

PRIVATEERING AND THE REVOLT OF THE NETHERLANDS: THE *WATERGEUZEN* OR SEA BEGGARS IN PORTSMOUTH, GOSPORT AND THE ISLE OF WIGHT 1570-71

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to examine English relations with the Dutch Watergeuzen or Sea Beggars by reference to a survey of shipping in the ports of Hampshire dated 24 July 1570 and a letter from Sir Henry Radecliff, the Captain of Portsmouth, to the Privy Council dated 21 May 1571, both in the Public Record Office, London. These documents tell of the Sea Beggars' presence on the Hampshire coast in the early years of the tumults that became known as the Revolt of the Netherlands or the Eighty Years' War. The letter of 21 May 1571, which throws light on the close links formed by certain Englishmen with the Sea Beggars, is significant since these privateers by their very nature did not tend to leave detailed accounts of their activities.

According to tradition the Revolt of the Netherlands, or the Eighty Years' War as it is known to the Dutch, began in 1568 with the execution of counts Egmont and Hoorne in June of that year and ended in 1648 when Spain recognised the independence of the Dutch Republic. But already in 1566 government forces had put down Calvinist insurrections. In the spring of that year a group of the local nobility demanded that the government of Philip II should cease to persecute religious dissidents and develop, in consultation with the States General, a policy which took account both of the strength of support for Protestants and the commercial interests of the country. In the summer the Calvinists in Flanders openly challenged the authorities by holding open-air services. With their ministers denouncing the mass and the images as idolatrous, it was only to be expected that sooner or later the hotheads among them would attack the churches. In August 1566 the image-breaking began in

Flanders from where it spread to most of the other provinces. As a result of the assault on the churches the governing classes rallied behind the government in Brussels, which gradually regained the initiative.

By the early spring of 1567 the forces of the government had easily suppressed the last pockets of Calvinist resistance. Large numbers of those implicated in the political and religious disturbances fled abroad to Germany and England. Foremost among those who left at this time was William of Nassau, Prince of Orange (1533-84), the leading nobleman in the Low Countries. Though no Calvinist, Orange was shrewd enough to realise that the duke of Alba, who had been appointed to put down the rebellion, would hold him, along with the other high nobility, largely responsible for the disorders. In exile Orange emerged as the unchallenged leader of the resistance to Philip II and Alba. To that end he employed all the means at his disposal to recover his estates, confiscated by the Crown, and his honour. He mounted military campaigns in 1568, 1570 and 1572 in the hope of inciting a general insurrection against Alba.

The captains and crews of the *Watergeuzen* or Sea Beggars were recruited from among the refugees. Many of them came from the maritime provinces of Holland, Zeeland, Friesland and Groningen, where substantial numbers had found employment in the fisheries or the carrying trades. In exile they turned to piracy and preyed upon shipping in the North Sea in order to earn a living, though some may have been motivated by a desire to wreak vengeance against Alba's government. In the spring of 1568 Orange's

younger brother, count Louis of Nassau, enlisted their services. In April the count led a large mercenary army out of Emden and into Groningen, gaining victory over the royal forces at Heiligerlee on 23 May, followed, however, by his own defeat by Alba on 21 July at Jemmingen. Consequent upon his invasion, the count had found himself in need of ships with which to protect his supply route into the Eems estuary (Parker 1985, 121–2). A number of vessels were hired and equipped in Emden, others being supplied under contract fully equipped by a local pirate, one Jan Abels. By July, Nassau's fleet numbered some fifteen ships operating out of Delfzijl. The disaster of Jemmingen temporarily depriving them of a port, Abels and other captains undertook indiscriminate privateering, preying upon shipping by virtue of letters of marque or commissions granted by Nassau. Early in 1569 and subsequently, Orange issued a number of letters of marque to the Sea Beggar captains, authorising them to levy war upon Alba and to fly at their mastheads a flag comprising the prince's heraldic device of the lion of Nassau on a field of three longitudinal stripes: orange, white and blue (Wedgwood 1944, 111).

