

**'The Veray Registre of All Trouthe': The Content,
Function, and Character of the Civic Registers of
London and York c.1274-c.1482**

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Abstract

This thesis offers a characterisation of the medieval civic register, based on a study of the content, structure, presentation and function of manuscript registers held by the administrations of London and York between c. 1274 and c. 1482. Previous scholarly discussions of administrative writing produced in medieval English towns have tended to treat this material simply as an unproblematic source of historical data, or either to focus on single records, or provide a survey of urban, or even national, documentation in general. This study argues that the civic register functioned as a distinct genre in the medieval city, and that treatment of it in its own right as an element of urban culture provides significant evidence of both literate practice and a sense of citizenship in this period.

Chapter One discusses the context of the production and reception of writing in the medieval English city in which these civic registers were compiled. Chapters Two and Three constitute detailed studies of the content, structure, and the circumstances surrounding the production of civic registers from London and York respectively. Chapter Two focuses on four of the manuscripts categorised as *customals* in London's Corporation of London Record Office, comparing them with other administrative and privately held manuscripts from the city. Chapter Three engages in a process of reconstructing the likely medieval state of both one of York's medieval registers, and the collection of registers in its archive as a whole, based on surviving manuscript evidence. Chapter Four examines the evidence for the symbolic function of these registers, including a description of their decoration. Chapter Five considers the influence of individual compilers on the registers they worked with, incorporating a discussion of the role of the common clerk in medieval York and London, and of statements attached to registers by their compilers of what they perceived their purpose to be.

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Notes On the Text.

The translations which appear in this thesis are my own except where I have stated otherwise. Translations appear in the text, to facilitate reading, while the original quotations, in Latin, French, or Italian, have been placed in foot-notes. In the transcriptions of Middle English texts, the letters 'thorn' and 'yogh' have been rendered as 'th' and 'y', and I have altered the use, or absence of capital letters, to match modern procedure.

In referencing and in the bibliography I have followed the procedures recommended in the *MHRA Style Book*, 4th edn (London: Modern Humanities Research Association, 1991), except when referring to manuscripts, when I have preferred to list the city where the manuscript is held, followed by the name of the repository, the holding reference of the manuscript, and finally the folio number in the first instance, and the name of the repository, followed by the holding reference in subsequent instances. The exceptions to this rule are the manuscripts held by the CLRO and categorised by them as 'customals', which are referred to in most scholarly discussion by their titles as, for example, the *Liber de Antiquis Legibus*, the *Liber Horn*, and the *Liber Albus*: this procedure has also been followed here. In Chapter Three, York, YCA, MS D1 has been referred to simply as MS D1 after the first reference: the detailed discussion of which it is the focus in this chapter precludes confusion, and repeated use of the longer form of referencing would have made this section of the argument more awkward to read. York, YCA, MSs A/Y and B/Y, the *Memorandum Books*, are also categorised in York City Archives as York, YCA, MSs E20 and E20A, but as they are more commonly known by the former classifications I have used those here.

In discussion of the contents of manuscripts I normally refer to folio numbers, where those manuscripts survive. However, where I have referred to contents to supply evidence for my argument, for example in the discussion of the storage and ceremonial use of civic registers in Chapter Four, or the background of common clerks in Chapter Five, I have referred to the page numbers of published editions. This is to enable these references to be traced more easily.

Abbreviations

<i>CEMCR</i>	<i>Calendar of Early Mayor's Court Rolls Preserved Among the Archives of the Corporation of the City of London at the Guildhall A.D. 1298-1307</i> , ed. by A.H. Thomas (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1924)
CLRO	Corporation of London Record Office
<i>CPMR</i>	<i>Calendar of Plea and Memoranda Rolls Preserved Among the Archives of the Corporation of the City of London at the Guildhall 1323-1482</i> , ed. by A.H. Thomas and P.E. Jones, 6 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1926-61)
<i>HB</i>	<i>York House Books 1461-1490</i> , ed. by Lorraine Attreed, 2 vols (London and Gloucester: Alan Sutton, 1991)
<i>LBA-L</i>	<i>Calendars of the Letter-Books of the City of London: Letter-Books A-L, 1275-1498</i> , ed. by R.R. Sharpe, 11 vols (London: John Edward Francis, 1899-1912)
<i>YMBI and II</i>	<i>York Memorandum Book, Part I (1376-1419) and Part II (1388-1493)</i> , ed. by Maud Sellers, Surtees Society, 120 and 125 (1911 and 1914) (Durham: Andrews; London: Bernard Quaritch, 1912 and 1915)
<i>YMBIII</i>	<i>York Memorandum Book, III</i> , ed. by Joyce W. Percy, Surtees Society, 186 (1969) (Gateshead: Northumberland Press, 1973)
<i>MED</i>	<i>The Middle English Dictionary, A-</i> , ed. by Hans Kurath and Sherman M. Kuhn, 3rd printing (Ann Arbor, Michigan: The University of Michigan Press, 1956-)
<i>Munimenta</i>	<i>Munimenta Gildhallae Londoniensis: Liber Albus, Liber Custumarum et Liber Horn</i> , ed. by Henry Thomas Riley, 4 vols (London: Longman, Brown, Green, Longmans, and Roberts, 1859-62)
<i>OED</i>	<i>The Oxford English Dictionary</i> , prepared by J.A. Simpson and E.S.C. Weiner, 2nd edn, 20 vols (Oxford, Clarendon, 1989; repr. 1991)

YCA

York City Archives

Introduction

This thesis will provide a characterisation of the medieval civic register, collections of urban and national legislative and administrative documents, usually in the form of a codex, which frequently also include writing designed to chronicle, describe, or celebrate the city, and were typically compiled and produced by urban governments. This characterisation will be based on the content, style, decoration, and functions of registers produced in London and York between the close of the thirteenth and the end of the fifteenth centuries.

Previous Scholarly Treatments of Medieval Administrative Records:

Compilations of copies of urban charters, laws and customs in the form of volumes survive from a number of medieval cities other than London and York in this period.¹ Modern scholarly discussion most commonly titles these collections as 'customals', although in fact this term is never used by their contemporary users and compilers in London and York, who tend to describe these manuscripts as '*libri*' or 'registers' respectively.² Geoffrey Martin has argued that the earliest customals, which 'seem often to date from the decades around 1300', appear as a result of 'a concern with recording the customs of local communities' in response to incursions of royal power, and defines customals thus as 'statements of customs in the broadest sense, ranging from forms of action and other usages of the borough courts to rules of inheritance, penalties, tolls, and terms of trade' which 'naturally invited the addition of other customary and historical lore'.³ Michael Clanchy has described 'registers', as a more general variety of medieval writing, as 'collections, in books or rolls, which had been compiled from primary sources from separate pieces of parchment' and acknowledges that the application of this term to a range

¹See M. Bateson, *Borough Customs*, 2 vols, Selden Society, 18 and 21 (1904 and 1906) (London: Bernard Quaritch, 1904 and 1906), I, pp. xviii.-lvi., for a list of town customals which, while it is incomplete, offers some idea of the number and nature of these volumes in medieval English towns.

²See Chapter Two, pp. 70-1.

³Geoffrey Martin, 'English Town Records, 1200-1350', in *Pragmatic Literacy, East and West 1200-1330*, ed. by Richard Britnell (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell, 1997), pp. 119-30 (p. 126).

of collections of records from both ecclesiastical and secular administrative backgrounds means that a 'wide definition' of this genre is necessary.⁴

Several of these compilatory volumes from cities other than York and London have been published in editions which date from the turn of the century. The *Mayor's Register* or *Black Book* from Coventry, for example, was apparently begun in 1421 and later copied or interpolated into the surviving *Leet Book* of the city: the volume contains records of civic elections, ordinances from the city's court, accounts of money collected from individuals for loans to the king, copies or descriptions of the procedure followed in royal entries to the city, and a short chronicle of national events.⁵ Amongst other documentary collections, Norwich held a compilation of its customs in the *Liber Consuetudinum*, compiled probably around 1308; the *Old Free Book*, which was started in 1344 to record memoranda of the administration, such as its maintenance of the walls, and from around 1384 became dedicated to recording the names of freemen and sometimes civic officials; and the *Liber Albus*, begun in 1426, which included records of the city's rights and legal actions dating back to the close of the thirteenth century, together with copies of the oaths of civic officials.⁶ Together with its *Great Red Book* and *Little Red Book*, the administration of medieval Bristol produced its *Maire of Bristow is Kalendar*, compiled in around 1479 by the common clerk Robert Ricart, which includes among its contents a chronicle describing the mythical foundation of Bristol by the Trojan Brynne, a detailed account of the process of mayoral elections, and two diagrams, of the mayor swearing his oath, and of the city of Bristol arranged in four quarters around a central cross.⁷ These volumes thus

⁴Michael Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record: England 1066-1307*, 2nd edn (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993), p. 103.

⁵*The Coventry Leet Book: or Mayor's Register, Containing the Records of the City Court Leet or View of Frankpledge, A.D. 1420-1555*, ed. by Mary Dormer Harris, Early English Text Society, original series, 134, 135, 138, 146 (1907-1913), I-II, 134-5 (1907-8) (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner: 1907-8), pp. xiii.-xvi.

⁶*The Records of the City of Norwich*, ed. by William Hudson and John Cottingham Tingey, 2 vols (Norwich and London: Jarrold, 1906 and 1910): on the *Liber Consuetudinum*, see I, p. xxxix., and pp. cxix.-cxxi.; on the *Old Free Book*, see I, pp. xlii.-xliv.; on the *Liber Albus*, see I, p. cvi., and p. 122, and II, p. 254;

⁷*The Maire of Bristow is Kalendar, by Robert Ricart, Town Clerk of Bristol 18 Edward IV*, ed. by Lucy Toulmin Smith, Camden Society, new series, 5 (1872) (Westminster: J. B. Nichols and Sons, 1892).

contain combinations of the legislative, customary, and historical material typical of the 'custumal' as Geoffrey Martin describes it, and constitute in at least some cases the collection together of copies of documents already existing separately elsewhere into the form of a volume which Michael Clanchy has suggested as the characteristic format of the register.

For the editors of these urban custumals or registers the value of their publications was clear: to provide in written form information useful for historians of the medieval city, or to compile, as the editor of the *Coventry Leet Book* puts it, a 'storehouse of information' for 'the student of economics and of municipal institutions'.⁸ These editors were thus interested in the data which the books could offer, rather than in the structure, function, and the background to the production of the manuscripts themselves. This fact is underlined in the editions of the *Coventry Leet Book* and *The Records of the City of Norwich* by the almost complete absence of description of the structure, presentation, and dating of the manuscript volumes. Their introductions instead offer lengthy discussions of how the records furnish information on the administrations, population, and history of the city. Such editions made much more widely accessible a range of information invaluable for the study of all aspects of the medieval city, and much of the subsequent scholarly discussion which has referred to English urban custumals or registers has made use of them in this way. The manuscripts, as compilations of the most significant ordinances and laws of the medieval city, have in particular served as valuable sources for recent studies tracing developments in the medieval city in England.⁹ Richard Holt and Gervase Rosser have described the 'period between the late twelfth century and the beginning of the sixteenth' as one which saw 'dramatic changes in urban life': 'the era opened, in a context of rapid population growth, with a rising trend of urban expansion and new town foundations; by the middle of

⁸Dormer, *The Coventry Leet Book*, p. ix., and p. xi.

⁹See, for example, Edward Miller and John Hatcher, *Medieval England: Towns Commerce and Crafts, 1086-1348* (London and New York: Longman, 1995), and R. H. Hilton, *English and French Towns in Feudal Society: A Comparative Study* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), which list editions of registers from a range of towns including London and, in the case of the former, York, in their bibliographies.

the fourteenth century that trend was reversed, and [...] towns inevitably contracted both in size and numbers'.¹⁰ The civic register offers in some cases the only copy of information on the historical events and legislative steps which mark these increasing rights of self-government, or stages of decline, in the medieval city.

This treatment of the civic register, however, ignores the significance of this kind of writing as an element of the changes inherent in the medieval city, rather than simply as a description or record of these changes.¹¹ In many ways the production of detailed studies of the social structure, economy, and history of the medieval city form a prerequisite for the examination of the role of the civic register in urban society, and in recent years some scholars have begun to examine the importance of the custumal or register other than as an information resource, and to seek to explain its production and its contemporary uses. As in the case of Sheila Lindenbaum, in her article 'Ceremony and Oligarchy: the London Midsummer Watch', those engaged in research have begun to recognise the interest of the administrative record, as a distinctive feature of medieval society, in their discussions of other aspects of that society.¹² Lindenbaum argues that the ceremony employed in the Midsummer watch of London between the 1370s and the 1530s, and employed and controlled by the ruling authorities in the town, was part of a policy of power enforcement by an oligarchy within the city: she suggests that the record books in which the event was recorded constituted 'a reproductive strategy [...] ensuring the perpetuation of the oligarchs' will' and 'prescribing the behaviour of future generations'.¹³ In dealing only briefly and tangentially with administrative record books and regarding them simply as the propaganda of a single social group, Lindenbaum inevitably minimises the significance of such

¹⁰Richard Holt and Gervase Rosser, 'Introduction: The English Town in the Middle Ages', in *The English Medieval Town: A Reader in English Urban History, 1200-1540*, ed. by Richard Holt and Gervase Rosser (London and New York: Longman, 1990), pp. 1-28 (p. 1).

¹¹Secondary literature dealing specifically with the civic registers of London and York will be discussed in Chapters Two and Three.

¹²Sheila Lindenbaum, 'Ceremony and Oligarchy: The London Midsummer Watch', in *City and Spectacle in Medieval Europe*, ed. by Barbara A. Hanawalt and Kathryn L. Reyerson, *Medieval Studies at Minnesota*, 6 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994), pp. 171-88.

¹³Lindenbaum, 'Ceremony and Oligarchy', p. 181.

records. Her work does emphasise, however, that books such as these are not merely repositories of uninterested fact, but worthy of study as the documentation of a society which on the contrary was extremely interested in methods of self-promotion.

A few scholars have focused their research on close study of the form and use of administrative records. Geoffrey Martin, in articles surveying the range and development of administrative records in the English borough in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, has argued that although only a relatively small number of early urban documents are extant, yet 'they have a good deal to tell us about their purpose and effect'.¹⁴ Martin discusses the structure and inter-relationship of surviving records, examining how series of documentation were begun or changed to serve a function within the growing archive of the medieval borough, and highlighting the techniques developed by their keepers for 'the management of records'.¹⁵ Martin thus points towards how study of the form of such records can disclose evidence of how they were regarded, in practical terms at least, by the urban clerks and governors who controlled and produced them, and how they were designed and modified to make them more useful.

The most influential discussion of the significance of administrative writing in general in England in the Middle Ages is Michael Clanchy's *From Memory to Written Record*, which treats the proliferation of documentary writing at local level as a manifestation of 'the growth of a literate mentality'.¹⁶ Clanchy focuses on 'the pressures of emerging bureaucracy' in particular during the thirteenth century as the main cause of the expansion of writing: 'through the spread of record-making the practice of using writing for ordinary business [...] became first familiar and then established as a habit'.¹⁷ However, he also traces the other processes by which

¹⁴Geoffrey Martin, 'The English Borough in the Thirteenth Century', originally in *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 5th series, 13 (1963), 123-44, repr. in Holt and Rosser, *The English Medieval Town*, pp. 29-48 (p. 47); 'The Origins of Borough Records', *Journal of the Society of Archivists*, 2 (1960-1964), 147-53; 'English Town Records'.

¹⁵Martin, 'English Town Records', p. 130. Martin discusses these techniques on pp. 130-1.

¹⁶Clanchy, *From Memory*, p. 2. The second half of Clanchy's book is devoted to examining the ways in which 'the literate mentality' developed.

¹⁷Clanchy, *From Memory*, p. 333, and p. 2.

documentary writing came to be valued and trusted, examining, for example, developments in the production and format of records, changes in the symbolic conceptualisation of writing, and levels of literacy in medieval England. According to Clanchy's argument, the spread of a 'literate mentality' enabled an increasing number of people to appreciate and explore the possibilities offered by writing, but this appreciation was dependent on experience of writing produced for practical or administrative, rather than aesthetic purposes: 'trust in writing and understanding of what it could - and could not - achieve developed from growing familiarity with documents.'¹⁸ Clanchy offers a detailed and broad-based account of the social and literate background to the increase in administrative writing. However, the comprehensiveness of his study precludes particular discussion of the records of the medieval town, which are touched on only briefly in his survey of the national spread of documentation - in addition, the period with which it deals is almost entirely outwith that of this thesis, and before the civic register seems to have appeared in a significant number of English towns. Clanchy's argument provides important contextual information for the study of the civic registers of London and York, and suggests many of the factors contributory to the establishment of administrative writing, but its design does not involve the detailed characterisation of a specific type of record which will be offered here.

Other studies have undertaken to examine and discuss the administrative records of particular cities. The medieval customals produced in the Cinque Ports, and especially those of Sandwich and Faversham, between the late thirteenth and the end of the fifteenth centuries have been investigated in a Ph.D. thesis by Justin Croft.¹⁹ Like Michael Clanchy, Croft interprets these manuscripts as a means of measuring the growth of a 'literate mentality', but in this instance specifically in these medieval towns: he states that his examination of 'evidence for composition, editing, compilation and codification is considered [...] not as an end in itself, but as a means of understanding the culture associated with documents in medieval

¹⁸Clanchy, *From Memory*, p. 2.

¹⁹Justin P. Croft, 'The Customals of the Cinque Ports c.1290-c.1500' (unpublished doctoral dissertation, The University of Kent, 1997)

urban administration.²⁰ His study focuses on the content of these customals, and on the immediate historical circumstances surrounding their production, to identify the motivation for the codification of borough customs in the format of the customal at specific times in these towns. Brigitte Bedos-Rezak, by contrast, emphasises the symbolic value of documentary records to an urban administration in her discussion of the medieval records of northern French towns. Bedos-Rezak has described the shared involvement of urban citizens and governors in the production of civic records when inhabitants brought their documents to be inscribed in the records of the administration, and participated in the ceremonial 'spectacle' and 'liturgy' of this inscription.²¹ She argues that civic records 'helped to establish the medieval city as a quasi-sacred centre of ceremony and political prestige, while documentary rituals and obligations reinforced urban social cohesion.'²² Like Lindenbaum, then, Bedos-Rezak points to close connections between civic writing and ceremony, except that Bedos-Rezak argues that the civic record has considerable symbolic value in itself, rather than simply describing and so perpetuating the symbolic meaning associated with ritual.

Most recently, Sheila Lindenbaum has argued that the wide range of writing produced by and for London's citizens between 1375 and 1485, including administrative records such as the *Liber Albus*, both reflected and assisted in the efforts of 'the merchant élite' to validate their authority.²³ Lindenbaum suggests that London citizens exercised their literate skills to authorise their social group or groups in the late fourteenth century when Lollard writings had contributed to a period of 'instability within documentary culture', and in the fifteenth century when the government was concerned 'to normalise discourse, to produce a standardised way of writing and speaking'.²⁴ As in her article 'Ceremony and Oligarchy: The

²⁰Croft, 'The Customals of the Cinque Ports', p. 14.

²¹Brigitte Bedos-Rezak, 'Civic Liturgies and Urban Records in Northern France, 1100-1400', in Hanawalt and Reyerson, *City and Spectacle*, pp. 34-55 (p. 42, and p. 43)

²²Bedos-Rezak, 'Civic Liturgies', pp. 45-6. Bedos-Rezak's ideas will be discussed further in Chapter Four, pp. 192-4.

²³Sheila Lindenbaum, 'London Texts and Literate Practice', in *The Cambridge History of Medieval English Literature*, ed. by David Wallace (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 284-309 (p. 285).

²⁴Lindenbaum, 'London Texts and Literate Practice', p. 285 and p. 294.

London Midsummer Watch', discussed above, Lindenbaum treats this writing exclusively as the product of what she considers to have been the political agenda of London's medieval citizens. She describes the 'merchant élite' as a 'political group whose textual activities served to regulate behaviour, produce social distinctions and ensure the survival of oligarchic rule.'²⁵ Consequently, her study overlooks the range of other possible functions served by administrative and other kinds of writing in London, although it underlines the fact that medieval citizens consciously valued administrative documents as more than disinterested records. Croft's, Bedos-Rezak's, and Lindenbaum's discussions, while their treatment of urban administrative documentation is quite different, insist on the intrinsic importance of the written record in the culture of the medieval city.

The Methodology Employed in This Thesis:

The chapters which follow will undertake a detailed study of the civic registers of York and London, in order to characterise the documentary genre which, I will argue, they collectively constitute. From London, seven of the volumes categorised as 'customals' in the city's modern archive will be discussed, and four of these - the *Liber de Antiquis Legibus*, the *Liber Legum Regum Antiquorum*, the *Liber Horn*, and the *Liber Albus* - will be studied in detail. From York, the registers partly published and known as the *Freemen's Register* and the *Memorandum Books* - York, YCA, MSs D1, A/Y, and B/Y - will be examined, together with registers which are referred to in the city's records but no longer survive. Chapter One describes the context of documentary and literary production and reception in the medieval city in which these volumes emerged, and reviews scholarly ideas concerning both medieval literacy, and the culture connecting writing with the expression of urban pride and identity in fourteenth and fifteenth-century Florence. Florence provides an example of an urban environment in which a tradition of writing praising, describing, or chronicling the city is conspicuous in a range of surviving texts, and has been acknowledged and discussed in detail by

²⁵Lindenbaum, 'London Texts and Literate Practice', p. 285.

modern research: it therefore offers a valuable point of comparison for the study of English civic registers in this thesis.

Chapters Two and Three provide detailed analysis of the content and structure of the civic registers of London and York respectively which are the focus of the thesis, and discussion of what is known of their compilers. The contrasting nature of the medieval archives of the two cities necessitates a differing treatment of their registers. A wide range of records survive from the medieval administration of London, and the majority of the registers to be discussed here have been published, and their contents described; a very much more limited number and variety of records are extant from medieval York, and many of the civic registers which are referred to in the city's records have either been lost, or exist only in modified form. The more established nature of London's registers enables their contents and structure to be described and the common characteristics of these collections, and the genre as a whole, to be delineated in Chapter Two, instituting a model for comparison with the manuscripts from York. Chapter Three bases its examination of York's civic registers on a process of reconstruction, of one of the city's medieval registers - York, YCA, MS D1, the *Freemen's Register* - and of its archive as a whole. This analysis points to essential similarities in the form and development of the registers of York and London, and furthermore provides a profile of how the treatment of civic records in York changed throughout our period of interest, and how their function altered as the archive expanded.

Chapters Four and Five are concerned with establishing how the civic register was regarded by those who produced or came into contact with it, and what its functions were perceived to be. Chapter Four discusses the symbolic presentation of the civic register by the urban administration, examining evidence concerning the accessibility, contemporary description, use and decoration of these manuscripts. While both Lindenbaum and Bedos-Rezak have pointed to connections between the urban administrative record and ceremony, no previous research has offered a detailed study of the evidence for the symbolic conceptualisation of the civic register specifically. Chapter Five investigates the

individuals influential on the production of the civic registers examined in Chapters Two and Three: it describes the background, the authority, and the social status of the common clerks who were responsible for the production and preservation of these records, and the ways in which they shaped the registers on which they worked, and concludes by examining four statements attached to these registers by their compilers of what they considered their function and value to be. The thesis thus brings together information on the typical content and format of the civic register in London and York with evidence of its use and its usefulness to those who produced or viewed it, to build up a profile of the significance of this type of writing in the medieval city.

These two cities have been selected partly on the basis of their status in the kingdom in the later Middle Ages, and partly on that of their surviving civic records. While London was by far the largest English medieval city, York considered itself to be the chief town of the north: the *Chronicle of the Archbishops of York*, copied into York, YCA, MS A/Y in 1420, refers to York, undeniably with regional prejudice, as 'the chief city of all of the north of Britain', and places it on equal footing with London in describing the two cities as 'most celebrated before others both for their antiquity and their wealth of materials, and because they were frequented by so many peoples'.²⁶ For spells of time during our period of interest, both cities played host to or encompassed within their walls major ecclesiastical establishments, and both were centres of education. Literary and documentary exemplars were thus readily available in the writing produced by these other institutions, and opportunities were available for at least some sections of the

²⁶*Eboraca vero et ipsa totius aquilonalis et septentionalis Britannie civitatis principalis [...] praedictas duas civitates tam antiquitate et rerum opulentia, quam populorum frequentia Britannia prae ceteris nominatissimas habebat.*: *The Historians of the Church of York and Its Archbishops*, ed. by James Raine, 2 vols, *Rerum Britannicarum Medii Aevi Scriptores* (London: Longman and Trübner; Oxford: Parker; Cambridge: Macmillan; Edinburgh: Black and Douglas and Foulis; Dublin: Thom, 1886), II, pp. 312-421 (pp. 314-15). Steven Rigby refers to London as having a population 'in 1377 of about 50,000', and thus being 'the only town in England which was anywhere near the size of the great towns of Italy and the Low Countries'. He describes York as one of 'the four provincial capitals [...] with populations of between 8000 and 15,000.': S. H. Rigby, *English Society in the Later Middle Ages: Class, Status and Gender* (Basingstoke and London: Macmillan, 1995), pp. 145-6.

population to increase their levels of literacy.²⁷ In terms of their differences, too, York and London provide an appropriate combination for comparison: while London was exceptional in England in its size, influence, wealth, and proximity to the machinery of royal power, York provides a case-study of documentary consumption which is more typical of that of the English medieval town. The contrast between the surviving registers of the two cities is also advantageous for this study. Previous descriptions of the information contained in the registers of London and of the circumstances surrounding their production facilitate a more rapid delineation of their common features, while the dearth of scholarly discussion of the structure and range of contents of the civic registers of York makes a study of these manuscripts, and of the city's medieval archive, highly desirable.

The selection of manuscripts for this analysis also requires explanation. The manuscripts held by London's administration in the Middle Ages which are discussed here are categorised together in the city's modern archive as 'custumals', providing a pre-existing endorsement of their treatment collectively in this thesis. However, the thesis is partly engaged in a process of re-classifying these and other manuscripts from medieval London, and in their inclusion of chronicle, ceremonial description, and lists of civic officials in addition to legal records, and in their decoration, these 'custumals' are very similar to the late fourteenth and fifteenth century *Letter Books* of the city. The changing function of the *Letter Books*, and their significance in relation to the other records of London's medieval archive, is undoubtedly a further neglected area of research, and comparison will be made in this thesis between their content and presentation, and that of the 'custumals'. However, the 'custumals', and the privately held manuscripts to which they will be related in Chapter Two, are distinctive in that throughout this period they constitute deliberate efforts to collect together copies of specific writings which most frequently already appear elsewhere, sometimes apparently according to a preconceived plan. This does not seem to be true of the entire series of *Letter Books*. As in Michael Clanchy's description of the 'register' cited above, then,

²⁷See Chapter One, pp. 51-3, and the introductions to Chapters Two and Three.

these 'custumals' consist of juxtaposed copies of pre-existing primary records, and as such they supersede the immediate utility of the administrative document to provide a written record of a legislative decision or order. Moreover, no previous study has treated and compared these 'custumals' collectively. The civic registers of York appear typically to have accumulated their contents periodically, but the changes in their content and presentation indicate that some were, similarly, constructed to function in ways other than as the sole sources of legal information. Chapter Three has concentrated on study of those manuscripts which seem to have been designed to capitalise on the potential of writing to honour or authorise.

This study is distinctive, then, in its focus on identifying the characteristic features and functions of this particular group of administrative records in York and London. It will also, however, consider the implications of study of the civic register for our understanding of the literate culture and urban ideology in London and York. It will, first, contribute to the enquiry into the growth of a 'literate mentality' in medieval society which is the common interest of much of the secondary literature discussed above. In other words, it will partly treat the civic register as a means of measuring the extent to which both ability in reading, and interest in owning, producing, and experimenting with writing of this kind was established in York and London in the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries. As well as offering a focused characterisation of the civic register, it will also include discussion of the growth of the civic archive in London and York in this period. Secondly, it will emphasise the importance of the register as a distinctively urban phenomenon, and investigate its usefulness to the society of the medieval city as a means of describing and symbolising the city. These two areas of enquiry are intrinsically linked: in developing the text of these registers to conceptualise the city, their compilers and composers clearly recognised the potential of writing and the book to do more than simply record legislation. These registers thus provide evidence of literacy employed for purposes which cannot be strictly designated as 'pragmatic'.

In contrast with much of the previous research on medieval administrative writing discussed above, this study will be less concerned with the legislative contents of civic registers than with their more unusual contents, including chronicles and honorific description, which might be considered 'literary'. The scholarly discussions of administrative records reviewed above have been undertaken by historians, although they as frequently employ the techniques associated with the study of manuscripts as those of historical research. However, a recent review of the writing produced by medieval administrations commences by drawing a clear 'distinction between two different modes of written text': on the one hand 'the literary manuscript - the work of philosophy, theology, history, law, poetry or romance - which had the capacity to instruct, edify or entertain an indefinite number of readers' and 'were not always beautifully executed but [...] were usually marketable', and on the other writing which 'contributed to some legal or administrative operation' and was 'produced for the use of a particular administrator or property-owner', was 'written in cursive handwriting' and was copied only 'for administrative convenience, not to satisfy a wide range of readers.'²⁸ Typically, urban manuscripts have been differentiated by modern scholars into administrative records, considered to serve solely pragmatic purposes and to be the preserve of historians, and those containing descriptive, fictional, or historical texts, which have been studied by literary critics. The ensuing chapters will show that the civic register encompassed features of both types of text. Moreover, one of the contentions of this thesis will be that the compilers and readers of these manuscripts were less concerned with the kind of disciplinary and generic distinctions which govern much modern scholarly research, and that the nature of the manuscript compilation, and in this instance specifically of the civic register, exemplifies a more mobile conceptualisation of types of writing. This study will thus focus on both types of contents in the civic register, and will refer to existing research undertaken by historians, literary critics, and art historians.

²⁸Richard Britnell, 'Pragmatic Literacy in Latin Christendom', in Britnell, *Pragmatic Literacy*, pp. 3-24 (p. 3).

The methods of analysis employed here are, however, most frequently those of codicological study. I have undertaken to investigate the civic register as a whole, by considering in each case not only its content, but also its presentation and the process by which it has been constructed, if this can be ascertained. In many instances this has involved analysis and examination of the structure of the manuscripts themselves, although this preliminary work has already been undertaken to a considerable extent on the London customals discussed here. This methodology has been adopted in the belief that appreciation of the construction and contemporary treatment of these manuscripts will reveal how they were intended to function, and will reflect how they were regarded at various periods of time. Only through investigation of the typical content, style, presentation, and intended usefulness of the civic register can this genre be properly characterised, and its importance in medieval society be judged.

The process of re-defining these texts as a genre also requires an explanation of the terms chosen to describe them. Full justification of the application of the terms 'civic register' and 'civic writing' to these records can only be provided by the argument of the thesis itself. However, I have preferred the title of 'register' over that of 'customal' in the thesis as a whole, partly because that is the contemporary term used to describe this kind of administrative collection in York and in other medieval cities. Furthermore, the modern use of 'customal' emphasises the function of collecting together urban custom over any other values of these manuscripts. In London's archive the term has been used to distinguish those compilations held by the Guildhall by the end of the medieval period from those which were not, regardless of whether they originated as private or public collections - the thesis will argue that these manuscripts over-ride these twentieth-century distinctions. Because the category of 'customal' provides an established means of distinguishing these registers from others in the Corporation of London Record Office, however, I have used it in the thesis as a clear and easy means of delineating this group of manuscripts from London. The medieval definitions of 'registre' suggest both a more inclusive classification for this study, and point

towards certain features typically found in the manuscripts considered here. The *MED* defines 'registre' as 'a public record book'; 'a book of rules, procedures, or lore of a particular group'; 'a private account book'; or 'a written historical account', and 'registerer' as 'a recorder, historian'.²⁹ According to these definitions, a 'register' could be either public or private writing, and encompassed the records of any kind of community, as well as historical writing. I have employed the term 'register' to refer to collections of writings which were deliberately compiled together, but not necessarily formally bound as a volume during the medieval period. We cannot be sure that many of the manuscripts under discussion were bound in the Middle Ages: while London's *Liber Horn*, for example, still has its medieval binding, other manuscripts such as YCA, MS D1, which accumulated contents over a period of time, were certainly left unbound.

The adjective 'civic' is, of course, a modern term; its range of meanings, however, makes it suitable to describe the type of writing which will be discussed in the ensuing chapters.³⁰ The *OED* defines 'civic' as 'of, pertaining, or proper to citizens'; 'of or pertaining to a city, borough, or municipality'; and 'of a city as a particular kind of locality'.³¹ The discussion which follows will argue that this documentary genre developed to serve a combination of practical and aesthetic needs and interests peculiar to the medieval city, and that the civic register book provides an important means of gauging the development in these communities of both a 'literate mentality' and an impulse to describe and identify the city.

²⁹*MED registre* n. 1(a) (b) (c) and (d). *MED registerer* n.

³⁰The adjective 'civic' is employed with increasing frequency in discussions of medieval urban culture, although few studies have attempted to define it. See, for example, Lindenbaum, 'London Texts and Literate Practice'.

³¹*OED civic* a. 1(a) (first citation 1790) 2(a) (first citation 1656) 2(b) (first citation 1821).

Chapter One
Writing and Reading in the City

Introduction:

The medieval city was a "'nerve center" of expansion' in which 'schools and literacy spread', 'in culture and the world of ideas above all [...] a crossroads - a workshop of cultural models, a meeting-place of experiences'.¹ Most modern scholarly discussions of medieval urban culture tend to agree in identifying the city as a particularly fertile environment for the development of lay literacy, for a range of reasons, some of which will be touched on in the discussion below.² This thesis will argue that the civic registers of London and York which it will consider are distinctively urban in nature - in other words that they arose as a result of a combination of conditions and circumstances particular to the medieval city. It will also argue that they provide evidence among the aldermanic class of those cities of an intensification of interest in owning and reading legal and descriptive texts, and of an increasing attentiveness to manifestations of urban identity and unity. In order to do so, however, we need first to describe the literary context in which the registers were produced so that their significance can be ascertained, firstly within the culture of writing in London and York, and secondly within modern scholarly arguments concerning literacy.

This chapter will review what is known about writing in the English city in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, based primarily on modern scholarly research. It will deal in sequence with the genres of writing which were produced, owned, and used during this period in London and York; what can be deduced concerning the scribes who were responsible for at least part of their physical production; and finally with the urban readers whose interests dictated what was written. This successive focus on writing, writers, and readers inevitably leads into questions concerning literacy itself: how is it defined, and what influence does it bring to bear on how much, and what, was read? Certain aspects of these

¹Harvey J. Graff, *The Legacies of Literacy: Continuities and Contradictions in Western Culture and Society* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1987), p. 55; Jacques Le Goff, 'The Town as an Agent of Civilisation 1200-1500', in *The Fontana Economic History of Europe: The Middle Ages*, ed. by Carlo M. Cipolla (London: Fontana, 1972), pp. 71-95 (p. 84).

²See, as a recent example, David Nicholas, *The Later Medieval City 1300-1500* (London and New York: Longman, 1997), pp. 288-302.

questions will be addressed in the main body of the discussion, but the final section of the chapter will concentrate on the issue of what it signified to be literate in the later Middle Ages, and will deal with some of the contentions surrounding modern discussions of medieval literacy. To provide a point of comparison, this discussion of literacy will be preceded by a review of the context of textual consumption and of the uses made of literacy in contemporary Florence, a subject which has produced a substantial amount of detailed scholarly research.

Writing in the City:

By the middle of the fifteenth century we know from surviving evidence that a wide range of writing was being produced and appreciated in York and London. Documentary production flourished in the shape of account rolls and register books deriving from the urban government, religious institutions, and guilds.³ A number of London chronicles were in circulation, while in York two thirds of *The Chronicle of the Archbishops of York* had been compiled (probably at York Minster), and at least two chronicles had been produced at St Mary's Abbey, including the *Anonimale Chronicle*.⁴ Literary texts composed by poets based in

³Published versions of these records include, for London, *LBA-L; Calendar of Early Mayors' Court Rolls of the City of London, A.D. 1298-1307*, ed. by A. H. Thomas (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1924); *The Cartulary of Holy Trinity, Aldgate*, ed. by G. A. J. Hodgett, London Record Society, 7 (1971); and from York *The Chronicle of St Mary's Abbey, York From Bodley MS. 39*, ed. by H. H. E. Craster and M. E. Thornton, Surtees Society, 148 (1933) (Durham: Andrews; London: Bernard Quaritch, 1934); *York City Chamberlains' Account Rolls 1396-1500*, ed. by R. B. Dobson, Surtees Society, 192 (1978 and 1979) (Gateshead: Northumberland, 1980); *The Register of the Guild of Corpus Christi in the City of York*, ed. by R. Skaife, Surtees Society, 57 (1871) (Durham: Andrews; London: Whitaker; Bernard Quaritch; Edinburgh: Blackwood, 1872).

⁴On the London chronicles, see Mary-Rose MacLaren, 'The Textual Transmission of the London Chronicles', *English Manuscript Studies 1100-1700*, 3 (1992), 38-72, and *The Great Chronicle of London*, ed. by A. H. Thomas and I. D. Thornley (London: The Library Committee of the Corporation of London, 1938), pp. xxix.-lxxvi. The earlier two parts of *The Chronicle of the Archbishops of York* were copied into York, YCA, MS AY, fols. 219v.-246v., by the common clerk Roger Burton in 1420. For other manuscript copies, and the printed edition, see *The Historians of the Church of York and Its Archbishops*, ed. by James Raine, 2 vols, *Rerum Britannicarum Medii Aevi Scriptores* (London: Longman and Trübner; Oxford: Parker; Cambridge: Macmillan; Edinburgh: Black and Douglas and Foulis; Dublin: Thom, 1886), II. *The Anonimale Chronicle* is published as *The Anonimale Chronicle, 1333 to 1381*, ed. by V. H. Galbraith (London: Longmans, Green, 1927), and *The Anonimale Chronicle 1307 to 1334 From Brotherton Collection MS 29*, ed. by Wendy R. Childs and John Taylor, The Yorkshire Archaeological Society, Record Series, 147 (1987) (Leeds: University of Leeds,

London, such as Geoffrey Chaucer, William Langland, and Thomas Hoccleve were circulating, while the Corpus Christi plays had been established in York since at least the 1370s.⁵ This section of the discussion will extend this description of the texts being produced in the medieval city and the form which they took, but also locate them chronologically. Extant texts from the beginning of our period of interest, the end of the thirteenth century, are far fewer in number, and we can trace a process of expansion in the production of urban writing between then and the plurality of the fifteenth century.

The proliferation of documentary writing between the eleventh and fourteenth centuries has been authoritatively discussed by Michael Clanchy in his work *From Memory to Written Record*.⁶ Clanchy argues that the production of documents increased dramatically in the eleventh century, primarily in response to the demands of an expanding royal bureaucracy confirming its authority. This growth in the number of royal documents initiated both a new familiarity with secular writing amongst a wider section of the population, and a corresponding diffusion of the use of documents to almost all levels of society. Clanchy's contention that the development of literacy, and of writing, during this period was therefore 'a consequence of the demands of the "pragmatic" rather than the "cultivated" reader' is one to which we will return in the discussion of literacy with which this chapter closes.⁷ It also makes his argument relevant to the study of all the genres of urban writing discussed in this chapter. But his point that 'confidence in the written record was neither immediate nor automatic', and that the very reliability and veracity of a dated document had to be established - in contrast to the traditional use of oral witness - highlights the fact that even in the thirteenth century a culture of using and trusting writing for secular purposes was still in the process of development.⁸ Moreover, Clanchy emphasises that thinking about the function

1991). See Childs and Taylor, *The Anonimale Chronicle*, pp. 2-3, and Craster and Thornton, *The Chronicle of St Mary's Abbey* for other chronicles produced in the abbey.

⁵*The York Plays*, ed. by Richard Beadle (London: Edward Arnold, 1982), p. 20.

⁶M. T. Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record: England 1066-1307*, 2nd edn (Oxford and Cambridge, Massachusetts: Blackwell, 1993).

⁷Clanchy, *From Memory*, p. 247.

⁸Clanchy, *From Memory*, p. 2.

and utility of writing also advanced only gradually, and that 'making documents for administrative use, keeping them as records, and using them again for reference were three distinct stages of development which did not automatically and immediately follow from each other.'⁹ The acculturation of writing was still very much in progress in the period we are studying here.

Clanchy's theory that documentary habits were transferred as a result of exposure to royal bureaucracy is supported by the existence of the first surviving civic ordinances of the city of York, dated in 1301. These were produced during one of the periods when the king, and the royal administration, were based in York, probably in response to problems incurred as a result of the influx of royal servants, and 'some were clearly based on national legislation'.¹⁰ There is no evidence that the ordinances were copied into York's civic records (the only surviving copy is in the crown's exchequer plea roll).¹¹ Their production pre-dates the inception of most of the city's copies of York's other extant civic records by some years, although charters survive from between 1155 and 1162.¹² The city's *Freemens' Register*, York, YCA, MS D1, has contents dating back to 1272, but while it must be based on material originally inscribed around this time, it probably was not begun until the fourteenth century.¹³ The *Memorandum Books*, York, YCA, MSs AY and BY, were begun in 1376 and 1371 respectively.¹⁴ The city's chamberlain's accounts survive from 1396, although as Barrie Dobson has stated 'it

⁹Clanchy, *From Memory*, p. 154.

¹⁰Michael Prestwich, 'York Civic Ordinances, 1301', *Borthwick Papers*, 49 (1976), p. 4. The potential reasons for the production of the ordinances are discussed by Prestwich on pp. 1-4.

¹¹Prestwich in fact argues that the civic authorities chose deliberately not to model subsequent ordinances on those of 1301, because of 'the way in which they were forced on the city by the royal authorities.' Prestwich, 'York Civic Ordinances, 1301', p. 6.

¹²The city's records are described in *Catalogue of the Charters, House Books etc. Belonging to the Corporation of York*, ed by William Giles (York: 1908). See, however, D. M. Palliser, 'York's earliest administrative record', *The Yorkshire Archaeological Journal* 50 (1978), 81-91 on a surviving incomplete husgabel roll from the city.

¹³See Chapter Three, pp. 144-50. Published as *Register of the Freemen of the City of York*, ed. by F. Collins, 2 vols, Surtees Society, 96 and 102 (1897-1899) (Durham: Andrews; London, Bernard Quaritch, 1934).

¹⁴YMBI -III.

would seem virtually certain that the chamberlains of York must have been compiling accounts of some sort from at least the early fourteenth century'.¹⁵

However, York's first civic ordinances are roughly coeval with the dating of the earliest surviving records from other English towns, including London, where the earliest enrolments of deeds in the Court of Hustings date from 1252, and the *Letter-Books* commence in 1275.¹⁶ Geoffrey Martin, unlike Michael Clanchy focusing specifically on English borough records, has pointed out that 'there are today eleven English boroughs, including London, which have preserved original administrative records from the period before 1272': he argues that 'the surviving material from the thirteenth century is likely to be the wreckage of a sophisticated system of archives, rather than the indications of a practice that was not well established and perfected until a much later time.'¹⁷ Documentation, then, was one of the earliest uses made of writing in the medieval city, and one which in some towns may have been established and familiar by the end of the thirteenth century.¹⁸ It also may have provided the means of familiarising an increasing number of urban inhabitants with writing and its potential uses.

This is a point of some significance for an investigation of specifically urban writing, since the statutes, rights and regulations which were inscribed into civic documentation represent the legal structure by which the city was run and economic activity and social relationships within it were, ideally, managed. The city was, in the period from the thirteenth to the fifteenth century, in a process of administrative

¹⁵Dobson, *Chamberlains' Account Rolls*, p. 21.

¹⁶On London's civic records, see *A Guide to the Records in the Corporation of London Record Office*, ed by P. E. Jones and R. Smith (London: English Universities Press, 1951). The city's records are discussed more fully in my introduction to Chapter Two.

¹⁷G. H. Martin, 'The English Borough in the Thirteenth Century', originally *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 5th series, 13 (1963), 123-44, repr. in *The English Medieval Town: A Reader in English Urban History 1200-1540*, ed. by Richard Holt and Gervase Rosser (London and New York: Longman, 1990), pp. 29-48, from which it is quoted here (p. 34). See also Geoffrey H. Martin, 'The Origins of Borough Records', *Journal of the Society of Archivists*, 2 (1960-1964), 147-153.

¹⁸Martin thus argues that urban documentation was established at an earlier date than Clanchy's theory would suggest. Martin further contradicts Clanchy when he argues that surviving evidence shows that documentation in towns was stimulated more by the internal authority of the gild rather than 'external example': Martin, 'The English Borough', p. 47.

development which parallels that of the increasing secular utilisation of writing at this time.¹⁹ As Geoffrey Martin argues, 'in an age when government was newly literate, the inception of regular written memoranda marked an important stage in a community's progress towards corporateness.'²⁰ If we follow Michael Clanchy's argument that documentation increased as a result of its dissemination from royal to local and urban administrations, then the proliferation of documentary writing in the English town marked the similarly successful accumulation of authority in civic, as opposed to royal hands. In practical terms, towns acquired autonomy through legislation. A quotation from the work of Florentine writer and chancellor Brunetto Latini's *Li Livres dou Tresor*, written between 1260 and 1267, confirms that contemporary legal theory also emphasised law as an intrinsic characteristic of the city:

from that time that people first began to increase and multiply, and the sin of the first man sent roots into the earth [...] it was absolutely necessary that those who wanted to live lawfully and escape the power of evildoers should turn together to one place and in one order. From that time on they began to build houses and strengthen cities and fortresses and enclose them with walls and ditches. [...] From that time on they began to establish customs, and laws, and rights, which were common to all the citydwellers. For this reason Cicero says that the city is an assembly of people for living in one place and under one law.²¹

¹⁹See, for example, Edward Miller and John Hatcher, *Medieval England: Towns, Commerce and Crafts 1086-1348* (London and New York: Longman, 1995), pp. 290-322.

²⁰Martin, 'The English Borough', p. 34.

²¹Brunetto Latini, *The Book of the Treasure (Li Livres dou Tresor)*, translated by Paul Barrette and Spurgeon Baldwin, Garland Library of Medieval Literature, 90, Series B (New York and London: Garland, 1993), Book III, 73, lines 12-23. Part of *Li Livres dou Tresor* was copied into one of the London customals in the early fourteenth century, suggesting that it was circulating among readers in London at least. See Chapter Two, pp. 92-4.

'Car de lors ke gens commencerent premierement a cristre et a mouteplier et ke li pechié dou premier home s'enracina sor son linage [...] il covint a fine force ke cil ki voloient vivre de lor droit et eschiver la force des maufeteurs se tornaissent ensamble en .i. lieu et en .i. ordre. Dé lors commencerent a fonder maisons et fermer viles et fortereces et clore les de murs et de fosses. Dé lors commencerent a establir les coutumes et la loi et les droi ki estoient communs par trestous les borgois de la vile. Por ce dist Tuilles ke cités est uns assemblemens de gens a abiter en un lieu et vivre a une loi.': Brunetto Latini, *Li Livres dou Tresor*, ed. by F. J. Carmody, University of California Publications in Modern Philology, 22 (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1947), p. 391.

Brunetto sets the legal constitution of the city alongside its physical construction as parallel supports of the morality supposedly to be found there: through its laws the city achieves positive representation as an ideal ethical state. Elsewhere in this section of the *Tresor*, Latini identifies great importance in the maintenance of written urban law within the city's government. He describes the responsibilities of an annually replaced *podestà* or governor of the city, who brings with him an administration of judges and notaries. In order to manage the practical operation of urban justice, these professionals 'must read and study night and day, from one end to the other' 'the books of the laws and the statutes of the city' 'in such a way that they retain everything in their hearts'.²² The city retains its status as a moral force through its strict regulation by laws, and those laws are maintained and put into operation through their recording in writing. Writing, in the form of documentation, thus becomes an agent, and potentially a symbol, of civic morality.²³

We also find legal hand-books being compiled for the private use of urban readers. Carol Meale, in her study of commonplace books of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, identifies law together with religion and history as the three main areas of interest for London merchants at this later date.²⁴ Earlier evidence exists, however, of an interest in legal texts among urban citizens. Susan Cavanaugh's study of books named in English wills and inventories includes legal texts owned mainly by university-educated clerks based in the cities of London and York in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.²⁵ John de Clyfford, treasurer of

²²Carmody, *Brunetto Latini, The Book of the Treasure*, p. 365; '*Après les sairemens et les parlemens de uns et des autres s'en doit li sires aler a l'ostel et ouvrir les livres des establissement et des chapistles de la vile; en quoi ses juges et si notaire doivent lire et estudiier, et de nuit et de jour et devant et deriere [...] en tel maniere que il le retiegnent toute en le cuer*', Carmody, *Li Livres de Tresor*, pp. 405-6, Book III, 83, lines 1-7.

²³The symbolism of civic writing will be dealt with most specifically in Chapter Four.

²⁴See Carol Margaret Meale, 'The Social and Literary Contexts of a Late Medieval Manuscript: A Study of British Library Manuscript Harley 2252 and Its Owner John Colyns' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of York, 1984), p. 161.

²⁵Susan H. Cavanaugh, 'A Study of Books Privately Owned in England: 1300-1450' (unpublished doctoral dissertation, The University of Pennsylvania, 1980) (Ann Arbor, Michigan: University Microfilms International, 1980). For further information on books left in wills during this period, see for York, between 1321 and 1500, P. J. P. Goldberg, 'Lay Book Ownership in Late Medieval York: The

York Cathedral, Thomas Dautre, a clerk of York, and Thomas Giles of Fleet Street, for example, all bequeathed books of canon and/or civil law, in 1366, 1437, and 1349, respectively.²⁶ The will of Walter de Berneye, mercer and sheriff of London in 1360, however, also refers to '*omnes libros meos iuris canonici et civili*', together with a portifory, a missal, a book called '*Summa de Abstinencia*' and '*legendam meam sanctorum*'.²⁷ Berneye's will, dated in 1377, bequeaths his books of law to William Norton, draper and alderman of London between 1406 and 1420.²⁸ As Cavanaugh warns in her introduction, wills and inventories can offer only a partial view of the books actually owned in the Middle Ages, since many people named only a few, or possibly none, of the books which they owned.²⁹ However, even if we cannot gauge the extent to which legal or other genres of texts were owned, or read, in the medieval city, this evidence indicates that legal texts were to be found in medieval York and London in the hands of mercantile as well as university-educated or clerical owners, from at least the middle of the fourteenth century. As with the expansion of the urban administration and its documentation, the thirteenth century was a period when law was increasingly organised and codified in written form.³⁰

In addition to legal texts, the wills of London and York book-owners are dominated by religious books, as we can see from the extract from the will of Walter de Berneye, above. Thrupp, on London, concludes that 'the intellectual life which was germinating in this environment fed primarily upon religious interests.'³¹ Texts for religious purposes included books of hours, psalters and devotional literature, as well as the portifory and missal mentioned in de Berneye's

Evidence of Wills', *The Library*, sixth series, 16:3 (1994), 181-9, and for London Sylvia L. Thrupp, *The Merchant Class of Medieval London [1300-1500]*, 2nd edn (Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 1989), pp. 161-3 and pp. 248-9.

²⁶Cavanaugh, 'A Study of Books': John de Clyfford appears on pp. 148-9; Thomas Dautre on pp. 231-2, and Thomas Giles on pp. 362-3.

²⁷Cavanaugh, 'A Study of Books', p. 92.

²⁸On William Norton, see Thrupp, *The Merchant Class*, p. 358.

²⁹Cavanaugh, 'A Study of Books', pp. 2-3.

³⁰See John Hudson, *The Formation of the English Common Law: Law and Society in England from the Norman Conquest to Magna Carta* (London and New York: Longman, 1996), pp. 19-23.

³¹Thrupp, *The Merchant Class*, p. 162. For York, see Goldberg, 'Lay Book Ownership', pp. 183-187.

will. Cavanaugh's study also indicates the possession of grammars, and other educative books: Thomas Giles, for example, also bequeathed books on 'dialectic, theology, as well as geometry and astronomy'.³²

History was also a subject of interest, as Carol Meale points out in her study of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.³³ Thomas Dautre of York, for example, bequeaths '*quaternam meam de Cronicis*' in 1437.³⁴ These might include both national and urban chronicles. As Antonia Gransden has described, the earliest chronicles were produced almost exclusively within religious houses, until 'the religious gave way to secular clerks in the fourteenth century. Then, in the fifteenth century, secular clerks in their turn gave precedence to laymen (both members of the chivalric classes and Londoners)'.³⁵ Ralph Flenley identifies the earliest surviving town chronicle as one of London dating from 1274, and Mary-Rose McLaren has traced the tradition of London chronicles on into the fifteenth century in 'at least three, and possibly four, textual strands'.³⁶ The editors of the *Great Chronicle of London* have argued that 'there was a considerable demand for chronicles of London', and that it is likely the extant versions 'are only the few surviving examples of a large class'.³⁷ The particular success of chronicle-writing in London is attributed by McLaren to the fact that the chronicles 'record a history perceived as the common property of the citizens of London, belonging to them by virtue of their being citizens, literate and English, and commonly recorded by them'.³⁸ Chronicle-writing, meanwhile, continued within religious institutions, including those within towns: in York chronicles were produced within St Mary's

³²Cavanaugh, 'A Study of Books', p. 363.

³³Meale, 'The Social and Literary Contexts', p. 161.

³⁴Cavanaugh, 'A Study of Books', p. 232. See also Goldberg, 'Lay Book Ownership', pp. 187-8, and Thrupp, *The Merchant Class*, p. 163.

³⁵Antonia Gransden, *Historical Writing in England*, 2 vols (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1974, and 1982), II: *c.1307 to the Early Sixteenth Century*, p. xii.

³⁶*Six Town Chronicles of England*, ed. by Ralph Flenley (Oxford: Clarendon, 1911), p. 8; McLaren, 'The Textual Transmission', p. 56. Flenley identifies the earliest surviving town chronicle as that of the *Liber de Antiquis Legibus*, which will be discussed in detail in Chapter Two.

³⁷Thomas and Thornley, *The Great Chronicle*, p. xxv. The inter-relationships between the *Great Chronicle* and the surviving manuscript versions of the other chronicles of the city are reviewed in detail by Thomas and Thornley on pp. xxix.-lxxvi.

³⁸McLaren, 'The Textual Transmission', p. 62.

Abbey throughout the fourteenth century, and *The Chronicle of the Archbishops of York* was compiled by men associated with the Minster.³⁹

The only surviving manuscript of the York Corpus Christi plays dates from 'some time between 1463 and 1477', but evidence suggests that the plays were being performed in the city by 1376.⁴⁰ Each play was presented annually by members of guilds from the city, and the manuscript, which was compiled for the city's authorities, 'was compiled from the various "originals", prompt copies in the form of small booklets, held by each of the guilds having responsibility for a play in the cycle'.⁴¹ While the plays were thus far more frequently watched than read, they do provide evidence for the composition of literary drama in York. Individuals seem also to have owned texts of plays: the will of the parish clerk William Revetour from 1446 bequeaths to the Guild of Corpus Christi 'a certain book called the Crede Play', and a priest of St William's Chapel on Ouse Bridge also lists 'my books of plays' in his will.⁴²

The evidence of wills show that only 'a small number of literary works' were bequeathed in York, 'several in aristocratic wills' including a copy of *The Canterbury Tales*, a work by Gower, and a copy of a text by Petrarch, owned by the clerk Thomas Dautre.⁴³ London wills contain similar references, for example to a copy of *The Canterbury Tales*, and of Boethius's *De Consolatione Philosophiae*, in the will of the tailor John Brincheve, dated 1420.⁴⁴ However, in the context of

³⁹Craster and Thornton, *The Chronicle of St Mary's Abbey*; Galbraith, *The Anonimalle Chronicle*; Raine, *The Historians*. The *Anonimalle Chronicle* was composed in the second half of the fourteenth century: Childs and Taylor, *The Anonimalle Chronicle*, p. 12, and pp. 19-20. On chronicle-writing in York, see also Barrie Dobson, 'Contrasting Chronicles: Historical Writing at York and Durham at the Close of the Middle Ages', in *Church and Chronicle in the Middle Ages: Essays Presented to John Taylor*, ed. by I. Wood and G. A. Loud (London and Rio Grande: Hambledon, 1991).

⁴⁰Beadle, *The York Plays*, p. 11, and p. 20.

⁴¹Beadle, *The York Plays*, p. 11. The '*Ordo Paginarum*' for the plays was copied into YCA, MS A/Y, fols. 252v.-255, in 1415. It lists the guilds responsible for presenting a play, together with a description of each pageant: it is published in *Records of Early English Drama: York*, ed. by Alexandra F. Johnston and Margaret Rogerson, 2 vols (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1979), II: *Introduction; The Records*, pp. 16-26.

⁴²'*lego Frtraernitati Corporis Christi in Ebor' quendam librum vocatum le Crede Play*'; '*libros meos de ludis*': Johnston and Rogerson, *Records of Early English Drama: York*, I: *Introduction, The Records*, p. 68, and p. 3.

⁴³See Goldberg, 'Lay Book Ownership', p. 188.

⁴⁴Cavanaugh, 'A Study of Books', p. 139.

this discussion of the range of writings which were available in the medieval city, it is useful to remember that the evidence of book-ownership in wills, incomplete as it in any case is, does not represent what seems to have been the true availability of at least some literary texts to London society. Modern research into the career of John Shirley, a copier and transcriber of texts who seems to have lived in London from around the second decade of the fifteenth century until his death in 1456, has suggested that he operated a lending system with the manuscripts which he owned and copied.⁴⁵ This argument is based on Shirley's attachment to his manuscripts of his name and/or motto, together with poetic reminders to their readers that they should be returned to him. The manuscripts include texts by Geoffrey Chaucer and John Lydgate, and the romance of Guy of Warwick. By the second quarter of the fifteenth century, then, it seems that those involved in manuscript production in London had devised means of allowing texts to circulate more freely in the city.

At least one other, more institutionalised 'library' was in operation in London at the same time: part of the estate of Richard Whittington, mayor of London, was used by his executors to found a library at the Guildhall in 1425, which contained books and documents relating to the city of London, as well as theological works.⁴⁶ The common clerk John Carpenter, one of Whittington's executors, left further books to the library in his will. We know that this was a more static collection which was available for consultation but apparently not removal: in his will Carpenter refers to his books as being 'chained in that library'.⁴⁷ Moreover, we cannot be sure who gained access to the books held by

⁴⁵On John Shirley see *English Verse Between Chaucer and Surrey*, ed. by E. P. Hammond (Durham N. C.: 1927), pp. 191-7; Aage Brusendorff, *The Chaucer Tradition* (Cloucester, Massachussetts: Peter Smith, 1965), especially pp. 207-36; A. I. Doyle, 'More Light on John Shirley', *Medium Aevum* 30:2 (1961), 93-101; Ralph Hanna III, 'Pilate's Voice/ Shirley's Case', *South Atlantic Quarterly* 91:4 (1992), 793-812; and Margaret Connolly, *John Shirley: Book Production and the Noble Household in Fifteenth-Century England* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1998).

⁴⁶See Wendy Scase, 'Reginald Pecock, John Carpenter and John Colop's "Common-Profit" Books: Aspects of Book Ownership And Circulation in Fifteenth-Century London', *Medium Aevum* 61:2 (1992), 261-74 (p. 268); Caroline M. Barron, 'Richard Whittington: The Man Behind the Myth', in *Studies in London History Presented to Philip Edmund Jones*, ed. by A. E. J. Hollaender and William Kellaway (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1969), pp. 197-248 (p. 232); Thomas Brewer, *Memoir of the Life and Times of John Carpenter, Town Clerk of London* (London: Arthur Taylor, 1856), pp. 23-29.

⁴⁷Brewer, *Memoir*, pp. 143-4 (p. 143). See also Scase, 'Reginald Pecock', pp.

the Guildhall Library or John Shirley, although Carpenter designates that books should go to the library 'for the profit of the students there, and those discoursing to the common people'.⁴⁸ Edward Borrajo speculated that the library's contents 'would be largely, if not exclusively, theological', and that the readers would 'be mainly drawn from the City clergy', and Caroline Barron has agreed that 'it seems clear that it was primarily used by priests at the (Guildhall) College, rather than the citizens of London at large'.⁴⁹ From 1418 York Minster also held a library, similarly based on the bequest of a collection of books by John Newton, treasurer of the Minster.⁵⁰ Texts seem also to have been made available for consultation at parish churches and at other religious houses in the city, although again probably exclusively to members of the clergy.⁵¹

These and other aspects of textual culture seem to have facilitated the wider circulation of books by the fifteenth century. As we have seen from the example of Walter de Berneye's will books were passed on to fellow citizens or readers in wills, and Wendy Scase has outlined a further practice of transferring books to those who needed them with the circulation of 'common-profit' books. These were texts of religious material, which bore inscriptions requiring them to be passed on when the owner died or no longer needed them, usually to indigent clerks who could not afford books for themselves. The inscriptions also requested prayers for the soul of the donor in return for his transferral of the book. Scase describes such a scheme in London in the first half of the fifteenth century (indeed, she suggests that the foundation of the Guildhall Library was inspired by the philosophy behind

269-70.

⁴⁸Brewer, *Memoir*, p. 143.

⁴⁹Edward M. Borrajo, 'The Guildhall Library: Its History and Present Position', *The Guildhall Library*, 10 (1908), 381-95 (p. 383); Caroline M. Barron, *The Medieval Guildhall of London* (London: The Corporation of London, Guildhall, 1974) pp. 33-5 (p. 34).

⁵⁰See C. B. L. Barr, 'The Minster Library', in *A History of York Minster*, ed. by G. E. Aylmer and Reginald Cant (Oxford: Clarendon, 1977), and John B. Friedman, *Northern English Books, Owners, and Makers in the Late Middle Ages* (Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 1995), p. 25-6.

⁵¹See S. Gee, 'Books Owned by the Minor Clergy of Late Medieval and Early Modern York' (unpublished masters dissertation, University of York, 1996), pp. 16-28.

the practice of 'common-profit' books) and also in York from around the end of the fourteenth and the beginning of the fifteenth centuries.⁵²

By the fifteenth century, then, books were clearly sufficiently valued in the medieval city that efforts were made to ensure that they were made more available to those who were interested in them or required them. This marks a notable development of the ideology surrounding writing, and the uses to which it was put, from the widespread inexperience of writing described by Michael Clanchy in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. The form in which many texts were produced also enabled their more ready circulation. Many literary, historical, or legal texts were written into individual booklets or quires, which were only later, if at all, bound into books: the '*quaternam meam de Cronicis*' referred to by Thomas Dautre in his will is one example of this practice.⁵³ Such booklets seem to have been very commonly the constituent parts of what became the genre of books known today as 'commonplace books', compilations of material based on the personal tastes of the owner, sometimes copied partly in their own hand over a period of years, and frequently containing the genres of writing which we have seen were especially popular in the medieval city, including literature, law, and history.⁵⁴ Meale has argued that 'it was only in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries that manuscripts which can be accurately described as commonplace books proliferated

⁵²Scase, 'Reginald Pecock', pp. 261-3. See also Jo Ann Hoepfner Moran, 'A "Common-Profit" Library in Fifteenth-Century England and Other Books for Chaplains', *Manuscripta* 28 (1984), 17-25. See also Joann Hoepfner Moran, 'A "Common-Profit" Library in Fifteenth-Century England and Other Books for Chaplains', *Manuscripta*, 28 (1984), 17-25.

⁵³Cavanaugh, 'A Study of Books', p. 232. On the production and circulation of 'booklets', see Julia Boffey and John J. Thompson, 'Anthologies and Miscellanies: production and Choice of Texts', in *Book Production and Publishing in Britain 1375-1475*, ed. by Jeremy Griffiths and Derek Pearsall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp. 279-315.

⁵⁴On the structure and content of some London commonplace books, see Meale, 'The Social and Literary Contexts'; Carol M. Meale, 'The Compiler at Work: John Colyns and British Library Manuscript Harley 2252', in *Manuscripts and Readers in Fifteenth-Century England: The Literary Implications of Manuscript Study: Essays From the 1981 Conference at the University of York*, ed. by Derek Pearsall (Cambridge: Brewer, 1983), pp. 82-103; Julia Boffey and Carol M. Meale, 'Selecting The Text: Rawlinson C. 86 And Some Other Books for London Readers', in *Regionalism in Late Medieval Manuscripts and Texts: Essays Celebrating the Publication of a Linguistic Atlas of Late Medieval English*, ed. by Felicity Riddy, York Manuscripts Conferences: Proceedings Series 2 (Cambridge: Brewer, 1991), pp. 143-169.

to any significant extent.⁵⁵ Manuscripts containing a miscellany of contents collected apparently according to individual taste, however, appear from a much earlier date in London at least, and these are frequently categorised today as 'commonplace books': the London, British Library, MSs Additional 14252 and Egerton 2885, for example, which contain a mixture of legal, civic and historical information, date from the early thirteenth and the late fourteenth centuries respectively. Both of these manuscripts will be discussed in Chapter Two, when we will attempt to define their significance and function more specifically than the rather amorphous, all-purpose concept of the 'commonplace book' allows. Nevertheless, the frequency with which the category of 'commonplace' book is employed in modern catalogues emphasises that books, or even booklets, often included texts from a variety of literary genres.⁵⁶ The importance of this practice of compilation, and its popularity, is attested by evidence that 'there was a definite market within the capital for commercially-produced commonplace-type books'.⁵⁷ The means by which different kinds of texts circulated complicate considerably our modern notions of the subject-matter, format, and ownership of books.

The practice of compilation was, moreover, central to the production of a range of texts in the Middle Ages. The encyclopaedic *Li Livres dou Tresor* of the Florentine Brunetto Latini, discussed above, which included discussions of government, natural history, and philosophy, provides an example of one such text.⁵⁸ John Shirley's manuscripts were similarly compilations of literary texts. M. B. Parkes has described how the literary practice of *compilatio* or 'compilation', developed amongst Latin scholastic writers in the thirteenth century, led eventually to writers of a range of literary genres employing its techniques, together with the *mise-en-page* associated with it.⁵⁹ Amongst other texts, *The Canterbury Tales* and

⁵⁵Meale, 'The Social and Literary Contexts', p. 211.

⁵⁶See Boffey and Meale, 'Selecting the Text', especially pp. 148-52, on the mis-use of the term 'common-place book'.

⁵⁷Boffey and Meale, 'Selecting the Text', p. 152.

⁵⁸Carmody, *Brunetto Latini, Li Livres dou Tresor*.

⁵⁹M. B. Parkes, 'The Influence of the Concepts of *Ordinatio* and *Compilatio* on the Development of the Book', in *Medieval Learning and Literature: Essays Presented to Richard William Hunt*, ed. by J. J. G. Alexander and M. T. Gibson (Oxford: Clarendon, 1976), pp. 115-141. See also A. I. Doyle and M. B. Parkes, 'The Production of Copies of The Canterbury Tales and The Confessio Amantis in the

John Gower's *Confessio Amantis* are identified as adopting the structure of the compilation.⁶⁰ The collections of urban laws and statutes contained in the civic registers such as the *Liber Albus* of London, or the *Memorandum Books* of York, are similarly based, if less self-consciously, on the principle of compilation.⁶¹

One of the underlying principles of compilation was organisation of the material involved: 'to reorganise inherited material in a new, systematic way'.⁶² The need to systematise material to make it more accessible is evidence of the proliferation of writing, and of a new sense of its utility: referring to records 'again for reference' was the third 'stage of development' described by Michael Clanchy in his discussion of the development of a literate mentality.⁶³ Increasing the accessibility of texts is clearly one of the motivating forces in the production of civic registers such as York's *Memorandum Books*, as well as other genres of urban writing. The cartularies produced within religious houses, such as St Mary's Abbey in York for example, collected together in one volume copies of documents and texts relevant to the institution. The compiler of the late fourteenth-century cartulary of God's House in Southampton refers to the 'too many ancient charters and deeds of the said House of God'.⁶⁴ Cartularies proliferated at religious houses in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries: the 'earliest surviving cartulary from a religious house in Great Britain dates from the first half of the eleventh century', and 'the first recorded secular cartulary dates from the early thirteenth century'.⁶⁵ A related impulse to organise and improve writing is apparent in the construction of books such as the *Formulary* compiled by the Privy Clerk and poet Thomas

Early Fifteenth Century', in *Medieval Scribes, Manuscripts, and Libraries: Essays Presented to N. R. Ker*, ed. by M. B. Parkes, Andrew G. Watson, C. R. Cheney, and Joan Gibbs (London: Scolar, 1978), pp. 163-203 (pp. 186-92) on the imposition of the textual apparatus associated with *compilatio* on the Ellesmere Manuscript of *The Canterbury Tales* by its scribe.

⁶⁰Parkes, 'The Influence', pp. 129-38.

⁶¹The idea of civic registers as compilations and their composers as 'compilers' will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Five, pp. 264-9.

⁶²Parkes, 'The Influence', p. 117.

⁶³Clanchy, *From Memory*, p. 154.

⁶⁴*nimiam antiquitatem cartarum et munimentorum dicte Domus Dei': The Cartulary of God's House, Southampton*, ed. by J. M. Kaye, 2 vols, (Southampton: Southampton University Press, 1976), I, p. 217.

⁶⁵*Medieval Cartularies of Great Britain: A Short Catalogue*, ed. by G. R. C. Davis (London, New York, and Toronto: Longmans, Green, 1958), p. xi., and p. xii.

Hoccleve in London in the 1420s. This collection of official letters and documents was intended to provide model texts for the clerks who would follow Hoccleve in the Office of the Privy Seal. Writing, of both a scribal and a compositional nature, was Hoccleve's profession, and so it is perhaps particularly apt to find among his works a text which aims to assist other people in the proper skills and formalities of writing.⁶⁶ His *Formulary* provides further indications of the ubiquity of writing in the medieval city, and the familiarity and inventiveness with which it had come to be regarded.

We have seen, then, that writing of a variety of types was central to the administration and life of the medieval cities of York and London. Official documentation, which according to the research of Geoffrey Martin and Michael Clanchy was the first secular kind of writing to proliferate in the medieval city, formed the basis of the laws which enabled the city to govern and identify itself. Administrative documents and compilations, such as the cartularies of religious houses, also flourished within other institutions in the city. The proliferation of administrative records also made writing more familiar to a greater number of people, and encouraged the increased production and ownership of other genres of text. Privately held texts were predominantly religious in nature, but an interest in history, law, and to some extent literature is apparent from the limited evidence of wills and inventories. It is evident that the volume of writing in the city increased between the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries, but the methods by and forms in which texts circulated enabled them to achieve a greater accessibility than the numbers which survive indicate. There was a culture of passing books to other interested or needy readers when the owner died or no longer required them, and by the beginning of the fifteenth century schemes had been developed in both York and London, including that of the 'common-profit' book, and of the library, to allow them to be more widely read. Over our period of interest we can see attitudes concerning the value and utility of books changing; in the section which follows we

⁶⁶J. A. Burrow, 'Thomas Hoccleve', in *Authors of the Middle Ages: 1, English Writers of the Late Middle Ages* (Aldershot: Variorum, 1994), pp. 185-248, (pp. 192-4).

will trace how the system of book production enabled this development to take place.

Writers in the City:

In order to comprehend the activity of writing in the medieval city, we need to appreciate fully the role of the 'writer' in the production of texts. The medieval definition of the 'writer', however, was a complex one, involving several distinct activities. In the early 1250s, St Bonaventure explained the process of book-production in his commentary on Peter Lombard's *Libri sententiarum* in the following terms:

The method of making a book is fourfold. For someone writes the materials of others, adding or changing nothing, and this person is said to be merely the scribe (*scriptor*). Someone else writes the materials of others, adding, but nothing of his own, and this person is said to be the compiler (*compilator*). Someone else writes both the materials of other men, and of his own, but the materials of others as the principle materials, and his own annexed for the purpose of clarifying them, and this person is said to be the commentator (*commentator*), not the author. Someone else writes both his own materials and those of others, but his own as the principal materials, and the materials of others annexed for the purpose of confirming his own, and such must be called the author (*auctor*).⁶⁷

It is the '*auctor*', or author, who combines material of his own composition with that of others, who is closest to our modern notion of the 'writer'; but Bonaventure gives equal status to those who comment on and clarify pre-existing texts, those who compile the writings of others, and those who simply copy texts, the scribes. We have already seen that *compilatio* or compilation was a recognised literary genre, and that many of the texts circulating in the medieval city by the fifteenth century took compilatory form. Alastair Minnis has traced how the status of the compiler, or '*compilator*', imposing form and order on a collection of existing material, had grown by the beginning of the fourteenth century, so that his

⁶⁷The translation is taken from A. J. Minnis, *Medieval Theory of Authorship: Scholastic Literary Attitudes in the Later Middle Ages* (London: Scolar, 1984), p. 94, translated from Prooemii qu. 4, conclusio, *Bonaventurae opera*, i, 14-15, in F. Stegmüller, *Repertorium commentariorum in sententias Petri Lombardi*, 2 vols (Würzburg: Schoeningh, 1947). The Latin names within brackets are my additions.

activity 'was accepted as a major and valuable *modus faciendi librum*.'⁶⁸ The distinction perhaps most characteristic of the literary culture of the Middle Ages, however, is that between the scribe and the author: 'writing' can involve at either extreme the intellectual process of composition, or the physical exertion of inscribing letters on parchment or paper.

In fact, the trade designations with which those involved in the craft of book or document production in the cities of London and York are described indicate a still greater differentiation of roles and activities. York's *Freemen's Register* between the years 1344 and 1483 uses the terms 'clericus', 'parcheminer', 'scryvener', 'scriptor', 'lumner', and, latterly, 'stacyoner', 'bukebynder', and 'tixtwriter'. Similarly, London's *Letter Book D* names 'clerks', 'parchemeners', 'writers of court hand', 'lymenours', 'text-writers', 'scriveners', and 'stacioners'.⁶⁹ Some of these craftsmen, in particular the 'limners', 'parchment-makers', 'stationers' and 'book-binders' were, obviously, involved in other aspects of book-production than the writing stage. The range of titles taken by 'clerks', 'scriveners', 'text-writers' and 'writers of court hand', however, reflect the diversity of writing being undertaken in the cities.⁷⁰

This section of the discussion will concentrate on the evidence of how these 'writers' operated; before progressing, however, it is important to note that developments in book production, and the concomitant increase in the amount of writing available in the city, were enabled by technological improvements in the activity of writing during our period of interest. Codices became reduced in size so that they could be carried and read individually more easily; pens and parchment were adapted so that copying could be undertaken more quickly and inexpensively; and a less elaborate and speedier style of writing, using a cursive script, developed

⁶⁸Alastair J. Minnis, 'Late-Medieval Discussions of *Compilatio* and the Role of the *Compiler*', *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Deutschen Sprache und Literatur*, 101 (1979), 385-421 (p. 420).

⁶⁹*LBD*, pp. 35-96 contains the only surviving record of those admitted to the freedom of London before the sixteenth century; Collins, *Register of the Freeman*.

⁷⁰For an analysis of craft-designations related to the book-trade in London between 1360 and 1430, see C. Paul Christianson, 'A Community of Book Artisans in Chaucer's London', *Viator*, 20 (1989), 207-18 (pp. 208-9).

in documentary writing and was increasingly employed in a range of texts.⁷¹ Geoffrey Martin has described how the physical form of administrative documentation also changed during this period to enable it to be produced and consulted more efficiently, by 'the replacement of rolls made up chancery-style (membranes sewn head to tail) by those finished exchequer-style (membranes joined at the head), the use of paper instead of parchment, and the supplanting of rolls by codices'.⁷²

Accordingly, recent research on the medieval book-trade in London has suggested that it was becoming increasingly organised by the end of the fourteenth century. C. Paul Christianson has identified a 'neighbourhood' of craftsmen involved in book production developing around old St Paul's Cathedral 'by the 1390s, if not earlier'.⁷³ Many of these craftsmen served as wardens of the mysteries of Stationers and Limners, acted as executor in each other's wills, and appear to have co-operated, from their separate workshops, in the production, decoration, and selling of books. Christianson emphasises that the trade in manuscript books was of an 'essentially bespoke nature, each book created as a special commission' and 'even trade in older or "used" books was restricted at trade fairs to a retail, not wholesale, market': this restricted the growth and aggrandizement of the mystery of Stationers.⁷⁴ He points out, however, that at St Paul's this settlement of book craftsmen were close to potential customers at the Inns of Court, and schools attached to the cathedral and other religious institutions.⁷⁵ Moreover, he suggests that a scribe based in this community may well have been one of those responsible for the Ellesmere manuscript of *The Canterbury Tales*.⁷⁶

⁷¹See Clanchy, *From Memory*, pp. 114-44, and M. B. Parkes, *English Cursive Book Hands, 1250-1500* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1969), pp. xiv.-xxiv.

⁷²Geoffrey H. Martin, 'The Origin', p. 149.

⁷³Christianson, 'A Community', p. 209. See also C. Paul Christianson, *Memorials of the London Book Trade in Medieval London: The Archives of Old London Bridge*, Manuscript Studies, 3 (Cambridge: Brewer, 1987), and C. Paul Christianson, *A Directory of London Stationers and Book Artisans, 1300-1500* (New York: Bibliographical Society of America, 1990).

⁷⁴Christianson, 'A Community', p. 212.

⁷⁵Christianson, 'A Community', p. 209.

⁷⁶Christianson, 'A Community', pp. 217-8.

Trade in books was, however, clearly unpredictable, and Christianson argues against the notion 'that the manufacture of a manuscript book could have taken place in a single workshop', suggesting rather most manuscripts were 'more probably the joint product of work done in many different places, with each stage in a book's creation occurring in a different artisan's shop'.⁷⁷ The fluid association of scribes and limners in the production of various texts or codices is confirmed by the evidence which can be gained from the hands of those scribes which have been successfully identified in more than one manuscript. A. I. Doyle and M. B. Parkes have investigated the five scribes who worked on Cambridge, Trinity College, MS R.3.2., containing John Gower's *Confessio Amantis*, in the first quarter of the fifteenth century, none of whom appear to have worked together on other manuscripts.⁷⁸ Moreover, 'the lack of co-ordination' between the scribes in their production of their sections of the manuscript, and the lack of evidence for overall supervision of its production, seem to confirm that these scribes 'practised their skill as independent craftsmen' and not as consistent participants in the work of a single scriptorium or workshop.⁷⁹

More interesting is the evidence provided by this manuscript that such books, containing literary works, were produced not only by scribes responsible for copying other vernacular literary texts, but also by those trained in documentary writing. One of the scribes who copied Trinity, MS R.3.2 has been identified as Thomas Hoccleve, the Clerk of the Privy Seal and poet who was also responsible for the production of the *Formulary* described in the previous section of this discussion. A second scribe also writes in a hand characteristic of 'some *de luxe* copies of the Statutes and in some offices of state'.⁸⁰ Even though the list of craft-designations associated with writing in the city suggest a level of differentiation in skills and training according to the types of texts produced, then, it seems that some manuscript commissions required that 'copyists who were not full-time producers

⁷⁷Christianson, 'A Community', p. 210.

⁷⁸Doyle and Parkes, 'The Production of Copies', p. 185.

⁷⁹Doyle and Parkes, 'The Production of Copies', p. 166, and p. 197.

⁸⁰Doyle and Parkes, 'The Production of Copies', p. 174.

of books' were also employed.⁸¹ This shows that figures such as Hoccleve, who was trained and worked throughout his life in an office of royal administration, still participated in the culture of book-production in London more generally, facilitating a cross-fertilisation of ideas and skills.⁸² Those who copied as scribes in the city of London could thus bring a varied experience to their work. Thomas Hoccleve provides a further informative example of the career of an urban writer in his capacity as a poet. He is the first of the poets based in London to describe his experiences of living there, and his work in the Office of the Privy Seal.⁸³

Linne Mooney, similarly, has listed fourteen manuscripts on which the so-called 'Hammond scribe' worked during his career in London between around 1460 and 1485.⁸⁴ The contents of these manuscripts cover a range of genres and interests, including literary works by Chaucer, Lydgate and Hoccleve, medical and scientific information, statutes of the realm, and legal documents, including some relating to the city of London. Mooney points out that this vitiates the idea that 'London scribes or scriptoria producing literary manuscripts in the fifteenth century would have specialized in producing such manuscripts to the exclusion of others.'⁸⁵

From York evidence survives both for individuals who undertook to copy their own books, and of 'amateur scribes' inscribing material for friends or patrons. John Block Friedman has listed examples of manuscripts which the owner has described as written '*manu mea propria*' and of occasions on which 'wealthy ecclesiastics' employed 'scribes whom they knew personally, or who were in their service'.⁸⁶ Individuals from both secular backgrounds and within religious establishments in the city seem to have worked as scribes: there may even have

⁸¹Doyle and Parkes, 'The Production of Copies', p. 199.

⁸²See Burrow, 'Thomas Hoccleve', pp. 191-7.

⁸³See, for example, Hoccleve's 'Complaint', and 'La Male Regle', in *Selections from Hoccleve*, ed. by M. C. Seymour (Oxford: Clarendon, 1981), pp. 12-23 and pp. 75-87. On the possible use made by Chaucer and William Langland of their experiences of living in London, however, see David Wallace, 'Chaucer and the Absent City', and Caroline M. Barron, 'William Langland: A London Poet', both in *Chaucer's England: Literature in Historical Context*, ed. by Barbara A. Hanawalt, Medieval Studies at Minnesota, 4 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1992), pp. 59-90, and pp. 91-109, respectively.

⁸⁴Linne R. Mooney, 'More Manuscripts Written by a Chaucer Scribe', *Chaucer Review*, 30:4 (1996), 401-7.

⁸⁵Mooney, 'More Manuscripts', p. 405.

⁸⁶Friedman, *Northern English Books*, pp. 26-30 (p. 27, and p. p. 26).

been 'specific commission or semicommercial book production at the York Austins' scriptorium'.⁸⁷

The status and role of clerks, and especially common clerks, will be discussed in detail in Chapter Five. However, it is worth noting at this juncture the expansion in the number and authority of clerks within the medieval city during the later Middle Ages. Clerks are named as employees of the civic government in London in association with the offices and courts of several officials, including the mayor and sheriffs.⁸⁸ Gwyn Williams has pointed to the increasing financial and political success of 'professional' groups, such as clerks and lawyers, in London society in the late thirteenth, and the first part of the fourteenth centuries. He argues that 'the rise of the clerks loosened the structure of dynastic control' in London's urban government, enabling men such as the chamber clerk John de la Chambre, and the common clerks Ralph Crepyn and John de Bauquell to rise to the position of alderman or member of parliament for the city.⁸⁹ In the same period, clerks from the archdiocese of York were highly successful in the royal administration during the reigns of Edward I and Edward II.⁹⁰ The development of urban administrations and archives necessitated the employment of more clerks, and an increase in their authority. The frequency of the use of the term 'clerk' or '*clericus*' in the civic records of York and London does not, however, merely reflect the growth in urban documentation. As Michael Clanchy has pointed out, the term '*clericus*' was often defined ambiguously in the Middle Ages, signifying alternatively a clergyman, as opposed to a layman, or simply 'a person of some scholarly attainments, regardless of whether he was a churchman'.⁹¹ The appearance of '*clerici*' alongside 'parishclerks' in the York *Freemen's Register* seems to confirm that even for the

⁸⁷John B. Friedman, 'Richard de Thorpe's Astronomical Kalendar and the Luxury Book Trade at York', *Studies in the Age of Chaucer*, 7 (1985), 137-60 (p. 149); Friedman, *Northern English Books*, pp. 31-72.

⁸⁸See, for example, *LBB*, p. 184, and *LBD*, pp. 313-5. See also Caroline M. Barron, 'The Government of London and Its Relations with the Crown 1400-1450' (unpublished doctoral dissertation, The University of London, 1970), Chapter Two, especially pp. 126-32, and pp. 561-2.

