

= Brian Twyne =

Brian Twyne (c . 25 July 1581 ? 4 July 1644) was an antiquarian and an academic at the University of Oxford . After being educated at Corpus Christi College , Oxford , and becoming a Fellow of the college in 1606 , he published his one main work , a history of the university , in 1608 . This was designed to prove that Oxford was older than Cambridge University , and has been described by a modern writer as a " remarkable achievement for a young scholar of twenty @-@ eight . " His main accomplishment was to play a leading role in the revision of the university statutes under William Laud (Chancellor of the University of Oxford and Archbishop of Canterbury) . He was rewarded by appointment in 1634 to the new position of Keeper of the Archives , in which role he obtained a new royal charter for Oxford to confirm its rights and privileges , and helped the university in its disputes with the city authorities .

= = Education and early career = =

Brian Twyne was born on or near 25 July 1581 in Southwark , Surrey (now part of London) . His father was the translator and doctor Thomas Twyne , and his grandfather was the schoolmaster and antiquarian John Twyne . He was educated at Corpus Christi College , Oxford (his father 's college) , probably after attending the grammar school in Lewes , Sussex , where his father then lived . He matriculated on about 6 February 1596 , taking a place normally kept for a scholar from the county borough of Southampton as there was no vacancy for one from the county of Surrey (under the system at Corpus Christi for admitting students) . Taking another county 's vacancy was not unusual , however . He obtained his Bachelor of Arts degree on 23 July 1599 . Despite the assistance of his father 's patron Thomas Sackville , 1st Earl of Dorset (Lord High Treasurer and Chancellor of the University) , he failed to be elected to a fellowship at Merton College , Oxford . He studied with the mathematician Thomas Allen , encountering modern developments in astronomy and navigation , and also learned French , Italian and Hebrew . He became a Fellow of Corpus Christi in 1606 , and was ordained in the following year ; although he later became vicar of Rye , Sussex , he stayed in Oxford and the parish duties were undertaken by curates .

= = First history of the University = =

Twyne published one main work : *Antiquitatis academiae Oxoniensis apologia* , in 1608 . This has been described by Strickland Gibson (Keeper of the Archives at Oxford 1927 ? 1945) as being " of a controversial character , and not of a kind to establish his reputation as a sound historian . " It was the first history of the University of Oxford to appear in print , and addressed a dispute between Oxford and Cambridge Universities as to which was the older . Oxford 's contention was that it had originally been established at Cricklade (or " Greeklade ") by Trojans and some Greek philosophers under the leadership of Brutus after the Trojan War . Cambridge claimed to have been founded by a King Cantaber of Spain in the pre @-@ Christian era , and said that in contrast Oxford had only been founded by Alfred the Great in the 9th century . In 1603 , however , the historian William Camden published a new edition of the life of Alfred by the 9th @-@ century Welsh monk Asser . In this edition , Asser was recorded as stating that Alfred had visited Oxford in 886 to settle disputes between students ? i.e. , the university existed before his visit . This strengthened Oxford 's claim to be older than Cambridge .

In the light of Camden 's publication , Twyne began collecting material to re @-@ establish Oxford as the senior university . He was given permission by the university to borrow documents for this purpose in May 1606 . The work (running to 456 pages in three volumes) relies upon archive documents held by the university , the colleges and the city of Oxford , as well as material from three Oxfordshire abbeys and the works of Homer , Aristotle , Cicero , and other classical authors . He submitted his work for inspection by a university committee in early 1608 . It was approved , with one of the four committee members praising the book 's style and learning . Gibson described it as " a remarkable achievement for a young scholar of twenty @-@ eight . " Nevertheless , it appears

from Twyne 's records that he had considerable doubts as to the veracity of the material in Camden 's edition . Twyne had been unable to find the reference to Alfred 's visit to Oxford in any known manuscript of Asser 's work , and challenged Camden about it . Camden said that it came from a copy sent to him by Sir Henry Savile , Warden of Merton College , Oxford . It is now generally thought that Savile was responsible for the passage that made the false claim , and that Camden knew this . One more recent history of the university says that " even in his own time Twyne 's opinions on this subject [i.e. when Oxford was founded] were received with amused tolerance by the better informed of English antiquaries . "

Twyne dedicated the work to Robert Sackville , 2nd Earl of Dorset : the 1st Earl had died earlier in 1608 . It was published by the university printer , Joseph Barnes , who would have required guarantees for the costs : Gibson 's view was that these were probably provided by Thomas Allen , with the Earl paying " the customary honorarium " as dedicatee .

= = Work at Oxford = =

Twyne studied manuscripts at the Bodleian Library , founded by Thomas Bodley in 1602 . Thomas Twyne , his father , gave books to the library . When Bodley died in 1613 , Twyne was one of the contributors to a volume of verse commemorating him : he wrote eight poems in Latin and one in Greek , and recalled a comment by King James I that Bodley ought to be called " Sir Thomas Godley " . However , Twyne was displeased with the work of Thomas James , the first Bodley 's Librarian , complaining to the library authorities in November 1613 about missing manuscripts , inaccurate records and delays in accessing new acquisitions , and about the librarian 's poor attendance and his habit of scattering his papers around the desks . James was admonished for his conduct .

