

**London Chronicles and the Civic Sense of the Past,
circa 1430-1516**

David Mason

Balliol College

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Short Abstract

Each society generates a historical culture, which here is understood to encompass the media through which the past is discussed, the institutions that seek to shape and form ideas about the past, and the prevailing ideas, ideologies and approaches that influence thinking about the past. This thesis examines the historical culture that was endemic to citizens of London in the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries.

The fifteenth century saw rising literacy amongst urban dwellers, an increase in manuscript production, and the onset of print culture. London also saw a localised phenomenon: the development of a civic chronicling tradition, the London chronicles, that had its high point in the period 1430-1516. This thesis situates London chronicles within the broader historical and literary culture of the period. It focuses on urban citizens, namely the merchants, craftsmen and others enfranchised freemen of London. In order to understand the historical writing of this period, education and governance are vital contexts.

Many chronicles were used in households, in the education of young people and apprentices. Prevailing ideas encouraged both authors and audiences to view historical literature as a pedagogic genre. Citizen households turned to historical literature as a means to teach morals, manners and political education.

Governance is also vital to understanding London historiography. Governing institutions such as the Guildhall commissioned historiography and founded archives and libraries to direct and control access to information. Citizens used origin stories to discuss the purpose and meaning of the institutions and offices of the city. Many officeholders owned or authored histories. Londoners used historiography to discuss and reflect upon the politics of the day, discussing both the ideals and reality of government in London and the wider realm.

Long Abstract

An aside inserted into William Caxton's edition of the *Polychronicon* lamented that there was any need to publish a chronicle at all. In Caxton's view, gentlemen were meant to 'wryte in theyr regystres suche thynges as dayly happen and falle'; it was only because some men neglected this practice that published chronicles of recent times were necessary.¹ For Caxton, the connection between writing a chronicle and being a respectable gentleman was obvious, and he believed that his sentiments were shared by his readers. Caxton may have considered his ideas about history to be common sense, but in fact, they represent a series of assumptions that were particular to his place and time. This thesis explores the historical culture of fifteenth-century London: namely, the endemic ideas and practices concerning history that would have been familiar to Caxton's London audience.

The past twenty years have seen numerous works on book ownership and literary reception, which have demonstrated that London had a vibrant culture of book ownership and miscellany compilation, even before the advent of print. Chronicles, hagiographies and other forms of historical literature were vital parts of this reading culture. The fifteenth century also saw the proliferation of the London chronicles, a local urban historiographical tradition. Previously, it had been a narrow tradition that was known only to a small number of officeholders and administrators; increasingly it became a large-scale phenomenon with a broad audience. It became common for book owners to append amateur continuations, a practice that continued until well into the sixteenth century. Just as Caxton suggested, Londoners were writing 'suche thynges as dayly happen and falle' into their chronicles: this thesis examines the historical culture in the London at the peak of this phenomenon, from

¹ *The Prologues and Epilogues of William Caxton*, ed. W. Crotch, EETS, o. s., 176, (London, 1928), p. 68.

approximately 1430 to 1516. It asks the question: what drove the interest of Londoners in history during this period?

This thesis searches after the historical culture of Londoners; but it does not seek to suggest that there was a single sense of the past, or that Londoners were all equipped with a coherent ‘civic ideology’. London was a diverse and dynamic place. London citizens were largely recruited from the gentry and yeomanry of the countryside, or from the burgesses of England’s lesser towns. In the city, they would have interacted with courtiers, heralds, lawyers, immigrants, churchmen and the poor. London citizens read omnivorously and did not only read chronicles and texts produced by other Londoners. They were open to approaches to the past that came from radically different sources: classical literature, the church, genealogy, religious commemoration and civic recordkeeping, amongst others. Each genre suggested different approaches and practices. Londoners were exposed to a *bricolage* of discordant ideas and their sense of the past was consequently fractured and multiple. They deployed the past in ways that were adapted to the specific situation in question, rather than in ways that were consistent with a unitary ideology.

Two sources, in particular, are central to our understanding of London’s historical culture. One is the commonplace book, a type of manuscript in which compilers arranged a variety of literary and entertaining material into a loosely-organised miscellany. Here we can see at first hand the diversity of written genres that influenced Londoners. The second source type is the London chronicle, often a vital part of any merchant’s commonplace book. London chronicles were kept, continued and edited for well over a century and, over time, they picked up divergent and discordant voices. These voices drew on different genres and different senses of the past, engaging with ideas derived from religious commemoration, chivalric romance, genealogy, and many other divergent sources. Although some historians have seen the scattered and discordant nature of London chronicles as a failing,

we should instead see their multivocal nature as a strength. Whilst this thesis will be interested in all forms of historical writing that were produced and read within the city of London, this particular function of the London chronicles means that civic chronicles will be given principal place. London chronicles and commonplace books both offered methods to pull together the divergent senses of the past which were present in the city, without having to bring these senses of the past into full harmony.

Two historians have particularly defined how we look at London's urban chronicles: C. L. Kingsford and Mary-Rose McLaren. Kingsford's *Chronicles of London* remains the most up-to-date printed version of several of the major London chronicles, and his *English Historical Literature of the Fifteenth Century* remains present on undergraduate reading lists a full century after its original publication. In his works, he placed London chronicles in a broader national context, alongside the wider development of vernacular histories, and also the explosion of biographies and war writing that coincided with the life of Henry V. For Kingsford, the interest of London citizens in history was a sign of growing political consciousness amongst the merchant class and their increasing engagement with English identity and the English state. Nearly a century later, Mary-Rose McLaren would take a contrasting approach. She rejected any attempt to place the London chronicles in context alongside other chronicles. Instead, she argued that their form, audience and style meant that their readers and writers formed a distinctive local subculture, composed of Londoners writing for other Londoners. The purpose of urban chronicling was to draw Londoners together into a community, based on shared authorship, and shared ownership of the past. For McLaren, the London chronicles were thus an expression of civic, rather than English, identity.

McLaren's focus on civic identity is surely welcome, but it threatens to obscure the London chronicles by isolating them from their broader context: London chronicles made

up only a small percentage of the chronicles written and read in London. This thesis reassesses chronicling in fifteenth-century London in light of more recent scholarship on literary culture in the capital. London chronicles were multi-vocal texts that belonged to their local civic culture and also engaged with ideas and genres that originated outside of the city. In particular, historiography was a genre through which Londoners could discuss, debate and teach matters concerning governance.

The first set of chapters focuses on the contexts for historiography in late-medieval London. ‘Institutional Histories’ examines the role of public institutions, such as the Guildhall, archives and libraries, in shaping historical culture. ‘Popular Histories’ meanwhile examines private ownership of chronicles: it examines both the typical reading list of a London household and the demographic profile of the chronicle-reading public.

The next chapter, ‘Instructive Histories’, examines the educational context for historiography. Thanks to the apprenticeship system, London citizens were heavily reliant on informal and domestic education. This chapter suggests that the popularity of chronicles was driven by, and the form of chronicles was influenced by, their important role in home education.

The final chapters develop the theme of education by suggesting that many London citizens expected historiography to provide them with instruction in governance. ‘Royal Histories’ examines how Londoners conceived of the relationship between the king and the city of London. Early London chroniclers tended to be both king-focused and largely uncritical of rulers, expressing London’s position as the loyalist ‘Royal Chamber’.

However, as the regime became tarnished in the Wars of the Roses, Londoners increasingly wrote about kingship in new ways that allowed for greater distance between mayor and king and that opened up room for criticism and dissidence against the

government. The next chapter, 'Citizen Histories', examines how Londoners wrote about themselves and their city. Londoners used historiography as a form of self-representation and self-reflection. It was also an education tool, to prepare younger generations of apprentices to be the civic citizens and leaders of the future.

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Abbreviations

<i>A Chronicle of London</i>	<i>A Chronicle of London</i> , ed. E. Tyrell and H. Nicholas, (London, 1827), pp. 1-133.
BL	London, British Library.
‘Bale’s Chronicle’	‘Bale’s Chronicle’, ed. R. Flenley, <i>Six Town Chronicles</i> , (Oxford, 1911), pp. 114-153.
‘Balliol 354’	D. Browning, ‘Balliol College MS 354’, (M.Litt thesis, University of Oxford, 1935).
<i>Brut</i>	<i>The Brut</i> , ed. F. Brie, EETS, o. s., 131 & 136 (1906-8).
‘Cleopatra C.iv’	‘BL, Cotton Cleopatra C.iv’, ed. C. L. Kingsford, <i>Chronicles of London</i> , (Oxford, 1905), pp. 117-152.
<i>CLB</i>	<i>Calendar of Letter-books Preserved Among the Archives of the Corporation of the City of London at the Guildhall</i> , ed. R. Sharpe, (11 vols, London, 1848-1925).
COA	London, Royal College of Arms.
CUL	Cambridge, University Library.
<i>Customs of London</i>	<i>The Customs of London</i> , ed. F. Douce, (London, 1811).
<i>EAM</i>	<i>Explore Archives and Manuscripts</i> .
EEBO	Early English Books Online.
EETS	Early English Text Society.
‘Egerton 650’	‘Continuation E’, ed. F. Brie, <i>The Brut</i> EETS, o. s., 136 (1908), pp. 444-451.
<i>ESTC</i>	<i>English Short Title Catalogue</i> .
‘Gough London 10’	‘Bodleian, Gough London 10’, ed. R. Flenley, <i>Six Town Chronicles</i> , (Oxford, 1911), pp. 153-166.
<i>Great Chronicle</i>	Robert Fabyan, <i>Great Chronicle of London</i> , ed. A. H. Thomas and I. D. Thorney, (London, 1938).

<i>Gregory's Chronicle</i>	'Chronicle of William Gregory, Skinner', <i>Historical Collections of a London Citizen</i> , ed. J. Gairdner, Camden Soc. n. s., 17, (London, 1876), pp. 57-239.
<i>IMEV</i>	<i>Index of Middle English Verse</i>
<i>ISTC</i>	<i>Incunabula Short Title Catalogue</i> .
'Julius B.ii'	'BL, Cotton Julius B.ii', ed. C. L. Kingsford, <i>Chronicles of London</i> , (Oxford, 1905), pp. 1-116.
'Lambeth 306'	'A Short English Chronicle, from Lambeth MS 306', in <i>Three Fifteenth-Century Chronicles</i> , ed. J. Gairdner, Camden Society, n. s., 28, (London, 1843).
<i>Liber Albus</i>	<i>Liber Albus, the White Book of the City of London</i> , ed./trans H.T. Riley, (Cambridge, 1861).
<i>MMOL</i>	<i>Medieval Manuscripts in Oxford Libraries</i> .
<i>Munimenta</i>	<i>Munimenta Gildhallae Londoniensis: Liber Albus, Liber Custumarum, et Liber Horn</i> , ed. H. T. Riley, (4 volumes, London, 1859-62).
<i>Discovery</i>	<i>National Archives Discovery Catalogue</i> .
<i>New Chronicles</i>	Robert Fabyan, <i>New Chronicles of England and France</i> , ed. H. Ellis, (London, 1811).
<i>ODNB</i>	<i>Oxford Dictionary of National Biography</i> .
Scott, 'Past ownership'	K. Scott, 'Past Ownership: Evidence of Book Ownership by Medieval Merchants in the Later Middle Ages', in C. Meale, and D. Pearsall (eds.), <i>Makers and Users of Medieval Books</i> , (Cambridge, 2014), pp. 150-177.
'Rawlinson B.173'	'Appendix C' and 'Appendix E', ed. F. Brie, <i>The Brut</i> , EETS, o. s., 136 (1908), pp. 392-3, 452-455.
<i>REED: Civic London</i>	<i>Records of Early English Drama: Civic London to 1558</i> , ed. A. Lancashire, (Cambridge, 2015).
<i>SoL</i>	John Stow, <i>A Survey of London</i> , ed. C.L. Kingsford, (2 vols, Oxford, 1908).

<i>Songs</i>	<i>Songs, Carols etc.</i> , ed. R. Dyboski, EETS, ex. s., 101, (London, 1907).
TCC	Cambridge, Trinity College.
‘TCC, O.9.1’	‘Continuation F’, ed. F. Brie, <i>The Brut</i> , EETS, o. s., 136 (1908), pp. 456-490.
TCD	Dublin, Trinity College Library.
‘Vitellius A.xvi’	‘BL, Cotton Vitellius A.xvi’, ed. C. L. Kingsford, <i>Chronicles of London</i> , (Oxford, 1905), pp. 153-264.
‘WYA 32D86/42’	‘Bradford, West Yorkshire Archives, MS 32D86/42’, ed. M. McLaren, <i>The London Chronicles of the Fifteenth Century</i> , (Cambridge, 2002), pp. 149-226.

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1.0: Introduction

1.1: Prologue: ‘Stick to Your City, As Good Men Do!’¹

In Thomas Heywood’s Elizabethan ‘chronicle’ play *Edward IV*, the conflicts inside and outside of medieval London were animated through the medium of drama. Act 1 depicted London surrounded and under siege in the year 1471. The mayor and citizens were staunch Yorkists but outside of the gates lay the Lancastrian army of the ‘Bastard of Fauconberg’. Citizens gathered at the gate and the mayor spoke to them, instructing them to do their duty as members of the town:

Why, it is well, brothers and citizens;
Stick to your city, as good men do.²

He told them that the city had once, in circumstances much like these, faced down Wat Tyler and the Peasants’ Revolt: there was a long tradition of citizens who fought for the king and his peace.³ The mayor was, however, nervous about the divisions within the city: he feared disorder by the apprentices, who were not classified amongst the ‘brothers and citizens’ that he addressed. They received separate instructions:

And, prentices, stick to your officers,
For you may come to be as we are now.⁴

The mayor’s speech indicated that he conceived of the city as composed of citizens: solid, community-minded and dutiful men who were tied together by the common inheritance, common past and common identity of the city. Apprentices did not share in that

¹ Thomas Heywood, *Edward IV, Part 1*, ed. B. Field, (London, 1842), p. 17, (Act 1, Sc. iv).

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.*

community. Apprentices were at best potential citizens, future citizens. They were rootless men with little investment in the community bonds of the city. They fought not because they were members of the city, but because they could in the future become members.

Within the play, the mayor's worries about the apprentices were shown to be unfounded. During the negotiations between the two sides, some plain-speaking apprentices came forth and declared themselves for the city and the House of York. When Fauconberg insulted their impertinence and youth, they responded:

Nay, scorn us not that we are prentices.
The Chronicles of England can report
What memorable actions we have done;
To which this day's achievements shall be knit,
To make the volume larger than it is!⁵

Just as the mayor's speech hinged around the memory of 1381, the apprentices centred their identity and political agency on the 'memorable actions' of their predecessors. Their understanding of what it meant to be an apprentice was formed through history: they were the inheritors of the deeds of previous apprentices. More than that, their actions were a continuation: they were protagonists of the tale, capable of authoring new chapters in the stories of London and England.

Although it was written in the Elizabethan period, Heywood's play successfully brings to life some of the pertinent themes in the historical writing of the fifteenth century. In particular, history was a vital part of identity formation: in Heywood's play, the mayor rallied the citizens with an appeal to their history. In turn, the apprentices could only stake their claim to membership of the community of London by creating their own sense of history. The fifteenth century was a period in which many London citizens turned to the

⁵ *Ibid.* pp. 18-9.

reading, writing, and owning of history books. The most locally distinctive aspect of this was the development of the London chronicles, a civic chronicling tradition that developed from c. 1430 onwards and flourished until the early sixteenth century. The same period also saw a broader expansion in the production of chronicles, as expressed by the proliferation of the *Brut* chronicle and the development of print culture. London was awash with historiography, much of it written by Londoners and some of it focused on the history of the city. This thesis examines why historiography became so prominent in this period, and how it was used in the construction of civic identities.

Conventional historiography – from medieval chronicles to modern monographs – is only one way for society to talk about the past. Heywood depicted history through theatre, meanwhile, his characters used it for political argumentation. Other media for exploring the past include legal precedents, ballads, narrative art, genealogies, statues of past leaders and many other forms that are specific to a particular time, place, and state of technological development. Attitudes towards the past are also expressed through habits of thought such as nostalgia, resistance to innovation, or a fatalistic belief that the past will repeat itself. Historiography swims in a broader cultural sea made up of these other versions of the past: historians are either influenced by or rebel against these cultural formations. There is no consensus on the best terminology to describe this broader complex of ideas about the past, but candidates include social memory, historical culture and cultural memory.⁶ Of these, historical culture has become prevalent in early modern studies through the work of D. R. Woolf.⁷ He used this term to put aside ‘traditionally studied intellectual influences’ on historiography and instead examine the ‘material, social,

⁶ On social memory, see C. Wickham and J. Fentress, *Social Memory*, (Oxford, 1992); on Cultural memory, see J. Assman, ‘Memory and Culture’, in D. Nikulin (ed.), *Memory: A History*, (Oxford, 2015), pp. 325-349.

⁷ D. R. Woolf, ‘Little Crosby and the horizons of early modern culture’, in D. Kelley (ed.), *The Historical Imagination in Early Modern Britain*, (Cambridge, 1997), pp. 93-132.

and circumstantial forces' that bore upon it.⁸ Since then, others have used the term to encompass intellectual influences on historiography, as well as those alternative influences outlined by Woolf.⁹ The term has proliferated within early modern historiography and has recently been applied to fifteenth-century urban chronicling by Jenneke de Vries.¹⁰ This thesis makes use of historical culture to refer to all cultural influences that informed how Londoners understood the past, whether they originated in intellectual, material, political, religious, or other circumstances.

In Heywood's play, the mayor viewed civic identity and history through the lens of citizenship, which was presented as a category quite separate from being resident in London. Citizenship is vital as both a legal category and a cultural phenomenon in understanding fifteenth-century London.¹¹ The 'square mile' of the central city was governed by the corporation of London, a semi-autonomous commune under the devolved authority of the monarchy. Residents in London could become citizens, enabling them to participate in the corporation. Caroline Barron has estimated that around one in four male residents of London in 1450 were citizens, but this was increasing and would reach approximately 70% in the sixteenth century.¹² A small minority of citizens were lawyers by training and were granted citizenship in return for working for the corporation's legal system or bureaucracy. The vast majority of citizens were merchants or craftspeople, who earned their citizenship through a lengthy apprenticeship. Whereas continental city-states usually had many landed patricians amongst their ruling classes, the citizenry and

⁸ *Ibid.* p. 94.

⁹ E.g. N. Popper, *Walter Raleigh's 'History of the World' and the Historical Culture of the Renaissance*, (Oxford, 2012).

¹⁰ J. de Vries, "'Nothing but Mayors and Sheriffs, and the deare yeer and the great frost": A study of written historical culture in late medieval towns in the Low Countries and England', (Ph.D. thesis, University of Durham, 2019).

¹¹ For broader context, see: C. Liddy, *Contesting the City: the politics of citizenship in English towns*, (Oxford, 2017).

¹² C. Barron, 'London 1300-1500', in D. Palliser, P. Clark and M. Daunton (eds.), *Cambridge Urban History of Britain*, (3 vols, Cambridge, 2000), i, pp. 395-440, 400.

corporate leadership were primarily commercial in occupation. Although the town chronicles of many continental cities were authored by university-educated notaries, London had few citizens with an equivalent graduate education.¹³ Even the corporation's leaders tended to be educated through apprenticeship rather than universities. Historical thought, therefore, had to take root in a society that lacked widespread formal education. This thesis will primarily deal with the historical culture of London citizens, and leave aside courtiers, clergymen, and other inhabitants of the metropolis.

Although citizenship was a stable legal category, ideas about the urban community were nonetheless fluid and contestable. Heywood's play presented a curious no-man's-land between loyalty and disloyalty in the formation of a community. The mayor instructed the apprentices to 'stick to your officers', but instead, the apprentices abandoned their assigned leaders and engaged the enemy independently. They did so with no ill will to the mayor: indeed, they acted disobediently so that they could prove their loyalty. The apprentices claimed to be loyal, faithful, and orderly; but they demonstrated this through acts of disorder and disobedience. The mayor laid out a vision of a city that was composed of orderly citizens, but the apprentices noisily interjected that they too were members of the city and inheritors of its identity and history. As they protested that they belonged to the city, the apprentices unwittingly demonstrated that they and the mayor had significantly different conceptions of community. Urban communities were held together by a common identity and a common sense of the past. However, within their identities and senses of the past, there were fractures and discontinuities. London appeared in this narrative both unified and fractured, loyal and disloyal, obedient and disobedient. It was held together not just by a common identity and history but also by permissive ambiguity:

¹³ On the importance of notaries as authors, see R. Schmid, 'Town chronicles', in G. Dunphy (ed.), *Encyclopedia of the Medieval Chronicle*, (Leiden, 2010), http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/2213-2139_emc_SIM_02443 (31-09-2019).

if the fractures within the city were examined too closely then London's history, identity and community could crumble. London historiography often attempted to use a common past to constitute the city as a single community, but in practice, the clashing voices and discordant narratives produced by citizens often reveal their disagreements and differences.

Clashing voices and difference in ideas were pervasive within the citizenry. The term 'historical culture' implies that the historical ideas expressed by different people and institutions are in some way connected, and thus form a culture. However, it does not assume unity or even coherence. London citizens had enough common institutions, common rituals, and common governance to form a civic culture. However, every culture has room for clashing ideas, cognitive dissonance, and ignorance. Historiography of the fifteenth century is particularly interesting because it illuminates some of the differences and diversity within the city.

The purpose of this thesis is to understand the historical culture of London citizens. It examines the period from the emergence of the London chronicles in the 1430s, through to the point at which their production in manuscript began to tail off in the 1510s. It examines all written historiography produced by London citizens, whether written in the London chronicle format or not. What drove London citizens to read, own and produce chronicles and historical literature in such large numbers? What kind of identity were Londoners looking to create through their historical culture? The remainder of this introduction introduces some important secondary literature. First, it examines what historians have written about late-medieval English chronicling, particularly the London chronicles. After that, it broadens the scope to consider the role of London in fifteenth-century culture.

1.2: Urban Chronicling and the Chronicles of London.

The fifteenth century saw dramatic changes to the production of historiography. There was an increasing shift from Latin into English, and there was a significant expansion in production. These trends are best exemplified by the largest surviving chronicle corpus, the Middle English prose *Brut*, which was originally composed in the fourteenth century. Of the surviving manuscripts, there are twenty-six instances in which the text terminates before 1400. There are around 170 manuscripts that have a terminus date after 1400, most of them in the period 1419-1461.¹⁴ The patterns within the *Brut* corpus illustrate a dramatic rise in chronicle production from the early fifteenth century, which was only increased and extended by the development of print.

In this period, chronicles were reaching a wider audience than before. Pioneering work by Lister Matheson and various other historians has built a detailed picture of the *Brut*'s readership, although similarly thorough studies for other chronicles are rarer.¹⁵ It was a remarkably successful chronicle, popular with the aristocracy, gentry, clergy, and every section of society.¹⁶ Many historians have noted that urban readers, particularly merchants, showed a pronounced interest in chronicles and histories such as the *Brut*.¹⁷ It was within

¹⁴ See 'Synoptic Inventory', in L. Matheson, *The Prose Brut*, (Lampeter, 1998), pp. 67-78; the number 26 is based on 10 MSS of CV-1333, 13 MSS of CV-1377, 1 MS of PV-1307, and 2 MSS of JM-1333.

¹⁵ Matheson, *Prose Brut*; The *Imagining History* project website has been immensely helpful to the early part of this project, but was taken offline in approximately 2017. Thus, all links are defunct. *Imagining History*, <http://www.qub.ac.uk/imagining-history/resources/wiki/index.php/> (defunct). W. Marx and R. Radulescu (eds.), *Readers and Writers of the Prose Brut*, (Lampeter, 2006); J. Rajsic, E. Kooper and D. Hoche (eds.), *The Prose Brut and other Late Medieval Chronicles*, (York, 2013). For a thorough audience study of a chronicle other than the *Brut*, see: H. Pagan, 'Trevet's *Les Cronicles*: manuscripts, owners and readers', in *ibid.* pp. 149-164.

¹⁶ Matheson, *Prose Brut*, pp. 9-17.

¹⁷ K. Scott, 'Past Ownership: Evidence of Book ownership by Medieval Merchants in the Later Middle ages', in C. Meale, and D. Pearsall (eds.), *Makers and Users of Medieval Books*, (Cambridge, 2014), pp. 150-177, 152; C. Barron, 'What Did Medieval London Merchants Read?', in M. Allen and M. Davies (eds.), *Medieval Merchants and Money*, (London, 2016), pp. 43-70, 52; A. Sutton, 'The Acquisition and Disposal of Books for Worship and Pleasure by Mercers of London in the Later Middle Ages', in E. Cayley and S. Powell (eds.), *Manuscripts and Printed Books in Europe, 1350-1550*, (Liverpool, 2013), pp. 95-114, 111-3; J. Boffey, 'London books and London readers', in J. Simpson and B. Cummings (eds.), *Cultural Reformations: Medieval and Renaissance Literary History*, (Oxford, 2010), pp. 420-437, 424.

this context of an expanding readership, expanding production, and a shift into the vernacular that the London chronicling tradition was created.

The London chronicles were a local adaptation of a genre found in many cities. This genre used the annual election of an official (a magistrate, a consul, a mayor, *etc.*) to name each year. Next to the name, a brief report on events of that year was given. This created annals which were structured around the names of local magistrates: the term ‘magistrate annal’ will thus be used to refer to this genre as a whole.¹⁸ In ancient Rome, the office of consul was the basis of an early magistrate annal known as the *fasti* or *consularia*.¹⁹ In the late twelfth century, Genoa revived the genre using its own annually elected officials. Many cities created localised variants of the magistrate annal, either in imitation of Rome or competitive emulation of other cities, and the format was widespread by the fourteenth century.²⁰

London was amongst the earlier adopters of the format: a list of sheriffs for the period 1189-1221 with annotations concerning constitutional development of London over this period can be found in the early thirteenth-century cartulary of Holy Trinity Aldgate.²¹ Similar annotated magistrate lists may have inspired London alderman Arnold Fitz-Thedmar, who constructed London’s first substantial magistrate annal (c. 1274), which focused on the office of sheriff.²² Mayor-centred annals were popularised in the fourteenth century: one continuator of Fitz-Thedmar’s chronicle used this format (c. 1326), as did the

¹⁸ Compare to the use of ‘magistrate list’, in Vries, ‘Written historical culture’, pp. 83-90.

¹⁹ For an introduction, see R. Burgess, ‘Chronicles’, *Oxford Bibliographies: Classics*, <https://ezproxy-prd.bodleian.ox.ac.uk:10466/view/document/obo-9780195389661/obo-9780195389661-0240.xml> (20-09-2019).

²⁰ See I. Stone, ‘The Book of Arnold Fitz Thedmar’, (Ph.D. thesis, King’s College, London, 2016), pp. 131-4.

²¹ *Cartulary of Holy Trinity Aldgate*, ed. G. Hodgett, (London, 1971), pp. 221-222.

²² For the most recent study and edition, see Stone, ‘Book of Arnold Thedmar’; I. Stone, ‘Arnold Fitz Thedmar: Identity, Politics and the City of London in the Thirteenth Century’, *The London Journal*, 40:2, (2015), pp. 106-122; for a translation, see *The Chronicles of the Mayors and Sheriffs of London and the French Chronicle of London*, ed. H. Riley, (London, 1863), pp. 1-208.

French Chronicle of London, (c. 1343).²³ Other urban histories compiled in this period include the *Annales Paulini* by Chamberlain Andrew Horn (d. 1328), anonymous London annals of c. 1315 in BL, Add. 62534, and the brief chronicle in a late-fourteenth century fishmonger's miscellany (BL, Egerton 2885).²⁴ By the fourteenth century, London had thus developed a chronicling tradition in Latin and French of significant size.

The fifteenth century saw a new wave of mostly vernacular magistrate annals. For most historians, the phrase 'London chronicles' refers only to this fifteenth and sixteenth-century phrase of the magistrate annal tradition.²⁵ Around fifty manuscripts survive that were completed between the year 1440 and 1565.²⁶ Although some historians treat the sixteenth century as a period of decline for the London chronicles, the case is often overstated. Many printers adopted the magistrate annal format to produce general histories of England, making the format ubiquitous by the Elizabethan period. The rise of print depressed the market for new manuscript versions, which became rarer from the 1510s onwards.²⁷ The magistrate annal did not die out but rather changed in the face of new technology: printed versions continued to be updated and reissued as late as the 1750s.²⁸ London chronicles were typically united by using the annual rotation of city officers to

²³ *Ibid.* pp. 208-228 (continuation); pp. 232-291 (*French Chronicle*); D. Cox, 'The French Chronicle of London', *Medium Aevum*, 45, (1976), pp. 201-8.

²⁴ On Horn, see J. Catto, 'Horn, Andrew (c. 1275-1328)', *ODNB*, <http://ezproxy-prd.bodleian.ox.ac.uk:2167/view/article/13780> (30-09-2016). J. Catto, 'Andrew Horn: Law and History in Fourteenth-century England', in R. Davis and J. Wallace-Hadrill (eds.), *The Writing of History in the Middle Ages*, (Oxford, 1981), pp. 367-391; S. Juranski, 'Andrew Horn, Alfredia Apocrypha, and the Anglo-Saxon Names of the *Mirror of Justices*', *Journal of English and German Philology*, 105, (2006), pp. 540-563; *Chronicles of the Reigns of Edward I and Edward II*, ed. W. Stubbs, (2 vols, London, 1882), i; *Mumimenta*, 2.1 & 2.2; 'Egerton Ms 2885', *EAM*, http://searcharchives.bl.uk/IAMS_VU2:IAMS032-001984952 (21-09-2019); 'Add Ms 62534', *EAM*, http://searcharchives.bl.uk/IAMS_VU2:IAMS032-001962948 (07-05-2020).

²⁵ E.g. M. McLaren, *London Chronicles of the Fifteenth Century*, (Woodbridge, 2002); C. L. Kingsford, *Chronicles of London*, (Oxford, 1905).

²⁶ Magistrate annals produced before 1525 are listed in Appendix, table 1; for a listing of later London chronicles, see McLaren, *London Chronicles*, Ch. 3.

²⁷ McLaren notes only the first two instances in print, the *Customs of London* and *New Chronicles*. There is no dedicated study of printed magistrate annals. For the *Breviat Chronicle* and *Chronicle of Years* and others of their type, see B. Beer, 'Small Mid-Tudor Chronicles and Popular history, 1540-1560', *Quidditas*, 37, (2016), pp. 57-84. On John Stow and Robert Grafton's use of the form, see B. Beer, 'England's History Abridged: John Stow's Shorter Chronicles and Popular History', *Albion*, 36:1, (2004), pp. 12-27.

²⁸ John Stow and John Strype, *A Survey of the Cites of London and Westminster*, (London, 1753), pp. 65-83.

mark time, and usually by adopting 1189 as a starting date. Beyond this, there are huge variations: they were compiled in Latin, English and French, used manuscript or print, and ranged from lightly annotated mayoral lists through to heavy tomes of six hundred or more pages.

There have been three major investigations into the fifteenth-century London chronicles, by C. L. Kingsford and Ralph Flenley in the early twentieth century and Mary-Rose McLaren in the early twenty-first century. Kingsford was responsible for bringing London chronicles to wider attention in his *Chronicles of London* and *English Historical Literature in the Fifteenth Century*.²⁹ In these works, he laid out a model for how the London chronicles were related to each other, work which has been superseded by subsequent historiography.³⁰ A more lasting contribution was that he set London chronicles in the context of the development of fifteenth-century English culture. He suggested that it is ‘no coincidence’ that the *Brut*, London chronicles and vernacular historical writing developed at around the same time.³¹ In Kingsford’s view, Henry V’s victories in France and encouragement to use the vernacular together excited a popular patriotism that was expressed in vernacular histories of the English nation.³² Some more recent historiography, notably by Raluca Radulescu, Antonia Gransden and Carol Meale has suggested that the rise of vernacular chronicles in England was linked to the consolidation of a sense of national identity amongst the gentry and urban citizens. This is however presented as a long-term development rather than being rooted specifically in the early fifteenth century.³³ Kingsford and his more recent successors, thus, suggest that London chronicles

²⁹ Kingsford, ‘Introduction’, *Chronicles of London*, x-xxvii; C. L. Kingsford, *English Historical Literature in the Fifteenth century*, (Oxford, 1913).

³⁰ A. Thomas and I. Thornley, ‘Introduction’, *Great Chronicle*, xv-lxxvi; McLaren, *London Chronicles*, pp. 98-140.

³¹ Kingsford, *English Historical Literature*, p. 3.

³² *Ibid.* pp. 3-8.

³³ C. Meale, ‘Patrons, Buyers and Owners: Book Production and Social Status’, in J. Griffiths and D. Pearsall (eds.), *Book Production and Publishing in Britain, 1375-1475*, (Oxford, 1989), pp. 201-238, 215; R.

need to be contextualised alongside other materials with a national, patriotic voice, such as the *Brut*, protest literature, or political manifestos.

For Kingsford's contemporary, Ralph Flenley, medieval historiography was defined by its local focus and it was not until the Elizabethan period that Londoners began to write with a national outlook or a patriotic spirit.³⁴ He noted that the genesis of London chronicles took place at the same period when there was 'much activity in the building and repairing of London; the same impulse led at once to the beautifying and re-edifying of the city and to the recording of its history'.³⁵ For Flenley, there was something inescapably civic about the London chronicles: they stood as a record of the pride and the pretensions of merchants of the fifteenth century. Many historians today – particularly those whose primary field of study is London – similarly interpret London chronicles as a form of civic self-expression, notably Caroline Barron, Mary-Rose McLaren, Sheila Lindenbaum and Malcolm Richardson.³⁶

The most recent monograph on London chronicles is Mary-Rose McLaren's *The London Chronicles of the Fifteenth Century* of 2002. McLaren devised a new system for the relationships between manuscripts, and her text groupings are used in this thesis.³⁷ She interpreted London chronicles through a strengthened version of Flenley's civic approach, suggesting that they were a statement about London identity. For McLaren, the format and mode of production of the London chronicle were the core of their meaning: Londoners

Radulescu, 'Writing Nation: Shaping Identity in Medieval Historical Narratives', in P. Brown (ed.), *A Companion to Medieval English Literature and Culture, c. 1350-c. 1500*, (Oxford, 2007), http://www.blackwellreference.com/subscriber/tocnode.html?id=g9780631219736_chunk_g9780631219736_26 (19/02/2017); A. Gransden, *Historical Writing in England*, 2nd edition, (2 vols, London, 1996), ii, pp. 220-248.

³⁴ R. Flenley, *Six Town chronicles*, (Oxford, 1911), pp. 7-8.

³⁵ *Ibid.* p. 11.

³⁶ McLaren, *London Chronicles*; M. Richardson, *Middle-class Writing in Medieval London*, (London, 2011), p. 157; Barron, 'What Did Medieval London Merchants Read?', pp. 53-5; S. Lindenbaum, 'London Texts and Literate Practice', in D. Wallace (ed.), *Cambridge History of Medieval English Literature*, (Cambridge, 1999), pp. 284-309, 296-8, 301, 308.

³⁷ McLaren, *London Chronicles*.

wrote anonymously, using a London-specific format. By contributing in common to a collective history, they formed themselves into a community. To write a London chronicle was a marker of London identity: '[i]n writing or owning one of the texts of the London chronicles, the chronicler laid claim to ownership of the city'.³⁸ The London chronicles were thus a literary symbol of citizenship.

One limitation of McLaren's approach is that it isolates London chronicles from other forms of historical culture. The magistrate annal format was so central to McLaren's interpretation that she suggests London chronicles cannot be compared to other types of historiography. For instance, even though *Brut* continuations and London chronicle continuations were produced at the same time and place and often featured very similar content, she was resistant to comparing them due to the difference in formats.³⁹ Her interest in the act of writing as a symbol of identity meant that she treated manuscript and printed magistrate annals as separate phenomena and, as a result, printed texts are significantly under-represented in her work. This thesis will instead suggest that we can only understand London chronicles when they are placed in a broader context, alongside the other chronicles and other forms of historical culture produced by fifteenth-century citizens.

More recently, there are signs of the development of a new approach to London chronicles that explores town historiography in an international and comparative context. When I embarked upon writing this thesis in 2016, the most up-to-date efforts to set London historians in a wider context of European town chronicling were the works of Ralph Flenley and Jeremy Catto.⁴⁰ In the last few years, Ian Stone and Helen Fulton have set the

³⁸ *Ibid.* p. 13.

³⁹ *Ibid.* p. 50.

⁴⁰ Flenley, *Six Town Chronicles*; Catto, 'Andrew Horn: Law and History'.

thirteenth and fourteenth centuries historiographical traditions of London in a broader European context.⁴¹ Jenneke de Vries's 2019 doctoral thesis has provided a cross-channel comparison of English and Low Countries town chronicling.⁴² Comparative work has become significantly easier since the production of the *Encyclopedia of the Medieval Chronicle*: it is to be expected that further transnational work could in the future yield significant results.⁴³

How, then, does this thesis relate to the existing historiography? This thesis takes inspiration from McLaren and Flenley's close attention to civic pride and civic identity but will attempt to avoid some of the narrowness of focus that can accompany it: London chronicles are presented here not as an isolated phenomenon but rather as part of a broader civic historical culture. The selection of sources used in this thesis is broad and not restricted solely to London chronicles: other sources include *Bruts*, legal records, pageantry, hagiography, commemorations for the dead, oral anecdotes and even songs. The parameters of these sources are laid out in chapters 2 and 3, which deal with the use of history in public institutions and domestic settings respectively. In placing London chronicles within this broader survey, this thesis aims to marry the breadth, scope and ambition of Kingsford's work with the attention to civic identity exhibited by McLaren and Flenley.

Amongst this wider historical culture, London chronicles are nonetheless an important point of focus because they are a particularly open and adaptable genre, written in many hands, containing many voices, and written across several generations. They possessed

⁴¹ Stone, 'Book of Arnold Fitz Thedmar', pp. 131-158; I. Stone, 'Writing History in Medieval European Towns', *Thirteenth Century England*, (forthcoming); H. Fulton, 'Urban History in Medieval and Early Modern Britain: the Influence of Classical and Italian Models', in H. Fulton and M. Campopiano (eds.), *Anglo-Italian Cultural Relations in the Later Middle Ages*, (York, 2018), pp. 150-178.

⁴² Vries, 'Written historical culture'.

⁴³ G. Dunphy (ed.), *Encyclopedia of the Medieval Chronicle*, (Leiden, 2010).

extreme adaptability to context. London chronicles came to be mixed with other genres and took up some unexpected roles. One was used as an aid to the devotion of Edward the Confessor (TCC, O.9.1), another as a form of commemoration for the dead (BL, Harley 541), others as archival records (Letter-book F): the flexibility of the format allowed it to perform a variety of functions.⁴⁴ The pliability of the London chronicles made them ubiquitous. By adapting to a wide variety of contexts, purposes and styles within the city, London chronicles can typify the diversity and breadth of civic culture.

1.3: The Place of London in Late-Medieval English Culture.

London has had an ambiguous place in estimations of the history of late medieval English culture. Older approaches to the topic employed a ‘diffusion’ perspective, in which some parts of society were *Kulturträger*, the active parts of society that produced and propagated culture; other sectors passively followed their lead.⁴⁵ In Richard Firth Green’s formulation, citizens of London received their literary tastes, manners and modes of thinking from the royal court: it was ‘inherently improbable that the city merchant would aspire to cultural models essentially different from those of his superiors’.⁴⁶ Others have suggested that the gentry was the dominant grouping in fifteenth-century elite society and so merchants

⁴⁴ See below, pp. 60, 164 (TCC O.9.1); 292 (Harley 541); 35 (Letter-Book F).

⁴⁵ On diffusion models, see G. Duby, ‘The Diffusion of Cultural Patterns in Feudal Society’, *Past and Present*, 39, (1968), pp. 3-10; P. Coss, ‘Aspects of Cultural Diffusion in Medieval England: the Early Romances, Local Society and Robin Hood’, *Past and Present*, 108, (1985), pp. 35-79.

⁴⁶ R. Green, *Poets and Princepleasers*, (Toronto, 1980), pp. 9-10; see also A. S. G. Edwards, ‘John Shirley and the Emulation of Courtly Culture’, in E. Mullally and J. Thompson (eds.), *The Court and Cultural Diversity*, (Cambridge, 1997), pp. 309-317.

emulated their rural cousins.⁴⁷ For many historians, London citizens were a group of culture-takers, not culture-makers.

One implicit feature in many Marxist-influenced diffusion models is that the onset of modernity is thought to coincide with the point at which the urban bourgeoisie became the *Kulturträger* in society; thus, in pre-modern societies, merchants and citizens had a passive role. Lee Patterson, for instance, suggested that late medieval Italian literature was more advanced than English literature because it exhibited ‘aggressive economic individualism’ and ‘anti-aristocratic politics’ which pointed to the rise of the middle class and capitalism.⁴⁸ Measured against these yardsticks, Patterson found late-medieval London literature to be wanting, indicating that the ‘merchant class of medieval London gives every evidence of having been a class in search of a legitimizing ideology’.⁴⁹ Rather than using literature to explore civic and mercantile identities, Londoners used it as a passport to gain admittance into the established English elite. They sought a universal culture and set of norms that applied to all educated gentlemen. They formed their ideology by suppressing the local and peculiar features of their own socio-cultural situation. The result was that ‘English mercantile culture was largely confected out of materials of other cultural formations – primarily aristocratic but also clerical – and lacked a centre of its own’.⁵⁰ When Londoners created literature or other forms of culture, they used it to accommodate themselves with the aristocracy and not to write about themselves or their city. Others have argued that late-medieval London lacked sufficient development to produce a distinctive urban culture. David Wallace has for instance termed London the

⁴⁷ E.g. N. Saul, *Scenes from Provincial Life*, (Oxford, 1986), p. 187; S. Thrupp, *The Merchant Class of Medieval London*, (Ann Arbor, 1963), Ch. 6. For arguments that the gentry and merchants were converging in this period, see Barron, ‘London, 1300-1500’, p. 411; M. Amos, “‘Somme Lordes & Somme Other of Lower Astates’”: London’s Urban Elite and the Symbolic Battle for Status’, in D. Biggs, S. Michalove and A. Reeves (eds.), *Traditions and Transformations in Late Medieval England*, (Leiden, 2002), pp. 159-176.

⁴⁸ L. Patterson, *Chaucer and the Subject of History*, (London, 1991), pp. 332-3.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.* p. 330.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.* p. 333.

‘absent city’ in literary culture and has argued that it appeared infrequently in fourteenth-century literature because ‘the conditions for the possibility of a credible ideology of the city do not yet exist’.⁵¹ Such ideas have continuing influence. For instance, Lawrence Manley’s *Cambridge Companion to the Literature of London* of 2011 consigns discussion of medieval literature of London to a single chapter by Ralph Hanna. It argues that it only became possible in the sixteenth century ‘actually to see England’s greatest city in a literary context or directly as a literary subject’.⁵² Within these interpretations, fifteenth-century London was underdeveloped and only became fully-formed enough to produce a distinctive urban culture and urban literature in the early modern period.

More recently, historians have moved away from models that employ a sharp division between active cultural creators and passive followers. Instead, they use models that present cultural change as an active and interactive process: actors show creativity and agency by taking generic cultural models and appropriating and adapting them to meet the needs of their particular time and place. London was a major centre for the consumption of literature, and recent studies by historians such as Carol Meale and Julia Boffey have shown how practices of collecting, compiling and annotating texts were used by Londoners to create new and distinctive meanings to literary texts.⁵³ Others such as Malcolm Richardson and Sheila Lindenbaum have noted that Londoners used the genres of pragmatic literacy – the archive, the custumal, the legal document – in ways that were

⁵¹ D. Wallace, ‘Chaucer and the Absent City’, in B. Hanawalt (ed.), *Chaucer’s England: Literature in Historical Context*, (Minneapolis, 1992), pp. 59-90, 85.

⁵² R. Hanna, ‘Images of London in Medieval English literature’, in L. Manley, *Cambridge Companion to the Literature of London*, (Cambridge, 2011), pp. 19-33, 19.

⁵³ J. Boffey and C. Meale, ‘Selecting the Text: Rawlinson C.86 and Some Other Books for London Readers’, in F. Riddy (ed.), *Regionalism in Late Medieval Manuscripts and Texts*, (York, 1991), pp. 143-170; J. Boffey, *Manuscript and Print in London, c. 1475-1503*, (London, 2012); C. Meale, ‘The Compiler at Work: John Colyns and BL, MS Harley 2252’, in D. Pearsall (ed.), *Manuscripts and Readers in Fifteenth-century England*, (Bury St Edmunds, 1983), pp. 82-103; C. Meale, ‘London, British Library, Harley MS 2252, John Colyns’ “Boke”: Structure and Content’, *English Manuscript Studies*, 15, (London, 2009), pp. 90-117; C. Meale, ‘The Middle English Romance of *Ipomedon*: A Late Medieval “Mirror” for Princes and Merchants’, *Reading Medieval Studies*, 10, (1984), pp. 136-91.

innovative and expressive of the ideas and ideologies of the city.⁵⁴ The wide-ranging work of Caroline Barron, Barbara Hanawalt and others has brought far greater attention to the distinctive features of London's late medieval culture: its political ideas, its ceremonies, its education and its literature.⁵⁵ Thanks to these studies, we increasingly understand that medieval citizens were a significant cultural force within medieval English culture. They formed a 'sub-culture', one that drew from cultural models that were current in England and Europe, but which adapted these models with skill and sensitivity to their local situation.⁵⁶

Literary historians have taken an increasing interest in the role played by readers, audiences and compilers within the creation of literary cultures. London miscellanies and London reading practices have often been at the forefront of reception studies.⁵⁷ Scholars of the early twentieth century had often doubted the erudition and learning of London citizens: Sylvia Thrupp's classic study found that merchants possessed 'no great zeal for education' and had little in the way of 'intellectual curiosity or initiative'.⁵⁸ Ralph Flenley claimed that the 'fire from the torch of historical learning...burnt but dimly' in the city.⁵⁹ By contrast, the past decade has seen the development of a sub-genre of articles that survey evidence for mercantile book ownership, which have demonstrated the ubiquity of book ownership: recent examples have been written by Julia Boffey (2010), Anne Sutton

⁵⁴ Lindenbaum, 'London Texts and Literate Practice'; Richardson, *Middle-class Writing*.

⁵⁵ C. Barron, 'Chivalry, Pageantry and Merchant Culture in Medieval London', in P. Coss and M. Keen (ed.), *Heraldry, Pageantry and Social Display in Medieval London*, (Woodbridge, 2002), pp. 219-242; C. Barron, 'The Political Culture of Medieval London', in L. Clark and C. Carpenter (eds.), *Political Culture in Late Medieval Britain*, (Woodbridge, 2004), pp. 111-133; B. Hanawalt, *Ceremony and Civility*, (New York, 2017); B. Hanawalt, *Growing Up in Medieval London*, (New York, 1993).

⁵⁶ C. Meale, 'The *Libelle of Englyshe Polycye* and Mercantile Literary Culture in Late-Medieval London', in J. Boffey and P. King (eds.), *London and Europe in the Later Middle Ages*, (Exeter, 1995), pp. 181-228, 184.

⁵⁷ Boffey and Meale, 'Selecting the Text'; Boffey, *Manuscript and Print*; C. Meale, 'Compiler at Work'; C. Meale, 'John Colyns' Boke'; A. Wiggins, 'The City and the Text: London Literature', in G. Walker and E. Treharne (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Medieval Literature in English*, (Oxford, 2012), pp. 540-556; D. Parker, *The Commonplace Book in Tudor London*, (Lanham, 1998).

⁵⁸ Thrupp, *Merchant Class*, pp. 163, 161.

⁵⁹ Flenley, *Six Town Chronicles*, p. 19.

(2013), Kathleen Scott (2014) and Caroline Barron (2016).⁶⁰ Collectively they have demonstrated that fifteenth and sixteenth-century citizens ploughed considerable resources into collecting books and could access a great diversity of genres. The educational achievements of fifteenth-century merchants are undergoing a positive reappraisal.

The idea of the reader as a compiler has been central to the approach of many literary historians. Particular prominence has been given to ‘commonplace books’, miscellanies of useful, entertaining, pious or edifying materials, often including chronicles. There have been two families of approaches to commonplace books, which we will loosely term the individual and the community perspectives. David Parker’s *Commonplace Book in Tudor London* represents a strong statement of the individualist interpretation.⁶¹ For Parker, there ‘is a purity of motive among the compilers of commonplace books that allows the true tastes and personalities of their compilers to shine through’, a purity that depends on the manuscripts being personal to a single individual.⁶² By uniting disparate texts, the compiler expressed their personality in ways that prefigure the development of the modern literary individual by expressing ‘a separate and distinct coherent self that is separate from the external structure of work, church and family’.⁶³ Most other studies of London commonplace books have adopted a similarly individualistic perspective, notably Meale’s work on John Colyn’s book and various authors’ work on Richard Hill’s manuscript.⁶⁴

⁶⁰ Boffey, ‘London Books’; Sutton, ‘Acquisition and disposal’; Scott, ‘Past Ownership’; Barron, ‘What did Medieval London Merchants Read?’.

⁶¹ Parker, *Commonplace Book*.

⁶² *Ibid.* p. 161.

⁶³ *Ibid.* pp. 84, 160-1.

⁶⁴ Meale, ‘The Compiler at Work’; Meale, ‘John Colyns Boke’; H. Collier, ‘Richard Hill: a London Compiler’, in E. Mullally and J. Thompson (eds.), *The Court and Cultural Diversity*, (Cambridge, 1997), pp. 319-329; J. Rogers, ‘Courtesy Books, Comedy, and the Merchant Masculinity of Oxford, Balliol College MS 354’, *Medieval Forum*, 1, (2001), <https://www.sfsu.edu/~medieval/Volume%201/Rogers.html> (10-05-2019); C. Meale, ‘Mirror for Princes and Merchants’; J. Sánchez-Martí, ‘Reconstructing the Audiences of the Middle English Versions of *Ipomedon*’, *Studies in Philology*, 103:2, (2006), pp. 153-77; J. Sánchez-Martí, ‘The Middle English Versions of *Ipomedon* in their Manuscript Context’, *Manuscripta*, 49:1, (2005), pp. 69-93; J. Sánchez-Martí, ‘Reading Romance in Late Medieval England: the Case of the Middle English *Ipomedon*’, *Philological Quarterly*, 83:1, (2004), pp. 13-39.

The community perspective meanwhile situates commonplace books not in relation to individuals, but rather within households or communities of readers. The selection of texts is understood to be primarily a reflection of communal needs and interests. Philippa Hardman, for instance, has analysed several gentry commonplace books in terms of their ‘highly conservative programmes of reading and teaching materials’ aimed at a multi-generational audience.⁶⁵ When historians examine courtesy texts, didactic texts or romances – all of which are frequent components of commonplace books – they often assume a household readership that included children, women and perhaps servants.⁶⁶ A few London commonplace books have been analysed in these terms of household reading, notably in works on Chetham’s Library MS 8009 by Kate McLean and Rhiannon Purdie.⁶⁷ However, it has been noticeably less common than the individualistic approach.

This thesis contributes to the growing historiography that contends that London had a large and active civic culture in the fifteenth century. In particular, the fifteenth century was a period of successful expansion for the literary activities of citizens. London’s chronicling traditions need to be situated within this thriving and expanding culture. London was a predominantly immigrant city: few citizens were born Londoners, rather they needed to be *made* into Londoners. The social and cultural reproduction of the city rested on a system of education and indoctrination, which turned immigrants into citizens. We need to situate

⁶⁵ P. Hardman, ‘Evidence of Readership in Fifteenth-century Household Miscellanies’, *Poetica*, 60, (2003), pp. 15-30.

⁶⁶ M. Foster, ‘From Courtesy to Urbanity in Late Medieval England’, *Parergon*, 29:1, (2012), pp. 27-46; P. Hardman, ‘Popular Romance and Young Readers’, in R. Radulescu and C. Rushton (eds.), *A Companion to Medieval Popular Romance*, (Cambridge, 2009), pp. 150-163; M. Seaman, ‘Late Medieval Conduct Literature’, in L. McAvoy and D. Watt (eds.), *The History of British Women’s Writing, 700-1500*, (Basingstoke, 2015), pp. 121-132; C. Meale, “‘Gode Men/Wiues Maydnes and Alle Men’: Romance and its Audiences”, in C. Meale (ed.), *Readings in Medieval English Romance*, (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 209-226.

⁶⁷ K. McLean, ‘Engaging the Manuscript: New Editions and Reading the “whole book” in Chetham’s Library MS 8009’, (Ph.D. thesis, University of York, 2009); R. Purdie, ‘Sexing the Manuscript: the Case for Female Ownership of MS. Chetham 8009’, *Neophilologus*, 82:1, (1998), pp. 139-148; Sánchez-Martí, ‘Reconstructing the Audiences’; Sánchez-Martí, ‘Versions of *Ipomedon* in MS context’; Sánchez-Martí, ‘Reading Romance in Medieval England’; Meale, ‘Late Medieval Mirrors for Merchants’; K. McLean, ‘The “Book of the Duke and Emperor”: a New Edition and Interpretations within the Manuscript Context of MS. Manchester, Chetham’s Library 8009 (Mun A.6.31)’, *Fifteenth-century Studies*, 33, (2013), pp. 97-121.

London's literary productions, its commonplace books and its chronicling within this educational context. Historiography was one of the main written genres through which Londoners discussed the world around them and depicted their city. It was particularly suited to discussing the political situation and the rights, duties and problems that faced citizens and civic leaders. Historiography was a means to express, form and inculcate civic values.

1.4: Chapters of This Thesis

This thesis examines the nature and purpose of historical culture within fifteenth-century London. Why did fifteenth-century Londoners plough time, resources and energy into producing depictions of the past? What was the role of civic chronicling within this historical culture?

The opening chapters of this thesis explore the parameters of London's historical culture. Chapter 2, 'Institutional Histories', examines the role of London's public institutions within its historical culture. It begins by surveying the evidence from libraries and archival sources, before subsequently examining the role of institutional foundation narratives in poetry, pageantry, legal documents and other forms of public historical culture. Chapter 3, 'Popular Histories', turns to the historical culture within the household. It considers the tastes of the chronicle-reading public within London, and also the typical demographics of chronicle-users.

The rest of the thesis then examines how and why Londoners made use of historical culture. Chapter 4, 'Instructive Histories', situates chronicles within the context of

domestic didactic and educational reading. It argues that education was a vital function for chronicles: households turned to historiography to teach manners, morality and political values. Chapter 5, 'Royal Histories', develops further on the issue of political education by examining how chroniclers wrote about kingship. The role of London as the 'royal chamber', the counsellor and supporter of the king, is vital for understanding how London historians conceived of kingship and the realm. Chapter 6, 'Citizen Histories' examines how Londoners wrote about their city. London historians showed a strong interest in the governance of the city and shared in many of the preoccupations and anxieties of contemporary civic leaders.

The thesis also contains an appendix in which short descriptions and provenance information of a large number of chronicle manuscripts and early printed books are given. Throughout the chapters, references to manuscripts described in the appendix are given in the following form: 'App. 2.1' for instance describes Appendix table two, item 1. In quotations throughout this thesis, Middle English spelling has for the most part been retained, but modern punctuation and capitalisation has been added, contractions have been silently expanded, and the modern distinction between letters 'u' and 'v' has been used to aid clarity.

2.0: Institutional Histories: the Role of Civic Government in Historical Culture.

2.1: Introduction: Archival Practice and Historical Culture

In July 1529, the most famous, and perhaps messiest, marital breakdown in history was in progress: Henry VIII was attempting to separate from his wife, Catherine of Aragon. A papal legatine court was convened in London. Henry cited the fact that his brother, Arthur, had previously married Catherine as grounds for an annulment; the queen responded that her prior union was unconsummated. The king needed to prove the legitimacy of Catherine and Arthur's marriage and thus gathered evidence that it had been acknowledged and widely known in public. His agents extracted chronicles from the archives of many of the principal institutions of the realm, and on 14th July they reached the Guildhall. They found chronicles in the Orphans' Chamber and the Council Chamber.¹ One of the chronicles was 'a printed book of the names of the bailiffs, mayors and sheriffs of the city of London', which provided a detailed account of the wedding. Julia Boffey has identified this as the chronicle in the printed miscellany, the *Customs of London*. Also quoted was a 'great register' containing a heraldic chronicle and a detailed description of the death of Prince Arthur.² Today there are several surviving witnesses of this chronicle in the archives of the College of Arms. One of these, COA MS M.13bis, is in the hand of the herald Christopher Barker, who also compiled the London chronicle COA MS M.6bis for the College's archives.³ From this story, we learn that the corporation had its own distinct 'London

¹ *Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic of the Reign of Henry VIII*, ed./trans. J. Brewer, (21 vols, London, 1875), iv, pp. 2586-9, no. 1591; see also Boffey, *Manuscript and Print*, p. 136, n. 25.

² London, COA, MS M.13bis, ff. 68r-74v; other copies can be found in COA, MSS I.3 ff. 14v and I.11 f. 10; see L. Campbell and F. Steer, *A Catalogue of Manuscripts in the College of Arms Collections*, (London, 1988), pp. 140-141.

³ For Christopher Barker and COA, MS M.6bis, see Campbell and Steer, *Catalogue COA*, pp. 106-111.

chronicle' format and the heralds their own distinct 'heraldic' approach to history. The Guildhall collected both heraldic and civic chronicles in their archives; so too did the College of Arms. Both institutions made their chronicles available for royal use upon request. The corporation, heralds and monarchy each produced, stored and exchanged historiography: the relationships between these three institutions were underwritten by a web of book-borrowing relationships.

Whilst the king's exploits in London's archives did not achieve his desired result, they nonetheless illuminate the role of public institutions in London's historical culture. These public institutions acted as stores of chronicles, and as custodians of history and there was significant interpenetration between historiographical practice and archival practice. These chronicles could be used to cultivate relationships between institutions and create together a common past. This chapter explores the role taken by London's civic institutions in the production, storage and propagation of historical culture.

There has long been a sense that London chronicles had one foot in the archive: Caroline Barron has described London chronicles as 'utilitarian texts' that initially 'emanated from the civic bureaucracy' and rarely had a role in domestic or leisure reading.⁴ Recent historiography has increasingly stressed that record-keeping was not merely practical in its focus but had historical and ideological dimensions.⁵ Malcolm Richardson has proposed that the close links between civic record-keeping and chronicling should lead us to see both activities as complementary and as vital in forming London identity. He has argued that historical-legal 'civic costumals' in private ownership were ideological documents first and foremost:

⁴ Barron, 'What Did Medieval London Merchants Read?', pp. 53, 55.

⁵ E.g. The 2016 supplemental edition of *Past and Present*: see A. Walsham, 'The Social History of the Archive: Record Keeping in Early Modern Europe', *Past and Present*, 230, (2016), pp. 9-48.

the English bourgeoisie was finally attempting to create a personal textual space which had both practical value in private and business life and yet was a site in which their values and aspirations found some permanence.⁶

Surveying civic historical writing in Holland and England, Jenneke de Vries has concluded that it is not fruitful to differentiate record-keeping from historiography:

The boundary between administration and historical writing is fluid and characterised by their interconnectedness; administrative sources can be historicised to a small or large extent, but there is never a dichotomy.⁷

Matthew Davies has suggested that guild customals were ‘more than simply collections of rules and regulations: they amounted to a kind of history of the guild concerned, assemblages of material relating to origins, development and heritage’.⁸ Archival and historical practices are increasingly understood as interlinked: rather than storing objective information, archives respond to contemporary cultural and historical concerns; meanwhile historiography makes use of the archive and its practices.

This chapter will examine the historical culture that was endemic within the Guildhall and other secular civic institutions such as the guilds. The first section examines the role of history in the archival culture of public institutions. The second section examines how public institutions used origination narratives to promote their political and cultural power, and expands the focus to include pageantry, poetry and legal disputation. Public institutions – and in particular the Guildhall – intervened frequently in historical culture and had a shaping influence in how London citizens wrote about and thought about the past.

⁶ M. Richardson, *Middle-class Writing*, p. 157.

⁷ J. de Vries, ‘Written Historical Culture’, p. 258.

⁸ M. Davies, “‘Wrytyng, Making and Engrocyng’: Clerks, Guilds and Identity in Late Medieval London”, in M. Allen and M. Davies (eds.), *Medieval Merchants and Money*, (London, 2016), pp. 21-42, 30.

2.2: History in the Archive and the Library

2.2.1: Chronicles at the Guildhall

In 1328, the will of the fishmonger Andrew Horn left many books to the ‘chamber of the Guildhall’, which included extensive historical and political works as well as practical archival materials.⁹ Caroline Barron and Mary Erler have demonstrated that, after the Guildhall was rebuilt and remodelled in the early fifteenth century, Horn’s bequest was rehoused in the antechamber (or ‘large walk-through cupboard’) between the Mayor’s Court and the Inner Council Chamber.¹⁰ This placed the library between two *loci* of power: the former was the centre of mayoral activity and the latter the main meeting-place of the aldermen. In 1509, the Court of Aldermen passed an ordinance that the door of the Chamber Library should be locked whenever the court was in session: this implies that the political officers (and not just the administrative and bureaucratic staff) were the intended users and gatekeepers of these books.¹¹ The Chamber Library was originally under the control of an elected political office, the chamberlain. However, after 1462, all of the Guildhall records were placed under the supervision of the town clerk.¹² A partial sense of the contents of this library can be gained from the undated library catalogue of approximately the mid-fifteenth century.¹³ It contained thirteen books and also the Letter-book series. Amongst these, at least five contained chronicles: the *Book of Old Laws*; the

⁹ S. Cavanaugh, ‘A Study of Books Privately Owned in England, 1300-1450’, (Ph.D. thesis, University of Pennsylvania, 1980), pp. 440-1.

¹⁰ M. Erler, ‘The Guildhall Library, Robert Bale and the Writing of London History’, *Historical Research*, 89:243, (2016), pp. 176-186; C. Barron, *The Medieval Guildhall of London*, (London, 1974), p. 31.

¹¹ Barron, *Medieval Guildhall*, p. 31.

¹² P. Tucker, ‘Dunthorn, William’, *ODNB*, <https://ezproxy-prd.bodleian.ox.ac.uk:4563/10.1093/ref:odnb/8294> (22-09-2019).

¹³ *CLB D*, pp. 317-8.

books of Andrew Horn; the Letter-book series; ‘Liber de Cronicis Callic’; and ‘Liber de Cronicis, &c.’¹⁴

The earliest of these was the *Book of Old Laws*, compiled in c. 1274 by Alderman Arnold Fitz-Thedmar.¹⁵ It contains his Latin ‘Chronicle of the Sheriffs of London’ (63v-144v), the first magistrate annal and the first town chronicle compiled in London; it also contains some brief and highly dispersed fourteenth-century continuations, mostly in French (40r-v, 43v-44v, 55r, 57r-62v, 144v-146r, 158v).¹⁶ Arnold compiled a short chronicle of the kings of England mostly consisting of extracts of the *Gesta Regum Anglorum* of William of Malmesbury (3r-7r, 11r-34v, 156v); he also excerpted annals similar to those of Merton and Southwark Priors (34v-40v). He collected hagiographic texts including the life of Secundus the Philosopher (7r-9r) and the deathbed vision of Edward the Confessor (41r-v). He constructed a genealogical narrative of his own family (157r-158v) and a narrative of his financial disputes with his fellow citizens (1r-2r, 163r-v). He collected the short history of the papacy – effectively a versified and annotated papal list – written by the canon of St John Lateran, Nicholas Maniacutius (9v-10r). Arnold also collected – and may, as Ian Stone has suggested, have authored – two further texts of a similar kind: a versified list of emperors (10v) and a versified list of Archbishops of Canterbury (55v). Arnold provided lists of bishops for each of the bishoprics of England (48v-54v), some of which contained short historiographical annotations. He was thus familiar with annotated lists of emperors, popes, archbishops and bishops; that he chose to build his chronicle around the annual rotation of sheriffs is, in this context, unsurprising. In short, Arnold’s compilation was less of a ‘book of old laws’ than it is a book of historiography. The past was depicted using

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ See J. Catto, ‘Fitzthedmar, Arnold (1201–1274/5)’, *ODNB*, <http://ezproxy-prd.bodleian.ox.ac.uk:2167/view/article/9644> (30-09-2016); Stone, ‘Book of Arnold Fitz Thedmar’, pp. 131-158; I. Stone, ‘Arnold Fitz Thedmar’; *Chronicles of the Mayors and Sheriffs*, pp. 1-208.

¹⁶ *Chronicles of the Mayors and Sheriffs*.

many genres: national chronicles, civic chronicles, church chronicles, genealogy, hagiography and annotated lists.

The *Book of Old Laws* bears signs of continuing use and importance in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Ian Stone has noted that many passages in which the Thames was mentioned have been heavily annotated in fifteenth-century hands, and two passages of the chronicle were copied into the *Liber Albus*, a London custumal (c. 1419).¹⁷ Direct use of the chronicle in fifteenth-century historiography was rare. However, Stone has noted that on three occasions, Robert Fabyan's *New Chronicles* used information that is today attested in no source but the *Book of Old Laws*.¹⁸ Fabyan is known to have borrowed books from the Guildhall and used them at home: it is, therefore, possible that he was loaned this book.¹⁹ Also of interest is the sixteenth-century note: 'Ego sum bonus puer' (I am a good boy).²⁰ This addition was more likely to arise if the book was loaned to households than if it were held continuously in a reference library.

The second cluster of historiography is the book collection of Chamberlain Andrew Horn, particularly his historical and literary manuscript the 'Liber Legum Regum Antiquorum'.²¹ This included Horn's continuation to the *Annales Paulini*, based on the chronicle of the Cathedral (which was in turn based on the *Flores Historiarum* of St Albans).²² As its lineage implies, this chronicle adopted the format of a monastic history rather than continuing Arnold Fitz-Thedmar's experiments in the magistrate annal format. Horn also wrote a short narrative account of the process of the 1321 eyre of London.²³ He included

¹⁷ Stone, 'Book of Arnold Fitz Thedmar', pp. 167-8.

¹⁸ *Ibid.* pp. 168-9.

¹⁹ See below, pp. 39, 120.

²⁰ Stone, 'Book of Arnold Fitz Thedmar', p. 166.

²¹ See Catto, 'Horn, Andrew'; J. Catto, 'Andrew Horn: Law and History'; Juranski, 'Andrew Horn, Alfredia Apocrypha'; *Chronicles of Edward I and Edward II*; *Munimenta*, 2.1 and 2.2.

²² *Chronicles of Edward I and Edward II* i.

²³ *Munimenta*, 2.1, pp. 285-432.

William Fitz-Stephen's twelfth-century *Description of London*, in which the story of Brutus of Troy was recounted.²⁴ His approach to the law was creative and historically-minded, and he wrote extensive memoranda that constitute working notes on the history of English law: Jeremy Catto has described him as the only man of his era to possess 'an historical imagination'.²⁵ Horn's chronicle has had fewer readers compared to *The Book of Old Laws*, both in the middle ages and today. The early fifteenth-century Town Clerk John Carpenter was, however, an avid user of Horn's books.²⁶ Horn's influence on later London chronicling was primarily indirect.

Another location for historiography was the Letter-book series. There was an extremely brief magistrate annal incorporated into Letter-book F that consisted of short annotations on a mayoral list.²⁷ It may have had pragmatic uses: establishing the correct order and dating of mayoralties could allow for the identification of forged documents.²⁸ The London Letter-books were primarily concerned with the legal and administrative life of the city, but they also contained numerous examples of short narrative accounts of events, which had no obvious legal purpose. Such accounts were often written shortly after the events described and thus fall somewhere between news-writing and historiography. I will term this genre 'narratives of record': 'narrative' emphasises that they are a form of storytelling analogous to histories, but the term 'record' makes clear that their context and function is not identical to that of chronicles. Arguably we have already discussed two examples of

²⁴ *Ibid.* pp. 2-15.

²⁵ Catto, 'Andrew Horn: Law and History', p. 367.

²⁶ *Liber Albus*, p. 14.

²⁷ *CLB F*, pp. 276-303; Appendix 1.34.

²⁸ *E.g.* in a 1479 case concerning the Hart's Horn in Southwark, lawyers searched Guildhall records and used an inconsistency in the chronology of mayors to argue that a document was a forgery: see M. Carlin, 'Palaeography and Forgery: Thomas D.'s *Book of the Hartshorn in Southwark*', in E. New and C. Steer, *Medieval Londoners*, (London, 2019), pp. 71-94, 76-9.

this genre: Arnold Fitz-Thedmar wrote an account of his political and legal disputes with the corporation, and Andrew Horn composed a narrative of the 1321 Eyre of London.

Narratives of record are dotted throughout the Letter-books. Letter-Book D contains an account of the ceremonies of celebration for the birth of the future Edward III in 1312.²⁹

Letter-book H features a narrative of the events of the peasants' revolt.³⁰ Letter-book I contains a description of the London celebrations following the battle of Agincourt.³¹

Letter-book K includes accounts of Henry VI's triumphal entries into Paris in 1431 and London in 1432.³² Letter-book L contains an unfinished narrative of the 1464 Sergeants' Feast, which Mayor Matthew Philip boycotted following a ceremonial slight by his hosts.³³

There is also a short Latin account of the siege of London by Thomas Neville, the 'Bastard of Fauconberg' in 1471, which has been copied into both Letter-book L and also the Journals of the Common Council.³⁴ A recounting of Henry VI's release from the Tower of London and restoration to the throne in October 1470 was also incorporated into the Journals.³⁵ The subject matter of such narratives mostly revolved around public ceremonies or war. The accounts of war and rebellion usually presented London in a heroic light, as the right hand to the king and a force keeping order. The many ceremonial narratives emphasised the city's status as the royal capital, as well as pointing to the magnificence and wealth of the city.

What were these narratives used for? The Letter-book narrative of the 1432 royal entry was the main source for John Lydgate's poem, *The Triumphal Entry of Henry VI into*

²⁹ H. Riley, *Memorials of London and London Life in the 13th, 14th and 15th Centuries*, (London, 1868), pp. 105-6.

³⁰ *Ibid.* pp. 449-451.

³¹ *CLB I*, p. 144.

³² *CLB K*, pp. 135-7, 137-9.

³³ *CLB L*, p. 7.

³⁴ *CLB L*, pp. 97-9; on the journal account, see R. Sharpe, *London and the Kingdom: A History*, (3 vols, London, 1895), iii, pp. 385-392. The journals are underrepresented in this paragraph: the lack of a calendar or published index makes them more difficult to search systematically compared to the Letter-books.

³⁵ Sharpe, *London and the Kingdom*, iii, pp. 391-2.

London, which was commissioned by Mayor John Welles.³⁶ It is feasible that other record narratives were also transformed into publicly-accessible forms. The Letter-book's narrative of the 1415 celebrations after Agincourt is notably similar to the account of that event shared across several London chronicles.³⁷ The chroniclers may have made direct use of this text, or perhaps the city could have created an intervening and public-facing document such as a newsletter. A poem survives that recounts the Agincourt campaign, *The Expedition of Henry V into France*: it is unusual because it begins and ends with meetings between the king and the mayor, even though the mayor is marginal to the plot. Two out of the three manuscripts in which it survives (appendix 1.24 and 3.13) are manuscripts owned by London citizens, suggesting a localised reception pattern.³⁸ It is feasible that the poem could have been commissioned by a London citizen or perhaps by the corporation, although this cannot be proven. The 1432 narrative was, therefore, reworked into a publicly accessible form by Lydgate; and the 1415 narrative was probably the basis for the London chronicles' account and may have been more distantly related to the *Expedition* poem.

A third example of a potential civic commission for a political poem is *The Recovery of the Throne by Edward IV*.³⁹ The events of 1470-1 were fast-moving and confusing, with Edward IV's deposition, Henry VI's readeption, and then Edward's recovery of the throne in rapid succession. That London found its loyalties confused can be seen in its historiography: as has been mentioned, the Journals of Common Council incorporated a Lancastrian-influenced record narrative of the city's participation in Henry VI's restoration

³⁶ C. Benson, 'Civic Lydgate: the Poet and London', in L. Scanlon and J. Simpson (eds.), *John Lydgate: Poetry, Culture and Lancastrian England*, (Notre Dame, 2006), pp. 147-68.

³⁷ *CLB I*, p. 144; compare to *Great Chronicle*, p. 94.

³⁸ 'The Expedition of Henry V into France', ed. N. Harris and E. Tyrell, *A Chronicle of London*, (London, 1827), pp. 216-33.

³⁹ 'On the Recovery of the Throne by Edward IV', ed. T. Wright, *Political Poems and songs related to English History*, (2 vols, London, 1861), ii, pp. 271-282.

in 1470 and a Yorkist-leaning account of the siege of the city in 1471 within a few pages of each other. By focusing on the siege, the divided loyalties of the city could be de-emphasized and the city could instead be portrayed as a bulwark of the renewed Yorkist regime. This was the interpretation of the record narratives, and it was also presented by the poem *On the Recovery of the Throne by Edward IV*. The poet portrayed York and Coventry as Lancastrian towns that ‘trowblid mervelously’ Edward IV; London was inaccurately presented as a consistent centre of Yorkist support.⁴⁰ The chronology of the poem was skewed so that the Battle of Barnet (14th April) and the siege of the Bastard (10th-14th May) took place almost simultaneously (thus Barnet effectively took the position of the battle of Tewkesbury on 4th May). A similar elision of Barnet and Tewkesbury into a single campaign simultaneous with the siege of London can be found in London chronicle, BL, Cotton Julius B.i.⁴¹ In reality, Edward IV returned to London with the body of the Earl of Warwick between the two battles; in the poem, Edward left London before Barnet and did not return until after the siege of the Bastard. The result was that Edward IV’s triumphal entry following Barnet was repurposed to become a joint triumph for both victories, despite in reality pre-dating the siege. The pattern of the distortions was only to the city’s benefit: it magnified the importance of London and extirpated any claims that the city had been disloyal. This makes it feasible, although not fully proven, that the poet was working on behalf of the corporation of London.

Guildhall officials produced record narratives for topics on which they wanted to fix a particular interpretation. These narratives should not be seen merely as residing in the archive: they may well have acted as sources for newsletters, chronicles and poems. In the instances of the events of 1415, 1432 and 1471 discussed above, the record narratives

⁴⁰ ‘Recovery of the Throne’, p. 272.

⁴¹ *A Chronicle of London*, p. 144.

produced by the city need to be situated alongside the chronicles, poems and newsletters produced by citizens recounting the same events. The record narratives must be seen as part of a broader campaign by civic leaders to shape interpretations of the recent past and influence opinion. The record narratives produced an interpretation of events in which London was an important ideological, logistical, financial and military support to the ruling regime; this version of events was subsequently disseminated through other forms of writing.

To return to the chamber library catalogue: two other chronicles are recorded, the ‘Liber de Cronicis Callic’ and ‘Liber de Cronicis &c.’ These cannot be identified with certainty but could be the same as some of the other books known to have been in the library but missing from the catalogue. In 1328, Andrew Horn bequeathed two chronicles to the city: Henry of Huntington’s chronicle; and ‘De Gestis Anglorum’, (perhaps a copy of William of Malmesbury’s *Gesta Regum Anglorum*).⁴² No extant version of these chronicles has been linked to the Guildhall (although extracts of the *Gesta* occur in the *Book of Old Laws*). Also of interest is the 1516 notice that the executors of the will of Robert Fabyan returned to the Guildhall the ‘grete boke of the Croniques of Fraunce wreton in Frensh’ that had been ‘long tyme in the keypyng of the sayd M. Fabyan’: Thorney and Thomas identified this with LMA CLC/270/MS00244, a French language chronicle of France.⁴³ This is particularly interesting because it indicates that Fabyan used the Chamber Library for borrowing and not only as a reference library. This strengthens the suggestion, made above, that Arnold Fitz-Thedmar’s chronicle may have been loaned to Fabyan and perhaps to other civic households in the sixteenth century.⁴⁴ The Guildhall thus at various points owned LMA CLC/270/MS00244, Henry Huntington’s chronicle and perhaps William of

⁴² Scott, ‘Past Ownership’, p. 170.

⁴³ Thorney and Thomas, ‘Introduction’, *Great Chronicle*, xxii.

⁴⁴ See above, p. 34.

Malmesbury's *Gesta*: any combination of these texts could lie behind the opaque names 'Liber de Cronicis Callic' and 'Liber de Cronicis'. These books, combined with the variety of genres in the books of Arnold Fitz-Thedmar and Andrew Horn, demonstrate that the Guildhall collected a wide variety of chronicles: not all of its books dealt with the administration or history of the city. The London administration was interested in amassing a broad library of knowledge.

Several other books can be placed at slightly later dates in the Chamber Library of the Guildhall. During Henry VIII's 1529 divorce proceedings, as described above, officers found a printed copy of Richard Arnold's London chronicle, the *Customs of London*: it is uncertain whether this was the 1503 or 1521 edition.⁴⁵ In 1534 the Aldermen resolved to 'provyde a book of Mr Fabyans cronycles...to remayn alaweys yn thys courte', which probably referred to the 1533 edition of the *New Chronicles*.⁴⁶ The historian Edward Hall in 1547 left his 'cronica cronicarum', (a copy of the *Nuremberg Chronicle*) to 'lye in the counsell chamber'.⁴⁷ Mary Erler has proposed, on less certain grounds, that the London chronicle authored by Robert Bale (TCD, 509 and 604, 1.10) could have been located in the Chamber Library.⁴⁸ This is because, in the 1550s, the antiquarian John Bale took notes from this book and labelled them 'ex Biblioth. London', which could refer to the Guildhall. Nonetheless, it is unlikely that Robert Bale originally wrote his chronicle with an institutional context in mind: the surviving text is an authorial working draft, with parts of the chronicle crammed without chronological order into any available space. Mary-Rose McLaren has suggested 'this manuscript was clearly written for personal use'.⁴⁹ It is, however, feasible that the circulation of this manuscript after Robert Bale's death

⁴⁵ *Letters and Papers*, iv, pp. 2586-9, no. 1591

⁴⁶ Thorney and Thomas, 'Introduction', *Great Chronicle*, xlvii.

⁴⁷ Erler, 'The Guildhall Library', p. 184

⁴⁸ *Ibid.* pp. 178-9.

⁴⁹ McLaren, *London Chronicles*, p. 34.

eventually brought it to the Chamber Library, by the 1550s at the latest. No other London chronicle can be linked with equal strength to the Guildhall library. Nonetheless, WYA MS 32D86/42 (1.1) was possessed by Clerk of the Guildhall, Richard Hedley; and Gough London 10 (1.45) by Chamberlain Miles Adys. These were the kind of men who created and used the Chamber Library: either book may have spent a period in institutional ownership.

The Chamber Library was not the only store of books at the Guildhall. The 1529 search of the records for Henry VIII's divorce proceedings showed that at least three historiographical documents were located in the Court of Orphans: in Mary Erler's article, she incorrectly labels these as being part of the Chamber Library.⁵⁰ One of these was the 'Great Register' which, despite its archival name, contained heraldic narratives. The other two were labelled as 'ancient book of calendars', one of which was in English and the other in Latin, which contained brief and factual notes about the dates of events. The administrative-sounding titles of these manuscripts – registers and calendars – could indicate that these were texts similar to the London Letter-books, and thus closer to record-keeping than to conventional chronicling. Perhaps this second library was reserved for the administrators and legal officials of the city. Up until 1462, the town records had been split between two masters: the chamberlain controlled the Chamber library and the town clerk controlled the archives.⁵¹ The presence of two separate libraries of historical chronicles could perhaps be a legacy of this arrangement, with the Orphans' Court books thus linked to the town clerk and the administrators under his remit.

There was, in fact, another library that the will of John Carpenter describes as 'the common library'; he mentioned that it was for the use of 'the students there, and those

⁵⁰ *Letters and Papers*, iv, pp. 2586-9, no. 1591; Erler, 'The Guildhall Library', p. 177.

⁵¹ Tucker, 'Dunthorn'.

discoursing to the common people’ and therefore may have been a primarily clerical library for the Guildhall chantry priests.⁵² This was not the only involvement of senior Londoners in clerical libraries: Mayor Richard Whittington paid for the Greyfriars library to be rebuilt.⁵³ ‘Common profit’ schemes, in which pious books were lent out to the public, proliferated in the same period: Wendy Scase has established that at least three men who were involved in administering Richard Whittington’s legacies (Reginald Pecock, John Carpenter, and John Colop) were involved in this kind of book bequest, as were a large number of men who can be linked through family and business to Colop.⁵⁴ Richard Whittington, John Carpenter and their social and political circle were responsible for many book-related projects: rebuilding the Guildhall and with it, the Chamber Library; building a library for chantry priests; rebuilding the Greyfriars’ library; and the expansion of common profit book lending. This mass of activity within a single generation, and the presence of at least three stores of books on-site at the Guildhall, indicates that access to books was an issue thought worthy of public policy and government intervention.

2.2.2: Beyond the Guildhall

The Guildhall libraries ensured that some of the most influential and politically influential Londoners had good access to historical literature. However, the number of users of such libraries were only a small fraction of the citizenry: Caroline Barron estimates that around 200 men were at any given time involved in governance and administration at the

⁵² Cavanaugh, ‘Books Privately Owned’, pp. 169-70.

⁵³ C. L. Kingsford, *The Grey Friars of London*, (Aberdeen, 1915), p. 42.

⁵⁴ W. Scase, ‘Reginald Pecock, John Carpenter and John Colop’s “Common-profit” Books: Aspects of Book Ownership and Circulation in Fifteenth-century London’, *Medium Aevum*, 61:2, (1992), pp. 261-274.

Guildhall.⁵⁵ Archival practice, nonetheless, touched a much greater number of citizens. Citizens also held office and had reason to use archives in many other civic secular institutions including livery companies, wards, vestries, and religious fraternities: Barron estimates that around a quarter of citizens held a position in one of these institutions at any given time.⁵⁶ The archival practices of these civic institutions had the potential to reach a broad audience and to be truly influential on how citizens thought about and wrote about the past. This section, therefore, examines how far these institutions imitated and shared in the archival practices of the Guildhall.

The narrative-of-record genre spread from the Guildhall to other institutional archives. In the accounts of the Wardens of the Bridge, there is a detailed Latin record narrative of the civic entry granted to the Duke of Bedford in 1425.⁵⁷ The record narrative form was also employed by occupational guilds, for example, the Goldsmiths' books include an account of the 1445 reception of Margaret of Anjou into London.⁵⁸ One of the most prolific producers of record narratives was William Porland, the clerk of the Brewers' company (*d.* 1440), who authored lively examples in both English and Latin. In a unique narrative, he described Henry V's practice of writing vernacular letters to the corporation; this was cited as a precedent for the Brewers' increasing use of the vernacular in their records.⁵⁹ Porland composed three narratives describing the running dispute between the corporation and the Brewers: Mayors Richard Whittington, Robert Chichele and William Walderne were portrayed as persecuting the guild.⁶⁰ On the other hand, Mayor William Crowmer was presented as 'a good man and a lovyng to þe craffte of Brewers', who helped the

⁵⁵ Barron, 'London 1300-1500', p. 401.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ REED: *Civic London*, iii, pp. 1128-40.

