Oiii10 Our state's a Game at Cards the Councell deale

*Notes. Versions of this epigram, which can be dated to the middle of 1628, vary in subtle yet significant ways. The version selected here, as well as being clearly dated, is one of the better texts in its representation of power struggles in the state. The poem is discussed by McRae (*Literature 144-45).

"This was writt 2 moneths before his death"[1]

Our state's a Game at Cards the Councell[2] deale

The Lawyers shuffle & the Clergie Cutt

The King wynnes, from the loosing publique weale[3]

The Duke keepes stakes, the Courtiers plott, & putt

The Game i'th stock,[4] & thus the Citty[5] Jumpes   5

Still Crosse, for why? Prerogative[6] is Trumpe.

Source. Bodleian MS Ashmole 36-37, fol. 174v

Other known sources. Bodleian MS Ashmole 38, p. 136; Bodleian MS Eng. Poet. c.50, fol. 13v; Bodleian MS Eng. Poet. e.14, fol. 11v; Bodleian MS Eng. Poet. e.97, p. 31; Bodleian MS Malone 23, p. 119; Bodleian MS Rawl. Poet. 26, fol. 6v; Bodleian MS Tanner 465, fol. 100r; BL Add. MS 22118, fol. 5v; BL Add. MS 29492, fol. 56r; BL MS Sloane 1458, fol. 24v; NLS MS Advocates 19.3.8, fol. 1v; St. John's MS K.56, no. 74; Folger MS V.a.162, fol. 80r; Folger MS V.a.319, fol. 26v; Folger MS V.a.322, p. 50; Rosenbach MS 239/27, p. 46

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[1] *writt 2 moneths before his death:* i.e. two months before Buckingham's death. Buckingham was assassinated on 23 August 1628.

[2] *Councell:* i.e. the Privy Council.

[3] *publique weale:* public good.

[4] *putt / The Game i'th stock:* in card games, the "stock" is the term for "the portion of the pack of cards which is not dealt out" (*OED*).

5   *the Citty:* i.e. the City of London.

6   *Prerogative:* i.e. the royal prerogative; the King's power to act in certain areas without restraint.