As a sovereign ruler by virtue of his tiny French principality, Orange claimed the legal right to fly his own flag on the high seas. The importance to Orange of publicly basing his resistance on law and on his status as an independent sovereign is well known, for as a rebel he was liable to be disowned by foreign governments at any time. In the grey world of sixteenth-century maritime ventures there was, however, but a fine distinction between lawful privateering and outright piracy, and to all intents and purposes the Sea Beggars were beyond the effective control of Orange or anyone else. Their title was derived from that given to the political and religious opponents of the policies of Philip II: the Beggars (Dutch *Geuzen*, French *Gueux*). During the 1570s and for long after, they preyed upon Channel and North Sea shipping of all nations, including English, as a means of supply. They and their English and French associates were particu-

larly active in the vicinity of Portsmouth and the Isle of Wight.

It should not be supposed that the *Watergeuzen* were psalm-singing, seagoing Calvinists. Rather, they were of an altogether more sinister type whose excesses were Orange's despair. Described by their own commanders as a godless, cutthroat brood, they undertook many raids on the coasts of the Low Countries, terrorising the civilian population. Until their expulsion by Elizabeth they acted from the shelter of English ports, often cooperating with the French Huguenot fleet at La Rochelle and elsewhere. Elizabeth and her Council found themselves having to deal with an insubordinate naval force, manned by rebels against an ostensibly friendly power. Government found itself greatly exercised. Witness the Council's repeated injunctions against the lucrative activities of the Sea Beggars and others professing to hold a lawful commission of some kind, to say nothing of those whose piratical status was never in doubt and who never lacked influential backers. Certain of the Crown's own officials in the localities were quite prepared to turn a blind eye to piracies and other malpractices in return for a *douceur*, the Vice-Admirals in the maritime shires – such as Edward Horsey in the Isle of Wight – being exceptionally well placed to profit from illicit dealings with pirates and privateers. Unable to restrain Sea Beggar excesses and fearing imminent breach with Spain, after repeated efforts Queen and Council at least effected their expulsion from English ports in March 1572. On 1 April 1572 under the command of Guillaume de la Marck, lord of Lumey, the Sea Beggars took the fishing port of Den Briel on the Maas estuary, which in the event proved a foothold from which the rebels could continue military operations against Alba.

Primary sources allude to the Sea Beggars' activities at Dover, Sandwich, Rye and other English ports. In the summer of 1570 their presence was noted at Portsmouth. On 11 July 1570 the Privy Council commanded the realm's Vice-Admirals to stay all ships of thirty tons and upwards and all mariners within their respective jurisdictions, and to

make a return of the same (*APC VII*, 376). In the survey of the ports of Hampshire dated 24 July 1570 conducted by Sir Adryan Ponynge, Vice-Admiral of the county, there appear eight vessels in Portsmouth harbour (*PRO SP 12/71/57.1*). Six are described as being 'of Emden': *fflienge spright*, her master one William Kloysin; *sea knight*, master John Roaver; *Abraham*, master Cornelis Aiphersun; *Aspe*, master Harman Peters; *Mychel Arkaindel*, master John Ffastyno; and *horse bayarde*, master Harman Harmonsun. Ponynge also noted a ship of Zeeland, the *golden hande*, master unnamed, and one Danish vessel.

The importance to the Dutch rebels of Emden in East Friesland is well known, both as a home to religious refugees and as a base for rebel printing-presses which disseminated Calvinist propaganda. In Philip II's own words, 'For more than forty years it has been another Geneva and the receptacle for the heretics of Frisia, Holland and other parts of my estate' (Maltby 1983, 171). While the ships at Portsmouth in 1570 are not specifically described as those of the King of Spain's rebels, it is highly likely that they belonged to the Sea Beggar fleet, the description 'of Emden' covering a multitude of sins; the more so as we know that at about this time the count of Emden, fearing Alba's wrath, expelled a number of their vessels from his dominions (Brandt 1979, 290). Nor is their presence there surprising when one considers the importance of Portsmouth where, Dietz observes, while the mayor complained that the Sea Beggars' presence had inflated the price of food and forced the poorer inhabitants to leave, for the most part the townsfolk seem to have welcomed the profitable if at times troublesome visitors (Dietz 1959, 327-8).