⁵⁸ McLaren, *London Chronicles*, p. 41.

⁵⁹ J. Fisher, 'A Language Policy for Lancastrian England', *PMLA*, 107:5, (1992), pp. 1168-1180, 1170; R. Chambers and M. Daunt, *A Book of London English*, (Oxford, 1931), p. 139.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.* pp. 140-2, 143-6.

company without accepting any gifts.⁶¹ Another narrative passage described the funeral of Henry V; it may, as McLaren has argued, have been used as a source for the London chronicle in Longleat MS 53.⁶²

There is a brief and unusual example of the history of an institution in the records of the parish guild of the Holy Trinity at St Botolph without Aldersgate in BL, Add. MS 37664.⁶³ At the head of its lists of entrants, there is a very brief memorandum of around 130 words describing the history of the guild: it began as an Easter guild that maintained tapers in the church. Its successes brought ‘more gretter devocioun and sterynge unto þe worschipe of God’, and the founders decided in 1377 to expand the fraternity and transfer its dedication to the Trinity. Although brief, this note illustrates that guilds and civic institutions could define their purpose through their history. For many guilds and fraternities, this may have been a primarily oral history; short memoranda and officer lists could act as an *aide-mémoire* for a group social memory.

There is less evidence for the ownership of fully-formed chronicles or non-utilitarian libraries amongst the livery companies. One interesting exception is Bodleian MS Rawlinson B.359, which was probably owned by the Grocers.⁶⁴ It contains a Latin-language London chronicle of a summary variety, followed by a list of senior officers of the Grocers’ Company, into which has been inserted several historical memoranda.⁶⁵ This second text is, thus, a unique example of a magistrate annal that used guild officials rather than city officials as its basis. One of these memoranda reads: ‘Ego Henricus Nycoll clericus magister grocer intravi in officium’.⁶⁶ Barron has shown that Henry Nichol

⁶¹ *Ibid.* p. 182.

⁶² McLaren, *London Chronicles*, p. 41.

⁶³ *Parish Fraternity Register: Fraternity of the Holy Trinity and SS. Fabian and Sebastian in the Parish of St Botolph without Aldersgate*, ed. P. Basing, (London, 1982), p. 4.

⁶⁴ Bodleian, MS Rawlinson B.359.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.* ff. 1-17v (London chronicle), ff. 18r-25v (Grocer list).

⁶⁶ *Ibid.* fol. 22v.

became company clerk in 1460 and received a pension in 1471.⁶⁷ Judging from the palaeography, Nichol's hand dominated in both the Grocer list and the London chronicle to the year 1498, at which point the respective lists were continued in a wide variety of hands to 1530.⁶⁸ McLaren has speculated that this may have been a company book kept in a public place, due to the variety of hands.⁶⁹ If so then this would indicate that archival-historical practices that had originated at the Chamber Library of the Guildhall had, by around 1500, spread to the livery companies. No other chronicles can be linked definitively to guild ownership, but the insertion of guild documents into some miscellanies of civic history – the Goldsmith documents in Gough London 10 and the Fishmonger documents in Egerton 2885 – means that it is feasible that other company-owned chronicles could yet be identified.⁷⁰

The other important centre of archival practice was the private household. Interactivity between personal archival books and public archival books was evident from an early date: the *Book of Old Laws*, Andrew Horn's books and Robert Bale's chronicle were probably examples of books compiled in private households which subsequently ended up in public institutional archives. Given the evidence that the Chamber Library lent its books, some manuscripts would have passed from public to household possession. Some leading Londoners began to make private legal miscellanies which collected extracts from the Guildhall's institutional books with chronicles or other historical materials: examples of the genre include BL, Add. 62535, BL, MS Egerton 2885, BL, MS Add. 38131 (owned by Alderman Thomas Carleton) and BL, Cotton MS Nero A.vi.⁷¹ In the mid-fifteenth century,

⁶⁷ Barron, 'What Did Medieval London Merchants Read?', pp. 54-5.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

⁶⁹ McLaren, *London Chronicles*, p. 129.

⁷⁰ BL, MS Egerton 2885.

⁷¹ 'Add. MS 62534', *EAM*, http://searcharchives.bl.uk/IAMS_VU2:IAMS032-001962948 (07-05-2020); 'Egerton Ms 2885', *EAM*, http://searcharchives.bl.uk/IAMS_VU2:IAMS032-001984952 (21-09-2019); On BL, Add. MS 38131, see H. Kleineke, 'Carleton's Book: William FitzStephen's *Description of London* in a

Mayor Thomas Cook compiled a personal legal material primarily derived from the *Liber Albus* and copied into it brief notes on the age and foundation of London.⁷² In the early sixteenth century, Mayor Thomas Monoux composed a record narrative in his private cartulary in which he memorialised his rebuilding of a church.⁷³ The record narrative format had reached even the private home.

This chapter has shown that the archival and historical practices of London's public institutions were interlinked. A set of practices developed in the Guildhall from the thirteenth century onwards, including the compilation of miscellanies that combined legal and historical material, the creation of institutional libraries, the writing of narratives of record, and the creation of annotated officer lists and magistrate annals. All of these practices began with a small circle of political and administrative officeholders who were closely linked to the Guildhall. These practices subsequently emanated outwards, reaching the archives of livery companies, vestries, fraternities and even the personal books of London households. The fact that a large proportion of citizens participated in the archival activities of public institutions meant that institutional historical culture – and in particular the version developed in the Guildhall – had a widespread influence on how historical knowledge was produced, stored and spread in London.

The historical books kept in archives had broad purposes. Some narratives were 'self-representation', in which the authors of the historical narratives reflected upon the origin, history, purpose and business of the public institutions of the city. Guildhall officials, for instance, compiled record narratives and London chronicles which commented on how the

Late Fourteenth-century Common-place Book', *Historical Research*, 74:183, (2001), pp. 117-126; 'Cotton MS Nero A VI', *EAM*, http://searcharchives.bl.uk/IAMS_VU2:IAMS041-001102603 (05-06-2020).

⁷² TCC, O.3.11, 67r; on Thomas Cook's library, see L. Matheson, 'Essex/Suffolk scribes and their language in fifteenth-century London', in M. Dossena, R. Dury and M. Gotti (eds.), *English Historical Linguistics, Volume III*, (Philadelphia, 2006), pp. 45-66, 51-52.

⁷³ BL, Add. MS 18783, ff. 5r-5v.

city had been (and should be) governed. Other narratives had broader purposes: for instance, the Guildhall possessed histories of France and the church. There was thus a broader project to ensure that public institutions were staffed by well-educated and well-informed men. The contemporary belief that history books made good reading for governors will be discussed in the later chapters of this thesis.⁷⁴ The remainder of this chapter will focus more closely on civic self-representation, by examining how the historical narratives produced by London's public institutions reflected on and supported the power of these institutions.

2.3: Institutional Foundation Narratives in London's Historical Culture

Amongst those narratives produced for the Guildhall and other archives, one sub-genre directly dealt with the concerns, legitimacy and cultural identity of London's public institutions: namely, foundational narratives. Historians and anthropologists attest that most cultures create stories about how their societies and institutions came into being that often become fundamental to their cultural and political identities: these are variously termed as foundational narratives, origin stories or etiological myths.⁷⁵ Several examples of London's foundational narratives were incorporated into the archives of London's public institutions, some of which have already been mentioned. However, one of the most

⁷⁴ See below, Ch. 4, 5 and 6, and in particular pp. 165-180.

⁷⁵ S. Reynolds, 'Medieval *Origines Gentium* and the Community of the Realm', *History*, 68/224, (1983), pp. 375-390; G. Rosser, 'Myth, Image and the Social Process in the English Medieval Town', *Urban History*, 23/1, (1996), pp. 5-25; N. Mac Sweeney, 'Introduction', in N. Mac Sweeney (ed.), *Foundation Myths in Ancient Societies: Dialogues and Discourses*, (Philadelphia, 2015), pp. 1-19.

interesting facets of foundation legends is their relative accessibility: it will be shown below that London origin stories were not confined to customals but also were recounted through sculpture, poetry, drama, legal pleading, public tablets, *post mortem* commemorative rituals and chronicles. It has already been suggested that the practices of institutional historical culture began with the Guildhall leadership and emanated outwards to the citizenry: foundation stories were a form which allowed it to reach the widest audience.

Another feature of foundational narratives is their lack of consistency, which makes them both a frustrating and a potentially lucrative historical source. A single institution such as the mayoralty could inspire several mutually contradictory stories about its origin; meanwhile, these mayoral narratives were not necessarily fully compatible with foundation legends for the sheriffs, corporation or city. Inconsistency in origin stories has been noted across countries and historical periods. Historian of the ancient world Naoíse Mac Sweeney has suggested that historians should respond to discordance by situating individual stories within ‘complete foundational discourses’, consisting of ‘all the foundation myths relating to a particular city, state or group of people in circulation at a given time’ as well as ‘the various ways in which they were told and the diverse social contexts of their telling’.⁷⁶ Even when stories diverge, they were nonetheless produced by the same society to talk about the same institutions. In some cases, the difference between origin stories can be explained by polemical factors: they were created at specific times to respond to contingent political threats. Others may be explained through power relationships: different factions, institutions or social groups may have formed contrasting versions of the past which supported their partisan viewpoints.

⁷⁶Mac Sweeney, ‘Introduction’, pp. 1-3.

Thus, by collating the foundational discourses of London, we can explore how historical culture was acted upon by institutional interests and contingent political factors. The remainder of this chapter aggregates London origin stories for four institutions: the city; the corporation; the civic jurisdictions held by churches; and the mayoralty. Each of these topics inspired several, often contradictory, stories. In most instances, these clustered around three time periods which had achieved particular salience in civic memory: the ancient reign of Brutus, the decades on either side of the Norman Conquest, and the decades on either side of the year 1200.

2.3.1: Founding the City: Trojans and Britons

In the twelfth century, Geoffrey of Monmouth drew on a cluster of older traditions to create an origin story for London, and England.⁷⁷ A Trojan prince named Brutus, after the destruction of that city, founded a new kingdom in Britain. He constructed the first version of London to be his capital and named it New Troy (or Trinovantum). This narrative had become widely accepted by the late middle ages, and there was even an unsuccessful initiative in the 1380s to rename it ‘Little Troy’.⁷⁸ The supposed great age of the city was presented as a source of prestige: in a verse salutation to the city, Sheriff Robert Fabyan noted that the city had stood longer than Rome, Carthage or Jerusalem and all that time it ‘hath ever borne the flowre/ [of] lawdable Brute’.⁷⁹ Similar brief references to Brutus,

⁷⁷ For overviews, see: J. Clark, ‘Trinovantum – the Evolution of a Legend’, *Journal of Medieval History*, 7, (1981), pp. 135-150; J. Clark, ‘John Stow and the Legendary History of London’, *Transactions of the London and Middlesex Archaeological Society*, 48, (1997), pp. 153-6; I. Bednarska, ‘London’s Imagination: London Legends as a Reflection of the City’s Personality’, (M.A. Thesis, University Mikołaja Kopernika, 2015), pp. 20-24.

⁷⁸ On this point see Kleineke, ‘Carleton’s Book’, pp. 124-6.

⁷⁹ *New Chronicles*, p. 293.

Troy or the age of the city were common in verse. Some poems commissioned by civic leaders drew a link between the authority of the city leaders and the ancient Trojans: John Lydgate composed several ‘Mummings’ for civic feasts which referred to London as the capital of ‘Brutes Albyon’ or as ‘called in cronycles whylome Nuwe Troye’.⁸⁰ The sixteenth-century urban praise poem ‘London Thou Art the Flower of Cities All’, composed for Mayor Edmund Shaa, referred to London as ‘lusty Troy novaunt/ Citie that some tyme cleped was New Troy’.⁸¹ A lone fourteenth-century verse chronicle claimed that Brutus was the creator of the London stone, a local landmark: no fifteenth or sixteenth-century historical work repeated this claim.⁸²

Other pageants and poems produced in London noted Brutus’ role as the progenitor of the monarchy. John Lydgate’s description of Henry VI’s 1432 triumphal entry described London as a ‘ryall citee’ and ‘In thy bygynnyng called Newe Troye’: Brutus’ foundation was used to evoke the historic relationship between a king and his capital.⁸³ Richard Maidstone’s description of the 1392 triumphal entry stated that Richard was the monarch honoured most by the citizens ‘Since Brutus’ day and those of ancient kings’: Richard was a new Brutus, returning to his royal foundation.⁸⁴ The romance *Merlin*, written by Skinner Henry Lovelich and dedicated to Mayor Henry Barton (d. 1435), also contains a brief recounting of Brutus’s foundation of the city as part of the backstory for King Arthur’s lineage.⁸⁵ These accounts positioned kings as the successors to Brutus: they gave London the status of a royal foundation and implied that this created an ongoing relationship

⁸⁰ John Lydgate, *Mummings and Entertainments*, ed. C. Sponsler, (Kalamazoo, 2010) <https://d.lib.rochester.edu/teams/publication/sponsler-lydgate-mummings-and-entertainments> (20-01-2019), ‘Mumming for the Goldsmiths of London’, l. 65; ‘Mumming for the Mercers of London’, l. 76.

⁸¹ ‘London thou art the Flower of Cities all’, in ‘Vitellius A XVI’, pp. 253, l. 9-10.

⁸² See J. Clark’s unpublished paper, ‘London Stone: History and Myth’, *Academia.edu* https://www.academia.edu/11908846/London_Stone_History_and_Myth (23-09-2019), section 3.3.

⁸³ ‘Triumphal Entry of Henry VI’, ll. 153, 512, in *Mummings and Entertainments*.

⁸⁴ Richard Maidstone, *Concordia*, ed. D. Carlson and trans. A. Rigg, (Kalamazoo, 2003), l. 504;

⁸⁵ Henry Lovelich, *Merlin, a Middle-English Metrical Version of a French Romance*, ed. E. Kock, EETS, ex. s., 93, 112, 185, (1904-1932, London), i, p. 272, ll. 1095-10198

between monarch and city that continued to be played out on occasions such as triumphal entries and pageants. The legend of Brutus thus provided a deep well of prestige, which citizen poets and historians used to praise London, glorify kings, or posit the existence of a close and intimate relationship between king and capital.

The Guildhall administration tried to turn the cultural capital of the Trojan foundation into concrete legal rights. In January 1429, the corporation defended its right to grant freedom to London-resident bondmen by using the argument:

According to the testimony of the chronicles, it [London] is much older than the City of Rome; for, springing from the same more ancient Trojans, London was founded by Brut, in imitation of Great Troy, before the foundation of Rome by Remus and Romulus; whence it is that, even to this day, it possesses the liberties, rights, and customs of that ancient city Troy, and enjoys its institutions...⁸⁶

In general, the ‘testimony of chronicles’ was considered to be of low value as legal evidence. One fourteenth-century court case stated that chronicles ‘are not admitted in this court [the King’s Bench] in place of proof’ and could lodge no ‘objection’ against legal documents.⁸⁷ Despite this emphatic denial of the weight of chronicles in the courtroom, the city repeatedly made legal use of its Trojan legends. Foundation narratives of the city could be found in many of the legal miscellanies described earlier in this chapter, namely Horn’s books, the *Liber Albus*, Thomas Carleton’s miscellany, Letter-book L, Egerton 2885, and Thomas Cook’s custumal TCC, O.3.11.⁸⁸ Even where they did not refer directly to Troy or Brutus, many legal documents and court cases referred to the ancient liberties of the city through references to ancient foundations: London was ‘the most ancient and most free city in the realm, and commonly called the king’s Chamber’, or ‘Of all cities in the

⁸⁶ *Liber Albus*, p. 54; *CLB K*, pp. 90-1; for the original, see *Munimenta*, 2.1, p. 9.

⁸⁷ ‘Prior of St Oswald’s Gloucester vs Archbishop of Canterbury, King’s Bench, Michaelmas 1304’, in G. Sayles, *The Functions of the Medieval Parliament of England*, (London, 1988), p. 273.

⁸⁸ *Munimenta*, 2.1, p. 9; *Liber Albus*, pp. 54, 12, 427; See also Kleineke, ‘Carleton’s Book’; *CLB L*, pp. ii, 7; BL, Egerton MS 2885, fol. 8v; TCC, MS O.3.11, fol. 67r.

West, this city of London, the most ancient...'⁸⁹ Despite their shaky legal force, references to the Brutus myth were ubiquitous in archival and legal contexts. These implied that London's legal powers and corporate liberties had roots in the Trojan past, although precisely which rights were linked to the Trojans was often left undefined in these texts.

Another variant in London's British legendary history was frequently referenced in pageantry, namely the giants of Albion. In some accounts, Britain's first residents were a group of princesses exiled from civilization for murdering their husbands.⁹⁰ They were led by Albina, who gave her name to the island of Albion. Forming an all-female society, they were unable to reproduce, except by the intercession of daemons. Their unnatural offspring were a race of giants that controlled the island. Trojan forces overpowered them and the strongest of their number, Gogmagot, was defeated in single combat by Corineus, Brutus' general.⁹¹ In Geoffrey of Monmouth, Gogmagot's battle was the final act of taming Britain immediately before the foundation of London: the proximity of these two events may have encouraged Londoners to view giants as part of their founding story. Sheila Lindenbaum has identified the central role of giants in the Midsummer Watch, the city's premier parade day, during which the London's military forces were mustered in a show of order.⁹² The procession was led by puppeteer-operated giants: in some years, three figures were used, one each for the mayor and two sheriffs. In other years there were female and child giant figures, which Lindenbaum has suggested to be depictions of Albina and her descendants.⁹³ Much of the pageantry of the Midsummer Watch was transferred to the Lord Mayor's Show in the mid-sixteenth century. Later shows employed imagery of

⁸⁹ Riley, *Memorials of London*, p. 580; *CLB K*, p. 185.

⁹⁰ T. Drukker, 'Thirty-three Murderous Sisters: a Pre-Trojan Foundation Myth in the Middle English Prose *Brut Chronicle*', *Review of English Studies*, 54, (2003), pp. 449-463.

⁹¹ Geoffrey of Monmouth, *Historia Regum Britanniae*, bk. 1, ch. 16.

⁹² S. Lindenbaum, 'Ceremony and Oligarchy: The London Midsummer Watch', in B. Hanawalt and K. Reyerson (eds.), *The City and Spectacle in Medieval Europe*, (Minneapolis, 1994), pp. 171-188, 175-9.

⁹³ *Ibid.* p. 179.

giants, referring to them in the Elizabethan period as Corineus and ‘Gogmagog’. Thus, some fifteenth-century pageants may have referenced Gogmagog rather than (or as well as) Albina. Although in written narratives Corineus was a man, in civic pageantry he was portrayed as the same size as Gogmagog: over time the two figures merged and in the modern-day, the giants are known as ‘Gog’ and ‘Magog’, a straightforward corruption of the name Gogmagog.⁹⁴

A related practice was the prominence of a giant identified as ‘the champion’ in royal-facing pageantry. The first extant use of this figure was at the coronation of Henry V, in which two ‘champions’ of gigantic stature were erected on London bridge.⁹⁵ The presence of giants on the bridge quickly became a tradition, with some variation as to their number and gender depending on the occasion. The giant was a military figure at the king’s disposal, who ‘alle assautes that wern marcyall,/ For his [the king’s] sake he [Champion] proudly wolde endure’: this represented the might of London in war.⁹⁶ The champions were not given specific names in early sources but at the coronation of Queen Mary were identified as Corineus and Gogmagog.⁹⁷ It is feasible that the association between Champion and Corineus was older. Lovelich’s *Merlin* reproduced a variant version of Corineus’ story found in older French romances. Rather than being a man, Corineus was ‘of Jeawntes [giants] lynage’. He was portrayed as a friendly ally to Brutus, although from his descendants ‘comen jeawntes mo,/ that to Bretouns moche harme diden tho’.⁹⁸ In Lovelich’s confused rendering, Corineus was no longer the man who rid Britain of Giants;

⁹⁴ F. Fairholt, *Gog and Magog: The Giants in the Guildhall*, (London, 1859), p. 14.

⁹⁵ C. Barron, ‘Pageantry on London Bridge in the Early Fifteenth Century’, in D. Klausner and K. Sawyer Marsalek (eds.), *“Bring furth the pagants”, Essays in Early English Drama Presented to Alexandra F. Johnston*, (Toronto, 2007), pp. 91-104, p. 95; see J. Rodriguez, ‘Rise and Fall: Tropes of Verticality in Middle English Literature’, (Ph.D. thesis, University of Iowa, 2012), pp. 121-162.

⁹⁶ ‘Triumphal Entry of Henry VI’, ll. 80-1.

⁹⁷ Rodriguez, ‘Rise and Fall’, p. 136.

⁹⁸ *Merlin*, i, p. 273, ll. 1031-1042. For the source see *The Vulgate Version of the Arthurian Romances*, ed. O. Sommer, (7 vols, Washington, 1908-16), ii, p.110, n. 3.

rather he was a friendly giant who acted as a royal champion. Thus, the pageantry image of a friendly gigantic champion may have been a response to this variant version of the Gogmagot legend.

In the absence of surviving pageant texts, it is difficult to be certain about the meanings given to giant figures in civic culture. The outline of the Albina myth presented giants as symbols of disorder and sexual and social deviance. By overpowering the giants, Brutus' men tamed the land and made it suitable for civilized life, as represented by the founding of London and of the kingdom of Britain immediately afterwards. A retelling of this version of the myth could have positioned the mayor and sheriff as assistants to the monarchy in the task of taming and ordering the world. Surviving depictions, however, suggest a more complex role. London did not always depict giants as enemies. The champion was presented as a mascot, representing London's military and logistical might. The midsummer giants were at least sometimes used as symbols for the mayor and sheriffs. Giants simultaneously represented all that was wild, untamed and disorderly, and also the political order of London. The Lovelich version of the Corineus legend could square some of these contradictions: London could be identified as a friendly giant, who made deals with the king and served him loyally but who retained internal reserves of strength and might. It was an image which stressed London's independence, whilst also aligning the mayor as a servant to the crown. The relationship between the corporation and the crown was a complex matter which will be discussed at greater length in chapter five. The king could be seen as a benefactor figure who granted and supported the corporation's liberties; at other times, monarchs threatened to encroach upon or curtail those liberties. The image of London as a giant had several dimensions: the giant appeared sometimes as a servant to the king; sometimes as an independent-minded royal ally; and at other times as a

threat to royal control. The giant was an appropriately vexed symbol for the shifting and complex relationship between crown and city.

Aside from Brutus and Albina, some historians gave London another ancient British founder: Lud. The earlier version of John Hardyng's *Chronicle*, completed in 1457, claimed that Brutus had built the city from the east to the local landmark, the London stone; and Lud 'buylded from London Stone to Ludgate'.⁹⁹ The London Stone was thus a divider between Brutus' city and Lud's city. The owner of *Brut-London* chronicle HH.6.9 may have been aware of this tradition: where the *Brut* text refers to Lud laying foundation stones for building projects, a user has added the term 'London Stone'.¹⁰⁰ The idea that east and west London had separate foundations later became commonplace and was, for example, incorporated into *Holinshed's Chronicles*.¹⁰¹ Lud was frequently mentioned in chronicles and legal miscellanies for renaming the city 'Lud's town', which was subsequently corrupted to London.¹⁰² Lud was also remembered as a builder. He was commonly associated with Ludgate, and a statue of him was displayed there.¹⁰³ Hardyng attributed to Lud the walls of London, as well as a temple.¹⁰⁴ Several authors claimed that Lud built a palace in London, although whether this was Ludgate, the Bishop's Palace or Baynard's Castle was debated.¹⁰⁵ Lud was not associated with specific legal rights; his strong association as a builder and boundary-maker rather suggests that his memory lived in the architectural and material culture of the city.

⁹⁹ *The Chronicle of John Hardyng*, ed. H. Ellis, (London, 1812), ch. 151, p. 77.

¹⁰⁰ CUL, MS HH.6.9, f. 5r; For the London stone, see 'London Stone', *Map of Early Modern London*, <https://mapoflondon.uvic.ca/LOND2.htm> (25-01-2019).

¹⁰¹ Raphael Holinshed, *Chronicles of England, Scotland and Ireland*, ii, bk. 3, ch. 9, (London, 1587), *Holinshed Project*, http://english.nsms.ox.ac.uk/holinshed/texts.php?text1=1587_0146 (29-01-2019).

¹⁰² *E.g. Liber Albus*, p. 12.

¹⁰³ See *SoL*, i, pp. 38-9.

¹⁰⁴ *Chronicle of John Hardyng*, Ch. 151.

¹⁰⁵ *Holinshed*, ii, bk. 3, ch. 9.

In retellings of the stories of Albina, Brutus and Lud, we can discern two political processes, one of which legitimised the authority of the corporation and the other of which engaged with the authority of the king. As to the former: linking London to Troy allowed the current rulers to draw on the authority and prestige of the classical world. It made the authority of the corporation appear mythic and timeless: as Fabyan put it, London was:

...so oldly foundyd,
[it] is so surely groundyd
That no man may confounde it'.¹⁰⁶

London's age and continuity of jurisdiction conferred legitimacy on the rulers of the city and implied that London should be treated as preeminent amongst cities in political life and royal pageantry. Many of the legends laid out the extent and borders of the corporation's control around the square mile of the city. Brutus was presented as the founder of the city's defences and Lud was associated with the gates and walls of the city. Champion giants appeared on the bridge gate, guarding the city's entrance. These origin stories were used to define the physical frontiers of the city. Several other British-era rulers were associated with the city's frontiers: King Cadwallo was said to have been buried near or in Ludgate; King Belinus was the namesake of the river gate and the associated market at Billingsgate; Julius Caesar allegedly built the Tower of London on the east flank of the city.¹⁰⁷ The connections of the London Stone, an internal boundary marker, with Brutus and Lud has already been mentioned; another internal boundary, the Walbrook river, was associated with Gallus (or Waloun), a Roman captain and defender of the city.¹⁰⁸ Origin myths thus marked out the edges of the square mile and, in the process, they justified and legitimized civic jurisdiction.

¹⁰⁶ *New Chronicles*, p. 294.

¹⁰⁷ Geoffrey of Monmouth, *Historia Regum Britanniae*, bk. 3, ch. 10 (Belinus); bk. 4, ch. 7 (Caesar); bk. 12, ch. 13 (Cadwallo).

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.* bk. 5, ch. 4.

As well as supporting the corporation's power, these legends also legitimized the crown. The monarchy could be connected to the inheritance of a prestigious civilization. A close and intimate relationship between capital and monarch was also posited by many of these legends: kings appeared as benefactors, who intervened in London to grant liberties and improve the city's material infrastructure. This expressed the political and historical fact that London's liberties and jurisdiction relied on royal goodwill. We may also perhaps see obliquely some anxiety about this fact. Foundation legends clustered on the borders of the city, marking out the edges rather than the core. In its use of giants, pageant-makers found themselves caught between an understanding of the city as an obedient servant to the king and a conception of London as a mighty power in its own right. The power of the corporation's leaders was both dependent on the monarchy and needed to be defined *against* the crown to assert autonomy. The complexities of the king-capital relationship were expressed through London's shifting foundation stories.

2.3.2: Founding the Corporation: Saxons and Normans

Brutus was thus widely presented as the founder of the city, but the extent of his role in creating London's governing system was unclear. William Fitz-Stephen's *Description of London* began a tradition of linking the sheriffs to Troy: Rome had consuls and London had sheriffs because both followed a common Trojan precedent ('habet annuos, pro consulibus, vicomites').¹⁰⁹ The *Liber Albus* echoed and extended this, by suggesting the similarity of aldermen to senators as well as consuls to sheriffs indicated that both offices

¹⁰⁹ *Munimenta*, 2.1, p. 9.

had Trojan roots.¹¹⁰ In some literature and historiography, London's aldermen were referred to as senators although whether this was an implicit reference to Troy, a neoclassical allusion to Rome, or both at once, may have varied according to the circumstances.¹¹¹ There were, thus, attempts to present London's constitution as rooted in ancient Troy. These efforts were, however, hampered by a profound lack of supporting documentation and by a highly speculative tone. How could they be anchored in the written record?

The first genuine document granting liberties to the corporation came from William the Conqueror, which confirmed all rights as they had existed in the time of Edward the Confessor.¹¹² This charter was widely recognized as a landmark in London's history. The *Liber Albus*, in its discussion of London's offices and institutions, suggested that most had endured 'since the time of the Conquest of England that was made by his lordship William, duke of Normandy'.¹¹³ The charter had reportedly been given to the city because of the intercession of Bishop William the Norman. Mayors were, as part of their accession ceremony, required to travel to pray at the bishop's tomb for his soul in an act of eternal gratitude.¹¹⁴ Two boards commemorating the bishop's deeds were placed at his tomb: these cannot be dated precisely, except that they were renewed and a new inscription added in 1622.¹¹⁵ This could indicate a long-standing tradition of placing inscriptions at this tomb, although the chronology is uncertain. During the rebuilding of Bishopsgate in 1479, a statue of Bishop William was placed on its outer gate.¹¹⁶ Somewhat harder to

¹¹⁰ *Liber Albus*, p. 54.

¹¹¹ *Liber Albus*, p. 29; 'Tanner 2', pp. 171; On Thomas More's neoclassical use of 'senator' and 'consul', see: G. Wegemer, 'Thomas More's *History of King Richard III*: Educating Citizens for Self-government', *Thomas More Studies*, 2, (2007), pp. 38-48, 40-1.

¹¹² *Munimenta*, 2.1, p. 504.

¹¹³ *Liber Albus*, pp. 11-12.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.* pp. 24-5.

¹¹⁵ William Dugdale, *The History of St Paul's Cathedral in London*, (London, 1658), p. 51.

¹¹⁶ C. Barron, 'Political Culture', p. 121.

interpret is evidence that the Midsummer Watch of 1535 featured a pageant ‘of Wylliam Congquerer [sic]’ and a king of France.¹¹⁷ This is the only known appearance of the Conqueror in London’s civic pageantry, although he appeared in pageants in other towns.¹¹⁸ Many depictions in law and some in pageantry thus gave William the Conqueror, rather than Brutus of Troy, the defining role in founding the corporation’s liberties.

A reconciliation between the two stories was, however, possible. William’s charter confirmed pre-existing liberties, as they had been under Edward the Confessor. If a constitutional norm or legal right could be traced to Edward’s reign then the writ of the Conqueror would give it the force of law. At some point, Guildhall officials forged a writ attributed to Edward the Confessor that founded the hustings court and guaranteed that the square mile would be held as a unitary jurisdiction. It also confirmed ‘the laws and ordinances, dignities, liberties, and royal customs of ancient Great Troy’.¹¹⁹ Using this forged charter, London officials reconciled the British and the Norman origins of London’s liberties: Edward the Confessor became as a secondary founding figure who confirmed the ancient liberties of London. His work was consolidated and set into writing by William, creating a legal paper chain that stretched from Brutus through to documented history. Edward the Confessor was thus a back-channel through which London’s immemorial customs could flow.

This was one reason for the popularity of Edward the Confessor in London. A short Latin prologue was appended to two London chronicles, which contained the names of leading civic officials before 1189, (the date at which most London chronicles begin).¹²⁰ This

¹¹⁷ REED: *Civic London*, ii, pp. 534, 536.

¹¹⁸ A Bristol pageant featuring William was copied into London chronicle manuscript Lambeth 306, see: ‘The Receyvyng of Kyng Edward the IIIIth at Brystowe’, ed. F. Furnivall, *Political, Religious and Love Poems*, EETS, o. s., 13, (London, 1866), p. 5.

¹¹⁹ *Liber Albus*, pp. 427-8.

¹²⁰ COA, Arundel MS 19(1), f. 1, and BL, Harley Roll C.8, f. 1r.

prologue began its officer list in the reign of Edward the Confessor, reflecting his prominent role in London history. The Guildhall walls and windows are decorated with the arms of the Confessor, probably because of his connection to the hustings court. The cross at Cheapside once similarly bore his insignia.¹²¹ Londoners thus associated Edward the Confessor specifically with their court system, and more vaguely as a lawmaker and consolidator of the corporation's liberties. Archaeologists also affirm that Edward the Confessor is one of the most common subjects for pilgrim tokens found within the city.¹²² This should alert us that some depictions of Edward may have been devotional rather than historical. However, a blending of the two was possible: London chronicle-*Brut* hybrid manuscript TCC, MS O.9.1 has only one illumination, which opens its account of the life of Edward the Confessor, and which depicts several of his miracles.¹²³ The king's face is worn, perhaps indicating that readers touched him in devotion. London chronicler Robert Bale collected some Latin miracles of the Confessor towards the back of his manuscript.¹²⁴ In both cases, the manuscripts had dual functions, both in devotion to Edward and as civic historical manuscripts. The corporate liberties could be given greater force by being aligned with the emotional and devotional associations of the Confessor's name.

The decades on either side of 1066 were dealt with in particular detail and complexity in Sheriff Robert Fabyan's *New Chronicles*. He stated that, although William the Conqueror usually kept Englishmen out of 'any offyce of honour or rule', William nonetheless 'favoured the cytie of London, and graunted to the cytezeyns the firste charter that ever they hadde'.¹²⁵ This was not, however, the start of written laws in London: Fabyan

¹²¹ *SoL*, i, p. 266.

¹²² B. Spencer, *Pilgrim Souvenirs and Secular Badges*, 2nd edition, (London, 2010), pp. 182-5, although the shrines of Thomas Becket (pp. 37-135) and Henry VI at Windsor (pp. 189-92) leave greater material remains.

¹²³ TCC, MS O.9.1, f. 102v.

¹²⁴ TCD, MS 509, ff. 265-71, as part of a more general *exempla* collection.

¹²⁵ *New Chronicles*, p. 247.

uniquely claimed that London once possessed an ancient written constitution called the 'Domysday book'. The properties of Domysday were inconsistent: at one point, it is described as lost but at another, its contents are cited as historical evidence.¹²⁶ Its name evokes the Domesday book and the Norman conquest, but Fabyan also stated that it was written in Old English and that it contained historical information dating to the reign of Aethelred the Unready, implying an Anglo-Saxon origin or influence.¹²⁷ Domysday thus had a Norman-influenced name but Anglo-Saxon contents: whatever its inconsistencies, it is broadly compatible with the ideas expressed elsewhere that the corporate liberties were set in writing after 1066, but rested on pre-Conquest traditions. Fabyan's work betrays a complex attitude to change: on the one hand, a mythic book was used to extend the life of London's liberties in an unbroken chain backwards in time. On the other hand, Fabyan acknowledged that the city's liberties had changed over time and London no longer used its ancient constitution. The spectral presence of Domysday was both a link to the ancient past and an explanation for why so little memory remained of this important era.

The Trojan foundation stories had established London as a royal city. By using Edward and William as secondary founder figures, citizens showed that London's liberties were not merely the gift of one monarch, but rather the accumulated product of an ongoing relationship. This chapter has already cited a 1429 legal case in which the corporation defended its right to liberate bondmen based on Trojan precedents. Following this Trojan argument, the counsel stated that: 'the said saintly King Edward decreed that the City should have and preserve all its ancient uses and customs'.¹²⁸ The liberties had then been affirmed by William the Conqueror and 'confirmed by the lord king and his progenitors'. The city's liberties were created and maintained by an ongoing relationship between the

¹²⁶ *Ibid.* pp. 214, 293.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*

¹²⁸ *CLB K*, pp. 90-1.

crown and the city. These words were of course also ironic: this was a legal case of the king versus the corporation, in which the city was defending its liberties against encroachment by royal officers. One use of London's foundation narratives was that they could project an idealised image of past crown-capital relationships, one which could be used to smooth over the difficulties of the present.

2.3.3: Founding Civic Church Liberties

This chapter has thus far centred primarily on how foundation stories reflected the give-and-take between the Guildhall and the monarchy. However, the crown and corporation were not the only powers to claim jurisdiction in London. Many churches – most notably the cathedral – claimed autonomy over small spaces within the square mile. From a Guildhall perspective, these churches undermined the unity of the city's jurisdiction which had been promised by Edward the Confessor's charter. In 1432 the corporation sued St Martin Le Grand to establish that the Guildhall had prior jurisdiction over its semi-autonomous close. The corporation cited Brutus, Edward the Confessor and William the Conqueror in support of its case.¹²⁹ However, the church countered with its own origin story, which also featured a grant by Edward the Confessor and a confirmation by William the Conqueror. St Martin's thus possessed separate origin stories and connections to prestigious rulers. Contention between churches and the Guildhall could thus be a spur to the production of foundation legends.

¹²⁹ *CLB K*, pp. 145-157.

The mayor's most powerful and problematic neighbour was the bishop of London. The bishopric had three potential origin legends in late-medieval chronicles. One was Trojan: Brutus endowed the priests of Trinovantum with widespread powers and privileges. The second was with the legendary British king Lucius, who converted pagan shrines into cathedrals and thus allowed the first see of London to inherit the properties and rights of the pagan priests.¹³⁰ Finally, the bishopric of London was re-founded as part of the Augustine mission to England, although several reversion to paganism meant that the early life of the see was not continuous.¹³¹

This tangle of foundation narratives created confusion for Londoners. In his *New Chronicles*, Robert Fabyan noted that 'of the buyldyng of this church of Seynt Poule, dyverse opynyons been had of þe fundacion': he noted foundations both by Lucius and by multiple Anglo-Saxon kings.¹³² One literary attempt at reconciliation can be seen in the poem *St Erkenwald*: its prologue explained that, following the Anglo-Saxon invasion, all of the churches of Britain had been given over to idolatry.¹³³ The narrative began with bishop Erkenwald demolishing London's temple to clear the site for a cathedral. In the process, a tomb was uncovered of an ancient British magistrate.¹³⁴ The presence of an intact pagan burial implied that the site had pre-Christian British roots: St Paul's was thus a site of continuous worship through British pagan, British Christian, Saxon pagan and Saxon Christian periods.

The cathedral's narrative was heavily contested: St Peter's Cornhill also claimed to be the site of the original pagan temple and first London cathedral. In their view, St Paul's was

¹³⁰ Geoffrey of Monmouth, *Historia Regum Britanniae*, bk. iv, ch. 19.

¹³¹ Bede, *Bede's Ecclesiastical History of England* ed./trans. A. Sellar, (London, 1907), bk. ii, ch. 3 (first conversion under Mellitus); ii, 22 (return of Christianity under Cedd); v, 6 (restoration after religious civil war under Earconwald).

¹³² *New Chronicles*, pp. 97 (Saxon foundations), 37 (Lucius).

¹³³ *St Erkenwald*, ed. I. Gollancz, (Oxford, 1922), l. 7-12.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*

only founded by the Augustine mission.¹³⁵ St Peter's was built within the footprint of the *basilica* town hall of Roman London: it is feasible that visible archaeology played a role in the development of this legend.¹³⁶ In 1417 the city passed an ordinance endorsing St Peter's claim to be the ancient cathedral of London and recounting a version of the Lucius legend. This allowed the rector of St Peter's precedence in civic religious pageantry.¹³⁷ The corporation may have favoured St Peter's claim because St Paul's was a greater threat: if the cathedral could claim a continuous lineage to Brutus then its jurisdiction was equal to that of the corporation. By sowing doubt about its claim, the prestige of the cathedral's rights could be weakened.

The two churches disputed their claims through relatively subtle means: St Peter's affixed a tablet to its wall containing a short vernacular historical narrative of its foundation.¹³⁸ St Paul's propagated a legend that its holy rood, 'the cross at the north door', had miraculously surfaced in the Thames during the conversion of Lucius, a story that can be found in most detail in *Hardyng's chronicle*. Pilgrims could also (according to one annotator of a *Hardyng's chronicle*) find the same story written 'in a table afore the rode at Northdore and in a story in a wyndow byhynde the sayd Rode'.¹³⁹ Neither the wall-mounted text nor the window today survives, but a second wall-mounted chronicle displayed next to John of Gaunt's tomb recorded a briefer version of the miracle.¹⁴⁰ Lucius was thus vital to the life of the church in London. It had some bearing for laymen too,

¹³⁵ Riley, *Memorials of London*, p. 652; See unpublished paper, J. Clark, 'The King Lucius *Tabula* in St Peter Upon Cornhill Church, London', *Academia.edu*, https://www.academia.edu/6553953/The_King_Lucius_tabula_in_St_Peter_Upon_Cornhill_church_London (07-02-2019).

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*

¹³⁷ Riley, *Memorials of London*, pp. 651-3.

¹³⁸ Clark, 'King Lucius *Tabula*'.

¹³⁹ F. Riddy, 'Glastonbury, Joseph of Arimathea and the Grail in John Hardyng's *Chronicle*', in J. Carley (ed.), *Glastonbury and the Arthurian Tradition*, (Woodbridge, 2003), pp. 269-284, 278-9.

¹⁴⁰ *A Chronicle of London*, pp. 174-5, 181-2.

given that the corporation intervened in the dispute in 1417 and that versions of the narrative were placed on public-facing display boards in London churches.

A different city-church relationship can be seen in the ward of Portsoken. In late-Anglo-Saxon England, a large jurisdiction both inside and outside of the walls of London had been governed by a secular organisation, the 'Knighten Guild'. It ceased operations and handed over its temporal responsibilities to the Priory of Holy Trinity at Aldgate in 1121.¹⁴¹ The section of this jurisdiction that lay within the walls was later constituted into Portsoken ward. This led to an unusual constitutional arrangement, where the prior of Holy Trinity was recognized as the *ex officio* alderman of Portsoken and possessed the full ceremonial rights of the office: each aldermanic ceremony was thus a reminder of the Priory's claims. This irregular status led to the foundation story of the Knighten Guild being reiterated in Letter-books C and K as well as the *Liber Dunthorn* and other customals.¹⁴² These documents were used in legal disputes about whether the Hospital of St Katherine, which was located outside of the city walls but within the old jurisdiction of the Knighten Guild, was subject to the corporation. In 1420 the city successfully argued that it had prior jurisdiction due to the Knighten Guild, but in 1428 the Hospital gained a new charter that granted it autonomy.¹⁴³ The Knighten Guild thus had legal, political and ceremonial implications for Londoners.

The churches of London and the corporation of London used foundation narratives to discuss and negotiate their relationships. These relationships were not always riven by conflict: the Priory of Holy Trinity and the corporation created a successful relationship using an agreed origin story, as acted out through pageantry and legal rights. The city's

¹⁴¹ R. Naismith, *Citadel of the Saxons: the Rise of Early London*, (London, 2019), pp. 162-4.

¹⁴² *CLB C*, pp. 216-225; *CLB F*, pp. 81-4.

¹⁴³ A. House, 'The City of London and the Problem of the Liberties, c. 1540-c. 1640', (D.Phil. thesis, Oxford, 2006), pp. 163-4.

relationship with the cathedral featured some moments of cooperation, such as the commemorative reverence shown to Bishop William as a benefactor during the mayoral installation ceremony.¹⁴⁴ It also included moments of conflict, notably the corporation's endorsement of St Peter Cornhill's claim to priority over St Paul's. By discussing their origins, institutional bodies were able to negotiate their relationships.

It is therefore characteristic that many of the peculiar jurisdictions within and around the city created ancient origin legends. The Bishop of Winchester's manor in Southwark attributed its customs regulating prostitution to a fictional parliament of Henry II, and also to St Thomas Becket.¹⁴⁵ Westminster Abbey had several origin stories, including one which traced it to an ancient shrine of Apollo.¹⁴⁶ Southwark Priory had by the sixteenth century a (somewhat garbled) legend in which it was founded through the donation of a ferry company owned by an Anglo-Saxon maiden named Mary.¹⁴⁷ One document produced by the cathedral in the 1540s claimed that 'certeyn olde ruinouse houses and groundes lying in Aldermanbury' had once been associated with 'Saincte Aethelbert Kyng'.¹⁴⁸ The defining feature of these legends were borders, boundaries and markers, which divided up territory and negotiated historic and legal relationships between governing powers. Perhaps on a smaller and less recoverable scale, citizens used similar stories when they beat the bounds of their parishes each year.¹⁴⁹ Churches and the corporation used historical stories, told through pageantry, ceremony and legal texts, to layout their spatial borders and map their power relationships.

¹⁴⁴ See above, p. 58.

¹⁴⁵ J. Post, 'A Fifteenth-century Customary of the Southwark Stews', *Journal of the Society of Archivists*, 5:7, (1977), pp. 418-428, 422.

¹⁴⁶ *Erkenwald*, l. 19.

¹⁴⁷ *SoL*, ii, p. 52.

¹⁴⁸ H. Wheatly, *London Past and Present*, (3 vols, London, 1891), i, p. 20.

¹⁴⁹ On the analogy between boundary-beating and historiography, see A. Gordon, *Writing Early Modern London*, (Basingstoke, 2013), pp. 152-4.

2.3.4: Founding Executive Power: the Mayoralty and the City Fathers

This chapter has so far mostly focused on occasions on which the corporation became embroiled in external disputes: it has therefore portrayed a unitary body called the ‘corporation’ which had well-defined interests and asserted itself against rivals for power (the king, the church, *etc.*) by creating historical stories. Closer inspection, however, complicates this understanding of how the corporation operated. The Guildhall was a site of contestation: guilds, factions and personal affinities squared off against each other to gain office, change policy, and bend the corporation to their sectional interests. The institutional interests of those in power – particularly the executive offices of mayor and sheriff – may have been quite distinct from the interests of those over whom they ruled. The interests of the corporation were thus not self-evident and consensual, and at times they were fiercely contested by factions within the community. As we have seen, external contests for power were fertile ground for the creation of historical culture: did internal disputes within the corporation similarly influence civic foundation stories? This section offers a case study by suggesting that, within debates concerning the origin of the mayoralty, we can discern the influence of internal disputes within the city, and in particular the struggle of the executive officers against Ralph Holland’s Tailor faction in the 1440s.

On the 16th October 1442, a clergyman was brought before the council of alderman for preaching a seditious sermon at St Paul’s Cross.¹⁵⁰ The offending content was that he had

¹⁵⁰ Liddy, *Contesting the City*, p. 16; C. Barron, ‘Ralph Holland and the London Radicals, 1438-1444’, in R. Hold and G. Rosser, *The Medieval Town, 1200-1540*, (London, 1990), pp. 160-183, 171-2.

inaccurately described the history of the mayoralty. The preacher had claimed that the first and greatest mayor was a Cordwainer (shoemaker) named Walsh. At his trial, the preacher protested that this information had been supplied to him by an alderman, whose name he refused to reveal. His source was probably Ralph Holland, who was engaged in a factional dispute against the other aldermen and who absented himself from this meeting.

Subsequently, the court provided the preacher with an official script to be read at St Paul's Cross on St Katherine's day, to correct the record.¹⁵¹ Sadly, this official narrative does not survive; however, the proscription against further mentions of Walsh and the production of an orthodox story illustrates that London's leaders took this incident seriously.

More than history was at stake: the trial took place just three days after a highly sensitive mayoral election. Ralph Holland had made repeated bids to become mayor but the other aldermen invoked their right of pricking (effectively a veto) to prevent his election.¹⁵² The dominant aldermanic position was that it did not matter how rich or how prominent Holland was because, as a Tailor, he would always be a craftsman. There never had been before, and never would be, a craftsman who became mayor. The electoral system was altered so that the mayor was chosen by indirect election by selected delegates, rather than a mass vote. Many craftsmen felt locked out of power. In 1443 they would plan (and at the final minute abandon), a rising to storm the election assembly by force.¹⁵³ The preacher's suggestion that a Cordwainer – a craftsman – had been the first mayor was, therefore, treading on sensitive political ground, even if that ground was located in the past. This section situates the 'Walsh the mayor' legend within the variety of foundation discourses concerning the mayoralty which circulated in this period.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁵² *Ibid.* pp. 169-171.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.* pp. 173-7.

In reality, the mayoralty emerged gradually out of a period of constitutional change in the decades on either side of the year 1200. Modern historians believe that London achieved the status of a self-governing commune with *de facto* recognition by the royal authorities during a political crisis in 1191.¹⁵⁴ At around the same time, local notable Henry Fitz-Ailwin established a quarter-century of domination: a document of his from 1194 is the first to use the title mayor.¹⁵⁵ The rise of the commune and mayor were subsequently recognized *de jure* by the king: the term ‘mayor’ was first used in a royal document in 1202, and formal permission to elect mayors was granted in 1215.¹⁵⁶ The mayoralty originated within complex and ill-recorded struggles between king and city, and the lack of a central founding document caused considerable confusion for subsequent writers.

London historiography recognised the period 1189-1215 as vital for the constitution of London, but interpretations of its chronology and significance varied. A memorandum in the early-thirteenth century cartulary of the Priory of Holy Trinity at Aldgate stated that the sheriffs originated on 21st September 1189.¹⁵⁷ Henry Fitz-Ailwin was claimed to have been elected as the first mayor on St Edward the Confessor’s day (October 13th) 1208. By contrast, in Arnold Fitz-Thedmar’s late-thirteenth century *Book of Old Laws*, the offices of mayor and sheriff were both said to have originated in 1189, after Richard I’s coronation and before his crusade expedition.¹⁵⁸ Fifteenth-century chroniclers followed another chronology. Most suggested that after the coronation of Richard I in 1189, a new office named the warden, bailiff or keeper was created: this was widely acknowledged by the use of 1189 as the starting date for London chronicles.¹⁵⁹ The origin of the mayor and sheriff

¹⁵⁴ C. Brooke, *London, 800-1216: The Shaping of a City*, (London, 1975), pp. 45-56.

¹⁵⁵ On the date of the first use of the title, see D. Keene, ‘Henry Fitz Ailwin, d. 1212’, *ODNB*, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/9526> (20-05-2019).

¹⁵⁶ Brooke, *Shaping of a City*, p. 54.

¹⁵⁷ *Cartulary of Holy Trinity Aldgate*, ed. G. Hodgett, (London, 1971), pp. 221-222.

¹⁵⁸ *Chronicles of the Mayors and Sheriffs*, p. 1.

¹⁵⁹ 1189 is by far the most common starting date for fifteenth century chronicles, but was increasingly abandoned by sixteenth century chronicles (e.g. BL, Harley 2252, COA, MS M.6bis, Balliol MS 354, etc.).

were both placed in 1208 in the majority of chronicles: London chronicle Rawlinson B.359 uniquely took 1208/9 as its starting date.¹⁶⁰ Henry Fitz-Ailwin was thus widely recognized as the first mayor, although whether his reign began in 1189 or 1208 was debated. His assize on buildings was copied into London legal manuscripts as the first civic ordinance.¹⁶¹ It is uncertain if he penetrated further into public consciousness: some Elizabethan and Jacobean pageants featured actors dressed as Henry Fitz-Ailwin, the most idiosyncratic of which saw him become father-in-law to Robin Hood.¹⁶² There is, however, no clear evidence that he appeared in medieval pageants. There was widespread agreement that Henry Fitz-Ailwin was the first mayor and that the Angevin period was important, but few other details were universally agreed upon.

Some citizen-historians had an ill-defined sense that the mayoralty had older roots, but there was little consensus as to when it began. Whereas the sheriffs and aldermen were sometimes suggested to have had Trojan origins, there is no clear case where the mayor was linked to Brutus. An Anglo-Saxon inheritance was implied by the poem *Erkenwald*.¹⁶³ It portrayed London in the seventh century as having a mayor ('maire', ll. 65, 143) and citizens ('burgeys', l. 59). Bishop Erkenwald met a ghost of a British ruler of the city who was referred to using a variety of juridical rather than mayoral terminology (namely 'Iuge', 'mayster-mon' and 'deputate & domesmon', ll. 201, 216, 227). The magistrate ruled as the king's deputy in the city for forty years, a system very different from the late-medieval annual elections. The poet stated that Anglo-Saxon London was governed under a mayor, but implied that British London had different institutions. Robert Fabyan may have

For the period 1189-1208, see *Gregory's Chronicle*, pp. 57-60; *A Chronicle of London*, pp. 1-7; *Great Chronicle*, pp. 1-4, etc.

¹⁶⁰ Bodleian, Rawlinson MS B. 359, fol. 1r.

¹⁶¹ *Liber Albus*, pp. 276-287.

¹⁶² D. Bergeron, 'Civic Pageants and Historical Drama', *The Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies*, 5:1, (1975), pp. 89-106, 95.

¹⁶³ *Erkenwald*, l. 213.

believed that the mayoralty had Anglo-Saxon roots. He stated that the mayor was a successor to an older office known as the portgrave: these had existed at the Norman conquest and also ‘before those dayes’.¹⁶⁴ The names of the portgraves were stored in the ‘Domysday book’, as discussed above, which was Fabyan’s term for the lost Anglo-Saxon constitution of London. A similar late-Saxon origin was implied by the Latin prologue attached to two London chronicles: it collected the names of executive officers of the city from the time of Edward the Confessor to 1189, before transitioning into an ordinary London chronicle. This gave the mayoralty older roots and implied a link to St Edward.¹⁶⁵ The *Liber Albus* claimed that there had been a single mayoral-type officer (known at times as the portgrave or justiciar) ‘since the time of the Conquest of England’.¹⁶⁶ However, a different passage of the same book describes Henry Fitz-Ailwin as the first mayor, thus the compilers of the *Liber Albus* lacked a unified approach to mayoral history.¹⁶⁷ The various authors recounted in this paragraph had in common a sense that the mayors had deeper roots in history. Whether these roots extended to the Britons, Saxons or Normans was ill-defined. The invention of proto-mayoral offices allowed Londoners to balance their desire to uncover longer continuity in the city’s constitution with an understanding that something important had changed during the Angevin period. The early history of the mayoralty thus lacked a fixed consensus: it could be used creatively or invented entirely if the situation demanded.

Of the pre-1189 proto-mayors, only one came into focus as an individual within London’s civic culture: Gilbert Becket, London merchant and father to St Thomas Becket. Gilbert was listed as an officer in the Latin prologue to the London chronicles, and his status as a

¹⁶⁴ *New Chronicles*, p. 293.

¹⁶⁵ See above, p. 59.

¹⁶⁶ *Liber Albus*, pp. 11-12.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.* p. 19.

proto-mayor was endorsed by the mayoral accession ceremony, which required each mayor-elect to visit and reverence his tomb.¹⁶⁸ Fragmentary but fascinating evidence exists that Becket was given a prominent role in the mayor's pageant at the 1519 Midsummer Watch: Mayor Thomas Mirfin was a Skinner and some details of his pageant can be gleaned from his company's financial records. The Skinners paid Richard Mathew 'for plaiyng Gylberd Bekett', and another man for playing a jailer. Two men bore a 'pryson for Gylbert Beket', and several other men were paid for parts concerning a Saracen king and some Jews.¹⁶⁹ Collectively these imply that the pageant was an adaptation of 'Gilbert Becket and the Fair Saracen', a popular legend that had been appended to St Thomas' life in the *South English Legendary*.¹⁷⁰ In it, Gilbert was imprisoned whilst crusading overseas. During his captivity, he romanced the daughter of a Saracen king. Upon receiving a promise of marriage, the princess released Gilbert; but once in England, his vow was forgotten. The princess crossed the seas to search for him and, after their eventual reunion, she became Thomas' mother. This pageant was accompanied by two other Becket pageants, called the Martyrdom of St Thomas and the Ladder of St Thomas.¹⁷¹ There is no other certain instance on which the 'fair Saracen' play was staged, although the numerous references to pageants of Saracen kings and castles could include similar performances.¹⁷² Understandably, Gilbert's tale appealed to Londoners: it mixed hagiography of a favourite saint with the tropes of romance literature, alongside a biography of an important civic father. By portraying Gilbert as a precursor mayor, it extended the roots of the mayoralty backwards, before 1189. The tale was devotional, entertaining and also supported the

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.* p. 24.

¹⁶⁹ *REED: Civic London*, i, p. 364.

¹⁷⁰ *South English Legendary*, ed. C. Horstman, EETS, o. s., 87, (London, 1888), pp. 106-10.

¹⁷¹ *REED: Civic London*, i, pp. 363-7; on London's favour for Becket, see Spencer, *Pilgrim Souvenirs*, pp. 37-135.

¹⁷² *E.g.* in 1521 'A king of Moores & L moraynes' and 'The kyng of the Moores pavillion' and 'the Soldan riding after the Castyll': *REED: Civic London*, i, pp. 380, 382, 383.

powers of the corporation: it represented a meeting of the hagiographic and the civic comparable to the city's use of Edward the Confessor. One possibility is that Gilbert Becket was the primary civic father used in medieval pageantry. When the Reformation caused a decline in Becket family popularity, it may have enabled the rise of Henry Fitz-Ailwin as a pageant figure, as a less problematic alternative.

The causes and process through which the proto-mayoral offices gave way to the mayoralty were rarely described in any depth. The most detailed account of this process was provided by Robert Fabyan's *New Chronicles*. Shortly after Richard I's coronation in 1189, Fabyan noted the creation of a new office, the bailiffs of London.¹⁷³ In 1201, John created an assembly of 35 prominent citizens who were tasked with electing the bailiffs of the city: this is a detail unique to Fabyan, which could have had a partisan origin.¹⁷⁴ The use of a narrow franchise in civic elections in the 1430s and 1440s was a significant political issue: Ralph Holland's radicals argued that mass elections were the norm in previous centuries, were guaranteed under the 1319 charter, and even suggested that 'an elected mayor is not the mayor of those who had not elected him'.¹⁷⁵ The *New Chronicles* established that the system of using selected delegates rather than a general election was an ancient one – indeed, it preceded the mayoralty itself. It is interesting to speculate about the lineage of this idea within Fabyan's work: could the lost script describing the origins of the mayoralty from the 'Walsh the mayor' case have contained a similar defence of the principle of a select electorate? Might this lost script have been an indirect or direct source for the *New Chronicles*? In the absence of other witnesses to this tradition, it is difficult to do much more than to speculate.

¹⁷³ *New Chronicles*. p. 299.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.* p. 313.

¹⁷⁵ Barron, 'Ralph Holland', p. 177.

Fabyan also provided a detailed account of how the bailiffs became mayors. There was in 1208 a grain shortage and the bailiffs took control of the city's food supplies. This began a conflict with the king's purveyor of grain, who arrested the bailiffs.¹⁷⁶ The assembly of 35 met and pleaded with the king for a solution. It was out of these crisis negotiations that the mayoralty was created.¹⁷⁷ This origin story was interesting for several reasons: for one, it acknowledged the history of combative relationships between the city and king and did not present the origin of the mayoralty as a sign of royal favour. It also presented the economic regulation of the city, and the security of its food supply, as foundational issues for the mayor and part of the central purpose of the office. This presented the mayor as a patrician figure: he was selected by a small electorate from out of the wealthiest men of the city but he had paternalistic duties to ensure the quality and stability of the food supply for all.

Where does this leave Walsh the Cordwainer, alleged first mayor of London? Both Caroline Barron and Christian Liddy have placed Walsh as an example of 'Golden Age' thinking. Liddy has suggested that Walsh represented a 'counter-memory': an example of an alternative and dissident sense of the past propagated by a subordinate group against its rulers.¹⁷⁸ He may be an entirely unhistorical figure, belonging to a vague 'day of yore'. Walsh's existence was incompatible with the narratives that place Henry Fitz-Ailwin as the first mayor. He could, however, fit within the official efforts to extend the mayoralty backwards in time – no Walsh is located on the Latin prologues to the London chronicles for 1066-1189, but he could belong in Fabyan's mythic 'Domysday book'.

It is possible that, rather than originating in an 'alternative' culture amongst London's craftsmen, Walsh drew on the same well of archival and historical writing emanating from

¹⁷⁶ *New Chronicles*, pp. 317-8.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁸ Barron, 'Ralph Holland', p. 172; Liddy, *Contesting the City*, p. 16.

the Guildhall that has been the main subject of this chapter. He may have been loosely inspired by either Waloun or Henry le Walleis. A speculative paper trail could begin with the *Liber Albus*, which stated that each ward was originally named after its alderman, with fixed names only developing later on.¹⁷⁹ Walbrook ward was directly named after the Walbrook river, which was allegedly named (as we have already seen) after the Waloun, a Romano-British warrior.¹⁸⁰ Chronicles described him as a defender of the Tower and captain of London's forces; perhaps his loose association with Walbrook ward and with the city's defences encouraged Londoners to think of him as an ancient alderman, although there is no reason to identify him as a Cordwainer. An alternative origin for Walsh could be in speculation as to the origin of the name of Cordwainer ward: if wards were named after men, perhaps its first alderman was a Cordwainer? In extant civic records, the first alderman of Cordwainer was Henry le Walleis, who also served as Lord Mayor in 1273-4.¹⁸¹ Walleis' surname was an ethnonym, demonstrating his Welsh origins; and Walsh could similarly be used as an ethnonym for a Welshman.¹⁸² There is sufficient overlap in *curriculum vitae* that 'Walleis, first alderman of Cordwainer, and mayor' could feasibly become 'Walsh, Cordwainer and first mayor'. The transformation could have happened through an accidental process of faulty oral transmission, or deliberate political misinterpretation. If either Walleis or Waloun was the namesake of Walsh then this would indicate that the London radicals drew from the same archival, documentary and historical culture as London's leaders, although they did so with politically radical intent.

In reality, Henry Walleis was a patrician who led the conservative reaction following the radical populist mayoralties of the 1260s. He thus did little to prefigure the radical politics

¹⁷⁹ *Liber Albus*, p. 30.

¹⁸⁰ Geoffrey of Monmouth, *Historia*, bk. 5, Ch. 4; *Brut*, pp. 38-9. See above, p. 56.

¹⁸¹ A. Beaven, *The Aldermen of the City of London*, (2 vols, London, 1908), i, p. 113.

¹⁸² For examples, *New Chronicles*, pp. 81, 126, 127, 177, 199, etc.

of Ralph Holland and his Tailor faction.¹⁸³ Even though he was a curious choice for a hero for craftspeople, it should be noted that by *circa* 1600, the early modern imagination would turn many medieval mayors into champions of the poor. Richard Whittington became the embodiment of the upwardly mobile; Sir John Crosby became a foundling whose surname derived from the cross-covered swaddling cloth in which he was found; and Simon Eyre was transferred from being a Draper to become the first Cordwainer mayor.¹⁸⁴ These attributions were not historically accurate, but all followed a common pattern whereby the origins of civic leaders became more impoverished and less genteel over time. Some retellings of these legends were, no doubt, politically inert, but they could also point to potentially controversial conversations about social mobility and oligarchy. It has already been shown that Holland's faction fought against practices of narrow electoral franchises and argued that mass elections had been normal in previous centuries.¹⁸⁵ By suggesting that the city had been run in a more inclusive and less oligarchic way in previous centuries, Holland's men reshaped the past with polemical intent.

This survey of legends about the foundation of the mayoralty reveals that internal contestation within the corporation could have a significant influence on historical culture. Many surviving retellings of the foundation of the mayoralty were designed to support the authority of the office. Mayors suffered in prestige by being widely acknowledged as a younger office compared to the sheriffs and aldermen. Some storytellers enhanced the prestige of the mayoralty by extending its roots backwards, inventing proto-mayoral offices and appropriating prestigious figures such as Gilbert Becket. However, the pliable nature of this mythmaking made it easy to appropriate. Holland's faction rewrote aspects

¹⁸³ *New Chronicles*, pp. 348-5; *Chronicle of Mayors and Sheriffs*, pp. 167-177.

¹⁸⁴ Richard Whittington, see Anonymous, 'London's Glory and Whittington's Renoun', 1605, *English Broadside Ballad Archive*, no 30404, <http://ebba.english.ucsb.edu/ballad/30404/xml> (20-09-2019); John Crosby, see *SoL*, i, p. 173; Simon Eyre, see Thomas Deloney, *The Gentle Craft*, ('S. I': London, c. 1597).

¹⁸⁵ See above, p. 68; Barron, 'Ralph Holland', p. 177.

of mayoral history, including asserting that the office had historically used mass election and that historic mayors came from non-elite guilds. By rewriting the origins of the mayoralty, they could express that they had a different conception of the purpose and meaning of the office. The direct response by the authorities sadly does not survive, but perhaps the most effective response can be seen in the works of Robert Fabyan. Fabyan countered arguments for mass election by showing that selection by patricians was the historic norm. However, even if the mayor was not accountable to the masses, he was nonetheless responsible for the masses: Fabyan inserted a moral vision for the mayoralty by arguing that the office had been created to ensure a good food supply for rich and poor alike. Holland's version of the origin of the mayoralty argued that the office required popular participation; Fabyan's defined it as an office which was patrician in nature, but which required paternalistic concern for all of society. Within the different versions of its foundation legend, we can discern debates and conversations within the corporation about the nature and purpose of the mayoralty.

2.4: Conclusion: Governance and Historical Culture

Historical knowledge was part of the business of government in London. Various institutions, including the Guildhall, the cathedral, churches, parish guilds, the College of Arms, the royal administration and livery companies involved themselves in the production of narratives about the past. Governors used these stories in three ways: archival memory, prestige and relationship management.

Archival memory denotes the use of history to preserve the memory of past events. For the most part, the corporation and guilds of London met their archival needs using legal

records and memoranda. Charters, trial records and other types of legal writing were highly prescriptive genres: evidential standards dictated that they could only be written in very specific forms. Wherever legal writing could not meet an institution's needs, historiography could take over. Historiography had a freer form – ranging from memoranda and record narratives through to full chronicles – and was less prescriptive. When a public institution needed to fix a particular interpretation of an event or extirpate alternative interpretations, historiography was one available method. There were spikes in this type of writing during periods of crisis. Arnold Fitz-Thedmar wrote in the immediate aftermath of a period of intense partisanship. He used his *Book of Old Laws* to fix a partisan, anti-populist interpretation of recent history. William Porland's record narratives in the *Brewers' Book* were set against the backdrop of mayoral efforts to prosecute the guild. The aldermen responded to the troubles of Ralph Holland's populist movement by officially denouncing the 'Walsh the mayor' legend. Crisis and controversy were spurs for civic historical writing. Narratives of this kind usually displayed a high awareness of the extent to which events were fast-moving and politically contingent: they showed an awareness of historical change that is not evident in some other forms of historiography.

Public institutions also used history to raise their prestige, memorialising glorious moments from its past which reflected well on their current status. Institutions of all types used their origin narratives to connect present power to past authority figures. The corporation and guilds used narratives of record to commemorate splendid moments of pageantry and moments of glorious achievement in war. Compared to the 'archival memory' approach, narratives of this sort are often much less detailed. Writers often alluded to Brutus, or more vaguely to great antiquity, without anchoring it in a comprehensive narrative. They often employed media which could potentially reach a wide audience: the statue of Lud, the pageants of the giants, the staging of 'Becket and the

fair Saracen', and the wall-mounted chronicles at St Peter's Cornhill all fall within this category. Prestigious uses of the past often looked beyond the archive and toward a wider public.

Thirdly, Londoners used the past for relationship management. Guildhall archives collected a mass of material on the past, not all of which was about the history of the city. It included material concerning kings of England and France; the pope and the church; and other institutions of importance. One purpose for collecting this material was to understand the relationships between the public institutions which governed metropolitan life. The relationship between corporation and king particularly spurred the production of historiography, as did that between the corporation and metropolitan churches. The corporation traded historical narratives with other public institutions. In some cases, this was cooperative: the 1529 royal divorce case illustrated cooperative textual exchanges between the corporation, the College of Arms and the king. Positive relationships were cultivated and maintained using mutually-agreed foundation narratives between the corporation and the Prior of Holy Trinity Aldgate or the Cathedral of St Paul's. On other occasions, the past was deployed in conflict as the Guildhall used its ancient liberties to smother attempts by churches to claim independent jurisdictions. Writing in this vein often showed little appreciation of historical development or difference: the relationships between the city and other jurisdictions were presented as if fixed in the distant past.

Officially endorsed versions of the past tended to be episodic, even fragmentary. This does not mean that modern historians need to treat them separately. Rather they fit within a complete foundation discourse and illustrate complicated attitudes to continuity and change. Civic thought about the ancient liberties of the city was caught between two contradictory beliefs. One was that the city had ancient roots and had changed little over time. The other was that the city was in flux, with liberties that were regularly augmented

or altered. For example, Londoners showed a widespread awareness that the mayoralty did not predate the Angevin period; but they also showed a determination to discover older roots, through proto-mayoral offices or a lost ‘Domysday’ book. The episodic nature of much of historical culture meant that, when citizens drew on the past, they usually attached a single founder figure to a particular place, liberty, or object. Synthetic treatments, in which multiple periods of history were brought into dialogue, were relatively rare. Robert Fabyan’s *New Chronicles* stands out as one of the first attempts to create a narrative of the city from earliest to contemporary times. He found his task difficult, as is evidenced by his multitude of origins stories for the mayor and his invention of a mythic Domysday book to resolve his difficulties. Fabyan’s pioneering scholarship prefigures the holistic treatment of London’s history that would be more common in the late-sixteenth century, yet this would come at a cost. London never found a way to bring its Trojan origins into concordance with recorded history. It was not until Elizabethan antiquary John Stow’s *Survey of London* that a wholly coherent narrative would emerge. Stow could only provide this by jettisoning Brutus and ancient Britain.¹⁸⁶ The mayoralty was too invested – politically, emotionally and intellectually – in its ancient history to take the equivalent step at the time of the *New Chronicles*’ publication in 1516.

The governing institutions of London were thus one of the engines of historical culture: the corporation, the guilds, the College of Arms, the king and the church each drove and influenced historiographical production. This chapter has noted that some London officials brought their archival practices home with them. This hints at the other great driver of historical culture – the domestic household – which is the topic of the next chapter.

¹⁸⁶ Clark, ‘John Stow and Legendary History’.

3.0: Popular Histories: Privately Owned History

Books in Late-Medieval London.

3.1: Chronicles in London's Literary Culture

The London Chronicle in BL, Egerton MS 1995 has been christened by historians *Gregory's Chronicle*, after Mayor William Gregory.¹ Despite this, no one has ever claimed that it was owned by Gregory, nor that he had the final say in authoring or editing it. Egerton 1995 is written in a single hand to the end in 1467, whereas he died three years earlier and thus cannot have seen this manuscript.² Rather, Gregory has been suggested to have had an undefined quantity of input into one of the (potentially many) copy-texts from which Egerton 1995 is derived. Even this minimal involvement by Gregory has been widely doubted.³ By naming it *Gregory's Chronicle*, historians have privileged a hypothetical text over the extant manuscript. This is surprisingly common in London chronicle historiography: C. L. Kingsford's *Chronicles of London* devoted many of its pages to hypothetical recensions of London chronicles ending in various dates from 1414 to 1445, none of which can be proven to have existed.⁴ Mary-Rose McLaren has rightly redirected our attention towards surviving exemplars, although her work has focused mostly on the compilers rather than the users and later owners of each manuscript.⁵ This chapter proposes a material turn in chronicle historiography. Instead of focusing on questions of hypothetical exemplars or production, it instead examines ownership and

¹ J. Gairdner, 'Introduction', *Gregory's Chronicle*, i-xli.

² For discussion, see McLaren, *London Chronicles*, pp. 28-33.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ Kingsford, *Chronicles of London*, xix-xxii.

⁵ McLaren, *London Chronicles*.

usage. It examines the audiences for chronicles in London, both by determining the most popular sub-genres of historical writing and by examining the demographics of readers.

The fifteenth century saw a rising tide of book ownership. One survey of literary Middle English texts found thirty surviving manuscripts from the period 1325-1400; for the period 1400-1475, it counted six hundred.⁶ Book production was expanding rapidly, even before the advent of print. Chronicles saw a similar expansion in production which is best typified by the Middle English Prose *Brut*: its best-seller status is underlined by the nearly 200 surviving copies in mostly fifteenth-century manuscripts, as well as the many surviving copies produced in early print.⁷ This chapter builds on existing scholarship on medieval literary audiences, particularly the work of Lister Matheson, Julia Boffey, Anne Sutton, Kathleen Scott, and Caroline Barron and the ‘Imagining History’ project.⁸ When compared to the majority of London chronicle scholarship (particularly the works of Flenley or McLaren) this newer wave of literature stresses the diversity of chronicles available to Londoners: they did not just read London chronicles but also *Bruts*, *Polychronica* and many other texts.

This chapter reviews the evidence for chronicle ownership and explores the demographic profile of the chronicle-consuming public in London. It examines this issue in three parts. The remainder of the introduction describes the methodologies through which book possession can be established. The next section examines books by title and sub-genre, asking which were the most popular. Finally, the chapter re-examines the evidence from a demographic angle: what were the occupations, social status, age and gender of typical

⁶ A. S. G. Edwards and D. Pearsall, ‘The Manuscripts of the Major English Poetic Texts’, in J. Griffiths and D. Pearsall, (eds.), *Book Production and Publishing in Britain, 1375-1475*, (Oxford, 1989), pp. 259-278.

⁷ See above, p. 14; Matheson, *Prose Brut*, pp. 67-78.

⁸ Matheson, *Prose Brut*; Boffey, ‘London Books’, pp. 420- 437; A. Sutton, ‘Acquisition and Disposal’, pp. 95-114; ‘Past Ownership’; C. Barron, ‘What did Medieval London Merchants Read?’, pp. 43-70; H. Pagan, ‘Trevet’s *Les Cronicles*’; Marx and Radulescu, *Readers and Writers of the Prose Brut*; Rajsic, Kooper and Hoche, *Prose Brut and other Late Medieval Chronicles*.

chronicle readers? For many books, detail concerning provenance has been placed in the summary tables in the appendix. For maximum clarity in attributing the work of other historians, manuscripts are marked as ‘P’ (Primary) or ‘S’ (secondary) in the footnotes: the former indicates that I have personally inspected the manuscript (or a facsimile), in addition to any secondary resources; the latter means that I have not seen the original and all information presented is based on manuscript catalogues, secondary literature or printed editions.

3.1.1: Methodologies

How, then, can we claim to know the owner of any book? There are five main approaches, which respectively examine: production evidence; inscriptions and heraldry; co-location of content; annotation; and textual archaeology. Of these, **production evidence** is frequently used by other historians, for example, Ralph Hanna’s *London Literature, 1300-1380* identifies London books primarily by production location.⁹ Manufacture in London can sometimes be demonstrated through dialect evidence, or by forensic examination of the hands, bindings and watermarks used by identifiable London workshops. London was the centre of the English book market, a situation that increased with the onset of printing.¹⁰ Given that London workshops produced books for a national market, production in the capital does not on its own prove that a book had a London audience. Similarly, Londoners imported some books, for instance, Richard Arnold’s *The Customs of London* was first printed in Antwerp. By its authorship, content and intended audience, this was a London

⁹ R. Hanna, *London Literature, 1300-1380*, (Cambridge, 2005).

¹⁰ C. Christianson, ‘The Rise of London’s Book-trade’, in L. Hellinga and J. Trapp (eds.), *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain*, (7 vols., Cambridge, 1999), iii, pp. 128-147.

book; by production, it was not.¹¹ Production evidence will, therefore, only be used sparingly in this chapter, mostly in support of other techniques, as part of a mixed methodology.

Book provenance can also be examined through **inscriptions and heraldry**. These were the principal methods through which medieval people asserted book-possession. Some contain a memorandum recording the sale or loan of the book; others have an inscription using a formula such as ‘Iste liber pertinet...’, or other possession indicators (‘bought by...’, ‘owned by...’, or ‘lent to...’); a few contain colourful inscriptions that name the owner and threaten curses on book thieves. Others announce their possession by emblazoning a coat of arms on the flyleaf; or use a trademark, a common form of identification for merchants and craftspeople. These categories of evidence are particularly helpful because they make use of medieval methods for identification. Owners often self-identify as Londoners, as citizens or as guild members. There are however limitations to such evidence. Sometimes, a name is written in the margin or the flyleaves without any possession indicators: does this name denote the scribe, the patron, the original owner, a later owner, or a borrower? Could the scribe have written the name of a friend, an enemy, or even some nonsense?¹² The accuracy with which we can link an inscription to a documented person is also a problem. Londoners left greater impressions in the archives if they were male, rich, or an officeholder: we are more likely to be able to link an inscription to a documented individual if he was a well-connected man. Similarly, heraldic evidence is useful only for armigerous families, which were mostly of gentry birth or aldermanic

¹¹ *Customs of London*; for a discussion of usage versus production in designating a ‘London book’, see: J. Boffey, *Manuscript and Print*, pp. 11-20.

¹² See: K. Harris, ‘Patrons, Buyers and Owners: the Evidence for Ownership, and the Role of Book Owners in Book Production and the Book Trade’, in J. Griffiths and D. Pearsall (eds.), *Book Production and Publishing in Britain, 1375-1475*, (Oxford, 1989), pp. 163-200, 170; Scott, ‘Past Ownership’, pp. 153-4.

rank.¹³ Arms identify a family, not a specific individual. Despite these qualifications, inscriptions and heraldry remain amongst the most useful forms of ownership evidence.

A third method is through **marginal annotation**.¹⁴ Sometimes within chronicles, an annotator may show specific and repeated interest in the history of London. Such evidence could suggest that the annotator was located in London, had a London identity, or had some reason to show a particular interest in the city. This methodology has a significant flaw in that it is prone to circular reasoning: we could create an expectation of the typical annotations created by London citizens, and then use this stereotype to “prove” that notes of this kind were produced by Londoners. In some cases, this method may prove that the owner was a London resident but leave us unsure if he was a London citizen: many clergy, lawyers, and commoners also lived in London and could have shown similar interest in London history. Annotation evidence can be a helpful support in a mixed methodology but is weak when not supported by other evidence.

The fourth method employs **co-location of content**. This involves examining the full contents of any manuscript and discerning whether any of the texts imply a London context: this method has particularly been used to examine commonplace books.¹⁵ Co-location with generic civic documents – charters of the corporation, lists of London churches, or documents from parish vestries – could suggest that compiler was resident in London without specifying an individual identity. Personal legal documents are a tempting but flawed source: if the named parties are London merchants then this could indicate a London provenance. There are two complications. The first is that most legal documents contain multiple parties, any one of whom could have been the owner. The second is that

¹³ On heraldry in London, see C. Barron, ‘Chivalry, Pageantry and Merchant Culture’, pp. 219-242.

¹⁴ On marginalia in chronicles in general, see T. Drukker, ‘I Read Therefore I Write: Readers’ Marginalia in Some *Brut* Manuscripts’, in W. Marx and R. Radulescu (eds.), *Readers and Writers of the Prose Brut*, (Lampeter, 2006), pp. 97-130.

¹⁵ E.g. M. Richardson, *Middle-class Writing*, pp. 154-170; Parker, *Commonplace Book*, pp. 129-158.

secretarial training involved the use of model letters. Merchants collected copies of documents to which they were not a party, for use as style guides: for instance, many Londoners owned copies of legal documents by Haberdasher Richard Arnold because he mass-produced his business archive as part of the *Customs of London*.¹⁶ Co-location also suffers from similar issues to annotation methodologies: both can be prone to circular reasoning, and neither provides a clear way to differentiate between the books of non-citizen residents and citizens of London.

The final category, **textual archaeology**, involves using archival methods to identify books that are no longer extant. Helpful documents include wills, inventories, and dedications to individuals in prologues; more rarely it can include trial records, book catalogues or sale indentures.¹⁷ Textual archaeology produces precise dates for ownership, and often depicts books as they change hands: it is thus particularly useful in tracing the social history of books. There are however problems with this type of evidence.

Documents often refer with imprecision to ‘chronicles’ or ‘histories’, and miscellanies are recorded under generic titles (‘bibliotecam meam in duobus voluminibus’, my library, in two volumes), with little evidence of their contents.¹⁸ Another issue is that wills have a strong bias against secular books. Caroline Barron has estimated that, of extant books owned by London merchants, 69% were primarily secular and 31% were primarily religious. By contrast, in mercantile wills, 20% of books are secular and around 80% are religious.¹⁹ Such statistics are beset by obvious problems of definition; but they alert us that wills were religious documents, concerned as much with the fate of the soul as with

¹⁶ *Customs of London*, pp. 102-137.

¹⁷ Cavanaugh, ‘Books Privately Owned’; ‘Past Ownership’.

¹⁸ Scott, ‘Past Ownership’, p. 173.

¹⁹ Barron, ‘What Did Medieval London Merchants Read?’, pp. 3, 6.

earthly goods. Textual archaeology is thus very useful but leaves a thin record of chronicle ownership.

Finally, it must be stressed that possession of a book is inherently a fleeting and temporary thing. Any book that has survived from the fifteenth century to the present must have had a long working life and a variety of owners. This chapter does not make broad claims that any individual book has an inherent ‘London nature’: rather it seeks to prove that books spent time in the possession of London citizens. Some of the books listed had a London origin; others only reached London later in a chain of transmission. Not every book discussed has an attribution of equal strength. As a shorthand, I have labelled books that can be located to the geographical area of London but which cannot be attached specifically to merchants or citizens as ‘metropolitan’. Ones that certainly belonged to a citizen or merchant but which cannot be located to a specific city are labelled as ‘civic’ or ‘mercantile’. Some of the books cited in this chapter may, therefore, have belonged to merchants of other cities, or non-citizen Londoners: these nonetheless illustrate the books that were possessed by the neighbours, business partners or family members to London citizens. The uneven quality of the evidence means that any totals for books in this chapter must be treated as provisional illustrations, and not as significant statistics.

3.2: Popular Genres and Titles

3.2.1: London Chronicles, and Other Magistrate Annals.

The single most prevalent format for chronicles was the magistrate annal, which used the annual elections of mayors and sheriffs to mark the passage of time.²⁰ Appendix 1 lists a variety of magistrate annals from the period c. 1430-c. 1521: all manuscripts from this period have been included, but printed books are included only where some information on usage can be obtained. It lists five exemplars, all in manuscript, of a ‘hybrid’ chronicle that consists of a *Brut* up until 1419, followed by a London chronicle continuation. It contains a further twenty-seven manuscripts of London chronicles in the vernacular, and five in Latin. It also contains seven printed exemplars of Richard Arnold’s *Customs of London*; and five exemplars, both in print and manuscript, of Robert Fabyan’s *New Chronicles*. Finally, it lists two instances from textual archaeology. These numbers are of course provisional: it has not been possible to inspect all copies of the printed books, and so further research could further develop this field.

(i) Citizens and Non-Citizens

The clearest pattern is that citizens were the main group of owners. Of the 50 instances in table one, 21 can be linked to a named individual who either self-identified as a citizen, used a trademark, or can be verified by archival research to have been a citizen (1.1, 1.3, 1.4, 1.10, 1.12, 1.15, 1.18, 1.19, 1.23, 1.24, 1.27, 1.30, 1.32, 1.33, 1.34, 1.36, 1.37, 1.41, 1.45, 1.49, 1.50). Many others can be ascribed to a civic setting without being ascribed to a specific individual through annotation (1.7, 1.14, 1.21) or collocation (1.11, 1.13, 1.42). Only three manuscripts (1.9, 1.31, 1.44) are known to have been possessed by non-citizens before c. 1525. Many others have unproven or ambiguous contexts (*e.g.* 1.2, 1.5, 1.6, 1.8,

²⁰ For definitions of these terms, see above, p. 15.

