

Margaret M. Condon and Evan T. Jones (eds), 'Bristol 1509-10: Particulars of account of a controller of customs: Further supplement: Introduction' (University of Bristol, Research Data Repository, 2024)¹

The account edited here is a single membrane that was found in a large bundle of unsorted and undated customs miscellanea. As can be seen from the photograph at the end of this introduction, it has been damaged by both damp and insect attack. A heading or memorandum of three or four lines was written above the first entry, for the *Mary* of Gloucester, but the parchment has been comprehensively scraped with a knife to erase the heading.² Two parallel lines of stitching holes suggests that there may have been another piece of parchment above.³ The foot of the membrane is clearly marked with a roman numeral, 'j' (i.e. 1). The membrane can be confidently identified as a Bristol account both from its format and from the merchants and ships involved.

In dating this account, we have proceeded conservatively. We were aware that that it might be a stray from the accounting year 1509-10, from which we have already published two parts of a single rotulet that had become separated from each other – one being the head and larger part of the rotulet and the second being a torn fragment that could be matched physically, as well as textually, to the bottom of it. That the current stray customs particulars is another part of the 1509-10 controlment is less clear cut. As will be seen below, however, three coincidences of dates with the previously verified accounts makes it extremely probable that the membrane is another rotulet of that account.

Dating was potentially hampered by the absence of parallel dated material, and by the fact that the account itself names only two *naviculae* (small ships) with the remaining vessels being *batellae* (boats). *Batellae* (seagoing vessels of c.5-30 tons burden) are much more difficult to trace through the records over time. One *navicula*, the *George* of Bristol, exited for Ireland on 23 October under Walter Oge, a master who is otherwise unknown. Early sixteenth century accounts yield several references to a Bristol vessel called the *George*. A *navicula* called the *George* of Bristol was mentioned three times in the full-year customs account for Michaelmas 1503-4, trading to northern Spain and Bordeaux, carrying goods on each occasion that belonged to John Colas.⁴ Based on its lading, the ship was of at least 31 tons burden.⁵ The *George* of Bristol is subsequently recorded in a prisage and butlerage account of 1507-8, entering on 4 November 1507, carrying at least 20 tuns of wine.⁶ These details, when set against the date of exit given in the fragment, ruled out 1503, 1504 and 1507 as possible dates for the account. The *George* is not mentioned in a Bristol customs ledger of 1512-13.⁷ It was, however, numbered among the Bristol vessels listed by the port's customers in January 1513 in response to an enquiry into shipping in the port. This survey identified the *George* of Bristol, owned by John Colas, as one of the 'Smale vessels which ys not redy to do service'. Since all

¹ The National Archives [TNA], E122/174/3 (part). This transcription is an output of the 'Cabot Project' (University of Bristol, 2009-).

² Some individual letters are legible with the aid of ultra-violet light, but it has not been possible to read whole words or make sense of the text. A different light spectrum might be more successful. The heading is almost invisible with the naked eye.

³ The lines run close together across the width of the parchment, above the erased heading.

⁴ Susan Flavin and Evan T. Jones (eds), *Bristol's Trade with Ireland and the Continent 1503-1601: The evidence of the Exchequer customs accounts* (Bristol Record Society, 61, 2009), pp. 72, 76, 99 from TNA, E122/199/1: masters Owen John and David Nono. Apart from a single-month fragment of the mid-1490s, there is a ten-year gap between the customs ledgers of 1492-3 and 1503-4 and then a further gap, apart from a single membrane of a controlment for 1509-10, until the full year ledger of 1512-13, TNA, E122/21/1.

⁵ Evan T. Jones, 'The *Matthew* of Bristol and the financiers of John Cabot's 1497 voyage to North America', *English Historical Review*, 121 (2006), p. 786.

⁶ TNA, E101/84/18, m. 9.

⁷ TNA, E122/21/1.

vessels of greater than 60 tons burden *were* considered large enough for naval service, it seems likely the *George* had a portage of 30-50 tons burden. That is consistent with the *George's* lading in 1503-4, when it was carrying goods belonging to John Colas. The coincidence of the ship name, type, size and port of registration, combined with an association with John Colas, suggests the *George* listed in the fragment is the same one recorded in 1503-4 and in 1513.⁸ It seems likely however that the *batella* the *George* of Bristol named in 1516-17, voyaging only to Ireland or across the Severn, was a different vessel.⁹

Mentions of two of the small boats in other Bristol customs accounts supports a date range of c.1508-15 for the fragment. The *Christopher* of Longney, under the shipmaster John Carter, is recorded in both 1512-13 and 1516.¹⁰ The *James* of Berkeley, under master Henry Hille and carrying goods belonging to John Rogers, was mentioned with the same master in 1512. The vessel is also recorded with goods belonging to John Rogers in 1517, albeit with a different master.¹¹

The other boats named in this customs stray called *James*, *Mary*, and *Kateryn* had common ship names. This means that even if a vessel found in another account has the same name, with the same homeport, it would be unsafe to assume that it is the same vessel. Only if the master is also the same, or some other factor, possibly external, links the accounts, does it become possible to be reasonably sure that the same vessel is being referenced.

