

Margaret M Condon and Evan T. Jones (eds.), ‘Bristol 1471: Particulars of Account of Richard Walwyn and Nicholas Warynges, customers, 29 March 1471 to 29 September 1471: Introduction’ (University of Bristol, Research Data Repository, 2019)¹

Text and Comment

This is the second of three or more ledgers kept in succession by Richard Walwyn and Nicholas Warynges as they served as customers of Bristol. The first ledger, no longer extant, recorded their receipts for a five-month period during the time of Henry VI’s readeption (generally dated as Sept/Oct 1470 to 11 April 1471).² The second ledger, edited here, is their particulars of account from 29 March 1471 to Michaelmas (29 September) 1471. Their later ledgers, from 29 September 1471 to 20 November 1472, have not survived. This is especially unfortunate since, as Eleanor Carus-Wilson long ago noticed, there is a gap in the enrolled accounts for Bristol customs between Michaelmas 1471 and November 1472.³ The reason for the gap is unknown, and is only partially explained by a privy seal writ of 10 February 1473. This ordered the Exchequer court to cease process against Walwyn and Warynges to compel them to render account ‘unto the tyme ye haue otherwise in commaundement from us’.⁴ In effect, the king withdrew the accounts from Exchequer process, for reasons that are not revealed. The interruption of normal process and audit is better documented for the next major gap in the Bristol enrolments, from December 1472 to Michaelmas 1477, and is first signalled by a similar writ, of 20 November 1473, ordering the Exchequer to cease process against the then collectors, Thomas Croft and John Langston.⁵

The heading of the 1471 customers’ ledger is in the hand of the manuscript and is conventionally worded, giving the outside dates of the period of account as 29 March ‘11 Edward IV’ (1471) to the following Michaelmas (29 September). The whole heading has, however, been squeezed into the top margin of the first page, which suggests it is a later addition to the text. Moreover a recently discovered controlment, commencing November 1470, overlaps the ledger, containing two additional entries for 30 March and 17 April.⁶ The choice of 29 March for the commencement of the present ledger can be read as a political statement that relates to Bristol’s individual circumstances, but which arose from national politics. The accounting period for most ports for which enrolments survive seems to have been treated as an unbroken run from October/November 1470 to May or June 1471.⁷ Bristol is

¹ The National Archives, UK [TNA], E122/19/8. This transcription is an output of the ‘Cabot Project’ (University of Bristol, 2009-2019), funded by Gretchen Bauta, a private Canadian benefactor. We are indebted to Professor Wendy Childs for assistance with Iberian names. This transcription was originally completed in 2014.

² See Margaret M. Condon and Evan T. Jones, eds., ‘Bristol 1470-71: Particulars of Account of Daniel Sheldon, controller, 4 November 1470 to 29 March 1471: Introduction’ (University of Bristol, Research Data Repository, 2019) <https://doi.org/10.5523/bris.ok0gh719ty9z2qrgbxpub6fe>.

³ E. M. Carus-Wilson, *The Overseas Trade of Bristol in the Later Middle Ages* (Bristol Record Society, vii, 1937), p. 295. The make-up of the original roll, E356/22, suggests deliberate omission rather than loss of parchment. The recent discovery of a controller’s account (dated on internal evidence to Easter to September 1472) goes some way towards filling the gap in the enrolled accounts.

⁴ TNA: PRO, E159/249, Recorda, Hil 12 Edw IV, rot 5 (IMG 416 at <http://aalt.law.uh.edu/> under document reference and date).

⁵ For the writ, E159/250, Recorda, Mich 13 Edw IV, rot 9d (IMG 622 at <http://aalt.law.uh.edu/> under document reference and date).

⁶ The *Valentine* of Drogheda of the customers’ particulars (entering 30 March 1471) is called the *Katherine* by the controller, a difference noted by the auditor. In other respects, however, the entries match.

