

SUMMARY: The document below is the Prerogative Court of Canterbury copy of the will, dated 2 July 1557 and proved 21 May 1558, of Sir John Cope (d. 22 January 1558), whose great-nephew, Sir Walter Cope (1553?-1614), a long-time servant of Lord Burghley, employed Shakespeare's fellow Globe Theatre shareholder, Cuthbert Burbage (1564/5-1636). See the *ODNB* articles on Sir Walter Cope and Cuthbert Burbage.

FAMILY BACKGROUND

The testator was the youngest son of William Cope (c.1440 - 7 April 1513), esquire, cofferer to Henry VII, by his second wife, Jane (nee Spencer) Saunders Cope. For the will of the testator's father, William Cope, dated 7 February 1513 and proved 24 May 1513, see TNA PROB 11/17/2. For the will of the testator's mother, Jane (nee Spencer) Saunders Cope, dated 20 January 1526(?) and proved 2 May 1526, see TNA PROB 11/22/125.

For the will of the testator's half-brother, Stephen Cope (d. 20 March 1534), dated 10 August 1533 and proved 12 November 1534, in which the testator was left certain properties in remainder, see TNA PROB 11/25/240.

For the will of the testator's eldest brother of the whole blood, Sir Anthony Cope, dated 5 January 1551 and proved 2 November 1551, see TNA PROB 11/34/433.

MARRIAGES AND CHILDREN

The testator married firstly Bridget Raleigh, the daughter of Edward Raleigh (c.1470-1508), esquire, of Farnborough, Warwickshire, by Anne Chamberlain, daughter of Richard Chamberlain of Coates in Titchmarsh, Northamptonshire. Bridget Raleigh's sister, Mary Raleigh, married, about 1508, as his first wife, Nicholas Wodhull (c.1482 – 6 May 1531) of Warkworth, Northamptonshire. Their son, Anthony Wodhull, married Anne Smith, who after his death married secondly John Leveson (d.1549) of Halling, Kent, and thirdly, Sir Edward Griffin (d. 16 December 1569), Attorney-General, named by the testator as overseer in the will below.

By his first marriage the testator had three sons and two daughters:

* **Erasmus Cope**, eldest son and heir, who predeceased the testator; he married Mary Heneage, by whom he had a son, Edward Cope (d.1620), aged 6 at the testator's death, who succeeded the testator and married Elizabeth Yelverton, eldest daughter of Sir Christopher Yelverton (1536-7-1612), justice and Speaker of the House of Commons. By indenture dated 22 June 1578 Sir Christopher Yelverton purchased Oxford's manor of Easton Maudit in Northamptonshire for £1200 (see Northamptonshire Record Office, NPL 201).

* **George Cope**, esquire, who married Dorothy Spencer, the daughter and co-heir of Thomas Spencer, esquire, of Everden, Northamptonshire, by whom he is said to have had two sons, George Cope, who died young, and John Cope, and a daughter, Dorothy, who married Stephen Kirton of Thorpe Mandeville, Northamptonshire. See the pedigree of Cope in Metcalfe, Walter C., ed., *The Visitations of Northamptonshire Made in 1564 and 1618-19*, (London: Mitchell and Hughes, 1887), p. 15 at:

<https://archive.org/stream/visitationsofnor00harvrich#page/14/mode/2up>.

In his own will, the testator's son-in-law, John Dryden (see below), makes reference to a contract with Thomas Spencer, esquire, of Everden, concerning 'John Cope, son and heir to George Cope, my brother-in-law, deceased, for his father's interest in Ashby'. For the will of John Dryden, dated 15 August 1584 and proved 10 September 1584, see TNA PROB 11/67/298.

* **Anthony Cope**, esquire, of Adstone, Northamptonshire, who married Eleanor Stafford, the daughter of Sir Humphrey Stafford (8 May 1548) and Margaret Tame (see below). He took on the executorship of the testator's will on 21 May 1558, but made his own will on 6 June 1558, and died shortly thereafter. For his will, proved 20 December 1558, see TNA PROB 11/42A/154.

* **Elizabeth Cope**, who married John Dryden (d. 3 September 1584), gentleman, of Canons Ashby, by whom she was the mother of Sir Erasmus Dryden (c.1553 – 22 May 1632) of Canons Ashby, who married Frances Wilkes (d. 16 February 1630), by whom he was the father of Erasmus Dryden (c.1602-1654), father of the poet, John Dryden (1631-1700).

