

Nv10 Ilium deplores, but still old Priams glad

Notes. This poem, written during Charles and Buckingham's sojourn in Spain (February-October, 1623) begins in an intensely, and sometimes obscurely, allusive mode, inviting readers to identify contemporaries with classical figures. The latter part of the poem, however, concentrates explicitly on Buckingham (who used the pseudonym "Tom Smith" on his trip to Spain in 1623), and predicts his fall.

Ilium¹ deplores, but still old Priams² glad,
Cassandra³ mournes, and Hellena⁴ is sad,
Andromache⁵ with teares bedewes her eyes,
Hector of Boheme⁶ like the Lyon lyes.
Paris⁷ takes ship intendeinge to fetch home 5
A second Helen⁸ but shee's sprunge from Rome.⁹
Heroes agree not, yet the upstarts they
though basest borne doe beare the greatest swaye.¹⁰
The states disordred not one halfe are just
and true Religion's¹¹ buried in the dust 10
Ulisses¹² for his tongue not for his wit
assotiates Jacke¹³ though he be far unfit.
Ajax¹⁴ lyes prison'd, the matter's small all knowes
Superiours not the Commons are his foes.
Aeneas¹⁵ was soe too, till fates devine 15
by poysoninge him, him cleare did resyne.
Lyke gold he glysters but his worth exceeds
great Xerxes forces¹⁶ or Alexander's deeds.¹⁷
The hogge¹⁸ hath lost his pearle, and it is pittye
a hogge more just were rooted in a Cyttye. 20
And Subtill Synon¹⁹ that doth all this plot:
Coward Thirsites²⁰ must not bee forgot;
They twaine, like Janus²¹ with their double faces

Th'one speakes you faire while th'other you displaces.
If they but aske i'le boldly lay my lyfe 25
that they shall have, though it were th'others wyfe.
Jason assumes the golden fleece to gayne,²²
gainst Romish wolves, and Bulls, he must maintayne
A feirce assault, thy soule not body feare
and thou a Lawrell wreath shalt allwayes weare. 30
First Jacke of England Jove²³ prolonge thy dayes
and ave²⁴ Jacke Smith, each man freely sayes.
Come thou away and leave Medea²⁵ there
A second Mars,²⁶ like Irefull Jove we feare:
till thou returne each flowre hangs downe her head, 35
and that which even now florisht is just now dead.
the Larke doth leave her Curious tunes to singe
and Narcissus makes his Eccho²⁷ ringe,
the shape of Niobe²⁸ each woman takes
that wept for her sweete Childrens sake: 40
the Pale fac'te Moone denyes us her sweete light
Since her Endymions out of England sight:²⁹
Aurora³⁰ she lookes pale, her face is wan
old Thetis³¹ she esteemes but as another man:
Phoebus³² agayne laments, cause hee's denyde 45
to shine on Phaeton,³³ his and Englands pride.
the starry skye is dimmd, England is benighted
eich man that's here with his owne shapes affrighted.
Thy presence here would wipe these mists away
and favour sorrowes lend a sunshine day: 50
Thy sight would ravish us and to be breife
would set a period to our poynts of greife;
Thy Companie's pleasant Tom,³⁴ but I doe vowe
I would have thy Roome if I could tell howe;

Thy titles greate³⁵ are, but thy vices flowe 55
and right by might thy oft dost overthrowe.
Thou lov'st thy kindred well, but shouldst doe more
prayse great Jehovah³⁶ and his name adore.
But to the Crosse thou prayst a Crosse may fall³⁷
That in the end may fully pay for all. 60
Fortune smiles on thee but beware her frowne
for him she soonest rayseth she as soone casts downe.
Be sure in tyme that thou sowe well thy seed
that thou agayne maist reape when thou hast need.
Be like the paynefull Ant that doth provide 65
In Summers Crops to serve the Winters tyde.
Lay up thy store for god and men doe knowe
Through greatest expence the greatest wants doe grow.
One gives the Councell but 'tis at thy Choyce
to take it, for he hath noe Prophets voyce. 70
Yet by the fals of others he doth see
that the lyke Chance may one day light on thee.
Do as thou pleasest but 'tis knowne to all
the greatest Cedars have the greatest fall.

Source. Bodleian MS Eng. Poet. c.50, fols. 12v-13r

Other known sources. CCRO MS CR 63/2/19, fol. 35v; Folger MS V.a.275, p. 11

Nv10

¹ *Ilium*: Troy; here England.

² *old Priams*: ruler of Troy; here James I.

³ *Cassandra*: Priam's daughter, whose prophecies were cursed never to be believed; here she probably represents James I's daughter, Elizabeth, wife of Frederick V, Elector Palatine, who, with her husband had been driven from Bohemia and from the Palatinate, taking refuge in The Hague.

