

Pi16 Pride lies heere, Revenge and Lust

Notes. One source attributes this libellous epitaph to John Felton (Bodleian MS Rawl. Poet. 26). While we can be almost certain that Felton himself did not write the poem, the attribution may suggest one contemporary's willingness to impute Felton's actions to his horror at the favourite's crimes enumerated in poems like this one.

"Epitaph"

Pride lies heere, Revenge and Lust,
Sorcerie¹ and Averice, all accurst:
A great one base, a rich one poore,
Hee that consum'd the Kingdomes store,
Alive and dead of all good abhorr'd, 5
Because that all Ill doe hee dar'd.
The Law to death had him condemn'd,²
Hee Death and Law both then contemn'd;
His life not lov'd, nor mourn'd his death,
Cause long hee drew condemned breath, 10
Hee sinfull liv'd, and dy'd with shame,
His flesh now rotts, soe Buckingham.
(O sodaine change) Heere doth hee lie,
That feareles livd dyd fearfullie.
Hee was not sick: What did betide? 15
A stroke was given, hee swore³ and dy'd.
Hee's gone all say: O but whither?
Birds of a winge flie together:
Lambe⁴ was sent a place t'out-looke,
And where Lambe is there's the Duke: 20
Now their Villanies they doe scann,
Lambe the Doctor, Duke the Man;
After-times their tricks will shew,

Not one of thousands now that know,
And then to this shall added bee,
'Gainst justice liv'd they,⁵ soe did dye.

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Source. BL MS Sloane 826, fol. 182r-v

Other known sources. Bodleian MS Malone 23, p. 196; Bodleian MS Rawl. Poet. 26, fol. 33v

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¹ *Sorcerie*: charges linking Buckingham to the practice of demonic witchcraft hinged on two of the Duke's relationships: with his mother, Mary Compton, Countess of Buckingham, who was often casually branded a witch; and with his alleged associate, the astrologer-physician and convicted witch John Lambe.

² *The Law to death...condemn'd*: this, of course, was not technically true, but some contemporaries took the House of Commons' 1626 impeachment of Buckingham as equivalent to a judicial sentence that had never been executed.

³ *hee swore*: some reports claimed that Buckingham's last words were the oath "God's wounds" (see "The pale horse of the Revelation" and "Here lies Leachery, Treachery, Pride").

⁴ *Lambe*: John Lambe, murdered by a London mob on 13 June 1628.

⁵ *'Gainst justice liv'd they*: this phrase may refer generally to the crimes of the two men, but it may also allude to the actual judicial sentences against them: Buckingham's impeachment by the Commons in 1626, and Lambe's convictions (both pardoned) for witchcraft and rape.