

BARBARA A. HANAWALT



# CEREMONY AND CIVILITY

*Civic Culture in Late Medieval London*

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## *Preface and Acknowledgments*

MEDIEVAL LONDON DEALT with challenges of immigration from the countryside and the Continent. These problems may seem similar to those of today, but the solutions were rather different. In place of newspapers, television, and other media, the actual visual contact in ceremonies and other public occasions made the city officials familiar to the population. Distinctive dress (liveries) also help to identify the authority figures to both the literate and nonliterate inhabitants. In a society in which oral statements and slanders could cause unrest, those who misspoke about the authorities had to be publicly punished as a lesson to others. Punishments meted out to offenders were also rituals, including pledges of large quantities of wine as retribution or parades through the streets to the stocks. Ceremonies and rituals were a show of power, but they were also didactic lessons for the large immigrant population. One lesson we might take away is that London's civic culture emphasized that men's privilege of living and working in London also came with the obligation to conform to the behavior required in the city and to respect the governing officials.

In this final book on London I have extended my inquiries into the activities of the men in London. My previous studies have been on childhood and women in London. Like all of my books, the research is based on extensive work in archives. Much of the material appears in court records. I have used both quantitative and qualitative methods to digest archival material and analyze individual cases that appear in the records. The records of cases are illuminating even if filtered by court scribes. The sources for this book provided exceptional opportunities to hear the voices of the elite men of London as they expressed their horror at the miscreants who opposed them or broke the laws of London. Their official oaths are recorded as is the manner in which they were elected. Being educated, the elites compiled books that were collections of events that they witnessed, the mythical history of London, and even a treatise on good governance.

The court records even tell us the words of defiance used by those who opposed the elite. Unlike children, women, and the poor, these men had the power of the pen and oratory with which to express themselves. London was a vibrant place in the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. It has been entertaining to read the records of the period. I hope, in this book, that the voices of these Londoners give a flavor of how the elite ruled the city.

The elite were colorful men, both in their personalities and in the brilliant clothing they wore. The clothes “made the official,” and they took serious delight in them. It would have been an experience to sit in on the meeting of the committee of aldermen as they determined the livery to be worn at the next swearing in of the mayor or at a royal entry. Did the discussions revolve around the availability of cloth and dyes or the latest fashions seen in Calais, Bruges, and Ghent? On at least one occasion, colors had to be changed because the men of Lincoln were going to wear the color the aldermen had chosen.

Over the years I have used a number of archives in England. For this project the Guildhall and the London Metropolitan Archives have been my chief base. I have always found the staff most helpful in producing records and helping to locate those that I would need for various projects. The requests for photographs was handled with great efficiency. Historians would be at a loss without archivists, and I thank them for their work and their kindnesses. For photo enhancements, thanks to Garth Pootinga of Green Hat Media.

Extended periods of time at archives require funding, and I have been fortunate and grateful for what I have received. The initial funding for the larger study of London came from the Guggenheim Foundation in 1988–1989. I have revisited the archives periodically since thanks to the funding from the National Endowment of the Humanities, the University of Minnesota and The Ohio State University, including monies through my chair at Ohio State, the King George III Chair of British History. I also received a special grant from the Mershon Center for International Studies at Ohio State University to read through the *Journals of the Common Council*. I have been twice honored with a National Humanities Council Fellowship, the last one in 2010. I chose to take it to the Newberry Library in Chicago. I found wonderful community of scholars there among the staff, the other fellows, and the library community. I also thank the History Department at Indiana University, which made me a visiting professor when I retired back to Bloomington so that I could use the library.

Unfortunately, Anne Lancashire's three-volume *Civic London to 1558* for the Records of Early English Drama series came out after my book was finished. For those who would like to pursue these topics further without going to the archives, I highly recommend it.

