

SUMMARY: The document below is a translation in the Calendar of State Papers Venetian of a memorandum of 6 June 1618 written by the English Ambassador, Sir Henry Wotton (1568-1639), to the Council of Ten at Venice.

The arrest of Sir Henry Wotton's steward while he was in the company of servants of Henry de Vere (1593-1625), 18<sup>th</sup> Earl of Oxford, was a calculated insult. It may have been related to events in Venice in early 1618. See Ogilvie, James, trans., *The Civil History of the Kingdom of Naples by Pietro Giannone*, Vol. II, (London, 1731), pp. 719-20, available online at:

[http://books.google.ca/books?id=dG5UAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA720&lpg=PA720&dq=%22general+barbarigo%22&source=bl&ots=M8cO3UdARk&sig=cczNT1dj6R0yVhd\\_29Fyv jGHrTk&hl=en&ei=smy5Toe-GoOeiQLqw\\_D9BA&sa=X&oi=book\\_result&ct=result&resnum=4&ved=0CCUQ6AEwAw#v=onepage&q=%22general%20barbarigo%22&f=false](http://books.google.ca/books?id=dG5UAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA720&lpg=PA720&dq=%22general+barbarigo%22&source=bl&ots=M8cO3UdARk&sig=cczNT1dj6R0yVhd_29Fyv jGHrTk&hl=en&ei=smy5Toe-GoOeiQLqw_D9BA&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=4&ved=0CCUQ6AEwAw#v=onepage&q=%22general%20barbarigo%22&f=false).

The insult may also have been related to the duel which had been fought between Sir John Vere and one Milander at Cortello near Udine on 23 March 1618. Sir John Vere had been imprisoned afterwards, and the matter was complicated by the fact that his second cousin, Henry de Vere, 18<sup>th</sup> Earl of Oxford, had come to Udine 'incognito last Carnival to fight as Vere's champion against any one who should take the part of Milander' (see Hinds, Nos. 297, 322).

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 had been a page to Prince Maurice of Nassau (1567-1625), and had served as Lieutenant to Count John Ernest of Nassau and as a captain in Flanders for 20 years (see Hinds, pp. 14-27, 108-26). 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. 73, 400 and 579.

The Doge of Venice at the time was Antonio Priuli (1548-1623), who held office from 17 May 1618 until his death on 12 August 1623.

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

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Majesty's Stationery Office, 1909), pp. 224-36. See also <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=88677>.

[June 6]

Senato, Secreta

Communicationi dal Cons di X

Venetian Archives

392. Memorial of Henry Wotton, the English ambassador.

The case is as follows. Last Wednesday evening I sent William Leete (Lith), my steward, well known as such and as a well-conducted gentleman, to invite the Earl of Oxford to my house on the following day. Not finding him, he waited until the third hour of the night. He then returned to my house alone in the gondola, with the Earl's gondoliers. Near San Martino, from which he started, he was stopped by a band of armed men, among whom was one who is jestingly called Count Piero. They asked who he was, and he replied: A servant of the English ambassador. Pieiro [sic] replied that he would take him to the Arsenal. At this Luigi, gondolier of the Earl of Oxford, said the steward had spoken the truth; he had supped with the Earl, and was coming straight back to my house. He said they could obtain information about this from Mr. Parvis, who lived near. Nevertheless Piero dragged my steward before the magistrate, who kept him in prison that night, although he heard the facts given above.

On the following morning this Count Piero returned, and after much threatening and insulting language declared that if my steward had not revealed that he was a servant of the ambassador of the King of England, he would have let him go. When the steward warned him not to speak thus, he repeated the same words twice again. In this way first the immunity of the representatives of crowned heads and their households has been violated in the person of one of my principal servants, who is well known. Secondly, the honour and dignity of his Majesty have been offended in the most serious manner possible. Thirdly, the English nation, at a crisis like the present, is sullied by the most abominable suspicions. I therefore ask your Excellencies for such a sentence as shall vindicate the honour of his Majesty and his subjects.

(signed) Henry Wotton

[Italian]