There survives evidence from the following year of close links formed between Englishmen and Sea Beggars at Portsmouth. In mid-May 1571 Sir Henry Radecliff, the Captain of Portsmouth – and as such, responsible for the town's military defences – received certain orders of the Privy Council (*APC VIII*, 27-8). After commending Radecliff's diligence in searching out one Captain Jacques, a Frenchman 'that

pretendeth to serve the Prince of Orange', their Lordships directed that 'so far as his authority doth reach he suffer none of the Queen's subjects to have any traffic nor to buy, sell or make exchange for merchandises either with him or others that pretend to serve by foreign commission upon pain of punishment'. Radecliff was further willed to endeavour to withdraw any Englishmen serving under foreign commissions, 'their doings not well pleasing her Highness.' The Council's orders were directed against English cooperation with the *Watergeuzen* and other sea rovers, an ever-present problem in the coastal districts, home to pirates and privateers. The Sea Beggars' arrival in strength in the Channel in 1571 as studied by Dietz, and their ever-increasing use of English ports, ensured that the Council's difficulties became all the more acute (Dietz, 294 ff).

The Council's problems are attested to by a letter dated 21 May 1571 from Radecliff to the Council, surviving in the Public Record Office (*PRO SP 12/78/15*). After giving an enlightening account of Portsmouth's armed might, Sir Henry informs their Lordships of the presence in Portsmouth harbour of a number of ships in the service of the Prince of Orange. Notably, he relates that there came to these ships a number of vessels which had participated in recent raids upon 'certain islands upon the coast of Flanders called the Vlie and the Texel', Flanders being then used as a general name for the collection of provinces and lordships that constituted the Habsburg Netherlands. They bore a rich cargo therefrom: chalices, silver and gilt, copes, vestments, linen, broad cloth and carpets, 'so as it should seem their spoil was great.' Without doubt, this is a reference to one of the many Sea Beggar descents, from the shelter of English and French ports, upon the coasts of the Low Countries, the victims in this case being the churches – to judge by the ecclesiastical nature of the spoil – on the islands of Vlieland and Texel off the coast of North Holland.

The Sea Beggars did, indeed, raid Texel on 25 March 1571 and other villages in North Holland between then and early April (De Meij 1972, 311). Such raids were common-

place, aimed at securing ransom and booty. Someone among the crews would usually have local knowledge, the intent being to ransack the church and other valuables and hold the local notables to ransom, as at Monnikendam on the Zuyder Zee in this same year. As Dietz observes, by its very nature the Sea Beggar Channel fleet – numbering some fifty in May 1571 – depended for its maintenance on prize, and under pressure from restive crews some captains sailed considerable distances in search of booty, with a resultant loss of formation and discipline (Dietz, 304). One might have expected the haul from Vlieland and Texel to have been taken to the notorious Mead Hole on the Isle of Wight for disposal rather than brought into harbour, but it seems the intention was to supply the Beggar warships direct, as distinct from selling the spoil on the local market (see Crawford 1952).

Radecliff in his letter of 21 May 1571 gives further details of the Sea Beggars' activities, initiated by the hiring from one 'Robinson of Hampton' of a ship named the *Griffyn*, of seventy tons, by one of the company of 'captain Sconwaie'. The writer has been unable to learn any more of the identity of 'Robinson of Hampton'. 'Sconwaie', however, is almost certainly a corruption of Schoonewal or Schoonewalle. There were at least two Sea Beggar captains of this name, both of the lesser nobility: one, *jonker* Jacques Caron de Schoonewal (d. 1573), lord of Schoonewal, second in command of the Sea Beggar Channel fleet under de Lumbres and subsequently under Guillaume de la Marck after de Lumbres left his command in Autumn 1571 (*NNBW* VI, 1229–30); the other, *jonker* Robert de Belle – or de Bailleul – lord of Schoonewalle in French Flanders (*NNBW* VI, 97). The first-named, at least, is known to have been active in this locality. Already in November 1570 the Spaniards were bemoaning his activities: 'The pirate Schonvall recently seized six rich Dutch smacks bound for Rouen and is hurrying forward the sale of his booty in the Isle of Wight . . . [the Council] have ordered the captain of the island to take possession of the vessels, and punish (as they say) the pirates. But it has

all been done so tardily that I expect the property will be dispersed . . .' (*CSP Span* II, 285. *NNBW* VI, 1230 identifies Schonvall with *jonker* Jacques Caron de Schoonewal). Notwithstanding, the same Spaniard did by October 1571 entertain some hopes, in vain, of Schoonewal: 'M. de Lumbres has gone to France with over one hundred thousand crowns in cash intending to buy a barony. Schonvall remains in his place. He has a brother of the habit of St John in Antwerp and this might be a means of converting him and his fleet to your Majesty's service.' (*CSP Span* II, 347).

