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London and beyond

Essays in honour of Derek Keene

Edited by Matthew Davies and James A. Galloway

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Preface

The majority of the chapters in this volume were presented at a conference held in October 2008 at Goodenough College in London. The conference was held to mark the twentieth anniversary of the establishment, within the Institute of Historical Research (IHR), University of London, of the Centre for Metropolitan History (CMH). It was also an opportunity to celebrate the contribution to the CMH and to the field of metropolitan and urban history in general of Derek Keene, founding director of the centre. Derek retired in the summer of 2008, having held the post of Leverhulme professor of comparative metropolitan history at the IHR since 2001. The conference was therefore designed with these twin celebrations in mind, and to that end proved to be a highly stimulating and convivial occasion, which was attended by a large number of Derek's former colleagues as well as many other urban historians. This volume is therefore intended not merely as a record of the conference, but perhaps more importantly as a tribute to Derek Keene.

Any appreciation of Derek's contributions to scholarship must start with the sheer range of his interests as an urban and medieval historian. His papers and published work are characterized by a thoughtfulness and originality, enabling him to think broadly and originally about cities across time and space and to make many significant interventions in ongoing scholarly debates. The list of publications at the end of this volume is eloquent testimony to this diversity. Several themes in particular are worth drawing attention to. First is an appreciation of the integration of material, topographical and archaeological evidence, first apparent in his work on the *Survey of Medieval Winchester*, a project founded and directed by Martin Biddle. At Winchester, Derek acquired first-hand experience of archaeological techniques, including dendrochonology and carbon 14 dating, although his great contribution was to develop a methodology of topographical reconstruction based on the city's rich documentary archive, and to relate the physical evidence of Winchester's historical environment to its social and economic development. This approach became a cornerstone of the 'Social and economic survey of medieval London' (SESML), a project that was funded initially by the Social Science Research Council (forerunner of the ESRC) from 1979 to 1984. The project team, led by Derek, were based at the Museum of London but were employed by the IHR. SESML demonstrated the importance of micro-studies within cities such as London as a means to throw light on much bigger questions, in this case contributing to discussions on the size and complexity of early London and on many of its cultural and economic features, such as shopping and the property market.

The value of this and subsequent projects was recognized by the IHR which, under director Michael Thompson, responded positively in 1987–8 to Derek's proposal that it host a research centre dedicated to the history of London and comparative work on other metropolitan centres. The result was the establishment of the CMH, with Derek as its first director. The notion of a Centre for *Metropolitan* History (as distinct from a Centre for *London* History) is a reflection of another theme in Derek's work – the significance and role as 'metropolises' of large cities as diverse as London, New York and Tokyo. Some of Derek's most important publications have examined characteristics of London's history that reflect its wider position and status as a rapidly growing metropolis in the medieval and early modern periods. These and other themes were the subject matter of the projects he directed at the CMH, securing funding from a range of public bodies and private sector funders. Projects included studies of medieval markets, London's early modern skilled workforce, mortality in nineteenth-century London, and an oral history of the jobbers on the London Stock Exchange.

Many of these projects reflected another key aspect of Derek's approach to historical research and writing, in their stress upon the spatial element – upon mapping, topography and the relationship between London and its hinterland. Influenced by historical geographers such as R. A. Pelham, Derek has always been interested in *where* things happen, as well as why and how, and carefully crafted maps form a key element of many Keene and CMH publications. In his own writing Derek has repeatedly returned to ideas of London's participation in networks of towns and cities and its location within wider political and economic systems, and has explored the notion of London as a 'city state'. The CMH was thus founded not only as a forum for the study of London's history, but also to employ the city as a kind of 'laboratory' for studying broader questions in metropolitan history, comparing London's development with that of other cities in different places and periods. This emphasis was reflected ultimately in the major Leverhulme grant made to the IHR in 2001 specifically for work on comparative metropolitan history, and it was entirely fitting that Derek should hold the chair which was funded as part of that nine-year programme, enabling him to take forward a number of collaborative projects.

Those who were fortunate enough to be involved in the early days of the CMH will remember fondly Derek's infectious enthusiasm for research, his eagerness to hear of new findings and computer analyses as they emerged, and his practicality – shown to great effect when his carpentry skills provided new customized work-stations for the staff in the basement at 34 Tavistock Square! Many aspects of the early projects, although now routine in historical research, were ground-breaking in the late 1980s, including the use of lap-top computers to gather data in archives, the analysis and mapping of large computerized datasets, and collaboration across disciplinary boundaries. Under Derek's leadership, the CMH gained a reputation for the quality and impact of its research programmes, as well as for the many publications, conferences and other events which it continues to facilitate. He led the centre from its early years in Tavistock Square to its re-housing in the slightly grander, and less burglary-prone, surroundings of Senate House. As CMH director, but also as an instinctively collaborative scholar, Derek forged lasting connections with urban historians in many different countries which he has maintained throughout his career, leading to many significant collaborations and projects.

Indeed, much of Derek's work has been characterized by a willingness to scan the horizons of research in urban history, forging partnerships with historians in other countries and disciplines to enrich our understanding of how cities develop and function, not least through his involvement in the International Commission for the History of Towns or the European Association of Urban Historians. A series of meetings between historians of London and Paris during the 1990s proved highly productive, leading among other things to two special issues of the journal *Franco-British Studies* on aspects of the two cities' economic and political development. A major publication on *Cultural Exchange in Early Modern Europe* also came about through just such a series of interactions. As this demonstrated, Derek has not been afraid to take on large-scale projects: another was the prize-winning *St. Paul's: the Cathedral Church of London 604–2004*, which involved Derek and his fellow editors in co-ordinating the efforts of some forty authors and delivering the volume in time for publication to mark the cathedral's 1400th anniversary. Retirement has made little difference in this respect, and he is now taking on the role of general editor of a new multi-volume history of London, as well as writing one of the volumes himself.

Finally, it is important to record some of the other contributions that Derek has made to the study of London history and the historical profession at large. These include a close association with the work of the Museum of London, for which he has provided valuable advice over many years, most recently with the publication of the findings from No. 1 Poultry. For more than twenty years, Derek has also been either a trustee or an editorial committee member (and often both) of *The London Journal*. He has also served on many other academic bodies, including the Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England, the British Historic Towns Atlas Committee, the Winchester Pipe Rolls Committee and the London Advisory Committee of English Heritage, and he is a past president of the London and Middlesex Archaeological Society. Beyond academe, Derek has for many years served on the Urban Panel, a group convened by the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment and English Heritage, to advise on difficult urban planning situations. Back at the IHR, Derek's final year before retirement saw him take on the post of acting director of the institute, before handing over to Miles Taylor in 2008.

In putting this volume together the editors have tried to reflect some of Derek's main interests and contributions, especially during his time at the CMH. Several chapters echo some of the themes of research projects which he directed, such as the relationships between cities and their hinterlands, or the importance of markets and fairs. Other contributions relate to projects established more recently, but which nonetheless owe significant methodological debts to Derek's research, including work on the medieval courts and on neighbourhoods in early modern London. We have also included essays from current and former graduate students, as well as from academic colleagues in London, and in universities elsewhere in the UK and other European countries, who have known and worked with Derek at various stages in his career. As such, the editors hope that the volume will be not only a worthy tribute to Derek's contribution to scholarship, but also a reflection of the regard in which he is held by friends and colleagues. In putting this volume together, the editors are grateful to the IHR's Publications Board for agreeing to publish these essays in its new Conference Series, and in particular would like to thank Emily Morrell, publications project officer in the School of Advanced Study, for typesetting the volume, and Jane Winters, head of publications at the IHR, for copyediting and seeing it through to publication. Olwen Myhill, a constant and integral part of the CMH since its establishment in 1987–8, has been involved in all stages of the production of the volume, and compiled the index and the list of Derek's publications.

Matthew Davies
James A. Galloway
September 2011

List of contributors

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Richard Britnell taught history at the University of Durham and retired as professor there in 2003. He has specialized in the economic history of the medieval period, and has a particular interest in the development of marketing and the impact of commerce upon institutions. These days he focuses on the medieval economy and institutions of northern England.

Matthew Davies succeeded Derek Keene in 2002 as director of the Centre for Metropolitan History at the Institute of Historical Research, University of London, where he is also Professor of Urban History. His research and publications have focused on the history of late medieval London and particularly on the guilds or ‘livery companies’. He has directed or co-directed several major research projects on the history of the city in the medieval and early modern periods, and is a trustee and editorial committee chair of *The London Journal*.

Richard Dennis teaches historical geography at University College London. He is the author of *Cities in Modernity: Representations and Productions of Metropolitan Space, 1840–1930* (Cambridge, 2008) and of numerous papers and book chapters on Victorian and Edwardian London, and also early twentieth-century Toronto. He is a trustee and editorial committee member of *The London Journal* and, first with Derek Keene, and now with Matthew Davies, he co-convenes the Metropolitan History seminar at the IHR.

Christopher Dyer is emeritus professor of regional and local history at the University of Leicester. He has published on the social and economic history, and landscape history, of medieval England. His particular interests include peasants and villages, and the ways in which they changed in the long term. He has also worked on trade and small towns.

James A. Galloway has had an association with the Centre for Metropolitan History since 1988, when he worked as a researcher on one of its inaugural projects, 'Feeding the city'. Follow-up research explored aspects of London's interaction with regional and national economies between the thirteenth and sixteenth centuries. More recently he devised, and was principal investigator on, the 'London and the tidal Thames' project at CMH, funded by the ESRC. He is currently an IHR visiting research fellow.

Carlos López Galviz's research has drawn on architecture (BA), social sciences (MSc) and history (PhD), and focuses on modern European cities. He is currently working on the monograph *Cities, Railways, Modernities: London, Paris and the Nineteenth Century*. More recent work explores the ideas about, and realities of, traffic and congestion and their relationship to contemporary urban transport and planning policy debates.

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Matthew Frank Stevens is lecturer in social and economic history at Swansea University. He was a research officer at the Centre for Metropolitan History from 2006 to 2010, and has been a researcher or lecturer at the universities of Wales (Aberystwyth), Oxford and Nicolaus Copernicus (Toruń, Poland). His interests focus on the interactions of medieval people, both with one another and with social, economic and legal structures. He is the author of *Urban Assimilation in Post-Conquest Wales: Ethnicity, Gender and Economy in Ruthin, 1282–1350* (Cardiff, 2010).

Catherine Wright is completing a PhD thesis on Dutch migrants in Restoration and Augustan London at the Centre for Metropolitan History.

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I. Markets, hinterlands and environments

1. Feeding another city: provisioning Dublin in the later middle ages

Margaret Murphy

Provisioning is arguably the most important element in the complex relationship between towns and their hinterlands. In order to develop and grow, towns need a fertile and productive hinterland. Over time, networks linking rural producers with urban consumers take shape and a symbiotic relationship develops, with towns stimulating rural production and rural producers spending their profits on town goods, which in turn further promotes urban growth. This 'economic cross-fertilization between urban commerce and rural agriculture' has proved a fruitful area for research.[1] Of special interest is the proposition that if towns are sufficiently large, they can shape land use in their hinterlands, encouraging specialization and intensification.

In 1988 the 'Feeding the city' project was set up in the Centre for Metropolitan History with the objective of studying the provisioning of London around the year 1300, when the city was at its medieval population peak.[2] The particular focus of the project was an investigation of the impact of the capital on the agricultural and distributive systems of its rural hinterland, defined as ten surrounding counties. The research was subsequently extended to allow the investigation to be expanded into the later fourteenth century and assess the effect of the Black Death.[3] The projects resulted in a number of publications, including some which explored the grain and fuel trades and estimated the supply zones for these key commodities.[4] Overall, the project concluded that there was evidence that the demands of London influenced land use, crop choice and management techniques in the hinterland area. In the years since 'Feeding the city' concluded, its findings and methodology have been critiqued and emulated in a number of publications.[5] The project also provided inspiration for one of the research modules undertaken as part of the 'Medieval rural settlement' project hosted by the Discovery Programme in Dublin. In 2002 the director of that project proposed a study of settlement and agriculture in the hinterland of medieval Dublin using both documentary source material and archaeological data.[6] The project, which started in 2003, was primarily a study of the countryside but the topic of provisioning was inevitably part of the discussion of the relationship between Dublin and its hinterland. This chapter gives a brief introduction to the medieval Dublin region and presents a synthesis of research relating to provisioning.[7]

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[1] C. Dyer, 'Making sense of town and country', in *Town and Country in the Middle Ages: Contrasts, Contacts and Interconnections, 1100–1500*, ed. K. Giles and C. Dyer (Leeds, 2005), pp. 317–18.

[2] 'Feeding the city (I): London's impact on the agrarian economy of southern England, *c.*1250–1350' (1988–91) was funded by the Leverhulme Trust and directed by Derek Keene of the Centre for Metropolitan History (CMH) and Bruce Campbell of Queen's University, Belfast (for details, see <http://www.history.ac.uk/projects/feeding-the-city1> [accessed 18 June 2011]).

[3] 'Feeding the city (II): London's impact on the agrarian economy of southern England, *c.*1290–1400' (1991–4) was funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (Ref: R000233157) and directed by Derek Keene, Jim Galloway and Margaret Murphy of the CMH and Bruce Campbell of Queen's University, Belfast (for details, see <http://www.history.ac.uk/projects/feeding-the-city2> [accessed 18 June 2011]).

Like London in England, Dublin was placed firmly at the apex of the Irish urban hierarchy and reached its peak medieval population around the year 1300.[8] The cities were not comparable in terms of size and population, with London being some four to eight times bigger than Dublin. In some other respects, however, it is not totally misleading to compare the two capitals and indeed Dubliners themselves frequently did so. In a 1997 essay Howard Clarke argued that morphologically Dublin bore more similarity to London than to some of the larger provincial cities of medieval England, such as Bristol and Norwich, with which it had more in common in terms of size.[9] It was situated on the lowest crossing point of a major east-flowing river and at a focal point of overland routeways. It had an organic street plan on an east-west axis and an imposing royal castle in the south-east corner of the walled area. Furthermore each city had a number of defined suburban areas, a productive and fairly densely settled hinterland and considerable overseas trading links.

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[4] See B. M. S. Campbell, J. A. Galloway, D. Keene and M. Murphy, *A Medieval Capital and its Grain Supply: Agrarian Production and Distribution in the London Region, c.1300* (Historical Geography Research Series, xxx, 1993); J. A. Galloway, D. Keene and M. Murphy, 'Fuelling the city: production and distribution of firewood and fuel in London's region, 1290–1400', *Economic History Review*, xlix (1996), 447–72.

[5] *The Pre-Industrial Cities and Technology Reader*, ed. C. Chant (1999), pp. 104–19; D. Perring, *Town and Country in England: Frameworks for Archaeological Research* (Council for British Archaeology Research Report, cxxxiv, 2002), pp. 118–21; J. S. Lee, 'Feeding the colleges: Cambridge's food and fuel supplies, 1450–1560', *Economic History Review*, xli (2003), 243–64; H. Kitsikopoulos, 'Urban demand and agrarian productivity in pre-plague England: reassessing the relevancy of Von Thünen's model', *Agricultural History*, lxxvii (2003), 482–522; R. C. Hoffmann, 'Footprint metaphor and metabolic realities: environmental impacts of medieval European cities', in *Natures Past: the Environment and Human History*, ed. P. Squatriti (Ann Arbor, Mich., 2007), pp. 288–326.

[6] N. Brady, *Exploring Irish Medieval Landscapes* (Dublin, 2003), p. 30; see also N. Brady 'Preface', in M. Murphy and M. Potterton, *The Dublin Region in the Middle Ages: Settlement, Land Use and Economy* (Dublin, 2010).

[7] I would like to thank the Discovery Programme, the project's director Dr. Niall Brady and my co-investigator Dr. Michael Potterton for permission to use the data generated during the project.

[8] Estimates of Dublin's pre-plague population have ranged from 11,000 to 20,000 (J. C. Russell, 'Late 13th-century Ireland as a region', *Demography*, iii (1966), 500–12; T. H. Hollingsworth, *Historical Demography* (1969), pp. 268–70). If any credence is given to the Franciscan chronicler John Clyn's statement that 14,000 people died of the first outbreak of plague in Dublin, then the higher of these two estimates must be chosen (*The Annals of Ireland by Friar John Clyn*, ed. B. Williams (Dublin, 2007), pp. 246–7). Very few population

Dublin's origins can be traced back to the pre-Viking period when it appears that there were two distinct settlement foci in the area which was to become the site of the medieval town.[10] One was at Duiblinn (black pool) and was an ecclesiastical settlement, founded no later than the early seventh century, whose bishops are mentioned in annalistic sources. It has been proposed that the other site at Áth Cliath (ford of hurdle-work) was an older, secular farming and fishing community located near the fording place on the River Liffey, although archaeological evidence for this is lacking.[11] The Vikings founded their first naval encampment in the area in 841 and, having been ejected in 902, came back in some numbers in 917 to recapture the settlement. Thereafter Dyflinn (as it was in Norse) rapidly became an important Viking emporium and grew into a town with an organized street plan, defences and, eventually, churches and religious houses. By the time the Anglo-Normans arrived at the gates of Dublin in 1170, the area enclosed by stone defences was about twelve hectares, the population was probably in the region of 5,000 and there were seven parish churches inside the walls

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estimates exist for other Irish towns. Russell estimated that the ports of New Ross, Waterford and Galway may have had populations of around 3,000 in the late 13th century but some of his propositions are questionable (Russell, 'Late 13th-century Ireland as a region', p. 506). The largest inland town was Kilkenny, and Bradley has proposed a figure of between 1,800 and 3,500 for the combined boroughs of Hightown and Irishtown in the 13th and early 14th centuries (J. Bradley, *Irish Historic Towns Atlas: Kilkenny* (Dublin, 2000), pp. 2, 4).

[9] H. B. Clarke, 'London and Dublin', in *Medieval Metropolises: Proceedings of the Congress of the Atlas Working Group, International Commission for the History of Towns*, ed. F. Bocchi (Bologna, 1998), pp. 103–25, at p. 122.

[10] H. B. Clarke, *Irish Historic Towns Atlas: Dublin, pt. 1, to 1610* (Dublin, 2002), p. 2.

[11] H. B. Clarke, 'Dublin', in *Medieval Ireland: an Encyclopedia*, ed. S. Duffy (New York, 2005), p. 135; L. Simpson, 'Pre-Viking and early Viking-age Dublin: some research questions', in *Medieval Dublin X: Proceedings of the Friends of Medieval Dublin Symposium 2008*, ed. S. Duffy (Dublin, 2010), pp. 49–93, at p. 56.

and as many more outside in the suburban area.[12] Dublin had become the centre of an archdiocese and had a cathedral, Christ Church, with an attached chapter of Augustinian canons, two further Augustinian houses in its eastern suburb and a Cistercian house just across the river. The city had been for some time the capital of Ireland and had been forced to accept the overlordship of a succession of Irish high kings and aspiring high kings.[13] Under the Anglo-Normans Dublin grew in size and population, becoming the centre of the English colony in Ireland with all the administrative, judicial, economic and cultural functions that implied.

The Dublin region study

The study of Dublin's region concentrated on the period after the arrival of the Anglo-Normans, while acknowledging that it first took shape in the pre-Norman period when the Hiberno-Norse town looked to the hinterland for food and fuel supplies, building materials and raw materials for craft industries.[14] The study area chosen for research was considerably smaller than the 5.43 million acres contained in the ten counties of the 'Feeding the city' project, reflecting the lesser size and scale of Dublin. Research was focused on a spatially defined area which, in the first instance, comprised a geometrically delineated orbital zone stretching thirty kilometres from the centre of Dublin. The rationale for defining such a study area was influenced by research on urban regions in other countries. These studies have shown that towns of widely varying population tended to have quite similarly sized local trade hinterlands. These zones can be related to the limits of direct provisioning in pre-industrial societies, which rarely exceeded thirty or forty kilometres.[15] In order to use administrative divisions, a broader area was defined which allowed for the inclusion of

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[12] Clarke, *Irish Historic Towns Atlas*, p. 5. Based on density of house plots in excavated areas of Viking Dublin, Geraghty estimated that the town *c.*1050–1100 had a population of 4,500 (S. Geraghty, *Viking Dublin: Botanical Evidence from Fishamble Street* (Dublin, 1996), p. 59).

[13] S. Duffy, 'Pre-Norman Dublin: capital of Ireland?', *History Ireland*, i (1993), 13–18.

[14] J. Bradley, 'The interpretation of Scandinavian settlement in Ireland', in *Settlement and Society*, ed. J. Bradley (Kilkenny, 1988), pp. 49–78; M. Valante, 'Dublin's economic relations with hinterland and periphery in the later Viking age', in *Medieval Dublin I*, ed. S. Duffy (Dublin, 2000), pp. 69–83; P. F. Wallace, 'The archaeology of Ireland's Viking-age towns', in *A New History of Ireland*, i: *Prehistoric and Early Ireland*, ed. D. Ó Cróinín (Oxford, 2005), pp. 814–41.

[15] J. A. Galloway, 'Town and country in England, 1300–1570', in *Town and Country in Europe, 1300–1800*, ed. S. Epstein (2001), pp. 106–31, at p. 112; G. W. Grantham, 'Espaces privilégiés: productivité agraire et zones d'approvisionnement des villes dans l'Europe préindustrielle', *Annales*, lii (1997), 695–726; S. H. Rigby, *Medieval Grimsby: Growth and Decline* (Hull, 1993), *passim*; P. J. Goodman, *The Roman City and its Periphery: from Rome to Gaul* (2007), pp. 20–1.

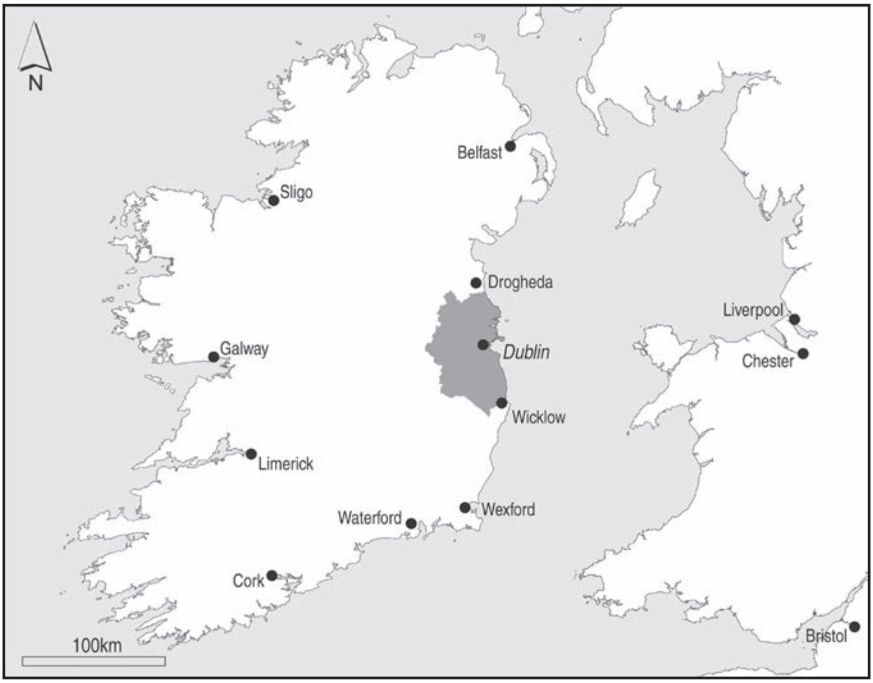

Figure 1.1. The Dublin study area (shaded) in the Irish Sea region.

Map prepared by Robert Shaw; reproduced courtesy of the Discovery Programme.

each barony intersected by the thirty kilometre 'buffer'. (The baronies were part of the civil administration system introduced into Ireland by the 'New English' conquerors in the late sixteenth century. Although their boundaries were altered in the nineteenth century, they retain significant correlation with medieval predecessors – cantreds, areas granted to chief tenants in the subinfeudation process which in turn have been shown to bear relation to earlier Gaelic landholding units.[16]) The Dublin study area contained twenty-five baronies incorporating all of Co. Dublin and parts of Cos. Kildare, Meath and Wicklow (see Figure 1.2). The total study area comprises 282,743 hectares (698,686 acres), or approximately 2,827 km.^{2}

The study area incorporated a number of different landscapes ranging from the low-lying fertile lands of north Dublin and east Meath to the rugged and heavily forested uplands of the Wicklow Mountains to the south. Much of the south-west of the region lay in the broad floodplain of

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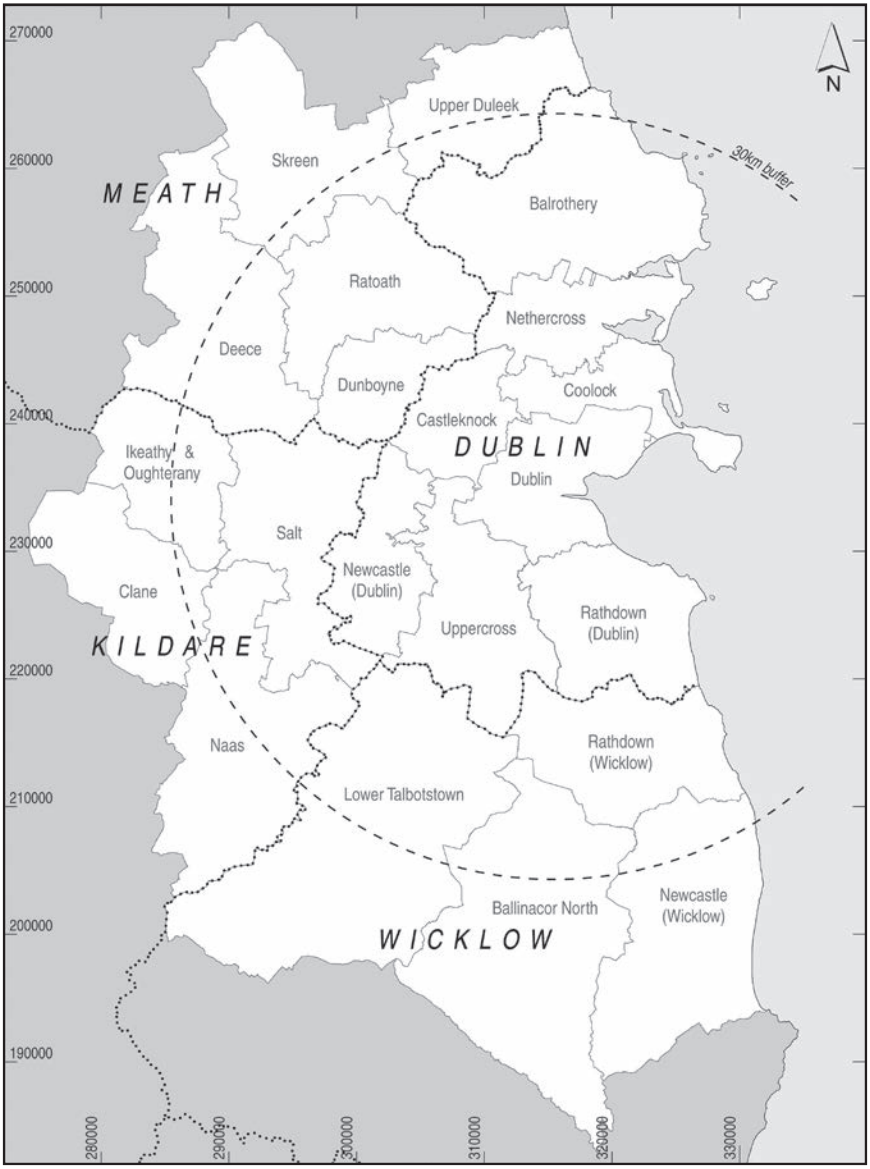
[16] P. MacCotter, *Medieval Ireland: Territorial, Political and Economic Divisions* (Dublin, 2008), p. 26.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Upper Duleek
Skreen
30km buffer
MEATH
Balrothery
Ratoath
Nethercross
Deece
Dunboyne
Coolock
Castleknock
Ikeathy & Oughterany
DUBLIN
Dublin
Salt
Newcastle (Dublin)
Clane
Uppercross
Rathdown (Dublin)
KILDARE
Naas
Rathdown (Wicklow)
Lower Talbotstown
Ballinacor North
Newcastle (Wicklow)
WICKLOW

Figure 1.2. The Dublin study area showing the 30 km. zone
and the 25 baronies.
Map prepared by Robert Shaw; reproduced courtesy of the Discovery Programme.

the River Liffey, which rises in Wicklow and travels westwards to Kildare before looping around to empty into the Irish Sea at Dublin. The hinterland therefore had great potential for both arable and pastoral agriculture as well as sources for supplies of natural resources such as wood, turf and building stone. In addition, the long coastline to the north and south provided safe havens for seagoing vessels and multiple opportunities for fishing and trade. The city itself, positioned in the sheltered Liffey estuary, became one of the busiest ports in the Irish Sea region in the middle ages, developing important trade-links with ports across the sea at Bristol and Chester as well as many other commercial centres along the coastal fringes of northern and western Europe.

Before the Anglo-Normans arrived, the patterns of landholding across the region had already been significantly influenced by the urban centre of Dublin. Considerable lands to the north and south were part of the demesne of the Scandinavian kings of Dublin – the Meic Torcaills – and other lands were held by rulers subservient to them.[17] From the eleventh century onwards the endowment of urban religious houses with lands in the hinterland became a method for kings and overlords of Dublin to underline their power and influence.[18] The Augustinian house of Holy Trinity (Christ Church), founded *c.*1030, was patronized by the Scandinavians and also Irish kings of the Mac Murchada and the Uí Briain dynasties during periods when they established overlordship of the Dublin region. In the twelfth century Diarmait mac Murchada founded the Augustinian house of All Hallows and the nunnery of St. Mary de Hogges in Dublin and granted them rural estates. St. Mary's abbey, founded as a Savigniac house in 1139 but becoming Cistercian in 1147, acquired substantial holdings both north and south of the Liffey. The lands of the archbishop of Dublin were first listed in 1179 in a bull of Pope Alexander III.[19] They included very substantial estates, for the most part made up of lands which had previously belonged to early monastic houses such as those at Swords, Lusk, Finglas, Clondalkin and Tallaght.

A significant proportion of land in the region was therefore in ecclesiastical ownership and this pattern was further developed by the Anglo-Normans, who added considerably to the landed holdings of the existing Dublin monasteries.[20] By 1190 four new religious houses had been founded around the city and endowed with land in the region. Virtually all the land within four to five kilometres of Dublin in every direction was in the hands of religious houses or the archbishop of Dublin. In the wider region, ecclesiastical owners dominated the landholding pattern across Co. Dublin, with almost half of the land in their hands.[21] The holdings of the archbishop of Dublin increased significantly in 1216 when Pope Innocent III formally ratified the amalgamation of the diocese of Glendalough in Wicklow with Dublin, and the lands pertaining to that bishopric were merged with the archiepiscopal estates.[22]

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[17] K. W. Nicholls, 'The land of the Leinstermen', *Peritia*, iii (1984), 535–58.

[18] Murphy and Potterton, *Dublin Region*, pp. 67–70.

[19] *Calendar of Archbishop Alen's Register, c.1172–1534*, ed. C. McNeill (Dublin, 1950) (hereafter *Alen's Register*), p. 3.

[20] Murphy and Potterton, *Dublin Region*, pp. 74–84.

An additional distinctive feature of the later medieval landholding pattern in the Dublin region was the presence of a number of royal manors.[23] One group of these manors was located in south-west Co. Dublin at Chapelizod, Crumlin, Esker, Newcastle Lyons and Saggart. In east Co. Wicklow, the crown held the manor of Newcastle McKynegan, and other substantial holdings in north-east Wicklow included some large forests. There were some sizeable lay holdings close to Dublin, such as that of Hugh Tyrel at Castleknock, but most of the large lay estates were situated further from the capital, in east Meath, where Hugh de Lacy had retained demesne manors as well as enfeoffing his followers with lands, and in north-west Kildare, where the FitzGeralds and de Herefords had settled. Very few Irish or Scandinavians remained as lords over lands in the region although many natives were incorporated into the manorial system at lower levels. From the 1270s onwards, there was a revival of Gaelic military power which saw the colonized lands to the south and west of Dublin coming increasingly under pressure. In this period Dublin lay uncomfortably close to what became known as 'the land of war'.

Little is known for definite about the agricultural systems of the region before the arrival of the Anglo-Normans. Recent research indicates that the size and demands of Scandinavian Dublin may have already resulted in an intensification of farming methods in its hinterland and in particular a move away from pastoral farming towards arable.[24] The arrival of the Anglo-Normans, with their fully formed conceptions of manorial structure, their knowledge of intensive farming techniques and their understanding of the workings of a monetized economy, acted as a catalyst on these incipient practices. The speed at which parts of Dublin and Meath were colonized, manorialized and set to producing marketable surpluses suggests that the conditions already prevailing here were more conducive to these developments than elsewhere in Ireland.

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[21] Otway-Ruthven calculated that at the time of the Dissolution the cathedrals and religious houses of Dublin city and county held approximately 50,800 acres of land in Co. Dublin. The archbishop held a further 53,200 acres (A. J. Otway-Ruthven, 'The medieval church lands of County Dublin', in *Medieval Studies presented to Aubrey Gwynn, S.J.*, ed. J. A. Watt, J. B. Morrall and F. X. Martin (Dublin, 1961), pp. 54–73.

[22] *Alen's Register*, p. 38.

[23] Murphy and Potterton, *Dublin Region*, pp. 84–5.

[24] F. McCormick and E. Murray, *Knowth and the Zooarchaeology of Early Christian Ireland* (Dublin, 2007), pp. 112–15.

The sources available for medieval Ireland differ greatly from those for medieval England. In particular, there are few surviving sources which allow quantitative investigation of population size, wealth, land use and productivity. The examination of agriculture in the counties around medieval London benefited greatly from the large number of surviving demesne account rolls, but only a tiny number of demesne accounts have survived for the whole of Ireland and unfortunately none of these relates to manors within the Dublin study area.[25] Whether these documents were ever produced in great numbers for manors in medieval Ireland is open to debate. The survival in the central account roll of the priory of Holy Trinity, Dublin of two 'haggard accounts' for the manors of Grangegorman and Clonkeen in Co. Dublin for 1343–4, as well as the account of the bailiff of Clonkeen for 1344–5, suggests that this ecclesiastical landlord, at least, produced similar documents for its directly managed estates.[26] The collection of manorial extents for the Dublin region is small but does allow for some systematic analysis.[27] It is also possible to use a variety of other records such as pipe rolls, memoranda rolls, and judicial and testamentary material. This can be supplemented by municipal records which contain information relating to marketing and trading within the city, petitions of the citizens and listings of tolls to be levied at the city gates.[28]

Provisioning Dublin: cereals

Like all medieval towns, Dublin generated a large demand for cereals of different types.[29] It would appear that the bread eaten in the city was almost exclusively baked from wheaten flour.[30] Rye bread is not mentioned and rye was not widely grown in the hinterland (see below). Oats were consumed in the form of oatmeal but in terms of human consumption they had a more important use as a brewing grain. Most of the ale drunk in Dublin was brewed from oats, and barley only appears to have started to displace oats in the fifteenth century. There is little evidence from the Dublin region of the cultivation of the mixed oats and barley crop known as dredge, which was commonly found as a brewing mixture in the London region. Therefore, the grains most in demand from Dublin, especially in the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries, were wheat and oats.

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[25] The surviving accounts relate to manors held by Roger Bigod, earl of Norfolk, in the lordship of Carlow and Cos. Wexford and Kildare. They date from the later 13th century. The nearest manor to the Dublin study area is Ballysax, Co. Kildare, approximately 50 km. from Dublin (The National Archives of the UK: Public Record Office, SC 6/1237/1–6; M. C. Lyons, 'The manor of Ballysax, 1280–8', *Retrospect*, i (1981), 40–50).

[26] *Account Roll of the Priory of the Holy Trinity, Dublin, 1337–46*, ed. J. Mills (Dublin, 1891; new edn., Dublin, 1996) (hereafter *Account Roll*).

[27] A database was created comprising information drawn from 40 extents relating to manors in the Dublin region (see Murphy and Potterton, *Dublin Region*, pp. 46–9 and app. 1).

[28] *Calendar of Ancient Records of Dublin*, ed. J. T. Gilbert (19 vols., Dublin, 1889–1944) (hereafter *CARD*); *Historic and Municipal Documents of Ireland, 1172–1320*, ed. J. T. Gilbert (1870) (hereafter *HMDI*); see M. Clark, 'People, places and parchment: the medieval archives of Dublin city', in *Medieval Dublin III*, ed. S. Duffy (Dublin, 2002), pp 140–50.

[29] M. Murphy 'Feeding medieval cities: some historical approaches', in *Food and Eating in Medieval Europe*, ed. M. Carlin and J. Rosenthal (1998), pp. 117–31.

During the study, an attempt was made to calculate the city's aggregate demand for grain and the rural area needed to meet this demand. An allocation of two quarters of grain per head per year was used, a little higher than the amount allocated to medieval Londoners in a similar exercise conducted during the 'Feeding the city' project.[31] It was assumed that an acre of medieval arable land would produce a quarter (12.7kg.) of grain two years out of three and a half of the total yield would have been available for disposal. Therefore, if the population of Dublin *c.*1300 was 10,000, then 60,000 acres of arable would have been needed to supply its bread and ale needs. If the population *c.*1300 reached 20,000 then the arable area needed to supply it with grain would have been 120,000 acres. There were some 400,000 acres of land within a thirty kilometre radius of Dublin and even if only 50 per cent of this area was under arable cultivation, Dublin's grain needs could be comfortably met from within it. In addition, however, the needs of the people dwelling in the countryside had to be met, and there was also a considerable export market.

Analysis of land-use patterns on demesnes across the Dublin region revealed some interesting results. First, demesnes across the region were large, with the average 427 acres in size and three demesnes recording acreage in excess of 800 acres (see Figure 1.3). Demesnes in the London region were smaller, with the average comprising 180–90 acres.[32] Overall,

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[30] M. Murphy and M. Potterton, 'Investigating living standards in medieval Dublin and its region', in *Medieval Dublin VI: Proceedings of the Friends of Medieval Dublin Symposium 2004*, ed. S. Duffy (Dublin, 2005), pp. 224–56, at pp. 240–1.

[31] Campbell, Galloway, Keene and Murphy, *A Medieval Capital*, pp. 31–6. The 'Feeding the city' project used an allowance of 1.65 quarters of grain per head of population. This took into account the extraction rates for converting bread grains to flour and brewing grains to ale, and the total allowance also included an element for the fodder requirements of the horses needed to transport the grain into the city. The allowance of grain was believed to be equivalent to 1¼lbs of coarse bread and a pint of weak ale per person per day.

[32] B. M. S. Campbell, J. A. Galloway and M. Murphy, 'Rural land-use in the metropolitan hinterland, 1270–1339: the evidence of *inquisitiones post mortem*', *Agricultural History Review*, xl (1992), 1–22.

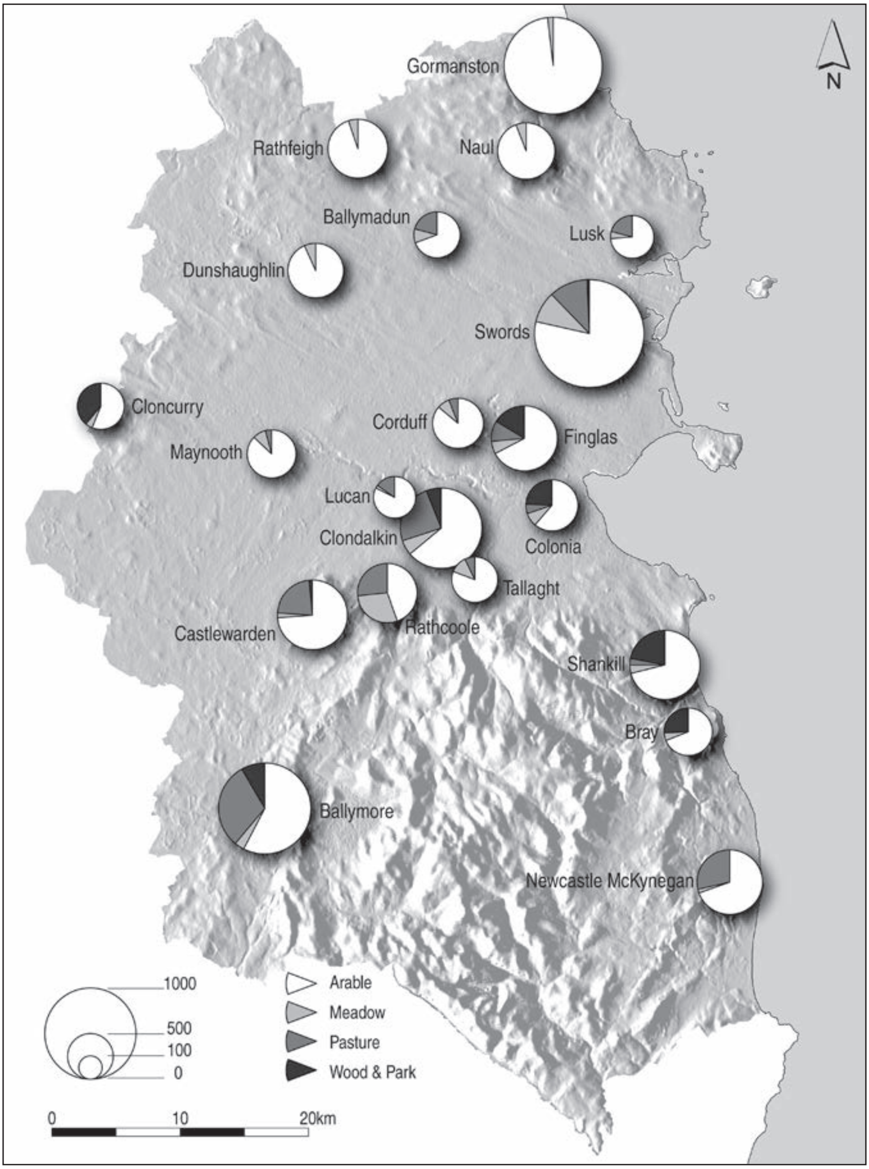
N
Gormanston
Rathfeigh
Naul
Ballymadun
Lusk
Dunshaughlin
Swords
Cloncurry
Corduff
Finglas
Maynooth
Lucan
Clondalkin
Colonia
Tallaght
Castlewarden
Rathcoole
Shankill
Bray
Ballymore
Newcastle McKynegan
1000
500
100
0
Arable
Meadow
Pasture
Wood & Park
0
10
20km

Figure 1.3. Land-use data from the Dublin region, *c.*1300. The circles represent manorial demesnes and the size reflects the acreage. Shading represents proportions of demesne acreage under different land uses.

Source: manorial extents (see above, n. 27). (Map prepared by Michael Potterton, Robert Shaw and Margaret Murphy; reproduced courtesy of the Discovery Programme).

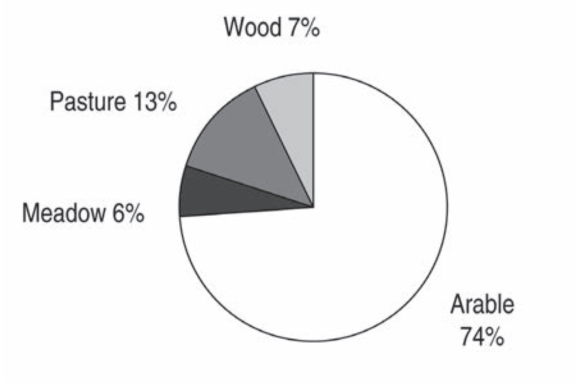

Figure 1.4. Land use on manorial demesnes in the Dublin region, *c.*1300.
Source: manorial extents (see above, n. 27).

arable accounted for 74 per cent of the land surveyed in the Dublin region extents. Pasture was the next most important land use, and 13 per cent of land fell into this category. Six demesnes recorded no pasture at all, which may be the result of under-recording of unenclosed or common pastoral resources. All demesnes recorded some land as mowable meadow and across the region 6 per cent of land fell into this category. Wood accounted for 7 per cent of demesne acreage, with a very distinctive spatial pattern (see Figure 1.4).

The arable land of the Dublin region was predominantly sown with grain, although some legumes were also sown either on their own or as mixed crops.[33] Documentary sources indicate that the cultivation of wheat and oats dominated on the manorial demesnes of the region, with many demesnes dividing the sown arable fairly equally between the two and growing no other crops. Archaeological evidence reinforces this picture, with oats and wheat by far the most commonly identified crops on excavations across the region.[34] Barley, rye, peas and beans were also grown but in much smaller amounts and probably by and large on smaller holdings. Yields and seeding rates appear to have been roughly similar to those pertaining in the London region, with wheat yielding between 3.5 and four bushels for each bushel sown and oats yielding between 2.6 and 2.8 bushels.[35] Wheat seed represented 26 per cent of harvested grain, while 36 per cent of the recorded harvest of oats was set aside for seed. Surviving documents do not allow the calculation of average quantities of harvested grain sold or other measures of commercialization. The grange accounts for some of the manors belonging to Holy Trinity priory reveal the quantities sent to the priory household for consumption, which gives an indication of disposal patterns. On the manor of Clonkeen in south-east Co. Dublin, 51 per cent of the wheat harvest of 1344–5 was sent into the priory to be baked into bread.[36] Clonkeen was located ten kilometres from the priory and was thus well within the city's grain provisioning zone.

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[33] Murphy and Potterton, *Dublin Region*, pp. 303–6.

[34] Murphy and Potterton, *Dublin Region*, p. 309.

[35] Murphy and Potterton, *Dublin Region*, pp. 317–18.

Documentary sources reveal that overland carriage by cart and packhorse accounted for a significant element of the city's grain supply and there is a paucity of references to grain being brought in by boat. It may have been quicker to bring supplies by road, avoiding delays in loading and unloading boats and possible transhipment to circumvent obstructions. In 1282 a large quantity of wheat and oats from Ballysax in Co. Kildare, required as part of the supplies for Wales in that year, was carried the fifty kilometres to Dublin overland, two horses being hired for the purpose for a period of six weeks.[37] A total of ninety-three quarters and six bushels of grain were carried which, if loaded into carts of three-quarters carrying capacity drawn by two horses, would have necessitated thirty-one return journeys.[38] In the mid fifteenth century there was an active overland trade in small parcels of grain as a custom was levied on all men and women bringing 'peke bags' of wheat, bere (barley), peas, beans and malt to market in Dublin.[39] Some of Dublin's bread was baked outside the city and transported in for sale.[40] There is no mention of specialized cornmongers operating in the Dublin region, but individuals known as haggard-men start to appear in the fifteenth century. These men owned granaries (haggards) in the city and were warned against stockpiling grain in times of shortage or going out of the city to purchase grain and thereby forestalling the city markets.[41]

The parts of the region from which Dublin received its grain supplies were probably defined at an early stage when the Scandinavian town developed an infrastructure of transport and exchange linking urban and rural settlements. This infrastructure was further expanded following the foundation of religious houses in the town and their endowment with country estates. Substantial transfers of provisions from rural granges to central monastic cellars served not only to feed the resident religious, but would also have provided surpluses for sale in the urban market. Following the arrival of the Anglo-Normans the rapid manorialization of the countryside, coupled with the foundation of chartered markets and fairs, would have brought a wider area into the provisioning zone of the growing city.

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[36] *Account Roll*, p. 78.

[37] *Calendar of Documents Relating to Ireland* (5 vols., 1875–86) (hereafter *CDI*), ii. 459, no. 2009.

[38] The average cartload of wheat in the London region *c.*1300 (Campbell, Galloway, Keene and Murphy, *A Medieval Capital*, p. 31).

[39] *CARD*, i. 275.

[40] *CARD*, i. 313.

[41] *CARD*, i. 275, 287, 308, 337, 343.

Although there is considerable evidence for direct provisioning, there was also a system in place which used the local markets of the region. These smaller centres acted as bulking points and were visited by Dublin merchants seeking large consignments of grain. The accounts of purveyors operating out of Dublin in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries reveal the operation of the grain provisioning network and the areas where grain was sourced. A commission to purveyors in 1315 specified Lusk and Swords as markets at which wheat should be acquired and brought to Dublin. These markets were located in the arable rich area of north Dublin, described by Richard Stanihurst in the seventeenth century as 'the barn of Ireland'.[42] A detailed account of the monies spent by two royal purveyors operating out of Dublin during the years 1314–15 sheds important light on grain availability and marketing within the region.[43]

The purveyors' account reveals a marketing structure in which potential purchasers could obtain grain in a number of different ways. Large purchases were made as the result of deals struck with the representatives of important landowners, such as the archbishop of Dublin, or managers of grain stocks obtained as tithes. Medium purchases of between five and ten crannocks were made from dozens of individuals, some of whom may have been operating in co-operative groups.[44] Furthermore, market towns in the region were visited at times when rural producers selling surplus grain were likely to be present. The account suggests that the rural markets at Swords and Maynooth played a particularly important role in the grain trade in the early fourteenth century.

Livestock and dairy produce

Despite the apparent dominance of arable farming across much of the region, there is abundant evidence that dairying and livestock-rearing were also significant features. Meat formed an important part of the diet in medieval Dublin and it is likely that, in common with most other European towns, the proportion of meat eaten increased during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.[45] If the diet of the prior of Holy Trinity priory in the fourteenth century can be taken as in any way typical of the diet of a wealthy consumer, then meat featured very heavily on the tables of well-to-do Dubliners.[46] Faunal evidence suggests that cattle provided as much as 79 per cent of the meat eaten in Dublin, pig 18 per cent and sheep only 3 per cent (Figure 1.5).[47] As so much of the land to the north was dominated by arable agriculture, it appears likely that Dublin looked to the south for its meat and dairy produce, although draught cattle undoubtedly found their way onto the capital's tables when they reached the end of their useful lives. Land-use data and incidental references support the view that Dublin was largely provisioned with meat and dairy produce from the south where pastoral farming had always been important.

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[42] C. Lennon, *Richard Stanihurst the Dubliner* (Dublin, 1981), p. 143.

[43] TNA: PRO, E 101/14/40

[44] Grain and various other commodities were measured in Ireland in crannocks and pecks. A crannock of wheat contained eight pecks and various sources in the 13th century equate it with the English quarter which contained eight bushels.

Some manors close to the city engaged in fairly intensive dairying; the Templar manor of Clontarf just to the north of Dublin produced large quantities of cheese, some of which would have been destined for urban consumption.[48] Religious houses in the city were supplied with butter and cheese from rural estates, and dairy products often formed part of customary renders and lease-holding conditions. In 1483, the priory of Holy Trinity leased various issues of a church in Co. Wicklow for a money rent and 'eight gallons of good butter in the first year and ten gallons of good butter thereafter'.[49] There is also evidence that Gaelic families from north Wicklow were involved in supplying the city with dairy products. A cross in south Co. Dublin was known as the Butter Cross and an early seventeenth-century source records that this was where 'in ould tyme the provision of butter that came from the marches and Tooles' country [i.e., north Wicklow] to Dublin was sold'.[50] According to another seventeenth-century reference, butter was brought into the city in pails or buckets.[51]

As a commodity which could be transported on the hoof, livestock was not subject to the same transport cost constraints as some other products. In 1282, pigs were driven the fifty kilometres from the manor of Ballysax, Co.

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[45] Murphy and Potterton, 'Investigating living standards', pp. 239–45.

[46] *Account Roll*, *passim*.

[47] Figures derived from an analysis of 30 published and unpublished reports (see Murphy and Potterton, *Dublin Region*, pp. 41–4).

[48] G. Mac Niocaill, 'Documents relating to the suppression of the Templars in Ireland', *Analecta Hibernica*, xxiv (1961), 183–226, at p. 215.

[49] *Christ Church Deeds*, ed. M. J. McEnery and R. Refaussé (Dublin, 2001) (hereafter *CCD*), no. 1045.

[50] *CARD*, i. 193.

[51] *CARD*, i. 262.

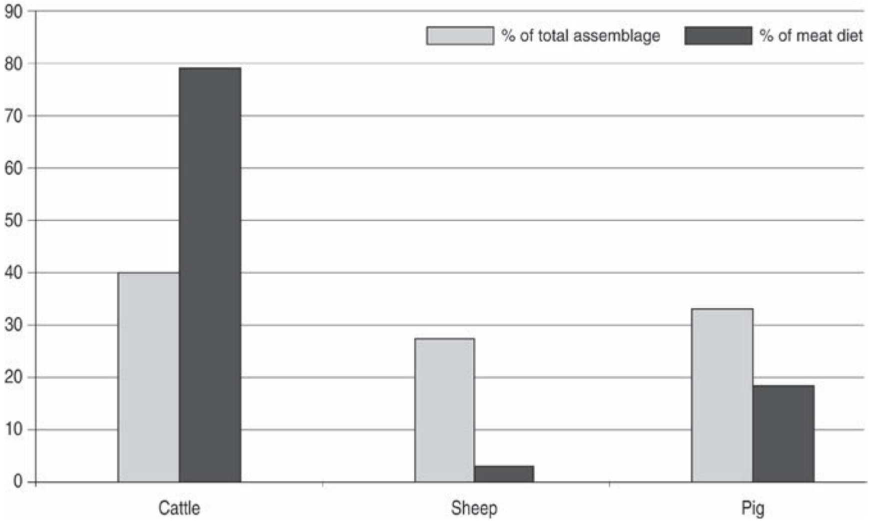

Figure 1.5. Relative percentage of faunal remains of three main domesticates on medieval sites in the Dublin region, and relative percentage of meat provided by each.

Source: excavation reports (see above, n. 47). Chart prepared by Michael Potterton; reproduced courtesy of the Discovery Programme.

Kildare, to Dublin and a total of fifty-five were shipped to Wales to supply Roger Bigod who was on campaign there.[52] Dublin's fair and markets were major sources of both live and dead animals for the purveyors of the late thirteenth century. Supplies may normally have been abundant, although a 'dearth of flesh meat' was noted in 1364 as a reason to limit prices charged by city butchers.[53] Regulations relating to the selling of meat in the city reveal that Dublin butchers went out to source animals in the hinterland and that country butchers, 'foreign' merchants and rural agriculturalists brought animals into the city for sale. Slaughtering of cattle within the city was forbidden in 1366, which may have increased the amount of meat brought in by outsiders.[54] These dealers were charged a custom of one penny on each ox or pig carcase and one farthing on each sheep carcase.[55] If the vendor was not a merchant but an ordinary farmer selling 'out of necessity' there was no charge. Dublin butchers are found in markets and fairs of the region but also much further afield. In the early sixteenth century they are found sourcing supplies sixty-five kilometres from the city in Athboy, Co. Meath.[56] The fact that Dublin butchers were going further from the city to source supplies does not necessarily mean that demand for meat was increasing. It is more likely that some of the traditional areas for Dubliners to source livestock had been cut off as a result of the increasing tensions which developed between the city and the Gaelic inhabitants of north Wicklow.

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[52] *CDI*, ii. 459–61, no. 2009.

[53] *CARD*, i.. 235.

[54] *CARD*, i. 236.

[55] *CARD*, i. 234.

Garden products and fish

The study of London's region revealed that intensive market gardening close to the city was one of the responses to the presence of concentrated urban demand.[57] Something of the same pattern can be seen close to Dublin, where orchards and gardens played a part in the provisioning of the city. Such an orchard was found five kilometres north of Dublin on the de Feypo manor of Santry, and in 1303 it was reported to have 200 apple trees and 100 pear trees, implying an area of about three acres.[58] At least 100 gardens are mentioned in the extents made at the time of the dissolution of the Dublin religious houses in 1540.[59] There was a particular concentration in the western suburb where St. Thomas's abbey had two gardens and eight orchards in its precincts and also had interests in a further thirteen gardens.[60] The northern suburb of Oxmantown also had a decided horticultural aspect. St. Mary's abbey owned a garden and an orchard called Comyn orchard within its precincts in eastern Oxmantown, while Holy Trinity had an orchard, known as the Great Orchard, north of Oxmantown Green.[61] Documentary sources seldom reveal what was grown in these gardens and orchards beyond generic 'fruit' and 'vegetables'. In 1545, when a garden in Crumlin (three kilometres south-west of Dublin) was leased out, the lessee covenanted to plant it with apples, pears and wardens (a type of culinary pear).[62] In 1536 when Holy Trinity priory leased its garden to Richard Hankoke, a Dublin merchant, the lessee was required to supply herbs to the convent kitchen, 5*s* or two pecks of onions at the feast of the nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, leeks in Lent and herbs for the 'coppys' to the convent hall and the prior's chamber.[63]

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[56] *Calendar of Inquisitions formerly in the Office of the Chief Remembrancer of the Exchequer, prepared from the MSS. of the Irish Record Commission*, ed. M. C. Griffith (Dublin, 1991), pp. 30, 42.

[57] J. Galloway and M. Murphy, 'Feeding the city: medieval London and its agrarian hinterland', *London Journal*, xvi (1991), 7–8.

[58] *CDI*, v. 86–7, no. 255.

[59] *Extents of Irish Monastic Possessions, 1540–1, from Manuscripts in the Public Record Office, London*, ed. N. B. White (Dublin, 1943) (hereafter *EIMP*), *passim*.

[60] *EIMP*, pp. 26–8.

[61] E. Purcell, 'Land use in medieval Oxmantown', in *Medieval Dublin IV*, ed. S. Duffy (Dublin, 2003), pp. 193–228, at pp. 204, 226.

[62] *CCD*, no. 1198.

It is clear that, in addition to the gardens associated with religious houses, there were numerous other gardens within or just outside the walls of Dublin, and primary documentary references to over 120 gardens are listed by Clarke for medieval Dublin.[64] The hinterland area played an important part in the maintenance and manuring of these gardens. Carters and car-men regularly brought loads of dung into the city for spreading on the citizens' gardens. This practice became so widespread in the fifteenth century that the city authorities legislated that all dung brought in had to be left in designated areas and spread the same day by the city gardeners.[65]

Dublin's coastal position and the presence of so many rivers and streams meant that the urban diet included a wide variety of fish and molluscs. This is borne out by faunal remains which demonstrate that fish and shellfish made a crucial contribution to the diet of Dubliners.[66] The historical sources reveal that, in the medieval period, the coastal area to the north and south of Dublin was extensively exploited for its fishing and much of this catch found its way into the city. Several Dublin religious houses had lands by the coast and exacted payments from boats using their harbours and havens. Rights were exercised to claim the best fish of the catch, also known as 'the lord's fish'. Fishmongers and their wives travelled out from Dublin to the seaside and fish was brought into the city by packhorse to be sold at Fishamble Street.

The fisheries of the River Liffey were valuable assets in the medieval period and also played a part in provisioning the city. Most of the large religious houses claimed fisheries on the Liffey or rights to maintain fishing boats on the river or receive tithes of fish caught there.[67] With all these conflicting rights to fish the river, it is not surprising that disputes frequently arose. As early as 1220, the citizens complained that the prior and brethren of the hospital at Kilmainham had made a pool upstream of the city that was preventing boats from travelling up and down and was also preventing the fish from reaching their fisheries downstream.[68] Later on, the Hospitallers removed the fixed net that the citizens had attached to the bridge, complaining that it was injurious to their fisheries. A jury found that it was the citizens' right to have such a net, which was valued at £10.[69] Complaints about traps, nets and pools continued throughout the medieval period.[70] They rarely contain much detail about fish species, but salmon and eels are sometimes mentioned.

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[63] *CCD*, no. 1162.

[64] Clarke, *Irish Historic Towns Atlas*, pp. 24–5.

[65] *CARD*, i. 326.

[66] Murphy and Potterton, 'Investigating living standards', pp. 246–8.

[67] Murphy and Potterton, *Dublin Region*, pp. 395–6

[68] *CDI*, i. 149, no. 974.

Fuel

The challenge of meeting urban society's need for fuel was just as great as the challenge of feeding it, and it too placed considerable demands on hinterlands and distributive systems.[71] Baking, brewing, food preparation and domestic heating required significant fuel inputs and in the medieval period Dublin would have been the focus of the most substantial aggregate demand for fuel in Ireland. The city and its suburbs would also have generated a large industrial demand for fuel – the manufacture of pottery and tiles, metalworking, glass-making and the manufacture of lime all required fuel for kilns and braziers.

There are no contemporary records of total quantities of fuel consumed in medieval Dublin, but recent work on the fuel requirements of medieval London can provide some basis for comparison.[72] This research has put forward an estimated per capita annual fuel requirement of 1.76 tons of wood for each Londoner in the medieval period. The figure covers both the domestic needs of the general population and the fuel consumed by industry. Using an estimated output figure of two tons of wood per intensively managed woodland acre, it was proposed that London's total fuel needs in 1300 required the entire underwood output of some 70,000 acres.[73] Using the same figures with reference to medieval Dublin's proposed requirement suggests that *c.*1300, if the city had 10,000 inhabitants, it would have required the output of about 8,800 acres of intensively managed woodland. This figure is almost certainly a gross overestimate as London had a much higher level of industrial activity. Furthermore, while turf was not used to any great extent in London, it was certainly available and used as a fuel in Dublin. An undated, but probably seventeenth-century reference to customs payable on horse-loads of fuel in the city itemizes 'faggotts, wood, furs, fern, turfe and straw', and it is probable that all of these items had also formed elements of the medieval city's fuel supply.[74]

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[69] *HMDI*, pp. 216–19.

[70] *HMDI*, p. 149; *Calendar of the Justiciary Rolls, or Proceedings in the Court of the Justiciar of Ireland … 1305–7*, ed. J. Mills (Dublin, 1914) (hereafter *CJR, 1305–7*), p. 258.

[71] M. Murphy, 'The fuel supply of medieval London, 1300–1400', *Franco-British Studies*, xx (1995), 85–96.

[72] J. A. Galloway, D. Keene and M. Murphy, 'Fuelling the city: production and distribution of firewood and fuel in London's region, 1290–1400', *Economic History Review*, xlix (1996), 447–72.

[73] Galloway, Keene and Murphy, 'Fuelling the city', p. 456.

Geographical models such as that of Johann Von Thünen propose that, as wood is so bulky and expensive to transport, there should be a zone of woodland located very close to an urban centre.[75] Research on medieval London revealed that areas close to the city or within easy reach of navigable water retained significant areas of woodland throughout the period. There is some evidence that this was also the case in the Dublin region. Most of the land within four to five kilometres of the city was in the hands of ecclesiastical owners who appear to have carefully managed pockets of woodlands to supply their own needs into the sixteenth century. The Augustinian abbey of St. Thomas had a large area of woodland in the carucate of Donore, close to its precincts. In the thirteenth century, this wood was sufficiently large to contain seven acres of arable land within it, and in the sixteenth century ten acres of underwood were recorded there.[76]

The house of the Hospitallers at Kilmainham maintained considerable woodland in proximity to the city. The 1540 extent of the preceptory's possessions mentions a wood called the 'Grete' wood, containing forty-one acres, on the north side of the Liffey and a wood called 'Inscore' (Inchicore), containing sixteen acres of underwood, on the south side.[77] All of this woodland was said to be reserved for the hospice. Holy Trinity, situated inside the walls, had to rely on its rural estates for fuel. In the autumn of 1344, the bailiff of Clonkeen paid two men cutting underwood in the wood of Clonkeen for fourteen days 'for brewing and baking for the abbey'.[78]

The wood from Clonkeen was transported into the city by cart but water transport was used where possible. Documentary sources show that wood and fuel came into the city by water and the name 'Wood Quay' in Dublin may reflect this shipping of wood.[79] Much of this wood originated in coastal parts of Co. Wicklow where land-use analysis shows manors with significant woodland (Figure 1.4). A late sixteenth-century lease of a rectory near Arklow, Co. Wicklow included the provision that the lessee should deliver fourteen tons of firewood yearly at Wood Quay in Dublin.[80] Mid fifteenth-century regulations required that wood from Wicklow should be exposed on the quay for twenty days before retail sale, and attempted to prevent the storage of wood in houses, probably for safety reasons as well as to hinder private trading away from the quayside market.[81] Wood also came into the city from parts of the Liffey valley. Complaints about obstruction of the River Liffey by weirs and fish-traps at Chapelizod, Kilmainham, Lucan, Palmerstown and elsewhere make specific reference to a regular trade in firewood, both carried in boats and floated as bundles.[82]

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[74] *CARD*, i. 262.

[75] J. H. Von Thünen, *Von Thünen's Isolated State: an English Edition of Der Isolierte Staat*, ed. P. Hall and trans. C. M. Wartenberg (1966).

[76] *Register of the Abbey of St Thomas the Martyr, Dublin*, ed. J. T. Gilbert (1889), p. 3; *EIMP*, p. 26

[77] *EIMP*, p. 81

[78] *Account Roll*, p. 64.

[79] L. Simpson, 'Historical background', in A. Halpin, *The Port of Medieval Dublin* (Dublin, 2000), pp. 23–7, at p. 25.

Conclusion

Apart from crisis years when weather, crop failure or severe political instability threatened supplies, Dublin appears to have been comfortably provisioned from its hinterland. The limits of this hinterland differed depending on the product. The documentary evidence suggests that most grain came into the city overland in horse-drawn carts and was brought in by rural producers. The practical limits of such direct provisioning have been estimated at approximately thirty to forty kilometres or the maximum distance a farmer could conveniently carry grain and return the same day, or, at most, spend one night away. It therefore appears likely that Dublin's grain requirement was largely met from within a thirty kilometre zone. Livestock could be sourced at a greater distance, as could wood and fuel supplies when water transport was used. It is not clear whether Dublin's demand for food and fuel had a structured impact upon its region such as has been revealed in the study of medieval London. It seems that the city's grain needs were substantially met by the region to the north while the requirement for meat, dairy produce and wood was largely satisfied by the southern hinterland. Environmental factors appear to have played the most important role in forming this spatial specialization but it can be argued that urban demand may have emphasized and enhanced the particular attributes of different parts of the hinterland.

In conclusion, it would appear that the provisioning relationship between Dublin and its rural hinterland was shaped by a number of factors. Patterns of landownership, particularly the preponderance of ecclesiastical lands close to the city, had an impact, as religious houses were to some extent immune to market forces and pursued their own provisioning strategies. For most of the inhabitants of Dublin, the regular supply of affordable commodities was of great importance and efforts were made to source the staple necessities in the most economic way possible. Dublin's provisioning needs do not appear to have been large or complex enough to require the services of specialized intermediaries such as the cornmongers and woodmongers who operated in the London region. The city's role as a colonial capital and gathering point for military provisioning aided the development of an integrated transport and marketing structure in the hinterland, but the activities of royal officials were sometimes resented by the populace when they interfered with normal supply patterns. In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries the 'land of war' approached ever closer to the city and Dubliners frequently came to view their immediate hinterland as a vital buffer between them and the hostile lands beyond. Control of the region became a very pressing concern and, over time, provisioning hinterlands shifted as different strategies had to be employed to source some products. While Dublin can be compared with London and other English cities in many ways, this increase in political instability in its hinterland provided it with a substantial additional concern and a different set of challenges.

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[80] *CCD*, no. 1391.

[81] *CARD*, i. 284–5.

[82] *CJR, 1305–7*, p. 258.

2. Did peasants need markets and towns? The experience of late medieval England*

Christopher Dyer

Historians, led by Derek Keene, have become much concerned with the connections between medieval towns and the surrounding countryside, and it might be thought that little can be added to the general picture of hinterlands and interdependence that has emerged in recent years.[1] Usually the town has occupied the centre of the stage, and this chapter is intended to redress the balance by taking a view from the country. The best evidence for the sale of rural produce tends to come from the records of landed estates, but here attention is being drawn to the small producers, who cumulatively cultivated more land and sent more corn, wool, cheese and livestock to market than did the demesnes of the lords' manors. The question posed above will be answered initially by surveying the role of the town in the peasant economy in the period 1250–1540, and then by a more ambitious argument that peasants were drawn into the trade of the large towns at the top of the hierarchy, and were therefore indirectly connected to the international trading network. Finally, a brief reference will be made to the ways other than trade in which peasants interacted with towns.

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* I am grateful to Matthew Davies and Jim Galloway for organizing the event at which this chapter was first presented, and for editing this volume. I am pleased to honour Derek Keene who has made such an important contribution to our understanding of medieval towns. The subject of this chapter was chosen in order to reflect Derek's intellectual qualities: that includes his ability to say new things, and to use both archaeological and documentary evidence. I have not been so successful as he has been in applying the comparative method. I have been helped by Caroline Barron, David Hinton, Stuart Jenks, Gerry McDonell, Bjorn Poulsen and Gavin Simpson. Comments helped me to improve the chapter when it, or parts of it, were presented at conferences in Aarhus, Birmingham and Oxford, as well as in London.

[1] B. M. S. Campbell, J. A. Galloway, D. Keene and M. Murphy, *A Medieval Capital and its Grain Supply: Agrarian Production and Distribution in the London Region c.1300* (Historical Geography Research Series, xxx, 1993); D. Keene, 'Small towns and the metropolis: the experience of medieval England', in *Peasants and Townsmen in Medieval Europe: Studies in Honorem Adriaan Verhulst*, ed. J.-M. Duvosquel and E. Thoen (Ghent, 1995), pp. 223–38; D. Keene, 'Changes in London's economic hinterland as indicated by debt cases in the court of common pleas', in *Trade, Urban Hinterlands and Market Integration c.1300–1600*, ed. J. A. Galloway (Centre for Metropolitan History Working Paper Series, iii, 2000), pp. 59–81.

Definitions of peasants which much exercised historians in the 1970s included such characteristics as small-scale cultivation, possession rather than ownership of their plots of land, association with others in communities, a subordinate social position, a tendency to use family labour, and an attachment to traditional values and customs. Often they would add some statement about the peasants' self-sufficiency and their limited involvement in the market.[2] Since those heady days when historians believed optimistically in their ability to arrive at some objective conclusion, we tend to avoid exact definitions, and prefer the imprecision of such devices as a 'bundle of criteria', because every characteristic has to be broad enough to take account of many exceptions. For example, the small scale of peasant cultivation is very clear for the majority who held between two and thirty acres (say one to twelve hectares) of land. Would, however, a cottage with a garden or curtilage attached count as a peasant holding, and can those with fifty or 100 acres (twenty or forty hectares), though having much less land than the lowest rank of gentry, still be regarded as peasants? Some historians have found it difficult to cope with the revelation that as early as the thirteenth century 'peasants' regularly bought and sold land, and were involved in complex credit transactions.[3] These people were surely too commercial and sophisticated to fit the lumpish, family-oriented, stay-at-home, backward-looking, narrow-minded and poverty-stricken stereotype?

Focusing on the 'limited market involvement' among peasants which is our immediate concern, opinion has shifted as the varied types of peasants are recognized. In late medieval England a majority of peasants were capable of producing most of the food needs of their households in a normal year, even in the days of high densities of people and restricted holding size around 1300. So the defining characteristics cannot be said to be entirely in error. The rural population were, however, of necessity involved in the market because they owed rents and taxes in cash, and had to sell goods to acquire that money. They tended to produce some cash crops, such as wool, flax or dyestuffs, which were in demand for specialist manufactures, and the garden and yard, usually in the care of a woman, yielded horticultural and dairy produce which had the potential to be sold. Rarely did they depend entirely on the sale of a single crop, like a coffee grower in the contemporary developing world, though some upland pastoralists lived primarily by selling animals, dairy produce and wool. Obviously a late medieval peasant in the lowlands, with more than thirty acres (twelve hectares) of land and who practised mixed agriculture, sent produce to market more often than did a tenant with half that amount of land who relied mainly on arable cultivation.

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[2] T. Shanin, *Peasants and Peasant Societies* (Harmondsworth, 1971), pp. 14–17; R. H. Hilton, *The English Peasantry in the Later Middle Ages* (Oxford, 1975), pp. 12–15.

[3] A. Macfarlane, *The Origins of English Individualism* (Oxford, 1978).

All peasants in the period 1250–1550 bought goods which they could not obtain from their own resources, not just the standard necessities of salt and iron, but also footwear and clothing, domestic utensils and farm implements, and supplementary foodstuffs such as fish. Often it was more convenient to buy ready-prepared food and drink – bread, ale, cheese, pies – rather than always make them in the home. Similarly, the services of a skilled specialist might be superior to home-made efforts, leading to the employment of building craftsmen and tailors. The expertise of clerks, clergy and lawyers was far beyond the capacities of even a resourceful peasant family.[4] This tendency of peasants to buy manufactured goods and specialist services was most marked among the better-off, and we should not forget that a substantial proportion of the rural population, those with smallholdings, bought the foodstuffs that they could not produce on their modest acreage. Ironically it was the less well-off who were of necessity frequently involved in the labour market for their income, and the food market for their consumption.

To provide an idea of the quantities involved in exchange, let us take one of the hundreds of small market towns, with a population of 500 and a hinterland stretching over a radius of seven miles (eleven kilometres).[5] The rural population of the hinterland in about 1300 would amount to at least 8,000 people, living in 1,600 households in about forty villages.[6] If a quarter of those households were paying annual rents of 10*s* each, and a third 5*s* each (modest sums and probably underestimates), they would need to raise £333 each year. If they did this by selling grain, it would mean taking 1,300 quarters to market. They would all be paying tithes in kind, so if a third of the 150 square miles of the hinterland were under crops (32,000 acres or 13,000 hectares) a tenth of the produce, perhaps 3,000 quarters, would be gathered annually by the tithe owners or their farmers. A proportion would be consumed in the households of the rectors, or sent to feed the monks of a tithe-owning religious house, so perhaps 1,500 quarters would be sold, for about £400. Some local lords' demesnes, accounting for about 8,000 acres (*c.*3,000 hectares) within the typical hinterland, would be selling at least part of their grain in the local market, perhaps another 1,000 quarters per annum worth £250. This suggests a turnover in the grain trade alone of about £900. The town's population would be consuming 750 quarters of grain for their own food and drink, and processing a large quantity for sale as bread (including horse bread) and ale. They would also be selling some grain to other towns. And then we must add to the produce being sold in the town's market the surpluses of pastoral activities and horticulture, in all worth some hundreds of pounds. The agrarian basis of the town's economy is beginning to emerge.

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[4] For the professionals, see R. Swanson, 'Clergy and manorial society in late medieval Staffordshire', *Staffordshire Studies*, v (1993), 13–34; M. Tompkins, '"Let's kill all the lawyers": did 15th-century peasants employ lawyers when they conveyed customary land?', *The Fifteenth Century*, vi (2006), 73–87.

[5] This is based partly on C. Dyer, 'Market towns and the countryside in late medieval England', *Canadian Journal of History*, xxxi (1996), 17–35.

[6] See the calculations in C. Dyer, 'Medieval Stratford: a successful small town', in *The History of an English Borough: Stratford-upon-Avon 1196–1996*, ed. R. Bearman (Stroud, 1997), pp. 43–61. Stratford was a large market town with an unusually densely populated hinterland, so the figures have been scaled down to fit the hypothetical example.

On the other side of the urban economy, we can only attempt to calculate the volume or value of goods being sold by the townspeople in a very rough and ready fashion. The various occupations catered for the needs of a wide range of customers, including peasants. The town's inhabitants would be selling food, clothing, leather goods and metal implements to the local peasants. Some of these goods were made in the town, but many came from elsewhere. Perhaps sixty small-scale workshops and retailers could have had a combined turnover of £2,400.

This is all so speculative that it would be dangerous to suggest the extent of the contacts between our model town and the higher reaches of the market, but there is no doubt that wool was traded upwards, ultimately for export, and large quantities of animals and animal products, as well as grain, were sold to larger towns in the region. Many market towns had access to some specialist products: those serving a wooded landscape would sell glass, pottery or goods made of timber. More expensive or specialized commodities such as wine or imported dyestuffs would have been supplied to market town retailers by merchants from ports and large towns.

This is a familiar old tale, sketched here without detailed references to specific examples because they are well known, and the same stories, or at least parts of the stories, have been told about many towns, from Newmarket to Thornbury, and from Northallerton to Maidstone.[7] Such urban economies interacting with their rural surroundings are found on the continent, but it is worth emphasizing that English towns had no monopoly powers, and rural customers could pick and choose between rival markets.

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[7] P. May, *Newmarket, Medieval and Tudor* (Newmarket, 1982); R. H. Hilton, 'Low-level urbanization: the seigneurial borough of Thornbury in the middle ages', in *Medieval Society and the Manor Court*, ed. Z. Razi and R. Smith (Oxford, 1996), pp. 482–517; C. M. Newman, *Late Medieval Northallerton: a Small Market Town and its Hinterland, c.1470–1540* (Stamford, 1999); P. Clark and L. Murfin, *The History of Maidstone: the Making of a Modern County Town* (Stroud, 1995).

This chapter is designed to take the argument further, in order to show that the peasants were connected not just to the relatively simple and local exchange systems, but that they had some significant indirect contact with the higher reaches of the urban hierarchy, and with international trade. This will challenge the prejudices of many historians of peasants, towns and trade, who have tended to depict peasants as confined to a narrowly defined locality, and to associate the long-distance trade conducted by merchants based in large towns entirely with the wealthy elites who could afford to buy wine, spices, imported cloth and other luxuries.[8]

Consuming

Peasant purchases included manufactured goods containing imported raw materials, so the textiles from which their clothes were made were dyed with chemicals from overseas. Peasants wore coloured clothing. An appropriate starting point might be the Luttrell Psalter, probably executed in the second quarter of the fourteenth century, which shows working peasants wearing tunics, hoods and hose of violet, blue and various shades of light brown.[9] The leading authority on the manuscript, who cautioned against any simple belief that the images are 'mirrors' of daily life, suggested that the artist, perhaps in pursuit of visual variety, gave the peasants in the margins of the manuscript coloured clothing though in the 'real' world they wore something much more drab. He did not argue that the choice of colours had any significance in relation to morality or ideology, and he was perhaps not aware that coloured clothes are mentioned among the possessions of peasants in contemporary records, even those written before 1350.[10] Lists of stolen goods and occasional inventories in the period after the Black Death routinely mention the colours of garments. Robert Bell of Helperby in Yorkshire, a husbandman of very modest means, owned a black tunic and red hood when he died in 1451.[11] Husbandmen's wills in the early sixteenth century mention garments of russet, black, tawny and violet.[12]

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[8] E.g., P. Spufford, *Power and Profit: the Merchant in Medieval Europe* (2002), pp. 60–139.

[9] J. Backhouse, *The Luttrell Psalter* (1989).

[10] M. Camille, *Mirror in Parchment: the Luttrell Psalter and the Making of Medieval England* (Chicago, Ill., 1998), pp. 183–5, 319–21; his earlier work emphasized the social significance of the peasant scenes, and the light that they shed on the lord's perception of the workers and tenants (M. Camille, 'Labouring for the lord: the ploughman and the social order in the Luttrell Psalter', *Art History*, x (1987), 423–54). For peasants' colourful clothing at about the time of the painting of the psalter's marginal images, see C. Dyer, *Standards of Living in the Later Middle Ages: Social Change in England c.1200–1540* (rev. edn., Cambridge, 1998), pp. 176–7.

Peasants bought modestly priced cloth which was normally produced in England, Wales and Ireland. Some dyestuffs were grown locally, but large quantities of woad in particular came from southern France, Picardy and Lombardy, and madder and weld were also imported. Other substances used in weaving, dyeing, fulling and shearing of cloth included olive oil, alum, which fixed dyes, wood ashes, soap and teasels. These were all brought from the continent, sometimes to supplement native supplies, but in the case of alum and oil were only obtainable overseas.[13]

Peasant households possessed a number of knives. They were employed in cutting up food, but would not be provided at table, as diners carried their own. Every peasant kitchen would need at least one knife for preparing food. Although essential also for many daily agricultural tasks, they were not usually listed in inventories because of their low value, but they appear in court records when assaults were reported, reinforcing the point that they were widely carried and instantly available.[14] They are among the most common small finds from the excavation of village sites, such as the forty-two discovered at the village known as Goltho in Lincolnshire.[15] These are not closely datable, and were presumably made and used over the village's life from the eleventh to the fifteenth century. Two or three might have been post-medieval in date. Twelve of them had marks to identify the cutler, which suggests that they originated in the workshops of a town, perhaps Lincoln which lay eight miles (thirteen kilometres) to the west of the village. Knife-making was a speciality around Sheffield, at Thaxted in Essex, which had links with the London market, and Rugeley in Staffordshire, where eleven cutlers were taxed in 1381.[16] The iron of the knife blades found in excavations was mainly of local origin, but the sharp edge was made of a strip of steel, which was forged into the blade by complex processes.[17] Iron and steel were imported from Spain and Scandinavia in quantity: Spanish imports alone amounted to 1,000 tons in the mid fifteenth century, rising to 3,000 tons around 1500.[18] High grade weapons and armour, and specialist fittings for buildings, such as grilles, account for part of the imports, but some would have been a component in the knife blades of half a million consuming households, which together with other tools, such as shears and plough parts, cumulatively added to the demand for the metal, which apparently was increasing towards 1500.[19]

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[11] York Minster Library, L2/4 fo. 265v.

[12] M. Hayward, *Rich Apparel: Clothing and the Law in Henry VIII's England* (Farnham, 2009), p. 219.

[13] Spufford, *Power and Profit*, pp. 302–4, 332–4; J. Munro, 'Textile technology in the middle ages', in J. Munro, *Textiles, Towns and Trade* (Aldershot, 1994), pp. 18, 22–4.

[14] *The Worcester Eyre of 1275*, ed. J. Rohrkasten (Worcestershire Historical Society, new ser., xxii, 2008), pp. 370–2 (although axes and staves were more often mentioned as weapons in this set of records); 18 homicides with knives appear in the Huntingdonshire eyre of 1286 (*Royal Justice and the Medieval English Countryside*, ed. A. R. and E. B. DeWindt (Studies and Texts, lvii, Toronto, 1981), p. 57).

[15] G. Beresford, *The Medieval Clay-Land Village: Excavations at Goltho and Barton Blount* (Society for Medieval Archaeology Monograph Series, vi, 1975), pp. 79–82.

[16] D. Hey, 'The origins and early growth of the Hallamshire cutlery and allied trades', in *English Rural Society, 1500–1800: Essays in Honour of Joan Thirsk*, ed. J. Chartres and D. Hey (Cambridge, 1999), pp. 345–6; Keene, 'Small towns and the metropolis', pp. 234–6; *The Poll Taxes of 1377, 1379 and 1381*, ed. C. Fenwick (Oxford, 2001), pt. 2, p. 477.

Most peasant households had a cast brass pot or two, or at least a pan made from sheets of copper alloy riveted together. These figure prominently in inventories because they were the most highly valued household goods, at sums such as 3*s* 4*d* in the case of the cast pots. If a peasant had no valuable animal available as a heriot (death duty owed to the lord), the pot was often chosen from among the dead person's possessions by the manorial officials as the best chattel. Pots were commonly bequeathed in wills. The specialist skill of casting pots tended to be concentrated in the workshops of potters, braziers or bell founders in larger towns: we have to be careful to distinguish between the urban potters working in metal, and the mainly rural potters who made ceramic vessels.[20] The braziers and potters recycled the scrap of broken vessels, and some copper was mined in Britain, but most new supplies tended to come from the Netherlands and Germany, and some of the pots and pans were brought across the North Sea.[21] In the customs records of an east coast port like Boston, we find in 1390–1 that ships from continental ports brought in consignments of cooking pots with customs valuations of as little as 13*s* 4*d* for one batch, and as much as £61 13*s* for another, pans (including some from Dinant) worth in total £387, 'battery' (meaning pans) worth nearly £46, and 2000 lbs of copper.[22] A peasant's pot might therefore have been imported as a finished utensil, or if made in

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[17] J. Cowgill, M. de Neergaard and N. Griffiths, *Knives and Scabbards* (Woodford, 2000), p. 8.

[18] W. Childs, *Anglo-Castilian Trade in the Later Middle Ages* (Manchester, 1978), pp. 116–19.

[19] J. Geddes, 'Iron', in *English Medieval Industries: Craftsmen, Techniques, Products*, ed. J. Blair and N. Ramsay (1991), pp. 167–88; D. Starley, 'Discussion', in *Craft, Industry and Everyday Life: Finds from Medieval York*, ed. P. Ottoway and N. Rogers (York Archaeological Trust, xvii/xv, 2002), pp. 2788–91.

[20] R. K. Field, 'Worcestershire peasant buildings, household goods and farming equipment in the later middle ages', *Medieval Archaeology*, ix (1965), 137–45; R. Butler and C. Green, *English Bronze Cooking Vessels and their Founders* (Honiton, 2003).

[21] C. Blair and J. Blair, 'Copper alloys', in Blair and Ramsay, *English Medieval Industries*, pp. 83–5, 93–5.

[22] *The Overseas Trade of Boston in the Reign of Richard II*, ed. S. Rigby (Lincolnshire Record Society, xciii, 2005), pp. 140–52.

England would have originated in a large town and contained a proportion of metal from the continent.

The same admixture of imported copper would also have been included in the metal of the much more numerous small items found on excavations of village sites, such as buckles, belt fittings and ornaments for harness (Figure 2.1). Again, they were mainly manufactured in larger towns, and a clue to their distribution comes from the group of fifty-nine buckles of *c.*1300 found at Hambleden in Buckinghamshire, which were probably being carried from London into the provinces to be retailed by pedlars or by small town traders.[23]

Cloth, knives and wares made of copper alloy were widely distributed and frequently owned by peasants, but the imported dyes, chemicals and metals were one element in goods manufactured in Britain. Some objects acquired by peasants, however, were entirely of continental origin. These included handmills of lava from the Rhineland, which were light and relatively thin, and especially well suited for milling malt for brewing (Figure 2.1). They are identified from their geology, and are excavated from peasant sites especially in the east of England, such as Grenstein in Norfolk where seventy-nine pieces were found.[24] They are less common in the midlands, with a single piece from a late medieval peasant house at Lyveden in Northamptonshire.[25] Customs accounts show that millstones and quernstones were imported in large numbers in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries as a small part of cargoes which mainly originated in ports in the Low Countries.[26] Other stone artefacts include mortars made of Caen stone from Normandy, which are rare: one fragment was found, for example, at Westbury in Buckinghamshire, a site rich in small finds.[27] The presence of mortars on peasant sites suggests that culinary methods well known in aristocratic kitchens were used to prepare some peasant food.

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[23] L. Babb, 'A 13th-century brooch hoard from Hambleden, Buckinghamshire', *Medieval Archaeology*, xli (1997), 233–6.

[24] P. Wade-Martins, *Fieldwork and Excavation on Village Sites in Launditch Hundred, Norfolk* (East Anglian Archaeology, x, 1980), p. 141.

[25] J. M. Steane, G. F. Bryant and P. A. Webster, 'Excavations at the deserted medieval settlement at Lyveden', *Northampton Borough Council Museums and Art Gallery Journal*, xii (1975), 145. Lava millstones were used in the Roman period, but Lyveden had no finds of the Roman period, so the fragment is unlikely to have been residual.

[26] E.g., *The Making of King's Lynn*, ed. D. M. Owen (Oxford, 1984), pp. 352, 358–62, 369; *The Customs Accounts of Newcastle upon Tyne 1454–1500*, ed. J. F. Wade (Surtees Society, cii, 1995), p. 148.

[27] R. Ivens, P. Busby and N. Shepherd, *Tattenhoe and Westbury: Two Deserted Medieval Settlements in Milton Keynes* (Buckinghamshire Archaeological Society Monograph Series, viii, 1995), pp. 384–5.

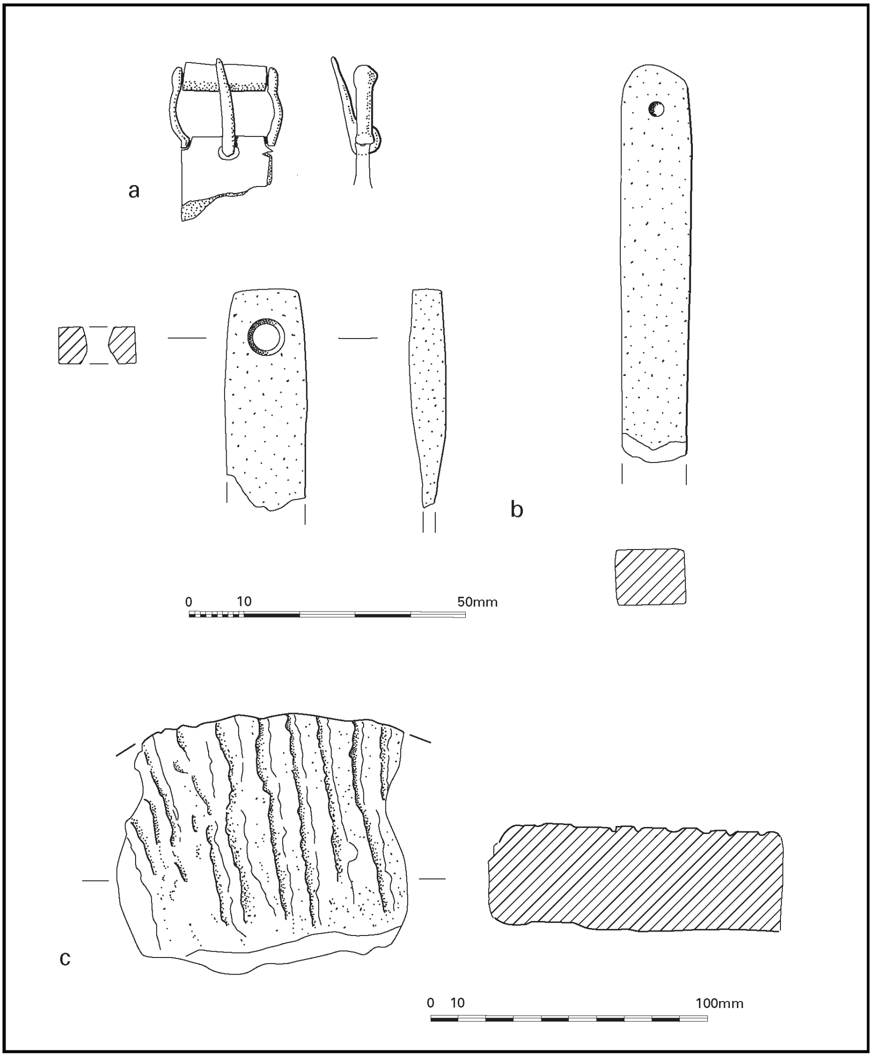

Figure 2.1. Examples of artefacts containing imported raw materials (a, thirteenth-century copper alloy buckle), and themselves imported (b, Norwegian schist whetstones and c, fragment of a German lava handmill).

Sources: P. Rahtz, 'Upton, Gloucestershire. 1964–8', *Transactions of the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society*, lxxxviii (1969), 107; Steane, Bryant and Webster, 'Excavations', pp. 145–6; Ivens, Busby and Shepherd, *Tattenhoe and Westbury*, pp. 382–3.

Whetstones made of schist from Norway occur on village sites so often that they are regarded as commonplace by the excavators (Figure 2.1). For example, thirteen were found on a late medieval house site at Lyveden, and thirty-eight at the larger excavation of Westbury, a settlement which was occupied intensively from the thirteenth to the sixteenth century.[28] The precise origin of most of the Norwegian stones is known, from Eidsborg in Telemark, and they were shipped out of the small port of Skien. The whetstones occurring on peasant sites, identified by their geology as originating at Eidsborg, were presumably of the same type as those recorded in customs accounts at such North Sea ports as Boston, Hull and King's Lynn.[29]

The decorative and high quality imported pottery of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, such as polychrome jugs from Saintonge in western France, or Spanish lustreware, are normally found on high status sites, but German stonewares of the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries were more widely distributed and occur on village sites of all kinds including Wharram Percy in Yorkshire in its last shrunken phase. Imports of stoneware drinking vessels appear frequently in the customs accounts.[30] Archaeological finds also include jettons of continental manufacture, which were coin-like decorated discs of copper alloy, designed to serve as casting counters in the accounting process. At least nine have been found on village sites, which amounts to one for every six medieval coins from peasant settlements.[31] Lords of manors and the beneficed clergy would have cast their financial accounts on chequer boards, and the counters may have come into the hands of peasant administrators such as manorial reeves. Perhaps some peasants made calculations of their own finances using counters, and this offers the best explanation for their occasional presence in or near to their houses.

Documents reveal other categories of imported goods made from organic materials and therefore unlikely to be found in excavations. Inventories of peasant furnishings, or bequests in wills, occasionally mention chests of spruce (meaning Prussian chests) from the Baltic. John Hall, for example, a husbandman of Holgate in Yorkshire, in 1468 left two spruce chests worth 6*s* 0*d*, which were expensive furnishings for a peasant household. These chests and other pieces of furniture feature in the customs accounts for eastern ports. About ninety of them still survive as chests in English parish churches, distinguishable from their pine construction with curved poplar lids. Many of them must have begun their life in England as domestic furnishings, which were later given to the church.[32]

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[28] Steane, Bryant and Webster, 'Excavations', pp. 141–4; Ivens, Busby and Shepherd, *Tattenhoe and Westbury*, pp. 82–4.

[29] S. Myrvoll, 'Trade in Telemark and the earliest settlement in Skien', *Offa*, xli (1984), 41–55; S. Myrvoll, 'The hones', in *Ribe Excavations 1970–6*, iii, ed. M. Bencard, L. Bender Jorgensen and H. Brinch Madsen (Esbjerg, 1991), pp. 129–35; Rigby, *Overseas Trade of Boston*, pp. 80, 81, 87; *The Customs Accounts of Hull*, ed. W. R. Childs (Yorkshire Archaeological Society Record Series, cxliv, 1986), p. 58; Owen, *King's Lynn*, p. 359.

[30] D. H. Brown, 'Pots from houses', *Medieval Ceramics*, xxi (1997), 83–94; *Wharram: a Study of Settlement on the Yorkshire Wolds*, ed. D. D. Andrews and G. Milne (Society for Medieval Archaeology Monograph, viii, 1979), p. 94.

[31] C. Dyer, 'Peasants and coins: the uses of money in the middle ages', *British Numismatic Journal*, lxvii (1998), 30–47.

Bowstaves, made of yew, which was a relatively scarce tree in England, were also imported in very large numbers. They were brought in to some of the east coast ports, especially Hull, where an average of 10,000 per annum were recorded in 1303–11, and 15,900 in one year in 1383–4. In July and August 1463, 2,784 came into the port, mainly in the cargoes of Hanseatic merchants in ships originating in Gdansk. Their original source lay in the forests of the Carpathians.[33] In view of the common assumption that the bow was a weapon especially characteristic of the English, their overseas origin reminds us forcefully of the importance of continental imports. English craftsmen played a role in their manufacture, because the staves would be bought by bowyers who would make the finished weapon.[34] Bows were used by everyone, which included peasants. They occasionally appear in peasant inventories, and of course in records of crimes; coroners also had to deal with the consequences of shooting accidents. The most systematic information about the ownership of bows is found in the military survey of 1522, such as that for Gloucestershire, which lists, among many other weapons and pieces of armour, a total of 1,369 bows. In the village of English Bicknor, among the forty-eight people who were assessed, fifteen bows with sheafs of arrows were owned by people of very varied financial status, from William Jurden with goods worth an above average £13 6*s* 8*d*, to six men with no assessment in money at all. The majority of bow owners, with goods between £1 and £5, are likely to have been peasants.[35] In many villages no bows were recorded, which suggests that the survey is an imperfect record, as they are unlikely to have been completely absent from any village.

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[32] York, Borthwick Institute for Archives, dean and chapter wills, 1468, Hall; D. Sherlock, *Suffolk Church Chests* (Suffolk Institute of Archaeology and History, 2008), pp. 8, 11, 16, 28–32; G. Simpson, 'The pine standard chest in St Margaret's church, King's Lynn, and the social and economic significance of the type', in *King's Lynn and the Fens: Medieval Art, Architecture and Archaeology*, ed. J. McNeill (British Archaeological Association Conference Transactions, xxxi, 2008), pp. 53–65.

[33] W. R. Childs, 'Timber for cloth: changing commodities in Anglo-Baltic trade in the 14th century', in *Cogs, Cargoes and Commerce: Maritime Bulk Trade in Northern Europe, 1150–1400*, ed. L. Berggren, N. Hybil and A. Landen (Toronto, 2002), pp. 181–211; Childs, *Customs Accounts of Hull*, pp. 58–63.

[34] H. Swanson, *Medieval Artisans* (Oxford, 1989), pp. 101–3.

[35] John Jakson of Grimston had a bow with various arrows worth 10*d* in his hall in 1464 (York, Borthwick Institute for Archives, dean and chapter wills, 1464, Jakson); *The Military Survey of Gloucestershire, 1522*, ed. R. W. Hoyle (Gloucestershire Record Series, vi, 1993).

To conclude the picture of imports from northern Europe which were bought by peasants, tar from northern forests was used to treat and prevent infection among sheep. Hundreds of barrels are recorded in customs accounts: to take one example, 440 barrels of tar and pitch were noted being landed at London between January and September 1446. The medicinal application of tar and pitch is most fully recorded for the flocks kept by lords of manors, but a wealthy tenant like Richard Jorge of Willersey (Gloucestershire) in 1507 acquired a barrel of tar which had come through London, and doubtless small quantities were available to his less affluent neighbours.[36]

When many ships were carrying English cloth to the continent, they sometimes returned with miscellaneous cargoes including large quantities of relatively cheap consumer goods, like the *Martyn* of London which sailed into its home port in 1480–1 with such items as thirty-three gross (4,820) of latten buckles, seventeen dozen mirrors, eight dozen felt hats, 1,400 thimbles and fifteen gross (2,160) of sets of playing cards.[37] Peasant purchasers would have been tempted by seeing these things displayed on market stalls or at fairs. They were also included in pedlars' packs which were carried around villages, with a view (according to contemporaries) to attracting the interest of women purchasers. An early sixteenth-century drama which lists the contents of such a pack mentions items which are also found in ships' cargoes: pins, needles, thimbles, combs, lace, ribbons and much else.[38] Packs of playing cards, early products of the continental printing industry, were luring the customers of village ale houses into bad habits of gambling, according to a rising number of village by-laws in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. The village elders attempted to curb illicit games which encouraged the wasting of time and money, and were likely to lead to disorder.[39]

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[36] Childs, 'Timber for cloth'; *London Customs Accounts*, ed. S. Jenks (British Academy Records of Social and Economic History, forthcoming), pp. 93–101; Westminster Abbey Muniments, 12258 fo. 33r.

[37] *The Overseas Trade of London: Exchequer Customs Accounts 1480–1*, ed. H. S. Cobb (London Record Society, xxvii, 1990), p. 9.

