

SUMMARY: The document below is the Prerogative Court of Canterbury copy of the will, dated 12 April 1572 and proved 25 June 1572 of Thomas Lee of Clattercote in Oxfordshire, maternal uncle of the poet, Thomas Watson (d.1592).

For the will of the testator's father, Thomas Lee (d.1527), see TNA PROB 11/22, f. 174. For the will of the testator's mother, Elizabeth (nee Rolleston), who died on 2 August 1556, and according to the testator's will was buried in the parish church of St Mary the Virgin in Cropredy, see TNA PROB 11/38, ff. 71-3. For the will of the testator's sister, Anne (nee Lee) Watson (d.1561), mother of the poet, Thomas Watson (d.1592), see TNA PROB 11/44, f. 132.

For the testator's relationship to Richard Lee of Wybunbury in Cheshire, to whom he leaves a number of properties in remainder, see Chambers, E.K., *Sir Henry Lee; An Elizabethan Portrait* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1936), p. 256.

As the terms of the will indicate, the testator was responsible for the upbringing of his nephews, William Watson, and the poet Thomas Watson (d.1592), after the death of their mother, Anne Watson, in 1561.

After the testator's death, his widow, Mary, married Sir Richard Corbet (b. circa 1544, d.1606).

Family relationships among the Lee, Corbet and Windsor families dating back two generations are indicated in the inquisition post mortem taken on the death of Sir Richard Corbet's elder brother, Robert Corbet (d. 30 May 1583):

In Trinity Term 17 Henry VIII [=1525] Thomas Lee, esquire, Edmund Windsor, esquire, recovered by writ of ingress against Roger Corbet, esquire, father of Sir Andrew, the manors of Cobbington and Chelmscote etc., Buckinghamshire, and on 4 November 17 Henry VIII the same were settled on Roger [Corbet] and Anne, his wife, in tail male, and in default to his issue and right heirs. Roger died, and Anne survived him, and after, Sir Andrew succeeded as sons and heir male.

See Corbet, Augusta Elizabeth, *The Family of Corbet*, Vol. II, (London: St Catherine Press, n.d.), pp. 296-7, 302-6, available online, from which the following excerpt is also taken:

Robert Corbet died 30th May, 25th Elizabeth [=30 May 1583] without male issue . . . [His] successor, we are informed by the inquisition held on his death, was Richard Corbet, his brother. He was at that time 39 years of age; therefore born somewhere about 1544. It is evident from the age of their father, the first Sir Andrew, that Robert and Richard were the elder ones of the subsequent numerous family. Unlike his brother, Richard Corbet was not a wanderer. He seems to have led a quiet home life, and, till called upon to fill the position of head of the family, lived chiefly at Meriden, where he had inherited his first wife's property in Warwickshire. He had married Mary, the daughter of Morgan Wolfe,

of Meriden. At the time of his marriage Mary was the widow of Sir Thomas Lee, knight [sic], of Clatercote, in Oxfordshire. On her death Richard Corbet married a lady who had been married twice previously and who outlived him. She was Judith, the daughter of Thomas Austin, of Oxley, in Staffordshire . . . Richard Corbett left no children. He was buried in 1606 in the little Church of St. Bartholomew, at Moreton-Corbet. The Registers bear record that on "29th September 1606 Syr Rychard Corbett knight of the honorable odr of the Bathe was buried."

Sir Richard Corbet (b. circa 1544, d.1606) was the second son of Sir Andrew Corbet (b. 1 November 1522, d. 16 August 1578) of Moreton Corbet, sheriff of Shropshire in 1551, and his wife Jane, the daughter of Sir Richard Needham, and the grandson of Roger Corbet (d.1538/9), sheriff of Shropshire in 1530, and his wife Anne (nee Windsor) Corbet (d.1550/1), the daughter of Andrew (1467-1543), 1st Lord Windsor. See Burke, John, *A Genealogical and Heraldic History of the Commoners of Great Britain and Ireland*, Vol. III (London: Henry Colburn, 1838), p. 190. For the will of Roger Corbet (d.1538/9), see TNA PROB 11/27, f. 194. For the will of Anne (nee Windsor) Corbet (d.1550/1), see TNA PROB 11/34, ff. 241-2. For the will of her father, Andrew (1467-1543), 1st Lord Windsor, see TNA PROB 11/29, ff. 179-181.

