

SUMMARY: The document below is the last will and testament, dated 14 February 1598, of Oxford's half-sister, Katherine de Vere, who died on 17 January 1600, aged about 60. She married Edward, 3rd Lord Windsor (d.1575), sometime between 1553 and 1558. At the time of the making of her will, Lady Windsor was living at Hewell in Worcestershire. She was buried at Tardebigge in that county. The terms of her will suggest that Lady Windsor was in somewhat straightened circumstances during the last years of her life. It also seems that she did not enjoy cordial relations with either Oxford or his sister Mary, as neither of them is mentioned in the will. By the time of Lady Windsor's death, her son Frederick (1559-1585), 4th Lord Windsor, had been succeeded by his brother Henry (1562-1605), 5th Lord Windsor. A Frederick Windsor is left a bequest of £20 in the will, but this cannot have been Lady Windsor's son; he may have been a grandson. According to Lady Windsor's will, she had two other sons, Edward and Andrew, and two daughters, Margaret (who seems to have been unmarried in 1598) and Katherine (who had married Robert Audley in 1597). Bequests are also made by Lady Windsor to two other 'daughters', Anne and Elizabeth, but these may have been her two daughters-in-law, Anne (Rivett) Windsor and Elizabeth (Ardington) Windsor, wives of her sons Henry and Edward, respectively.

LM: Testamentum Domine Katherine Windsor vidue

In the name of God, Amen. The fourteenth day of February in the year of our Lord God one thousand five hundred fourscore and eighteen, I, Katherine, Lady Windsor, of Hewell, late wife of Edward, Lord Windsor, deceased, being weak in body but of good and perfect memory, thanks be given to God therefore, do constitute, ordain and make this my last will and testament in manner and form following, viz.,

First I do bequeath and yield up most willingly my soul into the hands of Almighty God, my only Creator, hoping assuredly by the precious death and bloodshedding of my Saviour and Redeemer, Jesus Christ, that he will vouchsafe to place me in the company of the heavenly company [+of] angels and blessed saints, there to remain forever;

And for my body, I commend it to the earth from whence it was taken, and to be interred in such manner and form as to my executors shall seem most convenient, so as the whole charge of my funerals exceed not one hundred pounds;

Item, I give and bequeath unto my son Edward fifty pounds, wishing him to content himself herewith for that no man knoweth my ability better or the cause that brought me so much indebted as himself doth;

Item, I give and bequeath unto my son Andrew, rather to show my remembrance of him than for the value of the gift, my ring with a turquoise stone set in the same;

Item, as nature doth bind all creatures to favour with greater affection their like, as we daily see experience, especially when desert hath been showed even from the cradle, myself, not being in motherly affection unto any, would willingly manifest the same in this my last and greatest care I endure for the good of my daughter Margaret, and although I doubt not but the Almighty will be a father to her to protect her from the force of the wicked, yet would I, according to my power, show my love in exhorting her to continue in the fear of God and obedience to his laws, which will be unto her the greatest treasure that is upon earth, and out of that small substance God hath lent me, I bequeath and give unto her two hundred pounds, requesting my son Henry, according to the intent of my lord his father, and the trust of my son Frederick, his brother, on him reposed in the behalf of his two sisters, that he will be mindful thereof;

Item, forasmuch as my daughter Katherine, as I hope, is joined in marriage with a man that will show himself a loving husband unto her, my care is the less, yet upon condition that my son Audley shall perform as much towards her as he promised unto me in the presence of my servant Barnsley and Henry Cooles, I give unto him my grey double gelding, and I give unto my said daughter Katherine, hoping that she will prove an obedient wife, a basin & ewer of silver of the price of thirteen pounds six shillings and eight pence;

Item, I give and bequeath unto my daughter Elizabeth Windsor my wrought velvet gown;

Item, I give and bequeath unto my daughter Anne Windsor a kirtle of black velvet embroidered;

Item, I give and bequeath unto Frederick Windsor towards maintaining him in learning, which I would have done myself if God should spare me life, twenty pounds;

Item, whereas Barnsley, my servant, standeth bounden for me in many great sums of debt to the value of four hundred pounds for the payment of two hundred and twenty pounds, some jointly with me and some by himself with others with him, which I do knowledge to be to my use, to be paid at several times within one year now next following, besides I owe unto him the sum of two hundred and twenty pounds which is due in May next following, and one hundred threescore and three pounds due unto him by account, as by his book of receipts and disbursements may appear, my will is that with all expedition after my death, as well all my goods and chattels as also all debts that shall be owing unto me, shall be employed first of all only to discharge him, and for the good service he hath done me I give and bequeath unto him thirty pounds, and if any suit should be commenced against him for any sum of money that he standeth indebted for me, or that he lay out or expend any money for the continuing of any debts until money may be made for the payment of the same as aforesaid, then my will is that all such charges as he shall be at and for all such money as he shall disburse, expend or lay out for the causes aforesaid shall be allowed him again;

Item, I give and bequeath unto Edward Browne, my servant, five pounds;

Item, I give and bequeath unto Thomas Harwarde six pounds thirteen shillings and four pence;

Item, I give and bequeath unto Humphrey Mascoll, my servant, ten pounds;