1.16, 1.17, 1.20, 1.22, 1.25, 1.26, 1.28, 1.29, 1.38, 1.39, 1.43, 1.47). Thus, in the vast majority of cases in which an audience context can be verified, London chronicles were owned by citizens.

Heralds formed one early non-citizen audience for London chronicles. COA MS M.6*bis* (1.31) was partially written in the hand of herald Christopher Barker in c. 1513 and was entered into the archives of the College of Arms at an early date. More ambiguously, several documents of possible heraldic interest have been inserted into Cotton Julius B.i (1.16), which could indicate usage by a herald in *temp.* Henry VII. Cotton Julius B.ii meanwhile contains an HR monogram: this evidence is ambiguous, but similar marks were used to mark royal books under the reigns of Henry VII and VIII (1.17). The only clear case of clerical ownership is Chicago MS 254 (1.9), which was owned by Battle Abbey by c. 1460. Tanner MS 2 (1.40) contains a list of Proctors of Oxford University: this may imply compilation by a graduate, perhaps a clergyman or lawyer of unknown identity.

One manuscript that is worthy of reappraisal is Bodleian Library **Bodley MS 596** (1.44). It has, since at least its *Summary Catalogue* entry, been seen as ‘connected with Westminster Abbey’.²¹ It contains a petition of the abbot to the king, a short Latin chronicle with a Westminster Abbey perspective, the coronation oath and a list of kings who were saints, each of which would have been pertinent to the Abbey.²² McLaren has also misidentified the arms on folio 10r as those of the Abbey.²³ They are the arms of William Baron, teller to the Exchequer under Henry VI and Edward IV.²⁴ Baron was resident in London, signed

²¹ P: Bodleian, MS Bodley 596; R. Hunt and F. Madan, *A Summary Catalogue of Western Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library at Oxford Which Have Not Hitherto Been Catalogued in the Quarto Series*, (8 vols, Oxford, 1895-1953), ii.1, p. 336, no. 2376.

²² Bodley 596, ff. 35-8r (petition), 39r-42r (Westminster chronicle), 44r (Sainted kings), 47r-52v. (Form of Coronation).

²³ McLaren, *London Chronicles*, p. 38. She misattributes the identification to SC.

²⁴ His arms also appear in ‘MS. Douce 322’, *MMOL*, https://medieval.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/catalog/manuscript_4658 (09-05-2019). See also L. Mooney, ‘Scribes and Booklets of Trinity College, Cambridge, Manuscripts R.3.19 and R.3.21’, in A. Minnis (ed.) *Middle English Poetry, Texts and Traditions*, (York, 2001), pp. 241-267, 254.

himself as ‘gentleman of London’, and married Johanna Knolles, a daughter from a dynasty of London Grocers.²⁵ Given that the abbey had connections to the commercial book trade, it is feasible that this book was produced there for external sale.²⁶ The register of its religious texts is basic and would have been better suited to a lay audience than to monks: for instance, there is a short epitome of Christian faith, a text on how men of each rank in society should act to reach heaven, two sets of sayings of moral advice, and a catechism of the ten commandments and seven deadly sins.²⁷ It is also feasible that its early history lay with William Baron’s father in law, the prominent Grocer Sir Thomas Knolles (*d.* 1445), or with his grandfather-in-law, the mayor of the same name (*d.* 1435). There is an erasure next to Knolles’ second term as mayor on folio 61r: the erased text may perhaps have drawn attention to the family interest of this entry. There are however no corresponding marks for his term as sheriff or first term as mayor, so this could be coincidental. If this was a Knolles family book then it is also possible that its possessor was Johanna Baron (*nee* Knolles), an interesting example of female possession of a London chronicle. It is also feasible that William himself was the first owner: the mixing of Westminster material with civic material could reflect the geographical and cultural reality that Exchequer bureaucrats were half-way between Westminster society and London mercantile social circles.

Bodleian, Rawlinson MS B.173 (1.46) has previously been suggested to have had a gentry context, but this requires a reappraisal.²⁸ Lister Matheson suggested that this book was produced for a family on the Welsh-English border because the scribal dialect is of

²⁵ On his biography see: G. Wrottesley, *History of the Family Wrottesley of Wrottesley, Co. Stafford*, (Exeter, 1903), pp. 238-9.

²⁶ H. Nixon, ‘Caxton, His Contemporaries and Successors in the Book Trade from Westminster documents’, *The Library*, 5th Ser., 31:4, (1976), pp. 305-326.

²⁷ Bodley 596, ff. 1-12 (Life of Adam, English prose), 25r (Distiches), 26r-28r (Summary of Theology), 28v-29v (On living well for different ranks), 31v-5r (Confession, English prose), 34v (Distiches), 86r-174v (Lydgate, *Life of Our Lady*).

²⁸ P: Oxford, Bodleian MS Rawlinson B.173.

Herefordshire and because the rear flyleaves contain memoranda concerning lands in that area.²⁹ Amy Vines has noted the presence of several annotations by Eleanor Vaughn, which is a common surname in the Welsh borders.³⁰ Although this book must have spent some of its life in that region, Matheson and Vines have neglected important evidence for London connections. One user-added a recipe was attributed to ‘Wyll[i]am Spynke Grocer at the Bull in Bucklersbury’.³¹ Matheson and Vines both have ascribed this to the Herefordshire village of Bucklebury, which would be a surprising location for a specialised Grocer’s shop. It is more likely that it referred to the major thoroughfare in London named Bucklersbury, which joined the Great Conduit of Cheapside to Walbrook. Elizabethan antiquarian John Stow noted that ‘on both sides throughout [Bucklersbury] is possessed of Grocers and Apothecaries’.³² Furthermore, the Vaughn family had London connections: the book contains a draft letter from Nic[ho]las Mabbie addressed to ‘Brother Vaughn’. Mabbie stated that he was writing from London and mentions that in Holland, things ‘waxen kauld no more to you at this time’; this could perhaps refer to trade conditions.³³ Although the Vaughns had property in Herefordshire, they also had business links to London and Flanders. This book needs to be understood within the ties of family, marriage, property and business that bound the provincial gentry and London merchants together.

It is clear, then, that magistrate annals were sometimes owned by non-citizens, but not in large numbers. Most non-citizen owners were London residents: heralds, lawyers, London-

²⁹ Matheson, *Prose Brut*, p. 102; A. Vines, ‘“Thys Ys Her Owne Boke”: Women Reading the Middle English *Prose Brut Chronicle*’, in W. Marx and R. Radulescu (eds.), *Readers and Writers of the Prose Brut*, (Lampeter, 2006), pp. 71-98, 82-4.

³⁰ Vines, ‘Thys Ys Her Owne Boke’, pp. 82-4.

³¹ Rawlinson B.173, fol. 227v.

³² *SoL*, i, p. 260.

³³ Rawlinson B.173, fol. 162v.

connected gentry, or clergy. Chicago 254's connection to Battle Abbey remains the only example of possession outside of the metropolitan area at an early date.

(ii) Politicians and Administrators

Another strongly identifiable pattern was that London chronicles were often owned, commissioned or compiled by officeholders: this was true both for those in political offices (such as the aldermen) and also administrative offices (such as Guildhall clerks). Harley 565 (1.24, 1.50) is linked to two mayors, Matthew Philip and John Alyn. Others chronicles were linked to the families that produced mayors: Harley 541 (1.23) to the Frowyk family and Bodley 596, as we have seen, (1.23) to the Knolles family. Gough London 10 (1.45) was compiled by Chamberlain Miles Adys and may have later been owned by Mayor William Capel. Sheriff Robert Fabyan owned and compiled the *Great Chronicle* (1.33) and the *New Chronicles*. Elizabethan alderman Sir John Garrard, haberdasher probably owned BL, C.38.h6 (1.15). Warden of the scrivener's company Robert Bale compiled TCD, 509 and 604, (1.10). In short, there is a strong correlation between officeholding and London chronicle ownership.

William Caxton, governor of the Merchant Adventurers and later print entrepreneur, wrote in his prologue to the continuation of the *Polychronicon* that his audience required a continuation to the older chronicle because there were nowadays 'fewe that wryte in theyr regystres suche thynges as dayly happen and falle'.³⁴ Caxton was thus familiar with the practice of chronicling events in a homemade 'register' and may have kept such a text himself. In any case, his continuations to the *Brut* and *Polychronicon* are heavily indebted to one strain of the London chronicles and share much of their content with Gough

³⁴ *The Prologues and Epilogues of William Caxton*, ed. W. Crotch, EETS, o. s., 176, (London, 1928), p. 68.

London 10(ii), Vitellius A.xvi and the *Great Chronicle*. Caxton certainly made use of a London chronicle and may have compiled his own, although it is not extant. This is not the only example of a known reader whose book has disappeared. *Gregory's Chronicle* (1.13) contains an entry that refers to 'my yere beyng mayre', describing events from the mayoralty of Fishmonger Stephen Forester, (although they have been incorrectly inserted into the entry for William Gregory). The simplest explanation, as McLaren has suggested, is that a lost chronicle by Stephen Forster was a source for Egerton 1995.³⁵ Another lost exemplar owned by Mayor Thomas Cook may lie behind the *Great Chronicle* (1.33): Cook's secretary, John Vale, copied out a series of documents that were sourced from a lost London chronicle into his miscellany.³⁶ The sequence of documents is unusual: it combines one set found only in the St Johns 57 group chronicles with the 'Process' of the 1399 Parliament, which is found only in Julius B.ii group chronicles.³⁷ The *Great Chronicle* was a member of the St Johns 57 group but, for the period 1399-1409, it deviated and used the text of the Julius B.ii group: it is, therefore, the only extant London chronicle which contains the same documents as Vale's book.³⁸ The *Great Chronicle's* version of the Process is defective, and could not have been Vale's direct source.³⁹ The most likely explanation is that Vale's book and the *Great Chronicle* shared a common exemplar in a lost London chronicle. During the 1460s, John Vale served as Thomas Cook's servant and Robert Fabyan, compiler of the *Great Chronicle*, served as Cook's apprentice.⁴⁰ The simplest solution is that the *Great Chronicle* and John Vale's book used a shared (and now lost) exemplar that was located in Thomas Cook's library during the

³⁵ McLaren, *London Chronicles*, pp. 29-33.

³⁶ These have been calendared in M. Kekewich, C. Richmond, A. Sutton, L. Visser-Fuchs, J. Watts (eds.), *The Politics of Fifteenth-century England: John Vale's Book*, (Stroud, 1995), pp. 174-7.

³⁷ On the St Johns 57 group documents, see *Ibid.*; on the Process, see McLaren, *London Chronicles*, p. 41 n. 96, 100-103, 235-6; 'Julius B.ii', pp. 53-5.

³⁸ McLaren, *London Chronicles*, pp. 102, 243.

³⁹ *Vale's Book*, p. 176.

⁴⁰ On Fabyan's links to Cook, see *Great Chronicle*, pp. 204-6; on Vale and Cook, see A. Sutton, 'Cook, Sir Thomas (c. 1410-1478)', ODNB, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/6179> (09-03-2017).

1460s. It is therefore likely that Caxton, Cook and Forster also owned London chronicles, although their copies do not survive.

Another feasible candidate for a mayor who owned a London chronicle was William Butler, who may have commissioned **BL, Cotton MS Vitellius A.xvi** (1.19).⁴¹ Some surmises about the identity of its anonymous compiler can be made. The end date of the chronicle is 1509, but a user added a single year's continuation for 1515/6: the date of production is thus certainly after 1509 and probably before 1515.⁴² One of the only substantial annotations in the chronicle is a note next to the mayoralty of Robert Fresh, giving directions on how to find that mayor's tomb in the church of St Benet Sherehog in Cheap ward.⁴³ Fresh was not a major figure in civic history, nor was St Benet Sherehog a major civic church. The owner, therefore, was probably a parishioner of St Benet or resident of Cheap ward. Finally, the compiler inserted an annotated list of the nobles killed in the Wars of the Roses into the back of the manuscript.⁴⁴ Although most of the text consists of a list of casualties, the final entry contains an account of Lieutenant-governor of Calais Giles Daubeney's heroic actions during the Siege of Diksmuide.⁴⁵ Connections to Calais could perhaps explain this puzzling addition. Although doubtless there are several Londoners who could meet these criteria, a strong candidate is Mayor William Butler.⁴⁶ Butler was the alderman for Cheap ward from 1507-1534, thus St Benet Sherehog was within his local sphere of influence. He had connections to prominent Calais staplers, which may account for his apparent interest in the Siege of Diksmuide.⁴⁷ The decision to

⁴¹ P: BL, Cotton MS Vitellius A.xvi.

⁴² *Ibid.* f. 209r.

⁴³ *Ibid.* f. 30r.

⁴⁴ For an edition, see Kingsford, *Chronicles of London*, pp. 276-9.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.* pp. 278-9.

⁴⁶ Beaven, *Aldermen*, i, p. 101.

⁴⁷ William Butler's second wife, Elizabeth, was the widow of Staple merchant John Saunders. His son, also named William, was a prominent stapler. See: 'The Boteler Family', *Bedfordshire Archives Service Catalogue*, <http://bedsarchivescat.bedford.gov.uk/Details/archive/110275987> (01-07-2019);

add a continuation for the year 1515/6 but not for the intervening years of 1509-15 is also explicable by this theory: William Butler was mayor for 1515/6. This user-added continuation was thus an act of vanity, written to insert himself into the history of London. Such evidence is suggestive, but not conclusive.

Aside from elected officials, there was also a correlation with the administrators of the city: the scriveners, clerks and salaried officials of the Guildhall and civic companies. Professional administrators of this sort include Richard Hedley, clerk of the Guildhall (WYA 32D86/42, 1.1); Henry Nicholl, clerk of the Grocers (Rawlinson B.359, 1.41); and Robert Bale, who worked as a secretary for the Mercers' company (1.10). The similarities between Bale's commonplace book and Hatfield Cecil 281 (1.11) could suggest that the latter was also owned by a scrivener, or else 'emanated from legal chambers' as McLaren has suggested.⁴⁸ Gough London 10 (1.45) was owned by Miles Adys: the indexes to the London Letter-books and large collection of legal material incorporated into that manuscript indicate that he was a highly active administrator during his periods both as chamberlain of the city and warden of the Goldsmiths' company. As we have seen, Bodley 596 (1.44) was owned by William Baron, who was an administrator with a comparable role, albeit in the royal rather than civic bureaucracy. As has already been mentioned, it is feasible that the compiler of Tanner MS 2 (1.40) was a university-educated London lawyer: whether he worked for the city or the king is unknown. The manuscripts discussed in this paragraph include the majority of Latin language London chronicles, and several miscellanies that contain Latin literature. London administrators were thus more comfortable in reading Latin for leisure compared to merchants or craftspeople.

⁴⁸ McLaren, *London Chronicles*, p. 108.

Chapter 2 of this thesis showed that London officeholders had access to several chronicles, including some magistrate annals, in the Chamber Library. The same types of men – officeholders and bureaucrats – were amongst the most likely to author their own London chronicles, or own one for domestic use. In particular, several important London officeholders owned chronicles that belonged to a single tradition and showed the influence of a common exemplar: Vitellius A.xvi (William Butler, mayor), the *Great Chronicle* (Robert Fabyan, sheriff), Gough London 10 (Miles Adys, chamberlain) and a lost exemplar linked to William Caxton, governor of the Merchant Adventurers. This likely reflects the circulation of an influential text within social networks of senior officeholders.

(iii) Private Citizens, Women, and Other Owners

Not all London chronicle owners were senior officers of the city. Several London chronicles were owned by identifiable individuals who never held a significant Guildhall or Livery company office. Mercer John Colyn (Harley 2252, 1.27) and Tailor James Fytte (TCC, O.9.1, 1.4) served in parish fraternities and vestries, but not in any corporate offices. Grocer Richard Hill (Balliol 354, 1.37) appears never to have held any significant office. Most probably, John Chandeler (Harley 565, 1.24) and Thomas Myll (Lambeth 306, 1.32) fall in the same category of prosperous private citizens.

Most identifiable citizen-owners came from the main merchant guilds (particularly the Mercers, Grocers and Drapers), but even members of these companies were not consistently prosperous. For example, Richard Gyttten's copy of the *Customs of London* appears in a bankruptcy inventory (1.49) and the widow of John Colyn (1.27) later

petitioned the city as a pauper.⁴⁹ Some owners came from the more prestigious amongst the craft guilds including the Tailors (1.4 and 1.36), and Haberdashers (1.13, and also Richard Arnold, compiler of the *Customs of London*). There are a large number of names that are difficult to link to historical persons, which could indicate men who never held important political offices and never achieved prominence in their communities. Likely candidates of this sort included: John Wryghtyngton, (who signed with a trademark but no company) (1.30); Thomas Torner, a citizen of London (1.36); James Hater, ‘cityzen’ (1.3); and a great many other signatures scrawled in margins and flyleaves of chronicles. London chronicles had a readership that stretched beyond officeholders and administrators and into the citizenry.

Whereas previous commentators have tended to assume a strongly male audience for London chronicles, several of the manuscripts have female annotations, such as the signatures Elizabeth (TCC, O.9.1, 1.4), or Eleanor Vaughn (Rawlinson B.173, 1.46). I have also suggested above on less certain evidence that Bodley 596 (1.44) could have been the property of Johanna Baron *nee* Knolles. To this, one more manuscript must be added, **Chetham’s Library, MS 8009 (MUN A.6.31)** (1.35), which was not described by McLaren, Kingsford or Flenley.⁵⁰ This manuscript has drawn attention from several scholars interested in reading patterns due to its rich selection of texts.⁵¹ It is a professionally-produced miscellany, and no dominant personality or owner is known, although the name ‘Elisabet’ has been added on fol. 224v in a hand different from those of the scribes. Chetham 8009 contains several educational texts aimed at the young (Cato’s

⁴⁹ Barron, ‘What Did Medieval London Merchants Read?’, 58.

⁵⁰ P: Manchester, Chetham’s Library MS 8009 (Mun A.6.31); J. Sánchez-Martí, ‘Manchester, Chetham’s Library MS 8009 (Mun. A.6.31): a Codicological Description’, *Revista Canaria de Estudios Ingleses*, 47, (2003), pp. 129-154

⁵¹ Purdie, ‘Sexing the Manuscript’; K. McLean, ‘Book of the Duke and Emperor’; Sánchez-Martí, ‘Reconstructing the Audiences’; Sánchez-Martí, ‘Middle English Versions of *Ipomedon*’; Sánchez-Martí, ‘Reading Romance in Late Medieval England’; Meale, ‘Middle English Romance of *Ipomedon*’.

Distiches; John Russell's *Book of Nurture*) alongside several female saints' lives and a collection of romances.⁵² There is only one other historical text, *The Book of the Duke and the Emperor*, an account of the 1473 meeting of the Duke of Burgundy with the Holy Roman Emperor at Trier.⁵³ To this original scheme, a later user has added two incomplete texts in a more amateurish hand: the *Ballad of the Tyrannical Husband*, a comedic text about gendered work in a peasant household; and a short London chronicle for the years 1189-1217.⁵⁴ The London chronicle contains little that is original. It is mostly identical to Julius B.ii, except that each king's reign is introduced with an English title in this manuscript and a Latin title in Julius B.ii.⁵⁵ Purdie, Martí and Meale have each noted that this manuscript contains much that would have been appealing for childhood education. Purdie has suggested that the educational scheme was aimed at girls: the hagiography is exclusively female in its subject matter, and she suggests that the female supporting characters in the romances in this manuscript are notably well-developed.⁵⁶ Her case is strengthened by the fact that the only user-added name is female. Nonetheless, Purdie has suggested no productive role for the two historical texts – the London chronicle and the *Book of the Duke* – within her scheme. Additionally, John Russell's advice in the *Book of Nurture* was addressed male careerists and is not unisex. It thus seems more reasonable to suggest that Chetham 8009 was a family book designed to provide an education to both male and female children. Goldberg has suggested that *Tyrannical Husband* was used in

⁵² Chetham's Library, MS. 8009 (Mun A.6.31), ff. 1r-2v (St Dorothy), 3r-17v (Assumption of Mary), 18r-29v (St Anne), 30r-47r (Katherine), 48r-75r (*Distiches*), 76r-119v (*Torrent*), 119v-121v (Lamentation of Mary), 122r-190v (*Bevis*), 191r-335r (*Ipomedon*), 336r-355v (*Book of Nurture*). On use of *Distiches* and the *Book of Nurture* in education, see below, pp. 142, 167.

⁵³ Chetham 8009, ff. 357r-366v; McLean, 'Book of the Duke and Emperor'.

⁵⁴ Chetham 8009, ff. 367v-368v, 370r-272r; 'Ballad of a Tyrannical Husband', in *The Trials and Joys of Marriage*, ed. E. Salisbury, (Kalamazoo, 2002), pp. 85-9.

⁵⁵ Chetham 8009, ff. 367v-368v; compare with 'Julius B.ii', pp. 1-3.

⁵⁶ Purdie, 'Sexing the Manuscript'.

the socialisation of servants in merchant households, although this is neither proven nor disproven by the codicology of this manuscript.⁵⁷

3.2.2: The *Brut*

The second-largest group of chronicles owned by London citizens was the Middle English Prose *Brut*. There are seven occasions, all listed in table one (1.4, 1.46, 1.28, 1.32, 1.9, 1.7, 1.21), in which a *Brut* appears in the same manuscript as a London chronicle. Table 2 lists a further 27 manuscripts and five printed books containing *Bruts*. Two cases from textual archaeology have also been included: one certain case is the 1404 will of Nicholas Hotot, woolmonger (2.34); less certainly, the ‘English Chronicles’ in the will of Walter Smith, draper (2.35) could be a *Brut*. This gives a total of 41 surviving civic exemplars of the *Brut* chronicle.

London office-holders are well-represented amongst *Brut* owners. These include Mayor William Purchas (2.15), and Sheriff Thomas Northland (2.32); Sheriff Robert Fabyan used the *Brut* extensively for his *New Chronicles* but leaves no surviving copy.⁵⁸ Alice, the wife of Alderman Hugh Brice may have owned Longleat 183A (2.18) and Warden of the Mercers William Bromwell owned Glasgow Hunterian MS 83 (2.7). More ambiguously, Harvard Houghton MS f.938 (2.3) contains an *obit* notice for the wife of the Warden of the Drapers, John Hungerford. Thus, approximately one-tenth of the *Bruts* listed in table 2 were possessed by a senior officeholder.

Most *Brut* owners belonged to the members of the most prominent merchant companies: Mercers (1.32, 2.11, 2.16); Grocers (2.5, 2.30); Drapers (2.3, 2.30, 2.35); Skinners (2.33); Salters (2.20); and Vintners (2.3). Others sign themselves simply as ‘merchant’ (2.2, 2.19).

⁵⁷ P. Goldberg, ‘Space and Gender in the Later Medieval House’, *Viator*, 42:2, (2011), pp. 205-232, 212.

⁵⁸ On Fabyan’s books, see below, p. 120.

There are however several manuscripts associated with craft guilds. The more prestigious craft guilds were the Tailors and Haberdashers, who left marks in 1.4, 2.12 and 2.11. Some less prestigious professions also leave their marks: there is a wax chandler (2.28); a leather seller (2.6); a carpenter (2.12); a plumber (2.8); and perhaps another plumber in Harley 63 (2.10). A servant signed his name in Beinecke 494 (2.33). This indicates that the reading public of the *Brut* had relatively broad frontiers, perhaps broader than the London chronicles.

Women are also well-represented within the *Brut*'s readership. Harley 753 (2.11) contains a particularly interesting notice: one married couple, Robert and Ellen Herdes, gave the book to Henry Brayne as a wedding present.⁵⁹ The Herdes signed their book as if it was jointly owned; it was given to another person at the point of his marriage as if ownership of a *Brut* was an important part of setting up a household. The following female names appear across the corpus: Alice Brice (2.18); Elizabeth Carpenter (2.32); Eleanor Vaughn (1.46); Elizabeth (1.4); and Margaret Chyldyrys (2.7). As has been mentioned, an *obit* appears for Alice Hungerford in Houghton MS f.938 (2.3): this could indicate that her family owned the book, but it is not certain. Longleat 183A (2.18) contains a female signature and no male names; all other books in this paragraph contain both male and female signatures. The *Brut* may thus have been unisex reading and a 'family' book, which was shared by couples and made available to other members of the household.

3.2.3: Universal Chronicles

⁵⁹ BL, Harley 753, fol. 165v.

The third category of chronicles that enjoyed some popularity in London were universal chronicles. Universal chronicles told the story of the whole world, (or at least of ‘universal’ institutions such as the Catholic Church or Roman Empire). The simplest and least substantial of these texts narrated the scheme of the ‘Seven Ages of the World’: the longer of the two wall-mounted tablet chronicles of St Paul’s opened with this ‘Seven Ages’ scheme, and was copied into two London chronicle manuscripts, (1.24 and 1.39). A short ‘Seven Ages’ text was incorporated into Richard Arnold’s *Customs of London*, (ff. 156-7) and copied into Hill’s commonplace book (1.37), and an unrelated Seven Ages text occurs in Rawlinson Poet. 32 (2.26). Table 3 in the appendix lists nineteen instances of more substantial universal chronicles: namely the *Polychronicon*, *Nuremberg Chronicle*, Nicholas Trevet’s *Chronicle*, Martin of Opava’s *Chronicon*, the ‘Lollard’ chronicle of the papacy and a unique tabular chronicle.

The *Polychronicon* was the most prevalent universal chronicle in London. The surviving record consists of two Latin manuscripts, two manuscripts of Trevisa’s translation, three printed copies of Trevisa’s translation, one manuscript of an independent translation, and three instances in textual archaeology. The majority of instances are in manuscript: Caxton’s printed version was reacting to (and presumably expanding) an existing market for *Polychronica*. The *Polychronicon* may have been a more exclusive text compared to the *Brut* and the London chronicles. In only one case did it appear in a commonplace book: Rawlinson C.86 (3.13). Boffey and Meale have shown that this book was owned by members of leading civic companies: these include a London MP, a Warden of the Scriveners’ company, and inscriptions from Salters, Goldsmiths and Tailors. Identifiable owners of other *Polychronica* include Warden of the Mercers Robert Skrayngham (3.17) and prominent and prosperous Mercers such as William Purde (3.16), and William Middleton (3.10). Other owners include a Warden of the Grocers (Thomas Crull, 3.18), a

Draper (John Collard, 3.8) and perhaps a master Haberdasher (Thomas Heton, 3.15). This social circle is typically male, well-connected, and features some of the more prestigious civic companies.

The three surviving exemplars of Schedel's *Nuremberg Chronicle* exhibited an even narrower circle, although the sample size is too small to make a firm judgement. The chronicle was created by two merchants of Nuremberg and thus provides a link between English and continental mercantile historical cultures. London print entrepreneur Richard Pynson (3.9) gifted his copy to an Italian friend resident in London; another owner was Sheriff Robert Fabyan (3.5), who used it as a source for the *New Chronicles*. The *Nuremberg Chronicle* was thus used by men with professional interests in books, but its wider circulation is less certain.

A third exemplar, **Glasgow Hunterian BV.1.12** (3.4), may have once been in a London household library along with Harley 565. Harley 565 contains in a Latin verse motto 'Nihil prodest filio probitas parentis...' in various hands, one of which has written the date 1513. Given that it is known to have circulated within the city after this date (it was with John Chandelers, merchant in 1515/6 and later was owned by John Alyn, Mayor for 1525/6) it is likely that the earlier motto writers were also located in London. It also contains the name 'Syr Thomas Tailboys'. Turning to BV.1.12, it contains one instance of the same Latin motto as well as the surname 'Tailboys'. One explanation for the similarity in the annotation is that these two books were once present in the same library and, given the circulation history of Harley 565, it is probable that this library was located in London in

the early sixteenth century. There was a Tailboys family of Lincolnshire gentry, although a family member named Thomas of the right generation has so far proven elusive.⁶⁰

Martin of Opava's *Chronicon* probably circulated in London, but surviving evidence is of uneven quality. Robert Bale copied extracts of the *Chronicon* into his commonplace book (1.10), albeit no extant exemplar can be linked to Bale.⁶¹ Matheson and Kingsford have noted that Latin historical miscellany COA MS Arundel 5, which includes a *Chronicon* and Latin *Brut*, contains a chronicle of recent events that incorporates localized London material similar to *Gregory's Chronicle* and Vitellius A.xvi.⁶² Its ownership cannot be verified. One copy of the Middle English translation of the *Chronicon*, Cambridge Magdalene College, Pepys MS 2014 (3.2) contains repeated instances of a mercantile trademark (with the name 'Johanni Spycer son of Willelmo Spycer'): the geographical location of this merchant is unknown. Thus, there is no unproblematic witness of the *Chronicon* from London in this period: we have one local adaptation and continuation, one reader without an extant text, and one mercantile reader of unknown location. The *Chronicon* was thus probably in circulation in London.

Bodley 623 (3.11) contains a tabular universal chronicle. It can be localised to London using its liturgical calendar; ownership by a merchant is probable as it also contains tables of weights, measures and multiplication aids. Emmanuel College MS 85 (3.1) contains the 'Lollard chronicle of the Papacy' and a signature of William Andrews, Mercer, dated 1539. This book could have circulated amongst London Lollards, perhaps in a lay conventicle.

⁶⁰ S. Gunn, *Henry VII's New Men and the Making of Tudor England*, (Oxford, 2016), p. 81; R. Virgoe, 'Tailboys, Sir William', ODNB, <https://ezproxy-prd.bodleian.ox.ac.uk:2095/10.1093/ref:odnb/26949> (14-05-2020).

⁶¹ TCD, 509, pp. 116-120.

⁶² Matheson, *Prose Brut*, p. 16; Kingsford, *English Historical Literature*, p. 159.

3.2.4: Other Chronicles

The London chronicles, *Bruts* and universal chronicles were the most popular textual groups, but the manuscript record attests that Londoners read a much wider and more miscellaneous variety of texts.

(i) Brief Annals

Some of the most basic forms of historical literature consisted of brief lists of dates of events, chronologies, or slender annals. In some cases, these were home-produced. **BL, Add. 48031**, is a miscellany of legal and historical material compiled by John Vale, a ‘man of affairs’ (secretarial servant) to Mayor Thomas Cook. Vale added a short chronicle with an authorial note ‘per me J. V.’⁶³ **Longleat House, MS 174** is a primarily medical miscellany, with some literary content.⁶⁴ One user has added a short chronicle that focuses mostly on events in London and Kent, with some entries concerning the Horn family.⁶⁵ The Horns were a longstanding Kentish family who, through several branches, produced numerous prominent Londoners including: the Mayor Sir William Horn (1487); Sheriffs John Horn (1272 and 1275) and Robert Horn (1446); the alderman John Horn (*fl.* 1379-1382); and the Chamberlain and chronicler Andrew Horn (*d.* 1328).⁶⁶ Harris has noted that it contains memoranda and recipes which include references to places in London and

⁶³ P: *Vale’s Book*, pp. 178-80. On the lives of Cook and Vale, see A. Sutton and L. Visser-Fuchs, ‘The Provenance of the Manuscript: the Lives and Archive of Sir Thomas Cook and his Man of Affairs, John Vale’, in *Ibid.* pp. 73-123.

⁶⁴ S: K. Harris, ‘The Longleat House Extracted Manuscript of Gower’s *Confessio Amantis*’, in A. Minnis (ed.) *Middle English Poetry, Texts and Traditions*, (York, 2001), pp. 77-90.

⁶⁵ Longleat 174, ff. 102v-104v.

⁶⁶ Harris, ‘Longleat House Manuscript’, pp. 80-1. On the Horns, see Beaven, *Aldermen*, i, pp. 23, 56, 154, 175, 369; and J. Catto, ‘Horn, Andrew (c. 1275-1328)’, *ODNB*, <http://ezproxy-prd.bodleian.ox.ac.uk:2167/view/article/13780>, (30-09-2016).

Kent.⁶⁷ The combination of history, medicine and literature from Kent and London suggest that this book could have been compiled by a member of the Horn family with connections to Kentish gentry, London merchants and London physicians, although the exact context is elusive.

A much shorter chronicle focusing on London and Kent events from the year 1450-2 can be found in **BL, Cotton Roll ii.23**, a collection primarily consisting of political literature and petitions compiled during and shortly after the Cade rising. Kingsford suggested that this roll was compiled by a London citizen because it contained a list of trade grievances and a strong interest in London.⁶⁸ Literary miscellany **Huntington MS HM 64** contains a chronology of important events in English history; a mercantile context is suggested by the signatures of ‘Hughe Drapere Merchaunt’ and ‘John Harris [a]pottycary’.⁶⁹ The miscellany of alchemical, scientific and technical works **Huntington MS HU 1051** contains on folios 63-6v a short chronicle for 1170-1430 of England and Scotland in Latin.⁷⁰ A metropolitan location is suggested by a list of London churches (47r-v); mercantile ownership is feasible due to notes on currency, prices and weights (39-43, 84v).

Similar historical texts were also incorporated into professionally-produced miscellanies.

Bodleian, Ashmole 59 was produced in John Shirley’s London workshop and contains a list of the dates of important events.⁷¹ Its flyleaves contain two trademarks (a sign of four and the letter b), and on folio 1r, the word ‘merchant’ has been written twice. A note on the same page states that David Garret used this book as collateral on a loan in 1486. This

⁶⁷ Harris, ‘Longleat House Manuscript’, p. 79.

⁶⁸ S: Kingsford, *English Historical Literature*, appendix xi, pp. 358-68.

⁶⁹ S: Scott, ‘Past Ownership’, pp. 158, 160; ‘San Marino, Huntington Library, HM00064’, *Digital Scriptorium*, <http://www.digital-scriptorium.org/xtf3/search?rmode=digscript;smode=bid;bid=43;docsPerPage=1;startDoc=70;fullview=yes> (13-06-2019).

⁷⁰ S: ‘San Marino, Huntington Library, HU 1051’, *Digital Scriptorium*, <http://www.digital-scriptorium.org/xtf3/search?rmode=digscript;smode=basic;text=HU%201051;docsPerPage=1;startDoc=1;fullview=yes> (25-09-2019).

⁷¹ P: ‘MS. Ashmole 59’, *MMOL*, https://medieval.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/catalog/manuscript_356 (18-06-2019).

book, then, began life in London and a seventeenth-century ownership notice indicates that it later reached the possession of an Inner Temple Lawyer; between these dates, it spent time with merchants and moneylenders, most probably in London.⁷² There is a non-chronological list of dates in the book of hours **Bodleian Rawlinson Liturg. f. 3** on fol. 8v.⁷³ Some of these dates have been incorporated into the liturgical calendar (1r-6v), creating a non-chronological historical text. Localisation to London diocese is suggested by the liturgical calendar, as well as entries such as a commemorative notice for a fire at Ludgate in the calendar (2r). Its compilers were surnamed Shepherd: their arms feature two crooks (fol. 50r) and liturgical calendar incorporates the 11th April 1446 birth of Johanna Shepherd (2v) and the 22nd October 1455 death of John Shepherd (5v).

(ii) Chronicles of England

Aside from owning and producing unique annals, Londoners also bought standard histories of the nation. The most basic popular texts of this kind were verse biographies of English kings, as typified by John Lydgate's *Verses on the Kings of England*, and its various continuations and imitations. It was first printed as a broadside in 1483 and was issued in a nine-page pamphlet of useful historical knowledge in 1518.⁷⁴ The *Verses* and its imitators can be found in numerous manuscripts that have already been discussed: 1.13 (Egerton 1995); 1.32 (Lambeth 306); 1.28 (Stowe 69); 1.11 (Cecil 281); and 3.13 (Rawlinson C.86).

⁷² Bodleian, MS Ashmole 59, flyleaf v (John Shirley), f. 163v (Lawyer).

⁷³ P: Bodleian, MS Rawl. Liturg. f.3: 'MS Rawl. liturg. f.3', *MMOL*, https://medieval.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/catalog/manuscript_8708 (25-09-2019).

⁷⁴ L. Mooney, 'Lydgate's "Kings of England" and Another Verse Chronicle of the Kings', *Viator*, 20, (1989), pp. 255-289, 256, n. 6.

It can also be found in Ashmole 59, discussed above.⁷⁵ Three other versions instances are of interest. One is in **TCC, R.3.21**, a literary miscellany that, on folio 245v, has an inscription from the London Mercer Roger Thorney.⁷⁶ The *Verses* are also found in **BL, Lansdowne MS 762**, a commonplace book that contains some London-specific legal documents, although its precise ownership remains unknown.⁷⁷ Finally, a copy appears in **BL, Harley 2251** (ff. 2v-4r), which bears the monogram of John Vale, the ‘man of affairs’ to Mayor Thomas Cook.⁷⁸ This results in a total of nine manuscripts.

Londoners also collected more substantial histories of England. This chapter has already noted Woburn Abbey 181, a miscellany of English chronicles, including Robert Fox’s *Chronicle of St Albans* and a *Brut*, (2.32). Robert of Gloucester’s *Chronicle* was available in London: copies occur alongside the *Brut* in Sloane 2027 (2.12) and with the *Chronicon* in Pepys 2014 (3.2). If brief chronologies and Lydgate’s *Verses* constituted the light and accessible side of historical reading then these multi-chronicle miscellanies represented a whole-hearted commitment to collecting and reading history.

John Hardyng’s verse chronicle of England may have been popular in London. Carol Meale has shown that **New York, Pierpont Morgan MS Bühler 5** had a London context.⁷⁹ It contains some geographically specific signatures: Robert Mylner signed himself once as of ‘Mylkstret towne de London’ and once as of Wood Street; John Mylner signs himself as of Wood Street.⁸⁰ Wood Street and Milk Street were parallel arterial roads off Cheapside, both in Cripplegate ward. Two other signatures self-identified as citizens,

⁷⁵ See above, pp. 106-107.

⁷⁶ P: Scott, ‘Past Ownership’, p. 164.

⁷⁷ P: For an argument that this is a London commonplace book, see Parker, *Commonplace Book*, pp. 129-158.

⁷⁸ P: BL, MS Harley 2251, ff. 170 (Vale’s monogram); ‘Detailed Record for Harley 2251’, *Catalogue of Illuminated manuscripts*, <http://www.bl.uk/catalogues/illuminatedmanuscripts/record.asp?MSID=7318> (13-06-2019); ‘Harley MS 2251’, *EAM*, http://searcharchives.bl.uk/IAMS_VU2:IAMS040-002048082 (13-06-2019).

⁷⁹ S: Meale, ‘*Libelle of Englyshe Polycye*’, p. 199.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

namely ‘Whyttynton’ and ‘Willmo Stathame’.⁸¹ Two other exemplars of Hardyng’s chronicle were probably read within the geographical area of London, although the identities of their readers are unknown. **Yale, Beinecke Library MS Takamiya 6** contains flyleaf notes concerning land transactions in Middlesex and Essex and also reporting on Reformation-related executions at Smithfield, 1531-4.⁸² Its owner in this period was presumably a London resident wealthy enough to own property. A weaker case may be made for another Hardyng manuscript, **BL, Lansdowne MS 204**.⁸³ This text contains a marginal instruction that the reader can learn more of the story of the rood of St Paul’s from the stained glass window and written tablet that accompany the holy relic at the north door of the church.⁸⁴ The owner of this book was thus highly familiar with St Paul’s, which may suggest a London resident; the evidence is however meagre and inconclusive.

(iii) Chronicles with a Focus on a Local Area or a Brief Time Period

Londoners also collected chronicles that did not aspire to tell the whole span of the history of England but instead focused on more limited times or places.

The fifteenth century saw the compilation of several narrative pamphlets that recounted recent events and which thus straddled the divide between chronicling and news. Versified accounts of wars and battle were particularly popular. A verse account of the Agincourt campaign known as *Henry V’s Expedition Into France* can be found in two exemplars

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁸² S: ‘Chronicles of England’, *Beinecke Rare Book & Manuscript Library*, <https://brbl-dl.library.yale.edu/vufind/Record/4428053>, (18-06-2019).

⁸³ S: BL, MS Lansdowne 204; ‘Lansdowne MS 204’, *EAM*, http://searcharchives.bl.uk/IAMS_VU2:IAMS040-002073484, (18-06-2019).

⁸⁴ BL, Lansdowne MS 204, f. 42r; Riddy, ‘Glastonbury, Joseph of Arimathea’, p. 278.

already discussed: 1.24 (Harley 565) and 3.13 (Rawlinson C.86). John Page's poem *The Siege of Rouen* occurs in seven exemplars that have already been discussed: 1.13 (Egerton 1995); 1.4 (TCC, O.9.1); 1.7 (CUL, HH.6.5); 1.37 (Balliol 354); 1.9 (Chicago 254); 2.14 (Lambeth 331) and 2.11 (Harley 753). *Warkworth's Chronicle*, which recounted the wars of 1470-1, was incorporated into Glasgow Hunterian 83 (2.7).

A short pamphlet that focused on events outside of England was *The Death of the King of Scots*, which recorded the assassination of James I of Scotland (d. 1437). This is found in one exemplar that was probably owned by a London citizen: **BL, Add. MS 5467**, a wide-ranging miscellany including a cookbook, conduct texts and recipes for health.⁸⁵ This book contains several texts produced by London manuscript producer John Shirley and is probably based on a lost exemplar of his.⁸⁶ It contains a trademark on folio 212r (a sign of four, incorporating M and S). Given the trademarks and its probable London production, ownership by a London mercantile household is likely.

Some texts focused on a shorter timeframe in the more distant past. A Latin language short life of Edward III, largely based on the *Brut*, is found in two exemplars: Robert Bale's book (1.10) and Cecil 281 (1.11). Another short and narrowly-focused text can be seen with the French language *De Guerra Baronum*, an account of Edward II's struggles with his nobility. It survives uniquely in **TCC, O.2.53**, a miscellany of a mostly legal and functional character.⁸⁷ Its documents include examples of how to form an apprenticeship, a letter by a schoolboy asking his parents to send books and money, and copies of tomb

⁸⁵ P: BL, Add. MS 5467, ff. 72v-84v; 'Add. MS 5467', *EAM*, http://searcharchives.bl.uk/IAMS_VU2:IAMS032-002029031, (18-06-2019); for an edition see L. Matheson, *Death and Dissent*, (Woodbridge, 1999).

⁸⁶ C. Griffin, 'Reconsidering the Recipe: Materiality, Narrative and Text in Later Medieval Instructional Manuscripts and Collections', in E. Cayley and S. Powell, *Manuscripts and Printed Books in Europe, 1350-1550*, (Liverpool, 2013), pp. 135-149, 148.

⁸⁷ P: TCC, MS. O.2.53, ff. 43r-44v.; 'O.2.53', *James Catalogue*, <http://trin-sites-pub.trin.cam.ac.uk/james/viewpage.php?index=677> (18-06-2019).

inscriptions and other documents concerning London churches.⁸⁸ It also contains documents for properties in Kent (30v-32v). These additions could indicate compilation by a family with mixed mercantile and gentry interests in the home counties area. A family of Essex gentry, the Ramstons, made the last major additions to this book in the reign of Henry VIII.⁸⁹

Other histories focused on specific localities or institutions. Institutional histories of churches circulated in London from an early period: chapter two demonstrated that in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, Arnold Fitz-Thedmar and Andrew Horn both collected church institutional histories such as a short verse history of the papacy, or annals of St Pauls, Southwark Priory or other local churches.⁹⁰ Fifteenth-century Londoners showed less consistent interest in texts of this kind. **Bodleian Douce 95** contains a versified list of archbishops of Canterbury in Latin, which is similar in style but not identical to the one in Arnold Fitz-Thedmar's book.⁹¹ It was written by scrivener Robert Bale (1.10); the manuscript also contains a list of London churches and a user-added list of ordinances of the parish guild of St Stephen Coleman Street.⁹² Users have also added a debt bond between the merchants of the staple and 'Johanes Lybythe', a gentleman of London, and also a note by 'John Smyth doctor of Phisic...and prebend [of] the Cathedrall church of St Paul...' (d. 1502).⁹³ This book had its origins with a London Scrivener and was owned by both churchmen and merchants within the city.

⁸⁸ TCC, O.2.53, ff. 25r-26v (Carthusians), 30 (apprenticeship documents), 45r (Westminster tombs), 45v (Schoolboy letter).

⁸⁹ TCC, O.2.53, ff. 36v and 46v (births of Ramston children).

⁹⁰ See above, pp. 33-34.

⁹¹ On the palaeographical attribution, see A. Sutton, 'Robert Bale, Scrivener and Chronicler of London', *English Manuscript Studies*, 14, (London, 2008), pp. 180-206. P: 'MS. Douce 95', *MMOL*, https://medieval.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/catalog/manuscript_4753 (14-09-2019).

⁹² Bodleian MS Douce 95, ff. 9-12 (London churches), 20v-22v (Latin verse list of Archbishops of Canterbury), 22r-22v (Prose list of Archbishops, 37v (Ordinances of St Stephen Coleman Street).

⁹³ Douce 95, fol. 6v (debt bond), 39v (Smyth); J. Horn, *Fasti Ecclesiae Anglicanae, 1300-1541: Volume 5, St Paul's Cathedral, London*, (London, 1963), pp. 23-25.

Histories of local churches showed some popularity. Bodley 596 (1.44) incorporated a chronicle of Westminster Abbey. The most popular institutional histories were the Latin *tabulae* of St Paul's. These consisted of two chronicles written onto boards and mounted on columns flanking the tomb of John of Gaunt in St Paul's cathedral; the originals perished in the great fire.⁹⁴ The long tablet to 1431 is preserved in Harley 565 (1.24), and Rawlinson B.355 (1.39). The short tablet ending in 1382 is preserved in Harley 565 (1.24) and TCD, 509 (1.10).

(iv) International Chronicles

There has been a predominantly English focus for all texts discussed so far in this section (except for the *Death of the King of Scots*), but some Londoners were more outward-looking in their reading. Particularly unusual (and late in date) was the chronicle of the Ottoman empire that John Colyn copied into his book Harley 2252, ff. 36v-7 (1.27), apparently from a lost broadside of 1529.

As England's closest neighbour and perennial rival, France attracted the most interest. Robert Fabyan incorporated the history of France into his magistrate annal, the *New Chronicles*. He also borrowed **London Metropolitan Archives, CLC/270/MS00244**, a copy of the chronicles of France, from the Guildhall.⁹⁵ A similar intertwining of French and English history could be found in Jean Froissart's chronicle: *Warden of the Mercers*. William Bromwell bequeathed a copy of this text in his will.⁹⁶ A copy of *Pseudo-Turpin's*

⁹⁴ For an edition, see *A Chronicle of London*, pp. 174-187.

⁹⁵ S: Thorney and Thomas, 'Introduction', *Great Chronicle*, x-xii.

⁹⁶ Sutton, 'Acquisition and Disposal', pp. 95-114, 111.

Chronicle in French in **BL, Harley 273** was possessed by John Clerk, Warden of the Grocers (1467, 1475).⁹⁷ The 1394 will of Alderman William Kyng left a set of ‘chronicles in French’, which may or may not have been chronicles of France.⁹⁸

Genealogies that entwined the French, English and sometimes other European royal families together were also common. One was copied into John Colyn’s book Harley 2252 (1.27). Another genealogy was incorporated into Bodley 623 (3.11); it also contains a universal chronicle structured around the genealogical descent from Adam to form the ruling lines of the monarchs of Israel, England, France and the Empire. A genealogy was incorporated into **TCC, R.3.19**, which may have been owned by Roger Thorney, Mercer.⁹⁹ Although he did not leave any annotations in R.3.19, it was produced by the same scribes as a companion volume to TCC, R.3.21, which Thorney owned; and it contains the same system of decoration and underlining found only in TCC, R.3.21, Bodleian Laud Misc. 577 and St John’s MS 266, all of which contain his signature.¹⁰⁰

Notably poorly represented within these accounts of foreign histories are Roman, Greek and classical works. Sir Thomas Knolles left two histories by Josephus to Oxford University; no other classical historians are attested in the manuscript record.¹⁰¹ John Lydgate’s prose retelling of the story of Julius Caesar, the *Serpent of Division* was included in Vale’s book BL, Add. 48031, discussed above.¹⁰² It also appears in

Cambridge, Magdalene Pepys MS 2006, which contains an ownership inscription of

⁹⁷ S: Scott, ‘Past Ownership’, p. 157. Pseudo-Turpin in found on BL, MS Harley 273 ff. 110v-112v; ‘Harley MS 273’, *EAM*, http://searcharchives.bl.uk/IAMS_VU2:IAMS040-001945628 (10-06-2019).

⁹⁸ Scott, ‘Past Ownership’, p. 170.

⁹⁹ P: B. Fletcher, ‘Introduction’, *Manuscript Trinity R.3.19: A Facsimile*, (Norman, 1987), xv-xxxi, xxxix-xxx.

¹⁰⁰ Scott, ‘Past Ownership’, p. 164; G. Bone, ‘Extant Manuscripts Printed from by W. de Worde, with notes on the Owner, Roger Thorney’, *The Library*, 12:3, (1931), pp. 284-306, 287; also, Mooney, ‘Scribes and Booklets’, p. 263. Mooney uses the underlining to suggest that Thorney owned booklets from this manuscript, but not the whole book as currently constituted.

¹⁰¹ Scott, ‘Past Ownership’, p. 170.

¹⁰² See above, p. 105.

William Fetyplace, Mercer.¹⁰³ Londoners rarely read prose accounts dedicated solely to Roman history, but they could have gained classical knowledge from universal histories, or through verse retellings such as John Lydgate's *Fall of Princes*.¹⁰⁴

3.2.5: Summary: Genres and Titles

This section and its appendix have cited approximately 120 books that contain at least one historical text. No doubt this number includes some that were located in London but owned by non-citizens and others that were owned by merchants from outside of London. Some books may have had only a brief circulation in London. Even with these caveats, the corpus of surviving texts is vast and stands as a testament to the effort and resources devoted to history by Londoners. London chronicles have been cited fifty times. This represents a large section of London's historical reading, but it also indicates that they were far from the only, (or even the main), way that citizens experienced historiography. Citizens' reading tastes varied greatly. Some of the texts are brief and meagre, consisting of a side or two of summary notes, or short rhymes to remember the names of kings. Others were expansive histories of the whole universe, or fat tomes containing several chronicles.

Virtually every major genre of medieval historiography is attested at least once: if a Londoner had sufficient financial means and an interest in history then historical knowledge was open to them. Nonetheless, there are some clear patterns in popularity.

¹⁰³ S: Scott, 'Past Ownership', p. 159; A. S. G. Edwards, 'Introduction', in *Manuscript Pepys 2006: A Facsimile*, (Norman, Oklahoma, 1985), xvii-xxxii, xxvii-xxix.

¹⁰⁴ Of the manuscripts already discussed, the 'Fall of Princes' or an extract thereof could be found in: BL, Harley 2251; Bodleian, Ashmole 59; and TCC, R.3.19.

Brief historical texts that acted as ‘primers’ of important information, such as king lists, collections of important dates, royal genealogies or verses on the kings of England were very popular, typically as part of a miscellany. When Londoners bought longer and more substantial texts, most focused on the history of England. The *Brut* and London chronicles were standard texts in many households; other histories of England such as *Hardyng’s Chronicle* or *Robert of Gloucester’s Chronicle* enjoyed some popularity. Londoners also read histories of specific events: verse accounts of the hundred years’ war such as *Henry V’s Expedition into France* or *The Siege of Rouen* are particularly well-attested.

Aside from national chronicles of England, the main taste was for universal histories. The *Polychronicon* established itself as the leader within this genre; the *Nuremberg Chronicle* and Martin of Opava’s *Chronicon* had lower instances of popularity. Histories that were neither universal nor English was less popular. Some Londoners showed an interest in the history of France; other European countries less so. Few Middle English texts focused on the history of Rome or Greece, which reflected or perpetuated a lack of focused interest in classical history. Foreign lands were understood mostly through the medium of universal history.

3.3: The Demographics of Chronicle Ownership

This chapter has so far presented a mass of evidence, arranged according to texts and genres. This section re-examines this evidence thematically, to demonstrate some of the main demographic features of chronicle readership.

3.3.1: Occupation and Officeholding.

Figure 1 (below) breaks down chronicle ownership by guild or profession, for all cases where the data is available – this is mostly from textual archaeology, or where an owner declared a company affiliation in their signature. The guilds have been ranked within the table according to their formal ceremonial rank as given in the 1516 order of precedence.¹⁰⁵ The first twelve rows contain the twelve great livery companies, the dominant guilds that established a formal monopoly on senior offices by 1538; all other professions are listed in the thirteenth column.¹⁰⁶

The overall pattern is clear: the twelve dominant companies produced the vast majority of evidence, and merchants of high-ranking companies (Mercers, Grocers, Drapers) possessed a large proportion of extant chronicles. Many chronicles have not been included in this table because their owners simply signed themselves ‘merchant’: the majority of such individuals can probably also be placed in these senior merchant companies.

<i>Figure 1: Chronicle ownership by profession</i>		
Guild	Owners from Appendix tables	Owners from Chapter 3.2.4
Mercers	William Middleton and Roger Thorney (3.10); John Colyn (1.27); Frowyck family (1.23); William Purde (3.16); William Bromwell (2.7); Robert Skrayngham (3.17); William Andrews (3.1); William Purchas (2.15); John and Thomas Pateshale (2.16); Thomas Myll	William Middleton and Roger Thorney (p. 108, TCC, R.3.21 and p. 113, TCC, R.3.19); William Bromwell (p. 112, <i>Froissart</i>); William Fettyplace (p. 113, Pepys 2006).

¹⁰⁵ Given in *CLB L*, p. xlii.

¹⁰⁶ Beaven, *Aldermen*, i, pp. 329-330.

	(1.32); Rowland Shakersley (2.11); Richard Gytens (1.50).	
Grocers	Knolles family (1.44); Henry Nichol (1.41); Richard Hill (1.37); Thomas Northland (2.32); Richard Mill (2.5); William Butler (1.19); Nicholas Benson (2.30); Thomas Crull (3.18).	Thomas Knolles (p. 113, <i>Josephus</i>); John Clerk (p. 112, Harley 273).
Drapers	Robert Fabyan (1.2; 1.12; 1.18; 1.33; 1.48; 3.5); Alice and John Hungerford (2.3); William Capel (1.45); John Chandelers (1.24); Thomas Shalcross (2.30); John Collard (3.8); Walter Smith (2.35)	Robert Fabyan (p. 112, LMA CLC/270/MS00244); John Vale and Thomas Cook (p. 105, BL, Add. 48031 and p. 108, Harley 2251); William Kyng (p. 113, 'Chronicles in French').
Fishmongers	Stephen Forster may have produced one of the sources for Egerton 1995 (1.13).	Andrew Horn's <i>Annales Paulini</i> ; a 14 th C annal of London in BL, Egerton 2885. ¹⁰⁷
Goldsmiths	Matthew Philip (1.24; 1.50); William Callaway (3.13); Miles Adys (1.45); Hugh and Alice Brice (1.18).	
Merchant Tailors	James Fytte (1.4); William Warner (3.13); Henry Brayne (2.11); John Galborne (1.36); Richard Procter (2.12).	
Skinners	William Nasby (2.33).	
Haberdashers	Thomas Heton, (3.15); Robert Herdes (3.11); John Garrard (1.15).	Richard Arnold, author of <i>Customs of London</i> . ¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁷ See above, p. 16.

¹⁰⁸ P. Herman, 'Arnold, Richard', *ODNB*, <http://ezproxy-prd.bodleian.ox.ac.uk:2167/view/article/681> (30-09-2016).

Salters	John Sampson, (3.13); John Seiton (2.20).	
Ironmongers	Thomas Warner (joint membership with Saddler's Company), (3.13)	
Vintners	John Gaydon (2.3)	
Fullers/ Shearmen/ Clothworkers		
All other professions	Scriveners: Robert Bale (1.10); John Reve and John Hammond (1.13); anon. scrivener (1.11). Clerk: Richard Hedley (1.1). Wax Chandlers: John Gostwick, (2.28). Barber-Surgeons: Edmund Harman (3.14). Plumbers: William Loker (2.8); more speculatively, John Skydmore (2.10). Carpenters: William Holwick (2.12) Leather-seller: Anthony Whit and Thomas Cramar (2.6). Woolmonger: Nicholas Hotot (1.35).	Scriveners: Robert Bale (p. 111, Douce 95) Apothecaries: John Harris (p. 106, Huntington HM 64).

Civic office-holding correlated with chronicle ownership. Chronicles can be linked directly to mayors (1.24, 1.50, 1.24, 2.15, 1.19), and to the families or households of mayors (1.13's exemplar, 1.23, 1.33's exemplar, 1.44, 1.45, BL, Add. 48031, Harley 2251, Longleat 174); they were also owned by sheriffs (2.32, 1.33, 1.2, 1.12, 1.18, 1.33, 1.48,

3.5, LMA CLC/270/MS00244), and aldermen (1.15, 2.18 and William Kyng's 'Chronicles in French'). Other office-holders included a chamberlain (1.45), Member of Parliament (3.13) and clerk of the Guildhall (1.1). Senior guild officers such as wardens or masters are also attested, including for the Mercers (3.17, 2.7), Scriveners (1.10, 3.13) and Grocers (Harley 274, 3.18, 1.41). William Caxton, governor of the Merchant Adventurers, took a strong professional interest in history, printing and authoring continuations of the *Brut* and *Polychronicon*.

Even amongst non-officeholding individuals, the majority of identifiable owners came from the twelve dominant guilds who monopolized the senior offices of the city. The majority of craftsmen owners came from the most prestigious craft guilds, namely the Tailors and Haberdashers. Looking beyond the twelve head companies, there are relatively few chronicle owners. We can link chronicles to a barber (3.14), and wax chandler (2.28), although those individuals had links to the royal court. These men were adjacent to power, albeit in a different form compared to the civic officers.

Politically powerful men did not, however, have a monopoly on history. Officeholders as a group lived particularly well-documented lives compared to private citizens, and so it is much easier to verify their identities in the archives. However, a great many more books were owned by men who signed themselves as 'citizen', or 'of London', who are often difficult to verify in the historical record and so were probably private citizens. A few books can be definitively linked to men who were truly in non-prestigious professions, such as William Holwyke, Carpenter (2.12), William Loker, Plumber (2.8) and Anthony Whit leather-seller (2.6). In his annotations in Harley 63, John Skydmore, of profession unknown, cuts a humble figure, recording small loans taken from a plumber (2.10). If we accept that chronicle ownership was most common amongst officeholders and upwardly-mobile men who entered courtly life or served as officers, then chronicles may have been

seen as ‘aspirational’. Men of lesser social standing were influenced by and imitated the reading habits of London’s elite.

3.3.2: Bibliophiles

Within the broader patters of audience demographics, it is important not to lose sight of personality and individual preference. Some bibliophilic individuals – many of whom were from the senior merchant companies – showed particular energy and consistency in collecting historical books.

One cluster of book-owning activity can be seen around Mayor Thomas Cook. Cook and his secretary, John Vale can be linked to a library of surviving books including BL, Harley 2251, BL, Add. 48031, and the exemplar for the *Great Chronicle* (1.33); other books linked to them included TCC, R.14.52 (medical miscellany), TCC, O.3.11 (legal miscellany), and Worcester Cathedral Library, MS F.172 (devotional miscellany).¹⁰⁹

Robert Fabyan was apprenticed to Cook in the 1460s and may well have been influenced by his masters’ impressive library. Fabyan went on to become a bibliophile in his own right. He compiled both the *Great Chronicle* (1.33) and the *New Chronicles* (see: 1.2, 1.12, 1.18 and 1.48), and his copies of the *Nuremberg Chronicle* (3.5) and ‘Chroniques de France’ (LMA, CLC/270/MS00244) are still extant.¹¹⁰ Using the citations within the *New Chronicles*, Julia Boffey has created a list of texts that were owned, borrowed or otherwise accessed by Fabyan: Geoffrey of Monmouth’s *Historia Regum Britanniae*; Ranulph

¹⁰⁹ 3.2.4(i) and (ii) on Cook’s books, see L. Matheson, ‘Essex/Suffolk Scribes and their Language in Fifteenth-Century London’, in M. Dossena, R. Dury and M. Gotti (eds.), *English Historical Linguistics*, 3, (2006), (Philadelphia, 2006), pp. 45-66, 51-52.

¹¹⁰ See above, p. 39.

Hidgen's *Polychronicon* in its Latin version; Henry of Huntingdon's *Historia Anglorum*; Thomas Walsingham's *Historia Anglicana*; Robert Gaugin's *Compendium Super Francorum Gestis*; Jacobus Philippus de Bergamo, *Supplementum Chronicarum*; Bernard Gui, *Flores Chronicarum* and the *Brut*. He made less frequent use of works by Peter of Poitiers, Marianus Scotus, Antoninus, Froissart, the *Golden Legend* and the *South English Legendary*.¹¹¹ He also cited the Middle English *Polychronicon* and Arnold Fitz-Thedmar's *Book of Old Laws*.¹¹² His autograph copies of the *New Chronicles* are decorated with miniatures extracted from Pierre Desrey's, *Les Faits et Gestes du Preux Godefroy de Boullioun*, printed in Paris in 1500.¹¹³ Fabyan may have borrowed some of these books – his *Chronicles of France* and *Book of Old Laws* were loaned from the Guildhall – but the huge mass of sources used indicates that he was amongst the most bibliophilic Londoners of this period and he may have possessed one of the largest private historical libraries of his generation in England.

Another bibliophile cluster can be detected around Eleanor and her first and second husbands, Roger Thorney and William Middleton, both Mercers. Both Roger and William left their marks in TCC, R.3.21, Bodleian Laud Misc. 577 and St John's MS 266; they probably also owned TCC, R.3.19.¹¹⁴ Wynkyn de Worde thanked Roger Thorney for his support in the epilogue to his 1497 edition of the *Polychronicon*; Middleton's name appears in *Polychronicon* copy S.Seld.d.7 (3.10).¹¹⁵ Thorney and Middleton between them own one of the largest extant libraries of fifteenth-century London: their historical texts include at least one copy of the *Polychronicon*, a pedigree of the kings of England and a

¹¹¹ Boffey, *Manuscript and Print*, pp. 173-8.

¹¹² *New Chronicles*, pp. 164, 305; I. Stone, 'The Book of Arnold Fitz Thedmar', (Ph.D. thesis, King's College, London, 2016), pp. 168-9; see above, p. 34.

¹¹³ Boffey, *Manuscript and Print*, p. 71.

¹¹⁴ See above, pp. 108, 113.

¹¹⁵ Scott, 'Past Ownership', p. 172.

copy of Lydgate's *Verses on the Kings of England*. Eleanor's relationship to these books is ambiguous: she never left a signature but must have at least temporarily possessed the library between her marriages. Boffey and Meale have suggested that TCC, R.3.19 and R.3.21 could have been compiled for a female or mixed-gender audience.¹¹⁶ R.3.19 contains female-focused educational text *How the Good Wife Taught Her Daughter* (ff. 211r-213r), and an annotating hand has drawn 'nota' marks next to particular lines of advice. It also contains texts on feminine virtue: for instance, it a poem on the 'IX Ladyes Worthy' of antiquity (IMEV 2767) is followed by Chaucer's *Legend of Good Women*.¹¹⁷ R.3.21 contains numerous poems focused on female saints: there is a heavy interest in Mary (ff. 1r, 85r-156v, 157r-169r, 170r-174r, 233r-242r, 274v-275v), as well as Ursula (169r-169v) and Anne (169v, 221r-230). This pair of manuscripts thus consistently provided women with secular and religious role models, which could suggest that female readership was expected. There is strong evidence, therefore, that Eleanor was a temporary owner of her husbands' library and suggestive evidence that she could have been a user of some of these books.

Other individuals with a sustained interest in historiography included William Bromwell, who served as Warden of the Mercers' company. His inscription survives in a manuscript of the *Brut* and Warksworth's chronicle, and his will bequeathed copies of *Froissart's Chronicle* and an English *Vitae Patrum*.¹¹⁸ The Knolles family also showed signs of bibliophilia: Sir Thomas Knolles left two works of Josephus to Bodleian library, which suggests a classical education and links to clerical learning establishments; on less certain grounds, he may also have been linked to the production of London Chronicle, Bodley 596

¹¹⁶ C. Meale and J. Boffey, 'Gentlewomen's Reading', in L. Hellinga and J. Trapp (eds.) *Cambridge History of the Book in Britain*, (7 vols, Cambridge, 1999), iii, pp. 526-540, 537.

¹¹⁷ TCC, R.3.19, ff. 110v-111, 114r-150v.

¹¹⁸ See above, p. 112.

(1.44).¹¹⁹ Richard Gytens was a Mercer who filed for bankruptcy in 1507. His inventory shows a sizable library of 21 books, which included the *Customs of London* and two unnamed chronicles (1.49).

Not all book-lovers left behind large libraries. Commonplace books often attest in a single volume to voracious reading habits. Robert Bale was claimed by antiquary John Bale to have authored three texts: a London chronicle, a dictionary of the saints and a life of Edward III. All three appear in TCD, 509 (1.10) and the dictionary appears a second time in Bale's handwriting in Douce 95.¹²⁰ Nonetheless, Bale probably did not author the life of Edward III: another copy exists in Cecil 281 (1.11), which had a production date of 1440, the same year that Bale completed his apprenticeship.¹²¹ It would have been precocious for him to have authored a Latin verse history at this point in his career. Aside from these historical texts, Bale also collected short origins narratives for several churches, the tablet-chronicles from St Paul's, anecdotes about kings from *exempla* collections, and notes from Martin Opava's *Chronicon*.¹²² Robert Bale demonstrated not only a strong interest in history but also a tendency to read a large variety of complex literature in Latin. John Colyn leaves only Harley 2252 (1.27) as a witness to his reading; but he copied out extracts of the *Customs of London*, the *Secretum Secretorum*, the *Vitas Patrum*, a London chronicle, *Verses on the Kings of England*, a genealogy of the kings of England and a broadside chronicle of the Ottoman Empire. Richard Hill leaves only Balliol 354 but he also copied out the whole of the *Seven Sages of Rome* and excerpts from the *Confessio Amantis*, the *Secretum Secretorum*, *Customs of London*, 'Seven Ages of the World', 'Siege

¹¹⁹ See above, p. 113.

¹²⁰ See above, p. 111.

¹²¹ Sutton, 'Robert Bale', p. 181.

¹²² TCD, 509, pp. 1-6 (Latin chronicle of England), 8-10 (tablet), 109-111 (St Peter Thorney), 116-120 (*Chronicon*), 219-256 (Edward III), 268 (Foundations of Barking and Lindesfarne), 272-286 (Dictionary of Saints). Bodleian, Douce MS 95, ff. 13r-20r (Dictionary of Saints).

of Rouen' and a London chronicle. The practices of Hill, Colyn and Bale suggest men who frequently borrowed and lent books: they had access to a wide variety of texts, but their access was time-limited and they often copied out useful, interesting, or important extracts. These men were bibliophiles, but on a more modest and affordable scale compared to Robert Fabyan or Roger Thorney.

The individuals listed in this section were likely atypical: they were well-resourced and well-educated individuals who had a pronounced interest in history. Some of these individuals (notably Thorney, Colyn and Bale) had business links to the book trade; they may have collected texts with an eye for business as much as for leisure and edification. Their links would at least have given them easy access to a wide variety of literature. These individuals do not represent typical reading practices, but they can illustrate the upper limits of achievement that were possible for men with the time, means, learning and inclination to pursue an interest in history. Robert Fabyan, in particular, illustrates where a combination of large economic resources with a clear personal obsession with history could lead. Hill, Colyn and Bale represent what was achievable with more moderate resources.

3.3.3: Household Readership

As has been mentioned, Harley 753 (2.11) was given by one married couple to Henry Brayne as a wedding present: this gift marked Brayne's rite of passage toward becoming a householder. Many other books contain more subtle signs of household use.

One marker for household use may be the presence of female names. Signatures by women are less common than those of men and in every case but one (see 2.18), they appear in books that also contain a male signature. This implies that these chronicles were unisex rather than being exclusively ‘female’ texts. These books were probably possessed by the household and made available to some female, as well as male, members. This chapter has suggested female possession for London chronicles (1.35, 1.44), *Brut*-London chronicle hybrids (1.4, 1.46), *Bruts* (2.25, 2.24, 2.7, 2.11, 2.32, 2.18), universal chronicles (3.10, 3.14, 3.12), and several other books (TCC, R.3.19, TCC, R.3.21). Women’s chronicle reading was thus diversified, with the *Brut* as the most popular text and London chronicles also well-represented.

Another important group of readers were youths which, in a London household, included children, apprentices and servants. Hints of youth reading can be seen in some of the inscriptions. The stock phrase ‘Ego sum bonus puer’ (I am a good boy) has been copied into CCO MS 89 fol. 185v (3.8) and Arnold Fitz-Thedmar’s *Book of Old Laws*, implying a young male audience.¹²³ One copy of the *Customs of London* (1.36) bears the inscription of ‘Richard Waddis scholaris’, perhaps a schoolboy. In Egerton 1995 (1.13) there are annotations by ‘John Cranwell 10’ (112v), which could indicate the boy’s age. TCC, O.2.53 contains model letters for how a schoolchild can write home to his parents and ask for money.¹²⁴ Matching father and son inscriptions are left in Balliol 354 (1.37: Richard and John Hill) and Rawlinson C.86 (3.13: Thomas and William Warner), and Hugh Brown left a History of Troy to his fifteen-year-old kinsman in 1503.¹²⁵

¹²³ See Stone, ‘Book of Arnold Fitz Thedmar’, p. 168; see above, p. 34.

¹²⁴ See above, p. 110.

¹²⁵ Sutton, ‘Acquisition and Disposal’, p. 104.

When historians identify alphabets in books of hours or religious books, it is often said to signify that these books were used in youth education.¹²⁶ Many chronicle manuscripts contain alphabets, some of which are laid out with the confident hand of a parent or teacher, others in the shaky hand of a learner, still others in the scratchy hand of a pen trial. Full or partial renditions of the alphabet appear widely in chronicle manuscripts including: 2.3 (Houghton 938, f. 2v); 2.4 (CUL, Add. 2775, f. 256r); 1.13 (Lambeth 259, iv); 1.33 (Beinecke 494, f. 1[v]); and 1.23 (Bodley 754, fol. 154v). This stands as indicative evidence that many of the readers were youthful, sometimes in the extreme. Many chronicles were co-located with the youth-oriented genre of ‘courtesy books’, which addressed the young and taught them manners: courtesy books will be addressed at greater length in the next chapter.¹²⁷

There is also evidence of young adult use of chronicles. Meale has identified two hands within John Colyn’s London chronicle (1.27). One hand is recognizably ‘current’, similar to the contemporary hands taught in the writing schools of the 1520s; the other is John Colyn’s hand, which visibly is of an older generation. The older hand was dominant and frequently corrects work done by the younger hand: this could represent John Colyn and an apprentice.¹²⁸ Apprentices worked alongside their masters and were subject to their correction in the workplace; in Harley 2252, this model was extended to chronicle compilation, with an apprentice compiling under the supervision of his master. We can place several chronicles with young men, in the early years of enfranchisement: Richard Hill became a London citizen in 1511 and wrote his London chronicle in 1513 (1.37). Thomas Mill became a citizen in 1506 and made his first datable addition to Lambeth 306

¹²⁶ V. Reinburg, *French Books of Hours: Making an Archive of Prayer, c. 1400-1600*, (Cambridge, 2012), pp. 100-108.

¹²⁷ See below, pp. 141-150.

¹²⁸ Meale, ‘John Colyns’ Boke’, pp. 741-4.

in 1508 (1.32). John Chandeler became a citizen in 1512 and Harley 565 contains a legal document of his from 1516 (1.24). Henry Brayne received Harley 753 (2.11) four days before his wedding as a marriage gift. We may perhaps draw a tentative link between the immediate post-apprenticeship years and chronicle acquisition. Perhaps as a man set up his first household, it was necessary to acquire a household library, of which chronicles were a quintessential part.

There is some evidence that some books were shared with servants. We should be cautious about terminology here: large parts of medieval society spent some part of their life ‘in service’ to a master but this did not mean that they necessarily acted as menial servants in the modern sense.¹²⁹ The term ‘covenant servant’ was used to denote a waged employee. Our best-documented servant in this period is John Vale, who entered the Cook household as a servant and subsequently established himself as ‘man of affairs’ to the household.¹³⁰ Vale could be described in medieval terms as a servant, although in modern terminology he may be better described as a secretary, clerk or business employee. Others may have had a period as a household ‘servant’ as a precursor to becoming an apprentice: Richard Hill (1.37) on one occasion signs himself as ‘servant’ of Mayor John Wyngar. The term ‘servant’ is, therefore, ambiguous. Beinecke 494 was annotated by John Hull ‘sarvant’ (1.33). CUL, 3939.2 contains an indenture by Anthony Whit retaining Thomas Cramar as a servant: Whit or Cramar are both feasible owners (2.6).

Another sign of servants as readers is that in some miscellanies, chronicles appear alongside recipes and instructions for menial tasks. *Customs of London* incorporated recipes for beer brewing, soap making and washing clothes. These menial tasks would presumably have often been the responsibility of household servants. The beer and soap

¹²⁹ R. Horrox, ‘Service’, in R. Horrox (ed.), *Fifteenth Century Attitudes*, (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 61-79.

¹³⁰ Sutton and Visser-Fuchs, ‘Provenance of the Manuscript’, pp. 73-123.

entries have been circled, and the initials AQ added in Bodleian Douce A.314 (1.32), and recipes for beer, soap and instructions for washing cloth have been copied into Balliol 354 (ff. 3-4r), (1.37).¹³¹ BL, Add. MS 5467 contains a cookbook with a lengthy and practical index alongside texts on diet and medical recipes; meanwhile, Woburn Abbey 181 (232) contains London's regulations concerning cooks. These texts could have been useful either to London cooks, or the households that employed them.¹³² Thus, texts that could feasibly have been for the use of servants are found with moderate frequency alongside chronicles. These texts raise the possibility that households may have allowed some measure of access to books for their servants, although the lack of widespread direct evidence in signatures means that we need not view this as a universal practice.

3.4: The Chronicle-reading Public

Londoners collected histories on many topics: histories of England and London were the most favoured topics; histories of the church, the world, and specific battles and events were also popular. Classics and foreign kingdoms were less popular subjects but were nonetheless attested.

Generally, use and ownership of chronicles skewed towards those with established power: men are frequently represented within this chapter, women less so; officeholders and administrators were dominant, and the rest of society less well represented; similarly, merchants were better represented than craftsmen. This partly reflects the fact that relatively privileged people usually leave richer archival deposits and are therefore easier

¹³¹ *Customs of London*, pp. 173, 187-189, 238, 246-7.

¹³² See above, p. 110.

to trace. However, it also partly reflects historical reality, given that these relatively privileged groups possessed the best education, greatest resources and sufficient leisure time to devote to historical study. The prosperous male householder was an important audience for historical books, although he did not monopolize them.

Often, chronicles were not the sole possession of a single individual but rather were accessible to a whole household. Books were made available to women, children, apprentices and servants. There is also some evidence that this reading culture amongst the ‘worthy citizens’ penetrated deeper into society and had been adopted by some craftsmen of sufficient means.

The previous chapter established the ‘public sector’ element of London’s historical production, including the importance of chronicles in archival, institutional and library settings. This chapter has provided an important complement by outlining the ‘private sector’ of historical culture as it was found in citizen households. There is some justification for maintaining a public/private divide in these discussions: it is notable for instance that the *Brut* and *Polychronicon* were extremely successful in the domestic book market but are not attested in archival settings. Nonetheless, interactivity between public and private chronicle cultures is evident. The officeholders and administrators who have been identified as chronicle owners in this chapter are the same kinds of people who had access to the Guildhall Chamber Library. Some texts, notably LMA, CLC/270/MS00244 and the *Book of Old Laws* were owned by the Guildhall but available for loan, thus were read in a domestic setting.¹³³ Other books, notably TCD, 509 (1.10) and Rawlinson B.359 (1.42) probably began in personal ownership and later passed into an archival setting.¹³⁴ Unlike the *Brut*, the London chronicles thrived both in institutional and in domestic

¹³³ See above, pp. 34, 39.

¹³⁴ See above, pp. 40, 44.

settings. They could be used scholarly aids, bureaucratic tools or as domestic entertainment.

Chronicles had an important political aspect – the creation and storage of historiography was a part of the normal business of London's public institutions, and private historical book ownership was common amongst the senior officers of the city. Historiography and political power were therefore closely correlated. Chronicles were also commonly used to educate the young, including apprentices: one function may have been that chronicles provided a political education, which prepared an apprenticeship for citizenship and future participation in government.

This chapter has amassed evidence for household ownership of books; the next chapter will make more selective use of it. We have seen that many books show marks indicating 'family' ownership, open to apprentices, children, women and servants. The next chapter will look to the instructional culture of the household and ask: what did households intend to teach through the use of history?

4.0: Instructive Histories: Uses of the Past in Civic Education.

4.1: History and Education

The previous chapter suggested that many chronicles were in books used by a whole household, accessible to men, women, children, apprentices and potentially servants.¹ This does not accord with some of the previous interpretations of London chronicles. Caroline Barron has, for instance, suggested that London chronicles ‘seem not to have occupied the domestic or household role that was the common context of copies of the *Brut* chronicle’.² Mary-Rose McLaren argued that London chronicles had a wide audience within the citizenry, but she identified the primary readers as ‘individuals with money, time and intellectual interests’, which implies an audience of prosperous male adults.³ Carol Meale and Rhiannon Purdie have separately made the case that Chetham’s Library MS 8009 was used in the education of London youths and Janine Rogers has made a similar case for Balliol 354, yet none of these historians considered the London chronicles within these manuscripts to have been youth-focused or educational texts.⁴ Age has barely featured in discussions of the audience or uses of London chronicles.

The same is true to a lesser extent across the wider historiography of book ownership and literary audiences in London. Survey articles on mercantile book ownership by Barron, Anne Sutton and others parse their data by genre, status and guild, but make few

¹ See above, pp. 124-128.

² Barron, ‘What Did Medieval London Merchants Read?’, pp. 53, 55.

³ McLaren, *London Chronicles*, p. 4.

⁴ Meale, ‘Middle English Romance of *Ipomedon*’; Purdie, ‘Sexing the Manuscript’; Collier, ‘Richard Hill’.

conclusions concerning age cohorts.⁵ There has been some work on specific genres and their reception amongst the young, most notably the courtesy book and the romance.⁶ However, it is striking that the dominant approach to the study of London commonplace books – one of the major manuscript contexts for courtesy books and romances – has tended to focus on readership by individual adults rather than suggesting household or childhood readership. David Parker has, for instance, suggested that the commonplace book expressed the development of a ‘separate and distinct coherent self that is separate from the external structure of work, church, and family’.⁷ Many other historians have similarly seen commonplace books as expressing individual personality and only a minority of historians have viewed them as having been formed in response to household or community needs.⁸

This chapter suggests that London commonplace books, and the chronicles within them, were not created solely for the compiler’s benefit. Rather they were used in household contexts. They had an important function in aiding education and personal development. They were less about expressing the personality of the compiler, and more about forming the personality of the reader. Citizens were raised on a diet of didactic texts such as *exempla*, hagiographies and manuals of personal conduct and public government: the ways that these genres made use of the past to teach lessons had formative impacts in the education of many London chroniclers. The chronicles produced in London grew out of this culture of education and in turn adapted to it, becoming flexible educational tools. This chapter, therefore, outlines the nature of domestic literary education in London and

⁵ Foster, ‘Courtesy to Urbanity’; Hardman, ‘Popular Romance’; M. Seaman, ‘Late Medieval Conduct Literature’; Meale, ‘Gode Men/Wiues Maydnes and Alle Men’.

⁶ Barron, ‘What Did Medieval London Merchants Read?’; Sutton, ‘Acquisition and Disposal’; ‘Past Ownership’.

⁷ Parker, *Commonplace Book*, p. 84.

⁸ On this historiography, see above, pp. 25-26; and in particular see Hardman, ‘Evidence of Readership’; Collier, ‘Richard Hill’; Purdie, ‘Sexing the Manuscript’; Meale, ‘Middle English *Ipomedon*’.

considers the implications that this environment of instruction had for wider historical culture.

4.2: The Social Context of Civic Education

In 1911, Ralph Flenley argued that the London chronicles stand as evidence for the type and quality of education available to Londoners. Their authors were ‘untouched by the influence of foreign literature’, and their rhetoric owed more to ‘homely phrases and quaint conceits’ than to educated culture.⁹ For Flenley, the fifteenth-century citizen was in a state of educational crudity: ‘his vision... short, his intelligence limited, his tastes homely, his credulity enormous, and his powers of expression feeble...’¹⁰ In short: ‘[t]he chronicles are, indeed, just what we should expect of their authors’ because their failings represented the crudity of education amongst merchants – and most Englishmen – in the fifteenth century.¹¹ This chapter will concur with the idea that London historiography reflects and exhibits many of the typical features of civic learning in this period, but it will take issue with the rest of Flenley’s interpretation. Rather than treating fifteenth-century education as a low-achieving foil to the rapid changes to education of the sixteenth-century, this chapter will instead examine fifteenth-century civic education on its own terms and within its social context.

A contemporary view of education can be found in the 1469 ordinance of the Goldsmiths concerning the training of apprentices. It described the admission of illiterate candidates to

⁹ Flenley, *Six Town Chronicles*, p. 22.

¹⁰ *Ibid.* p. 56.

¹¹ *Ibid.* p. 23.

the apprenticeship as ‘a practice damaging not only to the fellowship but also to the master taking such apprentices and to the apprentice himself’.¹² The reasoning was threefold.

First, the literate possessed greater skills of comprehension than the illiterate: ‘it is unreasonable to expect an illiterate child or man to have as much understanding by wit and observation alone as a child or man who has both practical experience and can read’.

Second, the literate man could be self-sufficient but the illiterate person needed others to write for him; thus, illiterate men risked disclosing trade secrets to guild outsiders. And third, literate men were better respected:

for want of such literacy, members of this fellowship are not held in esteem by merchants of the city of London or favoured by lords and gentlefolk as are literate men of other fellowships of the city to the great discredit of this fellowship.

Literacy thus was helpful to the apprentice in understanding legal documents. It aided him in his comprehension and his ability to learn quickly and accurately. It also positioned him as a respectable man, alongside lawyers, clergy, and other educated gentlemen. Literacy was a learning aid, a practical tool, and a means of social aspiration.

