

SUMMARY: The document below is the Prerogative Court of Canterbury copy of the will, dated 28 November 1538 and proved 4 July 1539, of Sir William Kempe (1487 – 28 January 1539) of Olantigh, Kent, the grandfather of Alice (nee Kempe) Hales Lee (d.1592), the dedicatee of Robert Greene's *Menaphon* (1589), to which Thomas Nashe contributed a preface.

FAMILY BACKGROUND

The testator was the second son of Sir Thomas Kempe (d.1520) and Emeline Chiche, daughter and co-heiress of Sir Valentine Chiche by Philippa Chicheley, daughter and heir of Robert Chicheley (see Hitchin-Kemp, *infra*, pp. 20-3).

The testator's elder brother, Christopher Kempe (1485-1512), married Mary Guildford (1486-1529), who, after Christopher Kempe's death married Sir William Haute; for details see the will, dated 12 January 1539 and proved 16 June 1539, of Sir William Haute, TNA PROB 11/26/240.

For the testator's family see also Robertson, Herbert, *Stemmata Robertson et Durdin*, (London: Mitchell and Hughes, 1893-95), pp. 105, 224-5:

<https://archive.org/stream/stemmatarobertso00robe#page/224/mode/2up>

MARRIAGE AND CHILDREN

The testator married Eleanor (nee Browne), the daughter of Robert Browne, esquire. Robert Browne was the brother of Sir Anthony Browne (d.1506), who, by his second wife, Lucy Neville (d.1534), was the great-grandfather of Mary Browne (c.1552-1607), mother of Henry Wriothesley, 3rd Earl of Southampton, the dedicatee of Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis* (1593), and *The Rape of Lucrece* (1594), and of Thomas Nashe's *The Unfortunate Traveller* (1594). See the will of Robert Browne (Consistory Court of Canterbury, vol. 10, f. 12, FHL Microfilm 188837); the will of the testator's wife, Eleanor Browne Kempe, dated 24 August 1558 and proved 11 December 1560, TNA PROB 11/43/638; and Richardson, Douglas, *Magna Carta Ancestry*, 2nd ed., 2011, Vol. I, p. 340, and Vol. III, pp. 275-7.

At the time of the making of his will the testator had seven sons by Eleanor Browne, although the names of only six of them are known:

* **Sir Thomas Kempe** (1517 - 7 March 1591), eldest son and heir, who married firstly Katherine Cheyney (d. before 1550), daughter of Sir Thomas Cheyney (c.1485-1558), Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports. For Sir Thomas Cheyney, see his will, TNA PROB 11/42B/105.

According to the History of Parliament, Sir Thomas Kempe had five daughters by his first wife, Katherine Cheyney. See the History of Parliament entry at:

<http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1558-1603/member/kempe-sir-thomas-1517-91>

However only two daughters, Anne Kempe and Alice Kempe, are mentioned in the will, dated 6 December 1558, of Katherine Cheyney's father, Sir Thomas Cheyney, TNA PROB 11/42B/105:

Also I give and bequeath to Anne Kempe and Alice Kempe, my daughter Dame Katherine Kempe's daughters, two hundred pound apiece to either of them, so that the same Anne and Alice and either of them be ordered for their marriages by their father, Sir Thomas Kempe, knight, or by mine executors or the survivors of them.

The five alleged daughters of Sir Thomas Kempe by his first wife, Katherine Cheyney, thus appear to have been:

(1) Anne Kempe (b.1543). Mentioned in her grandfather's will. She married Sir Thomas Shirley (c.1542-1612). For her will, proved 1 April 1623, see TNA PROB 11/141/330. For Sir Thomas Shirley, see the *ODNB* entry, and the History of Parliament entry at:

<http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1558-1603/member/shirley-thomas-i-1542-1612>

(2) Alice Kempe (d.1592), to whom Robert Greene dedicated *Menaphon*. Mentioned in her grandfather's will. She married firstly Sir James Hales (d.1589), for whose will see TNA PROB 11/75/265, and secondly Sir Richard Lee (d.1608), illegitimate half brother of Queen Elizabeth's Champion, Sir Henry Lee.

