

SUMMARY: The document below is the Prerogative Court of Canterbury copy of the will, dated 20 March 1592 [=1593] of Dame Margaret Newport, wife of Sir Richard Newport (d.1570), owner of a copy of Hall's *Chronicle* in the British Library containing annotations thought to have been made by Shakespeare. Dame Margaret was the daughter of Sir Thomas Bromley, Chief Justice of the Common Pleas. Sir Thomas Bromley's second cousin, another Sir Thomas Bromley (1530-1576), was Queen Elizabeth's Lord Chancellor and Keeper of the Great Seal. The latter Sir Thomas Bromley was one of five trustees who were parties to an indenture entered into by Oxford on 30 January 1575, just prior to his departure for the continent (see ERO D/DRg2/25). At the time of the making of her will, Dame Margaret's daughter Mary was married to William Gratwood; she later married, as her second husband, Ralph Sneyd, the uncle of Oxford's second wife, Elizabeth Trentham, and Oxford's trustee in documents entered into at the time of the marriage and shortly thereafter. Dame Margaret Newport's daughter Magdalen was the mother of the poet George Herbert, and a friend of the poet John Donne, who was apparently related to Oxford through a mutual ancestor, Sir John Don.

RM: Testamentum domine Margarete Newporte

In the name of God Amen. In the year of our Lord God a thousand five hundred fourscore and twelve and in the five and thirtieth year of the reign of our Sovereign Lady Elizabeth by the grace of God Queen of England, France and Ireland, Defender of the Faith &c., I, Dame Margaret Newport of Eyton in the county of Salop, widow, whole in body and of good and perfect remembrance, thanks be to Almighty God, make my testament and last will in form following, that is to say:

First and principally, I yield up my soul into the merciful hands of God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, believing assuredly to be saved only through God's mercy purchased for me by the death and bloodshedding of Jesus Christ, God and man, my only Saviour and Redeemer;

My body I will to be buried in the parish church of Wroxeter or in the parish church of High Ercall, whether of the two parishes it shall please God that I die in, with such charges to be bestowed about my funeral as to my executors shall be thought convenient, and that my body be buried so soon after my death as conveniently may be;

Item, I give and bequeath to every one of my now sons-in-law forty shillings to make them rings, and to every of my daughters, their wives, one old royal of fifteen shillings;

Item, I give to my daughter Newport one old royal of fifteen shillings;

Item, I give to my daughter Gratwood forty shillings to make her a ring;

Item, I give and bequeath to my son, Andrew, forty pounds of lawful money to be paid him within one quarter of a year after my decease, and twenty kine in the holding of Robert Illedge of Fenimer, my tenant, or forty pounds of money, at the choice of the said Andrew, within one half year after my decease the kine to be delivered or the money to be paid him;

Item, I give to the said Andrew two bedsteads with testers of wainscot or some other stuff, so it be not silk, and curtains to the same, and two featherbeds, two bolsters, two pair of pillows, two pair of blankets, with other furniture sufficient for two beds, and half my linens in a chest in a chamber adjoining to the over-parlour at Eyton;

Item, I give to my nephew and godson, Richard Newport, twenty pounds and a great silver cup with a cover gilt having the Bromleys' arms on it, to be delivered him when he shall be of the age of one and twenty years or at his day of marriage;

Also I give the said Richard three great bowls of silver with a cover gilt, and two golden salts with covers, the one salt with stone and pearls, thother in form like a gentlewoman, to his use after the death of his father;

Item, I give to Edward Herbert, my nephew and godson, five pounds to be paid him at the day of his marriage or when he shall be of the age of one and twenty years, and also twelve silver spoons with two letters in the end standing for my name which I have already delivered to his mother to give unto him at the day of his marriage;

Item, I give unto Mary Newport, my god-daughter, five pounds to be paid her at the day of her marriage or when she shall be of the age of one and twenty years, and also the cup with the cover gilt that I gave her at her christening, and half the linens that I have in a chest in the chamber adjoining to the over-parlour at Eyton, and a little sweet chest and all that shall be in it at my death;

Item, I give unto Margaret Newport a tablet of gold with a picture of Saint Margaret on the one side, and on the other side the picture of Christ and Saint Thomas putting his hand into his side, and a little chest bound with iron and all that shall be in it at my decease;

Item, I give to George Lawley, my godson, five pounds to be paid him when he shall be of the age of one and twenty years;

Item, I give to William Wolley a ring with a sergeant's posy on it;

Item, I give to William Leake two angels;

Item, I give to every serving-man that shall serve in the house at my death ten shillings, and to every chambermaid ten shillings, and to every of the other maids five shillings and eight pence;

Item, I give to Master Price, curate of Saint Chad's in Shrewsbury and preacher, forty shillings;

Item, I give and bequeath to Francis Newport, my well-beloved son and heir, all my goods moveable and unmoveable wheresoever they be, and do ordain and make him my sole executor, and charge him of my blessing that he faithfully perform this my last will and testament according to the trust I repose in him;

In witness whereof to this my last will and testament I have put my hand and seal the twentieth of March in the presence of William Leake, my servant, anno supradicto.

Probatum fuit Testamentum suprascriptum Apud London coram venerabili viro magistro Iohanne Gybson legum doctore Curie prerogative Cantuariensis magistro Custode siue Commissario legitime constituto Decimo quarto die mensis ffebruarij Anno Domini iuxta cursum et computationem ecclesie Anglicane millesimo quingentesimo nonagesimo octavo Iuramento Anthonij Calton notarij publici procuratoris ffrauncisci Newport filij at heredis dicte defuncte et Executoris in huiusmodi testamento nominati Cui comissa fuit Administratio &c De bene et fideliter administrando &c Iurato examinatus

[=The above-written testament was proved at London before the worshipful Master John Gibson, Doctor of the Laws, lawfully constituted Master, Keeper or Commissary of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury, on the fourteenth day of the month of February in the year of the Lord according to the course and reckoning of the Church of England the thousand five hundred ninety-eighth [=1599] by the oath of Anthony Calton, notary public, proctor of Francis Newport, son and heir of the said deceased and executor appointed in the same testament, to whom administration was granted etc., sworn to well and faithfully administer etc. Examined.]