The levels of effort and investment that citizens ploughed into education rose from the fourteenth century through to the sixteenth century. Learning started in the household: first in the parental home, and later during a period of service to another household.¹³ At around the same time, many had some amount of formal schooling, whether in the prestigious grammar schools or the less formal ‘song’ and ‘dame’ schools.¹⁴ Fourteenth-century candidates likely would have been apprenticed at around the ages of 13-14, and a minimum term of seven years was instituted late in the century.¹⁵ In order to have both

¹² Quoted in C. Barron, ‘The Expansion of Education in Fifteenth-century London’, in J. Blair and B. Golding (eds.), *The Cloister and the World*, (Oxford, 1996), pp. 219-245, 224-5.

¹³ For an overview, see M. Bennett, ‘Education and Advancement’, in R. Horrox (ed.), *Fifteenth-Century Attitudes*, (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 79-96; and R. Horrox, ‘Service’, *ibid.*, pp. 61-78.

¹⁴ See Barron, ‘Expansion of Education’; see also Hanawalt, *Growing Up*, Ch. 5.

¹⁵ Hanawalt, *Growing Up*, pp. 155, 183.

schooling and a service period before the age of fourteen, attendance at school cannot have been lengthy. There was little time for the extensive training in letters and literature that would cause a merchant to be ‘held in esteem...by lords and gentlefolk’; this sort of education was confined to a small elite of men such as Arnold Fitz-Thedmar or Andrew Horn.¹⁶ Thus, the prevailing culture of education in the fourteenth century would have promoted practical skills and functional literacy, with most citizens receiving very little non-vocational education.

London civic education became lengthier over the next two centuries. The Mercers instituted 16 as the minimum age of recruitment by the mid-fifteenth century.¹⁷ Sixteenth-century records allow better statistical data: in the 1580s the mean age of recruitment across all companies was 17.98 and in the 1590s it was 17.89.¹⁸ The average age of recruitment was, therefore, rising, from around 14 in the fourteenth century to around 18 in the sixteenth century.¹⁹ This probably enabled apprentices to spend more years in school, which in turn would have allowed some apprentice candidates to gain greater literacy and literary competence.²⁰ Indeed, the number of registered grammar schools in the city expanded from three to five in the first half of the fifteenth century, and Barron’s research has shown that the number of unlicensed grammar schools expanded illicitly to meet demand.²¹ However, the changes to apprenticeship were about more than just schooling: terms of apprenticeship also lengthened. The Mercers set a minimum term of ten years (thus making 26 the minimum age at enfranchisement) by the mid-fifteenth century, and the Grocers set a minimum age of freedom of twenty-five in the late fifteenth century.²²

¹⁶ Barron, ‘Expansion of Education’, pp. 224-5.

¹⁷ Thrupp, *Merchant Class*, p. 193.

¹⁸ P. Wallis, C. Webb and C. Minns, ‘Leaving Home and Entering Service: the Age of Apprenticeship in Early Modern London’, *Continuity and Change*, 25:3, (2010), pp. 377-404.

¹⁹ Hanawalt, *Growing Up*, pp. 155 and 331 end note no. 13.

²⁰ *Ibid.* p. 155.

²¹ Barron, ‘Expansion of Education’, pp. 229-232.

²² Thrupp, *Merchant Class*, p. 193.

This policy was eventually generalised: a blanket minimum age of 24 for admission as a citizen was set for London in 1556 and was established by statute across England in 1563.²³ Contracts lasting for as many as twelve years (which could include both schooling and apprenticeship) became increasingly common.²⁴ Even after such a lengthy contract, young citizens were still bound to work for several years more as a ‘bachelor’ or ‘yeoman’ before gaining the right to marry or set up an independent business.²⁵ The young men of London were, therefore, receiving more education: more years of schooling and more years of household-based training.

In the fourteenth century, apprenticeship had been a late stage of childhood: if a candidate was recruited aged fourteen and served for seven years then they could be a fully enfranchised citizen by the age of twenty-one, or twenty-three if they also served as a bachelor. By the sixteenth century, apprenticeship had become a period of early adulthood: if a candidate was apprenticed aged seventeen, they served a ten-year term and then a two-year bachelorhood, then they would gain the full rights of a householder and citizen only at the age of twenty-nine. The education of citizens had dramatically lengthened: with full qualification in their late twenties, the training of a London citizen had more in common with modern doctors or architects than it does with today’s entrepreneurs or business leaders. In terms of the sheer quantity of time invested, London citizens were amongst the most educated people of their time. Nonetheless, when compared to their well-educated contemporaries, it is striking how much of their learning occurred in a domestic setting. Merchants and craftsmen were trained by apprenticeships in citizen households and thus could not access the external formal educational institutions which were important to other groups of highly educated gentlemen, namely the universities, inns of court and

²³ S. Rappaport, *Worlds Within Worlds*, (Cambridge, 1989), pp. 232-4.

²⁴ Hanawalt, *Growing Up*, pp. 184, 267-8; Thrupp, *Merchant Class*, p. 159.

²⁵ Rappaport, *Worlds Within Worlds*, p. 327.

theological schools.²⁶ A service period, apprenticeship and bachelorhood tied most citizens to a household-based education as late as the age of 26-30. Citizens had a lengthy education, but it had a more domestic character compared to other educated gentlemen. They were often well-educated, but relatively little schooled.

Although apprentices were often adults, they continued to have a child-like legal status: most notably, apprentices and bachelors could not marry or set up households. Contracts typically specified that apprentices were to stay away from taverns and brothels and have no sexual relations.²⁷ This elongated adolescence could cause social tensions, with apprentices increasingly prone to the vices of young, transient and unmarried men: drunkenness, violence, illicit marriage, rebellion, bastardy and prostitution. Thus when the *Great Chronicle* remarked that the rioters who harried immigrants in 1492 consisted of ‘covenanta servauntis and apprentyzis and not oon howsholder of theym alle’, it was their youth, rootlessness and lack of independence that marked them out.²⁸ By contrast, the mayor summoned a force of ‘honest howsholders’ to put them down, men defined by their wealth, responsibility and participation in government.²⁹ The chronicler presented this incident as a triumph of domestic order over disenfranchised, youthful disorder.

This was not, however, purely a class conflict, in which masters could crush apprentices by force. Rather it was a conflict of generations: apprentices were today subordinates, but would in the future become citizens, and participants in civic government. The city needed to discipline the apprentices and restrict their conduct, but it also needed to foster their capacity to govern themselves and others. As has already been mentioned, the Goldsmiths claimed in their 1469 statute that literacy aided a person’s comprehension and ability to

²⁶ *Gregory’s Chronicle*, pp. 228-32 narrated a dispute in the St Paul’s theological school in detail: lay access to such schools could be debatable.

²⁷ Hanawalt, *Growing Up*, p. 182.

²⁸ *Great Chronicle*, p. 249.

²⁹ *Ibid.* p. 249.

learn.³⁰ An apprentice cohort which was older and more literate was not just a challenge: it was also an opportunity, because of their capacity to learn quickly and to use written sources. Masters, householders and governors of London increasingly turned to the written word as a medium of instruction. The expansion of courtesy books and conduct manuals in the fifteenth century has been widely noted by historians.³¹ More broadly, we can see the expansion of London's domestic literate culture – including the production of commonplace books and chronicles – as consonant with a greater programme to form and reform the young through writing. The transient youth needed to be given a greater sense of place, belonging and identity in London. Chronicles and historical literature were vital parts of this culture of instruction.

4.3: Uses of the Past in Household Education

The citizen household was thus a vital institution within civic culture, which deserves to be recognized as a creative force in historical culture alongside the corporation, guilds, churches and other public institutions discussed in chapter two. Households were tasked with training children and apprentices to become future citizens, a vital task that enabled the city to reproduce itself over time. Learners needed to be trained – vocationally, morally, religiously and politically – to become good citizens. The remainder of this

³⁰ Barron, 'Expansion of Education', pp. 224-5.

³¹ E.g. Foster, 'Courtesy to Urbanity'; Meal, 'Middle English Romance of *Ipomedon*'; Lindenbaum, 'London Texts and Literate Practice', pp. 294, 304; Seaman, 'Late Medieval Conduct Literature'; and for a provincial example, see M. Johnston, 'Mercantile Gentility in Cambridge, University Library MS. Ff.2.38', in F. Somerset and N. Watson (eds.), *Truth and Tales: Cultural Mobility and Medieval Media*, (Columbus, 2015), pp. 134-150.

chapter examines the educational literature owned by households and considers the role of history within this domestic educational culture.

A good case study for educational literature is the Grocer Richard Walker (*d.* 1491), whose household leaves us two educational books of varying character.³² One is Bodleian MS Lat. misc. d.69, which contains Walker's signature, (ff. 3r and 7r).³³ The manuscript contains a treatise on conveyancing (ff. 7r-29r) written by the London Scrivener and master of a business school at Oxford, William Kingsmill.³⁴ To this have been added useful items including legal documents, (ff. 24-30), multiplication aids (4r-6r), and medical remedies (41r). The flyleaves exhibit voluminous evidence of household instruction: an alphabet has been laid out in a confident hand on 2r, and then copied beneath, repeatedly, in a shakier hand. It also contains numerous pen trials, practice documents, and repeated writing out of lines (1r-3r), which are typical of learners practising their business hands. There is some slender evidence of historical culture in this book: on folio 38r, a user has written out the names of the kings of England twice, first in chronological and then in reverse chronological order, as if they were attempting to memorise them. This has parallels in other legal manuscripts: Alderman Thomas Carleton included a mnemonic for the name of kings in his cartulary (BL, Add. MS 38181, fol. 1v); and Alderman Richard Tylney added a king list to his formulary (BL, Harley 3352, fol. 5r).³⁵ Knowing the names and orders of English kings could perhaps help in dating or interpreting charters, or may simply have been considered general knowledge.

A second manuscript also bears Walker's signature, namely CUL, MS GG.1.34(2), a copy of the *Dicts and Sayings of the Philosophers*, which provides short vernacular summaries

³² See 'PROB 11/10/320', *Discovery*, <https://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/details/r/D981196> (24-10-2019).

³³ 'MS. Lat. Misc. d. 69', *MMOL*, https://medieval.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/catalog/manuscript_6619 (24-10-2019).

³⁴ On Kingsmill's school, see Barron, 'Expansion of Education', p. 225.

³⁵ Kleineke, 'Carleton's Book'; on Tylney, see Scott, 'Past Ownership', p. 164.

of Biblical prophets and Greek philosophers.³⁶ It contains the signatures of two Grocers, Richard Walker (19v) and Robert Mason (89r). Another owner was William Averell (3r), an Elizabethan London schoolmaster, which indicates that it continued to be used to aid instruction.³⁷ Users have circled, underlined and marked numerous passages concerning the importance of education. On 57v, users marked the sentiment that severe chastisement turns children away from learning; on 58r, they bracketed a passage arguing that old men should remain willing to learn, even from those younger than them. There are two annotations on folio 84r: one marking the sentiment that fathers give their children temporal life, but a good tutor can give his charge eternal life. The other marked an observation that over-long lectures by teachers will bore students. An early sixteenth-century hand has, above a letter of Darius to Alexander (71v), written 'Kyng of England' directly above the name of Darius: presumably, users were drawing political parallels with the Hellenistic past, although the precise meaning is elusive. These additions indicate that the users sought advice from this book on how to educate themselves, or perhaps those under their care; it is feasible, but not certain, that the Darius passage was used in some sort of political discussion.

Walker's books illustrate two important facts. The first is that household reading encompassed the vocational activities which accompanied apprenticeship, but could also include a liberal arts education with classical, ethical, moral and literary aspects. The second is that Walker's books display an interest in the past, even though he did not write or own a chronicle. Users memorised the sequence of the kings of England. They engaged with classical culture and viewed ancient philosophers as examples of good practice in

³⁶ CUL, MS GG.1.34(2); see Scott, 'Past Ownership', p. 184; *The Dicts and Sayings of the Philosophers*, ed. C. Bühler, EETS, o. s., 211, (1941); concerning this manuscript, see *ibid.* xxvi.

³⁷ W. Burns, 'Averell, William (bap. 1556, d. 1605)', *ODNB*, <https://ezproxy-prd.bodleian.ox.ac.uk:4563/10.1093/ref:odnb/40543> (02-04-2019).

education. They may have used historical comparisons to draw contemporary political observations.

When it comes to understanding the role of the past in domestic education, chronicles are a necessary source but are not sufficient: we also need to consider the wider culture of instruction. The remainder of this chapter will examine some of the main forms of instructional literature which were read in London households. Four important genres which blended instruction with uses of the past will be discussed: namely, conduct manuals; exemplary narratives; hagiography; and governance manuals. This is by no means an exhaustive list: these are merely four common genres which had self-consciously didactic purposes and made some use of the past. These genres did much to inform and shape the instructional culture of the household. As chronicles were received, written, edited, continued and rewritten within London households, they took on some of the educational concerns inherent in these other genres. Chronicles bent to meet the needs of the educational culture of households.

4.3.1: Conduct Books: History and Manners

The Goldsmiths' ordinance stated that education was vital to becoming worthy of the respect of 'lords and gentlefolk': learners needed to become respectable in the eyes of society. This task was most directly pursued by conduct manuals, which are also one of the only genres self-consciously addressed to children.³⁸ Conduct manuals were a diverse

³⁸ Foster, 'Courtesy to Urbanity'; Seaman, 'Late Medieval Conduct Literature'; K. Ashley and R. Clark, 'Medieval Conduct: Texts, Theories, Practices', in K. Ashley and R. Clark (eds.) *Medieval Conduct*, (Minneapolis, 2001), ix-xx.

group of didactic texts: some focused on girls and others on boys; many focused on manners and courtesy, particularly at mealtimes; another group focused on comportment during hunting or hawking; and finally a more heterogeneous group focused on personal ethics. London examples of texts aimed at women include TCC, R.3.19 (*How the Goodwife Taught her Daughter*, IMEV 671) and Bodleian Inc-A-054 (*Book of the Knight of the Tower*).³⁹ Of those addressed to boys and their mealtime conduct, the most common was the Middle English *Stans Puer ad Mensam* (IMEV 2233), present in London manuscripts including Balliol 354, Rawlinson Poet. 32, Rawlinson C.86, Bodleian Ashmole 59, BL, Harley 2251, and BL, Add. MS 5467.⁴⁰ Works with a similar focus included the *Book of Courtesy* (IMEV 1919: Balliol 354, 1.37); John Russell's *Book of Nurture* (IMEV 1514) in Chetham's 8009 and Sloane 2027 (1.35 and 2.12); and *The Little Children's Little Book* (IMEV 1920), which is found in Balliol 354 and Egerton 1995 (1.37 and 1.13), and had been printed twice by 1500.⁴¹ Other short texts focused on the related practices of hawking, hunting and feasting: these are common in civic historical manuscripts (e.g. Lambeth 491; Egerton 1995; Lambeth 306; Harley 541).⁴²

Others focused more on ethics, personal conduct and how to be a good householder.

Precepts in -ly, (IMEV 324, 317 and 3087) were a loosely related group of ethical manuals; witnesses include Harley 2252, Egerton 1995, Balliol 354 (1.27, 1.13, 1.37), Lansdowne 762, Ashmole 59 and Huntington HM 744.⁴³ A version adapted for the use of

³⁹ See above, p. 113 (TCC, R.3.19); Bodleian Inc-A-054(1) contains indentures of 'Ricardum Story Cyvem et Fishmonger' and 'John Smythe of London sederler'; see 'A-054', *Bod-Inc Online*, <http://incunables.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/record/A-054> (25-10-2019).

⁴⁰ See Appendix 1.37, 2.26, 3.13; see above pp. 106-107 (Ashmole 59), 108 (Harley 2251), 110 (BL, Add. MS 5467).

⁴¹ 'The Little Children's Little Book', printed as *A Lytell Treatyses for to Lerne Englysshe and Frensshe*, (Wynkyn de Worde: Westminster, 1497) and (Richard Pynson: London, c. 1500).

⁴² Lambeth MS 491 ff. 287r-290v, see App. 2.16; Lambeth MS 306, ff. 166r-177v, App. 1.32; BL, Egerton 1995 ff. 55v-7v, 63r-64v, App. 1.13; BL, Harley MS 541, f. 225r, App. 1.23.

⁴³ On Huntington MS HM 744, see 'Filer/Fyler, Thomas' in Scott, 'Past Ownership', p. 160. See above, pp. 106-107 (Ashmole 59), 108 (Lansdowne 762).

apprentices and young men of ‘this city’ (IMEV 596) was included in Huntington HM 140.⁴⁴ Also common was the *ABC of Aristotle*, (IMEV 4155, 3793), which similarly focused on personal ethics, and occurs in TCD, 509, Harley 541 (1.10, 1.23), TCC, O.2.53, and BL, Harley 1304.⁴⁵ Less common were *A Father’s Counsel to His Son* (IMEV 432: Harley 2252, 1.27), and *How the Wise Man Taught His Son*, (IMEV 1891: Balliol 354, 1.37). For household management advice, Londoners could turn to *St Bernard’s Principles of Household Economy* (Lambeth 306, 1.36).⁴⁶ A mixture of courtesy with ethical and household advice could be found in Jacques Legrand’s *Livre de Bonnes Meurs*. It was translated into English twice: first by London manuscript entrepreneur John Shirley (BL, Add. 5467); later as William Caxton’s *Book of Good Manners*, at the request of London Mercer William Pratt.⁴⁷ Conduct manuals and historiography frequently appeared together: they are co-located with London chronicles on seven occasions.⁴⁸ They co-locate with Lydgate’s *Verses on the Kings of England* on six occasions, and the *Brut* on four.⁴⁹ Thus, many of the manuscripts which contain chronicles also include texts which were written with the needs of young, mostly male, household dependents in mind.

Some (though by no means all) conduct manuals made use of historical examples. Caxton’s *Book of Good Manners* cited the bible, ‘holy sayntes, doctours, phylosophres & poetes’ as the authorities on courtesy.⁵⁰ It illustrated many of its points with philosophical

⁴⁴ On the ownership of this book by William Marshall, Armorer, see J. Boffey, ‘Household Reading for Londoners? Huntington Library MS HM 140’, in E. New and C. Steer (eds.), *Medieval Londoners*, (London, 2019), pp. 55-70.

⁴⁵ See above, p. 110 (TCC, O.2.53); Scott, ‘Past Ownership’, p. 160 (John Hall, Harley 1304).

⁴⁶ Lambeth 306, ff. 64r-65r, see ‘Proverbys of Howsold-kepyng’, ed. F. Furnivall, *Political, Religious and Love Poems*, EETS, o. s., 15, (1866), pp. 29-33.

⁴⁷ See above, p. 110 (BL, Add. 5467); B. Lindström, ‘The English Versions of Jacques Legrand’s *Livre de Bonnes Meurs*’, *Library*, Ser. 6, 1:3, (1979), pp. 247-54.

⁴⁸ Lambeth 306; Balliol 354; Harley 2252; Egerton 1995; Harley 541; Chetham’s 8009; TCD, 509.

⁴⁹ ‘*Verses*’: BL, Egerton 1995; BL, Harley 2251; Lambeth 306; Bodleian, Rawlinson C.86; Bodleian, Ashmole 59; BL, Lansdowne 762. *The Brut*: Lambeth 306; Lambeth 491; Bodleian, Rawl. Poet. 32; BL, Sloane 2027.

⁵⁰ *Prologues of Caxton*, pp. 99-100.

quotations or else with *exempla* drawn from biblical or classical history. Users could, for instance, model their household practice on that of the Emperor Octavian:

Polycrate recyteth... that the Emperour Octavyan made his sonnes to be taught and t'excercise feates chyvalrous; And his daughters he made to be taught to werke wull, to that ende that they myght lyve by theyr labour in caas that fortune faylled theym.⁵¹

The *Book of Manners* was, however, a particularly lengthy and complex example of the genre, which contained advice for adults as well as children. The simplest courtesy books – those most clearly aimed at children – eschewed historical storytelling in favour of brief allusions. The dominant advice offered in most conduct texts was that young readers should submit to the authority of their elders and follow their examples. For instance, the *Little Babies' Book* divided mankind into 'hem of elde that ben expert/ in governaunce, nurture and honeste' on the one hand, and stubbornly wilful children on the other.⁵²

Conduct books typically taught respect for contemporary authority figures, such as parents, and encouraged younger people to watch and imitate their elders. The distinction between old and young could be amplified by citing great figures of the religious or classical past as authorities: the *ABC of Aristotle* claimed a Greek lineage in its title; other texts stated that courtesy was brought to earth by the angel Gabriel and given to Mary; and *St Bernard's Principles* was attributed to Bernard of Clairvaux.⁵³ Young readers were therefore conditioned to view older and aged figures as authoritative and worthy of imitation, long before they began to read histories or classical texts. Conduct books did not always directly use history, but their approach taught respect for authority figures, precedent, and the past.

⁵¹ *A Book of Good Manners*, (William Caxton: London, 1487), bk. 4, Ch. 11.

⁵² 'Little Babies' Book', in *Early English Meals and Manners*, ed. F. Furnivall, EETS, o. s., 32, (1868), p. 250.

⁵³ 'ABC of Aristotle', in *Early English Meals*, p. 5. On Gabriel, see the 'Little Children's Little Book', *ibid.* p. 9; and 'Young Children's Book'. *ibid.* p. 12; on St Bernard, see 'Proverbys of Howsholde-kepyng'.

A thematic connection between historical writing and conduct texts can be seen in BL, Add. MS 5467, a manuscript which contains a chronicle (*The Death of the Kings of Scots*) and which has been suggested above to have been owned by a London citizen.⁵⁴ It contains ‘*Stans Puer ad Mensam*’, (67-68v), as well as John Shirley’s version of *Livre de Bonnes Meurs*, (97-211).⁵⁵ Other texts within the manuscript employed a distinctive ‘courteous’ sense of the past, blending an antiquarian sensibility with an interest in contemporary fine living. One text purported to be the dietary regime of Henry V during his French campaigns (ff. 71r-v). A treatise on the plague is attributed to the ‘gretteste docturs of ffisike amonges th’unyversite of Cristen nacions yn the tyme of Sante Thomas of Caunturbury’, (ff. 85-7). There are three medical texts on bloodletting, of which two are attributed to the authorship of St Bede and the other to ‘Cal[i]xstes Antioche’, a surgeon and astronomer of Constantinople (ff. 69v-71). The manuscript ends with an incomplete rendition of John Shirley’s translation of the *Secretum Secretorum* (ff. 211-224), which purports to be Aristotle’s curriculum for the young Alexander the Great.⁵⁶ The manuscript also contains a cookbook (ff. 23-66v), which has a detailed and practical index which Carrie Griffin has suggested indicates that it was compiled for use, not merely as recreational reading.⁵⁷ In place of a prologue, the compiler has added two menus from feasts held by Richard II. One was dated with precision to an occasion at the hall of the Bishop of Durham in London held to honour Richard II and John of Gaunt on 23rd September 1397.⁵⁸ I am aware of two other cookbooks which contained historic royal menus: one of these is BL, Harley 4016, which contains several of the same recipes as BL, Add. 5467.⁵⁹ The other is Durham University Library MS Cosin V.iii.11 (fol. 1r), which is

⁵⁴ See above, p. 110.

⁵⁵ Lindström, ‘The English Versions’, pp. 247-54.

⁵⁶ On such texts, see below, pp. 168-169.

⁵⁷ Griffin, ‘Reconsidering the Recipe’, p. 148.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ *Two Fifteenth-century Cookery Books*, ed. T. Austin, EETS, o. s., 91, (1888), pp. 67-8.

unrelated; it attributed some of its recipes to ‘Johanna Hamme de London’, (78v) and ‘Wymundum Mounteney’ citizen and vintner of London (82v) and thus may also have had a civic context.⁶⁰ In each of these three cookbooks, the menus positioned historic kings as exemplars of good culinary practice: kings provided an example to which the citizen can, on his more limited budget, only aspire. Therefore, this manuscript contains many texts on personal comportment which attribute their advice to courtiers and kings from across history, from the time of Alexander the Great through to Henry V. The manuscript provided a comprehensive programme of living which encompassed diet, health, manners and education and which allowed the reader to adopt a lifestyle fitting for a court-connected gentleman. An interest in the great rulers of history blended seamlessly with a fascination with manners and courtesy.

Ceremony and pageantry are pervasive within London chronicles – indeed, so pervasive that some have expressed weariness at their ‘long and immensely detailed descriptions of ceremonies and pageants’.⁶¹ It would thus labour the point to list every example of pageantry included in the corpus. An interesting case study can be seen within the *Great Chronicle*, which is consistently interested in ceremonial. It, for example, incorporates primary sources such as the seating plans for the coronations of Catherine of Valois and Henry VI, John Lydgate’s verse description of the 1432 Triumphal entry, the scripts from Catherine of Aragon’s 1501 civic entry, and many other accounts of royal feasts and ceremonies.⁶² The incorporation of these primary sources indicates that written accounts of these events were in circulation: this thesis has already noted that the Guildhall and

⁶⁰ See ‘DUL, MS Cosin V.III.11’, *Durham Special Collections*, <https://www.dur.ac.uk/library/asc/theme/medmss/apviii11/> (24-10-2019).

⁶¹ J. R. Lander, *Conflict and Stability in Fifteenth-century England*, 2nd edition, (London, 1974), pp. 13-4.

⁶² *Great Chronicle*, pp. 94-5, 115-9, 152-4, 173-5, 297-316; for miscellaneous other ceremonies, see *ibid.* 228-9, 251-2, 254, 254-6, 262, 274, 283, 288-9, 321-2, 322-3, 329, 331, 339-343, etc.

College of Arms each produced descriptions of ceremonial events.⁶³ Additionally, from the first decade of the sixteenth century onwards, Richard Pynson began to print accounts of public ceremonies such as royal marriages.⁶⁴

It was not merely a question of an expanding supply of ceremonial accounts: historical writing also responded to audience demand. The users of the *Great Chronicle* added to its wealth of pageant detail. One added an account of jousts from 1389.⁶⁵ An interpolator expanded the account of Queen Katherine's wedding to Henry V by inserting a short description of her reception into London.⁶⁶ Another noted the 1465-6 regulations against excessive length and curvature of shoes.⁶⁷ These additions suggest that the readers of the *Great Chronicle* hungered for details on fashion, pageantry and feasting. Just as the readers of BL, Add. 5467 brought an antiquarian sensibility to their conduct texts, the readers of the *Great Chronicle* sometimes approached the chronicle with an antiquarian interest in ceremonial and courtly detail.

Accounts of royal ceremonies set a 'courteous' tone, but they would have had limited usefulness as conduct examples. Merchants could imitate courtly dining on a more modest budget, but they did not hold Triumphal entries for themselves; such accounts could, perhaps, have informed the culture of civic mumblings and pageantry or aided in the organisation of royal events in London. They also had purposes beyond the merely practical. Royal pageantry on the streets of London highlighted the relationship between the king and city. The king treated London as 'his chamber', his natural home and most loyal support; the city in return demonstrated its ideological, financial and cultural support

⁶³ See above, pp. 29-30, 35-39.

⁶⁴ On Pynson, see: C. Baskervill, 'William Lily's Verse for the Entry of Charles V into London', *The Huntington Library Bulletin*, 9, (1936), pp. 1-14, 7; Boffey, *Manuscript and Print*, pp. 92-8.

⁶⁵ *Great Chronicle*, p. 46.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.* p. 115.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.* p. 203.

of the king.⁶⁸ An interesting case study can be seen in the life and book-ownership of Mayor Matthew Philip (1463/4). Philip was probably the owner of Harley 565, a manuscript that contains a London chronicle. Although this book contained no conduct manuals, some short educational maxims have been added by users. One wrote ‘With reste and pees,/A man schal best encrees’ within the chronicle; and several educational Latin epigrams have been written on the rear flyleaves, which stressed financial moderation and that virtue needed to be learned and could not be inherited.⁶⁹ This book provided the reader with several examples of royal-civic pageantry, notably John Lydgate’s 1432 *Triumphal Entry of Henry VI*. It also contained *Henry V’s Expedition Into France*, a verse chronicle which began with a ceremony between mayor and king on Henry’s exit from England and ended with a description of the post-Agincourt triumphal entry into London. Harley 565 thus contained three descriptions of ceremonies which featured the king and the mayor acting together in partnership, aside from the many such ceremonies described in the London chronicles. Philip thus had at his hand several examples of past ceremonies which expressed royal-civic partnership.

In his term as mayor, Matthew Philip boycotted the feast of the Sergeants of the Coif because, in the absence of the king, the attendants did not reserve the seat of honour for him. The incident was described in detail in *Gregory’s Chronicle* and also in an unfinished record narrative in Letter-book L: the latter represented an ‘official’ civic view of the event. The Letter-book narrative opened with a laudatory comparison which stated that London was owed greater honour than Venice or Genoa because of its greater age and illustrious royal foundation: the city was portrayed as gaining its prestige from its antiquity and its close connections to royalty.⁷⁰ *Gregory’s Chronicle* used the story to illustrate the

⁶⁸ For more on this relationship, see below, Chapter 5, particularly pp. 200-201.

⁶⁹ *A Chronicle of London*, p. 122; BL, Harley 565, ff. 125v-126v.

⁷⁰ *CLB L*, pp. 11, 7.

point that ‘with yn London he [the mayor] ys next unto the kyng in alle maner thyng’: by refusing to acknowledge that the mayor was the king’s deputy and give that status its due ceremonial form, the sergeants had insulted the city.⁷¹ The most detailed chronicle accounts, therefore, interpreted this event as having a bearing on the relationship between the city and the king: in the Letter-book, the city is owed greater prestige due to its historic relationship with the king; and in *Gregory’s Chronicle* the mayor demanded to be treated as the king’s deputy. Matthew Philip was, through his ceremonial actions, ensuring that the correct royal-mayoral relationship was kept and publicly acknowledged.

Thus, across the chronicles that Mayor Philip owned, commissioned and was portrayed in, there is a common attitude to royal ceremonies: the city of London gained great cultural prestige from its royal origins and its continual role in royal ceremonies and pageantry. While royal pageants showcased the splendour of the king, they also reflected light onto the magnificence of the mayor and the city. The mayor and civic elite gained prestige and splendour by acting in courtly fashions which situated them in cultural proximity to the royal court; the emphasis in Harley 565 on royal pageantry within the city of London thus set a tone of civic and courtly magnificence which was important in inspiring the conduct of London’s rulers.

McLaren has suggested that the chroniclers’ obsession with ceremonial and its associated visual culture are signs of ‘writers struggling with the transition from an oral and visual culture to a literate one’.⁷² This section has suggested alternative explanations. Pageantry provided models of courtly and polite conduct which could provide positive formation for the manners of London youths. They also provided a means of engaging with kingship. Conduct manuals and chronicles were parallel and sometimes overlapping means through

⁷¹ *Gregory’s Chronicle*, p. 223.

⁷² McLaren, *London Chronicles*, pp. 51-64.

which London citizens engaged with the king and royal court. Citizens adopted codes of conduct which were suited to courtly men and turned to conduct manuals and courtesy books to aid them in this quest. There was nothing pre-literate about this interest in ceremonies and spectacle: indeed, it was enabled by the written conduct texts, record narratives of ceremonies, and the widespread adoption of written historiography. By adopting court-inspired manners and by reading about court ceremonies, Londoners expressed their relationship to the king, court and elite of England: the question of the relationship between the city and the king will be examined in more detail in Chapter 5 of this thesis.

4.3.2: Exemplary Literature: History and Morality

Household education needed not only to teach normative codes of action but also to instil ethical principles. The simplest written genre that was used for moral education was exemplary literature, which here describes both the *exemplum* and the variety of literary genres that derived from it. An *exemplum* was a form of anecdotal evidence that was frequently used in sermons: Daniel Jones has defined *exempla* as

plausible stories, drawn from literary sources or from life, which are used to seize the attention of a preacher's audience and illustrate a moral or theological point, usually by delivering a salutary lesson.⁷³

Some *exempla* were drawn from classical or historical sources, others from hagiography.⁷⁴

Exempla were thus linked to some of the authoritative genres for writing about the past.

⁷³ D. Jones, 'Introduction', *Friars' Tales: Thirteenth-century Exempla from the British Isles*, (Manchester, 2011), pp. 1-25, 1.

⁷⁴ S. Wenzel, 'The Classics in Late Medieval Preaching', in A. Welkenhuysen, H. Iraet and W. Verbeke (eds.), *Medieval Antiquity*, (Leuven, 1995), pp. 127-143.

The most common use was as an illustration of the virtues and vices. Other common forms included the ‘Wheel of Fortune’ story, which narrated the downfall of a prince as evidence of the transitory nature of worldly fame and power.⁷⁵ Similar in purpose was the *memento mori* narrative, which illustrated the inevitability of death.⁷⁶ *Exempla* were extremely popular and began to be detached from their sermon context: they were used as part of argumentation within other genres and an example from the *Book of Good Manners* has already been cited.⁷⁷ They were also used as stand-alone stories. They had a significant impact on secular literature: Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales* used John of Wales’ *exempla* collections as a source, meanwhile Gower’s *Confessio Amantis* consists of a series of *exempla* that illustrate the virtues and vices.⁷⁸ Exemplary literature had come far from its initial roots and now consisted of much more than mere didactic stories: John Lydgate’s *Serpent of Division*, for instance, is a wheel of fortune *exemplum* of the life and death of Julius Caesar, which also contained complex political, literary, providential and religious themes.⁷⁹ Both through literature and preaching, lay audiences would have been familiar with *exempla*.

Londoners were highly interested in exemplary literature. Many owned the *Gesta Romanorum*, a collection of *exempla* set in ancient Rome and Greece, although the stories were mostly fictive: Mercer William Haxey in 1460 left his copy to the cathedral; meanwhile, a Latin version in Bodleian Inc-G-144(1) (Printer of ‘Flores Sancti Augustini’:

⁷⁵ C. Vincent, ‘Wheel of Fortune’, in A. Vauchez, *Encyclopaedia of the Middle Ages*, (Oxford, 2002), <https://ezproxy-prd.bodleian.ox.ac.uk:10012/view/10.1093/acref/9780227679319.001.0001/acref-9780227679319-e-3028?rskey=iVR0DS&result=3026> (24-10-2019).

⁷⁶ On the *memento mori* in London, see A. Appleford, ‘The Dance of Death in London: John Carpenter, John Lydgate, and the *Daunce of Poulys*’, *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies*, 38:2, (2008), pp. 287-314; and for an overview, see P. Tristram, *Figures of Life and Death in Medieval English Literature*, (New York, 1976), Ch. 5.

⁷⁷ See above, p. 144.

⁷⁸ R. Pratt, ‘Chaucer and the Hand That Fed Him’, *Speculum*, 41, (1966), pp. 619-42.

⁷⁹ N. Mortimer, *John Lydgate’s ‘Fall of Prince’s: Narrative Tragedy in its Literary and Political Concerns*, (Oxford, 2005), pp. 221-2.

Cologne, c. 1472), bears a sixteenth-century inscription of ‘Edmond Perman of London [a]prentis and habberdashere’.⁸⁰ Grocer Richard Hill copied excerpts from the *Gesta* into his commonplace book (Balliol 354, pp. 9-14). An exemplary hagiographic miracle story in verse, *St Gregory’s Trental*, was popular in London: it was attested in Balliol 354 (1.34), and Lambeth MS 306 (1.32), and had been printed twice by 1515.⁸¹ Lydgate’s *Serpent of Division* was found in at least two London examples (Pepys 2006; BL, Add. 48031).⁸² Many commonplace book owners were collectors of *exempla*: John Colyn for instance collected in Harley 2252 (1.27) an *exemplum* concerning the twelfth-century knight Sir Roger Whalesborough and the true cross (50v-51v).⁸³ No commonplace book owner showed a greater commitment to historical *exempla* than Robert Bale: he copied numerous extracts into his common book from Odo of Cheriton’s *Parabola*, a twelfth-century preaching handbook, (TCD, MS 509, pp. 287-296 and MS 604 ff. 84-97). Bale collected moralised anecdotes from several historical periods: lists of English kings who became monks, narratives of the deaths of early English kings, and kings who gave gifts to St Cuthbert (268-270). He also collected miraculous stories featuring Emperor Otto III (266-7), Edward the Confessor (265, 267) and Alexander the Great (287). Bale mined the lives of great rulers for exemplary stories. *Exempla* often occurred in the same manuscripts as chronicles: I have cited four instances where exemplary narrative co-locate with a London chronicle (TCC, 509, Lambeth 306, Balliol 354, Harley 2252). Thus, two methods of storytelling about the past often existed in proximity: how far did they influence each other?

⁸⁰ Sutton, ‘Acquisition and Disposal’, p. 111; ‘G-144’, *Bod-Inc Online*, <http://incunables.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/record/G-144> (25-10-2019).

⁸¹ *Life of St Gregory’s Mother*, (Richard Pynson: London, 1501), (Wynkyn de Worde: London, 1515).

⁸² See above, pp. 105 (BL, Add. 48031), 113 (Pepys 2006).

⁸³ H. Jenner and T. Taylor, ‘The Legend of the Church of the Holy Cross in Cornwall’, *Journal of the Royal Institution of Cornwall*, 20, (1917), pp. 295-309.

An old commonplace, often found in book prologues, suggested that historians should provide moral instruction to their readers. This was limited neither to London nor to the fifteenth century. Bede, for instance, made moral claims concerning his *Historia*:

...if history relates good things of good men, the attentive hearer is excited to imitate that which is good; or if it recounts evil things of wicked persons, none the less the conscientious and devout hearer or reader, shunning that which is hurtful and wrong, is the more earnestly fired to perform those things which he knows to be good...⁸⁴

Sir John Fortescue noted approvingly that, in the Inns of Court, trainee lawyers applied themselves ‘to the reading...of holy scripture and of chronicles.’⁸⁵ Through this reading, they inculcated virtue and banished vice (‘Ibi quippe disciplina virtutum est et viviorum omnium relegacio’).⁸⁶ Fortescue thus placed chronicle-reading alongside bible-reading as an effective path to virtue. It was, thus, a widespread medieval trope that reading history and the pursuit of virtue were closely linked.

This commonplace was reproduced in several of William Caxton’s prologues to his classical, historical and literary texts. Caxton frequently quoted Romans 15:4, which stated that all writings are ‘wryton to our doctryne’, *i.e.* readers should seek moral instruction in all literary works.⁸⁷ The preface attached to his life of Charlemagne stated that it was difficult to understand doctrine if it was set in the universal terms of ‘symple auctoryte’, but it was much easier if presented through specific examples which appealed to the ‘ymagynacion local’: ‘hy hystoryes’ were ideal for moral instruction.⁸⁸ Past actions contained moral messages:

the thynges passed dyversly reduced to remembraunce engendre in us correction of unlaful lyf; For the werkes of the auncient and olde peple ben for to gyve to us

⁸⁴ Bede, ‘Preface’, *Bede’s Ecclesiastical History*, p. 1.

⁸⁵ John Fortescue, *De Laudibus Legum Angliae*, ed./trans. S. Chrimes, (Cambridge, 1942), p. 119.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

⁸⁷ *E.g. Prologues of Caxton*, p. 95.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

ensaumple to lyve in good & vertuous operacions, digne & worthy of helth in folowyng the good, and eschewyng the evyl.⁸⁹

Caxton suggested that the past can be read as a series of stories, in which good was rewarded and evil punished. The Charlemagne preface followed a French source, but Caxton expressed similar sentiments in his own words in other prefaces. The *Polychronicon* argued that society owed praise to historians, who ‘gretely have prouffytedoure mortal lyf, that shewe unto the readers and herers by the ensamples of thynges passyd, what thyng is to be desyred, and what is to be eschewed’.⁹⁰ The preface to the *Morte d’Arthur* instructed readers to:

take the good and honest actes in their remembraunce and to folowe the same, wherein they shalle fynde many...noble & renommed actes of humanyte, gentylnesse and chyvalryes. For herein may be seen noble chivalrye, curtosye, humanyte, frendlynnesse, hardynesse, love, frendshyp, cowardyse, murdre, hate, vertue, and synne. Doo after the good and leve the evyll, and it shal brynge you to good fame and renommee’.⁹¹

Both history and pseudo-historical romance were conceptualised as containing a series of exemplary stories, written for the moral edification of readers. Caxton – and also the commonplaces of the day – encouraged readers to see historical literature and moral *exempla* as linked in theme and purpose.

On occasion, chronicles incorporated passages into their texts which resemble *exempla*. Arnold Fitz-Thedmar used the commonplaces of the *exemplum* to justify his vituperative and negative account of the mayoralty of Thomas Fitz-Thomas;

The deeds and works of good men are reduced to writing so that, to their praise and endless glory, they may be handed down to the memory of posterity; and in like manner ought the cruelties, the malice, the perfidy, and the wickedness of the iniquitous, to be put in writing so that, to their disgrace, reproach, and dishonour, the same may, in future times, unto the whole world be notified.⁹²

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

⁹⁰ *Ibid.* p. 64.

⁹¹ *Ibid.* pp. 94-5.

⁹² *Chronicles of the Mayors and Sheriffs*, p. 119.

Later chroniclers sometimes inserted similar passages which addressed the reader in explicitly exemplary terms. *Gregory's Chronicle* contained an anti-Lollard *exemplum* in which heretical church-breakers found themselves punished by miraculous divine vengeance. The didactic purpose was made clear through a direct address to religious dissidents in his audience: 'Lo, ye obstinat herytykys...here ys an exampylle grete i-nowe to converte you...God give you to a mende'.⁹³ The *Gregory Chronicler* thus self-consciously presented this anecdote as an aid for potential readers to 'a mende' their sinful lives. London chronicles contained other, mostly brief, miraculous narratives.⁹⁴ Annotators occasionally marked passages as exemplary, for instance, in the *Great Chronicle*, an anecdote about a dole for paupers given at a funeral has been marked '*exemplum pietatis*' (example of piety).⁹⁵

The most elaborate interrelationship between exemplary literature and historiography can be seen in the works of two men both educated in the household of Mayor Thomas Cook: Cook's servant, John Vale, and his apprentice, Robert Fabyan.⁹⁶ In the *Great Chronicle*, Fabyan reminisced on the religious temperament of his former master. The many hardships of Cook's life had vindicated his disdain for the material world:

This man, when he was in his moost prosperyte, wold offtyn saye: "*Good lord send to me my purgatory in this world*", whych prayer I thynk God acceptyd for concydering the grete & assiduat peyn that he hadd of the growth [gout], and this losse & trowble...I trowe hys petition was hard [by God]...⁹⁷

Fabyan presented Cook here as an exemplar of mercantile piety, although on other occasions he was critical of his master's politics and did not always treat him as exemplary.⁹⁸ Fabyan implied that Cook led a pious household, one in which he discussed

⁹³ *Gregory's Chronicle*, pp. 234-5.

⁹⁴ *Great Chronicle*, pp. 12 (St Boniface), 40 (Thomas of Lancaster), 220 (Henry VI), 332 (Our Lady of Barking).

⁹⁵ *Ibid.* p. 174.

⁹⁶ On their relationship, see above, p. 120.

⁹⁷ *Great Chronicle*, pp. 215-6.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.* pp. 204-6, 207-8, 215-6, 222.

with his apprentices not just matters of business but also purgatory and the instability of worldly wealth. Cook was presented as an *exemplum* of an ascetic sort of piety, standing for stoic virtue in the face of suffering. At least one user found Cook's philosophy to his liking and marked this passage 'verba sapientis' (words of wisdom).⁹⁹

We may be able to access something of the religious education of Cook's household through the miscellany BL, MS Harley 2251, a wide-ranging poetry collection. It may have once been part of Cook's library because it contains John Vale's monogram (fol. 170r).¹⁰⁰ One fifteenth-century hand, with the initials 'J. V.' or perhaps 'J. B.' has laid out prescriptive annotations, instructing the reader where and how to read.¹⁰¹ One poem which is addressed to 'ye that lovers be', concerning the deceits of women, has been forbiddingly marked: 'do not reade thys but hyde your eye' (149v). He annotated many of the historical tales within John Lydgate's, *Fall of Princes*, a collection of 'wheel of fortune' exemplary tales about the downfall of great magnates. Tales have been marked out either to read once ('reade this' or 'Rade & go on') or else for repeat reading ('Reade agayne & agayne' or 'Reade oftyn tymes'). Tales to be read once included Adam (81r), Jeroboam (92v), Agathocles (114r) and Candaules of Lydia (126r). Those for repeat reading included Nimrod (85v) and Saul (89v). He particularly wanted people to read the lengthy passages of moralisation which followed an *exemplum* and not just the story itself: other repeat reading passages include the moral following the story of the sack of Rome (107r); the passage against the harming of princes attached to the murder of Prince Luciano of Rome (109r); a *memento mori* moral after the tragedy of Jabin of Canaan (126r); and a discussion of the impermanence of worldly things following the fall of Troy (143r). Whilst the

⁹⁹ *Ibid.* p. 215.

¹⁰⁰ See above, p. 108.

¹⁰¹ On the annotators of this book, see F. Dallachy, 'A Study of the Manuscript Contexts of Benedict Burgh's Middle English *Distiches of Cato*', (Doctoral thesis, University of Glasgow, 2013), ii, pp. 90-1.

identity of the annotator is uncertain, his reading programme blended ancient history with a Christian understanding of the mutability of the world. This programme rejected purely secular literature (such as the poem on deceits of women); it recommended reading poems about the histories of men who fell from prosperity; and it prescribed repeated reading of the moralisation passages which gave religious interpretations of these tragedies. These passages typically used historical examples in support of Christian ideas of world rejection. In short, the annotations contain a programme of interpretation very similar to the world-rejecting sentiment attributed to Thomas Cook.

When Vale and Fabyan came to write their histories, each employed the ‘wheel of fortune’ exemplary narrative. Vale copied out John Lydgate’s *Serpent of Division* into his commonplace book, a text which used the fall of Julius Caesar as a political *exemplum* against factionalism and disorder.¹⁰² He also authored a short chronicle which interpreted the life and death of Henry VI as a tragic *exemplum*. It opened with the coronation of the king and stated that, in his early days, Henry ‘reigned in grete nobley, worship, welthe and prosperite’.¹⁰³ However, in time he fell under the influence of men ‘broughte up of noughte’, upon whose advice the King allegedly had the Duke of Gloucester murdered which was here presented as the origin of factional strife. The moralisation within this story was clear and explicit. Of bad counsellors of low birth, he said:

[Their] sinister counseill, envye and prepensed malice not aloonly caused the subvercion and falle mooste dolorous of the saide king Henry from his mooste roiall and eccellente dignite and astate, but also caused execrable many and divers grete mischefes, lossis, insurreccions and civile bataylis to th’extreme pointe of the utmost destruccion and depopulacion of subgiettes and people.¹⁰⁴

The rest of the chronicle consisted of a litany of battles and murders, from the Cade rising through the Wars of the Roses. It ended with the death of Henry VI, and a prayer for his

¹⁰² *The Serpent of Division* by John Lydgate, ed. H. Noble, (London, 1911).

¹⁰³ *Vale’s Book*, p. 178.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

soul ('upon whos soule, God take it into his moste mercy. Amen').¹⁰⁵ Although the chronicle was short and not at all detailed, the moralisation is clear: the story had a similar structure to a wheel of fortune anecdote in which a prince began in prosperity but fell from power due to a damning sin, in this case, the inversion of hierarchy by raising low born men and the alleged murder of Gloucester.

Robert Fabyan showed an interest in historical *exempla* in his works. Commenting on the death of King John, Fabyan incorporated into his *New Chronicles* a short poem of the 'wheel of fortune' variety. Its moral was that 'multa sunt flagella peccatorum' (many are the punishments of sin). It developed the premise using historical examples ('by olde storyes, it is playnly seen'), including Alexander, Julius Caesar, Pompey, Ptolemy, John of England, Philip II of France and Emperor Otto IV.¹⁰⁶ In the *Great Chronicle*, Fabyan similarly incorporated a list of five tyrants from the Old Testament who had fallen into pain and misery because of their sinful lives, with the moral 'God ffirst or last punysshith vicious synners for their grevous offencis'.¹⁰⁷ These tyrants included Nimrod, who had been marked for repeat reading by the Harley 2251 annotator. Fabyan directly imitated the wheel of fortune genre and made explicit use of historical *exempla*, although it was contained within the framework of London chronicles.

Londoners thus perceived a connection between historiography and moral instruction. This was advanced through broad ideological statements in prologues, and it came to influence authors and annotators, both consciously and unconsciously. London citizens were educated within a culture of household reading that was suffused by exemplary narratives.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.* pp. 179-80.

¹⁰⁶ *New Chronicles*, pp. 322-323.

¹⁰⁷ *Great Chronicle*, p. 351.

When they came to write history, they imported an understanding of the past that was rooted in exemplary literature.

4.3.3: Hagiography: the Sacred Past

Another genre of historical narrative which provided moral examples was hagiography: the lives of the saints, which could be told individually or as part of a collection. They were also significant sources for *exempla*. Testamentary evidence suggests that hagiography was amongst the earliest literary genres to proliferate in the city. Kathleen Scott gives several examples of ownership of ‘Legends of Saints’ in wills and inventories: John Worstede, 1368; Fishmonger John de Cantebrigge, 1376; Sheriff Richard Lyons, 1376 (inventory); Alderman Walter de Berney, 1379; Alderman Thomas Carleton, 1389; Mayor William Estfield, 1448; Calais Stapler Richard Cely, 1482 (inventory); and Draper Walter Smyth, 1538.¹⁰⁸ Further cases include: Mayor John Northampton’s *Legenda Aurea* (1397); Mason of Southwark John Clifford’s *Legenda Aurea* (1417); Mercer Hugh Brown’s vernacular ‘legend of the saints’ bequeathed to his teenage kinsman Richard Brown in 1503; and Mercer William Bromwell’s *Vitae Patrum* left to the wife of Michael Dormer.¹⁰⁹

Turning from textual archaeology to surviving books, Londoners enjoyed hagiography both in anthology collections and as standalone tales. Many prosperous households owned a *Golden Legend*, with London exemplars including: Bodleian MS Douce 372 (John Barton, Mercer, d. 1460, and his daughter, Katherine, a nun); New York, Pierpont Morgan

¹⁰⁸ Scott, ‘Past Ownership’, pp. 173, 167, 170, 166, 167, 169, 168, 172.

¹⁰⁹ E. Kim, ‘The Tailors, Drapers, and Mercers of London and the London Commissary and Husting Court Wills, 1374-1485’, (Ph.D. thesis, University of Toronto, 2015), p. 280; Barron, ‘What Did Medieval London Merchants Read?’, p. 49; Sutton, ‘Acquisition and Disposal’, pp. 104, 107.

Library 780 (John Sevens, citizen and Draper; John Perre of London); and Bodleian Inc J-060(1) (Richard Chambers, an Elizabethan Alderman).¹¹⁰ One copy of the *South English Legendary* (Bodleian Laud Misc. 108) contains signatures of the Draper Henry Perveys and Goldsmith William Rothesley (f. 238v).¹¹¹ Printed *Vitae Patrum* copy Lambeth 1495.4 was owned by Martha Fabyan, the niece of Sheriff Robert Fabyan; it also bears the inscription of London Recorder for 1545-54 Robert Broke, as well as ‘John Harryson Barbor’ and ‘John Savage de London yoman’.¹¹² John Colyn copied a text onto fol. 165r of Harley 2252 that he claimed came from the *Vitae Patrum*, although no similar text is found elsewhere: he may thus have possessed a peculiar manuscript version.¹¹³ In short, many prosperous and well-educated families in London owned hagiography collections.

Londoners read hagiography not just in collections but also as stand-alone stories. John Lydgate’s *Life of Our Lady* was amongst the most popular hagiographies in London: it was printed by Caxton in 1483, and appears in Bodley 596 (1.44); TCC, R.3.21; Ashmole 59; and BL, Harley 1304.¹¹⁴ Other Lydgatian saints’ lives were also popular in London: *Saints Edmund and Fremund* (Rawlinson B.216 and CUL, Ee.2.15); *Saints Alban and Amphibal* (Huntington HM 140); and *Life of St George* (TCC, R.3.21).¹¹⁵ Another popular hagiography was the *Three Kings of Cologne*: it was printed three times by Wynkyn de Worde (Westminster and London: 1496, 1499, 1511), and also occurs in Lambeth 491

¹¹⁰ Scott, ‘Past Ownership’, p. 166; ‘PML 780’, *Material Evidence in Incunabula*, <https://data.cerl.org/mei/02128020> (12-08-2019). ‘Bod-Inc: J-060’, *Bod-Inc Online*, <http://incunables.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/record/J-060> (12-08-2019); ‘Chambers, Richard (sixteenth century)’, *Owners of Incunabula*, <https://data.cerl.org/owners/00011794> (12-08-2019).

¹¹¹ ‘MS Laud Misc. 108’, *MMOL*, https://medieval.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/catalog/manuscript_6917 (12-08-2019).

¹¹² On Martha Fabyan, see R. Baldwin, ‘Spert, Sir Thomas d. 1541’, *ODNB*, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/52009> (25-10-2019); ‘London, Lambeth Palace Library (GB): [ZZ] 1495.4’, *Material Evidence in Incunabula*, <https://data.cerl.org/mei/02010690> (12-08-2019).

¹¹³ BL, Harley 2251, fol. 165r.

¹¹⁴ See above, pp. 106-107 (Ashmole 59), 108 (TCC, R.3.21); Scott, ‘Past Ownership’, p. 160 (John Hall, Harley 1304).

¹¹⁵ Rawlinson B.216 (Appendix 2.2); Scott, ‘Past Ownership’, p. 163 (‘E.R.’, in CUL, EE.2.15); Boffey, ‘Household Reading’ (HM 140); see above, p. 108 (TCC, R.2.21).

(2.16), TCC, R.5.43 (2.4), and Cambridge Magdalene MS Pepys 2006.¹¹⁶ Similarly popular was the hagiographic *exemplum*, *St Gregory's Trental*, which has already been discussed.¹¹⁷ A great many lives of prophets and saints occur in the context of manuscript miscellanies. A non-exhaustive list of stand-alone lives in civic miscellanies included: Adam (Hatfield MS Cecil 281, Bodleian MS Bodley 596, TCD, MS 509); Augustine of Canterbury (CUL, MS Ee.2.15); Catherine of Alexandria (Chetham MS 8009, TCC, O.9.1); Dorothy (Chetham's MS 8009), Eustace (Lambeth MS 306); James (TCC, MS O.9.1); Nicholas (CUL, Ee.2.15); Stephen (Balliol 354); Thomas Becket (Balliol 354, CUL, Ee.2.15); Ursula (Huntington HM 140); and Winifred (Printed by Caxton, 1483; Lambeth 306).¹¹⁸ As a group, these texts have little in common, including prose and verse, print and manuscript, Latin and English. The life of Becket in Balliol 354 is short, lively and was probably intended to be sung: this should remind us that there was another layer of more popular, orally-transmitted narratives about the lives of saints to which historians have only occasional access.¹¹⁹

Saints' lives suffused reading culture within the capital. Well-read households may have owned dedicated hagiographic collections, whilst both high and low-status readers collected individual lives within wider-ranging miscellanies. In seven of the examples cited above, hagiography is co-located with a London chronicle.¹²⁰ In five, it coincides with a *Brut*.¹²¹ Women also made up a significant proportion of the known owners of these manuscripts: owners have included, Katherine Barton (Douce 372), Martha Fabyan (Lambeth 1495.4) and Michael Dormer's wife; and I have elsewhere suggested female

¹¹⁶ See above, p. 113 (Pepys 2006).

¹¹⁷ See above, p. 152.

¹¹⁸ Hatfield 281 (1.11); Bodley 596 (1.44); TCD, 509 (1.10); Chetham's 8009 (1.35); TCC, O.9.1 (1.4); Lambeth 306 (1.32); Balliol 354 (1.37); Scott, 'Past Ownership', p. 163 ('E.R.', in CUL, EE.2.15); Boffey, 'Household Reading', (HM 140).

¹¹⁹ 'The Murder of Thomas Becket', *Songs*, pp. 31-2.

¹²⁰ Balliol 354, Lambeth 306, TCC, O.9.1, Bodley 596, Hatfield Cecil 281, Chetham's 8009 and TCD, 509.

¹²¹ Lambeth 306, Lambeth 491, TCC, O.9.1, TCC, R.43, and Rawlinson B.216.

possession for TCC, O.9.1, Chetham's 8009, Bodley 596 and TCC, R.3.21.¹²² The Harley 1304 copy of Lydgate's *Life of the Virgin* contains a prescriptive note next to a passage on Mary's poverty and meekness, 'A good lernyng for women & maydens' (86r).

Nonetheless, the majority of known readers of hagiography were male: many such books were probably family possessions, accessible to a male householder as well as his female dependents.

Hagiography and chronicles thus occurred frequently together and both were ways of writing about the past. The links between the two genres in the minds of their readers are attested in chronicle marginalia. The annotators of *Brut*-London chronicle manuscript, Bodleian Rawlinson B.173 left several annotations, most of which focused on matters of religious import such as the birth of Christ (21r), the conversion of Britain under Lucius (23v), Saint Ursula (27v), and the mission of St Augustine (58r). The only other annotations were for Vortigern's prophetic visions (25r-v), the prophecies of Merlin (38v-39r) and Henry V's funeral procession (224v): even these 'secular' inscriptions showed an interest in prophecy and religious ceremonies. In her examination of annotation patterns in the *Brut* corpus, Tamar Drukker has expressed puzzlement at the extent of the enthusiasm that readers showed for the religious content, even when those entries were brief and functional in the extreme:

The *Brut* is not a devotional work and does not follow Biblical history or saints' lives. By neglecting to do so, the compilers seem to work against their readers' expectations; indeed, it might be said that the *Brut* leaves its readers starved of such things.¹²³

London readers were not 'starved' of hagiography: rather they enjoyed a glut of saints' lives. These annotations instead show that hagiography was vital to Londoners' literary

¹²² See above, pp. 124-128.

¹²³ T. Drukker, 'I Read Therefore I Write: Readers' Marginalia in Some *Brut* Manuscripts', in W. Marx and R. Radulescu (eds.), *Readers and Writers of the Prose Brut*, (Lampeter, 2006), pp. 97-130, 106.

lives: it informed their reading practices and meant that they often read historical texts through a hagiographic lens.

A blurring between hagiography and historiography is exemplified by an eight-page long pamphlet *The Cronycle of All the Kynges Names... and How Many Sayntes & Martyrs Have Ben in This Lande*, (Richard Pynson: London, 1518).¹²⁴ Divided into three sections, the first consists of a timeline listing important saints from Christ to Thomas Becket. The selection of saints chosen is similar to the list of saints' narratives popular in London given above: saints additionally included in this list include John the Baptist, Peter and Paul, St Longinus and Edward the Confessor. The next section listed kings, from Brutus to William the Conqueror. The final part used Lydgate's *Verses on the Kings of England*, (with a unique continuation) to provide a history from William the Conqueror to Henry VIII. This pamphlet presented kings and saints as two pillars of the common understanding of the past. Although the first edition survives in only one copy, it became a strikingly popular text with fourteen editions by the coronation of Elizabeth I; later copies added the names of the mayors of London to become a London chronicle.¹²⁵

Other citizens also reshaped historiography to emphasise hagiographic and devotional aspects. Bodley MS 596 (1.44) incorporated alongside a London chronicle a list of English kings who became saints.¹²⁶ For each king, it listed his regnal dates followed by a chapter reference to his reign in the *Polychronicon*. This list thus enabled users to read the *Polychronicon* as if it were a collection of royal saints' lives. A different approach is suggested by TCC, O.9.1, which contained several vernacular saints' lives, followed by a hybrid *Brut*-London chronicle. The biography of St Katherine, for instance, situated her

¹²⁴ *The Cronycle of All the Kynges Names That Have Ben in Englande, and How Many Yeres They Reygned and How Many Sayntes & Martyrs Have Ben in This Lande*, (London: Richard Pynson, 1518).

¹²⁵ Matheson, *Prose Brut*, p. 322, n. 1.

¹²⁶ Bodleian, MS Bodley 596, fol. 43r.

life in an extremely precise historical context: a lengthy section, sourced from the *Golden Legend*, discussed her British ancestry, Constantius' wars in Armenia, and the martyrs under Diocletian (ff. 9r-v).¹²⁷ By contrast, this life ignored some of the devotional aspects of the *Golden Legend*'s narrative, neglecting to include prayers to her or the etymology of her name.¹²⁸ If the life of St Katherine has been historicised, the *Brut* in this manuscript has been adapted in part to resemble a saint's life. The reign of Edward the Confessor began on folio 102v with a full-page illumination – the only one in the manuscript – which depicted his miracle-working. The faces of the figures are worn from repeated touching, which could suggest that this page was used repeatedly in personal devotion.¹²⁹ Other chronicles also added in hagiographic material, for example, Lambeth MS 84 is a London-produced extended version of the *Brut* into which material from the lives of St Dunstan and St Augustine of Canterbury has been interpolated.¹³⁰ Hagiography and historiography had highly permeable borders in late medieval London.

Hagiography and history were, therefore, closely linked in the minds of readers, writers, annotators and compilers within London. Hagiography was influential for readers of universal histories and the *Brut*. Its influence on civic chronicles was presumably lesser, given that London chronicles typically began in 1189 and thus lacked the scope for including Biblical or early Christian saints. Religious didacticism was an important influence, but should probably be viewed as secondary to political and moral concerns in motivating Londoners to read history.

¹²⁷ TCC, O.9.1, ff. 9r-v. J. Voragine, *Golden Legend*, ed./trans W. Ryan, (Princeton, 1993), no. 172, pp. 720-8.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*

¹²⁹ See above, p. 60.

¹³⁰ Matheson, *Prose Brut*, pp. 309-11.

4.3.4: Governance Manuals: History, Wisdom and Governance

In the prologue to his 1481 edition of the *Polychronicon*, William Caxton was clear about the educational purposes of his text: history was meant to furnish the reader with political wisdom. Good policymaking required that governors possess ‘experience’ of the world: the diversity of its cultures, change over time, and its general trials and tribulations.¹³¹ An elderly or widely-travelled man gained experience at first-hand, but only with difficulty and suffering. The diligent reader of histories could ‘come unto the knowleche of and understandynge of the same wysedom and polycye’ whilst ‘syttynge in his chambre or studye’.¹³² Indeed, the book-learned could come to learn more of the world than the traveller or the old man, because history ‘includeth moo ensamples of thynges and laudable actes than th’age of one man may suffyse to see’.¹³³ Chronicles were thus a concentrated and aggregated form of experience. They were an ideal tool to make men wise beyond their years, and could ‘make ryght pryvate men digne & worthy to have the governaunce of empyres & noble royaumes’.¹³⁴ A humanities education was therefore envisaged by Caxton as a grounding in the skills of governance: history, geography and classics were schools for aspirant governors.

Caxton’s other prologues developed and extended this idea. Humanities education should begin with the young: Caxton devised a textbook which he dedicated to the City of London with the wish that copies should be given to school children and orphans in the city’s care.¹³⁵ It consisted of the *Distiches* attributed to Roman senator Cato, expanded through

¹³¹ *Prologues of Caxton*, p. 64.

¹³² *Ibid.*

¹³³ *Ibid.* p. 65.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*

¹³⁵ *Ibid.* pp. 77-8.

the interpolation of a miscellany of ‘many historyes & ensamples autentyke of holy faders & auntyent cronycles trewe & approued’.¹³⁶ In his prologue, Caxton opined that present-day London lacked ‘prosperite & polecye’ and he contrasted the selfishness of modern citizens to the public-spirit of ancient Romans.¹³⁷ Caxton wished to improve the education of the young so that they could become ‘noble and wyse and prove wel & ben better and rycher than ever were theyr faders’: it was vital to this task that they read their Cato. A complementary vision for older learners was offered in his 1481 multi-text collection of translated works of Cicero combined with a neoclassical dialogue by Italian humanist Buonaccorso da Montemagno.¹³⁸ Caxton’s stated that this collection was for aged wise men and also ‘yong men for to lerne how they owght to come to the same’.¹³⁹ It was unsuited for use of ‘every rude and symple man’ and especially inappropriate for those who are not already aware of the deeds of the Romans; instead, it should be enjoyed by ‘noble, wyse & grete lordes, gentilmen & marchaunts that have seen & dayly ben occupied in maters towchyng the publyque weal’.¹⁴⁰ Caxton’s intended audience for this text was thus unusually well defined: it was suitable only for men who had already received an education in history and literature, and was pertinent to those involved in governance. It was best suited either to those already old and wise or to younger men attempting to gain wisdom. The Cato and Cicero collections were conceptualised by Caxton as age-specific texts which promoted the maturation of future governors: the *Distiches* were an early introduction to the classics that enabled stubborn and wilful children to progress towards maturity and citizenship. The Cicero collection continued this

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*

¹³⁸ *The Reducyng, Both Out of Latyn as of Frensshe in to Our Englyssh Tongue, of the Polytyque Book Named Tullius de Senectute...*, (Caxton: Westminster, 1481), EEBO, http://ezproxy-prd.bodleian.ox.ac.uk:2344/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:citation:99842238 (02-04-2020).

¹³⁹ *Ibid.* fol. 2r.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

educational programme, enabling the adult ‘private’ citizen to become a public governor. The humanities aided the development of wisdom and governing skill. A learner had to gain historical and political knowledge to develop the skills of self-governance and public governance.

Caxton was far from alone in believing that literature could be used to educate and shape men into becoming better governors. Fifteenth-century England saw a large expansion in the use of didactic political literature, however, discussions of this trend by modern historians have been hampered by confusion over terms and the use of vague categories such as ‘Mirrors for Princes’.¹⁴¹ This discussion will use the following typology: Wisdom Literature; the Aristotle-Alexander tradition; the Christian-Aristotelian tradition; and pragmatic works with limited aims.

Cato’s *Distiches* falls within a tradition which we might loosely term ‘wisdom literature’: books that distilled the wisdom of prophets or philosophers, often through compilations of sayings or anecdotes. These texts were often as interested in personal self-government as they were with public governance. The *Distiches* was popular throughout the middle ages and was a vital part of the grammar school curriculum, perhaps because it provided ‘a life-lesson and grammar tutorial in one’.¹⁴² Civic copies of the *Distiches* include Chetham’s 8009 (1.35), Rawlinson Poet. 32 (2.26), Harley MS 2251 (John Vale), Pepys MS 2006 (William Fettespace, Mercer), TCC, O.2.53, and Bod Inc-A-054(1) (Richard Story, Fishmonger).¹⁴³ Other texts compiled sayings or anecdotes from multiple philosophers:

¹⁴¹ For overviews, see J. Genet, ‘General Introduction’, *Four English Political Tracts of the Later Middle Ages*, Camden Society, 4th Series, 18, (London, 1977), ix-xix; N. Perkins, *Hoccleve’s ‘Regiment of Princes’: Counsel and Constraint*, (Cambridge, 2001), Ch. 3; Green, *Poets and Princepleasers*, Ch. 5; M. Kekewich, ‘Books of Advice for Princes in Fifteenth Century England with Particular Reference to the Period 1450-1485’, (Doctoral thesis, Open University, 1987).

¹⁴² Dallachy, ‘Distiches of Cato’, i, p. 16; R. Hazelton, ‘The Christianization of “Cato”: The *Disticha Catonis* in the Light of Late Mediaeval Commentaries’, *Mediaeval Studies*, 19, (1957), pp. 157-173.

¹⁴³ ‘A-054’, *Bod-Inc Online*, <http://incunables.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/record/A-054> (25-10-2019); see above, pp. 108 (Harley 2251), 110 (TCC, O.2.53), 113 (Pepys 2006).

particularly popular was the *Dicts and Sayings of the Philosophers*, which was subject to nine translations into English during the fifteenth century and was one of the first books to be printed by Caxton.¹⁴⁴ A copy of the *Dicts* was owned, as has already been established, by Robert Mason and Richard Walker, both Grocers (CUL, MS. GG.1.34); other civic copies included Bodley MS 943 (Anthony Locksmith, Mercer); and Harley 2266 (William and Amy Athertoun, victualler to the Tower of London mint); and Rawlinson Poet. 32.¹⁴⁵ Town clerk John Carpenter (*d.* 1438) bequeathed to a clerk a book of wisdom, '*Sententiae Diversorum Prophetarum*' (Sentences of Diverse Prophets). This may perhaps describe Petrus Alphonsi's *Disciplina Clericis*; if so then John Vale similarly possessed a Middle English translation in Worcester Cathedral Library MS F.172.¹⁴⁶ Perhaps inspired by this formal wisdom literature, some Londoners compiled collections of authorities and proverbs: lists of classical and patristic authorities can be found in Bodley 596, ff. 25r-25v, 34v (1.44); meanwhile a collection of the sayings of philosophers can be found in TCC, O.9.1, ff. 228r-229v (1.4). When Caxton printed copies of the *Distiches* or the *Dicts*, he was thus responding to a well-developed civic reading public.

Also important was the pseudo-Aristotelian tradition, which sought to recreate the tuition that Alexander the Great had received from Aristotle.¹⁴⁷ It was most commonly expressed in the *Secretum Secretorum*, an encyclopaedia attributed to Aristotle; it was translated into English nine times during the fifteenth century, and first printed by Pynson in 1511.¹⁴⁸

John Lydgate and Benedict Burgh's translation of the *Secretum* was popular in London:

¹⁴⁴ Kekewich, 'Books of Advice', p. 12; on its transmission see C. Bühler, 'Introduction', *Dicts and Sayings*, ix-lxviii.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.* xxi, xxvi, xxviii.

¹⁴⁶ S. Cavanaugh, 'A Study of Books Privately Owned in England, 1300-1450', (Ph.D. thesis, University of Pennsylvania, 1980), p. 169; T. Brewer, *Memoir of the Life and Times of John Carpenter*, (London, 1856), p. 129; see above, p. 120 (Worcester F.172).

¹⁴⁷ S. Williams, *The Secret of Secrets: the Scholarly Career of a Pseudo-Aristotelian Text in the Latin Middle Ages*, (Ann Arbor, 2003); Genet, 'General Introduction', xvi-xvii; Green, *Poets and Princepleasers*, pp. 140-1.

¹⁴⁸ Kekewich, 'Books of Advice', p. 12; *The Governance of Kynges*, (Richard Pynson: London, 1511).

witnesses include Sloane MS 2027 (William Holwick, Carpenter, Appendix 2.12); Harley 2251 (John Vale); and TCC, R.3.19 (Roger Thorney, Mercer).¹⁴⁹ Other translations could be found in BL, MS Add. 5467 (discussed above, for its courtesy content); Lambeth MS 633 (Robert Rawson, merchant of unknown location); Oxford, University College, MS 85 ff. 70-135 (Whetehill family, Calais); BL, Harley 2252 (John Colyn, Mercer, 1.27); Worcester Cathedral MS F.172 (John Vale); and Bodleian Ashmole 59, ff. 1-12v.¹⁵⁰ A Latin pseudo-Aristotelian letter was also incorporated into Richard Hill's commonplace book (1.37), and further letters were incorporated into the *Dicts*.¹⁵¹ Town clerk John Carpenter owned two copies of the *Secretum* and bequeathed them to a Guildhall clerk and a local clergyman; he also bequeathed another pseudo-classical treatise on virtue, Pseudo-Seneca's *De Quattor Virtutibus*.¹⁵² The circulation of pseudo-classical literature on governance and virtue was therefore significant in London in this period.

Many writers sought to create a fusion between Aristotelian and Christian morality. Political textbooks produced in France and Italy from the thirteenth century onwards set themselves systematically to this task, creating an image of a moral political order which was both Christian and Aristotelian.¹⁵³ One text from this tradition was particularly accessible to Londoners: Chamberlain Andrew Horn donated to the Guildhall Chamber Library a copy of Brunetto Latini's *Li Livres dou Trésor*. Horn rewrote sections to make it more appropriate for the instruction of the mayor; this local adaptation and its location in the Guildhall would have made it accessible to all London officials.¹⁵⁴ Town clerk John Carpenter bequeathed copies of Vincent of Beauvais, *Speculum Maius* and Christine de

¹⁴⁹ See above pp. 113 (R.3.19), 108 (Harley 2251).

¹⁵⁰ See above, pp. 106-107 (Ashmole 59), 110 (BL, Add. 5467), 120 (Worcester F.172); Scott, 'Past Ownership', p. 163 (Rawson); on the Whetehills, see J. Boffey, 'Books and Readers in Calais: Some Notes', *The Ricardian*, 13:1, (2003), pp. 67-74, 72.

¹⁵¹ 'Balliol 354', pp. 201-2; *Dicts*, pp. 148-224.

¹⁵² Cavanaugh, 'Books Privately Owned', pp. 167, 168, 169; Brewer, *Memoir*, pp. 123-4, 128-9.

¹⁵³ See Genet, 'General Introduction', xiv-xvi.

¹⁵⁴ *Munimenta*, 2.2, pp. 517-528.

Pisan's *Livre du Corps de Policie*, as well as an unidentified treatise on Christian virtues ('On the Seven Theological Virtues') to some of his Guildhall clerks.¹⁵⁵ The *De Regimine Principum* of Giles of Rome survives in one known civic exemplar, Pierpont Morgan MS M.122 (Sonnyng family, Calais and London).¹⁵⁶ Works of this sort circulated in the city, but it should be noted that many of the texts were lengthy, complex, not translated into English, and most of the attested audience came from a narrow elite of officeholders. This may well reflect a 'specialist' form of literature, only commonly read by political insiders.

Londoners may, however, have come across the themes and ideas of the Christian-Aristotelian synthesis in more accessible forms, particularly in Middle English texts which responded to the *Secretum* and Christian moral-political literature. Thomas Hoccleve's *Regiment of Princes*, which drew both on Giles of Rome and the *Secretum*, was popular: London witnesses include Sloane MS 1825 (Richard Stodley of Newgate); Huntington MS. El. 26 A.13 (Avery and Beatrice Cornburgh, Ironmonger and yeoman of the King's Chamber); Magdalene Pepys MS. 2101 ('Bereys Hafflyn at London'); and BL, Royal 17 D.xix (Mayor John Allyn).¹⁵⁷ Similarly, book 7 of John Gower's *Confessio Amantis* gave advice drawing heavily on the *Secretum*. Whole or partial versions included: Oxford, Corpus Christi MS 67 (Thomas Crispe, Mercer); COA Arundel 45 (Thomas Goodonston, Girdler); Bodleian, Rawlinson D.82 (Alderman John Keme); TCC. R.3.2 (Thomas Urswick, Recorder); Balliol 354 (Richard Hill, 1.37); and Longleat 174 (Horn family).¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁵ Cavanaugh, 'Books Privately Owned', pp. 168-9; Brewer, *Memoir*, pp. 124, 128, 130.

¹⁵⁶ Boffey, 'Books and Readers', pp. 70-2.

¹⁵⁷ On Hoccleve's use of *Secretum*, see A. Gilbert, 'Notes on the Influence of the *Secretum Secretorum*', *Speculum*, 3:1, (1928), pp. 84-98; Perkins, *Counsel and Constraint*, pp. 85-99; on John Allyn, see *ibid.* p. 175; On Richard Stodley, see Boffey and Meale, 'Selecting the Text', p. 159. On Cornburgh, see Scott, 'Past Ownership', p. 138. On Hafflyn, see 'Manuscript Description: Cambridge, Magdalene College MS. Pepys 2101', in *Late Medieval English Scribes*, <https://www.medievalscribes.com/index.php?browse=manuscripts&id=261&nav=off> (02-04-2019).

¹⁵⁸ On the relationship of the two texts, see Gilbert, 'Influence of the *Secretum*'. Scott, 'Past Ownership', pp. 158 (Crispe), 160 (Goodonston), 161 (Keme). On Urswick, see 'Cambridge, Trinity College MS R.3.2', *Late Medieval English Scribes*,

The pseudo-Aristotelian tradition had a large influence on encyclopaedic literature, as well as on some of the more complex conduct books. Reflection on rulership could, for instance, be found in the *Book of Good Manners* (discussed above), set amongst broader life advice about comportment and manners. Some Londoners owned encyclopaedias: Draper Walter Smith (d. 1538) owned Bartholomeus Anglicus's, *De Proprietatibus Rerum* and the *Catholicon*; other *Catholicon* copies were bequeathed by Draper, William Shukburgh (d. 1505) and Thomas Walyngton (d. 1403).¹⁵⁹ Even if the direct reach of political textbooks of the Continental Christian-Aristotelian tradition were not widely accessible, their ideas reached a wider audience through a variety of forms.

Other texts had a more limited focus on specific aspects of governance, notably on the constitution, warfare, or specific political problems. Many of the political textbooks produced in England concerned themselves primarily with constitutional and legal matters.¹⁶⁰ Horn left a copy of the *Mirror of Justices* to the Chamber Library. He also left a copy of *Britton*; other exemplars could be found in the libraries of Vintner Richard Lyons (d. 1381), Draper Thomas Walyngton (d. 1403) and Draper John Fettespace (TCC, O.5.33).¹⁶¹ Sir John Fortescue developed and extended this constitutional-legal tradition in the fifteenth century.¹⁶² John Vale copied extracts of Fortescue's *Governance of England* into his commonplace book.¹⁶³ Another popular sub-genre of governance textbooks were manuals of warfare: Carpenter bequeathed to one of his clerks a miscellany which contained an unidentified text '*Dispositio et Regimen Bellorum Duorum et Acierum*

<https://www.medievalscribes.com/index.php?browse=manuscripts&id=154&nav=off> (13-03-2020). See above p. 105 (Longleat 174).

¹⁵⁹ Scott, 'Past Ownership', pp. 172 (Smith), 172 (Shukburgh), 173 (Walyngton).

¹⁶⁰ Genet, 'General Introduction', xviii.

¹⁶¹ Cavanaugh, 'Books Privately Owned', p. 441; Scott, 'Past Ownership', pp. 159 (Fettespace), 175 (Lyons), 173 (Walyngton).

¹⁶² M. Kekewich, *Sir John Fortescue and the Governance of England*, (Woodbridge, 2018).

¹⁶³ *Vale's Book*, pp. 225-253.

Guerrarum'.¹⁶⁴ Other texts of this kind included Vegetius' *De Re Militari* in Sloane 2027 (William Holwick, Carpenter), Nicholas Upton's *De Studio Militari* in COA Arundel MS 64 (Thomas Crispe, Mercer) or Honoré Bonet's *L'Arbre des Batailles* (Boston Public Library MS 1519, Sonnyng family of London and Calais).¹⁶⁵ Finally, non-systematic political reflection could be found in polemical literature such as petitions or partisan poetry; this category is too large and diverse to permit a systematic survey here, although chronicles appeared alongside large collections of polemical material in BL, Add. MS 48031, BL, Cotton Roll ii.23, and Lambeth 306.¹⁶⁶ The genres through which Londoners could reflect on and discuss politics were thus diverse and did not solely consist of rigorous theoretical textbooks.

William Caxton's prologues posited that historical and classical works were useful for political education; this survey of the manuscript record has suggested that many Londoners agreed with him. Londoners collected a large number of works of political educational literature, spanning across genres. Chronicles appeared in manuscripts accompanying many different types of political educational literature: wisdom literature (*E.g.* Chetham's 8009, TCC, O.9.1, TCC, O.2.53, Bodley 596 and Rawlinson Poet. 32), the *Secretum* tradition (*E.g.* Balliol 354, Sloane 2027, Harley 2251, TCC, R.3.19, BL, Add. 5467 and Bodleian Ashmole 59), the Christian-Aristotelian fusion texts (Andrew Horn's books, Longleat 174, Balliol 354 and BL, Add. 5467), and the English legal-constitutional tradition (BL, Add. 48031 and Horn's books). This association in the manuscript record makes it highly feasible that many Londoners saw the two genres as complementary. This thesis has elsewhere noted that there was a close association between

¹⁶⁴ Cavanaugh, 'Books Privately Owned', p. 168.

¹⁶⁵ Scott, 'Past Ownership', p. 158 (Crispe); App. 2.12 (Sloane 2027); Boffey, 'Books and Readers', pp. 70-2 (Sonnyng).

¹⁶⁶ Lambeth 306 (App. 1.32); see above, pp. 106 (Cotton Roll ii.23) and 105 (BL, Add. 48031).

holding office and owning historical texts.¹⁶⁷ This can be well explained if chronicles were viewed as a form of political education. Caxton's Cicero prologue identified his readers as older men participating in government and younger men who wished to join them: this accords closely with the audiences of historiography that were identified in chapter three.¹⁶⁸

This is not, however, the whole audience for such texts: notably, of the political education texts mentioned so far, several can be linked to female ownership.¹⁶⁹ Others have been linked to the ownership of Armourers, Girdlers, and Carpenters. The idea of citizenship necessitated that many people participated in government, even if most citizens never held a high political office. Political education texts also assisted the reader in self-government and government of the household. The importance of the household as a unit of instruction may also have meant that women took on the role of teachers, and thus needed a political education comparable to their husbands. In any case, we should not imagine that officeholders had a monopoly on political literature or historical culture.

Historical and political texts sometimes referenced each other in support of their aims. The genre of wisdom literature rested on the assumption that men from well-governed and well-educated eras should be treated as authoritative figures: their words recorded and their examples emulated. Alexander the Great had been the greatest of princes, and therefore his education was worthy of emulation down the ages, via the *Secretum* tradition. In his prologue to the *Distiches*, Caxton berated the present generation of London citizens,

¹⁶⁷ See above, pp. 116-120.

¹⁶⁸ See above, pp. 116-120, 124-128.

¹⁶⁹ See above, pp. 121 (Eleanor Thorney, TCC, R.3.19), 168 (Amy Athertoun, Harley 2266), 170 (Beatrice Cornburgh, Huntington MS El.26.A.13); and see appendix, 1.35 ('Elizabet', Chetham's 8009), 1.44 (Joanna Knollys, Bodley 596).

saying that ‘ther is almost none that entendeth to the comyn wele but only every man for his singuler prouffyte’.¹⁷⁰ The Romans supplied a contrary example:

O whan I remember the noble Romayns that for the comyn wele of the Cyte of Rome they spent not only theyr moevable goodes but they put theyr bodyes & lyves in jeopardy & to the dethe as by many a noble ensample we may see in th’actes of Romayns.¹⁷¹

In at least some cases, classics encouraged a sense of modern inferiority or decline, which made it imperative that the wisdom of the past be recovered and treasured.

Many political treatises made implicit or explicit use of history. Texts in the pragmatic English tradition often commented on the history and development of institutions: the prologue to the *Mirror for Justices*, which laid out a fanciful origin of many of England’s legal institutions with Alfred the Great, is one of the most studied examples.¹⁷² Other treatises made use of the past through *exempla*. A simple and self-contained example was the fragment of a lost work of Sir John Fortescue copied by John Vale into his book. This was an *exemplum* which demonstrated ‘what good counseill helpith and avantageth and of the contrare’: in it, Fortescue illustrated the importance of good counsel by contrasting the wealth and fortune of the early Roman state with its later collapse after emperors embraced ‘privat counsellours’.¹⁷³ Vale also copied up chapter 16 of *The Governance of England*, which was on a similar theme: ‘How the Romaines prospered while they had a grete counseill’.¹⁷⁴ General principles could thus be illustrated in political educational literature by specific historical examples. Fortescue’s concern with ‘private counsellors’ closely paralleled the way that John Vale wrote in his chronicle about the distinction between

¹⁷⁰ *Prologues of Caxton*, p. 77.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁷² J. Jahner, ‘The *Mirror of Justices* and the Arts of Archival Invention’, *Viator*, 45:1, (2014), pp. 221-246.

