

SUMMARY: The document below is the will, dated 1564 and probated on 29 December 1565, of Oxford's paternal aunt, Elizabeth de Vere, widow of Thomas, 1st Lord Darcy of Chiche. For the wills of Lady Darcy's husband and two sons, John and Robert, see PROB 11/44, ff. 75-6, PROB 11/63, ff. 3-4, and PROB 11/51, f. 156. For the will of Lady Darcy's nephew John Vere (d.1624), son of her brother Geoffrey de Vere, see PROB 11/143, ff. 510-15. Lady Darcy's daughter Constance was the wife of Edmund Pyrton, one of the executors named in the will. It would appear that Edmund Pyrton had been in wardship since Lady Darcy leaves him £10 'to help toward the payment of his livery'. A memorandum which follows the will describes the circumstances of Lady Darcy's death.

RM: Testamentum Elizabethhe Darcy vidue

In the name of God, Amen. I, Elizabeth Darcy, widow, whole of body and mind, thanks be to God, do make this my last will and testament in the year of Our Lord 1564 and in the sixth year of our most dread Sovereign Lady, Queen Elizabeth, by the grace of God Queen of England, France and Ireland, Defender of the Faith & Supreme Head of England under God.

First, I give & bequeath my soul unto Almighty God and to his mercy, trusting that by his grace and the merits of his most precious death and passion and upon my earnest repentance for my sin to have full remission and forgiveness of the same, and my mortal body I bequeath to the earth and to be buried at Saint Osyth called Chiche by my honourable Lord and husband, the Lord Darcy, with such ceremony as belongs to a Christian woman and to my calling, and as my executors shall think meet;

Also I bequeath at the day of my burial to be given to the poor that is impotent and not able to work or aged £5 after 2d dole, or else as my executors shall think meet to give groats;

Also I will that my Lord my son have a black gown and a coat, and 4 of his servants black coats;

Also Robert Darcy a gown and a coat, and my son Pyrton as much, and two of his men coats;

Also Thomasine Darcy all such mourning apparel as belongeth the daughter to wear for the death of her mother, and my daughter Pyrton the same, and to my 2 gentlemen their gowns and coats, and my gentlewoman a gown;

Also I do give unto my Lord my son £10 of lawful money of England;

Also I give my daughter, his wife, a bracelet of gold flagon fashion;

Also I give to Thomasine Darcy, if she be unmarried, a hundred marks of good and lawful money of England, and a flower of diamonds, and the best hedge [=edge?] of pearl, and my can of parcel-gilt, & a trussing bed sparver of tawny velvet and orange tawny damask with roots of cloth of silver and curtains to the same, and a featherbed and bolster, a pair of blankets, a pillow and 2 pair of sheets and 2 pillow-beres and a coverlet of coarse tapestry;

Also I give to my daughter Pyrton my other hedge [=edge?] of pearl, and a ring with a diamond, and a casting-bottle all gilt, and a trussing bedsteddle with gilt posts, and a tester of cloth of baudekin and crimson satin with a word and curtains to the same, and a featherbed and bolster, and 2 pairs of sheets and a pillow and 2 pillow-beres, and a gown of black velvet and my best kirtle, and half dozen of my best smocks and kerchers as many;

Also I give to my son Robert a basin and an ewer with the Darcies' arms, and a jug parcel-gilt with the Darcies' arms, and a dozen of silver trenchers with the Darcies' arms, and 2 wine-pots all gilt, and a trussing bedsteddle of walnut-tree with a tester of crimson satin paned with black velvet with my Lord's arms and mine and curtains to the same, and the featherbed that I lay on, and [+a] pair of fustians and a pillow, and a coverlet with leaves and conies and beasts, and two pair of fine sheets and 2 fine pillow-beres, also a long cushion of crimson velvet with mullets, and another that is lesser with mullets, and a cupboard carpet;

Also I give unto my son Pyrton a nest of goblets parcel-gilt and six in the case, and £10 of money to help toward the payment of his livery, and £10 to the keeping of his son William to school;

Also I do give to Thomas Darcy my marriage-ring, and a cross-bow of damascene work with the rack;

Also I do give unto my gentlewoman a gown and a kirtle of mine own, and 6 smocks and 6 kerchers and a bonnet;

Also I will give [sic?] Harper twenty nobles and a gelding, and a half dozen of silver spoons;

Also I do give Piren [=Perryn?] twenty nobles and a nag;

Also I give Roger, my groom, forty shillings and a nag if he be my man;

Also I do give unto [+my?] groom four beasts that is milch-kine, whereof 2 John Cooke hath to farm and thother 2 goeth with John Usherwood, and a nag, and £4 of money;

Also I do give John Usherwood all the rest of my kine that he hath in farm, that is 6 and a nag, and all such money as he oweth me;

Also I do give unto my godson, John Vere, my brother Geoffrey's eldest son, £10 in considering his bringing up in learning, which I do earnestly charge my executors that this money be bestowed to that use, or else that way as may be benefit unto the boy as they shall think best;

Also I do give Mistress Tey a little wreathed ring if I die in her house, or elsewhere it is my chance to die, to give it to her that is owner of the house;

And this shall be to charge you that if there remain any goods, I will they shall be evenly distributed between Robert Darcy and my son Pyrton, whom I make my executors to see this my last will truly distributed as my trust is in you both, and as you will answer at the general day of judgment;

In witness whereof I have set to my hand to this my last will and testament. Elizabeth Darcy.

Memorandum: That the above-named Lady Darcy the 26th day of December anno domini 1565 iuxta computacionem ecclesie anglicane, lying sick at the house of her son-in-law, Edmund Pyrton, in the presence of Anthony Bishop and George Perryn, gentlemen, and Edward Lloyd, clerk, and others, being in perfect mind and memory, did openly & voluntarily confess and acknowledge that she had made her last will and testament and had written the same with her own hand and subscribed her name thereunto, and that it did remain in a coffer of hers that was in her lodging at Master Tuke's house at Layer Marney, and that her said will and testament should stand and be of force to all intents, bequests and purposes in the same contained, and furthermore she declared that Master Edmund Pyrton and Master Robert Darcy, esquires, were her executors named and appointed in the same her last will & testament, and delivered the key of the coffer wherein her said last will and testament was unto the above-named Master Pyrton and Master Darcy, her executors, and willed them to go for the same and to bring it unto her, at whose commandment they went & brought the will to the said Master Pyrton's house, but before they could come thither she was departed.

Probatum fuit huiusmodi testamentum coram Magistro Waltero Haddon Legum doctore curie Prerogatiue Cantuariensis Custode siue commissario apud London xxix die mensis Decembris anno domini Millesimo quingentesimo sexagesimo Quinto Iuramento Magistri Georgij Harrison procuratoris Edmundi Pirton et Roberti Darcie executorum in huiusmodi testamento nominatorum Quibus commissa fuit administracio De bene &c. Iuratorum.

[=The same testament was proved before Master Walter Haddon, Doctor of the Laws, Keeper or Commissary of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury, at London on the 29th day of the month of December in the year of the Lord the thousand five hundred sixty-fifth by the oath of Master George Harrison, proctor of Edmund Pyrton and Robert

Darcy, executors named in the same testament, to whom administration was granted to well etc. Sworn.]