

THE RENAISSANCE IN ENGLAND

Non-dramatic
PROSE AND VERSE
of the Sixteenth Century

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PREFACE

In this anthology we offer a generous sampling of texts to represent the non-dramatic literary activity of England in the sixteenth century. Major space has been given to the best writing of the period (with the exception of *The Faerie Queene*, for which adequate room could not be found), but we have also included various texts of more historical than literary importance to piece out the total picture and help to show the greater works in true perspective. Stanyhurst as well as Sidney casts light upon the critical controversies of the time; and Barclay and Googe aid the reader in assessing Spenser's achievement in *The Shepherd's Calendar*. For similar reasons we have printed from the original books a sizable quantity of prefatory material, which not only illuminates separate works but also, as a whole, tells much about conventions of authorship, publishing practices, the nature of the reading public, and other significant aspects of the literary scene. The ten headings under which the selections have been arranged, though somewhat arbitrary, do suggest the main lines along which sixteenth-century writers worked, and they will perhaps serve to guide the student confronted for the first time by the rich confusion of Renaissance literature.

We have taken uncommon care to insure reliable texts. With a few exceptions (duly noted in the introductions) we have based our readings upon a fresh examination of the earliest printed or manuscript sources. For each selection from a printed work the source is identified by the original titlepage and the corresponding entry-number in Pollard and Redgrave's *Short-Title Catalogue* (STC). Except for the selections from Spenser's poetry, which are reproduced in the original spelling as specimens of consciously archaic Elizabethan English, we have tried to steer a middle course between complete archaism and thoroughgoing (often misleading) modernization. A student who uses completely modernized texts not only misses much of the flavor of the old authors but will be helpless to decipher their meaning when he sees an actual Elizabethan text or a facsimile of one. We have therefore, as a general rule (but without attempting complete consistency), kept forms that occur in a main or subordinate entry (but not as variant spellings) in *A New English Dictionary on Historical Principles*. For example, we have retained the Tudors' *hit* and *hability* (for *it* and *ability*) and often their casual treatment of the vowels in words like *when:whan*, *then:than*, *not:nat*, *hunger:honger*. Where the original editions give sanction we usually print *agen* for *again*, *bankero(u)t* for *bankrupt*, *battail* for *battle*, *capitain* for *captain*, *herault* for *herald*, *norice* for *nurse*, *plage* for *plague*, *sodain* (or *suddain*) for *sudden*, *wordle* for *world*, and so on. The punctuation has been modernized throughout. Obvious misprints in the originals (for example, *of* for *or*) have been silently emended; occasional less certain emendations are enclosed in brackets, which are also used for editorial notes and explanations. Sometimes (as explained in separate introductions) pointed brackets (<>) have been used to supply missing lines from other manuscripts or later editions.

The annotation of texts in which numerous words requiring explanation reappear again and again presents a special difficulty. To avoid repetition and to keep the editorial apparatus at a spatial minimum we have substituted two full glossaries for footnotes. The first glossary defines or identifies all the English words and phrases the meaning or orthography of which may pose difficulties for the student; the second supplies explanations of all proper nouns and translations of foreign words and phrases. With the assistance of the glossaries and the introductory notes the student will have all the information he needs for a ready understanding of the texts.

H. E. R.

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Part I THE HISTORICAL SETTING

MICHAEL DRAYTON

POLY-OLBION

When Michael Drayton chose the story of Brut to open his massive *Poly-Olbion* (see p. 423, below) he was following the precedent established by generations of Tudor historians and reworking a formula that had long proved its appeal to patriotic Englishmen. The twin legends of Brut, the mythological Trojan founder of Britain, and of King Arthur, his descendant who battled the Saxon invaders, had been contrived to fill in the dim beginnings of British history, and for obvious reasons they had been among the dearest fictions of the Tudors: they were stirring tales, and they provided a flattering if spurious historical impetus for British nationalism. Although they had long been accepted as true, by Drayton's time the facts were coming to light (as Selden's "Illustrations" to the first song make clear). We now know that Geoffrey of Monmouth, Bishop of St. Asaph (?1100–?1154), on some slender hints in Bede and Nennius and on a "most ancient book in the British tongue" allegedly given him by one Walter, Archdeacon of Oxford, fabricated the famous legends in his *Historia regum Britanniae*, a work so popular that it survives in more than two hundred manuscripts. Geoffrey's history was translated into Anglo-Norman by Geoffrey Gaimar (whose version is lost) and by Wace in his *Roman de Brut* (1155); then Wace's version was expanded into splendid Middle English by Layamon, a Worcestershire priest. His vigorous *Brut* (ca. 1205) more than doubles Wace's 15,000 lines and greatly develops the Arthurian materials, which thereafter were lovingly embellished in a wealth of metrical romances and prose chronicles. In the sixteenth

