

SUMMARY: The document below is a translation in the Calendar of State Papers Venetian of a letter dated 28 January 1618 written from the Hague by Christofforo Surian to the authorities in Venice.

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.

The letter mentions Sir John Vere, the illegitimate son of Oxford's first cousin, John Vere (d.1624) of Kirby Hall, stating that in his youth he was a page to 'His Excellency', Prince Maurice (1567-1625) of Nassau. He also served as Lieutenant to Count John Ernest (1582-1617) of Nassau in the Low Countries, and was a captain in Flanders for 20 years (see Hinds, No. 32). 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. 32, 73, 196, 297, 322, 382 and 579.

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. 108-126. See also <http://british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=88670>.

January 28

Senato

Secreta Dispacci, Signori Stati

Venetian Archives

196. Christofforo Surian, Venetian Secretary in the Netherlands to the Doge and Senate

I wrote to Pasini last Sunday about Studler, saying that if he was still inclined to go and serve your Serenity with the provisions already granted to him, to get him to set out at once. I am awaiting the reply.

They are very sorry here to learn the death of Captain Culena, but expect to hear that your Serenity will have pardoned Captain Steven, as they hear that the French have exercised an evil influence over him. I think it right also to notify your Serenity that they hope you will not allow the Englishman, Lieutenant Colonel John Vere, to leave your service, as his Excellency considers him a good, brave and prudent officer, and is very fond of him,

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as he was his page. When I spoke to him about military matters, he mentioned Vere in such a way that I gathered he would be glad for him to receive the appointment. Some other persons of the English nation have also spoken to me about it.

While fresh preparations for war in Italy are constantly reported, various English gentlemen are staying on here, waiting to hear what will be the upshot of the promise given to the Earl of Oxford about raising a levy of English troops. I am sure that there are two or three gentlemen of that nation here who ought to be engaged, as they have the reputation of being good and experienced soldiers in this country, and if I knew what to say to any Englishman who might speak to me on the matter, I could perform a useful office.

The Hague, the 28th January, 1618.

[Italian]