

SUMMARY: The document below is the last will and testament, dated 20 October 1569 and proved 12 October 1575, of Anthony Stapleton (d.1574?) of the Inner Temple, who acted as legal counsel to Oxford's father, John de Vere (1516-1562), 16th Earl of Oxford, and who was related to the dedicatees of both parts of Robert Greene's *Mamillia*.

CONNECTIONS TO THE EARLS OF OXFORD

In her 1537 will Elizabeth (née Scrope), Dowager Countess of Oxford, widow of John de Vere (1442-1513), 13th Earl of Oxford, bequeathed the testator ten pounds 'towards his learning at the common law'. For her will, see TNA PROB 11/27/144. For the relationship between the testator and the Dowager Countess through the latter's first husband, William Beaumont (d. 20 December 1508), 2nd Viscount Beaumont, see Blott, Walter, *A Chronicle of Blemundsbury*, (South Norwood: John Woolnough, 1892), p. 250 at:

<https://books.google.ca/books?id=QhU-AQAAMAAJ&pg=PA250>

For the relationship between William Beaumont (d. 20 December 1508), 2nd Viscount Beaumont, and the Stapleton family see also Selby, Walford D., ed., *The Genealogist*, New Series, (London: George Bell, 1886), Vol. III, p. 287 at:

https://books.google.ca/books?id=_59IAQAAMAAJ&pg=RA1-PA287

The testator was educated at the Inner Temple, and was active in its affairs throughout his life. He 'rarely missed a parliament' of the Inner Temple, was Reader in 1543, 1544, and 1553, 'and held the highest offices', serving as Treasurer during the years 1555-7, and as Governor in 1555 and 1566. Among his legal clients were Henry Percy, 5th Earl of Northumberland; his paternal uncle, Sir Brian Stapleton (d. 2 April 1550); John de Vere (1516-1562), 16th Earl of Oxford; and the Dean and Chapter of Westminster, who paid him a retainer of 40s a year. For a Star Chamber suit in which an Anthony Stapleton, likely the testator, is described as the servant of Sir Brian Stapleton, see TNA STAC 2/25/47.

The testator was granted an annuity by the 16th Earl of Oxford on 3 June 1544. See TNA C 142/136/12:

And further the foresaid jurors say that the foresaid late Earl, by his deed sealed by his seal at arms & subscribed by his own hand dated the third [+day] of June in the 36th year [=3 June 1544] of the reign of the late King Henry the Eighth, as well for good & praiseworthy counsel to him by Anthony Stapleton of the Inner Temple, gentleman, given & to be given, gave to the same Anthony a certain yearly rent of 20 marks sterling issuing of his manor of Thorncombe in the county of Devon, to have & perceive the foresaid yearly rent to the forenamed Anthony & his assigns during the life of the same Anthony at the feasts of Saint Michael & the Annunciation of Blessed Mary the Virgin by equal

portions, with a clause of distraint if payment be not made as above, as by the said deed to the foresaid jurors upon the taking of this inquisition in manifest evidences more fully appears.

See also Swales, R.J.W., *Local Politics and the Parliamentary Representation of Sussex 1529-1558*, Vol. 2, pp. 433-7, available as a pdf file online at:

[https://research-information.bristol.ac.uk/en/theses/local-politics-and-the-parliamentary-representation-of-sussex-15291558\(752f0823-b9d1-4d87-879f-3096f1440816\).html](https://research-information.bristol.ac.uk/en/theses/local-politics-and-the-parliamentary-representation-of-sussex-15291558(752f0823-b9d1-4d87-879f-3096f1440816).html)

Swales notes that the testator's annuity from the 16th Earl of Oxford is recorded for the years 1550-1 and 1553-4.

Legal counsel also to the Earl of Oxford (d. 1562), he signed the will the Earl made in 1548 and received an annuity of £13.6s. 8d. for his services, recorded for the years 1550 to 1551 and 1553 to 1554.

As noted above, the testator was a witness to the will dated 1 February 1549 extorted from the 16th Earl by the Protector Somerset (see TNA C 66/848). In 1544 he was appointed Recorder for Colchester, perhaps through the 16th Earl's influence, and in the same year was granted the reversion of the office of Town Clerk of London, although he was not able to take up the position until 24 July 1570. By the early 1550s he was a member of the 16th Earl of Oxford's council. In 1554 he was elected to Parliament for East Grinstead.

