

SUMMARY: The document below is a translation in the Calendar of State Papers Venetian of the report of an audience given by the authorities in Venice to the English ambassador, Sir Henry Wotton (1568–1639), on 29 November 1617, during which the Senate's decision to decline the offer made by Henry de Vere (1593-1625), 18th Earl of Oxford, to raise 6000 men for the service of the Venetian Republic was conveyed to the ambassador.

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.

The Doge mentioned in the report below was Giovanni Bembo (1543-1618).

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. 44-63. See also <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=88665>.

November 29  
Collegio, Secreta  
Esposizioni Principi  
Venetian Archives

102. The ambassador of England was summoned to the Cabinet, and the deliberation of the Senate of the 28th instant was read to him. He said:

I thank your Serenity for the continued confidence shown to me, and I will do my best to undeceive my King, because I understand from letters from England this week that the peace of this province is published in London. For my part, I agree with the common opinion that the intentions of the King of Spain are good, and that the difficulties are caused by certain ministers. However my hope is good, and God grant that it may be converted into faith. My conscience assures me that I have done my best for peace since my return to this charge.

With regard to the Earl of Oxford, he was able to make good his offer owing to the influence of his house and his personal following. I do not know whether he will take your Serenity's reply to the King with him, or send it on.

With regard to Captain Bell, I may say that he has no equal in Christendom as a brave and experienced soldier. I understand that the question of language is a drawback, but he has made considerable progress, and his knowledge of Latin will smooth the way. He

---

was expressly recommended for the purpose by his Majesty, to whose letter I do not know whether a reply has been enclosed in the one written for the Earl, or if a separate one will be sent. He has incurred lavish expenditure on his journey and his stay here. The King granted him power to raise troops.

The Doge replied: The present decision with regard to the Earl was necessary. With respect to the Captain, the difficulty of language is very great. For instance to Candia we only send subjects for military matters who understand the language well.

The ambassador said: I forgot to say that I heard the news about the commissioners with astonishment, which will certainly be shared by his Majesty. If we look at the meaning of the document which declares they are not interested, I say, leaving the Pope out of account, that the Grand Duke according to the use of this city in particular has been excluded with Ferdinand as blotted out (*cazzato*) to employ the very words used.

After returning to say something more about Captain Bell, the ambassador took leave.

[Italian]