

SUMMARY: The document below is the last will and testament, dated 7 October 1516 and proved 28 August 1517, of John Cooke (1485-1516), the grandfather of Oxford's mother-in-law, Mildred (nee Cooke) Cecil, Lady Burghley. The testator was the son of Sir Philip Cooke and Elizabeth Belknap, and the grandson of Sir Thomas Cooke (c.1410-1478), a wealthy draper who was Lord Mayor of London in 1462-3, by Elizabeth Malpas, one of the two daughters of another wealthy London draper, Philip Malpas (d.1469). According to the *ODNB*, Sir Thomas Cooke (c.1410-1478) was the son of another draper, Thomas Cooke, warden of London Bridge (1440–57), who was the son of Robert Cooke of Lavenham, Suffolk. See the *ODNB* entry for Sir Thomas Cooke and the will of Philip Malpas, TNA PROB 11/5/114.

The testator's mother, Elizabeth Belknap, was a descendant of Geoffrey Plantagenet. See Richardson, Douglas, *Plantagenet Ancestry*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 2011, Vol. I, pp. 229-35.

Two of the testator's executors, Gerard Danett and William Shelley, were his uncles. The testator's grandfather, Henry Belknap (c.1434-1488), esquire, of Crofton, Kent and Beccles, Suffolk, had by his wife, Margaret, the daughter of Sir Richard Knollys, a son, the courtier and soldier, Sir Edward Belknap (1470-1521), and six daughters: Griselda (d.1498), who married John Caryll (1460s-1523); Alice (*b. c.*1481, *d.* in or before 1537), who about 1498 married Sir William Shelley (1478/9–1549); Mary, who married Gerard Danett (d.1520); Anne, who married Sir Robert Wotton (c.1463-1524) of Boughton Malherbe; Margaret, who is said to have married John Boteler, esquire, of Watton at Stone, and to have died 18 August 1513; and Elizabeth, who married the testator's father, Sir Philip Cooke. See *Plantagenet Ancestry*, *supra*, pp. 234-5; the entries for John Caryll, Sir William Shelley and Sir Edward Wotton in the *ODNB*, *Note and Queries*, Vol. VIII, July-December 1853, p. 363; and the will of Mary (nee Belknap) Danett (TNA PROB 11/42A/123). See also the website at the link below, which states that Mary (nee Belknap) Danett was co-heir to her brother, Sir Edward Belknap, with her sisters Alice, wife of William Shelley; Anne, wife of Sir Robert Wotton; and Elizabeth, wife of Sir Philip Cooke, 'whose names are continually mentioned in conjunction with the Danett name in many documents in this period':

[http://www.dannatt.eu/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=52&Itemid=82](http://www.dannatt.eu/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=52&Itemid=82)

The testator's aunt, Mary (nee Belknap) Danett was the grandmother of Oxford's steward/surveyor, Sir John Arundel (d.1590), for whose will see TNA PROB 11/76/403.

The testator married twice. His first wife was Alice Saunders (d.1510), the daughter of William Saunders of Banbury, Oxfordshire, by whom he had a son, Sir Anthony Cooke (1505/6-1576), and a daughter, Beatrix (d.1561), who married Richard Ogle (d.1555). The testator's second wife was Margaret Pennington, a lady-in-waiting to Queen Katherine of Aragon and later to Princess Mary. The testator also names a daughter, Mary, in the will below; however this daughter is not noticed in *Plantagenet Ancestry*, and it is not known whether Mary was the daughter of the testator's first or second marriage. For the will of the testator's son and heir, Sir Anthony Cooke, see TNA PROB

11/59/110. For the will of the testator's son-in-law, Richard Ogle (d.1555), see TNA PROB 11/38/252.