[38] J. Davis, '"Men as march with fote packes": pedlars and freedom of movement in late medieval England', in *Freedom of Movement in the Middle Ages*, ed. P. Hordern (Harlaxton Medieval Studies, xv, Donington, 2007), p. 150.

[39] M. McIntosh, *Controlling Misbehaviour in England, 1370–1600* (Cambridge, 1998), pp, 102–4. These refer to 16th-century cases, but cards are mentioned in by-laws before 1500, e.g. one at Kempsey in Worcestershire in 1480 (Worcestershire County Record Office, ref. 705:4, BA54).

Some imported food and drink was consumed by peasants. Their purchases normally consisted of local produce, or of prepared foodstuffs: bread, cheese, ale, pies and puddings. Marine fish formed a significant element in the diet of peasants at Wharram Percy, where cod bones are likely to represent the consumption of stock fish.[40] Some of these dried fish from Arctic waters were imported through Norway, and brought into North Sea ports such as Hull. Better-off peasants, on special occasions such as funeral and wedding feasts, tasted the spiced food and wine that was normally confined to aristocratic households. Wine worth 12*d* was provided for the 'friends and neighbours' of John Hall of Holgate (Yorkshire) after his funeral in 1468. At the funeral feast in 1329 of William Lene of Walsham-le-Willows, who was an exceptionally successful peasant with assets including 121 sheep, 12*d* was spent on 'salt and spices'.[41] Clearly on both occasions only very small quantities of these imported luxuries were consumed. In the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, when pepper was sold for 12*d* per pound, and peasants and skilled artisans might have more cash, one can imagine a household buying an ounce or two occasionally from a local spicer. On the continent pepper was regarded as a condiment that might be available to ordinary people. Indeed, it has been argued that in the fifteenth century the very rich bought more expensive spices precisely because pepper was being consumed by too many of their inferiors.[42]

Peasants and peasant households made purchases of traded good from their limited resources. They disposed of larger sums of money, however, when they took on public office. The upper ranks of village society were expected to serve as churchwardens, and their accounts of the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries show that many parishes raised sums in the region of £5 per annum, which was spent largely on materials and equipment required by the liturgy, and on the expenses of the church fabric. They bought luxuries for the church which they would never have dreamt of consuming in their homes, such as wax for candles, much of which came from northern Europe. A wealthy parish like Yatton in Somerset would commonly spend £1 in a year on wax.[43] Tintinhull in the same county bought

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[40] J. H. Barrett, 'The fish bone', in *Water Resources and their Management: Wharram*, x, ed. C. Treen and M. Atkin (York University Archaeological Publications, xii, 2005), pp. 169–75; J. H. Barrett and others, 'Detecting the medieval cod trade: a new method and first results', *Journal of Archaeological Science*, xxxv (2008), 850–61.

[41] York, Borthwick Institute for Archives, dean and chapter wills, 1468, Hall; *The Court Rolls of Walsham le Willows 1300–50*, ed. R. Lock (Suffolk Records Society, xli, 1998), p. 135.

[42] B. Laurioux, *Une histoire culinaire du moyen âge* (Paris, 2005), pp. 190–3.

[43] *Church-Wardens' Accounts of Croscombe, Pilton, Yatton, Tintinhull, Morebath and St Michael's Bath*, ed. E. Hobhouse (Somerset Record Society, iv, 1890), pp. 83–9.

53¼ lbs for 33*s* in 1440–1. Incense was acquired in small quantities, for only 9*d* at Yatton in 1490.[44] This came from the Middle East, from Persia and Arabia, but Bristol, which supplied these Somerset villages, seems to have obtained its incense from Bayonne in western France. Fine linen was appropriate for altar cloths, including relatively expensive imported linen like the Holland cloth for the high altar at Croscombe in 1478–9, and on occasion the repair or renewal of vestments needed silks such as velvet and damask, which were commonly produced in Italy.[45] Until the end of the fifteenth century, which saw the first English manufacture of paper, supplies had to be imported, often from southern Europe. The Somerset parish of Croscombe in 1475–6 bought paper costing £6 18*s* 0*d* for a 'new legend', which was presumably the Golden Legend with its collection of saints' lives. The churchwardens at Yatton chose wainscots, made of imported timber from the Baltic, for internal building work in the church in 1447–8, at a cost of 23*s* 4*d*. The timber had been unloaded at the quay at Bristol, and the wardens paid for it to be carried the ten miles (sixteen kilometres) to their church.[46] Organ pipes and bells were usually made by urban artisans, and the search for the best product often took the churchwardens a considerable distance. This is apparent from surviving fifteenth-century bells now hanging in rural church towers in east midland counties such as Northamptonshire, which carry the names of London bell founders.[47] A proportion of the copper which constituted most of the alloy in the bell was imported, as we have seen.

Producing

Peasants can be seen as consumers of imports and the products of towns at the top of the urban hierarchy; more importantly, however, they also supplied large and distant markets. The contribution of peasant sheep to the wool trade with the continent is well known, thanks to a calculation that twelve million fleeces were exported in the peak year of the wool trade in 1304–5, and that eight million of these would have come from peasant flocks. Local tithe evidence shows that demesne sheep, at East Meon in

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[44] Hobhouse, *Church-Wardens' Accounts*, pp. 120, 180.

[45] P. Freedman, *Out of the East: Spices in the Medieval Imagination* (New Haven and London, 2008), p. 80; *The Overseas Trade of Bristol*, ed. E. M. Carus-Wilson (Bristol Record Society, vii, 1937), pp. 224, 272; *Bristol's Trade with Ireland and the Continent*, ed. S. F. Lavin and E. T. Jones (Bristol Record Society, lxi, 2009), p. 70.

[46] Hobhouse, *Church-Wardens' Accounts*, pp. 5, 8, 51, 88; Bristol received paper from La Rochelle and wainscots from Flanders in the late 15th century (Carus-Wilson, *Overseas Trade*, p. 286 (paper) and p. 258 (wainscots)).

[47] J. Laughton, E. Jones and C. Dyer, 'The urban hierarchy in the late middle ages: a study of the east midlands', *Urban History*, xxviii (2001), 337.

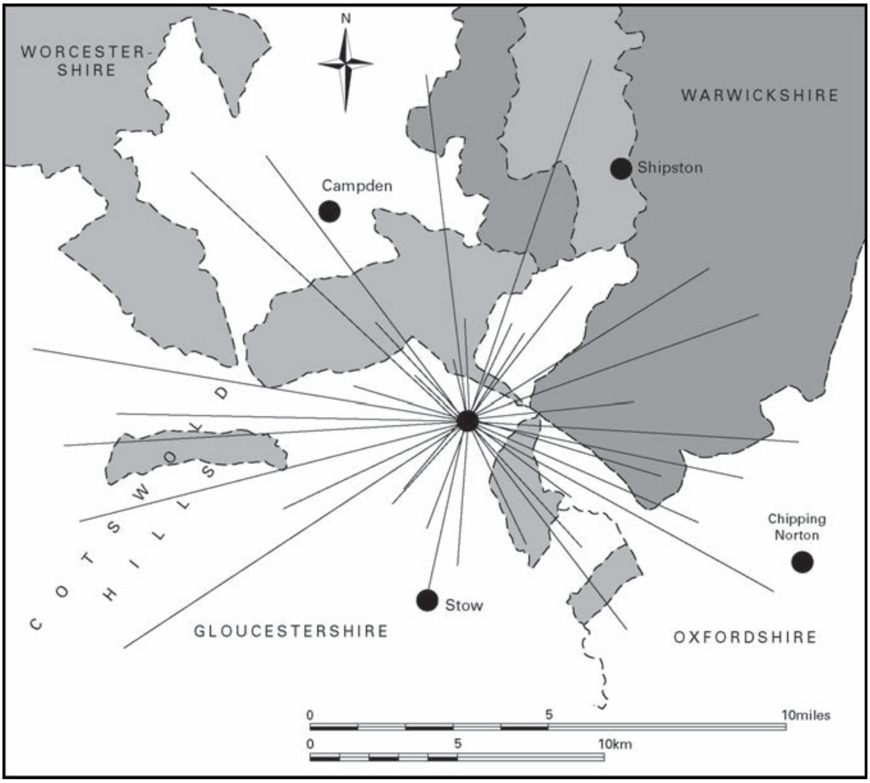
N
WORCESTER-SHIRE
WARWICKSHIRE
Shipston
Campden
COTSWOLD HILLS
Chipping Norton
Stow
GLOUCESTERSHIRE
OXFORDSHIRE
0
5
10miles
0
5
10km

Figure 2.2. Location of suppliers of wool to John Heritage of Moreton-in-Marsh (Gloucestershire), 1500–20. The majority of these wool growers were peasants.
Source: see n. 50.

Hampshire for example, were outnumbered by peasant sheep in a ratio of one to three.[48]

Indirect evidence for the mechanism by which the peasant wool reached the exporting merchants comes from references to lords, monastic and laymen, acting as middlemen and selling the *collecta* assembled from peasants' flocks along with the fleeces of their own sheep.[49] Direct records of the sale of peasant wool for an ultimate overseas market are contained in the account book of John Heritage, a Gloucestershire woolman, or brogger, who was based at Moreton-in-Marsh in 1500–20.[50] Many of those who sold him wool were peasants in the surrounding villages, who often held between thirty and ninety acres of land, and sold each year between thirty and ninety fleeces (Figure 2.2). Heritage packed this wool into sacks and carried forty of these each year (in 1500–10) to London where he sold them to staplers who exported to Calais. The wool would often have been woven into cloth in Flanders. The peasants who supplied the fleeces were running mixed agricultural holdings with some land under the plough, but corn-growing was not very profitable and their income of between £1 and £4 from wool sales enabled them to survive and prosper in an economic environment that was not very friendly to primary producers. Other wool dealers were gathering peasant fleeces for sale to the English clothiers, but the peasants who supplied wool for manufacturers at home were also indirectly involved in the export trade because from the late fourteenth century much English cloth was sold overseas.

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[48] C. Dyer, *Making a Living in the Middle Ages* (New Haven and London, 2002), p. 165.

[49] The laymen's role is mentioned in P. Nightingale, 'Knights and merchants: trade, politics and the gentry in late medieval England', *Past & Present*, clxix (2000), 43.

[50] Westminster Abbey Muniments, 12258.

In addition to wool, English exports included a wide range of agricultural products. In the years around 1300 about 45,000 hides were sent abroad each year, 30,000 quarters of grain, and much firewood.[51] In 1377–1461 near to 4,000 quarters of grain were exported on average each year, mainly to the Low Countries.[52] Great estates in the south-east contributed to the export trade in grain, but so did peasants, especially after 1400 when estates drew back from agricultural production. A glimpse of the means by which peasants' produce was collected can be gained from the accounts compiled for sheriffs, when they were required to provide cargoes of grain (and other foodstuffs) for military expeditions and castle garrisons in the early fourteenth century.[53] They went round the villages, compulsorily purchasing one, two or three quarters from the small-scale producers. Alternatively they visited market towns, finding forty quarters of wheat here and sixty quarters of oats there, which were constituted, of course, from cartloads each of one, two or three quarters sent for sale by peasants, but then requisitioned. In normal times grain dealers, like the London cornmongers, carried out very similar operations of gathering together the quantities that they required to satisfy the needs of the city.[54] In the provinces in the 1380s, grain dealers in the corn-growing districts around Tewkesbury and Gloucester assembled hundreds of quarters of grain in order to send cargoes down the river by boat to the major port of Bristol, from which some would be exported to western France. The basis of those boat loads is suggested by evidence in the same period that villagers around Gloucester were selling in the town quantities of grain varying between one and twelve quarters.[55]

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[51] B. M. S. Campbell, 'The sources of tradable surpluses: English agricultural exports 1250–1350', in Berggren, Hybil and Landen, *Cogs, Cargoes and Commerce*, pp. 1–30.

[52] S. Jenks, 'The English grain trade, 1377–1461', in *Les techniques de conservation des grains à long terme*, iii, pt. 2, ed. M. Gast and F. Sigaret (Paris, 1985), pp. 501–26.

[53] J. Masschaele, *Peasants, Merchants and Markets: Inland Trade in Medieval England, 1150–1350* (New York, 1997), pp. 38–40, 220–3; C. Dyer, *Bromsgrove: a Small Town in Worcestershire in the Middle Ages* (Worcestershire Historical Society Occasional Publication, ix, 2000), p. 37.

[54] Campbell, Galloway, Keene and Murphy, *Medieval Capital*, pp. 78–110.

Peasants played a significant role in supplying large towns like London and Bristol with food. The 'Feeding the city' project concentrated on the trade in grain from manorial lords, and the manorial accounts contained much information about the sale of livestock and cheese.[56] Demesne gardens also produced dyestuffs like madder. The manors controlled assets like woods which kept London supplied with fuel.[57] Gaps are apparent in the range of products, as few demesnes were regularly selling large numbers of poultry and eggs, vegetables and fruit, honey and other small-scale products which they were not organized to provide – bee-keepers, for example, are recorded as workers on manorial demesnes in the early middle ages, but not in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. We know that households in London expected to buy and consume delicacies such as piglets, young lambs and kids, but we do not often find such items being sold by manorial officials. Occasionally the sale into towns of specialist produce by peasants can be discovered, for example in the person of the hucksters selling fruit and vegetables (beans, peas and apples) in Bristol around 1300, or the villagers in north Gloucestershire in 1380 supplying Gloucester with honey, and fish caught in the River Severn. They also brought in bread and ale to compete with the products of the urban food traders.[58] The same list of traders and their commodities shows that peasant craftsmen were supplying the products of rural industries, such as wood ash and iron. As the wood ash, fuller's earth, madder and teasels that came into towns from the country were used in cloth production, in the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries when English cloth was being exported in large quantities, the peasants who made, extracted, grew and gathered these commodities can again be seen making a small and indirect contribution to international commerce.

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[55] Hilton, *English Peasantry*, p. 89; R. Holt, 'Gloucester in the century after the Black Death', in *The Medieval Town*, ed. R. Holt and G. Rosser (1990), p. 144.

[56] 'Feeding the city (I): London's impact on the agrarian economy of southern England, *c.*1250–1350' <http://www.history.ac.uk/projects/feeding-the-city1> and 'Feeding the city (II): London's impact on the agrarian economy of southern England, *c.*1290–1400' <http://www.history.ac.uk/projects/feeding-the-city2> [both accessed 10 Aug. 2011].

[57] J. A. Galloway, D. Keene and M. Murphy, 'Fuelling the city: production and distribution of firewood and fuel in London's region, 1290–1400', *Economic History Review*, xlix (1996), 447–72.

[58] *Accounts of the Constables of Bristol Castle in the 13th and 14th Centuries*, ed. M. Sharp (Bristol Record Society, xxxiv, 1982), pp. 11, 23, 30 38, 48, 54, 57; *Victoria County History of Gloucestershire*, iv. 47.

Educating and training

Finally, it must be said that too much emphasis has been placed here on the transmission of material goods between town and country, and some reference should be made to the human traffic, and the more intangible social, economic and cultural consequences of contacts between the two, a point which Derek Keene has emphasized. He showed how country boys were offered to Londoners as apprentices, and in the case of the sixteenth-century butchers distinctive regional patterns of recruitment showed how connections were made between the London meat traders and the graziers, farmers and dealers in livestock in the midlands.[59]

Some of the best evidence for cultural and social links between towns and nearby villages comes from the fraternities which were based in towns but attracted rural members. The better-off peasants who joined such guilds at Stratford-upon-Avon (Warwickshire) and Walsall (Staffordshire), for which lists of brothers and sisters have survived, would gain the spiritual benefits of attending services, and eventually prayers from the chaplains, as well as social events such as the guild feast.[60] The guilds founded and administered schools (as did chantries and collegiate churches, often located in towns), which drew their pupils from both the urban and rural population. The peasant interest in education is most commonly recorded when serfs sought permission to send their sons to school or when they were found to have gone to school without permission. Peasant parents were anxious to give their children the opportunity to become clergy and gain status and a higher income away from the village, and we know that hundreds of those being ordained and gaining positions in the church were of peasant origin.[61]

Some well-documented villages in the west midlands allow us to glimpse the close connections between town and country in the practice of industry, which again has implications for the training of young people (Figure 2.3). Birmingham *c.*1500 was in the upper rank of market towns with a population near to 2,000. Its traders and craftsmen provided the usual range of goods and service to the hinterland, including foodstuffs and clothing. Its specialists included an organ maker, and nearby churchwardens hired

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[59] Keene, 'Debt cases', pp. 69–70.

[60] *Register of the Guild of the Holy Cross, Stratford-upon-Avon*, ed. M. Macdonald (Dugdale Society, xlii, 2007), pp. 10, 22–4; C. Dyer, 'The urbanizing of Staffordshire: the first phases', *Staffordshire Studies*, xiv (2002), 18–20.

[61] R. N. Swanson, *Church and Society in Late Medieval England* (Oxford, 1989), p. 38.

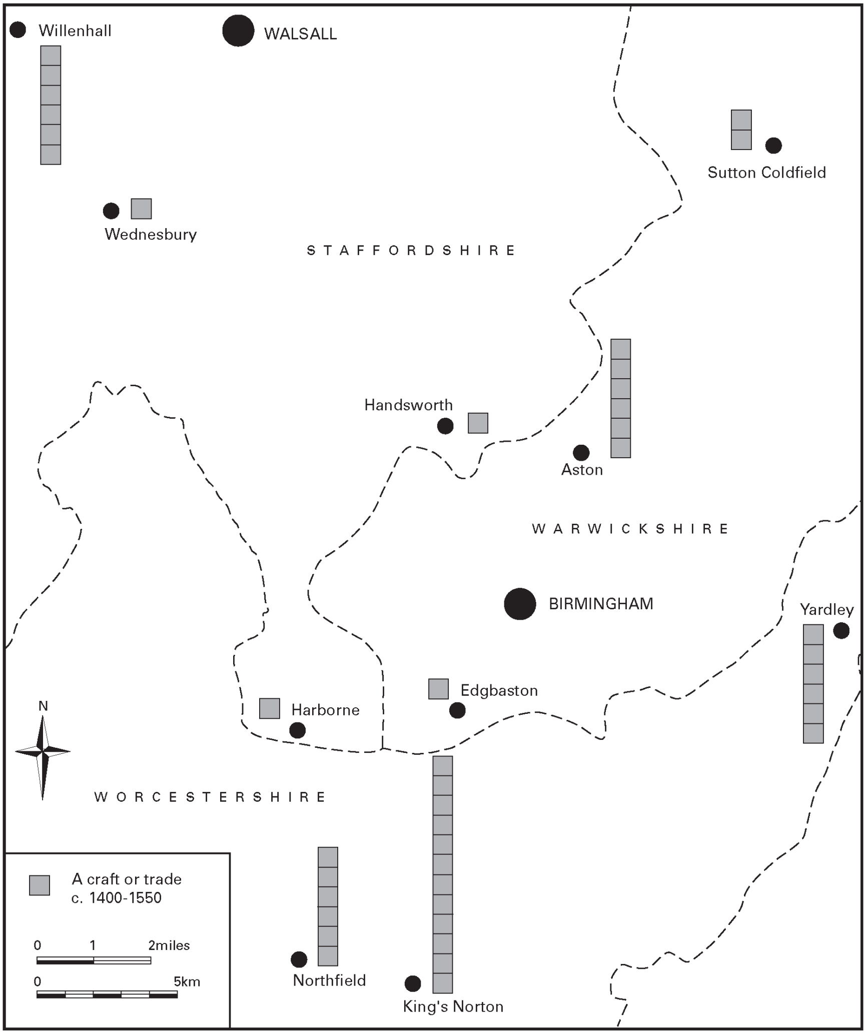
Willenhall
WALSALL
Sutton Coldfield
Wednesbury
STAFFORDSHIRE
Handsworth
Aston
WARWICKSHIRE
BIRMINGHAM
Yardley
Edgbaston
Harborne
N
WORCESTERSHIRE
A craft or trade c. 1400-1550
0 1 2miles
0 5km
Northfield
King's Norton

Figure 2.3. The surroundings of Birmingham (Warwickshire) and Walsall (Staffordshire) showing the location of rural traders and artisans.

Source: see below, n. 64.

a Birmingham craftsman to paint a Doom.[62] The town had a busy cattle market, but in manufacturing it was best known for its leather processing and its iron industry, especially the manufacture of blades. Nine miles to the north-west, in Staffordshire, lay Walsall, which was smaller in size, but also celebrated for its iron workers, and in particular the lorimers who made horse bits.[63] The scale of production of blades and horse bits in the two towns was connected with the extent of the market which the artisans and traders had carved out for themselves, stretching over the midlands and beyond. The manufactures of the two towns were complemented by the activities of the surrounding rural population, in the large parishes of Aston, Northfield, King's Norton, Willenhall and Yardley, documented in the period 1400–1540 (Figure 2.3). The crafts and trades in these villages were often pursued by families who also held land and they can be characterized as having 'dual occupations'.[64] They enjoyed the advantage of access to water power from the many streams of the district, and the raw materials and especially fuel that could be acquired conveniently in a woodland landscape. There is little evidence for that antagonism between urban and rural industry which can be found on the continent. Instead the 'skills base' which developed in the whole district enabled workers to acquire experience and move about from town to town and between town and country.

The records of the heresy trials held at Coventry in 1511 contain very useful biographical information about the Lollard community in the regional capital, and its connections with the smaller town of Birmingham. The proceedings reveal an easy mobility among a number of those accused. This was most extreme in the case of John Johnson of Birmingham, a cutler, who had travelled from Yorkshire to London, and moved widely over western England and France.[65] Much more characteristic we suspect was the Gest family. Richard Gest senior was born in rural (but industrial) Northfield and lived in Birmingham, while Joan Gest, wife of John Gest junior of Birmingham, came from the small Staffordshire market town of Abbots Bromley, and had been the servant of a Coventry tailor.[66] The heresy of which Johnson, the Gests and many others were accused was town based, but country people, who were often drawn into contact with the town by employment, trade or marriage, joined the network of dissent. Lollards owned and read books, so some of them had attended schools. They may have held unorthodox beliefs, but their migratory behaviour and webs of social interaction were probably not so unusual.

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[62] R. Holt, *The Early History of the Town of Birmingham 1166–1600* (Dugdale Society Occasional Paper, xxx, 1985); *Cambridge Urban History of Britain*, i, ed. D. Palliser (Cambridge, 2000), pp. 636–7; C. Dyer, 'Trade, towns and the church: ecclesiastical consumers and the urban economy of the west midlands, 1290–1540', in *The Church in the Medieval Town*, ed. T. R. Slater and G. Rosser (Aldershot, 1998), p. 64.

[63] Dyer, 'Staffordshire', pp. 18–20.

[64] *Victoria County History of Warwickshire*, vii. 82; British Library, Egerton Rolls, 8556–8, 8590–600, 8667; Birmingham City Archives and Heritage, MS. deeds, vol. 816, ZZ (Weoley court rolls); *The Court Rolls of the Manor of Bromsgrove and King's Norton, 1494–1504*, ed. A. F. C. Baber (Worcestershire Historical Society, 1963); Dyer, 'Staffordshire', p. 31; V. Skipp, *Medieval Yardley* (Chichester, 1970), pp. 79–110.

[65] *Lollards of Coventry 1486–1522*, ed. S. McSheffrey and N. Tanner (Camden Society, 5th ser., xxiii, 2003), pp. 109–13, 223–7.

In the same decades around 1500, combinations of town and country workers are found in the cloth-making districts, and presumably it was also possible for individuals to move from country to town and back in order to acquire training and employment. In south Suffolk, Wiltshire and Somerset, towns like Lavenham, Bradford-on-Avon and Frome were linked with groups of cloth-making villages. Town-based clothiers co-ordinated the many rural spinners, weavers and fullers, who still formed part of peasant society. Attempts to erect legal obstacles to rural cloth-making in the mid sixteenth century met with failure.[67] A proportion of the products were sent to London and exported to the continent, again demonstrating the long chain of connection between peasants and overseas trade.

Affording goods

Having documented the many ways in which peasants became engaged in the life of towns and markets, including the largest towns and international markets, readers will ask how these generally less affluent consumers could afford such relatively high priced items as coloured cloth (at 1*s* to 1*s* 6*d* per yard, which means about 3*s* for the material of a whole garment), spruce chests (valued at 2*s*–4*s*) and brass pots (often between 2*s* and 5*s*). Even those with plenty of crops and animals would have difficulties in finding sufficient cash for such purchases. The solution to their problem must have come partly from credit extended to them by urban traders, or loans from fellow villagers. Pleas of debt in manorial courts were frequently recorded in the fourteenth century, and they show that sums of money of the kind mentioned above could be obtained within the village, especially for the better-off villagers who were known to have the resources to support the loan.[68] The debt records fade from the manorial court rolls in the fifteenth century, but they persisted in many borough courts, and occasionally these pleadings record the rural place of origin of the debtor, and even the purchase which gave rise to the debt. For example, in the court of Stratford-upon-Avon in 1499 John Harres of Grafton in Worcestershire was sued by Richard Grene of Stratford for 2*s* 8*d*. Goods for which debts were incurred in other cases in the same court included 3*s* 4*d* for linen cloth, 12*d* for candles and 8*s* for malt, all recorded in 1500.[69] The precise nature of the transaction is not revealed, but the dispute appears to have arisen from a sale in which the vendor advanced credit to the buyer by allowing him or her to delay payment for an agreed period, and the money had not been forthcoming. Occasionally will inventories give details of debts, and show that peasants owed sums of money to urban traders, like the 12*d* which John Hall of Holgate owed to a York merchant in 1468, and another 12*d* due to a smith.[70]

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[66] McSheffrey and Tanner, *Lollards*, pp. 143–4, 153–5.

[67] D Rollison, *A Commonwealth of the People: Popular Politics and England's Long Social Revolution, 1066–1649* (Cambridge, 2010), pp. 324–6.

[68] C. Briggs, *Credit and Village Society in 14th-Century England* (Oxford, 2009).

Wills provide indirect testimony to a trade in second-hand goods. The will maker assumed that he or she was conferring a desirable benefit when leaving a relative 'my best cloak' or 'my blue gown'. When an item left to a servant is valued – 'a bed of price 13*s* 4*d*' – the recipient had the option of selling it. The values suggest that there was a sufficiently busy market in second-hand clothes, furniture and utensils to allow a price to be confidently assigned to them. A durable item like a brass pot might be acquired at third or fourth hand, and presumably diminished in price as it descended from one household to another.[71] The bequests of such items as clothing, furnishing and utensils provide only one way in which goods changed hands outside the market. Some peasants would also have acquired such items as part of dowries, or in the case of clothing as a livery from an employer or patron.

Conclusion

Peasants needed towns and markets; at least, the particular form of peasant society that emerged in the thirteenth century and persisted into the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in England depended on complex exchange systems. Peasants produced for a market which included foodstuffs and raw materials for the largest towns, and they contributed indirectly to international trade. Peasant consumers, by buying the products of specialized town-based crafts, participated in long distance commerce, and sometimes acquired imported commodities. They purchased coloured clothing, steel-edged knives, copper alloy pots and dress accessories, lava millstones, whetstones, bows made of yew and other consumer goods. Peasants' expenditure, whether they acted as individuals or as officials, aided the commercial economy. Did the urban economy damage or destroy the peasantry, as is often alleged? Education and training, and opportunities for migration, gave peasants the chance of leaving their villages. Producers with the largest peasant holdings certainly benefited from selling commodities, and they were consumers of relatively expensive goods. Their activities may in the long run have promoted divisions in village society between the elite and the wage earners. Those with holdings of twenty, thirty or forty acres, however, who were also interacting with towns, tended to sustain common fields and traditional husbandry. Contacts with towns could strengthen elements within the peasant economy.

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[69] C. Briggs, 'The availability of credit in the English countryside, 1400–80', *Agricultural History Review*, lvi (2008), 1–24; Stratford-upon-Avon, Shakespeare Birthplace Trust Records Office, DR 75, no. 4; Maidstone, Centre for Kentish Studies, U269/M75.

[70] York, Borthwick Institute for Archives, dean and chapter wills, 1468, Hall.

[71] *Wills of the Archdeaconry of Sudbury, 1439–74: Wills from the Register 'Baldwyne'*, pt. 1: *1439–61*, ed. P. Northeast (Suffolk Records Society, xliv, 2001), pp. 160, 162, 214.

3. The proliferation of markets revisited

Richard Britnell

It may seem graceless to return to old work of my own, and to write in the first person, in a collection of papers focused on the work and achievements of Derek Keene. However, the evidence on which my comments depend derives wholly from a project in which Derek's role was vital, in setting it up, in managing the finance that allowed it to be completed, and in supervising the resulting research at the Centre for Metropolitan History. I refer to the magnificent *Gazetteer of Markets and Fairs in England and Wales to 1516*, compiled primarily by Samantha Letters, but with considerable input from Mario Fernandes, Olwen Myhill and Derek himself, which is available both online and in a printed edition published by the List and Index Society in 2003.[1] The *Gazetteer* provides a body of evidence that I could only dream of forty years ago or so, when I started thinking about markets. In 1981 the *Economic History Review* published a paper of mine that examined the proliferation of local markets in England before 1349, using data from twenty-one counties.[2] In the absence of anything approaching the quality of the *Gazetteer*, this evidence was derived piecemeal. Some came from other historians' listings of the markets for particular counties – David Palliser's for Staffordshire, Tim Unwin's for Nottinghamshire, Michael Reed's for Buckinghamshire – together with partial listings for Lancashire, Yorkshire and Gloucestershire. Three lists were created by going through the indexes of volumes of the *Victoria History of the Counties of England* for Bedfordshire, Berkshire and Hertfordshire. R. H. Hilton's maps of medieval markets for the west midlands, Norman Scarfe's for Suffolk and W. G. Hoskins's for Devon, all served as handy guides. Some lists I put together myself from printed sources, and I did what I could to check out and augment the others.[3]

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[1] The online *Gazetteer* can be found at <http://www.history.ac.uk/cmh/gaz/gazweb2.html> [accessed 12 July 2011]. It is accessible from the Centre for Metropolitan History home page on the Institute of Historical Research website. The printed version is S. Letters, *Gazetteer of Markets and Fairs in England and Wales to 1516* (2 pts., List and Index Society, special ser., xxxii–xxxiii, Kew, 2003).

[2] R. H. Britnell, 'The proliferation of markets in England, 1200–1349', *Economic History Review*, 2nd ser., xxxiii (1981), 209–21.

[3] References to these sources are given as a note to Britnell, 'Proliferation', Table 1, p. 210.

The twenty-one counties accounted for 55 per cent of the area of England, representing all parts of the kingdom, so I supposed that the evidence so compiled would yield reliable general conclusions. The *Gazetteer*, which now provides data systematically collected for the whole of England, has presented a strong temptation to review the strength of my former findings and to carry the work on in a few directions that seemed unapproachable or too arduous in the 1970s. That is the temptation to which I am now succumbing.[4]

Revised data

Most of the 1,003 markets recorded before 1349 that I had to deal with for my 1981 article are first known from the royal charters or letters close by which they were licensed. They therefore have at least a notional date of foundation. Those recorded with charters from the years 1200–1349, known mostly from the charter rolls and close rolls, I placed into six consecutive categories of dated markets, from which were excluded any that were licensed anew, or whose charter merely changed the day on which they were held – any, that is, for which there was evidence of a market before the date of the first known market charter. Royal grants from this period that changed the day of a market – either from a Sunday to a weekday, or to an alternative weekday to avoid conflict with a neighbouring franchise-holder – commonly say so. The six categories each covered a quarter century. All the remaining markets I grouped together in a single miscellaneous category of markets founded 'sometime before 1349', in which I included boroughs as well as markets, since many places are recorded as boroughs long before there is any specific reference to their markets.[5] Markets in the category 'sometime before 1349' included all those recorded before 1200, some of which have market charters, together with very many occurring after 1200 for which no charter is known and whose origin is consequently undated. Given the high quality of the surviving documentation relating to new foundations after 1200, I supposed, without arguing the point, that in the absence of known market charters most of these later undated markets in fact originated sometime before that.

I concluded from this data that the number of markets founded in each quarter century after 1200 reached a peak in most regions of England

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[4] My original county lists of markets, compiled before the age of cheap computing, were typed on sheets of paper cut up and patched together with Sellotape, and have long since disintegrated. I have therefore been unable to compare my lists in detail with the new ones, and except in very few instances have accepted the evidence of the *Gazetteer* without further ado.

[5] I have discussed the rationale for this decision in R. Britnell, 'Boroughs, markets and trade in northern England, 1000–1216', in *Progress and Problems in Medieval England: Essays in Honour of Edward Miller*, ed. R. Britnell and J. Hatcher (Cambridge, 1996), pp. 51–3.

Table 3.1. Numbers of medieval markets from different periods: a comparison between the data set of Britnell for select counties (1981) with that of Letters for all England (2003)

	Sometime before 1349	**1200–24**	**1225–49**	**1250–74**	**1275–99**	**1300–24**	**1325–49**	**Total**
Britnell 1981	329	92	119	214	84	115	50	1003
Letters 2003	637	195	189	391	163	232	104	1911
Britnell as % of Letters	*52*	*47*	*63*	*55*	*52*	*50*	*48*	*52*

between 1250 and 1275 but then fell away. I also concluded that the number of charters in any period of twenty-five years before 1200 is unlikely to have reached the figures indicated for the period after. Not surprisingly, given the size of my sample, these conclusions are well supported by the improved data of the *Gazetteer*. Table 3.1 compares my original data to that of the *Gazetteer*, dividing its evidence up in the same way as I did my own.[6] It shows that my sample was indeed about half the total, and that its chronological shape was roughly right, though it overrepresented markets from the middle decades of the thirteenth century, particularly the period 1225–49, chiefly because of the weight of East Anglia and the midlands in the sample; Norfolk and Suffolk were surging forward at this time in the multiplication of market centres. The total picture confirms my conclusion that there was a peak in the third quarter of the thirteenth century, though this was more a blip than the crest of a wave and numbers of charters did not drop below their earlier thirteenth-century levels until after 1325. The argument that there had been fewer charters before 1200 is a reasonable one, considering that the 'sometime before 1349' category includes markets founded over at least three centuries before 1200, as well as some, no doubt, that were founded after 1200 but whose origins are unrecorded.

Some revision of the conclusions relating to the peak of 1250–75 is required in the light of subsequent work showing that grants of markets and fairs were used as an instrument of royal patronage in this period, particularly between 1251 and 1254, in 1257–8 and in 1267-8. Between 1251 and 1253, for example, fewer than a third of market charters were paid for, notably in grants to noblemen, to their kin and to courtiers.[7] The ease with which particular groups could acquire markets at this period might call into question the economic significance of the apparent boom. Many charters given as patronage may not have corresponded to definite investment plans on the part of their recipients, in which case they were more likely to remain ineffectual. It is also likely that the average investment involved in each new market was significantly lower than it had been earlier in the century: the peak period for the founding of new towns, according to Beresford's figures, was 1191–1230 rather than 1250–74.[8] On the other hand, unless noblemen and courtiers had wished to establish new markets and fairs this was an inept form of patronage, and it is reasonable to suppose that the king gave his favourites market charters because that is what they wanted. There were, after all, alternatives, such as grants of free warren.[9] Emilia Jamroziak's study of this question concludes that the use of grants of markets and fairs as a tool of patronage was feasible only because 'there was an economic and social value attached to having a market or fair rights'.[10] There is no reason, in other words, to question that the increase in market grants between 1250 and 1274 corresponds to a real increase in the number of markets, facilitated by the ease with which some investors could acquire licences, even if a larger proportion of the resulting new foundations had little local impact on trading opportunities and ultimately proved ephemeral.

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[6] Where the exact date of a charter is not known it is put into the latest of the possible categories. The nine charters of Henry III that cannot be more precisely dated are therefore counted as belonging to 1250–74. Lists for all English counties, comparable to Table 1 of Britnell, 'Proliferation', are printed as an additional note to Item V in R. H. Britnell, *Markets, Trade and Economic Development in England and Europe, 1050–1550* (Aldershot, 2009).

With more complete data it is now possible to use this information to comment on the geographical spread of activity before 1349, a topic I was reluctant to examine in 1981. Table 3.2 defines seven regions of England for this purpose, and Table 3.3 shows the percentage of markets in each of these regions according to the chronological categories of Table 3.1. As Samantha Letters showed, the number of recorded markets per square kilometre was consistently low in the northern counties. The northern region, as I have defined it, had 28 per cent of the area of England, but only 15 per cent of all markets recorded before 1349. Four regions of England all have a share of the recorded number of markets that is proportionate to their size – identical in the south-central and west midland regions, within 2 per cent in the east midland and south-west regions. But the south-eastern region

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[7] E. Jamroziak, 'Networks of markets and networks of patronage in 13th-century England', in *Thirteenth Century England X*, ed. M. Prestwich, R. Britnell and R. Frame (Woodbridge, 2005), pp. 42–3.

[8] M. Beresford, *New Towns of the Middle Ages* (1967), p. 330.

[9] D. Crook, 'The "Petition of the Barons" and charters of free warren, 1258–69', in *Thirteenth Century England VIII*, ed. M. Prestwich, R. Britnell and R. Frame (Woodbridge, 2001), pp. 33–48.

[10] Jamroziak, 'Networks', pp. 47–9.

Table 3.2. Regions as defined for Tables 3.3 and 3.5

Region	**Counties**	**Percentage of the area of England**
South-central	Berkshire, Dorset, Hampshire, Wiltshire	*10*
South-eastern	Essex, Hertfordshire, Kent, Middlesex, Surrey, Sussex	*12*
South-western	Cornwall, Devon, Somerset	*11*
East Anglian	Cambridgeshire, Huntingdonshire, Norfolk, Suffolk	*10*
East midland	Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Northamptonshire, Nottinghamshire, Rutland	*16*
West midland	Gloucestershire, Herefordshire, Oxfordshire, Shropshire, Staffordshire, Warwickshire, Worcestershire	*14*
Northern	Cheshire, Cumberland, Durham, Lancashire, Northumberland, Westmorland, Yorkshire	*28*

and East Anglia, with 22 per cent of the area of England, had 31 per cent of recorded markets, and were to that extent by 1349 better supplied with a marketing infrastructure than other parts of the country.[11]

A second set of conclusions in the 1981 paper related to the potential of these medieval markets to establish themselves and survive the turbulence of the later middle ages, as attested by the late Alan Everitt's well-used lists of early modern markets in the fourth volume of *The Agrarian History of England and Wales*.[12] In particular I argued that in the course of time new foundations became less and less likely to survive the medieval period. The evidence of the *Gazetteer* again confirms this conclusion. Table 3.4 shows that data from the counties I had selected gave an overall survival rate within 3 per cent of the revised total picture for markets founded after 1200, and the figures for each separate half century between 1200 and 1349 are equally close. The new figures show a tailing off from 35 per cent survival of markets founded in the first half of the thirteenth century to one of only 11 per cent for those founded in the first half of the fourteenth. My estimate of the survival of markets founded 'sometime before 1349' was less reliable,

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[11] The evidence is mapped by counties in B. M. S. Campbell and K. Bartley, *England on the Eve of the Black Death: an Atlas of Lay Lordship, Land and Wealth, 1300–49* (Manchester, 2006), p. 306.

[12] A. Everitt, 'The marketing of agricultural produce', in *The Agrarian History of England and Wales*, iv: *1500–1640*, ed. J. Thirsk (Cambridge, 1967), pp. 468–75.

Table 3.3. The percentage of English markets recorded from different periods before 1349, geographically ordered

	Sometime before 1349 n=637	Total, 1200–1349 n=1,274	Total n=1,911	1200–24 n=195	1225–49 n=189	1250–74 n=391	1275–99 n=163	1300–25 n=232	1325–49 n=104
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
South-central	*11*	*8*	*10*	*14*	*8*	*9*	*8*	*7*	*8*
South-eastern	*17*	*16*	*16*	*14*	*13*	*16*	*15*	*19*	*14*
South-western	*15*	*12*	*13*	*11*	*13*	*9*	*16*	*15*	*14*
East Anglian	*16*	*15*	*15*	*10*	*21*	*17*	*11*	*13*	*18*
East midland	*13*	*19*	*17*	*19*	*15*	*20*	*17*	*20*	*18*
West midland	*13*	*14*	*14*	*19*	*19*	*15*	*10*	*10*	*13*
Northern	*15*	*15*	*15*	*14*	*11*	*14*	*22*	*18*	*15*
	100	*(100)*	*100*	*(100)*	*100*	*100*	*(100)*	*(100)*	*100*

Table 3.4. Numbers of medieval markets from different periods surviving after 1500: a comparison between the data set of Britnell for select counties (1981) with that of Letters for all England (2003)

		Sometime before 1349	**1200–49**	**1250–99**	**1300–49**	**Total**
Britnell	Total	329	211	298	165	1003
	Survivors	219	81	59	13	372
	%	*67*	*38*	*20*	*8*	*37*
Letters	Total	637	384	554	336	1911
	Survivors	383	136	93	36	648
	%	*60*	*35*	*17*	*11*	*34*

but even so the fact that 60 per cent of them survived into the early modern period means that my inference from the evidence is sustained. If indeed these were mostly older markets, founded before 1200, their high survival rate supports the idea that the earliest markets were the most likely to last. Insofar as the argument of the 1981 paper is valid, its results seem to hold up well against the better evidence now available.

Methodological questions

However, there are several assumptions implicit in the methodology of that paper that were not questioned at the time and need more justification than I gave them. It is impossible to establish by independent testimony to what extent markets with dated charters in fact originated as a result of those charters, or in association with their granting, since by definition the markets included in the dated categories have no earlier attestation. Each dated cohort is likely to contain some older members that are included wrongly. However, conclusions to be derived by comparing the numbers of markets in each cohort are not necessarily invalidated for that reason. Since hundreds of landlords were content to let the status of their markets and fairs rest upon prescription, there are no strong grounds for supposing that the chartered markets of the period 1200–1349 contain large numbers founded before 1200. After 1200, prevailing jealousies and official observances made it difficult for landlords to maintain new markets for any length of time without market charters. In a number of cases, including some discussed in Maurice Beresford's *New Towns*, it is possible to show that market charters do indeed correspond to investment in new markets and borough communities.[13] A more serious problem might be differences between cohorts in the number of charters that were put into effect, though the cost and trouble involved in acquiring charters from the crown should have discouraged frivolous applications. There may have been a higher rate of non-completion among those who received grants of markets and fairs as a form of royal patronage, but we have already queried the assumption that this negates the evidence of Table 3.1. There can be no way of specifying bounds to the magnitude of any errors arising from such causes, but these arguments concerning the quality of the data justify the supposition that differences in the size of each cohort, though they cannot be precisely accurate, are an adequate indicator of the course of change.

The methodology for comparing the longevity of markets founded from period to period rests on the assumption that differences between the characteristics of each dated cohort correspond to differences between the normal characteristics of its true members. Though each cohort is likely to contain some older members that are included wrongly, the conclusions to be derived by comparing their longevity are not therefore weakened. If in fact older markets tended to survive longer, the erroneous inclusion of markets from an earlier cohort in a later one would dampen rather than exaggerate the difference between the two. The strong contrasts recorded in Table 3.4 imply that this is not a problem that needs to cause any concern. At least for the period 1200–1349 no explanation of the data other than differences in the normal longevity of each cohort looks like a serious proposition.

On the other hand, my comparison of markets established 'sometime before 1349' with the cohorts of dated markets settled too easily for a weak and circular argument – that the high survival of markets from 'sometime before 1349' shows both that they were early and that early markets had a high survival rate. These propositions involve sleight of hand, since the two categories are not commensurate. Survivors from the cohorts of dated markets are a subset of all the markets known to have been licensed, whereas survivors from among the prescriptive and undated markets are a subset of markets fortuitously recorded. It is impossible to say how many ephemeral markets were chartered, or otherwise established, before 1200 without leaving any record, or how many markets founded between 1200 and 1349 have no known market charter. The superior longevity of markets set up 'sometime before 1349' would be established only if the survivors constituted above 35 per cent of all markets actually founded before 1200 and of all those founded between 1200 and 1349 whose origins are unrecorded. This is not capable of being proved, or even directly argued. A closer investigation of the markets founded 'sometime before 1349' is therefore needed to establish on other grounds the likelihood that they were already there in 1200.

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[13] E.g., R. H. Britnell, 'The making of Witham', *History Studies*, i (1968), 15; R. H. Britnell, 'The origins of Stony Stratford', *Records of Buckinghamshire*, xx (1977), 451–3; E. M. Carus-Wilson, 'The first half-century of the borough of Stratford-upon-Avon', *Economic History Review*, 2nd ser., xviii (1965), 49; H. Grieve, *The Sleepers and the Shadows. Chelmsford: a Town, its People and its Past* (2 vols., Chelmsford, 1988–94), i. 7–10. These all occur as new towns in Beresford, *New Towns*, pp. 398, 435–7, 500–1. See also the comments in R. H. Britnell. *The Commercialisation of English Society, 1000–1500* (2nd edn., Manchester, 1996), pp. 81–4.

Earlier markets re-examined

Table 3.5 reclassifies the 637 markets in the *Gazetteer* established 'sometime before 1349', which were lumped together as a single category in 1981, as in Tables 3.1 and 3.2 above, but which are here analysed like the dated markets into chronological tranches.[14] The first includes all sites where there were mints or boroughs before 1066. These are places known to have been *burhs* and mints founded under the Anglo-Saxon kings.[15] They were mostly already established as centres of trade in the tenth century; eighty-one out of the ninety-four were *burhs* or mints before 1000. This is virtually a closed set, since it is unlikely that further members will be identified. The second category, also a closed set, includes places with a recorded borough or market in Domesday Book but not already counted as Anglo-Saxon *burhs*. The other three sets are all open to revision; in each case the numbers of markets and fairs recorded in the *Gazetteer* depend on finds in a generous but necessarily incomplete selection of the available sources – pipe rolls, charters, letters patent and close, inquisitions post mortem, law suits – leaving the likelihood that some previously unobserved markets may be identified from records not yet consulted. In particular, twelfth-century markets not recorded in the *Gazetteer* are likely to be found among the hitherto uncollected charters of Henry II and Richard I. The third category in Table 3.5 contains boroughs and markets recorded before 1200, including some recorded in the late eleventh century but not noted in Domesday Book. The fourth contains prescriptive or otherwise undated markets first recorded between 1200 and 1299 and the final one contains

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[14] As in Tables 3.1, 3.2 and 3.4, this 637 excludes three markets in Norfolk (Guton, Methwold, Shouldham) and three in Suffolk (East Bergholt, Raydon, Walsham le Willows) which may be attested before 1349 but for which the *Gazetteer* was unable to supply any dated information.

[15] The count excludes three Anglo-Saxon burghs, for which there is no evidence of commercial activity at any time in their history: Halwell (Devon), Burpham (Sussex) and Chisbury (Wiltshire).

Table 3.5. The first occurrence of early and prescriptive English markets for each region as a percentage of the total

	Sometime before 1349	**Anglo-Saxon**		**Domesday**		**1066–1199**		**1200–99**		**1300–49**	
	Total	***no.***	***%***	***no.***	***%***	***no.***	***%***	***no.***	***%***	***no.***	***%***
South-central	68	16	*24*	10	*15*	16	*24*	25	*37*	1	*1*
South-east	109	22	*20*	11	*10*	30	*28*	39	*36*	7	*6*
South-west	97	17	*18*	10	*10*	15	*15*	43	*44*	12	*12*
East Anglian	99	7	*7*	12	*12*	15	*15*	57	*58*	8	*8*
East midland	84	17	*20*	14	*17*	14	*17*	34	*40*	5	*6*
West midland	85	13	*15*	8	*9*	33	*39*	24	*28*	7	*8*
Northern	95	2	*2*	3	*3*	40	*42*	45	*47*	5	*5*
Total	637	94	*15*	68	*11*	163	*26*	267	*42*	45	*7*

similar prescriptive and undated markets first recorded between 1300 and 1349. It will be seen that 51 per cent of markets whose date of foundation is unknown, and which are deemed to be prescriptive, are not demonstrably older than the large groups of markets chartered after 1200. In some cases, indeed, they may be chartered markets whose charter is no longer recorded, since the royal enrolments of charters and letters have not been perfectly preserved. The regional numbers of prescriptive markets recorded in Table 3.5 show that the proportion of those occurring first after 1200 is highest in East Anglia, at two-thirds of the total. It might be supposed that this is simply a measure of the enthusiasm for founding markets there during the mid thirteenth century.

However, as a group, these prescriptive and undated charters have a distinguishing characteristic, which becomes apparent when we examine the proportion that survived after 1500. Table 3.6 records this proportion for the separate categories. For the group as a whole it was 60 per cent, which is high in comparison with the survival rate of chartered markets of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. It rises even higher, however, in the case of the earliest three sets, all containing markets recorded before 1200, whose survival rates are 88 per cent, 63 per cent and 69 per cent respectively. If we turn to the prescriptive markets recorded between 1200 and 1299, the survivors from the group of 267 fall to 51 per cent of the total, and the survival rate drops to 36 per cent of the forty-five prescriptive or otherwise undated markets first recorded between 1300 and 1349. These five cohorts, in other words, show the same pattern of declining longevity as the three cohorts of dated markets recorded in Table 3.4. Comparing these five cohorts of markets founded 'sometime before 1349' is a justifiable procedure, since they all comprise markets recorded rather than markets licensed. It can be reasonably assumed that each successive category contains markets that are, on average, of lesser antiquity than its predecessor. On this assumption the argument for a declining survival rate can be sustained without the need to make a direct comparison with that of markets founded after 1200.

To argue the case that prescriptive markets first recorded in the thirteenth century were generally in existence before 1200 is more problematic once their greater propensity to survive is rejected as sufficient evidence. The contrasts are stark. Only 24 per cent of markets survived from those whose origins are determined by thirteenth-century charters, whereas survivors from the prescriptive markets first recorded in the thirteenth century amounted to 51 per cent of the total. The proportion of the surviving chartered markets first recorded between 1300 and 1349 is even more discrepant – 11 per cent of the chartered markets as against 36 per cent of the prescriptive or otherwise undated markets first recorded in that period.

Table 3.6. The proportion of early and prescriptive markets surviving after 1500, related to their date of first occurrence

		Anglo-Saxon	**Domesday**	**Occurring 1066–1199**	**Occurring 1200–99**	**Occurring 1300–49**
Total occurring	637	94	68	163	267	45
Total survivors	383	83	43	112	136	16
% survival	*60*	*88*	*63*	*69*	*51*	*36*

There are various explanations why markets recorded after 1200 with no known market charter might show a higher capacity for survival. They were by definition markets recorded as established, whereas the chartered markets include some that were never in fact established, or proved unsuccessful. The fact that such markets were not only established but established successfully enough to survive for centuries makes it improbable, in fact, that they were set up illegally, since in that case their success would have been contested by challenging their right to exist, either by their neighbours at the time of their foundation or in the course of quo warranto proceedings. In any case, the possibility that markets founded during the thirteenth century without licence from the crown may, as a class, have shared exceptional longevity has no *a priori* likelihood, and needs no laboured rebuttal. If, on the other hand, all 136 survivors are instances of chartered markets whose charter is unrecorded, and if their survival rate was 35 per cent – equivalent to that of known chartered markets founded between 1200 and 1249 – this would imply the loss of all record of at least 389 thirteenth-century market charters, a number larger than that of all recorded markets newly chartered in the first half of the century (Table 3.1). In other words, we should have to allow for a total of 1,327 thirteenth-century market charters of which 29 per cent are unknown.[16] Given the fact that even gaps in the charter rolls can often be made good by other records, a loss of this magnitude is improbable.

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[16] It is likely that any new 13th-century market sufficiently robust to make a mark in the available documentation was founded earlier rather than later in the 13th century, which is why I have adopted a survival rate of 35 per cent (see Table 3.4). A lower survival rate of 24 per cent – that for chartered markets over the whole century – would raise the number of missing charters to 567 and the percentage of losses to 38. The number of missing charters would then be larger than that of all markets known to have been chartered in the second half of the century (Table 3.1).

We may alternatively explain the high survival rate of undated markets recorded between 1200 and 1299 by supposing that the group combines markets founded in the thirteenth century with earlier foundations whose survival rate was higher. The likeliest reason for the greater longevity of these other undated markets is that many of them, though unrecorded at any earlier date, shared the characteristics of markets recorded before 1200, with a survival rate of 63–69 per cent. For a case in point, it is likely that numerous hundredal markets known from thirteenth-century sources had been trading sites from the eleventh or twelfth centuries. In Norfolk, for example, these include Wighton (recorded in 1201), Saham Toney (in 1205), Foulsham (in 1268), Harleston (in 1270), Aylsham, Diss, Hingham and Kenninghall (all in 1274–5),[17] and East Dereham.[18] It is impossible to determine the proportion of older markets in the sample with exactitude. It is easily demonstrable, however, that if 35 per cent of undated markets founded after 1200 survived, the survival rate of older markets in the sample would reach this figure of 63–69 per cent provided that they constituted 48 ± 5 per cent of all 267 prescriptive or otherwise undated markets recorded between 1200 and 1299.[19] This is more credible than the proposition that all 267 markets were established after 1200, and shows how plausible it is that at least half the number of undated and prescriptive markets occurring in thirteenth-century records were older foundations. When considered alongside the 325 markets recorded before 1200, this encourages a reasoned supposition that at least 70 per cent of markets founded 'sometime before 1349' were in fact established sometime before 1200.

This argument implies that across England there were significantly more markets before 1200 than contemporary evidence implies, and that the late Anglo-Saxon and Anglo-Norman periods as a whole were of great importance for the multiplication of markets. By the eve of the Norman Conquest England already contained some of the most heavily monetized parts of Europe, having forty-six mints in operation during King Harold's short reign.[20] The attractions of cash income, and the pursuit of means by which the circulation of cash could be raised to facilitate the collection of money rents and taxes, were a primary incentive for manorial lords, including kings, to develop trade through the creation of markets and towns.[21] The evidence from Wessex suggests that the association between markets, manors and lordship was as strong in the ninth century as in the twelfth, so we may suppose that seigniorial enterprise was in this respect fundamental to long-term development. Under the Normans the symbolic association between boroughs, castles and lordship perhaps added extra force to the enthusiasms of the nobility for market-founding.[22] The evidence of continuing monetization of the economy implies a considerable growth of local commerce throughout England between 1066 and 1199: coinage in circulation is estimated at £37,500 on average in the late Anglo-Saxon period, rising to between £200,000 and £500,000 around 1210.[23] It would be surprising if this had not encouraged widespread new investment in trading institutions, and there is indeed a good deal of evidence for the multiplication of market centres in this period, even if its chronology is too imperfectly defined to supply an index of development.

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[17] R. H. Britnell, 'English markets and royal administration before 1200', *Economic History Review*, 2nd ser., xxxi (1978), 185–6; H. M. Cam, *Liberties and Communities in Medieval England* (Cambridge, 1933), pp. 75–6; Letters, *Gazetteer*, pp. 238, 241, 243, 245–7, 252, 257.

[18] Letters, *Gazetteer*, p. 242, cites no reference for East Dereham earlier than 1388. However, David Dymond's map of Norfolk markets records a market there by 1251 and Janet Williamson cites a reference to the market in 1299 (D. Dymond, 'Medieval and later markets', in *An Historical Atlas of Norfolk*, ed. P. Wade-Martins (2nd edn., Norwich, 1993), p. 77; J. Williamson, 'Norfolk: 13th century', in *The Peasant Land Market in Medieval England*, ed. P. D. A. Harvey (Oxford, 1984), p. 55). See also E. Miller, *The Abbey and Bishopric of Ely: the Social History of an Ecclesiastical Estate from the 10th Century to the Early 14th Century* (Cambridge, 1951), pp. 31, 85n., 135.

[19] A lower survival rate of 24 per cent, that of chartered markets over the whole century, would raise this provisional share of older survivors to 60–69 per cent.

Beresford's evidence records ninety-one new towns between 1066 and 1200. His figures suggest a rising trend through the twelfth century, from an average of six new towns each decade in the first three decades to ten in the final three, and it is likely that this was matched by an equivalent increase in the number of original market charters. The *Gazetteer* lists fifty markets that are first recorded by a market charter from the period 1066–1199. Many of these can only be dated to a reign rather than to a year, so that to categorize them by periods of twenty-five years, as in Table 3.7, requires allowing maxima and minima for each period. These numbers are open to other explanations, such as the improving availability of documentation

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[20] P. H. Sawyer, 'The wealth of England in the 11th century', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 5th ser., xv (1965), 156–8; D. Hill, *An Atlas of Anglo-Saxon England* (Oxford, 1981), pp. 131–2.

[21] D. Keene, 'Towns and the growth of trade', in *The New Cambridge Medieval History*, iv: *c.1024–c.1198*, pt. 1, ed. D. Luscombe and J. Riley-Smith (Cambridge, 2004), pp. 54–8.

[22] R. H. Britnell, 'Les marchés hebdomadaires dans les îles Britanniques avant 1200', in *Foires et marchés dans les campagnes de l'Europe médiévale et moderne*, ed. C. Desplat (Actes des XIVes journées internationales d'histoire de l'abbaye de Flaran, Toulouse, 1997), pp. 37–40

[23] N. J. Mayhew, 'Modelling medieval monetisation', in *A Commercialising Economy: England, 1086 to c.1300*, ed. R. H. Britnell and B. M. S. Campbell (Manchester, 1995), p. 62; M. Allen, 'The volume of the English currency, 1158–1470', *Economic History Review*, liv (2001), 607.

Table 3.7. The chronology of markets first known from royal charters, 1075–1199

	Minimum	**Maximum**
1050–74	0	2
1075–99	2	4
1100–24	6	8
1125–49	7	13
1150–74	3	12
1175–99	19	24

during the course of the twelfth century, but they constitute at least a *prima facie* case for supposing that the number of charters issued increased. The larger number from the last quarter of the century is not attributable to the survival of charters from 1199 in the first charter roll of King John, which account for only seven of the total. The *Gazetteer* records eleven markets first known from charters of Richard I. The size of the known sample is small, however; there are likely to have been many more new chartered foundations among the other 113 markets first recorded in that period.

The East Anglian anomaly

Given the populousness and wealth of East Anglia by the time of Domesday Book, and the high proportion of free peasants among its inhabitants, its low count of early recorded markets is problematic.[24] Even in Domesday Book the number of recorded boroughs and markets is smaller than its economic development, and later rich endowment, would have suggested (Table 3.5). The anomaly, given our conclusion that there are in reality an exceptional number of unrecorded markets, requires some explanation.[25] Three likely reasons for this contrast may all be valid. Given the large political and cultural divisions in Anglo-Saxon England, the lords of early markets did not necessarily use the same institutional formulae or terminology in all parts of the country; the *burhs* of the Burghal Hidage, for example, were something of a regional speciality. Nor, second, did early markets in different parts of the country have an equal chance of being recorded. Markets and fairs as such appear not to have enjoyed franchisal status until the Norman Conquest, or shortly before, and there was only rarely any need to refer to them as trading institutions in charters or chronicles.[26] *Burhs* subject to the kings of Wessex, most of which seem to have been developed as centres of trade and minting, were more likely to be recorded than those in other areas of England, partly because of the prominence of determined royal enterprise in their development,[27] partly because of their association with military activity and partly because of the higher level of investment they attracted. It is likely that lords in East Anglia were equally active in founding trading places during the tenth century, though without equivalent investment in their defences and without there being any occasion for their existence to be recorded. A third reason for East Anglia's differences has to do with the Danish invasions, and the greater institutional discontinuity in the eastern shires in the late ninth and early tenth centuries.[28] In this region ecclesiastical organization was also exceptionally disturbed, and since early markets were often associated with early minsters, commercial and ecclesiastical geography before 900 may have been closely linked.[29]

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[24] H. C. Darby, *Domesday England* (Cambridge, 1977), pp. 67, 93, 228.

[25] A recent examination of this same question on different lines is B. Brodt, 'East Anglia', in *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain*, i: *600–1540*, ed. D. M. Palliser (Cambridge, 2000), pp. 641–5.

The first of these explanations deserves more extended comment. The East Anglian anomaly suggests that early marketing centres had regional peculiarities. It is likely, too, that even within regions they differed from one to another more under the Anglo-Saxon and Norman kings than in later times. By the time in the late twelfth century when markets were defined as franchises dependent on royal consent, routinely distinguished from fairs, and more frequently recorded using the standard term *mercatum*, their forms were becoming standardized. In the thirteenth century it was open to debate in law what was a market and what was not.[30] Yet, we need to reckon with a preceding history of institutional development that is less subject to legal scrutiny and largely obscured from view. The fact that a thirteenth-century market met by an early minster, or in the *forum* of an Anglo-Saxon *burh*, says nothing about the extent of differences that 400 years of institutional development could bring about.[31] Early markets perhaps differed in their periodicity as well as in their modes of operation; we do not know when the difference between weekly markets and annual fairs became a normal one to make. The link between hundreds and markets itself implies a transitional stage in the late Saxon period during which some local trade continued to be associated with the hundred court meeting every four weeks, while elsewhere manorial lords had seized the initiative and developed a more frequent market subject to greater seigniorial control.[32] The development of markets as appurtenances of manors, transforming earlier ways of trading that were probably less regulated, did not necessarily take the same form everywhere. For all the numerous parallels between Wessex and East Anglia – the association of early markets with minster sites or hundredal manors, which were often the same thing – there is good reason to suppose that lords innovated differently in the first instance. For this reason the counting of early markets is a more hazardous task than meets the eye, and the farther back before 1200 we go the more poorly defined the observable phenomena become. It must be enough to have shown that there were more marketing centres in Anglo-Saxon and Norman England than direct contemporary evidence reveals, and that the earliest sites of local commerce tended to survive well as later weekly markets.

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[26] Britnell, *Commercialisation*, p. 14.

[27] See Hill, *Atlas*, pp. 106, 143.

[28] R. H. Britnell, 'Marchés hebdomadaires', pp. 42–3.

[29] J. Blair, *The Church in Anglo-Saxon Society* (Oxford, 2005), pp. 251–61, 296, 316–17.

[30] Britnell, *Commercialisation*, p. 82.

[31] This question is taken as far as I have been able in R. H. Britnell, 'Commerce and markets', in *A Social History of England, 900–1200*, ed. J. Crick and E. M. C. van Houts (Cambridge, 2011), pp. 179–87.

The reassessment of East Anglia's endowment of such market centres in 1200 makes a difference to the interpretation of the evidence for thirteenth-century development. Samantha Letters inferred from the number of markets actually recorded before 1200 that during the following century the growth in the number of new markets was particularly rapid in East Anglia. East Anglia had only 10 per cent of the markets recorded by 1200, a figure barely in proportion to its share of the land surface. Table 3.3 shows, however, that if the markets in the category 'sometime before 1349' were indeed predominantly older markets founded before 1200, East Anglia and the southern counties generally were by that date already well served by the standards of England as a whole.[33] Adding half the undated markets from the period 1200–99 to the number recorded earlier, a procedure legitimated by our earlier analysis, raises the total number of markets founded by 1200 from 325 to 460, of which the south-central region had 12 per cent, the south-east 18 per cent, the south-west 14 per cent and East Anglia 13 per cent, in each case a proportion higher than their share of territory. Table 3.3 implies that in fact the region that developed most rapidly after 1200 was not East Anglia but the east midlands. In every period of twenty-five years its share of new foundations was higher than its share of prescriptive and undated markets.[34] In 1200, if we revise the number of markets founded by

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[32] Britnell, 'Commerce and markets', p. 185.

[33] Early development in the south-eastern region is evident from D. Keene, 'The south-east of England', in Palliser, *Cambridge Urban History*, i. 553–7.

[34] Evidence for the development of marketing centres in this region is discussed in C. Lewis, P. Mitchell-Fox and C. Dyer, *Village, Hamlet and Field: Changing Medieval Settlements in Central England* (Macclesfield, 2007), pp. 160–3.

1200 as proposed, East Anglia and the east midlands each had 13 per cent of English markets founded up to that time, but by 1349 East Anglia had 15 per cent and the east midlands 17 per cent. The difference would be even more considerable if the number of concealed early markets in East Anglia was proportionately greater than in the east midands.

Conclusion

Having now tested out my 1981 paper against the *Gazetteer*'s data, explored areas where its assumptions were questionable, and commented more fully on developments before 1200, I can conclude that for all its faults it is not significantly misleading. Although the numerically attested peak of market-founding in the third quarter of the thirteenth century now needs cautious handling, it is likely to be a real phenomenon rather than a trick of the documentation. The extension of chronological analysis backwards before 1200 has strengthened the evidence that older markets lasted longer. The supposition that prescriptive and otherwise undated markets recorded in the thirteenth century were commonly older has proved amenable to argument, which, if accepted, provides substantial support for the proposition that most markets founded 'sometime before 1349', but with no known charter of the period 1200–1349, were in existence by 1200. The elaboration of these arguments has also permitted more extensive comment on regional variations than I was able to supply in 1981. In these respects the *Gazetteer* has made it possible to express my conclusions more confidently and accurately, as well as to elaborate upon their longer-term significance. I should therefore like to express my delight that this research project was completed in time for me to use it, and to express my gratitude to Derek Keene for having supervised it so successfully.

4. 'Tempests of weather and great abundance of water': the flooding of the Barking marshes in the later middle ages

James A. Galloway

In March 1489 an exemplification of a petition to the king in parliament was enrolled on the patent rolls at the request of Elizabeth Shuldham, abbess of the house of Benedictine nuns at Barking in Essex.[1] The petition, which was subsequently enshrined in law, concerned the jurisdiction of the mayor of London over the River Thames, and in particular sought an extension of the mayor's powers over flooded grounds beside the river.[2] It narrates how diverse breaches of the river banks had occurred through 'tempests of weather and great abundance of water', causing many meadows and other grounds to be inundated, and how fishermen were using illegal nets and devices to catch the fry of fish which were congregating in the flooded lands. The mayor was to be given powers to regulate the activities of fishermen in the flooded marshlands, supplementing the authority he already possessed over the channel of the Thames itself. However, after the statute was given royal assent a proviso was added to the effect that the mayor should have no jurisdiction over fishing in any flooded grounds within royal lands, or within lay or ecclesiastical franchises.[3] The abbess also caused an inspeximus of this proviso to be enrolled on the patent rolls, and may indeed have been its author or initiator.[4]

The abbess of Barking had good reason to take a keen interest in the issues of Thames flooding, and in any attempts to change the legal or jurisdictional position of lands affected by it. By 1489 Barking abbey had suffered well over a century of severe flooding of its Thames-side lands, beginning with a series of major storms in the 1370s. Reclaimed and embanked farmland had been engulfed or transformed by the river and the action of the tides. The abbey, its tenants and neighbouring landholders had had to find ways of living with a radically changed environment in the area. This chapter explores the causes and consequences of flooding in the Barking marshlands in the later middle ages, and considers the relative importance of economic and environmental factors in the transformation. It also considers how the interests of Londoners were affected, and how the city responded to the challenge of environmental change in a key part of its hinterland.

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[1] *Calendar of Patent Rolls* (hereafter *CPR*) *1485–94*, p. 298.

[2] *The Statutes of the Realm* (10 vols., 1810–28), ii. 539.

[3] *Statutes of the Realm*, ii. 539; 'Henry VII: January 1489', *Parliament Rolls of Medieval England* <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=116566> [accessed 28 Dec. 2010].

[4] *CPR 1485–94*, p. 298.

Before the flood

Barking abbey was founded in the seventh century, and by the time of Domesday had acquired most of the estates which it held until its dissolution in 1539.[5] The abbey's principal lands lay in Essex, augmented by holdings in Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Middlesex and Surrey. The core of the Essex properties lay along the tidal Thames and the Thames estuary, within the parishes of Barking, Dagenham, Mucking, Tollesbury and Great Wigborough.[6] All these parishes included extensive areas of marshland, subject, before embankment, to high tides and periodic immersion in the brackish waters of the Thames estuary, but nonetheless of considerable value as pasture for sheep, and for reed-cutting, fishing and fowling. The site of the abbey was on the outskirts of the town of Barking, an important centre of trade and industry by the fourteenth century, located on the navigable Barking Creek which gave access to the Thames, and to the markets of London and the wider world. On both sides of the creek were marshlands extending some two kilometres inland from the channel of the Thames (Figures 4.1 and 4.2). The date at which these marshes were first embanked is uncertain, but it seems clear that at the time of Domesday they were still tidal saltmarsh. The first references to walls, banks or ditches in the Barking marshlands do not occur until the middle of the thirteenth century, when the sheriff of Essex was ordered to distrain landholders who failed to make contributions to the repair of the marsh walls there.[7] It is probable that embankment had begun earlier, however, as at Rainham, east of Dagenham, where a tenant of a five-acre holding had an obligation to 'defend the wall against the Thames' in 1201–2.[8]

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[5] *Victoria County History of Essex*, ii. 115–22 <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=39832> [accessed 28 Dec. 2010].

[6] W. M. Sturman, 'Barking abbey: a study in its external and internal administration from the Conquest to the Dissolution' (unpublished University of London PhD thesis, 1961), pp. 24ff.

[7] *Calendar of Close Rolls 1254–6*, pp. 185–97 <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=91553> [accessed 10 Aug. 2011].

[8] *Feet of Fines Essex*, i: *1182–1272*, ed. R. E. G. Kirk (Colchester, 1910), pp. 17, 26.

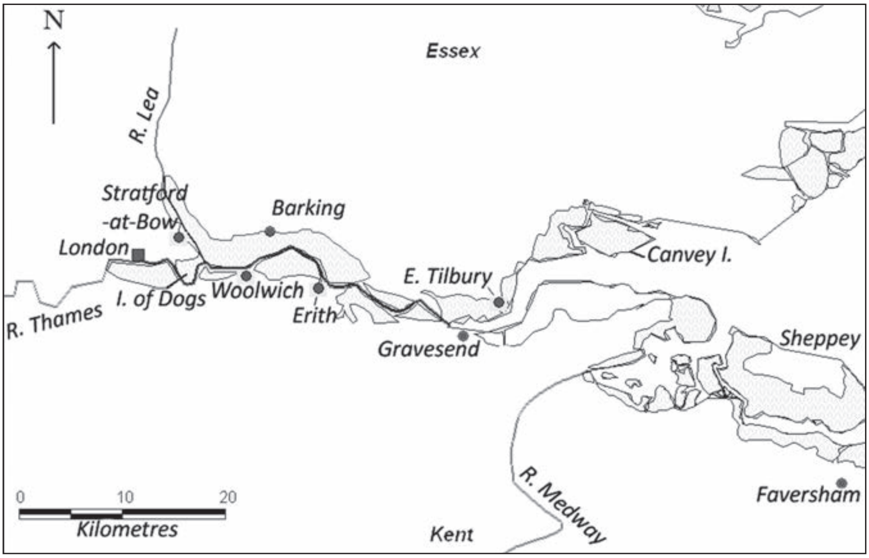
N
Essex
R. Lea
Stratford
-at-Bow
Barking
London
Canvey I.
E. Tilbury
I. of Dogs
Woolwich
Erith
R. Thames
Gravesend
Sheppey
0
10
20
Kilometres
R. Medway
Faversham
Kent

Figure 4.1. Location map – the tidal Thames, the Thames estuary and the marshes.

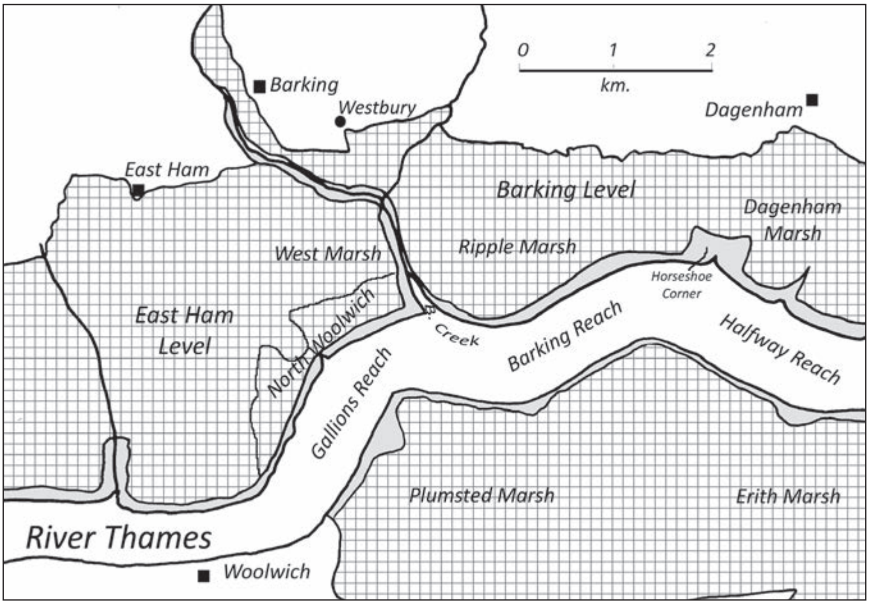
Barking
Westbury
0
1
2
km.
Dagenham
East Ham
Barking Level
Dagenham
Marsh
West Marsh
Ripple Marsh
Horseshoe
Corner
East Ham
Level
North Woolwich
Creek
Barking Reach
Halfway Reach
Gallions Reach
Plumsted Marsh
Erith Marsh
River Thames
Woolwich

Figure 4.2. The marshes of the Barking area.

The marshlands to the west and east of Barking Creek were known, by the sixteenth century, as the East Ham and Barking levels respectively. The East Ham Level contained the West Marsh of Barking, the marshes of North Woolwich – a detached part of the county of Kent on the north bank of the Thames – and the marshlands of East Ham parish, which accounted for around two-thirds of a total acreage of approximately 1,580 acres (640 hectares). The principal landholders here were Stratford Langthorne abbey, Barking abbey and the Burnell lords of East and West Ham, with smaller quantities of marsh held by the abbeys of St. Mary Graces and St. Peter's Westminster.[9] The Barking Levels to the east of Barking Creek comprised some 1,300 acres (530 hectares) in the mid sixteenth century, the largest part of which was Ripple Marsh bordering Dagenham. Barking abbey was the dominant landholder here.[10] If the marshes had been primarily valued as sheep grazing at the time of Domesday, it is probable that after embankment pastoral uses continued to dominate, but there is also evidence that arable cultivation was carried on to a significant extent. The great demand for grain in the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries, particularly marked in the hinterland of England's metropolis, encouraged the ploughing of the marshlands.[11] The alluvial marsh soils were of high fertility, and could produce excellent yields of wheat, barley and other grains, reflected in high land values. Thus, the holding of Philip Burnell at East Ham contained some 150 acres of land at his death in 1294, of which 101 acres were described as marsh arable, and were given the very high valuation of 28*d* per acre.[12] By contrast, a further twenty-nine acres of arable, which by implication lay outside the marsh, were only valued at 6*d* per acre. Twenty years later his son Edward Burnell's arable land at East Ham comprised two parcels of 'upland', valued at 4*d* and 6*d* per acre, and 132 acres of 'marshland' valued at 18*d* per acre.[13]

A manorial account survives from 1321–2 for the Barking abbey demesne at Westbury, close to the town of Barking, together with a dependent property near the Barking-Dagenham boundary.[14] The account shows that a mixed farming system was being practised on a property which spanned marshland and upland terrain. Oats, rye, wheat, barley and legumes were grown, and some of the marshland was being ploughed up; the accountant includes the expense of whetting three ploughshares 'ploughing in the marsh at the time of sowing wheat, beans, winter barley and oats'. A substantial sheep flock was also kept on the marshes, although in 1321–2 the reeve of Westbury and Dagenham had to repair the ravages which livestock disease had wrought on his flocks over the preceding years. Sheep were being transferred in from other manors of the Barking abbey estate, including some from Lidlington in Bedfordshire. Some of the animals were subsequently sold after fattening on the marshes, and many were transferred to a 'Roger Joye, *emptor*' who may have been one of the abbey's provisioners. The constant need for maintaining or extending the defences which protected the valuable marsh arable and pasture land is also reflected in the 1321–2 account in the expenditure of 21*s* 8*d* on making forty-one new perches of 'Hyelmyswall', later known as Higham's Wall, a cross-wall built at right-angles to the Thames, which separated Barking and Dagenham marshes.[15]

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[9] *Victoria County History of Essex*, vi. 14–18 <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=42742> [accessed 11 Jan. 2011].

[10] *Victoria County History of Essex*, v. 235–48 <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=42729> [accessed 11 Jan. 2011].

[11] B. M. S. Campbell, J. A. Galloway, D. Keene and M. Murphy, *A Medieval Capital and its Grain Supply: Agrarian Production and Distribution in the London Region c.1300* (Historical Geography Research Series, xxx, 1993), esp. pp. 46–53, 91–5; J. A. Galloway, 'Storm flooding, coastal defence and land use around the Thames estuary and tidal river, *c.*1250–1450', *Journal of Medieval History*, xxxv (2009), 171–88.

[12] The National Archives of the UK: Public Record Office, C 133/68(10).

[13] TNA: PRO, C 134/48(9).

The need for defences against the tidal Thames was becoming ever more evident in the early fourteenth century. Storm surges driving in from the North Sea posed a recurrent threat to reclaimed marshlands, as did extreme high tides, while intense rainfall could provoke freshwater flooding through rapid run-off from adjacent higher ground. An effective network of drainage ditches and sluices, together with sufficiently high and robust walls along the river front, supplemented by cross-walls to compartmentalize the marshes, was therefore essential to minimize the threat of damage to the valuable reclaimed lands. Numerous instances of storm flooding are documented in the Thames area in the later thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries. The most serious of these episodes may have been the storm surges of the late 1280s, which struck a large area of eastern and south-eastern England.[16] That these storms wrought damage to the Barking abbey estates is implied by a royal licence issued to the abbess in 1291, permitting her to sell wood to the value of £30 'in aid of her land in the marshes near the sea coast'.[17]

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[14] TNA: PRO, SC 6/849/11. See also discussion of this account in *Victoria County History of Essex*, v. 214–19 <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=42724> [accessed 11 Jan. 2011].

[15] Sturman, 'Barking abbey', p. 67.

[16] J. A. Galloway and J. Potts, 'Marine flooding in the Thames estuary and tidal river *c.*1250–1450: impact and response', *Area*, xxxix (2007), 370–9; M. Bailey, '*Per impetum maris*: natural disaster and economic decline in eastern England, 1275–1350', in *Before the Black Death: Studies in the 'Crisis' of the Early 14th Century*, ed. B. M. S. Campbell (Manchester, 1991), pp. 184–208.

Numerous commissions *de walliis et fossatis*, which empowered commissioners to investigate and enforce the resolution of problems of drainage and flooding, were issued for the Essex coast and for the tidal Thames at this period.[18] Many of these were of general application, but they almost invariably mention North Woolwich in their remit, to ensure that this detached part of Kent on the north shore of the Thames did not escape scrutiny.[19] One such, issued in January 1335, was undoubtedly a response to the major storm surge which hit the Thames with particular severity in October 1334.[20] On occasion specific commissions were issued for the Barking area, suggesting that particular problems had arisen in the locality; thus, in May 1325 a commission was issued for the marshes of East Ham and [North] Woolwich.[21]

After 1350 such targeted commissions became more common, in part a product of an increasingly nuanced system, but also undoubtedly in response to growing difficulties in maintaining the river defences around Barking in the post-Black Death era. In 1353, 1356, 1358 and 1362 commissions were issued for the stretch of Thames frontage between Barking and East Tilbury, while in 1361 East and West Ham, together with North Woolwich, were the focus for concern.[22] A commission for the stretch of river between the Tower and Barking Fleet was issued in 1367, one for East and West Ham, Barking and North Woolwich in 1369 and a further commission for the Barking to East Tilbury shore in 1370. These repeated commissions point to mounting difficulties in the area, no doubt associated with a growing shortage of labour and disruption of the agrarian economy. They were, however, merely a prelude to the disasters which were to befall Barking abbey and the East Ham Level in the mid 1370s.

Calamity in the marshes

The winter of 1373–4 brought flooding along the Thames, with a commission *de walliis et fossatis* issued in March for the Essex bank of the river between Stratford-at-Bow and East Tilbury.[23] The most serious problems seem to have arisen at Havering marsh, part of the extensive royal manor of Havering, which had a short frontage on the Thames at Hornchurch just to the east of Dagenham.[24] A commission was issued in February 1374 to Ralph Tyle, the bailiff of Havering, and others, granting them powers to conscript carpenters and other workmen to work on the walls and ditches of the marsh, ‘which are broken by the inundation of the water of Thames’.[25] If the Barking marshlands escaped without major damage from this episode, they were almost immediately dealt a series of hammer blows. Two major storm surges hit the southern North Sea in the autumns of 1374 and 1375, and were followed by further storms in the winter of 1376–7.[26] The devastating surges of 1374 and 1375 both occurred in the month of October, and their impact is well documented across the North Sea in Flanders, Holland and Zeeland.[27] There is clear evidence that the surge of 1375 hit eastern England hard, including the Thames area, but the evidence relating to 1374 is more equivocal. The only commission issued for the Thames area in late 1374 relates to the Kentish shores of the outer estuary.[28] However, the summer of 1375 saw the issue of several commissions for the Essex shores of the tidal Thames, and produces the first evidence of serious flooding in the Barking marshes. On 10 July a commission was issued with powers to take workmen and labourers from Becontree Hundred and ‘other lordships’ of the abbess of Barking ‘for repairing the walls of her marsh at Berkyng, which are broken down by the force of the sea, and put them to the works at her wages, there to stay as long as shall be necessary’.[29] Five days later a more orthodox commission *de walliis et fossatis* (that is, without powers to impress labourers) was issued to Nicholas Carreu, Robert Bealknap and others ‘in the marsh of the abbess of Barking’.

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[17] *CPR 1281–92*, p. 465.

[18] Galloway and Potts, 'Marine flooding', pp. 376–7.

[19] E.g., *CPR 1313–17*, p. 64; *CPR 1334–8*, p. 71; *CPR 1338–40*, p. 179.

[20] *CPR 1334–8*, p. 71. For the 1334 storm surge, see Galloway and Potts, 'Marine flooding'; and Galloway, 'Storm flooding'.

[21] *CPR 1324–7*, p. 143.

[22] *CPR 1350–4*, p. 460; *CPR 1354–8*, p. 401; *CPR 1358–61*, p. 205; *CPR 1361–4*, p. 151.

[23] *CPR 1370–4*, p. 474

These commissions raise two important questions. First, why were they issued in the middle of the summer, if the damage had been done by the surge of the previous October? It is true that repair works would most likely be carried out in spring or summer when conditions were favourable to working in the marshes, but it was more normal for the commissions to be issued quite soon after a flooding event, even if the repair work was not to be carried out for some months. However, the damage to the marsh walls is explicitly stated to have been caused by the sea, rather than by fresh-water flooding or some other cause – and the types of extreme tidal or storm surge most likely to cause such damage are far more likely to occur in autumn or winter than at any other time of the year. Perhaps, then, the months since the storm surge had been spent in a fruitless attempt to mend the river-wall breach or breaches. Second, why was it necessary to issue a commission to raise labour from among the abbey's own estates? This may suggest that, from the very start of this crisis, the abbess's powers were insufficient to tackle serious storm flooding, and that she was not able adequately to marshal the resources of labour and materials available to her from within her own possessions. As was seen above in the case of Havering, it was not unprecedented for such powers to be issued, but it is striking that an estate with such extensive marshlands, and with an already long history of protecting and exploiting them, was obliged to seek outside help. Perhaps the finances and organization of Barking abbey were already stretched before the flooding crisis broke, contrary to earlier interpretations.[30]

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[24] M. K. McIntosh, *Autonomy and Community: the Royal Manor of Havering 1200–1500* (Cambridge, 1986), p. 78.

[25] *CPR 1370–4*, p. 473

[26] Some earlier writers have ascribed the initial damage at Barking to storms in the winter of 1376–7 (e.g., H. Grieve, *The Great Tide: the Story of the 1953 Flood Disaster in Essex* (Chelmsford, 1959), p. 12), but it is evident from the commissions *de walliis et fossatis* and other evidence that there was severe flooding during 1375 and the initial damage may have been done by the storm surge of 1374.

[27] E. Gottschalk, *Stormvloeden en Rivieroverstromingen in Nederland* (3 vols., Assen, 1971–8), i. 427–8, 444–6.

[28] *CPR 1370–4*, p. 474.

[29] *CPR 1374–7*, pp. 126–7.

The storm surge of the following year struck the European littoral over a three-day period as a powerful storm belt moved, unusually, from south to north between 8 and 10 October 1375. It has been assessed as one of the most severe – perhaps the most severe – of the fourteenth-century surges.[31] This time there is little doubt of its immediate impact upon the Thames area. On 18 October a commission was issued for 'diverse marshes and places in the county of Essex'. The next day a wide-ranging commission was issued for the Isle of Sheppey and the marshes around the mouth of the River Medway in north Kent, followed on 11 November by a further commission with authority 'along the water of Thames'.[32] It is likely that the situation at and around Barking deteriorated significantly as a result of this second surge, which may have undone repairs effected earlier in 1375. That the problem was spreading into the East Ham Level is indicated by the grant of a commission to the abbot of Stratford in May 1376, renewed in February 1378, with authority 'along the shore of the ... Thames from Stratford-atte-Bowe as far as the town of Barking'.[33]

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[30] E.g., *Victoria County History of Essex*, ii. 115–22 <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=39832> [accessed 11 Jan. 2011].

[31] Gottschalk, *Stormvloeden*, i. 444–5

[32] *CPR 1374–7*, p. 161.

[33] *CPR 1374–7*, p. 319; *CPR 1377–81*, p. 41.

A general crisis, socio-economic as much as environmental, was developing along the tidal Thames. Labour was proving hard to recruit and retain, leading to the regular granting of coercive powers. Robert Bealknap and his fellow commissioners were empowered in 1377 to recruit carpenters and workmen for repairs at ‘diverse marshes and places’ in Essex and to arrest and imprison all those who were ‘rebellious’ in the matter.[34] Workmen and labourers were again recruited specifically for work on the Thames walls of the Barking abbey demesnes in March 1380, and at the same time the abbess sought exemption from the burden of repairing fences in Havering Park.[35] The abbess and convent had already been granted exemption from the array of men at arms in 1377, as the king had been informed ‘that by flooding of the Thames they have lost great part of the profit of their possessions at Berkyng and elsewhere in Essex’, and had expended a great part of their resources ‘in repair of dikes broken, stopping of trenches and thrusting back the water there’.[36] A pattern was becoming established whereby the Barking abbesses petitioned repeatedly, and usually successfully, for relief from their taxes and feudal obligations, while royal appointees to commissions *de walliis et fossatis* wrestled with the problem of actually repairing the severely damaged marsh defences and drainage system.

All these efforts appear to have been unavailing, however. By 1380 the breach at Barking had caused ‘immense damage’, not just to the abbey ‘by loss of the lands drowned’, but also to the wider region and to the citizens of London.[37] The land around the breach had been scoured out, a ‘broad lake or pond’ had formed on land once used for arable farming, and the channel of the Thames opposite was said to be ‘in large part blocked and filled up by logs, stones and sand drawn down from the said lake by the ebb, to the peril of ships’. The mayor and citizens of London had complained to the king of this threat to Thames navigation, and further noted that as the Thames was no longer confined by its bounds, and was spreading out at each tide over the flooded marshlands, ‘the rising of the tide is checked and is lower than it used to be’. A third area of concern to the Londoners was that the Barking abbey tenants, perhaps making the best of a bad job, had begun to install ‘improper engines’ in the flooded marsh. These were clearly some variant of the fishing weirs or ‘kiddles’ which the Londoners had been attempting to restrict or eradicate from the channel of the Thames for centuries.[38] Now, however, they were being employed in the flooded Barking marshlands and, together with fishing nets of smaller mesh than permitted by local and national regulations, used to 'take and destroy young fish at improper times, before they be fit for food'. The fry thus illegally taken were said to be being fed to pigs by the abbey tenants.[39]

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[34] *CPR 1374–7*, p. 485.

[35] *CPR 1377–81*, p. 447; *Calendar of Inquisitions Miscellaneous* (8 vols., 1916–2003), iv. 69.

[36] *Calendar of Close Rolls 1377–81*, pp. 8–17 <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=106783> [accessed 11 Jan. 2011].

[37] *Calendar of Close Rolls 1377–81*, pp. 401–8 <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=106946> [accessed 11 Jan. 2011].

The abbot of Stratford Langthorne was granted a further commission in the marshes of West Ham, East Ham and North Woolwich on 28 May 1381. It must be likely that this was a dead letter, as it was issued on the eve of the great convulsion which shook the English state in the early summer of 1381, and which had its beginnings and some of its most intense manifestations in south Essex. The villages of Fobbing and Corringham, marshland communities east of Tilbury, are reported as the scene of the first disturbances of the revolt, and men from these villages took part in the attack on commissioners investigating poll tax evasion in Brentford on 30 May.[40] As the revolt spread, estate officials and manorial records were targeted in many parts of Essex, as peasants sought revenge for oppressive treatment and destroyed evidence of servile tenure. Stratford abbey was attacked and many of its muniments were burned.[41] Men from East and West Ham may have been involved in this action, as on 30 June the king ordered the constables of those places to issue a proclamation requiring tenants of Stratford abbey to perform the customary services due to their lords under pain of arrest.[42]

It seem likely that the unpopular conscription of labour for works in the Barking and East Ham marshes in the years before 1381 had added to the general discontent of labour in the area, and the abbot of Stratford's active involvement in commissions *de walliis et fossatis* may have made his abbey a more obvious target for the rebels than Barking. Whatever the truth of this, it is evident that the revolt disrupted work in the marshlands, just as it did many other aspects of life. No further commissions were issued for the Barking area until 1384, although conditions there were continuing to deteriorate. Early in 1382 the abbess and convent were given licence to appropriate the living of Hockley church 'because their lands are inundated and their sustenance is diminished to the value of 400 marks yearly'.[43] When the work of the commissioners finally resumed in 1384, it was at a moment of supreme crisis. In June the commissioners entrusted with a commission for the stretch of Thames bank between Stratford-at-Bow and Barking included Nicholas Brembre, mayor of London, together with the abbot of Stratford and the ubiquitous Robert Bealknap, reflecting the grave concern of the capital's rulers and citizens at the course matters were taking. In July Robert Crull and his fellow commissioners were empowered:

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[38] D. Keene, 'Issues of water in medieval London', *Urban History*, xxviii (2001), 161–79, at p. 167.

[39] *Calendar of Close Rolls, 1377–81*, pp. 401–8 <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=106946> [accessed 11 Jan. 2011].

[40] N. Brooks, 'The organisation and achievements of the peasants of Kent and Essex in 1381', in *Studies in Medieval History presented to R. H. C. Davis*, ed. H. Mayr-Harting and R. I. Moore (1985), p. 251.

[41] *Victoria County History of Essex*, ii. 129–33 <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=39836> [accessed 5 Jan. 2011].

[42] *Victoria County History of Essex*, vi. 18–24 <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=42743> [accessed 5 Jan. 2011].

> to take as many labourers and workmen in the county of Essex as may be necessary for saving the marsh called Berkyng Marreys, which is more than usually inundated, and which in past years has yielded great profit to the abbess and convent of Berkyng, but is now at the point of becoming a total loss.[44]

The wages of these workers were to be paid by the abbess, and any who refused to work were to be imprisoned, with the exception only of harvest workers and those in the king's service.

In early 1385 Barking and Dagenham marshes were subject to a further commission, but an inquiry held before the mayor and aldermen of London in January 1386 suggests that, at least so far as the marshes to the west of Barking Creek were concerned, the battle was indeed lost.[45] The chief concern of the Londoners by this date emerges as the impact which the flooding of the marshlands was having upon the Thames fisheries. A jury of fishermen from Thames-side communities east of London Bridge was questioned as to 'how and by whom the fish in the Thames were so destroyed that hardly a seasonable fish could be found in it'. The fishermen placed the blame upon the use of certain types of nets and weirs placed in creeks and marshes, and in 'the bruche [breach] towards Berkyng'.[46] The activities at the Barking breach emerge as the most damaging, for here, the jurors averred, the fish usually entered at high tide 'in order to feed on the land there and to be more at ease and more *swef* [comfortable] than in the current of the Thames'. When the tide ebbed the fish congregated in the flooded ditches of the marsh, and were then trapped by the weirs and nets when they tried to return to the river. In the most revealing part of their testimony the fishermen stated that the ditches were rented out by the abbess of Barking and the abbot of Stratford, upon whose lands the breach was located, 'and thus the abbot and abbess were the principal maintainers of the destruction of fish'.

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[43] *CPR 1381–5*, p. 106.

[44] *CPR 1381–5*, p. 438.

[45] *CPR 1381–5*, p. 591; *Calendar of Select Pleas and Memoranda of the City of London 1381–1412* (hereafter *CSPM 1381–1412*), ed. A. H. Thomas (Cambridge, 1932), pp. 116–17.

[46] The nets and devices are described as *treinkes*, *weres*, *engynes* and *hebbyngnettes* (see the discussion of fishing technology in L. Wright, *Sources of London English: Medieval Thames Vocabulary* (Oxford, 1996)). That this breach was located in the East Ham Level is clear from its description as being 'towards Barking', that is, lying between London and Barking. The precise location cannot be determined.

Taken together with the royal order of 1380 this inquiry provides clear evidence of a pragmatic adaptation on the part of both tenants and landlords to the environmental changes associated with flooding. Saltmarshes and mudflats are colonized at high tides by a wide variety of fish species, which feed actively on the rich nutrients to be found there.[47] It seems that the flooded marshes west of Barking Creek were rapidly reverting to saltmarsh, and the fauna of the tidal Thames were colonizing them. Smelt, a valuable food fish of the Thames estuary, and gudgeon, a freshwater fish tolerant of a fairly wide range of environments, were mentioned in the 1386 enquiry in the context of illegal fishing, while salmon and sturgeon were said to have been 'utterly destroyed' by weirs and trink-nets.[48] While the initiative in fishing the flooded marshes may have lain with the tenants, it seems clear that the abbot and abbess were becoming resigned to long-term flooding of a significant part of their marshland estates, and were seeking new ways to make money from the marsh in its tidal, periodically inundated state. Those said to be exploiting the marsh fishery included men from 'Hamme' (East or West Ham), Poplar in Middlesex, Erith and Plumstead on the Kentish bank of the Thames, and Woolwich. The latter included John Galyon, whose family's holdings in the marshes of North Woolwich acquired the name 'Galyonshope' (from *–hop*, an enclosure within a marsh), and which eventually gave rise to the name Gallions Reach for that stretch of the Thames between the town of Woolwich and Barking Creek.[49]

The regular issuing of commissions *de walliis et fossatis* for the Barking and East Ham marshes comes to an abrupt halt in the mid 1380s, which again suggests resignation towards the persistent flooding in the face of major technical difficulties, and in the context of agrarian recession, ushered in by a collapse in grain prices in the late 1370s.[50] There is a striking contrast with the continuation of commissions for the Kentish bank of the tidal Thames down to *c*.1410, and the periodic commissions issued for the Stepney area in Middlesex.[51] Only in 1401 was a commission issued which included, but did not specifically mention, the Barking area.[52] We must picture the break in the river wall as having been progressively widened and deepened by the action of the tides, scouring out a major depression which would have become increasingly difficult to repair, something similar to the infamous Dagenham breach of the early eighteenth century.[53] It became a well-known feature of riverside topography, and may have been used as a hiding place by the pirates whose boat was seized in 'le Breche of Berkyng' in 1412.[54] While sporadic attempts at reclamation of the marshes may have continued without the support of commissions, it is evident that considerable areas remained inundated, and in 1398 it was asserted that in Woolwich a 'place' formerly used as the site of a fair had been flooded and abandoned as far as Barking.[55] Context suggests that this 'place' must have been located somewhere in North Woolwich, in the strip of land adjoining the north bank of the Thames, although nothing further is known of the fair. The fifteenth-century references to 'Galyonshope' and an associated wall in the West Marsh of Barking suggest that a small enclosure close to the Thames may have remained secure from the tides.[56] This might also explain the transference of the name to Gallions Reach, with such a permanently dry piece of land providing a reliable landmark for navigators seeking the Thames channel when high tide flooded the rest of the marsh.

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[47] P. Laffaille, E. Feunteun and J. C. Lefeuvre, 'Composition of fish communities in a European macrotidal salt marsh', *Estuarine, Coastal and Shelf Science*, li (2000), 429–38.

[48] *Calendar of Plea and Memoranda Rolls Preserved among the Archives of the Corporation of the City of London at the Guildhall*, ed. A. H. Thomas and P. E. Jones (6 vols., Cambridge, 1926–61), iii. 116–17. For Thames fish species and historic fisheries, see A. Wheeler, *The Tidal Thames: the History of a River and its Fishes* (1979).

[49] *A Descriptive Catalogue of Ancient Deeds*, vi (1915), 146–59, 256–7 <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=64479> [accessed 11 Jan. 2011]; P. H. Reaney, *Place-Names of Essex* (English Place-Name Society, xii, Cambridge, 1935), pp. 14, 90.

The abbesses of Barking continued to seek aid to compensate for their losses, which were exacerbated in 1409, a storm surge year in the Low Countries, by the inundation of some of their holdings in Dagenham marsh. A total of 600 acres of meadow were said to have been inundated there, together with 100 acres sown with wheat in another unspecified marsh.[57] On the occasion of this new flood, the abbess claimed that she had spent

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[50] D. L. Farmer, 'Prices and wages', in *The Agrarian History of England and Wales*, iii: *1348–1500*, ed. E. Miller (Cambridge, 1991), pp. 431–525.

[51] *CPR*, *passim*.

[52] *CPR 1401–5*, p. 65.

[53] *Victoria County History of Essex*, v. 281–94 <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=42732> [accessed 11 Jan. 2011].

[54] *CPR 1408–13*, p. 402.

[55] *CPR 1396–9*, p. 470.

[56] *A Descriptive Catalogue of Ancient Deeds*, i (1890), pp. 495–505 <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=64240> [accessed 11 Jan. 2011].

[57] *CPR 1408–13*, pp. 99–100.

