

SUMMARY: The document below is the Prerogative Court of Canterbury copy of the will, dated 27 November 1538 and proved 1 February 1539, of Roger Corbet, uncle of Sir Richard Newport, the owner of a copy of Hall's *Chronicle* (formerly Loan 61 in the British Library, and now in the hands of Lord Hesketh, a trustee) containing annotations thought to have been made by Shakespeare (see Keen, Alan and Roger Lubbock, *The Annotator*, (London: Putnam, 1954)).

The testator was the eldest son and heir of Sir Robert Corbet (b. about 1477, d. 11 April 1513) and Elizabeth Vernon (d. 29 March 1563), the daughter of Sir Henry Vernon (b. circa 1441, d. 13 April 1515) of Haddon and his wife, Anne Talbot (d. 17 May 1494), the daughter of Sir John Talbot (1413-1460), 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl of Shrewsbury. For the will of the testator's father, Sir Robert Corbet, see TNA PROB 11/17/471.

The testator was about twelve years of age at his father's death, and is said to have been placed under the guardianship of Charles Brandon (born c.1484, d. 22 August 1545), Duke of Suffolk. See Corbet, Augusta Elizabeth, *The Family of Corbet*, (London: St. Catherine's Press, n.d.), Vol. II, p. 264 at:

<https://archive.org/stream/familyofcorbetit02corb#page/n153/mode/2up>.

The testator later became the ward of John de Vere (1442-1513), 13<sup>th</sup> Earl of Oxford (see TNA C 1/1485/58). After the Earl's death, the wardship was sold to Andrew Windsor (b.1467, d. 30 March 1543), 1<sup>st</sup> Lord Windsor, who married the testator to his daughter, Anne Windsor (d.1550/1). For the will of the testator's wife, Anne (nee Windsor) Corbet, see TNA PROB 11/34/443. For the will of her father, Andrew, Lord Windsor, see TNA PROB 11/29/416. For the testator's children and grandchildren, see the will of his wife, Anne (nee Windsor) Corbet, TNA PROB 11/34/443.

The testator had two brothers and four sisters:

\* Richard Corbet (d.1564x6), who married Margaret (nee Savile), the widow of Thomas Wortley, esquire, of Wortley, Yorkshire, and daughter of Sir John Savile (d.1504) of Thornhill and Tankersley, Yorkshire. For the will of the Richard Corbet, see TNA PROB 11/48/556.

\* Reginald Corbet (born c. 1510, d. 19 November 1566), who married Alice Gratewood (d.1603), daughter of John Gratewood of Wollerton, Shropshire, and Margaret Hill, sister of Sir Rowland Hill (c.1495-1561). For the will of Reginald Corbet, see TNA PROB 11/49/18.

\* Jane Corbet, who married Thomas Lee (d.1561x3) of Langley, the son and heir of Fulke Lee and Alice Cornwall, the daughter of Sir Richard Cornwall of Berrington, Herefordshire. For the will of Thomas Lee, see TNA PROB 11/46/40.

\* Joan or Anne Corbet, who married Thomas Newport (d.1548x51).

\* Mary Corbet, who married Thomas Powell of Oswestry.

\* Dorothy Corbet, who married Sir Richard Mainwaring (b. about 1499, d. 30 September 1558) of Ightfield, Shropshire.

As supervisors, the testator appoints his mother, Elizabeth Vernon (d. 29 March 1563), his uncle, John Vernon (d.1545), and his brother-in-law, Thomas Newport (d.1548x51). As noted above, the testator's brother-in-law, Thomas Newport, was the father of Sir Richard Newport (d.1570/1), owner of a copy of Hall's *Chronicle* containing annotations thought to have been made by Shakespeare. For the wills of the testator's brother-in-law, Thomas Newport, and nephew, Sir Richard Newport, see TNA PROB 11/34/176 and TNA PROB 11/53/456.

In his will the testator urges his executrix and supervisors to redeem his eldest son and heir, Andrew Corbet (d. 16 August 1578), from wardship. The will of the testator's widow, Anne (nee Windsor) Corbet (d.1550/1) indicates that this did not come to pass.

In the will below, the testator provides annuities for the maintenance of his three younger sons. In the Prerogative Count of Canterbury copy below, this clause is mistranscribed. It is evident from the will of Anne (nee Windsor) Corbet (d.1550/1) that she and the testator had three younger sons, Walter, Robert and Jerome. Unfortunately the scribe omitted the name of the youngest son, Jerome, in the will below, and used the word 'brethren' in a context which suggests that the two sons named in the clause, Walter and Robert, were Roger Corbet's brethren, when in fact they were his sons, and each other's 'brethren'.

The testator leaves the household goods at his manor of Linslade in Buckinghamshire to his wife, Anne, and it appears from her own will that she resided there until her death. The testator also mentions his chamber in the Strand in London, and in the will of his brother, Reginald Corbet, he is referred to as 'my old master, my brother, Roger Corbet', which suggests that the testator may at one time have been a London merchant.

For the foregoing see references cited in the will of the testator's wife, Anne (nee Windsor) Corbet.