⁸⁹G. A. Williams, *Medieval London: From Commune to Capital* (London: Athlone, 1963), especially pp. 97-105 (p. 100).

⁹⁰J. L. Grassi, 'Royal Clerks From the Archdiocese of York in the Fourteenth Century', *Northern History*, 5 (1970), 12-33 (p. 12).

⁹¹Clanchy, *From Memory*, pp. 226-30 (p. 228).

purposes of trade designation in civic records, '*clericus*' or 'clerk' was something of an umbrella term.⁹² These non-administrative clerks, however, seem also to have been sporadically involved in literary production in the city. There is evidence that at least some of the guilds employed clerks to compose their plays for the Corpus Christi performances, and four parish clerks were consulted over the preparation of the royal entry for Henry VII to the city in 1483.⁹³ By profession, too, Hoccleve was a 'clerk'.

While the definition of the medieval 'writer' or 'writers' with which we began this section, and the range of craft designations adopted by those involved in the book trade, suggest a high degree of specialisation in skills and responsibilities between different types of 'writer' and 'copyist', then, figures such as Thomas Hoccleve, the 'Hammond' scribe and the clerks employed in composition for civic purposes in York indicate a greater degree of fluidity. This would enable cross-fertilisation of ideas and skills in the wider culture of writing in the city. Hoccleve, copyist of literary texts and royal documentation, compiler of a style-book for later Privy Seal clerks, and poet in his own right, provides an example of this. The trade of book production was relatively well developed in London at least by the end of the fourteenth century, but its unpredictability meant that scribes or clerks who did not work full-time on copying literary manuscripts might also be employed.

Urban Readers:

The concept of the 'reader' in the medieval city is as potentially insecure as that of the 'writer'. To begin with, although we have limited evidence of book ownership from wills, we cannot be certain that these owners did, or could, read the texts which they owned. Books might be sought as status symbols or '*objets d'art*' rather than for their subject-matter. In addition, variations in literacy and in the languages in which texts were written meant that while a reader might be able to

⁹²See, for example, Collins, *Register of the Freeman*, under the year 21 Edward IV.

⁹³*HB*, p. 130. On clerks' involvement in the production of the plays, see Peter Meredith, 'Scribes, Texts and Performance', in *Aspects of Early English Drama*, ed. by Paula Neuss (Cambridge: Brewer, 1983, repr. 1985), pp. 13-29 (especially p. 18).

comprehend one book, they would not be able to understand another. As M. B. Parkes states, 'in the Middle Ages the term *litteratus* was applied only to those who possessed a knowledge of Latin.'⁹⁴ Michael Clanchy has also argued that '*litteratus*' was effectively a synonym for '*clericus*', signifying a clergyman.⁹⁵ While many texts, including literature, history, and some documentation were by the end of the fourteenth century written in English, much legal literature, scholarly texts, and some civic documentation remained in Anglo-Norman or Latin. The writing of Latin or French civic documentation, too, was expedited by a system of abbreviation which made it inaccessible to those not familiar with these practices. Distinct groups of readers, then, were capable of reading different, but not all, kinds of texts, causing modern scholars to categorise medieval literacy into types, based on the genres of texts which a certain reader or readers were capable of comprehending. Michael Clanchy, for example, differentiates between 'sacred', 'learned', 'bureaucratic' and 'vernacular' 'literacy', depending on the kinds of writing which readers could comprehend.⁹⁶ We will return in the final section of this chapter to consider some of the problems attached to these definitions of medieval literacy.

The population of the medieval cities of London and York was, of course, varied in its levels of education and textual experience in any case. The clerks attached to the religious institutions or governmental bodies in the two cities would have possessed a higher level of learning than, in turn, the aldermanic class, and craftsmen of merchant or artisan status, and the literary experience of the wives and daughters of men in these social groupings must have been different again. However, both cities were well equipped with schools, at the elementary level at least. Joann Moran has argued 'that York seems to have continued to be a centre for schooling at the grammar level for the north of England', from the fourteenth

⁹⁴M. B. Parkes, 'The Literacy of the Laity', in *Literature and Western Civilisation: The Medieval World*, ed. by David Daiches and Anthony Thorlby (London: Aldus, 1973), pp. 555-77 (p. 555).

⁹⁵Clanchy, *From Memory*, pp. 226-34.

⁹⁶Michael Clanchy, 'Looking Back from the Invention of Printing', in *Literacy in Historical Perspective*, ed. by Daniel P. Resnick (Washington: Washington Library of Congress, 1983), pp. 7-22.

through into the fifteenth centuries.⁹⁷ She describes grammar schools attached to the Minster, at the hospital of St Leonard's, and chantry and song schools associated with several other parish churches. Higher education appears to have been more limited, and to have centred around the Minster and the friaries located within the city. Moran writes that 'by 1300, the intellectual institutions of York had lost ground to the rising universities of the south',⁹⁸ but she cites the existence of a theological lectureship at the Minster, and evidence of theological teaching and of an impressive library at the Dominican and Franciscan priories in York as indications of intellectual training of a more advanced degree in the city.⁹⁹

Sylvia Thrupp, in her study of London's merchant class, calculates from the evidence of male witnesses described as 'literate' in the consistory court between 1467 and 1476 that forty per cent had 'the ability to read a little Latin' at this time.¹⁰⁰ On this basis Thrupp estimates that around fifty per cent of 'lay male Londoners' could have read English.¹⁰¹ She describes variation in levels of education at the elementary level, with the duration of boys' education depending on the prosperity of their family, and the requirements of the craft with which they were associated. As in York, more advanced schooling seems to have been more limited: the establishment of such schools was under the control of the bishop of London and the chancellor of St Paul's, who approved only three such establishments up until the middle of the fifteenth century.¹⁰² In addition students of law were present in London, based at the Inns of Chancery. William Courtenay has also noted that 'the picture of London's intellectual life should include the non teaching but active scholars resident for a time in London', namely those attached to the households of bishops, or writers of scholastic texts.¹⁰³ Education of varying

⁹⁷Joann H. Moran, 'Education and Learning in the City of York 1300-1560', *Borthwick Papers*, 55 (1979), p. 15.

⁹⁸Moran, 'Education and Learning', p. 25.

⁹⁹Moran, 'Education and Learning', pp. 25-31.

¹⁰⁰Thrupp, *The Merchant Class*, pp. 156-7. Thrupp also breaks these figures down according to occupation.

¹⁰¹Thrupp, *The Merchant Class*, p. 158.

¹⁰²Thrupp, *The Merchant Class*, pp. 155-6. Thrupp notes, however, that proprietors of private schools were on several occasions ordered to cease teaching, so that schools clearly existed without formal approval.

¹⁰³William J. Courtenay, *Schools and Scholars in Fourteenth-Century England* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1987), pp. 92-106 (p. 104).

levels was, then, available in the cities of London and York, to a greater extent than in many other English towns, although we cannot be certain how many urban inhabitants took advantage of this kind of institutionalised instruction, or what level of learning they achieved.

One final complication in the notion of medieval readership lies in the way that readers related to texts. As we have seen, the genre of the 'commonplace book', and the practice of collecting texts in booklet or quire form and only later compiling them into codices, allowed readers to gain greater control over the shape of the books which they owned. Similarly, texts such as 'commonplace books' and chronicles offered scope for readers to add continuations of texts in their own hands. Mary-Rose McLaren describes such a situation occurring in the surviving manuscripts of the London chronicles: 'the very anonymity of the Chronicles suggests that they do not have 'authors' as such at all, but that those who wrote down this common history felt free to add, subtract, or change passages, just as others felt free to update and add continuations'.¹⁰⁴ Medieval readers were thus far more interactive with their texts than we imagine the modern reader to be, and frequently had a much more personal investment in their books. This greater personal identification with the book is an issue which will be raised once again in Chapters Two and Five, in relation to the production of the civic registers which are the subject of the thesis.

The preceding three sections of this discussion have shown that the volume of writing present in the medieval city increased dramatically between the thirteenth and the fifteenth centuries, and that as readers became more familiar with various kinds of writing means were devised to make texts more accessible and affordable. Documentary writing, as a textual form with which most inhabitants of the city would have had contact, and which was essential to the running of the medieval city, clearly served as a medium of acculturation to written forms and their potential uses. Moreover, we have seen that in both London and York a range of texts were being read and produced by citizens, and that a high level of educational

¹⁰⁴McLaren, 'The Textual Transmission', pp. 62-4.

possibilities were available. Even if a person was not 'literate' according to the strict medieval definition of understanding Latin, they may have possessed a knowledge of English or Anglo-Norman, or even administrative Latin which enabled them to comprehend certain kinds of writing. It remains to consider to what uses these increased possibilities for participation in urban literary culture were put: how did the readers of London and York exercise their literate skills? In the final section of this chapter, some of the recent scholarly responses to this question will be reviewed. Before doing so, however, we will consider briefly what is known concerning the context of literary production, and the utilisation of literate skills in medieval Florence. This Italian city-state offers a valuable point of comparison for the study of writing produced in medieval English cities, and particularly that of the civic registers of London and York. Florence provides evidence of the uses to which burgeoning literacy in an urban population might be put. It also represents an urban environment in which writing of a variety of types was undertaken by citizens from differing backgrounds specifically with the intention of describing, and praising an idea of the city. Moreover, in contrast with English civic writing, the literature produced in Florence which discusses the city has been extensively dealt with in scholarly research, enabling it to be summarised here.

Writing in Medieval Florence:

Levels of literacy and educational opportunities in Florence provided a firm basis for production of writing in the city. Harvey Graff has estimated that adult literacy in Florence had risen to around twenty-five to thirty-five per cent by the beginning of the fourteenth century.¹⁰⁵ Elementary education was provided by cathedral schools, and lay masters and mistresses who established their own schools or attended their pupils within their homes.¹⁰⁶ At the age of eleven, a few pupils would progress to grammar schools, or to 'business schools' to learn

¹⁰⁵Graff, *The Legacies of Literacy*, p. 55.

¹⁰⁶See John Larner, *Culture and Society in Italy 1290-1420* (London: B. T. Batsford, 1971), pp. 188-200. Larner calculates that the statements of the Florentine chronicler Giovanni Villani on schooling in the city in 1338 suggest literacy levels of sixty to eighty per cent, a figure which he describes as 'extraordinarily high' (p. 189).

commercial skills. In addition, 'notaries began their own schools.'¹⁰⁷ Schools, then, catered for and developed the various categories of literacy which we have seen identified in English society in the Middle Ages, including 'legal' and 'business' literacy. Florence also possessed a university, founded in 1349, which offered access to further study, and around which stationers producing and selling books sprang up.¹⁰⁸

As in English cities, administrative records and the professionals who produced them played an important role from an early stage in Florentine written culture. While we know that professional clerks became steadily more powerful within English urban government in the later Middle Ages, however, 'a notariate organized as a professional category exercised incomparably more weight and influence in Italy'.¹⁰⁹ The notariate were responsible for drawing up all legal documents, and by the thirteenth century they were one of the 'seven major arts (*Arti maggiori*)' with whom 'real power lay': indeed, 'in the communes the chief notary was given the title of Chancellor'.¹¹⁰ The influence of these figures in the Italian communes is indicative of the importance attributed to the administrative record there. Armando Petrucci has described how 'notaries were entrusted with the task of drafting the civic chronicles that had to have the publicity, truth, and authenticity characteristically guaranteed by the notarial function'.¹¹¹ Those trained in the production of one type of writing then, utilised their skills in the inscription and composition of other genres of texts. This parallels the situation which we have seen existed in English cities, where clerks and scribes appear to have sought employment producing a range of types of text, although this seems to have been the result of an unpredictable trade in books which was only informally organised in England. The status of the Italian notary also indicates that the administrative

¹⁰⁷Graff, *The Legacies of Literacy*, p. 56.

¹⁰⁸Larner, *Culture and Society*, pp. 178-9. See also Graham Pollard, 'The Pécia System in the Medieval Universities', in Parkes, Watson, Cheney, and Gibbs, *Medieval Scribes*, pp. 145-61.

¹⁰⁹Armando Petrucci, *Writers and Readers in Medieval Italy: Studies in the History of Written Culture*, ed. and translated by Charles M. Radding (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1995) p. 243.

¹¹⁰John Larner, *Italy in the Age of Dante and Petrarch 1216-1380* (London and New York: Longman, 1980), p. 119; and p. 222.

¹¹¹Petrucci, *Writers and Readers in Medieval Italy*, p. 244.

record and the officials who produced and controlled it were viewed as guarantors of veracity and held to be of public value to the commune. Furthermore, these qualities of truthfulness and communal importance were applied to other kinds of writing produced by the city's officials and concerning the city itself.

Moreover, the qualities of the skilful writer or speaker were considered to be inseparable from those of the good governor. Harvey Graff has described how, by the beginning of the fourteenth century 'literacy was seen increasingly as a commodity with functional and economic value in the commercial context of [...] Italy' and citizens invested 'in education in hopes of future success'.¹¹² The skills and achievements of the writer or the reader of an extensive range of texts became associated with good citizenship and government. 'Rhetoric and *poesis*' came to 'represent a divine instrument' for the rejuvenation of Florentines as ideal citizens of the city-state.¹¹³ John Lerner lists a range of Italian poets, translators, and chroniclers, who by training and profession were 'notaries, judges, and jurists', including Boccaccio and Petrarch, and the Florentine chancellor Brunetto Latini, whose compilation *Li Livres dou Tresor* has been discussed already. As we have seen, part of Brunetto's text prescribes rules for the good government of cities, including the careful consultation of books of urban law: Brunetto advises that the good governor must be a skilled speaker, talking neither too little nor too much, and includes in his text detailed instruction on the speeches suitable for delivery by the governor on his arrival in the city.¹¹⁴ Earlier in his compilation he emphasises the role played by rhetoric in raising men to a civilised state, describing the 'wise and eloquent man' who explained to his fellow men while they still 'lived according to the law of the beasts' 'the greatness of the soul and the dignity of reason and of discretion'.¹¹⁵ In Florence, then, the training and skill of the writer, as a poet or

¹¹²Graff, *The Legacies of Literacy*, p. 77.

¹¹³Marvin B. Becker, 'Dante and his Literary Contemporaries as Political Men', *Speculum*, 41 (1966), 665-80 (p. 676).

¹¹⁴Carmody, *Brunetto Latini, Li Livres dou Tresor*, pp. 391-422, Book III, 73-105. On the governor as a skilled speaker, see p. 394, Book III, 73, lines 45-52; on the speeches to be made by the governor, see pp. 402-5, Book III, 73, lines 13-60 and lines 83-103.

¹¹⁵'*au commencement que li home vivoient a loi de bestes [...] Lors fu uns sages hom bien parlans, ki tant consilla les autres et tant lor moustra la grandour de l'ame et la dignité e la raison et de la discretion*': Carmody, *Brunetto Latini, Li Livres dou*

notary, assumed symbolic as well as practical importance in the successful management of the city.

Ultimately this connection of ideal civic politics with the pursuit of literary excellence flowered into the 'humanism' for which fourteenth-century Florence is so famous. A training for public life, and urban leadership, was styled around study of ancient Greek and Roman texts and educational programmes. While it represents in its perhaps most sophisticated form the relationship between writing and urban identity and government which we have traced throughout this chapter, however, 'humanism' was very much 'an educational ideal for the well-placed', socially as well as economically.¹¹⁶ Its ideals and texts excluded the majority of the Florentine population, and marked a return to the use of Latin rather than Italian: many writers, indeed, displayed 'acute embarrassment' that Dante had produced his great works in the vernacular.¹¹⁷

The high levels of literacy and the regard in which the skills of the writer were held, however, led to the production of a range of works, in the vernacular as well as in Latin, which concentrated on constructing, or describing, a literary identity and history for the city. These include the production of *encomia urbis*, rhetorical descriptions of the city based on classical texts relating the virtues of the city in terms of its geographical situation; its trade; its famous citizens; and its saints, and the inclusion of urban histories in family genealogies compiled by mercantile citizens.¹¹⁸ The composers and compilers of these and other genres of texts came from a variety of social backgrounds. As the production of books became more efficient and less expensive, and education in its many forms expanded, there appeared increasingly more of 'a relatively new figure in the panorama of Western medieval written culture: the literate person free to write apart

Tresor, p. 318, Book III, 1, lines 43-49. Brunetto draws from Cicero's *De Inventione*, I, ii, 2 for this passage.

¹¹⁶Graff, *The Legacies of Literacy*, p. 80.

¹¹⁷*Medieval Literary Theory and Criticism c.1100-c.1375: The Commentary Tradition*, ed. by A. J. Minnis and A. B. Scott, with the assistance of David Wallace, rev. edn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981), chapter 10; p. 439.

¹¹⁸See J. K. Hyde, 'Medieval Descriptions of Cities', in *Literacy and its Uses: Studies on Late Medieval Italy*, ed. by Daniel Waley (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1993), pp. 1-27.

from any precise social function or constricting judicial obligations'.¹¹⁹ There is evidence in the Italian city-states that citizens who could write for themselves in the vernacular began to do so. Merchants' 'manuals' appear, much like the 'commonplace books' already discussed from English cities, produced from as early as the beginning of the fourteenth century in Venice and Tuscany. These *zibaldoni* contained a great deal of information of commercial use, such as conversions of currencies and weights between different countries; however, they could also include the kind of writing to be found in later 'commonplace' books in England, such as copies of 'romances' or poetry, and religious material.¹²⁰

The desire and increased ability to write was matched by a self-confidence and tendency for self-mythologising amongst the merchant citizens of city-states such as Florence: 'For these men a commercial venture was as much a test of nerve and judgement as a joust'.¹²¹ The thirteenth and fourteenth centuries saw a growth in prosperity in Florence, and experimentation with governmental forms in the Italian city-states which led in general to increased representation of at least some of their craft guilds.¹²² As a result citizens of Florence, such as Giovanni Villani and Dino Compagni, who began to produce chronicles of their cities, were involved in urban government, in the case of Compagni at times of intense crisis and upheaval.¹²³ The combination of increased literacy, urban prosperity, and of intimate proximity to constitutional change and development produced a desire to compile writings which praised and catalogued the history and destiny of the city. Both Villani and Compagni wrote in Italian, a language which would be understood by all their peers.¹²⁴

¹¹⁹Petrucci, *Writers and Readers in Medieval Italy*, p. 178.

¹²⁰See, for example, *Merchant Culture In Fourteenth Century Venice: The Zibaldone da Canal*, translated with an introduction and notes by John E. Dotson, Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 98 (Binghamton, New York: Center for Medieval and Early Renaissance Studies, State University of New York at Binghamton, 1994).

¹²¹Larner, *Italy in the Age of Dante and Petrarch*, p. 102.

¹²²See Larner, *Italy in the Age of Dante and Petrarch*, Chapter Six, and especially pp. 119-22.

¹²³*Giovanni Villani, Nuova Cronica*, ed. by Giuseppe Porta, 3 vols (Parma: Ugo Guanda, 1990); *Dino Compagni, Cronaca*, ed. by G. Luzzatto (Turin: Einaudi, 1968).

¹²⁴Villani states that he writes 'in the plain vernacular, so that the uneducated can draw fruitful profit and pleasure from it as well as lettered people can' (*in piano*

Villani's chronicle, written probably in the 1320s, reflects a concern to promote and mythologise the city of Florence. Villani sets the contemporary experiences of his city within a history initially constructed from the Old Testament, giving it a long-term genealogy, and a religious significance. He claims to have been inspired to commence his chronicle on a visit to Rome in the year 1300, the Jubilee year when pilgrims to Rome could be granted absolution from their sins, and he is at pains to stress the moral nature of his writing. He hopes that his work will 'be delightful and useful and an encouragement to our citizens in the present and the future, towards being virtuous and of great activity'.¹²⁵ His connection of the narrative of Florence's history with civic morality marks another instance of the city, urban writing, and virtue being drawn together by medieval writers. Villani also derives his sense of the civilising and ethical qualities of Florence from his association of it with ancient Rome, a favourite theme of humanistic writers. The nobility which Villani claims that the Florentines have derived from Rome, and indeed ultimately from Troy, enables him to increase the prestige of the city, and 'to validate the immediate reality of the world by buttressing it with a meaningful past'.¹²⁶ It also adds substance to his presentation of the city's contemporary prosperity. His description of 'the nobility and greatness of our city in our present times', is bolstered by a suggestion that, at the time of his visit to Rome, 'our city of Florence, daughter and creation of Rome, was in the ascendancy, and had great things in front of her, while Rome was in decline'.¹²⁷ Alongside this, Villani includes description of the more recent experiences of his city, including its topography, and a catalogue of some of the prominent families living in it. Life for

volgare, a cio che li laici siccome gli aletterati ne possano ritrarre frutto e diletto): Porta, *Giovanni Villani*, I, p. 4.

¹²⁵ *'fia dilettevole e utile e conforto a nostri cittadini che sono e she saranno, in essere virtudiosi e di grade operazione'*: Porta, *Giovanni Villani*, p. 4.

¹²⁶ Louis Green, *Chronicle Into History: An Essay on the Interpretation of History In Florentine Fourteenth-Century Chronicles* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972), p. 6.

¹²⁷ *'la nobiltà e grandezza della nostra città à nostri presenti tempi'*: Porta, *Giovanni Villani*, I, p. 3; *'Ma considerando che la nostra città di Firenze, figliuola e fattura di Roma, era nel suo montare e a seguire grandi cose, sì come Roma nel calare'*: Porta, *Giovanni Villani*, II, p. 58.

Florence's contemporary citizens, then, is given a religious, mythological, and moral significance, as if it is a culmination of a long-term process of destiny.

In Florence, as early as the beginning of the fourteenth century, then, writing was being employed as a means of promoting and describing the city, and expressing a sense of urban identity and pride. Underlying these changes were the increase in the number and importance of texts produced in the city and of the men who were trained to compose or compile them - trends which we have seen had begun by at least the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries in London and York. Moreover, the reading and writing of texts was perceived as a valuable activity for those involved in the government of the city, or even simply for good citizenship. In describing in textual form the government, history, or topographical features of their city, Florentines were considered to be participating in the promotion of prosperity in their community, and of the city to those outside it.

Problems and Definitions of Literacy:

The ensuing chapters will argue that the civic registers of London and York display the application of literate skills to description and praise of the city in ways similar to those described in medieval Florence. However, first we need to take into consideration some of the ways in which modern scholarly examinations of medieval literacy have responded to the question of how it was used. Definitions of 'literacy' vary between the medieval and modern treatments of the subject: while the medieval 'literate' was essentially a reader and writer of Latin, and probably a churchman, discussions of literacy by scholars such as Michael Clanchy encompass a range of types of 'literacy', dependent on the genres of texts which a reader could comprehend in each case, and the languages and the degree of writing or reading skills which they would require.¹²⁸ This chapter has shown that the opportunities for education, and for exercising and developing literate skills were increasing in York and London in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. As M. B. Parkes has

¹²⁸Clanchy, 'Looking Back from the Invention of Printing'.

put it, the main 'question is not whether there were literate laymen, but how far they used this literacy outside their professional activities.'¹²⁹

Discussions of medieval literacy generally agree that 'from the twelfth century onward [...] the history of lay literacy is dominated by the steady growth of literacy among the expanding middle class'.¹³⁰ This social group in particular is considered to have developed their skills in reading and writing through their experience of documentary and business writing, for which Parkes has coined the term 'pragmatic literacy'.¹³¹ This is highly reminiscent of the model proposed by Michael Clanchy with which we began this chapter, according to which the wider population of England became familiarised with the forms and uses of writing by their increased exposure to documentation in the eleventh and twelfth century. 'Pragmatic literacy' was based entirely on the requirements of business and trade, and the need to comprehend and produce accounts and records of professional activities. In her study of the mercantile class of London in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, Sylvia Thrupp has argued that literate merchants showed little interest in employing the literacy they had developed through business on texts of literary or other non-practical content. Thrupp contests that the evidence of limited book-ownership in mercantile wills in London, the fact that trade in books in London seems to have 'remained largely in the hands of aliens and that as late as 1520 the mercers were classing books among the "tryfylles" of their import trade does not speak well for the London merchants' intellectual curiosity or initiative'.¹³² Similarly, Harvey Graff has argued that other than business, religious, or historical works, 'there was apparently little other patronage of literature' amongst English merchants, and 'the use of their literacy and education was not often turned to intellectual ends'.¹³³

By contrast, Carol Meale, in investigating the ownership and commercial background of 'commonplace books' in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth

¹²⁹Parkes, 'The Literacy of the Laity', p. 561.

¹³⁰Parkes, 'The Literacy of the Laity', p. 557.

¹³¹Parkes, 'The Literacy of the Laity'.

¹³²Thrupp, *The Merchant Class*, p. 161.

¹³³Graff, *The Legacies of Literacy*, p. 99.

centuries, has suggested that 'the professional or middle classes in general increasingly put their literacy to "non-pragmatic" uses during the late medieval period (owners from the higher echelons of society are conspicuous [...] only by their absence)'.¹³⁴ Meale's study, beginning in the late fifteenth century, is too late for its conclusions to be transferred unproblematically to the period from 1274-1474 with which this thesis is concerned. However, the 'commonplace book' would seem, as a compilation of personally selected - and sometimes copied - texts to be a promising one with which to counter accusations that mercantile book owners were uninterested in reading a variety of works. Indeed, Malcolm Parkes refers specifically to this genre of texts, and other compilations, for a key part of his argument 'that some pragmatic readers were becoming increasingly more cultivated'.¹³⁵ Parkes describes 'commonplace books' and other 'manuscripts of middle-class interest' as 'compilations for the whole family: "libraries", as it were, of texts for edification and profit, or edification and delight'.¹³⁶ The comprehensiveness and internal diversity of such books, according to Parkes, counters the idea that few books were owned because there are so few mentioned in wills. Parkes cites such books as evidence that 'compilers were collecting for literate recreation, and that some pragmatic readers were becoming increasingly more cultivated', shifting towards the status of the 'general reader' whom he sees as emerging in the thirteenth century.¹³⁷ As the following chapters will show, many of the civic registers of London and York display a similar conjunction of texts of differing genres and apparently varying value or function.

Parkes' notion of the 'general reader', whose literacy encompassed a range of texts, matches the evidence which has emerged in the discussion in this chapter of books containing within them works which might serve them for business purposes or leisure reading, and of writers who were involved in the production of several different genres of writing, despite their apparent training in one area exclusively. The categorisation of types of 'literacy', such as that undertaken by

¹³⁴Meale, 'The Social and Literary Contexts', p. 211.

¹³⁵Parkes, 'The Literacy of the Laity', p. 563.

¹³⁶Parkes, 'The Literacy of the Laity', p. 568.

¹³⁷Parkes, 'The Literacy of the Laity', p. 563, and p. 572.

Michael Clanchy, while it broadens the definitions of literacy to enable a better understanding of the reading and writing capabilities and habits of the Middle Ages, at the same time tends to suggest that various types of 'literate' were limited exclusively to the kinds of writing according to which they were arranged. The favoured subjects of religion and history, according to both Sylvia Thrupp's and Harvey Graff's treatments of mercantile literacy, in any case, would seem to defy easy categorisation under the heading of 'pragmatic' reading. As Carol Meale has pointed out, 'commonplace books, in their often haphazard juxtapositioning of diverse materials, demonstrate more clearly than other types of compilation the compatibility of the various uses of literacy amongst the members of a certain class: the notion of practical utility is a broad one, encompassing morality as well as business.'¹³⁸ 'Pragmatic literacy' is an essential concept for the comprehension of the development of literate skills and interests in the medieval city, but it needs careful redefinition in order to appreciate the function and significance of the texts owned by the mercantile class in the medieval city, and the interests of those mercantile book owners.

The civic registers of London and York which we will now go on to examine were produced within an urban society in which writing, in particular of a documentary nature, had begun to proliferate. During the period in which they were compiled, the craft of book production and the training and organisation of writers and compilers became more sophisticated. The status of both writers, including clerks, and of books themselves, increased, and schemes were devised to facilitate the circulation of texts. Moreover, in both cities the instruction was available to assist in the development of varying levels of literacy within the urban population. In particular, we have seen that the mercantile middle class were extending their literate skills and interests to include texts unrelated to their professional activities, such as histories, poetry, and law. The fusion of civic and literary ideals in medieval Florence has provided an example of how writing could be used to express new ideas about the city and its government. The argument of

¹³⁸Meale, 'The Social and Literary Contexts', p. 212.

this thesis will show how the civic registers of London and York arose in this context of literary production and ownership in the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries.

Chapter Two
Defining Civic Writing: the
London Customals

'London, which is the head of the kingdom and of laws'
(*London que capud regni est et legum*)¹

Introduction:

Between around 1274 and 1474 at least ten of the manuscript compilations of urban and national laws and customs now held by the Corporation of London Record Office in the Guildhall of London, and categorised as 'customals' were produced in London.² Their material was drawn from each other, from London's *Letter Books*, and from other city documentation, and during this period they were produced in increasingly fine copies. This thesis will consider seven of these customals as evidence of an interest in writing which articulates a sense of urban identity and citizenship in London between the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries: the *Liber de Antiquis Legibus*; the *Liber Horn*; the *Liber Custumarum*; the *Liber Ordinationum*; the *Liber Memorandorum*; the *Liber Albus*; and the *Liber Dunthorn*. The medieval customal the *Liber Legum Regum Antiquorum*, which survives as part of the manuscript now titled the *Liber Custumarum*, will also be included in this enquiry. The greatest part of this chapter, however, will be concerned with a detailed discussion of the format, the contents, and the circumstances of the production of four of the customals held by the CLRO during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries and in the present day: the *Liber de Antiquis Legibus* (compiled by around 1274); the *Liber Horn* (completed probably by around 1318); the *Liber Legum Regum Antiquorum* (compiled around 1321); and the *Liber Albus* (completed in 1419).³ The seven customals listed above contain combinations of

¹London, British Library, MS Additional 38131, fol. 85r.

²Philip E. Jones and Raymond Smith, *A Guide to the Records in the Corporation of London Records Office and the Guildhall Library Muniment Room* (London: English Universities Press, 1951), list the following manuscripts, compiled before the end of the fifteenth century, in the collection of the CLRO as 'customals and ancient books': the *Liber de Antiquis Legibus*; the *Liber Horn*; the *Liber Ordinationum*; the *Liber Dunthorn*; the *Cartae Antiquae*; the *Statuta Antiquae Angliae*; the *Liber Custumarum*; the *Liber Albus*; the *Liber Memorandorum*; and the *Liber de Assisa Panis*. Of these, all had been completed by 1474 except for the *Cartae Antiquae*, which contains material extending from 1327 to 1495.

³The *Liber de Antiquis Legibus*, the *Liber Legum Regum Antiquorum*, and the *Liber Albus* have been at least partly published in, respectively, *De Antiquis Legibus Liber*, ed. by Thomas Stapleton, Camden Society, old series, 34 (1845) (London: Camden Society, 1846) and the *Chronicles of the Mayors and Sheriffs of*

both royal statutes and legislation issued by and for the city specifically, and were therefore designed to record matters pertinent to London in particular. Moreover, they were not added to after the close of our period of interest, so constituted complete volumes during the Middle Ages. The four registers on which this chapter will focus have been selected because a relatively substantial amount of evidence is available concerning their probable compilers and the circumstances surrounding their production, and because their contents include both legislation and other genres of text describing the city.

The chapter will partly provide a particular case study of the production and use of the customal in London at this time. London was an exceptionally active centre, within medieval England, for the production and consumption of writing, and the texts which its mercantile class owned are relatively well documented.⁴ At the same time, however, this case study is intended to provide a provisional definition of the format and nature of the civic register in general, through, first, description and characterisation of the customals' contents and structure, and secondly discussion of some of the issues and questions raised in Chapter One, including those concerning audience and urban literacy. This will allow themes to be pinpointed which will be considered in greater detail in the ensuing chapters, enabling that definition to be further refined.

These parameters which have been set for the discussion which follows require further explanation, particularly because they raise fundamental questions about the methods of analysis to be employed in this chapter and throughout the thesis. The most obvious question concerns the selection of texts to be evaluated as examples of 'civic writing' from London: why should the customals provide the primary focus for the discussion, to the exclusion of other documentation and manuscripts produced in London during this period? The thirteenth century was a

London, A.D. 1188 to A.D. 1274, and the French Chronicle of London, A.D. 1259 to A.D. 1343, translated by Henry Thomas Riley (London: Trübner, 1863); *Munimenta, II: Parts I and II, Containing Liber Custumarum, with Extracts from the Cottonian MS. Claudius D.II*; and *Munimenta, I: Liber Albus, and the Liber Albus: The White Book of the City of London*, translated by Henry Thomas Riley (London: Richard Griffin, 1861).

⁴See Chapter One, pp. 46-8.

period when documentary writing within English cities was proliferating, and London's is one of the few urban governments with extant documentation from before 1272. The *custumals* are themselves only one example of the 'sophisticated system of archives' envisaged by Geoffrey Martin for English boroughs such as London in the thirteenth century.⁵ As well as enrolments of deeds in the Court of Hustings, beginning in 1252, the city's *Letter Books* are compiled from 1275.⁶ Many of the contents of the *custumals* are derived from the *Letter Books*, which function essentially as periodic collections of memoranda of council meetings and decisions, judicial decisions, deeds, and ordinances.⁷ In content, then, as well as in compilatory structure, the *Letter Books* provide a particularly close analogy with the manuscripts categorised as *custumals* in the Guildhall archive. In addition, their range of contents can be seen to diversify during our period of interest to include items frequently found in the *custumals* which this chapter will argue are expressive of a developing civic identity, including a chronicle, oaths of civic officials, and royal documentation. As with the *custumals*, by the end of the fourteenth century increasing attention was being paid to the presentation and decoration of the text of the *Letter Books*.⁸ Moreover, the contemporary system of nomenclature made little distinction between the *custumals* and the *Letter Books*: John Carpenter's *custumal* of 1419 is referred to as the '*Liber Albus*', while Letter Book C is titled the '*Major liber niger*', and indeed the administrative books of London are generally described simply as '*libri*'.⁹ It seems that, with regard to their contents, their presentation, their contemporaneous description, and their potential for the expression of civic identity the integrity of the *custumals* as a group is questionable.

However, common characteristics distinguishing the *custumals* named above are equally apparent, and this chapter will discuss many of these shared

⁵See Chapter One, p. 32.

⁶*LBA-L*.

⁷*LBA-L*. The *Letter Books* (except for *Letter Book G*) were also known during the Middle Ages by alternative titles, based on their size and colour, such as *liber niger major* and *liber rubeo*: see the introductions to *LBA-L*.

⁸See Chapter Four, p. 219.

⁹For an accessible example of this shared terminology, see the list of books held by the civic government of London copied onto one of the fly-leaves of *Letter Book D* during the reign of Henry VI, which includes *custumals*, *Letter Books*, and other administrative volumes, *LBD*, pp. 317-18.

features. The custumals constitute compilations of secondary documentation, or copies of original documents, often made at least partly according to design over a limited period, rather than primary records written up over a period of years in response to the occasions which required them.¹⁰ As such, they were clearly seen to function in ways other than as the sole written records of urban laws or events. They supersede the most immediate, pragmatic purpose of the written record, and represent purposive selections of particular documents. Moreover, while we cannot be certain when or indeed whether civic manuscripts such as the custumals and the *Letter Books* were bound formally together during the medieval period, the tables of contents attached to many of the custumals, and the signs of their formal construction, including catchwords and quire numbers, suggest that they were frequently envisaged largely as complete texts by their compilers and readers, at some stage during their process of compilation at least.¹¹ Thus the range of writings gathered together in these compilations can be seen to be for the most part a deliberate, rather than a haphazard, configuration of texts and genres. Indeed, the presence of the same non-documentary kinds of writing, including chronicle, verse, and celebratory description of the city or of civic ceremony in several of these manuscripts also unites and distinguishes them as a group. These characteristics suggest that these manuscripts served an honorific and a symbolic as well as a practical purpose.¹²

Part of the purpose of this chapter, then, will be to consider the coherence of this group of volumes as a 'genre', in the sense that they were recognised by contemporaries as examples of a particular kind of writing, with a consistent type of content and style, and with shared functions. As well as circumscribing these custumals as a distinct group, however, the chapter will also set them within a wider literary context. This will include comparison with the *Letter Books*, and

¹⁰Michael Clanchy discusses the importance of distinguishing between 'primary' and 'secondary' documents in *From Memory To Written Record: England 1066-1307*, 2nd edn (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993), p. 84

¹¹The description of some of the *Letter Books*, and the *Liber Albus*, by colour, however, suggest that they were bound at some stage during our period of interest.

¹²The symbolic potency of the texts will be discussed further in Chapter Four as part of the process of defining civic writing.

with guild registers from the period, but in particular the widening of the circle of the texts to be considered to encompass a selection of privately produced and owned compilations from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries which contain a very similar core and range of contents to the customals. As with the *Letter Books*, it is essentially modern classification which distinguishes the customals of the CLRO from privately held compilations in non-governmental libraries. While those texts which were held by the Guildhall in the Middle Ages and still are today are categorised by post-medieval bibliographers as 'customals', those apparently compiled and held by individuals within their households are most commonly described in today's library catalogues as 'commonplace books' or 'legal compilations'. However, the term 'customal' does not appear in English as a mode of describing a documentary genre until the sixteenth century, and although one of the London customals is titled the *Liber Custumarum*, a comparable Latin term does not seem to have been used as a general descriptive term for these or other books.¹³ Indeed, the four customals held by the CLRO which will be the subject of closest study in this chapter - the *Liber de Antiquis Legibus*; the *Liber Horn*; the *Liber Legum Regum Antiquorum*; and the *Liber Albus* - are those with which the influence of a particular individual can be closely associated, and all except the *Liber Albus* originated as privately compiled texts, a fact which further blurs the distinction between these two kinds of manuscripts into the discrete genres of the 'customal' and the 'commonplace book'. Considering examples of both kinds of compilation together in this chapter pushes us towards a more wide-ranging, but also a more precise, definition of what 'civic writing' might have signified to the medieval readers of London. In many ways, the features which the customals share with these 'commonplace books' mark them off more clearly as a distinct

¹³The *OED* dates its first citation of 'customal' in 1570-6, *OED customal* sb. The *MED* gives 'customal' as an adjective, meaning 'habitual', but not as a noun: *MED customal* adj (1). Similarly, both the *Anglo-Norman Dictionary*, ed. by William Rothwell, Louise W. Stone and T. B. W. Reid (London: The Modern Humanities Research Association, 1992) and the *Dictionnaire de L'Ancienne Langue Française et de Tous ses Dialectes Du IX^e au XV^e Siècle*, ed. by Frederic Godefroy, 10 vols (Nedeln/ Lichtenstein: Kraus, 1883, repr. 1969) give 'custumel' or 'costumel' only as an adjective.

group within the surviving documentary production of London's medieval government.

In addition to setting the London customals held by the Guildhall within a wider literary context, then, comparison with certain 'commonplace books' from the city highlights the question of the status of these books as either public texts, reflecting the practical needs of the communal institution of urban government, or as private productions, shaped at least partly by the interests and preoccupations of the individuals who were responsible for their compilation. The public quality of these and other civic registers and their importance to the citizen as well as to urban government will be discussed in particular in Chapters Four and Five. However, the London customals and the 'commonplace books' with which they will be compared provide a particularly valuable example of this dual private and public function with which to begin. Not only have several of these texts been owned during their history both privately by citizens, and by London's civic council, but the typical format of both customals and 'commonplace books' encompasses both urban legislation and a range of less obviously pragmatic contents, including chronicles, verse, or ceremonial description. By taking into consideration the owners and compilers of the customals and 'commonplace books' which are known to have been under private possession, we will also be able to gain a better idea of the nature of their audience and readership; to re-assess the significance of these compilations as evidence of urban literacy; and to begin to develop a sense of how writing in medieval registers might be described as 'civic'.

The Thirteenth Century: the *Liber de Antiquis Legibus*:

The earliest volume categorised as a 'customal' in the collection of the CLRO is the *Liber de Antiquis Legibus*, thought to have been compiled and partly written by Arnald Fitz-Thedmar.¹⁴ Several very personal entries concerning Fitz-Thedmar indicate that the customal was produced by him and inform us of some of

¹⁴London, CLRO, Customal 1, the *Liber de Antiquis Legibus*. The manuscript is catalogued and described by Neil Ker, *Medieval Manuscripts in British Libraries*, 5 vols (Oxford: Clarendon, 1969), I, pp. 22-27.

his history. The chronicle included in the *Liber de Antiquis Legibus* describes him as an alderman of London, although his ward is not designated.¹⁵ Intermittent references in the chronicle affirm Fitz Thedmar's innocence against accusations of corruption from factions in the city supportive of Simon de Montfort, attributing them 'more to the heat of hatred than because his faults required it'.¹⁶ Into the front of the volume Fitz Thedmar has copied, possibly in his own hand, letters from Henry III and Edward I, excusing Fitz Thedmar from paying the amount assessed of him by the mayor in the raising of a fine in the city.¹⁷ A further note records that Arnold Fitz Thedmar had custody of a '*scrinio civium*', 'a chest of the citizens', in 1270, containing royal charters to the city from William I, Henry II, and Richard I. This suggests that he held a position of responsibility for the city's records within London's urban government, possibly that of chamberlain.¹⁸

Perhaps the most unusual entry referring to Fitz Thedmar is a description of his family's history.¹⁹ This recalls the voyage of Fitz Thedmar's maternal grandparents from their home in Cologne to Canterbury to visit the shrine of Thomas Becket, to pray that his grandmother might conceive a child. They did not want to return home before visiting London, however, 'concerning which city, so noble and famous, they had heard the report in their own land', and after some time in the capital Fitz Thedmar's grandmother conceived.²⁰ The couple remained, becoming citizens of London, and the passage goes on to describe the death of Fitz Thedmar's uncle on crusade with Richard I, before recounting a prophetic dream experienced by his mother before his birth, involving a log of wood and a slab of marble. The passage finishes by noting that Fitz Thedmar was born on the 10th of August, 1201.

¹⁵CLRO, Custumal 1, the *Liber de Antiquis Legibus*, fol. 74r.

¹⁶'*plus odii fomite quam meritis suis exigentibus*': CLRO, Custumal 1, the *Liber de Antiquis Legibus*, fol. 75v.

¹⁷CLRO, Custumal 1, *Liber de Antiquis Legibus*, fols. 1-2, fol. 163.

¹⁸CLRO, Custumal 1, the *Liber de Antiquis Legibus*, fol. 159r. According to the early thirteenth-century Statutes of London, the chamberlain of London held responsibility for the city's records: in 1462, jurisdiction passed to the common clerk. See *LBC*, p. 17.

¹⁹CLRO, Custumal 1, the *Liber de Antiquis Legibus*, fol. 157r.-158r.

²⁰'*de qua Civitate tam nobili at famosa famam audierant in terra sua*': CLRO, Custumal 1, the *Liber de Antiquis Legibus*, fol. 157r.

Fitz Thedmar's will was enrolled at the Hustings of London in 1275.²¹ The latest entry in the main body of the *Liber de Antiquis Legibus*' contents is the description of the preparations for the coronation of Edward I in 1274. We can conclude from this evidence that the custumal was completed in around 1274, although a few later entries from the reigns of Edward II and Edward III have been added. The book appears to have been compiled over a period of years before this, however. Neil Ker suggests that a central body of its contents were commissioned by Fitz Thedmar, with other entries being added by himself and another scribe at later dates.²² Some entries have been entered into spaces on folios spread across the volume, including the description of Fitz Thedmar's avoidance of payment of his assigned share of London's fine, which is begun on fol. 163v., and then transfers to fols. 1r.-1v. Thus, although some of the book's contents may have been based on a preconceived design, it seems that it functioned for the most part as an on-going, personal memorandum book.

Other than the entries in which Fitz Thedmar is directly involved, the book's contents range widely in subject and style. The central core of contents which Neil Ker considers may have been copied initially for Fitz Thedmar as the basis of the volume consists of selections from William of Malmesbury's *Gesta Regum Anglorum*; short descriptions of the events of the reigns of Stephen, Henry II, Richard, and John up until 1199; lists of the archbishops of Canterbury and London up until 1270 and 1273 respectively; a list of the sheriffs of London between 1188 and 1271; the chronicle of London, based around a list of the new mayors and sheriffs of the city each year, between 1188 and 1274; and a list of the chapters of the Statute of Marlborough, made in 1264.²³ In addition to these, the book contains several sets of verses, concerning, in one case, the Roman emperors and the kings of France and Germany up until 1271, in another two the deaths of Henry III and of the saints Peter and Paul respectively, and a copy of a poem now

²¹*Calendar of Wills Proved and Enrolled in the Court of Husting, London, A.D. 1258 - A.D. 1688* (London: Corporation of London Record Office, 1890), I, p. 22.

²²Ker, *Medieval Manuscripts*, I, p. 23.

²³See CLRO, Custumal 1, the *Liber de Antiquis Legibus*, fols. 3r.-7v., fols. 11r.-30v., fols. 31r.-34v., and fol. 156v.; fols. 35r.-36v.; fol. 52r.; fols. 58r.-60v.; fols. 63v.-144v.; and fols. 147r.-153v. respectively.

known as 'The Prisoner's Prayer' and written in Anglo-Norman and Middle English.²⁴ Urban governmental business is represented by a copy of the assize of buildings from 1189, under London's first mayor Henry Fitz Aylwin; a list of the city's mayors from 1189 until 1271, and memoranda on weights and the price of bread; and ecclesiastical matters by further lists of English bishops, and a charter of liberties of the bishopric of London.²⁵ A table of contents suggests that the manuscript once also included the names of the kings of England from 'Eylbrittho' to Henry II, and a genealogy of Henry II going back to Noah.²⁶ Fitz Thedmar's book, then, as we would expect of a compilation of this kind, encompasses several different kinds of writing (for example, verse, chronicle, and legal record), and numerous subjects, including the business of city government, the church, kings of England, and the history - of Fitz Thedmar's family, of London and of the country as a whole.

This eclecticism is typical of the compilatory manuscripts which appear among the possessions of urban lay readers of the later Middle Ages, and in particular of those known as 'commonplace books', collections made for, and held by individuals for their private leisure reading, the contents of which often vary widely in terms of their genre and style.²⁷ Clearly this is a consequence of the fact that the book was wholly the property of Fitz Thedmar and not that of the civic council which he served, and that he was therefore at liberty to compile it entirely on the basis of his, as opposed to simply governmental interests. We do not know when the *Liber de Antiquis Legibus* passed into the hands of London's ruling council, although it seems to have been part of the Guildhall archive by around the middle of the fifteenth century.²⁸ Certainly, there are no indications that Fitz

²⁴See CLRO, Custumal 1, the *Liber de Antiquis Legibus*, fol. 10v.; fol. 42r. and fol. 162r.; fols. 160v.-161r. respectively. 'The Prisoner's Prayer' is printed in *English Lyrics of the Thirteenth Century*, ed. by C. Brown (Oxford: Clarendon, 1932), p 10, and *Anglo-Norman Political Songs*, ed. by I. Aspin, Anglo-Norman Texts, 11 (Oxford: Blackwell, 1953), pp. 6-11.

²⁵See CLRO, Custumal 1, the *Liber de Antiquis Legibus*, fols. 45r.-48r.; fol. 63r., and fol. 2r. and fols. 56v.-57r., and fols. 55v.-56r.; fols. 48r.-51r., and fols. 53r.-54v, and fols. 42v.-43r. respectively.

²⁶See CLRO, Custumal 1, the *Liber de Antiquis Legibus*, fols. i.v.-ii.v.

²⁷See Chapter One, p.53, pp. 40-1, and pp. 62-3.

²⁸A list of books, dated in the reign of Henry VI, is entered onto a fly-leaf of Letter Book D, and refers to the '*Liber Thamisie*'. On the verso of the front sheet of the

Thedmar intended it to be held by London's council. The structure of the compilation enabled its owner to achieve a peculiarly personal involvement with the probably unique configuration of texts which he had compiled or commissioned within this kind of volume.²⁹ On one level, the *Liber de Antiquis Legibus* functions as this kind of personal notebook compiled by Fitz Thedmar, and as such provides a valuable reflection of the miscellaneous interests of an aristocratic London citizen in the late thirteenth century.

Fitz Thedmar's inclusion of details of his own and his family's history is fully consonant with the design of a book meant to satisfy the literary interests of its owner. Gwyn Williams has argued that the government of London during this period was dominated by representatives of patrician families such as Fitz Thedmar's: most 'aldermen in the early years of the [thirteenth] century were provided by a handful of rooted civic dynasties who exercised an almost hereditary authority.'³⁰ In this kind of political climate, the family must have provided an important means of self-identification and self-promotion, and it would therefore perhaps be more surprising if a text such as the *Liber de Antiquis Legibus*, produced and held within the family milieu, did not include an account of its compiler's ancestry. But Fitz Thedmar's idiosyncratic version of his genealogy does more than simply record the details of his family; rather he mythologises them, so that their journey to London, and subsequent fates and experiences seem to be guided by and indicative of the workings of Christian influence. This is true of his account of his uncle who dies as a crusading hero, but also of his association of himself and his family with Thomas Becket. Not only does his grandmother conceive after visiting the tomb of Becket, but the mysterious dream which foretells Fitz Thedmar's own birth echoes those visions and dreams attributed to the

Liber de Antiquis Legibus 'liber iste intitulatur de aqua Thamisie' has been written twice, implying that this may have been an alternative title for the book. William Kellaway, in his article 'John Carpenter's Liber Albus', *Guildhall Studies in London History*, 3:2 (1978), 67-84 (p. 72; p. 78; p. 83) argues that the *Liber de Antiquis Legibus* may have been a source for some of the material in the later London custumal, the *Liber Albus*: this means that Arnald Fitz Thedmar's book must have been in the possession of the city's government by 1419.

²⁹See especially Chapter One, p. 53.

³⁰Gwyn Williams, *Medieval London, From Commune to Capital* (London: Athlone, 1963), pp. 32-3.

archbishop's mother during and after her pregnancy in some of the biographies produced after Becket's death.³¹ The description confirms the importance of the manuscript as a text of personal, familial significance - a private compilation - but at the same time it suggests Fitz Thedmar's self-conscious use of writing, and of this kind of volume, as a means of self-promotion, implying that he imagined that it would have an audience.

Similarly, the other documents concerning Fitz Thedmar, and references to him which are included in the *Liber de Antiquis Legibus*, are emphatic that its written form affirms his good reputation. In the chronicle copied into the book under the year 1259, for example, Fitz Thedmar has recorded the testimony of a spokesman for the king that he 'had committed no crime, and had been wrongly indicted'.³² Fitz Thedmar seems anxious that his book should form a testament of his good family, and character, suggesting that he foresaw that it would be read by others than himself. One of his editorial interventions into the flow of action in the chronicle confirms his sense of the value of writing as a record of character as well as of legislation, with a moral importance. Under the year 1269, he writes that

The deeds and works of the good are reduced into writing, so that they can be brought back to the memory of posterity to their everlasting praise and glory, and in this way the cruelties, vices, treacheries, and the wicked deeds of the unjust should be put in writing, so that they can in future times be made known to the whole world to their disgrace, disparagement and slander.³³

³¹See, for example, Richard Winston, *Thomas Becket* (London: Constable, 1967), pp. 9-10. Amongst the details relevant to Fitz Thedmar's account of his family's history, Winston refers to the myths that Becket's mother was a Saracen princess who followed his crusader father back to London, and that while pregnant she dreamt that she bore the church of Canterbury in her womb. On the legends which arose surrounding Becket after his execution, see *A History of Anglo-Latin Literature 1066-1422*, ed. by A. G. Rigg (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 77-83. See also Phyllis B. Roberts, 'Thomas Becket: The Construction and Deconstruction of a Saint from the Middle Ages to the Reformation', in *Models of Holiness in Medieval Sermons, Proceedings of the International Symposium (Kalamazoo, 4-7 May 1995)*, ed. by Beverly Mayne Kienzle, *Textes et Études du Moyen Âge*, 5 (Louvain-La-Neuve: Fédération Internationale des Instituts d'Études Médiévales, 1996), pp. 1-22

³²'*nichil deliquisse, et quod injuste fuit indictatus*': CLRO, Custumal 1, the *Liber de Antiquis Legibus*, fol. 79v.

³³'*Gesta et opera bonorum in scriptis reddiguntur ut ea ad eorum laudem et gloriam perpetuam possint posteris reduci ad memoriam et ita debent crudelitates malicie perfidie et nequicie iniquorum in scriptis poni ut ad eorum dedcus vituperium et scandalum ea possint toto mundo futuris temporibus notificari*': CLRO, Custumal 1, the *Liber de Antiquis Legibus*, fol. 114r.

Fitz Thedmar may not have quite envisaged 'the whole world' as the future audience for his book, but he seems to have imagined it being viewed by other readers and contributing 'to the memory of posterity' - and to have styled its contents accordingly.

However, we should also remember that one of the most significant aspects of the character which Fitz Thedmar had recorded for himself in his book was his role in the government of London. Fitz Thedmar was, after all, an alderman, and possibly chamberlain of the city, and his public persona is repeatedly emphasised in the *Liber de Antiquis Legibus*. The intimate association of his family with the city of London, as prominent members of its community, plays a significant part in his depiction of London: his grandparents, after all, only overcome their inability to conceive a child on staying in London, the city 'so noble and famous, they had heard the report [of it] in their own land'.³⁴ Arnald is careful to emphasise, also, that they bought property in the city, and so became citizens of it.³⁵ Fitz Thedmar also associates himself with Thomas Becket, a saint born in London, whose benevolent influence was often claimed for the city: William Fitz Stephen's biography of Becket, for example, which was written in the later twelfth century, was prefaced by a laudatory description of London.³⁶ In this context, identification with the city becomes as connotative of virtue as Arnald's crusading uncle's accompaniment of King Richard. Fitz Thedmar's promotion, and identification of himself, then, is buttressed by his association not only with an influential family, but also with the city: assimilation into London and its affairs becomes a key part of his genealogy.

Indeed it is important to bear in mind that while the *Liber de Antiquis Legibus* was a privately compiled volume, yet Fitz Thedmar still chose to include records of London's administration which, while they are in the minority amongst

³⁴CLRO, Custumal 1, the *Liber de Antiquis Legibus*, fol. 157r.

³⁵See CLRO, Custumal 1, the *Liber de Antiquis Legibus*, fol. 157r.

³⁶See also Riley, *Liber Albus*, pp. 26-30, for a fifteenth-century description of the 'ancient' involvement of the church of St Thomas of Acon, in the churchyard of which Becket's parents were said to have been buried, in the ceremony surrounding the election of London's mayors.

the book's contents, were sufficient for it to have been obtained and maintained as a resource by London's government, and categorised subsequently as a custumal. Fitz Thedmar's manuscript includes comprehensive lists of civic officials, and it also contains copies of urban legislation, such as the assize of buildings, and memoranda concerning weights, and bread.³⁷ The statutes of London were clearly of as much interest - at least deemed as worthy of record - to a civic official in his own book, as to the urban government in their archive.

London is also reflected in the *Liber de Antiquis Legibus* through Fitz Thedmar's chronicle of the city from 1188 up to 1274 on fols. 63v.-144v. The chronicle contains a range of information, concerning local affairs as well as national events, but it becomes most vivid in its second half, from around the 1250s, when it begins to recount the conflicts within the city and outside it caused by Henry II, and his confrontations with Simon de Montfort. Arnald Fitz Thedmar is mentioned on several occasions as a protagonist, and sometimes a victim, in this turbulence, and the production and inclusion of the chronicle in the manuscript reflects again his desire to catalogue his own contemporary experience.³⁸ The chronicle also represents one of several examples within the *Liber de Antiquis Legibus* of an apparent concern on Fitz Thedmar's part to document not only the present, but also the details of a distant past, including a missing genealogy of Henry III, and the list of England's Anglo-Saxon kings.³⁹ Even his lists of civic officials, kings, and archbishops penetrate back a hundred years, and Henry Fitz Ailwin's building assize for London may have been almost a century old when the *Liber de Antiquis Legibus* was compiled.⁴⁰

Probably as a result of the conflict between the city and Henry II which provides much of the material for the later part of the chronicle, it also features a

³⁷See CLRO, Custumal 1, the *Liber de Antiquis Legibus*, fols. 45r.-48r.; and fol. 2r., and fols. 55v.-56r.

³⁸See CLRO, Custumal 1, the *Liber de Antiquis Legibus*, fol. 74r., fol. 75v., fol. 79v., and fol. 114v.

³⁹See Ker, *Medieval Manuscripts*, I, p. 25, number 28.

⁴⁰John Schofield, however, suggests that the Building Assize was connected with 1189 and the mayoralty of Henry Fitz Ailwin, only 'according to tradition', and can only have said to have been 'in force by 1212': John Schofield, *Medieval London Houses* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1994), p. 4, and p. 95. I am grateful to Professor David Palliser for pointing out this dating to me.

vocabulary descriptive of Fitz Thedmar's sense of the political identity of London, and the relationships between some of its constituent groups. References to the '*virī de validoribus Civitatis*', and to the '*minutus populus*', to designate on one hand the ruling, wealthier group and on the other the poorer group more frequently excluded from government, in urban society, which we find in civic documentation in many cities, are frequent, together with the term '*concives*'.⁴¹ In addition, the chronicle repeatedly describes the city as a '*Communa*', rather than a '*Civitas*' (the term normally used in the chronicle to refer to the city), and under the entry for 1267, a further, relatively sophisticated description of urban society is included.⁴² Fitz Thedmar recounts royal proclamations to London that 'all the people of the city, both the poor and the rich, should be like one body and one man, so that the peace of the king and of the city might be faithfully observed, according to their fealty'.⁴³ In this instance, Fitz Thedmar is quoting a document produced by the royal household, and it seems likely that these ideas about the political identity and social groups of the city, and the organised lexicon to describe these, may originate from the terminology applied to the kingdom, and from the national administration. Fitz Thedmar uses this model of the macrocosmic body of urban society again when he describes how 'the aldermen are like the heads and the people are like the

⁴¹See, for example, fols. 98v.-99r., and fols. 100v.-101r. R. H. Hilton, in *English and French Towns in Feudal Society: A Comparative Study* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 113-7, discusses the use of this kind of hierarchising vocabulary within medieval English towns.

⁴²On the use of '*Communa*' and other terms to describe the city-state in medieval political thought, see Anthony Black, *Political Thought in Europe, 1250-1450* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), Chapter Four, and Susan Reynolds, *Kingdoms and Communities in Western Europe, 900-1300* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1984), Chapter Six. Reynolds argues that the term '*Communa*' had no legal significance' and that, like many similar terms used to describe the medieval town and its government, was indicative of the diffusion of this kind of vocabulary between cities rather than new political ideas about the constitution and autonomy of the city: Reynolds, *Kingdoms and Communities*, p. 181. In 1193 a short-lived commune had been declared in London: see Williams, *Medieval London*, pp. 1-6, and J. H. Round, *The Commune of London and Other Studies* (Westminster: Archibald Constable, 1899), Chapter Eleven.

⁴³*omnes de civitate tam pauperes quam divites essent quasi corpus unum et vir unus ad pacem regis et civitatis ad fidem suam fideliter observandam*: CLRO, Custumal 1, *Liber de Antiquis Legibus*, fol. 106v. On the use of the metaphor of the human body for the social constitution of the city, see Anthony Black, 'The Individual and Society' in *The Cambridge History of Medieval Political Thought c. 1350-c. 1450*, ed. by J. H. Burns (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp. 588-606 (p. 593).

limbs, since the aldermen themselves return all judgements on the pleas advanced in the city'.⁴⁴ However, it is interesting, if not surprising, that Arnald Fitz Thedmar, as a London alderman, seems to have been conversant with these ideas, and to have applied them to his own urban experience. Fitz Thedmar expresses a clear sense of the unity of the city of London, and of the threat of social and political faction to it, as well as of the prestige of association with it. The fact that the chronicle begins with the year 1188, when it is noted that Henry Fitz Ailwin became London's first mayor, is a further indication of the importance of the idea of a united, corporate, urban identity, to Fitz Thedmar's construction of his own, and London's history.⁴⁵

We can see, then, that the *Liber de Antiquis Legibus* constitutes a highly personalised selection of texts, typical of the compilatory manuscripts held by urban lay readers in the range of styles and genres which it contains. Although the volume was subsequently held within the Guildhall, and by the fifteenth century at the latest grouped together with other custumals by a city clerk,⁴⁶ the material dealing with London's administration - such as the lists of civic officials, and the documentation of the assizes - seems simply to reflect Fitz Thedmar's involvement and interest in urban government, just as the other contents may well represent other aspects of his life. Nevertheless, despite the apparent disparateness of the volume's contents, common concerns are clear: Fitz Thedmar displays an interest both in the cataloguing of details of London's and England's past, and in the real, and idealised, history of his family. He also utilises the volume as a means of defending and promoting himself and his status in the city. Indeed, while Fitz Thedmar's book includes a surprisingly small amount of urban documentation for a manuscript maintained as a custumal, London provides the context for many of its contents. The city's legislation; its civic officials; its history; and the imagined constitution of its society appear intermittently throughout the manuscript. Moreover, Fitz Thedmar's family's assimilation into the city, and his own location

⁴⁴*aldermanni sunt quasi capita et populus quasi membra tum quia ipsi aldermanni reddunt omnia iudicia in placitis motis in civitate'*, See CLRO, Custumal 1, the *Liber de Antiquis Legibus*, fol. 132v.

⁴⁵See CLRO, Custumal 1, the *Liber de Antiquis Legibus*, fol. 63v.

⁴⁶See *LBD*, pp. 317-18.

there as an alderman are stressed. While the *Liber de Antiquis Legibus* may not be a 'civic' book in the sense that that it was produced by and primarily concerned with London's administration, it provides important evidence that at least one of the city's governing officials possessed a sense of the city's identity, and what it meant to be one of its citizens. In addition, he considered his own private collection of writing an appropriate space for articulating his ideas about London and its society.

Since the *Liber de Antiquis Legibus* is the earliest of the customals held by the CLRO, and the first to be discussed in this chapter, it seems premature to consider it in terms of the questions concerning 'genre' which were raised in the introduction. However, an earlier book, apparently produced also by an official of the city of London, and containing a range of urban customs and regulations, does exist. London, British Library, MS Additional 14252 is thought to have been compiled between 1204 and 1216, from documents held in the Guildhall of London. Felix Liebermann and Neil Ker have presented arguments suggesting that the manuscript forms the second part of a volume the first section of which is now held separately as Manchester, John Rylands Library, MS 174, or MS lat. 155.⁴⁷ The words '*pro Martino le Cornmonger*' appear in one of the margins of Additional 14252, and towards the end it contains a genealogy of, amongst others, Gervase of Cornhill, justiciar of London.⁴⁸ This has led Mary Bateson to suggest that the compiler of the volume may have been a member of the Cornhill family, and Gwyn Williams has pointed out that John de Cornhill was an alderman at the time of the manuscript's production.⁴⁹ Like Fitz Thedmar, then, the compiler of these

⁴⁷London, British Library, MS Additional 14252 and the Manchester, John Rylands Library, MS 174 are described and catalogued in 'A London Municipal Collection of the Reign of John', by Mary Bateson, *English Historical Review*, 17 (1902), 480-509, and 707-30, and Felix Liebermann, 'A Contemporary Manuscript of the "Leges Anglorum Londoniis collectae"', *English Historical Review*, 28 (1913), 732-45. Neil Ker identifies Rylands, MS 174, which he refers to as Rylands, MS lat. 155, as the first part of BL, MS Additional 14252 in the British Museum, in 'Liber Customarum, And Other Manuscripts Formerly at the Guildhall', *Guildhall Miscellany*, 3 (1954), 39-42 (p. 37).

⁴⁸See Bateson, 'A London Municipal Collection', p. 483. BL, MS Additional 14252, fol. 98r. (the reference '*pro Martino le Cornemonger*'), and fol. 127v. (the genealogy of the Cornhill family).

⁴⁹The possible date and authorship of the manuscript are discussed by Bateson, in 'A London Municipal Collection', on pp. 482-4; by Williams, in *Medieval London*, p. 77; and by Liebermann in 'A Contemporary Manuscript', on pp. 732-4 and pp. 743-5.

manuscripts may well have been a city official, and a member of one of London's more affluent and well-connected families.

The volume seems unlikely to have served as an exemplar for Arnald Fitz Thedmar's custumal, since the manuscripts share only two entries in common, the Assize of Buildings from 1189, which in any case is only partly copied into the earlier collection, and a list of sheriffs from 1189-90 until 1214-15, which is very close to that of the *Liber de Antiquis Legibus*.⁵⁰ However, the types of contents found in the two books are in many ways similar. Spread between Rylands, MS 174 and BL, MS Additional 14252 are a copy of the '*Leges Anglorum*', a collection of English laws dating back to the reign of Ine made during the reign of King John.⁵¹ This collection includes the '*Libertas Londoniensis*', a compilation of laws specific to the city, and an Anglo-Norman translation of the sections of Henry of Huntingdon's *Historia Anglorum* which describes the cities, rivers, and peoples of Britain.⁵² Liebermann has argued that the '*Leges Anglorum*' was in circulation in London at the beginning of the thirteenth century, and was copied into several different London manuscripts.⁵³ The vast majority of BL, MS Additional 14252's contents are copies of the laws of medieval London, including rules for foreign merchants in the city, regulations for the holding of folkmoots, a list of the city charters held in the treasury, the privileges of freemen in pleas of the crown, regulations dealing with cornmongers and bakers, and a copy of a '*sacramentum commune*' from 1193 to the mayor and council.⁵⁴ However, as we have seen, BL, MS Additional 14252 also contains a list of sheriffs, as the *Liber de Antiquis*

⁵⁰BL, MS Additional 14252, fol. 133v., and fols. 107r.-108v. On the dating of this Assize, however, see Schofield, *Medieval London Houses*, p. 4, and p. 95.

⁵¹These have been published as *Über die Leges Anglorum Saeculo XIII. Ineunte Londoniis Collectae*, ed. by Felix Liebermann (Halle: Max Niemeyer, 1894) See also Liebermann, 'A Contemporary Manuscript'.

⁵²The '*Libertas Londoniensis*' has been published in *Die Gesetze der Angelsachsen*, ed. by F. Liebermann (Halle: Max Niesmeyer, 1898), pp. 673-5.

⁵³Liebermann, *Über die Leges Anglorum*, and 'A Contemporary Manuscript'. Bateson has suggested that the compiler of Rylands, MS 174 and BL, MS Additional 14252 may have been the educated London layman whom Liebermann describes as the likely compiler of the '*Leges Anglorum*': see Bateson, 'A London Municipal Collection', p. 482, and Liebermann, *Über die Leges Anglorum*, pp. 91-100.

⁵⁴BL, MS Additional 14252, fols. 99v.-101r.; fols. 99v.-100v.; fol. 166r.; fol. 120v.; fol. 122v. ; fol. 112v. respectively.

Legibus does, together with genealogies of the house of Boulogne, and of Gervase of Cornhill, Hubert of Caen and William Blemund from a common family.⁵⁵ The same non-bureaucratic interests, then, in tracing the family histories of royalty, and of London citizens - probably in both cases including the compiler - as well as recording the laws of the city, are displayed.

In each case, also, the compilations can be connected with the members of affluent, and probably aldermanic, London families. However, although unlike the *Liber de Antiquis Legibus* the earlier volume is not in the possession of London's government, Felix Liebermann believes that it was compiled within and for London's Guildhall.⁵⁶ Certainly, its hand-writing and presentation are neater and more formal than that of Fitz Thedmar's book: capital letters marking the start of new sections, and lines breaking up the text have been highlighted in red, blue, and sometimes gold; there is little addition of notes, or extra text, in the margins, as we find in the *Liber de Antiquis Legibus*; and catch-words have been used, suggesting that the overall structure of the manuscript was planned from an early stage. The apparently wholly professional production of the manuscripts, and the fact that they seem to have been altered or added to very little subsequent to their compilation, together with the far greater number of contents which relate to urban and national government, might well provide evidence that they were produced within the city council for administrative use.

Even if they did not originate as a household manuscript for a London citizen, however, BL, MS Additional 14252 and Rylands, MS 174 provide an important context for our understanding of the significance of the *Liber de Antiquis Legibus*. The earlier volume displays, in broad terms, the same pattern of documentation reflecting involvement in civic government, set alongside contents designed to demonstrate the longevity and influence of the compilers' families. As we have seen, other interests, in history and royal ancestry, are also represented in both collections. Far from being a wholly idiosyncratic, and exceptional collection for its time, then, it seems that the *Liber de Antiquis Legibus* may well have been

⁵⁵BL, MS Additional 14252, fol.108v., and fol. 125r. and fol. 127v., respectively.

⁵⁶Liebermann, 'A Contemporary Manuscript', p. 743.

following a broad paradigm for the production of a custumal of value to aldermen and other civic officials in their professional roles, and in their households. In each case, a sense of the compiler's public, conciliar role, and the prestige of association with the city is set alongside the influence of private interests and promotion. The admittedly inclusive textual model of the custumal for which these two collections provide evidence, then, seems to encompass both the private and the public worlds, rather than demanding categorisation in one or the other. The modern categorisations of 'custumal' and 'commonplace book' which were discussed in the introduction and which have been applied to these kinds of manuscripts are, in any case, rendered redundant in relation to both the *Liber de Antiquis Legibus* and BL, MS Additional 14252 and Rylands, MS 174, since both volumes seem to have slipped easily between these classificatory limitations, and between civic and non-governmental possession. Indeed, given the political system in London in the period when these collections were produced, in which government was dominated by influential and established families within the city, their textual blending of the civic and the private, and indeed of promotion of London, is perhaps not surprising, since these interests were intimately interconnected in real life. It is difficult, and probably unnecessary, to disentangle whether civic responsibility is being carried over to add weight to familial reputation in these books, or vice versa.

Before progressing to discuss the custumals produced in the fourteenth century, it is worth considering briefly the significance of these thirteenth-century manuscripts in relation to the questions concerning urban literacy which were raised in Chapter One. The presence of copies of documents from London's civic government, and the involvement of at least one of the compilers in that government, would seem to confirm Michael Clanchy's model of literacy disseminated through contact with bureaucratic writing.⁵⁷ However, the range of genres found in each collection, including chronicle, verse, and genealogical writing, signals that the literary interests of the readers of these manuscripts were extending beyond the strict bounds of 'pragmatic literacy', although the fact that

⁵⁷See Chapter One, pp. 30-1.

these two manuscripts cannot be satisfactorily confined to the professional or private worlds of their compilers further undermines the adequacy of this concept for dealing with the reading habits of medieval citizens. The two volumes provide evidence that at least some readers were exercising their literate skills on a range of kinds of writing as early as the thirteenth century in London.⁵⁸ We should bear in mind, of course, that this evidence is based only on two manuscripts, and that the compilers we are dealing with already seem to represent a relatively limited sector of the city's population. From the evidence available to us at this stage of the discussion, the readers who took the trouble to compile these 'civic' collections, reflecting the needs and interests of their private and professional lives, were exclusively those involved in London's government, probably at a high level.

Discussion of the contents and background of the *Liber de Antiquis Legibus* and BL, MS Additional 14252 and Rylands, MS 174 can provide us with a basic model for the format and function of the civic customal. Their basic complement of copies of civic documentation and contents based on more personal interest encompassed a variety of subjects and styles. We can see a concern to catalogue national and local history, for example, and to reflect the city's corporate identity and past in lists of early civic officials, discussion of the constitution of urban society, and early records of urban government. Ecclesiastical and royal affairs are also noted. This combination of the professional and the private seems to reflect a flexibility in the use of this broadly defined kind of compilation: both volumes manifest the responsibilities of urban governmental service, while apparently bearing the marks of familial and self-promotion by an individual compiler, and both have slipped easily between possession by the Guildhall of London, and by non-governmental libraries. If the customal was a distinctive and recognised type of compilation in thirteenth-century London, then clearly its owners saw no incongruity in its use within government and within the household. The governmental and familial status of the two compilers linked with these manuscripts was almost entirely dependent on their position in the city, and consequently their

⁵⁸See Chapter One, pp. 60-4.

association of themselves with London, and promotion of it, becomes an important feature of this kind of collection. We have also seen that Arnald Fitz Thedmar, at least, was highly conscious of the potency of writing as a means of presenting information to the public, and to future readers. He apparently perceived his book as a record for an audience accumulated through posterity, as well as for his own eyes.

The Fourteenth Century:

The *Liber Legum Regum Antiquorum*:

After the production of the *Liber de Antiquis Legibus* in around 1274, no further 'customals' survive in the CLRO collection until the second decade of the fourteenth century. From around 1311, however, a period of exceptional productivity appears to begin for the civic customal in London. Between around this year and probably the middle of the fourteenth century, four of the surviving CLRO customals were compiled: the *Liber Horn*, the *Liber Custumarum*, the *Liber Ordinationum* and the *Liber Memorandorum*.⁵⁹ We will concentrate on the earlier of these, the *Liber Horn* and the *Liber Legum Regum Antiquorum*, which survives as part of the modern *Liber Custumarum*. In both of these volumes we can see continuities from the earlier *Liber de Antiquis Legibus* and BL, MS Additional 14252 and, Rylands, MS 74 in terms of their contents, and authorship. In the sections which follow, as before, we will begin by describing the contents, background, and structure of first the *Liber Legum Regum Antiquorum*, and secondly the *Liber Horn*. Thereafter, the two customals will be compared with both the governmental customals and privately produced 'commonplace books' of the fourteenth century with which they share common contents and structures, so that their significance can be considered in relation to such questions as readership, urban literacy, and the ongoing process of defining the civic register.

⁵⁹Most of the contents of three of these manuscripts have been catalogued in Ker, *Medieval Manuscripts*, I: the *Liber Horn*, pp. 27-35; the *Liber Custumarum*, pp. 20-22; and the *Liber Ordinationum*, pp. 35-41. The *Liber Memorandorum*, which is copied almost entirely from the *Liber Horn*, is discussed more briefly by Ker on p. 35.

The same individual is thought to have been the compiler of the *Liber Horn* and a custumal parts of which are now contained in the current London, CLRO, Custumal 6, the *Liber Custumarum*. This now disassembled book was known contemporaneously as the *Liber Legum Regum Antiquorum*.⁶⁰ Andrew Horn, fishmonger and chamberlain of the city of London between 1320 and 1329, was, like Arnald Fitz Thedmar, helpfully effusive in attaching information about himself and his books to his various compilations. In a colophon attached to the *Liber Horn* in 1311, he describes himself as a 'a fishmonger of Breggestrete in London'.⁶¹ As chamberlain, and a member of one of the most politically prominent crafts in the city at this time, the fishmongers, his name is frequently referred to in other city records.⁶² In the London chronicle the *Annales Paulini*, for example, the entry for 1327 describes how the new charter of liberties granted to the city of London by Edward III was 'read and made public and translated into English by Andrew Horn, chamberlain of the Guildhall'.⁶³ *Letter Book D* records his election as chamberlain in 1320, and in *Letter Book E* Henry de Secheford is named as the city's new chamberlain in 1329. In the same year, *Letter Book E* refers to 'Andrew Horn, the late chamberlain'.⁶⁴ We know from the information which he offered about himself, and from his will, enrolled in 1328-9, that he had several books produced for him. In his will, Andrew Horn bequeathed four books to the Guildhall of London:

I bequeath to the chamber of the Guildhall of London one great book containing the ancient deeds of the English in which are contained many

⁶⁰The *Liber Legum Regum Antiquorum* will be referred to from here onwards as the *Liber Regum*. A book with this title is listed amongst the volumes held by the Guildhall on the fly-leaf of Letter Book D, made in the time of Henry VI: *LBD*, pp. 317-18.

⁶¹'*piscenario London' de Breggestrete*: CLRO Custumal 2, the *Liber Horn*, fol. 206.

⁶²Williams describes the fishmongers as 'perhaps the strongest mercantile interest, in terms of numbers and local political power, in the city' in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries: Williams, *Medieval London*, pp. 163-60 (p. 165).

⁶³'*per andream Horn camerarium Gildhaldae lectae et pupplicatae ac in Anglico expositae*': *Chronicles of the Reigns of Edward I and Edward II*, ed. by William Stubbs, *Rerum Britannicarum Medii Aevi Scriptores* (Rolls Series), 76 (London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office, 1882, repr. 1965), I: *Annales Londoniensis and Annales Paulini*, p. 325

⁶⁴*LBD*, p. 30; *LBD*, p. 231, and p. 236. Andrew Horn's name appears at regular intervals in *LBD* and *LBE*.

useful things, and one other book concerning the ancient English laws with a book called Bretoun and with the book called the Mirror of Justices, and another book compiled by Henry of Huntingdon. Also another book concerning the statutes of the English with many liberties and other matters pertaining to the city.⁶⁵

Jeremy Catto and Neil Ker have connected three of these four books with surviving manuscripts.⁶⁶ The second volume in the list (the 'one other book concerning the ancient English laws with a book called Bretoun and the book called the Mirror of Justices') can be identified as a volume probably completed around 1314, and now split into two parts, Cambridge, Corpus Christi College Library, MSs 70 and 258. The contents of these two manuscripts match the description in Andrew Horn's will, and on the pages of both has been written proprietorially 'Horn is my family name, Andrew is my name'.⁶⁷ The first volume described in the list, the 'one great book concerning the ancient deeds of the English in which are contained many useful things', has been identified by Catto and Ker as the *Liber Legum Regum Antiquorum*.

⁶⁵*Item lego camere Gildaule London[ie] unum magnum librum de gestis anglorum in quo continentur multa utilia, et unum alium librum de veteribus [word omitted] anglorum cum libro vocato Bretoun et cum libro vocato speculum Justic', et alium librum compositum per Henricum de Huntingdon[ia]. Item alium librum de statutis Anglorum cum multis libertatibus et aliis tangentibus civitatem*. The Latin text is taken from the transcription of Jeremy Catto, from London, CLRO, Hustings Roll 57, number 16, in '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. by R. H. C. Davis and J. M. Wallace-Hadrill, with the assistance of R. J. A. I. Catto and M. H. Keen (Oxford: Clarendon, 1981), pp. 367-391 (pp. 370-371); Andrew Horn's will appears in the *Calendar of Wills of the City of London*, I, pp. 344-345.

⁶⁶Catto, 'Andrew Horn'; and Neil Ker, 'Liber Custumarum'.

⁶⁷*Horn mihi cognomen Andreas est mihi nomen*: Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 70, p. 101, and MS 258, fol. 1r. Corpus, MS 70 has been paginated rather than foliated, and as this provides by far the easier way of locating information in the volume, these page numbers, rather than estimated folio numbers, will be referred to, here. The two manuscripts are described in *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Manuscripts in the Library of Corpus Christi College Cambridge*, ed. by M. R. James, 2 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1912), Corpus, MS 70 in I, pp. 148-9, and Corpus, MS 258 in II, pp. 8-9. These two books, together with the seemingly lost copy of the Henry of Huntingdon, of course, either never passed to the possession of the Guildhall, or returned later to private ownership. The name 'Rob. Horne' has been added to the top of one of the front endleaves of Corpus, MS 258, in a post-medieval hand, but we can only speculate as to whether this is evidence that the two Corpus manuscripts remained in the hands of Horn's family. The less impressive presentation and lack of formal decoration in Corpus, MSs 70 and 258 might provide one explanation for their absence from today's Guildhall archive, together with the fact that they refer to national, as opposed to London, law.

The history of the *Liber Regum* is extremely complicated, and has been reconstructed, sometimes speculatively, by Ker and Catto. According to their hypothesis, in the late sixteenth century it, and other manuscript collections of city customs were removed from the Guildhall and passed to Sir Robert Cotton, who unbound their contents and rearranged them into three books: the current *Liber Custumarum*, now held once more by the Guildhall in the CLRO; London, British Library, MS Cotton Claudius D ii; and Oxford, Oriel College Library, MS 46. A table of contents for the original *Liber Regum*, now in Oriel, MS 46 helps to resolve some of the confusion caused by this reorganisation.⁶⁸ It records that the *Liber Regum* contained a range of royal records, including the Magna Carta; the statutes of Merton, Marlborough, Westminster, and Gloucester; a collection of royal charters, beginning with the charter granted by William I written in English; and like BL, MS Additional 14252 and Rylands, MS 174, the '*Leges Anglorum*', a series of statutes issued by English kings from Ine to Henry II.⁶⁹

It also included a variety of documents dealing directly with the city, such as the regulations for the assizes of bread and wine, and for the Festival of the Pui, a mercantile society in which members competed for the title of prince with songs or poems;⁷⁰ craft ordinances, including the fishmongers; statutes for foreign merchants; and a list of London's mayors, sheriffs, chamberlains, and coroners, from 1276 up to 1321. None of the other contents of the volume post-date 1321, and on this basis it can be deduced that the *Liber Regum* must have been produced at around this time. Most unusually, the manuscript seems to have included in a self-contained quire at its beginning a copy of the excerpts from Henry of Huntingdon's *Historia Anglorum*, translated into Anglo-Norman, which is found also in BL, MS Additional 14252; William Fitz Stephen's twelfth-century

⁶⁸Oxford, Oriel College, MS 46, fol. 210. This table of contents is printed in Ker, '*Liber Custumarum*', pp. 42-45.

⁶⁹See Liebermann, *Über die Leges Anglorum*.

⁷⁰For more details on the Pui of London, see *Munimenta*, I: *Liber Custumarum*, Part 1, pp. xlvi-lvi, and Anne F. Sutton, 'The Tumbling Bear and its Patrons: A Venue for the London Puy And Mercery', in *London and Europe in the Later Middle Ages*, ed. by Julia Boffey and Pamela King, Westfield Publications in Medieval Studies, 9 (London: The Centre for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, Queen Mary and Westfield College, University of London, 1995), pp. 85-110.

description of London; and selections from *Li Livres dou Tresor*, a compilation mainly of classical, didactic material, written between 1260 and 1267 by the Florentine Brunetto Latini while in exile in France. These selections are taken from Latini's discussion of the government of cities, and concern the choice and later self-management of the good governor, or, as the *Liber Regum* has it, mayor.

In addition, it seems that further material may have been removed from the *Liber Regum* before its fifteenth-century table of contents was compiled. Material relating to the judicial Eyre and now integrated into the *Liber Albus* appears to have been bodily removed from the *Liber Regum*.⁷¹ Jeremy Catto also believes that Andrew Horn originally included a chronicle in his *Liber Regum*, which is now published separately as the *Annales Londoniensis*.⁷² The original manuscript of this was destroyed by fire in 1731, but a transcription fortuitously survived.

The chronicle is based on the *Flores Historiarum*, but its period of original composition dates from probably 1289, and certainly 1301, until 1316. This coincides with a period when we know from other works to which his name is attached, the *Liber Horn* and Corpus, MSS 70 and 258, that Andrew Horn was actively compiling and writing, and before he assumed the responsibilities of chamberlain. The chronicle has been previously attributed to Andrew Horn on the evidence of a reference of an almost uniquely personal nature in it, under the year 1305, to 'a son of Andrew Horn, who was born, and baptised, and lived for seven weeks, and lies at Coleman-church next to Alegate', although there are also equally unexpectedly specific references to the death of a Johanna la Sausere and to a William le Cupere.⁷³ Catto bases his argument on two main pieces of evidence. First, an entry in the *Liber Albus*, which is said to be taken from the 'Chronicles of the Greater *Liber Horn*', provides an exact reference to material held in the *Annales*,

⁷¹See Catto, 'Andrew Horn', pp. 377-378; *Munimenta*, I: *Liber Custumarum*, Part 1, p. xiii, note 3; see also Riley, *Liber Albus: The White Book*, p. 55, note 1, in which he records an interlineation of 'Legum Antiq.' next to a reference to 'an ancient book [...] of the said city'.

⁷²Printed as Stubbs, *Annales*; see pp. xxii.-xxviii. on the authorship of the chronicle by Andrew Horn and its connection with the *Liber Regum*; Catto, 'Andrew Horn', pp. 374-378.

