

SUMMARY: The document below is a letter dated 24 September 1575 from Benedict Spinola (1519/20-1580) to Lord Burghley advising that he is sending a letter to Oxford in Venice by the ordinary post, and there have been no letters received in England from Venice for the past six weeks due to an outbreak of plague at Trent, thus forestalling the conveyance of letters through the Brenner Pass. Oxford also mentions that his letters to England had been turned back because of the plague in a letter to Lord Burghley written on the same day as Benedict Spinola's letter below. See Cecil Papers 160/74:

My good Lord, having looked for your Lordship's letters a great while, at length, when I grew to despair of them, I received two from your Lordship. Three packets which at sundry times I had sent this summer towards England returned back again by reason, the plague being in the passages, none were suffered to pass, but as they came were returned back, which I came not to the knowledge of till my return now to Venice, where I have been grieved with a fever.

For other letters written by Benedict and Pasquale Spinola concerning Oxford's travels on the continent, see TNA 70/136, ff. 113-14; TNA SP 70/137, ff. 251-2; and TNA SP 12/105/50, ff. 121-2.

For the will of Benedict Spinola, see TNA PROB 11/62, ff. 294-5.

For Oxford's purchase of the Great Garden property at Aldgate from Benedict Spinola by indenture dated 15 June 1580, see TNA C 54/1080.

Most illustrious & excellent Sir etc.

Today I am sending your Lordship's letter by the ordinary post to my friends in Venice with order that they give it into the most illustrious Earl's own hand & that they request a reply, from which place of Venice no letters have come for six weeks now because of the hindrance caused by the great plague which there was at Trent where those letters are accustomed to pass, so that no news comes from Italy, & thus it is no marvel if the most illustrious Countess does not have news from her most illustrious husband.

Whenever I hear anything, I will give notice of it to your Excellency, & as well if there comes news which may be worthy of your Excellency, to whom I send enclosed the chapter of news of Genoa and Flanders.

I will make provision of the apricot trees and some other good fruits [=fruit trees], & concerning the sycamores, of which I have no knowledge, I will give the charge thereof to one of my French friends, who will order them in Paris, & I will take care to know the quantity which your Excellency wishes to have of those trees, being bound to do every possible diligence to serve you, provided that the nature of such a tree succeeds in your Excellency's site, somewhat watery and unfavourable, & Master Francis Caron having

caused a few trees of that sort to be brought over, I will endeavour to understand how they have proved, the which will give example to your Excellency, whom I will not fail to remind of the possibilities(?) of the trees called linges [=lindens?], of which in Flanders there is a great abundance, and they are very well-suited for making very beautiful avenues agreeable to your Excellency's mind, those trees loving damp and watery ground, of which trees with great easiness your Excellency can be provided by the ships of the Merchant Adventurers, which come here almost(?) daily, if your Excellency will request they may be given a place in those ships.

The marbles from Carrara for the service of the most serene Queen were all in order some time ago, & conducted to the port of Livorno, where they remain, awaiting ships to load them, & since some English ships are to leave from here in a few days' time for the journey to that place of Livorno, may it please your Excellency to give order here to all the officers of her Majesty that they meet with Mr Smyth, Customer, who by commandment of your Excellency ought specially to give order to all those English ships that they must bring away those marbles, which will be delivered to them by my brother, Pasquale Spinola, according to the bill which I will give to the said Customer, & that he agree here with those ships for the hire so that they will not charge more than is reasonable, considering that, being stones which will serve for ballast, they will be serviceable to those ships.

Signor Cavaliero Giraldi, as his secretary has reported to me, is very anxious to understand from me when your Excellency will come to London, & has requested me to inform him of it. It seems he has to treat with your Excellency about the usual practice of Portugal, of which I understand that this knight may demonstrate better will and hope than the usual. It has now seemed [+good?] to me to apprise your most illustrious Lordship of it, so that, you drawing near here & seeming to that Signor Cavaliero to give audience to him, that I may know how to conduct myself to cause him to understand from me where your Excellency will be, to whom, as your most obliged servant, I continually offer myself most ready to serve you & to obey you in all that I can and wish, praying you to keep me in your usual good grace, & the Lord God that he grant you long health and content. From London the 24 of September 1575.

