

Accession number: 1992-24/9d

Description: Half sheet of paper, with draft of 'Quin's Soliloquy'. Scribal transcript. n.d.
[1765]

Transcript: Quin's Soliloquy

On seeing Duke Humphrey's body,
Embalmed at St Albans

A Plague on Egypt's Arts I say;
Embalm the Dead! —on senseless clay
Rich wines and Spices Waste?
Like Sturgeon, or like Brawn, shall I,
Bound in a precious pickle lie,
Which I can never Taste?

Let me Embalm this flesh of mine,
With Turtle Fat and Bordeaux Wine,
And spoil th'Egyptian trade;
[Than Humphrey Duke, more happy I – *crossed out*]
Than this Duke Humphrey happier I
Emablm'd Alive Old Quin shall die,
A mummy ready made.

Note: Aileen Osborn, 'The Literary Material in the Hereford Garrick Papers', M. Phil thesis, University of Birmingham, 1999, 165-7.

Knapp 133; other versions: Folger, autograph W.b.467, 2 transcripts, only 1, Y.d.122 found.

James Quin: an actor of the old school, whose career was ending as Garrick's began ... He was overweight and notoriously fond of food ... the date of the poem, 1765, is given by Knapp and Kearsley.

Duke Humphrey: Duke of Gloucester (1391-1447), youngest son of Henry IV, said to have been murdered by Suffolk and cardinal Beaufort. "To dine with Duke Humphrey" came to mean to have no dinner to go to. Although he was actually buried in St. Albans, it was held that a certain tomb in St Paul's belonged to him and loiterers would claim to be dining with him rather than admit to their real situation.