(3) Frideswide Kempe. According to Richardson, *supra*, p. 276, she was the daughter of Sir Thomas Kempe by his first wife, Katherine Cheyney. If so, it appears she predeceased her grandfather, Sir Thomas Cheyney, as she is not mentioned in his will. Sir Thomas Cheyney's first wife was Frideswide Frowyk (1499 – before April 1528), the daughter of Sir Thomas Frowyk (c.1460-1506), and it thus seems likely that Sir Thomas Kempe and his first wife, Katherine Cheyney, might have had a daughter named Frideswide.

(4) Margaret Kempe. According to the History of Parliament, Margaret Kempe was also the daughter of Sir Thomas Kempe by his first wife, Katherine Cheyney, and married, as his first wife, William Cromer (d. 12 May 1598), esquire, of Tunstall, Kent, by whom she had a daughter, Anne Cromer. Margaret Kempe had died by 1 October 1561, when William Cromer married Elizabeth Guildford, the daughter of Sir John Guildford (d. 5 July 1565) and Barbara West, the daughter of Thomas West (c.1457 – 11 October 1525), 8th Lord la Warr. See Richardson, *supra*, Vol. I, p. 327; Vol. II, p. 314,

Vol. IV, pp. 320-2; the will of Sir John Guildford, TNA PROB 11/48/216; the Wikipedia articles on Sir John Guildford and Thomas West, 8th Lord la Warr edited by the author of this summary; and the History of Parliament entry for Sir John Guildford at:

<http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1509-1558/member/guildford-john-1508-65>

See also the History of Parliament entry for William Cromer at:

<http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1558-1603/member/cromer-william-1531-98>

It appears from the will of Sir Thomas Cheyney that a daughter of Sir Thomas Kempe (1517 - 7 March 1591) did marry William Cromer, and had a daughter by him:

Item, I bequeath to William Cromer, esquire, son-in-law to Sir Thomas Kempe, knight, fifty pounds and a horse or a gelding upon condition that the daughter of the said William Cromer by the said Sir Thomas Kempe's daughter had do permit and suffer Richard Daper and his assigns to hold and enjoy her part of the said lands and tenements (blank) South Mimms unto the end of the years contained in the lease that I made, yielding the rent and performing the covenants as aforesaid.

The wording used by Sir Thomas Cheyney to refer to William Cromer's wife ('the said Sir Thomas Kempe's daughter'), although ambiguous, leaves open the possibility that 'Sir Thomas Kempe's daughter', i.e. Margaret Kempe, who married William Cromer, was, in fact, Sir Thomas Cheyney's granddaughter, i.e. the daughter of Sir Thomas Kempe (1517 – 7 March 1591) by his first wife, Katherine Cheyney. If so, this clause in the will of Sir Thomas Cheyney indicates that Margaret Kempe had died before Sir Thomas Cheyney made his will on 6 December 1558.

According to the History of Parliament, Anne Cromer, William Cromer's daughter by Margaret Kempe, married, by 19 September 1577, Sir Thomas Bishopp (1553-1626) of Parham, Sussex, as his first wife, but died without issue. See:

<http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1604-1629/member/bishopp-sir-thomas-1553-1626>.

See also 'Bishopp of Parham' in *The English Baronetage*, Vol. I, (London: Thomas Wotton, 1741), pp. 416-17 at:

<https://books.google.ca/books?id=ciwUAAAAQAAJ&pg=PA416>

For Sir Thomas Cheyney, see also the History of Parliament entry at:

<http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1509-1558/member/cheyne-sir-thomas-148287-1558>

(5) Dorothy Kempe. According to the History of Parliament, she was another daughter of Sir Thomas Kempe (1517 - 7 March 1591) by his first wife, Katherine Cheyney (d. before 1550), and married Sir Thomas Chicheley (c.1578-1616). See the History of Parliament entry for Sir Thomas Chicheley at:

<http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1558-1603/member/chicheley-thomas-1578-1616>

However, according to Richardson, Dorothy Kempe was not the daughter of Sir Thomas Kempe (1517 - 7 March 1591) by his first wife, Katherine Cheyney, but rather the daughter of Sir Thomas Kempe (d.1607?) by his second wife, Dorothy Thompson. See Richardson, *supra*, p. 277 at:

<https://books.google.ca/books?id=8JcbV309c5UC&pg=RA2-PA277>

Sir Thomas Kempe married secondly, Amy Moyle (buried 17 August 1557), daughter and co-heiress of Sir Thomas Moyle (d. 2 October 1550), Speaker of the House of Commons, a descendant of Robert de Vere, 3rd, Earl of Oxford, by whom he had six sons:

(1) Sir Thomas Kempe (d.1607?).

