Jones, E. T. Bristol’s petition against the establishment of the Port of Gloucester, 1582

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Evan T. Jones (ed.), ‘Bristol’s petition against the establishment of the Port of Gloucester, 1582’ (University of Bristol, ROSE, 2011)

Until the late-sixteenth century the Port of Bristol included within its jurisdiction all the Gloucestershire reaches of the River Severn and its tributaries as far as Worcester. In 1575, however, Burghley, the Lord Treasurer, turned Gloucester into a member port of Bristol, so that it began to account separately to the Exchequer. Following some intense lobbying from Gloucester, which included a number of gifts of silverware to Burghley and the grant of a personal lifetime pension of £5 per year, Gloucester was turned into a headport, receiving its royal patent on 20 June 1580. Bristol responded by petitioning the Queen and she ordered a commission to review the case. The following documents record Bristol’s petition against the establishment of the headport (fos. 68-72) and Gloucester’s answer (fos. 83-89). Bristol’s replication is also recorded, as marginal annotations written to the left of Gloucester’s answer. At the end of the document the date ‘July 1582’ is noted, followed by four names written in Burghley’s hand: Sir William Wyntar, Thomas Throgmarton, Richard Pate and Thomas Hannam. On 4 July 1582 these four men were charged with undertaking an Exchequer Commission to investigate the dispute. The main business of the commission took place in January 1583, when depositions in response to four sets of interrogatories were taken in Gloucestershire. Following this, a second commission was ordered on 12 February, charged with taking further depositions based on two additional sets of interrogatories. These depositions were taken in April 1583. The end result of the process was that it was decided that Gloucester would continue to be an independent head port, which it remained until modern times.

Bristol’s petition, Gloucester’s answer and Bristol’s replication are useful not just for the light that they throw on the immediate dispute, but also for what they reveal about the how the port of Bristol functioned before 1580, on the potential for smuggling in the region, and about the arguments as to whether the establishment of the Port of Gloucester would cut down on illicit trading. Beyond this, the documents say much about the nature of the rivalry between the two cities, about the way they saw themselves and about the manner in which they portrayed each other. Lastly, it is possible to infer from the arguments presented in the documents what the two cities believed would be the issues that were most likely to sway the Crown. Apart from the matter of smuggling, these included the likely impact on the economy of the region and the question of whether the establishment of the port would reduce the number of ‘serviceable’ ships and skilled mariners that would be available to the Crown during time of war.

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1 The National Archives: Public Record Office, UK [TNA:PRO], SP 46/17, fos. 68-73, 83-89. I would like to thank Margaret Condon (University of Bristol) for her assistance on the transcription of these documents and Peter Fleming (University of the West of England) for his comments on Bristol’s foundation myth – as expressed in the city’s replication (fo. 83). The following conventions were employed when transcribing the documents: the line spacing, spelling, capitalization, underlining, deletions and punctuation follow the manuscript; reconstructions of suspensions are in italics. Squared brackets indicate editorial additions.

2 Evan T. Jones (ed.), ‘Survey of the Port of Bristol, 1565’, (University of Bristol, ROSE, 2011); TNA:PRO, E159/350 Recorda. Hil., rot. 348, r. d, et seq.


4 TNA:PRO, SP46/32, fo. 250.

5 The collection also includes another version of Gloucester’s response (fos. 73-82), which excludes Bristol’s replication. This has not been reproduced, since the text is almost identical to the version given below.

6 TNA:PRO, E 134/25Eliz/Hil3.

7 TNA:PRO, E134/25Eliz/East14.
Bristol’s petition against Gloucester

68r.

1. Bristol was a verie ancient Towne and Countie untill of late that it became a Cytie,8 Scituated in an Angle betwene the Counties of Somerset and Gloucester, and allwaies stode and yet standeth upon the trade of marchaundize and makeynge of Cullored Clothes for the Sea,9 which with their trade of marchaundize they have allwaies sufficiently served, aswell all the Countries adioyninge10 to the said Cytie, As also all Townes and Countries lyinge upon and nere about the Ryver of Severne and the Creekes11 of the same, as farre inwardwarde towarde the lande, as to the Towne of Shrewesburye.

2. There lieth the South and westwarde adjoyninge to the same Cytie, the Countie of Somerset, whose chiefe trade by reason of the porte of Bristol, is makeynge of Cullored Clothes, merchauntable for the Sea, and mynynge for leade,12 whereof there riseth greate store, Upon which trade of marchaundize and Cloth makeynge dependeth the lyvinge and mayntenaunce of many thousands of Craftes men and their housholde: As Spynners, Weavers, Tuckers,13 Dyers, Shermen,14 Carpenters, Smythes and others, of which consisteth no smale parte of the Cytie of Bristol.

3. There lythe the northwarde upon the said Cytie the Countie of Gloucester, whose state and maytenanaunce especially towards the saide Cytie standeth upon grasinge and husbandrye.15

4. There is belonginge to Bristol betwene Somerset and Gloucester Shiers an auncient and sufficient porte for shippes of all burthens16 to ride and fleete in,17 wherein hath ben byulded and mayneteyned from tyme to tyme, As many greate Serviceable Shippes18 as in any porte in this her maesties domynyon (London excepted) And there hath ben broughte and trayned up as many skilfull maryners as to suche Shippinge should belonage and more, which serve in dyvers other places.19

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8 Bristol became a county in its own right in 1373 and was a cathedral city from 1542.
9 ‘Cullored Clothes for the Sea’: coloured cloths for the sea – i.e. coloured woollen broadcloth for overseas markets. By this, the city would distinguish itself from London, which focused on the export of undyed cloth for the Netherlands market.
10 ‘Countries adioyninge’ – i.e. adjoining counties.
11 ‘Creekes’ – in the this sense of the word, lading places and havens that fell under the jurisdiction of a Head Port but where customs officers were not normally resident.
12 ‘mynynge for leade’: a reference to the Mendips’ lead mines.
13 ‘tuckers’ – i.e. fullers of woollen cloth.
14 ‘Shermen’: sheermen. Men who ‘sheered’ broadcloth following the dyeing.
15 ‘grasinge and husbandrye’: grazing and husbandry – i.e. pastoral and arable farming.
16 ‘burthens’: burdens. The size of merchant ships was determined by their ‘tons burden’ – i.e. the number of tuns of Bordeaux wine they could carry in their hold.
17 ‘fleete in’ – i.e. sail into.
18 ‘Serviceable Shippes’ – i.e. ships deemed to be large enough to be capable of service in the navy when required. One hundred tons by naval measure (75 tons burden), was typically held to be the minimum size for such purposes: B. Dietz, ‘The royal bounty and English merchant shipping in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries’ Mariner’s Mirror, LXVII (1991), p. 6; ‘An Act for ‘The Maytenaunce of the Navye’ (1540), Statutes of the Realm, III, pp.374-5, 760-63; ‘An Acte towching certayne Politique Constitutions made for the maintenance of the Navye’ (1562/3), Statutes of the Realm, IV, pp. 422-8.
19 The maintenance of a large pool of trained mariners, which could be called up to serve in the navy during war, was another enduring policy aim of the Crown, the importance of which had been reiterated the year before Bristol presented its petition: ‘An Acte for the encrease of mariners & for the mainte nance of Navigacon’ (1581), Statutes of the Realm, IV, pp. 668-9.
5. There have byn belongine to the said Cytie and porte of Bristoll tyme out of mynde and allowed and confyrmed aswell by dyvers actes of Parlyament, As also upon greate conference and deliberacion by the ordynaunces of the highe Courte of ~ Exchequier, All the Creekes which laye and lyen upon the Ryver of Severn Inwarde towards the lande, As Barkeley, Gatcombe, Newnam, Gloucester Tewkesbery, and all other the Creeks and pilles20 extendinge as farr upwarde as wigorn,21 Oute of which Creekes, the said Cytie and Citizens had their cheiffe relief of Victuallinge for their mayntenance. / 

6. By and throughe the which Creekes the saide Cytie had the chiefe venta of all manner of forreyne marchaundizes,22 As farr upwarde and Inwarde towarde the lande as Shrewesburye which served all other Countries thereunto adjoyninge ./

68v.