The best evidence for dating the new fragment comes from three shipments where calendar dates recorded in the fragment correspond to the same calendar date, relating to the same vessel, in either the previously dated 1509-10 controlment, or the prisage and butlerage account for 1509-10. Two of the oddities already noted for this year are, firstly, that two controllers were held responsible for the validity of the account, and secondly that the customs paid on a given shipment were not all recorded under a single entry, as would normally be the case. Goods from a single shipment were in some instances recorded in different parts of the same account.¹² Why this was so is not entirely clear, but it may be a consequence of there being two controllers for the port during the autumn of 1509: Richard Pole and John Lloyd. Whatever the cause, the advantage of this unusual feature of the account is that in some cases it is possible to match shipments in the new fragment to shipments listed on the extant membrane of the 1509-10 controlment.

The first coincidence of dates relates to the *Julian* of Cardiff, master William Deane. The fragment records the entry of the *Julian* on 19 October. The 1509-10 account also records the entry of the *Julian* of Cardiff, under William Deane, on 19 October.¹³

The second correspondence of dates concerns the *batella* the *Kateryne* of New Ross, under master William Blake. The new fragment records that the vessel entered from Ireland 12 November with a typical cargo of Irish goods that, less usually, included a valuable

⁸ Jones, 'The *Matthew* of Bristol', p. 795.

⁹ See Flavin and Jones, *Bristol's Trade with Ireland and the Continent*, for an edition of the customs particulars, TNA, E122/21/2.

¹⁰ TNA, E122/21/1, fos. 4v, 15r; Flavin and Jones, *Bristol's Trade with Ireland and the Continent*, p. 114.

¹¹ TNA, E122/21/1, fo. 3r; Flavin and Jones, *Bristol's Trade with Ireland and the Continent*, p. 137.

¹² For which see [Margaret M. Condon and Evan T. Jones, 'Bristol 1509-10: Particulars of account of a controller of customs, 29 September 1509 to c.14 January 1510: Introduction'](#), pp. 1-3. The Exchequer's originalia rolls, like the Chancery's patent rolls, do not date Lloyd's patent. It is entered between controller's patents for November (above) and August (below), followed by similar patents for November and December 1509 and February 1510: TNA, E371/275 m. 11 contd.

¹³ [Margaret M. Condon and Evan T. Jones, 'Bristol 1509-10: Particulars of account of a controller of customs, 29 September 1509 to c. 14 January 1510: database'](#) (University of Bristol, Research Data Repository, 2023), from TNA, E122/165/1. The *Julian* then exited for Cardiff 22 October 1509. In 1513 Deane was the master of the *Nicholas* of Cardiff: E122/21/1, fos. 10v, 14r, 15r.

goshawk.¹⁴ The *Kateryne* of New Ross, master William ‘Bak’, is similarly mentioned in the 1509-10 account, entering Bristol from Ireland on 12 November 1509.¹⁵

The third date match is with the 1509-10 prisage and butlerage account for Bristol, rather than the controllers’ account. The fragment records that on 30 October, the *navicula* the *Kateryn* of Berkeley, under master Philip Ketyner, entered from Bordeaux carrying goods belonging to Maurice and Richard Bocher. The ship paid customs on 9 tons of woad, pitch and rosin.¹⁶ By the end of October, a usual cargo for a ship inbound to Bristol from Bordeaux would include wine, which was Gascony’s main export and Bristol’s chief import.¹⁷ The absence of wine recorded on the *Kateryn* would, by itself, suggest that the year was 1509. This is because the collection of tonnage on wine was suspended in England between the accession of Henry VIII on 22 April 1509 and January 1510, when parliament granted the new king the right to collect tonnage on wine for life.¹⁸ As the authors have noted elsewhere, prisage and butlerage continued to be collected in Bristol and other ports, since it did not require parliamentary approval.¹⁹ The butler’s account for Bristol records the arrival of the *Kateryn* of Berkeley on 30 October 1509. Since two tons of wine were taken to prise, the ship itself must have been laden with *at least* twenty tuns of wine belonging to English merchants.²⁰ The prisage account names Maurice Bocher as the master of the *Kateryn*, rather than Philip Ketyner, the master mentioned in the fragment. As noted, Richard and Maurice Bocher were the owners of all the goods listed on the *Kateryn* recorded in the customs fragment. If they also owned all the wine it is possible that Maurice Bocher was recorded erroneously as ‘shipmaster’ by the deputy butler because Bocher was the man with whom the butler dealt.²¹ Bocher is not recorded as a shipmaster on any other occasion and Ketyner was recorded in the 1509-10 controlment as the master of the *Kateryn* of Berkeley when it left Bristol for northern Spain in January 1510.²² Regardless of this discrepancy between the two records, the correspondence in the ship name

¹⁴ Goshawks were as prized and expensive as falcons, and the notion in the *Boke of St Albans* that it was a yeoman’s bird should be taken with a pinch of salt. 11 Hen.VII c. 17, primarily concerned with the illegal trapping of partridge and pheasants, also regulated the sourcing of goshawks and other birds used for hunting. Imports were allowed provided a [customers’] certificate was shown. Ireland was a known place of origin for goshawks: Richard Grassby, ‘The decline of Falconry in Early Modern England’, *Past and Present* no. 157 (1997), pp. 37-62, esp. pp. 37-8, 42-3, 55, 59.

