

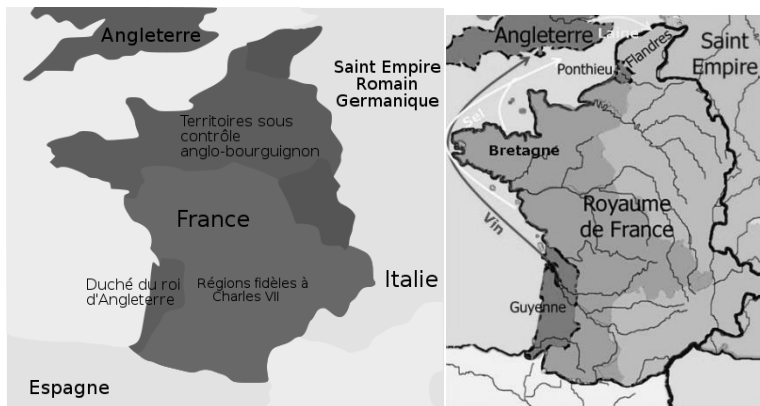
## Master Mariners De Beroby and Bérubé

In the Fall of 2010, we went back in *Le Monde Berrubey*, while carrying on the reflection further, to an hypothesis related to boat masters (captains) *de Berrobi* identified as Southerners, in Antwerp and in England, because they had chosen to settle in the Basque Country. This article was completing a text published in 2000 as a part of chapter 1 of Volume II of *Les Bérubé d'hier et d'aujourd'hui*, a text titled **Bérubé Un nom plein de mystère** (a name full of mystery).

I was mentioning **Michael de Beroby**, a master whose ship made several entrances in the port of Bristol in 1563, surely a relative to Martin de Beroby established in Antwerp around 1553, according to a list of merchants from this city (cf. Volume II, page 18). A **Marten de Beroby** is also identified as a Spaniard bringing a freight of wine in England in another document. The ship of the first one comes from the Basque Country while the second is identified as a Southerner merchant in Antwerp.

What were those *de Berobys* bringing to England? Mainly wine. Bristol was after London the port of entrance for wine in England; there was also iron, for which the Basque Country was already a producer at the time. Bristol was as well the main center for the *Merchant Adventurers*<sup>1</sup>, a group that is progressively taking over the place held by the *staplers*, the powerful corporation of wool merchants, as fast as the England's economy was diversifying. The two big corporations were represented in York, another city where we find the name Beruby, Beroby or Baroby at the time; they were already there for a century in 1472, according to historian Paul Murray Kendall<sup>2</sup>. Bristol is furthermore maintaining a privileged link with Coventry (See John Barube from Coventry under tab *Our History / Roots in England*).

As for Bordeaux, the Basque Country was in great part in the Dukedom of Guyenne, a territory belonging to England, as well as Normandy, until the end of the Hundred Year War, in 1453, as shown by these maps found on Wikipedia.



<sup>1</sup>The most famous was Sebastian Cabot, born in Bristol and a sailor like his father John, an Italian by his roots who, leaving from Bristol, touched the American continent in 1497, notably in Newfoundland.

<sup>2</sup>See **Richard III** published by Fayard Éd. in 1979, page 131.

At page 118 of a book by Jean Vanes published under the title « *Documents illustrating the Overseas Trade of Bristol in the Sixteenth Century* », there is a mention of a master (captain) named **John de Beroby**. The *Merchant Adventurers* were traveling abroad, toward Antwerp for instance, the most important center of European commercial activities at the time. An arrival of John de Beroby's vessel is registered at Bristol in 1545, coming from Errenteria, like Michael's boat. At a distance of eighteen years, this let us presume that John, Michael and Marten were related. They could also descend from a ship-owner, Jehan de Berobi, whose boats were already circulating between Antwerp and the Basque Country at the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. He is identified on a receipt written in French on June 19, 1506 (Volume II Tome of *Les Bérubé d'hier et d'aujourd'hui*, p. 19).

