

SUMMARY: The document below is the copy on the Close Rolls of a recognizance in the amount of £1600 acknowledged by Oxford to Richard Stonley on 5 March 1580 in connection with indentures of the same date.

By licence dated 1 December 1579 Oxford had been authorized to alienate Doddinghurst Park to Richard Stonley, reserving the jointure of Oxford's wife, Anne (see TNA C 66/1194, m. 34), and by a fine in the Court of Common Pleas dated 20 January 1580 clear title to lands in Doddinghurst passed from Oxford to Stonley (see TNA CP 25/2/131/1676/22ELIZIHIL, Item 8).

By another licence dated 1 March 1580 Oxford was authorized to alienate the manor of Doddinghurst to Richard Stonley (see TNA C 66/1194, m. 16), and by a fine in the Court of Common Pleas dated 18 April 1580 clear title to the manor of Doddinghurst passed from Oxford to Stonley (see TNA CP 25/2/131/1677/22ELIZIEASTER, Item 19).

The recognizance below appears to relate to the latter of the two sales.

Richard Stonley (d.1600) of London and Doddinghurst, who held an appointment for life as one of the four Tellers of the Exchequer, was the first recorded purchaser of Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis*:

Richard Field entered Venus and Adonis in the Register at Stationers' Hall on 18 April 1593. Less than two months later, an elderly gentleman, Richard Stonley, Esq., saw the poem on the stalls at the sign of the White Greyhound in Paul's Churchyard, and bought a copy for sixpence. One of the four tellers of the Exchequer, Stonley had a London house in Aldersgate, but spent his weekends on his Doddinghurst estate in Essex; at the advanced age of seventy-seven this civil servant who had spent his whole career dealing with Crown finances found himself imprisoned in the Fleet because of massive personal debt. A figure of consequence in his own day, but later forgotten, Stonley has the minor distinction of being the first recorded purchaser of Shakespeare's first publication.

See Schoenbaum, Samuel, *William Shakespeare: A Compact Documentary Life*, rev. ed., (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), pp. 175-6.

LM: Recognizance between the Earl of Oxford and Stonley

Edward de Vere, Earl of Oxford, Great Chamberlain of England, Viscount Bulbeck & Lord of Badlesmere & Scales, having appeared personally before the Lady Queen in her Chancery, acknowledged himself to owe to Richard Stonley of London, esquire, one thousand & six hundred pounds of good & lawful money of England, to be paid to the same Richard or his designated attorney, heirs, executors or assigns;

And if he shall not have done [+so], the foresaid Earl for himself, his heirs, executors & administrators wishes & grants by these presents that the said thousand & six hundred pounds be levied to the use & behoof of the forenamed Richard Stonley, his heirs, executors & assigns, of the goods, chattels, lands, tenements, possessions & hereditaments of the foresaid Earl, his heirs, executors & administrators, wheresoever they may be found within the kingdom of England;

Witness the said Lady Queen at Westminster on the fifth day of March in the twenty-second year of the reign of our Lady Elizabeth by the grace of God of England, France & Ireland Queen, Defender of the Faith etc.

The condition of this recognizance is such that if the above-bound Earl of Oxenford, his heirs, executors and administrators and every of them do well and truly hold, perform, observe, fulfil and keep all and every the covenants, grants, articles and agreements which on the part and behalf of the said Earl, his heirs, executors and administrators and every or any of them are or ought to be performed, observed, fulfilled and kept mentioned, comprised and specified in a pair of indentures bearing date the day of the date of these presents made between the said Earl on thone party and the above-named Richard Stonley on thother party according to the tenor, effect, purport and true meaning of the same indentures, that then this present recognizance to be void and of none effect, or else it to stand and abide in full strength and virtue.

LM: *Recognitio inter Oxonie Comitem et Stonley*

1 Edwardus de Veer Comes Oxonie magnus Camerarius Anglie Vicecomes Bulbecke & dominus de Badlesmere & Scales

2 coram domina Regina in Cancellaria sua personaliter constitutus recognouit se debere Richardo Stonley de London Armigero

3 Mille & Sexcentas libras bone & legalis monete Anglie Soluendas eidem Richardo aut suo certo attornato heredibus executoribus

4 vel assignatis suis Et nisi fecerit predictus Comes pro se heredibus executoribus & administratoribus suis vult & concedit per

5 presentes quod dicte Mille & Sexcente libre leuentur ad opus & vsum prefati Richardi Stonley heredum executorum & assignatorum

7 suorum de bonis catallis terris tenementis possessionibus & hereditamentis predicti Comitum heredum executorum & administratorum

8 suorum vbicumque fuerint inuentis infra Regnum Anglie Teste dicta domina Regina
apud Westmonasterium quinto die Marcij Anno

8 regni domine nostre Elizabethhe dei gracia Anglie ffrancie & Hibernie Regine fidei
defensoris &c vicesimo secundo