FAMILY BACKGROUND

For the pedigree of the Stapleton family, see Foster, *Pedigrees of the County Families of Yorkshire*, Vol II, (London: W. Wilfred Head, 1874), at:

<http://archive.org/stream/pedigreesofcount02fost#page/n187/mode/2up>

For the pedigree of Stapleton of Carleton see Clay, J.W., ed., *Dugdale's Visitation of Yorkshire with Additions*, (Exeter: William Pollard, 1899), p. 166 at:

<https://archive.org/stream/dugdalesvisitati01dugd#page/166/mode/2up>

For the will dated 1 January 1545 of the testator's uncle, Sir Brian Stapleton (d. 2 April 1550) of Burton Joyce, who inherited the Carleton estates, see Clay, John William, *Testamenta Eboracensia*, (Durham: Andrews and Co., 1902), Vol. VI, p. 217 at:

<https://archive.org/stream/aselectionofwill06surtooft#page/216/mode/2>

Testator's grandparents

The testator was the grandson of Sir Brian Stapleton (d. 16 December 1496), the head of the Carleton branch of the Stapleton family, by his first wife, Joan Lovell (d. before 1508), sister and coheir of Francis Lovell (d.1488), Lord Lovell, and niece of William Beaumont (d. 20 December 1508), 2nd Viscount Beaumont. See Selbry, *supra*, p. 287, Foster, *supra*, and Norcliffe, Charles Best, ed., *The Visitation of Yorkshire in the Years 1563 and 1564*, (London: Harleian Society, 1881), Vol. XVI, p. 296 at:

<https://archive.org/stream/visitationofyork00flow#page/296/mode/2up>

Testator's parents

According to the History of Parliament, the testator was the third son of George Stapleton (d. 25 March 1564) of Rempstone, Nottinghamshire, by Margaret Gaskill, daughter and coheir of William Gaskill (d.1485) of Rolleston, Nottinghamshire, by Amphyllis Neville, daughter and heir of John Neville, esquire, of Sutton in the Marsh, Lincolnshire. See:

<https://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1509-1558/member/stapleton-anthony-1514-74>

The testator mentions his father in the will below:

Item, I will and bequeath unto my well-beloved wife, Alice Stapleton, for term of her life my manor of East Leake otherwise called Great Leake with th' appurtenances in the county of Nottingham . . . which lately were th' inheritance of George Stapleton, esquire, my late father, deceased.

See also the will of the testator's grandfather, William Gaskill, TNA PROB 11/7/243, and Richardson, Douglas, *Plantagenet Ancestry*, 2nd ed., 2011, Vol. II, p. 618 at:

<https://books.google.ca/books?id=kjme027UeagC&pg=RA1-PA618>

The Stapleton pedigree in Foster, *supra*, states that there were two Anthony Stapletons, and if so, it appears Foster confused the testator, who was the son of George Stapleton and was Treasurer of the Inner Temple in 1555, with his first cousin, another Anthony Stapleton, who was the son of Sir Brian Stapleton (d. 2 April 1550), by his second wife, Joan Basset, the daughter of Thomas Basset of North Luffenham, Rutlandshire.

For the pedigree of Bassett of North Luffenham, see Armytage, George John, ed., *The Visitation of the County of Rutland in the Year 1618-19*, (London: Harleian Society, 1870), Vol. III, p. 18 at:

<https://books.google.ca/books?id=eawKAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA18>

Testator's siblings

In the will below the testator mentions two brothers and two married sisters:

-Gabriel Stapleton.

-William Stapleton.

-Dorothy Stapleton, whose husband was surnamed Thetford.

-Elizabeth Stapleton, who married William Aston of Rufford, Nottinghamshire.

According to Norcliffe, *supra*, the testator had two other married sisters, Frideswide Stapleton, who married John Holywell, and Jane Stapleton, who married firstly Henry Mainwaring of Cheshire, and secondly Edward Maxe of Northamptonshire, as well as other brothers and sisters who died without issue.