£2,000 in an attempt to save her lands from the tides. In the following year, when the abbey was granted permission to appropriate Lidlington parish church in Bedfordshire, it was claimed that none of the nuns had more than 14*s* yearly for her habit and vesture.[58] Papal ratification of the appropriation in 1412 recognized the impoverishment caused to the house by plague and 'sudden floods, which have swallowed up some of their possessions, within the last 30 years, to the value of 200 marks'.[59] Half a century later the then abbess, Katherine de la Pole, was still receiving grants and allowances in respect of flooding losses; in 1462 and 1464 return of writs, the assize of bread and various other casualties of Becontree Hundred were re-granted and confirmed 'on account of the losses ... sustained by a great part of their land being inundated by the river Thames'.[60]

For nearly ninety years, therefore, a significant part of the Barking marshes had remained flooded, and the Barking abbesses had grown adept at securing such compensation as they could from the crown, while profiting from the fisheries and other saltmarsh resources developed by their tenants and others. The activities of fishermen from the Barking area using fishing weirs and trink-nets suspended from boats continued to cause conflict with the London authorities. The inspections of the Thames carried out on behalf of the mayor resulted in regular fines for men from Barking, East Ham and Woolwich during the fifteenth century.[61] Indeed, the activities of the Barking men were spreading beyond their own marshlands and they were found to own weirs and trinks at Tilbury Hope in 1425, while men from Ham owned weirs in Plumstead parish on the Kentish side of the river in 1421.[62] On occasion the confrontation between the Londoners and the fishermen became violent, as in February 1407 when Alexander Boner, the 'sub-conservator of the Thames', on an expedition to seize illegal nets, was confronted by an angry mob said to comprise 2,000 men from Barking, Woolwich, Erith and other places, who assaulted him with bows and arrows and then proceeded to chase him to the town of Barking and take back the confiscated nets.[63]

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[58] *Victoria County History of Essex*, ii. 115–22 <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=39832> [accessed 8 Jan. 2011].

[59] *Calendar* of *Papal Registers Relating to Great Britain and Ireland*, vi: *1404–15* (1904), pp. 271–85 <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=104239> [accessed 7 Jan. 2011].

[60] *CPR 1461–7*, pp. 223, 395–7.

[61] E.g., London Metropolitan Archives, COL/CC/01/02 fos. 54–5; COL/CC/01/05 fos. 212, 216v.

[62] LMA, COL/CC/01/02 fo. 5v; L. Wright, 'Medieval Latin, Anglo-Norman and Middle English in a civic London text: an inquisition of the river Thames, 1421', in *De Mot en Mot: Aspects of Medieval Linguistics*, ed. D. A. Trotter and S. Gregory (Cardiff, 1977), p. 245.

[63] *Calendar of Letter-Books of the City of London*, i: *1400–22* (1909), pp. 55–67 <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=33679> [accessed 4 June 2008].

That Barking appears as the epicentre of this illegal fishing and resistance to metropolitan regulation can plausibly be linked to the dramatic environmental and socio-economic changes its people had experienced since the 1370s. Similarly, the close interest which the Barking abbess paid to the legislation regarding London oversight of flooded marshlands in the late fifteenth century is easily explained in the light of these changes. The 1489 petition and act date from a period when, in fact, the long chapter of marsh inundation at Barking was drawing to a close. Renewed concern with and oversight of the marshes on the Essex bank of the tidal Thames is shown by the resumption of issuing of commissions *de walliis et fossatis* from mid century.[64] A rental of abbey lands drawn up in 1456 indicates that at that time only limited areas of marsh were in a condition to be leased out as agricultural land, and several references to submerged lands occur.[65] A few acres in the West Marsh return a rental income, together with a pasture called 'le Breche', let for 33*s* 4*d*. The extent of this pasture is not given, but it may represent the bulk of the drowned West Marsh, being let as saltmarsh grazing. Piecemeal reclamation was certainly underway before 1500, when we hear of both 'drowned mersshes' and 'dry lond ... late inned' at Galyons in the West Marsh of Barking.[66] William Hyccheman or Hichman, abbot of Stratford Langthorne *c.*1499–1516, and a certain Richard Gouge were credited with recovering various marshes in East and West Ham 'from the water' and in 1527 a bill of payments was submitted by a Nicholas Gugge 'for inning of my lady Hoddys marshe att Galyance' and repairing a breach called 'Cotmanhavyn Danger'.[67] By the dissolution, Barking abbey's rent-roll from the marshes amounted to £77 19*s* compared to no more than £15 in 1456, and references occur to 'new inned marshes' and lands 'lately recovered'.[68] There are similar references in a great survey of the marshlands drawn up for the commissioners of sewers in 1563, when fifty-seven acres in the East Ham Level were described as 'new inned'.[69] By this date, it is probable that the great majority of the marshes flooded since the 1370s had been recovered.

The legacy of late medieval flooding was still visible in the marshland landscapes of the Barking area in the eighteenth and early nineteenth

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[64] *CPR 1461–7*, p. 35; *CPR 1467–77*, pp. 169, 252, 288.

[65] British Library, Additional MS. 45387.

[66] *A Descriptive Catalogue of Ancient Deeds*, vi (1915), pp. 188–204 <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=64482> [accessed 10 Jan. 2011].

[67] *Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, Henry VIII*, ix, pt. 1: *January–July 1544* (1903), pp. 358–88 <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=80313> [accessed 10 Jan. 2011]; *Letters and Papers Henry VIII Addenda,* i, pt. 1, p. 186.

[68] Sturman, 'Barking abbey', p. 75.

[69] Chelmsford, Essex Record Office, D/SH7.

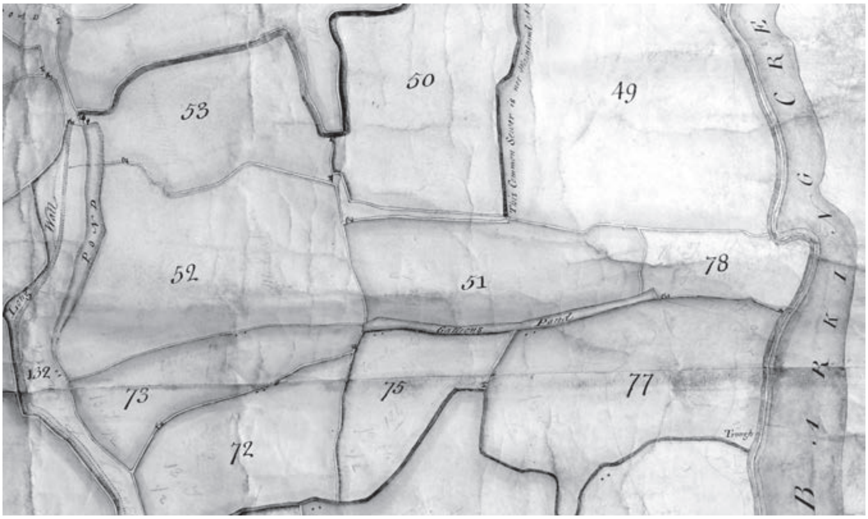

Figure 4.3. Linear ponds in the West Marsh of Barking, 1741.
Source: detail from ERO D/SH 8, reproduced with permission of Essex Record Office.

centuries. A map of the East Ham level compiled in 1741 shows a number of linear ponds in the West Marsh (Figure 4.3). These seem likely to be residual flooded drainage ditches in the lowest part of the marsh. The pond near the centre of the figure is named Gallions Pond, and may be a remnant of the 'wet marsh' which surrounded Gallion's Hope in the fifteenth century. In Dagenham marsh, a large horseshoe feature (Figure 4.2 above) points to a 'set-back' repair around a major river-wall breach, possibly that documented in 1409. 'Horseshoe Corner' remained an intertidal area after the rest of the marsh was reclaimed, and formed an important source of reeds for thatching and other purposes.[70]

Conclusions

The interaction of economic and environmental factors produced a progressive change in the physical state and human use of the marshlands at Barking, East Ham and Dagenham during the later middle ages. Two centuries of reclamation were reversed, and significant areas of land reverted to tidal saltmarsh and mudflat. Although recurrent storms and storm surges had threatened the Thames-side lands in the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries, it is not until the 1370s that clear evidence of crisis and a long-term loss of embanked land emerges. These years posed severe problems elsewhere around the tidal river and the estuary, including the extensive reclaimed marshes at the mouth of the River Medway.[71] In the Barking area the sudden impact of storm surges and river-wall breaches broke upon a febrile society where resistance to royal and seigniorial exactions was growing in the years before 1381. The enforced labour in the marshes – unpleasant and dangerous work – can only have added to the grievances of peasant farmers and labourers there. Barking abbey, unlike many other religious houses, seems to have been incapable of marshalling its own resources to combat the threat of flooding, and repeatedly required the help of the commissioners *de walliis et fossatis.* At an early stage both Barking and Stratford abbeys seem to have recognized the extreme difficulty they faced in recovering the flooded lands. As the turbulence of the 1381 revolt engulfed the area, and as it became increasingly apparent that depressed agricultural prices would continue, these religious houses seem to have bowed to the inevitable and sought limited alternative revenue from their flooded lands, instead of continuing to pour money into their attempted recovery. This accommodation to new socio-economic and environmental realities seems entirely rational. The Barking abbesses also became adept at obtaining compensation for their losses from the crown during the later fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

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[70] *Victoria County History of Essex*, v. 281–94 <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=42732> [accessed 11 Jan. 2011].

There were significant consequences to their decisions, however, which would bring the people of the Barking area into conflict with the citizens of London. The Londoners feared that the flooding of the marshlands would harm the Thames navigation, while the establishment of fisheries in the creeks of flooded marshes seems to have exacerbated a perceived problem of over-fishing through the trapping and destruction of large quantities of fry, and to have threatened London's supply of some species of fresh fish. The Londoners' anxieties were set out in the inquiry of 1386, and in the petition and statute of 1489. Today, saltmarsh creeks are recognized as important fish nurseries, and land deliberately flooded as part of the process of managed coastal realignment quickly becomes colonized by juvenile fish. This suggests that the impact on fish stocks of the installation of new fishing weirs in flooded marshland in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries may have been real enough; the complaints of Londoners and Thames fishermen seem thus to have been based upon the close observation of real ecological processes. Conflict between London authorities and the fishermen of the Barking district in the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries can be seen to represent more than just a quarrel over jurisdiction; rather, it reflects some of the key tensions and contradictions at the core of the metropolitan hinterland during an era of rapid change.

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[71] Galloway, 'Storm flooding', pp. 180–1.

II. Luxury, innovation and skill

5. A taste for the Orient? Cosmopolitan demand for 'exotic' durable consumables in late medieval Bruges*

Peter Stabel

Introduction

It is widely known that medieval elites had a taste for exotic luxury. Princes, lay noblemen, ecclesiastical institutions and office-holders alike invested in luxury goods to demonstrate their newly acquired status and prestige, and by exchanging gifts to smooth relationships with neighbouring princes and noblemen or to establish and confirm particular hierarchical feudal relationships.[1] Hence luxury cloth, jewellery, precious gems and stones, weaponry and armour, horses etc. were sought-after items. Many even go as far as to state that the process of massive urbanization and the commercial revolution of the long twelfth century would not have been possible without this huge demand generated by the landed elites and the church; although conversely, the economic weakness of landlords towards the end of the period of medieval growth was to a certain degree self-inflicted, partly the result of their taste – some historians have not hesitated to call it 'hunger' – for luxury.[2]

Prominent among the goods desired by the rural, and later also urban elites were 'oriental' luxury items. More than other luxury goods, they seem to have carried a great deal of prestige, not only because of their high cost, but also because of their initial rarity and the lure of the exotic and richer worlds that they represented. Silks from the Byzantine empire and beyond, ceramics and various fabrics from the Islamic territories around the Mediterranean, carpets from Anatolia and from as far afield as Persia, jewellery and coins, precious stones and various type of weaponry were much in demand from the Carolingian era onwards.[3] The mixed societies and courts of Sicily and the Iberian peninsula, and the Christian feudal territories founded during the successful first phase of the crusades from the late eleventh century onwards, acted as cultural mediators which did much to stimulate and enhance the scope of the process in the twelfth century, just when commercialization was taking hold of most of the European continent.[4]

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* A version of this chapter was first published in French in *Histoire Urbaine*, xxx (2011), 21–39.

[1] F. Piponnier and P. Mane, *Se vêtir au moyen âge* (Paris, 1995).

[2] C. Dyer, *Standards of Living in the Later Middle Ages: Social Change in England c.1200–1520* (Cambridge, 1989).

[3] C. Wickham, *Framing the Early Middle Ages: Europe and the Mediterranean, 400–800* (Oxford, 2005), pp. 696ff.

The thirteenth century, however, witnessed important changes. Although Islamic trade routes in Asia were temporarily disrupted by the sudden Mongolian conquests, it is widely assumed that shortly afterwards the established 'Pax Mongolica' boosted trade flows between the Near East, Central Asia and the Far East, allowing Chinese and Indian luxury goods (and the taste for their designs) to reach the Mediterranean, and thence the Christian West, in greater numbers. This window on the Far East caused western missionaries like Guillaume de Rubrouck and John of Plano Carpini and merchants like the Polo family to go east for new religious, political and above all economic opportunities. Their writings fascinated the Christian European audiences, acting as a catalyst for a new interest in the exotic and the wide world beyond the Mediterranean, which was depicted as extremely rich and full of refined, if often very mysterious goods.

It is, therefore, a great paradox that oriental imports, though still widely popular, seem to have lost some of their initial momentum in exactly the same period. What had undoubtedly changed was the business instinct of Italian merchants and entrepreneurs. Genoa, Venice and to a lesser degree Pisa (succeeded by Florence) not only increasingly controlled trade flows in the Mediterranean, they also initiated a massive import substitution of the oriental goods which were in such demand among European elites. Although it is no longer accepted that Venice had deliberately and in a perfidious way induced the lords and knights of the fourth crusade to take hold of Constantinople in 1204,[5] the results were, nonetheless, clear. Not only did Venice limit competition from its main rival in this region, Genoa, it also dealt a terrible blow to the Byzantine luxury crafts, by copying and emulating their industrial capacity. Without further competition from Byzantine silks, the newly established silk manufacturers that had spread from Sicily to cities such as Lucca (later also Florence) and Venice itself flooded the European markets for expensive silk and brocaded fabrics. Only from the end of the middle ages were western European silk manufacturers able to compete, more or less, with these Italian urban industries. Genoese traders held on somewhat longer to oriental fabrics, but it can be safely assumed that late medieval silk fabrics were henceforth mostly Italian made. Designs remained, however, inspired by oriental influence. Such was the lure of 'oriental taste' that these adapted much more slowly to mainstream European fashion.

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[4] R. S. Lopez, *The Commercial Revolution of the Middle Ages, 950–1350* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ, 1971).

[5] J. Phillips, *The Fourth Crusade and the Sack of Constantinople* (2005).

Silk had always been the staple of luxury goods. It is less clear what happened to other oriental consumables. One can safely assume that, although silk is undoubtedly the most spectacular case, the same thing happened in relation to other oriental luxury commodities. Italian manufacturing capacity consistently seized the opportunity to replace oriental consumables with similar manufactured goods, thereby boosting, for several centuries to come, the hold of Italian businessmen and entrepreneurs on the market for luxuries (majolica, jewellery, mixed fabrics etc.). According to Richard Goldthwaite's thesis on consumer culture in Renaissance Italy, the Italian industries of the fifteenth and sixteenth century captured a renewed and broader demand for durable consumables, with more rapid turnover and shorter fashion cycles, replacing a so-called traditional, 'medieval' demand pattern for jewellery and woollen textiles with fashion-sensitive goods such as lighter fabrics, furniture, pottery and, of course, cheaper art products like paintings. There is, however, little doubt that this new consumer culture both developed earlier, probably pre-dating the Black Death (although the net rise of per capita income during and after the demographic crisis did a lot to stimulate it), and extended beyond the Italian peninsula. Elsewhere I will argue that the new consumer culture was by no means an Italian monopoly, as it also touched the other urbanized parts of late medieval Europe; and that textiles, and a 'medieval' consumption pattern, were an integral part of new consumer behaviour, not a relic from a medieval past.[6] In the following pages, I will instead focus on how oriental durable consumables in particular, so prominent from the quattrocento on the Italian markets, performed at Bruges, the most international market, but also the leading one for luxury commodities in fifteenth-century northern Europe.

The presence of oriental goods in the Bruges market, imported mostly by Italian (Genoese, Venetians, Luccese and Florentines) and Iberian merchants (Catalans and Castilians), is a well-known phenomenon, although the quantities involved are not very well documented.[7] Pepper and other spices were, of course, the single most important type of product that the Venetians brought to the northern markets in their 'Flemish galleys'.

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[6] P. Stabel, '*Le Rouge et le Noir* en Flandre: vêtements et couleurs en milieu bourgeois au bas moyen âge (Bruges première moitié du XVe siècle)' (in preparation).

[7] On Bruges, see J. M. Murray, *Bruges, Cradle of Capitalism, 1280–1390* (Cambridge, 2005); *Les marchands de la Hanse et la banque des Médicis: Bruges, marché d'échanges culturels en Europe*, ed. A. Vandewalle (Bruges, 2002).

But other Italian ships, together with Spanish vessels, imported foodstuffs that originated in the Mediterranean, some of them even from Islamic and Byzantine territories: Mediterranean fruits such as figs, dates, raisins and oranges, but also other food stuffs like honey and sugar. The urban industrial entrepreneurs of north-west Europe looked to the Middle East and Anatolia for raw materials, as these were indispensable for the manufacture of their own industrial goods. For the cloth industries, the backbone of economic organization in the cities of the Low Countries, alum was undoubtedly the most important product.[8] It was much needed as a fixing agent by dyers. Before the middle of the fifteenth century and the discovery of alum around Tolfa in the Papal States, it was imported by Genoese merchants from the eastern Mediterranean. Various dyes and colours came from the same region (and later on also from the New World): kermes, brazilwood, cochineal, lapis lazuli etc. were indispensable for the textile industries and luxury crafts in the Low Countries. Neither painters nor drapers would have been able to switch to producing luxury goods with a high added value, the cornerstone of industrial change and continuing success in the cities of the Low Countries in the fifteenth and sixteenth century, without them.

It is not the intention of this chapter to address the flows of these foodstuffs, nor does it aim to mark out the importance of the flows of raw materials needed by local entrepreneurs from the Islamic territories. A clear analysis of these would undoubtedly be useful, as research is still very much at the stage of impressionistic assessment. But such investigation would involve the in-depth study of Italian or Catalan business accounts, and this is well beyond the scope of this contribution. This chapter will focus rather on consumer goods and textiles, and use more indirect information about consumer behaviour and corporate organization as an indicator for developments in commercial flows. Exotic textiles such as silks, gold cloth and various mixed fabrics were needed to meet the ever more refined demand from the northern and eastern European nobles and urban aristocracies. Oriental carpets were allegedly used to brighten up the interior of the urban palaces of the nobility and the houses of wealthy merchants.[9] Jewellery and precious stones were considered as one of the most efficient means of social distinction.[10] Hence, it was jewellery and luxury fabrics, rather than paintings or illuminated manuscripts, that dominated the expenditure of the Burgundian court, which, in the middle of the fifteenth century, was the example to be followed by the royals and nobles of Europe.[11] All of these items, some of them imported from Islamic and Byzantine territories, were crucial in creating the material culture of princely, noble and rich bourgeois households.

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[8] J. H. Munro, *Medieval Woollens: Textiles, Textile Technology, and Industrial Organization, c.1000–1500*, in *The Cambridge History of Western Textiles*, ed. D. Jenkins (Cambridge, 2003), pp. 181–226.

[9] L. W. Mackie, 'Woven status: Mamluk silks and carpets', *The Muslim World*, lxxiii (1983), 253–61.

[10] J. Dumolyn and K. Moermans, 'Distinctie en memorie. Symbolische investeringen in de eeuwigheid door laatmiddeleeuwse hoge ambtenaren in het Graafschap Vlaanderen. Een algemeen antropologisch vraagstuk', *Tijdschrift voor Geschiedenis*, cxvi (2003), 332–49.

Oriental consumables and northern patterns of consumption in the fifteenth century: image or reality?

Surveys of the distribution of oriental durable consumer goods in the Italian peninsula by, among others, Rosemary Mack and Marco Spallanzani have demonstrated how widely diffused these consumer goods really were. Although silks, so popular in the high middle ages, tended to disappear in the face of the massive process of import substitution and textile specialization in cities like Lucca, Venice and Florence – in turn probably partly induced by increasing commercial and supply problems in Mediterranean trade with the Near East and in trade routes across Asia[12] – knotted oriental carpets were still very much sought after goods, carriers of social prestige and of the exotic, not only in the elite groups of Italian urban society, but increasingly also among the urban middle classes of rich artisans and wealthy local traders. Oriental carpets were not only represented on paintings and frescoes, they were prominent in inventories and other documents that illustrate the 'earthly possessions' of these wealthy Italian city-dwellers. The same is true for other goods as well. Metalware, ceramics, fabrics etc. were easily available in the urban markets of large Italian cities and made it, to cite Rosamond Mack, from the bazaar to the piazza.[13]

One look at Flemish painting from the same quattrocento, the so-called *ars nova*, would suggest that this pattern of wide diffusion of such exotic durable goods was more or less similar in the equally densely urbanized Low Countries. Oriental carpets are very prominent in both religious and profane panel paintings, and oriental ceramics and silk patterns are also found. They figure in both religious subjects (usually a Virgin enthroned with various different patron saints) and in the background of portraits (individual portraits and more official works like Jan Van Eyck's Arnolfini 'wedding' portrait in the National Gallery in London).

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[11] W. Blockmans, A. Janse, H. Kruse and R. Stein, 'From territorial courts to one residence: the Low Countries in the late middle ages', in *La cour comme institution économique*, ed. M. Aymard and M. A. Romani, (Paris, 1998), pp. 17–28; M.-Th. Caron, D. Clauzel, J. Rauzier and M. Sommé, 'La cour des ducs de Bourgogne (1369–1477), consommation et redistribution', in Aymard and Romani, *La cour*, pp. 31–41.

[12] J. Abu-Lughod, *Before European Hegemony: the World System A.D. 1250–1350* (Oxford, 1991).

[13] R. E. Mack, *Bazaar to Piazza: Islamic Trade and Italian Art, 1300–1600* (Berkeley, Calif., 2002); and M. Spallanzani, *Oriental Rugs in Renaissance Florence* (Florence, 2007). For more general remarks, see *At Home in Renaissance Italy*, ed. M. Ajmar-Wollheim and F. Dennis (2006); E. Currie, *Inside the Renaissance House* (2006); and E. Welch, *Shopping in the Renaissance: Consumer cultures in Italy, 1400–1600* (New Haven and London, 2005).

There is, however, something peculiar about the use of oriental items in early Netherlandish painting. They are represented almost exclusively in paintings and illuminations manufactured in Bruges, the main commercial hub in the fifteenth-century Low Countries. Especially in the panel paintings of Jan Van Eyck (+1441) and Hans Memling (+1494), the second and fourth generation of the so-called 'Flemish Primitives', oriental objects are clear elements of distinction, both in religious scenes (Our Lady is commonly represented as sitting in a chair on a platform covered by an Anatolian carpet) and in portraits for bourgeois commissioners (where oriental carpets are usually shown as luxury table covers).[14] Oriental carpets are also present in the work of other Bruges painters, appearing in some paintings of Petrus Christus (+1472) and the late Bruges masters from around 1500, of Gerard David (+1523) and of Jan Provoost (+1529). In paintings of the early sixteenth century in Antwerp (the commercial successor of Bruges), for example those of Quentin Massys, oriental carpets keep returning. However, in works by masters in other art centres (for example Hugo Van der Goes in Ghent (+1482), and in the county of Flanders as a whole; the early masters in the bishop's city of Tournai, including the so-called group of the Master of Flémalle and Jacques Daret (+*c.*1468); and Rogier Van der Weyden in Brussels (+1464) etc.), oriental goods, and most noticeably carpets, seem to be almost completely absent, despite the clear contacts and influences that link the painting traditions in the different cities of the Low Countries.

This very dissimilar tradition of representing oriental consumer goods seems to point to a marked difference between, on the one hand, the commercial heart of the Low Countries urban system (Bruges, succeeded by Antwerp) and, on the other, the urban hinterland of industrial and regional administrative and court towns (some of them, like Ghent, even larger than the commercial heart itself). In the former, oriental carpets and other goods were clear identity markers, in the latter they were patently not. The explanation for this significant discrepancy seems obvious. Bruges (and later Antwerp) was a large and cosmopolitan commercial city, where foreign trading nations converged, not least the four important Italian merchant communities, the Venetians, Genoese, Florentines and Luccese (merchants from Milan, Piacenza, Siena and Pisa were also present, though in lesser numbers, and they were not organized in formal merchant guilds). Together with the Catalans, who were also active in Mediterranean trade with the Levant, they must have influenced consumer behaviour and stimulated a taste for the Orient.[15]

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[14] F. Batari, 'The "Memling" carpets', in *Hans Memling: Essays*, ed. D. De Vos (Ghent, 1994), pp. 63–6.

Moreover, Bruges was the foremost centre for luxury crafts in the late medieval Low Countries. An analysis of the Burgundian dukes' shopping activities in relation to luxury commodities has already revealed that, together with Brussels, the Bruges craft guilds delivered most of the high-value items purchased by ducal officers.[16] Hence it seems that Bruges painters and illuminators must have been more sensitive to introducing oriental goods into their works of art. Many of the paintings were indeed commissioned by Italian – mostly although not exclusively Florentine and Luccese – traders and their taste for oriental luxury goods clearly took hold among Bruges elites as well.[17] Although painters outside Bruges also worked for foreign commissioners (Hugo Van der Goes's Portinari triptych at the Uffizi in Florence is the mere tip of the iceberg) and, like their Bruges colleagues, did not hesitate to put many luxury goods and fabrics on display, they only exceptionally adopted the Bruges-style representation of oriental carpets and ceramics.

In Italian cities the tradition of representing oriental objects was clearly matched by the prominent presence of these items in the Renaissance households of the urban and regional elites, and increasingly also among urban middling groups.[18] In the following pages, I would like to ask first, if this was also the case in the Low Countries, and second, whether the difference in pictorial tradition between Bruges, and later Antwerp, and their urban hinterlands reflects a different attitude towards oriental durable consumer goods in the international commercial centres and the other urban centres, large and small.

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[15] P. Stabel, 'Italian merchants and the fairs in the Low Countries (12th–16th centuries)', in *La pratica dello scambio: sistemi di fiere, mercanti e città in Europa(1400–1700)*, ed. P. Lanaro (Venice, 2003), pp. 131–60.

[16] P. Stabel, 'For mutual benefit? Court and city in the Burgundian Low Countries', in *The Court as a Stage: England and the Low Countries in the Later Middle Ages*, ed. S. Gunn and J. Antheun (2006), pp. 101–17.

[17] R. Salvini, *Banchieri fiorentini e pittori di fiandra* (Modena, 1984).

[18] R. A. Goldthwaite, *Wealth and the Demand for Art in Italy, 1300-1600* (Baltimore, Md., 1993); L. Lindow, 'For use and display: selected furnishings and domestic goods in 15th-century Florentine interiors', *Renaissance Studies*, xix (2005), 634–46; Mack, *Bazaar to Piazza*.

The exotic in late medieval material culture in the Low Countries

In the cities of Flanders there were no special tolls or taxes on luxury consumption and there are no traces of any sumptuary legislation (and its implementation) in the Low Countries until the first part of the sixteenth century. Hence systematic quantitative or qualitative data about imports of luxury consumables in the Bruges market are not readily available. This is not necessarily surprising. Bruges was primarily an international market for luxury foodstuffs (oriental spices, Mediterranean fruits and nuts etc.), textiles of all kinds (including Italian and Spanish silks and brocades) and raw materials (expensive fabrics, dyestuff, alum, wool, precious stones etc.), all destined for the urban industries for half finished goods, fashion and luxury in the cities of the Low Countries. Compared to these trade flows, imported manufactured luxury goods must have constituted only a tiny part of the Bruges market.

This lack of sources makes it very difficult to assess the levels of consumption of imported luxury consumer goods, let alone those coming from the Orient. The only way to get an impression is by looking at inventories of movable goods (usually registered after death) and trying to identify those that originated in the eastern Mediterranean and beyond.

The regional elites: a taste for luxury (the Burgundian dukes and their nobles)

The most obvious place to look is the inventories of the court and the (rural or urban) nobility. Status, distinction and political dialogue in this region, where power was shared and negotiated between the prince and the leading cities, required princes and noblemen to invest more than other groups, and perhaps more than elsewhere, in luxury goods.[19] It is not surprising, therefore, that the inventories of high noblemen and princes alike are filled with (imported) luxuries. Moreover, the Burgundian court was widely known to be the most splendid in fifteenth-century Europe. Although they increasingly appear to have preferred specific residential cities – Brussels in Brabant, Bruges and Lille in Flanders, The Hague in Holland – the itinerant dukes had urban palaces all over their different principalities, and they moved from one to the other, leaving a local infrastructure of services and goods, but also taking along with them many of their prestigious possessions. No wonder that these were chosen not only for their splendour and richness, but also for their portability: the ducal household carried along movable goods in the strictest sense. These objects needed to be small and easy to carry. Hence they invested in jewellery, which could also be exchanged quickly for cash and credit, luxury tapestries (locally made in Brussels, Arras and Tournai), clothing of all kinds, small works of art (embroidery, small statues) and books: the library of the dukes was among the most prestigious in Europe.[20]

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[19] *Showing Status: Representations of Social Positions in the Late Middle Ages*, ed. W. P. Blockmans and A. Janse (Turnhout, 1999).

However, neither the household inventories compiled after the death of dukes Philip the Good (+1467) and Charles the Bold (+1477),[21] at the height of Burgundian splendour and power, nor the accounts of the ducal household in the first years of the reign of Charles the Bold (1467–9) mention many oriental goods.[22] The long list of tapestries and jewellery owned by the young Burgundian duke Philip the Good, made in 1420, contains only two knotted carpets ('tapis velu') and two old and worn rugs among an enormous number of woven tapestries, mostly from Arras and Tournai. The origin of these carpets cannot be established.[23] The inventory made by the ducal officers of the movable goods left by Philip the Good to his son Charles probably also contains textiles of oriental origin,[24] but it is very difficult to attribute with any certainty specific fabrics like damasks, camelots and other fabrics ('drap de damas blanc', 'damas noir', 'sandal noir', 'camelot') to particular regions of origin, let alone to say whether they are oriental or Islamic.[25] Many of these fabrics could also be – and probably were – products of European (Italian and Spanish) and even Flemish textile industries: linen damasks, for instance, were manufactured in the region of the Flemish town of Courtrai. Most luxury textiles in the Burgundian inventories were brocaded silks, 'draps d'or', fine linen and heavy woollens, all of which were almost certainly manufactured either in one of the Italian manufacturing cities (Venice, Florence, Lucca) or by the textile entrepreneurs of the Low Countries themselves (Ghent, Brussels, Lille etc.). Among the weaponry of the ducal household, three richly decorated Turkish knives appeared ('cousteau de Turquie, la ghaine garnie dargent doree et cloee tout au long'), but these constituted only a tiny part of the ducal armoury, as did two large Turkish purses ('gibesières de Turcquie').[26]

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[20] H. Van der Velden, *The Donor's Image: Gerard Loyet and the Votive Portraits of Charles the Bold* (Turnhout, 2000).

[21] L. de Laborde, *Les ducs de Bourgogne: études sur les lettres, les arts et l'industrie pendant le 15e siècle et plus particulièrement dans les Pays-Bas et le Duché de Bourgogne* (4 vols., Paris, 1849–52).

[22] A. Greve and E. Lebailly, *Comptes de l'argentier de Charles le Téméraire, duc de Bourgogne. Le registre B 2068 des archives départementales du nord*, i: *année 1468* (Paris, 2001); and A. Greve and E. Lebailly, *Comptes de l'argentier de Charles le Téméraire, duc de Bourgogne. Le registre CC 1924 des archives générales du royaume, Bruxelles*, ii: *année 1469* (Paris, 2002).

[23] Laborde, *Les ducs de Bourgogne*, ii. 235–78, and in particular pp. 274–5: 'ung grant tapiz velu sur champ vert a feuilles de vignes en croix et sur la bordure cussons a champs vermeilz ayant chacun ung chasteau blanc a trois tours' and 'ung tapiz rez, fait de petiz poins quarrez bleuz et rouges' and 'deux petites pieces de vielz tapis, tous pourriz et ne valent que pour faire echarpillieres'.

[24] Laborde, *Les ducs de Bourgogne*, ii. 201–2.

[25] Laborde, *Les ducs de Bourgogne*, ii. 21, 27, 102–3.

One can assume, therefore, that the Burgundians' taste for splendour was met by massive purchases of expensive textiles (woollen cloth, velvets, brocaded silks, silk and linen damasks etc.) from the Italian and Flemish/Brabantine urban textile industries; of fashionable clothing and accessories (purses, belts, hats etc.) manufactured by specialist tailors and other manufacturers, principally in Bruges, Brussels and Lille; and of armoury, manufactured both in Italian cities like Milan and in Low Countries cities like Valenciennes, Mons, Liège, Bruges etc.[27] But the dukes also owned a lot of art and highly expensive jewellery. Many of the precious stones and gems probably had oriental origins, but one can safely assume that the jewellery itself was manufactured by southern or north-west European goldsmiths. The ducal jewels were often used as collateral for loans from Italian and Flemish financiers, to meet urgent requirements for money and liquidity problems of all kinds. The dukes also took their treasuries along with them.[28]

Investment in arts and 'culture', like investment in clothing and armoury, needed to fulfil political and ideological functions. Hence the dukes invested in large-scale libraries, containing illuminated manuscripts of classical and knightly tales and historiographical works describing the legitimacy of ducal policy, but also in cycles of expensive tapestries (usually commissioned from tapestry weavers in Brussels, Arras and Tournai), in works of embroidery and, albeit on a very limited scale, in panel paintings. The latter seem to have been more popular with Burgundian state-officials and those present in the Burgundian councils, such as chancellor Nicholas Rolin, councillor Pieter Bladelin and financier Tommaso Portinari. Despite the complexities, and the enormous amount of investment in these types of artefacts, it is striking that, unlike their colleagues in Italian cities and principalities, no attempts were made to acquire oriental consumables in a more or less systematic way. The demand for ostentatious luxury could clearly be met with goods from the Low Countries themselves, supplemented with Italian textiles and armoury.

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[26] Laborde, *Les ducs de Bourgogne*, ii. 138, 140.

[27] Stabel, 'For mutual benefit', pp. 115–17.

[28] J. Haemers and P. Stabel, 'From Bruges to Antwerp: international commercial firms and government's credit in the late 15th and early 16th century', in *Banca, credito y capital: la monarquia hispanica y los antiguos Paises Bajos (1505–1700)*, ed. C. Sanz Ayan and B. Garcia Garcia (Madrid, 2006), pp. 20–38.

This does not mean that rich oriental textiles and other consumables were completely absent from the inventories and household accounts of the late medieval princes in the Low Countries. Jacqueline of Bavaria, countess of Holland and Hainaut, and formidable political opponent of Duke Philip the Good, before he incorporated both Jacqueline's counties in his dominion, had various oriental carpets in her urban palace of Ghent. When the inventory was made in 1425, the Burgundian officials counted eight Turkish carpets.[29] But it was particularly from the early sixteenth century onwards that the by now Habsburg princes copied the interest of their Italian colleagues in oriental goods. In 1499 Margaret of Austria, sister of Duke Philip the Fair, bought carpets on the markets of Zaragoza and Medina del Campo, and among the movable goods in her inventory of 1524–30 there were no fewer than twelve large and small oriental, probably Turkish, carpets. In 1503 Pieter Van Aelst, one of the most important tapestry entrepreneurs in Brussels, delivered five Turkish carpets ('tapis veluz de Turcquie') to Duke Philip the Fair.[30]

The high Burgundian nobility are renowned for copying the duke's expenditure on material culture. The substantial inventory of 1528 itemizing the movable wealth left behind by Philip of Cleves, duke of Ravesteyn, one of the most prestigious noblemen in the Burgundian and early Habsburg Low Countries, at his castle in Wijnendale (Torhout) describes in incredible detail the many earthly possessions of the duke.[31] Yet, among the furniture, tapestries, paintings, clothing and jewellery no specific mention is made of oriental goods. Certainly, among the taffetas, brocaded silks and weapons, there were probably some items of non-European origin. The inventory mentions eight 'tapis veluz', knotted floor or table carpets probably stemming from the Orient, but it does not seem to have been worth noting their origin separately, as if they did not carry special meaning or have any special value. They are part of a whole series of table coverings, most of them woven tapestries from Flanders: if the origin is mentioned, it is 'ouvraige de Gand'. The goods that carry a place of origin all come from either Italy (fashion, fabrics and weapons) or Spain (fabrics and leather).

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[29] E. Duverger, 'Over oosterse en westerse vloer- en tafeltapijten in Vlaanderen', in *Brugge en de tapijtkunst*, ed. B. Delmarcel and E. Duverger (Bruges, 1987), pp. 151–2.

[30] Duverger, 'Over oosterse en westerse', pp. 152–3.

[31] G. Denhaene, 'Les collections de Philippe de Clèves, le goût pour le nu et la renaissance aux Pays-Bas', *Bulletin de l'Institut Historique Belge de Rome*, xlv (1975), 309–42; and E. Olivier, 'Philippe de Clèves, le goût et les particularismes artistiques d'un noble bourguignon à travers le Recueil des mandements, d'inventaires et de pièces diverses concernant la succession de Philippe de Clèves', in *Entre la ville, la noblesse et l'état: Philippe de Clèves (1456–1528), homme politique et bibliophile*, ed. J. Haemers, H. Wijsman and C. Van Hoorebeeck (Turnhout, 2007), pp. 143–59.

There were, however, exceptions – individuals with a greater interest in oriental things. In the Burgundian sphere, some noblemen and princes were undoubtedly proud owners of manufactured goods from the Orient. The inventory of the material belongings of Philip of Burgundy, bishop of Utrecht and illegitimate son of Duke Philip the Good, dating from 1529 and so roughly contemporary with the inventory of Philip of Cleves, mentions a substantial collection of Turkish weaponry,[32] exotic fabrics (silks from Cyprus)[33] and also carpets, which appear in the living quarters of the bishop and his guests and collaborators at the castle of Duurstede near Utrecht. Although their origins were not specified, they were quite distinct from the Flemish or Brabantine tapestries, and, therefore, it is likely that they were either woven or long- or short-pile oriental rugs. Despite its Burgundian material culture, with lots of jewellery and tapestries, the Duurstede inventory already contains, like so many other noble and princely inventories of the first half of the sixteenth century, the first colonial commodities (an adorned coconut: 'nootschulp binnen verchiert').[34]

Flemish bourgeois taste, cosmopolitan taste?

The Burgundian nobility's relatively late interest in oriental products is shared by the urban bourgeoisie of the large cities of the Low Countries. Oriental carpets only start to appear regularly in the sixteenth century. In 1517, the humanist and politician Hieronymus Van Busleyden owned a Turkish carpet in his lavish Mechelen residence, and Ghent inventories increasingly mention oriental rugs in the same period.[35] However, Carolien De Staelen, who studied a wide range of sixteenth-century Antwerp inventories, does not mention any oriental commodities in this, according to her findings, very advanced market.[36]

Despite their increasing popularity in the sixteenth century, numbers of oriental commodities remain extremely low, in sharp contrast to what happened in Italian cities. A century earlier, oriental goods seem to be almost completely absent. Our knowledge of the material culture of fifteenth-century urban households is still very limited. The urban patriciate in Flemish cities were renowned for their material display. Material culture and ostentatious consumption were an integral part of class distinction, but also of political dialogue between the prince and the urban elites, and in the cities themselves between the various social bodies (patriciate, guilds etc.).[37] On entering the city of Bruges in 1301, after the French invasion, Queen Johanna, wife to Philip IV the Fair, famously remarked that she was not the only queen, but that all the women of the Bruges patriciate looked like queens, indicating that the reputation was not unwarranted. Yet, there are very few indications that the Bruges bourgeoisie invested in exotic goods. Despite the fact that they were as keen as Italians to be represented in a setting defined by luxury and oriental objects, there are even fewer indications than for the nobility that such objects were part of their real material surroundings. A sample of around 100 inventories from Bruges between 1436 and 1440, mostly from the lower urban middle classes (skilled artisans and guildsmen etc.), does not contain any oriental goods. The luxury items were expensive (woollen) clothing and fabrics, jewellery, silverware, ornamented and figured sitting cushions (woven or embroidered), and the occasional (religious) painting. Silks, the use of which was limited to clothing accessories, were still very rare in these social groups, while brocaded fabrics and wall hangings, like the famous regionally manufactured tapestries, were completely absent.

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[32] 'Turcx messecheye mit een blau zijden riem' and 'twee semiterren d'een mit een schey van zwart fluweel ende d'ander van leer, beyde tot sommigen plaetsen mit silver beslagen ende vergult' (fo. 7), 'een lemmer van een Turcx mes' (fo. 9) and 'een stalen hoet, Turcxgewijs boven scarp' (fo. 29).

[33] 'Een rocxken van Chipers satijn gevoedert mit witte maerters', 'een nachtstabbaert van Chipers satijn' (fo. 9).

[34] J. Sterk, *Philips van Bourgondië 1465–1524 als protagonist van de renaissance; zijn leven en maecenaat* (Zutphen, 1980).

[35] Duverger, 'Over oosterse en westerse', p. 153.

[36] C. De Staelen, *Spulletjes en hun betekenis in een commerciële metropool. Antwerpenaren en hun materiële cultuur in de zestiende eeuw* (unpublished University of Antwerp PhD thesis, 2006–7).

Patterns of identity and possession

Unlike the Italian princes and urban elites, it seems that in the Low Countries, and in Bruges in particular, oriental manufactured goods were not in high demand and, therefore, were not prominent in even the richest households. They only appear occasionally, and in these cases their owners are exceptions in urban society, even among noblemen. When such items do appear, they are not treated any differently from other commodities and they do not seem to be exceptionally valuable, either in real or in sentimental terms. This finding strongly contradicts earlier assessments by Erik Duverger that Low Countries consumers were very keen on acquiring and owning, for example, Turkish carpets, oriental fabrics and Islamic ceramics. Even recently, art historians have, in accepting these statements, all too readily endorsed the older hypotheses that Low Countries craftsmen had tried, in much the same way as their Italian counterparts, to manufacture 'oriental-looking' consumer goods, like carpets with oriental designs, combining the widespread production of woven tapestries with oriental carpet-making. Import substitution was, from the fifteenth century onwards, aimed primarily at Italian goods.[38]

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[37] P. Arnade, *Realms of Ritual: Burgundian Ceremony and Civic Life in Late Medieval Ghent* (Ithaca, NY, 1996).

If import substitution on a grand scale took place in the urban luxury industries of the Low Countries, this seems to have happened relatively late, in the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and was more prominent in the rising economic metropolis of Antwerp than in the Bruges market, where traditional (Flemish) textiles and fashions were still a thriving business. Besides textiles, Flemish fashion objects (hats, sleeves, purses, gloves etc.) found their way to consumers all over Europe, even in the heart of Goldthwaite's new consumer culture in the Italian cities, as the tax lists of fifteenth-century Rome clearly demonstrate.[39] These industries were eager to use oriental raw materials (dyes), and oriental foods (spices, fruit, etc.) were widely sought after in elite circles, but the markets for oriental consumer durable goods were neither regular, nor quantitatively important.

This does not mean that town-dwellers lacked the taste for the exotic. The fact that in the early sixteenth century oriental goods were in increasing demand, and that objects from the newly discovered Americas were rapidly distributed among both regional and urban elites, points to consumers in the cities of the Low Countries being not insensitive to such exotic goods. In the high middle ages, elites had also been keen buyers of exotic (and in this case clearly oriental) goods. The late middle ages, therefore, can be considered as an important exception, which still needs to be explained.

Although such explanation requires further research into patterns of consumption and an investigation of the changed perception of status and distinction, it is obvious that one of the key elements must be the enormous growth and flexibility of the late medieval luxury industries in both Italy and the Low Countries. It is, therefore, not durable consumer goods, but raw materials from the Orient that were in high demand among Italian and Flemish entrepreneurs. The concentration of capital, the expertise to a large degree facilitated by guild-organized manufacturing capabilities, and the ready availability of market information in these key trading centres of late medieval Europe, allowed for a massive deployment of highly specialized luxury and fashion industries, which were able to meet the increasing demand generated in turn by both changing economic and social-political developments. In the same way that oriental goods were able to supply the demand for exotic goods among the wealthy Italian consumers of the *quattrocento*, the Italian production of luxury silks, velvets, brocades and other fabrics could meet the desire for distinction among consumers in the north.[40] This was not, however, a one-sided trade, as is often stated: at the same time, Low Countries fashion, linens and light woollens conquered Italian markets. It is only from the sixteenth century onwards that the taste for durable oriental commodities seems to have taken root in the north, alongside the growing interest in products from the New World. Hence oriental goods were reintroduced into north-west Europe after a break of almost two centuries.

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[38] For the broader context, see H. Van der Wee, 'Industrial dynamics and the process of urbanization and de-urbanization in the Low Countries from the late middle ages to the 18th century', in *The Rise and Decline of Urban Industries in Italy and the Low Countries (Late Middle Ages–Early Modern Times)*, ed. H. Van der Wee (Leuven, 1988), pp. 307–81.

[39] A. Esch, 'Roman customs registers 1470–80: items of interest to historians of art and material culture', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, lviii (1995), 72–87.

Memling's and Van Eyck's carpets were, therefore, images of another reality: a transfer of distinction through oriental objects by means of painting, a reflection of the Italian taste for the Orient. As with the introduction of figured linen damasks in Kortrijk, this constitutes one more proof of the flexibility and product innovation of the Flemish luxury industries. These images had to appeal to (Italian) customers, used to the presence of such objects in their hometowns, and were quickly taken over by local elites, who met regularly and shared a common culture in the commercial metropolis of Bruges. Moreover, the use of Islamic objects must also have carried an ideological meaning. In the Burgundian Low Countries, this shift in consumer taste in court, noble and bourgeois households can at particular times be linked to specific political circumstances, for instance when the idea of a crusade was used in Burgundian political ideology at the beginning (the expedition of Nicopolis and its aftermath) and in the middle of the fifteenth century (the Banquet of the Pheasant). Hence, the fact that the Virgin is usually presented in this period as being seated on a platform covered by an Anatolian carpet does not necessarily solely indicate particular attitudes towards goods as signifiers of distinction and prestige; it can also constitute a political and ideological image of a triumphant Christendom that is superior to Islam. The use of similar oriental and exotic literary themes in the same period seems to confirm such an interpretation.[41]

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[40] M. Ruvoldt, 'Sacred to secular, east to west: the Renaissance study and strategies of display', *Renaissance Studies*, xx (2006), 640–57.

[41] J. Paviot, *Les ducs de Bourgogne, la croisade et l'Orient, fin XIVème–XVème siècles* (Paris, 2004).

6. Hartlib's world

Rob Iliffe

Early modern London was the hub of English commerce, government, culture and legal practice. A mere outpost in terms of highly skilled production in the mid sixteenth century, by 1750 it had become a major centre of high quality manufacture. This transformation of the English capital into a major centre of innovation was caused by a number of factors. Prime among these was the availability of relatively high wages, which gave rise to continuous internal immigration from the rest of England and Scotland, and a generally tolerant attitude to protestant immigrants arriving from Europe. For many centuries highly skilled immigrants had been encouraged to work in courts, mines, arsenals and the Mint, and in the seventeenth century they were increasingly dominant in trades such as glassmaking, goldsmithing, interior decorating and textiles. No longer reliant on imported products, or merely capable of imitating the production of foreign goods, London boasted both foreign and native craftsmen who were the best at their trade in the known world. This transformation took place in a city that was the most populous in Europe by 1700.[1]

By the middle of the seventeenth century greater numbers of artisans and inventors than ever before were applying for patents, while others were attempting to expand their business into new markets by offering an increasingly diverse range of products for sale. Attitudes to technical innovation were influenced by a number of concerns. Initially patents were given to courtiers for monopolies in areas such as mining or glassmaking, but with the growth of anti-monopolistic sentiment in the early seventeenth century this practice became deeply unpopular. Patents for genuinely new devices or techniques were encouraged from the 1620s, but a number of these were resisted by guilds. A statute of Edward VI made it unlawful to make men idle unnecessarily, and there was a moral economy of the workplace that assumed that labour-saving devices increased unemployment. Nevertheless, a wide range of contemporary evidence indicates that attempts to thwart the encouragement and production of innovations were becoming unsuccessful by the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries.[2]

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[1] I was part of the Centre for Metropolitan History 'Skilled workforce' project, directed by Derek Keene and funded by the Renaissance Trust, between 1992 and 1995. I would like to thank Derek for the excellent advice and support he gave the group during its existence. For the influx of skilled foreigners, see among others L. Luu, *Immigrants and the Industries of London, 1500–1700* (Aldershot, 2007).

Information about the practices and lives of skilled craftsmen in early modern London is extremely hard to come by. Occasionally, as is the case with elite craftsmen, one can uncover a great deal about their work from trade cards, advertisements or, in rare cases, from objects themselves. Apart from brief references in diaries or fleeting remarks in correspondence, however, it is virtually impossible to determine anything about the identities of ordinary artisans who were concerned with innovating on either a large or a small scale. Nevertheless, one remarkable source for metropolitan inventive activity in the period 1635–60 provides a unique glimpse into the many overlapping worlds of both elite and ordinary technical innovators. This is the diary, or 'Ephemerides', of the radical protestant Samuel Hartlib, who lived in London for over three decades until his death in 1662. Although he started off as the main organizer of religious and political correspondence for a pan-European protestant network, he became the primary promoter of educational, technical and agricultural improvement in England. Along with a large number of mainly puritan and parliamentarian individuals, Hartlib argued for over two decades that the state should put technical innovation at the centre of efforts to realize the project of reform offered by Francis Bacon in his *De Augmentis Scientarum* of 1623, and his *New Atlantis* of 1626.[3]

The Hartlibian programme reached its zenith in the late 1640s and early 1650s, gradually petering out by the time of the Restoration. Nevertheless, many of the individuals and networks he cultivated became the cornerstones of the Royal Society of London, which was founded in November 1660. In the rest of this chapter I treat Hartlib's journal as a source for understanding his central place in a culture that was obsessed with technical innovation. The document itself combines extensive information about foreign protestants coming to meet Hartlib with an astonishingly rich description of inventive activity in the capital, carried out either by elite virtuosi or humble artisans. It illuminates the personal and intellectual connections between numerous inventors in the capital, and reveals that many of these individuals were themselves at the centre of an extensive network of contacts.

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[2] For patents, see C. Macleod, *Inventing the Industrial Revolution: the English Patent System, 1660–1800* (Cambridge, 1988), pp. 11–28, 113–16, 159–65, 207–10; and J. R. Kellett, 'The breakdown of gild and corporation control over the handicraft and retail trade in London', *Economic History Review*, 2nd ser., x (1958), 381–94.

[3] The general interests and achievements of the Hartlib programme are described extensively in Charles Webster's foundational *The Great Instauration: Science, Medicine and Reform, 1626–60* (1975), and in essays collected in *Samuel Hartlib and the Universal Reformation*, ed. M. Greengrass, M. Leslie and T. Raylor (Cambridge, 1994). The research for this chapter was made possible by the existence of the digital 'Hartlib papers' project; citations follow its expansion of contracted words.

The great reformation

Hartlib was born at Elbing (now Elblag in Poland) around 1600 and came to England in the early 1620s, moving to London in 1628 after briefly returning to his home town. At Elbing he had met the minister John Dury, and together they discussed schemes for reforming education and plans to bring together protestants under one church. Hartlib's attempt in 1630 to found a private academy in Chichester failed and he gradually assumed a role in which he acted as an 'intelligencer', a co-ordinator of information and correspondence from Dury and from other radical protestants across Europe. Drawing inspiration from scriptural prophecy, Hartlib and others sensed that the time was fast approaching when Antichrist would be conquered, knowledge would expand and a new Christian world could be created on Earth. Central to this project was pedagogical reform, and Hartlib made contact with the Czech educational theorist Jan Amos Comenius in the early 1630s. Comenius's schemes for a pansophic transformation of learning were central to Hartlib's programme and he attempted to bring Comenius across to London on a number of occasions.[4]

Although Hartlib retained his role as a political and religious intelligencer, utilitarian and technical notes became the most pervasive features of the journal in the early 1640s. From 1646, he attempted to get state funding to support fertile inventors and the exchange of useful information by means of an 'office of address'. A distant, material ancestor of many modern online enterprises, this was, among other things, a physical place where people could deposit, acquire and exchange information of all kinds. It was intended to assume numerous roles that were being performed by private institutions, including the provision of housing and employment, information about shipping times and the postal service, and the management of scientific and technical innovation. Hartlib never received the financial support he requested, but he was by no means neglected by his parliamentarian and puritan friends. In any case, with support from some of these individuals, and a small amount of private wealth, he was able to conduct his intelligencing activities on an informal basis. The most talented inventors and experimenters of the day came to his residences in Duke's Place and Angel Court, and they gave him firsthand information about the work of the most ingenious artisans, chemists, natural philosophers and engineers in Britain and Europe.[5]

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[4] Hartlib's relations with Dury and Comenius are detailed in G. H. Turnbull, *Hartlib, Dury and Comenius: Gleanings from Hartlib's Papers* (Liverpool, 1947).

The diary was itself an experiment in ordering and recording information. Side references in the margin arranged the data under terms that ranged from specific names and inventions to more general headings such as 'Didactica gymnastica', 'Inventiones experimenta' and 'Mechanica mathematica'. In a typical act of self-effacement Hartlib only ever referred to himself as 'Albureth' and the same name consequently occurred as a heading. Only rarely did he offer his own opinion on a given issue, but since he usually recorded the name of his source of information, the document is also a record of his personal interactions with hundreds of inventors and experimenters who resided in or visited the capital. At various places in the journal Hartlib reminded himself systematically to record the names and addresses of everyone whose work might be of use to his programme. However, despite the practical aims of the Ephemerides it is not clear how he actually used the document. There is little explicit cross-referencing to earlier (or later) items that may have involved the same person or subject, and on a number of occasions individuals are named for a second or third time, as if for the first. If the system relied on or was supposed to enhance the author's faculty of memory, then it failed.[6]

The individuals who appear in the Ephemerides as informants or objects constitute a heterogeneous group consisting of puritan or parliamentarian patrons, inventors, artisans, alchemists, gentlewomen and learned virtuosi. Theodore Haak, John Dury, Comenius, Joachim Hübner and John Pell were important contacts in the 1630s, as was the inventor-author Gabriel Plattes. In the following decade the Kent landowner Cheney Culpeper and the physician, projector and inventor Benjamin Worsley were core members of Hartlib's group, to be joined in the later 1640s by William Petty, Cressy Dymock and Robert Boyle. Others, such as Dury's uncle David Ramsay and Hartlib's patron William Brereton were highly significant conduits of information. By the 1650s a new group of individuals regularly appeared in Hartlib's journal, including the remarkable inventor and apocalyptic theorist Francis Potter, the 'very Metallical' projector and inventor John Lanyon, Boyle's sister Katherine Jones (Lady Ranelagh), the chemist Robert

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[5] For the shifting political and religious contexts in London during the 1640s, see K. Lindley, *Popular Politics and Religion in Civil War London* (Aldershot 1997). The fate of the office of address is assessed in Webster, *Great Instauration*, pp. 67–76.

[6] See, in general, M. Greengrass, 'An "intelligencer's workshop": Samuel Hartlib's Ephemerides', *Studia Comeniana et Historica*, xxvi (1996), 48–62.

Child, the instrument-makers Ralph Greatorex and Francis Smethwick, and Hartlib's son-in-law, the Paracelsian chemist Frederic Clodius. Some inventors, like the historian and politician John Rushworth, the naturalist-painter Alexander Marshal and the musician Davis Mell, were better known in other areas. Others, like the joiner William Martindale or Hartlib's barber (simply called 'Owen'), are known only through Hartlib's journal. In many cases, the Ephemerides offers an extraordinary window into the extensive interests and skills of a large number of men and women who came from every conceivable walk of life.[7]

The journal shows that in Hartlib's world the free flow of natural knowledge and technical information knew no international boundaries, and that movement between countries was routine for many members of his circle. Hartlib was constantly kept in touch by correspondents, such as the physician Johann Moriaen, with the movements and achievements of the most highly skilled artisans, chemists and inventors in Europe, and many European chemists, scholars and diplomats came to stay with him in London. A central figure in the Ephemerides was the Paracelsian physician-chemist Johan Brun (whom Hartlib knew as Unmussig), who from 1648 regaled Hartlib with a bewildering torrent of information on technical and alchemical developments in Europe. A rise in religious and political tensions in the mid 1650s heralded the appearance of a number of foreign visitors such as Frederick Kretschmar, Jean Breckling and Constantinus Schaum, many of whom were diplomats acting on behalf of distressed protestant groups in Europe. Like Brun, these people had extensive German contacts.[8]

By the middle of the 1630s Hartlib was consolidating his position as a co-ordinator of correspondence that came overwhelmingly from radical protestants in Britain and Europe. In a letter of 1635 to an unknown recipient Dury stated that Hartlib had 'undertaken a spirituall agency' and was 'an Intelligencer of spirituall endeavours'. However, the Ephemerides shows that Hartlib was already interested in promoting invention, and there was a clear preference for recording technical inventions rather than advances in natural philosophy. Pell was a useful informant, as was Johann Christoph de Berg, who was in close contact with Francis Kynaston, the director of the Covent Garden-based Musaeum Minervae. In the same year Hartlib listed as a 'desideratum' making publicly available a catalogue of all inventions lodged with the broad seal office where patents were deposited. With the public good always in mind, Hartlib noted that it should be recorded whether specific inventions had succeeded or failed, and a list of such endeavours would allow individuals to 'frame a Collegiat Correspondency amongst divers Projectors to helpe the Inconveniences, to improove and perfect that which is good and imperfect'. Later in the decade Hartlib's interactions with Hübner, Pell and Gabriel Plattes were central to his thinking about how best to support and record inventive activity.[9]

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[7] Lanyon is thus described in University of Sheffield, Hartlib Papers (hereafter HP), 28/2/15A; see also M. Jenner, '"Another *Epocha*": Hartlib, John Lanyon and the improvement of London in the 1650s', in Greengrass, Leslie and Raylor, *Samuel Hartlib*, pp. 243–56. From 1646 Worsley and Boyle were key members of the loose grouping known as the 'Invisible College' (see Webster, *Great Instauration*, pp. 59–67).

[8] See Webster, *Great Instauration*, pp. 301–4; J. Young, *Faith, Medical Alchemy and Natural Philosophy: Johann Moriaen, Reformed Intelligencer, and the Hartlib Circle* (Aldershot, 1998).

A number of totemic inventions remained perennial desiderata throughout the Ephemerides. Key among these were innovations in various optical devices. Hartlib (whose eyesight diminished in the early 1650s) noted any improvement within the field as well as the names, addresses and achievements of the most expert craftsmen in Britain and Europe. Grinding a hyperbolical (that is, non-spherical) lens, whose benefits Descartes had discussed in his *Dioptrique* of 1637, was a constant source of interest for natural philosophers who wished to improve microscopes and telescopes and Hartlib recorded numerous efforts to achieve this. The journal also recorded related inventions associated with improving street lighting; creating a powerful burning lens for use in laboratories or for destroying ships at a distance; producing amazing displays in the domain of natural magic; and enhancing vision. References to engines of various sorts were ubiquitous, especially in connection with agricultural improvements and transport. Serious work was carried out in these areas at various locales around London, especially at Vauxhall which remained a key site for inventive activity in both royalist and republican regimes. More nebulously, the promise of a 'self-moving' or perpetual motion machine tantalized Hartlib throughout the period. He was told on various occasions that a working version had been successfully produced, but others, like the Wadham College natural philosopher John Wilkins, were more sceptical about the entire notion.[10]

Coupled with the reformation of learning was the need to create a proper system for promoting, supporting and recording invention. Hartlib noted that England was an ideal place for promoting technical progress and by 1640 invention was at the heart of his programme: 'When a New Principle or Invention comes into the world this makes a marvellous alteration in a number of particulars'. Plattes reminded Hartlib that in practice it was very hard to introduce good inventions, but similar warnings, and numerous disappointments, never dampened his enthusiasm for devices such as a perpetual motion machine. Hartlib also discussed with Hübner the need to record the arts of various trades. Hübner was concerned that there was no accepted method for excerpting and listing information from large sources of material and lamented the fact that no one had recorded the inventions of the master engineer Caspar Kalthoff, then working for the earl of Worcester at Vauxhall.[11]

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[9] HP, 3/4/39A–B (see also HP, 6/4/1A–10B, esp. 7B–8A); 29/3/56A; 29/3/58A. Dury discussed Hartlib's role in various letters from 1636 at HP, 6/4/1A–10B (esp. 7B–8A).

[10] See John Wilkins, *Mathematical Magick, or the Wonders that may be performed by Mechanicall Geometry* (1648), pp. 224–95. The Vauxhall site is extensively discussed in A. F. C. Wallace, *The Social Contexts of Innovation* (Princeton, NJ, 1982), pp. 21–47.

The centre of attention

Hartlib was based in two major dwellings over the period covered by his Ephemerides; initially Duke's Place, where he had moved in early 1631, and from 1650, in Charing Cross, 'over against Angel Court'. In 1658, when his health and fortunes were ailing, he moved to Axe-yard, Westminster, to the house of his son, also Samuel, who was a clerk to Worsley. Duke's Place became a centre for international correspondence and also for visits from a wide variety of protestant visitors and exiles. Many of these individuals lodged for long periods of time with Hartlib, who in return received valuable information about European artisans and inventors. Hübner stayed for an extended period in the late 1630s, as did Pell, while Clodius – who married Hartlib's daughter – remained with him permanently from 1654.[12]

Hartlib recorded in 1641 that his initial meeting with Cheney Culpeper took place at a physician's house in Shoe Lane, and in December 1650 he noted that he had met the American chemist George Starkey at the Royal Exchange, presumably in the company of Robert Child. For the most part, however, his interactions with others took place at his house. The first visit recorded in the Ephemerides occurred in May 1648, when Cressy Dymock came to Duke's Place with the Scottish chemist William Hamilton. Dymock claimed that he had a marvellous military invention, and made out a case for being given some land in Yorkshire on which to perform some experiments. Dymock visited Hartlib in October 1649 and the latter remarked that he 'came to mee joyfully with the ful confirmation of his Invention for a P[erpetuus] M[otus] or of Time and Strenght [*sic*], so that it is now out of all doubt'. The mechanism underlying this, involving the use of wind, was revealed to Hartlib, although its description in the Ephemerides is just as obscure as Dymock's account of his 'engines of motion' that was published two years later. Although he impressed Hartlib and one or two others, Dymock had only sporadic success convincing sponsors that he really could do what he claimed.[13]

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[11] See HP, 31/3/51B; 30/4/46B and 30/4/30B; 30/4/47A–B and 30/4/50B.

[12] For Pell's contacts with Hartlib during this period, see *John Pell (1611–85) and his Correspondence with Sir Charles Cavendish: the Mental World of an Early Modern Mathematician*, ed. N. Malcolm and J. Stedall (Oxford, 2005), pp. 61–81.

Just over a year later Hartlib was visited by a man who later revealed himself as George Snell, a one-time fellow of St. John's College, Cambridge who had been ejected for some allegedly unparliamentary comments made in a sermon. Snell, who had recently published a Hartlibian book on methods for teaching useful knowledge, was now practising as a goldsmith and struck Hartlib as a 'very pious real and universally didactical man'. He noted that Snell would be the conduit for any letters he might send to his brother, a Dr. Adeling, who was a watchmaker based (presumably in the same house) in Lombard Street. Adeling was initially mentioned in the context of his invention of a new kind of printer's ink but a short while later, probably on information gleaned from Boyle, the puritan Hartlib recorded that he was a man 'malæ famæ [who] hath gathered together a number of all manner of Natural Optical Mechanical Rarities'. Adeling's collection included an automaton that could dress itself and present 'obscene representations to women': the practical Hartlib indexed the latter entry under 'Encyclop*ædia* sensualium'.[14]

Throughout his more than three decades in England, Hartlib was a magnet for foreign visitors. In the 1630s and early 1640s he hosted a number of religious refugees, as well as inventors such as Berg, although many of these are not recorded in the surviving Ephemerides. From early in 1648 the incidence of foreign visitors noted in the journal increases rapidly. In May he wrote in the usual style that Martin Grundman had come to his house, and the following January he took the trouble to record that Grundman had left. The Helmontian chemist Johann Brun turned up on Hartlib's doorstep with one of Alsted's sons on 10 June 1648 and immediately expounded on Van Helmont and the immense potential of the furnaces recently popularized by Johann Glauber. On his peregrinations across Europe Brun had worked intensively on the Philosophers' Stone and had gleaned a vast array of chemical and medical information. Over the following months he regaled Hartlib with explanations of how to extract yellowness from diamonds, cure lameness, paint horses by hanging tapestries in their stables and melt butter to purify it. He spoke about the wonderful qualities of pure rainwater, how to cure stinking breath (which he had learned from German hangmen), and how to draw Persian gold or gold wire.[15]

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[13] HP, 30/4/76A; 31/22/5A; 28/1/31A; see also C. Dymock, *The Invention of Engines of Motion lately brought to perfection. Whereby may be dispatched any work now done in England or elsewhere, (especially works that require strength and swiftness) either by Wind, Water, Cattel or Men* (1651).

[14] HP, 28/1/23B–25A (for Snell); 28/1/24B and 31A (for Adeling, compare with HP, 8/31/9A–10B). Snell's 1649 book was *The right teaching of useful knowledge, to fit scholars for som honest profession shewing so much skil as any man needeth (that is not a teacher) in all knowledges*; he was the archdeacon of Chester until his death in 1655.

Some individuals were star turns. William Petty, who came to see Hartlib in July 1649, was recommended to Hartlib by Culpeper at the start of 1647 and took over the central role as his technical consultant when Worsley went to the Netherlands later that year. Spanning technical inventions, practical and theoretical optics, institutional reform, chemistry and mechanics, Petty's interests were as varied as anyone in Hartlib's orbit and this fact alone endeared him to the intelligencer. More specifically, he shared Hartlib's enthusiasm for Bacon and the experimental philosophy, and agreed that inventors should be motivated by the benefits that their work might bring to the commonwealth, in contrast with the self-interested attitudes of inventors such as Sir Thomas Blount and William Wheeler. Petty also held that inventiveness was the best solution to improving the lot of the poor, and it would be a key to England becoming the major centre for commerce and manufacture.[16]

Christopher Wren had been marked out by Hartlib as an outstanding talent in 1650, but thereafter disappeared from the journal until he visited Angel Court at the start of March 1653. Before Wren arrived Hartlib heard that he spent a great deal of time with tradesmen and helped them to improve their various crafts. At the meeting itself Wren disabused Hartlib of his notion that the former had invented a new way of improving wagons, but he still left Hartlib with a highly favourable impression. With Petty's credit as an inventor wearing thin among the Hartlibians, Wren briefly became the new focus of attention, but there were many other virtuosi who were equally broad in their interests and talents. Hartlib had heard from the chemist Thomas Henshaw in 1650 that his friend John Evelyn had expertise in chemistry and invention and he was informed by Greatorex in 1653 that Evelyn was interested in promoting a history of trades. Anxious to see Hartlib's beehive, Evelyn was 'brought' to Angel Court on 1 December 1655. After his visit Hartlib recorded that Evelyn was a great lover of husbandry, possessed the recipe for a special black colour, and was a connoisseur of perfumes. He added that Evelyn knew Blount and would give all his collections to someone who would write a history of the mechanical arts.[17]

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[15] HP, 31/22/5A; 28/1/3A; 31/22/9A, 12B, 16A–B, 17A–B, 18B, 19A–B, 20A, 34A. See also Webster, *Great Instauration*, pp. 78, 302.

[16] HP, 28/1/14B, 28/1/24B and 63/12A–B. See T. McCormick, *William Petty and the Ambitions of Political Arithmetic* (Oxford, 2009), pp. 40–83.

[17] Wren's visit is recorded at HP, 28/2/54A; compare with 28/2/53B. For Evelyn's visit, see HP, 29/5/54A–B; for earlier remarks from 1653 on his interests, see 28/2/59A, 66B and 71A.

Long before Hartlib met him in May 1654, Alexander Marshal, the merchant and gifted painter of flowers and insects, had become a highly significant figure in his network. Some years earlier Hartlib had heard about Marshal's extraordinary prowess in making 'pictuaries' from Robert Child and Christopher Merrick, who had described Marshal in 1639 as 'a very ingenious man'. In 1650 Hartlib heard from Child about 'a new Man of Experiments and Art one Marshall dwelling at Ham to bee enquired after at a Barbers-shop neere Temple barre. Hee hath a whole Chamber of Insects which make a glorious representation. Hee is also very skilful in drawing painting and representing of anything'. During his encounter with Marshal, Hartlib heard that he spoke fluent French, dealt in roots, plants and seeds from the Indies, and was expert in pigments and taxidermy. Marshal was in charge of two gardens, one in Islington (at the home of Lord Northampton) and another in Northamptonshire where he experimented in liquorice husbandry with a 'great Rural-Experimenter' who was the cousin of John Rushworth.[18]

Hartlib's Ephemerides opens a fascinating window into an extended web of personal links surrounding Marshal. He was in close contact with individuals such as Merrick, Child, the MP and rural experimenter Edmund Wild (or Wyld), Rushworth and John Tradescant, as well as with elite agriculturalists such as his 'special acquaintance' Sir Humfrey Foster in Berkshire. In February 1650 Hartlib wrote that he had come 'to bee acquainted' with the anti-Cartesian Captain Floyd, who was Cromwell's surgeon. Floyd told Hartlib at the end of 1653 that Marshal was outstanding for insects and planting; a few weeks later he informed Hartlib that he had met Marshal in Lord Northampton's house in Islington and that Marshal had told him that he could cause any sort of insect (except bees) to spontaneously generate from putrefied matter. On 22 December Floyd brought a Captain Horsey to meet Hartlib, and Hartlib noted that Horsey was Marshal's 'intimate' and that the latter was believed 'to know all the Artists and Inventors about the City'. Horsey was not mentioned in the Ephemerides for another three years until Hartlib noted that he had promised to give Dymock some papers on gardening and orchards. Sadly, Dymock told him soon afterwards that Horsey was in prison.[19]

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[18] Hartlib to Boyle, 8 May 1654 (*The Correspondence of Robert Boyle*, ed. M. Hunter and others (6 vols., 2001), i. 172); HP, 29/4/15B–16B (for the visit); 28/1/58A and 15/5/7A, Child to Hartlib, 13 Nov. 1651; 30/4/31A and 31/23/17A (for Merrick's account) and 29/4/19B. More generally, see P. Leith-Ross, *The Florilegium of Alexander Marshal in the Collection of Her Majesty the Queen at Windsor Castle* (2000).

[19] HP, 29/4/21A; 28/1/44B (for his initial meeting with Floyd); 28/2/75B; 28/2/78B; 28/2/80A; 28/2/82B; 29/6/4B.

Personal knowledge

Within the Ephemerides, the term 'acquaintance' referred to significant connections between individuals and facts in Hartlib's intelligence web. Hartlib himself was often implicated in these links, but he frequently recorded the fact that key individuals knew of or were associated with other people, thus granting vicarious membership of the great programme to people he had never met. William Petty was linked to an exceptional number of artisans and inventors. For instance, he was described by Hartlib as 'very well acquainted' with the 'mighty Mechanical Man' Jonas Moore, who in 1648 proposed to make one of his London houses available to be 'a Meeting-place for Artificers and other Ingenuities'. A smith in the Minories who was attempting to construct a perpetual motion machine was described as being 'of Petty's acquaintance', while in February 1650 Culpeper brought 'a good and excellent man' from Utrecht whom Hartlib described as 'desir[ing] to be acquainted' with Petty. Robert Child and Theodore Haak were two others who were widely connected in the metropolis. For example, in 1648 Hartlib recorded that Haak had an acquaintance based in the Strand, a gunsmith who was one of Kalthoff's employees and who was 'a most excellent workman'. At the same time he noted that the Irishman John Madden was a 'special' acquaintance of Haak, 'ful of Ingenuities [and] about a great Mony – or Metallick Designe'. Two years later he mentioned that the physician Zury-Shaddai Long was Haak's 'special friend' and had a 'Head-piece ful of Ingenuity'.[20]

Hartlib described the bonds between informants and others on a graduated scale. On many occasions he commented that a person was 'well acquainted' with someone else, occasionally to record a link between two individuals already known to him. Other relationships seemed to be even stronger than this. Dymock told him that he knew the son of a knight who was 'inwardly acquainted' with the 'old salt-peeter Philosopher' Francis Joiner. A number of people were 'specially' acquainted with each other, such as the natural philosopher John Wilkins and the physician Thomas Willis – whom Hartlib noted as being 'a very experimenting ingenious gentleman'. It is telling that when Robert Child set out with Henshaw, Thomas Vaughan and William Webbe to form a quasi-monastic 'Chymical Club' in 1650, their goal was to collect all English philosophical and chemical books, and 'to make all Philosophers acquainted one with another and to oblige them to mutual communications'. Nevertheless, Child soon reported that the group was being criticized 'because they are so retired and non-communicative and because they doe not write and print so much as other Vniversities doe by way of vapourizing'.[21]

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[20] HP, 31/22/5A; 28/1/16B; 28/1/23B; 28/1/60A; 31/22/38A and 39B; 28/1/45A.

[21] HP, 28/1/39B; 29/4/28A; 29/5/52B–53A; 28/1/61B; 28/1/66B.

Genteel ladies and the wives of friends also played a key role in supplying Hartlib with practical information. In some cases this involved alchemical texts, and women could be owners of key texts or practitioners of the art. In 1640 Lady Barrington (the patron of Thomas Browne) told Hartlib that she knew about someone who had worked for more than two years on the Elixir and was confident he would bring it to perfection, but she was doubtful that he would be able to perfect the transmutation of gold. She also communicated a manuscript of George Ripley, once owned by John Dee, as well as unpublished texts by Edward Kelly and the alchemist Thomas Norton. Thomas Henshaw's mother was an experienced chemist, while in 1654 Hartlib heard from William Brereton that the wife of Justice Kelway (or Keilway) was 'far advanced in the great worke [and could] make of one lb. of gold 8 or 10 lb.' On 3 August of the following year Hartlib was visited by Anthony Morgan's aunt, Mrs. Ogleby, who revealed that she also had some of Ripley's alchemical manuscripts. Both Hartlib, who called her 'a rare Chymical Gentlewoman', and Clodius were entranced, and they invited her back. On 21 August she told Clodius about 'a never failing Medecin with one simple or herbe to cure the king's Evil being steep't in Wine. Shee related it as a most certain and experimented cure'. Hartlib could not ascertain the name of the herb but added that Mrs. Ogleby had dissolved gold by using one of Clodius's experiments, which might prove 'a very rare Medecin'.[22]

Other women featured regularly in Hartlib's journal. Dury's wife Dorothy Moore knew many recipes, including a cordial that apparently far exceeded the efficacy of the famous powder of Lady Kent, as well as more mundane fare such as how a louse placed in the eye overnight could cure soreness. A central source of lay medical knowledge was Robert Boyle's sister Katherine Jones, Lady Ranelagh. In 1649 she told Hartlib about an Irish gentleman who had cured her toothache by cutting her gums and rubbing them with a special powder. Later, she gave Hartlib an extensive list of the benefits of Lady Kent's powder, concluding that it was a universal medicine, and added that Lady Kent was also in possession of an excellent and reliable cure for gout, which she had obtained from 'a very meane man, a porter or some such creature'. Identifying the ingredients of the powder became an extraordinary research project for Boyle and others. Boyle found out from an ex-servant of Lady Kent that she had raised toads on a special diet and then had them killed, whereupon they were burned and used as a key element of the powder. Lady Ranelagh heard from Lady Kent herself that a central ingredient was the claws of black crawfish, which were specially collected for the purpose in the Isle of Wight. Her eclectic knowledge of medical cures was typical of many genteel and aristocratic women, and like many of her ilk, she was able to vouch from personal experience for the efficacy of the cures – including the dew or 'starshot' gathered by herb or snakewomen.[23]

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[22] HP, 30/4/67A; 29/4/29A (and cf. 29/5/2A); 29/5/45B–46A.

Versatile men

Inventive men were to be found in any and every walk of life, and many of them exhibited a striking breadth of skills. In 1648 the chemical philosopher William Rand reported that the Popeshead Alley bookseller John Sweeting was 'one of the most ingenious men of that company' and some months later, having invented a piece of clockwork that would go for two or three months without stopping, he was described by William Petty as 'a Learned Stationer and Mechanically-mathematical and a good Musitian'. Three years later Hartlib made a note to himself to obtain from Boyle the name and address of an 'optical or otherwise curious Gentleman' the latter had met at the Duck Lane premises of the bookseller James Allestry. The stationer, Hartlib remarked, was a 'very intelligencing man. One that can procure the choicest Book's and know's every where all manner of Learned men. Hee keepes Correspondence with Kircherus and hath diverse Letters from him'. He was also recorded as an important potential source of information for the publication of Plattes's works, and was apparently the conduit for information sent by Rand. Allestry was indeed an unusually cosmopolitan operator, who occasionally visited European book markets for manuscripts and books. He was one of the official 'printers' or publishers (with John Martyn) to the Royal Society in its early years.[24]

Hartlib frequently noted examples of new sorts of musical instruments as well as gifted or highly proficient musicians. An extraordinary example of the latter was Davis Mell, a gentleman violinist and composer who was also a clockmaker and general inventor. Hartlib originally heard of him from Samuel Cradock at the start of 1649, and the latter described Mell as living in Crutched Friars and as 'one of the King's Musitians very excellent in his Art and of a very inventive genius'. Six years later he was told by the Kent landowner Sir Thomas Blount that Mell was now one of Cromwell's musicians and a 'special' acquaintance of Blount's, possessing an 'admirablenes and dexterity in Musick (wherin also hee superlatively excels) [and] a most witty inventive and Mechanical Man'. Haak also commented that Cromwell was particularly taken with Mell's playing. Cradock and Blount both remarked on Mell's horological expertise, while, after noting Cradock's initial information, Hartlib queried whether a clock worth £50 that Mell had recently made could be sent as a gift to a king in the Indies. Blount reported that Mell had made a spit-turning jack that showed the hours of the day and had a 'consort of bells' that played a tune when the meat was in a certain position. This confirmed the comment made by Petty in 1650 to the effect that Mell was 'very excellent' for jacks. Like many of the figures in the Ephemerides, Mell was connected by Hartlib to a number of other inventive individuals and was immersed in a culture of invention.[25]

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[23] HP, 28/1/78A; 31/22/38A; 28/1/2A; 28/1/32B–33A; 28/1/45B (and cf. 28/1/50B); 28/1/74B; 29/4/6B and 29/5/18B–19A. Dorothy Moore (Dury) and Katherine Jones were related by marriage (Dorothy was Katherine's aunt) and were in regular contact in the 1640s and 50s, probably in Katherine's house in Pall Mall (see Webster, *Great Instauration*, pp. 62–3).

[24] HP, 30/4/68A; 31/22/1A; 31/22/6A; 28/2/3A; 28/2/53A; 62/21/2B, Rand to Hartlib, 11 Aug. 1651. In 1652 Allestry moved to the Bell in St. Paul's Churchyard where he worked with Martyn until 1664, when he apparently returned to his former shop (see C. Rivington, 'Early printers to the Royal Society', *Notes and Records of the Royal Society*, xxxix (1984), 1–27, esp. pp. 1–10 and 9, for Allestry's less than harmonious relations with Italian booksellers).

One of the most significant inventors in the Ephemerides was Blount, invariably 'Colonel Blunt' for Hartlib, who was extremely well connected with other metropolitan innovators. In 1648 Petty reported favourably on his agricultural projects and said that he had the best ploughs in existence, but remarked that he was selfish and not public spirited. Still, Blount was a central figure in Hartlib's world; he was closely associated with Mell, Wilkins, Boyle and Evelyn, and was involved in a number of rural and technical projects. Towards the end of 1655 Hartlib heard from Culpeper that Blount was involved in new experiments in pig-farming and had a 'very peculiar and compleat' rabbit warren. Soon afterwards Blount himself told Hartlib that he had planted thousands of ash trees for timber, was studying viniculture and was actually producing his own wines. When Evelyn met Hartlib at the start of December he told him that he was acquainted with Blount, and indeed in his own diary recorded that he had seen the warren and sampled some of the wine. Blount's interests were expansive, and by the late 1650s he was experimenting with a new design for barrels that would preserve ale and beer, and also with a new technique for preserving wine by covering the liquid with salad oil. He was a noted inventor of improvements to carriages and his expertise in this field was recorded by Hartlib as early as 1652. At that point Hartlib noted Blount's two-wheeled carriage that took him all the way to Lambeth, but his innovations also included the fixing of an odometer to the wheels of a carriage to record the mileage. As Boyle reported to Hartlib, Blount went on innovating in this area into the latter part of the decade, and indeed, in 1665 Pepys noted that Blount, Hooke, Wilkins and others were experimenting with various spring-supported coaches.[26]

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[25] HP, 28/1/17B; 29/5/55B–56A; 29/5/24A; 29/6/5A; 28/1/60A. See also M. P. Fernandez and P. C. Fernandez, 'Davis Mell, musician and clockmaker, and an analysis of the clockmaking trade in 17th-century London', *Antiquarian Horology*, xvi (1987), 602–17. For other comments on Cromwell's musicians, see HP, 29/5/9A–B.

The Ephemerides also sheds light on the exceptional breadth of expertise of a number of instrument-makers in the capital. Hartlib kept a close eye on the work of Richard Reeves and Francis Smethwick, and was in close contact with the latter in the 1650s. Arguably the most striking of this group was Ralph Greatorex, an apprentice to the great instrument-maker Elias Allen. Throughout the decade Greatorex continued to devise new machines, which he often offered for sale alongside the scientific instruments. He was an expert artisan who would later be crucial in helping Robert Hooke design and make the first air-pump for Robert Boyle in the late 1650s. In the 1660s he became a major surveyor of sites in London and was often consulted by the Royal Society. He was very highly regarded by Boyle, Evelyn, Blount and the Wadham circle, and early in the 1650s he advised Evelyn on the latter's plan to create a natural history of trades. Despite initial misgivings, he made a number of examples of Wren's double-writing machine, and Wren, Wilkins and others recommended Greatorex as the 'keeper' of the proposed 'Colledge for Experiments et Mechanicks' that was planned at Oxford in 1653. Greatorex was apparently still interested in this idea four years later, this time acting on his own initiative to promote a Hartlibian scheme according to which all models of patented inventions were to be brought to Chelsea College. If in one year inventions were 'not put in practice or found really useful and serviceable' the patent would be annulled.[27]

Following a conversation with Francis Potter, Hartlib initially described Greatorex in 1651 as a 'most piercing and profound witt' who was 'intimately acquainted' with Edmund Wild. Soon afterwards Hartlib visited Greatorex's shop in the Strand, one of the few occasions when he explicitly described a visit to a location outside his home. He noted the invention of a sand-driven dial and the existence of some powder that could be sprinkled on paper that would resemble ink when written on with a silver nib. Greatorex was soon a trusted informant on technical and agricultural matters and in

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[26] HP, 31/22/39B (compare with a similar comment from 1649 about Blount's ploughs at 28/1/13B); 29/5/52A; 29/5/54A; 29/5/56A (and note Blount's comment to Hartlib in 1657 that he had planted thousands of vines (29/6/5B)); 28/2/33A (and 41B, for the Lambeth coach); 29/6/9B; 29/7/13A. See also *The Diary of John Evelyn*, ed. E. S. de Beer (6 vols., Oxford, 1955), iii. 161; and *The Diary of Samuel Pepys*, ed. R. Latham and W. Matthews (11 vols., 1970–83), vi. 94, 213.

[27] HP, 28/2/78B; 29/6/10B. See J. Brown, 'Guild organization and the instrument-making trade, 1550–1830: the Grocers' and Clockmakers' companies', *Annals of Science*, xxxvi (1979), 1–34.

1653 Hartlib asked him to extract information from Jonas Moore concerning experiments with sowing clover-seed in the fens, since Moore was then deeply engaged in the fen drainage project. Greatorex kept Hartlib up to date with experiments on clover-grass at Coventry, and in the next few years he received useful information from Greatorex about various designs for beehives. In 1652 and 1653 Hartlib heard from Potter and Culpeper that Greatorex was making a corn-setting machine invented by the Hampshire gentleman Nicholas Steward, and Potter reported that he had also invented a device that would prevent copper or brass coinage from being counterfeited.[28]

In the late summer of 1653 Greatorex reported on a kiln at Chelsea that dried corn before it was shipped, and recommended a way of preventing knives from rusting. Towards the end of the year someone, presumably Francis Potter, told Hartlib that Greatorex was going to undertake some experiments for breathing underwater, a topic that continued to fascinate Hartlib during the remainder of the decade. Indeed, Greatorex had apparently been involved in a series of related trials in Derbyshire over the summer and was planning to return the following year. These further experiments were evidently carried out, for in March and July 1655 Potter and Boyle both reported that he had produced a workable version of the invention. Indeed, his machine was tested before the Royal Society in 1663 by Jonas Moore, whom Greatorex knew well and who shared the same patron in the form of Wild. The original experiments were important in corroborating earlier views that the weight of water made deep-sea activities extremely difficult below a certain level, and were an important source for Boyle's work on the weight or spring of the air. Inventions that ran on from this work included a sophisticated way of raising water through tidal power, and a new means of delivering water to extinguish fires.[29]

Artisans

The shops of craftsmen were important places for gleaning information. In 1635 Hartlib noted: 'To enquire for names of strangers and inhabitants of street the best and neerest way is to resort to coblers e.g. I enquiring of Mr Hazard in Colman-street', and he had already learned from the shop of a barber-surgeon that a spy in the Netherlands could tell what country he was in by smelling the earth. In 1649 he heard from his barber Thornton that an unnamed 'Chirurgical Tailor' in Hartlib's own street had successfully drawn out 'annoying windes and humors or peccant waters by a Horne and his owne sucking the places rubbed'. Hartlib's friend, the ex-cobbler William Trigge, had apparently undergone the procedure with great success. In 1655 Hartlib's new barber, a man called Owen, recommended a Hartshorne Lane combmaker named Spong as a highly 'ingenious Mechanical, Mathematical and Astrological witt'. Spong was praised for having recently invented a sort of 'natural' jack whose spits were turned by the fire of a chimney, and the following year Owen added that Spong was 'somwhat Optical, Astrological with [William] Lilly and now learnes the Art of surveying'. Owen continued to be useful and in 1655 he provided a recipe for curing the common cold. In 1658, when Hartlib was suffering from the merciless effects of the stone, Owen joined numerous others in offering some sound advice.[30]

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[28] HP, 28/2/7A; 28/2/78B; 28/2/40B (and note his earlier comments on the clock at 28/2/8A); 28/2/42B; 28/2/59B; 29/5/12A and 29/6/20B.

[29] HP, 29/2/67A–B; 28/2/70B; 28/2/77B–78A (see 29/5/18A and 29/5/38B, for Potter's and Boyle's confirmation of the success of the diving bell); 29/4/2A; 29/4/6A; 29/4/28A; 29/5/38B (cf. 29/5/73A, for Kuffler's 1656 view that his uncle Cornelius Drebbel had earlier discovered the same thing); 29/5/59B and 29/5/75A.

The existence of a number of gifted and experienced mechanics was also recorded by Hartlib, who was invariably informed about such men by his core group of inventor-informants. Petty had numerous contacts with artisans, and the Ephemerides for the period 1648–52 is replete with Petty's comments on metropolitan technical skill. Cressy Dymock was another exceptional informant. In 1649 he told Hartlib about a millwright called Chamberlaine, 'an pretty ancient man [who] mendes the wheeles to all the Brewers'. Dymock thought Chamberlaine was a most ingenious and creative mechanic who could turn his hand to various mechanical devices and especially to clockwork. He believed Chamberlaine was the best person to help him with his perpetual motion machine, since what he needed was some sort of mechanism of the kind that clockmakers could easily invent or make. Some mechanical adepts had gone abroad to learn various tricks of the trade. For example, immediately after being told about Chamberlaine Hartlib was informed by a Captain Thomas Juxon about Thomas Pits, a young man who was 'like to proove a Rare Mechanick or Artist'. Pits, whose father was a 'special friend' to Juxon, was bound to a goldsmith for seven years but ran away after two, believing he had learned enough of the trade. He arrived in Amsterdam where he learned the art of enamelling, and was now an expert clockmaker and instrument-maker. Juxon told Hartlib that after even more travel Pits would likely prove to be a most excellent artist.[31]

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[30] HP, 29/3/28A; 29/3/20B; 28/1/30B (for Thornton); 29/5/11B; 29/5/101B; 29/5/65B; 29/8/11A (for contact with Spong in 1660); 29/7/15B and 29/7/2B.

[31] HP, 28/1/30A–B. Juxon was an East Sheen sugar baker, a parliamentarian and puritan who invested heavily in Irish estates in the 1640 and 50s. He had been promoted to major by the time he met Hartlib, and is referred to as such in 1652 (see HP, 28/2/34A (and cf. 21/8/3A–B); and see also *The Journal of Thomas Juxon, 1644–7*, ed. K. Lindley and D. Scott (1999), pp. 4–5, 8).

Another inventive and ambitious artisan was the joiner William Martindale, 'a Tradesman about Cripple-gate [who] came of his owne accord' to see Hartlib on 28 November 1657. Martindale sought assistance for his invention for pulling weights, but Hartlib noted that an obvious application of Martindale's invention was to improve carriages. On 3 December Martindale delivered a note in his own handwriting to Hartlib, giving his name and address and indicating that he had invented a new sort of carriage that did not need to be driven by any animal. Having expended a substantial amount of time and money on the project he now needed financial support. Hartlib quickly consulted Dymock about the machine, and the latter saw its utility for a range of different practical and leisure activities. Early in 1658 Hartlib enthusiastically informed correspondents about the joiner's work. He believed that Martindale's invention was genuinely new, but little was heard of it afterwards. Early in February 1659 Hartlib became aware of a Croydon millwright, 'a most ingenious Mechanick', who had alighted on a similar sort of 'self-motion' as Martindale; however, the millwright could not drive his own vehicles as fast as a famous 'fat butcher' in the same town. Undaunted by the demise of his proposal, over the next two years Martindale turned to the development of military equipment.[32]

Some artisans were identified purely by their address. Secrecy, anonymity and fraud surrounded the identities of alchemists who journeyed from one town or city to the next. Many of these came to visit Clodius, and thus fell within Hartlib's orbit. In April 1654 Clodius received a letter from 'a very special hand' in Amsterdam warning him that a 'famed Impostor' and 'Arch-liar and Cheater' had left Haarlem for England. He was of 'a middle stature but young and without almost any beard, a mighty and hypocritical Talker or Mountebanke, skilled in severall Languages'. The following month Hartlib took this seriously enough to inform Cromwell that he had heard that the pretender was already in London. Four years later Hartlib heard from Clodius that the sixty-year-old laborant of a 'great Chymical Cheater', Don Johannes Baptista, had arrived in London, and he soon came to meet Hartlib. In his 'broken Italian' the man told a conventional alchemical story about how he had on more than one occasion extracted three ounces of silver from one pound of lead, and had produced a pound of gold from twenty-five pounds of tin or pewter. In 1659 Clodius regaled Hartlib with a tale about an anonymous Dutchman who 'stay's not long in one place' and who had effected a number of extraordinary cures. Clodius claimed that he was an authentic *adeptus* who knew Pell and who had communicated a *menstruum* (solvent) to Clodius that had resolved all metals – this *menstruum* was the true Alcahest. Most importantly for Hartlib, the adept had a range of cures for the stone.[33]

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[32] HP, 29/6/22B; 55/8/1A–B; 29/6/23A; 29/8/22B; Hartlib to Boyle, 25 May 1658 (Boyle, *Correspondence*, i. 275). Descriptions of inventions for making guns faster loading and more reliable are at HP, 55/8/2A–5B.

Conclusion

Hartlib's Ephemerides was intended to be a system for ordering information about inventive activity that would be of service to the reformation of learning and society. Although his plans to inaugurate the great Baconian project in which he believed were thwarted by the demise of the Commonwealth in which he had invested so much, he created a gigantic system that was centred in his own person. From the early 1630s his plans for the reformation of learning combined religious, pedagogical and technical features. As his ideas evolved about how the 'Great Instauration' could best be accomplished, so the nature of the journal changed to represent the more material and utilitarian interests that he thought were vital to the success of what remained a fundamentally religious project. The Ephemerides was not supposed to be an impartial survey of all inventive activity in the city, for one man, even a Hartlib, could not hope to give comprehensive coverage to every initiative. He was most interested in the work of people who shared similar religious and political ideas to himself, but royalists, Catholics and those like Blount and Wheeler who were not public spirited could still be incorporated into the scheme.

The personal nature of the Ephemerides does not detract from its major importance as an unrivalled account of technical expertise and innovation in an early modern European city. Unlike Hooke, Pepys and the traveller Zacharias von Uffenbach, Hartlib did not patrol the city for information. However, he interested himself in all the relevant work then taking place in the capital, and recorded the existence of numerous ordinary craftsmen who have not otherwise left their mark in the historical record. As such, the text constitutes a remarkable cultural geography of inventive life in the metropolis. Hartlib's scrupulous recording of the sources of his information reveals his personal interactions with informants – themselves often experts or inventors – along with their combined assessments of the relative skill of various experts. As a document, it constitutes an excellent source for determining the full range of activities of people who are well known from the period, or of those who would otherwise have been lost to us. On the one hand, it throws into relief the special technical interests and skills of individuals who were experts in one area of activity; on the other, it demonstrates the impressive versatility of a number of gentlemen and tradesmen, a factor that to some extent may be seen as a normal way of life for many early modern people.[34]

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[33] Yale University, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, James Marshal and Marie-Louise Osborn Collection, Document 13, 1A–B; HP, 29/7/12A–13A; 29/8/5A–6B; 28/1/13A.

In the journal Hartlib attempted to capture the very features of the capital that he was trying to organize. The world described in his journal is evidently that of Hartlib himself, but the text records objective features of metropolitan technical culture. Like the web of technical and scientific practices described in the later 'diary' of Robert Hooke, this was a world of face-to-face meetings, exchanges of information and skills, and searches for medical cures. Indeed, the notes of Hartlib's interactions with informants depict a real and typical set of social relations through which knowledge and skills were exchanged. For Hartlib, London was an embryonic technical utopia, and he was unremittingly optimistic regarding imminent or apparently already perfected inventions. Given the millenarian impulses that galvanized so much of Hartlib's work as a religious intelligencer, the Ephemerides demonstrates that for him, the apparently disparate worlds of religious prophecy and technical progress were two sides of the same coin.

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[34] For Hooke's journal, see *The Diary of Robert Hooke, 1672–80*, ed. H. W. Robinson and W. Adams (1936). Hooke's activities in the 1670s are surveyed in R. Iliffe, '"Material doubts": Robert Hooke, artisanal culture and the exchange of information in 1670s London', *British Journal for the History of Science*, xxviii (1995), 285–318. For von Uffenbach, see *London in 1710: from the Travels of Zacharias Conrad von Uffenbach*, ed. and trans. W. H. Quarrell and M. Mare (1934).

7. Hiding in the forest … The Gilberts' rural scientific instrument manufactory

Anita McConnell

How large-scale businesses were able to operate behind small high-street workshops

Towards the end of the eighteenth century the shops of London's leading scientific instrument makers were mostly located along the Strand, along Fleet Street and in the vicinity of Tower Hill, these latter often specializing in navigation instruments and advertising themselves as navigation warehouses. These shops displayed some new small instruments and refurbished used instruments, which they had taken in part-exchange or bought at the sales of deceased owners' property. Simple repairs could be undertaken on the premises. Larger telescopes and other instruments had to be ordered specially, and a down payment was requested to cover the purchase of materials and to pay workmen and subcontractors while they were being constructed. The owner of such a business needed stock rooms for sale goods, for small amounts of materials such as wood, brass, glass tube and lenses, and for an accounting office. The records of insurance policies identify the values of stock (including customers' items left for repair), the workshop tools and the owner's personal household possessions. In some cases we learn that the premises include a brick or timber outbuilding.

A Danish artisan, Jesper Bidstrup (1763–1802), who came to London with the hope of finding employment with one the best craftsmen, wrote home in 1788: 'I am convinced that it was not with Nairne and Blunt, Adams, Dollond or their peers from whom I would have learnt anything, as their most prestigious instruments are manufactured all round the city, and what men they employ in their houses are simply put to repairing instruments or making some small adjustments'.[1] So the question arises of how and where these prolific makers produced their wares.

Among the leading craftsmen at this period, both in terms of quality and quantity, were the Adams family of Fleet Street whose working lives occupied the years between 1734 and 1817.[2] George Adams junior (1750–95) was appointed mathematical instrument maker to the office of ordnance in 1748, while George senior (1709–72) supplied hundreds if not thousands of gunnery and drawing instruments besides undertaking repairs. With the outbreak of the Seven Years' War in 1758, the demand increased, and between 1756 and 1763 Adams supplied instruments worth over £1,700, as detailed in war office records at The National Archives of the UK.[3] From 1750 George senior supplied the Royal Mathematical School (Christ's hospital) with navigation and drawing instruments, an appointment which passed to George junior. A more prestigious appointment was as mathematical instrument maker to HRH George, prince of Wales, subsequently King George III, which continued to his son George junior (1750–95). Dudley Adams (1762–1830) held office as globe maker and optician. Dudley established a separate business at 53, Charing Cross, moving back to Fleet Street when George junior died.

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[1] Copenhagen, Royal Library, Nyy Kongelig Samling 287 ii 4, Jesper Bidstrup to Thomas Bugge.

The Adams' Fleet Street premises were far too small for the volume of work which we know was delivered; the bulk orders were sub-contracted to local home workers who could manufacture to a pattern. The remaining instruments, though they might be individual, were not large, consisting of microscopes, surveying apparatus, barometers and suchlike. The Adams' apprentices may have spent their journeymen years at Fleet Street, or at some nearby cheaper premises, but no information has been found, beyond George Adams senior's often quoted remark taken from one of his catalogues: 'I always inspect and direct the several Pieces myself, see them all combined in my own House, and finish the most curious Parts thereof with my own Hands'.[4]

For astronomical instrument makers, whose business included really large or complex apparatus, taking months or even years to construct, a flow of lesser work was essential to keep the skilled men employed and to generate the income to pay their weekly wages. These large items could not be built in the high-street premises identified on trade cards and other advertising literature, nor in the small workrooms of the subcontractors, usually located on upper floors to benefit from better light. However, there has to date been very little information on the location of the actual manufacturing premises. In a paper in *The London Journal* in 1994 I described how John

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[2] J. R. Millburn, *Adams of Fleet Street, Instrument Makers to King George III* (Aldershot, 2000).

