

SUMMARY: The document below is the Prerogative Court of Canterbury copy of the last will and testament, dated 24 July 1618 and proved 25 September 1618, of Anne Spencer (d. 22 September 1618).

The poet Edmund Spenser dedicated separate long poems to the testatrix and two of her sisters, with whom he claimed kinship: ‘Prosopopoia, or Mother Hubberd’s Tale’ to the testatrix, Anne Spencer; ‘Muiopotmos, or the Fate of the Butterfly’ to Elizabeth Spencer; and ‘The Tears of the Muses’ to Alice Spencer. See Oram, William, ed., *The Yale Edition of the Shorter Poems of Edmund Spenser*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), pp. 268, 334, 412.

FAMILY BACKGROUND

The testatrix was one of thirteen children (and the fifth of eight daughters) of Sir John Spencer (d.1586) of Althorp, Northamptonshire, by Katherine Kitson, eldest daughter of Sir Thomas Kitson (1485–1540) of London. One of her sisters was Alice Spencer (1559–1637), who married firstly Ferdinando Stanley (1559?–1594), 5th Earl of Derby, and secondly Thomas Egerton (1540–1617), 1st Viscount Brackley. Another sister was Elizabeth Spencer (29 June 1552 - 24 or 25 February 1618), who married firstly George Carey (1548-1603), 2nd Baron Hunsdon, and secondly Ralph Eure (d.1617), 3rd Baron Eure.

MARRIAGES AND ISSUE

Testatrix’ first marriage

The testatrix married firstly, in 1575, William Stanley (1528-1581), 3rd Baron Monteagle, son of Thomas Stanley (25 May 1507 – 25 August 1560), 2nd Baron Monteagle, by his first wife, Mary Browne, the daughter of Charles Brandon (c.1484–1545), 1st Duke of Suffolk, and his first wife, Anne Browne (d.1510), the daughter of Sir Anthony Browne (d.1506) of Calais. Thomas Stanley, 2nd Baron Monteagle, was a ward of John Hussey (executed 29 June 1537), 1st Baron Hussey of Sleaford, and others, and Charles Brandon purchased his wardship and marriage about 1527.

Testatrix’ second marriage

The testatrix married secondly Henry Compton (1538-1589), 1st Baron Compton, the son of Peter Compton and Anne Talbot (1524-1588). For the will of the testatrix’ second husband, see TNA 11/74/434. He was the dedicatee of *The Paradise of Dainty Devises* (1576), which contains eight songs by Oxford (see STC 7516).

By her second husband the testatrix had one son:

* **Sir Henry Compton** (c.1584-c.1649), who married Cecily Sackville, daughter of Robert Sackville (1560/1-1609), 2nd Earl of Dorset, by his first wife, Margaret Howard (1562-1591), daughter of Oxford's first cousin, Thomas Howard (1538-1572), 4th Duke of Norfolk. For Sir Henry Compton, see the History of Parliament entry at:

<http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1558-1603/member/compton-henry-ii-1584-1649>

Testatrix' third marriage

The testatrix married thirdly, at Yarnton, Oxford, on 4 December 1592, Robert Sackville (1561-1609), later 2nd Earl of Dorset, by whom she had no issue. The testatrix and her third husband separated in 1608.

See Cokayne, George Edward, *The Complete Peerage*, (London: St Catherine Press, 1936), Vol. IX, pp. 115-17, and Vol. III (1913), pp. 390-1; Gunn, S.J., *Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk c. 1484-1545*, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988), p. 28; and the *ODNB* entries for Sir William Compton (1482?-1528); Sir Thomas Kitson (1485-1540); Charles Brandon (c.1484-1545), 1st Duke of Suffolk; Alice Spencer (1559-1637), Countess of Derby; Elizabeth Spencer (1552-1618), Lady Hunsdon; and Robert Sackville (1560/61-1609), 2nd Earl of Dorset.

LADY DERBY'S ENTERTAINMENT

For the testatrix as one of the guests at Lady Derby's entertainment, see *The Edward De Vere Newsletter*, No. 42, on this website.

OTHER PERSONS NAMED IN THE WILL

The testatrix' overseer was her stepson, William Compton (d. 24 June 1630), eldest son and heir of the testatrix' second husband, Henry Compton (1538-1589), by his first wife, Frances Hastings (d.1574).

