

THE EXPENSES OF THOMAS PLAYTER OF SOTTERLEY, 1459 – 60

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THOMAS PLAYTER WAS Sir John Fastolf's chief legal adviser¹ and after Fastolf's death on 5 November 1459 was retained by his late master's executors John Paston and Thomas Howes. For Playter the period 1459 – 60, as shown by the bill of expenses printed below,² was thus a particularly busy one. There was much to be done. What mattered most was not routine business such as embracery, but the discussions and working dinners with Master John Stokes, William Wayneflete the Chancellor, John Lord Beauchamp of Powick, William Yelverton, William Jenny, doctors of law and other lawyers, and even (as his 'conceytes' needed urgently to be discovered) William Worcester, Fastolf's secretary and workhorse in general.³

The subject of these conversations was, briefly, that version of Fastolf's will, dated 3 November, which John Paston maintained truly reflected the childless old man's last wishes concerning the disposition of his lands after his death. Others, however, were less certain of the authenticity of this nuncupative will, for it varied greatly from earlier versions, most significantly in leaving all the extensive East Anglian properties, including the great house at Caister,⁴ to Paston himself, and reducing the number of executors from ten to two, of whom one, Thomas Howes, was Fastolf's former chaplain, and the other, John Paston, a principal beneficiary. Too much was at stake for the excluded executors, who included Stokes, Wayneflete, Beauchamp, Yelverton and Worcester, to accept from Paston a document which offered him all that he could desire and gave him the means to obtain it. Moreover, their hesitation had some justification: the will *was* nuncupative and the old man had been very weak in his last days. Still, the tension between those who hovered over Fastolf during his declining years, clearly displayed in William Worcester's letters,⁵ indicates that once he was gone there was almost bound to be conflict between them; Fastolf had accumulated too much for it to be dispersed amicably.⁶

Thomas Playter's expenses, however, cover only the early days, the diplomatic prelude to the war itself. A letter of 28 January 1460 from William Paston and Playter, but written, save for its postscript, by the latter,⁷ conveys something of the atmosphere of this time and puts some of the earlier items of the expenses in context. At Mortlake, for example, Master John Stokes, an official of the Archbishop of Canterbury's court of Audience, 'sayd he was spoken to by on whiche he coude not remembre that he schuld take good heed vppon the probat of my maisters wyll how his londys schuld by gyded by-cause there was a thyng ensealed as his wyll which was forged after my maisters decesse'. Playter then began to earn his retainer:

It was long or we coude fynd hym feythfully dysposed in oure conceytys. And whan we had hym resonably after oure entent, we enfourmyd hym of Yeluer-ton nedeles wastyng of my maister godys⁸ and the mystrust that he had jn hem hom my maister most erthely trustyd, and how his desyre was synglerly to have had the keypyng of Castre and all stuffe wyth-jnne it, and there to have lodged hym-self.

William Worcester, on the other hand, was not to be brought round:

And euer more whan I sey vn-to hym that it may not be gaynseyd but as touchyng to al my maister lond jn Norffolk and Suffolke it is his wyll and suffycyant prove ther-vppon that ye schuld have it, etc., and than he answereth and prayeth me no more to speke of that mater for he vnderstand no (. . .) covenant, etc.; and more can I not gete of hym.

The wine had not loosened William's tongue.

Whereas William Worcester, who was never convinced of the Paston cause, eventually deserted it, Thomas Playter was hired to further it and continued to do so after this bill of expenses was closed. In October 1460, for example, probably through Margaret Paston's cousin William Rookwood, who was named first among the jurors, he managed to get the Norfolk inquisition *post mortem* jury to make a noncommittal return, an important tactical victory in the campaign,⁹ and he remained a member of John Paston's learned council, carrying out the varied tasks which such membership entailed, until Paston's death in 1466.¹⁰ He was present at the funeral,¹¹ and successfully manipulated the subsequent inquisition *post mortem*; the jury's return was a mere recital of the Paston case concerning Fastolf's will, both official copies being in the hand of John Pampyng, a Paston servant. Presumably Playter himself had composed it. Certainly he delivered the Chancery copy there on 8 November, something readily done as he had been appointed escheator of Norfolk and Suffolk (for the only time in his life) three days previously.¹² So much for the impartiality of government.

