

Oiii The Ile de Re (1627)

Oiii1 O Admirall! Since thou camst back againe

Notes. It is unclear whether this poem refers to Buckingham's opposition to the calling of the 1628 Parliament or to his wish to see it dissolved once it had begun to sit. In either case, the libel is perhaps most striking for its explicit allusion to the possibility of assassination as a solution to the Buckingham problem.

“Upon the Duke Buckingham his opposition to the Parliament”

O Admirall!¹ since thou camst back againe
more base from Rhee,² then Cecill did from Spaine³
Since thou hast bin againe receaved at Court
beyond thy owne conceite beyond Reporte.
Since thou hast guilt of all the bloud Rhee spent 5
must thou still live to breake a Parliament!
hath no witch poyson! not one man a dagger
or hath our Coward Age forgott to swagger
no! no! Greate George! it is nor them nor thee
tis not thy Charmes tis not thy Venery⁴ 10
though these doe much, tis none of them doe this
tis nought that does it but our owne Amisse
would each of us mend one, though thou mend none
then all thy plots were straightwaies overthrowne
till then thou thrivst & till then mayst thou still 15
as hangmen doe by the lewd peoples ill.
if once we prove (as once we may prove) good
then, than thy Brother thou wilt prove more wood.⁵
meane while this is the state of our lost land
thou standst we fall & when thou fallst we stand. 20

Source. BL Add. MS 29492, fol. 55r

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¹ *Admirall*: Buckingham was Lord Admiral.

² *Rhee*: the Ile de Ré, where Buckingham had led the ill-fated English expedition of 1627.

³ *Cecill did from Spaine*: alluding to the failed 1625 expedition to Cadiz led by Edward Cecil, Viscount Wimbledon.

⁴ *Venery*: sexual sins. Buckingham was commonly depicted in the later 1620s as a sexually voracious womanizer.

⁵ *thy Brother...prove more wood*: “wood” here means “insane”, and thus the allusion is to Buckingham’s brother John Villiers, Viscount Purbeck, who suffered notorious bouts of madness during the 1620s.