[3] The National Archives of the UK: Public Record Office, WO 51. A total of 146 bills have been found scattered through these volumes.

[4] George Adams, *A Catalogue of Mathematical, Philosophical and Optical Instruments, as made by George Adams* (1746), p. 224.

Bird, John and Edward Troughton and Jesse Ramsden resolved the problem of where to construct their larger and more complex apparatus, the demand for which was driven by the construction of astronomical observatories in Britain and Ireland and in western Europe.[5]

In 1750 the highly esteemed John Bird (1709–76) was commissioned to construct a large telescope and other instruments for Greenwich Observatory. His premises at this time were in York Buildings, off the Strand, where he had an upper room with a clear view to the south, but unsuitable as a manufactory. He had another workshop in Berwick Street, north of Piccadilly, but when he received an order from the Radcliffe trustees to construct two mural quadrants, two sectors and a transit instrument for their Oxford Observatory, he needed far more space, able to bear the weight of such equipment. He leased a recently built house in Little Marylebone Street and the Radcliffe trustees agreed to pay for a timber workshop behind it, where the quadrant arcs could be graduated. Another problem for the makers of quadrants was that of transport; a telescope could be removed from its stand and the stand itself taken down, but a quadrant could not be dismantled once it had been divided.

The Troughton brothers, John (*c.*1739–1807) and Edward (1756–1835), also of Fleet Street, were able to take over additional buildings along the alley behind their shop for producing surveying and mathematical instruments. Their limitation was the low narrow archway from their workshops into Fleet Street, through which all packing-cases had to pass. When orders for large telescopes were received, they obtained the castings from Bryan Donkin's riverside engineering works, making the optical parts at Fleet Street and assembling the instrument in Donkin's manufactory.

Jesse Ramsden (1735–1800), with a shop in Piccadilly, bought a nearby carriage workshop which, with the two intervening houses, provided adequate space and height for his output, including large astronomical apparatus. Ramsden constructed several sizeable instruments to completely new designs, which he needed to oversee as they were being constructed. His manufactory, with its fifty-odd workmen, was so unusual that it was commented on by many of his foreign visitors.[6]

There remain several major suppliers whose workshops have not been fully identified, including the Dollond family and Nairne & Blunt. The long-lived Dollond dynasty began when John Dollond (1706–61), previously a silk weaver, joined his son Peter (1731– 1820) in the optical instruments trade in 1752. Peter's brother John (1733–1804) and his nephew George Huggins (1774–1852), who took the name of Dollond, continued the business. The Dollonds ran a very profitable line in achromatic telescopes which were widely sold across Europe and into North America. Their principal address was in St. Paul's Churchyard but they also had a house in the Haymarket. In a letter of 1820 to the board of longitude, concerning the purchase of a reflecting telescope, George Dollond wrote: 'I should be pleased to provide one from my own manufactory, where I have the power of completing the whole of the instrument, from the mixing and casting, to the finishing of the metals etc', which implies a substantial workshop with a foundry and skilled operatives.[7]

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[5] A. McConnell, 'From craft workshop to big business – the London scientific instrument trade's response to increasing demand, 1750–1820', *London Journal*, xix (1994), 36–53.

[6] A. McConnell, *Jesse Ramsden (1735–1800): London's Leading Scientific Instrument Maker* (Aldershot, 2007), ch. 4, pp. 53–75.

The same situation applied to Edward Nairne, later Nairne & Blunt, of 22 Cornhill. Lloyds Bank, present occupants of the site, have no old maps of the premises but it is likely that much of the apparatus was at least partially constructed elsewhere. Edward Nairne (1726–1806) and Thomas Blunt (*c.*1740–1822) enjoyed the patronage of fellows of the Royal Society and other natural and experimental philosophers, including Benjamin Franklin (1706–90) in North America. They supplied a vast number of instruments to private and institutional customers, clearly far beyond what could have been manufactured in their rather cramped premises. A lease for this house refers to an accounting house, behind the shop with its moveable shutters, and a view of the shop-front is engraved on Blunt's trade cards. The limited stock is referred to by Martinus van Marum (1750–1837) who, having come to London in 1790 to buy instruments, wrote:

> We then went to Mr Nairne, who however had nothing of any importance ready in his shop but requested us to come again next Wednesday when he expected to have some new instruments on hand. Subsequently we went to Dollond's shop where apart from the usual shop articles we did not find anything that attracted us at all, but we received from him the promise that he would show us another day what he had ready.[8]

At this period instrument workshops within the City of London relied on human muscle power, but the Ribrights, a family of opticians with a shop in Poultry, moved their lens-grinding operations outside the capital to take advantage of water power.[9] In *c.*1760 Thomas Ribright (d. 1781) acquired a corn mill at Tewin, on the River Mimram in Hertfordshire, and installed machinery to grind spectacle and telescope lenses, working with his brother George (d. 1783) and his apprentice Robert Gass (d. 1804). After 1781 Ribright's widow Mary ran it, with two former apprentices, Henry Rose and John Flindall, and John's son. This glass mill was said to have been in operation for forty years. In 1795 George's son Thomas Ribright II took over a paper mill at Bromley, Kent, to grind lenses, but from 1801 he was back in London. By 1818 Samuel Froggatt, one of a family of opticians from Sheffield, where water-power was used for grinding cutlery and glass, migrated to London; Froggatt's Mill is depicted on maps of Hackney Marshes, dated 1831 and 1836.[10]

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[7] Cambridge University Library (hereafter CUL), Greenwich Royal Observatory Archives, RGO 14/48 fos. 81–2, G. Dollond to T. Young, for the board of longitude, 11 Apr. 1820.

[8] M. van Marum, *Life and Work*, ii: *Diary of a Journey in England, 1790*, ed. R. J. Forbes (Haarlem, 1970), p. 27.

[9] D. J. Bryden, 'The Ribrights, opticians in the Poultry, London', *Bulletin of the Scientific Instrument Society*, cv (2010), 10–21.

Given the difficulty of transporting fragile goods in England before the arrival of toll-roads, canals and railways, it is not surprising that provincial craftsmen looked to local customers rather than those in London. Many ports had their local watchmakers and navigation instrument makers.[11] Henry Hindley (1701–71) of York, a Catholic, was better known as a clockmaker but did produce a few astronomical instruments and could count the Catholic gentry among his customers. The Massey family (*fl.* 1767–1865) were also Catholic and better known as watchmakers, based at first at Newcastle-under-Lyme. They moved to London, adapting their clockmaking skills to the navigation instrument business, producing ships' logs and sounders, instruments of modest size the manufacture of which, like watchmaking, could be undertaken in London or elsewhere.

Thomas and William Dormer Gilbert

And so I come to the brothers Thomas (b. 1786) and William Dormer Gilbert (b. 1781),[12] descendants of a family active from at least 1716 at Postern Row, near the Tower, as suppliers of optical, navigational and philosophical instruments.[13] By 1794 they also had a shop or 'navigation warehouse' at 148, Leadenhall Street where William Gilbert (d. 1813) and his partner Benjamin Hooke insured their tools and stock for £3,000, with Gilbert's stock of glass separately insured for £500.[14] In 1814 the house, stock and tools were insured for £4,000.[15]

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[10] London Metropolitan Archives, THCS/P/012, 'Plan of the parish of St John at Hackney …' by W. H. Ashpitel (n.d. [*c.*1831]). Tower Hamlets Commission of Sewers, *Large Scale Atlas of Hackney* … (n.d. [*c.*1836]).

[11] A. D. Morrison-Low, *Making Scientific Instruments in the Industrial Revolution* (Aldershot, 2007)

[12] I have been unable to locate records of baptism or burial, wills or admons for either man.

[13] John Gilbert I had been apprenticed to John Johnson in the Grocers' Company and appears to have inherited Johnson's premises at Postern Row.

[14] LMA, CLC/B/192/F/001/MS11936/398.

[15] LMA, CLC/B/192/F/001/MS11936/463/811119. See LMA, CLC/525/MS11316, land tax assessments, Lime Street Ward, first precinct, 1798/9, 1799/1800, 1800–1803/4, 1804–1818/19, 1834.

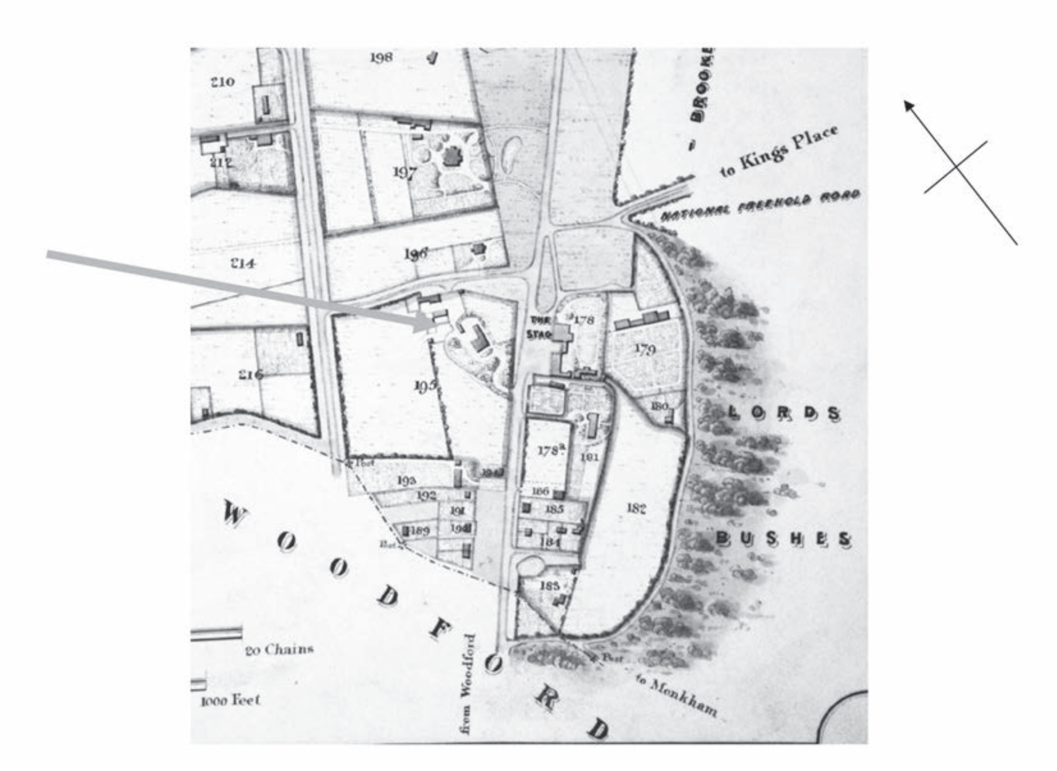
198
210
212
197
to Kings Place
NATIONAL FREEHOLD ROAD
214
196
THE STAG
178
179
216
195
180
LORDS
178a
181
193
192
194
191
189
190
186
185
184
182
BUSHES
183
WOODFORD ROAD
20 Chains
1000 Feet
from Woodford
to Monkham

Figure 7.1. The Gilberts' Woodford manufactory. Depicted in *Plans of the Manor of Chigwell, Essex, Surveyed by William D'Oyley* (1855).

Source: LMA, CLC/232/MS01367, map 15. Reproduced by permission of London Metropolitan Archives.

Thomas and William Dormer, working in partnership between 1819 and 1831, enjoyed a particularly prosperous time for instrument makers – serving an expanding fleet of naval and merchant ships, as well as surveyors at home and in India,[16] military men, astronomers, teachers and so forth. Here too, the question arises as to how and where this considerable output was constructed, in addition to the general turnover of repairs and resales. The answer has come from a fortunate survival of the Gilberts' bankruptcy file in The National Archives[17] and maps of the Epping Forest estates in the

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[16] However, reports from surveyors in India were often critical of Gilbert's instruments (see, e.g., R. H. Phillimore, *Historical Records of the Survey of India* (5 vols., Dehra Dun, 1945–68), iii. 182, 190, 217).

[17] TNA: PRO, B 3/2535.

Guildhall Library. ‘The Manor of Chigwell …’ by William D’Oyley, dated 1855 (see Figure 7.1), clearly depicts their workshops at Woodford in Essex.[18]

The National Archives long ago weeded out most of its bankruptcy files, leaving only two for scientific instrument makers, one being the Gilberts’, who were declared bankrupt in 1828. The file reveals the cause of their bankruptcy, names their creditors and debtors, and contains sixteen pages detailing premises, tools and materials. Woodford has given its name to a station on the eastern end of London Underground’s Central Line but was then in the purlieu of Waltham Forest, an area encompassing Epping and Hainault forests.

The term ‘forest’ defined land under forest law, and usually comprised woodland, farmland, commons and villages. Woodford parish itself was fairly open, with some dense woodland. It was a wealthy residential parish at its peak during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, close to London – in 1788 the London to Norwich coach took one and a half hours to reach the Bald Faced Stag Inn at Woodford – yet in an attractive rural setting. Wealthy merchants and retired sea captains found it the ideal location.[19] William Gilbert is first recorded as the occupier of a house and land at Chigwell, paying land tax there from 1820 to 1832, and six of his seven children were baptized at Chigwell.[20] Chigwell tithe for 1838 shows him with two plots of land, ‘homestead and hoppit’.[21]

Documents in the bankruptcy file reveal that the Gilberts’ financial ruin came about because they had woefully underestimated the time and materials needed to construct some large apparatus, namely a four-foot mural circle, destined for the East India Company’s observatory on St. Helena;[22] a four-foot standard scale, an instrument for working nautical problems; and two telescopes, which were to have what were known as ‘fluid lenses’ – replacing the flint glass lens with a capsule of a fluid with the same refractive index, to get round the scarcity of good quality flint glass caused by the imposition of government taxes on glass. There was no documented account of the loss of £700, the Gilberts simply declaring ‘the loss on the above items has not been made from any account kept at the period of the loss but from a perfect recollection of the time and materials expended during their progress'. The problem for instrument makers based outside London, such as the Gilberts, would be the transportation of large crated apparatus to the London docks, from where they could be shipped overseas.

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[18] LMA, CLC/232/MS01367, map 15, ‘The Manor of Chigwell in the County of Essex, the property of James Mills, Esq., surveyed by William Doyley, 1855’ (reproduced by permission of London Metropolitan Archives).

[19] C. Johnson, ‘The Bald Faced Stag Inn at Buckhurst Hill’, *Essex Countryside* (Oct. 1982), pp. 45–6. I am obliged to Mrs. Georgina Green of the Woodford Historical Society for this and other local information.

[20] Chelmsford, Essex Record Office, Q/RPI 685–737, land tax registers for Ongar Hundred.

[21] Chelmsford, Essex Record Office, D/CT 78A, Chigwell tithe, 1838.

[22] The mural circle and a transit instrument were both delivered to the East India Company Observatory on St. Helena; their later whereabouts are not known.

The fluid lenses were the invention of Peter Barlow (1776–1862), professor of mathematics at the Royal Military Academy at Woolwich, though several other opticians in France and Britain were experimenting along similar lines. Barlow claimed that such lenses could increase the aperture and reduce the length of the telescope itself and that they would diminish chromatism – the halo of coloured bands which to a lesser or greater degree surrounded all-glass lenses. He proposed using sulphuret of carbon – a clear oily liquid now known as carbon disulphide. Given its volatility and inflammable qualities, it is remarkable that the Gilberts' workshops did not catch fire. Under his direction, the Gilberts had made two small telescopes, one of three inches aperture, four feet long, another of four inches aperture, five feet long, which Barlow had several times carried between Woodford and Woolwich to see if the lens capsules leaked. He then approached the board of longitude to ask for £200 to complete them, and with the Gilberts' help to make 'a National Instrument', of eight inches aperture, twelve feet long.[23] However, wrestling with the novelty and impracticability of these telescopes was probably the last straw which drove the firm to bankruptcy. To round off the story, Barlow then turned to George Dollond who, by 1832 and funded by the Royal Society, made a telescope of eight inches aperture, eight and three-quarters feet long.[24]

The bankruptcy report

The bankruptcy papers list the buildings at Woodford, several of brick, and including three workshops, a turning mill shop, foundry and forge, dividing room, adjusting room and observatory, and three woodsheds, plus fixtures, drawers etc., and mahogany sundries. There is a sixteen-page inventory of tools and stock, everything from benches, vices, lathes, files, taps and dies, every nut and bolt, down to varnish brushes, each item priced at cost value. One page lists glass in the form of crown and flint blanks, new and old lenses, one fluid lens, sextant mirrors, glass covers for compasses etc. The grand total cost value of tools, stock and buildings at Woodford was £8,533. The estimate of their present value was a mere £1,055 10*s*. The named Woodford employees were Henry Gilbert and seven others, who were owed £100 back wages.

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[23] CUL, RGO 30 fos. 389–90, Peter Barlow to the board of longitude, 1 Feb. 1828.

[24] Peter Barlow, 'An Account of the Construction of a Fluid Lens Refracting Telescope of Eight Inches Aperture, and Eight Feet and Three Quarters in Length, Made for the Royal Society by George Dollond, Esq. F.R.S', *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London*, cxxiii (1833), 1–13.

The Gilberts' possessions at Leadenhall Street, which included drills, lathes, taps and dies, had a cost value of £1,327 14*s*, the present value being assessed at £370 10*s* following their sale by Barnes & Thornton. The Gilberts' debts, as listed in the court papers, were nearly £12,000. These included some very substantial loans, a modest loan of £40 18*s 6d* to Barlow, domestic purchases such as coal and provisions, and goods and services from numerous subcontractors and suppliers. The Gilberts' customers owed them £1,214, of which some £400 was deemed to be bad or doubtful debts, a deficit often arising from the buyer having died, gone abroad or himself fallen into bankruptcy. It was a sad end to a long line of reputable craftsmen, but this voluminous bankruptcy file opens for instrument historians a most informative window on to how one of these large London businesses managed (or in this case, mismanaged) its workflow.

The expansion of the (small) instrument trade beyond London had already begun.[25] Small businesses sprang up in Cornwall, Derby and elsewhere to serve local mining or other concerns. Northern towns such as Sheffield were using water-power for grinding edge-tools and cutlery, and had developed lens-grinding and brass manufacturing to produce telescopes and other instruments. Elsewhere, steam-engines were already at work. The crowded streets of London were not suited to their installation and the copious supply of coal which they demanded; they were more appropriate on the eastern fringes downriver, serving factories where their noise and the unpleasant smells generated by their products were blown away from the city. The coming-together of a power source and adequate manpower, as housing expanded round London, led to the emigration of a few successful London businesses, notably that of Troughton & Simms, which established itself at a greenfield site at Woolwich. Demand from Woolwich Dockyard, the Royal Military Academy, nearby Greenwich Observatory, and for instruments for the Survey of India (where in 1838 Troughton & Simms had replaced the Gilberts as official suppliers) assured a full order book. Beyond London, Thomas Cooke of York enjoyed the benefit of a growing railway network to carry the larger astronomical apparatus from his factory to London, for onward shipment worldwide.

As demand grew and machine tools improved, a production line system enabled instrument parts to be standardized and interchangeable. Spares could be sent out to distant regions of the empire, doing away with the need to return defective instruments for repair. At the same time emigration, especially from Britain and Germany, led to the establishment of instrument businesses in North America, Australia and other colonies, closer to where they were needed.

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[25] Morrison-Low, *Making Scientific Instruments.*

III. Suburbs, neighbourhoods and communities

8. Houses and households in Cheapside, *c.*1500–1550

Vanessa Harding

The 'Cheapside gazetteer', published in 1987, embodies the pioneering approach brought by Derek Keene to understanding London's development over the medieval and early modern periods. It comprises a compilation of property histories for a cluster of five parishes at the eastern end of Cheapside, from the thirteenth century to the rebuilding after the Great Fire of 1666. Taken together these individual histories document London's property market over several centuries, thus constituting a barometer of change and development in wider economic, social and demographic fields.[1] The *longue durée* of the project's coverage ensures that the pattern of growth, decline (or stasis) and renewed growth emerges clearly, and allows for examination of crucial stages in this sequence. The property histories also offer evidence and context for different lines of enquiry, including a series of further research projects under the heading 'People in place', reconstituting the population of the five parishes in the early modern period and comparing Cheapside with other areas of the metropolis.[2] The

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[1] The gazetteer was the work of the 'Social and economic study of medieval London' project, funded by the Social Science Research Council, subsequently the Economic and Social Research Council, from 1979 to 1983 (grant number D00/23/004). It was published as D. Keene and V. Harding, *Historical Gazetteer of London before the Great Fire*, i: *Cheapside* (Chadwyck-Healey microfiche, 1987); available online at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/source.asp?pubid=8> (hereafter *Gazetteer*). The five parishes were All Hallows Honey Lane, St. Martin Ironmonger Lane, St. Mary le Bow, St. Mary Colechurch and St. Pancras Soper Lane. References to individual property histories are given in the form: *Gazetteer* + parish name + property reference. They can be accessed directly from the webpage noted above. All citations of *Gazetteer* entries were (re)accessed 1–31 Aug. 2011.

[2] 'People in place: families, households and housing in early modern London', funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (APN 16429), was a collaboration between Birkbeck, University of London, the Centre for Metropolitan History, Institute of Historical Research, and the Cambridge Group for the History of Population and Social Structure and ran from Oct. 2003 to Nov. 2006 (see <http://www.history.ac.uk/cmh/pip/> [accessed 10 Oct. 2011]). Subsequent projects were 'Housing environments and health in early modern London' (funded by the Wellcome Trust for the History of Medicine) and 'Life in the suburbs: health, domesticity and status in early modern London' (funded by the ESRC, Grant RES-062-23-1260). I would like to thank Mark Merry and Phil Baker, research officers on the successive projects, for help with data for this chapter.

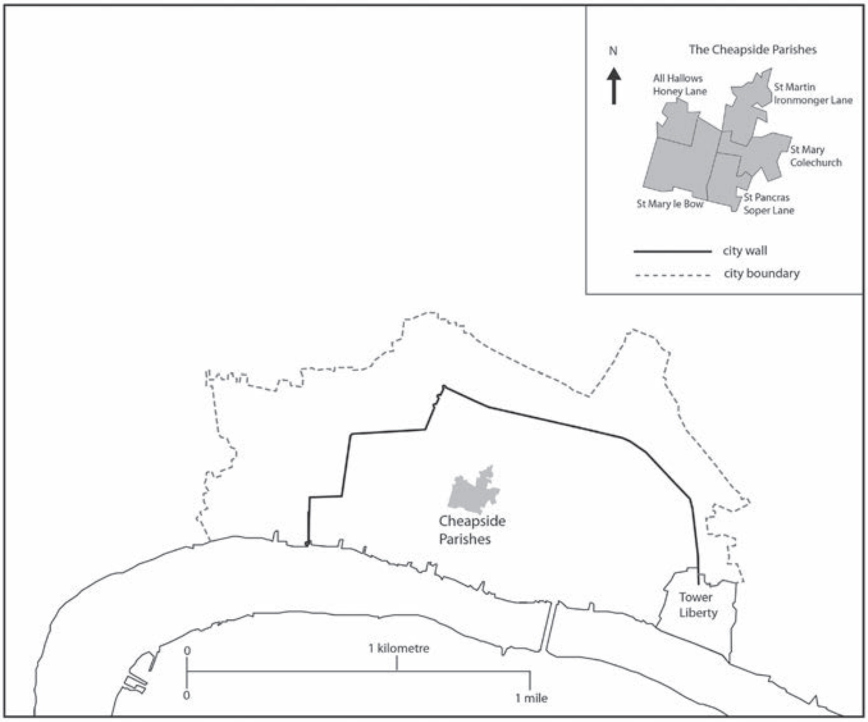
N
The Cheapside Parishes
All Hallows Honey Lane
St Martin Ironmonger Lane
St Mary Colechurch
St Pancras Soper Lane
St Mary le Bow
city wall
city boundary
Cheapside Parishes
Tower Liberty
0
1 kilometre
0
1 mile

Figure 8.1. Location of the five parishes in Cheapside investigated by the 'Social and economic study of medieval London' and 'People in place' projects.
For plot maps, see <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/source.aspx?pubid=8> [accessed 26 Sept. 2011]

present chapter draws on material collected for the gazetteer and 'People in place' to reconstruct some of the domestic spaces of early sixteenth-century Cheapside and populate them with families and households.[3] The aim is to show how the rich documentation for property history provides a firm basis on which to ground exploration of more personal kinds of data, often examined in isolation from the physical environment in which those individuals passed their lives. The key point is the household, an entity defined both by its members and by the domestic space they collectively occupied. While it is not claimed that Cheapside is typical of the whole of

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[3] An earlier version of this chapter was presented at a conference on 'Medieval domesticity: home, housing, and household', at the Center for Medieval Studies, Fordham University, New York, in March 2005. I am grateful to the British Academy's Conference Grants Fund for asistance attending the conference, and to Professor Maryanne Kowaleski of Fordham University for her comments on that paper.

London, let alone contemporary England, it represents a densely settled city-centre location, where particular urban forms of housing and, arguably, household evolved under the pressure of the demand for space and favoured location (Figure 8.1).[4]

The chapter focuses on the comparatively short period *c.*1500–1550, when London was experiencing a trade boom and the early stages of the huge demographic and physical expansion that transformed it in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The social relations and power structures of the medieval city were still intact, but coming under pressure from both economic and political forces. In the second half of the fifteenth century, London pulled out of the mid century trade slump, and began to capture an increasing proportion of England's export trade, especially in cloth, as this concentrated on the London-Antwerp axis. Between 1450 and 1550, London's cloth export rose sevenfold, while the value of imports rose nearly threefold.[5] Huge fortunes were being made, by London Merchant Adventurers in particular, and if this wealth did not necessarily percolate through London society – since the bulk of the trade was essentially in undyed broadcloths woven outside London – it nevertheless had an impact. For the craftsman and labourer too, the economic situation must have seemed good. A craftsman's or labourer's wage bought more in the second half of the fifteenth century than at any period over the sixteenth or seventeenth centuries. Wages were stable from the 1480s or 1490s to the 1540s, and though prices were rising, the drift was gradual: 22 per cent between the 1490s and the early 1540s. London wages were normally a quarter to a third higher than in the provinces, and this differential was retained even as the population grew.[6]

From the second half of the fifteenth century London had been experiencing accelerating population growth. Between 1500 and 1550 the capital's population may have grown from 50–60,000 to perhaps 70–80,000.[7] A good deal of this growth took place outside the centre, in Westminster, Southwark and the suburbs; city centre rents did not rise appreciably until the mid sixteenth century.[8] One reason for the slow rise of city-centre rents must be that there was still plenty of property to be had; and one implication is that early Tudor Londoners were able to afford comparatively spacious and perhaps better quality housing. City landlords had faced difficulties in the fifteenth century, with rents low and the cost of wages and building materials high: they could not let all their properties, they could not prevent tenants from defaulting and disappearing, they could not always keep buildings in good repair against a future upturn in demand.[9] But it may therefore have been a buyer's, or tenant's, market. Derek Keene has suggested that it is likely that a closer coincidence between one house and one family developed in the later middle ages, after the overcrowding of the years before the Black Death.[10] Certainly the size of commercial units increased, and the extreme division of land to accommodate shops and selling spaces only a few feet square, documented in the early fourteenth century, never recurred. London in 1500 was less crowded, with more open space between and behind buildings. Even in and near Cheapside itself, the commercial heart of the city, there were open plots where houses had once stood. No quarter of the city was far distant from real open space in the outskirts. As late as the 1530s it was possible to send a child to fetch milk 'hot from the cow' in Goodman's Fields, a few minutes walk from Aldgate – or so John Stow famously recalled at the end of the century.[11]

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[4] See V. Harding, 'Families and housing in 17th-century London', *Parergon*, xxiv (2007), 115–38; P. Baker and M. Merry, '"For the house, herself and one servant": family and household in late 17th-century London', *London Journal*, xxxiv (2009), 205–32.

[5] C. M. Barron, *London in the Later Middle Ages: Government and People, 1200–1500* (Oxford, 2004), pp. 102–9.

[6] S. Rappaport, *Worlds within Worlds: Structures of Life in 16th-Century London* (Cambridge, 1989), pp. 85, 130–1; J. Boulton, 'Wage labour in 17th-century London', *Economic History Review*, xlix (1996), 268–90.

[7] See V. Harding, 'The population of London, 1550–1700: a review of the published evidence', *London Journal*, xv (1990), 111–28.

Housing in early Tudor Cheapside

How were broader patterns of demographic and economic change in the early sixteenth century reflected in the domestic accommodation of Londoners? Records of property-holding allow occasional but sometimes very detailed insights into living quarters and how they evolved. At any given time, a city's housing stock will be of varying ages, so descriptions from a later period may well give a fair picture of a property's general layout and accommodation at an earlier date. At this time it was landlords rather than tenants who repaired and rebuilt leasehold property, and the documentation for repair and rebuilding offers important insights into what was deemed desirable and lettable, as well as an indication of demand.

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[8] A. G. Rosser, *Medieval Westminster, 1200–1540* (Oxford, 1989); M. Carlin, *Medieval Southwark* (1996); *London Bridge: Selected Accounts and Rentals, 1381–1547*, ed. V. Harding and L. Wright (London Record Society, xxxi, 1994), pp. xviii–xix; D. Keene, *Cheapside before the Great Fire* (ESRC pamphlet, 1987), p. 20.

[9] *Gazetteer*, *passim*; Harding and Wright, *London Bridge*, p. xix.

[10] Derek Keene, personal communication.

[11] John Stow, *A Survey of London*, ed. C. L. Kingsford (2 vols., Oxford, 1908; repr. 1968), i. 126.

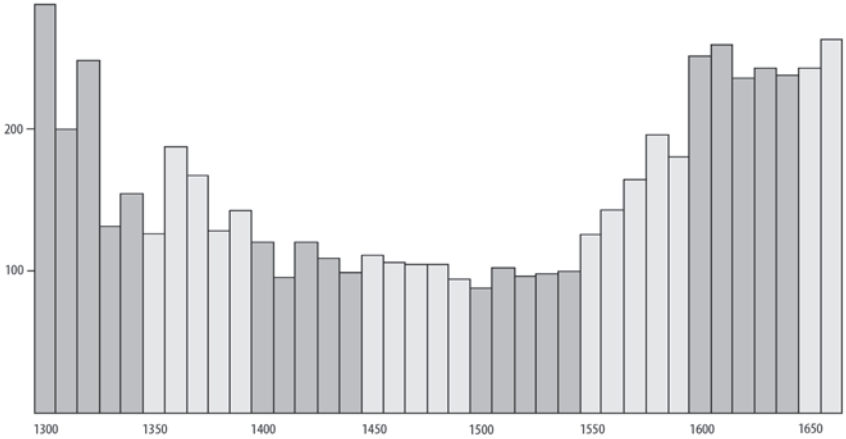

Figure 8.2. Cheapside land values by decades, 1300–1670, shown as indices corrected for inflation.

Source: D. Keene, *Cheapside before the Great Fire* (Economic and Social Research Council, 1985), p. 20.

The property market in Cheapside was surprisingly slow to respond to the demographic and economic upturn of later medieval London. For much of the later fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries rents were stable or falling, but there is a complex chronology of resistance, failure and renewed confidence (Figure 8.2).

It is the most substantial properties that are the most fully documented, but this does also indicate that landlords of larger properties were prepared to invest rather than see their real estate deteriorate, even though the return on the investment might take some time to come in. Larger London-based landlords such as St. Paul's cathedral, the Bridge House and the livery companies were usually fairly successful at maintaining the value of their properties, but even they experienced difficulties. The Skinners' Company responded to vacancies of their property in Honey Lane parish in the later fifteenth century by investing in repairs in the 1490s and early 1500s. Works included making a hearth, a pentice over a garret window, paving and work in the cellar. A new stone floor was laid in the kitchen, three chimneys were mended, and doors and windows renewed. This seems to have enabled them to let it again, though they continued to repair the tenement, at times substantially, and it is not clear if they were making a net profit.[12]

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[12] *Gazetteer*, All Hallows Honey Lane, 11/9.

From the 1520s we can see a number of major repair and rebuilding projects, probably aimed at the upper end of the market. Cheapside was certainly the home of wealthy merchants, with high assessments recorded in the early Tudor taxes, and Mercers' Hall, headquarters also of the Merchant Adventurers, dominant at the eastern end of the street. Mercers' Hall itself was rebuilt between 1516 and 1522, involving a complicated reorganization of spaces and accommodation and a very considerable investment, later estimated at £2,735 16*s* 1*d*.[13] While the major beneficiaries of London's trade boom were limited in number – in 1535, seventeen Merchant Adventurers owned nearly half the cloths sent to the Antwerp summer market[14] – there was a larger class of moderately prosperous traders, for whom a location on or near Cheapside was desirable. It is not clear that there was a real competition for properties before 1550, sufficient to push up rents across the board; what we see are landlords investing in rebuilding to attract substantial tenants at enhanced rents.

The landlords whose records best represent this trend were the mercantile livery companies; their members had direct experience of the property market, as both occupiers and rentiers, and could identify the features that would make a property attractive to men like themselves. Though the Mercers' Company were the pre-eminent institutional landowner in the eastern end of Cheapside, the Drapers' Company also owned several properties there (in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries their fraternity met in St. Mary le Bow)[15] and appear to have invested shrewdly in their upkeep. They had one house in Honey Lane, behind the church, let for £4 a year in the 1480s but for only £3 6*s* 8*d* by 1506. From 1526 to 1528 the company undertook a major rebuilding costing over £100. The works included renewing or repairing the frame of the house using timbers of great scantling; paving the buttery, larderhouse and the entry between kitchen and hall; and making stairs and numerous windows. Already quite spacious, the rebuilding created an updated and substantial house in a desirable location, with accommodation including a cellar or cellars, kitchen, larder, shops and warehouse, a hall upstairs with a chamber next to it, a buttery and countinghouse nearby, a closet by the buttery, a parlour, chambers on the floor above, and two garrets. It had glazed windows on all aspects, including a new bay window in the hall and the chamber over it and clerestories for the countinghouse, parlour and the chamber over the parlour. The Drapers were able to raise the rent to £7 from 1528, even though there were still some works going on.[16] At much the same time the Drapers paid for substantial repairs to their house in Bow Churchyard, including making a new bay window for the hall and chamber in 1527–8, boarding for the hall floor and shop windows and repairs to the kitchen chimney in 1532–3, and roof repairs, including new rafters and purlins, in 1536–7. The shop and kitchen were floored or paved in 1538–9 and 1543–4.[17]

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[13] *Gazetteer*, St. Mary Colechurch, 105/18; cf. *The Mercers' Hall*, ed. J. Imray (1991), pp. 10–16.

[14] B. Dietz, 'Antwerp and London, structure and balance of trade in the 1560s', in *Wealth and Power in Tudor England: Essays Presented to G. R. Elton*, ed. E. W. Ives, R. J. Knecht and J. J.Scarisbrick (1978), pp. 191–2.

[15] *Gazetteer*, St. Mary le Bow, 104/0.

The cycle of decline and renewal is even more graphically illustrated by another property on Cheapside opposite the Standard. This belonged to the Bridge House, which appears to have allowed it to fall into disrepair and vacancy in the early sixteenth century. The last tenants left in 1508–9 and the house had fallen down or been demolished by 1512. In 1536, when the City recovered possession, it was was described as late a messuage, fallen down and now desolate and a void plot in the 'most chief place' of the city. Between 1536 and 1538 the Bridge wardens rebuilt the property as one house (it had formerly been two). The total cost is not separately recorded, but work included digging and laying new foundations, making vaults and chimneys, raising a new timber frame, and the use of 30,000 bricks. Rooms mentioned include a hall (facing Cheapside) with a chamber over it and another on the highest storey, a parlour (facing backwards) with a chamber over it, a countinghouse, buttery, kitchen, jakes and garret. The house was finished to a high specification for comfort and appearance. The hall had forty-four panes of glass, the parlour seventeen, and even the windows in the jakes and countinghouse were glazed. In all, 450 (square) ft. of glass was used, and seventy-one 'quarrels' or squares of glass with the Bridge House mark and the date. Hair plaster was used, implying fine interior plasterwork, ten double plate-locks were purchased, and the house was topped with two gilded finials and vanes. A new tenant was found even before the rebuilding began, and he paid a substantially increased rent.[18]

An example of the private rebuilding of a substantial Cheapside property to match these institutional investments is the property known as the Key at the corner of Soper Lane. This was a prominent site, long associated with high-quality retail (in the fourteenth century it had been known as the Broad Seld and contained a number of retail spaces or standings). The property was rebuilt by the mercer Richard Collyer around 1530, and a description some fifteen years later gives a good picture of the accommodation thus created.

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[16] *Gazetteer*, All Hallows Honey Lane, 11/5.

[17] *Gazetteer*, St. Mary le Bow, 104/14.

[18] *Gazetteer*, All Hallows Honey Lane, 11/1. For details of the rebuilding, see Harding and Wright, *London Bridge*, nos. 470, 472–5, 479, 481, 497, 502–6, 510-29, 531, 533, 545.

The ground floor space was largely reserved for business, with a great shop and a lower warehouse both equipped with canvas-covered warebenches. On the upper floors were a hall ceiled with wainscot and with a cupboard built into the wainscot; a parlour next to the street with a carved portal of wainscot; and a chamber next to the street with a wainscot portal. Also in the premises were a 'summer parlour' ceiled round about with wainscot and with a wainscot portal; a 'fyshehouse' with wainscot shelves; and a counting-house over the hall, also with shelves. The overall height of the house is not stated but it is likely to have extended to three or four storeys above ground, plus garrets. Later leases of the same house (which by 1587 was in great need of repair) mention cellars, yards and various small chambers.[19]

The confidence expressed in the repair and rebuilding of substantial houses was not reflected in the lower end of the market. A striking feature of Cheapside in the later middle ages was the disappearance of the tiny retail outlets that had characterized it in the fourteenth century. A row of eight small shops at the top of Soper Lane disappeared in the fifteenth or early sixteenth century, and was said in 1532 to have fallen down 'in the default of the owners of the same'.[20] On the other side of the same street, in 1489, herbs were sold on the vacant site of a former shop. The 'herbwives' were still occupying it in 1517–19, and in 1537 this and the adjoining plot were described as 'certain ground whereupon old ruinous houses now stand'.[21] It is possible that many of these shops were pentices or flimsy street-front stalls attached to more solid buildings, and were never occupied as residential units, but other small units had combined retail and living accommodation, and these seem also to have been subject to change and reconfiguration.

Backlands and off-street properties were certainly at risk of decay and abandonment, and if this is true of Cheapside it seems likely to be even more the case elsewhere. A group of small houses behind St. Mary le Bow church gave way to a green space used as part of the churchyard.[22] Houses at the far end of the the cul-de-sac called Bordhaw Lane seem to have been abandoned by their owners and occupants and much of the site was vacant by the 1530s if not earlier; in 1556 it was described as one tenement or toft or parcel of waste land, sometime built in two several parts, lying together and forming one whole curtilage.[23] In most cases the dereliction probably took place in the fifteenth century, but there is at least one striking example from the sixteenth. A complex of seven or more small houses off Popkirtle Lane, for which £9 rent was paid in 1504, gradually declined over the next forty years (despite some quite costly repairs) as the tenants came and went, and vacancies and arrears accumulated. By 1546 it seems probable that several of the houses or holdings recorded in the 1520s and 1530s were unoccupied or had fallen down; the property was being used as a carpenter's yard, for a rent of only £2 for the whole. In 1551 it was described as a house or tenement with courtyard, well and sawpit, little garden and shed in the court, and other ground now occupied by carpenters. The 1550s seem to have been the nadir of the site's fortunes, and parts were subsequently sold off and rebuilt, including a house later occupied by a wealthy scrivener's family.[24] Not all backland properties were allowed to decline in this way, of course, though it is never easy to say what helped one to survive while another failed.

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[19] *Gazetteer*, St. Pancras Soper Lane, 145/10.

[20] *Gazetteer*, St. Pancras Soper Lane, 145/7.

[21] *Gazetteer*, St. Pancras Soper Lane, 145/30.

[22] *Gazetteer*, St. Mary le Bow, 104/3B.

[23] *Gazetteer*, St. Mary Colechurch, 105/6, 105/7.

It is often hard to see what happened to the sorts of property likely to be occupied by lesser citizens. Better quality was important to keeping tenants and value at this level too. St. Paul's cathedral built four row-houses in Ironmonger Lane in 1420, on part of its property there; though its income from the whole property declined over the fifteenth century, the rents for these newer buildings held their value a little better than the older part of the property.[25] An interesting alternative scenario is indicated in the case of a property belonging to St. Bartholomew's priory on the north side of Cheapside. This was a long narrow site (over fifty metres long by about six and a half metres wide), occupied by ten or eleven small tenements ranged along an alley. The property seems to have retained its value rather better, and at the time of the Dissolution the whole was valued at £18 2*s* 8*d* rent, though we do not know if all of this was actually being received by the priory. The houses differed in size and value, but as an example, one of them, in the upper part of the alley, was a tenement with two shops, a parlour with chamber over, a kitchen and a yard, held on a forty-one-year lease from 1533 at £1 6*s* 8*d* rent. Most of the houses in the alley were leased in the 1520s and 1530s for similarly modest rents, with the obligation to repair laid on the tenant, and it could be that this arrangement suited their occupants better than relying on a landlord to repair.[26]

Fixtures and furnishings

Describing houses and properties, and how they changed, is one thing, furnishing and peopling them is another, but both are important to understanding the lived environment. The wealth and social prominence of Cheapside's major inhabitants ensure that some key records of family survive, especially wills, though sixteenth-century London is unfortunately very short of probate inventories and accounts. There are more lease schedules, and though these are limited to landlord's fixtures they can be indicative. As before, they relate to the better properties and more attentive landlords, but they add to the impression of well-equipped and comfortably appointed dwelling space for this group. Lease schedules document the number of rooms comprising a particular property, and often indicate the different uses to which they were put: shop, warehouse, hall, buttery, parlour, chambers, kitchen, sheds or buildings for storing wood and coal.[27] Among the fixtures landlords were keen to identify and preserve were glass and lattice windows; ironwork to secure doors and windows; shelves and cupboards and sometimes cisterns in kitchens. Wainscot or panelling are often listed, and occasionally movable furniture.[28]

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[24] *Gazetteer*, St. Pancras Soper Lane, 145/18.

[25] *Gazetteer*, St. Martin Ironmonger Lane, 95/5.

[26] *Gazetteer*, All Hallows Honey Lane, 11/11.

Records relating to a property in Ironmonger Lane give us the fullest insight into the home and furnishings of a moderately wealthy Londoner of the mid sixteenth century in this area. We know from an agreement of 1517 that the house had a parlour, several chambers, garrets and an internal privy, and that it had glass and lattice windows. From later descriptions it appears to have extended along Ironmonger Lane, with some intermixture giving an upper room or rooms a view over Cheapside; it is possible that the hall, parlour and warehouse all adjoined the lane at ground floor level and that the kitchen was at the same level to the rear.[29] A rare probate inventory also survives for the house's late occupant in 1551. Leonard Barker, a mercer, occupied the house in the 1540s as undertenant of his brother Ambrose, at £3 rent. In 1541 Leonard was assessed for the subsidy at £150 in goods, above the median but well below the mean for the ward, where the assessed worth of the richest men was over £1,000. However, this assessment seems seriously to underestimate his likely real wealth, unless he had an exceptionally successful decade between 1541 and 1551: at his death in 1551 his estate was valued at £1,787 10*s* 8*d*, with his household goods alone worth £165, and he had £230 in ready money and nearly £1,400 in good debts. Even so, he is unlikely to have been unique in being under-assessed, and though certainly prosperous he was probably still well short of the wealthiest group of Londoners.[30]

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[27] *Gazetteer*, St. Pancras Soper Lane, 145/36B.

[28] E.g., *Gazetteer*, St. Mary le Bow, 104/20.

[29] *Gazetteer*, St. Martin Ironmonger Lane, 95/18B.

[30] *Gazetteer*, St. Martin Ironmonger Lane, 95/18B; *Two Tudor Subsidy Assessment Rolls for the City of London: 1541 and 1582*, ed. R. G. Lang (London Record Society, xxix, 1993),

On Barker's death in 1551 the contents of his house were appraised by his neighbours.[31] The inventory lists the rooms in the house and their contents one by one, and reveals a very comfortable domestic scene, with objects selected for decoration and display as well as utility. The main living rooms were a hall and parlour, both containing tables and stools; the hall also had chairs, carpets, cushions and a picture of a woman, while the parlour was furnished with hangings, window curtains, a looking glass and fire-irons. Probably also used in these rooms were cupboard cloths of crewel work, tapestry carpets and cushions of 'verderwork'.[32] Barker evidently kept a good table: although no stocks of food or wine are listed in the inventory, the kitchen contained a large quantity of cooking equipment, including a copper kettle, brass pots, pans, frying-pans and chafing-dishes; fire-irons, racks, trivets and a turning spit; a stone mortar and pestle; two coops and a trough for keeping chickens; and distilling apparatus. The provision for dining included numerous pewter serving dishes, among them chargers, butter-dishes, an egg-dish and two pie plates; pewter platters, dishes and porringers; pewter pots (jugs or tankards) for wine and ale; three salts, three goblets, four pots and a maser, all gilt or parcel gilt; and twelve silver spoons. The stock of napery was equally impressive, with two damask and three diaper tablecloths, twenty-one plain, old or coarse tablecloths, and two dozen diaper napkins, two dozen 'plain napkins wrought', and four dozen plain napkins. In all, Barker could easily have set a table for a dozen people with his best dining wares, and accommodated a number more with lesser-quality goods.

Comfort as well as utility were equally apparent in the more private quarters of the house. There were five chambers, all containing beds, mattresses and bedding, and some other furniture such as tables or chests. The first-mentioned chamber, probably Barker's own, had a standing bed with tester and curtains, featherbeds, and a coverlet with flowers, a trundle bed, and a child's cradle. The chamber over the hall had a joined bed and a trundle bed, both well furnished with featherbeds, bolsters, coverlets and blankets, and a close stool with a brass pan. 'The maydene chamber' contained an old standing bed with a tester and curtains, feather pillows,

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no. 69; Northamptonshire County Record Office (hereafter NCRO), I (L), 194. Leonard Barker's estate formed the basis for the business capital of John Isham, who married his widow Elizabeth and had charge of his sons' inheritance (*John Isham, Mercer and Merchant Adventurer: Two Account Books of a London Merchant in the Reign of Elizabeth I*, ed. G. Ramsay (Northampton Record Society, xxi, 1962), pp. xxxvi–xxxviii, 170–1).

[31] NCRO, I (L), 194. This is the source for the next three paragraphs.

[32] *OED*: Verder, see *Verdure* 3: a rich tapestry ornamented with representations of trees or other vegetation.

and two presses. Only the chamber over the kitchen had few pretensions, with an old bedstead, an old mattress, a flock bed and an old coverlet and blanket. Bedlinen, listed separately, included fine sheets and pillowberes, wrought and diaper 'coverpanes' and a quantity of old or worn sheets and pillowberes. Barker's own wardrobe was also extensive, with several doublets, jackets, coats and gowns. Fabrics included damask, velvet, satin, camlet, russet and frieze. The gowns included one new black gown, perhaps a funeral gift, and three of 'pewicke' (pewke, an inky blue), faced with fur or satin, possibly livery gowns.[33] Not surprisingly, the house had numerous chests, aumbries, cupboards and presses to hold this substantial household stock.

There is some limited evidence of Barker's business activities, but it may be that the greater part of these took place away from home. He was probably an exporter of cloth and/or wool to the Low Countries, like many fellow-Mercers, and if so he would not necessarily have taken personal possession of the goods he was trading; there is little in the inventory to suggest that he was a significant retailer of imported silk and textiles, the classic mercer's trade. He seems to have used the chamber adjoining his own as a business office: as well as two old bedsteads and a modest amount of bedding, glass bottles, a sword and an axe, it contained a joined countinghouse with two little chests and shelves, other chests and cupboards, a little 'bougette' (perhaps a budget or moneybag) and 'a ryste to wind silk'. The warehouse contained lockable ware-chests, other chests, 'malles' (trunks or boxes), six sarplers and thirty-three ells of Newcastle canvas. Barker owned two 'ambling' horses, saddlery and riding coats and cloaks, as well as a 'malle pyllyon',[34] suggesting that he was an active traveller in person, at least in England. He had several desperate debts in York and Wakefield, again implying cloth trading, but it is not clear whether the £1,373 8*s* 2*d* of 'good debts due to the testator in England', mostly from Londoners, represent trade debts or moneylending activities or a mixture of both. The list of debts was probably transcribed from notes or bonds written by Barker himself, since debtors named included 'my brother Perche' and 'my mother'. He had the substantial sum of £230 3*s* 9*d* in 'ready money at the hour of his death', and he owed very little (£17 6*s* 10*d* to 'divers persons as by a bill of particulars appears').[35] G. D. Ramsay suggests that he may have disposed of his stock-in-trade before his death, thus explaining the absence of wares and the large amount of cash in hand.[36]

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[33] He bequeathed two of his gowns to his brother and brother-in-law (The National Archives of the UK: Public Record Office, PROB 11/35 fos. 3v–4, will of Leonard Barker).

[34] *OED: mail pillion n.* at mail *n. 2* Compounds 3: a pad or cushion on the hinder part of a saddle used for resting a mail or piece of luggage in transport.

[35] NCRO, I (L), 194.

In the absence of other inventories, we cannot tell how typical Barker's well-furnished house and household were of others in Cheapside at the time. Some wills offer information for comparison, such as that of Richard Mylles (d. 1545) of St. Mary Colechurch, who left a Turkey carpet, five gowns and enough household stuff to equip each of his three principal heirs with a bed and bedding, a dozen napkins, a generous amount of pewter and brass, and a chest and cushions.[37] That this accumulation was not uncommon, however, is suggested by William Harrison's 1587 comment on the 'great provision of tapestry, Turkey work, pewter, brass, fine linen, and thereto costly cupboards of plate' to be found 'in the houses ... of merchantmen, and some other wealthy citizens'.[38] We can probably imagine, therefore, that the majority of larger Cheapside houses of 1550 contained similar quantities of household goods, directed towards display, hospitality and public and private comfort.

The domestic group: families and spaces

Substantial, multi-room dwellings, rebuilt to modern standards, furnished for pleasure and business: how were they inhabited? What can we say of the family and household groups who occupied them? In the first half of the sixteenth century there is little demographic data as such, at least until 1538, though there is some illuminating if anecdotal documentation of other kinds, so reconstituting the domestic group is an exercise in extrapolation and back-projection with occasional hard evidence.

'People in place' and its successor projects examined family and household in Cheapside, Clerkenwell and St. Botolph Aldgate from the mid sixteenth century to the early eighteenth, using parish register data and the listings of inhabitants or householders culminating in the returns to the Marriage Duty Tax of 1695, a virtual census of London's population. Analysis of the latter for four of the five Cheapside parishes and one precinct of St. Botolph Aldgate parish yielded interesting and sometimes surprising conclusions and a formal schema for classifying metropolitan household structure. Baker and Merry stress the importance for such an analysis of distinguishing between the family, the co-resident conjugal or parent-child group, related by blood and/or marriage; the household, the economic and social unit with an identifiable head and normally with a family group at its centre; and the houseful, the inhabitants of a single property, possibly including more than one household. Only if these distinctions are carefully observed can valid comparisons be made from one area or, by implication, one period to another. No source comparable to the Marriage Duty Tax listings exists for early sixteenth-century London. Reconstructions of family groups have for the most part to be made from wills, and as is well known these rarely give a full picture of either family or household, though they can establish a minimum. However, Baker and Merry's analysis offers a vocabulary and framework with which to approach the subject, as well as a picture of the late seventeenth-century situation for comparison. In 1695, Cheapside families were small, averaging 2.3 persons, the same as Aldgate; extended or multigenerational families were rare. Mean houseful size, however, was quite large, at 6.6, owing partly to the presence of subsidiary or lodging households and individuals within the property, but far more to the widespread presence of servants and apprentices (over 33 per cent of the population). Single adults were common; nearly a quarter of housefuls contained no married couples, and there was a high occurrence of single parenthood. Children (defined not by given ages but by being identified as sons and daughters, so possibly including dependent teenagers or even twenty-somethings) made up only 20 per cent of the population.[39]

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[36] Ramsay, *John Isham*, p. xxxvi.

[37] *London Consistory Court Wills, 1492–1547*, ed. I. Darlington (London Record Society, iii, 1967), no. 215. Richard Mylles's property or residence in St. Mary Colechurch is not known. He was assessed at £40 in 1541 (Lang, *Two Tudor Subsidy Rolls*, no. 69).

[38] W. Harrison, *A Description of England*, quoted by I. Archer, 'Material Londoners?', in *Material London ca. 1600*, ed. L. C. Orlin (Philadelphia, Pa., 2000), pp. 174–92, at p. 176.

Although it is not possible to reconstruct the size and composition of the family group in early sixteenth-century Cheapside with certainty, there are some clues. Most of the wills of householders from this area indicate that they were married men; there seem to be relatively few widow householders, at least of long standing. In the parish of St. Mary Colechurch in 1574, thirty-one of forty households (77 per cent) were headed by a married couple.[40] A comparison of the subsidy return for 1541 with the surviving parish register for St. Mary le Bow, which begins in 1538, suggests that half to two-thirds of households had children at home. Although the number of households in this parish at this date is not known exactly, it was probably around sixty to seventy.[41] Twenty of thirty-five subsidy-payers in St. Mary le Bow parish in 1541 baptized no children in the decade 1538–47. These included several of the wealthiest taxpayers, senior figures in age and status, whose children may have grown and left, and a number of the lowest-rated taxpayers, who may not yet have established families. Several other known residents also baptized no children. Fifty fathers (including fifteen subsidy-payers) baptized children within the decade, though not all of these men can be shown to have been resident. In all, there seem to have been about twenty-five to thirty resident families baptizing children in this decade.[42] Others may have completed their families but still had some children at home. William Hanson, for instance, occupied a house on the south side of Cheapside, and was rated at £50 for the subsidy in 1541. Although he baptized no children in the years 1538–47, he probably had two or three older children at home in this period: his daughter married in St. Mary le Bow in 1551, his son Arthur was of age to share in his business by 1558, and George Hanson, buried in 1543, could have been another son.[43]

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[39] Baker and Merry, '"For the house, herself, and one servant"'.

[40] Mercers' Hall, Mercers' Company Register of Writings ii, fos. 13–14.

[41] The parish contained 83 tithe-paying households in 1638 (*The Inhabitants of London in 1638*, ed. T. C. Dale (Society of Genealogists, 1938), pp. 109–10).

Households did not, of course, consist just of biological families: apprentices, servants and some journeymen all expected board and lodging. Given the general prosperity of the Cheapside area, and the mercantile occupations of many inhabitants, it is likely that most households contained some persons in these categories. Though William Hanson had no young children by the time of his death in 1558, he had a maidservant and an apprentice, and his surviving son may also have lived with him.[44] But as noted above, wills, while useful anecdotally, are not a reliable guide to the presence of such individuals. Parish registers do not consistently identify status, but six out of twenty-eight persons buried in All Hallows Honey Lane between 1538 and 1543 were designated as servants (four male and two female), while the eighty burials in St. Pancras Soper Lane between 1538 and 1548 included thirteen servants (eight male and five female) and seven apprentices (six male and one female).[45] In St. Mary Colechurch in 1574, only one household out of forty was certainly without servants; thirty servants are mentioned, of whom four were male and four female, in fourteen households, but twenty-five of the remaining twenty-six households contained 'others' or 'other communicants' in addition to the householder, and these 'others' probably comprised a mixture of teenage children, servants, apprentices, resident journeymen and in some cases other kin. Some of these 'servants' were presumably domestics, but others may have been employees of the business; the largest number of servants mentioned in any one household was five, and this was for the Mitre tavern. Given that this source does not list children under the age of first communion, total household size cannot be calculated, but at least a quarter of households in this parish contained seven or more persons, not counting any younger children.[46]

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[42] Comparison of the subsidy returns for St. Mary le Bow parish (Lang, *Two Tudor Subsidy Rolls*, nos. 66, 77) with the parish register (*The Registers of St Mary le Bowe, Cheapside, All Hallows Honey Lane, and of St Pancras Soper Lane, London*, i: *Baptisms and Burials*, ed. W. B. Bannerman (Harleian Society, xliv, 1912), pp. 1–6). The 'other known residents' are individuals recorded in property transfers of the time (see *Gazetteer*, St. Mary le Bow, 104, *passim*). In general, most fathers baptizing two or more children can be linked to a specific property; most fathers who cannot be so linked only baptized one child (or, in two cases, a pair of twins). In all these calculations a large allowance must be made for those who escaped the record in one way or another.

[43] *Gazetteer*, St. Mary le Bow, 104/16; Lang, *Two Tudor Subsidy Rolls*, no. 77; Bannerman, *The Registers of St Mary le Bowe*, i. 1–6, 170, ii. 319; TNA: PRO, PROB 11/41 fo. 184v, will of William Hanson.

[44] TNA: PRO, PROB 11/41 fo. 184v, will of William Hanson.

[45] Bannerman, *The Registers of St Mary le Bowe*, i.

Turning from extrapolation to individual cases, Leonard Barker's immediate family at the time he made his will on 3 December 1551, shortly before his death and burial on 6 December, seems to have comprised himself, his second wife Elizabeth (to whom he left the remaining term of the lease), his daughter by his first marriage Anne, and two young sons Leonard and Thomas. Leonard senior was about forty-five at the time of his death; Elizabeth may have been much younger, possibly only in her twenties. Anne, though still a minor, was named executrix. Leonard junior and Thomas were infants, born in 1549 and 1551 respectively. Leonard Barker senior also made bequests to Joan, a maidservant, and Alice, his child's nurse. Certainly there is evidence scattered through the inventory (a cradle, a cradle cloth, a christening towel, a face cloth for a child) indicating one or more infants at home. Barker's mother was alive, but there is no indication where she was living. But he could have had apprentices or resident journeymen, not mentioned in the will, and he might have had more servants, so the total size (above the seven presumed members) and full composition of his household is uncertain.[47] However, a house with at least two reception rooms and five chambers would have offered spacious accommodation for quite a large household, while the list of household goods shows it was well equipped both for sleeping and dining. Leonard's household probably continued for another year in this house, or at least until his widow married the twenty-six-year-old mercer John Isham in October 1552. Leonard's son Thomas did not survive childhood, but Anne and Leonard junior both lived to adulthood and marriage.[48]

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[46] Mercers' Hall, Mercers' Company Register of Writings ii, fos. 13–14. The source is an Easter Book or enumeration of communicants by household, so there is no record of children under the age of communion. My reading of the source is that the enumerators specified 'servants' only when there were no other dependent communicant persons in the household, other than the householder's wife, if present; where there were dependants in more than one category, they simply noted them all under the heading 'others'.

[47] TNA: PRO, PROB 11/35 fos. 3v–4, will of Leonard Barker; NCRO, I (L), 194. Barker's mother is listed as a debtor in the inventory. The International Genealogical Index (IGI) (<https://www.familysearch.org> [accessed 20 Aug. 2011]) gives Leonard Barker senior's date of birth as 1505–7, and his marriage to Elizabeth as 1546. She went on to have another eight children with John Isham (IGI; Ramsay, *John Isham*, p. xxxvi).

There are occasions when a combination of testamentary, property and demographic evidence come together to tell an interesting story. One such case is the Key at the corner of Soper Lane. This house, as noted above, was rebuilt by Richard Collyer around 1530, and it was occupied by him until his death in 1533. Collyer was a mercer, 'a merchant of great substance', and the well-equipped shop and warehouses must have served his business. The rest of the house (hall, parlours, chambers and garrets) accommodated him, his wife Katherine and his two children George and Dorothy, both under age in 1533 (Dorothy was under sixteen), and probably some servants and/or apprentices. According to Collyer's will, Katherine was to have the Key until George came of age. The will makes no mention of apprentices or servants, so the size of his household, as opposed to his family, cannot be ascertained. Collyer died in early 1533, and Katherine continued to live in the Key, though a tenant may have rented the shop. Within a short time she remarried, to another mercer, Robert Packington, and he moved in with her. Robert was the brother of Humphrey Packington, one of Collyer's overseers; he had been married before, but it is not clear if his son Thomas came to live with Robert and Katherine in the Key. It was a short marriage, however: Robert Packington was murdered in November 1536, shot dead just after he left his house in Cheapside to go to mass at the church of St. Thomas of Acre. After three years of second widowhood Katherine married Michael Dormer, alderman and mercer, in August 1539; by about this time, it appears that Collyer's children had died under age, and the Mercers' Company, residuary legatees, began to press for possession of the property. Katherine was widowed again in 1546, but she appears to have ceased to live in the Key before that time.[49] Again, the total size of the household cannot be ascertained, but the family fluctuated between three and four individuals, headed alternately by a married couple and a widow.

Often the most illuminating documents are those that detail how accommodation was to be shared, since these indicate what a couple or family regarded as necessary for living. Part of the Pewter Pott in Ironmonger

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[48] Ramsay, *John Isham*, pp. xxxvi–xxxviii, 39–40, 41–3, 143. The entry in the register of St. Martin Ironmonger Lane recording the marriage of 'Anne Backer' to 'John Isome' on 6 Oct. 1552 probably refers to the marriage of Elizabeth Barker and John Isham (Guildhall Library, MS. 4392).

[49] *Gazetteer*, St. Pancras Soper Lane, 145/10; TNA: PRO, PROB 11/24 fos. 182v–183v, will of Richard Collier; Bannerman, *The Registers of St Mary le Bowe*, ii. 439; *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, sub Richard Collyer, Robert Pakington (<http://www.oxforddnb.com> [accessed 20 Aug. 2011]).

Lane was leased in 1517, reserving certain rooms for the existing occupant, Richard Lyster, girdler, for the lives of himself and his wife. We know from later evidence – this is Leonard Barker's property – that the house had a hall, parlour, kitchen, warehouse and at least five chambers upstairs. The Lysters were to keep two chambers, one of them called the 'presse chamber', perhaps indicating that it contained presses or chests; a garret over one of the chambers; and the use of the parlour next to these chambers, which they were to share with the new tenant, Ambrose Barker, grocer. One of the chambers kept by the Lysters contained a 'wyddraught', probably denoting a privy connected to the vault. The Lysters' share of the house was probably adequate in size, though neither self-contained nor self-sufficient, if Ambrose Barker occupied the commercial premises, the hall and the kitchen; it is not clear how and where the Lysters were to dine. Barker assumed responsibility for some maintenance, while the landlord was to do major repairs, including cleansing the privy vault. The Lysters had occupied the property for at least nineteen years before this date, and this agreement allowed them to continue living in the same house while relinquishing responsibility for rent and maintenance; perhaps they were downsizing for reasons of age or income.[50] If this group were to be described according to the terms defined by Baker and Merry, this would be a houseful containing two households, Ambrose Barker's and Richard Lyster's, though the size and composition of these households and families are unknown.

A different sort of arrangement was negotiated between John Eccleston and Christopher Payne, both grocers, in 1550, for a house in All Hallows Honey Lane. Payne had been Eccleston's apprentice, and they may still have been in business together, since various conditions concerning the supply of goods formed part of the agreement. Eccleston let part of his dwellinghouse, the Boar's Head in Honey Lane, in which he had been living for ten years or more, to Payne for eighteen years. Eccleston retained the chamber within which he then lay, the 'Maydens Chamber' within the same, a little room at the head of the stairs known as William Eccleston's chamber, and free access to these rooms by the back door into Honey Lane. He also reserved the 'use, pleasure and commodity' of the hall, kitchen and buttery and the rooms within for himself, his wife and his servants, for four months in each of the first six years of Payne's term.[51] Although not mentioned in this agreement,

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[50] *Gazetteer*, St. Martin Ironmonger Lane, 95/18B.

[51] *Gazetteer*, All Hallows Honey Lane, 11/2. The agreement is recited in an inquisition post mortem (*Abstracts of Inquisitiones Post Mortem for the City of London*, pt. 1, ed. G. S. Fry (1896), pp. 110–26 (online at <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=65872> [accessed 20 Aug. 2011]).

Eccleston's family included a son, John, then aged about eleven, and a daughter, Dorcas, unmarried and probably also under age.[52] We do not know if the 'William Eccleston' mentioned above was another child or perhaps an older relative, nor whether the allusion to him indicates that he was living there too. John Eccleston's household group thus consisted of at least five persons and probably six or more (at least four family members and one or more servants), inhabiting three chambers and with part-time use of the public rooms and kitchen. Since Payne had presumably lived with Eccleston during his apprenticeship, it may be that this agreement represented a formalization of existing arrangements, or perhaps it marked a shift in the balance of space and responsibility attributed to each party. Payne was not married, but had at least one female servant and two apprentices, so the houseful comprised nine or more people in two households. It is not clear how the agreement worked in practice, but Eccleston must have had another property in which he and his family could spend the rest of the year; possibly he had acquired a country residence. The cohabitation did not in any case last long. Payne died in July 1551, possibly of the sweat then raging in London – his will mentions 'those poor women which have kept me in my sickness' – and Eccleston senior died in December 1551. John Eccleston junior, the heir, was then aged twelve. As far as we know he did not continue to occupy the property, and he sold the freehold almost as soon as he came of age in 1562.[53] Margery Eccleston, widow of John senior, however, was buried in the parish churchyard next to her late husband in 1571.[54]

Conclusion

There was clearly no archetypical 'Cheapside household' in the early sixteenth century, whether in structure, composition or duration, just as there was no single type of house. Family size is in any case dynamic, not static: there were shifting patterns as individuals were born, died, married, remarried and left home; many family groups fluctuated sharply owing to mortality, and co-resident 'families' might be the product of more than one marriage. In significant ways the family and household of this period seem to have resembled those of the later seventeenth century: fairly low numbers of children, but large household groups, containing people of diverse ages and relationships. There were numerous servants and apprentices, though perhaps a lower proportion of female servants than later. The houses they occupied were both old and new, conforming to a long-established network of plots and aspects but regularly and often expensively refurbished to meet new expectations. Privacy, physical comfort and the accumulation and display of attractive household goods were clearly important values.

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[52] She has been identified with the 'godlie matron' Dorcas Martin *née* Eccleston, 1536/7–99 (*ODNB*, sub Dorcas Martin (<http://www.oxforddnb.com> [accessed 20 Aug. 2011]).

[53] *Gazetteer*, All Hallows Honey Lane, 11/2; TNA: PRO, PROB 11/34 fo. 171r–v, will of Christopher Payne.

[54] Bannerman, *The Registers of St Mary le Bowe*, i. 261.

The latter also suggests sociability: a readiness to entertain and impress guests in the home. An important point that emerges from the sixteenth-century sources is that Cheapside households were not socially isolated units. They included unrelated individuals in the quasi-familial relationship of master/apprentice, who might well be keeping up connections with family elsewhere. They had links with other households in the neighbourhood through kinship, marriage, godparenthood and executorship, as well as the commercial and fraternal links provided by membership of a guild or livery company. Witness depositions in a dispute between the vestry of All Hallows Honey Lane and the Mercers' Company over the ownership of the cellar under the church in 1553 reveal knowledge of neighbours, their households and their activities stretching back more than fifty years.[55] Many wills mention neighbours, some point to kin resident nearby; others extended charity to poorer members of the parish.[56] Four of fifteen marriages in St. Pancras Soper Lane between 1538 and 1548 for which the residence of both parties is given were between parishioners. The baptism register of St. Pancras records godparents, often themselves neighbours. Some higher-status women appear several times: Katherine Dormer (formerly Collyer) stood godmother to four local children in 1539–41.[57] Although religious life is not examined here, it too played a major part in the formation of community and association in London, both before and after the Reformation, and would certainly be a topic worth exploring at the level of congregation, neighbourhood, street and household.

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[55] *Gazetteer*, All Hallows Honey Lane, 11/0; Mercers' Hall, depositions in Mercers' Company Register of Writings ii, fos. 219–223v, 226–229v, 231–42, 246–57, 264v–267.

[56] E.g., TNA: PRO, PROB 11/27 fos. 19–20, will of Richard Peke.

[57] Bannerman, *The Registers of St Mary le Bowe*, i. 126ff.

9. 'The poore lost a good Frend and the parish a good Neighbour': the lives of the poor and their supporters in London's eastern suburb, *c.*1583–*c.*1679

Philip Baker and Mark Merry

Recent writing on the history of poor relief in early modern London has redirected attention from the mechanics and minutiae of administration to the lives of the poor themselves.[1] Research by Jeremy Boulton, Tim Hitchcock and others has shed light on the life-cycles and survival strategies of paupers in specific regions of the city,[2] and there is an obvious need for studies of additional and complementary areas if we are to build up an overall picture of the experience of poverty in the capital. For example, Boulton's important work on paupers in London's fashionable West End focuses on a region of the capital that is not normally associated with its humbler residents. This chapter, by contrast, concentrates on the parish of St. Botolph Aldgate in London's eastern suburb, an area that has been identified strongly with among the poorest members of metropolitan society from at least the sixteenth century.

St. Botolph's is one of the parishes on which Derek Keene worked in the 1980s as part of the 'Social and economic study of medieval London' project and the *Historical Gazetteer of London before the Great Fire*.[3] In addition to researching the area's property history and changes in land use, he also investigated its burgeoning pauper population in a stimulating (but unpublished) paper, which described vividly the squalid and insanitary physical conditions in which the poor lived, and detailed the extent and distribution of local poverty.[4] Taking its inspiration from Derek's paper and the recent literature on poor relief and charity in early modern London, this chapter examines the lives both of those who found themselves reliant on St. Botolph's welfare system and of those who actively supported them, a group that included wealthy individuals but also some of the poor themselves. In so doing, it addresses a number of important themes in the field, such as the nature and extent of relief networks, practices of informal and charitable giving, and the role performed by parish nurses. The chapter also offers a striking portrayal of the experience of poverty in late sixteenth- and seventeenth-century London.

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[1] This chapter draws on research undertaken during two projects, the Wellcome Trust-funded 'Housing environments and health in early modern London, 1550–1750' and the ESRC-funded 'Life in the suburbs: health, domesticity and status in early modern London'. Both projects were collaborations between the Centre for Metropolitan History, Institute of Historical Research, the Cambridge Group for the History of Population and Social Structure, and Birkbeck, University of London. For further details, see <http://www.history.ac.uk/cmh/projects> [accessed 5 Aug. 2011]. We are extremely grateful to Jeremy Boulton and Tim Wales for their insightful comments on an earlier version of this chapter.

[2] J. Boulton, '"It is extreme necessity that makes me do this": some "survival strategies" of pauper households in London's West End during the early 18th century', *International Review of Social History*, xlv, suppl. 8 (2000), 47–69; T. Hitchcock, '"Unlawfully begotten on her body": illegitimacy and the parish poor in St. Luke's Chelsea', in *Chronicling Poverty*, ed. T. Hitchcock, P. King and P. Sharpe (Basingstoke, 1997), pp. 70–86; A. Wear, 'Caring for the sick poor in St. Bartholomew's Exchange, 1580–1676', in *Living and Dying in London*, ed. W. F. Bynum and R. Porter (1991), pp. 41–60.

I

The extramural parish of St. Botolph Aldgate covered an area of just under eighty acres running south, adjacent to the eastern city wall, from the parish of St. Botolph Bishopsgate to the Thames. Less than half of St. Botolph's was conterminous with the city ward of Portsoken, while the remainder of the parish, the liberty of East Smithfield, was part of Middlesex (see Figure 9.1). As a consequence of mass immigration, this area experienced a population explosion between the mid sixteenth and late seventeenth centuries, which transformed its social, economic and topographical character. These structural changes are outlined below as they represent the essential context in which the lives of St. Botolph's inhabitants must be located, for they not only shaped those lives but increasingly determined the overall social composition of the parish.[5]

In the mid sixteenth century, when much of the area was gardens or wasteland, St. Botolph's housed 1,130 communicants, of whom a not insignificant number were rich residents in well-appointed properties. But around this time, the poor were already a visible presence in the community; John Stow recalled how in his youth almsgivers would visit an area of the parish inhabited by 'poore bedred people ... [and] none other ... lying ... within their window, which was towards the street open so low that euery

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[3] See <http://www.history.ac.uk/projects/social-and-economic> [accessed 3 July 2011].

[4] D. Keene, 'The poor and their neighbours: the London parish of St. Botolph outside Aldgate in the 16th and 17th centuries'. We are extremely grateful to Derek Keene for providing us with a copy of this paper, and for much other help with St. Botolph's.

[5] The following overview builds on earlier work by Derek Keene.

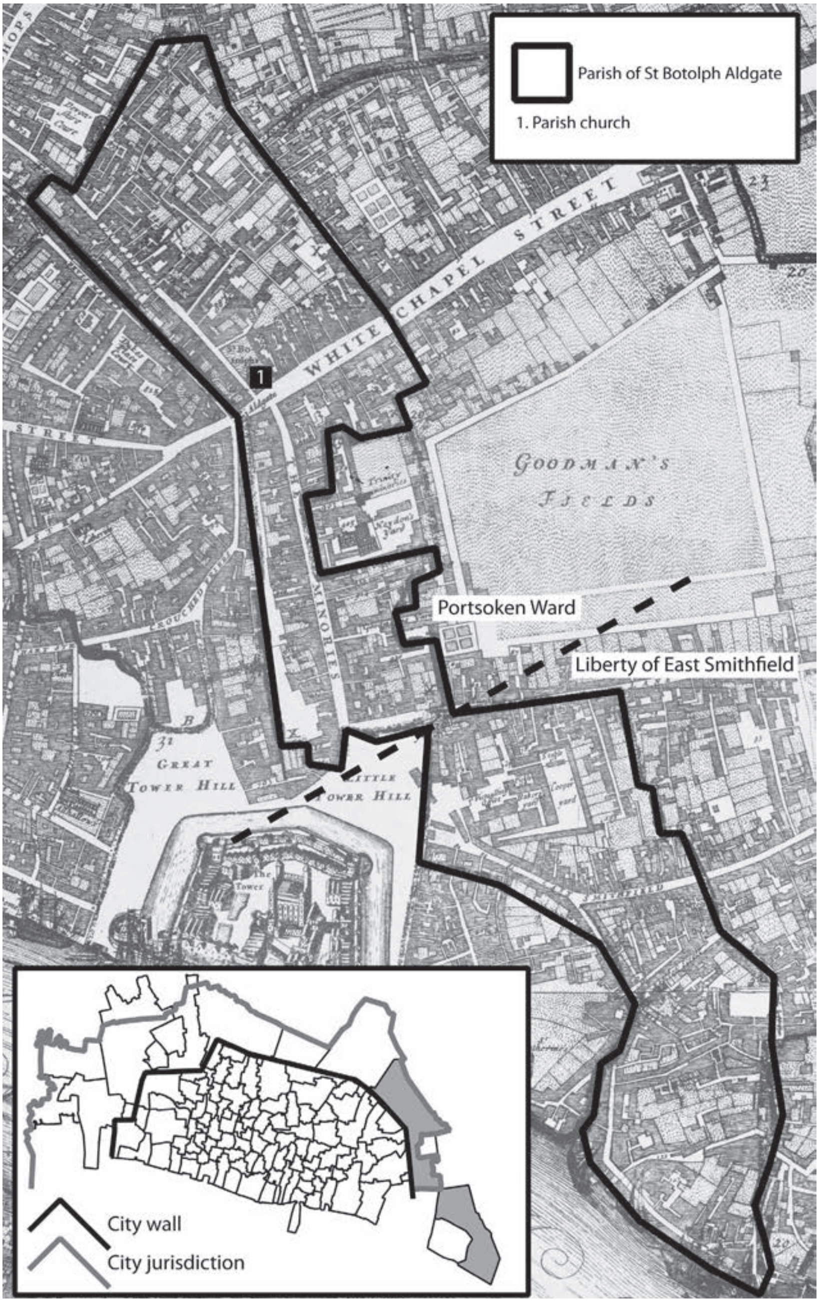
Parish of St Botolph Aldgate
1. Parish church
1
WHITE CHAPEL STREET
GOODMAN'S FIELDS
MINORIES
Portsoken Ward
Liberty of East Smithfield
31
GREAT TOWER HILL
LITTLE TOWER HILL
The Tower
City wall
City jurisdiction

Figure 9.1. Map of the parish of St. Botolph Aldgate, from William Morgan’s 1682 survey of London.

man might see them'.[6] Subsidy rolls of the mid and late sixteenth century reveal that, in terms of the wealth of its population, Portsoken was among the poorest of the city's wards, and a listing of 1595 records that 218 (43.6 per cent) of its 500 householders were 'wanting relief'.[7] A vivid account of the process of social and demographic transformation in Portsoken ward – and of the fears it engendered – is contained in a survey of 1618:

> the best Inhabitants & most antients being dead & decaied & manie verie pore come in there places, most of them having neither trades nor meanes to live on, but by their handy labour, as porters carrmen waterbearers, chymney sweepers, servants in silk mylls bruers servants lyving for ye most part in allies having wyves, & most of them many children ... wch poore are & dayly doeth soe increase … that they are ready to eate out, or els to dryve out the better sort of the inhabitants … who at this time are very fewe, & in short time wilbe fewer if there be not some remedye founde.[8]

Later taxation returns offer a strikingly similar picture of the parish's social topography. In the 1638 London tithe survey, only nineteen (0.6 per cent) of St. Botolph's 2,947 households can be classified as 'substantial' (those living in property with a moderated rent of £20 or above), one of the smallest proportions among the parishes surveyed.[9] The mean moderated rent of the area's property, at £2 10s 4d, was also exceptionally low, as the mean across the entire extramural area and liberties was £6 8*s* 7*d*, and £13 4*s* 5*d* in intramural London.[10] In the 1666 hearth tax returns, the occupants of 1,352 (40.3 per cent) of the parish's 3,354 houses were described as poor, alms people or those with too few goods for a distress to be made. Appreciation for the scale of the area's poverty is only reinforced by the local distribution of hearths: just twenty (0.6 per cent) of its houses had ten or more hearths – usually indicative of a larger house – and only 314 (9.4 per cent) had five or more; the average number of hearths per house in St. Botolph’s, at 2.2, was the fourth lowest of all parishes in the entire metropolitan area. By contrast, the listing of 855 (25.4 per cent) of its houses as ‘empty’ was the third highest proportion within the metropolis and suggests the mobile, even transient nature of a sizeable part of the population.[11] Finally, by the end of the seventeenth century, St. Botolph’s was a densely built-up area with approximately 20,000 inhabitants, its once open spaces having long disappeared under networks of proliferating alleys and closes.[12] In the 1695 marriage duty assessment for Portsoken ward, only 127 (7.9 per cent) of its 1,615 houses contained any surtax payers – among the lowest proportions within the city – and over the following years, hundreds of the ward’s inhabitants were listed annually for being unable to pay even the basic tax rate, on the grounds of their poverty.[13]

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[6] *London and Middlesex Chantry Certificate, 1548*, ed. C. J. Kitching (London Record Society, xvi, 1980), p. 43; J. Stow, *A Survey of London*, ed. C. L. Kingsford (2 vols., Oxford, 2000), i. 125–9.

[7] *Two Tudor Subsidy Assessment Rolls for the City of London*, ed. R. G. Lang (London Record Society, xxix, 1993), pp. lxix–lxx; London Metropolitan Archives (hereafter LMA), COL/CA/01/01/025 fos. 479v, 480; Bodleian Library, MS. Rawlinson D796B fo. [86].

[8] Bodl. Libr., MS. Rawl. D796B fo. [86].

[9] *The Inhabitants of London in 1638*, ed. T. C. Dale (2 vols., 1931), i. 210–24. For the methodology behind these figures and data for other parishes, see R. Finlay, *Population and Metropolis* (Cambridge, 1981), pp. 72, 77, 168–71. The figures cited are our own and (unlike Finlay's) cover both the London and Middlesex areas of the parish.

[10] Dale, *Inhabitants of London*, i. 210–24. Mean moderated rents are calculated from the un-moderated figures in W. C. Baer, 'Stuart London's standard of living: re-examining the settlement of tithes of 1638 for rents, income and poverty', *Economic History Review*, lxiii (2010), 621.

During this period, then, the proportion of wealthy inhabitants in St. Botolph Aldgate decreased substantially, and the majority of its residents – and those responsible primarily for its dramatic population growth – were those of little or no wealth, whose subsistence revolved around casual and manual labour and the local relief system. Given the centrality of that system to the lives of the indigent, it is unfortunate that the finances of the formal poor relief efforts of the parish are extremely difficult to unpick because of the absence of a unifying series of data. Both short and longer series of accounts (covering all or part of the parish) survive in a number of sources, but it is far from clear what the distinction between them may have been, or whether there was, indeed, any demarcation in the types of information they record. However, the picture that emerges from the confusion is clear enough in outline and may be summarized briefly. Churchwardens’ spending on the poor in Portsoken ward for most of our period can be gleaned from a series of churchwardens’ poor accounts (see Figure 9.2).[14] An

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[11] The National Archives of the UK: Public Record Office, E 179/252/32, pt. 21, fos. 33–54v; E 179/252/32, pt. 22/1, fos. 1–22; E 179/252/32, pt. 22/2, fos. 1–15v. All London-wide figures were generated from the AHRC London Hearth Tax Project database, found at <http://sas-space.sas.ac.uk/2578> [accessed 3 July 2011].

[12] The population total is based on the family reconstitution of St. Botolph’s undertaken by our colleague, Gill Newton, to whom we express our thanks. For the topography of the area around this date, see William Morgan’s 1682 survey of London (<http://www.british-history.ac.uk/source.aspx?pubid=59> [accessed 3 July 2011]), sheet 11.

[13] LMA, COL/CHD/LA/04/01/102; COL/CHD/LA/03/28, 30, 39. For figures on surtax-paying houses across London, see P. E. Jones and A. V. Judges, ‘London population in the late 17th century’, *Economic History Review*, vi (1935-6), 58–62.

[14] In the 1720s, churchwardens’ disbursements made up 50.1 per cent of Portsoken’s total spending on the poor; the equivalent figure in East Smithfield was 33.2 per cent, still a very substantial proportion (William Maitland, *The History of London, From its Foundations by the Romans, to the Present Time* (1739), pp. 390–1).

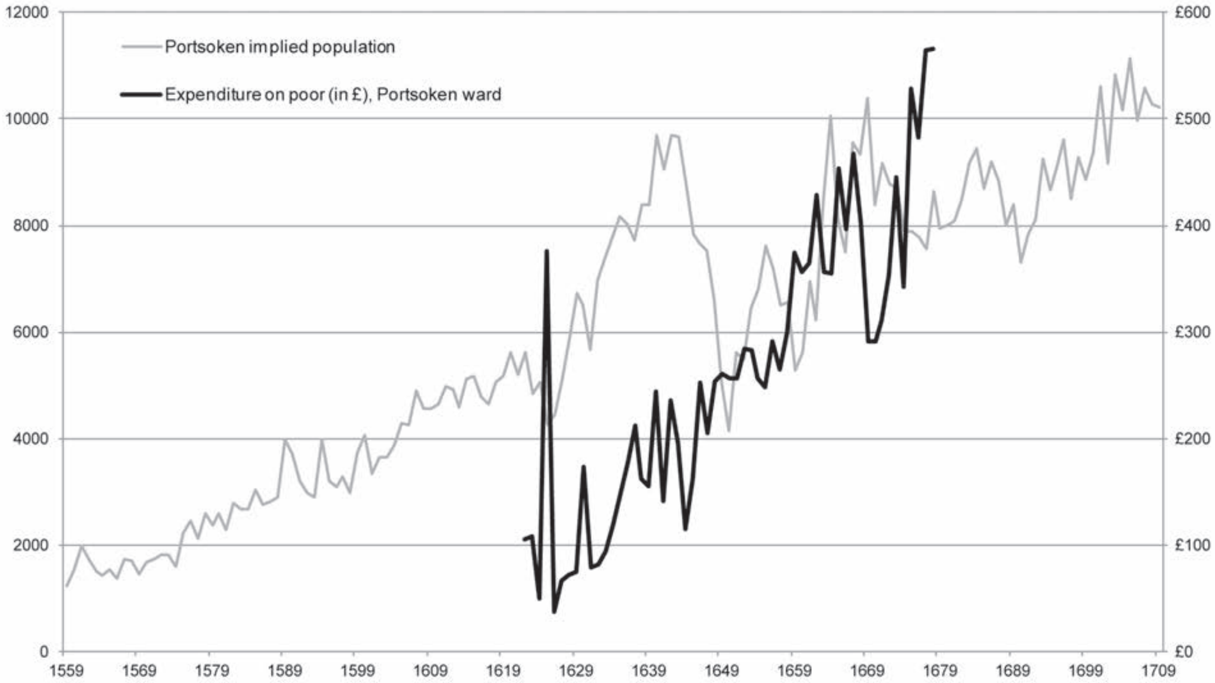

Figure 9.2. Portsoken ward's population, 1559–1709, and churchwardens' expenditure on the poor, 1622–79.

Source: St. Botolph Aldgate family reconstitution; LMA, P69/BOT2/B/031/MS09237 (as this volume is not foliated throughout, references [other than those to the entire series of accounts, as here] are given to the relevant years). The original churchwardens' poor accounts for 1674/5–75/6 are conflated but have been separated here. Expenditure figures exclude all 'disbursements' of stock and security, which were also treated as receipts in the accounts.

obvious spike in the vicinity of the plague outbreak of 1625 aside, the figures indicate that the rate of rise in expenditure on the poor outstripped the very substantial rate of population growth in the ward. However, figures for the entire parish from the 1720s indicate that its spending, at just over *2s per capita* yearly, was far from impressive, being less than ½*d* a week.[15]

There are no extant overseers' accounts for our period and only occasional references to the money brought in by the local poor rate; in Portsoken ward, it varied between £12 and £22 in the late sixteenth century, and £81 and £116 between 1616 and 1622.[16] Whatever the total raised by the rate, it was, unsurprisingly given the parish's social profile, insufficient to deal with the numbers of local indigent, and as a result St. Botolph's was a recipient of the rate-in-aid that the wealthier London parishes gave to their poorer neighbours as poor relief assistance. This provided a fluctuating source of annual income, one that rose from £7 to £91 in the late sixteenth century, but brought in only around £35 for most of the seventeenth century.[17] Finally, and as in other poorer London parishes, a substantial proportion of the money St. Botolph's spent on its poor was generated from the charity of individuals.[18] This took the form of pre- and post-mortem gifts, often in the form of one-off donations of capital to be invested or loaned, simple cash doles, annuities derived from property incomes, or funds for pensions.

A useful summary of the major 'perpetual' gifts – annuities, stock or properties – given to St. Botolph's for the use of its poor is provided in John Strype's account of the parish, drawing upon a late seventeenth-century commemoration book, and from this the scale of such charity is evident. Strype lists substantial parishioners, such as Robert Rogers and Anthony Duffield and his daughter Joan, who left annuities for the purchase of fuel; others who bequeathed tenements; while major benefactors, such as Robert Dow and George Clarke, are singled out for their lifetime charity. Nevertheless, Strype's account underestimated the sums of money generated from such bequests. Landed income for the poor alone brought in around £150 annually from the mid seventeenth century,[19] and the equivalent amount was received from other gifts for the poor by the

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[15] St. Botolph Aldgate family reconstitution; Maitland, *History of London*, pp. 390–1.

[16] LMA, P69/BOT2/A/019/MS09234/001-007; Bodl. Libr., MS. Rawl. D796B fos. [86], [88], [90], [92], [98v].

[17] I. W. Archer, *The Pursuit of Stability* (Cambridge, 1991), pp. 185–6; LMA, P69/BOT2/B/031/MS09237.

[18] I. K. Ben-Amos, *The Culture of Giving* (Cambridge, 2008), p. 119.

[19] We owe this figure to our colleague, Mark Latham, who is working on the management of St. Botolph's parish rents.

1720s.[20] Given the scale of local poverty, it is unsurprising that the parish took considerable administrative pains to keep this income stream going. In the early eighteenth century, vestrymen were appointed to update the commemoration book and determine who was responsible for paying long-established and even relatively small gifts and to chase up those that had lapsed.[21]

Bequests from substantial benefactors represent just one element of the charity St. Botolph's received for its poor, as its records detail not only the contents of the poor box, but also one-off gifts – from parishioners and strangers alike – and the sums received at collections. The poor box provided a fluctuating, but often important, source of income, with annual totals varying between 8*s* 8*d* and £11 7*s* from 1583 to 1600, and £1 7*s* 1*d* and £37 8*s* 11*d* between 1623 and 1650. Money received at collections followed a similar pattern, bringing in £14 12*s* 7*d* in 1656 but only 17*s* in 1673. Meanwhile, one-off donations to the poor and the sick were significant, especially in crisis years, with £34 7*s* 4*d* and £130 15*s* 11*d* received during the plague outbreaks of 1625 and 1636 respectively.[22]

We get some indication of how this income was spent from Portsoken's churchwardens' poor accounts. These reveal that the majority of the churchwardens' disbursements were incidental extraordinary payments, often for the sick and the old, or longer-term series of payments for nursing or other forms of physical care, which constituted an increasing proportion of expenditure from the 1630s (see Figure 9.3).[23] Perhaps this was part of a deliberate strategy to encourage the poor to address their situation through their own efforts, while still providing aid at times of crisis, although this is impossible to verify in the absence of overseers' accounts or complete lists of rate-based parish pensioners.[24] However, it does seem to be the case that pensions funded by individual gifts played an important role in parish life. The most celebrated of these was that of Robert Dow (d. 1612), who set up a fund which provided for sixty pensioners, as well as a room in the Merchant Taylors' almshouses in the parish for one (subsequently two) poor local widows.[25]

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[20] J. Stow, *A Survey of the Cities of London and Westminster*, ed. J. Strype (6 bks. in 2 vols., 1720), I. ii. 17–22, 24–6; Maitland, *History of London*, pp. 390–1.

[21] LMA, P69/BOT2/B/018/MS02626 fo. 59v.

[22] LMA, P69/BOT2/A/019/MS09234/001–7; P69/BOT2/B/031/MS09237.

[23] LMA, P69/BOT2/B/031/MS09237.

[24] There are no rate-based pensioner lists for East Smithfield during our period, and Portsoken's churchwardens' poor accounts only intermittently record small numbers of pension payments before the 1660s, and after then never to more than 50 people annually (LMA, P69/BOT2/B/031/MS09237).

[25] LMA, P69/BOT2/D/005/MS02632.

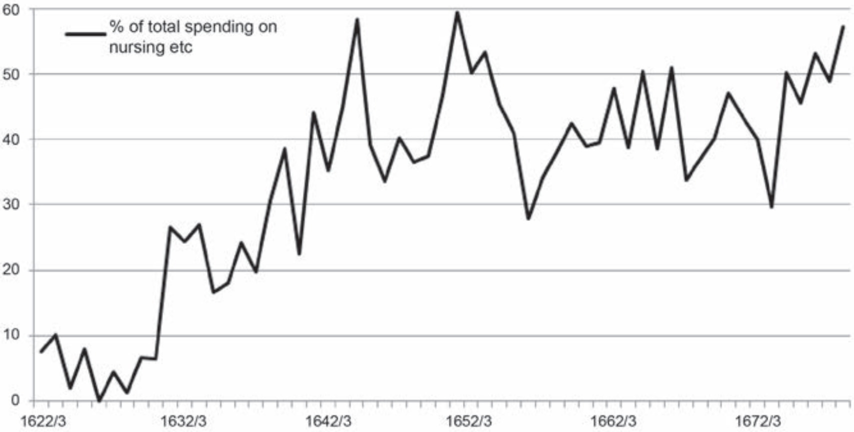

Figure 9.3. Expenditure on nursing and its associated costs in Portsoken ward as a percentage of churchwardens’ total spending on the poor, 1622–79.

Source: LMA, P69/BOT2/B/031/MS09237. The original churchwardens’ poor accounts for 1674/5–75/6 are conflated but have been separated here. Expenditure figures exclude all ‘disbursements’ of stock and security, which were also treated as receipts in the accounts.

Although we can thus reconstruct only a partial picture of St. Botolph’s poor relief finances, its records are exceptionally rich in biographical information about both the receivers and providers of various forms of local relief. Three sources, in particular, have been pivotal to this study. First, St. Botolph’s parish registers, which begin in 1558 and contain detailed information about residence and occupations for certain periods; second, the parish clerk’s memoranda books, which run (with some gaps) from 1583 to 1625 and provide a virtual daybook of parish life; and, finally, the churchwardens’ poor accounts for Portsoken ward from 1622 to 1679, which record some 6,000 payments to the poor and their supporters. The four-year period, 1622–5, in which these sources overlap – during which London experienced an exceptionally harsh winter in 1622 and a major plague epidemic in 1625 – is the one in which we might reasonably expect to recover the most information about the lives of those involved in the local poor relief system. On this basis, the names of all individuals who received or provided some form of relief in the years 1622–5 were collated; those described as ‘poor’ in the material were also included, on the basis that the compilers of the records clearly had an exceptional knowledge of those about whom they wrote. This produced a total of 635 distinct names, and, through a process of nominal linkage, the ‘parish career’ of each individual was then reconstructed using the complete range of available sources. The remainder of this chapter takes the form of an analysis and commentary on the lives of this sample group, while also contextualizing its findings within the broader picture of poor relief in both St. Botolph Aldgate and London more generally during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

II

For the purposes of analysis, the sample lives have been divided into three groups: those who, during the years 1622–5, received relief or support or who are described in the sources as poor ('receivers'); those who provided aid to the poor during that period ('givers'); and those who at *any* point during their residence in St. Botolph's gave *and* received aid ('both'). In line with recent writing on charity, a deliberately broad approach has been adopted in defining the characteristics of receiving and giving within this context, one that takes us beyond a discussion of pensioners and pension values and seeks, instead, to encompass the full range of care and support that an individual might receive.[26] This wider conceptualization of relief, as outlined below, with its emphasis on alternative, or at least supplementary, forms of aid, offers a rounded picture of the lives of the poor and their supporters and is powerfully reflected in the parish's records.

By far the largest of the three groups is, predictably enough, the 551 people (or 86.8 per cent of the sample) who received aid and at no time were providers of support. This includes those in receipt of extraordinary relief payments and pensions, but also those who were nursed or housed by local residents, on one or more occasions. The second group, the providers of aid, consists of the forty-nine individuals (7.7 per cent), who, among other things, took on parish apprentices or gave money or cared for the poor. Finally, the third group, those who were both givers and recipients of relief, numbered thirty-five people (5.5 per cent).

What types of people are found in the sample, and do the members of any group have distinctive characteristics? Beginning with the issue of gender (see Table 9.1), it is clear that the vast majority of those providing support to the poor were male, as might be expected. The greater freedom to dispose of goods and property – and therefore to dispose of it for charitable purposes – as well as greater integration into the life of the parish and significant institutions (such as the livery companies) certainly contributed to this pattern. Within the group of 'receivers', it is notable that there is no such sharp gender distinction, as has been found in other areas of London where females were prevalent among the recipients of relief.[27] This may be a reflection of the general economic state of the parish's population, suggesting

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[26] Ben-Amos, *Culture of Giving*, *passim.*

[27] J. Boulton, *Neighbourhood and Society* (Cambridge, 1987), pp. 95–6.

Table 9.1. Gender distribution of sample individuals

	Female		**Male**		**Gender unknown**		**Total in group**
Type	**No.**	**% of type**	**No.**	**% of type**	**No.**	**% of type**	
Receiver	290	52.6	246	44.7	15	2.7	551
Giver	5	10.2	44	89.8	0	0.0	49
Both	20	57.1	15	42.9	0	0.0	35
Both+Receiver	310	52.9	261	44.5	15	2.6	586
Both+Giver	25	29.8	59	70.2	0	0.0	84

Source: Unless otherwise stated, data in the tables and figures that follow draws on the entire range of sources used to reconstruct the lives of the sample individuals. The limit on space prevents their listing here, but all are referenced fully elsewhere in the notes.

that poverty was endemic and that it was not the case that certain types of poverty prevailed – for example, those more likely to occur to women, such as widowhood and abandonment.

The precise age of the individuals in the sample can be established only in those few instances where we have baptismal dates or given ages at death. Nevertheless, it is possible to construct a broad picture of their age profile by identifying those who are described as aged and those who are described as being children or infants (see Table 9.2). What is perhaps significant is that three-quarters of those receiving aid have no descriptor regarding their age. While this might be attributable to a simple lack of ‘labelling’ in the sources, their usual richness of detail suggests that those individuals lacking age descriptors may have been at neither extreme of the life-cycle spectrum. This would be at odds with findings elsewhere in London, where the most common recipients of relief were the elderly and the young.[28] A similarly surprising situation arises with the widowed, with only ninety-five (16.2 per cent) of all those who received support in St. Botolph’s being described as widows or widowers. Although this may, in part, be the result of examining a wider group than pensioners alone, it again speaks to the extent of poverty in the parish, and suggests that individuals could find themselves vulnerable and in the position of requiring relief throughout their lives or, rather, at any point in their lives.

Apart from the widowed, little is known about the marital status of the receivers of aid, but by arranging them into their distinct family units,

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[28] R. W. Herlan, ‘Poor relief in the London parish of Antholin’s Budge Row, 1638–64’, *Guildhall Studies in London History*, ii (1977), 195.