Such management was of course what Playter was paid for. In 1461 Margaret Paston reported to her husband that so far as John Lyster's matter was concerned Playter 'seyd he hopyd to fynd a mene . . . that schold ese hym ther-in'; in 1472 she advised John Paston III, 'Speke to Playtere that ther may be fownd a meane that the shereffe or the gaderere of the grene wax may be discharged of certeyn issues . . .'.¹³ Finding ways and means, especially perhaps to smooth things over, was his business. Moreover he was good at it; he himself wrote '. . . for I am of tho that thynk long tyll I here say, etc.';¹⁴ and it was no doubt such a capacity to weigh things that Margaret had in mind when she wrote to John Paston II in 1470, 'if ye shuld be at my lady of Suffolk, it [were] necessary to haue Playtere there wyth you if ye shuld engroos any appoyntmentes wyth here at that tyme, for she is sotill and hath sotill counsell wyth here; and therefore it were wele do ye shuld haue summe wyth you that shuld be of your counsell'.¹⁵ It is surely setting Playter's abilities high that Margaret should consider them a match for those of Alice Chaucer, dowager Duchess of Suffolk. This invaluable man continued to serve the Pastons into the 1470s, very possibly indeed for the rest of his active life, not simply as their legal adviser and feoffee,¹⁶ but more as a family friend. He assisted John III in his attempt to persuade Margaret to lend him the £100 necessary to recover the mortgaged estate of Sporle, albeit to no avail, for Margaret was unwilling to see her elder son's financial problems as other than of his own making.¹⁷

Playter presumably had other clients besides the Paston family:¹⁸ as a talented country attorney it would have been odd if he had not. The term 'country attorney' is employed to suggest a lawyer who practised on behalf of men whose proper *milieu* was neither that of the Court nor the capital, but the country, a lawyer whose labour in their causes was not augmented by service to the government, whether central or local. There were many such lawyers in Norfolk and Suffolk; Playter's near neighbour at Spexhall, Robert Banyard, whose son or grandson Thomas was Playter's feoffee, executor, and the guardian of William, his son and heir, is a splendid example.¹⁹ Playter may, however, have had his training in Chancery, for he is described as 'of the Chancery' when we first encounter him in 1448.²⁰ Yet he was never active in local government; his escheatorship of 1466–7 was an isolated experience, and he had to wait until 1473 to be placed on a local commission, one of *oyer et terminer* in Norfolk and Suffolk. He only ever sat on one other, of *walliis et fossatis* for the East Anglian coast five years later. It was public service of the most limited kind.²¹

The explanation is straightforward. Like Robert Banyard he was simply not a sufficiently substantial member of local society to be considered for such commissions. He was not (in other words, and to use local examples) a John Sulyard, a Roger Townshend, or a James Hobart.²² This is not to say that he did not do well. Only a fool would not have prospered in the legal profession in the 15th century, and among the lawyers of the period, at whatever level their business was

conducted, there were probably few fools. The result of Playter's prosperity and the means of his entrée to what one might term the local establishment was his acquisition of the Sotterley estate in the late 1460s. It was not his only property; but it was the one that counted for most, the possession of which brought him those two commissions of the 1470s, for with Sotterley he became a Suffolk gentleman. Manor, house, advowson and church put his gentility beyond question; he had established himself.

Originally he was a Norfolk man. Margaret Paston, in writing to John Paston III in 1471, recommended him to borrow from Roger Townshend or Thomas Playter or 'sum othere good kuntery man of owyrs'.²³ The Playter estate in Norfolk was Welbourne.²⁴ Thomas left this manor to his younger son Edmund; despite its being his patrimony, it was obviously not as central to his sense of family as was Sotterley. We may perhaps detect a trace of Thomas's pride in that place in the final sentence of a letter John Paston III wrote to his brother: 'And so jn my progresse fro my fadyr Brews on-to Mawtby I took Master Playter in my wey, at whoys hows I wrot thys bylle the xxj day of January A^o E. iiiijⁱ xvij^o. And I beseche God to preserue yow and yours.'²⁵

How Playter obtained Sotterley is not the romantic story Suckling wished to tell; appeal can no longer be made to the 'Wars of the Roses' for explanations of the unexpected in the 15th century. That Thomas Sotterley, a Lancastrian, forfeited Sotterley, and that Thomas Playter, a Yorkist, was rewarded with it,²⁶ is not what happened; the exchange was freer than that, and took effect only on the death of Thomas Sotterley. However, he had evidently already in his lifetime disposed of Uggeshall, his other family estate in Suffolk, immediately to the south of Sotterley, to Thomas Playter.²⁷ Thomas Sotterley died on 17 March 1467. At the inquisition held at Beccles after his death it was found that he had required his feoffees to raise 100 marks from the Sotterley estate for the performance of good works for the souls of himself and Elizabeth his wife; when that had been done and Sotterley had proved not to be entailed, Thomas Playter and his heirs were to have it in perpetuity. Part of the price Playter had to pay for the property was to Thomas Sotterley's heir Thomas Cheyne, son of his daughter Elizabeth; to Cheyne, to compensatè him for the loss of Sotterley, Playter was to grant other lands of the same annual value, 20 marks.²⁸ Whether this condition was fulfilled or some other arrangement made, the two men remained on good terms, for at his death in 1479 Playter left Cheyne his best silver and gilt cup.²⁹

Playter probably married about the time he obtained Sotterley. He made a good match: Anne Dennis of Tannington, Suffolk, sister (as was proclaimed on her memorial brass) of Roger Dennis of Tannington. It was an unusual relationship to advertise to posterity, and is to be explained by the fact that she was Roger's heir. Roger was a feoffee of Anne and her husband for Uggeshall, no doubt when this estate was made her jointure.³⁰ She brought to the marriage her future interest in the manor of Braisworths in Tannington; certainly she was recorded as holding it at her death in 1479.³¹ Probably younger than her husband, Anne was pregnant at his death on 21 September 1479,³² but she too was dead within three weeks, dying possibly in childbirth or more probably (perhaps like her husband) of the plague,³³ on 10 October. She had had no time to enjoy her late husband's household goods, all of which he had left her.