⁷ Stuart Jenks, *The Enrolled Customs Accounts (E356, E372, E364), Part 9* (List and Index Society, vol. 341, 2010) and Stuart Jenks, *The Enrolled Customs Accounts (E356, E372, E364), Part 10* (List and Index Society, vol. 344, 2012), under port and date. Hull was an exception, because of the death of a customer, triggering a new account from February 1471. In June 1471 sixteen new controllers were appointed, mostly replacing Henry VI’s appointees: *Cal. Patent Rolls, 1467-1477*, pp. 268-9.

different. Edward IV, whom the restored Henry VI had supplanted, returned from exile 14 March 1471. He re-established his power by both political and military means over the next few weeks.⁸ The commencing date of the Bristol particulars reflects this process. Edward IV, like Henry IV before him, at first purported only to be claiming the duchy that was his by right of inheritance: in Edward's case, the duchy of York. On 29 March 1471 his southward journey reached the walled city of Coventry, which the earl of Warwick had made his temporary headquarters. Edward challenged Warwick to emerge with his forces and to do battle, in effect to try Edward's right as king. When Warwick refused Edward withdrew to the nearby town of Warwick. There, abandoning the pretence that he was only interested in regaining the duchy of York, 'he was received as Kynge, and so made his proclamations from that tyme forthe warde'.⁹ So 29 March 1471 was the date on which Edward IV reasserted his right to the throne, although he did not obtain possession of either the person of Henry VI, or of the great seal, until his entry to London on 11 April. The Bristol account thus reflects, retrospectively, the partisan assertion that Edward's regained authority dates from 29 March. This was particularly significant in Bristol because, despite Edward IV's victory over Warwick and the Lancastrian army at Barnet on 14 April, the town admitted and materially aided the forces of Queen Margaret, wife of Henry VI, when they appeared outside the city around the end of April. Indeed, the city's recorder died fighting for Margaret at the Battle of Tewkesbury; and four of Bristol's most prominent merchants [who] 'haue largely offended agains vs' were among those initially excluded from the pardon that Edward IV offered to the city once he had retaken the throne.¹⁰ On 29 March, and probably for at least two to three weeks after, Warynges and Walwyn would still have been acting under the authority they had received under the great seal of Henry VI, even if Walwyn (but not Warynges) was originally a Yorkist appointee.

As already noticed in the discussion of the Bristol controller's particulars for 1470-71, the audit of the first two accounts of Walwyn and Warynges, from November 1470 to Michaelmas 1471, ignores the interruption of Henry VI's restoration. Both accounts date Walwyn's authority as customer from his earlier patent of 17 February 1468, ignoring his reappointment under Henry VI. Warynges' letters patent from Henry VI were regarded as invalid. He received a new patent 29 May 1471 – although the enrolment of the account for March to September 1471 mistakenly cites the patent's date as 29 March.¹¹ Warynges' letters patent give no indication that they applied retrospectively: but in practice he seems to have been allowed his full fee as customer from 29 March to Michaelmas, *pro rata* on half a year and two days.¹²

The impact of politics on the auditing of the customs would also be apparent in the subsequent account. When the particulars for March to Michaelmas 1471 were audited, in Trinity term 1472, the account was said to be without controlment until 18 June 1471, and

⁸ Summarised in context in Condon and Jones, 'Bristol 1470-71', pp.1-2.

⁹ John Bruce, ed. *Historie of the Arrivall of Edward IV... 1471* (Camden Soc., 1838), reprinted Keith Dockwray, *Three Chronicles of the Reign of Edward IV* (Gloucester, 1988), p. 155.

¹⁰ Condon and Jones, 'Bristol 1470-71'; Francis Bickley, ed., *The Little Red Book of Bristol*, vol. II (Bristol, 1900), pp. 130-1.