(2) Reginald Kempe, gentleman.

(3) Moyle Kempe.

(4) Moyle Kempe (again).

(5) William Kempe.

(6) George Kempe.

See Richardson, *supra*, Vol. III, pp. 216-18, and pp. 275-7.

Sir Thomas Kempe married thirdly, by settlement dated 20 December 1571, as her third husband, Joan Fermor, daughter of Sir Richard Fermor of Easton Neston, Northamptonshire, by Anne Browne, daughter of Sir William Browne. Joan Fermor married firstly Robert Wilford (d.1545), and secondly Sir John Mordaunt (1508-1571), 2nd Baron Mordaunt. For her will, dated 6 October 1591 and proved 5 April 1592, see TNA PROB 11/79/239. For Robert Wilford, son of the London merchant and alderman, James Wilford, (d.1526), see the will of James Wilford, TNA PROB 11/22/6, and the History of Parliament entry for Robert Wilford's younger brother, Nicholas Wilford (c.1495-1551), at:

<http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1509-1558/member/wilford-nicholas-1495-1551>

For John Mordaunt, 2nd Baron Mordaunt, see his will, dated 16 April 1571 and proved 19 October 1571, TNA PROB 11/53/462, and the History of Parliament entry at:

<http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1509-1558/member/mordaunt-sir-john-1508-71>

For Sir Thomas Kempe, see also the History of Parliament entry at:

<http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1558-1603/member/kempe-sir-thomas-1517-91>

* **John Kempe** (d.1597), who married a wife named Jane, and whose will, dated 27 November 1597, was proved in the Archdiocese of Canterbury on 8 September 1599 (Arch. Cant. 51, f. 360).

* **Edward Kempe** (d. 7 March 1605), gentleman, of Gins in Beaulieu, Hampshire, who married, after 1558, Elizabeth Wilmot, a descendant of Robert de Vere, 3rd Earl of Oxford. See Richardson, *supra*, Vol. I, p. 331; and Hitchin-Kemp, *infra*, p. 32.

* **Anthony Kempe** of Slindon, Sussex, who married firstly Anne Conyers, daughter and coheir of John Conyers (d. June 1557), 3rd Lord Conyers, and secondly Margaret Gage, daughter of Sir Edward Gage (d. December 1568) of Firle. Anthony Kempe is said to have been 'something of a court favourite', and present at 'most of the court ceremonies of his times; see Hitchin-Kemp, *infra*, pp. 20-1, and Questier, Michael C., *Catholicism and Community in Early Modern England*, (Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 112, 524. See also Cokayne, G.E., *The Complete Peerage*, (London: St Catharine Press, 1913), Vol. III, p. 405. For the will of Anthony Kempe, dated 16 March 1598 and proved 5 February 1599, see TNA PROB 11/94/3.

* **Francis Kempe** (c.1534-c.1597), Clerk of the Hanaper and Attorney of the Court of Chancery, who married Eleanor Carew, daughter and coheir of Henry Carew, brother of Wymond Carew of Anthony in Cornwall, by whom he had two daughters, but left no male issue. See the History of Parliament entry for Francis Kempe at:

<http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1509-1558/member/kempe-francis-1534-97-or-later>

* **George Kempe** (died c.1588), gentleman, of London, for whose will, dated 28 February 1568 and proved 30 May 1588, see TNA PROB 11/72/479.

