

SUMMARY: The document below is the will, dated 4 April 1581 and proved 13 June 1581, of Vincent Guicciardini (d.1581). The testator married Lucretia Bruschetto [Bryskett] (1539/40-1608) by licence dated 15 September 1558, and had by her a son, James, and three daughters, Camilla (d.1606), Elizabeth and Mary.

Camilla Guicciardini (1561/2-1606) married, firstly, Thomas Darcy (d.1593/4), the son of Thomas Darcy (1538?-1586) and his wife, Margaret Sulyard, and, secondly, Francis Harvey (d.1602), one of Queen Elizabeth's Gentlemen Pensioners. For the will of Thomas Darcy (d.1593), see TNA PROB 11/84, ff. 238-9. For the will of Camilla (nee Guicciardini) Darcy Harvey (d.1606), see TNA PROB 11/108, ff. 54-5. Elizabeth Guicciardini married Robert Prowe. Mary Guicciardini married Sir Thomas Aylofffe (d.1614). See also Armytage, George J., ed., *Allegations for Marriage Licences Issued by the Bishop of London 1520 to 1610*, Vol. I (London, 1887), p. 19; Metcalfe, Walter, C., ed., *The Visitations of Essex* (London: Harleian Society, 1878), p. 215, and Sisson, Charles Jasper, ed., *Thomas Lodge and Other Elizabethans* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1933), pp. 345-7, all available online.

The testator was the brother of Lorenzo Guicciardini (d.1593) of Florence, who was involved in the intelligence gathering activities of both Lord Burghley and Robert Devereux (1565-1601), 2nd Earl of Essex, in the latter case through the testator's son, James Guicciardini. See Hammer, Paul E.J., *The Polarisation of Elizabethan Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 179, available online:

For all these reasons, Essex was happy to employ James Guicciardini as his agent at Florence in late 1593. Although his family were prominent Florentine merchants, Guicciardini was born in London and was the nephew of Edmund Spenser's close friend, Lodowick Bryskett. Following disputes over his father's will, Guicciardini traveled to Florence, where his uncle, Lorenzo, was a leading official under the grand duke of Tuscany. During 1592 and early 1593, writing on his master's behalf, Lorenzo Guicciardini had tried to open communications with Burghley. Although he wished to keep it secret, the duke was anxious that England should endorse Henri IV's conversion. However, Burghley was unenthusiastic and it seems that contact with Florence was passed over to Essex – clearly with Elizabeth's approval. James Guicciardini arrived back in England during this period, and when he finally returned to Florence at the end of 1593, he did so under direction from Essex. Unfortunately, his uncle died before his return and he himself had to assume the role of secret contact between Essex and the duke.

Although the precise nature of the relationship has not yet been established, Vincent Guicciardini (d.1581) and his brother, Lorenzo Guicciardini (d.1593), would appear to have been nephews of the historian Francesco Guicciardini (1483-1540), the author of *Historia d'Italia*, written from 1537 to 1540, but not published until 1561 in an edition by the author's nephew, Angelo Guicciardini. Oxford owned a copy of the 1565 edition of Guicciardini's *Historia d'Italia*, which is now in the Folger Shakespeare Library (see DG539.G8 H4 1565 Cage). Oxford's ownership of this book testifies to his fluency in

Italian, while Oxford's ties to members of the testator's family, as well as his father-in-law, Lord Burghley's, ties to members of the Guicciardini family, suggest that Oxford may have visited members of the Guicciardini family on his continental tour in 1575-6.

For additional discussion of the testator's will, including the identification of the Francis Bacon mentioned by the testator as Sir Francis Bacon (1561–1626), first cousin of Oxford's first wife, Anne Cecil (d.1588), see Sisson, Charles J., ed., *Thomas Lodge and Other Elizabethans* (New York: Octagon Books, 1966), pp. 292-3.

RM: Testamentum vincentij Guiceiardini

In the name of God, Amen. The fourth day of the month of April in the year of Our Lord God a thousand five hundred fourscore and one, and in the three and twentieth year of the reign of our Sovereign Lady Elizabeth by the grace of God Queen of England, France and Ireland, Defender of the Faith, etc., I, Vincent Guicciardini, merchant Florentine dwelling in London, being sick of body but in good and perfect mind, sense and remembrance (laud and praise be given unto Almighty God), and calling to remembrance the fragility and short time of man's life, and how certain and sure death is to all mankind, and the hour and time thereof most uncertain, do make, ordain and dispose this my present testament and last will in manner and form following that is to say:

First and principally I give and commend my soul into the hands of Almighty God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, by whom and by the merits, precious death, bloodshedding and glorious resurrection of the Second Person in Trinity, Jesus Christ, I trust and most assuredly believe to arise again, and to have full and clear remission and forgiveness of all my sins, and to be saved and to be inheritor of the kingdom of heaven;

And my body I commit to the earth, desiring to be buried in the parish church where I dwell, without pomp, at the discretion of Lucretia Guicciardini, my well-beloved wife;