Sir Andrew Corbet's aunt, Joan or Anne Corbet, married Thomas Newport (d.1548x1551). Sir Andrew Corbet was thus a first cousin of their son, Sir Richard Newport (d.1570/1), the owner of a copy of Hall's *Chronicle* now in the British Library containing annotations thought to be by Shakespeare. For the will of Sir Richard Corbet (b. circa 1544, d. 1606), in which he appoints his 'loving kinsman', Sir Francis Newport (c.1555–1623), son and heir of Sir Richard Newport (d.1570/1), owner of the copy of Hall's *Chronicle*, as one of his supervisors, see TNA PROB 11/109, ff. 27-9.

Sir Richard Newport (d.1570/1) was also related by marriage to Humphrey Martyn, the addressee of the *Langham Letter* describing Leicester's entertainment of Queen Elizabeth at Kenilworth in the summer of 1575. Sir Richard Newport's sister, Elizabeth Newport, was the wife of John Pakington (1530-1578), Humphrey Martyn's maternal uncle. For the wills of Thomas Newport (d.1548x1551) and Sir Richard Newport (d.1570/1) see TNA PROB 11/34, f. 112 and TNA PROB 11/53, f. 290.

After marrying the testator's widow, Mary (nee Wolfe) Lee, Sir Richard Corbet (b. circa 1544, d.1606) became embroiled in litigation with William Watson, elder brother of the poet, Thomas Watson (d.1592), over property disposed of in the testator's will. For the relevant documents see TNA C 2/Eliz/W14/29, and Alhiyari, Ibrahim, 'Thomas Watson: New Biographical Evidence and his Translation of Antigone', PhD Dissertation, Texas State University, May 2006, available online at: <http://etd.lib.ttu.edu/theses/available/etd-04122006-154851/>

LM: Testamentum Thome Lee

In the name of God, Amen. I, Thomas Lee of Clattercote in the county of Oxon, esquire, sick and diseased in body, but whole in mind and of perfect memory, laud & praise be given to God, do make and ordain this my last will and testament in manner and form following, that is to say:

First, my soul, which God, the Creator of all things, of his mercy and goodness hath given unto me and united to this my earthly body, I do give and bequeath unto his high and holy hands again as a thing unto him due, not only praying but assuredly also believing that through the merits, death and passion of Jesus Christ, his only Son, in the hour and moment of the death of this my body he will freely receive the same my soul again, and not impute unto it any ways any sin at any time in this my transitory life by me committed;

My body also made of earth and the temporal tabernacle or rather prison of my said soul I give and bequeath again unto the earth, there to remain and rest until the latter day, at which day among other the chosen children of God I firmly trust and believe in soul and body to rise again to perpetual life & salvation through the only merits, death and passion of Jesus Christ, my Saviour and Redeemer;

The place of my burial I will to be in the parish church of Cropredy in the county of Oxon as near unto the grave of Elizabeth, my mother, there buried, as may be, in which place I will that a tomb or stone at the discretion of mine executors hereafter named be erected and set in the memorial of my said mother and me;

And as touching all the lands and goods wherewithal it hath pleased God of his goodness to bless me in this world, I do willingly leave, give again and bequeath unto the world in manner and form following, that is to say:

