

SUMMARY: The document below is the record in the Venetian State Archives of the appearance of Oxford's page, Orazio Cuoco, before the Venetian Inquisition on 27 August 1577 on Cuoco's return to Venice. The document was discovered by the historian John Bossy in 1996, who provided a copy to Dr Alan Nelson. The document was first translated by Dr Noemi Magri in 1997.

The questions asked of Cuoco establish that the Inquisition wished to determine whether Cuoco had lived 'Catholically' while he was absent from Venice, and to obtain information about Venetians who associated with Oxford during his stay in Venice, and about Venetian nationals living in England. The Inquisition's interest in this latter point is confirmed by the fact that the information given by Cuoco regarding Venetians living in England is repeated in the margins of the document.

The document also establishes that Oxford was not a practising Catholic. While living in Venice he ate fish on Fridays and fast days, and attended Mass. In England, however, although he allowed religious freedom to his Catholic servants, Oxford himself did not live "Catholically", and ate meat on Fridays and on Catholic fast days.

Cuoco states that Oxford was fluent in Latin and Italian.

Cuoco states that Oxford invited him to go to England after having heard him sing in the choir of Santa Maria Formosa, and that while in England, serving in Oxford's household as a page, he sang in the presence of Queen Elizabeth. Cuoco mentions five Venetian brothers who had established themselves at court as musicians, and who can likely be identified as the five sons of Anthony Bassano (d.1574): Mark Anthony, Arthur, Edward, Andrew and Jerome. For the will of Anthony Bassano, see TNA PROB 11/56/512. For the Bassano family, whose members were merchants as well as musicians, see Selfridge-Field, Eleanor, *Venetian Instrumentalists in England: A Bassano Chronicle (1536-1660)*, (Florence: Leo S. Olschki Editore, 1979), available online.

Cuoco states that he is 17 years of age (and thus would have been 16 while in Oxford's service), and that he left England because a Milanese merchant in London, Christopholo da Monte, felt that Cuoco would be 'perverted', i.e. become a heretic to his Catholic faith, if he remained in England. Da Monte gave Cuoco money, and embarked him on a ship for Flanders in the company of other Italian merchants.

The transcript in Latin and Italian below is taken from Magri, Noemi, 'Orazio v. Nelson', *De Vere Society Newsletter*, April 2006, pp. 6-11, available online at <http://www.deveresociety.co.uk/articles/April06DVSNS.pdf>.

The English translation below was made by Dr Magri in 1997. A printed version of Dr. Magri's English translation is available in the January-February 2002 edition of the *De Vere Society Newsletter*, and in Malim, Richard, ed., *Great Oxford* (Tunbridge Wells: Parapress, 2004), pp. 45-9. A translation is also available in Nelson, Alan. H., *Monstrous*

Adversary (Liverpool University Press, 2003), pp. 155-7, although Dr. Magri has drawn attention to errors in the latter.

Dr. Magri's footnotes are reprinted at the end of the translation.

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Die martis 27 mensis Augusti 1577
cum assistentia illustrissimi domini Pasqualis Ciconia

Comparuit vocatur in Sanctissimo Offitio Horatius filius quondam
Francisci Coqui, clericus in ecclesia Sanctae Marinae et
Interrogatus de aetate respondit, "Io ho 17 anni".

Ei dictum, "Estu sta fuera della terra?"
Respondit "Signore, si".

Ei dictum, "In che luogo?" Respondit, "In Ingilterra".
Dicens interrogatus, "Le un anno et mezzo credo che
me parti de questa cita per andar in Ingilterra".
Dicens interrogatus, "Io andai con un conte,
parente della Rezina de Ingilterra
nominato Millort de Uoxfor".

[LM: Millort de uoxfor]

Ei dictum, "Quanto tempo estu sta in Ingilterra?"
Respondit, "XI mesi".

Dicens interrogatus, "Son stato sempre in casa de questo conte".

Ei dictum, "Che officio era el tuo in casa sua?"
Respondit, "Per paggio".

Ei dictum, "Estu sta con altri che con lui?"
Respondit, Signore no, in Ingilterra".

Ei dictum, "Quanto e che ti si partito de Ingilterra?"
Respondit, "Sete over 8 mesi".

Ei dictum, "Quanto e che ti e zonto qui?"
Respondit, "El di della Assumption della Madona proxima passata".

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Ei dictum, Con chi te partistu de Ingilterra?"
Respondit, "Solo, Signore".