By Eleanor (nee Browne) the testator also had five daughters, four of whom were still unmarried at the time he made his will, and one of whom, Margaret, was then a nun:

* **Emmeline Kempe**, who married, before 1537, Sir Reynold Scott (c.1511 - 16 December 1554) of Scott's Hall in Smeeth, Kent by whom she had one son, Sir Thomas

Scott (c.1537 – 30 December 1594), who married Elizabeth Baker, daughter of Sir John Baker (c.1489–1558), Speaker of the House of Commons, and two daughters, Katherine Scott, who married John Baker (c.1531-c.1604), son of Sir John Baker (c.1489–1558), Speaker of the House of Commons, by whom she was the mother of the chronicler, Sir Richard Baker (c.1568–1645), and Anne Scott, who married Walter Mayney (d.1577) of Spillsill manor, Staplehurst, Kent. Emmeline Kempe died before 1542, at which date Sir Reynold Scott married secondly, Mary Tuke, the daughter of Sir Brian Tuke (d.1545) of Layer Marney, Essex, by Grissell Boughton (d.1538), daughter of Nicholas Boughton of Woolwich. See Richardson, Douglas, *Magna Carta Ancestry*, 2nd ed., 2011, Vol. IV, pp. 1-3, the *ODNB* articles on Sir John Baker (c.1489-1558), Sir Richard Baker (c.1568-1645), and Sir Brian Tuke; and the History of Parliament entry for John Baker (c.1531-c.1604) at:

<http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1509-1558/member/baker-john-ii-1531-16046>

For Walter Mayney, see also <http://www.geograph.org.uk/photo/928022>.

* **Cecily Kempe**, who married firstly, before 1558, William Latham, and secondly William Strangman (d. 17 December 1573) of Hadleigh Castle, Essex, for whom see his will, TNA PROB 11/56/319; and King, H.W., ‘James Strangman, Esq., of Hadleigh, an Eminent Essex Antiquary of the time of Queen Elizabeth and James I’, *Transactions of the Essex Archaeological Society*, (Cochester, 1863), Vol. II, pp. 139-46 at p. 143:

https://books.google.ca/books?id=_hY5AQAAMAAJ&pg=PA143

For William Strangman, see also Metcalfe, Walter C., ed., *The Visitations of Essex*, (London: Harleian Society, 1878), Vol. XIII, pp. 52, 104, 292 at:

<https://archive.org/stream/visitationsofess13metc#page/292/mode/2up>

* **Faith Kempe**, who married Francis Neale of Lancashire.

* **Mary Kempe**, who married Nicholas Boughton, son of Sir Edward Boughton (d.1550) of Plumstead, Kent. For the will of Nicholas Boughton, dated 30 March 1559 and proved 9 February 1560, see TNA PROB 11/43/127.

* **Margaret Kempe**, who, as noted above, was a nun at the time the testator made his will, and later married Sir George Fogge.

See Richardson, Douglas, *Magna Carta Ancestry*, 2nd ed., 2011, Vol. III, pp. 275-7; Robertson, *supra*, p. 225, and Hitchin-Kemp, Frederick, *A General History of the Kemp and Kempe Families*, (London: The Leadenhall Press, 1902), pp. 25-8 at:

<https://archive.org/stream/generalhistoryof00kemp#page/n41/mode/2up>

The Reynold Scott who witnessed the testator's will would thus appear to have been the testator's son-in-law, and it further appears from the will that it was through him that the testator acquired a 20-year lease of the manor of Olantigh near Wye in Kent. Both Sir Reynold Scott and Oxford were descended from the daughters of Sir Richard Sergeaux, Sir Reynold Scott through Philippe Sergeaux, and Oxford through Alice Sergeaux (d.1452) (see Richardson, Douglas, *Plantagenet Ancestry*, 2nd ed., 2011, Vol. III, pp. 181-4, 194,)-13. For the will of Reynold Scott, dated 4 September 1554 and proved 13 February 1556, see TNA PROB 11/37/539.

