

H28 Here under lyes a Counsellor of State

Notes. The last line of this poem may allude to the Essex nullity of 1613, making it probable that this is an epitaph for Thomas Bilson, Bishop of Worcester (1596-97) and of Winchester (1597-1616), who died in June 1616, and who had been instrumental in securing the nullity of the Essex marriage. Bilson had been closely allied to Robert Carr and, at Carr's behest, was made a privy councillor in the summer of 1615. His support for the nullity was long remembered—contemporaries mocked his son, for instance, as "Sir Nullity Bilson". The sole extant copy of this poem is attributed to "RB".

Here under lyes a Counsellor of State,
a Deep Divine; a stout & Grave prelate;
a Bishopp, & an Alchymist; who ist
He is not, and in him is verefied
this truth, that all things must be Nullified.

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Source. BL MS Harley 6038, fol. 14r

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