

SUMMARY: Dedicatory epistle to Anne Cecil, Countess of Oxford, in George Baker's 1576 publication *The New Jewel of Health*, the first English translation of the second part of *Thesaurus Euonymi Philiatrī de remediis secretis* by Konrad Gesner (1516-1565). Gesner's *Thesaurus* was published in two parts. The first part, published in Latin in Zurich in 1552, was translated into English by Peter Morwen, Fellow of Magdalen College, Oxford, and published in London by John Day in 1559 under the title *The Treasure of Evonymus*. The second part, posthumously edited by Gesner's literary executor, Caspar Wolff, was published in Latin in Zurich in 1569 under the title *Euonymus Conradi Gesneri. . . de remediis secretis liber secundus*. It was then translated into English by Baker and published in London by Henry Denham in 1576 with a dedication to the Countess of Oxford. The dedication suggests that it was presented to the Countess as a New Year's gift, although an epistle to the reader by Baker is dated 'from my house in Bartholomew Lane beside the Royal Exchange in London this 21 day of February 1576'. The *Thesaurus* is primarily a treatise on distillation and the use of distillates in medical practice. Baker published a second edition of *The New Jewel of Health* in 1599 under the title *The New and Old Physic*, with a dedication to Oxford, Anne having died in 1588.

To the right honourable, virtuous and his singular good lady the noble Countess of Oxenford etc., your humble servant wisheth long life, prosperous health, and daily increase of honour

It is written, right honourable and my singular good Lady, that Philip, King of Macedonia, rejoiced greatly when his son Alexander was born because his empire should not lack a governor after his death, but herein he rejoiced much more, that his son was born in the time of Aristotle, that learned philosopher, by whom he was taught and instructed ten years. And in like manner it fareth now with me as with the King of Macedonia, and no less is my joy than the delight of that mighty prince. Herein I do rejoice, that this work of distillation is now finished to the profit of my county, wherein great study and long labour hath been earnestly bestowed. But I rejoice much more that it is finished in the time of you, my honourable, virtuous and good Lady, to whose learned view and favourable protection I offer this book as a due testimony of my serviceable heart and as some fruits of my poor painful study and practice, wishing that it were in value countervailable to the condign demerits of your so honourable expectation, so as every line, in respect of my loyalty, might supply a new jewel for your New Year's gift, albeit you have no need of gold and jewels, abounding honourably in all riches. Notwithstanding, this book may be truly termed *The New Jewel of Health*, which before this day was never seen or published abroad by any other man. This *New Jewel* will make the blind to see and the lame to walk. This *New Jewel* will make the weak to become strong, and the old crooked age appear young and lusty. This *New Jewel* will make the foul seem beautiful, and the withered faces show smooth and fair. Yea, it will heal all infirmities and cure all pains in the whole body of man. What is it to have lands and houses, to abound in silver and gold, to be decked with pearls and diamonds, yea, to

possess the whole world and lack health, the principal jewel? Not without cause therefore, Agamemnon, the wise and famous captain of the Greeks, did highly esteem and reward Machaon and Podalirius, by whose cunning skill in chirurgery thousands worthy Greeks were saved alive and healed which else had died and perished. But why do I here name Agamemnon or the Greeks whenas no age can be without physic, no person can live without chirurgery, no country can miss these noble mysteries? Wherefore I at this time, to pleasure my country and friends, have published this *New Jewel* under your honourable protection, that it may more easily be defended against sycophants and fault-finders because your wit, learning and authority hath great force and strength in repressing the curious crakes of the envious and bleating babes of Momus' charm.

Your Honour's humble & obedient servant,
George Baker