Playter drew up his testament at Sotterley on 20 September, the day before his death. It was brief and to the point, for his children were still under age and he had settled his lands on feoffees with clear directions as to their descent after his death; Welbourne in Norfolk, for instance, was to go to his younger son Edmund when he became twenty-one, and to his heirs.³⁴ Thomas left £40 each to Agnes his daughter and to his unborn child; Thomas Cheyne was to have the silver-gilt cup, and Anne all his stuff of household. The friars at Norwich and South Town, Yarmouth, were to receive £1 apiece, and his executors, Anne herself and Thomas Banyard, were to find a priest to pray for his soul for two or three years. Except on the subject of Sotterley church, that was all he had to say.³⁵

During his lifetime he had enriched the church,³⁶ and he undoubtedly conceived of it as the family chapel and mausoleum it became and still remains. The brass to himself and his wife, which so unusually distinguishes her as her brother's sister, just as strikingly records of him that he was patron of the church.³⁷ As that is the one thing it says of him, it was clearly a distinction which he valued. His only pious bequest besides those to the local friars was of £1 for the 'candilbeme' of the church, and in the chancel, before the image of St Margaret, the church's patron saint, he was buried. On his tomb he and his wife were soon to be depicted; probably they were already featured in the glass of the east window. There Thomas still kneels with a line of boys behind him;³⁸ Anne would surely have figured opposite him, a row of daughters behind her.³⁹ Just as conventionally, this hardworking lawyer is portrayed on his brass as a fully armoured knight, a sword dangling from his belt, where in life nothing more warlike had depended than pen and ink. Thus in glass above he represents a new ideal — the father of a devout family; whereas in brass below he is shown as representative of an old, though by no means dead, ideal — the noble (or gentle) warrior. Sotterley was obviously close to Thomas Playter's heart, and with reason; its acquisition had brought him that very gentility he took such pride in displaying, and which we, 500 years after his death, can happily still observe.

THE MANUSCRIPT

The document here transcribed (Magdalen College, Oxford, Fastolf Paper 71) is a paper roll of nine membranes of uneven length, stitched head to foot, *c.* 12ins wide and *c.* 100ins long overall. It is autograph (cf. Davis 1976, Pl. XVII). Since part of the first membrane has been torn away the heading is wanting. It is evident from the subsequent and subsidiary headings, however, that the expenses begin with Michaelmas Term 1459, and equally clear from the *In primis* of the first entry that none is missing.

For many of the names which feature, reference should be made to the indices of the Paston Letters (Gairdner 1904, VI; Davis 1976). For William Worcester, see McFarlane 1957(1). For Master John Stokes, see Emden 1959, 1782. For John Andrew, a de la Pole retainer (B. L. Egerton roll 8779) and Sir Philip Wentworth, see Wedgwood 1936, 11 and 934. Giles Seintclo or Saintloo of London, esquire, had been sheriff of Norfolk and Suffolk in 1448–9 and 1457–8. It is no surprise to learn, therefore, that this king's esquire, who had also been in Queen Margaret's household, was sufficiently committed to be with Margaret's party in Scotland in the summer of 1461 (Myers 1957–8, 405–6; Davis 1976, 253). As he had also been sheriff of Dorset and Somerset in 1456–7 he was perhaps a member of the Somerset family (see Wedgwood 1936, 737). Thomas Ive has not been identified. John Lord Beauchamp of Powick, a Fastolf feoffee whose attitude to Sir John's will and to themselves the Pastons considered of some importance, has left remarkably little trace for one so influential. He was a knight of the King's chamber, from December 1457 until December 1460 Steward of the Household; in a private letter David Morgan writes 'he seems to me, on a calculation of staying-power at the centre of things, as intelligent a choice of feoffee on the part of Fastolf as that other Henry VI favourite and lordly promotion of 1447, William Wayneflete'.