⁷³'filius Andree Horn, natus fuit, et baptizatus, et vixit per xii. septimanas, et iacet apud Coleman-church juxta Alegate': Stubbs, *Annales*, p. 137.

suggesting that the 'greater *Liber Horn*' was a contemporary name for a book compiled by Andrew Horn after the *Liber Horn*, which incorporated the *Annales*. Secondly, if the *Liber Regum* is the manuscript described by Andrew Horn in his will as 'one great book concerning the deeds of the English', then his depiction of it matches better with a volume which includes a chronicle.

There are obvious points of contact between the *Liber Regum* and the *Liber de Antiquis Legibus* in terms of their contents, the pervading interests of their compilers, and the fact that both were originally produced privately by citizens of London; but the two customals differ starkly with regard to their presentation.⁷⁴ While Fitz Thedmar's book was added to over a period of years, and is often untidy in appearance, with entries squeezed into spaces on folios, and some marginal notes entered sideways, the *Liber Regum* appears to have been the product of a single, carefully planned programme of writing and elaborate decoration by professional craftsmen. According to Neil Ker, it 'probably always was the finest of the city customals, admirably written and illuminated'.⁷⁵ Rather than functioning as a kind of ongoing notebook, then, the *Liber Regum* seems to have been produced as a complete reference work, and as a showpiece item. Its contents are dignified by the visual impressiveness of the book in which they are contained. We will return later to consider how this differing design of the *Liber Regum* may relate to Andrew Horn's intentions for his book, but clearly the material within it gains status from its eye-catching presentation.

As with BL, MS Additional 14252, and part of the *Liber de Antiquis Legibus*, the solid core of the contents of the *Liber Regum* were copies of laws and regulations for the government of the city of London. Some of the contents dealing with the city's and the country's administration, however, seem to reflect individual interests as well as the professional requirements of the civic official - in particular a

⁷⁴The presentation and decoration of all of the civic registers of York and London discussed in Chapters Two and Three are dealt with in greater detail in Chapter Four.

⁷⁵Ker, 'Liber Custumarum', p. 39; see also Lynda Dennison, 'Liber Horn, Liber Custumarum and the Other Manuscripts of the Queen Mary Psalter Workshops', in *Medieval Art, Architecture and Archaeology in London*, ed. by Lindy Grant, The British Archaeological Association Conference Transactions for the Year 1984, 10 (London: British Archaeological Association, 1990), pp. 118-134.

fascination with the governmental and legal constitution of London and England, and their history. Contents such as the series of royal charters granting rights and increasing autonomy to the city of London and the lists of civic officials suggest that Horn was trying to conceptualise the legal identity of the city through documents which formalised and memorialised in writing the earliest evidence of its legislative autonomy, as with Arnald Fitz Thedmar's copying of the city's earliest Building Assize.

Horn's inclusion of the selections from the *Tresor* may well be a further manifestation of this interest in exploring and finding a terminology to articulate the mechanics and principles of urban government.⁷⁶ Its presence in the *Liber Regum* is, in any case, of obvious value for the evidence it offers of the accessibility of texts from mainland Europe to London readers, and of the expansiveness of the literate skills and political interests of at least one, albeit apparently quite exceptional, citizen of the city. Latini's original version seems, unsurprisingly, to have the problematic government of the autonomous city-states such as Florence as its main point of reference.

It seems likely that Horn would have appreciated this discussion of the urban government in the powerful communes of Italy for its own sake, given his apparent interest in the legal constitution of his own country and city. The text which he copies from Brunetto's *Livres*, however, provides a combination of theoretical prescriptions for an ideal form of urban lordship with recommendations which must have seemed immediately relevant to the practical problems of governing a city. For example, Horn's version begins with a passage stating that 'the government of cities should be supported by three pillars, - namely, that of justice, that of reverence, and that of love', and later the text warns that the mayor should 'assume office with a clean heart and with pure intent, and that your hands should be clean

⁷⁶Brunetto Latini, *Li Livres dou Tresor*, ed. by F. J. Carmody, University of California Publications in Modern Philology, 22 (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1947), pp. 391-422, Book III, 73-105. The version of *Li Livres dou Tresor* inscribed into the *Liber Regum*, and now bound into London, CLRO, Customal 6, the *Liber Custumarum*, is printed in *Munimenta*, II: *Liber Custumarum*, Part 1, pp. 15-25.

regarding all people before God and before the law'.⁷⁷ This is inter-mingled, however, with advice that the man chosen as mayor 'should hold no other position of authority', and when the time comes for the election of his successor should 'assemble the council of good men of the city who know its constitution best', and should avoid serving a second term of office himself.⁷⁸ Horn's version also discusses the mayor's responsibilities for 'the petty complaints' heard in the city, and for maintaining the 'works and the buildings [...], the bridges and the roads, the ditches and all other things' within it.⁷⁹ While Horn may have been interested in the principles of ideal urban government in abstract terms, then, he clearly found much in Brunetto's text which was pertinent to contemporary rule in the city of London.⁸⁰ Horn also retains in his version of Brunetto's text references to the necessity of maintaining peace in the city: the mayor should ensure 'to the best of his ability that there is no hatred or dissension between his subjects', and the final section in the text outlines 'the difference between a king and a tyrant'.⁸¹

The excerpt from the *Tresor* also provides a vocabulary for describing the medieval city and its government, like that of the passages on the constitution of London quoted from Arnald Fitz Thedmar's chronicle. Horn's version of Brunetto's text includes references to 'the great, the small, and the middling' of the

⁷⁷'le gouvernement de villes seit ferme par treis piliers, - ceo est a savoir, de justice, de reverence, et de amour': *Munimenta*, II: *Liber Custumarum*, Part 1, p. 16; 'Dounkes covient qe tu prenges loffice ove net quer et ove pure entencioun, et qe tes mains soient nettes a Dieu et la ley envers touz': *Munimenta*, II: *Liber Custumarum*, Part 1, p. 21.

⁷⁸'qil neit autre baillie': *Munimenta*, II: *Liber Custumarum*, Part 1, p. 19; 'ly souverains doit assembler le counsail des prodeshommes de la vile que mieux scierent les constituciouns': *Munimenta*, II: *Liber Custumarum*, Part 1, p. 19. On the recommendation that the mayor should avoid serving a second period of office, see *Munimenta*, II: *Liber Custumarum*, Part 1, pp. 19-20.

⁷⁹'et qe tu delivres les petites quedeles [...] et qe tu meintiegnas les oevres et les edifices du commune, et faces refere les pountz et les voies, les fossez et les autres choses.': *Munimenta*, II: *Liber Custumarum*, Part 1, pp. 21-2.

⁸⁰Susan Reynolds, *Kingdoms and Communities*, pp. 203-18, argues that such ideals were pursued and perceived as attainable in medieval urban government: Horn may therefore not have recognised to the same extent the distinction which I have made here between the principles of ideal government and pragmatic suggestions for the everyday rule of the city. Reynolds discusses *Li Livres dou Tresor* and its inscription into Horn's cutumal on pp. 197-8.

⁸¹'tu purvoies a toun poer qil ni ait hayne ne descorde entre tes subgis': *Munimenta*, II: *Liber Custumarum*, Part 1, p. 21; 'De Differentia iner Regem et Tyrannum': *Munimenta*, II: *Liber Custumarum*, Part 1, p. 24.

city, to 'the commons', and to 'the common profit of the town'.⁸² As Fitz Thedmar does, Horn borrows vocabulary from a text produced outside the city, and applies it to discussion of his own urban experience.

An enthusiasm on Horn's part for a reformed and ideal government of London may also be reflected in his chronicle. Under the entry for 1310, he recounts in unusual detail the mayoralty of Richer de Reffham recalling that he 'caused the ancient customs and liberties in the books and rolls of the chamber of the city to be searched, and with the wiser and more powerful men assembled, together with the aldermen, in their presence he had them read and made public'.⁸³ Horn goes on to comment that in these and other acts, de Reffham 'thus seemed to preserve and reform the king's city in its former glory, and he was rightly preferred to many of his predecessors who had been mayors'.⁸⁴ On few other occasions does Horn express opinion on the figures involved in his chronicle, but he is clearly attracted to the reforming activities of de Reffham, including his efforts to have the records of the city, which apparently were normally held in private seclusion, made public to the citizens. In particular, Horn seems to identify knowledge of the city's laws, and of its legal identity, with a 'glory' which he suggests it has lost in his times. Set in the context of this passage of his chronicle, the role of Andrew Horn described in the *Annales Paulini*, reading to the citizens in English the charter of Edward III to London, seems particularly apt.⁸⁵ Horn appears to have been acutely sensible of the importance of its laws to the integrity of the city, and his legal compilations, begun probably shortly after de Reffham's mayoralty in 1310, must have had all the greater significance to him. He may have been attempting to re-create in textual form the 'former glory' of London in his collection of laws and writings concerning the city in the *Liber Regum*.

⁸²*les grauntz, et les petitz, et les meynes'*: *Munimenta*, II: *Liber Custumarum*, Part 1, p. 21; '*communes*': *Munimenta*, II: *Liber Custumarum*, Part 1, p. 19; *Munimenta*, II: '*commun profit de la ville*': *Liber Custumarum*, Part 1, p. 16.

⁸³*Hic antiquas consuetudines et libertates in rotulis et libris camerae civitati fecit persecutari, et, congregatis sapientioribus, potentioribus, una cum aldermaniis, coram eis fecit legi et pupplicari*: Stubbs, *Annales*, pp. 175.

⁸⁴*sic regis civitatem ad pristinam dignitatem et indempnem visus est servare et reformare qui praedecessoribus pluribus ante majoribus merito sit praeferendus*: Stubbs, *Annales*, pp. 175-6.

⁸⁵Stubbs, *Annales Paulini*, p. 325.

Given that Horn served as chamberlain of London from 1320, and clearly held privileged access to its apparently carefully protected records before that time, it is not surprising to find him associating himself closely with the civic government in his compilation. The basic structure of the *Annales*, organised around a note of the annual election of the mayor and the sheriffs of London, is the same as that of Arnald Fitz Thedmar's chronicle. Moreover, the viewpoint of the chronicle is more closely aligned with that of the city's ruling council by the interweaving of records of events with transcriptions of civic legislation. The use of a chronicle as a means of documentary, legal validation is perhaps not surprising from a man whose knowledge of and fascination with local and national law was clearly so impressively detailed.⁸⁶ The experiences of the civic government, in their daily business as well as in the national conflict, assume a position of priority in Andrew Horn's account of events. When the mayor is knighted in 1306, for example, this is noted, as is the Charter of Merchants in 1303.⁸⁷ The inclusion of description of civic ceremony for royal visitors to the city, involving the mayor and the citizens, seems to confirm that Horn is aiming to honour the city by means of promotion of its governing body. In 1307, for example, the chronicle records the presence of the mayor, the aldermen, and the citizens at the coronation of Edward II, 'dressed in garments of samite and silk and decorated with the arms of England and France, assembling in the presence of the king and queen'.⁸⁸

Horn's note of the birth and death of his baby son is his sole reference to his family in the chronicle and the other occasions on which he does attach his name to the *Liber Regum* function simply as proprietorial statements of compilation and ownership.⁸⁹ Certainly this detail has not been included as a means of conveying

⁸⁶One of the functions of the chronicle in the Middle Ages was to preserve not only records of events but also documentation. Michael Clanchy notes, for example, that in 1291 Edward I sought justifications for his Scottish campaign in monastic chronicles, and ordered that his current claims should be entered into the chronicles to constitute precedents in themselves: M. T. Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record: England 1066-1307*, 2nd edn (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994), p. 101.

⁸⁷Stubbs, *Annales*, p. 146, and p. 131.

⁸⁸*induti samiteis et sericeis vestimentis et ex armis Angliae et Franciae depictis, coram rege et regina karolantes'*: Stubbs, *Annales*, p. 152.

⁸⁹Stubbs, *Annales*, p. 137. Horn describes himself as 'a fishmonger of Breggestrete in london' in CLRO, Custumal 2, the Liber Horn, on fol. 206, and has also inscribed his name in Corpus, MS 70, p. 101, and in Corpus, MS 258,

powerful family associations, as it is in the *Liber de Antiquis Legibus*. Rather, Horn's allegiances in the *Liber Regum*, and in the chronicle in particular, are firmly identified with the civic council, and partly with his craft of the fishmongers. The chronicle does contain a much fuller description of a pageant of the fishmongers given for Queen Isabella after the birth of Edward III, suggesting that craft membership had assumed greater significance than family for Horn.⁹⁰ This shift in priorities seems to accord with the movement from patrician families to craft associations as the source of governmental power in London between the 1270s and the 1320s, when the *Liber Regum* was completed. Gwyn Williams has pointed in particular to the rise to power in this period of 'the victualling interest in London', and among these it was 'in the years after 1280 that the fishmongers established their characteristic hegemony'.⁹¹ The differences in focus between the *Liber de Antiquis Legibus* and the *Liber Regum*, in this case at least, may be explicable largely as a change in the politics of London with which the two compilers were so involved. A fundamental desire to contextualise themselves within what was the contemporary unit of power in the city is apparent in the compilations of both.

Horn may also have inscribed copies of civic documentation and details of the city's early officials and legislation into his books as a result of a defensiveness about its unity and autonomy. As with the *Liber de Antiquis Legibus*, the chronicle of the *Liber Regum* relates that it was produced during a period of political turmoil, and frequent conflict with Edward II. Much attention is paid to the often violent events precipitated by this crisis, with entire letters between the king and the city, and copies of their addresses to each other, being painstakingly included with an almost legalistic precision.⁹² The inclusion of a series of precedents compiled by Horn to help the city to deal with the Iter of 1321, is clearly a reaction to a judicial eyre which Helen M. Cam describes as 'a sustained attack on the City's franchises' by the counsellors of Edward II, who 'may have cherished a grudge against the

fol. 1r.

⁹⁰Stubbs, *Annales*, pp. 220-221.

⁹¹Williams, *Medieval London*, p. 161.

⁹²See, for example, Stubbs, *Annales*, pp. 202-203; pp. 208-209.

City for its Lancastrian sympathies'.⁹³ As well as the precedents, Horn copied details of the *Iter* into the *Annales*, and a day-by-day account of the events of the 1321 Eyre itself, into the *Liber Custumarum*. Helen Cam also notes that Horn's hand can be identified annotating the city's copy of the 1276 Eyre Roll, in the process of preparing the precedents for 1321.⁹⁴ Horn's apparent anxiety proved well-founded: as a result of the *Iter* London was taken into the king's hands, and the autonomy of which Horn was so concerned to establish the legislative validity was compromised. His insistence on maintaining peace in the city in his version of the excerpt from Brunetto Latini's *Li Livres dou Tresor* may similarly reflect his disapproval of the turbulent national politics of his day.

The *Liber Regum* does, of course, contain other non-documentary entries which seem designed to reflect personal interests, and pride, in the history of the country and the city. Like the compiler of BL, MS Additional 14252 and Rylands, MS 174, Andrew Horn chose to include sections from Henry of Huntingdon's description of the geography and races of England. William Fitz Stephen's description of London is similarly unusual, in terms of its content and style.⁹⁵ It forms an example of the literary genre of *encomium urbis*, first popular in the classical period and still appearing in Europe in the fourteenth century.⁹⁶ The *encomium urbis* systematically enumerated the attributes of the city concerned, including its physical structure and location; the details of its foundation; the activities of its citizens; its most famous sons and daughters; and any association it may have with saints. The purpose of these texts was unequivocally celebratory,

⁹³Helen M. Cam, ed., *The Eyre of London: 14 Edward II A.D. 1321, Year Books of Edward II*, 26, 2 vols, Selden Society 85 and 86 (1968-9) (London: Bernard Quaritch, 1968-9), I, p. xix, and p. xvi.

⁹⁴Cam, *The Eyre of London*, p. xv; the 1276 Eyre Roll is now London, British Library, Charters 5153.

⁹⁵This is printed in *Munimenta*, II: the *Liber Custumarum*, Part 1, pp. 1-15. On the inscription of William Fitz Stephen's description of London into manuscripts during this period, see H. Kleineke, 'William Fitz Stephen's Description of London' (unpublished masters dissertation, University of London, 1994).

⁹⁶On the genre of the *encomium urbis*, see Chiara Frugoni, *A Distant City: Images of Urban Experience in the Medieval World*, translated by William McCuaig (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1991), pp. 54-81, and J. K. Hyde, 'Medieval Descriptions of Cities', in *Literacy And Its Uses: Studies on Late Medieval Italy*, ed. by Daniel Waley (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1993), pp. 1-32.

and the entry for Fitz Stephen's description in the fifteenth-century table of contents for the *Liber Regum*, 'de laudibus london', 'concerning praises of London', stands in sharp contrast to those for the charters and craft regulations surrounding it.⁹⁷ In addition, Fitz Stephen's encomium provides a new repertoire of terms for describing the city, through the historical, geographical, and social categories which it encompasses, including a reference to London's foundation by the Trojan Brutus, derived from Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Britannicorum*. As with the *Liber de Antiquis Legibus*' references to Thomas Becket, Horn's text seems to collect a range of textual and symbolic means of conceptualising the city, and indeed praising it. The city becomes a fragmented, but almost omnipresent, idea in the *Liber Regum*, represented through its history; its geography; its laws and customs; a discussion of its form of government which allowed its rule to be considered in more theoretical terms; and the officials and procedures of its government. Horn has included a range of texts which extend from documentation of the city to a more rounded description, praising and honouring London, and which are as influenced by his private enthusiasms as the requirements of his professional involvement in the government of the city.

Horn offers other indications of what he believed to be the purpose and value of his writing, which need to be considered briefly before progressing to the *Liber Horn*. At times in the *Annales*, Horn assumes a moral stand-point on his writing and on the contemporary political situation, as Arnald Fitz Thedmar does, in his compilatory role: his note of the accession of Edward II, in 1307, is accompanied by the prophecies of Merlin concerning the new king, and the victory of the Scots army at Bannockburn is explained as a result of 'the prodigious sins of the English, namely because of their very great pride, their lechery, their greed, their avarice and other vices'.⁹⁸ There are suggestions, moreover, that like Arnald Fitz Thedmar, Andrew Horn had a sense of a future audience for his customal. In Corpus, MS 70, a hand thought to be his own has written 'I intend to compile from that book

⁹⁷See Ker, 'Liber Customarum', p. 42.

⁹⁸'propter peccata enormia Anglorum, videlicet propter superbiam permaximam, luxuriam, gulam, averitiam et cetera vitia': Stubbs, *Annales*, p. 151; pp. 230-231.

and others a great book that I consider useful to represent our times in the present to people coming after us'.⁹⁹ Since the *Liber Regum* is thought to be the volume described as a 'great book' in Andrew Horn's will, and as it was the only compilation included in the will, and surviving today, which seems to have been begun after Corpus, MSs 70 and 258, it would appear that Horn must have been recording a plan for this book, his 'greater *Liber Horn*'. We have already seen that the *Liber Regum* seems to have been a carefully planned volume, and that considerable attention was paid to its presentation. Horn intended it, then, to function as more than a kind of fine commonplace book for himself; its other function was as a record of his city and his times to be passed to the future.

We can perceive many similarities between the *Liber de Antiquis Legibus* and the *Liber Regum* which suggest that they are two separate manifestations of a common kind of book. They both contain documentary contents, but also include writing which attempts to describe the city which their compilers lived in and served, by, for example, conceptualising its community in theoretical terms, and constructing a history for it. Both were produced and owned by London civic officials - probably both by chamberlains of the capital city - and express a mixture of personalised interests and a sense of conciliar responsibilities and honour. Each compiler also seems to have viewed his custumal in terms of how it presented its subject matter to its audience, both contemporary and future. And each have borne in mind the longevity of their writing in the way they have presented their chosen material and subjects, be it the city of London, their craft, or their family.

The *Liber Horn*:

But what of the other book constructed by Horn and bequeathed to the Guildhall of London, the *Liber Horn*?¹⁰⁰ It seems to have been an earlier example

⁹⁹*intendo ex libro isto et aliis imposterum deo dante magnum codicem componere que utile duxi posteris presentia temporum nostrorum exprimere*: Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, Manuscript 70, fol. 96r.

¹⁰⁰CLRO Custumal 2, the *Liber Horn*; '*Liber horn*' has been written on the inside cover of the volume, and the fifteenth-century list of books held by the Guildhall written onto the fly-leaf of Letter Book D also refers to it: *LBD*, pp. 317-18.

of Horn's compilatory interests than the *Liber Regum*. The manuscript appears to have been produced in at least two parts, with the end of the first section being marked by a colophon naming Horn as the book's owner, and recording that it was made for him in 1311.¹⁰¹ Subsequent entries seem to have been made up until around 1318.¹⁰² The 1311 colophon offers a description of the manuscript's contents at this date: 'a charter and other customs of the foresaid city [of London]. Also a charter of the freedom of England and statutes proclaimed by King Henry and by King Edward son of the foresaid King Henry'.¹⁰³ Jeremy Catto believes that the *Liber Horn* is the fourth item referred to in Andrew Horn's will, the 'book concerning the statutes of the English with many liberties and other matters pertaining to the city'.¹⁰⁴ Both descriptions of the *Liber Horn* are accurate. The custumal contains a range of documents relating to the country and to the city of London, as the *Liber Regum* does, and indeed some documents appear in both volumes. Horn had copied into it a collection of city ordinances and charters and records of contemporary legal cases, together with a comprehensive set of national statutes dealing with the legal procedure for a variety of circumstances, including the Charter of the Forest; a statute against the bringing of foreign money into the kingdom illegally; the Statute of Merchants; and the Statute of Bigamy.¹⁰⁵

A large proportion of these statutes derive from at most fifty years before the compilation of the *Liber Horn*, and some were extremely recent. The Statute of Stamford, for example, dates from 1309, and *Liber Horn*'s copy of the Customs of Kent is considered to be one of the earliest extant.¹⁰⁶ The collection of national laws in the *Liber Horn*, then, seems to have been compiled on the basis of

¹⁰¹CLRO, Custumal 2, the *Liber Horn*, fol. 206.

¹⁰²The structure and the majority of the contents of the *Liber Horn* are catalogued by Ker, *Medieval Manuscripts*, I, pp. 27-34.

¹⁰³*Carta et alie consuetudines predictae Ciuitatis. Et carta libertatis Anglie et Statuta per Henricum Regem et per Edwardum Regem filium predicti Regis Henrici edita*: CLRO, Custumal 2, the *Liber Horn*, fol. 206.

¹⁰⁴Catto, 'Andrew Horn', pp. 370-1.

¹⁰⁵CLRO, Custumal 2, the *Liber Horn*, fols. 24r.-25v. (the Charter of the Forest); fols. 93r.-93v. (the statute against bringing foreign money into the kingdom illegally); fols. 69v.-71v. (the Statute of Merchants); and fols. 75r.-76r. (the Statute of Bigamy).

¹⁰⁶See Felix Hull, 'The Custumal of Kent', *Archaeologia Carthana*, 72 (1958), 148-59. The Statute of Stamford appears on CLRO, Custumal 2, the *Liber Horn*, fols. 114r.-115v.

contemporaneity, providing an up-to-date record of the laws of England at a time when the country's common law was becoming standardised and its judicial system was becoming increasingly professionalised.¹⁰⁷ The London documentation copied into this register, which generally speaking is more roughly transcribed, similarly contains some detail synchronous with the *Liber Horn's* compilation; however, it also features royal charters dating back to that of William the Conqueror, and the city's first Assize of Buildings. The collection of London laws known as the '*Libertas Londoniensis*' copied into BL, MS Additional 14252 has also been inscribed in the *Liber Horn*.¹⁰⁸ Notations made next to some of the entries in the *Liber Horn* record that the document had been verified at the Guildhall, confirming Horn's interest in the process of law-making, and contemporary legal development. This accords well with the fascination for the principles and procedures of urban government manifested in the *Liber Regum*, and with the contents of Corpus, MSs 70 and 258, which were also owned by Horn. These included the '*Leges Anglorum*', the ancient collection of English laws, and the *Speculum Justiciariorum*, with its discussion of the English parliament, which had been compiled as recently as the 1290s.¹⁰⁹

The construction of the manuscript of the *Liber Horn* shows that it was partly completed in 1311, but that Horn continued to add to it after that date, probably until around 1318. By 1319 a new table of contents had been compiled for the volume, suggesting that by this date, it had, indeed, reached a stage of completion.¹¹⁰ As well as inferring from this Andrew Horn's determination to maintain a record of contemporary English and London law-making, we can see that this evidence marks a major difference between the functions of the *Liber Horn* and the *Liber Regum*. While the *Liber Regum* was carefully planned and elegantly written and illuminated, and, of course, contains a range of styles of writing

¹⁰⁷See John Hudson, *The Formation of the English Common Law: Law and Society in England from the Norman Conquest to Magna Carta* (London and New York: Longman, 1996), pp. 19-23.

¹⁰⁸Printed in Liebermann, *Die Gesetze der Angelsachsen*, pp. 673-5.

¹⁰⁹Liebermann, *Über Die Leges Anglorum*.

¹¹⁰CLRO, Customal 2, the *Liber Horn*, fols. 8v.-9r., and fol. 14v. See Catto, 'Andrew Horn', p. 372.

relating to a variety of subjects, the *Liber Horn* seems to have been intended as a functional, working volume, in which Andrew Horn could compile over a period of years documents which were of interest or of relevance to him. The *Liber Horn* is decorated, with some illuminated initials and leaves; with images of fish next to documents concerning the fishmongers; and twice with a shield of arms, made up of a fish and the St. Andrew's cross, which further identifies the manuscript with Andrew Horn. However, according to Lynda Dennison, the decorative work is 'not of the highest quality'.¹¹¹

Other than its immediate usefulness to Andrew Horn as a record of contemporary legal development in the city of London and in England as a whole, the *Liber Horn* seems to have been designed with another, quite specific function in mind. Next to many of its contents are notes recording that they are copied from documents located in particular books held within the Guildhall of London, usually the '*maiori libro nigro*', the '*parvo libro nigro*', or the '*rubeo libro camere Gildaule Lond*', alternative names for some of the *Letter Books*, with folio numbers often being given in addition.¹¹² Even before Horn gained official jurisdiction over London's archive as chamberlain in 1320, then, the *Liber Horn* seems to have been designed to function as a kind of unofficial referencing system to its rapidly expanding collection of documents at the beginning of the fourteenth century. We must assume that even in his non-official relationship with London's government before 1320, he had ready access to the records of London's Guildhall, in order to compile the collection of the *Liber Horn*, and to be aware of which documents had been formally verified there. The very contemporaneity of Andrew Horn's custumal makes it almost impossible that it could have been copied from an earlier collection.

More importantly, the *Liber Horn* organised the city's documents in its own text, and, by locating them precisely, in the archive. In 1419, the common clerk John Carpenter described the archive in London's Guildhall as a '*chaos*' and an '*inextricabilem laborintum*', and while the volume and disorder of the city's records

¹¹¹Dennison, "'Liber Horn', 'Liber Custumarum' and Other Manuscripts", p. 124.

¹¹²See, for example, CLRO, Custumal 2, the *Liber Horn*, fol. 203r.

must undoubtedly have increased dramatically in the hundred years following Horn's chamberlainship, it seems likely that it would still have been daunting in 1320.¹¹³ Organisation of documentary material which probably lay in a disordered form amongst the records of the Guildhall seems to be a key function of Horn's manuscript collections.¹¹⁴ Despite its periodic production, and sometimes informal presentation, the *Liber Horn* is methodically divided into three '*partes*' by titles, and contains several separate tables of contents for different sections of the collection. Similarly, Corpus, MSs 70 and 258 are distinguished by red and blue decoration to mark off sections of the text; running headings along the tops of folios; and the various sets of laws of the English kings in the '*Leges Anglorum*' in Corpus, MS 70 are almost invariably preceded by a '*prologus*' and a table of the articles of the laws. A distinctive, cuffed, pointing hand appears regularly in the margins of Corpus, MSs 70 and 258 and the *Liber Horn*. Even in these manuscript collections where, unlike the *Liber Regum*, decoration and presentation have apparently received less attention than the need to include as much information as possible on the folios, the potential of this kind of volume for organising material, and making it more accessible, has not been forgotten. For Andrew Horn, this was clearly a further intrinsic function of the privately held civic custumal.

The Relationship of Andrew Horn's 'Custumals' with Other Manuscripts of the Fourteenth Century:

Like the *Liber de Antiquis Legibus*, the *Liber Horn* and the *Liber Regum* seem to have been compiled according to highly individual taste, and in many ways seem closer to the category of 'commonplace book' than that of governmental reference work. They are personalised in their selection of contents, and the

¹¹³London, CLRO, Custumal 12, the *Liber Albus*, fol. 264r.

¹¹⁴Geoffrey Martin has described how 'calendars' produced from as early as around 1311 and an index produced probably around 1377 functioned as finding-aids to the entries in London's Husting rolls of wills and deeds. He describes these, and volumes like the *Liber Horn* as 'striking essays in the management of records': Geoffrey Martin, 'English Town Records, 1200-1350', in *Pragmatic Literacy, East and West 1200-1330*, ed. by Richard Britnell (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell, 1997), pp. 119-30 (p. 129).

margins of Horn's manuscript are marked with his own commentary on the texts, several notes recording his name, and in the *Liber Horn* the coat of arms of a fish adopted by Andrew Horn. Yet by bequeathing his books to the Guildhall on his death, Horn altered their status as volumes of private significance, to that of a public resource, belonging to the city's administration and its population as a whole. Indeed, arguably an ambivalence between private taste and public utility is inherent in the very nature of the customal, based on the evidence of those texts which we have considered already. While these are collections designed according to individual interest, their contents largely derived from the documentation owned and produced by the city's administration, including craft ordinances, lists of civic officials and royal charters to the city. Horn's books, and earlier surviving customals also compiled by London citizens, indicate an interest in the private possession of collections of copies of documents relevant to the government of the city and held in the civic archive as a communal resource.

The status of Horn's customals as public books was, however, reinforced by the adoption of their format in the production of customals within the institution of the Guildhall of London. In the period immediately following Horn's appointment as chamberlain, two of the customals now held in the Guildhall of London were compiled, and apparently partly copied from his two private books. The *Liber Custumarum* seems to have been almost entirely copied from sections of the *Liber Regum*, the *Liber Horn*, and an earlier civic customal, the *Liber Ordinationum*, in the 1320s.¹¹⁵ It contains a reference to the *Liber Horn* (on fol. 262v.) and *non scribe* has been inscribed in the *Liber Horn* next to items which have not been transcribed into the *Liber Custumarum*.¹¹⁶ The *Liber Memorandum* was also later partially based on the collection of laws in the *Liber Horn*.¹¹⁷ No names have been added to the margins or endleaves of these manuscripts, and it seems likely that they were produced within the Guildhall by clerks employed by the civic council. It seems that the commencement of Horn's

¹¹⁵Ker, *Medieval Manuscripts*, I, pp. 21-2.

¹¹⁶Ker, *Medieval Manuscripts*, I, p. 28.

¹¹⁷Ker, *Medieval Manuscripts*, I, p. 35.

chamberlainship in 1320 marked the assimilation of the *Liber Horn* and the *Liber Regum* within the civic archive. The *Liber Custumarum* and Horn's *Liber Regum* later became sources for the fifteenth-century customals the *Liber Albus* and the *Liber Dunthorn*, which will be discussed in the final part of this chapter, and these volumes collectively form one of the main modern-day resources of information on the government, law, and history of medieval London. Horn's customals formed a large part of the basis of a documentary tradition within the Guildhall, which has helped to categorise them as official, and impersonal, public texts.

But while subsequent customals now held by the CLRO all appear to have been produced within the city's government, private commissioning of customals also seems to have continued, and, like public compilation, possibly to have intensified. Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Rawlinson B.356 constitutes an almost exact copy of the Guildhall's *Liber Memorandum*, with some additional material, and Neil Ker has presented evidence to suggest that Bodleian, MS Rawlinson B.356 was the exemplar for this officially produced manuscript.¹¹⁸ As such, Bodleian, MS Rawlinson B.356 must have been copied at some stage from Andrew Horn's customal, the *Liber Horn*. The text is attractively presented, with the main part of it being written in a single, professional hand, and the first page elaborately decorated with foliage and the figure of a throned king drawn within the initial. The volume gives the impression of being a formal copy of the *Liber Horn*, which has been held and annotated by individual owners for their own reference. It bears the names of three post-medieval owners on its endleaves, and there is no record of it ever having been held within the Guildhall. Like Andrew Horn, its owners have marked and annotated their text extensively, with sections marked off with red pencil, and words emphasised by being written over in black ink, although written additions in post-medieval hands in the margins suggest that these alterations, at least, were made at a later period. Unfortunately, the medieval owners of Bodleian, MS Rawlinson B.356 have not attached their signatures to it, although an entry made at the front of the volume on an flyleaf and dated on 20 May, 1601, by a John

¹¹⁸Ker, *Medieval Manuscripts*, I, p. 35.

Croke refers to the manuscript as '*liber Iohannis Croke ex dono Lucae Norton*'. A further annotation on this endleaf, in the same hand, states that '*cest lievre fuit escrie m^o CCC^o xiiii^{imo} ab incarnatione*'. If Bodleian, MS Rawlinson B.356 was produced in 1314, a date which would accord well with its availability for the later production of the *Liber Memorandorum*, then it must have been copied shortly after the first parts of the *Liber Horn* were completed, and while the custumal was still in Andrew Horn's hands, reinforcing the idea that Bodleian, MS Rawlinson B.356 was not produced or held by the Guildhall of London. Most importantly, we can see that either before or after it became the property of London's government, the *Liber Horn* seems to have been the exemplar for at least one privately owned custumal.

This has implications for our sense of Horn's idea of the function of his books. While he effectively turned them into public, governmental books, he clearly also saw their utility for individual citizens like himself, and seems to have made the *Liber Horn* available for transcription. However, perhaps more importantly, it confirms that there was an interest in the early part of the fourteenth century amongst London's citizens, as there seems to have been in the thirteenth century, in holding collections of local and national law. In Chapter One, we saw that such an interest was suggested by the prevalence of law texts amongst the books mentioned in the wills of urban citizens. For example, the will of the London alderman Walter de Berneye, dated in 1377, records that he bequeathed 'to William Norton all his books of the canon and civil law', although unfortunately this William Norton cannot be connected with the family of Norton who apparently owned Bodleian, MS Rawlinson B.356 at some point in its history.¹¹⁹ More tangible evidence survives in the shape of manuscripts surviving in non-governmental libraries and categorised as 'commonplace books'. Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 476, an almost pocket-sized volume measuring only 135 mm. by 92 mm., is one such manuscript, which contains material dating up to around 1312-1313.¹²⁰ The manuscript's contents include a version of the

¹¹⁹Sharpe, *Calendar of Wills*, II, p. 205.

¹²⁰For a full description of the manuscript, see James, *A Descriptive Catalogue*, II,

prophecies of Merlin, entitled, '*Historiam Britonum doctus scripsit Caradocus*'; a chronicle dating from 1064 up until 1274; charters to the city of London from Henry III, John, Richard, and the charter of William the Conqueror; a copy of documents relating to a prosecution brought by the common clerk Hugh de Waltham before the Barons of the Exchequer on behalf of the citizens and sheriffs concerning purprestures; and a '*modus et ordo*' for the citizens for the holding of the judicial eyre at the Tower of London.¹²¹ It is neatly presented, and partly decorated, with red and blue ink used to mark sub-sections in the text, and a full-page miniature of Vortigern and Merlin, accompanied by two dragons, on fol. 2v. at the start of the copy of the prophecies, although some spaces left for illuminated initials have been left blank, suggesting that the programme of decoration was never completed.

London, British Library, MSs Egerton 2885, and Additional 38131 appear to have been compiled in the latter part of the fourteenth century, and contain very similar combinations of contents to Andrew Horn's *Liber Horn* and *Liber Regum*. BL, MS Egerton 2885 includes royal charters to the city of London; a list of civic officials from 1189 until 1389; and two separate chronicles.¹²² The presence of several statutes relating to the fishmongers of London, mainly dated during the reign of Edward II, has led to its entitlement on its modern binding as 'Collections Relating To a London Fishmonger'.¹²³ BL, MS Additional 38131 features the description of London by William Fitz Stephen found in the *Liber Regum*, together with the collection of royal statutes contained in both Horn's books; the series of precedents for the holding of the judicial eyre found in the *Liber Custumarum*, together with an account of some of the events of the Iter of 1321; ordinances relating to the fishmongers, once again; and royal charters to London dating back to

pp. 414-7. Item three in James' catalogue of the manuscript's contents, concerning a prosecution made before the Barons of the Exchequer on behalf of the citizens, contains a letter from Edward II dated in the sixth year of the reign of Edward II.

¹²¹Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 476, fols. 1r.-40v.; fols. 41r.-118r.; fols. 149r.-161r. and fols. 174r.-177r.; fols. 121r.-129v.; fols. 131r.-138v., respectively.

¹²²London, BL, MS Egerton 2885, fols. 15r.-31v.; fols. 1r.-7v.; and fols. 8r.-12r. and fols. 13r.-14r., respectively.

¹²³For example, on fol. 39v., and on fols. 40r.-42v., which deal with memoranda of events in the mayoralty of Hamo de Chigwell.

Edward the Confessor, and including the Anglo-Saxon version of William the Conqueror's charter to the city.¹²⁴

The combination of administrative material and non-documentary contents in these three manuscripts suggest that they were privately compiled and owned during the fourteenth century. Certainly there does not appear to be any record of them amongst the possessions of the Guildhall archive at this time. Only BL, MS Additional 38131 bears the name of a medieval owner, who was also almost certainly its compiler: it contains at least two references to a Thomas Carleton, the embroiderer and alderman whose will is dated in 1382.¹²⁵ The compilers and commissioners of these later customals appear not to have had the sense of the intrinsic value of writing as a means of presenting themselves and their city to the future, displayed by Arnald Fitz Thedmar and Andrew Horn. However, the predominance of texts concerning London in these manuscripts would seem to confirm that they must have been held, like BL, MS Additional 38131 and the *Liber Regum*, by readers considerably involved and interested in the government of London, and almost certainly by London citizens - readers for whom a comprehensive collection of the laws of London might indeed be valuable.

While these may not be direct copies of Horn's manuscripts, they display the pervasiveness of the model which he had assembled in the *Liber Horn* and the *Liber Regum*. We can see that this paradigm constituted a basic combination of London legislation, often contained within the same quires, and a fairly consistent compilation of statutes of the realm, usually accompanied by a table of articles. These copies of national statutes frequently constituted the most finely decorated

¹²⁴London, BL, MS Additional 38131, fols. 83r.-84v.; fols. 3r.-79r.; fols. 92v.-95v.; fols. 106r.-108v.; and fols. 85r.-88v., respectively. Helen Cam describes the contents of BL, MS Additional 38131 dealing with the judicial eyre in, 'The Eyre of London', pp. cl-eli.

¹²⁵Fols. 79v.-80v. contain copies of an indenture made between Thomas de Carleton '*civis London albanus persona ecclesie de hadham*' (on fol. 79v.) and a John Payn, and on fol. 1v. a series of sums of money are noted as '*Extentus redditus Thome de Carleton*' for properties including shops, and tenements in Wodestrete, and a '*domus apud le lion on the hop*'. The will of Thomas Carleton, 'brouderer', dated in 1382, refers to his properties, including shops, in Wodestrete, and 'a tenement called "le lyon on the hope"', Sharpe, *The Calendar of Wills*, II, pp. 272-3 (p. 272).

section of the manuscript.¹²⁶ These are set alongside recurring items, including the Anglo-Saxon charter of William the Conqueror; chronicles; material relating to the holding of the judicial eyre at the Tower of London; and the statutes of the fishmongers. In terms of their content, the privately owned legal collections discussed here display a distinct resemblance to both Horn's books, and the *custumals* subsequently produced within London's civic government. While these manuscripts, in governmental and private ownership, can be, and have been, differentiated into the discrete genres of '*custumal*' and '*legal common-place book*', the fact that Andrew Horn's compilations represent the common source for at least some of both kinds of text emphasises the continuity between them. In the years after Andrew Horn bequeathed his books to the Guildhall the *custumal* seems to have flourished as a genre which functioned in both the public sphere and within the families of London citizens.

What conclusions can be drawn from this evidence in relation to the larger themes to be considered in the chapter and the thesis as a whole? We can see, first, that by the end of the fourteenth century at the latest, and perhaps as a direct legacy of Andrew Horn's compilations, the civic *custumal* had achieved a roughly standardised form in its dual format as a governmental and a private collection. The ambivalence between public, governmental utility, and private selection in the typical contents of the *custumal* must have been intensified by the establishment and success of closely related collections in both public and private hands in the fourteenth century, so that this ambivalence became a definitive aspect of these compilations as they converged into a recognisable genre during this period. Crucially, as with the earliest examples of the civic *custumal* which we have considered such as the *Liber de Antiquis Legibus*, contents concerning the city of London of both an administrative and a non-documentary nature seem to be consistently included in these compilations, bringing focus to collections which include items which are otherwise often dissimilar. Moreover, although we have

¹²⁶These royal statutes usually include the Magna Carta; the Charter of the Forest; the Statutes of Merton, Marlborough, Gloucester, Lincoln, York, and Winchester; the Statute of Merchants; and the first and second Statutes of Westminster.

evidence for the ownership of only some of these private compilations, what we do know suggests that they were indeed commissioned and read by citizens who were involved in London's government, probably at least as aldermen.

This enables us to make more defined comment on the extent and use of literate skills amongst London's citizen body. It seems that these men possessed a level of literacy which encompassed the administrative and business Latin and Anglo-Norman in which the legal documents were inscribed - a manifestation of the 'pragmatic literacy', or literate skills developed through and sufficient for reading and writing for business purposes, defined by Malcolm Parkes, which were discussed in Chapter One.¹²⁷ Other scholars, such as Sylvia Thrupp, or Harvey Graff, have argued that among English merchants 'the use of their literacy and education was not often turned to intellectual ends.'¹²⁸ The evidence of the manuscripts examined here, however, suggests that the civic customal was a type of book on which certain London citizens were willing to expend the effort and expense of compilation. Moreover, the range of writing contained in the customal, encompassing law, chronicle, and sometimes laudatory description of the city of London, signals that the literary interests of this social group were extending beyond the strict boundaries of 'pragmatic literacy'. Carol Meale has argued that the London 'common-place books' of the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries provide evidence of the increasing exercising of 'non-pragmatic' literacy among London citizens, and that such books by the diversity of their contents, 'demonstrate more clearly than other types of compilation the compatibility of the various uses of literacy'.¹²⁹ The civic customals of Andrew Horn, and these later, privately held versions of them imply that London citizens were utilising their

¹²⁷M. B. Parkes, 'The Literacy of the Laity', in *Literature and Western Civilisation: The Medieval World*, ed. by David Daiches and Anthony Thorlby (London: Aldus, 1973), pp. 555-77. See Chapter One, pp. 60-4.

¹²⁸Harvey J. Graff, *The Legacies of Literacy: Continuities and Contradictions in Western Culture and Society* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1987), p. 99. See Chapter One, pp. 60-4.

¹²⁹Carol Margaret Meale, 'The Social and Literary Contexts of a Late Medieval Manuscript: A Study of British Library Manuscript Harley 2252 and Its Owner John Colyns' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of York, 1984), p. 212.

literacy from as early as the first quarter of the fourteenth century to indulge an interest in the law and history of their city and country.¹³⁰

But while the utility of the custumal within the civic archive is obvious, what was its value to the aldermen who seem to have compiled these manuscripts? We have already noted the usefulness of the marginal annotations in the *Liber Horn*, identifying the locations of the documents contained in the volume within London's ever-expanding civic archive, and it is interesting that these have been carried over into the privately held Bodleian manuscript, but reduced in the Guildhall custumal 'the *Liber Memorandum*' which was copied from it. The Bodleian manuscript and the *Liber Horn* thus provided a referencing system to the Guildhall archive, and manageable collections of some of the urban and national laws recorded in the civic archive. For the aldermen who owned these collections, such a guide to the statutes on which the administration they served was based must have been invaluable. Like the *Liber Regum*, they constituted what Jeremy Catto describes as 'a school for statesmen, if only Guildhall statesmen, with broad responsibilities' - a kind of professional hand-book for governmental officials.¹³¹

The prestige attached to ownership of these manuscripts must also be taken into consideration. Indeed, the manuscripts discussed here which do seem to have been compiled privately, including the *Liber Horn*, the *Liber Regum*, Bodleian, MS B.356 and BL, MS Egerton 2885, and parts of BL, MS Additional 38131, are generally more impressively decorated and more carefully organised than some of those probably produced in the Guildhall, including the *Liber Memorandum*, presumably because private money for textual illumination was more plentiful than public finance. Within private households or families, however, the visual impressiveness of a book might have been more important than in the working

¹³⁰The evidence gathered by Anne F. Sutton for the membership of the London Pui at the turn of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries would seem to confirm that affluent citizens, including those who served as civic officials and clerks, were interested in using their literate skills in the composition and appreciation of literary, as opposed to documentary texts. See Anne F. Sutton, 'The Tumbling Bear', and Chapter One, pp. 60-4.

¹³¹Catto, 'Andrew Horn', p. 391.

climate of the Guildhall. It seems likely that possession of such books might have been sought as a mark of status within the city.¹³²

The symbolic significance of the civic custumal, however, must also have lain in the very elasticity of its possible categorisation as private compilation or governmental record. The custumal may well have acquired status through its possession within the families of London citizens of, presumably, relative affluence, and authority in their households, their wards, and their crafts. But its association, in content and ownership, with the laws and administration by which the city was run, must have increased the potency of the custumal as an accoutrement of governmental power. The kinds of writing most frequently found in these manuscripts, including legislation, chronicle, and lists of civic officials, constituted a useful guide-book for those participating in London's government, but also included genres already popular with London citizens, and which bound them into a sense of corporate and historical community.¹³³ Texts such as William Fitz Stephen's laudatory description of London, the charter granted to London by William I, and catalogues of London's mayors, which are generically disparate, collectively provide a textual focus on the legal and historical identity of the city of London which may well not always have been obvious to their aldermanic readers in their administration of urban government. Strictly speaking, they cannot be easily categorised as examples of either 'pragmatic literacy' or 'leisure reading', but open up a new area of textual consumption in relation to a sense of urban citizenship. In fact, the confluence of the 'public' and the 'private' in the civic custumal may well have lain at the root of its appeal as a private possession. The very duality of the manuscripts discussed here must only parallel the concurrent roles of their owners as heads of households, members of working communities, and ultimately officials of civic government. Like Andrew Horn, the chamberlain

¹³²The significance of the decoration of the civic registers discussed here and in Chapter Three will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Four.

¹³³Mary-Rose McLaren similarly argues that the chronicles of London 'record a history perceived as the common property of the citizens of London, belonging to them by virtue of their being citizens, literate and English, and commonly recorded by them': Mary-Rose McLaren, 'The Textual Transmission of the London Chronicles', *English Manuscript Studies 1100-1700*, 3 (1992), 38-72 (p. 62).

of London, these later aldermanic owners of custumals may have seen in their possession of books which recorded the members and administrative decisions of their city's civic council a reflection of their own relationship with the city and its government - their sense of citizenship was inscribed in the volumes which they owned, making this writing truly 'civic'.

The idea that writing, in particular in the format of compilatory volumes such as the custumals, embodied a kind of social prestige may not have been derived solely from the possession of these kinds of texts by urban government, however. Many of the earliest surviving records of London's craft organisations derive from the fourteenth century, and their contents frequently reflect those typically contained in the custumals, although based on the requirements and viewpoint of the craft as opposed to the civic council.¹³⁴ London, Guildhall Library, MS 4645, for example, compiled between the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries, contains oaths of journeyman weavers and bailiffs of the company, together with excerpts from the Gospels of Mark, Mathew, Luke, and John, presumably allowing the book to be sworn on during the taking of oaths; ordinances of the weavers' company, dated in the seventh year of the reign of Henry VII; a royal charter to the company from Henry VI and an inspeximus charter from Edward III; and other regulations for the weavers' working practices.¹³⁵ London, Guildhall Library, MS 11570, which was compiled between 1345 and 1463, and belonged to the more politically prominent Grocers' Company, includes a similar range of contents.¹³⁶ However, it begins with a series of formally presented entries detailing the inception of the company in 1345, starting on fol. 1r. with a description of the foundation itself in the past tense, and

¹³⁴See *City Livery Companies and Related Organisations: A Guide to Their Archives in Guildhall Library*, 3rd edn (London: Guildhall Library Publications, 1989).

¹³⁵London, Guildhall Library, MS 4645, fol. 1v., fol. 7v., and fol. 13v.; fols. 10r.-11r.; fols. 1r.-7v. (the foliation commences again from 1 after fol. 2v.); fols. 27r.-28r.; and fols. 14r.-17r., respectively.

¹³⁶This manuscript has been published as the *Facsimile of First Volume of Manuscript Archives of the Worshipful Company of Grocers of the City of London*, ed. by John Abernethy, 2 vols (London, 1886). On the history of the Grocers' Company in the Middle Ages, see Pamela Nightingale, *A Medieval Mercantile Community: The Grocers' Company and the Politics and Trade of London 1000-1485* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1995).

continuing with a list of those admitted to the fraternity in 1346-9 and in 1351 on fols. 1v.-2v. Fols. 4v.-11r. contain a series of ordinances of the company, beginning in 1345, and detailing on fol. 8v. the feast of the company's members at which it was decided to undertake its foundation, and at which its first ordinances were decided. This has the effect, not only of connecting the beginning of the company's record-keeping in the memorandum book with the commencement of the company itself, but also of placing the members of the Grocers' Company whose names are inscribed at intervals in the book's folios within a narrative history of this powerful craft guild. The experience of seeing writing as a means of contextualising one's self within, and identifying one's self with, potent and influential social bodies in the city seems to have been more common than an examination of London's governmental collections alone would suggest, then. By the beginning of the fourteenth century the craft was becoming increasingly important as a unit of governmental authority in the medieval city: craft participation seems to have been another area of the citizens' life in which the authoritative use of compilatory volumes might have inspired the desire to possess such a book themselves.¹³⁷

The Fifteenth Century: the *Liber Albus*:

In the final section of this chapter we will focus on how the publicly held civic customal developed in the fifteenth century, after this type of text became established as a governmental resource in London in the fourteenth century. We have seen that the customal continued to thrive as a privately held compilation, stabilised to an extent in terms of its format and its typical contents by the end of the fourteenth century, although, as a genre, it appears to have remained characteristically mobile and dynamic in form. This mobility in the privately held customals which we have considered must be partly attributable to the influence of individual compilers on these collections. Those customals apparently produced within the Guildhall of London in the fourteenth century, however - the *Liber*

¹³⁷See David Nicholas, *The Later Medieval City 1300-1500* (London and New York: Longman, 1997), Chapter Four.

Ordinationum; the *Liber Memorandum*; and the *Liber Custumarum* - are, as would be expected, exclusively dedicated to documentary contents, and frequently derive their contents from each other and Andrew Horn's *Liber Horn* and the *Liber Regum*. In the fifteenth century, two further civic customals were produced within the Guildhall: the *Liber Albus* and the *Liber Dunthorn*, compiled by the common clerks John Carpenter and William Dunthorn respectively.¹³⁸ We will focus on the content and structure of the *Liber Albus* to examine how the governmental customal was designed, and how it functioned, during this period.

Like the governmental customals produced during the fourteenth century, the *Liber Albus* and the *Liber Dunthorn* focus entirely on the administrative memoranda, legislation, and officials of the civic government, excluding more descriptive material like William Fitz Stephen's description of London, Henry of Huntingdon's account of Britain, or a formal chronicle. However, the *Liber Albus* in particular constitutes the most deliberately comprehensive and ordered collection of specifically urban customs and laws produced in the city which we have discussed in this chapter. The *Liber Albus* was completed in 1419.¹³⁹ It consists of four 'books', divided into sub-sections and each containing an index of its contents. The book begins with the '*prooemium*', or introductory prologue, explaining the purpose of the volume, and dating its compilation to November 1419, and the mayoralty of Richard Whittington.¹⁴⁰ Much of the discussion of the function of this customal which follows will be based on study of this prologue. The compiler never identifies himself by name in the '*prooemium*', but has been presumed to be the common clerk John Carpenter: a post-medieval hand has added his name to the flyleaf opposite fol. 1r.

Book One contains an account of the etymological and historical derivation of certain civic offices and procedures, including mayoral elections and the wardmote, followed by a series of prescriptions and precedents for the holding of

¹³⁸London, CLRO, Custumal 10, the *Liber Dunthorn*, and Custumal 12, the *Liber Albus*. The *Liber Albus* has been published as *Munimenta*, I: the *Liber Albus*, and translated in Riley, *Liber Albus*.

¹³⁹See the prologue or '*prooemium*' to the book: CLRO, Custumal 12, the *Liber Albus*, fol. 1r.

¹⁴⁰CLRO, Custumal 12, the *Liber Albus*, fols. 1r.-1v.

the judicial eyre, which as we have seen is thought to have been removed from the *Liber Regum*. Book Two contains the summarised articles of royal charters to the city of London from King William to Henry V. Book Three encompasses a series of city customs concerning the Hustings; business and sanitation in the city; the oaths of various civic officials; the assizes of bread and ale; and the 1189 Building Assize; and ordinances dealing with the removal of kiddels from the Thomas and the Medway, allegedly dating back to the time of King Brut and Edward the Confessor. At the beginning of Book Four, a second prologue has been added, explaining that the original purpose of transcribing completely a larger number of civic statutes into the *Liber Albus* has proved impossible because of the commitments of 'city business' and the volume of documents. Indeed, the compiler refers to the archive as 'an inextricable labyrinth' and 'a vast chaos' into which he fears entering.¹⁴¹ What follows, therefore, is a 'calendar' of statutes, together with notes of their location in the rolls or books of the city.

John Carpenter, whose name has been inscribed on a flyleaf at the front of the collection in a sixteenth-century hand, was appointed as common clerk of the city of London in April 1417, having previously served in the office of the common clerk under his predecessor, John Marchaunt.¹⁴² He appears to have remained in office until 1438, when his successor is noted.¹⁴³ During these two decades he acted several times as an executor to citizens of London, including Richard Whittington, mayor of the city when the *Liber Albus* was completed, and as an attorney and an arbitrator. In 1437 and 1439 he was elected as a member of parliament for London.¹⁴⁴ In acting as Whittington's executor, Carpenter was involved in the establishment of the Guildhall Library in London, founded by the mayor in 1411.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴¹*inextricabilem laborintum*'; 'tantum chaos': CLRO, Custumal 12, the *Liber Albus*, fol. 264r.

¹⁴²*LBI*, pp. 179-90.

¹⁴³See William Kellaway, 'John Carpenter's Liber Albus', *Guildhall Studies in London History*, 3:2 (1978), 67-84 (p. 68).

¹⁴⁴*LBK*, p. 211, and p. 232. On Carpenter's career, see Kellaway, 'John Carpenter's Liber Albus', pp. 67-9, and Thomas Brewer, *Memoir of the Life and Times of John Carpenter Town Clerk of London* (London: Arthur Taylor, 1865).

¹⁴⁵Caroline M. Barron, *The Medieval Guildhall of London* (London: The Corporation of London, Guildhall, 1974), pp. 33-5.

Carpenter and other compilers and inscribers of civic registers, and the office of the common clerk, will be considered in greater detail in Chapter Five, but it is worth noting that the responsibilities of the common clerk in London were by this date varied. The oath of the office copied into the *Liber Albus* requires ensuring 'that all pleas of Hustings and of Nuisances' are correctly inscribed in the city's records, providing 'counsel' to 'the Mayor, Judges, and Council of the City' on its government, and the safe-keeping of the records in the common clerk's keeping.¹⁴⁶ He was also responsible for junior clerks working within the city's administration, apparently taking on an at least supervisory role. In addition, other civic records indicate that the common clerk received fees for enrolling deeds, and gifts for inscribing documents for parties outside the civic council.¹⁴⁷ The range and scale of civic and political responsibility achieved by Carpenter, however, seem to have been exceptional, and his special relationship with the city's administration is indicated by his description by himself and by others, as the '*secretarius*', or 'secretary' of London.¹⁴⁸

John Carpenter seems to have been trained in the law, and the twenty-six named books in his will indicate a broad literary knowledge and taste.¹⁴⁹ These include Alanus de Insulis's *Anticlaudianus*, and two copies of his *De Planctu Naturae*; the *Meditations* of St Anselm; a 'book on architecture'; two copies of the pseudo-Aristotelean *Secretum Secretorum*; Petrarch's *De Remediis Utriusque Fortunae*; a book written against Lollardy by Roger Dymok; a *Historiae Provinciarum*; books of the laws of London and England; Richard de Bury's *Philobiblon*; the poem *De Vetula* considered in the Middle Ages to be by Ovid; two works by Seneca; the *Parables of Solomon*; and Vincent de Beauvais' *Speculum Morale Regium*. John Carpenter's career, then, was one of extensive political

¹⁴⁶CLRO, Custumal 12, the *Liber Albus*, fol. 209r.

¹⁴⁷Caroline M. Barron, 'The Government of London and its Relations with the Crown 1400-1450' (unpublished doctoral dissertation, the University of London, 1970), pp. 126-32.

¹⁴⁸*LBK*, p. 210, and p. 139. See Chapter Five, p. 259.

¹⁴⁹Each of the books in John Carpenter's will is described in Brewer, *Memoir*, pp. 121-130, and his will appears on pp. 131-44.

experience, and pursuit of a variety of branches of learning, much as we can deduce from the compilatory selection of Andrew Horn of his literary interests.

The manuscript is neatly copied throughout, with the text forming a self-contained central block surrounded by wide margins, presumably to enable notes to be added, as has subsequently occurred. Fol. 1r., containing the introductory prologue, is marked with a large, decorated initial and a frame of floral design in red, blue, and gold, filling three margins of the page (see Figure 2). Fol. 264r., on which the prologue to Book Four has been inscribed is similarly decorated, and the opening of the section on the judicial eyre on fol. 16r. contains a historiated initial depicting two rows of men below a turreted structure, presumably the Tower, and apparently in verbal dispute (see Figure 3, and Figure 6). Other decoration is dedicated to facilitating the organisation and use of the book, with headings in the margins and the text and at the head of almost every folio, distinguishing book-numbers and sections.¹⁵⁰

This use of decoration to improve the organisation of material in the *Liber Albus* is reflected in Carpenter's statement of the purpose of the collection, unique amongst the custumals which we have considered, in his '*prooemium*' on fols. 1r.-1v.:

Because the instability of human memory and the shortness of life do not allow us to gain certain knowledge concerning everything that deserves to be remembered, despite it having been written, especially if it has been written irregularly and confusingly, and much more concerning those things which have not been written; and since, after all the aged, more experienced, and more discreet governors of the royal city of London had been removed almost at the same time through frequent plagues, in various cases younger men succeeding them in the government of the city were more frequently in doubt, for want of writing [...] for a long time it seemed necessary, both to the superior and the subordinate men of the said city, that a volume, which was called a Repertory from the content in it concerning the government of the city, should be compiled from the notable memoranda arranged irregularly and widely spread both in the books and rolls, and in the charters of the city.¹⁵¹

¹⁵⁰The decoration of the *Liber Albus* and other civic registers will be discussed further in Chapter Four.

¹⁵¹CLRO, Custumal 12, the *Liber Albus*, fols. 1r.-1v.: '*Quia labilitas humane memorie brevitatsque vite de singulis rebus memorandis licet scriptis presertim irregulariter et confuse et multo magis de non scriptis certam habere notitiam non permittunt cumque per frequentes pestilentias subtractis velut insimul cunctis gubernatoriibus longevis magis expertis et discretioribus civitatis regalis Londoniarum juniores eis in civitatis regimine succedentes in variis casibus pro*

Carpenter's statement is expressive of several important aspects of the perceived function and status of the civic customal in this period. The prologue states that the book has been compiled because important laws and customs of the city are being lost when civic officials forget them, or die without passing them on, or because they are often transcribed into the rolls and registers of the archive in a disorganised, and thus inaccessible, way. Its central premise is that '*memoranda*' - things which should be, or which are worthy of being, remembered - are being lost because they have not been adequately recorded. That the compilation of a volume such as the *Liber Albus* should provide a solution to this problem is expressive of the importance of writing for the preservation of information at this time. Both Arnald Fitz Thedmar and Andrew Horn express a consciousness of the survival of the written record into the future, but much less directly than Carpenter does here: rather their more explicit statements of the purpose of their compilations relate to its moral value for future readers.

Concomitant with this consciousness is the anxiety that the citizens and even government of London should be aware of the laws which define it and secure its liberty, which we have seen also seems to provide motivation for Andrew Horn in the inclusion of many of the contents in his customals. Carpenter details the vulnerability of human life and memory: the rulers of the city 'not infrequently' are suddenly removed by plagues; human life is short; and human memory is 'unstable'. By contrast with the '*labilitas humanae memoriae*', inscribed '*memoranda*' have a more substantial life, surviving beyond their compilers into the distant future for later citizens to consult. Right from the beginning, then, Carpenter emphasises the importance of the written volume he has compiled, as a potentially perpetual record of customs crucial for the continued running of the administration of the city.

defectu scripture nimirum sepius ambigebant [...] necessarium videbatur a diu tam superioribus quam subditis dicte civitatis quoddam volumen quod Reportorium a contento in eo civitatis regimine diceretur ex notabilibus memorandis tam in libris rotulis quam in cartis dicte civitatis inordinate diffuseque positis compilari'.

This '*prooemium*', and the prologue to Book Four, promote the importance of the *Liber Albus* specifically, however, by suggesting that in itself the written record is not the solution to the problems of urban government; on the contrary, in the prologue to Book Four, on fol. 264r., Carpenter paints a picture of a civic administration swamped by written records to the extent that they are no longer useful, as they cannot be located or used. 'Seeing the vast multitude of writings' which he has undertaken to transcribe, Carpenter describes it, as we have seen, as an 'inextricable labyrinth' and a 'great chaos' into which he fears entering.¹⁵² His comments in his prologue preceding Book One confirm that writing is not intrinsically valuable and does not inevitably bring order. Carpenter's worst case scenario is that 'no written account exists', but he also argues that written accounts made 'in a disorderly and confusing manner' are of little use. He states that the purpose of the *Liber Albus* is to provide an organised guide to documents which are recorded in the Guildhall archive, but are 'scattered without order or classification' - in other words are inaccessible because their location there is not generally known. Like the *Liber Horn* and other fourteenth-century customals which we have discussed, then, one of the functions of the *Liber Albus* is as a kind of referencing work to the collected documents of the Guildhall. To Carpenter it seems to constitute a self-contained archive in itself. Carpenter's introduction, we can see, is closely packed with expressions of the importance of the customal.

The *Liber Albus* is, moreover, distinguished as an essential tool of the city's government, and so associated with the prestige and authority which it represents. Carpenter confirms this in the prologue to Book One by linking the book's production with the mayoral activity of 'that noble man' (*nobilis viri*), Richard Whittington, mayor of London at the time of the *Liber Albus*'s compilation and a man sufficiently close to Carpenter for the common clerk to serve Whittington as an executor in his will.¹⁵³ Interestingly, Carpenter offers a cursory sketch of the city

¹⁵²*videns immensam multitudinem scribendorum velut inextricabilem laborintum ingrediendo tantum chaos ne diceretur temerarius aut praesumptuosus formidavit*: CLRO, Customal 12, the *Liber Albus*, fol. 264r.

¹⁵³See Caroline M. Barron, 'Richard Whittington: The Man Behind the Myth', in *Studies in London History Presented to Philip Edmund Jones*, ed. by A. E. J. Hollaender and William Kellaway (London: Hodder and Stoughton; Edinburgh:

which emphasises its unity in using the resource of the book: it is useful to the older and the younger members of the city, and is desired and will be used 'both by the superior and subordinate members of the said city'.

The attachment of the city's coat of arms to the decoration on fol. 1r. confirms that the book embodies and reflects the authority and law of the city's government (see Figure 2). In the previous section we discussed the desirability of the privately held civic register as a means of bestowing status on its owners by virtue of its association with urban authority, and with the city as a whole; the *Liber Albus*, similarly, seems to generate prestige for the civic officials who are responsible for its production. The attractive presentation and illumination of the *Liber Albus*, turning it into a showpiece item similar to the *Liber Regum*, confirms that it was intended to be a visually impressive object. This impressive decoration is more typical of the privately held books which we have considered from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, than of those produced in the Guildhall. By 1419, it seems, the customal was not only flourishing as a governmental resource, but its symbolic value as an accoutrement of power was being recognised within the institution of the Guildhall, as well as within aldermanic households of London.¹⁵⁴

The *Liber Albus* advertises its status as a resource of public authority in its prologues, decoration and contents. Its only section which does not constitute copies of the documentation of urban government, Book One, provides a history of the procedures and offices of London's government, rather than the national and urban chronicles found in earlier customals, and Carpenter does not attempt to provide the admittedly fragmented and widespread conceptualisation of the city based on its geography, its citizens, and its past, which we find in collections like the *Liber de Antiquis Legibus* or BL, MS Additional 38131. The image of London conveyed in the *Liber Albus* is entirely that of its government, rather than of the city in a more inclusive, amorphous sense. The focus of the '*prooemium*' on the practical usefulness of the text as an organised collection of important customs,

Constable, 1969), pp. 195-248 (p. 198, and pp. 214-5), and Brewer, *Memoir*, pp. 24-30.

¹⁵⁴The symbolic value of the civic register will be discussed in Chapter Four.

facilitating the processes of government, can be seen as a reflection of this insistence on its entirely administrative value.

Nevertheless, the *Liber Albus* bears evidence that a customal produced within the civic government was still a prime location for self-promotion by its compiler, and for expression of his particular vision. William Kellaway has shown that in fact large parts of the *Liber Albus* had already been completed before John Carpenter became common clerk in 1417, and that the parts of the book which are probably directly attributable to him are tables of contents for these already existing sections; Book Four, which contains a 'calendar' of the memoranda contained in the Guildhall archive which Carpenter did not have time to copy out in full; and Book One, Part I, which is made up of descriptions of the duties and election procedures of various civic officials.¹⁵⁵ Carpenter stresses the importance of his own organisational role by describing himself in the prologue to Book Four, on fol. 264r., as the book's '*Compiler*'.¹⁵⁶ Moreover, the unprecedented inclusion of two relatively substantial prologues in the *Liber Albus*, together with the interpretative style which Carpenter adopts in his discussion of London's civic officials and customs in Book One, in preference to the largely notational form of urban chronicles, points to the facts that Carpenter takes control and intervenes more in the actual text of his compilation, and that consequently his authority as compiler and common clerk is all the greater. Carpenter may not have attached his own name to the *Liber Albus*, as Andrew Horn and Arnald Fitz Thedmar were concerned to do, but his '*prooemium*' displays his consciousness of the longevity of his text, and his promotion of his official role as common clerk, and the council which he served.¹⁵⁷

The *Liber Albus* also reflects the desire seen in earlier customals to integrate documents considered to be from London's early legal past, such as the charter of William I, and the city's first Building Assize. His discussion of the origins of London's civic officials and procedures in Book One represents a similar

¹⁵⁵Kellaway, 'John Carpenter's *Liber Albus*'.

¹⁵⁶The significance of this title will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter Five, pp. 264-9.

¹⁵⁷See Chapter Five, pp. 269-80.

enthusiasm to root London's customs firmly in ancient tradition. Rather than prescribing the behaviour of the mayor, aldermen, sheriffs, recorder and other officials of London, Book One, Part I offers an account of the derivation of their authority, and that of the working of London's government, from pre-conquest precedents. John Carpenter refers frequently to civic customals, particularly the *Liber Custumarum*, as the source of his information, but rather than cataloguing this documentary information, as the rest of the *Liber Albus* does, in Book One, Part I, he condenses it into episodic, self-contained histories of each civic office. Carpenter provides a 'history' of the city through a historicisation of its government and their customary practices.¹⁵⁸ The mayor takes centre stage in Carpenter's chronicle of civic office. The *Liber Albus* recalls that the mayor was anciently known as the 'Portgrave', a title indicative of his long-standing authority, and of his noble status, held equal to earls of England. Carpenter notes that the mayor has been 'the chief and immediate deputy to the kingdom in London appointed from the time of Lord William the Conqueror of England'.¹⁵⁹ His descriptions of mayoral election and ceremony are firmly located in the past by his inclusion of Anglo-Saxon etymology, consistent use of the past tense, and frequent references to his evidence as '*antiquitus*'.¹⁶⁰

The *Liber Albus* contains one further, more unusual entry, added to the fourteenth century account of the judicial eyre at a later, but uncertain date. A passage derived from William Fitz Stephen's description of London switches the tone of this part of the volume from a record of procedure to unmitigated eulogy. It states that 'among the noble cities of the world which fame honours, the city of London is the one chief seat of the kingdom of England which extends widely the fame of its name', before proceeding to enumerate its attributes in climate, religion, and its citizens, as well as 'very ancient foundation'.¹⁶¹ The passage claims, as

¹⁵⁸CLRO, Custumal 12, the *Liber Albus*, fols. 1r.-14r.

¹⁵⁹*principales immediateque regno locum-tenentes in Londoniis constituti a tempore domini Willelmi regis Angliae conquaestoris*: CLRO, Custumal 12, the *Liber Albus*, fol. 1r.

¹⁶⁰CLRO, Custumal 12, the *Liber Albus*, fols. 1r.-7v.

¹⁶¹*Inter nobiles urbes orbis quas fama celebrat civitas Londoniarum regni Angliae sedes una est principalis quae famam sui nominis latius diffundit felix est aeris salubritate Christiana religione dignissima libertate antiquissima fundatione*:

William Fitz Stephen does, that London pre-dates Rome, and goes on to recall how Brutus founded London 'in the image of great Troy'.¹⁶² The passage provides evidence, once again, that this kind of volume, with its essentially documentary basis, was considered an appropriate location for the inclusion of writing promoting the city. In Book One, Part I, Carpenter chooses to do this by describing the ancient authority of London's rulers and of its civic rituals; in this passage in Book One, Part II, the scribe, who may or may not have written according to John Carpenter's instructions, echoes the laudatory mode and words of entries in the first of the customals we considered in the chapter, the *Liber de Antiquis Legibus* and the *Liber Regum*.

Conclusion:

Much of the argument of this chapter has been preoccupied with whether the books we have been discussing can in fact be categorised together as 'civic' customals, in as much as some reflect the interests and background of the individual compilers who had them produced for themselves, while others were compiled within the Guildhall of London, and combine documentary records with promotion of the government which owned them. Comparison of these books, however, compiled over a period of around two hundred years, has shown clear similarities between them. All are based around the formal collection and presentation of a compilation of London's laws, an exemplar for which may have been circulating as early as the beginning of the thirteenth century - common items within this collection frequently recur, including texts dealing with the judicial eyre; royal charters granted to the city of London, especially that of William the Conqueror in Anglo-Saxon; the ordinances of the craft of the fishmongers; a chronicle; and a set of national statutes which first appear gathered together in the *Liber Horn*. The compilers of these works clearly identify the gathering of these laws, and their publication, as basic to a sense of constitutional unity of the city. This attempt to

CLRO, Customal 12, the *Liber Albus*, fol. 18r.

¹⁶²*a Bruto in similitudinem magnae Trojae condita est*: CLRO, Customal 12, the *Liber Albus*, fol. 18r. Earlier, Book One, Part I, states that London was founded by King Lud, on fol. 1v.

conceptualise London in legalistic terms is supplemented in several of the customals examined here with other texts which provide additional means of describing the city, through its history, its geography, its social constitution, or its famous citizens and governing officials. In as much as they deal predominantly with ideas and symbols of the city of London, often in an admittedly fragmented way, the customals can be termed 'civic'.

The civic customal, as it became increasingly standardised at the beginning of the fourteenth century, also flourished during the two hundred years which have been examined here in both public and private hands. Rather than signifying the co-existence of two similar genres of texts, one serving public requirements and the other reflecting solely the interests of private London citizens, the similarities in content and format of these manuscripts considered collectively suggest that these 'commonplace books' and 'customals' are in fact two manifestations of a common type of text. Examples of both kinds of text in the fourteenth century can be seen to derive from the paradigm provided by Andrew Horn's customals, and the ease with which his *Liber Regum* and *Liber Horn*, together with the *Liber de Antiquis Legibus* and BL, MS Additional 14252, slip between governmental and private ownership and use, confirm the fluidity of the term 'customal', which has been adopted in this chapter to describe these manuscripts as a single genre. In fact, as we have seen, the apparent dichotomy of 'public' and 'private' reflects in actual terms a continuum of ownership in medieval London. The owners of customals known to have been produced and held privately seem consistently to have been members of London's civic government, and the wider interests of family and craft which are represented in Arnald Fitz Thedmar's and Andrew Horn's books are indicative of the precedence of these social units as sources of authority in the city. Clearly, there is a difference in focus between the more inclusive interests of the privately compiled customals which we have discussed on one hand, and on the other, later, governmental customals such as the *Liber Albus* which promote and present the viewpoint of the civic council exclusively. Association with the civic government of London, however, lies at the basis of all of these texts, and both

Andrew Horn in 1321, and John Carpenter in 1419, can be seen to be exploiting the connection of this type of text with urban power and law for the prestige it affords them as citizen and as common clerk. The custumal, then, can be described as 'civic' also because it seems to have embodied both the authority of the city's government, and the amorphous sense of what it meant to be a citizen and an official of any city. The custumal seems to confirm Michael Clanchy's hypothesis that literacy in the Middle Ages was stimulated by contact with documentary writing. It also offers powerful evidence of the thriving use of literate skills amongst a limited sector of London's society, at least, on manuscripts which certainly included entries which exercised reading and writing for business purposes, but also encompassed texts apparently valued for the far less tangible sense of the city and identification with it which they offered.¹⁶³

¹⁶³See Chapter One, pp. 60-4.

Chapter Three
Reconstructing the Civic
Archive: The Civic Registers of
Medieval York

(‘a city of great repute and always named the second city of the kingdom and the chief chamber of the king’)
 (‘une Citee de graunde reputacion et tudys nomer la secounde Citee du Roialme et la Chaumbre le Roy et chef’)¹

Introduction:

Medieval writers and modern scholars tend to concur in describing York as ‘the second city’, and provincial capital, of medieval England.² J. N. Bartlett, for example, has argued that York remained ‘one of the leading English cities’ throughout the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, continuing to flourish during a period of decline in other English towns in the fifteenth century.³ In Chapter One, moreover, we saw that York functioned as an educational centre in the later Middle Ages.⁴ The city, therefore, provides an appropriate and valuable point of comparison with London. The fact that London’s population was so much greater than that of other English medieval towns;⁵ its proximity to royal government at Westminster; and the relatively large number of book-producers, clerks, composers, and readers within the capital city all suggest that as a case-study in the production of civic registers it is more likely to constitute an anomaly rather than a typical model.⁶ As ‘the second city of the kingdom’, York offers one of the closest

¹York, YCA, MS D1, fol. a348r. See Appendix One, p. 309-10 for an explanation of the foliation system used in reference to the later sections of this manuscript.

²The quotation with which the chapter begins has been frequently cited in modern scholarly discussions as evidence of a sense of self-confidence in the city of York in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. See the recent examples of Barrie Dobson, ‘The Crown, the Charter and the City, 1396-1461’, in *The Government of Medieval York: Essays In Commemoration of the 1396 Royal Charter*, ed. by Sarah Rees Jones, Borthwick Studies In History, 3 (York: Borthwick Institute of Historical Research, 1997), pp. 34-55 (p. 46); and W. M. Ormrod, ‘York and the Crown Under the First Three Edwards’, in Rees Jones, *The Government of Medieval York*, pp. 14-33 (p. 33). Both articles also evaluate the claims of both medieval and modern advocates of York’s status as the ‘second city’ and northern capital of medieval England. See also D. M. Palliser, ‘Thirteenth-Century York - England’s Second City?’, *York Historian*, 14 (1997), 2-9.

³J. N. Bartlett, ‘The Expansion and Decline of York in the Later Middle Ages’, *Economic History Review*, 2nd series, 12 (1959-60), 17-33 (17).

⁴See Chapter One, pp. 51-2.

⁵London’s population in c. 1300, for example, has recently been estimated at 80000, Edward Miller and John Hatcher, *Medieval England: Towns, Commerce and Crafts 1086-1348* (London and New York: Longman, 1995), p. 274. David Nicholas estimates that York’s population rose from around 8 000 to 13 000 during the fourteenth century, David Nicholas, *The Later Medieval City 1300-1500* (London, New York: Longman, 1997), p. 66.

⁶See Chapter One, pp. 44-50.

possible parallels with London in terms of the economic, social, and intellectual context in which its civic writing was produced. But it also bridges the gap between London and the literate culture of the provincial, the northern, and the smaller English medieval town. While the defining evidence concerning civic registers in London which we considered in the previous chapter was, as we shall see, in many ways unique to the capital, examination of the civic writing produced in York during the same period will enable us to move towards a geographically and textually broader, but more representative and precise, view of the nature of the civic register.

In fact, the differing nature of the surviving civic writing from medieval York, and the paucity of this material in relation to that in London, necessitates a re-evaluation of those definitions of the civic register gained through consideration of the governmentally and privately held customs of London in Chapter Two. Not only does York lack the evidence of private ownership of manuscripts containing a substantial amount of material dealing with the city, its legislation, and its government, but extant documentation produced and held by the city's ruling council is, as a whole, much less than that from London between the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries.⁷ Practically nothing from York's archive survives from before the middle of the fourteenth century, by which time, as we have seen, the civic custom was firmly established as a governmental resource in London.⁸ Moreover, what documentation we do have from medieval York frequently manifests signs of damage and re-organisation in the post-medieval period. As Barrie Dobson and Lorraine Attreed have pointed out, the losses of and damage caused to York's records have been the result of usage and early attempts at conservation as much as of their careless treatment through the centuries. Barrie Dobson has suggested that the rolls of York's chamberlains' accounts which are extant 'no doubt owed their survival - such as it was - to indifference rather than

⁷For a catalogue of the contents of York's modern civic archive, see *The Catalogue, Printed by Order of the York Corporation, of Charters, Deeds, and Old Documents Belonging to the Corporation*, ed. by William Giles (York, 1908).

⁸See Chapter Two, pp. 109-14.

curiosity'.⁹ A reference in the city's records dated on the 2nd of March, 1476, to a request that its collection of 'registres, archives and othere bookes of olde and <newe> remembraunces' 'might be enserched' for a 'scedull' provides evidence that by the final quarter of the fifteenth century the city had a sufficiently substantial number of records to constitute what was recognised as a 'civic archive'.¹⁰ The limited number of records surviving from the medieval period today, and references which they contain to registers and documents no longer extant, some of which will be considered in this chapter, suggest that a significant proportion of what was held in the 'counsall chambre under saufe and suyre keping' has been lost in the intervening years.

Given that what we are left with today constitutes something like 'the wreckage of a sophisticated system of archives' envisaged for many thirteenth-century English towns by Geoffrey Martin, this chapter will necessarily differ methodologically and stylistically from the discussion of the customals of London in the preceding chapter.¹¹ The following discussion will seek to identify in York's civic registers the common kinds of contents, the apparent functions, and the format which the study in Chapter Two showed to be characteristic of London's medieval customals. This can only be achieved, however, through an attempted reconstruction both of York's civic archive in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, and of the probable medieval condition of certain of its individual civic registers. This is necessary not only because of the altered state of many of York's medieval registers, but also because these registers have received a great deal less scholarly attention than many of those produced in London. It is also in itself a valuable exercise, since in comparing the likely state of the registers and the archive in the

⁹*York City Chamberlains' Account Rolls 1396-1500*, ed. by R. B. Dobson, Surtees Society, 192 (1978 and 1979) (Gateshead: Northumberland, 1980), p. xiii. For a discussion of the post-medieval storage and treatment of York's archive, and of the condition of its medieval records, see Dobson, *York City Chamberlains' Account Rolls*, pp. xiii-xiv, and especially *HB*, pp. xiv-xviii.

¹⁰*HB*, p. 4. This statement will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter Four, pp. 205-6.

¹¹G. H. Martin, 'The English Borough in the Thirteenth Century'. originally *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 13 (1963), repr. in *The English Medieval Town: A Reader in English Urban History 1200-1540*, ed. by Richard Holt and Gervase Rosser (London and New York: Longman, 1990), pp. 29-48 (p. 34). See Chapter One, p. 32.

medieval period with the condition they now exist (or do not exist) in, and considering the treatment they received at the hands of their medieval compilers and users, we can gain an insight into how the civic record in general was viewed at various stages in the Middle Ages. This treatment includes efforts to duplicate, correct, or recycle the records, as well as neglect of them. As with the London civic customals, most modern scholarly attention has focused on the historical interest of the contents of York's civic registers, rather than the significance of their structure, their combination of contents, and their presentation. In fact, by attempting a reconstruction of both the civic archive and of individual civic registers from York at various stages in the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries, we can begin to establish what their specific significance and functions were held to be. Thus, much of the analysis of this chapter will be based on a close study of the manuscript registers, and the codicological evidence for their design and use over the period concerned.

This reconstruction will include both extant registers and those which no longer survive but concerning which information does still exist in York's records. As in the preceding chapter, discussion will focus on manuscripts which constituted complete registers during the medieval period, or which contain material which seems to have been deliberately compiled, or later collected together, even if it can not be shown to have been compiled into book form. Particular attention will be paid to YCA, MS D1, published as the *Freemen's Register* and containing material dating from 1272 and up until 1671; YCA, MSs A/Y and B/Y, published as the *Memorandum Books*, and commencing in 1377 and 1371 respectively; and the manuscript registers known as the *House Books*, the extant examples of which appear from 1461 onwards.¹² The first part of the chapter will set the documentary context in which York's civic registers were produced, by reviewing both what is known of the earliest surviving records produced by and belonging to the city's

¹²These manuscript registers have been published, at least in part, as *Register of the Freemen of the City of York*, ed. by Francis Collins, 2 vols, Surtees Society, 96 and 102 (1897-9) (Durham: Andrews and Co.; London: Whittaker and Co. and Bernard Quaritch; Edinburgh: Blackwood, 1897); *YMBI-III*; and *HB* (the first six volumes of the surviving *House Books*).

administration, and the manuscript registers being compiled during this period in York outside of the Guildhall, by religious institutions located in the city. This will be followed by a discussion of the structure and contents of YCA, MS D1 in its current form, and of its probable medieval format. This manuscript not only contains material compiled over three hundred years, but also evidence which is suggestive of how that material has been added to, rearranged and re-prioritised during those years, and is thus particularly valuable as a means of measuring how the civic register was viewed in York during this period. The remainder of the chapter will extend to consider YCA, MSs A/Y and B/Y and the miscellaneous register YCA, MS E39, and finally an index of the contents of some of the books belonging to the civic council in 1482, copied onto folios bound into the back of YCA, MS A/Y. The index describes selected contents of a much larger number of registers than survive in the archive in York today, and thus enables us not only to widen our field of reference in our discussion of the nature of the civic register, but also to gain a fuller impression of the nature of the civic archive in the city by the end of the fifteenth century. We will thus be able to judge more precisely how York's civic registers may have been designed to function in relation to each other, and to begin to consider what their collective significance, as an archive, as opposed to individual manuscripts, may have been, a subject which will be returned to in Chapter Four.

The Documentary Context for the Production of York's Civic Registers:

Despite the fact that, as David Palliser has pointed out, York had 'developed an administration of some complexity during the thirteenth century, and [...] must have been generating its own archives from an early date, certainly well before the office of common (town) clerk is first recorded in 1317', disappointingly few civic records survive from before the late fourteenth century.¹³ In addition to the registers listed in the introduction, the medieval archive includes the chamberlains' account rolls which survive intermittently from 1396, and the account rolls of the

¹³D. M. Palliser, 'York's Earliest Administrative Record', p. 81.

city's bridge-masters, beginning in 1438, with some subsequent accounts having again been lost over the years.¹⁴ Similarly, only two medieval chamberlains' account books, dating from 1446 to 1453 and from 1480 to 1482, are today held in York's archive; John Muggleston has argued, however, that the patterns of entry used in these records suggest that they were continuations of earlier chamberlains' account books.¹⁵ Measured according to the extant medieval documentation in York's modern archive, then, the production of civic records in the city would seem to have remained extremely limited up until the final quarter of the fourteenth century, and to have begun to expand considerably only in the mid fifteenth century.