The testator's sister, Beatrix Cooke, married Sir Nicholas Rawson of Aveley, Essex. Their daughter, Anne Rawson, married Michael Stanhope, who was beheaded on Tower Hill in 1552, as was his brother-in-law, Edward Seymour, the Protector Somerset: From the *ODNB*:

*Stanhope, Sir Michael (b. before 1508, d. 1552), courtier, was the second son of Sir Edward Stanhope (d. 1511), knight of the body to Henry VII, and Adelina, daughter of Sir Gervase Clifton of Clifton, Nottinghamshire. In January 1529, following the death of his elder brother, Richard, without male children, he became head of the Stanhope family; by November 1537 he had married Anne (c.1515–1588), daughter of Nicholas Rawson of Aveley, Essex, and they had seven sons and four daughters. Among his sons were the lawyer Sir Edward Stanhope and the courtier John Stanhope. . . . Stanhope's sister Anne had by 1535 married Sir Edward Seymour [=the Protector Somerset] as his second wife.*

Michael Stanhope was involved in the Protector Somerset's fraud against Oxford's father, the 16th Earl. See TNA E 328-345 and other documents on this website, and *The Fall of the House of Oxford* by the author of this website.

Oxford was personally acquainted with the testator's first cousin, Sir Richard Shelley (c.1513-1587), the second son of the testator's uncle and aunt, Sir William Shelley and his wife, Alice Belknap. Sir Richard Shelley was resident in Venice when Oxford was there on his continental tour in 1575/6, and Oxford's personal acquaintance with him is evidenced by an allegation made by Charles Arundel in January 1581 (see TNA SP 12/151/49, f. 109):

*4 That he [=Oxford] had detected Shelley at Rome to the fugitives for giving intelligence to my Lord Treasurer.*

Sir Richard Shelley is cited by the author of *A Conference about the Next Succession to the Crown of England* (1594) as having supplied him with genealogical information:

*Divers other papers, notes and memories I have seen also (said he), as well touching the succession of those whom I have named as of others, for that Sir Richard Shelley, who died some years ago in Venice, by the name of Lord Prior of St John's of England, had gathered divers points touching these affairs, & many more than he had Master Francis Peto that died in Milan, and was a very curious and well-readen man in genealogies, as may appear by sundry papers that I have seen of his.*

It has been suggested that Oxford was the author of *A Conference*, and his relationship to the Shelley family through his mother-in-law, Lady Burghley, a descendant of Elizabeth Belknap, offers support for that suggestion.

For the quarterings and inscriptions on the monument to the testator's son, Sir Anthony Cooke, in Romford Chapel, see 'Romford', The Environs of London: volume 4: Counties of Herts, Essex & Kent (1796), pp. 183-203. URL: <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=45473>.

LM: Test{amentu}m Iohannis Cooke

In the name of God, Amen. This is the last will of me, John Cooke, esquire, made the 7th day of October the eight year of the reign of King Henry the 8th. First I bequeath my soul to Almighty God, Our Blessed Lady Saint Mary, and all the holy company of heaven, my body to be buried in the church of the Crossed Friars beside the Tower of London;

Item, I will that my wife have all the stuff that is wont to be occupied in any two of the chambers of Gidea Hall that she will chose, or stuff of 2 chambers, the best she will choose in the house;

Item, I will that all the residue of my goods, chattels and stuff, except the stock of Rydon Court [=Redencourt] and the stock of Nearles [=Earles], be sold by mine executors for my burying and payment of my debts;

Item, I will that all they that now be or hereafter shall be seised of all my lands and hereditaments or any part of them in Havering shall be [-be] from henceforth seised to th' use of the performance of the last will of Sir Philip Cooke, knight, my father, and after his will performed, then to th' use of the performance of this my will;

And after my father's will performed, I will that Gerard Danett, esquire, Richard Cooke, Richard Fermer and William Shelley shall of th' issues and profits of the said lands give to every of my daughters, Beatrix and Mary, £40 to their marriage, and if any of them die before she be married, then I will the said Gerard, Richard, Richard and William bestow her part so dying upon the payment of my debts;

item, I will that my brother, Richard, shall have all my lands called Ryden Court [=Redencourt] during his life with the stock that is upon it at this time which goeth for £14 6s 8d;

