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**An Unnoticed Reference to a Member of the Canynges Family**

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## AN UNNOTICED REFERENCE TO A MEMBER OF THE CANYNGES FAMILY

The Thomas Canynges who sued out the following plea in the Chancellor's court was a great-nephew of the second William Canynges, mayor of Bristol, and grandson of Thomas Canynges, sheriff, and later mayor of London.<sup>1</sup> He seems to have joined the family business early on in his life, and some time between 1469 and 1474 he was captured by a Breton pirate, and was ransomed for the exceptionally large sum of £100.<sup>2</sup> He then went to London, where he continued to trade in 'bristoweclothes', as our document indicates, and in 1480 we find him back in Bristol importing woad from Bordeaux.<sup>3</sup>

The interesting point that this document reveals about Thomas is that, for a while at least, he gave up his career as a merchant to travel abroad in the royal service, either attendant upon the king himself, or as a soldier. His great-uncle William Canynges had become a devoted adherent of Edward IV almost immediately after his accession: in July 1461 he had loaned the new king 500 marks, and was his host in Bristol in the September of the same year, when he added a further 50 marks to the loan.<sup>4</sup>

Whether or not it was this connection which induced Thomas to enter royal service, we find him on 26 August 1474 spending £20 at a London mercer's to set himself up for 'his Journay with the king our souereign lord into fraunce'. He was certainly very much in advance with his preparations, for it was only in the previous month that Edward had made the treaty of perpetual amity with Charles the Bold that was an essential preliminary to his great expedition into France, and indeed that parliament had voted the even more important grants. It was not, in fact, till 4 July in the following year that Edward set foot in France, and he was back in England again on 28 September, having concluded his brief and unwarlike expedition by the profitable treaty of Picquigny.<sup>5</sup>

We cannot tell whether, in the event, Thomas Canynges did go to France with the king, as he had planned, nor do we know the result of his case, for the Early Chancery Proceedings rarely record decisions. It is interesting, however, to find any details of the later history of this fascinating family.

<sup>1</sup> For a pedigree of the Canynges family, see E. M. Carus-Wilson, 'The Overseas Trade of Bristol in the later Middle Ages', *Bristol Record Society*, vii (1937), p. 303. For this Thomas's grandfather, see George Pryce, *Memorials of the Canynges Family and their Times* (Bristol, 1854), pp. 141-5.

<sup>2</sup> Carus-Wilson, *op. cit.*, pp. 150-1, qu. E.C.P. 64/181.

<sup>3</sup> Carus-Wilson, *op. cit.*, p. 279.

<sup>4</sup> C. L. Schofield, *The Life and Reign of Edward IV* (London, 1923), i, 195, 199.

<sup>5</sup> Schofield, *op. cit.*, ii, 131.

## Early Chancery Proceedings, 60/121 (extended)

To the right reuerent ffader in god and his gode and gracious lorde tharchebussshop of yorke primate and Chaunceller of Ynglond.

