

SUMMARY: Ode to Oxford in John Southern's *Pandora, The Music of the Beauty of his Mistress Diana*. The title page gives the publication date as 20 June 1584.

The ode extols Oxford's skill in astronomy, classical languages, music and horsemanship. Southern's use of the phrase 'knowledge in the tongues' suggests that Oxford was expert in both Latin and Greek, and perhaps Hebrew.

The language of the ode was criticized in Book III, Chapter 22 of *The Arte of English Poesie*, published in 1589 and attributed to George Puttenham. Puttenham accused Southern of plagiarism, saying: 'Another of reasonable good facility in translation, finding certain of the hymns of Pindarus and of Anacreon's odes and other lyrics among the Greeks very well translated by Ronsard, the French poet, & applied to the honour of a great prince in France, comes our minion and translates the same out of French into English, and applieth them to the honour of a great nobleman in England (wherein I commend his reverent mind and duty), but doth so impudently rob the French poet both of his praise and also of his French terms that I cannot so much pity him as be angry with him for his injurious dealing'. See also Whigham, Frank and Wayne A. Rebhorn, eds., *The Art of English Poesy by George Puttenham: A Critical Edition*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, p. 338) at:

<https://books.google.ca/books?id=wM2sLMbjF5EC&pg=PA338>

To the right honourable the Earl of Oxenford etc.

Ode I            Strophe 1

This earth is the nourishing teat,  
 As well that delivers to eat  
 As else throws out all that we can  
 Devise that should be needful for  
 The health of or disease or sore,  
 The household companions of man.  
 And this earth hath herbs sovereign  
 To impeach sicknesses sudden  
 If they be well aptly applied.  
 And this yearth spews up many a brevage  
 Of which, if we knew well the usage,  
 Would force the force Acherontide.  
 Brief, it lends us all that we have  
 With to live, and it is our grave,  
 But with all this, yet cannot give  
 Us fair renowns when we be dead,

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And indeed they are only made  
By our own virtues whiles we live.

Antistrophe

And marbles (all be they so strong)  
Cannot maintain our renowns long,  
And neither they be but abuses  
To think that other things have puissance  
To make for time any resistance  
Save only the well-singing Muses.  
And the fair Muses that provide  
For the wise an immortal name  
Do never garnish any head  
With laurel by hearsay of fame,  
Nor every one that can rime  
Must not think to triumph on time,  
For they give not their divine fury  
To every doting troop that comes,  
Nor the touch of every one's thumbs  
Is not of an eternal dury.

Epode

No, no, the high singer is he  
Alone that in the end must be  
Made proud with a garland like this,  
And not every riming novice  
That writes with small wit and much pain,  
And the (God's know) idiot in vain,  
For it's not the way to Parnasse,  
Nor it will neither come to pass  
If it be not in some wise fiction  
And of an ingenious invention,  
And infanted with pleasant travail,  
For it alone must win the laurel,  
And only the poet well born  
Must be he that goes to Parnassus,  
And not these companies of asses  
That have brought verse almost to scorn.

Strophe 2

Making speak (her with a sweet bruit)  
 The ten divers tongues of my lute,  
 I will freddon in thy honour  
 These renowned songs of Pindar,  
 And imitate for thee, De Vere,  
 Horace, that brave Latin harper.  
 And stand up, nymphs, Aganappide,  
 Stand up, my wantons Parnasside,  
 Stand up, wantons, and that we sing  
 A new ditty Calaborois  
 To the Iban harp Thebanois  
 That had such a murmuring string,  
 For I will shoot here with my verses  
 (Following the ancient traces)  
 As high up to the air this hymn  
 (With a strong bow and arms, presumptuous)  
 As De Vere is both wise and virtuous,  
 And as of my harp he is digne.

#### Antistrophe

Muses, you have had of your father  
 Only the particular favour  
 To keep fro the reeve infernal,  
 And therefore, my wantons, come sing  
 Upon your most best-speaking string  
 His name that doth cherish you all.  
 Come, nymphs, while I have a desire  
 To strike on a well-sounding lyre  
 Of our virtues De Vere, the name,  
 De Vere that had given him in part  
 The love, the war, honour, and art,  
 And with them an eternal fame.  
 Come nymphs, your puissance is divine,  
 And to those that you show no favour,  
 Quickly they are deprived of honour,  
 And slaves to the chains Cossitine.

#### Epode

Amongst our well-renowned men  
 De Vere merits a silver pen  
 Eternally to write his honour,  
 And I in a well-polished verse

Can set up in our universe  
 A fame to endure forever  
 And filled with a furiae extreme  
 Upon a well-superbous rime  
 (On a rime, and both strong and true)  
 I will (De Vere) push thy louanges  
 To the ears of people estranges,  
 And ravish them with thy virtue.  
 But in truth I use but to sing  
 After the well-entuned string  
 Of either of the great prophets,  
 Or Theban, or Calaborois,  
 Of whether of whom yet the voice  
 Hath not been known to our poets.

### Strophe 3

But what shall I begin to touch?  
 O Muses, what have I begun?  
 But speak, wantons, what have I done?  
 Take it off; the charge is too much.  
 No, no, if I would there were made,  
 I could take an entire Iliad  
 Of only his noble antiquity,  
 But his own virtues would blush with shame  
 If I should not by his own name  
 Give him a laud to our posterity.  
 But if I will thus like Pindar  
 In many discourses egar  
 Before I will come to my point,  
 Or, or touch his infinity  
 Of virtues in this poesy,  
 Our song will never be conjoint.

### Antistrophe

For who marketh better than he  
 The seven turning flames of the sky,  
 Or hath read more of the antique,  
 Hath greater knowledge in the tongues,  
 Or understands sooner the sounds  
 Of the learner to love music?  
 Or else who hath a fairer grace  
 In the centaurian art of Thrace,

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Half horse, half man, and with less pain  
Doth bring the courser indomitable  
To yield to the reins of his bridle,  
Vaulting on the edge of a plain?  
And it pleases me to say too  
(With a louange I protest true)  
That in England we cannot see  
Any thing like De Vere but he;  
Only himself he must resemble,  
Virtues so much in him assemble.

Epode

And naught escapes out of my hand  
In this ode but it's veritae,  
And here I swear, De Vere, 'tis thee,  
That art ornament of England,  
Vaunting me again of this thing,  
Which is, that I shall never sing  
A man so much honoured as thee,  
And both of the Muses and me,  
And when I get the spoil of Thebes,  
Having charged it on my shoulders  
In verses exempt fro the webs  
Of the ruinous filandering sisters,  
I promise to build thee a glory  
That shall ever live in memory.

In meanwhile, take this little thing,  
But as small as it is, De Vere,  
Vaunt us that never man before  
Now in England knew Pindar's string

*Non careo patria, Me caret Illa magis.*