First, I do will, give, devise and bequeath to Mary, my well-beloved wife, all that my manor of Cropredy with all and singular my lands, tenements, meadows, pastures, waters, woods underwoods, rents, reversions & services and other my hereditaments whatsoever with all their appurtenances in Cropredy aforesaid, to have, hold, occupy and enjoy all that my said manor of Cropredy with all and singular my lands, tenements, meadows, pastures and other the premises to my said manor belonging to the said Mary, my well-beloved wife, for and during her natural life without impeachment of waste other than voluntary waste, the said Mary, my wife, paying yearly to William Watson, my nephew, during her life for the same manor with th' appurtenances £32 9s 10d ob;

And after her decease, I will, give and bequeath all that my said manor of Cropredy with all and singular my lands, tenements, meadows, pastures, waters, woods, underwoods, rents, reversions and services and other my hereditaments whatsoever with their appurtenances in Cropredy aforesaid and to my said manor belonging to the said William Watson, my nephew, and to the heirs males of his body lawfully begotten;

And for default of such issue male of the body of the said William lawfully begotten, I do will my said manor of Cropredy with all and singular my lands, tenements, meadows,

pastures and other the premises with their appurtenances in Cropredy aforesaid and to my said manor belonging to remain unto Thomas Watson, brother to the said William, and to the heirs males of his body lawfully begotten;

And for default of such issue male of the body of the said Thomas lawfully begotten, I do will my said manor of Cropredy with all and singular my lands, tenements, meadows, pastures and other the premises with their appurtenances to remain to the right heirs of me, the said Thomas Lee, forever;

Reserving always by this my gift and bequest to the Queen's Majesty during the minority of this my aforesaid heirs such right, title, claim & interest as the laws of this realm and statutes in such case have provided and given unto her;

Provided always and my full intent, will and meaning is that if the said William Watson, Thomas Watson, or any of them [RM: or the heirs males of them or any of them] at any time or times hereafter shall or do go about to make away or do make away, alien, alter or sell the said manor of Cropredy or any part of the lands, tenements, meadows, pastures or other the premises of the same, then I will that immediately upon due and sufficient proof thereof my said manor of Cropredy with all & singular the lands, tenements, meadows, pastures and other the premises with their appurtenances shall come and remain to the heir or heirs by this my last will and testament limited in that behalf;

Item, I do will, give, devise and bequeath to the said Mary, my well-beloved wife, all that my manor of Dassington in the counties of Warwick and Gloucester with all & singular my lands, tenements, meadows, pastures, waters, woods, underwoods, rents, reversions & services and other my hereditaments whatsoever with their appurtenances and to the said manor of Dassington belonging, to have, hold, occupy and enjoy all that my said manor of Dassington with all and singular my lands, tenements, meadows, pastures and other the premises with their appurtenances unto the said Mary, my well-beloved wife, for and during her natural life without impeachment of waste other than voluntary waste;

And after her decease, I do will, give, devise and bequeath all that my said manor of Dassington with all and singular my lands, tenements, meadows, pastures and other the premises with their appurtenances in the several counties of Warwick and Gloucester aforesaid unto Richard Lee, the son of Richard Lee of Wybunbury in the county of Chester, and to his heirs forever;

Item, I do will, give, devise and bequeath to the said Mary, my well-beloved wife, all that my manor of Stoke upon Severn in the county of Worcester with all and singular my lands, tenements, meadows, parks, pastures, waters, woods, underwoods, rents, reversions and services and other my hereditaments whatsoever with their appurtenances in the said county of Worcester, to have, hold, occupy & enjoy all that my said manor of Stoke upon Severn with all and singular my lands, tenements, meadows, parks, pastures, waters, woods, underwoods and reversions and services and other my hereditaments whatsoever with their appurtenances and to my said manor of Stoke belonging to the said

Mary, my well-beloved wife, for and during her natural life without impeachment of waste other than voluntary waste;

