

“Now thrive the Armourers”: The Development of the Armourers’ Crafts and the Forging of Fourteenth-century London

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Abstract

This thesis ultimately seeks to understand how and why the London armourers came to be so closely associated with the politics and uprisings of London's controversial mayor, John Northampton (1381-1383). However, because the armourers were not incorporated as a combined guild until 1453, this thesis must first analyse how the armourers developed as an industry, and how their workshop, household, and socio-industrial networks and organisations developed and helped to inform their political identities. This is the first time that the fourteenth-century London armourers have been rigorously examined as a collective of constituent specialist industries, and this thesis contributes to an understanding of how late medieval small crafts developed outside of guilds.

Through examining armourers' workshops, households, and socio-industrial networks, this thesis arrives at several important conclusions about the nature of the English industry in the fourteenth century which challenge existing scholarship. It finds evidence to explode scholarly myths that English armour was cheap and poorly made through lack of skill, that women did not participate in the industry, and that regulation of the industry was entirely imposed from outside. Finally, this study shows that the armourers were the most significant participants in the 1384 Mayoralty Riots because their workshop, household, and socio-industrial networks had all contributed to the development of a shared political identity, because Northampton's opponent Nicholas Brembre attacked that identity, and because the Crown and City's draconian policies towards the local armour market had grown increasingly severe prior to the riots. This thesis argues that the armourers' political identity developed as an extension of their workshop, household, and socioindustrial identities and networks, and that each of these contributed to their overall organisational development outside of a guild structure.

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Author's Declaration

This thesis consists of entirely new research, although it must be stated that some aspects of Chapter 5 represent further work that developed out of my 2010 MA dissertation at the University of York, entitled "The Life Records of John Northampton". In that work, I determined the variety of industries that were present at the October 1384 London Mayoralty Riots, and mapped the route described by Ruth Bird and George Unwin that John Northampton's mob took in the February 1384 London Mayoralty Riots (copied with additions in Appendix 4).¹ This thesis has not previously been presented for an award at this, or any other, University. All sources are acknowledged as References.

¹ Ruth Bird, *The Turbulent London of Richard II* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1949) 83; George Unwin, *The Gilds and Companies of London* (London: Methuen & Co., 1908) 150-51.

Chapter 1: Introduction, Research Questions, and Methodologies

1.0: Introduction and Research Questions

This study began out of questions that arose in my Masters dissertation, which examined the life records of John Northampton and his role in the London Mayoralty Riots following his third-term mayoral election loss to Sir Nicholas Brembre in 1383.² While investigating the circumstances of those riots, I discovered that armourers represented twenty-two percent of the rioters arrested for protesting Brembre's re-election in October, 1384.³ Central to the political conflicts between Northampton and Brembre were questions of how London's government would be elected, the rights of craftsmen and merchants, and who was eligible to stand for civic office. Unrest over those issues continued long afterwards: even as late as 1391, the mayor of London was so concerned that more rioting might erupt that he ordered that anyone who spoke publically about Northampton *or* Brembre was to be imprisoned for a year and a day.⁴ These riots and their causes are important to understanding the urban politics of late medieval London, but they have traditionally been examined primarily by scholars focussed on the agendas of wealthy, politically active groups.⁵ In the fourteenth century, the armourers were a relatively small industrial body with almost no political power when compared with London's more powerful, and well-established mercantile industries.⁶ Armourers furthermore lacked the centralising social structure of a guild in the fourteenth century, and even their wealthiest members possessed a mere fraction of the wealth and resources that characterised most of

² Brad Kirkland, "The Life Records of John Northampton" (MA Diss., University of York, 2010).

³ Figure 5.1

⁴ *Mem*, 526-27.

⁵ This debate is examined in Section 5.2. See: Unwin, *Gilds*, 37-42, 127-54; Bird, *Turbulent London*, 14-15, 55-79; Pamela Nightingale, "Capitalists, Crafts and Constitutional Change in Late Fourteenth-century London", *Past and Present* 124.1 (1989): 3-35; Pamela Nightingale, *A Medieval Mercantile Community: The Grocers' Company and the Politics and Trade of London, 1000-1485* (New Haven, Conn., and London: Yale University Press, 1995), 263-91; Frank Rexroth, *Deviance and Power in Late Medieval London*, trans., Pamela Selwyn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 114-144.

⁶ In later studies, these industries are often called the "Great Twelve." The concept originates from the order of precedence given to the wealthiest and most powerful livery companies in 1516. However, George Unwin argued that the concept of greater and lesser industries existed in the fourteenth century in the form of the wealthiest and most powerful "chief misteries" summoned in 1351 to form the Common Council (consisting of the Grocers, Mercers, Fishmongers, Drapers, Goldsmiths, Woolmongers, Vintners, Skinners, Saddlers, Tailors, Cordwainers, Butchers, and Ironmongers). See: *LBL*, xli-xlii; Unwin, *Gilds*, 76-77.

the politically active London oligarchy. This presents a question: how could such a small craft be at the centre of so much political and social turbulence?

That a small industry occupied such an important role in this pivotal event in London's political history draws into question how small urban industrial bodies developed, and how they navigated and helped to define the socio-political world of fourteenth-century London. These are important questions to consider, because despite the armourers representing over a fifth of all arrest and mainprisal records related to this conflict, their roles, motivations, and relationship to other craft and mercantile movements at the time have never been examined by historians. If small craft coalitions represented the majority of the rioters, then previous investigations into the interests of wealthy merchants in this period create an incomplete picture of events, and this calls into question the roles of smaller crafts on larger London politics at the time.

In order to examine the armourers' role in London's fourteenth-century urban politics, the first question that must be asked is "what was an armourer in London in the fourteenth-century?" On the surface, this question appears to be a simple question with an easy answer: a smith who manufactured or sold armour. This is the definition that has been used by most modern historians of late medieval English armourers and metalworking industries, such as Claude Blair, Charles Ffoulkes, Matthias Pfaffenbichler, Derek Keene, Alan Williams, and Jane Geddes.⁷ These examinations primarily focus on later centuries,

⁷ Claude Blair was the most influential scholar of armour of the last century, but his specialist expertise was on European metalwork, and particularly late medieval continental armour. Charles Ffoulkes recognised that the perishable nature of non-metallic armour made comprehensive study during his lifetime difficult, and so likewise focussed primarily on metal-armour and armourers. Matthias Pfaffenbichler defined armourers as "able smiths who produced various kinds of arms and armour", but ignored non-metallic armour entirely. Derek Keene has provided insights into the interdisciplinary organisation of metalworking crafts in London, but these have only examined the broader industry in general terms. Alan Williams went into some depth on the basic European understanding of the craft in his chapters on "Hardening Armour" and "The Mass-Production of Armour", but with the exception of some comparative impact tests on soft armours, he focussed exclusively on metal armour. Lastly, Jane Geddes' work on the iron industry is part of a book which examined each industry separately, but her broadly focussed methodology recognised that the metal armourers were part of a larger iron-workers' community. See: Claude Blair, *European Armour: circa 1066 to circa 1700* (London: B.T. Batsford Ltd., 1958); and "Arms and Armour", in *Age of Chivalry: Art in Plantagenet England 1200-140*, ed. Jonathan Alexander & Paul Binski (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1987), 169-170; Charles Ffoulkes, *The Armourer and his Craft from the XIth to the XVIth Century* (New York: Dover Publications, 1988), 21; Matthias Pfaffenbichler, *Medieval Craftsmen: Armourers* (London: British Museum Press, 1992), 4; Derek Keene, "Metalworking in Medieval London: an Historical Survey",

on the armour itself, on the manufacture of metal armour in isolation from other armourers' crafts, or on the more frequently surviving examples manufactured on the continent, because there are considerably more sources of evidence for the continental armourers' craft. When scholars write about fourteenth-century English armourers, they often note that, "The armour produced by the Armourers' Company of London seems not to have come up to the standard of fine-quality armour produced on the Continent",⁸ and that medieval patrons looking to purchase armour,

...would take no risks, but would employ for choice those craftsmen who held the highest repute for their work... It may seem strange that the [English] craftsmen did not attempt to improve their work when examples of foreign skill were imported in great quantities; but against this we must set the fact that the detail of the first importance in the craft of the armourer was the tempering of the metal and this the craftsman kept a close secret.⁹

However, if the London armourers' products did not have a market, how could they have developed into a craft and trade group by the end of the century capable of threatening the stability of London? Therefore, it is important to examine how the industry functioned, what market it served, and how it was able to develop in a market where it could not compete on quality with imported armour, in order to understand its growth over the course of the fourteenth century. As will be examined throughout this thesis, the question of "what was an armourer?" is much more complex than it at first appears, and is at its core a question of how small crafts formed out of developing specialist industries in order to better meet the demands of a rapidly developing consumer economy.¹⁰ By examining how

Historical Metallurgy, 30.2 (1996): 95-102; Alan Williams, *The Knight and the Blast Furnace* (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 893-901, 903-908, 943; Jane Geddes, "Iron", in *English Medieval Industries*, ed. John Blair and Nigel Ramsay (London: The Hambledon Press, 1991), 167-188.

⁸ Pfaffenbichler, *Armourers*, 23-24.

⁹ Ffoulkes, *Armourer*, 13.

¹⁰ Maryanne Kowaleski argued that the idea of an Early Modern "consumer revolution" actually began in the fourteenth century, remarking upon the wider range of consumer goods, and the diversification of the market. This has been studied in other industries where "Craftsmen aimed to profit from the rising spending power among lower-class consumers" and Christopher Dyer's work has provided numerous examples of metalworkers producing cheap belt-buckles to capitalise on a broadening consumer market. It is far more likely that examples of "poorly-made" English armour are representative of this trend than they are of a lack of skill amongst the industry as a whole. See: Maryanne Kowaleski, "A consumer economy", in *A Social History of England, 1200-1500*, ed. Rosemary Horrox and W.M. Ormrod (Cambridge: Cambridge University

these contributory industries formed together prior to the establishment of the Armourers' Guild, some insight can be gained into the realities of fourteenth-century English urban life.

As Steven Epstein argued, one of the most important tasks for historians of political economies is to “explain how governments found the money to pay for war... [because] War drove many economic developments.”¹¹ As the manufacturers of equipment for England's armies, London's armourers represented a crucial aspect of England's national interests, and the crown's interests in London's urban economy. If we have misunderstood the armourers' role in that economy, then we have misunderstood one of the most vital components in the development of London during one of its most turbulent phases. So, the question of why the armourers were so involved in the turbulent politics of the last quarter of the fourteenth century depends upon a re-examination of who and what the armourers really were, and how they grew from a poor group of diverse specialists dependent upon larger industrial and civic authorities at the beginning of the century, into a powerful network of related crafts and retail traders, capable of placing their membership into positions of civic authority, threatening the person of the king, and attempting to overturn elections by force by the end of the century.

While the question of “what was a fourteenth-century London armourer?” will be more fully examined in Chapter 2, in order to discuss the methodologies utilised in this thesis, it must be first understood that when London records used the term “armourer” to describe a person, it was not a specific craft or occupational identification, but a general one, and one which changed over the course of the fourteenth century, reacting to economic, social, political, civic, and royal changes and influences in the city. Just as Elspeth Veale's research into the skimmers revealed that the term “skinner” “...applied to all who were connected in any way with skins and furs, [and this] conceals the extraordinary

Press, 2006): 238-259; Christopher Dyer, *An Age of Transition? Economy and Society in England in the Later Middle Ages* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2001): 139-143.

¹¹ Steven A. Epstein, *An Economic and Social History of Later Medieval Europe: 1000-1500* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009): 122-23. For a discussion of costs involved in England's wars, See: May McKisack, *The Fourteenth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1959), 234-249.

variety of economic activity and social class within the industry,”¹² throughout the period, a Londoner whose occupation was identified as “armourer” might have actually been, or simultaneously identified as a linen-armourer, a plater, a heaumer (helmet-maker), a hauberger (makers of mail armour, specifically *hauberks* or *haubergeons*), a furbisher (polishers and repairers of arms and armour), a kisser (makers of leg armour, or *cuisse*s), a smith, a whalebone worker,¹³ a leatherworker, a blade smith, or an armour retailer.

Identification of these roles is further complicated because these craftsmen often identified with more than one craft either at the same time, or over the course of their lifetimes.

Where they can be partially identified by occupational surnames this is confused even further, as the name may not indicate the actual occupation practised.¹⁴ Throughout this thesis, therefore, the word “armourer” will be taken to mean the broad craft body made up of these contributory craftsmen and retailers. Where specific or multiple craft identification has been possible for individual case studies, I will use these terms to identify the persons.

Historical analyses in the fourteenth century have shifted in recent years, from the “‘straight’ political role of London in national affairs to an interest in the economy of the city and structure of its communal life.”¹⁵ However, it is important to recognise that London’s national affairs and economy are inseparably related to the communal structures upon which it is based, and so this thesis will attempt to shed light on both those connections through the lens of the armourers. James Farr has argued that modern scholars’ examinations into these communal structures have primarily fallen into three categories: firstly, artisan histories, which argued that the ideals found within guild statutes and documents reflected the actual idealistic behaviour of their membership; secondly,

¹² Elspeth Veale, *The English Fur Trade in the Later Middle Ages* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966), 78. Matthew Davies found a similar variety of activities associated with the term “tailor”. See Matthew Davies, “The Tailors of London and their Guild, c.1300-1500” (PhD diss., University of Oxford, 1994) 234.

¹³ Almost nothing is known of the baleen-armourers of England, as baleen is almost never found in the archaeological record. In armour, it was used as a cheap substitute for metal plates. See: *CPR: 1324-1327*, 10; 29; Ralph Moffat, James Spriggs and Sonia O’Connor, “The Use of Baleen for Arms, Armour and Heraldic Crests in Medieval Britain”, *The Antiquities Journal* 88 (2008): 207-215.

¹⁴ *Subs*, 38.

¹⁵ Barron, “London 1300-1540”, 396.

economic guild histories, which have argued that socio-industrial organisations impeded what would have otherwise been a free economy; and finally, working-class histories, which focussed upon poorer members of guild associations with the assumption that their lives were more reflective of reality than the documents that related to the wealthier and more powerful master craftsmen.¹⁶

These methodologies concentrate on social or economic developments, but as Sylvia Thrupp argued, “Social history in general was for a long time regarded as a mere appendage to economic history or as a frivolous sideline... , while institutional historians tended to lose sight of the people behind the records...”¹⁷ This thesis will focus on the individuals behind the records of the fourteenth-century London armourers, but will examine both the social and economic aspects of the armourers’ development, as well as the roles played by both the working-class and wealthier members of the group. This study does not have the benefit of guild records to draw upon, and so its construction must necessarily draw from a wider corpus of civic, royal, and governmental records, but will attempt to address each of Farr and Thrupp’s approaches together, because a group’s social, economic, and individual histories are intrinsically interrelated, and so cannot be examined in isolation from each other.

Even in the absence of a guild, the armourers’ industrial networks nonetheless managed some level of governance and centralisation over a variety of specialist smaller industries. This study will seek to understand the growth of the armourers over the course of the century by examining both the records relating to their socio-industrial organisations as they developed, but will also examine crown, parliament, mayors’ courts, and individual records in order to create a picture of their industry with a better understanding of the historical biases that might be missed in a narrower survey. It will also attempt to show the growth of the industry through prosopographical records relating to both the master

¹⁶ James Farr, *Artisans in Europe: 1300-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 1-3.

¹⁷ Sylvia Thrupp, “The Dynamics of Medieval Society”, in *Society and History: Essays by Sylvia L. Thrupp*, ed. Raymond Grew and Nicholas H. Steneck (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1977), 45.

craftsmen and retailers of the industry, but also through the poorer members that contributed much to the labour and success of that industry. While it is the intention of this study to examine all aspects of the armourers' society, I will attempt to avoid the pitfalls Farr saw in assuming that any one demographic represented the "true" experience amongst the whole of a society. Only by examining the industry from all of these methodological angles can any interpretation about its growth be confidently suggested.

Examining all of the changes that defined the London social, economic, and political realities of the fourteenth century goes well beyond the bounds of this thesis, but something must be said about the nature of those changes and the scholarship that has addressed them before the experiences of the armourers can be contextualised. From as early as the tenth century, London has been the centre of England's trade and wealth, and its largest city.¹⁸ As Elspeth Veale argued, London "could stand comparison in size and range of economic activity with many a European city... [however] the story of her economic development... is not an easy subject to investigate – the sources, while plentiful, are scattered and elusive and often difficult to interpret."¹⁹ As no consistent record system existed for recording the population, for London's development of international trade, or for the individual or communal wealth of its inhabitants, it is very difficult to assess economic trends in London. What records exist are difficult to interpret, because they did not record information regularly or consistently,²⁰ because they measured wealth in different ways,²¹ and because they often recorded economic information specific to a single sector of the economy, which may not have been reflective of the overall economic

¹⁸ Derek Keene, "Medieval London and its Region", *London Journal* 14.2 (1989): 99-100

¹⁹ Elspeth Veale, "Craftsmen and the Economy of London in the Fourteenth Century", in *Studies in London History Presented to Philip Edmund Jones*, ed. A.E.J. Hollaender and William Kellaway (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1969) 151.

²⁰ For discussions about challenges in determining medieval populations, see: M.M Postan, "Some Economic Evidence of Declining Population in the Later Middle Ages", *The Economic History Review*, New Series 2.3 (1950): 221-246; Barbara F. Harvey, "The Population Trend in England Between 1300 and 1348", *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 16 (Dec., 1966): 23-42.

²¹ H.C. Darby et al., "The changing geographical distribution of wealth in England: 1086-1334-1525", *Journal of Historical Geography* 5.3 (1979): 248-49.

experience.²² As Richard Hartwell pessimistically summarised, "...we do not know, in any useful way, what growth there was in the English economy... Moreover, the work of the historians on particular periods, problems, and factors, cannot be added up to make a convincing composite picture; their aims, concepts, and criteria are sufficiently different to make aggregation difficult or impossible."²³ Even the City's population is difficult to judge with certainty: A.H. Thomas suggested a population of 16,360 based on the 1332 Subsidy Rolls, but other estimates of the population in the first half of the century have ranged from 40,000 to 100,000,²⁴ while estimates from the end of the century have ranged from 23,000 to 35,000.²⁵ While a falling population after the Black Death and the reduction of well-recorded wool exports over the fourteenth century²⁶ suggest a period of wide-reaching economic contraction, England's wars and the larger armies it fielded²⁷ ensured that armour became an increasingly inelastic commodity. This provided some stability to the local

²² England's economy has been analysed extensively through its wool exports. However, periods of decline in the wool market coinciding with English wars did not represent periods of decline in other industries, most notably in those of England's martial crafts examined in this thesis. For discussions of this and wool exports' usage in evaluating the English economy over time in other industries, see: A.R. Bridbury, *Economic Growth: England in the Later Middle Ages* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1962) 27; M.H. Keen, *England in the Later Middle Ages: A Political History*, 2nd Edition (London: Routledge, 2003) 99-134; P.T.H. Unwin, "Trade: the international and local contexts", in *An Historical Geography of England and Wales*, ed. R.A. Dodgshon & R.A. Butlin (London: Academic Press, 1978) 133-135.

²³ Richard M. Hartwell, "Economic Growth in England Before the Industrial Revolution: Some Methodological Issues," *The Journal of Economic History* 29.1 (March 1969): 30.

²⁴ A.H Thomas, Introduction to *CPMR ii*, lxii; J.C. Russell, *British Medieval Population* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1948) 285-87; D.B. Grigg, *Population Growth and Agrarian Change: A Historical Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980) 78; Barbara Hanawalt, *Growing Up in Medieval London: The Experience of Childhood in History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993) 24; Caroline Barron, "The Later Middle Ages: 1270 to c. 1520", in *The British Atlas of Historic Towns Volume III: The City of London From Prehistoric Times to 1520*, ed. Mary D. Lobel (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989) 55; Keene, "Medieval London and its Region", 101.

²⁵ It must be stated that these estimates were largely based upon the 1377 poll tax, which Caroline Fenwick argued was a misidentified roll for Worcester, rather than London. See: Sylvia Thrupp, *The Merchant Class of Medieval London* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1948) 49-52; Thomas, "Introduction", lxii; Russell, *British Medieval*, 285-87. Caroline C. Fenwick, ed., *The Poll Taxes of 1377, 1379 and 1381: Part 2: Lincolnshire-Westmorland* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 61.

²⁶ See Chapter 1, Footnote 22

²⁷ The importance of armour to the English crown is discussed in Chapter 5. The concept of an "infantry revolution" has been introduced and excellently debated by Clifford Rogers, Anne Curry and John Stone. See: Clifford J. Rogers, "The Military Revolution in History and Historiography", in *The Military Revolution Debate: Readings on the Military Transformations of Early Modern Europe*, ed. Clifford J. Rogers (Boulder: Westview Press, 1995) 1-12; Clifford J. Rogers, "The Military Revolutions of the Hundred Years War", in *The Military Revolution Debate: Readings on the Military Transformations of Early Modern Europe*, ed. Clifford J. Rogers (Boulder: Westview Press, 1995) 55-94; Anne Curry, "Medieval warfare. England and her continental neighbours, eleventh to the fourteenth centuries", *Journal of Medieval History* 24.1 (1998): 99-101; John Stone, "Technology, Society, and the Infantry Revolution of the Fourteenth Century", *Military History* 68.2 (April, 2004): 361-380.

armour industry, but this also means that the armourers must be examined with their specific economic context in mind.

Economically, London was a city built upon trade and competition between the contending interests of mercantile and entrepreneurial elements, and a hierarchy of craft specialisms that was constantly challenged and enriched by foreign and domestic immigration and trade.²⁸ Relationships between craft specialisms transformed over time, responding to changing market conditions, and trading climates. The nature of those relationships was heavily influenced by the need to equip and fund armies for England's wars, and the economic implications of the Black Death upon the materials, labour, and distributive markets.²⁹ The effects of the Black Death were widespread upon London's social, political, and economic landscape. Within the City, it killed as much as a third of the population, but it also forced a reorganisation of London's craft structures.³⁰ This impacted all of London's industries,³¹ but was clearly transformative among the broader armourers'

²⁸ For discussions of London's broad economic and governmental context in the fourteenth century, see: Gwyn Williams, *Medieval London: From Commune to Capital* (Bristol: Western Printing Services, 1963), 106-195, 264-314; Derek Keene, "Medieval London and its Region," 99-111; M.H. Keen, *England in the Later Middle Ages*, 21-301; Edward Miller & John Hatcher, *Medieval England: Towns, Commerce and Crafts, 1086-1348* (New York: Longman, 1995), 409-429; George Unwin, introduction to *Finance and Trade Under Edward III*, ed. George Unwin (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1918), v-xxviii; McKisack, *The Fourteenth Century*, 349-382; Thrupp, *Merchant Class*, 1-97; Caroline Barron, *London in the Later Middle Ages* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005); Caroline Barron, "The Government of London: the formative phase, 1300-1500", *London Journal* 26.1 (2001): 9-18; Caroline Barron, "London in the Later Middle Ages 1300-1550", *London Journal* 20.2 (1995): 22-33; Caroline Barron, "London 1300-1540", in *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain*, ed. D.M. Palliser (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008); Matthew Davies, "Crown, city and guild in late medieval London", in *London and Beyond: Essays in honour of Derek Keene*, ed. Matthew Davies & James Galloway (London: Institute of Historical Research, 2012), 247-68; Charles R. Hickson and Earl A. Thompson, "Essays in Exploration: A New Theory of Guilds and European Economic Development", *Explorations in Economic History* 28 (1991): 127-168.

²⁹ For in-depth discussions about the impacts of the Black Death on London and its economy, see: Keen, *England in the Later Middle Ages*, 137-159; Steven A. Epstein, *Economic and Social History*, 159-189; Sylvia Thrupp, "Plague Effects in Medieval Europe", in *Society and History: Essays by Sylvia Thrupp*, ed. Raymond Grew and Nicholas H. Steneck (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1977): 150-162; Josiah C. Russell, "The Preplague Population of England", *The Journal of British Studies* 5.2 (May, 1966):1-21; George Unwin, "The Estate of Merchants, 1336-1365", in *Finance and Trade Under Edward III*, ed. George Unwin (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1918), 221-222; Philip Ziegler, *The Black Death* (London: Faber & Faber, 1998); John Hatcher, "England in the Aftermath of the Black Death", *Past and Present* 144 (Aug., 1994): 3-35; David Herlihy, *The Black Death and the Transformation of the West*, ed. Samuel K. Cohn, Jr. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997), 39-58; McKisack, *The Fourteenth Century*, 331-337.

³⁰ Keen, *England in the Later Middle Ages*, 150.

³¹ T.F. Reddaway discovered that at least one third of the goldsmiths' wardens died in the plague. See: T.F. Reddaway, *Early History of the Goldsmiths' Company: 1327-1509* (London: Edward Arnold Publishers, 1965), 27-28.

crafts: the cutlers' mystery lost all of their wardens to the plague by 11 November 1349,³² the occupational surname "kisser" disappeared entirely from the London records after 1348,³³ and despite the heaumers only gaining their ordinances in 1347, the word "heaumer" was entirely replaced by the more general "armourer" in the records by 1364.³⁴ The plague also made acquiring raw materials and labour more difficult during a period when wars necessitated the crown's demands for greater and greater productivity and quality from the local armour market in order to equip English armies.

The fourteenth-century English wars in France, Scotland, Wales, Ireland, and Castile all profoundly impacted the fourteenth-century urban experience of Londoners. While armourers and other martial crafts were charged with meeting the needs of England's armies, London's role as the economic centre of England meant that Londoners became one of the most significant sources of finance and war purveyance for the English crown.³⁵ As Gwyn Williams argued, "...the needs of war and royal finance created a new pattern..." of political service, economic growth and institutional sophistication.³⁶ Despite the challenges of the fourteenth century, the period was an explosion of commerce, trade, immigration, and increasing craft and political organisation. These challenges and opportunities allowed for industrial growth in all sectors, and among the armourers it encouraged various specialist industries to adopt numerous strategies to best capitalise upon opportunities and respond to economic challenges as they arose. Those strategies will be examined throughout this thesis.

In order to understand how the armourers developed and contributed to London's economic growth during this period, they must be examined through five broad, connected areas of inquiry. Firstly, the records relating to the armourers must be thoroughly examined in order to determine who armourers were, what they did, and how they interacted with the

³² *LBF*, 110.

³³ See: Sections 1.2.2 & 2.4.2; *CWPH i*, 523.

³⁴ "heaumer (n.) Also healmer, heumer," *The Middle English Dictionary*, accessed 1 April, 2015, <http://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/m/mec/med-idx?type=id&id=MED20195>; *CPMR iii*, 4; Section 2.3.

³⁵ Williams, *Medieval London*, 14.

³⁶ Williams, *Medieval London*, 308.

London community at large. Secondly, the armourers' individual production specialisms must be defined and the production relationships between those specialisms must be understood, because it is out of these interdependent economic relationships that their broader identities as "armourers" were derived. Thirdly, we must understand the nature of armourers' household economies, how the armourers' households contributed to and interacted with the development of their other social, production, industrial, and political networks, and particularly how women of the household contributed to the development of an industry that has been traditionally regarded as "male". Fourthly, we must understand how social networks related to the development of the armourers' industrial forms of organisation ("misteries," "fraternities," and "guilds"), and whether those organisations were externally imposed, or developed out of a voluntary desire to gain greater control over their production and market centres. Finally, using an understanding of all of these concepts we can attempt to understand the nature of the armourers' political participation, because political perspectives are a combination of workshop, economic, household, social, moral, industrial, and trade influences. These concepts and how they will be engaged with in this thesis' chapters will be briefly introduced below, but each of these investigations will be examined separately, and the historiography relating to each area of inquiry will be engaged with in the relevant chapters.

The prosopographical record analysis that I will utilise is not a unique development, but rather my own adaptation of methods which have become more and more common in historical analyses over the past forty years. When this methodology is applied to larger historical inquiries like those attempted here, it allows for useful comparisons between the industry as it was depicted by the official records of the city, and crown, and the industry as a collection of the lives of its individual members, recorded incidentally in documents such as criminal records, property records, records of debt, and wills. For this I am particularly indebted to the prosopographical methodology developed by Maryanne Kowaleski in her work on medieval Exeter, which aimed to create a collective biography of fourteenth-

century commercial groups in that city.³⁷ As my own research also focussed on fourteenth-century craft and commercial groups, and depended upon the creation of both individual and specialism-specific prosopographies, Kowaleski's contributions to prosopography have been particularly useful. My own survey identified over a thousand records relating to individual armourers or the London armour industry across the surveyed materials dating from 1251 to 1460,³⁸ and identified three-hundred and eleven individual members of the armourers' industries. This first chapter will discuss how both primary and secondary sources helped to compile and interpret this data, discuss the previous scholarly works that have contributed to this study, and examine how I identified the armourers and some of the challenges I faced compiling records from disparate sources that were not originally intended to provide the kinds of data I sought out.

At its core, Chapter 2 will be an inquiry into the nature of production and retail specialisation amongst the armourers, and aims to answer the broad central question of "what was an armourer?" by examining the commercial and industrial diversity of the group through each of the armourers' constituent specialisms of linen-armourers, plate-armourers, furbishers, kissers, and haubergers. It will further ask the questions of how workshops were organised and how different types of armour manufacturers and retailers interacted with one another in order to create and sell the compound products that defined fourteenth-century English armour. It will investigate the division between armourers' specialisms, but also the division between craftsmen and retailers and ask what strategies armourers used to organise the manufacture and sale of armour. Here, I will draw particularly upon financial records to test the hypothesis that those who identified as armourers and represented their craft in civic ordinances came from a diverse range of economic backgrounds, that they acted both as retailers and craftsmen, and that they

³⁷ Maryanne Kowaleski, "Appendix 1", in *Local markets and regional trade in medieval Exeter* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 334-352.

³⁸ These included the earliest records of persons active in the fourteenth century through to the last inheritance of properties of those that were active in the fourteenth century, but do not include the several hundred auxiliary records which were used to help identify armourers.

utilised a range of specialist production strategies according to their unique economic opportunities. In order to contextualise the armourers' specialisms, I will draw upon Durkheim's theoretical approaches examining the interconnectedness between a group's social and material organisational complexities,³⁹ as well as the more recent works by scholars investigating occupational specialisation within its medieval context.⁴⁰ Finally, I will question how the incorporation of multiple armourers' specialisms into what Penelope Corfield called "occupationally pluralist"⁴¹ workshops and wholesale or retail trading warehouses contributed to the development of both more complex production methods, and the increasing centralisation of the industry in the absence of a guild. Examining these questions is important, because only by understanding how the armourers' specialisms worked together in their production and trading pursuits can we begin to unravel the nature of their developing social and political developments which eventually led to their involvement in the Mayoralty Riots.

Medieval urbanites understood that their larger societies were constructed out of smaller ones, which began in the household: as John Trevisa wrote, "...many hous maken a street and many stretes maken a cite and many citees maken a regne. Þanne in þis wise comente of hous is iordeyned to oþere comyntees, for eche oþer comynte conteyneth comynte of hous and þat comynte is in sum wise partee of al oþere comyntees".⁴² Therefore in order to answer the question of how the armourers' social and industrial networks developed, and how the material and social aspects of that development are related, it is imperative to first understand them in the contexts that the armourers themselves would have understood them, and question how the industrial aspects of the workshop, shop, and

³⁹ Émile Durkheim, *De la division du travail social : livres II et III* (1893).

⁴⁰ See: Section 2.0.

⁴¹ Penelope Corfield, "Business leaders and town gentry in early industrial Britain: specialist occupations and shared urbanism", *Urban History* 39.1 (2012): 30.

⁴² "Many houses make a street, and many streets make a city, and many cities make a reign. Then in this wise comment about houses is arranged to the other communities, for each other community contains the community of the household and that community is in some way a party of all other communities." Translation to Modern English mine. David C. Fowler & Charles F. Briggs, eds., *The Governance of Kings and Princes: John Trevisa's Middle English Translation of the De Regimine Principum of Aegidius Romanus* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1997), 164.

the inter- and intra- specialist networks examined in Chapter 2 related to the industrial and social aspects of the household economy. Chapter 3 therefore is an examination of the armourers' households, and asks what contributions wives, daughters, widows, apprentices, and servants made to the industrial or trading activities of the household.

While the corpus of feminist historiography addressing the role of the household and women's roles in medieval urban industry has grown rapidly over the last twenty years,⁴³ as will be discussed in Chapter 3, the majority of these studies have examined more "traditionally female" contributions and industries. However, it is clear in records that women of armourers' households contributed to both domestic and workshop tasks, and so I will question the nature of those contributions, how they related to the growing social network of the armourers, and how that contributed towards a material growth in the wealth and complexity of the industry. By understanding how the household was related to the larger industry, a clearer picture of individual armourers' lives emerges, but more importantly, insight can be gained into the relationship between the individual and the development of the broader industry's social organisation. This chapter will question how women among the armourers helped to connect their household economies to the broader market economy and social networks, what level of autonomy was present among female members of the industry, how women's pay differed, how gendered workplaces and industries contributed to a stereotype of female labour as less valuable among the armourers, and what effect this had on women's contributions to the industry. It will conclude by discussing the experiences and roles of apprentices and servants within the family economy and ask who these men were among the armourers and how their relationships within the family economy contributed to the development of more complex industrial and social networks.

Expanding the scope of inquiry to broader socio-industrial organisations, Chapter 4 will explore the question of how the armourers' industry's governing bodies emerged and

⁴³ For a discussion of the development of these arguments see: Section 3.0.

functioned. It was these social organisations that came together to mainprise the armourers arrested in the mayoralty riots in 1384, and the amount of money involved in those mainprisals indicates a considerable growth in collective wealth. Therefore, understanding how the armourers' socio-industrial organisation was formed and how it functioned is imperative to understanding both why the armourers were so involved in the riots, and why the armourers' leadership were the first of all of London's socio-industrial organisations to come forward with its members that were suspected to have been involved. Central to understanding the armourers' socio-industrial organisations is the question of whether those organisations were internally formed or externally imposed upon them. This question has been vigorously debated by scholars examining numerous industries across Europe in the Middle Ages, and I will contribute to that debate by framing the question within the context of the armourers alone.⁴⁴ I will explore how the armourers' unique social and occupationally pluralist structures contributed to a power struggle between the mercantile elite of the mayor's court, the crown, and the various co-dependent armourers' specialisms. I will further examine the issue of social organisation by contrasting the "top-down" structures seen in records relating to misteries, fraternities, and guilds, with "bottom-up" wholly voluntary social structures seen in co-mainprisal and criminal records, and in the formation of armourers' districts seen in property record analysis. This dual approach to the question of how the armourers' broader social organisations formed and functioned is imperative to understanding the relationship between the armourer rioters and the armourer mainprisers examined in Chapter 5. Furthermore, examining the formation of the industry prior to the development of a guild and outside of traditional organisational structures allows for the nature of small craft organisations to be questioned within social and industrial frameworks.

Chapter 5 examines the relationship between the armourers, the City, and the Crown through the lens of the Mayoralty Riots. It will first examine how the crown's goals

⁴⁴ See: Section 4.0.1.

for the armourers' products interfered with their industrial goals and how those conflicting purposes led to dissatisfaction among the armourers as a community. It will then seek to answer the questions of how that dissatisfaction translated into political action in London through the armourers' strong support of the reformist politician John Northampton, and then ask why the armourers were particularly responsive to Northampton's political messages, and what roles the armourers played in the political landscape of late fourteenth-century London, and in the riots of 1384. It will conclude by discussing how the armourers were able to re-forged their reputation in the wake of the riots as a respectable, organised body, eager to support its membership and the good of the City and examine how that campaign led to their further growth and successes in the aftermath of the riots, and ultimately to the establishment of their guild. By tracing the development of the armourers from the interactions of individual specialisms and their workshops and shops to their participation in City-wide political activism, this thesis will provide unique insights into the development of small craft and trade groups in London.

1.1: Previous Scholarly Works

This kind of a study requires an understanding of how the armourers' specialist industries grew together, what avenues the larger industry utilised in its development, and how the armourers compare to other, similar craft and trade groups. Thankfully, in this there has been a wealth of useful studies to draw upon, which have examined the growth and development of both London in general, and of other individual craft groups. George Unwin's early work on London's guilds and fraternities was one of the first major scholarly examinations of the development of London's craft communities, but was unfortunately hampered by the refusal of all save the Drapers', Clothworkers', Leathersellers', Cordwainers', Haberdashers', and Feltmakers' Companies to allow him access to their

records.⁴⁵ He addressed the armourers only in passing, and in fact misunderstood the nature of the 1322 Armourers' Ordinances, believing the industry to have consisted solely of metalworkers,⁴⁶ but he did recognise that "...the spread of the craft or mystery type of organization... supplies the key to the social and political development of the city in the 14th century."⁴⁷ This echoed the earlier work of Lujo Brentano, who argued that guilds existed as part of a "continual struggle" between the craftsmen and the older, wealthier, and more politically active citizenry.⁴⁸ This theme will be examined further in Chapter 5; however, as will be discussed, the scarcer records relating to London's smaller non-guild industries in the fourteenth century has meant that scholarship has made very little progress both in defining their function and in examining their roles in London's political development since Unwin.

Sylvia Thrupp's excellent work on the development of the grocers and London's merchant class at large provides some insight into the development of some of London's craft and mercantile communities. While very useful, her focus on the importance of the mercantile and export trades is difficult to apply directly to a discussion of the armourers, who were forbidden from exporting their wares for much of the fourteenth century.⁴⁹ However, her exceptionally thorough work, *The Merchant Class of Medieval London* is of particular usefulness in its examination of merchant groups' interactions with crafts, their practise of multiple specialisms, their interactions with the civic government, the role of women and households in the marketplace, and the relationship between John

⁴⁵ Unwin, *Gilds*, vi.

⁴⁶ Unwin, *Gilds*, 88.

⁴⁷ Unwin, *Gilds*, 87.

⁴⁸ Lujo Brentano, "Craft Gilds," in *On the History and Development of Gilds, and the Origin of Trade Unions* (London: Trubner & Co., 1870), 55-56.

⁴⁹ Chapter 5 examines export restrictions. See: Sylvia Thrupp, "The Grocers of London: A Study of Distributive Trade", in *Studies in English Trade in the 15th Century*, ed. Eileen Power and M.M. Postan (London: George Routledge & Sons, 1933) 247-292. Sylvia Thrupp, "Social Control in the Medieval Town", in *Society and History: Essays by Sylvia Thrupp*, ed. Raymond Grew and Nicholas Steneck (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1977) 39-52; Sylvia Thrupp, "Medieval Gilds Reconsidered", *Journal of Economic History* 2.2 (1942): 164-173; Sylvia Thrupp, *The Merchant Class of Medieval London* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1948).

Northampton's politics and the London marketplace.⁵⁰ These themes are all central to my investigation of the armourers, and Thrupp's work allows for a valuable comparison between London's broader merchant class and the armourers specifically.

Gwyn Williams's *Medieval London: from Commune to Capital* is important to any modern study of London and its communities. His work examines the mercantile interests in London's civic government, the growing importance of the craft communities, and the constitutional changes of London's government in 1319. These are very useful to discussions of John Northampton's 1376 constitutional changes which were based on the 1319 constitutional changes that had fallen out of practise by the last quarter of the fourteenth century.⁵¹ Williams' examination only covers up to 1337, and so while his ideas about the foundations of craft groups are useful in examining the early armourers, and his broad ideas about the functions of various industrial bodies can be carefully applied to later ones, they do not specifically relate to much of the armourers' organisational development examined here. However, how armourers fit into the "new social order" that Williams argued emerged from mercantile organisations in the early fourteenth century is an important question to consider, and will be engaged with throughout this thesis.⁵²

Some of the most useful scholarly debates about the nature of guilds, fraternities, and other craft and trading groups have revolved around the questions of whether craft groups had positive or negative effects on the growth of trade and innovation,⁵³ whether these groups were internally or externally controlled,⁵⁴ and whether they were primarily religious or socio-industrial in character.⁵⁵ This thesis will examine some these problems

⁵⁰ Thrupp, *Merchant Class*, 1-27; 53-97; 164-170; 73-85.

⁵¹ Williams, *Medieval London*, 106-156; 157-195; 264-285. For a discussion of Northampton's constitutional changes, see: Bird, *Turbulent London*, 17-43.

⁵² Williams, *Medieval London*, 169.

⁵³ A good summary of the history of this debate can be found in Gary Richardson's "Craft Guilds and Christianity in Late-Medieval England: A Rational Choice Analysis", *Rationality and Society* 17.2 (2005): 139-141.

⁵⁴ This is examined more fully in Chapter 4.

⁵⁵ Gary Richardson, Sylvia Thrupp and Pamela Nightingale all argued for the usefulness of being able to call upon religious authority when guilds pursued their economic goals. Justin Colson has argued for the importance of religious fraternities in the creation of centralised communities of people who were physically dispersed throughout the city, which was useful for the creation of trades and group identities. See: Gary

through the lens of the armourers in the appropriate chapters. Unfortunately, much of the debate around the idea of the formation of socio-economic collectives has been specifically focussed on guilds, and on fifteenth-century records, while very little work has been done on the development of fourteenth-century groups operating outside of a guild structure. However, P.J.P. Goldberg's recent work on proto-guild "collectivities," which acted as guilds but lacked permission to do so is an exciting area for future research, and one which I will engage with further in Section 4.0.1.⁵⁶

Scholars who have addressed issues of industrial development in other trade groups have been of great use as comparisons to the armourers, and as methodological guides to this study. Elspeth Veale's seminal work on the fur trade is exceptionally thorough, and engages with the development, structure, and organisation of the skimmers and their related specialist industries from the thirteenth through sixteenth centuries.⁵⁷ Likewise, C. Paul Christianson's work on bookmakers tracked the development of the book trade back to the fourteenth century, and demonstrated a good methodology for how to organise and structure research on artisans from multiple occupations and disparate sources, which I have adapted to my work on the armourers.⁵⁸

Histories of larger and wealthier crafts, and examinations of guilds are far more common: T.F. Reddaway's excellent accounts of the growth of the goldsmiths provide a good comparison to the development of other wealthy crafts and trades at the time, and he spends some time discussing the development of the goldsmiths from their proto-guild structure prior to their first charter in 1327 up to their sixteenth-century controls on the precious metal market at large.⁵⁹ Examining later industrial developments, John Oldland's

Richardson, "Craft Guilds", 139-189; Nightingale *Medieval Mercantile*, 177-178; Thrupp, *Merchant Class*, 19; Justin Colson, "Alien Communities and Alien Fraternities in Later Medieval London", *The London Journal* 35.2 (Jul., 2010): 111-143.

