

H9 I.C.U.R

Notes. This poem is occasionally attributed to Sir Walter Raleigh (e.g. Bodleian MS Eng. Poet. e.14). In one version two extra lines are appended: “Thou Carr to 4 feirst beasts didst trust / Pride, envie, murther, wanton lust” (BL Add. MS 30982). The poem’s visual gimic requires the reader to sound out the initials that constitute every third line. Thus I.C.U.R. is “I see you are”. The same technique is used in a 1640 libel against Archbishop William Laud (“U.R.I.C. poore Canterbury, in a tottring state”). The poem is discussed by Bellany (Politics 105, 166).

I.C.U.R.¹

good monseieur Car²

about to fall

U.R.A.K.³

as most men say

5

& thats not all

U.O.Q.P.⁴

with a nullity⁵

that shameles packe⁶

S.X.Y.F.⁷

10

whose wicked life

hath broke thy backe.

Source. BL MS Harley 6038, fol. 28r

Other known sources. Raleigh, *Poems* 121; Bodleian MS Don. c.54, fol. 22v; Bodleian MS Eng. Poet. e.14, fol. 49r; Bodleian MS Firth d.7, fol. 152r; Bodleian MS Rawl. D. 1048, fol. 64v; Bodleian MS Sancroft 53, p. 48; BL Add. MS 15227, fol. 42v; BL Add. MS 15476, fol. 1r; BL Add. MS 30982, fol. 22r; BL MS Harley 1221, fol. 91r; BL MS Sloane 1489, fol. 9v; CUL Add. MS 4138, fol. 47r; CCRO MS CR 63/2/19, fol. 13r; V&A MS D25.F.39, fol. 97r; Folger MS V.a.162, fol. 35r; Rosenbach MS 1083/16, p. 172

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¹ I.C.U.R: “I see you are”.

² *Car*: Robert Carr, Earl of Somerset.

³ *U.R.A.K.*: “You are a kae (i.e. a jackdaw)”. In Aesop’s fables, the jackdaw has borrowed feathers. In this context, the allusion refers to Carr’s acquisition of other men’s fortunes, lands and wife, a charge made more explicitly in the libels “Poore Pilote thou hast lost thy Pinke” and “The wealth he gott to make his meanes greate”.

⁴ *U.O.Q.P.*: “You occupy” (“occupy” having the connotation of sexual possession).

⁵ *nullity*: i.e. the 1613 nullity of the marriage of Frances Howard to Robert Devereux, 3rd Earl of Essex.

⁶ *packe*: a low person; here Frances Howard.

⁷ *S.X.Y.F.*: “Essex’s wife” (i.e. Frances Howard).