My research and writing has brought me wonderful graduate students. The joy of seeing students flourish, develop their own research agendas, and publish their results is one of the great pleasures that a teacher has. I appreciate their return of respect in the Festschrift that they published in my honor, *The Ties that Bind*. Indeed, working together does bring close ties, and what is so gratifying is that although they earned their graduate degrees from the three different universities, they are all friends and help each other. Perhaps more than they realize, I have a strong emotional investment in their success.

I must also honor an old friend, Lawrence Clopper, recently deceased, who was a scholar of medieval English drama. Although he did not contribute to this book, he has been very much an intellectual companion for many years, since I first started teaching at Indiana University. I miss his intellect, his companionship, and his gourmet cooking. He cannot be replaced for me and for his many friends.



# *Ceremony and Civility*



## *Introduction*

LONDON WAS A magnet for people from all over the British Isles and the Continent. They came, men and women, young and old, rich and poor, seeking employment, alms, or excitement hoping to better their lot. Some were hired servants and apprentices who would live with their masters, but many were footloose soldiers, sailors, journeymen, merchants, students, clergy, thieves, and desperate women. Nobles, royal servants, and wealthy aliens were also among their number. While some were literate in Latin, French, and English, many were illiterate in any language. They spoke in foreign tongues, but also in impenetrable dialects from the far reaches of the British Isles. The population was a shifting one, with immigrants staying a short while and leaving and others dying of plague or from diseases contracted in the unhealthy city environment; new immigrants arrived daily. The immigrants were far more numerous than the small population of elite and long-term residents. The newcomers had to be instructed about the laws and customs of the metropolis, the governing hierarchy, and the civic virtues that the elite hoped would permeate the urban mentality. Civic lessons had to be ongoing.

London had a variety of institutions, both formal and informal, that helped to establish the authority of officials and educate the immigrants. The elite used elaborate civic ceremonials and parades to inform the masses about who were the powerful officials and city's elite and to establish hegemony. The oath taking of the new mayor was followed by parades that included civic officials and the powerful city guilds. Another group of ceremonies were public shaming rituals that were intended not only to punish those who violated civic ordinances or insulted officials, but also to inform bystanders of the behavior expected of urban residents. The ceremonial life of London was an active performance of power by the London

elite to establish the social and governmental hierarchy. Other institutions, such as wards, parishes, and gilds, helped to instill the behavior expected in a civil society. London's twenty-four wards, each headed by an alderman, expected all nonclerical, non-noble male residents to participate in ward governance and peacekeeping. The wards, the basic units of city government, taught men the city's laws and power structure. The trade gilds had their own ceremonies of oath taking, elections, induction of apprentices, and shaming rituals that informed members of correct behavior. Parishes and parish gilds welcomed only those who could pay the dues, but they, too, had their own forms of governance and ceremonies that instilled a respect of order, hierarchy, and civility.

Fourteenth- and fifteenth-century English society, like all of European society, was hierarchical. The nobility gained their status at birth or by being ennobled. Within their ranks there were many levels, partly dependent on ancestry, but also on landholdings. The church also had a hierarchy, based on ordination and one's rank within the church. The urban hierarchy—the mayor, aldermen, sheriffs, and city oligarchs—stood outside these more established ones. Part of the goal of the ceremonial show was to maintain the elites' status in the English realm as a whole. London's mayor held a rank that was equivalent to that of an earl, which placed him among the very elite of the nobility. The mayor had to keep up the appearances of this rank and, at times, defend it. The ceremonial welcoming of the king or queen into the city was a lavish affair, indicating the wealth and importance of London and its officials to the crown.

As in most preindustrial cities, the environment of London was unhealthy, and the city struggled to replenish its reduced population. Within the walls, enclosing about a square mile, residents lived in crowded neighborhoods where infections could spread rapidly. In addition, plague and famine could decimate the population. Infant mortality was high, even among the wealthy. Added to the population shortfall was the problem that many inhabitants could not afford to marry, or their apprentice or service contracts prohibited marriage, or they stayed only long enough to acquire a skill or money to go home to their villages and marry there, or they died without reproducing. As a consequence, the city's population was always in flux. Even among the elite, many lines died out, or the members bought property in the country and left the city. London was a city of opportunity for the immigrants but could also be a dead end. The newly arrived, if they hoped to make a success of their stay in the city, needed to learn to function according to the rules of behavior.