The earliest surviving records dealing with the city's administration, however, pre-date this period of intensive documentary production by over one hundred years. David Palliser has identified an incomplete roll recording the payment of 'husgabel', a tax due to the king on properties in the city, dating from the 1280s.¹⁶ Copies of charters to the city are also found in the city's archive: charters granted by Henry II; Richard I; John; Henry III; Edward I; Edward II; and Edward III all antecede the commencement of the *Memorandum Books* in the 1370s. The earliest dates from between 1152 and 1162, but refers back to a previous charter of Henry I awarded to the city.¹⁷ In addition, a series of ordinances issued by the royal administration to regulate trade in York and dating from 1301 survive in an Exchequer Plea Roll E 13/26, but not in the records of the city itself: they may not actually have been produced in the city. The ordinances were designed to deal with the problems which arose as a result of the presence of the king and the royal administration in York at the end of the thirteenth and the beginning of the fourteenth centuries, and Michael Prestwich has suggested that

¹⁴The chamberlains' account rolls have been published as *York City Chamberlains' Account Rolls 1396-1500*, ed. by R. B. Dobson, Surtees Society, 192 (1978 and 1979) (Gateshead: Northumberland, 1980).

¹⁵J. Muggleston, 'Some Aspects of the Two Late Medieval Chamberlains' Account Books of York', *Yorkshire Archaeological Journal*, 67 (1995), 133-46. The account books, which do not however seem to have been bound, were used for the recording of daily financial records, with the accounts being summarised at the end of the chamberlains' year of office in the account rolls.

¹⁶D. M. Palliser, 'York's Earliest Administrative Record'.

¹⁷YCA, MSs A1-8. See Giles, *The Catalogue*, pp. 11-12.

they were in fact neither copied into the civic records nor followed as a paradigm for later ordinances in the city as a consequence of 'the way in which they were forced on the city by the royal authorities'.¹⁸ The earliest of York's records and its documented laws appear to derive from the necessities of dealing with royal authority in the city, and indeed frequently to be produced within the administration of central government. This evidence would seem to confirm the thesis proposed by Michael Clanchy and discussed in Chapter One, that widespread documentary production in thirteenth-century England was stimulated by increased contact with the records generated by a rapidly expanding royal bureaucracy.¹⁹ The fact that a group of clerks from Yorkshire families seem to have formed an influential group within the royal administration of the fourteenth century provides further evidence that documentary production in central government may have influenced the administration of York in the period before many of its major medieval records were begun.²⁰

Nevertheless, the evidence for other possible models for and influences on the production of York's later civic registers needs to be added into this equation. The Company of the Merchant Adventurers in York held a cartulary, containing details of the property owned by it, together with the names of those admitted to the company in 1422-95, and a set of ordinances which may date from 1495. It has been written in a fifteenth-century hand.²¹ Cartularies held by both St Mary's Abbey and St Leonard's Hospital in York during the Middle Ages, and produced at an earlier period, survive. They bear similarities in both presentation and content with the civic customs of London considered in the previous chapter. Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS 39 was compiled in St Mary's Abbey probably between

¹⁸Michael Prestwich, 'York Civic Ordinances', *Borthwick Papers*, 49 (York: Borthwick Institute of Historical Research, University of York, 1976), p. 6.

¹⁹M. T. Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record: England 1066-1307*, 2nd edn (Oxford and Cambridge, Massachusetts: Blackwell, 1993). See Chapter One, pp. 30-1.

²⁰J. L. Grassi, 'Royal Clerks from the Archdiocese of York in the Fourteenth Century', *Northern History*, 5 (1971), 12-33.

²¹The cartulary is described in *A Guide to the Archives of the Company of Merchant Adventurers of York*, ed. by David M. Smith, Borthwick Texts and Calendars, 16 (York: Borthwick Institute of Historical Research, University of York, 1990), pp. 48-50.

around 1312 and 1326.²² It contains, in addition to various ordinances and statutes relating to the Benedictine order, a description of the foundation of the abbey in 1088, which includes annals of the abbey up until 1267 and a list of abbots; further annals of the abbey from 1258 up until 1326; and lists of monks and priors there at various points in its history. Some of the entries are decorated with drawings of abbots and monks. St Mary's also held two cartularies during the Middle Ages, produced probably after Bodleian, MS 39 was completed. London, British Library, MS Harley 236 is a neatly presented but largely undecorated codex containing charters of liberties granted to the abbey by William II, Henry I, Henry III, and Edward III; copies of documents detailing the properties held by the abbey; and records of legal disputes in which it had been involved over the lands which it possessed.²³ London, British Library, MS Additional 38816 is a more formally presented and decorated manuscript, and includes a section devoted to more impressively copied versions of the charters granted to the abbey.²⁴ A cartulary produced by St Leonard's Hospital, now Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Rawlinson B.455 and London, British Library, MS Cotton Nero D iii, similarly contains a large number of records documenting the properties held by the hospital, which are carefully differentiated with running headings along the tops of the folios, and place-names as sub-headings in the margins; a series of royal and ecclesiastical charters granted to it, with the earliest bearing the name of King Stephen; and a brief history of the hospital, extending back to the year 800 and dated at its conclusion to 1173.²⁵ Both BL, MS Harley 236 (on fol. 1v.) and Bodleian, MS

²²This manuscript register has been partly published as *The Chronicle of St. Mary's Abbey, York, from Bodley MS. 39*, ed. by H. H. E. Craster and M. E. Thornton, Surtees Society, 148 (1933) (Durham: Andrews and Co.; London: Bernard Quaritch, 1934). The dating of the manuscript is discussed on p. x.

²³London, BL, MS Harley 236, fols. 2r.-6v., and fols. 6v.-10v.; fols. 11r.-24r.; and fols. 52v.-54v.

²⁴London, BL, MS 38816, fols. 21r.-28v. Both of these manuscripts contain more than one system of foliation, which are sometimes at variance with one another, suggesting that their constituent sections may have been at different times in separate manuscripts. Their integrity as the manuscripts which they exist as today is thus questionable.

²⁵London, BL, MS Cotton Nero D iii, fols. 1r.-4v. (royal charters beginning with that of King Stephen) and fols. 7r.-32v. (further charters); and fols. 5r.-5v. (the history of the hospital dating back to 800); Oxford, Bodleian, MS Rawlinson B.455, fols. (documents dealing with property owned by the hospital). The

Rawlinson B.455 contain what seem to be fifteenth or sixteenth-century attempts to add tables of contents for the cartulary.

The cartularies and the register containing the chronicle of St Mary's Abbey thus display parallel interests and modes of organisation to those which were commonly seen in the medieval custumals of London, and which we might expect to find in the examination of York's civic registers which will follow. The inclusion of documents which record and thus defend the property and legal status of the institution of the abbey or hospital is clearly a primary function of the cartularies, and correlates with the frequent copying of documents such as records of the judicial eyre, and royal charters, in the London custumals. Alongside documents with a pragmatic purpose, moreover, the compilers of the St Mary's Abbey register book have included lists of members of the community of the abbey, and in particular those holding office within it. Chronicle, and the history of the institution, is again seen to be an important element of both the legal authority and the identity of both St Mary's and St Leonard's. In particular, the apparently early origin and royal associations of the institution seem to be stressed. The charters contained in BL, MS Harley 236, for example, are marked by underlinings and marginal comments emphasising the role of King William Rufus in its foundation: on fol. 7v. the words 'note that William Rufus son of the conqueror founded the abbey with his own hands' appear.²⁶ The principle of using the codex to organise a range of often disparate material, which we also saw exemplified in registers such as *Liber Horn* in Chapter Two is also in evidence here, both in the use of formal headings during the production of the cartularies, and in the later addition of tables of contents. Moreover, as in custumals such as the *Liber Regum* particularly important documents, such as the charters granted to St Mary's Abbey, can be seen to be re-copied into more than one compilation, and distinguished by more formal decoration and presentation.

cartulary refers to itself as a '*Registrum cartarum et munimentorum hospitalis sancti leonardi Ebor*' on fol. 1r. of BL, MS Cotton Nero D iii.

²⁶'*Nota que Willelmus Rufus filius conquestoris propriis manibus fundavit ista abbiam*': BL, MS Harley 236, fol. 7v.

It is impossible to locate precisely a source of influence for the development of York's civic registers: while the enforcement of the legislation, and the dissemination of the records, of central government must surely have motivated the production of records on a local level, and provided formulae and formats for those records, the cartularies which would have been visible within York from the first part of the fourteenth century offer a clearer analogy with the structure and content which we have seen to be typical of the civic registers of London. Moreover, the cartularies of St Mary's Abbey and St Leonard's Hospital in York include mythological and historical writing, like many of the custumals examined in Chapter Two. Both cartularies and custumals also contain often attractively presented copies of legal records such as charters to emphasise the authority of the institution to which they belong. Indeed, it seems likely that these two separate genres were influential not only on the development of the civic register, but on each other. It is clear, however, that although the evidence only survives for the consistent keeping of civic records, and certainly of civic registers, from the later fourteenth century onwards, documentation was being produced and maintained by the city's administration from a much earlier date. This, combined with available documentary exemplars from central government and at a local level from the cartularies and registers of religious bodies within the city, created a fertile environment in the fourteenth century for the further development of York's civic registers and its archive.

The *Freemen's Register*:

The earliest of the surviving civic registers produced by York's administration was York, YCA, MS D1, known as the *Freemen's Register*. Its contents have been catalogued in Appendix One, and include the names of the men and women admitted to the freedom of York from 1271 up until 1671; lists of the names of the city's mayors (from 1272 up until 1516), bailiffs (from 1272 up until 1587), chamberlains (from 1290 up until 1419, bridge-masters (from 1352 up until 1517), common clerks (from 1374 up until 1516) and mayors' servants (from around 1365

up until 1516); records of council meetings in the reigns of Henry VIII and Edward VI; a series of oaths to be taken by various civic officials and by the freemen; and a miscellany of English, French, and Latin material from the medieval period, including a list of church wards, a contract for the construction of the city wall, petitions concerning taxation, and political verse.²⁷ From this diverse collection of material, only the lists of freemen have been published, and have served as the main focus for the expansion of scholarly interest in the manuscript in recent years.²⁸ Only one of these studies, that of Barrie Dobson, has evaluated the imperfect nature of the lists of freemen in the register, and, in the process, taken into consideration the structure of the manuscript itself: as he puts it, he has been attentive to 'the problems of interpretation it poses as well as the statistics which it provides'.²⁹

It is partly because the scholarly literature largely neglects discussion of the composition of the manuscript, and indeed of the wide range of contents which it includes in its current form in addition to the lists of freemen, that it has been selected as the main example with which to examine the medieval production and treatment of the civic register in York. However, it is more importantly the fact that the manuscript is at the same time 'a highly complex and composite work clearly conflated from various earlier texts' that makes it particularly valuable for a study of the civic writing produced by York's administration in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, and how that writing was intended to function.³⁰ Since the manuscript was compiled over a period of at least three centuries, with much of its material deriving from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, it enables us to review how the civic records within it develop over this period, and how the records are treated by

²⁷See Appendix One.

²⁸The lists of freemen are published in Collins, *Register of the Freemen*. The lists have variously been used as a source for evidence on control of admission to the freedom in Muggleston, 'Some Aspects' and Barrie Dobson, 'Admissions to the Freedom of the City of York in the Later Middle Ages', *Economic History Review*, 2nd series, 26:1 (1973), 1-21; of the levels of migration into York in Peter McClure, 'Patterns of Migration in the Late Middle Ages: The Evidence of English Place-Name Surnames', *Economic History Review*, 2nd series, 32:2 (May, 1979), 167-82; the economic fortunes of the city in Bartlett, 'The Expansion and Decline'; and of the constitution of York's freemen body by occupation and gender in P. J. P. Goldberg, *Women, Work, and Life Cycle in a Medieval Economy: Women in York and Yorkshire c.1300-1520* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1992), pp. 49-63.

²⁹Dobson, 'Admissions to the Freedom', p. 2.

³⁰Dobson, 'Admissions to the Freedom', p. 5.

their compilers and users during the various phases of its production. For practical reasons, too, the manuscript yields valuable evidence of its process of compilation: compared to York, YCA, MS A/Y, the parchment folios of which have been attached to modern paper pages, and in which the hand-writing is often faded, MS D1 appears to retain much of its original quire formation, and its hand-writing is consistently legible. The fact that a fairly small number of hands can be identified working on the folios now bound into the *Freemen's Register* also facilitates investigation into the process and timing of its compilation. Finally, the eclecticism of the manuscript's contents includes a range of kinds of writing, some of which provide parallels with the style and content of the civic customs of London discussed in Chapter Two. This enables comparative study of the registers from the two cities to be begun, and the process of defining civic writing to be continued.

By simply viewing the contents of MS D1, we can see that the manuscript obviously did not exist in its current form in the late medieval period which interests us, here. Apart from the fact that some of its contents extend into the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the traces of earlier foliation systems on the manuscript's folios indicate that at least some of the contents of MS D1 were previously part of other collections of documents. The foliation in Roman numerals on fols. 311r.-318 ('lxxix' to 'lxxvij'), and on fol. a344r. ('lxxxj') suggests that these sections were previously part of quite sizeable codices. Quire XLV (fols. 288r.-298v.) and folios added into quire LII (fols. 342 and 343, and the two stubs following them) all have puncture holes visible above the current binding, suggesting that they have previously been bound into volumes elsewhere. We cannot be certain whether these sections of the text were part of MS D1, or bound elsewhere, during the Middle Ages: clearly the volume has not remained a stable, uninterrupted collection.

The disparities and anomalies in the composition of MS D1 allow us to gain some idea of how its contents have been treated over the years. Much of its alteration seems to have taken place during the post-medieval period: closer consideration of the arrangement of the manuscript's quires confirms that the compilers who continued to add to it in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries have

also rearranged its folios over the years to achieve a more desirable order. This is apparent, for example, in quires XXVII-XXIX. Here, folios have been cut from the beginnings and ends of the quires, necessitating the addition of the letters 'a' and 'B' to enable them to be matched together. The confusing final seven quires of the volume, in which the folio-numbers from 344 to 359 are repeated twice and sometimes three times, may also be explicable as a consequence of the insertion of new material into an existing collection.

From fol. a344r., onwards, the material at the back of the compilation is predominantly a mixture of documents dated in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries, with five quires containing the names of entrants to the freedom in the seventeenth century. Two of these seventeenth-century quires are completely self-contained, and if the contents from the medieval period are run together, they occupy fols. a344r.-a348v., and b350r.-b355r., almost a complete sequence of numbers. Of course, the date of foliation for each of these sequences remains uncertain, but the insertion of the latest entries of lists of freemen in the seventeenth century or later might explain this replication of folio-numbers. Like quire XLIX, quire LV, which contains both seventeenth-century lists of freemen, and lists of freemen by patrimony from the fifteenth century, begins with a stub. This has previously been one half of a bifolium, on the other side of which appears fifteenth century material; with it removed, the quire begins with the seventeenth-century lists which occupy most of its pages. Material considered extraneous by the volume's users after the Middle Ages seems to have been removed to cede dominance to newly-entered information. Clearly the clerks who added and referred to these records in the seventeenth century were less concerned with preserving the integrity of the existing, medieval collection of material, than with its current utility.

However, the medieval compilers of these records seem to have been equally willing to alter them according to the perceived present need. In quire XLIX, which deals entirely with material dated between 1334 and 1411, a stub has been left between fols. 317v. and 318r., on which writing is still visible in regular lines,

very similar to the type of entries used to record the names of the bridgemasters beginning on fol. 318r. At the beginning of the quire is another stub, cut too close to the text to show any evidence of writing. On the other half of this bifolium, fol. 321, are found the names of the chamberlains elected from the eighteenth year of the reign of Edward I to the ninth year of the reign of Edward III. Other than the bridgemasters, the chamberlains are the only civic officials in this volume whose records are not taken back to the first year of the reign of Edward I, and it seems reasonable to suggest that earlier entries listing the men filling this office may have appeared on the missing folio. Instead, it has been removed and the quire begins with the entries from the Great Rolls which dominate it. This begins with the new first folio of the quire, fol. 311, which has been inserted as a single sheet, and which appears to start mid-entry, suggesting that it has been removed from another quire of material from the Great Rolls. Quire XLIX thus presents a slightly less fragmentary collection of contents than it would have done had it begun with a folio listing the names of chamberlains, although after the transcribed contents of the Great Rolls it still includes the names of bridgemasters from the thirty-first year of the reign of Edward III to the twelfth year of the reign of Henry IV, and the names of chamberlains mentioned above.

Of course we cannot be absolutely certain that this conversion was carried out at around the same time as any of this material was inscribed, or even during the medieval period. However, another instance of stubs which have clearly previously borne information being removed to achieve greater consistency in the volume can be dated with more certainty to the fifteenth century - on the two stubs between fols. 298v. and 299r., at the end of quire XLV, traces of writing set out in the style of the formulaic entries used to record the appointment of chamberlains and bridgemasters are still visible. The list of sheriffs' names which carries on across these folios is unbroken from the second to the third years of the reign of Edward IV, so has probably been added after the intervening leaves have been cut out. Of course, in both of these instances the folios may have been removed because they had become damaged (especially in the case of the stub which would

have formed the covering folio at the front of Quire XLIX) rather than as part of a larger scheme to renovate the civic records either to achieve a greater consistency or to deal with the exigencies of contemporary record-keeping. However, it seems that the compilers and users of York's civic records throughout its history have shown little compunction in converting them according to the current need. This readiness to recycle civic collections contrasts with the apparent respect shown to the integrity of most of the manuscripts of the customals of London discussed in Chapter Two, at least during the medieval period: of those collections, only the *Liber Regum* became fragmented during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.³¹

It would seem, then, that MS D1 has undergone repeated addition and reorganisation throughout its history, and that while we can with certainty state that it was not as it is now in the medieval period, we cannot be sure exactly what it was like, and which of its current contents were collected together at various times. In publishing only its lists of freemen Francis Collins was in many ways simply following in a long tradition of altering the face of the manuscript in response to the interests of his time. However, it is possible to reconstruct to some degree what the format of the manuscript, or at least some of its contents, might have been. In fact, it is the post-medieval additions to MS D1, which consist almost entirely of sixteenth and seventeenth-century continuations of the lists of officials and freemen, which are among the most disorganised and confused sections of the codex. By contrast, the wide range of entries which can be dated to the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries seem to reveal a more careful process of record writing and development in the late medieval period. By re-examining these sections of the manuscript which derive from the Middle Ages, we can make some observations regarding the function of some of these records, and the development of record-keeping in York in general in this period, and attempt to establish more precisely the date at which these various sections were produced.

Barrie Dobson has stated that 'with the probable exception of those for Edward I's reign [...], the surviving freemen's entry lists show every

³¹See Chapter Two, p. 89.

palaeographical indication of having been written in a contemporary or near-contemporary hand.³² The same hands can be identified working on the lists of mayors, freemen, bailiffs, chamberlains, and bridgemasters during similar periods of years, and the lists of mayors, bailiffs, and freemen all begin with a substantial section copied in the same hand, probably at the same time.³³ This suggests that these three sets of names were probably begun to be compiled simultaneously, allowing these sections of the manuscript, at least, to be dated together. It is clear that, although the lists of freemen and most of the lists of the civic officials begin nominally in the first year of the reign of Edward I these sections of MS D1 derive from later than 1272. In the list of mayors on fols. 4r.-27r., for example, in instances when the same mayor ruled for several years, the entries for these years have been run together: this is the case with the entry recording the six successive mayoralities of Nicholas le Flemyng on fol. 4v., 'in the fourth fifth sixth seventh eighth ninth year of the reign of the same king Edward (II)'.³⁴ The scribe has not attempted to create the illusion of annual, and contemporaneous recording of names, and the fact that the first years of the lists of freemen, mayors, and bailiffs are obviously copied up in the same hand, probably all at the same time corroborates the idea that these first entries in these lists were copied as part of a single programme of writing. However, these lists appear to have been copied up by the same hand right up until around the middle of the reign of Edward III, rather than the beginning of the reign of Edward II, as Dobson's dating of the lists of freemen in MS D1 would suggest.³⁵ Moreover, the first instance of a mayor's

³²Dobson, 'Admissions to the Freedom', p. 6. However, subsequently Dobson states that 'a study of the hands and, more especially, the inks at work in the original manuscript from the mid-fourteenth century onwards makes it reasonably clear that the names of the freemen were normally copied up at the end of the each mayoral year', implying that before this time this may not have been the case (p. 7).

³³See, for example, the hand which inscribes the entries in the list of mayors from the first year of the reign of Edward I until around the twenty-second year of the reign of Edward III, on fols. 4r.-5v., in the list of bailiffs from the entry for the first year of the reign of Edward I up until around the entry for the twenty-eighth year of the reign of Edward III, on fols. 288v.-291v., and in the list of freemen from the entry for the first year of the reign of Edward I up until around the entry for the twenty-fifth year of the reign of Edward III, on fols. 32r.-57v.

³⁴*anno regni eiusdem regis Edwardi (II) quarto quinto sexto septimo octavo nono*: YCA, MS D1, fol. 4v.

³⁵See the list of mayors on fols. 4r.-5v.; the list of freemen on fols. 32r.-52r.; and

sequential years of office being recorded in separate formulae occurs with John de Langton in 1352.³⁶ Taken as a whole, this evidence suggests that the lists of mayors, bailiffs, and freemen may well not have been begun until the 1340s or 1350s.

Indeed, the recurrence of distinctive handwriting in MS D1 suggests that many of its medieval contents were compiled by the same scribes in around the same period. This enables us to place the production of those documents dated earliest in this period in later years. The lists of chamberlains and bridgemasters are begun by a hand which appears in the list of freemen and bailiffs copying up entries in the reigns of Richard II and Henry IV (fols. 85v.-99v., and fols. 249v.-295r., respectively). The list of church-wards on fols. b353r.-b353v., for example, dated in the ninth year of the reign of Edward II, has been written by a scribe whose hand appears in the lists of mayors and of freemen copying details from the reigns of Richard II and Henry IV. The same hand is responsible for entry 25, the records concerning the searchers of the city, and 33, the Latin verses, both of which are undated. Entry 14, the excerpts from the Great Rolls, would probably have been copied up after their recorded dates of entry in the Rolls, anyway, and have been written in a hand which records the names of city bailiffs up to the second year of the reign of Richard II (1379), and the names of the mayors of York between roughly the forty-first and the forty-third years of the reign of Edward III (1367-1369). The same hand worked on entries 30 and 31. This places the bulk of the dateable medieval entries in the reigns of Henry IV, Henry V, and the early years of the reign of Henry VI. If we look again at the miscellany of medieval documents present in the volume which are dated, the earliest refer to the first years of the reign

the list of bailiffs on fols. 288v.-291r.

³⁶The first twelve quires of the lists of freemen, quires VI to XVII, are marked on the first six folios of each quire with the letters 'aj-avj' through to 'mj-mvj', and quires VI to XVI also bear catchwords on their final verso folio. The lettering and catchwords have probably been employed to ensure that the collected quires do not become mixed up. The lists of freemen on these folios extend up to the reign of Mary, however, so that these additions cannot have been intended, as they are in other examples of their use in manuscripts, to enable the contents of the folios to have been copied up at once from earlier exemplars. Rather it seems likely that these quires were detached from a bound codex in the 1550s, and the catchwords and numberings were added to allow them to be kept in order.

of Edward III, and virtually all (12; 14; 24; 28; 29; 30; 31; 32; 33; 34; and 37) are connected with the period between roughly 1330 and 1441. This indicates a period of productivity in the compilation of civic record writing beginning in around 1330, rather than the beginning of the reign of Edward II in 1307, and continuing into the first half of the fifteenth century.

Of course, we have already seen that it cannot be argued that these texts were all bound together in the period between 1330 and 1441 in which we have identified that they were largely written. The evidence that some contents may have previously been part of other compilations, discussed above, reinforces this possibility. The dates of writing for these documents, then, are not necessarily the dates during which the manuscript register MS D1, in whatever format it existed in the late Middle Ages, was produced. Nevertheless, this is important evidence for the dating of the contents of MS D1, and of the more widespread production of civic records in York. From at least middle of the fourteenth century, the contents of MS D1 suggest that the production and keeping of records by York's administration had intensified. Indeed, the strong suggestion that the first sections of the lists of mayors, freemen, bailiffs, chamberlains, and bridgemasters were copied up from previously existing collections of names implies that this kind of civic writing was being undertaken at an earlier date. Records such as item 35 in Appendix One (dated in 1316) have clearly been copied from even earlier civic memoranda which no longer survive. The paucity of surviving records in York's archive from before the final quarter of the fourteenth century fails to represent this apparent increase in record production in the first half of the century. In addition, the recurrence of handwriting throughout the different types of records in MS D1 implies that a fairly limited number of scribes was responsible for this proliferation of civic writing.

In fact, the date of production of some of the entries in MS D1 can be more precisely isolated by means of the signature of York's common clerk between 1415 and 1435, Roger Burton. Alone among the scribes who were responsible for writing or copying out different groups of documents in the volume, Roger Burton

subscribed each of the entries which he made with his signature or a distinctive symbol. While previous entries in the lists of mayors have been written by at least five different hands which do not necessarily match up with the election of a new common clerk in these formulae, Roger Burton's signature confirms that it is his own hand which provides the records for the years of his office from the second year of the reign of Henry V to the thirteenth year of the reign of Henry VI (1415 up until 1435). As a result, we can with some certainty place other entries in the volume which bear his name, or his symbol, or which are written in his hand, within this period. Burton's hand is perhaps not as ubiquitous here as it is in YCA, MSs A/Y and B/Y, the *Memorandum Books*, but it does appear in some of the lists of civic officials, and on fols. a344r.-a346v., the first of the lists of entrants to the freedom by patrimony added separately to the lists of freemen by other means. On these pages, the freemen are said to have been admitted in the the second to the ninth years of the reign of Henry V, and in the first to the ninth years of the reign of Henry VI. Subsequent independent entries of freemen by patrimony all precede this terminal date, and Burton's signature on these pages would suggest that these lists were probably begun in or around the ninth year of the reign of Henry VI (1431).

This is important evidence in several respects. First, Burton's work here and in the mayor's lists seems to have been done roughly contemporaneously, implying that at this stage, the civic lists were established enough to be maintained as current, ongoing records, and not simply roll-calls of past officials copied up in chunks. Certainly this seems to have been the case by the time that the entry in the mayors' list for 1471, during Henry VI's recovery of his kingship, was written. The regnal year has been given as '*henrici sexti xlix*', then underlined by a later hand which has added interlineally '*Ed: iij.10*'. Clearly, then, this entry was made promptly, some time between the election of the mayor on the 3rd of February, and the restoration of Edward IV, on 11th April 1471. Secondly, the addition of the names of those becoming freemen by patrimony appears to be an attempt to improve and correct existing records to make them more accurate. Burton's work on the

mayor's lists displays similar motivation. From the time when his hand appears, each entry has the calendar year integrated into its formula; in all the preceding entries, Burton's hand is recognisable adding the calendar year interlineally. Clearly he was something of a perfectionist. More importantly, the years of his office mark a period of perfecting of the civic records of MS D1. By this stage of its production, it was deemed important that the civic writing in MS D1 should be accurate and complete. The apparently casual treatment of civic records which was suggested by the evidence that they were being recycled according to present need has been ceded by a real solicitude for their integrity.

Admittedly, the evidence of the medieval material in the manuscript as a whole suggests that the effort to correct and update its information was general, and not just confined to Roger Burton. This is especially true of the lists of freemen, in which numerous notes have been added next to the names of individual freemen, recording that they have been deprived of their freedom, or reconciled with the city council. A particularly dramatic updating of information occurs on fol. 133r., next to the name of John Burton, the mayor's sword-bearer, in the lists of freemen admitted in the thirty-sixth year of the reign of Henry VI, where a note has been added '*postea decapitatus fuit super pavementum pro diversis predicionibus*'. Names have also been erased, for example on fol. 113v., and there is much evidence of erasure and correction throughout the volume. It seems that the late medieval period from which many of these documents date was active both in its production, and in its attempted perfection of records.

This evidence of revision, however, provides clues to what the structure of part of the current D1 may have been during the period of Roger Burton's common clerkship. The particular corrective attention of Roger Burton and of others to the lists of civic officials and of freemen in MS D1 emphasises that these contents by their essentially non-statutory and non-narrative nature stand apart from the remainder of the volume. At the same time, there are many binding principles between them. These entries are similar in their style and presentation, and presumably in their purpose, and, as we have seen, for the most part in their chosen

date of commencement. The same hands can be seen to be working on different lists between similar periods of regnal years. We can deduce that they have been copied up from other records, and that efforts have been made subsequent to their beginning to make them more complete. While decoration of the text is extremely limited, the examples of correction indicate that these records were intended to be clear and attractive to the eye, although this intention has faltered somewhat with the often cramped and scribbled additions of the names of freemen by patrimony. It seems likely that the lists of civic officials bound in MS D1 were the result of an effort, in the final years of the fourteenth century and the first half of the fifteenth century, to provide a coherent record of names which at the very least would have been accurate, and would have constituted a good, formal copy.³⁷

There is no firm evidence that these lists were intended to be bound together, but their production in a similar period would seem to make this a strong possibility.³⁸ We can see what might be a unifying identity for a medieval civic book, derived from the current MS D1. It could provide a literary space devoted to the recording of the names and status of the civic officials and citizens in their formal relationship with the city. The distinct difference of these lists of civic names makes their isolation from the miscellany of other documents in the volume more likely. The oaths of the civic officials found on fols. 1r.-3v., and on fols. 352r. and b354v. could be argued to provide a natural accompaniment to the names of those who filled these roles, although they appear to be much rougher copies than most of the civic lists and seem to have been inserted into the register.³⁹

The structure of the manuscript also suggests that these lists were predominantly produced as separate sections up until the end of the fifteenth century. The collection of oaths bound into the front of MS D1 is a self-contained quire, and quires II-IV, containing the names of York's mayors up until the

³⁷The presentation of the civic registers of London and York will be discussed further in Chapter Four.

³⁸Indeed, Barrie Dobson has argued that 'it is clear that the lists of the city's freemen and of its officials were originally preserved in two separate and distinct volumes.' Dobson, 'Admissions to the Freedom', p. 5.

³⁹See Dobson, 'Admissions to the Freedom', p. 5, on the possibility that the oaths, or a version of them, were bound into a codex with the lists of civic officials.

beginning of Henry VIII's reign, are equally independent. The blank folios remaining in quire V have been filled with ordinances from the sixteenth century after the list of mayors ceased in 1516. The lists of freemen remain uninterrupted in distinct quires up until the entry for 1537, when they begin to be a little more disorganised. Quire XLV begins with an odd list of various civic officials from the reign of Edward III, which seems to have been added to the names of the city's bailiffs from 1272 that occupies the rest of this, and all of the following three quires. The lists of bridgemasters and of chamberlains are admittedly more disorganised. The names of York's bridgemasters appear in the second half of folio XLIX, which begins with the material copied from the Great Rolls, followed by the first of the names of chamberlains on its final folio. The names of bridgemasters begin later than most of the lists of officials, in 1357; as we have already discussed, however, the arrangement of this quire suggests that a folio containing earlier names may have been removed. The remainder of the names of the fourteenth and fifteenth century bridgemasters and chamberlains are contained in the following two quires, with both lists spread across the two quires and each interrupting the other. Quire LI ends with an indenture from 1514. The lists of freemen admitted by patrimony, added by Roger Burton, similarly appear in a disordered form, on odd single sheets on fols. a333 and b350, and mixed with either other medieval (in quires LVI and LIX) or seventeenth-century (in quire LV) material. The bulk of this material, lies, however, in fairly ordered, and self-contained sections. By contrast, many of the other medieval contents are written on parchment which may have been inserted, and often on single folios - of the seven folios in quire LVIX, as an extreme example, five are attached to the central bifolium as individual sheets.⁴⁰

The isolation of the lists of officials and freemen, and possibly the collection of civic oaths, as a distinct kind of record in MS D1, which would be likely to form a separate volume, has an additional advantage of allowing us to isolate the date when its production was likely to have been begun more precisely. The hand

⁴⁰See the description of the collation of the manuscript in Appendix One.

which begins the list of mayors, and other of the lists of names in MS D1 can be seen to be working up until the entries for the mid-1350s, and to be copying up the majority of these entries, possibly all of them, at once. Of course, this is no guarantee that this scribe was not working later in the period, and simply copying up a section of earlier entries, especially as subsequent scribes also seem to be copying several entries at once. However, we know that these lists were unlikely to have been begun before the 1340s, although their sources obviously were, and we have the evidence of the correction exercise of these lists, in particular those undertaken by Roger Burton between 1415 and 1435.

MS D1 thus provides us with important evidence concerning the development of civic writing, and the civic register during the fourteenth century in York. It suggests that a greater amount of civic record writing and keeping was being undertaken at the start of the fourteenth century than is indicated by the current contents of the city's archive. But the likely dating of the production of the contents of MS D1 also points towards particular phases of intensification in this record writing. We can see that in the first half of the fourteenth century a wide range of civic records inscribing memoranda of the business of government were being produced. Moreover, by the time that the records of civic officials and of freemen in MS D1 were begun, probably in the 1340s, we can see that the pages of York's civic volumes were being seen as a space not simply for documenting urban business, but also for recording the names of those involved in its government as officials or citizens.

These sections of MS D1 also represented an attempt to produce and maintain a good, attractive copy of lists of names of civic officials, reinforced by a process of correction and supplementation in the early fifteenth century. While the study of the civic customals in medieval London in Chapter Two began with earlier manuscripts - the *Liber de Antiquis Legibus*, for example, was probably completed in 1274, very close to the date of inception which the 'civic lists' of MS D1 claim for themselves - these periods of productivity and attentiveness to the integrity of civic records correlate roughly with the dates attributed to the customals. In

London, the *Liber Horn*, the *Liber Regum*, the *Liber Custumarum*, the *Liber Memorandum*, and the *Liber Ordinationum* all derive from the first half of the fourteenth century, and it is in fact during these fifty years that the first customals produced and held by the civic authorities, rather than within the families of citizens, appear. Moreover, the *Liber Albus*, compiled in London in 1419, represents a self-declared effort to organise the city's confused records through their formal inscription into a register distinguished by sometimes impressive decoration, and neat and ordered presentation. Roger Burton's contributions to the records in MS D1, and in particular the lists of freemen and civic officials, cannot be described as an attempt to reorganise the civic archive of York in this way, but his punctilious correction of and addition to incomplete records during his common clerkship between 1415 and 1435 are clearly part of a wider programme of improving the city's registers and documents in terms of presentation and their accuracy.⁴¹

Perhaps most importantly in the context of this discussion, with the copying up of formal versions of the lists of freemen and civic officials from around the 1340s comes the evidence for the production of a register book, or at the very least a collection of records of similar function, within York's administration. In addition, this putative medieval formulation of MS D1 would have been devoted partly to the lists of civic officials which we have seen to be a frequent feature of the customals of London.⁴² As such, its concentration on those distinguished by civic office, or membership of the franchise, makes it honorific as well as documentary

⁴¹Norwich's *Liber Consuetudinum* dates from around 1308, and its *Old Free Book* was begun in 1344, suggesting that the first half of the fourteenth century was a period when the administrations of other English cities were also concerned to collect together copies of their legislation in the form of registers. Similarly, Norwich's *Liber Albus* was begun in 1426, and Coventry's *Mayor's Register* dates from 1421, another period when registers were produced in York and London. See *The Coventry Leet Book: or Mayor's Register, Containing the Records of the City Court Leet or View of Frankpledge, A.D. 1420-1555*, ed. by Mary Dormer Harris, Early English Text Society, original series, 134, 135, 138, 146 (1907-1913), I-II, 134-5 (1907-8) (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner: 1907-8), and *The Records of the City of Norwich*, ed. by William Hudson and John Cottingham Tingey, 2 vols (Norwich and London: Jarrold, 1906 and 1910), I, p. xxxix., pp. cxix.-cxxi., pp. xlii.-xliv., p. cvi., and p. 122, and p. 254.

⁴²Only very limited records of those admitted to the franchise in London survive, in *LBD*, pp. 317-18.

in function. Inclusion in its records would presumably carry the same cachet as election to one of the civic offices, with the additional prestige of being documented for perpetuity in this written roll of honour. These sections of MS D1 are undecorated, but as with the sometimes illuminated and illustrated folios of many of the London customals, they represent an attempt to distinguish with formal presentation records which seem to be particularly highly valued.

With the 'civic lists' of MS D1, then, we find evidence that civic writing was by the 1340s considered to serve a celebratory and honorific function, as well as simply providing a record for practical reference. Interestingly, then, it is in the lists of officials and freemen that further adaptations of civic record writing, again highly reminiscent of some of the contents of the London customals, appear. We will complete our discussion of MS D1 by considering these adaptations, which can be roughly characterised as chronicle, legal record, and ceremonial description which promotes the city. This will help to characterise this possible formulation of the codex. It will also allow further connections with the civic registers of London to be illuminated.

Basic notation of events occurs in the early entries in the lists of freemen, bailiffs, and mayors. The lists of bailiffs on fols. 288v.-296r. mark the years in which one king has died and another acceded, up to the advent of Henry IV, with a formulaic note of this event. They also regularly note the years when the city was 'in the hand of the king our lord' (*in manu domini Regis*), and when a sheriff has died in office and had to be replaced. The list of freemen only strays briefly into chronicle-form. On fol. 41v., 'the battle of Miton here' has been added next to the introduction to the entry for the ninth year of the reign of Edward II, and 'and the said Nicholas (Nicholas le Flemyng, elected mayor that year) was also killed at Miton on the thirteenth day of September in the year of our Lord 1319' has been inserted interlineally.⁴³ On fol. 72v., the introduction to the entry for the fifty-first year of the reign of Edward III also records the death of Edward III and the succession of Richard II.

⁴³*hic bellum de Miton*'; *'et isto N occisus erat apud Miton xiiij^o die Septembris domini millesimo ccc xix^{mo}*'; YCA, MS D1, fol. 41v.

However, it is the list of mayors which provides the arena for most of the elaboration of records in MS D1. Like the lists of bailiffs and of freemen, its historiographical elements arise mainly in the earlier entries. On fol. 4v., under the entry for the eleventh year of the reign of Edward II, a violent confrontation between the men of London and of York is briefly mentioned. Following on from the next entry, for the twelfth year of the reign of Edward II, the deaths of the mayor Nicholas le Flemyng and a number of York citizens at Miton, are again recorded, together with a legal dispute between the city and the Dean and Chapter of St. Peter's, the brothers of St Leonard's, and the Abbot of St Mary's Abbey, concerning privileges they claimed to have over men of the city. On fol. 5r., under the entry for the first to the seventh years of the reign of Edward III, a whole range of local and national events are recorded. A further dispute between the mayor and city and the abbot of St Mary's concerning jurisdiction over the suburb of Bootham, the coronation of Edward III in London, and his marriage to Philippa of Hainault in York, and the legal establishment of the water of the Ouse and the Foss as 'free' are all mentioned. Then, written over a space which has been erased, is a note that the steward of the king's marshal should no longer intervene in the legal affairs of the city and its suburbs. Finally, there is a note of the city's petition in the presence of the king to hold a market, dated to the mayoralty of Nicholas le Flemyng, in the tenth year of the reign of Edward II. Hereafter, only two entries of a historiographical nature occur, on fol. 6v., following on after the entry for the forty-first year of the reign of Edward III, when the construction of seven shops in the buttresses of Ouse Bridge, and a new latrine, are noted, and on fol. 10r., under the entry for the second year of the reign of Henry IV, when the scribe records the repayment by the city of a loan owed by the king.

All these adaptations to the civic lists chronicling the history of the city appear in the earlier entries, ceasing with the note of the city's repayment of the king's loan under the entry in the mayors' list for the second year of the reign of Henry IV, and really flourishing under the entries for the twelfth year of the reign of Edward II and the first to the seventh years of the reign of Edward III. These latter entries were

written by the first hand which compiled the mayors' list, copying a whole chunk of entries at a time, and, as such, the chronicle entries may simply have been copied up from their original. The mayors' list then shows a distinct chronological development into inclusion of formal legal record dealing with the election and the powers of the mayor. (The entry for the second year of the reign of Henry IV appears between these later entries, but in fact could equally be considered a financial or legal memorandum). On fol. 9v., following on after the entry for the sixteenth year of the reign of Richard II, a statute appears, limiting the number of times which a mayor may serve, and the sum of money which he might receive while in office. The final part of this entry records the revocation of this statute in the twentieth year of the reign of Richard II. On fols. 11r.-11v., under the entry for the eleventh year of the reign of Henry IV, the scribe switches suddenly from Latin to Anglo-Norman, to record the confirmation of this previous statute, in this year, and to reiterate it in Anglo-Norman, adding ordinances on the manner of electing the mayor.

Once again, these entries are locked in the world-view and business of men of the civic council, and cohere perfectly in content, if not in style, with the list of civic officials in which they appear. This is indicative of the fluid nature of the written record in this York register at this period, and of the confidence of the composers of these entries in the capacity of the civic record, in this case a list of civic officials, to include and express a range of types of writing. It seems that having isolated sections of MS D1 which would constitute a consistent volume, closer examination of these sections demonstrates again the essentially eclectic nature of civic writing. Moreover, the concurrence of the historiographical and legalistic entries in the mayors' list shows that the latter was not simply developing from, and consequently subsuming the former. As the composers of this register experimented with the potential for different types of writing in it, the content of both chronicle and legal record was simultaneously developed.

In fact the basic formula recording the election of the mayor becomes increasingly less basic and more verbose and complex alongside the development of

these historiographical and legalistic insertions. The list begins on fol. 4r., with quite bare notes of the names of each mayor by the regnal year, but by the entry for the seventeenth year of the reign of Edward III (on fol. 5r.) the date of the election has been added, and in the entry for the twenty-sixth year of the reign of Edward III (on fol. 5v.), the date of his swearing-in is also recorded for the first time. In the thirty-eighth year of the reign of Edward II (on fol. 6r.), the mayor's fee is given for the first time, and in the following year (on fol. 6v.) the mayor's servant makes his first appearance. In the entry under the forty-second year of the reign of Edward III (on fol. 7r.), the ceremonial detail is further intensified with the election of a new mayor mid-term, following the death of his predecessor - Roger de Selby is now 'elected to the mayoralty and sworn in the Guildhall with the assent of the whole commonalty and received the customary fee'.⁴⁴ Shortly afterwards, the mayor is formally called '*maior Ebor*' for the first time, and the second mayor's servant and the common clerk also begin to be listed.⁴⁵ This increased detail may partly be a consequence of contemporaneous writing, rather than copying unfamiliar names from the past, or equally of the gradual intensification of ceremony surrounding the mayor.

It also emphasises the attention to civic officialdom and its promotion with which the list as a whole, including its historiographical and legalistic contents, have been so concerned. The elaboration of the formula in the list of mayors intensifies and perpetuates the prestige of the civic officials it describes. The special significance of such written dignification becomes most evident when it is focused on those who are producing the writing, the clerks, by themselves. Perhaps not surprisingly, Roger Burton once more appears to be the scribal pioneer in this development. By the time he appears as common clerk in the second year of the reign of Henry V (on fol. 12r.), the common clerk is among three civic officials

⁴⁴*'electus in maiorem et iuratus in Gilda Aula per assensum totius Communitatis et capiet foedum consuetum':* YCA, MS D1, fol. 7r.

⁴⁵The title '*maior Ebor*' appears for the first time in the entry for the second year of the reign of Richard II, on fol. 8r.; the name of the common clerk is listed from the entry for the forty-eighth year of the reign of Edward III, on fol. 7r., and the name of the second mayor's servant is noted from the entry for the seventh year of the reign of Henry IV, on fol. 10v.

being named alongside the mayor each year, along with the mayor's sword-carrier and his mace-bearer. Burton hierarchises his importance amongst these civic figures in three main ways. First, he no longer refers to the trade of the mayor, as previous scribes have done, but instead in almost all his entries emphasises his own professionalism. At the very least he usually describes himself as '*clericus*', and in other entries he refers to himself as '*notarius publicus*', '*auctoritatibus apostolica et imperiali Notarius*' and '*Secretarius*'.⁴⁶ Secondly, he places the section of each entry which describes his own election immediately after that of the mayor's, and before that of the mayor's servants, although originally it appeared last; later entries during his common clerkship, however, combine the appointment of the common clerk, and the mayor's servants within a single entry.⁴⁷

Thirdly, he increases the general amount of information which he gives about himself. Burton is helpfully effusive in his self-reference, and in the entries for the seventh to the eleventh years of the reign of Henry VI almost dramatises the process of his election. In the seventh year of the reign of Henry VI (on fol. 14r.), he was elected 'despite resistance' 'for as long as it pleased him to occupy' the office; in the following year and in the tenth year of the reign of Henry VI (on fol. 14r.), 'at the request of the mayor and good men and of the community he took upon himself the whole burden of the office of common clerk'; and in the eleventh year of the reign of Henry VI (on fol. 14v.), although he resigned the office, Burton 'occupied that office afterwards but did this of his own will at his pleasure', and he notes here, as he does in an addition to his entry in the lists of freemen, that he 'held that office for twenty-one years completely'.⁴⁸

⁴⁶See, for example, the entries for the third and the ninth years of the reign of Henry V, on fol. 12r. and on fol. 13r., and for the first year of the reign of Henry VI on fol. 13r. See also the discussion of common clerks and their self-presentation in Chapter Five.

⁴⁷Burton combines the elections of the common clerk and the mayor's two servants in the entry for the fifth year of the reign of Henry VI on fol. 13v., having previously re-ordered these entries so that the election of the common clerk appeared immediately after that of the mayor. In the entry for the following year he returns again to the previous form of entry, giving priority to the election of the common clerk.

⁴⁸'*licet resistencia*'; '*quamdiu sibi occupare placuerit*'; '*ad instancia maioris et proborum hominum at communitatis assumpsit super se onus omne officii clericatus communis*'; '*illud officium postea occupaverit hoc tamen fecit ex voluntate propria sua ad libitum*'; '*occupavit illud officium per xxj annos complete*'.

Roger Burton's entries in the mayors' list are especially interesting because they illustrate the particular exploitation of writing for self-promotion by an individual trained in that skill. Later common clerks were not slow to imitate his self-presentation. In the entry for the fourteenth year of the reign of Henry VI, for example, Thomas Uldale is described as being elected 'publicly by the common voice of all with no-one objecting', another of Burton's phrases.⁴⁹ In the year 1477, Nicholas Lancaster is referred to as 'bachelor of both kinds of law', and the same designation is used of John Haryngton in the year 1484, when he 'was elected having been nominated and appointed by royal authority'.⁵⁰ When John Haryngton resigns as common clerk in the year 1490, the same phrase is used as in Roger Burton's resignation entry to describe the event.⁵¹ Roger Burton's entries here, then, are extremely influential on the mayors' list in their effect on the use made by later individuals of this particular written record, and in that they make particularly explicit the function of such civic writing for self, and civic, dignification. By this stage, the volume is far more than a static record which offers prestige by inclusion in its lists. Its writing has become actively honorific, and promotional.

The final addition to the mayors' list in the year 1491 confirms this tendency. After relating the details of the mayor's election, in this case mid-term as a replacement for a mayor who has died in office, this addition describes for the first time the ceremony occurring after the election. A 'wooden staff with silver and golden tips' is borne before the mayor by one of the sheriffs, as he returns to his mansion, followed by the aldermen and others from the common council.⁵² The following Wednesday, he returns to the Guildhall to swear his oath, and then again progresses to his home, preceded by the sword and mace of the mayor, and 'the

YCA, MS D1, fol. 14r.

⁴⁹*publica eo communi voce omne nemine reclamante*: YCA, MS D1, fol. 14v.

⁵⁰*in utroque iure bachalarius*; *per regia maiestatem nominatus et deputatus electus fuit*: YCA, MS D1, fol. 20r., and fol. 21r.

⁵¹*et sursum reddidit officium communis clerici predictum*: YCA, MS D1, fol. 22r. The self-presentation of the common clerks will be discussed in closer detail in Chapter Five.

⁵²*virga lignea cum finibus argenti et de auratis*: YCA, MS D1, fol. 22v.

other key or symbol of office' (*cetere clave*).⁵³ Here, more explicitly than in the elaboration of the formulae noting the election of the mayor and the common clerk, the civic register which these parts of the modern version of MS D1 may have constituted is clearly being used as a means of perpetuating the effects of civic ceremonial - and its capacity to honour and promote the leader of urban government, although presumably with a quite different kind of audience being appealed to.⁵⁴

The register MS D1 thus provides us with important evidence concerning York's civic writing in several respects. It confirms that a range of urban documentation was being inscribed in the city at the latest by the 1330s, when the earliest of the volume's contents were probably begun, despite the fact that the surviving individual records in York's modern archive suggest much more limited record production by the city's administration up to the last thirty years of the fourteenth century. Moreover, by the 1340s, when the lists of civic officials were almost certainly begun, civic writing was perceived not simply as a location for copying important governmental records, but also for listing, and thus further dignifying, those honoured with civic office or citizenship. It could also provide a place for exploring new ways of writing about the city other than basic documentary record: chronicle and ceremonial statute and description assume a natural place in the writing held by the city council.

Writing which promoted and emphasised the official dignity of the council and its officials in particular can be seen to flourish, and in MS D1 this impulse to celebrate the civic world of the city in writing is evidenced in a programme to produce and correct a good, accurate copy of lists of officials and freemen. This reaches its peak with Roger Burton's intervention in the volume during his common-clerkship in 1415-1435. This is despite the fact that at other times during and after the medieval period York's clerks display little hesitation in removing or altering the structure and content of existing civic records to serve the needs of their

⁵³YCA, MS D1, fol. 22v.

⁵⁴The possible relationship between the civic register and civic ceremonial, and the issue of the registers' intended audience, will be discussed further in Chapter Four.

current documentary activity. The contents of the current formulation of MS D1, including the putative civic register containing the 'civic lists', indicate that the civic record, and the civic register, in York in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries was seen as fluid, and changeable, and available to be developed according to present priorities and interests. By contrast, the readers and users of London's civic customals seem for the most part to have respected their integrity as manuscript collections: their compilations are apparently more likely to be copied repeatedly rather than fragmented.

However, MS D1 also displays several common features with the customals of London examined in Chapter Two, in particular in the collections of 'civic lists' which may well have formed an exclusive compilation. These are, unlike many of the London customals, ongoing compilations, but at their inception and in their later phases of improvement they are the result of an impulse to provide a fine, attractive, and correct copy of the lists of officials which appeared to be so frequently desired to represent an aspect of the civic administration in London. Given that in London and York it is such men who would have been most likely to have read and consulted civic registers it is hardly surprising that in both cities compilations held by these administrations should attempt to dignify them within a perpetual written record.⁵⁵ Moreover, while in the London customals the lists of civic officials appear inscribed alongside texts which celebrate the city and its government in other ways, in MS D1 these kinds of texts feature as developments among the lists themselves. In MS D1, not only chronicle, but also description of civic ceremonies surrounding the mayor, and statutes concerning mayoral election are included alongside the lists of mayors of the city.

In fact, it seems that it is the adaptations into chronicle in the mayors' lists in MS D1 which may have made the most important long-term contribution to the wider citizen body of York. The list of mayors seems to have functioned as the

⁵⁵Even if the extreme view is taken that only the clerks employed by the civic council actually read the records, their loyalty would presumably still lie with the administration which employed them, and the men whom they were required to assist. On the role of the common clerk and their relationship with the temporary, elected members of the civic councils of York and London, see Chapter Five.

main source for the seventeenth-century antiquarian Christopher Hildyard in his *List, or Catalogue of all the Mayors, and Bayliffs, Lord Mayors, and Sheriffs, of the most Ancient, Honourable, Noble, and Loyall City of Yorke*, published in 1664. Hildyard structures his work similarly to the mayors' list in MS D1, enumerating in chronological order the mayor and bailiffs of the city from 1273 onwards, and including within some entries any relevant historical information. Some of this is in substance the same as the early chronicle-type entries to the mayors' list in MS D1, including the confrontation of the Londoners with the citizens of York in 1318, the question of the liberties of St Mary's Abbey in 1334, and the ordinance preventing mayors serving for more than one year at a time from 1394.⁵⁶ Hildyard's dating of these events is often slightly different to that which we calculate from the regnal years given in the list in MS D1, and indeed most of its historical references have been gleaned from elsewhere, so that MS D1 was clearly not the only source. However, Hildyard's adoption of its presentation style, and his use of many of its references, especially the statute concerning mayoral elections, confirms that MS D1's lists of officials were still functional and influential in 1664. At around the same time, Thomas Widdrington included in his history of York a similar list of the city's mayors, containing chronicle entries. Widdrington refers to 'a catalogue of all the Mayors, and Bailiffs, and Sheriffs of this city, from the beginning of the time of Edward I [...] in the hands of divers persons'. He describes how he has 'taken some notes upon this, which were taken by Mr Roger Dodsworth out of a book of Mr Walter Strickland, a worthy gentleman well versed in antiquity'.⁵⁷

A note of the manuscript held by Sir Walter Strickland of Boynton in 1622 suggests that a list of the city's mayors, which also incorporated a civic chronicle, was in at least one instance held in private hands. The memorandum in 'Yorkshire

⁵⁶Christopher Hildyard, *A List, or Catalogue of all the Mayors, and Bayliffs, Lord Mayors, and Sheriffs, of the most Ancient, Honourable, Noble, and Loyall City of Yorke*, printed by Stephen Bulkley, 1664, p. 12, p. 14, and p. 22.

⁵⁷Thomas Widdrington, *Analecta Eboracensia* (London: C. J. Clark, 1897), p. 82. The list of mayors is printed on pp. 82-6. The other important post-medieval history of York is Francis Drake, *Eboracum or the History and Antiquities of the City of York* (London: W. Bowyer, Wakefield: E. P. Publishing, 1736, repr. 1978)

Church Notes 1619-1631, by Roger Dodsworth', refers to 'a catalogue of the Maiors of Yorke' and includes entries from 1447 to 1453, and into the reign of Henry VIII, in which alongside the mayor's name are recorded notes of, for example, the murder of the Duke of Gloucester; the annexation of the Ainsty to the city in 1449; and an interdict imposed on the Minster for the election of a dean.⁵⁸ It is impossible to tell whether these compilations were being made for private consumption, or whether this manuscript had been removed at some point from York's civic archive, and the evidence is too late to provide a very useful analogy with the apparent trend for the private possession of civic customals in medieval London. We can see, however that in York, as in London, there was a close association between the production of lists of civic officials, and in particular of mayors, of the city, and the compilation of a civic chronicle.

Defining the Civic Register in Medieval York: the *Memorandum Books*, the *House Books*, and the *Liber Miscellanea*:

We can see that there are similarities in the apparent function, presentation, and content between what may have been the civic register contained within the present MS D1, and the London customals reviewed in Chapter Two. This register remains the product of speculation, however, and, moreover, a single example compared to the accumulated examples of more than ten customals from London discussed in Chapter Two. We still lack from York the evidence which we have found in medieval London of the repeated production of civic registers, as a specific documentary form with characteristic contents, themes, and presentation. We now need to set MS D1 within the context of the other surviving compilations of civic documentation produced in York during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The extant volumes of this type produced in York after the first parts of MS D1 were compiled are YCA, MSs A/Y and B/Y, the *Memorandum Books*, YCA, MSs B1-6, the *House Books* from 1476-1490 (which will be referred to in this discussion as

⁵⁸J. W. Clay, ed., 'Yorkshire Church Notes 1619-1631, by Roger Dodsworth', *Yorkshire Archaeological Society Record Series*, 34 (1904), p. 159. I owe thanks to Mathew Holford for pointing me towards this reference.

the *House Books*) and York, YCA, MS E39, now termed as a '*Liber Miscellanea*'.⁵⁹ Because of the current condition of some of these manuscripts, and in order to remain within the restrictions of this discussion, it is impossible to repeat the kind of detailed codicological study of all of the registers which was performed on MS D1. Moreover, the structures of YCA, MSs A/Y and B/Y have been briefly described in the *Records of Early English Drama* volume for York, and Sarah Rees Jones has also described the construction of YCA, MS B/Y.⁶⁰ Therefore the section which follows will concentrate on characterising these different series and types of registers, and identifying the common features which they share with the 'civic lists' of MS D1, and with the London customals. This should enable us to move closer to establishing whether the civic register in York took a distinctive form, and what that form might have been.

YCA, MS E39, the *Memorandum Books*, and the *House Books* have all been compiled cumulatively, over a period of years. The first of these compilations to be begun after the commencement of MS D1 in the 1340s was YCA, MS B/Y, which describes itself in its opening text as 'a book or register of memoranda concerning the city enrolled in this book in the time of John de Gisburn maior of the said city begun and made in the forty-fifth year of the reign of King Edward III after the conquest of England'.⁶¹ Its contents extend from 1371 up until 1596, but a very large number of its contents, from as early as fol. 39r., are signed by or written in the hand of Roger Burton, the common clerk between 1415 and 1435, who we saw was so active in the continuation and correction of the 'civic lists' of MS D1.

⁵⁹See Giles, *The Catalogue*. York, YCA, MSs A/Y and B/Y are also categorised in YCA as MSs E20 and E20A, respectively. However, they are normally referred to in scholarly discussion as YCA, MSs A/Y and B/Y and these titles will be used here.

⁶⁰*Records of Early English Drama: York*, ed. by Alexandra F. Johnston and Margaret Rogerson, 2 vols (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1979), II: *Introduction: The Records*, p. xx. Sarah Ruth Rees Jones, 'Property, Tenure and Rents: Some Aspects of the Topography and Economy of Medieval York', 2 vols (unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of York, 1987), pp. 3-5.

⁶¹'*liber sive registrum memorandorum civitatis tangentis in hoc volumine irrotulatis tempore Iohannis de Gisburn maioris dictis civitatis incepte et facto anno regni regis Edwardi tercii post conquestum Anglie quadragesimo quinto*': YCA, MS B/Y, fol. 1r.

Clearly, then, a large amount of the register was copied up during the period of his common clerkship.

Moreover, the quires of the manuscript, although they have sometimes been cropped, or flood-damaged in places, display quire numberings from 'bj' onwards up until fol. 156r., on which a document dated on the 15th of August in 1456 has been inscribed, and catchwords at the ends of quires on fols. 50v. and 59v. Obviously the contents of the register up to this point were not compiled together in 1456, since a range of hands and dates are visible before this part of the manuscript, but it seems possible that the manuscript may have unbound at this time, and possibly reorganised for some reason, with the quire numbering intended to provide a reminder of the desired order. Sarah Rees Jones has suggested that the earliest of the manuscript's entries 'may have been a fair copy of an older register', and that changes to its composition 'were probably made after c. 1445 x 1449, further entries being made subsequently.'⁶² Despite the sequential run of quire numberings, the contents of the manuscript are clearly out of chronological order, and it is not obvious why they might have been ordered in this way.⁶³ If these markings do indicate that the volume was reorganised at this time, however, then this may be a continuation of the impulse to correct and supplement civic records which we saw Roger Burton brought to the 'civic lists' of MS D1 up until 1435. It may, however, equally be another manifestation of the willingness of York's clerks to alter and renovate the records without aiming to improve or preserve them. YCA, MS B/Y is undecorated, with little attention apparently paid to the presentation of its contents; the writing and organisation of the text on its folios does, however, become more formal in later years, and in particular under the hand of Roger Burton.

The opening section of YCA, MS B/Y consists of copies of deeds, and its modern editor, Joyce Percy, has speculated that the manuscript 'was intended originally as a register of deeds', while 'in contrast, there are relatively few deeds in

⁶²Rees Jones, 'Property, Tenure and Rents', pp. 4-5.

⁶³The presence of two or more systems of foliation on many of the folios of YCA, MS B/Y also suggests that its order has been disturbed over the years.

the *Memorandum Book*, YCA, MS A/Y'.⁶⁴ In its later sections, YCA, MS B/Y contains a range of documents very close to those inscribed in YCA, MS A/Y, with which it is categorised as a *Memorandum Book*. These include craft ordinances; details of property belonging to the city; notes of the city's boundaries; charters to the city; and other statutes and memoranda relating to the workings of York's administration. The register does include some more unusual, non-documentary contents, however. On fols. 88v.-89r. has been inscribed an account of the origin of the city's ceremonial swords, subscribed by Roger Burton. Burton defends his inclusion of this material in the city's records in terms which are highly reminiscent of the descriptions of civic ceremonial found in the 'civic lists' of MS D1:

each mayor in his time should rejoice in the diversity of so many principal swords and on that account praise and honour should multiply and grow for all and the people passing by praising them should say Behold the two swords of the city of York, the first namely of King Richard and the other of the Emperor⁶⁵

An awareness of the swords thus increases a sense in the citizens of York of the importance of their city. Moreover, Burton justifies his perpetuation of this information in written form on the basis that 'what is worthy of praise should be reduced into writing, so that these things might be more seriously noted, from frequent reading of them, and [...] be imprinted upon the minds of posterity'.⁶⁶ Burton makes explicit here the potential of the civic record to extend, and to re-enact for a new audience, the promotion of the city and its administration apparently (according to the written account at least) achieved by ceremony and its symbols. As with the descriptions of mayoral ceremony and election in the lists of mayors in MS D1, then, and as in the case of contents such as William Fitz Stephen's

⁶⁴*YMBIII*, p. viii.

⁶⁵*ut sit singuli maiores suis temporibus tantorum principum gladiatorum varietate latentur et omnibus inde laus et honor multiplacentur et crescant plebs que pretiens laudando dicat Ecce gladii duo Eboraci civitatis primus scilicet Ricardi Regis aliis vero Imperatoris*: YCA, MS B/Y, fol. 89r.

⁶⁶*tamquam laude digna redigere in scripturis ut sit ex frequenti lectura horum notitia solemnior habeant horum nempe considerationis intuitum hoc presens exilis scripture nota in mentibus imprimat futuros*: YCA, MS B/Y, fol. 88v.

description of London and Andrew Horn's account of the fishmongers' pageant for Queen Isabella, a register book containing records and statutes relating to the city's administration is seen as an appropriate context for the inclusion of writing which praises and honours the city.⁶⁷

Also notable is an instructional section in the manuscript, on fols. 135r.-142v., which explains the use of Roman and arabic numerals, presumably for clerks who were still in training in the production and copying of civic records. This is the only part of YCA, MS B/Y in which rubrication is used, for the interlineal insertion of verbalised numbers added as a kind of gloss over the Roman numerals, and for sub-titles in this section. This suggests that the civic register in York functioned not only as a reference text for the city's administration, but also as an educational tool for the clerks who were required to use these manuscripts first-hand.⁶⁸

YCA, MS A/Y contains material dating from between 1377 and 1491. Its contents are diverse in nature, and some sense of their range can be gleaned from a selection of them enumerated in the medieval index attached to YCA, MS A/Y which is transcribed and re-ordered in Appendices Two and Three to the thesis. They include a considerable number of craft ordinances; a copy of the assize of bread; a list of church wards in the city of York; names of Scotsmen summoned to swear allegiance to the king of England; copies of two of the charters granted to the city by Richard II; a brief compilation of the customs of the city, together with a collection of the oaths of civic officials, in Anglo-Norman. In addition, it includes the '*Ordo Paginarum*', a list of the guilds who presented pageants as part of the Corpus Christi play cycle in the city, together with descriptive titles of the plays, and a chronicle of the archbishops of York, both copied into the volume by Roger Burton in 1415 and 1420 respectively.⁶⁹ We cannot be sure that Roger Burton was

⁶⁷See Chapter Two, pp. 92-8.

⁶⁸See Chapter Two, pp. 111-12.

⁶⁹The '*Ordo Paginarum*' is published in Johnston and Rogerson, *Records of Early English Drama: York, I: Introduction; The Records*, pp. 16-26; it appears on fols. 252v.-255 in YCA, MS A/Y. The chronicle is published as the '*Chronica Pontificum Ecclesiae Eboracensis*', in *The Historians of the Church of York and its Archbishops*, ed. by James Raine (London: Longman; Trübner, 1886), II, pp. 312-421; it is inscribed onto fols. 219v.-246v. of YCA, MS A/Y.

responsible for composing this chronicle. But its inclusion here is further evidence of his efforts to expand and distinguish the civic records of York, and of a continuation of the impulse to chronicle the city begun in the mayors' list in MS D1. Interestingly, too, it suggests that Burton, at least, was willing to embrace the ecclesiastical history of York as a chronicle of the city as a whole, despite the fact that the city authorities and the officials of the Minster, and of York's other religious institutions were frequently in conflict during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries over their respective jurisdiction over areas of the city.⁷⁰ This perhaps says something of the willingness of civic officials during this period to absorb textual accounts or chronicles of their city from sources with which they would not normally associate themselves.

Sub-sections of the chronicle are marked by spaces where it seems that small, decorated initials were intended to be added, but this decoration was never undertaken. This attempt at more formal presentation of the text would, in any case, have been largely incongruous with the lack of illumination and simple decoration found almost throughout the remainder of YCA, MS A/Y. Elsewhere in the volume, craft ordinances, and the copies of the charters from Richard II, and other royal correspondence, tend to be most impressively inscribed, with more elaborate lettering, and more distinctive use of titles.⁷¹ As with the more formally written and decorated sections of royal statutes, and the copies of royal statutes in some of the London customals, then, presentation is used as a means of signalling a hierarchy of importance in the contents of YCA, MS A/Y.⁷²

In addition to the chronicle, YCA, MS A/Y contains a section in French which appeals to and records the city's legislative past, in a style reminiscent of the inclusion of ancient laws in the London customals.⁷³ The modern editor of the *Memorandum Books* describes this section as a 'customal', and it contains a

⁷⁰See Chapter Five, p. 255. On the conflicts between the city authorities and religious institutions within York, see Sarah Rees Jones, 'York's Civic Administration, 1354-1464' in Rees Jones, *The Government of Medieval York*, pp. 108-40 (pp. 120-1).

⁷¹On the copying of the charters granted to the city of York by Richard II, see Sarah Rees Jones, 'York's Civic Administration, 1354-1464', p. 115.

⁷²See Chapter Two, pp. 104-9.

⁷³YCA, MS A/Y, fols. 343r.-350r.

description of the mayor's court of York, and the oaths of the mayor, the thirty-six members of the council, the 'commons', the chamberlains, the bridgemasters, and the sergeants.⁷⁴ These are followed by descriptions of the formal duties of the chamberlains, aldermen, bailiffs, the guardians of weights and measures and of the city's gates, the searchers and the constables, together with various customs of the city. The oaths are essentially similar to those in English at the beginning of MS D1, although they are not direct translations, and the collection of oaths in MS D1 is more extensive. Obviously, this focus on the civic officials which constitute the administration by which the city is run recalls the 'civic lists' and the oaths formally copied into the folios now in MS D1 in the 1340s. But the interest here in the duties of the city's officials is also reminiscent of the description of the responsibilities and histories of some of the civic officials of London in the opening section of the *Liber Albus*.⁷⁵

The mixture of contents in YCA, MSs A/Y and B/Y, including royal charters, compilation of city customs, and regulations for the crafts or trades of the city, suggests that they were also intended to function as collections of precedents to be consulted in the future. The addition of notes to some of the entries, made when they were consulted in later centuries, confirms that this was the case. Next to the ordinances of the 'smythys', for example, a note has been written that 'that ordinance was reformed' (*iste ordinaciones reformatus*) in 1572. The survival of the two *Memorandum Books* also confirms that by the end of the fourteenth century a whole range of civic documentation was being systematically maintained, including records of the lists of freemen of the city, the names of some of its civic officials, the rules attached to various trades in the city, and legislation for its day-to-day running. This range of contents, and the inclusion of chronicle and celebratory writing such as Roger Burton's account of the ceremonial swords, confirm the importance of the period at the end of the fourteenth and the beginning of the fifteenth century in the development of the city's record-writing.⁷⁶

⁷⁴*YMBII*, p. vii.

⁷⁵See Chapter Two, pp. 123-4.

⁷⁶On this subject, see Rees Jones, 'York's Civic Administration', pp. 108-15. The years immediately following the commencement of the both YCA, MSs A/Y and

YCA, MS E39 consists largely of copies of indentures, together with records of cases from York's court, and the names of Scotsmen swearing allegiance to the king of England, dated predominantly in the beginning of the fifteenth century. Alongside these straightforward records are two more unusual inclusions. On fols. 223-224, a table has been set out systematically listing the Latin numerals and vocabulary, in several different cases, for the numbers one to twenty, then for the multiples of ten from twenty to one hundred, for two hundred, and finally for three hundred. On fols. 225-230, a Latin text offers *exempla salutacionum*, clearly differentiated by marginal sub-headings, with which persons of varying status should properly be addressed. Bound with writing which seems to be purely documentary in its function and useful to the city in general, then, are careful copies of didactic material presumably designed to benefit only the clerks responsible for producing this and other sorts of official literature. YCA, MS E39 provides a timely reminder of the demands on the city's scribes in a period when its production of civic writing was clearly expanding. Although it is a fortunate survival from the medieval period, the existence of a register dedicated predominantly to recording indentures and legal cases is indicative of the nature of what must have been the vast majority of York's civic records. By comparison, the roll of honour of York's officials and freemen which may have constituted a medieval form of MS D1 stands out in increasingly stark contrast.

The earliest *House Book* still in existence dates from 1476. According to a description of the city's records compiled in 1699, however, *House Books* dating back to 1461 were present in the city's archive at that time.⁷⁷ Since they still seem to have appeared only late in our period of interest, however, they will be considered only briefly here. Maud Sellers, the editor of the published version of

B/Y were also marked by unrest in York, and the dismissal of the common clerk, John Rufford, who was responsible for the compilation of YCA, MS A/Y being begun. Much of this unrest surrounded controversy concerning the mayoralty of John de Gisburn, in whose year of office as mayor YCA, MS B/Y is stated to have been begun in its introductory statement: YCA, MS B/Y, fol. 1r. The political context to the production of these manuscripts will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter Four.

⁷⁷See *HB*, pp. xiv.-xvi. The date of the earliest *House Books* will be discussed further in the final section of this chapter.

YCA, MS A/Y, describes the manuscript as 'striking' in its similarity to York's *House Books*, and since the earliest surviving part of it dates from 1376, she claims that 'it may rightly be regarded as the first of the series'.⁷⁸ The modern editor of the earliest surviving volumes of the *House Books*, Lorraine Attreed, has suggested that as the *Memorandum Books* 'became crowded with craft regulations, civic officials decided to begin a new series of record in which greater attention could be paid to municipal activities', but that indeed 'of all York's records, the *Memorandum Books* most closely compare with the scope and interests of the *House Books*'.⁷⁹

The *House Books* do indeed contain a similar range of documentation to the *Memorandum Books*, including correspondence between the king and the city, details of property belonging to the city, and craft ordinances. However, they function much more specifically as minute books of the meetings of members of the civic administration, and are closely tied to particular mayors and their years of office. The majority of their entries have specific dates, and they often record the attendance of the mayor, aldermen and various other civic officials, suggesting that their main purpose was to record activity at council meetings. There are obviously practical reasons why these volumes should be limited chronologically to the years of office of individual mayors, but the association also has symbolic potency, for both the legislative text, and for the mayor.⁸⁰ Like the *Memorandum Books*, the *House Books* could also clearly function as collections of legal precedents, enabling future behaviour or decisions to be based on consultation of what had succeeded in the past.⁸¹ In addition, they were also used to record the plans for civic ceremony in 1486 with the royal entry devised for the first visit of Henry VII to the city.⁸² A

⁷⁸*YMBI*, p. i.

⁷⁹*HB*, p. xii.

⁸⁰The connection of mayoral authority with the production of books of urban law will be discussed further in the final section to this chapter, and in Chapter Four, pp. 204-5. See also the association of London customals with mayors, in Chapter Two, pp. 94-5, p. 121, and p. 127.

⁸¹There is evidence that they were used for this kind of consultation in the city's reply to a letter of Lord Clifford in 1486 concerning the forthcoming visit of Henry VII to the city. The city council claim that they have 'knowlege by presidences remaynyng of record in the regsite of the said cite in what maner and forme thei shall receive the king': *HB*, p. 480.

⁸²On this visit of Henry VII to the city, see Lorraine Attreed, 'The Politics of

full account of the ceremonial and speeches planned for the entry is inscribed into the *House Books*, although interestingly the entry records precisely that - what was planned, rather than what actually happened, which has been described by a herald in the retinue of the king and copied into London, British Library, MS Cotton Julius B XII. The *House Books*' description thus offers an account of the performance and reception of civic ceremony, reflecting in the best possible light on the city and its administration. This civic writing thus serves a similar honorific function to the descriptions of mayoral elections in the lists of mayors in MS D1 and the account of the city's swords in YCA, MS B/Y.

Clearly, then, the other compilatory registers produced in York during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries display similar interests in some of their contents, and seem to have been intended to perform some of the same functions, at least, as the London customals and the 'civic lists' of MS D1. In YCA, MS B/Y and the *House Books* there are attempts to honour the city and promote its administration through perpetuation in writing of the effects of civic ceremony. In YCA, MS A/Y we also find both a chronicle of York, although admittedly one dedicated to the adversities and virtues of its archbishops rather than the experiences of the city more generally, and a 'customal' which enshrines the oaths and duties of civic officials at the heart of one of its civic registers. In the *Memorandum Books*, too, as in the London customals, royal charters and legislation are frequently distinguished by more formal presentation. In addition, both YCA, MS E39 and YCA, MS B/Y contain carefully copied entries clearly devised to aid the education of clerks employed in the inscription of these records. Civic registers were thus also seen to have a didactic function for the clerks who would surely have been their most frequent readers. As with the customal in London, then, the civic register in York was seen as an appropriate location for experimentation with

Welcome: Ceremonies and Constitutional Development in Later Medieval English Towns', in Barbara A. Hanawalt and Kathryn L. Reyerson, eds, *City and Spectacle in Medieval Europe*, Medieval Studies at Minnesota, 6 (Minneapolis and London: the University of Minnesota Press, 1994), pp. 208-231, especially pp. 216-25. The planned format for the visit is published in *HB*, pp. 481-5; the BL, MS Cotton Julius B XII account appears in Johnston and Rogerson, *Records of Early English Drama: York, I: Introduction; The Records*, pp. 146-52.

different ways of praising the city and expressing what we have already heard was a growing sense of civic self-confidence in the city during the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries.⁸³

However, unlike those of London, civic registers in York are seldom distinguished with decoration, and while the volumes in the completed form which we see them today can be fairly clearly differentiated in terms of function, as we have heard, they sometimes begin, or finish, as essentially similar types of miscellanies of records. This suggests that the compilation of civic documents in York was, at the end of the fourteenth century at least, still relatively disorganised and slightly haphazard. The clerks of York at this time seem to have had a less clear sense than their colleagues in London had of a distinctive nature, set of contents, and format for the civic register. While the compilations of YCA, MSs D1, A/Y, B/Y, E39, and the *House Books* are self-evidently a different kind of record from a charter, or an account roll, and they alone provide the fertile environment in which ceremonial description and chronicle arise, they do not seem to constitute as coherent a literary genre as the customals of London.

York's Civic Archive: the 'Calendar' of Thomas Mynskip:

We can glean this much from extant civic registers. However, an index of York's statutes attached to the back of YCA, MS A/Y offers evidence of a much wider range of civic books, some of them contemporaneous with the copying of *The Chronicle of the Archbishops of York*, into YCA, MS A/Y, and correction of MS D1's 'civic lists'.⁸⁴ Many no longer exist. The index announces itself as a 'calendar made in the secundtyme of the mairalte of Richard of York maire of the cite of York Thomas Mynskip thene beyng comun clerk of the said cite of and apou all the ordinaunces and statuts beyng in the chambyr of the said cite of York

⁸³See p. 128, and note 1, in this chapter. See also the discussion of the social context for the production of some of York's civic registers in Chapter Four, pp. 228-35.

⁸⁴The 'calendar' is inscribed onto fols. 3r.-22v. in the second series of foliation at the back of YCA, MS A/Y. The 'calendar' is transcribed in Appendix Two to this thesis, and the statutes listed in it have been organised into the civic registers to which it is stated they belong in Appendix Three to the thesis.

the xj^t day of the moneth of Jun in the xxij yere of the reing of king Edward the Fowrt' (1482).⁸⁵ Thomas Mynskip, 'gentleman', was elected as common clerk in 1482 and died in office during the mayoral year 1483-1484.⁸⁶ The twenty-two folios of the index are separately foliated from the main part of the manuscript. The bulk of its references are to an un-named register of substantial size (at least three hundred and sixty folios), which may have been the medieval form of YCA, MS A/Y: if this is the case, then the index may have been intended originally to accompany this manuscript.⁸⁷ While most of the contents of the civic register in YCA, MS A/Y have been either published as or catalogued in Maud Sellers's edition of the *Memorandum Books*, the index remains unpublished and largely ignored.⁸⁸ However, the 'calendar', as it describes itself, provides, first, crucial facts about the range of registers which had been produced before 1482, and how they related to each other as an archive, and, secondly, evidence of the contemporary view of these volumes, in terms of the specific function which they were intended to perform and the values which they were considered to represent. A transcription of the index forms Appendix Two to this thesis, and Appendix Three to the thesis contains a breakdown of the items referred to in the 'calendar' into the twenty-six volumes to which it refers, with the contents placed as far as possible in their original order. We will begin by considering what facts the

⁸⁵YCA, MS A/Y, fol. 3r. (second series of foliation).

⁸⁶See the entries for the twenty-first and twenty-second years of the reign of Edward IV, and the first year of the reign of Richard III in the list of mayors in YCA, MS D1, fols. 21r.-21v.

⁸⁷The editors of the *Records of Early English Drama* volume on York suggest that YCA, MS A/Y is constituted from two medieval registers in addition to the 'calendar': 'the *maior registrum*' and 'the *novum registrum*': Johnston and Rogerson, *Records of Early English Drama: York, I:Introduction; The Records*, p. xix. The 'newe register' and the 'gret register', however, are named and listed as distinct volumes in the 'calendar', separate from whichever un-named register the bulk of the 'calendar's' entries refer to. If YCA, MS A/Y is constituted from the 'newe' and the 'gret' registers then this un-named register must be a further manuscript which existed in York's medieval archive. The attachment of the index to YCA, MS A/Y, however, suggests that it is probably the un-named register, and that the 'newe' and the 'gret' registers may well have been separate registers in the medieval period.

⁸⁸An appendix of civic material similar in style to the *House Books* and dated between 1482 and 1483, which was bound into the manuscript after the index, has also been published, as Appendix III of *HB*.

'calendar' can provide for us about both the index itself and the volumes it describes, and what functions they seem to have served.

The 'calendar' itself was apparently not unique. Two references in the index, on fols. 3v. and 22r., seemingly to the same item concerning the Wappentake and Ainsty, locate it 'after the calendar before the second number' (*post calendar ante secundum numerum*). Fols. 5v., and 19r. in the index contain references to 'calendars' in the register with the crucifix, and the second register with the crucifix, respectively, the former towards the end, and the latter apparently near the beginning of the volumes. It seems likely that the multiplication of civic documentation which must have occurred in the later Middle Ages must have required the organisation of these records so that, quite simply, their information could be located and utilised.⁸⁹ We have already seen in this chapter that rudimentary tables of contents were added to the cartularies produced within St Mary's Abbey and St Leonard's Hospital during the Middle Ages, probably in the fifteenth or sixteenth centuries. Tables of statutes are found included in several of the manuscripts from London discussed in Chapter Two, for example the *Liber Horn*. It is the index of contents which was compiled for the *Liber Regum* in the fifteenth century which provides the crucial information of its medieval format.⁹⁰ The most significant attempt to tabulate the contents of London's archive, rather than of an individual register, of course, is the *Liber Albus*, completed in 1419.⁹¹ The approximate synchronicity of the majority of these indices and tabulations of statutes suggests that the fifteenth century may well have marked a phase in which the users of civic records, in London and York at least, sought to use writing as a means of organising and facilitating access to information, or perhaps found

⁸⁹See also the passage in *HB*, p. 4, quoted on p. 130 of this chapter.

⁹⁰See Chapter Two, p. 18, note 44.

⁹¹See Chapter Two, pp. 115-20. See also Geoffrey Martin's description of the use of 'calendars' and custumals as a means of organising and making accessible the contents of London's Husting rolls in the fourteenth century: Geoffrey Martin, 'English Town Records, 1200-1350', in *Pragmatic Literacy, East and West, 1200-1330*, ed. by Richard Britnell (Woodbridge, Suffolk, 1997), pp. 119-30 (pp. 128-30).

themselves having to 'calendar' the considerable mass of written information which had been compiled through the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.⁹²

If indeed it was not uncommon for individual registers to contain 'calendars' of their contents, then this would help to explain partly the structuring of the 'calendar' in YCA, MS A/Y. The contents are categorised under the letters of the alphabet, according to the initial letter of the reference, but within each section alphabetical order is abandoned. However, very frequently clusters of contents from the same volume appear in sequence, although they may not necessarily be located near each other in the register in which they belong. This is especially true of the contents from YCA, MS A/Y, and of the two registers with the crucifix. This suggests that parts at least of the YCA, MS A/Y 'calendar' could have been copied straight from existing indices, arranged in the same approximately alphabetical order, from individual registers. However, the 'calendar' in YCA, MS A/Y is different from these individual indices because it directly presents itself as a 'calendar made [...] of and upon all the ordinaunces and statuts beyng in the chambyr of the said cite' on the date specified. The YCA, MS A/Y 'calendar' is an attempt to co-ordinate the contents of all the registers of the city of York, and, indeed, as such may represent as significant and new a development in the treatment of and thinking about civic records as John Carpenter's organisation of London's records in 1419 in the *Liber Albus*.⁹³ Just as the majority of the registers referred to in the 'calendar' have not survived, so we cannot guarantee that an earlier index, equally comprehensive in its attempted scope, may not similarly have been lost. However, no specific references to such another 'calendar' have been found, for example in relation to the search of the city's records in 1476, and Thomas Mynskip's careful association of this 'calendar' both with his own name, which he does not appear to have added to other civic records, and with the mayor Richard York, suggests that it was perceived, or at least presented, as a major undertaking.

⁹²On the organisational function of the *Liber Horn* and other fourteenth century customals of London see Chapter Two, p. 103, p. 111, and pp. 115-20.

⁹³See Chapter Two, pp. 114-24.

Moreover, the YCA, MS A/Y index is obviously incomplete (for example, it contains only one record, the oath of the sheriff, on fol. 16r., which could be identified with any of the contents of MS D1) and so would appear to be the copy of indices connected to a limited number of individual volumes rather than a pre-existing comprehensive 'calendar'. The bulk of the entries are in the same hand as the introduction, and if we assume, as seems likely, that this hand belonged to Thomas Mynskip, then this means that most of the index as it stands was completed before his death in 1483 or 1484. However, later entries have clearly been added, such as that referring to the 'soyers' sent 'aynest the Scottes' in 'the pawper boke of divers actes of mairs' dated in 1513, and the entry concerning the 'buchers' in 'the newe register' issued 'in the tyme of John Metcalf', mayor in 1498-1499. Indeed, three of the registers associated with named mayors referred to in the 'calendar' were actually produced after 1484 - 'the boke of Ser William Tode' (mayor in 1487-1488); 'the buke of actes of Nicholas Loncastre the second tyme of his mairalte' (mayor in 1493-1494); and 'the pawper boke of actes maide in the tyme of William Nelson maire' (mayor in 1500-1501). That further additions were intended is apparent from the folios left partly blank under some of the letters such as 'D' and 'I'. The 'calendar' was clearly intended to be a fluid index, remaining functional over a period of many years as new ordinances were continually made accessible.

