

SUMMARY: The document below is the program of studies for the 12-year-old Oxford which was likely drawn up by one of Oxford's tutors in 1562 when Oxford first came to live at Cecil House as the Queen's ward. The body of the document is not in Cecil's handwriting, indicating that the program of studies was not designed by Cecil personally. However there are additions in Cecil's hand (shown in italics in the transcript below), indicating that Cecil exercised close supervision over Oxford's studies.

One of the most noteworthy aspects of the document is that Oxford spent four hours a day in the study of languages, and at the age of twelve, when he first arrived at Cecil House, was sufficiently fluent in Latin and French to be able to read the daily epistles and gospels in both languages, a fact which indicates that he had had private tutors from an early age. Oxford's proficiency in written French is also attested to in a letter he wrote in French to Cecil on 19 August 1563 (see BL MS Lansdowne 6/25, f. 79).

It appears from the program of studies that Richard Frith of the Blackfriars was Oxford's dancing instructor, but unfortunately Oxford's tutors in other subjects are not named. However it is known from a letter written by the scholar and antiquary Laurence Nowell that he was Oxford's tutor in 1563, and Nowell may have been Oxford's tutor at Cecil House from the outset since cosmography, a subject in which Nowell had a keen interest, is included in the program of studies below. For Nowell's letter, see BL Lansdowne 6/54, f. 135.

Another of Oxford's known tutors was the scholar Sir Thomas Smith (1513-1577). Strype notes that Oxford and Edward Manners (1549-1587), 3<sup>rd</sup> Earl of Rutland, were in Sir William Cecil's household in 1563 as royal wards, and mentions a letter written by Cecil in that year asking Smith, who was then ambassador in France, to engage a French-speaking attendant and a riding instructor for the two young earls. This letter has unfortunately since been lost, but the detail provided by Strype makes it clear that he saw it. He says that in the letter Cecil told Smith that Oxford had 'learned to understand French very well'. Other evidence establishes that Oxford was Smith's 'scholar' at some time prior to 1562, when Smith left for France.

It is particularly noteworthy that Strype, who was born only 40 years after Oxford's death, states that Oxford 'afterwards proved of excellent abilities and learning'. Part of the credit for that must of necessity be given to his tutor, Sir Thomas Smith, who Strype says was 'the best scholar' of the University in a wide field of subjects, and 'one of the three there that were the great masters of the English tongue'.

See Strype, John, *The Life of the Learned Sir Thomas Smith* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1820), pp. 18-20:

*Whilst Smith lived in the college, he spent not his time in sloth and ease, nor indulged himself to a lazy unprofitable life, but made himself useful and serviceable to the University in many respects. One was in breeding up young men in literature and good manners, being his pupils, many of whom were of the best rank and quality. He was tutor*

*to Edward, Earl of Oxford, a nobleman who afterwards proved of excellent abilities and learning, but too much addicted to prodigality. Sir William Cecil, Master of the Wards and Liveries, took this young nobleman, being a ward, under his peculiar care, and in the family with him was also another Earl, namely of Rutland, being also a ward. And when in the year 1563 Dr. Smith (then a knight) was the Queen's ambassador in France, the said Cecil wrote him how the former Earl, whom he styled his scholar, had learned to understand French very well, and that he was desirous to have an honest qualified Frenchman to attend upon him and the other Earl, for the exercise and speech of the tongue. He directed Smith that he should be one honest in religion, civil in manners, learned in some science, and not unpersonable. And if he were worthy fifty or sixty crowns by year, he would be ruled by him, the said Smith. And withal he prayed him to provide some good rider for these noble wards (which riders in those days commonly were Italians) and he would give him twenty pounds by year if Smith should so judge him worthy. And Sir Thomas was glad to be thus employed, to contribute to the generous education of all noble youth, for the good of the commonwealth, as well as of the Earl that once had been his pupil.*