* **Joan Cope**, who married firstly Stephen Boyle of Bradden, Northamptonshire, and secondly Ferdinand Freckleton. It is said that Elizabeth Boyle, wife of the poet Edmund Spenser, was the daughter of Joan Cope and Stephen Boyle. See the nuncupative will of Stephen Boyle, dated 17 May 1582 and proved 8 October 1582, TNA PROB 11/64/427, and Haskell, Dorothy F., *Edmund Spenser; A Bibliographical Supplement*, (New York: Haskell House, 1937), p. 30:

http://books.google.ca/books?id=kjtvnSmFdb4C&pg=PA30&lpg=PA30&dq=%22Stephen+Boyle%22+%22Bradden%22&source=bl&ots=Hck2AYZelw&sig=wTB6Nx7CIahH36ygkJ-t2e6qn38&hl=en&sa=X&ei=gCa2U6u4E-rwiWlp_YD4Ag&ved=0CBwQ6AEwAA#v=onepage&q=%22Stephen%20Boyle%22%20%22Bradden%22&f=false.

For the testator's family see also Richardson, Douglas, *Magna Carta Ancestry*, 2nd ed., 2011, Vol. I, pp. 121, 433-4, 440-1; the *ODNB* article on John Dryden; and the pedigree of Dryden of Canons Ashby in Burke, John and John Bernard Burke, *A Genealogical and Heraldic History of the Extinct and Dormant Baronetcies of England*, (London: Scott, Webster and Geary, 1838), p. 171 at:

http://books.google.ca/books?id=K1kBAAAAQAAJ&pg=PA172&lpg=PA172&dq=%22Erasmus+Dryden%22+baronet&source=bl&ots=E8L11aqpek&sig=xL4i8N-iSWpCww5JX5hhwFOb09g&hl=en&ei=CR-WTeDBFoeHhQeKnYHvCA&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q=%22Erasmus%20Dryden%22%20baronet&f=false.

See also Betham, William, *The Baronetage of England*, (London: Ward and Betham, 1804), Vol. IV, pp. 272-3 at:

http://books.google.ca/books?id=CLVBAAAACAAJ&pg=PA275-IA2&lpg=PA275-IA2&dq=%22Sir+Erasmus+Dryden%22&source=bl&ots=Hrx6VHD1Nl&sig=IJnl7PJQOQxPZcF3bwfvP8xoFvA&hl=en&sa=X&ei=TpW1U_z2KeHWiwKXviGgAQ&ved=0CEsQ6AEwCA#v=onepage&q=%22Sir%20Erasmus%20Dryden%22&f=false.

See also Betham, William, *The Baronetage of England*, (Ipswich: Burrell and Bransby, 1801), Vol. I, p. 87 at:

<http://books.google.ca/books?id=5ikwAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA87&lpg=PA87&dq=%22Sir+John+Cope%22+%22Erasmus%22&source=bl&ots=cDH5j4x04C&sig=W72iQYgHWsudsBnPH0vFcGLq8H8&hl=en&sa=X&ei=Y4q1U6noB6i4igLf3oCADg&ved=0CDQQ6AEwBA#v=onepage&q=%22Sir%20John%20Cope%22%20%22Erasmus%22&f=false>.

See also the History of Parliament entry for the testator at:

<http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1509-1558/member/cope-john-1513-58>.

The testator married secondly Margery Mallory, widow of Clement Cave (d. 30 November 1534), and daughter and co-heiress of Nicholas Mallory, esquire, by Katherine Kingston, by whom he had no issue. For the will, dated 25 November 1534 and proved 9 March 1535, of Clement Cave, see TNA PROB 11/25/300 .

The testator married thirdly Margaret Tame, widow of Sir Humphrey Stafford (d. 8 May 1548), and daughter of Sir Edmund Tame by his first wife, Agnes Greville, by whom he had no issue.

For the standing cup which had belonged to the testator's father, and which the testator bequeaths to his grandson, Edward Cope, see Cope, William H., *Bramshill; Its History and Architecture*, (London: H.J. Infield, 1883), p. 106 at:

http://books.google.ca/books?id=X-IHAAAQAAJ&pg=PA106&lpg=PA106&dq=%22William+Cope%22+%22king+James%22&source=bl&ots=u0DnswGg0J&sig=DmnLvQbX4oOM4QLB0N8ierRO_A&hl=en&sa=X&ei=9mm1U5OVLca6iwKjxoHQCA&ved=0CCcQ6AEwAw#v=onepage&q=%22William%20Cope%22%20%22king%20James%22&f=false.

