3. *Dame Margery Acton* v. *Sir Robert Acton*[84]

3.1 *Paper Copy of Bill of Complaint* *27 April 1553* *REQ 2/14/53, m. 1*

To the Kynge our sovereigne lorde

[In][85] moste humble and pytious wyse besecheth your moste excellente highnes, your pore suppliante Dame Margery [A]cton, wyfe to Sir Roberte Acton knight[86] & late daughter & heire to Nycholas Major deceased, that where the same Sir Roberte had in mariage with your suppleant one hundreth marks by yere in good lande and leases, vij^{c} *li*[87] in redy mony, v^{c} marks[88] worth in plate, a house thoroughly furnisshed valued at cc marks at the leaste, and m marks in good dettes due to her saide father, & also the office of your highnes sadler, beinge worth yerely cccc markes at the leaste. Which notwithstandynge, & albeyt she behaved herselfe towerdes her saide husbond in all poyntes as she ought and was bound to doo duringe the tyme she was with hym, yet the saide Sir Roberte Acton aboute vij yeres paste, nothinge fearinge or regardinge his duety to almightie God nor the lawes of this realm, did moste wykedly withoute any juste or probable cause put her from hym and sent her to an alehouse where she was and contynewed two yeres, very sick in greate misery and in mische[89] daunger of death even for lacke of kepynge, in so muche she utterly had perisshed yf good people had not by the providence of God refresshed and comforted her.

And sence that tyme, which is fyve yeres paste and more, she never had or receved eny monye of or from him, towerdes eyther the paymente of her dettes or for her pore sustentacion, but only xl marks in mony which she receved for the sale of parcell of her seide inheritaunce by her saide husbondes consent, who had v marks for the same his consente. Whereby she is now in suche extreme povertye

[84] See also BL Lansdowne MS 125, fo. 157; Caesar, *The Ancient State*, p. 164.

[85] The top corner of the document is ripped.

[86] JP for Surrey, ktd. 1542; succeeded his father-in-law as king's saddler, and exercised the office of deputy; see *VCH Surrey*, vol. 2, p. 123; Shaw, *Knights*, vol. 2, p. 53; D.F. Corcos, 'Acton, Sir Robert', in *History of Parliament 1509–1558*; M. Hayward, *Dress at the Court of King Henry VIII* (Leeds, 2007), pp. 339–340.

[87] £700.

[88] 500 marks, or £333 6s 8d.

[89] i.e. 'much'.

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as she ys not able to buy her any necessary apparell or to susteyne her otherwyse, and she hath ben and ys suche a burden to all her fryndes as they are now waxed utterly wery of her and will truste her no more, so that she ys lyke utterly to peryshe yf remedy be not the rather provided by your noble grace. In tender consideracion whereof, it may please your highnes of your abundant pyty and clemency to[90] directe your graces favorable letters to her saide husbond in your poore oratric[e]s behalf, either to gyve her some conveniente porcion of lyvynge for her sustentacion and paymente of her dettes, or eles to accepte her home agayne into his company and to use her as his wyfe, as to go[o]d lyves and honestie apperteyneth, according as she hath allredy moste humbly required, or eles to appere before your highnes honorable Counsell to awnswell[91] to the premisses. And she shall dayly pray for your moste royall estate longe to endure.

[*m. 1v*]
Apud Westmonasterium xxvij die Aprilis anno regni regis Edwardi sexti septimo. Fiat privatum sigillum versus Robertum Acton militem ad personaliter comparendum coram Consilio domini regis in curia Requisicionum apud Westmonasterium in crastino sancte Trinitatis proxime ad respondendum hiis que ex parte domine Margerie Acton uxoris eius adtunc et ibidem ei obicientur et hoc sub pena centum librarum[92]
William May[93]
John Cokes[94]
John Lucas[95]

3.2 *Court Order* *22 June 1553* *REQ 1/9, fo. 157*

Whereas Dame Margery Acton, wife to Sir Robert Acton knight, exhibited her lamentable bill of complaint to the kings majestie against the saide Sir Robert Acton, her husband, who being called by pryvie seale undre the payne of c *li* to make aunswere thereunto came not himselfe but sent his secunde sonne with certen letters, seaming

[90] The original mistakenly reads 'to be'.
[91] i.e. 'answer'.
[92] 'At Westminster 27 April 1553. Writ under privy seal directed against Robert Acton, knight, to appear in person before the Council of the Lord King in the Court of Requests at Westminster on the morrow of the Holy Trinity next [29 May] to answer to what shall on the part of Dame Margery Acton his wife be then and there objected against him, under pain of £100'.
[93] William May, Master of Requests 1550–*c.*1553 (see Appendix 2).
[94] John Cocks, Master of Requests 1550–1553 (see Appendix 2).
[95] John Lucas, Master of Requests 1551–1553 (see Appendix 2).