MARRIAGES AND ISSUE***First marriage***

The testator married firstly, by licence dated 14 August 1544, Joan Dormer, the daughter of Sir Michael Dormer, Lord Mayor of London. See Foster, Joseph, ed., *London Marriage Licences 1521-1869*, (London: Bernard Quaritch, 1887), p. 1279 at:

<https://archive.org/stream/londonmarriageli00fost#page/n669/mode/2up>

Stapleton, Anthony, of the Inner Temple, London, and Joanna Burlace, of St. Martin-in-the-Vintry, London, widow. 14 Aug. 1544. F.

Before her marriage to the testator, Joan Dormer had been twice married, firstly to James Bolney (d.1536), by whom she had a daughter, Agnes Bolney, and secondly to Edward Borlase (d.1544). For the will of James Bolney, in which he mentions his wife, Joan Dormer, and his children, Agnes Bolney, Winifred Bolney and Edward Bolney, and 'the child now being in my wife's womb', see TNA PROB 11/25/554. For the will of Edward Borlase, in which he mentions his wife, Joan Dormer, see TNA PROB 11/30/136. For the will of the testator's father-in-law, Sir Michael Dormer (d.1546), see TNA PROB 11/30/546.

See also a 1546 lawsuit involving the testator and his wife, Joan, as executrix of Edward Borlase:

<http://aalt.law.uh.edu/Indices/CP40Indices/CP40no1127/CP40no1127Cty.htm>

and:

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<http://www.oxford-shakespeare.com/>

http://aalt.law.uh.edu/AALT1/H8/CP40no1127/aCP40no1127fronts/IMG_1107.htm

1546 Burlacy, Edward, of London, mercer, executors of; (Stapleton, Anthony, esq; Joan his wife).

According to the History of Parliament and Norcliffe, *supra*, p. 296, the testator had two sons by his first wife:

* **Michael Stapleton**, who died without issue.

* **Amyas Stapleton**, who died without issue.

Second marriage

The testator married secondly Alice Roos (buried 3 January 1596), the daughter of Francis Roos (d.1577) of Laxton, Nottinghamshire, by whom he had no issue. For the will of Francis Roos of Swineshead, Staffordshire, proved 26 April 1580, see TNA PROB 11/62/155.

In his will, Anthony Stapleton, leaves all his law books to his brother-in-law, Peter Roos, for whose admission to the Middle Temple on 6 November 1552 see Sturgess, H.A.C., *Register of Admissions to the Honourable Society of the Middle Temple*, (London: Butterworth & Co., 1949), Vol. I, p. 20, available online:

Nov. 6 Peter Rosse. son and heir of Francis R., of Swyneshed, Staffs., gent. Bencher 1572. Reader Autumn 1572 and Lent 1586.

Before her marriage to the testator, Alice Roos is said to have been the wife of Brian Stapleton (d.1568?) of Burton Joyce, who appears to have been a younger son of Sir Brian Stapleton (d. 2 April 1550). See the pedigree in Foster, *supra*, and Brown, Cornelius, *A History of Nottinghamshire*, (London: Elliot Stock, 1891), p. 52 at:

<https://books.google.ca/books?id=Ygtfx-7B0wgC&pg=PA52>

For the Roos pedigree see Marshall, George William, ed., *The Visitations of the County of Nottingham in the Years 1569 and 1614*, (London: Harleian Society, 1871), Vol. IV, p. 111 at:

<https://books.google.ca/books?id=fDBSgpgDmRIC&pg=PA111>

After the testator's death, Alice Roos married Thomas Leeke of Hasland, Derbyshire. It appears that Alice's third husband, Thomas Leeke of Hasland, was the grandfather of Bess of Hardwick. From the *ODNB*:

Talbot [née Hardwick], Elizabeth [Bess; called Bess of Hardwick], countess of Shrewsbury (1527?–1608), noblewoman, was one of four daughters and one son born to John Hardwick (c.1487–1528) of Hardwick, Derbyshire, and his wife, Elizabeth, daughter of Thomas Leake of Hasland, in the same county.

