

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 22 November 1617, at which Henry de Vere (1593-1625), 18th Earl of Oxford, was formally presented to the Doge of Venice, Giovanni Bembo (1543-1618).

According to the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, available online, after the death of his mother in early 1613, Henry de Vere 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, he offered to raise 6000 men for the Republic's service, an offer which the Venetian Senate declined. This offer is mentioned in the report below.

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. 44-63. See also <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=88665>.

November 22
Collegio Secreta
Esposizioni Principi
Venetian Archives

92. The ambassador of England came into the Cabinet with the Earl of Oxford, who was given a place above the Savii of Terra Ferma. The ambassador said:

I have come to speak for the Earl what modesty forbids him to say for himself, and I would not do so in his presence, unless to execute my instructions. He is hereditary Lord Chamberlain of England and the direct representative of the house of Vere in the male line. In the Wars of the Roses his ancestors always took the right side. He has shown his devotion to your Serenity by coming to serve you, being convinced of the justice of your cause and authorised by the letters of the King, which he will present. He was in camp before offering to come and serve your Serenity with 6 to 20 thousand infantry. This he can easily do, not only by the King's licence but by the great credit of his house in the realm. This is a good beginning of the King's declaration in favour of the Republic.

After this the Earl rose and went to the Doge to offer himself. His Serenity thanked him courteously, and referred the matter to the Savii. The ambassador and Earl left the following letters, and departed.

Jacobus etc. Domino Joani Bembo, Venetiarum Duci amico nostro charissimo, salutem.

Comes Oxoniensis vir tam natalium tam loci sui claritate primi inter hujus Regni proceres nominis, nobis nuperrime per litteras suas significavit, magnopere se cupere, ut sub Republica Vestra praesentibus hisce bellis (si modo id nos ratum haberemus) possit mereri. Quod quidem nos non solum libenter concessimus, sed ei insuper potestatem fecimus conscribendi copias, et e subditis nostris, si qui id vellent, cuperentque delectum habendi. Et quidem cum tanti nominis, et aestimationis apud nos sit, et hoc ipso tam egregia erga Rempublicam Vestram studia demonstraverit, justitia et affectus nostros secutus, non potuimus eum utriusque nomine curae vestrae non commendare rogareque ut eam rationem tum propensionsis suae tum stipendiorum habere velitis, qualem tam singularis ipsius affectus mereatur.

Jacobus Rex.

Date e palatio nostro Edimburgensi nono die Julii, Anno Domini 1617

Presented by the ambassador of England, with letters from the King and Lionello.

Captain Bell, recommended by his Majesty as a man of great valour and experience in war, offers himself to serve the Republic. He has practised arms under the King of Sweden and the Elector of Brandenburg, to wit, the drilling of new troops, and is skilled in the use of all sorts of weapons. He asks to be proven, and accepted or dismissed according to the results.

Most Serene Prince.

The Margrave of Brandenburg recommended to the King some days ago Captain Henry Bell, who was going to Venice, hoping to serve the Republic. His Majesty recommends him. Yesterday the Secretary Lake wrote asking me to support the application. There has not been time to collect further information about him, especially as he has spent a long while in Germany.

Gio. Battista Lionello

London, the 17th March, 1617

Jacobus etc. Domino Joanni Bembo Venetae Reipublicae Duci, amico nostro charissimo, salutem etc.

Cum et Reipublicae vestrae hoc statu temporum rerumque vestrarum fortium virorum opera non minus necessaria quam opportuna videatur, et harum lator Henricus Bel generosus, subditus noster, cum rei militaris usum habeat militarium armorum experientia, et variis bellis comparatum, ut non solum centurionis munus obierit, verum etiam cohortes quinque signorum in acie contra hostem aliquoties duxerit con benignius et libentius annuimus, commendationem nostram suppliciter petenti quam ob rem si

Serenitas Vester ipsum eo loco habebit, qui fortunae et conditioni conveniat, quam ante hac obtinuit, ejusque opera eo modo utetur, sicut minime dubitamus quin fideli et strenuo ministerio effecturus sit, ut hanc gratiam recte ac merito collocatam censeatis, ita hoc benevolentiae vestrae erga nos testimonium nobis valde gratum erit, idque ut vobis liquido appareat quotiescumque occasio suppetet, promptissimo animo efficere conabimur.

Jacobus Rex

Datum e Palatio nostro Westmonasterii quinta die Martii Anno Dni. 1616 stilo veteri.

[Italian]