century such widely read historical writers as Grafton, Stow, and Holinshed (see pp. 20–21) dutifully repeated the well-worn fables as facts, and even the learned Leland professed belief. But by 1612, when the first part of *Poly-Olbion* appeared, the situation had changed. In spite of Drayton's throbbing patriotism and indefatigable energy, his recension of the Brut story could not, in the nature of things, be taken very seriously by a "critic age" that was learning to distinguish history from fable and was more interested in the growing menace of Stuart despotism than in the mythical exploits of Trojan warriors. Drayton's decision to open his *magnum opus*, and to begin British history, with such a legend indicates with sufficient clarity his conservative, not to say reactionary, aims and methods. As a historian he was an alien in the age that would produce Bacon's clinical dissection of Henry VII and Clarendon's realistic appraisal of contemporary events, and he perversely exulted in the fact (see his epistles on pp. 438–39, 441, below).

The part of Drayton's version here reprinted concerns the wanderings of Brutus (Brut), grandson of Ascanius and great-grandson of Aeneas, who, after many perils, landed at Totnes, founded Troynovant (New Troy, later London), and established a dynasty of mighty kings that included Bladud, Gorboduc, Ferrex and Porrex, Lud, Cymbeline, Vortigern, and Arthur. Our text is based upon *Poly-Olbion. Or A Chorographicall Description of Tracts, Rivers, Mountaines, Forests, and other Parts of this renowned Isle of Great Britaine . . . Digested in a Poem, 1612* (STC 7226).

FROM POLY-OLBION (1612)

THE FIRST SONG

THE ARGUMENT

The sprightly muse her wing displays
And the French islands first surveys,
Bears up with Neptune, and in glory
Transcends proud Cornwall's promontory;
There crowns Mount Michael, and discries
How all those riverets fall and rise;

Then takes in Tamer as she bounds
The Cornish and Devonian grounds.
And whilst the Devonshire nymphs relate
Their loves, their fortunes, and estate,
Dert undertaketh to revive
Our Brut, and sings his first arrive.
Then northward to the verge she bends,
And her first song at Axe she ends.

Of Albion's glorious ile the wonders whilst I write,
 The sundry, varying soils, the pleasures infinite,
 Where heat kills not the cold, nor cold expels the heat,
 The calms too mildly small, nor winds too roughly great,
 Nor night doth hinder day, nor day the night doth wrong,
 The summer not too short, the winter not too long—
 What help shall I invoke to aid my muse the while?

Thou Genius of the place, this most renowned ile,
 Which livedst long before the all-earth-drowning flood,
 Whilst yet the world did swarm with her gigantic brood, 10
 Go thou before me still thy circling shores about,
 And in this wand'ring maze help to conduct me out;
 Direct my course so right as with thy hand to show
 Which way thy forests range, which way thy rivers flow;
 Wise Genius, by thy help that so I may discry
 How thy fair mountains stand and how thy valleys lie
 From those clear, pearly cleaves which see the morning's pride
 And check the surly imps of Neptune when they chide
 Unto the big-swoll'n waves in the Iberian stream,
 Where Titan still unyokes his fiery-hoofed team, 20
 And oft his flaming locks in luscious nectar steeps
 When from Olympus' top he plungeth in the deeps;
 That from th' Armoric sands, on surging Neptune's leas,
 Through the Hibernic gulf (those rough, Vergivian seas)
 My verse with wings of skill may fly a lofty gait,
 As Amphitrite clips this iland fortunate,
 Till through the sleepy main to Thuly I have gone
 And seen the frozen iles, the cold Ducalidon,
 Amongst whose iron rocks grim Saturn yet remains,
 Bound in those gloomy caves with adamantine chains. 30

Ye sacred bards that to your harps' melodious strings
 Sung th' ancient heroes' deeds (the monuments of kings)
 And in your dreadful verse ingrav'd the prophecies,
 The aged world's descents and genealogies,
 If, as those Druids taught which kept the British rites
 And dwelt in darksome groves, there counsailing with sprites
 (But their opinions fail'd, by error led awry,
 As since clear truth hath shew'd to their posterity),
 When these our souls by death our bodies do forsake
 They instantly again do other bodies take, 40
 I could have wish'd your spirits redoubled in my breast
 To give my verse applause to time's eternal rest. . . .