We learn of Sea Beggar operations in the Solent, Radecliff telling of the embarkation at Stokes Bay in Gosport of forty English crew, together with two Dutchmen as captains: one *Constante*, 'lieutenant to Sconwaie', the other, one *Hector*. Certainly, Stokes Bay would have afforded an ideal venue for such escapades (Fig 1). Years later in 1587 the earl of Sussex, Lord Lieutenant of Hampshire, considered it a prime anchorage for the feared Spanish fleet: '... the Roade of Stoakes baie and browne downe where maie ride a Thousand saile of the greatest ships in Seaven: ten or fiftene fadome water at lowe water which Roade is three miles longe at the leaste and after three quarters floode a ship of iiij tie or a c : tons maie put her nose a grounde and come of againe . . .' (Williams 1972). 'Sconwaie' evidently had little difficulty in recruiting considerable numbers of Englishmen. This says much of the extent to which subjects ignored governmental directives against serving under foreign commissions or succouring pirates and foreign privateers, these events being almost contemporaneous with the Council's orders of mid-May 1571 referred to above.

By Radecliff's account, these men proceeded to capture three vessels which they manned and which were taken from them by 'captain Brederode's lieutenant'. The captain referred to was probably Lancelot, called the Bastard of Brederode, the illegitimate half-brother of the famous Hendrik van Brederode (d 1568) who was lord of Vianen in the county of Holland and one of the leaders of the

disaffected nobles during the Time of Troubles in 1566–67. 'Brederode's lieutenant', we learn, thereupon departed for La Rochelle to meet Louis of Nassau – 'Lodowicke' – with the intent of mustering a fleet and sailing to Zeeland or West Friesland 'for spoil and gain'.

In April 1571 Louis of Nassau did, indeed, attend a French Reformed synod at La Rochelle, and was there again in August. Regarding the intentions of these men for Zeeland and West Friesland, Alba had many problems in dealing with Sea Beggar attacks operating from English and French ports. Not least of the duke's difficulties was that he was not particularly well supplied with warships and, moreover, in the shallow waters of Zeeland and the great estuaries one needed vessels of comparatively shallow draft. At last, we read, 'This ship called the *Griffyn* is returned unto Stokes Bay her men dispersed and those that were taken in the hulks before specified sit ashore sore beaten.' Co-operation between the *Watergeuzen* and Huguenot fleets and those Englishmen who for whatever motives – whether through religious sympathy, or probably more frequently for baser reasons – supported or became associated with them, has been well documented by Dietz and others. Also, in the same year Louis of Nassau put forward a number of schemes for operations against Alba which, had they been implemented, would have involved England and France in co-operation with the Dutch rebels with the intent of partitioning the Low Countries among Orange, France and England (Maltby 1983, 203).

Radecliff further informs the Council that, 'There be divers other barques belonging to these men and gone to sea with them manned with Englishmen . . .', naming three captains: Worley, Gyles and Bowrowes. Evidently, piratical spoil found a ready market in the vicinity of Portsmouth, Bowrowes having recently disposed of a considerable quantity of wine which he had seized off the coast of France. After describing how he arrested the person, vessel, and crew of Bowrowes – the boat and some of the crew being surprised at anchor between Southsea and Hayling Island – Sir Henry relates that a deputation of local

worthies complained to him of the untrustworthiness of their servants who boasted that they had no need to work for their masters as they 'might make their share at sea within one week four or five pound . . .'. This indicates in no uncertain terms the attractions for Englishmen of co-operating with the *Watergeuzen* and other pirates and privateers.

