

Medieval London

Collected Papers of Caroline M. Barron

Edited by
Martha Carlin and Joel T. Rosenthal



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RESEARCH IN MEDIEVAL AND EARLY MODERN CULTURE

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WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY

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MEDIEVAL INSTITUTE PUBLICATIONS

Western Michigan University

Kalamazoo

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Barron, Caroline M., author. | Carlin, Martha, editor. | Rosenthal, Joel Thomas, 1934- editor.

Title: Medieval London : collected papers of Caroline M. Barron / edited by Martha Carlin and Joel T. Rosenthal.

Description: Kalamazoo : Medieval Institute Publications, Western Michigan University, 2017. | Includes bibliographical references and index.

Identifiers: LCCN 2016052644 (print) | LCCN 2016059915 (ebook) | ISBN 9781580442565 (paperbound : alkaline paper) | ISBN 9781580442572

Subjects: LCSH: London (England)--History--To 1500. | City and town life--England--London--History--To 1500. | London (England)--Social life and customs. | London (England)--Social conditions.

Classification: LCC DA680 .B364 2017 (print) | LCC DA680 (ebook) | DDC 942.1/203--dc23

LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2016052644>

ISBN: 9781580442565

eISBN: 9781580442572

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Printed and bound in the United States of America.

Chapter 18

The Political Culture of Medieval London

RECENT HISTORICAL SCHOLARSHIP HAS contributed greatly to an understanding of the political culture of later medieval England; this work has emphasised the vertical loyalties that bound the men in the shires to their lords (sometimes several lords) and which also criss-crossed county boundaries.¹ John Watts has focused attention on the particular, indeed the supreme, importance of the king, and has developed the idea, first propounded by K. B. McFarlane, about the problems posed for late medieval government when the king was 'under-mighty'—that is, when he failed to exercise his will. As a result, the royal will was fractured, or diffused, through nobles or counsellors who, however altruistic, could not speak for the whole body politic as the king could. Watts's important study has thrown much light on the workings of fifteenth-century government and on the ideas that motivated rulers and ruled.² He has examined the prevailing ideas, to be found, for example, in the *Mirrors for Princes*, which influenced men in their attitudes to the ruler. Watts also looked at the political ideas held by the nobility, and he studied the ways in which local government worked.³ But his study concentrated on local government at the level of the shires and analysed the different, and sometimes competing, roles played by the nobility and the gentry. Watts did not consider the local government of the towns, nor the political ideas of fifteenth-century townsmen, and there is no particular reason why he should have done so. His use of certain kinds of evidence has, however, proved suggestive in elucidating the political ideas of medieval English townsmen.

In his analysis of the political ideas of the nobility Watts made use of two particular sources: the books that the nobility and gentry were known to have commissioned or owned and may be assumed to have read, and the language they used in political situations, specifically in parliament.⁴ It is possible to say something about the books owned by Londoners, and we know something also about the books that they compiled or commissioned. These volumes may tell us something about

the priorities and concerns of townsmen and also about those writings, whether ancient or contemporary, which influenced their actions. Some of these books were 'privately owned', others were 'public books', the custumals and collections of law codes and charters, and miscellanies of various kinds put together at the behest of the mayor, or bailiff or aldermen, by a town's paid employee, the secretary or common clerk: men such as John Carpenter in London, or Robert Ricart in Bristol. Such books can tell us quite a bit about the way people thought about civic government, albeit more about the way the governors thought about it than about the ideas of those who were governed.

It is hard to know what townsmen said when they sat in the Commons in parliament and their petitions are couched in the standard formulae.⁵ It is particularly difficult to discern the political ideas of those citizens who were not rulers or, indeed, the ideas of the town-dweller who was not a citizen. Here we have to rely on accounts of what they were said to have said, usually in the written records of hearings in the city courts. Although it is rare for earlier civic records to include accounts of what defendants said, yet such records of reported speech are quite frequently found in the London journals of the court of common council which survive from 1416. But it is only rarely possible to catch the talk of the tavern or brew house, or the discussions in local leet or ward meeting, or arguments among groups of craftsmen gathered in a London house, or the ideas and opinions shouted in narrow streets and borne away on the wind. And, even when it is possible to grasp the stray political opinion, it is never clear whether it is the product of oral discussion, or derived from the ideas of others, written perhaps in books and reflecting older traditions of political thought.

It may be because this evidence is particularly exiguous that the political culture of English medieval towns has rarely attracted historians. There are some notable exceptions. Susan Reynolds wrote an important article about the political thought of English medieval towns which was published in *Urban History Yearbook* in 1982, and, more recently, Steve Rigby has three suggestive pages on 'Urban Political Theory' in the first volume of the new *Cambridge Urban History of Britain* published in 2000.⁶ Although there is not a great deal of written evidence about what townsmen thought about politics or more specifically, about the ways in which their towns should be governed, yet there is a range of material, other than that used so effectively by John Watts, that can be pressed

into service. It is hoped that this study of London may open up questions which can be answered by using evidence from other English towns.

In the first place there is the visual, or material, evidence. What did townsmen choose to have engraved on their communal seals? This may provide an indication of their priorities when thinking about their city. Another possible route into urban political culture may be provided by the study of civic ceremonial: again it has been customary to see civic ceremonial as predominantly religious (which much of it was), but there were also more secular ceremonies and more secular themes. Religious ideas, of course, permeated society at all levels but that does not mean that all medieval men and women interpreted all civic actions in terms of divine intervention. It may also be useful to ask how townsmen chose to decorate their guildhalls and their city gates. What motifs or symbols or figures did they choose? The evidence is not extensive but these images were not always religious or mythical: someone made a choice which can again suggest political concerns and priorities.

I

One of the earliest expressions of 'political thought' perhaps to be found in London occurs in the choice of imagery for the first communal seal (Plate 18.1). Whereas royal seals may well have projected an image simply of the personal authority of the king who is represented, rather than an image of the state, civic seals may be more helpful here for they could not simply show a single person to represent the civic community.⁷ Long before we have any surviving civic custumal or other corporate written documentation, London appears to have had a common seal which was kept safely together with copies of the city's important charters.⁸ Heslop has pointed out that the design of this seal is influenced both by the seal of the bishop of London and also by Henry III's first great seal, and yet the choice of imagery and wording must have depended upon the Londoners themselves.⁹ The obverse shows St. Paul, rising up from within the walled city and bearing a sword and a banner with the arms of England. The inscription reads *Sigillum baronum Londoniarum* (as early as the twelfth century the Londoners had claimed to be barons). The original reverse (destroyed at the Reformation) showed St. Thomas Becket dressed as an archbishop seated on an arch raised over the city. On either side of him there were kneeling figures, lay on one side and clerical on the other. The inscription read *Me que te peperit ne cesses Thoma, tueri* (Cease not, Thomas, to



Plate 18.1. The thirteenth-century Common Seal of London, reproduced from Llewellyn Jewitt and W.H. St. John Hope, *The Corporation Plate and Insignia of Office of the Cities and Towns of England and Wales* (1895), 119.

protect me who brought you forth). So, here, the city chose to represent itself through its patron saints: in place of the monarch wielding a sword, there was St. Paul holding aloft both a sword and the banner of England and on the reverse the city's second saintly patron. But the city is not solely represented by its saints: twice the engraver displayed the physical reality of the walled city with towers, gates and churches. In addition the seal depicts the citizens of London, both lay and ecclesiastical, and although the citizens are shown as suppliants they are not, as was usual in such representations, separated from the saint by an arch and thus clearly placed below him; rather, the Londoners are placed alongside Becket.¹⁰ It may be worth remarking that the inhabitants of England are not represented anywhere on the royal great seal which appears to be entirely concerned to promote the royal image. So, from the early thirteenth century, the Londoners singled out the patron saints, the citizens and the walled city as the threefold representation of the commonalty. The absence of a single 'ruling' figure is notable.