⁵⁶ P.J.P. Goldberg, "From Tableaux to Text: The York Corpus Christi Play ca. 1378-1428", *Viator* 43.2 (2012): 247-276.

⁵⁷ Elspeth Veale, *The English Fur Trade in the Later Middle Ages* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966).

⁵⁸ C. Paul Christianson, "A Community of Book Artisans in Chaucer's London", *Viator* 20 (1989): 208-209.

⁵⁹ Reddaway, *Early History of the Goldsmiths' Company: 1327-1509*, xix-9; T.F. Reddaway, "The London Goldsmiths circa 1500", *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 12 (December, 1962): 49-62.

research on the development of relationships between craft and retail specialists among the cloth trade, and on the merger of the London fullers and shearmen into the Clothworkers' Company in 1528 presents a useful comparison to the armourers', platers', haubergers', heaumers', and eventually braziers' merger into the Armourers' Company.⁶⁰ Anne Sutton's examination of the mercers and their businesses demonstrates the growth of the importing trade in the fourteenth century, and examines a distinction between the craft and mercantile aspects of London trade groups.⁶¹ This has been useful in examining similar distinctions among the armourers' craftsmen and retailers. Sutton's work also examined links between mercers' businesses and London and international politics, a theme that this thesis examines in Chapter 5.⁶² Pamela Nightingale's massive study of the grocers has also been of great use in this study.⁶³ Her research utilises the experiences of a developing industrial organisation as a lens through which to examine the role of foreign trade on London's economy, and the relationships between industrial and political power in London. This latter area of inquiry is particularly interesting to this study, because while Nightingale examines the Grocers' Company in its context as a political base for Nicholas Brembre, in Chapter 5 of this thesis I examine the pre-guild structure of the armourers as part of a political base for his rival, John Northampton.⁶⁴ Finally, studies of craft organisations and industrial developments in other cities are also of great value as comparisons to the armourers' experiences in London. In particular, Gervase Rosser's work on medieval Westminster, Martha Carlin's work on Southwark, Derek Keene's work on Winchester, and

⁶⁰ John Oldland, "Making and Marketing Woollen Cloth in Late-Medieval London", *The London Journal* 36.2 (July, 2011): 89-108; John Oldland, "The London Fullers and Shearmen, and their Merger to Become the Clothworkers' Company", *Textile History* 39.2 (November, 2008): 172-192.

⁶¹ Anne Sutton, "The Shop-floor of the London Mercery Trade, c. 1200 – c. 1500: The marginalisation of the artisan, the itinerant mercer and the shopholder", *Nottingham Medieval Studies* 45 (2001):12-50.

⁶² Anne Sutton, *The Mercery of London: Trade, Goods and People, 1130-1578* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005)

⁶³ Nightingale, *Medieval Mercantile*; Nightingale, "Capitalists", 3-35.

⁶⁴ Eleanor Quinton's PhD work on the drapers and cloth traders, and Matthew Davies' PhD work on the London tailors also provide very useful parallel examinations into the kinds of motivations that different crafts had for supporting Northampton's riots. See: Eleanor Jane Powys Quinton, "The Drapers and the Drapery Trade of Late Medieval London, c. 1300-c.1500" (PhD diss., University of London, 2001) 53-68; Davies, "The Tailors of London", 115-120.

Maryanne Kowaleski's work on medieval Exeter have provided useful descriptions of the development of other cities' occupational networks.⁶⁵

There have been numerous studies of medieval arms and armour approaching the subject of armourers from an object-oriented or materials science perspective;⁶⁶ however, there have been only a few studies that have discussed the craftsmen themselves, and those that have tended to only examine individual crafts (such as metal-armourers or linen-armourers), rather than the industry as a whole.⁶⁷ The most comprehensive of these studies have been those of Charles Ffoulkes and Claude Blair. Ffoulkes' 1912 work, *The Armourer and his Craft from the XIth to the XVIth Century*, remains one of the most complete examinations of the broader European subject, particularly his first and second chapters on armourers and their working environments.⁶⁸ However, Ffoulkes' study only briefly examined London's armourers, made no distinctions between them and other English cities' armourers (whose economic, political, and social contexts differed greatly), and did so over such a long period of time that the specific regional and temporal contexts that led to the unique developments in London over the fourteenth century were entirely lost to

⁶⁵ Gervase Rosser, "Occupations", in *Medieval Westminster* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989): 119-165; Martha Carlin, "Occupations and Economy", in *Medieval Southwark* (London: The Hambledon Press, 1996): 169-89; Derek Keene, *Survey of Medieval Winchester*, Winchester Studies, 2 (Oxford, 1985); Maryanne Kowaleski, "Commerce and the Occupational Structure", in *Local markets and regional trade in medieval Exeter* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995): 120-178).

⁶⁶ For studies of plate armour, see: Williams, *Blast Furnace*, 740-747; "Medieval metalworking – armour plate and the advance of metallurgy", *Chartered Mechanical Engineer* 25 (September 1978) 109-14; "Experiments with medieval steel plates", *Historical Metallurgy* 32 (1998): 82-86; Peter N. Jones, "The Metallography and Relative Effectiveness of Arrowheads and Armor During the Middle Ages", *Materials Characterization* 29 (1992): 111-117; Francis M. Kelly and Randolph Schwabe, *A Short History of Costume & armour: Two Volumes Bound as One* (1931; reprint, Mineola: Dover Publications, 2002) 62-70. For studies of mail armour, see: E.M. Burgess, "The mail-makers' technique", *Antiquities Journal* 33 (1953): 48-55; "Further research into the construction of mail garments", *Antiquities Journal* 33 (1953): 193-201; Cyril Stanley Smith, "Methods of manufacturing chain mail", *Technology and Culture* 1 (1959): 60-67. For studies of cloth armour, see: Janet Arnold, "The Jupon of Coat-Armour of the Black Prince in Canterbury Cathedral", in *Church Monuments VIII* (1993): 12-24; For general studies, see: Claude Blair, *European Armour: Circa 1066 to Circa 1700*, London: B.T. Batsford Ltd., 1958; Thom Richardson, "Armour in England, 1325-99", *Journal of Medieval History* 37 (2011): 304-320; David Edge & John Miles Paddock, "The Fourteenth-century: The Parfait Gentil Knight", in *Arms & Armour of the Medieval Knight* (London: Defoe Publishing, 1988), 66-93.

⁶⁷ Elspeth Veale argued that individual guild or industrial histories necessarily represented "partial" and "distorted picture[s] of the City's economy" because many contributors to larger industries did not belong to guilds or were not freemen (and thus not recorded among guild records). Just as she recognised in her study of the skinner's community, this study seeks to define the armourers by their wider industrial and trading community which included a broad range of interdependent specialist trades operating outside of a guild structure. See: Veale, "Craftsmen and the Economy of London in the Fourteenth Century", 134; Veale, *Fur Trade*, 78.

⁶⁸ Ffoulkes, *Armourer*, 1-38.

him. In part, this was because it was Ffoulkes' belief that, "There are no details relating to the lives of any of the known English armourers that are worth recording."⁶⁹ This erroneous Euro-centric perspective has been echoed more recently by Peter Spufford, who claimed that, "There were no major production centres for armour... in the British Isles."⁷⁰ In both cases, as this thesis will show, the facts do not support these interpretations.

In 1926, Ffoulkes attempted to refocus on the broader history of English armourers, in an article briefly speculating about the interrelationship between the linen-armourers, merchant taylors, plate-armourers, cutlers, blacksmiths, and heaumers in the first half of the fourteenth century.⁷¹ However, he was not able to fully examine the interrelationship of these crafts beyond brief speculation, since much of his article focussed on the later history of the craft, the Greenwich Armoury, and the guilds' later makers' marks.⁷² With the notable exceptions of Claude Blair, Malcolm Mercer, and Derek Keene, I have found no scholars of the past hundred years revisiting this problem of craft interdependence among the armourers specifically, though there have been studies which have examined this trend among London's crafts, and among those of other cities in general.⁷³ Of these studies, James Farr in his *Artisans in Europe: 1300-1914* stated the situation best: "... the more we learn about their business practices, the more we realise how deeply enmeshed artisans were in interdependent networks[...] The city was a matrix of small, interconnected, and interdependent workshops."⁷⁴ Gervase Rosser furthered this argument, stating that through these internal and external craft networks, artisans were able to attain "...access to

⁶⁹ Ffoulkes, *Armourer*, 60.

⁷⁰ Peter Spufford, *Power and Profit: The Merchant in Medieval Europe* (London: Thames & Hudson, Ltd., 2002), 265.

⁷¹ Charles Ffoulkes, "The Armourers' Company of London and the Greenwich School of Armourers", in *Archaeologia or Miscellaneous Tracts Relating to Antiquity Published by the Society of Antiquaries of London*, Volume 76, Oxford (1927): 41-42, 45-46.

⁷² Ffoulkes, "Armourers' Company", 43-45, 46-57.

⁷³ See: Samuel Kline Cohn Jr., *The Laboring Classes in Renaissance Florence* (New York: Academic Press, 1978), which examines immigration, the environment, class struggles, and criminality among the Florentine working class; and Farr's *Artisans in Europe*, which broadly examines craft communities, economies, workplaces, education, and religious and secular ceremonies.

⁷⁴ Farr, *Artisans*, 52.

resources: tools, materials and, not least, channels of personal patronage and influence.”⁷⁵

While these networks were further enriched by interconnected trading communities, how these matrices of economic, social, civic, political, and royal resources and connections developed will be a major theme in every chapter of this thesis.

Claude Blair’s 1958 work, *European Armour: Circa 1066 to Circa 1700*, remains one of the most thorough examinations of European armour ever written. However, as Blair’s specialist expertise at that time was the materials rather than the people who made armour, he only briefly discussed the lives of those engaged in the manufacture or sale of armour.⁷⁶ This work was also primarily focussed on metalworking armourers, and so very little attention was paid to the various types of leather and “soft armour,” which rarely survived as did the metal armours in the collections Blair curated.⁷⁷ Blair’s exceptional scholarship and influence, combined with the complexity of scholarship required to discuss the broader contexts of these interdependent crafts, has meant that most scholars of arms and armour have followed his example by limiting their discussions to metal armours, of which we have much better surviving examples.⁷⁸ When Blair died in 2010, he was working on a history of the London Armourers’ and Brasiers’ Company that would have addressed some of the broader issues of craft interdependence among these industries; however, its focus was on the fifteenth century and later, when the occupations of the armourers became much clearer and when more records exist. In preparing for this thesis, I was fortunate enough to have been given access to Blair’s notes by his estate, and this thesis will build upon some of his ideas.

⁷⁵ Gervase Rosser, “Big Brotherhood: Guilds in Urban Politics in Late Medieval England”, in *Guilds and Association in Europe, 900-1900*, ed. Ian Gadd and Patrick Wallis (London: Centre for Metropolitan History, 2006), 33.

⁷⁶ Blair, *European Armour*, 188-190.

⁷⁷ Blair, *European Armour*, 32-34, 38-40, 50, 55-57, 60.

⁷⁸ Some of which are recorded in: J. Starkie Gardner, “Armour in England”, *The Portfolio* 33 (July, 1897): 1-98; J. Starkie Gardner, “Foreign Armour in England,” *The Portfolio* 38 (October, 1898): 1-96; James Mann, *An Outline of Arms and Armour in England from the Early Middle Ages to the Civil War* (London: Her Majesty’s Stationery Office, 1969); Williams, *Blast Furnace*, 740-747.

Examining the individual crafts that made up the armourers' networks, very little work exists, in part because these crafts did not have individual charters at this time, because they no longer exist, or because they were subsequently absorbed into other crafts. Of the crafts that survive, among the most useful histories have been C.M. Clode's *Early History of the Merchant Taylors' Company*, which begins with a study of their origins as the linen-armourers and tailors, and in the second volume, examines several of the company's early leaders in individual case studies.⁷⁹ More recent work on the merchant taylors by Matthew Davies and Ann Saunders has gone into considerably more depth and analysis of the early role of the linen-armourers in the development of the merchant taylors' industry, and has provided some insight into how these two aspects of the cloth industry interacted with one another and with crown and city at the beginning of the fourteenth century.⁸⁰ No significant works exist examining the furbishers, kissers, haubergers, heaumers, or platers outside of those examining craftsmen in general. However, Tom Girtin's *The Mark of The Sword* provides a narrative history of the cutlers' company, which had significant social and economic ties with the metalworking armourers,⁸¹ and Barbara Megson's examination of the development of the London bowyers has several parallels to this study: bowyers were impressed alongside armourers in the Tower, occasionally mainprised armourers for crimes, and lived in proximity to armourers in Ludgate and Farringdon Without.⁸²

Malcolm Mercer has examined the relationships between the royal armourers and the London armourers in general in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries.

Mercer argued that the Royal Armourers acted as "an important link between the

⁷⁹ Charles Clode, *Early History of the Merchant Taylors' Company: Part One: The History* (London: Harrison and Sons, 1888); *Early History of the Merchant Taylors' Company: Part Two: The Lives* (London: Harrison and Sons, 1888).

⁸⁰ Matthew Davies & Ann Saunders, *The History of the Merchant Taylors' Company* (Leeds: Maney Publishing, 2004); Matthew Davies, "Crown, city and guild", in *London and Beyond: Essays in honour of Derek Keene*, ed. Matthew Davies & James Galloway (London: Institute of Historical Research, 2012), 247-68.

⁸¹ Tom Girtin, *The Mark of the Sword* (London: Hutchinson Benham, 1975), 1-64.

⁸² Barbara E. Megson, "The Bowyers of London 1300-1550", *London Journal* 18.1 (1993): 1-13; Sections 4.3, 4.4, and 5.1.

armourers' community and the crown".⁸³ His work primarily focusses on the royal armourers and their provisioning of the royal household; however, his introduction to the armourers' craft and trade in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries provides a good summary of some of the evidence available to historians of the early non-royal armourers' communities as well.⁸⁴ Furthermore, his work is invaluable for understanding some of the complexities of the relationships between these communities at the beginning of the century. However, it is important to remember that the royal armourers worked on a national scale as they followed the king wherever he was, and so records of their interactions with local armourers' communities did not necessarily reflect the interactions with the London community specifically.

Jane Geddes' extremely thorough work on the iron craftsmen and iron supply networks of London during this period was published as a part of John Blair and Nigel Ramsay's *English Medieval Industries* in 1991. It is an excellent examination of both smelting and the general forging of iron across various industries in London and in Britain at large, but it only briefly touches upon armourers specifically. As it is focussed only upon ironworkers, it does not connect them to the larger craft network beyond the iron supply networks shared by all ironworkers.⁸⁵ In the same work, John Cherry contributed an excellent survey of the leather industry in general. Unfortunately, it omits all but the briefest mention of how the trade was used in the armourers' craft, focussing primarily upon more domestic goods such as shoes, saddles, leather bottles, chests, scabbards, and purses.⁸⁶ Armour production represented only a small portion of these broader industries, and its violent purpose condemns such products to a low likelihood of survival for modern scholars to examine, but craftsmen in these industries were of great utility to the fourteenth-century armourers' craft, as will be demonstrated in Chapter 2.

⁸³ Malcolm Mercer, "King's Armourers and the Growth of the Armourer's Craft in Early Fourteenth-Century London", *Fourteenth-century England VIII*, ed., J.S. Hamilton (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2014), 2.

⁸⁴ Mercer, "King's Armourers", 2-7.

⁸⁵ Geddes, "Iron", 167-188.

⁸⁶ John Cherry, "Leather", in *English Medieval Industries*, ed. John Blair and Nigel Ramsay (London: The Hambledon Press, 1991), 295-318.

Derek Keene was one of the few scholars to write about the complexity of the relationships between these interrelated crafts. However, because he was looking at the links between different types of metalworkers alone, he missed the interdependence of cloth, baleen, and leather workers with the community of metalworking armourers. That said, he did contextualise craft interdependence among metalworkers, saying, “Close relations and conflicts between crafts reflected the complex processes which underlay the manufacture and marketing of articles incorporating metal” and recognised the same kind of relationships among lorimers, smiths, and saddlers (using metal and leather to make horse bridles, harnesses, and saddles), that I examine in Chapters 2 and 4 between the armourers’ economic and social networks that similarly had to combine their crafts in order to make a complete product.⁸⁷ Furthermore, Keene’s expertise relating to the commercial character of Cheapside and urban London allowed him to contextualise some of these relationships by neighbourhoods, which I shall examine in the armourers’ contexts in Section 4.4.

Lastly, Thom Richardson’s work on the construction of armourers’ workshops, the inventories of the Tower of London, and some of the equipment used by armourers in the Tower has been an invaluable resource in interpreting inventories of armourers’ personal belongings that I uncovered in the National Archives and armourers’ wills, and for providing a context for the relationship between the crown as a customer discussed in Chapter 5 and the developing types of armour found in inventories over the fourteenth century.⁸⁸

While these scholars have all been invaluable to my research, the lack of scholarly attention to the interdependence of the London armourers’ crafts specifically has been the result of a lack of previously examined historical evidence, as this topic represents a very specific niche of inquiry across a very broad range of primary sources scattered across the

⁸⁷ Keene, “Metalworking in Medieval London”, 98.

⁸⁸ Thom Richardson, “Armour in England, 1325-99”, 304-320; “Armourers’ Tools in England”, *Arms and Armour* 9.1 (2012): 25-39; *The medieval inventories of the Tower armouries 1320-1410* (PhD diss., University of York, 2012).

London records. This, combined with the fact that more records and surviving materials exist for students of armour on the continent, has led to the London armourers being almost entirely ignored by historians outside of those I have mentioned. One of the most telling examples of this absence of scholarly attention is in John Harvey's *Medieval Craftsmen*, which dedicated nearly a third of the text to metalworkers, but only a single paragraph to the armourer's trade, claiming it was "impossible here to give any account..." of the armourers and blade smiths, whom he appeared to have difficulty differentiating.⁸⁹ This difficulty is telling both of source complexity and of the close interrelation of crafts, as I shall examine throughout this thesis.

1.2: Primary Sources Used & Methodology

This thesis has been structured into discussions of the different aspects of armourers' lives and organisations in the fourteenth century: workshop organisation, household organisations, socio-industrial organisations, and political organisations. I have engaged with these topics through a rigorous search for records of the City of London including London's Letter Books, the Plea and Memoranda Rolls, the subsidy rolls of 1292, 1319, and 1332, the Mayor's Court Rolls, the Possessory Assizes, the Assizes of Nuisance, and Cases of Trespass. I have also looked at records of royal government including the Feet of Fines, the Patent Rolls, the Close Rolls, Rymer's *Foedera*, the Fine Rolls, exchequers rolls, customs records, Statutes of the Realm, and Parliament Rolls. Finally, I have examined wills belonging to or relating to armourers preserved in the Court of Husting, and the Commissary Court of London. I have used these records both in their calendared forms as finding aids, as well as in their original forms in the National Archives, the London Metropolitan Archives, and the Guildhall Library whenever possible to ensure the accuracy of the calendared data. I organised these records into both temporal and thematic calendars, as well as into calendars which I organised by occupational

⁸⁹ John Harvey, *Medieval Craftsmen* (London: B.T. Batsford Ltd., 1975), 177.

specialism in order to create datasets capable of providing biographical information useful for answering the research questions discussed above. However, as the sources of this research vary so greatly, something must be said about how they have been organised, and how I have been able to draw conclusions about the nature of armourers' lives.

None of the records series described above were meant to record the personal, social, or economic activities of individuals or craft groups, and no contemporary guild or craft records exist for the armourers in the fourteenth century, whose earliest court minutes book dates from 1413.⁹⁰ However, as Maryanne Kowaleski argued, "...creative methodologies allow researchers to extract data that the original compilers of the source may not have necessarily have intended to offer..."⁹¹ Where armourers' industrial records have been enrolled in the City's Letter Books (such as the various craft ordinances and confirmations of charters for the armourers and their related crafts),⁹² I will explore whether they represent the ideals of those in positions of authority in the craft, or reliable descriptions of craft practices or of the lives and activities of the craftsmen they claimed to represent by comparing those records with the collective biographical information.⁹³

Working with these civic and royal records requires exceptional care, as their purpose was not to record information about armourers' lives, and in several cases only a handful of records exist that relate to the armourers. Rolls AA, and CC of the London Possessory Assizes, for example, were the only rolls of that series that contained any mention of armourers in the fourteenth century.⁹⁴ These were collations of sheriffs' records, and as Helena Chew noted, the regulations requiring that sheriffs deliver these records to the City chamberlain for safe keeping were "more honoured in the breach than

⁹⁰ Jayne Rimmer, *Court Minutes of the Armourers' Company of London (1536-1538): A Select Edition and Commentary* (MA Diss., University of York, 2003) 10; London Guildhall Library CLC/L/AB/B/MS12071/1.

⁹¹ Kowaleski, "Appendix 1", in *Local Markets*, 336.

⁹² See: the regulations of the armourers (1322), heaumers (1347), furbishers (1350), blacksmiths (1372), cutlers (1380), blacksmiths (second, 1394), between the cutlers and sheathers (1408), between the cutlers and bladesmiths (1408), and of the bladesmiths (1408): *Mem*, 145-146; 237-238; 258-259; 361-362; 438-442; 537-539; 567-568; 568-569; 569-570.

⁹³ Gervase Rosser, "Crafts, Guilds, and the Negotiation of Work", *Past and Present* 154.1 (1997): 5; Heather Swanson, "The Illusion of Economic Structure: Craft Guilds in Late Medieval English Towns", *Past and Present* 121.1 (1988): 31.

⁹⁴ *LPA*, 9, 101, 194.

the observance”⁹⁵ and so the information they express is fragmented at best. Similar problems occur in the Assizes of Nuisance, which was a collection of those complaints that were enrolled within the court’s jurisdiction over complaints of nuisance between landowners. According to Helena Chew and William Kellaway, most craft complaints were probably addressed through the crafts themselves (of which we have no records for the armourers), creating a picture of social life in London in the surviving records painted “in sombre colours and no doubt distorted”.⁹⁶ These deficiencies of source completeness, source intention, and source trustworthiness are shared by all of the individual record series used in this thesis.

The underpinning methodologies of this research are based on a collection of individual life records identified via nominal record linkage, and the creation of a catalogued dataset of individuals. These methodologies enabled a prosopographical examination in order to contextualise the armourers within the trade specialist, regional, social, and political groups to which they belonged. Nominal record linkage is a technique for determining if an individual in one record can be identified with another in another record, and is the foundation for the creation of individual biographical life records, as well as the broader group-biographical data that is at the heart of prosopography.⁹⁷ Prosopography is particularly useful to the study of developing trade groups: as Lawrence Stone argued, it allows for an understanding of historical groups’ “deeper interests... beneath the rhetoric of politics; [and] the analysis of social and economic affiliations of political groupings.”⁹⁸ By utilising nominal record linkage alongside prosopographical interpretation, it is possible to properly identify the population of armourers, and address questions relating to where these men and women lived and worked, what kinds of crafts

⁹⁵ Helena Chew, introduction to *London Possessory Assizes*, ed. Helena Chew, vol. 1 of *London Record Society Publications* (London: London Record Society, 1965), xii.

⁹⁶ Helena Chew and William Kellaway, introduction to *LAoN*, ed. Helena Chew & William Kellaway, vol. x of *London Record Society Publications* (London: London Record Society 1973), xxxi.

⁹⁷ E.A. Wrigley, introduction to *Identifying People in the Past*, ed. E.A. Wrigley (London: Edward Arnold, 1973), 1-16.

⁹⁸ Lawrence Stone, *The Past and the Present Revisited* (New York: Routledge, 1987), 45-46

they practised concurrently or cooperated regularly with, what types of materials they worked, what equipment they owned, and what social groupings they gave or received loans from, committed crimes with, mainprised, or engaged in joint businesses with. Ultimately, this methodology provides clues as to the development of group-political identities.⁹⁹

As Margaret Mullett and Lawrence Stone have both argued, prosopography is based upon the identification of the individual, but its goal is to understand the dynamics of groups of individuals.¹⁰⁰ Stone further argued that there are two schools of prosopography: an “elitist school” which focusses on small groups of wealthy individuals studied by historians interested in political movements, and a more statistically-minded “mass school” which focusses on statistical correlations between individuals of large groups by researchers interested in social, rather than political history.¹⁰¹ As Dion Smythe noted, however, medieval sources in particular “do not lend themselves easily to quantitative approaches, but treating them as *rich sources*... is productive.”¹⁰² This has held true in my research of the armourers as well; however, because I have been interested in both political and social movements, my prosopography does not fully fit with either of Stone’s “elitist” or “mass” schools. Throughout the course of this study I uncovered three-hundred and eleven armourers (and provisionally-identified armourers), representing a range of persons from the very poor to the very rich. As the nature of the armourers’ social, industrial, and political organisations changed over the course of the fourteenth century, and the sources

⁹⁹ For good discussions of this methodology, see: Stone, *The Past and the Present Revisited*, 45-73; Neithard Bulst, “Prosopography and the computer: problems and possibilities”, *History and Computing* 2 (1989): 12-18; Kowaleski, “Appendix 1”, in *Local Markets*, 343-347; Koenraad Verboven, Myriam Carlier, and Jan Dumolyn, “A Short Manual to the Art of Prosopography”, in *Prosopography Approaches and Applications: A Handbook*, K.S.B. Keats-Rohan, ed. (Oxford: Unit for Prosopographical Research, 2007): 35-70; Ralph W. Mathisen, “Where are all the PDBs?: The Creation of Prosopographical Databases for the Ancient and Medieval Worlds”, in *Prosopography Approaches and Applications: A Handbook*, K.S.B. Keats-Rohan, ed. (Oxford: Unit for Prosopographical Research, 2007): 95-126.

¹⁰⁰ Margaret Mullett, “Power, Relations and Networks in Medieval Europe. Introduction”, *Revue belge de philologie et d’histoire*, 83.2 (2005): 258; Stone, *Past and Present*, 45.

¹⁰¹ Stone, *Past and Present*, 46-51.

¹⁰² Dion C. Smythe, “‘A Whiter Shade of Pale’: Issues and Possibilities in Prosopography”, in *Prosopography Approaches and Applications: A Handbook*, K.S.B. Keats-Rohan, ed. (Oxford: Unit for Prosopographical Research, 2007): 132. Italics mine.

that revealed this group-biographical data varied both in scope and intent, interpreting these varied records has required exceptional care. My prosopographical methodology owes a great deal to the work of Maryanne Kowaleski and her adaptations to the methodology for her work on medieval Exeter, which faced similar challenges and had similar goals.¹⁰³

Some of the greatest challenges to both prosopographical interpretation and the interpretation of individual life records lie with the quality of the sources that can be used to identify armourers, and the survival rate of these documents. As a result, the earliest part of my survey of records yielded a very large population of armourers, as they were recorded in the Subsidy Rolls of 1292, 1319, and 1332. However, as records in this early period rarely identified a person's craft outside of an occupational surname, those persons whose surnames did not indicate their craft had to be cross-identified from later records where they could be positively identified by other means, and so it was impossible to identify the complete population with any certainty. Conversely, the latter twenty-five years of the survey also yielded a large population of armourers, and while it can be inferred that the craft had grown in size based on the needs of the crown for locally produced armour¹⁰⁴ and by the rising social prominence of the armourers' industrial organisations at the time, their increased appearances in the records also stems from their increasing participation in civic affairs,¹⁰⁵ better record keeping, better survival of records, and their well-recorded participation in the Mayoralty Riots. As a result, even basic information such as the population of the craft and its growth over time cannot be estimated with any certainty because of the nature of the records which make up this survey.

A further challenge to interpreting this data comes from the variety of individuals examined in the group. The records examined tend to favour wealthier, male craftsmen,

¹⁰³ See: Kowaleski, "Appendix 1", in *Local Markets*, 343-347.

¹⁰⁴ Discussed in Sections 2.5, 5.3, and 5.4.

¹⁰⁵ Discussed in Section 4.2.

who had the freedom of the City.¹⁰⁶ Information about apprentices, foreigners, and women is very rare, though they certainly contributed greatly to the economic and social activity of the industry.¹⁰⁷ As a result, the records can disproportionately affect conclusions about average wealth, levels of civic engagement, financial independence, family size, and civic and political engagement of the group at large. Records relating to apprentices, servants, and the poorer members of the group tend to be records of crime, debt, or civic disobedience, and so the records paint a picture of a group starkly divided between the wealthy, civically active leaders of the craft, and the poorer, violent, indebted workmen, when the reality was that these were the extremes of a spectrum of social, economic, and civic participation. As a result, each area of inquiry in this thesis relies primarily upon qualitative case studies to demonstrate theories of group experience, taking into account the diversity of experience in the development of the armourers' groups in this period. Theories about wealth, levels of crime, family experience, workshop organisation, and other areas of broad inquiry are therefore presented through the lens of these case studies, compared against all available cases.

Sources related to the economic activities and networks of the armourers come from the entire range examined, but most importantly from the Subsidy Rolls and the Letter Books. My analysis of the Subsidy Rolls has depended upon Eilert Ekwall's *Two Early London Subsidy Rolls*, wherein are transcribed the names and tax rates of each person taxed by the 1292 and 1319 subsidy taxes, along with some attempt to identify these persons using the wider records, and a thorough contextual analysis of the documents and their significance to scholarship.¹⁰⁸ The 1332 subsidy rolls have also been transcribed and thoroughly analysed by Margaret Curtis in George Unwin's *Finance and Trade Under Edward III*.¹⁰⁹ These documents were extremely useful, as they allowed me to identify

¹⁰⁶ For a discussion of similar prosopographical limitations, see: Stone, *Past and Present*, 62-65.

¹⁰⁷ Apprentices and journeymen are discussed in Section 3.4, women's roles are discussed throughout Chapter 3.

¹⁰⁸ Eilert Ekwall, *Two Early London Subsidy Rolls* (Lund: C.W.K. Gleerup, 1951).

¹⁰⁹ *LLS*, 35-60.

seventy-five potential members of the broader armourers' craft network, but also allowed for a comparison between armourers' economic power within the context of the entire taxable body of London, eliminating some of the methodological difficulty of pulling financial information on the surveyed group from disparate sources. However, such examination must be done with care since the source is limited by an unknowable rate of tax evasion, since only twelve wards' records survive from the 1292 assessments,¹¹⁰ since the poll taxes stop recording individual names after 1334,¹¹¹ and since the later fourteenth-century poll taxes for London that might have provided comparative data are lost.¹¹²

These were the only thoroughly examined primary records which placed the armourers within the context of the larger London population.¹¹³ The other sources I draw upon in this thesis are primarily individual records of single events, such as court cases, or wills. On their own, these tell very little about the armourers' life or about the state of the industry, but such records help identify more armourers by name, which can help to identify them in other records where their craft is not given.¹¹⁴ Individual records can further contribute to understanding social networks, and provide clues about income, common properties, tools, and other possessions that suggested different types of craft activities. Examining these individual documents prosopographically also can provide insights into social questions that I examine here, such as potentially allied industries, common challenges faced by armourers, the roles taken on by their family members, expectations of servants and apprentices working in armourers' workshops, and a wealth of other details about the daily lives of the men and women who made up the armourers' industry in the fourteenth century.

¹¹⁰ Veale, "Craftsmen and the Economy of London in the Fourteenth Century", 135.

¹¹¹ W.B. Stephens, *Sources for English Local History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973), 50; Robin E. Glasscock, *The Lay Subsidy of 1334* (London: Oxford University Press, 1975), xiv.

¹¹² Fenwick, ed., *The Poll Taxes of 1377, 1379 and 1381*, 61; Note 24.

¹¹³ There were nine lay subsidies between 1307 and 1332, but only 1292, 1319, and 1332 have published editions. A thorough search and transcription of the other lay subsidies contained within E 179 at the National Archives could have revealed more about the armourers. This is an area for future research.

¹¹⁴ Nominal record linkage methodology and problems emerging from similar names are addressed in Sections 1.2.1 and 1.2.2 below.

A final category of sources that I have engaged with were artistic, dramatic, and poetic sources. While art imagery, poems, and plays are not historical sources, they can represent a common understanding of the scenarios which the artist has attempted to depict, or at the very least, a “stereotype” that might resonate with the audience, while not representing any specific reality.¹¹⁵ As Jacques le Goff wrote, works of imagination “were not produced to serve as historical documents but are a historical reality unto themselves. [However] such works... cannot be interpreted according to the same rules as the archival sources with which historians are accustomed to working, for their motivations and purposes are different.”¹¹⁶ I have used art images and lines from poetry and drama throughout this thesis as supporting evidence for my interpretation of historical documents. However, this was always done with exceptional care.¹¹⁷ In some cases, I used art as examples where the artist has depicted something that matches evidence in historical sources, and the artist was known to have been a witness to a contemporary example of what the art depicted.¹¹⁸ In other cases, I have used popular art and drama as a method of understanding not what was necessarily a true depiction of contemporary reality, but a normative one. For example, in the cases of the very negative depictions of female smiths found in artistic and dramatic sources examined in Section 3.3, the artistic sources are useful when examined alongside the historical sources discussing how female armourers were viewed in the English market, and the historical experience is compared and contrasted with the artistic representation. While the imagery and poetry was the result of a long standing artistic tropes, those tropes both informed and reflected contemporary opinions and perspectives, and so represented a valuable insight into the experience of armourers.

¹¹⁵ Veronica Selukes, “Women and Art in England in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries”, in *Age of Chivalry: Art in Plantagenet England 1200-1400*, ed. Jonathan Alexander and Paul Binski (London: Royal Academy of the Arts, 1987), 41-48.

¹¹⁶ Jacques le Goff, *The Medieval Imagination*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 3-4.

¹¹⁷ For a discussion of challenges in using art depictions of craft workers in historical research, see: Patricia Basing, *Trade and Crafts in Medieval Manuscripts* (London: The British Library, 1990), 15-17.

¹¹⁸ Such as Chaucer’s description of armourers at a tournament in Section 2.4.1.

Finally, some artistic sources were used even though there was clearly no intention to depict a historical reality, such as those found in images of soldiers armed for battle in the Holkham Bible.¹¹⁹ These images depicted scenarios from the Book of Revelation. However, as the armour depicted matched that described in contemporary historical and archaeological accounts, these images are useful for placing the armour within a worn context. Because the circumstances of an artistic work's creation and its intended audience are vital to placing it within a historical context, I will make my arguments for each work's usefulness individually.

1.2.1: The Methodology of the Fourteenth-Century Armourers' Survey: Nominal Record Linkage and the Identification of Armourers Using Occupational Surnames

The methods used to identify the London armourers consisted of a rigorous search of the records for instances of direct identification, that is, where armourers either specifically identified themselves as armourers in the records, or were otherwise positively identified as armourers by the records; and instances of occupational surname identification, that is, where armourers' occupational surnames identified them as likely members of the craft associated with their names. In the former case, not every record which dealt with a particular person identified his craft, as no regulations required this until the Statute of Additions in 1413.¹²⁰ As a result, these armourers needed to be identified, and then an additional search performed for each of their individual names in every record series in order to find all records probably associated with each person.¹²¹ Challenges to this identification could occur in records where their occupation was not recorded, or

¹¹⁹ Figure 2.5.

¹²⁰ This only applied to writs, appeals, and indictments; however Christine Carpenter and Malcolm Mercer both argued that it normalised description by titles in the records as a result of lower gentry's desire to be recognised by their status. See: Christine Carpenter, *Locality and Polity: a Study of Warwickshire Landed Society, 1401-1499* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 45, 69, 79; Malcolm Mercer, *The Medieval Gentry: Power, Leadership and Choice during the Wars of the Roses* (London: Continuum Publishing, 2010), 8; "Henry V: May 1413", in *PROME*, accessed January 26, 2015, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/no-series/parliament-rolls-medieval/may-1413>.

¹²¹ While I had to adapt my methodology to the context of London and the smaller size of a single industrial group, it was based upon Kowaleski's methods illustrated in: Kowaleski, "Appendix 1", in *Local Markets*, 343-347.

where it was recorded as a different occupation in different sources. In some cases, this represented an instance of multiple occupations in the armourers' lifetimes, while in other cases, this meant that another person existed with the same name at the same time. The records that make up this survey consist only of those where the person identified could be either positively confirmed as the armourer under examination, or where timeframe, location, or social or economic contacts and activities strongly suggested it was the same person.

Nominal record linkage problems can be very complex when applied to occupational surnames. When using surnames as a way of identifying armourers, three main problems occurred. The first was found among armourers who bore occupational surnames that were demonstrably not the occupation they actually practised or among armourers who bore surnames designating them as armourers but for whom there were not enough records to positively associate them with the industry. A second problem occurred among individuals who were known by multiple names over the course of their lives, such as John Marchaunt, also called John Le Clerk, who was an armourer, an armour retailer, and a foot soldier; or Nicholas le Armurer, who was also known as Nicholas le Clerk, Nicholas Larmurer, and Nicholas le Girdelere. "John" was the most common name for men, and so it was possible that some of the former of these were separate individuals. In such cases, I have tried to confirm identities by cross-referencing all records of an individual with their identified family members, properties, and other associations. In the latter case, "Nicholas" is a less common first name, and I was able to confirm that he worked both as an armourer and as a girdler, since he is positively identified by context, properties, or associations using these occupational surnames, but with different occupational titles in several different records.¹²² It is possible that he was also the clerk of

¹²² *LPA*, 3, 9; *LBE*, 189; *LBF*, 56, 57, 180; *CWPH i*, 539; *Liber Albus*, 375.

one of these industries; however, “Clerk” is a particularly common name in the subsidy rolls among persons whose primary occupation was not clerk.¹²³

The third problem in identifying armourers by their surnames comes from the assumption of relationality. Today, most people think of surnames as being largely certain tools for identifying familial relations, albeit possibly very distant relations. However, surnames only came into common use in England sometime between the end of the twelfth and middle of the thirteenth centuries and did not fully stabilise until much later.¹²⁴ The purpose of these names was not to identify family members in relation to each other (medieval people needed no special tools for this), but to identify persons for official purposes in written records such as taxes, apprenticeships, contracts, property transfers, letters of credit, and wills.¹²⁵ These names could signify relationships where the name was inherited by children, servants, or apprentices (such as *Mannekynnesmanthearmurer*, the servant or apprentice to Manekyn le Armurer/le Heaumer, who died in 1318);¹²⁶ signify occupation (such as the six confirmed armourers out of potentially twenty-six individuals in my prosopographical survey found using variants of the surname “Armourer”); signify nicknames related to a physical, personal, or occupational trait (such as Robert le Proude or Roger Savage, two of the craftsmen appearing in the 1322 armourers’ ordinances);¹²⁷ or signify place of residence or origin (such as the armourers John atte Grove,¹²⁸ Giles de Colonia¹²⁹ or Clement Passemer¹³⁰).¹³¹

¹²³ Ekwall, *Subs*, 38.

¹²⁴ Allen Mawer, “Some Unworked Sources for English Lexicography”, in *A Grammatical Miscellany Offered to Otto Jespersen on his Seventieth Birthday*, ed. Niels Bøgholm et al. (Copenhagen: Levin & Munksgaard, 1930), 11-16.

¹²⁵ R.H. Britnell, “Specialization of Work in England, 1100-1300”, *Economic History Review*, LIV, 1 (2001): 5.

¹²⁶ *Subs*, 39; P.H. Reaney & R.M. Wilson, *A Dictionary of English Surnames* (London: Routledge, 1991), xiii; *CPR 1317-1321*, 286.

¹²⁷ *Mem*, 145-146.

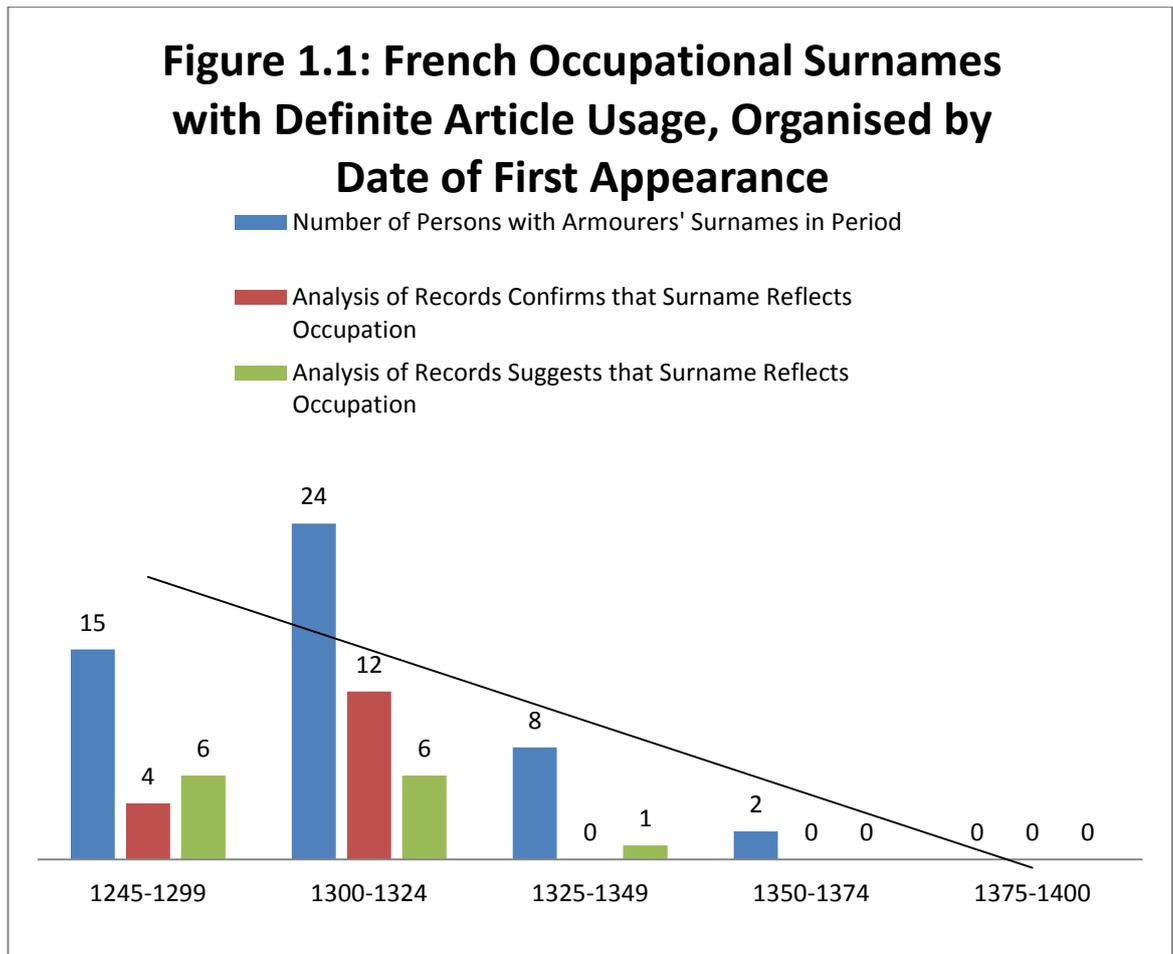
¹²⁸ *CPMR i*, 173.