¹⁷³ *Vale’s Book*, pp. 225-6.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.* p. 246.

counsellors of the ‘blood roiall’ and counsellors ‘that were broughte up of noughte’.¹⁷⁵

Political writers – and readers such as John Vale – often treated history as a resource to be drawn upon for political education. The past was an important context for the development of institutions, a source of authorities, and also could be used to supply examples of good and bad practice.

Vale was not alone in using themes and ideas from political educational literature in constructing his chronicle. The *New Chronicles* contained a story of a papal legate who attempted to stamp out sexual vice in the English church but was subsequently discovered with a prostitute.¹⁷⁶ Fabyan stated that the legate had forgotten his Cato, and quoted a distich against hypocrisy.¹⁷⁷ He thus shaped this anecdote of bad governance into an *exemplum* through reference to classical wisdom literature. Another instance of political educational literature being used in chronicles was in evaluations of Henry VI’s character in Vitellius A.xvi and the *Great Chronicle*. Vitellius A.xvi estimated that the king ‘was a goostly and a good man, and set litell by worldly maters’: the chronicler thus used language derived from hagiography to praise the king.¹⁷⁸ In the equivalent passage in the *Great Chronicle*, Fabyan amplified this language but also rendered it more complicated. Fabyan stated that the king had chosen ‘the lyfe contemplatyve’ over the ‘actyff’ life.¹⁷⁹ The king showed himself to be ‘goostly & vertuous’, lacking in pride, and generally disdainful of the ‘pomp or vanytees of this world’. However, he also lacked the practical and political virtues which were appropriate to the active life of a king: ‘after my myend he mygth saye as Cryst sayd to Pylat, *Regnum meum non est de hoc mundo* [My kingdom

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.* p. 178.

¹⁷⁶ *New Chronicles*, p. 259.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁸ ‘Vitellius A.xvi’, p. 184.

¹⁷⁹ *Great Chronicle*, p. 212.

is not of this world].'¹⁸⁰ Whereas Vitellius A.xvi had used this passage to present Henry as a good Christian ruler, the *Great Chronicle* drew a more complex distinction: he was a good Christian and a bad ruler. One feasible source for this distinction was the synthesis of Aristotelian and Christian conceptions of virtues which were found in many political manuals. Authors distinguished between the 'theological' virtues (faith, hope and charity) which were best suited to the contemplative life of the church; and the cardinal or civic virtues (prudence, courage, temperance and justice) which were best suited to the active life of rulers.¹⁸¹ Henry had adopted the spiritual life and its theological virtues even though his office required him to live an active life: Fabyan could thus balance praise of the king's piety with criticisms of his governance. Fabyan's use of political educational material equipped him with quotations and vocabulary which aided him both in a simplistic level of political didacticism (as with his use of Cato) and with more complicated political ideas (as with his criticisms of Henry VI).

Other chroniclers used historiography to advise rulers. Caxton incorporated a eulogy to Henry V in his *Brut* which presented that king as an exemplar of good governance:

Loo! here may al princes take ensample bi þis noble prince... þat did so many noble actes, as wel for his soul to be perpetuelly remembred & prayd fore, as in hys worldly conquestes. And he, beyng in his moste lusty age, despised & eschewed synn, & was vertuouse, & a gret justyser, in so mych þat al þe princes of Cristendome, & also of hethenes, dradd him¹⁸²

Caxton stressed that Henry was an 'ensample' both in his martial and his pious acts. In addressing the lesson to 'al þe princes', he used an idiom similar to the *Mirrors for Princes*, which were notionally addressed to a sovereign ruler but in practice used by governors of all levels. In an example more directly relevant to London governors, Vitellius A.xvi

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁸¹ See: J. Watts, *Henry VI and the Politics of Kingship*, (New York, 1996), pp. 23-25; I. Bejczy, *Cardinal Virtues in the Middle Ages*, (Leiden, 2011).

¹⁸² *Brut*, p. 496.

recounted that Mayor Humphrey Heyford refused to finish the work of his predecessor and instead began new and wasteful projects. This was not merely a personal vice, but illustrated a general principle:

there is nat one mayr that will accomplysshe that thyng which was begon in his predecessour's dayes; for then they thynk the wors[h]ip therof is ascrybed unto the ffynder and to the begynner, and not to th'ender; which causeth many good werkes and actes to be put owte of mynd, which is full greate pyte.¹⁸³

The chronicler's concern was not merely to record events, but also to expound general principles of political behaviour: this incident did not just reflect on the actions of a single mayor, but the nature of leaders in general. Caxton used Henry V as an example of good leadership, and Vitellius A.xvi used Humphrey Heyford as an example of failures of leadership: both sought self-consciously to encode political advice within their chronicles. On such occasions, the distance between political education literature and historiography could be thin.

The connections between political education and historical writing were perhaps at their most explicit and self-conscious in the *Great Chronicle's* account of the downfall of Henry VII's favourites in 1509. Courtiers were accused of cultivating a corrupt faction within London on behalf of the king. Fabyan gave detailed and polemical accounts of the crimes of faction leaders, Richard Empson and Edmund Dudley, as well as junior associates, Jean-Baptiste Grimaldi and John Canby. Fabyan framed the life of Canby as a lesson in self-government and public government. Canby was introduced as a 'servyng man', beneath the sheriffs of London and acting as 'a comon servaunt unto every worshypfull & honest Cytyzyn'.¹⁸⁴ He subsequently entered an upward trajectory to become the keeper of the Counter prison: the story thus followed his trajectory from servant through to being a

¹⁸³ 'Vitellius A.xvi', pp. 187-8.

¹⁸⁴ *Great Chronicle*, pp. 348-9.

householder and public governor. To be a prison keeper ‘was and is an office off good auctoryte and of grete beneffeet, and yit may the mastyr use grete charyte & wyn hevyn & lyve lyke a gentlman besyde’; but Canby did not choose to live as a laudable governor and instead ran his office ‘to hys grete dysclaundyr & shame’.¹⁸⁵ He accepted and gave bribes, and showed no humility or obedience to the sheriffs or mayor. He also ran a disordered household: inverted gender roles are suggested by the fact that his wife collected bribes from prisoners, sometimes without his knowledge; and by the fact that Canby owned an illicit brothel. The image of Canby’s chamber evoked further domestic disorder: it was ‘pylid’ high with luxury goods and fine cloths such that it ‘was more lyke a Mersers or Drapers shopp, then such a mannys chambyr’.¹⁸⁶ Canby thus traced the path from private man through to householder and public governor, but he did so without virtue or good government. He lacked self-government, control of his household, or the virtues required for public government. Canby was an inverted image of the ideal learner from Caxton’s prologues. Caxton hoped that upwardly mobile men would study to gain wisdom and self-control; Canby was an example of upward mobility without virtue and the evils for household and public governance which resulted.

Fabyan was explicit about the exemplary intent of his writing: he wrote about Canby ‘in charytable ordour, to cawse othyr lyke servyng men to be well ware how they runne ffast toward the devyll & othyr pardycion ffor the pleasure of theyr mastyr’.¹⁸⁷ Across his account of the fall of Empson and Dudley’s faction, Fabyan inserted several similar self-conscious asides about the educational purposes of history. He protested that he wrote: ‘oonly for the erudicion of my sylf and alle othir that shall come afftyr’.¹⁸⁸ Serving men

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

needed to learn and remember Canby's story, as did those who 'avuaunce theym of theyr grete byrth & gentylnesse of blood, and have verray ffewe vertuous condicions'.¹⁸⁹ By studying history, they could learn how to 'guyde theym when they be putt in grete auctoryte'.¹⁹⁰ Within this story, the *Great Chronicle* thus contains passages which directly addressed the upwardly mobile, those who were newly assuming responsibility, less powerful Londoners who were in service to powerful men, and governing men in general. These men were approximately the same groups that Caxton had described in the prologue to his Cicero collection of 1481: governors, private men assuming governance and young men who need to develop greater wisdom.¹⁹¹ Fabyan framed this story as well-suited to their education, and more generally implied that reading history would benefit their governing skill and personal morals.

Fabyan furthered his educational scheme within these passages by collecting several important genres of political educational literature. He collected classical literature, quoting and translating a couplet from Horace that demonstrated that nobility depended on character and virtue rather than on birth.¹⁹² Fabyan also collected polemic: he incorporated into the body of the chronicle the 'Ballad of Empson' and also a Ballad of Jean-Baptiste 'Legenda Non Aurea', both protest poems against pervasive corruption.¹⁹³ Finally, he constructed an *exemplum* collection which consisted of short accounts of the rise and fall of tyrants from the old testament: Nimrod, Pharaoh, Achab and Jezebel, Holofernes, and Aman; at another point in the narrative, he additionally compared Empson and Dudley to Herod.¹⁹⁴ These were cited to prove that tyrants would always be punished by God for

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.* p. 351.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.* p. 347.

¹⁹¹ See above, p. 166.

¹⁹² *Great Chronicle*, pp. 351-2.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.* pp. 344-347, 352-365.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.* pp. 350-1, 334-5.

their sins.¹⁹⁵ This chapter has suggested that London citizens brought together several genres to reflect on and teach political principles, including classical literature, polemical literature and didactic texts which used political *exempla*. The *Great Chronicle*'s account of the fall of Empson and Dudley was an epitome of this political educational culture, containing self-conscious asides on the purposes of historical education, and a collection of politically didactic texts including classics, *exempla* and polemic.

Historical literature and political educational literature were therefore intimately connected. For the political writer, history provided context, authorities and examples; for the historian, political education could supply concepts and aid in interpretation. The connection also ran much deeper: these texts appeared together and were read by similar audiences of aspirant men and governors. London's political order was significantly different from that of the wider English realm: Barron has estimated that in any given year, approximately one-quarter of male citizens held a civic office, here understood in a broad sense encompassing the Guildhall, wards, occupational guilds, religious fraternities, and parish officers.¹⁹⁶ This relatively broad distribution of power made civic political education vital. Historical literature was one of the genres through which Londoners engaged in political reflection, discussing governance within London and in the wider realm. Political reflection and political education were important tasks for this historian and his audience. Historiography could play a vital role in the political and legal education of citizens: it allowed them to create a genre of political instruction which could act as a mirror not for princes, but rather for citizens.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.* p. 351.

¹⁹⁶ Barron, 'London 1300-1500', p. 401.

4.3.5: *Coda*: Richard Hill and Compilation as a Method of Learning

Although this chapter has roamed widely across civic literature, it could be fairly suggested that it has repeatedly relied on works by individuals who fit a particular profile: erudite, wealthy, politically powerful, relatively aged, and interested in history. Notable recurring authors who fit this pattern have included Robert Fabyan and William Caxton. How representative were they of London's wider reading culture? An important counterpoint can be offered by Richard Hill's commonplace book, Balliol 354, which offers a rare survival: a book compiled in part *by* an apprentice rather than *for* an apprentice.

The earliest datable part of the manuscript is from 1503 and Richard Hill became a freeman in 1511.¹⁹⁷ Hill was thus working on his book for at least eight years before his enfranchisement as a citizen. Richard was born to John Hill at Hill End, Hertfordshire; his immediate family appear to have been of little wealth or consequence, but his cousin Margery rose through three successful marriages to wed Mayor Ralph Astry (1494-5).¹⁹⁸ The sheriff who served alongside Astry, John Wyngar, was a shaping influence on Hill's life. Hill signed his book as a servant to Alderman Wyngar, a note which must have been written before John's death in December 1505.¹⁹⁹ Hill probably came to London in c. 1503, served in the Wyngar household, then became a Grocer's apprentice: if he served a seven-year apprenticeship, then it would have spanned the period 1504-11. During this

¹⁹⁷ 'Balliol 354', pp. 335, 219.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.* p. 37; W. Hills, 'Richard Hill of Hillend and Balliol MS. 354', *Notes and Queries*, 177:26, (1939), pp. 452-546, 545-6; Collier, 'Richard Hill'; C. Shrank, 'Hill, Richard (fl. 1508-1536)', *ODNB*, <http://ezproxy-prd.bodleian.ox.ac.uk:2167/view/article/68090> (30-09-2016); Rogers, 'Courtesy Books'; Parker, *Commonplace Book*, Ch. 3; McLaren, *London Chronicles*, pp. 35-7; A. Gillespie, 'Balliol MS 354: Histories of the Book at the End of the Middle Ages', *Poetica*, 60, (2003), pp. 47-64.

¹⁹⁹ 'Balliol 354', p. 373; on his will, see 'PROB 11/15/9', *Discovery*, <https://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/details/r/D972440> (23-10-2019).

period, he spent time in the Low Countries and gained admittance to the Merchant Adventurers of London in 1508, and the Hanses of Bergen-op-Zoom, Bruges and Antwerp in 1508-1511. He was admitted as a citizen of London and a freeman of the Grocers in November 1511. If he served as a bachelor for two more years then he could have set up an independent household around 1513. It is probably not a coincidence that he wrote the date '1513' on the first page of his London chronicle and laid out the text in a single style and format as far as 1512.²⁰⁰ He married Elizabeth Wyngar, (niece of Mayor Wyngar) on an unknown date, and their first child was born in 1518.²⁰¹ The period 1503-1518 was thus transitional for Hill: he began as a teenage servant and immigrant to London and ended as an independent adult citizen and householder. This was also the period in which he developed his manuscript compiling practices. We can date the compilation of his London chronicle to the latter end of this transitional period, at around the point that he became a householder.

Richard Hill's book offers a chance to test some of the arguments of this chapter in a different context, with a much younger compiler. Hill held no significant civic offices and was never amongst the wealthiest citizens; he was, however, a member of the powerful companies of Grocers and Merchant Adventurers, and had social and business links to two Mayors, Astry and Wyngar. His chronicle is brief and lacking in detail; of the London chronicles which have received full scholarly editions, it is amongst those least cited by modern historians. Hill may, therefore, indicate the type of education that was achievable to a merchant of moderate means; one for whom history was an interest, but not an obsession.

²⁰⁰ 'Balliol 354', p. 469.

²⁰¹ *Ibid.* p. 37.

Courtesy had a formative role in Hill's selection of texts. He wrote two inventories of 'howshold stuff as must nedes be ocupied at þe mayres fest', which implies that Hill had a household position in support of Mayor Wyngar.²⁰² He collected two orders of precedence, one for aristocratic titles and the other for guild companies, which could have been used at civic feasts.²⁰³ He also collected an extensive set of courtesy books: *The Little Children's Little Book*, pp. 289-91; *How the Wise Man Taught His Son*, pp. 335-337; *Stans Puer ad Mensam*, pp. 338-339; *Precepts in -ly*, p. 340; and Caxton's *Book of Courtesy* pp. 341-51. On the final page of the latter, Hill wrote the date 1503, which suggests that it (and perhaps the other courtesy books) can be dated to his period in service to the Wyngar family. Hill's reading as a servant and apprentice was thus distinctly courteous in its genres and themes. When he came to write his chronicle, Hill brought his courteous sensibility to events. Amongst his often-meagre chronicle entries, his eye for superfluous ceremonial detail is striking. In 1509 he supplemented his notice of the by-election of Laurence Aylmer as mayor by noting: 'þe same day he was sworn at Yeld-hall; & þe sword was born home affore hym & he in a gray klok'. In an apparent afterthought, he then added 'No fest', perhaps in a tone of outrage.²⁰⁴ Hill thus focused on the ceremonial trappings of the mayoralty. His entry for 1509/10 was packed with ceremonial details. The first related to the funeral of Henry VII, for example, his procession travelled 'with v^M torches & prikkets brennyng at ons, at þe kyngis cost; þe cite ordeyned for as many or mo brennyng in every stret as he cam'.²⁰⁵ This was followed by an account of the humiliation of men of Empson and Dudley's party, who 'rode abowt þe cite with þer facis to þe hors taylis' before being pilloried.²⁰⁶ He also included an account of Henry VIII and Catherine of Aragon riding

²⁰² *Ibid.* pp. 211-212.

²⁰³ *Ibid.* pp. 220, 426.

²⁰⁴ *Songs*, p. 154.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.* pp. 154-5.

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

through the city before their marriage, at which point ‘þe howsis, as þe kyng rode, were ha[n]ggid without with clothes of gold aryes, with whit roses & rede ha[n]ggynge upon them’; he gave many more details concerning their music, pageantry and clothing.²⁰⁷ Hill’s close focus on pageantry has been the single most noted fact concerning this chronicle in the secondary literature: Parker has noted that Hill paid ‘special attention to the clothes and various trappings of office’; and Heather Collier has suggested that Hill was fascinated by ‘pageantry and ceremonial of the Lord Mayors of London’.²⁰⁸ Hill’s formative experience serving in Wyngar’s mayoral household no doubt informed his later writing.

Hill also read for his own moral and spiritual development; indeed, Parker has noted concerning the manuscript that ‘[t]he volume of sincere religious content in it is exceptional even for sixteenth-century England’.²⁰⁹ Hill collected three short hagiographic narratives in verse, namely lives of saints Stephen and Thomas Becket; and a miracle narrative *St Gregory’s Trental*.²¹⁰ The *Trental* was not the only *exemplum* copied into the book: Hill also copied the tale of Godfridus of Rome out of the *Gesta Romanorum* and extracted numerous classical exemplary stories out of the *Confessio Amantis*.²¹¹ It is however within the category of *memento mori* and ‘wheel of fortune’ narratives that Richard Hill showed the earliest and the most consistent interest. There is a concentration of *memento mori* poetry on pp. 344-357, at the end of which is the signature in which Hill attested himself as Wyngar’s servant, dating this passage to c. 1503-4. This section of the manuscript contains three poems that provide *memento mori* meditations on the death of Queen Elizabeth (d. 1503).²¹² The book also contains a ‘Lamentation on the Duchess of

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁸ Parker, *Commonplace Book*, p. 78; Collier, ‘Richard Hill’, p. 319.

²⁰⁹ Parker, *Commonplace Book*, p. 71.

²¹⁰ ‘Balliol 354’, pp. 476-7, 477, 283-6.

²¹¹ *Ibid.* pp. 9-14, 113-195, 346-371.

²¹² *Songs*, pp. 95-103.

Gloucester', a unique wheel of fortune tale which uses the fall of Eleanor Cobham (*d.* 1452) as an example of the instability of the fame.²¹³ Hill thus showed a concentrated interest, datable to *circa* 1503, in *memento mori* type *exempla*, particularly those focused on royal figures.

Use of the past as a '*memento mori*' *exemplum* was extended by the poem '*Erth Upon Erth*'. Hill's copy is a unique variant, 'B-14' in Nancy Pope's typology.²¹⁴ The creator of B-14 added new material which is locally-specific to London: he instructs the reader to 'Go to Seynt Powlis, & see þer the portratowr' of death, referring to the *memento mori* mural of the *Dance Macabre* at the Cathedral.²¹⁵ Given that Hill's book is the only surviving witness of B-14 and the additions are locally-specific, it is feasible that Hill himself was responsible for the changes. The other unique feature of B-14 is the addition of historical *memento mori* tales:

Alisander was but erth, þat all þe world wan,
 & Ector upon erth was hald a worthy man,
 & Julius Cesar þat þe empire first be-gan
 & now, as erth within erth, þei lye pale & wan.²¹⁶

Despite their earthly achievements, each must die and become earth. Other historical figures were given similar treatment: David, Judas Maccabees, Joshua, Arthur, Godfrey of Bouillon and Charlemagne were cited, following the chivalric scheme of the 'Nine worthies'.²¹⁷ More idiosyncratically, the poem also included William I and Henry I.²¹⁸ These passages developed and extended the *memento mori* interpretation of the royal past

²¹³ *Ibid.* pp. 95-7.

²¹⁴ N. Pope, "'Erthe Upon Erthe" Revisited', *Journal of the Early Book Society for the History of Manuscripts and Printing*, 21, (2018), pp. 53-95, 67.

²¹⁵ 'Erth Upon Erth', *Songs*, p. 91; on the St Paul's *memento mori*, see Appleford, 'The Dance of Death'.

²¹⁶ 'Erth Upon Erth', p. 91.

²¹⁷ C. Bouchard, 'Nine Worthies', in C. Rogers (ed.), *The Oxford Encyclopaedia of Medieval Warfare and Military Technology*, (Oxford, 2010), <https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780195334036.001.0001/acref-9780195334036-e-0661> (25-10-2019).

²¹⁸ 'Erth Upon Erth', p. 91.

that was established in the lamentations for the Duchess of Gloucester and Queen Elizabeth. If we accept that Richard Hill authored this passage himself then it shows that he internalized the message of these poems and employed it more generally as an interpretation of history. Religious sensibilities influenced Hill's chronicle to some extent, but rather less so compared to his courteous sensibilities. He recorded the death of Margaret Beaufort with a short prayer ('on whose sowle, Jhesu have mercy!')²¹⁹ He recorded a 1511 fire in religious and emotive terms, noting that there were 'xv or xvi Crystyn bodyes brent, or mo: þe more pite!'²²⁰ The later sections of his chronicle have been noted for providing a pro-Catholic interpretation of the early Reformation.²²¹ However, Hill's chronicling style was generally understated, recording material without providing overt interpretation: this meant that the emotive and moralising rhetoric of the *exemplum* was only occasionally used.

Although Hill never held elected office in the city, he nonetheless sought political education. He copied a Latin letter in the Aristotle/Alexander tradition, providing a short political education text.²²² Hill showed consistent interest in London's economic regulations, particularly of the food supply. We know little of his business except that it involved Hanseatic and Netherlands trade, so it is uncertain if his interest in grain was professional. He copied an abbreviated version of the assizes of bread and ale before later replacing it with the full version. He also copied out a list of 'þe statutes of Ynglond how every craftes man vyteler shall be ruled' which laid out prescriptive codes against fraudulent millers, bakers, brewers, butchers, cooks and innkeepers.²²³ His chronicle also focused closely on the food supply and local government: there are notes concerning food

²¹⁹ *Songs*, p. 155.

²²⁰ *Ibid.* p. 156.

²²¹ Parker, *Commonplace Book*, pp. 79-80.

²²² 'Balliol 354', p. 421.

²²³ *Ibid.* pp. 218 (summary of assize), 221-222 (regulations), 239-49 (assize).

prices in 1439/40, 1482/3, 1486/7, 1501/2, 1507/8, 1524/5, 1525/6 and 1533/4. The precariousness of the food supply, and the effectiveness of prompt relief action, was made particularly clear in his 1502 entry: ‘þer was a derth of corn, tyll þe hoys [*i.e.* small coastal vessels] cam owt of Flanders, lade with whet, gret plente; & after þat we had ynowgh, thankid be God!’²²⁴ It was not only in the realm of economic management that mayoral action was stressed: in his entry describing the mayoralty of his old master, John Wyngar, Hill noted an affray between several lords that took place ‘at þe syne of þe Christofre in Chepe’. However, at ‘abowt mydnyght’ the fight was ‘seasid thorow þe polisie of þe mayre & sheryffis, & litill harme don, thankid be God!’²²⁵ London’s political economy was a major subject and theme of Hill’s chronicle; in his writing, problems were often countered by timely paternalistic solutions.

Within Richard Hill’s manuscript, we can see the circular relationship between household educational culture and civic authorship. Hill’s formative teenage reading was representative of the breadth of texts available to well-resourced and well-connected merchants. He read texts concerning manners, morals and politics, each of which made use of the past in distinctive ways and for particular purposes. When in later life Hill authored a chronicle, he was indebted to his childhood reading. The distinctive themes of his education – and his miscellany as a whole – were expressed in miniature within his chronicle and his recension of *Earth Upon Earth*. His chronicle was informed by and contributed to London’s domestic educational culture.

²²⁴ *Songs*, p. 152.

²²⁵ *Ibid.* pp. 152-3.

4.4: Conclusion: Chronicles as Instructive Texts

London households were principal sites in the creation and dissemination of a distinct civic educational culture. Its aims were at times simple and vocational, but could also expand to encompass the moral, cultural and political formation of citizens. This culture responded to varying impulses. Some were internal to the city, namely the formation of good citizens with the right moral and political values to participate in city governance. Other impulses were external to the city, such as the need to provide an education in manners and letters that would gain esteem amongst other educated gentlemen, particularly courtiers, gentry, and lawyers. When London citizens sought out literature that would meet these needs, they turned to a wide variety of pre-existing genres that originated outside of London. Some, such as courtesy books and *Mirrors for Princes*, had their roots in royal courts; others, such as hagiography and *exempla*, had their roots in the church. Lee Patterson has commented that ‘English mercantile culture was largely confected out of materials of other cultural formations – primarily aristocratic but also clerical – and lacked a centre of its own’.²²⁶ Certainly, the material gathered within this chapter could support an interpretation of civic educational culture as derivative of church and court.

But to take such a view would be to miss the process of reception and adaptation.

Londoners belonged to a broader English literary culture, but they formed a distinct sub-culture within it: a grouping with particular needs and interests.²²⁷ Londoners engaged in active processes of translating, adapting and adding to their texts. They compiled diverse miscellanies in which different genres were assembled: hagiographic, exemplary, courteous and political approaches to the past were brought into proximity. In mixed-text miscellanies, Londoners took the first steps towards finding coherence within this sea of

²²⁶ Patterson, *Chaucer and the Subject of History*, p. 333.

²²⁷ On sub-cultures, see: Meale, ‘*Libelle of Englyshe Polycye*’, p. 185.

different genres and approaches to the past. By compilation and juxtaposition, Londoners took control and began to form a more coherent sense of the past, one that adapted these pre-existing materials to meet the needs and interests of the London civic sub-culture.

By beginning to write chronicles, Londoners took another step towards creating a coherent historical culture. In the case of Hill's chronicle, he provided stories with a surprisingly diverse array of themes and interests which closely mirrored the broader educational scheme of the manuscript. The feature that made chronicles such good educational tools was that they were capable of incorporating a variety of subject matters, genre influences, styles and tones; and they could set this educational subject matter in a broader historical context than any other genre. Chronicles thus acted as a solvent, capable of absorbing and amplifying the themes of other texts within the miscellany. Chronicles were capable of blending genres: they adopted uses of the past which were more typically associated with other genres. Through historiography, Londoners could bring their hagiographic, exemplary, courteous and political approaches to the past together. At times they could be brought into dialogue or conflict; at other times they were simply compiled next to each other, any contradictions left unresolved. The appeal of the chronicle for many fifteenth-century readers was its diversity, its ability to teach a variety of lessons with different themes and morals using a multitude of stories. Modern historians have sometimes found the form of medieval chronicles off-putting, particularly their lack of a unified authorial voice, consistent themes, and coherent narrative. Within the context of fifteenth-century education, these were not weaknesses. Domestic education aimed to 'instruct and delight', mixing their several educational objectives amongst entertaining material. The chronicle could within a single text encompass different voices, themes, approaches, tones and styles.

5.0: Royal Histories: the King and His City in London Historiography

5.1: Introduction: Relational Historiography

Commenting on the treatment of the mayor at a feast, *Gregory's Chronicle* laid out an important principle of London's government: 'with yn London he [the mayor] ys next unto the kyng in alle maner thyng'.¹ This was a legal fact: the mayor was the monarch's deputy and the formally recognized keeper of the king's peace. It also had social implications: *Gregory's Chronicle* used this phrase to argue that the mayor should be honoured by society in a manner comparable to the king. The legal, cultural and ceremonial aspects of the mayoralty were formed in dialogue with the monarchy. The relationship between the mayoral and the royal was played out on every page of a London chronicle because magistrate annals dated each event by two chronological systems. One was the civic year, marked by the annual rotation of mayors. The other was the regnal year, in which time was determined relative to the king's coronation date.² The king and the mayor were offices so fundamental that Londoners used them to organise time. Managing two separate chronologies was a challenge and, as a result, there are many chronological errors within London chronicles. By following this dual chronology, Londoners forced two systems that had been formed by the parallel influence of two political powers, into concordance with each other. The relationship between king and mayor thus played out on every page of a London chronicle: this chapter will suggest that

¹ *Gregory's Chronicle*, p. 222.

² On chronologies and civic identity, see McLaren, *London Chronicles*, pp. 13, 230-1.

the royal-civic relationship shaped the contents as well as the forms of London historiography.

Amongst modern historians, the dominant approach to the king-city relationship has been to present the civic and royal governments as existing in essentially separate spheres.³ The town ‘governed itself after the fashion of a little principality’ and city governors engaged with the wider politics of the realm only to extract legal concessions and expanded liberties from the king.⁴ Over time, the city achieved strengthened autonomy and as a result, its motivation to engage with national politics decreased.⁵ Many historians have characterised towns as mostly neutral players, unwilling to engage with national politics during the Wars of the Roses.⁶ Increasing autonomy thus strengthened city elites, but also made them more insular and less engaged in national politics.

This chapter draws on a revisionist approach, as developed by Jim Bolton, Christian Liddy, and Eliza Hartrich, amongst others.⁷ Within this conception, urban and royal governments were not separate spheres. The powers of the corporation were delegated by the king, thus an expansion of urban liberties ‘actually intertwined towns more fully within royal government rather than divorcing them from it’.⁸ Civic officers needed royal support to make full use of their legal, financial and administrative powers. City leaders could not afford to be politically neutral but rather were vocal about royal finance and trade policy, and were drawn into networks of patronage. The relationship between the king and

³ The framing of this historiographical debate is best explained in E. Hartrich, *Politics and the Urban Sector in Fifteenth-century England, 1413-1471*, (Oxford, 2019), pp. 2-4.

⁴ A. Green, *Town Life in the Fifteenth Century*, (2 vols, London, 1894), i. p. 1.

⁵ Hanawalt, *Ceremony and Civility*, ch. 2.

⁶ C. Barron, *London in the Later Middle Ages*, (Oxford, 2004), p. 9; R. Horrox, ‘Urban Patronage and Patrons in the Fifteenth Century’, in R. Griffiths (ed.), *Patronage, the Crown and the Provinces*, (New Jersey, 1981), pp. 145-166, 160-1; C. Barron, ‘London and the Crown 1451-61’, in J. Highfield and R. Jeffs (eds.), *The Crown and Local Communities in England and France in the Fifteenth Century*, (Gloucester, 1981), pp. 88-109.

⁷ J. Bolton, ‘The City and the Crown, 1456-1461’, *London Journal*, 12, (1986), pp. 11-24; C. Liddy, *War, Politics and Finance in Late Medieval English Towns*, (Woodbridge, 2005); E. Hartrich, *Urban Sector*.

⁸ Hartrich, *Urban Sector*, p. 4; see also Barron, *London in the Later Middle Ages*, ch. 2.

London thus had many dimensions: the king was at once a patron, a benefactor, a customer, an ally, a colleague in governance, a rival and at times could be a threat to the city's liberties. Far from being an independent principality, London's governance was deeply entwined with the royal government.

Londoners were part of a broader English political culture and read many of the same texts as other classes in society: their reading lists included the *Brut*, governance manuals and courtesy books and many other texts which would have been familiar to the gentry, clergy or courtiers.⁹ In suggesting that Londoners had distinct approaches to kingship, this chapter is not attempting to divorce them from the wider English political culture.

Londoners were however distinct *within* the realm: they had particular economic interests, a local identity, and a distinct approach to education through apprenticeship. Above all, they had localized political institutions through citizenship and the corporation: the political interests of the city government loomed large over much of London historiography. Londoners' status as a coherent group meant that they formed a sub-culture within the realm. Brian Stock has defined a textual community: 'microsocieties organized around a common understanding of a script'.¹⁰ London citizens met this description, as a local microsociety organised around locally distinctive approaches to politics, including local idioms in the ways that they wrote and talked about kingship.

Chapter two of this thesis showed that London citizens often used foundation legends for institutions to discuss the relationships between important political institutions.¹¹ This chapter suggests that they brought a similar 'relational' approach to much of the rest of their historiography. This chapter examines how London historiography depicted the

⁹ See above, pp. 99-100 (*Brut*), 141-150 (Courtesy books), 165-180 (Governance manuals).

¹⁰ B. Stock, *Listening for the Text*, (Baltimore, 1990), p. 23.

¹¹ See above, Ch. 2.3, *passim*, but particularly pp. 49-62.

relationship between the monarch and the city of London. It suggests that this institutional relationship was vital to understanding how London chronicles portrayed the history of England. In particular, depictions of this relationship changed over time: each generation of Londoners responded to the contingent problems and commented on them through their writing. For the sake of chronological discussion, Londoners will be arranged into three generations: the ‘founder generation’, that wrote the first vernacular London chronicles in the early reign of Henry VI in the 1430s-1440s; the ‘War generation’, that updated and continued these earlier texts to cover the Wars of the Roses during the 1450s-1480s; and the ‘Tudor’ generation, that wrote during and immediately after the reign of Henry VII.

5.2: The King’s Chamber: Loyalist London in the Founder Generation of London Chroniclers, (c. the 1430s).

Although London chronicles vary greatly, common features indicate that many of the texts are distantly descended from only a small number of exemplars. Approximate dating of these exemplars is possible given that, of the main textual groups, one (O.9.1 group) terminates in the late 1420s; four (Egerton 1995 group, St Johns 57 group, Cecil 281 group and Julius B.ii group) terminate in the period 1432-8; and one (Harley 565 group) ends in the 1440s.¹² A significant number of manuscripts end with the English (1429) or French (1431) coronations of Henry VI or his 1432 triumphal entry into London, (namely Rawlinson B.173; Harley 3775; St Johns 57; Julius B.ii; CUL, HH.6.9; Egerton 650). The earliest exemplars that have known production dates are from 1440 and 1444.¹³ The period

¹² McLaren, *London Chronicles*, Ch. 3.

¹³ Appendix 1.11, 1.24.

1428-1444 thus represents the critical period in which London chronicles originated, formed several parallel strands and proliferated to a wider audience. Most later London chronicles were written as continuations and adaptations of these older texts. Thus, a large proportion of the London chronicle coverage for the period from 1189 to the 1420s can be attributed to a concentrated burst of authorial activity by the ‘founder’ generation chroniclers, active in the 1430s and 1440s. This section explores ways that London historians writing in these decades conceived of kingship, both in London chronicles and other parallel chronicles.

Two faces of the crown-city relationship from this period can be seen in the Goldsmiths’ Book of Entries. Within the entry for 1444/5, two narratives were inserted: a description of royal pageantry and a history of immigration disputes in Paris. The former describes the Goldsmiths’ role in the ceremonies to welcome Margaret of Anjou to England before her marriage to Henry VI.¹⁴ This was combined with a 1443 letter in which the king thanked the Goldsmiths for their past support in pageantry and requested their help for the marriage spectacle, and also the financial accounts of their contribution.¹⁵

The pageant description expressed the public face of the crown-city relationship, namely a close partnership in government. The reign of Richard II – during which the king had curtailed the city’s liberties, intervened in elections and publicly confronted the corporation – was within living memory for older citizens, and would have acted as a cautionary tale of the consequences of royal wrath.¹⁶ The Lancastrian regime had brought about a less confrontational style of governance. Publicly visible disputes became rare, no matter what private tensions remained. Henry VI’s letter exhibits typical features of public

¹⁴ *Memorials of the Goldsmiths’ Company*, ed. W. Prideaux, (3 vols, London, 1896-7), i, pp. 20-1.

¹⁵ *Ibid.* p. 21.

¹⁶ For an overview, see C. Barron, ‘Richard II’s Quarrel With London’, in F. DuBoulay and C. Barron (eds.), *The Reign of Richard II*, (London, 1970), pp. 173-201.

crown-city interactions of this period. The letter referenced London's recurrent role in royal ceremonies: London hosted, organised and financed a large number of royal ceremonies, including the 1415 Agincourt triumph, the 1421 marriage entry, the 1429 coronation entry, the 1432 triumphal entry and the 1445 marriage entry. Through these ceremonies, the corporation signalled public support for the monarchy.¹⁷ The 1443 royal letter about pageantry also followed the precedent of Henry V, who had begun writing vernacular correspondence to thank Londoners for their assistance during his French campaigns.¹⁸ London was an important financial, logistical and ideological support to the government. Within the model set out by the 1443 letter, the Londoners acted for the king's 'honneur and [the] worship of this oure reulme'. In return, the king offered the city 'favor of oure good grace in time to come'.¹⁹ This was an image of a close and successful partnership in governance. By producing a narrative of this event, the Goldsmiths were magnifying and perpetuating the king's honour.

The second piece of historiography produced by the Goldsmiths in the same year had a different tone. It recorded a dispute that occurred in Paris 'XXIII yere passed and more' ago, although it had more to do with London's present than real French history.²⁰ It recorded that the king's court had attracted to Paris a great many foreigners who established 'dominacion' over royal patronage for crafts. The immigrants 'thought that the Rialte of the Kynges highnes was so grete and so fre' that they could dwell there 'withouten any interupcions of the said Parisians'.²¹ The citizens of Paris would rather die than have their city's liberties undermined by foreigners. The strangers began to fear 'murdre and manslaughter', and so came to a compromise. Foreign craftsmen had to register with citizen

¹⁷ Barron, *London in the Later Middle Ages*, pp. 18-22.

¹⁸ Fisher, 'A Language Policy', pp. 1171-1172.

¹⁹ *Memorials of Goldsmiths*, i, p. 21.

²⁰ *Ibid.* iii, pp. 361-2.

²¹ *Ibid.* iii, p. 361.

hosts and work for them for a period. This historical account was accompanied by petitions and legal documents concerning immigration in London, making it clear that the Parisian narrative had a political purpose.²²

Whereas the pageant narrative presented the city and king as joined in a secure and intimate partnership, the Parisian narrative revealed an anxious and insecure relationship. Bad intermediaries – in this case, immigrants patronized by the king – could subvert and overthrow the correct functioning of civic liberties and the civic-royal partnership. By setting the narrative in Paris in the 1420s, the author evoked the historic concern that, during the dual monarchy period, London and Paris had been joint capitals. Some historians have interpreted London's increased willingness to stage costly royal pageants in the 1420s and 1430s as an assertion of its status as the senior capital.²³ The prominent placement of the 1432 London triumphal entry in London chronicles – an event at which London upstaged Paris by holding large pageants after Henry's French coronation – may indicate that early London chroniclers were influenced by this inter-city rivalry. The loss of Paris in 1436 and the deteriorating situation in the war over the next decade meant that the rivalry over capital status was no longer a pressing issue by the 1440s. However, by setting their narrative in the king's other capital during the dual monarchy, Londoners could talk about the relationship between monarch and capital in an indirect way.

In the 1430s and 1440s, civic leaders had several reasons to feel insecure about their relationship with the king. The corporation weathered the factional and fractious atmosphere of the minority of Henry VI through an alliance with the Duke of Gloucester, who had been admitted as a freeman since 1414 and who engaged in mutually beneficial

²² *Ibid.* i, pp. 20-1.

²³ See L. Bryant, 'Configurations of the Community in Late Medieval Spectacles: Paris and London in the Dual Monarchy', in B. Hanawalt and K. Reyerson (eds.), *The City and Spectacle in Medieval Europe*, (Minneapolis, 1994), pp. 3-33.

patronage relationships with leading citizens.²⁴ Gloucester's faction was declining in influence and fell from power in 1447. The weakness of the duke left leading citizens out of influence at court. Another source of concern was that the government began to raise money by selling monopolies, patents and even minor city offices to individual merchants, including foreigners. This benefited some individuals but undermined corporate privileges.²⁵ The city had in 1439 instituted a hosting regime in which foreign merchants were required to register with a citizen household, similar to the one described in the Parisian narrative.²⁶ The Parisian narrative expressed the anxieties of civic leaders – against immigrants, against intermediaries usurping their position at court, and against the weakening of corporate privileges. It also argued for the importance of enforcing the hosting regime. The Parisian narrative was closely connected to corporate political concerns of the 1440s.

The pageant and the Parisian narratives were both composed for transparently political aims. In the case of the pageant, this was to promote a sense of partnership with the king; in the Parisian narrative, it was to argue for immigration controls. In both, the crown-throne relationship was presented as central to political life. Even in the Parisian narrative, the citizens 'durst' not proceed with their new hosting system without royal support.²⁷ The author of the Parisian narrative was mindful of the importance of projecting a public image of a strong partnership between city and king; he discussed the current political challenges only in an indirect way, avoiding criticism of the ruling king. Instead, the challenges of the present were transposed on to a different king, a different country, a different city and a

²⁴ L. Rhymer, 'Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, and the City of London', in L. Clark (ed.), *The Fifteenth Century*, 8, (Woodbridge, 2008), pp. 47-58.

²⁵ Barron, 'London and the Crown', pp. 88-92; Hartrich, *Urban Sector*, Ch. 3.

²⁶ R. Flenley, 'London and Foreign Merchants in the Reign of Henry VI', *English Historical Review*, 25:100, (1910), pp. 644-655.

²⁷ *Memorials of Goldsmiths*, iii, p. 361.

different period. The author could speak his mind openly about the problems of Paris in a way that was impossible when describing London. The pageant documents expressed the responsibility of the city to act for the honour and worship of the king; the Parisian text illustrates the narrative contortions required to preserve the king's honour in public whilst discussing the problems and challenges of his regime in private.

Founder generation chroniclers thus wrote at a time when a stable partnership between king and city had been established, but there were reasons to worry about its future. One of the prime political issues of the day for London's governors was how the royal partnership could be renewed and sustained. It was against this backdrop that the London chronicle genre was founded. Like the two narratives discussed above, early London chronicles gave a central role to the crown-city relationship. They showed a similar tendency to be effusive when discussing positive aspects of that relationship and indirect when discussing its challenges. They expressed this by forming Henry V into an uncomplicated archetype of good governance. It also manifested in more complex and sometimes evasive accounts of his predecessors, through which chroniclers argued for the benefits of positive relationship and expressed their fears of the consequences if their partnership was broken.

5.2.1: Henry V's Loyal City

From the vantage point of the first London chroniclers of the fifteenth century, Henry V represented the recent past: their entries concerning his reign are typically longer those of

his predecessors.²⁸ Primary sources such as treaties from the French war or detailed descriptions of pageantry were rarely incorporated in London chronicles before the 1410s but became common in depictions of Henry's reign. He represented the most recent period of strong executive power at home and military success abroad, neither of which were consistently provided by the troubled minority administration or early personal rule of Henry VI. Henry V was thus close enough in time to be covered in detail but distant enough that his reign could be remembered with nostalgia.²⁹ This informed his prominent place and positive treatment within London historiography.

Many chroniclers found a showcase for the crown-city relationship in Henry V's leave-taking ceremonies before going on foreign campaigns, or his corresponding re-entry ceremonies. At one exit ceremony in *Gregory's Chronicle*: 'the kyng bade the mayre goo home and kepe welle hys chambyr in hys absens, and [yave hym] Crystysse blessyng and hys, and he sayde "Cryste save London"'.³⁰ The speech was a commonplace one: the *Brut* recorded a different leave-taking ceremony in which the king spoke to the mayor 'chargyng hym to kepe welle his chaumbre'.³¹ A contemporary ballad recorded the king's words to the mayor at the Agincourt triumph:

"Heil, ryall London", seyde oure kyng,
 "Crist the kepe evere from care";
 And thanne gaf it his blessyng,
 And praid to Crist that it well fare.

In response, the mayor declared:

Here is come youre citee all,
 Yow to worchepe and to magnyfye,

²⁸ E.g. in the *Great Chronicle*, 1400/1-1409/10 constitutes seven pages (pp. 84-90); 1410/11-1419/20 is twenty-six (90-115); and 1420/1-1429/30 is forty-one (115-155). The equivalent decades in *Gregory's Chronicle* are four pages (pp. 103-106); thirty-two (106-138); and thirty-three (138-171).

²⁹ On nostalgia for Henry V in this period, see: D. Morgan, 'The Household Retinue of Henry V and the Ethos of English Public Life', in A. Curry and E. Matthew (eds.), *Concepts and Patterns of Service in the Later Middle Ages*, (Woodbridge, 2001), pp. 64-79, particularly 65-68.

³⁰ *Gregory's Chronicle*, pp. 108-9.

³¹ *Brut*, p. 382.

To welcome yow, bothe gret and small,
With yow everemore to lyve and dye.³²

Each of these accounts used joint royal-civic ceremonies to position the governance of London as a shared endeavour between king and mayor. *Gregory* and the *Brut* portrayed the king as personally interested in the welfare of his London, his chamber. He also used his authority to legitimise and strengthen the mayor's rule in the city, (hence '*keep well my chamber*'). The ballad depicted a partnership, in which the mayor and king were intimate well-wishers. The city owed to the king obedience, '*worchepe*' and the maintenance of peace. London's role in royal pageantry and propaganda enabled it to '*magnifye*' Henry's regime. In return, Henry supported the rights of the city, and in particular the ability of its magistrates to govern, even in his absence. The Goldsmiths' book used depictions of pageantry to create an image of king and city in close partnership; in their depictions, these chroniclers transferred a similar understanding backwards in time, to present an idealised partnership between Henry V and the city.

The phrase '*hys chambyr*' was a reference to the medieval commonplace of London as the '*royal chamber*', meaning that it was the king's natural home.³³ The first recorded usage was in a 1328 letter by Edward III in which he demanded London's unconditional allegiance.³⁴ In the early fifteenth century, the term had gained a historical dimension and referred to the city as a royal foundation with a long history of positive relationships with the king. One such usage was a 1429 legal case in which the corporation defended its right to grant freedom to resident bondmen.³⁵ The city's lawyer employed a highly historical defence, pointing to the precedent of ancient Troy, the foundation of the city by Brutus,

³² 'Henry VI's Expedition Into France', in *A Chronicle of London*, p. 230; on the manuscripts of this poem, Appendix 1.24 and 3.13.

³³ C. Liddy, 'The Rhetoric of the Royal Chamber in Late Medieval London, York and Coventry', *Urban History*, 29:3, (2002), pp. 323-349.

³⁴ *Ibid.* p. 327.

³⁵ See above, pp. 51, 61; *CLB K*, pp. 90-1.

and the confirmation of rights by Edward the Confessor, William the Conqueror and by various subsequent kings. In parallel, the corporation's counsel argued that rights of refuge were owed to any 'hospice or king's chamber'. This argument thus placed the king's chamber trope next to a brief recapitulation of the history of positive relationships between the monarchy and London, and thus implied that London's status as royal chamber had been created through its illustrious royal history. A less detailed version of the same argument can be seen in a 1434 legal case in which the mayor defended his right to regulate weights and measures. London's lawyer stated that 'the City of London is the most ancient and most free city in the realm, and commonly called the king's Chamber'. Its rights stemmed from 'time immemorial' and were supported by 'constant use'.³⁶ Although specific kings were not cited in the 1434 case, the legal argument nonetheless had a similar outline to the 1429 case: both rested on an allusion to London's ancient foundation, evidence of continuous usage over time, and the use of the phrase 'royal chamber'. The city's governors in the 1430s made use of the 'king's chamber' trope to position London as a royal foundation with a history of positive partnership with kings, and this usage found its way into chronicles such as *Gregory's Chronicle*.

Henry V was not only depicted positively in his relationship to London: he was more generally presented as an exemplary king. He was particularly shown to be a paragon of chivalry and a divinely blessed monarch. Chivalry was pervasive because accounts of his reign were filled with descriptions of battles, and Londoners collected versified war narratives such as *Henry V's Expedition into France*.³⁷ The author of *Cleopatra C.iv* even incorporated a few stanzas of an otherwise lost martial poem describing Agincourt into his London chronicle account:

³⁶ *Ibid.* p. 185.

³⁷ See above, pp. 109-110.

Owre lord þe kynge he foght ryght wele,
Sharpliche on hem his spere he spent...³⁸

Several London chronicles marked Henry V's death by including a list of towns taken by the king: the wars were presented as his life's work.³⁹ Some historians commented briefly on Henry's character by using chivalric commonplaces, such as describing him as 'of knyghthoode lode starre...Gretely experte and marcyalle dyssepleyne'; or 'Fortunate preved in pees and werre. Erthly expert and mercyall displyn, worthi to stonde a monge the worthie ix' (*i.e.* the nine worthies, a chivalric *topos*).⁴⁰ Others described Henry as the flower of Christian chivalry, or prince of Christian chivalry.⁴¹ These references to 'Christian' chivalry indicated another vital feature of these accounts: Henry V was presented as divinely favoured. Henry was only able to be so successful in battle 'thorow myght of God omnipotent' according to Cleopatra C.iv, and his army at Agincourt was named the 'lytylle blessyd mayne [*sic*]' in *Gregory's Chronicle*.⁴² According to *Gregory*, the Southampton plot would have unseated Henry V 'but God that knewe alle trougthe, he sende warnynge to oure kyng'.⁴³ Similar divine interventions were credited with heading off the Oldcastle rising and Joan of Brittany's treasonous necromancy plot in some London chronicles.⁴⁴ Henry was king not just by force of chivalric arms, but also by the will and the active intervention of God.

Henry V was also presented as an exemplar of governing wisdom: he was 'wyse and right manly to termyne right' and 'Erthly expert'.⁴⁵ His governing wisdom was best illustrated, ironically, within the only early London chronicle that contains a significant criticism of

³⁸ 'Cleopatra C.iv', pp. 120-2.

³⁹ *Gregory's Chronicle*, p. 148; *Great Chronicle*, p. 123.

⁴⁰ 'Lambeth 306', pp. 30-1; 'Verses on the Kings of England', in *Gregory's Chronicle*, p. 53.

⁴¹ 'Julius B.ii', p. 75; 'Cleopatra C.iv', p. 128; *A Chronicle of London*, p. 110.

⁴² 'Cleopatra C.iv', p. 120; *Gregory's Chronicle*, p. 111.

⁴³ *Gregory's Chronicle*, p. 109.

⁴⁴ *Gregory's Chronicle*, p. 108; 'Julius B.ii', pp. 69, 73.

⁴⁵ 'Lambeth 306', pp. 30-1; compare to 'Verses' in *Gregory's Chronicle*, p. 53.

his policies. Cleopatra C.iv opposed attempts to come to peace terms with France in the period 1415-7. The proposals left the commons ‘fful sory and dreddyn of strong treson þat myȝt fall to þe reme, and grochedede [*sic.*] with hole herte’.⁴⁶ Subsequently ‘owre’ king ‘hade wetyng’ [knowledge] of these complaints. He ‘examenyd better this mater’, and abandoned the proposals.⁴⁷ Whilst this anecdote contained some elements of criticism of royal policies, it also presented the king as a responsive and attentive listener, with a positive relationship with the commons. That this was the most pointed criticism of Henry V produced by any London historian of the first half of the fifteenth century was an indication that his regime was particularly well-received amongst citizen historians.

The watchwords for depictions of Henry V in chronicles produced by the ‘founder generation’ were royalism and loyalty. Henry was presented as an exemplar: a good king and a great man. His relationship with London was close and mutually supportive. In both foreign and domestic policy, he was strong, decisive and successful. London depictions were explicitly loyalist: they always presented the king in a positive light and never engaged in any substantive criticism. This loyalist historiography reflected the priorities of London’s governors in the 1430s. London’s governors were the beneficiaries of a period of stable partnership between the monarchy and city, but they had reason to worry about the future. London used the ‘king’s chamber’ trope to assert its status as the capital at a time when Paris had a rival claim. The political priority of maintaining a strong and close relationship with the monarchy was expressed in depictions of a successful relationship between Henry V and his mayors. In constructing an image of Henry V that was martial, wise, factionless and decisive, they asserted nostalgia for a time before the troubles of the minority and the flagging fortunes of the French war. Henry represented a positive model

⁴⁶ ‘Cleopatra C.iv’, p. 125.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

to which future mayors and kings should strive. The founder generation of London chroniclers thus used Henry V's reign to present a loyalist vision: one in which their desires and anxieties were expressed through an uncomplicated and positive depiction of Henry V.

5.2.2: A Contentious City, 1189-1413

Although the memory of Henry V was a significant inspiration for founder generation chroniclers, they were also interested in a broader span of history. Their compilatory efforts also produced the standard London chronicle narratives for the period 1189-1413 which later chroniclers continued to copy and employ for the rest of the century. In these sections, chroniclers focused closely on the relationship between the mayor and the king, in particular by discussing the long history of the development of the liberties of London. The monarch frequently appeared as a benefactor who granted, added to, or restored elements of London's liberties.⁴⁸ This illustrated that the king and his chamber had a long history of co-operation. However, just as common were incidents in which the corporation's officers were deposed or its liberties were suspended or encroached upon, particularly during turbulent reigns of Henry III, Edward I and Richard II.⁴⁹ Chroniclers who prioritised a 'king's chamber' interpretation of London needed to respond to this earlier history, which was rife with conflict, as well as co-operation. In early histories, they found an outlet for their anxieties and fears, as well as their positive hopes.

⁴⁸ *Great Chronicle*, pp. 3, 4, 8, 11, 12, 15, 17, 26, 31-2.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.* pp. 4, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 12-13, 15, 16, 19, 24, 44, 47, 49-50.

London chroniclers rarely engaged in direct or overt criticism of early monarchs. Some instances of criticism will be discussed below, but these are counter-examples to the general trend. Kings were usually reported neutrally or positively; chroniclers rarely commented on misgovernment or tyrannical overreach, even when narrating instances of civil war or popular disturbance. A good example is King John, who has been amongst the most consistently negatively depicted kings both in medieval and modern historiography.⁵⁰ Within the London chronicle tradition, the most explicit criticism of him is the comment (only in the Egerton 1995 group chronicles) that the interdict of the church in England occurred ‘for the kyngys trespass’. No further detail was given, and even this tepid criticism was missing in other chronicle groups.⁵¹ John’s wars against the barons were presented as a product of French intervention. The rebels included ‘manye Frensshmen, which dede moche harme in the reaume or they wenten home’, and the aspect of the conflict that was described in most detail was the burning of London and the deposition of the mayor.⁵² London appeared as a victim rather than a participant in the revolt. As we have seen, founder generation chroniclers adopted a positive and loyalist tone when describing Henry V; they similarly presented predecessor kings in a light that was mostly positive or neutral and which avoided overt criticism or sympathy with opposition forces. Loyalism was a general feature of the historiography of this period.

Negative depictions of kings were rare even when discussing kings such as Henry III and Edward I, who had confrontational relationships with the London authorities. In the Egerton 1995 group, these disputes were reduced to the barest facts: the deposition of mayors and suspensions of liberties were noted, but with no detail or sense of motive.⁵³

⁵⁰ See ‘Historiography’, in J. Gillingham, ‘John, 1167-1216’, *ODNB*, <https://ezproxy-prd.bodleian.ox.ac.uk:2095/10.1093/ref:odnb/14841> (21-05-2010).

⁵¹ *Gregory’s Chronicle*, p. 59.

⁵² *A Chronicle of London*, p. 7; *Gregory’s Chronicle*, p. 61; *Great Chronicle*, p. 5.

⁵³ *Gregory’s Chronicle*, pp. 67, 72, 63.

Other chronicles expanded these bare bones, but the additional details were not flattering to civic leaders. Tensions were often caused because ‘tydynges comen to the kyng that the cite of London was nought trewly, no[r] in due maner gowerned’.⁵⁴ The king intervened not for malice but to reform the wrongs of the city. Bad actions by civic leaders were said to have incurred the king’s just wrath: one mayor was deposed because he refused in the king’s presence to end exploitative taxes and dues; others because officers perjured their oaths, allowed prisoners to escape, ‘token mede of the Bakers of London’, or disloyally sided with the Simon de Montfort against the king.⁵⁵ Despite being ‘civic’ chronicles, they usually adopted a royalist perspective: the city was usually at fault and the king’s punitive actions were justified. These passages reminded readers that civic leaders were accountable to the king. It presented an image of a beneficent king, who acted as patron to the city and guarantor of good government. He intervened within civic governance only when it was in the city’s best interest.

Chroniclers were more critical in their descriptions of two kings, Edward II and Richard II. London was portrayed as openly hostile to Edward II in the account of his deposition common to the Harley 565 and St Johns 57 groups of London chronicles. The cause of the revolution was said to have been ‘the malice of the kyng thugh entisement of the Spencers’.⁵⁶ When the queen’s rebel party landed, ‘the cuntrey all aboute fille to hem of here owne good wylle’.⁵⁷ The climax in London came when Edward II sent Bishop Walter de Stapleton to take command of the city. A ‘debate aroos betwixt hym and the cite, so that he was taken and ladde to the Standarde in Chepe’ and there beheaded.⁵⁸ This account contained no hint of condemnation, even though it involved the murder of a senior member

⁵⁴ *A Chronicle of London*, p. 19.

⁵⁵ *Great Chronicle*, pp. 10, 11, 12, 16, 19; *A Chronicle of London*, pp. 16, 18, 25-6, 31.

⁵⁶ *Great Chronicle*, p. 29; *A Chronicle of London*, pp. 48-50.

⁵⁷ *Great Chronicle*, p. 29.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.* p. 31.

of the government by a mob that had links to the civic authorities. Harley 565 justified these actions by stating that the queen had written a letter that instructed them to ‘distroye the traytours and enemyes’ of the realm. The St Johns 57 group included a copy of one of the Queen’s letters.⁵⁹ By focusing on the queen, the chroniclers gave the sanction of authority to this violence; it could be legitimized further by the fact that the community of the realm later deposed Edward. Even whilst criticising Edward II, London historians frequently looked to find legitimization and sanction from established authorities.⁶⁰

The frankness with which some chronicles criticised Edward II may have been controversial. Edward’s deposition was severely truncated in the Egerton 1995 group and the execution of Walter de Stapleton was placed in the passive voice such that it was impossible to determine who the culprits had been.⁶¹ Several chronicles expressed unease using omens: between Edward II’s abdication and his death, two moons appeared in the sky and, because of a schism, there were two popes.⁶² This disordered doubling in the natural world was an implicit criticism of the fact that England had two living, anointed kings.⁶³ Others objected much more strongly: Edward II was incorporated into the list of sainted kings in Bodley 596.⁶⁴ The Rawlinson C.86 version of *Verses on the Kings of England* attested of Edward that ‘Trywly he was an holy man’ who did not suffer for his sins but rather for his wife’s ‘velonye’.⁶⁵ For some, Edward II was an arbitrary and tyrannical monarch who could be legitimately criticised; others revised these accounts to instead stress the sanctity and sovereignty of kings. Londoners were, therefore, of several

⁵⁹ *Great Chronicle*, pp. 28-31; *A Chronicle of London*, p. 49.

⁶⁰ On London’s relationship to Edward II and to the new regime, see E. Hartrich, ‘Urban Identity and Political Rebellion: London and Henry of Lancaster’s Revolt, 1328-29’, in W. Ormrod (ed.), *Fourteenth Century England*, 7, (Woodbridge, 2012), pp. 89-105.

⁶¹ *Gregory’s Chronicle*, pp. 76-7.

⁶² *Ibid.* p. 77.

⁶³ *A Chronicle of London*, p. 51; *Great Chronicle*, p. 31; *Gregory’s Chronicle*, p. 77.

⁶⁴ Bodleian, MS Bodley 596, fol. 43v.

⁶⁵ Mooney, ‘Lydgate’s ‘Kings of England’’, p. 283.

minds, and some found the topic of opposition to monarchical authority uncomfortable, (or perhaps unsafe), to set down in writing.

Richard II was more widely and directly criticised than Edward II, and there was no equivalent royal saint's cult.⁶⁶ Here as in the reign of Edward II, many of the different chronicle groups had similar content but the Egerton 1995 group tended towards softening criticism of the king. The *Great Chronicle* claimed that, in 1392, the treasurer's men made a deliberate affray in the streets of London, after which the treasurer 'wykkedly enfourmed' the king and thus caused the dispute between king and city.⁶⁷ By comparison, *Gregory's Chronicle* more neutrally noted that there was an affray and that the treasurer informed the king.⁶⁸ Even with this apparent moderation, *Gregory's Chronicle* still noted in frank terms the rift between Richard and the city:

the kyng, thorowe conselle that was not goode, hadde the cytte of London and many othyr cytteys and townys in grette hate and in indygnacyon, and [they] were endytyd as for rebellys.⁶⁹

Even here, the criticism had a caveat because the actions were attributed to bad counsel rather than to Richard's initiative. A loyalist and meek letter by the city, asking to be restored to royal favour, was incorporated into the Egerton 1995 and St Johns 57 group narratives.⁷⁰ Instead of accepting this humble subjection, Richard demanded 'blanke chartours', or blank documents with the city's seal attached.⁷¹ This meant that the city would assent unconditionally to whatever was later written on them, effectively destroying London's independence.⁷² '[N]o man wyste what hyt mente', *Gregory's Chronicle*

⁶⁶ For an overview of Richard's legacy, see: S. Walker, 'Remembering Richard: History and Memory in Lancastrian England', in S. Walker (ed.), *Political Culture in Later Medieval England*, (Manchester, 2006), pp. 183-197.

⁶⁷ *Great Chronicle*, p. 47; compare *A Chronicle of London*, pp. 79-80.

⁶⁸ *Gregory's Chronicle*, p. 94

⁶⁹ *Gregory's Chronicle*, p. 98; *Great Chronicle*, pp. 49-50.

⁷⁰ *Gregory's Chronicle*, pp. 98-101.

⁷¹ *Ibid.* p. 101.

⁷² *Great Chronicle*, pp. 49-50; *Gregory's Chronicle*, p. 101; *A Chronicle of London*, p. 93.

lamented.⁷³ This criticism had a specifically civic root: the powerful and arbitrary king had ruptured the civic-royal partnership and thus endangered the liberties of the city.

The Harley 565 and St Johns 57 groups both provided full accounts of Richard's deposition, but the Egerton 1995 group avoided open confrontation with royal authority. The *Great Chronicle*, Julius B.ii and Bodley 596 all contained the full proceedings of the deposition parliament through which readers could examine the legitimacy of the coup for themselves.⁷⁴ The Harley 565 group presented a detailed narrative of how, after the lords abandoned Richard, he 'resigned his dignyte' and 'Duke Herry was be generall accorded [sic] in parlement chosyn kyng'.⁷⁵ Much more unusual was the textual strategy within the Egerton 1995 group, in which the entire usurpation passed unmentioned: it noted Henry's return from exile and subsequently began an account of a new reign. There was however no explanation of how Richard's reign had ended or Henry IV had been installed.⁷⁶ The writer's default ideological position was one of loyalty to the crown, yet in a conflict between Richard II and Henry IV, loyalty to both was impossible. The writer thus defused the situation by ignoring it. By wilfully choosing not to include the event through which the current ruling dynasty had come to power, Egerton 1995 illustrates how far some chroniclers would go to avoid taking an oppositional position against an anointed monarch.

⁷³ *Gregory's Chronicle*, p. 101.

⁷⁴ *Great Chronicle*, pp. 51-83; 'Julius B.ii', pp. 19-62; Bodley 596 ff. 65r-86r (Latin). The process also occurs in in Lambeth MS 738, ff. 232-244 (Appendix 2.17) and BL, Add. MS 48031, on which, see above, p. 105; *Vale's Book*, p. 176.

⁷⁵ *A Chronicle of London*, pp. 83-5.

⁷⁶ *Gregory's Chronicle*, p. 102.

5.2.3: Founder Generation Chronicles: a Summary

The chroniclers of the 1430s and 1440s wrote at a time when the city had benefited from a close partnership with the Lancastrian regime but faced fear and anxiety concerning contemporary strains on that relationship. Chroniclers constructed their narratives of past reigns in dialogue with contemporary values and political priorities. Londoners wrote with pronounced loyalism towards kings: they rarely criticised rulers and often used self-censorship and reticence to avoid discussing difficult or uncomfortable topics that could have harmed the king's prestige or authority. They presented London as the royal chamber, the king's closest working partner. This partnership was assumed to be the default position; where it was ruptured, chroniclers pursued displacement strategies. Some used reticence to avoid discussing indiscreet topics – this was particularly used in the Goldsmiths' 'Parisian' narrative and the Egerton 1995 group of chronicles. Another strategy was to present an image of the king as a generous but exacting patron: he granted London's autonomy but sometimes intervened for the city's good. Although strategies varied between chronicles, the overall approach was similar: kings were rarely criticised, and a positive relationship between crown and city was presented as the default situation. Chroniclers were mindful of the fact that the city liberties were devolved powers from the crown. Kings were usually portrayed as possessing full and divinely-given sovereignty. Chroniclers often used accounts of royal pageantry to stage moments at which the king delegated his authority to the mayor. The general working model was that king and city had a co-operative partnership. However, on any occasion on which the king and city government came into conflict, the king's perspective was assumed to be the legitimate one: he was the higher power and the corporation should not act against his wishes. This led to the image of the king as a patron: he granted the city power, but could also take it

away. One result of this ideological perspective was that early London chronicles were habitually royalist: they usually presented a defence of the king's actions rather than those of the civic elite. Early sections of the London chronicles focused mostly on the actions of kings and did not frequently depict independent actions of the mayors.⁷⁷

5.3: 'He That Had Londyn for Sake/Wolde no More to Hem Take': the Challenges of Weak Kingship, *temp.* Henry VI and Edward IV.⁷⁸

The 1440s saw a significant material change in the production of London chronicles. The earliest surviving exemplars were produced within this decade and thus, in this period, we can move from discussing hypothetical exemplars and manuscript groups and instead analyse the texts as they exist today. Chroniclers writing after the 1440s typically drew on founder generation chronicles for the early history of London, but their exemplars usually ended in the period 1428-1444.⁷⁹ After this date, owners would have to write new continuations. The founder generation had been closely knit, with many inter-related texts which differed only through small editorial additions and omissions. The next generation of chroniclers proved quite different. It was common for two chronicles to have similar material as far as the 1430s, before branching out into unique continuations. Texts became increasingly idiosyncratic and diverse. The result is that the reigns of Henry VI and Edward IV are covered in greater detail, and there is greater diversity within the reportage,

⁷⁷ For the increasing interest in civic history from 1420 onwards, see below, pp. 251-256.

⁷⁸ *Gregory's Chronicle*, p. 215.

⁷⁹ McLaren, *London Chronicles*, Ch. 3.

compared to any of their predecessors. These were chroniclers writing about the immediate past and, perhaps as a result, political partisanship became an increasing feature of the narratives.

The middle decades of the century also saw new strains in the relationship between king and city. 1447 saw the death of Humphrey of Gloucester, which deprived London of its most powerful and well-connected benefactor at court.⁸⁰ England decisively lost the wars in France, experienced the 1450 popular rising of Jack Cade, and began a series of factional struggles that eventually escalated into the Wars of the Roses. Instability and conflict bred a new political environment for city leaders.⁸¹ Warring court factions desired city support and finance, and the corporation similarly desired a strong royal partner. However, recurrent regime change threatened to destabilize these alliances. Plebeian and aristocratic violence broke out on London streets and threatened the corporation's authority. When citizens came to write histories of this period, they faced significantly different political challenges compared to their predecessors during the 1430s and 1440s. Given the centrality of civil war to their political situation, these chroniclers will be termed the 'war generation'.

5.3.1: London, the Critical Ally

In their accounts of the Cade rising, London chroniclers conjured an image of a shattered partnership between king and city. Lambeth 306 claimed that, as Henry VI was evacuated

⁸⁰ See above, p. 196.

⁸¹ For overviews, see Bolton, 'City and Crown'; Barron, 'London and the Crown'; Hartrich, *Urban Sector*, Ch. 4 & 5.

from London, the mayor came to him ‘besekynge him that he wolde tarye in the cite and they wolde lyve and dye with him, and pay for his costes of housholde an halff yere; but he [Henry] wold nott’.⁸² Henry’s refusal to defend London against an existential threat in 1450 symbolized the king’s neglect of his fundamental duties to the city: he had, as the *Great Chronicle* put it, ‘lafft þe cyte withowth ayde, except of theym sylf’.⁸³ His predecessors had been portrayed in London historiography as paternalistic guardians of the city, who aided the mayor in providing stability and safety; now, Henry provided neither. Indeed, kingship sometimes was a source of instability and violence. Various London chronicles focused on the Spring 1458 council at which the factions negotiated a peace deal. Chroniclers recorded that out-of-control nobles ‘made grete werre a yenes the cite’, and the citizens responded by forming a militia and patrolling the streets, ‘to see that the kynges peace wer kepte’.⁸⁴ On occasions such as these, the king’s council was no longer a source of peacekeeping; instead ‘the meire off London with a godely fellaueshippe of men of armes kepte the pees’.⁸⁵ Within these narratives, the king offered little aid or support to the city: the crown-throne alliance no longer produced the necessary results.

Many chroniclers depicted the allegiance of London to the crown as transactional, and open to renegotiation. In 1450, Robert Bale reported the treasonous words for which a vintner’s servant was prosecuted: ‘London shall put þe kyng from his crown’.⁸⁶ What had once been seditious and treasonous subsequently became acceptable. The habitually pro-Yorkist *Gregory’s Chronicle* depicted the city’s switch of allegiance from Lancaster to York in 1461 by quoting approvingly a couplet: ‘He that had Londyn for sake/wolde no

⁸² ‘Lambeth 306’, p. 67.

⁸³ *Great Chronicle*, p. 183.

⁸⁴ ‘Lambeth 306’, p. 73; ‘Vitellius A.xvi’, p. 168; *Great Chronicle*, pp. 189-90.

⁸⁵ ‘Lambeth 306’, p. 71.

⁸⁶ ‘Bale’s Chronicle’, p. 129.

more to hem take'.⁸⁷ In other words, the Lancastrians had forsaken their duties toward the city and in return, the city was justified in forsaking its allegiance. Another allegiance debate of 1461 was depicted in the *Great Chronicle*, during which 'the comons of the cite and the hedys were of ij oppynyons & meyndys'.⁸⁸ The mayor preferred the Yorkists but needed to appease the queen's Lancastrian army, which was recently victorious at the 1461 Battle of St Albans and was perilously close to London. The mayor formed a strategy that was approved by the 'a certayn numbyr of aldyrmen with hede comoners' and 'the lernyd men of the counsayll': the Lancastrians were to be barred from entering the city but they would be provided with carts of provisions.⁸⁹ This policy was pragmatic: the weak position of the Yorkists meant that the security and survival of London depended on accommodating the Lancastrians. This was not an alliance based on love, or even on trust, (hence the queen's men were not admitted within the walls). The Yorkist-aligned commons responded to the mayor's plan with 'ffury & rage' and blocked the convoy from reaching the Lancastrians.⁹⁰ The commons acted in a way that exhibited loyalty and an emotional bond to their preferred leader. In the chronicler's eyes, this was naïve and mistaken: he favoured a measured, pragmatic and transactional approach rather than one rooted in unswerving loyalty.

Although these anecdotes from Bale, *Gregory's Chronicle* and the *Great Chronicle* had different contexts and meanings, they each depicted moments at which citizens proposed breaking with the city's current royal allegiance and adopting a different strategy. This was portrayed as pragmatism: the city governors gave allegiance and material support to any ruler who could provide them with security and legitimacy. It was, however, also an issue

⁸⁷ *Gregory's Chronicle*, p. 215.

⁸⁸ *Great Chronicle*, p. 194.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

which cut through from the top to the bottom of society, and could motivate Vintners' servants or street mobs to debate which candidate would make a better or more legitimate king. Founder generation chroniclers had presented London as unconditionally loyal to and emotionally committed to the reigning monarch. War generation historians presented the crown-city relationship as composed of bargains and temporary alliances, ever open for debate and renegotiation.

The reign of Edward IV allowed crown-city relations to be reset. After Edward had been acclaimed king, a delegation of Londoners came to him:

besechyng the kyng to be good and gracious to the citee; and that they myght have their olde liberties and ffraunchises graunted and confermed as they had been by his noble progenitours days.⁹¹

Edward renewed their liberties and ordered that London's leaders must 'see the citee well guyded in his absence, and that he kept it safly to his use', and 'kepe the cytee to his behoffe and honoure'.⁹² This ceremony, and many others, were used to portray the importance that London held to the Yorkist regime. Other ceremonies of a similar kind included an occasion on which many citizens were knighted by the king in 1465, which was 'a grete worschyppe unto alle the cytte'.⁹³ Late in Edward IV's second reign, several chronicles described an occasion on which the King 'ffor ffavour that he bare unto the cyte, or ffor ffavour that he bare unto the mayer' invited the civic leadership to hunt with him at Waltham forest.⁹⁴ Accounts of ceremonies and feasts within the reign of Edward IV were used to express the close and reciprocal relationship between mayor and king under the Yorkist regime.

⁹¹ 'Vitellius A.xvi', pp. 174-5.

⁹² 'Vitellius A.xvi', pp. 174-5; 'Gough London 10', p. 162.

⁹³ *Gregory's Chronicle*, p. 228.

⁹⁴ *Great Chronicle*, pp. 228-9.

London's pivotal role within the Yorkist cause was particularly portrayed through accounts of the 1471 'siege of the Bastard', in which the city defended itself against a Lancastrian army led by the Bastard of Fauconberg. This was depicted in great detail in several London chronicles, notably Vitellius A.xvi and the *Great Chronicle*; it was also depicted in a record narrative in the journals of the common council and was a principal event in the verse history *On the Recovery of the Throne by Edward IV*, which chapter two suggested was probably authored by a citizen.⁹⁵ Each of these sources depicted heroic actions of citizens who 'sallied out of the gates and made a stout resistance and put them [the Lancastrians] to flight'; some, particularly the *Great Chronicle*, depicted the individual actions, words and even costumes of some of London's leaders.⁹⁶ Many of these accounts ended with Edward IV returning to London and knighting the mayor, recorder and the aldermen, 'to the honour of the same city'.⁹⁷ In *Recovery*, this was magnified to become a fictional triumphal entry at which the king 'thonkyd the cetisence [citizens] of thayre fidelité'.⁹⁸ All of the accounts emphasized the effort exerted by the city, whether in blood, treasure or in the personal heroic actions of its leaders. They also ended with ceremonial accounts in which the king expressed his gratitude towards the citizens through knighthoods, honours or ceremonies. These positioned London as a vital lynchpin within the Yorkist regime and as critical to maintaining peace in England.

Historians of the war generation were thus influenced by the conception of the royal chamber, just as founder generation chroniclers had been. However, the earlier generation had asserted that harmony was the normal state of this relationship and that when the city

⁹⁵ *Great Chronicle*, pp. 218-220; 'Vitellius A.xvi', p. 185; 'On the Recovery of the Throne by Edward IV', ed. T. Wright, *Political Poems and Songs*, ii, pp. 271-282; Sharpe, *London and the Kingdom*, iii, pp. 391-2; on these accounts and their links to the Guildhall, see above, pp. 35-39.

⁹⁶ Sharpe, *London and the Kingdom*, iii, p. 392.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁹⁸ 'Recovery of the Throne', p. 281.

and king came into conflict, it was usually the city's fault. The war generation brought a different perspective: they demanded good governance from their kings. Their attitudes were often transactional: they were prepared to support kings, but only if they received something in return. Unconditional loyalty was no longer a hallmark of London chronicles. They no longer avoided criticising kings but instead evaluated and sometimes opposed them. London historiography had moved from being unconditionally royalist to becoming a critical ally.

5.3.2: A Spirit of Evaluation

As has been noted, some London chroniclers used Edward IV's hunting party for the civic elite at Waltham forest to stage a positive and intimate relationship between city and king.⁹⁹ In Thomas More's *History of Richard III*, the same incident was recounted, but the moral was that rulers can gain 'more heartie favoure amonge the common people' by 'kindenesse' and 'a lyttle courtesye' than by other means.¹⁰⁰ For London chroniclers, this incident illustrated the relationship between king and corporation. For Thomas More, it represented the relationship between the monarch and the commonality: indeed, Peter Herman has noted that Thomas More often used urban citizens to stand in for the commons.¹⁰¹ The apparent interchangeability of the ruler-commons and king-city relationships indicates that we should not attempt to understand London during the Wars of the Roses as an isolated political unit, but only as an integrated part of the realm.

⁹⁹ See above, p. 215.

¹⁰⁰ Thomas More, *The Complete Works of Thomas More, Volume 2: The History of King Richard III*, ed. R. Sylvester, (New Haven, 1963), p. 5.

¹⁰¹ P. Herman, 'Henrician Historiography and the Voice of the People: the Cases of More and Hall', *Texas Studies in Literature and Language*, 39:3, (1997), pp. 259-83, 259, 263.

Londoners inherited two older models of their place in the realm. In one, London acted collectively as a ‘peer of the realm’, acting collectively as a baron to provide counsel and aid to the king. This had an institutional expression in royal ceremonies, where the mayor was afforded dignity equal to an earl and the aldermen to a baron.¹⁰² An alternative conception was that London was a vital part of the commons rather than the nobility, which was most obviously manifested by the presence of London’s parliamentary representatives in the House of Commons rather than the House of Lords. Through these two models, London citizen claimed the right to act as counsellors to the king, whether as part of a petitioning commons or as peers of the realm. Whereas founder generation chroniclers adopted the role of royal servants, war generation chroniclers increasingly appeared as counsellors, petitioners and critics of kings.

London historians of this generation increasingly adopted a critical tone, which evaluated the character, strengths and failings of kings and their policies. In some chroniclers’ estimations, Henry VI was a miracle-working saint, and ‘a goostly and a good man’ who had little time for the ‘pomp or vanytees of this world’ or ‘set litell by worldly maters’.¹⁰³ For others, he was characterised by an ‘innocency’ through which the ‘land was nygh lorn’, or he was a man of ‘lytyle wytte’, or one smitten by ‘ffransy’ (madness) with his ‘wit and reson withdrawen’.¹⁰⁴ Others steered a middle path in which he was a ‘gode, simple, & innocent man’ whose faults could be blamed on a domineering wife.¹⁰⁵ Even if they did not criticise Henry’s person, chroniclers faulted his policy: he followed ‘false counsell that was covetowse’, he raised money ‘be sotell and straunge meanes’, and under him ‘noo good rule nor stablenes [was] at that tyme, to greet discomfort and hevynes of the

¹⁰² On uses of this trope in the fourteenth century, see Hartrich, ‘Urban Identity’.

¹⁰³ *Great Chronicle*, pp. 212, 220; ‘Vitellius A.xvi’, p. 184.

¹⁰⁴ Mooney, ‘Lydgate’s “Kings of England”’, p. 260; ‘Bale’s Chronicle’, p. 140; *Gregory’s Chronicle*, p. 208.

¹⁰⁵ Caxton, *Brut*, p. 527.

peple'.¹⁰⁶ At public ceremonies he resembled an actor playing a king rather than the genuine article: it 'was more lyker a play then the shewyng of a prynce to wyne mennys hertys'.¹⁰⁷ Edward IV was somewhat more kindly treated than Henry VI: some deemed him an 'excellent prince' or a 'noble and victorious prynce' and recounted flattering anecdotes of his good manners and courtesy.¹⁰⁸ On the other hand, chroniclers speculated about his personal life: one noted that the people 'were evyr ferde that he had be not chaste of hys levyng', and another claimed that his deposition in 1470 was divine punishment for his 'wickyd lyvyng'.¹⁰⁹ He was criticised for listening to the wrong counsellors such as the Woodville family, impoverishing 'the substaunce of the noble blood of thys land', and making punitive fines against enemies such that they were 'hangid by the purs'.¹¹⁰ Both Henry VI and Edward IV were subject to evaluations by many historians in this period, in which their characters and policies were analysed and criticised. Edward was mostly presented as a flawed but good king, whereas Henry VI appeared both pious and inept: as Robert Fabyan put it, Henry's kingdom was not of this world.¹¹¹ In any case, whereas chroniclers of the founder generation had often acted as uncritical supporters of kings, those of the war generation abandoned reticence in favour of a more critical and evaluative style.

Chroniclers did not always couch criticism as their own opinions: often they showed an interest in criticism of rulers by the commons, as expressed through petitions, revolts and dissident speech. Earlier in London chronicles, there were relatively few accounts of treason trials, and expressions of sympathy for dissidents were largely absent.¹¹² The mid-

¹⁰⁶ 'Verses on the Kings' in 'Lambeth 306', p. 31; 'Bale's Chronicle', p. 126.

¹⁰⁷ *Great Chronicle*, p. 215.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.* pp. 229-30.

¹⁰⁹ *Gregory's Chronicle*, p. 171; 'Recovery of the Throne', p. 271.

¹¹⁰ *Great Chronicle*, pp. 208, 202-3, 198, 220-1; *Gregory's Chronicle*, p. 221.

¹¹¹ *Great Chronicle*, p. 212.

¹¹² For a counterexample of a dissident portrayed sympathetically at an early date, see 'Cleopatra C.iv', p. 134.

century miscellany BL, Cotton Roll ii.23 offered a strikingly different approach to dissent.¹¹³ It collated historical material including short annalistic entries describing popular disturbances in Kent and nearby counties during and soon after the Cade revolt of 1450, and the countermeasures taken by the authorities.¹¹⁴ The compiler also collected political materials including Jack Cade's petitions, anti-regime poetry and a list of trade-related mercantile grievances.¹¹⁵ The combination of texts implies that the compiler was preoccupied with a single, searching question: why were so many people discontented with the government? Whether the compiler's sympathies ultimately lay with the authorities or with the rebels cannot be said with any certainty. It is nonetheless clear that he showed a willingness to listen to dissident voices through their petitions and poems of protest. Earlier citizen chroniclers had mostly written in defence of kings; the compiler of Cotton Roll ii.23 was always mindful of oppositional and dissident voices.

Much like the compiler of Cotton Roll ii.23, many contemporary writers used chronicling to understand the causes and nature of dissidence. Sympathy for dissidents, sometimes coded and sometimes open, was particularly evident in *Bale's Chronicle*. Bale dared to reproduce Thomas Kerver's seditious words, 've regno ubi puer est rex' (woe to the kingdom where a child is king). Upon Kerver's release, he rode through 'the citee with glad chier', implying that he had the sympathy of the crowds.¹¹⁶ Bale also recorded the case of the protestor who declared himself 'Queen of the Fairies' and was executed despite doing 'noon opression nor hurt to any persone'.¹¹⁷ The Cade rising was depicted with particular complexity: many chroniclers ascribed good motives to Jack Cade, even whilst

¹¹³ BL, Cotton Roll ii.23, see above, p. 106. For a partial edition, see Kingsford, *English Historical Literature*, pp. 358-68.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.* pp. 360, 364-6, 367-8.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.* pp. 362-3.

