

SUMMARY: The document below is the Prerogative Court of Canterbury copy of the will, dated 28 November 1538 and proved 4 July 1539, of Sir William Kempe or Kemp of Olantigh, the grandfather of the comedian Will Kempe and of Alice (nee Kempe) Hales (d.1592), the dedicatee of Robert Greene's *Menaphon* (1589), to which Thomas Nashe contributed a preface. The testator's wife, Eleanor (d.1560), was the daughter of Robert Browne of the manor of West Betchworth in Surrey, whose brother, Sir Anthony Browne (d.1506), by his second wife, Lucy Neville (d.1534) was the great-grandfather of Mary Browne (c.1552-1607), the mother of Henry Wriothesley, 3rd Earl of Southampton, the dedicatee of Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis* (1593), and *The Rape of Lucrece* (1594), and of Thomas Nashe's *The Unfortunate Traveller* (1594). By his first wife, Sir Anthony Browne (d.1506) had a daughter, Anne Browne, who was the first wife of Charles Brandon (c.1484-1545), Duke of Suffolk, who married as his fourth wife Katherine Willoughby (1519-1580), later the mother-in-law of Oxford's sister, Mary de Vere (d.1624). For the Browne family of Betchworth, who were descended from King John of England, see Richardson, Douglas, *Plantagenet Ancestry* (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing, 2004), pp. 62-3, 160)

In the will the testator mentions his son and heir, Sir Thomas Kempe (d. 1591), and six younger sons. In the will of his widow, Eleanor, six sons are named: Sir Thomas Kempe, Anthony Kempe, Francis Kempe, Edward Kempe, John Kempe and George Kempe (see PROB 11/43, ff. 457-8). Sir William Kempe also mentions in his will four unmarried daughters, Cecily, Faith, Mary and Margaret (a nun). His daughter Emmeline, not mentioned in the will, had married, before 1537, Reynold Scott of Scott's Hall in Smeeth, Kent (see Richardson, p. 335). The Reynold Scott who witnessed the will would thus appear to have been the testator's son-in-law, and it further appears from the will that it was through him that the testator acquired a 20-year lease of the manor of Olantigh, near Wye in Kent. Both Reynold Scott and Oxford were descended from the daughters of Sir Richard Sergeaux, Reynold Scott through Philippe Sergeaux, and Oxford through Alice Sergeaux (see Richardson, pp. 646-7). Sir Thomas Scott, the son of Reynold Scott and Emmeline Kempe, was a first cousin and a financial supporter of Reginald Scot, whose *The Discoverie of Witchcraft* (1584) is said to have influenced Shakespeare. From *The Dictionary of National Biography*:

Scott, Sir Thomas (1534x6–1594), landowner, was the eldest son of Sir Reginald Scott (d. 1555) of Scot's Hall, Smeeth, Kent, and his wife, Emmeline, daughter of Sir William Kempe of Olantigh by Wye, Kent, and his wife, Eleanor, daughter and coheir of Sir Robert Brown of Betchworth, Surrey. He was the grandson of Sir John Scott (b. in or before 1484, d. 1533), while Reginald Scott (Scot), the writer on witchcraft, was a cousin.

Scott [Scot], Reginald (d. 1599), writer on witchcraft, was the first son of Richard Scott (d. before 1544), landowner, of Scott's Hall, Kent, and his wife, Mary (d. 1582), daughter of George Whetenall of Hextall's Place, Kent. After his father's death his mother married Fulke Onslow, clerk of parliament. She died on 8 October 1582. . . . He had close connections with his cousin Sir Thomas Scott (1534x6–1594) of Scott's Hall, and tells us that he was financially dependent upon him.

The Peter Lyly named in the probatum clause as proctor for Sir William Kempe's widow, Eleanor, would appear to be Peter Lyly (d.1569), the father of Oxford's servant, the writer and dramatist, John Lyly (1554-1606).