Ei dictum, "Di dove sei stato et con chi in questi 7 over otto mesi".
 Respondit, "Son stato in Fiandra 4 mesi con el capitan signore
 Zuan Battista da Monte et poi son >ritornato<
 [LM: el capitan signor zuan battista da monte]
 son partito d'Anversa dove stiti
 quel tempo col ditto capitano et vini
 in Borgogna per passazo, da Borgogna in
 Lorena per passazo et poi in Savogia
 poi a Cremona, da Cremona a Mantua,
 da Mantua a Padoa, da Padoa a Venetia".

Ei dictum, "Dove lassastu el capitano?"
 Respondit, "A Fontanelli, sora Cremona".

Ei dictum, "Con chi estu vegnu da Fontanelle in qu?"
 Respondit, "Solo".
 Ei dictum, "Chi te esse con el conte Inglese?" Respondit, "Nissuno".

Ei dictum, "Con che mezo andastu con lui?"
 Respondit, "El me senti a cantar in organo
 a Santa Maria Formosa et mi adimando
 se voleva andar con lui in Ingilterra et a questo modo andai".
 Ei dictum, "Domandasti consegio ad alcuno

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se dovevi andar o no?"
 Respondit, "Domandai a mio patre et mia matre
 li quali mi consegioro che andasse et sono morti dal contagio".

Ei dictum, "Questo conte dove si trovalo?"
 Respondit, "In Ingilterra".

Ei dictum, "Vivevalo Catholicamente?"
 Respondit, "Signore no".

Ei dictum, "Quando el te invido andar con
 lui in questa terra quanto stetelo dapoi a partirse?"
 Respondit, "El di de zuoba grassa andai a star
 in casa sua et si parti el luni di canaval immediate siguente".

Ei dictum, "Quel venere et sabbato seguenti
 al zuoba che cosa se magno in casa sua?"
 Respondit, "Pesce".

Ei dictum, "In Ingilterra et per il viazo andando in Ingilterra che vita fevelo nella LXma >per el viazo< et le vigilie?" Respondit, "Pesce per el viazo perche per le hostarie non si da carne".

Ei dictum, "E in Ingilterra nelle vigilie veneri et sabbati che cose magnavalo?" Respondit, "Carne e pesce".

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Ei dictum, "In questi giorni fevelo magnar carne alla famegia?" Respondit, "Signore no".

Ei dictum, "Te halo fato magnar carne in zorni prohibiti?" Respondit, "Signore no, lhaveva ancho in casa un camarier et un servitore che erano catholici".

Ei dictum, "To halo mai fatto andar alle prediche de heretici?" Respondit, "Signore no."

Ei dictum, "Estu andato ti alle prediche de heretici volontariamente?" Respondit, "Signore no, ma andava all messa in casa delli Imbassiatori di Franza et Portogallo".

Ei dictum, "E' stato alcuno che in Inghilterra te habi voluto far lezer libri priobiti e insegnar la dotrina de eritici?"

Respondit, "Signore, si".

Ei dictum, "Chi sono Stati questi?" Respondit "Uno que si domandava messer Alexandro credo chel sia bandido da Venezia per la Religion. Un altro Ambroso da Venetia che e musicho della Rezina de Ingilterra qual ha doi figlioli et lui ha tolto moglie la con tuto che ho inteso che sua moglie vive qua in Venetia alla quale si dice anco che li mandava aiuto.

[LM: alexandro forrlan]

[LM: furrilan]

[LM: Ambroso da vene-

tia musico della
Regina de ingilterra
qual ha doi figlioli
Et ha tolto moglie]

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Et vi sono anchora cinque venitiani
fratelli i quali son musici della
Rezina et fano flauti et viole et
vi e una gentildonna Venitiana da Ca
Malipiero la qual tiene scuola et insegna
lezere et la lingua italiana et non so
de altri”.

[LM: Cinque venitiani
fratelli quali so-
no musici della
Rezina fano flauti
et viole]

[LM:Una gentildonna vi-
nitiano qual
tien scuola.]

Ei dictum, Hastu mai parla con la Rezina?”
Respondit, “Signore si et ho cantato alla sua presentia”.
Dicens interrogatus, “La me ha voluto convertir
all sua fede”. Dicens interrogatus, “Alcuni marcadanti
cioe el signore Christopholo da Monte millanese
me disse che sarei pervertido se stesevi qui
et che non voleva che stesse altramente
la et mi imbarco per Fiandra in compa-
gnia de altri marcadanti et mi dete
25 ducati per vegnir via”.

Ei dictum, “Volesti licentia dal conte?”
Respondit, “Signore no
perche el no me haveria lassado partir”.
Ei dictum, “Per il viazo in Anversa et
altri luoghi dove ti e sta hasto vivesto
catholicamente?” Respondit, “Signore si son venuto
con soldati italiani catholici”.
Ei dictum, “Dapoi zonto qui ti e sta doman-
dato del conte >da< con chi tu andasti da
alcuno?” Respondit, Signore no”.