¹¹⁶ 'Bale's Chronicle', p. 118.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.* p. 127.

criticising his actions. In Bale's narrative, Cade's men initially appeared as 'petitioners' who wished 'not to doo any harme but to have the desires of the comones in the Parliament fulfilled'.¹¹⁸ Other chroniclers similarly acknowledged that Cade intended to 'be ffamyd ffor a trew & good justyser'.¹¹⁹ Some noted that Cade's prominent targets were notorious wrongdoers.¹²⁰ Despite their interest in Cade's motives, all chroniclers agreed that, by the latter stages of the rising, Cade had gone beyond what was reasonable and become a traitor. For Bale, the pivotal moment was when Cade returned to Blackheath, 'ageinst his ligeaunce' to the king, turning protest into treason.¹²¹ For others, it was when his lawless tyranny and pillaging meant that Londoners 'wythdrewe hertis and love from hym'.¹²² No London chronicle presented Cade as unambiguously correct in his quest, but many described his motives in detail and accorded him some degree of legitimacy.¹²³

The interest in dissidence shown by London historians only increased across the period of the Wars of the Roses. Many writers used the voice of 'the people' or 'the commons' to advocate for actions contrary to royal policy. One particularly striking example was *Gregory's Chronicle's* consistent hatred of the Duke of Somerset. During Somerset's period of alliance with the Lancastrians, the chronicler commented that 'the pepylle sayde that the Duke of Somersett was worthy to suffer that dethe'.¹²⁴ During Somerset's Yorkist-allied period, the chronicler expressed disappointment that a plot by the commoners of Northampton to assassinate the duke had been thwarted: it was a 'pytte, for the savyng of hys lyffe at that tyme causyd mony mannys dethys son after'.¹²⁵ This is the most

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.* p. 130.

¹¹⁹ *Great Chronicle*, p. 182.

¹²⁰ *E.g.* Sheriff Crowmer's 'extorcion', *ibid.* p. 184.

¹²¹ 'Bale's Chronicle', p. 132.

¹²² *Great Chronicle*, p. 184.

¹²³ For Cade's role in London historiography, see A. Kaufman, *Historical Literature of the Cade Rebellion*, (Padstow, 2009).

¹²⁴ *Gregory's Chronicle*, pp. 198-9.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.* p. 221.

unambiguous instance in which a London chronicler endorsed the use of extrajudicial murder by popular rebellion as a political weapon. Similar attitudes were expressed elsewhere, albeit in a more guarded form. Bale noted in 1459 that Warwick and York were driven to violent resistance ‘to shewe unto the kyngs highnes the mischefe of his land for the defaute of good rule because they hadde noon oþer mean to com to his presence in saving their lives’.¹²⁶ Caxton placed in the mouths of the commons a desire to execute evil counsellors around the king including the Duke of Suffolk, Lord Say and the Bishop of Salisbury. During his account of the murder of Suffolk, Caxton observed that this was his reward for his past conduct.¹²⁷ *Gregory’s Chronicle* similarly noted several of the Bishop of Salisbury’s sins and errors whilst recounting his assassination, although the chronicler also stated that his murder was ‘mys rewle’.¹²⁸ Throughout the Wars of the Roses, citizen chroniclers frequently inserted statements that showed tacit or explicit endorsement for the use of extrajudicial violence as a political tool. In many cases, they used terms such as ‘the commons’ or ‘the people’ to ventriloquize for their own views or to provide legitimacy to anti-government actions.

The watchword for the founder generation of London chroniclers was loyalty: they were unswervingly loyal to anointed kings and avoided expressing sympathy with rebels, critics, or even with the London’s governors if they ever displeased the king. The watchword for the Wars of the Roses generation was criticism. Chroniclers frequently criticised those in power. They also showed a fascination with the wider phenomenon of criticism in society: they collected petitions, discussed rebellions, and attempted to set down in writing what the ‘common voice’ was saying, even when they professed not to agree with it. English

¹²⁶ ‘Bale’s Chronicle’, p. 148.

¹²⁷ Caxton, *Brut*, p. 516.

¹²⁸ *Gregory’s Chronicle*, pp. 194-5.

politics became increasingly fractious and disharmonious in the mid-fifteenth century and London historiography responded by embracing discord.

5.3.3: The War Generation: a Summary

The historiography produced by two successive generations – that of the 1430s and 1440s versus those of the 1450s-1480s – showed quite distinct approaches and themes. In both cases, these drew from the prevailing political priorities of their time. The founder generation wrote at a time when the city had enjoyed decades of productive partnership with the Lancastrian regime, but this partnership was threatened by the prospects of factionalism and weak kingship. They asserted the importance of the throne-city alliance through overt loyalism and by avoiding open criticism. Kings were frequently depicted as divinely aided, magnificent and martial. For the war generation, all of this had changed. They faced a situation in which Edward and Henry were both anointed and crowned kings, and each had benefited from and also fallen victim to popular revolts. If an author wished to construct a history that was loyalist, pro-royal and which always supported the authorities against dissent and disorder, their task became increasingly difficult in this unstable, changing and violent atmosphere. Weak kingship and a divided polity posed a series of problems both for the crown-throne alliance and for the realm as a whole. London historiography picked up these concerns and appeared in this period increasingly fractious, critical, and preoccupied with understanding the causes of the rising tide of violence.

The changes to London historiography were not just a passive reaction to the changing state of the nation: they also reflected conscious choices taken by chroniclers. Whereas the founder generation was often writing about the distant past and could adopt a tone of

detachment, chroniclers of the war generation were writing about near-contemporary events. This brought with it a greater sense of political and partisan investment. The Wars of the Roses produced a battle of pamphlets, poems and polemic. Some of the same features that were present in this political literature – such as attacks on evil counsellors or an interest in the ‘voice of the commons’ as an instrument of dissent – can also be found in London historiography. BL, Add. MS 48031 is a collection of political and polemical literature including the petitions and manifestos of Jack Cade, Robin of Redesdale, and works by Sir John Fortescue, alongside a chronicle authored by the book’s compiler, London secretary John Vale.¹²⁹ Chapter four of this thesis has already demonstrated that Vale drew on his political literature – particularly Fortescue – to inform the vocabulary and interpretations within his chronicle.¹³⁰ Similar combinations of petitions and dissident poems alongside could be found in Lambeth 306, Cotton Roll ii.23 and many other miscellanies.¹³¹ This wave of political literature was noted by chroniclers. They frequently noted that a broadside, a ‘strange and woundyrfulle bylle’ or a ‘bille sediciose’ had been plastered through London, and the chronicler Robert Bale was imprisoned in June 1455 for writing one such bill.¹³² As for manifestos, *Gregory’s Chronicle* noted that the Yorkist faction in 1459 sent ‘letters unto many placys’ describing ‘howe they were a vysyde to reforme the hurtys and myschevys ande grevys that raynyd in thys londe’.¹³³ The language of manifestos was sometimes echoed by chroniclers: the *Great Chronicle* noted Cade’s aim to end ‘fflateryng & ffals counsayll’ and ‘reffourm the comon weale of thys land’, which mimicked the language of his manifestos.¹³⁴ Similarly, Caxton’s *Brut* attributed York and Warwick’s revolt to a desire to remove evil counsellors and improve ‘þe comon

¹²⁹ *Vale’s Book*, pp. 206-7, 210-215.

¹³⁰ See above, p. 174.

¹³¹ See above, p. 172.

¹³² *Gregory’s Chronicle*, p. 195; *Great Chronicle*, p. 209; Sutton, ‘Robert Bale’, p. 189.

¹³³ *Gregory’s Chronicle*, p. 206.

¹³⁴ *Great Chronicle*, pp. 182, 183.

were of þe reame'.¹³⁵ Londoners were interested in polemic and were active readers, collectors and producers of political literature in this period. There are some instances in which chroniclers echoed themes, phrases and interpretations derived from polemic.

The London chronicles of this period have sometimes been characterised as 'Yorkist' literature, forming a part of the wave of pro-regime historical writing following the accession of Edward IV.¹³⁶ This discussion has shown that the picture was more complex. Many chroniclers projected an image of an alliance between the city and the Yorkists, but the relationship was never as warm or unambiguously loyal as that between the founder generation and the Lancastrian regime in its heyday. Chroniclers wrote with a greater sense of distance from the government, and an increased spirit of critical evaluation. Londoners did not accord on every issue and their historiography spoke with many voices. Although the Lancastrians bore a greater burden, Edward IV was not immune from criticism.

In many ways, the historiography written in the 1430s-1440s used a unipolar model of the realm, in which the king was the main protagonist. The city government existed as an extension of the monarch, which aided and assisted him. Founder generation chroniclers usually positioned themselves on the side of the king's order and authority. Chroniclers of the 1450s-1480s increasingly portrayed a multipolar realm: one with warring kings, factions, a rebellious commons and fractious politics. The mayor and king emerged as separate powers, sometimes in alliance and sometimes in conflict. The authority of rulers could be questioned, and rebels could be granted a degree of legitimacy. Chroniclers of

¹³⁵ Caxton, *Brut*, p. 527.

¹³⁶ A. Gransden, 'Politics and Historiography During the Wars of the Roses', in D. Morgan (ed.), *Medieval Historical Writing in the Christian and Islamic Worlds*, (London, 1982), pp. 125-148; Gransden, *Historical Writing*, ii, p. 222.

this generation responded to a complicated political world by creating increasingly complex chronicles.

5.4: '[He] Rulyd Mostwhat by Rygour and Tyrannye':

Overmighty Kingship in Tudor London.¹³⁷

Tudor England brought with it changes to the production of London historiography. The most notable feature was the decline in the production of continuations of older texts. The rise of the print trade reduced the demand for new manuscript histories. One result is that handwritten continuations of the *Brut* and *Polychronicon* became rare in this period, meanwhile, the print versions of these texts had a termination date of 1461.¹³⁸ The effect was less dramatic on London chronicles, however, the original London chronicles as compiled in the 1430s were rarely continued past the 1480s. There are only four instances of later London chronicles written as continuations to these old texts, namely the *Great Chronicle*, Vitellius A.xvi, Digby Rolls 2 and WYA 32D86/42: all but the last of these ended in the 1510s.¹³⁹ Most London chronicles created in this period were new compositions. A new tradition, the 'Arnold Chronicle group', arose from c. 1503 onwards, which consisted of texts related to the printed book, the *Customs of London*.¹⁴⁰ These were not continuations to the old chronicles and often abandoned 1189 as a starting date: for instance, Richard Hill's chronicle began in 1400, and John Colyn's chronicle in 1414.¹⁴¹

¹³⁷ *New Chronicles*, p. 673.

¹³⁸ Matheson, *Prose Brut*, pp. 157-166, 339-349.

¹³⁹ Kingsford, *English Historical Literature*, pp. 99-107; Thomey and Thomas, 'Introduction', *Great Chronicle*, lxix-lxxvi; McLaren, *London Chronicles*, p. 7.

¹⁴⁰ McLaren, *London Chronicles*, pp. 115-9.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.* p. 37.

They were often quite brief: Colyn left many years blank and often reduced his description of events to only a few words, written as marginal annotations.¹⁴² They usually focused closely on London and did not attempt to act as general histories of England. Both because of their brevity and their inconsistent interest in kings, the Arnold Chronicle group will be infrequently cited in this chapter.

Outside of the Arnold Chronicle group and the London chronicle continuations, only a few other histories were composed by citizens. By far the most consequential history written in this period was the *History of Richard III*, by Thomas More, a London citizen and lawyer, which was composed during his 1510-18 term as undersheriff.¹⁴³ More was university educated, immersed in classical culture, and would soon leave civic life in favour of a career in royal service: his work stands as a brilliant but unrepresentative example of what an exceptional London citizen could achieve. Another innovative text was Robert Fabyan's *New Chronicles*, which synthesized a wide array of sources within a London chronicle format to create a comprehensive history of England and France.

Thus, it is difficult to create a unitary and coherent narrative for chronicle production in early-Tudor London. There was a shift towards print as the dominant medium. There were fewer instances in which private households compiled their own ambitious and expansive London chronicle continuations; there were however increasing numbers of brief annals in commonplace books. There were also experiments with form and format, from Thomas More's innovative 'humanist' historiography to the reinvention of the London chronicles, first within the Arnold Chronicle group and subsequently in the *New Chronicles*.

¹⁴² BL, Harley 2252, ff. 3v-8v.

¹⁴³ S. House, 'More, Sir Thomas (1478–1535)', ODNB, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/19191> (16-10-2017).

The political environment was also shifting: Henry VII engaged in several public disputes during the final decade of his reign, and even refused to renew in full the city's liberties.¹⁴⁴ Other points of tension included allegedly malicious prosecutions carried out against leading citizens and the intervention of the king in several civic elections. This was the kind of public confrontation between the corporation and king which had not been seen since the reign of Richard II. London historians needed to respond to this changed situation. During the minority of Henry VI, they had written about kingship as strong and beneficent. In the Wars of the Roses, they had depicted kings who came into conflict with the city not by design but because of the weakness and instability of their regimes. In early-Tudor England the most pressing issues were different: the threat to the city now came from a king who was strong, well-resourced and confrontational. The challenges posed by an over-mighty monarch informed the historical writing of this period.

5.4.1: Richard III

The violent deposition of Richard III and his replacement by Henry VII posed a problem for chroniclers: was Henry's regime based on anything more than naked force? One answer to the question of legitimacy was to damn the memory of Richard III, thus many Tudor writers treated him as a tyrant, usurper and illegitimate ruler. Some modern historians have suggested that this 'black legend' reflected the efforts of a 'Tudor propaganda machine'; on the other hand, Cliff Davies has argued that Henry VII's regime

¹⁴⁴ For overviews, see M. Horowitz, *Daring Dynasty: Custom, Conflict and Control in Early-Tudor England*, (Cambridge, 2018), particularly Ch. 4, 5 and 6; S. Harper, 'Royal Servants and City Fathers: the Double Lives of London Goldsmiths and the Court of Henry VII', in J. Bolton (ed.), *Medieval Merchants and Money*, (London, 2016), pp. 177-193; S. Harper, 'London and the Crown in the reign of Henry VII', (Ph.D. thesis, University of London, 2015).

pursued tactics ‘of obfuscation or concealment rather than propaganda’.¹⁴⁵ The first detailed printed account of Richard’s reign was the *New Chronicles*: it was one of the earliest widely accessible versions of the black legend. Thomas More’s *History of Richard III* would later become a foundational text in blackening Richard’s character. Early negative depictions of Richard III can be found in London chronicles, notably the *Great Chronicle* and Vitellius A.xvi. Historiography produced by London citizens was vital to the early development and popularization of negative views of Richard III. There is no evidence to suggest that any of these citizen historians acted on commission by royal courts, thus ‘propaganda’ was probably not their direct motive. Why did early Tudor Londoners participate enthusiastically in damning Richard III’s memory, even before Tudor state propaganda began to do so?

The four most detailed sources – the *Great Chronicle*, Vitellius A.xvi, *New Chronicles*, and *History of Richard III* – each suggested that Richard III gave London and the corporation a central role in his plans to usurp the throne. Within these narratives, Richard’s first move was to co-opt senior Londoners to join his affinity: Mayor Edmund Shaa joined ‘upon trust of his own advauncement’, and promised to ‘frame the cite to their [Richard’s party’s] appetite’.¹⁴⁶ This resulted in a situation in which a small number of leaders of London were complicit in the new regime but the rank and file citizens were not. Shaa arranged for a sermon to be held at St Paul’s Cross at which Richard’s claim to the throne was to be publicized to the citizens. Each of the chroniclers presented this speech as a failure. He spoke ‘to the great abusion of all the audyence, except such as favoured the matyer, which were fewe in nombre’.¹⁴⁷ Shaa had been anticipating that the sermon would

¹⁴⁵ C. Davies, ‘Information, Disinformation and Political Knowledge under Henry VII and Early Henry VIII’, *Historical Research*, 85:228, (2012), pp. 228-253, 229.

¹⁴⁶ *History of Richard III*, p. 58.

¹⁴⁷ *New Chronicles*, p. 669.

end with the citizens voicing their support for Richard, but instead they ‘stode as [if] thei had bene turned into stones’.¹⁴⁸ This incident illustrated the divide between a small number of self-interested Londoners who joined Richard’s coup and the larger number who (in chronicle depictions at least) remained distant from the new regime.

The next phase was for Richard to gain the assent of the realm for his accession to the throne. In reality, consent was sought from a variety of sources, including the nobility and clergy. However, each of our historians – including Thomas More – ignored this wider process and focused exclusively on the assembly at the Guildhall, at which the Duke of Buckingham spoke to the citizens and asked for their consent. Vitellius A.xvi credited the speech with some success in ‘excityng the people to take hym for their kyng’.¹⁴⁹ The *New Chronicles*, *Great Chronicle* and Thomas More all suggested that Buckingham’s speech failed. Citizens were said to have enjoyed the oratory but to have hated the content:

many a wyse man that daye mervayled and commendyd hym for the good ordryng of [his] wordes; but nat for the entent and purpose the whiche that therupon ensuyd.¹⁵⁰

Nonetheless, the citizens eventually granted their assent. According to the *Great Chronicle*, this was ‘more ffor ffere than ffor love’.¹⁵¹ The *Great Chronicle* hinted at coercion, but More was more explicit. He suggested that Buckingham’s servants stood menacingly at the back of the hall, and they packed the room with apprentices who acclaimed Richard upon command.¹⁵² For More, the election at the Guildhall was stolen and had no legitimacy. All four London accounts of this event suggested that Buckingham obtained the city’s consent, but did so by means that were in some way illegitimate, whether through ‘excitation’, intimidation or packing the hall. They each agreed that

¹⁴⁸ *History of Richard III*, p. 68; *Great Chronicle*, p. 231.

¹⁴⁹ ‘Vitellius A.xvi’, pp. 190-1.

¹⁵⁰ *New Chronicles*, p. 669; compare *Great Chronicle*, p. 232 and *History of Richard III*, pp. 75-76.

¹⁵¹ *Great Chronicle*, p. 232.

¹⁵² *History of Richard III*, p. 76.

Richard received the outward forms of legitimate assent, namely a public shout of affirmation in the Guildhall, but that these rituals of freely-given consent were used to hide illegitimate coercion.

One further incident was narrated only in Thomas More's narrative: the mayor sent a delegation to deliver London's assent to Richard at Baynard's Castle. To the puzzlement of the mayor, Richard refused to accept their assent and the citizens were forced to beg him to be their king.¹⁵³ The civic delegation was left confused and demoralised. Richard's political methods were compared to a stage play: 'these matters bee kynges games, as it were stage playes, and for the more part plaied upon scaffoldes; in which pore men be but be lokers on'.¹⁵⁴ More's characterisation of the aldermen as representing 'pore men' is telling: More was not primarily focused on the relationship between London and the king, but rather between the king and the commons; this elision between urban citizens and the commons of the realm was, as has been mentioned, characteristic of More's writing.¹⁵⁵ The ceremonies for electing a new monarch were meant to express the idea that the king ruled with the consent of the commons. Richard was shown to subvert these ceremonies: under tyranny, the commons (as represented by London citizens) could not speak freely and were forced to act out a script written for them by their ruler. Richard courted, dominated and finally side-lined the citizens of London; for More, this stood for the relationship between a tyrant and the people. Through strength and guile, a tyrant could rob the people of its voice. Ceremonies of election and public declarations of consent could not act as remedies against abuses of power. Indeed, they sometimes gave a cloak of

¹⁵³ *Ibid.* pp. 77-81.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.* p. 81.

¹⁵⁵ See above, p. 217; also, see Herman, 'Henrician Historiography'.

legitimacy to tyranny. Far from being participants in the politics of the realm, the citizens of London had been reduced to ‘lokers on’.

The London chronicles also patterned their discussions of Richard III to act as case studies in the abuse of power. In Vitellius A.xvi, Richard III was a manipulator who briefly caused the city to become excited; his brief honeymoon ended when the disappearance of the princes in the Tower revealed his true character, ‘for whiche cawse he lost the hertes of the people’.¹⁵⁶ Richard thus followed the pattern of the demagogue, who briefly stirred up the people before ultimately being consumed by their disappointment and hatred. Robert Fabyan meanwhile presented Richard III as a violent and arbitrary ruler: the *Great Chronicle* referred to the men who enforced Richard’s will as ‘tyrauntys’, and the *New Chronicles* stated that Richard ‘rulyd mostwhat by rygour and tyrannye’.¹⁵⁷ In Fabyan’s chronicles, Richard never won the assent of the commons of London but rather used threats and coercion to force the appearance of consent. This was set within a broader narrative that contained many instances of Richard murdering his opponents, as well as occasions on which he borrowed money from Londoners without any intention of repaying it.¹⁵⁸ Richard was thus shown to be lawless and tyrannous: he used the outward form of election ceremonies to hide his violent coup, the appearance of peacekeeping to murder his enemies and the outward form of loans to hide his arbitrary confiscation of property. London chronicles thus presented Richard as a demagogue and a tyrant. Their detailed accounts of his usurpation illustrated the threat that such arbitrary power posed to London’s liberties, as well as to the commons of England.

¹⁵⁶ ‘Vitellius A.xvi’, p. 191.

¹⁵⁷ *Great Chronicle*, p. 231; *New Chronicles*, p. 673.

¹⁵⁸ For financial issues see *Great Chronicle*, pp. 234, 235-6; for executions see *ibid.* 234, 234-5, 236-7; ‘Vitellius A.xvi’, pp. 190, 191, 192.

A novel feature of the historiography of this period is its attitude towards the trappings of power such as royal ceremonies. Earlier generations of chroniclers used examples of royal pageantry in the city to illustrate the truth of the relationship between crown and city.

Large and splendid pageants under Henry V and Edward IV indicated a healthy relationship, whereas Henry VI's anaemic city pageants foreshadowed the decline of his regime. In accounts of the reign of Richard III, pageants no longer represented reality but rather hid it. The outward forms of royal pageantry were used to hide the reality of tyranny: displays of public consent hid coercion; when the king publicly declared that he loved his 'chamber', it often concealed a sinister agenda.

Thus, citizen writers frequently used narratives of Richard III's reign to comment on the abuse of royal power. The depictions used stereotyped patterns to depict him as a tyrant and a threat to London's liberties. The commonplace nature of these tropes becomes clearer when these accounts are compared to descriptions of tyranny produced in London in this period. One notable point of comparison is the *Great Chronicle's* account of Perkin Warbeck, a challenger to the throne who styled himself as the rightful king Richard IV based on a fraudulent claim to be one of the princes in the Tower.¹⁵⁹ Another is Thomas More's 'Coronation Ode' which hailed the new reign of Henry VIII whilst simultaneously complaining of misrule under Henry VII.¹⁶⁰ All three rulers were presented as arbitrary and violent rulers. Richard III was presented as a tyrant who used violence to remove his enemies; the *Great Chronicle* stated that Perkin's men 'tyrannously dysmembrid' their rivals.¹⁶¹ The 'Coronation Ode' complained about arbitrariness, the abuse of the law under

¹⁵⁹ S. Gunn, 'Warbeck, Perkin, (c. 1474-1499)', ODNB, <https://ezproxy-prd.bodleian.ox.ac.uk:2095/10.1093/ref:odnb/28669> (24-01-2020).

¹⁶⁰ Thomas More, 'Epigram 19', in *The Complete Works of Thomas More, Volume 3, part II, Latin Poems*, eds./trans. C. Miller, L. Bradner, C. Lynch and R. Oliver, (New Haven, 1984), pp. 100-113.

¹⁶¹ *Great Chronicle*, p. 282.

Henry VII (ll. 32-3) and hailed the new reign as bringing liberation from bondage: ‘This is the [end] of our slavery, the beginning of our freedom’ (12-13).

Another repeated feature was that tyrants corrupted the forms and institutions of legitimate rule and use them to intimidate their subjects. In Richard III’s case, this was shown by his abuse and subversion of the coronation ceremony. Warbeck subverted the legitimate succession by creating a false identity and genealogy. The *Great Chronicle* characterised this counterfeiting as ‘covyrd malice & ffalshode abhomynable’, indicating a gap between the superficially acceptable ‘covering’ and the false heart beneath.¹⁶² Perkin was also portrayed as unintentionally and humorously subverting the coronation ceremony: after his capture, Warbeck was paraded through London in a route that ran from Westminster to the Tower of London, tracing backwards the route of a typical coronation procession, de-coronating him in the process.¹⁶³ More’s ‘Coronation Ode’ meanwhile focused on how the subversion of the law to mete out arbitrary violence and the corruption of the tax system to confiscate property left the common people of the kingdom brutalised, sullen and silent: as a result, people concealed their wealth (36-7), the merchants ceased to trade (30-1), and the common people hid in their homes due to their fear of engaging in public life and politics (46-7).

Another trope was the focus on obsequious courtiers. Richard III’s overtures to London caused a small number of self-serving citizens to join his regime, whilst most of the rank-and-file citizens were left behind. More’s ‘Ode’ presented Henry VII’s rule as a golden age for ‘sycophants’ and ‘informers’ (42-5, 132). In Perkin’s case, the gathering of a court party of citizens was played out through parody. Warbeck drew to him renegade Londoners who formed a board of ‘chief counsellors’: these included John Heyron, a

¹⁶² *Ibid.* p. 284.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.* pp. 283-4.

Mercer who had fled London due to debts, and John Astley and Richard Skelton, Scriveners of ‘lyke auctoryte and dyshonesty’.¹⁶⁴ Whereas a true king would gather a council of citizens of substance and honesty from London, a counterfeit king gathered debtors and fraudsters. In short, writing about the regimes of Richard III, Henry VII and Perkin Warbeck produced in early sixteenth-century London had surprisingly similar features. Each was patterned by similar concerns with tyranny, arbitrary rule, fawning courtiers and a concern that the institutions and trappings of the monarchy could be corrupted and used as weapons to cow the commons rather than rule them with legitimacy. Thus, if three leaders with very different lives were portrayed in similar ways, it follows that these tropes did not exist primarily as a reaction to the reality of their regimes but rather as a reaction to the political, intellectual and historiographical environment in which these texts were created.

Thus, writing by citizens about the life of Richard III was shaped by several concerns. This included the need to respond to the real events of his reign; as well as the need to defend the legitimacy of the current ruling regime. However, the stereotyped aspects of depictions of his reign attest to the general textual environment and political conversations that were occurring in early Tudor London. The 1500s-1510s was the same period in which the Erasmian circle were introducing a neoclassical approach to political discussions with a new focus on tyranny and political liberty.¹⁶⁵ Londoners in this period used narratives about kings to discuss the difference between arbitrary and legitimate rule, and between tyranny and liberty. One reason that the ‘Black Legend’ of Richard III was so popular amongst citizen writers in this period was that it captured some of these political

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.* p. 281.

¹⁶⁵ On contemporary discussions of tyranny, see: D. Drysdall, ‘Erasmus on Tyranny and Terrorism: *Scarabaeus Aquilam Quaerit* and the *Institutio Principis Christiani*’, *Erasmus Studies*, 29, (2009), pp. 89-102; J. Guy, ‘Thomas More and Tyranny’, *Moreana*, 49, (2012), pp. 157-188.

conversations. Writers could use it to pose the question: what if a king possessed the cunning, resources and organisation to break London's power? This was partially a response to Richard III, but also needs to be understood in the context of the increasingly strong, solvent and powerful Tudor state under Henry VII and Henry VIII. The increasing tone of confrontation between the royal court and the city leaders in the first decade of the sixteenth century was a vital context for these discussions. Accounts of Richard III's reign thus have a paradoxical quality: on the one hand, they had propagandistic purposes that supported the legitimacy of the Tudor state; but on the other hand, they formed an outlet for the anxieties and fears created by that growing authority of that same regime. Thomas More abandoned his *History of Richard III* at the point in the narrative at which Henry VII should have entered to end England's tyranny: the abrupt and incomplete end to the text can perhaps stand as a symbol for the difficulty in reconciling the images of Henry Tudor as a liberator and as a tyrant. Thus, understanding how Londoners wrote about Richard III is impossible without reference to how they felt about Henry VII.

5.4.2: Henry VII

If London citizens found an outlet for their greatest fears and anxieties about tyranny in Warbeck and Richard III, the tone of their accounts of Henry VII were usually more measured. Nonetheless, some of the same tropes recur namely accusations of tyranny, an interest in how royal power can co-opt the urban elite, the threat of evil counsellors and an interest in the trappings of power.

To turn first to the trappings of power: in some respects, accounts of Henry VII represented a return to normality. Accounts of Richard III had expressed a fear that the

ceremonial forms used by the monarchy to express a positive relationship and partnership with the city of London were being corrupted: in staging consent, they were hiding coercion. Descriptions of Henry VII's reign often reverted to using ceremonies as indicators of crown-city partnership. A widely noted moment of partnership and unity was the aftermath of the Cornish rising of 1497, during which the mayor had a vital role in providing logistics and support to the king's army. According to Vitellius A.xvi, after the rising, the king:

came over London Brigge, where at Saynt Magnus Chirch the Mair with his brethren in scarlet receyved hym, to whom he gave cherefull thanks for his good diligence of kepyng and orderyng of the citie, and also for the plenteous vitailyng of his ost; after which thanks geven, in the same place the kyng with his owne swerd, which was gird aboute hym, he dubbed the maire knyght, John Shaa one of the shryffes knyght, and the recorder, Robert Sheffeld.¹⁶⁶

This was followed by the knighting of several aldermen at Midsummer.¹⁶⁷ After the disorder and chaos of a popular rebellion, public lauds given to London's principal leaders were a symbolic restoration of order. Depictions of public ceremonies celebrated the mutually beneficial partnership of king and city. The *Great Chronicle* and Vitellius A.xvi contained many accounts of public ceremonies in which the mayor appeared alongside Henry VII or his children, publicly demonstrating their working relationship.¹⁶⁸

However, on occasion, the outward forms of rule were described in a manner similar to those of Richard III, where surface-level consent concealed a true story of coercion. The clearest example of this was in accounts of benevolences. These were voluntary loans given by citizens to the crown as an expression of confidence and support for a regime, and several such loans are described in London historiography of this period.¹⁶⁹ These

¹⁶⁶ 'Vitellius A.xvi', p. 215; *Great Chronicle*, p. 277.

¹⁶⁷ *Great Chronicle*, p. 278.

¹⁶⁸ E.g. *Great Chronicle*, pp. 238-9, 247, 247-8, 251-2, 262, 274, 283, 283-4, 288, 288-9, 297-316, 326, 329, 331; 'Vitellius A.xvi', pp. 193, 197-8, 200, 201-3, 211-2, 215, 218, 224, 234-253, 253-255.

¹⁶⁹ *Great Chronicle*, pp. 240, 242, 244, 274-5, 275.

were however far from being voluntary, and the king even threatened to prosecute merchants who attempted to opt-out: the *Great Chronicle* described this policy as ‘benevolence malyvolence’.¹⁷⁰ Chroniclers displayed little trust in the financial management of the king’s administration and claimed that much of their loan and tax money ended up enriching corrupt royal advisors.¹⁷¹ Beneath expressions of public ceremonial and financial partnership, a combative and difficult relationship was sometimes evident. Under Henry VII just as under Richard III, sugared words and state theatrics could hide a coercive relationship.

Henry VII attempted to project a positive relationship between himself and the city in the ceremony for the sealing of the *Intercursus Magnus* in 1496. The king had been involved in disputes with the Hapsburg domains that had resulted in severe disruptions to trade, and this 1496 treaty would restore diplomatic relations and trade. Henry wanted the monarchy and corporation to seal jointly the documents and asked the city to enter into a penal bond. As the *Great Chronicle* recounts, the Common Council of London refused to do so, citing ‘many jupardyes’ if they handed their seal over to the king. They could not be persuaded otherwise, even when it was made clear that this was a matter ‘towchyng the kyngys honour’.¹⁷² Eventually, the treaty was signed with the mayor’s seal, not that of the Common Council. This account made clear that many citizens distrusted the king, and feared both the immediate consequences and the precedent set if they handed over their seal to his administration. The disruptions to trade caused by Henry’s policies were the subject of negative coverage within London chronicles: the *Great Chronicle* and Vitellius A.xvi described the burning of English goods across Hapsburg lands and cited ‘the restreyntys made by the kyng’ as a major cause of the London anti-immigrant riots of

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.* pp. 244-5.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.* p. 243.

¹⁷² *Great Chronicle*, p. 263; ‘Vitellius A.xvi’, pp. 209-20.

1492.¹⁷³ Whereas the signing of the *Intercursus* was meant to present a positive relationship between city and king, chronicle descriptions made clear the level of alienation and mistrust.

Richard III had co-opted mayor Shaa into his regime and Perkin Warbeck had drawn to him several unscrupulous Londoners. Similarly, Henry VII collected a personal affinity of Londoners who were depicted in chronicles as acting for their self-interest, against that of their mother city.¹⁷⁴ Henry frequently patronised both individual Tailors and their company. The Tailors were the largest guild in London and had some extremely wealthy members but they were nonetheless outside of the ruling group and were explicitly excluded from becoming mayor.¹⁷⁵ Henry granted the company new charters and renamed them as the ‘Merchant Taylors’. He also interfered in civic elections to promote Tailor candidates and gave the company its first mayor.

This unprecedented interference was covered in detail by a wide variety of London chronicles. In some instances, London chronicles interpreted the king’s favour for the Tailors through an ‘evil counsellor’ trope: the Tailors were ambitious, individually and corporately, and had captured the king’s ear at the expense of the legitimate leaders of the city. The *Great Chronicle* noted that they were ambitious because their guild had ‘grete welth & rycchesses’ but their ranking within the city was ‘nott corespondent to theyr worship’.¹⁷⁶ Chroniclers noted that their change of name occurred because they ‘sewyd to the kynge’, which placed initiative with the company rather than the monarch.¹⁷⁷

Individual Tailors were also accused of ambition: John Percival, first Tailor mayor and the

¹⁷³ *Great Chronicle*, pp. 253, 249; ‘Vitellius A.xvi’, pp. 198-9, 200.

¹⁷⁴ For a consideration of conflicted loyalties, see Harper, ‘Royal Servants and City Fathers’.

¹⁷⁵ See Beaven, *Aldermen*, i, pp. 329-30; M. Davies, ‘The Tailors of London and Their Guild, c. 1300-1500’, (D.Phil. thesis, University of Oxford, 1994), ch. 3.

¹⁷⁶ *Great Chronicle*, p. 323.

¹⁷⁷ *Customs of London*, xlii.

beneficiary of the king's patronage in the election of 1499, was noted to be 'verray desyrous to have it [office], in othir maner than othir of his predecessours mayris beffore hym'.¹⁷⁸ Similarly, the *Customs of London* claimed that Fitz-William – the king's candidate for sheriff in 1507 – gained this patronage 'by his instaunce and labour to the kynge'.¹⁷⁹ These accounts placed initiative with conniving individuals and particular guilds: by attacking bad-faith actors, the king was insulated from personal criticism.

Not all chroniclers however employed these distancing techniques, and some ascribed sinister motives to the king, particularly in accounts of the 1507 election. Within Richard Hill's chronicle, the king was said in 1507 to have sent a 'letter myssyve' prescribing how the electors should vote. When they chose a different candidate, the king was 'gretly dysplesid' and 'commandid' that the election must be rerun. He also claimed that the mayor that year was chosen 'by kyngis commandment'.¹⁸⁰ Hill, therefore, attributed these actions personally to the king and left little room for blame to be redirected to counsellors. The *Great Chronicle* suggested that Fitz-William had not requested royal favour. Fabyan reasoned that to be sheriff brought a man no profit, and the illegitimacy of his election meant that the commons treated him with little honour: thus, Fitz-William would not be 'soo insolent to labour ffor such an office as by noo waye cowde turn hym to any proffytt nor worshypp'.¹⁸¹ Instead, blame for the confrontation belonged with the king, who had 'put in question the ffranchyse of þe cyte' and acted in 'uttyr derogacion unto the lybertees of the cyte'.¹⁸² Thus, Henry VII's interventions in royal elections were widely resented across London historiography and sometimes were narrated in ways that personalised this policy to the king.

¹⁷⁸ *Great Chronicle*, p. 288.

¹⁷⁹ *Customs of London*, xlii.

¹⁸⁰ *Songs*, p. 153.

¹⁸¹ *Great Chronicle*, p. 333.

¹⁸² *Ibid.* pp. 332-3.

The most widely-reported instances of citizens who joined the king's affinity were Richard Empson and Edmund Dudley. They were two lawyers who had formerly worked for the corporation and civic companies. They entered royal service and used their contacts and insider knowledge to cultivate a faction within London and oversee the prosecution of several prominent Londoners.¹⁸³ Many citizens showed a fascination with Empson and Dudley: in one copy of the *Customs of London*, a user has added a 1502-1510 handwritten continuation in which the only chronicle entry records the trial of Empson and Dudley.¹⁸⁴ In the non-historical miscellany TCC, MS R.4.20, which bears ownership marks from several Elizabethan London merchants, a short note about the trial of Empson and Dudley was scrawled into the margins.¹⁸⁵

Henry VIII blamed the misdemeanours of his fathers' regime on his advisers and had Empson and Dudley executed: this gave royal sanction to the idea that they were archetypal evil counsellors. London chroniclers varied in how far they viewed Henry VII as having control of his regime. The *Great Chronicle* sharply differentiated between the king's good intentions and the evil actions of his advisors. In his eulogy to the king, Fabian stated that Empson and Dudley's bad actions unjustly

cawsyd hys grace to bere the wyte and blame of alle theyr ill doynge, ffor soo much as alle was doon in his name, & yit much thereof nowthir to his wyttyng nor undyrstandyng.¹⁸⁶

During his accounts of their actions, Fabian noted that although 'alle was doon in the kyngis name & yit the moost proffyt cam to theyr [Empson and Dudley's faction's] coffys'.¹⁸⁷ On his deathbed, Henry 'by soom weldysposid personys...in sermonys &

¹⁸³ Harper, 'London and the Crown', pp. 228-260; Gunn, *Henry VII's New Men*, ch. 7; Horowitz, *Daring Dynasty*, Ch. 4, 5 and 6.

¹⁸⁴ Appendix 1.3.

¹⁸⁵ TCC, R.4.20, fol. 115r; on its ownership by Richard Crymp, Grocer, see Scott, 'Past Ownership', p. 158.

¹⁸⁶ *Great Chronicle*, p. 339.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.* p. 334.

othirwyse' learned of the evil actions of his subordinates and began to issue pardons to their victims.¹⁸⁸ Fabyan thus constructed a firewall that separated the actions of Empson and Dudley from the king, which allowed him to attack misgovernment without damaging the Tudor regime. Not all chroniclers maintained this distinction. The 1521 continuation to the *Customs of London* stated that some of the prosecutions which had occurred 'by the meane of Empson and Dudley' were also done 'by the Kyngys comaundement'.¹⁸⁹ Similar phrasing was used by Vitellius A.xvi, which reported some of their prosecutions as occurring 'by sute of the kyng'.¹⁹⁰ Empson and Dudley's story had an interest and appeal that went beyond their status as archetypical 'evil counsellors'.

The *Great Chronicle's* account of the rise and fall of Empson and Dudley was more detailed, more vituperative and more central to the narrative compared to all other versions. Their lives became a case study of the perils of ambition: when serving as undersheriff of the city, Richard Empson had been humble and well-liked, but as he gained royal favour, he became as haughty as any duke.¹⁹¹ Through his corrupt practices, Dudley overthrew legitimate authority within the city:

whoo soo evyr hadd the sword born beffore hym, Dudley was mayer, and what his pleasure was, was doon, thowth the auctoryte of the Cyte and ffraunchyse of the same stood clerely agayn it.¹⁹²

Had they remained in favour much longer, 'the honour of that Cyte hadd been clene ovyr turnyd' and the cloaks of the aldermen changed from scarlet to russet.¹⁹³ Fabyan's focus on Empson and Dudley fit within a broader pattern in which he was intensely suspicious of ambitious men at court: this can be seen in his partisanship against Tailors, and hostility to

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.* p. 337.

¹⁸⁹ *Customs of London*, xliii.

¹⁹⁰ 'Vitellius A.xvi', p. 262.

¹⁹¹ *Great Chronicle*, p. 348.

¹⁹² *Ibid.*

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*

royal favour being given to candidates in elections. Royal power was vital to the city and the realm, but it was attractive to ruthless and ambitious underlings who could flout custom, capture elections, corrupt the justice system and overthrow established liberties of the city. At the end of his account, Fabyan inserted a self-conscious reflection that in the future, upwardly mobile men needed to read such stories to understand the problems inherent in ambition, and he inserted five lives of biblical tyrants and their downfalls as warnings: ‘wyse men may by the sodeyn ffalle of thys man, and his sodeyn pwnyshment, be well ware how they guyde theym when they be putt in grete auctoryte’.¹⁹⁴ By identifying Empson and Dudley as tyrants, Fabyan turned their lives into broader case studies on the abuse of power.

The chroniclers of early Tudor London wrote at a time when the state was increasingly solvent, powerful and organised; and also, at a time when public confrontations between the city and the king became increasingly common. These tendencies found their expression in chronicles that reflected on the limits (or lack thereof) on monarchical power. Chronicles expressed a growing worry that the powers amassed by the monarchy would be abused either by kings or by their evil counsellors. The *Great Chronicle* used the term ‘tyrant’ or ‘tyrannous’ on three occasions: once to describe Richard III’s thugs, once to describe Warbeck’s thugs, and once to describe Empson and Dudley’s role as evil counsellors.¹⁹⁵ Chronicle accounts of this period expressed a fear of monarchy that was not present in the writing of earlier generations.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.* p. 347.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.* pp. 230, 281, 349-51.

5.4.3: The Early Tudor Generation: A Summary

Founder generation chronicles tended to present politics in a unipolar manner, with the king at the centre and most events depicted from his point of view. War generation historians adopted a multipolar viewpoint, in which mayor and king were two power centres amongst many in a fluid and unstable world. The early Tudor generation's historiography may be better described as bipolar: the spheres of the royal court and the corporation were both depicted but they were fundamentally separate. Earlier chroniclers had celebrated the bonds of ceremony, affection and alliance between the city and court. Early Tudor chroniclers were much more suspicious of contact between the civic and the royal. Men who walked in both spheres, such as Mayor Edmund Shaa or Richard Empson, could belong to neither: there was a constant risk, if they had a connection to the king, that a citizen would forsake his allegiance and act against the interests of the corporation. Ceremonies that mediated the borderline between royal and civic spheres were narrated in detail, but they also were scrutinised for any evidence of royal encroachment. London historians often wrote with a cautious and guarded voice concerning Henry VII and expressed their worst anxieties and fears through polemical depictions of tyranny under Richard III, Perkin Warbeck or even Empson and Dudley.

In some respects, the chroniclers of the early Tudor period built on trends begun by chroniclers of the Wars of the Roses. The war generation's 'multi-polar' understanding had laid the groundwork for writing about the mayoral and royal governments as separate spheres. The war generation had shown an interest in good and bad counsel, which developed into the early Tudor obsession with evil counsellors. The more evaluative and questioning attitude of the earlier generation may have contributed to early Tudor chroniclers' interests in tyranny and abuse of power. In other respects, the interests of

these two generations differed. The war generation was often fascinated by dissent and conferred degrees of legitimacy on rebels. This was less clearly a feature of early Tudor historiography: for example, the 1497 Cornish rebellion was narrated with less detail and little sympathy compared to the 1450 Cade rebellion.¹⁹⁶

Another significant feature of this generation of chroniclers compared to earlier ones was the practical attention that they paid to the royal-civic relationship. Founder and War generations had expressed the relationship between the city and king through broad statements of affection, or through showy public ceremonies which staged intimacy between the king and his chamber. Early Tudor chronicles included some such ceremonies, but they also, for example, included entries recording the civic levies and organisational committees set up in support of royal pageantry.¹⁹⁷ Chroniclers increasingly focused on the practical nuts and bolts of the relationship, such as the men who travelled backwards and forwards between royal and civic governments and the financial support provided by the city. In its account of the *Intercursus Magnus*, the *Great Chronicle* found fertile material for expressing the relationship between city and king in details as minor as the allegedly incorrect use of corporate seals. Earlier chroniclers often suggested that public ceremonies revealed the ‘truth’ of politics, whereas Tudor chroniclers showed a greater awareness of the possibility that there was a difference between surface and reality, and between intention and effect. Chronicles of this period sometimes display an orientation towards the practice, rather than theory, of government.

¹⁹⁶ For the Cornish revolt, see *Great Chronicle*, pp. 275-8; ‘Vitellius A.xvi’, pp. 213-216; Bodleian, Digby Roll 2, fol. 28r; *Songs*, p. 151.

¹⁹⁷ ‘Vitellius A.xvi’, p. 229; *Great Chronicle*, p. 292.

5.5: Conclusion: London Citizens as a Political Sub-culture

Londoners were a distinct community within England in that they had their own localised political institutions, and apprenticeship provided a distinctive approach to education. By examining their historiography, this chapter has suggested that we can gain insight into their political culture: the salient ideas, their use of theories, their engagement with political discourses of the day. This chapter has primarily focused on how the relationship between the corporation and the monarch expressed and influenced these idioms, but the principle could be used more broadly to examine how chroniclers understood political concepts (*e.g.* tyranny). Within the history of political ideas, Londoners should be viewed as a coherent sub-culture: one that was capable of generating, appropriating or repurposing ideas and expressing them through particular local idioms.

Ideas were contingent not just in space but in time. London historiography exhibits markedly different political discussions in different generations. Londoners reflected on the challenges of the day and responded to the dominant debates within political literature. At the same time that John Lydgate was composing poetry that served Henry VI's minority regime, London chroniclers were making use of some of Lydgate's poetry as sources for their chronicles (*e.g.* the subtleties of Henry VI's coronation and the *Triumphal Entry of Henry VI*). Founder generation chroniclers constructed an image of Henry V that fused chivalric and Christian themes in a manner comparable to Lydgate's work. Dissident manifestos of the Wars of the Roses often claimed to speak for the 'voice of the commons' in denouncing 'evil counsellors'; at around the same time, war generation chroniclers became increasingly interested in protest, dissent, and counsel. As the Erasmian circle in England were discussing tyranny using classical examples, early-Tudor generation historians were doing the same using English examples. Londoners reacted to the political

and intellectual environment of the time: just because they were a coherent political community did not mean that they were closed to outside influences or slow to change.

The relationship between the mayor and the king frequently acted as a lightning rod for the political issues that were salient amongst London citizens. The founder generation depicted the mayor as a royal servant. The war generation depicted him as a counsellor who negotiated with kings. The early Tudor generation sometimes depicted him as the victim of an overmighty monarchy. For each successive generation of Londoners, the royal-civic relationship was central to London's political culture and so had a prominent role within London historiography.

6.0: Citizen Histories: London Historiography as a Civic Self-portrait

6.1: Introduction

Commenting on the fact that literary audiences in fifteenth-century England included increasing numbers of gentry and merchants, Richard Firth Green has warned that we ‘should not make the mistake of assuming that a wider reading public necessarily means a new reading public’.¹ According to Green, the dominant literary tastemakers remained the royal court and the high nobility. When merchants read literature, they adopted courtly modes without significant alteration: ‘it is inherently improbable that the city merchant would aspire to cultural models essentially different from those of his superiors’.²

Chronicles were a literary form that proliferated first amongst the clergy and subsequently amongst the royal courts and nobility: could the proliferation of chronicling amongst merchants in the fifteenth century simply have been a means for London citizens to emulate their social betters, whilst adding little that was innovative or new to the genre? This thesis has so far posed quite a different understanding of the civic reading public. It has suggested that, as chronicling spread in London, it was appropriated to meet the particular needs of citizens. These processes of adaptation and localisation significantly reshaped the form and content of chronicles. This chapter revisits the most fundamental assumption which underlies this model of cultural adaptation and asks: just how ‘civic’ was London historiography?³ In particular: how did Londoners write about London?

¹ Green, *Poets and Princepleasers*, p. 10.

² *Ibid.* p. 9.

³ For a discussion of ‘civic’ literature, see above, pp. 21-27.

6.1.1: Civic Chronicling

One of the most distinctive features of London's historiography was the prominence of depictions of the city and corporation. London was not a common subject in late-medieval literature. In his 2011 *Cambridge Companion to the Literature of London*, Lawrence Manley observed that London had a 'marginal position in late medieval literature'.⁴ In the same volume, Ralph Hanna argued that the prevalence of chivalric and clerical conventions in literature rendered London 'too problematic for discussion'. It was only in the sixteenth century that it was 'possible actually to see England's greatest city in a literary context or directly as a literary subject'.⁵ Hanna noted that earlier depictions of London existed but they had 'the scrappy quality of rather chance references across a range of texts' and did not constitute a systematic engagement with civic life.⁶ Hanna and Manley both concentrated almost exclusively on canonical poetry and did not consider historical literature. Within their conceptions, *literati* were non-citizens who found mercantile life to be a 'social and imaginative other' that they could never fully understand.⁷ Given the apparent lack of curiosity about London in other genres of late-medieval vernacular writing, the intense interest in the city exhibited by chroniclers is a striking and truly localised feature.

This thesis has suggested that citizens were not 'other' to the *literati*. Instead, Londoners came in large numbers to read and write historical literature. In many cases, Londoners wrote for the enjoyment of their fellow Londoners. This is most notably the case for the

⁴ L. Manley, 'Introduction', in L. Manley (ed.), *Cambridge Companion to the Literature of London*, (Cambridge, 2011), pp. 1-18.

⁵ Hanna, 'Images of London', p. 19. For additional surveys of London literature, some of which suggest a non-marginal role for the city, see: Boffey, 'London Books'; C. Benson, 'Some Poets' Tours of Medieval London: Varieties of Literary Urban Experience', *Essays in Medieval Studies*, 24, (2007), pp. 1-20; Benson, 'Civic Lydgate'.

⁶ Hanna, 'Images of London', pp. 21, 19.

⁷ Manley, 'Introduction', p. 9.

London chroniclers but is also true for much of the writing produced for institutional and archival use, such as the Guildhall's record narratives.⁸ For citizens, the city was not an 'other', rather it was their home, their workplace, and an important part of their political life and identity. Londoners thus formed a distinct sub-culture within late-medieval English literary culture: one with distinctive patterns of authorship, readership, identity and community.⁹ Thus, one of London historiography's most striking features compared to other types of Middle English literature was its developed and sustained effort to depict city life in writing: London's history, its identity, its governance, and its leaders.

This chapter considers how and why Londoners wrote about their city. It particularly follows on from chapter four, which suggested that historiography had an important role in the moral and political education of young Londoners.¹⁰ Depictions of London need to be understood as part of a programme of education: citizens and officeholders needed to understand how the corporation should, and did function. Historiography was a tool for the moral and political formation of London citizens.

6.1.2: London in Fiction and Historiography

London chronicles need to be situated within the broader field of literary depictions of London. Ralph Hanna has noted that literature often focused on London's walls and outer boundaries, but remained 'chary of offering definitions of what is within them'.¹¹ Civic governance was rarely discussed: London appeared a 'scarcely governable urban bustle'.¹²

⁸ See above, pp. 35-39.

⁹ On the idea of a sub-culture, see Meale, '*Libelle of Englyshe Polycye*', p. 184.

¹⁰ See above, Chapter 4, particularly pp. 165-180.

¹¹ Hanna, 'Images of London', p. 20.

¹² *Ibid.* p. 32.

The relatively small number of authors that discussed London's internal life often employed three tropes, each of which expressed ambivalence or negativity towards London.¹³ One approach was to focus on economic crime, particularly the prevalence of fraud and corruption. Another was to focus on vice and illicit delight. A third approach presented London as a place where stable identities broke down in the face of urban anonymity.

When we compare categories in Hanna's survey to the content of the London chronicles, there are some clear analogues but also some notable differences. Many chroniclers were interested in the outer boundaries of the city: chapter two recounted many legends that focused on the walls, gates, river and bridge, which constituted the boundaries of the corporation's territory. Vice, temptation, fraud and corruption were depicted primarily through chronicle accounts of the city's court system. These often portrayed the punishment of prostitutes, corrupt retailers and petty criminals. In other respects, however, poetry and chronicles differed. There is no sense in typical chronicle narratives that London was corrosive to personal identity. Far from depicting the city as 'scarcely governable', chroniclers were obsessed with governance. We may group the ways that London was depicted in historiography into four broad categories: those that illustrated the city's power relationships (*e.g.* between the city and crown); changes to the urban fabric; civic regulation and trial reportage; and internal politics.

Power relationships, such as that between the mayor and the king, were vital to London historiography. Chapter five of this thesis has already demonstrated that, for London historians, the relationship between the king and his city was of central importance: it preoccupied London chroniclers, but also Thomas More and authors of the *Brut*. It was a

¹³ *Ibid.* pp. 26-32.

constant and widespread concern, equally central to each generation of Londoners over our period.¹⁴

Chroniclers also frequently remarked upon changes to the **urban fabric**. For example, the *Great Chronicle* from the earliest to the latest sections showed an interest in the founding or repair of London churches, the bridge, walls and gates.¹⁵ Depictions of the fifteenth century brought a more consistent focus on corporate secular architecture such as the Guildhall, prisons and conduits.¹⁶ Interest in power relationships and the urban fabric was present from the earliest to the latest sections of the London chronicles and represented two common ways of writing about the history of the city. These two forms of writing could interact: for instance, there were legends that Ludgate was founded by King Lud and Billingsgate by Belinus. These stories explained the origins of civic buildings and also illustrated London's past relationship with benefactor kings.¹⁷

Depictions of **regulation and trials** within London chronicles followed a different chronology. Crimes, such as murder, piracy, infamous thefts and heresy were only occasionally present in the earlier sections of the London chronicles.¹⁸ Each became more common in depictions of the early fifteenth century and were particularly prevalent in *Gregory's Chronicle* and some of the London chronicle-*Brut* hybrid texts.¹⁹ The city's internal legal systems of regulation and enforcement began to be depicted in chronicle descriptions of the 1420s.²⁰ Interest in civic regulation and enforcement increased after this point: for example, Mayor Stephen Brown (1438/9) was depicted across several chronicles

¹⁴ See above, pp. 49-62, 190-247.

¹⁵ *Great Chronicle*, pp. 4, 4, 5-6, 8, 8, 9, 10, 11, 11, 15, 15, 17, 19, 24, 26.

¹⁶ *Ibid.* pp. 85, 90, 122, 150, 156, 176, 174, 174.

¹⁷ On this point, see above, pp. 49-57.

¹⁸ For earlier outliers, see: BL, Harley MS 3775, 85v; *A Chronicle of London*, p. 69; *Gregory's Chronicle*, pp. 89, 93.

¹⁹ *Gregory's Chronicle*, pp. 108, 161, 163-4, 182; 'TCC, O.9.1', pp. 472, 474-5, 475-6, 483.

²⁰ 'Egerton 650', p. 448; 'Rawlinson B.173', p. 453.

sending a grain expedition to avert food shortages, leading a campaign against prostitution, and destroying defective goods at the Standard.²¹ Some later writers showed a particular intensity in their interest in regulation and enforcement, particularly in the cluster of related chronicles consisting of the *Great Chronicle*, *New Chronicles* and *Vitellius A.xvi*. For example, within the printed edition of the *Great Chronicle*, pages 222-7 covered the years 1473-1480. These included: a correction of the civic tax system; a campaign against prostitution; a civic debtor who escaped from prison; the burning of a London heretic; an ordinance concerning Newgate legal sessions; the pillorying of corrupt victuallers; the restoration of walls and scouring of ditches; and the punishment of an alderman for profane speech next to St Erkenwald's shrine. Thus, reportage of legal cases and legal enforcement was uncommon in chronicles when depicting history before 1400, and became more common in entries describing the years *circa* 1420 onwards, and increased in frequency in later accounts.

Finally, the **internal politics** of the city were sometimes reported on by chroniclers: this included depictions of guilds, factions, elections or the individual personalities of civic rulers. The first widely-reported factional conflict was the 1441 election at which Ralph Holland was denied the mayoralty and his defiant supporters were incarcerated.²²

Chroniclers in the second half of the century often portrayed internal political matters in greater detail. In particular, they began to discuss individuals and personalities more than earlier chroniclers had. Some chroniclers quoted a song about Mayor John Norman (1453/4).²³ Similarly, Mayor Matthew Philip's (1563/4) decision to boycott the Sergeants

²¹ *Great Chronicle*, p. 174; 'Bale's Chronicle', p. 114; Caxton, *Brut*, p. 507; BL, Harley Roll C.8, f. 7r; *Gregory's Chronicle*, p. 182; 'Lambeth 306', p. 62.

²² *Great Chronicle*, pp. 175-6; Caxton, *Brut*, pp. 522-3; Bodleian, MS Gough London 10, fol. 38v; 'Bale's Chronicle', p. 115; 'Vitellius A.xvi', pp. 154-5. For an earlier outlier see *A Chronicle of London*, pp. 75-78.

²³ 'Rawlinson B.355', pp. 103, 108; 'WYA 32D86/42', p. 212; *A Chronicle of London*, p. 138; 'Bale's Chronicle', p. 140; Caxton, *Brut*, p. 521; *New Chronicles*, p. 628; 'Lambeth 306', p. 69; *Customs of London*, xxxiv; *Great Chronicle*, p. 186; 'Vitellius A.xvi', p. 164.

of the Coif's feast due to its irregular seating plan was widely discussed.²⁴

Idiosyncratically, BL, Harley 2252 sometimes noted the marital statuses of mayors from the 1490s onwards, ('a bachelor' and 'a wedewar').²⁵ The personalisation of the mayoralty found its greatest expression in the *Great Chronicle* and Vitellius A.xvi. Within the *Great Chronicle*, for instance, we can find that: Thomas Cook (1462/3) was a pious man who, when stricken with gout, would pray that his pains in this world would spare him from purgatory; Ralph Josselyn (1476/7) overcame aldermanic scepticism through energy and ambition; Humphrey Heyford (1477/8) was sickly and lethargic and many feared that he would die; and John Shaa (1501/2) usually agreed with the first speaker in any court case, regardless of the particulars of the situation.²⁶ Before c. 1460, chroniclers wrote about the institution of the mayoralty; after that date, they also began to chronicle the individual mayors.

When these different styles of depiction are synthesized together, a clear chronology emerges. In every generation, London was an important topic for historiography. However, when the first generation of London chroniclers (writing c. 1430s) depicted the more distant past (*i.e.* the period before 1400), their narratives often lacked detail. They investigated the history of extant civic architecture. Using lawbooks and general chronicles of the realm they were able to depict the historic relationship between corporation and king. Architectural and relational depictions, therefore, dominate the early section of London chronicles. The selection of incidents by chroniclers began to change in their accounts of the more recent past. In depictions of the years after 1420 or so, Londoners wrote about the city in increasingly diverse ways, showing a new interest in the court

²⁴ *Customs of London*, xxv; *A Chronicle of London*, p. 142; *CLB L*, p. 7; *Gregory's Chronicle*, pp. 222-3; 'WYA 32D86/42', p. 214; BL, Harley 2252, fol. 5v.

²⁵ BL, Harley MS 2252, 6v.

²⁶ *Great Chronicle*, pp. 215-6, 225-6, 226, 320.

system and internal politics and an intensified interest in power relationships and urban fabric. This fits closely with the production chronology: the period 1420-1440 constituted recent memory for the founder generation of London chroniclers.²⁷ Thus, chronicle depictions of the period c. 1420-c.1445 exhibited an increasing interest in London's internal politics, legal system and economic regulation.

Later London chroniclers built on the work of earlier chroniclers, and there are no sharp chronological divides. There was, however, a gradual intensification of previous trends. In the depictions of the second half of the fifteenth century, the legal operations of the city were recorded more frequently; and politicians were depicted in a more personalised and individuated manner. London looms a little larger in late fifteenth-century narratives than it had for previous generations, but this is a matter of degree rather than a revolutionary change. Later London chroniclers benefited from writing within a well-established genre. The existence of many forerunner chronicles helped to justify and intensify the interest that later writers had in London's history. It is also possible that these changes represent an adaptation to a particular audience: a close focus on London is most clearly exhibited in several chronicles that were closely related to each other. Owners of this strain of chronicles included Sheriff Robert Fabyan (*Great Chronicles* and *New Chronicles*), Mayor William Butler (Vitellius A.xvi), Chamberlain Miles Adys (Gough London 10) and Governor of the Merchant Adventurers William Caxton (*Brut* and *Polychronicon* continuations).²⁸ They were chronicles compiled by politicians, they had an audience of officeholders, and they engaged closely with civic governance. This represented the London chronicles coming to maturity as a tool of political education. Late London

²⁷ On the chronology, see above, pp. 193-194.

²⁸ On the relationship of these chronicles to each other, see above, p. 96. See also, Appendix 1.19, 1.33, 1.45.

chronicling was thus increasingly interested in London and this may in part have represented a closer relationship between chronicling and governance.

Thus, the London chronicles stand out as the largest and most detailed corpus of Middle English literature about London. They engaged closely with city life and in particular, showed an interest in city government which is not evident elsewhere. The remainder of this chapter examines how and why Londoners depicted urban governance. First, it considers legal reportage and how depictions of trials and regulation were used to teach ethics. Then, it considers questions of law and order, and how they were used to discuss political judgement. Finally, it turns to the cultural role of London's governors.

6.3: 'No Good Custom You Shall Break, or an Evil One Maintain': Law and Ethics.²⁹

6.3.1: Norm-based and Case-based Ethics

Any politically aspirant citizen needed to ask themselves: what makes a man into a good governor? How can a leader know whether a course of action is ethical? In answering these questions, some may have turned to the copy of Brunetto Latini's *Li Livres dou Trésor* that had been edited and amended for London usage and donated to the Guildhall Library by Chamberlain Andrew Horn.³⁰ It advised that the core of good rulership lay in Christianity:

²⁹ *Liber Albus*, p. 266.

³⁰ See above, p. 169.

Be religious and shew faith; because there is no fairer thing in a prince of the earth than to have righteous and truthful belief; and it is written: *When a just king sits on the throne, no evil can happen against him.*³¹

It also stated that good rulers enforced the law as it has been written and practised before: readers were instructed ‘remember the law and its commandments’, and ‘do all that which is written in the books of the constitution of the city’.³² This presented a norm-based approach to ethics: civic law and Christianity laid out systems of rules. A governor was good if he was obedient to these rules.

Some London literature promoted the idea that officeholding was a Christian ethical responsibility and encouraged governors to abide by civic and Christian norms. In John Lydgate’s *Mumming at Bishopswood*, commissioned by the Sheriffs for May Day 1430, the world was presented as gripped by a dark winter of ‘extorcyouné’.³³ Light would return and Spring would return when governors united and acted in virtue:

Mayre, provost, shirref, eche in his substaunce;
And aldremen, whiche have the governaunce
Over the people by vertue may avayle,
That noone oppression beo done to the pourayle [poor].³⁴

In the *Mumming for the Goldsmiths* of the same year, the mummers entered the hall dressed as the twelve tribes of Israel and presented an Ark of the Covenant to the mayor, which contained the virtues of:

...konnyng, grace, and might,
For to gouverne with wisdom, pees, and right
This noble cytee, and lawes suche ordeyne,
That no man shal have cause for to compleyne.³⁵

These pageants shared an ethical and political vision in which good rule could be created through Christian virtue. Leaders were engaged in moral governance: they combatted

³¹ *Munimenta*, 2.2, p. 523.

³² *Ibid.* pp. 523, 524.

³³ ‘Mumming at Bishopswood’, in *Mummings and Entertainments*, l. 70.

³⁴ *Ibid.* ll. 60-64.

³⁵ *Ibid.* ll. 81-4.

extortion and fraud, protected the poor, and established peace. In a virtuous Christian city, good governance could bring the populace to such tranquillity that ‘no man shal have cause for to compleyne’. One task for civic cultural productions – such as education, historiography and literature – was to teach, police and reinforce normative ethical behaviour.

But to know moral rules was not enough: governors also required the prudence and wisdom to apply them. Christian-Aristotelian ethics suggested that lay governors required particular ‘cardinal virtues’ and chief amongst them was prudence, the ability to use reason in pursuing personal or public discipline. Prudence was key to assessing consequences and making wise decisions.³⁶ The *Trésor* turned from norm-based to consequence-based ethics when discussing the issue of mercy:

It behoves not a governor to be altogether cruel, nor yet altogether full of clemency. For as much is it cruelty to pardon all as it is to pardon none. But it is an act of high clemency to confound the evil in granting pardon.³⁷

Mercy was a Christian position; so too was rigorous enforcement of divine law. How was a governor to know which was most appropriate? A governor needed to consider the specifics of the case and to reason through the probable consequences. This approach to ethics placed greater emphasis on the process of reasoning: personal judgement and contingent factors were important, meanwhile virtuous intentions meant little if they produced negative consequences. Some of the same issues emerged in the *Mumming for the Goldsmiths*. The ark of wisdom contained a ‘wrytt’ from King David that granted the prudence to know how best to apply laws:

A wrytt withinn shal unto you declare
And in effect pleylnly specefye,
Where yee shal punyssh and where as yee shal spare,

³⁶ See: Watts, *Henry VI*, pp. 23-25.

³⁷ *Munimenta*, 2.2, p. 528.

And howe that mercy shal rygour modefy...³⁸

In the absence of the appearance of such an ark, governors needed to build their capacity to make wise judgements: this could be done by considering salient issues through literature. Thus, when it came to writing about morality and governance in London, chroniclers had two tasks that were related but not identical. One was to enforce moral normative codes and the other was to engage with questions of ethical judgement.

The most basic and widespread guides to governance within the city were the oaths of office sworn by every citizen and every official. These laid out an interlinking set of legal, moral and economic concerns that were comparable to those expressed by the *Trésor* or Lydgate's mummings. Every citizen was expected to participate in a campaign against corruption and fraud. Upon becoming a freeman, a person bound himself to participate in economic regulation and to report any illicit sale of merchandise by non-citizens within the city.³⁹ At each wardmote, the citizens of the ward were asked whether officials had 'made extortion or affray within the ward'.⁴⁰ Citizens were expected to act as a surveillance network, ensuring that economic laws were enforced and fraud and corruption purged. Leadership on these issues was the purview of more senior officers. The mayor swore that:

lawfully and rightfully you will treat the people of your bailiwick, and right will do unto every one thereof, as well unto strangers as to denizens, to poor as to rich, in that which belongeth unto you to do; and that neither for highness, nor riches, nor for promise, nor for favour, nor for hate, wrong you shall do unto anyone.⁴¹

The mayor's fundamental duties included the impartial administration of justice and the protection of the rights of the poor. The mayor's legitimacy was thus linked to just regulation of the economy and action to combat fraud, corruption and abuse of power. The oath of office for the sheriff bound him to keep the assizes of bread and ale, the regulations

³⁸ 'Mumming for the Goldsmiths', ll. 85-89.

³⁹ *Customs of London*, p. 96.

⁴⁰ *Liber Albus*, p. 292.

⁴¹ *Ibid.* p. 266.

that ensured that staple products were available at reasonable costs.⁴² Aldermen swore that they would never sell victuals by retail: economic regulation and political corruption were understood to be so closely linked that it was inappropriate for senior Londoners to sell food or drink.⁴³ These prescriptions were underwritten by oaths before the saints and God. In short, the oaths of office were highly ethically prescriptive: they laid out a vision of a city in which economic, moral and legal order was maintained by widespread participation in networks of surveillance and detection; and in which civic governors showed leadership in maintaining Christian, economic and legal justice within the city.

Civic oaths and customs were less inclined to raise questions of wisdom or judgement, with a few interesting exceptions. The sheriff's oath contained a clause: 'no good custom you shall break, nor an evil one maintain'.⁴⁴ Laws and customs could thus be sorted into two ethical categories: 'good custom' and 'evil custom'. Historiography could act as a record of the actions of past governors and thus was a store of good customs. However, the fact that customs could be 'evil' also brought to the foreground questions of prudence and judgement by leaders: sheriffs needed to be equipped to understand the difference between good and bad customs and thus to make ethical judgements. Personal judgement was even more prominent in the prologue to the 1377 'Jubilee Book' constitution of London. It stated that one of the fundamental grounds for the 'perfeccionn of al policie' was that sage rulers governed 'in their reddure [harshness] and favour after this [so] that the tyme requireth so be it demaunded and modified'.⁴⁵ In other words, the tranquillity of the city rested on the ability of governors to make judgements that were appropriate to circumstance on whether the government should act with harshness or mercy. The basic

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ *Ibid.* p. 267.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.* p. 266.

⁴⁵ TCC, O.3.11, fol. 133r; see also Barron, 'Political Culture', p. 127.

legal texts of the city were, therefore, mostly normative and morally prescriptive, but at times they engaged with questions of prudence and judgement.

6.3.2: Law and Ethics

When portraying legal practice within the city, many London historians pursued a morally normative vision, portraying London's governors as virtuous and their opponents as sinful. This is evident in accounts of violent crimes such as murder, theft and piracy. In some cases, the crimes themselves were covered in vivid detail such as the Thames pirates who in 1440 boarded merchants' ships:

in the nyght, as þey [the merchants] were aslepe in their vesseles and rode by anker in Tamys, and slewe all þat were there in the shippes, and cutte þeir throtes and cast theym in the water, and after drowned their shippes, and the shippes sank in the water, for no man shuld espye their falsnesse.⁴⁶

This tale focused on the murder of vulnerable merchants during their sleep; others included scandalous cases of wives who killed their husbands; a recipient of charity who killed his benefactor; or a servant who, when his master was absent, murdered his master's pregnant wife.⁴⁷ The full and sensational detail with which such cases were reported betrays a tabloid sensibility: these stories inverted established social relationships and depicted the worst fears felt by many mercantile readers. These vivid entries were in the minority. Many simply noted that the perpetrator was a 'strong thefe' or that a victim had been 'i-slayne': the focus was on the punishment, not the crime.⁴⁸ Many chroniclers asserted that example should be taken from the punishment: for instance, William Wrawe, an 'erraunt

⁴⁶ 'TCC, O.9.1', pp. 475-6.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.* pp. 472 (wife as murderer), 474-5 (servant as murderer); TCC, O.9.1, fol. 205v-6r (beggar as murderer).

⁴⁸ *Gregory's Chronicle*, pp. 163-4.

theft', was carried to his death on an open cart so 'þat all men myght se and knowe hym'.⁴⁹ Pirates were 'hyng by strong cheynes for to yeve all othir thevis ensample': this was an example not just to passers-by but also to readers.⁵⁰ These stories of violent criminals who met inevitably violent ends employed a morally prescriptive teaching style comparable to the sermon *exemplum*: each anecdote was a morality tale of vice and its consequences. Crime narratives sometimes contained providential elements. TCC, O.9.1 stated that a murderous robber fled 'but God wold not so; for murdour woll com-oute': providence favoured the law.⁵¹ Whilst some thieves were drawn on a cart to their deaths,

þere fell suche wedryng from the skye þat folke were sore adredde and agast; it was so horrible and grete, what of rayne, thondere and lightnyng and hayll, in their passage to þe deth.⁵²

Divine anger against theft was thus underlined by portentous omens. In both cases, the judgement of the law was amplified and extended by the judgement of God. Chroniclers thus often framed stories of violent criminals in ways that castigated vice and taught their readers respect for human and divine law.

Government of the economy was also interpreted through the lens of Christian morality. Civic governors were praised for acting to prevent food shortages: Mayor Stephen Brown (1438/9) was widely applauded for 'full graciously' importing Prussian rye, through which a shortage was 'eased & did myche gode to þe peple'.⁵³ Brown's actions were set amongst accounts of poverty and suffering in 1437/8 and 1438/9. The poor made 'right feble brede', out 'of ferne rotes' or 'of barly, of benys, pesys & ffechis & othir', and some chroniclers recorded high prices for cereals, wine, flesh and fish, and the spread of

⁴⁹ TCC, O.9.1, fol. 203v.

⁵⁰ 'Vitellius A.xvi', p. 153.

⁵¹ 'TCC, O.9.1', pp. 474-5.

⁵² *Ibid.* p. 483.

⁵³ 'Bale's Chronicle', p. 114; Caxton, *Brut*, p. 507.

pestilence.⁵⁴ By contextualising Brown's actions amongst the suffering of the poor, the grain expedition was framed as a moral, Christian action. Similarly, *Gregory's Chronicle* applauded Simon Eyre for building a new granary for the benefit of the 'pore pepylle of the contraye': it was presented as an act of civic charity, not as pragmatic economic infrastructure.⁵⁵ When discussing the arrival of a grain convoy from Flanders amid grain shortages in 1502, Richard Hill used providential language: 'after þat we had ynowgh, thankid be God!'⁵⁶ The civic government (and merchants as a whole) were responsible for the food supply of the nation: this was not merely a matter of profit or devolved royal responsibility. London historians encouraged their readers to conceive of it as a moral duty, with charitable and Christian aspects.

Regulating the economy was a vital function of civic government: the *New Chronicles* claimed that the mayoralty was created to settle a dispute over grain shortages in 1208.⁵⁷ Chronicles appeared alongside copies of the main statute used by local government to regulate grain prices, the assizes of bread and ale, in the *Customs of London*, BL, Egerton 1995 and Balliol 354.⁵⁸ BL, Harley 2252 included a 1517 petition to the king that protested against the poor enforcement of trade regulations in London. The petition's understanding of weights and measures was extremely historically-minded:

afore the Conqueste sondrye kynges aprovyd and provyded how & by what maner of weyes they myghte beste & longeste endure... The whyche provysyon dyd stonde before the Conqueste and was confermyd by Willyam Conquerour, and with every kyng folowyn[g]...⁵⁹

⁵⁴ 'TCC, O.9.1', pp. 472-3; Caxton, *Brut*, p. 507; *Great Chronicle*, p. 174.

⁵⁵ *Gregory's Chronicle*, p. 187.

⁵⁶ *Songs*, p. 152.

⁵⁷ *New Chronicles*, pp. 317-8; On the origins of the mayoralty, see above, p. 74.

⁵⁸ BL, Egerton MS 1995, ff. 80v-81v; 'Balliol 354', pp. 218, 221-222, 239-249; *Customs of London*, pp. 49-56.

⁵⁹ Harley 2252, ff. 18r-21v; 'Exposure of the Abuses of Weights and Measures for the Information of the Council (c. 1517)', in *Select Tracts and Table Books Relating to English Weights and Measures*, ed. H. Hall and F. Nicholas, Camden Society, n. s., 15, (London, 1929), pp. 47-50, 47.

The author was not content with historical generalities and subsequently traced the development of weights and measures from Magna Carta through to the time of Henry VII using a wide variety of statutes, including the assizes of bread and ale.⁶⁰ The petitioner used his considerable grasp of legal history to position himself as a moderate working within established norms, rather than as an outsider or a radical. For the petitioner, trade regulation could only be understood in its historical context. Many chroniclers showed a similar desire to contextualize economic regulation: they often noted gluts or surpluses of food and recorded highs and lows in prices of goods, mostly staple foods.⁶¹ The readers of *Gregory's Chronicle* showed sustained interest in such information and left *nota* marks next to famines, droughts and shortages.⁶² These notes must at least have impressed upon readers the importance of economic regulation; it is feasible that *Gregory's Chronicle* and other civic chronicles may have had a role in informing and contextualising the tasks of trade regulation, as carried out by London's civic elite.

In his study of 'medieval market morality', James Davis noted that the prevailing stereotype of fraudster and economic criminals were 'the retailer and middlemen of basic foodstuffs'.⁶³ London historiography similarly focused on fraudulent victuallers. Vintners, coopers and brewers were repeat targets: one of the earliest accounts of civic regulation was Rawlinson B.173's description of the 1427/8 breaking of vats of corrupt wine, 'the falsest gode that evyr any man see'.⁶⁴ Chroniclers also criticised bakers for grain price manipulation: high prices 'mad bakers lords' and had done 'grete hurte to þe power [of

⁶⁰ *Ibid.* p. 49.

⁶¹ *Great Chronicle*, pp. 3, 7, 13, 20, 39, 119, 128, 152, 171, 173, 174, 174, 249, 254, 258, 261-2, 262, 287, 290, 295-6, 328, 331, 332, 381; *Gregory's Chronicle*, pp. 68, 75, 79, 80, 83-4, 88, 103, 164, 181, 238.

⁶² Egerton 1995, ff. 124r, 126r, 129r.

⁶³ J. Davis, *Medieval Market Morality* (Cambridge, 2012), p. 32; B. Hanawalt, 'Toward the Common Good: Punishing Fraud Among the Victuallers of Medieval London', in F. Somerset and N. Watson (eds.), *Truth & Tales: Cultural Mobility and Medieval Media*, (Columbus, 2015), pp. 168-186.

⁶⁴ 'Rawlinson B.173', p. 453; 'Vitellius A.xvi', p. 208 (cooper); *Great Chronicle*, p. 262 (brewer), etc.

the] comynalte'.⁶⁵ The *Great Chronicle's* account of the anti-baker campaign of 1500/1 was one of the most detailed examples of mayoral economic enforcement: 'By craffty meanys of the bakers of London', a bread scarcity developed.⁶⁶ The mayor heard 'rumour' of this from the discontented commonality, 'where uppon he cawsyd a serch to be made of theyr garners'. Many bakers were punished and the price of bread fell.⁶⁷ The anti-baker campaign was strikingly similar to the ideal model prescribed by the civic oaths: the commons acted as a surveillance network and counsellor to the mayor; meanwhile, the mayor showed leadership in punishing fraud and ensuring fair prices. These entries took issues of scarcity or insufficiency in goods and moralised them. As with the anecdotes of felonies discussed above, these crimes were portrayed as morality tales: they presented the sins of lying, greed and fraud, and the inevitable punishment that followed.

Other issues of regulation and enforcement similarly treated the economy as a primarily moral sphere. Several London chronicles recorded ordinances that the sabbath must be 'so reverently kept' that no trading could occur 'upon a grete peyn', although the *Great Chronicle* lamented that this was 'holdyn but a short whyly afftir'.⁶⁸ The civic authorities were often depicted acting against prostitutes: the sex trade was proscribed within the city walls but licensed in Southwark and some suburban areas, thus it was simultaneously tolerated and illicit.⁶⁹ On occasion, prostitutes were rounded up and forced to don a costume of 'ray [i.e. striped] hoodes', sometimes also with 'a white rood in her hondys'.⁷⁰ In this costume, they were ceremonially humiliated and 'shewid abowth the cyte' with

⁶⁵ *A Chronicle of London*, p. 124; Harley Roll, C.8, fol. 2r; *Gregory's Chronicle*, p. 70; 'Vitellius A.xvi', pp. 187, 233; *Great Chronicle*, pp. 224, 295-6.

⁶⁶ *Great Chronicle*, pp. 295-6; 'Vitellius A.xvi', p. 233.

⁶⁷ *Great Chronicle*, pp. 295-6.

⁶⁸ *Great Chronicle*, p. 177; 'Bale's Chronicle', p. 117; 'Vitellius A.xvi', p. 156; *Gregory's Chronicle*, p. 238; 'Lambeth 306', p. 65.

⁶⁹ On London prostitution, see: E. Burford, *The Bishop's Brothels*, (London, 1976); R. Karras, *Common Women*, (New York, 1996).

⁷⁰ 'Cleopatra C.iv', p. 146.

minstrels and music on market days.⁷¹ Anti-prostitute campaigns were first recorded in historical accounts depicting the 1430s and became more common from the 1470s onwards.⁷² London's leaders were thus depicted in combat against the kind of sins commonly prosecuted in church courts, not just secular crimes.

Other civic regulations targeted fraud and falsehood outside of the victualling professions, for instance, chroniclers recorded civic campaigns against coin clipping, usury, or monetary counterfeiting.⁷³ Many chroniclers recorded periods of monetary scarcity as well as any changes to the minting of currency: perhaps data of this sort could be helpful in monetary policy.⁷⁴ Also extremely common were descriptions of the pillorying of document-forgers, counterfeit pardon-sellers, and perjurers. The earliest example was the 1424/5 account in Rawlinson B.173 of a pardoner who was forced to ride backwards on a horse with 'his billes hanging a-bought hys necke by-hynde and bifore', and the documents were burned outside St Paul's.⁷⁵ This set the pattern followed by subsequent accounts: it was common to depict the punishment but less common to give details about the specifics of the crime.⁷⁶ Chroniclers focused on punishment: they used vivid accounts of the suffering of criminals as moral examples against vice. These stories also acted as a public sign that the city's legal system was working as it should, by rooting out falsity, fraud and immoral economic conduct.

One of the most interesting discussions of civic court practice can be found in the two contrasting accounts of Mayor John Shaa's (1501/2) legal reforms. Shaa began to preside

⁷¹ *Great Chronicle*, p. 222.

⁷² 'Cleopatra C.iv', p. 146; *Gregory's Chronicle*, pp. 182, 185; Harley Roll C.8, f. 7r; 'Lambeth 306', p. 62; *Great Chronicle*, pp. 174, 222, 258, 331, 366; 'Vitellius A.xvi', pp. 200, 205, 205.

⁷³ 'Egerton 650', p. 448 (usury); 'Vitellius A.xvi', p. 261 (coiner); *Great Chronicle*, p. 17 (clipping).

⁷⁴ *Great Chronicle*, pp. 18, 34, 35, 38, 90, 119, 203, 327, 328; *Gregory's Chronicle*, pp. 80, 80, 83, 106-7, 142, 143, 227.

⁷⁵ 'Rawlinson B.173', pp. 452-3.

⁷⁶ 'Vitellius A.xvi', pp. 198, 208, 210-11, 217; for an exceptionally detailed case, see *ibid.* 210-1; *Songs*, pp. 154-5.

over afternoon sessions of the Court of Requests, which increased the accessibility of mayoral justice. In Vitellius A.xvi, this was presented as an unambiguous good: ‘he ended many maters and variaunces hangyng atwene persones, and caused moch poore people to have their maters sped without spence of money’.⁷⁷ The mayor’s oath made the poor’s access to the law a defining duty of the mayoralty. Vitellius A.xvi portrayed this reform as enabling Shaa to meet the obligations of his oath. The *Great Chronicle* treated this incident differently:

moch of the pore people drew unto hym [Shaa], whom he ffavourid more somtyme than justyce & good lawe requyrid; wherffor the men of mygth murmurid agayn hym & said, that he that told the ffyrst tale had avauntage, ffor he was ffor the more party wyth hym best belevid; men of lawe alsoo allowid not his doying ffor they were hynderid by it, ffor he endyd many maters which in lawe wold have cost moche money.⁷⁸

Fabyan’s attitude was thus equivocal. The poor had better access to the law, but there was a negative effect on the rights of the propertied. The expense and inertia of lawyers had been bypassed, but the high degree of personal involvement by the mayor made justice amateurish and partial. The mayor had attempted this reform because Shaa’s intimacy with the king had caused him to become arrogant: ‘he bare hym þe bolder and took upon hym thyngis that hath not soundid to his fframe syne his departyng’.⁷⁹ Fabyan’s account was thus of two minds: the reform had featured good intentions but produced mixed-to-negative results. The differences between these two accounts are significant: in Vitellius A.xvi, the anecdote was presented as exemplary, with a good legislator improving the system. The *Great Chronicle*’s approach could be termed evaluative: it portrayed the reform in terms of a series of trade-offs, between protecting the rights of property versus listening to the needs of the poor, and between the benefits of personal initiative in the

⁷⁷ ‘Vitellius A.xvi’, pp. 257-8.