7. Oute of which saide Cytie, by reason of the trade, porte, Creekes and ~ members of the same, the Queenes majestie receyveth yerely for fee farme23 ~ fifteenes,24 Customs, Subsidies, ympostes25 and other Dueties greate somes of money./ All which Creekes, upon suggestion of some untryed26 matter ben of late taken from the saide Cytie and porte of Bristol, and are become several portes of them selves,27 to the utter Immyntynt ruin of the said Cytie, decaye of the shippinge and maryners, hinderance of the Queenes majesties Customs; dueties and proffyttes, byringinge and rayinginge of greate dearth and scarceytie, Incouraginge and increasinge of pirottes and other greate inconvenyences as by the profes and probable reasons hereafter expressed more at Large it will appeare ./

69 r.

8. Gloucester is a greate through fare and standeth altogethe~ retailers Inne keepers, handycraftes men, maultmakers, Corne Jobbynge28 usage of husbandry, and is a a greate markett, Scituated in the harte of the Country, where greate concourse of people is, for twise A yere they have the assizes, besides quarter Sessions, and sundry other greate meetinges of the whole Countrye.29 By the meanes whereof, all ~ the aforesaide Citizens have and doe lyve plentifully./ And the Cytie never in better case then nowe it is: There are no merchaunte there for there is but one free of that late incorporacon graunted by her majestie and he is no adventurer.30 They can mayneteyne no serviceable shippinge or fytt for good marchauntes, for none (but suche as are of twenty tonnes

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20 ‘pilles’: pills – a Bristol Channel term for tidal creeks.
21 ‘wigorn’: Worcester.
22 In other words, it is asserted that it was through its creeks that Bristol sold most of its foreign merchandize.
23 ‘fee farme’: fee farm. The right to collect many taxes were farmed out to individuals or groups in return for a fixed rent.
24 ‘fifteenes’: The fifteenth. A tax granted by Parliament, equivalent to a fifteenth part of the nominal value of the taxpayer’s moveable assets.
25 ‘ympostes’: imposts – i.e. taxes on trade imposed by the Crown without parliamentary authority.
26 ‘untryed’: untried – i.e. unproven.
27 Gloucester was established as a separate Head Port in 1580, taking with it the creeks mentioned in Article 5.
28 ‘Corne Jobbynge’: corn jobbing – i.e. dealing in grain.
29 ‘Countrye’: country – i.e. county.
30 By ‘merchants’, the author means those who live solely from wholesale trade, as opposed to those who might also be involved in retail. An ‘adventurer’ or ‘merchant adventurer’ was one who lived solely off the profits of overseas trade. This was true of most of Bristol’s principal merchants and was, indeed, a requirement of those who wanted to become members of Bristol’s Society of Merchant Venturers, founded in 1552.
or under) can come to that place. They make there no Cullored Clothes or Clothes for the Sea, Neither have they any tyme leade or other ~ kynde of marchaundize laufull / So that if they make any ~ adventure, It muste needes be of Corne and prohibited wares, 31 ~ Whereby not only the pore people of the same Countrie, but also ~ the Cytie of Bristoll are sharply pynched, and the transporters onlye enryched thereby. 

9. Glouc~ester standeth betwene Bristoll and wigone, Warrick Coventrie and ~ Shrewesbury and all other places upp Severn where the merchauntes of Bristoll did usually make their vent32 of suche Comodyties as they bringe from byeonde Seas. / And Glouc~ester it selfe also is a place where they have uttered muche merchaundize/ but nowe if the same contynue a porte It is like they will not only serve them selves, but also those other Countryes and townes about them, And so the trade in Bristoll (when the vente of their Comodytes is taken from them) muste needes be hindered and decayed thereby. 

10. If trade of marchaundize be setled in Glouc~ester, and a porte contynued there ~ where no depthe of water is but for smale barkes or boates the same wilbe An increase of smale boates and barkes, and the decaye of so muche greate Shippinge in Bristoll. 

11. Since Glouc~ester was made a porte, they have increased smale barkes ~ and boates to the number of xlvth or thereaboutes, which are of burden from xv~ tonnes to xxxv, which amonteth by estymacion to a thousand tonne shippinge and doe make voyage and retornes with the same as offe as they can, which muste of necessytie decaye our trades, decrease a greate parte of our serviceable shippinge in Bristoll, But what Custome they have paid or benefytt her majestie hath thereby, theire booke of accompte33 dothe shewe and beinge examyned it will appeare, that so muche greate Shippinge in ~ Bristoll dothe yelde tenne tymes so muche Custome as they have or will yelde / 

69v.

12. The more ladinge and discharginge places that be allowed of, the ~ greater wilbe the concealement and stealth of her majesties Customs ~ and conveyinge awaye of prohibited wares, and therefore was yt ~ provided for in the xxxiiijth yere of Kyenge Henry the eight34 and in ~ the firste yere of her higheenes reigne by acte of parlyamente,35 ~ and the ixth yere of her majesties reigne by a decree36 set downe by the Lorde threasor then beinge, and the whole Courte of Exchequer That nothinge shoulde be laden or discharged within Severn, but onlye at Bristoll and certeyne usuall places whereof the officers of Bristoll had speciall charge / As by the same more att large dothe appeare / 

31 ‘Prohibited wares’ were wares that were routinely subject to export prohibitions, such as foodstuffs, beer and leather.
32 ‘vent’ – i.e. sale.
33 ‘booke of accompte’: account books – i.e. the ‘port books’, which recorded all the overseas trade of each port. Since these were submitted to the Exchequer, they could be used to determine the size of a port’s recorded trade.
35 ‘An Acte limiting the tymes for laying on Lande Marchandise from beyonde the Seas, and touching Customes for Sweete Wynes’ (1559), Statutes of the Realm, IV, pp. 372-4.
13. All creekes upon Severn beinge made portes there muste needes be more ladinge and discharginge in sundrye places at one tyme, betwene ~ Bristoll and Gloucester then before, And so still more hinderaunce to her majestie, and hurte to the Common Wealthe. / 

14. The chiefeste place of ladinge and discharginge for Gloucester, is at A place called Gattcombe, which is xviith myles downewardes towards the Sea before the officers of Gloucester, and nearer to the porte of Bristoll then to Gloucester, and no officer dwellinge nigher then Gloucester, neither is it any towne or populous village to descrye or understande howe her majestie is deceyved and the Countrye robbed.37 / 

15. But yf they did make their entries and take oute their Cockettes at Bristoll then should the officers of Bristoll which lye betwene that and the Sea have knowledge thereof, and by duetifull care, intercepte and controwle them. / 

16. It is muche meeter, and more conveynent that the Creekes of Severne doe belonge to Bristoll than to Gloucester, or to be portes of them selves, flor Bristoll standeth in nede of, and byn relieved with the grayne and victualles which Gloucester and the Countries upon Severn doe yelde ~ and abound with, the utterance thereof enricheth the riche sorte of ~ the Countrye and robbeth the poore. / 

17. Before the said Creekes became portes the Borderars38 Upon the Welshe Coast came to Bristoll to take out Cockettes39 to passe to us their Comodyties which the Countrye yeldeth, as Leather, Butter, Chese and other, by the which meanes they did bestowe money with us and nowe are the prises of theis Comodyties greater in those Countries then in Bristoll for nowe they buy their Leather with us, As it maye appeare by the Queenes porte books40 / 70r.