The index refers to twenty-six different registers.⁹⁴ Other than YCA, MS A/Y, seven of these registers can be identified with surviving manuscripts. The books of Sir Richard York, the second time of his mayoralty; of Nicholas Loncaster; of Sir William Todd; of Thomas Wrangwish the first and second times of his mayoralty; of John Newton; and of John Tong all contain documents which can be found in the *House Books* produced during their mayoral terms. These begin in 1476.⁹⁵ An earlier *House Book*, containing material dated between 1461 and 1483 was described in 1699 by Darcy Preston, who later became the city's

⁹⁴These are listed with the statutes attributed to them in the 'calendar', in Appendix Three.

⁹⁵These are published as *HB*.

common clerk.⁹⁶ However, one of the most immediately interesting implications of the 'calendar' in YCA, MS A/Y is that books titled according to their production during the term of a particular mayor are referred to here which can be dated nearly thirty years earlier than this. The earliest is associated with Thomas Kyrkham, mayor in 1435, but registers also appear which are stated as having been produced during mayoral terms in 1437, 1439, 1443, 1450, 1468, and 1470.⁹⁷ We can thus infer that the *House Books* were begun at least by 1435, when they began to be recorded in the 'calendar'. This provides further evidence of an expansion of civic writing in the early fifteenth century, and that different types or categories of records were being designed at this relatively early date.

Other than the registers specifically associated with particular mayors, nine books are listed in the 'calendar' which are more generally titled, apparently on the basis of physical description. These cannot be conclusively identified by their contents listed in the 'calendar'. Although some contents are dated, or dateable by means of names connected with them which can be traced, this limited evidence places most of these items after the date of the index's production. It seems likely that they were dated deliberately to distinguish them from pre-1482 ordinances, confirming previous evidence that the city's registers were being continually added to over a period of some years. As a result, dateable records deriving from before the production of the 'calendar', such as the 'renunciacion made by Nicholas Anlaby and Agnes his wife doghtre to John Gilyot enent hire child porcion in hire fader goodes before Thomas Wrangwish of the same citie', referred to on fol. 22v. of the index, do not provide reliable proof that the 'register with the crucifix' in which it this record was located was produced entirely around either of the years of Thomas Wrangwish's mayoralties, in 1476-1477, and 1484-1485. However,

⁹⁶*HB*, pp. xiv.-xvi.

⁹⁷These are the books named in association with the mayoralties of William Bedale; Thomas Ridley; William Bowes; Thomas Barton; Richard York; and William Holbek. The years given are those when the mayors began their mayoralties. Both William Bowes and William Holbek are listed as serving as mayor several times: in both cases, the latest likely date of their mayoralties has been selected. If William Bowes' register dates from the earlier of his three mayoralties, then it was produced before that of Thomas Kyrkham, in either 1416, or 1427, and the *House Books* must have been begun even earlier.

before proceeding to examine the contents of these registers more closely, and to attempt to establish whether they can be characterised differently according to their documents and description, we can exclude three of these nine from our investigation. The break-down of the 'calendar' into volumes in Appendix Three to the thesis shows that only one item from the '*libro de memorandorum*' and 'the buke of parchement unburded', and only two from 'the newe registir' are referred to in the 'calendar'. This makes their general nature too hard to establish, although we can imagine that the '*libro de memorandorum*' probably contained a similar style of contents to YCA, MS A/Y. Its single item, in any case, is dated to 1527, outside our period of interest. One of the two items listed for 'the newe registir', similarly, is dated to the mayoralty of John Metcalf, in 1497-1498, and as this register was referred to as 'new' in 1482, it was probably of fairly recent inception, anyway.

This leaves us with six civic registers of uncertain date: 'the parchement buke where certein deides and evydences be bene inrollid'; 'the registir with the crucifix'; 'the registir with the crucifix the second noumbir'; 'the pawper boke of divers actes of mairs'; 'the les registir'; and 'the gret registir'. We can add 'the parchement book of Thomas Wrangwish', which was probably produced during Thomas Wrangwish's first mayoralty in 1476-1477, since it does not identify itself with the second in 1484-1485, to this list, as it is possible that it was the same volume as 'the parchement buke where certein deides and evydences be bene inrollid'. Of the three contents listed from 'the parchement buke', one is a copy of an ordinance which is stated as having been 'maid in the tym of Thomas Wrangwishe mair' and also appears in his first 'pawpir' *House Book*.⁹⁸ Another refers to the register in which it is written as 'the parchement book besyd the mayre', while almost all the contents of Thomas Wrangwish's parchment book are similarly described as 'lying by side the maire seit in the Chambre'.⁹⁹ This parchment book seems to be, in any case, a different kind of book from the mayors' paper *House Books*, a difference which we will return to in due course.

⁹⁸YCA, MS A/Y, fol. 21r.

⁹⁹YCA, MS A/Y, fols. 21r., and 9r.

The fact that only a small number of ordinances are referred to from the majority of the registers indicates of course that the index does not attempt to include all of the documents from each volume, and that we are able to glean only a partial picture of most of them. Comparison of the contents of the mayors' *House Books* in the 'calendar' with the surviving manuscripts confirms that the majority of their records were usually ignored. To offer one telling example, even 'the les registyr', for which we have twelve contents, had at least three-hundred-and-sixty-one folios, since one of its documents is located on this folio.¹⁰⁰ Clearly these registers were often very substantial. We will return later to consider whether this is the result of an editorial policy on the part of Thomas Mynskip, but from the information which he has given us, there is a clear preponderance of craft regulations. These dominate particularly in three of the registers. In 'the pawper boke of divers actes of mairs', four out of the nine contents listed are craft ordinances, all located on the first folio, and four of the remaining five are dated in the reign of Henry VIII, so that these could have been added towards the end of an otherwise consistent volume. If the parchment book of Thomas Wrangwish is the same as the parchment book of 'certein deides', then five of its eight contents are craft ordinances; if it is a separate volume, then these constitute all its listed contents. 'The les registir' frequently appears in the 'calendar' under the same entries as Thomas Wrangwish's parchment book, and therefore it is not surprising that nine of its twelve listed contents are also craft ordinances.

It is unfortunate that the limitations of the 'calendar' prevent us speculating realistically that these may have been volumes dedicated almost entirely to craft ordinances. It is worth reflecting on the inclusion of Thomas Wrangwish's parchment book in this category of registers, however. This is distinguished from the other books associated with individual mayors first by the fact that it is in parchment while they are in paper, suggesting that it was designed to be more long-lasting, and to be more valuable, perhaps constituting a finer copy of its contents. If a copy of some of these contents had been undertaken from 'the les registir', this

¹⁰⁰See Appendix Three, pp. 339.

would explain the relatively frequent duplication of their entries. The register differs from the other mayors' *House Books*, secondly, on the basis of its apparent relative consistency of contents, although as we have already recognised the focus on craft ordinances may well be simply owing to Thomas Mynskip's selectivity. Indeed, comparison of the index's selection of the paper *House Books*' contents with the surviving registers suggests that the more mundane, day-to-day recording of civic business which is conspicuously absent in the parchment book's contents was excluded by Thomas Mynskip from his index. Thirdly, however, the parchment book is repeatedly described as 'lying be side the maire sete in Chamber' (for example, on fol. 8r. of the 'calendar'). This confirms its special status, and recalls the significance accrued by the civic records in the *House Books* passage at the start of the chapter, by virtue of their location at the seat of governmental power.¹⁰¹ Arguably the paper *House Books* were also 'prestige' volumes to an extent, recording and forming a kind of 'mini-chronicle' of a mayor's term of office.¹⁰² The essential identification of these books in the index with the mayors under whose auspices they were compiled in the 'calendar', as well as locating them chronologically, suggests that this was a dignifying association. That this parchment book was held permanently, however, at the very centre of urban authority, by the seat of the head of civic government, emphasises the potency of the written record. This would function as a register of the sort of 'status' which I have been arguing for the civic lists of MS D1. We cannot assume that this volume was dedicated to craft ordinances, but it is interesting that an attempt has undeniably been made to include this sort of record in a book of such potent appearance and situation.¹⁰³

¹⁰¹*HB*, p. 4. See p. 130 in this chapter.

¹⁰²The chronicles of the *Liber de Antiquis Legibus*, the *Liber Regum*, and YCA, MS D1 are all constructed around an annual list of mayors and sometimes other civic officials. See Chapter Two, especially pp. 78-80, and pp. 94-6, and pp. 152-4 in this chapter. On this style of "'living" chronicles', see Antonia Gransden, *Historical Writing in England c. 550 to c. 1307* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1974), pp. 29-30.

¹⁰³The symbolic significance of the civic register in general, and of Thomas Wrangwish's parchment book in particular, will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Four.

The contents of these registers other than the craft ordinances display little consistency: the boundaries of the city, an ordinance enforcing the carrying of torches on Corpus Christi day, and the tax of Bootham in 'the parchment buke where certein deides and evydenes be bene inrollid'; and records of an arbitration between citizens and the rental of lands, together with a prescription for the ceremonial accompaniment of the city's sheriffs by servants in 'the les register'.¹⁰⁴ 'The gret register', which consisted of at least three-hundred-and-forty folios, exhibits this degree of diversity in all its listed contents: it does contain the ordinances for 'commun wommen', and a more general regulation of what carpenters 'shall take by day', but it is perhaps most *interesting for its inclusion of* the Corpus Christi play. The only extant complete copy of the plays, copied from the 'originals' owned by individual guilds for the city council 'at some time between 1463 and 1477' is now London, British Library, MS Additional 35290, but this evidence suggests that a further copy of the play was held by the city's authorities and inscribed into one of their civic registers.¹⁰⁵ Moreover, to have been included in the 'calendar' produced in 1482, this version of the plays must have been inscribed either before or at around the same time as BL, MS Additional 35290. The title of this register is suggestive of a wide range of contents, similar in scope to YCA, MS A/Y, which 'the gret register' recalls here in the selection of its contents.

This leaves us with the two registers with the crucifix, a description which suggests that they too were volumes of some importance. The fact that these two books bear the same name also implies that the first was seen to have a distinct character, which required continuation in the same kind of book. This is confirmed by the partial structuring of contents in both registers under such categories as

¹⁰⁴Barrie Dobson has suggested that 'the lesse Registre' was the name given to a volume 'which began with copies of the oaths of civic officials (perhaps fos. 1-3 of the present manuscript)' (MS D1) 'and apparently went on to provide lists of city office-holders.' Dobson, 'Admissions to the Freedom', p. 5. See also note four, on p. 5. A reference in the *House Books* states that the 'lesse registre' contained 'in the begynnyng' the oaths of the common clerk, of the 'swyres to the swerd and mase, and of the 'seriauntes to the mases': *HB*, p. 399.

¹⁰⁵See *The York Plays*, ed. by Richard Beadle (London: Edward Arnold, 1982), p. 11.

'*statuto iudicii pillore*' (dealing with the 'pillory of judgement'); 'the statut of Westminster; the '*statuto de novis articulis*' ('the statute of new articles'); 'the statute of York the furst' and 'the statut made at yorke the secund'. The headings are indicative of the unifying character of at least some of the contents of the two registers. Both contain some craft ordinances, and in their diversity to some extent again recall YCA, MS A/Y. But both also include a large number of prescriptive laws dealing with the essentials of both urban and national government. Thus the first register with the crucifix contains the regulations for the assise of wine and for 'rebell ayanst the pees'; '*treson petit et graund*'; and 'chartirs of libertes grauntid by diwyr kinges'; and the second includes a 'relees' of Richard II, and a statute controlling how tax should be decided, and by whom. Several documents in both registers deal with the status and responsibility of York's civic officers: in the first register are found the sheriff's oath, a regulation against serving officers selling food, and the foundation charter of the important St Christopher's Guild, of which so many civic officials were members.¹⁰⁶

Into the second register with the crucifix have been copied regulations for treason against the mayor, sheriffs, and sergeants; an ordinance forbidding the disclosure of the official discussions of the council, and a record enforcing the attendance of the aldermen at council meetings and civic occasions. Although, once again, we can base our conclusions only on the incomplete evidence of the 'calendar', these two registers seem to have had a fairly distinctive character, based on a concentration on fundamental national and local laws and regulations, many deriving from the royal administration. This particular type of record is generally listed as being contained only in the first or the second register with the crucifix, and none of the other volumes included in the 'calendar', suggesting that these documents were, indeed, the preserve of these two registers. If this was the case, then it is striking that copies of laws deriving from the royal administration have been distinguished by inclusion in a register the title of which suggests that it may

¹⁰⁶On the guild of St Christopher and St George, see Eileen White, 'The St Christopher and St George Guild of York', *Borthwick Papers*, 72 (1987).

have been marked as symbolically valuable by an image of a crucifix on its front folio or binding.¹⁰⁷

The 'calendar' thus offers us a range of evidence about the collection of civic registers which were current in 1482, although its clues are clearly limited. It confirms for us that the characteristic nature of York's civic registers was one of diversity and eclecticism. Although we can speculate that volumes such as 'the les register' contained mainly craft ordinances, almost invariably a miscellany of other kinds of records have been inserted in these books and lie side by side. It is perhaps unrealistic, then, to expect precise categorisation of records in these registers during this period. As we saw with regard to MS D1, the most focused of civic records, such as the list of mayors, could provide the literary space for experimentation with other, and often new, kinds of writing. The 'calendar' indicates that often copies of the same document were duplicated in two or more civic registers, suggesting that they cannot have been wholly specialised.

However, the admittedly incomplete information of the 'calendar' does suggest that different types of record were concentrated into volumes such as the two registers with the crucifix. We cannot be sure that 'the les registir', 'the pawper boke of divers actes' or Thomas Wrangwish's parchment book were intended to focus particularly on craft ordinances, but we do know that the parchment book represents an effort to copy at least some of these into a more expensive, and probably attractive, and certainly more prestigiously located, register. The range of volumes referred to in the 'calendar', and their general diversity, sets the register of lists of civic officials and freemen, which part of MS D1 may have constituted in the medieval period, in sharper contrast. It is interesting that these lists are not referred to in the 'calendar', suggesting that the volume which contained them was viewed as a different kind of book from those included in the index, although MS D1's more documentary content is also ignored

¹⁰⁷This association of the religious book and religious symbols with the civic register recalls the inclusion of excerpts from the Gospels in the guild book of the Weavers' Company in London. See Chapter Two, p. 113. The subject will be further discussed in Chapter Four. On the cutting of patterns into the leather binding of manuscripts in the Middle Ages, see Mirjam de Foot, 'Bindings With Cut-Leather Work', *Bulletin de Bibliophile*, 1 (1991), 18-41.

by Thomas Mynskip. However, Thomas Wrangish's parchment book also provides valuable evidence of the deliberate production of books which did have special value to the civic council, and the description of its location, by the mayor's seat in the council chamber, confirms that such registers were viewed, and functioned, as potential symbols of honour and power. Having identified a campaign of development and proliferation of civic register production in the beginning of the fourteenth century, we can speculate that another such process was undertaken under the auspices of Thomas Wrangish, with whom three registers are connected in the 'calendar'.¹⁰⁸

It remains to consider whether the collection of contents described in Thomas Mynskip's 'calendar' indicate a deliberate policy of selection, and if so, on what basis. As we discussed above, a large proportion of the contents listed in the 'calendar' are craft ordinances. If, as seems likely, the index represents the first effort on the part of the city council to compile an index covering a range of civic registers, then a practical function of simply identifying the locations of a range of craft ordinances spread across many volumes is clear. The way that the contents are actually indexed is unusual, based more frequently on the initial letter of the first word of the statute, or its descriptive title, than on the key terms of the subject it deals with. It would be difficult to locate a lot of these contents through the 'calendar' in the way that we would use a modern index, by searching for all the instances when a basic subject or name occurs. Rather, the index would seem to be designed to be used by those who would be familiar with a given statute or ordinance which they were looking for, and would automatically look for the words with which it began, as opposed to the words dealing with its subject matter. It would seem that the 'calendar' was designed to be used by those people who were, like Thomas Mynskip, already familiar with the city's records. Perhaps, therefore, its focus was predominantly on those records, such as the craft ordinances, which had multiplied to such an extent that even experts in the records would be unsure of all their locations.

¹⁰⁸See also Chapter Four, p. 204-5.

Another dominant presence in the index, however, are documents dealing with civic office: this is especially true of the references to the two registers with the crucifix, which are disproportionately well represented in the 'calendar' by comparison with all the other registers except YCA, MS A/Y. As we have seen, this does not include the lists of civic office-holders in MS D1, and generally also excludes references to their oaths. It focuses rather on the regulation of the fulfilling of these offices by their holders - attending civic functions and council-meetings, appearing in public with an appropriate accompaniment of servants, ensuring the ceremonial torch-bearing of council officials and craft-members on the morning after the festival of Corpus Christi - as well as controlling the public response to it. There is also a focus on dealing with ceremonial occasions, such as the processional torch-bearing on the morning after Corpus Christi day, and especially on the Corpus Christi plays. Clearly this aspect of civic writing, which we saw developing in the early fifteenth century in the writing of MS D1, has become of major importance by the time that this 'calendar' was produced in 1482. The 'calendar' is, after all, conspicuously labelled with the names of the mayor and common clerk under whose auspices it was produced, suggesting that even this sort of literary undertaking has by 1482 assumed prestigious association. As such it seems to constitute a telling conclusion to our exploration in this chapter of the development of the association between civic writing and the promotion of figures representing urban power.

By the final quarter of the fifteenth century, then, we can see that York held a considerable collection of registers in its archive, and that different functions and types of contents were probably being confined to separate volumes. The separation of different kinds of records into discrete collections is partly a reflection of the desire to organise the archive and its contents which we can see displayed in the compilation of the 'calendar' itself, and which is suggested more generally in the fifteenth century by the addition of tables of contents to cartularies and registers in both York and London, epitomised in the organisational programme of the *Liber Albus* for London's civic archive. It also shows that the civic register was

considered to be serving a variety of functions useful to the administration which owned it. For example, we find collections which seem to be devoted largely to craft regulations. By contrast, the *House Books* listed in the 'calendar' serve to provide a legislative record, and indeed almost a chronicle, of the year of office of each of the city's mayors. The two registers with the crucifix seem dedicated to providing a more symbolically distinguished location for the royal statutes which constitute a large part of their contents. The parchment book of Thomas Wrangwish, indeed, apparently exploits the symbolic potency of the civic register further: it may well have provided a formal copy of a set of city records, and probably was deliberately located by the seat of the mayor, and thus identified as an accoutrement of his authority. Given the evidence with which the chapter began for the production of a register or collection of records from the current MS D1 devoted to recording the names of civic officials, it is striking that there seems to be a focus on those who served the city's administration in the 'calendar' produced in 1482. This is true of the ordinances which are selected for inclusion in the index, and of the associations made by the its compiler with himself as common clerk and with the mayor Richard York. Here, as in London, the civic book seems to have been seen by those who were responsible for its commissioning and its maintenance as a means of promoting and perpetuating their own memory.¹⁰⁹

Conclusion:

We have seen that the civic register in York as a genre of civic record writing does not seem to have been as distinctively recognised, or as organised in its structure and content, as the civic custumal in medieval London. In London the civic custumal, with a roughly standardised core of contents, was apparently commissioned as a specific type of compilation both by the city's administration and by private readers, and the special nature of the text was often signified by impressive presentation and sometimes decoration. The compilation of the civic registers of medieval York, while they indicate a hierarchising of their contents by

¹⁰⁹On the memorial function of the civic register, see Chapter Five, pp. 269-80.

degrees of formality in their presentation, are rarely decorated, and often very simply written. While the *Memorandum Books*, and the *House Books* develop distinctive characters as different kinds of compilations over the years that they are compiled, their range of contents are often very similar, and their arrangement of contents quite haphazard. Moreover, close study of the manuscript registers of York suggests that the clerks who initiated and continued them had little respect for the integrity of the existing record, and frequently altered collections to serve their present needs. However, the evidence for the compilation of the honorific collection of 'civic lists' in MS D1 from around the 1340s, and the subsequent commencement of YCA, MSs A/Y and B/Y in the 1370s, and the *House Books* as early as the 1430s, shows that from before the middle of the fourteenth century onwards, when York's archive may well have been fairly small in any case, the civic register became a very desirable format for the recording of information.

The number of apparently very large registers listed in the 'calendar' of 1482 confirms that this trend continued in the city. This collection of register books, and the various kinds of writing included in YCA, MSs D1, A/Y, B/Y and E39, suggest that the function and the contents of the register were seen to be flexible. This may well have lain behind its popularity. In Thomas Mynskip's 'calendar' we find evidence of registers apparently devoted to royal statutes, or craft ordinances, but more importantly used through their appearance (for example, the image of a crucifix on their front folio or binding), their association with a mayor, or their customary location (by the seat of the mayor) to convey symbolic authority for the book, its contents, or those who held it. We have seen, moreover, that just as in the civic customs of London, the collection of civic legislation into a register was perceived in York to be a suitable location for the development of writing which praised or chronicled the city and its administration.

While the concept of the 'civic register' may have been less well established in York than in London, the sense of the potential of the writing contained in it to appeal to or even to create a sense of citizenship and identity for the city was apparently not. Indeed, starting with the putative medieval register of 'civic lists'

contained in the modern MS D1, we can see a concern to focus upon the authority and visual impressiveness of the civic officials of York. It is interesting, too, that in two pieces of evidence examined at the beginning and the conclusion to the chapter - the description of the search of York's archive in 1476, and the 'calendar' of 1482, the importance of the 'civic registers' of York as constituent parts of the city's archive is stressed. Unlike many of the customals of London, York's civic registers began as and remained the property of the city's administration. The fact that York had a clear sense of the importance of its archive is underlined by the use of the English word 'archives' in the description of the search undertaken in 1476, although the clerk responsible for this memorandum uses the term to refer to a compilation of documents or possibly a register book, rather than to the city's complete collection of records.¹¹⁰ The English word 'archive' does not appear in the *Middle English Dictionary*, and its first citation in the *Oxford English Dictionary* it is dated in the first half of the seventeenth century.¹¹¹ In this at least, York seems to have been ahead of its time.

¹¹⁰See *HB*, p. 4, for the request by two citizens that the city's collection of 'registres, archives and othere bookes of olde and <newe> remembraunces' 'might be enserched'. See p. 130 in this chapter.

¹¹¹*OED* sb. *archive* (1) 'A place where public records or other important historic documents are kept' (first citation dated in 1645) (2) 'A historical record or document so preserved' (first citation dated in 1638). The *Oxford Latin Dictionary*, defines '*archium*' as a 'public record office'.

Chapter Four
The 'Public' Book: the Symbolic
Presentation of the Civic Registers

'With cities, it is as with dreams; everything imaginable can be dreamed, but even the most unexpected dream is a rebus that conceals a desire or, its reverse, a fear.'¹

Introduction:

The previous two chapters have offered a close examination of the content and structure of the civic registers and customals of London and York, and highlighted certain aspects of their production and the functions for which they were valued. This enabled some characteristics of the genre of the English medieval civic register to be established: their use in the development of non-documentary writing about the city and its government, such as chronicle, and encomiastic description; their utility as instructional manuals or hand-books for civic clerks and governing officials; and their association with civic authority and with a communal identity of the city, which led to them being compiled for private ownership as well as for administrative use. In the next two chapters we will pursue further the larger questions concerning the use and development of these registers towards which this evidence points. Most importantly, why did books with the general structure, content and decoration which we have found to be characteristic of the civic register arise in this format at these specific periods of time, and what was their role in the development of a sense of civic identity in London and York during the later Middle Ages?

This chapter will explore further the role of the civic register in the medieval city by examining its status as a public book. In Chapter Two we saw that in medieval London manuscript customals were assembled both by the city's administration and privately by individual citizens, so that they could not easily be categorised as either private or public writing (in the sense that it was used and owned by the city's government).² This chapter will reconsider the symbolic use of the civic register as a representation of urban authority, taking into consideration documentary references to the books in the records of London and

¹Italo Calvino, *Invisible Cities*, translated by William Weaver (London: Vintage, 1997), pp. 43-44.

²See Chapter Two, pp. 111-14.

York, and also their presentation and artistic decoration, since the London customals in particular are some of the finest in London's collection of administrative records.

It will, in addition, discuss what the significance of the civic register might have been to 'the public' of the medieval city more generally - how accessible were these registers to readers, auditors, or viewers both within and outside of the body of the ruling administration? The documentation of the civic administration which formed the most substantial part of these registers' contents was, unlike most other genres of writing, influential on and descriptive of the lives of almost every occupant of the medieval city, yet their language and written form alone limit dramatically the numbers who might have been capable of reading them, never mind been permitted to do so. Could the symbolic presentation of the civic register by the urban administration have extended its meaning to a wider audience in the city? This is a question of crucial importance for our definition of the nature and function of the civic register in the medieval city: can these books be termed 'civic' because they represented or were of some value to the city or its citizen body as a whole, or only because they were the preserve of the ruling administration discussion of which dominates their contents? We will begin by reviewing two recent scholarly discussions of the significance of the administrative document to medieval society, and its non-literate as well as its educated members. This will be contrasted with the evidence from the records of York and London of how registers, and civic records more generally, were used and presented symbolically by the authorities which held them. In the third section, we will discuss the decoration of the civic registers on which the thesis has focused, and the role of this artistic type of presentation in the symbolic use of these books. The final section will consider how successfully the civic book served the city as a symbol of urban prosperity and integrity, by considering the historical context for the production of some of these volumes.

Civic Writing and its Public: Two Scholarly Views:

In his book *Writing and Rebellion: England in 1381*, published in 1996, Steven Justice uses evidence of the treatment of administrative documentation by rebels during the Peasants' Revolt of 1381 to investigate the rural experience of and attitude to writing around this time.³ Justice follows the argument of Michael Clanchy, discussed in Chapter One, that a considerable familiarity with documentary form and terminology existed amongst at least some peasant workers.⁴ Moreover, he goes further to suggest that the destruction of existing - and in some cases creation of new - documents by rural workers whose experience of formal education was probably minimal is evidence of 'a kind of documentary involvement' which he categorises under a 'broader' definition of 'literacy' including not just the ability to read and write, but also 'a savvy about the forms and functions and powers of documentary usage.'⁵ A lack of formal education, then, did not preclude involvement in and some comprehension of documentary culture.

At the same time, however, Justice argues that the rebels associated the written word with governmental and institutional authority, and that their actions were motivated by resentment over their exclusion from the power inscribed in documentary form. He describes the production of rebel texts in documentary format as 'acts of assertive literacy', 'appropriating the instruments, also in part symbolic, of parchment, ink, and chancery formulae, the documentary forms of royal government', and suggests that their treatment of some documents during the revolt was a response to the belief that 'trewthe hat bene sette under a lokke'.⁶ Justice focuses on the apparently unjust paradox, in the eyes of the insurgents, of the 'private' possession of documents which are by their very nature 'public',

³Steven Justice, *Writing and Rebellion: England in 1381*, *The New Historicism: Studies in Cultural Poetics*, 27 (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1996).

⁴M. T. Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record: England 1066-1307*, 2nd edn (Oxford and Cambridge, Massachusetts: Blackwell, 1993); see Chapter One, pp. 30-1.

⁵Justice, *Writing and Rebellion*, p. 52. This redefinition of literacy can also be compared with the categories of medieval literacy discussed in Chapter One, pp. 50-1, and pp. 60-4.

⁶Justice, *Writing and Rebellion*, p. 24, and p. 68.

inasmuch as they deal with issues of common concern to the local population as a whole. Documentary writing, which in itself might be viewed positively as a receptacle of 'trewthe', was considered to belong to the community as a whole; in the hands of government, however, it was 'under a lokke' from which it must be 'liberated'.⁷

Brigitte Bedos-Rezak's 1994 article, 'Civic Liturgies and Urban Records in Northern France, 1100-1400' describes a situation in towns of northern medieval France, in which documentary writing similarly formed a key point of connection in the ongoing relationship between the ruling urban council, and the population of the town whose lives were recorded and regulated by this writing. However, Bedos-Rezak presents this urban writing as a medium by which unity might be achieved within the community, and an embodiment of this integrity. She argues that civic records 'elicited attachment, involvement, and commitment on the part of townspeople', partly because statutes tended to 'emphasize individual identity' in their legislative detail, referring to 'actual events embedded in, and expressive of, the urban social network', but also through public ceremonial surrounding the document, in which they were implicated.⁸ Townspeople came to the town hall, which 'monopolized scribal activity', and observed, and often played an active gestural role in, the 'liturgy' surrounding production of the documents which they required.⁹ Copies, or parts, of these documents were then installed in the city's archive, thus ensuring that 'the parties were inscribed within the ongoing narrative of the city's history, making them part of the very substance of the collective

⁷Justice in fact, on pp. 185-92, interprets the 'trewthe' of the rebel texts to have a wider range of meanings than the modern 'truth'. Susan Reynolds, by contrast, argues that modern historians apply anachronistic political ideas to the Middle Ages when they seek out examples of lower class discontent with the authority of their governors. Reynolds contends that according to the medieval concept of 'community' 'everyone, apparently, agreed that the rich not only did but should take the lead in government; only, they ought to consult the others and treat them fairly.': Susan Reynolds, 'Medieval Urban History and the History of Political Thought', *Urban History Yearbook*, 1982, 14-23 (p. 19).

⁸Brigitte Bedos-Rezak, 'Civic Liturgies and Urban Records in Northern France, 1100-1400', in *City and Spectacle in Medieval Europe*, ed. by Barbara A. Hanawalt and Kathryn L. Reyerson, *Medieval Studies at Minnesota*, 6 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994), pp. 34-55 (p.34, and p. 36).

⁹Bedos-Rezak, 'Civic Liturgies', p. 43, and p. 42.

identity from which they as individuals derived the means, and meaning, of their social behaviour'.¹⁰

Bedos-Rezak acknowledges that communal involvement in the production of public documentation 'did not abolish all divisions' and recognises the ritualisation of civic documentation as part of 'a discourse in power' of which the towns' councils were very conscious.¹¹ Towns were anxious to maintain and multiply copies of their written records, and to develop their role as a symbol of governmental and 'public' life: they were 'written, sealed, objectified, and thus available as sacred texts and icons for the ritual of a civic liturgy'.¹² Once civic records were made symbolic like this, carrying the weight of added layers of significance, Bedos-Rezak points out that they transferred their potency to the locations in which they were produced, and to the archive in which they were collectively stored. The administrative document was useful as a symbol of both authority and authenticity within the urban environment, transforming the town, as Bedos-Rezak puts it, into a '*locus credibilis*'.¹³

Bedos-Rezak and Justice present contradictory descriptions of the attitudes of a wider 'public' to the administrative writing produced and held by members of local and national government: while for Justice the written document came to represent for the rural poor their exclusion from the decision-making of literate government, for Bedos-Rezak it became a means of integrating, even if only in symbolic and not practical terms, the ruling body of a town with its larger body of inhabitants into an idea of a united community. However, their treatments of the social role of the administrative record equally clearly reveal important common features - perhaps most obviously the fact that both seem concerned that the written record should be a 'public' document, relevant and somehow accessible to the townspeople or peasants whom it concerned, although in practical terms it was necessarily used and held by governmental bodies. In both instances, the written record is associated with a ruling administration, but at the same time, both

¹⁰Bedos-Rezak, 'Civic Liturgies', p. 43.

¹¹Bedos-Rezak, 'Civic Liturgies', p. 44, and p. 39.

¹²Bedos-Rezak, 'Civic Liturgies', p. 40.

¹³Bedos-Rezak, 'Civic Liturgies', p. 39, and p. 45.

peasants and town dwellers are presented as seeking possession of documents or involvement in the culture of writing, as a means of achieving authority and a sense of unity for their social groups. Inasmuch as it apparently creates a sense of a unified 'public', then, the written record is a 'public' instrument and symbol. While they may not all have been capable of reading, understanding, or writing these records, both peasants and townspeople seem to feel that they have a role to play in their production or use - the 'kind of documentary involvement' posited by Justice. In each case, the written record becomes increasingly valued as a result of a complex of symbolic associations developed around it: the document is seen as belonging to the community, as conducive of social unity, and, importantly, as a repository of 'truth'.

Civic Writing and its Public: the Evidence of the Records of London and York:

Documentary references to the civic records and registers of London and York suggest that Steven Justice's and Brigitte Bedos-Rezak's concern that 'public' records should be treated as such is not solely a modern, intellectual preoccupation. London's records contain resolutions that the city's customs and laws should be pronounced in public to make them more accessible to the city's population. Andrew Horn, in the chronicle thought to have been attached to the London customal the *Liber Regum*, completed probably by 1321, highlights and applauds the efforts of the reformist mayor Richer de Refham to have 'the ancient customs and liberties in the books and rolls of the chamber of the city' 'searched' and 'read and made public' ('*fecit [...] pupplicari*') as contributing 'to preserve and reform the king's city in its former glory'.¹⁴ The same verb '*puppublicare*', is used in another chronicle, the *Annales Paulini*, to describe the occasion when Horn himself 'read and made public and translated into English' the city's new charter

¹⁴*Hic antiquas consuetudines et libertates in rotulis et libris camerae civitati fecit persecutari, et, congregatis sapientioribus, potentioribus, una cum aldermaniis, coram eis fecit legi et puppublicari [...] sic regis civitatem ad pristinam dignitatem at indemnem visus est servare et reformare*: *Chronicles of the Reigns of Edward I and Edward II*, ed. by William Stubbs, *Rerum Britannicarum Medii Aevi Scriptores* (Rolls Series), 76 (London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office, 1882, repr. 1965), I: *Annales Londoniensis and Annales Paulini*, pp. 175-6. On the *Liber Regum*, see Chapter Two, pp. 86-100.

granted by Edward III.¹⁵ *Letter-Book E*, which contains material dating from 1314-1337, records that 'matters connected with the duties of divers bailiffs [...] and ordinances regulating the various trades and handicrafts' should be 'enrolled in a register, and that once or twice a year they be read in public assembly, and copies be delivered to such as desire them', because 'many citizens, owing to their youth, are not sufficiently instructed in the ancient laws, franchises and customs of the city'. Clearly there were practical reasons why legislation such as this should be made known to citizens other than civic officials, but in this instance, as in that above taken from the chronicle attached to the *Liber Regum*, the clerk emphasises the benefit of such knowledge to the city imagined as an incorporated entity, recommending the publicising of records so 'that peace and concord be nourished and preserved throughout the city by neighbourly unity'.¹⁶ The records of London's courts contain references to written records being read publicly in order to settle legal disputes as early as 1300, and it seems inevitable that similar procedures would have been followed in the courts presided over by York's civic officials.¹⁷ A memorandum written in the 1470s survives for a royal proclamation addressed 'to the foresaid mayor to be pronounced and proclaimed throughout the whole city', and important urban legislation would presumably have received the same treatment.¹⁸

The title of one of the civic registers of York suggests that there was, similarly, an attempt at the very least to present the civic record and the legislation it contained as belonging to the body of the city as a whole. York, YCA, MS B/Y includes a reference to itself as the '*registrum communitatis*', the register of the commonalty, or the common register.¹⁹ The Middle English equivalent, 'commune', is a popular adjective in the articulation of civic bodies,

¹⁵*per andream Horn camerarium Gildhaldæ lectæ et pupplicatæ ac in Anglico expositæ*: Stubbs, *Annales*, p. 325.

¹⁶*LBE*, p. 13.

¹⁷*CEMCR*, p. 73

¹⁸*praedicto Maiori ad pronuntiandum et proclamandum per totam Civitatem*: *York Civic Records*, ed. by Angelo Raine, 8 vols, *Yorkshire Archaeological Record Series*, 98-119 (1938) (1939; 1941; 1942; 1946; 1948; 1950; 1953) (Wakefield: West Yorkshire Printing Company, 1939-53), I, pp. 2-3.

¹⁹York, YCA, MS B/Y, fol. 4v.

business and possessions in the civic registers which we are considering, here. The 'communitas' or 'commonalty', as a body of citizens, is often referred to, and *clericus communis* or 'comun clerk' is the chosen professional name of the senior clerk in urban governments from at least the early fourteenth century.²⁰ According to the *Middle English Dictionary* 'commune' is defined as, among other things, 'shared by, or serving, the members of a community, or organization; also official, public (as opposed to private)'.²¹ In terming it as the '*registrum communitatis*', then, the common clerk responsible for MS B/Y emphasised its utility as a 'public' book, owned ultimately by the city as a kind of imprecise whole.²²

We will return shortly to consider in greater detail the concern of city authorities to present the civic record as 'public' and available; more immediately, we must acknowledge that in practical terms, access to the records of the medieval town was severely limited by a range of factors. The most obvious obstacle for a large number of the inhabitants of medieval York and London must have been their incapacity to comprehend the written form and the language characteristic of the administrative record. We saw in Chapter One that, although educational opportunities were good in both York and London, the literate skills possessed by different people in the medieval city may frequently have been limited to reading or writing of particular types of text or specific languages.²³ The literacy required to read and understand the text of an administrative record, or more specifically one of the civic registers discussed in this thesis, would involve knowledge of Latin and probably also Anglo-Norman, in addition to English; experience of the legalistic formulae which many of these texts used; and familiarity with the scribal hands and contractions employed to facilitate the more

²⁰See Chapter Five, pp. 240-56.

²¹*MED*, *commune* adj. (3a) and (4). The meaning of '*commune*', in particular in relation to 'common clerks', is discussed further in Chapter Five, pp. 257-9.

²²On the 'common' or public quality of features of urban government, see Anthony Black, "The Individual and Society", in *The Cambridge History of Medieval Political Thought c. 350-c. 1450*, ed. by J. H. Burns (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), pp. 588-606, especially pp. 591-8, and Susan Reynolds, *Kingdoms and Communities in Western Europe, 900-1300* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1986), Chapter Six, and 'Medieval Urban History'.

²³See Chapter One, pp. 50-1, and pp. 60-4.

rapid copying of documentation.²⁴ If the aldermanic and mercantile owners of the privately held London custumals discussed in Chapter Two did in fact read their manuscripts themselves, then we can assume that at least some men of this background in the capital city possessed this level of literacy, but clearly it cannot have extended to the poorer and less educated inhabitants of London.²⁵ George Woodbine argued that the 'legal parlance' in French which we find in this kind of writing was as early as the thirteenth century 'more or less incomprehensible to the uninitiated'.²⁶ The linguistic exclusion of potential readers is particularly pertinent to those civic registers which are the focus of this thesis from London: Latin and French continue to be the languages in which the bulk of the text is written in the *Liber Albus* of 1419, and the *Liber Dunthorn*, completed around 1474, whereas the city's other records were increasingly copied in English from the first quarter of the fifteenth century onwards, as are the civic records surviving in York.²⁷

A counter-current of references to the civic archive and its records in the registers of both cities implies that what visual access was available was kept distant and perhaps strictly controlled. London's *Plea and Memoranda Rolls* contain an entry which suggests that the records were ordinarily kept stored away from the hands and eyes of those outside - and perhaps even of some of those who served - the city's ruling body. A 'letter and acquittance' are said to remain 'in the

²⁴Although according to the arguments of Michael Clanchy and Steven Justice familiarity with at least the form and formulae, and some of the vocabulary, of documentary writing was widespread relative to the ability to read Latin *per se*. See pp. 191-2 in this chapter, and Chapter One, pp. 30-1.

²⁵See Chapter Two, pp. 111-14.

²⁶George E. Woodbine, 'The Language of English Law', *Speculum*, 18:4 (1943), 395-436 (p. 395). On the discrepancy between the use of Latin and French in administrative writing with the lack of comprehension of these languages amongst the population as a whole, see, for example, W. Rothwell, 'The Trilingual England of Geoffrey Chaucer', *Studies in the Age of Chaucer: Yearbook of the New Chaucer Society*, 16 (1994), 45-67, Laura Wright, 'Early Modern Business English', in *Studies in Early Modern English*, ed. by Dieter Kastovsky, Topics in English Linguistics, 13 (Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 1994), pp. 449-65, Michael Richter, 'A Sociolinguistic Approach to the Latin Middle Ages', *Studies in Church History*, 11 (1975), 69-82, and Rolf Berndt, 'The Period of Final Decline of French in Medieval England (Fourteenth and Early Fifteenth Centuries)', *Zeitschrift für Anglistik und Amerikanistik*, 20 (1972), 341-69.

²⁷On the use of Latin, French, and English in London's medieval records, see *CPMR, A.D. 1413-1437*, pp. vii.-xix.

custody of the common clerk in the upper chamber where the records were kept in a certain chest'.²⁸ Caroline Barron describes this as a 'bookroom which may have been no more than a large walk-through cupboard', lying between 'the outer Mayor's court and the inner chamber'.²⁹ The court cases recorded in the *Plea and Memoranda Rolls* and *Mayor's Court Rolls* for the city suggest that proceedings were frequently suspended while civic records, sometimes from another court or under the jurisdiction of a different official, were searched and consulted. We can infer from this that they were stored apart from the areas of the Guildhall open to public access for such occasions. In 1377, to offer two examples, the 'rolls, books and memoranda' were searched to confirm whether or not a clerk named Alan Scarnyngg was a freeman when he died, and William Poynt requested that the date on an indenture of apprenticeship enrolled at the Guildhall was checked.³⁰

While we lack a parallel direct reference to the mode of storage of York's civic records, they were probably kept similarly secluded. An excerpt from York's *House Books*, referred to at the beginning of Chapter Three and dated in 1476, offers a clearer presentation of the accessibility of the records of York's city council.³¹ It describes how two citizens, needing to discover whether a copy of a document concerning them was held in the city's archive, followed a strict decorum of applying to the council 'that our registres, archives ande othere bookes of olde and newe remembraunces alway abiding and remaynyng in our saide counsall chambre under saufe and suyre keping might be enserched' for them.³² Although the documents held in the archive potentially deal with the citizens' business, then, theoretically 'inscribing' them into a 'written' 'collective identity' of

²⁸*CPMR, A.D. 1458-1482*, p. 28. London's records were officially in the custody of the chamberlain until 1462, when jurisdiction passed to the common clerk: *LBL*, p. 17. In York they seem always to have lain in the custody of the common clerk. See Chapter Five for further discussion of the role and responsibilities of the common clerk.

²⁹Caroline M. Barron, *The Medieval Guildhall of London* (London: The Corporation of London, Guildhall, 1974), p. 31, and n. 100.

³⁰*CPMR, 1364-1381* (1929), p. 242, and p. 248.

³¹See Chapter Three, p. 130.

³²*HB*, p. 4. An entry on pp. 6-7 notes that a '*scriptum testimonale*' was later delivered to the two citizens, John Stokesley and Hugh Lincoln. Another entry in the *House Books*, on p. 409, records the temporary loan of charters of liberties of the city to a citizen.

the city, the documents are entirely within the control of the city council, and access to them is restricted to those of suitable status within the 'collective' community, and probably the council.³³ We will return to consider the significance of this passage for our understanding of the way that York's civic records were kept and viewed shortly.

In fact, the records confirm that loss or abuse of civic documentation was a real danger. One of York's common clerks, Thomas Yotten, was dismissed for 'misguideing of our bookes, accomptes and other evidences of your citie of Yorke' in 1476, and there is evidence that at least one of London's record books, *Letter Book E*, was removed from the Guildhall and had to be bought back by the city's council in the reign of Henry VIII.³⁴ Moreover it seems that in London at least the records were sometimes quite literally held in private hands during - and sometimes beyond - the period of office of the civic servant who used or was most concerned with them: London's *Plea and Memoranda Rolls* contain an assurance, dated in 1329, from the executors of Andrew Horn's will that they 'had delivered by indenture to Henry de Seccheford, now Chamberlain, all property pertaining to the Chamber of London', while the Mayor's Court Rolls record a complaint by the alderman Adam de Fulham that a man 'had entered his chamber by night, broken open his chests and carried away rolls and memoranda relating to his Aldermanry, charters, writings obligatory, tallies'.³⁵ While there was a consistent attempt to present the civic register as a public resource, produced by the public's 'common clerk', then, the notions of shared urban experience of this writing are sharply undercut here by the documentary evidence of its possession and control by a limited group within the city council, and its withdrawal into the governmental archive.

However, the evidence we have of records being consulted in cases in the city's courts suggest that at least some of the civic registers of London and York might have been available to a larger listening and viewing public than to those

³³Bedos-Rezak, 'Civic Liturgies', p. 43.

³⁴*HB*, p. 47; see the introduction to *LBE*.

³⁵*CPMR, A.D. 1323-1364*, pp. 88-9; *CEMCR*, p. 164.

who actually read them. It also seems likely that manuscripts such as YCA, MS B/Y from York, the so-called 'common register', which contains a large number of copies of wills and deeds brought by citizens to be enrolled, would have been made visible to them in the process, as in the recording of civic documents in northern France described by Brigitte Bedos-Rezak, although again there are no references proving that this was the case. The 'calendar' of civic statutes entered into the back of York, YCA, MS A/Y, discussed in Chapter Three, refers repeatedly to 'the parchment book of Thomas Wrangwish', whose first mayoralty ran from 1476 to 1477, as 'lying be side the maire sete in Chamber'.³⁶ According to the 'calendar', its contents included the ordinances of the fletchers, the glovers, the armourers, and possibly the bookbinders and the potters, together with a memoranda concerning the taxation of Bootham. Regulations stipulating that aldermen and craftsmen should be equipped with torches for the morning after the feast of Corpus Christi, and dealing with the boundaries of the city, may well also have been copied into this civic register.³⁷ The high proportion of craft-related regulations which are listed in this particular register would justify frequent consultation, and its location in a position where it could be easily reached. Similarly, records of the legal definitions of the city's boundaries, and its taxation rights over the suburb of Bootham, were key to the city council's administration of its power.³⁸ The description of this volume suggests that at least one register was on show to those who had access to the mayor.³⁹

³⁶See Chapter Three, pp. 177-8.

³⁷See Appendix Three to this thesis, pp. 333-4, for an explanation of why these contents probably all appeared in this single book.

³⁸The city council of York achieved jurisdiction over most of Bootham in 1354, after considerable conflict. See D. M. Palliser, 'The Birth of York's Civic Liberties, c. 1200-1354' in *The Government of Medieval York: Essays in Commemoration of the 1396 Royal Charter*, ed. by Sarah Rees Jones, Borthwick Studies in History, 3 (York: Borthwick Institute of Historical Research, University of York, 1997), pp. 88-107 (pp. 99-100).

³⁹The extent of this access depends on which building is referred to by the phrase 'the maire sete in Chamber': if it is to the Guildhall, where 'larger meetings assembled and where the court of the mayor and bailiffs was held', then this scene would have been available to a larger number of York's inhabitants than it would if 'Chamber' signifies the council chamber on Ouse Bridge, 'described in 1376 as 'the mayor's chamber on Ouse Bridge', where 'the city council met and the main officers of the city were accommodated'. E. Miller, 'Medieval York', in *The Victoria History of the Counties of England: A History of Yorkshire: The City of*

The Symbolic Presentation of the Registers:

Other registers may well have been used in oath-taking: the oaths of civic officials copied into the front of York, YCA, MS D1 customarily end with the undertaking to swear 'be this buke', and it is tempting to conclude that the register into which the oaths were copied was also that from which they were read, and on which an oath was sworn.⁴⁰ According to the 'calendar' constructed by Thomas Mynskip, oaths of civic officials were also found in YCA, MS A/Y, 'in 'the registir with the crucyfix', and in 'the pawpir boke in the tyme of John Thyrsk mair'.⁴¹ The 'les registre' may also have begun with a series of oaths of civic officials.⁴² In London, civic oaths were copied into several of the civic customals, and other administrative volumes, such as the *Letter-Books*, kept in the Guildhall: if such books were being used in the ceremonial swearing-in of civic officials in York, it seems likely that they may also have been so employed in the capital city.⁴³ As such, they would have been visible to all those public servants swearing oaths of office - in the case of YCA, MS D1 including bridgemasters and even freemen of the city - and to those observing the event.⁴⁴ Moreover, they would have taken on a symbolic value in an important civic ceremony, functioning much like the 'sacred texts and icons for the ritual of a civic liturgy' described by Brigitte Bedos-Rezak.⁴⁵

There is no direct evidence that these civic books were used as objects on which fidelity was sworn, as well as the repositories in which the oaths were copied, but the contents of London, Guildhall Library, MS 4645, a register compiled by the Weavers' Company of London between the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries, are more strongly suggestive that this may have been the case. As was described in Chapter Two, this manuscript contains, amongst other guild

York, ed. by P. M. Tillott (London: Oxford University Press, 1961), pp. 25-116 (p. 65).

⁴⁰York, Y.C.A., MS D1, fols. 1r.-3v.

⁴¹See Appendix Three, p. 333, and pp. 335-7.

⁴²See Appendix Three, p. 160.

⁴³See, for example, *LBD*, pp. 1-13, and pp. 192-208.

⁴⁴YCA, MS D1, fols. 1r.-3v.

⁴⁵Bedos-Rezak, 'Civic Liturgies', p. 40.

records, oaths of journeyman weavers and bailiffs of the company, but also excerpts from the Gospels of Mark, Mathew, Luke, and John.⁴⁶ At the very least, the inclusion of this religious material, or pericope, allowed the book to be used, and seen, as a source of not only guidance for guild members in their working lives, but also writing which was spiritually educative; in addition, it may have imbued the register with some of the supernatural potency of the Bible itself.⁴⁷ The register absorbed both some of the contents and some of the significance of the most publicly visible, and symbolically charged book of the Middle Ages, the Bible, and it seems likely that the pericope was included to increase the potency of the register as a guarantee of fidelity and truth, enabling it to be used more effectively for the swearing of oaths. As the discussion in Chapter One of book ownership showed, the majority of manuscripts possessed by lay readers in the medieval city were of a religious nature, and the Bible was the one book familiar to all inhabitants of the city, if only from a distance, and formed the content of the most richly decorated manuscripts.⁴⁸ Michael Clanchy has also pointed out that 'the Bible had been written in the form of a book almost since the historical beginnings of Christianity', rather than in any other format, and that Christ 'was most commonly depicted in Romanesque art' 'in majesty bearing the Book of Judgement'.⁴⁹ Writing, and most specifically the book, then, already bore a religious significance for a medieval audience.

None of the civic registers under discussion in this thesis have a similar religious content: indeed, we cannot be certain that they were bound together into permanent book form during the medieval period - we know that this was definitely not the case, for example, with the collection of material in the current YCA, MS D1.⁵⁰ However, as was suggested in Chapter Two, the structure of guild registers such as Guildhall Library, MS 4645 may well have been modelled

⁴⁶See Chapter Two, 113.

⁴⁷On the insertion of 'pericopes', see Geoffrey Martin, 'English Town Records, 1200-1350', in *Pragmatic Literacy, East and West 1200-1330*, ed. by Richard Britnell (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell, 1997), pp. 119-130 (p. 130).

⁴⁸See Chapter One, p. 35-6.

⁴⁹Clancy, *From Memory*, p. 139, and p. 140.

⁵⁰See Chapter Three, pp. 139-42.

on civic registers such as the *Liber Horn*, and in their turn been influential on both publicly and privately held registers in London, and other cities. There is some evidence from York confirming that the special, spiritual potency of the Bible was transferable to other kinds of book, and to civic books in particular. A record of a court case concerning members of the craft of girdlers held in the city in 1428 describes witnesses taking oaths, in the first instance 'upon the haly Evangill', but subsequently simply 'apon a buke'.⁵¹ Whether or not we infer from this that any book was deemed sufficient for oath-taking, it is clear that little differentiation was made, even in a legal record, between the categories of book and Bible.

Thomas Mynskip's 'calendar' also refers to two volumes as 'the register with the crucifix' suggesting that, within the context of the city council, they may have been attributed with the solemn symbolism of the Bible as a guarantee of fidelity: we know that one of these registers, at least, contained oaths of civic officials.⁵² YCA, MS B/Y contains a reference to itself as 'the register called Domesday', and this may be another indication that civic authorities were borrowing from Biblical iconography.⁵³ It seems that the urban authorities who owned and used these civic registers recognised the potential of the visual symbolism of the book, playing on its original religious importance. As such, the register employed in civic ceremony would indeed function as an 'icon' to be observed and valued by those present.⁵⁴

⁵¹A *Volume of English Miscellanies*, ed. by James Raine, Surtees Society 85 (1888) (Durham: Andrews; London: Whittaker, Bernard Quaritch; Edinburgh: Blackwood, 1890), p. 1, and p. 2.

⁵²See p. 201 in this chapter. See also Mirjam M. Foot, 'Bindings with Cut-Leather Work', *Bulletin de Bibliophile*, 1 (1991), 18-41 on the techniques of cutting patterns into the leather covers of manuscripts in the Middle Ages, which may have been used on these registers.

⁵³The reference to YCA, MS B/Y as '*registro eiusdem Civiatis vocatus Domesday*' appears on fol. 7r. of the register.

⁵⁴Bedos-Rezak, 'Civic Liturgies', p. 40. The titles given contemporaneously to the civic registers of London and York seem also to suggest that they were characterised by their external appearance, rather than their content: see *LBD*, pp. 317-18. In York, the collection of civic registers referred to in the 'calendar' inserted at the back of the codex YCA, MS A/Y suggests that the council's books were differentiated partly in the same way: in Appendices Two and Three we can see listed 'the les register', 'the gret register' and registers designated according to their construction out of parchment or paper. This may reflect that they were viewed as closed books, and from a distance, by the majority of those who saw them.

The civic register was also an important symbol for the members of urban government because it contained, and embodied, the charters and laws on which its autonomy was based and according to which its administration was run. The city gained its legal identity through the charters and statutes which were carefully, and often repeatedly, copied into its archive of writings. These written collections of laws, then, while they were basic to the public life and identity of the city as a whole, and therefore in theory belonged to the urban 'public', were a crucial requirement in any urban government. The city's books of laws and statutes were tools of their government, but also one of the justifications and symbols of their rule. Moreover, the city, in a legal sense, could be very closely identified with the civic register.⁵⁵

In both York and London, the civic register can be seen to function as a kind of accoutrement, or symbol, of governmental power. The names of both mayors and common clerks are ostentatiously attached to civic books. In London, in the case of the *Liber Albus*, John Carpenter has been careful to name Richard Whittington as the mayor during whose period of office the volume was completed, and the *Liber Dunthorn* is named after the common clerk who supervised its production.⁵⁶ As we saw in Chapter Three, the name of the common clerk Roger Burton appears repeatedly in the York records, and the *House Books* were frequently titled with the name of the mayor during whose year of office they were produced.⁵⁷

Association with the symbol of a written compilation of urban legislation was clearly highly desirable. In the title of the York civic register which we have already considered, 'the parchment book of Thomas Wrangwish lying beside the maire sete in Chamber', the authority and prestige which the register could attribute within a civic context is clear.⁵⁸ The 'parchment book of Thomas Wrangwish', apparently characteristically located 'be side the maire sete in

⁵⁵See Chapter One, pp. 32-5.

⁵⁶See Chapter Two, p. 68.

⁵⁷See Chapter Three, pp. 155-7, pp. 162-5, p. 166, pp. 169-70, and pp. 179-80. The attachment of their names to the records which they copied or supervised by clerks and compilers will be discussed further in Chapter Five.

⁵⁸See Appendix Three, pp. 333-4.

Chamber', forms a potent symbol of the legislation which supports the rule of the mayor, imagined as located next to the seat of highest authority in one of the two central buildings of conciliar power in the city. This brief descriptive nomenclature for this book conjures up an impressive tableau of authority, embodying governmental power in the human figure of its highest official; in the geographical location in which it is enacted; and in the written law on the basis of which it functions. Authorship of this kind of writing, or at least possession of it, could be synonymous with authority.

York's *House Books* recount the procedure followed by two citizens seeking a copy of a document in the city's archive in a memorandum dated in 1476. The passage yields evidence of the description and presentation of civic records as symbolically valuable. The two men are said to have

desired of us with great instance and lowely prayer that our registres, archives ande othere bookes of olde and newe remembraunces alway abiding and remaynyng in our saide counsall chambre under saufe and suyre keeping might be enserched [...] ande noo maner, fourme ne mension therof we can fynde there specifyed in enny bok abiding within our saide chambre as our lord God the veray registre of all trouthe and rightwissness knowith.⁵⁹

We can see that the restrictive access to the archive is justified by a concern for its security - in the 'counsall chambre' it is 'under saufe and suyre keeping', rather than metaphorically imprisoned 'under a lokke' as in the case described by Justice at the beginning of the chapter.⁶⁰ The possessiveness implied by Steven Justice of governmental authorities over public documentation is still apparent, here: although the two men are described in this entry as 'concitizens', the documents consulted are constantly referred to as 'oure' archive, and as being stored in 'oure [...] counsall chambre'. Whether the 'oure' allies the clerk recording this event with his fellow clerks within the council, or with the governmental body more generally, it would seem to exclude the two citizens. As in the example of Thomas Wrangwish's book discussed above, the archive here

⁵⁹*HB*, p. 4. See Chapter Three, p. 130.

⁶⁰Justice, *Writing and Rebellion*, p. 68.

with its records of the laws and inhabitants is presented in close association with the city council and as an aspect of its spectacle of authority.⁶¹

More importantly, however, the clerk is careful to emphasise other valuable properties of civic writing: the written record is supposedly a record for posterity, one which will be 'alway abiding and remaynyng in our saide counsall chambre'. Not only is it a permanent record, moreover, but it is presented as an absolute means of establishing truth - the two citizens, after all, come to the council's archive because it holds permanent proof of a situation which oral dispute appears to have confused. As in the examples by Steven Justice and Brigitte Bedos-Rezak cited at the start of the chapter, then, the administrative record here is presented as a repository and symbol of truth. This symbolism is carried further, however, by the replication of the term 'registre', the most common term in York's records for the administrative record book, and used in that context in this passage, in its reference to the ultimate means of measuring veracity, and administering justice, 'our lord God the veray registre of all trouthe and rightwissness'. Clearly it was important to the city council to emphasise the unbiased 'truth' of the contents of their civic registers, in the process setting their longevity within a divine time-scale. Crucially, too, the symbolic virtue of the civic record transfers its potency to the location in which it is held, as in the examples cited by Justice and Bedos-Rezak. In the case from York this symbolic value is transmitted ultimately to the council chamber, but in the first instance to the archive, since it is the entire collection and range of the city's documents, its 'registres, archives ande othere bookes of olde and newe remembraunces', which is visualized in the passage as a large and impressive resource. The two citizens who ask for the York civic records to be consulted for them are said to approach with 'lowely prayer', implying a certain solemnity in the treatment of the archive. Whether the writing derives its significance from its location at the heart of

⁶¹The most obvious reason for this discrepancy in the presentation of the administrative record as either imprisoned 'under a lokke' or under saufe and suyre keping', of course, is that while the description in York's *House Books* has been devised by a clerk employed by the city council, Steven Justice records the response of those excluded both from governmental power and from access to its documents.

governmental authority, or the relationship is more synergetic, the combination is clearly a powerful one.

The idea that the civic authorities of York and London might have been attentive to the symbolic value of their records, and particularly their visual presentation to a wider audience, is supported by evidence from these cities and abroad of an increasing number of imagistic representations of the city and its power during the fourteenth century. These could be directed at both a local, and a national or international audience. Two medieval seals of York survive today. The earlier one, dating from at the latest the beginning of the thirteenth century, bears an image of St Peter on one side and depicts a walled city on the other; a second seal of similar design was in use by 1335 and a seal of the mayoralty dates at the latest from the end of the fourteenth century.⁶² Mayoral dignity had also expanded by the end of the fourteenth century to require an official sword-bearer and a mace-bearer.⁶³ In 1389 and 1393, Richard II is said to have given the city a ceremonial sword, and a 'cap of maintenance' for the sword-bearer to wear, respectively.⁶⁴ York's Guildhall was rebuilt from 1445 onwards, and London's government engaged in a process of rebuilding and extending its Guildhall from 1411.⁶⁵

Moreover, an entry in the list of mayors in YCA, MS D1 dated in 1491 recounts the formal procedure for the election and swearing-in of the mayor of York, involving two processions through the city on two consecutive days: this ceremony may well have been in operation some time before it was recorded, here. We know, similarly, that by 1419 London also had a coat of arms, and that the election of its mayors was surrounded by detailed ceremony, involving sword and mace bearers. The *Liber Albus*, which was completed in this year, describes this as established ritual, and is decorated on its opening folio with the city's coat

⁶²Tillot, *The Victoria County History*, pp. 544-5.

⁶³The name of the mayor's first servant is recorded in the list of mayors in YCA, MS D1 from the thirty-ninth year of the reign of Edward III on fol. 6v., and the second servant, later identified as his sword-bearer, appears from the entry for the twelfth year of the reign of Richard II, on fol. 9r.

⁶⁴Janet H. Bateson, 'The Cap of Maintenance', *York Historian*, 5 (1984), 18-24.

⁶⁵Tillot, *The Victoria County History*, pp. 542-3; Barron, *The Medieval Guildhall of London*, p. 25.

of arms.⁶⁶ Other forms of ritual ceremony and drama were also thriving by the end of the fourteenth century. In York, the Corpus Christi play 'had already evolved by 1376' 'into 'a multi-pageant Play cycle' which was seen certainly by Richard III in 1483 and possibly by Richard II in 1396.⁶⁷ York's *House Books* also record the elaborate ceremony devised for the royal entry of Henry VII to the city in 1486, involving tableaux and a speech by Ebrauk, the mythical founder of York: earlier royal visits to the city are described in much less detail.⁶⁸ In London, descriptions of royal entries into the city become more detailed from the end of the fourteenth century onwards.⁶⁹ In both cities, it may have been the written record of the ceremony which was innovative, and carefully devised pageants of this kind may have been appearing earlier. Civic registers are implicated in this ceremonial self-presentation of the civic government most obviously because they record it and so perpetuate it. However, if they did indeed constitute a symbolic reminder of the law by which the city was run, then their inclusion as props in this kind of ceremonial behaviour was also perhaps inevitable.

Parallels from Italy in this period confirm that this kind of use and perception of civic registers may well have been current. In Siena, civic account books dating from the fourteenth century have been decorated with coats of arms, but also imagery symbolising the ideal running of the commune. Throned figures

⁶⁶London, CLRO, Custumal 12, the *Liber Albus*, fols. 3v.-9r; the coat of arms is copied into the bottom right-hand corner of fol. 1r.

⁶⁷Jeremy Goldberg, 'Craft Guilds, the Corpus Christi Play and Civic Government', in Rees Jones, *The Government of Medieval York*, pp. 141-63 (p. 149).

⁶⁸*HB*, pp. 482-5. On Henry VII's royal entry to York, see Lorraine Attreed, 'The Politics of Welcome: Ceremonies and Constitutional Development in Late Medieval English Towns', in Hanawalt and Reyerson, *City and Spectacle*, pp. 208-231. On ceremonial entries into York by Richard III and Henry VII, see *Records of Early English Drama: York*, ed. by Alexandra F. Johnston and Margaret Johnston, 2 vols (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1979), II: *Introduction*; *The Records*, pp. 137-43, and pp. 146-52 respectively.

⁶⁹See, for example, the description of Henry V's entry into London after the battle of Agincourt in *Gesta Henrici Quinti*, ed. and translated by Frank Taylor and John S. Roskell (Oxford: 1975), pp. 101-13, John Carpenter's account of Henry VI's entry into London in 1432 in *Munimenta*, III: *Translation of the Anglo-Norman Passages in Liber Albus, Glossaries, Appendices, and Index*, pp. 457-64, and the descriptions in *The Great Chronicle of London*, ed. by A. H. Thomas and I. D. Thornley (London: The Library Committee of the Corporation of the City of London, 1938), pp. 156-70.

representative of the commune appear, similar to those depicted in the frescoes depicting good and bad urban government painted by Ambrogio Lorenzetti in the Sala dei Nove in the Palazzo Pubblico of the city. Lorenzetti may also have provided the decoration of one of the covers of the account books.⁷⁰ We cannot be sure whether these books were intended for public display. This example provides evidence, however, that in Italy civic registers of practical purpose were at this time expected to be seen. Moreover, they were thus perceived as a suitable location for imagery which is didactic and which depicts symbolically the city's government, to the extent that considerable investment was apparently made in their decoration.

During the late fourteenth century, then, the increasingly rapid accumulation of records by the governments of London and York coincided with a period when urban officials were seeking ways of symbolising and conceptualising for an observing public the authority and identity of the city. Of course, the evidence which we have considered concerning the civic records of York and London cannot reveal how extensive their 'public' might have been. There are no direct references to any of the civic registers which we have focused on being used in public meetings or consulted in court: registers such as the *Liber Albus* or the civic lists in YCA, MS D1, which constitute fine copies or collections of material also inscribed elsewhere in the records, are probably particularly unlikely to have been in everyday practical use in the council assembly or legal hearing.

Evidence does exist, however, that some of these books may have been visible to those who had access to the mayor or to the ceremonial swearing-in of civic officials, although again we cannot be certain whether this would have included many individuals other than office-holders in the cities. In addition, references to the cities' records and archive suggest that they were being

⁷⁰See Diana Norman, "'Love Justice, You Who Judge the Earth': The Paintings of the Sala dei Nove in the Palazzo Pubblico, Siena', in *Siena, Florence, and Padua: Art, Society and Religion 1280-1400*, ed. by Diana Norman (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, in association with the Open University, 1995), pp. 145-67.

consciously attributed with symbolic value. As in the examples discussed by Steven Justice and Brigitte Bedos-Rezak at the beginning of the chapter, the civic records of York and London seem to have been presented as receptacles of absolute truth, often imbued with the potency of divine text, and as 'public' documents, belonging to and conducive of a sense of the community as a whole, while simultaneously symbolising the authority of urban officials, and in practice being jealously kept within their control. These symbolic values are, of course, encapsulated in the description of the records within the records themselves, and access to a sense of these properties may have been as limited as access to the text of these documents: it is impossible to tell whether the citizens of York and London absorbed the ideas about the significance of the civic record in the same way that Justice suggests that the peasants he discussed did.

The ubiquity of the register book in urban government - in court; as the location where private and public records were copied up; in oath-taking ceremonies - and apparently also in guild meetings, however, must have made it a familiar symbol of authority and of city business to many inhabitants of London and York. Moreover, the presentation of the civic register as a public resource seems to have been deeply engrained in the minds of urban governors - down to the title of the 'common register' in York - suggesting that this symbolism may well have been more pervasive in medieval society than the limited evidence available to us implies. While the vast majority of the inhabitants of London and York may never have seen the text of these registers, they may still have been conscious of them as symbols of governmental rule, an idealised united 'public', and of the truth of writing. As such, they would have participated in the 'kind of documentary involvement' envisaged by Steven Justice for the rural peasants of 1381, which did not require either the ability or access to read the text of the administrative record, but only an appreciation of its significance within their wider community.⁷¹

⁷¹Justice, *Writing and Rebellion*, p. 52.

The Decoration of the Civic Registers:

We will return to consider further the significance of the symbol of the civic book to the medieval community later in the chapter, but having put the case for the book functioning within civic procedure as an externally viewed symbol, we need metaphorically to open up this closed book, and consider the visual impression made by the presentation of the pages within it. In many ways, textual decoration can help us to re-establish a vital link with these books, a link which if it is not missing then at least has been obscured, by offering a kind of 'reading' of how they were interpreted by their medieval owners and producers. In each instance, further description of the decoration of the registers has also been included when they are first discussed in Chapters Two and Three of the thesis, but some generalisations can be made about these manuscripts collectively to enable speculative conclusions to be drawn about the nature and purpose of their artistic presentation. While the previous section included discussion of civic records, or the civic archive in general, the following investigation will return to focus on the group of customals and registers considered in Chapters Two and Three. Both privately compiled and government owned books will be surveyed, roughly categorised according to the period or place in which they were produced, and whether they originated as the possessions of individual citizens or of urban government. The parameters of this investigation do not allow for detailed interpretation of the artistic work undertaken on these codices, but in the discussion which follows we will try to rediscover to some extent what the relationship between text and decoration was intended to be, and what effect this might have had on the way the books were viewed and used.⁷²

⁷²Only the London customals have been the subject of art historical criticism: the *Liber Horn* and the *Liber Custumarum* by Lynda Dennison, 'Liber Horn, Liber Custumarum and the Other Manuscripts of the Queen Mary Psalter Workshops', in *Medieval Art, Architecture and Archaeology in London*, ed. by Lindy Grant, The British Archaeological Association Conference Transactions for the Year 1984, 10 (London: British Archaeological Association, 1990), pp. 118-34. In the discussion which follows, the terms of description which I have used are based on the definitions offered by Kathleen Scott's article 'Design, Decoration and Illustration', in *Book Production and Publishing in Britain 1375-1475*, ed. by Jeremy Griffiths and Derek Pearsall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp. 31-64.

On the whole, decoration is limited, particularly in the York volumes: it appears to have been largely dictated by the practical considerations of the physical use of the texts and frequently contributes to the division of books into sections, or highlighting of particular contents for pragmatic purposes. While some of the London registers do contain pictures, these are rare, and there are no full-page miniatures.⁷³ The highlighting of initials with blue or red ink function as much to mark out different sections of the text, and facilitate searching for particular parts of contents, as to make it more attractive to the eye. Where the text has been copied with attention to neatness and visual attractiveness, writing tends to form a single, solid block in the centre of the page, with wide margins left on all four sides. The fact that these have been filled in many cases with sub-headings, references to the location of contents in other volumes, or other comments on the text, implies that this construction of space around the writing was made for practical, rather than aesthetic, reasons.

Other details of presentation can also be seen to relate to easing the task of reading, and of locating information. For example, several of the London volumes have been divided up into books or 'parts', and these are often indicated along the tops of the folios.⁷⁴ Throughout London's *Liber Memorandum*, and towards the end of the *Liber Ordinationum*, and in sections of the civic register YCA, MS A/Y from York, there are spaces containing small letters in ink where small decorated initials have been planned but never completed.⁷⁵ The fact that these books are imperfect in terms of their appearance has clearly not hindered their continued use by their owners, implying that decoration, and internal visual impressiveness, were of quite limited importance to those who used them.

⁷³Except for Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 476, on fol. 2v. See Chapter Two, p. 107.

⁷⁴For example, Andrew Horn's books, and the *Liber Albus*: see Chapter Two, p. 103, and pp. 115-16.

⁷⁵These spaces for decoration occur at the beginning of each section in the *Chronicle of the Archbishops of York*, copied into YCA MS A/Y by the common clerk Roger Burton. In another copy of this work, in Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Barlow 27, the beginning of each section describing each archbishop is marked by a decorated capital letter, as seems to have been intended here, together with a rubricated sub-heading in the text giving his name. See Chapter Two, pp. 104-5, and Chapter Three, p. 166.

Indeed, in the earliest of the London registers, the *Liber de Antiquis Legibus*, and in some parts of the York volumes, decoration and even neat presentation seem to have been largely ignored: the squeezing of information into spaces on folios; untidy hand-writing; and crossing out of sections, suggests that the inclusion of the information desired had utmost priority.⁷⁶ In such cases, the registers function simply as containers of information, which are not required to be accessible, attractive, or impressive to anyone other than those who use them regularly and who probably compiled them.

With these qualifications in mind, however, it is also clear that in many cases considerable effort has been exercised to produce a neat, appealing, and often impressively and interestingly decorated text in the registers, for reasons which may well subsume the mechanics of their practical use. Of the codices produced within the urban administrations of these two cities, the most extravagantly decorated are the London customals compiled later in our period of interest: the *Liber Albus*, completed in 1419, and the *Liber Dunthorn*, dated in 1474.⁷⁷ Both manuscripts begin with an elaborately and skilfully decorated opening page (see Figures 2 and 4). The *Liber Albus* commences with John Carpenter's introduction to his civic register, marked with a large, decorated initial and a broad frame in red, blue, and gold of floral design filling three margins of the page. The coat of arms of the city of London has been drawn into the bottom right-hand-corner of this frame, emphasising the book's possession by the Guildhall (see Figure 2). The royal charters granted to the city of London which appear on the first page of the *Liber Dunthorn* are similarly surrounded by a solid frame of flowers and leaves, and the book begins with a large initial, containing a throned and robed figure, probably a king (see Figure 4). Thereafter, both texts in general settle down into a formal presentation of their contents, with the text neatly contained in a centralised block, or columns. Decoration is largely limited

⁷⁶See Chapter Two, p. 73, and p. 83.

⁷⁷See Chapter Two, pp. 114-24. On the decoration of the *Liber Albus* as a device to facilitate use of the text, see also Chapter Five, pp. 264-5.

to the inclusion of small decorated initials, marking the beginnings of new sections, and fine pen line-work in some of the outside margins of the pages.

In both codices decoration is employed to distinguish different sections of the text. The *Liber Dunthorn* contains a series of some decorated sub-headings in the margins of its pages; the *Liber Albus* is distinguished by a conscientious inclusion of titles and marginal headings through most of its sections. The four parts into which the book is divided are normally noted across the tops of its folios, and different symbols appear consistently marking the verso and recto sides of folios. In the section on the judicial eyre, the headings '*quaestio*' and '*responsio*', or sometimes simply 'q' and 'r' are consistently included in the margins of the text.⁷⁸ The *Liber Albus* also differs from the *Liber Dunthorn* in the appearance in its margins of a limited amount of 'unofficial' decoration - the snakes; human heads; fishes; two-headed men; and human-headed dragons which may be an example of scribal or artists' doodling.⁷⁹

The two books, however, also share the characteristic of having further folios later in their contents which are as impressively decorated as their opening pages. The second part of Book One of the *Liber Albus*, concerning the judicial eyre, opens on fol. 16r. with its text surrounded by a floral and leaf frame, and commencing with a historiated initial depicting two rows of men, seated facing each other, with their hands raised as if in dispute, and with one man possibly holding a book (see Figure 6). They are sitting beneath an arched, turreted structure.⁸⁰ Further new major sections are similarly marked with margins

⁷⁸CLRO, Custumal 12, the *Liber Albus*, fols. 16r.-39v.

⁷⁹Michael Camille has argued that this kind of irreverent art in fact reinforces the authority represented by the text in the centre of the page, by mocking and subverting it: 'what looks at first like unfettered freedom of expression often served to legitimate the status quo': Michael Camille, *Image on the Edge: The Margins of Medieval Art* (London: Reaktion, 1995), p. 143. Mary Carruthers has suggested that these grotesques also served as triggers for the memory, arguing 'that the style of painting "drolleries" in manuscript margins comes into widespread use in the mid-thirteenth century' at the same time that a 'mnemotechnique' involving 'images that are violent, ugly, salacious or titillating, noble, sorrowful, or fearful' returned to fashion', perhaps representing 'an instance where a particular mnemotechnique did influence a new style in book decoration': Mary J. Carruthers, *The Book of Memory: A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture*, repr. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 245.

⁸⁰This section of the *Liber Albus* is, of course, of early fourteenth century origin. See Chapter Two, p. 90.

decorated with flowers and leaves, and illuminated initials (see Figure 3). In the *Liber Dunthorn*, the page on which the section describing pleas of land held at the Hustings begins on fol. 19r. is marked with a highly decorated frame of flowers, leaves, and birds, filling all four margins of the page, with scrolls incorporated into this artistic work containing the title of the section, and referencing its location in the *Liber Albus*.

Both of these civic registers have clearly been consulted and used to a degree: some subsequent marginal notes have been accrued in each book, and each finishes with more haphazard, undecorated additions suggesting that they were added to, to some extent, over time. Illumination, and careful presentation and production, then, does not indicate in these instances books which were designed exclusively as '*objets d'art*'. The evidence of the civic registers considered here cannot sustain a dichotomised valuation of the medieval manuscript in which those displaying costly and skilled decoration are simply showpiece items designed to be read only infrequently, and those which contain bare text are examples of working volumes. Indeed, we have already seen that much of the decoration in these civic registers functioned to facilitate their practical use: decorated capital letters marking new sections of text and sub-headings assisting the user in negotiating the extensive range of documents which they each included. The decoration of the *Liber Albus* and the *Liber Dunthorn* indicates that the civic register was in London by the fifteenth century valued both for the practical value of its documentary content and organisation, and its eye-catching appearance.

But might the artistic enrichment of these volumes be serving a more specific purpose - in the highly elaborate decoration of particular folios, for no obvious functional reason, and in the general attempt to make the volumes impressive and attractive to the eye? Kathleen Scott has described how in the fifteenth century manuscript illumination developed what she identifies as 'the iconography of power' - imagery in which the 'social hierarchy' was 'reflected'. This includes 'those images of kings where the figure is rendered in full frontal

position, holding attributes of the highest office of the realm', together with images of bishops, and author presentation pictures, which 'impress with implicit force and status'.⁸¹ This status is by association transferred to the owner of the book. Scott's argument explains convincingly the inclusion of royal imagery in the *Liber Albus* and the *Liber Dunthorn* - the image of a throned king with which the *Liber Dunthorn* commences, and possibly the image on fol. 16r. of the *Liber Albus*, which may well represent royal power in consultation with urban officials during the judicial eyre (see Figures 4 and 6).⁸² At the same time, the programmes of decoration undertaken in these volumes, of course, adopt the 'iconography of power' for their own civic authority: this is apparent in the probable presence of civic officers in the image representing the judicial eyre, and the coat of arms of the city of London drawn into fol. 1r. of the *Liber Albus* (see Figure 2). The careful presentation of the books in general suggests, in addition, that the importance of urban law and government is being indicated by the richness of their ornamentation. And as accessories of this authority the importance and value of the books as compilations of urban law are indicated.

This iconographical empowering of the book as a whole may well be heightened and matched symmetrically within the text by the inclusion of what appears to be the image of a book held by a bearded figure in animated discussion with the king in the scene representing the judicial eyre in the Tower on fol. 16r. of the *Liber Albus* (see Figure 6). Within its own decoration, then, as well as in textual references, the civic register is presented as an essential tool of government and a symbol of knowledge and power. The book as an image is itself made into a part of 'the iconography of power' proposed by Kathleen Scott. Moreover, this 'iconography of power' of the civic government and of the book seems to be a hybrid developed for the promotional imagery of the civic register: it may adapt not only the pictorial celebration of royal authority, but also that of

⁸¹Kathleen L. Scott, *Later Gothic Manuscripts: 1390-1490*, 2 vols, A Survey of Manuscripts Illuminated in the British Isles, 6 (London: Harvey Miller, 1996), pp. 61-62.

⁸²On the eyre of 1321, see Chapter Two, pp. 96-7.

religious iconography, borrowing from the familiar scene of Christ bearing the Book of Judgement described earlier in the chapter.⁸³

Kathleen Scott describes other instances of manuscript decoration dedicated to dignifying civic authority in fifteenth-century London, including a manuscript book produced in the city in around 1449 and containing 'huge renderings of the Aldermen of London', 'who by the evocative size of the pages and of the figures impart their control over the city and guilds of London'.⁸⁴ The pages of this manuscript are filled with coloured representations of twenty-six aldermen of London, each carrying a plaque including the arms of the city of London. Kathleen Scott notes that

The reason for undertaking this record of Aldermen is not obvious, as it was an inefficient means of recording heraldic information. It may have been instigated by one of the Aldermen or by the City and intended as an ongoing, permanent document of service to the City in the manner of a Benefactors' Book.⁸⁵

The manuscript represents evidence that the civic council of London was by the mid-fifteenth century using a civic codex purely as a means of recording and, to a very great extent, promoting and glorifying, its officials through powerful iconography. The idea of the volume as 'an ongoing, permanent document of service to the City' provides a valuable point of comparison not only for the production of other decorated civic books, but also for the compilation of lists of civic officials such those in YCA, MS D1 in York, and the *Liber de Antiquis Legibus*, and the *Liber Regum* in London. This manuscript confirms that these lists had a wider context in the urban book culture and that they were perceived to have a significantly promotional or memorial value to justify costly illustration in at least one instance.

⁸³See p. 202 in this chapter.

⁸⁴London, Guildhall Library, Print Room (s.n.); Scott, *Later Gothic Manuscripts*, p. 62, and pp. 245-7.

⁸⁵Scott, *Later Gothic Manuscripts*, pp. 246-247. This manuscript is now held in the Print Room of the Guildhall Library in London. It is number eighty-six in Kathleen Scott's catalogue, pp. 245-247.

The issue remains, however, of what function the highly decorated folios, the neat presentation of text, and miniatures of the *Liber Albus* and the *Liber Dunthorn* could serve if civic books were kept secluded from general view, or even if they were included, as we have speculated, in urban governmental procedure and ceremony. Kathleen Scott has suggested that, within the household, 'Illustrated books were undoubtedly seen on reading-stands by visitors [...] greater or lesser, and thus [were] not, as it were, a closed book'. She describes how 'Guild registers [...] would also have been semi-private in function, being presumably open to current membership but presumably in no sense truly public'.⁸⁶ Books of London's guilds were similar in content to the city's civic registers, and may have been influential on the production of the latter. The same men who might have had access to the books of the civic administration, as urban officials or in attendance at court cases or meetings at the Guildhall, would have been members of the guilds who owned and might have displayed their similar registers.⁸⁷ It seems likely that these men would have perceived both kinds of texts similarly, and that as a result the treatment and evaluation of the civic register would have been close to that of the guild book.

Scott is cautious in estimating how great an access this practice may have allowed to the inner decoration of illuminated books, but we can imagine that it might also have enabled urban governmental books to be made 'open' to a still limited, but greater, audience, which might have included members of the city's government, or visitors to the city whom its officials might have wished to impress. Although access was probably still strictly controlled, this suggests that the codices did indeed function not only as reference or educational texts, on the basis of their content, but also as the 'icons' envisaged by Brigitte Bedos-Rezak, by virtue of their decoration, and the symbolic values with which they were attributed.⁸⁸ It is striking also that the particularly elaborately decorated folios within the *Liber Albus* and the *Liber Dunthorn* mark out what could have been

⁸⁶Scott, *Later Gothic Manuscripts*, p. 31.

⁸⁷See Chapter Two, pp. 109-14.

⁸⁸Bedos-Rezak, 'Civic Liturgies', p. 40.

considered especially significant documents for the city. In both books, for example, the first page of the section of royal charters to the city has been distinguished, and, as we have seen, the record of the judicial eyre is also especially ostentatiously decorated. These might well be pages on which the books would be displayed, in any case, since they represented documents symbolising the city's legal power and independence.⁸⁹

The decorated civic book in the fifteenth century might thus have served an iconographical function within urban ruling council, representing and dignifying the power of the council by its symbolic potency and impressive ornamentation. How does this evidence hold up, however, in application to the early fourteenth-century civic registers produced by London's city council, and to those produced in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries for individual London citizens? In fact, the early fourteenth-century registers, the *Liber Ordinationum* and the *Liber Memorandum*, produced by London's administration are considerably less elaborate in their decoration than the *Liber Albus* and the *Liber Dunthorn*. Both volumes are neatly presented. The text of the *Liber Ordinationum* is marked regularly with decorated initials of varying size, some of them boxed, although towards the end of the manuscript these are replaced by spaces containing letters inscribed in ink, where decoration was intended but never completed. This is the case throughout the *Liber Memorandum*: from beginning to end the text is punctuated with spaces containing these letters as direction to an illuminator or artist whose hands appear never to have touched the manuscript.

The *Liber Ordinationum* is filled with the informal, marginal drawings already noted in the pages of the second part of the *Liber Albus*, including riderless horses; human-headed dragons (one wearing a bishop's mitre); a head on legs; and various other beasts.⁹⁰ However, in general, the lack of 'official'

⁸⁹On the eyre of 1321, see *The Eyre of London: 14 Edward II A.D. 1321*, ed. by Helen M. Cam, *Year Books of Edward II*, 26, 2 vols, Selden Society, 85 and 86 (1968-9) (London: Bernard Quaritch, 1968-9), and Chapter Two, pp. 96-7.

⁹⁰The bishop-headed dragon appears on fol. 160r., running away from an aggressive-looking face emerging from the word 'Billingsgate' in the text; the 'gryllus', or head on legs, appears on fol. 132r. See Camille, *Image on the Edge*,

decoration and illustration in these books suggests that their visual appearance took secondary importance to their inclusion of clear copies of urban customs and statutes.