Table 9.2. Age distribution of sample individuals

	Child		Aged	
Type	**No.**	**% of type**	**No.**	**% of type**
Receiver	75	13.6	56	10.2
Giver	0	0	0	0
Both	0	0	3	8.8
Both+Receiver	75	12.8	59	10.1
Both+Giver	0	0	3	3.6

we can examine the issue of *families* receiving support. Most commonly, individuals received relief in the form of extraordinary payments because of some distress within the family, such as having a sick child or spouse. But there are also numerous cases where aid is given to, or on behalf of, multiple individuals within a family; even within the relatively short span of the sample period, there are forty-three such families. In almost all of these cases (thirty-six), the context is that of a husband and wife receiving relief individually, usually with one of the couple given aid shortly after the death of the other. This is particularly the case with the recipients of pensions (as discussed below), where individuals effectively 'inherit' the pension held by their spouse. The remaining seven families are instructive for what they tell us about how families incapable of supporting themselves were aided by the parish. One such family was that of the tailor Hugh Bell and his wife, who had five young daughters. In June 1623, Hugh received payments for having a sick family, and by August both he and his wife had died, leaving the daughters as a burden on Portsoken ward. The strategy for caring for the children was to divide them up around the ward, with at least six individuals (four of whom were habitual recipients of aid themselves) keeping one or more of them at a time over the remainder of the 1620s. The churchwardens made regular disbursements for the children's care and for their shoes and clothing, and one was also 'put to apprentis' at the expense of the ward.[29]

In terms of families *giving* aid to the poor, there are no examples in the sample group of more than one individual acting in that role. There are, however, several families where one member is a recipient of aid, and another falls into the category of both giver and receiver of support.[30] But in all cases,

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[29] LMA, P69/BOT2/B/031/MS09237, accounts 1623–9; P69/BOT2/A/019/MS09234/008 fo. 197v.

[30] E.g., Robert Breach and his wife Katherine received extraordinary payments from the churchwardens, but Katherine also tended the local poor (LMA, P69/BOT2/B/031/MS09237, accounts 1622–7).

Table 9.3. Pensioners in sample by group

Type	Number of pensioners	% of total individuals in group
Receiver	126	22.9
Both	13	37.1
Both+Receiver	139	23.7

Table 9.4. Widowed and aged pensioners in sample by group

		Widowed pensioners		Aged pensioners	
Type	Number of pensioners	Number	% of total pensioners in group	Number	% of total pensioners in group
Receiver	126	68	54.0	27	21.4
Both	13	4	30.8	3	23.1
Both+Receiver	139	72	51.8	30	21.6

these latter are those who provided short-term care for others, rather than any kind of charitable giving, and who also received relief payments from the parish.

Interestingly, a large proportion – over a third – of those individuals who both gave and received support were pensioners (see Table 9.3), who supplemented regular relief payments with an ad hoc income based on various forms of care work (discussed in Section III, below). Pensioners made up almost a quarter of all receivers of aid in the sample, half of them being widows or widowers (see Table 9.4). However, only a relatively small proportion of them (less than a quarter) were described in some manner as aged, suggesting that pensions were not merely the province of the elderly poor of the parish.

Of the sample's pensioners, ninety-nine were recipients of the pensions established by Robert Dow's gift. Only twenty (20.2 per cent) of these were men, while sixty (60.6 per cent) were widows or widowers (only one of the latter). Although the number of annual pensions (sixty) was divided equally between East Smithfield and Portsoken, smaller numbers of pensioners in the ward tended to receive their pensions for longer – on average, over four years longer (11.9 years as opposed to 7.1) – than their East Smithfield counterparts (see Figure 9.4). It is also notable that pensions appear to have been transferred regularly within the family on the death of a recipient, with three widows replacing their husbands during the 1622–5 sample period.[31]

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[31] LMA, P69/BOT2/D/005/MS02632 fos. 18v–22.

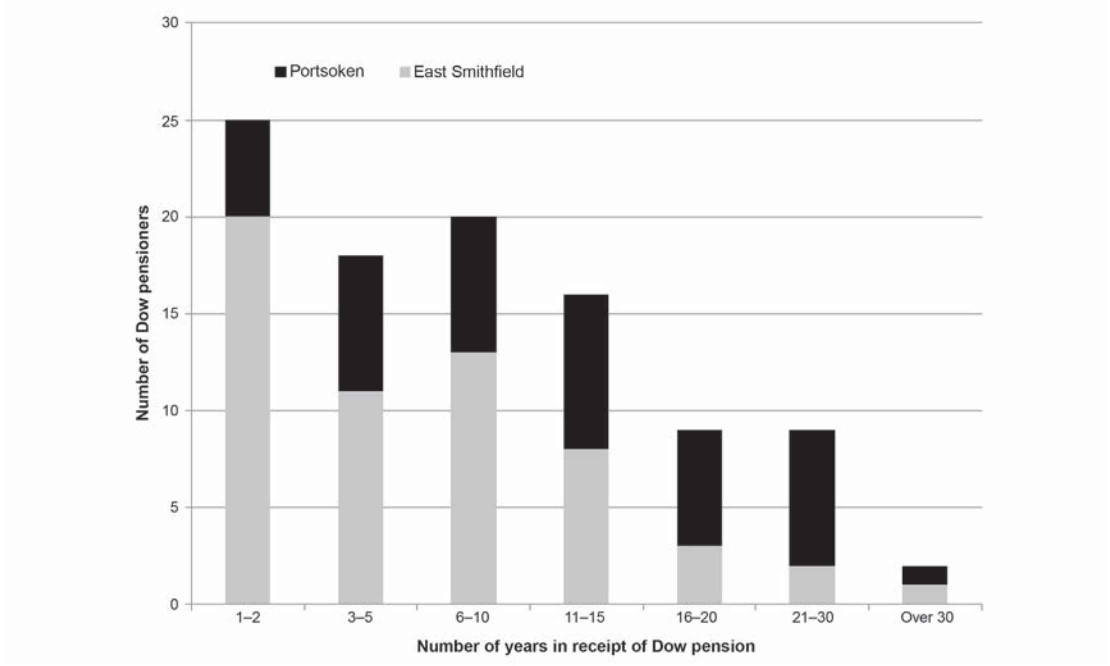

Figure 9.4. Dow pensioners in sample years: period in receipt of pension.
Source: LMA, P69/BOT2/D/005/MS02632.

Ideally, we would chart the social and economic status of pensioners and other members of the sample group across time, but, unfortunately, the necessary sources are not extant. There is no series of inhabitants' listings, merely a single poor rate listing for 1598, and only parts of the 1621 subsidy returns are legible, in which two givers of aid, William Hart and John Webster (both rated in land), are the only sample individuals to appear.[32] It is possible, however, to get a broad notion of the sample members' status from other factors, such as occupational structure. From our various sources, occupations (sometimes several) were recovered for 143 individuals (22.5 per cent) in the sample, and these are arranged into broad categories in Figure 9.5. The numbers involved are small, but those in receipt of relief are prominent in the transport, manual labour, building and textiles categories, while providers of aid are notable among those involved in the retail clothing and household goods industries. Interestingly, this replicates closely the findings of research into the

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[32] LMA, P69/BOT2/A/019/MS09234/007 fos. 149v–150[ii]v; TNA: PRO, E 179/147/500 rots. 1–2d; E 179/142/279 rots. 3–3d.

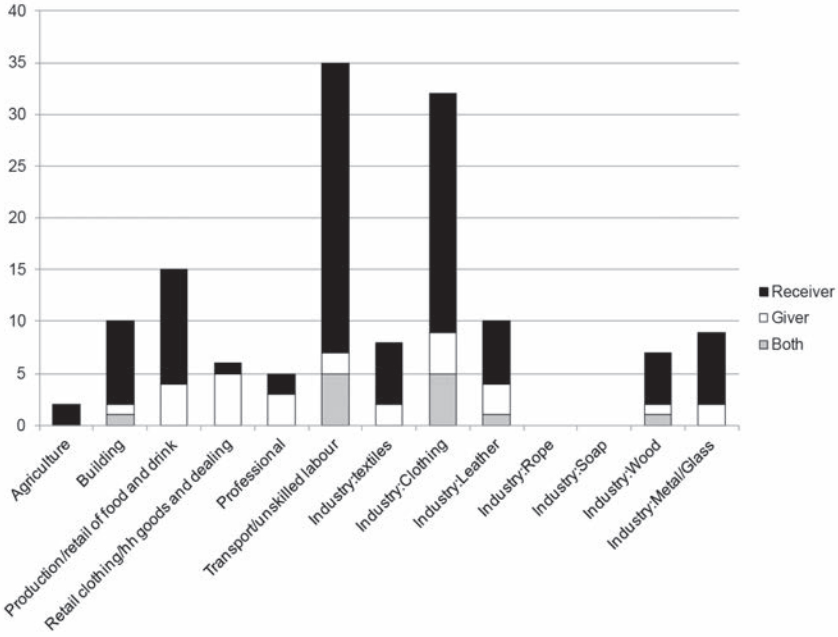

Figure 9.5. Occupational structure of sample individuals.
The categories follow those used by Boulton in *Neighbourhood and Society*, pp. 66–9.

relationship between wealth and occupation in Southwark at exactly the same time.[33]

Additional sources from outside the 1622–5 period illuminate the circumstances of a number of the sample individuals. For example, eight people – five receivers of relief, two individuals who both gave and received support, and one provider of aid – are listed in the 1637 survey of the poor of Portsoken ward. Of the receivers of relief, two had been and still were Dow pensioners, and two were described as blind.[34] The two individuals who both received and gave aid were the pensioners Widow Harrington and Goody Sarah Adams, who supplemented their regular payments by taking in lodgers or caring for sick individuals.[35] Finally, as one of St. Botolph's sextons during the early seventeenth century, Edward Hawes supported and housed a number of parish children, although the ward paid for a least one of these. The apparent tenuousness of his economic stability is evident in his inclusion in the 1637 survey, which describes him as an aged widower who lived alone and was unable to work.[36] That more of our sample individuals, notably recipients of aid, do not appear in the survey suggests that a decade is 'a long time' in the life-cycle of the poor, with many of them dying or perhaps moving out of the parish in the intervening years.

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[33] Boulton, *Neighbourhood and Society*, pp. 116–18.

[34] LMA, P69/BOT2/D/005/MS02632 fos. 5v–33v; TNA: PRO, SP 16/359 fos. 89, 90, 94v.

[35] LMA, P69/BOT2/B/031/MS09237, accounts 1625; P69/BOT2/A/015/MS09222/002 fo. 107; P69/BOT2/A/003/MS09223 fo. 243; P69/BOT2/D/005/MS02632 fos. 18v–34v; TNA: PRO, SP 16/359 fos. 89, 90.

Similarly, only four members of the sample are listed in the 1638 tithe survey of St. Botolph's, although we know from other sources that many more were still resident in the parish. Those absent from the survey lived in the groups of up to 100 tenements in alleys or yards which were not individually assessed, and we can presume that all such dwellings were relatively humble. Of the listed individuals, one was Sarah Adams from the 1637 survey of the poor, who lived in a property with a moderated rent of just £2,[37] while two of the others were providers of aid. The first, the tailor Primeius Elson (or Nelson) of Rosemary Lane, dwelled in a house with a moderated value of £3, where a number of individuals are known to have lodged during the 1620s.[38] The second, Jeremy Argyll, victualler, who adopted a number of parish children (as discussed in Section III, below), lived in a more substantial property rated at £8 moderated rent.[39] The final person listed in the survey from our sample was Francis Eastgate, a currier, who received an extraordinary payment from the churchwardens in 1625 and appeared in the 1637 listing of the poor. Nevertheless, Eastgate's house had a moderated rental value of £8, indicating that house values and personal wealth were not always related directly.[40]

One fairly reliable indicator of poverty is if an individual's burial costs were met by the parish, and Table 9.5 records the results of applying this test to the sample individuals. At the time of their death, no givers of aid lacked the means to pay for their burial, while nearly one in five of the receivers did. These are likely to have been the poorest of those individuals who received relief, or, perhaps more accurately, those in extreme poverty at the end of their lives. Notably, a greater proportion of those who both gave and received support left their burials unpaid, with a quarter of such people depriving the clerk of his fee. This fits the profile that is emerging

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[36] LMA, P69/BOT2/A/019/MS09234/008 fos. 233v, 258v; TNA: PRO, SP 16/359 fo. 94v.

[37] Dale, *Inhabitants of London*, i. 214.

[38] Dale, *Inhabitants of London*, i. 219; LMA, P69/BOT2/A/019/MS09234/008 fo. 245; P69/BOT2/A/015/MS09222/002 fos. 23v, 42.

[39] Dale, *Inhabitants of London*, i. 217.

[40] LMA, P69/BOT2/B/031/MS09237, accounts 1625; TNA: PRO, SP 16/359 fo. 89; Dale, *Inhabitants of London*, i. 211.

Table 9.5. Unpaid burials of sample individuals

	Total in group	Unpaid burials	
Type	**Number**	**Number**	**%**
Receiver	551	98	17.9
Giver	49	0	0
Both	35	9	25.7
Both+Receiver	586	107	18.3
Both+Giver	84	9	10.7

Table 9.6. Servant-keeping households of sample individuals

	Total in group	Having servants in sample period		Having servants at any time	
Type	**Number**	**Number**	**%**	**Number**	**%**
Receiver	551	8	1.5	10	1.8
Giver	49	8	16.3	9	18.4
Both	35	2	5.7	6	17.1
Both+Receiver	586	10	1.7	13	2.2
Both+Giver	84	10	12.0	15	17.9

of individuals in this category as being the long-term poor for whom the provision of relief to others was a means of generating income; in other words, they may well constitute the chronic poor who spent large periods of their life floating above and below the poverty line.

Another means of examining the wealth of our sample individuals, at least obliquely, is through identifying those who at any point accommodated servants within their households (see Table 9.6). As one would expect, very few receivers of aid had servants, although a small proportion did, even at a time when they were definitely in receipt of relief. This is something of a contrast with the Boroughside area of Southwark, where 12.7 per cent of householders not rated for the poor rate still had servants, perhaps underlining the relative level of poverty in St. Botolph's.[41] Less surprising is the fact that those individuals who gave aid were significantly more likely to have servants, especially during the sample years. It is important to

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[41] Boulton, *Neighbourhood and Society*, pp. 111–13.

Table 9.7. Duration of residence of sample individuals

	Type of individual		
Minimum residence	**Both**	**Giver**	**Receiver**
Snapshot	2	21	314
2–5 years	6	6	79
6–10 years	4	4	42
11–20 years	10	5	68
21–30 years	5	5	21
31–50 years	7	5	25
50+ years	0	0	2
Average (including snapshot)	17.3	9.6	6.3
Average (excluding snapshot)	18.3	18.4	13.3

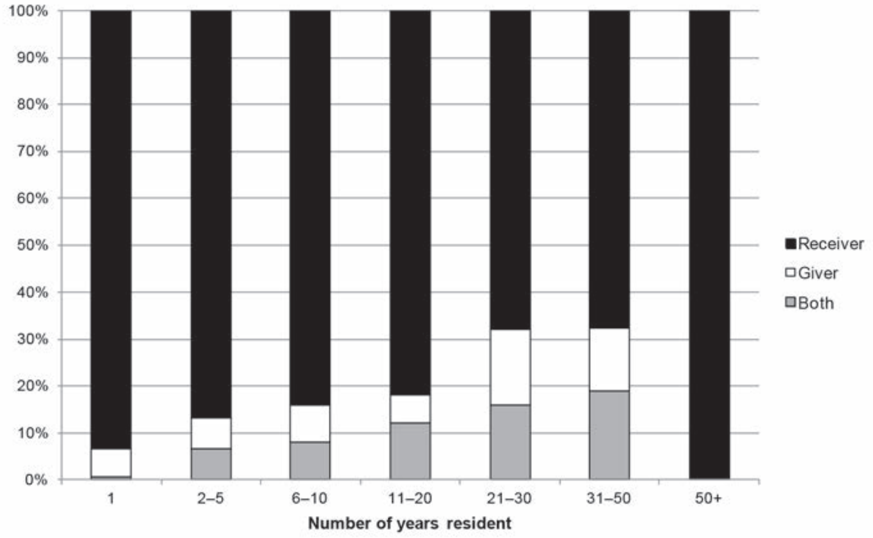

Figure 9.6. Length of residence of sample individuals.

note, however, that the evidence for servant-keeping households does not include any type of inhabitants' listings and is entirely serendipitous, so the numbers of individuals with servants in all groups (but especially those providing relief) is likely to be under representative.

Finally, it is possible to consider our sample individuals in terms of their duration of residence in St. Botolph’s, as determined by their appearance in the sources (see Table 9.7 and Figure 9.6).[42]

The figures show that givers of aid tended to be resident in the parish longer than those to whom they provided aid; when examining those individuals resident for over a decade, the bias shifts further towards the givers. This suggests that the provision of charity and support were the activities of persistent inhabitants, an impression that is reinforced if those individuals who appear in the sources for a single year only (the ‘snapshots’) are excluded from the calculations. But there are also two patterns of note: first, the length of time that the recipients of aid reside in the parish is relatively high, even when including the snapshots; second, the group longest resident in the parish (including snapshots) were the givers and receivers of relief, who may well have comprised the chronic poor. These results certainly lend support to the thesis that the degree of transience and residential mobility among London’s poor was not as pronounced as once thought.[43]

III

Having examined some of the overall characteristics of the sample group, it is time to explore in greater detail the individual lives of the poor of St. Botolph Aldgate and their supporters. As something has been said about the standard forms of financial aid that the indigent received, such as extraordinary payments and pensions, this section focuses on alternative types of relief. Such relief might come about through the intervention of other members of the community, but there were also recognized methods by which the poor could support themselves. The parish often played an important role in instigating or co-ordinating this form of relief, and we begin by exploring the lives of those who received or provided aid through the formal attributes of the relief system. But this support was based, in part, on informal and customary practices, and the people involved in this less well-known and harder to recover aspect of poor relief are also considered. Finally, the section emphasizes the likely relationship between some of the formal and informal ways in which the indigent received aid.

As was the case in many London parishes, the number of pauper and orphaned children was a persistent problem in St. Botolph’s and in 1623 the vestry approved a standard policy for dealing with older parish children: that of binding them out to service. As a result, nine children kept by Portsoken ward were placed into service between 1623 and 1625.[44] Of these, at least one, Ellin Goldwell, who was aged nine at the time of her placement, had an impoverished background. Her father, a currier, was noted as poor at his (unpaid) burial in October 1620, while her mother, who was described as poor two months after her husband's death, was in 1624 branded 'a Lewd widow, & base Strumpett' when she gave birth to illegitimate twins.[45] A second child, the unnamed son of John Mosley, may have entered service following the social decline of his family as a result of life-cycle poverty. John Mosley, a painter, was once of some economic standing as he acted as a surety for a bond in 1611–12, but in 1622 he received an extraordinary relief payment and died the following year. No payment was received for burying another of Mosley's children in 1625, and his wife was described as a pensioner at her death in 1631.[46]

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[42] As there is no series of inhabitants’ listings, periods of residence should all be treated as *minimum* values.

[43] Boulton, *Neighbourhood and Society*, pp. 217–27.

Less is known about those individuals with whom the ward's children were placed, and although there is no indication of whether or not they took on such children voluntarily, it is clear that they often received premiums for doing so. The payment of financial inducements to masters was far from standard practice in the case of pauper apprenticeships, but they were made for all nine children bound out between 1623 and 1625, their value ranging from 8*s* to £2 11*s* 10*d*. Such sums were low on a national scale, and the total expense, of £6 19*s* 6*d*, for binding out all nine children represented good business for the ward given that the annual cost of care for a single child could be well over £3.[47] One of the masters, John Knight – who took on three children – may have lived outside St. Botolph's as there are no further references to him in parish records, reminding us that the poor might find support from those outside, as well as within, their own parish. At least one child was bound out to a local resident, for which Robert Owen, a Houndsditch silk-weaver, received a premium of £2 11*s* 10*d*. It was not uncommon for parish apprentices to be taken on by the poor, for whom even a small premium was welcome income, and this may have been the case here. Owen, who resided in St. Botolph's for at least twenty-five years, was unable to pay the christening and burial fees for his numerous children, and it is interesting to note that he had a number of apprentices or servants during that time. In 1637, by when he was widowed and any surviving children had moved on, he was sharing his house with an inmate family, which, as we shall see, was a fairly common way of supplementing household income within the parish.[48]

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[44] LMA, P69/BOT2/B/031/MS09237, vestry minutes 1623, accounts 1623–5.

[45] LMA, P69/BOT2/A/003/MS09223 fo. 248v; P69/BOT2/A/019/MS09234/008 fos. 116, 120v, 241. Prostitution, of course, was one means by which poor women might seek to earn an income. For additional references to local prostitutes, see T. R. Forbes, *Chronicle from Aldgate* (New Haven and London, 1971), pp. 32–4.

[46] LMA, P69/BOT2/B/001/MS09236 fos. 106v, 108v; P69/BOT2/B/031/MS09237, accounts 1622; P69/BOT2/A/019/MS09234/008 fos. 197v, 255v; P69/BOT2/A/015/MS09222/002 fo. 50v.

[47] LMA, P69/BOT2/B/031/MS09237, accounts 1623–5. For national premium rates, see S. Hindle, *On the Parish?* (Oxford, 2004), p. 216.

Another, less common, strategy that the authorities employed in seeking to reduce the number of parish children was to find individuals who would formally adopt them, and one local resident we have encountered already, Jeremy Argyll, did this on more than one occasion. Argyll lived in St. Botolph’s for over two decades, during which time he held a number of ward and parish offices, and in 1622 he entered into a bond with local officers ‘of his love and free good will … to take and keepe [John Parrey] as his owne’. At the same time, the churchwardens gave Argyll £1 5*s*, and in the following year paid him 18*s* 6*d* for keeping Parrey, suggesting that his charitable instincts did not rule out financial inducements.[49]

John Parrey was a two-year-old orphan when he entered Argyll’s household, his family perhaps having once been of some wealth as they had had a number of servants. Following the death both of his father, a glover, and his mother in 1622, the parish responded by binding out his older brother and placing John with Argyll. John died in 1625, but in the same year Argyll received £1 4*s* 6*d* from the churchwardens to take another child, John Price, as his own. The same type of arrangement may explain the payment of £2 10*s* from the churchwardens to Argyll in 1626 ‘for John Birch due by bond’, indicating that Argyll was a persistent supporter of local poor children.[50]

A constant source of pauper children in St. Botolph’s was illegitimate births, and one way in which the parish sought to protect itself from the cost of maintaining such children was through bastardy bonds. These were sometimes posted by local residents, as in 1590, when William Lawdian of East Smithfield provided a bond for a ‘bace borne’ child delivered in his house.[51] But individuals living outside St. Botolph’s are also found acting as sureties, as in the case of the two men who bonded to keep the parish safe from any charges following the birth of an illegitimate child to a nonparishioner in 1622. The first was a cordwainer from St. Katherine Cree, of whom nothing further is known, but more has been uncovered about the second, William Butts, a Westminster gentlemen. Quite why a seemingly unrelated man of status from the opposite end of London would be willing to act as a surety for an illegitimate child born in St. Botolph's becomes clear only through his will. This reveals that, among many other lands and properties, Butts owned a house in the Minories, and it thus seems likely that his involvement was based on his position as a local landlord.[52]

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[48] LMA, P69/BOT2/B/031/MS09237, accounts 1623; P69/BOT2/A/019/MS09234/008 fos. 15, 146v, 222v; P69/BOT2/A/015/MS09222/002 unfol. entry for 2 March 1642; TNA: PRO, SP 16/359 fo. 94.

[49] LMA, P69/BOT2/B/031/MS09237, accounts 1622–3; P69/BOT2/A/015/MS09222/002 unfol. entry for 29 Sept. 1643; Bodl. Libr., MS. Rawl. D796B fos. [103], [105]; LMA, P69/BOT2/B/020/MS10026 box 1, bond dated 18 Feb. 1622.

[50] LMA, P69/BOT2/A/019/MS09234/008 fos. 108, 159v, 177, 257; P69/TRI2/A/001/MS09238 p. 25; P69/BOT2/B/031/MS09237, accounts 1622–6.

[51] LMA, P69/BOT2/A/019/MS09234/002[b] fo. 9v.

So far, the poor themselves have appeared as passive figures who were dependent entirely on the intervention of others for their receipt of alternative types of support through the formal relief system. Although this characterization may have some validity, especially with regard to pauper children, it is clear that poor individuals in St. Botolph Aldgate, when given the opportunity by the local authorities, took on a broad range of tasks that provided them with additional sources of income from the parish. Some held minor positions in local office, such as Francis Bird, a regular recipient of the charity of George Clarke, who served at the same time as Portsoken's beadle for the poor.[53] Others received one-off payments, like the 'towe pore women' paid 1*s* each for sweeping the church in 1630.[54] Another standard service the indigent provided was to take the sick and the poor into their own homes on a temporary basis. This was a major local industry in the parish; between 1622 and 1658, Portsoken ward's churchwardens made payments to 222 individuals, most of them women, for the provision of this type of maintenance.[55] It is quite possible that the unique level of detail in the records illuminates relief networks that were entirely typical in their scope. But some parish authorities are known to have preferred the temporary cost of boarding the poor to providing them with pensions,[56] which were normally for life, and, given St. Botolph's precarious financial position, this may have been the case there, too.[57]

Not all keepers of the parish's sick and indigent were poor themselves; Jeremy Argyll received 4*s* for a month's care of a poor child in 1623.[58] But, from what we know of them, the vast majority of the individuals who performed this task were of little wealth, as in the case of both Sarah Adams, the widow of a poor lame man, who received 1*s* for keeping a sick woman in 1625, and Anne Gouldwyer, a Dow pensioner, who was paid 3*s* for accommodating two sick individuals in 1622.[59] These are the only references to these particular women housing others, and they, like many other local residents, provided this service on a seemingly ad hoc basis. However, of the 222 individuals who received payments between 1622 and 1658, a minimum of twenty-eight (12.6 per cent) did so over a period of at least five years, indicating that the provision of this type of support could be a more regular source of income. One person for whom this was certainly true is the widow and Dow pensioner Kate Tanner, who, over twenty-three years, kept infants, young children and adults. Although she perhaps housed no more than three or four people at a time, she was evidently operating as a multi-functional parish nurse. This brought Tanner only a modest financial return, however: by the time of her death in 1647, she had been paid £118 4*s* 6*d* for her services, a return of less than £5 per year. But perhaps this contributed to her ability to maintain an independent household, as she appears living on her own in the 1637 return of Portsoken’s poor residents, and seemingly occupied one of twenty-four tenements in an alley that were rated for £40 moderated rental value in the 1638 tithe survey.[60]

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[52] LMA, P69/BOT2/B/020/MS10026 box 1, bond dated 5 Oct. 1622; TNA: PRO, PROB 11/177 fos. 430–1. It remains possible, of course, that Butts was the actual father of the child.

[53] Bodl. Libr., MS. Rawl. D796B fos. [99], [103]; LMA, P69/BOT2/B/031/MS09237, vestry minutes 1624; P69/BOT2/A/015/MS09222/002 fo. 23v.

[54] LMA, P69/BOT2/B/012/MS09235/002/002 fo. 372.

[55] LMA, P69/BOT2/B/031/MS09237, accounts 1622–58.

[56] Hindle, *On the Parish?*, pp. 64–5.

[57] As noted previously, the absence of key sources makes this point impossible to verify. However, there are extremely few references to rate-based parish pensioners in St. Botolph's voluminous records throughout our period.

[58] LMA, P69/BOT2/B/031/MS09237, accounts 1623.

The local authorities no doubt encouraged and co-ordinated those instances of boarding and nursing for which they paid parishioners, and an agreed fee structure clearly existed as disbursements were made according to set weekly or monthly rates.[61] But while this points to the systemization of such care, there is evidence to suggest that identical practices were also occurring outside the formal relief system. Between 1588 and 1599, the widow Ellen Wright, who lived in a garden house in the poorest area of the parish, operated a form of hospice that took in women in childbirth, the diseased and the sick, and those recuperating from treatments. No payments to her are visible in the parish records, and her clients – who included gentlemen – came from all over London, and even further afield, suggesting strongly that her establishment ran outside the formal local welfare system. This impression is reinforced by the fact that in 1595, the parish took out a bond to prevent itself from becoming liable financially for an infant delivered in her house, and that four years later Wright was excommunicated from St.

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[59] LMA, P69/BOT2/A/019/MS09234/008 fos. 129v, 252v; P69/BOT2/B/031/MS09237, accounts 1622, 1625.

[60] LMA, P69/BOT2/B/031/MS09237, accounts 1622–46; P69/BOT2/D/005/MS02632 fos. 19v–42v; TNA: PRO, SP 16/359 fo. 95; Dale, *Inhabitants of London*, i. 217.

[61] See LMA, P69/BOT2/B/031/MS09237.

Botolph's for allowing an illegitimate child to be born at her home.[62] In addition to private nursing, local records reveal that the taking of lodgers, as formal, paying house-guests, was a widespread service industry from at least the late sixteenth century.[63] This was both a means by which the poor might find accommodation, as in the case of Isabell Peterson, a poor woman, who lodged with an East Smithfield lighterman, or else supplement their income, as with Thomas Baylie, a poor man of Nightingale Lane, who took in Richard Sharpe, 'a seafaring man'.[64] Again, these were seemingly private arrangements, perhaps based on older customary notions of neighbourliness and mutual support, with no evidence for the involvement of the local authorities.

The co-existence of these formal and informal relief practices raises a number of important issues, beginning with their likely relationship. It seems quite possible that the growth of St. Botolph's extensive, seventeenth-century, parish-financed system of boarding and nursing represented the formulization, to some extent, of earlier private practices. The area's dramatic demographic expansion would have generated an obvious need for such services, through which the poor (and others) could earn additional income, and we can presume that those who provided them independently from the auspices of the parish did so voluntarily. Whether that applies equally to those who provided relief through the formal welfare system is harder to ascertain. In some London parishes, pensioners were forced to carry out specific tasks under threat of the loss of their pensions,[65] but there is no evidence of similar general requirements in St. Botolph's. Nevertheless, in 1663 the churchwardens paid the mother of Mary Airee 2*s* 6*d*, having 'forced her' to take care of her own daughter, although this is the only explicit reference to the use of compulsion found in the records.[66]

IV

Over thirty years ago, Valerie Pearl argued for the existence of an effective system of poor relief in early modern London, emphasizing the extent of public action and provision based on a powerful sense of communal responsibility.[67] Although her thesis has been criticized for ignoring the link between social discipline and relief and for its narrow focus on practice in wealthy city-centre parishes,[68] the notion that the institution of poor relief helped to bind a community together for its collective good continues to find favour with some scholars.[69] By way of a conclusion to this chapter, we may consider what light our sample lives and the records of St. Botolph Aldgate throw on this ongoing debate.

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[62] LMA, P69/BOT2/A/019/MS09234/005[a] fo. 74v; Wear, 'Caring for the sick poor', pp. 57–8; L. C. Orlin, 'Temporary lives in London lodgings', *Huntington Library Quarterly*, lxxi (2008), 237, 241–2.

[63] Orlin, 'Temporary lives', pp. 238–40.

[64] LMA, P69/BOT2/A/019/MS09234/008 fos. 250, 249, 186, 195v. The two latter references reveal that Baylie also adopted another common survival strategy of the poor when he remarried only four months after the death of his wife.

[65] Wear, 'Caring for the sick poor', pp. 46–7.

[66] LMA, P69/BOT2/B/031/MS09237, accounts 1663.

The act of providing relief was an occasion when the lives of the rich and poor of the parish intersected, and there is evidence to suggest that social relations between the two were, at times, far from harmonious. We have noted already, in the 1618 survey of Portsoken ward, the sense of fear generated by the influx of poor families, and the same account confirms the existence of social stratification by revealing that other residents challenged and refused to pay the rates for the maintenance of the indigent.[70] The vestry showed a comparable lack of disregard when it decided to demolish and rebuild an alley of parish tenements for the poor in the early seventeenth century. The residents did not go quietly and took some months to be removed, whereupon all those who were pensioners were rehoused by the parish, with the others – including one of our receivers of aid – seemingly left to fend for themselves.[71]

Historians have long recognized that the gifts of wealthy individuals like Robert Dow often had as much to do with exerting control over the poor as relieving them, while at the same time enhancing the standing of the benefactor. Dow’s gift stipulated stringent standards of good reputation, moral standing and neighbourly consideration as qualifying requirements, and it was Dow himself who personally nominated one poor local widow to the Merchant Taylors’ almshouses. His attitude towards the indigent was not uncritical, bemoaning that ‘the poore in these daies are given unto to much Idlenes and litle labour … and much seeking after Almes how litle soever it be’, and perhaps this provoked opposition towards him: in 1598, three local women were questioned for the offence of ‘casting Fowle bowles of beastlynes agaynst Mr Robert Dow his backe doore’.[72] But as

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[67] V. Pearl, ‘Social policy in early modern London’, in *History and Imagination*, ed. H. Lloyd-Jones, V. Pearl and B. Worden (1981), pp. 115–31.

[68] Archer, *Pursuit of Stability*, pp. 149–50.

[69] Wear, ‘Caring for the sick poor’, pp. 52–3; Ben-Amos, *Culture of Giving*, pp. 343, 373.

[70] Bodl. Libr., MS Rawl. D796B fo. [86].

[71] Bodl. Libr., MS Rawl. D796B fo. [29]. We are grateful to Mark Latham for help with the details of this incident.

[72] LMA, P69/BOT2/D/005/MS02632 unfol. preamble; P69/BOT2/A/019/MS09234/007 fo. 137.

Derek Keene identified in the 1980s, recalling the discourse of Dives and Lazarus, Dow was not without compassion entirely. When given licence to rent a parish property for the poor that abutted his house, he chose 'not [to] offend an owld woman of long tyme Dwelling in the Tenement' and waited until she died before assuming the lease.[73] Similarly, and in spite of its extensive rules and provisions, recipients of Dow's charity among our sample group included those who had, in their earlier lives, given birth to illegitimate children, been presented for abusing the local minister and even excommunicated from the church.[74]

Such findings make it necessary to qualify the more pessimistic view of the capital's relief system on two main points, the first being that self-aggrandizement is unlikely to have been the purpose of every benefactor. Anthony Duffield, who left the indigent of St. Botolph's a substantial gift in his will, made regular donations to the poor in his lifetime and even took poor individuals into his house – evidence for the persistence of the older custom of 'hospitality'. A parish clerk noted that Duffield was 'godly bent euer vnto the poore'[75] – suggesting that a strong religious impulse lay behind his charity – and a clerk's epitaph for another local lifetime-giver of aid, Ezekias Le Roy, provides the epigraph for this chapter, with its implication that good neighbours were indeed those who supported the poor.[76] Second, the scurrilous backgrounds of a number of Dow pensioners can be supplemented with much wider evidence that the local authorities made no distinction between the deserving and undeserving resident poor when it came to the provision of relief. Those among our sample individuals who received some form of parochial aid were, at other times, described by the clerks as 'Lawles', 'ill members of o' parish', 'a Grace-les widow', 'a (Drunken) Porter' and 'Two filthy Couples'.[77] The clerks obviously had little time for such persons, and it seems likely that the churchwardens and overseers would have thought likewise. But relief was given to them, nonetheless, and perhaps not simply as an attempt to preserve the stability of the local community but also because it was the neighbourly thing to do.

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[73] Keene, 'Poor and their neighbours', pp. 34–6; LMA, P69/BOT2/A/019/MS09234/005[a] fos. 137v–138.

[74] LMA, P69/BOT2/B/001/MS09236 fo. 13v; P69/BOT2/A/019/MS09234/002[b] fo. 73v; P69/BOT2/A/019/MS09234/005[b] fo. 161v.

[75] LMA, P69/BOT2/A/019/MS09234/001[b] fos. 28v, 35v; P69/BOT2/A/019/MS09234/002[b] fo. 11v; P69/BOT2/A/002/MS09221 unfol. entry for 23 Oct. 1589.

[76] LMA, P69/BOT2/A/019/MS09234/008 fo. 123.

[77] LMA, P69/BOT2/A/019/MS09234/008 fos. 261v, 238, 120v, 89v; P69/BOT2/A/003/MS09223 fo. 242v.

10. Between sea and city: portable communities in late medieval London and Bruges

Erik Spindler

This chapter is concerned with particular kinds of communities that exist in port towns and in metropolitan centres along major trade routes. These communities have distinctive characteristics: they may manifest themselves in several, distant places (mostly port towns), without necessarily dominating any one of these, and they may be quite loosely defined. The communities considered here consisted of men involved in long-distance trade in the North Sea region, as merchants or as mariners, who may not have had any long-term commitment to the host town. A highly developed sense of community, of belonging together and offering mutual support, is evident in all cases, but these communities did not typically have institutional features such as membership lists, communal buildings or institutional procedures. As a result, they may not have resembled other communities such as guilds.

Previous work on the subject of geographically mobile communities has usually dealt with narrowly defined groups, such as merchants from one town trading elsewhere, or men of different origins trading in a particular town. Among those communities not organized around a single urban centre, the Hanseatic League (constitutionally an association of towns, but in practice acting like an association of merchants) has been studied most thoroughly.[1] However, much of this existing work channels discussion in particular directions. First, the emphasis of most scholarship lies on trade, on economic relations and on those directly involved in long-distance trade. That is to say, networks of merchants are studied with relatively little consideration for how they might relate to other social groups, including the mariners on whom they depended.[2] Second, much traditional scholarship has a tendency to search out examples of what might loosely be termed ‘geographically far-reaching communities’ in politics, without necessarily considering the impact of particular arrangements on the ground. The case study towards the end of this article attempts to reconcile political relations on a European scale with urban social realities.

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[1] There is an enormous bibliography on the Hanseatic League. A short recent survey is R. Hammel-Kiesow, *Die Hanse* (Munich, 2002).

[2] E.g., P. Stabel, 'De gewenste vreemdeling: Italiaanse kooplieden en stedelijke maatschappij in het laat-middeleeuws Brugge', *Jaarboek voor middeleeuwse geschiedenis*, iv (2001).

In this chapter, the aim is to explore how ‘portable communities’ manifested themselves in port towns. By this, I mean both how these communities became visible to non-members (especially to natives) and how they affected the lives of their (potential) members. The term ‘portable’ encapsulates these communities’ key feature: the ability of their members to carry with them their membership of the community. The communities described here as ‘portable’ do not easily fit into the pattern of communities constructed by Susan Reynolds in her book on the subject. She used a strictly spatial framework, focusing her attention on communities whose members shared geographical proximity, social features and/or economic interests (guilds and fraternities) and on those which consisted of many or most of the permanent residents of a particular area (a village, a town, a province or the realm).[3] The ‘portable communities’ discussed here lacked such a strong geographical component and their members never constituted the majority in any town, but they still displayed essential features of community. Crucially, their members, even when they travelled over relatively long distances (such as between London and Bruges) remained tied to each other by bonds of sympathy, friendship or obligation.

This chapter will proceed, first, by examining the distinctive perspective of portable communities on the town which hosted them temporarily. Second, evidence of mutual support within the community will be explored. The third section will analyse networks of information in greater detail. In each section, reference will be made to a case study, which will be analysed in full in the final section. This case study concerns a Hanseatic captain in Sluis (the port suburb of Bruges) in 1402. Briefly, this captain, called Tidekin, injured a law enforcement officer and was executed. Hanseatic authorities protested against this execution, albeit only after the fact, and eventually achieved his posthumous rehabilitation and reburial. Given that the chief object of the dispute (the status of a dead man) was symbolic, this case sheds light on the nature and form of the ties that connect dead and living members of a single, ‘portable’ community. It provides a rare opportunity to investigate the evidence for, and impact of, portable communities in an urban setting.

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[3] S. Reynolds, *Kingdoms and Communities in Western Europe, 900–1300* (2nd edn., Oxford, 1997).

Evidence is drawn from London and Bruges in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Both towns were major metropolitan centres at the time. Indeed, they were (after Paris) the largest and most cosmopolitan centres in late medieval Europe north of the Alps. London's port and the port of Bruges at Sluis were two of the most important centres for maritime trade in northern Europe, and the main points of entry into England and Flanders respectively. London and Bruges were connected by means of trade networks: political circumstances permitting, wool and cloth were traded directly between them, and Bruges served as an entrepôt for Mediterranean luxury goods. Both towns accommodated disproportionately more long-distance trade, Hanseatic and Mediterranean, than most other northern European ports.

The focus will naturally be on, broadly speaking, mercantile maritime communities, made up of people whose social and professional lives were clearly oriented towards the sea, such as long-distance merchants, merchants' apprentices, captains, sailors, ship's cooks and deckhands. This socially far-reaching notion of community goes beyond most previous work on, for example, merchants of the Hanseatic League. It is true, of course, that London and Bruges hosted a variety of other short-term visitors, including pilgrims, pedlars, petitioners, merchants on overland routes, court retinues and soldiers, who may have belonged to rather different kinds of communities. Being part of a 'portable' community, then, was not merely a matter of individual mobility (indeed, most 'native' long-term residents of London and Bruges had in fact migrated to those towns in their lifetime). Moreover, not everyone whose livelihood depended on the sea travelled far: many fishermen and bargemen did not sail far from their family, never navigated on the high seas and remained at sea for hours rather than weeks or months, while even long-distance merchants might grow deep roots in the towns in which they traded and purchase property or marry locally.

Perspectives on the metropolis

The short-term visitors who made up the portable communities discussed in this chapter had a distinctive way of perceiving, imagining and navigating the metropolitan centres which they visited. From their point of view, particular geographic areas or institutions seemed more prominent than they did to locals or to people with a stronger local connection. Members of 'portable' communities may have been most likely to meet their peers in parts of these towns that perhaps seemed rather less central from the perspective of, say, an alderman or indeed a modern historian. In Bruges, clusters of merchants of the same origin can be identified clearly.[4] For example, Scottish and German merchants were usually based near the Carmelite house, which served as a centre for worship and administration for their respective nations.[5] It is likely that foreign merchants typically developed a mental map of Bruges structured around the buildings and institutions (such as mendicant churches) which were of particular relevance to their nation. Sailors' temporary accommodation was usually near transport infrastructure (ports and canals): most long-distance sailors in the Bruges area probably travelled no further than Sluis, the maritime port of Bruges, about fifteen kilometres north-east, where they stayed either on board their ships or in hostels across the town. Those that came to Bruges tended to stay in hostels along the canal connecting Damme gate (and thus the Zwin waterway leading to the North Sea) with the water-hall in the centre. This distribution had an impact on trades heavily patronized by sailors: Guy Dupont has shown that those areas of Bruges where sailors were most likely to stay also had the highest concentration of brothels.[6] The differences between sailors' mental geography of a region and that of merchants will be explored further below. In London, as in Bruges, members of 'portable' communities favoured areas close to the main commercial waterway, that is, the River Thames. As Derek Keene has shown, those sailors who stayed in London clustered in the riverside wards.[7] Many probably also stayed in the suburbs: in Southwark and further east, along the Thames. I am not aware of evidence to show that German sailors received food or lodging in the Steelyard, the residence of Hanseatic merchants. Consequently, merchants and sailors may have used separate spaces in London, too.

These distinctive perspectives extended not just to geography but also to urban institutions. It is obvious that maritime visitors would have encountered customs officers almost immediately upon arrival and perhaps intermittently throughout their stay, while long-term residents may never have had prolonged dealings with them (except for merchants involved in overseas trade). Conversely, transients might have taken little interest in aldermen, council meetings and proclamations (unless matters pertaining to trade or aliens were concerned). Such a distinctive perspective is to be expected, but it could lead to misunderstandings and even to serious difficulties, as illustrated by the problems faced by the Venetians in Sluis in 1390.[8] According to the local bailiff, two sailors had got into a violent fight on board the Venetian galleys en route from Venice to Flanders. One was stabbed to death, and his corpse was still on board when the convoy arrived in Sluis.[9] As the Venetians were unsure how to deal with the body, they asked a local barber for advice, who allegedly informed them (incorrectly) that they could bury the dead man without formalities. The bailiff imprisoned those Venetian sailors who had dug the grave as well as the captain of the galleys. The cause of the problem had been an erroneous transposition of north Italian institutional structures into a Flemish setting, since in north Italian jurisdictions, barber-surgeons habitually reported injuries to local authorities. A similar duty also existed in the northern Low Countries by the sixteenth century.[10] Seeking a barber's advice would have been a reasonable reflex for a Venetian, but barbers had no formal function with respect to fatal injuries in Flanders. Although visiting a barber may have been a priority after a long sea voyage,[11] the fact that the Venetians sought advice there demonstrates that they were guided by an alien understanding of urban structures, institutions and authorities.

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[4] Cf. V. Henn, 'Der "dudesche kopman" zu Brügge und seine Beziehungen zu den "nationes" der übrigen Fremden im späten Mittelalter', in *Kopet uns werk by tyden. Beiträge zur hansischen und preussischen Geschichte: Walter Stark zum 75. Geburtstag*, ed. W. Stark and others (Schwerin, 1999), p. 133.

[5] A. Vandewalle, 'Les nations étrangères à Bruges', in *Les marchands de la Hanse et la banque des Médicis: Bruges, marché d'échanges culturels en Europe*, ed. A. Vandewalle (Oostkamp, 2002), p. 39. W. Paravicini, 'Lübeck und Brügge: Bedeutung und erste Ergebnisse eines Kieler Forschungsprojektes', in *Die Niederlande und der europäische Nordosten: ein Jahrtausend weiträumiger Beziehungen, 700–1700*, ed. H. Menke (Neumünster, 1992), p. 109.

[6] G. Dupont, *Maagdenverleidsters, hoeren en speculanten: prostitutie in Brugge tijdens de Bourgondische periode (1385–1515)* (Bruges, 1996), p. 147, maps pp. 152–4.

[7] D. Keene, 'Du seuil de la cité à la formation d'une économie morale: l'environnement hanséatique à Londres entre les XII^{e} et XVII^{e} siècles', in *Les étrangers dans la ville: minorités et espace urbain du bas moyen* âge *à l'époque moderne*, ed. J. Bottin and D. Calabi (Paris, 1999), pp. 410–13.

The resolution of this conflict offers another example of distinctive perspectives. The Venetians, using their excellent connections with the Burgundian court, were able to procure a pardon – one, incidentally, which the bailiff refused to recognize on a technicality, although he released the

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[8] For the following section, see Lille, Archives départementales du nord (hereafter ADN), B 6014, account of the bailiff of Sluis, Sept. 1390.

[9] It was not entirely unusual for ships to carry corpses: for example two cases were recorded in 1380, a ship arriving from Prussia and another ship leaving for Zeeland (Brussels, Archives générales du Royaume, series chambre des comptes (hereafter AGR, CC) 1513, account of the water-bailiff at Sluis, May 1380).

[10] Cf., on Groningen in the mid 16th century, F. Huisman, 'Civic roles and academic definitions: the changing relationship between surgeons and urban government in Groningen, 1550–1800', in *The Task of Healing: Medicine, Religion and Gender in England and the Netherlands, 1450–1800*, ed. H. Marland and M. Pelling (Rotterdam, 1996), p. 73. I thank Margaret Pelling for discussing these issues with me.

[11] In 1406, the Venetians brought a barber with them to Flanders, indicating the importance of his service (AGR, CC 13925, bailiff of Sluis, May 1406).

Venetians after a money payment, justifying this with their unquestioned ability to purchase a second, valid pardon. The Venetians thus bypassed local institutions (namely, the bailiff) twice: when acting without his advice in burying their comrade and when negotiating their own release with officers at the Burgundian court. The institutions and people they chose to deal with, the barber and the court, reflected their strictly transient presence in Flanders, focusing on the necessities of everyday life (thus their contact with the barber) and on the guarantor of trading conditions (the duke of Burgundy and his court), but neglecting officers of considerable importance from a Flemish urban perspective. It shows how a 'portable community', the captain and crew of the Venetian convoy, understood local structures in a distinctive way. This incident also shows that portable communities were coherent, as well as hierarchical: both mere sailors and the captain of the galleys were arrested as belonging to the same community, which had, collectively, offended. However, the captain, in accordance with his higher social status, was accommodated in relative luxury at the bailiff's private house, while the sailors were put in prison.

This interplay between community and hierarchy can also be seen in the anti-German riot of 1436 in Sluis, during which an element of the local Flemish population brawled with Hanseatic Germans.[12] The riot began in the evening of Trinity Sunday (3 June) 1436, the feast day of the Hanseatic community in Bruges. Descriptions of the procedures followed on the annual feast day are neither contemporary nor good, as the best record is a prescriptive document from 1500.[13] A feast meal most likely took place at the Carmelite house in Bruges.[14] The near-contemporary chronicle ascribed to Pseudo-Jan van Dixmude (written between 1440 and 1452) tells of a group of Germans who were drinking in a tavern in Sluis that same evening, where they became embroiled in a dispute with a Flemish servant. This dispute developed into a nocturnal riot between Flemings and Hanseatic Germans which claimed around sixty casualties.[15] If some members of the Hanseatic community participated in drawn-out festivities in Bruges during the day, and other members of the same community idled in a tavern in Sluis, fifteen kilometres away, in the evening, then the Hanseatic community was not monolithic and its members did not experience (or use) urban space in the same way. Indeed, Flemish sources described the victims as sailors or captains, not merchants: 'maronniers allemans' ('German sailors'),[16] 'sceplieden, meesteren ende cnapen' ('captains, masters and servants').[17] However, in spite of social distinctions, the entire Hanseatic community joined together when they were attacked by a mob. Thus, in response to a German petition, the church council at Basel used (or repeated) a much more encompassing phrase: 'nonnulli mercatores nacionis Germanice nec non naute, marinarii ac nauclerii, Osterlinghe de Hanza vulgariter nuncupati'.[18] This was a community whose cohesion derived from a common identity (that of 'Osterling' or members of the Hanseatic League), a common identity which overruled the differences in occupation and status of the victims, and which was widely recognized (thus 'vulgariter'). Such rhetoric of shared identity, even if it did not reflect the realities of everyday life, is an essential part of imagining a community, portable or otherwise.

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[12] Discussed in detail in W. Paravicini, 'Schuld und Sühne: der Hansenmord zu Sluis in Flandern, anno 1436', in *Wirtschaft, Gesellschaft, Mentalitäten im Mittelalter: Festschrift zum 75. Geburtstag von Rolf Sprandel*, ed. H.-P. Baum, R. Leng and J. Schneider (Stuttgart, 2006), pp. 401–51. The only other article to treat of this incident in depth is G. Juten, 'Slusana sacra: een boetekapel', *Annales de la Société d'Émulation de Bruges*, lix (1909), 201–13.

[13] *Hansisches Urkundenbuch* (11 vols., Halle, Leipzig and Munich, 1876–1916), xi. 759–74.

[14] Cf. R. Rößner, *Hansische Memoria in Flandern* (Frankfurt, 2001), pp. 205ff.

[15] Pseudo-Jan van Dixmude, 'Kronyk van Vlaenderen', in *Corpus Chronicorum Flandriae*, ed. J.-J. de Smet (4 vols., Brussels, 1837–65), iii. 47ff.

The Venetians and the Hanseatics formed portable communities, which carried with them a sense of identity, an established hierarchy and a distinct perspective on urban institutions. Nothing could make their communal structure clearer than the fact that they engaged in that most quintessentially communal act, burying a dead comrade. The Venetians literally dug their comrade's grave, while the Hanseatic community founded a memorial chapel after the 1436 riot, and collectively mourned their dead at other times (as seen in the case study below). This was not exceptional or a response to unusual circumstances, but a feature of portable communities. Indeed, according to the provisions made for the crusading expedition to Lisbon in 1147, which were to regulate communal life at sea, each ship had its own priest and was to 'keep the same observances as are prescribed for parishes'.[19] In other words, each crusading vessel and the community it carried were conceived of as a 'floating parish' of sorts. The Venetian convoy mentioned above likewise formed a similar 'portable', parish-like community, lacking only its own graveyard.

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[16] AGR, CC 13926, bailiff of Sluis, Dec. 1436.

[17] *Hanserecesse von 1431–76*, ed. G. Freiherr von der Ropp (7 vols., Leipzig, 1876–92) (hereafter *Hanserecesse 1431–76*), ii. 201.

[18] *Hanserecesse 1431–76*, i. 505.

[19] *The Conquest of Lisbon*, ed. C. W. David (New York, 2001), pp. 56ff. I am indebted to Derek Keene for mentioning this reference to me.

Community behaviour

In this section, the focus will be on two aspects of communities: the mutual support shared by its members and the perception of these communities among locals. Crew mates and captains normally supported sailors in trouble, particularly vis-à-vis local authorities. Given the number of sailors who got into difficulties, principally for customs offences and for acts of drunken violence, such support was frequent and visible. The accounts of the bailiff of Sluis contain regular references to Germans who paid reduced fines because of community support. One of the most effective and routine ways of offering such support was to refuse to give evidence against one another to law enforcement authorities: as the bailiff of Sluis put it in 1402, Germans 'ne sont point accoustumé de pourtraire ne de accouser l'un l'autre' ('do not normally accuse or give evidence against one another'). In the absence of other witnesses, this prevented disputes from coming to court.[20] Such support does seem to have derived from membership of the same community, rather than from personal relationships, since loose terms such as 'compaignon' appear more regularly than 'ami' (in Flemish legal sources, the latter term describes a close, legally significant relationship). The case study below offers further evidence in support of this view that mutual support was based on belonging, rather than on sympathy.

If such support was a feature of portable communities, it was not, of course, selfless. For example, a Spanish mariner was imprisoned by the bailiff of Sluis in 1436, for carrying foreign currency. After merchants interceded, he was released 'pour ce qu'il estoit tailliez de demourer derriere et perdre sa reyse par ce que la flote d'Espaigne se partissoit de l'Escluse' ('because he was likely to remain behind and to miss his voyage, as the Spanish fleet was about to leave Sluis').[21] While the sailor was saved from having to wait for perhaps several months, until the next convoy left for Spain, the merchants pleading with the bailiff for his release were not necessarily moved by sympathy, but sought to prevent delaying the departure of their ships, with resulting expenses and loss of income. One of the causes of mutual support, then, was the mutual dependence of members of portable communities.

Having shed some light on the operation of portable communities, we turn to their perception by outsiders. Urban populations were aware of these portable communities temporarily present in their town. This is clearly demonstrated by the issue of Venetian sailors' debts in London: before the Venetian convoy left, captains habitually visited local taverns and paid off their sailors' debts. Although a comparatively sophisticated mechanism existed by which captains paid tavern debts by giving advances on the sailors' wages for the return trip, the Venetian senate feared that the debts might delay the galleys or increase the cost of the convoy, and repeatedly discussed the issue.[22] For present purposes, this situation is interesting not for its dysfunctional impact on trade, but for the evidence it offers of smooth interactions between a portable community and London tavern-keepers, perhaps the only native point of contact for Venetian sailors in London. The problem of debts only developed because oarsmen of the galleys were able to receive credit in London taverns during their stay of (usually) fifty days, by stark contrast with almost any other newcomer or short-term visitor. The most convincing explanation for this exceptional ability to receive credit is that the keepers of the London taverns patronized by Venetians recognized the sailors as belonging to a functioning community and therefore expected (correctly) to be able to claim payment from the head of that community, the captain of the galleys. The Venetian community may have been unique in this respect, since those belonging to it could easily be identified: they differed from Londoners, from other Englishmen and from other aliens in language, dress and physical appearance, as most of the men involved probably came from the Adriatic, often Albania or Greece. In addition to recognizing members of that community, tavern-keepers had enough faith in its communal support structures to trust that debts would be repaid before the debtors left London for Venice, the longest sea journey in Christendom.

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[20] AGR, CC 13925, bailiff of Sluis, Jan. 1402.

[21] AGR, CC 13926, bailiff of Sluis, Jan. 1436.

As we have seen, Germans, Spaniards and Venetians routinely and frequently supported each other in situations of difficulty. This is evidence of, in Robert Putnam's terms, 'bonding social capital'.[23] Moreover, they were perceived as a community not just by distant or casual observers who may have had little direct interaction with them, or by broadly hostile officers, but (for example) by tavern-keepers serving Venetian sailors regularly for several weeks, that is to say by the Londoners who had most opportunity to observe these communities in action. At the same time, these aliens engaged minimally with the host population and other local groups (except in so far as was required by trade, law or necessity). They thus showed low levels of 'bridging' social capital. With the exception of Venetians who travelled in an annual convoy, individual members of these communities travelled along European trade routes in different directions and at different speeds, so that alien communities in any given town changed continuously. These were truly 'portable' communities, whose members were connected to each other by social capital rather than by personal ties of affection.

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[22] On London and Bruges/Sluis, 1408, see *Calendar of State Papers and Manuscripts, Relating to English Affairs, Existing in the Archives and Collections of Venice, 1202–1509* (1864), pp. 44ff.

[23] R. D. Putnam, *Bowling Alone: the Collapse and Revival of American Community* (New York, 2000), pp. 22–4 and *passim*. Cf. also T. Schuller, S. Baron and J. Field, 'Social capital: a review and critique', in *Social Capital: Critical Perspectives*, ed. S. Baron, J. Field and T. Schuller (Oxford, 2000), p. 10.

Access to information

Communities, as Benedict Anderson sees them, rely heavily on their members sharing access to a pool of information.[24] While Anderson focused on printed newspapers, these late medieval portable communities drew chiefly on face-to-face contacts. As Kowaleski has shown, this was a most effective system, particularly in the region of the Channel and the southern North Sea.[25] Such information as was shared among these communities might reach quite far into the past. For example, a German sailor, Bernard Hemeleic, was imprisoned in Sluis in 1396.[26] When he made enquiries about Bernard's past, the local Flemish bailiff discovered that Bernard had killed a man in Scania (on the southern tip of Sweden) sixteen years earlier. It is a remarkable feat to discover evidence of any crime, even manslaughter, across a distance of sixteen years and 800 kilometres as the crow flies. Since Scania and Sluis were connected by the northern European herring trade routes, the bailiff's knowledge of this incident derived from his ability to draw on maritime networks and to access the information circulating within them. The chief weakness of these networks was relatively slow movement: it took the bailiff a month to find out about the crime. In the case study below, a similar delay may have caused Tidekin to be executed before any support could be given to him.

There is thus evidence for the movement of information within portable communities and for outsiders' (occasional) ability to access it. This movement was not random, but a systemic feature of any community. The bailiff could evidently find the right person or persons to ask about Bernard's violent past. Likewise, individuals who did not want information about them to be known could find ways of avoiding this. One possibility was to outrun rumours (or accurate information), a solution which required mobility and a good understanding of relevant networks. This strategy can be studied with reference to fraudsters, who naturally depended on victims' ignorance of their deceit.

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[24] B. Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (1993).

[25] M. Kowaleski, '"Alien" encounters in the maritime world of medieval England', *Medieval Encounters*, xiii (2007), 98.

[26] ADN, B 6031, bailiff of Sluis, May 1396.

In the maritime milieu, one of the most common forms of fraud was playing with false dice. The tension between a highly mobile culture (transient individuals exploiting equally transient sailors), on the one hand, and a distinctly sedentary legal system, on the other, can be drawn out clearly in a case of false dice tried in Sluis in 1400. The statutory penalty, according to local by-laws, was banishment for three or six years, a sentence that left the accused, Hanskin, distinctly unimpressed ('dudit ban il ne faisoit conte'): he made it clear to the aldermen that he had no intention of staying in Sluis or of returning within that time period. The aldermen instead imposed a monetary payment, the 'composition' (Hanskin paid £72 *parisis*).[27] As Hanskin was able to pay this considerable sum, his activity had been profitable, and its profitability had depended on his not being recognized as a player of false dice, either by locals or by the transients whom he tried to cheat. He used at least two techniques to avoid being recognized, changing his name (the record states he was known as both Hanskin le Costere and Hanskin van den Velde) and being highly mobile (he had already come to Sluis from Utrecht, and intended to travel elsewhere). As playing dice was a popular pastime, false dice were probably used everywhere along maritime routes. For example, the Museum of London has false dice on display (some weighted with mercury so as always to fall on high or low numbers, some showing only high or low numbers, including dice with two sixes like the ones Hanskin used).[28] These dice date from the late fifteenth century, a few decades after Hanskin was active, and were found in the river, in the area where portable communities clustered (All Hallows Stairs, near the Steelyard). Anywhere in northern European port towns, members of maritime communities might while away long hours on land by playing dice and 'invest' some of the wages they received upon arrival; and in any port town they might also encounter fraudsters trying to cheat them.

Case study: the rehabilitation of Tidekin

Having explored some of the salient features of portable communities, the following case study will serve to demonstrate that the notion of 'portable community' can contribute to explaining urban relationships and conflicts. The case is easily outlined: a Hanseatic captain, Tidekin van der Heyde, injured a law enforcement officer in Sluis in January 1406 (new style), whereupon he was condemned to death and executed by authority of the sovereign bailiff of Flanders. Soon afterwards, representatives of the Hanseatic League objected and engaged in protracted negotiations with Flemish authorities. In order to resolve this conflict, Tidekin was exhumed and reburied (a most unusual procedure), and there were public acts of remembrance.

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[27] AGR, CC 13925, bailiff of Sluis, Jan. 1401. On the composition system, see J. van Rompaey, 'Het compositierecht in Vlaanderen van de veertiende tot de achttiende eeuw', *Tijdschrift voor rechtsgeschiedenis*, xxix (1961), 43–79.

[28] Museum of London, accession number 84.136. On display in case 16.1 (10 March 2008).

This case has previously only been studied through the lens of Flemish politics,[29] in the context of the confrontation between Ghent and the sovereign bailiff of Flanders in 1400–2.[30] Blockmans treated it as a twofold dispute, between the Flemish towns and the duke of Burgundy (opposing good relations with the Hanse, on the one hand, and the sovereign bailiff's prerogatives, on the other), and between the towns and the Hanseatic League (with conflicting views on the right of a Flemish comital officer to execute a German). According to this interpretation, Tidekin was but a pawn in power struggles which he may not have understood. This interpretation is convincing in so far as the lengthy negotiations (February to November 1406) are indicative of complex political and economic interests. However, the emphasis on power struggles fails to explain how this particular conflict arose, and fails also to account for the resolution of this conflict, centred as it was on communal acts of remembrance. The notion of portable communities, and Tidekin's Hanseatic status, do explain these features.

Tidekin's Hanseatic identity (and the applicability of Hanseatic privileges to him) was not contested. Flemish sources variously described him, unambiguously, as 'een van der [H]Anse'[31] or, synonymously, 'oosterlinc'.[32] Known biographical details about him include his occupation and his place of origin: he had been the captain ('scipheer') of a Hanseatic ship,[33] and he had been born in 'le Holle en Zweden',[34] that is Höllviken bay in Scania,[35] an important centre of the herring trade. He clearly belonged to the Hanseatic portable community, but (as far as I am aware) nothing more can be gleaned about him from any other source.[36]

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[29] W. P. Blockmans, 'Konfliktregelung der Hanse in Flandern, 1393–1451', in Menke, *Die Niederlande und der europäische Nordosten*, p. 217.

[30] For a concise summary, see M. Boone, 'Particularisme gantois, centralisme bourguignon et diplomatie française: documents inédits autour d'un conflit entre Philippe le Hardi, duc de Bourgogne, et Gand en 1401', *Bulletin de la Commission Royale d'Histoire*, clii (1986), 52–4.

[31] *Handelingen van de Leden en van de Staten van Vlaanderen, 1405–1419: excerpten uit de rekenigen der steden, kasselrijen en vorstelijke ambtenaren*, ed. A. Zoete (2 vols., Brussels, 1981) (hereafter *Handelingen*), i. 97.

[32] *Handelingen*, i. 101, 104, 107 and others.

[33] *Handelingen*, i. 180.

[34] ADN, B 5648, account of the sovereign bailiff of Flanders, May 1406.

[35] *Die Recesse und andere Akten der Hansetage von 1256–1430* (7 vols., Leipzig, 1870–93) (hereafter *Hanserecesse 1256–1430*), v, index of place names, s.v. 'Höl, Hölviken, Bucht in Schonen: der Holl, das Hul'.

The conflict started when Tidekin was executed by Flemish authorities, an unusual event in itself, since confrontations between officers and drunken Germans were common in Sluis and rarely led to punishments other than monetary fines. No other Germans appear to have interceded on his behalf, stopping judicial proceedings and securing his release. The severity of the punishment is even more remarkable, given that Tidekin's victim appears to have survived the altercation. However, the execution can be explained by the fact that the injured man, Floreins de Brugdam, was a sergeant in Sluis and had been hurt while exercising his office. Given the close involvement of the sovereign bailiff throughout proceedings, Floreins had most likely served that officer.[37] In the case of attacks on officers, local law enforcement systems displayed an enthusiasm that was both predictable and atypical in bringing the perpetrators to justice. For example, when another sergeant, Henry Valmeesten, was injured on Monday 21 November 1429, the accusation was brought in Ghent three days later (Thursday 24 November), the court heard the case nine days later (Wednesday 30 November) and the verdict was given on Wednesday 7 December, less than three weeks after the confrontation, despite the necessity of travelling three times between Sluis and Ghent (about 40 kilometres each way).[38] Moreover, once Tidekin had been tried and found guilty (by his confession and 'evidence', that is, probably the statements of reliable witnesses),[39] there was limited scope for appeal; the sovereign bailiff of Flanders had been involved at all stages,[40] and an appeal to that officer might otherwise have been the most obvious route to escape execution.

Tidekin was beheaded in Sluis on 18 January 1406.[41] This date suggests a possible explanation for the failure of the Hanseatic community to secure his release. Assuming relatively fast operation of local courts, an execution in mid January indicates that the fight took place in December 1405 (none of the sources dates the incident). This was an unusual time for a German to be in Sluis, since long-distance maritime travel in the North Sea region virtually ceased in winter. Any German in Sluis in early January probably spent the entire winter there, whether out of choice or because of unforeseen circumstances. Stuart Jenks has shown that the Hanseatic League regularly imposed bans on sailing in winter, in addition to the impediment caused by adverse weather conditions.[42] Tidekin's execution accordingly took place at a time when the Hanseatic presence in Flanders was weak in numbers and unable to act effectively or rapidly (even during the sailing season, return travel between Bruges and Hamburg took at least seven weeks).[43] In other words, Tidekin may have been executed because the mechanisms of information flow and support associated with portable communities did not function effectively in winter.

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[36] Neither 'Tidekin van der Heyde' nor variants (e.g., Dietrich) appear in *Hanserecesse 1256-1430*, v, *Hansisches Urkundenbuch*, v, or in any of the five volumes of the series *Hansekaufleute in Brügge* (Frankfurt, 1992–2001). The last name van der Heyde (and similar) does appear occasionally, e.g., Clais van der Heyde, from Lübeck, was in Sluis in the summer of 1401 (AGR, CC 13925, bailiff of Sluis, Sept. 1401).

[37] On the sovereign bailiff, see Boone, 'Particularisme', p. 52.

[38] AGR, CC 13926, bailiff of Sluis, Jan. 1430.

[39] 'pour ce qu'il confessa devant les hommes de monseigneur et avec ce fu trouvé par informacion faite par lesdiz hommes et les eschevins dicelle ville, lesquelz eschevins se ostrerent de cognoistre dudit fait et le baillient aux diz hommes que par nuyt il avoit navré' (ADN, B 5648, sovereign bailiff, May 1406). On proofs in Flemish law, see R. C. van Caenegem, *Geschiedenis van het strafprocesrecht in Vlaanderen van de XI^{e} tot de XIV^{e} eeuw* (Brussels, 1956), pp. 200–4.

[40] Cf. 'les hommes de monseigneur' (the Duke's men) in previous note.

[41] On this punishment, see R. C. van Caenegem, *Geschiedenis van het strafrecht in Vlaanderen van de XI^{e} tot de XIV^{e} eeuw* (Brussels, 1954), p. 160.

However, a closer look at this incident and its aftermath reveals how important such communities could be even after death, and conversely, how important a death could be for the community of the living. Tidekin's execution led to prolonged negotiations between the relevant parties, that is to say the Bruges *Kontor* or Hanseatic representation, on the one hand, and the Four Members of Flanders, on the other, the Four Members being an informal forum in which the country's three main cities (Ghent, Bruges and Ypres) and the *Franc* or *Vrije* of Bruges (that is, the independent hinterland) co-ordinated their policies. The dispute centred on the right of comital officers to execute someone protected by Hanseatic privileges, an eventuality not covered by existing regulations. The most recent set of privileges for the Hanse in Bruges, which dated from 1360,[44] provided for Germans as victims of violent crime, and dealt with them as perpetrators on the principle of an eye for an eye ('li dit malfaiteur soient puni vie pour vie et membre pour membre').[45] Tidekin, however, had injured rather than killed the sergeant.

Negotiations began a month after the execution, in mid February 1406, and ran until late November. After several meetings,[46] the aldermen of the

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[42] S. Jenks, *England, die Hanse und Preussen: Handel und Diplomatie, 1377–1474* (Cologne, 1992), pp. 306–11.

[43] G. Hoffmann and U. Schnall, *Die Kogge: Sternstunde der deutschen Schiffsarchäologie* (Hamburg, 2003), p. 171.

[44] *Hansisches Urkundenbuch*, iii. 250–67. Cf. Rößner, *Hansische Memoria*, p. 115.

[45] This provision is only included in the French text, not the Dutch one (*Hansisches Urkundenbuch*, iii. 258ff.).

[46] *Handelingen*, i. 97, 101, 103ff.

Hanse remained, in the words of the council of Flanders, 'most obstinate'.[47] Prompted by a letter from Duke John the Fearless, the Four Members met at Bruges on Sunday 25 April, where the Hanse continued to be 'rude and stubborn'.[48] A largely symbolic resolution attempt was made at this point, discussed below, but the issue was still being debated at the end of June, when the aldermen of the Hanse continued to seek redress and justice ('beteringhe ende recht daer up'). The Members were unsure how to proceed,[49] and the matter was only finally resolved on 26 November 1406, over ten months after the original incident, in negotiations between the Four Members, the council and the Hanse. The record is frustratingly anticlimactic: 'after much debate, an agreement was reached'.[50] The lengthy, meandering negotiations testify to the complexity of the matter at hand, since debate ranged across not only Tidekin's execution but the wider situation of Hanseatic trade in Flanders.

The main element in the resolution of the dispute was an unusual ceremony, the exhumation of Tidekin's body, followed by reburial in consecrated ground, and a funeral mass in St. Mary's church. This ceremonial resolution was agreed on 25 April 1406 and carried out three days later, on the morning of Wednesday 28 April. Although negotiations continued after this date, the ceremony is important since there is no historical record of the final settlement, if there even was a formal one. Moreover, the ceremony was built around the symbolic undoing of Tidekin's execution, and provided a stage on which the various communities involved, including the Hanseatic portable community, could present themselves and their relations with each other. The ceremony is recorded in some detail in the bailiff's expenses.[51] Two men exhumed Tidekin's body, three months and ten days after the execution. They put the corpse in a coffin and carried it to the churchyard ('en lieu saint') for a new burial. In the church, the curate, chaplains and clerks sang mass, apparently over an empty, substitute coffin. There can be no doubt that reburial in consecrated ground was felt to be important by contemporaries convinced that 'proper' burial had a real impact on the afterlife.[52] The Burgundian exchequer paid £22 *parisis* for Tidekin's funeral (in addition to the expenses for his initial execution and the protracted negotiations),[53] considerably more than for other funerals in the same period.[54] The interim agreement reached at this point was thus based around a highly symbolic act (a Christian reburial) and a deeply communal event (a grand funeral service). As part of the funeral service, three parties offered small candles: the deputies of the Four Members, the aldermen of the Hanse and 'other Germans, both captains and others' ('et pluseurs autres notables personnes allemans, maistres de neifs et aultres'). The last group is particularly interesting. These were Tidekin's peers; they were described in precisely the same way as Tidekin himself, as Germans (or 'osterling') and as captains. Origin and occupation thus defined a community whose members attended each other's funerals, but who may have had few connections with Sluis or with Flanders. Furthermore, there is not a shred of evidence to suggest that any of the Hanseatic officers negotiating the settlement or any of the 'other Germans' attending the funeral had been personal acquaintances of Tidekin, and the Hanseatic *Kontor* routinely expected all Hanseatic Germans to attend Hanseatic funerals while they were in Bruges.[55] Here, members of a 'portable community' formed a community of mourners, playing the roles that might, in sedentary society, be filled by families, associates, friends, guild members and co-parishioners.

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[47] 'estoient tres fort obstinez en leur rigueur' (*Handelingen*, i. 108ff.).

[48] 'mids dat zij up hare ruuthede ende harthede bleven' (*Handelingen*, i. 115).

[49] *Handelingen*, i. 142.

[50] 'naer vele handelinghen der of ghehouden, appointment ghemaect ende ghesloten was' (*Handelingen*, i. 180).

[51] AGR, CC 13925, bailiff of Sluis, Jan. 1407 (*Handelingen*, i. 118ff.). All information about the reburial is taken from here (unless indicated otherwise).

[52] E.g., the family of another executed man, Jehan filz Boudins, buried him illegally and secretly (ADN, B 5627, no. 148 357, sovereign bailiff, Sept. 1386).

The centrality of death in late medieval thought and society need hardly be emphasized.[56] Perhaps death was especially meaningful for men who spent their lives engaging in inherently dangerous activities (such as long-distance sailing) and who might expect to die far from loved ones and trusted friends.[57] Death could even be the foundation on which a mobile society was built: Engseng Ho, describing a maritime community in a different part of the world (the Indian Ocean), wrote the evocative sentence: 'in a society of migrants, what is important is not where you were born, but where you died'.[58] That statement is too strong to be transferred to this situation: we are dealing not with migrants but with transients; place of birth still mattered (it is the only detail of Tidekin's life before his execution mentioned in the sources), and the place of death was considered less important in the medieval North Sea region than in the Hadrami society as studied by Ho. Nonetheless, death was central to the notion of a community, and the memory of death was important to the late medieval communities discussed here. In the Hanseatic community in Bruges, the memory of the dead was usually perpetuated by individual provisions, as studied by Renée Rößner,[59] and in Tidekin's case, several remarkable measures were taken to ensure that the events were remembered and publicized, beyond those groups involved in the negotiations or present at the reburial service. Unlike many of the bequests studied by Rößner, these acts of remembrance were not primarily geared towards the salvation of Tidekin's soul, but aimed to reach an audience of the living. The reburial itself was publicized across Sluis by three long peals rung at the time of the service. More significantly, the Burgundian exchequer paid for a regular memorial mass. For a year from 5 December 1406, the chaplain of St. Mary's said a daily requiem 'pour l'ame de feu Tidekin de le Heyde, de le Hanse d'Allemaigne'. Thrice a week, the requiem was followed by prayers at Tidekin's grave.[60] Every Sunday, Monday and Friday those walking past St. Mary's churchyard would thus see a party saying prayers at the graveside, in an act of remembrance purposely visible to passers-by. This regular ceremony amounted to an enactment of the relevant communities in the area and their relationships, allowing Flemish authorities and the Hanseatic community to commemorate their conflict and the latter to commemorate their dead. Both the days chosen for the ceremony and the location contribute to the sense of the audience's importance in remembrance. Graveside prayers were said on days which were also favoured for civic events attracting large numbers of spectators or participants. Thus, the approximately biannual assembly of Sluis householders known as *franches vérités* often took place on Sundays or Mondays,[61] and executions were often scheduled on Fridays.[62] St. Mary's church, Tidekin's resting place, was one of two parish churches in Sluis (the other being St. John the Baptist); it was near the town hall and market squares, and even a casual visitor to Sluis might pass it. More than thirty years later, the memorial chapel for the 1436 riot was established in that same church, confirming its use as a site of remembrance by Hanseatic Germans.[63]

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[53] Exhumation £6 *parisis*, *huche* 18*s*, large candles £7 4*s*, small candles £2 8*s*, bells £1 4*s*, *louenge* 14s, mass £3 12*s*.

[54] The funeral of Jehan Brand, curate of St. Mary's church in nearby Damme, cost £11 12*s*: *escrin* £1 10*s parisis*, two candles 6*s*, clothes to dress the corpse £1 16*s*, grave £1 4*s*, vigil £1 4s, 'pout tout le chiere de la suppelture' £5, 'pour lui vestir et aparelgier' 12*s* (AGR, CC 13891, bailiff of Damme, Sept. 1390).

[55] *Hanserecesse 1256–1430*, ii. 111ff.

[56] Cf. M. Aston, 'Death', in *Fifteenth-Century Attitudes*, ed. R. Horrox (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 202–28

[57] Several of the Castilian wills studied by Phillips contain alternative provisions, depending on the place of death (W. D. Phillips, Jr., 'Local integration and long-distance ties: the Castilian community in 16th-century Bruges', *Sixteenth-Century Journal*, xvii (1986), 43, n. 30).

[58] E. Ho, *The Graves of Tarim: Genealogy and Mobility across the Indian Ocean* (Berkeley, Calif., 2006), p. 3.

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[59] Rößner, *Hansische Memoria*, pp. 223–4.

[60] AGR, CC 13925, bailiff of Sluis, May 1407.

[61] On the *franches vérités* in general, see Van Caenegem, *Geschiedenis van het strafprocesrecht*, pp. 35–47. Of the 75 assemblies in the period 1387–1441, 64 are dated: Sundays 21 (33 per cent), Mondays 15 (23 per cent), Tuesdays 14 (22 per cent), Thursdays 6 (9 per cent), Wednesdays 5 (8 per cent), Saturdays 3 (5 per cent), Fridays none (ADN, B 6006–41, bailiff of Sluis, 1387–99; AGR, CC 13925–6, bailiff of Sluis, 1400–11 and 1421–41).

[62] Three out of 10 dated executions in the period 1387–1441 (16 Sept. 1401, 16 June 1402, 29 Aug. 1410). Tidekin's execution had been on a Monday (AGR, CC 13925, bailiff of Sluis, 1400–11).

It is perhaps significant that the requiems began only on 5 December 1406, months after the reburial in April (perhaps on the anniversary of the altercation between Tidekin and the sergeant?). By then, negotiations between the Hanse and Flanders had concluded, and while the final agreement is not known, this act of remembrance may have been instituted by it. One may suppose that the institution of a memorial mass was particularly important to Hanseatic plenipotentiaries, and remained significant after the funeral mass, since they were concerned not just with the salvation of Tidekin's soul (which required a Christian burial) and with legal arrangements (namely the right, or otherwise, of Flemish authorities to execute a Hanseatic German), but with the reaction of the living. Publicly visible remembrance was addressed to locals and to transients, particularly to members of the Hanseatic community passing through Sluis. The measures chosen, in particular the thrice weekly commemoration in 1406–7, were appropriate for a portable community, since every Hanseatic mariner, merchant or captain coming to Sluis, even for the first time, would have become aware of Tidekin's story. Indeed, if the flow of information within maritime communities functioned as well as has been supposed above, many would already have heard of Tidekin's execution and its political aftermath before reaching Flanders, and many that never sailed in Flemish waters might have heard of their community's efforts to care for its members, on every shore of the North Sea and, as the phrase goes, on another shore and in a greater light.

Conclusion

Metropolitan populations consisted not only of natives and newcomers, but of a patchwork of overlapping, rival or ill-defined groups, sharing a variety of interests, a particular status or particular privileges and displaying varying degrees of homogeneity. The phrase 'portable communities' draws attention to the fact that for many travellers, their identity and their most important connections were not necessarily associated with the town in which they traded or through which they travelled, but that these travellers might be part of other, mobile communities, in keeping with their transient lifestyle. These communities, identities and connections were no less important for their lack of a geographical anchor point.

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[63] Paravicini, 'Schuld und Sühne', p. 425.

Portable communities can be shown to have had their own mental frameworks, which shaped their distinctive perception of foreign towns, institutions and space. At the same time, they shared certain features with other, more sedentary communities elsewhere: their members buried their dead and remembered them, they supported each other in difficulty, they could be recognized by those not belonging to the community, and they shared information with each other. These communal structures were predictable, to the point that those wishing to exploit them (for example in order to try to cheat community members), could do so.

This survey highlights the need to think about how transient populations might relate to the geographical, social and legal landscape of the towns in which they appear in the historical record. The notion of portable communities is, then, a useful tool with which to study groups that became manifest in towns but were only very loosely associated with those towns. This notion enables us to study how portable communities and their members interacted with each other and with urban society, whether in formal, economic or political relations, by purchasing food and drink, renting short-term accommodation, spending money on games or prostitution, or by hurling abuse at locals. Portable and local communities, in an urban setting, interacted in various ways and negotiated dynamic relationships with each other, both formally, in response to a specific dispute, and informally, as part of everyday life in the metropolis.

11. The kindness of strangers: charitable giving in the community of the Dutch Church, Austin Friars, in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries*

Catherine Wright

Among the litany of complaints directed against the strangers of early modern London by disgruntled citizens was the notion that their poor were burdensome to everyone, but that they did not contribute themselves to support the institutions of the city. The complaint about the poor was demonstrably false; indeed, the support that the stranger churches gave to their own poor was frequently deployed by the churches themselves as an argument for the maintenance of their privileges.[1] It was also recognized by some contemporaries as not only admirable but actively beneficial to civic society, in that it removed the burden of caring for poor people who would otherwise have been thrown on the mercy of parish authorities or reduced to begging in the streets.[2] The charitable activities of the Dutch Church in particular were described with (somewhat exaggerated) approbation by John Strype:

> They maintain their Poor at their own Charge, which stands them in neer 1200l. per ann. Part of which they collect every Sunday, and Week Day customarily, whensoever there is a Sermon, at the Church Door, by Deacons of the Church, who stand there with Basins to receive what the People are pleased to throw in.[3]

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* This chapter stems from my doctoral work on the Dutch in London in the later 17th century, which was begun under the supervision of Derek Keene and Matthew Davies at the Centre for Metropolitan History. I am hugely grateful to Professor Keene for his enthusiasm and insight, and for the incredibly wide knowledge he brought to bear on my work. My thanks are also due to Matthew Davies and Grant Tapsell for their comments on earlier drafts.

[1] L. B. Luu, 'Alien communities in transition, 1570–1650', in *Immigrants in Tudor and Early Stuart England*, ed. N. Goose and L. B. Luu (Brighton, 2005), p. 198 (1599); Joannes H. Hessels, *Ecclesiae Londino-Batavae archivum. Tomii tertii, pars secunda. Epistulae et tractatus cum reformationis tum Ecclesiae Londino-Batavae historiam illustrantes* (Cambridge, 1897), p. 2745 (1702).

[2] Such as Lancelot Andrewes in 1588, as noted by C. Hill, 'Puritans and the poor', *Past & Present*, ii (1952), 44.

[3] John Strype, *A Survey of the Cities of London and Westminster: Containing the Original, Antiquity, Increase, Modern Estate and Government of those Cities* (2 vols., 1720), I. ii. 117. The actual expense was probably less than half Strype's figure: in 1715 expenditure by the deacons amounted to around £450 (London Metropolitan Archives (hereafter LMA), CLC/180/MS07390/004).

The picture of the stranger churches as fulcrums of charitable activity – indeed, 'paragons of charitable endeavour' – has been reinforced by the work of modern historians.[4] Their studies have tended to focus on the poor relief provided through the diaconates of the churches rather than the contributions which made such relief possible.[5] This chapter attempts to redress this by examining the giving habits of the congregation of the Dutch Church between 1660 and 1720; it will investigate *inter vivos* and testamentary gifts, the motivations of benefactors, and the forms of commemoration that were focused on or mediated by the church. I shall argue that charitable and other contributions were a significant factor in maintaining attachments to the church, particularly when membership was essentially voluntary and the community included many second- and third-generation migrants who were equally comfortable participating in parish life.[6] Financial contributions both derived from and contributed to a group identity among the wealthier members; they also formed part of a service ethos, in which such contributions went hand-in-hand with the offices of deacon or elder.[7]

The Dutch Church in later Stuart London

The Dutch Church had been self-supporting since its initial foundation in 1550. The only material support it received from the crown was the original grant of the nave of the church of the Austin Friars; the ministry, church maintenance and poor relief were funded by the members of the church. That membership fluctuated over the late sixteenth century and reached a peak in the 1590s, after which a long decline appears to have set in. The diminishing numbers of new members during the early Stuart period were offset by the increasing wealth of the merchants of the congregation, who were able to make significant contributions to the church finances; the sums raised in charitable collections at this time were substantial by any contemporary measure.[8] This mercantile elite has been seen as increasingly oligarchic in terms of its governance of the church and congregation – a state of affairs which continued into the eighteenth century.[9]

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[4] I. W. Archer, 'The charity of early modern Londoners', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 6th ser., xii (2002), 241.

[5] O. P. Grell, *Dutch Calvinists in Early Stuart London: the Dutch Church at Austin Friars* (Leiden, 1989), pp. 94–9, covers gifts and collections for the poor over the period 1620–42, looking at the sums collected through the church. Other recent works have tended to deal either with the early development of the diaconate in the exile communities of the 16th century or with the charitable institutions that emerged among the French communities after the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, and deal with gifts and bequests in passing (e.g. A. Spicer, '"Le quatriesme ordre": the diaconate in the French-Walloon churches of London and Sandwich, *c.*1568–1573', *Proceedings of the Huguenot Society of Great Britain and Ireland*, xxix (2008), 1–14, and 'Poor relief and the exile communities', in *Reformations Old and New: Essays on the Socio-Economic Impact of Religious Change, 1470–1630*, ed. B. A. Kümin (Aldershot, 1996), pp. 237–55; L. H. Yungblut, '"Mayntayninge the indigente and nedie": the institutionalization of social responsibility in the case of the resident alien communities in Elizabethan Norwich and Colchester', in *From Strangers to Citizens: the Integration of Immigrant Communities in Britain, Ireland and Colonial America, 1550–1750*, ed. R. Vigne and C. Littleton (Brighton, 2001), pp. 99–105; T. Murdoch and R. Vigne, *The French Hospital in England: its Huguenot History and Collections* (Cambridge, 2009); R. Vigne, '*Dominus providebit*: Huguenot commitment to poor relief in England', in *The Religious Culture of the Huguenots, 1660–1750*, ed. A. Dunan-Page (Aldershot, 2006), pp. 69–86.

[6] Such as Adrian Beyer (see P. Gauci, *The Politics of Trade: the Overseas Merchant in State and Society, 1660–1720* (Oxford, 2003), p. 80).

[7] C. Wright, 'The consistory and community of Austin Friars in the later 17th century', *Proceedings of the Huguenot Society of Great Britain and Ireland*, xxviii (2007), 630–1.

After the Restoration, the Dutch Church remained a single institution with a small and declining population headed by merchants. Even with a group of wealthy contributors, however, it was no longer able to muster sufficient resources to extend its relief activities far beyond its own congregation; the generosity of wealthy members had to be directed principally inwards, towards the church and community, and could not be too greatly strained. While the church continued to make small donations to churches in need in the Netherlands, and to individuals from areas under the cross, these activities were low-level in comparison to those of the earlier Stuart period.[10] This also came to be the case for the financial support given to the ailing Dutch communities of Sandwich, Yarmouth and Canvey Island (and eventually to those of Norwich and Colchester).[11] When approached by the London French Church in 1690 for assistance with the large numbers of poor Huguenot refugees, the elders of the Dutch Church 'made no reply'.[12] Furthermore, the increasingly precarious state of the church's own poor funds led the elders and deacons to attempt to restrict membership in order to prevent recent migrants from depleting resources that belonged to the community's 'own' members.[13] Those poor members did, however, continue to benefit from the charitable activities of the church, both in its almshouses and through outdoor and occasional relief in the form of pensions, one-off payments for sickness, travel or other needs, and the provision of clothing.

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[8] Grell, *Dutch Calvinists*, pp. 94–9.

[9] Grell, *Dutch Calvinists*, p. 39; Wright, 'Consistory and community'.

[10] Grell, *Dutch Calvinists*, pp. 176–210.

[11] The London church had maintained a separate annual collection for the congregations of Maidstone and Yarmouth, but this produced only £2 2*s* 6*d* in 1666 and was discontinued (see LMA, CLC/180/MS07389/001, accounts for 1660–6). After this, all payments were made directly by the elders (see LMA, CLC/180/MS07389/001 fos. 62, 76, 82, 86, 97). In the mid 18th century the London church was sending £5 to the Dutch Church in Norwich (LMA, CLC/180/MS07395/001 fo. 22). See also O. P. Grell, 'From persecution to integration: the decline of the Anglo-Dutch communities in England, 1648–1702', in O. P. Grell, *Calvinist Exiles in Tudor and Stuart England* (Aldershot, 1996), pp. 120–46.

[12] *Minutes of the Consistory of the French Church of London, Threadneedle Street, 1679–92*, ed. R. Gwynn (Huguenot Society Quarto Series, lviii, 1994), p. 317.

The survival of the Dutch Church and its provision of poor relief is a testimony to its continuing ability to attract charitable gifts. Changes in the size and political or financial clout of the church do not necessarily indicate that it had less importance for its members – either for the poor who were dependent on the relief afforded by the church, or for the wealthier members who contributed to its funds.

Lifetime giving

The Dutch Church fell in theory under the superintendence of the bishop of London, but in practice it was largely autonomous and wholly self-funding. The ministry was supported by the collection of *dienstgeld*, which was collected quarterly and was levied by assessment of members who were sufficiently well-off to pay. The church fabric was maintained by a separate fund for the 'reparatie des Tempels', for which collections were made in *schotels* (dishes) at six sermons a year. These funds were supplemented by occasional extraordinary collections. Contributions for the poor were not levied by a rate, as with English parishes, but were made via collections in church at every service, and by annual door-to-door collections known as the *bussen* ('poor-box'). Such ways of collecting money were all deployed in securing alms for the poor in the Low Countries, in the public Dutch Reformed church as well as other denominations.[14] They would also have been known to long-established Londoners, not only from their parishes but also from the activities of Nonconformist congregations: Quakers levied a rate for the support of their poor from their members.[15] While the total self-reliance of the London Dutch Church was a result of its position outside the Anglican parochial system rather than of deliberate civic policy, it would not have seemed particularly peculiar to contemporary migrants.

It is impossible to quantify individuals' lifetime donations to the church poor funds, as the records do not permit such a breakdown. It is, however,

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[13] LMA, CLC/180/MS07397/009 fos. 49v, 82v.

[14] See, e.g., H. van Wijngaarden, *Zorg voor de kost: Armenzorg, arbeid en onderlinge hulp in Zwolle, 1650–1700* (Amsterdam, 2000), pp. 130–1; E. Kuijpers, *Migrantenstad: Immigratie en sociale verhouding in 17e-eeuws Amsterdam* (Hilversum, 2005), pp. 288–90, 306–8; M. van Leeuwen, 'Amsterdam en de armenzorg tijdens de Republiek', *NEHA-Jaarboek voor Economische, Bedrijfs- en Techniekgeschiedenis*, lix (1996), 139–42.

[15] A. Davies, *The Quakers in English Society, 1655–1725* (Oxford, 2000), pp. 82–4.

Table 11.1. Income from regular collections held in the Dutch Church, 1660, 1690 and 1720

	Poor *schotels*	**Poor *bussen***	***Dienstgeld***	**'Reparatie' *schotels***
1660	£452 1*s* 11*d*	£93 4*s* 3*d*	£321 17*s* 0*d*	£48 13*s* 6*d*
1690	£297 16*s* 9*d*	£57 2*s* 2*d*	£170 1*s* 0*d*	£40 16*s* 6*d*
1720	£176 4*s* 7*d*	No collection	£120 4*s* 0*d*	£33 4*s* 7*d*

Source: LMA, CLC/180/MS07390/004 and CLC/180/MS07408.

possible to discern the annual income from the collections in the *schotels* and the annual *bussen*; figures for 1660, 1690 and 1720 are shown in Table 11.1.[16] The decreasing returns of both collections are easily explained by the declining numbers of members. Sometimes extraordinary contributions were recorded by the deacons; for example £50 given by Sir John Frederick in 1677, and Pieter van der Mersch's 'liberal and generous' gift of 21 guineas.[17] This income was supplemented by interest on capital from legacies left to form a stock, by rents, and by legacies which could be used immediately. Occasional ad hoc collections were held for people in need: sums of £51 and £25 were collected *c.*1662 for the widow and eight children of an assistant minister; contributions from members of the congregation ranged from 10*s* to £10.[18] Individual contributions to the repairs fund were also sometimes recorded: nine members gave £34 6*s* between them for repairs in 1669, apparently as a collective effort; Gerard van Heythuysen contributed £10 in 1683 for the rebuilding of the minister's house; Denis Dutry gave £20 in 1706 for repairs to the north wall of the church.[19]

Individuals' lifetime contributions to the *dienst* can be calculated from the church accounts. Between the years 1664 and 1714 the elder Jean de la Chambre contributed £137 in *dienstgeld* funds, and £21 to extraordinary collections; Pieter van der Mersch contributed £144 5*s* 6*d* in *dienstgeld* and £73 2*s* for general collections between 1660 and 1714.[20] *Dienstgeld* payments were perhaps not strictly or solely charitable in intention (although the accounts also include small 'vrywillige giften' from people who were not normally assessed), but other contributions certainly were: Francis Tyssen gave £100 to the *dienst cassa* at a time of need in 1695, when it was held to be inappropriate to hold a general collection because of the war.[21] Even in the 1720s, when contributions to the *dienst* had fallen to a relatively low level, a subscription list for an organ gathered promises of gifts totalling over £1,000.[22] The three general collections of 1668/9, 1699 and 1717/18 brought in substantial amounts: £1422 13*s*, £1346 5*s* and £1649 14*s* 5*d* respectively.[23] This underlines the continuing ability of the church to attract significant donations at special occasions, even as the numbers of *dienstgeld* contributors declined.

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[16] There was also a 'black box', possibly a box for fines levied on elders and deacons for neglecting their duties, and the 'blocken', perhaps fixed wooden poor-boxes in the church (LMA, CLC/180/MS07396/006 fos. 344ff.).

[17] LMA, CLC/180/MS07410 fos. 27r, 49.

[18] LMA, CLC/180/MS07396/006 fos. 365v–367.

[19] Figures for the collections and the *schotels* income can be found in annual accounts in LMA, CLC/180/MS07389/001, 002; for other references, see LMA, CLC/180/MS07389/001 fos. 56, 113, and CLC/180/MS07389/002 (unfoliated), 1706 accounts.

[20] Figures compiled from annual accounts in LMA, CLC/180/MS07389/001, 002.

Other acts of generosity took a more material form:

> M. Vendermersh [Pieter van der Mersch], a Merchant and one of their Elders, at his own Cost, built a good House for one of their Ministers: which cost 400l. and after, finished it within, at a considerable further Expence; very much to his Commendation, and the lasting Memory of his Charity and good Will to this Church.[24]

Marie du Bois gave £250 in her lifetime to build the room which housed the church library; many others gave small donations to buy books, or gave books directly.[25] Others contributed material objects to enhance or support the church services: Jan van Pieren gave four silver beakers to be used at the Lord's Supper; Abraham Dolins contributed thirteen 'beautiful church Bibles', recorded by the elders as a 'distinguished gift'; Pieter Hoet donated a clock for the consistory; Daniel Demetrius asked freedom 'in the name of an unknown friend' to place a new clock over the communion table; and a Mr. Angel presented a gilt ironwork egg-timer.[26]

All these contributions, including those for the basic maintenance of the church and its poor, were in essence voluntary: strangers were not required to be members of the stranger churches. There was no real method of enforcing such payments, especially as members could in practice simply leave; their continued willingness to contribute shows their attachment to the congregation. They may have had a variety of reasons for maintaining these ties: religious ones (as, until the Act of Toleration of 1689, the stranger churches were the only places in London where Reformed worship could legally be conducted in public); linguistic or ethnic ones; reasons to do with kinship or business networks; and reasons to do with a sense of personal heritage. Contributions to the church did not necessarily indicate regular or exclusive attendance; many members were also active in their parishes and often in parish vestries. The decision to contribute to the Dutch Church, and often to contribute significant amounts both over time and as one-off gifts, thus suggests both the strength of attachment among members, and the importance of charity as an expression of that attachment.

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[21] LMA, CLC/180/MS07397/009 fo. 87v.

[22] LMA, CLC/180/MS07397/009 fo. 136; J. Lindeboom, *Austin Friars* (The Hague, 1950), pp. 168–9.

[23] LMA, CLC/180/MS07389/001, 002, accounts for relevant years.

[24] Strype, *Survey of the Cities*, I. ii. 117.

[25] Lindeboom, *Austin Friars*, p. 169; Grell, *Dutch Calvinists*, p. 81; LMA, CLC/180/MS20185/004 (benefactors' book), CLC/180/MS20185/053 fos. 3–4v.

[26] LMA, CLC/180/MS07397/008 fo. 278; CLC/180/MS07397/009 fos. 12v, 50v, 71.

It is impossible to judge how lifetime giving to other institutions by members of the Dutch Church compared with their giving to the church itself. However, it is certain that many of the wealthier members, being householders, were liable for parish rates and tithes, and probable that they gave to charitable donations at sermons and for charitable briefs. Some members gave in a much more high-profile manner. Sir John Frederick, who had been president of Christ's hospital in 1662, promoted its mathematical school, spent £5,000 repairing the great hall, and bore the costs of bringing the conduit water from Gray's Inn Fields.[27] Pieter Hoet, mentioned above, gave a silver basin and chalice to the church of St. Dionis Backchurch, and contributed over £100 to its rebuilding after the Great Fire.[28] Francis Tyssen, Frederick Gronen and Adrian Vandepost all contributed to the gallery and organ in the church of St. Mary-at-Hill in 1693; Pieter Lupaert was recorded on the 'Table of Benefactors' in the rebuilt church of All Hallows Lombard Street.[29] These gifts probably represent only the tip of the iceberg of charitable giving, both quotidian and extraordinary. Giving as an expression of attachment was not restricted to a single institution.

Testamentary giving

Was the Dutch Church, then, only one of a number of institutions which received equal attention from donors, or did it have a special place in the minds of its members? Several recent historians of the stranger churches in London and elsewhere in England have seen bequests as useful indicators both of attachment to the stranger churches and their communities, and of the degree of assimilation into the life of the host community and its civic structures. This held true for the refugee migrants of the sixteenth century as it did for their successors: Andrew Pettegree and Charles Littleton have both noted the high level of bequests to the French and Dutch churches of London in migrants' wills of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries.[30] They have also shown, as has Lien Luu, that membership of a stranger church or community did not preclude significant charitable bequests to Anglican parish poor and other London institutions.[31]

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[27] E. H. Fellowes, *The Family of Frederick* (Windsor, 1932), p. 20.

[28] Strype, *Survey of the Cities*, I. ii. 152.

[29] A. Trower, *The Parish of St Mary-at-Hill, its Church Estates and Charities* (1878), pp. 219–20; Strype, *Survey of the Cities*, I. ii. 156.