Sir Thomas Scott (c.1537 – 30 December 1594), the son of Sir Reynold Scott and Emmeline Kempe, was a first cousin and a financial supporter of Reginald Scott, whose *The Discoverie of Witchcraft* (1584) is said to have influenced Shakespeare. From the *ODNB*:

Scott, Sir Thomas (1534x6–1594), landowner, was the eldest son of Sir Reginald Scott (d. 1555) of Scot's Hall, Smeeth, Kent, and his wife, Emmeline, daughter of Sir William Kempe of Olantigh by Wye, Kent, and his wife, Eleanor, daughter and coheir of Sir Robert Brown of Betchworth, Surrey. He was the grandson of Sir John Scott (b. in or before 1484, d. 1533), while Reginald Scott (Scot), the writer on witchcraft, was a cousin.

Scott [Scot], Reginald (d. 1599), writer on witchcraft, was the first son of Richard Scott (d. before 1544), landowner, of Scott's Hall, Kent, and his wife, Mary (d. 1582), daughter of George Whetenall of Hextall's Place, Kent. . . . He had close connections with his cousin Sir Thomas Scott (1534x6–1594) of Scott's Hall, and tells us that he was financially dependent upon him.

The Peter Lyly named in the probatum clause as proctor for Sir William Kempe's widow, Eleanor, would appear to be Peter Lyly (d.1569), the father of Oxford's servant, the writer and dramatist, John Lyly (1554-1606).

It is possible that the comedian Will Kempe was a member of the testator's family. The comedian was in the service of the Earl of Leicester, who was distantly related to the Kempes of Olantigh. See Adams, Simon, *Household Accounts and Disbursement Books of Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester*, (Cambridge: Royal Historical Society, 1995), p. 371 at:

<https://books.google.ca/books?id=Ua9m6c488kcC&pg=PA371>

The comedian is described in TNA KB 27/1454/1, rot. 692 as a gentleman ('William Kempe, late of London, gentleman, deceased'), which suggests the possibility that he could have been a member of the family of Kempe of Olantigh. Moreover during a visit to Rome in 1601 the comedian met with Sir Anthony Shirley (1565–1636?), son of the testator's granddaughter, Anne Kempe Shirley, which again suggests the possibility that he was related to the Kempes of Olantigh. From the *ODNB*:

Sherley [Shirley], Sir Thomas (c.1542–1612), politician and courtier, was the eldest of three children born to William Sherley (c.1498–1551), a gentleman of Wiston, Sussex, and his wife, Mary, daughter of Thomas Isley of Sundridge, Kent. Nothing is known of his education; he did not, as sometimes claimed, matriculate as a fellow commoner from Queens' College, Cambridge, in 1561. Sherley married, about 1559, Anne (c.1542–1623), daughter of Sir Thomas Kempe of Wye, Kent. They had twelve children, including three adventurous sons: Sir Thomas Sherley (1564–1633/4), Sir Anthony Sherley (1565–1636?), and Robert Shirley (c.1581–1628). Herbert referred to the Sherleys as 'A family not needing hyperboles' (Shirley, 234).

*Kemp, William (fl. 1585–1602), actor, was the most important stage clown working in the late Elizabethan period. . . . During the ensuing year [=1601] Kemp made his way into Germany and Italy, eventually arriving at Rome, where he met the English traveller Sir Anthony Shirley, an encounter dramatized after his death in Day, Rowley, and Wilkins's play about the Shirley family, *The Travailes of the Three English Brothers* (1607).*

RM: Tes{tamen}t{u}m Will{el}mi Kemp militis

[f. 228r] In the name of God, Amen. The 28th day of November in the 30th year of the reign of our Sovereign Lord King Henry th' Eight, I, William Kempe, knight, of whole mind, declare my will in manner and form following:

First, I bequeath my soul to Almighty God, my body to be buried in Our Lady chancel in the church of Wye among my parents;

Item, I will to the high altar there for my tithes negligently forgotten, 20s;

Item, to the reparations of the church of Wye, five pounds;

Item, I give and bequeath to Cicely, my daughter, three hundred marks to her marriage;

Item, I bequeath to the marriage of Faith, my daughter, three hundred marks;

Item, I give and bequeath to the marriage of Mary, my daughter, three hundred marks;

Item, if Margaret, my daughter, be put out of the house where she is now nun, and then she be disposed to marry, I give and bequeath to her marriage three hundred marks, and if she be not disposed to marry, then I will Thomas, my son, have the said three hundred marks, and to pay her yearly during her natural life five marks with meat and drink, or ten marks and no meat and drink;