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thereby to be contentid to stande to some reasonable ordre therein. Whereuppon and uppon other matter to his majesties Counsaill of his highnes courte of Requests appearing, they have nowe orderid and decreed that the saide Sir Robert shall from hensfurthe yerely content and paye to the saide Dame Margery the somme of xxx *li* of Englisshe [*fo. 157v*] money yerely during his life, yf she so longe lyve, in manner and forme folowing: that ys to saye at the feaste of the nativitie of Saint John Baptist next comming or within sixtene dayes next after the saide feaste at the fonte stone within the cathederall churche of Saint Paul in London betwene the howres of one and three of the clock in the after none of the saide feaste seven powndes, tenne shillings. And at the feaste of Saint Michaell th[e] Archangell then next folowing at the same place and betwene the same howres vij *li* x *s*. And at the feaste of the nativitie of our lorde God then next folowinge at the same place and bewtene the same howres vij *li* x *s*. And at the feaste of th[e] Anunciacion of our Ladye then next folowing at the same place and betwene the same howres other vij *li* x *s*. And so from feaste to feaste yerely in the same place and betwene the same howres during his life xxx *li* in manner and forme aforesaide.

And yt ys further orderid by the saide Counsaill that the saide Sir Robert Acton shall permytt and suffer the saide Dame Margery to have, occupie & enjoye chambers, buttre, stable and gardens which be exceptid and reseavid out of the lease made to Nicholas Tayler of the late dwelling howse of the saide [*fo. 158*] Sir Robert Acton, within the borowghe of Sowthewarke in the countie of Surrey, sometyme the howse of Nicholas Major, father to the saide Dame Margery, with free ingresse and egresse at all tymes into and from the same, to inhabite and dwell in during his lyfe, yf she so longe shall lyve. And for as moche as yt appearith unto the saide Counsaill that the saide Sir Robert Acton hathe not accompayned with the same Dame Margery, nor yet relyved her with anye thinge by the space of fyve yeres (to her grett charges[)], but that she hathe lyen at sundrye her frends charg[e]s and upon her owne credyte by all the same tyme whereby she ys grettly indebtid. In consideracion whereof, and in recompence of the same, it ys nowe further orderid and decreed by the said Counsaill that the saide Sir Robert Acton immediately upon the sight of this ordre shall content and paye unto the saide Dame Margery or to her assigns for her costes, charg[e]s and finding by the saide space of fyve yeres last past the somme of thirtie powndes of lawfull money of Englande. And yf the saide Sir Robert uppon the sight hereof do or shall refuse to obey, fulfill and performe this saide ordre, that then he shall imediately, without anye delaye in proper person appeare before the Kings majesties Counsaill attending uppon his royall person, this ordre and decree to be observid and kept in every behalfe &c.

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3.3 *Paper Copy of Order* *22 June 1553* *REQ 2/14/53, m. 2*

xxij die Junij anno regni regis Edwardi vj &c vij

Whereas Dame Margery Acton, wyffe to Sir Robert Acton knight, exhibited her lamentable bill of complaynt to the kings majestie agenst the said Sir Robert Acton, her husbonde, who being called by pryvie seale under the payne of c *li* to make answere therunto came not himselfe but sent his second sonne with certen letters, semynge therby to be contented to stande to some resonable order therin. Wherupon his majesties Counsell of his highnes corte of Requests appearing they have nowe orderid and decreed that the said Sir Robert shall from hensforthe yerely content and pay to the said Dame Margery the some of xxx *li* of Englysshe money yerely during his lyffe, yf she so longe lyve, in manner and forme followinge: that is to say at the feast of the natyvitie of Seynt John Baptiste next comynge, or within syxtene dayes next after the seyd feaste, at the fonstone[96] within the cathedrall churche of Seynt Paule in London betwene the houres of one & thre[e] of the clocke in the after noone of the said feaste vij *li* x *s*, and at the feaste of Seynt Mychell th[e] Archangell then next following at the same place & betwene the same houres vij *li* x *s*, and at the feaste of the natyvytie of our lorde God then next followinge at the same place & betwene the same houres vij *li* x *s* and at the feast of th[e] Anuncyacion of our Lady then next following at the same place & betwene the same houres other vij *li* x *s*. And so from feaste to feaste yerely in the same place and betwene the same houres duringe his lyffe xxx *li* in manner & forme aforesaid. An[d] it is further[97]

[*m. 2v*]
Termino Trinitatis anno 7 Edwardi vj
Intratur in registro[98]

[96] i.e. 'font stone'.
[97] End of membrane: no more to follow.
[98] 'Trinity Term [2–21 June] 1553. Let it be recorded in the register'.

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