

SUMMARY: The document below is the Prerogative Court of Canterbury copy of the will, dated 2 January 1582 and proved 5 June 1589, of Thomas Chapman, father of the poet and playwright, George Chapman (1559/60-1634), who described a meeting with Oxford in *The Revenge of Bussy D'Ambois* (Act III, Scene 4, lines 84-103):

<http://www.elizabethanauthors.org/chapman101.htm>

CLERMONT:

*I overtook, coming from Italy,
In Germany, a great and famous Earl
Of England, the most goodly-fashioned man
I ever saw; from head to foot in form
Rare and most absolute; he had a face
Like one of the most ancient honored Romans,
From whence his noblest family was derived;
He was beside of spirit passing great,
Valiant, and learned, and liberal as the sun,
Spoke and writ sweetly, or of learned subjects,
Or of the discipline of public weals;
And 'twas the Earl of Oxford; and being offered
At that time, by Duke Casimir, the view
Of his right royal army then in field,
Refused it, and no foot was moved to stir
Out of his own free fore-determined course:
I, wondering at it, asked for it his reason,
It being an offer so much for his honor.
He, all acknowledging, said 'twas not fit
To take those honors that one cannot quit.*

The testator married Joan Nodes (d.1566), the daughter of George Nodes (d. 14 May 1564), Sergeant of the Buckhounds to Henry VIII, Edward VI, Mary I and Elizabeth I, by Margaret Grimeston (d. 6 June 1582), a cousin of the historian, Edward Grimeston. See the will of George Nodes, TNA PROB 11/47/208, and Chauncy, Henry, *The Historical Antiquities of Hertfordshire*, (Bishops Stortford: J.M. Mullinger, 1826 reprint), Vol. II, pp. 414-15 at:

http://books.google.ca/books?id=99MqAQAIAAJ&pg=PA415&lpg=PA415&dq=%22George+Nodes%22&source=bl&ots=RDs-_XjFMo&sig=v8DsRzJyfEEGu9zLj9wfXrM8TGQ&hl=en&sa=X&ei=bOUYVM-YGOGCjALNj4C4Bg&ved=0CD0Q6AEwBg#v=onepage&q=%22George%20Nodes%22&f=false

LM: T{estamentum} Thome Chapman

[f. 16v] In the name of God, Amen. The second day of January in the year of Our Lord God a thousand five hundred eighty-one and in the four and twentieth year of the reign of our most gracious Sovereign Lady Elizabeth by the grace of God of England, France and Ireland Queen, Defender of the Faith etc., I, Thomas Chapman of Hitchin in the county of Hertford, yeoman, being whole of body and perfect of mind and remembrance (I laud and praise my God therefore), do make, constitute and ordain this my present testament containing therein my last will in manner and form following, that is to say:

First and principally I commend and commit my soul into the hands of God the Father Almighty, my Maker and Creator, to Jesus Christ, his dear Son, my alone and only Saviour and Redeemer, and to the Holy Ghost, his elect Spirit, my Comforter and Sanctifier, three distinct persons and one eternal, almighty and ever-living God, most assuredly trusting in the mercy and favour of God through the only death, passion and resurrection of Jesus Christ by faith in his blood to have free pardon and full forgiveness of all my sins;

And I will that this body of corruption until such time that it shall rise again and put on interruption shall be decently interred within the churchyard of Hitchin aforesaid near or upon the place where Joan, my late wife, was buried;

Item, I will that all such debts and duties as I owe of right to any person or persons shall be well and truly satisfied, contented and paid by mine executor hereafter named so soon after my decease as the same conveniently may be;

Item, I give and bequeath unto the poor people of Hitchin aforesaid three pounds of current money to be equally distributed amongst them towards their better relief immediately after my decease by and at the discretion of my said executor;

Item I give and bequeath unto my son, George Chapman, one hundred pounds of lawful money of England, whereof I will fifty pounds to be paid unto him within one year next after my decease, and fifty pounds, the residue, to be likewise paid unto him the next year then next and immediately following;

Also I give unto him two silver spoons;

Item, I give and bequeath unto my daughter, Elizabeth Pigott, ten pounds of current English money and two silver spoons;

