

Piii Ambivalent Voices and Defenders of Buckingham

Piii1 M alignant characters that did portend

Notes. This acrostic verse, inspired by the widely circulated prophetic chronogram discovering the fatal year 1628 in the letters of Buckingham's name, is far more sympathetic to the Duke than most elaborations on the prophecy, and is clearly hostile to his assassin. Given the importance of the Roman "V" to the chronogram, we have not regularized the usage of "U" and "V" in this poem, as we have done elsewhere in this edition.

Chronogramma, Anno 1628, obiit.

GeorgIVs DVX BVCKInghaMIæ¹

M alignant characters that did portend

D uke=murthuring Fate & his untimely end

C onstrain'd to die, that would have liv'd & tought²

5

X antippus³ like but that fell⁴ Felton brought

V ncertaine projeck to a certaine end.

V aine are designes, where one doth of his freind

V surpse too much,⁵ (him) foes doe countermine

I n breife the world applaudes this last designe

10

I t was his death, but now hee's dead & gone

I ll having heard of many; felt but one.

Source. BL Add. MS 15227, fol. 41v

Piii1

¹ *Chronogramma...BVCKInghaMIæ*: the chronogram assigns numerical values to the letters corresponding to Roman numerals in Buckingham's latinized name—Georgius Dux Buckinghamiae, George Duke of Buckingham. The numbers add up to the year of his death ("obiit"), 1628 or MDCXVVIII.

² *tought*: probable scribal error; "fought" is a more logical reading.

³ *X antippus*: Xantippus was the commander of the Athenian fleet at the victory over the Persians at

Mycale in 479 BC. The implication is that if Buckingham had lived to lead the planned expedition to La Rochelle, he too might have returned victorious.

⁴ *fell*: cruel, savage, deadly.

⁵ *one doth...V surpse too much*: the “friend” here is probably King Charles.