TRANSCRIPT OF THE ACCOUNTS

(*The manuscript has been transcribed as it stands, neither punctuation nor capitalisation being modernised. Abbreviations have however been slightly extended wherever one can be certain about the extension.*)

In primis the xvij day ...
 Item the same nygth at Atty[leborough]....
 Item for oure mennys sopers
 Item the next day for oure brek

EXPENSES OF THOMAS PLAYTER

Item for boytyng at Thetford	
Item for oure soper at Iklyngham	
In wode and candell iijd in horsmete	
Item the thred day at the same Tounn	
Item at Newmarket at Dyner with	
Item at Babram in bred and ale and kechyn	
Item at Barkewey with Skypwyth	
In Mylk 1d In horsmete	
Item at oure brekefast by	
Item at Ware at oure dlyner]	
an hors iiijd in horsmete	
Item at Waltham in bred and ale 1d	
Item the same nygth at London to	
Cannterbury iiijd in bred and ale iiijd	
	Sum' xv
Item for oure comons for iiij wekys	
Item for oure comons candelmesse weke	
Item for oure mennys comons by the same tyme	
Item for iiij hors standyng by the same tyme payng for an hors day and nyg[ht]	
Item for provendre countyng for every hors every weke a busshell summa	
	Summa iij li xviijs ijd
Item for bote hyre to mortelak owte and in	xvjd
Item for oure soper whan we cam late fro mortelak and for oure mennys soper	xd
Item for paper	ijd
Item to James Gresham hors and his mannys abydyng ij dayes to bryng hom lette[rs]	ijs iiijd
Item in bote hyre to Westm' iij tyme for us and our men	vjd
Item in bote hyre to Lambhythe and agayn to Westm' to speke with M. Stokys	iijd
Item for our dyner at Westm' with sum of maister Stokys men	vjd
Item fro Westm' to Lambhythe to speke with Maister Stokes and fro Lambhythe to London	iijd
Item for oure brekefast at Dolfyn with Clement Paston and Vowell Richard Calle and our men	viijd
Item to ij doctors of lawe to comon with of dyvers questyons	vjs
Item at the Taverne	ijd
Item at the Taverne with Plomer and Worceter in applys and wyn	vijd
Item in bote hyre at dyvers tymes to seynt mary overeys to speke with my lord Chaunceler	xd
Item fro seynt mary overeys to Westm' for oure men at dyvers tymes because they mygth not come In to the barge	viijd
Item in horshyre fro Lambhythe to London with Richard Calle	ijd
Item for our dyners whan Richard Calle was with us to wayte uppon my lord Chaunceler	vijd
Item for wyn at Plomers hous dyvers tymes to harken of W. W. conceytes	xijd
Item in bote hyre to Westm' to comon with Maister Faukes for the acte of parlement	iiijd
Item for oure dyner at Westm' a nother tyme to tarye uppon my lord Chaunceler	vjd
Item for our dyner with Maister John Stokes at Westm'	ixd
Item to the Freresbox in the eschequer and in the Kynges benche for us bothe	iiijd
Item a reward to maister John Stokes man' to late us have knowletch of his maister conceyte	iijs iiijd
Item to Malmesbury for his brekefast	iiijd
Item at the Tavern with Pakenham	iiijd
Item to maister Makerell	iiijd
Item in drynkyng and dynyng with the chief judges men and with broun of the Kynges benche	xd
Item for our dyner at the Dolfyn with Watkyns and Archer	vijd
Item for 1 peyre Glovys of mayll to Lytylton	xxviijd
Item to the Cryours of the Kynges benche	iid
Item for hors Shoyng	vjd
Item to Richard whan he cam rydyng hom to Syr Thomas Howys	iijs iiijd
Item for oure dyner and for oure mennys at Plomers hous	vjd
Item for William Worceter at dyner	ijd
Item with Bokkyng and Colyns at dyner	ijd
Item for bote hyre In to Suthwerk to oure maister place	ijd
Item at dyner a nother tyme for Plaiter with William Woyceter	ijd

C. RICHMOND

Item for a pyk at plomers hous to hym and his wyf	ijd
Item in drynk a nother tyme	jd
Item for oure dyner a nother tyme at the Dolfyn	vjd

Summa xxxvs iiijd

Summa to[talis] vjli ixs ix d ob

These be the expens' of Thomas Playter for Hill' terme anno H.vjti. xxxvij to the use of the executors of my Maister Fastolf for maters in lawe

In primis to W. Jeney Grenefeld and Jerard de la Hay for makyng new of the ple in the eschequer for the executors of my maister Fastolf for the maner of Bradwell	xs
Item at the Taverne for the same mater	viijd
Item for a copy of the same ple to schewe maister Yelverton	xijd
Item to gete day over whan the ple was mad by cause Maister Yelverton wold not appere ther to	iijs iiijd
Item to Essex clerk for a reward by cause he wold not else entre the relez for my M. Fastolf for the mater of Lewys	xxd
Item to W. Jeney to calle uppon the bylle ayens Seynclo in the eschequer	iijs iiijd
Item in espens' fro London In to Norwich	iijs iiijd

Summa xxiijs. iiijd.