18. Otherwise when they delivered their booke to the officers of Bristol ~ they were then hable to fynde their disorders and to reforme them, or to ~ travaile41 to them and to staie the passage thereof, which nowe theye ~ cannot doe, what neede soever we have for provision of our Cytie, or ~ for the Queenes service into Irelande, or elles where, And so passe ~ the same awaye throughge the newe erected portes under Cullour to ~ come to Bristoll, And a greate parte of the same is conveyed by nighte into Shippinge which comethe from other portes lyinge in the Welshe rode, joynynge to Kyne Rode, (where we nowe cannot Searche) and there doe caste out their Ballest to the destruction of ~ that rode also.42

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37 Gatcombe served as Gloucester’s outport. It lies 12 miles southwest of Gloucester, or 22 miles by water. Gatcombe is 21 miles north of Bristol, or 25 miles by water. The nearest settlements to Gatcombe are Blakeney (1 mile northwest) and Lydney (3 miles southwest).

38 ‘Borderars’: borderers. This is presumably a reference to the men of Chepstow and perhaps also Caerleon and Newport.

39 ‘Cockettes’: cockets. In this context a customs certificate to allow ‘prohibited wares’ (e.g. grain) to be sent coastwise.

40 After 1565 coastal trade was recorded in coastal port books, which were submitted to the Exchequer each year.

41 ‘travaile’: travel.

42 In other words it was claimed that goods passing under coastal cockets granted at Gloucester, for shipment to Bristol, were in fact being laded by night on to ships in the Welsh Road (the Welsh side of the Severn) or the Kingroad (the bay stretching between Avonmouth and Portishead). When such lading took place, the ships cast out their ballast to make room
19. Since Gloucester hathe ben A porte, they have restrayne greyne\textsuperscript{43} to ~ come to Bristoll, So as when they have occasion, they must travell to Gloucester for a cockett, and ther if they obteyne it, the same is not without greate difficultie, which maketh a greate change in the saide Cytie of Bristoll.~/

20. The Cytie and porte of Bristoll is nowe dismembred of all the auncyent Creekes belonginge to yt, and of the trades of the same, and hathe but the very mouthe of the haven to issue out at into Severn.~/ And so the said Creekes are become portes where no one of them is sufficient of water for a shippe of any service.~/ But other cheife portes (althoughe inferior to ~ Bristoll) have many and dyvers Creekes belonginge unto them, and yet no towne or porte may spare their Creekes so ill as Bristoll.~/ for their greatest trade is by and throughe their Creekes, And that in tyme muste needes decaye both the Cytie and the serviceable Shippynge of the same.~/

21. Irishe men also with their Barkes have founde A directe trade to Gloucester, ~ And all to shippe awaye Corne and so wee lose the benefytt of their Comodtyes, and the utteringe of our owne, which is another greate ~ decaye to us./

22. The Serviceable Shippes of Bristoll have and muste serve her ~ majestie upon all occasions, And in the meane tyme the smale Barkes of Severn are free, and doe spoyle the Countrie of grayne and victualles for they are in A manner out of comptrollement.\textsuperscript{44}~/

23. When the Creekes of Severn belonged to Bristoll, then Corne grayne and ~ victualles came from thence by Cocket from Bristoll, and then was her majestie for the victuallinge of Ireland and for other services provided at Bristoll, But ~ nowe her charges upon Severn to provide and gather the same is greate ~ As by the booke of the purveryor for that service appeareth.\textsuperscript{45} And greate exactions ben at Gloucester for Cockettes, and other fees, but her majesties Custome verye smale~/

70v.

24. Aboute xvij\textsuperscript{46} yerres paste were taken from Bristoll all the Creekes upon the Coast of Wales, which were belonginge to Bristoll, as Swansey Cardif, Newport and Chepstowe, whereof Cardif is made A Chiefe porte,\textsuperscript{46} and the other members of the same, ffrom whiche ~ Countries no merchandize is to be spared but prohibited wares, / And which the utteranuce thereof they doe mayneteyne smale shippinge and returne forreyne Comodyties. But that hathe broughte ~ scarsitie of certeyne kyndes of victualles to Bristoll, And also ~ by so muche hindered the trade thereof, Another cause of decay of the saide Cytie, And what Custome her majestie hathe from ~

\textsuperscript{43} 'greyne': grain.
\textsuperscript{44} 'out of comptrollement' – i.e. not properly controlled or supervised.
\textsuperscript{45} The claim here is that the Queen’s purveyor, in gathering grain to ship to the English troops in Ireland, now found it more expensive to gather his goods.
\textsuperscript{46} In 1563 John Leek was appointed customer of the newly-established Port of Cardiff, which included all the coast from Chepstow to Swansea: W. R. B. Robinson, ‘The establishment of royal customs in Glamorgan and Monmouthshire under Elizabeth I’, Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies, XXIII, Part IV (1970), p. 354.
thence the bookes doe shewe. 47 / A smale matter from a head porte /  

25.  Aboute theis portes and Creekes in Wales of late yeres have ben manye pirottes harboured, succored and vitled, and never taken or removed, but by the Shippinge of Bristoll, And the inconvenyences thereof did ~ appeare about xv^{an} yeres past to the Lorde Threasoror and Courte of Exchequiers, Wherefore, it was by him and the said Courte upon great consultacion and throughghe debatinge of the matter, decreed, That the same shoulde become Creekes and members to the porte of Bristoll agayne,48 But they never obeyed the same49 /  

26.  In tender consideracion whereof, maye it please your honours to have ~ regarde of the mayntenaunce and contynewaunce of the said distressed Cytie, that without desert, or other weightye or necessarie consideracion, the same be not so dismembred of their Creekes and ventes: especially that they shoulde be laide to ~ A place more unworthie, and utterly unmeete for so many causes to be a porte. / to the ruyn of the said Cytie of ~ Bristoll, decaye of the Shippinge and maryners, ~ hinderaunce of her majesties proffites, and apparaunt againste the Common Wealthe bothe of the said Cyties and Countries./ And so muche the rather bycause the Shippinge of Bristoll have sufficiently and willingly served her highenes in the service of Irelande althoughge to their hinderaunce/ So as by your honourable consideraciones and meanes to her majestie, the said Cytie of Bristoll and Countries maye be restored to their former estates. /  

71rv.  [blank]  

72r.  [blank]  

72v.  Bristol against Gloucester50  

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47 For Cardiff’s late sixteenth-century trade, as recorded in the overseas port books, see: Taylor, ‘The Maritime Trade of the Smaller Bristol Channel Ports’, pp. 131-155.  
48 A reference to the Exchequer decree of June 1567, albeit that did not make any reference to pirates – the principal justification for making Cardiff into a member port of Bristol being that this would force the officers of Cardiff to charge the same duties as those applied in Bristol: Jones, ‘Exchequer Decree’.  
49 Since the officers of Cardiff were appointed independently by Letters Patent, those in Bristol would not, in practice, have been able to discipline them if they chose not to follow orders issued by the officers in Bristol.  
50 This is written sideways across the folio. The fold lines suggest this was originally the cover of the petition.
The answer of the Mayor of Gloucester and Bristol’s replication

fo. 83r.