This section uses a sample of prerogative court of Canterbury wills to assess levels of charitable bequests, and hence levels of attachment, among lifetime contributors to the Dutch Church. Testators were identified using lists of contributors to the *dienstgeld* from 1660, 1670, 1680, 1690, 1700, 1710 and 1720, and general collections of 1668/9 and 1699. Of approximately 500 contributors, wills were found for 194. Of these testators, thirty-one were women, of whom thirty were widows and one a spinster; there were 163 male testators, ranging from the extremely rich to the much more modest middling sort. The material from the will sample has been organized in three cohorts by date of probate (1660–89, 1690–1719 and 1720 onwards), in order to capture differences in bequeathing practice over time. Bequests that were made to an institution or a group of people such as 'poor widows' or 'parish poor' were counted; bequests to named individuals who might have been poor kin or poor neighbours were excluded, because of the difficulty of determining the status of such legatees when it was not explicitly stated. Bequests which could not readily be expressed in terms of money, such as bequests of gowns to the number of the testator's age, were also excluded, as were bequests which relied on the death of another legatee to take effect. The figures derived from the wills must therefore be taken as representing the lowest possible estimate of charitable intentions.

These figures, for the three cohorts and for the overall group, are given in Table 11.2. They show several changes over the whole period: the number of donors declined, which is not surprising considering the reduction in the church population as a whole (although this is exaggerated for the post-1720 period, as the construction of the sample excludes anyone who did not feature in the *dienstgeld* and collection lists by 1720). The mean number of legacies per donor, however, was higher at the beginning and end of the period than in the central thirty years, which suggests that the charitable impulse itself had not necessarily declined. The number of lower-value donations reduced over the period, and the mean values of bequests to the poor, to religious institutions and to hospitals all increased; indeed, the mean value of all legacies increased over the three cohorts from £44 14*s* to £146 4*s*. This corresponds to trends identified by Richard Grassby, who found that, among businessmen born 1580–1700, those with estates over £5,000 tended to bequeath both more and more often; and that, over time, the proportion of donors making 'major' bequests remained more or less stable at 46–7 per cent, but that the percentage of 'minor' bequests declined and the proportion of testators making no bequest increased.[32] In the present (much smaller) sample, the proportion making no bequest increases across the three groups, albeit not particularly dramatically; the number of smaller donations decreases, as does the number of donors making bequests of small total value. This suggests that the generosity of the richest members of the Dutch Church increased, while that of less wealthy testators declined.

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[30] A. Pettegree, *Foreign Protestant Communities in 16th-Century London* (Oxford, 1986), p. 201: 'The poor were remembered in … over 60% of the total, and in the vast majority of these cases the poor of their churches were specifically mentioned'. C. Littleton, 'Acculturation and the French Church of London, 1600–*circa* 1640', in *Memory and Identity: the Huguenots in France and the Atlantic Diaspora*, ed. B. van Ruymbeke and R. J. Sparks (Columbia, SC, 2003), p. 100, finds that 104 of 105 French Church members' wills proved 1560–1625 included some bequest to the poor of the French Church; only 17 included bequests to the English parish poor.

[31] Pettegree, *Foreign Protestant Communities*, pp. 297, 304; Littleton, 'Acculturation and the French Church', p. 98; L. B. Luu, *Immigrants and the Industries of London, 1500–1700* (Aldershot, 2005), p. 164. The same was true of the Essex Quakers studied by Adrian Davies (*Quakers in English Society*, p. 203).

Overall levels of charitable giving in the metropolis for the later Stuart period are not fully known. Donna Andrew shows that while more than two-thirds of (surviving) aldermanic wills for 1690–1719 include some provisions for posthumous aid to the poor, only one-third of those for 1739–78 do so; a similar decline occurs in her sample of testators who appeared on subscription charity lists.[33] Peter Earle's sample of 181 London citizens' wills proved between 1660 and 1725 shows fifty-five (30.4 per cent) making charitable bequests, of which 49 per cent were £10 or less, 31 per cent £11–99 and 20 per cent £100 or over (median value £11).[34] Comparison with these figures suggests that charitable activity was probably slightly higher than the norm for reasonably well-to-do Londoners among contributing members of the Dutch Church, at 59 per cent over the whole, and particularly that

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[32] R. Grassby, *Kinship and Capitalism: Marriage, Family and Business in the English-Speaking World, 1580–1740* (Cambridge, 2001), pp. 258–60. Grassby's categories of donors are defined by the proportion of their estates bequeathed to charity rather than by absolute values, and he gives no definitive rule for this calculation (see pp. 452–3); it is therefore difficult to gauge how far the Dutch testators in this study would have counted as major or minor donors.

[33] D. Andrew, *Philanthropy and Police: London Charity in the 18th Century* (Princeton, NJ, 1989), pp. 48–9.

[34] P. Earle, *The Making of the English Middle Class: Business, Society and Family Life in London, 1660–1730* (1989), pp. 317–18. Earle notes that his sample, drawn from citizens with inventories surviving in the London orphans' court, might exclude those childless men (or men with children already advanced in the world) who were most inclined to be charitable on a really large scale (see also pp. 395–6).

Table 11.2. Values and numbers of bequests for 1660–89, 1690–1719, 1720 onwards, and the whole project sample

		1660–89	**1690–1719**	**1720 onwards**	**Whole sample**
Overall totals of donors and legacies	Total testators in sample	83	73	38	194
	Total charitable donors	54 (65%)	40 (55%)	20 (53%)	114 (59%)
	Donors bequeathing to the Dutch Church and/or its poor	48 (58%) (89% of donors)	34 (47%) (85% of donors)	19 (50%) (95% of donors)	101 (52%) (89% of donors)
	Donors bequeathing to the Dutch Church and/or its poor *only*	10 (19% of donors)	13 (33% of donors)	11 (55% of donors)	34 (30% of donors)
	Total number of legacies	172	98	62	332
	Mean number per donor	3.2	2.45	3.1	2.9
	Total value of legacies	£7,638 16*s* 3*d*	£5,776 6*s*	£9,061	£22,476 2*s* 3*d*
	Mean value of legacies	£44 14*s*	£59	£146 4*s*	£67 14*s*
	Mean value per donor	£142 8*s*	£144 13*s*	£453 2*s*	£197 4*s*
Poor	Total legacies to all poor	137	65	35	237
	Legacies to Dutch Church poor	45	33	15	93
	Legacies to parish poor	65	21	3	89
	Total value of legacies to all poor	£4,593 16*s* 3*d*	£3246 6*s*	£3,935	£11,775 2*s* 3*d*
	Total value of legacies to Dutch Church poor	£2,537	£1,715	£1,645	£5,897
	Total value of legacies to parish poor	£825	£375	£230	£1,330
	Mean value of legacies to all poor	£33 10*s*	£49 18*s*	£112 8*s*	£49 14*s*
	Mean value of legacies to Dutch Church poor	£56 8*s*	£52	£109 13*s*	£63 8*s*
	Mean value of legacies to parish poor	£14 16*s*	£17 18*s*	£76 13*s*	£14 18*s*

Religious institutions	Total legacies to all religious institutions	18	26	22	66
	Total legacies to Dutch Church	14	22	17	53
	Total value of legacies to all religious institutions	£1,725	£1,840	£4,026	£7,591
	Total value of legacies to Dutch Church	£1,250	£1,340	£2,410	£5,000
	Mean value of legacies to all religious institutions	£91 16*s*	£70 15*s*	£183	£115
	Mean value of legacies to Dutch Church	£89 6*s*	£60 18*s*	£125 18*s*	£94 8*s*

Source: wills sampled from TNA: PRO, PROB 11/303–875.

Table 11.3. Institutional priorities of testators from the entire project sample

Proportion of value of charitable bequests to the Dutch Church and its poor	**0**	**Under 1/3**	**1/3 and over**	**2/3 and over**	**100%**	**Total**
Number of testators	13	8	26	29	34	110
Number bequeathing to parish poor	8	7	16	24		55
To other Dutch churches in England and their poor	0	2	3	3		8
To other stranger churches and their poor	2	2	5	1		10
To hospitals	2	5	11	1		19
To livery companies	0	2	2	0		4
To churches and poor abroad	2	1	4	4		11
To English Nonconformist ministers, lectures, poor	0	2	3	0		5
To other institutions or groups	1 (poor householders)	2 (Artillery Company, general poor)	5 (charity schools, beggars at funeral, general poor)	2 (charity school, prisoners for debt)		10

Source: wills sampled from TNA: PRO, PROB 11/303–875.

the value of gifts was greater than the norm. It may also have been slightly more sustained over time. Unfortunately, at the time of writing there is no study of Londoners' wills in the period that is sufficiently detailed to allow a comparative analysis; this study is therefore a starting point only, and a wider study will be necessary for the results to be seen in full context.

Priorities of giving

The Dutch Church was the largest beneficiary in all three periods, with the total value of bequests intended for the church and its poor topping all other institutions. Not only the total value but the number of bequests intended for the Dutch Church and its poor outweighed the numbers of bequests to other institutions (Table 11.2), with the exception of legacies to the parish poor in the first period (a total which was skewed by the legacies of Nicholas Corsellis, who left £30 to the parish of St. Mary at Hill, £25 to the parish of St. Botolph Aldgate and £5 to each of the other fifteen extramural parishes).[35] In terms of personal priorities also, it was important for many donors, with thirty-four giving only to the Dutch Church and/or its poor, and twenty-nine giving two-thirds or more of the value of their charitable donations to the church and its poor; twenty-six gave between a third and two-thirds, eight under a third, and thirteen nothing (see Table 11.3). Members of the Dutch Church who felt in a position to leave charitable legacies, particularly those who made modest bequests, clearly had a strong preference for the church as a beneficiary. Those who made charitable donations but bequeathed nothing to the Dutch Church in general favoured their parish poor. Those who gave under a third of the value of their bequests to the Dutch Church tended to be those who spread their benevolence most widely, often among civic institutions such as the city hospitals, particularly Christ's hospital, and their livery companies. Those who gave a third or more of the value of their charitable bequests to the church were likely also to give to the parish poor (sometimes of several parishes), and perhaps one other institution, whether that was a hospital, livery company, another stranger church, poor overseas, a charity school, a religious lecture or a workhouse. For those giving two-thirds or more to the Dutch Church, only one other institution was included in almost all cases, most frequently the parish.

This prioritization may have been based in contemporary theories of charitable giving according to the prudential Protestant model, by which (after immediate family) the proper recipients of aid were poor kindred, fellow parishioners and fellow believers. The church probably straddled the latter categories in the minds of many givers, not least because it also fulfilled instructions to support religious institutions (bequests to the church were often stipulated to be for 'the maintenance of the ministry').[36] It may also simply speak to the significance of the Dutch Church in the lives of the testators.

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[35] The National Archives of the UK: PRO, PROB 11/319 (Nicholas Corsellis). Corsellis's bequests were no doubt influenced by his involvement in the London corporation of the poor (P. Slack, 'Hospitals, workhouses and the relief of the poor in early modern London', in *Health Care and Poor Relief in Protestant Europe*, ed. O. P. Grell and A. Cunningham (1997), pp. 237–9).

The support shown for the other Dutch communities in England was no doubt the result of a mixture of religious fellow-feeling, and support of kindred and neighbours; in many cases Dutch and Anglo-Dutch families in later seventeenth-century London had ancestors in the provincial communities. James Burkin, born in Colchester, bequeathed £100 to the Colchester Dutch Church poor.[37] Some legacies appear to reflect a more general sympathy for co-religionists in exile and fellow Netherlanders, as with the many legacies of Marie du Bois, who left £300 to the poor of the Canterbury French Church, £100 to the poor of each of the Dutch churches of Norwich, Sandwich and Colchester, and £50 to the poor of the small Dutch community at Canvey Island.[38] This type of support ceased in the later decades of the seventeenth century, not unnaturally, as the provincial communities themselves declined and the support of the London church became a matter of more immediate concern.

Giving to the parish was the second priority for this sample group in terms of numbers of bequests, although legacies to parish poor were generally much lower in value than those to the Dutch Church poor (see Table 11.2), suggesting that their need was felt to be less pressing. Jacob Lucie's gift of £100 to his parish, St. Katherine Coleman Street, and Mary du Bois's £100 for St. Benet Sherehog were unusually generous; most bequests to parishes were under £10.[39] The majority of legacies to parishes were to named parishes – most often the parish where the testator lived or, sometimes, was born; legacies to unnamed parishes were often for the parish where the testator came to be buried (Jan Aelst, £5), or for the parish where he or she died (Mary Rushout, £5) or dwelt at the time of writing (Mary Cranenburgh, £5).[40] This was, again, a product of ideas concerning the importance of giving to one's neighbours. Parishes became less important as beneficiaries over the period under consideration; whether this is a reflection of the increasing importance of the poor rates (and a general diminution of bequests to parish poor in London), or a decline in interest on the part of the Dutch congregation in particular, must remain a moot point until further study.[41]

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[36] I. K. Ben-Amos, *The Culture of Giving: Informal Support and Gift-exchange in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, 2008), pp. 244–55.

[37] TNA: PRO, PROB 11/354 (James Burkin).

[38] TNA: PRO, PROB 11/315 (Mary du Bois).

[39] TNA: PRO, PROB 11/315 (Mary du Bois), 11/390 (Jacob Lucie).

[40] TNA: PRO, PROB 11/342 (John Aelst), 11/454 (Mary Rushout), 11/507 (Mary Cranenburgh).

Beyond the legacies to the Dutch Church and its poor, to the other Dutch churches, and to parish poor, legacies indicated more the personal interests of testators than any apparent group attachment, although there were still some giving preferences that reflected both the history of the testators as migrants and descendants of migrants, and an interest in supporting Protestantism more generally. The smattering of legacies to overseas poor co-religionists indicates that some members (all first-generation migrants) retained ties to their places of origin. James Willemsen, born in Middelburg, left £100 to the poor of the Middelburg churches; Francis Tyssen, born in Flushing, left £20 to the poor of the Great Church there; Mary Deynoot and Alida Vandermarsh, whose husbands had been born in Haarlem, left money to a particular church in the town.[42] Members of subsequent generations do not appear to have retained any such ties with particular communities overseas.

A further smattering indicates that some members were concerned with poor Protestants more generally: John Walraven, doctor of physic of Rotherhithe, bequeathed £10 each to the Dutch Church poor, the Quaker poor, poor Irish and poor French Protestants, as well as £100 to 'poor honest housekeepers' in Julich and Cleves (at the time, 1689, suffering greatly owing to war).[43] Nathaniel Letten also left £30 for poor French Protestants.[44] However, the evidence of these wills shows a perhaps surprising lack of interest in English Nonconformity; Peter Heringhoeck's £50 to Nonconformist ministers and Abraham Dolins's £50 to the Presbyterian lecture at Salters' Hall are the most significant bequests in this area.[45] Again, such legacies seem to have been the result of individual interest rather than a general feeling among testators that it was important to support Presbyterianism or other forms of Nonconformist Protestantism in England.

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[41] Andrew, *Philanthropy and Police*, pp. 48–9; however, Ben-Amos, *Culture of Giving*, pp. 119–20, suggests that many parishes continued to derive substantial income from testamentary bequests through the late 17th century.

[42] TNA: PRO, PROB 11/390 (James Williamson), 11/456 (Francis Tyssen), 11/474 (Mary Deynoot), 11/476 (Alida Vandermarsh).

[43] TNA: PRO, PROB 11/397 (John Walraven).

[44] Letten's £30 had during his lifetime been subscribed to a stock for poor French Protestant refugees in Ipswich 'to sett them a work', showing a long-term interest in that community (TNA: PRO, PROB 11/370 (Nathaniel Letten)).

[45] TNA: PRO, PROB 11/386 (Peter Heringhooke), 11/490 (Abraham Dolins); Dolins's interest in Nonconformity can also be seen in his donation of £200 to the 1670 Dissenting loan to the crown (G. S. de Krey, *London and the Restoration, 1659–83* (Cambridge, 2005), pp. 125, 405).

The French churches in England were not especially popular with this group of testators throughout the period. This may have been because of the large amounts of funding available for the relief of refugees through the Royal Bounty, or simply because of community boundaries. The notable bequests to French institutions made by the two largest donors of the third cohort of this study, Sir Denis Dutry (£1,000 to French institutions) and Gerard van Neck (£750), are explained by the fact that both men were successively married to Marie, the daughter of Hilaire Reneu, a wealthy refugee from Bordeaux; Reneu was heavily involved in the distribution of the Royal Bounty and other Huguenot charitable institutions, and his daughter was a director of La Soupe.[46] The few legacies to the Prussian Church in Savoy were intended to help co-religionists of the Reformed German congregation that worshipped there from 1697: 'not the Luthern church but the Protestant church'.[47] They also reflected the German origins of some members of the London Dutch Church community.

The final group of beneficiaries who fell within the obligation to help poor kindred, neighbours and parishioners included general groups of poor people. One of these legacies, that of Abraham Sayon to 'poor householders', was modest at £20, but the other three (all later in the period) were substantial: Agneta vander Mersch's £800, which was to be distributed according to a schedule of poor relations, recipients of mourning and other charitable uses; Denis Dutry's £500, to be distributed to poor private persons; and Gerard van Neck's £1,000, to be divided among the poor English, Dutch and French as his executors saw fit.[48]

The city hospitals were the only non-religious institutions to sustain much interest among this group of benefactors; of these, Christ's hospital was the most significant, attracting £1,045 in legacies from the first two cohorts. The other hospitals, St. Thomas's, St. Bartholomew's, Bridewell and Bethlem, all attracted some bequests over the period, often from people who had been governors.[49] Livery companies received a few legacies from testators who were members; James Burkin left £50 to the Artillery Company (in which he had been a captain) for building.[50] Personal service was clearly important in forming significant attachments to such institutions. Over time, as the charitable landscape of London and its suburbs changed, other institutions appeared in wills: charity schools, workhouses, new hospitals. These were always interests peculiar to individuals, often the most integrated members of the community; they were not common to the group.

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[46] TNA: PRO, PROB 11/626 (Sir Denis Dutry), 11/782 (Gerard van Neck); Vigne, 'Dominus providebit'.

[47] TNA: PRO, PROB 11/618 (Peter Marke).

[48] TNA: PRO, PROB 11/324 (Abraham Sayon), 11/472 (Agneta Vandermersch), 11/626 (Sir Denis Dutry), 11/782 (Gerard van Neck).

[49] Sir James Warde gave £100 to the hospitals of Bridewell and Bethlem, where he had been a governor; William Henry Cornelisen gave £100 to St. Thomas's hospital where he was a governor (TNA: PRO, PROB 11/408 (Sir James Warde), 11/548 (William Henry Cornelisen)).

[50] TNA: PRO, PROB 11/354 (James Burkin).

There is some indication that members of the Dutch Church participated in a move from 'traditional' institutional objects of charity to the new philanthropic institutions of the early eighteenth century.[51] The diminution of bequests to the parish may be part of this, as may the appearance of charity schools and workhouses in their turn, along with a few of the new, subscription institutions of the eighteenth century – St. George's hospital, the Foundling hospital. Other major changes were the decline of bequests to the provincial communities, a result of their actual decline, and the increase of interest in French institutions thanks to the effects of the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes. However, the consistently high level of bequests to the Dutch Church is the most significant aspect of all, and clearly shows the continuing importance of the church to its members, and its ability as an institution to extract practical assistance from them.

It is possible that any group of testators defined by attachment to a particular institution would be more likely to contribute to that institution than to others; the question posed by this evidence is whether rates of bequests to the Dutch Church were higher, and the value of legacies greater, than was the case for other institutions. This is currently impossible to answer; we must await further studies of gift-giving in parishes, livery companies and hospitals. However, it seems plausible that where membership of an institution involved a positive choice rather than automatic inclusion – as in attachment to the Dutch Church as opposed to an Anglican parish – the commitment was correspondingly greater. This may then have been expressed through greater service and through larger donations.

Forms of giving

Endowments – the form of charitable donation that has been regarded as most significant both in personal and institutional terms by modern historians – are rarely found in the annals of the Dutch Church: bequests of money were most usual. Some were intended to be added to the capital stock held by the elders or the deacons – more often to the elders, presumably because the deacons were more likely to need to have the unencumbered use of large sums of money in emergencies such as plague years; in later periods, most legacies were left without such stipulations, to be spent at the discretion of the custodians (an exception being James Crop, 1723).[52] This may have been a deliberate preference on the part of the church hierarchy in response to their need for immediate funds rather than long-term capital. Of the £3,677 10*s* that the elders received in legacies over the whole period 1660–1720, £660 was left to be capital stock; of the £4,351 received by the deacons between 1675 and 1720, £300 was given as stock.[53] It was very rare indeed for a testator to stipulate how his or her legacy to the Dutch Church was to be spent; an exception was Judith Sayon, who left £20 to 'poore widdows Members of the Dutch Congregation in London who haue beene married to English or French'.[54]

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[51] For a summary of these changes, see J. Innes, 'The "mixed economy of welfare" in early modern England: assessments of the options from Hale to Malthus (*c.*1688–1803)', in *Charity, Self-Interest and Welfare in the English Past*, ed. M. Daunton (1996), pp. 139–80.

Several legacies left to other institutions in the first period, 1660–89, took forms associated with post-Reformation developments in bequest styles. This suggests that the donors participated fully in the charitable culture of such English institutions, alongside their affiliation to the Dutch Church. Sir John Frederick left £400 to Christ's hospital to buy lands in order to place children out as apprentices, and a further £100 to be laid out to provide funds for entertaining the governors of the Christ's hospital schools; James Burkin left £100 to the Clothworkers' Company to be lent out to young freemen who were starting up in business; Sir James Warde left £100 to the Drapers' Company, £40 of which was to be spent on plate and £60 to be given in annual 10*s* instalments to poor elderly members or widows of the company.[55] Some testators specified traditional gown or dole legacies: Samuel Beake bequeathed as many 10*s* gowns as he was years old, and 6*d* to each of the poor begging at the church door on the day of his funeral; Elizabeth Hovener left gowns worth 13*s* 4*d* each to as many poor women as she was years old.[56] Ralph Burrowes in 1685 left £5 to the poor of St. Botolph Aldgate, which he directed should be laid out in bread, half for the poor within the city boundaries, and half for those in East Smithfield; Pieter Marck left twenty quarter loaves to be distributed among poor housekeepers after his death in 1727.[57]

There was a greater tendency to give in forms that have been associated with English post-Reformation philanthropy when donors were giving to or through English institutions. The absence of such gifts to the Dutch Church, and the extent to which the hierarchy of the church were left to spend bequests as they saw fit, are striking. This was probably a response in part to the church's need for accessible funds. Since there was a strong degree of group identity among the elders and deacons and other merchants within the congregation, testators may also have felt confident that their contemporaries, peers and successors in the hierarchy would not misuse the donations, and could be left with liberty to do as they thought best for the church and its poor.

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[52] TNA: PRO, PROB 11/594 (James Crop).

[53] Figures derived from LMA, CLC/180/MS07398/001, 002, CLC/180/MS07410.

[54] TNA: PRO, PROB 11/355 (Judith Sayon).

[55] TNA: PRO, PROB 11/380 (Sir John Frederick), 11/354 (James Burkin), 11/408 (Sir James Warde).

[56] TNA: PRO, PROB 11/381 (Samuel Beake), 11/322 (Elizabeth Hovener).

[57] TNA: PRO, PROB 11/379 (Ralph Burrowes), 11/618 (Peter Marke).

Motivations for giving

There were several strands of possible motives for charitable giving, and they were not necessarily discrete. Some givers were motivated by religious or at least spiritual convictions; Matthew Decker in his will declared 'in the presence of God that I never have felt so much Inward Joy as when I gave money or other things in Charity Especial when I was satisfied that it was bestowed upon honest good and Industrous Christians'.[58] Such impulses were bolstered by frequent encouragement. Exhortatory addresses from the Dutch Church pulpit at New Year urged the congregation to show their generosity and their gratitude for their God-given wealth by giving liberally to the poor; and, at special collections, to show their dedication to the Christian Reformed religion by supporting the church.[59] Charitable briefs do not appear to have been collected in the Dutch Church in this period, but when there were briefs for persecuted or suffering Protestants, the congregation was encouraged to show thankfulness for their riches and freedom by contributing to the collections held in their parishes.[60]

Giving could be enhanced by moral pressure, particularly in public collections, as with the giving of alms in dishes during or after church services. In the Netherlands, door-to-door collections often produced remarkably consistent sums year on year, in part because of the pressure to contribute at least as much as one's neighbour.[61] This would not have been quite the same in London, where the Dutch community was dispersed through the city and its suburbs, but lists were kept and might have been used to encourage members to give more liberally. The pressure exerted in regard to the funds for maintenance of the ministry was somewhat greater. Members were visited by the elders of their districts to persuade them to contribute; anyone who did not choose to continue *dienstgeld* payments was likely to be visited by further deputations of elders and ministers urging them to continue.[62] During special collections pressure was further increased: an announcement was made from the pulpit asking all members and auditors to remain after the service, and to appear in the consistory in order to show their generosity.[63] Bequests in particular must frequently have been discussed among members of the church, especially members of the consistory and diaconate: it was reported of Raymond de Smeth that 'about a month before he died he did actually declare to Sr Dennis Dutry that he had left an annuity of £50 per annum to the said Dutch Church'.[64] Records of collections are notable for the leadership shown by the deacons and elders, who headed the lists as a body and often made very high contributions.[65]

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[58] TNA: PRO, PROB 11/769 (Sir Mathew Decker).

[59] LMA, CLC/180/MS07415/001 (unfoliated), entries in Dec. 1662, Dec. 1664. For a Dutch comparison, see van Wijngaarden, *Zorg voor de kost*, pp. 130–1.

[60] LMA, CLC/180/MS07415/003 (unfoliated), entries for 6 Feb. 1704, 31 July 1709.

[61] J. Spaans, 'De gift aan de armen in Friese steden in de zestiende, zeventiende en achttiende eeuw: toegelicht aan het voorbeeld van Sneek', *Tijdschrift voor Sociale Geschiedenis*, xxii (1996), 375–93, at pp. 388–9.

Raymond de Smeth 'was and had been a Member of the Dutch Church in Austin Fryers for many years ever since the year 1690 and went to no other Church', and had contributed £3 a year for many years as well as serving as a deacon; he had proposed a significant legacy of £50 per annum to the poor and the £50 to the church mentioned above, because he was 'well acquainted with the true state of the said Church, and ... desireous to make a provision towards the support of the Ministers and maintenance of the poor belonging to the said Congregation'.[66] It is possible that financial support was seen as part of the service given by an elder or deacon to the church. Certainly some form of attachment to the church and its community must have played a part in the decision to give, whether it was the loyalty of a dedicated member or a more distant regard for co-religionists.

Commemoration

Ian Archer has commented that 'the arts and acts of memorialization were clearly important elements in the generation of group identities and their self-fashioning as models of charitable virtue'.[67] Although it appears to have been relatively rare for the Dutch Church elders or deacons to make a public memorial to benefactors, there were a few instances. The gallery which housed the church library was lettered 'Ecclesiae Londino-Batavae Bibliotheca, extructa, sumptibus Mariae Dubois'; and after the death of Pieter Hoet, the consistory agreed to engrave the clock which he had given them with the words 'Ex dono fratris Petri Hoet Senioris'.[68] In 1704 they paid £7 7*s* for a keystone over the door of the building that Pieter van der Mersch had erected, to record his benefaction.[69] A more usual form of acknowledgement was the recording of a gift in the formal minutes of meetings of the consistory. That such records were intended as a form of memorialization is clear from the letter sent to Abraham Dolins acknowledging his gift of church bibles: 'your liberality will be registered in our Acta-book, in order that the remembrance of it may be preserved for the succeeding generations, for whose service the books are intended'.[70] The same was true of the benefactors' book of the church library; writing to the Delft *burgermeester* Johan van Bleiswyck to thank him for a gift of books, the consistory promised that 'We will ... register ... your name among the benefactors of our Library in memory of your favour'.[71] If possible, the consistory would also send deputies to benefactors – as when John Hoet, himself a deacon, donated a clock for the deaconry and was thanked by the minister Philip Op de Beeck and two of the elders.[72] If the benefactor was actually present at an appropriate consistory meeting, he would be thanked formally then and there, with assurances of a merciful recompense in heaven, and this would be recorded in the acta.[73]

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[62] LMA, CLC/180/MS07397/009 fos. 16v, 17, 31v, 67v.

[63] LMA, CLC/180/MS07415/001 (unfoliated), entry for 21 Feb. 1668, CLC/180/MS07415/002 fos. 49v–50v.

[64] Hessels, *Ecclesiae Londino-Batavae archivum*, p. 2818.

[65] In the general collection of March 1699, current and former elders and deacons donated between them £819 out of a total of £1346 5*s* 0*d* (LMA, CLC/180/MS07389/001 fos. 190–1).

[66] Hessels, *Ecclesiae Londino-Batavae archivum*, p. 2817.

[67] I. W. Archer, 'The arts and acts of memorialization in early modern London', in *Imagining Early Modern London: Perceptions and Portrayals of the City from Stow to Strype, 1598–1720*, ed. J. F. Merritt (Cambridge, 2001), quotation at p. 113; Ben-Amos, *Culture of Giving*, pp. 227–40.

These marks of honour and esteem were, however, not public in the same way that memorials and inscriptions common elsewhere in London were: personal visits may have been made at the benefactors' homes, or perhaps at the exchange, but not, it seems, in the public view of the Dutch congregation; and memorials written in the acta, lists of benefactors kept in other church records, and the library benefactors' book would only have been readily available to members of the church government. The reciprocity of honour between benefactors and recipients took place only within the church hierarchy and (to a slightly lesser extent) among the wealthier members, and was inaccessible in most cases to the poorer members. It may have been that the office of elder or deacon was more important in terms of honour or recognition within the community, though intrinsically bound up with financial support of the church. Monuments in the church very rarely mentioned charitable acts – only three, those of Gerard van Neck (1750), Nicholas Rotshouck (1760) and Pieter van Notten (1783), stated that the deceased was a benefactor of the community; eighteen mentioned service as elder or deacon.[74]

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[68] Strype, *Survey of the Cities*, I. ii. 116; LMA, CLC/180/MS07397/001 fo. 13v.

[69] LMA, CLC/180/MS07389/001 fo. 215.

[70] Hessels, *Ecclesiae Londino-Batavae archivum*, p. 2577.

[71] Hessels, *Ecclesiae Londino-Batavae archivum*, p. 2607. A contemporary comparison, albeit on a much grander scale, may be found in the Sion College Library 'Booke of the Benefactors', 'for the perpetuall memory of such well disposed Christians as shall … be beneficial to this Library', which was 'placed on the Deske at the East end of the Library' to encourage further donations (E. H. Pearce, *Sion College and Library* (Cambridge, 1913), pp. 242–3). Individual donations were also recorded in the college court minutes.

[72] LMA, CLC/180/MS07397/009 fo. 25. See further examples at LMA, CLC/180/MS07397/008 fo. 278 and CLC/180/MS07397/009 fos. 17, 65.

[73] LMA, CLC/180/MS07397/009 fos. 87v, 105.

Conclusion

The charitable efforts of the Dutch Church and its members in the later Stuart period did not compare, and perhaps could not have compared, with those of their early Stuart predecessors; nor did the church attract bequests at the level of some of the major London institutions. Nevertheless, the value of gifts and long-term contributions given by individuals remained impressive, and was undoubtedly essential to the survival of the church and community during a period of numerical and financial decline; the deacons may have stated that 'op vrije giften is wel te hoopen, maer niet te dependeren' ('it is good to hope for gifts, but not to depend upon them'), but in truth the church did depend on the generosity of its members.[75] Their response indicates a considerable degree of attachment, which translated into substantial contributions by the wealthier members of the community. Such gifts, donations and bequests formed part of an ethos of service to the church, and part of a group identity focused on it, in which personal service and charitable support were central pillars.

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[74] *The Marriage, Baptismal and Burial Registers, 1574 to 1874, and Monumental Inscriptions, of the Dutch Reformed Church, Austin Friars, London*, ed. W. J. C. Moens (Lymington, 1884), pp. 160–204.

[75] LMA, CLC/180/MS07410, account for 1720.

IV. Governance

12. Londoners and the court of common pleas in the fifteenth century

Matthew Frank Stevens

In a recent reassessment of the relationship between London and the rest of the English realm, exploring the legitimacy with which we might broadly conceive of the pre-modern metropolis as a city-state, Derek Keene wrote: 'the establishment of the key state institutions at Westminster, on the edge of London, points to their secondary function within a metropolis whose essential role within the state was as a source of wealth'.[1] Few institutions of the medieval English state would prove so enduring as the principal royal courts, the court of common pleas – or the 'common bench' as it was initially known – and its counterpart the court of king's bench, which became more or less permanent fixtures in the shadow of the city of London, at Westminster Hall, from the late thirteenth century into the modern era.[2] Few institutions were as essential to the rude health of London trade and commerce throughout the later middle ages as was the court of common pleas, which had four main sorts of jurisdiction: 'real actions' to assert title to land; 'personal actions' including actions of detinue, account, covenant and debt over 40*s*; mixed real and personal actions such as *ejectio firmae*, that is, ejection from lands held for a term of years; and, shared with the court of king's bench, actions brought on trespasses, including breach of royal statute. Of these, the court's functions in hearing and determining economically oriented personal actions of detinue, account, covenant and, particularly, debt were far and away those most frequently employed by later medieval litigants, the largest single group of whom at common pleas were, by origin, Londoners (see below).

This chapter explores the extent to which the fifteenth-century court of common pleas exhibited, secondary to its role as a national venue for royal justice, a distinct metropolitan function as a de facto London court. It is posited here that, for fifteenth-century Londoners, common pleas was just one among several judicial venues within an explicit framework of London judicial forums geared towards the resolution of their disputes. From at least the tenth century London had been the most populous and wealthiest settlement in the British Isles, continuing to house, even in the decades following the pestilence of the mid fourteenth century, some 40–60,000 souls.[3] Between the mid twelfth and mid thirteenth centuries London, through the proxy of nearby Westminster, had replaced Winchester as the focus of royal government. Throughout the following century and a half, to 1400, the metropolis had greatly influenced the development of regional and national trade networks by generating and responding to the raw market forces of demand, created by the city's need for resources, and supply, of labour and goods, as both the nation's most active port and its largest centre of population and productive specialization.[4] Keene, at the forefront of the exploration of each of these themes, has emphasized the long-term, 'distinct structural effects' of the city in shaping the economic and political landscape of its regional and national hinterlands, and has suggested that these effects may also have extended to the shaping, or at least the commandeering, of the state institutions of the king's courts at Westminster by their London clientele.[5]

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[1] D. Keene, 'Metropolitan comparisons: London as a city-state', *Historical Research*, lxxvii (2004), 471.

[2] The court of common pleas was occasionally removed from London, usually to York and usually for military reasons, during the later 13th and early 14th centuries, and was again removed from London during Richard II's quarrel with the city of London in the 1390s (D. Keene, 'Medieval London and its region', *London Journal*, xiv (1989), 101–2 and citation there).

With an aim of exploring the relationship between Londoners and the court of common pleas, as well as other related themes, a major Arts and Humanities Research Council-funded project, 'Londoners and the law: pleadings in the court of common pleas, 1399–1509', based at the Centre for Metropolitan History, Institute of Historical Research from 2006 to 2008, identified and calendared more than 6,300 lawsuits at common pleas involving London or Londoners, which reached the stage of pleading.[6] Additionally, this project measured the overall volume of lawsuits before the court, at whatever stage of prosecution (that is, mesne process, pleading and final process). Drawing on these data to investigate the importance of the court of common pleas to Londoners, and to explore whether the court might reasonably be characterized as a 'London court', it is possible to assess both how many London lawsuits and Londoners themselves typically came before the fifteenth-century court of common pleas each year, and the kinds of disputes these Londoners sought to resolve. This is to ask, what was the relative frequency with which cases were 'laid in London', revolving around events taking place there and so begun by an original writ directed to the sheriff of London? What was the relative frequency with which Londoners were litigants at common pleas, by comparison with London city courts? What kinds of legal actions did Londoners employ at common pleas? And who were the Londoners who brought and responded to lawsuits in common pleas? Finally, we might also ask, what was the importance of the court to Londoners who were not themselves litigants? The answers to these questions, collectively, do much to illuminate the nature of the court of common pleas as a 'London court'.

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[3] Keene, 'Medieval London and its region', pp. 99–100, 107.

[4] See below, n. 5.

[5] D. Keene, 'Changes in London's economic hinterland as indicated by debt cases in the court of common pleas', in *Trade, Urban Hinterlands and Market Integration, c.1300–1600*, ed. J. A. Galloway (Centre for Metropolitan History Working Papers Series, iii, 2000), pp. 59–81, quotation at p. 61. See also Keene, 'Medieval London and its region', pp. 99–111; B. M. S. Campbell, J. Galloway, D. Keene and M. Murphy, *A Medieval Capital and its Grain Supply: Agrarian Production and Distribution in the London Region, c.1300* (Historical Geography Research Series, xxx, 1993); D. Keene, 'Small towns and the metropolis: the experience of medieval England', in *Peasants and Townsmen in Medieval Europe: Studia in Honorem Adriaan Verhulst*, ed. J.-M. Duvosquel and E. Thoen (Ghent, 1995), pp. 223–38; J. A. Galloway, D. Keene and M. Murphy, 'Feeding the city: production and distribution of firewood and fuel in London's region, 1290–1400', *Economic History Review*, xlix (1996), 447–72; Keene, 'Metropolitan comparisons', pp. 459–80.

The quantitative context of Londoners' litigation in common pleas

The backdrop to Londoners' litigation at common pleas was the overall volume of business handled by the court across the fifteenth century. Based on sampling, in which all case entries on the fronts of the rotulets of three Michaelmas term rolls were counted (Table 12.1), it is possible to estimate that in 1400 there were in progress at the court of common pleas about 9,400 cases in any given term; about five times as many entries as appear on the corresponding rolls of the court of king's bench, where more criminally oriented suits were heard.[7] By 1450, the work of common

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[6] M. Davies and H. Kleineke (project directors), 'Londoners and the law: pleadings in the court of common pleas, 1399–1509', Arts and Humanities Research Council (award no. AR119247). This calendar has since been published online by British History Online, as 'Court of common pleas: The National Archives, CP 40 – 1399–1500' <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/source.aspx?pubid=1272> [accessed 19 Apr. 2011]. This online resource includes an introduction outlining the specific documents consulted, and data collection methodology.

[7] The estimated number of cases in progress at common pleas is based on The National Archives of the UK: Public Record Office, CP 40/556, 557, 559, Hilary, Easter and Michaelmas terms 1400; CP 40/756–9, Hilary, Easter, Trinity and Michaelmas terms 1450; and CP 40/955–8, Hilary, Easter, Trinity and Michaelmas terms 1501. All entries on the front of each year's Michaelmas term roll were counted. E.g., on roll CP 40/559, Michaelmas term 1400,

Table 12.1. Estimated number of cases in progress at common pleas in any given term, 1400, 1450 and 1501

	Cases in progress	**Ratio of non-pleaded-case entries to pleaded-case entries**	**Percentage of cases laid in London***
1400	9,400	22:1	12%
1450	4,500	13:1	14%
1501	3,800	5:1	14%

Source: The National Archives of the UK: Public Record Office, CP 40/556–9, 759, 958. For calculations, see above, nn. 7–12.

* These percentages are based on the Michaelmas roll of each year only (see below, n. 20).

pleas had fallen to about 4,500 cases in progress per term.[8] And by 1501, the total number of cases in progress each term had fallen to probably fewer than 3,800.[9] It is worth noting that this decline is contrary to the impression given by the size of the rolls themselves, which are around 400–500 rotulets each throughout the century. The continued high number of rotulets in the rolls across the century, despite the falling number of cases in progress during any given term, is the result of a gradual increase in the size of the documentary hand employed and a rising proportion of cases reaching the stage of pleading (pleaded-case entries take up more space on the roll than the terse non-pleaded-case entries which typically note mesne and final process). In Michaelmas term 1400 the ratio of non-pleaded-case entries to pleaded-case entries was roughly 22:1.[10] By 1450,

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there are 602 rotulets. There are 6,449 cases on the fronts of these rotulets (mesne process and pleaded entries), with dorse sides very occasionally being blank, allowing an estimate of approximately 12,000 cases, or about 20 cases per rotulet, on the roll. The rolls CP 40/556, 557 and 559 contain an average of 469 rotulets, equating to an average of around 9,400 cases in progress per term. For the relative number of king's bench entries, see M. Hastings, *The Court of Common Pleas in 15th Century England: a Study of Legal Administration and Procedure* (Ithaca, NY, 1948), p. 16, n. 2.

[8] Applying the same methodology as above, the roll for Michaelmas term 1450 (TNA: PRO, CP 40/759) contains 2,871 cases on the fronts of its 454 rotulets, with the four termly rolls of 1450 averaging 405 rotulets each, equating to an average (rounded down) of 12 cases per rotulet and probably no more than 4,800 cases in progress per term.

[9] Applying the same methodology as above, the roll for Michaelmas term 1501 (TNA: PRO, CP 40/958) contains 2,585 cases on the fronts of its 590 rotulets, with the four termly rolls of 1501 averaging 477 rotulets each, equating to an average (rounded down) of eight cases per rotulet and probably no more than 3,800 cases in progress per term.

[10] TNA: PRO, CP 40/559, Michaelmas term 1400, the fronts of all rotulets contained a total of 6,173 non-pleaded-case entries and 276 pleaded-case entries.

the ratio of non-pleaded-case to pleaded-case entries had fallen to 13:1;[11] and by 1501, to 5:1.[12]

The fifteenth-century decline in business at common pleas, and relative increase in the proportion of cases reaching the stage of pleading, has largely escaped comment by past legal historians. Margaret Hastings's path-breaking work *The Court of Common Pleas in 15th Century England*, which has stood as the standard work on the court of common pleas in this period for more than six decades, notes that competition for business existed between common pleas and king's bench.[13] Further, Hastings observed that the latter court 'eventually defeated the Common Pleas' through the development of the highly flexible and relatively expeditious 'Bill of Middlesex', by which king's bench, in effect, extended its jurisdiction to encompass varieties of dispute previously in the sole preserve of common pleas.[14] Nevertheless, the comparatively speedy handling of such suits by king's bench did not attract to that court a large volume of disputes otherwise destined for the court of common pleas until the sixteenth century.[15] In the later fifteenth century, a survey of the profits of the seals of common pleas and king's bench – that is, the total income, less overhead, that each court accrued by charging a flat rate of 7*d* for the sealing of each writ of judicial process issued – indicates that both courts were in decline.[16] In the context of London litigation, Penny Tucker has, probably more accurately, attributed the later fifteenth-century decline of both common pleas and king's bench to the rapid growth of the equity courts, particularly chancery.[17] Regarding the increase in the proportion of cases at common pleas which were recorded as having reached the stage of pleading, no thoroughly researched explanation has yet, to my knowledge, been put forward. However, one may speculate that, at least in part, this increase relates to a substantial fifteenth-century growth in the numbers and availability of those in the legal profession, particularly in the inns of court in London, who could act as attorneys at Westminster on behalf of defendants.[18] The result of this may have been that many defendants, who in earlier times would resist appearing in court until the plaintiff had exhausted his resources of money and patience as the case languished in the mesne process stage of proceedings, would later have appeared before the court by attorney and thereby occasioned a pleaded-case entry in which the plaintiff's suit was outlined in more detail.[19] The attorney of a recalcitrant defendant would then employ the alternative delaying tactic of requesting numerous successive licences to imparl, or leave to confer with his client until a later sitting of the court.

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[11] TNA: PRO, CP 40/759, Michaelmas term 1450, the fronts of all rotulets contained a total of 2,659 non-pleaded-case entries and 212 pleaded-case entries.

[12] TNA: PRO, CP 40/958, Michaelmas term 1501, the fronts of all rotulets contained a total of 2,185 non-pleaded-case entries and 400 pleaded-case entries.

[13] Hastings, *Court of Common Pleas*, pp. 24–7.

[14] Hastings, *Court of Common Pleas*, pp. 24–7.

[15] M. Blatcher, *The Court of King's Bench, 1450–1550: a Study in Self-help* (1978), pp. 154–66.

[16] Blatcher, *Court of King's Bench*, pp. 15–21, 167–71.

[17] P. Tucker, 'Relationships between London's courts and the Westminster courts in the reign of Edward IV', in *Courts Counties and the Capital in the Later Middle Ages*, ed. D. E. S. Dunn (Stroud, 1996), p. 118.

What was the relative frequency with which cases were laid in London? Irrespective of the fifteenth-century decline in the volume of business at common pleas and the increase in the proportion of pleaded-case entries on the rolls, those cases 'laid in London' – that is, reflecting disputes arising from events alleged to have taken place in the city – made up roughly 12–14 per cent of all case entries (totalling non-pleaded- and pleaded-case entries) recorded on the plea rolls of the beginning, middle and end of the century (Table 12.1).[20] A slightly more sophisticated measure of the relative frequency with which cases were laid in London can be attained by totalling the number of case entries appearing on the Michaelmas term plea rolls of 1400, 1450 and 1501, tabulated by the county of enrolment, and setting these county totals against estimated county populations for the late fourteenth century.[21] By this measure – achieved here by first totalling for each county all case entries on the fronts of the individual rotulets making up each of these plea rolls, and then doubling these county sub-totals to take account of the similar number of case entries appearing on the backs of the rotulets – it is clear that there were, in each sample year, significantly more cases laid per head of the population in London than in any other county (Table 12.2, pp. 234–6 below). It must be stressed that the population estimates appearing in Table 12.2 probably underestimate, by a significant margin, the country's population as a whole.[22] However, this is not problematic for our purposes here, as the 1377 poll tax returns, from which these totals are derived, nevertheless reflect with reasonable accuracy the relative distribution of population by county.[23]

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[18] N. Ramsay, 'Retained legal counsel, *c.*1275–*c.*1475', *Transactions of the Royal Historical* Society, xxxv (1985), 111.

[19] E.g., the 'Londoners and the law' project extracted 902 pleaded cases from the period 1400–9 (TNA: PRO, CP 40/556–94), in 361 (40%) of which the defendant employed an attorney. By comparison, the project extracted 626 pleaded cases from the years 1480 and 1500 (CP 40/871–4 and 951–4), in 491 (78%) of which an attorney was employed.

[20] TNA: PRO, CP 40/559, Michaelmas term 1400, the fronts of all rotulets contained a total of 6,449 entries, of which 789 relate to cases laid in London; CP 40/759, Michaelmas term 1450, the fronts of all rotulets contained a total of 2,871 entries, of which 395 pertain to cases laid in London; CP 40/958, Michaelmas term 1501, the fronts of all rotulets contained a total of 2,585 entries, of which 350 relate to cases laid in London.

[21] London had its own sheriffs during this period and functioned, in terms of process at common pleas, as an English county (see, C. Barron, *London in the Later Middle Ages: Government and People, 1200–1500* (Oxford, 2004), pp. 30–4).

By averaging the number of all ongoing cases from each county in the Michaelmas term samples of 1400, 1450 and 1501 – again, doubling the case totals on these rolls' fronts – and setting those averages against the estimated population of each county, it is possible to derive a synthesis measure of the volume of ongoing cases, by county, in an 'average' Michaelmas term (Table 12.2). These averaged figures have been used to create Figure 12.1, which offers a general impression of the relative number of ongoing cases laid in each county, respective of county populations, and notwithstanding the backdrop of the sharp decrease in the volume of cases laid in virtually all counties across the century. This exercise makes apparent how disproportionately large was the number of cases laid in London in relation to the city's population; with somewhere around six times more cases laid in London, per thousand persons, than in an average county, and almost double the number of cases laid there, per thousand persons, than were laid in the rival urban centres of Norwich and York combined. After London, the county of Middlesex was, by far, the next busiest shrievalty relative to the size of the local population. This was undoubtedly due to the many social and mercantile transactions, leading to litigation, which took place in the area between Westminster and the western and northern boundaries of the city of London. Hence, many 'Middlesex' lawsuits might also reasonably be considered London related, as products of this county's centrality to London's socio-economic hinterland.

What was the relative frequency with which Londoners were litigants at common pleas, by comparison with London city courts?

It can be established from the 'Londoners and the law' project's periodic sampling of pleaded cases, which yielded just over 6,300 cases laid in London or concerning a Londoner, that about 75 per cent of all pleaded cases laid in the city involved a litigant described as 'of London'.[24] Using

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[22] R. B. Dobson, *The Peasant's Revolt of 1381* (2nd edn., 1983), pp. 54–7.

[23] The 1377 poll tax returns have recently been employed by Campbell as a key indicator for English population distribution in the later middle ages (B. M. S. Campbell, 'Benchmarking medieval economic development: England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland, *c.*1290', *Economic History Review*, lxi (2008), 925–8).

[24] Based on 4,469 cases laid in London, as indicated by their first county of marginalization, of which 3,361 involve a party described as 'of London' (2,895 Londoners in 3,821 cases laid in London after 1413). See also above, n. 6.

Table 12.2. Entries on Michaelmas term rolls 1400, 1450 and 1501, by county

County*	**Estimated population**	**1400 Entries on Mich. term roll fronts**	**1400 Entries on fronts ×2 per 1,000 persons†**	**1450 Entries on Mich. term roll fronts**	**1450 Entries on fronts ×2 per 1,000 persons†**	**1501 Entries on Mich. term roll fronts**	**1501 Entries on fronts ×2 per 1,000 persons†**	**Average 1400, 1450 and 1501**	
								Entries on Mich. term roll	**Entries on fronts ×2 per 1,000 persons†**
Bedfordshire	31,525	72	4.6	41	2.6	31	2.0	96	3.0
Berkshire	35,220	86	4.9	41	2.3	24	1.4	101	2.9
Bristol	9,835	0	0.0	9	1.8	11	2.2	40	4.1
Buckinghamshire	38,241	77	4.0	26	1.4	53	2.8	104	2.7
Cambridgeshire	42,392	101	4.8	34	1.6	20	0.9	103	2.4
Cornwall	53,125	154	5.8	54	2.0	55	2.1	175	3.3
Cumberland	18,354	32	3.5	8	0.9	9	1.0	53	2.9
Derbyshire	36,027	60	3.3	14	0.8	29	1.6	69	1.9
Devon	70,734	312	8.8	173	4.9	119	3.4	403	5.7
Dorset	53,074	111	4.2	40	1.5	21	0.8	115	2.2
Essex	74,341	222	6.0	105	2.8	112	3.0	293	3.9
Gloucestershire	56,978	173	6.1	70	2.5	51	1.8	196	3.4
Hampshire	51,524	181	7.0	76	3.0	53	2.1	207	4.0
Herefordshire	23,743	32	2.7	37	3.1	34	2.9	69	2.9
Hertfordshire	30,961	93	6.0	45	2.9	57	3.7	130	4.2
Huntingdonshire	21,962	46	4.2	19	1.7	8	0.7	49	2.2

Kent	87,663	317	7.2	47	1.1	150	3.4	343	3.9
Kingston-upon-Hull	2,413	0	0.0	29	24.0	0	0.0	19	8.0
Leicestershire	49,182	107	4.4	58	2.4	34	1.4	133	2.7
Lincoln	5,289	20	7.6	28	10.6	9	3.4	38	7.2
Lincolnshire	147,434	415	5.6	179	2.4	123	1.7	478	3.2
London	36,137	789	43.7	395	21.9	350	19.4	1023	28.3
Middlesex	17,427	179	20.5	180	20.7	92	10.6	301	17.3
Newcastle-upon-Tyne	4,103	2	1.0	18	8.8	2	1.0	15	3.6
Norfolk	137,635	311	4.5	171	2.5	225	3.3	471	3.4
Northamptonshire	62,349	128	4.1	69	2.2	57	1.8	169	2.7
Northumberland	21,951	50	4.6	8	0.7	3	0.3	41	1.9
Norwich	6,126	0	0.0	54	17.6	50	16.3	69	11.3
Nottinghamshire	40,703	102	5.0	43	2.1	51	2.5	131	3.2
Oxfordshire	38,722	146	7.5	43	2.2	42	2.2	154	4.0
Rutland	9,291	24	5.2	7	1.5	8	1.7	26	2.8
Shropshire	36,540	40	2.2	13	0.7	17	0.9	47	1.3
Somerset	84,636	342	8.1	66	1.6	72	1.7	320	3.8
Southampton	1,786	1	1.1	0	0.0	1	1.1	1	0.7
Staffordshire	33,271	50	3.0	25	1.5	28	1.7	69	2.1

Table 12.2 continued

County*	**Estimated population**	**1400 Entries on Mich. term roll fronts**	**1400 Entries on fronts ×2 per 1,000 persons†**	**1450 Entries on Mich. term roll fronts**	**1450 Entries on fronts ×2 per 1,000 persons†**	**1501 Entries on Mich. term roll fronts**	**1501 Entries on fronts ×2 per 1,000 persons†**	**Average 1400, 1450 and 1501**	
								Entries on Mich. term roll	**Entries on fronts ×2 per 1,000 persons†**
Suffolk	90,846	176	3.9	106	2.3	172	3.8	303	3.3
Surrey	27,960	97	6.9	40	2.9	57	4.1	129	4.6
Sussex	54,755	152	5.6	67	2.4	52	1.9	181	3.3
Warwickshire	39,443	112	5.7	57	2.9	54	2.7	149	3.8
Westmorland	11,453	24	4.2	19	3.3	13	2.3	35	3.0
Wiltshire	66,028	187	5.7	66	2.0	61	1.8	209	3.2
Worcestershire	22,512	63	5.6	34	3.0	56	5.0	102	4.5
York	11,234	9	1.6	40	7.1	18	3.2	45	4.0
Yorkshire	203,112	410	4.0	197	1.9	71	0.7	452	2.2

Source: ‘Londoners and the law’ project data, see above, n. 6. Estimated county populations (except those indicated with an asterisk) have been calculated from the 1377 lay poll tax returns published in Dobson, *Peasant’s Revolt of 1381*, pp. 54–7, multiplying the published return figures by 55 per cent in order to compensate for children, beggars and others not represented in the totals of those taxed.

* Cheshire, Durham and Lancashire were counties palatine, for which the court of common pleas did not exercise justice, and so do not appear in this list.

† Plea rolls are made of several hundred individual rotulets, bound at the head and written front and back. Thus, the numbers of entries on the rotulet fronts of each roll have been doubled to derive an estimated total number of entries.

these data as a guide for the interpretation of non-pleaded- as well as pleaded-case entries on the plea rolls it is possible to estimate, roughly, the number of Londoners litigating at common pleas during a particular term. For example, as discussed above, *c.*1450 approximately 4,500 cases were in progress each term, of which 14 per cent, or about 630 cases, were laid in London. If, as suggested by the 'Londoners and the law' sampling, 75 per cent of cases laid in London involved a Londoner as a litigant, these estimated 630 cases would have equated to about 470 cases involving at least one London litigant *c.*1450. Additionally, there were, of course, Londoners litigating in suits laid in other counties. Roughly 30 per cent of cases extracted for the 'Londoners and the

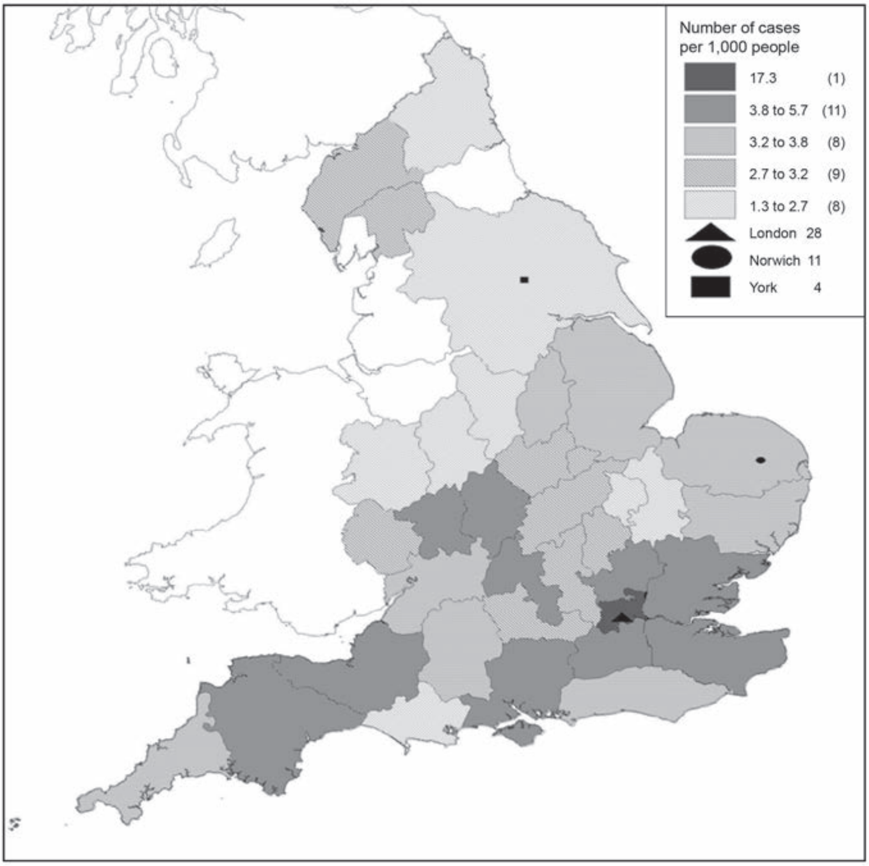

Figure 12.1. Average cases in progress per thousand persons, Michaelmas terms 1400, 1450 and 1500.

Source: Table 12.2.

law' project involved a London litigant, but were not laid in London.[25] This would suggest that a typical plea roll of *c.*1450 would have contained about 250 additional cases laid in counties other than London but involving a London litigant.[26] These estimates suggest that *c.*1450, in total, Londoners may have been litigants in around 720 cases in progress at common pleas during any given term, with the total number of individual London litigants involved probably about the same, some London litigants having brought multiple lawsuits, and some lawsuits having involved multiple London litigants (see below for a discussion of cases involving both a London plaintiff and London defendant). Converting this estimate of the number of lawsuits involving London litigants ongoing during a typical term into an estimate of the number of such lawsuits ongoing at some point during any given year is exceedingly difficult. As discussed above, only one in thirteen case entries on the plea rolls *c.*1450 relate to pleaded cases, with the remainder relating to cases in mesne process, which were frequently discontinued or settled out of court after highly variable periods of time ranging from one term to many years.[27] However, taking these considerations into account, it might speculatively be estimated that no fewer than 750–1,000 cases involving at least one London litigant were initiated, ongoing or resolved at some point during any given year around the middle of the fifteenth century, with the number of individual Londoners involved being probably more or less the same.

These estimates can be contextualized by comparing the number of cases at common pleas involving Londoners to the volume of business passing through London's city courts. The city of London's legal franchise was such that, in theory, London freemen suing other Londoners could be fined or imprisoned if they did so outside the city's own courts. Thus, for freemen of the city, the basic distinction between common pleas and the city's courts was that the former was a venue for Londoners litigating with non-Londoners, while the latter were a venue for Londoners suing other Londoners.[28] However, it has been estimated that freemen are unlikely to have made up more than 12 per cent of all London inhabitants, perhaps a quarter of the adult male population, at any time before 1550.[29] Thus, for the great majority of potential London litigants who did not enjoy the freedom of the city, the primary incentive to litigate against non-Londoners at common pleas was the city's courts' lack of a means by which to secure the appearance of recalcitrant non-London defendants who neither had estate within the city's area of jurisdiction by which they could be distrained, nor were present there to be attached.[30] At the same time, there were strong incentives for London freemen and non-freemen alike to bring suits against their fellow Londoners primarily within the city's courts rather than at common pleas, embodied in the comparative speed and cheapness with which cases could be prosecuted in the city. For example, in the sheriffs' court of London, by far the city's busiest judicial forum, cases could be begun orally or by bill without the need to purchase one or numerous writs, as required for litigation at common pleas.[31] Moreover, even protracted cases in the London sheriffs' court were typically delayed by no more than a few months, as opposed to the many months, and often years, by which cases were regularly delayed in common pleas.[32]

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[25] The project sample contains 6,321 pleaded cases, of which 1,844 (29%) were not laid in London.

[26] E.g., if a typical plea roll *c.*1450 contained, among non-pleaded-case and pleaded-case entries, approximately 585 cases laid in London and 250 cases involving a Londoner but not laid in London, totalling 835 cases, then 250 cases involving a Londoner but not laid in London would equal 30% of that total. This reasoning extends the 'Londoners and the law' sampling methodology to include non-pleaded-case entries.

[27] See above for ratios of pleaded-case to non-pleaded-case entries. For the discontinuation of out-of-court settlement of suits, see Hastings, *Court of Common Pleas*, p. 183.

[28] Tucker, 'Relationships between London's courts', p. 117.

The city's three principal courts for civil litigation were: the sheriffs' court, which was a 'court of first resort for most individuals', initiating most kinds of minor cases, apart from rights to and in land; the courts of hustings, both 'of land', which dealt with disputes concerning property ownership, and 'of common pleas', regarding property-related rights, particularly naam and dower; and the mayor's court, which dealt with the enforcement of civic ordinances as well as some interpersonal pleas over which it came to enjoy a power to remedy injustices 'in conscience', arguably either as superior or parallel court to the sheriffs' court and courts of hustings.[33]

The rough estimates of the volume of interpersonal disputes brought before the mid fifteenth-century courts of the city of London, as appearing in Table 12.3, are the work of Penny Tucker.[34] The records of the court of hustings are nearly complete for this period, and so it is possible to know with some certainty how many personal actions were heard there.[35] The records of the mayor's court are somewhat less complete, and those of the

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[29] P. Tucker, *Law Courts and Lawyers in the City of London, 1300–1550* (Cambridge, 2007), p. 24.

[30] Tucker, *Law Courts and Lawyers*, pp. 180–1.

[31] Tucker, *Law Courts and Lawyers*, pp. 152–60 (volume of business), 179 (originating lawsuits); Hastings, *Court of Common Pleas*, pp. 169, 247–55 (fees).

[32] Tucker, *Law Courts and Lawyers*, pp. 168–70, 182–3; Hastings, *Court of Common Pleas*, pp. 211–36.

[33] Tucker, *Law Courts and Lawyers*, pp. 98 (sheriffs' court), 113, 146–7 (mayor's court).

[34] Tucker, *Law Courts and Lawyers*, pp. 144, 150, 159–60.

[35] Tucker, *Law Courts and Lawyers*, p. 144.

Table 12.3. Civil litigation, estimated cases *c.*1450

Court	**Cases per term**	**Cases per year**
Royal court of common pleas (*involving a Londoner*)	720	750–1,000*
Sheriffs' court	–	3,800–4,700†
Mayor's court	–	400†
Courts of hustings (*'of land' and 'of common pleas'*)	–	10–20†

Source: 'Londoners and the law' project data, see above, n. 6.
* See discussion above.
† Tucker, *Law Courts and Lawyers*, pp. 144, 150, 159–60.

sheriffs' court are almost completely lacking, making the estimated number of cases heard there necessarily the most speculative.[36] As with the county population estimates in Table 12.2, however, the precision of these estimates is not as important as their relative distribution and orders of magnitude. What Table 12.3 conveys is just how central litigation at common pleas must have been to Londoners' mental map of the legal environment in which they lived and traded. Londoners are unlikely to have seen common pleas as a venue for litigation separate from or outside the usual range of judicial forums they might employ, in the way many provincial merchants may have seen it (see Table 12.2). In addition to London's proximity to Westminster Hall, where the court sat, and the high frequency with which the lawyers and litigants of common pleas undoubtedly patronized the city by the mid fifteenth century, as Keene has shown, the London mercantile community stood head and shoulders above any other town's guild merchants as the hub of a national and international trade and distribution network.[37] In essence, the business of London was to trade with non-Londoners, which in turn regularly generated disputes that could not be settled by the city's own courts, which lacked the power of common pleas to compel litigants from other counties to come before them. London's *Liber Albus* does record that, in theory, commercial arrangements entered into outside the city could be brought before London's city courts if payment had been due to take place in London. However, given their limited power to secure the appearance of recalcitrant non-London defendants (as discussed above), it seems unlikely

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[36] Tucker, *Law Courts and Lawyers*, pp. 150, 159–60. See also S. Jenks, 'Picking up the pieces: cases presented to the London sheriffs' courts between Michaelmas 1461 and Michaelmas 1462', *Journal of Legal History*, xxix (2008), 99–145.

[37] Keene, 'Changes in London's economic hinterland', pp. 59–81.

Table 12.4. Pleaded cases involving a Londoner sampled for the 'Londoners and the law' project, 1400–1500

Date range (inclusive)	Involving a Londoner	LvL*	LvL as a percentage of all cases
1400–9	519	28	5%**
1420–9	1,115	107	10%
1445–50	1,056	169	16%
1460–8	1,529	242	16%
1480†	257	37	14%
1500†	207	35	17%
Totals	4,683	618	13%

Source: 'Londoners and the law' project data, see above, n. 6.
* Londoner versus Londoner.
**Before the Statute of Additions (which required a defendant's location of residence).
† Small sample. Four terms only.

that London traders would often have found this an attractive option for dealing with the non-London debtors with whom they would have been most likely to have negotiated debts outside the city.[38]

Conversely, modest numbers of Londoners consistently chose to initiate litigation against other Londoners at common pleas, contrary to city regulation regarding London freemen (see above), throughout the fifteenth century (Table 12.4). The number of Londoners pursuing such cases to the stage of pleading may even have increased slightly from mid century onwards. However, this is difficult to ascertain as, before the 1413 Statute of Additions, writs were not required to specify the defendant's place of residence, leading to the probable under-identification of London defendants.[39] Furthermore, from at least the 1460s, plaintiffs sometimes identified defendants as being 'of London', along with an alternative geographical origin (or 'alias'), thus inflating the apparent number of 'London' defendants. In terms of the content of these pleas, it is probably significant that pleaded cases of Londoner versus Londoner (LvL) at common pleas, when compared with pleaded cases of Londoner versus non-Londoner, contain an unusually high proportion of violence-related lawsuits. For example, LvL cases were only half as likely to be cases of sales of goods (5 per cent (31) LvL vs. 11

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[38] Tucker, 'Relationships between London's courts', p. 118.

[39] Statute of Additions, 1 Hen. V, c. 5 (*Statutes of the Realm* (12 vols., 1810–28), ii. 171).

per cent (515) overall), but nearly twice as likely to be cases of 'trespass with force and arms' (23 per cent (142) LvL vs. 14 per cent (656) overall), such as 'taking of goods' or assault.[40] This raises the question of whether Londoners may sometimes have felt more likely to receive impartial justice in tumultuous, intra-city disputes outside the city's own courts; or perhaps felt that common pleas was a more effective tool with which to harry their adversaries in such disputes.

What kinds of legal actions did Londoners employ in common pleas?

Returning to the more general activities of Londoners at common pleas, the overall character of their litigation was strongly mercantile, with 69 per cent of their lawsuits which reached the stage of pleading, as identified by the 'Londoners and the law' project, having been brought on writs of debt (see Table 12.5). This high proportion of debt cases is emphasized by comparison with the only available, albeit problematic, evidence of the types of cases that were heard in the fifteenth-century sheriffs' court of London, which suggests nearer to just 50 per cent of cases decided there may have been suits of debt.[41] However, not all 'debt' cases were about mercantile activity. The most explicitly mercantile of Londoners' many debt cases pleaded in common pleas – 19 per cent of all Londoners' cases found by the 'Londoners and the law' project – were writs of debt on sales of goods or cash loans. Less clearly mercantile, fully 44 per cent of Londoners' pleaded cases revolved around writs of debt on a bond – literally a formalized 'I owe you' – usually without details of what the bond was about. Many of these bonds were no doubt commercial devices such as non-performance bonds for the sale or shipping of merchandise. However, it is important to recognize that many others were clearly not commercial, relating to property ownership, assurances of good behaviour, arbitrations, marriage agreements and the entire range of social activities engaged in by later medieval Londoners.[42] The residue of Londoners' writs of debt, identified by the 'Londoners and the law' project, related primarily to unpaid rents. Further, after the 69 per cent of writs which were writs of debt, the remainder of Londoners' pleaded cases at common pleas were principally writs of trespass, often used to disguise claims to property, followed lastly by writs of disseisin.

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[40] 'Londoners and the law' project data (see above, n. 6).

[41] Jenks has reconstructed about 10% of the business of the London sheriffs' court of 1461–2 (Jenks, 'Picking up the pieces', p. 108).

[42] The ratio of mercantile to non-mercantile bonds is impossible to determine, as only a small minority of bonds indicate to what they relate.

Table 12.5. Actions at common pleas involving a London litigant, 1400–1500*

Writ type	**Writ sub-type**	**Number of actions**	**Percentage of Londoners' cases (Table 4)**	**Subtotals as a percentage of Londoners' cases**
Debt	Bond	2,062	44%	
	Sales of goods/ Loans	890	19%	
	Other	279	6%	
Sub-total		*3,231*		*69%*
Trespass	With force and arms	741	16%	
	Against royal statute	162	3%	
	Other	9	<1%	
Sub-total		*912*		*19%*
Detinue		277	6%	
Account		92	2%	
Disseisin		56	1%	
Other		115	2%	
Totals:		4,683	100%	

Source: 'Londoners and the law' project data, see above, n. 6.
*Based on sample periods 1400–9, 1420–9, 1445–50, 1460–8, 1480 and 1500; all dates inclusive.

Who were the Londoners who brought and responded to lawsuits in common pleas?

An examination of the status and occupation of persons involved in pleaded cases found by the 'Londoners and the law' project featuring at least one London litigant also conveys a very mercantile emphasis to court usage by Londoners (Table 12.6). The most common status of persons appearing in these lawsuits was, not surprisingly, that of citizen (or freeman) of London, with citizens appearing in 2,577 pleaded cases featuring a London litigant. These citizens were most commonly plaintiffs, in 2,010 suits, rather than defendants, in 595 suits. The second most common status in these cases was that of 'gentleman', with these making appearances in 1,207 suits; gentlemen most commonly appeared as defendants (668 def., 187 pl.). Alternatively, focusing on the most

Table 12.6. Most common litigants, by group, in cases featuring a London litigant, 1400–1500*

Group	**Total cases with appearances by group members**	**Cases involving a group member as a plaintiff**	**Cases involving a group member as a defendant**
Laymen, by title:			
'Citizen' or 'freeman of London'	2,577	2,010	595
Gentlemen and gentlewomen	1,207	187	688
Laymen, by occupation:			
Mercers, drapers, grocers and tailors	500–600 each		
Brewers, skinners, fishmongers, butchers and goldsmiths	200–250 each		
Clergy			
Abbot/Abbess or prior/prioress	*c.*200		
Chaplain	*c.*190		

Source: 'Londoners and the law' project data, see above, n. 6.
* Based on 'Londoners and the law' the sample periods are 1400–9, 1420–9, 1445–50, 1460–8, 1480 and 1500; all dates inclusive.

common occupations of Londoners using the court of common pleas, members of the city's main companies dominate, with London mercers, drapers, grocers and tailors each making appearances before the court in 500–600 pleaded cases. Trailing significantly behind are occupational groups such as the brewers, skinners, fishmongers, butchers and goldsmiths, each of which appeared in 200–250 pleaded cases featuring a Londoner. Thus, in terms of its most frequent users, the significance of common pleas to Londoners was, in no small part, as the court of the mercantile Londoner. However, it was also patronized by the clergy, as the cases involving Londoners include over 190 cases with chaplains and 200 cases with abbots and priors, many of whom were from London religious houses and parish churches. The country's largest city, of course, had one of the country's highest concentrations of clergy, the more prominent of whom had significant landed, and thus economic, interests both throughout the city and beyond.[43]

What was the importance of the court of common pleas to non-litigants?

As well as resolving Londoners' disputes, the court of common pleas provided employment and income to numerous Londoners who were not themselves litigants. Many London cases, even those not involving a London litigant or attorney, often directly or indirectly involved London professionals, such as the scriveners and notaries who wrote the bonds, indentures and other documents around which cases laid in the city and elsewhere often revolved. Indications of this can be seen when disputes between principal parties spilled over to affect these professionals, as when in 1480 John Moile, as part of an ongoing property dispute with the executors of one Thomas Eyre, indicted London scrivener John Morecok, along with Eyre's executors, of having made false documents that threatened his lawful possession of certain lands in Kent.[44] John Morecok was otherwise unconnected to the case, or its related arbitration, except for having drawn up documents at his employer's request. Perhaps more obviously, when a dispute came to court, there is every indication that the attorneys representing one or both parties would often have been men residing in and around London. The inns of court, of course, were nearby, between London and Westminster, and many prominent attorneys at common pleas, handling cases between persons from all corners of the country – Richard Edmund, William Kirkeby, Thomas Torald and Richard Flegge, to name just a few – described themselves variously as 'attorney' or 'gentleman, of London', in those instances when they acted as sureties or litigants themselves.[45]

The economic significance of the lawyers, scriveners and other individuals who serviced the court being based in and around London should not be understated. For example, by the early fifteenth century common lawyers were often retained by a dozen or more clients at any one time, and even less well-known professionals might be retained long-term for around a mark per annum.[46] Other prominent attorneys, such as Philip Leweston, who sometimes described himself as a 'gentleman of London', took fees on a termly basis, in one instance 40*d* per term plus all expenses.[47] This method of charging fees would have yielded Leweston 10*s* per client per annum beyond expenditure on their behalf. As Nigel Ramsay has shown, the more prestigious serjeant-at-law and future justice Robert Tirwhit collected more than £50 in fees, that we know of, in 1400 alone.[48] Much of this very significant revenue stream is likely to have been ploughed back into the London economy in one way or another.

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[43] In addition to London's 106 parishes and their clergy, a large number of religious foundations were present in the city and its suburbs (see *The Religious Houses of London and Middlesex*, ed. C. M. Barron and M. Davies (2007)).

[44] TNA: PRO, CP 40/872 rot. 102d.

[45] Richard Edmund (TNA: PRO, CP 40/638 rot. 301); William Kirkeby (CP 40/642 rot. 116); Thomas Torald (CP 40/797 rot. 435d); and William Flegge (CP 40/809 rot. 316d).

[46] Ramsay, 'Retained legal council', p. 105.

Conclusion

The sum of the answers to the questions posed at the beginning of this chapter has, it is hoped, established the likely importance and centrality of the court of common pleas to Londoners, and to London social and mercantile life. More cases in common pleas were laid in London than in any other county, three-quarters of which involved a Londoner (see Table 12.2 and Figure 12.1). As a result of Londoners' regular need to litigate against non-Londoners, by the mid fifteenth century at least, the court of common pleas was entertaining more Londoners' suits than were two of London's three main courts (see Table 12.3). Throughout the fifteenth century, Londoners were even regularly employing the court of common pleas to litigate against each other, despite a prohibition against London freemen doing so and that court's higher costs and slower process than the city's own courts (see Table 12.4, and above). For Londoners, common pleas was an essential tool for resolving mercantile disputes, and heavily relied upon by both the city's merchants and tradesmen, and the clergy. And finally, the court of common pleas undoubtedly, directly or indirectly, brought some degree of income and employment to the city of London. All of these factors suggest very strongly that, as a 'state institution', the court of common pleas did indeed have, as Keene has suggested, a clear 'secondary role within a metropolis', the business of which was certainly the generation of wealth.[49]

Together, these conclusions would also seem to justify, from a historical perspective, the identification of common pleas as a de facto 'London court', as much as a national institution. The more speculative question of whether Londoners themselves are likely to have thought of the court of common pleas in this way is more difficult to gauge. However, in its unparalleled function as a venue for litigating against non-Londoners, indispensible to a mercantile community overwhelmingly oriented towards trading both with the counties and abroad – not to mention the court's uses for resolving certain disputes between Londoners – people living in fifteenth-century London would perhaps have been inclined to see the court of common pleas very much as a London court. More to the point, in the late fourteenth-century allegorical poem *The Vision of Piers Ploughman*, written by some-time Londoner William Langland, the characters Theology and Cyvyle (that is, Civil-law) do not agree to take their dispute over the betrothal of Lady Mede (that is, Fee) to the villainous Fals (that is, Fraud) to Westminster Hall for judgement, but instead decide to 'ledeth hire to Londone, there it is y-shewed, if any lawe wol loke', and so set out in fact to consult the justices at Westminster.[50]

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[47] TNA: PRO, CP 40/755 rot. 659d.

[48] Ramsay, 'Retained legal council', p. 105.

[49] Keene, 'Metropolitan comparisons', p. 471.

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[50] William Langland, *The Vision and Creed of Piers Ploughman*, ed. T. Wright (1842), pp. 36–7.

13. Crown, city and guild in late medieval London

Matthew Davies

By the early seventeenth century it was common for the London livery companies to commission leading writers such as Anthony Munday and John Webster to design elaborate shows celebrating the election of their members to the office of lord mayor. In October 1605 it was the turn of the Merchant Taylors, who commissioned Munday to write a show entitled *The Triumphs of Re-united Britania* for their lord mayor, Sir Leonard Halliday. The opening speech was to be given by an actor portraying Edward III, who had given the company its first charter in 1327. This was linked explicitly to the overall theme of the pageant – the regaining and reuniting of kingdoms. Two years after the accession of James I, the pageant placed themes, characters and stories that were familiar to the audience in a wider context, emphasizing the coming together of the *British* peoples. One of these stories, very popular in pageants and chronicles in this period, was the idea of London as the 'New Troy', founded by the mythical Brutus, a descendant of Aeneas, a legend that first appeared in the work of Geoffrey of Monmouth in the twelfth century. The 1605 pageant presented Brutus as the father of Britain – the kingdoms of England, Scotland and Wales were given to his three sons to rule, and to their descendants ever after. The 'reuniting' of these kingdoms thus provided a contemporary backdrop to this mayoral election, and placed London and its merchants at the heart of this alliance of nations and the emergence of the 'British state'.[1]

The narratives present in such texts reflect strongly held notions of corporate history among London's livery companies, where connections with the crown and the monarch feature prominently. These connections, in turn, are part and parcel of debates concerning London's relationship to central government and to processes of 'state formation' in the middle ages and into the early modern period. Among Derek Keene's many contributions to the field of metropolitan history has been to emphasize the significance of this particular question for London historians of all periods, both in terms of how we perceive the city in relation to the state, and in terms of how we discuss it in comparison with other metropolises and capital cities in continental Europe and beyond.[2] For London guildsmen viewing and reading Munday's pageants, the connections between the city, its merchants and guilds and the crown resonated, lending a contemporary relevance to some of the main themes, characters and events of their early histories. The aim of this chapter, therefore, is to look back at the processes which shaped these relationships in the formative years of London's governmental history. It also seeks to show how the three-cornered relationship between craft, city and crown influenced the formation of ideas of guild history and identity.

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[1] Anthony Munday, *The Triumphes of Re-united Britania* (1605), STC 18279.

To understand the involvement of the crafts in the business of governing London means setting their story in the context of a wider array of political and economic connections. It has long been understood that political structures and the exercise of lordly and kingly power had much to do with the differing ways in which guilds developed within towns and cities in medieval Europe; the interplay between urbanization and the proliferation of guilds on the one hand, and the realities of political power in different regions and kingdoms on the other.[3] The ways in which cities were to be governed, and their relationships to the 'state' or monarch, were the focus of debate and efforts by rulers in many instances to influence things to their advantage. In Italy there were various attempts in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries to limit or forbid the activities of guilds, on the grounds that they infringed royal authority. In Germany, the banning by Charles IV of guilds in Nuremberg (1349) and Frankfurt am Main (1366) was intimately connected with his exercise of imperial power and the need for the support of those urban communities. Yet the emperor's endorsement of a guild-based constitution in Augsburg in 1374 appears to have been similarly founded on political calculation, after financial support was pledged to him by the town council. Maarten Prak's chapter in this volume, likewise, deals with the case of Arnhem, where government by guild filled a power vacuum, and was ratified by Maximilian of Austria.[4] In France, towns and cities were affected by the crown's need constantly to gain support from them in shoring up its position against powerful regional aristocrats, and at the same time make sure that it took into account opposition within many urban centres to the exercise of power by small, mostly mercantile, elites. In processes of state expansion, therefore, an opportunity arose for towns and cities, and in particular for guilds to establish themselves as part of urban governments, and also to engage directly with the crown.[5] The situation in Flanders was different again, with the often fractious relationship between the Four Members (Ghent, Bruges, Ypres and the *Brugse Vrije)* and the Burgundian dukes, as well as with each other, affecting the ways in which the guilds developed as integral parts of particularist urban governments.[6]

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[2] See, e.g., D. Keene, 'Metropolitan comparisons: London as a city-state', *Historical Research*, lxxvii (2004), 459–80.

[3] Still useful here is S. L. Thrupp, 'The gilds', in *The Cambridge Economic History of Europe*, iii: *Economic Organization and Policies in the Middle Ages*, ed. M. M. Postan, E. E. Rich and E. Miller (Cambridge, 1965), pp. 230–79.

[4] See M. Prak, 'Urban governments and their citizens in early modern Europe' (below, pp. 271–88).

By comparison, England was politically unified and had had a strong monarchy relatively early compared with some of its continental neighbours. Given this, it is notable, as Keene has shown, that the crown was willing to see guilds of craftsmen as potentially useful organizations as early as the eleventh century, and was not content just to rely on 'gild merchants' in English towns and cities to perform services and collect revenue. Craft guilds in at least four towns, including London, were paying annual fees to the crown in 1130–1, with guilds of weavers particularly well represented.[7] The economic role played by London was becoming more and more significant for the royal government in this period, not least for the setting of national standards in aspects of commercial activity, to be followed across the kingdom, as well as for the supplying of essential goods such as foodstuffs and textiles. In this sense, a tendency for a strong, centralized monarchy to inhibit the development of guilds was clearly offset by an awareness of their advantages, and so here the development of the city's guilds, from the beginning, expressed aspects of 'London's character as a metropolis – not just a capital city but as a uniquely dominant social and physical organism'.[8] It is therefore important to emphasize from the start the long-established tradition of royal approval of, and engagement with, London's crafts and guilds. The London weavers and bakers had obtained royal recognition and economic privileges by 1160, while a royal enquiry of 1179–80 was undertaken in order to identify so-called 'adulterine' guilds – that is, those that did not have royal approval. Four of the London guilds listed were associated with particular crafts, including the pepperers, later the Grocers, whose guild, it has been suggested, was founded partly to protect their control of the valuable royal market in spices.[9] This background is important in relation to the two themes of this chapter. First of all, it demonstrates the deep historical roots of the connections between London's craft guilds and the crown, which helped to determine not only their attitude towards royal authority on a day-to-day basis, but also the importance that these connections had for their self-image and corporate identity. Second, it places in context the subsequent twists and turns in the evolution of London's government and the significance of guilds within the metropolis.

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[5] On this see, e.g., H. Soly, 'The political economy of European craft guilds: power relations and economic strategies of merchants and master artisans in the medieval and early modern textile industries', *International Review of Social History*, liii (2008), 45–71; B. Chevalier, *Les Bonne Villes de France du XIVe au XVIe siècle* (Paris, 1982), pp. 74, 129–30; W. P. Blockmans, 'Voracious states and obstructing cities: an aspect of state formation in preindustrial Europe', in *Cities and the Rise of States in Europe, A.D. 1000–1800*, ed. C. Tilly and W. P. Blockmans (Boulder, Colo. and Oxford, 1989), pp. 235–6.

[6] See, e.g., W. Blockmans and E. Donckers, 'Self-representation of court and city in Flanders and Brabant in the 15th and early 16th centuries', in *Showing Status: Representations of Social Positions in the Late Middle Ages*, ed. W. Blockmans and A. Janse (Turnhout, 1999), pp. 81–111.

[7] For this background, see esp. D. Keene, 'English urban guilds, *c.*900–1300', in *Guilds and Association in Europe, 900–1900*, ed. I. A. Gadd and P. Wallis (2006), pp. 3–26.

[8] D. Keene, 'Livery companies: what, when and why?', in *Guilds, Society and Economy in London, 1450–1800*, ed. I. A. Gadd and P. Wallis (2002), p. 171.

At the same time, of course, rapid urban growth meant that royal authorities in England and other countries increasingly had to decide whether, and in what ways, authority could be delegated to towns and cities, and in turn to groups and individuals within them – including guilds. It was this which provided the dynamic element in the relationship and led to both conflict and co-operation over the centuries. In England, the fluctuating relationship between the crown and London was critical to the political turbulence of the later thirteenth century – and particularly during the struggle of the barons with Henry III, which brought out some important differences in terms of how the crafts of London should fit into the broader structures of city government. How, for instance, should the court of aldermen and court of common council be made up? How should the trades be regulated? A conservative author of an important contemporary chronicle bitterly attacked a fellow alderman, the populist Thomas FitzThomas, during whose mayoralty (1261–5) the city had committed to the baronial cause. FitzThomas was said to have 'pampered' the city populace by encouraging the crafts to draw up their own regulations.[10] Another target of his polemic was Walter Hervy (mayor 1272–3), who was said to have granted charters to various (unnamed) crafts. These were revoked during the mayoralty of his successor, Henry le Waleys, who had Hervy arrested for good measure, a move which seemingly heralded a defeat for the crafts.[11] In the last decades of the thirteenth century, partly because of a period of direct royal control, the city was encouraged to define its functions more explicitly, and this helped to clarify the position of the crafts. In particular, it was recognized that craft officials should have authority to regulate apprenticeship, which was becoming by far and away the most popular route to obtaining the freedom of the city. In 1274–5, according to one source, a new register of apprentices and redemptioners was begun, with enrolment of the names of apprentices and freemen made compulsory.[12] Further measures are noted in the city records over the next twenty years, and finally in 1312 it was reaffirmed that a newcomer to the city would not be allowed to take up the freedom until his 'condition and trustworthiness' had been certified by representatives of the trade he wished to practise. All these concerns were reflected in the charter granted to the city in 1319 which laid down that admission to the freedom could only be obtained through one of the recognized crafts or 'misteries'. This can be contrasted with the situation almost a century earlier when, as Keene has noted, an order to establish central registration of apprentices made no reference to crafts.[13]

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[9] *The Great Roll of the Pipe for the 26th Year of the Reign of King Henry the Second, A.D. 1179–80* (Pipe Roll Society, xxix, 1930), pp. 151, 153–4; P. Nightingale, *A Medieval Mercantile Community: the Grocers' Company and the Politics and Trade of London, 1000–1485* (New Haven, Conn., 1995), pp. 556–7.

[10] *De Antiquis Legibus Liber*, ed. T. Stapleton (Camden Society, xxxiv, 1846), pp. 55–7.

[11] A. F. Sutton, 'The silent years of London guild history before 1300: the case of the Mercers', *Historical Research*, lxxi (1998), pp. 134–7.

Control over access to the freedom represented a coming together of the interests of craft, city and crown – the protection of London's influence, economy and labour market from outsiders being a particular concern. The corollary to this, of course, was that the city government, drawn from the most prominent crafts, became more interested in the rules and regulations which were being established by the guilds. More and more craft ordinances were brought before the mayor and aldermen for ratification during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, and these quickly took on a common form, containing clauses about the election of masters and wardens, apprenticeship, and so on. Sets of ordinances that included apprenticeship regulations, for example, were presented to the mayor by more than fifty crafts between 1331 and 1497. It is worth pointing out that almost all the crafts that submitted ordinances in this period were artisan rather than mercantile: there was, as Caroline Barron has noted, a sense in which wealthier crafts such as the Mercers, Drapers and Grocers – who were by now supplying the vast majority of the mayors and aldermen – were in practice not subject to the same obligations because of their dominance of these offices. This was a pattern that was to continue into the fifteenth century as distinctions between the greater and lesser crafts became more explicitly stated.[14]

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[12] *Chronicles of Edward I and Edward II*, ed. W. Stubbs (2 vols., Rolls ser., 1882–3), i, *Annales Londonienses*, pp. 85–6; *Calendar of Plea and Memoranda Rolls of the City of London*, ii: *1364–81*, ed. A. H. Thomas (Cambridge, 1929), p. xxviii.

[13] *Calendar of Letter-books Preserved among the Archives of the Corporation of the City of London at the Guildhall, A–L*, ed. R. R. Sharpe (1899–1907) (hereafter *Calendar of Letter Books: A*, *B* etc.), *B*, p. 241; *C*, p. 84; *E*, pp. 12–14; Keene, 'English urban guilds', p. 19.

It is important to remember that the main institutions of the government of London itself – the court of aldermen and the court of common council – continued to be drawn from the city's wards. Despite the advances made by the crafts in terms of the freedom and economic regulation, the tradition of government by ward survived, albeit with a shift away from some of the dynastic tendencies of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. London and other English towns and cities did not follow the path taken by some of their counterparts in other European kingdoms, where government based on 'corporatist' principles was either the norm, or was the subject of long-lasting 'experiments'.[15] In London, as a result, few men from artisan crafts found their way into the city's top tiers of government in the later middle ages. Instead, guilds such as the Mercers, Grocers, Drapers and Goldsmiths were most heavily represented as mayors, on the court of aldermen, and among the city's four members of parliament, and there was already emerging a distinction between the lesser and greater crafts. The greater crafts were still most numerous at lower levels of government, in the common council in particular: three-quarters of more than 400 common councilmen who attested the elections of London's MPs in the mid fifteenth century were drawn from just nine, mostly mercantile, crafts – there were only a very few representatives of the thirty or so other crafts such as the Girdlers, Cordwainers and Founders, even though some of these had already been recognized by royal charters.[16]

A government drawn specifically from the guilds was only introduced on a few, short-lived occasions, all of them in the fourteenth century. The most famous of these phases, well documented by historians, began in 1377 when radical reforms were introduced by a 'party' within the city government, headed by a draper, John of Northampton, who, it was claimed, sought his support from the 'small people'. The practice of electing aldermen for life was abolished and replaced with annual elections, and it was decided that the common council should henceforth be drawn from the crafts rather than from the wards.[17] The reforms were swiftly reversed in October 1383 with the election as mayor of Nicholas Brembre, a grocer, royal favourite and staunch opponent of Northampton. The primacy of the wards was reaffirmed in 1384. Over the ensuing century or so, the pattern set by the leading guilds as institutions, and in terms of their connections to the crown and the city government, was replicated by many of the so-called 'lesser' crafts who, although active in a collective sense in earlier periods, had not yet acquired things such as charters, company halls and property endowments. Participation in the formal structures and processes of government gradually became more clearly defined – by the late fifteenth century the masters, wardens and liverymen of all the crafts were allowed to attend the election of the mayor, affirming the value of the guilds as organizations which embodied, in a way that wards could never do, the economic and political muscle of London's civic elite.[18]

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[14] S. Hovland, 'Apprenticeship in later medieval London' (unpublished University of London PhD thesis, 2004), app. 8; C. M. Barron, *London in the Later Middle Ages: Government and People 1200–1500* (Oxford, 2004), pp. 207–8.

[15] On Florence, see, e.g., J. M. Najemy, *Corporatism and Consensus in Florentine Electoral Politics, 1280–1400* (Chapel Hill, NC, 1982), pp. 3–17, 217–62.

[16] Barron, *London in the Later Middle Ages*, pp. 207–8; The National Archives of the UK: Public Record Office, C 219/13/1–5, 14/1–5, 15/1–7, 16/1–6, 17/1–3. I carried out the analysis of parliamentary attestors while working on the constituency survey of London for *The History of Parliament: the Commons, 1421–61* (forthcoming). I am grateful to the History of Parliament Trust for allowing me to reproduce these figures here.

Meanwhile the organized crafts were also becoming involved in other aspects of urban governance. Finance was one area in which the crown had a clear interest, although requests for money were normally channelled through the city government rather than made directly to the crafts. A 'gift' of just over £450 given to Edward III in 1363 was raised from a variety of craft groups as well as individuals in London. Some were well-established guilds such as the Drapers, Mercers, Tailors and Fishmongers. Others, however, were not, and seem to have been sub-sets or local 'clusters' of craftsmen, such as the butchers of Eastcheap and the butchers of St. Nicholas Shambles, a group of four dyers and the 'tanners without Newgate'.[19] This is a good illustration of the variety of craft associations and groups which still existed at local level. Such gifts and loans reflected the ways in which the companies and their members were gradually becoming central to revenue-raising in London, and by extension to the fortunes and policies of the crown itself. With formal organization within many crafts increasing, associations of craftsmen, headed by their respective 'good men', were seen as useful tools of urban government, taking upon them the delegated authority of the mayor and sheriffs in relation to economic regulation (particularly apprenticeship), but also becoming a convenient means to organize the collection of revenue.

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[17] R. Bird, *The Turbulent London of Richard II* (1949), pp. 30–43; P. Nightingale, 'Capitalists, crafts and constitutional change in late 14th-century London', *Past & Present*, cxxiv (1989), 3–35; C. M. Barron, 'London: 1300–1540', in *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain*, i: *600–1540*, ed. D. M. Palliser (Cambridge, 2000), pp. 405–6.

[18] *Calendar of Letter Books: L*, pp. 73, 132; Barron, *London in the Later Middle Ages*, p. 217. And see M. Davies, 'Artisans, guilds and government in London', in *Daily Life in the Late Middle Ages*, ed. R. H. Britnell (Stroud, 1998), pp. 134–6.

[19] *Calendar of Letter Books: G*, pp. 171–2.

This was to become even more central to the role of the guilds in the fifteenth century, particularly once they began to acquire significant wealth in the form of property, and to develop robust organizational structures. In 1435, for instance, the mayor and aldermen received an appeal for help from their counterparts in the besieged city of Calais. By July the next year an expeditionary force led by Humfrey, duke of Gloucester was being organized and writs were sent to the sheriffs of London requesting them to make proclamations concerning the provision of weapons and food for the army. Meanwhile, 'by the good a-vyse and consent of craftys', the mayor raised contingents of soldiers who were to join the force at Sandwich at the end of July.[20] When London prepared its defences against a feared assault by the forces of Henry Tudor in 1485, 3,000 men were drawn not from the wards, but from 73 crafts in proportions relating to their status. Two years later all the crafts were required to contribute to a loan of £3,000 to the new king. The Mercers, Grocers and Drapers were to pay just over £500 each, the Goldsmiths, Fishmongers and Tailors £315, and an unspecified number of other guilds were to provide the remaining £1,438 6*s* 8*d*. The guilds were therefore central to the city's ability to demonstrate its influence in national politics, and the stock of the guilds themselves could only rise as a result.[21]

Despite the city's progress in gaining a greater degree of independence, the crown itself seems to have continued, albeit with varying intensity, to view some London crafts in the broader context of royal policy relating to the kingdom, and not just London. There were close economic and financial connections between the crown and crafts such as the Goldsmiths, Fishmongers and Vintners, reflecting the longstanding roles which they had played in inspecting coinage and regulating the price and quality of food and drink in the capital, as well as supplying the royal household in times of both peace and war. These ties were renewed in the early fourteenth century: Edward III, for instance, granted charters to several crafts with royal associations, such as the Skinners, Girdlers, Tailors and Goldsmiths.[22] The provisions of most of these early charters were not particularly extensive or controversial: they generally just confirmed their right to hold an annual feast, and to regulate their particular trades. However, in some cases the extension of rights of search to cover the kingdom as a whole was already being pursued. This was the case with the Goldsmiths, who wished to formalize and protect a longstanding national role in regulating the quality of gold- and silver-ware. Less ambitious, but equally well connected, were the London Tailors, who benefited from the involvement of prominent members of their craft in the supply of clothing, tents and other equipment for military campaigns in France and Scotland; as well as a charter from Edward III they acquired the site of their hall in London from the king's tent-maker, John de Yakeslee. One of their later benefactors, Thomas Carleton, was the king's embroiderer.[23]

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[20] *Calendar of Letter Books: K*, pp. 190, 205–6; *The Historical Collections of a Citizen of London in the 15th Century*, ed. J. Gairdner (Camden Society, new ser., xvii, 1876), p. 178.

[21] London Metropolitan Archives (hereafter LMA), COL/CC/01/09 fos. 81v–82, 85v.

[22] *Memorials of London and London Life in the XIIIth, XIVth and XVth Centuries*, ed. H. T Riley (1868), pp. 153–6; *The Charters of the Merchant Taylors' Company*, ed. F. M. Fry and R. T. D. Sayle (1937), pp. 12–13; E. Veale. 'The 'Great Twelve': mistery and fraternity in 13th-century London', *Historical Research*, lxiv (1991), 237–63.

The example of the Tailors illustrates the ways in which the London guilds were intimately connected with sections of the royal government and household, links which their counterparts in other English towns and cities found much more difficult to foster. London had become essential as a centre of production, supplying materials and labour for the royal households and great wardrobe, which was by the mid fourteenth century firmly established at Baynard's Castle on the western edge of the city. Royal occasions such as coronations created significant short-term demand for fine cloth, furs and other goods, and the permanent staff of the wardrobe (such as the king's skinner and tailor) were augmented by large numbers of London guildsmen who worked on the garments in their own workshops. At these times, the ability of the guilds to mobilize their members must have been useful: John de Cologne, a leading figure in the London Tailors' guild at the time of the granting of their charter of 1327, was also the king's linen-armourer, and was commissioned to supply clothing for more than 100 foot soldiers who were to go on campaign with Edward III in Scotland in 1334. The coronation of Richard III involved the employment of seventy-two London tailors for a total of 412 days' work, anticipating the even greater degree of mobilization of labour and materials that came to be required for state occasions in the later sixteenth century.[24] Aside from such events, the normal operations of the wardrobe came to be overseen by experienced and senior London craftsmen, who occupied the positions of king's skinner and king's tailor from the mid fourteenth century onwards.

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[23] M. Davies and A. Saunders, *The History of the Merchant Taylors' Company* (Leeds, 2004), ch. 1. For Carleton, see H. Kleineke, 'Carleton's book: William FitzStephen's "Description of London" in a late 14th-century common-place book', *Historical Research*, lxxiv (2001), 117–26.

[24] Riley, *Memorials of London*, p. 190; *The Coronation of Richard III: the Extant Documents*, ed. P. W. Hammond and A. F. Sutton (Gloucester, 1983), *passim*; Davies and Saunders, *History of the Merchant Taylors' Company*, pp. 61–2; I. W. Archer, 'Conspicuous consumption revisited: city and court in the reign of Elizabeth I', in *London and the Kingdom: Essays in Honour of Caroline M. Barron*, ed. M. Davies and A. J. Prescott (Donington, 2008), pp. 38–57.