Thereupon ordering a secret search to be made in the town for all idle persons, Radecliff apprehended twenty 'tall and serviceable' men who confessed that many of them had been involved in recent piracies not only as members of the ship's company of the *Griffyn*, but many also with Bowrowes and the rest with other sea rovers. The men taken into custody were from different shires in East Anglia and the South: Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex, Kent, Wiltshire and Berkshire. Trafficking in piratical spoils was widespread along the south coast, Dietz observing on the circumstances of 1571 that, 'Prize was sold freely the length of the south and west coast, and purchases were made with like freedom in London where the Sea Beggars moved about openly on business and pleasure.' (Dietz 1959, 327). Nor were these the only Englishmen in the locality so occupied, Radecliff informing the Council of forty or fifty outside his jurisdiction 'of the same company and faculty watching but for shipping to go to sea.' Having committed the twenty 'masterless men' to the custody of the mayor of Portsmouth, Radecliff doubted not that, 'as they be sea men and strangers I think they will hardly find sureties and their long lying will be their undoing.'

The activities of the Sea Beggars at Portsmouth in 1570–71 by no means represent the only link between the south coast and foreign privateers and pirates, although evidence as detailed as Radecliff's is rare. As early as 1568, Huguenot privateers working the English Channel had menaced Anglo-Spanish relations: the episode of Alba's treasure ships, which provoked a diplomatic rift and trade embargo between Spain and England which was not resolved until May 1573 (Read 1933). The Isle of Wight, too, witnessed the activities of the Sea Beggars and other privateers. Be-

tween 1565 and 1583 Edward Horsey – from 1577 Sir Edward – was Captain and Vice-Admiral of the Island. One of the Channel rovers in Mary's reign, during his tenure of office Horsey permitted the Island to become one of the main bases of French, Dutch and English freebooters, while in 1572 he set forth Captain James Ranse, who joined Drake in the West Indies, and in 1578 supported Sir Humphrey Gilbert's venture with which William Hawkins was also associated, a venture aiming to establish a North American base for raiding Spanish shipping (Andrews 1964, 18). In May 1570, having been complained of by the French and Spanish ambassadors, Horsey denied that either he or the Islanders were succouring French privateers commissioned by the Queen of Navarre (PRO SP 12/69/22).

Protesting that he had convened an Admiralty court to enquire into piracies, as well as using secret spying and other means, Horsey had found, supposedly, that the value of piratical goods brought into the island did not exceed ten pounds. This is surely disingenuous. Indeed, Horsey in the same letter admits that, 'Some gentleman haply may have bought for his provision a hogshead of wine, some poor man a bushel of corn or salt. And I myself perhaps have had two or three pieces of wine sent me. And this doth not grow to any great matter.' When holding his Admiralty Court to deal with the French and Spanish allegations, it would have been easy enough for Horsey to accept denials at their face value without enquiring too stringently. Given the prevailing attitudes to lucrative piracies, one suspects that he would not have insisted overmuch on an inquisitorial procedure aimed at securing the truth: 'In the accommodating moral climate for the practice of piracy at this time, these people might at one time be regarded as criminals, at another as benefactors' (Jones 1978, 187).

In Horsey's career can be seen the difficulties of a government reliant upon co-operation between the Crown and a largely unsalaried gentry in the shires; problems that became all the more acute in the coastal areas, home to piracies and privateering. In his letter

of 29 May 1570 Horsey further informed Cecil that 'These men of war and their prizes, lie commonly at Mead Hole'. We have already touched on the notoriety of Mead Hole as a market for piratical spoil. Consequent upon the stay of shipping ordered by the Council in July 1570, Horsey conducted a survey of mariners and vessels in the vicinity of the Island. On 23 July 1570, in forwarding the return to the Council, he notified their Lordships of sixty-six English mariners at Mead Hole, 'where in divers ships divers English mariners were found', along with a number of French privateers in the service of the Queen of Navarre: 'The French captains have ten sail of ships well trimmed in warlike order and aboard them as I can learn three hundred of their nation as well mariners as others' (PRO SP 12/71/54 and 54.1).

