

SUMMARY: Dedicatory epistle to Oxford in *The Breviary of Britain*, published in 1573, a translation by Thomas Twyne of the Latin of *Commentarioli Descriptionis Britannicae Fragmentum* by Humphrey Llwyd (1527-1568), published posthumously in Cologne in 1572. Llwyd, a noted antiquary, was personal physician to the Earl of Arundel for fifteen years prior to 1563, when he returned to his home town of Denbigh. The manuscript was sent by Llwyd on his deathbed to the cartographer, Abraham Ortelius. In the dedication, Twyne makes mention of the ‘singular delight’ which he knows from experience Oxford takes in ‘books of geography, histories, and other good learning’. Twyne also alludes to Oxford’s Welsh ancestry when he requests that Oxford ‘would receive into your safe tuition the written name and description of that Britain which, as it is in part your native soil, so your duty biddeth you to defend and maintain it’.

To the right honourable Edward de Vere, Lord Bulbeck, Earl of Oxenford, Lord Great Chamberlain of England, Thomas Twyne wisheth long life, perfect health, increase of honour, and endless felicity

Nobility is a precious gift which so glittereth in the eyes of all men that there is no one corporal thing in this world whereof we make a greater account. For so is it esteemed of all, desired of all, and revered of all virtue, saith Tully, and before him Plato, if it might be seen with our bodily eyes doubtless it would procure marvellous love and good liking unto itself, the show thereof would appear so fair and amiable. The uniting of which two most noble graces with all other furniture of nature & fortune within your person, right honourable and my very good Lord, hath so bent my judgment and brought me into such liking & admiration thereof that I have rested no small time not only not satisfied in being one of the admirators but also desirous to be one of the participators of those your Honour’s most laudable dispositions, whereunto I do now humbly submit myself, and in token of my dutiful meaning herein am so hardy as to present your Honour with this simple travail (which I so term in respect of my pains in translating the same, howbeit I am persuaded that it cost Master Llwyd, who first and not long since wrote the same in Latin, no small labour and industry in the gathering and penning), regarding your Honour to be amongst the rest a very fit patron for it in consideration that, being as yet but in your flower and tender age, and generally hoped and accounted of in time to become the chiefest stay of this your commonwealth and country, you would receive into your safe tuition the written name and description of that Britain which, as it is in part your native soil, so your duty biddeth you to defend and maintain it. Hereon, when your Honour shall be at leisure to look, bestowing such regard as you are accustomed to do on books of geography, histories, and other good learning wherein I am privy your Honour taketh singular delight, I doubt not but you shall have cause to judge your time very well applied, and so much the rather for that in the study of geography it is expedient first to know exactly the situation of our own home where we abide before that we shall be able to judge how other countries do lie unto us which are far distant

from us, besides that it were a foul shame to be inquisitive of the state of foreign lands and to be ignorant of our own, as your Honour, being already perfectly instructed, is not now to learn at my hand. But for my part it shall be sufficient that your Honour would deign to accept this small present, or rather therein my hearty goodwill, which being no otherwise able to gratify the same, shall never cease to pray to God that he would always direct you in the commendable race of virtue and learning which you have begun, augment your honour with many degrees, and in the end reward you with immortal felicity.

Your Honour's most humble at commandment,
Thomas Twyne