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Excerpt

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## DE HISTORIA AVIUM.

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[More information](#)*Epistola Nuncupatoria*

[p. 3] Illuſtriffimo VValliaë principi, Eduuardo filio hæredi, fereniffimi & potentiffimi Henrici VIII. regis Angliæ, Franciaë, & Hiberniaë, Guilielmus Turnerus S. P. D.

PRUDENS admodum, & ſi quid ego intelligo (illuſtriffime princeps) neceſſaria imprimis regij prophetæ fuit admonitio, qua reges, principes & iudices terræ, ut intelligerent, & eruditionem confequerentur, admonuit. Nam ut fummus ille rerū architectus Deus optimus maximuſq; caput ſuper omnes reliquas corporis partes in homine, qui perfectiffimè in fe

[p. 4] Reipublicæ ſimulachrum gerit, collocauit, & omnes quinque ſenſus ſimul in eo reſpuit, ut pro reliquis omnibus mēbris (quibus ſolus tactus eſt conceſſus) uideret, audiret, guſtaret & odoret, & eorum ſaluti conſuleret : ita principem Reipublicę, corpori ex multis membris conflato, ueluti caput præfecit, ut prudentia, eruditione, & ſenſibus ſuis non tam exterioribus, quã interioribus, totius Reipublicæ commodis & ſaluti proſpiceret. In pedibus uiſum, in tibijs auditum, in manibus olfactum, in brachijs odoratum nemo requirit: ſed hæc omnia in capite requiruntur.

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### *Epistle Dedicatory*

To the most illustrious Prince of Wales, Edward, son and heir of the most serene and mighty Henry VIII, King of England, France and Ireland, William Turner wishes long life and health.

**E**XCEEDING wise, and if I understand aright, necessary above all things, most illustrious Prince, was the warning of the royal prophet, in which he admonished kings, princes, and judges of the earth that they should have understanding and seek learning. For, as that architect supreme of the universe, God most good and great, placed the head above all the remaining parts of the body in man, who in himself shews forth the image of a most perfect State, and stored up in it all the five senses at once, that it should see, hear, taste, and smell for all the remaining members (to which touch alone has been allowed), and should consult for their well-being; so he hath set the Prince, as it were a head, over the State, a body welded together of many members, that he should provide for the advantage and well-being of the whole State by his wisdom, learning and senses, not so much external as internal. No one demands sight in the feet, hearing in the legs, smell<sup>1</sup> in the hands, or smell in the arms; but all these things are necessary in the head.

<sup>1</sup> This should probably be "taste" (gustum).

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Quum igitur tot sensus in capite uni tantū corpori p̄fecto requirantur : quot sensus, quantum sapientiæ & eruditionis ab eo capite exi-  
 [p. 5] guntur, cui plus quàm trecentorum milium corporum p̄fectura committitur? Quòd si quis forsan respondeat, non in principe, sed in ijs folijs, qui illi à consilijs sunt, eruditionem & prudentiam requiri : hunc ego dignum censerē, qui pro tali responso, omnibus sensibus, excepto tactu, orbatus in media fylua uepribus & spinis densa, caueis & fossis formidabili, quatuor ducibus comitatus statueretur, nobis dicturus, nū proprijs malit uti sensibus an alienis? & num tutius illi sit, ducum fuorum incertorum sensibus, an proprijs duci? & qua ratione cæcus & surdus odoratu & gustu destitutus ipse, cęcine an uidētes sui sint duces, dignoscere possit?

In consiliarijs summam prudentiam & eru-  
 [p. 6] ditionem non uulgarem requiri, non diffiteor : uerū non in ijs folijs, nam si illi, qui principi sunt à consilijs, ad tempus bene consulant, & postea in ipsius perniciem malè suadeant, ut Abfaloni Achitofelem fecisse legimus : quomodo perniciosum illorum consiliū ipse subodorabitur & depræhendet, nisi eruditione & prudentia consiliarios suos aut superet, aut saltem æquet? Quare nō in consiliarijs tantum, sed in principe ipso eruditio & sapiētia requiruntur. Non defunt, qui fati esse principi existimant, quo cæteris mortalibus præstet, si regio uestitu, diuitijs, copijs, scitè pulfando testudinem, & tela dextrè uibrando, subditis suis p̄luceat : uerū fortif-  
 [p. 7] simi quiq; & sapientissimi reges longè diuersum

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Inasmuch therefore as so many senses are requisite in the head, which is set over one body alone, how many senses and what a wealth of wisdom and learning are demanded from that head, to whom more than three hundred thousand bodies are given in charge? But if any should chance to answer that learning and wisdom are needed not in the Prince, but only in those who are his councillors, I should consider it fitting that he for such a reply should be set, accompanied by four guides, in the midst of a wood tangled with briars and thorns, and dangerous with its pits and ditches, deprived of all his senses, except that of touch, and should tell us whether he preferred to use his own senses or those of others: or whether it would be safer for him to be led by the senses of his doubting guides or by his own; and in what way he, being blind and deaf, and destitute of smell and taste, could determine whether his guides were blind or able to see.

