
SUMMARY: The document below is a letter dated 17 March 1575 written by Oxford to Lord Burghley from Paris.

It appears from the letter that Lord Burghley had earlier written to Oxford of the possibility that his wife might be expecting a child, and in a more recent letter had not only confirmed that this indeed was the case, but had expressed the hope that Oxford would abandon his continental tour and return to England, which Oxford in the letter below declines to do.

Oxford speaks of the letters and funds he has received from Benedict Spinola in England, and of the helpfulness of a Mr Reymondo in Paris, of his plan to travel to Italy by way of Germany rather than through Milan, and of his intention to spend some time with the scholar Johannes Sturm (1507-1589) in Strasbourg, not only on the way to Italy, but also on his return journey.

Oxford mentions that the French King, Henri III, has given him letters of recommendation to the French ambassador in Turkey, and that the Venetian ambassador in Paris, Giovanni Francesco Morosini (1537-1596), has given him letters to the Doge and a number of the ambassador's kinsmen in Venice. For a letter from Morosini dated 12 March 1575 reporting Oxford's arrival in Paris, see Brown, Rawdon and G. Cavendish Bentinck, eds., *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. VII, 1558-1580 (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1890), pp. 527-8.

Oxford states that if the Turks attempt an invasion of Italy, he will try to join the military forces opposing them; however if the Turks do not invade, he plans to spend two or three months travelling to Constantinople and Greece.

As a favour to the English ambassador in Paris, Dr Valentine Dale (c.1520–1589), Oxford passes on the ambassador's complaints concerning his expenses.

Oxford states that one of his officers has requested that some of the money set aside for Oxford's continental tour be used to pay his creditors. However before he left England Oxford had made a settlement setting out a schedule for payment of his creditors, and he states that it should be abided by, rather than he himself be left short of funds on his travels. He also asks Lord Burghley to keep a watchful eye on the officers whom he has put in trust in his absence.

In a postscript Oxford recommends the bearer of his letter, one 'Mr Corbek', to Lord Burghley as someone who has been especially helpful to him. 'Mr Corbek' appears to have been the diplomat Robert Corbet (d.1583), son of Sir Andrew Corbet (d. 16 August 1578), and grandson of Roger Corbet (1501/2 – 20 December 1538), a ward of John de Vere (1442-1513), 13th Earl of Oxford, and Anne (nee Windsor) Corbet. For the wills of Roger Corbet and Anne (nee Windsor) Corbet, see TNA PROB 11/27/408 and TNA PROB 11/34/443. For Robert Corbet (d.1583), see also the will of his uncle, Walter

Corbet (d.1583), a first cousin of Sir Richard Newport (d. 12 September 1570), the owner of a copy of Hall's *Chronicle* containing annotations thought to have been made by Shakespeare. The volume was Loan 61 in the British Library until 2007, was subsequently on loan to Lancaster University Library until 2010, and is now in the hands of a trustee, Lady Hesketh. According to the Wikipedia entry for Sir Richard Newport, the annotated Hall's *Chronicle* is now at Eton College, Windsor. See:

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Richard_Newport_\(died_1570\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Richard_Newport_(died_1570))

Newport's copy of his chronicle, containing annotations sometimes attributed to William Shakespeare, is now in the Library at Eton College, Windsor.

For the annotated Hall's *Chronicle*, see also the will of Sir Richard Newport (d. 12 September 1570), TNA PROB 11/53/456; Keen, Alan and Roger Lubbock, *The Annotator*, (London: Putnam, 1954); and the Annotator page on this website:

<http://www.oxford-shakespeare.com/annotator.html>

My Lord, your letters have made me a glad man, for these last have put me in assurance of that good fortune which your former mentioned doubtfully. I thank God therefore, with your Lordship, that it hath pleased Him to make me a father where your Lordship is a grandfather, and if it be a boy I shall likewise be the partaker with you in a greater contentation, but thereby to take an occasion to return, I am far off from that opinion, for now it hath pleased God to give me a son of my own (as I hope it is), methinks I have the better occasion to travel, sith whatsoever becometh of me I leave behind me one to supply my duty and service either to my prince or else my country.

I thank your Lordship, I have received farther bills of credit and letters of great courtesy from Mr Benedict Spinola. I am also beholding here unto Mr Reymondo that hath helped me greatly with a number of favours, whom I shall desire your Lordship when you have leisure and occasion to give him thanks, for I know the greatest part of his friendship towards me hath been in respect of your Lordship.

For fear of the Inquisition I dare not pass by Milan, the Bishop whereof exerciseth such tyranny, wherefore I take the way of Germany, where I mean to acquaint myself with Sturmius, with whom, after I have passed my journey which now I have in hand, I mean to pass some time.

I have found here this courtesy: the King hath given me his letters of recommendation to his ambassador in the Turk's court. Likewise, the Venetian ambassador that is here, knowing my desire to see those parties, hath given me his letters to the Duke and divers of his kinsmen in Venice to procure me their furtherances to my journey, which I am not yet assured to hold, for if the Turks come, as they be looked for, upon the coast of Italy or

elsewhere, if I may I will see the service; if he cometh not, then perhaps I will bestow two or three months to see Constantinople and some part of Greece.

The English ambassador here greatly complaineth of the dearness of this country, and earnestly hath desired me to crave your Lordship's favour to consider the difference of his time from theirs which were before him. He saith the charges are greater, his ability less; the court removes long and oft; the causes of expenses augmented, his allowance not being increased. But, as concerning these matters, now I have satisfied his desire, I refer them to your Lordship's discretion, that is better experienced than I perhaps informed (faded and illegible) the negotiations of ambassadors.

My Lord, whereas I perceive by your Lordship's letters how hardly money is to be gotten, and that my man writeth that he would fain pay unto my creditors some part of that money which I have appointed to be made over unto me, good my Lord, let rather my creditors bear with me awhile and take their days assigned according to that order I left than I to want in a strange country, unknowing yet what need I may have of money myself. My revenue I appointed with the profits of my lands to pay them as I may, and if I cannot yet pay them as I would, yet as I can I will, but preferring mine own necessity before theirs, and if at the end of my travel I shall have something left of my provision, they shall have it among them, but before I will not disfurnish myself.

Good my Lord, have an eye unto my men that I have put in trust.

Thus making my commendations to your Lordship and my Lady, I commit you to God, and wheresoever I am I rest at your Lordship's commandment. Written the 17th of March.

Edward Oxenford

From Paris.

My Lord, this gentleman, Mr Corbek [=Corbet?], hath given me great cause to like of him, both for his courtesies that he hath shown me in letting me understand the difficulties as well as the safeties of my travel, as also I find him affected both to me and your Lordship. I pray your Lordship that those who are my friends may seem yours, as yours I esteem mine, and given your Lordship's good countenance, and in short, I rest yours.

Endorsed: To the right honourable and his singular good Lord, my Lord Treasurer of England, give these