It is written Rendrye as port of registry and Errenteria with « mod. », probably for « modified ». This place was named Renteria by Spaniards and Errenderi by the Basques; Rendrye must evidently correspond to the ancient name given to it by English merchants. Taking into account the proximity of the French border (10 kms) and the instability of



borders at the time, Rendrye was practically linked with Guyenne, which was an English territory for a long period of time. If there is a village named Berrobi in the Basque Country, name that Barby, England, also bore in the 14<sup>th</sup> century, after being called Beruby earlier, it is probably not a coincidence.

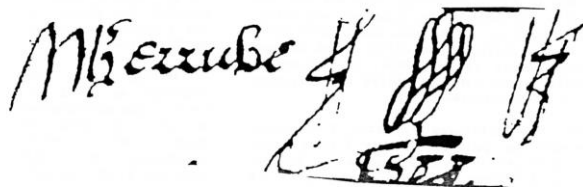
Englishmen were struggling in the beginning of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, because of the continued effects of the plague from the 14<sup>th</sup> century on the English economy. Cities like York or Coventry saw their population declining around the years 1420. A quotation gives an idea of the importance of the English migration at that period: « *Englishmen had been settled deliberately in some Norman towns, as Cherbourg, Caen and Harfleur, and had acquired property in many others. Normandy and the conquered lands in France had become for them a country of opportunity, and, as the records show, considerable numbers crossed the sea in quest of fortune there, the soldiers apart.* »<sup>3</sup> Some of these new inhabitants in France came there in conclusion to survive or to seek fortune. They may have stayed notwithstanding the return of Normandy and Guyenne to France in 1453.

In the British Archives, I found a certificate granted to a merchant, William Richard de Berughby, from Northamptonshire, for a loan of £200 (pounds) obtained from Henry le

<sup>3</sup>This quotation is from a book published in London in 1973 by M.H. Keen, with the title *England in the Later Middle Ages, a Political History*.

Zouche, parson from Berughby, on November 2, 1348. His witness is William Horn, mayor of Coventry. While the village of Barby is named Beroby as well as Berughby in documents from that period, it seems legitimate to ask ourselves if this enormous loan was not granted for the purchase of a boat and if Jean de Berobi doesn't belong to the same lineage as William Richard de Berughby, like other captains *de Beroby* whose traces are found later on.

When we know on the other hand that many Spanish merchants were forced to leave Antwerp at the beginning of the 16th century, because of the troubles affecting the city, and that they went to France, around Nantes and Rouen, there is some reason to ask ourselves if there is not a family link between the first Berrubes from Upper Normandy and these sailors named *de Beroby*. The oldest signature we have, dated 1588, is the one of Marin Berrubé, a priest in charge of a parish in Rouen. But the accents appeared for good in French a little bit later, which let us believe that the priest was in fact signing Berrubi.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Marin Berrubé" followed by a large, stylized flourish. Below the signature, the year "1588" is written in a smaller, simpler hand.

Judge by yourself.

It is not only between the spellings Beruby, Berrube and Beroby, Berrobi of our surname that there is a possible confusion, but also between Baruby, Barube, Baroby and Beroby. We found an interesting trace of a Baroby<sup>4</sup>. On December 27, 1527, **Robert Baroby**, a merchant from London, gave to a fellow citizen, Sir Thomas Archier, who settled in Bordeaux, the power to buy for him different merchandises. He also recognized to him the power to charter boats on his behalf.

This document represents a mandate given by a merchant of London to a fellow citizen living in France. French is the language in use for commercial activities at the time. If our first ancestor in Normandy was involved in commercial activities, it's sure that he didn't have a problem of a linguistic order. On the other hand, Robert Baroby is a contemporary to John Barube who wrote his will at Coventry, in 1519, also a burgess associated to a merchant's guild (See article under *Our History/Roots in England*).

We can't prove that the people mentioned in this text are related. There is nevertheless a conclusion to draw: our surname has, under one spelling or another, traveled a lot, since it has been connected to international business and to sea sailing before the end of the Middle Age.

