

SUMMARY: The document below is the Prerogative Court of Canterbury copy of the will dated 28 February 1568 and proved 30 May 1588 of George Kempe, uncle of the comedian Will Kempe and of Alice (Kempe) Hales (d.1592), to whom Robert Greene dedicated *Menaphon*. As he states in his will, George Kempe was a Catholic recusant, as apparently was the case with his brother, Sir Thomas Kempe (d.1591), the father of Alice (Kempe) Hales and the comedian Will Kempe. George Kempe is named, along with his brothers Edward, Anthony and Francis, in the will of his mother, Eleanor (see TNA PROB 11/43, ff. 457-8). The manor of Chelworth, mentioned by George Kempe in his will below, is also mentioned in his mother's will, and appears to have been inherited through her. For the will of George Kempe's father, Sir William Kempe (1487-1539) of Olantigh, see TNA PROB 11/27, f. 228.

In the name of God, Amen. I, George Kempe of London, gentleman, being in perfect health and memory, laud and praise be unto Almighty God, do make and ordain this my will and testament in manner and form following:

First, I commit my soul to the tuition of Almighty God, trusting through the merits of Christ's passion and the faith of the Catholic church, wherein I intend to live and die, to be a saved soul in heaven; my body I will to be buried as to mine executors shall seem good in Christian burial;

Item, I give unto my well-beloved brother, Edward Kempe, all that fifth part of the manor of Chelworth and hundred of Staple in the county of Wiltshire, with all lands, tenements and hereditaments, woods and underwoods belonging to the same, with all and singular the appurtenances which I late had to me and mine heirs of the bargain, sale, gift or grant of the said Edward, to have and to hold to the said Edward and his heirs forever;

Item, I will and bequeath the one fourth part of my goods being within this realm of England at the time of my death to be given to poor folks and prisoners as to mine executors shall seem good;

And I do ordain and constitute my well-beloved brothers, Anthony Kempe and Francis Kempe, executors of this my will and testament;

In witness whereof I have hereunto subscribed my name, given the last of February in the year of Our Lord one thousand five hundred sixty-seven after the computation of the Church of England. George Kempe. These being witnesses: Nicholas Shawe, John Morys

Probatum fuit testamentum suprascriptum apud London coram venerabili viro Magistro Willelmo Drury legum doctore curie Prerogatiue Cantuariensis commissario &c tricesimo

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die mensis Maij anno domini millesimo quingentesimo octogesimo octavo Iuramento Thome wheeler notarij publici procuratoris Anthonij Kempe et ffrancisci Kempe executorum in huiusmodi testamento nominatorum Quibus commissa fuit administracio &c De bene &c Iurato Examinatus

[=The above-written testament was proved at London before the worshipful Master William Drury, Doctor of the Laws, Commissary of the Prerogative Count of Canterbury etc., on the thirtieth day of the month of May in the year of the Lord the thousand five hundred eighty-eighth by the oath of Thomas Wheeler, notary public, proctor of Anthony Kempe and Francis Kempe, executors named in the same testament, to whom administration etc., sworn to well etc. Examined]