And after her decease I will, give, devise and bequeath all that my said manor of Stoke upon Severn with all and singular my lands, tenements, meadows, parks, pastures, waters, woods, underwoods, rents, reversions, services and other my hereditaments whatsoever with their appurtenances and to my said manor of Stoke belonging to the aforementioned Richard Lee, the son of Richard Lee of Wybunbury aforesaid in the county of Chester, and to his heirs forever;

Item, I do will, give, devise and bequeath unto the said Mary, my well-beloved wife, all and singular my manors, lands, tenements, meadows, pastures, waters, woods, underwoods, rents, reversions, services and other my hereditaments whatsoever with their appurtenances in Streetfild and lying and being in one field called Stretfild in the county of Warwick and now in the tenure and occupation of one Francis Dymocke, to have and to hold all those my manors, lands, tenements, meadows, pastures, waters, woods, underwoods, rents, reversions and services and other my hereditaments whatsoever with their appurtenances in Streetfelde and in the field called Stretfelde aforesaid to the said Mary, my well-beloved wife, for and during her natural life without impeachment of waste other than voluntary waste;

And after her decease I do will, give, devise & bequeath all my said manors, lands, tenements, meadows, pastures, waters, woods, underwoods, rents, reversions, services and other my hereditaments whatsoever with their appurtenances in Streetfelde and the field called Streetfelde aforesaid to the aforementioned Richard Lee, the son of Richard Lee of Wybunbury in the county of Chester aforesaid, and to his heirs forever;

Item, I do will, give, devise and bequeath to the said Mary, my well-beloved wife, all and singular my manors, lands, tenements, meadows, pastures, waters, woods, underwoods, rents, reversions and services and other my hereditaments whatsoever with their appurtenances in the several towns or villages of Nethercote, Sawbridge, Flecknoll [=Flecknoe] and Rugby in the county of Warwick, to have, hold, occupy and enjoy all my said manors, lands, tenements, meadows, pastures, waters, woods, underwoods, rents, reversions, services and other my hereditaments whatsoever with their appurtenances in the several towns or villages last afore-named to the said Mary, my wife, for and during her natural life without impeachment of waste other than voluntary waste;

And after her decease I do will, give, devise and bequeath all my said manors, lands, tenements, meadows, pastures, waters, woods, underwoods, rents, reversions & services ad other my hereditaments whatsoever with their appurtenances in the said several towns or villages of Nethercote, Sawbridge, Flecknoe and Rugby in the said county of Warwick to Thomas Watson, my nephew aforesaid, to have, hold, occupy and enjoy all those my said manors, lands, tenements, meadows, pastures and other the premises in the several towns of Nethercote, Sawbridge, Flecknoe and Rugby aforesaid to the said Thomas Watson for and during his natural life without impeachment of waste other than voluntary waste;

And after his decease I do will, give, devise and bequeath all those my said manors, lands, tenements, meadows, pastures, waters, woods, underwoods, rents, reversions and services and all other my hereditaments with their appurtenances whatsoever in the said several towns or villages of Nethercote, Sawbridge, Flecknoe and Rugby aforesaid in the county of Warwick aforesaid to the aforementioned Richard Lee, the son of Richard Lee of Wybunbury in the county of Chester, and to his heirs forever;

And whereas furthermore I am indebted and owe to the Chamber of London the sum of two hundred and fifty pounds out of the said Chamber to be paid to my aforementioned nephews, William Watson and Thomas Watson, at their several ages of 21 years, I do will and my full intent and meaning is that immediately or as soon as conveniently may be after my decease mine executors hereafter named do pay and answer or cause to be paid and answered to the said Chamber of London the said sum of two hundred and fifty pounds;

And whereas likewise I have acknowledged myself, by a bill to John Quarles of London, merchant, made, to be indebted and to owe to the children of my sister, Anne Watson, deceased, the sum of fourscore and odd pounds equally to be divided between them, which fourscore pounds and odd I had and did raise by the sale of certain my said sister Anne Watson's goods, I do will the said sum of fourscore & odd pounds to be paid by mine executors hereafter named to the children of my said sister, portion like, as they shall come to their full ages;