[Among the rivers of Cornwall and Devon the Dert (Dart) thus declares her preeminence:]

"There's not the proudest flood
 That falls betwixt the Mount and Exmoor shall make good
 Her royalty with mine, with me nor can compare.
 I challenge any one to answer me that dare,
 That was, before them all, predestinate to meet
 My Britain-founding Brut when, with his puissant fleet,
 At Totnes first he touch'd, which shall renown my stream
 (Which now the envious world doth slander for a dream); 50
 Whose fatal flight from Greece, his fortunate arrive

In happy Albion here whilst strongly I revive,
 Dear Harburn, at thy hands this credit let me win,"
 Quoth she, "that as thou hast my faithful handmaid been,
 So now, my only brook, assist me with thy spring
 Whilst of the godlike Brut the story thus I sing.

"When long-renowned Troy lay spent in hostile fire
 And aged Priam's pomp did with her flames expire,
 Aeneas (taking thence Ascanius, his young son,
 And his most reverent sire, the grave Anchises, won 60
 From shoals of slaughtering Greeks) set out from Simois' shores
 And through the Tyrrhene Sea, by strength of toiling oars,
 Raught Italy at last, where King Latinus lent
 Safe harbor for his ships with wrackful tempests rent.
 When in the Latin court Lavinia young and fair
 (Her father's only child and kingdom's only heir)
 Upon the Trojan lord her liking strongly plac'd
 And languish'd in the fires that her fair breast imbrac'd;
 But Turnus at that time, the proud Rutulian king,
 A suitor to the maid, Aeneas malicing, 70
 By force of arms attempts his rival to extrude;
 But, by the Teucrian power courageously subdu'd,
 Bright Cytherea's son the Latin crown obtain'd,
 And dying, in his stead his son Ascanius reign'd.
 Next Silvius him succeeds, begetting Brut again.
 Who in his mother's womb whilst yet he did remain
 The oracles gave out that next-born Brut should be
 His parents' only death, which soon they liv'd to see.
 For in his painful birth his mother did depart,
 And ere his fifteenth year, in hunting of a hart, 80
 He with a luckless shaft his hapless father slew,
 For which out of his throne their king the Latins threw.

"Who, wand'ring in the world, to Greece at last doth get,
 Where whilst he liv'd unknown and oft with want beset,
 He of the race of Troy a remnant happ'd to find
 There by the Grecians held; which (having still in mind
 Their tedious ten years' war and famous heroes slain)
 In slavery with them still those Trojans did detain
 Which Pyrrhus thither brought (and did with hate pursue
 To wreak Achilles' death at Troy, whom Paris slew), 90
 There by Pandrasus kept in sad and servile awe.
 Who, when they knew young Brut and that brave shape they saw,
 They humbly him desire that he a mean would be
 From those imperious Greeks his countrymen to free.

"He, finding out a rare and sprightly youth to fit
 His humor every way for courage, power, and wit,
 Assaracus (who, though that by his sire he were
 A prince amongst the Greeks, yet held the Trojans dear,
 Descended of their stock upon the mother's side,
 For which he by the Greeks his birthright was deni'd), 100
 Impatient of his wrongs, with him brave Brut arose,
 And of the Trojan youth courageous captains chose,
 Rais'd earthquakes with their drums, the ruffling ensigns rear,
 And, gathering young and old that rightly Trojan were,
 Up to the mountains march through straits and forests strong,
 Where, taking in the towns pretended to belong

Unto that Grecian lord, some forces there they put,
 Within whose safer walls their wives and children shut;
 Into the fields they drew for liberty to stand.

"Which when Pandrasus heard he sent his strict command
 To levy all the power he presently could make;
 So to their strengths of war the Trojans them betake.