RM: Testamentum Willelmi Kemp militis

In the name of God, Amen. The 28th day of November in the 30th year of the reign of our Sovereign Lord King Henry th' Eight, I, William Kemp, knight, of whole mind, declare my will in manner and form following:

First, I bequeath my soul to Almighty God, my body to be buried in Our Lady chancel in the church of Wye among my parents;

Item, I will to the high altar there for my tithes negligently forgotten, 20s;

Item, to the reparations of the church of Wye, five pounds;

Item, I give and bequeath to Cicely, my daughter, three hundred marks to her marriage;

Item, I bequeath to the marriage of Faith, my daughter, three hundred marks;

Item, I give and bequeath to the marriage of Mary, my daughter, three hundred marks;

Item, if Margaret, my daughter, be put out of the house where she is now nun, and then she be disposed to marry, I give and bequeath to her marriage three hundred marks, and if she be not disposed to marry, then I will Thomas, my son, have the said three hundred marks, and to pay her yearly during her natural life five marks with meat and drink, or ten marks and no meat and drink;

Item, whereas I have of the demise and grant of Reynold Scott, esquire, and John Took [=Tuke?], gentleman, for term of twenty years a messuage called Olenty [=Olantigh] with all the lands thereto belonging, and divers other manors, lands and tenements comprised in a deed indented made by the said Reynold and John unto me, I will that Dame Eleanor, my wife, have the said messuage with all the lands and tenements comprised in the said deed indented for term of twelve years so that she may receive the said twelve hundred marks before bequeathed to the marriage of my daughters aforesaid;

And after the twelve years I will that the said Dame Eleanor have the said messuage with all the said lands and tenements thereto belonging to the full term of twenty years if she so long live, and to pay yearly during the said term to every one of my six younger sons forty shillings, and the residue of the said manors, lands and tenements comprised in the said deed I will that Thomas, my son, have, paying to every one of his brothers 40s;

And if my said wife be not disposed to inhabit and dwell in the said messuage after the said twelve years, then I will that Thomas, my son, have the said messuage with all the lands thereunto belonging, and to pay to every one of his brothers out of the said lands 40s yearly as his mother should have done during the full residue of the said term of twenty years;

Provided always that if it happen my wife to die after the said twelve years and before the said twenty years be expired, then I will that Thomas shall have the said messuage and all the foresaid manors, lands and tenements clearly without paying anything to his brothers;

Furthermore, I will that if my wife be not disposed to dwell and inhabit in the said messuage, and go from thence at any time within the said 12 years, then I will that Thomas, my son, have the said messuage and lands thereto belonging, paying yearly during the said term of twelve years the value thereof to his mother for the levying of the said twelve hundred marks;

Furthermore I will that my wife shall receive the profit of the lands that I have during the nonage of Henry Idon [=Iden?], and she to find him conveniently during his nonage for to help to levy the said twelve hundred marks;

Provided always and my very will is that if my foresaid daughters or any of them happen to die before they be married, then I will my said son, Thomas, to have the money to them bequeathed that be departed;

The residue of my goods I will to my well-beloved Dame Eleanor, my wife, whom I ordain to be mine executrix, and to dispose for me and my children as she shall think most convenient.

These being witness at the making hereof: Reynold Scott, esquire, and John Took, gentleman.

Probatum fuit suprascriptum testamentum iijto die mensis Iulij Anno domini Millesimo quingentesimo xxxix apud London coram Domino auctoritate domini nostri Regis & Willelmi Kemp Militis defuncti habentis &c Iuramento domine Elianore Relicte & executricis in huiusmodi testamento nominate in persona Petri Lylly procuratoris &c ac per eundem auctoritatem dicti domini nostri Regis approbatum & insinatum Commissaque fuit administracio omnium & singulorum bonorum Iurium & creditorum dicti defuncti prefate executrici in persona dicti procuratoris De bene & fideliter administrando Ac de pleno & fidei Inventario secundo die post festum Commemoracionis animarum proximum futurum exhibendo necnon de plano & vero compoto reddendo Ad sancta dei Euangelia in debita iuris forma Iurato

[=The above-written testament was proved on the 4th day of the month of July in the year of the Lord the thousand five hundred 39th at London before the Lord [+Archbishop?] by the authority of our Lord the King etc. of William Kemp, knight, deceased, having etc., by the oath of Lady Eleanor, relict & executrix named in the same testament, in the person of Peter Lyly, proctor etc., and by the same authority of our said Lord the King probated and registered, and administration was granted of all & singular the goods, rights and credits of the said deceased to the forenamed executrix in the person of the said proctor, sworn on the Holy Gospels in due form of law to well & faithfully administer, and to exhibit a full & true inventory on the second day after the feast of All Souls next to come, and also to render a plain & true account.]