¹⁵ [Margaret M. Condon and Evan T. Jones \(eds.\), ‘Bristol 1509-10: Particulars of account of a controller of customs, 29 September 1509 to c. 14 January 1510: Supplementary Fragment: database’](#) (University of Bristol, Research Data Repository, 2024). ‘Bak’ appears to be a scribal error.

¹⁶ Made up of 7 tons woad and 2 tons of pitch and rosin.

¹⁷ In this period, Bristol obtained nearly all its wine from three places: Bordeaux, Lisbon and the ports of Atlantic Andalusia.

¹⁸ [Margaret M. Condon and Evan T. Jones, ‘Bristol 1509-10: Particulars of account of a controller of customs, 29 September 1509 to c.14 January 1510: Introduction’](#) (University of Bristol, Research Data Repository, 2023), pp. 3-8.

¹⁹ [Margaret M. Condon and Evan T. Jones, ‘Bristol 1509-10: Particulars of account of Nicholas Browne, deputy butler, for prisage and butlerage’](#) (University of Bristol, Explore Bristol Research, 2023), p. 10, from TNA, E101/85/11.

²⁰ Prisage allowed the king to take one tun from any ship carrying at least 10 tuns of denizen-owned wine, and two tuns if the ship carried 20 tuns or more.

²¹ The two Bochers were also the majority shippers on the *Kateryn*’s voyage to northern Spain in 1512-13, TNA, E122/21/1, fos. 1v, 17r.

²² [Margaret M. Condon and Evan T. Jones, ‘Bristol 1509-10: Particulars of account of a controller of customs, 29 September 1509 to c. 14 January 1510: database’](#). This is the last known mention of Ketyner as master of an ocean-going ship sailing from Bristol, although it is possible that he was the ‘Philip Katon’ bringing the *navicula* the *Margaret* from Ireland in 1512: TNA, E122/21/1, fo. 3. Ketyner is best known as the master of the *Gabriel* for that ship’s voyage to the New Found Land in 1504: A. A. Ruddock, ‘The Reputation of Sebastian Cabot’, *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research*, 47 (1974), p. 97. Ketyner’s colleague on the 1504 voyage, Richard Savery, is recorded as a Bristol master at least as late as 1517: Flavin and Jones, *Bristol’s Trade with Ireland and the Continent*, p. 1033.

and port, the calendar day of entry, the association with two (presumably related) merchants, all combined with the issue of the ‘missing’ wine, suggests, very strongly, that the year of entry was 1509.

In conclusion, it has proved possible to match the calendar date of three shipments recorded in the fragment with three shipments in accounts that can be dated firmly to 1509-10. While one such match might be a coincidence, three matches of this sort is extremely unlikely. It thus seems almost certain that the fragment was another part of a controller’s account for the port of Bristol in 1509-10. As far as we are aware, there are no further fragments of this 1509-10 controlment extant, from an account that once totalled twenty-four membranes.²³ Future discoveries from unsorted miscellanea or mis-described documents cannot, of course, be ruled out.

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.²⁴ These conventions are summarised in our introduction to the account for 1461.²⁵ 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. All entries in italics have been supplied by the editors. These include extensions of abbreviations. 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 value/quantity have been attached to the ‘commodity’ where they are more clearly visible.

²³ TNA, E356/24, m. 3d. What is not clear, given the current state of the rotulets, is whether the two membranes of E122/165/1 and E122/174/3 were handed in to the Exchequer separately from the full-year account, or whether they were attached (as in 1486-7) as an anomalous section of the larger roll.

²⁴ Databases at <http://www.bris.ac.uk/Depts/History/Ireland/datasets.htm> (accessed 21 January 2024); these were reformatted and published in 2009 with indexes and abbreviated glossaries in Flavin and Jones, *Bristol’s Trade with Ireland and the Continent*. Editorial conventions repeated at pp. xxii-xxv.

²⁵ [Margaret M. Condon and Evan T. Jones \(eds\), ‘Bristol 1461: Particulars of Account of Thomas Gibbes and Robert Strangways, customers, 26 March to 29 September 1461: Introduction’](#) (University of Bristol, Explore Bristol Research. 2016), pp. 5-10.

Photograph of the recto of the fragment (TNA, E122/174/3, part)