Item, I give and bequeath unto Michael Pigott, my servant, four pounds;

Item, I give and bequeath unto Netherton, my servant, four pounds;

Item, I give and bequeath unto John Barber, my servant, forty shillings;

Item, I give and bequeath unto Richard Barber, my servant, forty shillings;

Item, I give and bequeath unto every other manservant that shall be in my house at the time of my death twenty shillings;

Item, I give and bequeath unto every waiting gentlewoman that shall be attending on me in my house at the time of my death five pounds;

Item, I give and bequeath unto Mary Lane forty shillings;

Item, I give and bequeath unto mother Poole forty shillings;

Item, I give and bequeath unto every other woman servant that shall be in my house at the time of my death twenty shillings;

And if any of my servants before-named, either man or woman, shall depart from my service and not be in house with me at the time of my death, then my will is that all such sums of money before mentioned and bequeathed unto any of them so departed to be detained, and the same to be employed as hereafter in my will is further declared;

Item, I give and bequeath unto the poor, to be distributed to such persons and at such times as my executors shall think best, twenty pounds;

Item, for the trust I repose in my especial good friend Mr John Talbot of Grafton, esquire, and my servant Barnsley, hoping that in equity and conscience the[y] will perform the trust hereby reposed in them, I do ordain and make them my executors, and unto Mr Talbot, for his pains herein, I give my young gelding called Painter, and unto Barnsley I give for his pains five pounds;

Provided, and my will further is, that my said servant Barnsley, during the life of the said John Talbot (if the said John Talbot shall take upon him to be an executor), shall not any way dispose of any of my goods or chattels which I shall leave at my decease without the consent of the said Mr Talbot, or jointly with him, nor shall but jointly or with the consent of him make any release or acquittance as executor unto me of or for anything whatsoever, nor shall do, execute or perform any act or thing touching or concerning this

my last will or anything herein contained without the like consent of the said Master Talbot, except in satisfying of himself such debts as are by myself due unto him and discharging and satisfying such others as he standeth bound unto for me or in my behalf, and except likewise in receiving such sums of money as be or shall be due unto me in my lifetime or to my said executors after my decease, of all which receipts and of all and everything else whatsoever that my said servant Barnsley shall do, I will that he shall every half year after my decease until my will be performed, make and deliver up unto the said Master Talbot a true and perfect account, together with all such money as shall thereupon appear to be remaining in his hands;

Item, upon the great good hope and motherly affiance that I have and trust will be performed by my eldest son Henry, Lord Windsor, as well in showing of kindness towards his brothers and sisters as also in his assistance towards my executors, I ordain and make him my overseer of this my present will, and in consideration for his pains to be taken I give unto him my sorrel horse, or else if I shall not have the said horse at the time of my death, then I give unto him a basin and ewer of silver of the price of twenty pounds, requesting him to accept hereof, and I do likewise require him, as he doth trust to possess the favour of God, that he by no manner of means do molest or trouble my said executors, but rather by his advice and counsel to protect & maintain them in all such actions as shall tend to the accomplishing of my said will;

Furthermore my will is that after my funerals performed and my debts and legacies discharged, my executors allowed their reasonable expenses and everything accomplished according to my will, that then my daughter Margaret to have and enjoy whatsoever doth then remain in my executors' hands unemployed, and also that she shall have and enjoy all my brass, pewter, bedding, plate, linen, napery and all other household stuff as part of payment of the foresaid legacy to her before bequeathed at the same rate and value as it shall be praised and assessed in the inventory thereof to be taken;

Lastly, I utterly revoke and annul all and every other former testaments, wills, legacies, bequests, executors and overseers by me in any wise before this time named, willed and bequeathed;

And if it shall happen at any time hereafter any ambiguity, doubt or question to grow or arise by reason of the imperfection or defect of or in any words, clauses or sentences in this my present last will and testament or my true intent and meaning therein, that then for the further and better explanation, interpretation and confirmation of the said doubt and ambiguity, I will that my said executors shall expound, explain and interpret the same according to their wisdoms and good discretions;

In witness whereof unto this my present last will and testament I have put my hand and seal the day and year first above-written. Katherine Windsor. Signed, sealed and published in the presence of Robert Caldwell, Robert Leeke, Giles Arkenstall.

Probatum fuit testamentum suprascriptum apud London Coram venerabili viro magistro Iohanne Gibson legum doctore Curie Prerogative Cantuariensis magistro Custode siue Commissario legitime constituto Vicesimo quarto die mensis Aprilis Anno domini Millesimo Sexcentesimo Iuramento Iohannis Price notarij publici procuratoris Iohannis Talbott et Nicholai Barnsley executorum in huiusmodi testament nominatorum Quibus commissa fuit administracio &c De bene et fideliter administrando &c Ad sancta dei evangelia Iurato Examinatus

[=The above-written will was proved at London before the worshipful Master John Gibson, Doctor of the Laws, Master Keeper or Commissary of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury lawfully constituted on the twenty-fourth day of the month of April in the year of the Lord one thousand six hundred by the oath of John Price, notary public, proxy of John Talbot and Nicholas Barnsley, executors named in the same testament, to whom administration was granted etc., sworn on the sacred gospels to well and faithfully administer etc. Examined.]