Item, I give unto my daughter, Margaret Chambre, ten pounds of like lawful money and two silver spoons;

Item, I give and bequeath unto my daughter, Joan Monck, ten pounds of like money and two silver spoons, to be paid unto every one of them within one year next after my decease if they be then living;

Item, I give and bequeath to Roberta Pigott forty shillings;

Item, I give and [f. 17r] bequeath to Joan Chamber forty shillings;

To Jonathan Chamber forty shillings;

To John Monck forty shillings;

To Thomas Moncke forty shillings;

To Thomas Chapman, my servant, twenty shillings;

To Nicholas Chapman, my brother's son, twenty shillings;

To William Chapman, the other son, twenty shillings;

And to Edward Chapman, the third son, twenty shillings, to be likewise paid unto them or so many of them as then shall be living within one year next after my decease;

Item, I give to my son, Thomas Chapman, all that my messuage or tenement with the appurtenances wherein I now inhabit and dwell, to have and to hold to him and to the heirs of his body lawfully to be begotten;

And for default of such issue of the body of the said Thomas lawfully to be begotten, then I will and appoint that my said messuage or tenement with th' appurtenances shall come and remain to my said son, George Chapman, and to the heirs of his body lawfully to be begotten;

And for default of such issue of the body of the said George lawfully to be begotten, then I will my said messuage or tenement with th' appurtenances to descend and be to my said three daughters, Elizabeth, Margaret and Joan, or to so many of them as then shall happen to be living;

And if all my said three daughters die, as God it defend, then I will and ordain my said messuage or tenement with th' appurtenances wholly to come and remain to such issues of the bodies of my said three daughters lawfully begotten as then shall be surviving, equally to be divided amongst them;

And for default of such issues then to remain and come to the right heirs of me, the said Thomas Chapman;

All the rest of my goods, chattels and debts whatsoever, as well movables and unmovables, reals or personals, which I have in my said house or elsewhere before in these presents by me not named, willed or bequeathed, I clearly and absolutely give and bequeath unto my said son, Thomas Chapman, for and towards the performance of this my present will and satisfaction of the legacies in the same by me named and bequeathed;

And I constitute and ordain of this my present testament my said son, Thomas Chapman, my sole and alone executor, and require and pray my good friend, Mr Humphrey Bagshawe to be unto him in due ordering and execution of the same a helper and overseer, and I give unto him for his pains twenty shillings, and will also that if he be at any charges in and about the overseeing of this my said will that he shall have the same answered and supplied by my said executor;

And I utterly renounce, revoke and annul all other former wills, testaments, bequests, executors or overseer[s] whatsoever before this time by me made, willed, bequeathed, nominated or appointed;

In witness whereof I have unto these presents set my hand and seal the day and year first above-written in the presence of Humphrey Bagsha, Edmond Sleigh, Thomas Wrighte his mark, and John Pond.

Post scriptum. Item, I will and bequeath and give unto the poor people of Hitchin seven pounds more over and above the said sum of three pounds before nominated and bequeathed, which amounts in the whole unto ten pounds, which I will to be bestowed amongst them within three years next after my decease, namely by five marks a year, which will come unto sixpence a couple, and the same to be distributed unto the poorest sort by and at the discretion of my said executor above-named yearly in Lent during the said three years.

Probatum fuit testamentum suprascriptum apud London coram venerabili viro magistro Willmo Drury Legum doctore Curie Prerogatiue Cantuariensis Commissario & Quinto die mensis Iunij anno Domini millesimo quingentesimo octogesimo nono iuramento Thome Chapman filij defuncti et executoris in huiusmodi testamento nominati Cui commissaria fuit administratio bonorum iurium et creditorum eiusdem defuncti de bene et fideliter administrando & ad sancta dei evangelia iuratus

[=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 fifth day of the month of June in the year of the Lord the thousand five hundred eighty-ninth by the oath of Thomas Chapman, son of the said deceased and executor named in the same testament, to whom administration was granted of the goods, rights and credits of the same deceased, sworn on the Holy Gospels to well and faithfully administer etc.]