

SUMMARY: The document below is a translation in the Calendar of State Papers Venetian of the report of an audience granted on 11 June 1618 to the secretary of the English Ambassador, Sir Henry Wotton (1568-1639), by the authorities in Venice.

The arrest of Sir Henry Wotton's steward while he was in the company of servants of Henry de Vere (1593-1625), 18th 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.

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, 18th 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 (1567-1625) of Nassau, and had served as Lieutenant to Count John Ernest (1582-1617) of Nassau in the Low Countries, and as a captain in Flanders for 20 years (see Hinds, Nos. 32, 196). 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, 382 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

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

June 11
Collegio Secreta
Esposizioni Principi
Venetian Archives

400. The Secretary of the English ambassador came into the Cabinet and said:

His Excellency, on hearing that the case of Piero called Count has been remitted by the Council of Ten to your Serenity and your Excellencies, has directed me to present the following paper:

Most Serene Prince, I beg to submit to you particulars which I have already given to the Council of Ten with some further details. On Wednesday evening last I sent William Lith, my steward, to invite the Earl of Oxford to my house for the following day. He waited three hours for him, returning in the gondola alone with the Earl's gondoliers. Near San Martino he was stopped by a band of armed men, among them one who is jestingly known as Count Piero. When this man asked him who he was, he said he was a servant of the English ambassador. Piero said he would take him to the lords of the Arsenal. Luigi, the Earl's gondolier, said that he had dined with the Earl and was returning home, and that Signor Parvis, who lived near by, would bear witness to the fact. Nevertheless the steward was dragged before the magistrate, and spent that night in prison.

On the following morning Count Piero returned, and after many insulting words he told the steward that he would have let him go if he had not let slip that he was a servant of the ambassador of the King of England. He repeated the same words upon two other occasions. Your Excellencies thus see the immunity of the representatives of crowned heads and their households violated in the person of one of the chief functionaries of my house, and the dignity and honour of his Majesty offended in the most serious manner possible. Finally the English nation, at such a time as the present, is sullied with the most abominable suspicion by such words. In view of all this I ask for such a sentence as shall vindicate the honour of his Majesty and his subjects. I wrote this much to the Council of Ten.

I have two other considerations to offer, the first that my steward wore no arms except a dagger, and the gondola was not standing still but moving towards the house; the other, that he was detained without being accused of any crime whatsoever, as there is no law at Venice which forbids anyone to be out at the third hour of the night. He must therefore have been taken upon suspicion of the recent unhappy events, as the common voice of the Piazza gives out. This leads me to ask for satisfaction for our nation as well as for the wounded honour of his Majesty.

Your Serenity's most devoted servant,
Henry Wotton

After reading this, the Secretary added: I am instructed to tell your Serenity that when I made the first request to the heads of the Council of Ten, his Excellency commanded me to tell them that if a sentence were passed he would be pleased that the condemnation should be handed over to him, and I am commissioned to say the same to your Serenity.

The Doge replied that what was fitting should be done.

The Secretary added: I have already asked for the release of Captain Vere, but he still remains in prison at Udine. The Savii said that orders for his release had been sent, upon condition that he should have made his peace with Milander, his adversary, but the indisposition of General Barbaro [=Barbarigo?], to whom the orders had been sent, possibly accounted for the delay.

The Secretary seemed satisfied, and after taking leave he departed.

[Italian]