[Bristol’s replication]

The answere of the Maior and Burgesses of the Citie of Gloucester to the Articles exhibited by the maior & comynalitie of the Cytie of Bristol. /

Glouceter is a towne of a greater antiquitie then Bristoll It hathe ben a towne of merchaundize in and ever sithence the tyne of Kyng John, for aswell by him, as by others his successors Kynges of England dyvers liberties hathe ben graunted to the Guilde of merchauntes of the towne of Glouceter, the same towne beinge a Cytie from the begynnyngge in the opinion of the kinges of this Realme of greate accompte & reputation as appeareth by the Cronicles and other authorities and records. /

Yf liberties by kinge John were graunted to the Guylde of the merchautes of ~ Gloucester, it is very like that the unaptenes of the place and the insufficiencie of the Porte was the cause of the discontinuenance of that Guylde and trade there. But it is to be thoughte that it was meante merchautes retaylers, and not merchautes venturers Gloucester standeth not upon any trade of merchaudize but of Curte only: neither ~ make theire coloured clothes for the Ocean Sea. 

This Citie of Glouciter is a countie of it self situated upon the Ryver of Severne in the harte of Glouciter Shere, and in the myndes60 of Severne betwene Bristoll and Bewdley, it standeth muche upon the trade of merchaudize aswell in makyinge & sellinge of Clothe as in transportinge and brynginge in dyvers other thinges merchautable, and the trade of the Cytye of Bristoll nowe no otherwise hindered, then allwaiues heretofore accusstomably yt hathe ben. /

Gloucester standeth not upon any trade of merchaudize

herein is denied an open truthe

By decaying or dynynyshing of the trade of merchautize in Brystowe the saide Artificiers must consequently be hindred and decayed also. /

2 The cheife trade of the Countie of Somerset (beinge of it self a riche and wealthiest Countrie by reason of the fertilytie of the groundes thereof) dothe not by occassion of the porte of Bristoll stande upon the makynge of Colored Clothes merchautable for the Sea. For althoughe in Somerset Shere there are colored clothes made, yet are they for the moste parte solde to the merchautes of London and other places within the Realme, Also the lyvinge and maytenaunce of suche Craftes men as dependeth upon that trade of merchaudize and Clothe makynge cannot any waye be hindered by the Custome House of Glouciter, seing they doe and maye transporte theis clothes from Bristoll beyonde the Seas at their pleasure; without any controllmente or interrupcion of the Cytie of Glouciter. /

51 Anno Mundii: ‘in the year of the world’ – a calendar system that starts from the year of biblical creation. Determining the date meant is difficult, since different authorities had different calculations for the date of the Creation.

52 ‘Cayer Oder, Nent-Badon’: Caer Odor yn nant Baddon is the Welsh name for Bristol, meaning ‘the city of the gorge in the valley of Bath’. Documentary and archaeological evidence suggest that ‘Brigstow’ (Bristol) was established c.1000 as a trading station next to a bridge over the Avon: M.D. Lobel and E.M. Carus-Wilson, ‘Bristol’ in M.D. Lobel (ed.), The Atlas of Historic Towns, Vol. 2 (London, 1975), pp. 2-3. Bristol’s medieval ‘origin myth’, however, held that it had been built by Brennius, a descendent of the refugees from the fall of Troy: L. Toumlin Smith (ed.), The Maire of Bristowe is Kalendar by Robert Ricart, Town Clerk of Bristol 18 Edward IV (Camden Society, V, 1872), pp. 3, 6-10.

53 A reference to the foundation of the Roman town of Gloucester, following the invasion of Britain by Claudius Caesar in 43 A.D.

54 Bristol received a series of charters in Henry II’s reign and became a county in its own right in 1373: N. D. Harding, Bristol Charters, 1155-1373 (Bristol Record Society publications, Vol. I, 1930).

55 ‘for the Ocean Sea’ – i.e. for overseas trade.

56 ‘sithence’: since.

57 A reference to the extension of the Borough’s privileges by King John’s Charter (1200).

58 The clerk appears to have written ‘C’, but ‘a’ makes more sense.

59 ‘Cronicles’: chronicles.

60 ‘myndest’: middle, or middle part. Gloucester lies 33 miles northeast of Bristol and 34 miles south of Bewdley.
3. That parte of the Countie of Glouciter which lieth betwene Bristoll and Glouciter, standeth chiefly upon grasinge and husbandry and as from that parte of the Country of Glouciter, the Cytie of Bristoll continually receyveth greate Comodytie in their provision of victuallles and suche other necessaries (of which provision and Comodytie they are no waie hindered by her majesties grant lately made to the Cytie of Glouciter) So in requital it were fyt the Cytie of Bristoll should cease to contend against her majesties grant made upon greate deliberacion and good consideracion to the benefit of her highness Cytie of Glouciter without their preuiduc.

4. Shippes of all convenient burthen maye as safely fleete to Gatcombe & myles from Glouciter as they maye come to Bristoll key or to the back of Bristoll. Gatcombe beinge a place where floweth as muche and as depe water as dothe at the key or back of Bristoll. And barkes of xxiii ton or more and lighters of greater burthen maye come at every Springe to & from Gatcombe to the keye of Glouciter, from where all comodyties maye more aptly and more cheaply be dispersed then from Bristoll into all the bowelles of the other sheres round about with far easier and shorter travaile, Also the Cytie of Glouciter is two myles nere to Gatcombe where the shippe lieth well and in good harbor then the town of Westchester is to Flynt Castle where the shippes of Chester doe staye and unlade by lighters.

5. The Creekes which lien upon the river of Severne inwarde towards the lande as Barkeley, Gatcombe, Newnem an ~ Glouciter Tewkesbury &c. have not tyme out of mynde ben belongine to the Cytie & porte of Bristol, neither were suche persons (as did lade emboate or discharge any corne or grayne at any of the said Creekes to be transported beyonde the Seas) enforced or any Custome or lawe to bringe the said Corne to the key of Bristoll there to be vewed and a Cocket to be had of the Customer of Bristoll for the transportinge thereof before the makinge of the Statute made in the xxxiii yere of the reinge of Kinge Henry theighte, which statute dothe not unyte nor allowe the said Creekes to be parcell or belonginge to the porte of Bristoll, nor dothe restrayne her majestie to establishe by her graunte a port at Glouciter, and to unite theis Creekes parcell and belonginge to the same porte, nor provideth for the restrainte of ladinge or transportinge of any other merchandize

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61 ‘iomyeth’: joineth.
62 See n. 15.
63 ‘L tonnes’ – i.e. fifty tons burden.
64 See n. 16.
65 ‘fleete to’: fleet to – i.e. sail to.
66 See n. 37.
67 The Key / Quay of Bristol was the main place of lading and unlading for great ships. The ‘Back’ was the area just below Bristol Bridge where the smaller vessels used in the Irish / coastal trade berthed. These were the only two places officially designated for the lading / unlading of overseas goods in the port of Bristol.
68 ‘Springe’: Spring tides are the high tides that occur twice-a-month around the time of the new and full moon.
69 Flint Castle lies eleven miles downriver from Chester on the River Dee.
70 ‘Newnem’: Newnham.
71 ‘emboat’ – i.e. to put on board a boat.
72 See n. 34.
Bristol's petition vs Port of Gloucester, 1582

TNA:PRO, SP46/17 fos. 68-73, 83-89

74 By and through the same Creekes the said Cytie of Bristol hath the vent of and for all manner of forreynne merchandizes in as liberall and ample manner as at any tyme heretofore they accustomedly have had.