Most of the instruction was directed toward men. The male population and its participation in ceremonies, rituals, and government is the subject of this book. Women did not have a role in the wards, because their behavior was assumed to be guided by and under the control of their fathers, husbands, or masters. For them, correction took place in the home. Women participated in the parish, but had very limited official roles either there or in the guilds, and had none in the government.

If one of the purposes of civic ceremony and ritual was didactic, what lessons did the elites hope to instill? The term “civil society” was used in the Middle Ages to mean both a socio-economic unit and an idea, or *mentalité*, of urban life. The values of the civil society were the peaceful possession of private property, personal security, access to legal means of settling disputes, loyalty to the city, and obedience to officials. The term also evolved to imply urbane and polite behavior among those living in the city. An ideal of personal freedom in trade, marriage, and property ownership, as well as a commitment to the community, was fundamental to the medieval meaning of civil society.<sup>1</sup> The goal of civil society was to preserve the common good. Shared, self-imposed codes of behavior made the enforcement of laws easier, because the expectation was that those dwelling and trading in a community would conform to the norms. Rational self-interest impelled people to follow the code of behavior because they feared that failure to do so could lead to a loss of business partners or employment.<sup>2</sup> The businessmen who ran London’s government shared these precepts of acceptable behavior and appealed to them when infractions occurred. Records from court cases, civic ordinances, and chronicles illustrate the civic values that London’s citizens strove to defend when they were violated. Emotive language signaled the betrayal of the common good.

London, of course, experienced unrest of various sorts from its inhabitants. A shared sense of the common good did not stop quarrels from breaking out or insults against officials from being voiced. These tremors and signs of disrespect had to be dealt with quickly to avoid destabilizing the elite. Factions among the elite could lead to serious street fighting for control over the city government. Violent fights among the guilds occurred. Negotiations could be tricky among the elites, and the various means of calming them involved ceremonials. Insults to the mayors and other officials by fellow elites were treated with forbearance. The oligarchy knew that too violent a punishment could lead to factional strife. Miscreants and hotheads usually came to the Guildhall to offer atonement. Punishment was reduced to a bond to be paid if the man offended again, and he had

to produce sureties for his good behavior. Occasionally, a public ceremony of contrition was also required, such as forcing the offender to walk bare-headed around the city. Gilds used similar means to punish offenders, sometimes requiring them to bow down to the masters in the gildhall to cement their apologies. The more humiliating and physical punishments, such as being paraded through the streets on a hurdle and being made to stand in the pillory, as well as being sent to Newgate prison, were reserved for the non-elite.

By far the most serious challenge that the city governors faced came from the crown. London's franchise to govern itself and elect its own officials was established in charters granted by the king. This dependence put the government of London in a precarious position, because the king could revoke the charter if he was displeased with the city. If the mayor and aldermen were not able to contain disruptive skirmishes, then the king would use that as an excuse to revoke the charter. Various kings in the late Middle Ages threatened to take the governance of the city into their own hands or ended up doing so. This was a frequent occurrence in the thirteenth century, but it became less common in the fourteenth century and ceased in the fifteenth century. Ceremonies to propitiate an angry sovereign required lavish gifts of precious gold and silver objects and large quantities of money.