Even when, on occasion, those appointed were foreign craftsmen, these men almost always came to join their respective guilds in London, often rising to become warden or master.[25] These kinds of contacts were, of course, not uniformly created by all London's guilds, and here one might identify one of the reasons for the tensions between certain crafts which periodically arose, and the differing success rates of guilds in engaging with the crown to pursue their objectives. Yet, leaving these aside for the moment, it is clear that London's status as a site of skills, finance and materials enabled it to plug in to networks of power and patronage at the centre of government. We also know, for example, that the western areas of the metropolis, particularly along Fleet Street and the Strand, were locations for aristocratic and ecclesiastical town houses, which also served as sources of demand for goods and services provided by Londoners. Noblemen such as John, duke of Bedford, brother of Henry V, sited their own wardrobes in the city itself. The presence of gentry and aristocracy was important to the prestige and economy of London and the fortunes of its trades, but as we will see it also enabled the guilds to build effective networks of patrons and well-wishers.[26]

The pursuit of royal charters was to become a significant theme in the subsequent histories of the London companies, and one which helped to create a historical narrative where royal patronage formed a continuous thread. In this sense the London guilds differed somewhat from their counterparts in other English towns and cities, such as York or Exeter, where it was less common for guilds to obtain charters and even rarer for them to seek confirmations or extensions of their provisions.[27] That said, not all London guilds sought royal recognition of this kind in the middle ages, and there were many (mostly the 'lesser' crafts) that, as we have seen, were happy to deal primarily with the city government in terms of getting their ordinances approved and so on. Nevertheless, the pursuit of charters (or letters patent, strictly speaking) does represent one aspect of the tensions that occasionally surfaced in the relationship between crown, city and guild, in that it preserved the longstanding connection between the crown and guilds that was apparent as early as the twelfth century, albeit now expressed through activities such as lobbying as well as institutional and personal networks. By doing so, the guilds were inevitably drawing attention to the limitations of the authority of the city government itself, at a time when that government was asserting its independence and resented interference from the crown. The actions of the crown, while not often in direct contradiction to those of the city, nevertheless implied that it was the crown that granted legitimacy to associations such as guilds and fraternities, whereas the practical day-to-day supervision of the crafts was the function of the city government, even if delegated to the representatives of the crafts. The problem was, of course, maintaining this balance. From the point of view of the Londoners, the crown could not always be relied upon to have the interests of the crafts in mind. The wool trade, for example, became a focus of intense conflict as London's merchants sought to have control of the staple at Bruges and subsequently Calais, while the crown was increasingly prepared to grant trading privileges to alien merchants.[28] When dealing with the crown, therefore, some hedging of bets is in evidence early on: it is notable, for instance, that three of the guilds which obtained charters in 1327 opted to have them copied into the city letter books, tacitly acknowledging that the city government had an interest in their contents.[29] In other words, these royal documents were being treated in a similar way to craft ordinances, which were regularly presented to the mayor for approval. Such ambiguity became less and less common, however, and the guilds (often at their own doing) could find themselves caught between the competing claims of city and crown.

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[25] Davies and Saunders, *History of the Merchant Taylors' Company*, p. 61; and see M. Hayward, *The Great Wardrobe Accounts of Henry VII and Henry VIII* (London Record Society, forthcoming); M. Hayward, *Dress at the Court of King Henry VIII* (Leeds, 2007), pp. 317–43.

[26] C. M. Barron, 'Centres of conspicuous consumption: the aristocratic town house in London 1200–1500', *London Journal*, xx (1995), 1–16; J. Stratford, *The Bedford Inventories: the Worldly Goods of John, Duke of Bedford, Regent of France, 1389–1435* (1993), p. 44.

[27] E.g., the Mercers and Tailors of York obtained their only medieval charters in 1430 and 1453 respectively (see *The Merchant Taylors of York: a History of the Craft and Company from the 14th to the 20th Centuries*, ed. R. B. Dobson and D. Smith (York, 2006), pp. 40–1; *The York Mercers and Merchant Adventurers, 1356–1917*, ed. M. Sellers (Surtees Society, cxxix, 1918), pp. 33–6).

An example of this occurred during the mayoralties of Nicholas Brembre (1377–8, 1383–5), which were notable for the resentment and bitter divisions between his government and many of the crafts – both mercantile and artisan. Petitions were drawn up against him during the parliament of 1388 by at least twelve of the city's crafts, and one of the charges was that in 1377 he had seized royal charters belonging to some of them, in order, he had claimed, to investigate whether they infringed powers vested in the mayor. The parliamentary petitions – that from the Mercers, written in English, being the most famous and remarkable – were clearly coloured by the mutual hostility between Brembre and his opponents, yet they are very revealing about the attitudes of the guilds to royal and mayoral authority. Brembre was accused of exceeding his authority as mayor, of creating a claustrophobic and fearful city where a word out of place could result in imprisonment or worse by a tyrannical regime. He was accused moreover of having accroached royal authority, through his exercise of summary justice in the city.[30] In their petition, the Saddlers claimed that Brembre had attempted to seize their charter but they had refused, saying that they would only yield it up on the command of king or parliament – a telling statement. They only complied when Brembre threatened them, promising to 'fair lever tout la d[i]te citee sur la d[i]te mestier'.[31] The Mercers' petition sought both to draw attention to the wider crisis, but also to repair their own reputation in the face of Brembre's attempts to question their loyalty to Richard II:

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[28] Nightingale, *Medieval Mercantile Community*, pp. 563–4.

[29] Barron, 'London in the later middle ages', p. 208, n. 49; Riley, *Memorials of London*, pp. 153–6.

> And we ben openlich disclaundred, holden vntrewe & traitours to owre Kyng, for the same Nichol[as Brembre] sayd bifor Mair, Aldermen, & owre craft ... that xx. or xxx. of vs were worthy to be drawen & hanged, the which think lyke to yowre worthy lordship by an euen juge to be proued or disproued, the whether that trowthe may shewe, for trouthe amonges vs of fewe or elles no man many day dorst be shewed.[32]

According to the petitions, Brembre managed the neat trick of accusing the guilds of treason against the king, but at the same time alleging that their royal charters – ostensibly an indicator of royal favour – infringed the liberties of the city. It was suggested by at least two contemporary writers that representatives of the guilds appeared at Westminster to give evidence shortly before Brembre was executed. This took place after the petitions were presented and is another indicator of the status of London's guilds by this time, and the sense in which they could be dealt with as institutions independently of the city government.[33] Royal charters were, therefore, a reminder of the extent to which crafts looked outwards to the crown as well as inwards to Guildhall. They were not only practical devices, conferring sets of rights and privileges, but were also symbols of the particular relationship which the guilds had with the crown, which characterized their development and influenced their evolving sense of their own histories. At the same time, of course, a mayor such as Brembre could perceive them as running contrary to what he felt were the rights and privileges of the city government, and his own conception of the place of the guilds.

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[30] For the revised dating of the petitions, see W. Scase, *Literature and Complaint in England, 1272–1553* (Oxford, 2007), pp. 68–73; M. Turner, *Chaucerian Conflict: Languages of Antagonism in Late 14th-Century London* (Oxford, 2007), pp. 13–14. The Mercers' petition is TNA: PRO, SC 8/20/997; 'Richard II: February 1388', *Parliament Rolls of Medieval England* <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=116490> [accessed 23 June 2011]; Bird, *Turbulent London*, p. 69, n. 6.

[31] TNA: PRO, SC 8/20/999.

[32] *A Book of London English, 1384–1425*, ed. R.W. Chambers and M. Daunt (Oxford, 1931), p. 35; for a discussion of the idea of 'trowthe', see R. F. Green, *A Crisis of Truth: Literature and Law in Ricardian England* (Philadelphia, Pa., 2002), pp. 1–2.

[33] Scase, *Literature and Complaint*, p. 70.

In the event, the charters seized from the guilds were not finally handed back by the city chamberlain until January 1389.[34] The timing is significant, because it is clear that these guilds needed their charters in order to respond in chancery to the national enquiry into guilds (of all kinds) that the crown had initiated in 1387–8. The enquiry is a reminder that royal and civic government sometimes shared similar concerns. Both thought that guilds should not be allowed to flourish unhindered because of the potential threats they posed to order as well as to economic and political stability. The circumstances and results of the enquiry show that this was a period when craft organizations could still vary significantly in terms of their functions and activities, and hence reflected a broad spectrum of relationships with each other, and with the city government and the crown. The forty-two returns that survive for London include a number from craft guilds, although interestingly none from any of the 'greater' crafts such as the Mercers, Drapers and the like. The Girdlers and the Saddlers were among those which attached their charters to their returns, while other guilds mentioned them explicitly.[35] In addition to the historical narrative being presented by these guilds, it was undoubtedly important for them to show that their connection to the crown had some contemporary meaning and importance, not least because it was the crown which was investigating their affairs.[36]

The self-confidence displayed by some of London's guilds in their dealings with the crown increased in the fifteenth century. This was partly because of their own institutional development, driven in many cases by the acquisition of property holdings in the city and elsewhere. Professional company clerks were recruited from the ranks of the city's scriveners and attorneys, and they became critical figures for the guilds when it came to petitioning parliament or drawing up legal agreements. Their literary as well as legal skills were indispensable, as the author of the Mercers' petition of 1388 had so ably demonstrated.[37] Economic changes were also responsible, though, with some older guilds seeking to hang on to, or extend, monopolies acquired many years before in the face of the rise of crafts which became organized more recently and which were carving out territory for themselves. An example was the debate which took place in the 1470s and 1480s over whether Londoners should attend provincial fairs, with the Mercers supporting a ban, and the upstart Haberdashers, who were encroaching on the Mercers' country business, opposing it.[38] The ambitions of some of the crafts, and their propensity for looking to the crown for answers, brought them into conflict with one another and with the city government. The Mercers and Grocers were at odds over the wool staple, an issue which also pitted them against the crown.[39] Charters once again took centre stage, principally because they were more and more being used as part of strategies to advance the economic and political status of particular guilds. They were an alternative, and often in fact complementary, to the lobbying of parliament to obtain changes in national legislation dealing with economic questions. Of course, it is important to remember that there were different kinds of letters patent being granted for different purposes. Some were simply confirmations of existing charters: the accession of Edward IV and the change of dynasty prompted several guilds to use *inspeximus* charters as a means to forge good relations with the crown, without adding to their privileges. Other charters were concerned with the extension of rights of search into the surrounding region, or even nationally – controversy here was connected, therefore, to perceptions of London's economic and political importance. The Pewterers, for example, embarked on a successful campaign in the 1460s for a 'charter for þe craft to haue serche thurgh England'– one of the few guilds in the city to gain recognition of this kind at this time, echoing some of the privileges accorded to London guilds in the twelfth century. The Pewterers' account books record numerous instances of the wardens travelling to the south-west to inspect pewter production and the stannaries.[40]

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[34] *Calendar of Plea and Memoranda Rolls*, iii: *1381–1412*, ed. A. H. Thomas (Cambridge, 1932), p. 149.

[35] TNA: PRO, C 47/42/216, 46/467, 468.

[36] For discussion of the role of such documents in creating historical narratives, see M. Davies, '"Monuments of honor": clerks, histories and heroes in the London livery companies', in *Parliament, Personalities and Power: Papers Presented to Linda S. Clark*, ed. H. Kleineke (Woodbridge, 2011), pp. 158–52.

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[37] See Turner, *Chaucerian Conflict*, p. 17; L. Mooney, 'Chaucer's scribe', *Speculum*, lxxxi (2006), 97–138. For the clerks employed by the Tailors, see M. Davies, *The Merchant Taylors' Company of London: Court Minutes 1483–93* (Stamford, 2000), pp. 8–12.

[38] For further discussion of these themes, see: Davies, 'Artisans, guilds and government', pp. 125–50; M. Davies, 'Lobbying parliament: the London companies in the 15th century', *Parliamentary History*, xxiii (2004), 136–48.

[39] Nightingale, *Medieval Mercantile Community*, pp. 563–4.

[40] Davies, 'Lobbying parliament', pp. 140–1; C. Welch, *History of the Cutlers' Company of London and of Minor Cutlery Crafts* (2 vols., 1916–23), i. 64–5.

These grants rarely provoked opposition from other guilds, because in the main they benefited the status and wealth of London as a whole, without affecting other trades. Problems for the city started when companies began seeking charters that seemed to undermine the rights of the mayor and aldermen to govern the city (echoes of Brembre here), or which cut across the rights of other crafts to inspect the shops of their members and generally regulate their trades. A case in point was a bitter dispute between the Goldsmiths and the Cutlers, provoked by the Goldsmiths' request for confirmation of a charter granted by Edward III which allowed them to scrutinize the work of the Cutlers – who, of course, often used silver and gold in their products. The Cutlers petitioned parliament in protest, but to no avail and the confirmation was granted. The Cutlers then tried another tactic, claiming this time that the charter infringed the rights of the city, because the right to correct faults belonged in the first instance to the mayor, who was meant to act on presentments made by the wardens of the particular crafts. But again they were unsuccessful.[41] So what we have is not only a disagreement about the powers of particular guilds, but also about where, ultimately, the source of regulatory authority came from. An even more serious dispute between the Drapers and Tailors in the early 1440s, discussed by Caroline Barron, also centred on a charter which appeared to give tailors the right to search the shops and stalls of drapers – particularly at the prestigious annual St. Bartholomew's Fair in Smithfield. In both cases, the crown seems to have adopted a partial attitude, favouring a long-established vested interest, in the case of the Goldsmiths, and a lobbying campaign on behalf of the Tailors in which the influence of Humfrey, duke of Gloucester (member and patron of the Tailors' fraternity) seems to have been crucial.[42]

Such examples were rare, and need to be put into context. At no point did the efforts of the guilds to secure new privileges, however controversial, seriously undermine London's stability as a self-governing commune, whereas in France (for example) guilds in towns and cities often appealed directly and vigorously to the crown for new powers and charters, sometimes undermining and changing the basis of urban governments.[43] The incidents involving the London Tailors and Goldsmiths were probably less serious in their ramifications than a broadly similar dispute involving the city of Exeter, where the guild of Tailors obtained a new charter in 1466 that presented a direct challenge to the rule of the merchant elite.[44] Nor was the crown, as a rule, keen to exploit guild ambitions as a means to divide and rule, or destabilize London's government. Inevitably, despite London's undoubted, and growing, economic importance within the kingdom as a whole, the interests of the crown were not always the same as those of the guilds, and policies continued to be enacted which undermined as well as enhanced the positions of the London crafts.[45] Henry VI's government, for example, was notorious for rewarding household men with offices, some of which directly affected London's guilds. An example was the post of garbeler of spices in the city, which Henry granted to a yeoman of the chamber in 1457. The Grocers saw the post as an essential means to preserve their monopoly over the distributive trade against the ambitions of Italian spice merchants. Their involvement in the wool trade also continued to be threatened, and not just by the influence wielded by Italian merchants. Five years earlier Henry had granted to the merchants of Newcastle the right to export wool directly to Bruges or Middleburg. It is significant that on the accession of Edward IV the Grocers took no chances and ensured that their preferred candidate for the post was put forward by Sir John Fogg, treasurer of the household. [46] Indeed the early years of Edward's reign were significant for the ways in which the London guilds sought to re-engage with the crown after a period when some had been adversely affected by royal policies: a number of guilds gained confirmation of their charters, and even entertained the king to dinner in their halls.[47]

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[41] Welch, *History of the Cutlers' Company*, i. 108–10, 277, 289–91. For the petitions, see TNA: PRO, SC 8/102/5070, 198/9889 (Cutlers), 121/6042 (Goldsmiths); 'Henry IV: January 1404', *Parliament Rolls of Medieval England* <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=116510> [accessed 23 June 2011].

[42] Barron, *London in the Later Middle Ages*, pp. 209–11.

[43] Soly, 'Political economy', pp. 45–71.

There were, as already noted, fluctuations in London's broader relationship with the crown. The city's liberties had briefly been seized by Richard II, but this was not motivated by any desire to extend crown control over the capital city in ideological terms, along the lines favoured by some other European princes. It was instead a rather extreme reaction to the city's typical wariness in the face of demands for funds. Likewise even the political uncertainties and conflict of the dynastic struggle between 1450 and 1485 were navigated safely, although there were some nervous moments for the citizens. Indeed, what was perhaps most significant about London in this period was its careful negotiation of political difficulties, and also the sense in which, in general terms at least, the crown continued to accept and endorse London's position as capital city, with a significant and by now well-established tradition of self-government, and an economic importance which justified the extension of broad powers to some of its guilds.[48] By contrast, the dukes of Burgundy and Guelders were much more aggressive in their dealings with the towns of Flanders, and this extended to the assertion of corporate identity by the guilds, particularly in the context of urban ceremony. In 1407, for example, Duke John the Fearless issued a decree in Bruges that guild banners were not to be shown in popular gatherings or elsewhere without the express order of the duke or his officers. The duke's own banner was to be unfurled in the main square before one of the guild banners could be displayed. Any infringement would be punished by execution in front of the town hall and confiscation of all possessions. This rather draconian step was a response to the powerful role which guild banners played as a means to rally opposition to ducal rule, and a symbolic assertion of authority over the town and its guilds.[49]

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[44] M. Kowaleski, *Local Markets and Regional Trade in Medieval Exeter* (Cambridge, 1995), p. 156.

[45] For London's economic significance in the later middle ages see, e.g., D. Keene, 'Changes in London's economic hinterland as indicated by debt cases in the court of common pleas', in *Trade, Urban Hinterlands and Market Integration c.1300–1600*, ed. J. A. Galloway (Centre for Metropolitan History Working Papers Series, iii, 2000), pp. 59–81; Barron, 'London: 1300–1540', pp. 416–20.

[46] Nightingale, pp. 502, 505, 519–20.

[47] Davies, 'Artisans, guilds and government', pp. 127, 132.

For the London guilds, the expression of guild identity took place within a rather different context, even if some of the means of expression were similar. As well as royal charters, guilds increasingly began to obtain grants of arms from the crown, the first being given to the Drapers in 1438. These devices were becoming common among European urban guilds in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, with trade guilds frequently combining religious iconography (such as patron saints) with depictions of tools or products associated with their occupations and heraldic elements. They reflected the way in which London's civic society increasingly drew on chivalric and courtly culture, interweaving it with the religious aspects that had long been part of corporate life in the later middle ages. It is particularly striking that in fifteenth-century London many of the companies acquiring arms were outside the ranks of the greater guilds – such as the Cooks, Girdlers, Upholders and Tallow-Chandlers – who perhaps saw these as quick and relatively cheap ways to ape the successful connections forged by the leading guilds.[50] This was a gradual process. London's guilds were not as 'militaristic' in their origins or outlooks as guilds in towns in Guelders or Flanders for example: occasions such as royal entries, marriages, funerals and so on were relatively few in number in London, and did not have such explicitly feudal or military overtones as they did in other cities, for example in Bruges where archery contests and tournaments were common. Perhaps even more crucially, although the London guilds became involved in raising forces for civic defence, they were rarely deployed in anger by the city or the crown.[51] For Londoners, the adoption of chivalric elements undoubtedly increased in the later fifteenth century as part of a revival of interest in these themes. But in some senses it was less to do with political considerations, and perhaps more about nostalgia and aspirations: Caroline Barron examines this sense of nostalgia to argue that, with 'modern' warfare so far removed from its earlier incarnations, merchants could safely aspire to some of the virtues and trappings of chivalry, now that these were associated with an age gone by rather than present-day realities.[52]

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[48] See J. L. Bolton, 'The city and the crown', *London Journal*, xii (1986), 11–24; C. M. Barron, 'London and parliament in the Lancastrian period', *Parliamentary History*, ix (1990), 343–67.

[49] Blockmans and Donckers, 'Self-representation of court and city', p. 97; P. Arnade, 'Crowds, banners and the marketplace: symbols of defiance and defeat during the Ghent war of 1452–3', *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies*, xxiv (1994), 471–97. For Guelders, see G. Nijsten, 'The duke and his towns: the power of ceremonies, feasts, and public amusement in the duchy of Guelders in the 14th and 15th centuries', in *City and Spectacle in Medieval Europe*, ed. B. A. Hanawalt and K. A. Reyerson (Minneapolis, Minn., 1994), pp. 235–70.

For the guilds, the practical application of chivalric culture was perhaps less important than the significance of charters, arms, liveries and other iconographic devices in enabling them to express publicly a sense of corporate identity which drew heavily on their historic and ongoing connections to royal authority. Disputes over precedence in processions were one side-effect of this, as they were elsewhere, but they never seriously destabilized the city's government or jeopardized law and order. Creative solutions such as the 'Billesden award', which allocated sixth and seventh places in processions to the Skinners and Tailors in alternate years, were one way to keep the peace, and in general mayoral authority was sufficient to do this.[53] By the end of the fifteenth century a number of guilds had accumulated a great deal of cultural and historical 'capital', which drew attention to their royal connections and wider significance. The successive charters acquired by the Goldmsiths, Tailors and others were already providing a historical narrative for these guilds, which through their ceremonies, prayers and iconography tied them in closely with English kingship and the state over several centuries. So too did the establishment of 'heroic' figures within the guilds' historical consciousness, for example the vintner Henry Picard, who allegedly entertained several kings to dinner at his mansion in London in the mid fourteenth century. Another such figure was, of course, William Walworth, whose role in defeating the rebels of 1381, and especially in the death of Wat Tyler, came to be celebrated not simply in terms of defending the city, but specifically for keeping Richard II on the throne. This was used by the Fishmongers and by the city as a whole to demonstrate their longstanding loyalty to the crown.[54]

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[50] Barron, *London in the Later Middle Ages*, p. 211.

[51] A. D. Brown, *Civic Ceremony and Religion in Medieval Bruges c.1300–1520* (Cambridge, 2011), pp. 174–5, 179; C. Barron, 'Chivalry, pageantry and merchant culture in medieval London', in *Heraldry, Pageantry and Social Display in Medieval England*, ed. P. Coss and M. Keen (Woodbridge, 2002), p. 219.

[52] Barron, 'Chivalry', pp. 239–42.

[53] M. Davies, 'Governors and governed: the practice of power in the Merchant Taylors' company in the 15th century', in *Guilds, Society and Economy in London 1450–1800*, ed. I. A. Gadd and P. Wallis (2002), pp. 67–9.

The deployment of historical narratives and imagery played an important part in the guilds' reaction to the interventions of Henry VII in London's affairs, especially in the first decade of the sixteenth century. Accounts of these events have drawn attention to the hostile reaction in the city to the new charter granted to the Tailors in 1503, which allowed them to call themselves 'Merchant Tailors', and to a statute initiated by the king which was passed the following year and which required the guilds to have their regulations inspected and approved by the lord chancellor, on behalf of the crown. It was claimed that an earlier statute of 1437 which had delegated this responsibility to local justices of the peace (the mayor in the case of London) had lapsed – to the surprise of the Londoners.[55] It remains a point of debate whether Henry's actions stemmed from short-term opportunism or from a more coherently formulated policy to extend the royal prerogative, but a consequence of the new statute was that it threw into sharp relief the historic relationships between the guilds and the city, on the one hand, and the crown, on the other. To what extent did the guilds actually regard the measure as a threat? Clearly, the short-term reaction was often vehement and provoked defensive measures: the Founders made considerable efforts to have their ordinances 'corrected and ordered' by the lord chancellor 'that the craft mytte be harmeles ayenste the Kyng ouer Soveryg' Lord'.[56] However, in the case of the greater guilds, soon to be the 'Great Twelve', it is worth recalling that very few of them actually ever bothered to get their ordinances approved by the mayor and aldermen in the first place. These organizations, as we have seen, were much more prepared to look outside the city for new rights and privileges. Indeed, it has been suggested that the effects of the statute were not as damaging as feared, and that a number of the London guilds, while reverting gradually to inspection by the mayor and aldermen, may indeed have come to see the advantages of royal inspection as another means to extend their rights of search outside London.[57]

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[54] For these and other examples, see Davies, '"Monuments of honor"'.

[55] See H. Miller, 'London and parliament in the reign of Henry VIII', *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research*, xxxv (1962), 130–43; P. Cavill, 'Henry VII and parliament' (unpublished University of Oxford DPhil thesis, 2005), ch. 11, esp. pp. 248–51; and S. Harper, 'Divide and rule: Henry VII, the Mercers, Merchant Taylors and the corporation of London', *The Fifteenth Century*, XI (forthcoming, 2012).

[56] *Wardens' Accounts of the Worshipful Company of Founders of the City of London, 1497–1681*, ed. G. Parsloe (1964), p. 23.

Another consequence of the statute was that some guilds took the opportunity to produce compilations of their records, suitable for presentation to the royal government. The Skinners, according to their accounts of 1508–9, spent a total of £26 8*s* 8*d* on

> suying to my Lord Chancellor, the Lord Steward, the Lord Chief Justice of the King's Bench, and the Lord Chief Justice of the Common Pleas, for the renewing and ratifying of the old acts and ordinances belonging to the Craft and Company as by the particular parcels of the same written in a 'pamflete' more plainly doth appear.[58]

The precise nature of the 'pamflete' is not made clear. However, it has been suggested that this evidence was incorporated into one or both of the lavishly illuminated books of the fraternities of Corpus Christi and the Assumption of the Virgin, which had been established by the Skinners for their liverymen and yeomen respectively.[59] The Tailors at about the same time produced a similar illuminated book, and what both have in common, in addition to an emphasis on spiritual and charitable activity, is a highlighting of connections beyond the city of London. The Skinners, for instance, wrote in lists of distinguished honorary members, including monarchs such as Edward III and Richard II (both of whom granted the guild charters), while the Tailors' clerk included transcriptions of charters and their confirmations, as well as the guild's grant of arms of 1480. The Pewterers' illuminated charter, ordinance and record book dates from the same period, and may also have begun in response to the statute.[60] The work of the clerks proved invaluable as a means of establishing a historical narrative which emphasized royal connections: in 1607 the Merchant Taylors entertained James I to dinner at their hall, and presented to him a roll containing the names of all their honorary members. When John Gore, a member of the same company, was elected lord mayor in 1624 a show was commissioned from John Webster featuring a chariot which depicted the arms of the company and figures of eight kings of England, all of whom had been made honorary members of the company and had granted it charters.[61]

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[57] Cavill, 'Henry VII', p. 251; I. Archer, 'The London lobbies in the later 16th century', *Historical Journal*, xxxi (1988), 26.

[58] *Records of the Skinners of London*, ed. J. J. Lambert (1933), p. 157.

[59] E. Veale, *The English Fur Trade in the Later Middle Ages* (Oxford, 1968; repr. by the London Record Society, 2003), pp. 101, n. 2, 108–14.

[60] LMA, CLC/L/MD/A/004/MS34004; Davies and Saunders, *Merchant Taylors*, p. 19, and plates IIIa, VIb; LMA, CLC/L/PE/A/027/MS07114.

The evolving sense of identity and history of the London guilds was therefore related to their complex and shifting relationships with the crown and the city: they were sufficiently self-confident and connected with the crown to be able to seek its patronage, but at the same time they were integral components of a proud, self-governing urban community. Ultimately, the ways in which the guilds perceived and represented themselves to each other and the wider public reflected these connected identities, whether through literary compilations, iconography or formal documents such as charters and ordinances. From the fifteenth century onwards, foundations of schools and other charities in the provinces were another reflection of their unique reach and influence. These were a reminder of the enduring connections between London and the regions that were forged through migration, which were evoked in heroic, 'rags-to-riches' tales.[62] A final example, also from Webster's show of 1624, is illuminating. As an international trader with interests that extended throughout Europe and beyond, Gore was celebrated not only by depictions of the figures of English kings but in addition by representations of famous seafarers and explorers, such as Francis Drake, John Hawkins and Martin Frobisher. This emphasized the international reach and prestige of English mercantile exploits, as embodied in the careers of London guildsmen who were involved in the East India Company and in other overseas ventures.[63] The unique set of connections which the London guilds had with the crown, both institutionally and through their members, therefore allowed them to identify themselves with broader themes in national history. Their ability to do this ultimately stemmed from London's sheer size and importance, in both political and economic terms, and also from the relative stability of crown-city relations in the medieval and early modern periods, compared with some other European states. Although, as we have seen, there were fluctuations in this relationship, which often placed the guilds in the spotlight, it seems that on the whole they were able to navigate their way through these difficulties and to profit from their dual allegiances.

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[61] John Webster, *Monuments of honor Deriued from remarkable antiquity, and celebrated in the honorable city of London, at the sole munificent charge and expences of the right worthy and worshipfull fraternity, of the eminent Merchant-Taylors* (1624), STC 25175.

[62] See, e.g., J. P. Ward, 'Godliness, commemoration, and community: the management of provincial schools by London trade guilds', in *Protestant Identities: Religion, Society, and Self-fashioning in Post-Reformation England*, ed. M. Macdonald, M. C. McClendon and J. P. Ward (Stanford, Calif., 1999), pp. 141–57; R. Tittler, 'Sir Thomas White of London: civic philanthropy and the making of the merchant-hero', in R. Tittler, *Townspeople and Nation: English Urban Experiences, 1540–1640* (Stanford, Calif., 2001), pp. 100–20.

[63] Webster, *Monuments of Honor*. For this theme, see R. T. Barbour, *Before Orientalism: London's Theatre of the East, 1576–1626* (Cambridge, 2003), pp. 89, 97–9.

14. Urban governments and their citizens in early modern Europe

Maarten Prak

Introduction

The traditional narrative of European political history has a very simple shape. It consists of two stages, separated by the events that took place in the summer of 1789: the Bad Old Days before the French Revolution, and the modern, democratic era that the Revolution initiated. The Bad Old Days were the time of oligarchy and corruption; the French Revolution introduced Europe to popular elections, parliamentary control and so on. Almost inevitably, the British version of this story looks slightly different. Its watershed is exactly 100 years earlier, in 1688–9, with the Glorious Revolution and the introduction of parliamentary rule. However, the Bill of Rights was followed by the 'age of oligarchy', which was only overcome with the reform legislation of the 1830s. So there is no need to worry too much about these different chronologies. One might argue that this division of European political history was reinforced during the 1960s and 1970s. Inspired by the work of Lewis Namier, and immortalized as 'prosopography', or more generally the social history of ruling classes, the main gist of this research was to confirm that the ruling elite were self-perpetuating, through the mechanisms of patronage and oligarchy. Many books and articles were written outlining and detailing the impact of family and wider social networks on the operation of the political system.[1]

Alongside this research on the ruling classes, another area of study developed in the 1960s, which was concerned with the role of 'ordinary people' in politics before the French Revolution. This grew out of a leftist interest in protest movements, kindled by the mass protest of the 1960s. In the English-speaking world it is especially connected with the names of

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[1] The classic work is, of course, L. Namier, *The Structure of Politics at the Accession of George III* (1929). On prosopography, see the almost equally classic L. Stone, 'Prosopography', *Daedalus*, c (1971), 46–71, repr. in L. Stone, *The Past and the Present* (1981); and, more recently, *Prosopography: Approaches and Applications – a Handbook*, ed. K. S. B. Keats-Rohan (Oxford, 2007) and <http://prosopography.modhist.ox.ac.uk/course_syllabuses.htm> [accessed 15 May 2011].

George Rudé and Eric Hobsbawm. No doubt because of its origins in the 1960s, this kind of research has mainly been preoccupied with 'revel, riot and rebellion', as in the title of David Underdown's celebrated book of 1985. The least one can say about the achievements of this type of work, is that by now it has become impossible to discuss pre-democratic European politics without reference to the role of non-elites.[2] It is today widely accepted that European politics before the French Revolution was much more volatile and variegated than the steady progress from feudalism to absolutism and then to democracy would suggest. The rise of the modern state was accompanied by the religious wars of the sixteenth century, the civil wars of the seventeenth century and the revolutions of the eighteenth, and in all those events ordinary people, or more neutrally 'non-elites', were significant participants.

It is, however, still very unclear how to define and understand the place of these non-elites in the political process. There are two reasons for this. One is that much of the literature on state formation concentrates on national institutions, in spite of the fact that the issues which would be of importance for non-elites were mostly local, or at best regional in nature.[3] If we want to evaluate non-elite participation in politics, we therefore need to focus on these local and regional arenas rather than on the national. The other reason for our problem with including 'ordinary people' in our political history narrative is a tendency to overlook the very significant variations in state formation among European states.

There are several reasons to re-evaluate the importance of local and regional over national politics. One is the recent shift in the interpretation of political change in the centralized states. Research on French public finances, for example, has clearly demonstrated that the French state of the seventeenth century was much more decentralized than historical images of absolutism had led us to assume. The French state – *even* the French state, one is tempted to say – relied heavily on local and regional political networks to mobilize its financial resources.[4] At the same time, comparative research into 'republican' state formation has suggested that decentralized states, such as the Dutch Republic, remained a significant force during much of the early modern period.[5]

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[2] G. Rudé, *The Crowd in History: a Study of Popular Disturbances in France and England 1730–1848* (1964); E. J. Hobsbawm and G. Rudé, *Captain Swing* (1969); D. Underdown, *Revel, Riot and Rebellion: Popular Politics and Culture in England 1603–60* (Oxford, 1985). For a European survey, see W. Ph. Te Brake, *Shaping History: Ordinary People in European Politics, 1500–1700* (Berkeley, Calif., 1998).

[3] Some of the more influential surveys were written in the 1990s, among them C. Tilly, *Coercion, Capital, and European States, AD 990–1990* (Oxford, 1990); B. M. Downing, *The Military Revolution and Political Change: Origins of Democracy and Autocracy in Early Modern Europe* (Princeton, NJ, 1992); T. Ertman, *The Birth of the Leviathan: Building States and Regimes in Medieval and Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, 1997). They all share this fixation on national politics.

The importance of local communities, and of citizen participation in community affairs, has been highlighted in two significant – albeit also somewhat controversial – studies by American political scientist Robert Putnam. In his *Making Democracy Work* (1993), Putnam set out to demonstrate how, in Italy, good local government was the product of dense community networks of institutions, and how, in conjunction with those community institutions, it produced more successful societies. In *Bowling Alone* (2000) Putnam produced an avalanche of statistics to make the same point: civic involvement produces economic prosperity and general wellbeing.[6] In his 2002 presidential address for the American Economic History Association, Peter Lindert argued that 'voice', that is, the possibility for citizens to influence political decisions, had a positive impact on a society's prosperity.[7]

The argument about the importance of participatory institutions has been further reinforced by recent interpretations of the effectiveness of early modern states. The traditional argument assumes that centralization equalled greater effectiveness. Decentralized states, like the Holy Roman Empire, the Dutch Republic and the Swiss Confederacy, were seen as either backward, compared to centralizers like France and England, as exceptional or were simply ignored. This positive evaluation of centralization was, however, supported by precious little evidence. For too long historians have taken for granted that more *intendants* in the French provinces was proof in itself of the greater grip of central government on regional politics. Economic historians have recently suggested that we can test this idea with the help of two indicators: tax collection and the interest rate on the public debt.[8] Higher tax intakes are both proof of a state's capacity to collect a more substantial share of national income, and in themselves a means for the state to execute its designs. A low interest rate on the public debt is proof of popular confidence in the state; a state that has the support of its population is potentially more effective, for instance because it can collect more taxes. Data on interest rates in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Europe demonstrate that 'republican' types of state could indeed borrow more cheaply than absolutist regimes.[9] In other words, these states commanded greater trust from their citizens.

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[4] J. B. Collins, *The State in Early Modern France* (Cambridge, 2009) summarizes this argument.

[5] See, e.g., various contributions to *A Miracle Mirrored: the Dutch Republic in European Perspective*, ed. K. Davids and J. Lucassen (Cambridge, 1995).

[6] R. D. Putnam, *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy* (Princeton, NJ, 1993); R. D. Putnam, *Bowling Alone: the Collapse and Revival of American Community* (New York, 2000).

[7] P. Lindert, 'Voice and growth: was Churchill right?', *Journal of Economic History*, lxiii (2003), 315–50. The term 'voice' comes from A. O. Hirschman, *Exit, Voice and Loyalty. Responses to Decline in Firms, Organizations, and States* (Cambridge, Mass., 1970), a book that provides important theoretical reflections on the issues discussed in this chapter. See also Lindert's *Growing Public: Social Spending and Economic Growth since the 18th Century* (2 vols., Cambridge, 2004).

All of this seems to suggest that we have to rethink fundamentally our ideas of the process of state formation. This contribution proposes that we can achieve success by combining the two research traditions of local elite studies and the investigation of 'ordinary people' to see how non-elites were routinely involved in urban politics. Potentially, this should allow us to achieve something similar to what economic historians have done with the Industrial Revolution, that is, to demonstrate that the eighteenth-century watershed had long and deep historical roots in the early modern and possibly even medieval periods. What this chapter will do more particularly is to look at the ways in which urban constitutions left room for the involvement of 'ordinary people' in day-to-day politics. In other words, we are going to disregard the extraordinary situations of 'revels, riots and rebellions' and investigate how urban government was organized in quieter times.[10] The purpose is to find out to what extent, in the era before democratic rights were formally established, 'ordinary people' were already participating in local, and more specifically urban government.

Before we do so, however, some elements in this exercise have to be clarified. First, the term 'ordinary people' is used here, but the people we are talking about were not necessarily dock labourers or journeymen bakers, as perhaps the phrase may seem to suggest. In fact, the literature on early modern rebellions demonstrates that they almost always involved people who, socially speaking, belonged to the elites, and that the backbone of many protest movements were not so much the poor or the working classes, but rather the so-called middling sort, the artisans; perhaps also the liberal professions, people who owned property, paid direct taxes and who participated in the various community organizations, such as guilds, civic militias, religious confraternities and so on.[11] Perhaps we should replace 'ordinary people' with 'citizens', because it was very often on the basis of their formal citizenship rights that these 'ordinary people' staked a claim in local government. However, the word 'citizens' is also fraught with problems, so it will be used only intermittently. Second, to concentrate on urban politics is to leave out a sizeable part of early modern societies, as most people did not live in towns but in the countryside. That is perhaps not a serious problem, but we need to be aware of this nonetheless. Concentrating on local politics also creates another problem, because it automatically raises the connected issue of urban autonomy.

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[8] A third indicator might be troop strength per 1,000 inhabitants, as discussed below.

[9] Data in S. R. Epstein, *Freedom and Growth: the Rise of States and Markets in Europe, 1300–1750* (2000), pp. 20–3; Epstein's interpretation is somewhat different from the one presented here. See also J. L. van Zanden and M. Prak, 'Towards an economic interpretation of citizenship: the Dutch Republic between medieval communes and modern nation-states', *European Review of Economic History*, x (2006), 111–45.

[10] I am following here in the footsteps of C. Friedrichs, *Urban Politics in Early Modern Europe* (2000), ch. 2.

Popular politics in English towns

London freemen participated in local politics to a degree that immediately belies the idea that political life was the exclusive domain of oligarchic elites.[12] The government of the city of London consisted of the lord mayor, elected annually, and the court of aldermen, twenty-five men chosen for life as representatives of the wards of the city. In case of a vacancy, the aldermen chose their new colleague from among candidates elected by the resident ward householders and freemen. The city's executive was assisted by a legislature of (by the late seventeenth century) no fewer than 234 representatives of the wards, called the common council and elected annually. The lord mayor was elected from the ranks of and by the aldermen, but they were limited to a choice from two names selected by the common hall, the electoral assembly of the liverymen of the city, where the final decision was made.[13]

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[11] On urban rebellion and rebels, see, for England, T. Harris, 'Introduction', in *The Politics of the Excluded, c.1500–1850*, ed. T. Harris (Houndmills, 2001), pp. 1–29 and I. Archer, 'Popular politics in 16th and early 17th century London', in *Londinopolis: Essays in the Social and Cultural History of Early Modern London*, ed. P. Griffiths and M. Jenner (Manchester, 2000), pp. 26–46; for France, W. Beik, *Urban Protest in 17th-Century France: the Politics of Retribution* (Cambridge, 1997); for the Low Countries, M. Boone and M. Prak, 'Rulers, patricians and burghers: the great and little traditions of urban revolt in the Low Countries', in Davids and Lucassen, *A Miracle Mirrored*, pp. 99–134.

[12] I am not entirely persuaded by Archer's argument that the freemen's options were unduly constrained because many of the candidates in local elections were proposed by those holding office, or because their wealth did not reflect that of the average London household. The same complaint could be (and has been) made about modern elections, where candidates are selected by political parties, and are usually better educated and wealthier than the average citizen. Is modern England therefore an undemocratic country? (I. Archer, *The Pursuit of Stability: Social Relations in Elizabethan London* (Cambridge, 1991), pp. 19–20, 64, 68–9.)

[13] G. S. de Krey, *A Fractured Society: the Politics of London in the First Age of Party 1688-1715* (Oxford, 1985), p. 10.

The 'livery' were the upper tier of the guilds; and next to the wards the guilds were, politically speaking, the most important civic institutions in London.[14] Around 1700 the city numbered an estimated 8,000 liverymen, who were 'the most zealous guardians of the historic liberties of the London citizenry', according to Gary de Krey.[15] Besides nominating the lord mayor, the liverymen elected, in the common hall, the sheriffs and other high officials of the corporation, as well as the city's representatives in parliament. The lower ranks of the guilds, who were all ordinary freemen of the city of London, together with the liverymen were entitled to elect the members of the common council during the so-called wardmotes, district meetings that took place annually on St. Thomas's Day. Even the non-citizens, or mere inhabitants, of London were included in the political process, as they had the right to participate in the selection of petty officers of their precincts and wards; they were excluded, however, from participation in the politics of the city as a whole.[16]

In Great Yarmouth, a port town of approximately 10,000 inhabitants in the early eighteenth century, the 'freeman body … inevitably played an important role in civic affairs and remained the most immediate concern of the assembly when debating local matters'.[17] Great Yarmouth numbered around 800 freeman households and according to contemporary testimony these were 'of the most substantial inhabitants … generally persons of pretty good circumstances'.[18] The charters of Great Yarmouth were repeatedly changed by the crown during the seventeenth century and these alterations were a source of serious anxiety among the town's rulers.[19] Its two members of parliament were constantly instructed to keep a watchful eye on potential infringements of local autonomy. Moreover, the town solicited the favours of aristocratic patrons to ensure that its interests were voiced at court. The freemen did not receive the vote until 1660. But already before that date, its interests were looked after by a common council, consisting of forty-eight representatives of the town's four districts. The common council acted as the local legislative assembly.

On top of their role in local politics, English town-dwellers of course also had a say in national politics, through the national elections. Work published in the last decades has substantially revised, and indeed upgraded, our ideas about the impact of towns and their citizens. Of course, the franchise was circumscribed, and so was its exercise. Nonetheless, there was still more 'democracy' in England than in almost any other European country at the time. Derek Hirst estimated that during the first half of the seventeenth century between 25 and 40 per cent of the adult male population could vote in parliamentary elections.[20] O'Gorman's slightly more pessimistic estimate sets it at 20 per cent in 1689, a quarter in 1715 and 18 per cent in 1832.[21] The trend was, if anything, downward, and it has been argued quite often that this was further reinforced by the increased grip of the aristocracy on the outcome of elections.[22] It has also been pointed out that many seats were not even contested to begin with. But this now seems like only half the story. If we narrow our focus to the urban franchise, and especially to the more substantial towns, perhaps the opposite was true. The Civil War created political rifts that proved impossible to heal and party divisions were especially contested in the major towns, where newspapers and pamphlets kept the electorate on full alert throughout the eighteenth century.[23] The party system as such originated in precisely the context of these urban political conflicts.[24] As Phil Withington has recently shown, borough incorporation had increased dramatically between roughly 1580 and the start of the Civil War. And this urban politicization in turn reinforced corporate political identities and ideology.[25] Civic ideology also strongly emphasized the unity of the civic community and required the local government to rule on behalf of that community.[26]

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[14] On London guilds, see *Guilds, Society and Economy in London 1450–1800*, ed. I. A. Gadd and P. Wallis (2002).

[15] De Krey, *Fractured Society*, p. 40.

[16] De Krey, *Fractured Society*, pp. 40–1.

[17] P. Gauci, *Politics and Society in Great Yarmouth 1660-1722* (Oxford, 1996).

[18] Gauci, *Politics and Society*, p. 43.

[19] Gauci, *Politics and Society*, pp. 1, 20, 52.

To conclude this all too brief survey, in England a substantial number of adult males were allowed to vote in local and national elections, and especially in the larger towns they exercised that right in practice. Petitions, pamphlets and the press provided alternative channels for political 'voice'; it seems there was indeed something like 'public opinion' in early modern England.[27] In Great Yarmouth and London citizens were prominent participants in the routine operations of local government. Local governments were keenly aware of their reliance on the approval of their fellow citizens, and acted accordingly.

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[20] D. Hirst, *The Representative of the People? Voters and Voting in England under the Early Stuarts* (Cambridge, 1975), p. 105.

[21] F. O'Gorman, *Voters, Patrons, and Parties: the Unreformed Electoral System of Hanoverian England 1734–1832* (Oxford, 1989), p. 179. There are even more pessimistic figures in J. Garrard, *Democratisation in Britain: Elites, Civil Society and Reform since 1800* (Basingstoke, 2002), p. 20.

[22] The argument was famously articulated in J. H. Plumb, *The Growth of Political Stability in England, 1675–1725* (1967).

[23] J. Innes and N. Rogers, 'Politics and government 1700–1840', in *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain*, ed. P. Clark (3 vols. Cambridge, 2000), ii. 559–62.

[24] P. D. Halliday, *Dismembering the Body Politic: Partisan Politics in England's Towns, 1650–1730* (Cambridge, 1998), p. 7.

[25] P. Withington, *The Politics of Commonwealth: Citizens and Freemen in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, 2005); the point about corporate politics was already made by Jonathan Barry, esp. in his 'L'identité bourgeoise dans l'Angleterre moderne', *Annales* ESC, xlviii (1993), 853–83.

[26] I. W. Archer, 'Politics and government 1540–1700', in Clark, *Cambridge Urban History of Britain*, ii. 243–4.

The towns of the Dutch Republic

When we turn to the Low Countries, or rather to the Dutch Republic, we enter a completely different, but equally fascinating world of urban and national politics. In this world, citizens were only rarely allowed to vote, but other channels were nonetheless open to them, as our discussion of local politics in Arnhem, in the eastern part of the present Netherlands, and Amsterdam will make clear.

By and large, the great wave of artisan revolutions that swept through much of what is now Belgium during the early fourteenth century had left the northern parts of the Low Countries untouched. In the duchy of Guelders, however, urban citizens got a second opportunity in the fifteenth century, thanks to the duchy's role in the continental struggle against Habsburg dominance. In 1466, when Arnhem was conquered by the duke's troops, the ruling families had fled, thus leaving behind a power vacuum. The guilds were summoned 'to elect a new council'.[28] In 1487, these arrangements were confirmed by Maximilian of Austria. From now on, six so-called guild masters would represent the six 'main guilds' in the local government of Arnhem. These main guilds were in effect political organizations (comparable to the so-called nations that we find in the towns of Brabant), encompassing several trades. The guild masters were granted extensive powers in a document drawn up in January 1488. For decisions on issues of war and peace, the sale of town property, and the introduction of new taxation, the council needed the approval of the guild masters. By-laws concerning the guild trades could only be introduced by council and guild masters together. They were also to propose candidates from their midst, one of whom would be appointed as an extra paymaster of the town, 'on behalf of the citizenry'.[29]

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[27] J. Raymond, 'The newspaper, public opinion and the public sphere in the 17th century', in *News, Newspapers, and Society in Early Modern Britain*, ed. J. Raymond (1999), pp. 109–40.

[28] D. P. M. Graswinckel, 'Ontstaan en ontwikkeling van de gilden te Arnhem', in D. P. M. Graswinckel, *Arnhem, zeven eeuwen stad* (Arnhem, 1933), p. 94.

[29] C. L. Verkerk, *Coulissen van de macht. Een sociaal-institutionele studie betreffende de samenstelling van het bestuur van Arnhem in de middeleeuwen en een bijdrage tot de studie van stedelijke elitevorming* (Hilversum, 1992), pp. 364–6.

In the course of the sixteenth century, the guild masters were first supplemented by eighteen other representatives of the guilds, who were called *gemeente* (a word that means common council, but also 'community'). By the end of the century, the *gemeenslieden* (common councillors) numbered forty-eight, but they were no longer the representatives of the guilds.[30] Instead, they were now supposed to speak on behalf of the whole community. Their powers were basically overlapping with those of the guild masters. By the early eighteenth century, an elaborate treatise on the constitution of Arnhem claimed that no decisions could be taken in what were called 'serious matters' by the council alone, but always required the approval of – as the treatise put it – the 'Guild masters and common council from the people, who have represented the people'.[31]

In fact, this treatise claimed, the local government of Arnhem had always been of a popular nature, that is, one in which ultimately the people decided. At the same time it was far from clear who 'the people' actually were. The 1703 treatise mentioned various, overlapping categories. The title page lists the common council, guilds, citizens and inhabitants side by side. The argument is mainly built around the category of *burgers*, a highly ambivalent term in Dutch, that might at one and the same time indicate full citizens, the middle classes, members of the civic militias or simply the people in general.[32]

As it was, all these categories of people were active in local politics during the eighteenth century. In the spring of 1702, stadtholder William III of Orange died without male issue. Almost overnight, the rulers of the Guelders towns had to face up to popular claims, demanding a full restoration of what was called 'our ancient rights and privileges'. In Arnhem, petitions articulating such claims, as well as demanding a comprehensive purge of the common council, were signed in guild meetings, by most or all of the members present.[33] The petitions marked the start of years of wrangling between the political elites and the population of Arnhem. In January 1703 burgher representatives dismissed Arnhem's town council, and installed a completely new one of their own liking. The acts confirming the legality of this election were signed by the common council, as well as by seventy-two citizens on behalf of the guilds and civic militias.[34]

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[30] Graswinckel, 'Ontstaan en ontwikkeling', p. 95.

[31] *Deductie van de regten ende privilegien der vrye stadt Arnhem, het collegie van de geswoore gemeente, gildens, borgerye ende ingesetenen van dien competerende; ofte apologie van de wettige regeringe, na de oude gronden van de vrye-stadt Arnhem* (Arnhem, 1703) (Knuttel catalogue, 15037), pp. 10–11.

[32] For these meanings of the word 'burgher', see M. Prak, 'Cittadini, abitanti e forestieri: una classificazione della popolazione di Amsterdam nella prima eta moderna', *Quaderni Storici*, xxx (1995), 331–57.

[33] Arnhem, Gemeentearchief (Municipal Archive), Oud archief, 1160, petitions from 1702–3.

During the 1780s another wave of popular protest engulfed the country, this time taking it to the brink of revolution and civil war in the summer of 1787.[35] In December 1782, the bakers' and brewers' guild of Arnhem opened a fresh book, to record for posterity the new attempts to restore the guild's former political rights. Members of the guild were signing petitions once again, and, as in 1702, burgher representatives were appointed. In September 1783 the representatives received an official instruction from the 'Bookkeepers, Guardians, Councillors and other members of all the guilds, in the name and on behalf of the body of citizens of this town Arnhem, presently meeting together'.[36] Thus, rebellion and routine politics reinforced one another; they were two sides of the same coin.

The city of Amsterdam grew to over 200,000 inhabitants in the course of the seventeenth century. Despite this, it continued to be ruled by its four burgomasters and council of thirty-six, as in the days when the town had a population of 20,000. The council, or *vroedschap*, moreover, was co-optive, that is, in case of a vacancy the remaining members chose their new colleague.[37] As in other towns in Holland, the council claimed to be representative of the whole community, the absence of elections notwithstanding.[38] This obviously raises questions about relations between citizens and the authorities there.

To judge from the documents preserved in the Amsterdam archives, the most common line of communication between citizens and local authorities was through petitions, many of them filed by the guilds. Hundreds of these guild petitions survive, and it is quite likely that many more have been lost.[39]

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[34] A. van Dixhoorn, '"Voorstanden van de vrije wetten": burgerbewegingen in Arnhem en de republiek tussen 1702 en 1707', *Tijdschrift voor sociale geschiedenis*, xxv (1999), 48.

[35] For an outline of events, see S. Schama, *Patriots and Liberators: Revolution in the Netherlands 1780–1813* (New York, 1977), ch. 3.

[36] Arnhem, Gemeentearchief, Oud archief, 1479, 'Memorie en Resolutieboek van het bakkers- en brouwersgilde ... 1782 en 1783', 26 Sept. 1783.

[37] For a socio-political history of the Amsterdam council during the Dutch Republic, see J. E. Elias, *Geschiedenis van het Amsterdamsche regentenpatriciaat* (The Hague, 1923).

[38] M. Prak, 'Verfassungsnorm und Verfassungsrealität in den niederländischen Städten des späten 17. und 18. Jahrhunderts: Die Oligarchie in Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Deventer und Zutphen 1672/75–1795', in *Verwaltung und Politik in Städten Mitteleuropas: Beiträge zu Verfassungsnorm und Verfassungswirklichkeit in altständischer Zeit*, ed. W. Ehbrecht (Cologne, 1994), pp. 55–83, 67–70.

[39] These petitions can be found in Amsterdam, Gemeentearchief, archive 5061 (judicial archives), 684–725, petitions to the aldermen; and 5028 (burgomasters), 515–19, petitions filed by the guilds. For the analysis of their contents, see M. Prak, 'Individual, corporation and society: the rhetoric of Dutch guilds (18th c.)', in *Statuts individuels, statuts corporatifs et statuts judiciaires dans les villes européennes (moyen âge et temps modernes)*, ed. M. Boone and M. Prak (Leuven/Apeldoorn, 1996), pp. 255–79.

Many of these requested a change in the guild's regulations, usually because new circumstances demanded adaptation. In their petitions, significantly, the guilds never claimed legal entitlement to government support. Instead, they tried to build a case based on the civic community, that included both the authorities and themselves. The carriage-makers, for example, were of the opinion that 'they were paying their scot and lot, and therefore were helping to carry the burdens of the town and their guilds'. Other guilds added that taxation in Amsterdam was substantially higher than in the countryside, or reminded the authorities of their contributions to the civic militias.[40] All of this, according to the wallpaper-painters, entitled them to the 'advantages, that are due to them as inhabitants of this town, and members of their guilds ... with the exclusion of others, particularly aliens'.[41]

It seems that these guild petitions were generally looked upon most favourably by the Amsterdam government. A survey of Amsterdam local legislation – very important in the absence of any significant national legislation – has demonstrated that much of it was created at the initiative of those sections of the population who were directly involved. More than 40 per cent of petitions led to the introduction of a by-law. Even more telling, many by-laws copied the text of the petition verbatim into the Amsterdam statute book. Indeed, guilds were the single most important group of petitioners in Amsterdam; almost half the petitions preserved from the eighteenth century were signed in the name of a guild.[42]

To the very end of the eighteenth century, the citizens of Arnhem were in manifold ways involved in local politics. They tried to gain permanent influence over the election of members of the town council, and thus to acquire a say in the way the town was run. In Amsterdam citizen influence was much more informal than in Arnhem. As a result, the rulers of Amsterdam were more autonomous than their Arnhem counterparts. But rather than allying themselves with a national elite, which was in any case not very powerful in the Dutch Republic, the local rulers of Amsterdam had entered into an alliance with the rulers of other towns in the province of Holland.[43] It was this alliance of urban governments that permitted

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[40] Amsterdam, Gemeentearchief, 5061, 697, no. 1 (1751).

[41] Amsterdam, Gemeentearchief, 5061, 723, no. 23 (1786). Compare 5061, 694, no. 46 (1747–8); 5061, 702, no. 9 (1756); 5061, 713, no. 1 (1770); 5061, 720, no. 6 (1778).

[42] H. F. K. van Nierop, 'Popular participation in politics in the Dutch Republic', in *Resistance, Representation, and Community*, ed. P. Blickle (Cambridge, 1997), pp. 286–7.

[43] On the varieties of such urban coalitions, see J. Aalbers, *De Republiek en vrede van Europa: de buitenlandse politiek van de Republiek der Verenigde Nederlanden na de Vrede van Utrecht (1713), voornamelijk gedurende de jaren 1720-1733* (Groningen, 1980), ch. 3; S. Groenveld, *Evidente factiën in den staet: sociaal-politieke verhoudingen in de 17e-eeuwse Republiek der Verenigde Nederlanden* (Hilversum, 1990).

Amsterdam's ruling class to preserve the town's – and therefore its own – political autonomy, while at the same time preventing its citizens from obtaining an official role in the political domain.[44] However, in the absence of an outside authority on which to rely, Amsterdam's regents were still forced to pay close attention to the claims of their citizens.

The French towns of Nantes and Angers

It can easily be demonstrated that at least in some French towns the situation was not so very different from what we have found in the Dutch Republic and in England. In spite of the massive claims of political domination by the absolutist royal regime, the view from the bottom up has a by now familiar outline, as we can see from a brief discussion of the local politics of Nantes and Angers.

In seventeenth-century Nantes the populace were involved in the political process in two ways: through annual elections and through consultations.[45] The elections concerned first and foremost the mayor and aldermen. On 30 April the electoral meeting took place in the *grande salle* of the Nantes town hall. To these meetings were invited the members of the 'grand corps', including royal officers and the former mayors and aldermen of the town, who together constituted the grand bureau, as well as the representatives of urban institutions and private citizens. Looking at their numbers, the urban community were definitely not minority participants in these proceedings. On the contrary, in a list from 1685 there are 450 names, but 'plusieurs autres bourgeois et habitants' had also been present.[46] These numbers, as well as other indicators, testify to the important role of the non-office-holding part of the civic community.

In Nantes local policies were designed by the *corps de ville* in consultation with the local population. During the Wars of Religion the records of the municipality are full of references to *assemblées générales*, in which the officers of the civic militias were prominent participants, but which were also attended by individual inhabitants of the city.[47] Apart from such general *assemblées* there were also consultative meetings between the *corps de ville* and representatives of various corporative interests, especially the civic militias and the craft guilds. The main topic – almost half the meetings discussed it – was the preservation and maintenance of local privileges.

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[44] During the Patriot revolution of the 1780s many urban governments could no longer afford that balancing act and were forced to choose between an alliance with the stadtholder and his court, or with their own citizens; see M. Prak, *Republikeinse veelheid, democratische enkelvoud: sociale verandering in het Revolutietijdvak – 's-Hertogenbosch 1770–1820* (Nijmegen, 1999), ch. 11.

[45] The following is a summary of G. Saupin, *Nantes au XVII siècle: vie politique et société urbaine* (Rennes, 1996), chs. 3, 4.

[46] Saupin, *Nantes au XVII siècle*, pp. 86–7.

[47] Saupin, *Nantes au XVII siècle*, p. 110 (quotation).

In Angers we find a situation that was basically identical with that in Nantes.[48] Again there are two types of citizen involvement in local politics: annual elections, and irregular but frequent consultations. The elections for 'maire' (mayor), 'lieutenant de maire' (assistant-mayor), 'trésorier' (treasurer), 'quatre échevins' (four aldermen) and twelve 'conseillers de ville' (town councillors) took place on the first of May in the *grande salle* of the *hôtel de ville*. The electors in Angers cast their votes by putting a piece of paper into a hat displayed on the president's table. The electoral meeting was dominated, at least numerically, by the two representatives sent by each of the sixteen parishes of Angers.

Besides the annual elections on 1 May, there were regular consultations of the parish representatives in *assemblées générales*. Of these, 338 took place between 1657 and 1789, about three on average each year.[49] Behind these general meetings, moreover, lurked countless meetings of the inhabitants of individual parishes in Angers, where both parish and general city issues were discussed. These meetings were sometimes even attended by servants (*domestiques*), but usually dominated by merchants and artisans. The general assemblies discussed royal taxation and the preservation of local privileges, as well as day-to-day issues such as poor relief, health care, public works and so on. It is doubtful whether the claim by one of the Angers aldermen that there was no inhabitant whose opinion was not evaluated was actually true, but neither can one deny the important role of ordinary citizens in the political life of the town.

As a result of the particular interests of past generations of French historians, such work on the routine procedures of urban political life during the ancien régime is unfortunately exceptional. However, nineteenth-century historiography suggests that Angers and Nantes may have been close to the norm, rather than exceptions.[50] If this is indeed so, I would suggest that this gives us a radically different idea of the French of the old regime as subjects, rather than citizens. Unfortunately, however, this is not the whole story of 'popular politics' in early modern Europe.

The national impact of urban citizenship

One of the changes effected by the French Revolution was a reinforcement of the political centre as the stage upon which major decisions were taken.

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[48] This section summarizes information from J. Maillard, *Le pouvoir municipal à Angers de 1657 à 1789* (Angers, 1984).

[49] Maillard, *Pouvoir municipal*, p. 86.

[50] I am thinking particularly here of A. Babeau, *La ville sous l'ancien régime* (2 vols., Paris, 1884), i, chs. 3–4.

The transition from indirect to direct rule, and the implied abolition of local privileges, can in itself be interpreted as a sign of democratization.[51] Therefore it would be helpful if we could say something about the national impact of citizenship arrangements before the French Revolution. One standard of measurement would be the 'success' of states in raising taxes and borrowing money, to pay for their armed forces. As warfare was the most important business of early modern central state institutions, and they spent by far the largest amounts of their revenues on this, it seems a fair standard. It has the advantage that there are at least some comparative data that can guide our inquiry. Obviously, these data have to be rendered in per capita terms in acknowledgement of the different sizes of the countries involved.

According to our best estimates, the armies of our three sample states during the third Anglo-Dutch War (or the *guerre de Hollande* as it was known in France) of the 1670s, on a per capita basis lined up like this: there were fourteen soldiers for each 1,000 Frenchmen or women, in Britain the number was thirteen, but in the Dutch Republic it was thirty-seven per 1,000.[52] By this standard the Dutch Republic was an extraordinarily successful state – and, obviously, under enormous pressure. Per capita tax income confirms this picture. By the standards of western Europe, the Dutch were paying inordinate amounts of taxes.[53] As England's ambassador to The Hague, William Temple, famously commented: 'I have heard it observed at Amsterdam, that when in a tavern, a certain dish of fish is eaten with the usual sauce, above thirty general excises are paid, for what is necessary to that small service'.[54]

The difference between these numbers can be explained by institutional variations between the three countries. Large and powerful though it was, the city of London was also closely monitored by the court. During the 1680s, in an attempt to reduce the city's autonomy, the king revoked its charter and in effect terminated the functioning of the city's representative institutions. This happened to many English towns at the time. This points up a more general problem. English towns had to deal with two significant constraints on their autonomy. The first was constitutional. Urban charters depended on the goodwill of the crown. Between the Restoration of 1660 and 1681 a total of eighty-five new borough charters were issued; from 1682 to the beginning of 1687 another 134 followed.[55] All of this served as a strong reminder during this period of the corporations' dependence on the crown.[56] The second constraint was financial. English towns, to an important extent, relied on their property – urban and rural real estate – for their income, and supplemented this with port and toll levies.[57] Their financial autonomy was therefore severely constrained.

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[51] C. Tilly, *Contention and Democracy in Europe, 1650–2000* (Cambridge, 2004), ch. 1.

[52] Population figures from J. de Vries, *European Urbanization 1500–1800* (1984), p. 36, table 3.6.

[53] Van Zanden and Prak, 'Towards an economic interpretation of citizenship', pp. 129–35.

[54] William Temple, *Observations upon the United Provinces of the Netherlands* (1673), p. 129.

[55] Halliday, *Dismembering the Body Politic*, p. 192.

French urban autonomy was likewise circumscribed. In the late middle ages, crown and towns had been close collaborators. But the upheavals of the Wars of Religion upset the balance. During the second half of the sixteenth century the cordial relations between towns and the monarchy disintegrated.[58] This is not to say that towns were completely subjected to royal control, as cruder versions of absolutism would suggest.[59] But it is a fact that the scope for urban autonomy was reduced.[60] Especially after the middle of the seventeenth century the crown increasingly used urban institutions as financial milch cows, by selling off municipal offices to the highest bidders.[61] The towns, moreover, had no direct influence on national politics whatsoever.[62] The difference between France and England was, of course, parliament. English towns were represented in parliament, and the increased powers of that body after the Glorious Revolution therefore also reflect the greater impact of local citizenship on the capacity of the national government to tax its citizens. In France, local citizenship could not be translated into national politics, and this may have been an important reason for its failure substantially to expand the tax base.

In the Dutch Republic, national policies were decided in urban council chambers. The town of Zwolle, for instance, in the eastern province of Overijssel, was, with its 10,000 or so inhabitants, at best a medium-sized player. Nonetheless, its council voted on all major declarations of war and all peace treaties during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.[63] Tax proposals of the provincial estates were discussed in detail, and at times returned for major revisions, in that same council chamber. The citizen representatives were closely involved in these discussions and their approval was required by the local constitution. Moreover, the distribution of national offices in the Dutch Republic was organized in such a way that towns like Zwolle, or Arnhem and Amsterdam for that matter, would be directly represented in the important national institutions.[64] The three distinct systems of parliamentarianism, absolutism and republicanism thus each bound urban citizens in quite distinct ways to the central state, with significant results.

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[56] Halliday, *Dismembering the Body Politic*, pp. 60, 150, 162, 193, 239; Innes and Rogers, 'Politics and government', p. 535.

[57] Innes and Rogers, 'Politics and government', pp. 548–9.

[58] B. Chevalier, *Les bonnes villes de France du XIVe au XVIe siècle* (Paris, 1982), ch. 4.

[59] For the complex relationships between crown and towns, see S. Annette Finley-Crosswhite, *Henry IV and the Towns: the Pursuit of Legitimacy in French Urban Society, 1589–1610* (Cambridge, 1999).

[60] D. Parker, *La Rochelle and the French Monarchy: Conflict and Order in 17th-Century France* (1980); K. C. Robbins, *City on the Ocean Sea: La Rochelle, 1530–1650. Urban Society, Religion, and Politics on the French Atlantic Frontier* (Leiden, 1997), and more recently D. Dee, *Expansion and Crisis in Louis XIV's France: Franche-Comté and Absolute Monarchy, 1674–1715* (Rochester, NY, 2009).

[61] N. Temple, 'The control and exploitation of French towns during the ancien régime', in *State and Society in 17th-Century France*, ed. R. Kierstead (New York, 1975), pp. 67–93.

[62] As is demonstrated by their marginal role in Collins, *State in Early Modern France.*

Conclusion

As Machiavelli pointed out, political decisions, even in the pre-democratic age, require a platform of popular support, or else ruthless oppression of the subject population.[65] In the face of the state's general weakness such ruthless oppression was hardly an option, and in the long run also a potentially self-defeating strategy. Moreover, local elites, who mainly relied on their own citizens to maintain public order, were more than a little vulnerable to popular protest.[66] All of this strongly suggests that we ought to look beyond oligarchy and patronage if we want to understand properly the functioning of the early modern state, and indeed the society it governed.

One of the problems that historians have, is that they tend to think of politics, and more specifically the process of state-formation, as a zero-sum game. But in many ways national rulers and local communities were either in agreement about what should happen, or alternatively they were not very interested in each other's problems. Generally, national elites were very much preoccupied with public order at home and military power abroad. Local authorities were equally preoccupied with public order, but were similarly interested in issues of economic policy, social welfare and so on. So in many areas national rulers and local communities could either collaborate (public order) or more or less ignore each other (the rest). However, there was one issue where they were, at least potentially, at loggerheads. Almost inevitably, that issue was money. Because the scope of government action was expanding, locally and nationally, both wanted a larger share of the public's private incomes. Again, this did not necessarily imply conflict. We know of many arrangements where local and national government taxed in unison and then divided the spoils. Also, taxation did not necessarily imply excluding citizens from participation. On the contrary, governments must have been aware of the potential benefits of inclusive rule. In general, the most inclusive regimes raised the largest amount of revenue and borrowed at the lowest interest rates.[67]

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[63] J. C. Streng, *'Stemme in staat': de bestuurlijke elite in de stadsrepubliek Zwolle 1579–1795* (Hilversum, 1997), p. 112.

[64] A. J. C. M. Gabriëls, *De heren als dienaren en de dienaar als heer: het stadhouderlijk stelsel in de tweede helft van de achttiende eeuw* (The Hague, 1990), pp. 43–54, 447–52.

[65] Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince* (1532), ch. ix; Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Discourses* (1531), bk. iii, discourses 7–9.

[66] A point made for French towns in Beik, *Urban Protest*, ch. 4.

So it should come as no surprise that so many early modern towns had constitutions in which their citizens were formally recognized as participants in the process of selecting officials, or the introduction of significant legislation, especially in the domain of taxation, or indeed both. There is actually very little to suggest that these representative mechanisms and institutions became less significant in the course of time, although it is reasonable to assume that their impact may have fluctuated. How and why this happened is something that requires further investigation, but we should steer clear of the idea that it was 'all bad and becoming worse'. In fact, one might argue that in the first half of the nineteenth century, that is, in the early stages of the democratic era, citizen participation stagnated, or even declined, rather than increased in many European states, in comparison with preceding centuries. Like the steam engine, democratic institutions were slow to take off. As a result, the contrast between the age of democracy and its predecessor was one of principle rather than practice: ordinary people had more political rights in practice before 1789 than one might assume on the basis of the prevailing political theories; and in the half century or so after 1789 they probably had fewer such rights than the rhetoric of democracy might have indicated.[68]

The history of Dutch citizenship does, however, suggest that there was more to political participation than just a (formal or informal) share in urban government, which was more or less ubiquitous. To have an impact on national politics, local politics had to be connected in an effective way to the central state institutions. The overwhelming opinion in the historical literature is that centralization was the best way to achieve this. The data presented here seem to suggest otherwise. France, England and the Dutch Republic represented three different models of governance in early modern Europe. In pre-Revolutionary France the regions were represented by the nobility. In the absence of a national forum (at least after the last meeting of the *états-généraux* in 1614–15) that representation was informal and almost inevitably sectional. In England, parliament was directly representing the regions and towns of the realm. Before 1689, however, the effectiveness of that representation was severely limited by the policies of the crown. The Bill of Rights made parliamentary representation much more effective, as the increased tax income and borrowing capacity (against declining interest rates) of the British state in the eighteenth century clearly demonstrate.[69] The Dutch Republic represents a third model, that of the federal state. This gave local communities a direct stake in national policies. The Dutch state was rewarded by a remarkably high per capita tax ceiling.[70] From this perspective, the stronger implication of urban constituencies in national politics in post-Civil War England may be an underrated aspect of Britain's rise to global dominance during the eighteenth century.

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[67] This is elaborated for the Dutch Republic in M. Prak and J. L. van Zanden, 'Tax morale and citizenship in the Dutch Republic', in *The Political Economy of the Dutch Republic*, ed. O. Gelderblom (Farnham, 2009), pp. 143–65.

[68] For the Netherlands, see T. Poell, 'The democratic paradox: Dutch revolutionary struggles over democratisation and centralisation (1780–1813)' (unpublished Utrecht University Ph.D. thesis, 2007) and L. Blok, *Stemmen en kiezen: het kiesstelsel in Nederland in de periode 1814-1850* (Groningen, 1987); for England, see O'Gorman, *Voters, Patrons, and Parties*, p. 179 and Garrard, *Democratisation in Britain*, p. 20.

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[69] The classic titles are P. G. M. Dickson, *The Financial Revolution in England: a Study in the Development of Public Credit, 1688–1756* (1967) and J. Brewer, *The Sinews of Power: War, Money and the English State, 1688–1783* (1989).

[70] For the theoretical underpinnings of this claim, see J. Alm, R. Bahl and M. N. Murray, 'Tax structure and tax compliance', *Review of Economics and Statistics*, lxxii (1990), 603–13; J. Andreoni, B. Erard and J. Feinstein, 'Tax compliance', *Journal of Economic Literature*, xxxvi (1998), 818–60; L. B. Feld and B. S. Frey, 'Trust breeds trust: how taxpayers are treated', *Economics of Governance*, iii (2002), 87–99; B. S. Frey, 'Deterrence and tax morale in the European Union', *European Review*, xi (2003), 385–406; see also Prak and Van Zanden, 'Tax morale'.

15. Victoria Street in theory and practice: scenes from the governmentality of nineteenth-century London

Richard Dennis

> Among the glories of this age, the historian will have to record the conversion of dirty alleys, dingy courts and squalid dens of misery and crime, almost under the walls of our royal palaces, into 'stately streets,' to 'squares that court the breeze,' to palaces and mansions, to elegant private dwellings, to rich and costly shops, filled with the productions of every clime, to magnificent ware-rooms, stored with the ingenious and valuable manufactures of our artisans and mechanics, giving activity to commerce with all the enviable results of national prosperity.[1]

Thus Shepherd and Elmes prefaced their survey of *Metropolitan Improvements*. One royal palace still fringed by 'dirty alleys, dingy courts and squalid dens' was Buckingham House, in the middle of its conversion to Buckingham Palace at the time *Metropolitan Improvements* was published in 1828, and one objective of the earliest plans to lay out what became Victoria Street, running west from Westminster abbey in the general direction of Belgravia, was to stimulate the physical and moral improvement of the area adjacent to the palace. The aim of this chapter is to reveal the mixed motives, erratic progress and disturbingly modern politics and economics in the laying out of Victoria Street, an early Victorian street improvement that is usually presented cursorily and unproblematically in histories of nineteenth-century London, certainly by comparison with more 'glamorous' improvements such as Regent Street, New Oxford Street, Holborn Viaduct or the Embankment.[2]

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[1] T. H. Shepherd and J. Elmes, *Metropolitan Improvements; or London in the 19th Century* (1828), pp. 2–3.

[2] For histories of Victoria Street, see G. Tyack, 'James Pennethorne and London street improvements, 1838–55', *London Journal*, xv (1990), 38–56; G. Tyack, *Sir James Pennethorne and the Making of Victorian London* (Cambridge, 1992), pp. 68, 78; I. Watson, *Westminster and Pimlico Past: a Visual History* (1993), esp. pp. 100–3; J. White, *London in the 19th Century: 'A Human Awful Wonder of God'* (2007), p. 34. For a wider perspective, and some comparison with Paris, see H. J. Dyos, 'Urban transformation: a note on the objects of street improvement in Regency and early Victorian London', *International Review of Social History*, ii (1957), 259–65, repr. in *Exploring the Urban Past: Essays in Urban History by H. J. Dyos*, ed. D. Cannadine and D. Reeder (Cambridge, 1982), pp. 81–6.

Improvement is a multifaceted concept. The *Oxford English Dictionary* definition begins with 'the turning of a thing to profit or good account', 'the profitable employment or investment of money' and 'the turning of land to better account' before moving on to 'bodily or mental cultivation or culture' and 'the turning of anything to good account for spiritual or moral edification'. For Shepherd and Elmes, 'metropolitan improvements' should elevate the nation, attracting 'opulent and ingenious foreigners', increasing commerce, creating wealth and employment, stimulating patriotism and pride in one's native land, and bringing more money in 'than all the cost that was originally expended in their construction'.[3] The improvements they enumerated and illustrated included Regent's Park, new churches, prisons, theatres, shops, banks and the brand-new University of London (now UCL), but also residential terraces and villas in Belgravia and around Regent's Park, new bridges across the Thames and, crucially, the new north-south route comprised of Portland Place, Regent Street and Waterloo Place. Regent Street, authorized by an act of parliament in 1813 and completed in 1825, paved the way for a succession of new streets recommended by select committees and royal commissions through the 1830s and 1840s but financed by a complex mix of public and private funding. Each was intended to fulfil some or all of a variety of objectives: improve access to newly developing or newly important districts; improve circulation by relieving congestion; improve sanitation – by demolishing slums, ventilating densely built areas, and facilitating the construction of new sewers; improve morality – by displacing the immoral and criminal, facilitating policing and regulation, and providing sites for 'model' housing in which inmates could lead more ordered and disciplined lives; improve property values as a result of all of the above, providing vacant sites attractive to developers, and thereby raising local government income from rates (property taxes); and beautify the environment with new architecture, offering new vistas.

Early Victorian notions of improvement were reflected in the formation of a Metropolitan Improvement Society early in 1842. The society campaigned for a range of improvements dealing with smoke nuisances, duplication of street names and numbers, sewerage and drainage. They noted that:

> The opening also of large and leading avenues in the more crowded portions of London is a measure which must exercise the most salutary influence upon the atmosphere of the metropolis as well as greatly increase its general symmetry if the requisite alterations are effected with a due regard to that beauty, which has of late years so strongly characterised the style of the metropolitan architecture.[4]

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[3] Shepherd and Elmes, *Metropolitan Improvements*, p. 3.

[4] Tyack, 'James Pennethorne', p. 51; *Morning Post*, 4 Aug. 1842, p. 3.

A potential framework for interpreting the marriage of environmental and moral concerns in nineteenth-century street improvements is offered by the concept of liberal governmentality, devised by Michel Foucault, imported into British sociology and political science by Nikolas Rose, and then into urban social history by Patrick Joyce.[5] Governmentality is a slippery term, variously conceived as 'governmental-ity' – the study of the art of government; as 'governmental rationality' – the logic of practices of government; and as 'govern-mentality' – how governing is imagined and operationalized. Joyce opts for Nikolas Rose's definition of governmentality – 'the ways in which those who would exercise rule have posed to themselves the question of the reasons, justifications, means and ends of rule, and the problems, goals or ambitions that should animate it'; in other words, different mentalities of government, operationalized through a variety of strategies, techniques, tactics and procedures.[6] We can differentiate between a 'police' form of governmentality up to the early nineteenth century – what to an earlier generation of social historians corresponded to very direct 'social control' or to regimes of 'discipline and punishment' – and a 'modern' (nineteenth- and twentieth-century) form of 'liberal governmentality', 'shy of too much governing', instead seeking to promote 'self-regulation' by 'cultivating a certain sort of self, one that was reflexive and self-watching'. Joyce refers to a shift from the panopticon (one all-seeing central authority) to the omniopticon (we are all watching one another).[7]

If the object of government is to produce a dynamic economy linked to a stable, secure and contented society, then 'metropolitan improvements' could be seen as one of the technologies of government through which those objectives are achieved. As in Haussmann's Paris, wide new streets made policing easier, allowed the free movement of troops, police and emergency services, destroyed labyrinthine slums where crime and immorality were assumed to concentrate, and which were difficult to police, facilitated the installation of new infrastructure (sewers, pipes, cables), but also opened up the users of new streets to one another's scrutiny – the substitution of the omnioptic vision of citizens by one another for the panoptic vision of central government. Knowing that you might be watched, and judged, by your peers, even if no authority figures were visible, was an encouragement to good behaviour: no spitting, no relieving oneself in a public place, no harassing or soliciting others or other forms of public misbehaviour. Moreover, this tendency to self-government would be reinforced if new streets were provided with new gas lighting ('a light is as good as a policeman') and new sanitary facilities (public conveniences, drinking fountains), and if they contained a mix of residential and commercial functions (as in Jane Jacobs's ideal urban neighbourhoods where there would always be somebody observing what was going on), a land-use pattern associated with streets with shops, cafes or offices on the ground floor and residential apartments on upper floors.[8] The fact that this new environment was at least partly paid for by private investors in joint-stock companies or by bondholders emphasized that the general public was complicit in its development.

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[5] M. Foucault, 'Governmentality', in *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality*, ed. G. Burchell, C. Gordon and P. Miller (Chicago, Ill., 1991), pp. 87–104; P. Joyce, *The Rule of Freedom: Liberalism and the Modern City* (2003).

[6] N. Rose, 'Governing "advanced" liberal societies', in *Foucault and Political Reason*, ed. T. Osborne, A. Barry and N. Rose (1996), pp. 41–2, quoted in Joyce, *Rule of Freedom*, p. 3.

[7] Joyce, *Rule of Freedom*, pp. 1–19.

Joyce devotes attention in *The Rule of Freedom* not only to streets, but also to mapping as an instrument of both business and the state, including the mid nineteenth-century revival of the Ordnance Survey as an instigator of large-scale urban mapping, and to maps as *arguments*, not just benign carriers of information about places. Mapping *everywhere* (as undertaken by the Ordnance Survey), like counting *everybody* (as in the census), gave each piece of information equal weight. Just as census officials enumerated all persons equally, but judged them to be of unequal worth, so large-scale maps implied that all spaces were equally important, but not all equally desirable. Mapping the slum, charting every corner and blind alley in the labyrinth, was the first step in the argument for slum clearance, making the crooked places straight.[9]

Critical in making the case for the construction of a new street from Westminster in the general direction of Belgrave Square were numerous maps produced by the promoters of rival schemes and selectively reproduced in appendices to select committee and royal commission reports, in periodicals such as the *Westminster Review* and the *Illustrated London News*, and as hand-coloured prints (Figures 15.1–15.3). So important were these maps to their creators that Rigby Wason, whig MP for Ipswich from 1831 to 1837, and the chief protagonist in promoting the new street through successive inquiries in the 1830s and early 1840s, was vehement in his protest when a map of his scheme was omitted from one report; and when a map of a rival scheme

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[8] C. Otter, 'Making liberalism durable: vision and civility in the late Victorian city', *Social History*, xxvii (2002), 1–15; C. Otter, 'Cleansing and clarifying: technology and perception in 19th-century London', *Journal of British Studies*, xliii (2004), 40–64; C. Otter, *The Victorian Eye: a Political History of Light and Vision in Britain, 1800–1910* (Chicago, Ill., 2008); L. Nead, *Victorian Babylon: People, Streets and Images in 19th-Century London* (New Haven, Conn., 2000), pt. 2, 'Gas and light'; J. Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (1972). More generally, see J. Winter, *London's Teeming Streets, 1830–1914* (1993).

[9] Joyce, *Rule of Freedom*, chs. 1, 5.

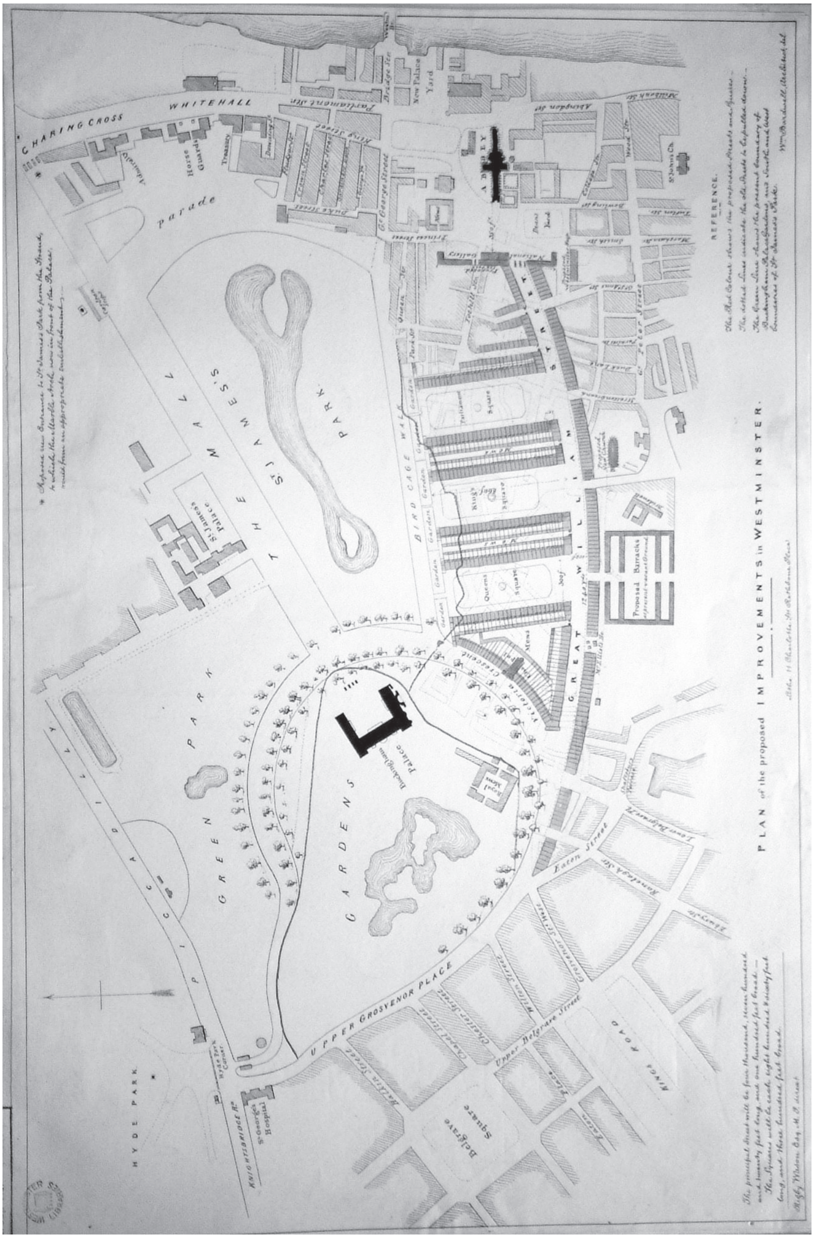
PLAN of the proposed IMPROVEMENTS in WESTMINSTER
CHARING CROSS
WHITEHALL
Admiralty
Horse Guards
Treasury
parade
THE MALL
ST JAMES'S PARK
St James's Palace
GREEN PARK
PICCADILLY
HYDE PARK
Hyde Park Corner
Knightsbridge Rd
St George's Hospital
UPPER GROSVENOR PLACE
GARDENS
Buckingham Palace
Royal Mews
BIRD CAGE WALK
GREAT WILLIAM STREET
Victoria Crescent
Proposed Barracks
Queens Square
Kings Square
Parliament Square
ABBEY
Parliament Str
Bridge Str
New Palace Yard
Abingdon Str
King Street
Gt George Street
Princes Street
Tothill Str
Eaton Street
Lower Belgrave Str
Upper Belgrave Street
Belgrave Square
KINGS ROAD
Chapel Street
Halkin Street
Chester Street
Wilton Street
REFERENCE

Figure 15.1. Plan for Great William Street; William Bardwell, architect, on behalf of Rigby Wason, 1832. Reproduced by permission of City of Westminster Archives Centre.

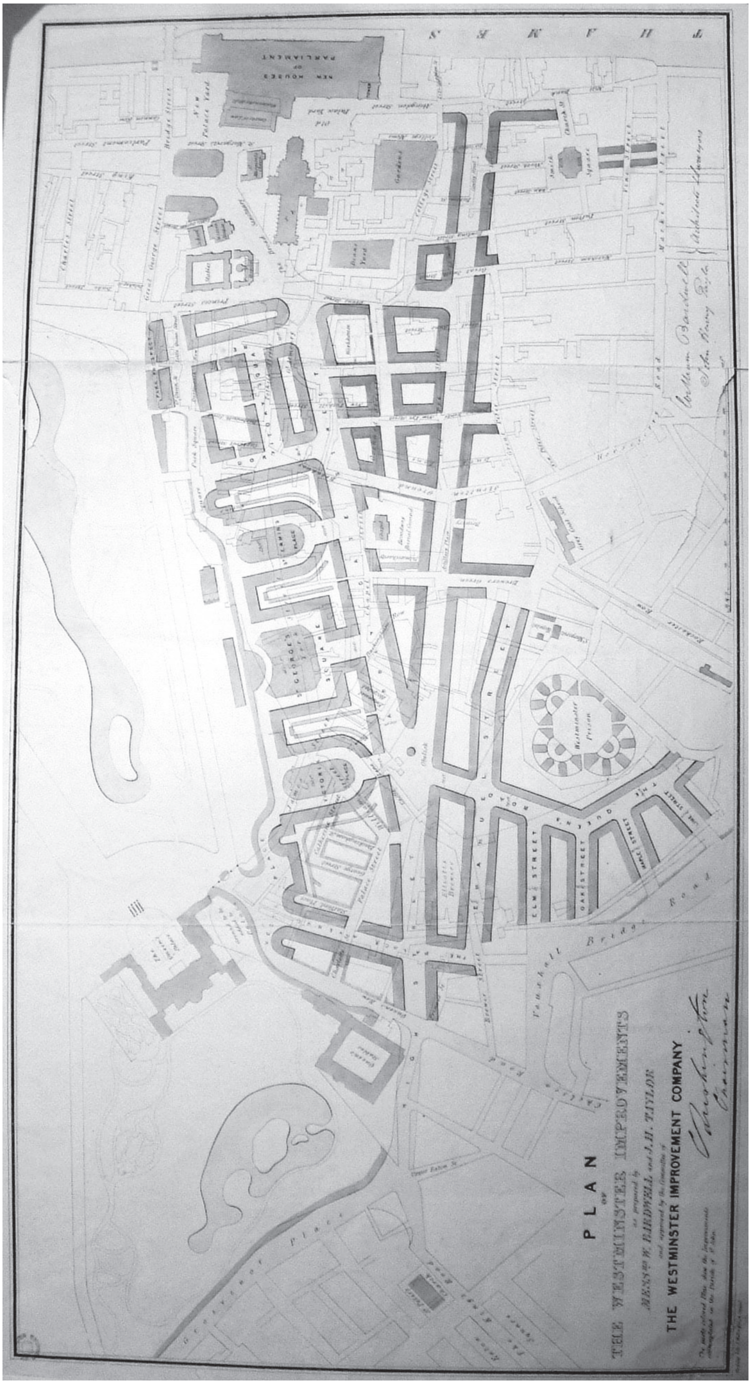
PLAN
OF
THE WESTMINSTER IMPROVEMENTS
THE WESTMINSTER IMPROVEMENT COMPANY
NEW HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT
THAMES
ST GEORGE'S SQUARE
Westminster Prison
Vauxhall Bridge Road
Grosvenor Place

Figure 15.2. Bardwell and Taylor's plan for the Westminster Improvement Company, 1838. Reproduced by permission of City of Westminster Archives Centre.

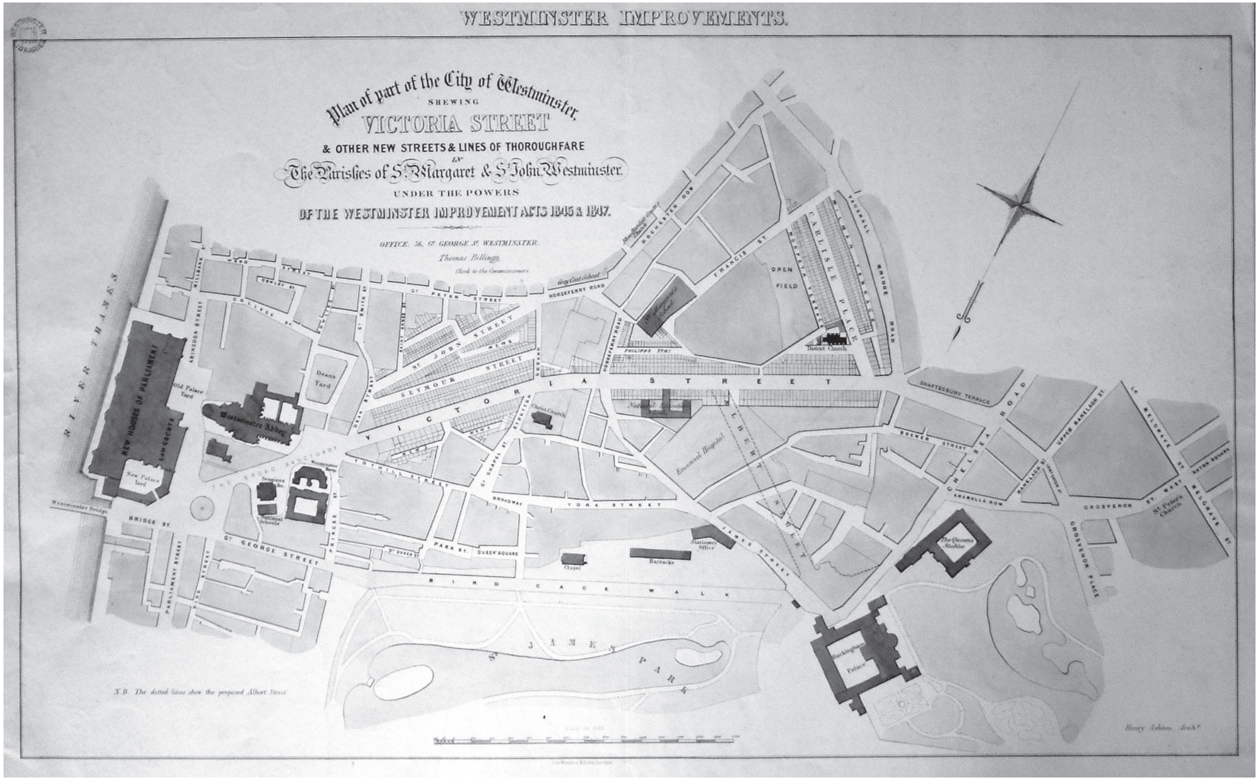
WESTMINSTER IMPROVEMENTS.
Plan of part of the City of Westminster,
SHEWING
VICTORIA STREET
& OTHER NEW STREETS & LINES OF THOROUGHFARE
IN
The Parishes of St. Margaret & St. John Westminster.
UNDER THE POWERS
OF THE WESTMINSTER IMPROVEMENT ACTS 1845 & 1847.
OFFICE, 36, GT. GEORGE ST. WESTMINSTER.
Thomas Billings
Clerk to the Commissioners.
VICTORIA STREET
ALBERT STREET
RIVER THAMES
NEW HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT
Westminster Abbey
ST. JAMES PARK
BIRD CAGE WALK
Buckingham Palace
CARLISLE PLACE
OPEN FIELD
N.B. The dotted lines shew the proposed Albert Street
Henry Ashton Archt.

Figure 15.3. Henry Ashton’s plan for Victoria Street (under the powers of the Westminster Improvement Acts, 1845, 1847).
Reproduced by permission of City of Westminster Archives Centre.

selectively omitted a military barracks which might prove a disincentive to high-class residential development in its immediate vicinity.[10] Several maps depicted not only the proposed route of the street but also speculative layouts of adjacent streets, terraces, squares and crescents, none of which was ever built.[11] Once opened as a thoroughfare in 1851, subsequent progress in erecting offices, shops and flats along the length of the street could be charted in regularly updated editions of Ordnance Survey plans – first surveyed in 1869, and revised in 1893–4 and 1914; and the social impact of the street is also apparent on successive versions of Charles Booth's poverty maps at the ends of the 1880s and 1890s. These post-1851 maps show how the street failed to attract developers through the 1850s and 1860s and was not fully lined with buildings until the 1890s. Photographs of the street, for example by Bedford Lemere in 1899, reveal its developers' aspirations to emulate a Parisian boulevard, but hardly bear witness to its function as a vital traffic artery. Compared to many photographs and films of late Victorian street life, Victoria Street appeared decidedly un-busy and unhurried in Lemere's photograph (Figure 15.4).[12] In other late Victorian illustrations, the principal source of congestion was the line of stationary cabs and carriages waiting while their passengers visited the Army & Navy Stores,[13] thereby creating a new kind of retail blockage in place of an old blockage: street traders – as in nearby Broadway and Strutton Ground – who were the object of government attempts at regulation, licensing and exclusion.[14]

Going beyond this cartographic and visual evidence, which raises numerous questions about the efficacy of the 'improvement', what do official and press reports and commentaries reveal about why Victoria Street was built and why both its authorization and its subsequent development proved so contentious?

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[10] Second Report of the Select Committee on Metropolis Improvements (Parl. Papers 1837–8 [661], p. 133); Second Report of the Select Committee on Metropolis Improvement (Parl. Papers 1840 [485], pp. 3–9).

[11] Report of the Select Committee on the Improvements of Westminster (Parl. Papers 1831–2 [614]), Plan A; Report of the Select Committee on Metropolis Improvements (Parl. Papers 1836 [517]), Plan shewing the proposed street from Westminster abbey to Pimlico; Second Report of the Select Committee on Metropolis Improvements (Parl. Papers 1837–8 [661]), Plan of the Westminster Improvements as prepared by Messrs W. Bardwell and J. H. Taylor; Second Report of the Select Committee on Metropolis Improvement (Parl. Papers 1840 [485]), Plan for a New Street connecting the District around Belgrave Square with the Houses of Parliament and Courts of Law; Third Report of the Commissioners on Improving the Metropolis (Parl. Papers 1845 [619]), Plans 1–4.

[12] R. Dennis, *Cities in Modernity: Representations and Productions of Metropolitan Space, 1840–1930* (New York, 2008), pp. 71, 118–25.

[13] T. H. S. Escott, *England: its People, Polity and Pursuits* (1891), pp. 221–2.

[14] Dennis, *Cities in Modernity*, pp. 145–6.

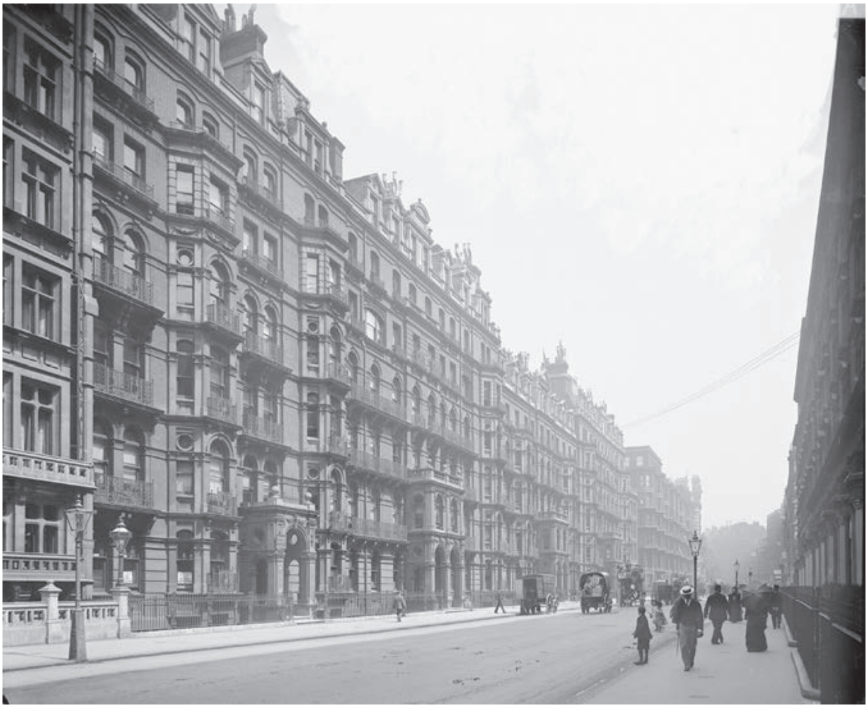

Figure 15.4. Looking across Victoria Street from the south-west towards Princes Mansions, 25 July 1899.

Bedford Lemere Company, BL 15472A. Reproduced by permission of English Heritage NMR.

It is worth noting that the titles of successive select committee reports referred simply to 'Improvements of Westminster' (1832), 'Metropolis Improvements' (1836, 1838) and 'Metropolis Improvement' (1839, 1840), as if the fact of the improvements being new *streets* was incidental. The royal commission appointed in 1842 was charged with 'Improving the Metropolis' and (in much smaller type) 'Providing Increased Facilities of Communication within the Same'. It is clear that improvement was not only, and perhaps not primarily, about the circulation of traffic.