75 Bristol thus claimed that use of the Gloucestershire creeks for proper purposes would be allowed, subject to oversight by a Bristol officer. This would presumably be the ‘clerk of the creeks’ mentioned under Article 13.

76 See n. 36.

77 ‘Cullor’: colour - i.e. pretence.

78 The point is that while Bristol claimed a historic right to the Gloucestershire creeks, they had no formal title over them. There was thus nothing to stop the Queen from establishing a new port at Gloucester by Letters Patent.

79 See n. 54.
That encrease of her majesties profittes doth decrease the same in Bristowe. The suggestions whereupon the said letters patentes were granted be – apparently untrue, as well in comendinge the sufficiencye of the Creekes to receave Shippes of all convenient burthenes as also in describing the distance of the places where no portes were and yet sett out meete to be. The statue also of xxiii Henry viii was not recyted in their suggestion /Yf Glouce Bristowe had so meane a begynnyng, god be thanked Gloucester is well overtaken.

There be in Gloucester so many able persons for the trade of merchants that there is but one allowed to be a merchant of the Southernne trade and he dealeth not therein. /80 Yf theie of Gloucester will use merchandize with serviceall Shippes there were lesse reason to repyne therat. The clothes which be made in Gloucester and Gloucester shire be for the trade of – Flanders and Germanyn and not for the trade through the ocean sea.

Yt will appeare by their custome bookes wherewith theire adventures have byn made to the sea. /The merchandises and officers of Gloucester doe lyve friendly and neighbourly togeather for the newe officers of the Custome hose & portes there have no fees allowed them. /81 Bristowe is so cutt of from the Severn that the barkes of the newe portes with their Corne passe not thorough any liberties of Bristowe at all Cornwale Devon and Wales doe bear the name and returne certificatess but little.

8 As Glouciter is an Auncyent towne of grete merchandize and hathe not had his begynnynge contynuance and maynetenance by suche trades as is unsemely and unfytt terme is set downe which mighte more properly be applied to that other towne which had a farre meaner begynnyng, So the supposed good estate of Glouciter havinge in yt many persons hable to used the trade of merchandize, many Clothemen, spyniers weavers and other – pore people, is no reason to let them to become merchandizes and to trade as merchandizes accordingly as longe heretofore their predecessors have don. /Suche barkes and boates as in older tyme had accesse to Glouciter are still maynteyned, and albeit shippes of grete burthen cannot come up to the key of Glouciter, yet maye they be owners of as good shippes of service as Bristoll and if they become merchandizes forroynys dominys they of force muste have shippes bothe for burthen and for defence and thereby her majestie and the Realme more strengthened & enrychted, There are made in Glouciter and Glouciter shere greater store of colored Clothes and clothes for the Sea, then Bristoll & Somersesthire dothe make. Theire adventure is not of Corne and – prohibited wares to the enrichtinge of them selves and the pinchinge82 of the people of the Country and Cytie of Bristoll as unsemelie alledged for no Corne passeth out of that County without speciall licence and warrant, nor – without the knowledge of the Comissioners authorized for – reainste of Corne, neither can they transporte any prohibited wares by stealthe and without knowledge bycause there are officers in Glouciter resident to loke there into, And yt they should escape there, yt they are to passe through the of Erle Worcesterly berbiete,83 who hathe a searcher there allwaies attendinge, And yt they might there escape, yet

80 In 1577 the Spanish Company was granted a royal monopoly over trade to Iberia, most of the members of which came from London and Bristol: P. Croft, *The Spanish Company* (London Record Society publications, Vol. IX, 1973), p. xiii. The statement implies that only one Gloucester merchant was a member of this company and that he was not actively engaged in the trade.

81 Bristol seems to have been insinuating that, because the Gloucester officers were unpaid and lived in close association with the local merchants, they were more likely to be corrupted.

82 ‘pinching’: pinch – i.e. to deprive people of food.

83 Until 1564 the ports of South Wales fell under the jurisdiction of the Marcher Lords: the Earl of Worcester and the Earl of Pembroke. The Earl of Worcester’s liberty included the coast of Monmouth, from Chepstow to Newport, which is presumably what is being referred to here: W. R. B. Robinson, ‘Dr. Thomas Plaer’s report on the harbours and customs administration of Wales under Edward VI’. *Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies*, 24.4 (1972), 492-3. What is slightly odd about Gloucester’s statement is that, after 1564, the Welsh ports were incorporated into the Exchequer’s customs collection system, with the customer of the port of Cardiff being responsible for the whole coast from Chepstow to Swansea: Robinson, ‘The establishment of royal customs’. Legally speaking the ‘Liberty’ of the Earl of Worcester, at least as far as the collection of customs went, ceased to exist at this point. The statement seems to suggest, on the other hand, that, eighteen years after this, the liberty still had at least a notional existence in the minds of the merchants of Gloucestershire.
Corne is landed there
Cornnewall doth often tymes serve Bristol
with wares

fo. 84v.

Cornewall Devon and Wales doe beare the name and Cornewall and
Devon do returne certificattes, although
little grayne landed there. 84
Cornewall of late yeres hath served
Bristowe with Corne and grayne. 85

muste they after passe throughe the libertie of the officers of
Bristoll. 86 So that they cannot possiblie passe with ~
prohibited wares in suche sort as is surmysed; nevertheles
with warrant and lycence it is very nedefull that some of
the greate plenty of Corne in Gloucister Shere shoulde be
transported to South wales, north wales, Devonshire,
Cornewall and Ireland, to supply and helpe the great
eccessytie and want of those places, And so it hathe ben
hertofore used tyme out of mynde /

More care is to be had of the mayntenaunce
of the greate Shippes at Bristowe
then of the small barkes and Boates of
Severne

There are little furthered by having their
Cockettes at Glouc' for every springe87 by their
Trowemen88 theye used to sende by thenes
Trowmen to Bristowe for Cockettes and had
them and so theye do to Gloucester after the
same manner but at Gloucester the Cockettes
doth coste them very nere doble so much
as theie do at Bristowe /

It cannot be denied but that Gloucester were
a necessary porte: yt there were water
to bringe Shippes theyther, and so ~
were Coventrye also.89

Lett the small barkes serve for that purpose in
godes name, But lett Bristol be allowed
to looke in to the matter, that theie maye
be first served, as it is meet & necessary

The maryners of Severne that

84 In other words, it is claimed that, while coastal cockets were being issued for grain to be delivered to Cornwall, Devon
and Wales, little of this grain was actually landed there -- the implication being that it was being exported fraudulently
instead.
85 If Cornwall was supplying Bristol, this would imply that the price of grain was lower there than in Bristol. If so, this
would support the notion that grain shipped from Gloucester to Cornwall under a coastal cocket was likely to be intended
for illicit export, rather than the provisioning of Cornwall.
86 Following the creation of the port of Gloucester, the 'liberty' of the port of Bristol consisted of the Avon and the English
side of the Severn Estuary from Aust to Kingroad.
87 'every springe' -- i.e. at the time of the twice-monthly spring tides.
88 A trow is a type of flat-bottomed sailing boat used on the Severn.
89 The statement is sarcastic, in that Coventry lies far from any navigable waterway.
90 'wigorn': Worcester.
91 'Warrie': Warwick.
92 'subject': subject.
93 A 'barred haven' is one that possesses a sandbank that needs to be passed over to reach the harbour, thereby preventing
access to deep-drafted vessels.
use to serve in small Barkes are but lytle the fitter to serve in greate Shipping, and long voyages for service of merchante / or any other.