Thomas Anyan became President of Corpus Christi in 1614 , and he appointed Twyne as Greek lecturer . By 1623 , Twyne had resigned his fellowship , apparently (according to the 17th @-@ century Oxford historian Antony Wood) to avoid having to choose which side to support in a dispute between the college president and the fellows . He did not secure any further academic advancement : he hoped to be appointed Camden Professor of Ancient History on the death or resignation of Degory Wheare (the first professor) . According to Twyne , Camden promised this to him in a conversation in 1623 , and a patent sealed by Camden in March of that year to this effect was read out to the university 's governing body in January 1624 . Camden , however , wrote to Wheare shortly after the patent was signed and said that he had been tricked by some " foul play " and did not intend to appoint Twyne . In the end , Twyne died three years before Wheare . In 1624 , a House of Commons committee criticised Anyan for , amongst other things , excessive lenience to Twyne for his drunkenness .

= = Statutes and archives = =

The university 's statutes at this time were written in the registers of the chancellor and proctors . The chancellor 's register dated from 1315 , and the contents had been confusingly rearranged by rebinding . The two proctors ' registers , which dated from 1407 and 1477 , were in better arrangement , but repealed statutes remained next to ones that were current . Twyne was first appointed to a 28 @-@ strong committee for revising the statutes in 1614 , although nothing came of their work . He led efforts to improve the archives of Corpus Christi in 1627 and 1628 , producing 30 volumes of manuscript transcriptions of title deeds . In 1630 , Twyne was part of a new delegacy appointed by the new Chancellor of the University William Laud (who was also Archbishop of Canterbury) to revise the statutes . The other members were Robert Pink (Warden of New College) , Thomas James (Bodley 's Librarian , later replaced on the committee by Peter Turner) , and Richard Zouch (Regius Professor of Civil Law) . By 1631 , an inventory of the university 's archives had been made . Twyne , assisted by Zouch , carried out the bulk of the work in drafting new statutes , and it was reported to the university 's governing body on 1 September 1633 that work was complete . The Vice @-@ Chancellor asked Turner to make a final revision , and requested

that Twyne write a historical account of the previous attempts to reform the statutes as a preface . To Twyne 's intense displeasure , the preface that he hurriedly wrote was shortened and rewritten extensively by Turner .

His reward , however , was to be the university 's first Keeper of the Archives , appointed on 11 August 1634 . The new statute governing the position noted the losses that Oxford had suffered because of the careless keeping of its archives , and the need for an experienced person to take charge of them and to advise the university 's officers in defending its interests . He was to be paid not less than £ 40 annually , with a levy of one shilling from each graduate and undergraduate . Thereafter , he sought to obtain royal confirmation of Oxford 's rights and privileges , to keep the city of Oxford subordinate to the university , and to match the position of Cambridge . A new royal charter was obtained in 1636 to confirm the revised statutes . Under Twyne and his successor as Keeper (Gerard Langbaine) , the archives were moved into one of the rooms in the Tower of the Five Orders in the Bodleian Library ; three of the wooden presses that were built at that time to store them are still in use .

Twyne advised the university authorities in their disputes with the city fathers in relation to courts , licensing , markets and other matters . He was " spurred on " , according to one historian of the university , by " violent antipathy towards townsmen " ; Twyne wrote that they were " too near engrafted into the university to be a body of themselves " . As a result , his actions in rejecting even minor claims by the local inhabitants sometimes led to worthless litigation .

= = Personal life = =

Knowledge of Twyne 's private life is derived from his frugal habit of reusing blank sides of letters that he received for making notes upon : in this way , some letters to and from his father between 1596 and 1613 have survived . As a student , Twyne wrote assuring his father that he was working hard , and asking for " money , clothes , books and cheese " . He complained that his allowance was not enough to employ someone to carry out tasks such as making the fire , but his father was unsympathetic . He also is shown to be a keen lute player . Later , his father raised the issue of marriage , and Twyne was anxious to put forward reasons why his father 's suggestion came at the wrong time , because of (for example) his lack of an income . His father 's death in 1613 not only freed him from parental pressure to marry , but also (as the only surviving son) led to his inheriting his father 's estate ; he remained single for the rest of his life .

= = Death and legacy = =

Twyne died on 4 July 1644 , having made a will earlier that day in which he left his books and manuscripts to his college and the university . He made some pecuniary bequests to friends and those who had assisted him in his final illness . His manuscript collections amounted to 24 main volumes (about 12 @, @ 000 pages) with other supplementary material . He was buried in the chapel of Corpus Christi . A hard @-@ working researcher and collector of manuscripts , he was highly regarded and consulted by the legal scholar John Selden , the historian William Camden and Archbishop James Ussher . A later Keeper of the Archives , Strickland Gibson , described him in 1940 as " one of the greatest of Oxford antiquaries " . Twyne 's collections , he said , were " one of his greatest achievements , and in themselves a monument . " They were used extensively by Antony Wood in his history of the university but (noted Gibson) without proper credit being given . He was , however , disliked intensely by the city authorities for his actions against them . As it happens , many of the town 's medieval records were lost in the early 17th century and are only known because Twyne had copied them into his collection .