And so coming to the disposition of my temporal goods, I do give and bequeath to Anna Colliours, my maidservant, twenty pounds of lawful money of England;

Item, I do give and bequeath to every one of my other servants 20s and a mourning gown;

Item, I do give and bequeath to Camilla Guicciardini, my eldest daughter, the sum of nine hundred pounds of good and lawful money of England towards her marriage, and to Elizabeth and Mary Guicciardini, also my daughters, I do give and bequeath to either of them one thousand marks of lawful money of England towards their marriage, so that the same Camilla, Elizabeth and Mary, my daughters, shall not marry without their mother's consent;

Item, I do give and bequeath to the said Lucretia, my wife, the lease of the house or tenement which I have in Seething Lane in London, and the lease which I hold of Francis Bacon in East Ham, and the lease of the marsh ground which I have of Streatham, and the lease of the lands which I have at Sydenham;

Item, I do give and bequeath to James Guicciardini, my son, all the goods which I have at Florence;

And moreover I do give & bequeath unto my said son the lands hereafter declared which in this realm are bought with my money, but the instruments thereof are made to my said son upon trust, to wit, ten acres and a half of Plumstead Marsh in Kent that was won;

Item, the lands and tenements in Erith bought of Thomas Barnes, and a certain part in the lands that shall be recovered of the breach at Erith aforesaid, which I reckon shall be threescore and ten acres or thereabouts, in which part my son is invested by Act of Parliament;

Provided always that my said son shall suffer my said wife freely to enjoy all the same lands so bought with my money in this realm during her lifetime, considering that they are bought with my money, and that the instruments thereof are made upon my said son only upon trust & confidence which I have in him that he will stand to my last will and testament;

And the residue of all and singular my goods, plate, jewels, ready money, debts and other substance whatsoever they be (my debts, funerals and legacies heretofore and after declared being first paid, discharged and performed), I make to the said Lucretia Guicciardini, my wife, and to the said James Guicciardini, my son, equally for to be divided amongst them, conditionally always that the said James shall suffer the said Lucretia, his mother, during her lifetime to enjoy all the said lands which in this realm are bought with my money, as is abovesaid, and thereof shall make unto my said wife good assurance within six months next ensuing after my decease that she shall or may freely enjoy the same during her said lifetime, or else by fault of the same and that my said wife may not freely and lawfully so enjoy it, my will is that the said James, my son, shall be deprived of all the said goods which I here-above have made to him and my said wife equally for to be divided amongst them, and that my said wife in such case shall have all the same goods alone, and therebesides that the said James in such case shall pay all such costs and charges as I shall lay out from the day of the date hereof for the winning of the said land of the breach;

And I do make and ordain the said Lucretia Guicciardini, my well-beloved wife, and the said James Guicciardini, my son, executors of this my last will & testament;

And I do make as overseers of the same my trusty friends (blank) and William Petala, making and bequeathing to every of them a mourning gown, and moreover unto the said Petala that which my wife shall think reasonable;

In witness whereof I, the said Vincent Guicciardini, have set hereunto my hand and seal in the presence of the notary and witness underwritten.

Approbo ('and the lease which I hold of Francis Bacon in East Ham') Interlineas que verba attestor ante subscriptionem & sigillationem ibidem scripta fuisse. Paulus Typoots Notarius publicus. Per me Phillippo Corsinij testimonio. Per me Willelmum Petala. Per me Bartolo Corsini fui(?) testimonio. Per me Sebastiano Bruschetto(?) testimonio. Per me Edward Atkinson. Per me Thomaso Bruschetto testimonio. By me Dennys le Blancq as witness. In testimonium quod prefatus Magus(?) D Vincentius Guicciardi compos mente ac intellectu presentes subscripserit ac sigillo suo corroborauerit declaueritque hodesse suum testamentum et vltimam voluntatem in presentia mei infrascripti notarij ac testium inferius nominatorum presentes manu mea propria signam requisitus. Paulus Typoots Notarius publicus.

Probatum fuit suprascriptum testamentum apud London Coram venerabili viro magistro Willelmo Drurye legum Doctore curie prerogatiue Cantuariensis commissario etc Decimo tertio die mensis Iunij Anno Domini millesimo quingentesimo octogesimo primo Iuramento magistri Edwardi Barker in legis(?) Baccalarij(?) notarij publici procuratoris Lucretie relictę vnus executorum etc Cui commissa fuit administracio bonorum etc de bene etc Iurati Reseruata potestate &c Iacobo Guicciardini(?) alteri executori in eodem nominato cum venerit &c admissuro Examinatur

The above-written testament was proved at London before the worshipful Master William Drury, Doctor of the Laws, Commissary etc. of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury, on the thirteenth day of the month of June in the year of the Lord the thousand five hundred eighty-first by the oath of Master Edward Barker, Bachelor(?) in the Laws(?), notary public, proctor of Lucretia, relict, one of the executors etc., to whom administration was granted of the goods etc., sworn to well etc., with power reserved etc. to James Guicciardini, the other executor named in the same, when he shall have come etc. to be admitted. Examined.]