110

"But whilst the Grecian guides (not knowing how or where
 The Teucrians were entrench'd or what their forces were)
 In foul, disord' red troupes yet straggled as secure,
 This looseness to their spoil the Trojans did allure,
 Who fiercely them assail'd, where stanchless fury rap'd
 The Grecians in so fast that scarcely one escap'd;
 Yea, proud Pandrasus' flight himself could hardly free.

120

Who, when he saw his force thus frustrated to be
 And by his present loss his passed error found
 (As by a later war to cure a former wound),
 Doth reinforce his power to make a second fight.
 When they whose better wits had overmatch'd his might,
 Loth what they got to lose, as politiquely cast
 His armies to intrap in getting to them fast
 Antigonus as friend and Anaclet, his phere
 (Surpriz'd in the last fight), by gifts who hired were
 Into the Grecian camp th' insuing night to go,
 And fain they were stol'n forth to their allies to show
 How they might have the spoil of all the Trojan pride,
 And, gaining them belief, the credulous Grecians guide
 Into th' ambushment near that secretly was laid.

130

So to the Trojans' hands the Grecians were betray'd,
 Pandrasus' self surpriz'd, his crown who to redeem
 (Which scarcely worth their wrong the Trojan race esteem)
 Their slavery long sustain'd did willingly release,
 And, for a lasting league of amity and peace,
 Bright Innogen, his child, for wife to Brutus gave
 And furnish'd them a fleet with all things they could crave
 To set them out to sea. Who lanching, at the last
 They on Lergecia light, an ile, and, ere they pass'd,
 Unto a temple built to great Diana there
 The noble Brutus went wise Trivia to enquire
 To shew them where the stock of ancient Troy to place.

140

"The goddess, that both knew and lov'd the Trojan race,
 Reveal'd to him in dreams that furthest to the west
 He should discry the ile of Albion, highly blest;
 With giants lately stor'd, their numbers now decay'd,
 By vanquishing the rest his hopes should there be stay'd,
 Where, from the stock of Troy, those puissant kings should rise
 Whose conquests from the west the world should scant suffice.

150

"Thus answer'd, great with hope, to sea they put again
 And, safely under sail, the hours do entertain
 With sights of sundry shores which they from far discry.
 And viewing with delight th' Azarian Mountains high,
 One walking on the deck unto his friend would say
 (As I have heard some tell), 'So goodly Ida lay.'

"Thus talking mongst themselves they sunburn'd Africk keep
 Upon the leeward still, and (sulking up the deep)

160

For Mauritania make, where, putting in, they find
 A remnant yet reserv'd of th' ancient Dardan kind,
 By brave Antenor brought from out the Greekish spoils
 (O long-renowned Troy! Of thee and of thy toils
 What country had not heard?), which to their general then
 Great Corineus had, the strong'st of mortal men,
 To whom (with joyful hearts) Diana's will they show.

"Who eas'ly being won along with them to go,
 They altogether put into the wat'ry plain.

Ofttimes with pirates, oft with monsters of the main
 Distressed in their way, whom hope forbids to fear,
 Those pillars first they pass which Jove's great son did rear,
 And, cuffing those stern waves which like huge mountains roll
 (Full joy in every part possessing every soul),
 In Aquitaine at last the Ilion race arrive.

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Whom strongly to repulse when as those recreants strive,
 They (anchoring there at first but to refresh their fleet,
 Yet saw those savage men so rudely them to greet)
 Unshipp'd their warlike youth advancing to the shore.
 The dwellers, which perceiv'd such danger at the door,
 Their king, Groffarius, get to raise his powerful force,
 Who, must'ring up an host of mingled foot and horse,
 Upon the Trojans set, when suddainly began
 A fierce and dangerous fight, where Corineus ran
 With slaughter through the thick-set squadrons of the foes
 And with his armed ax laid on such deadly blows
 That heaps of liveless trunks each passage stopp'd up quite.