Item, whereas I have of the demise and grant of Reynold Scott, esquire, and John Tuke, gentleman, for term of twenty years a messuage called Olantigh with all the lands thereto belonging, and divers other manors, lands and tenements comprised in a deed indented

made by the said Reynold and John unto me, I will that Dame Eleanor, my wife, have the said messuage with all the lands and tenements comprised in the said deed indented for term of twelve years so that she may receive the said twelve hundred marks before bequeathed to the marriage of my daughters aforesaid;

And after the twelve years I will that the said Dame Eleanor have the said messuage with all the said lands and tenements thereto belonging to the full term of twenty years if she so long live, and to pay yearly during the said term to every one of my six younger sons forty shillings, and the residue of the said manors, lands and tenements comprised in the said deed I will that Thomas, my son, have, paying to every one of his brothers 40s;

And if my said wife be not disposed to inhabit and dwell in the said messuage after the said twelve years, then I will that Thomas, my son, have the said messuage with all the lands thereunto belonging, and to pay to every one of his brothers out of the said lands 40s yearly as his mother should have done during the full residue of the said term of twenty years;

Provided always that if it happen my wife to die after the said twelve years and before the said twenty years be expired, then I will that Thomas shall have the said messuage and all the foresaid manors, lands and tenements clearly without paying anything to his brothers;

Furthermore, I will that if my wife be not disposed to dwell and inhabit in the said messuage, and go from thence at any time within the said 12 years, then I will that Thomas, my son, have the said messuage and lands thereto belonging, paying yearly during the said term of twelve years the value thereof to his mother for the levying of the said twelve hundred marks;

Furthermore I will that my wife shall receive the profit of the lands that I have during the nonage of Henry Idon [=Iden?], and she to find him conveniently during his nonage for to help to levy the said twelve hundred marks;

Provided always and my very will is that if my foresaid daughters or any of them happen to die before they be married, then I will my said son, Thomas, to have the money to them bequeathed that be departed;

The residue of my goods I will to my well-beloved Dame Eleanor, my wife, whom I ordain to be mine executrix, and to dispose for me and my children as she shall think most convenient.

These being witness at the making hereof: Reynold Scott, esquire, and John Tuke, gentleman.

Probatum fuit suprascriptum tes tamen t u m iijto die mensis Iulij Anno d o m i n i Mill es imo quingen tesimo xxxixo apud London coram D o m i n o auc torita te

d{omi}ni n{ost}ri Regis &c Will{el}mi Kemp Milit{is} defuncti h{ab}entis &c Iurament{o} d{omi}ne Elianore Relicte & executricis in h{uius}mo{d}i tes{tamen}to no{m}i{n}at{e} in p{er}sona Petri Lyly procur{atoris} &c ac p{er} eund{e}m auct{o}r{itatem} d{i}c{t}i d{omi}ni n{ost}ri Regis approbat{um} & insinuat{um} Com{m}issaq{ue} fuit admi{ni}strac{i}o om{n}i{um} & singulor{um} bonor{um} Iuriu{m} & creditor{um} d{i}c{t}i defuncti pefat{e} executrici in p{er}sona d{i}c{t}i procur{atoris} De b{e}n{e} & fidel{ite}r admi{ni}strand{o} Ac de pleno & fideli In{uenta}rio secundo die post festum Com{m}emorac{ionis} a{n}i{m}ar{um} prox{imum} futur{um} exhiben{do} necnon de plano & vero compoto reddend{o} Ad s{an}c{t}a dei Eua{n}g{elia} in debita iuris forma Iurat{e}

[=The above-written testament was proved on the 4th day of the month of July in the year of the Lord the thousand five hundred 39th at London before the Lord by the authority of our Lord the King etc. of William Kempe, knight, deceased, having etc., by the oath of Lady Eleanor, relict & executrix named in the same testament, in the person of Peter Lyly, proctor etc., and by the same authority of our said Lord the King probated and registered, and administration was granted of all & singular the goods, rights and credits of the said deceased to the forenamed executrix 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 feast of All Souls next to come, and also to render a plain & true account.]