RM: Testamentum honorandae foeminae D{omi}na Annae Comitissae Dotissae Dorset

[f.140r] In the name of God Almighty, Amen. The four and twentieth day of July one thousand six hundred and eighteen and in the years of the reign of our most gracious Sovereign Lord James by the grace of God King of England, France and Ireland, Defender of the Faith, the sixteenth, and of Scotland the one and fiftieth, I, Anne Countess Dowager of Dorset, being sick in body but of perfect mind and memory (thanks

be given to Almighty God for the same), do make and ordain this my testament, declaring herein my last will in manner and form following:

First and principally I commend my soul into the hands of Almighty God, my Creator, assuredly trusting through the precious merits of his only beloved Son, Jesus Christ, my Redeemer, by his bloodshedding for my sins to be saved and made partaker amongst his elect in his heavenly kingdom;

And my body I commit to the earth from whence it came, to be buried in decent manner in the daytime as a Christian without [f.140v] any extraordinary pomp in the church at Compton Wynyates in the county of Warwick according unto my promise made unto the Lord Compton, my late husband, who within the same church caused a tomb to be prepared for me;

And being fully minded and determined by God's assistance and grace to order and dispose those lands, tenements, hereditaments, goods and chattels wherewith Almighty God of his mercy and goodness hath endued me, do therefore declare my intent in manner following:

Item, my will and meaning is that all my debts and duties which I owe to any person either in law or conscience be first well and truly satisfied and paid by my executors, or order taken for them presently after my decease;

Item, I give to my dearly beloved son, Henry Compton, knight, and his heirs forever Allestley park alias Awseley park, the tithes of Princethorpe in the county of Berwick, and Vintes farm lying near unto Egglestone Abbey within the county of York with all their appurtenances to them and every of them belonging in as large and ample manner as I purchased the same;

Item, I give unto my grandchild, Richard Compton, eldest son to my son, Henry Compton, knight, my great basin and ewer which I bought of the Lord Viscount Montague's wife before I married the Earl of Dorset, and also my great charger of silver with the arms of his grandfather, the Lord Compton, upon it, both which basin and ewer and silver charger remain in the custody of Richard, now Earl of Dorset, one of the executors of Robert, Earl of Dorset, my late husband;

And I give also unto him my two great silver flagons with my own arms upon them and a double silver salt with the lions upon it;

Item, I also give unto him towards his maintenance three hundred pounds a year for three lives which I bought of Mr Ferrer and Mr Milles out of an office which they had the Great Seal of England for;

Item, I give unto my executors my whole lease and estate for years of my house which I bought in High Holland in the county of Middlesex of Elizabeth Blackhead, widow, together with my household stuff whatsoever therein, notwithstanding with and upon this

trust and confidence and to this only intent and purpose, that they and either of them shall permit and suffer Frances Stanley, my gentlewoman, for the good and faithful service she hath done me, to take and receive the profits thereof and to use the said household stuff therein during her life, and that from and after her decease if she shall happen to depart this life before her husband, George Stanley, gentleman, that then my said executors or the survivor of them shall likewise permit and suffer him, the said George, to receive and take the profits thereof, and also to have the use of the household stuff therein during his life if the said lease, term or estate for years of the said house shall so long endure, they, the said Frances and George, duly paying during their lives such rent and performing such covenants in discharge of my said executors as in and by the said lease are required to be paid and done on my behalf, and also(?) the said Frances and George keeping and preserving the said household stuff without spoil or any other negligent waste or decay whatsoever thereof to be done or permitted to be done by them or either of them or by their or either of their means or defaults, whereby my said executors shall and may, either a little before the expiration of the said lease and estate of years or immediately after the decease of the said Frances and George if they shall happen both to die during the said lease, take and receive my household stuff and every part and parcel thereof according to the inventory thereof that I shall leave them;

Item, I give unto my grandchild, William Compton, all those my manors, lands, tenements and hereditaments which I have purchased within the county of Lincoln, to have and to hold to him and his heirs according to such uses, intents and purposes as are expressed and limited in a certain deed of feoffment and other indentures tripartite for the raising of eight thousand pounds for the portions of Cicely Compton and Anne Compton, likewise my grandchildren, and also to the other uses in the said indentures expressed, which said indentures bear date the nineteenth day of February in the fifteenth year of the reign of the King's Majesty that now is of England, and of Scotland the one and fiftieth, one thousand six hundred and seventeen;

Item, I give unto my son, Henry Compton, [f. 141r] all my stock of money and other merchandise which I have and do adventure with the East India Company to the end he shall order, dispose of and manage the said stock as others of the said Company do, and also do put in the money into the second joint stock according as I have underwritten unto the same;

Item, I give unto my servant and kinsman, William Wallop, gentleman, what my son hath promised me to perform;

Item, I give unto my servant, James Orrell, gentleman, all such debts as he oweth me;

Item, I give unto Samuel Collier and to Alice, his wife, both of them my trusty servants, the sum of fifty pounds of lawful English money;

Item, I give unto John Scott, my faithful servant, the sum of twenty pounds of lawful English money;

Item, I give unto my two musicians, Edward Wilcox and William Golledge, to either of them the sum of twenty pounds of lawful English money, and each of them a black suit of apparel of fifty shillings apiece;

Item, I give unto Sara Bartholomew, my servant, the sum of five pounds of lawful English money;