¹¹ Condon and Jones, 'Bristol 1470-71'; TNA, E356/22, rot. 8d. Both the Chancery Fine Rolls, and the enrolment of Warynges' account for November to December 1472, give 29 May as the date of the patent. Since Edward IV did not have access to the great seal in March 1471, this is almost certainly correct. The Treasurer's warrant that authorised Warynges' patent also had 29 May as the date of delivery into Chancery – and, unsurprisingly, does not name a predecessor in office, since in practice this was Warynges himself, C81/1635, no. 59.

¹² TNA, E356/22, rot. 8d. The official rate of remuneration was set long before the fifteenth century at ten marks (£6 13s 4d) per annum, to be divided between the two customers. That this was a joint fee is made clear both by the mathematics of the accounts, and by occasional references such as that for the port of Plymouth in 1496, where the port's rather lower annual rate of five marks was said to be 'inter se' – between them: TNA, E122/163/6. In 1471 the fee *pro rata* was 67s 4½d for the Bristol customers, and 27s 3d for the controller, who was paid *pro rata* on 100s per year.

then by the controlment of Richard Alberton from that date until Michaelmas. In effect, the Exchequer had refused to acknowledge the authority or legitimacy of the previous controller, Daniel Sheldon, because he had been appointed by Henry VI. Alberton, who had previously been appointed as controller in the port in 1461 in similar circumstances of regime change, was again made controller on 5 June 1471. He was one of sixteen controllers of customs appointed to English ports that month, and served until February 1472.¹³ The refusal to acknowledge Henry VI's controllers may have been more general, since customs accounts covering the period of Henry VI's readeption and the early months of Edward's restoration were, for a number of ports, audited 'without controlment'.¹⁴ The status of Alberton's predecessor in office is discussed in the context of the controller's particulars for 1470-71. Sheldon's accounts were continued beyond 29 March 1471, but he was not recognised nor reappointed by Edward IV. His rolls were returned into the Exchequer by the prior of St James, Bristol, in response to a writ of *dedimus potestatem*, and Sheldon himself was neither present for the audit nor paid a fee as controller.¹⁵ However, the customers' ledger for March-September 1471, edited here, shows careful comparison against the records of both controllers, Alberton and Sheldon; and in a near-illegible auditor's note remarks the end of Sheldon's responsibility against the entry for 4 July.¹⁶

The collectors' ledger begins, uniquely, with an invocation to the sacred names of Jesus and Mary.¹⁷ The ledger is compiled with a degree of carelessness generally uncharacteristic of the Bristol accounts. The abbreviations that indicate status – denizen, alien, or of Spain, denizen, are frequently omitted, and have been added with carets. An entry for the shipmaster Richard Blake, one of a line of Bristol/Minehead mariners regularly trading through the port, shows a deletion of his denizen status and the surprising substitution of 'alien', with an additional charge for customs as well as poundage on his import of herring.¹⁸ The final entry in the ledger, for the Bristol ship the *Mary Bird* or *Bridde*, which arrived from Bordeaux on 27 September 1471, two days before the close of the account, was found on audit to be defective. Having compared it to Alberton's controlment roll, the barons of the Exchequer determined that the customers' entry contained significant omissions, with items amounting to 43% of the value of the ship's cargo being left out. They thus ordered that the account be corrected. In part this was accomplished by squeezing in an entry for John Godard between the start of the entry, which listed the shipping details, and the first merchant entry. This was the record for William Bird/Bridde, the ship's owner.¹⁹ It seems that adding in all the other missing entries, which could have been taken from the controlment, was felt to be impractical at this stage, or perhaps just viewed as unnecessary detail.²⁰ Whatever the reason, the exchequer clerks merely provided a summary of the other missing goods. At the very end of the account, after the determination which summarised the duties charged by categories of goods and merchant status, the clerks recorded the presence on the *Mary Bridde* of 1.75 tuns wine, which was subject to 'tunnage', and merchandise to the value of £237 6s. 8d, which was subject to 'poundage'.²¹ That the

¹³ TNA, E356/22, rot. 8d; *Cal. Patent Rolls 1467-77*, pp. 268-9. Alberton had previously served as controller in the port 8 October 1453 to 28 November 1454; 3 June 1455 to 25 November 1458; and again from 1 August 1460, *Cal. Patent Rolls 1452-61*, pp. 146, 201, 202, 328, 459, 590; he was reappointed 25 April 1461, serving until June 1462, *Cal. Patent Rolls 1461-67*, p. 12; TNA, E356/21, rot. 31d.