Item, I will that my brother, Anthony Cooke, have yearly out of the farm of Esthouse [=Easthouse] £6 13s 4d during his life, and that my brother, Richard, and my brother, Anthony, shall have that I have bequeathed them immediately after my death;

Item, I will that my sister, Beatrix Rawson, have all such sums of money as my father bequeathed to her;

Item, I will that my sister, Mary, have fifty marks that my father bequeathed to her, and fifty marks more, which I will shall be paid to her after the rate of £17 6s 8d by the year, but I will that my sister, Beatrix Rawson, to be first paid before my sister, Mary Cooke, have the said fifty marks that I have bequeathed to her;

Item, I will that my daughters, Beatrix and Mary, be found by the said Gerard, Richard, Richard and William till they be married or till my son have his lands;

Item, I will that th' issues and profits of all the said lands, after my debts paid and legacies performed, by the space of 16 years after my death shall be bestowed by the discretion of the said Gerard, Richard, Richard and William;

Item, after the said 16 years ended, then I will my son, Anthony, have all the said lands to him and his heirs according to th' old entails, if any be, except such as I have given to my brother Richard and Anthony during their lives, and all my said lands after their decease;

Item, I will that if my son die during his nonage, the said Gerard, Richard, Richard and William shall take the profits of all the said lands to th' uses aforesaid from time of my death till the full term of 16 years;

Item, I will the said Gerard, Richard, Richard and William keep yearly an obit for me, my grandfather' soul, my father' soul, and my mother' soul, and all Christian souls in the church of Romford;

Item, I will there be a priest found to pray for my soul in the church of Romford by the space of 16 years next following after my departing;

Item, I make and ordain [-and] mine executors Gerard Danett, William Shelley and Richard Cooke, my brother, and I bequeath to every of them £6 13s 4d for their labour and all their costs;

Item, I will that they that be seised of and in my lands in Southwark shall after my father' will performed be seised to th' use of the performance of my will;

Witness to this clause, and that William Shelley and Richard Fermer be Richard Balard, John Carne, Thomas Bawgh;

Item, I will that Louckyn be recompensed for the wrongs that I have done him;

Item, all other that I have wronged, I will they be recompensed.

Memorandum, that where before he gave authority to his executors, he hath given the same authority to Gerard Danett, Richard Cooke, and Richard Fermer. Witness Thomas Baugh, scrivener, Richard Danyell, Beatrice Rawson, and my niece, his wife.

fra est collacio(?)

Probatum fuit suprascriptum testamentum coram D{omi}no apud Lamhith xxviiio die mensis Augusti Anno d{omi}ni Mill{es}imo quingentesimo xvijo fur(?) Ricardi Gifforde procu{rato}ris in hac parte Ac approbatum etc Et Com{m}issa fuit admi{ni}stracio o{mn}i{u}m et singulorum bonorum et debitorum dicti defuncti Ricardo Cooke executori in h{uius}mo{di} testamento no{m}i{n}ato In p{er}sona d{i}c{t}i procu{rato}ris De bene et fidel{ite}r administrand{o} eadem Ac de pleno et fideli Inuentario conficiend{o} Et de exhibend{o} citra festum Mich{ael}is prox{imum} futur{um} Necnon de plano et vero compoto &c Iurat{i} Res{erua}ta p{otes}tate etc alijs Executorib{us} cum ven{er}int &c

[=The above-written testament was proved before the Lord at Lambeth on the 28th day of the month of August in the year of the Lord the thousand five hundred 17th by(?) Richard Gifford, proctor in that behalf, and probated etc., and administration was granted of all and singular the goods and debts of the said deceased to Richard Cooke, executor named in the same testament, in the person of the said proctor, sworn to well and faithfully administer the same, and to prepare a full and true inventory, and to exhibit [+the same] before the feast of Michael next to come, and also [+to render] a plain and true account etc., with power reserved etc. to the other executors when they shall have come etc.]