Upon being informed of the stay of shipping, the French captains protested their willingness to enter English service and gave Horsey their hands not to depart without the Council's leave. The Spaniards certainly had no illusions as to the kind of transactions conducted at Mead Hole, as witness de Spes writing to his king in June 1570: 'I thought well to send Bautista de San Vitores to the Isle of Wight to see what was going on there. There are sixteen ships at the island, not very good but well manned with English and Frenchmen, who, however, are for the most part low scamps. In a town on the island called Medol there is a great fair of spices, wines, wool, saffron, oil, soap, woad and a great number of other goods stolen from your Majesty's subjects and some from French and Portuguese' (*CSP Span II*, 245). In August of the following year, de Spes was lamenting the activities of the Sea Beggars on the south coast: 'They have enriched that place, the Isle of Wight, and nearly all the coast . . . Mean knaves come hourly from the Netherlands to join these people, and not a ship sails that they do not know the hour of her leaving and her point of departure. There are other ships belonging to Englishmen, which are robbing in the same way' (*CSP Span II*, 328–9). Allowing for a degree of exaggeration, it is no wonder that de Spes felt aggrieved.

In these circumstances, Spanish allegations of governmental collusion with the *Watergeuzen* and other privateers and pirates, though mistaken, are very understandable, although as was the case with Horsey there were certainly *local* royal officers who feathered their nests by such connivance. In October 1571 we find Horsey writing to Burghley of the 'disordered and continual spoil committed on the sea by certain fly boats and other vessels, which cover their lewd dealings by the Prince of Orange's commission' (Kervyn de Lettenhove 6, 184–5). Yet once again, Horsey felt constrained to deny trafficking with sea rovers: '... if ever I bought or by any other means have come by, directly or indirectly, any part of the goods taken in this disorderly sort, let me not only receive the shame thereof, but also have your Lordship's displeasure. Perhaps some persons of greater wealth than I might by the hope of greedy gain been carried away so far, as to have in some points forgotten their duties ...'.

Did Burghley believe him? One cannot help feeling that Horsey protested too much. Yet when government depended upon co-

operation between the Crown and a largely unsalaried gentry in the shires, it was found expedient to continue Horsey in office – from which he was discharged only by his death in 1583. While much of the evidence is circumstantial Horsey, like many others, can hardly be acquitted of gaining by illicit dealings with both foreign and native pirates and privateers: authors of 'great wrongs, spoils ... losses [and] insolencies ... a matter in no wise convenient to be suffered within Her Highness's own streams' (Kervyn de Lettenhove 7, 66).

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APPENDIX

21 May 1571 Sir Henry Radecliff to the Council (PRO SP 12/78/15)

It may please yor honors the xiiij th of this Instant Sir Henry Wallopp and Sir William Kyngsmill and Jhon Basinge captaine of sowthsaie castle repaired hyther beinge the Quenes Majesties comysioners to vew and survaie the Isle and towne of portismoth with all fortificacons ordinnance armor and munystons with a muster to be had of the able men of the same towne and Isle and of their armor weapons and other furnytures which ys by them accomplisshed as by their letters and certificat under their handes together with myne to yor honors may more plainlie apeire And where we have certified yor honors of one hundred able men of the Isle and townes men I assure yor honors they were the barest and meanest servisable that I have seene and not

onlie unexperte and untrayined but also unfurnished for amongst threscore and eight bill men there was but tenn swordes and daggers, without any other kynde of armor or furnytüre as by our booke dothe apeire; nevertheles to anymate them to learne and practise them selves hereafter to be made more servisable, I spake the best of them and semed to sett them fourth. The harquebuseres were as farr untrained and unredi for amonghtes three and twenty which were alowed servisable not fyve of them shott within fyve fote of a marke beinge sett within fourescore yardes of them / Yor honors shall further understand that there lie diverse shippes appertaynyng to the prince of orange unto whom came certaine barks named the flie botes whoe had byn at the spoilinge of certaine llandes upon the cost of fflanners called the flie and the tassell they had in them of the spoile chalissis sylvor and

gylt coopes and vestmentes lynnen cloth brod cloth and carpaids soe as yt shold seame their spoile was great /