Places, our superfluous frute and sider,\(^{94}\) and their fishe returned by them to serve us and the sheres adioyninge\(^{96}\) So by their smale barkes, the Queenes naturall subjectes are preserved from famyne, tillage increased, the people kepe in worke, fisher men mayneteyned, And if theis smale barkes doe encrease then will there be more ~ maryners. And so her majesty shalbe the better furnished in nedefull tymes of service. The Cytie of Gloucit\(\text{er}\) sithence this graunte made unto them, hathe not increased any one boate, above the number they accustomedly use allwaies before, and they mighte at all tymes before the said graunte, have used as manye boates as they wolde

\(^{94}\) 'frute and sider': fruit and cider.

\(^{95}\) The suggestion is that mariners whose sole experience was of river and coastal boats would not be fit to serve on the Crown's great ships in time of war.

\(^{96}\) 'adioyninge': adjoining.

\(^{97}\) 'although not serviceable' – i.e. not fit to serve in the royal navy.

\(^{98}\) Bristol invites the Exchequer to examine the port books returned by Gloucester, to determine how much trade had been declared since it had become a head port.

\(^{99}\) The insinuation is that the officers at Gloucester were facilitating the illicit export of grain, to the advantage of farmers, merchants and themselves, but to the disadvantage of the common people, since it was assumed that grain prices would rise as a result.

\(^{100}\) 'deseased': diseased – i.e. inconvenienced or annoyed.

\(^{101}\) Since small ships require more men per ton of shipping capacity than large ones, Gloucester's small vessels would employ more men than the equivalent tonnage at Bristol, where the average size of ships was much greater.

\(^{102}\) See n. 34, 35, 36.
Howe the officers of the newe portes do watche and what concealement there is the voyce of the people and the searchite and death of Corn and grayne doe showe. /104

Bristowe did of necessite appointe the keye and Gatcombe are accomp to be accounted as convenient places for lading and discharg (as Bristowe is) where no Shipp of any convenient burthen can come /

fo. 85v.

The Creekes that nowe be made portes were not places of lading and discharge before the lettres patentes granted / And so nowe there be more places of lading and discharging /

And he that was Clarke of the Creekes and Searcher before is searcher nowe And so no officer in that service increased. 106

There is no shipping of merchandise for the sea before it come downe under Gloucester Bridge, and for that service there was before and yet is a searcher & Clarke of the Creekes appointed which was & is sufficient in that place. / /

The gentlemen that dwell no nere be favourable Searchers./

Greate quantities of graine & leather maie be brought to Gatcombe without passing by the Custome house of ~ Gloucester or under Gloucester Bridge /

who hathe power thereby to dispence with the same estatutes 103 And which said estatutes doe not abridge her prorogatyve, or any waiue dishalble the same her said highes graunte, nowe that there is another Custome house, and more officers to ~ watche that busynesse of transportinge without Custome, it muste followe that there is nowe lesse concealement then before tyme, And so the Custome house in Glouciter within the remedy and intencion of the said estatutes which provideth against that mischeif for thavaile of her majestie ./ Also the towne of ~ Bristoll more for their pryvate gayne then for anye other necessary respecte, havinge a Comission founded upon the Statute of the first yere of this Queen, and thereby appointinge the back & key of Bristoll to be the onely place of ladinge & dischargeing, whereas Gatcombe ~ Newneham and Glouciter Key hathe ben allways accoumpted as convenyent and as fyt a place for that purpose, was ~ hard dealinge offerd by them to the towne of Glouciter to exclude the key of Glouciter & Gatcombe, as maye very evidently appeare by the contentes of the Certificat made by the Comyssioners./105

[13] There are nowe no more ladinge and discharginge places then were before, yet as many places of ladinge and discharginge at one tyme maye be a hinderaunce to the Quenes majesty, So when of many places havinge but one ~ Custome house, there is made another Custome house, and more officers, Common reason & experience teacheth lesse hinderance or concealement aryseth, and greater benefit to her majestie and no hurt to the Common wealthe / The greatest parte of all merchandise cominge to Bristoll are uttered 107 at Glouciter and above Glouciter, and the passage thereof throughe Glouciter bridge, And Glouciter and Glouciter Bridge standinge upon Severne as london and London ~ bridge doth upon Thames, and the passage beinge under the bridge, nothinge can passe without payinge Custome the Custome house beinge at Glouciter /

14 This Article is answered portely before, in the answere to the iii; 108 Article. Gatcombe is inhabited with dyvers people at the place of discharge; some gentlemen are dwellinge nere thereunto, the Searcher there attendeth at every Springe, 106 and hathe a deputie contynuallye waytinge at that place, no ladinge comethe from Gatcombe but muste of necessite passe by the Custome House of Glouciter and under Glouciter bridge, So the queenes Majestie cannot by any meanes be deceaved, nor the Country hindered./

103 The argument was that the same lading places were being used as before but now they were formally recognised and had officers appointed to them.

104 This seems to imply that there had been recent complaints about high grain prices at this time, which Bristol knew the commissioners would be aware of.

105 This is presumably a reference to the 1559 commission at Bristol to define the legal quays of the port: TNA:PRO, E122/221/71C.

106 The suggestion is that the ‘clerk of the creeks’ had simply changed titles and become the ‘searcher’ of Gloucester.

107 ‘uttered’ – i.e. sold or marketed.

108 ‘attendethe at every Springe’: attends around the time of the twice-monthly spring tides.
Bristol's petition vs Port of Gloucester, 1582

One officer serveth Gloucester & Gatcomb but little service can be don after the barkes be under Sailes & passe sodenly though the erle of Worcesters liberties which hath no intelligence of their comnyng by/ And Bristolowe cannot have understanding thereof because theye do not take out their Cockettes nowe but through the liberties of Bristolowe for theie have nowe but the mouth of the haven left them. 109

The searchers of the Crekes and the Searchers of Bristolowe must nedes to better service, then the searching of the Crekes alone.

The Creekes were not for some parte of them unmeet to belonge to Gloucester yf Gloucester were meete and sufficient to be a porte (as it is not) and also yf theie hade not first belonged to Bristolowe as theie did.

Bristolowe is served with graine and victualles at their pleasure and under their power of restrainte which is a greate chaunge without any necessary cause.

Where Bristolowe endeavored to overthowe the Custume house erected at Cardiff in Wales yt was ordered by the righteous Walter Milday & the Lord Chief Baron & the whole Court of Exchequer upon great advisement that the same Creeks in Wales should belonge of graynes and victualles to Glouceter & Tewkesbury by suche quantities that the same is as good cheape or better in Bristol, which hath also the provision of other sheres adioyninge then in Glouceter or Tewkesbury. The more vent from places where is plenty of grayne and in tyme of plenty the ritcher becomes the ploweman, the porer sorte of people, the better kepte in worke and relieved, tillage increased, the Country nourished, and her majestie and the common wealth thereby much benefitted and strengthened.

