

SUMMARY: The document below is a translation in the Calendar of State Papers Venetian of a letter dated 16 April 1618 written from Udine by Zuane Basadonna to the authorities in Venice stating that as a result of a duel between Sir John Vere and one Milander at Cortello near Udine on 23 March 1618, Sir John Vere had now been imprisoned, and that the matter was complicated by the fact that his second cousin, Henry de Vere (1593-1625), 18th Earl of Oxford, had come to Udine 'incognito last Carnival to fight as Vere's champion against anyone who should take the part of Milander'. For an earlier letter written by Basadonna on 29 March 1618 suggesting that the quarrel between Sir John Vere and Milander originated over the question of who should succeed to the command of the late Count John Ernest (1582-1617) of Nassau's company at Udine, see Hinds, No. 297. According to the report of an audience granted by the Venetian authorities to the English ambassador, Sir Henry Wotton (1568-1639) on 11 June 1618, Sir John Vere had still not been released from prison by that date, although orders had been sent from Venice to Udine ordering his release (see Hinds, No. 400).

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.

Sir John Vere was the illegitimate son of Oxford's first cousin, John Vere (d.1624) of Kirby Hall. In his youth Sir John Vere was a page to Prince Maurice (1567-1625) of Nassau, referred to in the letter below as 'Count Maurice, his leader for twenty years' (see also Hinds, No. 196). He served as Lieutenant to Count John Ernest (1582-1617) of Nassau in the Low Countries, and was a captain in Flanders for 20 years (see Hinds, No. 32). For the will of Sir John Vere, dated 13 December 1630 and proved 14 November 1631, see TNA PROB 11/160, ff. 433-4. For other documents in the State Papers Venetian mentioning Sir John Vere, see Hinds, Nos. 32, 73, 196, 382 and 579.

Zuane Basadonna was a Venetian merchant and informal agent for Venetian affairs who had resided in England from 1593 to 1599. See Smith, Logan Pearsall, *The Life and Letters of Sir Henry Wotton*, Vol. I, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1907), p. 299. See also Brown, Horatio F., 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. IX, 1592-1603, (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1897), pp. 387-92, at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=95537>.

The Doge of Venice at the time was Nicolo Donato (1539-1618), who reigned for only 35 days, from his election on 10 April until his death on 9 May 1618.

For Colonel de Roquelaure, see:

<http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=88801&strquery=Roccalaura>.

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. 187-205. See also <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=88675>.

April 16
Senato, Secreta
Dispacci, Udine
Venetian Archives

322. Zuanne Basadonna, Venetian Lieutenant in Udine, to the Doge and Senate.

Yesterday, in conformity with the orders of the most illustrious Barbaro [=Barbarigo?], I sent for Sir John Vere and confined him in the castle, where he will be guarded with the utmost care. He complained loudly, saying that it was a hard and unexpected reward for the services which he had rendered and for the zeal shown by the whole English nation that he should receive a public prison. He said that if your Serenity would not grant him the post which he thinks he deserves, you might at least give him leave to return to Count Maurice, his leader for twenty years. He is visited by captains of his own nation who seem much offended, and God grant that there be not some serious outbreak among the nations.

I am bound to add that about ten days ago Colonel Roccalaura [=de Roquelaure] came to this town to see Vere and try to obtain a promise from him to submit his differences to him, as Milander had done. As Vere seemed somewhat reluctant, I resolved to bring to bear the influence which I have tried to secure with all these troops, and finally succeeded in inducing him to submit his dispute with Milander to M. de Roccalaura. At this the Colonel left in a very happy frame of mind, promising to return with Milander and to dine with Vere in this house. I have thought proper to report this so that you may decide what is to be done. A decision should be taken as speedily as possible in order to obviate grave complications, since the Earl of Oxford, a near kinsman of Vere, came to this town incognito last Carnival to fight as Vere's champion against anyone who should take the part of Milander.

Udine, the 16th April, 1618.

[Italian]