The ceremonies and rituals of London used many types of symbols. One of the most prominent was clothing. The aldermen had a special committee to determine the livery the city officials wore each year for the city's grandest procession, the oath taking of the mayor. The committee also determined the livery to be worn for royal entries into the city and for the various ceremonial processions throughout the year. The livery distinguished the officials' positions and made them easily recognizable. Each gild had a livery that was changed yearly or biannually. The livery was distinctive in color, but did not differ from the regular male clothing—the clothes were not uniforms. Cloth was expensive in the Middle Ages, and these outfits were vibrantly colored and made of costly fabrics. Livery was so important as an indication of rank that there were rules to prohibit the disposal of the garments after their year or so of use. Nonelites in parish gilds also had a distinctive livery, and when the yeomen of gilds tried to form their own gilds, part of their assertion of organization and power was to adopt a distinctive livery. As the historian Martha Howell has observed, in the late Middle Ages "the exterior was a sign of the person and inseparable from it; the social, visible self was the entire self." Sartorial display

was a key vehicle in establishing social hierarchy.<sup>3</sup> Clothing, or the removal of it, was also important in shaming rituals. To walk bareheaded in the streets was a symbol of humiliation. Bakers taken to the stocks had both their shoes and hoods removed. Prostitutes had their hair cut off, and were clothed in a distinctive dress. Male bawds also had the hair shorn to within an inch of fringe.

Other physical symbols were the mace and the sword. The sword, symbolic of the rank of earl, was carried before the mayor in processions, and along with it the ceremonial mace. The sheriffs also had staffs that distinguished them in processions. Gilds, both trade and parish, had distinctive banners. Many also had badges and coats of arms. Gild masters wore garlands on their heads for elections. For the trip to the stocks, a very potent symbol in itself, the man being punished rode through the streets of London on a hurdle pulled by a horse. In addition to the public announcement of his transgression, the fraudulent item was hung around his neck (a loaf of bad bread for dishonest bakers); the liar or slanderer wore a whetstone indicating his sharp tongue.

Music accompanied the ceremonies. For royal entries, a group of children dressed as angels might sing. Horn players accompanied the procession of the mayor and sheriffs to Westminster. The number of horns could be a source of rivalry among gilds and had to be limited because of the noise. The trip to the stocks was accompanied by music as well, including tabors (a type of drum).

The terms *symbol*, *ritual*, and *ceremony* are used somewhat interchangeably in this book. Many disciplines have laid claim to these terms, but anthropology in particular made them a subject area of research.<sup>4</sup> Clifford Geertz's observations of the drama of Balinese ceremonies led him to speak of the "theater state." The dramaturgy of state rituals is an important element of the governing power of the state.<sup>5</sup> A more recent anthropologist, Catherine Bell, has argued in favor of a theoretical model—practice theory—that concentrates on how ritual is performed, because it permits the observer to map relationships of power.<sup>6</sup> The movement of actors in a specially constructed space imparts a sense of the ritual power relations and the meaning it is to convey. Bell's analysis is valuable for studying London's rituals and is adopted in this book.

The ceremonial spaces in the city, including the streets, the Guildhall, the cathedral, the halls of the various gilds, and the parish churches were utilized to help establish the hierarchy. In the procession for the mayor's oath taking at Westminster, the space around him was ceremonially

protected. In the gildhalls, seating at the table separated the elite from the regular members. In the parish church, the rood screen kept the parishioners separate from the area of the priest. London was very conscious of the hierarchical uses of space. Major fights broke out among guilds over the prominence of their place in ceremonies in St. Paul's Cathedral.

Historians were quick to pick up the study of ritual and ceremony without distinguishing between the two.<sup>7</sup> Marcello Fantoni's recent summary of historians' uses of symbols, ceremonies, and rituals points out that the study of ritual has become so popular that "everything is 'ritual'—revolts, religious liturgy, festivals, family life, diplomatic protocol, public executions, etc.—and entire civilizations have ended up being considered 'ritualistic.'"<sup>8</sup> But his survey does not resolve the problem or recommend a way to distinguish between ritual and ceremony. This book follows the same approach used by other historians and does not draw sharp distinctions. Both follow prescribed formulas, and the symbols that were used by those performing them and their meanings were known to the viewers as well as the participants.

