

D15 Heere lyes interred wormes meate

Notes. The author of this “invictive Epitaph” (Crum H832) on Robert Cecil was identified at the time as the Welsh-speaking Shropshire poet Richard Edward John (Owen 4-5, citing *PRO STAC* 8/205/21, 22). This much-copied poem is discussed by McRae (Literature 61-62).

Heere lyes interred wormes meate

Robin¹ the little that was so greate

Not Robbin goodfellow,² nor Robbin-hood³

But Robbin the Divell that never did good⁴

He studied nothing but mischevous ends

5

Trickes for his foes, traynes⁵ for his frends,

A cruell monster sent by fate

To devoure both cuntrye, king, and state

I care not, nor I cannott tell

Whether his soule be in heaven or Hell

10

Butt sure I am they have earthed the foxe⁶

That stunke alive, and dyde of the poxe.⁷

Source. BL MS Egerton 2230, fol. 33v

Other known sources. Osborne 87; “Poems from a Seventeenth-Century Manuscript” 40; Bodleian MS Ashmole 38, p. 182; Bodleian MS Ashmole 1463, p. 13; Bodleian MS Eng. Poet. f.10, fol. 97r; Bodleian MS Rawl. Poet. 155, p. 70; Bodleian MS Tanner 299, fol. 12r; BL MS Harley 6947, fol. 211r; V&A MS D25.F.39, fol. 71r; NCRO MS IL 4304; Folger MS V.a.339, fol. 258r

D15

¹ *Robin*: common diminutive or nickname for Robert.

² *Robbin goodfellow*: the mischeivous goblin of English folklore.

³ *Robbin-hood*: the legendary English outlaw.

⁴ Francis Osborne's printed version and some earlier manuscript copies have an interesting variant for this line, giving it as "But Robin th'Encloser of Hatfield wood" (Osborne 88; Croft, "Reputation" 52).

⁵ *traynes*: deceits.

⁶ *foxe*: referring here to Cecil's political cunning.

⁷ *poxe*: syphilis.