RM: T{estamentum} Ioh{ann}is Cope milit{is}

[f. 200r] In the name of God, Amen. The second day of July in the year of Our Lord God a thousand five hundred fifty and seven and in the third and fourth years of the reigns of our Sovereign Lord and Lady Philip and Mary by the grace of God King and Queen of England, Spain, France, both the Sicilies, Jerusalem and Ireland, Defenders of the Faith, Archdukes of Austria, Dukes of Burgundy, Milan and Brabant, Counties of Hapsburg, Flanders and Tyrol, I, Sir John Cope of Ashby in the county of Northampton, knight, being whole in body and also in good and perfect mind and remembrance, laud and praise be given to Almighty God, do make, ordain and dispose this my last will and testament in manner and form following, that is to say:

First and principally I give and recommend my soul unto Almighty Jesus, my Saviour and Redeemer, in whom and by the merits of whose most blessed death, passion and resurrection I trust and believe to be saved, and to have full and clean remission and forgiveness of all my sins;

And I will my body to be buried where it shall please God to provide for me; if within one hundred miles of Ashby, then in the north aisle there as I have declared to mine executors, which matter I remit to their discretions;

And after my body buried, then I will that all & singular such debts and duties as I owe to any person or persons in right or in conscience shall be truly contented, satisfied and paid;

Item, I give and bequeath to the high altar of the mother church of Lincoln three shillings and four pence;

And further I give and bequeath by this my last will and testament that whereas Dame Margaret Cope, my wife, hath her jointure in the house and lordship of Ashby, as by her deed and [sic for 'of?'] jointure thereof more at large it appeareth, I will that she have the occupation during her life natural of all the glass, ceiling, doors, locks, bolts, trestles, tables, forms, bedsteads, leades [=leads?], the great rack commonly used in the kitchen which were William Cope's, my father's, and all the fallen timber, slate and stone within the lordship of Ashby without any wilful spoil or waste making of all or any the premises, and after her decease I will that all and singular the premises shall remain standards of household there to my heir's right, provided [f. 200v] that the said Lady Margaret shall have free liberty to occupy in building there, and not elsewhere, the said timber, slate and stone at her own proper costs and charges;

Also I give and bequeath unto the said Lady Margaret, my wife, all my milch kine within the said lordship of Ashby;

And further I will that if it please her to pay unto mine executors the rent reserved in my lease of Morton parsonage, that mine executors from year to year shall assign her all the commodities and profits thereof coming towards the keeping of her house, and if she die during my term thereof, then I will my executors shall sell the residue of the years after her death, or that she doth refuse to take of the rent, and the money to be converted to the performance of this my last will and testament;

And furthermore I will that my said executors for and during the life natural of the said Lady Margaret shall not meddle with one half of all my household stuff at Ashby aforesaid, but suffer her to have the occupation thereof without making thereof any voluntary waste or impairment thereof;

And after her decease then I will my executors shall convert all the said household stuff to the most profit towards the performance of this my last will & testament, and I trust the said Lady Margaret will be contented with the premises considering her large jointure and my great debts;

Item, I give and bequeath unto Edward Cope, son to Erasmus Cope, my son and heir apparent whilst he liveth, to be delivered immediately after my decease my great gilt standing cup with branches which the King of Scots, James, gave amongst other things unto William Cope, his great-grandfather;

And also I give him more my ring with the turquoise which I commonly wear that was also his great-grandfather's;

Item, I will and bequeath to George Cope, my second son, immediately after my decease, one of my basins & ewers of silver, viz., that which hath no cover, wherewith I trust he will be contented, considering my former conveyances unto him both in Berkshire and also in Warwickshire, Northamptonshire, before good and sufficient witness;

Item, I give and bequeath unto Anthony Cope, my youngest son, all my houses in Byfield in the county of Northampton with all edifices, buildings, lands, tenements and commodities lying in the town and fields of Byfield aforesaid or to the same by any means belonging or appertaining now or late in the tenure or occupation of one Robert Parsons and one John Sywell;

Also I give and bequeath to the said Anthony my lease of the farm or parsonage of Woodford Hynton and Farmedon which I bought of Mr Parott with all the edifications and profits thereunto belonging except only a late lease of part thereof which I have made lately to the now vicar of Woodford and his brother during the vicar's life;

And also I give and bequeath to the said Anthony my lease of my house in Hallywell [=Holywell] with all my right, title and interest that I have or hereafter may have to the same or any part or parcel thereof;

Also I give to the said Anthony all my household stuff that I have or at the day of my decease shall have within the said precinct of Hallywell in Shoreditch, the lead only except, to have and enjoy the same then immediately;

Also I give and bequeath unto the said Anthony [f. 201r] for his stock which I have given him for his wolles [=wools?] remaining in my hands two hundred pounds of current money of England to be paid him year and year after my decease;

And if it happen the said Anthony to die without issue of his body lawfully begotten, then I will and bequeath all and every the leases and farms with all other things given and bequeathed to the said Anthony unto the said George Cope, my second son, and his assigns except only the two hundred pounds, which I will then by these presents mine executors shall have towards the performance of this my last will and testament;