⁷⁸ *Great Chronicle*, p. 320.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

mayor versus the amateurish and personally-flawed reality of Shaa's administration.

Fabyan mused that there is no one 'who is in auctoryte that can please all parties, as who sayth noon': Shaa illustrated the principle that trade-offs and conflicting priorities were inevitable for all governors.⁸⁰ Vitellius A.xvi used this incident to discuss good practice; the *Great Chronicle* used it to discuss good judgement.

As has already been established, the sheriff's oath distinguished between 'good' and 'evil' customs. In many of the cases discussed above, London historians recounted good custom: they recorded instances of sage rulers who instituted and enforced good regulation.

Through these accounts, normative moral values were reinforced. Murderers, thieves, fraudsters and prostitutes were each depicted, but only so that they could be shown to have been punished and to have suffered for their sins. Historiography could be useful to Londoners in laying out and reinforcing moral and legal norms. Vitellius A.xvi followed in this tradition by presenting Shaa's reforms to the court of requests as exemplary.

In Fabyan's version of the story, Shaa's reform was a case study of personal judgement in which the mayor's policy was caught between a series of difficult trade-offs. This brought to the fore the questions of prudence, wisdom and moral judgement that enabled a ruler to know the difference between 'good custom' and 'evil custom'. When it came to teaching norms, exemplary literature may have been better suited to the task than history: *exempla* could offer a clear and concise narrative in which cause and effect were closely linked and the moral message was evident. Chronicling was frequently messier: the convention of dividing time into annual entries could separate cause from effect and the close conjunction of different themes and stories within each entry created difficulties for clear storytelling. However, chronicles could offer something that *exempla* could not: a sense of

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

context. Chronicles could depict moral issues being worked through within real historical circumstances. Mayor Shaa was shown acting in the context of his character flaws, his relationship to the king, his domestic priorities, his relationship to propertied citizens, his duties to the poor, and the ideal of impartial justice. Any lessons drawn from this story were not universally applicable in the same way that the moral of an *exemplum* often was. Nonetheless, an attentive reader could learn much about personal judgement and wise governance. Previous chapters have indicated that many officeholders owned or wrote historiography, and on some occasions, London chronicles appeared alongside treatises on government or the pursuit of wisdom within the manuscript record.⁸¹ Historiography made for suitable reading matter for governors precisely because it engaged with questions of political and moral judgement.

London historians often used civic regulation, enforcement and legal trials to teach normative moral codes. They used stories of well-deserved punishment to stigmatize fraud, corruption and sexual immorality; they used stories of sage rulers to discuss good governance and to reinforce Christian norms. However, it was necessary not only to teach normative codes but also to enable readers to make moral judgements. The remainder of this chapter will turn from the relatively simple questions of enforcement to issues that required a greater level of moral and political judgement: in particular, the linked issues of peacekeeping and popular participation; and the relationship between the individual and the commune.

⁸¹ See above, pp. 116-120, 165-180.

6.4: Peacekeeping and Citizen-participation.⁸²

Governance in the city of London contained within it partially resolved tensions between communitarian and hierarchical understandings of civic politics. An authoritarian and hierarchical tendency understood the mayor and city government to be legitimately appointed deputies of the king: because of this, residents of the city owed unconditional obedience to their appointed leaders. The duties of the citizen were those laid out in the prologue to the ‘Jubilee book’: namely ‘that the comune people be trefable and of oon accord and be deservyng, [and] loven they their governours and soveraignes, and that they of hem have dreed and theym obeyen’.⁸³ They must maintain a respectful attitude towards their governors, avoid faction and be obedient. Partly contrasting against this was the participatory and communitarian tendency, in which governance was communal: the mayor was first amongst the citizens and held his power by common consent. One of the clearest statements of this perspective came from the Guildhall *Trésor*: ‘seeing that he [the mayor] is but one among them [the citizens], he could do or accomplish nothing without them’.⁸⁴ Hierarchy and participation were both fundamental to the way that the city was governed.

Authoritarian and communitarian tendencies were brought into sharp relief in London’s model of peacekeeping. In his oath, the mayor swore ‘surely and safely to keep’ London and he was deputised to uphold the king’s peace.⁸⁵ Every citizen had to swear to be obedient to the mayor and that if they knew of ‘any congregacyon or any assemblee made agayn the peas, ye shall warne the maire thereof’.⁸⁶ Hierarchy is implicit in this model: the

⁸² *Liber Albus*, pp. 266-7.

⁸³ TCC, O.3.11, fol. 133r, Barron, ‘Political Culture’, p. 127.

⁸⁴ *Munimenta*, 2.2, p. 518.

⁸⁵ *Liber Albus*, pp. 266-7.

⁸⁶ *Customs of London*, p. 96.

mayor's authority to keep the peace was granted from above by the king, and citizens must be obedient to his authority. However, aspects of the communitarian tendency were also present: social stability rested on the willingness of rank-and-file citizens to participate in surveillance and policing. This model required that reconciliation be found between a conception of power based on hierarchy and obedience with one based on community and participation. The tension between these two tendencies often surfaced within historiography, with the result that questions of public order and political participation were often closely entwined.

London historians were preoccupied with public order, in part because failures in peacekeeping could lead to the suspension of civic self-governance. The *Great Chronicle* recorded that the sheriffs were deposed in 1253 because they allowed Newgate prisoners to escape; similarly that the mayor was deposed in 1285 for violating the sanctuary at Barking; and in 1392 'a grete debate in Fletestrete' between citizens and the bishop of Salisbury's affinity resulted in the franchise being suspended.⁸⁷ No incidents of similar importance occurred in the fifteenth century, but *Bale's Chronicle* recorded that a prison break in 1456 occurred 'to greet jeopardde of the shirrefs'.⁸⁸ Julius B.i recounted that a 1474 brawl between members of the king's household and the constables of Cheapside left the king 'gretely displeasid with the cunstablis'.⁸⁹ Precedent suggested that a loss of franchise or the deposition of officers were feasible outcomes for a serious breach of the peace. Pragmatic policymaking required London's rulers to be ever mindful of violence and the methods by which it could be contained.

⁸⁷ *Great Chronicle*, pp. 12, 19, 47.

⁸⁸ 'Bale's Chronicle', p. 144.

⁸⁹ *A Chronicle of London*, p. 145.

6.4.1: The Great Watch and Threats from the Outside

The threat posed to the mayor's legitimacy by disorder was graphically displayed in *Bale's Chronicle*. During his accession ceremony in 1450, the mayor rode to St Thomas' Hospital, where his path was blocked by forty recently demobilised soldiers, 'well armed for werr with gleves and axes'.⁹⁰ The mayor 'comanded them in þe kings name to leve their wepens bering withyn the citee', but they proved disobedient. The mayor disarmed and arrested them, and issued an order that no arms must be carried in public. The installation ceremonies for the mayor were a vital symbol of legitimacy and public order: Bale's narrative positioned the mayor as a force for order during the time of disorder that coincided with the disastrous end of the French Wars. Public order was a personal responsibility of the mayor: in Bale's account of the 1453 St Bartholomew's Fair, the mayor was at a wrestling match when a 'mysruly' mob 'toke upon theym to have fered and distressed the mair but howe be hit the mair manfully beet slewe and toke of þeym divers and put them to shamefull rebuke'.⁹¹ To bring order was a measure of a mayor's power and manful virility. It was also a corporate responsibility: Bale noted that at another St Bartholomew's Fair, the mayor sent out an armed convoy of three hundred men under the command of his deputy for the defence of the retailers against bandit ex-soldiers.⁹² The ability to hold orderly public events was a demonstration of the mayor's grasp on public order. Maintaining peace was both the personal responsibility of the mayor and the collective responsibility of the city.

The city's most important tool of peacekeeping was the 'great watch', a muster of citizens that was used as a peacekeeping force during times of threat. Watches were ubiquitous

⁹⁰ 'Bale's Chronicle', p. 136.

⁹¹ *Ibid.* p. 140.

⁹² *Ibid.* pp. 134-5.

within London historiography, as a counter to Lollard agitation, aristocratic violence, war or revolt.⁹³ This ubiquity reflected the importance of the watch as a practical tool, and also its utility as a literary symbol. The watch encompassed mayoral leadership and widespread citizen participation in a common endeavour to keep the peace: it was a manifestation of peacekeeping model advocated by the oaths of mayor and citizen. However, as a symbol of both obedience and participation, it also manifested the unresolved tension between these values. The mayor called a watch in 1425 to deal with a stand-off at London bridge between two court factions, led respectively by the Duke of Gloucester and the Bishop of Winchester. This mobilisation was too effective and a large mass of the commons joined the watch in a partisan, anti-Winchester mindset:

they in haste schytte in ther shoppys and come downe to the gatys of the brygge in keypyng of the cytte ande salvacyon of the cytte a-gayns the kyngys enmys, for alle the shoppys in London were schytte in one howr.⁹⁴

It was only ‘thonkyd be God thoroughe goode governaunce of the mayre and hys aldyrmen’ that the commons were ‘sessyde and wentte home ayenne’: the commons had mobilised to keep the peace, but they had quickly become a threat to public order. This incident was one of many in London chronicles in which the two ideals expressed in the watch – namely, obedience to the mayor and popular participation in peacekeeping – threatened to pull apart. Some accounts stressed obedience by giving primacy to the mayoralty (‘the meier kept grete wacche to kepe the pees’), or of other officers (‘the mayre with the shyryffis, constablis and othir officers of the cyte kepte grete wacch’).⁹⁵ On other occasions, the watch was presented as an alliance between the officers and the prosperous citizens: ‘þe mayre, the aldirmen, wyth the thryfty comoners of the cyte’ or ‘those that were substanciall’.⁹⁶ At other times the watch was presented as requiring the participation

⁹³ E.g. *Gregory's Chronicle*, p. 183 (Lollard); *Great Chronicle*, pp. 189 (nobles), 275 (plebeian revolt).

⁹⁴ *Gregory's Chronicle*, p. 159.

⁹⁵ ‘Gough London 10’, p. 159; *Great Chronicle*, p. 190.

⁹⁶ *Great Chronicle*, p. 184.

of all of society, from the mayoralty down to the inhabitants of each ward: ‘the maire, the schirreves, with alle the aldermen, be comown counseill and comowne assent dede ordeyne divers [sic] wacches of divers wardes of the citee’.⁹⁷ Descriptions of the watch thus existed on a spectrum from the hierarchical to the communitarian: the watch was an unstable symbol that captured the vexed relationship between public order and popular participation.

The watch was most frequently depicted as a counter to aristocratic violence. The behaviour of large aristocratic affinities in London was a recurrent source of concern. During the tense 1397 parliament, so many large affinities entered London ‘þat every strete & lan yn London & yn þe sowthbarbez [suburbs] weren fulle of ham logged, and X or XII myle about London every way’.⁹⁸ As tensions escalated in parliament, the mayor ‘ordeined, at every yate and yn every warde, strong wacche of men of armeȝ and of archers’.⁹⁹ The problem of armed aristocratic factions became particularly intense during the unsettled years between 1450 and the stabilisation of the monarchy under the Tudors. Several chroniclers commented explicitly on the threat that aristocrats posed. Bale noted before the 1450 parliament that a great watch was held on the streets of London because: ‘the peple wer in doute and feer what shuld fall, for the lordes com to Westminster and to the Parliament with greet power as men of werr’.¹⁰⁰ *Gregory’s Chronicle* commented that the sight of the Duke of York’s affinity marching in formation in London in 1450 would have been ‘a gay and a gloryus syght if hit hadde ben in Fraunce, but not in Ingelonde’ as it roused partisan spirits and ‘causyd aftyr many mannys dethe’.¹⁰¹ Lambeth 306’s entry for 1459/60 accused a band of nobles led by Lord Scales of having ‘made grete werre a

⁹⁷ *A Chronicle of London*, pp. 125-6.

⁹⁸ *Brut*, p. 353.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.* p. 354.

¹⁰⁰ ‘Bale’s Chronicle’, p. 127.

¹⁰¹ *Gregory’s Chronicle*, p. 196.

ynes the cite'.¹⁰² During the 1470 strife over the return of Henry VI to the throne, the *Great Chronicle*, recorded that a great watch was kept 'for þe sowldiars was so plentious in þe city, who robbed & spoyled in Sothwarke & at Blyndchapelton makynge the Flemyngs to flye out of þe citie in þe worst wyse'.¹⁰³ These flashpoints represented some of the worst violence, but London chronicles also often recorded near-clashes: in 1456, for instance, the affinities of the Duke of Somerset and Sir John Neville came perilously close, but 'by sadde provicion of the mayre...wyth kepyng of sufficient wacchis it was lettid'.¹⁰⁴ These examples indicate that aristocratic violence preyed on the minds of chroniclers. It was often portrayed as being mediated, countered or checked by the mayor and watch.

One potential cause for anxiety was the imbalance between the high level of military training amongst the aristocracy compared to the relatively amateurish citizen militia. This made it easy for civic interventions to misfire. Several London chronicles memorialised the 1417 instance in which Lord Strange and Sir John Trussell brawled 'for here wyves' in St Dunstan-in-the-East 'in the preching tyme'. The Fishmonger, Thomas Petwardyn, 'wente betwene them to lette the debate' and was slain for his efforts.¹⁰⁵ One tactic for negating aristocratic advantage during mass unrest was to stretch chains across city streets, which could force cavalry to dismount whilst leaving foot traffic unimpeded: the *Great Chronicle* noted that this occurred during Simon de Montfort's wars in the 1260s, and Bale noted the return of the tactic during the 1450 parliament.¹⁰⁶ Another source of anxiety was that aristocratic rioters were of high status, and those who arrested them were of relatively low status: for a common citizen to command or arrest an aristocrat would upend social norms and could be politically dangerous. Bale noted during the 1450 parliament that

¹⁰² 'Lambeth 306', p. 73.

¹⁰³ *Great Chronicle*, p. 211.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.* p. 189.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.* p. 96.

¹⁰⁶ *Great Chronicle*, p. 14; 'Bale's Chronicle', p. 136.

several of the Duke of Suffolk's men were taken by the night watchmen of the city and imprisoned 'but they wer delivered ageyn be writ without tareing': men with high connections found it easy to evade justice.¹⁰⁷ Worse still occurred in 1392: an attempt by vigilant citizens to arrest a brawling servant of the Bishop of Salisbury led to a confrontation between court and city and resulted in the suspension of the city's franchise.¹⁰⁸ Although the presence of aristocrats was vital to the cultural and economic importance of the city, it also posed military, practical and political difficulties. The arrest of nobles involved low-born citizens giving commands to higher-born and well-connected superiors. Given the significant challenges that they faced, it is therefore unsurprising that London chroniclers devoted many entries to this topic and celebrated occasions on which violence was 'seasid thorow þe polisie of þe marye [sic] & sheryffis'.¹⁰⁹

6.4.2: Threats from Within

Menaces to public order did not just come from outsiders such as soldiers and aristocrats. They also came from within, including from factions and plebeians. Factionalism was in London, as in most medieval cities, a longstanding issue. The late fourteenth century had seen the aldermanry become relatively inclusive, with members recruited from the craft as well as merchant guilds.¹¹⁰ By the early fifteenth century, this experiment was discontinued and the vast majority of offices were held by a narrow oligarchy of merchants: aldermen were drawn from only eight companies in the early fifteenth century,

¹⁰⁷ 'Bale's Chronicle', pp. 128-9.

¹⁰⁸ Barron, 'Richard II's Quarrel'.

¹⁰⁹ *Great Chronicle*, pp. 136-7; *Songs*, pp. 152-3.

¹¹⁰ Beaven, *Aldermen*, i, pp. 329-30.

with over half from the Mercers, Drapers and Goldsmiths.¹¹¹ There were recurrent challenges to this narrow oligarchy. The leaders in most of these challenges were from the largest and wealthiest of the craft guilds, the Tailors, which produced its first alderman in 1435 and first mayor in 1498.¹¹² The merchant guilds struck back and from 1503, all new aldermen could be chosen only from only a narrow list of approved guilds (which excluded the Merchant Taylors), creating a formal oligarchy.¹¹³ It was only in 1538 that a broader list of officeholding guilds was drawn up, which added Tailors, Vintners, Clothworkers and Salters to the ruling group, forming the ‘12 Head Companies’.¹¹⁴ Thus, the Tailors had some success in challenging the distribution of power. The outcome, however, was not a fundamental redistribution of power but rather the creation of an expanded oligarchy, underpinned by formal power-sharing agreements between guilds. Although the precise dynamics changed with each generation, many of London’s factional disputes were informed by long-running tensions between merchant and craft guilds, and by the rivalry between the Tailors and other prominent guilds. Chronicle reportage on these struggles inevitably raised questions of faction, public order, oligarchy and power-sharing between guilds.

Some chroniclers interpreted factional struggle through the lens of an authoritarian understanding of city politics: namely that the commons were obliged to be obedient to their rulers and to be ‘of oon accord’.¹¹⁵ Factionalism was a threat to unanimity and undermined the common good. This was most clearly represented in accounts of the Tailor, Ralph Holland’s bid for the mayoralty in 1441. The aldermen used their power of ‘pricking’ to effectively veto Holland’s candidacy: several chroniclers noted that the

¹¹¹ *Ibid.* p. 330.

¹¹² For an overview, see Davies, ‘Tailors of London’, pp. 106-134; C. Barron, ‘Ralph Holland’.

¹¹³ Beaven, *Aldermen*, i, p. 330.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁵ TCC, O.3.11, fol. 133r.

aldermen acted ‘after the lawdable custome’ and ‘as the custume is’.¹¹⁶ Their actions were aligned with tradition, law and the customary authority of the city. Members of Holland’s Tailor-led faction within the hall began to shout protests such as ‘Nay, nay, not this man but Rawlyn Holand’.¹¹⁷ This was ‘undyscrete noyse’ and ‘unresonable’ behaviour, according to the *Great Chronicle*, and continued, despite commands to the contrary by the mayor and sheriff: their activism was presented as disobedience to the mayor.¹¹⁸ *Bale’s Chronicle* claimed that the Tailors had committed ‘pety treson’.¹¹⁹ Both *Bale’s Chronicle* and the *Great Chronicle* interpreted the actions of the aldermen as consensual and in the common interest of the city; and the actions of the Tailors as factional, sectional and partisan. Other guild disputes were similarly portrayed as a battle of legitimate majority versus a disobedient minority. Harley 565 described the factional battles of the 1380s as a ‘debate’ of the justly-elected Mayor John of Northampton against the Fishmongers, who corrupted elections by inviting non-citizen outsiders and using threats of military force.¹²⁰ The *Great Chronicle* portrayed the Tailors of the 1490s as exhibiting ‘malice’ toward other guilds and a ‘hote apetyte’ to gain office; the aldermen were, therefore, protecting the city in opposing Tailor demands.¹²¹ Within this view, factional conflicts occurred when individual guilds failed to recognize their rightful place in society and were disobedient to authority.

This was not, however, the only feasible view. Another interpretation was that factions were created by insufficient sharing of power: indeed, it was a power-sharing agreement between the Tailors and the other guilds that would resolve their longstanding oppositional

¹¹⁶ ‘Vitellius A.xvi’, pp. 154-5; *Great Chronicle*, pp. 175-6; Caxton, *Brut*, p. 509.

¹¹⁷ ‘Vitellius A.xvi’, p. 155.

¹¹⁸ *Great Chronicle*, pp. 175-6.

¹¹⁹ ‘Bale’s Chronicle’, p. 115.

¹²⁰ *Chronicle of London*, p. 75.

¹²¹ *Great Chronicle*, pp. 245-6.

activism in 1538. Bale recorded that in 1448 there was a period of ‘stryf’, followed by a ‘greet sute upon a truce’ between the Drapers and the Tailors, which positioned the factionalism of the period as a guild rivalry, solvable by treaty.¹²² Both the *Great Chronicle* and Vitellius A.xvi reported with some sympathy a 1486 dispute within the Merchant Adventurers: the discontented Adventurers complained that only Mercers held office even though the company recruited from many guilds.¹²³ The Mercer monopoly on officeholding was broken with the installation first of a civil lawyer and then a Draper. Many other factional incidents were discussed in more value-neutral terms as disputes between guilds, for instance, some chroniclers noted in the 1370s that the murder of John Norwold, Mercer, at a wrestling match at Blackheath ‘byganne grete debate and dyssension amonge the craffttes of London’.¹²⁴ These accounts showed, implicitly and explicitly, that settlements between guilds underpinned public order; disorder did not necessarily mean that less-powerful guilds were being disobedient, but could mean that they were not being accommodated. The early sixteenth century saw a trend towards a formalized oligarchy that was underwritten by power-sharing agreements between guilds: some chroniclers showed an interest in power-sharing agreements which prefigured this development.

Some of the issues discussed in this section – public order, participation and political judgement – were thrown into sharpest relief in accounts of anti-immigrant riots, particularly the anti-Lombard riots of 1456 and the Steelyard riots of 1493. Many chroniclers used these riots to contrast the wise and peaceful senior commoners against the violent and unstable lower commons. The *New Chronicles* described the ‘polycy & good

¹²² ‘Bale’s Chronicle’, p. 123.

¹²³ *Great Chronicle*, p. 240; ‘Vitellius A.xvi’, pp. 193-4.

¹²⁴ ‘Julius B.ii’, p. 14; ‘Lambeth 306’, p. 47; Harley Roll C.8, fol. 4r.

order' through which the city was brought to 'quyetnesse' in 1456.¹²⁵ The mayor, acting as the king's 'lyeutenaut', called an assembly of all of the head commoners including the Common Council and the leaders of each guild. He instructed them to return to their guilds and constituencies and to 'geve every cytezyn streyght commaundement þat every man see & entende to see þe kynges peace within þe cyte'. If any commoners advocated for violence, 'fayer wordys' should be used to calm them and the names of troublemakers should be secretly recorded.¹²⁶ This system expressed a hierarchical and authoritarian understanding of city politics: the mayor and head commoners were engaged in a common project to maintain the king's peace, and the threats to that peace came from the disobedience of the masses.

A large group of chroniclers, consisting of the related accounts of the *Great Chronicle*, Vitellius A.xvi, Caxton's *Brut* and the *New Chronicles*, used depictions of anti-immigrant riots to differentiate between sober citizens and a greater mass of the disenfranchised. The 1456 riots for were begun by 'yong men of the mercery, as apprentices and other lowse men' and subsequently joined by the 'hand crafty-men' and 'vacabondys and other that lokyd for pylfry & ryfflynge' and 'a multytude of rascall & poore people of þe cytie, without hede or guyde'.¹²⁷ The 1493 riots contained a 'numbyr off idyll & yll dysposid personys' alongside 'servauntes', 'childern' and 'covenant servauntis and apprentyzis and not oon howsholder of theym alle'.¹²⁸ Although many rioters were Mercers' servants, the senior men of that guild were blameless: 'noon of theyr mastyr were ffound gylty in any concent of thys ryott'.¹²⁹ The city's defenders who faced off against the rioters were said to be of a higher social status. In 1456 they were variously termed 'þe honest peple of þe

¹²⁵ *New Chronicles*, p. 631.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*

¹²⁷ 'Vitellius A.xvi', p. 166; *New Chronicles*, p. 630; Caxton, *Brut*, pp. 522-3; *Great Chronicle*, p. 188.

¹²⁸ 'Vitellius A.xvi', p. 198; *Great Chronicle*, pp. 249, 248, 250.

¹²⁹ *Great Chronicle*, p. 250.

town', 'good and weldysposid people of the cyte', 'sadde and welavisyd men' or the 'worshypfull comoners'.¹³⁰ The equivalent group in 1493 were 'honest howsholders'.¹³¹ The perpetrators were presented as disenfranchised men, namely those who were young, poor, inexperienced or lacking independent means. The peacekeepers were the enfranchised, namely older and richer men, householders and citizens. These chronicles reinforced the line between the honest householder and the disenfranchised.

The simple division between enfranchised defenders and disenfranchised rioters was not present in all chronicles. Several accounts of the 1456 riots produced in the 1460s and 1470s (and thus closer to the riots than Fabyan or Vitellius A.xvi) presented civic leaders as complicit: *Gregory's Chronicle* blamed the whole riot on the 'wanton reule of þe mayre and the Mercers of London a-gayne the Lombardys'.¹³² Lambeth 306 recorded the arrest of one alderman and 36 leading Mercers as parties to the riot.¹³³ Not all condemned the riots. Some shifted the blame onto the immigrants themselves: in Gough London 10(ii), the 1456 incidents were not riots *against* immigrants, but rather 'the fraye among Lombardis'; similarly, an annotator of the *Great Chronicle* reframed the incident as a 'dystourbaunce of the Lumbardis withyn London'.¹³⁴ In the extremely brief account of 1493, the chronicle COA MS M.6bis rearranged the facts such that the immigrants made war 'a-yenist the cete' rather than the other way around.¹³⁵ An ambiguous stance was taken by Robert Bale's account of the 1456 riot. Bale presented very little detail of the 'debate among the people' aside from that there was some 'riflyng' (theft). He instead narrated the trial and sentencing and noted that 'the peple sore grucched': Bale thus implied that the punishment

¹³⁰ Caxton, *Brut*, p. 523; *Great Chronicle*, p. 188; *New Chronicles*, p. 630; 'Vitellius A.xvi', p. 166.

¹³¹ *Great Chronicle*, p. 249.

¹³² *Gregory's Chronicle*, p. 199.

¹³³ 'Lambeth 306', p. 70.

¹³⁴ Gough London 10, fol. 43v; *Great Chronicle*, p. 188.

¹³⁵ COA, MS M.6bis, fol. 58v.

was too harsh.¹³⁶ These accounts illustrated that the line drawn between honest householders and disenfranchised men in some chronicles was not closely rooted in historical fact. Despite coming from the honest householder group, many London chroniclers identified the rioters with the leaders of London, or sympathised with the rioters, or exhibited anti-immigrant sentiments. The focus on householders as peacekeepers in chronicles such as Vitellius A.xvi was primarily an ideological statement rather than a description of reality. Chroniclers reinforced London's peacekeeping model, which was centred on the idea that honest householders were a bulwark of social order.

The simple divide between householders and the rioters was further complicated in some depictions because the rioters were shown making use of the official policing powers that the city delegated to citizens. Many accounts of the 1456 riot began with a Lombard servant who 'walked throughe Chepe with a dagger hangynge at his gyrdell'.¹³⁷ The catalytic incident came when a Mercer's servant approached him and 'chalengyd the straunger, and questenyd with hym how he was so bolde to bere such a warely wepyn, consyderynge he was a straunger and out of his natyfe countrey': the *New Chronicles* uniquely added that the Mercer's servant had himself been reprimanded for bearing arms when he had been in Italy.¹³⁸ The city authorities had the right to disarm dangerous men: this section has already discussed Bale's description of the mayor disarming rioters in 1450.¹³⁹ These chroniclers thus furnished the first mover of the riot with a relatively sympathetic motivation: a community attempt to enforce civic bylaws and keep the peace by removing weapons from the streets. Later, a crowd of servants detained the mayor and forced him to release the first rioter from prison. This was a disobedient and unlawful

¹³⁶ 'Bale's Chronicle', pp. 143-4.

¹³⁷ *New Chronicles*, p. 630.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*

¹³⁹ 'Bale's Chronicle', p. 136.

action, but it was necessary because if the rioter had stayed in prison, he would have been ‘in jubardie of his lyfe’.¹⁴⁰ When the mayor released the rioter, this created ambiguity: the *New Chronicles* claimed that some ‘men of honeste’ mistook this action for a mayoral rebuke to the Lombards, who were widely suspected of making a ‘great lyvyngge’ by illicit sales of luxury goods.¹⁴¹ Citizens were obliged by their oath to monitor the economic activities of foreigners, thus these ‘men of honeste’ were to some extent performing their civic duties. Many chronicle accounts ended with an attempt by the commons to arm themselves and ‘to have rungyn the comon belle callid bowe belle’: bell-ringing was a widespread means of calling an assembly of the commons.¹⁴² The Duke of Buckingham, who was holding an inquest into the riot at the time, ‘incontynently’ fled in the face of this potential assembly: the use of the term incontinent thus suggested that Buckingham should have not treated the mobilisation of the commons as a violent threat. Some chroniclers thus attributed several features to the rioters that were derived from officially-endorsed civic peacekeeping. The rioters attempted to enforce civic bylaws by removing weapons from the streets. They monitored illicit economic activities by foreigners. Some mistakenly believed that their cause was endorsed by the mayoralty, and they used official forms of organisation, including the Bowe bell. The rioters in 1456 were portrayed as having made use of the infrastructure for citizen participation in peacekeeping.

The *Great Chronicle*’s account of the 1493 riots presented a relatively sympathetic account of the motives of the rioters, without justifying their methods. The rioters told a committee led by sheriff Robert Fabyan a sympathetic story of deprivation. They were suffering from the trade depression caused by royal policies; and ‘they agreed alle in oone

¹⁴⁰ Caxton, *Brut*, p. 523.

¹⁴¹ *New Chronicles*, p. 630.

¹⁴² *Great Chronicle*, p. 188; C. Liddy and J. Haemers, ‘Popular Politics in the Late Medieval City: York and Bruges’, *English Historical Review*, 128:533, (2013), pp. 771-805, 801.

tale' concerning the casualisation of employment, lower wages and the lack of opportunities:

ffor where theyr mastyr in tymys passyd usid to gyve unto a covenaut servant xx li. & mete and drynk yerely beside othir avaylys, now ffor lak of occupyng...a covenant servaunt at this day mygth not ffynd a mastyr that wold gyve to hym v mark by yere¹⁴³

The protesters were portrayed as acting in desperation, in the vain hope that 'ffortune wold have preferrid theyr entent'.¹⁴⁴ Although Fabyan condemned their methods, he maintained a lively curiosity about their motives. In the rioters' tale, the economic elites of the city were criticised for driving their employees to desperation. Keeping peace in the city did not only mean unconditional adherence to hierarchy: it also required economic justice and that the commons were allowed a measure of participation and representation.

As sheriff, Robert Fabyan led the committee that aimed, (according to the *Great Chronicle*) to 'cumme unto the knowlage of the trowth' of the causes of the riot.¹⁴⁵ Fabyan was a representative of authority, but he was also a listening ear, tasked with interviewing the rioters and making their reasons known to the civic authorities and the king.

Chroniclers were engaged in a comparable task: analysing, interpreting and explaining the revolt. Readers and future governors could, by understanding what caused revolts, avert similar events in the future. The measure of representation given to the rioters had less to do with the rights and wrongs of the situation, and more to do ideas of petition and counsel. The poor and those distant from power were held to have rights of petition and representation within the realm, particularly when it came to economic issues. Citizen-owned manuscripts contained many texts of political criticism, whether mildly worded petitions or more outrageous and seditious political poetry and dissident writing. Mayoral

¹⁴³ *Great Chronicle*, p. 249.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.* p. 250.

secretary John Vale collected manifestos and petitions alongside his chronicle, as did the anonymous author of Cotton Roll ii.23.¹⁴⁶ London commonplace books such as Harley 2252, Balliol 354, Lambeth 306 and Lansdowne 762 contained protest ballads and petitions; even the habitually politically tame *Customs of London* contained within it a petition of ‘articles desired by the comunes of the cytee [f]or reformation of thinges prejudicall [to London]’.¹⁴⁷ London chronicler Robert Bale was imprisoned for writing protest literature against the court of aldermen.¹⁴⁸ It is within this context – of a city producing and reading critical literature – that we should consider the representation that the *Great Chronicle* gave to the Steelyard rioters. Whereas Londoners could access a direct form of dissident self-representation through protest literature, they turned to historiography for a more refined and processed version. The historiographical version was balanced out by interpretation and evaluation; indeed, it was often placed alongside condemnation and suitable punishment. It sought to explain some of the driving forces in protest and dissidence in the hope that grievances could be resolved in the future. In pitting the perspective of the Steelyard rioters against the established values of hierarchy, obedience and public order, the *Great Chronicle* was engaged with the political education of rulers.

One further vital theme in these riot descriptions was the importance of mercy, clemency and the unequal application of the law. In their accounts of enforcement against fraud, economic crime and prostitution, chroniclers advocated for ‘ffull observaunce accordyng to justyce’ and praised mayors who enacted ‘dyligent & sharp correccion...and sparid noon

¹⁴⁶ On Vale’s book and polemic, see above, pp. 105, 174, 224; on Cotton Roll ii.23, see above, pp. 106, 219.

¹⁴⁷ *Customs of London*, pp. 80-89. BL, Harley 2252, ff. 1v (Anti-Fraternal scatology), 2v-3r (*On the Fall of Buckingham*), 18r-21v (petition against abuse of assizes), 25r-7r, 33v-34v, 134r-139r, 147r-153v, 156-159r (miscellaneous protest literature against Wolsey). ‘Balliol 354’, pp. 360-2 (*On the Fall of Eleanor Cobham*). Lambeth MS 306, fol. 134r (*Twelve Letters That Shall Save England*). BL, Lansdowne 762, ff. 72r-73r (Petition of Commons to Emperor).

¹⁴⁸ Sutton, ‘Robert Bale’, pp. 180-206.

ffor mede nor ffor ffavour'.¹⁴⁹ The tone concerning peacekeeping was quite different. In 1493, the *Great Chronicle* praised the king for his clemency in pardoning the rioters: 'the kyng of hys grete goodnesse pardonyd theym & sett theym at theyr lybertees'.¹⁵⁰ Bale suggested that stringent enforcement of the laws against the rioters of 1456 caused widespread grievance amongst the commons; fears of harsh mass reprisals may have been the motivator for the crowd that attempted to ring the Bowe bell during Buckingham's inquiry. Harsh and merciful policies could both have unintended effects: in 1456, the mayor's swift action in imprisoning the first rioter (and the fears that this evoked for the prisoner's survival) was vital in mobilising Mercers' servants to take to the street. On the other hand, clemency also contributed to the escalation of violence: the release of the first rioter was misinterpreted as a sign that the mayor wished to humble the Lombards. Effective management of popular disturbance required good judgement on the part of mayors: in certain circumstances, rigorous application of the law was appropriate and in others, it could inflame the situation; the effectiveness of pardon was similarly contingent on circumstance. This chapter has already described how, in relatively abstract terms, the *Trésor* and *Mumming for the Goldsmiths* had identified clemency as a particularly difficult issue of personal judgement.¹⁵¹ Within their chronicles, Londoners could find a series of working case studies on the prudence of rigour and mercy.

Lee Patterson has claimed that 'the primary social value in late-medieval London was not freedom but public order'.¹⁵² This thesis rather has suggested that public order and freedom of the city were both important values, with a vexed boundary between them.

Peacekeeping was a fundamental duty for citizens, collectively and individually. The civic

¹⁴⁹ *Great Chronicle*, p. 222.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.* p. 250

¹⁵¹ 'Mumming for the Goldsmiths', ll. 85-89.

¹⁵² Patterson, *Chaucer and the Subject of History*, p. 329.

oaths laid out a normative model within which peace would be kept through wise leadership of the mayor and the obedience and participation of the masses in surveillance and peacekeeping. Through their historical reading and writing, many Londoners subscribed to this vision of an obedient and ordered populace; but they also considerably complicated it. Maintaining a broad coalition of citizens who were willing to uphold public order required the mayor to fulfil certain obligations: to maintain a balance of power between guilds, to avoid open factionalism and to maintain a sense of legal and economic justice. Mayors needed to pay attention to the petitions of the commons: the relationship between the commons as a source of counsel and the commons as a source of subversion was complex. Rigorous application of the law needed to be tempered by political skill when dealing with aristocratic violence; or with prudent mercy when countering plebeian threats. Effective peacekeeping required much more than the faithful application of normative ideological codes: it required understanding, wisdom and good judgement. An increasing interest in education, and a particular focus on history, could help civic governors to understand their roles.

6.5: ‘He Dyd as Hys Dygnyte Requyryd of the Cytte’: the Individual Leader in the Commune.¹⁵³

Not all civic political life was focused on legal duties or institutional powers: a good illustration of this can be seen in accounts of Mayor John Shaa’s (1501/2) efforts to build new kitchens for the Guildhall. Shaa first gathered his ‘brethyrn’ from the Goldsmiths, ‘to

¹⁵³ *Gregory’s Chronicle*, pp. 222-3.

knowe what þey of theyr comon box wold gyve'.¹⁵⁴ Once that guild's voluntary generosity was published, other companies were invited to donate. Each guild gave 'as their powers and havours [possessions] were': the Goldsmiths, Mercers, Grocers and Drapers donated large sums, reflecting their principal importance, and the other companies gave lesser amounts. Donations by several individuals resulted in their heraldry being displayed in the Guildhall windows.¹⁵⁵ Thus, the mayor, by 'provydent meanys', raised enough money without increasing taxes to complete his project within two years. This chapter has so far mostly stressed a legalistic definition of citizenship, with the greatest focus on rules, regulations and decisions taken by officeholders. The story of Shaa's kitchen illustrates the cultural aspects of leadership: the importance of the glory and fame of individuals; of competition within the elites; of the duty to maintain the urban fabric of the city; and of the importance of charity. These could not be found within the civic customals but all were important to the civic elite. This chapter has already suggested that there was a shift towards a more individualised style of chronicling in the late fifteenth century: chroniclers concentrated less on the office of the mayoralty and more on the individual who held it, noting their different styles, personalities and approaches. This section will explore the social and cultural role of civic leaders within the commune.

6.5.1: Commemoration and Charity

In order to understand how individuals were memorialised within London, it is important to consider the culture of commemoration. Religious ideas of commemoration were

¹⁵⁴ *Great Chronicle*, pp. 319-320; 'Vitellius A.xvi', p. 257.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

shaped by models of charity and *post-mortem* spiritual patronage.¹⁵⁶ These were best expressed in a London context by the ordinances of the almshouse created by the will of Mayor Richard Whittington (*d.* 1423):

The fervent desire and besy intension of a prudent, wise and devoute man shold be to cast before & make seure the state and th'ende of his short lyff with dedes of mercy and pite. And namely to provide for suche pouer persones, whiche grevous penurie and cruelle fortune have oppressed and be not of power, to gete their lyvyng...Whereby that, at þe day of the last jugement, he may take his part with hem that shalle be saved¹⁵⁷

To avert the pains of purgatory, a rich man should ensure that his chattels were used in good deeds after his death. Any recipients of his posthumous largess were obliged to pray for his soul. These prayers would preserve the earthly fame of the donor and also ensure his smooth passage toward heaven. This had two components: an individualistic side, in which the benefactor shaped his own memory and reputation; and a communal element, in which beneficiaries were drawn together into a community that was obliged to sustain the memory of their benefactor. Londoners had a broad definition of charitable works: for instance, David Harry has noted that Caxton's prologues frequently requested that readers pray for the printer due to his 'charitable' act of enabling their edification by providing them with a book.¹⁵⁸ Ideas of spiritual patronage thus could become expansive within London's economy and political system.

Within London historiography, the most frequently depicted benefactions were charitable building works. As has been shown above, interest in the urban fabric of the city was frequently expressed throughout London historiography, particularly in descriptions of the

¹⁵⁶ A. Galpern, 'The Legacy of Late Medieval Religion in Sixteenth-century Champagne', in C. Trikaus and H. Oberman (eds.), *The Pursuit of Holiness in Late Medieval and Renaissance Religion*, (Leiden, 1974), pp. 141-176; D. Harry, 'William Caxton and Commemorative Culture in Fifteenth-century England', in L. Clark (ed.), *The Fifteenth Century*, 13, (Woodbridge, 2014), pp. 63-80.

¹⁵⁷ Quoted in A. Appleford, *Learning to Die in London, 1380-1540*, (Philadelphia, 2015), p. 60.

¹⁵⁸ See: Harry, 'William Caxton'.

building, rebuilding or concern for damage done to civic buildings or infrastructure.¹⁵⁹

Although construction projects are frequently depicted in accounts of the twelfth-through-fourteenth centuries, they were not usually ascribed to a patron or individual builder.¹⁶⁰

Individual patrons or donors were first identified in descriptions of the 1420s-1430s, which was recent memory for the founder generation of London chroniclers. For example, many London chronicles noted the rebuilding of Newgate by the executors of ‘that famos [*sic*] marchant and Merser, Rycharde Whytyngdone’.¹⁶¹ *Gregory’s Chronicle* noted that during the rebuilding of the drawbridge at the tower at London Bridge, ‘the mayre layde the fyrste stone, and mo othyr aldyrmen with hym’.¹⁶² More idiosyncratically, Harley 540 ascribed the new weathercock of St Paul’s to Bartholomew Plomar ‘dwelling in Finkes Lane besyde Cornehill’.¹⁶³ These accounts reinforced the social expectation that the elite of the city was responsible for the built environment of the city. By recording acts of charity and improvements to the civic infrastructure, the London chronicles joined in with the city’s culture of *post-mortem* charity and patronage.

Other types of charity were less frequently described in civic historiography. Several chroniclers noted the posthumous generosity of Mayor Robert Chicheley, who arranged at his funeral for a feast for one hundred poor men.¹⁶⁴ In the *Great Chronicle’s* account of this event, an annotator has added ‘*exemplum pietatis*’ (an example of piety), marking this out as a model for future readers. Another unusual scheme was that Mayor John Bernes (1370/1, 1371/2) left a chest of money that was used to lend out seed capital to young

¹⁵⁹ See above, p. 252. For examples of accounts of urban building, see *Gregory’s Chronicle*, pp. 60, 60, 65, 70, 71, 148, 156, 162, 172, 183, 185, 187. For instances of fire damage, see: *Ibid.* 60, 61, 65, 163, 185; *Great Chronicle*, pp. 1, 8, 14, 45, 286, 326-7, 327, 327, 330, 334, 335, 338, 366, 380.

¹⁶⁰ For a (user-added) earlier outlier, see *Great Chronicle*, p. 11.

¹⁶¹ *Gregory’s Chronicle*, p. 156.

¹⁶² *Ibid.* p. 162.

¹⁶³ Harley 540, in Kingsford, *English Historical Literature*, p. 295.

¹⁶⁴ *Great Chronicle*, p. 174; Bodleian, Rawlinson B.173, fol. 224v; *A Chronicle of London*, p. 124.

merchants. Instead of repaying interest, the debtors were required to pray for his soul.¹⁶⁵ Benefactions for the poor were normal within the memorial culture of the time, (although lending schemes were much less so): the relative rarity of such entries compared to the glut of discussions of the urban fabric of the city suggests that London historians were primarily focused on acts of charity that created a large community of beneficiaries. Chroniclers were interested in charity which benefited the whole city and not merely on personal and private acts.

Complementing these spiritual conceptions of commemoration was a bundle of primarily secular ideas about memorialization. The word *fama* (fame) had diverse meanings and was tied to personal reputation, genealogy, family honour and ‘worldly glory during and after one’s life, associated particularly with the act of writing’.¹⁶⁶ Neo-classical and humanist scholars drew a link between historiography and *fama*: Caxton’s prologue to the *Polychronicon*, for instance, stated that history was a form of ‘monymment’ which preserved the fame of good men, and was comparable in its function to statues, inscriptions and memorials.¹⁶⁷ Another conception of fame that was more specific to a civic context was the personal reputation of a merchant was linked to his credit and thus his funds. Given that eligibility for office was tied to wealth, personal reputation was at the heart of any citizen’s economic and political power.¹⁶⁸ Commemorative practices were subject to diverse impulses and it was possible for religious commemoration, neo-classicism, credit reputation and genealogical forms of memory to influence each other and cross-pollinate. Chronicling needs to be understood within this context: one form of commemoration amongst several, and serviceable for both secular and religious purposes.

¹⁶⁵ *Great Chronicle*, p. 43.

¹⁶⁶ T. Fenster and D Lord Smail, ‘Introduction’, in T. Fenster and D. Lord Smail (eds.), *Fama: The Politics of Talk and Reputation in Medieval Europe*, (Ithaca, 2003), pp. 1-14, 7.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.* p. 66.

¹⁶⁸ See C. Muldrew, *The Economy of Obligation*, (Basingstoke, 1998), ch. 6.

The most direct interface between historiography and these primarily secular conceptions of fame can be seen in the appropriation of chronicling to meet genealogical purposes. This is particularly pronounced in the London chronicle in BL, Harley 541 (1.23). It began as a mayoral list for 1189-1438, continued in an amateur hand to 1481/2, in a book owned by Mercer Thomas Frowyk (*d.* 1485), as the work of Anne Sutton and Livia Visser-Fuchs has shown.¹⁶⁹ After this point, three scribes working collaboratively transformed it into a brief chronicle containing entries for 1481-7 and 1497. The first four entries of the chronicle contain three entries that recount a death, followed by a brief post mortem prayer (*e.g.* ‘god have merci on her soulle, Amen’). One of these prayers was for family patriarch Thomas Frowyk.¹⁷⁰ This was not the only reference to family memory: users marked the name of Henry Frowyk (Thomas’ father) in the mayoral list (fol. 217r). In short, this chronicle was produced at around the time of the death of Thomas Frowyk; it was probably produced collaboratively by several amateur scribes, perhaps in the Frowyk household; it showed an interest in Frowyk family members, and it contains a concentration of prayers for the dead. This chronicle expressed an entangling between Frowyk family memory and corporate memory. This was not the only London chronicle used in this way: Bodley 596 may have been a vehicle for Knolles family memory, and genealogies of civic families were inserted into Balliol 354 and Arnold Fitz-Thedmar’s *Book of Old Laws*.¹⁷¹ Several other chronicles also contained materials that carried family memories: the Horn family in Longleat 174; the Shepherd family in Bodleian Rawlinson Liturg. f.3; and an unidentified family in Bodley 623.¹⁷² More ambiguously, in Houghton MS f.938, an *obit* notice for civic widow Alice Hungerford has been added.¹⁷³ As it

¹⁶⁹ A. Sutton and L. Visser-Fuchs, ‘The Making of a Minor London Chronicle in the Household of Sir Thomas Frowyk (died 1485)’, *The Ricardian*, 10:126, (1994-6), pp. 86-103, 86-7.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.* p. 99.

¹⁷¹ Appendix 1.37, 1.44; see above, pp. 33-34 (Fitz-Thedmar).

¹⁷² See above, pp. 105 (Longleat 174), 107 (Rawl. Liturg.F.3), and App. 3.11 (Bodley 620).

¹⁷³ See Appendix, 2.3.

became common for citizen households to compile chronicles, these texts became vehicles for individual and family commemoration: the life of the individual family could be entwined with the histories of London and the realm.

However, the general pattern was that London historiography showed a preference for the communal over the individual: it focused on the officers of the city rather than individual families, and on acts of public charity rather than localised and private charity. Citizens were concerned with communal memory more than individual memory, and they exhibited anxiety about the fragility of that memory. Users of the *Liber Albus* customal added a Latin poem on the potential for London's customs to be lost: 'while it still exists, transcribe each page;/ Once gone, 'tis lost to every future age'.¹⁷⁴ For Robert Fabyan, the loss of records was not a theoretical threat. He claimed that there had been a long line of proto-mayors that had ruled the city before 1189; however, 'the remembraunce of suche rulers...are loste and forgotten'.¹⁷⁵ Their names had been 'regestryd' in an old 'Domysday' book, but as it had become increasingly arcane, it was 'enbesylyd or loste'.¹⁷⁶ Fabyan's mythic 'Domysday' speaks of contemporary fears about the loss of memory: if the old records were not recopied then the city's memory would fade and even the names of the mayors could be lost. Records, archives, historiography and writing had an important role to play as *aide-mémoires*, which carried and supplemented the memory of the corporation of London.

Just as genealogies carried the names and memories of a family, some citizens conceived of London chronicles as carrying the names and memories of London's leaders. Most were originally entitled with a variant on 'Here folowythe the namys of...' the mayors, sheriffs,

¹⁷⁴ *Liber Albus*, p. 1.

¹⁷⁵ On proto-mayors, see above, pp. 67-77; *New Chronicles*, p. 293.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

bailiffs, or other titles for officers of London.¹⁷⁷ This presented their task as a simple and unambitious one: to record the names and memories of civic officers. In two instances (Digby Rolls 2 and Harley Roll C.8), London chronicles were compiled in a roll rather than a codex format: this was an uncommon format for lengthy histories and was never used for the common versions of the *Brut*.¹⁷⁸ Rolls were commonly used in genealogy because the format allows for a clear connection to be drawn from the top to the tail of the genealogy without any breaks: the physical form implies continuity.¹⁷⁹ By placing the names of mayors on a roll, the sense of successorship – in which one officer succeeds and builds on the work of another – could be enhanced. In the case of Harley Roll C.8, a Latin prologue was added that extended the roots of the mayoralty back to Edward the Confessor, partially supplementing the lost ‘Domysday’.¹⁸⁰ London chronicles, whether in roll or codex, expressed the idea that London had a long and unbroken civic memory.

Genealogies were not, however, the only genre of writing about the past which employed rolls: London chronicles may also have been influenced by mortuary rolls and bede rolls. These were texts used for collecting the names of the dead, which often contained the names of individuals who had acted as patrons or benefactors to an institution, and who thus needed to be prayed for after their deaths. Medieval cities used prayers and ceremonies to pray for their historic benefactors. The prologue to the Bristol town chronicle, *The Mayor of Bristol’s Calendar*, presented urban liberties as the product of good actions by ‘worshipfull and auncient fadirs’. Citizens were beneficiaries of these actions and so ‘ar bounde to pray for’ the city fathers, and the chronicle also included a

¹⁷⁷ Gregory’s *Chronicle*, p. 57.

¹⁷⁸ There are two genealogical rolls that derive from highly abbreviated *Bruts*, see: J. Rajsic, ‘The English Prose *Brut* Chronicle on a Roll: Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 546 and its History’, in J. Rajsic, E. Kooper and D. Hoche (eds.), *The Prose Brut and Other Late Medieval Chronicles*, (York, 2016), pp. 105-124.

¹⁷⁹ E. Kennedy and R. Radulescu (eds.), *Broken Lines: Genealogical Literature in Late-Medieval Britain and France*, (Turnhout, 2008).

¹⁸⁰ Harley Roll C.8, fol. 1r.

short prayer that wished them heavenly bliss.¹⁸¹ Contemporary citizens of Bristol were a community of beneficiaries and were therefore obliged to pray for their predecessors; it did not matter that the good works from which they had benefited were entirely secular in nature. A similar understanding of civic history is implied by the mayoral accession ceremony in London. It was customary that in the afternoon, the new mayor visited St Paul's and said prayers for two civic worthies: one was bishop William the Norman of London 'who by his entreaties, it is said, obtained from his lordship William the Conqueror great liberties for the City of London'; the second was Gilbert Becket, sheriff and father to St Thomas.¹⁸² This positioned the entire city as a perpetual chantry, saying prayers for past benefactors. There is suggestive evidence that some London chronicle owners were influenced by similar concerns. Two London chronicles contain annotations directing readers to find the tombs of mayors, which may suggest a link between civic historiography and *post-mortem* religious commemorations at burial sites: BL, Harley 3775 contains one such note for Richard Whittington, and Vitellius A.xvi contains one for Robert Fresh.¹⁸³ In manuscript Gough London 10, on folio 4 there is a civic mortuary list on the recto of the page and a very brief London chronicle on the verso. The close conjunction of these texts could suggest that they provided parallel means of preserving the names and memories of past civic officers. One reason for preserving the memory of past governors was a spiritual sense of obligation: by conserving the names of past governors and their good actions, historians were meeting their social and spiritual obligations to remember their benefactors.

¹⁸¹ *The Maire of Bristowe is Kalendar*, ed. L. Toumlin Smith, Camden Society, n. s., 5, (London, 1872), pp. 3, 4.

¹⁸² *Liber Albus*, p. 24.

¹⁸³ BL, Harley MS 3775, fol. 95v; BL, Cotton MS Vitellius A.xvi, f. 30r.

Thus, London historiography had important links to the commemorative practices of London. Chroniclers understood their texts to be linked to the ‘memory’ of the city, but the term memory had a variety of meanings, referring to *post-mortem* religious commemoration, spiritual patronage, genealogies and archival memory. Historiography at times cross-pollinated with each of these forms of memory. There was very broadly a progression over time, with early London chronicles conceived of as carrying the collective memory of the city. As chronicles became increasingly common and were compiled by ordinary citizen households, there was a partial turn from the collective to the individual: interest in genealogy and personal commemoration increased over time.

6.5.2: Decorum and Competition

Aside from charity and patronage, Londoners also memorialised individual leaders for their ceremonies, hosting and liberality. Surviving records provide tantalizing hints of oral histories that focused on ceremony and feasting. London manuscript entrepreneur John Shirley (*d.* 1456) attached several antiquarian-minded prologues to poems, which noted the alleged place and occasion of their composition. Several were linked to civic feasts, for instance: the *Mumming for the Mercers*, *Mumming at Bishopswood*, and *Mumming for the Goldsmiths* to civic feasts on the Epiphany, Candlemas and May Day of 1430 respectively; the *Legend of St George* for use in the Armourer’s hall; *A Procession of Corpus Christi* for a London Skinners’ procession; *Bycorne and Chychevache* for a London merchant’s residence; and Henry Scogan’s *Moral Balade* for a supper held by Louis Johan, merchant

of Vintry.¹⁸⁴ Several London chroniclers similarly stated that the poem *London Thou Art the Flower of Cities All* was ‘made at Mayor Shaa[‘s] table’ by a visiting Scottish dignitary.¹⁸⁵ Elizabethan civic antiquarian John Stow in his topographical writing often noted the specific mansions in the city in which past mayors had held court; he also noted important feasts of past mayors, notably Henry Piccard (1356/7) who once hosted a feast attended by five kings.¹⁸⁶ Richard Grafton gave a detailed account of a feast of Mayor Bartholomew Rede (1502/3) at Goldsmiths’ Hall, which he sourced to ‘the ende of an olde booke in the Grey Friars’ library in London, writen by one Friar Jones’: the nature of this book is uncertain but it indicates a written memorial of a civic feast.¹⁸⁷ Cumulatively, these indicate that there existed an active culture of memorialising important civic feasts and occasions, particularly those held by companies and officeholders, and more occasionally those held by private individuals. Most memorials may have been oral, but some were written.

One intriguing collision between this oral culture and the London chronicle tradition was the song of Mayor John Norman (1453/4). Norman was credited with changing the custom so that, during his installation ceremony, the mayor-elect travelled from the Guildhall to Westminster on a barge rather than horseback. Some London chronicles criticized this as a violation of tradition, but a greater number recorded in it neutral or positive terms.¹⁸⁸ The *Great Chronicle*, Vitellius A.xvi and *New Chronicles* cited a well-known song: ‘Rowe the

¹⁸⁴ *Mummings and Entertainments* contains editions of John Lydgate’s poems: ‘Mumming at Bishopswood’, ‘Mumming for the Goldsmiths’, ‘Mumming for the Mercers’, ‘A Procession of Corpus Christi’, ‘Bycorne and Chychevache’. Henry Scogan, ‘Moral Balade’, *Chaucerian and Other Pieces*, ed. W. Skeat, (Oxford, 1897), pp. 237-244.

¹⁸⁵ For ‘London Thou Art the Flower of Cities All’, see: ‘Balliol 354’, p. 419; *Great Chronicle*, pp. 316-7; ‘Vitellius A.xvi’, pp. 253-5.

¹⁸⁶ Some houses in which mayors held court include: *SoL*, i. pp. 152 (Leaden Porch), 173 (Crosby Hall), 224 (Oxford Place), 232 (Grantham’s Lane Brewhouse), 278 (The Windmill), 286 (Bay Hall); on feasts, *ibid.* 106, 204 (Picard’s feast).

¹⁸⁷ *Abridgement of Chronicles*, (Richard Grafton: London, 1572), ff. 136r-137r; *SoL*, i. p. 305, ii. p. 342.

¹⁸⁸ ‘Rawlinson B.355’, pp. 103, 108; ‘WYA 32D86/42’, p. 212; *A Chronicle of London*, p. 138; ‘Bale’s Chronicle’, p. 140; Caxton, *Brut*, p. 521; *New Chronicles*, p. 628; ‘Lambeth 306’, p. 69; *Customs of London*, xxxiv; *Great Chronicle*, p. 186; ‘Vitellius A.xvi’, p. 164.

bote Norman/rowe to thy lemman [lover]'.¹⁸⁹ In the absence of the full ballad, its meaning is unclear: Frank Rexroth has interpreted it as a parody ballad used to mock the mayoralty.¹⁹⁰ However, the term 'lemman' did not necessarily have stigmatizing connotations in the fifteenth century and the *New Chronicles* described it as 'a songe to his great prayse'.¹⁹¹ Whilst its precise meaning is uncertain, it indicates that Londoners had parallel oral and written means of remembering the past: London chronicles could on occasion draw from this oral culture but for the most part it is unrecoverable to modern historians.

Ceremonies had an important role in London chronicles. Chroniclers frequently evoked the form and costumes of routine civic ceremonies, even if the ceremonies themselves are rarely recounted in detail. When describing a new mayor assuming office, Richard Hill stated that 'þe sword was born home affore hym & he in a gray klok'; when an alderman was removed from office he was 'disgracid of his klok'.¹⁹² For many chroniclers, the external trappings of public office – the rituals, ceremonies and uniforms – acted as metonyms for political power. This was clearest when used in an inverted form. When the *Great Chronicle* wished to express that the liberties of the city were under threat from Richard Empson and Edmund Dudley, the chronicler turned to ceremonial metaphors: 'whoo soo evyr hadd the sword born beffore hym, Dudley was mayer'.¹⁹³ Similarly, Empson's threat against the aldermen was expressed in a sartorial form: he 'trystid to se the aldyrmen were klokys of cotton russet, in stede of klokys of scarlet'.¹⁹⁴ Chroniclers often used subverted or interrupted ceremonial forms to express disorder. When in 1499

¹⁸⁹ *New Chronicles*, p. 628; *Great Chronicle*, p. 186; 'Vitellius A.xvi', p. 164.

¹⁹⁰ F. Rexroth, *Deviance and Power in Late Medieval London*, (Cambridge, 2007), p. 301.

¹⁹¹ *New Chronicles*, p. 628; 'Lemman', *Middle English Dictionary*, https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/dictionary/MED25097/track?counter=1&search_id=2904248 (07-02-2020).

¹⁹² *Songs*, pp. 154, 156.

¹⁹³ *Great Chronicle*, p. 348.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.* p. 348.

the king interfered with the mayoral election, royal writs arrived ‘afftir the messe of the holy goost was sungyn & the mayer with his brethyr was comyn into the inner counseyll chambyr’. By recounting the form of the mayoral ceremony in unusual detail, the chronicler established normal and customary practice. The king’s writ interrupted this process, thus its uncustomary nature was emphasised. The mayor who was elected through this process was ambitious to hold office ‘in othir maner than othir of his predecessours mayris beffore hym’: he had no respect for custom.¹⁹⁵ Similarly, at the 1441 election, Ralph Holland’s discontented faction began their disturbances in the middle of the ceremony, as the mayor led the elected candidate down the stairs ‘upon his right hand, as the custume is’: this marked the mayor and mayor-elect as guardians of ‘lawdable custome’ and the protestors as uncustomary actors.¹⁹⁶ Mayoral ceremonies to attend at the St Bartholomew’s fair were mentioned only when interrupted by disorder, and a ceremonial visit to St Erkenwald’s shrine was recorded only when the sheriff was prosecuted for profanity in that holy place.¹⁹⁷ These ceremonies represented right order, custom and continuity with past practice: they conferred legitimacy and therefore their inversion was a powerful way to express disorder within chronicle narratives. Ceremonies were a vital tool for interpreting civic politics.

Londoners thus possessed an oral history that stressed the personal magnificence of the mayor, they aligned ceremony with good custom, and they habitually used clothing and costume as metonyms for power and office. In combination, this presented the mayor and civic leadership as the centre of a culture of magnificence in ceremony and feasting. This was epitomized by the accounts of Mayor Matthew Philip (1463/4) and his boycott of the

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.* p. 288.

¹⁹⁶ ‘Vitellius A.xvi’, pp. 154-5.

¹⁹⁷ St Bartholomew’s fair: ‘Bale’s Chronicle’, pp. 134-5, 140; ‘Rawlinson B.354’, p. 105; ‘WYA 32D86/42’, p. 212. Erkenwald: *Great Chronicle*, pp. 226-7; *New Chronicles*, p. 656; ‘Vitellius A.xvi’, p. 188.

feast of the Sergeants of the Coif, which has already been briefly discussed in chapter four.¹⁹⁸ Several accounts survive, the briefest of which – ‘this yere Sergeantis fest was, and the mayr dyned not there’ – was sufficiently truncated that any reader could have interpreted it only if he already knew the story, perhaps from oral history.¹⁹⁹ A somewhat fuller account in Julius B.i gave a clearer sense of the narrative: ‘bicause the chief place was not kepte for him...[the mayor] came away with alle his compeigny of this cite, and dyned at home in his owne place’.²⁰⁰ There were however two accounts that took this brief story and turned it into an exemplar of civic magnificence, one of which was an official account in Letter-book L and the other of which was *Gregory’s Chronicle*. The Letter-book account set a stately tone, opening with a description of the foundation of London and how it was an ancient and well-respected city, much older than Genoa or Venice.²⁰¹ It then narrated that Philip was denied his rightful seat of honour and so led a walk-out of the citizens in attendance. After dinner, a delegation of lords informed the mayor that they disapproved of the way that he had been treated, and invited him to dine with them the next day. The account was left unfinished, but presumably, a positive feasting experience would have restored the tarnished honour of the city. The fact that such an account was created and registered in the archives is a sign that the ceremonial dignity of the mayoralty was taken every bit as seriously as the legal and bureaucratic powers of the office.

In *Gregory’s Chronicle*, the mayor walked out of the feast and set up a rival event at his own home. This was striking in its magnificence, such that ‘alle the howse mervelyd howe welle all thyng was done in soo schorte a tyme, and prayde alle men to be mery and gladde, hit shulde be a mendyd a nothyr tyme’.²⁰² The Sergeants were ‘fulle evylle a

¹⁹⁸ See above, pp. 148-149.

¹⁹⁹ *Customs of London*, xxv.

²⁰⁰ *A Chronicle of London*, p. 142.

²⁰¹ *CLB L*, p. 7.

²⁰² *Gregory’s Chronicle*, pp. 222-3.

schamyd' of their actions and sent a hamper of goods in recompense. However, upon seeing the magnificence of Philip's feast they were 'fulle sore a schamyd...for the present was not better thenn the servyse of metys was by fore the mayre'.²⁰³ Philip graciously accepted their gifts, which the chronicle presented as exemplary: 'the worschippe of the cytte was kepte, and not loste for hym; and I truste that nevyr hyt shalle, by the grace of God.'²⁰⁴ The worship of the city was thus expressed both by the actions of the mayor and by how the mayor was perceived by others. Philip was treated as a hero by *Gregory's Chronicle* because he refused to allow public slights to the city, but also because he was accommodating and gracious in the aftermath. The mayor was presented as a centre of magnificence and ceremony separate from (but not hostile to) the royal court: 'with yn London he ys next unto the kyng in alle maner thyng'.²⁰⁵ The importance of the mayoralty had to be established and demonstrated through pageantry, ceremony and courteous conduct: any threat to the dignity of the office was also a threat to its power.

Within accounts of charity, ceremony and personal conduct of rulers there is a recurring tension between the individual and the collective. For the most part, London chroniclers showed a preference for the collective: they were interested in charitable acts that benefited large numbers, and not in small and localised actions. They were interested in clothing, feasting and ceremonies where they epitomized the good order of the city, but not where they showcased flamboyant or ambitious individuals. Descriptions of individuals tended to raise the question of competition, which was an inevitable feature of urban life due to the existence of market economics, political elections, and the potential for upward social mobility. Within Mayor Shaa's rebuilding of the kitchens, as described above, contention between civic leaders was harnessed for good ends: friendly contention

²⁰³ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

between guilds spurred donations. However, competition was also associated with antagonism, factionalism and self-interest.

The complications of competition within ceremonial decorum were displayed in the *Great Chronicle*: it stated that it was custom that, immediately following his election, the mayor-elect hosted a feast in his own house. However, the uncertainties of the election process made this difficult to plan for:

Sundry of th'aldyrmen such as were lykly to be laid in eleccion wold make purvyaunce ffor the said dyner, soo that every yere some were dysapoyntid, ffor yf that oon sped of his purpoos that othyr ffaylid, and soom yere bothe.²⁰⁶

Sometimes ambitious aldermen prepared feasts that were never eaten and other years, unanticipated mayors-elect were forced to buy and prepare a feast with little notice. Those who were not elected 'susteynyd soom derysion, as some I mygth bryng to myend that long gapid [desired] ffor it, or [before] it ffyll to theyr lott'.²⁰⁷ This custom forced contests between aldermen into the public view and exposed which of them were the most ambitious. It also exposed them to 'derysion' from their peers, or even from their inferiors. For the 1495 election, this custom was amended: henceforth, the outgoing mayor would host the feast each year. This social custom had provoked antagonism, resentment and derision between aldermen; transferring the hosting responsibilities to the outgoing mayor allowed the ill effects to be contained and managed, although not quite eliminated. The same impulses that drove the city towards ceremonial and sartorial magnificence could also be sources of factionalism, confrontation and other social ills if they were not checked by good governance.

²⁰⁶ *Great Chronicle*, p. 261.

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.* p. 261.

Another comment on the effects of competition, this time concerning civic architecture, can be seen in accounts of the 1477/8 mayoralty of Ralph Josselyn.²⁰⁸ The mayor ‘gave hys myend’ to the task of repairing the walls around the city, which had suffered damage and neglect.²⁰⁹ He used tax money to build a kiln and to provide bricks for the wall, but further funds were gained through ‘poletik meanys’.²¹⁰ Josselyn went to market places with a ‘box born wyth hym’ and there exhorted widows, rich men, and executors to give money voluntarily to the project: the focus on donations and a spirit of friendly competition between guilds prefigured Shaa’s later campaign to build the Guildhall kitchens.²¹¹ All of this allowed him to offer a public-private partnership in which government capital provided the brick and lime, but private capital funded the workmanship. ‘[M]any a wyse man’, the *Great Chronicle* claimed, had doubted that they could manufacture enough brick; but Josselyn left office with a large surplus of brick and the project towards completion.²¹² These successes could not last. Josselyn’s successor, Humphrey Heyford:

applied it not so sore as his predecessour did. Wherefore it had not so good expedition as it myght have had; and also, he was a syklew [sickly] man, ffeble and weke, wherefore he had not his mynde so fresshely, nothir myght not apply it so well as his predecessour did.²¹³

Josselyn’s great store of brick was ‘lost & brybid away’, with some used in housing and others sold to raise funds; meanwhile, manpower was diverted into scouring the city ditches.²¹⁴ The chroniclers used this anecdote to illustrate a broader political principle that successors rarely finished good works by their predecessors ‘becawse he [the successor]

²⁰⁸ *Customs of London*, xxxvii; *Great Chronicle*, pp. 225-6; *A Chronicle of London*, p. 146; ‘Vitellius A.xvi’, pp. 187-8; ‘WYA 32D86/42’, p. 215; *Songs*, p. 148.

²⁰⁹ *Great Chronicle*, p. 225.

²¹⁰ ‘Vitellius A.xvi’, p. 187.

²¹¹ *Great Chronicle*, pp. 225-6.

²¹² *Ibid.*

²¹³ ‘Vitellius A.xvi’, pp. 187-8.

²¹⁴ *Great Chronicle*, p. 225.

thynkyth the honour thereof shalbe ascrybid unto his predecessour, and not unto hym'.²¹⁵

Thus 'many good werkes and actes' were 'put owte of mynd' of the city.²¹⁶

The story of the city walls illustrates a tension between the individual and the communal.

London's government was communal and collective: governors represented the citizens

and looked out for the commonweal of the city. The city also inevitably relied on

individuals to staff its institutions, and ideas about prudence and wisdom emphasized the

importance of individual judgement. The friendly contention between guilds in the fields

of charity and construction, as begun by Josselyn, represented a positive track for

competition. Different stretches of the city walls could be built by different companies and

bore the arms of different individuals: honour was not a zero-sum game but could be

shared between participants. The competitive streak in Heyford was however presented as

harmful: it drove self-interested ambition, which was against the common good. It created

a zero-sum game in which either Josselyn or Heyford would assume all honour and no

equitable division was possible. Governors needed to understand how their actions,

individually or collectively, could spur productive or unproductive competition.

This tension between the individual and the collective is evident across London

historiography. Mary-Rose McLaren has described London chronicles as 'constructed by a

communal authorship', written across generations by multiple editors, authors and

continuator, each of whom acted anonymously and without claiming 'ownership' of their

information.²¹⁷ In this respect, London chronicles can be seen as providing a 'corporate'

perspective: one that recorded the history of the city with a civic and collective voice. This

section does not fundamentally challenge this view, but it does complicate it. For the most

²¹⁵ *Ibid.* p. 226.

²¹⁶ 'Vitellius A.xvi', p. 188.

²¹⁷ McLaren, *London Chronicles*, p. 47.

part, London chroniclers engaged in a culture of praise for the achievements of the corporation, and only infrequently the praised achievements of individuals. As London historiography aged and matured, it picked up more diverse influences: production in households meant that it absorbed elements of personal and family memory. The increasing use of chronicles in political education meant that some chroniclers began to comment on the personal leadership qualities of individual governors. This turn towards depicting individuals was only partial. Individual memories were heavily entwined with civic identity. London chronicles largely avoided discussing private actions such as feasts held in the domestic homes of civic leaders or acts of charity with only small numbers of beneficiaries. Instead, when they lauded individuals, they did so for their contribution to the commonweal of the city: for their good works in government, or for large-scale works of charity that benefited many citizens. London chronicles remained uneasy with individualism, factionalism or competition. Historiography aimed to speak on behalf of the city and keep in the collective memory those things done for the communal good of the city.

6.6: Conclusion: Mirrors for Citizens.

Although some historians have doubted that there was much that was ‘civic’ or ‘mercantile’ about literary writing by London merchants, this chapter has shown that London historians paid close attention to their city. Their interest in history was not merely a matter of emulating court practice and positioning themselves as educated gentlemen. Londoners also used chronicles to express their sense of the place: to engage with civic governance, to memorialise benefactors of the city and to express a London identity.

Chroniclers engaged with the norms, values and debates current within the citizenry and civic leadership.

In poetry London may have often appeared as a ‘scarcely governable urban bustle’; in historiography, the governance of the city was a central concern.²¹⁸ Londoners recorded court cases, civic regulation, and local enforcement, through which they reflected on the moral, economic and cultural well-being of the city. Some chronicles, particularly later in the period, engaged in a culture of praise for worthy citizens. They depicted the splendour of the civic elite, as expressed by their ceremonial, sartorial and architectural activities.

Chapter five posited that there was a significant generational difference in how London chroniclers wrote about kingship: the first generations of London chronicles (approximately before 1450) wrote about kingship in a politically didactic style in which kings were usually presented as correct and beneficent, and their opponents as deserving of correction. Later London chronicles increasingly questioned authority, evaluating the difference between good and bad rulership, showing closer attention to corruption, abuse of power and the voices of dissidents.²¹⁹ There are parallels between these depictions of kingship and how Londoners wrote about city governance. Often London historians demonstrated that the city was well-ruled and its leadership was legitimate by providing normative accounts of governance, in which the good prospered and the bad were punished. Other chroniclers, particularly in the second half of the fifteenth century, began to show an interest in more complex questions: how was the city to handle competition, factionalism, peacekeeping, corruption, public order, or popular participation and representation? These were questions that lacked easy answers; to devise a solution required political judgement. Chroniclers engaged their readers in the pursuit of prudence,

²¹⁸ Hanna, ‘Images of London’, p. 32.

²¹⁹ See above, ch. 5, particularly pp. 210-211, 223-226, 244-245.

wisdom and good judgement. In their understanding of both royal and civic politics, London chroniclers showed an increasing political sophistication and awareness of alternative perspectives in the second half of the fifteenth century.

By depicting civic governance, laying out normative moral and legal codes, and engaging with questions of political judgement, chroniclers were bending historiography to meet specifically civic purposes. Most medieval tracts on governance used kings, monarchs or princes as their primary examples, hence a popular genre of political textbooks was known as the 'Mirror of the Princes'. Londoners were experimenting in different forms of political writing that were better attuned to the needs of the city: in their historiography, they were searching for a 'Mirror for Citizens'. They took the forms and norms of political literature and adapted it to their local and specific needs. In historiography, they found a flexible and popular genre that could meet many of their purposes.

7.0: Conclusion

7.1: Historical Culture in Fifteenth-Century London

From the thirteenth century onwards, London's governors began to search for ways of writing that engaged with the governance, life and identity of the city. In the Guildhall Library and other institutional settings, they collated pragmatic, historical, literary and educational texts into miscellanies such as the *Book of Old Laws*. They used compilation and authorship of texts to express their ambitions and respond to the challenges of city government. Their activities laid the seeds for the historical culture that would come to proliferate and become influential in the later middle ages. By the early sixteenth century, this historical culture was widely accessible: whereas the *Book of Old Laws* was available only to a few officeholders, its distant descendant, the *Customs of London* was printed for a wide audience. In the later middle ages, citizens used songs, poems, pageants, rituals, sermons, political argumentation, *post-mortem* commemorative rituals, chronicles and legal pleading as vehicles to tell stories about London's history. Depictions of London's past were increasingly prominent, diverse and widespread.

Londoners used the past to search for an identity, which came to be best expressed through the London chronicles. These chronicles exhibited a civic identity by using the mayors and sheriffs to provide the framework of history, commenting on the history of the city, and adopting a narrative voice that was impersonal and 'communal'. The predominant simplicity of the prose style and the straightforward annalistic structure made them particularly easy to read, edit or continue. By owning a London chronicle – and particularly by reshaping or continuing one – Londoners could express their sense that they were members of the city and inheritors of its past. By forming a textual community

around a common genre, Londoners argued that the identity and community of London citizens were shaped by their shared heritage. London chronicles were also appropriated and reshaped to meet the needs of users. The Letter-book F chronicle was probably used as a reference in legal cases.¹ Rawlinson B.359 was used as an *aide-mémoire* for the Grocers' Company.² Egerton 1995 had a role in aiding civic market regulation.³ Harley 541 was used for genealogical purposes and commemoration of the dead.⁴ TCC, O.9.1 was reshaped to a hagiographic and devotional role.⁵ Perhaps least likely of all, Robert Fabyan's *New Chronicles* used the London chronicle format to tell the history of France. London chronicles were a uniquely flexible and pliant genre, equally useful for home entertainment, archival reference, or scholarly research. Although they typically used an impersonal voice, London chronicles often captured the idiosyncratic and unusual ways in which citizens used the past. In their diversity and adaptability, the London chronicles epitomised civic historical culture.

London historiography was shaped by a close connection to civic education. Children, apprentices, servants and young men made up important parts of the audience for chronicles. Many chronicles were authored by older and more experienced men for the benefit of these learners: at times they adopted a tone of instruction, drawing out morals and laying out messages for the reader. The relationship between the experienced author and the inexperienced reader was an intellectual apprenticeship: indeed, this was literally the case in the London chronicle in Harley 2252, which was partly copied out by an apprentice under the supervision and correction of his master, John Colyn.⁶ The chronicle

¹ App. 1.34, and above, p. 35.

² App. 1.41, and above, p. 44.

³ App. 1.13, and above, p. 264.

⁴ App. 1.23, and above, p. 292.

⁵ App. 1.4, and above, pp. 60, 164.

⁶ App. 1.27, see above, p. 126.

was an educational tool that was well-adapted to the educational needs of Londoners. The citizens' reliance on the household as a unit for instruction meant that education needed to be sprinkled amongst lighter reading: 'Somewhat of lust, somewhat of lore', as John Gower recommended.⁷ The format of the chronicle – diverse and miscellaneous in its content, themes and tone – was ideal for home instruction. The chronicler could at times instruct in law and custom, practical governance, morals or manners, weaving these lessons amidst material that was entertaining and exciting.

There was also a close association between historiography and city governance. The corporation of London was a significant sponsor and propagator of historical narratives and many chronicles were stored in the Guildhall records. Senior governors of London such as mayors and aldermen were amongst those most likely to own, read and write historiography. As a result, chronicles often engaged closely with practical government. One of the most common political uses of historiography was to discuss, prescribe and negotiate power relationships. Chroniclers were particularly interested in interactions between the mayor and the king but were also observers of the relationships between church and secular authorities, or between the king and his realm. Chronicles often contained passages of political instruction, and historiography was an important means for London citizens to reflect upon the rule of the city and the governance of the realm.

In order for the practice of chronicling to take root in London, it needed to adapt to meet the challenges of city life. Urban living inherently brings together a great variety of people, professions, economic activities and political structures and concentrates them in a confined space. A diverse urban population is only ever partly unified by their common location, shared identity and joint institutions. Every city is therefore riven between the

⁷ John Gower, *Confessio Amantis*, ed. R. Peck, 2nd Edition, (Kalamazoo, 2006), <https://d.lib.rochester.edu/teams/publication/peck-confessio-amantis-volume-1> (18-07-2020), Prologue, l. 19.

small number of things that unite their populations and the much greater number of things that make them fractious, diverse and pluralistic. London historical culture was formed in reaction to this urban experience. It was less a unified ideological system and more a bundle of shared concerns, anxieties, interests and institutional settings. Through their historical culture, London citizens searched for unity and common identity, and also created legitimacy for their governing institutions. The past also inevitably became a vehicle for many different voices with their partisan interests and personal idiosyncrasies. London rarely succeeded at speaking as one through its historiography; this makes their chronicles more interesting, not less, for the modern reader. Capacious, multivocal and capable of expressing contrasting opinions at once, London historiography was a truly urban form of literature that expressed well the character, identity and interests of the fifteenth-century capital.

7.2: Post-script: Continuity and Change in the Sixteenth Century.

This thesis has pursued London's historical culture only as far as the 1510s and no further because there are signs of a watershed in London's historical culture at around this point. The age of cheap print began to arrive only after 1500, which caused a decline in the production of literary manuscripts: London chronicles from the 1510s are some of the last to be produced in professional workshops. Before this point, most printed histories consisted of either the *Brut* or the *Polychronicon*. The diversity of texts on offer began to expand in the sixteenth century. Richard Pynson's press, in particular, began to offer novel

histories in the early 1520s, including translations of Friar Hayton's *The Flowers of the Histories of the Orient*, Sallust's *Jugurthine War* and Froissart's *Chronicles*.⁸ When compared to older offerings, these exhibited a more international and classical flavour, responding to the contemporary vogues for travel literature and neo-classicism. Thomas More's pioneering *History of Richard III*, written in the 1510s, prefigured how classical and humanist ideas would open up new ways to write history throughout the sixteenth century.⁹ The 1510s also saw the origins of the Reformation in Germany which would, over time, have a significant impact on how the past was viewed.¹⁰ There were thus several cross-currents – intellectual, literary, religious and technological – which carried the potential to quicken the pace of change in historical culture in the 1510s-1530s.

The nature of London chronicling began to change in this period. Mary-Rose McLaren grouped those London chronicles created in the original period (*circa* the 1430s) into eight groups, based on textual similarities. Of these, the latest continuations ended in the fifteenth century for five of these groups (TCC, O.9.1 group, Julius B.i group, Cecil 281 group, Julius B.ii group and Harley Roll C.8 group).¹¹ The remainder became extinct in the second decade of the sixteenth century: the St Johns 57 group ended with the *Great Chronicle* in 1512; the Harley 565 group ended with Digby Rolls 2 in 1513; and the Egerton 1995 group ended with Vitellius A.xvi in 1516.¹² This was not the end of the London chronicle genre, but it was the end of the practice of taking an older London chronicle and updating it to the present.¹³ Of the later London chronicles, many were part

⁸ Hayton of Corycus, *A Lytell Cronycle...*, (Richard Pynson: London, 1520); Sallust, *The Famous Cronycle of the Warre, Which the Romayns had Against Jugurth Usurper of the Kyngdome of Numidy*, (Richard Pynson: London, 1522); Jean Froissart, *The First Volum of Sir Iohan Froyssart*, (Richard Pynson: London, 1523).

⁹ For an overview of intellectual changes, see D. Woolf, 'From *Hystories* to the Historical: Five Transitions in Thinking About the Past, 1500-1700', *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 61:1, (2005), pp. 33-70.

¹⁰ A. Walsham, 'History, Memory, and the English Reformation', *The Historical Journal*, 55:4, (2012), pp. 899-938.

¹¹ McLaren, *London Chronicles*, ch. 3.

¹² Appendix, 1.33, 1.42, 1.19.

¹³ The notable exception is Bradford, West Yorkshire Archives, MS 32D86/42, see Appendix 1.1.

of the ‘Arnold Chronicle group’ that consisted of texts related to the *Customs of London*.¹⁴ Others were new and independent compositions that did not draw much on the older tradition. Digby Rolls 2 and Vitellius A.xvi were some of the last London chronicles to be created by professional scribes in London workshops: later examples of the genre were either produced by an amateur hand in a home-made manuscript (e.g. *Greyfriars’ Chronicle* or Bodleian MS Tanner 2) or else were produced in print. The decline in manuscript production workshops was probably a major cause of the end of the practice of chronicle continuation.

Late London chronicle manuscripts also exhibit a change in purpose and perspective. Fifteenth-century chroniclers had expansive interests, often writing general histories of England with some international material, and not focusing exclusively on local affairs. Sixteenth-century chroniclers were usually more limited in scope and concentrated closely on London. Most chronicles produced after the 1510s lacked a strong interest in history from before 1400: in some cases, they reproduced the history 1189-1400 in a brief and summary form. In others, they abandoned 1189 in favour of a more recent starting date, with a few even choosing only to record history after the year 1500.¹⁵ Many annals gave detailed coverage only to the immediate past, consisting of the past decade or two before composition. The purpose of the London chronicles must have altered for these later generations. London chronicles had once been seen as general histories that had a local perspective; in the sixteenth century, they were increasingly used as local histories. This narrowing of chronological and geographical horizons may have been a response to developing print culture: printed books took over the role of providing general-purpose

¹⁴ On Arnold, see McLaren, *London Chronicles*, pp. 115-9.

¹⁵ McLaren, *London Chronicles*, p. 37; Start dates include 1399 (Harley 2252), 1402 (COA, MS M.6bis), 1414 (Balliol 354), 1485 (*Wriothesley’s Chronicle*), 1500 (Vespasian A.xxv), 1523 (Harley 540[ii]), 1547 (Harley 530[ii]).

histories that saw to the moral and political education of the household. As a greater diversity of histories became available, manuscript London chronicles survived by finding a more specialised niche: they shrank and became registers of local events from the recent past.

