

SUMMARY: The document below is a letter dated 12 February 1583 from King James to Queen Elizabeth on behalf of the master of fence, Rocco Bonetti (d.1587), who had connections to Oxford through the lease of rooms in the Blackfriars.

Bonetti is alluded to in Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* as 'the very butcher of a silk button'.

For the letter below see also Thorpe, Markham John, ed., *Calendar of the State Papers Relating to Scotland*, (London: Longman, Brown, Green, 1858), Vol. I, p. 434 at:

https://books.google.ca/books?id=1WwoAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA434&lpg=PA434&dq=%22Rocho+de+Bonettis%22&source=bl&ots=KkDyKF26am&sig=5UVcVfV7Zf98SO7fKum1_PXYZHw&hl=en&sa=X&ei=oQgLVdGPB5PkoATk04GIBA&ved=0CCQQ6AEwAA#v=onepage&q=%22Rocho%20de%20Bonettis%22&f=false

The letter is also mentioned by Akrigg, who refers to Bonetti as 'Pocho de Bonettis'. See Akrigg, G.P.V., *Letters of King James VI & I*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), p. 460.

Bonetti had been in Scotland in the King's service on the recommendation of the Duke of Brabant. The latter would appear to be Queen Elizabeth's suitor, Francois (d. 10 June 1584), Duke of Alencon, youngest son of Queen Catherine de Medici, who in February 1582 had been installed as Duke of Brabant, despite the fact that the title was at that time held by King Philip II of Spain.

For a letter dated 26 April 1583 from the French ambassador in England, Michel de Castelnau (c.1520-1592), Sieur de Mauvissiere, to Sir Francis Walsingham (c.1532-1590) on behalf of Bonetti stating that since Bonetti's return from Scotland he has been 'threatened by the people of the Earl of Oxford', see TNA SP 78/9, f. 90 on this website, and:

<http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/foreign/vol17/pp268-281>.

It may be that the 'threats' to Bonetti by Oxford's people had to do with Oxford's opposition to the French marriage.

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 PC

2/12, ff. 261-2; TNA SP 12/175, f. 104; TNA SP 46/125, f. 130; 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.

Right excellent, right high and mighty Princess, our dearest sister and cousin, in our heartiest manner we recommend us unto you.

The bearer hereof, Rocho de Bonettia, Italian, being come into this country recommended to us by our cousin, the Duke of Brabant, after some months spent in attending on our service has upon certain news of some particulars that touches him lately falling out at London taken purpose to pass thither to see the manner and to take order with the rest of his affairs(?) which he there left behind him, where fearing to find the malice and evil will of certain his unfriends disposed to do him some inconvenience he has procured of me the promise(?) to request you, as we do earnestly, to have him and his honest advice in favourable recommendation, and to assist him with your authority and favour against such as unlawfully and by way of deed will go about to do him any harm or inconvenience in his person, goods or otherways, that under your protection he may in safety of his life haunt and repair to whatsoever parts(?) he shall have ado within your realm, and have your favour & good countenance in his advice to help him to the furtherance thereof as you shall see occasion, wherein for his honest behaviour here with us you shall do us no less thankful pleasure nor if it were to any of our own.

Thus, right excellent, right high and mighty Princess, our dearest sister and cousin, we commit you in the protection of the Almighty.

From Holyrood House this 12 of February 1582, and of our reign the 16th year.

Your most loving & affectionate brother & cousin,

James R.

Postscript in King James' hand: Madame & dearest sister, I pray you remember to help this poor bearer for my cause.

Endorsed: (1) 12 May 1583, to her Majesty from the King of Scots on the behalf of Rocho Bonetti; (2) To the right high, right excellent and mighty Princess, our dearest sister and cousin, the Queen of England.