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SUMMARY: Dedicatory epistle to Oxford in Thomas Watson's 1582 publication *The EKATOMPATHEIA or Passionate Century of Love*. The work was registered in the Stationers' Register on 31 March 1582, shortly after Oxford had been seriously injured in a fray with Thomas Knyvet, the uncle of his former mistress Anne Vavasour, an event perhaps alluded to in Watson's epistle ('reconciliation of all foes'). Watson's Latin poem in the prefatory material also mentions Oxford. The Latin poem and an English translation are reprinted below from *The Hekatompathia or Passionate Century of Love (1582 by Thomas Watson; A Facsimile Reproduction* with an introduction by S.K. Heninger, Jr. (Gainesville, Florida: Scholars' Facsimiles & Reprints, 1964). The prefatory material also includes a commendatory epistle by Oxford's servant John Lyly, who describes himself as Watson's 'good friend', as well as verses by George Buck, Thomas Acheley, C. Downhale, Matthew Roydon, and George Peele. As these are Watson's friends, and Watson says that Oxford viewed his work in manuscript, it is not unreasonable to assume that these men were known to Oxford as well, and perhaps part of his literary circle. Heninger mentions that Watson, 'though he aligns himself unmistakably with Oxford', nonetheless hopes that Sidney and Dyer 'will look favorably upon his work', and that this is complicated by the fact that Oxford and Sidney had quarrelled in the summer of 1578. One might also draw the same conclusion with respect to Watson's expressed hope that his book might come into the Queen's hands, since Oxford had allegedly been in disfavour with her ever since Anne Vavasour had borne his illegitimate son in March 1581. In fact, it is usually alleged that Oxford had been banished from the court since that time. However Watson's verses cast some doubt on that proposition ('When you accompany de Vere as an attendant at the royal court, always be mindful of your duty'). These lines seem to indicate that Oxford was permitted to attend court in 1582.

To the right honourable my very good Lord, Edward de Vere, Earl of Oxenford, Viscount Bulbeck, Lord of Escalles and Badlesmere, and Lord High Chamberlain of England, all  
happiness

Alexander the Great, passing on a time by the workshop of Apelles, curiously surveyed some of his doings, whose long stay in viewing them brought all the people into so great a good-liking of the painter's workmanship that immediately after they bought up all his pictures, what price soever he set them at.

And the like good hap (right Honourable) befell unto me lately concerning these my love-passions which then chanced to Apelles for his portraits. For since the world hath understood (I know not how) that your Honour had willingly vouchsafed the acceptance of this work, and at convenient leisures favourably perused it, being as yet but in written hand, many have oftentimes and earnestly called upon me to put it to the press, that for their money they might but see what your Lordship with some liking had already perused. And therewithal some of them said (either to yield your Honour his due praise for fondness of judgment, or to please me, of whom long since they had conceived well)

that Alexander would like of no lines but such as were drawn by the cunning hand and with the curious pencil of Apelles. Which I set not down here to that end that I would confer my poems with Apelles' portraits for worthiness, albeit I fitly compare your Honour's person with Alexander's for excellency. But how bold soever I have been in turning out this my petty poor stock upon the open common of the wide world where every man may behold their nakedness, I humbly make request that if any storm fall unlooked for (by the fault of malicious high foreheads, or the poison of evil-edged tongues), these my little ones may shroud themselves under the broad-leafed platane of your Honour's patronage. And thus at this present I humbly take my leave, but first wishing the continual increase of your Lordship's honour, with abundance of true friends, reconciliation of all foes, and what good soever tendeth unto perfect happiness.

Your Lordship's humbly at command,  
Thomas Watson

Authoris ad Libellum suum Protrepticon.