For the family of Leeke of Hasland, see Jewitt, Llewellynn, ed., *The Reliquary*, (London: Bemrose & Sons, 1870), pp. 70, 73 at:

https://books.google.ca/books?id=u_M9AAAACAAJ&pg=PA70

See also *Derbyshire Visitation Pedigrees 1569 and 1611*, (London, 1895), p. 53 at:

<https://books.google.ca/books?id=NSo6AQAAMAAJ&pg=PA53>

OTHER PERSONS MENTIONED IN THE WILL

The testator bequeaths a gold ring to ‘Mrs Rose Trott’, and in her own will, dated 20 January 1574, Rose (nee Cartwright) Trott (d. 6 January 1575) appoints the testator one of her overseers, and bequeaths him a gold ring (see TNA PROB 11/57/20). See also the will of her husband, John Trott, TNA PROB 11/34/324; and Waters, Robert Edmond Chester, *Genealogical Memoirs of the Extinct Family of Chester of Chicheley*, (London: Robson and Sons, 1878), Vol. I, p. 40 at:

<https://books.google.ca/books?id=oGMBAAAQAAJ&pg=PA40>

See also her inquisition post mortem taken 10 February 1575 in Madge, Sidney J., ed., *Abstracts of Inquisitiones Post Mortem for the City of London, Part II*, (London: The British Record Society Limited, 1901), pp. 189-91 at:

<https://archive.org/stream/abstractsofinqui2627grea#page/n201/mode/2up>

See also the History of Parliament entry for her grandson, John Trott, at:

<http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1604-1629/member/trott-john-1573-1641>

The testator states that the gold ring bequeathed to Rose Trott was a gift to him from ‘Lady Godsham’, which may be a scribal error for ‘Gresham’. The testator’s father-in-law, Sir Michael Dormer, had a brother, Edward Dormer, who married Katherine Sampson, who after his death married Sir John Gresham (d.1556), Lord Mayor of London. For the will of Edward Dormer, see TNA PROB 11/28/4.

TESTATOR’S LANDS

For the testator's manor of East Leake, see:

<http://archiveshub.ac.uk/data/gb159-ms1>

For the testator's purchase of property in Skegness from William Fitzwilliam and his wife Anne, see TNA E 210/10426, TNA E 210/10427 and TNA E 210/10428.

For the testator's property in Dagenham, Essex, see TNA C 3/82/2.

For the testator as steward of the manor of Harefield to John Newdigate, esquire, see London Metropolitan Archives ACC/1085/EF/002.

The testator was bequeathed a gold ring in the will of John Lucas (c.1512-1556), who, like the testator, acted as legal counsel to John de Vere, 16th Earl of Oxford. See his will, TNA PROB 11/38/199.

The testator was granted a leave from his position as Clerk of the City of London in early 1574 on grounds of illness, and appears to have died shortly thereafter, as his successor in the clerkship took up the position on 25 May 1574.

For the testator, see also the Wikipedia article created by the author of this website.

For the testator's will, see also *Index of Wills in the York Registry A.D. 1568 to 1586, Record Series Vol. XIX*, (Yorkshire Archaeological Society, 1895), p. 148 at:

<https://books.google.ca/books?id=Ph3VAAAAMAAJ&pg=PA148>

CONNECTIONS TO RICHARD STAPLETON, GENTLEMAN, WHO CONTRIBUTED VERSES TO ROBERT GREENE'S MAMILLIA (1593)

'Richard Stapleton, gentleman', contributed verses to Robert Greene's *Mamillia* (1593) addressed to 'the courteous and courtly ladies of England', beginning:

*Ye peerless dames of Pallas' crew,
and Britain ladies all*

'Richard Stapleton, gentleman' has not been identified with certainty. However it seems likely he was the nephew of John Darcy (1530-1602), 2nd Baron Darcy of Aston, 'Lord Darcy of the North', the dedicatee of the first part of Greene's *Mamillia* (1583).

The pedigree in Selby, *supra*, p. 287, states that the testator's paternal uncle, Sir Brian Stapleton (d. 2 April 1550), had a son, Sir Richard Stapleton (d. 11 January 1585), the testator's first cousin.

Sir Richard Stapleton (d. 11 January 1585), had a son, Sir Brian Stapleton (d. 13 December 1607), who married Elizabeth Darcy, the sister of Greene's first dedicatee, John Darcy (1530-1602), 2nd Baron Darcy of Aston, 'Lord Darcy of the North'.

