

SUMMARY: The document below consists of an extract, dated 9 July 1579, from the Acts of the Privy Council directing the Lord Mayor and Recorder of the city of London to investigate complaints by Rocco Bonetti (d.1587) of violence towards him by English fencers in London. Bonetti's skill as a fencer is alluded to in Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, where he is described as 'the very butcher of a silk button'.

Although Aylward, in referring to this document, transcribes Bonetti's surname as 'Vonetty', it appears to be 'Bonetty' in the original. In addition, Aylward states that one Francis was 'living' in the Blackfriars and one Isaac was 'living' in the Whitefriars, whereas the original document states that Francis was 'teaching' in the Blackfriars and that Isaac was 'teaching' in the Whitefriars. See Aylward, J.D., *The English Master of Arms*, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1956), p. 44. Aylward identifies the two fencers as Francis Calvert and Isaac Kennard. For mention of Francis Calvert's fencing school at the Blackfriars in connection with a fray which occurred at the Blackfriars on Monday, 18 June 1582, between Thomas Knyvet (1545/6-1622) and his men, and two men, Gastrell and Horsley, who purported to be Oxford's men, see TNA SP 12/154/11, ff. 20-1.

The document below mentions Bonetti's second wife. His first wife, Eleanor (nee Burbage), had died in 1574.

For Rocco Bonetti, see the will of his brother-in-law, Robert Burbage (d.1575), TNA PROB 11/57/448, the allusion to him in the anonymous *News From Heaven And Hell*, and direct references to him or discussion of him in the following documents on this website:

Folger MS L.b.37; Folger MS L.b.352; Folger MS L.b.356; Folger MS L.b.357; Folger MS L.b.446; Loseley MS No. 1396; BL Cotton Caligula C/VI; BL Cotton Galba C/V, f. 37; BL Cotton Galba C/V, f. 39; BL Cotton Titus B/VII, f. 225; BL Lansdowne 830, f. 249; TNA PC 2/10, f. 358; TNA PC 2/10, ff. 395-6; TNA PC 2/12, ff. 261-2; TNA SP 12/175, f. 104; TNA SP 46/125, f. 130; TNA SP 52/31, f. 34; TNA SP 78/9, f. 90; SHC LM/COR/3/372; SHC LM/COR/3/382; SHC LM/COR/3/383; SHC LM/COR/3/384; SHC LM/COR/3/386; SHC LM/COR/3/387; SHC LM/COR/3/388; TNA PROB 11/62/182; and TNA PROB 11/98/226.

ix July at the Star Chamber

Lord Chancellor  
Lord Treasurer  
Lord Admiral  
Lord Chamberlain  
Mr Treasurer  
Mr Vice-chamberlain

---

Both Mr Secretaries  
Sir Ralph Sadler  
Sir Walter Mildmay

A letter to the Lord Mayor & the Recorder of the city of London, that whereas their Lordships upon complaints made unto [-unto] then [sic?] by Rocco Bonetty(?) of the injurious dealing & behaviour of the common fencers of the city towards him, they had written sundry letters unto them requiring them to call the said fencers before them and to take order for the poor man's quietness & safety, which as it appeareth hath taken little or none effect hitherto, whereat their Lordships do not a little marvel;

Forasmuch as the said Rocco hath at this present exhibited a new complaint of the insolences and disorders of the said fencers used towards him & his wife, as he is particularly to show and prove against them, they are therefore required to call such of the fencers before them as the said Rocco shall nominate unto them, and especially one Francis teaching in the Blackfriars & one Isaac teaching in the Whitefriars, and upon examination of such informations as the said Rocco shall deliver in against them, the same appearing true, to commit them unto prison, there to remain until their Lordships' pleasure be further signified, and in the meantime to certify their Lordships what they find.