

SUMMARY: The document below is the reply by Oxford's maternal uncle, Arthur Golding to a petition in the ecclesiastical courts by Oxford's half-sister, Katherine (1538-1600), then the wife of Edward (1532?-1575), 3<sup>rd</sup> Lord Windsor. Golding states that Katherine had petitioned Matthew Parker (1504-1575), Archbishop of Canterbury, requesting him to order the 13-year-old Oxford and his sister Mary to produce witnesses on their behalf in the ecclesiastical courts. It can be inferred that the matters to which they were being asked to respond concerned the legitimacy of the 16<sup>th</sup> Earl's marriage to Margery Golding (see Huntington Library MS EL5870). Golding requests the Archbishop to stay the proceedings on the grounds that Oxford is a minor under the age of 14 and a ward of the Queen, and according to the common law, the statutes of the realm and the privileges of the Court of Wards and Liveries, no legal action can be maintained against a ward in any other court without prior licence from the Court of Wards and Liveries. See also Golding, Louis Thorn, *An Elizabethan Puritan* (New York: R.R. Smith, 1937), pp. 38-9.

Arthur Golding, gentleman, uncle of Lord Edward, Earl of Oxford, and Lady Mary, his sister, understanding from the report of some that the Lady Katherine, wife of Lord Edward Windsor, knight, Baron of Stanwell, has urgently treated with & still to persevere to the most reverend Matthew, Archbishop of Canterbury, that he might decree that the said Lord the Earl of Oxford and Lady Mary, his sister, be summoned to produce witnesses to be received, sworn and examined, if they consider [+it in] their interest, upon certain articles touching and concerning the same Earl and his sister, under protestations of not to be assenting & unless etc., he [=Arthur Golding] appears, and to all effect of right alleges the petition of the said Lady Katherine to contain grievous injury to the Lady the Queen & the said Earl and his sister, and to touch the legitimation of blood and the right of hereditary possessions, and also the foresaid Lord the Earl to have been and to be less than fourteen years of age, and publicly & of record under the wardship, guardianship or care of our said Lady the Queen, and all and singular his lands, tenements & hereditaments to be in the possession & direction of the said Lady the Queen during his minority, and of right ought to be thus, and by that reason, both by the common law and by the statutes of this kingdom and also by the privileges of the Court of Wards & Liveries of our foresaid Lady the Queen no action or dispute ought nor can be moved nor anything other be alleged, done or intended before any ecclesiastical or secular judge which or that directly or indirectly touches his person, estate, things, goods, lands, possessions, tenements or hereditaments whatsoever, or by any manner during his minority is able to touch [+the same] except in the Court of Wards & Liveries of the said Lady the Queen before the Master & Council of the same Court by the judge for the purpose especially appointed by the force of the laws of this kingdom, and moreover he has alleged the foresaid Lady Mary, sister of the said Earl, to have been and to be also less than fourteen years of age, and her right & interest to depend directly from the right & title of the forenamed Earl, wherefore he requests that the most Reverend might decree for the before-mentioned reasons that the proceedings be stayed until special licence in

this respect be obtained according to the laws & customs till now lawfully used in like cases in the said Court of Wards and Liveries.

Endorsed in Sir William Cecil's hand: Arthur Golding's petition for my Lord of Oxford.

- 1 Arthurus Goldyng generosus Avunculus Domini Edwardi Comitis Oxonie et
- 2 Domine Marie sororis sue Intelligens ex relacione nonnullorum Dominam
- 3 Catherinam vxorem Domini Edwardi Windesore Militis Baronis de
- 4 Stanwell instanter egisse & adhuc instare apud Reverendissimum Matheum
- 5 Canter' Archiepiscopum quatenus dictos Dominum Comitem Oxonie et Dominam Mariam
- 6 eius sororem citandos fore decernat ad videndum testes recipi iurari et
- 7 examinari si sua putaverint interesse super quibusdam Articulis
- 8 eosdem Comitem et eius sororem tangentibus et concernentibus sub protestacionibus
- 9 de non consentiendo & nisi &c Comparet et ad omnem iuris effectum
- 10 allegat dicte Domine Catherine petitionem continere grave preiudicium Domine
- 11 Regine & dicti Comitis et eius sororis sanguinisque legitimitate ac ius
- 12 hereditariarum possessionum contingere necnon antedictum Dominum Comitem
- 13 fuisse et esse minorem quatuordecem Annorum ac notorie & ex recordo
- 14 sub warda tutela seu cura dicte Domine nostre Regine omniaque et singula
- 15 terras tenementa & hereditamenta sua in possessione & Regimine
- 16 dicte Domine Regine durante minore etate sua esse et de iure sic esse
- 17 debere Eaque racione tam de iure communi quam statutis huius Regni ac
- 18 etiam privilegijis curie Wardarum & Liberationum predicte Domine nostre
- 19 Regine nullam litem seu controuersiam moveri nec quicquam aliud allegari

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- 20 agi aut intentari coram aliquo ecclesiastico seu seculari Iudice  
21 debere nec posse que vel quod directe seu indirecte personam statum  
22 res bona terras possessiones tenementa seu hereditamenta eius  
23 quecunque tangit vel aliquo modo durante eius minore etate  
24 tangere potest preterquam in Curia Wardarum & liberationum dicte Domine  
25 Regine coram magistro & consilio eiusdem Curie Iudice ad hoc specialiter  
26 vigore legum huius Regni deputato Et insuper allegavit  
27 antedictam Dominam Mariam sororem dicti Comitis fuisse et esse  
28 minorem etiam quatuordecem Annis eiusque ius & interesse dependere  
29 directe a iure & titulo prefati Comitis Quare petit quatenus  
30 Reverendissimus decernat ex causis premissis supersedendis fore donec licentia  
31 in hac parte specialis obtineatur secundum leges & consuetudines  
32 in casibus consimilibus in dicta Curia Wardarum et  
33 Liberationum hactenus legitime vsitatas