About fifty years later a second, separate, seal was also engraved for the use of the mayor of London; this showed St. Paul and St. Thomas beneath elaborate gabled arches, with the three leopards of England crawling around their two tabernacles.¹¹ The inscription reads simply '*Sigillum Maioratus London*'. It is interesting that this inscription makes it

clear that this is the seal not of the mayor (a person) but of the mayoralty (an institution). In this case the engraver has chosen to emphasise the two patron saints of the city and the royal leopards. The topography and the inhabitants of the city are omitted. But in April 1381 the mayor, William Walworth, had a new mayoral seal made because the old one was '*nimis parvum, rude et antiquum*' and not suitable for the honour of the city. In fact it was not crudely engraved, nor particularly old, so there was probably some other reason why it was thought desirable to have a new seal.¹² This new seal was, in fact, rather larger and included the same visual elements as the old one but placed in a more elaborate setting. The design included two serjeants-at-arms in two characteristic Gothic tabernacles and above them two angels and the Blessed Virgin in the loftiest tabernacle. The new 1381 seal however incorporated an innovation: it showed Saints Thomas and Paul seated above the city arms supported by lions. This appears to be the first time that the city of London adopted its own armorial shield (which, as now, displayed a cross charged with the sword of St. Paul in its first quarter) and here the arms are clearly used to represent, or stand for, the city.¹³ Although the arms on the seal are not, of course, coloured, it is likely that the familiar blazon of red for the cross and the sword, and silver (or white) for the ground was adopted at this time. At exactly this time, the city specified that men were to come to the 'Midsummer Watch' dressed in red and white and that the aldermen who accompanied the mayor on his riding to Westminster were also to wear scarlet and white.¹⁴ There are more secular elements in the new seal than there had been in the earlier seal, but they have not taken over completely by any means. Most unusually a full account of the decrepit old seal and the fine new one was written into the city's Letter Book, perhaps to legitimise Mayor Walworth's rather high-handed action in commissioning a new seal.¹⁵

The fact that seals were important as expressions of a common identity (which is an aspect of political thought) can be seen not only in the refashioning, and recording, of the imagery on the mayoralty seal, but also in the decision taken by the mayor, the recorder, eleven (out of twenty-four) aldermen and 'an immense commonalty' in August 1376 that a '*signum vocatum Molet*' (a star) should be added to the city's common seal, in the middle of the city river gate beneath the feet of the image of St. Paul.¹⁶ The significance of this addition is not explained, but it seems likely that it was added to represent a 'new order', following the Good Parliament of 1376 and far-reaching changes in the way in which the city was governed.¹⁷ The men of London had met several times in

large and noisy assemblies to discuss and to reform the ways in which the city was governed (in effect to draft a new constitution for the city), and the star added to the common seal represented the new order that they had hammered out. The addition to the common seal in 1376 and the replacement of the mayoralty seal in 1381, together with the careful recording of these changes, is indicative of the important communal face that these seals presented to the world at large. Their designs were carefully chosen and they may, therefore, be seriously read as statements about the political priorities of the urban community. The city relied upon the saintly protection of Paul and Thomas (and ultimately that of the Blessed Virgin also), and it aimed to uphold the authority of the crown. The topography of the city was important, as were its citizens, and, in the course of the fourteenth century, they came to adopt a civic coat of arms to express their corporate identity. But no individual Londoner represented the city (as individual kings may have represented the realm on their seals): the political ideal of the Londoners as expressed on their civic seals was that it was the whole, and not the individual, which made up the body politic.

II

The form of the various ceremonies in which the elected mayor, the aldermen and the citizens played a role may also reveal something of their political priorities and preoccupations. It has been customary to see civic rituals as primarily the adaptation of religious ceremonial for political purposes: the Corpus Christi procession, it is argued, was pressed into service by civic rulers to symbolise the unified body of citizens and to harness to the cause of social order the passion and panoply of religious ceremonial.¹⁸ Of course the religious procession and the civic procession had much in common but it is striking how, in London at least, the citizens were capable of devising ceremonies which expressed urban, secular values and not religious ones. The annual riding of the mayor of London to take his oath before the barons of the exchequer at Westminster on 29 October developed, in the course of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, into an occasion of considerable civic pageantry, enlivened by minstrels and 'disguising and pageants'. But in 1481 these were deemed to have got out of hand and were banned as not suitable to the solemnity of the occasion.¹⁹ This 'riding' was, at least for the city's rulers, the most important day in the civic calendar and they did not intend that carnivalesque accretions

should be allowed to detract from the solemnity. On this day the mayor, supported by all the aldermen and by the men of the city companies dressed in their liveries, rode to Westminster to assert the city's right to choose its own mayor while, at the same time, acknowledging that the mayor had a responsibility also to the king. There was no ecclesiastical dimension to this 'riding' (the city clergy did not join in the procession) and it was not a 'show'. On this day the city's rulers and the substantial citizens took themselves and their tasks very seriously.

Likewise, the other civic ceremony, the 'Midsummer Watch', although it took place on the feasts of St. John and Saints Peter and Paul (June 24 and June 29), was not a religious ceremony. Again there is no record that the clergy took part in this procession either. The 'Midsummer Watch', before it was abolished in the 1540s, had developed into a massive 'Notting Hill Festival' type of occasion when old soldiers, musicians, archers, torch bearers, morris dancers and pageants (on religious, mythical, classical and historical themes) paraded through the streets with the mayor and sheriffs at the climax of the procession. John Stow remembered nostalgically the marching processions of his youth when houses were decorated with greenery and householders entertained each other in a spirit of the modern 'neighbourhood party.'²⁰ In this more populist event, the mayor rode as the city's king (and upon him depended the well-being of the city every bit as much as the well-being of the realm as a whole depended upon the effective exercise of the royal will), and he was preceded by his sword-bearer, wearing a cap of maintenance and carrying aloft the city's sword, the symbol of the mayor's authority, flanked by horsemen and footmen.²¹ These were significant visible symbols which expressed the common consensus about the importance and the power which the mayor exercised. These symbols do not tell us about the source of that authority (whether descending or ascending), but they do express the tacit acceptance that the mayor had such authority and was expected to exercise it. There is no symbolism, however, to suggest that the temporal power of the mayor (or of the sheriffs who processed with him) came from God: it is not a power sanctioned by religious authority although it does not challenge that authority.

Whereas the mayor's 'Riding' and the 'Midsummer Watch' contained messages for the inhabitants of London, the processions devised for monarchs spoke to a wider world. There was a marked change in the form of these in the course of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Records of these royal welcomes or celebrations are thin at the beginning

of the period and such accounts as we have tell us largely of tapestries and flowing wine and elaborate pageants such as the shoal of large silver-gilt fishes that swam down Cheapside to celebrate Edward I's victory over the Scots in 1298.²² The first civic royal ceremony of which we have a detailed account (indeed two) is the pageantry devised for the reconciliation between Richard II and the city of London in 1392. Here there is no doubt, as Kipling has amply demonstrated, that the themes chosen were religious and derived from the liturgy for Advent.²³ These pageants were most likely devised under the influence of the court, indeed of Richard himself: the Londoners are the intercessors, and the king is given a quasi-divine role, with absolute power to judge, and to forgive, the citizens.²⁴ There is no doubt at all that there is a political message here, and that the message was disseminated beyond the circle of those who were present in August 1392, probably by a newsletter and by the commissioning of a long Latin poem which described the ceremonies and the pageants in great detail. The tone of the political message can be seen in the speech of the warden (for London had been deprived of its right to choose its own mayor) as he greeted the king at London Bridge:

Hail king, whose power is no less to be loved and worshipped than it is to be feared. Hail! Your humble citizens, prostrated at your feet, surrender to you at once themselves and all that they have. With these keys and this sword, the city freely now yields and comes ready to submit to your will. She earnestly begs, amid her tears, that the merciful king will deign to enter his chamber. Let not the most beautiful walls of the realm be torn down and destroyed...²⁵

It is difficult to know what was passing through the minds of the London aldermen who accompanied the warden as he delivered this speech, but the description of London as the royal chamber, implying both a special relationship between the king and the city and also a financial responsibility, was invoked in the discourse between the crown and London during this period to call to mind the intimacy of that relationship, whether in good times or in bad. The choice of this metaphor was deliberate, as Christian Liddy has shown, and the word was charged with political meaning.²⁶ It seems clear that the pageants, the speeches and the poem were designed to present a particular, 'royalist' view of the relations between the sovereign and the city. The message was that it was the duty of the Londoners to show humility and loyalty to their magnificent and magnanimous sovereign.

The welcome offered to Henry V by the city after Agincourt took the form of a protracted religious service with the singing of psalms and anthems at each of the pageant stages along the route.²⁷ It was surprisingly untriumphalist and very much in the spirit of '*Non nobis Domine*'. Whether this very religious form of victory procession was the choice of the Londoners or of the king himself is not clear. But the message was that it was God who had given to Henry and the English success in a just cause. It is, however, in the welcome for Henry VI after his coronation in Paris in 1432 that we can see most clearly the way in which the civic royal pageant was developing its own political timbre. It seems most probable that this welcoming procession (for which the city had ample time to prepare, unlike the welcome after Agincourt) was devised by the city's common clerk, John Carpenter, who wrote a Latin account of the procession which has been copied into the city's Letter Book, and it seems clear that this account was sent to John Lydgate who then wrote up the event in English verse.²⁸ The pageants are patently didactic: they instruct the young king in how he is to rule: the Virtues offer him gifts of wisdom and fortitude and these classical virtues are linked to Christian ones. At St. Peter Cornhill church (one of the intellectual centres of fifteenth-century London),²⁹ Dame Sapientia commends to the king the seven liberal arts, and the written text records *Et nunc reges, intelligite: erudimini, qui iudicatis terram* (Be wise now, therefore, kings: be instructed ye judges of the earth).³⁰ Although this injunction comes from the Book of Psalms (chapter 2, verse 10), a very similar topos taken from the apocryphal Book of Wisdom—*Diligite iustitiam qui iudicatis terram*—is to be found 'throughout the pre-humanist literature on civic government'.³¹ In fact it is inscribed on scrolls in the Maestà paintings of the early fourteenth century in the civic council chambers of both Siena and San Gimignano.³² At the next pageant, placed on the conduit in Cheapside, a young man dressed as a king had Dame Misericordia on his right and Dame Clemencia on his left, to teach him. Near the king stood two old men as judges, and eight men skilled in law *iudicium et justiciam corporis politici representantes*.³³ In fact the political instruction embedded in Carpenter's text is somewhat obscured by the poetry of Lydgate and it is instructive to read Carpenter's own account of his pageants. Of course there were also religious pageants such as the Garden of Eden with wells—a pun on the name of the mayor, John Wells—and the Trinity pageant at the west end of Cheap. Moreover the celebrations ended with a service in St. Paul's cathedral. The political ideas expressed in such pageants may not be startlingly original, but they are the ideas about the duties and responsibility of kings to uphold

the law and administer justice which must have been current in urban contexts.³⁴ The change of emphasis between the 'liturgical' receptions of 1392 and 1415 and the much more humanist, or secular, reception for Henry VI in 1432 may be, in part, a consequence of the youth of the king (where, even at this early age the absence of a strong royal will left the Londoners free to devise their own reception themes), but it may also owe something to the learning and enterprise of the city's common clerk, John Carpenter. Although it might be argued that ceremonial receptions are but visual images, subject to fleeting and varying interpretations, it is clear that increasing care was taken both to write the message in bold letters on the pageants themselves (Lydgate records that the 'scriptures' could be read 'withoute a spectacle'),³⁵ and also to make a written record of the event (whether in Latin prose or English verse). This suggests that the political messages were perceived to be important.

