

### Piii3 Dearling off Kings, Patrone off armes

*Notes.* Defending Buckingham as royal favourite, military leader and artistic patron, this epitaph provocatively links the posthumous “detractiōne” of the Duke by libellers (“poetasteres cankered breath”) to the anti-monarchical politics of those who “love not Kings”.

#### “An Epitaph upon the Duke off Buckinghame”

Dearling off Kings, Patrone off armes,  
Muses protector,<sup>1</sup> who from harmes  
Did sheild professores off them twaine,  
Lyes heere by a base Soldier<sup>2</sup> Slaine  
And by poetasteres<sup>3</sup> cankered breath  
Dyes everie day a lingring death:  
Be silent malice from henceforth,  
And know detractiōne from his worth  
(off Kings off Mars,<sup>4</sup> off Muses lov’d)  
Is onely from such spirits mov’d,  
As love not Kings and would advance  
Base Cowardise and Ignorance.

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**Source.** *First and Second Dalhousie Manuscripts* 189

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<sup>1</sup> *Muses protector*: patron of the arts.

<sup>2</sup> *base Soldier*: John Felton was a lieutenant during the 1627 expedition to the Ile de Ré. “[B]ase” here may simply mean morally vile, but it has a social resonance too: Felton was from an obscure and socially precarious branch of a Suffolk gentry family.

<sup>3</sup> *poetasteres*: poetaster, “a writer of poor or trashy verse” (*OED*). Contemporary stereotypes of libellers depict them as incompetent poets.

<sup>4</sup> *Mars*: the god of war.

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