¹⁴ Jenks, *Enrolled Accounts*, passim.

¹⁵ Condon and Jones, 'Bristol 1470-71', pp.3-5.

¹⁶ TNA: PRO, E122/19/8, fo. 3v.

¹⁷ 'I M' : TNA, E122/19/8, fo. 1r.

¹⁸ TNA: PRO, E122/19/8, fo. 5v.

¹⁹ TNA: PRO, E122/19/8, fos. 7r, v.

²⁰ This was despite the fact that the book contained a further three blank folios that had already been ruled.

²¹ The additional revenue for which the customers had to answer was therefore 5s 4d for tonnage, and £11 17s 4d poundage.

discrepancies between the two accounts were noted in such detail demonstrates that the Exchequer clerks were diligent in comparing the customers' ledger to the controlment, as was expected. The essential purpose of this comparison was to detect discrepancies that might be a result of fraud.²² In this case, however, the discrepancies were so great and so obvious that it seems more likely that the clerk who produced the fair copy of the ledger for submission to the Exchequer had simply missed out a block of entries.

Spanish ships are more in evidence in the ledger than those of Portugal, a trend that would increase in the course of the decade.²³ As in the previous account, and that for 1472, shipments include loadings by several London merchants not usually found sending goods through Bristol. In other respects commodities imported and exported are fairly typical of the port and season.

Editorial Practice

All entries in italics have been supplied by the editors. This includes extensions of abbreviations.

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.²⁴ 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.

The presence of editorial comments is marked by a red triangle in the upper corner of any cell, and appears on mouse hover. Comments on discrepancies in value/quantity have been attached to the 'commodity' where they are more clearly visible.

²² For the accounting process, see Stuart Jenks, *The London Customs Accounts 1472/3-1476/77* (Quellen und Darstellungen zur Hansischen Geschichte, Hansischer Geschichtsverein, vol. 74, Cologne, 2018), pp. xxiv-xxxi, xlv-lx. A particularly flagrant example of discrepancies between the particulars of Bristol's customers and controller at an earlier date is discussed *ibid.*, pp. xlvi-xlvii.

²³ Wendy R. Childs, *Anglo-Castilian Trade in the Later Middle Ages* (Manchester, 1978), pp. 52-70, 108-77; Wendy R. Childs, *Trade and Shipping in the Medieval West: Portugal, Castile and England* (Porto, 2013); R. Stone, 'Bristol's overseas trade in the later fifteenth century: the evidence of the 'particular' customs accounts' and Hilario Casado Alonso and Flávio Miranda, 'The Iberian Economy and Commercial Exchange with Northwestern Europe in the later Middle Ages', both in Evan T. Jones and Richard Stone, eds., *The World of the Newport Ship* (University of Wales Press, 2018), pp. 181-228. In addition to the one named Lisbon ship, the account includes an unnamed ship identified as the 'Carvilo of Calvo'. A 'carvilho' is the distinctive Portuguese ship type anglicised as carvel. 'Calvo' may be an indication of ownership in this case, rather than a reference to the ship's homeport. It could possibly be the property of Francisco Calvo, nephew of Marco Lomellini, who was in Lisbon in 1468 and naturalized as Portuguese in 1474: Virginia Rau, 'Italian merchants in Portugal in the XVth Century' in *Studi in onore di Armando Sapori*, (2 vols, Milan, 1957), vol.i, p. 724.

²⁴ 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.