¹²⁹ Cologne. See: CCR 1349-1354, 220.

¹³⁰ “*Passé mer*” “Passed the sea”. See: *LBD*, 143.

¹³¹ For research on alien craftsmen and merchants during this period, see: Alice Beardwood, *Alien Merchants in England, 1350-1377* (Cambridge: Mediaeval Academy of America, 1931); Geddes, “Iron”, 183-84; Thrupp, *Merchant Class*, 3-4, 206-211; Colson, “Alien Communities”, 111-143; Reddaway, “The London Goldsmiths circa 1500”, 58-61; Sylvia Thrupp, “A Survey of the Alien Population of England in 1440”,

One of the most important changes over the course of the fourteenth century for identifying individuals in the records is the evolution of by-names from traditional French to transitionally composite French and English vernacular versions, and what these changes implied about the interpretation of these names. The most obvious of these changes among the occupational surnames (outside of minor adjustments to spelling), is the inclusion or absence of the French definite articles *le* (masculine) and *la* (feminine), and the masculinization or feminization of the surnames themselves, such as the cases of Manekin *le* Armurer, who appears in the records between 1286 and 1321, and Alice *la* Haubergere, who appears from 1271 to 1310. Figure 1.1 demonstrates the decline in usage of the article among the armourers, and the individuals who used it have been recorded in Appendix 1 with their names, date of earliest appearance in the records, and the source of that appearance placed in order of their first appearance in the records.



Sources: Appendix 1.

As the data in Appendix 1 and Figure 1.1 above illustrate, starting around 1350, French definite articles had almost entirely disappeared among the armourers. After 1350, only three out of eighteen persons using occupational surnames still use the French articles,¹³² and only two of those appear in a first record after 1350. The dropping of the definite article from the occupational surname after 1350 may be the result of changing fashions, but it is more likely that it coincides with the increasing heredity of surnames among the armourers, beginning around 1350.¹³³ Thus, at the beginning of the century, Manekin *le Armurer* was literally Manekin *the armourer*, while in 1378, Richard Glover

¹³² Gilott, John, and Hugh *le Fourbour*.

¹³³ P.H. Reaney and R.M. Wilson disagree with this theory, stating that the article had begun to disappear much earlier. However, among the armourers population in London, the names that I identified agree with Fransson's argument that the disappearance tends to be a sign that the name has become hereditary. See: Reaney and Wilson, *A Dictionary of English Surnames*, xvi-lv; Gustav Fransson, *Middle English Surnames of Occupation: 1100-1350* (Lund: Kraus Reprint Ltd., 1967) 39.

was not Richard *the glover*, but rather an armourer with an inherited surname.¹³⁴ While this was not a certain rule, and there are exceptions, such as Gerard Hauberger, who was granted the office of the Haubergery in the Tower of London in 1363, the presence or absence of the French definite article can be one way to interpret how the name was seen by its adopter: as a personal occupational descriptor, or as an inherited name.¹³⁵ That the use of the French definite article decreased over time suggests a changing relationship between people and their names, and understanding that names were undergoing this shift in the mid fourteenth century is imperative to correctly identifying the armourers in the records.

The context of occupational surnames is especially important to bear in mind in identifying large groups of urban persons, since so many recent scholars of urban history have structured their studies around an assumption that occupational surnames directly correlated with their bearers' occupations, or implied familial relationships with those of the same name. This practice has been long contested, most succinctly by M.M. Postan, who argued that at the close of the Middle Ages, surnames "lose all their value as evidence" of occupations, while earlier in the period, "...they can be assumed to reflect more accurately the actual occupations of men bearing them...",¹³⁶ because the names were intended to identify individuals in legal records, rather than to identify inherited familial relationships. When attempting to discuss individual industries without centrally-organised records, assumptions about occupation based on surnames can be very dangerous. The celebrated lexicographer Eilert Ekwall was generally very careful to identify occupations only when he had records to support his identification, but he still routinely made educated guesses based on surnames to identify armourers in the subsidy rolls of 1292 and 1319. Many of these guesses were based on assumption of family businesses, or on the hereditary adoption of surnames, such as his identification of John

¹³⁴ *CPR 1377-1381*, 100.

¹³⁵ *CPR 1361-1364*, 344.

¹³⁶ M.M. Postan, *The Medieval Economy and Society: An Economic History of Britain in the Middle Ages* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1972), 202.

atte Hull as likely an armourer based on his having the same surname as the armourer Adam atte Hull;¹³⁷ William de Shirwode based on the armourer Robert de Shirwode;¹³⁸ and a 1319 John atte Grove based on an armourer of the same name appearing in 1338 (though not the same man).¹³⁹ However, there is no evidence in the records to support these interpretations.

In earlier cases, Ekwall occasionally accepts the occupational surname without any contextual evidence as representative of the actual occupation, such as Henry le Forebur, “a furbisher, to judge by his surname.”¹⁴⁰ Even P.J.P. Goldberg’s more recent and otherwise excellent work on the poll tax returns for several urban communities in 1377, 1379, and 1381 made the argument that occupational surnames in the records could be reasonably used as evidence of craft allegiance, “even for individuals otherwise loosely designated only as labourers or artisans.”¹⁴¹ To some extent these assumptions can be made, especially when dealing with very early cases, as Postan claimed. However, this tendency among historians to ascribe more significance than is due to occupational surnames has meant that I have had to be extremely cautious not only in my own identification of them, but also in trusting identifications made by others.

1.2.2: The Methodology of the Fourteenth-century Armourers Survey: Nominal Record Linkage and Armourers’ Direct Identification

Figure 1.2 tracks the first appearances in the records where armourers were directly identified by their crafts. As mentioned above, based on the nature of the records examined, these persons cannot represent every armourer who lived in the period, but only

¹³⁷ *Subs*, 297.

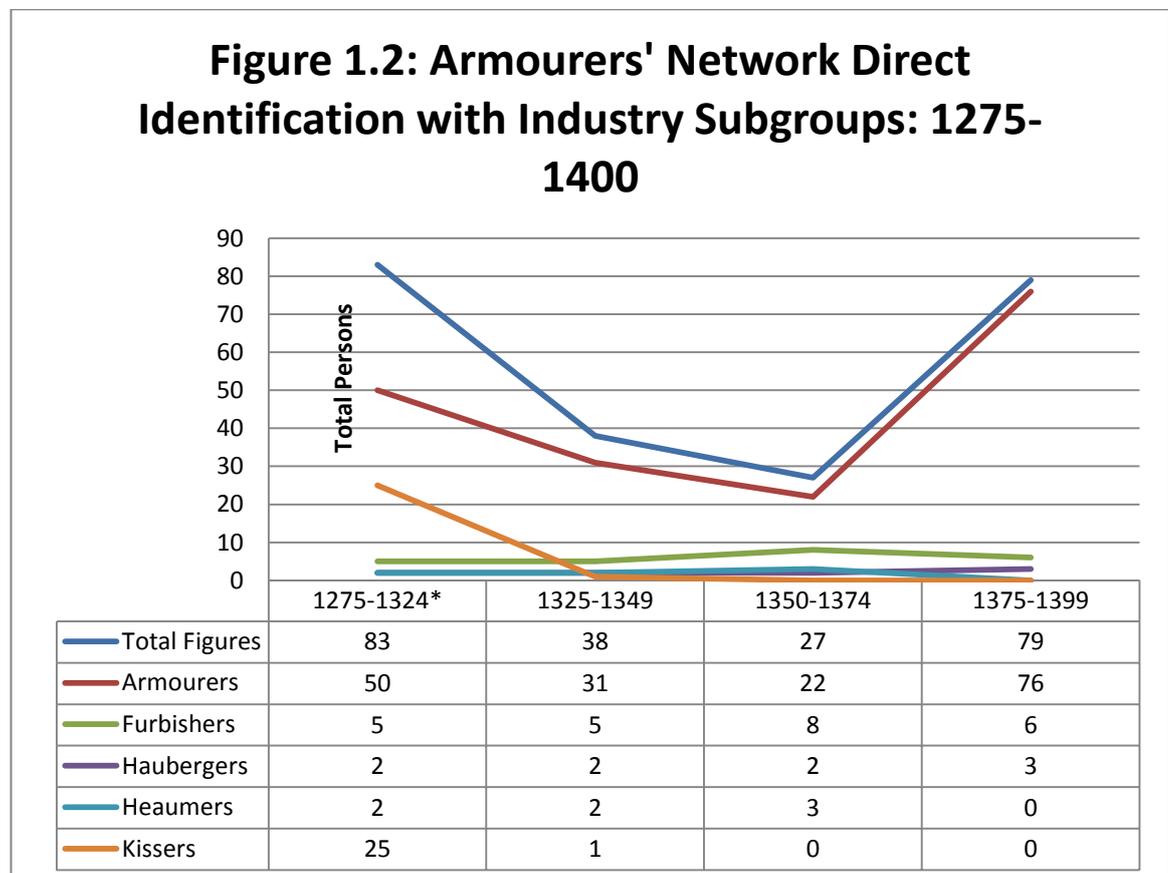
¹³⁸ *Subs*, 317.

¹³⁹ *Subs*, 303.

¹⁴⁰ *Subs*, 170.

¹⁴¹ Goldberg argued for the validity of this evidence because he believed that (particularly in the north) surnames “had still not become fully stable” by the end of the fourteenth century, and he hoped to minimise errors by organising his data by trade groups, rather than specific occupations. However, in such broad sets of data, it is impossible to determine whether inheritors of occupational surnames would remain within the same trade group. See: P.J.P. Goldberg, “Urban Identity and the Poll Taxes of 1377, 1379, and 1381”, *Economic History Review* New Series 43.2 (May 1990): 209.

those in the surviving records and calendars of records, and those persons whose economic, social, civic, royal, or political activities were considered worthy of recording. The first period examined includes the last quarter of the thirteenth century, because there were several members of the armourers' crafts active throughout the first quarter of the fourteenth century who first appear identified in the records in this earlier period. Individuals active during the period 1275-1300 but not after 1300 have been omitted. Where an individual had more than one occupation, he appears as having a first appearance under both categories and potentially, multiple timeframes. Armourers here include those identifying as armourers directly, as armour retailers or wholesalers; and all categories included those who appeared as apprentices of their respective crafts. It does not include many positively-identified armourers who bore occupational surnames, because prior to 1350 the surname made an additional self-identification redundant for many of these persons.



Sources: Appendix 2

This data shows that throughout the period, the identification of “armourer” in the records was by far the most common of the group, because this is probably the term used for the craft in general, while specific sub-group identification probably only occurred when it described a specialist, or the craft was significantly different at one point in time. While the industry disappears after 1348, identification as a “kisser” was the next most numerous at the beginning of the century. This disappearance of the kissers is most likely the result of their craft being absorbed into another craft identity with the enrolment of the Heaumer’s Ordinances in 1347, which claimed authority over “helmetry, and other arms forged with the hammer,”¹⁴² or representative of this craft being hit harder by the Black Death than other groups. Of the other occupations I was able to identify, furbishers, haubergers, and heaumers all remained fairly consistent in their small numbers through the century, with a small rise of furbishers and heaumers in the period of 1350-1374, when the armourers in general and the total number of individuals surveyed were at their lowest. The drastic reduction of armourers appearing in first records in this period has the obvious explanation of the Black Death; but while these fluctuations among the furbishers and heaumers are very minor, they may point toward a trend in multi-occupational practice among the group. In the records I examined, when occupationally pluralist armourers practised furbishing in addition to another armourers’ craft, it was done with only one exception between the years of 1361 and 1384, and so the slight increase in the numbers of furbishers in this period is likely a reflection of more armourers adopting the specialism as a secondary craft.¹⁴³ In this period, only three of the eight directly-identified furbishers did not have some other occupation associated with them at other times in their lives.¹⁴⁴ It is probable that this growth in the furbishing craft by multi-occupational armourers was a combination of the enrolment of the Furbishers’ Ordinances in 1350¹⁴⁵ and of the first truce of the Hundred Years’ War between 1360 and 1369, resulting in a greater demand for

¹⁴² *Mem*, 237-238.

¹⁴³ This trend is examined further in Sections 2.4.1 and 2.5.

¹⁴⁴ These were John Peyntour, John Andreu, and Richard Bokeler. See: *LBF*, 211; 236; *CPMR ii*, 315.

¹⁴⁵ *Mem*, 258-259.

repaired equipment than for new arms and armour. This fluidity of occupation between armourers' crafts will be further discussed in Section 2.5.

The increase in the number of armourers at the end of the century is probably due to a population recovering after the Black Death, better record keeping, the continuing Hundred Years' War, and the wars in Scotland and Ireland under Richard II. Armourers had also gained a great deal of prestige by this time as well, particularly after 1384 and the industry's recovery after its disastrous involvement in the Mayoralty Riots.¹⁴⁶ The final period in this study sees armourers sitting on the Common Council,¹⁴⁷ acting as sheriffs,¹⁴⁸ and a much greater number of records dealing with the armourers and their allies than exist in earlier periods.

The question of how and why the armourers were so heavily involved in the political uprisings of 1383 and 1384 depends upon understanding who and what the armourers were, and how their workshop, home, and socioeconomic organisations interacted to influence the development of their collective political identities. As the methods of identification discussed above have shown, armourers' experiences varied greatly during this period, and the crafts which could be called "armourers" included workers in multiple material specialisms, and engaged in a variety of activities. The question of "what was an armourer in the fourteenth century?" can therefore only be answered by further examining the process of how these varied crafts and professions interacted, which this thesis will attempt to reveal. Identifying the members of the craft as described here was important so that a more robust series of records about the armourers could be assembled, which allowed for a more complete story of each individual who contributed to their industry's growth. The data contained in the life records of each identified armourer can help to show how their occupational specialisms functioned, how

¹⁴⁶ See: Chapter 5.

¹⁴⁷ Robert Sendale (as a Heaumer representing the smiths), Simon de Wynchecombe (for the armourers) and John Walsyngham (for the armourers). See: *LBH*, 43-44.

¹⁴⁸ Simon de Wynchecombe and Henry Reede. See: *LBF*, 289, 292.

armour craftsmen related to armour retailers, and what strategies the armourers used to centralise the works of various occupational specialisms within individual workshops.

Just as the medieval worldview understood that large societies were constructed out of smaller societies, questioning the nature of the armourers during this time demands that one first question how their industry was similarly comprised of smaller communities. This thesis will ask these questions, and strive to uncover how communities of disparate craft and trading specialisms combined with household and family networks in order to develop into more complex forms of socioeconomic organisation. Only by questioning how the structures of work, family, and craft identity functioned among the armourers' community in London can the larger question of armourers' political identities be examined. These questions will be addressed throughout this thesis, beginning with the most basic questions of what it was to be an armourer, and each chapter will examine each layer of social and material complexity as they developed over the fourteenth century.

Chapter 2: Busy Hammers, Needles, Nailtools, and Grinding Stones: The Fourteenth-century Armourers' Crafts

2.0: Occupational Specialisation, Economic Mosaics, and the Sources and Theories Used to Interpret the Armourers' Crafts

English armour in the fourteenth century required many specialised craftsmen, not only for the creation of a complete suit of armour, but often in the creation of individual pieces of armour as well, since such pieces may have incorporated mail, plate, quilted linen, baleen, or leather elements. Each of these raw materials required its own specialist equipment, skills, and supply networks in order to be worked. As this could be quite expensive, becoming a generalist capable of working in more than one of the component materials required to produce a complete piece of armour required significant capital, which not all craftsmen were able to acquire. Therefore it was more economically practical for many poorer and middling armourers to specialise in just one area of the trade. However, in order to be effective, many types of armour common in the fourteenth century required the layering of several types of materials, and this meant that those who specialised in just one aspect of the industry had to work closely with other specialists in order to make functional armour at all.

As a result, while the fourteenth century saw increasing specialisation and complexity among the armourers' crafts, meeting the demands of a growing market required an increase in social and economic craft integration, which armourers experimented with through their workshops, households, and socioeconomic structures. While the organisation of workshops and the overarching attempts at craft-wide organisation were closely related, this chapter will deal primarily with the different types of workshops operated by craftsmen that considered themselves "armourers." Further, this chapter will examine the questions of what kinds of armour were being made in London in the fourteenth century, and how technological advances and limitations, and economic opportunities and pressures encouraged the development of interdependent strategies

among workshops and craftsmen that would in turn affect the experiments of socio-industrial organisation discussed in Chapter 4. Finally, and most importantly, this chapter will examine what it meant to be an “armourer” in fourteenth-century London.

As no guild records for the armourers survive for the fourteenth century, records that describe armourers’ working conditions are extremely scarce. As Claude Blair summarised, referring to all European armourers, of all specialisms, from the eleventh through seventeenth centuries: “Such information as we have about the actual processes involved in making armour is derived almost entirely from the very few known illustrations of armourers at work, from a few lists of tools, and, above all, from examination of surviving pieces. Of the actual organisation of an armourer’s workshop we know almost nothing.”¹ Examining the processes that led to the multiple armourers’ crafts that existed within an exclusively London context in the fourteenth century alone is considerably more difficult. London can accurately be described as “a uniquely dominant social and physical organism”,² sufficiently divorced not only from the larger European context, but from other English cities as well, and so the findings of historians who have examined the armourers more generally do not necessarily apply to the reality of the London armourers’ experiences in this period.

London was home to a variety of interdependent armour workshops at least as early as 1277, as evidenced by the purchases of Hugh de Oddingseles, who was granted permission to leave on the king’s service with “two iron horse-coverings, a trapping³, a haubergeon, three gambesons, an aketon, a bascinet, two iron girdles, three tunics, a pair of iron leg-pieces, a pair of thigh-pieces, and four pennoncelles,”⁴ all of which he had had made in London. The industries to make these items may have included leather, cloth, plate, mail, and possibly whalebone armourers, meaning that Oddingseles either sought out as

¹ Blair, *European Armour*, 188.

² Derek Keene, “Livery companies: what, when and why?”, in *Guilds, Society and Economy in London, 1450-1800*, ed. Ian Anders Gadd and Patrick Wallis (London: Centre for Metropolitan History, Institute of Historical Research, 2002), 171.

³ “*treppam*.”

⁴ *CCR 1272-1279*, 373.

many as eleven specialist craft workshops in order to outfit himself, or dealt with an armour wholesaler who purchased or possibly organised the work of the specialist workshops on his behalf. How these workshops were structured, if they worked together, and how they related to the raw materials markets and trading communities they supplied has never been explored by scholars.

The question of the nature of armourers' craft and retail specialisations, and how they fit into our existing understanding of medieval urban economic frameworks must be addressed before the effects on trade, political, and royal relationships emerging from the armourers' organisation can be considered.⁵ The fourteenth-century Milanese chronicler Galvano Fiamma suggested that mail production in Milan was a very advanced form of proto-industrial, cooperative organisation, saying, "The makers of hauberks alone are a hundred, not to mention innumerable workmen under them who make links for mail with marvellous skill",⁶ and described specialist manufacturers of "hauberks, breastplates, helms, helmets, steel skull-caps, gorgets, gauntlets, greaves, cuishes, [and] knee-pieces" all working together.⁷ This minute specialisation was certainly the case by the sixteenth century at the Greenwich Armoury Workshop, which also employed hammer-men, mill-men, and locksmiths, who forged, polished, and made fittings for the plates respectively.⁸ However, the scarcer records, and transitional nature of the craft in fourteenth-century London makes the nature of workshop specialisation and organisation more challenging to define, but the question of how specialisation was incorporated into the armourers' industry, and how this developed and influenced other aspects of their industry is central to understanding what armourers were.

⁵ A caution echoed by Derek Keene in "Continuity and development in urban trades: problems of concepts and the evidence", in *Work in Towns 850-1850*, ed. Penelope J. Corfield and Derek Keene (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1990), 1-2.

⁶ *Chronicon Extravagans*, in Claude Blair *European Armour*, 188

⁷ *Chronicon Extravagans*, in Ewart Oakshott, *Records of the Medieval Sword* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1991), 9.

⁸ Blair, *European Armour*, 188

The idea that specialisation was important for industrial growth is nothing new: Xenophon argued that conscious specialisation led to improved production quality, while Adam Smith saw it as a reflexive response to demand and the expansion of consumer markets.⁹ James Farr, mirroring Adam Smith, believed that discrete workshop specialisation went “hand in glove... with consumer demand and market expansion...”, which has been echoed by more recent scholars, such as James Davis, who suggested that increasing occupational specialisation was an integral part of fourteenth-century urban life.¹⁰ Examining the England specifically, Richard Britnell offered five signs of increasing occupational specialisation that are applicable to London’s fourteenth-century armourers: the development of new, highly skilled occupations; the growth of skill in occupations whose products survive; increasing size and population in towns suggesting an influx of specialists; the presence of specialist occupational surnames; and the presence of specialist craft or retail districts.¹¹ As will be shown, each of these qualities can be seen in London’s armour industries over the course of the fourteenth century. In a later study, Britnell suggested a sixth sign of increasing specialisation that might be applied to the armourers, concluding that occupational specialism could also be seen in the conflicting interests of the broader industrial community and he suggested that specialist trends led to monopolies.¹² Occupational specialisation, in his words, could “foul the environment and swindle or inconvenience customers [and was]... a threat, in other words, to social unity and peace.”¹³ While monopolistic language does appear in armourers’ regulations (such as that the heaumers should control all “arms forged with the hammer”),¹⁴ among the

⁹ Keene, “Continuity and Development”, 4.

¹⁰ Farr, *Artisans*, 52; James Davis, *Medieval Market Morality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 15, 221.

¹¹ Craft districts are examined in Chapter 4. See: Richard Britnell, “Specialization of work in England, 1100-1300”, *Economic History Review*, LIV, 1 (2001): 1-4.

¹² Richard Britnell, “Town Life”, in *A Social History of England: 1200-1500*, ed. Rosemary Horrox & Mark Ormrod (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 166-167.

¹³ Britnell, “Town Life”, 167.

¹⁴ *Mem*, 238.

armourers' larger community, monopolies were checked by the armourers' interdependence with a network of related crafts and trading groups.¹⁵

The nature of the armourers' occupational specialisms is also important to consider in order to understand how those specialisms operated together. While he was not examining medieval Londoners, Émile Durkheim's theories about the relationships between the development of social and industrial groups are incredibly helpful in understanding how the armour industry grew out of several disparate specialist occupations into a more complex socio-industrial organisation. Derek Keene very usefully applied Durkheim's theories to his work on medieval Winchester, arguing that subdivision into specialities among industries mirrored subdivision in real property during times of population growth, and vice versa, which supports Britnell's idea that specialisation coincided with increasing city populations.¹⁶ This idea is also supported among the armourers' specialisations, which, as shown in Figure 1.2, were increasingly identified in records by the general term, "armourers," rather than by specialist designations after the Black Death, implying that some armourers may have adopted more occupationally pluralist strategies as a response to population decline.

One of Durkheim's most important arguments was that specialisation necessitated closer social constructions that allowed specialists to predict the actions of other members of their "masse sociale",¹⁷ which was a requirement for efficient craft and trading communities. While these ideas have important connotations for the development of inter-household networks examined in Chapter 3 and the armourers' social bodies examined in Chapter 4, here Durkheim's theories are particularly important to note because he claimed that growth of the social aspects of specialised workers' communities, their "densité morale", directly correlated with the growth of populations and the subsequent growth of

¹⁵ See: Section 2.4.1.

¹⁶ Keene, "Continuity and development", 5; Derek Keene, *Survey of Medieval Winchester*, Winchester Studies, 2 (Oxford, 1985): 248-365; Britnell, "Specialisation", 1-4.

¹⁷ Émile Durkheim, *De la division du travail social : livres II et III* (1893), 32-34, 201; Keene, "Continuity and development", 4.

markets, infrastructure, and material culture, or their “densité matérielle”. This was because as social and industrial organisations developed, their markets and populations grew, which in turn required greater social and industrial development in order to function efficiently. Furthermore, he argued that “Il est, d'ailleurs, inutile de rechercher laquelle des deux a déterminé l'autre; il suffit de constater qu'elles sont inséparables.”¹⁸ This is one explanation for how the armourers’ interdependent and specialist workshop strategies discussed in this chapter were intrinsically related to their household, craft, and political strategies that developed alongside their growing industry and are examined throughout the rest of this thesis.

These ideas are useful as scaffolding for understanding the development of the armourers’ specialisations, but like all theories of specialisation, they oversimplify the complex economies and human aspects of the systems it seeks to describe. In a very basic way, these concepts do describe the economic situation and background for increasing workshop complexity in London in the fourteenth century: war increased consumer demand for armourers’ products and led to the growth of the armour market in London, however, it also imposed a scarcity of raw materials for the craftsmen to work with,¹⁹ limited their ability to export their wares due to royal embargo, limited their profit by purveyance or the outright seizure of goods,²⁰ and forced armourers to nimbly take advantage of any economic opportunity to compete with the high-quality imports of alien merchants.²¹ Furthermore, plague devastated their workforce and supply networks, and the impositions of civic and royal restrictions on the market limited armourers’ abilities to work efficiently. In such an environment, it is unsurprising that armourers would adapt the organisation of their individual workshops and shops; however, these patterns are neither uniform nor unanimous across the community or the century. Instead of specialising into

¹⁸ “There is, moreover, no need to look for which of the two determined the other; it is enough to state that the two are inseparable.” Translation, mine. Durkheim, *De la division*, 32.

¹⁹ For statutes prohibiting iron export due to scarcity, see: *SotR i*, 345.

²⁰ See: Chapter 5.

²¹ See: Chapter 4.2.

minute aspects of the craft and seeking economic refuge in a factory-like environment, as is seen in Milan, London's armourers demonstrate numerous specialisation strategies: into individual crafts, into niche markets underserved by the import trade, and into differing experiments of workshop organisation dependent upon the unique means and opportunities of each individual.

Armourers' specialisation was furthermore not limited to single crafts, despite a royal statute from 1363, which declared that "artificers [must] ... hold them every one to one mystery ... [and] *none use other craft than the same which he hath chosen* [italics mine]."²² There can be no question that armourers disregarded this statute, apparently without penalty, but Richard Britnell's research into crafts in Colchester has revealed that occupational pluralists were rarely prosecuted unless they were forestallers.²³ As this chapter will demonstrate, armourers routinely practised multiple crafts, both individually and within the context of their workshops. Derek Keene cautions against viewing multiple specialisms within a single workshop as progressive, however, as while this may have been the result of individuals' responses to favourable economic conditions and a growing market, they were just as likely to have stemmed from contracting markets and economic challenges like those Durkheim proposed, pressuring workshops to adopt more generalist, rather than specialist strategies.²⁴ In reality, such mosaic workshops probably occurred in response to both opportunity and hardship, as they required greater investment, but were less dependent upon the cooperation of other specialists. As will be shown, the practice of multiple specialisms in individuals and workshops appears to have been common among both the very wealthy and middling armourers, in periods of both growth and decline in the fourteenth century.

In some cases, these multiple specialisms complemented one another, such as the simultaneous practise of furbishing and plate-armour manufacture, or craft and retail

²² *SotR i*, 379-380.

²³ Richard Britnell, *Growth and Decline in Colchester: 1300-1525* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 135; Corfield, "Business leaders", 30.

²⁴ Keene, "Continuity and Development", 6.

activities occurring in the same shops and households. Examining crafts two centuries later, Ogilvie claimed that English crafts were weaker than their continental counterparts and did not generally engage in “export-oriented ‘proto-industries’ and tertiary activities such as merchant trading”.²⁵ While armourers were unable to export their wares for much of the fourteenth century, how they engaged in these “tertiary activities,” such as multiple specialisms, wholesale, and retail trading, is an important area to consider. As will be discussed in Section 2.1, retail and craft activities were almost always examined as distinct specialisms in fourteenth-century London, because of the large amounts of capital investment required to be an entrepreneur was greater than most craftsmen could afford. However, as this chapter and Chapter 3 will demonstrate, diversity of economic activity into tertiary crafts and trading pursuits can be seen to have been one of the defining elements of the London armourers’ industry.

Multiple occupations practised in a single workshop often required larger workshops; however, the evidence from the London records suggests that the largest private metal-working workshop in London employed eighteen apprentices and servants, which Heather Swanson suggests was exceptional, though Keene suggested that twenty may have been average.²⁶ Keene’s interpretation of large-scale workshops is supported in this study by the number and variety of products produced by armourers’ individual workshops; by the redundancies found in tools recorded in inventories of armourers’ properties; and by the complaints of nuisance about armourers’ workshops in the records. However, as servants and apprentices rarely appear in the London armourers’ records, very little direct evidence for these large workshops exists. These ideas will be examined in Section 2.5.1, which uses interdisciplinary approaches, examining historical records alongside artistic descriptions of craft and civic life, to argue for the occupationally

²⁵ S.C. Ogilvie, “Guilds, efficiency, and social capital: evidence from German proto-industry”, *Economic History Review* 57.2 (2004): 287, 290. Ogilvie’s ideas are challenged in S.R. Epstein, “Craft guilds in the pre-modern economy: a discussion”, *Economic History Review* 61.1 (February 2008): 155-174.

²⁶ Heather Swanson, *Medieval Artisans: An Urban Class in Late Medieval England* (New York: Basil Blackwell, 1989), 128; Keene, “Continuity and development”, 8.

pluralist nature of some of London's armoury workshops in the fourteenth century. This interpretation is of particular value to the current scholastic debate because where multiple crafts appear to be operating out of a single workshop, or by a single armourer in the surviving records, it suggests an increasingly generalist, rather than a specialist trend among the armourers' craft community, which may reflect the increasing complexity of the industry at large.

This chapter will examine the kinds of activities and workshops that developed in the fourteenth century among the London armourers. It will begin by examining the interdisciplinary nature of their craft and retail activities in the earliest description of their workshops: the 1322 armourers' ordinances. It will then examine each of the primary specialisms that existed within the "moral density" of the armourers' network, and examine how and why each developed as it did. It will conclude by examining why, how, and when the organisational experiments of occupational and workshop pluralism emerged. Understanding this small-scale organisation is crucial in order to understand the related developments and experiments undertaken by the armourers in their relationship to their households, crafts, and civic participation examined throughout the rest of this thesis.

2.1: The Armourers' Ordinances of 1322: The Early Division Between Artisans and Retailers Among the Armourers

Much of the evidence for early armourers' collective organisation consists of social evidence for a complex industrial network of interdependent craftsmen, which will be investigated in Chapter 4. Here, however, the 1319 Subsidy Rolls and the Armourers' Ordinances of 1322 will be examined in order to contextualise the armourers' early production and retail activities.²⁷ Whatever the social structure of the craft at the beginning of the century, it must be accepted that the assenters of the armourers' ordinances were among the most prominent members of their individual crafts, that they were considered by

²⁷ *Subs*, 205-332; *Mem*, 145-146.

the City and themselves to be “armourers,” and that their workshop and retail activities may be taken as representative, or at least exemplary, of their peers practicing the same activities at the time.

Financial records among the 1319 subsidy rolls confirm the range of economic classes from which the ordinance’s assenters were selected. Only fifteen of the twenty-eight men recorded in the armourers’ ordinances appear in this tax roll, suggesting that those absent either had non-exempt movable goods worth less than 6s 8d (the minimum taxable amount that year),²⁸ that they were absent from the City in 1319, new to the City in 1322 (and thus not taxed in 1319), or had evaded taxation. It is unlikely that they were new to the City, though many may have been absent, such as the prominent London armourer Manekin le Heaumer, who was in York during this time acting as a centurion for half of London’s forces sent north to fight in Scotland.²⁹ Five of the assenters who paid taxes that year were taxed 10d, (representing movable property worth 10s) though this low amount did not necessarily imply poverty, as the levels of exemption and evasion cannot be known. The average among the recorded assenters was just under 12s, 6d, representing movable goods to the value of £7 10s This placed the average of the assenters of the armourers’ ordinances taxable movable goods at the high end of what Ekwall considered to be “citizens of good middle class.”³⁰ They were better off on average than the armourers at large, of whom forty were recorded in the 1319 subsidy rolls, averaging 8s 2d of taxation on movable goods averaging £4 17s 8d, but it should be noted that these averages are artificially inflated by Simon le Heaumer and the king’s armourer, Thomas de Copham, who were each taxed £4 (countering Ekwall’s claim that no armourers were taxed higher than one mark).³¹ Armourers taxed at the lower end of the spectrum of taxation recorded here (between 10d and £4) were taxed at a rate similar to handicraftsmen and dealers such

²⁸ *Subs*, 104.

²⁹ Those on active service for the crown were exempt taxation. Manekyn was back in the City by 1320 and appears in a record appraising spearheads. See: *LBE*, 93, 132; *Mem* 128; J.F. Hadwin, “The Medieval Lay Subsidies and Economic History”, *The Economic History Review*, New Series, 36.2 (May 1983): 201, n.6.

³⁰ *Subs*, 108.

³¹ *Subs*, 111.

as bookbinders, plumbers, painters, cappers, and glovers, while those at the highest rate among the armourers were in the same economic category as prosperous mercers, pepperers, stockfishmongers, and even one goldsmith.³²

From this tax data, it can be hypothesised that the assenters of the ordinances probably represented persons whose activities ranged from primarily workshop-based craftsmen at the lowest tax rates, to middle class craftsmen with some trading elements to their businesses, to the highest taxes paid by primarily retailers interested in the sale and resale of armour across a diverse range of crafts (although even the wealthiest retail armourers from the end of the century still had some interest in the production of armour).³³ The range of production and market strategies suggested among the armourers here is also essential to establish because it highlights the diversity of economic strategies adopted by armourers from the beginning of the century. This diversity is important to bear in mind, because it is difficult to know with certainty whether an armourer was an artisan or a shopkeeper, or a combination of both.

This diversity of occupational specialisms has important connotations for how armourers can be classified amongst other fourteenth-century production and trade groups, because this range of activities challenges many modern historians' assumptions that most artisans tended not to engage in the market.³⁴ Examining the Mercers, Anne Sutton argued that craftsmen were exclusive from and dependent upon merchant capitalists to act as retailers, stating that "...the general inability of craftworkers or artisans to maintain themselves for long without the intervention of the entrepreneur is well-known", and that the controls of overseeing merchants "...could not be withstood by the craftworker."³⁵

³² *Subs*, 107.

³³ Section 2.5.1 examines workshop inventories that suggest combinations of craft and retail activities.

³⁴ For a discussion of this problem in Europe in general, see: James Farr, *Artisans*, 96-113; Ogilvie, "Guilds", 287-90.

³⁵ Her argument was based on evidence from the Mercers. Nightingale built upon this idea of a merchant capitalist vs craftsman dichotomy in her examination of the causes of the Mayoralty Riots, and investigated the conflicting economic interests at work between them. See: Anne Sutton, "The Shop-floor of the London Mercery Trade, c. 1200 – c. 1500: The marginalisation of the artisan, the itinerant mercer and the shopholder", *Nottingham Medieval Studies* 45 (2001): 13-14; Nightingale, "Capitalists", 3-35.

However, while this was also true among some armourers, the division between “merchants” and “craftsmen” was more fluid in their industry, and many fourteenth-century armourers acted as retailers or wholesalers, owned their own shops and selds, while others sold armour directly out of their homes.³⁶ Royal restrictions on the export of armour also contributed to greater self-reliance among the armourers’ industry because there was no legal market for entrepreneurial exporters to engage in.³⁷ Heather Swanson recognised that craft ascriptions hid “...the great gulf that could lie between two artisans who apparently practised the same craft”, but for most industries, this variety did not extend into trading pursuits.³⁸ However, Swanson discovered that York’s armourers, along with goldsmiths and others working in the “bespoke” trade, represented an exception to this rule, because their products were valuable enough for them not to be dependent upon external merchants.³⁹ This was true among some of London’s armourers as well, but in London the bespoke armour trade was slow to develop in the first half of the century, and could not easily compete with the import trade.⁴⁰ Outside of the bespoke market, armourers may have been able to adopt a retail strategy because consumers’ great need for armour of varying quality and prices during times of war meant that even though London’s armourers’ products “were evidently thought to be inadequate for noblemen”,⁴¹ demand was sufficient amongst the broader consumer market for armourers’ independent trading ventures to be more resilient than those of other industries.

The combination of craft and trade activities found even amongst middling armourers in London suggests that a more complex relationship existed between the

³⁶ See: *CCR 1354-1360*, 134; *Liber Albus*, 375-376; *Mem*, 146.

³⁷ See Chapter 5.

³⁸ Heather Swanson, “Artisans in the urban economy: the documentary evidence from York”, in *Work in Towns 850-1850*, ed. Penelope J. Corfield and Derek Keene (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1990), 48-49.

³⁹ Swanson, “Artisans in the Urban Economy”, 49. Sylvia Thrupp has similarly argued that the demand in the arms trade made it one of the only worked-metal industries that could achieve any organised power over its own prices. See: Sylvia Thrupp, “The Gilds”, in *Economic Organization and Policies in the Middle Ages*, vol. III of *The Cambridge Economic History of Europe*, ed. M.M. Postan, E.E. Rich, and Edward Miller (London: Cambridge University Press, 1965) 254.

⁴⁰ See: Section 2.3.

⁴¹ Williams, *Blast Furnace*, 732.

statuses of “armour craftsman” and “armour retailer.” Some of the more successful examples of this are examined in the evidence for multi-occupational workshops in Section 2.5.1, which clearly incorporated both craft and trading elements. However, even as early as the 1322 armourers’ ordinances, persons identifying as “armourers” were also operating as the kinds of “entrepreneurs” that Sutton saw amongst the mercers. The diversity of records relating to armourers’ businesses suggests that their industry utilised a multitude of different combinations of trading and production strategies amongst several specialisms in order to capitalise on a growing market.

This hypothesis can be partially confirmed by examining the surviving records of each of the twenty-eight assenters to the 1322 armourers’ ordinances. Among the assenters, John Tavy, Roger Savage, Elias de Wodeberghe, and Henry Horpol were linen-armourers with retail aspects to their businesses. They were each elected as governors of the Taylors and Linen-Armours in 1328,⁴² and while Elias de Wodeberghe purchased his citizenship as a tailor in 1310, his position among armourers here and socially in other records suggest that his primary business was as a specialist linen-armourer.⁴³ Similarly, the linen-armourer Roger Savage had two pairs of *spanleriorum*⁴⁴ that were seized for debt in 1301, indicating that he may have made or sold armour of different materials (Figure 2.1). Looking at metal-armourers, the assenters William de Lanshulle, Gilot le Heauberger, Henry Horpol, Richard de Seyntis and John de Kestevene, in addition to their crafts, were also prominent armour retailers. These persons all appeared in a record dated 7 July, 1322 along with the armourers John le Clerk, Salamon le Coffrer, and Geoffrey de Rothinge (who is probably the Geoffrey whose surname is absent in the armourers’ regulations),⁴⁵

⁴² *LBE*, 234.

⁴³ *LBD*, 57.

⁴⁴ Reginald Sharpe interpreted this as equivalent to the French *épaulière*, or armour for the shoulders, such as those found in the mass graves of the 1361 Battle of Wisby site (Figure 2.1). It is unlikely that these would have been made of cloth. Sharpe noted, however, that the term is similar to *Spaloria*, or, “curtain pole.” If Savage’s *spanleriorum* was armour like that in Figure 2.1, it would suggest that he was involved in metal- and linen-armour. If curtain poles were seized, then he may have been a linen-armourer more closely connected with the drapers. See: Reginald Sharpe, ed., *LBB*, 107 n. 1; Bengt Thordeman et al., *Armour from the Battle of Wisby, New Edition* (Chivalry Bookshelf, 2001), 396.

⁴⁵ See: Section 4.1.

engaged in a large transaction of armour to outfit five hundred foot-soldiers in Surrey and Sussex.⁴⁶ The variety of armour sold by the armourers in this record from outside of their identified crafts suggests that John de Kestevene, Henry Horpol,⁴⁷ and William de Lanshulle were either engaged in highly specialised aspects of both cloth and metal armour manufacture with very large workshops, or were acting as brokers for a network of these specialised crafts.



Figure 2.1: Type 1 Coat of Plates from the Battle of Wisby, 1361. The shoulder-pieces here are probably analogous to the *spanleriorum* seized for Roger Savage's debt. From: "Armour 1" in Bengt Thordeman et al., *Armour from the Battle of Wisby, New Edition* (Chivalry Bookshelf, 2001), Plate 2.

This interpretation, at least in the cases of William de Lanshulle and John Marchaunt, can be confirmed by their tax records. If either regularly owned stocks of armour in the volume sold here themselves, it could be expected to be taxed as part of their

⁴⁶ *LBE*, 170.

⁴⁷ Horpol was a governor of the Tailors and Linen-Armourers in 1328, although his dealing in helmets here points to broader trade interests. See: *LBE*, 234.

movable goods. Lanshulle was taxed in 1319 for movable goods valuing £2, compared to the £60 of armour he sold in this transaction alone, while Marchaunt was taxed at the lowest rate found among armourers, on goods valuing only 10s, but this transaction demonstrates him selling £19 10s of armour. Put another way, Marchaunt was taxed as though he owned no more than three basinet, compared to the hundred that he sold in this transaction. While it is possible that these armourers were manufacturing some of the armour themselves, it is clear that these men were also brokers, arranging the sale of other craftsmen's wares, or purchasing them on consignment for sale. This aspect of the activities of the armourers, which continues throughout the century, is important because it highlights the mercantile nature and breadth of dependent networks of workshops not appearing in the surviving records of the overall group. This chapter will now examine each of these dependent craft elements individually.

2.2: The Production and Retail Activities of London's Soft-Armourers

The linen-armourers were among the most important armour-manufacturers and retailers of the fourteenth century, and like the heaumers below, they are difficult to distinguish from other industries, as their members were often referred to simply as "armourers," and many were involved in numerous armourers' crafts. Linen-armourers made aketons and gambesons (the padded cloth armours that were the most common type of armour in England throughout the first half of the fourteenth century), and tents for campaigns, and furthermore, according to the 1322 armourers' ordinances, they covered helmets with fabric.⁴⁸ Linen-armourers also presumably made the interior padding of helmets, and worked together with metal-armourers to make aketons reinforced with plates, haubergers to fit mail to the padded aketons, and cloth coverings for other types of

⁴⁸ *Mem*, 145.

armour.⁴⁹ These processes required the linen-armourer to know the exact dimensions and specifications of the armour to be covered or incorporated with, which implies very close, construction-phase cooperation with the other armour specialisms.

