

SUMMARY: The document below is the Prerogative Count of Canterbury copy of the will, dated 20 February 1615 and proved 5 April 1615, of William Danby, who may have been the coroner of the Queen's household who presided over the inquest into the death of the playwright Christopher Marlowe in 1593.

### **FAMILY BACKGROUND**

The family relationships indicated by the bequests in the will below suggest that the testator was the sixth son of Sir Christopher Danby (c.1505 – 14 June 1571) by Elizabeth Neville (b. 28 April 1500), third daughter of Richard Neville (c.1467-1530), 2<sup>nd</sup> Baron Latimer (for whom see the *ODNB* entry). See the History of Parliament entry for Sir Christopher Danby at:

<http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1509-1558/member/danby-sir-christopher-1503-71>.

For a pedigree drawn up in 1615 showing the thirteen children of the marriage of Sir Christopher Danby and Elizabeth Neville, see ‘The Danby Family’ in Gibbons, A., ed., *The Northern Genealogist*, Vol. V, (Birmingham: C. Cooper & Co. Ltd., 1902) pp. 13-17 at:

<https://archive.org/stream/northerngenealog05gibb#page/n45/mode/2up/>.

See also the Danby pedigree in Norcliffe, Charles Best, ed., *The Visitation of Yorkshire in the Years 1563 and 1564*, Vol. XVI, (London: Harleian Society, 1881), p. 89 at:

<https://archive.org/stream/visitationofyork00flow#page/88/mode/2up>.

The testator’s eldest brother, Sir Thomas Danby (c.1530 – 13 September 1590), married Mary Neville (c.1531 - 14 March 1596?), the daughter of Ralph Neville (1498-1549), 4<sup>th</sup> Earl of Westmorland, whose eldest sister, Dorothy Neville (d. 6 January 1548?), was the first wife of John de Vere (1516-1562), 16<sup>th</sup> Earl of Oxford. See Gibbons, *supra*, p. 13; Norcliffe, *supra*, p. 89; BL Add. MS 6113, ff. 199-200 on this website; and Fisher, John, *The History and Antiquities of Masham and Mashamshire*, (London: Simpkin, Marshall and Co., 1865), pp. 104, 107, 139, 253-56, 262-3 at:

<https://archive.org/stream/historyantiquiti00fish#page/138/mode/2up>.

For the Danby family, see also Wheater, W., *Some Historic Mansions of Yorkshire*, (Leeds: Richard Jackson, 1889) p. 286 at:

[https://books.google.ca/books?id=bSzrAAAAMAAJ&pg=PA283&lpg=PA283&dq=%22Sir+Thomas+Danby%22&source=bl&ots=sXnZ46fAYJ&sig=tYTe4Vh\\_Ag-](https://books.google.ca/books?id=bSzrAAAAMAAJ&pg=PA283&lpg=PA283&dq=%22Sir+Thomas+Danby%22&source=bl&ots=sXnZ46fAYJ&sig=tYTe4Vh_Ag-)

xwztlN4t8vcuhZw&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwiD9LfJl\_XVAhUP2WMKHfLsDto4ChDoAQgvMAQ#v=onepage&q=%22Sir%20Thomas%20Danby%22&f=false.

Among the bequests in the will which identify the testator as the son of Sir Christopher Danby (c.1505 – 14 June 1571) are the testator's bequests to his brother, James Danby, to James' son, John Danby, and to William Chaloner, husband of James' daughter, Katherine Danby:

*Item, I give unto my brother, James Danby, five pounds and the three pounds which he oweth me;*

*Item, I give unto my nephew, John Danby, his son, five pounds;*

*Item, I give unto William Chullenore [=Chaloner] the five pounds he oweth me;*

For the testator's brother, James Danby, and his children, John Danby, and Katherine Danby, who married William Chaloner, see Gibbons, *supra*, p. 13.

The testator also leaves £100 to his nephew, Hector Danby, the illegitimate son of the testator's eldest brother, Sir Thomas Danby (c.1530 – 13 September 1590). See Gibbons, *supra*, p. 13.

The testator also leaves a bequest to his nephew, Christopher Danby of Leighton, son and heir of the testator's eldest brother, Sir Thomas Danby (c.1530 – 13 September 1590):

*Item, I give unto my nephew, Christopher Danby of Leighton, all the arrearages of my annuity of five marks by year given me by my father's will out of Farnley which he is indebted unto me.*

For Christopher Danby of Leighton (3 March 1581 – 18 July 1624) who married Frances Parker, youngest daughter of Edward Parker, Lord Morley, see Gibbons, *supra*, p. 13, and Fisher, *supra*, pp. 268-9.

#### **OTHER PERSONS MENTIONED IN THE WILL**

For the testator's master, Anthony Maria Browne (1574-1629), 2<sup>nd</sup> Viscount Montagu, see the Wikipedia article at:

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anthony-Maria\\_Browne,\\_2nd\\_Viscount\\_Montagu](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anthony-Maria_Browne,_2nd_Viscount_Montagu).

According to Questier, the testator served as Viscount Montague's 'gentleman of the horse'. See Questier, Michael C., *Catholicism and Community in Early Modern England*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 199, 235, 238.