15 But seeinge all ladinge that passeth from Glouceter and under Glouceter bridge is nowe searched and entred in ~ Glouceter, and agayne at Gatcombe, and after in the Erle of Worcesters lybertie and lastly in Bristoll who are not letted from makeinge newe searche within their office passinge from Gatcombe to the Sea, 110 It followeth, the Queenes ~ majestie cannot nowe so easeably be deceased as before she was when the Custome house was only at Bristoll, Bristoll standinge in a Creeke vii myles from the Channell of Severne, which leadeth from Glouceter to the Sea, By which occasion many thinges passed by Bristoll before without Custome though se the officer had carefully don his Duete.

16 It is farr better and more conveyente that theis Crekes of Severne scituated in the Country of Glouceter and of their owne nature never and more properly belonginge to Glouceter then unto Bristoll should be restored & continue to the Cytie of Glouceter which of righte oughte to enjoye them, and nowe standeth in nede of them, and hereby Bristoll no worse served and relieved with such grayne and victualles as Glouceter and the Countries upon Severne yeldeth. For all men are apte to seeke utteraunce for of their Comodyties, and it shalbe proved that all sortes

Yf graine and victualles be better cheape at Bristol then at Gloucester or Tewkesbury where naturally it growtheth that argueth an unlawfull waste and ill usage in Gloucester and Tewkesbury, but so was it not before this alteracjon. 113

109 This is a slight exaggeration, in that the port of Bristol still encompassed the eight-mile stretch of the Gloucestershire coast at as far as Aust and the two miles of the Somerset coast to Portishead, thereby encompassing the Kingroad. The point seems valid, however, in that a vessel coming down the Severn with a favourable wind on an ebbing tide would pass through the jurisdiction of the port of Bristol in little more than an hour. There would thus be little opportunity for search.

110 For comment on this point, see discussion and notes to Article 8 in ‘Gloucester’s answer’.

111 ‘unmeet’: unsuitable.

112 ‘enioye’: enjoy.

113 The insinuation seems to be that, if grain was cheaper in Bristol than at Gloucester, this could only be because so much grain was being exported illegally that it had driven-up the price in Gloucester.

114 ‘ritcher’: richer.

115 A reference to the 1567 decree, when the Lord Treasurer was William Paulet, Marquess of Winchester (d. 1572) and the Chancellor of the Exchequer / under-treasurer of the Exchequer was Sir Walter Mildmay.

116 ‘avayleable’: available.

117 ‘thempeachinge’: the impeaching. In this context ‘discrediting’ is probably meant.
to the porte of Bristol againe. As by the same decree more at large appareth although the same were contempounously disobeyed.\(^{118}\)

Yf the creekes in wales and upon Severn were seen to as it was heretofore, lether woulde not be so deare, where the cuntry yeldeth so great plentie therof. And Gloucester have made such restraint of their leather that their Shoemakers come to buye leather at Bristol and so both Cities the worse through disorder and negligent restraynt.\(^ {119}\)

Yf the farmors and Corne merchandes of Gloucester wilde see as narrowly\(^ {120}\) to their officers as the victuullers & Inhabittantes of Bristol / of necessite are ~ constrained to doe the offices woulde be executed both alike / but in and about Gloucester yf the officers doe chaunce to sleepe the farmors and corne merchantes wilbe starcke blynde.\(^ {121}\) Such provysion is made for the purveyor\(^ {122}\) that the incident charges\(^ {123}\) to gather the provysion togetheer is very greate. where at Bristol sufficient for one provysion dothe come in at one Springe And a newe supple was made to serve the Citie peradventure ymediately in the same Springe, yf not in the beginnyng of the nexte.\(^ {124}\)

\(^{118}\) ‘the same were contempounously disobeyd’. This implies that the officers of the Port of Cardiff, after it had been made into a member port of Bristol in 1567, had refused to bow to the authority of the officers of Bristol.

\(^{119}\) ‘let’ – i.e. prevent.

\(^{120}\) ‘narrowly’ – i.e. carefully or rigorously.

\(^{121}\) ‘starcke blynde’: stark blind – i.e. completely blind. The implication is that at Gloucester, if the customs officers were lax, the farmers and corn merchants would turn a ‘blind eye’ to any illicit lading. This is in supposed contrast to Bristol, where it is implied that victuallers and other locals would keep a check on illicit grain exports, presumably out of a desire to keep food prices low.

\(^{122}\) ‘the purveyor’: the man charged with obtaining grain to feed the troops in Ireland.

\(^{123}\) ‘incident charges’ – i.e. necessary charges incurred in the performance of a role or duty.

\(^{124}\) The claim was that the regular supply of grain to Bristol at each ‘spring’ tide was sufficient to fulfil the purveyor’s requirements and that, if he took the whole supply, it would be easy to arrange for the additional needs of the city.

\(^{125}\) ‘aucthorytie’: authority.

\(^{126}\) Being a head port, the officers of Gloucester would have to account directly to the Exchequer, rather than merely to the officers at Bristol.

\(^{127}\) ‘the Quenes service in Ireland’ – i.e. for the English troops campaigning in Ireland.

\(^{128}\) ‘the Justices’: Justices of the Peace.

\(^{129}\) The suggestion was that, even when cockets were obtained, the Gloucester officers could restrain shipment to Bristol if they felt the grain was needed elsewhere.

\(^{129}\) To Gloucester. Also there are officers in those partes of Wales which dothe lett\(^ {129}\) the cariage therof into forreyn Countries, and so lesse daunger & inconvenyence of transportinge byonde the Seas /

\(^{124}\) The claim was that the regular supply of grain to Bristol at each ‘spring’ tide was sufficient to fulfil the purveyor’s requirements and that, if he took the whole supply, it would be easy to arrange for the additional needs of the city.

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The officers of Bristowe sithence the letters patentes granted, cannot make cockettes to serve up Severne: neither are theye allowed but at their pleasure at Gloucester. The trade of merchaundize & shipping of Bristowe is hurt and hindered by asmuch as the trade of Gloucester is amended by tornying the Creeks into portes and by having a Custome howse there. But if no trade of merchandize be thereby encreased then was it nedele to have a Custome howse and to torn their Creeks into portes. The Irishemens licences woulde be better perused at Bristowe then at Gloucester and nevertheles be allowed to provyde their grayne at Gloucester. That service into Irelande with grayne woulde the serviceable shippes in Bristowe be gladd to doe.

20 The like and same trade which Bristol men had in tymes, they doe now continually use and enjoye without let of any in Gloucester. They have the caruyage of their owne and their neighbors colored Clothes, of lead, tynne, kerseis, of the Clothes made in Gloucester shere and of diverse other Comodities, they have the trade of wynes, oiles, oad, madder, and all other forreyne Comodities from forreyne partie as freely as ever they had, and are not interrupted nor hindered, for as ~ their navie is not decreased, So is not the navie or Boates in the portes nere Gloucester any waye encreased /

21 The Irishe men neither have nor can have any grayne from Gloucester without lycence, That which they have by lycence, hindereth Bristol no more then ~ in tymes past it did, their accesse beinge nowe none other then heretofore, And it is lyfter, theis ~ Irishmen (her majesties pore Subiectes which bringeth with them fishe for the provision of our Country) should fetche their Corne of suche as doe breede the Comodytie thereof, rather then at Bristoll at the second or third hande, to their greater ympovishment, And yet there have not come above foure Irishe boates since ~ therecetion of that porte /

22 This Article is before answered in the answere to the x Article / yf any of theis smale Barkes doe offend against the Lawes, they are to be punyshed And dyvers of the smale barkes of Gloucester shere have also of late and heretofore continually ben emploied to the service of Irelande.