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"Groffarius, having lost the honor of the fight,
 Repairs his ruin'd powers, not so to give them breath,
 When they which must be freed by conquest or by death
 And, conquering them before, hop'd now to do no less
 (The like in courage still) stand for the like success.
 Then stern and deadly war put on his horrid'st shape,
 And wounds appear'd so wide as if the grave did gape
 To swallow both at once, which strove as both should fall
 When they with slaughter seem'd to be encircled all.
 Where Turon (of the rest), Brut's sister's valiant son
 (By whose approved deeds that day was chiefly won),
 Six hundred slew outright through his peculiar strength;
 By multitudes of men yet overpress'd at length.
 His nobler uncle there, to his immortal name,
 The city Turon built and well endow'd the same.

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"For Albion sailing then, th' arrived quickly here
 (O never in this world men half so joyful were
 With shouts heard up to heaven when they beheld the land),
 And in this very place where Totnes now doth stand
 First set their gods of Troy, kissing the blessed shore,
 Then, foraging this ile long promis'd them before,
 Amongst the ragged cleaves those monstrous giants sought,
 Who (of their dreadful kind) t' appal the Trojans brought
 Great Gogmagog, an oak that by the roots could tear—
 So mighty were (that time) the men who lived there.
 But for the use of arms he did not understand
 (Except some rock or tree that, coming next to hand,

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He raz'd out of the earth to execute his rage),
 He challenge makes for strength and offereth there his gage,
 Which Corin taketh up to answer by and by,
 Upon this son of earth his utmost power to try.

"All doubtful to which part the victory would go,
 Upon that lofty place at Plymouth call'd the Hoe
 Those mighty wrestlers met with many an ireful look
 Who threat'ned as the one hold of the other took,
 But, grapled, glowing fire shines in their sparkling eyes.
 And whilst at length of arm one from the other lies,
 Their lusty sinews swell like cables as they strive;
 Their feet such trampling make as though they forc'd to drive
 A thunder out of earth, which stagger'd with the weight.
 Thus, either's utmost force urg'd to the greatest height,
 Whilst one upon his hip the other seeks to lift
 And th' adverse (by a turn) doth from his cunning shift,
 Their short-fetch'd, troubled breath a hollow noise doth make
 Like bellows of a forge. Then Corin up doth take
 The giant twixt the grains and, voiding off his hold
 (Before his combrous feet he well recover could),
 Pitch'd headlong from the hill. As when a man doth throw
 An axtree that with sleight deliver'd from the toe
 Roots up the yielding earth, so that his violent fall
 Strook Neptune with such strength, as should'ed him withal,
 That where the monstrous waves like mountains late did stand
 They leap'd out of the place and left the bared sand
 To gaze upon wide heaven; so great a blow it gave.
 For which the conquering Brut on Corineus brave
 This horn of land bestow'd and mark'd it with his name,
 Of Corin Cornwall call'd to his immortal fame . . ."

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ILLUSTRATIONS

[The commentary or "illustrations" which the fabulously learned John Selden provided for Drayton make *Poly-Olbion* a rich mine of antiquarian lore. Selden's remarks on the legend of Brut are especially interesting because they show how that attractive fiction (so carefully sustained by Tudor historians) was destroyed under a genuinely critical scrutiny.]

I should the sooner have been of the author's opinion (in more than poetical form standing for Brut) if in any Greek or Latin story authentique, speaking of Aeneas and his planting in Latium, were mention made of any such like thing. To reckon the learned men which deny him, or at least permit him not in conjecture, were too long a catalogue; and, indeed, this critique age scarce any longer endures any nation their first supposed author's name: not Italus to the Italian, not Hispalus to the Spaniard, Bato to the

Hollander, Brabo to the Brabantine, Francio to the French, Celtes to the Celt, Galathes to the Gaul, Scota to the Scot—no, nor scarce Romulus to his Rome—because of their unlikely and fictitious mixtures. Especially this of Brut . . . is most of all doubted. But, reserving my censure, I thus maintain the author. Although nor Greek nor Latin, nor our country stories of Bede and Malmesbury especially, nor that fragment yet remaining of Gildas speak of him; and that his name were not published until Geoffrey of Monmouth's edition of the British story, which grew and continues much suspected, in much rejected; yet observe that Taliessin, a great bard, more then 1,000 years since affirms it; Nennius (in some copies he is under name of Gildas), above 800 years past, and the gloss of Samuel Beaulan (or some other crept into his text) mention both the common report and descent from Aeneas, and withal (which I take to be Nennius his own) make him son to one Isicio or Hesichio (perhaps meaning Aschenaz, of whom more

