

Q3 I neade noe Trophies, to adorne my hearse

Notes. This widely circulated epitaph on the Earl of Castlehaven inverts the meanings pinned to his case by the prosecution. As Herrup notes, the poem “reduced the relationship of Castlehaven and the Countess to that of cuckold and adulteress. Gone were rape and sodomy, disinheritance and patriarchal irresponsibility...The verse portrayed the Earl as helpless, not monstrous; the willful evil belonged to the Countess” (121). The poem exists in many variant versions. The version we have chosen, from William Davenport’s commonplace book, adds a concluding couplet not typically found in other copies of the poem. One copy forms the final lines of an otherwise unique poem on Castlehaven, which we therefore treat below as a discrete text (see “My life is done my heart prepard for death”). And the last two lines of most versions of the poem (“Who will take such a Countess to his bedd / that firste gives hornes, and then cutts off his head”) were, at least once, copied out as a discrete verse (Bodleian MS Rawl. Poet. 26). The poem also elicited at least two answer-poems, written in the voice of Castlehaven’s wife (see “Blame not thy wife, for what thy selfe hath wrought” and “Its true you need noe trophees to your hearse”), and a number of manuscripts include copies of both the epitaph and one or other of the responses.

“An Epitaffe on the Earle of Castelhaven Mervine Touchett. set on his Tombe. after his beheadinge.
1631.”

I neade noe Trophies, to adorne my hearse
my wyffe, exalts my hornes¹ in everie vearse:
and plaste them hath, soe fullie on my tombe
that for my armes,² there is noe vacant rome.
Who will take such a Countess to his bedd
that firste gives hornes, and then cutts off his head:
Servaunts, a sonne, and wyffe wich I did wedd,
have layde poore Mervine here without a headd.

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Source. CCRO MS CR 63/2/19, fol. 72r

Other known sources. Bodleian MS CCC. 327, fol. 32v; Bodleian MS CCC. 328, fol. 58r; Bodleian MS Eng. Poet. e.14, fol. 87v; Bodleian MS Rawl. A. 346, fol. 142r; Bodleian MS Rawl. Poet. 26, fol. 21r; BL Add. MS 5832, fol. 222v; BL Add. MS 22118, fol. 29r; BL Add. MS 22591, fol. 89r; BL Add. MS 44963, fol. 38v; BL MS Egerton 2725, fol. 110r; BL MS Harley 738, fol. 328r; BL MS Sloane

1446, fol. 64v; CUL Add. MS 335, fol. 54r; NCRO MS IL 3337, p. 9; NCRO MS IL 3338, fol. 2v; St. John's MS S.32, fol. 32r; WCRO MS 413, fol. 401; TCD MS 731; Beinecke MS Osborn b.125; Beinecke MS Osborn b.126; Folger MS V.a.124, fol. 18v; Folger MS V.b.50, p. 547; Folger MS E.a.6, fol. 3r; Huntington MS HM 116, p. 122; Rosenbach MS 239/27, p. 386; Rosenbach MS 243/4, p. 161

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¹ *my hornes*: i.e. cuckold's horns.

² *my armes*: Castlehaven's coat-of-arms. Heraldic devices were commonly added to tomb monuments.