LM: T{testamentum} Will{el}imi Danbie

In the name of God, Amen. The twentieth day of February in the twelfth year of the reign of our Sovereign Lord James by the grace of God King of England, France and Ireland, Defender of the Faith, and of Scotland the eight and fortieth, I, William Danby of Cowdray in the county of Sussex, gentleman, being sick in body, but whole in mind and of good and perfect memory, thanks and praise be given to God, do make and ordain this my last will and testament in manner and form following:

In primis, I bequeath my soul unto Almighty God, my Saviour and Redeemer, trusting to be saved by the merits of his bitter death and passion, and my body to be buried where it shall be thought by my executors most fit and convenient;

Item, I give and bequeath to the right honourable Lord Anthony, Viscount Montague, my most honourable lord and master, my best gelding;

Item, I give unto my very honourable mistress and lady, the Lady St. Johns, my tablet with the picture of St Francis;

Item, I give unto my nephew, Christopher Danby of Leighton, all the arrearages of my annuity of five marks by year given me by my father's will out of Farnley which he is indebted unto me;

Item, I give unto my niece Danby of Leighton my tablet with the stone in the middest;

Item, I give to my nephew Mallory one twenty shillings piece in gold for a remembrance;

Item, I give unto my niece Mallory my grey mare which is at Arnecliffe;

Item, whereas my nephew, Christopher Danby, doth owe unto me the sum of thirty pounds, as by a bill under his hand appeareth, I do give and bequeath ten pounds thereof unto my nephew Mallory's children, equally to be divided between them, and to the children of Alice Tempest and Anne Pinckneyes other ten pounds thereof to be equally divided amongst them, and the other ten pounds I do give and bequeath to the children of my nephew, Christopher Wyvill, equally to be divided amongst them;

Item, I give unto my nephew, Francis Pinckney, one twenty shillings piece of gold for a remembrance;

Item, I give unto the daughter of my said nephew Pinckney which he had by his first wife one twenty shillings piece of gold for a remembrance;

Item, I give authority to my cousin, Miles Danby the elder, and my will and mind is that the said Miles shall sell all my lands, farms and tenements lying and being within the towns and territories of Thirsk and Bagbie with their appurtenances, and two hundred

pounds of the money received for the said lands sold I give and bequeath to my nephew, Hector Danby, and one hundred pounds thereof to my said cousin, Miles Danby the elder, and another hundred pounds likewise thereof I give unto my nephew James Danby;

All the rest of the money which shall be due for the said lands sold, I give it unto my honourable good lord, the Lord Viscount Montague, and during the time the said land remaineth unsold, I give and bequeath half the rents and profits of them to my nephew, Hector Danby, the other half I give unto my said cousin, Miles Danby, and to my nephew, James Danby, equally to be divided between them;

Item, I give unto my cousin, Thomas Danby of Looke [=Leake?], one twenty shillings piece for a remembrance;

Item, I give to my cousin, Christopher Danby of Masham, five pounds;

Item I give unto his son, William, other five pounds;

Item, I give unto my nephew, Michael Wentforth [=Wentworth?], one twenty shillings piece in gold;

Item, I give unto the children of the said Michael five pounds equally to be divided amongst them;

Item, I give unto my brother, James Danby, five pounds and the three pounds which he oweth me;

Item, I give unto my nephew, John Danby, his son, five pounds;

Item, I give unto William Chullenore [=Chaloner] the five pounds he oweth me;

Item, I give unto his son, Anthony, five pounds;

Item, I give unto Mr John Gage one twenty shillings piece in gold;

Item, I give unto Mr Littleboys one twenty shillings piece in gold;

Item, I give unto Mr Wyborne one twenty shillings piece;

Item, I give to Mr Barnes, Mr Lambe, and to Mr Buckland, to every of them a ten shillings piece in gold;

Item, I give to Randall Egerley one twenty shillings piece in gold;

Item, I give unto my nephew, Christopher Danby of Leighton, my great seal ring;

Item, I give unto my cousin, Christopher Danby of Masham, my mare which I have at Cowdray;

Item, I will that all my horses unbequeathed be sold, and the money redounding of them be given unto my very honourable good lord, the Lord Anthony, Viscount Montague;

Item, my will is that if I die before the Annunciation of Our Blessed Lady next ensuing, or within six weeks after, the rents of my lands of Thirsk and Bagbie then due shall be given unto my honourable good Lord and master, the Lord Anthony, Viscount Montague;

Item, I give unto my nephew, James Danby, and to my cousin Christopher Danby of Masham, all my trunks with apparel in my chamber, equally to be divided between them;

Item, I make and ordain my said cousin, Miles Danby, and my said nephew, James Danby, executors of this my last will and testament, and I do give to each of them five pounds apiece for their pains;

All the residue of my goods and chattels whatsoever and wheresoever, my debts, legacies and funeral expenses being discharged, I give and bequeath unto my said honourable good lord and master, Anthony, Viscount Montague;

And I do hereby utterly revoke and disannul all former wills by me made;

In witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand and seal the day and year above-written in the presence of these whose names are hereunder written. George Littleboys, Richard Radcliffe, William Danby.

Probatum fuit testamentum suprascriptum apud London Coram Magistro Iohanne Amye legum doctore Surrogato venerabilis viri domini Iohannis Benet Militis legum etiam doctoris Curie Prerogative Cantuariensis Magistri Custodis siue Com{m}issarij legitime constituti quinto die mensis Aprilis Anno domini Millesimo sexcentesimo decimo quinto Iuramento Milonis Danby et Iacobi Danby Executorum in huiusmodi testamento nominatorum Quibus Comissa fuit admi{ni}stratio omnium et singulorum bonorum Iurium et Creditorum dicti defuncti de bene et fideliter administrando eadem Ad Sancta dei Evangelia Iurat{orum}

[=The above-written testament was proved at London before Master John Amye, Doctor of the Laws, surrogate of the worshipful Sir John Bennett, knight, also Doctor of the Laws, lawfully constituted Master, Keeper or Commissary of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury, on the fifth day of the month of April in the year of the Lord the thousand six hundred fifteenth by the oath of Miles Danby and James Danby, executors appointed in the same testament, to whom administration was granted of all and singular the goods, rights and credits of the said deceased, sworn on the Holy Gospels to well and faithfully administer the same.]