

SUMMARY: Dedicatory epistle to Oxford in the revised edition, published in 1570, of Arthur Golding's *Th' Abridgement of the Histories of Trogus Pompeius, gathered out of the Latin tongue by the famous historiographer Justin*, a translation of *Trogus, Pompeius. Historiae Philippicae*. The epistle to the reader in this third edition is anomalous in that it is addressed to the reader by Ursula Golding rather than by Arthur Golding.

To the right honourable and his very good lord and master Edward de Vere, Earl of Oxenford, Lord Great Chamberlain of England, Viscount Bulbeck etc., Arthur Golding wisheth health and prosperity, with furtherance in knowledge and increase of honour

Right honourable, I find in perusing of ancient writers that it hath been the custom of the greatest estates and princes in the world (when they have had leisure from the earnest and weighty affairs of their realms) to bestow their idle times in perusing stories. For we read that Artaxerxes, surnamed Longhand, the fifth king of Persia, used to have the chronicles both of his predecessors and of his own time also read before him a-nights when he went to rest. And Alexander the Great had that noble writer of the famous battle of Troy in such estimation that he never went anywhere but he had his works about him, nor never slept but he had them under his pillow. Moreover, coming into a school and finding not Homer's works there, he gave the master a buffet with his fist, meaning thereby that the knowledge of histories was a thing so necessary to all estates and degrees that it was an offence to be without them.

For like as in music many notes and many tunes make one concert and one harmony, so also in an history the variety and multitude of examples tend all to one end, that is, th' advancement of virtue and the defacing of vice, offering themselves as a most clear and perfect mirror wherein for man to behold, I say, not the outward portraiture and shape of his body, but the very lively image and express figure of his inward mind, instructing him how to guide and order himself in all things. For what can be a greater enforcement to chivalry than not barely to hear but in a manner presently to behold the sage and grave consultations of expert captains, the speedy puttings in practice of things devised, the policies and sleights in executing of them, the favourable assistance of success to the same, with the fame and renown of valiant enterprises? What can be a greater encouragement to virtue than to see men raised from low and base degree (as it were out of the dust) unto high estate & honour, to see realms flourish, to see commonwealths prosper, to see good men exalted & evil men suppressed, to see peace and tranquility observed, to see nations willingly offer their obedience, to see long continuance in felicity with honourable report & wishing for after the decease? On the contrary part, what can be a greater dehortation from vice than to have laid before one's eyes not only the heinousness and enormity of the offence but also the miseries, calamities, shames and punishments worthily ensuing

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upon the same, with endless reproach and infamy after death? And so, consequently, what can be more commodious and profitable than an history?

Again what can be more pleasant or more to the satisfying and contentation of man's nature (which is always desirous of news and covetous of knowledge) than sitting quietly by himself to receive tidings of things done through the whole world, to behold the places, the persons, the times and the things with th' order and circumstances in doing of the same, to see so many running streams, so many high mountains, so many raging seas, so many wild forests and deserts, so many strange beasts, fowls, fishes, serpents, herbs and trees, so many large countries, so many rich and populous cities, so many well governed commonwealths, so many good laws and customs, and so many sundry sorts of people, together with the natures, dispositions, effects, descriptions, situations, commodities, pleasures and displeasures, foundations, continuances and decays beginnings, proceedings and endings of the same, and that in such sort as everything may seem not to be reported but to be presently in doing?

Now at such time as I had finished my translation of th' histories of Justin (who in so small room and in so few words comprehendeth so many and so notable things that it is to be doubted whether he be more brief of sentence or plentiful of matter), as I stayed with myself (as it were to take breath at th' end of my race), devising to whom I might specially dedicate the same, it came to my remembrance that sithence it had pleased Almighty God to take to his mercy your Lordship's noble father (to whom I had long before vowed this my travail), there was not any who either of duty might more justly claim the same, or for whose estate it seemed more requisite and necessary, or of whom I thought it should be more favourably accepted than of your Honour. For (to omit other things whereof this time and matter serveth not to speak), it is not unknown to others, and I have had experience thereof myself, how earnest a desire your Honour hath naturally graffed in you to read, peruse and communicate with others as well the histories of ancient time and things done long ago as also of the present estate of things in our days, and that not without a certain sharpness of wit and ripeness of understanding, which things do not only now rejoice the hearts of all such as bear faithful affection to th' honourable house of your ancestors, but also stir up a great hope and expectation of such wisdom and experience in you in time to come as are meet and beseeming for so noble a race.

To the furtherance whereof (because I will not be over-tedious in words) I will briefly propound unto your Lordship no mo but two examples which are mentioned among many other of like purport in this book. Thone is of the valiant Epaminondas, Prince of Thebe, who being an expert captain, and politic in all martial feats and warlike affairs, was nevertheless so well learned that it was a wonder to see how a man bred and brought up in philosophy should come by such knowledge in feats of arms, or how a man accustomed to the licentious liberty of the camp should retain such exquisite knowledge in philosophy with unspotted innocency of living and conversation, whose fortune was such (by the consent of all writers) that the strength, the glory and the renown of his country did both rise with him and die with him.

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Thother example is of Arymba, king of Epyre, who being very young at the decease of his father, was by the advice and consent of the whole realm during his nonage sent to Athens to be instructed in learning and philosophy. At his return then into his own realm again, he chose him a sage and grave council, created officers, made good laws, abrogated evil customs, and finally so stablished the state of the commonwealth that he seemed to have made the realm new. And look how much he was better learned than his ancestors, so much the story reporteth him to have been the better beloved and honoured of his subjects.

Let these and such other examples (whereof your Lordship shall find store in this work) encourage your tender years, running in the renowned footsteps of your famous ancestors, to proceed in learning and virtue (which are th' only ornaments of nobility, or rather the very true nobility itself) in such sort as you may be able to do acceptable service to your prince and your country, your prince & your country for your well-doings embrace you and esteem you as a jewel, and yourself thereby become equal to any of your worthy predecessors in advancing th' honour of your noble house, whereof as your great forwardness giveth assured hope & expectation, so I most heartily beseech Almighty God to further augment, establish and confirm the same in your Lordship with th' abundance of his grace.

Your Lordship's humble servant,  
Arthur Golding