

### H3 From Roberts coach to Robins carr

*Notes.* Like several poems composed around the time of the Essex nullity and Somerset marriage, this libel from 1615-16 depends on an extended pun on Robert Carr's surname, as a "car", cart or carriage. Other versions of the poem (e.g. Rosenbach MS 1083/16) contain only the first fourteen lines. A variant of lines 13-14 of this version are also appended to the transcription of the libel "I.C.U.R." in BL Add. MS 30982: "Thou Carr to 4 feirst beasts didst trust / Pride, envie, murther, wanton lust".

From Roberts coach to Robins carr<sup>1</sup>

Franke,<sup>2</sup> flings, and climes, and travells farr

And Tom<sup>3</sup> attempts the carr<sup>4</sup> to staye

Whom Weston<sup>5</sup> whippes out of the way

Moone, sunne, and many a starr beesyde

5

Lends Franke there light, her carr to guide<sup>6</sup>

Olde Venus<sup>7</sup> with her borrowed light

Finds beasts, and riders passing right

Att length an Elvish<sup>8</sup> trick is showne

That Franke, and carr, are overthrowne,

10

The Turner,<sup>9</sup> and then quickly spye

Where coaches creepe and carrs doe flye.

To four fierce beasts this race did trust

Call'd pride, ambition, murder, lust;

Woonder all men, is itt nott strange

15

Tyme should make so greate a change

Of Gods wrath it is a token

That the greatest Carr is broken

Sinn did loade itt, honnor top't itt

Tyme disclos'de itt, vengeance cropt itt.

20

**Source.** BL MS Egerton 2230, fol. 71v

**Other known sources.** CCRO MS CR 63/2/19, fol. 11v; V&A MS D25.F.39, fol. 98v; Rosenbach MS 1083/16, p. 13

### H3

<sup>1</sup> *From Roberts...carr*: Frances Howard's (perceived) social fall from the wife of Robert Devereux, 3rd Earl of Essex, to the wife of the (supposedly) low-born Robert Carr, Earl of Somerset. The social derogation is implied by the social distinction between an aristocratic coach and a humbler car, cart or carriage.

<sup>2</sup> *Franke*: Frances Howard.

<sup>3</sup> *Tom*: Sir Thomas Overbury.

<sup>4</sup> *carr*: a continued pun on Robert Carr's name.

<sup>5</sup> *Weston*: Richard Weston, Overbury's keeper in the Tower, convicted as the principal in his murder.

<sup>6</sup> *her carr to guide*: the language here and the allusion to Venus in the following line may refer to emblems of Venus that sometimes depicted her riding on a chariot (car) pulled by doves. Frances Howard "guides" the "Car of love" in the 1613-14 libel "Lady changed to Venus Dove".

<sup>7</sup> *Venus*: goddess of love, the planet also known as the evening and morning star, and a symbol of vengery.

<sup>8</sup> *Elvish*: referring to Sir Gervase Elwes, Lieutenant of the Tower of London, convicted as an accessory to Overbury's murder, and whose initial testimony sparked the investigation into Overbury's death.

<sup>9</sup> *Turner*: Anne Turner, confidante of Frances Howard, convicted as an accessory to Overbury's murder.

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