III

Carpenter's influence may also, perhaps, be detected in the decorative schemes carried out in the city during his tenure of office (1417–38). Such schemes chosen for civic buildings provided a permanent record of civic concerns and priorities. Robert Tittler has drawn attention to the significance of the rash of new, or refurbished, town halls in the post-Reformation period.³⁶ Very few medieval halls remain and even fewer are left with any of their medieval furnishings or imagery. Clearly many of these buildings were decorated with religious imagery since in many towns (particularly smaller ones) the religious guild was responsible also for several aspects of secular government (for example in Boston or Westminster).³⁷ In London, however, the city was not governed by a religious guild but by a completely secular group of men, the court of aldermen, supported, from the late thirteenth century, by a large court of common council. The London Guildhall, therefore, from its beginnings in the late twelfth century, was a secular building (with an adjacent chapel).³⁸ When the great new Guildhall was finally completed in about 1430, the citizens chose for the highly decorated façade that faced onto Guildhall yard, a hierarchical series of carved statues in canopied niches (Plate 18.2). In the late eighteenth century this medieval façade was demolished and the statues dispersed. Although four of the statues have been recovered, we depend for our understanding of their significance upon a sixteenth-century poem, together with drawings made by John Carter just before



Plate 18.2. Drawing of Guildhall Porch by Jacob Schnebbelie (1760–1792), executed after the fire in the Controller's Office, 1785, reproduced from Caroline M. Barron, *The Medieval Guildhall of London* (1974), Plate 7.

the façade was dismantled.³⁹ At the apex stood Christ in majesty, below him figures representing Law and Learning and, at the lowest level, four statues representing the four cardinal virtues of Discipline (Prudence), Justice, Fortitude and Temperance each trampling on a conquered vice (Plate 18.3).⁴⁰ The significance of these four virtues was widely understood in fifteenth-century England and John Watts has drawn attention to their important role in developing contemporary ideas about the duties imposed upon, and qualities required of, kings.⁴¹ They were an extremely popular motif not only in 'mirrors for princes' literature, but also in painting and sculpture.⁴² There may not, therefore, be any particular significance in the choice of these reasonably common representational figures for the London Guildhall but someone had to choose which figures should decorate the prominent new face of the magnificent new centre for civic government. It seems not unlikely that the industrious and learned John Carpenter, the city's common clerk since 1417 and so in post at exactly the time when the design of the porch would have been executed, played a leading role in suggesting the theme. Carpenter's involvement in the new Guildhall complex is further suggested by his active role as the leading executor of the wealthy mercer Richard Whittington (d. 1423) whose wealth Carpenter deployed to fund the new Guildhall library and to pay for paving the great hall and glazing the windows of the mayor's court.⁴³

What we know of Carpenter's personal library lends support to the suggestion that he may have helped to choose the themes for the Guildhall porch. When he drew up his will in 1442 Carpenter owned a remarkably extensive collection of books which included two copies of the *Secreta Secretorum*, a French book entitled *De Corpore Pollecie* and a treatise on the Four Cardinal Virtues, attributed to Seneca.⁴⁴ The fact that Carpenter distributed these books (and others) among the men who had worked for him in the common clerk's office suggests that such books were read and discussed among the civil servants of fifteenth-century London. So the design of the Guildhall porch may well have been inspired by ideas derived from a reading of classical texts and suggests a clear understanding of the source of political authority. It is a descending theory of power which derives from God (in the person of Jesus Christ) who gives to men Learning and Law so that they may know how to govern rightly. And in order that men may govern themselves they have to call to their aid the four cardinal virtues of Prudence, Justice, Temperance and Fortitude. A similar theme is to be found, worked out in much greater detail and complexity, in Ambrogio Lorenzetti's famous representation of good government to

be found in the Palazzo Publico in Siena.⁴⁵ There is nothing particularly unusual about the source and implementation of authority but it may be worth noting the absence of the Virgin Mary and the saints.⁴⁶

If the London Guildhall carried a message about the priorities of civic or political culture, then what about the city's gates? Again the decorative schemes, such as they were, of London's medieval gates have been destroyed with the gates themselves in the eighteenth century.⁴⁷ In 1261 Henry III ordered his master mason, Robert of Beverley, to give to the man in charge of the work on Ludgate, thirteen pieces of stone '*ad sculptendum ex eis quasdam ymagines*'.⁴⁸ According to Stow the Londoners at this time rebuilt Ludgate 'with images of Lud and other kings'.⁴⁹ The choice of kings, whether real or mythical, seems to have been considered appropriate for civic gates. It was surely for a political reason that Richard II demanded that, as part of the 'reconciliation package' in 1392, the citizens of London should place statues of himself and Anne, his queen, above the stone gate on London Bridge. The canopies above the statues were to display the arms of the king and queen together with those of Edward the Confessor, and all the carved work was to be painted. It cost the city more than £30 to provide this royalist statement.⁵⁰ When Bishopsgate was rebuilt at the expense of the Hanse merchants in 1479 it was decorated with three statues on its north side: in the centre Bishop William, the Norman bishop who was seen to have been instrumental in securing King William's confirmation of the liberties of London, and, on either side of him, King Alfred and the ealdorman Aethelraed of Mercia, between them responsible for the restoration of London after the Viking attacks of the ninth century. On the inner face stood the saintly Anglo-Saxon bishop of London, Erkenwald.⁵¹ The presence of William and Erkenwald is to be explained by the fact that the bishops of London accepted some financial responsibility for the maintenance of the gate that bore their title, but the choice of the two Wessex heroes is a little harder to explain. The absence of saints (whether St. Paul or St. Thomas) is notable. Twelve years later Cripplegate was also rebuilt at the cost of the executors of the wealthy goldsmith, Edmund Shaa, who stipulated that the rebuilt gate was to bear his arms and those of his company.⁵² In the same way, when Ludgate was again rebuilt in the 1460s at the expense of Stephen Forster it was decorated with his arms.⁵³ So, insofar as the city gates carried political messages they were about secular power and secular largesse.

IV

It has been suggested here that the city's common clerk, John Carpenter, with his extensive library of legal and political texts may have played a prominent role in fashioning the political culture of London in the first half of the fifteenth century. Doubtless he was exceptionally well read for a layman at that time. Yet there were other Londoners also with private collections of books, and others had access to books in a growing number of small 'public' libraries.⁵⁴ Carpenter, moreover, had a learned predecessor in the civic secretariat, Andrew Horn, a fishmonger, and the city chamberlain in the years 1320–28 who was probably born in London in the last quarter of the thirteenth century.⁵⁵ One of his brothers was, like Andrew himself, a fishmonger and another was a cleric. By 1307 he was a warden of the fishmongers and it may have been this experience that drew him into London government.⁵⁶ He never became an alderman but it seems likely that he was engaged in some way with the administration of the city for several years before he was formally elected as the city's chamberlain in 1320, and he was closely associated with another fishmonger, Hamo de Chigwell, who occupied the mayoralty almost continuously from 1319 to 1328. Horn appears to have been fluent in Latin, French and English and he compiled and wrote a number of books which he left to the chamber of the Guildhall, some of which are still there. He was interested in ancient law and custom, and rediscovered for his contemporaries the *Leges Anglorum*, a text compiled in London in the early thirteenth century and incorporating Old English laws. For Horn customary law was still important (whether the law of the land or of London) in the face of creeping legal bureaucracy.⁵⁷ Horn owned the only known copy of *The Mirror of Justices*, an appeal to fundamental law and to the sound legal practice of King Alfred.⁵⁸ It was from a knowledge of history and of past law and custom, that Horn derived his views on how the city (and the realm) should be governed. These concerns and beliefs came together in another of Horn's compilations, his 'Great Book', known in the fifteenth century as the *Liber Legum Regum Antiquorum*.⁵⁹ Among its extensive contents were two documents which throw particular light on Horn's concern for good government.