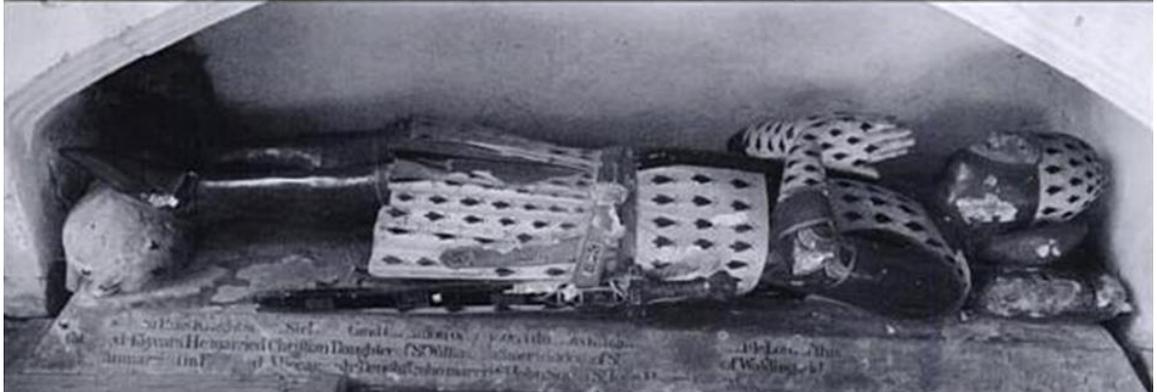


Figure 2.2: Painted effigy of Sir Robert du Bois, c. 1340; Fersfield, St Andrew's Church. Paint work on his helmet and gauntlets likely represents cloth coverings. From: Christopher Gravett, *English Medieval Knight 1300-1400* (Oxford:

The practice of covering metal armour in cloth or leather was “To hold thayre armur clene / And were hitte fro the wette”,⁵⁰ though Ffoulkes also believed this was “for gayness” and to prevent the glitter of metal attracting attention.⁵¹ This practice continued through the century, and while it is unusual that artistic depictions and grave markers almost never depict these coverings (Figure 2.2 is a rare example of an effigy depicted with covered plates),⁵² the 1322 regulations clearly state that basinetts were not considered to be complete until they were covered.⁵³ Charles Ffoulkes claimed that all parts of hard armour were lined with cloth to avoid chafing, and that the connections between linen-armourer and metal-armourer were “obvious... for [the linen-armourer] had to make allowances for the style and cut of the [metal] armour”, and that a helmet without properly fitted padding

⁴⁹ The 1337 Inventory of the Tower of London records 348 aketons of white cloth, four of which are *en suite* with pairs of plates, and William de Grantham's will recorded a pair of quissers covered with linen cloth. See: Richardson, “Armour”, 305; TNA E 101/386/15; *CWPH i*, 648-9.

⁵⁰ *The Avowyng of King Arthur*, in *Sir Gawain: Eleven Romances and Tales*, ed. Thomas Hahn (Kalamazoo, Michigan: Medieval Institute Publications, 1995) ll. 611-612.

⁵¹ Ffoulkes, *Armourer*, 93.

⁵² In part, this is because helmets are rarely included in the arms depicted in funerary monuments, as they obscure the memorial-figure's face, but contemporary effigies' other armour is likewise often left uncovered, such as the mid-thirteenth-century effigy of Sir Robert de Vere, 3rd Earl of Oxford, who is depicted in full mail with uncovered metal poleyns on the knees. Furthermore, De Vere is depicted without boots or sabatons, with his feet in bare mail. Such depictions suggest that funerary monuments were not intended to depict armour used in earthly battles, where rusted plates and uneven ground might be a concern, but represent rather the departed's “heavenly armour”, which was not bound by the armourers' ordinances. See: Ffoulkes, *The Armourer and his Craft*, 93; Claude Blair, “The De Vere Effigy at Hatfield Broad Oak”, *Journal of the Church Monuments Society*, Vol. VIII (Leeds: W.S. Maney & Son, Ltd, 1993), 3-11; Figure 2.2.

⁵³ *Mem*, 145.

(requiring heaumers to work collectively with linen-armourers) was “worse than useless” as it would not properly absorb the shock of a blow.⁵⁴ Matthew Davies and Ann Saunders argued that the linen-armourers’ and tailors’ craft similarities made them “a more natural marriage” than linen-armourers and the other armourers’ crafts, explaining why the linen-armourers became part of the tailors’ fraternity.⁵⁵ However, this argument highlights just how closely connected metal-armourers, tailors, and linen-armourers were: tailors and linen-armourers were a “natural marriage” because they utilised the same materials, tools, and raw materials as one another, but linen-armourers’ businesses were also mutually dependent upon the customers, combined products, and armour marketplaces that they shared with the other armourers’ crafts. Therefore, trying to separate these crafts or firmly identify craftsmen exclusively to only one facet of the industry is ultimately futile: if a “marriage” existed, it was certainly polygamous.

A prominent exemplar of this kind of interaction can be seen in John de Coloigne, who was the king’s armourer from 1333-1359.⁵⁶ He was “a leading figure in the London Tailors’ guild”, and “probably a member of the Fraternity of St John the Baptist”,⁵⁷ but as the king’s armourer, he was responsible for more than just linen-armoury. The fact that linen-armourers and the king’s armourers both are described in the records as “armourers” rather than tailors or linen-armourers, is significant.⁵⁸ As the king’s armourer, John de Coloigne was not making armour by himself. He ran a large armour workshop, storehouse, and purchasing operation which employed multiple craftsmen, buyers, and specialists including a specialist king’s heaumer and a king’s hauberger who worked with or under him. Both of these also had their own staff and acted as armour purchasers as well as craftsmen, or at least as overseers. Further suggesting that Coloigne and the office of the

⁵⁴ Ffoulkes, *The Armourer and his Craft*, 88, 91.

⁵⁵ Davies and Saunders, *History of the Merchant Taylors*, 50.

⁵⁶ Davies and Saunders stated that he worked as the king’s linen-armourer until 1355, but my recent research into TNA SC 8/247/12310 revealed that he was the king’s armourer until at least 1359. See: Davies & Saunders, *History of the Merchant Taylors*, 50.

⁵⁷ Davies, “Crown, city and guild”, 255; Davies & Saunders, *History of the Merchant Taylors*, 50.

⁵⁸ While accurate to his individual craft, he is only described as a “linen armourer” once in the London records, dated to 1359. See: Mercer, “King’s Armourers”, 16; TNA SC 8/247/12310.

king's armourer were involved in both the linen- and metal- armour trades, in 1354, when the goods of the Hansa were seized, the steel belonging to Hansa merchant Hildebrand Suderman was delivered to Coloigne for the king's use separately from the remainder of his goods (which were just to be appraised).⁵⁹ That the steel was to be delivered to him, rather than the royal heaumer or hauberger, indicates that he had a use for it, and was therefore an overseer of armourers in the broadest sense. While he may not have had the skill to work the steel personally, the armoury he oversaw did, and joined their metal products with his profession's cloth ones. These similarities forced cooperation and interdependence among otherwise quite distinct specialisms.



Figure 2.3: Flemish soldier wearing a leather coat of plates. National Library of the Netherlands, KA 16 Der Naturen Bloeme, 48v., c. 1350. <http://manuscriptminiatures.com/4508/7235/> (accessed June 14, 2015).

Hard armours also often required canvas or leather to form the parts to which the metal plates were attached (Figure 2.3). While tailors were certainly involved in this, there is no doubt that the leather trade was as well. Leather was used to cover shields, to line helmets, for belts, straps, military tents, and in its boiled form, *cuir bouilli*, as the base material for helmets, gauntlets, and body armour.⁶⁰ However, while London had many crafts which specialised in working leather, it is not clear in the records if there was a

⁵⁹ *CCR 1354-1360*, 10, 13, 16.

⁶⁰ Maryanne Kowaleski, "Town and Country in Late Medieval England", in *Work in Towns 850-1850*, ed. Penelope J. Corfield and Derek Keene (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1990), 65.

specialist leather-armour craft operating in the fourteenth century in the same way that linen-armourers and metal-armourers did.⁶¹ The pouchmakers certainly had a broad interest in the armour trade, as evidenced by their 1327 articles, which complained that “foreigners, by conspiracy with false workers of the City, were selling sheepleather scraped on the back in counterfeit of roe-leather, and that such false leather, when used on plate-armour or on plate-gauntlets, would not last two days if it was wetted.”⁶² Tailoring and leatherworking are wholly different sets of skills than metal-smithing, and so even as metallic armours became more common over the course of the fourteenth century, the kind of armours being crafted could only exist amongst a strongly established network of armourers capable of preparing the foundational materials to the metalworkers’ specifications. That the pouchmakers justified their request to control their own industry by highlighting the importance of their relationship with the armourers’ crafts demonstrates just how integrated this community of soft and hard armour craftsmen, and raw materials markets were in the fourteenth century.

2.3: The Workshops, Production Activities, and Industrial Growth of the Heaumers and Plate Armourers

Heaumers were primarily helmet-makers throughout the first half of the fourteenth century, as helmets were the most common pieces of metal armour, and as will be shown, often the only piece of metal armour that an English soldier would possess. The craft is interchangeable with makers of other types of metal armour though, as demonstrated by the heaumers’ ordinances, which claimed authority over all arms forged with a hammer,⁶³ and by individuals such as Master Richard le Heaumer, who also called himself “le Armurer” and “le Harneysmakyere”.⁶⁴ While this breadth can make it difficult to determine individual workshop specialities, it suggests that metal-armourers specialised in

⁶¹ I will argue for the possibility that the kissers occupied this role in Section 2.4.

⁶² *CPMR* i, 40.

⁶³ *Mem*, 238.

⁶⁴ *Subs*, 307; *LLS*, 74; *Cor*, 207.

helmet making because it was the largest market, but that they also made other types of armour in response to growing demand. The last usage of the term “heaumer” in the M.E.D references a record from 1364, and clearly distinguishes between heaumers and armourers, as it refers to a bond between John Scot, “Heaumer” and several other men, including John Grove, “armourer”; but by 1375, Scot is simply called an “armourer.”⁶⁵ Even Robert de Shirwode, one of the heaumers’ first wardens in 1347 was called an “armourer” in 1348, and throughout rest of his life.⁶⁶ It is clear, then, that heaumers were members of an initially highly specialised craft that by the end of the fourteenth century had generalised to capitalise on growing demand for stronger armour and the growth in iron-founding technologies that enabled it.

Although metal armour is often the best-surviving archaeological evidence of the armourers’ crafts in Europe, very few pieces of armour that can be attributed to London, or even English manufacture, have survived from the fourteenth century. Among these are the helm of Sir Richard Pembridge at the Royal Scottish Museum, the Leeds Armourers IV. 600 great helm, the great helm of Sir Nicholas Hawberk, the kettle-hats preserved in the Tower of London, and numerous other helmets that can only be provisionally identified as English based on having been found in England, such as the basinet below (Figure 2.4).⁶⁷ However, none of these items display the makers’ marks that were required both by the 1347 London Heaumers’ Ordinances and by direct order of Edward III in 1365.⁶⁸ One interpretation for why helmets do not survive has been that the metal has been re-used, most iconically in the example of the kettle-hats, which it has been suggested may have been turned into actual kettles. However, Jamie Hood recently uncovered evidence that helmet P&E 1856, 0701.2243, which is most associated with this interpretation, could not have been used in this way, as traces of vermilion pigment on its exterior indicate that it

⁶⁵ “heaumer (n.) Also healmer, heumer”, *The Middle English Dictionary*, accessed 1 April, 2015, <http://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/m/mec/med-idx?type=id&id=MED20195>; *CPMR iii*, 4, 194, 195.

⁶⁶ *FoF i*, 125; *CCR 1360-1364*, 239.

⁶⁷ Royal Scottish Museum, Edinburgh, no. 1905-489; Royal Armouries, Leeds, IV.600 & A.L. 30-2, in Williams *Blast Furnace*, 741-743.

⁶⁸ *Mem*, 238; *Foedera iii*, 772; Ffoulkes, *Armourer*, 57.

was a painted helmet, and that paint would have been destroyed if put in a fire.⁶⁹ A more plausible explanation may be that armour left unstamped was either imported, made by foreigners working in London, or did not meet the quality requirements of the heaumers' ordinances, and was left unstamped to keep its maker anonymous from the mistery's overseers. The great demand for armour in the fourteenth century undoubtedly led to armourers producing lower-quality armour *en masse*, which would explain Edward III's expressed displeasure with the poor quality of unstamped armour in 1365.⁷⁰



Figure 2.4: Basinet, probably from the 14th century found at Pevensey, Sussex. The line of shields embossed on the back is unusual, but do not appear to be makers' marks. Royal Armouries IV.444. From: Christopher Gravett, *English Medieval Knight*, 26.

While no London armourers' makers' marks are known until the seventeenth century, London records indicate that the heaumers were using makers' marks in their workshops.⁷¹ This lack of surviving examples may be because many London metal-armourers were engaged in outfitting common soldiers with the less-costly and poorer-quality work described in large purchase orders, inventories, and commissions of array,

⁶⁹ This decoration may be one reason for the association between armourers and painters found in the records, such as John Kyng, armourer and "peyntour." See: Jamie Hood, "A Late Fourteenth-Century Transitional Kettle-Hat Found in London", *Arms and Armour* 9.2 (2012): 159, 165-7; *CCR 1346-1349*, 289.

⁷⁰ *Mem*, 238; *Foedera iii*, 772; Ffoulkes, *Armourer*, 57.

⁷¹ *CPMR iii*, 36.

rather than preparing the bespoke armour purchased by knights and the nobility, which tends to survive longer by virtue of its better manufacture. Some London metal-armourers certainly made high-quality armour, especially late in the century, such as Simon de Wynchecombe and William Randulf, whose multi-specialist workshops are examined in Section 2.5.1; however, no archaeological evidence of this remains. As will be shown, one of London's largest niche markets was in the mass production of cheap armour for foot soldiers and the broader consumer market that served in England's wars.

Additionally, while plate-armour may have been the most prestigious and expensive type, prior to 1350 its cost, and the costs involved in establishing metal-working workshops necessarily made plate-armour a luxury beyond the means of most common soldiers, and iron scarcity following the Black Death ensured manufacturing costs remained high.⁷² Clearly, the metal-armour industry in London was not as prominent as it was on the continent. There were several reasons for this which span this thesis's chapters: difficulty excluding foreign competitors from the market will be discussed in Chapter 4; and royal seizures of goods which discouraged their participation in the more expensive prestige armour industry, embargoes preventing Londoners' competition in the continental markets, and freezing of prices will be discussed in Chapters 4 and 5. In this section I shall discuss how the technological limitations in London, coupled with a larger consumer market, led to a slow growth of the metal-armour industry during the first half of the fourteenth century, followed by a more rapid growth in the latter half of the century. As will be seen in this thesis, this growth in turn created a commensurate growth in the industry's social, civic, and royal connections. To demonstrate this development, this section will examine the kinds of armour that were considered appropriate for soldiers and watchmen throughout the century.

The size and complexity of metal armour during the fourteenth century was limited by the size of furnaces used to smelt and form the iron. As Alan Williams has shown, the

⁷² See: *SotR i*, 345.

bloom weights in European and British ironworks rose considerably throughout the fourteenth century, but only towards the end of this period do bloom weights of 10kg (and furnaces large enough to handle such blooms) become common.⁷³ These heavy blooms were needed to make large enough plates with a low enough slag content to create the large armour pieces that dominated the prestige armour trade, because the material wastage could be as high as 75%.⁷⁴ The continent had a much more developed network of ironworks, some of which were even powered by water (no evidence for any water-powered ironworks exists in England until the fourteenth century, compared to 1228 in Italy),⁷⁵ which increased their output and maximum possible size (as they could operate larger bellows at no cost).⁷⁶ It is no surprise then that most of the earliest mentions of metal armour discussed below are made from small plates attached to leather or fabric bases, or drawn into wire and knitted into mail: the higher slag content made larger plates brittle, but smaller plates or wires could be made from smaller blooms, and their overlapping components were actually beneficial, because the gaps between the rings and small plates acted as crack-stoppers.⁷⁷

England's mines and bog-iron operations were very rich, and ironworks in Durham and the Forest of Dean contributed greatly to the nation's iron supply market,⁷⁸ but most of the iron of sufficient quality to work into high-quality armour was imported, particularly from Sweden, France, Spain, and Germany in the form of both large and small plates, most commonly in the form of Swedish "osmunds." Generally, osmunds are described as small

⁷³ Adam Thiele has shown experimentally that 1-2kg blooms can be easily processed with small furnaces and technology available at the time, but the blooms his experiments produced were brittle and would have been unsuitable for arms and armour. However, his method may be where some of the plates used for wiredrawing mail or lamellar plate armour could have come from. See: Adam Thiele, "Smelting experiments in the early medieval fajsz-type bloomer and the metallurgy of iron bloom", *Periodica Polytechnica – Mechanical Engineering* 54.2 (2010): 2, 6.

⁷⁴ Williams, *Blast Furnace*, 877-879.

⁷⁵ Geddes, "Iron", 172; Maria Elena Cortese, "Medieval Ironworking on Mount Amiata", in *Prehistoric and Medieval Direct Iron Smelting in Scandinavia and Europe*, ed. Lars Christian Norbach (Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 1999), 56.

⁷⁶ According to Geddes, the highest cost in bloomeries was for the bellows-workers, amounting to 20% of total expenses at Tudeley. See: Geddes, "Iron", 171.

⁷⁷ Williams, *Blast Furnace*, 879.

⁷⁸ H.R. Schubert, *History of the British Iron and Steel Industry* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1957), 94, 98.

pieces of wrought iron,⁷⁹ though by the end of the fourteenth century, the armourer Stephen atte Fryth was forging with “great pieces of iron called ‘Osmund’... into ‘brestplates’, ‘quysers’, ‘jambers’ and other pieces of armour”,⁸⁰ indicating that there was some variety in size among them. These were of great utility as they had a low phosphorus content, which allowed them to more easily absorb carbon and be turned to steel.⁸¹ They were imported by the Hansa at the Steelyard, but also by private individuals, such as the Londoner John Chiveley, whose merchandise included seven thousand small “white plates” (probably osmunds) in 1395.⁸²

Before larger plates could be made locally or imported cheaply, however, London metal-armourers manufactured their goods out of smaller plates and wire in conjunction with the other armourers’ crafts, particularly the linen-armourers. As those with the funds to pay for bespoke armour in the late Middle Ages are generally accepted by scholars to have imported it, the growth of the London industry, local armour technology, and the London metal-armourers’ prominence compared to other types of armour manufacturers can be observed by examining the market for common soldiers’ armour. In 1297, a London watchman was considered properly armed if he was wearing at least two pieces of armour, namely, a “haketon and gambeson,⁸³ or else... haketon and corset,⁸⁴ or... haketon and plates.”⁸⁵ As the cost of being “properly armed” here is clearly a concern, the “plates” of the third type were probably some form of jack, made out of small plates attached to a

⁷⁹ Geddes suggested that it was any iron derived from bog ore, while Rigby argued that the term originally referred to superior quality iron from the Baltic (generally Sweden), but that it also referred to “any similar iron sold in small bars or rods, by the barrel or sack, and not by weight.” See: Geddes, “Iron”, 168; Williams, *Blast Furnace*, 883; S.H. Rigby, ed., *The Overseas Trade of Boston in the Reign of Richard II* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2005), 274.

⁸⁰ *LAoN* 617

⁸¹ Geddes, “Iron” 168; Keene, “Metalworking in Medieval London”, 98.

⁸² *CPMR iii*, 230. Rigby defined whiteplates as “saddleplates” (which he then defined as “whiteplates”) based on the position of goods in two related records from Boston. However, “whiteplate” simply meant “steel,” such as the “trumpes [trumpets] of white plate” used in the 1433 Mercer’s Pageant of York. See: Rigby, *The Overseas Trade*, 26, 123, 277, 281. Peter Meredith, “‘Some high place’ Actualising heaven in the Middle Ages”, in *Envisaging Heaven in the Middle Ages*, ed. Carolyn Muessig and Ad Putter (New York: Routledge, 2007), 139.

⁸³ The inner and outer padded coats used to pad mail armour, both were used as armour on their own, however.

⁸⁴ A light cuirass of either metal or leather, although as cost appears to be an issue here, it was probably made of leather in this context.

⁸⁵ *Mem*, 35.

cloth or leather backing, made from small, cheaper iron blooms, and probably similar to the armour found in the common graves from the 1361 Battle of Wisby.⁸⁶

In 1314, arbalesters were required to be provided with “haketons, bacinets, [and] colerettes.”⁸⁷ The colerette was probably made of iron, as would have been the basinet, but the main protection of the trunk, the largest part of the body, was still made of cloth, and thus made by linen-armourers, rather than metal-armourers. In 1322, the abovementioned purchase of armour for five hundred soldiers would have outfitted them with three hundred haketons, four hundred basinets, and four hundred pairs of gloves reinforced with small iron plates, again leaving the protection of the chest to linen-armourers, but perhaps more interestingly, potentially leaving as many as two hundred soldiers with no chest protection whatsoever.⁸⁸

Two years later, in 1324, a commission to equip 1,040 footmen was to arm two hundred and sixty elite soldiers with “haketons, hauberks or plate armour, bacinets and gauntlets of steel, and the remainder with haketons and steel bacinets and other competent arms.”⁸⁹ This is the first fourteenth-century instance of a large-scale outfitting of English soldiers that outfitted them with metal armour for their torsos, and among the first demanding steel armour. However, that this fine armour was only allocated to twenty-five percent of the soldiers suggests how costly and difficult to acquire such armour was at the time. Some of it was probably intended to be imported (at great expense), but to fill even a part of this order from cheaper English manufacturers would require highly-developed armour workshops capable of mass-production, or highly-developed trade networks among metal-armourers. Such workshops were probably still in their infancy in England, and only a month later this order was rescinded because the cost of such armour was excessive, stating that “the purveyance of haubergeons and plate armour shall cease for the present

⁸⁶ Thordeman, et al., *Armour from the Battle of Wisby 1361*, 345-392.

⁸⁷ A colerette was a collar protecting the neck and shoulders. The middle person in Figure 2.5 wears a colerette.

⁸⁸ *LBE*, 170.

⁸⁹ *CPR 1324-1327*, 10.

and the whole of the 1,040 men be armed with haketons, basinets, gauntlets of steel or whalebone and other arms *fitting for foot soldiers* [italics mine].”⁹⁰ Again the arms “fitting for foot soldiers” are largely not made of metal. The use of whalebone as a substitute material here further suggests that the character of English armourers in the first quarter of the fourteenth century was as outfitters primarily of cheap armour on large scales, rather than as prestige armourers. That same year, the Tower of London, which according to Randle Storey was “no better armed than any contemporary castle,” had only forty-three basinets covered in white leather, and no mail.⁹¹ The records for 1330 show these same basinets, alongside forty-eight worn-out aketons, one hundred and one kettle hats, fifty “feeble” pairs of plate gauntlets and seventy-four damaged shields.⁹² It is not until later in the 1330s that orders for locally produced metal armour for foot soldiers began to appear as a matter of course with any regularity in the records. In 1336, orders for the armament of forty soldiers in York recorded that “the king wishes [their armour] to be doubled (*dubletta*) with iron plates, basinets and iron gloves or also haquetons and habergeons, with the said basinets and gloves, to be bought and purveyed in places which shall seem most fitting.”⁹³ That this record highlighted their armament as the wishes of the king emphasises this higher quality armour as a new standard, not practised in the past. Furthermore, while where such armour could be purchased or purveyed was left up to the recipient, the fact that it could be purveyed in England highlights the growth of the English armour industry at large. The 1337 inventory of the Tower lists significant growth during this period as well: “348 aketons, almost all of white cloth, four of them are *en suite* with pairs of plates, 120 doublets covered with white buckram, 325 basinets, 262 aventails, 257 pisanes, and 181 pisane covers, 157 mail shirts, over 167 pairs of plates, 13 aketons of plates, 120 pairs

⁹⁰ *CPR 1324-1327*, 29.

⁹¹ Randle Storey, “The Tower of London and the *garderobae armorum*”, *Royal Armouries Yearbook*, 3 (1998): 176-83, in, Richardson, “Armour in England, 1325-99”, 305; TNA E 101/36/7.

⁹² Thom Richardson, “Armour in England”, 305; TNA E 101/386/15.

⁹³ *CCR 1333-1337*, 622.

of rerebraces of black leather tooled, [and] 127 pairs of gauntlets of plate...”.⁹⁴ None of this armour would have required the larger bloomery furnaces described by Williams: aventails and pisanes were constructed from mail, and aketons of plate were probably still cloth or leather garments with small plates affixed. The variety of armour shown here, much of which was probably produced locally, indicates the high level of craft development and interaction occurring during this time among cloth, leather, plate, and mail workers.⁹⁵



Figure 2.5: “The Great Folk Fight Each Other; The Commoners Fight Each Other.” Holkham Bible, British Library Additional MS 47682 f.40r, c. 1337-1340. From: *The Holkham Picture Bible: A Facsimile*. Translated by Michelle Brown. London: The British Library, 2007. Plate 40.

By 1339, of the arms and armour sent by the king’s armourer for the defence of Southampton, breastplates purchased and purveyed in London were the only type listed, indicating the regular local production or import of large iron blooms capable of making breastplates by this time.⁹⁶ However, the arms supplied by Andrew de Portinaire for his men-at-arms going overseas were simpler: “plate gauntlets, a shirt of good Lumbardy, a

⁹⁴ Richardson, “Armour in England”, 305; TNA E 101/388/1.

⁹⁵ Thom Richardson’s excellent work on the tower illustrates some records where armour can be specifically attributed to local production by king’s armourers, or by their purveyance among local producers. Exact figures for local vs. imported armour are not possible given the nature and survivability of the records. See: Richardson, “Armour in England”, 310, 315, 317.

⁹⁶ *CCR 1339-1341*, 83, 135.

pour-point,⁹⁷ a dagger and a shield.”⁹⁸ In the Holkham Bible, from the same period (c. 1337-1340), the image of common men fighting (Figure 2.5) depicts some of the diversity of armour found among English soldiers in the records: at a minimum all wear cloth haketons or gambesons, helms or basinet, and some kind of gloves, while some are also outfitted in mail haubergeons, colerettes, metal cuisses and bucklers. This depiction is supported by orders from the crown concerning the assessment of arms in 1345, which declared that anyone who held “£10 yearly of land shall be a hobeler, armed at the least with haketon, vizor, burnished helm, iron gauntlets and lance.”⁹⁹ This category of soldier was the only one to list specific types of armour required, and while cloth armour is again stated as the minimum level of armour required for the trunk, iron gauntlets would have to be made by metal-armourers working in conjunction with, or at least with a working trade relationship with linen or leather workers. Like the common soldiers depicted in the Holkham Bible,¹⁰⁰ many soldiers clearly went beyond this, such as the pepperer William de Grantham, whose 1350 will recorded some of his armour, “his best aketon, a pair of plates,¹⁰¹ a pair of musekyns¹⁰² and a pair of Bracers, one aventail,¹⁰³ a basinet with timbrer,¹⁰⁴ a pisan,¹⁰⁵ a pair of jambers,¹⁰⁶ a pair of quissers¹⁰⁷ covered with linen-cloth (cum panno de camaca), and a pair of iron gauntlets.”¹⁰⁸ A similar will in 1370 of a less prosperous draper listed his arms “comprising a haubergeoun, a basinet, a pair of gloves of plate, a large basinet with ventall,¹⁰⁹ a pair of panns¹¹⁰ and braaz.”¹¹¹ In both cases, their

⁹⁷ A quilted leather jacket.

⁹⁸ *CPMR i*, 105.

⁹⁹ *CPR 1343-1345*, 495.

¹⁰⁰ See: Figure 2.5.

¹⁰¹ Breastplates.

¹⁰² Armour for the back.

¹⁰³ Armour covering the rear of the neck, sometimes attached to the helmet.

¹⁰⁴ “...a projection like the peak of a cap over the front part of a helmet, capable of being put up or down.”

See: *CWPH i*, 648-9.

¹⁰⁵ A type of breastplate.

¹⁰⁶ Armour for the legs.

¹⁰⁷ Cuisses, or armour for the thighs.

¹⁰⁸ *CWPH i*, 648-9.

¹⁰⁹ Aventail.

¹¹⁰ Pances or panzars = gambesons.

¹¹¹ Probably a combination of vambraces and rerebraces, armour plates for the front and back of the arm. See: *CWPH ii*, 148.

armour came from a complex, interdependent industry of metal, cloth, and likely leather and whalebone workers, as each piece had to fit together or be covered by the other materials snugly.

By 1380, the arms that were considered suitable for watchmen of the wards first examined in 1297 had completely changed. Aldermen in 1380 were to ensure that the men of their wards were “suitably armed” with “‘basynet,’ gauntlets of ‘plate,’ habergeon’ [sic] sword, dagger, and hatchet, according to their estate, and inferior men arrayed with good bows, arrows, sword, and buckler.”¹¹² However, according to one complaint in parliament that year, “many have armed themselves at a greater cost than the remainder of all their possessions... that is to say, plate-armour, haubergeons, bassinets, visors, plated gauntlets, haketons, helmets, jackets, and other armour.”¹¹³ This demonstrates the growth of the consumer market as well as the changing fashions within the craft. Here, nearly all of the armour purchased by soldiers and all the armour considered suitable for the wardsmen are made of metal, where it had previously been only a small part, or indeed none.

Throughout most of this period, metal-armourers were not the “primary” armourers in London, but rather just one of a number of interdependent craftsmen for whom the term “armourer” applied. These restrictions forced metal-armourers to forge close relationships with linen- and leather-armourers and their supply networks, and, as will be discussed in Section 2.4 below, to diversify their activities among many specialisations, particularly the furbishing and mail-making trades. These tactics allowed individual metal-armourers to capitalise on the market as the technology and infrastructure that would eventually allow for their product’s dominance was still developing: a trend that will be re-examined from the perspective of the metal-armourers’ socio-industrial organisations in Chapter 4.

2.4: The Small Crafts: Furbishers, Kissers and Haubergers

¹¹² *LBH*, 152-153.

¹¹³ “Richard II: January 1380”, in *PROME*, accessed August 27, 2013 <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=116479>.

Plate-armourers were most likely to form complex, interdisciplinary workshops with specialists and smaller crafts because the higher start-up cost of plate-armourers' production equipment was a barrier to entering the craft which did not exist among smaller armourers' crafts. Furbishers, kissers, and haubergers required either fewer raw materials, less production equipment, or a lesser degree of training to achieve mastery than was found in workshops primarily dedicated to plate-armour. This section examines these crafts separately as they are each considerably smaller crafts than those discussed above, with twenty-eight kissers, twenty-seven furbishers, and only seven haubergers that could be confirmed to their occupations in my survey of the London records of the fourteenth century (compared to one hundred and eighty-seven persons confirmed in the records using the occupational title "armourer"). As a result, these smaller crafts are more likely to appear in the records operating small, family workshops of the sort discussed in Chapter 3, as supplementary incomes by family members, or as secondary industries adopted by plate-armourers' households.

While these crafts were smaller and less profitable than the linen- and plate-armourers' crafts, they are of particular interest in determining the interdependent character of the fourteenth-century armourers' communities. Furbishers needed to know how both armour and weapons were constructed in order to repair them; makers of mail had to be able to work with linen-armourers and plate-armourers to ensure that armour that included both materials fit properly; and the kissers' craft probably incorporating both leather and plate meant that they had to forge economic and social connections with craftsmen and tradesmen from both industries. Furthermore, these craftsmen's lower income potential led many practitioners of these crafts to diversify their workshops by practicing multiple armourers' occupations, a trend which led to each craft's eventual absorption into the broader "armourers'" industry.

2.4.1: Furbishers

Furbishers were the polishers, burnishes, cleaners, and repairers of armour and weapons. Thomas believed them to be primarily makers of sword pommels, hilts, and scabbards, and that they only later “confined [their work] to the finishing of new and reconditioning of old swords”,¹¹⁴ however, this was only one aspect of their work. His misinterpretation of this craft comes from the furbishers’ ordinances of 1350, where these items were specifically prohibited to be made in the houses of furbishers “if [the swords] not be of good pattern and steel; and the scabbards must be made of good calf-leather”,¹¹⁵ but records relating to furbishers suggest their craft primarily involved the repair of arms and armour, and many London furbishers were elsewhere identified as armourers. Furthermore, the lucrative sword-making industry was, by 1408, controlled by the blade-smiths, who made blades, sheathers, who made scabbards, and cutlers, who made handles and did the final fitting up.¹¹⁶ These crafts jealously guarded their monopolies, and so it is unlikely that the furbishers were primarily engaged in the manufacture of swords, but very probable that they repaired, polished, and sharpened them. The ordinance against making poor-quality swords was probably reflective of trade restrictions and conflicts with blade-making specialists rather than evidence for furbishers actually engaging in this work as their primary craft. Similar craft restrictions were imposed upon the metal-armourers by the linen-armourers and tailors in the 1322 armourers’ ordinances, and are examined in Section 4.1. Furbishers did have close ties to blade-makers, however, and their occupations clearly overlapped at times. Evidence for this with the cutlers can be found in the furbisher Hugh le Fourbour’s selection alongside two haubergers, a heaumer, and two cutlers as an appraiser of a cutler’s stock of some eight hundred and seventy-one spearheads seized for debt in 1320;¹¹⁷ in several of the regulations in the 1350 furbishers’ ordinances, which

¹¹⁴ *CPMR ii*, 135 n.1.

¹¹⁵ *CPMR ii*, 135 n.1; *Mem*, 259.

¹¹⁶ *Mem*, 567.

¹¹⁷ *LBE*, 132.

appear to have been copied almost directly from the 1344 cutlers' ordinances;¹¹⁸ and in the two furbishers who were sworn in as overseers of the cutlers' mystery in 1345.¹¹⁹

This high level of interaction with other crafts is a result of the furbishers' craft requiring them to be a jack of all trades, as they had to know how to make the items in need of finishing or repair (as repairing an item could be as complex as making it), and those items might be swords, shields, weapons, or any type of armour. Several of the crimes committed by furbishers discussed in Chapter 4.4 are for theft of armour, or related to weapons probably close at hand because the furbisher had been repairing them, and included swords as well as stonebows.¹²⁰ In one example of their varied proficiencies, at Edward I's 1278 tournament, a Peter the Furbisher made thirty-eight tournament swords out of baleen and parchment for the competition, decorating them with silver pommels and golden hilts.¹²¹ Finally, in William Rothwell's c.1353 accounts of the armour held at the Tower of London, four furbishers were paid 6d a day to mend mail and other armour alongside four haubergers (paid the same rate), and valets rolling the mail in barrels to clean them of rust.¹²²

The similarity of occupations and frequency of practicing both occupations between plate-armourers and furbishers meant that they were occasionally mistaken for one another, and the few manuscript images of armourers and smiths in the late medieval and early modern eras could just as easily have been furbishers, as they used many of the same tools. This may be one explanation for pictures of what appear to be heaumers and blade-smiths working in the same workshops in medieval images, discussed in Section 2.5.1. Another example of this confusion can be found in Chaucer's *Knight's Tale*, which

¹¹⁸ *Mem*, 217-219, 258-259.

¹¹⁹ *CPMR i*, 218.

¹²⁰ A crossbow that shot stones.

¹²¹ S. Lysons, "Copy of a roll of purchases for a tournament at Windsor Park, 1278", *Archaeologia* 17 (1814): 302-304.

¹²² TNA E 101/392/14; Thom Richardson, "Armour in England", 311.

describes a tournament that Stuart Robertson has compellingly argued was inspired by a 1390 tournament hosted by Richard II, which Chaucer probably witnessed.¹²³

The fomy stedes on the golden brydel
Gnawing, and faste the armurers also
With fyl and hamer prikinge to and fro.¹²⁴

Armour and weapons cannot be made with only a file and hammer, but they can be repaired. Furthermore, there would be no reason for armourers to be making armour at a tournament – the competitors would already have their armour, but there would be a great deal of business for a furbisher to repair, clean, and otherwise refurbish armour and weapons that had been damaged. Chaucer may have been describing plate armourers capitalising on the tournament by temporarily acting as furbishers, or misidentifying furbishers as armourers because the crafts were seen as so similar as to be indistinguishable to the contemporary lay-person. It is also possible that it was chosen as a trisyllabic synonym for “fourbour,”¹²⁵ but this metrical choice does not discount the interpretation that Chaucer viewed the occupations as synonymous. Clearly, the similarity and occupational overlap that makes identifying armourers and furbishers in the records difficult today was just as challenging for a contemporary observer watching them at their work in the fourteenth century.

The high level of skill required to refurbish weapons and armour may be the reason that when armourers took on the profession as a supplementary income, it was often towards the end of their lives. As will be shown in Section 2.5 below, there are numerous examples of this kind of occupational plurality. The growth of the furbishers’ industry is particularly important in the study of armourers, because repairers of armour can only exist if there is already a sufficiently advanced market supplying armour to the local population.

¹²³ Stuart Robertson, “Elements of Realism in the ‘Knight’s Tale’”, *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 14.2 (April, 1915): 235-236.

¹²⁴ Geoffrey Chaucer, “The Knight’s Tale”, in *The Canterbury Tales*, in *The Riverside Chaucer*, edited by Larry Dean Benson, 37-65. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008. ll. 2505-2508.

¹²⁵ The *MED* dates the earliest usage of the trisyllabic “furbisher” (rather than the disyllabic “fourbour”) to approximately 1400. See: “furbisher, our (n.) Also frub-” *Middle English Dictionary*, accessed February 1, 2015, <http://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/m/mec/med-idx?type=id&id=MED17968&egs=all&egdisplay=open>.

That the furbishers do not appear in civic ordinances until 1350 is a reflection of the development of the broader metal-armour industry, which, as stated above, only began to become prominent in the second half and last quarter of the fourteenth century. While furbishers in the records are relatively rare, they prove the growth of the other armourers' crafts.

2.4.2: Kissers

Riley defined kissers to have been the makers of thigh armour, or "*cuisses*," which he enigmatically misspells as "cushes," noting that, "the word 'cush' [was] apparently ... formerly pronounced like 'kiss'".¹²⁶ However, Thomas challenged this, suggesting that they were some form of leather dressers, or leather sellers. His justification for this came from a series of records pointing to a group of kissers put on trial in 1300 for selling their wares "dearer for the pollard than the sterling", and accused of smuggling their goods inside and outside of the city.¹²⁷ One of these kissers, John Tilli, who identified himself as both a kisser and a cordwainer at different times,¹²⁸ was accused of meeting carts bearing goods for the religious houses outside of the city and then bringing them inside for sale; but he was specifically chastened for his forestalling and smuggling of *hides*, rather than armour. Furthermore, on the membrane following this record, a jury attributed the high prices charged by the cordwainers to the tanners, kissers, and curriers, leading Thomas to interpret their role not as armourers, but rather as members of a leather supply network for the cordwainers.¹²⁹

Thomas' interpretation is certainly understandable, as the kissers and cordwainers have numerous economic and social interactions in the records, and while the current scholastic consensus agrees with him, no new records have yet been uncovered to make an

¹²⁶ This misspelling has led to some confusion among other authors citing Riley. See: Riley, introduction to *Mem*, xxii; *LBA*, 171, n. 53.

¹²⁷ *CoEMC*, 61.

¹²⁸ *LBA*, 41.

¹²⁹ *CoEMC*, 62-63.

unassailable case for either interpretation.¹³⁰ My analysis of the armourers' social networks in the prosopographical concordance of armourers' records demonstrates that London's late thirteenth- and early fourteenth-century kissers had very close ties with the cordwainers,¹³¹ and kissers like Tilli are occasionally found occupying both professions;¹³² however, not enough evidence exists to say that they did not work in armour, as Riley believed. During the kissers' brief appearance in the London records, many had social interactions with armourers and other members of the armourers' industry.¹³³ As stated in Section 2.1, there is no information in the records about specialists working in leather or whalebone armours, which both become less prominent after the disappearance of the kissers, and so it is possible that this industry was, like the furbishers, one which bridged between several other small specialisms, but which poverty and the brevity of their existence obscured in the civic records.

Riley's interpretation remains compelling, because it questions the meaning of the kissers' occupational surname. If he was correct and kissers were making cuisses, the ties to the leather industry observed by Thomas still make sense. Cuisses in the late Middle Ages were primarily made of interlocking metal plates, but as was pointed out by the Pouchmakers in 1327, London's manufacturers of plate armour required significant amounts of high-quality leather to make a complete piece, or the armour "would not last two days if [they were] wetted."¹³⁴ The abovementioned will of William de Grantham records that his "quissers" were covered in linen, but higher quality cuisses used leather.¹³⁵ Just such an arrangement of iron plates riveted to leather bases were used at the battle of

¹³⁰ Derek Keene and Gwyn Williams have both based their interpretations that kissers were preparatory crafts within the leather network upon Thomas' argument. See: Derek Keene, "Tanners' Widows," in *Medieval London Widows*, ed. Caroline Barron & Anne Sutton (London: The Hambledon Press, 1994), 11; Williams, *Medieval London*, 183.

¹³¹ Most of the kissers whose properties could be identified lived in close proximity to the cordwainers, tanners, and the leather supply network at large, particularly in Cripplegate Ward Without.

¹³² As did other armourers, such as the furbisher Thomas de Norwych, who was elected to investigate faulty goods among the cordwainers and cobblers. While it is possible this was a different man, other men listed in this record were identified by their craft as cordwainers, while he was not. See: *CoEMC*, 4-5.

¹³³ Particularly among the "le Kyng" family. See Chapter 4, note 48.

¹³⁴ *CPMR i*, 40.

¹³⁵ *CWPH i*, 648-9.

Wisby in 1361,¹³⁶ and the logic of such an arrangement, combined with the Pouchmakers' above complaint, suggests that the London cuisse-makers probably did the same.

These cross-industry ties point to the multidisciplinary skills that were required of armourers in manufacturing a complete piece of armour in a single workshop. Whether their leather needs represented backings, the coverings observed in other records, fastenings, or even full leather pieces of armour is not clear, but kissers' connections with the metal and leather industries suggests the possibility that before disappearing from the records in 1348,¹³⁷ they were working in some form with both materials to manufacture armour in the same way that the linen-armourers did with the cloth and metal industries. The lack of information about London's kissers makes them a fertile ground for future research if identification documents can be uncovered.