The ben the expens' and costes of Thomas Plaiter for the exec' of M. Fastolf to Bury for the mater a yens John Andrews

In primis for horsmete at Norwich	iiijd
Item at Attylburgh in boytyng	ijd
Item at Thetford all nygth	xijd
Item at Bury to my Brekefast	iijd
Item to Grys for counsell	iiis iiijd
Item to Cople and to the Cryours	xijd
Item to the Freres in almes	jd
Item on the munday for my dyner with Alyngton and other	viijd
Item at soper with Alyngton Lopham and other	vjd
Item uppon Fastegong tewysday at my dyner with the underschreve Worsop Hightham and other many	viijd
Item at my soper with W. Jeney Alyngton Aylmer and other	viijd
Item at arere soper with Alynton	iiijd
Item for horsmete ij dayes and an half	xviij
Item on pulner Wednesday at Thetford for my dyner with John Jeney Alyngton and other dyvers	viijd
Item to the frere box in almes	jd
Item in fyre and drynk at Evyn	ijd
Item for my soper and fyre at Evyn	vjd
Item for horsmete a day and a half and ij nygthes	xiijd
Item on Fryday at Attylburgh for my dyner and horsmete	vijd
Item for horshyre vj dayes	ijs
Item to Copley at Thetford to entre the deth of my maister Fastolf in ass' In Tudenham name	ijs

Summa xvijs vjd

These folwyng be the expens' of Thomas for his rydyng to London to speke with my Lord Chaunceler for the exec' of Maister Fastolf

In primis for horsmete at Norwich	ijd
Item at Attylburgh for my dyner and horsmete	vjd
Item at Thetford all nygth	xjd
Item at Newmarket for my dyner and horsmete	vjd
Item at Babram in boytyng	ijd ob.
Item at Barkewey for al nygth	xijd
Item at Ware for my dyner and horsmete	vijd
Item at Waltham al nygth to wayte uppon Lord Beauchamp	xijd
Item at London for my dyner	vd
Item for an hyred hors to London and hom ayen	iijs iiijd

EXPENSES OF THOMAS PLAYTER

Item for a mannys costs hom and for his reward	iijs
Item for my commons a weke	ijs viijd
Item for a reders drynkyng	xd
Item for my mannys comons a weke	xijd
Item for fyre in my chambre at dyvers tymes	iijd
Item for bote hyre to Lambhythe to seke after maister John Stokes	ijd
Item in drynkyng with Upton Colyns and Bokkyng at dyvers tymes	vd
Item for ij hors kepyng in London vi dayes hay and litter and provendre	iijs
Item for hors shoyng	iijd
Item for my dyner with Tasburgh or we cam owte of London	iiijd
Item at Waltham in boytyng	ijd ob.
Item at Ware all nygth for my soper with Tasburgh	xd
Item for my hors all nygth	vjd
Item at Barkewey in boytyng	iijd
Item for my dyner at Babram and in horsmete	vjd
Item at Newmarket all nygth	viijd
Item for my brekefast at Thetford and (for horsmete)	ivd
Item at Attylburg for my dyner and in horsmete	vd

Summa xxvs iijd

Item payed to Combford for ij termes as it appereth by his bylle	vijs viijd
Item to Cook as it apereth by his bille	xvs iiijd
Item to Thomas Harryson for ij termes as it appereth by his bille	xixs vjd
Item to Robert Deane for ij termes as it apereth by his bille	xjs

Summa liijs vjd

Termino Pasche anno xxxviiij. h. vjti.

Item for my costes to London	iijs iiijd
Item for ij copys of the comission which yed owte of the eschequer	iijs iiijd
Item for my mannys costes to Norwic and for his costes at Norwich to enforme the exec' wherea' my lord chaunceler schuld remeve	iijs iiijd
Item in drynkyng with Colyns	ijd ob.
Item for an al' venire fac' for Clement Paston ayens Seynclo	xiiijd
Item to Forster and Clough to be with Clement Paston in the sayd mater	vjs viijd
Item with Clough and the underschreve at the Taverne for the same mater in wyn and mete	vjd
Item to the underscheve for makyng of the panell	vjs viijd
Item for a copy of the same panell	iiijd
Item in drynkyng with Clough a part	ijd
Item delyvered to Clement Paston for to drynk with Forster for the same mater	iiijd
Item for a distringas ayens the Jurr' in the same mater	xiijd
Item for William Jeney and Jon Jeney's dyner at Westm' gate	iiijd
Item at the Taverne with morgan the chief barons clerk	ijd ob.
Item for ij copies of the Inquisicons whiche were taken in Norff' (and Suff)	iijs
Item for ij copies of the Inquisicons whiche were founden in Suff	iijs
Item for Grenefeld brekefast at Westm'	iijd
Item to Katesby man for his bote hyre to go to the tempyll and fetche the comyssyon	jd
Item to Jon Jeney for a bille makyng to the kyng for a prevy seall upon the office	iijs iiijd
Item in drynkyng with Clement Paston and Forster for seynclo mater	iijd
Item to Grenefeld William Jeney and Jon Jeney for the ple ayens Sir Phelip Wentworth in his accion of trav' ayens John P. and Sir Th. Howys for brekyng of his clos at Bradwell	xs
Item at the Taverne for the same mater	vd
Item in bote hyre at dyvers tymes	vjd
Items for my horsmete iij wekes	vjs
Item for myn expens' to Coventre and at Coventre and hom agayn to London	vijs xd
Item for certiorare to remeve the office in to the chuncery	ijs vjd
Item to Lacon at iiij tymes to go in to the eschequer to move the court that thys was not lawfull commission to sese any londes etc.	xiijs iiijd
Item to Grenefeld for the same mater	vjs viijd
Item to Katesby for the same mater	iijs iiijd

