
SUMMARY: Dedicatory epistle to Oxford in Thomas Underdowne's *An Ethiopian History* published in 1569, a translation into English of Stanislaus Warschewiczki's Latin translation of Heliodorus.

To the right honourable Edward de Vere, Lord Bulbeck, Earl of Oxenford, Lord Great Chamberlain of England, Thomas Underdown wisheth long and blessed life with increase
of honour

As they somewhat be more precise than I, right honourable Earl, which would have nobleman and such as bear sway and rule in the weal public to be in all manner of sciences great artists and altogether bookish, so do I far dissent from them, that would contrarily have them utterly unlettered and flat idiots, for the bookish man busily attending his own study cannot carefully enough tender the state, for such is the property of knowledge that it breedeth a contempt of all other things in respect of itself. As for the ignorant, it is most evident and plain that he can have no manner of governance or skill of regiment in his head. The Greeks in all manner of knowledge and learning did far surmount the Romans, but the Romans in administering their state, in warlike facts, and in common sense were much their superiors, for the Greeks were wedded to their learning alone; the Romans, content with a mediocrity, applied themselves to greater things. I do not deny but that in many matters, I mean matters of learning, a nobleman ought to have a sight, but to be too much addicted that way I think is not good. Now of all knowledge fit for a noble gentleman, I suppose the knowledge of histories is most seeming, for furthering whereof I have Englished a passing fine and witty history written in Greek by Heliodorus, and for right good cause consecrated the same to your honourable Lordship, for such virtues be in your Honour, so haughty courage joined with great skill, such sufficiency in learning, so good nature and common sense, that in your Honour is, I think, expressed the right pattern of a noble gentleman which in my head I have conceived. It nothing did dismay me, or for that I was not known to your Honour, neither may it seem any rash attempt for that cause, for such is the force of virtue that she maketh us to love not only our own countrymen by sight unknown, but also strangers which by land and sea be severed from us. Therefore I beseech your Honour favourably to accept this my small travail in translating Heliodorus whom, if I have so well translated as he is worthy, I am persuaded that your Honour will like very well of. Sure I am that of other translators he hath been dedicated to mighty kings and princes. Therefore accept my goodwill, honourable Earl, and if opportunity shall serve hereafter, there shall greater things appear under your Honour's name. Almighty God give you increase of honour, and keep and defend you forever and ever.

Your Honour's most humble to command,
Thomas Underdowne