2.4.3: Haubergers

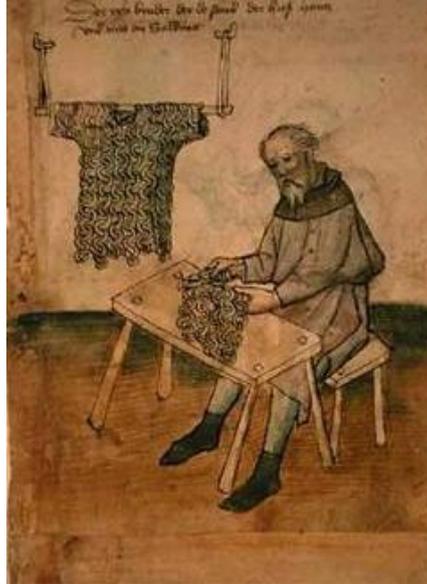


Figure 2.6: Armourer Making a Hauberk. MS Amb 3172. Stadtbibliothek, Nuremberg, Germany. Fifteenth Century. <http://www.bridgemanimages.com/fr/asset/151585/german-school-15th-century/ms-amb-3172-armourer-making-a-hauberk-pen-ink-on-paper> (accessed June 14, 2015).

¹³⁶ Thordeman et al., *Armour from the Battle of Wisby*, 114.

¹³⁷ The last appearance of a kisser in the London records is the 1348 will of Ralph atte Brom. See: *CWPH i*, 523.

Mail armour, often mistakenly called “chain-mail”¹³⁸ was, prior to the fourteenth century, the most common type of metal armour in Europe. Claude Blair suggested it represented “ninety-nine cases out of a hundred” where anything besides soft cloth armour was worn up to 1250.¹³⁹ This is disputable among English common soldiers, who, as shown, mostly wore soft armours and composite jacks until the last half of the fourteenth century; but it was certainly true of English knights into the fourteenth century, where it continued to be used as secondary protection under plate armour throughout the whole of the period. While some innovations occurred, in general it was made by joining circular metal rings so that each ring was joined to four others. The rings might be solid, or made of coiled wire welded or riveted closed at the ends with a “nayltoll” as depicted in Figure 2.6. Earlier examples of mail consist of “rough, uneven ring[s] of wire, clumsily fashioned and thicker than that of later dates”,¹⁴⁰ because the wire was beaten out by hand, rather than drawn.

Mail had none of the technological hindrances for production that plate-armour had, as it required very little equipment to make, mastery was simple, and it could utilise much smaller and more cheaply available iron blooms than plate armour required by converting the iron to wire. The main drawback to the construction of mail was that it was very time-consuming: a single riveted-mail shirt has been estimated to require between 28,000 and 50,000 individual rings depending on its size, and might have taken 1,000 man-hours of labour to produce.¹⁴¹ While mail armour was used throughout the fourteenth century, its cost increased after the onset of the Black Death in response to labour shortages, and as will be discussed in Chapter 3, some of those shortages may have been addressed by setting wives and daughters to the work, and some evidence exists that these crafts were on occasion continued by women in new husbands’ houses, and independently as widows.

¹³⁸ For a discussion of the linguistic origins of the term, see: Blair, *European Armour*, 20.

¹³⁹ Blair, *European Armour*, 19.

¹⁴⁰ Ffoulkes, *The Armourer and His Craft*, 44.

¹⁴¹ Williams, *Blast Furnace*, 30.

Another reason that the mail industry declines in London at the end of the fourteenth century has been suggested by Alan Williams, Peter Jones, and Michael Prestwich who have all suggested that mail armour was of little use against arrows or crossbows,¹⁴² and as the fourteenth-century infantry revolution increased the proportion of archers on the battlefield, that mail armourers were becoming obsolete. However, mail does not stop being worn in this period, but it does become more expensive to manufacture, which suggests an economic reason for its decline, rather than a technological one. As Blair stated, mail armour was one of the most prolific forms of armour in the Middle Ages, and while arrows were a greater threat in the fourteenth century, the challenge of stopping an arrow was not new to armourers, and it was one they were capable of meeting, as the *Chronicon Colmariense* attests, which described the utility of such armour, stating that “camisiam ferream, ex circulis ferreis contextam, per quae nulla sagitta arcus poterat hominem vulnerare.”¹⁴³ While this may have been boastful, if mail did not provide some protection against arrows, it would not have continued to have been used, and as shown in Section 2.3, the stock of mail in the Tower increases significantly during the fourteenth century.

In his penetration tests, Williams rightly backed his mail sample with a quilted jack because as he noted, “mail was never worn alone, but in conjunction with a quilted undergarment”.¹⁴⁴ However, he only utilised small samples, and hung his mail sample flat against a target, which provided greater tension on impact, and made it more likely to fail. Medieval soldiers wore mail garments loose, meaning the force required to penetrate varied across the body, and was greatest where it pooled around the belt, where it allowed more of the force to be diffused laterally.¹⁴⁵ Beneath the mail, linen-armour provided the

¹⁴² Williams, *Blast Furnace*, 42-43, 942-3; Jones, “Arrowheads and Armor”, 117; Michael Prestwich, *Armies and Warfare in the Middle Ages: The English Experience* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996), 21.

¹⁴³ “A shirt made of iron, from interwoven iron rings, through which no arrow of a bow was able to injure a man.” Translation mine. In, Ffoulkes, *Armourer*, 62. Foulkes misidentifies the passage as from 1398, rather than 1298.

¹⁴⁴ Williams, *Blast Furnace*, 42.

¹⁴⁵ This can be seen in countless manuscript images.

padding that allowed soldiers to potentially survive crushing blows (which all edged blows became if the mail held), and the silk stuffing further served to arrest the force of an arrow, but this is less effective unless the mail is allowed to bunch. As it is known that medieval soldiers did not wear mail in the way it has been tested, such experiments are misleading. However, the requirement that mail be reinforced with linen- and later plate-armor highlights the dependence of haubergers on the other armor industries: the haubergers not only had to work with other armorers' products, requiring some level of economic coordination, but it could not exist as an industry without the other armor industries whose products made it a viable protection against the weapons of the time.

My research identified thirteen haubergers over the course of the fourteenth century, of which seven could be confirmed as craft members in the records, while the remaining six were identified via their occupational surnames. Three of the confirmed haubergers occupied the position of king's hauberger, discussed below, leaving only four private haubergers that could be confirmed to the occupation in the records over the entirety of the fourteenth century. This lack of records relating to the craft can be partially explained by the likelihood of low income among specialists in haubergery. The average price of a haubergeon sold by John Payn in 1364 was 23s,¹⁴⁶ but if this represented a thousand hours of work, as suggested by Williams, the hourly rate of return for that labour would be only slightly more than a quarter of a penny per hour, ignoring material and other production costs. If Payn was selling haubergeons made by other craftsmen (as he almost certainly was), their return would be even lower to account for Payn's profit. Better was the return for steel-ringed haubergeons, where the sale price to the Tower ranged between 66s 8d and 73s 4d,¹⁴⁷ or an estimated hourly return of between four fifths and nine tenths of a penny per hour of labour, or between 6d and 7d for an eight-hour workday. However,

¹⁴⁶ TNA E 101/394/14.

¹⁴⁷ Richardson, "Armour in England", 309.

these returns were likewise not a wage, and did not include increased raw materials costs, time spent selling, or wholesaler expenses that all would reduce profit further.¹⁴⁸

The only records of wages for armourers to survive are those working for the royal household. The king's wages for his hauberger was 6d/day¹⁴⁹ and 2d/day for a yeoman worker,¹⁵⁰ compared to 12d/day at the same time for his armourer who was also granted an additional 6d/day for a yeoman worker, 3d/day for a groom, and a home and workshop in the Tower.¹⁵¹ Despite the considerably lower wage, the king's hauberger was a prestigious position, and so if this pay was a commensurate rate to the most prominent private haubergers' incomes, most private haubergers can be assumed to have earned approximately the same as a yeoman hauberger of the king's household, or approximately 2d per day from their craft, or their labour in another workshop, or roughly two-thirds the wage of an unskilled labourer at the time.¹⁵² Therefore, being a specialist hauberger was a time-consuming, low-profit operation, especially as labour costs increased in the wake of the Black Death while the prices armourers could charge for their products were often frozen, restricted, or discounted for purveyance by the crown.¹⁵³

It is probable that many haubergers were, like furbishers, primarily occupational pluralists, utilising haubergery and family labour to supplement their income from other

¹⁴⁸ This may have been mitigated through the free labour of wives and daughters operating the shops. This hypothesis is discussed in Chapter 3.

¹⁴⁹ This appears to be standard among king's armourers during Edward III's time, but the rate for haubergers is confirmed by Richard, while his armourers' wages were doubled. This lower rate is the same as the late fourteenth century pay for the king's smith, crossbow maker, bower, and furbisher. The royal hauberger Gerard/Gerald Hauberger was also granted a lifetime annuity of 100s. at the exchequer in 1366, which would have increased his daily wage (if he worked 365 days a year) to just over 9d. See: *CPR 1361-1364*, 344; *CPR 1377-1381*, 61, 137, 140; *CPR 1388-1392*, 41; *CPR 1364-1367*, 250; TNA E 101/392/14.

¹⁵⁰ *CPR 1358-1361*, 511.

¹⁵¹ *CPR 1377-1381*, 61, 140; T.F. Tout, *Chapters in the Administration of Medieval England, Volume IV* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1928), 475, n.4.

¹⁵² See: John Munro, "Builders' wages in southern England and the southern Low Countries, 1346-1500: a comparative study of trends in and levels of real incomes", in *L'Edilizia prima della rivoluzione industriale, secc. XIII-XVIII, Atti delle "Settimana di Studi" e altri convegni, Istituto Internazionale di Storia Economica F. Datini*, 36.1 (May 2005): 1051; John Munro, "Before and After the Black Death: Money, Prices, and Wages in Fourteenth-Century England", in *New Approaches to the History of Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe: Selected Proceedings of Two International Conferences at the Royal Danish Academy of Sciences and Letters in Copenhagen in 1997 and 1999*, ed. Troels Dahlerup & Per Ingesman, *Historisk-filosofiske Meddelelser* 104 (1999): 339.

¹⁵³ Williams, *Blast Furnace*, 43; *CCR 1354-1360*, 134; "Edward III: June 1369", in *PROME*, accessed September 4, 2013, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=116470>; *LBH*, 69, 160, 269, 288; *CPR 1385-1389*, 261; *CCR 1385-1389*, 261-62, 606.

armourers' crafts. An example of this, discussed in Chapter 3, is the case of the York armouress Agnes Hecche, who inherited her father's mail-making tools, while her brother inherited his furbishing tools, indicating that while her father practised both crafts, she probably assisted with his haubergery during his lifetime. Similarly, William atte Castelle throughout his life identified both specifically as a "haubergier",¹⁵⁴ but also generally as an armourer;¹⁵⁵ Reginald le Hauberger's and Gillot le Hauberger's craft activities were varied enough for them to be recognised as experts able to appraise the value of a cutler's spearheads seized for debt in 1320;¹⁵⁶ and John Payn, who sold mail to the Tower of London, identified for the majority of his life and in records after his death as either an armourer or a furbisher.¹⁵⁷ As haubergery would not have been many craftsmen's primary occupation, few would take the craft on as an occupational surname or identify with the occupation in the records, and those that did would in many cases have been so poor as to not appear in the records, obfuscating the craft's presence in London.

Despite the absence in the records, Thom Richardson's research on the armour held at the Tower of London in the fourteenth century points to very large purchases of mail by the crown, although at least some of this was imported continental armour.¹⁵⁸ A great deal of this was certainly produced locally, however, such as the already mentioned thirty-seven mail shirts purchased from the armourer John Payn in 1364;¹⁵⁹ and many more would have been the product of the several times throughout the fourteenth century that the armourers of London were forced to work at the Tower of London, or face imprisonment.¹⁶⁰

The crown employed a royal hauberger by 1328 identified as "Guilliam nostre hauberger" but he is the only king's armourer on record to have been specifically tasked

¹⁵⁴ *CCR 1346-1349*, 243.

¹⁵⁵ *Mem*, 353.

¹⁵⁶ *LBE*, 132.

¹⁵⁷ Identified as a furbisher: *LBG*, 125, 155, 166; *CWPH ii*, 169. Identified as an armourer: *CCR 1364-1368*, 85, 460; *CCR 1369-1374*, 86, 474-475, 573, 587, 604-605; *CCR 1374-1377*, 77, 101, 116, 198; *CPR 1367-1370*, 412; *CPR 1374-1377*, 67, 134; *CFR 1368-1377*, 322, 324; *CIMC iv*, 2, 44-45; *CPR 1385-1389*, 407; *CCR 1389-1392*, 146; *CIPM xvii*, 179, 328-330, 353-354, 391-392; *CCR 1392-1396*, 474.

¹⁵⁸ TNA E 101/388/1; Richardson, "Armour in England", 305.

¹⁵⁹ TNA E 101/394/14; Richardson, "Armour in England", 309.

¹⁶⁰ See: Chapter 5.

with haubergery in the records until 1359. The exact nature of this position is difficult to ascertain, as John Fleet was the wardrobe clerk responsible for the king's arms and armour from at least 1323 through to 1344.¹⁶¹ It was obviously related to the office of the king's armourer, but just as in the businesses of private armourers, these individual specialisms among the royal armouries were divided by individual craft. In one document from 1359, armour sent to or from the king is recorded separately between John de Coloigne, the king's armourer, Gerard Heaumer, the king's heaumer, and Gerald/Gerard Hauberger, the king's hauberger.¹⁶² While my work with this document establishes that Gerald/Gerard Hauberger occupied the office of the haubergery at the Tower of London four years prior to the first calendared record of this in 1363,¹⁶³ it also demonstrates the necessity for both separation and interaction between the different offices of the royal armourers.¹⁶⁴

Gerald/Gerard Hauberger occupied the post until 1397, when it was taken over by William Morys, and the title changed to “hauberger’ and ‘stuffer’ of the king’s arms”,¹⁶⁵ indicating that by this point haubergery alone was no longer a significant enough craft to require a dedicated member of the household to oversee it, and that the occupier of the post had to be proficient (or capable of organising manufacture or purchasing) in both mail and cloth armour, which reflected the same trend of practicing multiple armourers’ occupations among private armourers that developed over the course of the fourteenth century.

2.5: Evidence of Multiple Specialisms Practised by Individual Armourers

The execution of multiple armourers’ specialisms in single workshops, or over the course of an armourer’s life, appears to have been common in London, and both of these

¹⁶¹ Richardson, *Armour in England*, 305.

¹⁶² The National Archives’ summary mistranscribes “Gerard Heaumer le Roi” as “Gerard Heamner” and “Geraldyn Hauberger le Roi” as “Gerekyn Hauberger.” In the latter case, “le Roi” is smudged, but these omissions confuse the significance of each individual department of the king’s armouries. See: TNA SC 8/247/12310.

¹⁶³ *CPR 1361-1364*, 344.

¹⁶⁴ Records of William le Hauberger and Gerald/Gerard Hauberger’s terms as the king’s hauberger are recorded in: *CCR 1327-1330*, 423; *CPR 1361-1364*, 344; *CPR 1377-1381*, 140.

¹⁶⁵ *CPR 1396-1399*, 153.

concepts will be examined here. While the nature of these trends is impossible to establish with certainty for all armourers, where individual armourers appear often enough in the London records to allow for case studies, the evidence suggests that these practices were the norm, rather than the exceptions. Beginning with the question of how multiple armourers' specialisms were practised by individual armourers, the most evidence comes from records relating to furbishers, such as the armourer, furbisher, and mail retailer John Payn described above.¹⁶⁶ Of the twenty-seven furbishers that could be confirmed in my research, nine practised at least one other armourers' craft specialisation during their lifetimes. It is more difficult to firmly establish the degree by which multiple specialisations were practised among other crafts, as the term "armourer" was often used synonymously with "heaumer", "plate-armourer", and "linen-armourer." This is further complicated since some linen-armourers identified themselves as "tailors" as well, and so it is not always possible to determine if such craftsmen were practicing multiple crafts, or simply using the most general of terms to describe their specific occupations.

One of the most interesting individual cases of a furbisher taking on multiple specialisations is found in John Scorfeyn, who was an armourer, a master of the armourers, a furbisher, a master of the tailors, and a common councilman serving Breadstreet Ward.¹⁶⁷ It is certain that there were not multiple persons with the same name specialising in these crafts, as after his death, his wife Agnes sought a debt owed to her deceased husband along with his executors in 1393, identifying him in the Close Rolls as "John Scorpeyn 'fourbour' late citizen and 'armurer'".¹⁶⁸ A similar case occurs with William Thornhill, who was a prominent member of the armourers' craft in the late fourteenth century. He

¹⁶⁶ In the late fourteenth century there were at least two armourers named John Payn. One, probably the same as the mail retailer, was exceptionally wealthy, with properties throughout London, Somerset, Essex, York, and Surrey, and died in 1375 or 1376. The other was also a wealthy armourer, and appears mainprising ship captains in 1388. The majority of the records even after the former John Payn's death relate to the deceased Payn, as they are relating to properties owned by him, sent by persons unaware of his death. See: *CPR 1374-1377*, 134; *LMA DL/C/B/004/MS09171/001*, 1376/1/37; *CPR 1385-1389*, 407.

¹⁶⁷ *CPMR ii*, 256; *LBH*, 69, 221; *CCR iii*, 113; *CPMR iii*, 53, 54, 66. It is extremely unlikely that there was another person with the same name who was a tailor. Scorfeyn the armourer appears in a 1384 record bailing the tailor William Hotte for his part in the Mayoralty Riots alongside a draper and two tailors, possibly indicating a craft allegiance.

¹⁶⁸ *CCR 1392-1396*, 128.

was a sub-collector of the Farringdon Ward poll tax in 1379, a master of the armourers in 1380, and was described as one of the “more sufficient men of the City” called upon to attend the 1384 election that sparked the mayoralty riots.¹⁶⁹ His civic prominence is somewhat surprising, as in 1381 he was arrested for his participation in the Peasants’ Revolt (as a furbisher), and was again arrested in 1383 (this time as an armourer) for selling wine at a twenty-five percent premium.¹⁷⁰

This civic, market, and craft diversity reflects the breadth of activities undertaken by the wealthiest armourers at the end of the century. By this point, the industry had grown such that prominent armourers were often members of the civic oligarchy, and found trading and as craftsmen in multiple industries. In both of these cases, the armourers identify as furbishers in the last ten years of their lives, or last ten years where they appear in the records. They are wealthy, politically active, and most importantly, have diverse sources of income and employment. Thornhill’s late identification with the furbishing craft, and Scorfeyn’s wife’s identification with it as her husband’s primary craft after his death provides further evidence to the hypothesis posed in Section 2.4.1 that furbishing was an attractive craft for elderly armourers who had the expertise of a lifetime of crafting different types of armour, but lacked the energy to continue those crafts as a primary occupation.

The London records provide further examples of armourers practicing multiple related crafts. Nicholas le Clerk was a girdler, an armourer, and quite possibly a clerk of one or both of his crafts. There is no doubt that the records relating to these multiple related occupational surnames identified the same person, as even in his will he is identified as “Nicholas Larmurer ‘called Clerk’”,¹⁷¹ and he interchanges his usage of occupational surnames and occupational titles throughout his life, identifying as “Nicholas

¹⁶⁹ *LBH*, 131, 152; *CPMR iii*, 87.

¹⁷⁰ *CPMR ii*, 301; *CPMR iii*, 41.

¹⁷¹ *CWPH i*, 539.

le Girdelere, armourer” and “Nicholas le Clerk, ‘ceynturer’”.¹⁷² In the lists of those elected to oversee the goods sold on the highways in 1347, he is identified as an armourer, but his name is recorded among a group of three pursers, rather than amongst the other two armourers.¹⁷³ As has been shown, pursers had close ties to the armour industry as suppliers of leather, but they were also closely connected to girdlers, and both items are often depicted being sold in the same shops (Figures 2.7 and 2.8). While no records of Nicholas Larmurer’s possessions exist, it is probable that he was a leather-armourer or a retailer with diversified interests working in multiple industries. If he was a leather-armourer, the girdler’s craft is a logical source of additional income, as the metal fastenings used in girdles are similar to those used in leather and other types of armour. This would have been to his benefit, as an armourer with the skills and equipment to work both leather and metal would have a distinct advantage over his peers. Nicholas Larmurer’s diverse economic activities therefore mark him as emblematic of the overall trend of industrial overlap among the armourers and their related industries in the fourteenth century.



Figures 2.7 and 2.8:

Left: Dietmar von Aist Shows Purses and Belts. Manesse Codex, Zurich, Heidelberg Universitätsbibliothek, Cod. Pal. Germ. 848, fol. 64r., c. 1300-1320. <http://digi.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/diglit/cpg848/0520/scroll?sid=566b6174e7d15184c55d48955e5503cb> (accessed June 14, 2015).

Right: The Rape of Dinah in the Egerton Genesis. London, British Library, Egerton MS 1894, fol. 17r., c. 1360. http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/View.aspx?ref=egerton_ms_1894_fs001r (accessed June 14, 2015).

Occupational plurality was therefore a common element of many armourers’ daily working lives. The economic challenges of manufacturing items that required multiple specialists in different materials led some armourers to adopt multiple specialisms in order

¹⁷² See Chapter 1, note 122.

¹⁷³ *LBF*, 180.

to increase efficiency, enable them greater manoeuvrability to capitalise on economic opportunities in a dynamic market, and manufacture more complex pieces of equipment without extensive reliance on outside craftsmen. Occupational plurality does not necessarily imply advancement in armourers' workshop organisation, as it was merely one strategic response taken by armourers as they responded to changing economic conditions. Instead, it implies that armourers enjoyed a great deal of freedom in how they organised their work, regardless of any aspects of interference from the civic and royal spheres of control investigated in Chapters 4 and 5. Furthermore, it was a strategy which allowed for the diversity of the London industry which enabled the armourers to manufacture large quantities of armour of varying levels of quality, which could be sold to a wide range of consumers.

2.5.1: “Dole enduring night and day”:¹⁷⁴ Evidence of Multiple Specialisms Practised within Armourers' Workshops

Another useful source for exploring the question of the nature of armourers' multi-specialist economic activities is their properties and workshops. Instances where armourers practicing different specialties owned property together, or where the tools recorded belonging to an armourer represented multiple specialities, provide strong evidence for the hypothesis of inter-craft economic cooperation and the practise of simultaneous multiple specialisms. These workshops may also have been populated by journeymen of different crafts, each crafting the requisite components of armour and assembling the pieces together as was done later at the Greenwich Armoury; but as journeymen almost never appear in the London records, this is nearly impossible to determine for cases outside of those few armourers whose “servants” (probably journeymen) and apprentices appear in their wills and became prominent armourers themselves later in life. It is also very difficult to

¹⁷⁴ “Play 6, The Expulsion from the Garden: The Origenall Perteynng to the Crafte of Armourers” in *The York Corpus Christi Plays*, ed. Clifford Davidson (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 2011), accessed April 29, 2015, <http://d.lib.rochester.edu/teams/text/davidson-play-6-the-expulsion-from-the-garden>, 1.25.

establish whether masters of multiple armourers' crafts were operating out of single workshops because records of joint property ownership are rare and do not state the purpose of the property. This section will examine the most compelling example of this, along with the very few inventories of armourers' workshops which exist in the records, and some of the contemporary pictorial descriptions of armourers' workshops to answer the question of how the economic networks of the armourers' crafts engaged with one another in the production of armour. This question is particularly important because it highlights the level of inter- and intra-workshop cooperation that led to the increasing industrial forms of organisation discussed in Chapter 4, as well as the creation of more productive workshops able to meet the demands of the crown and English consumers.

The most compelling example of joint ownership between related crafts was for "certain shops" leased by the armourer Roger de Redebourne and the cutler Richard Baldewyn in 1329.¹⁷⁵ Redebourne and Baldewyn were brothers-in-law through their wives Alice and Agnes, who are also named in the lease, and so this was both an economic and social partnership. However, if these shops were Redebourne's and Baldewyn's places of work, the similar tools, raw materials, and economic connections that each craftsman had to their respective craft would have been beneficial to them both. They would have been able to share costs of doing business, as well as increase their individual market shares by providing both weapons and armour to their customers, as many would have required both. It is possible that this joint lease was unrelated to their businesses, however, but even if that were the case it demonstrates a strong economic connection between the ties of family in these two craftsmen's related industries. Richard Baldewyn was a prominent cutler, and so this kind of partnership must be viewed as an acceptable practise within the cutlers and armourers' industries. Baldewyn was one of the heads of the cutlers' craft, sworn to

¹⁷⁵ *LBE*, 235-236.

safeguard everything that belonged to the craft in 1340, and was a supervisor of the craft from 1344 until his death in 1349.¹⁷⁶

Inventories are slightly more common in the records, though still very rare. Only a handful of complete inventories for English armourers' workshops exist in the fourteenth century: two from Dover Castle in 1344 and 1361,¹⁷⁷ and one recently uncovered and compiled inventory of the Tower in the years 1374-7 and 1375-8.¹⁷⁸ These are of limited usefulness in this study, as these inventories describe well-stocked castle or royal armouries, which were designed to be multidisciplinary production centres, rather than the private armour workshops of the London craftsmen where such practices remain in question. However, these inventories remain useful for comparison purposes.

The inventories of the Tower studied by Richardson are actually a combination of two inventories and a purchase record, representing the inventories of Richard Glover, the king's helmet maker (1376), and William Snell, the king's armourer (1377-1395), as well as a series of tools purchased for the tower around the same time. The heaumer's tools consisted of "*ii anfelds magnos, j bygorne, j styth parvum cum corners, j steryngbycorne, j par forceipium, ij paria sufflatoriorum, j furum de plumbo, j toneyrne, ij paria tenellorum, iij martella magna*",¹⁷⁹ those purchased from John Wynley consisted of "*duobus forbyngformes longis..., uno molario parvo..., uno toneyrne..., uno parsyngstith et uno bygorn..., iijor martellis mangnis, uno pare forcipium, v stakes ferri, x paribus tenellorum, uno nayltoll et iijor martellis parvis...*",¹⁸⁰ while William Snell's tools consisted of "*...ij anefelds magnos, iij anefelds parvos, j styth parvum cum duobus corners, ij bygornes, j persyngstich, j steryngbigorne, ij paria forcipium cornuta, j*

¹⁷⁶ *LBF*, 57, 110.

¹⁷⁷ Ffoulkes, *Armourer*, 25.

¹⁷⁸ Richardson, "Armourers' Tools", 27.

¹⁷⁹ "Two large anvils, one anvil with tapered ends, one small stake with corners, one 'steryngbycorne', a pair of tongs, two pairs of bellows, one form of lead, one 'toneyrne', two pairs of pincers, and three large hammers." Richardson, "Armourers' Tools", 27-28, n.7.

¹⁸⁰ "Two long 'forbyngformes', a small grindstone, a 'toneyrne', a piercing stick, an anvil with tapered ends, four large hammers, a pair of tongs, five iron stakes, ten pairs of pincers, a 'nayltoll', and three small hammers." Richardson, "Armourers' Tools", 27-28, n.8.

molarium parvum, ij paria sufflatoriorum, j furum de plumbo, ij toneyrnes, ij fourbyngformes, v stakes de ferro, xij paria tenellorum, vij martella magna, iiij martella parva, j nayltoll.”¹⁸¹ William Snell’s tools appear to be a combination of the two above lists, but it is interesting that the first list is specifically a list of tools for a heaumer, while the second and third contains finishing and furbishing tools such as the “forbyngformes” and the grindstone, as well as a “nayltoll” which was used for the manufacture of mail, demonstrating that at least during Snell’s tenure as royal armourer, the position required him to oversee a workshop with multiple craft specialisms. As was suggested for the case of John de Coloigne in Section 2.2, oversight of multiple industries is not unexpected for the royal armourer, but the question of whether this kind of multi-specialism would appear in private armourers’ workshops is harder to explore as fewer records exist.

This question can be partially answered by examining a debt between the armourers William Pountfreit and William Randulf, which provides a nearly complete account of the goods of a household of an armourer. All of Randulf’s chattels were seized to pay a debt of £48 (although his property was only valued to a total of £33 13s 11d), and so it is the most complete record of an armourers’ property that survives from the period.¹⁸² The document itself is heavily damaged and in many places faded beyond recognition; however, among his chattels which I could identify were two iron rakes, three tripods, two grid-irons, two andirons, two spikes of iron, two crockets or iron, nineteen feet of tin, barrels, numerous pieces of plate armour including three pair of sabatons,¹⁸³ several breastplates, twelve pair of “legherneys,”¹⁸⁴ three plate skullcaps, nine “vamplates,”¹⁸⁵ and numerous tools of his trade similar to those recorded in castle inventories, including several anvils (one of which

¹⁸¹ “Two large anvils, three small anvils, one small stake with corners, two anvils with tapered ends, one piercing stick, one ‘steryngbigorne’, two pairs of tongs, one small grindstone, two pair of bellows, one lead form, two ‘tonyrnes’, two ‘fourbyngformes’, five iron stakes, twelve pairs of pincers, seven sledgehammers, four small hammers, and a tool for riveting.” Richardson, “Armourers’ Tools”, 28-29, n.9.

¹⁸² TNA C 131/206/49.

¹⁸³ Armoured footwear.

¹⁸⁴ Cuisses.

¹⁸⁵ The metal portion of a jousting lance which protects the hand.

was described as small), two pair of “sheres magnum”,¹⁸⁶ three pair of “tonges parum”,¹⁸⁷ a “herthstaf”,¹⁸⁸ and a hanging helmet for a sign. The helmet sign would suggest Randulf was a specialist heaumer advertising his wares as a retail armourer (or further the hypothesis that there was no difference between a heaumer and a plate-armourer by this point in London’s craft history), and based on his tools he was clearly a metalworking smith. On the other hand, his stock demonstrates that he was making and selling multiple types of armour, and his stock of vamplates for lances indicates that his business had some overlap with the cutlers and blade-smiths of that period. The redundancy of tools and size of his armour stock also suggests multiple workers in his workshop, some of whom may have specialised in specific types of craftsmanship, such as the complex hinged, interlocking metalwork involved in making sabatons.

A second record of a private armourer’s tools of the trade is found in the will of the prominent armourer, Simon de Wynchecombe. Wynchecombe identified as an armourer, but was a member of the Fraternity of St. John the Baptist of the Tailors, which is also associated with the linen-armourers.¹⁸⁹ However, he left his servant Richard Person (probably his apprentice or journeyman, as he appears by 1410 as an armourer in his own right)¹⁹⁰ his “implements of his craft as armourer, viz., a barell, anfeltz,¹⁹¹ Bicornes,¹⁹² strakes, hamours, tonges, sheres, &c.”¹⁹³ which are the tools of someone practicing plate-armour manufacture, helmetry, and possibly mail-making or furbishing, if his barrel was used for scouring rust off of mail. This is also confirmed by his bequest to Person of “six

¹⁸⁶ Large metal-cutting clippers.

¹⁸⁷ Small tongs for gripping and maneuvering the hot metal objects.

¹⁸⁸ A poker. The same term was part of the 1361 inventory of Dover Castle’s armoury. See: Ffoulkes, *Armourer*, 25.

¹⁸⁹ The fraternity was of “the tailors and armourers” (linen-armourers) in the confirmation of its charter in 1390, but Wynchecombe’s will names it as “of the tailors.” The Fraternity of St. George is associated with metal-armourers. See: *CWPH ii*, 340-342; *CPR 1388-1392*, 321-322; Chapter 4.

¹⁹⁰ *LPA*, 79.

¹⁹¹ Anvils.

¹⁹² A small anvil with two long horns used for riveting tubes or turning long pieces of metal. See: Ffoulkes, *Armourer*, 26.

¹⁹³ *CWPH ii*, 340-342.

pairs of jambes,¹⁹⁴ six habergeons of iron, six bacenettes of London make, with six aventails,¹⁹⁵ six pairs of vambras,¹⁹⁶ six pairs of rerebras,¹⁹⁷ six brestplates, and six pairs of gloves of plate”. It is important to note that his six bacinets are of “London make”, and not “of my making”, or “of Richard’s making”, suggesting that Wynchecombe either employed other journeymen, or was also engaged as an armour wholesaler as well as a craftsman. Wynchecombe was one of the wealthiest armourers of the century, and his craft, fraternity, and civic responsibilities, discussed in Chapter 5, meant that he likely had little time to personally ply his craft, and so he probably employed journeymen and retailers. Wynchecombe was therefore an extreme example of the level of organisation, integration, and technological incorporation that armourers’ workspaces underwent over the century.

¹⁹⁴ Leg armour.

¹⁹⁵ Mail hoods.

¹⁹⁶ Vambraces, armour for forearms.

¹⁹⁷ Rerebraces, armour for the upper arms, above the elbow.

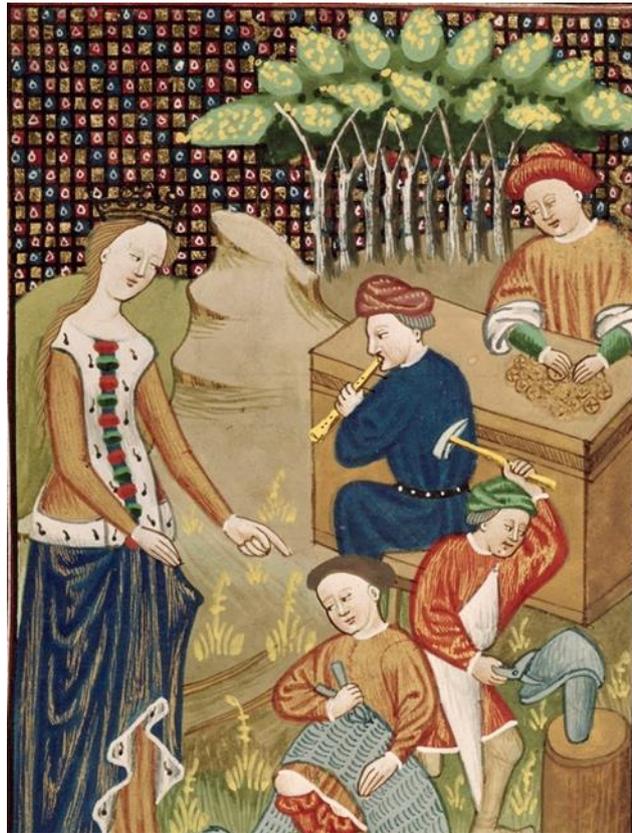


Figure 2.9: Armourers at Work. British Museum Royal MS. 16 G. V, f.11. French, c. 15th Century.
<http://www.bl.uk/catalogues/illuminatedmanuscripts/ILLUMI.N.ASP?Size=mid&IIIID=43027> (accessed June 14, 2015).

Images depicting armourers at their work can also be useful sources of evidence in interpreting these records, and while Thom Richardson erroneously claimed, “There are no known images of armourers from the fourteenth century... [and that] the earliest known example is... dated 1423”,¹⁹⁸ such images do exist, though they are very rare prior to the fifteenth century. Contemporary manuscript images of armourers at work could represent anything from half-remembered drawings of something the artist had once seen, to copies of existing artistic tropes, to complete fabrications, and so they must be interpreted with extreme care. One idyllic image comes from a fifteenth-century French translation of Boccaccio’s *De Claris mulieribus* (Figure 2.9), which depicts a woman overseeing three armourers at work outside, near a grove of trees, working to the rhythm of a flutist. Ignoring the obvious issues of the lack of a forge in the grove, there are quite a few accurate details suggesting that the artist had in fact seen armourers at work, or was copying someone who had. The heaumer hammers (albeit with the wrong end of his

¹⁹⁸ Richardson, “Armourers’ Tools”, 29.

hammer)¹⁹⁹ at his helmet, properly shaping it on a rounded helmet-stake, while a hauberger works with his “nayltoll” riveting the links together, similar to the hauberger in Figure 2.6. On the ground next to them sits a helm with a mail aventail, indicating that the hauberger has been working with the heaumer to make the combined product, exactly the kind of cooperation suggested by the records above. Behind, working at a table, another man works at attaching small circular plates to a leather foundation of the sort which smaller iron blooms imposed upon plate-armourers early in the century.²⁰⁰ While the source is from outside of London, it remains of significance as so many of London’s armourers were themselves continental immigrants, and because its depiction so closely matches the workshop activities suggested in London’s records.



Figure 2.10: Bladesmith, Heaumers, and Hauberger, Trinity College, Cambridge, MS 0.9.34, f.24. English, c. 1250 From: Christopher Gravett, *English Medieval Knight 1300-1400*. Oxford: Ospery Publishing, 2002. 29.

Figure 2.10 is the earliest image of English armourers at work, from approximately 1250. It depicts a similar situation to Figure 2.9 above, but is considerably more detailed. It portrays two heaumers working alongside a blade-smith or furbisher, while a hauberger fits a horse with mail barding. The heaumers are both making great helmets of the English style, with one of them using a hammer (hitting with the correct end), tongs and a bicorn anvil, while the other examines his work. The level of detail present here strongly suggests that

¹⁹⁹ The same error occurs in a 1423 illustration of Bernhard Plattner working on a vambrace in Stradbibliothek Nuremberg Mendel I, Amb. 317.2 f.42 r.

²⁰⁰ Ffoulkes believed was an example of “penny-plate” armour, although that term does not appear until the sixteenth century. See: Ffoulkes, *Armourer*, 23; J. Hewitt, “Notice of some examples of buff armour and of defences formed with scales of leather or of plate”, *The Archaeological Journal* 19 (June, 1862): 96.

the artist was familiar with the environment, and while he may have pressed the armourers into closer proximity than they might otherwise have worked for artistic purposes, the image is very probably the product of first-hand observation in England contemporary with the formative years of the London industry.

While these manuscript images show multiple types of armourers working in proximity to one another cooperatively, broader historical evidence suggests that many armourers' workshops were not only diverse, but exceptionally crowded and busy. This supports the evidence above and further counters the claims put forth by Swanson that most armourers operated small workshops.²⁰¹ My research into the armourers confirms that the London records do not contain any direct evidence for large-scale private workshops with the possible exception of John Tavy, who had an inn where his apprentices lived,²⁰² and as Swanson was primarily focussed on individual craftsmen in York, rather than London, her interpretation of their rarity is understandable. However, when one considers the volume of armour being produced out of London to supply the high consumer demand and massive English armies of the fourteenth century, and that apprentices and servants rarely appear in the records at all, the interpretation that larger-scale workshops of apprentices and servants were operating under master armourers is very probable.

This hypothesis is further confirmed by a 1378 complaint brought to the mayor's court about the armourer Stephen atte Fryth, who,

...built a forge of earth and timber... of which the chimney is lower by 12 ft. than it should be, and not built of plaster and stone as the custom of the City requires; and the blows of the sledge-hammers when the great pieces of iron called 'Osmund' are being wrought into 'brestplates', 'quysers', 'jammers' and other pieces of armour, shake the storie and earthen party-walls of the plaintiffs' house so that they are in danger of collapsing, and disturb the rest of the plaintiffs and their servants, *day and night* [italics mine], and spoil the wine and ale in their cellar, and the stench of the smoke from the sea-coal used in the forge, penetrates their hall and chambers,

²⁰¹ Swanson, *Medieval Artisans*, 128.

²⁰² Probably apprentices of law, rather than armour.

so that whereas formerly they could let the premises for 10 marks a year, they are now worth only 40s.²⁰³

This complaint about working both day and night echoes the spurriers' (1345) and blacksmiths' (1394) ordinances, which prohibited night work in forges due to the nuisance that it caused to their neighbours. The armourers had no such limitations against night work, and the ordinances against it among the spurriers and blacksmiths confirms that it was a common practice that needed addressing in their industries. That metalworkers desired to work in the cool of night should not be a surprise. Forges are by their nature hot places, and the smiths who laboured in them worked with "heavy hammers... that are hard to be handled", and could weigh as much as fifty pounds.²⁰⁴ Furthermore, darkness sharpens the eyes to the changing colours of glowing iron as it is heated, which is vital information to the smith. That Fryth's forge was active "day and night" implies shift work split amongst many journeymen. This is further confirmed by the other complaints: a single armourer and an apprentice could not shake the walls with their work, day and night without rest. The scale of disruption reducing the value of a property by seventy percent, and spoiling the wine and ale (with the shaking of the ground) would have required these shifts to have employed many workers. Finally, it is not surprising that armourers would adopt this form of organisation if they had the means: the extremely high demand for armour in the late fourteenth century encouraged this kind of organisation, and may be one reason that armourers' regulations never limited working hours, as was done in other industries. This record reveals a level of production organisation among the wealthier members of the craft never previously considered by scholars, and confirming both the pictorial evidence of crowded workspaces examined above, and the hypothesis of this section that the diverse nature of the fourteenth-century London armourers' industry was reflected in large, well-organised workshops.

²⁰³ *LAoN*, 160-161.

²⁰⁴ "Satire on the Blacksmiths", in *English Historical Documents Volume IV, 1327-1485*, edited by Alec Reginald Myers, accessed June 10, 2015, <http://www.englishhistoricaldocuments.com/document/view.html?id=1527>; Swanson, *Medieval Artisans*, 68. 1.13.

This level of workshop organisation, like occupational plurality, was neither universal nor necessarily an indication of widespread development towards “modern” economic practices. Rather, it is an indication of another kind of experiment made by armourers whose resources and circumstances allowed them to adopt these more industrial models of operation, and these large-scale experiments primarily occurred towards the end of a century of growth of production infrastructure and market networks. Furthermore, even among the armourers who were capable of operating large workshops, there is no evidence to suggest that the practices within them bore any uniformity amongst one another. The “developments” observed here were not made with the intent of revolutionising the methods of production, but rather attempts by individuals to make the most of what opportunities they had within the City. Demand for cheaper armour to outfit larger armies, and more complex armour to withstand the more advanced weaponry developed in the Hundred Years’ War was coupled with the regular import of higher quality metal and a growing market to sell their products in, and so it is no surprise that armourers who had the resources to invest in larger scale production or in stockpiling that metal did so. However, while common enough to appear in records and artwork, the defining characteristic of the industry was not any single economic strategy, but rather a mosaic of strategies, as varied as the individuals who made up the armourers’ crafts themselves.

2.6: Conclusions

The occupational activities of an armourer ranged from the exclusively craft-based, to the exclusively market-based, across many different materials, and utilizing many different workshop strategies to make the most of their resources. This diversity makes armourers very difficult to examine, but it is out of this diversity and interdependence that the armourers developed not only different strategies of work, specialisation, and organisation, but also strategies of social, civic, and royal organisation. As Durkheim

suggested, these developments cannot be separated from one another,²⁰⁵ but the complexity of these interactions defy the application of any single theory of development, because the armourers' market served many niches, and their central organisation was still developing throughout this period.