In the first place he includes two sets of statutes relating to the London fraternity of the Puy which appears to have been based at Guildhall chapel and was closely associated with the powerful Henry le Waleys (mayor in 1273–4, 1281–4 and 1298–9). Horn may even have

been a member of the fraternity. It has been argued that 'the statutes upheld a vision of a harmonious, loyal, loving city, preaching the "good love" and neighbourliness essential to a peaceful urban and mercantile co existence'.⁶⁰ It may be that Horn became disillusioned with the potential of song and good fellowship to achieve civic harmony amid the economic rivalries and political storms of the early fourteenth century. In his 'Great Book' Horn also included selections from a work on civic government, the *Li Livres dou Trésor*, a treatise on the right government of a city state, written by the Florentine, Brunetto Latini. The *Trésor* was an extremely popular work (there are ninety known manuscripts in European libraries),⁶¹ which Latini wrote in the years 1260–6 while he was in France in exile from Florence, either at Bar-sur-Aube in eastern Champagne or in Arras further north.⁶² The work, in three books, with a total of 436 chapters, is a compendium of civic wisdom aimed at achieving the common good, the absence of strife, and the supremacy of the republican form of government, and providing an analysis of the qualities required of elected rulers. Copies of Latini's work seem to have been known in England in the thirteenth century although it is not clear how Horn acquired his copy.⁶³ If Horn had access to the whole of Latini's work, then he used it very sparingly, selecting only eight of the 436 chapters.⁶⁴ Some of these chapters Horn adopts wholesale (for example, chapter 74, 'On the Pillars of the State'; chapter 96, 'On the Causes of Civic Discord'; chapter 97, 'On the Conduct of Rulers'; and chapter 104, 'On How the Retiring Ruler should Leave Office'). Other chapters he adapted (for example, chapter 102, 'On How a New Ruler should be Chosen'). Not only has Horn selected and adapted Latini's work, he has also changed the order of his chosen chapters.⁶⁵ Thus Horn is by no means a blind copyist: he has clearly read most (if not all) of Latini's *Trésor*, reflected on it and adapted it to the situation in London. For example Horn's advice on how the ruler should relinquish office is quite different from Latini's and, in a revealing addition, he inserts a sentence advising the departing mayor 'to pray to the Chamberlain, and others of the most worthy, that all suits and all pleas that have been moved before him during all his time be by them delivered according to righteous judgement'.⁶⁶ Here Horn has clearly designated the city chamberlain as the senior and most responsible member among the 'most worthy' to see to the completion of cases that had been heard before the departing mayor. Jeremy Catto has analysed the various ways in which Horn 'adapted his material to relate it to the government of London and to contemporary national politics, and concluded that 'where [Horn] altered or omitted

passages, it was to establish a detailed, practical procedure. The precepts which he took over from Brunetto, therefore, must have been intended to be taken seriously as a guide to practice'.⁶⁷ The 'Great Book' in which Horn wrote out his version of Latini was left to the chamber of the Guildhall, presumably for the use of his successors.⁶⁸ Catto however, ends his article questioning 'whether Horn's successors made anything of it'.⁶⁹

Contemporary with Andrew Horn, another Londoner was putting together a collection of useful material (Latin and French) similar in many ways to Horn's compilations; it included royal letters to London, material relating to the Jews, regulations about civic assizes and historical material including a chronicle which ended in 1315.⁷⁰ There is nothing in this collection comparable to Horn's adaptation of the Trésor, but it is clearly the work of an educated Londoner. His name eludes us. Not so the compilation put together by Thomas Carleton, a London embroiderer in the 1380s. His volume includes items concerned with the government of England and a selection of material, probably taken from city customals, relating to the government of London itself. Carleton includes, as Andrew Horn did in his 'Great Book', a shortened version of William FitzStephen's famous description of London but, significantly, Carleton adds some details (omitted by FitzStephen) about the way in which the city was governed.⁷¹ Carleton, a supporter of John Northampton in the political struggles of the 1380s in London, found it useful, or interesting, to have a compilation—in Latin—about the government of the city. There is a similar compilation, using Latin, French and English, which belonged in the 1390s to a London fishmonger, who seems to have had access to some of the city's memoranda books kept at the Guildhall.⁷² What is particularly striking about this volume is that it contains an English translation of the Latin *inspeximus* charter granted to the Londoners by Richard II in November 1383. Since no English translation of this charter survives among the city's records it may be that Nicholas Brembre, the mayor, had English copies made for distribution when the charter was proclaimed in December of that year.⁷³ If we move forward a hundred years we may consider the book put together by John Vale for his master Sir Thomas Cook: this is a remarkable collection of political documents, broadsheets, royal writs and letter formularies. But the volume also contains Sir John Fortescue's tract on the *Governance of England* and Lydgate's prose work, his *Serpent of Division*.⁷⁴ These two texts may surely be classified as 'works of political theory' and demonstrate, if that were necessary, that men in London were interested in the government of the realm, as well as that of

the city. Indeed the career of Sir Thomas Cook bears telling witness to the interplay of national and civic politics.⁷⁵ A generation later, Sir Thomas More, a Londoner by birth and upbringing and the city's under-sheriff, may have had the civic government (and problems) in mind when he wrote his *Utopia* in 1516.⁷⁶

The volumes that have been considered here are examples of manuscripts which were, so far as we can tell, privately owned: they were compiled for the use and interest of particular individuals who, in all these cases, can be demonstrated to have been Londoners. Andrew Horn put together 'personal' compilations which he made public, or communal, by later bequeathing them to the chamber of the Guildhall for the use of his successors in the urban civil service.⁷⁷ It is clear that Horn compiled these volumes in his own time and that they belonged to him to dispose of as he wished. There were other public volumes which Horn worked on in his official capacity when he was the city's chamberlain and which were always in the possession of the city.⁷⁸ As we have seen, the compiling by Londoners of private memoranda books, or custumals, or commonplace books containing useful information about the history and government of their city, continued throughout the later medieval period. After the burst of activity associated with Andrew Horn, there seem to have been few 'civic' compilations until the early fifteenth century when John Carpenter, in his capacity as the city's common clerk, in 1419 compiled the *Liber Albus* with the encouragement of the then mayor, Richard Whittington.⁷⁹ This was not a private project on Carpenter's part (unlike Horn's compilations a century earlier), but a public task undertaken for public use. Carpenter's purpose in compiling the *Liber Albus* was to preserve the knowledge of how things were done in the city because, in the past, in the absence of written information there had arisen '*controversia*' and '*perplexitas*'. He intended also to provide a 'finding aid' to the existing city records since the task of copying out all those items which were important would have been overwhelming, and he would have had to neglect the other business of the city to accomplish it.⁸⁰ In fact Carpenter was not simply the '*compilator*' that he ingenuously calls himself. He admits that he is also writing down matters where there is no written record and 'those observances which, though not written, have been usually followed and approved in the said city'. He claimed that the writing down of these laudable customs has been approved *tam superioribus quam subditis dictae civitatis* and that he has done this so that *tam superiores quam subditi dictae civitatis* shall know in the future what to do.⁸¹ In fact, behind this verbiage Carpenter is engaged in

writing an account of how he believes the city should be governed: how mayors, aldermen and sheriffs should be elected, and their oaths (which in medieval times constituted a kind of job description), and their duties. He described how wardmotes should be held (really the only direct evidence for this), and similar material, almost all of it in the first part of the first of the four books that make up the *Liber Albus*.⁸² The remaining books are, for the most part, compilations of material extracted from other city records, but the first book is not: it is a clear piece of ‘constitution drafting’, not created entirely out of Carpenter’s head, but selective and the product of a clear and largely authoritarian viewpoint.⁸³ In this sense Carpenter is much closer to Fortescue than he is to Andrew Horn. It is worth noting, also, that John Carpenter wrote his *Repertorium* in Latin, which suggests that the transparency of government was not intended to include many of the ‘*subditi*’: this was a book to be used by the rulers of London, not a book to be used by the ruled in order to check up on their rulers.