Item, I give unto Thomasine Howson, my servant, the sum of three pounds of lawful English money;

Item, I give unto Edward Gollege, my servant, the sum of three pounds of lawful English money;

And to all my other servants in house not here named one whole year's wages;

Item, I give unto Elizabeth Simmons which I placed with my son's children, that if she attend them or any of them seven years, I give unto her the sum of ten pounds of lawful English money;

Item, I give unto Ralph Patrick, my son's servant, for his pains heretofore done and in writing of this my last will, the sum of five pounds;

And my will is that these my legacies be paid within two months after my decease, and that my house be kept two months after my decease for meat, drink and lodging for my servants if they will stay for to have it;

Item, I give the tenth part of such sum or sums of money whatsoever which shall be received as due or in any wise belonging unto me in lieu and recompense of my dower from Robert, Earl of Dorset, my late husband, to the poor of every county, town or shire town in England one hundred pounds thereof, that is to say, that my executors hereafter named shall forthwith after the receiving and getting in thereof distribute one hundred pounds thereof to such county of [sic] shire town as they shall think fit to the use of the poor of the same town, and so to country or shire town one hundred pounds apiece to and for the use of the poor of the same towns respectively so far as the same tenth part of my said dower to be recovered or received as aforesaid will reach or amount unto;

And as touching the other nine parts of the sum or sums to be recovered or received as aforesaid, I give, devise and bequeath the same in manner and form following, that is to say:

Five hundred pounds thereof to the now youngest daughter of the right honourable the Lord of Huntingdon, to be paid unto her at her age of fifteen years if she be then living and not sole heir to her father;

And other five hundred pounds thereof to the now youngest daughter of the right honourable the Lord Chandos, to be also paid unto her at her age of fifteen years if she be then living and not sole heir to her said father;

And the rest and residue of the said ninth part of the sum or sums to be recovered or received as aforesaid I wholly give, devise and bequeath to my said son, Henry Compton, to his own use;

Nevertheless my will and meaning is that my said son shall from and after the recovery thereof in the meantime until the said two youngest daughters of the said Lords respectively shall accomplish their said several ages of fifteen years have the use and disposition of the said two several sums of five hundred pounds, and in respect thereof pay unto them respectively the yearly sum of forty pounds, viz., to either of them twenty pounds apiece every year;

The rest and residue of all and singular my goods, chattels, rights, debts and credits whatsoever after my funeral expenses discharged and my legacies paid I wholly give, devise and bequeath unto my said son, Henry Compton, to his own use;

And lastly of this my present testament and last will I do make, constitute and ordain my brother, Sir Richard Spencer of Offley in the county of Hertford, knight, and my son, Henry Compton, my full and sole(?) executors, and I do give unto my said brother for his pains to be taken therein a piece of plate of the value of twenty pounds;

And I do make and ordain my loving son-in-law [=stepson], William, Lord Compton, Earl of Northampton, overseer of this my last will [f. 141v] and testament, and I do bequeath as a testimony of my love and goodwill unto him a hundred pounds in what plate it shall please him to have;

In witness whereof I have hereunto subscribed my name and put my seal the day and year first above-written. Ann Dorset.

Signed, sealed, published and declared by the said Countess as and for her last will and testament in the presence of us whose names are hereunder written. William Wallop, William Golledge, Edward Wilcox, Ralph Patrick.

Probatum fuit testamentum suprascriptum apud London coram Magistro Edmundo Pope legum Doctore Surrogato venerabilis viri d{omi}ni Iohannis Benet militis legum etiam Doctoris Curie Prerogatiue Cantuariens{is} Mag{ist}ri Custod{is} siue Commissarij legitime constituti vicesimo quinto die mens{is} Septembris Anno Domini Millesimo sexcentesimo Decimo octauo Iuramentis D{omi}ni Richardi Spencer Milit{is} fratris et D{omi}ni Henrici Compton milit{is} filij n{atu}ralis et legitimi dicte Defuncte et executorum in eodem Testamento nominat{orum} Quibus commiss{a} fuit

Administrac{i}o bonorum Iurium et Creditor{um} dicte Defuncte De bene et fideliter
administrand{o} &c(?) ad sancta Dei Evangelia Iurat{orum}

[=The above-written testament was proved at London before Master Edmund Pope, Doctor of the Laws, Surrogate of the worshipful Sir John Benet, knight, also Doctor of the Laws, lawfully constituted Master, Keeper or Commissary of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury, on the twenty-fifth day of the month of September in the year of the Lord the thousand six hundred eighteenth by the oaths of Sir Richard Spencer, knight, brother, and Sir Henry Compton, knight, natural and legitimate son of the said deceased, and executors named in the same testament, to whom administration was granted of the goods, rights and credits of the said deceased, sworn on the Holy Gospels to well and faithfully administer etc.]