Later, a Bérubé lineage from Brittany also produced master mariners and captains in the 18th century, whose name is associated to the French navy. An example we can

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<sup>4</sup>See *Revue d'Aquitaine et du Languedoc*, vol 12  
<http://books.google.ca/books?id=0zpNAAAAMAAJ&pg=PA492&dq=baroby&lr=&hl=fr&cd=19#v=onepage&q=baroby&f=false>

remember is about the presence in Madagascar, in 1774, of captain **Bérubé-Dudemaine**, who arrived on the *Bougainville*. His name probably indicates that he is Lord of Du Demaine, as Bertrand Dufresne before him who was commanding a boat of corsairs, the *Comte-de-Revel*, in 1690. There may also be here the beginning of an explanation about a slave, born in 1799 at *Mauritius* (Île Maurice, not far from Madagascar, East from Africa), who was named **Jacques Bérubé**, according to a register of the British Empire.

In the summer of 1992, Paul-Henri Hudon taught us, in addition, in *Le Monde Berrubey* that a captain **Pierre Bérubé**, disembarked from the *St-Esprit*, a boat registered at Bayonne in the Basque Country, was witness in June 25, 1753, of the marriage of François Huard at *Ste-Famille de Pabos*, in Gaspesia, therefore ten years before New France fell under new masters. We know that the Basque ship-owners (names Biscayans at the time) were present at *Saint-Malo* where there were sailors named Bérubé, which make us presumed that this Bérubé may have been recruited there. A 350 tons frigate of corsairs was also named the *Saint-Esprit* in 1690. An author, Manet<sup>5</sup>, signaled (p. 9) this complicity between the Basques, sailors from St. Malo and those from Dieppe. He also says that the Biscayans and Dieppois discovered Newfoundland in 1495 and a few islands on the shores of Canada. This was followed in 1504 by the discovery of Newfoundland grand Banks, rich in cods. This happened before even Jacques Cartier, another well-known captain from St. Malo, officially discovered Canada, in 1534...

Manet was adding in 1824 (p. 72) the name Bérubé to famous « Maloins » who contributed in their time to create a link between our history and many other nations and who, almost from their birth, had an audacious and firm soul that you find only among old sailors trained to face danger. Another author, Charles Cunat<sup>6</sup>, put the name Bérubé (p. 482) on a list of captains who deserved recognition in posterity.

There is finally **Nicolas Bérubé**, also from Saint. Malo, who is lieutenant on *La Liberté*, a 30 tons boat equipped with 12 canons, around 1750. This boat traveled to La Rochelle and Québec. Another Bérubé born in St. Malo in 1756 is also second lieutenant in the French army in 1789. Which one of these Berubes is the most important in the St. Malo history? Charles-Pierre, Nicolas, Jean-Guy (1732-1780)<sup>7</sup>, himself Lord of Du Fresne, or this Pierre Bérubé on the *St-Esprit*, who came in Gaspesia in 1753, but about whom we know nothing else?

There were, in conclusion, Berubes on the seas in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, exactly like people named De Beroby in the 16<sup>th</sup>, which gives us again the opportunity to associate our surname with international commerce and sailing... maybe even pirating!

Michel Bérubé

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<sup>5</sup>[http://books.google.ca/books?id=1chUAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA84&dq=dudemaine&hl=fr&ei=WDajTbSjN-6H0QG63\\_SFBQ&sa=X&oi=book\\_result&ct=result&resnum=8&ved=0CFAQ6AEwBzhG#v=onepage&q=dudemaine&f=false](http://books.google.ca/books?id=1chUAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA84&dq=dudemaine&hl=fr&ei=WDajTbSjN-6H0QG63_SFBQ&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=8&ved=0CFAQ6AEwBzhG#v=onepage&q=dudemaine&f=false)

<sup>6</sup>[http://books.google.ca/books?id=W1koAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA482&dq=berube+%2B+saint-malo&hl=fr&ei=FkqjTZvKOMPFGAf32aXaBQ&sa=X&oi=book\\_result&ct=result&resnum=5&ved=0CD0Q6AEwBA#v=onepage&q&f=false](http://books.google.ca/books?id=W1koAAAAYAAJ&pg=PA482&dq=berube+%2B+saint-malo&hl=fr&ei=FkqjTZvKOMPFGAf32aXaBQ&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=5&ved=0CD0Q6AEwBA#v=onepage&q&f=false)

<sup>7</sup>See Volume II page 161.