Although he does not say so, Carpenter may have been reacting to an earlier attempt at ‘constitution making’ in London, namely the compilation of the ‘Jubilee Book’, a new civic customal so named because it was compiled in the jubilee year of Edward III in 1377.⁸⁴ This volume, associated with the reforms of the London ‘radicals’ in the wake of the Good Parliament (reforms which, it was argued earlier, ushered in a new order which found expression in the addition of the mullet to the city’s common seal), was finally compiled, after much committee work, a year later. It was resented and disliked by certain elements in the city and when the ‘conservatives’ led by the grocer Nicholas Brembre regained control of the city government the Jubilee Book was first revised and then, in March 1387, publicly burnt: an extremely unusual occurrence, especially before the advent of popular heresy.⁸⁵

Although the Jubilee Book was burnt, a version of it seems to have been copied into a private manuscript compendium of civic law, custom and practice of the kind already described. This particular manuscript appears to have come from the circle of Sir Thomas Cook and his secretary-factotum John Vale.⁸⁶ The preamble states that it is ‘the new book of the ancient customs and usages in the city of London compiled and affirmed by the mayor, aldermen and commons of the same city the year of King Richard the second the first year [1377–8]’.⁸⁷ The compiler goes on to write that

the perfection of all policy and the ground of good government dwell and abide upon two things which may not be dissevered or departed but always together to be held and kept. First that the sage and righteous governors of the common people in their governance, in their 'reddure' [harshness] and favour after this so the time requireth so be it demanded and modified. Secondly, that the common people be tractable and of one accord and be deserving [and] love they their governors and sovereigns, and that they of them have dread, and they obey. The which two things aforesaid well and steadfastly kept on that one part and on the other, every city shall be set [...] and tranquillity.⁸⁸

The first page of the document has been deliberately torn so that the text is incomplete, yet it is clear that the preamble was followed by a list of the aldermen who were present together with the names of the crafts that assented to the new regulations. The names of only thirty or so crafts have survived but the list includes such lowly trades as the pouchmakers, tallowchandlers, fusters, pinners and paternosterers,

which persons aforesaid, considering many good articles touching the principal governance of the said city and the good customs and ancient usages of the same to be in diverse great books of the same city comprised and that great labour and diligence was to search and seek in times covenable, and of which the commons of the said city may not be at a very certainty without right great costages to officers ordained, and of one accord they have assented that all the articles ensuing to the honour of God [...] profit, rest and tranquillity of the said city [...] realm shall be compiled in the form ...⁸⁹

Clearly the purposes of this earlier compilation were rather different from those of Carpenter forty years later. The former compilation appealed also to ancient custom, but the purpose was to make the government of the city more accessible, so that it would be easier for the commons (the *subditi*) to know how the city was governed. Significantly, whereas Carpenter began his book with an account of the history, election and duties of the mayor, followed by an account of the aldermen, then the wardmotes and the common council and finally the sheriffs and the other members of the civic bureaucracy, the Jubilee Book by contrast, begins with an account of the common council, then moves on to the mayor and to the offices of the chamberlain, common serjeant and common clerk who are all to be chosen by the common council, as laid down in

the charter of 1319.⁹⁰ But the most striking difference between the two volumes is that the earlier volume, the Jubilee Book, is written in English whereas Carpenter wrote in Latin. Perhaps the earlier volume was burnt for exactly that reason—as heretical books were to be burnt later—namely to try to prevent the discussion and questioning that rises from easy access to controversial texts. Between the Jubilee Book of 1377 and Carpenter’s *Liber Albus* in 1419 there had occurred the disquieting events of the Revolt of 1381 which had demonstrated not only that ‘peasants’ were capable of co-ordinating a mass uprising using the clerkly tools of writing and reading, but also that the rebels believed that servitude could be eradicated by burning the written texts which recorded it. During the damaging and, ultimately, expensive civic disputes of the 1380s rivals for office and power posted up inflammatory bills in the city and presented petitions in English to parliament. Indeed the translation into English of Richard II’s charter early in the mayoralty of Nicholas Brembre in November 1383 may be seen as part of this new-style propaganda war.⁹¹ At the same time the rise of popular heresy based on translations of parts of the Bible was challenging the authority of the church. In these circumstances it is possible to see why the common council, led by the fishmonger-mayor Nicholas Exton in March 1387, decided that the Jubilee Book should be burnt.⁹² It is not, perhaps, surprising that Carpenter (possibly encouraged by the mayor Richard Whittington) later took refuge in the security of Latin so that the ‘*superiores*’ might be able to govern the city in tranquillity without too much informed intervention from those they governed.

But Latin did not protect the rulers of London in the fifteenth century from criticism and, indeed, attempts at armed resistance. The cause of the artisan tailors, led by the wealthy tailor-alderman Ralph Holland, has been described in detail elsewhere.⁹³ At base it was one of the many craft disputes that fractured London government in the medieval period. But it is different because we know more about it and, in particular, in the city journals of the fifteenth century there are recorded not only the deeds of those who fell foul of the city’s governors, but also what they said or, in some cases, what they were said to have said. The tailors were supported in their protests against the decisions of the court of aldermen (composed of merchants) by the artisan skinnners and other artisans who identified common interests in opposition to the policies of the merchant aldermen. In the first place they protested at the restriction of the mayor’s election to those who were summoned individually by writ: in the past, they argued, all the freemen were entitled to take part in the election of the mayor. And

they were right, although from the early fourteenth century the mayor and aldermen had, on occasion, sought royal writs authorising the restriction of those present at the mayoral election to those who were summoned. But the protesters in the early 1440s claimed that in accordance with the city's 'Great Charter' of 1319 those who had not been present at the election of the mayor were not bound to obey him: he was not the mayor of those who had not elected him. In fact the 'Great Charter' of 1319 did not specify that all citizens could attend the election of the mayor: indeed no charter did. But the 1319 charter did lay down that the mayor was to be elected annually.⁹⁴ The protesters also argued that a writ from the king could not override the authority of a charter which had been confirmed in parliament. In fact the new charter of 1327, which Andrew Horn had helped to obtain from the new king, and which he explained to a mass meeting of the citizens, had, indeed, been confirmed *per regem et totum consilium parlamenti*.⁹⁵

The other issue which provoked the '*subditi*' of London in the 1440s was the new charter which the mayor and aldermen sought from the crown in 1443. In accordance with this charter the mayor, and those aldermen who had already served as mayor, were to become not simply guardians of the peace, but justices of the peace with power to hear and determine cases. Such charters were being granted to towns (in lieu of royal commissions) from the 1390s and London was, in fact, one of the last towns to seek such a charter; but it is easy to see why such a new charter, following on from the artisan protests about the bias and prejudice of the court of the mayor and aldermen, provoked further protest.⁹⁶ Ralph Holland declared that the new charter was a commission not of peace, but of war. A dyer named William Haylyn was sent to prison for protesting at the city's spending 2,000 marks on purchasing a new charter 'which was contrary to the liberties and franchises of the city and would destroy freedom'.⁹⁷

What is of interest here is the quite sophisticated political awareness displayed by tailors and skimmers and other artisans, about the way in which their urban community should be governed. They were not in the John Carpenter class, and doubtless owned few books and probably could not read Latin, but they knew that all men should be equal before the law and that the successful government of communities depends upon the consent of those governed. They also displayed an unexpected—perhaps—sense of the written and historical basis of such claims. These men knew about the city's 'Great Charter' of 1319 and the charter of 1327 which had been confirmed in parliament. Ralph Holland (admittedly an alderman)

argued that there had been no royal writs restricting access to the mayor's election in the past and that none could be found recorded in any of the city's books. In fact Holland was incorrect on this point, but this appeal to the historic, and recorded, past was an important aspect of the artisan protest. In a seditious sermon preached at Paul's Cross, the preacher had asserted in October 1442 that the first and best mayor of London had been a cordwainer named Walsh.⁹⁸ This is not historically accurate since no one named Walsh had been mayor; indeed, no cordwainer had ever served as mayor. On the other hand, in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries there were a number of cordwainers who had been able to serve as aldermen in the 'good old days' before civic office was monopolised by merchants and overseas traders.⁹⁹

The 'Great Charter' of 1319 had laid down that certain civic officers, namely the common clerk, the chamberlain and the common serjeant, were to be chosen by the commonalty of the city.¹⁰⁰ In fact the chamberlain, who was in charge of the city's common funds, was elected each year (often re-elected) at the same time as the sheriffs and the bridge-wardens. This annual election provided the 'radicals' in 1443 with an opportunity to flex their muscles and in September they refused to re-elect John Chichele, a grocer who had been the city chamberlain for nine years, and chose instead William Cottesbroke, another but more radical grocer, and a common councilman who had been elected as one of the city's MPs the previous year.¹⁰¹ Although the mayor and aldermen overruled Cottesbroke's election, and restored Chichele to the post, Cottesbroke continued to support the artisan rebels and it was he who displayed the city's 'Great Charter' to the other artisans and helped them to bring the force of ancient custom to bear upon their claims.¹⁰² So, a sense of history, of precedent and of custom appears to have been a powerful ingredient in the political thinking of fifteenth-century Londoners.

V

It is not surprising that political debate was particularly vigorous in medieval towns, peopled by immigrants from elsewhere in England and abroad, and governed according to procedures which were constantly reviewed and challenged. In London the debates were also fuelled by the political concerns of men involved in the government of the realm. Much of the debate is obscured and the political issues degenerate into economic and personal conflicts, but some changes may, perhaps, be detected. It is

clear that the sharp personal conflicts of the thirteenth century chronicled so vividly, if not always transparently, by Arnald FitzThedmar give way to the more measured debate about issues to be found in the pages of Robert Fabyan or Thomas More writing at the end of the period. It may have been the achievement of Andrew Horn to initiate this change. By providing the citizens with a written, as opposed to an oral, record of royal charters and communal decisions, it became possible to begin debates from an agreed starting point. And a knowledge of the history and governing practices of the city was not confined simply to the city's bureaucrats who had access to civic records: increasing numbers of Londoners owned their own copies of 'civic' books, obtained copies of important documents and read and discussed these with other Londoners. It was from among such literate communities that a knowledge of past struggles and governing practices was disseminated and used, as in the 1430s, to challenge those who exercised power.