C. RICHMOND

Item at dyner with them bothe	vjd
Item for the seall of the certiorare returned owte of the eschequer in to the chauncery	vijd
Item for a copy of the certiorare	iiijd
Item to Essex for his fee to retorne a nother certiorare and the Inquisicions ther with and for the seall of the same	vjs iijd
Item for my soper whan I cam late	iiijd
Item for wyn and pypyns to Danby	vjd
Item for wyn to hym at dyvers tymes after delyvered by the Taverner	xijd
Item in wyn and pypyns to Ric' Loy and to maister Freston clerkes	vjd
Item for a quayre of paper to wryte the traverse	ijjd
Item at the Taverne with Ric' Loy for the same traverse	ijjd
Item to Comberford for his counsell to the same traverse	vjs viijd
Item to Pygot the same tyme for the same mater	ijs iiijd
Item for Wyn the same tyme	ijjd
Item for Ric Calles bote hyre and myn to the chief juges oughth and In	ijjd
Item for myn owen bote hyre a nother tyme	jd
Item for myn horsmete xij dayes	vs
Item whan I rode to Coventre at Barnet alnygth	xijd
Item at Seynt Albons in boytyng and drynk	ijjd
Item at Barnet for my dyner and horsmete	vijd
Item at Brykhill in boytyng	ijjd
Item at Stony Stratton	ijjd
Item at Toucestre al nygth	xijd
Item at Daventre for my dyner and for my hors	vijd
Item at Coventre in drynkyng with wolf and Thomas Ive at dyvers tymes	viijd
Item for wrytyng of a supplicacion to the kyng for a prevy seall	xxd
Item to Thomas Ive for wrytyng of a letter to the maister of the rollys	xxd
Item for horschoyng	viijd
Item for my comons for a fortenygh	iiijs
Item for my mannys comons by the same tyme	ijs
Item for my hors by the same tyme	viijs
Item at Daventre in boytyng	ijjd'
Item at Toucestre al nygth	xiijd
Item at Stony Stratton for my brekefast and hors	iiijd ob
Item at Brykhill in boytyng	ijjd
Item at Dunstable for my dyner and for horsmete	vijd
Item at Seynt Albons	ijjd
Item at Barnet all nygth	xiijd
Item for my brekefast in the morwenyng	ijjd

Summa vij li ijs xjd ob

Item payed to Roberd Deane as it appereth by his bille here to annexed	iiijs iiijd
Item payed to Comberford and to Broun as it appereth by Comberford bille here to annexed	xvijs iiijd
Item payed to Cook of the eschequer as it appereth by his bills here to annexed	xxs

Summa xlijs viijd

Termus Trin' Anno supradict'

In primis for an al'distr' for Clement Paston	xiijd
Item for bote hyre with William Paston to Westm'	ijjd
Item at dyner with William Paston Comberford and Harry Wyndesore	vjd
Item in bote hyre fro Suthwerk to Westm'	ld
Item to Clough and Forster to labour the Jur' for Clement Paston ayens Seynclo	vjs viijd
Item to the underschreve for makyng of the tales after ther advys	vjs viijd
Item to lytylton and Comberford for ther counsell a bouthe the travers	xiijs iiijd
Item to Jeney and Grenefeld for the same	vjs viijd
Item at the Taverne for the same	vd
Item for bote hyre in to Suthwerk and a yen	jd