Despite these changes, the London chronicles proved to be highly influential. Many of their manuscripts ended their circulation in antiquarian libraries, where they came to influence the sixteenth and seventeenth-century tradition of the gentleman antiquaries.¹⁶

Historians have noted that influential writers such as Thomas More, Edward Hall and John Stow made use of London chronicles.¹⁷ London magistrate annals made the jump to print, where Stow and Richard Grafton established them as one of the default sub-genres of Tudor chronicling. John Stow incorporated a short annotated mayoral list into his *Survey of London*, which was regularly updated and continued by new authors and editors as late as the 1750s, making it the last of the magistrate annals.¹⁸ Significant amounts of material derived from London chronicles was incorporated into influential Tudor works, including Thomas More's *History of Richard III* and Holinshed's *Chronicles*. From there it reached the Tudor stage and, through William Shakespeare, it has ultimately reached us.¹⁹ The life of the London chronicle thus spanned five centuries, from the 1270s to the 1750s. What had started as an archival genre grew to become a bestseller.

¹⁶ Note the high proportion of surviving London chronicles in the British Library's Cottonian collection (Cleopatra C.iv; Julius B.i; Julius B.ii; Nero C.xi; Vespasian A.xvi; Vitellius A.xvi; Vitellius F.ix; Vitellius F.xii), and Harleian collection (Harley 530, (i) ff. 106-8 and (ii) ff. 115-118; Harley 540 (i) ff. 7-21 and (ii) ff. 40-5; Harley 541; Harley 565; Harley 2252; Harley 3775; Harley Roll C.8).

¹⁷ On Stow, A. Gillespie, 'Stow's "Owlde" Manuscripts of London Chronicles', in I. Gadd and A. Gillespie (eds.), *John Stow and the Making of the English Past*, (London, 2004), pp. 57-68; on Thomas More and Edward Hall, see Herman, 'Henrician Historiography'.

¹⁸ John Stow and John Strype, *A Survey of the Cites of London and Westminster*, (London, 1753), pp. 65-83.

¹⁹ On London chronicles and Shakespeare, see M. McLaren, 'Making Men out of Kings: Shakespeare's Sources and Kingship', in B. Hirsh and C. Wortham (eds.), *This Earthly Stage: World and Stage in Late Medieval and Early Modern England*, (Turnhout, 2010), pp. 211-233.

And yet their popularity and accessibility inspired a backlash in the late sixteenth century that has created an enduringly negative conception of London chronicles. Some argued that London chronicles were inept, clumsy and ill-qualified to act as historical authorities. ‘Lay chronographers...write of nothing but of Mayors and Sheriffs, and the dere yere, and the great frost’, wrote Thomas Nashe.²⁰ They contained little more than whatever ‘triviall household trash’ the chronicler happened to know, according to John Donne.²¹ Many Elizabethan proponents of ‘politic history’ believed that only courtiers, soldiers or national politicians should author histories.²² Their contempt for London lay chroniclers has proven pervasive and long-lasting. In the 1840s, Henry Hallam was able to sweepingly describe all vernacular English chronicles of the fifteenth century as ‘very little deserving notice’ and ‘absolutely contemptible’.²³ As recently as the 1970s, J. R. Lander dismissed London chronicles as ‘ill-informed, myopic in vision, limited and fumbling in vocabulary and expression’.²⁴ Contempt has sometimes been evident even amongst defenders of town chroniclers. Ralph Flenley edited numerous town chronicles, but he admitted that: ‘[w]hen all that is possible has been said of their good qualities, it cannot be said to amount to very much’.²⁵ Even the great champion of London chronicles C. L. Kingsford opined that they were ‘rude and artless compilations’.²⁶ If this thesis has achieved only one thing, I hope it is that it has presented London citizens and their historical culture without condescension. London historical culture was not a graceless attempt to ape the practices of court or clergy. Rather, London citizens used the past to grapple with their needs – the needs of their public institutions, their private households and of individual citizens. In London

²⁰ *The Works of Thomas Nashe*, ed. R. McKerrow, (5 vols, Oxford, 1958), i, p. 194.

²¹ *The Satires, Epigrams and Verse Letters of John Donne*, ed. W. Milgate, (Oxford, 1967), p. 17.

²² For a brief overview, see I. Archer, ‘John Stow, Citizen and Historian’, in I. Gadd and A. Gillespie (eds.), *John Stow and the Making of the English Past*, (London, 2004), pp. 12-26, 12-16.

²³ H. Hallam, *Introduction to the Literature of Europe in the Fifteenth, Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, (4 vols, New York, 1841), i, p. 329.

²⁴ Lander, *Conflict and Stability*, p. 150.

²⁵ Flenley, *Six Town Chronicles*, p. 22

²⁶ Kingsford, *English Historical Literature*, p. 110.

chronicles, citizens found a means to teach about, to reflect on, and to write about the world as they saw it.

8.0: Appendices

This section employs some additional conventions. ‘Metropolitan’ is used to denote a book that can be placed in the geographical area of London, with no further implications for the social status of the user. ‘Mercantile’ is used to denote a book owned by a merchant or citizen, with no implications for the geographical location of the user. In the footnotes, manuscripts are marked as ‘P’ or ‘S’ for primary or secondary: this indicates whether I have inspected them in person (P) or am wholly reliant on secondary sources (S). In addition to the commonly used abbreviations defined above, this section also makes use of the following:

IHSD
IHW
RLCO

Imagining History Short Descriptions.
Imagining History Wiki.
Records of London Livery Companies Online.

8.1: Appendix 1, Provenances of Magistrate annals.

Table 1: Provenance for magistrate annals.		
This table contains provenance for all manuscript London chronicles produced before c. 1525; along with copies of Fabyan’s <i>New Chronicles</i> and Arnold’s <i>Customs of London</i> .		
#	Location/Shelfmark	Historical Literature Information on origin, ownership and usage

1	Bradford, West Yorkshire Archives, MS 32D86/42	London chronicle.	Inscription: 'Iste Liber Constat Rico Hedley C[l]erico Came[rae] Guyhalde Civitate London', rear flyleaf.	¹
2	Cambridge, (Massachusetts), Harvard, Houghton Library MS 766	Robert Fabyan, <i>New Chronicles</i> , (manuscript).	A non-autograph copy; it was used at the source for Richard Pynson's edition (1516).	²
3	Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, Parker SP.318	Richard Arnold, <i>Customs of London</i> (1503).	Signature: 'Rycharde Hater a city[z]en', (not foliated). It also contains a user-added chronicle continuation, 1502-9.	³
4	Cambridge, Trinity College, Wren MS O.9.1	<i>Brut</i> with a London chronicle continuation.	Civic co-location: An indenture between James Fytte, tailor, and the wardens of a fraternity based at St Margaret's Church, Westminster, (230r-231r). Fytte, Tailor of London, (d. 1501) has been profiled by Matthew Davies (see footnote): he became a liveryman in 1459, resided in Westminster and held no significant political offices. Other inscriptions: 227r 'Elizabeth'; 229v 'Jone Mapestone' and 'George Maye'.	⁴
5	Cambridge, Trinity College, Wren V.3.9	Richard Arnold, <i>Customs of London</i> , (1521).	User-added London chronicle continuation, 1521-48.	⁵
6	Cambridge, Trinity College, Wren VI.18.20D	Richard Arnold, <i>Customs of London</i> , (1503).	User-added London chronicle continuation, 1502-45.	⁶
7	Cambridge, University Library, MS HH.6.9	<i>Brut</i> with a London chronicle continuation.	Metropolitan annotation: Fol. 5r, 'London stone', next to the reign of Lud. Other inscriptions: 67v: 'Henri'; 99v 'Rychard Dane'.	⁷

¹ S: M. McLaren, *London Chronicles of the Fifteenth Century*, (Woodbridge, 2002), pp. 38-9, 150-5, 226; O. Pickering, 'A London Chronicle in Yorkshire: An Addendum to Handlist VI of the *Index of Middle English Prose*', *Notes and Queries*, 40:3, (1993), pp. 305-7.

² S: Thomas and Thorney, 'Introduction', *Great Chronicle*, lii-lxix; M. Payne, 'Robert Fabyan and the Nuremberg Chronicle', *The Library*, 12:2, (2011), pp. 164-9, 166-7.
³ P.

⁴ P: 'O.9.1', *James Catalogue*, <http://trin-sites-pub.trin.cam.ac.uk/james/viewpage.php?index=954> (08-05-2019); 'Trinity College, Cambridge MS. O.9.1', *IHW*, http://www.qub.ac.uk/imagining-history/resources/wiki/index.php/Trinity_College%2C_Cambridge_MS._O.9.1 (link defunct); L. Matheson, *The Prose Brut*, (Lampeter, 1998), p. 151; M. Davies, *Merchant Taylor's Company of London, Court Minutes*, (Stamford, 2000), pp. 289-90.

⁵ P.

⁶ P.

⁷ P: *Catalogue of the Manuscripts Preserved in the Library of the University of Cambridge*, (5 vols, Cambridge, 1856-67), iii, pp. 303-4; Matheson, *Prose Brut*, pp. 150-1, 231; McLaren, *London Chronicles*, pp. 37-8.

8	Cambridge, University Library, Sel.3.41	Richard Arnold, <i>Customs of London</i> , (1521).	Metropolitan additions: a user has added London-specific chronological notes from Richard I's coronation to 1509, (not foliated).	⁸
9	Chicago, University Library MS 254.	A <i>Brut</i> with a London chronicle continuation.	Non-metropolitan context: this book was at Battle Abbey by c. 1460 (see Matheson). It contains an inscription by John Nutton, Prior of Battle.	⁹
10	Dublin, Trinity College MS 509 and 604	MS 509, pp. 1-6, Latin chronicle to 1418; 8-9, St Paul's Short Chronicle; 109-111, History of St Peter's, Thorney; 116-120, extracts from Martinus Polonus's, <i>Chronicon</i> ; 121-218, London Chronicle; 219-256, Latin <i>Gesta Edwardi III</i> ; with various historical exempla and short church foundation narratives (<i>passim</i>).	Compiled by Robert Bale, Warden of Scriveners. Anne Sutton provides the most complete profile of his life. Mary Erler has suggested that it was part of the Guildhall Chamber Library by the 1550s; its acquisition date is unknown.	¹⁰
11	Hatfield Hall, MS Cecil 281	ff. 1-23, Latin chronicle to 1418; 32-88, London chronicle; 90-107, Latin <i>Gesta Edwardi III</i> ; 139v-141, Lydgate, <i>Verses on the Kings of England</i> .	The scribe has added a production date: 18 th November 1440, fol. 89r. Fol. 1v, inscription: 'Martyn Gladell', (15 th C). It may have been produced by a scrivener or legal official: its user-added continuation (1446-1450) has a strong focus on law. The original text shared an exemplar with scrivener Robert Bale's TCD 509.	¹¹

⁸ P.

⁹ S: Matheson, *Prose Brut*, pp. 13, 132.

¹⁰ S: M. Colker, *Trinity College Library Dublin: Descriptive Catalogue of the Medieval and Renaissance Latin Manuscripts*, (Aldershot, 1991), pp. 943-54, 1058-1064; R. Flenley, *Six Town Chronicles*, (Oxford, 1911), pp. 66-74; McLaren, *London Chronicles*, pp. 33-5, 106-8; A. Sutton, 'Robert Bale, Scrivener and Chronicler of London', *English Manuscript Studies*, 14, (London, 2008), pp. 180-206; M. Erler, 'The Guildhall Library, Robert Bale and the Writing of London History', *Historical Research*, 89:243, (2016), pp. 176-186, 178-9.

¹¹ S: C. L. Kingsford, 'An Historical Collection of the Fifteenth Century', *English Historical Review*, 29, (1914), pp. 505-7; McLaren, *London Chronicles*, pp. 37, 106-8,

12	Holkham Hall MS 671	Fabyan, <i>New Chronicles</i> , (manuscript).	Autograph copy.	12
13	London, British Library MS Egerton 1995	ff. 87r-109v, <i>Siege of Rouen</i> ; 110r-112r, Lydgate, <i>Verses on the Kings of England</i> ; 113r-222v, London chronicle ('Gregory's Chronicle').	A reference during the mayoralty of William Gregory to 'my yere, beyng Mayre of London' (<i>Gregory's Chronicle</i>, p. 197) led to a false attribution to Gregory. However, McLaren has shown that the events described are misplaced from the mayoralty of Stephen Forster. Forster (<i>d.</i> 1458) and Gregory (<i>d.</i> 1467) were dead before the production of this manuscript took place (final entry 1469). As such: the manuscript may be based on an exemplar linked to Forster; the production, authorship and early ownership of this manuscript remain unclear. Usage: there are numerous ownership notes from the Cranwell family of Northamptonshire: Christopher Cranwell (51v); John Cranwell (1v., 27v. 50v, 112v, 115v, 122v, 131v, 134v, 135v, 136v, 139v, 140v, 145r, 147v, 156v), William Cranwell (118v, 134v, 156r, 161v). These are probably datable to the second and third quarters of the sixteenth century.	13
14	London, British Library MS Harley 3775, ff. 78r-99.	London chronicle.	Metropolitan annotation: 95v, directions to Richard Whittington's tomb.	14

¹² S: Thomas and Thorney, 'Introduction', *Great Chronicle*, lii-lxix; Payne, 'Robert Fabyan and the Nuremberg chronicle', pp. 166-7; J. Boffey, *Manuscript and Print in London, c. 1475-1503*, (London, 2012), ch. 5.

¹³ P: 'Egerton MS 1995', *EAM*, http://searcharchives.bl.uk/IAMS_VU2:IAMS032-001982919 (14-05-2019); D. Parker, *The Commonplace Book in Tudor London*, (Lanham, 1998), pp. 17-36; J. Gairdner, 'Introduction', *Gregory's Chronicle*, i-xli; McLaren, *London Chronicles*, pp. 29-33; C. L. Kingsford, *Chronicles of London*, (Oxford, 1905), xi-xiii; for Christopher Cranwell's links to city finance, see 'C 241/276/25', *Discovery*, <https://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/details/r/C9698627> (27-07-2020); on William Cranwell's will, see 'C 142/208/224', *Discovery*, <https://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/details/r/C7826613> (21-07-2020).

¹⁴ P: *A Catalogue of the Harleian Manuscripts in the British Museum*, (4 vols, London, 1808-1812), iii, pp. 60-1; 'Detailed Record for Harley 3775', *Catalogue of Illuminated Manuscripts*, <http://www.bl.uk/catalogues/illuminatedmanuscripts/record.asp?MSID=7378> (16-05-2019); McLaren, *London Chronicles*, pp. 109-113.

15	London, British Library, C.38.h6	Richard Arnold, <i>Customs of London</i> , (1521).	Co-location: it contains a user-added legal miscellany containing documents produced by wardmotes under Sir John Garrard (alderman, 1592-1625).	15
16	London, British Library, Cotton MS Julius B.i	London chronicle.	Metropolitan co-location: one user added a mayoral list to 1531, (92v). Several other documents have been added (ff. 91-8) which could indicate heraldic interests (Henry IV and Henry VII's titles to the throne; the treaty of Etaples and the riding orders of the dignitaries; battle ordinances for Richard II's Scottish campaign; and Richard II's aristocratic creations).	16
17	London, British Library, Cotton MS Julius B.ii	London Chronicle.	Unknown ownership. Front flyleaf: ligatured 'HR', which is a feature sometimes associated with royal books in the libraries of Henry VII and Henry VIII, (see Carley). Rear flyleaf: property memorandum concerning lands of Tintern Abbey, Monmouthshire.	17
18	London, British Library, Cotton MS Nero C.xi	Robert Fabyan, <i>New Chronicles</i> (manuscript).	Autograph.	18
19	London, British Library, Cotton MS Vitellius A.xvi	ff. 1-209, London chronicle; 210-213v, annotated mortuary list for aristocrats, 1446-1489.	Metropolitan annotation: fol. 176, directions to the grave of Mayor Robert Fresh. For proposed links between this MS and Mayor William Butler, see above, p. 94.	19

¹⁵ P.

¹⁶ P: 'Cotton MS Julius B.i, ff. 2-98', *EAM*, http://searcharchives.bl.uk/IAMS_VU2:IAMS041-001101640 (22-05-2019); Kingsford, *Chronicles of London*, xiii-xv; McLaren, *London Chronicles*, pp. 100-3.

¹⁷ P: 'Cotton MS Julius B.ii', *EAM*, http://searcharchives.bl.uk/IAMS_VU2:IAMS040-001101642 (16-05-2019); Kingsford, *Chronicles of London*, ix; J. Carley, 'Marks in the Books and Libraries of Henry VIII', *The Papers of the Bibliographic Society of America*, 91:4, (1997), pp. 583-606, 599.

¹⁸ S: 'Cotton MS Nero C.XI', *EAM*, http://searcharchives.bl.uk/IAMS_VU2:IAMS040-001102699 (10-09-2019).

Thomas and Thorney, 'Introduction', *Great Chronicle*, lii-lxix; Payne, 'Robert Fabyan and the Nuremberg chronicle', pp. 166-7; Boffey, *Manuscript and Print*, ch. 5.

¹⁹ P: 'Cotton MS Vitellius A.XVI', *EAM*, http://searcharchives.bl.uk/IAMS_VU2:IAMS040-001102976 (22-05-2019); Kingsford, *Chronicles of London*, xv-xviii; McLaren, *London Chronicles*, pp. 104-6.

20	London, British Library, Cotton MS Vitellius F.ix, ff. 1-70.	London chronicle.		20
21	London, British Library, Egerton MS 650	<i>Brut</i> with a London chronicle continuation.	Co-location weakly suggests ownership by an officeholder: fol. 76r, a fragmentary legal document addressed ‘to all mayrys sheryffs baylys constabylys and other law...[]/ within lyberte as without to [?qwhom] thys present wrytting shall com...’	21
22	London, British Library, Harley MS 530, ff. 115-8.	London chronicle (fragment).		22
23	London, British Library, Harley MS 541	ff. 215-220, Annotated mayoral list (sheriffs are inconsistently recorded).	Sutton and Visser-Fuchs have demonstrated that it was owned by the Frowyk family: it contains a nota mark next to Henry Frowyk in the mayoral list, (217r), and the ‘swan mark’ and name of Sir Thomas Frowyk (<i>d.</i> 1485), Mercer and steward of Westminster Abbey (228v). The chronicle was constructed at around the time of Thomas Frowyk’s death, with various hands inserting entries for the dates 1481-7. Compilation by Thomas’ children or household dependents is feasible.	23
24	London, British Library, Harley MS 565	ff. 2v-4r, Short tablet chronicle of St Pauls, to	This may be the same book described in textual archaeology, see Appendix 1.50.	24

²⁰ P: ‘Cotton MS F.IX, ff. 1-70’, *EAM*, http://searcharchives.bl.uk/IAMS_VU2:IAMS041-001607836 (16-05-2019).

²¹ P: ‘Egerton MS 650’, *EAM*, http://searcharchives.bl.uk/IAMS_VU2:IAMS032-001983702 (08-05-2019); ‘BL, Egerton 650’, *IHW*, http://www.qub.ac.uk/imagining-history/resources/wiki/index.php/BL_Egerton_650 (defunct); Matheson, *Prose Brut*, pp. 100-1, 311-2.

²² S: *Harleian Manuscripts*, i, pp. 391-2.

²³ P: *Harleian Manuscripts*, i, p. 396; A. Sutton and L. Visser-Fuchs, ‘The Making of a Minor London Chronicle in the Household of Sir Thomas Frowyk (died 1485)’, *The Ricardian*, 10:126, (1994-6), pp. 86-103.

²⁴ P: ‘Harley MS 565’, *EAM*, http://searcharchives.bl.uk/IAMS_VU2:IAMS040-002046394 (22-05-2019); Kingsford, *Chronicles of London*, x-xi; McLaren, *London Chronicles*, pp. 103-4; C. Barron, ‘What Did Medieval London Merchants Read?’, in M. Allen and M. Davies (eds.), *Medieval Merchants and Money*, (London, 2016), pp. 43-70, 52; J. Boffey and C. Meale, ‘Selecting the Text: Rawlinson C.86 and Some Other Books for London Readers’, in F. Riddy (ed.), *Regionalism in Late Medieval Manuscripts and Texts* (York, 1991), pp. 143-170, 164 n. 71. On John Chandler, see: ‘Event details’, *RLLCO*, https://londonroll.org/event/?company=drp&event_id=DREB6473 (26-06-2019); ‘Event details’, *RLLCO*, https://londonroll.org/event/?company=drp&event_id=DREB6474 (26-06-2019). On the ‘Draper’ annotations, see Thomas and Thorney, ‘Introduction, *Great Chronicle*, xxxvii.

		1382; 4r-9r, Long Tablet Chronicle of St Pauls, to 1431; 10r-99r, London Chronicle; 102r-114r, <i>Expedition of Henry V Into France</i> .	A note in this manuscript's list of kings (fol. 1v) establishes that it was produced in 21 Henry VI (1443/4). Inscriptions: Johannes Alyn, fol. 125v, who has been identified by Boffey and Meale as the Mercer and Mayor (1525/6). Civic annotation: frequent addition of 'Draper' next to the name of mayors. It also contains legal indentures by John Chandelers dated 1515-6 (99v-101v): I have identified a Draper of the right period and name (see footnotes). The shield of the Tailboys family with a (perhaps mocking) note saying 'Syr Thomas Taylboys ys a pratty lad, how say ye' (126v). Unidentified additions: 'Walter Lack' and 'Ricardo Willo' (125v); shield with a Harrington knot (125v).	
25	London, British Library, Harley Roll C.8	London chronicle, with a Latin prologue, 1066-1189.	Civic annotation, 6r: User has added 'geld hall' to denote the building of the Guildhall.	25
26	London, British Library, MS Cotton Cleopatra C.iv, ff. 22-61.	London chronicle.	It is in a composite miscellany that likely cohered in Elizabethan London: several pieces have annotations from antiquary and Draper John Stow, (see Gillespie).	26

²⁵ P: McLaren, *London Chronicles*, pp. 113-5.

²⁶ P: 'Cotton MS Cleopatra C.IV', *EAM*, http://searcharchives.bl.uk/IAMS_VU2:IAMS041-001607056 (16-05-2019); *A Catalogue of the Manuscripts in the Cottonian Library*, (London, 1802), pp. 580-1; Kingsford, *Chronicles of London*, ix-x; McLaren, *London Chronicles*, pp. 110-113; F. Logan, 'Swan, William (d. after 1445)', *ODNB*, <http://ezproxy-prd.bodleian.ox.ac.uk:2167/view/article/49675> (17-01-2017); A. Gillespie, 'Stow's "Owlde" Manuscripts of London chronicles', in I. A. Gadd and A. Gillespie (eds.), *John Stow and the Making of the English Past*, (London, 2004), pp. 57-68, 58.

			Feasibly of interest within the rest of the collection is the letter book of William Swann (d. 1455), papal procurator. Swann was from a London family: his brother John was a Pewterer, his brother Richard a Skinner. It is unclear when the Swann letter book became attached to the London chronicle: Swann family ownership is feasible but unproven.	
27	London, British Library, MS Harley 2252.	Ff. 3-8, London chronicle; 17r and 51v-53v, Genealogy of the Kings of England; 36v-7v, Chronicle of the Great Turk; 38r-v, Genealogy of Earls of Arundel; 43v-48v, Two ballads on Flodden.	It contains an ownership inscription by John Colyn, Mercer, fol. 133r. For the most complete accounts of Colyn's life, see the works of Carol Meale. Meale has identified that two hands worked collaboratively on the chronicle and has suggested that these were Colyn and his apprentice, (Meale, 'John Colyns' "Boke", pp. 71-4).	27
28	London, British Library, Stowe MS 69	ff. 1-192, <i>Brut</i> ; 192-195, extracts from a London chronicle; 196r-v, Lydgate, <i>Verses on the Kings of England</i> .	McLaren did not include this manuscript in her work. The London chronicle section consists of fragments for 1189-1272, taken from the 'Harley 565 group' of chronicles. The entries for 1189-90 and 1190-1 contain the same contents as Harley 565, but translated into Latin. Later material is similar to Harley 565, but sometimes abbreviated. Fol. 151r: Scribal signature, 'Pereson' (151r). User-added names of 16 th century: 56r, 'Thomas Labe[...]'; 196v 'William Darell', 'Wylyam Lamb'.	28

²⁷ P: 'Harley MS. 2252', *EAM*, http://searcharchives.bl.uk/IAMS_VU2:IAMS040-002048083 (10-05-2019); C. Meale, 'London, British Library, Harley MS 2252, John Colyns' "Boke": Structure and Content', *English Manuscript Studies*, 15, (London, 2009), pp. 90-117; D. Parker, *Commonplace Book*, ch. 4, pp. 89-128; C. Meale, 'The Compiler at Work: John Colyns and BL., MS Harley 2252', in D. Pearsall (ed.), *Manuscripts and Readers in Fifteenth-century England*, (Bury St Edmunds, 1983), pp. 82-103.

²⁸ P: 'Stowe MS 69', *EAM*, http://searcharchives.bl.uk/IAMS_VU2:IAMS040-001952851 (08-05-2019); 'BL, MS. Stowe 69', *IHW*, http://www.qub.ac.uk/imagining-history/resources/wiki/index.php/BL_MS_Stowe_69 (defunct); Matheson, *Prose Brut*, pp. 105-6.

29	London, College of Arms MS Arundel 19(i), ff. 1-8.	London chronicle with a Latin prologue for 1066-1189.		29
30	London, College of Arms MS Arundel 19(ii), ff. 9-35.	London chronicle.	Mercantile inscription: John Wryghtyn[g]ton, with merchant mark (24v, 25r, 25r).	30
31	London, College of Arms, MS M.6bis	Ff. 55-60, London chronicle.	Most of the miscellany is in the hand of herald Christopher Barker, including the 1512/3 entry of the chronicle (see catalogue). This MS may have entered the College of Arms' archives at an early date.	31
32	London, Lambeth Palace Library MS 306	Flyleaf, list of mayors and list of kings; 1r-17v, <i>Brut</i> ; 17v-18v, Lydgate, <i>Verses on the Kings of England</i> ; 18v-46r, London Chronicle; 132, Account of Edward IV's reception at Bristol; 204r-v, <i>Battle of Flodden</i> .	The identity of the original author and compiler is unknown. One user who made frequent additions to the manuscript signed himself as 'T Myll' (as identified by Christopher Lay), who added: flyleaf, Mayoral list; ff. 64r-65r, Household Principals of St Bernard; 65r-v, list of prohibited books, 1531; 177v, Marian prayer, dated to 1508. Myll thus owned the book for a long time (at least 1508-1531), and showed an interest in London institutions (hence the mayoral list, and prohibition list issued by the Bishop of London). He copied a manual of household management, thus was likely a householder.	32

²⁹ P: W. Black, *Catalogue of the Arundel Manuscripts in the Royal College of Arms*, (London, 1829), pp. 27-8; McLaren, *London Chronicles*, pp. 37, 132.

³⁰ P: Black, *Catalogue of Arundel MSS*, pp. 27-8; McLaren, *London Chronicles*, pp. 105-6

³¹ P: L. Campbell and F. Steer, *A Catalogue of Manuscripts in the College of Arms Collections*, (2 vols, London, 1988), i, pp. 106-111; McLaren, *London Chronicles*, pp. 34-5; R. Yorke, 'Barker, Sir Christopher (d. 1550)', ODNB, <http://ezproxy-prd.bodleian.ox.ac.uk:2167/view/article/1389> (15-05-2019).

³² P: 'MS 306', *Database of Manuscripts and Archives*, <http://archives.lambethpalacelibrary.org.uk/CalmView/Record.aspx?src=CalmView.Catalog&id=MSS%2f306&pos=76> (08-05-2019); Matheson, *Prose Brut*, pp. 215-6; Kingsford, *Chronicles of London*, xi; C. Lay, "'A Brief Collection of Matters of Chronicles': Notes by John Stow in Lambeth Palace Library MS 306", *English Manuscript Studies*, 14, (London, 2008), pp. 207-218, 209. On Thomas Myll: 'Event details', *RLCO*, https://londonroll.org/event/?company=mr&event_id=MCMM2086 (26-06-2019); 'Robert Whitby alias Durham, Will of 1509', *Kent Archaeological Society*, <https://www.kentarchaeology.org.uk/Research/Libr/Wills/Bk49+50/page%20034.htm> (26-06-2019); see also 'C 1/296/4', *Discovery*, <https://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/details/r/C7464713> (26-06-2019); *List of Early Chancery Proceedings Preserved in the Public Record Office*, (10 vols, New York, 1963), v, p. 441.

			As such, he was probably a London resident householder and may well have been a citizen. I have identified a Thomas Myll, who was admitted as a Mercer in 1506, (see footnotes).	
33	London, Metropolitan Archives, CLC/270/MS03313	London Chronicle (the <i>Great Chronicle</i>).	The original scribe (who produced the chronicle 1189-1438) is unknown. The continuator (1438-1512) was Robert Fabyan, Draper and sheriff (see Payne for palaeographical evidence).	33
34	London, Metropolitan Archives, COL/AD/01/6	Annotated Mayoral list, principally in Latin; part of Letter-book F.	A letter-book, in the Guildhall Chamber Library.	34
35	Manchester, Chetham's Library MS 8009	Ff. 357-366, <i>Book of the Duke and the Emperor</i> ; 367-386v, brief London chronicle.	The London chronicle was not featured in McLaren's system of manuscript groupings. It belongs to the Julius B.ii group. Its main unique feature is that it has English rather than Latin titles to introduce royal reigns. This book was produced by professional London scribes (see Sánchez-Martí, 'Codicological Description'); the London chronicle was added by users, which may suggest that it continued to circulate in the city.	35

³³ S: I. Thorney and A. Thompson, 'Introduction', *Great Chronicle*, xv-lxxvi; McLaren, *London Chronicles*, pp. 26-9; Boffey, *Manuscript and Print*, Ch. 5; Payne, 'Robert Fabyan and the Nuremberg Chronicle', pp. 164-9.

³⁴ S: *CLB F*, pp. 276-303; McLaren, *London Chronicles*, pp. 121-2.

³⁵ P: 'Ipomedon etc.', *Chetham's Library Online Catalogue*,

http://130.88.25.225/vs/FullBB.csp?WebAction=ShowFullBB&EncodedRequest=*9C*ED*A2*A4*A4*A9*5C*A6*A3*F1*21*B6*04B*E6*1B&Profile=Default&OpacLanguage=eng&NumberToRetrieve=50&StartValue=5&WebPageNr=1&SearchTerm1=0000000005.1.48931&SearchT1=&Index1=Keywords&SearchMethod=Find_1&ItemNr=5 (10-05-2019); J. Sánchez-Martí, 'Manchester, Chetham's Library MS 8009 (Mun. A.6.31): a Codicological Description', *Revista Canaria de Estudios Ingleses*, 47, (2003), pp. 129-154; J. Sánchez-Martí, 'Reconstructing the Audiences of the Middle English Versions of *Ipomedon*', *Studies in Philology*, 103:2, (2006), pp. 153-77; J. Sánchez-Martí, 'The Middle English Versions of *Ipomedon* in their Manuscript Context', *Manuscripta*, 49:1, (2005), pp. 69-93; J. Sánchez-Martí, 'Reading Romance in Late Medieval England: the Case of the Middle English *Ipomedon*', *Philological Quarterly*, 83:1, (2004), pp. 13-39; R. Purdie, 'Sexing the Manuscript: the Case for Female Ownership of MS. Chetham 8009', *Neophilologus*, 82:1, (1998), pp. 139-148; C. Meale, 'The Middle English Romance of *Ipomedon*: A Late Medieval "Mirror" for Princes and Merchants', *Reading Medieval Studies*, 10, (1984), pp. 136-91.

			Several historians, notably Purdie and Sánchez-Martí, have suggested, on the basis of co-location, that this manuscript was used for childhood education. 224v: 'Elisabet'.	
36	Manchester, Rylands Library, 22164	Richard Arnold, <i>Customs of London</i> , (1503).	Civic co-location: indenture that in 1559, John Galborne, citizen and Tailor, lent money to Thomas Torner, a citizen of London, (not foliated, immediately after the chronicle). Other inscriptions: 'Richard Waddis, scholaris', (rear flyleaf).	36
37	Oxford, Balliol MS 354	pp. 36-8, 219, genealogical and biographical notes; 208-9, 'Seven Ages of the World from Adam Forward'; 261-282, <i>Siege of Rouen</i> ; 362-6, <i>Lamentation of the Duchess of Gloucester</i> ; 469-483, London chronicle.	This book is almost wholly in the hand of Richard Hill, Grocer and Merchant Adventurer, who also left several ownership inscriptions (pp. 219, 335, 351). For a brief biography of Hill, see above, pp. 181-187.	37
38	Oxford, Bodleian Library Auct. QQ Sup. 2.33	Robert Fabyan, <i>New Chronicles</i> , (Richard Pynson: London, 1516).	Weak metropolitan context: Annotation patterns are consistent with a sixteenth-century London Protestant. There are frequent reformist annotations (<i>e.g.</i> 176r, against the Marian prayer). Some of these are done in the hand of 'Andrew Trevis' (120v) (no location). Within the London church list, a user has removed All Hallows Staining (188r)	38

³⁶ p.

³⁷ P: R. Mynors, *Catalogue of the Manuscripts of Balliol College Oxford*, (Oxford, 1963), pp. 242-4; Parker, *Commonplace Book*, pp. 39-47; R. Dyboski, 'Introduction', *Songs*, xxxiv-lix; D. Browning, 'Balliol College MS. 354', (B.Litt thesis, University of Oxford, 1935); C. Shrank, 'Hill, Richard (*fl.* 1508-1536), ODNB, <http://ezproxy-prd.bodleian.ox.ac.uk:2167/view/article/68090> (30-09-2016).

³⁸ p.

			the Bridge chapel and most monasteries (189r) and added crosses next to four other churches (188v), indicating London local interest. A London citizen or metropolitan clergyman are feasible owners.	
39	Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Rawlinson B.355; one booklet of this MS came loose and its today incorporated into Rawlinson D.913, ff. 55-60.	ff. 2, Mayoral list; 67v-74, St Paul's tabular chronicle to 1431, with additions to 1461; 77-80, Chronicle from the Conquest to the reign of King John; 83-113v, Latin London chronicle.	Metropolitan context: production within St Paul's precinct is probable because its cover (1r) was a St Paul's property document (leasing a Stepney tenement to John Newbone, Baker) and it contains the St Paul's tabular chronicle. It has a scribal signature 'RM' (67r). A user-added mayoral list to 1495 implies that later readers remained interested in the city.	39
40	Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Tanner 2	ff. 1-70, <i>Scala Temporum</i> , Latin chronicle to 1525; 70-84, 'Stemmata Gentium', on the origins of the Britons and English; 92-118, Latin London chronicle to 1522; 137-8, Middle English chronicle, Brutus to Richard III. Within a miscellany that contains many brief extracts from chronicles, including from William of Malmesbury and Gerald of Wales.	Compilation and ownership are uncertain. A graduate education for the owner is feasible: he collected a list of proctors of Oxford University (f. 141) and read a variety of complex literature in Latin. Compilation by a metropolitan lawyer, royal official or clergyman is feasible.	40

³⁹ P: 'MS. Rawl. B.355', *MMOL*, https://medieval.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/catalog/manuscript_8029 (09-05-2019); Flenley, *Six Town Chronicles*, pp. 62-6; McLaren, *London Chronicles*, p. 111. On Rawlinson D.913: G. Baskerville, 'A London Chronicle of 1460', *English Historical Review*, 28:109, (1913), pp. 124-7; 'MS. Rawl. D.913', *MMOL*, https://medieval.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/catalog/manuscript_8471 (10-05-2019).

⁴⁰ P: 'MS. Tanner 2', *MMOL*, https://medieval.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/catalog/manuscript_8991 (09-05-2019); Flenley, *Six Town Chronicles*, pp. 81-4; McLaren, *London Chronicles*, pp. 129-31.

41	Oxford, Bodleian Library MSS Rawlinson B.359	ff. 1-17, A Latin London chronicle; 18-25, annotated list of Grocer officeholders.	The Officeholder list contains a first-person note by Henry Nichol, master clerk of the Grocers' Company (66v): see Barron for details concerning his biography.	41
42	Oxford, Bodleian Library, Digby Roll 2.	London Chronicle.	Civic co-location: the verso contains a list of guilds of London derived from the 1488 assessment of a civic loan to the king. The scribe thus likely had access to the civic archives. There are also lists of London wards and churches, suggesting civic interests.	42
43	Oxford, Bodleian Library, Douce A.314.	Richard Arnold, <i>Customs of London</i> , (1503).	Weak evidence for a mercantile context: VL ligature on rear flyleaf could be a trade mark.	43
44	Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Bodley 596.	ff. 39r-42r, Latin Westminster Chronicle; 44r, List of Sainted kings; 53v-63, Latin London chronicle.	10r: arms of William Baron, teller to the exchequer; he married into the Knolles family of Grocers. For more on this context, see above, pp. 89-90.	44
45	Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Gough London 10 (i) and (ii)	Two London chronicles, 4v and 19v-52r.	Flenley surmised from co-location that this book was compiled for Miles Adys: legal documents in it relate both to his term as Chamberlain of the city and also his period as an officeholder in the Goldsmiths' company. It was later owned by the Barons Capel: ownership by their ancestor, Mayor William Capel, is feasible but unproven.	45

⁴¹ P: Barron, 'What Did Medieval London Merchants Read?', pp. 54-5; McLaren, *London Chronicles*, p. 129 'MS. Rawl. B. 359', *MMOL*, https://medieval.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/catalog/manuscript_8031 (23-05-2019).

⁴² P: 'MS. Digby Rolls 2', *MMOL*, https://medieval.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/catalog/manuscript_4441 (08-05-2019); McLaren, *London Chronicles*, pp. 103-4.

⁴³ P.

⁴⁴ P: 'MS. Bodl. 596', *MMOL*, https://medieval.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/catalog/manuscript_1609 (19-06-2020); McLaren, *London Chronicles*, p. 38; see G. Wrottesley, *History of the Family Wrottesley of Wrottesley, co. Stafford*, (Exeter, 1903), pp. 238-9 (William Baron).

⁴⁵ P: 'MS. Gough London 10', *MMOL*, https://medieval.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/catalog/manuscript_4936 (15-05-2019); Flenley, *Six Town Chronicles*, pp. 81-4; McLaren, *London Chronicles*, pp. 38, 114-5 131-2.

46	Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Rawlinson B.173	A <i>Brut</i> with a London chronicle continuation.	It was owned by a Vaughn family; on their identities, see above, pp. 90-91.	46
47	Oxford, St John's College MS 57	ff. 138-223, London chronicle.		47
48	York Minster, MS XVI.Q.9	Robert Fabyan, <i>New Chronicles</i> , (manuscript).	A non-autograph copy; it was used by Pynson for his 1516 edition.	48
49	Textual Archaeology: the bankruptcy inventory of Richard Gytten, Mercer, 1507.	Two chronicles; and 'a book in English of the Customs of London'.	Richard Gytten's goods contained 21 books. These included 'a book in English of the customs of London', which may describe Richard Arnold's <i>Customs of London</i> .	49
50	Textual Archaeology: the post-mortem inventory of Mayor Matthew Philip, Goldsmith, 1476.	'English book of the Chronicles of London'; the damaged next line indicates that it also contained an account of Henry V's French Wars.	Philip's post-mortem inventory stated that he stored his chronicle in his parlour. The combination of a London chronicle with a text on the French wars most closely resembles Harley 565, see above, Appendix 1.24.	50

⁴⁶ P: 'Rawl. B.173', *MMOL*, https://medieval.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/catalog/manuscript_7985 (08-05-2019); Matheson, *Prose Brut*, pp. 102-312; A. Vines, "'Thys Ys Her Owne Boke": Women Reading the Middle English Prose Brut Chronicle', in W. Marx and R. Radulescu (eds.), *Readers and Writers of the Prose Brut*, (Lampeter, 2006), pp. 71-98, 82-4.

⁴⁷ P: R. Hanna, *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Western Medieval Manuscripts of St John's College, Oxford*, (Oxford, 2002), pp. 75-7; Flenley, *Six Town Chronicles*, pp. 60-2; McLaren, *London Chronicles*, p. 100.

⁴⁸ S: Thomas and Thorney, 'Introduction', *Great Chronicle*, lii-lxix; Payne, 'Robert Fabyan and the Nuremberg chronicle', pp. 166-7; Boffey, *Manuscript and Print*, ch. 5.

⁴⁹ Barron, 'What Did Medieval London Merchants Read?', p. 45.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.* p. 52.

8.2: Appendix 2, Provenance of *Brut* Chronicles

Table 2: Provenance of London-connected <i>Brut</i> Chronicles. N.B: Manuscripts that contain both a London chronicle and a <i>Brut</i> have not been replicated here. As such, see table 1, numbers 4, 7, 9, 21, 28, 32, 46.				
	Name	Historical Literature	Information on origin, ownership and usage	
1	Aberystwyth, National Library of Wales 396D	<i>Brut.</i>	Metropolitan signature: ‘Thomas Gaye of London’, fol. 198r.	51
2	Aberystwyth, National Library of Wales, MS Additional 21608A	<i>Brut.</i>	Co-location: user-added memorandum, ‘I, Robert Lewes Marchaunt of London...’, fol. 3v.	52
3	Cambridge, Massachusetts, Harvard University Houghton Library, MS f938	Trevet’s <i>Chronicle</i> (English); with a continuation taken from the <i>Brut</i> .	1553 inscription ‘John Gaydon, Merchant of Vintre’, (2v). The manuscript also contains a liturgical calendar, to which an <i>obit</i> has been added for Alice Hungerford, who Matheson has identified as the widow of John Hungerford, Draper of London.	53
4	Cambridge, Trinity College, Wren MS R.5.43	<i>Brut.</i>	Metropolitan signature: within <i>Three Kings of Cologne</i> there is a note ‘Ego Thomas Shawe Londonearum’ (16v, 38v). Metropolitan annotation: a marginal note in the <i>Brut</i> (48v) shows interest in the London Walbrook.	54
5	Cambridge, University Library MS Additional 2775	<i>Brut.</i>	3r: there was once an ownership inscription: ‘Iste liber constat John ?Bowell Grocero London’. It has since been crossed out and	55

⁵¹ S: Matheson, *Prose Brut*, pp. 195-6; ‘NLW, MS 396D’, *IHSD*, (defunct).

⁵² S: This book is listed as ‘whereabouts unknown’ in ‘Past Ownership’, p. 161; ‘NLW, MS Add. 21608A’, *IHSD*, (defunct).

⁵³ P: ‘Chronicles in English, Manuscript ca. 1420’, *Harvard Digital Collections*, <https://curiosity.lib.harvard.edu/medieval-renaissance-manuscripts/catalog/34-990096114820203941> (13-06-2019); C. Rose, ‘The Seen and the Unseen: Miracles, Marvels and Portents in the Middle English Chronicle of Nicholas Trevet’, in J. Rajsic, E. Kooper and D. Hoche (eds.), *The Prose Brut and other late Medieval Chronicles*, (York, 2016), pp. 30-48; Matheson, *Prose Brut*, pp. 324-6.

⁵⁴ P: ‘R.5.43’, *James Catalogue*, <http://trin-sites-pub.trin.cam.ac.uk/james/viewpage.php?index=1552>, (18-06-2019); ‘TCC, R.5.43’, *IHSD*, <http://www.qub.ac.uk/imagining-history/resources/short/results.php?record=64>, (defunct); Matheson, *Prose Brut*, pp. 126-7.

⁵⁵ P: ‘Past Ownership’, p. 162; Matheson, *Prose Brut*, pp. 190; J. Ringrose, *Summary Catalogue of the Additional Medieval Manuscripts in Cambridge University Library Acquired Before 1940*, (Woodbridge, 2009), p. 24; ‘CUL MS Add. 2775’, *IHW*, http://www.qub.ac.uk/imagining-history/resources/wiki/index.php/CUL_MS_Add_2775 (link defunct); CUL MS Add 2775’, *IHSD*, <http://www.qub.ac.uk/imagining-history/resources/short/results.php?record=119> (link defunct).

			replaced with two inscriptions that 'Iste liber constat Richardo Milles Grocero London', and that he purchased it for 6s 8d. Other signatures: 261v: 'Thomas Newdete', 'He that wrought yt was F. Saunder'. 256r: Alphabet in a confident hand, ending 'Amen': it may have been an example sheet for a learner.	
6	Cambridge, University Library, 3939.2	Printed <i>Brut</i> , (Gerard Leeu: Antwerp, 1493).	Co-location: it contains a 1545 indenture between Anthonye Whit 'letharsellar of the Cyte off London' with Thomas Cramar, his servant. It also contains an incomplete bond witnessed by J. Bonde of London, 22 nd April 1547.	56
7	Glasgow, University Library, Hunterian Library MS 83 (T.3.21)	<i>Brut</i> ; Caxton's <i>Brut</i> continuation; Warksworth's chronicle, inserted as a continuation.	Signature of 'Meyster Wylliam Bromwell', who Matheson has identified as the Warden of the Mercers, (d. 1536). 'Jahane Chyldryrs, Margret Chyldryrs, Frances Ades, Harry Osmodes off Crown Key in London': This inscription shows four cohabiting people and could perhaps indicate a married couple (John and Margaret Chyldrys) followed by two dependents or apprentices.	57
8	London, British Library, Additional MS 12030	<i>Brut</i> .	Signature: 161r, 'Thys ys my boke Wylliam Loker, Plowmer [Plumber] in London'.	58
9	London, British Library, MS Harley 1568	<i>Brut</i> .	Mercantile context: cruciform trademark (48v).	59

⁵⁶ S: 'Chronicles of England [English]', *Early Book-owners in Britain*, <https://data.cerl.org/ebob/00000836> (10-09-2019).

⁵⁷ S: L. Matheson, *Death and Dissent*, (Woodbridge, 1999), pp. 90-1; Matheson, *Prose Brut*, pp. 167-8, 205; 'MS Hunter 83 (T.3.21)', *University of Glasgow Special Collections*, http://special.lib.gla.ac.uk/manuscripts/search/detail_c.cfm?ID=34505 (12-06-2019).

⁵⁸ P: 'Add. Ms 12030', *EAM*, http://searcharchives.bl.uk/IAMS_VU2:IAMS040-002041737 (13-06-2019); 'BL, Additional MS 12030', *IHW*, http://www.qub.ac.uk/imagining-history/resources/wiki/index.php/BL_Additional_MS_12030 (link defunct); Matheson, *Prose Brut*, pp. 179-80.

⁵⁹ P: 'Detailed record for Harley 1568', *Catalogue of Illuminated Manuscripts*, <https://www.bl.uk/catalogues/illuminatedmanuscripts/record.asp?MSID=3504&CollID=8&NStart=1568> (18-06-2019); 'Harley 1568', *IHSD*, <http://www.qub.ac.uk/imagining-history/resources/short/results.php?record=58>, (defunct); 'BL, Harley MS 1568', *IHW*, http://www.qub.ac.uk/imagining-history/resources/wiki/index.php/BL_Harley_MS_1568, (defunct); Matheson, *Prose Brut*, p. 121.

10	London, British Library, MS Harley 63	<i>Brut.</i>	Metropolitan signatures: there are several signatures and one memorandum written by ‘John Skydmore of London’; in the memorandum, he receives what may be a loan, £22 from ‘Hary Tomas Plommer [Plumber]’, (21v, 36v, 43v, 18v, 19v).	60
11	London, British Library, MS Harley 753	<i>Brut.</i>	Metropolitan context, suggested by <i>Imagining History</i>: see also 2.14. The original scribe of this manuscript frequently inserted sigla in the shape of an axe which marked out localised London entries. <i>Imagining History</i> suggested that this indicates London production for a London audience. Fol. 48v contains a possible trademark (‘NT’ monogram). Fol. 165v: Inscription that the book was given by Robert Herdes and his wife Ellen to Henry Brayn, four days before Brayne’s marriage, (location unknown). Numerous Elizabethan inscriptions from Rowland Shakerley, (ff. 48r, 81r, 126v, 133r, 134r, 144v), (location unknown). I have identified potential Londoners with the names Robert Herdes (Haberdasher), Henry Brayne (Tailor) and Rowland Shakerley (Mercer), all of which are detailed in the footnotes.	61

⁶⁰ P: *Harleian Manuscripts*, i, p. 16; Matheson, *Prose Brut*, p. 316; ‘BL, Harley MS 63’, *IHW*, http://www.qub.ac.uk/imagining-history/resources/wiki/index.php/BL_Harley_MS_63 (defunct).

⁶¹ P: *Harleian Manuscripts*, i, p. 433; Matheson, *Prose Brut*, pp. 146-7; ‘BL, Harley MS 753’, *IHW*, http://www.qub.ac.uk/imagining-history/resources/wiki/index.php/BL_Harley_MS_753 (18-06-2019); On Robert Herde, see: ‘C1/325/26’, *Discovery*, <https://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/details/r/C7466123> (27-06-2019); ‘C1/277/12’, *Discovery*, <https://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/details/r/C7778475> (27-06-2019); ‘C1/585/58’, *Discovery*, <https://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/details/r/C7475811> (27-06-2019). On Henry Brayne, see: ‘C 1/1077/3’, *Discovery*, <https://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/details/r/C7491735> (27-06-2018); ‘C 1/1289/44-49’, *Discovery*, <https://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/details/r/C7499620> (27-06-2019); ‘C1/1278/28-9’, *Discovery*, <https://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/details/r/C7499293> (27-06-2019). On Rowland Shakerley, see: ‘Event details’, *RLCO*, https://londonroll.org/event/?company=mr&event_id=MCEB2553 (27-06-2019); this may be the brother of the MP Robert Shakerley, MP: see ‘Shakerley, Robert (by 1510-69 or later)’, *History of Parliament*, <https://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1509-1558/member/shakerley-robert-1510-69-or-later> (18-06-2019).

			However, none of these identifications are certain. It is a book produced in London, containing a merchant mark and with several feasible London ascriptions.	
12	London, British Library, MS Sloane 2027	ff. 96v-97v, 170r-188v, <i>Brut</i> ; 97v-169v, <i>Robert of Gloucester's Chronicle</i> .	Its original context was with Midland gentry: 'William Braundon of Knoll in the Counte of Warwyke' (96r). It later reached London: it is inscribed 'Wylliam Holwyke in the Old Bayly in Saynt Polles parryshe Carponder in the Little Bayly' (4r). There is a 'sign of 4' trademark featuring the letters TB (60r). It also contains a possible Tailor inscription on 95r: 'Richard Procter Tay...'	62
13	London, Lambeth Palace Library MS 259	<i>Brut</i> .	Mercantile context: the front flyleaves bear several merchant marks, one with the name 'William Bentley'. There is also a shield containing a pair of shears, implying a family in the wool trade. Localisation is more confusing: the word 'London' is written on 125v. Several East Anglian names are entered elsewhere: i(r) (Newnham), iii(v) (Boston, Stockton), rear flyleaves (Norfolk, Stockton). Perhaps this book could have circulated within the regional East Anglia to London wool trade?	63
14	London, Lambeth Palace Library, MS 331	<i>Brut</i> .	Weak metropolitan context, suggested by <i>Imagining History</i> , see also 2.11. The original scribe of this manuscript frequently inserted sigla in the shape of an axe which marked out localised London entries.	64

⁶² P: Sloane 2027', *EAM*, http://searcharchives.bl.uk/IAMS_VU2:IAMS040-002114387 (13-06-2019); Matheson, *Prose Brut*, pp. 274-5; 'BL, Sloane MS 2027', *IHW*, http://www.qub.ac.uk/imagining-history/resources/wiki/index.php/BL_Sloane_MS_2027 (defunct).

⁶³ P: 'Past Ownership', p. 156; 'MS 259', *Database of Manuscripts and Archives*, <https://archives.lambethpalacelibrary.org.uk/CalmView/Record.aspx?src=CalmView.Catalog&id=MSS%2f259&pos=1> (18-06-2019); 'LP MS 259', *IHW*, http://www.qub.ac.uk/imagining-history/resources/wiki/index.php/Lambeth_Palace_MS_259, (defunct); Matheson, *Prose Brut*, p. 130.

⁶⁴ P: 'MS 331', *Database of Manuscripts and Archives*, <https://archives.lambethpalacelibrary.org.uk/CalmView/Record.aspx?src=CalmView.Catalog&id=MSS%2f331&pos> (18-06-2019); 'Lambeth MS 331', *IHSD*, <http://www.qub.ac.uk/imagining-history/resources/short/results.php?record=79>, (18-06-2019); Matheson, *Prose Brut*, pp. 147-8.

			<i>Imagining History</i> suggested that this indicates London production for a London audience. On Folio 47r there is a JN monogram mark which could be a trademark.	
15	London, Lambeth Palace Library, MS 6	<i>Brut.</i>	Arms of the Purchas family on the front flyleaf; Matheson identifies this manuscript with mercer and Mayor William Purchas (<i>d.</i> 1503). A civic context is implied by a trial letter that complains that hot weather and disease are occurring ‘to the hole subversion of an infinite number of our cytezens’ (flyleaf).	65
16	London, Lambeth Palace Library, MS 491	<i>Brut.</i>	London signatures: there are numerous graffiti marks and additions by two hands which sign themselves as John and Thomas ‘Pattsall’. Meale and Boffey have identified these with the Pateshale family, resident in Barking and members of the Mercers’ company. London production: the first section of this book was created by Guildhall scribe Richard Osborne. London annotation: users have written repeatedly on ff. 311v-312r the word ‘London’.	66
17	London, Lambeth Palace Library, MS 738	<i>Brut.</i>	Mercantile context. It contains memoranda concerning grain deliveries (231v). It also contains notes addressed to ‘Gabrell	67

⁶⁵ S: ‘MS 6’, *Database of Manuscripts and Archives*, <https://archives.lambethpalacelibrary.org.uk/CalmView/Record.aspx?src=CalmView.Catalog&id=MSS%2f6&pos=1> (13-06-2019); Matheson, *Prose Brut*, pp. 298-9.

⁶⁶ P: Boffey and Meale, ‘Selecting the Text’, pp. 161-2; ‘Ms 491’, *Database of Manuscripts and Archives*, <https://archives.lambethpalacelibrary.org.uk/CalmView/Record.aspx?src=CalmView.Catalog&id=MSS%2f491&pos=1> (11-06-2019); Matheson, *Prose Brut*, pp. 91-2; ‘London, Lambeth Palace Library Ms. 491’, *IHSD*, <http://www.qub.ac.uk/imagining-history/resources/short/results.php?record=16> (defunct); ‘Richard Osborn’, *Late Medieval English Scribes*, <https://www.medievalscribes.com/index.php?browse=hands&id=85&navlocation=San%20Marino,%20CA&navlibrary=Henry%20E.%20Huntington%20Library&msid=140&nav=off> (11-06-2019).

⁶⁷ P: ‘MS 738’, *Database of Manuscripts and Archives*, <https://archives.lambethpalacelibrary.org.uk/CalmView/Record.aspx?src=CalmView.Catalog&id=MSS%2f738&pos=16> (18-06-2019); ‘Lambeth Palace MS. 738’, *IHW*, http://www.qub.ac.uk/imagining-history/resources/wiki/index.php/Lambeth_Palace_MS_738 (defunct); Matheson, *Prose Brut*, pp. 104-5.

			master marchaunt of Antwerpe' who is also listed as 'honest gentylman of Calie' and 'controwler of Dublinn', dated to 1542 (231r).	
18	Longleat House MS 183A	<i>Brut</i>	London inscription of Alice Brice, f. 1v and 126v: she may be the widow of alderman Hugh Brice, Goldsmith (as identified by <i>Imagining History</i>).	68
19	Manchester, John Rylands Library, MS Eng. 105	<i>Brut.</i>	Metropolitan context. There is one clear mercantile owner, 'Rowland Rows mercant, 1565'. There are also ownership notes of Thomas Pawlyn, surgeon of London (2r); and a lawyer, 'Jacob Grynsted dominus, manucaptor', (2r). There are two other inscriptions signed 'gent', (2r). This seems to suggest circulation across professional boundaries amongst merchants, lawyers, doctors and gentlemen in the city of London.	69
20	Oxford Bodleian Library, MS Rawlinson B.216	<i>Brut.</i>	Inscription: fol. 134 'John Seiton of London Sallter'	70
21	Oxford, Bodleian Library Inc C-199(1) (Mal. 10).	Printed <i>Brut</i> , (Wynkyn de Worde: London, 1497).	Metropolitan annotations show an interest in London. 1) During the reign of Edward II, the chronicle discusses a military muster to defend the coast in which 'every hundered and wapentake' was involved; the men of London are mentioned in passing. Nonetheless, the annotator singles out London's role. 2) Annotation next to Ralph Holland and the disputed mayoral election of 1441.	71
22	Oxford, Bodleian Library, F.2.27 Art Seld.	Printed <i>Brut</i> , (Julian Notary: London, 1515).	Mercantile context: it contains merchant marks, 12r, 28v. There is also a note about the price of wheat (63r).	72

⁶⁸ S: 'Longleat MS 183A', *IHSD*, <http://www.qub.ac.uk/imagining-history/resources/short/results.php?record=34> (website defunct); Matheson, *Prose Brut*, p. 108. On Brice, see 'Past Ownership', p. 167.

⁶⁹ P: 'Brut Chronicle (1413 continuation)', *Archives Hub*, <https://archiveshub.jisc.ac.uk/data/gb133-engms105> (10-06-2019); Matheson, *Prose Brut*, pp. 177-8.

⁷⁰ P: 'Past Ownership', p. 163; 'MS Rawl. B.216', *MMOL*, https://medieval.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/catalog/manuscript_8005 (10-09-2019).

⁷¹ P: 'C-199', *Bod-Inc Online*, <http://incunables.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/record/C-199> (10-09-2019).

⁷² P.

23	Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Bodley 754	<i>Brut.</i>	Mercantile context: there is an inventory for the disposal of pepper (47r). There is also an annotation showing interest in the London Walbrook (17r).	⁷³
24	Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Bodley 840	<i>Brut.</i>	Inscription: ‘Thomas Wallinger de London’ and Chelmsford (142v). Circulation in Chelmsford rather than London is likely: there are inscriptions by several Chelmsford residents (53r, 74r, 120v, 123r, 124r, 164r, <i>etc.</i>). There is also a mercantile inscription of Thomas Raynold, Draper of Chelmsford (138r). This book thus was known to at least one Londoner and at least one merchant.	⁷⁴
25	Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Laud Misc. 733	<i>Brut.</i>	Amy Noelle Vines has shown, based on inscriptions evidence, that this book originated with aristocratic families, including the Neville and the Daubeney families. Later inscriptions were left by the Lawyer and Merchant Adventurer Armagill Waad and his son William, (flyleaves, 9r, 168v, 181v). Waad’s partner in one of his New World voyages was an Oliver Daubeney, merchant of London: given his surname, Oliver may have been the conduit through which the book left the gentry and reached Waad. See Vines, in the footnote.	⁷⁵
26	Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Rawlinson Poet. 32	55v-169 <i>Brut</i> ; 204v ‘the Age of the World’.	This is probably a metropolitan book, although its ownership is unknown. This book contains five units produced at different times, but it reached its current form by the date of its early sixteenth-century contents page. The final booklet contains a topographical text defining the bounds of St Paul’s precincts. Another booklet contains the <i>Libelle of English Policy</i> , a poem	⁷⁶

⁷³ P: ‘MS. Bodl. 754’, *MMOL*, https://medieval.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/catalog/manuscript_1741 (18-06-2019); Matheson, *Prose Brut*, pp. 295-6.

⁷⁴ P: ‘MS. Bodl. 840’, *MMOL*, https://medieval.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/catalog/manuscript_1830 (11-06-2019); Matheson, *Prose Brut*, p. 118.

⁷⁵ P: ‘MS. Laud Misc. 733’, *MMOL*, https://medieval.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/catalog/manuscript_7511 (12-06-2019); On the identification of these signatures, see Vines, ‘Thys ys Her Owne Boke’, pp. 78-81.

⁷⁶ P: ‘MS Rawl. Poet. 32’, *MMOL*, https://medieval.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/catalog/manuscript_8769 (18-06-2019); Matheson, *Prose Brut*, pp. 162-3. Boffey, *Manuscript and Print*, p. 65; C. Meale, ‘The *Libelle of Englyshe Polycye* and Mercantile Literary Culture in Late-Medieval London’, in J. Boffey and P. King (eds.), *London and Europe in the Later Middle Ages*, (Exeter, 1995), pp. 181-228.

			concerning trade which was popular amongst merchants, (see Meale, ‘ <i>Libelle</i> ’). The <i>Brut</i> contains few localising features, but there is a particularly intense interest by one annotator in the foundations of English cities: London (61v), York (64v), Colchester (75r), St Albans (77v), and Doncaster (80v). Such evidence is weakly suggestive of a London, and possibly a mercantile, context.	
27	Oxford, Bodleian Library, Vet.1.d.19	Printed <i>Brut</i> , (Richard Pynson: London, 1510).	Mercantile co-location: an English merchant in the Flanders trade added a letter addressed to a ‘frende’ at the ‘old worf in Anwarpp [Antwerp] main-warpp’ (98v).	77
28	Princeton, University Library, MS Garret 150	<i>Brut</i> .	Weak heraldic evidence: the rear flyleaves contain a shield that is similar (although incomplete) to that of John Gostwick of Willington, wax chandler of London and royal courtier under Henry VIII. The shield is amateurish and it is not proven beyond doubt that it is an ownership mark rather than a doodle.	78
29	Princeton, University Library, MS Taylor 3	<i>Brut</i> .	Mercantile context: Possible trademark consisting of an AB monogram (62v). On 49v and 59v there are notes on the history of London’s name, perhaps implying a London interest.	79
30	Washington, Folger Shakespeare Library, 9991	Printed <i>Brut</i> , (Caxton: Westminster, 1480).	Civic co-location: user-added memoranda of ‘[illegible]...cittizenn of Londonn, the witnes therof is Thomas Shalcros Draper Nicholas Benson free[man] of the right wourshipfull company of the Grocers...Nicolas Bensonn’ (see <i>ESTC</i>).	80
31	Washington, Folger Shakespeare Library, SM V.A.198 (1232.3)	Peculiar <i>Brut</i> .	Weak evidence of a metropolitan context: Matheson notes of its continuation that many of its later entries ‘may have been extracted from a London chronicle’.	81

⁷⁷ P.

⁷⁸ P: ‘Facsimile’, *Princeton.edu*, http://libweb5.princeton.edu/visual_materials/mss/ME/Garrett_MS_150_OPT.pdf (10-06-2019); Matheson, *Prose Brut*, pp. 199-200.

⁷⁹ P: ‘Facsimile’, *Princeton.edu*, http://libweb5.princeton.edu/visual_materials/mss/ME/Taylor_MS_03_Part_1_OPT.pdf (10-06-2019); Matheson, *Prose Brut*, pp. 94-5, 132-3.

⁸⁰ S: ‘S106522’, *ESTC*, <http://estc.bl.uk/S106522> (10-09-2019).

⁸¹ S: Matheson, *Prose Brut*, p. 321.

32	Woburn Abbey MS 181	Ff. 1-100 Richard Fox, <i>Chronicle of St Albans</i> ; 100v-202v <i>Brut</i> ;	Its original context was with Richard Fox, a schoolmaster in St Albans. Later inscriptions (see Matheson, <i>Prose Brut</i>): Thomas Northland, Grocer and sheriff (<i>d.</i> 1484); John Ashe, Grocer (<i>d.</i> 1523); ‘Elysabeth Carpenter’, (location unknown). One user added regulations concerning London cooks.	⁸²
33	Yale University, Beinecke Library MS 494	<i>Brut</i> .	It was created for the London Dominicans. It contains a sale notice of 12 th April 1464 to William Nasby, Skinner of London, (i[v], ii[r]); it also contains inscriptions of Robert Nasby, (i[r], 100v, 102v) and ‘John Hull sarvant’ (i[r]).	⁸³
34	Textual Archaeology: the will of Nicholas Hotot, Woolmonger (1404).	<i>Brut</i> .	Nicholas Hotot (<i>d.</i> 1404) bequeathed a <i>Brut</i> to John Longman. Wood (‘Life and Death’, pp. 222-4) has verified Hotot as a Woolmonger and the son of a Common Councillor.	⁸⁴
35	Textual Archaeology: the will of Walter Smith, Draper (1534).	‘English Chronicles’.	Walter Smith, Draper, bequeathed ‘English Chronicles’ in his will. He was likely the same as the servant in Thomas More’s household who authored the urban satire <i>The Wydow Edyth</i> (John Rastell: London, 1525).	⁸⁵

⁸² S: Matheson, *Prose Brut*, pp. 14, 326-8.

⁸³ ‘P: Past Ownership’, p. 163; ‘Brut chronicle etc.’, *Beinecke Library*, <https://brbl-dl.library.yale.edu/vufind/Record/3446529> (12-06-2019); Matheson, *Prose Brut*, pp. 14, 81-2.

⁸⁴ R. Wood, ‘Life and Death: a Study of the Wills and Testaments of Men and Women in London and Bury St. Edmunds in the Late Fourteenth and Early Fifteenth Centuries’, (Doctoral Thesis, University of London, 2012), p. 284.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.* p. 284; G. Watson, *New Cambridge Bibliography of English Literature*, (5 vols, Cambridge, 1974), i, col. 1145.

8.3: Appendix 3, Provenances of Universal Chronicles

Table 3: Provenance of universal chronicles: the *Polychronicon*; Nicholas Trevet, *Chronicles*; and Hartmann Schedel, *Nuremberg Chronicle*. N.B.: App. 3.3 has been redacted. It once contained a duplicated entry for App. 2.3 (Harvard Houghton MS f.938)

	Name	Content	Provenance	
1	Cambridge, Emmanuel College, MS 85	The ‘Lollard Chronicle’ of the Papacy	Rear flyleaf: inscription, ‘William Andrews, Mercer of London, 1539’. A Lollard of this name was arraigned in 1482; he was a brewer and was probably dead by 1539, (see <i>Precedents</i>). A more feasible candidate is a William Andrews who appears in the freedom-by-patrimony claim of his son, Richard, in 1519. This William would thus have been an old man by 1539.	⁸⁶
2	Cambridge, Magdalene College, Pepys MS 2014	Ff. 1-20r Martinus Polonus, <i>Chronicon</i> (English); 36r-63v <i>Robert of Gloucester’s Chronicle</i> .	Mercantile context: it contains a repeated merchant mark alongside the name ‘Johanni Spycer son of Willelmo Spycer’ (see Millar), but their location is unknown.	⁸⁷
3				
4	Glasgow, University Library, Hunterian Library, Bv.1.12	Hartmann Schedel, <i>Nuremberg Chronicle</i> , (Anton Koberger: Nuremberg, 1493)	A weak case can be made for London ownership, based on its similarities to Harley 565. Harley 565 (see appendix 1.24) contains the surname Tailboys and the repeated writing in several hands of a Latin motto ‘Nihil prodest filio probitas parentis’. One	⁸⁸

⁸⁶ P: D. Embree, *Chronicles of Rome*, (Woodbridge, 1999) pp. 15-7; M. James, *The Western Manuscripts in the Library of Emmanuel College: A Descriptive Catalogue*, (Cambridge, 1904), p. 77; W. Hale, *A Series of Precedents and Proceedings in Criminal Causes*, (London, 1847) p. 8, no. 33; ‘Event details’, RLLCO, https://londonroll.org/event/?company=mr&event_id=MCEW1500 (27-06-2019).

⁸⁷ S: B. Millar, ‘A Study of the *Siege of Jerusalem* in its Physical, Literary and Historical Contents’, (Ph.D. thesis, Nottingham University, 2000), p. 233; Embree, *Chronicles of Rome*, p. 12.

⁸⁸ S: ‘Schedel, Hartman: Liber Chronicarum’, *Glasgow Incunabula Project*, <https://www.gla.ac.uk/myglasgow/incunabula/a-zofauthors-a-j/bv.1.12,%20bd9-a.2/> (19-06-2020).

			of the motto writers also wrote a memorandum dated to 1512 on the rear flyleaves. Harley 565 can be verified to have had London civic owners both earlier and later than this date. The rear flyleaves of BV.1.12 contain the name ‘Tailboys’ alongside the motto ‘Nihil prodest filio probitas parentis’. A feasible interpretation of the similarities between these two books is that they once were situated in the same library. Given that Harley 565 circulated amongst London citizens through the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, BV.1.12 may similarly have been a citizen-owned book.	
5	London, Metropolitan Archives, CLC/270/MS03789 (Inc-75).	Hartmann Schedel, <i>Nuremberg Chronicle</i> , (Anton Koberger: Nuremberg, 1493), with manuscript additions.	It contains the arms of Sheriff Robert Fabyan and additions in his hand (see Payne).	⁸⁹
6	Manchester, Chetham’s Library MS 11379 (Mun.A.6.90)	English <i>Polychronicon</i> .	Mercantile ownership (weak evidence): it contains a cruciform mark on 18r. It could be a merchant mark indicating ownership, but it is rather faint and unobtrusive for this purpose; alternatively, it could be a scrivener’s mark and thus was a marker of production rather than ownership.	⁹⁰

⁸⁹ S: Payne, ‘Robert Fabyan and the Nuremberg Chronicle’, pp. 164-9

⁹⁰ P: ‘*Polychronicon*: Manuscript’, *Chetham’s Library*, http://130.88.25.225/vs/FullBB.csp?WebAction=ShowFullBB&EncodedRequest=*FF*21*BE*A3*1D*04*C8*F1*19*96*0Ec*8AxB*40&Profile=Default&OpacLanguage=eng&NumberToRetrieve=50&StartValue=2&WebPageNr=1&SearchTerm1=0000000002.1.49145&SearchT1=&Index1=Keywords&SearchMethod=Find_1&ItemNr=2 (18-06-2019).

7	New York, Pierpont Morgan Library PML 686	Printed <i>Polychronicon</i> , (Caxton: Westminster, 1482).	Mercantile context: it contains a symbol which may be a merchant mark, consisting of a ‘double cross with a split base overlaid with a V’ on 38r and 40r (See <i>Early Book-owners</i>). On 41v it contains ‘Note on the name of the mayor of London’.	⁹¹
8	Oxford, Christ Church College, MS 89	Latin <i>Polychronicon</i>	Fol. 186v: ‘Iohannes Collard de London ad lanam nyhyll mise(r)ius quam fuisse felicem’. <i>MMOL</i> has identified a taxpayer of this name and location in the 1541 subsidy. He may be the same as the John Collard, Draper, who took on six apprentices in the period 1543-1557. Also fol. 185v: ‘Ego sum bonus puer’.	⁹²
9	Oxford, Pembroke College, U.5.d	Hartman Schedel, <i>Nuremberg Chronicle</i> (Anton Koberger: Nuremberg, 1493).	Inscription: it was gifted by London printer, Richard Pynson, to Robert Minucci, a London-resident Italian, in 1498.	⁹³
10	Oxford, Bodleian Library, Inc-H-121 S.Seld.d.7	Printed <i>Polychronicon</i> , (William Caxton: Westminster, 1482).	Inscription: 78v, ‘Wyllm Myddelton’; on Middleton and his books, see above, p. 121.	⁹⁴
11	Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Bodley 623	ff. 29v-71, A unique tabular universal chronicle; 71-7, Genealogy of the English kings.	The chronicle contains London-localised entries, some of them user-added: 68r-v notes the collapse of masonry	⁹⁵

⁹¹ S: ‘New York, The Morgan Library and Museum, US: PML 686’, *Early Book-owners in Britain*, <https://data.cerl.org/mei/02127980> (10-09-2019).

⁹² S: ‘Christ Church MS. 89’, *MMOL*, https://medieval.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/catalog/manuscript_3963 (10-09-2019); ‘*Polychronicon*’, *Digital Bodleian*, <https://digital.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/inquire/Discover/Search/#/?p=c+0,t+,rsrs+0,rsp+10,fa+,so+ox%3A%5Easc,scids+,pid+dfa62826-c93d-41e8-baa1-9337a34ae434,vi+0808ff38-aac1-4fe4-a754-0fa58d3760b2> (10-09-2019). On John Collard, see: ‘Event Detail’, *RLCO*, https://londonroll.org/event/?company=drp&event_id=DREB4186 (12-09-2019); ‘Event Detail’, *RLCO*, https://londonroll.org/event/?company=drp&event_id=DREB4186 (12-09-2019); ‘Event Detail’, *RLCO*, https://londonroll.org/event/?company=drp&event_id=DREW9618 (12-09-2019); ‘Event Detail’, *RLCO*, (12-09-2019); ‘Event Detail’, *RLCO*, https://londonroll.org/event/?company=drp&event_id=DRHT986 (12-09-2019); ‘Event Detail’, *RLCO*, https://londonroll.org/event/?company=drp&event_id=DREW9623 (12-09-2019).

⁹³ S: ‘Schedel, Hartmann: Liber Chronicarum’, *Early Book-owners in Britain*, <https://data.cerl.org/ebob/00002720> (12-09-2019)

⁹⁴ S: ‘Higden, Ranulphus: *Polychronicon*...’, *Early Book-owners in Britain*, <https://data.cerl.org/ebob/00001618> (10-09-2019) ‘H-121’, *Bod-Inc Online*, <http://incunables.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/record/H-121> (21-07-2020).

⁹⁵ P: ‘MS Bodl. 623’, *MMOL*, https://medieval.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/catalog/manuscript_1629 (12-09-2019).

			on London Bridge; the battle of London bridge during the Cade rising. Metropolitan co-location: it contains a London diocese Liturgical calendar; Mercantile co-location: There are notes concerning weights and measures that could have been of use to a merchant on 97v; on 16v-17r there are several tables to aid in multiplication. On owners: Two obits have been added to a liturgical calendar, for John Wark (6v) and John Hide (12v). In the chronicle, there is an entry, 'Alicia nupta [est] Jon Niccole' for 1453 (28v). On fol. 1r there is an ownership note of the early sixteenth century of 'Richard Laynam of Wimborn Minster' (Dorset).	
12	Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Ashmole 796	Latin <i>Polychronicon</i> .	Metropolitan signature: inscribed fol. 304, 'Jane Bonham of Hackney'. Gentry or mercantile contexts are possible.	⁹⁶
13	Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Rawlinson C.86	31v-51v, English <i>Polychronicon</i> (prologue only), unique translation; 178-186, <i>Expedition of Henry V into France</i> ; 187-189, Lydgate, <i>Verses on the Kings of England</i> .	Boffey and Meale have noted several ownership inscriptions: John Sampson, Salter; William Callawey, Goldsmith; William Warner, Tailor; Thomas Warner, Ironmonger, Saddler and MP (d. 1478); John Reve (Warden of the Scriveners) and John Hammond (Scrivener).	⁹⁷

⁹⁶ P: 'MS. Ashmole 769', *MMOL*, https://medieval.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/catalog/manuscript_383 (10-09-2019).

⁹⁷ P: Boffey and Meale, 'Selecting the Text', pp. 156-7; 'MS Raw., C. 86', *MMOL*, https://medieval.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/catalog/manuscript_8359 (10-09-2019).

14	Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Douce 119	Nicholas Trevet, <i>Chronicles</i> , (French).	Heather Pagan has identified the inscription ‘Mr Harman and Katren Harmen’ with Edmund Harman, King’s Barber and citizen of London.	98
15	Princeton, University Library, MS Taylor Medieval 6	English <i>Polychronicon</i> .	Metropolitan inscription: Fol. i[r], ‘To the woorshipful M[aste]r Thomas Heton in London’. There was a Haberdasher in London (d. 1532) of this name.	99
16	Private collection of N. D. Martin: the Shuckburgh collection, no shelfmark.	Printed <i>Polychronicon</i> , (William Caxton: Westminster, 1482).	Inscription: bought by William Purde, Mercer of London.	100
17	Textual Archaeology: the will of Robert Skrayngham (d. 1467).	<i>Polychronicon</i> .	Robert Skrayngham (Stapler, and former warden of London Mercers) left ‘my grete English booke called <i>Pollycronycon</i> ’ to Thomas Thirland (Stapler and merchant of Leicester).	101
18	Textual Archaeology: the will of Thomas Crull (d. 1540).	<i>Polychronicon</i> .	Warden of the grocers and Calais Stapler Thomas Crull left a <i>Polychronicon</i> ‘writt in vellum and lined in bordes’ (and two Arthurian romances) to fellow stapler Nicholas Ticheburne.	102
19	Textual Archaeology: the King’s Bench prosecution of Thomas Marleburgh.	Two unknown small chronicles; a <i>Polychronicon</i> .	Thomas Marleburgh, London stationer, was prosecuted for embezzling the king’s <i>Polychronicon</i> and two ‘smale cronykles’.	103

⁹⁸ S: H. Pagan, ‘Trevet’s *Les Cronicles*: manuscripts, owners and readers’, in J. Rajsic, E. Kooper, D. Hoche (eds.), *The Prose Brut and other late Medieval Chronicles*, (York, 2016), pp. 149-164, 158.

⁹⁹ P: ‘Facsimile’, *Princeton.edu*, http://libweb5.princeton.edu/visual_materials/mss/ME/Taylor_MS_06_Part_1_OPT.pdf (10-06-2019); ‘Princeton T (Waldron)’, *Late Medieval English Scribes*, <https://www.medievalscribes.com/index.php?nav=off&browse=manuscripts&id=287> (27-06-2019); on Thomas Heton, see: ‘PROB 11/24/186’, *Discovery*, <https://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/details/r/D949189> (27-06-2019).

¹⁰⁰ S: ‘Higden, Ranulphus: *Polychronicon*...’, *Early Book-owners in Britain*, <https://data.cerl.org/ebob/00001618> (10-09-2019).

¹⁰¹ ‘Past Ownership’, p. 172.

¹⁰² *Ibid.* p. 168.

¹⁰³ C. Meale, ‘Patrons, Buyers and Owners: Book Production and Social Status’, in J. Griffiths and D. Pearsall (eds.), *Book Production and Publishing in Britain, 1375-1475*, (Oxford, 1989), pp. 201-238, 203.

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Bradford, West Yorkshire Archives

WYA, MS 32D86/42

London chronicle

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TCC, MS O.2.53

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TCC, MS O.9.1.

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TCC, MS R.3.2

John Gower, *Confessio Amantis*

TCC, MS R.3.19

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TCC, MS R.3.21

Literary miscellany, including John Lydgate, *Verses on the kings of England*

TCC, MS R.4.20.

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TCC, MS R.5.43

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Richard Arnold, *Customs of London*, (A. van Berghen: Antwerp, 1503)

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CUL, MS Additional 2775	<i>Brut</i>
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 Two London chronicles
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 Miscellany, incl. London chronicle
Dicts and Sayings of the Philosophers
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 London chronicle
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 John Harding, *Chronicle*
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Brut

Brut

Brut

Brut

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Miscellany, incl. chronicle

Brut

Brut

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<i>Oxford, University College Library</i>	
UCO, MS 85	Works of Alain Chartier and <i>Secretum</i> <i>Secretorum</i>
<i>Oxford, St John's College Library</i>	
St Johns, MS 57	Miscellany, incl. London Chronicle
St Johns, MS 266	Literary miscellany
<i>Oxford, Balliol College Library.</i>	
Balliol, MS 354	Miscellany, incl. London Chronicle

<i>Oxford, Corpus Christi College Library</i> CCCO, MS 67	John Gower, <i>Confessio Amantis</i>
<i>Oxford, Christ Church College</i> CCO, MS 89	<i>Polychronicon</i>
<i>Oxford, Pembroke College Library</i> PCO, U.5.d	Hartmann Schedel, <i>Nuremberg Chronicle</i> , (Antony Koberger: Nuremberg, 1493)
<i>Princeton, University Library</i> Princeton, MS Garret 150 Princeton, MS Taylor 3 Princeton, MS Taylor Medieval 6	<i>Brut</i> <i>Brut</i> <i>Polychronicon</i>
<i>San Marino, Huntington Library</i> Huntington, MS HM 64 Huntington, MS HM 140 Huntington, MS HM 744 Huntington, MS HU 1051 Huntington, MS. El. 26 A.13	Miscellany, incl. chronicle Literary miscellany Literary miscellany Scientific miscellany, incl. chronicle Hoccleve, <i>Regiment of Princes</i>
<i>Washington, Folger Shakespeare Library</i> Folger, SM V.A.198 (1232.3) Folger, 9991	<i>Brut</i> <i>Brut</i> , (William Caxton: Westminster, 1480)
<i>Woburn Abbey</i> Woburn Abbey, MS 181	<i>Brut</i>
<i>Worcester, Cathedral Library</i> Worcester, MS F.172	Devotional miscellany
<i>York, Minster Library</i> Minster MS XVI.Q.9	Robert Fabyan, <i>New Chronicles</i>
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9.5: Online Resources

Archives Hub, <https://archiveshub.jisc.ac.uk/>

Bedfordshire Archives Service Catalogue, <http://bedsarchivescat.bedford.gov.uk/>

Beinecke Library Online Catalogue, <https://brbl-dl.library.yale.edu/>

Bod-Inc Online, <http://incunables.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/>

Catalogue of Illuminated Manuscripts, British Library, <http://www.bl.uk/catalogues/illuminatedmanuscripts/>

Chetham's Library Online Catalogue, <http://185.121.204.150/ChethamLibrary/#/home>

Database of Manuscripts and Archives, Lambeth Palace Library, <http://archives.lambethpalacelibrary.org.uk/>

Digital Bodleian, Bodleian Library, <https://digital.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/>

Digital Index of Middle English Verse, www.dimev.net

Digital Scriptorium, <http://www.digital-scriptorium.org/>

Discovery Catalogue, National Archives, <https://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/>

Durham University Special Collections, <https://www.dur.ac.uk/library/asc/>

Early Book-owners in Britain, <https://data.cerl.org/ebob/>

Early English Books Online, <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebogroup/>

English Short Title Catalogue, <http://estc.bl.uk/>

Explore Archives and Manuscripts, the British Library, <http://searcharchives.bl.uk/>

Glasgow University Incunabula Project, <https://www.gla.ac.uk/myglasgow/incunabula/>

Glasgow University Special Collections, <http://special.lib.gla.ac.uk/manuscripts/>

Harvard University Digital Collections, <https://curiosity.lib.harvard.edu/medieval-renaissance-manuscripts/catalog/>

History of Parliament, <https://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/>

The Imagining History Project, <http://www.qub.ac.uk/imagining-history/resources/short>
(defunct)

The Imagining History Wiki, <http://www.qub.ac.uk/imagining-history/resources/wiki/index.php/> (defunct)

Incunabula Short Title Catalogue, https://data.cerl.org/istc/_search

James Catalogue, Trinity College Cambridge, <http://trin-sites-pub.trin.cam.ac.uk/james/>

Kent Archaeological Society, <https://www.kentarchaeology.org.uk/Research/>

Late Medieval English Scribes, <http://www.medievalscribes.com/>

Map of Early Modern London, <https://mapoflondon.uvic.ca/>

Material Evidence in Incunabula, <https://data.cerl.org/mei/>

Medieval Manuscripts in Oxford Libraries, Bodleian Library,
<https://medieval.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/catalog/>

Middle English Dictionary, <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/>

Owners of Incunabula, <https://data.cerl.org/>

Records of London Livery Companies Online, <https://londonroll.org/>