Item, I do will and my full intent and meaning is that all such legacies, debts and bequests as shall be duly proved I do owe, either private of mine own or by reason of my mother Elizabeth Onley's will, or by my sister Anne Watson's will, shall all, as soon as conveniently may be after my decease be truly paid by mine executors hereafter named;

Item, I do will that all such rents as I have received upon a lease of an house of William Watson's in Mark Lane at London now behind & unpaid for two or three years last past, and all such rents also as shall be due unto me by virtue of the said lease from this time forward to the accomplishment of the full age of the said William Watson shall be given and paid to the said William Watson, the said William Watson truly answering and paying unto them who have or shall have the government over him during his minority their reasonable charges of his bringing up;

Item, I do will and do likewise give and bequeath towards the bringing up of the said William & Thomas Watson, my nephews, all such portions of money as for these two years past have risen and as shall rise out of their stocks by such persons as have or shall have the use of their said stocks during their minorities;

Item, I do give and bequeath to every of my executors hereafter named in consideration of their pains and travail in my causes and for goodwill the sum of £40 of good and lawful money of England;

Item, I do give and bequeath to my brother Slythurst for his painstaking with me in my sickness the sum of £20 of like money;

Item, I do give and bequeath to my friend, Mr Emyle, the sum of £6;

Item, I do give and bequeath to my brother, Thomas Onley, the sum of twenty pounds;

Item, I do give and bequeath to my brother, William Pinchester, the sum of £5;

Item, I do give and bequeath to the right honourable Lady Ormond the charges of her whole sojourning and lying in my house from the 25th day of March last past until the feast of St John the Baptist next coming after the date hereof;

Item, I do give and bequeath to John Pope, esquire, the sum of £5 to make him a ring to wear in my remembrance;

Item, I do give and bequeath to Anne Lee and to Anne Underhill and to every of them the sum of £6 13s 4d;

Item, I do give and bequeath to George Davers [=Danvers], esquire, all my books;

Item, I do give and bequeath to Edward Underhill, gentleman, 20s in money;

Item, I do give and bequeath to Samuel Claxton, my cousin, the sum of £20 of good and lawful money of England, to be paid unto him at his full age;

Item, I will that for th' accomplishment of this my last will and testament my lease of Wardington and Cotes shall be sold if it so seem good to mine executors hereafter named or to the more part of them;

Item, I do will that my servant, William Vaughan, in consideration of his long and diligent service, shall have, hold, occupy and enjoy that tenement with the appurtenances in Cropredy wherein he now inhabiteth to him, the said William Vaughan, and to his assigns for and during his natural life, yielding and paying therefore yearly the rents & services due and accustomed;

Item, I do will that John King, my servant, in like consideration of his service, shall after the decease of Elizabeth Gibbes have and enjoy to him and to his wife for and during their natural lives successively all that my tenement with the appurtenances in Cropredy now in the tenure and occupation of the said Elizabeth Gibes, widow;

Item, I do will that Thomas Whiting shall have and enjoy all such lands and tenements in Cropredy as are contained in the draught of a lease between him and me made and yet unsealed according to the term of the said draught;

Item, I do give and bequeath to every yeoman servant resiant and being in my house or service at my decease the sum of 40s in money;

Item, I do give and bequeath to Alice King and to Elizabeth Bromley, every of them 40s in money;

Item, I do give to every other woman servant not heretofore named being in my house or service at my decease the sum of 20s in money;

Item, I do give and bequeath to be distributed among the poor people in the town and hundred of Banbury £20 in money, to be delivered at the discretion of my executors hereafter named or the more part of them;

And of this my present last will and testament I do constitute, make and ordain my executors my brother-in-law, Edward Onley of Catesby in the county of Northampton, esquire, Peter Temple of Dorst in the county of Warwick, esquire, George Danvers of Cothrope [=Calthorpe] by Banbury in the county of Oxon, esquire, and the aforementioned Mary, my well-beloved wife, desiring them as they will answer before God that they see this my last will and testament well and truly executed and performed;

And by this my present last will and testament I do utterly revoke and renounce all former wills and devises by me made whatsoever;

In witness whereof I have to this my present last will and testament in full confirmation of the same and of every part thereof set my hand and seal the 12th day of April anno 1572 and in the 14th year of the reign of our Sovereign Lady Elizabeth by the grace of God Queen of England, France & Ireland. Thomas Lee.