EXPENSES OF THOMAS PLAYTER

Item payed to a baylly to warne the Jurr' ayens Senclo	ijs iiijd
Item for a warent	iiijd
Item for paper	ijjd
Item for iij parchemynt skynnys to wryte the travers uppon	ixd
Item yeven to Glouceter clerkes for ther dyner to serche if any londes were ever sesed by fors of any comysson that yed oute of the eschequer in the nature of a diem clausit extremum	xxd
Item for a copy of the restor' a yens men of cotton	ijs iiijd
Item for iij billes of baille in the kynges bench for the same men	xijd
Item for the marchall fee for hem iij	xijd
Item delyvered to Clough for to drynk with the Jurr' ayens Seynclo and to enforme hem	ijs
Item to Jon Jeney for the men of Cotton	ijs iiijd
Item to Croxton for the entre of the emperlans for men of Cotton	ijs iiijd
Item to Grenefeld for makyng of the office for the place in Suthwerk	ijs iiijd
Item to his clerk for wrytyng of the same	iiijd
Item for a copy of the hool record ayens Senclo	ijs
Item to William Jeney to over se it	ijs iiijd
Item to Gough to bryng the rolles of iij termes to serche for Wyngfeldes prevy seall	xijd
Item to xij Jurrors which passed ayens seynclo	xls
Item to ij Jurrors which appered and were tryed owte	ijs iiijd
Item for the Jurrors dyner	vjs viiijd
Item to Jon Jeney to geve evydens in the same mater	ijs iiijd
Item to Clough	xxd
Item for my horsemete xvij dayes	vjs
(Item to Statham clerk for a copy of the statut of Lancastre <i>struck through</i>)	iiijd
	Summa vj li viijs iiijd
Item payed to Cook of the eschequer as it appereth by his bille	xs
Item to Comberford as it appereth by his bylle	ixs xd
Item to Thomas Harryson for mich' and hill' termes as it appereth by his bille	xvijs ijd
	Summa xxxvijs
Item for my expens' at London to tarye for dyvers besynesse for the exec' of my M. Fastolf	
In primis for myn hors a fortenygth in hay lytter and provendre	vs
Item to Ric' Loy for his labour abowte the office	ijs iiijd
Item in bote hyre to Westm' to speke with my lord of Wynchester	ijd
Item when I rode toward Cannterbury to speke with Thomas Ive at Derteford al nygth	xijd
Item at Rouchester for taryans al day and al nygth after Thomas Ive be cause he was comyng	ijs
Item at Derteford homward in boytyng and for my dyner	viijd
Item at the Taverne with Thomas Ive	ijd
Item for my comons vj wekes and a half	xvjs iijd
Item for iij repastes after I was owte of comons	xjd
Item for my costes fro London to Norwic	ijs iiijd
	Summa xxxijs xd
	Summa total' xxxj li xiijs ijd
Item for my fee for all this yere	v marc and a gowne
Summa total' cum feodo xxxv li xd and a gowne	
Of this summa I ress' of maister Paston for William Paston costes and myn to London Hill' terme anno xxxviiij	xiijs iiijd
Item ress' of Christofer Hanson the same terme	xls
Item ress' of Plumer the same terme as it appereth by my bylle endeded	viiiji
Item ress' of Sir Thomas Howys for my costes to Bury and thetford for the mater a yens John Andrew	xxs
Item ress' of Sir Thomas Howys for my costes to London to speke with my lord Chaunceler and other lordes	xxs
Item ress' of Sir Thomas Pasche terme	xls
Item ress' a nother tyme the same terme	xxvjs viiijd
Item ress' of Sir Thomas another tyme the same terme	v marc
Item ress' of Plummer trynyte terme as it appereth by my bylle endeded	xls

Item res of Sir Thomas Howys trynyte terme
 Item ress' of the said Sir Thomas the same terme
 Item ress' of the sayd Sir Thomas the same terme whan I rode into Sussex

xls
 xxvjs viijd
 xs

Sum of al my resseytes is xxv li iijs iiijd

And so is owyng to me besyde my gowne ix li. xvj s. ij d.

[another hand at foot]

m^d q^d sol' sunt per Thomam Howys Cleric' de hac billa ut patet supra p. recepto xij li vijs vjd

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NOTES

- ¹ Davis 1976, no. 573, which, however, should be dated 20 July 1459.
- ² These accounts have been noted before by McFarlane (1973, 117), who set out the entries relating to bribes to jurors. To these might properly be added the 6s. 8d. for the jurors' dinner, undoubtedly their hearty reward for reaching the right decision. McFarlane also made use of the entry 'for wyn at Plomers hous dyvers times to harken of W.W. conceytes' (McFarlane 1957 (1), 203).
- ³ 'And so I endure *inter egenos ut servus ad aratrum*' (Worcester to John Paston, c. 1454; Davis 1976, 102). On the identities of some of these men, see below, p. 44.
- ⁴ For which see Hawkyard 1968, 1–67.
- ⁵ E.g. Davis 1976, nos. 558, 559, 566, 571 and 572.
- ⁶ The accumulation is displayed in McFarlane 1957 (2), 91–116.
- ⁷ Davis 1971, 160. Almost better than any other, this letter demonstrates the historian's debt to Professor Davis. Gairdner (1904), III, 204), following John Fenn, published no more than the celebrated last sixth of the letter, the description of Lord Rivers' dressing down at Calais by the Earls of Salisbury, Warwick and March, a strange encounter for a future son- and father-in-law. That passage, isolated from its context of matters demonstrably of greater moment to the Pastons, has, together with other similar instances, misled historians into thinking of the family as more political than it was. The availability of the whole text furnishes a different picture.
- ⁸ A list of money and goods (including a finger of St John the Baptist) which Yelverton had from the Fastolf estate is contained in Magdalen College, Oxford, Fastolf Paper 70.
- ⁹ Davis 1971, 258–59; Davis 1976, 219–20.
- ¹⁰ E.g. Davis 1971, 98, 264, 274, 280–81, 321, and Playter's own letters (Davis 1976, nos. 625, 628, 641, 654, 673–74, 677, the last a splendid business letter). William Paston's letter of 4 April 1461 with the news of Towton and its casualties is in Playter's hand (Davis 1971, 165).
- ¹¹ Gairdner 1904, IV, 227.
- ¹² Davis 1976, 554–61, especially p. 556 where the editor points out the similarities of wording between this return and that of the Fastolf inquisition *post mortem* six years earlier, in which Playter had been just as effectively involved.
- ¹³ Davis 1971, 274, 363.
- ¹⁴ Davis 1976, 289.
- ¹⁵ Davis 1971, 357.
- ¹⁶ Davis 1971, no. 97.
- ¹⁷ Davis 1971, 455, 588, 458, 461–62, 466–67, 469, 470 (lines 9–10). Sir John put the precarious position of the head of a family, whose womenfolk were both well-provided for and long-lived, succinctly to his mother: 'My fadre, God have hys sowle, lefte me scant xl li. londe in rest, and ye lefte me as pleasythe yow, and my graunt dame at hyre plesure. Thus maye I have lytell hope off the worlde.' (Davis 1971, 466).
- ¹⁸ He was particularly close to William Paston, John I's independent brother, whose letters we have seen him writing in 1460–61; '*vestro dilecto amico*' as Friar Brackley called him in a letter to William in 1460 (Davis 1976, 355). Playter was still writing William's documents as late as 1474 (Davis 1971, no. 95).