The formal presentation of London's *Letter Books*, which commence in 1275, seems to confirm that the visual impressiveness of the city's records became more important in the latter part of our period of interest, although they indicate that greater attention was paid to the decoration of these records from the beginning of the fourteenth century onwards. While the text of *Letter Book A* is rather roughly presented on the page, and unornamented, *Letter Book D*, which contains material dating from around 1309-1314, has been inscribed with more attention to the attractiveness and accessibility of its contents, containing running titles at the heads of folios, well spaced text, and headings distinguished by size or decoration.⁹¹ In *Letter Books I* and *K*, containing material dating from 1400-1422 and 1422-1461 respectively, the city's authorities appear to be exploiting more fully the potential of the written record to advance an 'iconography' of mayoral power. In both manuscripts, the affairs from each mayoralty are distinguished by the inscription of the mayor's name in large and decorated letters along the tops of folios; in *Letter Book K* the commencement of records from the office of a new mayor is sometimes accompanied by a small drawing illustrating his name.⁹² *Letter Book K* also contains a large number of decorated initials at the beginnings of sections of text and calligraphic lettering.

p. 143, and Carruthers, *The Book of Memory*, p. 245.

⁹¹The title of the oath of the recorder on fol. E.v. is drawn within a scroll (the first six flyleaves of this manuscript, which contain the oaths of civic officials, are lettered A-E rather than foliated), and that of a writ of the Privy Seal from Edward II to the mayor charging him to safeguard the city, on fol. 142r. has been drawn into a diagram of the top half of a helmeted knight holding a shield. Significantly, however, it is mainly contents relating to or deriving from the royal administration which are most formally presented in this manuscript, suggesting either that they are distinguished as more important by their ornamentation in the city's records, or that the compilers of *Letter Book D* are copying the more impressive appearance of royal documents with which they have come into contact.

⁹²For example, in *Letter Book K* on fol. 36r., John Coventre's election as mayor is marked with a drawing of a coat of arms featuring a tree, and the name 'Coventre' borne across it on a scroll, and on fol. 42r. the name of the mayor John Reynwell is illustrated with a picture of a well with the letters 'Reyn' inscribed along the top of one of its edges.

By contrast, the privately produced manuscripts discussed in Chapter Two - the books compiled for and originally held by Andrew Horn; Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Rawlinson B.356; Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 476; and London, British Library, MSs Egerton 2885 and Additional 38131 - are in general more consistently, and ostentatiously, decorated.⁹³ BL, MSs Egerton 2885 and Additional 38131 display blue and red decoration marking the beginnings of sections or entries, although in the latter case some of the text is completely undecorated, and some anticipated rubrication has clearly not taken place. Corpus, MS 476 is very neatly presented, with sections differentiated with blue, red, and gold, and a full-page miniature of Vortigern and Merlin on fol. 2v., although again the programme of illumination has not been completed.⁹⁴ The failure to complete decoration of the *Liber Memorandum* is particularly highlighted by the almost complete programme of decoration in Bodleian, MS Rawlinson B.356, since they represent versions of the same text.⁹⁵ The front page of Bodleian, MS Rawlinson B.356 is decorated with marginal foliage, and with a large initial containing the image of a throned king, and through very nearly the whole of the book the neatly presented single block of text has been marked by red and blue initials and decorative ink-work distinguishing the beginnings of new sections. The text also contains titles. Bodleian, MS Rawlinson B.356 may represent exactly how the *Liber Memorandum* was intended to appear; but while one has been completed as a finished product, perhaps commercially, the other has gone into use without its planned decoration.

The *Liber Regum* was, as we saw in Chapter Two, perhaps the most impressively illuminated of the surviving medieval civic customals from London.⁹⁶ According to Jeremy Catto's argument, it originally contained Book One, Part Two of the current *Liber Albus*, describing the judicial eyre and

⁹³On Andrew Horn's manuscripts; Bodleian, MS Rawlinson B.356; BL, MS Additional 38131; B.L., Ms Egerton 2885; the *Liber Memorandum*; and the *Liber Ordinationum*, see Chapter Two, pp. 86-114.

⁹⁴See Chapter Two, pp. 86-114.

⁹⁵See Chapter Two, p. 105.

⁹⁶See Chapter Two, p. 91.

including the miniature of disputing authorities in the Tower.⁹⁷ Moreover, the earlier *Liber Horn*, part of which seems to have been added to by Horn over a period of years and which therefore functioned as a kind of working book for him, also features detailed illustration (see Figure 1).⁹⁸ It is not consistently decorated, and unusually begins with an entirely undecorated page, but its central core of laws and statutes are frequently distinguished by decorated borders and marginal 'grotesques', and historiated initials appear, featuring a throned king holding a huge sword and sceptre, and the images of a king and another man seated facing each other with an open book between them (see Figure 5).⁹⁹ Horn's two manuscripts which did not pass into, or remain in, the hands of the city's administration, Corpus, MSs 258 and 70, also contain rubricated sub-headings and decorated initials at the beginnings of sections and are relatively neatly presented, although text has often been squeezed onto the page. Of the earlier privately held customals of London discussed in Chapter Two, the *Liber de Antiquis Legibus*, dated in 1274, features no real decoration, except for a rough drawing of the 'monstrous lamb' referred to in its chronicle, and its text is often very roughly presented.¹⁰⁰ By contrast, the two manuscripts which together composed the early thirteenth-century register possibly held by the Cornhill family - London, British Library, Additional MS 14252 and Manchester, John Rylands Library, MS 174 - appear to have been more professionally compiled and decorated, with red, blue and gold decoration of initials at the beginnings of new sections, running titles used at the tops of folios in Rylands, MS 174, and spaces in the text filled with decorative lines.¹⁰¹

Importantly, then, the dignification of the royal and urban legislation, lists of civic officials and city history which made up some of the contents of the civic register with formal presentation and attractive decoration seems to have begun

⁹⁷See Chapter Two, p. 90.

⁹⁸See Chapter Two, pp. 100-4.

⁹⁹The image of the throned king appears on fol. 22r., at the beginning of the text of the Magna Carta; the illustration of the king disputing with another man who holds a book appears on fol. 35v., at the beginning of the first Statute of Westminster (see Figure 5).

¹⁰⁰CLRO, Customal 1, the *Liber de Antiquis Legibus*, fol. 123r.

¹⁰¹See Chapter Two, pp. 81-4.

with those manuscripts compiled privately rather than by the administration of London. There may be several reasons why this was so: Kathleen Scott, as we have seen, has argued that illuminated books were displayed for view within households, and this practice within private book culture might partly explain the desire for them to be visually impressive.¹⁰² The aldermen who apparently owned these manuscripts would almost certainly have been able to invest more heavily in the decoration of their private books than would the public administration in its records; and to a non-clerical owner the appearance of the book may have been equally as important as its textual content.¹⁰³ The compilers of these privately held manuscripts, then, must have been influenced by the programmes of illumination employed for their records by other authorities than the civic administration, such as the royal government, or major religious institutions.

While publicly held customs of the fourteenth century may have been designed to be illuminated and were often neatly inscribed and sometimes illustrated with grotesques, the fact that their decoration was either never completed or inextensive implies that their visual attractiveness was less of a priority for those who used them than the fact that they collected together a range of useful documentation.¹⁰⁴ By the fifteenth century, however, it is clear that London's civic government was willing to invest considerably more attention and finance into the ornamentation of their records, and to adapt imagery promoting royal potency into an 'iconography of power' for their own urban authority. In this period, then, we can deduce that the civic register was functioning as more than a repository of documentary information, and that the administration intended at least certain folios of its compilations to be viewed as well as read, and to impress as well as to inform.

The civic books of York which survive are, by contrast, almost entirely undecorated. In YCA MSs D1, A/Y, and B/Y, for example, no illustration or illumination occurs, and the trend for decorating civic books, particularly in the

¹⁰²Scott, *Later Gothic Manuscripts*, p. 31:

¹⁰³See Chapter Two, pp. 84-5, and pp. 104-14.

¹⁰⁴This is despite the fact that, as we have seen, decoration facilitated the organisation and finding of material in the civic register.

fifteenth century, does not seem to have taken hold, at least on the evidence of extant volumes. However, as we saw in Chapter Three, some texts can be differentiated in which greater care has been taken over presentation. A kind of hierarchy of types of texts becomes apparent. In YCA, MS D1, as we have seen, the middle of the fourteenth century seems to have been marked by an attempt to begin formal, correct, and attractive lists of certain civic officials, and this more impressive textual location was the site chosen for experimentation with a chronicle of York, and description of some civic procedure and ceremony.¹⁰⁵ Moreover, just as we have seen that the common clerk Roger Burton was responsible for expanding and correcting the lists of civic officials in YCA, MS D1, the sections of YCA, MS B/Y which are written in his hand are more neatly presented, so that in York as in London the first half of the fifteenth century sees greater attention being paid to the visual impression made by the civic record.¹⁰⁶

In YCA, MS A/Y, copies of craft ordinances and royal documents, as we saw occurring in London's *Letter Books*, are often the most neatly copied, and sometimes have flourished pen titles. On folio 130r., a copy of a writ from Richard II begins with a large, flourished capital letter, surrounded by a block drawn in pen, and, as we have already discussed, the chronicle of the archbishops of York, copied onto fols. 219v.-246v. by Roger Burton is marked with spaces inscribed with small, ink letters in which decorated capital letters were intended, as in the version of the same text in Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Barlow 27. Different kinds of texts, then, seem to have merited different standards of presentation and decoration, even if this was not successfully completed.

Impressively decorated registers do survive from medieval York, for example the guild books of the barber surgeons and of the pewterers of York.¹⁰⁷ The former, in particular, is eye-catchingly decorated, and includes a series of portraits of monarchs from Henry VII through to George III, and four full-page miniatures, in pen, on astrological, medical, and religious themes. According to

¹⁰⁵See Chapter Three, p. 148, pp. 163-4, and pp. 166-7.

¹⁰⁶See Chapter Three, p. 148, pp. 152-8, and pp. 162-5.

¹⁰⁷These are now held as London, British Library, MS Egerton 2572; and York, YCA, MS E54, respectively.

Kathleen Scott, 'the use of this technique' of pen illustration 'in a volume made in York demonstrates both a workshop and a clientele that was *au courant*'.¹⁰⁸ The resources for illuminated manuscript production were clearly present in York. However, both these manuscripts appear too late to provide possible influence on most of York's medieval civic registers: the pewterers' guild register seems to have been begun in 1599, and the guild book of the barber surgeons commences in 1486. Kathleen Scott suggests, however, that its illustrations are medieval. In itself, though, the guild book of the barber surgeons provides evidence of the probable existence of other decorated registers within the city of York, in the second half of the fifteenth century, at least. It cannot have been produced in a void, and its decoration may have been influenced by books produced by guilds or religious institutions in the city, or those being held by wealthy families in or around York. Books such as these, which may have been produced for show rather than for regular use, may well have been less likely to survive in as much as they were not often consulted. Opportunity, and influence, then, seem to have been available for the production of decorated civic registers in York, even if the surviving material suggests that this kind of programme of ornamentation was never undertaken.

The numbers of those granted access to view the internal decoration of the civic registers must, of course, have fallen far short of the notion of the 'commonalty' to which we have seen some registers aspired to appeal. But this further symbolic mode of emphasising the significance of the civic register encourages a response from a specific group in a distinct way - as does the external image of the closed book from those who might have been shown it from a distance when they had access to a civic event of some kind, or the content of the text to those who could read it, or who had it read to them. Gervase Rosser

¹⁰⁸Scott, *Later Gothic Manuscripts*, p. 364. The manuscript appears as number one hundred-and-thirty-nine in Kathleen Scott's catalogue, pp. 363-364. London, British Library, MSs Additional 38816, and Cotton Nero D iii, and Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS B.455, the cartularies of St Leonard's Hospital and St Mary's Abbey discussed in Chapter Three, are also relatively neatly presented, and contain decorated capital letters at the beginnings of sections, and formal titles: see Chapter Three, pp. 134-7.

has argued recently that the images and figures used in ceremonies organised centrally by medieval urban administrations, far from excluding 'the mass of people [...] from all but a passive role', were 'susceptible to reappropriation as a means to express the variant potentially conflicting positions of different groups within urban society.'¹⁰⁹ A symbol employed in ceremony apparently controlled and designed by institutional authority, such as the civic book, then, could nevertheless be appealing and meaningful to other sectors of society excluded from that authority, much as the peasants described by Steven Justice laid claim to administrative records and the legitimacy which they symbolised.

The evidence available to us concerning the civic registers of London and York is all that of the records of the administrations of those cities, and does not allow us to judge whether the registers were ever adopted as symbols of resentment by those excluded from access to urban government; it does enable us to see that the registers were increasingly from the fourteenth century onwards, and particularly in the fifteenth century, appreciated and designed by the authorities which compiled them for the symbolic values attributed to them. According to this evidence, the civic book was promoted as a repository of truth; an 'icon' with a quasi-religious potency; an embodiment of the text and law which guaranteed the city's autonomy and legal authority; an accoutrement of the power of the urban administration; and a 'public' resource, representative of and apposite to the lives of the community in general. Moreover, these properties, and in particular the 'public' quality of the civic book, could be made accessible to sections of urban society outside of those members of the administration who read and compiled them by their auditory and visual presentation, at a distance in a public gathering within the Guildhall, or close up by means of their decorated folios and 'iconography of power' to visitors whom it might be useful to impress. While we can only consider these books to be 'public' in a heavily qualified sense, we do gain an impression of their multi-faceted appeal to several different 'publics'. Just as the civic register through its juxtaposition of a range of different

¹⁰⁹Gervase Rosser, 'Myth, Image and Social Process in the English Medieval Town', *Urban History*, 23:1 (May, 1996), 5-25 (p.6, and p. 11).

kinds of texts, might appeal to a number of different types of 'readers', it could also through its symbolic presentation be 'read' in a variety of ways.¹¹⁰

The Civic Register as a Symbol of Urban Integrity: the Historical Context:

In the 1320s, the Florentine chronicler Giovanni Villani recorded how he had been inspired on a pilgrimage to Rome in 1300 to begin his urban chronicle. Villani claims to have been motivated to 'make a record of the events and beginnings' of Florence in Rome because of his sense that 'our city of Florence, the daughter and creation of Rome, was in the ascendancy, and had great things in front of her, while Rome was in decline'.¹¹¹ Villani may well have invented this episode explaining the inception of his chronicling activities: the significance of its precise timing, during the Jubilee year when pilgrims to Rome would be granted absolution of their sins, coinciding with what he claims are the rising fortunes of the city of Florence, provide an almost too auspicious conjuncture.

However, Villani's connection of how he was incited to begin a written description of the city and its history with a contemporary excitement about its imminent financial and political prosperity denotes both a further symbolic value of English medieval civic writing, and a potential explanation for the production of the civic registers which we have been discussing. We saw at the beginning of the chapter that Brigitte Bedos-Rezak identified the involvement of individual citizens in the ceremonial production of civic records in medieval French towns as a means of integrating them, if only symbolically, into the city's 'collective identity'.¹¹² Similarly, we have seen that one of the symbolic values of the civic record in London and York promoted most emphatically was its public value - its significance as an embodiment of the legislation and documentation which bound the inhabitants into a unified conceptualisation of their cities. In this final section

¹¹⁰On the civic register and the modern 'categorisation' of medieval literacy, see Chapter One, pp. 62-3, and Chapter Two, pp. 111-14.

¹¹¹*Ma considerando che la nostra città di Firenze, figliola e fattura di Roma, era nel montare e a seguire grandi cose, sì come Roma nel suo calare, mi parve convenole di recare in questo volume e nuova cronica tutti i fatti e cominciamenti della città di Firenze': Giovanni Villani, Nuova Cronica, ed. by Giuseppe Porta, 3 vols (Parma: Ugo Guanda, 1990), II, p. 58*

¹¹²See pp. 192-4 in this chapter.

of the chapter we will investigate how accurately this symbolic aspect of the registers represented the social context in which they were produced, by briefly considering the historical circumstances surrounding the compilation of some of these volumes. Was the civic book compiled as a consequence of genuine self-confidence and an increasing sense of identity in the cities of London and York?

There are obvious reasons why the compilation of civic registers might signify an increase in urban power and prosperity. The acquisition of legal authority in a town was inevitably accompanied by an increase in charters and records documenting its new powers, and this proliferation in record-keeping might well generate the production of new registers - because the volume of documentation required was greater, and because the city wanted to ensure that its new legislative rights were securely recorded and displayed. For example, Sarah Rees Jones has noted that after York was granted its royal charters of 1393 and 1396, not only were copies of the charters made in YCA, MS A/Y, but 'on the folios adjacent to the main texts of the charters, the clerks copied a series of other documents selected to demonstrate that the privileges granted in the charters were also enforced in practice in the years immediately following.'¹¹³ The chronicle writing which is so characteristic of these civic registers was often similarly generated by a desire to preserve copies of urban documentation or the memory of its officials: the chronicle in YCA, MS D1 is integrated into the list of the city's mayors, and of the chronicles included in London's *Liber de Antiquis Legibus* and the *Liber Regum*, around a quarter of the former, and about two-thirds of the latter are constituted of copies of administrative documents or official addresses.

The times when such legislative liberties were granted were inevitably viewed as periods of success for the city, and it is easy to contextualise the compilation of some of the civic registers we have been considering within eras of apparent self-confidence and ambition. For example, the fourteenth century, during which we have seen YCA, MSs D1, A/Y, and B/Y were all begun, is distinguished by exceptional royal interest and investment in York. During the

¹¹³Sarah Rees Jones, 'York's Civic Administration, 1354-1464', in *The Government of Medieval York*, ed. by Rees Jones, pp. 108-40 (p. 115).

intermittent campaigns against the Scots, several of the major bodies of royal government moved to York - for six years in 1298, and for five years in 1333 - including the office of the great seal, the exchequer, and various royal courts, and parliaments were also convened in York. The city also became 'a rendezvous of armies and made its own contributions to them'.¹¹⁴ 'This experience was quite unique among provincial cities and gave York an altogether exceptional contact with the practices of royal government and the realities of high politics'.¹¹⁵ It also brought financial prosperity to the city.

Increasing in economic strength, and taking centre stage as a focal point of the realm, Nigel Saul has commented that 'York was near the height of its medieval prosperity' by 1396 when its charter granting it county status was granted.¹¹⁶ It is hardly surprising if York's most successful citizens resolved to convert this period of political influence into, first, legislatively defined liberties and, secondly, books which would form both a written record and a symbol of the perceived importance of the city in the realm. The description of Andrew Horn reading in English the new charter of liberties granted to London by Edward III in 1327, referred to at the start of the chapter, similarly conveys an image of a city confident in its influence in the kingdom and in its legislative authority which Horn attempted to reflect in the compilation of his *custumals* during this period.¹¹⁷

With their sometimes ornate decoration and symbolic presentation as resources of legal wisdom and quasi-religious truth, the civic registers of London and York which we have considered look like manifestations of civic success and urban prosperity. That they 'look like' this, however, may be a result of their

¹¹⁴Miller, 'Medieval York', p. 54.

¹¹⁵W. M. Ormrod, 'York and the Crown Under the First Three Edwards', in *The Government of Medieval York*, ed. by Rees Jones, pp. 14-33 (p. 17). This article also points out that royal incursions into York, of course, brought tensions and problems with them, an issue which will be raised shortly within this argument. See also Miller, 'Medieval York', pp. 84-85 on a spate of new building undertaken in York during this period.

¹¹⁶Nigel Saul, 'Richard II and the City of York', in Rees Jones, *The Government of Medieval York*, pp. 1-13 (p. 6). On the significance of the granting of this charter to the city, see the collection of essays in Rees Jones, *The Government of Medieval York*.

¹¹⁷Stubbs, *Chronicles*, p. 325. See p. 194 in this chapter. See also Chapter Two, pp. 86-114.

presentation by their medieval composers and owners as symbols of wealth and power - to their contemporaries through language and ceremony and to modern readers through the representation of these books in their text. In fact, the connections between the experiences of the inhabitants of London and York, increasing self-confidence in the cities, and the production of civic registers are more complex and hazardous. It has been suggested repeatedly in this chapter that the production and decoration of civic registers may have been influenced by that of the books compiled and held by royal authorities, religious institutions in the cities, and guilds. The intermittent transferral of royal courts and departments into York in the fourteenth century, then, bringing proximity to their highly trained legal and clerical staffs, and to the documentation of government must in itself have provided a significant stimulus to York's urban council in their production of civic documentation. The inspiration for commencing compilation of these civic registers clearly cannot simply be imputed to urban prosperity and ambition on the part of the cities' officials.¹¹⁸

In fact, it is difficult to attribute it to any kind of 'feel good factor' at all - on closer examination, the compilation of the civic registers discussed here more characteristically occurs in periods of urban discontent and unrest. As Pamela Nightingale has pointed out, London's charter of 1327, made public by Andrew Horn, came at the end of 'a decade of great stress for the City', involving 'shortage of money, heavy taxation [...] famine and monetary crisis' and 'economic and political rivalry'.¹¹⁹ Chapter Two described how the most detailed sections of the chronicles of the *Liber de Antiquis Legibus* and the *Liber Regum* deal with the anxiety and unrest produced in London by conflict with royal power - in the case of the former chronicle Henry II, and of the latter Edward II.¹²⁰ Indeed, some of

¹¹⁸The presence of a large number of clerks from Yorkshire families in the royal administration in the fourteenth century might also provide a key point of contact between the example of royal documentation and the production of civic records in York during this period. See J. L. Grassi, 'Royal Clerks from the Archdiocese of York in the Fourteenth Century', *Northern History* 5 (1971), 12-33. See Chapter Three, p. 133.

¹¹⁹Pamela Nightingale, *A Medieval Mercantile Community: The Grocers' Company and the Politics and Trade of London 1000-1485* (New Haven, London: Yale University Press, 1995), p. 162. See p. 194 in this chapter.

¹²⁰See Chapter Two, pp. 78-80, and pp. 94-6.

the documentation inscribed into the *Liber de Antiquis Legibus*, concerning the family and a legal defence of the compiler, reflect a defensiveness of his own good reputation against personal attack.¹²¹

Similarly, Mark Ormrod has pointed out that the procuring of York's royal charter in 1396 'expressed not only the optimism and confidence of an urban society even then reaching the very heights of its demographic and economic prosperity, but also the unease and defensiveness of a city that had lost some of its former political importance in the realm', as national anxiety turned from Scotland to France and the presence of royal government in York decreased dramatically.¹²² We can as easily, and indeed more specifically, point to instances of urban anxiety as provoking the production of several of the entries in the chronicle which appears as part of the list of mayors in YCA, MS D1, added exclusively during these first decades of the fourteenth century.¹²³ These most frequently concern the incursion of external agencies of one kind or another on the authority of the city and its council.. The Scottish wars, for example, brought not only a national spotlight and economic prosperity, but also a very real, belligerent, external threat to the city from the north. The entry for 1319 notes fighting against Scots forces which penetrated close to York at Myton-on-Swale, where York lost its mayor Nicholas le Flemyng, together with many of the 'great multitude of the people of the said city of York following him'.¹²⁴

In addition, conflict with the authorities of the Minster over liberties they claimed to possess in the city is noted under this year. In 1318, a clash between men of London, soldiers present in York because of the Scottish campaigns, and men of York, is recorded.¹²⁵ And in 1327, the issue of jurisdiction over Bootham which caused much tension between the city council and St Mary's Abbey is noted.¹²⁶ Later in the period of our interest, too, crisis within the city can be seen

¹²¹See Chapter Two, pp. 75-6.

¹²²Ormrod, 'York and the Crown', p. 31.

¹²³See Chapter Three, pp. 152-65.

¹²⁴*cum magna multitudine populi dicte Civitatis ipsum sequentis*: YCA MS D1, fol. 4v.

¹²⁵YCA, MS D1, fol. 4v.

¹²⁶YCA, MS D1, fol. 5r. See Rees Jones, 'York's Civic Administration', pp. 116-17.

connected to unexpected additions to the text. In the lists of bailiffs bound later in the manuscript, on folio 288v., the words '*pius Ric*' have been drawn in large capitals, with a face inscribed into the capital 'R', and an arrow pointing to the entry for the last year of Richard II's reign.¹²⁷

Indeed, the attentiveness to the documentary and historical past of the city in civic registers, which has been noted in Chapters Two and Three, may reflect their compilers' attempt to circumvent description of sensitive contemporary political issues. As John Carpenter does in Part One, Book One of the *Liber Albus*, for example, the clerk who inscribed the description of the ceremony surrounding mayoral election in YCA, MS D1 under the entry for 1491-2 in the list of mayors presents this procedure as long-established and traditional; in fact, the power of mayoral election had been restored from the crafts to the common council by Henry VII in 1490, with this decision being formalised only in 1492, and the particular election to which this description was uniquely attached was in any case a particularly fraught one, held mid-term to replace John Fereby who had died in office.¹²⁸ The common clerk of York Roger Burton, by contrast, skirted political controversy with the *Chronicle of the Archbishops of York*, which he copied into YCA, MS A/Y in 1420, by selecting for use a chronicle which had, it seems, not at this stage been continued beyond 1371, thus avoiding the executed archbishop Richard Scrope, who held office between 1388 and 1405.¹²⁹ Similarly, while he chronicles the unrest precipitated by the political crises surrounding Edward II in the *Annales Londonienses*, Andrew Horn avoids direct criticism of the monarch, and he supplements his description of crisis in London with the idealistic - and crucially undated - portraits of urban life and administration, and of Britain, provided by William Fitz Stephen, Brunetto Latini, and Henry of Huntingdon.¹³⁰ Most of the chroniclers and compilers discussed

¹²⁷On the tensions inherent in the medieval English town, see S. H. Rigby, *English Society in the Later Middle Ages: Class, Status and Gender* (Basingstoke, London: Macmillan, 1995), p. 165-77.

¹²⁸YCA, MS D1, fol. 22v. Miller, 'Medieval York', p. 71. See Chapter Two, pp. 123-4, and Chapter Three, pp. 152-4.

¹²⁹See Chapter Three, p. 166.

¹³⁰See Chapter Two, pp. 86-100.

here seemed willing to manipulate their readers' sense of the historical quality of their texts, and conceal the turbulence and anxiety amidst which their compilations were produced with descriptive images of success and prosperity.

Modern sociological theory offers an explanation for this further symbolic use of the civic register. Anthony Cohen has described how an intensified sense of community derives from external challenge to a society, which enables a temporary self-definition among its members. According to Cohen's argument 'the sense of social self at the levels of both individuality and collectivity are informed by implicit or explicit contrast', and 'cultures write large the character of their atomistic constituents, symbols, for by their very nature these too express contrast and distinction'.¹³¹ Thus the community begins to imagine itself in terms of a united body essentially in opposition to an 'other' which it finds itself confronted with, and seeks out means of objectifying what it sees as its distinctive characteristics. Consequently, the civic register might be a product, and an indication, of a perceived sense of identity in the city, even if this was a result of disturbance and unrest rather than unity and prosperity. Following Cohen's theory, the cities of London and York in fact experienced an intensified consciousness of their integrity and identity as communities when they were being threatened by influences either within or outside of their geographical boundaries. The ways a community identifies its 'distinctive characteristics' may be common to its members, but although people 'share conceptual forms' they may not also 'share their meanings'.¹³² As a result, Cohen argues, the images of community to which people ally themselves are basically symbolic; constructed under pressure as a kind of temporary measure; and without intrinsic meaning.¹³³

¹³¹Anthony P. Cohen, *The Symbolic Construction of Community*, Key Ideas Series (Chichester, Sussex: Ellis Horwood; London: Tavistock, 1985), p. 115.

¹³²Cohen, *The Symbolic Construction*, p. 114.

¹³³Justin P. Croft, 'The Customals of the Cinque Ports c. 1290-c.1500' (unpublished doctoral thesis, The University of Kent, 1997) describes the historical circumstances surrounding the production of customals in Sandwich and Faversham in particular. Croft argues that new customals were compiled in these towns 'as a means of asserting or re-asserting authority at specific moments when such authority had been fundamentally challenged or undermined.' (p. 314). Croft also makes use of sociological theory in his argument.

The possible ceremonial presentation of the civic book, which we have been discussing in this chapter, provides an instance of this kind of 'temporary' signification of a symbol. This is despite the fact that the civic record itself was often promoted for its permanence over time, the certainty of absolute textual truth and wisdom which it offered, and the social stability which it embodied. In fact, just as the book could appeal to a variety of viewing, listening, or reading 'publics' in a range of ways, its symbolic meaning might also modulate, depending on the circumstances in which it was being viewed. Moreover, the necessity to make the civic register, and other images of urban identity in this period, symbolically significant - and most importantly to emphasise its value as a resource in which all of the inhabitants of the city shared as a united community - derived more directly from urban anxiety than economic and political well-being.

We may lack the kind of evidence for London and York which was cited by Steven Justice for popular adoption of the symbolic potency of the administrative record.¹³⁴ But towards the end of the fourteenth century in particular there are clear indications that the civic register, far from representing a kind of independent, timeless 'truth' in its laws and descriptions, was dangerously vulnerable to appropriation by factions within the city. The period at the end of the fourteenth and the beginning of the fifteenth centuries was, as Margaret Aston has pointed out, in any case, one when the spread of Lollard texts had made writing a potentially highly dangerous weapon.¹³⁵ In both London and York, there is evidence that civic registers were compiled by, or under the mayoralties of contentious officials. YCA, MS A/Y, for example, was begun by the common clerk John de Rufford, in 1377, and YCA, MS B/Y was commenced under the mayoralty of John de Gisburne: Rufford attaches his name to the beginning of YCA, MS A/Y, and the name of the mayor under whose period of office their

¹³⁴See above, pp. 191-2.

¹³⁵Aston also argues that writing authorised by its institutional production, including that of the Guildhall Library which John Carpenter helped to found, was employed to counteract this threat with an orthodox alternative to reading heretical texts: Margaret Aston, *Faith and Fire: Popular and Unpopular Religion 1350-1600* (London and Rio Grande: Hambledon, 1993), pp. 85-93. See Chapter Two, p. 117.

compilation commenced is noted in the introductory paragraph to both volumes.¹³⁶ However, Rufford was shortly afterwards dismissed from his office for embezzlement, and Barrie Dobson has argued that 'personal animosity towards John de Gisburne, from circles both within and without the mercantile elite, was in the event to prove the single most disruptive factor' in the internal disturbances in York in the early 1380s.¹³⁷ The mayor under whose period of office YCA, MS A/Y was begun, then, seems to have been the chosen representative of a faction within York, rather than of the majority of the city as a whole.

In London, too, there is evidence that during this period urban factions expressed their ambition for power with the production of registers. *Letter Book H* contains references to a book held by the civic council known as the 'Jubile' Book, compiled probably during the mayoralty of John de Northampton, which was ordered first to be revised in 1384, while Nicholas Brembre held office as mayor, 'with the view of preserving the good ordinances and rejecting the bad'. In 1386-7 it 'was ordered to be burnt by a Common Council summoned by Nicholas Extone, the Mayor, and composed not only of those elected from the Wards to be a Common Council, but also of the more reputable and substantial men of the same, in such numbers that the Council had to remove from the Upper Chamber of the Guildhall to the Hall below', because it contained 'ordinances repugnant to the ancient customs of the City'.¹³⁸

¹³⁶Y.C.A., MS A/Y, fol. 2r., '*Liber diversorum memorandum civitatem Ebor [...] per Johannem de Rufford tunc clericum comunem civitatis predictae inceptorum et factorum*'. Y.C.A., MS B/Y, fol. 1r., '*liber sive registrum memorandum civitatis tangentis in hoc volumine irrotulatis telpore Iohannis de Gisburn maioris dictis civitatis*'.

¹³⁷R. B. Dobson, 'The Risings in York, Beverley and Scarborough, 1380-1381', in *The English Rising of 1381*, ed. by R. H. Hilton and T. H. Aston (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), pp. 112-42 (p. 120). On John de Rufford, see Dobson, 'The Risings in York', p. 120, and Rees Jones, 'York's Civic Administration', p. 111, and note 12. Dobson notes (on p. 120), that 'some of Gisburne's ensuing unpopularity may have been due to his connections with court circles', and it is striking that Thomas Wrangwish, under whose mayoralty at least two civic registers were compiled (see Appendix Three, pp. 333-4, and Chapter Three, pp. 171-85) was also accused of having too intimate associations with the Duke of Gloucester. Unrest also surrounded the election to the mayoralty in 1482, in which Wrangwish was a contender. See Miller, 'Medieval York', p. 82. It may be that familiarity with noble or royal circles allowed these men greater access to the kind of decorated manuscripts and symbolism of power which influenced the compilation of civic registers during their mayoralties.

¹³⁸LBH, p. 235, and p. 303.

Northampton had led a faction within the citizen body and the urban government which had attempted to bring about civic reform, including that of the process of election of the aldermen and the Common Council of the city. Most specifically, he had attacked the monopoly on civic authority held by members of victualling guilds in London, in particular that of the fishmongers: Ruth Bird has suggested that the 'Jubile' Book may well have contained ordinances directed against retail victuallers. The destructively reactionary treatment of the book by the administrations led by Brembre and Exton can be partly explained by the fact that Brembre provided the main figurehead in opposition to Northampton during this period, and that both he and Exton were members of victuallers' guilds, Brembre as a merchant and grocer, and Exton as a fishmonger.¹³⁹ Bird also suggests that sections of the *Letter Books* dealing with the turmoil brought about in London during the Peasants' Revolt of 1381 have been excised.¹⁴⁰ Furthermore, Thomas Carleton, the embroiderer whose privately compiled *custumal*, now BL, Additional MS 38131 was discussed in Chapter Two, was also a political associate of Northampton at this time.¹⁴¹ As a symbol of 'public' truth, urban unity, and governmental potency, the civic register seems to have been sought as a means of authorising and legitimating faction with the image of institutional power which would survive in its text.¹⁴²

Conclusion:

Sometimes ostentatiously decorated; often monolithic in their size; in some instances featuring miniatures setting the book within the context of

¹³⁹See Ruth Bird, *The Turbulent London of Richard II* (London, New York, Toronto: Longmans, Green, 1949), especially Chapters Five and Six. On the 'Jubile' Book containing ordinances restricting the victualling guilds, see p. 56, and p. 86, note 86.

¹⁴⁰Bird, *The Turbulent London*, pp. 52-3.

¹⁴¹See Chapter Two, p. 108. On Thomas Carleton as an associate of Northampton, see Bird, *The Turbulent London*, p. 67, and pp. 73-4, and Nightingale, *A Medieval Mercantile Community*, p. 272, p. 272, p. 276, and p. 319.

¹⁴²On the production of writing with a political agenda in London in this period, see Sheila Lindenbaum, 'London Texts and Literate Practice', in *The Cambridge History of Medieval English Literature*, ed. by David Wallace (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 284-309. On the influence of individuals on the production of civic registers, see Chapter Five.

political power; and apparently offered as a symbol of urban power and possible unity, the civic book was a potent image which the city council which held it promoted with considerable energy. The book as an object brought with it pre-existing connotations and evaluations; but we can see in the medieval city the development of symbolic interpretations of the civic register which are particularly relevant to urban society. The civic register as public writing, for example, which could be displayed from a distance to members of the city in their encounters with government, constituted an urban record in which the whole city could be united in its involvement. Similarly, the civic book embodied the laws and customs by which the city was run, and its autonomy defined, making it an extremely important tool of civic government, an image of authority, and causing its insistence on the absolute and transcendent 'truth' of its contents to be both appealing and important.

As such, the civic book could embody both what the city wanted to be, and how it wanted itself to be imagined - united, governed by wisdom and just law, and possessed of power and prestige. As we have seen in the case of the 'public' quality of these books, however, much of this symbolism was idealistic rather than representative of the factual truth of urban experience. The interpretations of the civic book which their medieval compilers and owners have passed to us are often as decorative as the miniatures of the *Liber Horn*. This is perhaps best exemplified by the fact that although they look like symbols of prosperity, power and urban self-confidence, many of these civic registers can be shown to have been produced at times of political turbulence, and when the integrity of the city itself was under attack. We can see that the civic register could symbolise a sense of integrity for the city in terms of the united wholeness of its community, and the veracity and moral soundness of the registers' contents, but the integrity of the symbol itself, as a faithful representation, was not intact.

Chapter Five
Clerks and Compilers

'from the memory of antiquity to the comprehension of posterity'
(*'antiquitatis memoriam ad posteritatis notitiam'*)¹

Introduction:

Previous chapters have enabled us to characterise the civic register, based on the content, structure, and functions of those manuscripts from London and York which we have taken to be representative of this genre, and to identify the possible reasons for these registers to be produced and become established in the medieval city during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. This final chapter will consider the relationship of individual compilers and clerks with the civic registers which they were responsible for producing. Chapter One discussed the ambiguity of the concept of the 'writer' in the Middle Ages, as potentially scribe of, commentator on, or compiler of the writings of others, as well as 'author' of his own compositions.² The individuals who were involved in the production of the civic registers discussed in this thesis variously fulfilled all of these roles - physically inscribing documentary or other texts; adding notes or introductions to them; or composing texts which, for example, chronicled the city or described episodes of civic ceremonial. Most consistently, however, both the clerks and the private owners of books whose names survive attached to their registers appear to have acted at least partly as compilers of these manuscripts - exercising some control over the accumulation and organisation of texts in a civic register, whether or not they copied or added to the contents themselves. It is these individuals that the thesis has focused on, and who will be the subject of this chapter. This will allow us to evaluate the significance of the compiler in the composition of individual civic registers, but also in the development of the genre during this period.

¹*The Historians of the Church of York and Its Archbishops*, ed. by James Raine, 2 vols, *Rerum Britannicarum Medii Aevi Scriptores* (London: Longman and Trübner; Oxford: Parker; Cambridge: Macmillan; Edinburgh: Black and Douglas and Foulis; Dublin: Thom, 1886), II, p. 313.

²See Chapter One, pp. 44-5.

Earlier chapters have already reviewed the evidence concerning the life and background of the compilers of originally private books including Arnald Fitz Thedmar and Andrew Horn, and of John Carpenter, the common clerk responsible for the compilation of the London Guildhall's *Liber Albus*.³ Therefore, the first part of the chapter will concentrate on the role of the common clerk in urban government and society, based on the information surviving on the individuals who filled this office in York and London during our period of interest, since the production of most of the manuscripts discussed in the thesis lay quite literally in the hands of these civic officials. In the second section, we will review how the common clerks of London and York presented themselves in the civic registers on which they worked - in particular their relationship with civic registers, and the civic archive. The final section of the chapter will reconsider four statements attached to civic registers by their compilers already touched on in discussion in Chapters Two and Three, which refer to what they perceived to be the function of their writing. The chapter will therefore provide a brief study of the position of the common clerk in London and York in the later Middle Ages; gauge the importance of the compiler or clerk in the production of civic registers during this period; and evaluate what the originators of these manuscripts intended their purpose and value to be.

The Position of the Common Clerk:

By the beginning of the period in which the books which we have considered were produced, roughly 1274 until the 1480s, clerks in English cities were already growing in number, wealth and social influence.⁴ Gwyn Williams, for example, has pointed to the increasing financial and political success of the

³See Chapter Two, pp. 71-2, pp. 71-2, and pp. 116-17.

⁴'Clerk' here is taken as designating those who used this term to describe themselves professionally, and discussion focuses on those who were employed in the production of administrative writing. See Chapter One, p. 49, and the second section of this chapter on the range of meanings of '*clericus*' in the Middle Ages.

'professional' groups, those trained as clerks or in the law, in London society in the late thirteenth, and the first part of the fourteenth centuries.⁵

⁵G. A. Williams, *Medieval London: From Commune to Capital* (London: Athlone, 1963), see especially pp. 97-105.

Common Clerks of London and York 1274-1490⁶

<u>London</u>	<u>York</u>
Ralph de Alegate/ Ralph Crepyn (1274-1275)	
John de Banquell/ Bauquell/ Batequell/ Bankwell (1284)	
Hugh de Waltham (1311-1335)	
Roger de Depham (1335)	
John de Shirbourne (1335-1354)	
John Lucas (1364)	
Henry de Padingtone (1368-1375)	John de Rufford (c.1374-c.1378)
Henry Perot (1375-1399?)	William de Chestr/ de Cestria/ de Sestria (1379-1405)
John Marchaunt (1399?-1417)	William del Bothe (1405-1415)
John Carpenter (1417-1438)	Roger de Burton (1415-1436)
Richard Barnett (1438-1446?)	Magister Thomas Uldale (1436-1439)
	Thomas Misne (1439-1442)
Roger Spicer/ Tonge (1446?-1461)	John Shirwood (1442-February 1461)
William Dunthorn (1461-1490)	Magister William Huet/ Hewet (February 1461-June 1461)
	John Shirwood (June 1461-1471)
	Thomas Yotten/ Yoten/ Yotan (1471-1476)

⁶Dates are based for York on the entries in the list of mayors in York, YCA, MS D1, fols. 4r.-27r., and for London on the list compiled by Betty Masters in 'City Officers, III: The Town Clerk', *The Guildhall Miscellany*, 3 (October 1969-April 1977), 55-74. A 'Nicholas de Sexdecim Vallibus' is named as 'clerk of the city' of York in 1317 in the *Calendar of Patent Rolls Preserved in the Public Record Office, Edward III A. D. 1313-1317* (London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office, 1898), p. 692, and in 1327 in the *Calendar of Close Rolls Preserved in the Public Record Office, Edward III A. D. 1327-1330* (London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office, 1896), p. 214. A list of men elected to various civic offices in the city in YCA, MS D1, on fol. 288r. also mentions the appointment in 1342 of William de Skypwich, rector of the church of Holy Trinity on Goodramgate as clerk to three attorneys who served the city in the king's Chancery. Neither man is named in the list of common clerks in YCA, MS D1, however. York must have had common clerks before 1373, but their names have not been systematically recorded.

Richard Derwentwater
(1476-1477)

Magister Nicholas Lancaster/
Loncaster (1477-1480)

Thomas Clerke (1480-1482)

Thomas Mynskip
(1482-1484)

John Haryngton (1484-1490)

* * * * *

Williams argues that 'the rise of the clerks loosened the structure of dynastic control' in London, and that the most successful clerks and lawyers 'emerged as foci of social patronage, around whom threads of connexion and influence were woven in complicated patterns'.⁷ Professional clerks were also increasingly numerous in urban society. London's government seems to have held many opportunities for trained clerks as early as the thirteenth century: the *Letter Books*, for example, contain references to a 'clerk of the murage'; clerks assisting the chamberlain of the city; sheriffs' clerks; clerks attached to individual aldermen; and 'the Clerk of the Chamber' and 'the Clerk of the Commonalty enrolling the Pleas in Husting'.⁸

In York, too, we can see evidence of a flourishing clerical class, although we lack the same volume of references to clerks employed in a range of governmental offices. From the first '*clericus*' admitted in 1298 in the list of freemen in YCA, MS D1, entrants to the franchise regularly include one or more individuals choosing to describe themselves professionally as 'clerks' or '*clerici*'.⁹

⁷Williams, *Medieval London*, p. 100, and p. 97.

⁸*LBA*, p. 61; *C*, p. 116; the oath of the sheriffs' clerks, *LBD*, pp. 12-13; *LBD*, p. 73; and *LBD*, pp. 313-315. Williams, *Medieval London*, pp. 93-4 discusses the range of opportunities for professional clerks in London's government. See also Carlone M. Barron, 'The Government of London and its Relations with the Crown 1400-1450' (unpublished doctoral thesis, The University of London, 1970), pp. 126-32, and pp. 561-2.

⁹See *Register of the Freemen of the City of York*, ed. by Francis Collins, 2 vols, I: 1272-1558, Surtees Society, 96 (1896) (Durham: Andrews; London: Whittaker, and Bernard Quaritch; Edinburgh: Blackwood, 1897).

J. L. Grassi's study of the clerks from the archdiocese of York who gained employment in 'a remarkably high proportion' in royal government at Westminster during the reigns of Edward I and Edward II points to the importance of their frequent connection with the ecclesiastical administration of York.¹⁰ Grassi also suggests that 'the residence of the offices of government at York from May 1298 to December 1304' led to the increase in number and power of these northern clerks in the royal administration.¹¹

Within the city's administration itself, the evidence for employment of clerks other than the common clerk is much slighter. A '*subclericus*' or '*subclerici*' are referred to intermittently as being elected alongside the common clerk in the list of mayors in YCA, MS D1 from 1383 onwards, and the city's chamberlains' accounts record payment to a '*subclericus*' from February 1396 up until February 1397; 1442 up until 1443; from 1445 up until 1446; and from 1449 up until 1450.¹² York's surviving chamberlains' accounts are incomplete, preventing conclusions regarding the actual number of permanent paid clerical staff in the city's administration from being drawn from them. The accounts for the financial year from February 1433 up until February 1434, during the common clerkship of Roger Burton, contain no references to any '*subclerici*', but YCA, MS B/Y

¹⁰J. L. Grassi, 'Royal Clerks From the Archdiocese of York in the Fourteenth Century, *Northern History*, 5 (1970), 12-33 (p. 12).

¹¹Grassi, 'Royal Clerks', p. 171.

¹²*York City Chamberlains' Account Rolls 1396-1500*, ed. by R. B. Dobson, Surtees Society, 192 (1978 and 1979) (Gateshead: Northumberland Press, 1980), pp. 3-4, p. 22, pp. 32-3, p. 61, and pp. 63-4. The '*subclericus*' from 1442 up until 1450 is named in the chamberlains' accounts as John Rukeby, who worked throughout this period alongside the common clerk John Shirwood. The '*subclericus*' who served alongside William de Chestr is named in the list of mayors in YCA, MS D1, on fol. 8v., as Peter de Appilton in the entries for the fourth year of the reign of Richard II, and '*clerici sui*' are recorded anonymously, on fol. 8v., in the entries for the mayoral years beginning in February 1383, 1384, 1385 (the sixth, seventh, and eighth years of the reign of Richard II), and 1400-1404, on fols. 10r.-10v. (the first to fifth years of the reign of Henry IV) during the common clerkship of William de Chestr; for the years 1409 and 1410, on fol. 11r. (the tenth and eleventh years of the reign of Henry IV) during the common clerkship of William del Bothe; and the year 1416, on fol. 12r. (the third year of the reign of Henry V) during the common clerkship of Roger Burton. A memorandum in the *House Books* for 1490, at the end of our period of interest, records that 'it is agreed that the common clerk for the tyme being shall attend upon the maiour in his own propre person and not by his depute jurator', indicating that at least by this time a deputy clerk was sufficiently important in the city's administration to assume some of the advisory responsibilities of the common clerk: *HB*, p. 675.

mentions William Revetour, elsewhere described as a chaplain, as 'Deputy Clerk of the Chamber'.¹³ Clearly Burton cannot have been working unaided during a period when YCA, MSs D1, A/Y and B/Y and the chamberlains' accounts, at the very least, were being compiled or maintained: this suggests that while York's administration may well have required less clerical support than that of London, its surviving records nevertheless fail to reflect the true extent of its employment of professional clerks. Williams has argued for London that the growth in the number of clerks, and indeed lawyers, employed by the city council was partly due to the increasing activity of its courts, as it gained more judicial autonomy - as the city developed as a legal and authoritative entity, the power of its clerical servants was also augmented, and this must have been equally true of York.¹⁴ The growth in civic record writing offers both a manifestation of, and another element in this increase: the developing administration required documentation, and this necessitated skilled clerical employees.¹⁵

The common clerk, however, remains by far the most visible, and the most senior and powerful of the clerical employees of the governments of both London and York. Moreover, the named individuals from the urban administration whom we can identify as influencing the production or elaboration of the civic records considered here are predominantly common clerks, confirming that these officials possessed both the authority and skills required for the development and innovation of their cities' civic registers.¹⁶ As we can see from the list of common clerks

¹³*YMBIII*, p. 71. Revetour is named as a chaplain in *YMB*, p. 103. On Revetour and the books which he owned, including a copy of 'le Crede Play' see the transcription of his will in *Records of Early English Drama: York*, ed. by Alexandra F. Johnston and Margaret Rogerson, 2 vols (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1979), I: *Introduction; The Records*, p. 68

¹⁴Williams, *Medieval London*, pp. 81-84.

¹⁵The language used by the clerks who inscribed the city's records in York has been analysed in M. Holford, 'The English of the Civic Registers of Late Medieval York' (unpublished masters dissertation, University of York, 1997). This dissertation also investigates whether language contributed to a sense of civic identity in York. Laura Wright has analysed the language of the text inscribed by clerks in the accounts of London Bridge in 'Early Modern Business English', in *Studies in Early Modern English*, ed. by Dieter Kastovsky, *Topics in English Linguistics*, 13 (Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 1994), pp. 449-65.

¹⁶The most obvious examples are John Carpenter, William Dunthorn, and Roger Burton, whose manifest influence on the *Liber Albus* and the *Liber Dunthorn* in London, and on YCA, MSs A/Y, B/Y, and D1 has been discussed in Chapters Two and Three respectively. However, other common clerks can be argued to have had

above, the first common or town clerk of London is named in 1274, while the earliest common clerk recorded in the list of mayors in YCA, MS D1 appears in 1373, although a 'Nicholas de Sexdecim Vallibus' is named as 'clerk of the city' of York in the *Calendars of Close and Patent Rolls* as early as 1317.¹⁷ It seems likely that there may have been clerks fulfilling the responsibilities of this office at an earlier date, however: Graham Pollard has identified a '*clericus ville*' in Oxford from at least 1253, and potentially from c. 1229.¹⁸ And as was discussed in Chapter One, Geoffrey Martin has argued that many borough archives may have been well developed by the end of the thirteenth century - clearly the records in these archives must have been produced and maintained by clerks employed by city governments.¹⁹ The oaths of the common clerk from York and London, dating from the late fourteenth or early fifteenth century, indicate the formal responsibilities of the office in these two cities.²⁰

Ye shall assist and attende to the maire for the tyme beynge, and at your kunnyng and power suche counseill yeve hym as ye moste worship to protect to the citee of York. And all the privytes and counseill of the maire and his bretherin ye shall treuly kepe, and not discovere in no place ney to no persone. And truely ye shall kepe all manere of buukes and monementes, and all othir thinges that long unto the comenalte. And all thinges that shall be enterd of recorde, ye shall truely enroull and registre,

an innovative influence on their city's civic registers, and in some cases a taste for self-advertisement in the process: the *Liber Custumarum* and the *Liber Ordinationum* were probably compiled in London's Guildhall during the common clerkship of Hugh de Waltham, which coincided partly with the chamberlainship of Andrew Horn; John de Rufford, who commenced YCA, MS A/Y, declares his association with the register at the beginning of the book, and Thomas Mynskip attaches his name to the index of statutes in York's civic archive inserted into the back of the volume. See Chapter Three, p. 172, and Chapter Four, pp. 234-6.

¹⁷The *Calendar of Patent Rolls, Edward III A. D. 1313-1317*, p. 692, and the *Calendar of Close Rolls, Edward III A. D. 1327-1330*, p. 214.

¹⁸Graham Pollard, 'The Medieval Town Clerks of Oxford', *Oxoniensia*, 31 (1966), 43-76, (p. 49 and p. 59).

¹⁹G. H. Martin, 'The English Borough in the Thirteenth Century', originally *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 13 (1963), 123-44, repr. in Richard Holt and Gervase Rosser, eds, *The English Medieval Town: A Reader in English Urban History 1200-1540* (London and New York: Longman, 1990), pp. 29-48. See Chapter One, p. 32.

²⁰The York oath is copied onto fol. 1v. of YCA, MS D1, and is inscribed in a fifteenth-century hand; the London oath appears on fol. 209r. of the *Liber Albus*, CLRO, Custumal 12, and, according to William Kellaway, was probably compiled 'at the very end of the fourteenth or early in the fifteenth century': Kellaway, 'John Carpenter's Liber Albus', p. 70. Of course, both oaths may have originated from an earlier period.

and no maner of copiez ney evidence ye shall delyver furth, withoutyn advise of the maire beyng for the tyme.²¹

You will swear, that you will serve the city of London well and faithfully in the office of common clerk, and that you will keep and defend the laws, customs, and franchises of the city, inside and outside of the city, according to your wit and power; and that you will apply your diligence to ensure that all the pleas of Hustings and of Nuisances are lawfully entered and enrolled; and that you will make or suffer to be made, by yourself or by any other, no enrolment, without consent of the mayor and recorder. And you will be obedient to the mayor, judges, and council of the city; and you will give good advice to them, according to your power and wit, in all things concerning the government of the city and the common profit of the people. And you will keep the counsel of the city, and should you know of anything generally harmful to the city, to the best of your power you will prevent the same, or make it known to the officers and council of the city; and you will safely keep whatever you shall have in your keeping concerning the city. You will show or deliver no record or other muniments to any one, by which the city may be hurt, and you will maliciously conceal or deny no record that contains the right of any person; nor will you keep any clerk serving under you in court, except for those for whom you will be willing to answer at your own peril; and that they will be sworn in the presence of the mayor and aldermen, and in all other things that pertain to your office...²²

There are some differences between the demands made of the common clerks of the two cities. The York oath makes no mention of supervision of junior clerks, as we might expect from the evidence considered above, and is less specific in delineating the jurisdiction of the common clerk. The London oath also appears to circumscribe to a greater degree the autonomy of the common clerk: in London, strictly speaking, none of the clerks are allowed to undertake an enrolment without

²¹YCA, MS D1, fol. 1r. Spelling and punctuation have been partially modernised.

²²*Vous jurrez, qe bien et loialment servirez la citee de Loundres en loffice de Commune Clerk, et lez leys, usages, et fraunchises de la citee garderez et defenderez, deinz la citee et dehors, solonc vostre seen et poiare; et qe toutz les plees Hustengals et de nusances vostre diligence mettrez qils loialment serront entrez et enrollez; et nulle enroullement, par vous ne par autre, sanz assent du Maire et Recordour ferrez ne faire soeffrez. Et obeisante serrez au Maire, Juggez, et Conseille de la citee; et bon conseil a eux, solonc vostre poaire et seen, en toutz choses touchantz la gouvernement de la citee et comune profit du poeple, durrez. Et la conseil de la citee celerez, et comune damage de la citee ne sarez qe a vostre poere nel destourberez, ou as ministres et au Counseille de la citee assavoir le ferrez; et quanques vous avez en garde touchant la citee sauvement garderez. Nulles recordes nautres munimentz, par queux la citee purra estre empeyre, a nully ne monstrez ne deliverez, ne nulle record qe contient droit du persone malement conclerez ne deneyerez; ne nulle clerck tiendrez devers vous resceant en Court, fors tieux pur queux a vostre peril vous vuillez respondre; et qe ceux soient jurez en presence du Maire et Aldermans et en toutz autres choses qe a vostre office appendent....': London, CLRO, Custumal 12, *Liber Albus*, fol. 209r. The oath ends abruptly, without a conclusion.*

the permission of the mayor and the recorder; in York, the common clerk must seek the permission of the mayor before issuing copies of civic records, but there is no mention of the mayor overseeing the production and maintenance of these records when they are to remain within the city council. This may in part reflect the limitations in the common clerk's authority over London's civic records: until 1462, during the common clerkship of William Dunthorn, the chamberlain and not the common clerk was formally responsible for the safe-keeping of the city council's records.²³ Theoretically, this might mean that the common clerk's status within the council was reduced, and his role confined to an essentially manual one; the terms of the oath, however, suggest that the common clerk was assumed to have some control over the city's records. There is the expectation that the clerk needs to be warned to 'safely keep' 'whatever you have will have in your keeping concerning the City', presumably civic documents.

Three key requirements, however, are made of the common clerk in both London and York. The first is that which we most associate with the role: responsibility of some degree for producing, maintaining, and protecting the records held in the city's archive. The common clerk must inscribe material accurately, and ensure that access to it is limited according to 'the right of any person' for whom it may have consequences, the potential disadvantages to the city council, and the advice of the mayor. Secondly, the clerk is required to advise the mayor, a role which indicates that it was anticipated that the clerk would accumulate a knowledge of the city's records and its laws, and use this to offer counsel to its governors. As we can see from the list of common clerks at the start of this section, these officials usually served for periods of several years sequentially, with some individuals remaining for twenty years or more, allowing them to build up an experience of the city's administration which would have evaded the citizens whose periods of office as sheriffs, chamberlains, or mayors were, at least later in our period of interest, usually limited to one year.²⁴ Finally, the clerk must be discreet

²³See Masters, 'The Town Clerk', p. 58, on the increases instigated by William Dunthorn in the power of the common clerk in London.

²⁴Of course, many of these individuals served for many years as alderman, and in different civic offices at various times. For example, Nicholas Lancaster, who

with regard to the records, the advice he gives, and the counsel which he hears. The common clerk, then, is neither a mere scribe, nor a kind of apolitical archivist; his work with the city's records seems to qualify him as a learned adviser and confidant with a position of trust in the city council.

References to common clerks in the records of York and London, however, indicate that their role was more varied and bore greater responsibility than the oaths suggest. The records of both cities, for example, record common clerks, together with other individuals named as '*clerici*', acting throughout our period of interest as witnesses to legal documents for fellow citizens: in the instances where these clerks' names appear as the last of the witnesses, they presumably also inscribed the original document.²⁵ In York's surviving *House Books* the names of common clerks frequently also appear, during and outside their periods of office, as arbiters in disputes in the city: Richard Derwentwater, Thomas Clerke, and Thomas Yotten, for example, are all recorded acting in this capacity, so that we know that the later common clerks at least were employed this way.²⁶ In London, John Carpenter appears acting as an arbiter.²⁷ In addition, fifteenth-century common clerks from York are noted as undertaking diplomatic missions for the administrations which employed them. York's surviving chamberlains' account rolls record payments to Roger Burton for business conducted with the Earl of Northumberland over a chantry of Andrew Bossall, and for his expenses in carrying out a circuit of the boundaries of the city, and to John Shirwood for three visits to Bedale to the justice William Aiscugh, and two visits to London assisting in obtaining the *inspeximus* charter of 1422.²⁸ The *House Books*, similarly, indicate that John Haryngton took

filled the office of common clerk in York from 1477 up until 1480, also served as mayor in 1485-6 and 1493-4, and as sheriff: see *YMBI*, p. 103, *YMBII*, p. 248, and p. 293, and *YMBIII*, p. 207, and p. 223.

²⁵For example, Hugh de Waltham in *LBE*, p. 177; p. 198, and in *YMBIII*, William del Bothe on p. 44; John Shirwood on p. 135; and Richard Derwentwater and Nicholas Lancaster on p. 120.

²⁶See *HB*, pp. 131-2; p. 193; and p. 194.

²⁷*CPMR*, A. D. 1413-1437, p. 262.

²⁸Dobson, *York City Chamberlains' Account Rolls*, p. 47. The instances described above can be found on pp. 16-17, and pp. 47-48 and p. 53. See also *YMBIII*, p. 130 for John Haryngton's journeys to London to obtain the charter.

civic letters to the Earl of Northumberland, and to Henry VII, and rode to London to act as 'selistour for the cite in purchessing of' a royal charter.²⁹

The records of London do not record similar activities on the part of its common clerks during their periods of office, but it is clear that from an early stage the office of common clerk was filled by men who were influential in the city, and who had powerful contacts in London and the kingdom. John de Banquell, for example, was alderman of Cripplegate in 1286-91, and Dowgate in 1291-8, and filled a number of royal appointments, including that of Baron of the Exchequer in 1307-8. He was knighted in 1304, and *Letter Book B* records his payment in 1297 by the city for 'going to the lord the King in parts of Scotland to conduct the Cardinal Albin'.³⁰ Ralph Alegate also served as an alderman, of Cornhill ward, and as a representative of London in parliament.³¹ Over one hundred years later, John Carpenter served as a member of parliament for the city in 1437 and 1439, and during his career he also served as a justice of the peace of oyer and terminer in Norwich. Carpenter in addition acted on several occasions as an executor, most prestigiously to Richard Whittington, the mayor at the time of the completion of the *Liber Albus*.³² In the second half of the fifteenth-century York similarly employed as common clerk at least some individuals whose political ambitions exceeded that of the clerical office, or who possessed powerful patrons. The record of John Haryngton's election as common clerk in YCA, MS D1 notes that he was '*per Regia majestatem nominatus et deputatus*', and the *House Books* contain copies of letters of recommendation for him from Henry VII, members of the nobility, and

²⁹*HB*, p. 393; p. 474; and p. 664.

³⁰See Masters, 'The Town Clerk', pp. 56-7; *LBA*, p. 94, p. 173, and pp. 224-5; *LBB*, p. 178 (where this quotation comes from); and *LBC*, p. 4.

³¹See Masters, 'The Town Clerk', p. 56; *LBA*, p. 83; and *LBC*, p. 172 and p. 57-8..

³²On Carpenter, see William Kellaway, 'John Carpenter's Liber Albus', *Guildhall Studies in London History*, 3:2 (1978), 68-84 (pp. 67-9), and Thomas Brewer, *Memoir of the Life and Times of John Carpenter, Town Clerk of London in the Reigns of Henry V and Henry VI and Founder of the City of London School* (London: Arthur Taylor, 1856), especially pp. 22-9 on his executorships. On the influential position of Richard Whittington see Caroline M. Barron, 'Richard Whittington: the Man Behind the Myth', in A. E. J. Hollaender and William Kellaway, eds, *Studies in London History Presented to Philip Edmund Jones* (London: Hodder and Stoughton; Edinburgh: T. & A. Constable, 1969), pp. 195-248.

the vice-chancellor of Cambridge University.³³ A letter from Richard III refers to Haryngton as 'our trusty and welbeloved servaunt' and Haryngton describes himself in a record of 1484 as 'once of the king's council', indicating that he had at some point served in the royal administration.³⁴ Nicholas Lancaster, as well as working as common clerk of York, was elected as mayor in 1485-6 and 1493-4, and as a sheriff of the city.

Other common clerks seem frequently to have been influential in society on a local scale. The career of Hugh de Waltham, whose family 'had climbed to near-patrician status by the mid-thirteenth century', for example, included two marriages, and those of his children, into aldermanic families, and the acquisition and renting out of property in the city.³⁵ In 1329, *Letter Book E* records that Waltham and his wife were granted the lease of a property rent free, paying '*nichil quia communis clericus*'.³⁶ De Waltham's common clerkship falls within the period when the *Liber Ordinationum* and *Liber Custumarum* were probably compiled in the Guildhall, and it seems likely that he was influential in their production.³⁷ John Shirwood saw his daughter married to John Coupland, who later served the city as a sheriff, and his son become a bishop of Durham.³⁸ Shirwood, Burton, and their fellow common clerks William Huet, Nicholas Lancaster, Thomas Mynskip, and Thomas Yotten were all members of the Corpus Christi guild in York.³⁹

³³YCA, MS D1, fol. 21r.; *HB*, p. 389, p. 511, p. 515, and pp. 519-20.

³⁴*HB*, p. 347, and p. 440 ('*olim eiusdem regis consilii nunc vero huiusque civitatis consilii predicti clericus*').

³⁵Williams, *Medieval London*, p. 99, and pp. 99-100 on Hugh de Waltham's life and career. See *LBB*, p. 41, and pp. 47-8, and p. 52, and *LBE*, pp. 1-3, and p. 105 for property transactions and recognizances of debt involving Hugh de Waltham.

³⁶*LBE*, p. 235.

³⁷See 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. by R. H. C. Davis and J. M. Wallace-Hadrill, with the assistance of R. J. A. I. Catto and M. H. Keen (Oxford: Clarendon, 1981), pp. 367-91 (pp. 380-1).

³⁸The will of John Shirwood is in *Testamenta Eboracensia, II*, ed. by James Raine, Surtees Society, 45 (1865) (Durham: Andrews; London: Whittaker, T. And W. Boone, Bernard Quaritch, Nutt; Edinburgh: Blackwood, 1865), pp. 206-208.

³⁹*The Register of the Guild of Corpus Christi in the City of York*, ed. by R. Skaife, Surtees Society, 57 (1871) (Durham: Andrews; London: Whitaker; Bernard Quaritch; Edinburgh: Blackwood, 1872).

The specialised skills and experience, and relative permanence in office of common clerks (if they chose to remain there) may have distinguished them from the city governors alongside whom they worked. But while there is not space in this study to investigate in detail the background of all the common clerks of London and York, references suggest that they were in terms of family, wealth, and social activities, and sometimes political ambition, in general the compeers of the aldermanic class. In some cases, indeed, the same individual served as common clerk and as alderman. This evidence bears significantly on the argument in Chapter Two that the civic register was sought as a reference text and symbol of civic prestige by both urban authorities and private aldermanic compilers in London. Clearly clerks and aldermen shared social and familial affiliations and some individuals possessed the political ambition, business acumen, and intellectual ability to succeed in the roles of alderman, merchant or accumulator of property, and common clerk almost simultaneously. In this context of continuity between those who designated themselves professionally as clerks and merchants, it would not be surprising to find aldermen possessing a level of literacy and intellectual acuity which would lead them to compile customals such as those discussed in Chapter Two, alongside an interest in and enthusiasm for writing which identified their city.

We have seen that in London the first two common clerks, from the late thirteenth century, went on to become aldermen, but in fact the position of common clerk also seems to have been sought out as a position of prestige towards the end of our period of interest. Nicholas Lancaster was admitted to the freedom of the city of York by patrimony as '*clericus et mercator*', and in the second half of the fifteenth century, two common clerks from York and one of London chose to describe themselves as '*generosus*' or '*gentleman*', rather than '*clericus*' in documentary records.⁴⁰ Chapter Four reflected on whether the civic register was a

⁴⁰Collins, *The Register of the Freeman*, I: for Nicholas Lancaster, see p. 192; for Richard Derwentwater, see p. 196. For Thomas Mynskip, see *HB*, p 419, and p. 710. William Dunthorn is described as a 'gentleman' when he is named as the executor of the former mayor of London Sir James Bartholemew: *Calendar of Wills Proved and Enrolled in the Court of Husting, London A.D. 1258 - A.D. 1688*, ed. by R. R. Sharpe, 2 vols (London: Corporation of the City of London, 1890), II:

symbol of urban prosperity or anxiety; whether or not this is the case, it certainly seems to have been a manifestation of clerical success.⁴¹

If the common clerk was an active participant in the business and political prosperity of his city, however, he was also vulnerable to removal as a result of conflict within the city or on a national scale. We know that at least four of York's common clerks and one from London were removed from office and replaced between 1274 and 1490. In York John de Rufford, during whose common clerkship YCA, MS A/Y was begun, was dismissed for embezzlement, and Thomas Yotten was removed from office for 'excessive takynges of money, misguiding of our bookes, accomptes and other evidences'.⁴² Roger Tonge in London was dismissed in 1461 as a result of his Lancastrian sympathies, and John Shirwood in York, who was replaced briefly, also in 1461, by William Huet for a period of at least five months, may similarly have been a casualty of the turbulent national politics of this time. A note in the *Patent Rolls* dated in February 1462 records the 'appointment for life of John Shirwode, for his good service and love to the king [...] and for his losses from that cause [...] as clerk of the sheriff of the county of York' and an annual allowance after his retirement.⁴³

A.D. 1358 - A.D. 1688, p. 598.

⁴¹See Chapter Four, pp. 227-36.

⁴²On John de Rufford, see R. B. Dobson, 'The Risings in York, Beverley and Scarborough, 1380-1381', in *The English Rising of 1381*, ed. by R. H. Hilton and T. H. Aston (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), pp. 112-42 (p. 120), and Sarah Rees Jones, 'York's Civic Administration, 1354-1464', in *The Government of Medieval York: Essays in Commemoration of the 1396 Royal Charter*, ed. by Sarah Rees Jones, Borthwick Studies in History, 3 (York: Borthwick Institute of Historical Research, University of York, 1997), pp. 108-40 (p. 111, and note 12), and Chapter Four, pp. 234-5.; on Thomas Yotten, see *HB*, p. 47. Yotten's dismissal is followed by several instances in which he is called upon to keep the king's peace or to accept arbitration, for example in *HB*, p. 449.

⁴³On Roger Tonge, see Masters, 'The Town Clerk', p. 58; on John Shirwood, see *The Calendar of the Patent Rolls Preserved in the Public Record Office, Edward IV A.D. 1461-1467* (London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office, 1897), p. 107. The removal of three of its common clerks in the second half of the fifteenth century (although John Shirwood was quickly reinstated) must be one reason why York experienced such a high turnover of these officials from 1435 onwards. While the city appointed four common clerks in the sixty year period from 1374 up until 1435, ten individuals filled the office in the fifty-five year period immediately following this from 1435 up until 1491: in the thirty year period from 1461 up until 1490, during which William Dunthorn was employed as London's common clerk, York was served by no less than eight common clerks.

We have seen that for some common clerks the office was a temporary stepping-stone to other civic responsibilities, but in fact many of the common clerks of London and York dedicated their careers to this and other clerical offices in urban government. In York Roger Burton served as common clerk for twenty-one years, and John Shirwood for a total of thirty-one years, and in London, Hugh de Waltham served for twenty-five years after a period as a sheriff's clerk, and John Carpenter was the clerk of his predecessor John Marchaunt before taking up the office of common clerk himself for a duration of twenty-two years.⁴⁴ While such individuals appear throughout this period in the office of common clerk, we can see that in the fifteenth century the common clerkship seems to have been more settled in London than in York, where a number of officials held the office only for as little as six years or - in the extreme case of William Huet - five months. This rapid replacement of clerks was due in some cases to dismissal, or to clerks progressing to other civic offices, or dying in office (Thomas Udale and Thomas Mynskip); in other cases, there is no obvious reason for a clerk to have left office so quickly, although Richard Derwentwater and John Haryngton may well have gone on to make use of opportunities offered by their social connections, given the description of the former as a 'gentleman', and the latter's influential patrons.

In fact, documentary references suggest that many of the common clerks were not only experienced in the drafting of and advising on the laws of their cities, but also graduates of some kind of legal training. In London Henry Perot and Ralph de Alegate are described acting as 'attorneys'; in York William Huet is described as an '*advocatus*' when he is admitted to the freedom of the city, Nicholas Lancaster is referred to as '*in utroque iure Bachalarius*' when his election is first noted in the list of mayors in YCA, MS D1, and John Haryngton uses both this title and that of '*legum doctor*' in his entries in the same list.⁴⁵ Moreover, William de Chestr, Roger Burton, and John Haryngton all describe themselves as

⁴⁴For example, Hugh de Waltham is named as the clerk of Richer de Refham, sheriff, in 1299 in *CEMCR*, p. 38. On John Carpenter, see *LBI*, pp. 179-80.

⁴⁵On Henry Perot see *CPMR, A.D. 1364-1381*, p. 175; for Ralph de Alegate, see *LBA*, p. 73, and *LBC*, p. 172;

public notaries in the civic records of York.⁴⁶ The notary public was by 'definition [...] a *persona publica*' who 'was authorised by a public authority to issue instruments' according to an accepted format, thereby establishing their validity - as C. R. Cheney has pointed out, this required the notary public to acquire and 'display a modicum of legal science besides scribal competence and probity.'⁴⁷ Notaries public were created by examination and appointment either directly by imperial or papal authority or by 'the papal faculty granted to a local prelate' - the presence of the archbishopric in York may well then have been influential again on the fact that three of York's fourteen medieval common clerks apply to themselves an élite title.⁴⁸ Certainly, there is evidence that Roger Burton at least was probably employed by the archiepiscopal authorities before becoming common clerk: a memorandum in the chamberlains' accounts for York Minster for 1396 records a payment of 10 s. 'to Master Roger de Burton for the writing of various letters and procurements'.⁴⁹ The proximity of ecclesiastical authorities in both York and London must have provided a wider range of scribal and legal opportunities for trained professionals than were available in many medieval cities.

In Chapter One the authority of the notary in the Italian city-states as a professional lawyer and clerk, and in some cases an influential member of public

⁴⁶William de Chestr signs himself as a 'public notary' in *YMBI*, p. 245, and p. 250, *YMBII*, p. 17, and *YMBIII*, p. 3; Roger Burton describes himself as '*auctoritatibus apostolica et imperiali notarius*' in his entries in the list of mayors in YCA, MS D1, on fol. 12r. and as a '*notarius publicus*' in *YMBII*, p. 65, and in *YMBIII*, p. 49, and p. 50; and John Haryngton is described as '*notarius*' in his entry in the list of freemen. *Notarial Signs from the York Archiepiscopal Records*, ed. by J. S. Purvis (London and York: St Anthony's Press, The Borthwick Institute of Historical Research, 1957), p. ix. and p. xii., also refers to an oath sworn by a John Haryngton on his creation as a public notary in 1475.

⁴⁷C. R. Cheney, *Notaries Public in England in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1972), p. 1, and p. 74. Cheney suggests that this education would have been available in England at Oxford 'from at least the middle of the fourteenth century' (pp. 77-8).

⁴⁸Cheney, *Notaries Public*, p. 74.

⁴⁹*Et Magistro Rogero de Burton pro scriptura diverserum litterarum et procuratorum - x s.:* York, York Minster Archive, Chamberlains' Accounts for York Minster, E1/24, Pentecost to Michaelmas, 1396. I am grateful to Stacey Gee for pointing this reference out to me. Roger Burton is also recorded as copying documents for the Company of the Merchant Adventurers in 1433, during the period of his common clerkship: *The York Mercers and the Merchant Adventurers 1356-1917*, ed. by Maud Sellers, Surtees Society, 129 (1917) (Durham: Andrews; London: Bernard Quaritch, 1918), pp. 40-1.

government and chronicler of urban history, was discussed.⁵⁰ While we have seen that the power of the common clerk within the governments of medieval London and York was much more strictly circumscribed, nevertheless the thirteenth to the fifteenth centuries was clearly a period when men describing themselves professionally as '*clerici*' were increasing in number and prosperity, and the common clerk became a steadily more important member of the developing administration of the medieval city. In general, it seems that the common clerks of London and York were not just integrated into, but were an (extremely successful) outgrowth of, the mercantile class which provided medieval government with the majority of its civic officials throughout the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

However, these were at the same time exceptional individuals, in as much as they were trained in the legal language and formulae necessary for the maintenance and production of civic records, clearly often widely read, and sometimes educated to a high degree.⁵¹ This learning, and the sometimes extended periods which they spent working as clerks of the public archive, qualified them to act as advisers of the mayor, as well as to inscribe and maintain civic records. Some common clerks seem also to have acted as diplomatic emissaries for the city - clearly their job description was a nebulous one. By the second half of the fifteenth century, the close of our period of interest, two factors indicate that the office of the common clerk was apparently one to which sufficient prestige and governmental responsibility was attached that the social status, the reliability and the political loyalty of the individual who filled it was crucial. In this period we find common clerks from both cities choosing to describe themselves as gentlemen rather than clerks, thus selecting a title which indicated social, rather than intellectual, rank, but facing a greater risk of dismissal. The evidence suggests that the office of the common clerk itself, as distinct from the individuals who filled it, was one of increasing status and authority in urban government and society.

⁵⁰See Chapter One, pp. 54-7.

⁵¹Roger Burton, for example, copied the *Chronicle of the Archbishops of York* into YCA, MS A/Y: see Chapter Three, p. 166. The books owned by John Carpenter are listed in Chapter Two, on p. 117-18: one of these was passed on to him by his predecessor John Marchaunt.

The Self-Presentation of Common Clerks, and their Relationship With the Civic Archive:

The importance of the common clerk was, however, based on the civic records which were his primary responsibility: he produced, maintained, and guarded these, and his skills as an adviser to the mayor and aldermen were derived from his knowledge of them. The symbolic potency of the civic archive and the civic register which we considered in Chapter Four can only have increased the significance of the common clerk, its inscriber and guardian, in urban society. Moreover, it was not only the common clerk's contemporary reputation which was built on his knowledge and production of civic books; his future evaluation might depend almost entirely on his work in the city's records. In this second part of the chapter we will examine how certain common clerks exercised their authority over civic writing to describe themselves and their relationship with the records of the city for both current and future audiences.

The term most consistently used by the common clerks of London and York to describe themselves is *clericus*, or, more specifically, *clericus communis*. The term *clericus* remains prevalent, in the list of freemen admitted in York in YCA, MS D1, in the limited account of those admitted to the franchise in London by reception and apprenticeship between 1309 and 1312 in *Letter Book D*, and in the professional designations listed in the civic records of both cities.⁵² Our very notion of what a 'clerk' or '*clericus*' was in medieval England, however, is a complex and somewhat amorphous one. Michael Clanchy has argued that while *clericus* was originally used to designate a man of the church, 'by the twelfth century *clericus* meant *litteratus*, *laicus* meant *illiteratus*' - in other words, to be a 'clerk' had become synonymous with some level of literacy and learning, whereas a 'layman' was considered to be lacking in such education.⁵³ The *Middle English Dictionary* lists a series of possible meanings, encompassing a range of social roles:

⁵²YCA, MS D1, fols. 194v.-209r.; *LBD*, pp. 317-18.

⁵³M. T. Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record: England 1066-1307*, 2nd edn (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993), p. 227; Clanchy discusses the term *clericus* on pp. 226-230. See Chapter One, p. 49.

'a member of the clergy (as distinguished from the laity)'; 'one of the secular clergy (as distinguished from monastics)'; 'one who is educated; a learned person, scholar, master (of some subject)'; 'a man of letters, writer, author'; 'a pupil, student; especially a university student'; 'an official in charge of records and accounts'; and part of the 'titles of town and guild officers' and 'royal officers'.⁵⁴ A student or a master; an ecclesiastic of varying status or a composer, or a public official - a wide range of people (although almost certainly exclusively men) could thus term themselves as a '*clericus*'.

The very ambiguity of '*clericus*', however, may have made it a favoured professional description - as a term which encompassed learning of an indeterminate nature it could have been a usefully inclusive title to apply to one's self. Strikingly, in the list of freemen included in YCA MS D1, the *Freemens' Register* from York dating from 1272, the professional designation attached to men claiming to be clerks remains most frequently in Latin, as *clerici*, while other trade names tend increasingly to be written in English from the beginning of the reign of Henry V onwards.⁵⁵ The only other title which is normally in Latin is that of '*capellanus*', and we can speculate that this tendency may be due to an association of these two professions with learning, perhaps of an apparently esoteric nature, and with the Latin language. Although we cannot define its skills and its working practices in exact terms, then, we can see that the title 'clerk', or '*clericus*', clearly bore with it connotations of prestige and wisdom.

The term *clericus communis* appears first in the London records to describe Hugh Waltham in 1311, and in the list of common clerks in YCA MS D1 in the entry for the year 1377, selected over the titles 'clerk of London', and 'clerk of the city' in London, and *officium clericalem* in York.⁵⁶ The *Middle English Dictionary* defines 'commune', the noun, as, amongst other things, 'a commonwealth; a

⁵⁴*MED* *clerk* n. (1a) (1b) (2a) (2b) (2c) (3a) (3b) (3c).

⁵⁵Initially most trade designations in the list of those admitted to the franchise are in Latin, and during the reign of Richard II English takes over, with the term for clerks being included in this trend. During the reign of Henry V, however, '*clericus*' becomes the most popular term again, while other trades are described in English.

⁵⁶YCA MS D1, fol. 7v., and fol. 7r.; Sharpe, *LBD*, p.275, and *LBA*, p. 161.

community, town; also the people of such a body politic' and 'the body of freemen of such a country, city'.⁵⁷ The adjective 'commune' is defined as 'shared by, or serving, the members of a community, or organization' also 'official, public (as opposed to private)'.⁵⁸ As we saw in Chapter Four, 'commune' as an adjective was applied to many aspects of urban government, emphasising the fact that government answered to the community of the city as a whole.⁵⁹ By referring to themselves as 'common clerks', these officials advertised their responsibility to the city, as opposed to any particular governmental office or individual.

Other than *clericus communis*, we have seen that certain common clerks stressed their legal training in the vocabulary they applied to themselves, as '*doctor legum*', 'attorney', '*in utroque iure Bachalarius*', or even '*notarius publicus*'. In both cities, there are also several examples of common clerks being termed *secretarius*.⁶⁰ In English, 'secretaire' could mean 'a scribe, personal secretary; also a confidant', and the Latin definition of '*secretarius*' as a 'confidential adviser or representative, secretary', reinforces this sense of the valued adviser which we have already seen being put forward as one of the key roles of the common clerk in the oaths of both London and York.⁶¹ For Roger Burton or John Carpenter, the term '*secretarius*' emphasised their status as more than mere copyists, and the value of their accumulated knowledge of the city's laws and records, together with their intellectual ability, to the government of the city.

Common clerks, then, were adept at emphasising both their education and their importance in civic government in the titles which they adopted to describe themselves. With their training in the use of language and the documentation of government, of course, common clerks were ideally placed to use civic writing for

⁵⁷*MED commune* n. (1) and (2).

⁵⁸*MED commune* adj. (3a) and (4).

⁵⁹See Chapter Four, pp. 195-6.

⁶⁰John Carpenter and Roger Tonge described themselves as '*secretarius*': *LBK*, p. 139 and p. 210, and p. 350; Roger Burton refers to himself as '*secretarius comunem*' in YCA MS D1, fol. 13r., in *YMBII*, p. 102, as '*secretario civitatis*', and in *YMBIII*, as 'secretary' on p. 54, and p. 88, and as 'common secretary' on p. 106.

⁶¹*MED secretaire* n.; R. E. Latham, ed., *Revised Medieval Latin Word-List From British and Irish Sources*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1965, repr. 1994), p. 428.

a form of skilful self-promotion. But to what further extent could a common clerk leave an impression on the civic records under his control so as to distinguish his reputation, in durable documentary form? We saw in Chapter Two that private compilers such as Arnald Fitz Thedmar and Andrew Horn signified the personalised nature of their collections by including references to their family or guild, or contemporary experiences; in Andrew Horn's case by attaching imagery to the folios of his *customals* which identified him; or most simply by inscribing their names into their books.⁶²

Nevertheless, even in these private compilations, and the others which were discussed in Chapter Two, the amount of personal information which is integrated is fairly small. The common clerks who inscribed or influenced the collection of writings in the civic registers of London and York must have been far more inhibited in the extent to which they could signal their involvement in the production of civic writing. In fact, only the minority of common clerks attach their names to any of the writing which they have inscribed; Roger Burton, who seems customarily to have signed documentation which he has copied, is certainly the exception in this. We cannot be sure how much control the common clerk exercised over what was copied into the city's registers and how this space might be developed, described or presented, or whether their level of control was consistent between London and York or during the two hundred years under discussion. Large parts of the *Liber Albus* had probably been copied up before John Carpenter became common clerk in 1417, and Carpenter in fact attaches not his own name but that of the mayor Richard Whittington to his '*prooemium*': it is difficult to be certain whether Carpenter himself was the instigator of the collection, controlling which contents were included, or rather its co-ordinator acting under instruction.⁶³

Some of the contents of the registers which we have considered, however, indicate that the civic register, in terms of its contents at least, was to some extent

⁶²See Chapter Two, pp. 71-2, and p. 87-8.

⁶³Although of course Carpenter served as the clerk to the previous common clerk, John Marchaunt, and so could have been involved at an earlier stage if the *Liber Albus* was a long-term project. See Chapter Two, pp. 114-24.

the preserve of the clerks of urban government. In York, YCA, MSs B/Y (on fols. 135r.-142v.) and E39 (on fols. 223-4) instruction has been copied on the use of Latin numerals and on formal letter-writing in Latin, enabling the volumes to serve as reference and educative manuals for the clerks who worked with them.⁶⁴ Indeed, the didactic value of the civic register, as a 'handbook' for administrators in urban government has been a recurring theme of the thesis: the collection of documents of national and urban law, and references to their location elsewhere in the civic archive would clearly have been of value to citizens whether they served their city as clerks or aldermen.⁶⁵ At the same time, the inclusion of more unusual types of writing within strictly administrative records seems likely to have been undertaken on the initiative of the clerks who were copying them rather than according to superior instruction. The development of the list of mayors in YCA, MS D1 into urban chronicle, and description of civic ceremonial, for example, and the elaboration of detail surrounding the mayoral election in it, seems experimental in its intermittent nature. Similarly, text composed by John Carpenter during his common clerkship in London is written in a far more rhetorical and ostentatious language than is usual in the civic records.⁶⁶ The clerks of the urban administration were probably the only officials in that administration with a specialised knowledge of the contents of the city's registers and its archive. It is hardly surprising, then, that the city's registers seem to have formed a kind of literary domain for them, in which they could include material relevant specifically to the training of governmental clerks, and potentially experiment with different kinds of writing with which their education or general reading might have brought them into contact.