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to the Fourth Song), continuing a pedigree to Adam, joining these words: "This genealogy I found by tradition of the ancients which were first inhabitants of Britain." In a manuscript epistle of Henry of Huntingdon to one Warin I read the Latin of this English: "You ask me, sir, why, omitting the succeeding reigns from Brut to Julius Caesar, I begin my story at Caesar. I answer you that neither by word nor writing could I find any certainty of those times, although with diligent search I oft inquired it. Yet 10 this year, in my journey towards Rome, in the Abbey of Beccensam, even with amazement I found the story of Brut." And in his own printed book he affirms that what Bede had in this part omitted was supplied to him by other authors, of which Girald seems to have had use. The British story of Monmouth was a translation (but with much liberty and no exact faithfulness) of a Welsh book delivered to Geoffrey by one Walter, Archdeacon of Oxford, and hath been followed (the translator being a man of 20 some credit and Bishop of St. Asaph's under King Stephen) by Ponticus Virunnius, an Italian, most of our country historians of middle times, and this age, speaking so certainly of him that they blazon his coat to you. . . . Arguments are there also drawn from

some affinity of the Greek tongue, and much of Trojan and Greek names, with the British. These things are the more enforc'd by Cambro-Britons through that universal desire, bewitching our Europe, to derive their blood from Trojans, which for them might as well be by supposition of their ancestors' marriages with the hither-deduced Roman colonies, who by original were certainly Trojan if their antiquities deceive not. . . . Briefly, seeing no national story (except such as Thucydides, Xenophon, Polybius, Caesar, Tacitus, Procopius, Cantacuzene, the late Guicciardin, Comines, Machiavel, and their like, which were employed in the state of their times) can justify themselves but by tradition, and that many of the Fathers and ecclesiastical historians (especially the Jewish rabbins, taking their highest learning of Cabala, but from antique and successive report) have inserted upon tradition many relations currant enough where Holy Writ crosses them not, you shall enough please Saturn and Mercury, presidents of antiquity and learning, if with the author you foster this belief. . . . But you blame me thus expatiating. Let me add for the author that our most judicious antiquary of the last age, John Leland, with reason and authority hath also for Brut argued strongly. . . .

WILLIAM WARNER

ALBION'S ENGLAND

In 1598 Francis Meres praised Spenser and Warner as "our chief heroical makers," a comment that suggests both Warner's high contemporary reputation and the Elizabethan habit of converting history and quasi-historical fable to the uses of literature. Through many editions since 1555 *A Mirror for Magistrates* (see pp. 269 ff.) had instructed and (it must be presumed) delighted a whole generation of readers and writers; and its great popularity established the precedent for the spate of ostensibly historical poems that appeared in the last years of Elizabeth's reign: Warner's *Albion's England*, Drayton's *Piers Gaveston*, *Cromwell*, *Mortimeriados*, and *Heroical Epistles*, Daniel's *Complaint of Rosamond* and *Civil Wars*, and many others. Odd as the fact may now seem, *Albion's England* was the most popular of all these works, enjoying continuous favor for some twenty-five years in many editions. The first four books (1586) of laborious fourteeners (supported by a highly euphuistic dedicatory epistle) begin with "arked Noah" and then rehearse the familiar legends of Brut, his antecedents, and his posterity;

but as the demand continued and was met with successive expansions, Warner's "historical map" became a loose collection of versified tales, at least one of which, that of Curan and Argenteile in Book IV, Chapter XX, has real charm. Ultimately, the strange poem covered, after its fashion, everything between the Flood and the execution of Mary Queen of Scots. Whatever his demerits as a poet, Warner at least recognized a good thing when it came his way: two additional books were added to the second edition of 1589, two more to the third of 1592, four more in 1596 (reprinted in 1597), another (a summary of all British history) in 1602, and in 1606 the "continuance" attained sixteen books. In 1612 the whole work was printed with a "prose breviat of the true history of Aeneas and epitome." Our text is based upon *Albions England. Or Historicall Map of the same Island: prosecuted from the lives, Actes, and Labors of Saturne, Jupiter, Hercules, and Aeneas: Originallles of the Brutons and English-men, and Occasion of the Brutons their first aryvall in Albion*, 1586 (STC 25079).