Uppon fridaie was sennyght capitaine Sconwaie one of his company hiered for a moneth of one Robinson of Hampton a shippe of threscore and tenn tonnes called the Griffyn belonginge to one Mr. More of yarmouth in norfolke which shold have byn fraighted by the said Robinson from Rochell they had then but Syxteyne men aborde which were Englesmen but that nyght they toke aboard at stokes baie and those partes fortie Englismen more, and putt too dutche men aborde as captaines of them the one called Constante lyvetenante to Sconwaie the other Hector. / the next Daie beinge at sea they toke three hulkes into which they put sexteyne or eighteine of their men which were the next daie taken from them by one of that company whoe was capitaine Brederos lyvetenante whoe ys departed from them as they saie to goe to Rochell there to meyte Lodowicke the prince of orange brother to whom these men minde to resorte also, and havinge assembled a convenyent fleite for their purpose mynde under the conducte of duke Lodowicke Lombrarne or Lancslott Brewill their admyrall to repaire to zelande or west fresland for spoile and gaine.

This shipp called the Griffyn ys retourned unto stokes baie her men dyspersed and those that were taken in the hulkes before specified sytt ashore sore beaten /

There be dyverse other barkes belonginge to these men and gone to sea with them manned with englishe men as capitaine Worley sonne to Worley the merser of cheape side capitaine Gyles, there was also one called Jacke Bowrowes whoe with a bote of fyve tonnes toke a hoye laden with ffyve and twentie tonnes of wine upon the coast of ffrannce and came to these partes and sold the same wines he went agayne to sea and gettinge no bootie spent his victells and came and rode betwene Southsaie and Halinge and upon satterdaie last havinge intelligence thereof I toke certaine with me a horsbacke and rode thither and fidinge the capitaine and his men absent savinge too that were leifte to kepe the bote I haled them a

shore and put foure or fyve of my men aborde and have brought the bote into the habor of the Towne and by inventory taken a shore the ordennance munysion and victualls, I have also staid the said Jacke Bowros capitaine and owner of the said bote and have delyvered hym unto the mayor to be fourth comynge upon suerties, or ells to be safe kept till yor honors pleasures be further knowen therin /

The fermors and honest inhabitantes with some of the constables of the sea coast adioynynge came to me makinge their moane that they cold not be sure certaine of any servant they had for they wold openlie say that whye shold they serve for fyve nobles or fortie shillinges a yere and myght make their share at sea within one weike foure or fyve pound, and understandinge also of dyverse spoiles of sheipe powltrye and other thinges I caused within my rule and chardge of the Towne a secrett searche to be made for all yldle persons, which beinge donne I founde twentie tall and servisable men by whoes confessions yt apereth they had byn many of them this last Jorney in the shipp calld the griffon and dyverse of them with Jacke Borows and the rest with others and they of severall shiers as norfolke Suffolke essex Kent wilshier and barkeshier / ther be also fortie or fiftie upon this coast but without my rule that be of the same compainye and facultie watchinge but for shippinge to goe to sea / the twentie masterles men that I found within my rule I did commytt (after their examynacons taken) to the maior of the Towne to be eyther fourth comynge upon seuerties when they shalbe called or ells to be sauofflie detained, and for soemuche as they be sea men and stranngers I think they will hardlie fynde suerties and their longe lyinge wilbe their undoinge

Thus cravinge yor Honors pardons of my longe and tedious letter most humble requyre yor honors spedie instructions and order to me aswell for the usinge and receavinge of these strannge shippes their men and hierlinges and in what sortt they may use trafficke, as also for the orderinge and dishchardge of theis people which I have staid

Restinge also allwaies Redie carefullie and

dilligentlie to execute the same and all other her Majesties and yor all orders and Directions to the uttermost of my power, I humblie take

my Leave, ffrom portismoth the xxj th of Maie 1571.

Yor honors most humblie to command
Henry Radecliff

REFERENCES

Abbreviations

- APC *Acts of the Privy Council of England*
CSP Span *Calendar of Letters and State Papers Relating to English Affairs, Preserved Principally in the Archives of Simancas*
NNBW *Nieuw Nederlandsch Biografisch Woordenboek*
PRO Public Record Office
SP State Papers

Manuscript Sources

Public Record Office, London

State Papers, Domestic Series, 12/69/22, 12/71/54 and 54.I, 12/71/65 and 65.I, 12/71/57 and 57.I, 12/71/52, 12/75/12, 12/78/15 and 12/80/31

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