I fail not to confess that the highest wisdom, and learning of no common sort, are requisite in councillors, but not in them alone; for if they who are the advisers of the Prince, give good counsel for the time, and afterwards prompt him ill to his destruction, as we read that Achitofel did in the case of Absalom, how shall he smell out and detect their fatal advice, unless he either excels or at least equals his councillors in learning and wisdom? Wherefore not only in councillors but in the Prince himself are learning and wisdom requisite. There are not wanting those who think it enough for a Prince, as matters in which he should surpass other mortals, if he outshines his subjects in royal garb, in riches, in resources, in cunningly striking the lyre, and in skilfully throwing the spear; but all the bravest and wisest kings have

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*Epistola Nuncupatoria*

fenferunt. Nã Mithridates rex Põti & Bithy-  
nię, se regnorum fuorum caput esse intelligēs, et  
tot corporibus, quot pręerat, unicã uernaculã  
suam linguã minimè sufficere, uiginti duas  
linguas gētium, quas sub ditione sua habuit, ita  
perfectè didicit & percalluit, ut uiginti illarum  
gentium uiris sine interprete promptè responde-  
rit, & sua cuique lingua non fecus atque gentilis  
fuiisset, locutus fuerit. Idē rerum abditas natu-  
ras ita peruestigauit, & in re medica ita foeliciter  
fuit uersatus, ut aduersus lethalia uenena anti-  
dotum, quod hodie etiamnum ab eo nomen  
fortitum, Mithridatium appellatur, suo Marte  
inuenerit. Alexander ille Macedonum rex, tam  
[p. 8] naturæ quàm fortunæ dotibus iure suspici-  
endus, tanto bonarum artium & philosophiæ  
potissimum studio flagrauit, ut etiã in zelotypiam  
quandam literariam inciderit. Nam is cùm  
omnem propè Asiam armis & exercitu teneret,  
ubi primū Aristotelem libros suos de auscultatione  
physica inuulgasse acceperat, in tantis  
negocijs cum Aristotele, missa statim epistola  
de editis libris, his uerbis exoptulabat: Quòd  
disciplinas ἀκροαματικὰς edidisti, non rectè fe-  
cisti. nam qua alia re cæteris præstare poterimus,  
si ea, quæ abs te accepimus, omnium prorsus  
fuerint communia? Quippe ego doctrina  
anteire malim, quàm copijs atq; opulentijs. Hæc  
Alexander.

Diuino approbatus oraculo rex ille Daud,

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thought quite differently. For Mithridates, king of Pontus and Bithynia, understanding that he was the head of his domains, and that his native tongue alone was by no means sufficient for the numerous bodies, over which he reigned, learned so perfectly and understood so thoroughly the twenty-two tongues<sup>1</sup> of the nations, which he had under his sway, that he gave immediate answers to twenty men of those nations without an interpreter, and spoke to each in his own tongue just as if it had been native to him. He also so thoroughly traced out the hidden natures of things, and occupied himself to such good purpose in the science of medicine, that he discovered by his own exertions an antidote to deadly poisons, which even to-day is called Mithridatium, a name derived from him. The great Alexander, king of the Macedonians, rightly renowned as much for the gifts of nature as for those of fortune, burned with so great a zeal for the noble arts, and philosophy in particular, that he even descended to a sort of literary jealousy. For though he was holding almost all Asia by force of arms and his troops, when first he heard that Aristotle had made public his books ‘De Auscultatione Physica,’ in the midst of such great concerns he expostulated with Aristotle in the following words, a letter having been at once sent off concerning the publication of the books: “In that you have published your teachings called *ἀκροαματικά* you have not done rightly; for in what other thing shall I be able to excel the rest, if those things, which I have heard from you, become henceforth the common property of all? For I should prefer to stand first in learning rather than in resources and wealth.” Thus said Alexander.

The great king David, approved by the voice of

<sup>1</sup> ‘Duas’ is perhaps a misprint for ‘duarum.’