Historians, unlike anthropologists, must rely on written directions or descriptions of rituals. Contemporary illustrations of medieval London's ceremonies do not exist, but the written sources are so rich in description that the colors and sounds of each come alive. Relying on the written scripts for ceremonies presents problems, since those directions may not actually have been followed. Still, the very formulaic words used in the written records, including those of oaths and the directions for a ritual performance, were essential for the efficacy of the ceremonies. Medieval law and practice required that oaths be repeated word for word in order to legitimate and to confer power and obligations. In most cases, chronicles or court records confirm that the prescribed rituals were actually carried out or were not carried out properly, and in other cases it is through the court records that we know that a ritual existed.

Rituals that had developed during the fourteenth century were recorded in the *Liber Albus* of 1419, thus giving a formal status to the practice. John Carpenter, the common clerk of London, compiled it, drawing on earlier compilations and cartularies. The book also included the oaths sworn by officials of all ranks and by men who joined the wards. These spelled out not just the duties but also the behavior and attitudes expected of the oath takers. Numerous ordinances, gleaned from the Letter Books and the mayor's court rolls, called upon citizens, craftsmen, and the general public to behave honestly, think of the reputation of the city, avoid fraud and the

creation of nuisances, settle disputes within their crafts or within the city courts, honor the civic officials, and generally support the common good of the city. The mayor's court provided examples of the punishments of those who did not follow the laws and rules. The Letter Books, so called because each was assigned a letter of the alphabet, were compilations of important cases and their resolutions, royal correspondence, ordinances, and matters that the city wanted to have available for ready reference. The Assize of Bread recorded the frauds of bakers. The Coroners' Rolls, sporadically preserved, described the investigations into violent deaths. The *Journals of the Common Council* for the fifteenth century provide a wealth of details about running the city, ritual preparations, and information about major civic events. Taken as a whole, these London records provide scripts for ceremonials, show the role of officials in enforcing ordinances and respect for officers (often through ceremonies), and paint a picture of the goals of a civil society. Added to the rich municipal archives used in researching this study are those of the gilds, of parishes, and the private accounts of citizens and observers. All these sources speak to the need to maintain a civic culture that would contribute to the peace and prosperity of the city.

The compilation of the *Liber Albus* was a sign of changes in London and the consolidation of power in the hands of the elite that occurred in the last half of the fourteenth century and the first half of the fifteenth. Several crucial factors contributed to these changes, but perhaps one of the most important was the depopulation caused by the Black Death of 1348–49 and the periodic revisitations that occurred almost every generation thereafter. The plague substantially reduced the population of London and concentrated wealth in the hands of a small group of men and women. The changes did not happen immediately. Some transitions were violent, with factions fighting each other and royalty involved in the process. Others were more gradual, such as the increased export of English wool, which enriched many Londoners in the merchant gilds engaged in long-distance trade. And some of the transition was social, resulting from marriage patterns among the elite that tended to concentrate wealth in the hands of a few men.<sup>9</sup>

The writing of history would not be complete without some discussion of time and how the city marked it. London, unlike Florence and Venice, marked time by regnal years. Londoners were part of the realm of England and a charter from the king granted their freedoms. But they also marked time by the mayoral office holder, whose term was a year. Liturgical time, however, played a different role in London than it did in

the rituals of the continental cities. The mayors were elected on the Feast of the Apostles Simon and Jude, but other than a mass held before the election, the ceremonies were entirely secular. The same was true of the election of sheriffs. There were elements of religion in the ceremonies, but no ecclesiastical official participated in the elections. The mayor, sheriffs, and aldermen processed on major feast days, but, again, no bishop participated the procession. The Bishop of London played no major role in civic ceremonies. In Venice, the liturgical and political calendars were closely allied,<sup>10</sup> and the city of Bruges contributed heavily to the religious celebrations.<sup>11</sup> Florence tied both its economic and political power to its shrines and churches.<sup>12</sup> London, by comparison, was secular in its official ceremonies.