From at least as early as the late thirteenth century there had evolved an awareness that it was the office that mattered and not the officer. The seal was of the office of the mayoralty, not the mayor: just as those opposed to Edward II asserted that their loyalty was to the crown not to the person of the king, so had the Londoners earlier made that same distinction in the course of the thirteenth century. Whereas the earlier common seal was inscribed as the seal of the barons of London the later seal of about 1275 was that of the mayoralty, not the mayor. To express the new concept of the city corporately, an entity greater than its barons and other 'parts', the Londoners developed by the later fourteenth century a civic coat of arms to stand for, and represent, that greater whole. It would appear that over the centuries the Londoners were also developing their own secular, perhaps humanist, motifs. Whereas the earliest common seal was influenced by the seal of the bishop of London, as well as by the royal great seal, the later mayor's seal was secular in form. In the thirteenth century it was the saints Paul and Thomas who were chosen to represent the city, but in the new mayor's seal of 1381, the two saints are joined by a number of other more secular images including the city's arms. Moreover civic ceremonial was becoming increasingly secular. The mayor's riding never included a religious element and the royal welcomes developed classical or humanist messages. The façade of the fifteenth-century Guildhall confirmed the overriding divine authority but emphasised the classical virtues of Prudence, Temperance, Justice and Fortitude and the importance of Law and Learning. This secularisation of London's political

culture was epitomised when, in 1539 the city, in response to a royal injunction, removed St. Thomas from the city seal, and replaced him with the city's arms.

The city's political culture was also changing in other ways. Men like FitzThedmar and Andrew Horn understood that the peace and prosperity of the city depended upon the particular qualities of those elected to hold office. Horn selects from the work of Brunetto Latini those passages which deal with the qualities to be sought in rulers and the standards of public behaviour required of them once chosen. The task of the electors is to search for the right man and to obey him. And these same ideas can be detected in the Jubilee Book, where the rulers are to be 'sage' and 'righteous' and the common people 'tractable' and 'obedient'. But the compilers of the Jubilee Book also realised the importance of systems and accepted procedures for choosing officials and bringing them to account. And in his *Liber Albus*, John Carpenter is more concerned to describe the right working of structures than to rely upon the morality of individuals. It is not that morality is irrelevant, but that the well-being of the city is now acknowledged to depend upon the creation and observation of effective systems for delegating and exercising power. A political culture which had focused on the search for the right man has now given way to the search for the right constitution.

But a town as large as London never spoke with a single voice. The old common seal which showed groups of Londoners gathered around St. Thomas acknowledged the plurality of the political community. This plurality was the source both of the city's economic strength and its political instability. The written records tend to suggest a more uniform political culture than can ever have been the case. But Horn's necessary exposition of the 1327 charter, the tensions which gave birth to the Jubilee Book, the overt elitism of Carpenter's *Liber Albus*, and the recorded protests of the artisan tailors and skimmers in the 1430s remind us that the London ship of state sailed always on a choppy sea.

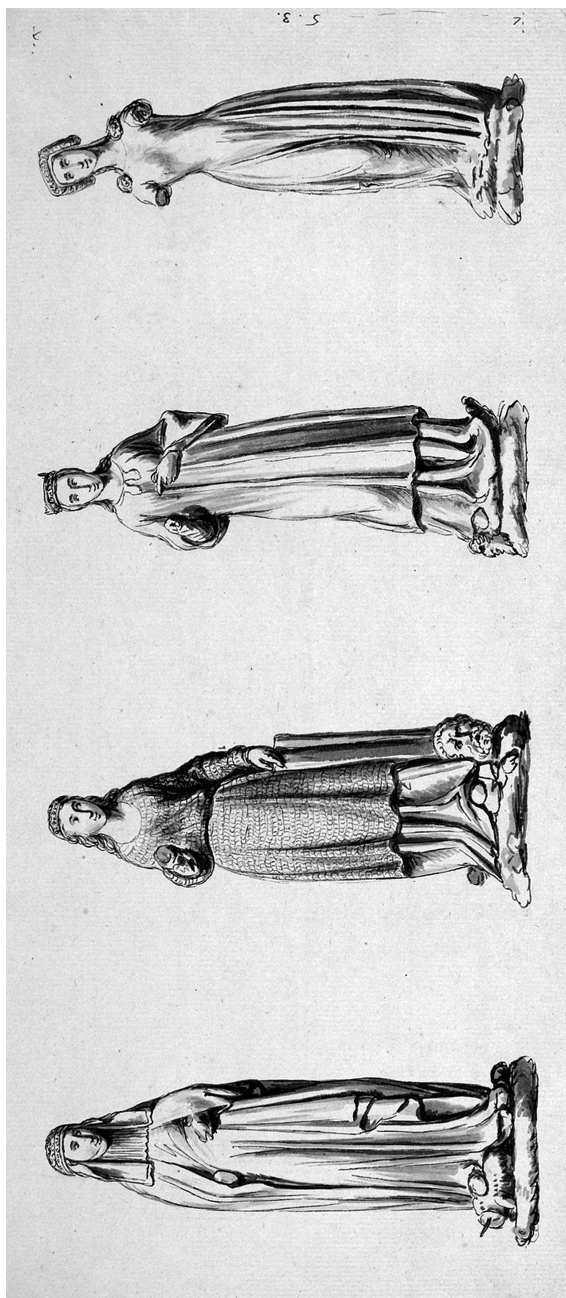


Plate 18.3. The four statues of Discipline, Justice, Fortitude and Temperance from Guildhall Porch, drawn by John Carter in 1783, reproduced from Caroline M. Barron, *The Medieval Guildhall of London* (1974), plate 9.

NOTES

¹ See, e.g., Christine Carpenter, *Locality and Polity: A Study of Warwickshire Landed Society, 1401–1499* (Cambridge, 1992), esp. chap. 9.

² John Watts, *Henry VI and the Politics of Kingship* (Cambridge, 1996); for a study of the political consciousness of the yeomanry and peasantry, see I. M. W. Harvey, 'Was There Popular Politics in Fifteenth-Century England?', in *The McFarlane Legacy: Studies in Late Medieval Politics*, ed. R. H. Britnell and A. J. Pollard (Stroud, 1995), 155–74.

³ Watts, *Henry VI*, 99–101.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 51–6.

⁵ See Caroline Barron, 'London and Parliament in the Lancastrian Period', *Parliamentary History*, ix (1990), 343–67.

⁶ Susan Reynolds, 'Medieval Urban History and the History of Political Thought', *Urban History Yearbook*, 1982, 14–23; S. H. Rigby and Elizabeth Ewen, 'Government, Power and Authority, 1300–1540', in *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain*, ed. D. M. Palliser (Cambridge, 2000), 291–312, esp. 304–6.

⁷ John Watts, 'Looking for the State in Later Medieval England', in *Heraldry, Pageantry and Social Display in Medieval England* ed. Peter Coss and Maurice Keen (Woodbridge, 2002), 243–67, esp. 264–5.

⁸ This common seal is referred to in a collection of London material to be dated to c.1215: see Martin Weinbaum, *London unter Eduard I. und II.* (2 vols., Stuttgart, 1933), i. 45; Mary Bateson, 'A London Municipal Collection of the Reign of John', *EHR*, xvii (1902), 480–511, 707–30; *CPR, 1216–25*, p. 211.

⁹ For discussion and illustration, see T. A. Heslop, 'The Seal of the Barons of London', in *Age of Chivalry: Art in Plantagenet England 1200–1400*, ed. Jonathan Alexander and Paul Binski (1987), 273 and photograph showing the obverse of the seal. See also confirmation in 1324 by the mayor, aldermen and commonalty of the city of London of ordinances relating to the Stocks Market [Betty Masters], *To God and the Bridge: The Story of the City's Bridges* (exhibition catalogue, Guildhall Art Gallery, 1972), no. 15 and plate II which shows the reverse of the seal, by this date (after 100 years of use), much worn. On civic seals more generally, see James Tait, *The Medieval English Borough* (Manchester, 1936), 235–9, 256–9.

¹⁰ I am grateful to Dr Elizabeth New for this observation.

¹¹ The earliest surviving impression of the seal is found on a deed dated 1277–8, now at Durham; see *Age of Chivalry*, ed. Alexander and Binski, 274, where the impression of the seal that is illustrated comes from Westminster Abbey Muni-ments, 41.

¹² Heslop, in *Age of Chivalry*, ed. Alexander and Binski, 32. The real reason may have been a desire to have a new seal to express the new order of civic government which had been created by the constitutional changes of 1376–8; see below, n. 85.

¹³ *Age of Chivalry*, ed. Alexander and Binski, 274.

¹⁴ Anne Lancashire, *London Civic Theatre: City Drama and Pageantry from Roman Times to 1558* (Cambridge, 2002), 51, 53, 195–6; the year was 1378.

¹⁵ *Calendar of Letter Books of the City of London: Letter Book H*, ed. R. R. Sharpe (1907), 164–5; *Memorials of London and London Life in the XIIIth, XIVth, and XVth Centuries* (1868), ed. H. T. Riley, 446–7. In this description of the old and new seals the scribe records the two saints as Peter and Paul. On the old seal their initials were engraved on the face of the seal (SS Th and SS P) so the scribe had no excuse for the confusion unless, of course, the seal was so worn after a hundred years of use that the wording had been obliterated.