The craft can therefore not be adequately described in the same terms as other crafts. While larger medieval crafts have depended upon some level of economic cooperation from related merchants and craftsmen, the armourers differed in that interdependence and cooperation are absolute prerequisites for the successful development of their industries. As the demand for more effective defences increased in the fourteenth century, the businesses of linen-armourers quickly became mutually dependent upon metal-armourers who they needed to reinforce their aketons "en suite" with metal plates. Metal-armourers were likewise dependent upon linen-armourers to cover their products, and provide linen backings to coats-of-plates and jacks. While linen-armourers did have other aspects to their businesses, such as supplying the canvas for military tents, they could not effectively participate in the changing armour market without the cooperation of other craftsmen. The same dependency can be seen in the small crafts, which, when practised independently, required the markets developed by the linen- and metal-armourers. The labour demands of haubergery meant that it was viable as little more than a supplementary income, provided the items could be sold efficiently or bought by a wholesaler, and its market depended entirely upon metal- and linen-armourers to reinforce these products. The narrow specialisation of kissers meant that their craft could only function in the presence of a larger general market; and furbishers had no work without a well-armed population to serve.

The diverse nature of this industry meant that some who described themselves as armourers could be individual specialists making and selling a single type of armour, but many others were wholly invested and dependent upon the cooperation and sometimes

²⁰⁵ Durkheim, *De la Division*, 32.

integration of multiple specialisms either within their own persons, within their workshops as employees, within their trading network as wholesalers, or as clients of an armour retailer who collected the products of multiple workshops together for the convenience of the consumer. This would change as the craft became more centrally organised in the fifteenth century, but during this period of transition between soft and hard armours, intense war, plague, and civil unrest, the diversity of armourers' workshop strategies enabled the development of a robust market, and enabled individuals to nimbly capitalise upon developing consumer niches. This complexity is important to recognise, because it shows that among smaller crafts, the divisions between specialisms and between craftsmen and retailers was not necessarily as rigid as they were among larger, more politically active trades. As the armourers were in transition between a disparate group of interdependent small trades, and a centrally-organised, politically active one during this period, studying them can shed light upon the complexity and processes of London's craft and trade communities as they formed in the Late Middle Ages.

Chapter 3: The Armourers' Households

3.0: The Household Economy

Looking beyond the workshop, much of the work of the London armourers was organised within their households, both within the social structure of the household by utilising the labour of the family, and spatially among armourers whose workshops were situated within their residence.¹ These households as social units represented the core of medieval conceptions of social organisation, and a prerequisite for all of the more complex forms of civic and national organisation. Modern historians often refer to household work in the context of contributing to a “family economy” or a “family production unit”, in which wives, children, servants and apprentices of a household occupied a supportive role in their husband’s, father’s, or master’s activities, either by directly aiding in its preparation, production, and finishing; or by ensuring the availability of raw materials and labour required.² While armourers’ labour was organised in many different ways, the household can be seen as the most basic method of organising labour in the industry, and as this chapter will show, in many cases among the armourers’ community, the activities of the household were directly linked with those of the workshop or shop, and with the formation of broader social networks. Understanding how this fundamental organisation

¹ Unfortunately, very little information about the structure or layout of armourers’ properties is given in the records. Some properties are described as shops or workshops, and wills and records of debt occasionally suggest the functions of properties, but further widespread archaeological work will be necessary to determine the character of the houses of London’s armourers. More general studies, like those done by David Clark on the architectural evidence for shops, and D.F. Stenning’s work on timber-framed buildings suggest that many houses of tradespersons incorporated some form of workshop, storehouse, or retail element. This is further supported by the Armourers’ 1322 Ordinances, the Furbisher’s 1350 Ordinances, the Blacksmith’s 1394 Ordinances, and the Bladesmiths’ 1408 Ordinances, which all contain regulations defining what kind of craft and mercantile work could be done within the home. See: David Clark, “A Shop Within?: an Analysis of the Architectural Evidence for Medieval Shops”, *Architectural History* 43(2000): 59; D.F. Stenning, “Timber Framed Shops 1300-1600: Comparative Plans”, *Vernacular Architecture* 16.1 (June, 1985): 35-39; *Mem*, 146, 259, 538, 569.

² For examinations of these concepts, see: Farr, *Artisans*, 107-113; Martha Howell, *Women, Production, and Patriarchy in Late Medieval Cities* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), 9-11, 27-30; *Commerce Before Capitalism in Europe, 1300-1600* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 96-115; P.J.P. Goldberg, “Life and Death: The Ages of Man”, in *A Social History of England: 1200-1500*, ed. Rosemary Horrox & W. Mark Ormrod (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 429; Barbara Hanawalt, *The Wealth of Wives* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 3-13, 116-134; Mavis Mate, *Daughters, Wives and Widows after the Black Death* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1998), 51-75; Peter Fleming, “Family Life”, in *Family and Household in Medieval England* (Houndmills: Palgrave, 2001), 53-79; Derek Keene, “Shops and Shopping in Medieval London,” in *Medieval Art, Architecture and Archaeology in London*, ed. Lindy Grant (Leeds: W.S. Maney and Son, 1990) 29-46, 41.

functioned among the armourers is imperative to understanding how their larger organisations emerged.

Answering the question of “what was a household among the armourers in the fourteenth century?” is a complex task, particularly as changing economic conditions resulting from wars, plagues, famines, and the rapidly changing political environment of the fourteenth century imposed new challenges on household economic organisation and production, and required new kinds of household, craft, and political organisations to meet them. As a result, the words used to express household and family groups had changing meanings throughout the fourteenth century. Generally, a household as it applied to the members (sometimes referred to as the *familia*), implied a related or non-related group with co-residency, a shared residential space, social cohesiveness through kinship or labour, and group recognition of a central authority figure.³ It is commonly accepted among urban historians that the household, or *meine(e)*, could include live-in servants, who might assist in the household economy, but few historians have been able to find any evidence of the household or the larger craft workshop acting as a distinct economic or political entity in the records, and the degree of incorporation of craft employees and non-kin household members among London’s armourers’ households has never been fully explored.⁴ However, in a royal proclamation from 1363, Edward III linked the economic activities of a craftsman with that of any householder, equating craft employees, journeymen, and workers, whether living with the craftsman or not, with those who made up the household unit.⁵ This firmly joined the craftsman’s workshop organisation discussed in Chapter 2 with his household organisation, because it placed these extra-familial

³ This definition comes out of various definitions discussed by modern scholars. See: Felicity Riddy et al., “The Concept of the Household in Later Medieval England”, in Sarah Rees Jones et al., *The Later Medieval English Urban Household, History Compass* 5.1 (2007): 117; P.J.P. Goldberg, “The Demography of the Household”, in Sarah Rees Jones et al., *The Later Medieval English Urban Household, History Compass* 5.1 (2007): 125-126; Hanawalt *The Wealth of Wives*, 186-187; Barbara Hanawalt, *Growing Up*, 175; Peter Coss, “An Age of Deference,” in *A Social History of England: 1200-1500*, ed. Rosemary Horrox & W. Mark Ormrod (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 47; P.J.P Goldberg and Maryanne Kowaleski, introduction to *Medieval Domesticity: Home, Housing and Household in Medieval England*, ed. Maryanne Kowaleski and P.J.P. Goldberg (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 2-5.

⁴ See: Fleming, “Family Life”, 72-76; Goldberg, “Demography”, 125; Riddy et al., “Household”, 120.

⁵ *CCR 1360-1364*, 533.

individuals under the same social and political responsibilities as the familia, making the craftsman answerable for the conduct of his workers in the same way that a household patriarch was responsible for the conduct of household servants.

Responsibility for the actions of non-kin members of the household and workshop among the armourers implies a strong central authority and a very close relationship between the kin and non-kin elements of the armourers' broader economic network, and between the activities of the family and that of the workshop or shop. In some cases, these were incorporated into the household itself, and so even workers who did not live with the household would have constant peripheral contact with it, and household members had constant contact with the work of the craft. At its core, the household economy (from the Greek: *oikos* and *nomos*: "house rule") was based around the economic activities of the husband and wife, whose household of children, servants and apprentices laboured toward self-sufficiency and prosperity.⁶ However, that household unit was an integral part of the broader market economy, and the two necessarily influenced the way each was organised, as they both adapted to the changing economic and demographic challenges of the fourteenth century, and contributed to the growing armourers' industry.

3.1: The Presence of Women in the Armourers' Household Economies

Studies of women's roles in medieval urban economies have gained considerably more scholarly attention in recent years; however, very little attention has been given to women working in the crafts that "we might perhaps have expected them to have left to men", beyond listing examples of women presented as exceptions to the more traditionally examined roles of cloth or silk workers, brewers, bakers, nurses, or prostitutes.⁷ Among London's medieval armourers, the only woman to be examined even in passing was in fact

⁶ Hanawalt, *Wealth of Wives*, 5.

⁷ Martha Carlin even went so far as to "tentatively" identify women without otherwise stated occupations as prostitutes. See: Carlin, *Medieval Southwark*, 174-79; A. Abrams, "Women Traders in Medieval London", *The Economic Journal* 26.102 (Jun., 1916): 278; Kay E. Lacey, "Women and Work in Fourteenth and Fifteenth Century London", in *Women and Work in Pre-Industrial England*, ed. Lindsey Charles & Lorna Duffin (London: Crook Helm Ltd., 1985), 52.

a historical supposition. A. Abrams, working with the Patent Rolls, examined the confirmation of the Armourers' Guild in 1453 which states that,

“... [the armourers gild may] find a chaplain to celebrate divine service daily for the good estate of the king and brethren and sisters of the gild and for their souls after death...”⁸

Abrams interpreted that the presence of “sisters” in the gild suggested that women were active members, though none of these sisters are identified in the records (and the gild is explicitly formed by the “*men of the mistery*”).⁹ This was in turn misinterpreted by Kay E. Lacey in her work on women workers to have been a single unnamed woman who was working as an armourer, and was recognised by the gild that year.¹⁰ Focussing on the fourteenth century, ordinances for the armourers make no mention of sisters whatsoever, and so the question of identifying what role women played in this traditionally male enterprise is difficult to answer. Furthermore, if only masters were permitted to maintain workshops,¹¹ and armourers did not have provision for women workers in their ordinances in the fourteenth century, what are we to make of the women in the records who are clearly operating as journeymen workers or overseers of workshops such as Alice de Canterbrugge, Katherine de Bury, Alice la Hauberger, Cristina le Fourbour, Johanna le Clerk, or the numerous other women I will be discussing in this chapter who did exactly that?¹²

Some of these women came to the profession through their husbands or fathers, but not all of women's contributions to the craft are so easily identifiable. Wives, widows, daughters, female servants and apprentices all took part in London's economic networks in the fourteenth century, and while “the women who made up half the work-force were

⁸ *CPR 1452-1461*, 105.

⁹ *CPR 1452-1461*, 105. Italics mine.

¹⁰ Lacey, “Women and Work”, 52.

¹¹ Maryanne Kowalski and Judith Bennett, “Crafts, Guilds, and Women in the Middle Ages: Fifty Years after Marian K. Dale”, *Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 14.2 (1989): 476.

¹² Matthew Davies' research into the tailors demonstrated that although most female workers in the tailors' industry entered it through their husbands, and he identified several working independently as widows or *femmes soles*. See Davies, “The Tailors of London”, 262-265.

barely considered” in the records,¹³ their economic impact on the trade as a whole cannot be underestimated. In Sections 3.2 and 3.3 below, I will examine these roles and demonstrate that as with male armourers, women’s particular activities could range from sewing gambesons, to making mail, repairing armour, working in the forge, or acting as a retail merchant: all work that helped contribute to the household economy, and the broader retail trade economy that helped to make London one of Europe’s leading commercial centres in the fourteenth century.¹⁴ However, while P.J.P. Goldberg and Heather Swanson have provided exceptional insights into women working in York and rural areas, and Jane Geddes’ work on metalworking crafts in England included a short examination of female smiths, the economic implications of armourers’ activities, the degree to which they were carried out by women in London, and how that work was regarded has never been fully examined before.¹⁵

Derek Keene’s group-biographical research into tanners’ widows in the fourteenth century provides an excellent model for examining this field, especially as it represents a craft which, like armour manufacture, women were less likely to be directly associated with (compared to the textile and brewing trades).¹⁶ Like Keene, this examination draws upon group-biographical research, wills and other records to attempt to create a sense of what the life of a female armourer was like throughout her life cycle. However, while I have been able to identify twenty-seven daughters of armourers, and forty-nine wives (and widows), the wide variety of activities undertaken by armourers during the transition period of the fourteenth century makes it difficult to determine the exact nature of their daily lives.

¹³ Swanson, “The Illusion of Economic Structure”, 29.

¹⁴ Hanawalt, *Wealth of Wives*, 3.

¹⁵ For studies which touch upon this, see: Goldberg *Women, Work and Life Cycle in a Medieval Economy: Women in York and Yorkshire, C. 1300-1520* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992) 93, 127-28, 139, 147-48, 166; Swanson *Medieval Artisans*, 68, 71; Swanson, “The Illusion of Economic Structure”, 29-48; Jane Geddes, “Iron”, 167-188.

¹⁶ Derek Keene, “Tanners’ Widows”, 3.

Many of the recent studies into women's economic roles in England have focussed on the idea of a "golden age" for women in the fourteenth century. However, much of the debate centres around semantic differences based on the individual writer's definition of the term. Caroline Barron recognised that while the legal position of women in the fourteenth century afforded them little autonomy, provisions in the common law and in social practice allowed some women (primarily widows) to briefly gain a level of economic prosperity comparable to that achieved by men.¹⁷ However, while a few women did achieve much greater economic autonomy among the armourers, the role of women among the armourers' networks can more accurately be described primarily as contributors to household production units, rather than as independent economic presences. As this also described London women in general, Martha Howell concluded that the more common appearance of women in the production and market economies of the fourteenth century was a reflection of the household's greater inclusion in the market economy, rather than a reflection of individual women's increasing social status.¹⁸ While this distinction still admits that fourteenth-century women were more active members of the production economy, it reminds us that they were still very much confined and controlled by a patriarchy jealous of its income, and interested in maintaining its dominance in family, household, and by extension, market spheres of economic power.

As this chapter will show, while some women in the fourteenth century gained some temporary measure of economic autonomy in the armour industry, and many became the transmitters of wealth that allowed the craft to consolidate itself into an increasingly complex corporate structure in the wake of the Black Death, in all but a few cases, their economic power was framed through the coverture of their husband or father as part of a household. Some crafts, like the girdlers (a craft occasionally found practised by armourers

¹⁷ Caroline Barron, "The 'Golden Age' of Women in Medieval London", *Reading Medieval Studies* 15 (1989): 35-58.

¹⁸ Martha Howell, "The Gender of Europe's Commercial Economy, 1200-1700", *Gender & History* 20.3 (November, 2008): 521-522.

such as Nicholas le Clerk)¹⁹ even forbid women from practicing their craft except as employees of their husband or father.²⁰

A recent study by Matthew Frank Stevens concluded that post-plague women were less likely to appear as litigants in London courts than they were in the pre-plague era, suggesting that their public activities were being suppressed by increasing patriarchal forces.²¹ This supports Howell's assertion that despite the great need of labour, there was a conscious process of "remov[ing] women from visible roles in market production" in effect in the fourteenth century.²² The visibility of women among the armourers in the records certainly changed during the fourteenth century, but if women were disappearing from the production and retail markets, it is important to ask where they were going. While Stevens' and Howell's conclusions may have been true for the general London population, as the next section will examine, there is evidence that women among the armourers were actually more visible than they had been prior to the Black Death. However, the context of that visibility shifts from records suggesting women's participation in production or trading aspects of the industry, to records highlighting their importance to the industry as a means of wealth transfer through marriage and re-marriage. When women do become less visible among the armourers, it is unlikely that this indicates that women were no longer contributing their labour to the industry, but rather that their contributions had become concealed as a part of the armourers' household economies.

Despite women appearing more frequently among records relating to the armourers than in other "masculine" crafts, women's wages among the metal-working armourers, where they can be ascertained, were not only lower than men's but considerably lower by percentage than what was normal for women in other industries. Finally, the rare women who appeared independently from a household production unit among the armourers

¹⁹ See Chapter 1, note 122.

²⁰ *Mem*, 216.

²¹ Matthew Frank Stevens, "London Women, the Courts and the 'Golden Age': A Quantitative Analysis of Female Litigants in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries", *London Journal* 37.2 (July, 2012): 83.

²² Martha Howell, "Gender", 521.

became victims of popular biases against their abilities, which is apparent in plays and poems of the time, and are examined in Section 3.4. Although it is difficult to argue for a “golden age” among the women of London’s fourteenth-century armourers’ networks, the demographic challenges of the post-Black-Death period, combined with increasing demands on the industry to supply the wars in France and Scotland, necessarily led to these women taking on greater and greater levels of responsibility within their households. While I cannot call this a “golden age” by any modern definition, it was certainly a period where women’s roles came to represent a much greater importance to the craft.

The realities of medieval urban family life varied greatly, and so too did their activities. Martha Howell in her discussions of these concepts reminds the reader that in such economies a woman might “...brew ale and sell her surplus, make clothing for household members, help her husband in his shop, and teach her daughter how to spin fine woollen yarn for merchants.”²³ In many of these cases, the additional roles taken on by wives and daughters served ancillary roles to that of the husband: thus butchers’ wives are found making tallow candles; weavers’ wives are found operating second looms; and glovers’ and shoemakers’ wives preparing the materials for construction.²⁴ Among armourers’ wives in the fourteenth century, this variety proves true: some appear to have primarily supported their husband’s craft in preparatory, finishing or retail work, while others worked other crafts as independent traders or craftswomen, sold goods, and helped to train their family’s children and apprentices. While these women’s contributions were primarily among the less physically-strenuous aspects of the armourers’ craft, it is important to note that modern assumptions about gendered divisions of work due to “women’s physical capacities... [making] them less suited for certain work”²⁵ meant less

²³ Martha Howell, *Women, Production and Patriarchy*, 10.

²⁴ Mavis Mate, “Work and Leisure”, in *A Social History of England: 1200-1500*, ed. Rosemary Horrox & W. Mark Ormrod (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 284.

²⁵ Howell, *Women, Production, and Patriarchy*, 29; John Hatcher, “Women’s Work Reconsidered: Gender, and Wage Differentiation in Late Medieval England, Debate”, *Past and Present* 173 (Nov., 2001): 191-198.

in an environment where the success of the family depended upon everyone's contributions.

3.2: Armourers' Daughters: Experiences, Roles and Contributions within the Household Economies and Armourers' Networks

This section will examine the roles of daughters and female servants within the armourers' household economic networks. Higher mortality rates in London required a constant stream of young immigrants to maintain population and production levels, and this trend has led social historians to suggest that the normal experience for adolescents in fourteenth-century England was outside of their natal homes.²⁶ However, the London armourers' workshops were overtaxed in supplying equipment for the Hundred Years' War and the wars in Scotland, and so their families were an indispensable source of free labour. This has meant that in the few cases where daughters could be identified, they appear to have remained in their natal homes, and in several cases retained strong connections with their paternal household economy even after marriage, indicating that they must have served an important function there. This section will examine the questions of what roles daughters occupied, how long they remained a part of the household, and how the craft carried on after their marriages.

Daughters and female servants were primarily the responsibility of the matriarch of the household. Although women had no legal right to the custody of their children on the death of the father, among the armourers, mothers were the primary care-givers for children, and often were their children's guardians or co-guardians on the death of the father.²⁷ Barbara Hanawalt found that fathers made mothers the children's guardians in 55% of cases in the Hustings wills, followed by friends (27%), extended kin (8%), and

²⁶ Maryanne Kowaleski, "The History of Urban Families in Medieval England", *Journal of Medieval History* 14.1 (1988): 54.

²⁷ Jenny Kermode and Maryanne Kowaleski respectively suggest that these were the social norm. See: Jenny Kermode, *Medieval Merchants: York, Beverley and Hull in the Later Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 97; Kowaleski, "Urban Families", 53.

executors (6%), and finally, apprentices, servants, and churchmen.²⁸ Among the armourers, primary guardianship allowed the mother to maintain her position as head of the now fatherless household, while co-guardianship from among the deceased's craft allies ensured that the children would be educated and integrated into the broader craft network. Johanna, the wife of John le Platier (likely a plate-armour manufacturer), was entrusted with their three children's custody and inheritance in 1305 (along with John Maheu, "coffrer" and Henry de Thele, skinner) until they reached the age of majority; and in 1348, Eustachia L'Armurer was granted custody of Master Gerard L'Armurer's daughter and a tenement which was her inheritance, provided that Eustachia (probably his second wife and not the child's birth-mother) saw to the child's proper education, presumably in the family craft.²⁹

P.J.P Goldberg's studies into women and their working conditions in York demonstrated that smiths and armourers occasionally took on young female servants, trained their daughters in the craft, and "that wives assisted their husbands, and that widows sometimes continued to run businesses after their husbands' demise."³⁰ He also suggested that in Yorkshire in the Late Middle Ages, girls tended towards later marriage (in their mid-twenties), which allowed them greater freedom to work, and as a result gain greater mastery over trades before bearing children.³¹ Among the London armourers, this is more difficult to prove. The only armourers' daughter in the records whose age at marriage can be verified was Amy, the daughter of John Payn, whose mother Joan was still pregnant with her on his death in 1375.³² Her age was recorded as eighteen years old in 1394 and confirmed as twenty-one three years later with a proof of age presented as part of her continuing inheritance suit, and supported by the testimony of the prominent armourer and

²⁸ Hanawalt, *Wealth of Wives*, 22.

²⁹ *LBC*, 198; *CWPH i*, 558.

³⁰ Goldberg, *Women, Work, and Life Cycle*, 128, 148.

³¹ P.J.P. Goldberg, "Marriage, migration, servanthood, and life-cycle in Yorkshire towns of the later Middle Ages: Some York cause paper evidence", *Continuity and Change 1* (1986): 155; P.J.P Goldberg, "Female Labour, Status and Marriage in Late Medieval York and other English Towns" (PhD diss., University of Cambridge, 1987); Barron, "Golden Age", 46.

³² She was mistakenly named "Emmota" in the inquisition. See: *CIPM xvii*, 179.

former common councilman for Cordwainer Street and Breadstreet wards, William Pountfreyt.³³ Her husband, Thomas Neuton,³⁴ appeared with her in 1394 when she was eighteen, and they may have been married for some time already by that point. In Amy's case, however, her father was not alive to incorporate her into his craft (though William Pountfreyt witnessing her proof of age proves that she maintained some contact with his network allies), and while other armourers' daughters may have worked longer, Amy likely never needed to. John Payn was one of the wealthiest armourers in London, and owned considerable properties in London, Middlesex, Essex, and Hertford. As Amy was his sole heir by 1394, she would have been a very wealthy, attractive prospect for Thomas Neuton.

There is less information available in the records about poorer families in the armourers' networks, but what does exist suggests that daughters that stayed in the household were an important source of labour prior to their marriages. If armourers attempted to prolong that period of free labour (as I demonstrate they did with their apprentices discussed in Section 3.4), then this would have allowed daughters to remain contributing to the family economy more effectively, and ensured that the next generation of children would be better trained in their maternal craft, and more active contributors to the new household. Heather Swanson has argued that even the burdens of childbirth and rearing would not have been the intrusion into women's working lives that it is often assumed to be, as daughters were capable of sharing some of the burdens of childcare.³⁵ Similarly, Goldberg has argued that among lower status craft families in York, many households elected to train daughters to take on duties that servants performed in wealthier craft households.³⁶ Among armourers' families, daughters' and female servants' duties would have primarily consisted of the less strenuous armoury tasks such as mail-making

³³ *CIPM xvii*, 179, 353-354; *CPMR iii*, 53, 55; *LBH*, 332.

³⁴ Possibly Thomas Neuton the Cutler, though it is also possible that Amy's wealth attracted Thomas Neuton the mercer and 1392 Sheriff and Alderman of London. See: *CCR 1392-1396*, 88, 497; *Aldermen*, 167; *LBH* 408.

³⁵ Heather Swanson, "Craft Guilds in Late Medieval English Towns", *Past and Present* 121 (Nov., 1988): 45.

³⁶ Goldberg, *Women, Work, and Life Cycle*, 101.

and linen-armour manufacture, the rudiments of preparation and finishing work, and later, possibly the running of the family shop if they had one.

The London mail-maker Reginald le Hauberger certainly trained his daughter Alice in his craft. Both before and after her marriage, Alice appears in the records using the feminised occupational surname “la Haubergere.” The Patent Roll records for 14th December 1309 and 22nd April 1310 both erroneously mix the masculine “le” and feminine “Haubergere” when referring to her, possibly a scribal error which points to the rarity of the feminization of the name at the time.³⁷ It is unusual for a woman to use an occupational surname, particularly once she has been married, when she is normally identified by her husband.³⁸ Alice, however, used the name throughout her life and into widowhood, and so it is probable that she was, in fact, “Alice the Mail-Makeress.” It is very likely that Alice also engaged in brewing during her marriage to the vintner and taverner Thomas le Marshal,³⁹ as she had inherited a large brewery with seven shops from her father.⁴⁰ However, this site was leased to William le Paternoster in 1280, and over the next ten years Alice and Thomas would be forced to demand advances on the leases of several properties due to “urgent need.”⁴¹ She also had the opportunity to work as a journeywoman armourer, if not a mistress in her own right, as two of the shops that she and her husband disposed of were armourers’ shops, and were leased by Andrew le Armurer in 1284,⁴² and Druettus le Armurer in 1290.⁴³ These properties, as well as several of their others, were in St. Mary

³⁷ Ekwall believed that errors in the definite article usage did not necessarily indicate indiscriminate scribal adoption of the masculine and feminine forms, but rather the direct transference of a husband’s (or in this case father’s) name entirely. However, as Alice is always found using the feminine “ere”-ending form of the name, while her father used the masculine form, this is unlikely to be the case here. See: *CPR 1301-1307*, 546; *CPR 1307-1313*, 94, 248, 257; *Subs*, 31-32.

³⁸ Justin Colson, “Local Communities in Fifteenth Century London: Craft, Parish and Neighbourhood” (PhD diss., University of London, 2011) 56.

³⁹ Also called ‘Thomas Kari’ and ‘Thomas de Conductu’ See: *HGL*, St Mary Colechurch 105/26.

⁴⁰ *HGL*, St Mary Colechurch 105/26.

⁴¹ This was a legal convention to avoid charges of usury. See: *LBA*, 162, 176; *HGL*, St Mary Colechurch 105/26.

⁴² *LBA*, 162; *HGL*, St Mary Colechurch 105/26.

⁴³ *LBA*, 176; *HGL*, St Mary Colechurch 105/26.

Colechurch in the Cheap, a neighbourhood that by 1319 had become a thriving armourer's community, and would continue to be so throughout the fourteenth century.⁴⁴

A similar example of this occurs in the case of the much-examined York armourer Adam Hecche, who died in 1403 and left his daughter Agnes "all the instruments of [his] craft of mailwork",⁴⁵ while his son inherited his furbisher's tools. This case is particularly interesting as it shows multiple armoury crafts being practised in a single household economy, but also provides an insight into how the crafts were viewed at the beginning of the fifteenth century. Repairing plate armour and weaponry is much more physically strenuous than mail-making, and so it is little surprise that Hecche pushed his son rather than his daughter toward that trade. There was also more work for a furbisher in 1403 than there was for a mail-maker, as the rising cost of labour in the wake of the Black Death caused the price of the more labour-intensive mail to become a less economically attractive method of outfitting soldiers by the fifteenth century.⁴⁶ This suggests that Hecche was pushing his son towards his more profitable craft, and his daughter towards one more appropriate as a supportive income in a household economy.

The activities of a young, unmarried daughter or female servant could include all of the activities of wives discussed in the next section, but according to Derek Keene, many young women served as shopkeepers.⁴⁷ Derek Keene and Vanessa Harding's research into London's properties identified several examples of women working as shopkeepers, in three shops in Soper Lane alone finding nine out of sixteen occupants between 1369 and 1418 to have been women.⁴⁸ None of these women were connected to the armourers' networks, and none of the armourers I found held property in that parish (though the Cheap was home to one of the largest populations).⁴⁹ Much of Keene's other evidence to support

⁴⁴ Figure 4.6; *Subs*, 288-302.

⁴⁵ Swanson, *Medieval Artisans*, 115; Goldberg, *Women, Work, and Life Cycle*, 128.

⁴⁶ This is likely why Adam Hecche either used it as supplementary income, or why he took on a second trade. See: Williams, *Blast Furnace*, 43.

⁴⁷ Keene, "Tanners' Widows", 5-6; Keene "Shops and Shopping", 41.

⁴⁸ *HGL*, St. Pancras Soper Lane 145/5; Keene, "Shops and Shopping", 41.

⁴⁹ See: Section 4.4.

the idea of women in the household economy working as shopkeepers comes from later centuries, or other cities, such as Nuremberg, where “The wives of craftsmen act[ed] as agents for their husbands, not only selling the merchandise but collecting debts and keeping record books as well.”⁵⁰

Whether this was the norm in London, as Keene suggests, is more difficult to establish, as there are few records that record women’s activities in London in the fourteenth century. However, the activities of a shopkeeper can be argued to be logical extensions of the work known to have been done by women in armourers’ households. As shopkeepers, a skilled daughter, wife or servant could multi-task between shop duties and preparing or finishing work on mail or quilted armour for the principal armourer of the household. Furthermore, there are numerous cases of the female members of armourers’ households owning or inheriting shops, and two which suggest that women were working in them. These are the cases of Rosia, the widow of the armourer Richard Deveneys, who was dead by 1312, and Alice de Canterbrugge, who owned a large armour workshop or shop independently of her husband’s craft in 1324 (which suggests that the trade may have come to her through her parents).⁵¹ This last case is discussed at length in the next section. Rosia Deveneys was recorded as the tenant of several shops in the Cheap in 1319, though whether or not she was continuing in the sales of her deceased husband’s trade, as was her right, is not recorded.⁵² Other potential shop-keeping women in the armourers’ networks included Agnes, the wife of the furbisher Thomas de Norwych, who inherited his shop near the conduit in 1329;⁵³ Isabella, the daughter of the prominent armourer John Tavy, who

⁵⁰ M.M. Wood, “Paltry Pedlars or Essential Merchant? Women in the Distributive Trades in Early Modern Nuremberg”, *Sixteenth Century Journal* 12 (1981): 3-16; Dorothy Davis, *A History of Shopping* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, Ltd., 1966), 125.

⁵¹ *LBD*, 301; *Liber Albus*, 375-376.

⁵² *Subs*, 301.

⁵³ *CWPH i*, 355.

inherited his shop in 1348;⁵⁴ and Cristina, who inherited all of the furbisher-smith Edward Siende's tenements and whose mother inherited the lease on his forge in 1374.⁵⁵

Owning a shop does not necessarily mean that the owner worked in it, however; but Derek Keene has suggested that this may have been the norm in some of London's markets. One of the main advantages to having female shopkeepers that Keene argued in his studies of the tanners and shopping in medieval London was that their "physical charms" might be used as a means of attracting additional business.⁵⁶ Keene elsewhere went so far as to suggest that the suggestively named red-light districts of Gropecunt Lane and Popkirtle Lane, approximately 100 metres from a group of stalls that sold armour, indicated a relationship between "masculine" commercial and sexual purchases, and that female shopkeepers thusly would have styled their interactions with their male customers in the same light as the women selling their bodies in Gropecunt Lane.⁵⁷ Certainly there was a contemporary bias in England in the fourteenth century implying that women's wiles were well suited to profiteering. John Gower, in his *Mirour de l'Omme* (1377), wrote that "the game" of merchants, was "deceit and flattery," and that "retail shopkeeping... belongs most / rightly to women. If a woman does it... she connives and / deceives more than a man. She will never give up the profit of a single / crumb...".⁵⁸ While such sexually reductionist explanations for female shopkeepers can be easily challenged in other industries where women are found making the majority of purchases,⁵⁹ in the armour industry, customers would primarily have been young men, and perhaps more prone to the manipulations proposed by Keene and Gower. However, while an attractive young woman

⁵⁴ *CWPH i*, 619 (note: Sharpe mis-transcribes his name as "John Tany"); William Herbert, *Antiquities of the Inns of Court and Chancery* (London: Vernor & Hood, 1804), 323

⁵⁵ *CWPH ii*, 164.

⁵⁶ Keene, "Tanners' Widows", 5-6; "Shops and Shopping", 41.

⁵⁷ He cites the surname of a local merchantess, Gunnilda Fierbras ("Proud Arms") as a figure of speech referring to sexual attraction as evidence for this claim. See: Derek Keene, "Cultures de production, de distribution et de consommation en milieu urbain en Angleterre, 1100-1350", *Histoire Urbaine* 16.2 (2006): 34.

⁵⁸ John Gower, *Mirour de l'Omme*, trans., William Burton Wilson (East Lansing: Colleagues Press, 1992), 334, 345, ll. 25453-4, 26329-32. Gower is speaking especially about female victuallers' shops here, but earlier accuses retailers and craftsmen in general of being prone to fraudulent practices.

⁵⁹ Hanawalt, *Wealth of Wives*, 135.

might encourage more business through Keene's ideas of display, and Gower's accusations of deception and flattery, the suggestion that reputation-conscious shopowners were uniformly encouraging their wives and daughters to mimic the behaviours of prostitutes to increase their sales is extremely unlikely.

It is much more likely that female shopkeepers appear as part of the household economy as an attempt to best organise the labour of the household. Keeping shop required a great deal of sitting, watching, and waiting for customers,⁶⁰ and particularly among haubergers and linen-armourers, this made shopkeeping a perfect occupation for a daughter, young wife, servant, or apprentice⁶¹ already labouring on preparatory or finishing work in mail or linen-armour. Mail construction requires little strength, is relatively simple, repetitive, and once learned requires little attention. Claude Blair went so far as to liken it to knitting.⁶² A wife or daughter could easily run a shop, monitor a brewing vat, keep an eye on a child and work on a mail shirt or stuff a gambeson at the same time if necessary. As the economic after-effects of the Black Death made such labour increasingly expensive, the free or cheap labour of daughters, servants and wives would have been very useful for this craft among those households that both made and sold their own products. Among daughters known to be trained in mail-craft like Alice la Haubergere or Agnes Hecche, this arrangement likely described much of their activities in their family economies.

3.3: Marriage, Remarriage and Widowhood: The Work and Contributions of Wives to the Household Economy and Networks of the Armourers

Women's entry into the social and economic networks of the male-dominated armourers' industry was most commonly achieved through their marriage to an armourer; through their fathers' occupational network; or occasionally through a more distant relative

⁶⁰ Mate, "Married Women", 54.

⁶¹ See: Section 3.4 for examples of apprentices running shops.

⁶² Blair, *European Armour*, 188.

or employer in the cases of female apprentices or servants.⁶³ According to Jane Geddes, women were considered *de facto* members of a guild as soon as their husbands or fathers became masters.⁶⁴ No guild records for armourers existed in the fourteenth century, and so the status and activities of female workers in this industry is more difficult to establish. However, the 1344 Girdlers' ordinances and the 1398 leather sellers' ordinances address the labour of the household, and suggest that the situation described was the general custom in London. They stated respectively that no one should "set any woman to work other than his wedded wife or daughter"⁶⁵ and that no one should "...set any man, child, or woman, to work in the... trade, [unless]... bound [as an] apprentice... [or] enrolled, in the trade; their wives and children only excepted, according...[to] the custom and ordinance of the... city".⁶⁶ In this section, I will show the activities undertaken by wives as they appear in the records of the fourteenth century. By examining wills and marriage records, women's roles as the transmitters of wealth, real-estate, and social prestige can be seen among the armourers; by examining judicial complaints, a picture can be made of the kinds of businesses women participated in and contributed to among the armourers, and the challenges they encountered in a male-dominated industry; and by examining employment records and artistic works in popular culture, I will demonstrate the stigma that they faced crossing work-gender lines as widows and *femmes sole* entrepreneurs.

Armourers in the fourteenth century were faced with extremely high operating costs in the form of raw materials, and the higher-than-average cost of specialised tools (particularly among the metal-working armourers) required to set up a workshop.⁶⁷ As such, armourers had most of their capital tied-up in their workshops, tools, raw materials, and finished products, even moderately-priced single examples of which could sell for more than a month's wages at the king's rate, and appear in several wills as among the

⁶³ Hanawalt, *Wealth of Wives*, 38.

⁶⁴ Geddes, "Iron", 186.

⁶⁵ *Mem* 217.

⁶⁶ *Mem*, 547.

⁶⁷ Swanson, *Medieval Artisans*, 129.

most valuable non-property items.⁶⁸ As a result, in order to grow their businesses there was a high demand for fresh capital. The easiest way to acquire that capital was by marriage, through a woman's dowry, dower, or inheritance. As a result, the female role in the redistribution of capital throughout London's economic networks was of paramount importance to both individual armourers and the industry at large, and an armourer marrying a wealthy or well-connected woman could provide himself with both funds and social prestige.⁶⁹ The armourer Thomas le Fleming collected £37 14s 10¼d in 1299, which was his wife Agnes' inheritance from her father; and the armourer John Marchaunt (also called "Le Clerk") inherited a corner house opposite the Guildhall through his wife Leticia's father in 1322.⁷⁰ Similarly, Simon de Wynchecombe's difficult second marriage was a profitable, if not happy match, with Alice de Wynchecombe probably courted for her wealth and station as the heiress to the Ipswich burgess Thomas le Mayster, more than any romantic attraction.⁷¹

Among the armourers, and Londoners in general, a desire to preserve the wealth, prestige, and skills of the network meant that daughters and widows were encouraged to marry or remarry within the social and economic networks to which they already belonged:

"... since the value of property put into... the widows' dowers and children's bequests had increased substantially by 1368, one can understand that guild brothers would want to keep the wealth among themselves. While few husbands took the precaution of insisting that their wives marry within their profession, guild brothers might have had an implicit understanding about the matter... Trade secrets would not leak out if the widow remained within the brotherhood."⁷²

This was true for Leticia Marchaunt, mentioned above, who was the daughter of the merchant Adam de Forsham.⁷³ While her husband John identified himself as an armourer, he is occasionally also identified as both an armourer and merchant, selling both to the

⁶⁸ One example of a pair of plates in 1362 sold for 13s 4d. Most fourteenth-century royal armourers were paid 2-12d/day at the king's wages. See: *CCR 1360-1364*, 335; *CWPH ii*, 164, 340-342; *CPR 1391-1396*, 656.

⁶⁹ See: Thrupp, *Merchant Class*, 29, 105-7; Kowaleski, "The History of Urban Families", 55.

⁷⁰ *LBB*, 93; *CWPH i*, 292.

⁷¹ *CCR 1399-1402*, 133-134; *CCR 1354-1360*, 401.

⁷² Hanawalt, *Wealth of Wives*, 109.

⁷³ *CWPH i*, 292.

Tower of London and to the crown's agents tasked with outfitting five hundred soldiers in 1322.⁷⁴ The same trend of daughters marrying within the craft is seen in Agnes, the daughter of Peter Nayer, discussed below, who married the armourer William de Glendale after her father's death.⁷⁵ When the mayor and aldermen were tasked with directing the marriages of merchant's daughters under their wardship, 84% of them were married into other merchants' families; when examining second marriages in widows, Sylvia Thrupp found an even higher proportion stayed within their original socio-economic network.⁷⁶ One such widow, Katherine Northburgh, was married to one of the masters of the armourers' mystery, John Game, by 1390.⁷⁷ On his death, she married her former husband's executor, the armourer and Sheriff of London, Henry Rede, thereby keeping Game's wealth within the network and combining it with the already substantial wealth of the Rede family.⁷⁸

When daughters of related crafts married into the family, or when widows remarried into such families, they brought with them the skills, inherited properties, and raw materials from their family or previous husbands' trade, and sometimes, their network of contacts. This is particularly true when examining records involving both armourers and their suppliers, the ironmongers. The armourer Peter atte Hethe had married Agnes, the daughter of Edward Gosselyn, by 1378.⁷⁹ Agnes' father was probably an ironmonger like Richard Gosselyn, and so would have been able to help ensure his daughter's comfort by doing close business with her new husband. A similar situation occurs with the guardianship of the ironmonger John Shaftysbury's son and five daughters, all of whom were placed into the guardianship of the armourer Arnold Ingelbright in 1373 on the death of Shaftysbury's wife, who was still alive when his will was enrolled in 1369.⁸⁰ This

⁷⁴ *LBE*, 170; *Subs*, 294.

⁷⁵ *LBF*, 207.

⁷⁶ Thrupp, *Merchant Class*, 28.

⁷⁷ *CWPH ii*, 285.

⁷⁸ *CCR 1422-1429*, 76-77.

⁷⁹ *LBH*, 66; *CWPH ii*, 464.

⁸⁰ *LBG*, 308; *CWPH ii*, 151.

placed the children's sizable inheritances of tenements and shops in the parish of St. John upon Walbrook in Ingelbright's control until their majority, and with them, the remainders of Shaftysbury's businesses and supplies. This connection to the iron supply network through marriage and guardianship may account for some of atte Hethe's and Ingelbright's remarkable wealth and success later in life, as any advantage that could be gained over the lucrative raw material market would increase an armourer's individual market share of the finished goods market.⁸¹

Armourers with wives capable of garnering raw materials, assisting in their trade, or diversifying the household economy into related crafts, had a distinct advantage over those who did not, increasing the productivity of the workshop. As many types of armour incorporated different materials and requisite skills, a wife who was able to work in other aspects of the craft would reduce the amount of intercraft organisation and trading necessary for a product to be completed, increasing the total profit to the household. In larger businesses, if the wife's family was engaged in the same craft and there was more work than the individual workshop could process, the household workshop would likely be able to secure piece-work labour through the wife's family much more easily, and possibly cheaply, than could an armourer without such connections.

For immigrant workers, marrying an armourers' daughter could be the most effective way to gain entry into the London armourers' social and economic networks. Agnes Nayer, the daughter of the successful armourer Peter Nayer, married the Northumberland immigrant and armourer William de Glendale.⁸² Peter Nayer was dead by 1346 and they were married by 1349, and so their meeting suggests that she maintained connections to the armourers' social or economic networks after her father's death. It is possible that she did this by assisting in the business properties of her brother, who had inherited her father's properties and business on the deaths of her mother and other

⁸¹ Swanson, *Medieval Artisans*, 129; Armourers and Ironmongers commonly granted one another the guardianship of their children. See: *LBD*, 300-301; *LBG*, 308.