⁶⁴See Chapter Three, p. 165, and p. 168.

⁶⁵See Chapter Two, pp. 111-12.

⁶⁶See, for example, his letter describing the entry of Henry VI into London in 1432, inscribed into *Letter Book K*, but published in full in the original Latin in Appendix III of *Munimenta, III: Translation of the Anglo Norman Passages in Liber Albus. Glossaries, Appendices, and Index* (London: Longman, Green, Longman, and Roberts: 1862), pp. 457-64, and the two prologues which he wrote for the *Liber Albus*: London, CLRO, Custumal 12, the *Liber Albus*, fols. 1r-1v., and fol. 264r. See Chapter Two, pp. 114-20.

The Example of Roger Burton:

Roger Burton provides an impressive example of how a common clerk might leave a cumulative impression on the records with which he worked over a period of years. Burton was, as we have seen, the most visibly prolific of the common clerks under discussion, and possibly in fact the most productive in terms of the volume of writing he undertook in York's administrative records. He signed his name after most of the entries which he inscribed, and, as has been discussed, employed a greater range of professional descriptions ('*notarius publicus*', '*secretarius*', 'common secretary'), with greater frequency, than other common clerks. Burton applied a process of correction and organisation to the lists of freemen and civic officials in YCA, MS D1, and possibly to the sections of YCA, MS B/Y produced during his common clerkship, and introduced self-promotion into the descriptions of his election in the list of mayors in YCA, MS D1, setting precedents which were copied by subsequent common clerks.⁶⁷ This increased the status of the office of common clerk in relation to other civic officials, but also stressed how Burton was valued and appreciated as an individual by the government of York.

Burton was also responsible, as we have seen, for the introduction of non-documentary material into York's civic registers, which explicitly celebrated the national importance of the city through the history of its archbishops (in the shape of the *Chronicle of the Archbishops of York*) and as reflected by the two ceremonial swords it had been given by royalty.⁶⁸ By inscribing the *Chronicle of the Archbishops*, Burton may have been signalling his associations with York Minster referred to earlier in the chapter, while also emphasising the long history of the city of York, and its significance in the ecclesiastical hierarchy of England. Thus he could have dignified his own reputation as a clerk and notary directly, as well as in association with the city council which he served. These two texts which

⁶⁷See Chapter Three, p. 146, pp. 155-7, pp. 162-5.

⁶⁸The chronicle appears in YCA, MS A/Y, on fols. 219v.-246v., while the description of the city's swords is in YCA, MS B/Y, on fols. 88v.-89r. See Chapter Three, p. 164, and p. 166.

Burton was responsible for including in the city's records - and in at least the case of the description of the swords, for composing - constitute only small sections of two of York's civic registers. While the *Liber Albus* or the *Liber Regum* form a kind of monolithic monument to John Carpenter or Andrew Horn, Roger Burton's name is not recorded by his association with the production of a complete register, although as we have seen he worked almost contemporaneously with John Carpenter and was as active and innovative a common clerk. Nevertheless, the ubiquity of his name; the relatively unusual titles with which he chooses frequently to describe himself; the importance he ascribes to his position in the city council in the list of mayors in YCA, MS D1; and the two non-documentary texts which he inscribes, almost unique in York's medieval records in their celebration of the city's significance, accumulate to convey his authority as common clerk and his scholarship and knowledge as an individual.

The Example of John Carpenter:

John Carpenter's prologues to the *Liber Albus*, at the beginning of the volume, and at the start of Book IV, provide another example of skilful self-presentation by a common clerk within the records on which his authority was based.⁶⁹ In his prologues Carpenter distinguishes the *Liber Albus* from the disorderliness of the '*inextricabilem laborintum*' by which he defines the London archive, in the process aggrandising both the book and his own efforts.⁷⁰ He does so partly by emphasising the organised structure of the *Liber Albus*: in its systematic use of indices of contents, its consistent organisation of documents into books and sub-sections, and of its separation off of historical material into a self-contained section it is more intrinsically and visibly ordered than any of the other civic registers considered in this thesis. The often impressive decoration of the *Liber Albus* also facilitated the ordering and location of the material in it.⁷¹

⁶⁹CLRO, Custumal 12, the *Liber Albus*, fol. 1r. and fol. 264r. A large part of Carpenter's '*prooemium*' is quoted in Chapter Two, pp. 118-19, together with brief citations from the prologue to Book IV.

⁷⁰London, CLRO, Custumal 12, the *Liber Albus*, fol. 264r. See Chapter Two, pp. 115-20.

⁷¹See Chapter Four, pp. 213-15.

However, the *Liber Albus* is also unique amongst the medieval customals in London's Guildhall in its addition of the prologues themselves, as introductory passages explaining the function of both the volume as a whole, and of the fourth of its constituent parts, and the circumstances under which they were produced. Michael Clanchy has described how monastic charters and registers frequently contained prologues like Carpenter's, stating that the purpose of the document was to provide a permanent record of an event and counteract the unreliability of human memory and the brevity and uncertainty of life.⁷² But Carpenter's attachment of prologues to his book, particularly the introductory one, also mimics the scholarly apparatus of the prefatory prologue or *accessus* attached to religious or moralised texts by medieval academic interpreters.⁷³ Carpenter's '*proemium*' is largely pragmatic, describing the circumstances requiring the production of the book, rather than systematically subjecting it to the various categories of the academic prologue by which scholarly texts were defined. The use of scholarly prologue and gloss, however, usually marked a text as authoritative and particularly respected, and in adapting the structure, if not the content, of the prologue, Carpenter may be trying similarly to demarcate the *Liber Albus* as a text of authority, requiring a certain level of introductory interpretation.

More specifically, however, the prologues show Carpenter to be styling his book according to another literary genre - that of the compilation or '*compilatio*'. In both prologues Carpenter at several stages describes his activity in producing the *Liber Albus* with the verb '*compilari*', and in the second prologue he offers his sole self-reference when he calls himself the '*Compiler*'.⁷⁴ M. B. Parkes has argued that '*compilatio*' became established as a literary genre in the thirteenth century, as changes in reading habits required the production of compilations of excerpts from a range of philosophical, historical, legal, theological, or natural historical texts, to

⁷²M. T. Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record: England 1066-1307*, 2nd edn (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994), pp. 146-9.

⁷³On the use of these prologues, see A. J. Minnis, *Medieval Theory of Authorship: Scholastic Literary Attitudes in the Later Middle Ages* (London: Scolar, 1984), Chapters One and Two.

⁷⁴See London, CLRO, Customal 12, the *Liber Albus*, fols. 1r.-1v. for the '*proemium*', and fol. 264r. for the prologue to Book IV.

offer only a few examples, in the accessible form of a single text.⁷⁵ According to Parkes, one of the key aspects of '*compilatio*' texts was their organisation and presentation in manuscript form. '*Ordinatio*', or ordering of material, was an intrinsic requirement of the process of '*compilatio*'.

Detailed attention to the *mise-en-page*, or the presentation and organisation of the text on the manuscript folio, with sub-headings, rubrication, and indices, was a crucial part of the construction of a 'compilation', but Parkes emphasises that this was perceived as an outward manifestation of the inherent hierarchies of topics of information in the Middle Ages, and of the rational process of reading and digesting the material on the part of the reader. 'The structure of reasoning came to be reflected in the physical appearance of books'.⁷⁶ Carpenter's insistence on the organisation of the city's documents in the *Liber Albus*, and his manifestation of this guiding principle in the consistent use of tables of contents, and division of the text into books and sub-sections suggest that *ordinatio*, attempting to order the contents of London's archive, is a crucial part of his process of compilation. While we cannot be certain what control, if any, Carpenter might have had over the decoration of the *Liber Albus*, we have seen that its use of illuminated headings further complements this programme of ordering.

Carpenter of course does not name himself in either of his prologues, preferring to connect the *Liber Albus* with the authoritative name of Richard Whittington.⁷⁷ By titling himself as '*Compiler*' in the prologue to Book Four, however, and indeed by the very act of introducing explanatory prologues into what would otherwise constitute a largely impersonal collection of transcribed documents, he marks himself out as the primary agent of the book's production and

⁷⁵M. B. Parkes, 'The Influence of the Concepts of *Ordinatio* and *Compilatio* on the Development of the Book', in *Medieval Learning and Literature: Essays Presented to Richard William Hunt*, ed. by J. J. G. Alexander and M. T. Gibson (Oxford: Clarendon, 1976), pp. 115-41. See Chapter One, pp. 41-3, and pp. 62-3. Examples of the medieval *compilatio* include Brunetto Latini's *Li Livres dou Tresor*, a section of which is copied into Andrew Horn's *Liber Regum* (see Chapter Two, pp. 92-4), and the *Speculum maius* of Vincent of Beauvais, part of which is listed amongst John Carpenter's possessions in his will (see Chapter Two, pp. 117-18).

⁷⁶Parkes, 'The Influence', p. 121.

⁷⁷Whittington is referred to as '*nobilis vir*' in CLRO, Custumal 12, the *Liber Albus*, fol. 1r. See Chapter Two, p. 117, and p. 121.

organisation. He provides an informing, and interpreting voice which acts as a guide to the *Liber Albus*. By allying himself with the literary tradition of '*compilatio*', moreover, Carpenter identifies himself with an established authorial role which is lacking in the other documentary collections or registers of the Guildhall. As Alastair Minnis has shown, as the genre of '*compilatio*' gained respect and prestige, so the role of the '*compilator*', as an assembler rather than an inventor of texts, was increasingly esteemed, and his work 'was accepted as a major and valuable *modus faciendi librum*'.⁷⁸ By introducing himself as the '*Compiler*', then, John Carpenter is adopting a respected literary persona which accords well with his working procedure with the *Liber Albus*, and his office of common clerk - organising and ensuring the accessibility of the city's records, and providing an authoritative voice in parts of the texts, without adding to the texts substantially, or altering them.

Carpenter's characterisation of the archive as an 'inextricable labyrinth' also has implications for the role of the common clerk. The term refers to the labyrinth of classical myth created by Daedalus, and the word '*laborintum*' seems to have been sufficiently familiar in medieval England to have been included in the *Catholicon*, or Latin word-list, compiled by John Balbus in the late thirteenth century and printed in 1485.⁷⁹ Penelope Doob has argued that the 'labyrinth' functioned as a metaphorical as well as an architectural idea in medieval literature.⁸⁰ The confusion of being in the physical labyrinth found a parallel in 'labyrinthine' texts or processes of reason which followed circuitous routes to their conclusions - for example in the use of the term in Boethius's *Consolatio Philosophiae* in III, prose twelve, to describe the apparently digressive and confusing arguments used by Philosophy to re-educate her pupil. There are obvious parallels here with the

⁷⁸Alastair J. Minnis, 'Late-Medieval Discussions of *Compilatio* and the Rôle of the *Compiler*', *Beitrage zur Geschichte der Deutschen Sprache und Literatur*, 101 (1979), 385-421 (p. 420).

⁷⁹York, York Minster Library, Incunable XIX.c.5., Iohannes Balbus, *Summa que vocatur Catholicon*.

⁸⁰P. R. Doob, *The Idea of the Labyrinth from Classical Antiquity Through the Middle Ages* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1990), see initially pp. 121-125 on the phrase '*inextricabilem laborintum*'.

archive of London as Carpenter characterises it - particularly in his insistence on its intrinsic disorder.⁸¹

Doob has argued, however, that the connotations of the literary labyrinth, like those of Philosophy's reasoning, are dual, depending on one's viewpoint of it: from the inside, it can seem confusing, and even intimidating; from above, the position achieved by its creator, its master, or those who have successfully navigated it, it appears to be an admirable work of skill and art.⁸² While Carpenter claims to be exhausted and overwhelmed by the 'labyrinthine' disorder of the archive, as common clerk he is most familiar with it. Moreover, in the *Liber Albus* he can present his own work of organisation, in which he has placed the contents of the archive into self-proclaimed order. The *Liber Albus*, then, is a manifestation of Carpenter's skill, as compiler, but also as common clerk, and therefore guide to the confusing twists and turns of the mass of the city's records. Again, Carpenter may well be aggrandising his own role, by means of the surviving monument of the *Liber Albus*, and by adopting prestigious imagery or terminology from literature distinct from the documentary writing with which he worked. In doing so, however, he develops the significance of his role of common clerk, rather than separating himself from it. He has translated the '*laborem nimium*' of the transcribing clerk faced with the city's archive into the artistic '*laborintum*' constructed by the legal knowledge and literary skill of the '*Compiler*'.

The common clerks of York and London, and some of the individuals who filled this office in particular, then, were adroit innovators of the written records they knew so well to dignify their city, its government, and themselves. In the titles which they use to describe themselves, or in the passages of text which Burton and Carpenter compose for inclusion in civic registers, they highlight their knowledge, their skill with writing, and their importance in the city's government. Indeed, while the terms and description which some of these men apply to themselves mark them out as different from, and more enterprising and forceful in

⁸¹See the prologues in CLRO, Custumal 12, the *Liber Albus*, fol. 1r., and fol. 264r.

⁸²See Doob, *The Labyrinth*, pp. 51-63.

their self-promotion than the typical 'common clerk', the ways in which they distinguish themselves tend to emphasise the importance of their office. As 'secretary', 'compiler', or 'doctor of law', the common clerk flaunts his intelligence, education, and knowledge, but these attributes contribute to his professionalism as clerk of the council, in all the varied responsibilities of that office which were considered in the first section of this chapter. As we saw in the case of both Roger Burton and John Carpenter, moreover, elevation of his own importance within a section of text by a common clerk is invariably a small element within a more significant programme of celebrating the city and its government. This is hardly surprising: not only was the common clerk an employee of the urban administration, but as we have seen he was very often an associate or relative of the men who served as its governors. However, in dignifying the city and its government through civic writing, the common clerk by implication raised his own profile as member of the city council, and controller of those records. While this method of self-promotion was indirect, it was nevertheless effective.

More importantly, perhaps, the examples of Roger Burton and John Carpenter suggest that those common clerks who can be identified with the improvement or development of civic records were also those who took the greatest pains to emphasise their skills and knowledge. During Roger Burton's common clerkship, York's lists of civic officials in YCA, MS D1 were supplemented so that they provided fuller information, and a chronicle and description of the city's ceremonial swords were added which publicised the city's national importance.⁸³ In London during almost the same period, John Carpenter celebrated the mayoralty of Richard Whittington with the production of an impressively decorated register which aimed to provide an organised guide to many of the city's legal documents, and a history of the ancient origin of its civic offices and procedures.⁸⁴ Those men who were ambitious to innovate the city's records in order to praise its history and government were equally concerned to use their writing to indicate their own importance. In Chapter Four, the compilation of civic registers was linked to

⁸³See Chapter Three, pp. 115-7, and p. 164.

⁸⁴See Chapter Two, pp. 14-24.

periods of social anxiety in York and London.⁸⁵ While the men who compiled these registers were inevitably motivated by the times in which they lived, we must not underestimate the influence of individual compilers and clerks on the books which they produced. Innovation in the content, style and possibly presentation of these civic registers can frequently be attributed to the hand, or at least the period of office, of men who were clearly distinguished in their education, knowledge - and ambition. We have also seen that the interest amongst London citizens in the Middle Ages in owning texts which recorded the laws of urban government and symbolised pride in citizenship probably led to the proliferation of civic customals in the city.⁸⁶ In their attentiveness to the civic registers on which they worked, men such as Roger Burton, John Carpenter, Andrew Horn, Thomas Mynskip, and Arnald Fitz Thedmar were ensuring the promotion and preservation of their reputations in textual form.⁸⁷

At the same time, the relationship between the common clerk or compiler and the compilation of essentially documentary texts in the civic register was a mutually beneficial one. Written records enabled these individuals to memorialise particular presentations of themselves, and provided a medium in which their specific skills and knowledge could be exhibited to their best advantage, as well as simply described; but in ostentatiously introducing different genres of writing into the registers, and by aggrandising their activity as that of the '*compiler*' or even '*secretary*', these men also distinguished their texts from typical administrative records. Partly through their concern to mark out in written form their own significance, these men contributed to the production of exceptional texts.

The Memorial Purpose of the Registers

But what did these compilers themselves state to be the purpose and importance of the civic registers on which they worked? Moreover, if the number of individuals who actually read these registers contemporaneously was in fact so

⁸⁵See Chapter Four, pp. 227-36.

⁸⁶See Chapter Two, pp. 111-14.

⁸⁷See Chapter Two, pp. 71-86, pp. 86-114, and pp. 114-24, and Chapter Three, pp. 155-7, and p. 172.

limited, for whom did they envisage they were writing?⁸⁸ We have seen that the men responsible for the compilation of civic registers in London and York characteristically offered limited information about themselves and their intentions in collecting these texts together. However, four of the individuals who have played an important role in the discussion of the thesis did attach statements to civic books which they inscribed or compiled regarding what they intended to be the function of this writing. In this final section of the chapter, we will re-examine these explanations of civic registers, and the language which they use to explain their writing, and in particular their interest in the durability of these texts into the future. The statements are given in chronological order: the first by Arnald Fitz Thedmar in his chronicle in the *Liber de Antiquis Legibus*; the second believed to be a proleptic statement by Andrew Horn of his intentions for the *Liber Regum*; the third part of the prologue to the *Liber Albus* written by Andrew Horn; and the fourth part of a paragraph composed by the common clerk of York Roger Burton around 1439 to introduce his account of the origins of the city's ceremonial swords in the civic register YCA, MS B/Y.

The deeds and works of the good are reduced into writing, so that they can be brought back to the memory of posterity to their everlasting praise and glory, and in this way the cruelties, vices, treacheries, and the wicked deeds of the unjust should be put in writing, so that they can in future times be made known to the whole world to their disgrace, disparagement and slander.⁸⁹

I intend to construct from that book and others a great book that I consider useful to represent our times in the present to people coming after us.⁹⁰

Because the instability of human memory and the shortness of life do not allow us to gain certain knowledge concerning everything that deserves to be remembered, despite it having been written, especially if it has been written irregularly and confusingly, and much more concerning those things which have not been written; and since, after all the aged, more

⁸⁸See Chapter Four, pp. 196-9.

⁸⁹*Gesta et opera bonorum in scriptis reddiguntur ut ea ad eorum laudem et gloriam perpetuam possint posteris reduci ad memoriam et ita debent crudelitates malicie perfidie et nequicie iniquorum in scriptis poni ut ad eorum dedecus vituperium et scandalum ea possint toto mundo futuris temporibus notificari*: CLRO, Custumal 1, the *Liber de Antiquis Legibus*, p. 114. See Chapter Two, pp. 76-7.

⁹⁰*quia intendo ex libro isto et aliis magnum codicem componere quia utile duxi posteris praesentia temporum nostrorum exprimere*: Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 70, fol. 96. See Chapter Two, p. 99.

experienced, and more discreet governors of the royal city of London had been removed almost at the same time through frequent plagues, in various cases younger men succeeding them in the government of the city were quite frequently in doubt, for want of writing [...] for a long time it seemed necessary, both to the superior and the subordinate men of the said city, that a volume, which was called a Repertory from the content in it concerning the government of the city, should be compiled from the notable memoranda arranged irregularly and widely spread both in the books and rolls, and in the charters of the city.⁹¹

And so that such noble grants might be returned more readily to the memory ('*apud quosdam*'?), the wisdom of the ancients made a provision of this kind, namely that what is worthy of praise should be reduced into writing, so that these things might be more seriously noted, from frequent reading of them, and [...] be imprinted upon the minds of posterity.⁹²

The most obvious common feature in these statements is their reference forward to the future audience which they imagine for their writing. While Carpenter's prologue, as we have seen, takes as its main subject the problem of the survival of information beyond the 'brevity' of human life to those that succeed the governors of the present, Fitz Thedmar, Horn and Burton also refer to the usefulness of writing as a means of preserving important information for future generations. Fitz Thedmar and Horn both use the term '*posteris*', which in its various forms was used to signify 'inheritance', 'posterity', 'descendants', and 'people who come afterwards/in the future'; Burton and Fitz Thedmar again include '*futuris*' in their explanations, signifying 'future'.⁹³ This consistency of interest in the future audience of the registers, from statements dating from the late thirteenth

⁹¹*Quia labilitas humane memorie brevitatsque vite de singulis rebus memorandis licet scriptis presertim irregulariter et confuse et multo magis de non scriptis certam habere notitiam non permittunt cumque per frequentes pestilentias subtractis velut insimul cunctis gubernatoribus longevis magis expertis et discretioribus civitatis regalis Londoniarum juniores eis in civitatis regimine succedentes in variis casibus pro defectu scripture nimirum sepius ambigebant [...] necessarium videbatur a diu tam superioribus quam subditis dicte civitatis quoddam volumen quod Reportorium a contento in eo civitatis regimine diceretur ex notabilibus memorandis tam in libris rotulis quam in cartis dicte civitatis inordinate diffuseque positis compilari' - London, CLRO, Custumal 12, the *Liber Albus*, fols. 1r.-1v. See Chapter Two, pp. 118-19.*

⁹²*Et ut talia tam nobiliter concessa [...] in memoria promptius voluerentur antiquorum prudentia cautelam invenit huiuscemodi videlicet tanquam laude digna redigere inscripturis ut sit ex frequenti lectura horum notitia solempnior habeant horum nempe considerationis intuitum hoc presens exilis scripture nota in mentibus imprimat futuros' - YCA, MS B/Y, fol. 88v. See Chapter Three, p. 164.*

⁹³All Latin translations are taken from R. E. Latham, ed., *Revised Medieval Latin Word-List From British and Irish Sources* (London: Oxford University Press, 1994).

through to the first half of the fifteenth century indicates, first, that their compilers all clearly envisaged their texts actually being read, in addition to being viewed, in detail in the future and perhaps in the present. They also imagine a plurality of readers (and, perhaps, listeners, since Roger Burton's term '*lectura*' can refer to 'reading' or a 'lecture'). This is despite the evidence discussed in Chapter Four that these volumes were inaccessible to the vast majority. Civic compilers such as Roger Burton and Arnald Fitz Thedmar perhaps envisaged having to accumulate their audience mainly through posterity. It is particularly interesting that Fitz Thedmar expresses this belief, and indeed in the strongest terms amongst the four writers here, since his was compiled as a private book and no indications remain, as in Andrew Horn's will, of any intention on his part for it to pass into the possession of the Guildhall, or of any other individual.⁹⁴ Secondly, the statements confirm that these compilers considered the durability of their writing an important aspect of its value - all of these compilers whom we have considered in this chapter began to compile books with the express belief that their words would be transmitted to a wide, and future audience. This must have increased their sense of the importance of their writing, and of their roles as compilers or writers. Furthermore, in including titles and description which enhanced their importance in the urban administration, the common clerks discussed earlier in this chapter probably envisaged preserving an impressive record of their professional skills for centuries to come, as well as for their immediate successors.

Further functions of the writing contained in the civic register are stressed. Fitz Thedmar is emphatic about the moral utility of his writing: its permanence enables exemplary descriptions of good and unworthy men to be transmitted further and to be followed or avoided. His consciousness of an audience for the *Liber de Antiquis Legibus* is again implicit in this essentially instructive function of writing. Roger Burton, similarly, argues that his writing enables examples of 'what is worthy of praise' to be perpetuated for future readers. They thus offer a pragmatic view of what is functional, rather than of the aesthetic value, in their civic writing.

⁹⁴See Chapter Two, pp. 76-80, and p. 88.

Andrew Horn's brief statement also focuses on the 'usefulness' of his future book, although his statement seems to suggest that he sees its utility lying in its expression of a view of his contemporary experience to readers still to come, rather than in its obvious practical value as a record of the laws of England and London. The term '*utile*', in legal usage, could also signify 'available', perhaps suggesting that by leaving his book to the Guildhall of London Horn envisaged that he would make it more accessible.

John Carpenter, too, stresses the practical usefulness of writing - while 'human memory' is 'fallible', writing can be 'ordered' and 'accurate'. While at the end of the thirteenth century Arnald Fitz Thedmar identified the usefulness of his private compilation as a medium of transmitting morally educative information, then, by the beginning of the fifteenth century Carpenter justified the use of writing by its intrinsic properties - as a more durable record than that of 'human memory', and as a means of ordering information. Carpenter's prologue suggests that by 1419, urban government in London had become wholly dependent on the written medium: 'human memory' has simply proven to be insufficient to maintain the institution which the laws and customs of the city embody, and which written records enable to work. Carpenter's prologue also indicates that the written records of London's administration had become so much of a way of life by 1419 that their volume was altogether swamping civic officials to the extent that they could not be used properly: disorganised writing cannot be 'useful'. The prologue, then, defines further our ideas about writing - for the purposes of Carpenter and, presumably, the other civic writers quoted here, it is not intrinsically valuable and does not inevitably bring order with it.

The idea that writing in itself is not the perfect solution to the problems of good government re-establishes the importance of the compiler in relation to the volume which will survive him, and underscores his skill in producing valuable writing. The organising agency of a professional figure such as Carpenter is required to make civic writing 'useful'. While only Carpenter describes himself as a '*Compiler*', and his activity as 'compiling', Andrew Horn uses the verb

'*componere*', 'to construct', 'to compose', or 'to arrange', which similarly stresses the control and skill which he exercises in assembling his customals. Similarly, although only the *Liber Albus* contains substantial prologues, Roger Burton also introduces his description of the city's ceremonial swords with a paragraph explaining the value of doing so. This provides a prime opportunity for the compiler, again, to introduce himself to his audience, and dignify his purpose and professionalism. But these two instances also constitute a major development in the shaping of the reception of their books by these compilers: they are apparently concerned to ensure that their collections should not be interpreted other than in the way they intend, and to seize the opportunity to aggrandise the writing in a civic register. Again, this process confirms the awareness of compilers and clerks of their audience. However, it is striking that these interpretative introductions, which are both validatory and defensive, are found as a structural addition in the two fifteenth-century texts considered here. This suggests that by this period civic writing may have been considered more vulnerable to miscomprehension, and therefore to require explanation and justification. It may, however, equally reflect the greater attentiveness by civic administrations in the fifteenth century to the presentation of the civic register which, as we saw in Chapter Four, was manifested in their decoration and suggestions of their ceremonial use, or simply the increased authority and control over written records of the common clerk by this period.

Each of the statements also expresses ideas of how their writing actually performs these functions. Roger Burton argues that writing is a relatively ancient tool, devised by 'the wisdom of the ancients'. He thus provides a 'history' for his activity, much in the way that the paragraph he introduces, and other civic registers, offer an ancient derivation for the city and its ceremonial or administrative procedures.⁹⁵ Again, this aggrandises both the text which Burton composes, and his role as common clerk. His description of how such writing works, however, is equally interesting. He uses the verb '*redigere*', also employed by Fitz Thedmar,

⁹⁵For example, the description of the Anglo-Saxon development of the office of the mayor in Book I of the *Liber Albus*, or the inclusion in several of London's civic registers of the city's earliest Assize of Buildings, and the Anglo-Saxon charter of William the Conqueror to the city. See Chapter Two.

signifying 'to reduce to, convert into'. As we have seen, John Carpenter uses the verb '*compilare*', and Andrew Horn the term '*componere*' to describe their activity. Horn, however, also uses the term '*exprimere*', 'to mould, express, copy, represent, describe, or translate'. Burton's introductory passage contains a further phrase for the process achieved by his writing - '*in mentibus imprimat*', 'to press or imprint on the minds'. In his description this is the outcome of the 'frequent reading' of his text, which causes it to be 'seriously noted'. The process of reading which Burton imagines clearly excludes the casual browser; rather it is a concentrated process which transfers the information which is recorded in writing to the memory of those who read it.

In Burton's model of reading, writing is an intermediary, and a means to an end, a mode of translation of information from one memory to another. The verbs '*redigere*' and '*exprimere*' substantiate this model, which seems to imagine three stages: the original activity, or legal 'act'; the process of 'reducing', 'copying', or 'translating' this into a summarised written form; and the transfer of the written version into the memories of the audience. The ubiquity of '*memoria*' within the passages quoted above seems to confirm the importance of human memory, fallible as it is, in the process which these registers apparently facilitate. Only Andrew Horn does not use it at all; in the other three passages, '*memoria*' is imagined as the recipient of written information and its subject is frequently defined as '*memoranda*' - things worthy of remembrance. The compiler of the *Chronicle of the Archbishops of York* may well have had a similar paradigm in mind when he wrote that he hoped to bring his information on the competition for superiority between the archbishops of York and Canterbury 'from the memory of antiquity to the comprehension of posterity'.⁹⁶

In *The Book of Memory*, Mary Carruthers argues that according to the medieval conceptualisation of 'memory', 'writing is a servant to memory, a book its extension, and like the memory itself, written letters call up the voices of those

⁹⁶'*antiquitatis memoriam ad posteritatis notitiam*': Raine, *The Historians of the Church of York*, p. 313.

that are no longer present'.⁹⁷ This and other instances of Carruthers's evidence dealing with the ideology surrounding memory in the Middle Ages provide a valuable context for the four statements above. Carruthers points out that the process of training and stocking one's memory was intrinsically one of ethical self-improvement, through the wisdom and knowledge thereby acquired and installed internally. "To form one's character and furnish one's memory" - they were the same goal in educational practice and philosophy from antiquity throughout the Middle Ages.⁹⁸ The act of reading, and properly memorising, was thus a morally corrective one: this helps to explain the moral value attributed to writing in the registers by Arnald Fitz Thedmar and Roger Burton. One of the requirements for successful memorising, in addition, was organisation: 'order is [...] the key to the precepts of memory training.'⁹⁹ Order is similarly, as we have seen, the key to useful written records, according to John Carpenter. Indeed, collection and organisation of material is the main guiding principle of the civic registers which we have examined in the thesis. John Carpenter explicitly states that this is his purpose, but it is clearly the underlying motivation behind this kind of compilation.

According to Carruthers' arguments, writing is essentially a mnemonic aid, and the apparatus found around texts in medieval manuscripts, including indices and decoration, particularly with unexpected grotesque characters, was developed primarily to facilitate this.¹⁰⁰ As we have seen at earlier stages in the discussion, decoration occurs particularly in the registers from London, ranging from rubrication of titles in sub-sections of text, to grotesque images and impressive miniatures.¹⁰¹ Similarly, tables of contents are present in most of the registers, added later in the medieval period if not originally. While these are possibly most ostentatious in London's *Liber Albus*, tables of contents also survive for the *Liber Regum*, even though the volume itself is no longer intact, and for the *Liber de*

⁹⁷Mary Carruthers, *The Book of Memory: A Study of Memory In Medieval Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 111.

⁹⁸Carruthers, *The Book of Memory*, p. 112.

⁹⁹Carruthers, *The Book of Memory*, p. 147.

¹⁰⁰Carruthers, *The Book of Memory*, see, for example, on indices, pp. 117-21, and on decoration, pp. 221-29.

¹⁰¹See Chapter Four, pp. 211-27.

Antiquis Legibus.¹⁰² In Chapter Three, the index of statutes contained in a range of civic registers, some of which are also no longer extant, held by York's city council at the end of the fifteenth century was discussed.¹⁰³ Its entries were based on the key contents of each act or document, arranged roughly alphabetically according to the first word in each of these key phrases, which in some cases was not the most obvious key word from the text. It seems likely that, in addition to providing information about the locations of the texts themselves, these entries functioned as memory triggers for their users - presumably clerks who were, in any case, extremely familiar with the laws and the contents of the civic archives. This 'catalogue' refers to additional indices attached to individual registers, and the arrangement of several entries from the same register in clusters in it suggests that by this time it was not uncommon to tabulate contents of civic books, presumably to produce a more ordered collection in which contents could be located more easily.

The organisation and decoration of these civic registers, then, suggests that they did function at least partly as mnemonic tools. It seems impossible, however, to limit the registers to this rather mechanical function merely. As mnemonic triggers, the books are simply 'servants to memory', but as repositories of documents, interpreters of their contexts, and stylists of historiography by their chronicles and organisation of writings 'from antiquity', they do more. They constitute, as Carruthers also argues, 'an extension [...] like the memory itself' and 'call up the voices of those that are no longer present'.¹⁰⁴ The statements examined above indicate that the compilers of these texts envisage their function as being inextricably bound up with a process of remembering. With texts such as Fitz Thedmar's chronicle, which is so insistent on the moral lesson of its contents, writing not only recalls, but in the process of remembering through reading, instructs. Fitz Thedmar, as we have seen, argues that writing is a crucial means of transmitting this exemplary didacticism to as wide an audience as possible. For

¹⁰²See Chapter Two, p. 74, and p. 89.

¹⁰³See Chapter Three, pp. 171-85.

¹⁰⁴Carruthers, *The Book of Memory*, p. 111.

John Carpenter, 'human memory' is 'fallible', and the inscribed contents of the Guildhall archive constitute an institutionalised, 'infallible' material memory.

The statements above remind the reader of the role of the human compiler, who is so frequently absent in both private and governmental compilations, and of his importance in the production of the book. We have seen that for many clerks and compilers it was important to attach their names, and sometimes some additional information about themselves, to the civic registers on which they worked. This tendency to see the book, in general, as an object by which an individual could be remembered was not limited to those most personally involved in their production, however. Most of these manuscripts bear the names of several clerks, and sometimes, as in the case of the Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Barlow 27 version of the *Chronicle of the Archbishops of York*, of readers.¹⁰⁵ In addition, manuscript books seem to have been a favoured object left to relatives and friends in wills, ensuring that one would be remembered for many years - living on in 'memory'.¹⁰⁶ Frequently, too, books were left to churches or churchmen, associating their previous owners with what we have seen was the particularly long-standing memory of Christian history.¹⁰⁷ Writing, and its use in the registers considered here, certainly has a role as a mnemonic tool; but their inclusion of historiography, their juxtaposition of both contemporary and apparently very old documents, and the particularly potent memorial quality of the book as an object in medieval culture, accrue to ensure that the 'memorial' quality and function of these civic registers specifically was a complex and multi-layered one.

Moreover, not only do the registers represent a translation of information from one memory to another, but the sometimes wide range of documents - in terms of chronology, genre, and subject matter - in a book such as the *Liber Regum* constitutes a unique complex of memories gathered in cumulative effect only by this

¹⁰⁵See Chapter Four, pp. 222-24.

¹⁰⁶See, for example, the wills of Stephan Bettenham (p. 94); John Bydyk (p. 96); and William de Byholte (pp. 97-100) in Susan H. Cavanaugh, 'A Study of Books Privately Owned in England: 1300-1450' (unpublished doctoral dissertation, The University of Pennsylvania, 1980).

¹⁰⁷See Jo Ann Hoepfner Moran, 'A "Common-Profit" Library in Fifteenth-Century England and Other Books for Chaplains', *Manuscripta*, 28 (1984), 17-25 (p. 21).

volume. Our earlier discussion of the contents of the *Liber Regum* and other registers has shown that themes and interests develop intertextually within as well as among the volumes - for example, the entire chronological range of laws and charters, and the co-existence of chronicle with separately copied documents deriving from the circumstances it describes, together with the descriptions of London and Britain as the locations for its narration, contributes to the over-riding structuring of a long legal and social history of the city of London.¹⁰⁸

Arguably, of course, the 'representation of our times' which compilers such as Andrew Horn suggest is offered by their compilations, is thus one which exists only in the mind of the compiler and the folios of his manuscript. It may represent a decidedly strained, if not an all together 'false memory'. In relation to the documentary and social 'history' provided these volumes, 'memory' creates and reforms, as well as recalls and records. In Chapter Four we saw that while civic registers may often have been offered as symbols of urban prosperity and self-confidence, in fact they could more frequently be connected with specific instances of unrest in London and York. Moreover, there is evidence to suggest that at least by the end of the fourteenth century the civic register was being adopted as a legal and documentary record, and an accoutrement of power, by factions in urban government, and consequently distrusted by members of other political affiliations.¹⁰⁹

Similarly, as we saw in Chapter Two, the histories contained in these registers inevitably originate with a personalised and often biased version of events.¹¹⁰ To offer an instance of direct conflict between these histories, while the *Chronicle of the Archbishops of York* promotes the ecclesiastical superiority and independence of York, and applauds its archbishops' defence of this, Arnald Fitz Thedmar's chronicle twice records and criticises the embarrassment caused by the Archbishop of York when, in a direct insult to the Archbishop of Canterbury, he persisted in having his cross carried before him in procession.¹¹¹ The statements

¹⁰⁸See Chapter Two, pp. 86-100.

¹⁰⁹See Chapter Four, pp. 227-36.

¹¹⁰See Chapter Two, pp. 76-80, and pp. 94-6.

¹¹¹CLRO, Custumal 1, the *Liber de Antiquis Legibus*, fols. 111v-112r, and fol.

above suggest that writing is simply a servant to human memory, unproblematically transferring information to the future and in the process serving both moral and practical needs as a repository of absolute truth. However, it is clear that the composers of these statements, and the men who composed and compiled these registers in general, were aware that the information recorded in civic writing, first, could easily be manipulated, and secondly, was likely to be depended upon as orthodox. We may be able to see the consequences of increasing anxiety about this in the dismissal of common clerks in the fifteenth century as a result of their political loyalties: clearly it would be dangerous for the records of an urban administration to lie under the control of an individual whose political views might conflict with their own, or be potentially dangerous for them. At the same time, the statements considered here indicate that their compilers were concerned to justify their compilations or writing: the interpretative introductions attached to their writing by Roger Burton and John Carpenter in particular seem to represent precautionary action taken to preclude miscomprehension. The action of Andrew Horn in bequeathing his custumals to the Guildhall may represent a further decisive - and highly successful - attempt to ensure that his registers embodied the 'official' 'representation' of the city, its laws, and its history, for the future.¹¹²

Conclusion:

It seems axiomatic that the compilers and clerks who were responsible for assembling and copying the civic registers considered in this thesis provided a key influence on the timing of their production, and the nature of their style and content. However, as we have seen, many of these men remain largely anonymous and voiceless in the collections which they shaped, and in other medieval records: in

^{117v}. For the *Chronicle of the Archbishops of York*, see Raine, *Historians*, pp. 292-311.

¹¹²See Chapter Two, p. 88.

many cases the only, or fullest account we have of their existence or of their lives is to be found in a civic register. This chapter has argued that the social background and ambition of compilers - either private or employed as common clerks - and the way that they viewed themselves and their writing, was an important factor in the production of the civic registers in the form they took. The period at the end of the thirteenth century, and the beginning of our period of interest, was as we have seen one in which men from London and York employed as administrative clerks flourished: not only were they numerous, but they were frequently of considerable social - and increasingly professional - status in these cities. The proliferation of administrative records which is apparent in the governments of York and London from this period onwards must have augmented the authority of the common clerk in urban government, and encouraged - if not required - these intelligent and educated individuals to undertake organisation and innovation in these records. As we have seen, by including contents which aggrandised or praised the city and its government, the common clerk was celebrating not only his employees, but sometimes also the social group from which he derived and with which he may have undertaken business and socialised.

In addition, of course, he promoted his own importance, and both common clerks and private compilers were enterprising in the ways in which they used their civic writing to describe or dignify themselves, and sometimes their family or guild. Moreover, the statements considered in the final section of this chapter indicate that these compilers were acutely conscious of writing as a durable record, and of the book as a memorial object: they seem to have been in little doubt that the titles, description, or representations which they recorded in their registers would survive to be read by a large audience of readers, accumulated through time. While the language, script, and restrictive control of civic records made them largely inaccessible to contemporary readers, then, these compilers seem to have assembled their volumes with an audience constantly in mind. It may well not be accidental that these registers often provide the sole or most detailed record of these men. The content of the civic registers discussed here benefited from the social prosperity, the

increasing governmental authority, and the intellectual skills of the clearly exceptional individuals who worked on them, but also from their ambition.

Conclusion

This study has aimed to characterise as a genre the civic registers of London and York which have been its subject. The previous five chapters have enabled us to develop a definition of these medieval civic registers, in terms of their content, decoration, functions, and the possible reasons for their appearance and proliferation between the thirteenth and the fifteenth centuries.

All of these collections are constituted predominantly from copies of legal documents deriving from the administrations of the city and usually also the kingdom. Chapter One outlined the significance of law to the medieval city: urban administrations assiduously sought, preserved, and recorded the laws and charters on which their independence from royal control, and their authority to govern their own community, was based. In Chapter One we also saw that legal collections were amongst the most popular manuscripts held privately by citizens of medieval English cities.

Typically, however, these collections contain material which does more than simply provide a record of useful or relevant legislation. Most frequently, they include a record of the city's history of some kind. Other contents also offer non-legislative means of recording different aspects of the city, such as the copies of the twelfth-century encomiastic description of London by William Fitz Stephen in the *Liber Regum* and British Library, MS Additional 38131, or Roger Burton's description of the ceremonial swords gifted to York by royalty in York, YCA, MS B/Y. These contents suggest that the compilers of these registers are seeking from other genres of writing ways of describing the city. Descriptions of the city's administration also play a central role in these collections. Lists of the names of those who served the city's government appear frequently in the registers, and some include description of the ceremony surrounding civic elections. Moreover, many of the laws and charters which are recorded date from centuries before the compilation of the registers, particularly in London: the Anglo-Saxon charter of William the Conqueror to London, and the 1189 Building Assize both appear repeatedly. Much of the documentary material assembled in these volumes, then, contributes to honouring or providing a history for the city and its government.

This genre of texts can thus be characterised in terms of its content as collections of urban and national legal documents which typically include other varieties of writing designed to describe and celebrate a range of aspects of the city, with an inevitable bias towards contents dealing with members of urban government.

The ways in which these registers appear to have been used offer further important means of defining this genre. As well as providing useful collections of legislation relevant to the city's government, it is clear that some registers were assembled in both London and York specifically to provide ordered compilations of documents which were already recorded in the city's archive. The particular value of these volumes, then, lay in the references they contained to where documents might be located in the ever-expanding archive, and in the organised way in which they could present material, which especially in the later registers was frequently tabulated or indexed. John Carpenter's description of the archive of London's Guildhall in 1419 as an 'inextricable labyrinth' confirms that during our period of interest the volume of administrative documentation held and produced by urban governments had increased to the extent that books which presented material in an organised and so accessible form, would be highly valued. The decoration of the civic registers of London and York also seems partly to have been designed to facilitate this organisation of material.

But just as the content of these registers indicates that they were designed to honour and conceptualise the city and its government, so the formal presentation of material in them seems to have been intended to dignify the community which owned them and which they described. While the London registers held by the Guildhall are often impressively decorated - in particular in the fifteenth century - the more modestly presented records from York also include the lists of civic officials now contained in York, YCA, MS D1, which have been corrected and supplemented to make the information they contain more accurate, and copied from earlier versions to produce more visually attractive versions. Documentary references to the registers of both cities suggest that some of them may have been employed as a visual symbol to convey to observers from both inside and outside

of the city the importance and prestige of the urban community and its government. As a collection of writing dealing with the city, as an accoutrement of its government, and as an image of its authority, wealth, wisdom, and unity, the civic register was closely identified with the city.

Importantly, the civic register seems in London to have functioned as a symbol of power and prestige for both urban government and private owners of these manuscripts. Chapter Two examined examples of manuscripts which have previously been most frequently categorised according to the discrete genres of customals and commonplace books, based largely on their possession in the present day in either the archives of a local administration or non-governmental libraries. In fact many of these collections seem to have slipped easily between public and private possession during their history. They were valued as professional, educative texts by both governmental clerks and citizens of London who, on the basis of the limited evidence which survives of ownership, seem to have served the city as aldermen or in other civic offices during their lives. These privately produced collections tend to reflect other interests in their compilers' lives, including their guild or family affiliations, indicating more complex and personalised ideas and experiences of citizenship. Both governmental and privately owned customals, however, include a common core of texts, and other very similar contents to the extent that they cannot be differentiated in terms of their style, presentation, and subject-matter. The practical and symbolic usefulness of the civic register to both government and within the household of a certain class of citizens in London is an important aspect of the definition of this genre.

Furthermore, the registers provide evidence of London citizens exercising literate skills which enabled them to cope with legal, historical, and rhetorical texts in Latin, French, and English, on collections which cannot be categorised merely as examples of 'pragmatic literacy' or 'leisure reading'. These collections satisfy the interests of these men in their professional lives as merchants and governors, and in their private lives. The categories of literacy outlined in Chapters One and Two prove to be inadequate to describe these manuscripts, which seem to embody in

literary form the sense of citizenship experienced by these men, and the pride they felt in their relationship with the city. Both governmental and privately held registers thus constitute significant evidence of how men of this social background perceived their relationship with the city they lived in and served, and that by as early as the thirteenth century they considered writing a suitable medium to denote and record this.

Crucial to our definition of the civic registers of London and York discussed in this thesis are the circumstances which caused them to be produced in this considerable number between the end of the thirteenth and the close of the fifteenth centuries. Chapter Four argued that specific instances of social conflict in the medieval city often motivated an urban government or an individual to compile a register as part of a campaign to convey their authority and success, as well as the unity of the community, or of the faction within it to which they belonged. Clearly, however, the thesis has shown that the factors leading to the establishment of this genre in the medieval English city are more complex than this. Chapter One discussed Michael Clanchy's theory that familiarity with the increasing documentary output of the royal administration led to more writing being undertaken at a local level, and there is certainly evidence that the administrations of London and York, and the citizens of London, were influenced by their experience of royal government and records in their assembling and decoration of the manuscripts considered here. However, it is apparent that ecclesiastical authorities, also present in considerable force in both London and York, might have provided both exemplars for the production of civic registers with their cartularies and chronicles, and professional training for the clerks who produced them. As we saw in Chapter One, both cities were also fortunate in the educational facilities available in them.

Moreover, during this period in its history, the English medieval city was in the process of defining itself in relation to sources of authority such as the king and religious institutions: this meant not simply aggressively contending for governmental power, but also establishing their position within the realm of

England, as 'the head of the kingdom and of laws' in the case of London, or as 'second city of the kingdom and the chief chamber of the king' - or of course the superior ecclesiastical authority to Canterbury - for York.¹ As was discussed in Chapter Four, the close of the fourteenth century and the beginning of the fifteenth in particular was a period when both cities can be seen to be searching out visual images with which to represent themselves. The development of the writing within these civic registers, then, to include celebratory and descriptive texts, can be partly attributed to general trends in the parallel evolution of the medieval city as its citizens increasingly sought means to identify and promote their community. As Chapter Five pointed out, however, this was also a period during which the authority, the ambition, and the self-confidence of common clerks was growing in the urban administration, and very often the elaboration of writing within these civic registers can be identified specifically with an innovative individual. The awareness which several of the compilers - both clerks and private owners - of these registers express of the durability of writing, and of the memorial function of the book, confirms that an exceptional individual might see a register book as a means of recording their own importance, or their particular view of their city and their times.

This study has filled a gap in modern scholarly studies of the civic register, by considering and comparing the registers of London and York collectively as examples of a single documentary genre. While many previous scholarly treatments of these and other medieval urban registers have treated them exclusively as sources of information for historical studies of other areas, this thesis has viewed the register as an important development in the written culture of London and York in its own right. Other areas of study obviously remain which would further enrich our sense of the significance of the civic register in the medieval city. Close examination of the structure and content of the chronicles which represent such a frequent feature of the registers might enable a distinctive characterisation of history-writing in this type of collection to be developed, and reveal how these chronicles might differ from those produced by other institutions or authorities.

¹See Chapter Two, p. 66, note 1, and Chapter Three, p. 128, note 2.

The limitations of space and time in this project have also prevented other potentially interesting contents of the civic registers from being considered in detail: the political verses of YCA, MS D1 and the *Liber de Antiquis Legibus* provide one such example. Closer study of the political situations in which the registers were produced, touched on in Chapter Four, would potentially yield further information on the reasons for their compilation. Finally, similar studies of other medieval urban documentary collections would undoubtedly improve our understanding of the purpose and importance of the civic registers considered here: these might include both the registers compiled at similar times in other cities, and other related series of records, such as London's *Letter Books*.

Throughout the thesis the titles 'civic register' and 'civic writing' have been adopted to describe these manuscripts and the text which they contain. The Introduction listed the various definitions of 'civic', as an adjective appropriate to description of the city, urban government, and citizenship. The previous chapters have confirmed the aptness of the title for this genre of manuscripts: the civic register arose as a fundamental element of the growing governmental authority and self-identification of the city between the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries. It appeared and became established as a consequence of the practical administrative needs of medieval London and York, and in response to their citizens' desire to lay down in visible and durable form descriptions, histories, or symbols by which they could identify the city which they lived and worked in, and which they may have served as officials. The varied contents of the civic register allowed clerks and compilers to describe and negotiate their relationship with their city and its government, and to express their idea of their citizenship.

Appendices

Appendix One

Appendix One

York, York City Archives, MS D1

The City of York's Freeman's Register

Latin, Anglo-Norman, and English

Entries made between 1272 and 1671

Contents¹

1 .Sixteen Oaths of Civic Officials

fols. 1r.-3v.

Titles in Latin; oaths in English

a. The oath taken by those being admitted to the freedom of the city

title: 'Sacramentum pro intransibus libertatem'

begins fol. 1r.: 'This here ye <my lord> mair'²

ends fol.1r.: 'So helpe yowe God and holydome and be this buke'

b. The oath taken by the mayor's mace-bearer

title: 'Iuramentum servientis ad clavam'

begins fol 1r.: 'Ye shall wele duely'

ends fol. 1r.: 'to ony hurt of the same so helpe yow god <at the holye dome and by this buke>'

c. The oath of the common clerk

title: 'Iuramentum clerici communis'

begins fol. 1v.: 'Ye shall assist and attende to the maire'

ends fol. 1v.: 'withoutyn advise of the maire beynge for the tyme'

d. The mayor's oath

title: 'Iuramentum maioris'

begins fol. 1v.: 'I shall be trusty and true'

ends fol. 1v.: 'I shall so do so helpe me god at the holye dome and by this book'

e. The aldermen's oath

title: 'Iuramentum aldermannorum'

¹In quotations from manuscripts all contractions have been silently expanded, and Christian names given as their modern equivalents. Place names have not been expanded or modernised. Some letters and spellings have been altered to modern form: 'thorn' has been written as 'th'; 'j' as 'i' (except in the case of numerals); 'v' and 'u' have been written according to modern English orthography. Letters have been capitalised or moved into lower case according to modern practice. I have not attempted to insert the punctuation symbols used in some of the texts.

²The punctuation marks <> have been used to indicate insertions in the text; square brackets [] have been added around text which has been deleted.

begins fol. 1v.: 'I swere that I shall truely counseill'

ends fol. 1v.: 'soo helpe me god ande all seyntes ande by this buyk'

f. The oath of the citizens of York gathered in the Guildhall

title: 'Iuramentum civium civitatis Ebor' adtunc in Guihald eiusdem civitatis congregatorum'

begins fol. 1v.: 'Ye the communes of this citie'

ends fol. 1v.: 'and to the same entente hoolde ye comunes nowe uppe your handes'

g. The chamberlains' oath

title: 'Iuramentum camarariorum'

begins fol. 2r.: 'Ye shall trulye receyve the dettes'

ends fol. 2r.: 'so helpe you god [at the holye doome] and by this booke'

h. The oath of the bridge-masters of the Ouse and the Foss

title: 'Iuramentum custodum pontium Use et Fosse'

begins fol. 2r.: 'Ye shall truely fulfyll'

ends fol. 2r.: 'so helpe you god at the daie of doome and by this buyke'

i. The punishment of those who reveal the business of the city council

Dated to the year 38 Edward III

A note of an agreement that any civic officer or citizen who makes public the private discussion of the council should be fined, excluded from civic office, and deprived of their freedom. This entry looks as if it has been added in a different hand from that writing the other oaths.

title: 'Contra discoperientes et revelantes consilium'

begins fol. 2r.: 'In the xxxviiij yere of kyng Edward the iii^{de}'

ends fol. 2r.: 'or otherwise to be punyshed after his trespasses'

A line has been drawn below this entry, and a later hand has added 'yow shall well and truely counsell ayde supporte assiste and (faded) the lord maior in the office of maioralty and come to counsell (faded) all tymes when yow shalbe sent for by the lord maior or his (faded) for the tyme being and all such lawfull maters and things as shall be (faded) yow shall not opin nor discovere to any person or persons whatsoever'

j. The oath of the arms-bearers

title: 'Iuramentum armigorum'

begins fol 2v.: 'ye swere that ye shall dewlie attend'

ends fol. 2v.: 'so help you god and holidom and be this buke'

k. The oath of the constables

title: 'Iuramentum constabulorum'

begins fol. 2v.: 'ye swere that ye shal dewly'

ends fol. 2v.: '<so [helpe] help you god and by thys buke et cetera>'

l. The oath of the aldermen and the twenty-four

title: 'Iuramentum aldermannorum et xxiiij^{or}'

begins fol. 2v.: 'I sweare that I shall trewly counsell'

ends fol. 2v.: 'soo helpe me god at the holydome and by this booke'

m. The oath of the searchers of the crafts

title: 'Iuramentum strit' artificiorum'

begins fol. 3r.: 'Ye shall trewly occupy the office'

ends fol. 3r.: 'so help [me] yu god and holydom and by this buk'

n. The oath of the searchers of the crafts

A version of the previous oath with its interlineations and corrections integrated into the text, together with a few other minor additions.

title: 'Iuramentum strictat' artificiorum'

begins fol. 3r.: 'ye shall trewly occupy the office'

ends fol. 3r.: 'so help you god and holidom and by thys buke'

o. The oath of the sheriffs

title: 'Sacramentum vicecomitum'

begins fol. 3r.: 'Syr ye and ather of you'

ends fol. 3v.: 'and the advise of the mayre so help you et cetera'

Following this entry a memorandum dated 'xx^o May 1579' has been added noting a change to the sheriffs' oath in the mayoralty of Robert Dripling.

p. The oath of the common council

title: 'Iuramentum communis concilii'

begins fol. 3v.: 'I shall truely assiste aide and cowncell'

ends fol. 3v.: 'so helpe me god at holy dome and by this book'

Below this final oath, marked by a pointing finger: 'moure maisters' and then 'Look for the moure maisters oath herafter in the last haf of this book'

2. A list of the mayors of York by regnal years, from 1 Edward I to 7 Henry VIII, including from 48 Edward III the name of the common clerk. From 39 Edward III the name of the mayor's servant appears intemittently, described more precisely as his sword-carrier from 12 Richard II, and a second servant is recorded from 7 Henry IV, described as the bearer of his mace from 8 Henry IV.

ff. 4r.-27r.

Latin

begins fol. 4r.: 'Anno regni Regis Edwardi filii Regis Henrici primo Iohannes le Specer senior gerabat officium maioritatis civitatis Ebor'

ends fol. 27r.: 'videlicet Burton ad clavam et Ratcliffe ad gladium et iurati'

Below this, an entry for 9 Henry VIII has been begun, and then abandoned: 'Die (space) in festo Sancti Mauri abbatis anno regni Regis Henrici octavi nono'

This section includes:³

3.a. Attempts to chronicle national and local events under the entries for 11 and 12 Edward II and 1-7 Edward III

Latin

i. Under the entry for 11 Edward II

begins fol. 4v.: 'eadem anno in festo Sancti Luce Evangeliste'

ends fol. 4v.: 'ex utraque parte fuerunt interfecti'

ii. Under the entry for 12 Edward II

begins fol. 4v.: 'qui die Mercurius'

ends fol. 4v.: 'quod quid placitia non dum terminatus fuit'

iii. Under the entry for 1-7 Edward III

begins fol. 5r.: 'tempore cuius maioritatis tum impetratum'

ends fol. 5r.: 'maioris a regni Regis Edwardi filii Regis Edwardi filii Regis Henrici decimo'

iv. Under the entry for 41 Edward III

begins fol. 6v.: 'Quia in hoc anno fuerunt'

ends fol. 6v.: 'domum Dei et cetera'

3.b. A memorandum of the repayment of a loan for Henry IV by the mayor of the city, under the entry for 2 Henry IV

begins fol. 10r.: 'et ultra concessum est ei'

ends fol. 10r.: 'in hac parte assignate'

3.c. Three entries concerning the election and conduct of the mayor of York, inserted in the list of mayors between the entries for 11 and 12 Henry IV

Anglo-Norman

i. The form of electing the mayor

This is stated to have been established as law in the sixteenth year of the reign of Richard II, and reaffirmed here in the eleventh year of the reign of Henry IV

begins fol. 11r.: 'Pur ceo que le tierce'

ends fol. 11v.: 'come il ad este adevaunt'

ii. Restrictions on who may serve as mayor and punishment of corrupt citizens

This section has been crossed out in the text, up until 'Et que ycest estatut soit luz'.

The final, un-erased sentence records that this ordinance was to be read out each year during the mayor's election.

begins fol. 11v.: 'Item ordeigne est que nul meir'

ends fol. 11v.: 'court des chaumbrelayns soit renduz'

iii. A very brief entry, stating that the mayor should be elected by full consent of all present in the Guildhall

³In these sections noting additions to the formulae describing the election of the mayor, the customary introductory phrases, recording the mayor's name, have been omitted.

begins fol. 11v.: 'Et inuisdiat quant le dit'

ends fol. 11v.: 'assemble en la dite sale'

fol. 27v. blank

3. An ordinance of the city of York, from the feast of Saint Maurus, 16 Henry VIII, (15th January, 1525), declaring that no-one is to be elected as chamberlain without having first served as a bridgemaster for the city, on punishment of a fine.

Latin title and English text

title: 'In festo Sancti Mauri abbatis anno regni regis Henrici octavi xvj^{mo}'

begins fol. 28r.: 'Assemblyd in the Guyldhalle of the said City'

ends fol. 28r.: 'to contynue and endure for evermore'

4. An ordinance of the city of York, dated to the feast of Saint Mathew the Apostle, 27 Henry VIII, (21st September, 1535), in response to complaints of corruption against the servants and bailiffs of the sheriffs of York, declaring that the sheriff must not re-appoint servants and bailiffs who have been in his service during the previous three years. A list is attached of those civic officers present at the meeting to discuss this ordinance.

Latin title and English text

title: 'In festo Sancti Mathei apostoli ante electionem vicecomitum anno regni Regis Henrici octavi vicesimo septimo'

begins fol. 28v.: 'Assemblyd in the counsell chambre within the common halle'

ends fol. 28v.: 'shall layse of his fee x libra'

5. An account of a meeting, dated the 17th April, 29 Henry VIII (1538), of the mayor, aldermen, sheriffs and twenty-four of the city of York at which the six current chamberlains of the city were fined six pounds, eight shillings and four pence because none of them had served as a bridgemaster or 'moor-master' before becoming chamberlain. An ordinance that future chamberlains in a similar position must pay the same fee within three weeks of being sworn in or pay twenty nobles to be acquitted of the offices of bridgemaster and 'moor-master'. Those who have served as bridge or moor-master need pay only four pounds. A list is attached of those present at the meeting.

Latin title and English text

title: 'xvij die Aprilis anno regni Regis Henrici octavi xxix^{no}'

begins fol. 29r.: 'Assemblyd in the cowncell chambre within the common halle'

ends fol. 29v.: 'usage to the contrary notwithstanding'

6. An ordinance of the city of York, dated the 21 September, 3 Edward VI (1549), that all sheriffs of the city must previously have served as bridgmaster and chamberlain under pain of a fine. A list is attached of those present at the meeting.

Latin title and English text

title: 'Die Sabbati in festo Sancti Mathei apostoli et evangeliste videlicet xxj^o die Septembris anno iij^{ti}o regni Regis Edawrdi vj^{ti}

begins fol. 30r.: 'Assemblyd in the counsell chambre within the Gylde hall'

ends fol. 30r.: 'in any thyng notwithstanding'

ff. 30v.-31r. blank

7. An ordinance of the city of York, dated the 15 January, 37 Henry VIII, (1546), that no citizens of York are to buy goods from the people of Kingston-upon-Hull, as a result of a disagreement between the two towns, with a list attached of those present at the meeting.

Latin title and English text

title: 'In festo Sancti Mauri Abbatis viz xv^o die Ianuarii xj anno xxxvij^o dicti domini Regis'

begins fol. 31v.: 'Assemblyd in the common halle of the said city'

ends fol. 31v.: 'specified to the contrary notwithstanding'

8. Annual lists of entrants to the freedom of the city of York from 1 Edward I to 1537

fols. 32r.-191v.

Published in *Register of the Freemen of the City of York from the City Records*, 2 vols, ed. by F. Collins, Surtees Society, 96 (Durham: Andrews; London: Whittaker; Bernard Quaritch; Edinburgh: Blackwood, 1897) I: 1272-1558, pp. 1-257.

Up until the entry for 10 Henry VI, 1432, (on fol. 112v.) the entrants to the freedom are simply listed without designation of their type of admission; from this entry, a separate list of entrants admitted by patrimony is begun, under the heading 'per patres in tempore Thome Snaudon'. From the entry for 1 Richard III, 1484 (on fol. 153v.) onwards, a separate list of those admitted as apprentices is also included. Each list begins with a formulaic introduction, which initially gives the regnal year and the name of the mayor during whose term of office the freemen were admitted. The calendar year has been added interlineally, or at the end of the introduction, up until the entry for 2 Henry V, 1415 (on fol. 101r.), when it is integrated into the introduction. In the introduction to the entry for 18 Edward III, 1344, (on fol. 53r.) the name of one chamberlain is given with 'et soc' suorum

Camer' Ebor' added and from the entry for 26 Edward III, 1353, (on fol. 58r.) the names of all three chamberlains appear in the introduction.

Introduction in Latin, until the entry for 1651 (on fol. 286v.) when it switches to English.

begins fol. 32r.: 'Nomina illorum qui intraverunt libertatem civitatis'

ends fol. 191v.: 'Brianus Thomson merchaunt filius Ricardi Thomson sporyer'

9. Lists of entrants to the freedom of the city by apprenticeship not included in the lists in fols. 32r.-191v., dating from

a. fol. 192r.: 7 Henry VIII (published in Collins, *Register of the Freemen*, I, p. 238)

b. fol. 192v.: 8 Henry VIII (published Collins, *Register of the Freemen*, I, p. 239)

c. fol. 193r.: 26 Henry VIII (published Collins, *Register of the Freemen*, I, p. 240) and 21 Henry VII (published Collins, *Register of the Freemen*, I, p. 241)

begins fol. 192r.: 'Nomina eorum qui intraverunt libertatem civitatis'

ends fol. 193r.: 'Iohannes Barwyk bocher apprenticius Thome Tone bocher'

These entries are accompanied by some additional notes naming the mayor elected in particular years, but without any names of freemen attached.

fols. 193v.-194r. blank

10. List of names of those admitted to the franchise from 29 Henry VIII to 3 Mary

Published in Collins, *Register of the Freemen*, I, pp. 257-277

Latin and English

begins fol. 194v.: 'De intrantibus libertatem tempore maiorat'

ends fol. 209r.: 'Georgius Sawhell Goldsmyth filius Iohannis Sawhell mynstrell'

11. Formulae giving the names of the two sheriffs, and of two men acting as pledges for each sheriff to pay part of the fee farm to the king, for the years 23, 24, and 25 Henry VIII.

Latin

title: 'Civitas Ebor - die Sabbati scilicet xxvij die octobris anno regni Regis Henrici octavi xxiiij^{to} tempore maioratus venerabilis viri Willelmi Barker Maioris civitatis predicte'

begins fol. 209v. 'anno xxiiij^{to} Regis Henrici octavi'

ends fol. 209v.: 'Iohannes Plewman mylner'

12. Annual lists of entrants to the freedom of the city of York from 4 Mary to the mayoral year 1650-1651

Published in Collins, *Register of the Freeman*, I, p. 277 up to II, p. 170

Latin and English

begins fol. 210r.: 'De intransibus libertatem tempore secundo venerabilibus viri Roberti Hall marchant'

ends fol. 287v.: 'Henry Wilkinson sonn of Robert Wilkinson inholder'
fols. 264r. and 274v. have been left blank.

13. Names of those elected to various civic offices in 12, 16, 23, 24, 26, 27, 29 and 30 Edward III:

- a. 12 Edward III (1338): election of Thomas de Grantham to act as attorney of the mayor and commanalty before the Justiciar of the Bench and note that Simon Kingson had previously been elected as attorney '*in Banco*'
- b. 16 Edward III (1342): election of Thomas de Grantham, Walter de Askham, and Thomas de Wilton as attorneys, and of William de Skypwich, rector of the church of Holy Trinity on Goodramgate as their clerk in the king's Chancery
- c. 23 Edward III (1349): election of Richard de Raisebek, William de Ferrour and Thomas de Lynalum as coroners, of William le Ferrour as the custodian of weights and measures, of John de Escrik, cordwainer, and Robert le Couper as bridgemasters of the Foss, and of Thomas de Felton (*associatus est Alano de Thoraldthorp*) and Alan de Thoraldthorp as bridgemasters of the Ouse.
- d. 24 Edward III (1350): election of William de Merefold, clerk, as servant of the city of York in the king's Chancery
- e. 26 Edward III (1352): election of Adam Aerlot and William de Cawod as bridgemasters of the Ouse
- f. 27 Edward III (1353): election of William Fox de Corneburgh and William de Hustewayt as bridgemasters of the Ouse and of William de Feriby and Adam de Esscryk, potter, as bridgemasters of the Foss, with a note that Adam was replaced by Master John le Cue
- g. 29 Edward III (1355): election of Simon Harditore and Adam de Candeler as bridgemasters of the Ouse
- h. 30 Edward III (1356): election of John Doway and Thomas de Topclif as bridgemasters of the Ouse, and of John Mower as collector of alnage

Latin

begins fol. 288r.: 'Memorandum quod die Lune in festo Sancti Andrei'

ends fol. 288r.: 'officium collectoris annagis et iuratus'

14. List of Bailiffs of the city of York, from 1 Edward I to 4 Philip 5 Mary.

Latin

Later entries also include the names of those providing pledges for payment of the fee farm. The entries for 18 Henry VIII and 26 Henry VIII fall at the end and

beginning of sequential quires, and the entries for 19 Henry VIII to 25 Henry VIII are missing (the entries for 23, 24 and 25 Henry VIII are now found on fol. 209v.). Earlier entries note the years when the city was taken into the king's hands, and the deaths of monarchs.

title: 'Nomina ballivorum civitatis Ebor' a tempore Regis Henrici patris Regis Edwardi et cetera'

begins fol. 288v.: 'Anno regni Regis Edwardi filii Regis Henrici primo'

ends fol. 310v.: 'pro dimidio firme dominorum Regis et Regine solvendum et cetera'

Below this entry a pointing finger is added and 'reliquum de vicecomitibus huius civitatis sequitur in folio abhinc xix^o'

15. Excerpts from the Great Rolls concerning the city of York, dated c. 4 Edward III to 37 Edward III

fols. 311r.-317v.

Latin and Anglo-Norman

a. Records relating to royal taxation of the city of York, dated between 11 and 18 Edward III

Latin

The first entry seems to start mid-text, and lacks the normal introductory wording and notation. Each entry has a sub-title locating it originally 'in magno Rotulo'.

begins fol. 311r.: 'Henricus de Belton maior civitatis Ebor'

ends fol. 312v.: 'O mea sunt'

b. Documents concerning the bailiffs of the city

i. A note of the names of those elected as bailiffs in the year 27 Edward III, and a statement of the duties and responsibilities of the bailiffs of the city, dated to the festival of St. Michael the Archangel (29 September, 1353)

Latin

begins fol. 313r.: 'Memorandum quod die Sabbati'

ends fol. 313r.: 'et Willelmum de Swanland'

ii. A note of the election of William de Burton, draper, Richard le Candeler and Robert de Feriby as bailiffs in the year 28 Edward III (1354) and of William Sauvage, Robert de Skelton, baker and Henry de Kelkefeld in the year 29 Edward III (1355), both on the feast of St Mathew the apostle (24 February)

Latin

begins fol. 313r.: 'Item die Domenica in festo Sancti Mathei'

ends fol. 313r.: 'iurati et inde pleg' invenerunt'

iii. A note of the names of those elected as bailiffs in the year 31 Edward III (1357), with a description of the process of the election, and of the replacement of an unsatisfactory bailiff.

Latin

begins fol. 313v.: 'Memorandum quod Die Iovis'

ends fol. 313v.: 'per unum annum completum'

iv. A response from Edward III to a petition from the bailiffs of the city of York, dated to 36 Edward III.

Latin title and Anglo-Norman text

title: 'Statutum domini Regis apud Westminster editum in xv Sancti Michaelis anno regni Regis Edwardi xxxvj^{to}'

begins fol. 313v.: 'Edward per la grace de Dieu'

ends fol. 313v.: 'des totes maners de articles de eire fior pres'

v. A record of a plea made in the court of York in the year 42 Edward III concerning possession of a property partly in York.

Latin

begins fol. 314r.: 'Placita coram maiore et ballivis Ebor'

ends fol. 314r.: 'seisinam inde predictae Custancie et cetera'

vi. A petition from the citizens of the city of York to John, Duke of Lancaster, undated

Anglo-Norman

The citizens appeal against tolls imposed upon them in Boroughbridge by the Duke's ministers, which they claim to have previously been free from.

begins fol. 314v.: 'A tressage counseill lour tresgraciouse seignour le Roi de Chastill'

ends fol. 314v.: 'des ditz citezeins nouvelles custumes'

vii. The Duke of Lancaster's response to this petition, summoning the citizens to London for an inquisition into the issue, dated in the year 47 Edward III

Anglo-Norman

title: 'Et sur ceo le dit seignour manda ces letres en maner qensuyt'

begins fol. 314v.: 'Iohan per la grace de Dieu Roi de Castill et de leon duc de lancastre'

ends fol. 314v.: 'le Roi de Engleterre xlvijme et de Fraunce xxxiiij'

viii. An account of the inquiry into the citizens' right not to be charged tolls in Boroughbridge, dated on the 10th of January, the year 47 Edward III (1374).

Anglo-Norman title and Latin text

Twelve citizens of York are described swearing on oath that citizens of York have been free from tolls in Boroughbridge 'from time out of mind', according to royal charters issued by the king's antecedents, confirmed by a 'breve' issued by the king.

title: 'Par vertu de quele letre le dit William prist enquest en maner qensuyte'

begins fol. 314v.: 'Inquisicio capta apud Knaresburgh x^{mo} die'

ends fol. 315r.: 'datum loco die et anno supradictis'

ix. A record of the proceedings of the case, confirming its outcome, dated on the 18 January, 47 Edward III (1374).

Latin text, with quotations in Anglo-Norman from the preceding documents

begins fol. 315r.: 'Quedam irrotulatio facta in curia de Knareseburgh tenta'

ends fol. 315r.: 'datum loco die et anno supradictis'

c. Records of three cases concerning inheritance of property in the York area

i. A note describing the building and inheritance of the 'castrum' of Knaresborough and Boroughbridge

Latin

begins fol. 315r.: 'Memorandum quod Serlo de Penbrok'

ends fol. 315v.: 'de quo Thomas de Wak superstes'

ii. A description of a case held in the court of the Guildhall in York in the year 4 Edward III (1330), concerning the claimed inheritance of property in York by Emma Baconn

Latin

title: 'Curia Ebor tenta in gilda aula die lune proxima post Octab Sancti Martini episcopi anno regni Regis Edwardi post conquestum quarto'

begins fol. 315v.: 'Eodem die Veneris Emma Baconn'

ends fol. 317v.: 'prefate Emme de placito predicto'

iii. A record of a case heard before the Justices of the King's Bench at Westminster, concerning the inheritance of property in the suburbs of York, dated in the year 51 Edward III

Latin

title: 'Placita apud Westminster coram Roberto Delknap et sociis suis iusticiarii domini regis de banco de termino Sancti Hillarii anno regni Regis Edwardi tercii post conquestum Anglie quinquagesimo primo'

begins fol. 317v.: 'Willelmus Frost et Margareta uxor'

ends fol. 317v.: 'reddeant et cetera'

16. List of those elected to the position of bridgemasters of the Ouse and Foss from 31 Edward III to 12 Henry IV. In some entries a bridgemaster is named for only one bridge.

Latin

begins fol. 318r.: 'Die Iovis in festo Sancti Mathei'

ends fol. 320v.: 'Thomas Wrangyll electi sunt custodes pontis Fosse'

17. List of those elected as chamberlains from 18 Edward I to 9 Edward III, with the entries for 20 and 25 Edward I missing. The death of Edward II and the succession of Edward III are noted with the appropriate entry.

Latin

begins fol. 321r.: 'Anno regni Regis Edwardi filii Regis Henrici xviiij'

ends fol. 321v.: 'Iohannes Randman Robertus de Skelton'

18. List of those elected as bridge-masters of the Ouse and Foss from 13 Henry IV to 8 Henry VIII. Some entries have the name of only one bridgemaster, and lines have been left for the second name to be added (for example, on fol. 323r.).

Latin

begins fol. 322r.: 'Die Lune proxima post festum Sancti Blasii'

ends fol. 329r.: 'electi sunt in custodia pontis Fosse hoc anno et iurati'

Fol. 329v. has a single entry giving the names of the bridgemasters for 11 Henry VIII

begins: 'Die dominica in festo Sancti Mauri abbatis'

ends: 'et iurati sunt et cetera die et anno supradictis'

19. List of those elected as chamberlains of the city of York from 10 Edward III⁴ to 6 Henry V.

Latin

begins fol. 330r.: 'anno dicti Regis decimo'

ends fol. 331v.: 'Tristremus Stalleworth Iohannes Dodyngton'

20. List of sheriffs elected in the city of York, with the names as those who served as their pledges for the fee farm from 5 Philip and 6 Mary to 29 Elizabeth I.

Latin

begins fol. 332r.: 'In festo Sancti Mathei apostoli'

ends fol. 335r.: 'pro altera dimidio firme eidem domine regine solvendum'

21. An indenture dated the 22nd October 6 Henry VIII (1514), noting the grant of some land by the mayor and commonalty to Thomas Mason of York, and his grant in return of an 'earthynge' to the mayor and commonalty.

English

begins fol. 335v.: 'This indenture mayde the xxijth day of Octobre'

ends fol. 335v.: 'indentors interchaungeably have putte there seall yeven the day and yere beforesayd'

22. List of those elected as sheriffs, together with those acting as their pledges for the city's fee farm, from 30 Elizabeth I to 9 James I.

Latin

begins fol. 336r.: 'In die festo Sancti Mathei apostoli'

⁴The chamberlains listed here are named under the year 11 Edward III in the list of freemen published in Collins, *Register of the Freeman*, I, p. 30.

ends fol. 338v.: 'eidem domini regis solvend'

23. Names of those admitted to the freedom of the city of York, listed under the name of the mayor for each year, from 1651-52 to 1661-62.

Published in Collins, *Register of the Freeman*, II, pp. 110-123.

Latin and English

begins fol. 339r.: 'The names of those who were made free'

ends fol. 351v.: 'Ricardus Holdsworth trunckmaker filius Iohannis Holdsworth'

24. The oath taken by those admitted to the freedom of the city of York. It is almost an exact copy of the oath on fol. 1r., with the two parts, the first to be spoken by the freeman, and the second to him, separated out here. The original paper on which the oath was written has been stuck onto modern paper and inserted as a single sheet. A title appears to have been cropped off at the top of the folio.

English

a. The oath spoken by the freeman being admitted

begins fol. 352r.: 'This hear ye my lord mayor chamberlaines and good men'

ends fol. 352r.: 'so help me God and holydome and by this book'

b. The oath addressed to the freeman being admitted

begins fol. 352r.: 'Ye shall be obeying to the mayor and sherriffs of this City'

ends fol. 352r.: 'so help you God and holydome and by this book'

fol. 352v. blank (back of modern piece of paper)

25. Names of those admitted to the freedom of the city of York by patrimony from:
fol. a344r.⁵ 7, 8, and 9 Henry VI (published in Collins, *Register of the Freeman*, I, pp. 142, 143, and 144-145)

fol. a344v.: 4, 5, and 6 Henry VI (published in Collins, *Register of the Freeman*, I, pp. 138, 140, and 141)

fol. a345r.: 1, 2, and 3 Henry VI (published in Collins, *Register of the Freeman*, I, pp. 134, 135, and 137)

fol. a345v.: 8, and 9 Henry V (published in Collins, *Register of the Freeman*, I, pp. 131, and 132)

fol. a346r.: 5, 6 and 7 Henry V (published in Collins, *Register of the Freeman*, I, pp. 127, 128, and 129-130)

fol. a346v.: 2, 3 and 4 Henry V (published in Collins, *Register of the Freeman*, I, pp. 123, 124, and 126)

⁵See the discussion of the foliation systems in the manuscript which follows this catalogue.

fol. a347r.: 14 Henry IV and 1 Henry V (published in Collins, *Register of the Freeman*, I, pp. 119, and 121)

fol. a347v.: 12 and 13 Henry IV (published in Collins, *Register of the Freeman*, I, p. 115)

Latin, with English trade names

title: 'De hijs qui clamant libertatem per patres tempore Nicholi Blakburn Junior maioris'

begins fol. a344r.: 'Thomas Howom Girdeler filius Thome Howom wolman'

ends fol. a347v.: 'Robertus Overton wever quondam de Ebor filius Iohannis Overton corder'

26. Three documents concerning the city, undated

Anglo-Norman

a. A petition to the mayor, aldermen and '*bones gentz*' of the city of York, from the 'commons' of the city, concerning the imposition of taxes.

The commons appeal that before any tax should be gathered from the citizens, the searchers of each craft should be summoned to the Guildhall, and have the reason for the tax clearly explained to them. They should then be given four or five days to go to consult their crafts on the issue before returning their response.

begins fol. a348r.: 'Pleise as honourables et reverents seuznours'

ends fol. a348r.: 'ascune tax ou contribucion dever'

b. A petition by the commons of the city of York that the searchers of the crafts should be fined if they fail to appear when summoned to the Guildhall

begins fol. a348r.: 'Item les dits communes suppliount '

ends fol. a348r.: 'des eux poet estre provez'

c. A petition by the commons of the city of York, that admission to the franchise of the city should be regulated, by payment of a fee, examination of practical skill by the relevant craft, and consideration of character.

This section has been scored through.

begins fol. a348r.: 'Item les dits communes suppliont'

ends fol. a348r.: 'pour meyndre soume que xl s'

inserted as an interlineation after this section: 'Ceste ordinaunce feust repalle an la Gildesale lundy prochein apres la fest de la chaundelour lane du Roi Henri primer'

d. A continuation of the previous passage, praising the reputation of the city

begins fol. a348r.: 'Et auxint deficome y ceste citee est'

ends fol. a348v.: 'accompter pour certeynes causes resonables'

27. Two lists of names of those admitted to the freedom of the city of York by patrimony, dated from 11 and 12 Henry IV and 7 Henry V (a continuation of the list of names for 7 Henry V on fol. a346r.)

Published in Collins, vol. 1, pp. 114 and 130).

Latin, with English trade names

title: 'Tempore Iohannis Bolton maioris anno xj et xij'

begins fol. a348v.: 'Iohannes Watton filius Iohannis de Watton corder'

ends fol. a348v.: 'Thomas Heseham merchaunt filius Laurencii Heseham lyttester'

28. List of names of those admitted to the freedom of the city between 14 Charles II and 23 Charles II

Published in Collins, *Register of the Freeman*, II, pp. 126-138.

Latin, with some English

begins fol. a349r.: 'Intrantibus libertatem tempore Henrici Thompson maioris'

ends fol. a357v.: 'Richardus Man sonne of John Man baker'

ff. a358r.-a358v. blank

fol. b349r. blank except for two lines at the bottom of the page: 'paid pro I Bromflete Edwardus Gar Thomas Esyngwald' and 'paid pro Willelmus Grillyngton I Mareton Thomas Esyngwald'

29. Memorandum concerning a legal case in the city of York, dated in the year 1 Henry IV. This concerns a dispute which had arisen between the city of York and Thomas de Santon, draper, resulting in Thomas being warned against future offences against the people and disturbances of the peace by insurrection, conspiracy, unlawful gatherings, or treacherous threats ('minas insidias') by him or his men. It was also agreed that Thomas should not in future fill any office in the city, nor serve on an assize or in any judicial inquest there.

Latin

begins fol. b349v.: 'Memorandum quod isti probi homines'

ends fol. b349v.: 'infra civitatem predictam capiend'

30. Fifteen lists of names of those admitted to the freedom of the city of York by patrimony from:

fol. b350r.: 3 Edward II (published in Collins, *Register of the Freeman*, I, p. 13); 2 Richard II (a list under the name of each of the two mayors who served during this regnal year, published in Collins, *Register of the Freeman*, I, p. 76); 4 Richard II (published in Collins, *Register of the Freeman*, I, p. 78); 20 Richard II (published

in Collins, *Register of the Freeman*, I, p. 99)⁶; 21 Richard II (published in Collins, *Register of the Freeman*, I, p. 101); and 22 Richard II (published in Collins, *Register of the Freeman*, I, p. 103)

fol. b350v.: 1 Henry IV (published in Collins, *Register of the Freeman*, I, p. 103); 2 Henry IV (published in Collins, *Register of the Freeman*, I, p. 105); and 4 Henry IV (published in Collins, *Register of the Freeman*, I, p. 106)

fol. b351r.: 5 Henry IV (published in Collins, *Register of the Freeman*, I, p. 108); 6 Henry IV (published in Collins, *Register of the Freeman*, I, p. 109); 7 Henry IV (published in Collins, *Register of the Freeman*, I, p. 110); 8 Henry IV (published in Collins, *Register of the Freeman*, I, p. 110); 9 Henry IV (published in Collins, *Register of the Freeman*, I, p. 112)

Latin and English

title: 'Adhuc qui clamant esse liberi per patres'

begins fol. b350r.: 'Willelmus filius Gilberti de Colyngham teighler'

ends fol. b351r.: 'Ricardus Knyght filius Willelmi Knyght chaundeler'

31. A contract made between the mayor and commonalty of York and Thomas de Staunton, mason, concerning the construction of walls around Walmgate, and payment for this work, dated 10 Edward III

Anglo-Norman text

title: 'Compositio facta super operatione murorum in circuitu de Walmegat'

begins fol. b351v.: 'Ceste endenture fet entre le meire e la communalte'

ends fol. b352r.: 'Et de son regne de Fraunce sisine'

32. A legal document in which John de Lincoln and Nicholas de Grantham, furbishers ('Furbours') recognise their obligation to fulfil a payment to Mathew de Knybe, merchant, dated from 21 Edward III

Latin

begins fol. b352r.: 'Universis pateat per presentes quod'

ends fol. b352r.: 'Regis Edwardi tercii post conquestum vicesimo primo'

33. The names of Scots sworn as liegemen of the king of England, some dated from between 14 Richard II and 9 Henry IV

Latin

begins fol. b352r.: 'Memorandum quod Adam de Wyke Scoticus'

ends fol. b352r.: 'fidelis legius domini Regis et cetera'

⁶This group of names is listed under 21 Richard II in the title on fol. b350r., and under the year 20 Richard II in the list of freemen in the manuscript, and in Collins' edition.

34. Latin verses, undated

Two verses, of four and three lines respectively, followed by a verse of at least two lines which has been erased, and completed by four more verses of two lines each. They seem to be on a political subject, referring to 'Valois', and the heraldic symbols of the leopard and the flower of France.

begins fol. b352v.: 'Si valois valeas venias defendere plarem'

ends fol. b352v.: 'daultaculi dicti per rosiposipotati' (?)

