

SUMMARY: The document below is the Prerogative Court of Canterbury copy of the will, dated 8 March 1561 and probated 8 May 1561, of Anne Watson, mother of the poet, Thomas Watson (1592). For a discussion of the evidence establishing that the testatrix was the mother of the poet, see the will of William Watson (d.1559), TNA PROB 1/43, ff. 26-7.

The following two bequests establish that Anne Watson numbered among her friends some of the wealthiest and most influential London citizens, and that her daughter, Maudelyn Watson, was brought up in the same household as the dramatist, Thomas Lodge:

*Item, I do will and desire that my daughter, Elizabeth, may be with my Lady Laxton, and she to have her portion, putting in sureties for the same till she come to lawful age or day of marriage;*

*Item, I will and desire that my daughter, Maudelyn, may be with Mistress Lodge, and he to have her portion in like manner;*

According to the online edition of *The Dictionary of National Biography*, Lady Laxton (d.1576), to whom Anne Watson entrusted the upbringing of her daughter, Elizabeth Watson, was one of the wealthiest women in London, and Lady Laxton's daughter, Anne (nee Luddington) Lodge (1528-1579), widow of William Lane, grocer, to whom Anne Watson entrusted the upbringing of her daughter Maudelyn Watson, was the mother of the dramatist, Thomas Lodge (1558-1625).

*Sir William Laxton (d. 1556), mayor of London, was the son of John Laxton of Oundle, Northamptonshire. . . . Laxton became one of the wealthiest London merchants of his time. . . . By the terms of Laxton's will of 17 July 1556, his estate after the death of his widow was to be divided among his own right heir, his niece Joan Wanton, and the three children of his wife, Joan, from her marriage to Henry Luddington: Nicholas, Joan, and Anne. . . . Laxton's widow, one of the wealthiest inhabitants of London, a substantial purchaser of real estate, and a powerful matriarch, died in August 1576.*

*Sir Thomas Lodge (1509/10–1585), merchant, the son of William Littleton, also known as Lodge, and his wife, Joan Burleton, was born at Cound in Shropshire; his father's use of the name Lodge was attributed to his living at Le Lodge, Cresset (Cressage?), in Shropshire, and to his claimed descent from Odard de Logis, Baron Wigton, of Cumberland, in the reign of Henry I. . . . Lodge was elected lord mayor in 1562. . . . It was to be an eventful year for him; on 8 March 1563 he was knighted, and in April a son was baptized. The latter was one of five sons (among them the dramatist Thomas Lodge (1558–1625)) and a daughter born of his marriage in 1552 to Anne Lane, née Loddington (1528–1579), the stepdaughter of Sir William Laxton, a member of the Grocers' Company and a former lord mayor.*

The testatrix entrusted the upbringing of her two sons, William Watson, and the future poet, Thomas Watson (d.1592), to her brother, Thomas Lee (d.1572):

*Item, I give to my brother, Thomas Lee, a hundred marks, and to have the bringing up of my son[s] William and Thomas Watson, with their portions, putting in sureties, and to have more, the rent of my house in Mark Lane during the time of the nonage of the said William towards the finding of them both to learning and bringing up . . . .*

*I do say that the profit of the 2 portions of my son[s], William and Thomas, to be given to my brother for their keeping.*

It thus appears that the future poet, Thomas Watson (d.1592), was left an orphan at a very young age, his father dying in 1559 and his mother in 1561, and that his upbringing was entrusted to his maternal uncle, Thomas Lee (d.1572) while two of his sisters were placed with the family of the future dramatist, Thomas Lodge.

RM: Testamentum Anne Watson

In the name of God, Amen. The 8<sup>th</sup> of March anno Domini 1560 in the third year of the reign of our Sovereign Lady Queen Elizabeth, I, Anne Watson of London, widow, dwelling in the parish of Saint Toolys [=Olave's] in the Tower ward, being whole of mind and perfect remembrance, thanks be unto God, but sick in body, do make and ordain this my last testament and will in manner and form following, that is to say:

First, I bequeath my soul to Almighty God, my Maker, who hath not spared his only Son, [-who hath not spared his only Son], Jesus Christ, to the painful death of the Cross for me and all the world, in whose death and passion is my whole trust of salvation, my body to be buried as near to my late husband, William Watson, draper, as conveniently may be, and my corpse honestly to be brought to the church by the discretion of mine executors;

Thirdly, as touching such worldly goods as it hath pleased God to endue me with, I bequeath and give them as followeth:

First, my mansion house standing in Mark Lane in London I give and bequeath it to my son, William Watson, and to the heirs of his body lawfully begotten, and if he should die before he come to lawful age, as God defend, then I will the same house to go to my son, Thomas Watson, and to the heirs of his body lawfully begotten, and for lack of the same to be sold for the most advantage by my executors or by th' executors of them or either of them, and the money thereof to be reparted equally between my children then living, to say, Elizabeth, Mawdlen, Mary and Elizabeth;

And fourthly, I will that all such debts as my late husband, William Watson, and I do owe and can be duly and justly proved shall be paid;

And more, I give and bequeath of my goods to the three hospitals, to say, Christ Church, Saint Bartholomew's and Saint Thomas, either of them £6 apiece in money, and to the prisoners of the King's Bench, 53s 4d, and to the prisoners of the Marshalsea, 53s 4d, to the prisoners of Newgate, 53s 4d, to the prisoners of Ludgate, 26s 8d, and to the 2 Counters, 26s 8d apiece;

