

SUMMARY: The document below is an extract from the Acts of the Privy Council indicating that on 13 September 1548 Somerset forced the 16th Earl to enter into a recognizance for 500 marks [=£333 6s 8d] in order to guarantee that the Earl would not dispose of any of his own personal possessions. This shocking abuse of power on Somerset's part is directly related to similar recognizances referred to in the letters patent dated 22 January 1553 which followed the passage of the private Act of Parliament of 22 or 23 January 1552 which restored the 16th Earl's lands to him after Somerset's extortion (see HL/PO/PB/1/1551/5E6n35) and which supplemented the private Act of Parliament by regranteeing to the 16th Earl certain bonds and other personal possessions which had escheated to King Edward VI as a result of Somerset's extortion against the 16th Earl and his subsequent attainder and execution. For a copy of the letters patent of 22 January 1553 and a fuller discussion of the various recognizances which Somerset extorted from the 16th Earl, see TNA C 66/848.

The recognizance mentioned in the extract below was presumably an interim measure aimed at preventing the Earl from granting any annuities or disposing of any of his plate, jewels, hangings or other moveables until Somerset had succeeded in forcing him to execute an unalterable will, which the 16th Earl did on 11 February 1549, by which he agreed not to make any gift or grant during his lifetime of any of his jewels, hangings or other things, but that Somerset would hold the same to the use of the 16th Earl's daughter, Katherine de Vere, and Somerset's son, Henry Seymour. The recognizance contains the further condition that the 16th Earl would forfeit the 500 marks unless he took orders from Thomas Darcy and other of his own officers and servants, and refrained from discharging any of them from his service.

It seems likely that this punitive measure on Somerset's part was related to the 16th Earl's secret marriage to Margery Golding on 1 August 1548, in defiance of Sir Thomas Darcy's plan to marry him to one of the nine daughters of Thomas (1501-1551), Lord Wentworth, a first cousin of both Somerset and Sir Thomas Darcy (see TNA SP 10/1/45). From the *Dictionary of National Biography* entry for Thomas (1501-1551), Lord Wentworth:

Through his father he was a cousin of Queen Jane Seymour and her brother Edward, later duke of Somerset.

The excerpt below is taken from Dasent, John Roche, ed., *Acts of the Privy Council of England*, New Series, 32 vols., (1890-1964) at Vol. II, pp. 221-2.

Apud Windesore, xiiijo Septembris [=At Windsor, 13th September]

Johannes, Comes Oxoniensis, recognovit se debere Domino Regi, vc marcas . . . [=John, Earl of Oxford, has acknowledged himself to owe to the Lord King 500 marks . . .]

Upon condition that if the same Earl forbear at any time between this and the feast of Christenmas next to make any annuity of any his castles, manors, lands and tenements to any person whatsoever, or to dispose during that time any plate, jewels, stuff or other thing in his possession without special licence of the Lord Protector, except in time of extreme sickness it shall be lawful for him to dispose of the movables for declaration of his last will, unless his Grace [=Somerset] shall within that time take further order with him, and also during the said time use the advice for th' order of his lands and household of Sir Thomas Darcy and others his officers which he hath at this present, not changing any of them of himself unless the said Lord Protector, informed of just fault in any of them, shall accord to the same, that then etc., or else, etc.