London was not alone among the cities of late medieval Europe that employed civic ceremonies as a tool for displaying power and reinforcing the authority of their officials. The Italian and Burgundian cities developed more ambitious civic rituals in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. London's late fourteenth- and fifteenth-century shows seem very modest compared to these. In England, much of the discussion about civic ceremonial has centered on the provincial cities, their theatrical performances in particular. One of the central questions has been whether or not theatrical performances and other ceremonies promoted harmony in the cities or served to underscore inequalities of wealth and power. Initially, the historians Mervyn James and Charles Phythian Adams made strong arguments for the integrative power of civic ceremony and the performance of plays; however, later scholars found that the plays, civic rituals, and ceremonies of civic office or royal and noble entries served to elevate the elite and reinforce the lesser denizens' lower place in the social hierarchy.<sup>13</sup> The argument that civic ceremonial, even in the religious plays of Corpus Christi, tended to separate the powerful from the middling and poor carries the weight of evidence.

One observation about late medieval English towns, however, is universal to the studies. Performative actions were the great teachers of hierarchical order and an honored tradition in urban centers. The ceremonies of installation to office, the maces and swords born before the mayor, and the liveries so lovingly described in the city records all announced the importance of officials. These were not empty theatrical effects, but were part and parcel of creating the official's power. Likewise, humiliation rituals were very visible to the population and taught lessons of behavior. Although literacy was becoming more common during the fifteenth century, oral and visual practices still conveyed powerful messages.

In exploring the use of ceremony and ritual for establishing a respect for hierarchy and in instilling a civic culture in medieval London, it is crucial to understand the urban environment. The physical landscape included residential, business, and market spaces, as well as governmental, religious, and social spaces. The major ones, civic and royal, were on the main arteries of the city. Their ceremonial routes are mapped in chapter 1. Rituals of humiliation occurred on the main thoroughfares and also in the offender's neighborhood. The sacred spaces were St. Paul's Cathedral and the parish churches. Governmental spaces included the Guildhall and also the halls of the various guilds, the pillory, prisons, and the Tower of London. The whole of the city was available and used for ritual and ceremony. The social landscape was of equal importance. The ranks in society included citizens, apprentices, yeomen, servants, and immigrants from the English hinterland, as well as from abroad. Of these groups, those who acquired citizenship, or became "free of the city" as it was called, were by far the smallest. Women were present in all these ranks, although they were few among the citizens unless through marriage and scarce among apprentices, and there were none among yeoman. But women made up a large proportion of immigrants, especially as servants. Londoners were proud of their city and wrote about its history, struggles against the crown, charters, and assets. Chapter 1 also discusses the myth that London was the new Troy.

Because London's relationship to the crown was so important to the city's identity and independence, chapter 2 gives a brief history of their clashes. The crown sought control over the city and required continual infusions of money, while the city sought to maintain its right to self-government. The mayor and other civic officials had to uphold the independence of London, but do so in a way that would not provoke the king to exert his authority over the city. The biggest threat to the city's independence was internal unrest that became violent and could lead the king to take the city into his own hands. If individuals or factions called upon royal aid, as happened at the end of the fourteenth century, then the charter was in danger. An adroit mayor had to negotiate among the fractious guilds, a restive commons, and the crown. Needless to say, not all mayors were so skilled. As always, London had to treat the monarch with the greatest of care, and this meant loans, lavish gifts, and elaborate royal entries. The relationship was symbiotic, but it required the city to be constantly vigilant.

Since the mayors of London were elected for a year term, their elevation to dignity of office required elaborate ceremonies that were convincing to

the denizens of the city, as well as to the king. Chapter 3 describes civic ceremonials surrounding the urban elite as they went through the election of the mayor and his procession to Westminster and back. These ceremonies were well established, but the *Liber Albus* presented the script for the election, complete with stage directions for where everyone was to stand and move in the Guildhall and on the procession to Westminster and back. An early fourteenth-century Chamberlain, Andrew Horn, provided an excerpt from Bruno Latini, an Italian scholar, on the desirable attributes of the mayor. This excerpt in *Liber Horn* must have been well known to mayors and later recorders and certainly to Carpenter, because the advice seems to have been followed. To defend the dignity of office a mayor sometimes had to assert his rights against an earl, and fifteenth-century mayors were also insistent that they had the traditional right to participate in coronations.