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[p. 9] qui & propheta fuit diuino numine adflatus, atq; ideo qd regi maximè necessariũ foret, cognoscens, ante omnia literas, nempe sacras expetiuit, ut sibi tẽperare non potuerit, quin diceret, Benedictus es domine, doce me iustificationes tuas, in uia mandatorũ tuorũ delectatus sum, sicut in omnibus diuitijs : in mandatis tuis exercebor, & considerabo uias tuas. Reuela oculos meos, & considerabo mirabilia de lege tua. Bonitatẽ & disciplinã & scientiam doce me : ego autem in toto corde meo scrutabor mandata tua. Nisi quòd lex tua meditatio mea est, tunc fortè perirem in humilitate mea. Quàm dulcia faucibus meis eloquia tua, super mel ori meo. Bonum mihi lex oris tui super milia auri & argenti.

[p. 10] Lucerna pedibus meis uerbum tuum, & lumen femitis meis. Declaratio sermonum tuorum illuminat, & intellectum dat paruulis. Hactenus rex Dauid, & pace & bello omnium regum illustrissimus.

Rex Solomon huius filius, omniũ, quos unquã terra genuit, sapientiss. cuius unius auctoritati plus tribuendum est, quàm sexcentis adulatoribus diuersum suadẽtibus, cùm totius orbis conditor & omnium bonorum largitor Deus pater, illi, quod sibi optimum, & ex usu suo maximè fore iudicaret, ultro offerret, & poscenti mox se daturũ promitteret, ad hunc modum, ut diuinæ literæ testantur, respondit. Nunc domine Deus, tu me regnare fecisti seruum tuum pro

[p. 11] Dauide patre meo, ego autem sum puer paruulus, & ignorans ingressũ, & introitũ meũ : & seruus tuus in medio est populi, quem elegisti,



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God, who was moreover a prophet filled with divine inspiration, and therefore well aware of what was especially necessary for a king, sought before all things learning, and that of course divine, so that he was unable to restrain himself from saying “Blessed art thou, O Lord, teach me thy righteousness, I have delighted in the way of thy commandments, as in all riches: in thy statutes will I exercise myself, and I will consider thy ways. Open thou mine eyes, and I will consider the wonderful things of thy law. Teach me goodness and instruction and learning; but with my whole heart will I examine thy commandments. Unless thy law had been my meditation, then should I perchance have perished in my low estate. How sweet are thy sayings to my mouth, better than honey to my lips. The law of thy mouth is a good to me beyond thousands of gold and silver. Thy word is a lantern unto my feet, and a light unto my paths. The telling of thy discourses giveth light and understanding to babes.” Thus far king David, the most illustrious of all kings both in peace and war.

King Solomon, his son, the wisest of all that earth ever bore, to whose single authority more weight is to be given than to six hundred flatterers persuading to a different course, when God the Father, maker of all the world and giver of all good things, of his own accord offered to him what he should judge to be best for himself and for his greatest advantage, and promised that he would grant it at once on his request, replied in this manner, as the Scriptures testify. “Now, O Lord God, thou hast made me, thy servant, to reign in the room of David my father, but I am a little child, and know not my coming in and entering; and thy servant is in the midst of the people whom thou hast chosen, an in-

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populi infiniti, qui numerari & supputari non potest præ multitudine. Dabis ergò feruo tuo cor docile, ut populum tuum iudicare possit, & discernere inter bonum & malum: quis enim potest iudicare populum istum, populum tuum hunc multum? Huc usq; Solomon, qui in philosophia tam diuina quàm humana ita non multis pòst annis profecit, ut de stirpibus à cedro usq; ad hissopum disputauerit, & de bestijs, uolucris, reptilibus, & piscibus differuerit.

Quare, prudentissimi quique principes, & [p. 12] fortissimi, nō fati habebant, subditos suos diuitijs, honoribus, uestitu, incesu, & bellica gloria excellere, nisi literis, linguis, philosophia tam diuina quàm humana insuper multum superarent, & à tergo relinquerēt. Quod pater tuus omnium regum, qui hodie uiuunt, eruditissimus, fati ut regem tantum decet, intelligens, & cui Reipub. gubernaculum committitur, quàm necessaria literæ & philosophia sint, prudenter secum perpendens, liberos suos semper eruditissimis quibusque præceptoribus commisit. Duci enim Richmundiæ, piæ memoriæ, fratri tuo Georgium Folberium præceptorē olim meum, uirum insigniter doctum, et mirum rectè instituendæ iuuentutis artificem, & tibi nūc uirum longè [p. 13] doctissimum (uti audio) præfecit.

Qua de causa, illustrissime & optime princeps, sapiētissimorum & fortissimorum regum exempla secutus, atq; potentissimi & eruditissimi patris tui consilio obtemperans, qui te ad meliores imbibendas literas, nunquam non inuitat, incitat & hortatur, dum ætas tua adhuc tenera