Vade, precor, timidus patrium mittende per orbem,  
Nec nugas iacta parue libelle tuas.  
Si quis Aristarchus mordaci laeserit ore,  
Culparum causas ingeniosus habe.  
Si rogat, vnde venis, dic tu de paupere Vena,  
Non ambire tuas laurea sarta comas.  
Sique rogat, verbis quis adauxit metra solutis,  
Ex amimo [sic?] nomen dic cecidisse tibi.  
Forsitan intrabis nostrae sacraria Diuae,  
Quam colit in medijs multa Diana rosis,  
Quae Cybele caeli nostri; quae gloria regni  
Vnica; quaeque sui sola Sybilla soli;  
Quae vatium lima est; quae doctis doctior ipsa;  
Iuno opibus, Pallas moribus, ore Venus;  
Quae superat Reges, quantum querceta myricas;  
Quam recinat Famae buccina nulla satis,  
Illa tuos sancto sispectet lumine rithmos,  
O quantum gemino Sole beatus eris?  
Tu sed stratus humi, supplex amplectere plantas,  
Cuius erit vili pondere laesa manus.  
Hic tamen, hic moneo, ne speres tanta futura;  
Attica non auris murmura vana probat.  
Hic quoque seu subeas Sydnaei, siue Dyeri  
Scrinia, qua Musis area bina patet:  
Dic te Xeniolum non diuitis esse clientis,  
Confectum Dryadis arte, rudique manu;  
Et tamen exhibitum Vero, qui magna meretur

Virtute et vera nobilitate sua.  
 Inde serenato vultu te mitis vterque  
 Perleget, et naeuos condet vterque tuos.  
 Dum famulus Verum comitaris in aurea tecta,  
 Officij semper sit tibi cura tui.  
 Tum fortasse pijs Nymphis dabit ille legendum,  
 Cum de Cyprigeno verba iocosa serent.  
 Si qua tui nimium Domini miseretur amantis,  
 Sic crepita folijs, vt gemuisse putet.

Tetrica si qua tamen blandos damnauerit ignes,  
 Dic tu, mentito me tepuisse foco;  
 Tumque refer talos, et fixum calce sigillum,  
 Qua Venerem temnis, filiolumque suum.  
 Taliter efficies, vt amet te candida turba,  
 Forsan & Autoris palma future tui.  
 Viue libelle, precor, Domino faelicior ipso,  
 Quem sine demerito sors inopina premit:  
 Denique (si visum fuerit) dic montis in alto  
 Pierij vacuum tempora dura pati.

Exhortation of the author to his little book

Go, I pray timidly, little book, ready to be sent throughout my native land, but do not vaunt your trifles. If some Aristarchus would wound you with his gnashing teeth, you not unworthy have grounds for claiming unfairness. If he asks whence you come, say from a poor vein, not to encircle your brow with a laurel wreath. And if he asks who put together the loose words of your lines, say that the name has slipped from your mind.

Perhaps you will come into the sacred precincts of our Goddess, whom great Diana cherishes in the midst of roses, who is the Cybele of our world, the singular glory of the kingdom, the sole Sibyl of her land; who is the whetstone of poets, more scholarly herself than the scholars. She is a Juno in opulence, a Pallas in manners, and a Venus in countenance. She excels kings by as much as the oak excels the tamarisk. No trumpet of Fame proclaims her sufficiently. If she looks upon your verses with her holy light, oh how greatly will you be blessed by this second sun? But you, prostrate on the ground, a suppliant, embrace the feet of her whose hand will be offended by a paltry burden. Here, however, I warn you, lest you expect too much: her ear does not approve meaningless Attic mumblings.

Here also you might find your way to the desks of Sidney or of Dyer, where twin bowers open to the Muses. Then say that you, a little stranger, belong to a poor client, composed with the art of a Dryad and by an inexperienced hand, though shown to de Vere, who

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merits great praise by his virtue and his true nobility. Thereupon each will peruse you favorably with a serene countenance, and each will overlook your blemishes.

When you accompany de Vere as an attendant at the royal court, always be mindful of your duty. Then perhaps he will give you to be read by gentle nymphs when they spin playful tales about the Cyprian-born goddess. If ever she feels unusual compassion for your loving master, then rustle your leaves, so that she might think you have sighed. If, however, she sternly condemns your too-genteel flames, then say, "I have taken my heat from a make-believe fireplace." And you might as well pick up your dice and the mark indicated by a stone, because you slight Venus and her little son. In such a way you will achieve the love of that glittering throng, and perhaps there will be some recognition for your author.

Prosper, I pray, little book, more happily than your master, whom unexpected fate weighs down through no fault of his. Finally (if it seems opportune) say that the open reaches atop Mount Pieria suffer hard times.