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Ei dictum, "Chi praticava col conte in questa
cita?" Respondit, "Nissun qua della terra.

L'andava a messa all giesia di Greci.

Et era persona che parlava ben la lingua
latina et Italiana".

Interrogatus sel conte lha volute mai convertir alla
sua fede respondit, "Signore no el lassava viver tuti
a suo modo".

Quibus habitis fuit licentiatus.

On the day of Tuesday 27th of the month of August 1577 in the presence of most
illustrious Master Pasquale Ciconia.

Being summoned to the Holy Inquisition, there appeared Orazio, son of the late
Francesco Cogno, altarist in the church of Santa Marina (1) and, being asked about his
age, he answered, "I am 17 years old".

It was asked him (or He was asked), "Have you been outside this State?". He answered,
"Yes, Sir".

It was asked him, "In which country?". He answered, "In England". Being asked, he
said, "It has been a year and a half, I think, since I left this town to go to England". Being
asked, he said, "I went with an earl, a relative of the Queen of England, called Milord de
Oxford" (2).

It was asked him, "How long did you stay in England?" He answered, "Eleven months".
Being asked, he said, "I have always been at the house of this earl".

It was asked him, "What job (duty) was yours in his house?" He answered, "I was a
page".

It was asked him, "Have you been with others, besides him?" He answered, "No Sir, in
England".

It was asked him, "How long ago did you leave England?" He answered, "Seven or eight
months".

It was asked him, "How long ago did you arrive here?" He answered, "I arrived here on
the day of the Assumption of Our Lady, just past" (3).

It was asked him, "With whom did you leave England?" He answered, "Alone, Sir".

He was asked, "Say where you have been and with whom in these seven or eight months". He answered, "I was in Flanders 4 months with captain master Zuan Battista da Monte (4) and then I left Antwerp where I had stayed all that time with the said captain and went down to Burgundy in transit, from Burgundy to Lorraine in transit and then to Savoy, then to Cremona, from Cremona to Mantua, from Mantua to Padua, from Padua to Venice".

It was asked him, "Where did you leave the captain?" He answered, "At Fontanelli, north of Cremona" (5).

It was asked him, "With whom did you come from Fontanelle to here?" He answered, "Alone".

It was asked him, "Who set (put) you with the English earl?" (i.e. at the service of the English earl) He answered, "No one".

It was asked him, "How did it happen that you went with him? (or: "What made you go with him?). He answered, "He heard me sing in the choir in Santa Maria Formosa (6) and he asked me if I wanted to go to England with him and so I went".

It was asked him, "Did you ask anyone for advice whether you should go or not?" He answered, "I asked my father and my mother and both advised me to go; then they died of plague" (7).

He was asked, "This earl, where is he now?" He answered, "In England".

He was asked, "Was he used to live (or: Was he living) Catholically?" He answered, "No Sir".

It was asked him, "After he invited you, in this town, to go with him, how long did he wait before leaving?" He answered, "On Thursday before Lent, I went to live (or: I moved to) in his house and we left on the following Monday of Carnival" (8).

It was asked me, "On the Friday and Saturday following Thursday before Lent, what food was eaten in his house?" He answered, "Fish".

He was asked, "In England and on the journey to England, what did he eat for Lent >on the journey< and on fast days?" He answered, "Fish on the journey because no meat is served in inns".

It was asked him, "And in England, on fast days, Fridays and Saturdays, what (food) did he eat?" He answered, "Fish and meat".

It was asked him, "Did he let his family eat meat on these days?" He answered, "No Sir".

It was asked him, "Did he let you have meat on fast days?" He answered, "No Sir. In his house he also had an attendant and a manservant who were Catholic".

It was asked him, "Did he ever make (or: let) you listen to sermons of heretics?" He answered, "No Sir".

It was asked him, "Did you voluntarily go to listen to sermons of heretics?" He answered, "No Sir, but I used to go to Mass in the house of the Ambassadors of France and Portugal".

It was asked, "Was there anyone in England who wanted to make you read prohibited books and to teach you the doctrine of heretics?" He answered, "Yes Sir".

It was asked him, "Who were these people?" He answered, "A man called Master Alexandro, I think he has been banned from Venice on account of religion (9). Another one, Ambroso da Venezia (10) who is a music-player (or: musician) of the Queen of England; he has two children and has got married there, even though, as I have heard, his wife lives here in Venice and, so they also say, he used to send money to her. And there are also five Venetian brothers who are musicians of the Queen and play the flute and the viola (11); and there is a Venetian gentlewoman from Ca' Malipiero (12) who has a school and teaches reading and the Italian language (13); and I don't know of anyone else".

