

SUMMARY: The document below is a translation in the Calendar of State Papers Venetian of the report of an audience given by the authorities in Venice to the English ambassador, Sir Henry Wotton (1568–1639), on 29 October 1617.

According to the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, available online, after the death of his mother in early 1613, Henry de Vere (1593-1625), 18th Earl of Oxford, embarked upon an extended tour of Europe, remaining overseas for over five years, first in the Spanish Netherlands, then in France, and finally, in Venice. He returned to England in October 1618.

With King James' approval, Oxford offered to raise 6000 men for the Republic's service, an offer which the Venetian Senate declined. This offer is alluded to in the report below.

The Doge mentioned below was Giovanni Bembo (1543-1618), who died on 16 March 1618.

The transcript below is taken from Hinds, Allen Banks, ed., *Calendar of State Papers and Manuscripts Relating to English Affairs Existing in the Archives and Collections of Venice and in Other Libraries of Northern Italy*, Vol. XV, 1617-19 (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1909), pp. 27-35. See also <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=88663>.

October 29  
Collegio, Secreta  
Esposizioni Principi  
Venetian Archives

66. The ambassador of England was summoned to the Cabinet, and the declaration of the Senate of yesterday was read to him. He said:

I thank your Serenity for the confidence. However, peace does not seem to me to be absolutely assured. Though it has been digested in Spain and sealed in France, there are circumstances which may cause a difficulty. As for Savoy, we see that his Highness has consented to disarm first. He has been chiefly persuaded by Lesdiguières upon the supposition that Mantua will pardon the rebels and restore their goods, and that the dower of the widowed Infanta is assured. These are two very difficult points. It will not be easy to restore to the rebels goods which have been converted to other uses, and for the dower I see that one side demands more than the other concedes. Your Serenity may judge how easily the Spaniards, if they do not desire peace, may confuse the issue by inciting Mantua to hold to her notions, thus exonerating themselves, so that difficulties may arise from the other side. But in this case as the word of the most Christian King has been solemnly pledged, I should like to believe that the treaty will hold. But as regards your Serenity, seeing that the siege of Gradisca is being pressed more than ever, some artifice

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appears. The Spaniards have brought down their troops to the confines of Lombardy, clearly for the sake of a diversion. If they were genuine, they might have relieved that place by putting a garrison in Segna for Ferdinand.

It is the custom of your Serenity to send instructions to your ambassador, and then to send for me. I may say with due respect that this is bound to have unfortunate consequences with a confidential minister so devoted to the Republic as I am, because the King's reply to your ambassador before he has received my advices is bound to be vague, and to be put off to the next week. Such a delay might be grave, so I beg your Serenity to impart the instructions to me at the time when they are sent.

The Doge replied, saying that frequently the letters are sent and the deliberations of the Senate taken on the evening of the dispatch of the ordinaries; consequently the communications to the ambassador are necessarily delayed until the following day.

The ambassador went on to say that the offers of the Earl of Oxford (Osfort) were opportune. He could also find a number of good ships if required. Captain Bel [=Bell?] would not only undertake the captaincy of a company, but the direction of artillery, in which he was well versed. The Prince of Colet, cousin german of the King of Denmark, who had hitherto served in Friuli in the regiment of Nassau, wished to resign this and serve the Republic as an adventurer.

[Italian]