Item, I will that immediately after my decease and after that the King and Queen's Majesties shall be satisfied of and for all such interest of and for all such right and claim as they shall be entitled to have by reason of wardship, primer seisin or otherwise by and after my decease, that mine executors shall have and take the issues, revenues and profits of my manor of Ashby and also Eydon, if the jointures to my daughter Cope and my wife, Dame Margaret Cope, made or any of them do cease, and of all my lands, tenements and hereditaments in Ashby and Eydon aforesaid in the county of Northampton, until the said Edward shall be of the full age of 21 years towards the payment of my debts and performance of this my last will and testament;

Provided always that if there be any other conveyances of these lands, tenements or hereditaments or any of them last specified made to the contrary hereof already, that then this shall extend to no other parcels of the premises in Ashby and Eydon abovesaid but to such as I may lawfully and without trouble and vexation or prejudice of one(?) or mine so given and bequeathed;

And also I will and bequeath unto my said executors all those my lands, tenements and hereditaments in Childrey in the county of Berkshire as well Kyngstons as Michanore(?) with all and singular the deeds, evidences, writings or muniments touching the same or any part of the same, with all other my lands, tenements and hereditaments whatsoever elsewhere within the said county except only the parsonage and rectory of Childrey, the park close, and one acre of land, being Hedland acre, to the Utterblacke land in Childrey, and the parsonage and Rectory of Letcombe with the lands and other things unto them due being heretofore sold, conveyed and assured, all the which lands and hereditaments within the said county of Berkshire to be sold by my said executors immediately after my decease towards the payments of my debts and for the performance of this my last will and testament;

Item, I give and bequeath unto Elizabeth Dryden, my daughter, my maudlin box of silver and gilt standing on three lions' backs;

All the rest, better than five hundred marks, is put into her husband's hands already, wherein I trust they be contented;

Item, I give and bequeath unto Joan Cope, my daughter, two hundred marks of ready money to be paid within one year next after her marriage had and solemnized, and if she chance to die before the same marriage, than I will that mine executors have the said two hundred marks towards my debts and performance of this my present last will and testament;

Item, I give and bequeath unto Humphrey Benson, my servant, one annuity or yearly rent of four marks to be paid yearly at two usual feasts during the life natural of the said Humphrey;

Item, I give and bequeath unto Thomas Prettie which is now in London ten pounds to be paid to him within one year after my decease if he remain so long alive;

Item, I give and bequeath unto Edmund Knight, my servant, ten pounds to be paid him also within one year next after my decease if he be then living;

And for all other my servants I remit to my wife's order;

The residue of all and singular my lands, leases, debts, goods, chattels, plate, jewels, household stuff and ready money whatsoever they be, beyond the seas or elsewhere, not before given or bequeathed, after my debts and legacies paid, the cost of my burial done, and this my present last will in all things truly performed, wholly I give and bequeath to mine executors;

And of this my present testament and last [f. 201v] will I ordain and make Dame Margaret Cope, my wife, if it please her, and George Cope, my second son, my sole executors;

And if the said Lady Margaret will not take upon her the same, then I will that Anthony Cope, my son, shall be joined executor with the said George Cope of this my present testament and last will;

And for the overseer of the same faithfully to be accomplished, I ordain and make Mr Griffin, the King and Queen's Majesties' Attorney;

Item, I give and bequeath to my said overseer for his labour and pains therein to be had and taken ten pounds of lawful money of England payable within one year after my decease;

In witness whereof I, the said Sir John Cope, to this present testament and last will have set my hand and seal the day and year abovesaid, and also have desired these underwritten to put to their hands as witnesses to the same. Per me, John Cope, per me, Anthony Cope, per me, Edmund Knight, John Mowntayne.

Probatum fuit huiusmodi Testamentum Coram Domino apud London vicesimo primo Die Mensis Maij Anno Domini Millesimo quingentesimo quinquagesimo octavo Iuramento Antonij Cope Executoris in huiusmodi Testamento nominatim Cui Commissa fuit Administratio omnium et singulorum bonorum dicti Defuncti De bene &c Ad sancta dei Evangelia Iuratona Domina Margareta Relicta et Georgio Cope Executoribus etc renunciantibus

[=The same testament was proved before the Lord at London on the twenty-first day of the month of May in the year of the Lord the thousand five hundred fifty-eighth by the oath of Anthony Cope, executor named in the same testament, to whom administration was granted of all and singular the goods of the said deceased, sworn on the Holy Gospels to well etc., Dame Margaret, relict, and George Cope, executors etc., renouncing.]