Margaret M Condon and Evan T. Jones (eds.), 'Bristol 1470: Particulars of Account of Richard Walwyn and Richard Drewes, customers, 18 August to 4 November 1470: introduction' (University of Bristol, Research Data Repository, 2019)[1]

Text and Comment

This short account spans the reigns of two kings, although the brief readeption of Henry VI is not recorded or recognised in the heading of the document. Edward IV had fled the country on 2 October 1470, half-way through the period of the account, being replaced by a restored Henry VI.[2] The earl of Worcester, who had nominated Richard Walwyn for the office of customer of Bristol in February 1468, was executed by the incoming regime 18 October 1470, two weeks after Edward's flight.[3] Despite this association with Worcester, Walwyn continued in office throughout the readeption. However, his fellow customer, Richard Drewes, was replaced by letters patent of 27 October 1470 by Nicholas Warynges. A Staffordshire man, Warynges' appointment as controller of Bristol in 1469, during the earl of Warwick's brief ascendancy, suggests that he may have been part of Warwick's affinity. This would have made him acceptable to the incoming regime.[4] When one of the customers left office, their account had to be closed down and a new one opened. This change in office holders explains why the accounting period was so short.

The audit of the account is likely to have been delayed by the political disruption of the following months, which saw Edward IV return from exile in March 1471, seize back the throne, and sanction the murder of Henry VI. The audit was heard in the Exchequer in Michaelmas term 1471.[5] Like the four immediately preceding accounts (covering the period 16 April 1468 to 18 August 1470), audited the same term, the customers made their account 'without controlment'.[6] Daniel Sheldon, a former customer of Bristol, had been appointed as controller 24 October 1470, by the readeption government of Henry VI. Sheldon was presumably the replacement for John Donne, re-appointed as controller 9 November 1469 after Edward IV had reasserted his authority in the autumn of that year. As with the changeover between Drewes and Warynges, there would have been a slight time-lapse between the delivery of Sheldon's warrant into Chancery and his take-up of office. Donne would thus have been responsible for most, and probably all, of the controlment maintained as a check on Walwyn and Drewes' account.[7] In any event, audit 'without controlment' seems to have been the norm for the majority of ports making accounts for the last years of Edward IV's first reign; whilst the authority of the readeption-appointed controllers was not recognised by Edward IV's Exchequer after the king's restoration in 1471.[8]

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[1] The National Archives: Public Record Office, UK [TNA:PRO], E122/19/7. This transcription is an output of the 'Cabot Project' (University of Bristol, 2009-2019), funded by Gretchen Bauta, a private Canadian benefactor and others.

[2] C. D. Ross, *Edward IV* (London, 1974), p. 153, correcting the widely quoted date of 29 September. Henry VI was re-crowned 13 October 1470 but again became Edward's prisoner 11 April 1471.

[3] Ross, *Edward IV*, p. 155; *Cal. Fine Rolls 1461-71*, pp. 198-200. The repayment of the earl's loans to Edward IV had absorbed most of the Bristol customs revenues from 22 April 1468 to August 1470. Walwyn's brief account for 16-22 April 1468 was a 'nil' return, declaring that no ships had entered the port.

[4] *Cal. Fine Rolls 1461-71*, pp. 198-200, 270-1, 274; *Cal. Patent Rolls 1467-77*, p. 167.

[5] TNA: PRO, E356/22, m. 8r; E368/244, States and Views, Mich 11 Edw IV, rot. 5.

[6] TNA: PRO, E159/248, Recorda Mich 11 Edw IV, rot 2r.

[7] First appointed 1462, *Cal Patent Rolls* 1461-67, p. 188; *Cal. Patent Rolls 1467-77*, pp. 167, 230; TNA: PRO, E159/249, Recorda Mich 12 Edw IV, rot. 11d. It is not known whether John Donne, controller, was the same as the John Donne said to be deceased before August 1471, *Cal. Patent Rolls 1467-77*, p. 274.

[8] Audit with or without controlment is most easily traced through the multi-volume *Calendars of Enrolled Accounts (E356)* prepared by Stuart Jenks for the List and Index Society.

Unlike the accounts for 22 April 1468-14 November 1469, the Exchequer allowed the two customers quick discharge or '*quietus*', since their expenditure was greater than their receipts. This was in part because of their payment of arrears of fees to Richard Choke, one of the king's justices: the repayments to Worcester having taken priority in previous accounting periods.

Trade

Unusually for a Bristol account of this period, the ledger contains no references at all to Spain, whether of voyages, ships, or merchants. Political instability and Channel piracy are possible explanations. Indeed, there is evidence that a Breton master named in this account (William Bergeyne) was a victim of recent piracy, although it is unclear whether it involved the *St Roinon* of Quimper, which entered Bristol on 19 October.[9]

The ledger records two sailing to Lisbon, both of English ships; and the entry into the port of the *Anthony* of Bristol on her return from Iceland on 10 September, laden with stockfish belonging to John Foster, her owner, and John Gregory, another Bristol merchant. A Spring/Summer voyage to Iceland was a regular feature of the *Anthony's* employment, typically followed by a trip south to Gascony, to fetch home wine. Such was the importance of this trade that the political drama of the following month was not enough to stop the *Anthony* from being dispatched to Bordeaux on 10 October, just a week after Edward IV's flight into exile.[10] In other respects the account is unremarkable, and the commodities listed typical of trading patterns in the port in late summer/early autumn.

Editorial practice

The transcription into Microsoft Excel follows the pattern set by Evan Jones for his ESRC funded project on Ireland-Bristol trade in the sixteenth century.[11] These conventions are summarised in the introduction to the account for 1461. In particular, surnames and ships' names follow the manuscript; quantities of any particular commodity have, as far as practicable, been standardised to a single unit, calculated if necessary to two decimal places. Wine and cloth of assize have been notionally valued at £4 and £2 respectively, unless specifically valued in the manuscript. All entries in italics, including extensions of abbreviations, have been supplied by the editors.

The presence of editorial comments is marked by a red triangle in the upper corner of any cell, and appears on mouse hover.

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[9] Less than two weeks after the close of this account, letters of safe conduct were issued for the *Marie* of Brittany for the ransom of the Breton William Bergeyne and a ship's crew 'lately taken' on the high seas: E. E. W. Veale, *The Great Red Book of Bristol, pt II* (Bristol Record Society, viii, 1938), pp. 132-3; Safe conduct dated 13 November 1470. For a recent study of piracy, noticing the period 1468-74 as a period of especial danger, and highlighting also the danger 'hotspots' of Fowey and Brittany, Susan Rose, 'Violence at Sea in the Late Fifteenth Century', in Evan T. Jones and Richard Stone, eds., *The World of the Newport Medieval Ship: Trade, Politics and Shipping in the Mid-Fifteenth Century* (Cardiff, 2018), pp. 57-74.

[10] With Henry VI's restoration, France became friendly rather than enemy territory. This is unlikely to have had a significant impact on the timing or nature of the voyage, however.

[11] Databases at http://www.bris.ac.uk/Depts/History/Ireland/datasets.htm (accessed 29 January 2014); these were reformatted and published with indexes and abbreviated glossaries as Susan Flavin and Evan Jones, *Bristol's Trade with Ireland and the Continent 1503-1601* (Bristol Record Society, vol. 61, 2009). Editorial conventions are repeated at pp. xxii-xxv.