Sir Brian Stapleton (d. 13 December 1607) and Elizabeth Darcy had a son, Richard Stapleton (d. 17 April 1636), whom Richardson suggests could have been the Richard Stapleton who contributed verses to the second part of *Mamillia* (1593):

See Richardson, Brenda, 'Robert Greene's Yorkshire Connexions: A New Hypothesis', *Yearbook of English Studies*, Vol. 10 (1980), pp. 160-80 at p. 162:

Richard Stapleton 'gent' was possibly the nephew of John, Lord Darcy. . . Brian Stapleton married the daughter of his neighbours, the Darcys, to produce a son, Richard.

There were connections between the Earls of Oxford and Robert Greene's dedicatees. See the entries for the daughters of Ralph Neville, 4th Earl of Westmorland, in the Wikipedia article edited by the author of this website:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ralph_Neville,_4th_Earl_of_Westmorland

- *Dorothy Neville (d.1546), who married, at a triple marriage ceremony on 3 July 1536 at Holywell in Shoreditch, as his first wife, John de Vere, 16th Earl of Oxford,[16] and by him had a daughter, Katherine, who married Edward Windsor, 3rd Baron Windsor.*

- *Margaret Neville (d. 13 Oct 1559), who married, at a triple marriage ceremony on 3 July 1536 at Holywell in Shoreditch, as his first wife, Henry Manners, 2nd Earl of Rutland, and had issue.*

- *Eleanor Neville, who married, as his first wife, Sir Bryan Stapleton (d. 13 December 1606) of Carlton, Yorkshire, eldest son of Sir Richard Stapleton (c.1516 – 1585), 'one of the carpet knights made at the accession of Queen Mary', and Thomasin Amadas, the daughter of Robert Amadas, goldsmith and master of King Henry VIII's jewel house. After Eleanor Neville's death, Sir Brian Stapleton married Elizabeth Darcy,[20] the daughter of George Darcy, 2nd Baron Darcy de Darcy.*

- *Anne Neville (buried 17 July 1583 at Alcester, Warwickshire), who married, about 1553, Sir Fulke Greville (1536-1606), de jure 4th Baron Willoughby de Broke, and by him had issue a son, Fulke Greville, 1st Baron Brooke, friend of Sir Philip Sidney, and a daughter, Margaret Greville (1561–1631/2), who married Sir Richard Verney.*

George Darcy (d.1558), mentioned above, was the father of John Darcy (1530-1602), 2nd Baron Darcy of Aston, 'Lord Darcy of the North', to whom Robert Greene dedicated *Mamillia* (1583), and as noted, John Darcy's sister, Elizabeth Darcy, married Sir Brian Stapleton (d. 13 December 1607). The order of Sir Brian Stapleton's marriages appears to be incorrect; he likely married firstly Elizabeth Darcy, and secondly Eleanor Neville,

but whichever order is correct, Eleanor Neville was the sister of the 16th Earl of Oxford's first wife, Dorothy Neville, and there was thus, besides the connection between the Earls of Oxford and the testator, also a family connection to Sir Brian Stapleton (d. 13 December 1607).

For the Darcy pedigree, see Collins, Arthur, *The Peerage of England*, 4th ed., Vol. IV, (London: H. Woodfall, 1768), p. 28 at:

<https://books.google.ca/books?id=Kzkn7YmHpO4C&pg=PA26>

See also the Darcy pedigree in Harwood, H.W. Forsyth, ed., *The Genealogist*, New Series, (London: George Bell & Sons, no date), Vol. XVI, pp. 241-2 at:

<https://archive.org/stream/genealogist1619selb#page/n501/mode/2up>

See also the Stapleton papers at Hull University:

<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/a2a/records.aspx?cat=050-ddca&cid=-1#-1>

RM: Test{amentu}m Anthonij Stapleton nup{er} de Civitate London gen{er}os{is} defuncti