To the poor of the parish that I now dwell in, £3 6s 8d;

To my cousin, Elizabeth Canon, £6 13s 4d; to my father-in-law, John Watson, £6; to the four children of Barbara Watson, 40s apiece; to John Watson, £10; and to Anne Watson, £10, so that after this time they nor none for them do trouble me nor my executors any more, and if they do, this my bequest to them to be void and no gift;

To the servants of my house, to say, to Ezachias Beaste I give 40s and a gown; to Apliyrd, my servant, 40s and a gown; to Thomas, my servant, 40s and a gown; to Anne Claystone, 40s and a cassock; to Sysly, 20s; to Leuce and the boy, 20s apiece; to Goodwife Cutberde, 20s and a gown, and to her husband a gown;

And I forgive to Roger Bodenham the 2 third parts of all such debts as he ought to my husband and me, and I give him more in money £20 and a gown;

To 12 poor folks dwelling within the same parish that I now dwell in, 12 gowns;

To Mr Scott and his wife, each of them a gown; Mr Cragge and his wife, each of them a gown; Mr Howlet and his wife, each of them a gown; Mr Welles and his wife, each of them a gown; John Watson and Anne Watson, each of them a gown; to Mary and Elizabeth Barton, each of them a gown;

All my linen to be put in certain chests and so kept till such time as it may be reparted to my children at their lawful age or days of marriage at the discretion of my executors and overseers;

Item, I do will and desire that my daughter, Elizabeth, may be with my Lady Laxton, and she to have her portion, putting in sureties for the same till she come to lawful age or day of marriage;

Item, I will and desire that my daughter, Maudelyn, may be with Mistress Lodge, and he to have her portion in like manner;

And so, my debts being paid, my legacies and funerals discharged, the rest of all my goods, plate and jewels, ready money and other, I do wholly given unto my six children, to say, William Watson, Thomas Watson, Elizabeth, Maudelyn, Mary and Elizabeth Watson, my daughters, to be reparted equally among them, portion and portion like, and if any of them die before they come to lawful age or day of marriage, the portion of them

so deceasing to be equally divided among the aforesaid my children then living, portion and portion like;

Item, I give to my brother, Thomas Lee, a hundred marks, and to have the bringing up of my son[s] William and Thomas Watson, with their portions, putting in sureties, and to have more, the rent of my house in Mark Lane during the time of the nonage of the said William towards the finding of them both to learning and bringing up, and the same my brother, Thomas Lee, I do make my executor jointly with John Quarles, draper, to whom for his pains I do give £10 and a gown to him and his wife;

And overseers of this my last will and testament, I do make and ordain John Caltrope, draper, to whom I do give for his pains £10, and a gown to him and another to his wife, and jointly with him I do make my overseer of the said will William Albany, merchant tailor of London, to whom I do give £6 13s 4d, and a gown to him and another to his wife;

Item, I do give to the Company of the Drapers towards a dinner £6;

And more I give to Mistress Pratt a kirtle of black satin, and a gown guarded with wrought velvet and edged with fringe and lined with fustian;

Barbara Haselfote, a gown;

To Mr Scott's eldest daughter a pair of Holland sheets, a long Holland tablecloth, and a towel and a dozen of napkins;

To the Goodwife Cutberd's eldest daughter a brown tablecloth, a dozen of napkins and a towel, and a half a garish of vessel of that in the kitchen;

To Richard Cragge's daughter, 40s;

Item, I do give to George Dauer [=Danvers] a hundred pounds, to be put in a chain and so given him to wear for my remembrance;

I do say that the profit of the 2 portions of my son[s], William and Thomas, to be given to my brother for their keeping;

For the money of Barbara's children, putting in sureties, to have it herself, otherwise not till they come to age;

To Bradshaw and his wife, and to Clarkson and his wife, gowns;

In witness hereof the part[i]es hereunder named have set to their hands the day and year abovesaid;

To Mr Baptist and Mr Barcket, each of them a gown; to Bawdwyn and his wife & the Goodwife Smyth, each of them a black gown, and more, to Thomas Spratt and his wife a

black gown apiece; Hugh Bodie and his wife, 2 gowns; to Mr Fisher and his wife, 2 rings of 20s apiece;

Item, to Mr Becon a gown and a noble.

Anne Watson. By me, John Scott. By me, John Huwlande. By me, Richard Cragge.

Probatum fuit huiusmodi Testamentum coram Magistro Waltero Haddon legum doctore Curie Prerogatiue Cantuariensis Comissario apud London octauo die mensis Maij Anno Domini millesimo quingentesimo sexagesimo primo Iuramento executorum in huiusmodi testamento nominatorum Quibus comissa fuit administracio etc de bene etc Ac de pleno inuentario necnon de vero et plano computo Reddendo Ad sancta dei Evangelia Iurati

[=The same testament was proved before Master Walter Haddon, Doctor of the Laws, Commissary of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury, at London on the eighth day of the month of May in the year of the Lord the thousand five hundred sixty-first by the oath of the executors named in the same testament, to whom administration was granted etc., sworn on the Holy Gospels to well etc., and [+to prepare] a full inventory, and also to render a true and plain account.]