

SUMMARY: The document below is the Prerogative Court of Canterbury copy of the will, dated 12 July 1571 and proved 11 November 1574, of Anthony Bassano, one of the members of the Bassano family who were the Queen's musicians and who were referred to by Oxford's page, Orazio Cuoco, in his testimony before the Venetian Inquisition. For the Bassano family, see the *ODNB* entry for Alvisio Bassano (d.1554). For Orazio Cuoco's testimony before the Inquisition, see Archivio di Stato di Venezia, Savi all'Eresia, Santo Uffizio. b. 41 on this website.

According to the *ODNB* the testator was in England in 1531, returned to Venice, and came back to England in 1538 as a 'maker of divers instruments of music'. In 1540 the Bassanos were officially appointed to the English court as 'brothers in the science or art of music'. In 1552 they jointly purchased a house 'in Mark Lane where they set up an instrument making shop; Anthony's descendants owned the property into the eighteenth century'.

For the will of the testator's brother, Baptista Bassano (d.1576), see TNA PROB 11/58/261. For the will of the testator's brother, Jasper Bassano (d.1577), see TNA PROB 11/59/260.

As noted in the will below, the testator married a wife named Ellen, who did not long survive him. In his will he names five sons, Mark Anthony, Arthur, Edward, Andrew and Jerome, and two daughters, Elizabeth and Lucrece. It would appear to have been the testator's five sons whom Oxford's page, Orazio Cuoco, referred to in his testimony before the Venetian Inquisition in 1577:

And there are also five Venetian brothers who are musicians of the Queen and play the flute and the viola.

From the *ODNB*:

Anthony's sons Mark Anthony (1546/7–1599) and Andrea (1554–1626) served in the sackbut consort; and Arthur (1547–1624), Edward (1551–1615), and Jeronimo Bassano (1559–1635), born on 11 March 1559, served in the recorder consort.

For the Bassano family, whose members were merchants as well as musicians, see Selfridge-Field, Eleanor, *Venetian Instrumentalists in England: A Bassano Chronicle (1536-1660)*, (Florence: Leo S. Olschki Editore, 1979), available online.

Referring to the testator, Selfridge-Field speculates that Shakespeare may have known the Bassanos:

Admittedly the names "Bassanio" and "Antonio", used for the Venetian traders in The Merchant of Venice (1595), provide an interesting, if accidental, tribute to the original head of the English lineage.

For the Bassano family, see also Woods, Susanne, *Lanyer: A Renaissance Woman Poet*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 1-9 at:

<https://books.google.ca/books?id=PHz8zveVvL4C&pg=PA4&lpg=PA4&dq=%22Joseph+Holland%22+%22Angela%22&source=bl&ots=aIFNv3AQZD&sig=qgxZTiSCb66myd6ZrMHYbo8h6PU&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0CDQQ6AEwBmoVChMIgYHMjI3PxwIVyi-IC3bbgmL#v=onepage&q=%22Joseph%20Holland%22%20%22Angela%22&f=false>

RM: T{estamentum} Anthonij Bassanye

[f. 325r] In the name of God, Amen. I, Anthony Bassanye, one of the Queen's Majesty's musicians, being whole of mind and perfect remembrance, lauds and praise be given to God, yet sick of body, make and ordain this my present testament and last will in manner and form following, that is to say:

First I will, give and bequeath my soul to Our Lord Jesus Christ, my Maker, Saviour and Redeemer, by whose death my trust and confidence is to be saved and to be an heritor of the kingdom of heaven, and my body to be buried in such place as it shall please God to provide for me;

Item, I give, will and bequeath to Ellen, my well-beloved wife, all my goods, movables, utensils, household stuff, ready money, plate, jewels and other my substance whatsoever they be or wheresoever they be found, as well within the realm of England as elsewhere, to have, use and enjoy the same at her will and pleasure during her natural life, and which shall remain at her death, my desire and will to her is to leave the same equally among my sons to remain to them and their assigns forever;

Item, I will and my mind is and I give and bequeath to my said wife to have and enjoy together with my children in such sort as I now occupy my mansion house or dwelling-house during her natural life, so that she do not marry, and after her decease I give, will and bequeath the same house with all and singular the appurtenances to Mark Anthony Bassanye, Arthur Bassanye, Edward Bassanye, Andrew Bassanye and Jerome Bassanye, my five sons, equally among them to remain [-to remain] to them, their heirs, assigns forever, equally amongst them to th' intent they may all dwell and inhabit in the same as loving brethren, and that if it shall fortune any of them go about to sell his inheritance of and in the same, that then and from thenceforth his or their part so going about to sell or selling his part in the same to lose from him and his heirs forever such inheritance as he ought to have and enjoy hereby forever, without any condition and the same so to continue without any partition successively;

Item, I will that my wife shall pay to the use of my daughter, Lucrece, fifty pounds which I promised to her at such time as the same Lucrece shall have occasion to occupy the same and when my wife may pay the same at her commodity, and I will that her husband

shall put in good sureties that the same shall remain in good men's hands to the use of my said daughter and her children;

Item, I will that my said wife during her natural life shall have and enjoy all my house in Venice with the appurtenances without let of any of my sons, and that after her decease the same shall remain to my said sons equally and to their heirs and assigns forever without partition or division;

Item, I will that my daughter, Elizabeth, shall inhabit and dwell in my house wherein I dwell during her natural life if her husband repair not to her, and that my said wife and sons shall find to her meat, drink and other necessaries in such sort as she is now found, used and enjoyeth, if it please her so still to [f. 325v] have them;

And of this my testament and last will I make my executrix my said wife;

Of overseer thereof, Baptist Bathanye [sic?], my brother, whom I desire to be aiding and assisting to my said wife as my trust is in him and hath been;

Item, I give to the same Elizabeth, my daughter, in my lifetime all such jewels and other goods as appertained to her late husband or to her whatsoever, whatsoever the same are, that she may enjoy them forever without let of my executrix or any of my children;

In witness whereof hereunto I have set my seal given the 12th day of July 1571 and in the 13th year of the reign of our Sovereign Lady Elizabeth by the grace of God Queen of England, France and Ireland, Defender of the Faith etc. Per me Anthoniu{m} Bassanye. Humphrey Brooke. Sigillauit subscripsit et deliberauit in p{rese}ntia Stephani Hethe(?) p{rese}ntia mei Edwardi Hintoun(?) s{er}uieu{ti} dicti Notarij et in p{rese}ntia Richardi Cragge.

Vndecimo die mensis Novembris Anno domini mill{es}imo Quingentesimo Septuagesimo Quarto Emanauit Commissio Marco Anthonio Bassanye Arthuro Edwardo Andree et Ieronimo Bassanye filijs naturalib{us} et l{egi}timis dicti defunct{i} ad administrand{um} bona ipsius defunct{i} ad viam intestati deceden{tis} pro eo q{uo}d Elena Rel{i}c{t}a et Executric{is} in eodem testamento nominat{a} mortem obijt anteq{ua}m onus &c in se assumpsit &c de bene &c ad sancta dei Eu{a}ngelia Iurat{is} &c

[=On the eleventh day of the month of November in the year of the Lord the thousand five hundred seventy-fourth a grant issued to Mark Anthony Bassanye, Arthur, Edward, Andrew and Jerome Bassanye, natural and legitimate sons of the said deceased, to administer the goods of the said deceased by way of an intestacy, for that Ellen, relict and executrix named in the same testament, died before taking upon herself the burden etc., sworn etc. on the Holy Gospels to well etc.]