⁸² *CWPH i*, 535; *LBF*, 207.

brothers. Between 1346 and 1349, Agnes' mother, all three brothers and one sister died, her brother Nicholas leaving a nuncupative will, which suggests that her entire family (with her, and her sisters Isolda and Leticia exceptions) were victims of the plague.⁸³ As a result, all of Peter Nayer's wealth passed to his daughters, who, in Agnes's case, combined it and the inherited goods her brother had inherited from their father with her and her husband's household, to the benefit of their business.

This case is particularly interesting since Agnes Nayer's husband William de Glendale became exceptionally prominent and wealthy in London. By 1363, he was the king's armourer, and was granting loans of as much as £500.⁸⁴ His start appears to have come from his new wife's position in the armourers' socioeconomic network, to which he had no apparent connections as a Northumberland immigrant. After his death in 1368, her financial and social position was strong enough to negotiate a marriage to Roger de la Chaumbre, the escheator of Northamptonshire.⁸⁵ Tracing their family in the records reveals that her daughter Joan (by de Glendale) would later marry Sir John de la Chambre (possibly Roger de la Chaumbre's son by a previous wife).⁸⁶ While Sir John and Joan likely moved to Oxfordshire by 1404, they and their family clearly retained a connection to the London armourers' economic network even outside the city and separated from the activities of the craft itself, through their management of inherited property holdings and leases. They rented out two of de Glendale's armourers' shops in Fridaystreet to the armourer William Langford from 1404-1411,⁸⁷ and in 1402/3, they rented out a brewery called "Le Horshed" which had been previously owned by Reginald le Hauberger, Alice la Hauberger and her family, and would later be partially owned by armourer Richard

⁸³ *LBF*, 207, n. 15.

⁸⁴ TNA C 241/144/69; TNA C 131/184/21; TNA C 131/184/22.

⁸⁵ *CCR 1381-1385*, 27.

⁸⁶ *CPMR ii*, 167-168; *CPMR iii*, 272.

⁸⁷ *CPMR iii*, 272.

Person, the former servant and inheritor of the prominent armourer Simon de Wynchecombe.⁸⁸

Inheritance among armourers' widows and children also related to the inheritance of the business at large. Caroline Barron suggested that a widow's continuance of her husband's business was not "merely *allowed*... but [that she] was... expected to do so."⁸⁹ George Unwin, Barbara Hanawalt and Peter Fleming have all remarked upon widows acting as executors to their husbands' estates and came to the conclusion that the women must have been very familiar with the day-to-day operation of their husbands' businesses, debts, and deals in order to do so, and that this implies that they were "one-half of a business partnership";⁹⁰ and Derek Keene in his study of medieval Winchester concluded that widows' continuance of their husbands' businesses suggested such a partnership in the craft activities and business during his lifetime.⁹¹ Among the armourers, the master of armourers John Game mentioned above chose his wife Katherine to be his executrix, as did the king's armourer Thomas de Copham with his wife Albreda.⁹² In the case of the latter, she was de Copham's sole executor, and is found in 1335 suing the king for debt of £17 13s 11½d for armour, jewellery and other items supplied by her husband to the king,⁹³ indicating the familiarity she had with her husband's business and expenses.⁹⁴

Game and de Copham were two of the most prominent armourers of their time, and their wives' integration into their businesses appears to have been common throughout the armourers' networks. Widows were legally entitled to the primary home by free bench,⁹⁵ and under London's borough law, they were entitled to at least one-third of their former

⁸⁸ *HGL*, 'St. Mary Colechurch 105/26'; *DCoAD iv*, A. 6869.

⁸⁹ Barron, "Golden Age", 45.

⁹⁰ *LLS*, 59; Hanawalt, *Wealth of Wives*, 120-1, 174; Fleming, "Family Life", 94.

⁹¹ Keene, *Medieval Winchester*, 389.

⁹² *CPR 1396-1399*, 390; *CCR 1337-1337*, 423.

⁹³ *CCR 1337-1337*, 423.

⁹⁴ Justin Colson's work on fifteenth century London wills supports this. In his findings, wives accounted for 75% of all executors, and when they served as the executrix, widows were found the sole executors in around half of the wills he examined. See: Colson, "Local Communities", 256.

⁹⁵ Barron, "Golden Age", 41.

husbands' total estate,⁹⁶ but this was generally the minimum that a widow of an armourer could expect. In 68.4% of armourers' wills recorded at Husting where an armourer was survived by a widow and children between 1279 and 1348, the widow inherited all of the husbands' properties contained in the will, with the children inheriting only on her death, while 80% inherited the entirety of the husbands' properties in those wills enrolled between 1349 and 1393.⁹⁷ While many bequests to children were probably handled outside of the will, these bequests indicate that armourers' widows were clearly expected to be familiar enough with their husbands' accounts to maintain their properties for their children's eventual inheritance. There are exceptions to this, however: Simon de Wynchecombe left bequests to the Fraternity of Linen-Armourers and Tailors, his son, his sister, his servant, and to the altar beneath which his first wife Johanna was buried, as well as numerous other religious bequests; but to his widow Alice he only left "such share of his goods as of right and by the custom of the City of London she ought to have, and no more."⁹⁸ Alice de Wynchecombe, and Simon de Wynchecombe's former servant, the armourer Richard Person, appear in the records still fighting over their inherited properties fourteen years after Simon de Wynchecombe's death.⁹⁹

Armourers' widows overseeing their deceased husbands' businesses were clearly fairly common, however. This was certainly the case for the aforementioned Cristina de Siende, whose husband Edward died in 1374. She inherited his leasehold in the forge, while their daughter inherited his other property, a bed, and armour for her husband, and his apprentice inherited "illam petram et la Glacer cum toto apparatu pendent' propinquius lincoln,"¹⁰⁰ which Reginald Sharpe interpreted to be his furbishing tools.¹⁰¹ Siende is

⁹⁶ Hanawalt, *Wealth of Wives*, 6-7; Barron, "Golden Age", 36.

⁹⁷ See: *CWPH i* and *CWPH ii*.

⁹⁸ *CWPH ii*, 340-342.

⁹⁹ *LPA*, 194.

¹⁰⁰ "That stone and the [Glacer] with all equipment [that are hanging?] near [Lincoln's Inn]" Translation mine.

¹⁰¹ Reginald Sharpe interprets "Glacer" here to be equivalent to "glacyn" or "glase," signifying to make things bright or furbish. *CWPH ii*, 164, n. 2.

identified as a master of the smiths,¹⁰² but his bequest of armour to his son-in-law and furbishing tools to his apprentice indicate that he was plying his skills at multiple professions. While Cristina does not appear again in the records, her husband clearly considered her to be proficient enough in the craft to oversee his business, or to remarry another who could. The gift of tools to his apprentice demonstrates that Cristina did not physically work the forge that she inherited, but that this business was continued through his apprentice, whose training Cristina was responsible for completing. Similar instances are found in the cases of Cecilia le Furbur (1260/61), Agnes de Norwych (1329), Johanna le Clerke (1348) and Eustachia L'Armurer (1348). Cecilia and Agnes inherited their late husbands' furbishing shops; Johanna and her children inherited an interest in some of her husband's properties along with his servant, Simon de Caumpes (probably an apprentice or journeyman), implying that Johanna was overseeing de Caumpe's work as he completed his apprenticeship, if necessary; while Eustachia inherited all of her husband's property, provided that she see to the maintenance and education of his daughter.¹⁰³ Cecilia le Furbur had two sons and three daughters to help her operate her husband's two shops; and Eustachia L'Armurer had a daughter and a son to help her; but Agnes de Norwych was childless, and so it is possible that she worked the business as a furbisher herself, or that she disposed of it to other craftsmen.

Women working as *femmes soles* craftswomen in the records of the armour industry were very rare,¹⁰⁴ but not unheard of. A Cristina le Fourbour, whose will was dated to 1330, may have been one.¹⁰⁵ While her occupational surname uses the masculine "le," the feminine name suggests her gender. This gender confusion may be the result of a scribal error,¹⁰⁶ or it may have been her choice to use the more common, masculine format

¹⁰² *LBG*, 291.

¹⁰³ *CWPH i* 9, 355, 539, 558; *LBE*, 232.

¹⁰⁴ Kowaleski has estimated that less than 5% of widows actively contributed to their deceased husbands' craft, although her data came from early modern accounts, rather than medieval ones. See: Maryanne Kowaleski, "Crafts, Gilds, and Women", 478.

¹⁰⁵ *CWPH i*, 361.

¹⁰⁶ As she only appears in a single record, this cannot be confirmed.

of the title, or it may simply have been the direct adoption of her former husband's, or even former employer's name.¹⁰⁷ If she came by the name through family or marriage, she would normally identify herself by that relation, but she is not identified as such in her will. Whether through error or intent, the gendered usage of the name points toward a social preconception of the occupation being predominantly a masculine one. However, her usage of the surname in its own right, combined with her rental properties in Fleet Street amongst tanners and small metal-workers, implies that she practised the craft on some level. A Katherine the smith-wife was also employed at Westminster in 1348 for "steeling and battering the masons' tools",¹⁰⁸ whom Jane Geddes has suggested may have been Katherine de Bury, the wife and mother of two king's smiths, who is discussed below.¹⁰⁹ "Battering" (*bateracione*), was the term given to sharpening and reworking the edges of the masons' axes and tools at the worksite,¹¹⁰ and is identical to some of the lighter work done by furbishers on weapons and armour, and so it would not be surprising if this Katharine worked in both industries.

Wives also took control of the management of their husbands' businesses when they were away at war. Armourers were particularly valuable men on campaign, and several of London's armourers appear among lists of soldiers in the fourteenth century. Leticia, the wife of the armourer John Marchaunt; and Alice, the wife of John Tavy, master of the linen-armourers, certainly would have maintained their husbands' businesses and apprentices while they were on campaign in Scotland in 1334 and France in 1338 respectively; and Katherine de Bury held the office of the king's forge while her son was away on campaign in 1346.¹¹¹ In the cases of linen-armourers, armour retailers, haubergers and some furbishers, these responsibilities would have consisted of managing apprentices, workers and servants, as well as the contributions to the business they normally made as

¹⁰⁷ *Subs*, 31-32.

¹⁰⁸ E. 470, 18. In L.F. Salzman, *Building in England down to 1540* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967), 337.

¹⁰⁹ Geddes, "Iron", 186.

¹¹⁰ Salzman, *Building*, 356.

¹¹¹ *LBE*, 4; *LBF*, 26; Geddes, "Iron", 186.

members of the household economy. Among the more physically strenuous businesses of the heaumers and plate-armourers, in all but the most exceptional cases, wives and widows taking over their husbands' businesses were probably overseeing the business in preparation for an apprentice, son, or new husband to take over, but not fully participating in the craft.

On remarriage, a widow's new husband had the right to practise the craft of the previous spouse, "whether [they] were competent in the craft or not",¹¹² though craft ordinances were strongly opposed to incompetent workers claiming the profession. It was therefore very important for wives and daughters of armourers to be trained to a very high level of proficiency in the craft, not only so that they could contribute to their family business, but also so that they could potentially run it in their husbands' absence or death, and to properly train apprentices, children, servants, and new husbands in the trade. Generally, while a wife was married, she fell under the coverture of her husband; as a *femme covert*, her legal identity became part of his, and he was responsible for her financial risks and conduct.¹¹³ Technically, though, married women could run their own businesses as *femmes soles*, as widows could, provided that it was her own craft, and that her husband approved but did not intermeddle.¹¹⁴ While she would be answerable for her own taxes, rent on shops, and credit, if goods were stolen from her, she still had to make a joint plea with her husband for their recovery.¹¹⁵

English women were rarely able to establish themselves as *femmes soles* independent craftsmen or traders outside of the businesses of their husbands or fathers if the trade required a large-scale capital investment,¹¹⁶ but there is evidence in London that some women were able to establish such businesses among the armourers. One example of this is found in Alice, the wife of the mercer Thomas de Cantebrugge, who was involved in

¹¹² Swanson, *Medieval Artisans*, 115.

¹¹³ Hanawalt, *Wealth of Wives*, 161, 169; Marjorie McIntosh, "Women, Credit, and Family Relationships in England: 1300-1620", *Journal of Family History* 30.2 (April 2005): 151, n. 32.

¹¹⁴ Barron, "Golden Age", 40.

¹¹⁵ Barron, "Golden Age". 39.

¹¹⁶ Goldberg, *Women and Work*, 99.

either the large-scale craft or trade of armour. On June 24th 1324, her property was invaded by Hugh de Gartone,¹¹⁷ John Somere,¹¹⁸ Henry Cheyni, Simon Huwes,¹¹⁹ Robert le Goldbetere, John de Stayntone, and the prominent armourers William le Haubergere¹²⁰ and Nicholas le Clerk, “ceynturer.”¹²¹ After threatening her with swords, the thieves carried away two-hundred pounds worth of “acketouns... jambieres, habergeons, bassenets, and other goods.”¹²² As in 1322, a basinet, aketon and pair of iron gloves together cost approximately 16d,¹²³ this massive theft of potentially hundreds of items can be interpreted as a robbery of what was either a well-stocked, diversified workshop or a storehouse for a shop.

It is interesting that the legal response to this theft and home-invasion was very light when compared to other cases of theft in the fourteenth century, where perpetrators were often punished by hanging for much smaller thefts. Instead, Alice’s robbers received their liberty with only the warning that they must do her “speedy justice”, or be summoned again to court.¹²⁴ It is possible, given the light punishment and the prominence of the robbers, that the items stolen actually belonged to the thieves and were in Alice’s care as a retailer; or that the raw materials used to make them were sold to her on credit, and they were attempting to recover a bad debt; or that they were attempting to recover goods which had increased in value because of rumours of impending war with France at the time.¹²⁵ In either case, the prominence of the robbers and the evidence that such varieties and

¹¹⁷ A mercer, Sheriff of London (1313-1314), and alderman of Coleman Street Ward (1319-1320, 1327) who immigrated to London from Yorkshire. See: *Subs*, 65; *Aldermen*, 107.

¹¹⁸ Likely the son of Reginald Somer, who Hugh de Gartone was a witness to Edmund of Baconsthorp manumitting from servitude only seven days prior to this robbery. See: *CCR 1323-1327*, 192; *LBD*, 141.

¹¹⁹ Hugh de Gartone’s apprentice. See: *Liber Albus*, 375-376; *LBE*, 189.

¹²⁰ The king’s hauberger. He was also a finder of soldiers for Edward II in 1218, helped to establish the Armourers’ Regulations in 1322, was an appraiser of spearheads for the cutlers in 1320, and by the time of his retirement in 1328 was granted a place at Deerhurst Priory by Edward III in recognition of his long service. See: *LBE*, 94, 132; *Mem*, 145; *CCR 1327-1330*, 423.

¹²¹ The same as Nicholas le Clerk, armourer, discussed elsewhere. “ceynturer” is the Norman equivalent of “girdler.” Thomas de Canterbrugge witnessed a lease between le Clerk and Isabella Godchepe for tenements in the parish of St. Mary le Bow sixteen years later, so this event was evidently put behind them. See: Charles Bardsley, *English Surnames: Their Sources and Significations* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1875), 349; *HGL*, St. Mary le Bow 104/33; *LBF* 56-57; *LBE*, 189.

¹²² *Liber Albus*, 375-376; *LBE*, 189.

¹²³ This sale was confirmed by William le Haubergere. See: *LBE*, 170.

¹²⁴ *Liber Albus*, 376.

¹²⁵ The War of St. Sardos began that month.

quantities of armour were kept in Alice's home suggests that she was an important figure in the sales or production of the London armour industry.

While the majority of northern European craft fraternities did accept women as members in the late Middle Ages,¹²⁶ I have found no records of female armourers appearing to be recognised by the industry in general, or using the title "armourer" rather than specific occupational titles or surnames (such as "Haubergere" or "Fourbour"). Herbert Westlake interpreted the 1453 allowance for sisters in the armourers' guild charter to indicate that it was a parochial, rather than a trade guild, based on his assumption that women were not capable of practicing the profession.¹²⁷ While Westlake's antiquated ideas indicate more about his own society's biases than medieval London's, there can be no doubt that female armourers were not granted the same rights as their male counterparts. In the case of Alice de Canterbrugge, while the armour was clearly her property and probably the largest part of her occupation, she is identified by her marriage to Thomas de Canterbrugge, rather than by her status as a craft- or tradeswoman.¹²⁸ This being said, it would be improbable that Alice was not connected to a fraternity (even if only by extension through her husband), as she was clearly doing large-scale business and would need the respectability provided by a parochial or craft fraternity to establish the networks of mercantile-credit to do business on that scale.¹²⁹ An unnamed wife of the armourer William Broke, and Johanna, the wife of the armourer Lowys Fox appear in the records of the Fraternity of the Holy Trinity at St Botolph without Aldersgate in 1392 and 1400 respectively, but as neither appear again in the London records, it is not possible to ascertain what impact this may have had on their daily economic life.¹³⁰

¹²⁶ Rosser, "Crafts, Guilds and Work", 22. Also see Justin Colson's work on the presence of women and widows in the Fraternity of Salve Regina in St Magnus' Church, in: Colson, "Local Communities", 247.

¹²⁷ Herbert Westlake, *The Parish Gilds of Mediaeval England* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1919), 24.

¹²⁸ As stated above, a joint plea was required for their recovery. See: Barron, "Golden Age", 39.

¹²⁹ See: Rosser, "Crafts, Guilds and Work", 10.

¹³⁰ "The Register: Extracts and memoranda, 1377-1415 (21-39)," in *ParFrat*, 4-18.

While I have found limited evidence of female armourers making plate armour at forges in London, female smiths, cutlers and furbishers appear with some frequency both in London and in England at large. P.J.P Goldberg identified twenty-seven female smiths in Yorkshire's West Riding from the 1379 poll tax, many of whom, he argued, took to the craft as children, and "a few are known to be widows since they were assisted by their children".¹³¹ London's poll tax records from this period no longer exist, and while Yorkshire's rich local supply market of iron made its production economy quite different from London's,¹³² similar pressures were placed on the armour industries in both areas in the fourteenth century to provide equipment for wars against France and Scotland. However, London was a much busier medieval metropolis and also considerably more strictly regulated in its crafts than rural Yorkshire, and so London women were less likely to be recorded as armourers operating outside of their household economies with their husbands. Where women do appear working at forges in London, as with the other armoury crafts, they are usually identified by their relation to the household patriarch and primary craftsman.

In London, the most famous example of a female forge-worker was Katherine de Bury, who was married to one king's smith and mother to his successor. Jane Geddes noted that in 1346 she was paid an equal wage to that of her son (8d. per day) to "keep up the king's forge in the Tower and carry on the work of the forge" while he was away at war.¹³³ Smiths in London were generalists who made armour and weapons, as well as other day-to-day metal goods, and armourers occasionally were identified as smiths in the records. Katherine de Bury and her family certainly would have been involved in armour production for the crown, as well as arrow and weapon-smithing, and other necessary

¹³¹ Goldberg, *Women, Work and Life Cycle*, 147-148.

¹³² Schubert, *British Iron*, 103-106.

¹³³ Such work included the manufacture of armour. See: Howard Colvin, ed., *King's Works*, i. 222-4, in Geddes, "Iron", 186; McIntosh, "Women", 155-156; Michelle Brown, trans., *Holkham Picture Bible: A Facsimile* (London: The British Library, 2007), 75-76.

productions of the wartime king's forge.¹³⁴ However, while it is entirely probable that de Bury was familiar with the running of a forge through her household contributions to her husband and son's crafts, and she may have overseen the operation of king's forge, technically she had no right to occupy her son's position, even temporarily. London women are occasionally found inheriting public offices, and could receive the pay for the office, but they were not legally permitted to actually practise them.¹³⁵

This is possibly why her pay is specified in the record as being equal to that of her son's, when women's pay was normally lower than men's in the fourteenth century. Eight pence per day is a common wage for the office at that time, and so it is more likely that this was the standard operation of the office, rather than any recognition of equality. Sandy Bardsley found that in most cases, the highest paid women only achieved wage-equality with the lowest paid men in the fourteenth century.¹³⁶ Among forge workers, this idea can be supported with evidence from Weardale, County Durham, where the smith John Gylle's wife's wages are itemised based on her tasks, such as pumping bellows, breaking up rock,¹³⁷ or "for diverse labours."¹³⁸ While some tasks paid more than others, her pay was almost entirely tied to the number of blooms that her husband smelted, for which he was paid 6d and she ½d.¹³⁹

This is considerably less than the average of approximately 70% of male labourers' wages found by Sandy Bardsley in other occupations, even when compared with the wages given to male assistants in other trades.¹⁴⁰ John Hatcher has suggested that such wage differences were primarily a result Bardsley's examination of time-rate, rather than piece-rate wages, as women being weaker than men meant that their productivity over time was

¹³⁴ The king's forge routinely impressed armourers and weapons manufacturers for this work. See: Section 5.1.

¹³⁵ Hanawalt, *Wealth of Wives*, 170.

¹³⁶ Sandy Bardsley, "Women's Work Reconsidered: Gender and Wage Differentiation in Late Medieval England", *Past and Present* 165 (Nov., 1999): 5; Sandy Bardsley, "Women's Work Reconsidered: Gender and Wage Differentiation in Late Medieval England: Reply", *Past and Present* 173 (Nov., 2001): 199-202.

¹³⁷ "Le beloves sufflans et petras mineræ frangens." Gaillard Lapsley, "The Account Roll of a Fifteenth Century Iron Master", *The English Historical Review* 14 (1899): 509-29. 511-12; Geddes, "Iron", 187.

¹³⁸ "Pro diversis laboribus suis." Lapsley, "Account Roll", 511.

¹³⁹ Lapsley, "Account Roll", 511-12.

¹⁴⁰ Sandy Bardsley, "Women's Work", 29.

less than that of men, resulting in lower time-rate efficiency.¹⁴¹ However, in the case of John Gylle's wife, her wage was tied directly to the piece-rate wage of her husband, and suggests that her work might be better understood as her contribution to her husband's wages in their household economy, rather than as an independent economic presence. This interpretation of female wage as an aspect of the total household wage recognises the patriarchal forces on gender-value employment discussed by Bardsley, and the payment methods that led to lower female wages in strenuous labour suggested by Hatcher.¹⁴² However, Gylle's wife's mere 1/12th rate wage attached to her husband's productivity implies a contemporary bias against women's work in the metal industry. In Katherine de Bury's case, it is unlikely due to public-office prohibitions that she was acting as the king's smith in anything but name, but if she were, then Bardsley's predicted lesser pay might have been seen there.

In Martha Howell's introduction to *Women, Production, and Patriarchy in Late Medieval Cities*, she reminds the reader that the fact that women who were entrusted with the management of forges "may not literally have been hammering at the forge or wielding the bellows is economically, if not existentially, irrelevant. It was she who collected the profits."¹⁴³ But these profits were not likely to have been lucrative for most women involved in the craft outside of their husband or father's coverture. Female metal-working armourers were rare in London's records, but when they appear, evidence suggests that their labour was not considered to be as high-quality, or as valuable as that of men's; and this may be one reason why most women who appear in the armourers' records appear as mail-makers, cloth-armourers, and shopkeepers working within their husbands' or fathers' household, rather than furbishers, heaumers or platers. Without a strong reputation for

¹⁴¹ Mavis Mate, looking at similar material points out that where the number of hours worked is not recorded that the difference in pay may be a result of men working longer hours than women. See: Hatcher, "Debate", 192-193; Mate, "Married Women", 56-58; Sandy Bardsley, "Women's Work", 4.

¹⁴² Hatcher, "Debate", 192-3; Sandy Bardsley, "Reply", 201-202.

¹⁴³ Howell, *Women, Production, and Patriarchy*, 3.

quality, a craftswoman could find herself without credit, customers, or any of the profits anticipated by Howell.



Figure 3.1 and 3.2: Left: Smith wife forging nails: Queen Mary's Psalter, British Library, Royal 2 B VII, f.252.v, London, c. 1310-1320. http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/Viewer.aspx?ref=royal_ms_2_b_vii_f001r (accessed June 14, 2015).

Right: Smith Wife Forging Nails. Holkham Bible, British Library Additional MS 47682 f.31, c. 1337-1340. From: *The Holkham Picture Bible: A Facsimile*. Translated by Michelle Brown. London: The British Library, 2007. Plate 31.

In Hatcher's debates over medieval wages with Bardsley, he demonstrated the same assumptions about medieval women's labour which would have resulted in these reputational challenges in the fourteenth century. In his explanation of the lower wages found among women in the period, he suggested that because women are not as strong as men in tasks involving lifting and carrying, that contemporary biases against wage equity had rational, rather than discriminatory origins.¹⁴⁴ However, medieval British popular culture provides a wealth of evidence favouring such a discriminatory interpretation of these wage issues. Depictions of female metal-workers in literature and drama cannot be taken literally, but they can be useful in understanding contemporary popular preconceptions and stereotypes. The figure of the female smith appears in English art, poetry and drama of the late Middle Ages. In the Harley 4196 version of the *Northern*

¹⁴⁴ Hatcher, "Debate", 193.

Passion Play, she is depicted as “a fell woman and full of strife”,¹⁴⁵ who forged the huge and misshapen nails for Christ’s crucifixion (Figures 3.1 and 3.2). In the *Cornish Passion Play*, and Harley 4196, she is not strong enough to wield the heavy hammer properly and so works the bellows and either brusquely instructs her customers in how to shape the iron themselves, or has them help her wield the hammer; but the awkwardness of this and her poor skill results in a product that is “full grete and rudely wrought”.¹⁴⁶ While she demonstrates that she has the knowledge to manage and operate the forge and work metal, she hasn’t the strength to do so. Smithing-hammers were exceptionally heavy, and as these stories illustrate, had to be wielded precisely in order to create a fine product. Plate armour required much greater strength and skill to create, and its high raw-material investment demanded top-quality workmanship in order to ensure a profitable selling price. If these examples from literature and drama point to a popular bias against the skills and reputations (and by extension, the amount of mercantile credit they would be afforded in their businesses) of female armourers in the fourteenth century, it is not surprising that there are so few examples in London from this period.

While many women in the armourers’ industry can certainly be best described as contributing to a “family economy,” the reality of the community was much more complex, and made more so by the large number of armouring crafts that contributed to the industry. As has been stated, the many hours required to draw wire, form it into rings, and link those rings into a pattern meant that mail-making was ideally suited as a family craft, rather than an individual one, and as Heather Swanson pointed out, “it seems probable that women sewed the defensive jackets of padded cloth and leather to which mail was attached.”¹⁴⁷ There are records to support this from Paris, where in 1322 an “Ada” appears

¹⁴⁵ “Harley MS 4196”, in *The Northern Passion* ed. Frances Foster (London: Early English Text Society, 1913), 173 l. 1485.

¹⁴⁶ Edwin Norris (ed), *The Ancient Cornish Drama*, Vol. 1 (New York: Benjamin Blom, 1859), 437-439, ll. 2700-2739; Harley MS 4196, ll. 1495-7, 1497, 1501 in *Northern Passion*, 173; Richard Morris, “Holkham MS., f. 31”, *Legends of the Holy Rood* (London: Early English Text Society, 1871), 86, l. 849-851.

¹⁴⁷ Swanson, *Medieval Artisans*, 71.

in the Chamber of Accounts being paid 40 sol, 4d for sewing gambesons.¹⁴⁸ Furbishing work had a wide range of difficulty depending upon what was being repaired, and so again wives and daughters could easily find ways of assisting in tasks or potentially working independently. If the full range of “hammer-and-tongs” armour-smithing was beyond all but exceptionally strong female armourers, it should also be remarked that the same was true for all but exceptionally strong men.

Women’s roles in the armourers’ social and economic networks included contributions to the craft, but while few forged steel, they did forge the social and economic connections that allowed the armourers’ community to thrive and grow. Wives, widows and daughters connected craft families together through marriages, incorporating new immigrants who brought with them the new techniques that would revolutionise the craft over the fourteenth century; they funded the growth of the industry through their dowries and dowers; increased the number of workshops in London through their inheritances; and were trusted with the upkeep and training of the next generation of craftsmen in their husbands’ absence or death. Their contributions to their family economies allowed their family businesses to grow and helped to meet the sharply increasing demand caused by the Hundred Years War in an environment of the dramatic demographic shortfall caused by the Black Death.

While the most strenuous labour of the armourers’ network does not appear to have been undertaken except in exceptional circumstances by the women of the network, the difficulty of the tasks that the craft posed should not be interpreted as a firmly entrenched notion of gendered tasks for the period, but nor should the existence of women’s specialised training and employment here be interpreted as a universal revolution in family labour and women’s rights. The situation among the armourers was far too varied and complex to be summed up by terms like a “Golden Age” for women’s labour and freedom. Some women among the armourers’ network prospered within their households by their

¹⁴⁸ Ffoulkes, *The Armourer and his Craft*, 86.

contributions and training, while others would have seen very little additional freedom or personal income as a result of their contributions to the household economy. The final sentiment that should be taken from this investigation comes from the smith's wife of the Holkham Picture Bible. In this image (Figure 3.2), and that of the Queen Mary Psalter (Figure 3.1) she is depicted forging nails, and while large they are not crudely done, as they are described in the poems and dramas. Here, she steps in to the labour that her husband is unable to do because of his injured hand and says, "Por ceo ne faudra que i[l] ne ines serrunt forgez,"¹⁴⁹ and completes the job. James Farr suggested that the female contribution to the household economy was highly interconnected with the market economy at large, and the success of family businesses.¹⁵⁰ In the wartime and post-plague environments of the fourteenth century, I would argue that they understood that as well, and that for many women, the difficulty of the task was not so daunting if, to paraphrase Holkham's smithwife, "it was needful that it be done."

3.4: The Contributions, Roles, and Experiences of Apprentices, Journeymen, and Servants in the Household Economy

Apprentices and servants were all important to the armourers' household economies, especially after the Black Death, when armourers' immediate families were smaller and the demand for armour to supply the war in France was increasing. Only masters and their widows were permitted to "maintain workshops, [and] hire apprentices and other workers" to work for them.¹⁵¹ These workers may have been journeymen members of the craft, or contracted servants, but as Gervase Rosser rightly reminded us, these roles, while defined by a hierarchical labour structure, were necessarily fluid, and rules defining them were more idealistic than realistic pictures of the urban craft

¹⁴⁹ "It is needful that they be forged." See: *The Holkham Bible*, 76.

¹⁵⁰ Farr, *Artisans*, 107-8. Matthew Davies similarly argued that "The security and solvency of individual enterprises owed a great deal... to the participation of all members of the family in the productive process." See: Davies, "The Tailors of London", 264.

¹⁵¹ Kowaleski and Bennett, "Crafts, Gilds, and Women", 476, 478.

economy.¹⁵² A journeyman or servant could live in an armourer's household or independently, be a master who lacked the funds to establish his own workshop and elected to work for another master,¹⁵³ be a newly-raised apprentice, or simply a paid labourer, as evidenced by the bladesmiths' ordinances forbidding journeymen to be taught trade secrets as their apprentices were.¹⁵⁴

The ordinances and records of service of the armourers' network rarely distinguish between apprentices, journeymen, and servants, and so the question of who these persons were, and what their role in the armourers' household economies was, becomes difficult to answer. Peter Fleming defined service to be in itself a form of apprenticeship; and Barbara Hanawalt stated that "there was little difference between being a child of the household and being a servant, because people in both groups were occupied with similar tasks."¹⁵⁵ Skilled young armourers like Simon de Wynchecombe's servant Richard Person were almost certainly working as long-term journeymen or apprentices, but are identified in the records as servants.¹⁵⁶ P.J.P Goldberg explained that this term was more dynamic and subtle in medieval usage than today, defining it as an unequal relationship entered into consensually or contractually, which engendered a sense of mutual obligation and emotional connection.¹⁵⁷ While there were differences in the contract periods and remuneration between apprentices, journeymen and servants, all of these roles can be argued to have met Goldberg's definition of service within the armourers' household economies. However, particularly after the Black Death, the servants of the armourers' network are indistinguishable in their duties, rights, and expectations of inheritance to apprentices or journeymen.

¹⁵² Rosser, "Crafts, Guilds, and Work", 7-8, 16.

¹⁵³ Rosser, "Crafts, Guilds, and Work", 16.

¹⁵⁴ *Mem*, 569; Geddes, "Iron", 183.

¹⁵⁵ Fleming, "Family Life", 74; Hanawalt, *Growing Up*, 179.

¹⁵⁶ *CWPH ii*, 341-342.

¹⁵⁷ P.J.P. Goldberg, "What was a Servant?", in *Concepts and Patterns of Service in the Later Middle Ages*, ed. Anne Curry & Elizabeth Matthew (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2000), 2.

Apprenticeship was one of several ways that London armourers sought the freedom of the City, but while it is probably the best known because of the numbers of regulations surrounding apprenticeship, it was far from being the easiest or fastest. As has been stated, new husbands of widows who inherited their husbands' crafts had the right to practise that craft regardless of their actual level of competence;¹⁵⁸ but the freedom could also be gained "by redemption" (purchase), such as in the example of the armourer John de Kesteven, who paid a mark for the freedom to operate his shop in 1310.¹⁵⁹ This practice was particularly common among foreign immigrants to London (Kesteven likely came from Lincolnshire);¹⁶⁰ but the practice is rarely used among armourers after the changes to London's constitution in 1319,¹⁶¹ and efforts were made to control the movement of labour and production standards in the volatile post-plague labour market.¹⁶²

While the origins of the training of armourers' apprentices predate the bounds of this thesis, it is interesting that the 1322 armourers' ordinances make no provisions for it, and they appear in few records at the beginning of the fourteenth century. The heaumers' ordinances of 1347 highlight just how important apprenticeship was to the foundation of the mistery, with four out of nine articles directly relating to apprenticeship and service.¹⁶³ This suggests that the desire to regulate armourers' training was at least as important to the formation of the early metal-armourers' mistery as their self-governance (four articles) and ability to control their marketplace (three articles) was.¹⁶⁴ Therefore, it is important to understand the function that apprentices served in the armourers' household economies and how this contributed to the development of the broader market economy.

The heaumers' ordinances lay out a standard term of apprenticeship of no less than seven years, but in many cases it took longer, and there are early examples in related

¹⁵⁸ Swanson, *Medieval Artisans*, 115.

¹⁵⁹ *LBD*, 45.

¹⁶⁰ Eilert Ekwall, *Studies on the Population of Medieval London* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1956), 175.

¹⁶¹ See: Williams, *Medieval London*, 266, 282-284.

¹⁶² Geddes, "Iron", 183.

¹⁶³ *Mem*, 237-238.

¹⁶⁴ *Mem*, 237-238.

industries of shorter terms.¹⁶⁵ Robert Wormwell, the apprentice of the armourer John Scot, signed on for an eight-year apprenticeship in 1369,¹⁶⁶ though some armourers took as long as fourteen years, and sixteen-year apprenticeships existed in other trades in London in the fourteenth century.¹⁶⁷ A.H. Thomas equated this long period of instruction in apprenticeship to adoption, and suggested that many masters may have been their apprentices' kin or known their families through local social networks, which supports this chapter's argument that household and workshop membership was closely related.¹⁶⁸ However, while this was certainly true in some cases, it was very much in the masters' best interests to prolong apprenticeships for as long as possible, as apprenticeship provided them with essentially free workshop labour.¹⁶⁹

Therefore losing one's apprentices was a real concern among fourteenth-century craftsmen – and one which they took measures to prevent. The ordinances of the heaumers (1347), blacksmiths (1372) and bladesmiths (1408) all include prohibitions against employing, withdrawing or enticing away the apprentices of other craft members, and similar prohibitions can be found among the furbishers' ordinances (1350) against employing other men's servants.¹⁷⁰ The heaumers even decreed that any apprentice who was indebted to his master at the end of his term would have to continue serving his master until he was satisfied, and no other tradesman could hire the former apprentice until the debt had been paid.¹⁷¹ This kind of provision allowed unscrupulous masters to legally lengthen the term of service even further, and for apprentices in such situations, it became closer to indentured servitude than adoption.¹⁷²

¹⁶⁵ Clement Passemer was Manekin le Heaumer's apprentice for only six years in 1273, and the kisser John le Kyng had an apprentice with only a five year term. See: *Mem*, 238; *LBD*, 107, 121, 143.

¹⁶⁶ *CPMR ii*, 195-6.

¹⁶⁷ Pfaffenbichler, *Armourers*, 29; A.H. Thomas, "Introduction", *CPMR ii*, xxxiii.

¹⁶⁸ Thomas "Introduction," *CPMR ii*, xxxiii.

¹⁶⁹ Pfaffenbichler, *Armourers*, 29; Swanson, *Medieval Artisans*, 115.

¹⁷⁰ *Mem*, 237-8; 361-2; 537-9; 569-70.

¹⁷¹ *Mem*, 238.

¹⁷² Matthew Davies has argued that masters lengthening their apprentices' terms of service also came from a desire to restrict access to the freedom of the City. See: Davies, "The Tailors of London", 186.

The ordinances made it particularly difficult for armourers' apprentices who were abandoned by their masters, even if the master no longer lived in London. The abovementioned apprentice Robert Wormwell was abandoned by his master in 1375, and even though the Mayor and Aldermen gave him permission to serve another until he returned, none would accept him because "the return of his master was pleadable" and they would be in breach of the ordinances by taking him on.¹⁷³ In a similar case, Roger Streyt, an ironmonger, left for Zeeland in 1386, leaving John Grove the armourer as his attorney. All of his properties had to be sold to cover his debts, and as a result his apprentice William was left uncared for, and became a vagabond. The apprentice sued for exoneration from the apprenticeship so that he could serve another master, but Grove opposed this until evidence could be provided that William himself had travelled to Zeeland and cleared his debts to Streyt.¹⁷⁴ No record of the ironmongers' ordinances survives for this period, but if they existed, it is probable that they adopted similar terms to the heaumers' ordinances.¹⁷⁵ However, as John Grove was acting as Streyt's attorney, it is likely that he was seeing to Streyt's affairs by following the rules that he was expected to abide by as an armourer. In either case, as the suit was being contested by an armourer following the Heaumers' Ordinances, this case gives some insight into how these regulations forced armourers' apprentices to be dependent upon their masters' good will and support.

When an armourer's apprentice attempted to sever the bond themselves, they were pursued and prosecuted by their masters.¹⁷⁶ The armourers Peter Ruget and Humfrey Aberford both had to have letters sent to Lynn (Norfolk) and Rochester (Kent), seeking after their runaway apprentices in the early 1350s;¹⁷⁷ Haukin Fox, the apprentice of Robert

¹⁷³ *CPMR ii*, 195-6.

¹⁷⁴ *CPMR iii*, 135.

¹⁷⁵ No fourteenth-century ironmongers' ordinances survive, but they must have existed because in 1365/6 the ironmongers were among the crafts described as having the privilege of being "ruled and governed each according to its nature..." See: John Nicholls, *Some Account of the Worshipful Company of Ironmongers* (London: John Bowyer Nichols and Son, 1851), 2, 20.

¹⁷⁶ For examples of this among the Tailors, see Davies, "The Tailors of London", 200-202.

¹⁷⁷ Aberford's plea is undated. See: Reginald Sharpe, ed., *Calendar of Letters From the Mayor and Corporation of the City of London Circa A.D. 1350-1370 Enrolled and Preserved Among the Archives of the Corporation at the Guildhall* (London: John C. Francis, 1885), 34, 56.

Colan, was imprisoned for leaving his master's service in 1378; and Haukin Haubugiore was mainprised against arrest for leaving the service of Giles Legmaker in 1381.¹⁷⁸ In some cases, this prosecution even appears to be malicious. The armourer John de Wynchecombe had his apprentice William atte Hawe imprisoned for refusing to enrol himself as his apprentice even though they had come to an agreement that the apprenticeship was to be broken.¹⁷⁹ In an extreme example, in 1427 the apprentice Roger Trevals fled the service of the tanner John Henry to start an armourer's apprenticeship under John Leylond using a different name. When Henry discovered him, he abducted the boy by force of arms and forced him to re-join his workshop. The two masters fought over the boy in court for three years.¹⁸⁰

Masters had to be possessive and strict with their apprentices, because as with wives and daughters, they contributed greatly to the success of the household economy, but as mentioned above, a master was legally answerable for their conduct.¹⁸¹ If an employee was undisciplined, the armourer could face legal consequences, as well as a poor personal reputation – what Gervase Rosser called “the single most pressing earthly concern of every medieval artisan,” as reputation was the source of their mercantile credit.¹⁸² Charles Ffoulkes described discipline among the armourers as meting out “honest correction... to apprentices found guilty of brawling, dicing, haunting evil women, being found in taverns... [in] the form of whipping in public in the hall.”¹⁸³ Punishments were often evidently harsher, as can be seen in the contract of a Cutler's apprentice, Juseana, which only states that her mistress¹⁸⁴ would “instruct her... in a proper manner... find her in food

¹⁷⁸ *CCR 1377-1381*, 206, 506.

¹⁷⁹ *CPMR ii*, 12.

¹⁸⁰ “Court of Common Pleas, CP 40/673, rot. 109”, in Jonathan Mackman and Matthew Stevens, *Court of Common Pleas: the National Archives, Cp40 1399-1500* (London: Centre for Metropolitan History, 2010), accessed September 15, 2015, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/no-series/common-pleas/1399-1500/easter-term-1429>.

¹⁸¹ *CCR 1360-1364*, 533.

¹⁸² Rosser, “Crafts, Guilds and Work”, 9.

¹⁸³ Ffoulkes, “The Armourers' Company”, 43; Pfaffenbichler, *Armourers*, 29.

¹⁸⁴ Agnes, wife of John Cotiller.

and drink, and would not beat her with a stick or knife.”¹⁸⁵ In a similar example, in 1374, the apprentice furbisher John Hatter brought his master Hugh Furbur to court. Furbur admitted “on several occasions [he] gave [his apprentice] slaps with his hand for the purpose of instruction and correction in this respect; ... [and not] that he beat him with force and arms or against the king’s peace.”¹⁸⁶ While correction falls within the purview of the master, the apprentice’s complaint was that he was “...beat[en], wounded, and ill-treated with force and arms against the peace of the lord king,” implying that the master had “corrected” him with one of the weapons that was being repaired in their workshop.