[f. 690] In the name of God the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, Amen. The 20th day of October in the year of Our Lord God a thousand five hundredth threescore and nine and in the eleventh year of the reign of our Sovereign Lady Elizabeth by the grace of God of England, France and Ireland Queen, Defender of the Faith etc., I, Anthony Stapleton of th' Inner Temple in London, gentleman, being of whole and perfect remembrance, thanks be given unto Almighty God, make, ordain and dispose this my last will and testament in manner and form following, revoking, annulling and utterly renouncing all other wills heretofore by me made:

First and principally I do commend and commit my soul to Almighty God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, three Persons and one only God, trusting not in my own merits but by the death and passion of Jesus Christ, the second Person in Deity, my only Redeemer and Saviour, to have full remission and forgiveness of my sins, and I will that my body be buried within such parish where it shall please Almighty [+God?] to call me to his mercy in such convenient and decent order without pomp or excess as to my executrix hereunder named shall seem meet and convenient;

Item, I will that mine executrix hereafter named give and bestow in the day of my burial to the poor people thereto resorting £3 6s 8d;

Item, I will that my said executrix by her discretion shall bestow amongst the poor people of the parish of St Martin in the Vintry in London 40s;

Item, I bequeath unto the poor scholars of Trinity College in Cambridge 40s;

Item, I will and bequeath unto my well-beloved wife, Alice Stapleton, for term of her life my manor of East Leake otherwise called Great Leake with th' appurtenances in the county of Nottingham together with all and singular my lands, tenements and hereditaments, rents, reversions and services [-and services] whatsoever with all and singular th' appurtenances to the said manor belonging or in any wise appertaining, except all those lands, tenements and hereditaments which lately were th' inheritance of George Stapleton, esquire, my late father, deceased;

The remainder thereof after decease of my said wife unto th' heir of our two bodies between us lawfully begotten;

And for default of such issue, I will that my said manor and other the premises with th' appurtenances, except before excepted, shall remain and be unto my brother, Gabriel Stapleton, for term of his life;

The remainder thereof after his decease unto Jane Stapleton, my daughter-in-law [=stepdaughter], and to the heir of her body lawfully begotten;

And for default of such issue the remainder thereof to the right heir of my said brother, Gabriel, forever more according to the tenor, purport and effect of a certain deed indented thereof by me made bearing date the seventee[n]th day of October in the year abovesaid;

Item, I do remit and forgive unto my brother, William Stapleton, and unto my sister, Elizabeth Aston, widow, such debts as they severally owe unto me;

Item, I give unto Mrs Rose Trott for a remembrance my ring of gold which I had of my Lady Godshum [sic for 'Gresham?'];

Item, I will that my executrix shall pay unto my sister Dorothy Thetford's eldest daughter the sum of £10, to be paid unto her within two years next after my decease;

Item, I will that every one of my servants that shall be my household servants at the time of my decease shall have one whole year's wages;

Item, I give unto my brother-in-law, Peter Roos, £6 13s 4d and all my law books;

Item, I give unto John Manley for his painstaking in and about the making of this my will 20s;

Item, I will that all my debts that I owe unto any person or persons be truly satisfied and paid;

The residue of all my goods, chattels & debts, my debts, legacies and funeral expenses paid and discharged, I wholly give and bequeath unto my said well-beloved wife, Alice Stapleton, whom I ordain and make mine only and sole executrix of this my present last will and testament;

And supervisor of the same I make and ordain my said brother-in-law, Peter Roos;

In witness whereof I, the said Anthony Stapleton, have to this my present last will and testament set to my seal and subscribed my name the day and year above-written, these being witnesses: Peter Roos, gentleman, John Manley, with other;

Et xijo Die mens{is} octobris anno D{omi}ni suprascript{o} Decanus De Nottingh{a}m Certificavit de approbac{i}o{n}e h{uius}mo{d}i test{ament}o p{er} testes in eod{em} test{ament}o no{m}i{n}at{os} iurat{os} &c Com{m}issuq{ue} [sic?] fuit admi{ni}strac{i}o bonor{um} eiusd{em} ex{ecutoribus} no{m}i{n}at{is} iurat{is} &c saluo m{agist}ro(?) &c

[And on the 12th day of the month of October in the year of the Lord above-written the Dean of Nottingham certified probate of the same testament sworn to by the witnesses named in the same testament etc., and administration was granted of the goods to the same named executors, sworn etc., [saluo magistro] etc.]