RM: Tes{amen}t{u}m Rogeri Corbett

In dei nomine, Amen. The 27<sup>th</sup> day of November in the year of our Lord God a thousand five hundred 38, I, Roger Corbet, sick of body and whole in mind, make my will and testament in manner and form following:

First, I bequeath my soul to Almighty God, and my body to be buried in the next parish church where God shall do his will by me, except it be within ten miles of the parish

church where my dwelling is, then I will my body there to be buried without any solemnity at my burial to be had otherwise than 6 Masses to be said at the time of my burial, and 24 Masses to be said for my soul and all Christian souls in divers and sundry places by the discretion of my executors, whom I make sole Anne, my wife, and my supervisor I require meekly to be my Lady, my mother, my uncle John Vernon, esquire, Thomas Newport, my brother-in-law, esquire, and as for any other ceremony to be done or celebrate at my burial, I remit that to the discretion of mine executrix to do as God shall put in her mind;

Item, I bequeath to my sister, Mary, one hundred marks towards her marriage;

Item, I bequeath to 13 poor men 13 black gowns;

Item, to 13 poor women, 13 smocks, to be assigned and appointed by the discretion of my supervisors and executrix;

Item, I bequeath thirty rings of gold to the value of five shillings a ring, which rings shall be marked with a R and a C, and they to be divided to special and trusty friends for a remembrance by the discretion of my executrix and supervisors;

Item, I will that the household stuff and plate left unto me by the will of my father do remain and continue in the castle of Moreton Corbet to the use and behoof of him or her whom God will shall inherit the possessions and lands of their foresaid fathers;

Item, I require and humbly beseech my supervisors and my executrix, tenderly lamenting the captive bondage of wardship, to consult together, pondering the readiest ways how to redeem my heir out of the thraldom and bondage of wardship, for whose marriage I was offered one thousand marks;

Item, if my supervisors and executrix, if they redeem the wardship of my son and heir, then I will that out of the money that they may have for his marriage, and out of the revenues and profits of his lands, be taken forth three hundred marks to the marriage of my daughter, Margaret, and three hundred marks to the marriage of my daughter, Elizabeth, which I will to remain in the custody of my executrix, so that she be widow, otherwise if she be married, I will that the money for the marriages remain in the custody of the supervisors;

Item, I will my servants, every man and woman, have his twelve months' wages clearly, or else my gelding and horses to be distributed amongst them after the discretion of my executrix;

Also I will to Walter, Robert brethren [sic], every one apiece, when they come to full age, £6 13s 4d for term of their lives, to be taken out of the revenues and profits of my lands, and till they be of full age to have a competent and a sufficient finding to their learning and living, and when God so provides for any of them that he or they may spend by his provision or other of his friends to the yearly value of twenty pounds, or else if God do

his will by any of them, I will that the foresaid £6 13s 4d be equally divided between his two brethren, and so from brother to brother, as God shall dispose their lives, and after their deceases or having the yearly value before named, then I will that the whole sum revert again to the use and behoof of my son & heir;

Item, I will to my brethren my apparel and raiment;

Item, I will to Anne, my wife, mine executrix, all my goods moveable unbequeathed that longeth to my house in Linslade for term of her life, and so after her decease to remain and descend to my heir;

Item, I bequeath to the vicar of Moreton, and to the parish clerk, and to the poor people of the said parish 6s 8d, and likewise to the parish of Shawbury and to the parish of Stanton, to be distributed and paid by my Lady, my mother;

Item, I will that my evidences which be at Linslade and at my chamber in Strand shall be brought to the castle of Moreton Corbet;

Item, I will my flagon-chain, after the decease of my wife, to be distributed and divided equally betwixt my three younger sons, and if God do his will upon any of them, I will the same to be distributed betwixt the other two;

Item, I will that my own chain be equally divided amongst my supervisors for their pains to be taken in the setting forth and furtherance of this my last will and testament;

In witness whereof I have put thereto my seal the day & year abovesaid.

Probatum fuit tes{tamen}t{u}m suprascripti defuncti h{ab}entis &c Primo Die mensis february Anno D{omi}ni Mill{es}imo quingentesimo xxxviii apud London auc{torita}te D{omi}ni n{ost}ri Regis &c Iurament{o} Anne Relicte & executricis in h{uius}mo{d}i tes{tamen}to no{m}i{n}at{e} In p{er}sona mag{ist}ri Io{h}annis Talkary notarij pu{bli}ci procur{atoris} sui &c Com{m}issa q{ue} fuit admi{n}istracio o{mn}i{u}m et sing{u}lorum bonor{um} Iuriu{m} et creditorum d{i}c{t}i defuncti p{re}fat{e} executrici In p{er}sona d{i}c{t}i procur{atoris} De bene & fidel{ite}r admi{n}istrand{o} Ac de pleno & fideli In{uent}ario secundo Die post D{om}i{n}i cam vocat{am} n{o}mi{n}a{m} D{omi}ni prox{imam} futur{am} exhibend{o} Necnon de plano et vero compoto reddend{o} Ad sancta Dei Eu{a}ngelia in debita iuris forma Iurat{e}

[=The testament of the above-written deceased, having etc., was proved on the first day of the month of February in the year of the Lord the thousand five hundred 38<sup>th</sup> at London by the authority of our Lord the King etc. by the oath of Anne, relict & executrix appointed in the same testament in the person of Master John Talkary, notary public, her proctor etc., and administration was granted to the forenamed executrix of all and

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singular the goods, rights and credits of the said deceased in the person of the said proctor, sworn on the Holy Gospels in due form of law to well & faithfully administer, and to exhibit a full & true inventory on the second day after the Sunday called Holy Name(?) next to come, and also to render a plain and true account.]