Mekely besechith your gode and gracious lordeship your continuell Oratour Thomas Canynges Gentilman. That where he for the apparaling of hym self toward his Jurnay with the king our souereign lord into fraunce bargeyned and bought of oon Thomas Riche Citizen and mercer of london certeyn silkis and other stuf for the Sume of xx li. for contentacion wherof he by his estrete obligatorie bering date the xxvi daye of August the xiiij yere of the reign of the king our souereign lord that now is . bounde hym self unto the seid Thomas Riche Citezen and mercer of london in xx li. to be paied unto the same Thomas Riche at the feste of Seynt Berthilmewe thenne next folowing And after that for the more suerte of the contentacion of the seide xx li. the forsaide Thomas Canynges delyuered to the seide Thomas Riche A Cheyne of golde with an herte of golde sette with vi grete Perilles and A diamond . and A grete Rubie in the same weyeng all to geder by the weight of troye iij unces . a j quarter being of the value of one C marcs . And furthermore by indenture bering date the daye & yere aboueseid it was couenented graunted & agreed betwene the seide partiez that if the seide Thomas Canynges paied unto the seide Thomas Riche or to his attourney in the parishe Church of Seynt margarete in lothbury in london the forseid xx li. at the seide feste of Saint Berthilmew . that thenne the seide Thomas Riche shulde delyuer or do to be delyuered to the seide Thomas Canynges or to his attourney makyng the seide paiement the forseide Cheyne with the forseide herte of golde afore rehersed And also the seide Obligacion to be as voide of no force nor effecte And if the seide Thomas Canynges paied not the seide money . at the seide daye & place afore-rehersed thenne the seide Obligacion to be gode and effectuell And also the seide Thomas Riche to haue reteigne and enioye . to hym and his executours . the seide Cheyne and the seide herte of golde as is aforerehersed . And after the en-sealing of the seide Indenture & obligacion and delyuere of the seide Iuelles . and before the seide feste of Seynt Berthilmewe . the forseide Thomas Riche understanding & knowing the forseid Thomas Canynges to haue within the seide Cite of london xx longe bristowclothes desired the seid Thomas Canynges to have vi of the same for the contentacion of the seid xx li. Whereto the seide Thomas Canynges agreed with that that the same Thomas Riche delyuered to Thomas Makkys . & John Wakefeld the seid Iuelles . And according therto the seid Thomas Canynges Commaunded one Nicholas Baylie thanne hauyng the keping of the seid clothes . to delyuer them to the seide Thomas Riche . at suche tyme as the seide Iuelles were delyuered to the seid Thomas Makkis & John Wakefeld according to their agreement whiche the seide Thomas Riche promysed to do And according thereto the seide Thomas Riche came to the house of the seid Nicholas Baylie and there chase oute vi clothes oute of the seid xx<sup>ti</sup> clothes and sealed them with his seall And left them in the keping of the seid Nicholas. according to the seid appoyntement And therupon the seid Thomas Canynges being reteigned in the kinges seruice toward the parties beforesaid . departed from london toward his seruice trustyng the seid agrement to be kepte by the seid Thomas Riche ferme & stable Wiche Thomas Riche knoweng the seid Thomas Canynges to be departed toward the kinges seruice thinkyng sotely and craftelie to haue reteigne and enioye the seid Iuelles . as by wey of forfeture And

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also to take auantage of his seide Obligacion . never came nor requyred delyuere of the seide clothes till the seide feste of Seint Berthilmewe was past And after the seide feste the seide Thomas Riche desired the seide Nicholas Bayle to delyuer hym the seid vi clothes whereto the same Nicholas was agreable with that that the seid Thomas Riche wulde have delyuered the seide Iuelles wiche to do the same Thomas Riche refused And afterward the same Thomas Riche died and the administration of his godes & catailes was committed vnto George Pykenham & Richard Barnet Ientilmen And howbeit the seide Thomas Canynges hath often tymes offered to paie to the seide George and Richard the seide xx li. so that thei wulde delyuer hym the seide Iuelles . yette that to do thei utterlie haue refused and yette refuse to do contrarie to all right and consciens . And also have taken an accion of dette ayenste the seide Thomas Canynges upon the seide Obligacion and so entend to enioye the seide Iuelles . and to recouer the seid xx<sup>ii</sup> li. withoute your gode & gracious lordeship to hym be shewed in this behalf . wherfor pleas it your gode and gracious lordeship the premisses to considre And that the seide Thomas Canynges hath no remedie by the course of the comen lawe to graunte seuerall writtes of sub pena to be directed to the seide George and Richard commaunding them by the same to appere by fore your lordeship in the Chauncerie At a certeyn daye by your lordeship to be lymetted therto to do and resceyve as right and gode consciens shall require And this at the Reuerens of god and in the wey of Charite

Ricardus Broun de london yoman &  
Willelmus Grene de eadem yoman.

J. FINES.