

Oiii6 Here Dr Lambe, the conjurer lyes

Notes. John Lambe—physician, astrolger, convicted witch and rapist, suspected quack, and probable confidence artist—was murdered by a crowd in the streets of London on 13 June 1628. For at least a couple of years, contemporary rumour had assumed that Lambe was in the service of the Duke of Buckingham, providing the favourite with magical potions and charms that were allegedly used to seduce women and to maintain his hold on royal favour. News reports of Lambe’s murder suggest the murderous mob was venting its violent hatred of Buckingham onto the body of his surrogate. The poem is discussed by McRae (Literature 139-140).

“An Epitaph on Dr Lambe”

Here Dr Lambe, the conjurer lyes,
Against his will untimely dies
The Divell did show himselfe a Glutton
In taking this Lambe before he was mutton
The Divell in Hell will rost him there
Whome the Prentises¹ basted here.
In Hell they wondred when he came
To see among the Goats a Lambe.²

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Source. Huntington MS HM 116, pp. 96-97

Other known sources. BL Add. MS 44963, fol. 37r; BL MS Harley 6918, fol. 83v

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¹ *Prentises:* contemporary records suggest that apprentices made up a substantial portion of the crowd that murdered Lambe.

² *To see among the Goats a Lambe:* a relatively witty pun alluding to Christ’s parable of the Last Judgement (Matthew 25.31-46).