Oxford's scholarly accomplishments were noted in 1578 by Gabriel Harvey in his *Gratulationes Valdinenses* (see STC 12901):

*. . . long since did Phoebus Apollo cultivate your mind with the arts. Your British numbers have been widely sung, while your Epistle testifies how much you excel in letters, being more courtly than Castiglione himself, more polished. I have seen your many Latin things, and more English are extant; of French and Italian muses, the manners of many peoples, their arts and laws you have drunk deeply. Not in vain was Sturmius himself known to you, nor so many Frenchmen and polished Italians, nor Germans.*

Harvey's phrase 'your epistle . . . more courtly than Castiglione himself, more polished' refers to Oxford's Latin epistle in praise of Bartholomew Clerke's *Balthasaris Castilionis Comitum De Curiali siue Aulico*, published in early 1572, a translation into Latin of Baldassare Castiglione's *Il Cortegiano*, dedicated by Clerke to Queen Elizabeth (see STC 4782), while Harvey's mention of 'Sturmius' refers to Oxford's visit to the German scholar Johannes Sturm (1507-1589) in Strasbourg in April 1575 (see TNA SP 70/134, ff. 186-7, and CP 8/24). A letter dated 8 September 1576 from William Lewin (d.1598) to Sturmius indicates that Oxford considered the German scholar a 'friend':

*I perceive that you inquire respecting the Earl of Oxford, whether he also did not recommend your case to Paulet. But you must know that I diligently interested myself with the Earl, who replied that he would not only recommend his friend Sturmius to Paulet, but would also request the Earl of Leicester to recommend him in every possible way. He added also that, unless you are relieved from France, he will take care that assistance shall be obtained for you in England; lastly, that he had a most high opinion of you, and had made most honourable mention of you . . . .*

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See Robinson, Hastings, *The Zurich Letters, A.D. 1558-1602*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ser., (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1845), pp. 281-4, available online.

On 4 December 1577, in a letter to Lord Burghley, Sturmius wrote in Latin (English translation supplied from Calendar of State Papers):

*As I write this I think of the Earl of Oxford, for I believe his lady speaks Latin also.*

See <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/foreign/vol12/pp342-356>.

It seems almost certain from this comment that during Oxford's visit to Sturmius in April 1575 Sturmius and Oxford conversed in Latin, since Sturmius was apparently not fluent in English.

### An Order for my Lord's Exercises

#### Morning

First, to rise in such time as that he may be ready to his exercises by seven of the clock.

From seven until half hour after, dancing.

From that time until eight, breakfast.

From eight unto nine, French.

From thence to ten, Latin.

After ten, one half hour in writing & drawing.

Then common prayers, and so to dinner.

Or, if Frith cannot come by seven, then

From seven unto eight, French.

From eight, one half hour at breakfast.

From thence to half hour after nine, Latin.

From thence to ten, exercise of his pen.

From that time to common prayers, dancing.

Afternoon

Afternoon exercises

From one until two, cosmography.

From two until three, Latin.

From three until four, French.

From that time one half hour, exercise with his pen.

Then common prayer, & so to supper.

Holidays

On the holidays

To read before dinner <del>the epistle of the day in French,</del> }	
& after dinner <del>the Gospel in Latin, or else to read both</del> }	<i>and to understand by some</i>
th' epistle & Gospel in thone tongue before dinner, & }	<i>commentary any hard place</i>
in thother tongue after dinner }	
All the rest of the day to be spent in riding, shooting, }	
dancing, walking, & other honourable exercises, }	
saving the times of prayer. }	

*morning:*

*to be ready at 7*

*French till 8*

*breakfast and Latin to 10*

*to be ready at 7*

*French and breakfast from 8*

*to then ~~breakfast and dance to nine~~*

*Latin to nine*

*dancing and walking to 10*

*writing ~~and~~ drawing and prayers till 11*

*afternoon:*

*cosmography from 1 to two*

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*French to three*

*Latin to 4*

*writing, walking till ~~half~~ prayers*