¹⁶ *Letter Book H*, 36; *Memorials*, ed. Riley, 400.

¹⁷ See below, n. 85.

¹⁸ Mervyn James, 'Ritual Drama and Social Body in the Late Medieval Town', *Past and Present*, xcvi (1983), 3–29; Charles Phythian-Adams, 'Ceremony and the Citizen: The Communal Year at Coventry 1450–1550', in *Crisis and Order in English Towns 1500–1700: Essays in Urban History*, ed. Peter Clark and Paul Slack (1972), 57–85.

¹⁹ *Calendar of Letter Books of the City of London: Letter Book L*, ed. R. R. Sharpe (1912), 187; Lancashire, *London Civic Theatre*, 52–3, 180–1.

²⁰ John Stow, *A Survey of London*, ed. C. L. Kingsford (2 vols., Oxford, 1971), i. 101–3.

²¹ On the development of the 'Midsummer Watch' and for discussion of the reasons for its abolition in the 1540s, see Sheila Williams, 'The Lord Mayor's Show in Tudor and Stuart Times', *Guildhall Miscellany*, x (1959), 3–18; Michael Berlin, 'Civic Ceremony in Early Modern London', *Urban History Yearbook*, 1986, 15–27; Sheila Lindenbaum, 'Ceremony and Oligarchy: The London Midsummer Watch', in *City and Spectacle in Medieval Europe*, ed. Barbara Hanawalt and Kathryn Reyerson (Minneapolis, 1994), 171–88; Lancashire, *London Civic Theatre*, 50–2 and chap. 9.

²² Stow, *Survey*, i. 95–6; Lancashire, *London Civic Theatre*, 42–4, 48–9.

²³ Gordon Kipling, 'Richard II's "Sumptuous Pageants" and the Idea of the Civic Triumph', in *Pageantry and the Shakespearean Theater*, ed. D. M. Bergeron (Athens, Ga., 1985), 83–103; Lancashire, *London Civic Theatre*, 45.

²⁴ C. M. Barron, 'Richard II and London', in *Richard II: The Art of Kingship*, ed. Anthony Goodman and J. L. Gillespie (Oxford, 1999), 129–54, esp. 152–4. [*Reprinted as Chapter 5 in the present volume.*]

²⁵ Latin poem in *Political Poems and Songs*, ed. Thomas Wright (2 vols., Rolls Series, 1859–61), i. 82–300; English translation by Edith Rickert in *Chaucer's World* (Oxford, 1948), 35–9, esp. 36–37. See also Richard Maidstone, *Concordia*, trans. A. G. Rigg and ed. D. R. Carlson (Kalamazoo, Mich., 2003), esp. p. 57.

²⁶ C. D. Liddy, 'The Rhetoric of the Royal Chamber in Late Medieval London, York and Coventry', *Urban History*, xxix (2002), 323–49.

²⁷ *Gesta Henrici Quinti*, ed. Frank Taylor and J. S. Roskell (Oxford, 1975), pp. xxxvii, 101–13. Lydgate's poem on the same event is printed, *ibid.*, 191–2.

²⁸ *Calendar of the Letter Books of the City of London: Letter Book K*, ed. R. Sharpe (1911), 137; *Munimenta Gildhallae Londoniensis: Liber Albus, Liber Custumarum, et Liber Horn*, ed. H. T. Riley (3 vols, Rolls Series, 1859–62), iii. appendix 3; see H. N. MacCracken, ‘King Henry’s Triumphal Entry into London: Lydgate’s Poem and Carpenter’s Letter’, *Archiv für das Studium des neueren Sprachen und Literaturen*, cxxvi (1911), 75–102. Lydgate’s English poem is printed in *The Great Chronicle of London*, ed. A. H. Thomas and I. D. Thornley (1938), 156–70; Lancashire, *London Civic Theatre*, 188.

²⁹ C. M. Barron, ‘The Expansion of Education of Fifteenth-Century London’, in *The Cloister and the World: Essays in Medieval History in Honour of Barbara Harvey*, ed. John Blair and Brian Golding (Oxford, 1996), 219–45, esp. 227. [Reprinted as Chapter 16 and p. 455 in the present volume.] It may be worth noting that St. Peter Cornhill was the parish of John Carpenter.

³⁰ *Munimenta Gildhallae*, ed. Riley, iii. 461.

³¹ Quentin Skinner, *Visions of Politics*, (2 vols., Cambridge, 2002), ii. 51.

³² *Ibid.*, 51.

³³ *Munimenta Gildhallae*, ed. Riley, iii. 461.

³⁴ See Watts, ‘Looking for the State in Later Medieval England’, 243–67, esp. 255.

³⁵ *The Great Chronicle of London*, ed. Thomas and Thornley, 163.

³⁶ Robert Tittler, *Architecture and Power: The Town Hall and the English Urban Community c.1500–1640* (Oxford, 1991); *idem*, *The Reformation and the Towns in England: Politics and Culture c. 1540–1640 c.* (Oxford, 1998), esp. chap. 12.

³⁷ Tittler, *Architecture and Power*, 13.

³⁸ C. M. Barron, *The Medieval Guildhall of London* (1974).

³⁹ For the sixteenth-century poem by William Elderton, said by Stow to be an attorney in the sheriffs’ court at Guildhall, see Stow, *Survey*, i. 272; ii. 333. The author of these verses may be the ‘Master Elderton’ who sat as a judge in a coining case in the Guildhall in 1562, see *The Diary of Henry Machyn, Citizen and Merchant-Taylor of London*, ed. J. G. Nichols (Camden Society, old series, xlii, 1848), 290. He is less likely to be the William Elderton, ‘ballad-writer and notorious tippler’, who died in c. 1590, see *Dictionary of National Biography*, 591–2. For the drawings by John Carter, dated 1788, see Barron, *Guildhall*, 27 and plates 8a and b, 9a and b, and 10.

⁴⁰ Carter named the Law and Learning statues as Aaron and Moses, see J. E. Price, *A Descriptive Account of the Guildhall of the City of London* (1896), plate facing p. 71.

⁴¹ Watts, *Henry VI*, 23–5; *Hoccleve’s Works. III. The Regement of Princes*, ed. F. J. Furnivall (EETS, extra series, no. lxxii, 1897), lines 4754–60; *Three Prose Versions of the Secreta Secretorum*, ed. R. R. Steele (EETS, extra series, no. lxxiv, 1898), 146–97.

⁴² For English illuminated manuscripts, see the copy of Brunetto Latini, *Livre du Trésor* (Bibliothèque Nationale, MS français 571); L. F. Sandler, *Gothic Manuscripts 1285–1385* (2 vols., Oxford and London, 1986), ii. 103; Thomas

Chaundler's *Liber Apologeticus* (Trinity College, Cambridge, MS R.14.5), in K. L. Scott, *Later Gothic Manuscripts 1390–1490* (2 vols., 1996), ii. 285.

⁴³ Barron, *Guildhall*, 32–3.

⁴⁴ Thomas Brewer, *A Memoir of the Life and Times of John Carpenter* (1856), 97–99, 121–30; for 'Seneca' see Skinner, *Visions of Politics*, ii. 43, 65–7.

⁴⁵ For a detailed reinterpretation of this famous painting, see Quentin Skinner, 'Ambrogio Lorenzetti: The Artist as Political Philosopher', *Proceedings of the British Academy*, lxxii (1986), 1–56; *idem*, *Visions of Politics*, ii. chaps. 3 and 4.

⁴⁶ We know very little about the interior decorative scheme of the new Guildhall. None of the medieval glass remains, although Stow records that various aldermen of the time paid for the glazing of the windows of the hall 'as appeareth by their arms in each window'. The executors of Richard Whittington paid for the glazing of the windows in the mayor's court, all of which bore his arms. Stow, *Survey*, i. 272. The only decorations of the mayor's court still to be seen when the rooms were about to be pulled down in 1882 were angels in niches bearing the city's arms: Barron, *Guildhall*, plate 29 b. The surviving bosses in the east crypt are largely decorative and do not appear to represent any consistent theme or idea, see Price, *Account of the Guildhall*, 88–9.

⁴⁷ John Strype, *Survey of the Cities of London and Westminster* (2 vols., 1720), i. 14–21.

⁴⁸ CPR, 1259–61, p. 434.

⁴⁹ Stow, *Survey*, i. 38. Stow also notes that the heads were struck off the kings in the reign of Edward VI 'by such as iuged every image to be an idoll', and then restored under Mary and rebuilt in Elizabeth's reign. The other kings may have been Lud's two sons: Strype, *Survey*, i. 21.

⁵⁰ J. H. Harvey, 'The Wilton Diptych: a Re-examination', *Archaeologia*, xxviii (1961), 1–28, esp. 5 n.7: the mason, Thomas Wrenk, was paid a total of £10, the painter was paid £20, and two gilt latten sceptres for the images cost £1.

⁵¹ Strype, *Survey*, i. 17.

⁵² T. F. Reddaway and L. E. M. Walker, *The Early History of the Goldsmiths' Company, 1327–1509* (1975), 176–7.

⁵³ Stow, *Survey*, i. 40.