Circulation

The 1832 select committee sought an 'economical' plan 'for improving the Approaches to the Houses of Parliament and Courts of Law'; and the Second Report of the Select Committee of Metropolis Improvements (1838) emphasized that the primary purpose was 'affording increased facilities for the conveyance of merchandise, and for the passage of carriages and persons' which would serve both 'social convenience' and 'commercial interests'. But members of the committee admitted they had 'not confined themselves to the single purpose of obtaining increased facilities of communication'.[15]

Among copious documentation submitted by Rigby Wason to the 1838 committee, one table compared attributes of 'The street called the Waterloo-bridge New-street' (between Strand and Longacre) with 'The street proposed between Chelsea-road and Broadway' (that is, the western part of what became Victoria Street). In the former case, there were already 'four carriage-roads' and 'several passages for pedestrians' connecting Strand and Longacre, whereas in the latter, 'A glance at the map of London will show there is no part of London so destitute of thoroughfares as that through which the street is proposed to pass, either for carriages or pedestrians'. Moreover, it would particularly benefit 'the industrious classes, to whom any saving of time is saving of money, or of laborious exertion'.[16] The Third Report of the Royal Commission (1845) added maps of the two districts and a refined 'Table of Comparison'.[17]

In 1838, William Bardwell, who had surveyed Wason's route, referred to the area as 'quite a stagnant portion of the metropolis' but, although he was questioned about sewers and drainage, he implied by this phrase that the area was, in his questioner's language, 'destitute of public and convenient communication': 'there are some crooked streets extending as far as Emanuel hospital or thereabouts, but no thoroughfare to Grosvenor-place and Pimlico from thence'. The final witness to offer evidence in 1838 on the proposed Westminster improvement, G. T. Bullar, also referred to the need for better communications, in his case by adding a new street on the south side of Westminster abbey, 'to provide direct and suitable approaches to the royal entrance of the House of Lords' from Buckingham Palace.[18]

However, when James Pennethorne gave evidence to the royal commission he averred that 'As a thoroughfare from Pimlico to the Houses of Parliament, it is not particularly wanted', although it was 'certainly desirable to open communications with all the new parts of Westminster to the south'; it would involve 'clearing away of bad property in the immediate line, but it would lead to the improvement of all the property north and south of it'.[19] In other words, new streets were less concerned with making the traffic flow smoothly than with a broader notion of circulation that would resuscitate the social and economic body as a whole. Even in Wason's comparisons, it was not traffic considerations but sanitary and financial issues that took precedence. Nobody bothered with a traffic census!

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[15] Report of the Select Committee on the Improvements of Westminster, p. 3; Second Report of the Select Committee on Metropolis Improvements, p. iii.

[16] Second Report of the Select Committee on Metropolis Improvements, p. 172.

[17] Third Report of the Commissioners on Improving the Metropolis (619), p. 32 and plans 1 and 2 facing p. 33.

[18] Second Report of the Select Committee on Metropolis Improvements, pp. 165–6.

Sanitation

In November 1831, the board of health for the parishes of St. Margaret and St. John, Westminster surveyed every street, court, alley and yard in their area. They reported that 'The filth-heaps in the streets were large and numerous … The sinks, privies and cesspools in many parts of the parish were in a state that threatened mischievous diseases at any moment'. But they also concluded that 'The ventilation was generally better than could have been expected' and 'The poor inhabitants [were] mostly in good health; measles and scarletina were the only prevalent diseases, and the poor were cheerful, civil and willing'.[20]

Giving evidence to the 1832 select committee, the local surveyor of sewers stressed the need to 'build a complete sewer for the new street' and to raise the street by as much as ten or eleven feet above the existing land surface to ensure effective drainage. Currently, the whole neighbourhood flooded 'five or six times every summer'. For example, cellars in Strutton Ground were 'deeply covered with offensive matter issuing from the neighbouring soil', with 'no means of removing it except by pumping during the night, which the magistrates have forbidden'. It was feared 'that a contagious fever of no ordinary malignity is likely to be produced'. In William Street, twenty cows were kept in a confined space, much lower than the surrounding streets, 'and which is therefore commonly flooded with rain and other refuse water, saturated with cow ordure, to get rid of which there are now no other means but pumping it into the street'. Elsewhere in the neighbourhood, stagnant ditches were the source of 'miasms of the most deleterious nature'. The committee's brief report highlighted not only 'the want of any effectual Sewerage' and 'the pestilential and unwholesome state of the atmosphere' but also their anxiety over the proximity to Buckingham Palace.[21]

A local medical attendant updated the situation in 1838: 'the houses are crowded together, with very little ventilation; built up courts and alleys, and the houses themselves are old, the rooms small and of bad elevation'. There was multi-occupancy of housing in the Almonry, Orchard Street,

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[19] Third Report of the Commissioners on Improving the Metropolis, p. 4.

[20] Second Report of the Select Committee on Metropolis Improvements, p. 160.

[21] Report of the Select Committee on the Improvements of Westminster, pp. 6, 10, 11, 3–4.

Old Pye Street, Duck Lane, Perkin's Rents and adjacent streets, and typhus fever was common. If one person was taken ill, the fever usually infected the whole family, although it only occasionally proved fatal: of thirty cases of fever in four houses in Great Duck Lane over the previous two months, 'three only have died'. The same districts had suffered 'during the time of the cholera' and smallpox was also characteristic.[22]

One reason why the royal commission favoured a more southerly route for the new street was that it would pass through 'a more imperfectly drained, a more densely peopled, and consequently a more objectionable portion of the district'. Pennethorne thought that 'the general class of habitations between Great Peter-street and Orchard-street' was 'nearly as ruinous, filthy, and badly inhabited as Spitalfields or St Giles's' (two areas where new streets were currently under construction), 'as much crowded as any part of London'. He also reported that the dean and chapter of Westminster abbey had been trying to clear parts of the area of 'prostitutes and other bad characters who lived there'.[23]

Approval to build the new street and accompanying sewer did not stem references in the press to the state of the area. Reporting on the need for steam-powered drainage, *The Times* noted:

> The startling fact … that in the drainage to the river in the low districts of Westminster, &c., the refuse cannot immediately be got rid of, but remains stagnating for a number of hours, twice in every day, all escape being cut off by the tide, and exhaling the most malignant and poisonous effluvia, to the destruction of the inhabitants.[24]

When Victoria Street at last opened in August 1851, the *Daily News* welcomed 'the broad, clear, open roadway, … penetrating, like a pioneer of civilisation, the darkest and densest haunts of infamy and vice, misery and uncleanness, sweeping them away and substituting light for darkness, fair for foul, … opened as a free passage to all people'.[25] At the opening ceremony, the earl of Carlisle reminded his audience that 'the place on which they were met … was formerly covered with abodes of the greatest filthiness and impurity',[26] and Sir Edwin Pearson, chairman of the Westminster improvement commissioners, affirmed that 'By the completion of this great thoroughfare, every impediment that had formerly existed to the admission of a pure atmosphere, and every obstacle to a pure enjoyment of life, had been removed'.[27]

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[22] Second Report of the Select Committee on Metropolis Improvements, pp. 163–4.

[23] Third Report of the Commissioners on Improving the Metropolis, pp. iv, 1.

[24] 'The sanitary question in Westminster', *The Times*, 12 Feb. 1848, p. 8.

[25] 'Westminster Improvements', *Daily News*, 7 Aug. 1851.

[26] 'Opening of Victoria-Street', *The Times*, 7 Aug. 1851, p. 8.

[27] *Daily News*, 7 Aug. 1851.

As several of these commentaries implied, the moral was inseparable from the physical: a 'pure atmosphere' made for a 'pure enjoyment of life'.

Moral improvement

Thomas Donaldson argued that 'immediately a street is widened and a respectable traffic and thoroughfare is established, then a more respectable class of occupants is induced to come and live in the houses', and the 1838 select committee report identified districts 'through which no great thoroughfares at present pass, and which being wholly occupied by a dense population, composed of the lowest class of labourers, entirely secluded from the observation and influence of wealthier and better educated neighbours, exhibit a state of moral and physical degradation deeply to be deplored'. Cutting 'great streams of public intercourse' through such areas would improve both moral and physical health.[28]

Anticipating the street's opening, *The Times* asserted that 'it will materially add to the comfort and security of the inhabitants, as it will occasion the removal of many, if not all, of the haunts of bad characters, for which unfortunately a part of Westminster is particularly celebrated'.[29] Come opening day, the Revd. Jennings, prebend of Westminster abbey, declared: 'It was a happiness to them to find that the moral condition of the poor of Westminster had been already greatly improved by the construction of this new street, and they hoped not only to see Victoria-street built with handsome houses, but to know that those houses were tenanted by a God-fearing people.'[30] But *The Times* leader writer easily won the prize for the most garish account:

> There is a district close to Westminster Abbey and Buckingham House … which has long retained an unfortunate pre-eminence in every kind of moral and physical pollution even amongst other tainted districts of the capital. Here, when the gas-lamps were lighted, and the pavement was glistening with fallen rain, you might have seen slatternly girls of twelve or fourteen years of age wandering about with all the marks of confirmed vice stamped upon their young brows. From the courts and blind alleys the screams and shouts both of the agents and the sufferers in deeds of violence might have been heard to break the silence of the night.[31]

Business

New streets provided new sites for business and other 'improving' land uses, and new sites implied increased ground rents for landowners and increased revenue, through increased rateable values, for local authorities. Pennethorne did not think the improvement would be profitable, but he did admit that frontages on the new street could be 'let advantageously' and that it 'would be inhabited by respectable shopkeepers, and would become a good line of shops'.[32] By December 1850, the improvement commissioners were advertising sites for public buildings 'with double frontages and deep drainage', and stressing the proximity to parliament, Westminster Hall, the abbey and Buckingham Palace.[33] By January 1851, 'a row of splendid edifices' had been built at the west end of the street, and near the east end, baths and washhouses had been erected by the vestry at a cost of £15,000.[34] In February, the *Morning Post* claimed that 'Many sites have been taken by eminent builders', but admitted 'there are still several to be let'; and not all offers were welcome: 'Some influential persons connected with the Roman Catholic body made overtures for a large area, on which to erect a cathedral, but the application has been declined'.[35] It was to be another half-century before Westminster cathedral was built at the western end of Victoria Street, and even then it was hidden away in a back-street, only allowed a frontage on to Victoria Street in 1975 by the construction of a piazza, following demolition of mansion flats, shops and offices that originally separated the cathedral from the street.[36]

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[28] Report of the Select Committee on Metropolis Improvements, p. 8; Second Report of the Select Committee on Metropolis Improvements, p. iv.

[29] 'Westminster Improvements', *The Times*, 4 Apr. 1851, p. 7.

[30] *Daily News*, 7 Aug. 1851.

[31] *The Times*, 8 Aug. 1851, p. 4.

The earl of Carlisle 'trusted the noble frontal of the street would ere long be covered with becoming abodes of industry and comfort, and for the purposes of education and piety'. Particular attention was also paid to the building of blocks of middle-class flats: 'houses on the Scotch principle for accommodating two families on each floor'.[37] And, in due course, the erection of the Westminster Palace Hotel and Westminster Chambers at the east end of the street, and the, admittedly short-lived, Oriental Baths, at its western end, also attracted press attention.[38]

While the 1838 select committee downplayed the significance of 'embellishment' compared to utility, some commentators were more sensitive to the spectacle afforded by a new street. Henry Rhodes, an architect to the commissioners of woods and forests, thought one plan, proposed by Bardwell and Taylor for the 1838 version of the Westminster Improvement Company, 'very liberal and magnificent', but he preferred 'a straight vista from the abbey, instead of taking an oblique one'. A straight 'mall' would be 'sublime and magnificent' but also 'more useful'.[39] When the new street opened, the *Illustrated London News* highlighted some sights now exposed to public view, almost as potential tourist attractions:

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[32] Third Report of the Commissioners on Improving the Metropolis, p. 3.

[33] *The Times*, 11 Dec. 1850, p. 3.

[34] 'Westminster Improvements', *The Times*, 10 Jan. 1851, p. 6.

[35] 'Westminster Improvements', *Morning Post*, 20 Feb. 1851, p. 5.

[36] 'Westminster cathedral: history & art: history of the cathedral' <http://www.westminstercathedral.org.uk/history_dates.php> [accessed 16 May 2010].

[37] *The Times*, 7 Aug. 1851, p. 8.

[38] 'The Great Westminster Palace Hotel', *The Times*, 15 Nov. 1858, p. 10; 'Money Market', *Daily News*, 13 Aug. 1860; 'Westminster Palace Hotel', *Morning Post*, 31 Jan. 1861, p. 3; 'The Oriental Baths, Victoria Street', *Illustrated London News*, 21 June 1862; 'London correspondence', *The Belfast News-Letter*, 11 Apr. 1865.

> The old localities which [the street] threw open to us appeared in a new and improving shape. Elliot's brewery, long a secluded site in Pimlico, is now open to all, and in a crowded thoroughfare; the Bridewell will now become as well-known a London exterior as Newgate or the Penitentiary; thousands will find out the once solitary churchyard in which 'Blood, who stole the crown,' lies buried …[40]

Finance

Critical to all these arguments was the issue of finance, but also the wider question of public and private responsibility. Parliament could pass an act authorizing the acquisition of land from its existing owners for the purposes of 'improvement', but this need have no financial implications for the state. In these circumstances, as with the promotion of a new railway, development was financed by the establishment of a joint-stock company, issuing shares or bonds. However, if it was argued that development was in the public interest or to the benefit of the crown, then it followed that government, through taxation, or the crown, through income from its estates, should contribute to the cost. In the case under consideration, much of the benefit related to improving the environment in the vicinity of the new royal palace or (after the fire of 1834) the new Palace of Westminster. Perhaps the crown, through the commissioners of woods and forests, should pay for all or part of the improvements, if necessary by selling off part of the royal estates. Various options for subsidising the scheme were mooted: promoting a state lottery, using the revenue from bridge tolls, or raising an additional duty on coal imports into the port of London.[41]

There was also the question of how much land should be authorized for compulsory purchase. The width of a new carriageway was variously estimated at between fifty and eighty feet, but once allowance had been made for pedestrian pavements, the width might be nearer to 120 feet. This would be a relatively narrow slice of land; its purchase might be accomplished quite cheaply. But there would be no direct returns to the purchasers, since there would be no lettable land beyond the limits of the carriageway; nor would there be much *direct* opportunity for slum clearance, or for influencing what kinds of buildings faced on to the new street, since they would be on land that was still privately owned; and, in slicing through existing landholdings, private owners would be left with awkwardly shaped sites. The occasional triangular or 'flatiron' building may enliven the cityscape, but there are limits to the numbers of such buildings that will attract tenants. Alternatively, the improvement act might authorize much more extensive land acquisition, at far greater cost, but with the potential for influencing the wholesale redevelopment of the area on either side of the new street. In these circumstances, an improvement company would lay out new streets, squares, crescents and circles opening off the new traffic artery, either offering land to builders at enhanced ground rents or undertaking the entire development itself and then letting or selling completed houses, offices and stores. This was a much more speculative form of improvement; it might take decades to complete and it was hardly reasonable to expect the state to bear the risks and costs of such an undertaking, especially given the prevailing context of free-market liberalism and the uncertainties of the market in the early 1840s.[42]

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[39] Second Report of the Select Committee on Metropolis Improvements, pp. iii, 133, 138.

[40] 'Victoria Street, Westminster', *Illustrated London News*, 6 Sept. 1851.

[41] Report of the Select Committee on the Improvements of Westminster, p. 4; Report of the Select Committee on Metropolis Improvements, pp. iii–iv; Second Report of the Select Committee on Metropolis Improvements, p. v; First Report of Commissioners on Improving the Metropolis (Parl. Papers 1844 [15]), pp. 4–7; Third Report of the Commissioners on Improving the Metropolis, pp. iii–iv.

Determining the route

Different solutions to the problem of financing implied different routes for the new street. The least-cost schemes traced routes connecting the cheapest parcels of land: land currently occupied by slum housing where little if any compensation need be paid to residents who rarely held long-term tenancies; or undeveloped land (although in Westminster this might be because of its vulnerability to flooding, which implied greater expenditure in making the new roadway); or land that existing owners were prepared to part with for free, anticipating increased values for the rest of their property which would now be so much more accessible. Such routes were very unlikely to be straight lines on the map. In the case of Victoria Street, an alternative low-cost option – and the one promoted especially by

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[42] Among specific references to street widths, see Report of the Select Committee on the Improvements of Westminster, p. 8; Second Report of the Select Committee on Metropolis Improvements, pp. 132–3, 177; Third Report of the Commissioners on Improving the Metropolis, pp. 19, 26. On narrow streets and awkward-shaped lots, see also Tyack, *Sir James Pennethorne*, pp. 54–5.

Rigby Wason – was to follow a loop to the south, thereby enclosing a larger amount of land between the new road and the southern boundaries of St. James's Park and Buckingham Palace. It was assumed that this area would be attractive to private developers who could be relied upon to do most of the improvements themselves at no cost to the public purse (Figure 15.1). But if one opted for a state-sanctioned improvement company buying up the entire district, then the logic was to build a dead-straight boulevard through the middle, equally accessible to new buildings and businesses on either side.

The earliest scheme, proposed by Wason in 1831–2, was estimated by William Bardwell to cost £122,500.[43] Wason offered to purchase property privately 'in the immediate line of the projected street' as and when it was offered for sale, and then to sell it to the government at cost, and he proceeded to implement this offer by buying property in Palmer's Village and negotiating with the owner of Elliott's brewery for free passage across his land provided that the brewery itself was left unscathed. But this attempt to jump-start improvement unsurprisingly backfired. When Wason suggested a bill authorizing the government to make loans at 2.5 per cent, arguing that an act of 1837, promoting public works in Ireland, 'sanctioned the principle of applying public money to public improvement, to an extent infinitely beyond that which would be required for this improvement', his critics charged him with self-interest as a consequence of his having become a local property owner. Next, Wason claimed that the street could be completed from Broadway west to Pimlico for no more than £25,000, since it would pass 'through a large portion of land upon which there is not a single building'. His proposed route, an elegant arc to the south of a straight-line route, would provide improved drainage for all the districts to the north, and 'more land to dispose of for comfortable residences between the street and the park, which of course is infinitely more valuable than any land could be south of the street'.[44]

Subsequently, Wason claimed that the remaining part of his route, between Broadway and Westminster abbey, could be completed for an additional £25,000.[45] But Henry Rhodes, instructed by the commissioners of woods and forests to make a detailed survey of Wason's proposed route, estimated that the section between Broad Sanctuary (in front of the abbey) and Brewer's Green (just west of Broadway) would involve the demolition of 356 houses, plus the workhouse, a newly erected medical school, a police station, Broadway chapel and burial ground, and Palmer's almshouses. The net cost of this section would be about £314,000. From Brewer's Green to Grosvenor Place would displace another 188 houses, net cost about £127,000. The grand total, after deducting the value of surplus land which could be re-sold, was about £426,000. Evidently, Rhodes was assuming that land immediately adjacent to the street would be retained, since he estimated an annual income from ground rents of a little more than £10,000, useful but by no means sufficient to service a debt of over £400,000.[46]

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[43] Report of the Select Committee on the Improvements of Westminster, p. 12.

[44] Second Report of the Select Committee on Metropolis Improvements, pp. 64, 76, 134, 156.

[45] Second Report of the Select Committee on Metropolis Improvement, pp. 8–9.

Contrasting with Wason's supposedly building-free route, a plan submitted by Arthur Mee offered two new streets – a direct line from the abbey to Queen's Row (the mews to the south-west of Buckingham Palace), and another from College Street, also in a direct line. Between them they required taking down 1,700 houses for streets eighty and seventy-five feet wide. He estimated that the cost would be £243,000 for the road from the abbey and £238,000 for the more southerly road, of which £100,000 was accounted for by compensation for the demolition of Elliott's brewery. However, his estimate of income from ground rents, assuming values of about 32*s* (£1.60) per foot of frontage, came to a healthy £45,000 per annum.[47]

John Henry Taylor submitted plans on behalf of the Westminster Improvement Company, whose prospectus proposed raising £750,000–950,000 in shares to purchase freehold property for roads 100 feet and ninety feet wide (Figure 15.2). Everything between Tothill Street and the park would be 'swept away'. To service loans altogether estimated at £1.2 million at 4.5 per cent would require an income of £54,000 per annum. Estimating the total frontage available for buildings at 23,000 feet, this implied an average ground rent of 45*s* (£2.25) per front foot. However, Taylor calculated that income from ground rents would actually amount to £61,000 per annum, yielding a profit to the company of 'rather more than five per cent'.[48]

Aside from the general principles about route and finance, there were also some important local issues. It was not just slums and slum businesses that were in the way. There was also Elliott's brewery; the Emanuel hospital almshouses; the new Westminster prison; the 'new' Broadway chapel; the St. Margaret's workhouse; a burial ground; and barracks.[49] Planning the street to avoid as many of these as possible produced some convoluted

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[46] Second Report of the Select Committee on Metropolis Improvements, pp. 176–9.

[47] Second Report of the Select Committee on Metropolis Improvements, pp. 120–1.

[48] Second Report of the Select Committee on Metropolis Improvements, pp. 131–3, 157.

[49] The 'new' chapel dated from the 1630s. In fact, irrespective of other Westminster improvements, it was demolished and replaced by a new church, Christ Church Broadway, in 1843 (see E. Walford, *Old and New London*, iv (1878), 14–26).

S-shaped routes. On the other hand, maybe some of these land uses should be treated in the same way as slum housing and deliberately targeted for clearance? It all depended on one's attitude to breweries: were they suitable neighbours for a royal palace? And to conservation: were the almshouses a historic monument, a picturesque piece of old London, or simply rotten old buildings inappropriate for their function, and the sooner they were knocked down and their inmates relocated to new buildings in more salubrious suburbs the better?

Thomas Donaldson's plan, prepared in December 1835, would have involved widening Tothill Street and York Street and then cutting a new street at the Pimlico end, 'which will pass through an unimportant class of houses and avoid Elliott's brewery'.[50] Rigby Wason also planned to retain the brewery, directing his route across the undeveloped southern fringe of Elliott's property. Arthur Mee, however, proposed demolishing the brewery which, he claimed, 'the whole neighbourhood … considered to be a nuisance'.[51] John Henry Taylor's plan for the first Westminster Improvement Company retained most of the brewery, but hid its buildings behind a facade along the street. He did not expect any help from government in purchasing the brewery, even though government favoured its removal, but he did think it would be desirable for the company to acquire it.[52] The Revd. H. H. Milman, a prebend of Westminster abbey, favoured a straight-line route for a new street, passing north of the Broadway chapel and cutting through Elliott's brewery, whereas his fellow prebend, the Revd. J. Jennings, preferred a more southerly line, slicing through Great and Little Almonry, and passing south of the chapel and burial ground.[53] Rhodes's route, too, avoided the chapel and burial ground, but would have demolished the workhouse. Rhodes was also worried that Taylor's plan involved the destruction of Emanuel hospital, a school and almshouses founded around 1600 although the existing buildings did not date back beyond the early eighteenth century.[54] In practice, Victoria Street bypassed both brewery and hospital (Figure 15.3), although the latter was again threatened in 1850 when the Westminster improvement commissioners, by then the body in charge of laying out the new street, planned additional cross-streets which would require a large portion of the hospital's property, close to the children's dormitories. The hospital governors thought that if the site was to be interfered with at all, then the whole property should be purchased, allowing the thirty almspeople and sixty scholars to relocate to a new building outside London. In fact, this did not happen until 1883 when a new school was built in Wandsworth and, in due course, the site on Buckingham Gate was occupied by the massive bulk of St. James's Court, luxury mansion flats.[55]

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[50] Report of the Select Committee on Metropolis Improvements, p. 8.

[51] Second Report of the Select Committee on Metropolis Improvements, p. 120.

[52] Second Report of the Select Committee on Metropolis Improvements, p. 133.

[53] Second Report of the Select Committee on Metropolis Improvements, pp. 61–2.

[54] Second Report of the Select Committee on Metropolis Improvements, pp. 133–4; Walford, *Old and New London*, pp. 14–26; Watson, *Westminster and Pimlico Past*, pp. 62–4.

Wellington Barracks on Birdcage Walk and the Bridewell Prison (Westminster House of Correction) were immoveable objects, even though on William Bardwell's first plan for the street, elaborating on Wason's southerly curved route, the barracks were relocated to the unfavourable, poorly drained side of what was then labelled as Great William Street (Figure 15.1). Rhodes worried that the barracks 'would be a very great obstacle to the comfort of the families' who might otherwise choose to live in the area. He thought 'the soldiers with white jackets, playing at foot-ball, and the appearance of the barracks' would be 'very objectionable'.[56]

At the Westminster end of the street, G. T. Bullar's elaborate plans for a street connecting Buckingham Palace to the house of lords would have sacrificed the fourteenth-century Jerusalem Chamber and the whole of Dean's Yard, and reconstructed the school and clergy residences on 'an improved plan' in keeping with the architecture of the rebuilt houses of parliament.[57] We may be thankful that this never came to pass, but contemporaries expressed their anxiety about lesser acts of desecration in the second phase of improvements:

> Those Vandals of to-day – the Pimlico and Westminster Improvement Commissioners – have been impertinently carrying on their Gothic annihilations in the very face of Buckingham Palace, and laying their utilitarian hands on some of the most hallowed edifices in our neighbourhood. … The work of destruction has been commenced in James-street; and six houses are now in process of speedy disappearance … Irish labourers demolish bit by bit the old red and brown brick walls that were considered quite the fashion when the street was built, about a century ago.[58]

But other commentators thought the real vandalism lay in previous developments which the proposed improvements were too timid to overturn. The *Westminster Review* condemned:

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[55] 'Westminster Improvements', *The Times*, 10 Jan. 1850, p. 6. It is worth noting that St. James's Court played the part of 'Wickham Mansions', E. M. Forster's 'Babylonian flats', in the Merchant-Ivory film version of *Howards End* (1992).

[56] Second Report of the Select Committee on Metropolis Improvements, pp. 133, 138.

[57] Second Report of the Select Committee on Metropolis Improvements, p. 166.

[58] 'Demolition near Buckingham Palace', *The Times*, 30 Aug. 1854, p.4.

> The apathy (apparent at least) of a Committee of Taste sitting as a Metropolitan Improvement Commission; the natural obstructiveness of a Chancellor of the Exchequer upon all questions of ways and means not belonging to routine, and the cost of purchasing a mass of inferior third-rate houses and miserable tenements … To avoid the additional outlay required to purchase an old and dilapidated workhouse, held upon a lease which has but sixteen years to run, the Commissioners have made the line crooked at its eastern extremity, cutting off the direct approach to the New Houses of Parliament, and building out of sight, to all persons passing down the line, both the Victoria Tower and Westminster Abbey. … An act of Vandalism is about to be perpetuated.[59]

Plans for a lottery were quickly dismissed. When a Westminster Improvement Bill was introduced in July 1838, it was soon withdrawn following criticism that empowering a company to raise money by tontine was an encouragement to gambling.[60] But the 1838 select committee thought that not only Londoners but 'inhabitants of all the districts immediately contiguous to London' should contribute to the cost of London street improvements, and endorsed the idea of imposing additional duties on coal imported through London.[61] The first report of the royal commission, in 1844, concluded that £39,000 might be provided for the Westminster improvement by maintaining until their original end-date of 1858 coal duties originally raised for the improvement of the approaches to London Bridge, and which had proved so lucrative that it had been planned to abolish them ahead of schedule; but the commissioners initially concentrated their attention not on Victoria Street or any other ordinary street improvement but on the building of a Thames Embankment. It was only with their Third Report, issued in April 1845, that they returned to the subject of Westminster. If this was to be an improvement financed solely by the state, they would not have recommended it, but given that Wason and his supporters sought only 'an incitement to private enterprize … a contribution only to the cost of a great public improvement, to be paid for in great measure out of private resources', the commissioners felt justified in recommending an increase in the grant from £39,000 to £50,000. They were also assured that the proposed company showed little interest in questions of taste or architecture, which might have inflated costs. Rather, they focused on 'the health, the morals, and the social comforts' of Westminster's inhabitants. So the commissioners proposed an act empowering an improvement company to make the street, the company to provide security of £10,000 for its completion within five years of the passing of the act, and the commissioners of woods and forests to pay up to £50,000, but not until the street had been completed.[62]

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[59] *The Examiner*, 28 June 1845, quoting *The Westminster Review*, no. 85.

[60] *The Times*, 12 July 1838, p. 4.

[61] Second Report of the Select Committee on Metropolis Improvements, p. v.

The Westminster Improvement Act was at last passed on 21 July 1845, and the street opened to the public on 6 August 1851. But this was hardly the end of the affair. In fact, it merely ushered in a new suite of controversies and problems.

Displacement

A perennial problem of improvements involving demolition is what happens to the displaced. As early as August 1846, Sir de Lacy Evans asked in parliament that tenants who had lived in the same dwellings for several years, but without the benefit of leases, should be able to claim compensation in the event of their being removed compulsorily. He cited the case of residents in poorer parts of Westminster, whose houses were scheduled for demolition under the 1845 act. Predictably, the attorney general acknowledged their hardship but concluded that 'the question of landlord and tenant's rights was so complicated, that it was wholly impossible the hardship could be satisfactorily remedied'.[63]

The Westminster improvement commissioners affirmed their desire to provide 'better houses for the working classes'. Suggesting a site in Castle Lane, they offered to subscribe half the cost of a model lodging-house to accommodate ninety families at rents of 4*s* per week for two-room flats with toilet and scullery, and which they anticipated would yield a return of 10 per cent. Nothing materialized and, in practice, model housing had to wait for philanthropic interventions by William Gibbs (in Old Pye Street) in 1862, and by the Peabody Trust (at Brewer's Green) in 1869.[64]

Speaking at the opening of the street, the earl of Shaftesbury expressed the hope that in future 'regulations would be made to provide in these cases places of refuge for the people dispossessed. It was not sufficient to give bills of notice; they must consider the helpless condition of those they had to deal with. They had not the time or opportunity to go about to make arrangements'.[65] His words were echoed in *The Times* editorial next day: 'If the Commissioners do not take careful heed that proper buildings are erected for the benefit of the working-classes upon the site of the wretched hovels that have been demolished, the improvement will be but a seeming one, and utterly fail in effecting any improvement in the condition of the people'.[66] Lord Shaftesbury returned to the topic in a Lords' debate on the dwellings of the labouring classes. In the case of Victoria Street:

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[62] First Report of Commissioners on Improving the Metropolis, pp. 6–7; Third Report of the Commissioners on Improving the Metropolis, pp. iii–v.

[63] Hansard, *Parliamentary Debates*, 3rd ser., *Commons*, lxxxviii (4 Aug. 1846), cols. 341–2.

[64] *Daily News*, 7 Aug. 1851; *Morning Post*, 7 Aug. 1851, p. 6; note that the Castle Buildings, now the Victoria Hostel, *were* built in Castle Lane for brewery workers, but not until 1882–3; for Gibbs and Peabody, see Watson, pp. 84–6.

[65] *The Times*, 7 Aug. 1851, p. 8.

> when the time arrived for pulling down the houses in that neighbourhood – Duck-lane and High-street – he remembered being on the spot, and seeing the disorder and confusion occasioned by the progress of the improvements. That part of the town appeared as if it had been taken by siege. People were running about to see where they could find shelter. Some of their houses were pulled down over their heads; and he knew, from inquiries he had made only two days ago, that those very persons so turned out of their houses were now living in the actual neighbourhood, but in houses tenfold more crowded than those which they inhabited before.[67]

The bishop of London made a similar point with slightly less exaggeration:

> the clergyman who was entrusted with the spiritual charge of the parish of St. John had informed him … that when Victoria Street was constructed five thousand poor persons were displaced in his parish, three-fourths of whom went into the already overcrowded parishes on the other side of the river, whilst the other fourth found refuge in his own parish; so that in many instances, where a family had a house before, there were now three or four families in it.[68]

John Hollingshead neatly summed up the tension between historical preservation and dilapidation:

> there is a period in the history of slums when they become utterly mouldy and putrid. I say unfortunately, for most of us like old houses and old neighbourhoods, and Victoria Street, W., will not please the present generation like old Westminster. The mouldy, putrid period fell upon the old Abbey district some few years ago, and an improved thoroughfare was ploughed through to Pimlico. The diseased heart was divided in half – one part was pushed on one side, and the other part on the other, and the world was asked to look upon a new reformation. A great city, a leprous district, is not to be purified in this manner by a Diet of contractors; and the chief result has been to cause more huddling together.[69]

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[66] *The Times*, 8 Aug. 1851, p. 4.

[67] 'House of lords', *The Times*, 19 March 1853, p. 2.

[68] J. Hollingshead, *Ragged London in 1861* (1861), p. 103, quoting the bishop of London speaking in the house of lords on 28 Feb. 1861.

[69] Hollingshead, *Ragged London*, pp. 102–3.

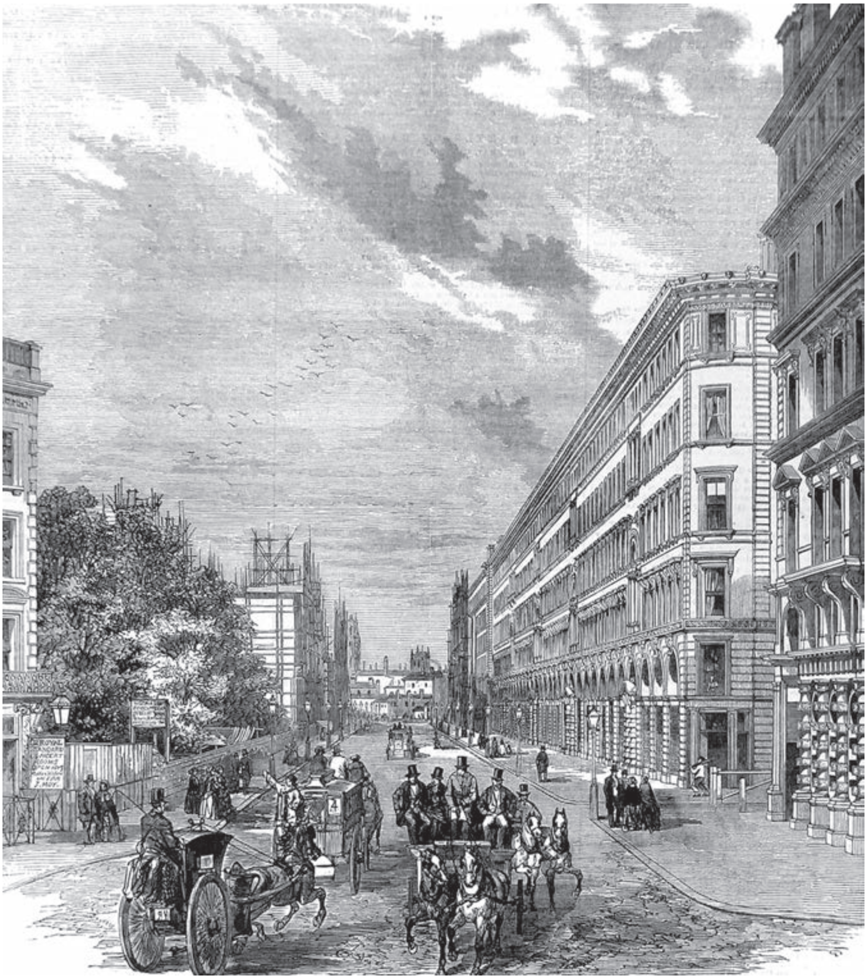

Figure 15.5. Engraving showing Victoria Street, Westminster, in *Illustrated London News*, 18 November 1854.

© Illustrated London News Ltd./Mary Evans.

Moreover, more demand for a smaller supply of housing for the poor meant higher rents, greater profits for slum landlords, and more likelihood of honest labourers and working women being corrupted by their enforced intimacy with thieves and prostitutes: 'The mouldiness and putridity of Westminster … have gone on increasing, and of all the criminal districts in London I think it is now the worst'.[70]

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[70] Hollingshead, *Ragged London*, pp. 103–4.

Vacant lots

Meanwhile, Victoria Street itself was 'the nightmare street of unlet palaces … waiting for more capital to fill its yawning gulf, and a few more residents to warm its hollow chambers into life'.[71] This was the heart of the problem: the failure to reap the anticipated social or economic benefits of a street improvement, as building sites remained vacant or, even worse, half-finished carcasses of new buildings decayed among the weeds. Unease surfaced as early as February 1852, when *The Times* reported that Victoria Street was 'scarcely safe by day, and utterly unsafe by night'. The improvement commissioners disclaimed responsibility: they had handed over the street to the parishes through which it passed, but a dispute had arisen over who was responsible for repairs to it.[72] The new sewer which ran beneath it was soon found to be defective. Settlement and faulty workmanship combined to cause depressions in the roadways.[73] Meanwhile, *The Times* observed that 'The new line of Victoria-street is progressing, though slowly. More houses in the Scotch or continental fashion of flats are being erected'.[74] The *Illustrated London News* talked up progress, assuring its readers that the new flats were in great demand, 'being tenanted, as fast as they are ready, by families of great respectability, including leading members of the Legislature' (Figure 15.5).[75] But a year later, a correspondent to *The Times* noted that 'not half the cleared ground is occupied, and but one of the shops that have long been built has found a tenant'.[76]

Five years on from the opening of the street, *The Times* pulled out all the stops in an end-of-year editorial:

> In the very heart of this metropolis there are deserts as solitary as the great Sahara, and desolations as dreary as the site of Babylon. … But the most remarkable of the metropolitan deserts is that which has been reduced to its present condition at a comparatively recent era, between the Houses of Parliament and Buckingham Palace. Queen VICTORIA has the honour of giving her name to a region as waste and ruinated as Baalbec or Petra. Though a rude viaduct still crosses the plain, and the vast *cloaca* under it has not yet fallen in, they pass through an alternation of immense edifices seamed and scarred by rain and heat, foundations crumbling to dust, and enclosures covered with the rankest vegetation. … British improvement acts by fits and starts, and so does quickest that which is easiest done, – the work of destruction. … Our improvers first

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[71] Hollingshead, *Ragged London*, p. 103.

[72] 'Victoria-Street', *The Times*, 20 Feb. 1852, p. 2.

[73] 'The Victoria-Street Sewer', *The Times*, 27 July 1853, p. 8.

[74] *The Times*, 30 Aug. 1854, p. 4.

[75] 'The Westminster Improvements', *Illustrated London News*, 18 Nov. 1854.

[76] *The Times*, 24 Sept. 1855, p. 9.

> clear the land, and then sit down and consider what to do with it. That is the question. … Then, it appears that there is always an under-estimate of the expense. … Instead of sufficient means or power being provided for building at once over the whole of the ground, when it might answer the purpose of a respectable tradesman to take a shop in the expectation of immediate custom, there is a dead certainty of the buildings being stopped at the outset, or draggled out through several years, or never being proceeded with at all, as is usually the case in our largest improvements. … Then there is sure to be a financial bungle of one sort or another. In the Westminster improvements it is such an abyss that we decline to enter into it, but we believe it to have been an experiment towards an inconvertible paper currency, with the usual and infallible result.[77]

By August 1860 there had been little change, at least in the rhetoric. Asking for a select committee to investigate the Westminster Improvement Commission, Sir W. Gallwey referred to 'the scene of desolation exhibited in Victoria-street, where houses might be seen half in ruins and valuable building ground made a receptacle for filth and the resort of the profligate for purposes of vice and immorality'.[78] *The Times* leader writer again enjoyed himself, calling it 'a condition worse than the dirty outskirts of the most neglected and retrograde city of the Old world, or the rawest backwoods city of the New. Positively there are three-quarters of a mile of ruin and dirtheaps'.[79]

Finance again

The 'financial bungle' referred to by *The Times* was the attempt to raise capital by issuing bonds. Following the original act, a second act in 1847 had authorized the improvement commissioners to raise additional sums. In 1852, when they owned land valued at £400,000, the value of their outstanding mortgages was £128,000 and of bonds £130,000, an apparently healthy situation. But in the course of that year, they bought 121 properties, and by December 1854 they had incurred liabilities of over £1 million, borrowing £700,000 more than their property was worth. Almost £1 million was in circulation in bonds. In addition, the commissioners were alleged to have mortgaged the freehold property for £271,500, although its value in January 1856 was claimed to be only £167,200. It was also alleged that in 1854 alone, £575,000 of bonds had been issued, of which £475,000, without any proper security, were to William Mackenzie, the contractor responsible for the much publicized 'Scotch' flats.[80] The *Daily News* observed that 'whereas advances ought not to have been made to builders without a surveyor's certificate, the commissioners by degree became more and more lax on that point, and ultimately the practice of requiring a certificate fell into disuse'.[81] By January 1855, bonds were being traded at a quarter of their nominal value. The *Daily News* argued that if the legitimate value of the bonds really had depreciated by 75–80 per cent the commissioners ought immediately to wind up their affairs; if there was real security for the bonds, then the current holders were being treated unjustly.[82] A year later, the bonds were changing hands for only 8 per cent of their nominal value. There had been no audit and no accounts published since 1851, and an attempt in 1855 to reconstruct the accounts suggested that the commission had liabilities of approx £1.1 million, of which the bonds issued exceeded £700,000. The assets – more than £500,000 in sundry debts, including advances to builders, and £180,000 in property already built (calculated as £6,000 per annum in ground rents at a somewhat generous thirty years purchase) – fell short of liabilities by about £354,000. Given the current state of the money market, the most that might be raised was another £250,000, only sufficient to complete the principal line of the street and leave, after liquidation, a profit of £100,000. To obtain the £250,000 it was proposed transferring the powers of the commission to a joint stock company with limited liability, bonds being converted to shares.[83] As usual, it was small-scale investors – 'professional persons, clergymen, widows, and others' – who were most vulnerable.[84]

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[77] *The Times*, 27 Dec. 1856, p. 6.

[78] 'Westminster Improvement Commission', *The Times*, 21 Aug. 1860, p. 6; Hansard, 3, *Commons*, clx (20 Aug. 1860), cols. 1577–9.

[79] *The Times*, 21 Aug. 1860, p. 9.

[80] Hansard, 3, *Lords*, clxiii (13 June 1861), cols. 978–80; *The Times*, 24 Jan. 1856, p. 5.

This might have been regarded as a regrettable but all-too-normal financial disaster, but for the involvement of the state. It was constantly reiterated that the foundation of the enterprise was at least £80,000 of public money: £50,000 from the coal duties, with the government subsequently agreeing to advance an additional £30,000 at 4 per cent interest; and £30,000 from the local rates.[85] Thus, the commission 'was endowed with advantages which gave it much of the character of a government undertaking'. Critics demanded the appointment of a parliamentary committee 'to drag to light all the circumstances of the case, and to recommend such provisions as may at least protect the public from a repetition of it'.[86] When no inquiry was forthcoming, a consortium of bankers promoted a bill to force the repayment of their mortgages, but parliament rejected this on the grounds that if the institutional mortgagees were paid, there would be nothing left for the private bondholders. Alternatively, new commissioners might be appointed, with power to sell the land and half-finished houses and distribute the proceeds equitably among all the creditors.[87] *The Times* urged taking the whole operation into public ownership: the improvement commissioners had been endowed with the right to seize private property which they claimed was needed for a public improvement; so how much more did the state have the right to seize property to ensure such completion?[88]

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[81] 'Westminster Improvement Bonds', *Daily News*, 24 Feb. 1855.

[82] 'Westminster Improvement Bonds', *Daily News*, 9 Jan. 1855.

[83] *The Times*, 24 Jan. 1856, p. 5; 'Westminster Improvement Bonds', *Daily News*, 24 Feb. 1855; *The Times*, 27 Jan. 1855, p. 9.

[84] *The Times*, 24 Jan. 1856, p. 5.

[85] See, e.g., 'Metropolitan Improvement Bill', Hansard, 3, *Commons*, cxxiv (9 March 1853), cols. 1359–62.

[86] *The Times*, 24 Jan. 1856, p. 5.

Eventually, in May 1861, following the winding-up of the existing Westminster Improvement Commission, a Westminster Improvement and Encumbered Estates Bill authorized the appointment of a new commission with a new chairman.[89] It also facilitated the sale of land with 'an indestructible and marketable title', overcoming the legal encumbrances which had delayed some of the few developments that had gone ahead, such as the building of the Westminster Palace Hotel on the angle of Victoria Street and Tothill Street.[90] But by this time, another venture had more rapidly come to fruition that was to shape the future character of the street: the opening of Victoria Station on 1 October 1860.[91]

Afterword

As an example of metropolitan improvement, Victoria Street might seem to offer the ideal model of how not to do it. As an exercise in governmentality, the developers – both the commissioners and some of the building contractors – hardly set examples of responsible citizenship to emulate; and by the end of the nineteenth century, the reputation of the new residents of mansion flats was hardly more 'moral' than that of the slum-dwellers lambasted in the 1830s and 1840s. The flats attracted some notable residents – Alfred, Lord Tennyson in Albert Mansions, Sir Arthur Sullivan in Queen's Mansions[92] – but the police who accompanied

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[87] *The Times*, 17 July 1857, p. 11; 'Westminster Improvement Bonds', *Daily News*, 26 March 1855.

[88] *The Times*, 21 Aug. 1860, p. 9.

[89] Still to come was a dispute over who had been invited to serve as the new chairman (see 'Westminster Improvement Commission', *The Times*, 17 May 1862, p. 8).

[90] *The Times*, 15 Nov. 1858, p. 10; 'Westminster Improvement Commission', *The Times*, 23 Aug. 1860, p. 6.

[91] F. Sheppard, *London 1808–70: the Infernal Wen* (1971), pp. 146–7.

[92] M. A. von Zedlitz, 'Interviews with eminent musicians. No. 3 – Sir Arthur Sullivan', *The Strand Musical Magazine* (Jan.–June 1895), pp. 169–74; I am grateful to Brian Jones for drawing this reference to my attention. See also A. Goodman, *Gilbert and Sullivan's London* (2000), pp. 95–7.

Charles Booth's investigators updating the poverty map in 1898 were more interested in the evidence of 'kept women', 'houses of accommodation' and 'queer *ménages*' in ostensibly respectable blocks;[93] and George Gissing set one of his most memorable minor characters – the young widow Mrs. Widdowson, anxious to use the money she had inherited from her former husband as a bait to marry into the aristocracy – in a Victoria Street flat.[94] Gustave Doré's dramatic representation of the Devil's Acre, a surviving part of the Westminster Rookery, and George Gissing's underrated early novel, *The Unclassed*, set – in its first edition (1884) – in the slums of Westminster, both bear witness to the unfinished business of improvement; and Gissing's and Charles Booth's references to 'open doors' and to gaggles of women and children gossiping and playing in these slum streets indicate that residents had still not learnt the middle-class differentiation of private from public space.[95]

It is customary to belittle street improvements in nineteenth-century London as piecemeal, penny-pinching and lacking in vision compared to continental developments such as Haussmann's Paris, the Vienna Ringstrasse or Barcelona's Eixample. But all these examples date from the second half of the century and, in the case of Vienna and Barcelona, along with other earlier but less extensive improvements, such as the Ludwigstrasse and Konigsplatz in Munich, the Passeig de Gràcia in Barcelona or the Champs Élysées in Paris, were extensions into relatively undeveloped areas of redundant fortifications or suburban smallholdings. They involved little displacement of existing residences or businesses that expected substantial compensation. They also, in most cases, mobilized the power of strong central or municipal governments, neither of which could be invoked to force through ambitious improvements in 1830s or 1840s London.[96]

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[93] Charles Booth police notebooks, B360, pp. 201–5 <http://booth.lse.ac.uk/notebooks/b360/jpg/201.html> [accessed 16 May 2010].

[94] G. Gissing, *The Odd Women* (1893; 1980), pp. 117–18.

[95] G. Doré and B. Jerrold, *London: a Pilgrimage* (1872), p. 43; G. Gissing, *The Unclassed* (3 vols., 1884). In the revised edition (1895), Gissing moved the slums to an unspecified 'East End' (see R. Dennis, 'George Gissing and the "other" East End', in *Writing Otherness: the Pathways of George Gissing's Imagination*, ed. C. Huguet (Haren, 2011), pp. 35–48. On 'open doors' in Chadwick Street, Westminster, see Charles Booth police notebooks, B360, pp. 248–9 <http://booth.lse.ac.uk/notebooks/b360/jpg/249.html> [accessed 16 May 2010]; on 'Litany Lane', Westminster, see Gissing, *The Unclassed*, i. 278.

[96] A. Sutcliffe, *Towards the Planned City: Germany, Britain, the United States and France, 1780–1914* (Oxford, 1981); A. Lees and L. H. Lees, *Cities and the Making of Modern Europe, 1750–1914* (Cambridge, 2007); R. Hughes, *Barcelona* (1996); C. E. Schorske, *Fin-de-Siècle Vienna: Politics and Culture* (New York, 1980).

Victoria Street was being laid out just as many European cities were experiencing the traumas of revolutionary movements which, in their social democratic or counter-revolutionary outcomes, facilitated these cities' elaborate plans of the 1850s and 1860s. Where Victoria Street does bear comparison with continental practice is in its association with the same residential form – the four- to six-storey, middle-class apartment house – and the same type of debt-financing. David Harvey observes that the principle differences between Haussmann and his predecessors in Paris lay in 'an extraordinary change of scale' and a shift from 'fiscal conservatism' to development dependent on credit, fictitious capital and creative accounting.[97] By the time Haussmann was forced out of office, this fragile artifice was near to collapse. As Harvey concludes, Haussmann and Napoleon III had 'placed the state at the mercy of financial markets and paid the price (as have many states since)'.[98] In the case of Victoria Street, the consequences were less far-reaching, as befits the much smaller scale of the undertaking. Nevertheless, many small investors, and the area as a whole throughout the 1850s and early 1860s, 'paid the price' in terms of personal financial ruin and communal environmental degradation.

In the longer term, however, our evaluation may be more generous. In terms of drainage and sanitation, and notwithstanding the initial problems with the new sewer, the scheme made a marginal area attractive for residence. Perhaps because the street was not immediately colonized by conventional land uses, such as the fashionable town-houses envisaged on the first plans, it provided the space for more innovative developments: mansion flats, luxury hotels, office chambers, a co-operative department store, a Catholic cathedral, a site for an experimental horse tramway.[99] We may lament that penny-pinching provided a street only eighty feet wide including pedestrian pavements, too narrow for the height of the mansion flats that lined it, and too narrow to function as a boulevard that was pleasant for strolling as well as efficient for vehicular traffic. But the ambition to improve the whole area led to an informal, market-led zoning of middle-class flats on and close to the main street, symbiotically connected to blocks of model dwellings on either side that, for all the uncongenial redevelopment of Victoria Street itself in the 1960s, still provides a richly textured architectural and social fabric.

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[97] D. Harvey, *Paris, Capital of Modernity* (New York, 2006), pp. 13, 82.

[98] Harvey, *Paris*, p. 144.

[99] For further details of all these ventures, see Watson, *Westminster and Pimlico Past*.

16. Converging lines, dissecting circles: railways and the socialist ideal in London and Paris at the turn of the twentieth century

Carlos López Galviz

Throughout the nineteenth century, railways in London and Paris were presented as instruments of urban change and social reform in line with the coincidences as well as the discrepancies between the interests of railway companies, on the one hand, and those of the municipal and local authorities of the two cities, on the other. In the process, the connections between densely built central and inner districts, constantly growing suburbs and the provision of affordable and rapid means of transport were redefined according to whose interests were at stake. The conception of an orchestrated railway development for the two cities involved formulating a co-ordinated plan which was necessarily subject to the conditions imposed by the inertia of administrative and business practices as well as the weight of the institutions which decided on the extent and type of what could be implemented.

In this chapter, I will look at the extent to which the railway plans produced in London and Paris towards the end of the nineteenth century were both a result and a constitutive part of the process of how the question of the public benefit was understood in the two cities. I will discuss the ideas behind one of the latest plans for the Métropolitain in Paris, before its construction at the turn of the twentieth century, and their relation to the municipal authorities' struggle for legitimacy. I will contrast these with the attempts to reorganize railway provision in London according to a co-ordinated vision and the common effort of the central authorities, a view put forward by figures such as Charles Booth. I will, therefore, present a relatively fragmented vision of the French capital against a distinctive example of the comprehensive rearrangement of housing and railways in London.

The 'city railway' in the English and French capitals

Since the 1830s, when discourses, visions and ideas of how to conceive of railways within London and Paris first emerged, the problem of severe street congestion was articulated in close relation to metropolitan improvement and overall reform across institutional, legislative and social practices. Reformers such as Fl. de Kérizouet in Paris and Charles Pearson in London, for example, made their contemporaries aware of the need to devise an effective connection between housing and transport issues. Towards the 1860s, the planning and construction of the Metropolitan and District lines in London, and the several debates of the municipal and departmental councils in Paris, led to the realization of the possibilities inherent in the operation of city railway lines as an instrument for the development of the two cities. In London, the District line, the first section of which opened in 1868, was conceived as the southern part of an 'inner circle' which was to help relieve the streets in the city centre from their congestion by further differentiating between passenger services and goods traffic, for the most part handled by the main line companies. In Paris, the newly incorporated suburbs (1860) prompted the emergence of ideas concerning circles and transversals that were to connect the centre and periphery, to some extent reinforcing the division created by the city walls. A section of the suburban railway ring or Ceinture began operation in 1852, specializing in goods traffic and restricted to linking the suburbs that had no direct connection to the city centre. The introduction of new technologies in urban transport, and specifically electricity, constituted the key issue from the late 1880s to the 1900s. The 'tube' lines of London were conceived of as a construct of trains operated by electric traction and steel tunnels laid down deeper into the city's soil. The often rehearsed issue of connecting the polluted centre with the healthy suburbs continued to be an important part of the statements that promoters and authorities alike made in connection with the opening of the City and South London (later part of the Northern line) in 1890, the Central London in 1900, and the Bakerloo, the Piccadilly and subsequent tube lines built during the first decade of the twentieth century. In Paris, the first six lines of the city railway network built between 1898 and 1910 became a reflection of the dispute between the socialist ideals of the city council and the interests of the state and the main line railway companies. The boundary created by the city walls was replicated as a result of the dispute: main line regional railway services and the exclusively local new transport system were kept separate and disconnected.

Developments in railway transport in the two cities were determined by the co-ordination of the agencies and structures inherent in two clearly different contexts and the ways in which these changed during the nineteenth century. Despite the increasingly significant role of a new metropolitan authority, the London County Council (LCC), created in 1889, the predominant role of private initiatives seemed to contribute to the generally fragmented organization of railways in London. In Paris, the course of the plans as they were built was largely characterized by the antagonism between the national, regional and local authorities involved. At the same time, all the projects and debates about how to design, execute and consolidate an effective city railway network for passenger services within the two cities demonstrated a profound dissatisfaction about how their growth seemed to exclude certain segments of the population, notably the working classes and the poor. Both Pearson and Kérizouet had identified this trend since the 1840s, outlining what they thought were the most effective ways to deal with its consequences. Not much appeared to have changed by the 1890s and 1900s, as the city railway plans continued to give place to dreams in their articulate and systematic visions of how to alter what past practices had created. How to translate those dreams and visions into the real blueprints of two modern cities was, therefore, at the core of the future of railway transport in the English and French capitals.

The socialist interpretation of railway interests: Paris

The range of city railway projects produced in Paris by the 1880s varied from circular lines or lines traversing the city from east to west and north to south, to more elaborate versions which included several means of traction, the combination of which constituted relatively comprehensive and sophisticated systems. P. Villain's '*Le 107ème projet de Chemin de Fer Métropolitain*', published in 1887, was among these. It consisted of seven different sections, including railway lines, funiculars, junctions and a central station next to the Hôtel de Ville for the exclusive use of passengers and postal services.[1] As with many earlier projects, Villain's vision remained confined to theories; but his ideas, like those of the men who had been and were still involved in the formulation of city railway plans since the 1830s, enhanced the body of expertise about the options available to the city and, more importantly, about how specific aspects of a plan could make it more feasible than others.

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[1] The sections were, in order: (1) an external line penetrating Paris; (2) an internal line; (3) the line of Bois de Boulogne; (4) three funiculars – Gare de l'Est to Châtelet, Gare St. Lazare to Collège Chaptal, and Gare Montparnasse to Rue du Louvre; (5) a central station, next to the Hôtel de Ville, between the Rue de Rivoli and the river embankments, dedicated to post services and passengers only; (6) a line linking the central station, the Halles and the Hôtel des Postes, for goods traffic only and entirely underground (an additional goods terminal was planned in the Canal St. Martin, between the Rue de Faubourg du Temple and the Avenue de la République); and (7) junctions with main line railways. For a description of each section, see P. Villain, *Le 107ème projet de Chemin de Fer Métropolitain* (Paris, 1887) (extract from *Annales industrielles* (30 Oct. 1887), pp. 8–13); the design of the central station was based on the model of the new 'postal terminus' (*gare aux messageries*) of the Compagnie d'Ouest (see *Annales industrielles* (30 Oct. 1887), pp. 17–18).

According to Villain, two main conditions were particularly important in order to conceive of a coherent system of circulation for Paris: the availability of city spaces which could be used effectively for the design and construction of new transport lines; and the technical aspects related to the choice of traction and infrastructure. But there was another dimension, distinctly decisive and generally prevalent during the last quarter of the nineteenth century, namely, the political struggle between the municipal and national authorities that was to determine the execution of any city railway plan in the French capital.

In April 1886, the minister of public works, Charles Baïhaut, presented to the national authorities the bill (*projet de loi*) for a new city railway project.[2] After consultation with the municipal council, in May the project received the first notice of approval by the ponts et chaussées, the national corps of engineers. The project was then examined by a municipal commission appointed to assess the extent to which the plan responded to the transport and related needs of the city. Concern about how best to define these needs was one of the dominant features after the events of the Commune in 1871. Since that date, tensions between the national and municipal authorities had intensified: they would often find themselves adopting antagonistic positions, particularly with regard to projects such as the Métropolitain which was invested with significant symbolic value for the French capital.[3]

The commission highlighted the importance of choosing both a particular constructive system (whether on elevated viaducts or underground) and the type of labour to be employed in building it. Technical expertise and firsthand experience could be hired from cities where similar transport infrastructures had been built (Berlin, London or New York), but the commission insisted on employing local labour, clearly stipulating the requirement to observe measures which were characterized as 'protectionist and socialist'.[4]

After numerous exchanges between the municipal council and the minister, the project was legally divided into 'essential' and 'non-essential' lines. A bilateral agreement (*contrat synallagmatique*) for the first essential lines already existed between the state and the concessionaire, on the one hand, and the state and the railway companies, on the other, and so any changes to these terms were difficult to implement.[5] Largely as a result of additional negotiations and municipal pressure, the left bank section of the circular line proposed in the plan, between the Gare d'Orléans and Trocadéro (crossing the River Seine and terminating on the right bank), was abandoned and opened to further study by the commission (see Figure 16.1). A revised layout was proposed after consultation with representatives of the *arrondissements* directly involved. The new line was to benefit the working classes and link the peripheral districts of the south (XIII and XIV) with areas such as Montparnasse and Maison Blanche, which generally lacked communication with the rest of Paris.

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[2] The following account is based on the report by Lefebvre-Roncier to the municipal council (see Conseil Municipal de Paris (hereafter CMP), *Rapports et Documents* (1886), lxix).

[3] I discuss this in detail in ch. 3 of 'Polis of the metro: the introduction of the city railway in 19th-century London and Paris' (unpublished University of London PhD thesis, 2009).

[4] Other demands of the municipal council included workmen's fares, the use of national products and equipment for the construction works and the percentage of the foreign workforce (see the anonymous account in *Journal des économistes*, ser. 4, xxxv (1886), 148).

Lefebvre-Roncier, reporter to the council, stressed the importance of a change to the underground route originally proposed as it was to introduce a direct service to the market area of the Halles: a new 'central subterranean line' between the Gare St. Lazare and the Place de la République (considered earlier by studies of 1883) was subsequently added to the project and presented as one of the commission's achievements. According to Lefebvre-Roncier, by adopting the new line and receiving the final approval of the ministry (*gain de cause*) the project was invested with 'the definitive character of a true and very Parisian Métropolitain'. A western junction between the Ceinture and the 'nouvelle Ceinture' drawn, after consultation with the southern districts, from the Place de l'Étoile to the Porte Maillot, was also included in the new version of the project.

The effects of an economic crisis which started in 1882 were still apparent in 1886.[6] In Lefebvre-Roncier's view, however, there was 'a political and social interest' in the pursuit of an enterprise of such a scale and character in that, despite the vast capital required for its execution, the project could encourage 'the recovery of the job market ('reprise du travail') and the progressive return of the working classes to [their] well-being'. The need to consider and weigh local conditions regarding the employment of 'the

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[5] As D. Larroque asserts, the combinations used in the contracts were 'particularly complex'; they incorporated, e.g., interest on capital guaranteed by the state and the tolls that the companies were to pay, and set revenues based on the traffic figures guaranteed by the companies (D. Larroque, 'Le Métropolitain: histoire d'un projet', in *Paris et ses transports XIXe–XXe siècles: deux siècles de décisions pour la ville et sa région*, ed. D. Larroque, M. Margairaz and P. Zembri (Paris, 2002), pp. 61–2).

[6] According to André, the end of the crisis, at least four years later, came when financial indicators fell to the minimum levels known during immediately preceding crises. Interestingly 1882 figures showed no effects on passenger traffic but only on the transport of goods (M. André, *Note sur les variations de la circulation dans les rues de Paris de 1872 à 1887* (Paris, 1888), pp. 34, 44). See also B. Marchand, *Paris: histoire d'une ville XIXe–XXe siècles* (Paris, 1993).

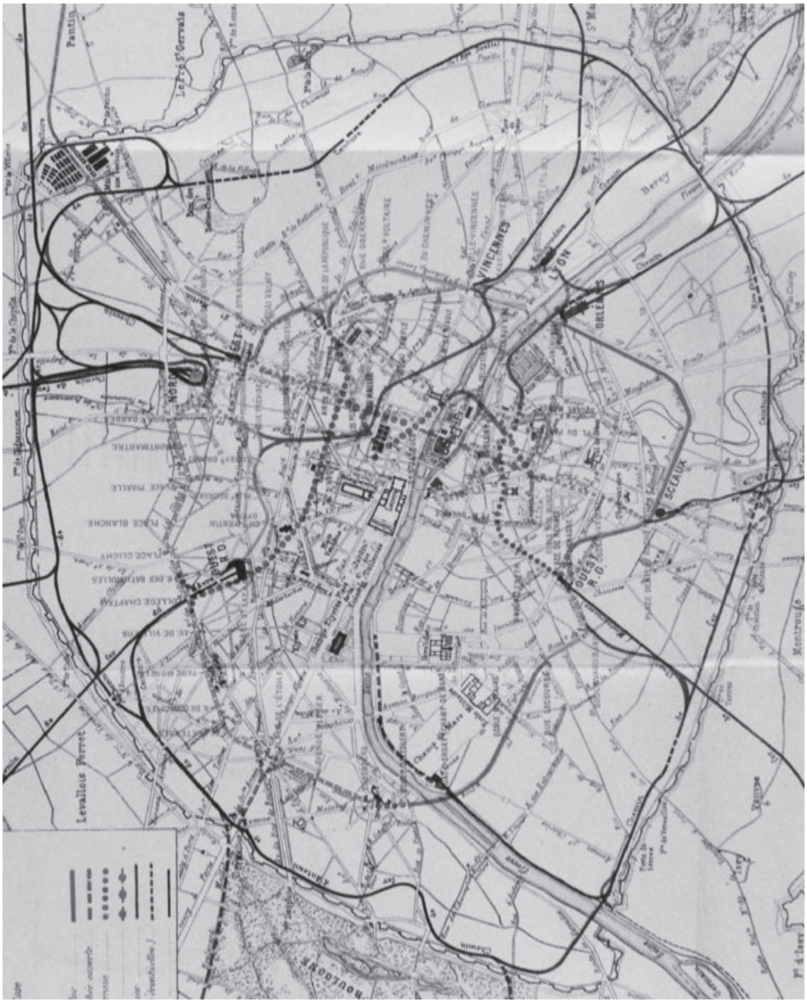
Pantin
Le Pré St Gervais
Levallois Perret
Boulogne
Montrouge
Bercy
VINCENNES
LYON
ORLEANS
NORD
OUEST R.D.
OUEST R.G.
SCEAUX
PLACE BLANCHE
PLACE CLICHY
MONTMARTRE

Figure 16.1. Chemin de Fer Métropolitain de Paris as amended for the session of 31 May 1886 of the municipal council. The ministerial project was subject to modifications introduced by the local authorities. Note the central full line connecting to the Halles, one of the changes presented as an achievement of the negotiations by the city authorities.

Source: Archives Nationales series F14 9183.

workers of all the Parisian official authorities' (*corps d'état*) had been made explicit to the ministry which was responsible for the execution of the works. The enterprise was thus to become a symbol which was 'republican, national, and communal at once'. Although executed within the territorial jurisdiction of the capital, the Métropolitain could be 'a grand national instrument of employment [which] will firmly cooperate in the renaissance of public prosperity', through the approval and support of the national authorities.[7]

Both the departmental and municipal councils issued their notices in early July. In a letter of 21 July 1886, Baïhaut demanded that changes be made to the municipal notice and so a modified version was produced on 6 August. A second bill was ready in October, with a railway commission reporting to the chambre des deputés on 27 October 1886. The project was eventually dismissed in July 1887 by the chamber, after a majority opposed the passing of the bill.[8]

The institutional structure of city council, regional prefect and the several national authorities, together with the economic and political elements of that structure, determined the kinds of interests which were at stake when city railway plans were produced, debated and rejected in the French capital. This turned the process into a seemingly endless debate with little or no prospect of a decision, and even less of its implementation.[9] Moreover, the seemingly articulate visions of the future of Parisian transport were diluted in an atmosphere of marked antagonism which was, in turn, a result of the friction between the institutional levels involved and the ways in which each exercised its influence. 'Such is our present condition', affirmed Yves Guyot in 1883, before becoming Baïhaut's successor:

> the two prefectures [of the Seine and police] always at war between themselves and with the Municipal Council – an enormous machine, unable to move without a friction by which it wears itself out without any useful result; wheels revolving in opposite directions; the public interest crushed and injured at every turn; gigantic efforts without result; nobody responsible for anything; a complete and hopeless anarchy;- this is what it has come to because the central authority is determined to be the master of Paris, and leave it but the shadow of municipal liberty.[10]

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[7] CMP, *Rapports et Documents* (1886), lxix. 17.

[8] Larroque, 'Le Métropolitain', p. 68; for a detailed discussion of Baïhaut's project, see Larroque, 'Le Métropolitain', pp. 60–8.

[9] For a helpful scheme of the various bodies involved and how their separate agencies circulated in the institutional structure, see the 'Itinerary of a project of the Métropolitain of general interest' (Larroque, 'Le Métropolitain', p. 64, fig. 7); contrast with the scheme depicting the adoption of the municipal project (Larroque, 'Le Métropolitain', p. 82, fig. 14).

[10] Y. Guyot, 'The municipal organization of Paris', quoted in C. K. Yearley, 'The "provincial party" and the megalopolises: London, Paris, and New York, 1850–1910', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, xv (1973), 84.

The seemingly irreconcilable dichotomy between the local interest concerned with the provision of a system exclusively devoted to urban traffic and the general interest associated with the national railway network and, therefore, the main line companies, developed into a conflict between the national establishment and the emerging autonomy of the local authorities. This conflict or antagonism hindered the implementation of any project before the opening of the first line in 1900.[11] According to Frederic Sauton, reporting on one of the several commissions created to evaluate the plans produced by the municipality and other parties, the process for implementing the city railway went 'from setback to setback and abandonment to abandonment'.[12] The question of how to unite under the precepts of one project the interests of the state, the city and private initiative was difficult, often placing political and economic interests in opposition.[13]

In November 1897, the general council of the ponts et chaussées declared the Métropolitain to be of a municipal character and, therefore, restricted to local interests, which to some extent provided an end to the debate.[14] Three amendments were made to the terms of the bill by the conseil d'état, the ministry of war and the council of the ponts et chaussées: first, the gauge of the rolling stock was changed from 2.10 to 2.40 metres in order to increase operational capacity; second, the gauge of rails supporting bigger trains was changed accordingly to 1.44 metres instead of the 1.30 metres initially proposed by the municipal authorities; and, finally, the conditions of labour were altered to ensure a minimum salary and limited working hours per day.[15]

The legal terms for the execution of the works were subsequently defined by the act of 30 March 1898 which further sanctioned the 'public utility' of the project.[16] The deliberation around the act during the municipal session reflected how much disagreement and, at times, vicious opposition there remained among the city councillors. As the Seine prefect asserted, no project other than the Métropolitain had been subjected to such detailed study and debate by the various governmental bodies, yet once the debate seemed to have ended, further objections were found and disagreements fiercely expressed.[17]

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[11] For a summary of projects produced under the 'private initiative', see P. Reverard, *Des conditions d'exploitation du Chemin de Fer Métropolitain de Paris* (Paris, 1905), pp. 72–8.

[12] *CMP procès-verbal* (5 July 1889), quoted in A. Mitchell, 'Le métro: bataille technologique', in K. Bowie and S. Texier, *Paris et ses chemins de fer* (Paris, 2003), p. 133; see also Larroque, 'Le Métropolitain', p. 70.

[13] According to Larroque, the debate around the city railway and its interest, initiated again in 1889, was determined by wider structural issues in the general political context rather than the choice between local or general interests, specifically the question of 'the Republic or an authoritarian regime' (Larroque, 'Le Métropolitain', p. 69).

[14] For a detailed account of the process leading up to the decision, see Larroque, 'Le Métropolitain', pp. 80–7.

[15] See CMP, *Rapports et Documents* (1898), xxiv; see also J. Robert, *Notre Métro* (Paris, 1967), p. 25; S. Hallsted-Baumert, 'The Métropolitain: technology, space and the creation of urban identities in fin-de-siècle Paris' (unpublished New York University PhD thesis, 1999); Larroque, 'Le Métropolitain', pp. 87–8.

The 1898 act established a city railway network of local interest, with trains operated by electric traction and focused on the 'transport of passengers and their hand luggage'.[18] The initial contract was granted to the Compagnie Générale de Traction, which associated itself with the Établissements Schneider du Creusot in order to build and operate the planned network, indicating a significant shift in the financial model. The new industries concerned with the production and distribution of electricity seemed to offer a novel challenge to the position normally occupied by the main line railway companies in terms of financing the project.[19] This would be accentuated further with the agreement between the final *concessionaire*, the Compagnie du Chemin de Fer Métropolitain de Paris (CFMP),[20] and the Société d'Électricité de Paris concerning the construction of the generating plant at St. Denis, in operation from 1906. Foreign capital, notably from the Belgian conglomerate of Général Baron Édouard Empain, was to become increasingly central to the operation of the network as the twentieth century progressed.[21]

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[16] The term public utility had been used in connection with several other lines, such as the Grande Ceinture (1875) (see Larroque, 'Le Métropolitain', p. 50).

[17] For the prefect's statement, see *CMP procès verbal* (30 March 1898), p. 357. For further illustration of the conflicting processes, even after decisions had been taken, see, e.g., another report by Berthelot concerning the financing of one of the additional lines ('Établissement d'une ligne métropolitain complémentaire …', *CMP procès verbal* (1 July 1898), pp. 54–7).

[18] This is the first article of the act or 'Projet de loi adopté par la Chambre des Députés ayant pour objet la déclaration d'utilité publique du chemin de fer métropolitain' (see *CMP procès verbal* (30 March 1898)); see also E. Hubault, *Omnibus, tramways, Métropolitain, nord-sud: supplément au recueil annoté de lois, décrets, ordonnances, arrêtés, décisions concernant les transports en commun, etc.* (Paris, 1910), also quoted in Robert, *Notre Métro*, pp. 25–6; and Mitchell, 'Le métro', p. 142.

[19] Larroque, 'Le Métropolitain', p. 78.

[20] The terms of the transition between the initial concessionaire and the CFMP were considered and adopted by the city council during the session of 27 June 1898 (see Berthelot's report 'Constitution de la Société concessionnaire du Métropolitain', *CMP procès verbal* (27 June 1898), p. 835; and the subsequent deliberations during the same session (*CMP délibérations* (27 June 1898), pp. 463–4)).

[21] For a brief discussion of Empain's role in the provision of electricity for the Métropolitain network, see A. Beltran, 'Une victoire commune: l'alimentation en énergie électrique du Métropolitain (1re moitié du XXe siècle)', in *Métropolitain: l'autre dimension de ville*, ed. M. Merger and others (Paris, 1988), pp. 115–17.

The lines built between 1898 and 1910 covered the city from east to west and north to south while also reinforcing the circular route of the Ceinture, although following the external boulevards instead. The distance between rail tracks was the same as that of the main line railways, but the operational gauge remained different. Main line trains were practically excluded from the metropolitan network since the dimensions of the tunnels accommodated the city railway cars (2.40 metres wide) and not the national rolling stock (3.20 metres wide).[22]

To some extent the legal terms defined by the 1898 act represented a compromise between the city and the state, after the national authorities had succeeded in persuading the city councillors to preserve a standard gauge for strategic (military) reasons. The urban transport system ultimately built constituted in this sense an affirmation of local sovereignty against the exercise of influence and power by different state bodies. Furthermore, the earlier plans which had placed Paris as the central node of the national railway network in the 1840s were transformed by the decision to build a separate railway system within the city. Costs were reduced in the construction of the tunnels; direct junctions with the existing national and regional railway network were made impracticable; and national and urban traffic were rendered distinct, separate and disconnected from one another.[23]

On the other hand, the CFMP would become a significant referent in terms of the employment conditions of its labour force, which included: 'statutory employment, minimum salary, working hours reduced to ten, a resting day per week', full payment covering absent days due to sickness, and 'free medical and pharmaceutical service', among other things. This was considered a triumph by the municipal council, which at the time had a socialist majority. More importantly, and as Larroque suggests, this was 'the way to a social change without revolution', which would serve as an important precedent for new disputes later in the twentieth century.[24]

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[22] See Robert, *Notre Métro*, pp. 25–6; N. Evenson, *Paris: a Century of Change, 1878–1978* (New Haven and London, 1979), pp. 105–6; Larroque, 'Le Métropolitain', pp. 87–90; Mitchell, 'Le métro', p. 143.

[23] The difference between the city railway network and the network of main line companies would increase as the 20th century progressed, regardless of initial plans to connect them. Larroque characterizes them as 'two parallel histories' joined only by 'the disappearance of the railway companies from the urban scene' and the consolidation of a regional transport service and subsequent creation of the Régie Autonome des Transports Parisiens (RATP) in the 1930s (see Larroque, 'Le Métropolitain', pp. 90–4). See also, G. Dupuy, 'Les stations nodales du métro de Paris: le réseau métropolitain et la revanche de l'histoire', *Annales de géographie*, dlxix (1993), 17–31.

[24] Particularly in sectors related to public transport and utilities such as gas and electricity (see Larroque, 'Le Métropolitain', pp. 86–7).

The contested understanding of the public benefit: London

The unanimous conclusion of two conferences held at Walworth, London in January and February 1901 was: 'That a complete system of transportation radiating from urban centres, and which shall be cheap, rapid, and under municipal ownership, is a primary step towards dealing with the housing problem'. The resolution could be applied to large towns and cities across Britain, but it was the situation in London that required the most urgent solutions. Charles Booth, whose work on the *Life and Labour of the People of London* provided one of the most detailed and comprehensive accounts of the living and working conditions of the population ever produced in relation to the English capital, was the conference's main speaker and a key advocate of 'Improved Means of Locomotion' as a way to solve the housing problem. According to Booth, the constant change in the patterns of residence and occupation across and within all London districts, the constant flow of migrants in search of work and life opportunities, the generalized lack of building space in the central and inner districts, and 'the requirements of a higher standard of life and health' among all social classes were the key factors affecting the housing provision of the capital.[25] Prosperity, he argued, was inextricably linked to these factors and constituted, therefore, an important part of the solution: 'as all the causes of pressure are resultants of prosperity, there can, at bottom, be no economic difficulty in dealing with the evils of over-crowding. The difficulty is one of administration only … The question is solely in what way or ways the Public Authorities should interfere; how far they should go in any direction; and how the cost of what they undertake should be borne.'[26]

Booth's proposal consisted of 'a large and really complete scheme of railways underground and overhead, as well as a net-work of tram lines on the surface; providing adequately for short as well as long journeys. A system', he said, 'extending beyond the present metropolitan boundaries into the outskirts of London, wherever the population has gone or may go'.[27] Contrary to what seemed the general consensus of parliamentary sessions at the time, Booth's scheme subordinated underground to overhead lines and separate interests in the operation of private lines to the public function of the municipal authorities, in other words the LCC. The most important matter was to consolidate affordable means of transport which would make adequate and sufficient housing accessible to the entire London populace. In this respect, Booth's ideas were to become part of the broader concern about the role railways could play in relation to social reform and metropolitan improvement, which characterized discourses and debates in parliament and other specialized London circles throughout the nineteenth century.

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[25] This and the previous quote are from London School of Economics and Political Science, Archives (hereafter LSE), Booth Collection, Charles Booth, *Improved Means of Locomotion as a First Step towards the Cure of the Housing Difficulties of London* (1901), p. 10.

[26] Booth, *Improved Means of Locomotion*, p. 11.

[27] Booth, *Improved Means of Locomotion*, pp. 15–16.

Booth's argument in favour of a centralized authority was not a claim for centralization but rather for a scheme which was to build upon the existing trends of decentralized communities that preserved a connection to the city centre: 'Such centres are to be found now on all sides of London, with brilliant shops, perhaps a Town Hall, and probably a theatre; streets full of people; and always the jingle of a tramway line. The growth of such local life in London during the past decade is very noticeable'.[28] As a result of his reading and understanding of the transformation which London experienced at the time, Booth conceived of a generalized plan that would allow the metropolis to grow in an orderly fashion in all directions along transport lines connecting the periphery to the centre, precisely the type of plan that the often disjointed efforts of private railway companies frustrated.

The trend of the city's constant growth and new communities becoming part of an ever-extending metropolitan construct was a recurring theme in the English capital, particularly during the second half of the nineteenth century. H. G. Wells, for example, understood means of locomotion, especially railways, as instigators, indeed direct causes, of the new types of relationships which seemed to develop between individuals and the communities and localities of which they were a part: 'A large proportion of our population to-day, a large and an increasing proportion, has no localized interests at all as an eighteenth-century person would have understood locality'.[29] In Wells's view, the inefficacy of traditional structures and practices in relation to the new processes taking place within and without urban and rural communities was a central element of the situation:

> if, while this expansion of the real communities goes on, you keep to the old boundary lines, you will find an increasing proportion of your population straddling those lines. You will find that many people who once slept and worked and reared their children and worshipped and bought all in one area, are now, as it were, delocalized; they have overflowed their containing locality, and they live in one area, they work in another, and they go to shop in a third.

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[28] Booth, *Improved Means of Locomotion*, p. 18.

[29] H. G. Wells, 'A paper on administrative areas read before the Fabian Society', appendix to *Mankind in the Making* (1906), p. 161.

> And the only way in which you can localize them again is to expand your areas to their new scale.[30]

The use of terms such as delocalization and decentralization was related to the size of London and, more precisely, to the way in which relatively autonomous villages and their communities had become part of the metropolis. Transport lines constituted an alternative means for consolidating a coherent whole out of separate and distinct parts. The question was thus not only whether or not new facilities provided sufficient and adequate connections, but also, and perhaps more importantly, how to make sense of the new relation between home and workplace and its effect upon the administration and space of the English capital.

Booth's scheme consisted of '5 lines radiating outwards from the Bank' connecting at various points, extending from the outlying districts and linking up to the existing regional and city railway lines: 'the resulting network would resemble a spider's web and every part would be readily accessible from every other part'.[31] Fares should be uniform and cheap[32] while the frequency of trains should be increased to three minutes, minimizing stoppage times.[33] Stops would be at fixed points, providing pedestrian crossings; speed increased only in direct relation to safety; widening of thoroughfares would be recommended if and when necessary.[34]

A significant objection to Booth's scheme was the longstanding problem of how best to join public and private interests, particularly in relation to the issue of land and tax rating. Agreements were in place concerning the interests of local councils and landowners, which would be challenged by the execution of the plan.[35] Moreover, Booth's ideas also involved a new socio-economic model for London and British towns more widely: 'It is quite possible to imagine all organized methods of locomotion (like all roads) as State or municipal monopolies, without any serious shock to the individualist basis of life; but', as Booth asserted, 'short of the wildest scheme of socialism, quite impossible to conceive of arranging the entire housing of the Nation on that plan'.[36]

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[30] Wells, 'Paper on administrative areas', p. 162. For a brief discussion of Wells's ideas, see K. Young and P. Garside, *Metropolitan London: Politics and Urban Change 1837–1981* (1982), pp. 109–11.

[31] See LSE, Booth Collection, A 55, the (draft of a) 'paper on law on transport improvements in connection with its housing problem' read on 29 March 1901 before the Political Economy Club, entitled 'Could the housing problem of London be solved by improved means of communication?' (hereafter 'Could the housing problem of London be solved?'), p. 13; for a general sketch of the lines, see 'Could the housing problem of London be solved?', p. 12.

[32] 'Could the housing problem of London be solved?', pp. 12, 14; a preliminary breakdown of fares according to four types of service, zones and/or systems included: 'any distance on the main surface lines or on the underground inner circle', 'any distance on the surface connecting lines', 'the whole tube system' and 'the outer metropolitan railway system' ('Could the housing problem of London be solved?', p. 14).

[33] In relation to the latter, Booth affirmed, 'we have a good deal to learn from the Americans' ('Could the housing problem of London be solved?', p. 15).

[34] 'Could the housing problem of London be solved?', pp. 15–16.

[35] 'Could the housing problem of London be solved?', pp. 20–2.

The fear of encouraging monopolies through municipal or state intervention related to the generalized resistance against claims for centralization and co-ordination across all districts in London.[37] At the same time, the interpretation of the public benefit was an important element in deciding whether or not railways, and transport facilities at large, might be turned into instruments in the hands of government for solving housing problems.

The public benefit was related to the type of services railway companies were to provide, which, if somewhat restricted to a transport facility, remained inextricably linked to how housing evolved and changed, particularly in the English capital. The connection between transport and housing issues, on which figures such as Charles Booth insisted, had become particularly clear towards the end of the nineteenth century.[38] But how best to realize that seemingly obvious connection in the face of the inertia and obduracy of institutionalized practices proved to be a fundamental problem: 'Private enterprise will seize on the most profitable routes and reject all others. Public enterprise will look to the profit on one part of the system to help those not less necessary parts (from a public point of view) of which the working is less, or perhaps not at all, profitable'.[39] The existing model according to which companies sought official powers for the operation of their lines generally hindered any attempts at co-ordinating private and public interests. This was precisely the model that characterized railway policy in Britain throughout the nineteenth century: focusing on the protection of individual liberties led private companies to enter a domain that was to restrict the formation of monopolies. The public benefit in this context was perceived as a relatively fair realm, open to all, and in which competition would stimulate growth

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[36] Booth, *Improved Means of Locomotion*, p. 19.

[37] For a thorough discussion of this, see Young and Garside, *Metropolitan London*.

[38] Several royal commissions and select committees were appointed to this end (see, e.g., *Notes of Conference held at the Board of Trade on 29th of June 1893, with Representatives of the London County Council and Representatives of the Railway Companies Having Termini in the Metropolis* (1894)).

[39] Booth, *Improved Means of Locomotion*, p. 22.

– even though outcomes often demonstrated the opposite.[40] The disparity between privately operated railway lines competing against each other and the need to conceive of transport and housing issues as a coherent whole was a direct consequence of such an understanding of the public benefit.

Between May and July 1901, ten different schemes were examined by a joint committee of the two parliamentary Houses (Commons and Lords) appointed to report on the situation of London Underground Railways. The schemes included the proposed 'loops' of the Central London at both ends of the line, which were to ensure the replacement of electric locomotives with a multiple unit system; two different bills for the Charing Cross, Euston and Hampstead; the City and South London's extension to Islington and Euston, presented as a separate bill from an independent company in order to ensure capital subscribers;[41] the King's Road; the West and South London Junction; two bills that were to provide services in the north-east, the City and North East Suburban and the North East London; and three lines which sought powers to connect the areas in and around the City and West End with the residential districts further west, namely the Brompton and Piccadilly Circus, the Charing Cross, Hammersmith and District, and the Piccadilly and City.[42]

The committee reported on the constructive techniques and types of technology that the new schemes proposed, as well as on issues related to 'present and probable future traffic' and whether or not extraordinary measures were needed 'for the protection of the owners, lessees, and occupiers of properties adjacent to underground railways from possible damage and annoyance'.[43] Property and prospects relative to the sustained increase in figures for metropolitan traffic remained central to the debate about the implementation of new city railway lines and their relation to the suburban expansion of London. In addition, the provision of the 'best routes' for underground communication was organized according to: first,

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[40] The French and British situations provide an interesting contrast in that the definition of public benefit was determined by, in the case of France, a set of relatively clearly identified collective goals to which individual efforts were subordinated and, in the case of Britain, the preservation of equal grounds for individual efforts leading towards a collective goal, the very definition of which was subject to numerous interpretations (see, e.g., F. Dobin, *Forging Industrial Policy: the United States, Britain, and France in the Railway Age* (Cambridge, 1994)).

[41] See P. Holman, *The Amazing Electric Tube: a History of the City and South London Railway* (1990), pp. 51, 54.

[42] For the list and comments on each scheme, see Report from the Joint Select Committee on London Underground Railways (Parl. Papers 1901 [Cd. 279], pp. vii–ix).

[43] Report from the Joint Select Committee on London Underground Railways, p. v.

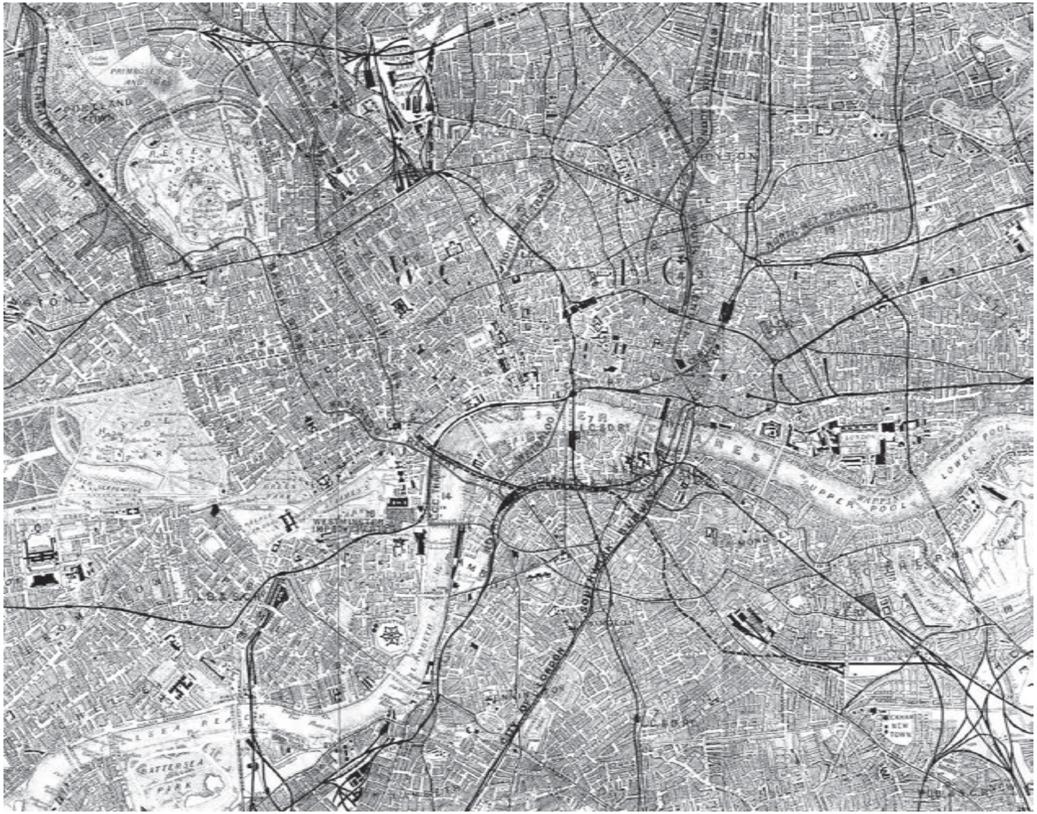
BATTERSEA PARK
UPPER POOL
LOWER POOL
WESTMINSTER

Figure 16.2. Detail of the several railway and tramway lines proposed in London towards the end of the nineteenth century, most of them operated by electric traction.

Source: *Report upon Railway and other Schemes Affecting the County of London* (London County Council, 1892).

future extension 'into the country' and its relationship with existing demand and means of transport; second, the responsibilities and obligations of the operating companies towards the public and the legal means to ensure they fulfilled them; third, the granting of '*locus standi*' to the City, the LCC and other councils regarding opposition to schemes which might affect or interfere with their jurisdiction; and, finally, operational aspects of the layout of the lines' termini and their junctions. The committee also confirmed one of the recommendations of a previous report (from 1892, see Figure 16.2) concerning 'way-leaves in the case of [both] private property' and public ways, as well as noting that the underground system was to maintain its premise of alleviating as much as possible and at designated points the problem of severe street congestion: 'Interchange stations should, where practicable, be placed at all points where underground lines cross one another, and should be connected by subways so as to facilitate the passing from one system to another under ground'.[44] An example of such an underground connection was readily available at the Bank station of the Central London, where a 'City subway' connecting the Bank of England, the Royal Exchange and Mansion House had been built.[45]

On the whole, the committee's report commended all the bills.[46] To conclude, however, the commissioners expressed their concern about whether and how to bring all underground lines together, 'subject within certain limits to the control of a central authority'.[47] The City Corporation and the LCC seemed to agree on this point, given the importance and interrelation of underground lines and suburban expansion and their influence on traffic and financial prospects. Both institutions believed that the issue of a central body regulating the various schemes put forward during parliamentary sessions was a question to take seriously. But uncertainty remained as to what kind of authority was required and how it would exercise effective control over fares which, according to the existing financial model, were subject to the estimated revenues to be paid on capital. The City, the LCC and the county councils could take an active part in this by participating in the construction of the lines, as in the model of the Light Railways Act: 'Such powers would enable the councils to encourage by subsidy or otherwise, the prolongation of railways into districts thinly populated, and therefore suitable for the relief of congested districts, whereas, in many cases at any rate, a public company would not feel justified in extending their line till the population became greater'.[48] If not entirely explicit, the committee conceded the importance of co-ordinated efforts, which had consequences for traffic, suburban expansion and the provision of affordable and sufficient means of transport, particularly for the working and poorer classes. What is more, with their report the committee produced a significant statement encouraging the creation of a centralized model and, therefore, recognizing the need to overcome the administrative fragmentation and inertia of institutional and business practices which determined how the Metropolitan, the Metropolitan District, the City and South London and the Central London had been built in the English capital.

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[44] All the points are in Report from the Joint Select Committee on London Underground Railways, p. vi.

[45] See *The Times*, 23 Nov. 1899, p. 12; also a brief notice after the opening to the public of five out of the seven staircases on 8 Jan. 1900 (*The Times*, 9 Jan. 1900, p. 7).

[46] Only the east end loop of the Central London, at Liverpool Street, represented some difficulty and needed further examination (see Report from the Joint Select Committee on London Underground Railways).

[47] Report from the Joint Select Committee on London Underground Railways, p. ix.

By the time the 1901 commission was reporting, a clear notion of the main, secondary and subsidiary systems of London transport was not attainable. Four city railway lines were in operation, with two different technologies: the Metropolitan and District were operated by steam locomotives while the City and South London and the Central London were worked by electric traction. Furthermore, the suburban services of main line companies made it difficult, if not impracticable, to distinguish between exclusively internal traffic and the traffic of the outlying districts communicating with the centre and inner districts; a difference that, according to J. Greathead, chief engineer of the City and South London and the Central London, was a condition for the successful operation of lines allocated to London traffic.[49] On the streets, omnibuses, tramways and an increasing number of bicycles and motor cars made intensive and often conflicting use of the urban landscape. Companies following their own practices and institutions responding to their own interests frustrated any attempts to establish a transport system which could be both effective and coherent.[50]

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[48] Report from the Joint Select Committe on London Underground Railways, p. ix. For a different discussion of the report, see T. C. Barker and M. A. Robbins, *A History of London Transport: Passenger Travel and the Development of the Metropolis*, ii: *the 20th Century to 1970* (1974), pp. 65–7.

[49] J. Greathead, evidence of a select committee from 1892, quoted in J. Simmons, 'The pattern of tube railways in London: a note on the joint select committee of 1892', *Journal of Transport History*, vii (1966), 236.

[50] This was an issue identified by many. John Robinson, representative of the London United Tramways and proponent of the London United Electric Railway, for example, stated that one of the main problems in the kind of operation proposed by the LCC, and to some extent recommended by the 1901 committee, was the degree of administrative fragmentation, whereby a 'multitude of councillors, and of Councils, might have projected

Neither Booth's scheme nor the idea of a centralized authority for railway transport, as recommended by the 1901 committee, materialized. However, the need for co-ordination and the possibilities of considering city railway lines as a planning instrument were to become more apparent as the twentieth century progressed. The following year, in 1902, the Underground Electric Railways of London was formed, obtaining powers to build the rest of the city railway lines that would complete the first unified transport network operated by a single company.[51] The vision of an integrated whole was thus the result of existing practices, namely, private companies whose emphasis on profit, more often than not, was the result of vested interpretations of the public benefit.

Conclusion

The relation between railway projects and socialist ideals was an important part of the ideological and physical transformation that London and Paris experienced at the turn of the twentieth century. Visions of new cities were devised in the process that challenged existing political and socio-economic models and practices in the two capitals. But the irreconcilable tension between co-operation and competition, as well as the effects of broader issues of social reform and metropolitan improvement, made the translation of these visions into practice a difficult affair, however evocative were the ideas proposed. Traditional conceptions of the administration and general understanding of the space and functions of the two cities were contested in the process. Yet, the visions remained constrained by the conditions of their present, in turn subject to unavoidable dependencies upon their pasts.

By 1910, in London there were seven city railway lines operated by four different companies using two technological systems, steam locomotion and electric traction. In Paris, the CFMP operated a city railway network consisting of six lines, limited to local traffic and fully worked by electricity. The two systems constituted fairly comprehensive urban transport networks:

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and constructed each its own bit of line … Each little Pedlington would have its staff of Parliamentary agents, engineers, and contractors, each one would demand its share of the profit, if any could arise, from such a hugger-mugger of ownership and management. The accounts would be voluminous, and their accuracy would be practically impossible'; and so the central question about city railways was whether 'they might have got these fragments operated as one system'. Robinson's plan consisted of an extensive system which combined 'light' and 'tube' railways directly connected to the existing lines operated by the company that he represented (see J. Robinson, 'Electric traction: London's tubes, trams, and trains, 1902', *Journal of the Society of Arts*, l (1902), 419).

[51] For a detailed discussion of the Underground Electric Railways of London and the role of Charles Yerkes in its creation, see Barker and Robbins, *History of London Transport*, pp. 61–84.

their structure and operation differed substantially from other means of transport, in the options available to commuters, regular travellers, tourists and visitors alike in using a differentiated space, underneath and above the streets. Moreover, beyond their contribution to the relatively effective circulation of passengers, the city railways were perceived and often used as agents of change that could reverse some of the cities' most pressing problems.

In London, Charles Booth was among the key figures who tried to persuade the authorities, companies and the public at large of the need for a railway system and of the sound benefits of a central vision compared with the execution of separate schemes. The housing problem could be alleviated by means of new transport networks, which would make the new districts in the outskirts accessible to the less privileged. The execution of the plan was best conceived of as an exercise of the LCC. But co-ordination and orchestrated development came under the aegis of private businesses and not the recently created metropolitan authority. A direct consequence of this was the over-provision of city railway services in certain areas and the dearth of services in others. The contrast between the well-served central districts and West End and the almost complete absence of these facilities in the east and north-east clearly illustrated this. In Paris, the municipal council used the Métropolitain as a symbol against which to establish its own identity. Resistance to the attempts of railway companies to extend their lines further into the city centre was countered by the conception of a systematic plan that covered Paris from east to west and north to south. This plan was confined to the space within the city walls, however. The circle that was to join the interests of the republic, the nation and the commune developed into a categorical distinction that separated rather than brought together clearly conflicting interests.

The definition and interpretation of the public benefit were important elements in the process. The arrangements in place between the individual railway companies and between the companies and the local or national authorities determined the conception, operation and management of railway lines in London, where the creation of a system required an overarching vision short of the appropriate means to implement it. In fact, the convergence of competing lines would first take place through the initiative of a private company, the Underground Electric Railways of London. The Parisian city railway was systematic from the outset. Its execution, on the other hand, demonstrated the extent of the antagonism between local, regional and national authorities and how the several interpretations of the public benefit developed into the conflicting exercise of diverging influences. The exclusion of the national railways from the local network was echoed by the triumph of the municipal authorities in establishing the conditions which would make the Compagnie du Chemin de Fer Métropolitain de Paris a model of employment.

The city railway was, therefore, both a project that encapsulated alternative visions of the futures of the two cities and an infrastructure project that transformed London and Paris by creating a differentiated layer for the exclusive use of passengers circulating across their inner, central and outer districts. It was a reality which is still with us today. But it is also a regressive dream of changes which are yet to come.

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This volume presents new research on key themes in the history of London and other European towns and cities, from the middle ages onwards. The essays brought together here celebrate the contribution to scholarship of Derek Keene, founding director of the Centre for Metropolitan History, and until 2008 Leverhulme Professor of Comparative Metropolitan History at the Institute of Historical Research, London. They offer new perspectives on a range of questions, with several resulting from major projects led or inspired by Professor Keene. The themes of the volume are central to the work of many urban historians today: the complex relationships between urban centres and their hinterlands; the importance of luxury goods and the transfer of new skills and technologies; the communal aspects of metropolitan life displayed in suburbs, religious groups and trans-national 'portable communities'; urban governance, considered through the lens of political relationships between institutions, cities and royal governments, and through studies of major initiatives in urban planning and infrastructure; and the effects of environmental changes that continue to shape cities today. The essays offer comparative perspectives on London's rich history, as well as studies of other cities, including Dublin, Bruges, Ghent and Paris.

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