- ⁴ *Hellena*: Helen of Troy, wife of the Trojan prince Paris; her contemporary identity is not clear.
- ⁵ *Andromache*: Trojan woman, wife of the hero Hector; possibly referring to Elizabeth, wife of Frederick V, Elector Palatine (figured in the next line as Hector).
- ⁶ *Hector of Boheme*: the Trojan hero Hector, son of Priam, and husband of Andromache; here he is Frederick V, Elector Palatine, and erstwhile King of Bohemia, driven from Bohemia after the Battle of White Mountain in November 1620.
- ⁷ *Paris*: the Trojan prince who stole Helen from the Spartan king Menelaus; here, Paris is Prince Charles, who “took ship” in February 1623 for Spain in an attempt to bring negotiations for the Spanish Match to a swift conclusion.
- ⁸ *A second Helen*: the Spanish Infanta, Maria.
- ⁹ *sprung from Rome*: i.e. she is a Roman Catholic.
- ¹⁰ *the upstarts...swaye*: attacks the socially obscure (“base born”, “upstart”) royal favourite, Buckingham.
- ¹¹ *true Religion’s*: Protestantism.
- ¹² *Ulisses*: the greek hero Ulysses, known for his wisdom and facile tongue. The contemporary identity is a little unclear: the figure who most closely “associated” with Jack/Charles on the trip to Spain was Buckingham, but the comparison seems to imply a courtier known for flattery rather than wisdom, and the flattery charge does not really fit the favourite. A possible alternative is Sir Francis Cottington, Charles’s secretary, who accompanied the Prince to Spain.
- ¹³ *Jacke*: Prince Charles, who assumed the pseudonym Jack Smith as he journeyed out of England for Spain in February 1623.
- ¹⁴ *Ajax*: Greek warrior hero. A plausible candidate for the “prison’d” hero is the “pariot” noble, and veteran of the 1620 Horace Vere expedition, Henry de Vere, 18th Earl of Oxford, who was imprisoned in the Tower from April 1622 to December 1623 for attacking Buckingham. Oxford was also, however, the butt of libellous attacks (see, e.g., “Some say Sir Edward Cecill can” and “When Charles, hath got the Spanish Gearle”), and his military record to that point hardly warrants the Ajax comparison.
- ¹⁵ *Aeneas*: Trojan hero and mythical founder of Rome. The contemporary identity of “Aeneas” depends on whether “was soe too” refers to imprisonment or enmity to Ajax. If the former, the only plausible candidate for a poisoned prisoner would be Sir Thomas Overbury, poisoned in the Tower of London in 1613. A somewhat looser reading might allow us to identify Aeneas with James’s eldest son, Prince Henry, the darling of English militant Protestant aspirations, who died in 1612 and was rumoured

to have been poisoned.

¹⁶ *Xerxes forces*: reference to the fifth century BC king of Persia. Herodotus claims that Xerxes raised forces of over 2.5 million men against the Greeks.

¹⁷ *Alexander's deeds*: Alexander the Great, fourth century BC king of Macedonia, and conqueror of massive swathes of territory.

¹⁸ *The hogge*: possibly Sir Francis Bacon, the disgraced Lord Chancellor, whose surname encouraged libellers to compare him with hogs and pigs.

¹⁹ *Synon*: Sinon, the Greek who persuaded the Trojans to take the wooden horse into their city. While no obvious contemporary figure seems to be implied, Sinon could easily stand for wicked counsellors plotting to betray Protestant England by admitting the Trojan horse of a Catholic queen. Sinon might also plausibly stand for the Spanish ambassador to England, Count Gondomar.

²⁰ *Thirsites*: in book 2 of Homer's *Iliad*, Thersites rails at King Agamemnon, accusing him of waging war solely as an excuse for plunder and rapine, and is then rebuked and struck by Ulysses. Again, a single contemporary identity is hard to prove, but Thersites' cowardice could stand for those who opposed English military action against Spain.

²¹ *Janus*: two-faced Roman god.

²² *Jason assumes...to gayne*: the mythic hero Jason sailed with the Argonauts to take the famed golden fleece from Colchis. The three lines following on from this make it likely that Jason is Charles, setting sail to Spain in pursuit of the golden fleece—the Spanish Match, which, among other things would have brought the English a huge dowry—at the risk of his spiritual corruption by popery (“Romish wolves” and “Bulls”).

²³ *Jove*: king of the gods; here a poetic shorthand for the Christian God.

²⁴ *ave*: hail.

²⁵ *Medea*: daughter of the King of Colchis. Jason met her on his mission to take the golden fleece and took her home as his wife. Here she represents the Infanta of Spain, Maria, while the awful consequences of Jason's marriage to Medea are meant to represent the consequences of a Spanish Match.

²⁶ *Mars*: god of war.

²⁷ *Narcissus...Eccho*: Narcissus was loved by the nymph Echo, but his inability to feel love drove her to her death.

²⁸ *Niobe*: Niobe's children were slain by the gods and, even after she was transformed into stone, Niobe would weep for them.

²⁹ *Pale fac'te Moone...England sight*: the moon fell in love with the youth Endymion; here Endymion is Charles (and, despite the name, almost certainly not Endymion Porter, one of the small group of men who accompanied Charles to Spain).

³⁰ *Aurora*: goddess of the dawn.

³¹ *Thetis*: a sea goddess. The description of her as "old", and her estimation as "another man" are puzzling, but may simply be intended as indicative of the poor dawn light.

³² *Phæbus*: god of the sun.

³³ *Phaeton*: son of Phoebus; here representing Charles.

³⁴ *Tom*: Buckingham assumed the pseudonym "Tom Smith" as he journeyed from England to Spain in February 1623.

³⁵ *Thy titles greate*: Buckingham was elevated to Duke, the highest rank of the English peerage, in May 1623.

³⁶ *Jehovah*: God. Buckingham was often assumed to be lukewarm in his commitment to Protestantism.

³⁷ *But to the Crosse...may fall*: this line plays on two meanings of "cross". The "cross" to which Buckingham "prayst" may be the crucifix used in Catholic ritual; the "cross" he may suffer is a setback.