The position of the mayor and civic officials also had to be maintained against inhabitants of the city who trespassed on their authority or who defied city laws. In chapter 4 the distinction of rank appears in the types of punishment administered to those people rebellious against the authority and person of the mayor and those of lower rank who defied the civic ordinances. Members of the elite who slandered the mayor or aldermen pledged vast quantities of wine, but these were usually reduced to a fine or the promise of a tun (265 gallons) or more if they offended again. A citizen could be stripped of his freedom for the most egregious offenses and barred from trading in London. Lesser people went to prison or were paraded to the pillory. To preserve the city of nuisance, such as streets not cleaned or buildings that overlooked other people's gardens and privies, the city had an Assize of Nuisances. Moral cleanness was also maintained through the punishment of bawds and prostitutes. Nowhere is the language of disapprobation clearer than in the cases of slander and the sale of fraudulent products. These offenders had no regard for the common good, the health of the consumers, the mayor, the king, and even God when they slandered or produced unwholesome food. Market morality had been transgressed.

By the end of the fourteenth century, the gilds had come to be active partners with the civic officials in enforcing apprenticeship contracts, determining citizenship, regulating the products they produced, and punishing members who offended. The major office holders, including the mayors, aldermen, and sheriffs, were drawn from the elite gilds. Chapter 5 discusses gild structure, hierarchy within the gilds, livery, gildhalls, and gild courts. Through apprenticeships, regulation of the quality of gild craft

products, elections of wardens, and gild oaths and initiation rituals, guilds taught respect for hierarchy, but they also provided lessons in conducting trade and in social relations that were essential to the development of a civic culture in London. For the citizens (freemen) of London, the gild system was the most important indoctrination. Guilds faced serious problems regulating non-gild members, such as journeymen, who worked for wages, or skilled craftsmen from the Continent. But eventually they, too, imitated the gild structure and were assimilated into the gild, as lesser members.

Most of London's population, however, were not citizens or members of guilds. Chapter 6 explores the measures that officials undertook to educate these people into the laws and customs of the city. Civic ceremonial and public punishments were only one tool. The city also had public readings in English of the laws and customs. A variety of institutions helped to indoctrinate newcomers and noncitizens. Taverns and inns were often the place of first contact for strangers and aliens. The city essentially made taverners responsible for their guests and for informing them of the laws about bearing arms and curfew. After three nights, the person was no longer a guest and had to join the peacekeeping unit in the ward in which he resided. The wards, under the governance of an alderman, became vehicles for teaching the city ordinances. Parish churches welcomed not only long-term inhabitants but also newcomers. The parish was a place for a mix of population, but it, too, was hierarchical, the wealthier members serving as churchwardens. But the parishes and parish guilds provided an opportunity to learn something of governance. Finally, there were popular ballads and civic statuary that carried didactic lessons on behavior.

The wide use of public ceremonies indicates the fragile peace that the city managed to maintain. Only a small fraction of the population occupied the status of citizen, and they were outnumbered by a large majority of inhabitants. Of the free of the city, only a small elite participated in the civic offices or were members of the council. There was, therefore, a substantial portion of the city that could potentially turn to rebellion or at least disrupt the harmony of the city. Taken all together, London in the fifteenth century successfully managed to instill a sense of identity with city and teach lessons that promoted a civic culture. After a turbulent history in the thirteenth and fourteenth century, London negotiated the difficult politics of the Wars of the Roses in the fifteenth century with few challenges to the authority of the civic government or the hierarchical order of its denizens.