130 Bristol thus did not deny Gloucester’s assertion that cockettes issued by the Bristol officers could be recognised at Gloucester. However, it was suggested that such recognition was purely at the discretion of the Gloucester officers and it was claimed that the cockettes issued at Bristol for ‘up Severn’ (i.e. beyond Gloucester) were not recognised at all. The validity of this argument turns on whether Gloucester was made a head port to encourage the development of its foreign trade, or whether the intention was merely to cut down on smuggling.

131 ‘tynne’: tin.
132 ‘kerseis’: kerseys – a type of woollen cloth.
133 ‘wynes, oiles, oad, madder’: wines, olive oil, woad and madder. Woad and madder are dyestuffs.
134 ‘navie’: navy – i.e. merchant marine.
135 This implies that the Bristol officers would be willing to allow Irishmen to ship grain from Gloucester, having first presented their licences at Bristol – albeit they would then presumably have to take the grain to Bristol for weighing and declaration, as required by the 1543 Act.
136 ‘Subjectes’: subjects.
137 ‘breede’: breed – i.e. grow.
138 Bristol asserts that their great ‘seviceable’ ships (i.e. those of c. 75 tons burden and above) would be happy to be employed in shipping grain to Ireland. This seems unlikely, given that Bristol’s great ships rarely engaged in the trade to Ireland during the sixteenth century: Susan Flavin & Evan T. Jones (eds.), Bristol’s Trade with Ireland and the Continent: The Evidence of the Exchequer Customs Accounts (Dublin, 2009).
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140 Gloucester claims here that its small ships were being employed to supply the English forces in Ireland with grain.
This article is already answered. / 141

[23] The purveyors have all waies receyved their provision without Cockett taken or fees or Customs paid,142 and lesse charge ariseth to her majestie by the purveyors beinge at Gloucester ~ where the Country yeldeth grayne and victuall better and more plentiful to serve the necessitie of service then at Bristoll that hath the same at the second hande /

[24-25] Theis articles which concern not the Cytie of Gloucester are to be answered by the officers of Cardiff and other Creekes and portes in Wales whom it concerneth. /

[26] This the Queenes majesties laufull graunte by her highnes lettres patentes made unto the maior and Burgesses of the Cytie of Gloucester upon their humble sute146 to her highnes of the porte & Creekes in the Ryver of Severn before mentioned to be places of Ladinge and discharginge and of ordeyninge a Customer and Comptroller147 properlie belonginge to the same, passed not upon suggestion of untried matter, but after great profe and experience by triall had, that the Creekes aforesaid were more aptly and truely served for her majesties benefytt by the offycers from Gloucester, then they wolde be by the officers of Bristoll beinge so farr distant from them. The Lorde threasorer of England (whose place and office this cause moste properlie doth concerne) upon the humble sute of the said maior & Burgesses of Gloucester and conference first had with the Chamberleyne & officers of Bristoll in the behalf of the Cytie of Bristoll, And after full hearinge of the reasons and profes of eche 148 partie, his Lordship with greate deliberacion, consideracion and vewe by him self in person made of the fynes of the place did for the causes heretofore set donne, and for diverse other reasons appoint a Customer at Gloucester accordinge to the tenor of the same lettres patentes for her majesties more availe and better service, and for the ease Comodytie and greater furtherance of her highnes Subjectes. /

By force of this graunt the Citie and Citizens of Gloucester dothe not, nor cannot use any other or greater trade to the Sea, then they did, and mighte laufully before ~ have done when they made their entries at Bristoll, neither worketh the same her majesties graunte any other chaunge or alteracion, to or of the Cytie of Bristoll or of their trade but only a libertie and ease to the Quenes Subjectes of not stayinge their shippes and Barkes in the Channell of ~ Kyng rode at their Comynge home subjecte there to

Then in vayne and to no purpose have there a Custom howse at Gloucester

And nedeles it was to torne the Creekes into portes.

To sende to Bristowe to make their entrie or to sende to Gloucester which be in manner of even distance from Gatcomb is a

141 See Bristol’s response to Article 18.
142 Grain bought for the Crown’s service in Ireland did not pay custom, although the goods were entered in the port books. It is noted here that no fees were paid to the customs officers for entering such shipments (as happened with commercial consignments) and that fees were not charged for issuing cockets on such shipments either.
144 ‘untryed’: untried – i.e. unproven.
145 A reference to the 1543 Act. See Bristol’s petition, Article 12.
146 ‘sute’: suit.
147 ‘comptroller’: controller – i.e. a subsidiary customs officer who took an independent record of goods shipped to act as a check on frauds perpetrated by the customer.
148 ‘eché’: each.
Bristol’s point was that, since ships could not generally sail beyond Gatcombe, merchants would have to travel up from Gatcombe to Gloucester to declare their imported goods and get a cocket issued before any unlading could take place.

This implies that before Gloucester had been made a head port its merchants had not been required to send their inbound goods up to Bristol for declaration. However, they had been forced to anchor in Kingroad while a merchant went up to declare the goods at the customs house in Bristol. A cocket would then have been issued, which could be checked by the searcher of Bristol if required. The cocket was presumably also presented to the ‘clerk of the creeks’ at Gloucester, who would have been expected to check the goods against the cocket when the merchandise was unloaded.

'stayinge lx myles' – i.e. delaying 60 miles.

Gloucester’s council took the decision to build the customs house on 9 June 1581: Gloucester Archives, BBR/B/3/1 fo. 74v.

'juste': just.

'serviceable maryners’ – i.e. mariners fit to serve in the Queen’s navy.

'tillage’ – i.e. arable cultivation.
July 1582

The Aunswere of the Maior &c of Glocester, to the Complaint of them of Bristoll\textsuperscript{156}

[Annotation in the hand William Cecil]\textsuperscript{157}
Sir William Wyntar\textsuperscript{158}
Thomas Throgmarton\textsuperscript{159}
Richard Pates\textsuperscript{160}
Thomas Hanram

\textsuperscript{156} This is written sideways across the folio. The fold lines suggest this was originally the cover of Gloucester’s answer.

\textsuperscript{157} These four names are in the hand of William Cecil, Lord Burghley (Lord Treasurer, 1572-1598). They record the names of the four commissioners appointed to investigate the matter, the main business of the commission being conducted in January 1583: TNA:PRO, E 134/25Eliz/Hil3.

\textsuperscript{158} Sir William Winter was a noted sea captain and naval administrator who came from Bristol: David Loades, ‘Winter, Sir William (c.1525-1589)’, \textit{Oxford Dictionary of National Biography} (OUP, 2004).

\textsuperscript{159} Presumably Thomas Throckmorton of Tortworth in South Gloucestershire.

\textsuperscript{160} Richard Pate was a rich and influential Gloucestershire lawyer, who represented the county as M.P. on a number of occasions: Stephen Wright, ‘Pate, Richard (1516–1588)’, \textit{Oxford Dictionary of National Biography}, (OUP, 2004); TNA:PRO, E 134/25; Eliz/Hil3, East14.