

SUMMARY: The documents below are copies of two letters of introduction in Latin to foreign princes written by Queen Elizabeth and intended to be presented by Oxford on his continental tour. Both letters are dated 24 January 1575, the same day on which Oxford was granted licence to travel (see TNA E 157/1, f. 1). The first letter is addressed to all foreign princes to whom Oxford might present it. The second is addressed to the Holy Roman Emperor, Maximilian II.

The original letters are not extant. Frank Bowles, Superintendent of the Manuscripts Reading Room at the Cambridge University Library, advises that 306 of Queen Elizabeth's letters, including these two, were copied into a register by the antiquary Thomas Baker, probably circa 1700, and that 'it would appear that Baker copied the letters from other copies of the letters which were in a volume held in the library of John Moore, Bishop of Ely'. In 1715, the register, MS Dd.3.20, was presented to Cambridge University Library along with the entirety of Bishop Moore's library.

The second letter has been partially translated in Nelson, Alan H., *Monstrous Adversary*, (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2003). See p. 119:

*An illustrious youth much adorned with many virtues, the offspring of a most ancient family of England, Edward Vere (etc.), our most beloved subject and cousin, wishes to inspect the palaces of your many princes, as also the cities and regions of your realm, to acquire knowledge of them; he himself being imbued with manners, virtue, learning.*

The English translations below were provided by Alexander Waugh.

Elizabeth, by the grace of God, etc.

To all individual kings, etc.

An illustrious and highly accomplished young man, our beloved cousin, Edward Vere, Earl of Oxford, Viscount Bulbeck, Lord of Scales and Badelsmore, Great Chamberlain of England, plans (with our good grace) to travel overseas to gain knowledge and understanding of the ways of men in different cities and regions. We therefore sincerely request your servants, your most excellent educators and your own kindness, that when he comes into any kingdom, territory, land or jurisdiction of yours, not only will he be permitted to stay there freely and to pass through without impediment, but he will be treated with all kindness for our sake, and will be welcomed so that we may see your friendship and benevolence towards us reflected in your treatment of this most noble earl, our kinsman (whom we recommend not in the usual way, but in all sincerity, on account of his outstanding intellect and virtue). When this young nobleman shows himself worthy of your kindness by virtue of his manners, we too, as a sign of thanks for things great and small, shall never forget to repay you generously, and by any means, when the time and occasion may arise.

In witness whereof etc.

Hampton, 24 January 1574, in the seventeenth year of our reign.

Elizabeth by the grace of God etc.

To the most powerful Prince and Lord Maximilian the Second, Holy Roman Emperor, King of Hungary and Bohemia, eternally Augustus, our brother and kinsman and dear friend, greetings.

An illustrious young man, greatly adorned with many virtues - Edward Vere, Earl of Oxford, Viscount Bolbeck, Lord of Scales and Badelsmere, Lord High Chamberlain of England, our most beloved subject and cousin - is presently setting out from England to visit your royal court of many princes and will be passing through the cities and regions of your empire, to benefit from the knowledge thereof. He is endowed, by his very nature, with manners, virtue and learning. We therefore earnestly desire your Imperial Majesty to protect this young nobleman by your authority, to grant him your favour, to help him with recommendations, and to favour him with all kindness, so that he may understand that our greatest recommendation holds weight with your Imperial Majesty. Nothing else could give us greater joy. May God preserve your Imperial Majesty in health and safety.

Hampton [Court], 24 January 1574, in the seventeenth year of our reign.

Elizabetha Dei gratia et caet{era}

Uniuersis et singulis Regibus et caet{era}

Cum Illustris{simus} et ornatissimus iuuenis Edouardus Verus Comes Oxoniensis Vicecomis Bulbecensis D{ominus} de Scales et Badelsmore magnus Angliae Camerarius Consang{ineus} noster charissimus in partes transmarinas ad rerum vsum colligendum hominmq{ue} mores regionum & vrbiu[m] maturas intelligendas bona nostra cum gratia proficisse nunc cogitet: Nos itaq{ue} Ser{uiens}tos Ex{ }as Mag{istr}as et humanitates vestras omnes summopere rogamus vt cum in regna territoria Ditiones iurisdictiones v{ost}ras quascumq{ue}} peruerint cum non solum libere morari et sine impedimento transire permittatis sed omni etiam humanitate in nostra gratiam tractetis et amplexemini sic vt vestram in nos amicitiam et beneuolentiam in nobilissimo hoc Comiti consanguineo nostro ornando (cui propter praestantes animi virtutis ex animo non vulgariter fauemus) perspicere possimus Hanc vestram humanitatem quanquam nobilissimus iuuenis suis moribus promereri cumulate poterit nos tamen in eximia et maxime gratia loco ponetas nec eam omni ratione largiter remunerari cum se res et occasio obtulerit vnquam obliuissimur

In cuis rei et caet{era}

Dat{um} Hamp{tonia} 24 Ian{uarij} 1574 R{eg}ni vero n{ost}ri 17.

Elizabetha Dei gratia et caet{era}

Potentissimo Principi ac D{omino} Maximiliano secund{o} Romanorum Imp{erato}ri Hungariae et Bohemiae Regi semper Augustus fratri Consanguineo et Amico nostro charissim{o} Salutem

Proficiscitur hoc tempore ex Anglia Illustris et multis virtutibus ornatissimus iuuenis ex vetustissima Anglia procerum stirpe ortus Edouardus Verus Comes Oxoniensis Vicecomes Bulbecensis Dominus de Scales et Badelsmore magnus Angliae Camerarius subditus et consanguineus noster charissimus Vt principum multorum Vestramq{ue} imprimis Aulam inuisat vrbesq{ue} et regions imperij ad rerum vsum acquirendum peraget Is eo ingenio moribus virtute doctrina est praeditus tum et etiam in nos fide et obseruantia vt omnia in hac preregrinatione illi persona et laeta accidere sane vehementer cupimus Rogamus igitur maiorem in modum Imperialem tuam Ma{iesta}tem vt nobilissimum iuuenem auctoritate protegas fauore ornes commendatione iuues et omni demum humanitatis ratione ita foueas vt intelligi possit commendationem nostrum maximum apud Imperatoriam tuam Ma{iesta}tem pondus habere Hoc nobis tam acceptum et optatum accidit vt nihil esse possit gratius Deus Opt: Max: Imperatoriam tuam Mag{ista}tem quam diutissime florentem seruet & in columem

Dat{um} Hamp{tonia} 24 Ian{uarij} 1574

R{eg}ni vero nostri 17