EXPENSES OF THOMAS PLAYTER

- ¹⁹ For the wardship of young William Playter, see *Calendar of Fine Rolls, 1471–85*, 200–01. Co-feoffee and co-guardian with Thomas Banyard was another lawyer from a local legal family, Edmund Jenny of Knodishall. Jenny was undoubtedly the moving spirit behind the application for the grant, which cost 200 marks, since it was his daughter Jane whom William Playter married.
- ²⁰ *Calendar of Close Rolls, 1447–54*, 69.
- ²¹ *Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1467–77*, 408; *1476–85*, 112.
- ²² For these three see Wedgwood 1936, 458, 827, 864.
- ²³ Davis 1971, 359.
- ²⁴ Blomefield 1739, i, 688.
- ²⁵ Davis 1971, 612.
- ²⁶ Suckling 1846, i, 82.
- ²⁷ Uggheshall, which features with Sotterley in the inquisition *post mortem* of Edmund, Thomas Sotterley's eldest brother whom Thomas succeeded in 1429, does not appear in the latter's own inquisition (P.R.O., C139/37/10; C139/42/72; C140/25/33). It does however appear in that of Thomas Playter (P.R.O., C140/72/62).
- ²⁸ P.R.O., C140/25/33.
- ²⁹ P.R.O., P.C.C. 12 Legge (Probate 11/7). Thomas Cheyne was a minor whose wardship was granted to Thomas Frowick, one of Thomas Sotterley's feoffees (*Calendar of Fine Rolls, 1461–71*, 213; Sotterley court rolls 1430–1459, S.R.O.(I.), HD 330/3).
- ³⁰ Uggheshall was the jointure of Jane Jenny, wife of William Playter: see his will, N.R.O., Norwich Consistory Court, 10 Cooke.
- ³¹ P.R.O., C140/72/61 (inquisition at Bungay, 17 November 1479). It was a valuable estate, being assessed at £10 *per annum*. Tannington is unequivocally called Tatyngton in this inquisition, as on her brass.
- ³² P.R.O., P.C.C. 12 Legge (Probate 11/7).
- ³³ The century's most severe attack of plague occurred in this year (Gottfried 1978, 45).
- ³⁴ P.R.O., C140/72/62, m.2.
- ³⁵ The will is dated 20 September and was proved on 25 October 1479: P.R.O., P.C.C. 12 Legge (Probate 11/7).
- ³⁶ 'We find the armorial bearings of Playter still sparkling with their lustrous azure bendlets in a south window of the nave in Sotterley church, beneath which shield is placed the date MCCCCIxx' (Suckling 1846, i, 81). The font, ruined screen and stalls are also possibly Playter's gift.
- ³⁷ Suckling 1846, i, 81. Only a fragment of the inscription now exists.
- ³⁸ It forms the lower left panel in an otherwise modern window. For an illustration, see Suckling 1846, i, 82. In Suckling's time, however, the panel was in a different position: 'As this group occupies the central bay, or division, of the window, it is not probable that the effigy of the wife with her daughters was ever placed with it' (Suckling 1846, i, 83).
- ³⁹ For such conventional portrayals of progeny, see du Boulay 1970, 90–91. These memorial images reveal just how dominant the ideal of the nuclear family had become by the 15th century.

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Unpublished MSS: Abbreviations

- B.L. British Library.
P.C.C. Prerogative Court of Canterbury.
P.R.O. Public Record Office.
S.R.O.(I.) Suffolk Record Office, Ipswich Branch.