

SUMMARY: The document below is a translation in the Calendar of State Papers Foreign summarizing 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 the fencing master, Rocco Bonetti (d.1587), stating that since Bonetti's return from Scotland he has been 'threatened by the people of the Earl of Oxford'. See:

<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; TNA SP 52/31, f. 34; 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.

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'.

Signor Roco, the present bearer, having addressed himself to me on his return from Scotland where he has been staying for some time, has requested me to write to you begging you to give him your aid and favour in any recourse he might have to you to recover the goods of his wife, who died last year, and a trunk with some clothing and leather articles which have been taken from his boy.

Further he tells me that he is threatened by the people of the Earl of Oxford, which puts him in great trouble and despair of ever being able to live securely in this realm if you do not kindly help him according to the courtesy which you are wont to use to everyone, and especially to those of his nation. Please help him so far as you deem just and reasonable.

London, 26 April 1583.

[French]