It was asked him, "Did you ever speak with the Queen?" He answered, "Yes Sir, and I sang (have sung) in her presence". Being asked, he said, "She wanted to convert me to her faith". Being asked, he said, "Some merchants, that is, master Christopholo da Monte, Milanese, told me that I would be perverted if I stayed here [i.e. in England] and he didn't want me to stay there any longer and he embarked me for Flanders in company with other merchants and he gave me 25 ducats to go away (literally; or: in order that I could leave that place)

It was asked him, "Did you ask the earl for leave?" He answered, "No Sir, because he wouldn't let me go (or: he wouldn't have let me go)".

It was asked him, "On the journey to Antwerp and other places where you have been, did you live Catholically?" He answered, "Yes Sir, I have come with Italian Catholic soldiers".

It was asked him, "After you've come back here, did anyone ask you about the earl with whom you went?" He answered, "No Sir".

It was asked him, "Who associated with the earl in this town?" He answered, "No one here from this town. He used to go to Mass at the Church of the Greeks (14) and he was a person (man) who spoke the Latin and Italian language well".

Being asked whether the earl had ever tried (or: wanted) to convert him to his faith, he answered, "No Sir. He let everyone (people) live as they wanted (do at will)".

After this deposition was made, he was dismissed.

(1) The Church of Santa Marina was demolished in 1810. The square on which the church was situated is still called 'Campo (=square) Santa Marina' and it is north of the famous St. Marks.

(2) In MS, the name 'Milord de Oxford' is repeated in the left-hand margin.

(3) I.e. August 15th.

(4) In Ms, the name 'captain master Zuan Battista da Monte' is repeated in the left-hand margin.

(5) Now Fontanella-Grazioli, north-east of Cremona, on the road to Mantua.

(6) One of the most famous churches in Venice. It is in Renaissance style and is situated north of St. Mark's. The name comes from the Latin 'formosa', 'virtuous and beautiful', an attribute of Our Lady to whom the church is dedicated. Tradition reports that the Virgin appeared in that place in the VII century. The church stands in Campo Santa Maria Formosa, a large square which in the past was, and still is, one of the liveliest centres of outdoor performances, as theatre plays, music, tumblers. Stately palaces built in the 15th and 16th century surround the 'campo'.

(7) The first few cases of plague registered in Venice between July 1575 and February 1576 had been kept secret. The infection broke out violently in the summer of 1576 and went on until the beginning of 1577. Therefore Carnival celebrations were allowed to take place in February-March 1576.

(8) In the year 1576, Easter fell on April 22nd; therefore Ash Wednesday fell on March 7th; Thursday before Lent on March 1st; and Monday of Carnival, the day when Lord Oxford left Venice, on March 5th.

Originally, Carnival was the week before Lent, devoted in Italy and other Roman Catholic countries to revelry, riotous amusement, street masquerades and masked balls. In the various parts of Italy, Carnival started, and still does, on different days: January 6th, the 17th, or February 2nd. The climax takes place on the Thursday before Lent and Shrove-tide.

(9) In the left-hand margin: "Alexander Forlan" and just below it: "Furlan".

(10) In the left-hand margin: "Ambroso da Venezia, a musician of the Queen of England; he has two children and has got married".

(11) In the left-hand margin: "Five Venetian brothers who are musicians of the Queen; they play the flute and the viola".

(12) Malipiero House (Ca' short for "casa", "house") was the home of the Malipiero family. It is situated in Campo Santa Maria Formosa. It was built in the first half of the 16th century. The top floor was added in the 19th century. The Malipiero family is one of the most distinguished aristocratic families in Venice. They number two dogi (Orio, 1178-93) and Pasquale (1457-62), ambassadors, renowned musicians, literary men and generals.

(13) In the left-hand margin: "A Venetian gentlewoman who has a school".

(14) San Giorgio dei Greci (The church of St George of the Greeks) situated east of St Mark's, was and still is the most important Greek-Orthodox church not only in Renaissance Venice but also in Italy and Europe. The Greek community officially founded in 1573 was particularly flourishing at the time of lord Oxford's visit, i.e. two years after the church had been inaugurated. Its printing-house and library housing rare incunabula, manuscripts and books had certainly appeased the earl's thirst for learning. There he also had the opportunity to practise his Greek.

A reason for his attending Mass there was that the Greek-Orthodox liturgy and doctrine had, in the second half of 1500, more points of similarity with the Reformed Church than with Catholicism.