Your most illustrious Lordship's most affectionate servant,

Benedetto Spinola

f. 173r

1 Ill{ustrissi}mo & ecc{ellentissi}mo sig{no}re & cij

2 Mando questo giorno co' la posta ordinaria la l{itte}ra de v{ostra} ecc{ellenz}a alli mei amici

3 de vinetia con ordine la diano in prop{ri}a mano al Ill{ustrissi}mo s{ign}or Conte &
che li

4 richiedino la risposta/ di quale luogo di vinetia no' vengano littere

5 da sei settimane in qua per l'impedim{en}to Causato dalla grande Peste

6 che era a Trento oue sogliono passare esse litere, dimodo che non

7 vengono noue Alcune d'italia &perCio' no' si marauiglij la Ill{ustrissi}ma

8 sig{no}ra Contezza se no' ha noua del suo Ill{ustrissi}mo marito, quando ne intendero

9 cosa alcuna ne daro Auiso a v{ostra} ecc{ellenz}a &cossi se venirano noue che

10 siano degne di v{ostra} ecc{ellenz}a, Alla quale mando sotto questa Il capitolo delle

11 noue digenoa, e di fiandra/ Faro prouigione delli Abricochi

12 e qualche altri boni frutti, &Circa li Cicamore del quale Io no' ho alcuna

13 cognitione, ne daro la Cura ad vno mio amico francese che li Comettera

14 apariggi, & haro caro sapere laquantita' che di essi Alberi v{ostra} ecc{ellenz}a

15 desidera hauere douendo fare ogni possibile dilligentia per seruirla

16 pur' che la natura di tale Albero Rieschi in lo luogo di v{ostra} ecc{ellenz}a, alquanto

17 Acquoso e contrario, & hauendone M{esse}r franc{esc}oCaro' fatto venire alcuni

18 Alberi ricercaro de intendere como li siano prouati, il che dara esempio

19 a v{ostra} ecc{ellenz}a, Alla quale no' mancaro de racordarli, la sorte delli alberi

20 chiamati linges, diquali in fiandra e' grande abbondanza e sono molto

21 propitij per fare bellissimi viali conforme l'animo di v{ostra} ecc{ellenz}a Amando

22 essi Alberi Il terreno humido e acquoso, diquale Alberi con molta

23 facilita v{ostra} ecc{ellenz}a puo esserne proueduto co' le nauì delli mercanti

24 Auenturieri che vengano qua adrittura giornalm{en}te se v{ostra} ecc{ellenz}a

25 Richiedera li sia dato Il luogo in esse nauì/ Li marmori di Carr{a}ra

26 per seruitio della ser{enissi}ma Regina sono tutti in ordine piu tempo fa

f. 173v

1 & condotti al porto di Ligorno, ove stano aspettando naue per Carrigarli

2 & douendo diqua Andare alcune naue inglese fra Alcuni giorni, per Il

3 viaggio di esso luoco de ligorno, piacia a v{ostra} ecc{ellenz}a dare ordine qua

4 Alli vfitiali di sua M{aes}ta che se trouino co' M{esse}r smyth costumero

5 Il quale di Comandam{en}to de v{ostra} ecc{ellenz}a debba spetialmente dare ordine

6 a tutte esse naue inglese che debbino leuare essi marmari che li sarano

7 consignati dal mio fratello Pasquale Spinola, secondo la nota che Io

8 daro al detto costumero, &che si acordi qua co' esse naue per lo nolito

9 Accio no' facino pagare piu del ragioneuole, poi che siando pietre che

10 seruirano per balestre, venira ad acomodare a esse naue/

11 Il s{ign}or Caualliero Giraldi secondo mi ha riferito Il suo segretario, Ricerca

12 molto de intendere da me, quando v{ostra} ecc{ellenza} venira a Londra, & mi ha

13 fatto istanza adouerlodi Cio Aduertire, Pare habbi a trattare con

14 v{ostra} ecc{ellenz}a circa la solita pratica diportugallo, della quale comprendo

15 che esso cau{alie}ro dimostri miglior voglia e sper{an}za del solito; hor(?) mi e'

16 parso darne auiso a v{ostra} Ill{ustrissi}ma Sig{no}ria Accio che douendo
aprossimarsi

17 qua & parendoli di dare audienza a esso s{ign}or Cau{alie}ro ch' Io sappi como

18 gouernarmi a farli intendere come da me, oue v{ostra} ecc{ellenz}a si trouera

19 Alla quale siCome suo obligatiss{im}o ser{uito}re diContinuo mi offero
promptiss{imo}o

20 a seruirla & vbedirla in tutto cio che Io puosso e voglio, pregandola

21 mi conserui in la sua solita buona gratia, &al s{ign}or dio che l' conceda

22 longa salute e Contento, Da Londra a 24 d' settembre 1575/

D{ i} V{ostra} Ill{ustrissi}ma sig{nor}ia

Vero aff{ezzionatissi}mo ser{uito}re

Benedetto Spinola

Endorsed: (1) All' Ill{ustrissi}mo & ecc{ellentissi}mo sig{no}re, Il s{ign}or Gram
trez{orie}ro d'ingl{ite}rra &c; s{ign}or e p{ad}rone mio sempre oss{ervandissi}mo
[=To the most illustrious & most excellent Sir, the Grand Treasurer of England etc.,
always my most honourable lord and master; (2) 24 Sep{tember} 1575, Mr Benedict
Spinola to my L{ord}, Advertisements from Venice and Genoa