35. A list of church wards in the city of York, dated at the end of the list to the year 9 Edward II. The church wards are listed according to their geographical jurisdiction in a diagrammatic formula.

title: 'Custodie civitatis Ebor'

begins fol. b353r.: 'A ponte de Layrethorp et a dicto ponte'

ends fol. b353v.: 'tempore Nicholi Flemyng maioris anno regni Regis Edwardi filii Regis Edwardi filii Regis Henrici nono'

36. Document concerning the provisioning and arming of the city, its walls, and its people, undated. The particular circumstances in which these precautions are necessary are not described, but there is a reminder that Scots in the city are to be carefully guarded and foreigners are only to be allowed to stay in the city with the mayor's permission.

Anglo-Norman

begins fol. b354r.: 'Adeprimes que les portes mures fossez seint garnis'

ends fol. b354r.: 'celly qest encountre la foy le Roy'

37. Two oaths of civic officials

English texts

a. The oath of the moor-master

title: 'Iuramentum custodum murorum'

begins fol. b354v.: 'Ye shall swere that ye shall welle'

ends fol. b354v.: 'So help yow God at holy doome and by this booke'

b. oath relating to office of dealing with weights and measures, untitled

begins fol. b354v.: 'Yow shall sweare that yow will'

ends fol. b354v. 'belonging to the both of yow from levy and toll (faded) holye'

38. The names of eight Scots swearing allegiance to the king of England, those dated referring to 4-10 Henry IV and 19 Henry VI

Latin

begins fol. b355r.: 'Iohannes Nicholson de Glascowe'

ends fol. b355r.: 'et non habuit cartam sub sigillo regis' (these words are rubricated)

underneath this entry a head is drawn and various names have been written, and some scribbled out

ff. b355v.-b356r. various scribbles, and names, with those of 'Ricardus Ripplynham' and 'Willelmus Thomlyngson' recurring.

Collation

I⁴ (wants 1); II¹⁰ (wants 8, 9, 10); III⁴; IV¹²; V⁶ (wants 6); VI¹² (wants 7); VII-VIII¹²; IX⁷; X⁴; XI⁸; XII⁴; XIII-XV⁸; XVI¹² (wants 1, 2); XVII-XXIV⁸; XXV⁸ (wants 7); XXVI⁸; XXVII⁶ (wants 5,6); XXVIII⁶ (wants 1,2,4); XXIX⁸ (wants 1, 2, 3; 4 or 5 inserted); XXX⁸ (wants 8); XXXI-XXXII⁸; XXXIII⁴; XXXIV-XXXV²; XXXVI⁸; XXXVII⁸; XXXVIII⁶ (wants 4); XXXIX¹⁰; XL⁶ (odd); XLI⁸ (wants 3); XLII-XLIV²; XLV¹⁴ (wants 11, 12, 13, 14); XLVI⁸; XLVII⁴ (wants 3, 4); XLVIII⁴ (wants 1, 2); XLIX¹³ (wants 1, 9, 13; 2 inserted); L¹⁰ (wants 1); LI⁶ (wants 6); LII¹¹ (wants 9, 10, 11; 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 look as if they may have been added as separate sheets) (odd); LIII²; LIV⁴; LV⁵ (wants 1; 4 inserted as a separate sheet); LVI⁴; LVII⁶; LVIII⁵ (5 attached as a single sheet); LVIX⁷ (1, 4, 5, 6, 7 attached as single sheets)

Foliation

The principal foliation system, which runs almost the whole way through the volume, appears in pencil, usually in the top outside corner of the recto folios. Folios which have been removed but remain visible as stubs are not included in this foliation, and it seems a relatively modern addition to the volume. It may have been applied by the same hand which has added the regnal years to the lists of freemen admitted by patrimony, for example on fols. a344r.-a347v., and which guides the reader to the appropriate page when there is a break in a series of entries, for example the direction on fol. 287v., which refers the reader to the continuation of the lists of freemen on fol. 339r. These entries are made in modern English and in pencil. In some instances, this foliation omits a page, for example, the folio between fols. 64 and 65 remains un-numbered. However, its major aberration occurs in the final thirty pages of the volume, where some pages have not been counted, and others have been foliated twice. The initial process of foliation ceases after fol. 351, the third folio of five in quire LV, and fol. 352, parchment stuck onto a modern piece of paper and inserted as a single sheet, is un-numbered. This would seem to indicate its insertion after the process of pencil foliation. However, when foliation re-appears on the following page, it begins again at 344, and

continues in this numeration up to 349 (referred to here as fols. a344-a349). The following ten folios are again un-numbered (fols. a350-a359, above), and a third sequence begins on the next page with 350, running to the end of the foliated pages at 356 (fols. b350-b356, above). Each of these sequences overlaps slightly, so that the third (fols. b350-b356) cannot simply be a continuation of the first, which finishes at fol. 351.

Remnants of other foliation systems are visible on some folios. Roman numerals from 'lxxix' to 'lxxvij' appear as foliation on fols. 311-318, in quire XLIX, which features excerpts from the Great Rolls. The number 'lxxxvj', which should have appeared on the stub of the ninth folio of the quire, is missing, and the stub shows signs of formulaic writing similar to the surrounding pages, suggesting that it was removed after these entries and this system of foliation was added to the parchment. On fol. a344r., 'lxxxj' appears as a folio number.

Catchwords, Quire and Leaf Signatures

Catchwords and leaf signatures appear regularly in quires VI-XVII, which cover the lists of names of those admitted to the freedom of the city of York. There are catchwords on the bottom inside corner of the final verso folio of each quire from VI-XVI, in every case matching the words at the beginning of the following quire. In quires VI-XVII, between the first one and six folios are numbered in the bottom outside corner with a sequence of letters and Roman numerals, from 'aj-avj' to 'mj'. In some cases these sequences are barely visible, because of cropping (for example, in quire XI, fols. 86r.-89v.) or because the writing has faded (for example, in quire IX, fols. 67r.-73v.). Between quires XXVII and XXVIII, and quires XXVIII and XXIX, letters have also been added. A lower case 'a' appears in the bottom inside corner of fol. 206v., at the end of quire XXVII, and in the same position on fol. 209v., at the end of quire XXVIII. A capital 'B' has been written in the bottom outside corner of fol. 207r., at the beginning of quire XXVIII, and in the same place on fol. 210r., at the beginning of quire XXIX.

Other Markings on the Text

There are other quite systematised marginal additions to the text, which are aimed at directing the reader within the volume. On fols. 4r.-27r., in the list of mayors of York, a single hand has added next to the name of each new mayor either simply the folio number on which that mayoral year appears in the later lists of freemen, on fols. 32r.-191v., or '*verte*' followed by the appropriate folio number. On fol. 143v., next to the list of freemen admitted in the year 14 Edward IV, has been written '*reverte 19*' in the same hand. These additions have clearly been made at a stage when these two sections of the volume, at least, were bound together.

Another hand, writing in pencil and in English, also provides guidance around the contents of the volume. On fol. 209v., the names of the sheriffs for the years 23, 24, and 25 Henry VIII appear, isolated from the other lists of sheriffs in the volume. At the top of this folio, the pencil hand has directed the reader to fol. 306, and at the bottom to fol. 307. Fol. 306 is the final folio in quire XLVI, and fol. 307 the first folio in quire XLVII, both quires containing the names of bailiffs (and later sheriffs) of York between 1 Edward I and 4 Philip 5 Mary. In the break between these quires, the entries for 19 to 25 Henry VIII have been omitted, and again the pencil hand appears on fol. 306v. to inform the reader that the entries for 23, 24 and 25 Henry VIII can be found on 'Fol 209 Page 2'. Interestingly, at the end of this later section, on fol. 310v., another, presumably much earlier hand has added a similar sort of direction, accompanied by a pointing hand, in Latin: '*reliquum de vicecomitibus huius civitatis sequitur in folio abhinc xix^o*'. Next to it has been written '332', the folio on which this list again continues. The pencil hand appears again on fol. 287v., at the end of the lists of freemen between 4 Mary and the mayoral year 1650-1651, to inform the reader that the list of freemen is continued on 'Fo: 339', on which these entries do indeed recommence. This hand also notes the end and continuation of the lists of chamberlains on fol. 321v., and on fol. 330r., respectively, and on fol. 351 directs the reader 'Register of Freemen resumed after the next five leaves, fol 349'. The list does continue on fol. a349r., but this occurs six, and not five, folios later, indicating either a mis-counting, or that the leaves were not in the current order when these pencil additions were made.

Various other types of additions have been made to the text. For example, on fol. 302v., a line has been drawn at the bottom of the page, and under the date '*17 Octobris anno domini 1665*', a memorandum has been added in English concerning a legal case involving the mayor and city of York, and noting that the book was shown to someone involved in the case 'at the tyme of his Examination in the said cause'. On fol. 294v., amongst the names of the bailiffs of York elected between 1 Edward I and 4 Philip 5 Mary, '*pious Ric*' has been written in large, shaded in letters, with an arrow pointing to the entry for the year 23 Richard II, the final year of Richard II's reign. 'Nota' has also been added beside various entries throughout the volume, but most frequently by the entries listing the names of the mayors of York between fols. 4r. and 27r. In several cases, for example on ff. 6v., and 8v., '*nota de feodo maioris*' is written.

Other than the names scribbled at the back of the volume, only the name of Roger Burton, common clerk of the city between 1415 and 1435 (2 Henry V to 13 Henry VI) appears as a regular addition to the text. Burton systematically signs his name after many of the entries which he has written in the volume, or marks them with a distinctive sign. One or the other appears, for example, appended to entries in the list of mayors (fols. 4r.-27r.), the names of entrants to the franchise (fols.

32r.-191v.) and to the lists of those admitted to the freedom by patrimony in the reigns of Henry IV, Henry V and Henry VI on fols. a344r.-a347v.

Appendix Two

Appendix TwoCity of York Archives, Manuscript A/Y - Transcription of
Unpublished Folios at the Back of the Manuscript, Containing An
Index of the Contents of Civic Registers in 1482¹

fol. 3r. (of the folios added at the back of the volume)

A

This is the calendar made in the secundtyme of the mairalte of Richard of York maire of the cite of York Thomas Mynskip thane then beyng commun clerk of the said cite of and apon all the ordinaunces and statuts beyng in the chambyr of the said cite of York the xj^t day of the moneth of Jun in the xxij yere of the reing of king Edward the Fowrt²

- . accompt a pon kayage and defaults a pon the staith } f^o v^{o3}
- . assis of breid and aile f^o} liij^o and in the registir with the crucifix in statuto iudicii pillore postea in eodem libro in fino Westm sext
- . assis of wyn f^o} liiiij^o and f^o lxxiiij^o
- . armerer ordinaunce in the les registyr *and in the booke of Thomas Wrangwese in the last end of it maide in parchement*⁴
- . alient shall bere no office <in the cite> nor cum in to the commun hall to here the privite of the cite ne be sworn of ane inquest} clxxxvj^{o5}

¹The other contents of York, YCA, MS A/Y are published as *York Memorandum Book, Part I (1376-1419)* and *Part II (1388-1493)*, ed. by Maud Sellers, Surtees Society, 120 and 125 (1911 and 1914) (Durham: Andrews; London: Bernard Quaritch, 1912 and 1915). A further collection of inserted folios at the back of the manuscript are included in the appendices of *York House Books, 1461-1490*, ed. by Lorraine Attreed, 2 vols (London and Gloucester: Alan Sutton, 1991).

²All abbreviations have been silently expanded, and some letters have been converted to provide more modern spelling, for example, 'thorn' to 'th', 'z' to 's', 'i' and 'j' (except in the case of numerals), and 'v' and 'u'. Spelling has not been modernised otherwise. Place names have not been expanded or modernised. Scored out words and letters have not been reproduced, and otiose flourishes have been ignored. Letters have been capitalised or moved into lower case according to modern practice.

³I have not attempted to copy exactly the presentation of each entry in the 'calendar', which tends to vary. Instead, the folio number of each entry here will follow the symbol }.

⁴Italics have been used to indicate that a section of text appears to have been added to an entry by a hand other than Thomas Mynskip's, and probably at a later date.

. alderman that withdrawys hym ayanst the day of the eleccion of the mairalte
 becaus he wold not be mair shall pay c marc} f clxxxvij^o

. alderman and ichone of the xxiiij^{ti} shalbe at every sarmon in the mynstyr and at
 every generall precession and cum to the counsell when they beyn warnyd a pon the
 payn of ij d in a ordenaunce maide in the tyme of the ryght worshipfull Thomas
 Wrangwysh mair as it apeirys in hys pawpir boke the furst leipf

~aray of a panell and of a inquest <made> by the shereff crowner or odir officours
 of thame that beyne suspecius or procurd <et cetera> the sheryff or the crowner that
 so maykys the panell shalbe punishid aftir the trespas requirys as wele enens the
 kyng as enens the pairte therby grevid for the damages that he has therby in the
 registir with the crucifix passid the myddys

~abatements of the tax in the tym of <Richard Wartyr and> John Bedayle maiour

fol. 3v.

agmentation of a chauntre <of Seint Petre> late foundyd in Seint Martin Churche in
 Cunyngstrete and by the advice of the heire of the patron of the said <chauntery> in
 the tyme of Mathew Tong mair of the citie of York annexid and addid to a chauntery
 of Seint Michaell foundyd in Seint Elyis Chirch in Stanegate as mor pleynly aperith
 in the gret regester almost at the end} fo^o cccxlj^o

(*'chantrie of Seint Martyns and Seint Magnus'* appears as a sub-heading to this
 entry)

aynesty post calendar ante secundum numerum

fol. 4r.

B

~boundes of the cite} fo^o vij^o and in the buke with the crucifix fo^o v^o

~buklermakers <ordinaunce>} fo^o ix^o

~buchers whow tha shall sell} fo^o xvj^o

(*'buchers for kepyng of twynstes in the tyme of John Metcalf in the new regestre
 inter aliter et cetera'* has been added beside this entry)

~bowers ordinauncs} fo^o xvij^o and xx^o and lxij

.bocher foren may sell hys flesh in Thursday market when hym pleas and yf ony
 bocher denisyn <or thar servant> tham lett in word or in deid tha shall forfaite thar
 libertes and there bode shall be Inprisond and punyshid aftir the discrecion of the
 maire and counsell of the chambyr and every bocher estraung that selles <flech>
 here in the cite shall pay therby iiij d to the pashand et cetera} fo^o xix^o

⁵The symbols < > have been placed on either side of sections of text inserted
 interlinally into the 'calendar' as corrections.

.bouchers ordinaunce} f^o xxv^o <and f^o cclxxix^o> and in the pawpir boke in the
furst tyme of Richard <xx^o die Februar> Yorke mair past the mydis vide postea

.bladsmys thes ordinaunce f^o} f^o xlj^o and blaidmsithis cutlers and blaksmys thes f^o
CCCxx

.baxsters ordinaunce f^o <plus postea et cetera>} f^o liij^o and in the registir with the
crucifix the ij^d noumbir f^o x^o et in eodem registro cum le crusifix ij numero f^o xxvj^o

.bowers ordinaunce f^o} lxij^o *and in the pawper boke of divers actes (faded) that
baxters shall by no corn in the market (faded)*

.barbours ordinaunce f^o} lxxij^o

.bokebynders ordinaunce in the les registir <fo xix^o> and in the end of the booke of
Thomas Wrangwish mair

.bigers of wolyll ordinaunce f^o} CClxxvj^o

.barkers ordinaunce f^o} cclxxj^o <and f^o cccxxvj^o> and betwyx shomakers and
barkers f^o cclxxj^o

vide plus de barkers ordinaunce in the registir with the cruysifix the ij^d nombyr and
in the boke of pawpir <of the counsell chambyr> in the furst tyme of Richard York
mair past the myddys of the boke} xj^o f^o

.bailie shallbe nowere attorney whils he is in office} f^o CCv^o

.buchers ordinaunce in the registir with the crucifix in statuto <de> iudicii pillore
and in pawpir boke de actis diversorum maior' primo folio

.bushels shallbe sold in the registir with the crucifix in statuto iudicii pillore

~baxters ordinaunce in the <buke with the> crucifix in the statute of assise of brede
et alia

~baxters ordinatus of horsebred in the pauper book of Ser Richard York the ij^d tyme
of his mairalte} xix^o die Novembris anno xxij^o Edwardi iiij^{ti}

~boundes of the cite in the parchement buke where certein deides and evydences be
bene inrolled} fo^o xxiiij

fol. 4v.

~botellers bowgemakers ordinances and patoners f^o CCClxiiij^o

~brewsters synes primo tempore maioratus Willelmi Holbek primo die Septembris
barbours ofis not be usid ij^d tempore Iohannis Gyllyot In

butchers shalnot ferme no myres grevid within iiij myles yere sext Henrici octavi
tempore Iohannis Thruton maioris in libro acttes et cetera

fol. 5r.

chartyrs and forfeintes made of tenamentes with in the cite shall be inrollyd in the
registir of the cite et cetera} f^o iiij^o

('chartyrs of the same shall be inrollid' appears as a sub-heading to this entry)

chamberlayns shallbe chosyn of Saint Blays day} fo v^o

('chamberlayns' appears as a sub-heading to this entry)

~custom taykyn a pon the kay shall be spendid a pon the staithe} f^o vj^o

('states' has been added at the right hand side of this entry)

chamberlayns shall syte daly with the maire and at lest wyse one of tham a pon the payn of fortfatour of ichon of tham defectyve every day vj d and forfatour of thar franchises bot yf tha have leve of the mair} f xj^o (*chamberlens fyns for defalt of attendes every corte day* 'has been added at the right hand side of this entry)

('chamberlayns' appears as a sub-heading to this entry)

chandeler of wax ordinaunce} f^o xviiij

('wax chandlers' appears as a sub-heading to this entry)

conuriours ordinaunce} f^o xx^o and f^o cclxxiiij and f^o cclxxv^o

cowpers ordinaunce} f^o xxj^o and xxiiij^o

cordwaners ordinaunce} f^o xxij and lx^o

capmakers ordininaunce} f^o xxiiiij^o and f ccclix^o

cairdmakers ordinaunce} f^o xxiiiij^o

coverlett wevers and tapitar ordinaunce} f^o xxvj^o and f^o xxxij^o and f^o cclxxxij and cclxxxv^o

carpentars ordinaunce f^o} f^o cclxxxiiij^o and ccclv^o

cutlers ordinaunce f^o} xl^o and cutlers bladsmhythis and blaksmhythis f^o cccxx and vij^o

chandlers <of> parish <candill> selleres ordinaunce f^o} xlviiij

cordveuers ordinaunce f^o} lx^o and betwyx cordwevers and barkers f^o} cclxx

cukys ordinaunce f^o} cclxx^o

commun wommen ordianaunce in the register with the crucifix <f^o>} f^o xxviiij^o

secundo numero in the gret register f^o cclxix^o

crayner ordinaunce f} clxx^o and f^o clxxxiiij^o and in the pawper boke in the tyme of W (faded)

certeficayt in to the chaunge of the namys of the syryffes f^o} ccviiij^o

certeficate in to the chaunge for the mair that he is eschetour} ccciiij^o

counsell of the mair and the of hys bredir shalnot be discewyrd a pon the payn of leysyng of hys franchises <of> xl li and newyr aftyr to be of the counsell in the registir with the crucifix the ij^d nombyr the xiiij^o lepf

coblers ordinaunce for thar torchys in the pawper boke of Ric (faded) mair the furst tyme in the end of his furst tyme of William Holbek

fol. 5v.

coblers ordinaunce in the tyme of John Gilliot <in> the xj day of may the iiijth of Edward iiijth and in the tyme of William Holbeke

chamberleyns ordinaunce in the pawper boke made in the tyme of William Bedale mair all most at the begynnyng of the boke and in the pawper boke of Thomas Wrangwysh mair the ij^d tyme of mairalte} f^o xxxviiij^o

also chamberlayns ordinaunce in the pawpir boke <made> in the secund tyme of Thomas Wrangwysh mair et cetera} -⁶

chartyr of the giff of King Richard registyd in the registir with the crucifix almost in the end

('charter of kyng' appears as a sub-heading to this entry)

chartir of the foundacion of Saint Christofir Gild in the registir with the crucifix f^o xij^o

carta de libertatibus extramis mercatoribus concessis in the registir with the crucifix f^o xix^o

carta taxtorum Ebor' in the registir with the crucifix f^o xxij^o

carpenters what tha shall take by day in the registir with the crucifix past the myddys / carpenters in the gret registre fo ccllv^o

comission of the pees in the registir with the crucifix past the myddys

Corpus Christi play ordinaunce f^o xv^o and clxix^o

chartirs of libertes grauntid by diwyr kinges in the registir with the crucifix past the myddys aftir the kalender

~comon <in knavesmire> graunt to the Lord Lovell concernyng his chieff place in the Rynghouses in the paupir booke of John Newton the xv day of Septembre anno primo Ricardi iij

('knaresemier common' appears as a sub-heading to this entry)

citizins on shalnot take accion ayanst on other in no forein shire in the register with the crucefix the ij nombre} fo^o xjm^o

charcole in the paupir boke in the ijd tyme of John Thirsk the xxj day of marce the xxxviiijth yere of Kyng Henr Sext

clerk del market} fo xvj^o

fol. 6r.

D

deid of gyft made of gudes and catell be wrytyng shall be inrollid in the registir of the lite or els it shall be voide} f^o iiiij^o

('deid shall be inrollid et cetera' appears as a sub-heading to this entry)

fol. 6v. is completely blank

fol. 7r.

⁶Where no folio number is visible, either because it has been omitted, or has faded, I have inserted the symbol - .

~exemplificacio <relaxacionis Walter Askh> sub sigillo officii maiorati in libro cum
le crucifix quasi in fine libri f^o lxxiiij^o

~excessive sellynge of vitale in the buke with the crucifix past the myddys

~eschetyr office at the syn of a hand in the registir with the crucifix past the myddes
and aftir that in the same registrar past the myddys

~evidence maid by Alyson Spynney et cetera to Richard Sott et cetera is inrolled in
the buke of parchement unburded almost at the end the tyme of John Renton being
maire et cetera

fol. 7v. is completely blank

fol. 8r.

F

ferm and rentes of the cite } f^o primo

('fermes et cetera' appears as a sub-heading to this entry)

ferme and rentes pertenying to the chapill of Owse Bryg } f^o viij^o

('ferms et cetera' appears as a sub-heading to this entry)

flotes of tymbyr that cumys to Owse Bryg is forfaite } f^o xj^o

('flot of tymbir' appears as a sub-heading to this entry)

~every <one> of the xij aldermen and everyone of the xxiiij and every one of the
communers that bene warnyd to cum to the comun hall and cumysnot afore the
namys of the worshipfull men and of the craftesmen be callyd and that the mare has
knokid iij upon the burd everyone of tham <that make defaut> shall forfaite that is
to say alderman xij d <every> of the xxiiij viij d and odir of the craftismen and iij
d } f^o xiiij^o <and f^o cclxxxvij^o> vide plus inde in the registir with the crucifix the ij^d
nowmbir f^o vj^{to}

('forfaite of aldirman xxiiij and odir kraftesmen' appears as a sub-heading to this
entry)

.foundours ordinaunce f^o } xxvij^o

.flechers ordinaunce f^o } xxxiiij^o and in the les registir in the end and the book of
Thomas Wrangwish made in parchement lying be side the maire sete in chamber

.fyshers <in Owsgate> ordinaunce f^o } lij^o

.fyshers of freshwatir fysh ordinaunce f^o } lxj^o and f^o clxxvij^o

.fysh<ers of see fysh ordinaunce>sold et cetera f^o } cix^o and in the registir with the
crucifix f^o } xxvj^{to} *in the second nombre*

~foryng de faux faitz f^o } ccv^o

~fyshers shalnot fysh betwyx the towre of Saint Lenardes and the towre of the
crane a pon the payn of xl s as it aperys in the pawper boke of the right worshipfull
John Tong *primo die Novembris anno xvij^{mo} Edwardi iij^{ti}*

~fysh that is to say store that is to say redheryng white heryng stokfysh and all odir fysh cald store shallnot be sold by retail a pon bordes owt of thar howsys bot in thar wyndews and howsys or in Thursday market and in no nodir places a pon the payn of xx d for the furst tyme <to be forfait> xl d the ij^d and vj s viij d for the thyrd def as it aperys in the pawpir boke made in the tyme of Thomas Kyrkham mair in the begynnyng of the boke

fol. 8v.

Frensh forfeite in the pawpir boke in the tyme of Thomas Rydley mair toward the myddys}-

forestallyng ordinaunce in the registir with the crucifix the ij^d noumbir f^o} ix^o *ultimus* (faded)

et in eodem libro f^o} xxvij^o

et in eodem libro in fine statuti Iudicii pillore and aftirwar (faded) in the same registir passt the myddys at the syn of the hand

forestall in meityng of it cumyng to the markett in the same registir past the deid

fullers ordinaunce in the rigistre f^o} xxiiij^o cclxx^o cclxxxx^o

fyzicyans ordinaunce in the register with the crucifix the ij nombre} fo^o xxvij^o

fremen shal not sew nor vex ane nothir in tempore maiorati Ricardi T (faded) in libro de memorandorum xv die Marcij xvij^{vo} Henrici Octavi

fol. 9r.

G

.glovers ordinaunce} f^o xvij^o and in the les registir in the end and in the pawper boke in the furst tyme of Richard York mair *and in the booke of Thomas Wrangwish mair in parchement lying by sydes the maire seit in the chambre*

.goldsmyth ordinaunce} f^o xxiiij^o

.glasiers ordinaunce f^o} xvij^o and f^o cclxxxx

.goldbeiters ordinaunce f^o} liij^o

.gyrdlers ordinaunce f^o} lviiij^o and gyrdlers chartir in the registir with the crucifix f^o xxvj^o

goldsmythis ordinaunce f^o} cxxviiij^o and in the registir with the crucifix in the statuto de novis articulis in fine et postea

.gyft of a chauntere in Saint Nicholas Chyrch in Mykilgate by the mair and communalte et cetera in the registir with the crucifix f^o liij^o

(*Saint Nicchs Chantrre'* appears as a sub-heading to this entry)

~gyrnstons and milnstons ordinaunce in the registir with the crucifix f liiiij^o

~gudys and catell as vele of estaunger as of denizens to be sold et cetera in the registir with the crucifix in the statute made at Yorke the secund and in the same buke past the myddys et cetera

fol. 9v. is completely blank

fol. 10r.

H

~hors dryvyn to Owse to drynk<louse> owt of hand the maister of hym shall pay vj d bot yf it be evescharpe } f^o vj^o

('hors drevyn to drynk' appears as a sub-heading to this entry)

horsbreid shalbe made of peis and beyns aftir the price of tham and iiij lovys for j d a pan the payn of vj s viij d to the chambyr and the craft evenly to be devided } f^o xiiij^o

('horsbreid' appears as a sub-heading to this entry)

horsbreid shalnot be made be ostelars nor be tham that kepis <ynys> bot be baxters and the syne thar of shalbe made that the weght be resonabill aftir the price of the corn in the market <and in the pauper boke of John Tong xx^o die Octobris> } f^o lxxxxij^o

('horsbreid shalnot be made in Ins' appears as a sub-heading to this entry)

hayrstirs ordinauns in the pawper boke made in the tyme of Thomas Barton mair allmost in the end of the said boke with turnourz ordinaunce *and in the boke of Ser William Tode f^o xxij^o*

('hayrstyrs' appears as a sub-heading to this entry)

~havermelle maker wonyng within thys cite and the libertes of the same shall by no havyd in the havermarket of this cite a fore xj of the klok of all hallows of the payment be strykyn a pon the payn of iij s iiij d as it aperis in a nordanaunc made in the tyme of John Tong mair as in hys pawpir boke it aperys <*the xx^o die mensis Octobris*>

('havermele makers' appears as a sub-heading to this entry)

~hosteler shallnot harbor a man owyr a day and a nyght bot yf he will awnser for hys dedys and yf the osteler have ony susspecion to ony that he harbyrs that he is not gude that he shall make the baillers have knowleg in the buke with the crucifix the ij^d nowmbyr f^o } ix^o

('hostelers' appears as a sub-heading to this entry)

~iter <hostilers> in the paupir boke of John Tong the xxth day of Octobr

~hatmakers ordinance in the registre in the end } fo^o } ccclxij^o

~horners ordinance in the lese registre in medio and in the pawper boke of actes maide in the tyme of William Nelson mair

~halt of mayntenance ultimo die april tempore Willelmi Neleson in libro (faded)

('halt of mantenance' appears as a sub-heading to this entry)

fol. 10v. is completely blank

322

fol. 11r.

I

iunours ordinaunce f^o} xlvj^o
irnmongers ordinaunce f^o} lxiiij^o

fol. 11v. is completely blank

fol. 12r.

k

karvours ordinaunce f^o} xlvj^o
knyghtes of the shyre be chosyn of tham that is resiant and by tham that is resiaunt
with in the same counte } f^o ccv^o

fol. 12v. is completely blank

fol. 13r.

l

~loksmythis ordinauncs f^o} xxxij^o
~lyttsters ordinaunce f^o} cclxxxix^o and f^o cclxxxj^o and of old f^o xxxiiij^o
~liveres <of ony lord et cetera> shallnot be worn et cetera } cclxxxviiij^o
~lettyr of attorney for the mair as eschetour for one to be hys attorney in the
eschekyr to make hys profirs and hys accompts as eschetour } f^o cxxxiiij^o
~lettyr of attorney for the sheryffes for one to be thar attorney in theschekyr to make
thar profyrs and accomptes } cxxxiiij^o
~lettyr sent to the Bysshop of Durham for fyshgarthis in the pawper boke of
Thomas Wrangwysh mair the iij leiff
~*ludus Corporis Christi in magno registro* } f^o clxix
~*lynweuers ordinance Wargwissh the furst tyme of his mairaltie fo^o* } vij^{mo} and
vij^{mo}
~*laborers agrement maid betwix they and masons for bryngyng furth of the
pagaunt <of Purificacion> of our Lady* } f^o cclxxxj^o

fol. 13v. is completely blank

fol. 14r.

M

~merchaunt estraung of wynis shall pay et cetera } f^o iiij^o
(‘merchant estraung’ appears as a sub-heading to this entry)

~muk or fylth cast in the strete or be one neghtburgh a pon a nodyr et cetera} f^o iij^o

('muk or Fylth' appears as a sub-heading to this entry)

mesur shalnot be usid bot yf it be selid a pon payn of forfator and tharof in grevos mercement} f^o v^o and xxxvj^{to}

('mesurz' appears as a sub-heading to this entry)

~muk fylth blud or ishew of bestes shalnot be cast be bocher or thar servant betwyx Ouse Bryg and the litill stathe besyd the freor minors a pon the payne of vj s viij d and that noyn shall wesh paunsh trip guttes nor odyr filthis of bestes in the said watyr ne cast fylth in the said watyr wher the watyr is to brewe or bake with a pon the payn a bove said} f^o v^o

('muk and fylth be bocher or odyr in ows cast' appears as a sub-heading to this entry)

('and more of fylth and corrupcion in the watir of owse f^o cccxxvj' has been added beside this entry)

~mare <shalnot> occupi the office of mairalte bot one yere to viij yers be past and that the maire shall take no more for hys fee bot xx li and that the maire at hys depairtir of hys <office> shall present iij or iijj lites <with> wych he shall go in to the chambir and aftir the comonalte in the hall shall chese one of the lite} f^o v^o

('mair' appears as a sub-heading to this entry)

('mayre refusyng shall forfeit c in the registre with the crucifixe the ij^d nombre f^o xij^o' has been added next to this entry)

~muk or fylth cast in the hy streit and thar fun <to> the <Setirday> the maister of the hows be whom that muk was made shall pay for every tyme j d and so from day to day every day j d to it be voidid and made honest} f^o v^o

('muk or fylth' appears as a sub-heading to this entry)

~bocher nor hys servant shalnot cast hys fylth in odyr place than is ordenyd be the mair apon the payn of forfatour of hys vesail wherin he beiris it and vj d as oft as he is fun defective and he shalnot beir hys fylth uncovyrd apon payn of vj d and forfatyng of hys vesell et cetera} f^o vj^o

('muk or fylth of bocherz' appears as a sub-heading to this entry)

~muk or fylth cast in the streit or in layns shalbe carid a wa at the costage of tham that cast it thar and the streites and layns shalbe kept onest a pon the payn above writyn the v leyf} f^o xij^o

('muk and fylth' appears as a sub-heading to this entry)

.mylners ordinaunce} f^o xxv^o and in the les regist (faded) in the end

marshals of hors ordinaunce} f^o cclxxvj^o

.masons ordinaunce f} xlv^o

.mareners ordinaunce f^o} lij^o

miln (faded) ordinaunce in the registir with the crucifix f^o liij^o
 ~mesurs et cetera in the registir with the crucifix all most in the mydd
 ~masons what tha shall take by the day in the buke with the crucifix past the
 myddys
 ~mesuryng of wadd f^o xiiij^o
 ~*mottes ordinances that no maner of bestes shall goo ne pastur over thame in the
 register with the crucifix the ij nombr} fo^o xij^{mo}*
 ~*malt market in connystret tempore Willelmi Wilson maioris in libro actium xij^o
 de (faded) Decembris anno quinto Regis Henrici Octavi*
mesurez of granes and cols how the shalbe ordred In principio Georgii Kyrke
suprascripti tempore maiorate sui in libro alt (faded)
 ('*measur of coles and graine at states*' appears as a sub-heading to this entry)

fol. 15r.

N

the rest of fol. 15r. and all of fol. 15v. are completely blank

fol. 16r.

O

oth of a seriant^{f^o}} cxxij^o
 offisour shalbe none attorney in the court wher he is offisour f^o} ccc^o
 ostlers ordinaunce in the pawpir boke of John Tong mair be the assent of the
 counsell xx day of Octobir the xvijth yer of King Edward the iiijth
 oth of the shiriffes in the registir with the crucifix in the begynyng of the buke
 oth of the eschetour in the pawpir boke in the tyme of John Thyrsk mair all most in
 the myddes
 osteler ordinaunce in the registir with the crucifix the ij^d nowmbyr} f^o ix^o
 et in eodem registro et eodem numero f^o} xxvij^o et f^o xxj^o
 offisour that has rewyll shall sell no maid vittale in the registir with the crucifix in
 the statute of York the furst in the end
oth of Scottes and other alyens in the registr} fo^o cxlvi
ordinaunce for tyler and wright for makyng of levers} fo^o cclxxv

fol. 16v. is completely blank

fol. 17r.

P

~porter shalnot by colys kydes corn maut or odyr maner of vitalles ne <tham> that
 put in garners to sell a pon payn of forfatour of tham et cetera} f^o v^o
 ('porters' appears as a sub-heading to this entry)

~porters shalnot use that office bot yf tha be sufficient and a pon that thar shall be principall porters sworn to see that et cetera and that all porters shall resceve cornys collys and odir gudes be sufficient mesur et cetera} f^o cliij

('porters' appears as a sub-heading to this entry)

~presentment of the chantre of Roger Selby a pon Ouse Bryg} f^o viij^o

('chantre of Roger Selbie' appears next to this entry)

~passage be Saint Mare Gate with carage to Owse} f^o ix^o

.pultre and wyldfewill <whow tha shall be sold>} f^o xv^o

.parchment makers ordinaunce} f^o xxj^o and f^o ccxlix^o and f^o cccxix^o

.pynners craft ordinaunce} f^o xxvj^o

.plastres ordinaunce} xlv^o and in the les registir in the end

.potters ordinaunce} xlvj^o [*and in the parchment booke of Thomas Wrangwish lying by sydes the maire in the chambre*]⁷

.payntours ordinaunce f^o} ljj^o

.pendrers ordinaunce f^o} lxxijj

.porters ordinaunce in the les registir in the end and in the register with the crucifix the ij^d nombir and in the said registir with the crusifix the ij^d noumbir f^o xxxvij^o the xxvij^o leyfe and in the same registir the ij^d noumyr f^o xxj^o and in the end of parchment booke and in the booke acta diversorum folio primo

.proclamacio fiendum in Thursday market de volatelibus et aliis victualibus ibidem vendendum} f^o cx

.play of Corpus Christi day ordinaunce} clxix^o and f^o xv^o

~prolamacion for the pees made in the tyme of Thomas Wrangwysch mair <primo tempore> as it apeirys in hys pawpir boke the ij^{de} leif

~proclamacio that comun wommen shalbe void in the pawpir boke in the tyme of William Bowes mair abowt the myddes of the boke

~proviso for the cite of York was had when resumcion was at the parlement haldyn in the tyme of Kyng Henry as it aperys in the tyme of Thomas Barton maid in hys pawpir boke (faded)

('resumcion' appears as a sub-heading to this entry)

~proclamacion to be maide on Corpus C (faded)} f^o ccxlv^{to}

fol. 17v.

pateners ordinaunce in the booke de actis diversorum maior' in primo folio

~presentacion of the gyfft of the chauntre of Richard Toller foundyd in the chapell of Scint William uppon Ousebryge in the registir with the crucifix in the end of the buke} presentacion the therd nowmer and f^o lxxxvij^o

('chantre of (faded)' appears as a sub-heading to this entry)

⁷Square brackets [] have been used to indicate material scored out in the 'calendar'.

~presentacion of the gyft of a chauntre foundyd uppon Owse Brige et cetera in the registir with the crucifix} f^o lxvij^o

('a (faded) chantree on Ousebrige' appears as a sub-heading to this entry)

payn of excessive selyng of vitale in the registir with the crucifix passt the myddys pris of poultre in the registir with the crucifix past the myddys

pyls and staykes sett in the watyr of Owse f^o xv^o

processe in touts pleas del terres pledables in le Gildhall de verwyk in le ground registr et cetera} f^o cccxxxvij^t

phisisions ordinaunce in the register with the crucifix the ij nombre} f^o xxvij^o

potekers makyng or ministeryng contrarius medcyns et cetera in the register with the crucifix the ij nombr} f^o xxvij^o

fols. 18r. and 18v. are completely blank

fol 19r.

R

return of seurty of peys in to the chauntre} f^o clxxvij^o

rebell ayanst the mair <in the register with the crucifix ij^{do} numero> f^o} vij^o

rebell ayanst the sheryffes <in the register with the crucifix ij^{do} numero f^o} vij^o

rebell ayanst the sargantes <in eodem registro cum le crucifix ij^{do} numero> fo^o} vij^o

rebell ayanst the mair f^o} cclx and in the crucifix the secund nombre and fo^o vij^o

regraityng ordinaunce in the register with the crucifix the ij^d noumbyr f^o ix^o and f^o} xxvij

~rebill ayanst the pees in the buke with the crucifix in the statute of North (faded)

~relees of King Richard the ij^d in the registir with the crucifix the ij^d nowmbyr f^o iiiij^o} ante calendare

~rent longyng to the masundeve uppon Owsbryg f^o} viij^o

('masyndou rent on Usbrig' appears as a sub-heading to this entry)

~ropers and haisters ordinance in the paupir boke in the tyme of Sir William Tode knyght} f^o xxij^o

~rent withdrawen frome the egialtie be ony Citizin or freman thai shall forfayt the fraunches for cxl et cetera} fo^o CClxxxvij^o

rental of Ashton landes in the litill register and for xvij d payd to Saynt Margaret Church f^o} f^o x

Of (faded)

fol. 19v. is completely blank

fol. 20r.

S

~statut merchand in the <wich> a man is boundyn in in the tyme of one mair at the tyme of the depairtir of hym owt of hys office shall be deliwyrd be hym and putt in to the tresore} f^o iiiij^o

('statute merchant' appears as a sub-heading to this entry)

~statuts and ordinaunces when the maire shall gyfe upp hys office shalbe red in the comun hall the Munday next afore et cetera} f^o iiiij^o

('statuts redd' appears as a sub-heading to this entry)

~swyn fun wakyng in the streit the maister thar of shall pay iiij d to the seriant that takes <it> and he may hold it to he be paid or kyll it} f^o vj^o ('swyne going in strete' has been written at the right hand side of this entry)

('swyn' appears as a sub-heading to this entry)

~sex sergantes shalbe chosyn and ichon of tham shall have award and se that it be cleyn and onest kept} f^o vj^o

('seriantes' appears as a sub-heading to this entry)

~yf a sergant doo ony thyng that is prejudice un to the maire and communalte he shall leys hys office} f^o vj^o

('seriantes' appears as a sub-heading to this entry)

~shethers} f^o ix^o

~sargaunts wardes f^o} xj^o

~stath defautes} v^o ('states defalte' has been written at the right hand side of this entry)

.skriueners of tyxt ordinaunce} f^o xix^o

.skynners ordinaunce} f^o xx^o

.sadlers ordinaunce f^o} xxvij^o and cclxxxv^o

.sporors and lorimers f^o} xxx^o and in the buke of actes of Nicholas Loncastre the secund tyme of his mairaltie the xxix day of Ianuar

.shirmen ordinaunce f^o} xxxj^o and cclxix^o

.smythis <and mershals> ordinaunce f^o} cclxxvjj^o blaksmaythis blaydsmyth and cutlers f^o (faded)

.saus sellers ordinaunce f^o} xlvij^o

.stevours ordinaunce f^o} lij^o

.shipmen ordinaunce f^o} cclxxxiiij^o

.stryngers ordinaunce f^o} ccxlvij^o

.sthath ordinaunce f} xiiij^o

.salmons and troutes ordinaunces f^o (faded) in the registir with the crucifix that is to say in Westminster ij^d (faded)

fol. 20v.

staykes and pullys in the watir of Owse f^o xv^o

serchourz of ony occupacion refusyng to take ther oth in the register with the crucifix the secund nombr} f^o xxviiij^o

sawers in fine libri actium Iohannis Merschall Roberti Amyas et alii

shirreffes shalnot goo opponly within the cite suburbes and precinctes of same withoute one officer to fore hym and a servaunt aftire hyme upon the payn of c s in the les regester} fo^o clxxxvj^{to}

soyers aynest the Scottes how many went forth of the cite and how many onto of the aynsty tempore Willelmi Wilson maioris in libro actium xxix^o die Augusti anno v^{to} Henrici Octavi

fol. 21r.

T

testament be the wich landes or tenaments ar bequethid in the cite shall be registyr in the registir of the Cite} f^o iiiij

('testament' appears as a sub-heading to this entry)

tylmakers shal sell no darer ij l thak tyle than for x s and that <the> shall sex vj^{xx} to the hundreth and v s ij^l wall tyll wele made and burid et cetera aftir <the form> to tham deliwyrd and assigned} f^o xiiij^o

('tyls et cetera tylmakerz' appears as a sub-heading to this entry)

.taylyours ordinaunce f^o} xxviiij^o <in nigro libro> *Iter tempore Iohannis Pety anno xxiiij Henrici Septimi in* (faded)

.tylers ordinaunce f^o} xlv^o and in the les register in the end <fol ccxlix^o and in the new registre>

.tanners ordinaunce f^o cclxxij^o and betwyx tanners and cordviners f^o cclxxj^o

.tapiters ordinaunce f^o xxvj and f^o xxxij^o and cclxxxij and cclxxxvj^o

.torchys that they shall be broght furth the morn aftir Corpus Christi day and that every allderman et cetera and ewyry odir craft that was wont to bryng furth torchys shall bryng tham furth as it aperys in a nordinaunce maid in the tym of Thomas Wrangwishe <mair> as it a perys in his pawpir boke } vide plus de torchys ordinance f^o xiiij^o <vide plus de torces secundo tempore maioris Ricardi York fo vij^o and viij^o>

.and whom thay shall go in cowrs in the parchment register f^o} ccclxj^o

.toll de Thursday market f^o} cxxxviiij^o

.tax of Bouthom} f^o clxxvij^o and in the parchement book bysyd the mayre folio in fine

.tax shalbe paid by every man in the parish wher he and hys wyfe is upprysyng and down lying} clxxxviiij^o

~turnours ordinaunce in the pawpir boke made in the tyme of Thomas Barton mair almost in the end of the buke

~tanners shalnot cast no lymyd skenys or ledyr a bont he pudyng hole for the
 corrupcion of the watyr of Owse apou the payn of xij d} cccxxvj
 ~tydynges maykers <telars> et cetera as it aperys in the (faded) ij d in the registir
 with the crucifix f^o (faded)

fol. 21v.

~treson petit et graund in the registir with the crucifix in the myddys
 ~tyllers what tha shall take by the day in the register with the crucifix past the
 myddys <and in the secund nombr f^o xij^o>
 ~tax whow it shalbe sett and by whom in the registir with the crucifix the ij^d
 nowmbyr f^o} viij^o
 ~testimoniall maid in lattyn the tym of William Bowyes mair et cetera
 ~taxe how it shalbe paid in every parische tempore Willelmi Wilson maioris in libro
 actium v^o die april anno iiij^{to} Regis Henrici Octavi

fol. 22r.

V

~wynis seld owt of the liberte of the cite be retail} f^o iiij^o
 ('wyns' appears as a sub-heading to this entry)
 ~weghtys shalnot be usid bot yf tha be selid <et cetera>} f^o v^o
 ('weghtys' appears as a sub-heading to this entry)
 ~yf swyn or odir bestes be of the wallys foundyn the maister thar of for every best
 and swyn shall pay to the seriant that takes it iiij d} f^o vj^o
 ('bestes a pon the wallys' appears as a sub-heading to this entry)
 .wa<l>kers ordinaunce} f^o xxij^o and f^o cclxx^o and f^o cclxxxx
 .wewers gyld ordinaunce f^o} cxxiiij^o
 .wewers of lyn ordinaunce in the boke made in the tym of Thomas Wrangwysh f^o
 xxij
 .wyrdrawers ordinaunce and pyners ordinaunce ar yovyd and maid all one
 .vinteners ordinaunce f^o ccclij^o *vide plus postea*
 .veyng of wadd or odir merchauntys be ony foran merchaunt shallnot be weid bot
 in the crayn and as it apeirs in a nordinaunce made the ij^d day of March in the xx
 yere of Kyng Edward the iiij^t
 .watyr bailye in the pawper boke of William Holbek mair almost in the end ('states'
 'has been added at the right hand side of this entry)
 .vinteners and selars of wyn in the buke with the crucifix in the Statut of
 Westminster sext and in the same buke with the crucifix in statuto de iudicio pillore
 .wad mesuryng ordinance f^o xiiij.
 ~visus coronatoris de quodam demerso in aqua
 ~wappentage de aynesty post calendar ante secundum munerium (faded)

fol. 22v.

*thaward yevene betwene John Tong and Richard Thorneton by certain arbitours in
the end of the lesse registre the} ccclxj fo*

*the renunciacion made by Nicholas Anlaby and Agnes his wife doghtre to John
Gilyot enent hire child porcion in hire fader goodes before Thomas Wrangwish then
mayer of the same citie in the begynnyng of the registre with the crucifix the} ij^{do} fo*

Appendix Three

Appendix Three

Civic Registers Referred to in the 'Calendar' at the back of York City Archives Manuscript A/Y

1. the pawpir boke made in the tyme of Thomas Kyrkham mair (13 Henry VI, 1435)¹

.fysh that is to say store that is to say redheryng white heryngstokfysh and all odir fysh cald store shallnot be sold by retail a pon bordes owt of thar howsys bot in thar wyndews and howsys or in Thursday market and in no nodir places a pon the payn of xx d for the furst tyme to be forfait xl d the ij^d and vj s viij d for the thyrd def - *in the begynyng of the boke*

2. the pawper boke made in the tyme of William Bedale mair (15 Henry VI, 1437)

.chamberlayns ordinaunce - *all most in the begynyng of the boke*

3. the pawper boke in the tyme of Thomas Ridley mair (17 Henry VI, 1439)

.Frensh forfaite - *toward the myddys*

4. the pawper boke in the tyme of William Bowes (4 Henry V, 1416; 6 Heny VI, 1427; 21 Henry VI, 1443)

.testimoniall maid in lattyn

.proclamacio that comun wommen shalbe void - *abowt the myddes of the boke*

5. the pawper boke made in the tyme of Thomas Barton mair (28 Henry VI, 1450)

.proviso for the cite of York was had when resumcion was at the parlement haldyn in the tyme of Kyng Henry

.hayrstirs ordinauns - *almost in the end of the said boke with turnourz ordinaunce*

.turnours ordinaunce - *almost in the end of the buke*

6. the paupir boke of John Thirsk (1 Edward IV, 1462)

¹Titles of the registers have been taken from references to them in the calendar, and these are followed by the mayoral and calendar dates of their production when these have been given. The registers attached to mayors have been placed in chronological order of their production, with more general registers listed afterwards in no particular hierarchy. The contents of each register have been re-ordered, where possible, according to the indications given of their location in the registers, and these indications have been given in italics after each item. In the case of mayors' books which can be identified with surviving *House Books*, current folio numbers have also been given in brackets, together with their page reference, if appropriate, in Lorraine Attreed's edition of the *York House Books 1461-1490*, 2 vols (London and Gloucester: Alan Sutton, 1991). Contents have been quoted in the original English, but insertions and additions, noted in Appendix Two, have not been indicated here. Capitalisation has been modernised and regularised.

.charcole - 21st March 38 Henry VI
 .oth of the eschetour - *all most in the mydddes*

7. the paper book in the first tyme of Richard York (8 Edward IV, 1468)

.coblers ordinaunce for thar torchys²
 .glovers ordinaunce
 .bouchers ordinaunce - 20th February, *past the myddys*
 .barkers ordinaunce - *in the boke of paupir of the Counsell Chambyr in the furst tyme of Richard York maire past the myddys*

8. the pawper boke of William Holbek mair (27, and 36 Henry VI, 1448, and 1457; 9, 10, and 11 Edward IV, 1469, 1470, and 1471)

.watyr bailye - *almost in the end*

9. the paper book of Thomas Wrangwish (1476)

.alderman and ichone of the xxiiij^{ti} shalbe at every sarmon in the mynstyr and at every generall precession and cum to the counsell when they beyn warnyd a pon the payn of ij d in a ordinaunce - *the furst leipf* (fol. 1r., p. 5)
 .prolamacion for the pees - *the ij^{de} leif* (fol. 2v., pp. 8-9)
 .lettyr sent to the Bysshop of Durham for fyshgarthis - *the iij leiff* (fols. 3r-3v., pp. 9-10)
 .lynwevers ordinaunce - fols. 7 and 8 (fol. 20v., p. 42)
 .torchys that they shall be broght furth the morn aftir Corpus Christi day and that every allderman et cetera and ewyry odir craft that was wont to bryng furth torchys shall bryng tham furth as it aperys in a nordinaunce maid in the tym of Thomas Wrangwishe mair - *vide plus de torchys* - fol. 14 (fol. 19v., p. 40)
 .wewers of lyn ordinaunce - fol. 22 (fol. 20v., p. 42)
 .bokebynders ordinaunce - *in the end of the booke of Thomas Wrangwish mair*

10. the book of Thomas Wrangwish made in parchement lying be side the maire sete in Chamber (1476)

.flechers ordinaunce
 .glovers ordinaunce
 .potters ordinaunce (scored out)
 .armerer ordinaunce - *in the last end of it*
 .bokebynders ordinaunce - *in the end of the booke of Thomas Wrangwish mair*³

²I have assumed that this ordinance belongs to the 'paper book in the first tyme of Richard York', although the writing in the 'calendar' fades after the initial 'R': York, YCA, MS A/Y, fol. 5r. (foliation at the back of the manuscript).

³Since the calendar locates the bookbinders' ordinances simply in the 'booke of Thomas Wrangwish', I have included them among the contents of both his parchment and his first paper book. As craft ordinances without a specific folio

.tax of Bouthom - *in the parchment book bysyd the mayre folio in fine*⁴

11. the pawper boke of the right worshipfull John Tong (16 Edward IV, 1476)

.havermelle maker wonyng within thys cite and the libertes of the same shall by no havyd in the havermarket of this cite afore xj of the clok of all hallows of the payment be stryken a pon the payn of iij s iiij d as it aperis in a nordaunce made in the tyme of John Tong mair - 20 October

.iter hostilers - 20 October

.ostlers ordinaunce [...] be the assent of the Counsell - 20 October, 17 Edward IV

.horsbreid shalnot be made be ostelars nor be tham that kepis ynys bot be baxters and the syne thar of shalbe made that the weght be resonabill aftir the price of the corn in the market - 20 October, fol. 92 (fol. 68, p. 22)

.fyschers shalnot fysh betwyx the towre of Saint Lenard and the towre of the crane a pon the payn of xl s - 1 November 17 Edward IV (fol. 69v., p. 124)

12. the pauper boke of Ser Richard York the ij^d tyme of his mairalte (21 Edward IV, 1481)

.baxters ordinatus of horsebred - 19 November 22 Edward IV

.torchys that they shall be broght furth the morn aftir Corpus Christi day and that every allderman et cetera and ewyry odir craft hat was wont to bryng furth torchys shall bryng tham furth - fols. 7 and 8 (fol. 59v. and pp. 257-58)

13. the paupir booke of John Newton (22 Edward IV, 1482)

.comon in knavesmire graunt to the Lord Lovell concernyng his chieff place in the Rynghouses - 15 September 1 Richard III (fol. 101v., 9v., or xxjv., p. 294)

14. the pawper boke of Thomas Wrangwish the ij^d tyme of mairalte (1 Richard III, 1484)

.chamberlayns ordinaunce - fol. 38 (fols. 115r.-115v., p. 304)

15. the paupir boke in the tyme of Sir William Tode knyght (14 Henry VII, 1487)

.hayrstirs ordinauns - fol. 22

.ropers and haisters ordinaunce - fol. 22

number they are more congruous with the parchment register, but unlike the other contents included in it here, the note of the bookbinders' ordinance does not refer to it as a parchment volume.

⁴While this book is not linked to Thomas Wrangwish, the salient points of its description here are very remiscent of Wrangwish's parchment register. The overlapping of the item dealing with torches on Corpus Christi day in the 'parchement buke where certein decides and evidences be bene inrollid' (see item 18, below) with Thomas Wrangwish's first paper book suggests that the former parchment volume may be the same register as Wrangwish's parchment book.

16. the buke of actes of Nicholas Loncastre the secund tyme of his mairalte (8 Henry VII, 1492)

.sporsers and lorimers - the 29 January (vol. 7, fol. 109v.)

17. the pawper boke of actes maide in the tyme of William Nelson maire (15 Henry VII, 1499)

.horners ordinance

.halt of mayntenance - 30 April 15 Henry VII

18. the parchement buke where certein deides and evydences be bene inrollid

.boundes of the cite - fol. 24

.torchys that they shall be broght furth the morn aftir Corpus Christi day and that every allderman et cetera and ewyry odir craft hat was wont to bryng furth torchys shall bryng tham furth as it aperys in a nordinaunce maid in the tym of Thomas Wrangwish mair - and whom thay shall go in cowrs - *in the parchement register* - fol. 361

.tax of Bouthom - *in the parchement book bysyd the mayre folio in fine*⁵

19. the buke of parchement unburded

.evidence maid by Alyson Spynney et cetera to Richard Sott et cetera - *is inrolled in the buke of parchement unburded almost at the end the tyme of John Renton being maire et cetera*

20. the newe register

.buchers for keypyng of twynstes in the tyme of John Metcalf in the new registre inter alia et cetera

.tylers ordinaunce

21. the register with the crucifix

.the renunciacion made by Nicholas Anlaby and Agnes his wife doghtre to John Gilyot enent hire child porcion in hire fader goodes before Thomas Wrangwish then mayer of the same cite in the begynnyng of the registre with the crucifix - fol. 2

.boundes of the cite - *in the buke with the crucifix* fol. 5

.chartir of the foundacion of Saint Christofir Gild in the registir with the crucifix - fol. 12

.carta de libertatibus extramis mercatoribus concessis in the registir with the crucifix - fol. 19

.carta taxtorum Ebor' in the registir with the crucifix - fol. 22

.gyrdlers chartir in the registir with the crucifix- fol. 26

⁵See footnote 3, above.

.gyft of a chauntere in Saint Nicholas Chyrch in Mykilgate by the mair and communalte et cetera in the registir with the crucifix - fol. 52

.baxters ordinaunce in the buke with the crucifix in the statute of assise of brede et alia

.grynstons and milnstons ordinaunce in the registir with the crucifix - fol. 54

.mibestoners ordinaunce in the registir with the crucifix - fol. 54

.presentacion of the gyft of a chauntre foundyd upon Owse Brige et cetera in the registir with the crucifix - fol. 67

.exemplificacio relaxacionis Walter Askh sub sigillo officii maiorati in libro cum le crucifix quasi in fine libri - fol. 73

.presentacion of the gyfft of the chauntre of Richard Toller foundyd in the Chapell of Seint William upon Ousebryge in the registir with the crucifix in the end of the buke presentacion the therd nowmer and - fol. 87

.tydynges maykers telars et cetera as it aperys in the (faded) ij d in the Registir with the crucifix fol. (faded)

.oth of the shiriffes in the registir with the crucifix in the begyngyng of the buke

.aray of a panell and of a inquest made by the shereff crowner or odir officours of thame that beyne suspicius or procurd et cetera the sheryff or the crowner that so maykys the panell shalbe punishid aftir the trespas requirys as wele enens the kyng as enens the pairte therby grevid for the damages that he has therby in the registir with the crucifix passid the myddys

.carpenters what tha shall take by day in the registir with the crucifix past the myddys

.commission of the pees in the registir with the crucifix past the myddys

.chartirs of libertes grauntid by diwyr kinge in the registir with the crucifix past the mydd aftir the kalender

.excessive sellynge of vitale in the buke with the crucifix past the myddys

.eschetyr office at the syn of a hand in the registir with the crucifix past the myddys and aftir that in the same registar past the myddys

.goldsmyth ordinaunce in the registir with the crucifix past the myddys

.gudys and catell as vele of estaunger as of denizins to be sold et cetera in the registir with the crucifix [...] past the myddys et cetera

.mesurs et cetera in the registir with the crucifix all most in the mydd

.masons what tha shall take by the day in the buke with the crucifix past the myddys

.payn of excessive selyng of vitale in the registir with the crucifix passt the myddys

.pris of poultre in the registir with the crucifix past the myddys

.treson petit et graund in the registir with the crucifix in the myddys

.tyllers what tha shall take by the day in the register with the crucifix past the myddys

.chartyr of the giffit of king Richard registyd in the registir with the crucifix almost in the end

.assis of breid and aile - in fino Westm sext

.vinteners and selars of wyn in the buke with the crucifix in the statut of Westminster sext

.assis of breid and aile - in statuto iudicii pillore

.buchers ordinaunce in the registir with the crucifix in statuto de iudicii pillore

.bushels shalbe sold in the registir with the crucifix in statuto iudicii pillore

.vinteners and selars of wyn in the buke with the crucifix in statuto de iudicio pillore

.goldsmthis ordinaunce in the Registir with the crucifix in the statuto de novis articulis in fine et postea

.offisour that has rewyll shall sell no maid vittale in the registir with the crucifix in the statute of York the furst in the end

.gudys and catell as vele of estaunger as of denizens to be sold et cetera in the registir with the crucifix in the Statute made at Yorke the secund

rebill ayanst the pees in the buke with the crucifix in the statute of North (faded)

22. the registir with the crucifix the ij^d noumbir

.relees of King Richard the ij^d in the registir with the crucifix the ij^d nowmbyr - fol. 4 *ante calendare*

.every one of the xij aldermen and everyone of the xxiiij and everyone of the comuners that bene warnyd to cum to the comun hall and cumysnot afore the namys of the worshipfull men and of the craftesmen be callyd and that the mare has knokid iij upon the burd everyone of tham that make defaut forfaite that is to say alderman xij d every of the xxiiij viij d and odir of the craftismne and iij d vide plus inde in the registir with the crucifix the ij^d nowmbir - fol. 6

.rebell ayanst the mair in the register with the crucifix ij^{do} numero - fol. 7

.rebell ayanst the sheryffes in the register with the crucifix ij^{do} numero - fol. 7

.rebell ayanst the sargantes in eodem registro cum le crucifix ij^{do} numero - fol. 7

.tax whow it shalbe sett and by whom in the registir with the crucifix the ij^d nowmbyr - fol. 8

.forestallyng ordinaunce in the registir with the crucifix the ij^d noumbir - fol. 9

- .hosteler shallnot harbor a man owyr a day and a nyght bot yf he will awnser for hys dedys and yf the osteler have ony susspecion to ony that he harbyrs that he is not gude that he shall make the baillers have knowleg in the buke with the crucifix the ij^d nowmbyr - fol. 9
- .osteler ordinaunce in the registir with the crucifix f^o the ij^d nowmbyr - fol. 9
- .regraityng ordinaunce in the register with the crucifix the ij^d noumbyr - fol. 9
- .baxsters ordinaunce in the registir with the Crucifix the ij^d noumbir - fol. 10
- .vide plus de barkers ordinaunce in the registir with the cruysifix the ij^d nombyr
- .citizins on shalnot take accion ayanst on other in no forein shire in the registir with the crucyfix the ij nombre - fol. 11
- .mottes ordinances that no maner of bestes shall goo ne pastur over thame in the register with the crucyfix the ij nombr - fol. 12
- .tyllers what tha shall take by the day in the register with the crucifix and in the secund nombr - fol. 12
- .counsell of the mair and the of hys bredir shalnot be discowyrd apou the payn of lesyng of hys fraunches of xl li and newyr aftyr to be of the counsell in the registir with the crucifix the ij^d nombyr -. fol. 13
- .mare shalnot occupi the office of mairalte bot one yere to viij yers be past and that the maire shall take no more for hys fee bot xx li and that the maire at hys departir of hys office shall present iij or iiij lites with wych he shall go in to the chamber and aftir the comonalte in the hall shall chese one of the lite - mayre refusyng shall forfeit c in the registre with the crucifixe the ij^d nombre - fol. 13
- .osteler ordinaunce in eodem registro et eodem numero - fol. 21
- .porters ordinaunce in the register with the crucifix the ij^d nombir - fol. 21
- .baxsters ordinaunce in the registir with the crucifix the ij^d noumbir - fol. 26
- .fyshers of see fysh ordinaunce sold et cetera in the registir with the crucifix - fol. 26 *in the seconde nombre*
- .forestallyng ordinaunce in the registir with the crucifix the ij^d noumbir - fol. 27
- .osteler ordinaunce in eodem registro et eodem numero - fol. 27
- .commun wommen ordinaunce - fol. 28
- .fysiciyans ordinaunce in the register with the crucifix the ij nombre - fol. 28
- .porters ordinaunce in the register with the crucifix the ij^d nombir - fol. 28
- .phisisions ordinaunce in the register with the crucifix the ij nombre - fol. 28
- .potekers makyng or ministryng contrarius medcyns et cetera in the register with the crucifix the ij nombre - fol. 28
- .serchours of ony occupacion refusyng to take ther oth in the register with the crucifix the secund nombre - fol. 28
- .porters ordinaunce in the register with the crucifix the ij^d nombir - fol. 38
- .forestallyng ordinaunce in fine statuti iudicii pillore and aftirwar (faded) in the same registir passt the myddys at the syne of the hand

.forestall in meityng of it cumyng to the markt in the same registir past the deid

23. the pawper boke of divers actes of mairs

.bowers ordinaunce in the pawper boke of divers actes (faded) that baxters shall by no corn in the market (faded) - fol. 1

.buchers ordinaunce in pawpir boke de actis diversorum maior' - fol. 1

.porters ordinaunce [...] in the booke acta diversorum - fol. 1

.pateners ordinaunce in the booke de actis diversorum maiori - fol. 1

.sawers in fine libri actium Iohannis Merschall Roberti Amyas et alii

.taxe how it shalbe paid in every parishe tempore Willelmi Wilson maioris in libro actium - 5 April 4 Henry VIII

.soyers aynest the Scottes how many went forth of the cite and how many onto of the aynsty tempore Willelmi Wilson maioris in libro actium - 29 August 5 Henry VIII

.malt market in Connyngstret tempore Willelmi Wilson maioris in libro actium - 12 December 5 Henry VIII

.butchers shalnot ferme yn no gres grevid within iiij myles yere sext [...] tempore Iohannis Thruton maioris in libro acttes et cetera - 6 Henry VIII

24. the gret regester

.ludus corporis christi in magno registro - fol. 169

.commun wommen ordinaunce - fol. 269

.processe in touts pleas del terres pledables in le Gildhall deverwyk in le grand registr - fol. 338

.carpenters what tha shall take by day - fol. 355

.agmentation of a chauntre of Seint Petre late foundyd in Seint Martin Church in Cunyngstrete and by the advice of the heire of the patron of the said chauntry in the tyme of Mathew Tong mair of the cite of York annexid and addid to a chauntry of Seint Michaell foundyd in Seint Elyis Chirch in Stanegate as mor plainly aperith in the gret regester almost at the end - fol. 340

25. the les registyr

.oaths of the common clerk, of the 'swyres to the swerd and mase', and of the 'seriauntes to the masez' - 'in the begynnyng'⁶

⁶See this reference to the 'lesse registre' in Attreed, *York House Books*, p. 399. Barrie Dobson has also suggested that a register 'which began with copies of the oaths of civic officials' was called 'the lesse Registre' in medieval York. He connects this register with York, YCA, MS D1: Barrie Dobson, 'Admissions to the Freedom of the City of York in the Later Middle Ages', *Economic History Review*, 2nd series, 26:1 (1973), 1-21 (p. 5).

.rental of Ashton landes in the litill register and for xvij d payd to Saynt Margaret Church - fol. 10

.bokebynders ordinaunce - fol. 19

.shirreffes shalnot goo opponly within the cite suburbes and precinctes of the same withoute one officer to fore hym and a servaunt aftire hyme upon payn of c s - fol. 186

.thaward yevene betwene John Tong and Richard Thorneton by certain arbitours in the end of the lesse registre - fol. 361

.armerer ordinaunce

.horners ordinaunce - *in medio*

.flechers ordinaunce - *in the end*

.glovers ordinaunce - *in the end*

.mylners ordinaunce - *in the end*

.plastres ordinaunce - *in the end*

.porters ordinaunce - *in the end*

.tylers ordinaunce - *in the end*

26. libro de memorandorum

.fremen shal not sew nor vex ane nothir in tempore maiorati Ricardi Tr (faded) in libro de memorandorum - 15 March 18 Henry VIII

27. Register for which No Title Has Been Given

.ferm and rentes of the cite - fol. 1

.chartyrs and forfeinentes made of tenementes with in the cite shall be inrollyd in the registir of the cite et cetera - fol. 4

.deid of gyft made of gudes and catell be wrytyng shall be inrollid in the registir of the cite or els it shall be voide - fol. 4

~merchaunt estraung of wynis shall pay et cetera - fol. 4

.statut merchand in the wich a man in boundyn in in the tyme of one mair at the tyme of the depairtir of hym owt of hys office shall be deliwyrd be hym and putt in to the tresore - fol. 4

.statuts and ordinaunces when the maire shall gyfe upp hys office shalbe red in the comun hall the Munday next afore et cetera - fol. 4

.testament be the wich landes or tenaments ar bequethid in the cite shall be regestyr in the registir of the cite - fol. 4

.wynis seld owt of the liberte of the cite be retail - fol. 4

~muk or fylth cast in the strete or be one neghtburgh apon a nodyr et cetera - fol. 4

.accompt a pon kayage and defaults a pon the staith - fol. 5

.chamberlayns shalbe chosyn of Saint Blays day - fol. 5

mesur shalnot be usid bot yf it be selid apou payn of forfatore and tharof in grevos mercement - fol. 5

~mare shalnot occupi the office of mairalte bot one yere to viij yers be past and that the maire shall take no more for hys fee bot xx li and that the maire at hys depairtir of hys office shall present iij or iiij lites with wych he shall go in to the chambir and aftir the comonalte in the hall shall chese one of the lite - fol. 5

~muk or fylth cast in the hy streit and thar fun to the Setirday the maister of the hows be whom that muk was made shall pay for every tyme j d and so from day to day every day j d to it be voidid and made honest - fol. 5

~muk fylth blud or ishew of beste shalnot be cast be bocher or thar servant betwyx Ouse Bryg and the litill stathe besyd the Freor minors a pon the payne of vj s viij d and that noyn shall wesh paunsh trip guttes nor odyr filthis of beste in the said watyr ne cast fylth in the said watyr wher the watyr is to brewe or bake with a pon the payn of a bove said - fol. 5

.porter shalnot by colys kydes corn maut or odyr maner of vitalles ne tham that put in garners to sell a pon payn of forfatour of tham et cetera - fol. 5

.weghtys shalnot be usid bot yf tha be selid et cetera - fol. 5

.custom taykyn apou the kay shall be spendid a pon the staith - fol. 6

~hors dryvyn to Owse to drynk louse owt of hand the maister of hym shall pay vj d bot yf it be evescharpe - fol. 6

bocher nor hys servant shalnot cast hys fylth in odyr place than is ordenyd be the mair apou the payn of forfatour of hys vesail wherin he beiris it and vj d as oft as he is fun defective and he shalnot beir hys fylth uncovyrd apou payn of vj d and forfatyng of hys vesell et cetera - fol. 6

.swyn fun wakyng in the streit the maister thar of shall pay iiij d to the servant that takes is it and he may hold it to he be paid or kyll it - fol. 6

.sex sergantes shalbe chosyn and ichon of tham shall have award and se that it be cleyn and onest kept - fol. 6

.yf a sergant doo ony thyng that is prejudice unto the maire and communalte he shall leys hys office - fol. 6

.yf swyn or odir bestes be of the wallys foundyn the maister thar of for every best and swyn shall pay to the seriant that takes it iiij d - fol. 6

.boundes of the Cite - fol. 7

.cutlers bladsmhythis and blaksmhythis - fol. 7

.ferme and rente pertenyng to the chapill of Owse Bryge - fol. 8

.presentment of the chantre of Roger Selby a pon Ouse Bryg - fol. 8

.rent longyng to the masuudeve uppon Owsbrug - fol. 8

.buklermakers ordinaunce - fol. 9

passage be Saint Mare Gate with carage to Owse - fol. 9

shethers - fol. 9

- .chamberlayns shall syte daly with the mair and at lest wyse one of tham pon the payn of fortfatour of ichon of tham defectyve every day vj d and forfatour of thar Franches bot yf tha have leve of the mair - fol. 11
- .flotes of tymbyr that cumys to owse bryg is forfaita - fol. 11
- .sargaunts wardes - fol. 11
- .every one of the xij aldermen and everyone of the xxiiij and everyone of the comuners that bene warnyd to cum to the comun hall and cumysnot afore the namys of the worshipfull men and of the craftesmen be callyd and that the mare has knokid iij upon the burd everyone of tham that make defaut shall forfaita that is to say alderman xij d every of the xxiiij viij d and odir of the craftismen and iij d - fol. 13
- .muk or fylth cast in the streit or in layns shalbe carid a wa at the costage of tham that cast it thar and the streites and layns shalbe kept onest upon the payn above writyn the v leyf - fol. 13
- horsbreid shalbe made of peis and beyns aftir the price of tham and iij lovys for j d a pan the payn of vj s viij d to the chambyr and the craft evenly to be devidid - fol. 14
- .mesuryng of wadd - fol. 14
- .sthath ordinaunce - fol. 14
- tylmakers shal sell no darer ij thak tyle than for x s and that the shall sex vj^{xx} to the hundreth and v s ij^l wall tyll wele made and burid et cetera aftir the form to tham deliwyrd and assigned - fol. 14
- .wad mesuryng ordinaunce - fol. 14
- .Corpus Christi play ordinaunce - fol. 15
- pultre and wyldfewill whow tha shall be sold - fol. 15
- .staykes and pullys in the watir of Owse - fol. 15
- .buchers whow tha shall sell - fol. 16
- .clerk del market - fol. 16
- .glasiers ordinaunce - fol. 17
- .bowers ordinauncs - fol. 18
- .chandlers of wax ordinaunce - fol. 18
- .bocher foren may sell hys flesh in Thursday market when hym pleas and yf ony bocher denisyn or thar servant tham lett in word or in deid tha shall forfait thar libertes and there bode shall be inprisond and punyshid aftir the discrecion of the mair and counsell of the chambyr and every bocher estraung that selles flech here in the cite shall pay therby iij d to the pashand et cetera - fol. 19
- .skriveners of tyxt ordinaunce - fol. 19
- .bowers ordinauncs - fol. 20
- .conuriours ordinaunce - fol. 20
- .skynners ordinaunce - fol. 20

.cowpers ordinaunce - fol. 21
 parchment makers ordinaunce - fol. 21
 .cordwaners ordinaunce - fol. 22
 .walkers ordinaunce - fol. 22
 .cowpers ordinaunce - fol. 23
 .fullers ordinaunce in the registre - fol. 23
 .capmakers ordininaunce - fol. 24
 .cairdmakers ordinaunce - fol. 24
 .bouchers ordinaunce - fol. 25
 .coverlett wevers and tapitar ordinaunce - fol. 26
 pynners craft ordinaunce - fol. 26
 .tapiters ordinaunce - fol. 26
 .sadlers ordinaunce - fol. 27
 .foundours ordinaunce - fol. 28
 .sporders and lorimers - fol. 30
 .sporders and lorimers - fol. 30
 .shirmen ordinaunce - fol. 31
 ~lokmythis ordinauncs - fol. 32
 .tapiters ordinaunce - fol. 32
 .flechers ordinaunce - fol. 33
 ~lyttsters ordinaunce - fol. 34
 mesur shalnot be usid bot yf it be selid apon payn of forfatore and tharof in grevos
 mercement - fol. 36
 .cutlers ordinaunce - fol. 40
 .bladsmys this ordinaunce - fol. 41
 .masons ordinaunce - fol. 45
 iunours ordinaunce - fol. 46
 karvours ordinaunce - fol. 46
 .chandlers of parish candill selleres ordinaunce - fol. 48
 .saus sellers ordinaunce - fol. 48
 .fyshers in Owsgate ordinaunce - fol. 52
 .goldbeiters ordinaunce - fol. 52
 .mareners ordinaunce - fol. 52
 payntours ordinaunce - fol. 52
 .stevourz ordinaunce - fol. 52
 .baxsters ordinaunce - fol. 53
 .assis of wyn - fol. 54
 .gyrdlers ordinaunce - fol. 58
 .cordwaners ordinaunce - fol. 60
 .fyshers of freshwatire fysh ordinaunce - fol. 61

- .bowers ordinauncs - fol. 62
- irnmongers ordinaunce - fol. 64
- .barbours ordinaunce - fol. 72
- pendrers ordinaunce - fol. 73
- .assis of wyn - fol. 74
- horsbreid shalnot be made be ostelars nor be tham that kepis ynys bot be baxters and the syn thar of shalbe made that the weght be resonabill aftir the price of the corn in the market - fol. 92
- .fyshers of see fysh ordinaunce sold et cetera - fol. 109
- .proclamacio fiendum in Thursday market de volatelibus et aliis victualibus ibidem vendendum - fol. 110
- oth of a seriant - fol. 122
- .wewers gyld ordinaunce - fol. 123
- .goldsmyth ordinaunce - fol. 128
- ~lettyr of attorney for the mair as eschetour for one to be hys attorney in the eschekyr to make hys profirs and hys accompts as eschetour - fol. 134
- ~lettyr of attorney for the sheryffes for one to be thar attorney in theschekyr to make thar profyrs and accomptes - fol. 134
- .toll de Thursday market - fol. 138
- oth of Scottes and other alyens in the registre - fol. 146
- .porters shalnot use that office bot yf tha be sufficient and a pon that thar shall be principall porters sworn to see that et cetera and that all porters shall resceve cornys collys and odir gudes be sufficient mesure et cetera - fol. 154
- .Corpus Christi play ordinaunce - fol. 169
- .fyshers of freshwatire fysh ordinaunce - fol. 177
- .return of seury of peys in to the chauntre - fol. 177
- .tax of Bouthom - fol. 177
- .alient shall bere no office in the cite nor cum in to the comun hall to here the privite of the cite ne be sworn of ane inquest - fol. 186
- .alderman that withdrawys hym ayanst the day of the eleccion of the mairalte becaus he wold not be mair shall pay c marc - fol. 188
- .tax shalbe paid by every man in the parish wher he and hys wyfe is upprysyng and down lying - fol. 188
- .bailie shallbe nowere attorney whils he is in office - fol. 205
- .forgyng de faux faitz - fol. 205
- knyghtes of the shyre be chosyn of tham that is resiant and by tham that is resiaunt with in the same counte - fol. 205
- .certeficayt in to the change of the nomys of the syryffes - fol. 208
- .proclamacion to be maide on Corpus C (faded) - fol. 245
- .stryngers ordinaunce - fol. 248

- parchment makers ordinaunce - fol 249
- .rebell ayanst the mair - fol. 260
- .shirmen ordinaunce - fol. 269
- .cukys ordinaunce - fol. 270
- .fullers ordinaunce in the registre - fol. 270
- .cordvevers ordinaunce - *betwyx Cordwvers and barkers* - fol. 270
- .walkers ordinaunce - fol. 270
- .barkers ordinaunce - fol. 271 (*and betwyx shomakers and barkers* - fol. 271)
and betwyx the tanners and cordviners - fol. 271
- .tanners ordinaunce - fol. 272
- .conuriours ordinaunce - fol. 274
- .conuriours ordinaunce - fol. 275
- ordinaunce for tyler and wright for makyng of levers - fol. 275
- .bigers of wolyll ordinaunce - fol. 276
- .marshals of hors ordinaunce - fol. 276
- .smythis and mershals ordinaunce - fol. 277
- .bouchers ordinaunce - fol. 279
- ~laborers agrement maid betwix ther and masons for bryngyng furth of the pagiaunt
of Purificacion of our Lady - fol. 281
- .coverlett wevers and tapitar ordinaunce - fol. 282
- .carpentars ordinaunce - fol. 283
- .coverlett wevers and tapitar ordinaunce - fol. 285
- .sadlers ordinaunce - fol. 285
- .tapiters ordinaunce - fol. 286
- .every one of the xij aldermen and everyone of the xxiiij and everyone of the
communers that bene warnyd to cum to the commun hall and cumysnot afore the
namys of the worshipfull men and of the craftesmen be callyd and that the mare has
knokid iij apon the burd everyone of tham that make defaut shall forfaite that is to
say alderman xij d every of the xxiiij viij d and odir of the craftismen and iiij d - fol.
287
- ~liveres of ony lord et cetera shalnot be worn et cetera - fol. 288
- rent withdrawen frome the egialtie be ony citizin or freman thai shall forfayt the
fraunches for cxl et ceter - fol. 288
- ~lyttsters ordinaunce - fol. 289
- .fullers ordinaunce in the registre - fol. 290
- .glasiers ordinaunce - fol. 290
- .walkers ordinaunce - fol. 290
- ~lyttsters ordinaunce - fol. 291
- .shipmen ordinaunce - fol. 294
- offisour shalbe none attorney in the court wher he is offisour - fol. 300

- .certeficayt in to the chaunge for the mair that he is eschetur - fol. 303
- parchment makers ordinaunce - fol. 319
- .cutlers bladsmaythis and blaksmaythis - fol. 320
- .barkers ordinaunce - fol. 326
- and more of fylth and corrupcion in the watir of Owse - fol. 326
- .tanners shalnot cast no lymyd skenys or ledyr a bon the pudyng hole for the corrupcion of the watyr of Owse apon the payn of xij d - fol. 326
- .vinteners ordinaunce - fol. 354
- .carpentars ordinaunce - fol. 355
- .capmakers ordininaunce - fol. 359
- ~hatmakers ordinance in the registre in the end - - fol. 362
- .botellers bowgemakers ordinances and patoners - fol. 363

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ILLUSTRATIONS



Figure 1 - London, CLRO, Customal 2, the *Liber Horn*, fol. 35v., the beginning of the First Statute of Westminster

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Figure 2 - London, CLRO, Custumal 12, the *Liber Albus*, fol. 1r., the Prologue



Figure 3 - London, CLRO, Custumal 12, the *Liber Albus*, fol. 264r., the Prologue to Book Four



Figure 4 - London, CLRO, Custumal 10, the *Liber Dunthorn*, fol. 1r.



Figure 5 - London, CLRO, Customal 2, the *Liber Horn*, fol. 35r., close up of the historiated initial of a king seated in discussion with another man, holding a book between them

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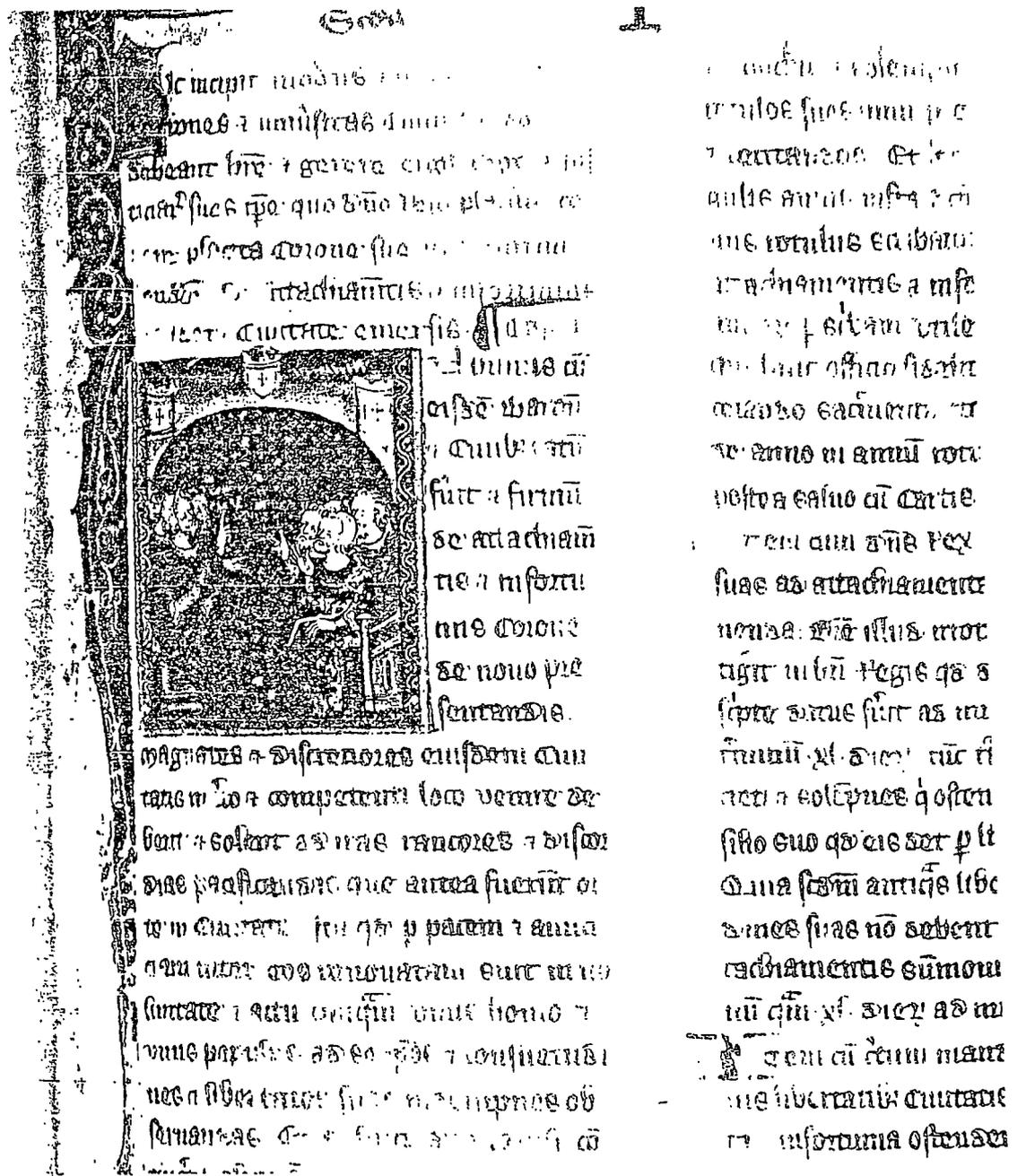


Figure 6 - London, CLRO, Custumal 12, the *Liber Albus*, fol. 16r., Book One, Part II, the Procedure for Holding Pleas of the Crown, close up of the historiated initial at the start of this section

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