⁵⁴ On libraries, see Barron, 'Expansion of Education', 219–45, esp. 239–41 [reprinted as Chapter 16 and pp. 467–68 in the present volume]; Fiona Kisby, 'Books in London Parish Churches before 1603: Some Preliminary Observations', in *The Church and Learning in Late Medieval Society: Studies in Honour of Professor R. B. Dobson*, ed. Caroline Barron and Jenny Stratford (Donington, 2002), 305–26. Most of the recorded books in parish churches were liturgical or broadly religious, although Carpenter's parish church of St. Peter Cornhill owned a copy of Ranulph Higden's *Polychronicon*: *ibid.*, 311.

⁵⁵ Jeremy Catto, 'Andrew Horn: Law and History in Fourteenth-Century England', in *The Writing of History in the Middle Ages: Essays Presented to Richard William Southern*, ed. R. H. C. Davies and J. M. Wallace-Hadrill (Oxford, 1981),

367–91. This account of Andrew Horn is much indebted to Catto's work.

⁵⁶ During the years 1307–12 Horn appears to have been writing a contemporary account of political events, now known as the *Annales Londonienses*, see Catto, 'Andrew Horn', 375.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 386–7.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 387; see F. W. Maitland's introduction to *The Mirror of Justices*, ed. W. J. Whittaker (Selden Society, vii, 1895), pp. ix–lv.

⁵⁹ Catto, 'Andrew Horn', 376; see Debbie Cannon, 'London Pride: Citizenship and the Fourteenth Century Customals of the City of London', in *Learning and Literacy in Medieval England and Abroad*, ed. Sarah Rees Jones (Turnout, Belgium, 2003), 179–98, esp. 186–90.

⁶⁰ A. F. Sutton, 'Merchants, Music and Social Harmony: the London Puy and its French and London Contexts, circa 1300', *The London Journal*, xvii (1992), 1–17, esp. 12.

⁶¹ I am grateful to Dr. Jennifer Marshall for this information, and for other helpful suggestions about Latini.

⁶² Julia Bolton Holloway, 'Brunetto Latini and England', *Manuscripta*, xxxi (1987), 11–21.

⁶³ Bodleian Library, Douce 319 is a late thirteenth-/early fourteenth-century copy, possibly written in Arras in Bolognan script; Bodleian Library, Ashmole 1509, of the same date, was copied from the Douce MS in England, see Holloway, 'Brunetto Latini', 11–21.

⁶⁴ *Munimenta Gildhallae*, ed. Riley, ii (1), 15–25 (French text); ii (2), 517–28 (English translation). For Latini's complete French text, see *Li Livres Dou Tresor de Brunetto Latini*, ed. F. J. Carmody (California, 1948). For an excellent discussion of the sources and context of Latini's political thought, see Skinner, *Visions of Politics*, ii, chaps. 2 and 3.

⁶⁵ Horn's order of Latini's chapters is: 74, 75, 102, 104, 105, 97, 98, 96.

⁶⁶ *Munimenta Gildhallae*, ed. Riley, ii (2), p. 522.

⁶⁷ Catto, 'Andrew Horn', 388–91, esp. 390; see also Reynolds, 'Medieval Urban History', 22–3.

⁶⁸ That Horn had his successors in mind is suggested by a note in 'Liber Horn' (Corpus Christi Cambridge MS 70, f. 96), that he intended to put together a *magnum codicem for posteris*: Catto, 'Andrew Horn', 373, n. 2.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 391.

⁷⁰ BL, Add. MS 62534. Cannon draws attention to Bodleian Library Rawlinson B 356, a private customal which may have been copied direct from 'Liber Horn' c. 1314, and Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, MS 476, which is another London compilation to be dated to 1312/13, see Cannon, 'London Pride', 190–2. Cannon makes the point that, at this date, there was no clear distinction made between a private and a public compilation: Horn's two private compilations became public customals when he bequeathed them to the city chamber and, once there, they influenced the style of later civic customals.

⁷¹ BL, Add. MS 38131: see Hannes Kleineke, 'Carleton's Book: William FitzStephen's "Description of London" in a Late Fourteenth-Century Common-Place Book', *Historical Research*, lxxiv (2001), 117–26.

⁷² BL, Egerton MS 2885: see *Catalogue of Additional Manuscripts in the British Museum MDCCCCVI–MDCCCCX* (1912), 270–2.

⁷³ *Letter Book H*, 222–3; BL, Egerton MS 2885, ff. 50–1.

⁷⁴ BL, Add. MS 48031A. This has now been studied and edited, see *The Politics of Fifteenth-Century England: John Vale's Book*, ed. M. L. Kekewich, Colin Richmond, A. F. Sutton, Livia Visser-Fuchs and J. L. Watts (Stroud, 1995).

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 74–97.

⁷⁶ For a fuller discussion of this interesting idea, see Sarah Rees Jones, 'Thomas More's "Utopia" and Medieval London', in *Pragmatic Utopias: Ideals and Communities 1200–1630*, ed. Rosemary Horrox and Sarah Rees Jones (Cambridge, 2001), 117–35.

⁷⁷ Cannon, 'London Pride', 198.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 190; Catto, 'Andrew Horn', 375–81.

⁷⁹ It appears that there was another civic custom known as 'Darcy's Custumal' which was used extensively by John Carpenter and was borrowed by Robert Ricart of Bristol in the 1480s, but is now lost. Henry Darcy was mayor of London in 1337–9, see *Calendar of Early Mayor's Court Rolls 1298–1307*, ed. A. H. Thomas (Cambridge, 1921), pp. xxv–xxvii.

⁸⁰ *Liber Albus: The White Book of the City of London*, ed. and trans. H. T. Riley (1861), 3–4, 452. For an interesting discussion of Carpenter's methods and purpose in compiling the *Liber Albus*, see Helen Martin, 'John Carpenter's *Liber Albus*: The Civic Context' (York University M.A. thesis, 2003), esp. 15–22.

⁸¹ *Munimenta Gildhallae*, ed. Riley, i. 3–4.

⁸² See C. M. Barron, 'Lay Solidarities: the Wards of Medieval London', in *Law, Laities and Solidarities: Essays in Honour of Susan Reynolds*, ed. Pauline Stafford, J. L. Nelson and Jane Martindale (Manchester, 2001), 218–33.

⁸³ On Carpenter's use of material in the older civic customals, see William Kellaway, 'John Carpenter's *Liber Albus*', *Guildhall Studies in London History*, iii (1978), 67–84; Martin, 'John Carpenter's *Liber Albus*', 79–83.

⁸⁴ W. M. Ormrod, '"Fifty Glorious Years": Edward III and the First English Royal Jubilee', *Medieval History*, new series, i (2002), 13–20.

⁸⁵ *Letter Book H*, 234–5, 303.

⁸⁶ See above, n. 74; the Cooke/Vale manuscript is Trinity College, Cambridge, MS O.3.11, which I hope to edit for the London Record Society in the near future.

⁸⁷ Trinity College, Cambridge, MS O.3.11, f. 133: the text given here has been modernised in spelling and syntax.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.* Note that the bottom right-hand corner of the page has been torn out, and so the introductory text is incomplete.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, f. 133v.

⁹⁰ Walter de Gray Birch, *Historical Charters of the City of London* (1887), 49, where

the electing body is described as the commonalty rather than the common council.

⁹¹ See above, n. 73.

⁹² *Letter Book H*, 303.

⁹³ C. M. Barron, 'Ralph Holland and the London Radicals 1438–1444', in *The English Medieval Town: A Reader in English Urban History 1200–1540*, ed. Richard Holt and Gervase Rosser (1990), 160–83. [Reprinted as Chapter 11 in the present volume.]

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 177 [p. 348 in the present volume]; Birch, *Historical Charters*, 44–50, esp. 45–6. William Cottesbroke, a supporter of the radicals in spite of being a grocer, had obtained a copy of this 'Great Charter' which he displayed to his colleagues. It is interesting to speculate whether he displayed a Latin or a translated version.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 59–60; *Cal. Charter Rolls*, 1327–1341, p. 7; Catto, 'Andrew Horn', 370.

⁹⁶ E. G. Kimball, 'Commissions of the Peace for Urban Jurisdictions in England 1327–1485', *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, cxxi (1977), 448–74.

⁹⁷ Barron, 'Ralph Holland', 181 [p. 352 in the present volume].

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 171 [p. 344 in the present volume].

⁹⁹ E.g. John Poyntel, cordwainer, was alderman of Bishopsgate 1319–30: A. B. Beaven, *The Aldermen of the City of London* (2 vols., 1908, 1913), i. 33.

¹⁰⁰ Birch, *Historical Charters*, 99.

¹⁰¹ A biography of Cottesbroke, written by Matthew Davies, will appear in the forthcoming volumes of the *History of Parliament*, covering 1422–1504.

¹⁰² Perhaps some 'folk memory' recalled that in 1311, at the height of a popular protest movement, a David Cotesbroke had been elected to act as a controller (or check) on the then city chamberlain: *Calendar of Letter Book D*, ed. R. R. Sharpe (1902), 79, 275–6. David Cotesbroke also served the city in parliament in 1312, but had died by April 1313: *ibid.*, 186, 289. His craft is unknown, but he must have been acquainted with Andrew Horn.