Sealed, subscribed & delivered unto us whose names are underwritten. Edward Onley, George Danvers, M.P., Richard Slithurst, John Palmer, Alice Kinde, witnesses of the subscribing and sealing;

Item, I do give and bequeath to Arthur Goldwell, my servant, in consideration of his diligent service, over and above his former bequest of 40s, the sum of £4 13s 4d;

Item, I give and bequeath to Richard Sakin, my servant, 40s in money;

Item, I do give to Lawrence, my servant, 40s in money, to be bestowed upon him at the discretion of my executors;

Item, I will John Palmer, my servant, after the determination of the interest of Goodwife Kirtlond, shall have all that tenement, mill and lands with the appurtenances now in the tenure and occupation of the said Goodwife Kirtland for & during his natural life, yielding and paying the rents and services due and accustomed for the same;

Item, I do give and bequeath to Richard Petiver, the poor boy in the kitchen, 20s;

Item, I do will and my full intent and meaning is that if any question, doubt or ambiguity after my decease shall happen to arise or grow of any matter, sentence or word in this my present will contained, the said question, doubt and ambiguity and every of them shall be expounded and decided by mine executors hereafter named or the more part of them, and whatsoever my executors or the more part of them in any such question, doubt and ambiguity shall agree upon and determine I do hold for good, and the same their agreement & determination by this my last will and testament do ratify and confirm. Thomas Lee.

Sealed, subscribed and delivered unto us whose names are underwritten. Edward Onley, George Danvers, M.P, Richard Slithurst, John Palmer, Alice Kinde, witnesses of the subscribing and sealing.

Memorandum: that the two bequests hereunder written were spoken, declared, affirmed & bequeathed to the parties therein named by Thomas Lee, the testator aforesaid, at the time of the making and before the finishing of this his testament, and were omitted only by the forgetfulness of the writer of the same testament whose name is to the said two bequests subscribed, viz., George Danvers esquire, who for the certain truth hereof reserveth himself to the testimony of Edward Onley, esquire, Richard Slithurst, Doctor of Physic, and others in whose presence as well these two bequests as also all the other parts of the said testament were pronounced, declared and affirmed to be the very last will and mind of the said testator:

Item, I do will that Nicholas Sherwood shall have the farm wherein he inhabiteth with th' appurtenances during his life, paying the rent accustomed;

Item, my debts and legacies paid and my funerals discharged, all the rest of my goods and chattels whatsoever I give and bequeath to Mary, my well-beloved wife. George Danvers.

Probatum fuit huiusmodi Testamentum Coram Domino Cantuariensis Archiepiscopo apud London xxvto die mensis Iunij Anno Domini 1572 Iuramento Thome Emlie generosi procuratoris Edwardi Onley Petri Temple Georgij Danvers armiger et Marie relicte executorum &c Quibus commissa erat administracio omnium et singulorum bonorum Iurium et Creditorum &c De bene &c Ad Sancta Dei Euangelia Iurati

[=The same testament was proved before the Lord Archbishop of Canterbury at London on the 25th day of the month of June in the year of the Lord 1572 by the oath of Thomas Emlie, gentleman, proctor of Edward Onley, Peter Temple, George Danvers, esquire, and Mary, relict, executors etc., to whom administration was granted of all and singular the goods, rights and credits etc., sworn on the Holy Gospels to well etc.]