For all of the difficulties that apprentices faced, there were some clear advantages to entering the craft in this way. Firstly, it provided immediate and relatively easy access to the social and economic networks that were necessary for apprentices to later find work as journeymen, or establish their mercantile credit. Secondly, it ensured the apprentices’ good reputation as the process certified them as competent workers. The ordinances of the linen-armourers, heaumers, furbishers, blacksmiths and bladesmiths were all concerned with excluding incompetent workers from the craft, and demanded that workers in the trade be certified by the wardens, or by “testimony of the good [folks] of the same trade.”¹⁸⁷ These ordinances required armourers “by marriage” and foreign armourers in particular to present themselves and their work for inspection if they wished to operate or have dealings within the London armourers’ networks. If they or their work failed these inspections, their work could be seized or destroyed, and they could “be punished at the discretion of the Mayor and Aldermen”.¹⁸⁸ While such ordinances were not unique to the armourers in London, the deadly implications of a faulty piece of armour or weaponry meant that competence was particularly important among these crafts, as demonstrated by the strong language of these

¹⁸⁵ *CPMR i*, 274

¹⁸⁶ TNA KB/27/455/50

¹⁸⁷ *Mem*, 145-6; 237-8; 258-9; 361-2; 537-39; 569-71.

¹⁸⁸ *Mem*, 259.

injunctions, wherein poorly crafted arms and armour would lead to “great peril... to the King and to his people, and disgraceful scandal to the armourers..., and to all the City”.¹⁸⁹

Finally, apprenticeship and service had the potential to build strong bonds of trust between master and apprentice. While the number of records relating to armourers’ apprentices overwhelmingly favours an interpretation of their poor treatment, the nature of these records masks an invisible majority that did not have such problems, and armourers’ wills suggest that many held each other in high esteem. Richard Person, who was described as the servant of Simon de Wynchecombe, and Roger, the apprentice of Edward Siende, both inherited their masters’ tools, which could be among their most expensive movable goods, and Person inherited the leasehold of one of his master’s former properties (likely one of the sites of business, and later records reveal that his master had enfeoffed him of at least one additional property).¹⁹⁰ This tradition continued through Person, who later became a master armourer himself and passed on his own tools and armour to his servant (again, likely an apprentice or journeyman) Edward Snowe in 1446.¹⁹¹ If a master died with apprentices who hadn’t completed their training, provision might be made for them, such as in the cases of Thomas atte Brom, William Adger, and James de Hestone, all apprentices of the “kissere” William le Kyng, who died in 1308. James de Hestone was admitted to the freedom in 1310 having finished the last two years of his apprenticeship under the supervision of William’s son John; John Adger appears being enrolled as apprentice under John in 1309/10; and in 1311 Thomas atte Brom was enrolled by William’s son Thomas, to whom “William had bequeathed the term of [his] apprenticeship.”¹⁹²

These cases suggest that while some masters were certainly negligent in their duties to their apprentices, others saw them as investments in businesses and as members of their households. Simon de Wynchecombe’s bequests to his servant were greater than those he

¹⁸⁹ *Mem*, 145.

¹⁹⁰ *CWPH ii*, 341-2, 164 n.2; *LPA* 79-80, 118.

¹⁹¹ *CWPH ii*, 515.

¹⁹² *LBD* 107, 121, 145.

left to his own son – and if his wife inherited more, the wording of his will suggests that this was not Wynchecombe’s desire, but the custom of the city.¹⁹³ In the cases of Brom, Hestone, and Adger, William le Kyng had a duty to see to the completion of their apprenticeships, but it is telling that he ensured that they were kept within the family. Pessimistically, this could be viewed as a father passing his cheap labour on to his children, perhaps to assist in the establishment of their inherited workshops following his death. However, by keeping the apprenticeships in the family, he benefitted both his apprentices and his sons, as on the completion of their apprenticeship the five of them would be strongly interconnected in a new generation of the armourers’ economic and social networks: allies able to vouch for one another’s abilities, character, and credit-worthiness.

3.5: Conclusions

The question of how armourers and their various economic and social networks developed from disparate but related crafts at the beginning of the fourteenth century into cooperative corporate networks of interdependent craftsmen can only be answered by investigating the individuals and the households that supported them. Wives’, widows’ and daughters’ roles in these household economies could vary from unrelated supportive roles in the household such as brewing, as Alice la Haubergere likely engaged in with her inherited brew-house,¹⁹⁴ to direct contributions to the craft as she and the York armouress Agnes Hecche did in their fathers’ households, Katherine de Bury and the wife of Edward Siende did by taking responsibility for forges,¹⁹⁵ and Leticia Marchaunt and Alice Tavy did by overseeing their husbands’ businesses while they were away at war.¹⁹⁶ Other women, such as Alice de Canterbrugge and the numerous women of the network who owned armourers’ shops, may have contributed to the craft in market roles. When these women

¹⁹³ *CWPH ii*, 341-2.

¹⁹⁴ *HGL*, St Mary Colechurch 105/26.

¹⁹⁵ Colvin (ed.) *King’s Works*, i. 222-4 In: Geddes, “Iron”, 186; *CWPH ii*, 164.

¹⁹⁶ *LBE*, 4; *LBF*, 26.

married, or remarried, they brought dowries and dowers which maintained or increased the overall wealth of the network, while providing financial advantages to the individual businesses that made them more likely to be successful over multiple generations. When they married or remarried into related crafts, the skills they learned in their parental or matrimonial households helped to foster multi-craft households and the eventual conglomeration of the armour industry over the course of the fourteenth century. When they married immigrant armourers, they provided an entry into the armourers' network for outside expertise, helping to introduce new ideas and craft techniques from outside of London and encouraging the growth of the industry.

The household was also where the next generation of armourers was trained, either by the parents as part of a small household economy, or by the incorporation of servants, apprentices, and journeymen among wealthier households. In this role, the management of the household directly impacted the future of the industry at large, via the inclusion of multiple crafts and new techniques through social and economic allies, craft intermarriage, or the incorporation of immigrant journeymen or family members into the workshop. By incorporating more extra-familial members into the household, new levels of complexity emerged within the overall economic and social networks of the armourers. This incorporation led to very close intergenerational relationships within the craft, leading to allied households and businesses that were the surest guarantors of mercantile credit, and thus economic advancement within the craft. Finally, it encouraged social interdependence, which enabled the later fourteenth-century crafts to band together into the increasingly powerful organisational structures that will be discussed in the next chapters.

Chapter 4: The Social and Industrial Organisations of the Armourers

4.0: The Development of the Armourers' Mystery, Fraternities, and Guild

This chapter will examine the larger social, industrial, and governing organisations of the armourers. This is very difficult; as Gwyn Williams put it, “on the pursuit of these elusive and sometimes weird associations, historians have expended much labour to little purpose.”¹ The crux of this difficulty lies in the fact that most historical examination of these organisations is based upon an assumption that there were universal or at least general processes governing their development; and that the categories defining such groups and levels of organisation had fixed meanings which could be applied universally.² This could hardly be further from the truth: these organisations may have developed along similar lines, but they did so according to the means and opportunities of their individual members, which differed both between industries and between different sections of industries, as will be discussed in the specific context of the armourers. While it is certainly true that the competing interests of craftsmen, merchants, royal, ecclesiastical and civic authorities, foreign traders, and court jurisdictional conflicts all influenced this development, and that similar influences among different industries produced similar structures, the mercurial complexity of these competing interests has meant that arguments for rigid definitions and cases for “typical” industrial or guild development in anything but the most general terms across a temporal period, or even more absurdly, across all of Europe, are invariably historical fallacies.³

A unique problem in examining these developments among the armourers is the complexity of their trading and industrial activities, discussed in Chapter 2. Because multiple semi-distinct industries were considered to be “armourers,” or were so tightly

¹ Williams, *Medieval London*, 171.

² For discussions of this ahistorical practice, see: Sylvia Thrupp, “Medieval Gilds Reconsidered,” 164-167; Rosser, “Crafts, Guilds and Work,” 3-5; Rodney Hilton, “Towns in societies – medieval England”, *Urban History* 9 (1982): 7.

³ For one example of this kind of generalisation based on singular test cases, see: Ogilvie, “Guilds, efficiency, and social capital”, 286–333; and S.R. Epstein’s rebuttal of the historical fallacy in “Craft guilds in the pre-modern economy: a discussion,” *Economic History Review* 61.1 (February 2008): 155-174.

interdependent to be indistinguishable from one another, the development of their trading and socio-industrial organisations were also heavily influenced by their production and entrepreneurial interdependence. Despite this, interdependence did not result in all specialisms being absorbed into a single “armourers” craft: smaller specialisms were absorbed by larger ones, but the largest specialisms were able to remain distinct. Fourteenth-century records of the armourers show the growth of linen-armourers and metal-armourers, initially tightly bound to one another, then splitting into two distinct yet still connected industries, each with their own associations and pursuing their own goals. This was further mirrored in the developing relationship between the metal-armourers and the furbishers, who enrolled ordinances three years after the heaumers (metal-armourers), in 1350.⁴ These ordinances defined the furbishers’ niche as a separate craft from that of the metal-armourers, who claimed regulation over “all... arms forged with the hammer”.⁵ Yet despite this separation, as was shown in Chapter 2, the common practice of both occupations in the latter half of the fourteenth century made them in many cases functionally, if not legally, a single industry. This chapter will examine the growth of the armourers’ social and industrial bodies through the fourteenth century, and attempt to place the armourers within the larger context of London’s developing craft and trading communities.

This chapter will address how workshops and households developed into larger forms of socio-industrial organisation in the fourteenth century. It will begin with a “top-down” approach, examining the linen-armourers’ and tailors’ fraternal organisations, and how they led to the (much slower) development of the armourers’ misteries and fraternity. It will examine how these organisations formed, their goals, how successful they were in attaining those goals, and how overarching trade organisations contributed to the growth of the industry as a whole. It will then examine the growth of the industry’s social

⁴ *Mem*, 258.

⁵ *Mem*, 238.

organisations through a “bottom up” method, examining prosopographical evidence of armourers’ associations through the development of armourers’ districts in London, and among records of criminal interaction among armourers and their interdependent craft and trading communities. These methods provide valuable information about the development of the armourers’ organisations by demonstrating similar relations between their work- and non-work- centred interactions. If the same patterns emerge between official structures, records of non-work-centred interactions, and the development of armourers’ neighbourhoods, it suggests that the armourers’ developments of misteries, fraternities, and eventually guilds, may have represented voluntary, rather than externally-imposed associations.

4.0.1: The Question of Imposed or Self-Directed Structures of Power and Socio-industrial Organisation

The most significant problem in examining the armourers’ industrial development is found in the terms given to the types of socio-industrial organisations. These structures, such as they existed, were not part of a hierarchical social evolution that had fraternities or guilds as any kind of conscious goal, and the use of the same word to describe very different structures makes analysis of the transition between those structures difficult.⁶ For most of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the armourers’ industry at large occupied what can only be described as a transitional position that had some characteristics of a mystery, a guild, and a fraternity. However, the questions of whether the armourers as a group exemplified any of these structures, or when they formally achieved them, are less important than why they strove for the methods of authority and access to power associated with those structures.

⁶ See Herbert Westlake’s argument against equating the term “guild” with craft groups: H.R. Westlake, *The Parish Gilds of Mediaeval England* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1919), v-vi.

Before these organisations can be discussed, however, some definition for the terms must be provided. From the beginning of the fourteenth century, the armourers were at the most basic level, a craft, or an *officium*, which Gwyn Williams defined as signifying a functional, and an officially controlled status, primarily by the aldermanic court.⁷ These *officia* were administered by a *ministerialis*, making them a *ministerium*, from which the term *misterium*, and *mistry* derive, which collectively describe all practitioners of a single trade or craft.⁸ These groups are primarily identified by the presence of craft ordinances and regulations enrolled with the Mayor and Aldermen. However, many historians have adopted the position that these documents did not represent the presence of “association[s] of any kind”, but that ordinances represented imposed, involuntary structures, if any structure existed at all.⁹ Conversely, Caroline Barron, and others, have argued that organisation was largely voluntary, that craft ordinances were a reflection of the crafts’ drive “to become more organised and to create rules for their self-government”, and that the crafts “brought [their] ordinances to the mayor and aldermen”, and not the other way around.¹⁰ Edward Miller and John Hatcher argued that such associations were “more than instruments of the municipalities,” calling them “spontaneous confederations of master craftsmen engaged in specific defence of their common interests.”¹¹ Matthew Davies argued that the idea that such groups were “merely the ‘agents’ of civic authority is...

⁷ Williams, *Medieval London*, 169; Henri Pirenne, *Les Villes et les Institutions Urbaines ii* (Paris: Librairie Félix Alcan, 1939), 28-9; Veale, “Craftsmen and the Economy of London in the Fourteenth Century”, 137.

⁸ Davies & Saunders, *History of the Merchant Taylors’ Company*, 5; “mystery, n.2”, OED Online. December 2014, Oxford University Press,

<http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/124645?isAdvanced=false&result=2&rskey=xjUvAr&> (accessed December 14, 2014). Sylvia Thrupp argued that these terms were simply contemporary generic terms for societies. See: Thrupp, “The Gilds”, 238; Davies, “The Tailors of London”, 2-3.

⁹ See: Davies & Saunders, *History of the Merchant Taylors’*, 5, 50; Unwin, *Gilds*, 72-3; Williams, *Medieval London*, 28-9; Thrupp, *Merchant Class*, 19; Rodney Hilton, “Towns in English Medieval Society”, in *The English Medieval Town*, ed. R. Holt & G. Rosser (New York: Longman Inc., 1990), 25; Heather Swanson, *Medieval Artisans*, 8; Heather Swanson, “The Illusion of Economic Structure”, 29-48; Miller & Hatcher, *Medieval England*, 368-69; Thrupp, “The Gilds”, 232-246, esp. 236. Swanson, Miller, and Hatcher argued that craft organisations were not solely the instruments of the municipal authorities. Sylvia Thrupp argued against the interpretation that these groups were subject to or in defiance of governing authorities, because in her view, industrial organisations were an intrinsic part of the machinations of medieval government.

¹⁰ Barron, *London in the Later Middle Ages*, 207; Sarah Rees Jones, “Household, Work and the Problem of Mobile Labour: The Regulation of Labour in Medieval English Towns”, *The Problem of Labour in Fourteenth-Century England*, ed. James Bothwell, P.J.P Goldberg and W.M. Ormrod (Woodbridge: York Medieval Press, 2000) 133-53; Hilton, “Towns in societies”, 10. Davies, “The Tailors of London”, 3, 87-105.

¹¹ Miller & Hatcher, *Medieval England*, 369.

simplistic, and fails to take into account the ways in which craft organisations... were able to represent and articulate the interests and aspirations of their members.”¹² While Miller and Hatcher and Davies were describing guilds specifically, this chapter will demonstrate that their argument was also applicable to the pre-guild armourers. Finally, Gervase Rosser is the most adamant critic against the interpretation of imposed control on misteries by modern historians, calling the argument, “paradoxical”, and arguing that such interpretations detach “historical description... from structural and theoretical issues...[and] reduce individual experience to a mere function of pre-existent structures inscribed in craft regulations, municipal ordinances, or the moral precepts of Christian preachers.”¹³

This chapter will provide a different interpretation for the armourers’ organisation: that external control was desirable to the municipal and royal authorities *and* to the armourers as a means of enforcing regulations on the broader market, but that imposing such regulation was dependent upon internal voluntary cooperation and pre-existing structures of social organisation within the industrial body.¹⁴ Among the armourers (and very probably among many of London’s smaller misteries), power was not simply imposed, but was constantly negotiated between the interested parties of the civic and royal courts, other craft and trade organisations, as well as diverse internal factions. As a result, no single economic imperative for the structures of socio-industrial organisation can be suggested, because that structure changed according to constantly shifting power relationships and economic influences.¹⁵ The evidence to support this argument begins with the craft ordinances themselves, but also looks to understand Rosser’s “individual

¹² Davies, “The Tailors of London”, 3, 87-105.

¹³ Rosser, “Crafts, Guilds and Work”, 6-7.

¹⁴ Gary Richardson has extensively examined the benefits of regulation from both perspectives. See: Gary Richardson, “Craft Guilds”, 139-188.

¹⁵ This idea is supported in research on English socio-industrial organisation in general by several historians. See: Barron, *London in the Later Middle Ages*, 204; Elspeth Veale, “‘The Great Twelve’: Mystery and Fraternity in Thirteenth-Century London”, *Historical Research* 64 (1991): 237; Derek Keene, “Guilds in English Towns, AD 1000-1500,” in *Power, Resistance and Authorities: Aspects of Guild Organisation in England*, ed. B. Ranson (Hong Kong: Hong Kong Baptist University, 1997), 35-6.

experience” among the armourers through prosopographical and other documentary evidence. As will be shown, the armourers’ organisational development was a process of striving for the most appropriate access to power for the industry at the time, rather than the deterministic advancement along a hierarchical ladder of increasing socio-industrial organisation. Furthermore, as will be shown in Sections 4.3 and 4.4, this development was complicated not only by the top-down methods of socio-industrial organisation achieved through civic, royal, and industrial frameworks, but also from a bottom-up approach via the social interaction of a wide network of traders and craftsmen.

Gwyn Williams’ research on the civic and urban development of late medieval London provides historians with the most convincing arguments for the imposed or externally organised regulation of misteries. He, and others, suggested that the merchant-aldermen of London exercised control over the crafts for their own mercantile interests;¹⁶ however, this idea draws heavily upon the research of Henri Pirenne, whose focus was not in London in the fourteenth century, but Belgium in the eleventh and twelfth centuries.¹⁷ Pirenne himself admitted that urban centres in the Middle Ages were extraordinarily diverse, and that they “differed from... others just as men differ among themselves... infinite[ly] complex”, and that the picture that he painted of urban culture was “a little too schematic, not fitting exactly any one particular case, but rather... an abstract of individual characteristics.”¹⁸ Therefore while Williams’ application of Pirenne’s work is well-considered, and the situation in London was similar enough in organisation to Pirenne’s Dinant and Namur for him to make general comparisons, when examining specifics, the fourteenth-century London armour industry was fundamentally different than Pirenne’s eleventh-century continental study. Thus, it is important to examine here how the armourers as both craftsmen and retailers negotiated with that civic mercantile authority

¹⁶ Williams, *Medieval London*, 169; Davies and Saunders, *History of the Merchant Taylors’*, 50; Thrupp, *Merchant Class*, 19.

¹⁷ Pirenne, *Les Villes ii*, 28.

¹⁸ Henri Pirenne, *Medieval Cities: Their Origins and the Revival of Trade*, trans., Frank Halsey (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1925), 133-134.

within its own context: representing a unique development, but still within the general principles described by Williams and Pirenne.

Whether the development of different forms of industrial organisation among the London armourers was self-directed and voluntary, or imposed and involuntary has only been examined, briefly, in the context of the relationship between armourers and linen-armourers, by Davies and Saunders. They argued that the armourers' 1322 craft ordinances were imposed upon them by the City government as a means of external control, rather than growing out of any internal voluntary organisation.¹⁹ This appears to have been the case amongst European crafts in general, but when specific industries are examined, such claims require closer examination. Returning to Pirenne, he found cases where individual groups' foundations countered the trends he examined, such as the copper-beaters of Dinant, who formed their craft entirely by free association, without any participation or imposition of the state.²⁰ It is therefore important to examine industries within their local and individual contexts. Here, I will attempt to distinguish what kinds of voluntary cooperation may have been occurring for the London armourers; where and how these organisations were developed through the competing interests of the craftsmen and traders that belonged to those interdependent industries; and how the power of external agencies such as the City, church, and royal court were both courted and imposed upon their craft. Again, while external imposition of control may have been the norm, some voluntary association was clearly occurring, particularly among smaller crafts and early in the armourers' industrial development when they were defined by their interdependence with other industrial bodies.

This idea has received very little scholarly attention, because the records that survive from the fourteenth century are primarily civic or royal records, whose courts represented the external systems through which the crafts grew in power. These sources

¹⁹ Davies & Saunders, *History of the Merchant Taylors*, 50.

²⁰ Pirenne, *Les Villes ii*, 29.

therefore offer an outsider's perspective of the industries they describe, and so evidence for internal voluntary organisations outside of these courts' prerogatives can only be extracted by examining additional sources prosopographically. The research conducted here mirrors some of P.J.P. Goldberg's recent research into the development of "collectivities", or craft groups which functioned as guilds, but lacked registered ordinances or guild charters.²¹ While compelling, Goldberg's argument that the development of many guilds may have emerged out of a desire by unincorporated craft groups to put on a pageant cannot be applied here, because no surviving London armourers' pageant exists.²² However, there can be no doubt that an armourers' "collectivity" would have had abundant economic, political, and social motivations to organise themselves together. The ideas that Goldberg developed in this research provide further evidence for voluntary proto-guild organisations, and further suggest Durkheim's idea that as an industry grows, more complex social and specialist organisations emerge, whether formal permissions existed for them or not.²³ I have no doubt that if similar "bottom-up" investigations (such as I engage with in sections 4.3 and 4.4) were done on the collectivities that Goldberg examined, further doubt would be cast upon the universality of externally imposed craft structures.

After the establishment of a mystery, the most important forms of external organisation to be examined are the use of the church, crown, and their courts to form a fraternity and guild – that is, a religious organisation dedicated to pious purposes while providing access to the ecclesiastical courts to enforce its regulations, and a royally-

²¹ Goldberg, "From Tableaux to Text", 256.

²² Some festivals that armourers would have participated in (at least as suppliers) clearly existed, but there are very few records describing them. The Midsummer Watch or "Marching Watch" is described in great detail by John Stow, but the presence of "Gunnery with hand Guns [sic]" marks his description as of the sixteenth century. However, *Letter Book H* describes the "ancient custom" of this same watch against summer fires, where the Mayor and Sheriffs marched through the City at Midsummer with "lighted cressets". It is impossible to know the level of armourers' participation in this parade, but Sheila Lindenbaum has suggested that the later armourers profited greatly from these ceremonial watches by selling armour to those in procession. See: John Stow, *A Survey of London, by John Stow: Reprinted from the text of 1603*, Volume I, ed., C.L. Kingsford (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1908), 102-103; *LBH*, 224, 228, 232, 254, 266; Sheila Lindenbaum, "Ceremony and Oligarchy: The London Midsummer Watch", in *City and Spectacle in Medieval Europe*, ed. Barbara Hanawalt and Kathryn Reyerson (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994), 180.

²³ Durkheim, *De la Division*, 32.

sanctioned corporation permitted to own communal property in mortmain, hold feasts, and whose regulations could be enforced by the royal court. Identifying when these organisational developments occurred among the armourers is very challenging, as the earliest surviving court minutes of the armourers dates from 1413, while their earliest charter does not appear until 1453.²⁴ However, the tailors and linen-armourers claimed they had been a guild “from a time beyond which memory runneth not” in 1327 when they applied for their charter,²⁵ and evidence exists to suggest that the metal-armourers were acting as a fraternity and guild many years before being granted their charter. As this chapter will show, the armourers were striving towards greater autonomy, and within this transitional period between different types of socio-industrial organisations, their members rose to prominent positions in the civic and royal courts, and became both the strongest challengers to and supporters of the mayoralty riots discussed in the next chapter.

4.1: Civic and Multi-Industrial Oversight and Organisation: 1300-1347

This section argues that the “involuntary” regulation of the 1322 armourers’ regulations emerged out of (or at least at the behest of) the linen-armourers’ and tailors’ industry, rather than solely through the Mayor and Aldermen. The earliest records of formal organisational structures among the armourers’ crafts indicate that they were predominantly economic or industrial organisations, interested in ensuring the quality of products, and in providing some level of control over what manufacturers and retailers were able to bring to the market, which is seen through their civic ordinances.²⁶ The concerns of the aldermanic merchants were a driving force for such organisations, as the success of their mercantile activity required a dependable supply of quality merchandise, and their positions of civic authority enabled them to impose or strongly influence such ordinances. However, this interpretation ignores the motivations of the smaller traders and

²⁴ London Guildhall Library CLC/L/AB/B/MS12071/1; *CPR 1452-1461*, 105.

²⁵ Clode, *The Early History of the Guild of Merchant Taylors, Part One*, 344-345; *LBF*, 52.

²⁶ See: *Mem*, 145-6, 237-8, 258-9, 361-2, 537-9, 567-570.

craftsmen who actually agreed to the ordinances and ensured that they were followed. The earliest of these documents among the armourers is the 1322 Armourers' Ordinances. As it is such an important document, I have copied its summary and translation from Norman French in its entirety, as transcribed by Riley in his *Memorials of London and London Life* below, with minor corrections for his and the original scribe's errors based on my consultation with the original document, COL/AD/01/005, entered into Letter Book E, fol. cxxxiii a&b, preserved at the London Metropolitan Archives.

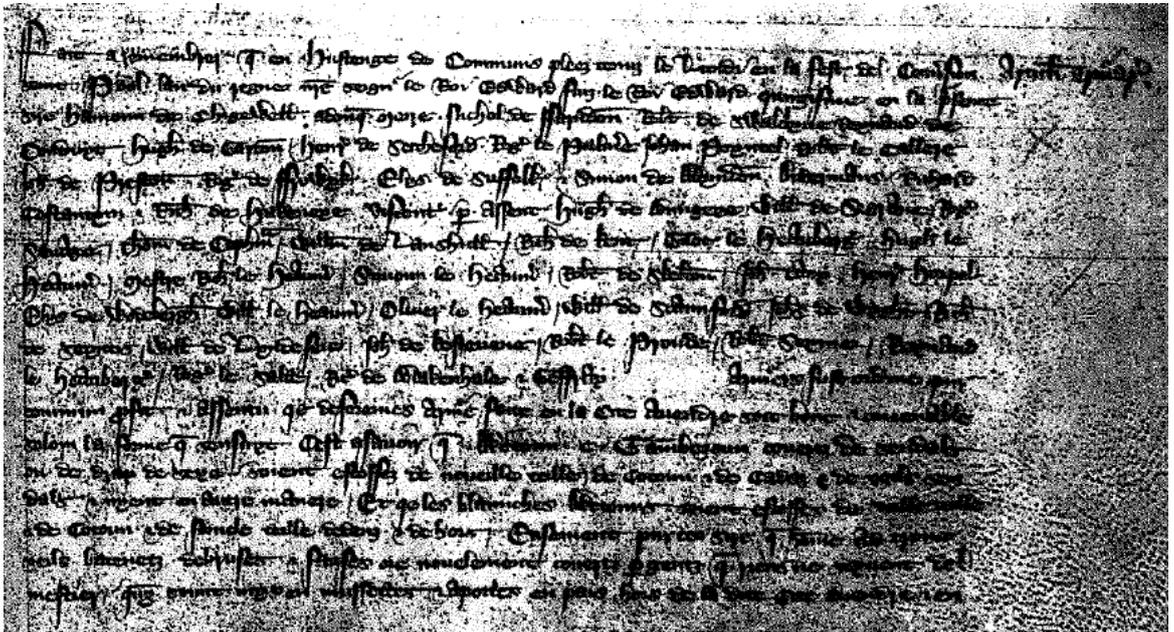


Figure 4.1: 1322 Armourers' Ordinances, London Metropolitan Archives COL/AD/01/005, fol. cxxxiii a. Personal Image.

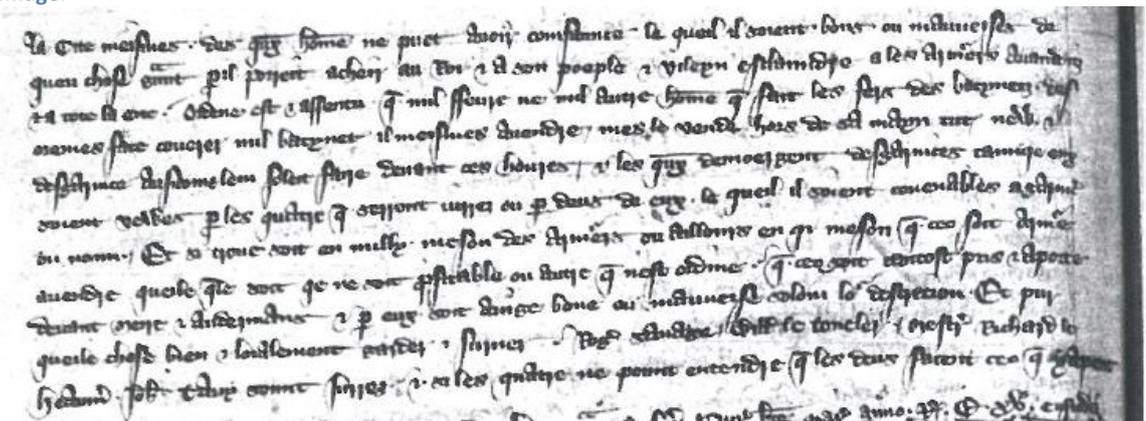


Figure 4.2: 1322 Armourers' Ordinances, London Metropolitan Archives, COL/AD/01/005, fol. cxxxiii b. Personal Image.

Be it remembered, that at the Husting of Common Pleas holden on Monday the Feast of the Conversion of St. Paul [25 January], in the 15th year of the reign of our Lord King Edward, son of King Edward, in presence of Hamon de Chigewelle, the then Mayor,

Nicholas de Farndone, Robert de Swalclyve, and other Aldermen, and Richard Costantyn and Richard de Hakeneye, Sheriffs, by assent of Hugh de Aungeye, William de Segrave, Roger Savage, Thomas de Copham, William de Lanshulle, Richard de Kent, Gilot le Heauberger, Hugh le Heaumer, Master Richard le Heaumer, Simon le Heaumer, Robert de Skeltone, John Tauy,²⁷ Henry Horpol, Elias de Wodeberghe, William le Heaumer, Oliver le Heaumer, William de Staunford, John de Wyght, Richard de Seyntis, William de Lyndeseie, John de Kestevene, Robert le Proude, Robert Seymer, Reynold le Heauberger, Roger le Saltere,²⁸ Roger de Blakenhale, and Geffray,²⁹ armourers, it was ordained for the common profit, and assented to, that from thenceforth arms made in the City for sale should be good and befitting, according to the form which follows; that is to say:—

That a haketon and a gambeson³⁰ covered with sendale,³¹ or with cloth of silk, shall be stuffed with new cotton cloth, and with cadaz,³² and with old sendales, and in no other manner. And that white haketons shall be stuffed with old woven cloth, and with cotton, and made of new woven cloth within and without.

Also, seeing that as well lord as man have found theirs to be old bacinets, battered and vamped-up, but recently covered by persons who know nothing of the trade; such bacinets being then put away in some secret place, and carried into the country, away from the City, to sell; and that in the City of such men no cognizance can be taken, whether the same be good or bad; a thing from which great peril might ensue to the King and to his people, and disgraceful scandal to the armourers aforesaid, and to all the City; it is ordained and assented to, that no smith, or other man who makes the irons for bacinets, shall from henceforth himself cause any bacinet to be covered for sale; but he is to sell the same out of his hands entirely, and not fitted up, in manner as used to be done heretofore; and the bacinets so sold are to remain so uncompleted, until they have been viewed by the four persons who shall have been sworn thereto, or by two of them, as to whether they are proper to be fitted up or not. And if there shall be found in any house, whether it be of an armourer or elsewhere, whosoever house it may be, armour on sale of any kind whatsoever, which is not of proper quality, or other than has been ordained, such armour shall be immediately taken and brought before the Mayor and Aldermen, and by them adjudged upon as being good or bad, at their discretion.

And this matter well and lawfully to observe and supervise, Roger Savage, William le Toneler, Master Richard le Heaumer, and John

²⁷ Riley has mistranscribed this individual as “John Tany”, because the graphs of n, u, and v, are so similar. My transcription is supported by my examination of the original document, and the fact that this individual is later associated with *Thavies Inn* in St. Andrew Holborn (though Ekwall suggested that Tany may be a descriptive nickname, derived from “tawny”). See: *Subs*, 299; *LBF*, 102, n.2.

²⁸ Riley mistranscribed this as “Roger le Salte”, missing the faint digraph “er” abbreviation in the original document.

²⁹ Surname is absent. Probably Geoffrey le Rothinge, see: Section 2.1.

³⁰ Aketons, or haketons, were vertically quilted garments stuffed with tow, rags, or other materials worn under mail, while gambesons were worn over it, or as armour in itself. See: Edge & Paddock, *Arms and Armour*, 57.

³¹ Thin silk or linen.

³² Flocks of cotton, silk, tow, or wool.

Tauy³³, are sworn; and where the four cannot attend, any two of them are to do what pertains thereto.³⁴

This document represents an attempt to establish a new regulatory body incorporating the misteries of the linen-armourers, heaumers, haubergers, and early platers. The question of whether these ordinances and the men who upheld them were proactive in their establishment, or whether these rules were imposed upon them by the civic government, misses the significance of this document. Examining the life-records of the assenters and overseers of the ordinances recorded above reveals that they were selected because they were respected among the multiple crafts represented here, and because their activities and businesses were representative of the London industry at large, thus easing the ordinances' enforcement. If this was imposed, these men were purposely selected for their influence within an already existing collectivity. As discussed in Chapter 2, the assenters here were diverse in wealth, occupational specialism, and workshop organisation. If these assenters were intended to be representative of the larger social and economic group (and thus able to aid in imposing its regulation), then whatever social structures existed at this time, formal or informal, would therefore have been similarly diverse. This is significant because it suggests that armourers, or those who imposed the regulations upon them, recognised the importance of inter-specialist organisation both economically in their workshops and shops, but also in the organisation and regulation of the industry as a whole.

That the armourers were overseen by a representative body at this period is particularly apparent in the selection of the four armourers chosen to oversee the ordinances. Roger Savage and John Tavy were both linen-armourers,³⁵ although this was probably not their sole occupations. The remaining two overseers, Master Richard le Heaumer and William le Toneler, are more difficult to determine. Few records exist relating to Master Richard le Heaumer, and though his occupational surname of

³³ See note 565.

³⁴ London Metropolitan Archives, *COLAD/01/005, fol. cxxxiii a&b*; corrected translation of *Mem*, 145-146.

³⁵ They were both governors of the Taylors and Linen-Armourers in 1328. See: *LBE*, 234.

“Heaumer” points towards his activities as a helmet-maker, in the other records attributed to him he adopted the occupational surnames “le Armurer” in 1319 and 1332 and “le Harneysmakyere” in 1338.³⁶ Harness is another name for plate armour, and so his adoption of these occupational surnames indicates that he was engaged in the production of metal armour in general, and not only helmets. This record is the only appearance I have been able to discover relating to William le Toneler, and his surname may be an adaptation or mistranscription of “le Trumelier,” which (if representative of his true occupation) would have meant he was a maker of leg defences. If this was the case, his inclusion suggests that the framers of these ordinances may have been attempting to ensure equal representation amongst metal and cloth armour industries.³⁷

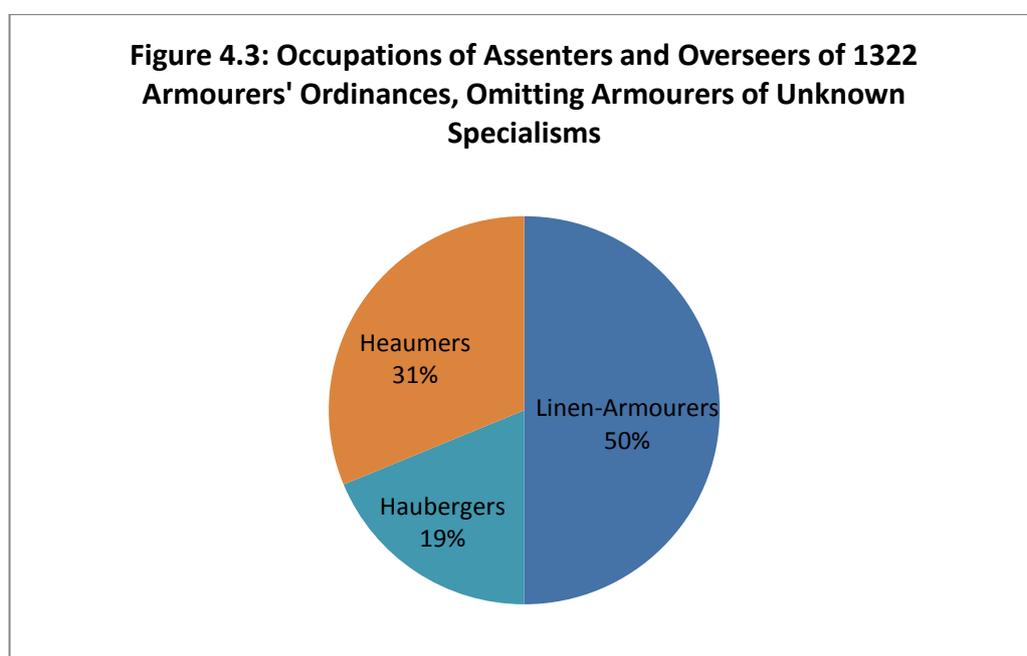
This is an important idea to consider, because if the overseers of the ordinances were chosen to control the plate and linen industries equally, this implies that the two industries were equally powerful and represented relatively equal proportions of the armourers’ industry and marketplace. As has been shown in Chapter 2, however, this was not the case: linen armour was a much larger and more important industry at the beginning of the century. Therefore, it is more likely that “Le Toneler” meant “a maker of tonels” (tuns), or wine barrels, and so if this is an occupational surname, it more likely represents some relationship to the cleaning or burnishing of mail armour, which was done by rolling or rocking it in barrels filled with sand, suggesting that he may have been a hauberger or a furbisher of mail armour.³⁸ Thus, a representation among the overseers of 50% linen-armourers, 25% plate armourers, and 25% furbishers or haubergers is more likely. This arrangement is further suggested by an examination of the division of specialisms observed amongst the assenters of the records (where they could be identified, see Figure 4.3), which reveals that half were linen-armourers, 31% were heaumers, and 19% were

³⁶ See: *Subs*, 307; *LLS*, 74; *Calendar of Coroners Rolls of the City of London A.D. 1300-1378*, ed. Reginald Sharpe (London: Richard Clay and Sons, Ltd., 1913) 207.

³⁷ I am grateful to Claude Blair and his estate for sharing his notes on this idea with me.

³⁸ As described in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, where the eponymous knight’s “...paunce and his plates, piked ful clene, / The rynges rokked of the roust of his rich bruny”. Paul Battles, ed., *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* (Peterborough: Broadview Editions, 2012), 121, ll., 2017-2018.

haubergers, and thus the overseers comprising of two linen-armourers, one heaumer and one possible hauberger (le Toneler), as suggested above, is consistent with the overall population of the assenters. Examining the general populations recorded in the 1319 and 1332 subsidy rolls yielded even larger population differences, with populations of 73% linen-armourers, 19% plate-armourers, and 8% haubergers in 1319; and 75% linen-armourers, 19% plate-armourers, and 6% haubergers in 1332,³⁹ which contextualises the pre-eminence of the linen-armourers in the craft network, and their dominance of these ordinances at this time.⁴⁰



Source: *Mem* 145-146.

While armourers may have represented an *officium* or “mystery” at this point, no evidence exists to suggest that any metalworking armourers had organised into a guild. The earliest evidence for a guild among any of the armourers’ specialisms is found in the Fraternity of St. John the Baptist of the Tailors and Linen-Armourers, which was formally

³⁹ The lower income potential for haubergery, which would have contributed to lower representation in the subsidy rolls, has been discussed in Section 2.4.3.

⁴⁰ Armourers without recorded specialisations are considered linen-armourers here, as it is the most likely interpretation. It is also important to note that linen-armourers were much more likely to be taxed in the 1319 and 1332 subsidy roles, as their greater wealth meant a greater proportion of them would have movable goods above the minimum taxable value than metal-armourers and haubergers would have. See: *Subs*, 211-350; *LLS*, 61-92.

granted its charter in 1327.⁴¹ However, their petition for a charter claimed that their annual guild feast had already occurred for some time, and John Stow claimed they had been granted their charter in 1300 by Edward I, although no contemporary record of this survives.⁴² Malcolm Mercer claimed that the tailors' and linen-armourers' fraternity dated back even further, to 1272, referencing Charles Ffoulkes.⁴³ However, Ffoulkes provides no reference for his claim, and his work contains errors elsewhere where he has mistaken the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.⁴⁴ While Mercer is certainly correct in his argument that the linen-armourers and tailors were likely self-regulating in the thirteenth century, Ffoulkes' date of 1272 for the birth of their fraternity is found amid a paragraph discussing Edward III and Richard II's involvement in it, and so it is very likely that this date is the result of another such error in dating. However, if the linen-armourers were self-regulating in the thirteenth century, or if they had a guild or a strong fraternity in 1322 when the armourers' ordinances were assented to, a power relationship in the social organisation of the crafts is suggested, and the question of voluntary or involuntary group organisation between these crafts must be raised.

The first two regulations of the armourers' ordinances controlled how cloth armour was to be made, in particular how it was to be combined with the products of other armourers, whom the ordinances call "smith[s] or [men] who make the irons for bacinets",⁴⁵ rather than their proper titles of heaumers, platers, or armourers, indicating that those who drafted the document did not necessarily consider these craftsmen to be "armourers", or that they needed to be distinguished from the more prominent linen-armourers, who also used that occupational title. The greater level of organisation among the linen-armourers, their dominance of the overseers and the assenters, and the larger market for their products at this time compared to plate-armourers (discussed in Section

⁴¹ *LBF*, 52; Clode, *The Early History of the Guild of Merchant Taylors, Part One*, 344-345.

⁴² John Stow, *A Survey of London, by John Stow: Reprinted from the text of 1603*, Volume II, ed. C.L. Kingsford (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1908) 192; Davies and Saunders, *History of the Merchant Taylors'*, 9.

⁴³ Mercer, "King's Armourers", 2; Ffoulkes, *Armourer*, 94.

⁴⁴ Such as dating the thirteenth-century *Chronicon Colmariense* to 1398. See: Ffoulkes, *Armourer*, 62.

⁴⁵ *Mem*, 145.

2.3) led to their greater wealth, and suggests that while the ordinances' assenters were diverse, the ordinances themselves were imposed on the other armourers' crafts not simply by the City, but *through* the City by the much stronger, wealthier, and more politically active linen-armourers and tailors, seeking to protect and expand their own interests. This is important because it provides a social context for the comparatively slow development of the local metal-armourers' industry, and is inseparable from the economic and industrial contexts discussed in Section 2.3: the linen-armourers, through the wealth of the tailors and the growth of the London wool and textile industries, had the power to impose their interests through the aldermanic court upon the smaller armourers' specialisms.

This greater industrial and civic power through their tailor allies also led to the linen-armourers becoming part of a guild much sooner than other armourers' crafts, and probably even concurrently with the 1322 ordinances. The tailors and linen-armourers' 1327 charter was primarily concerned with ensuring the exclusion of foreigners and those who were not free of the city, the rights of enfranchisement through the mystery, and, particularly, their own self-governance. Absent are regulations concerning apprentices and servants, explicit regulations concerning competition, or the election of officials, and so it is possible that this charter is simply addressing issues not addressed by guild records that were either not enrolled, or are otherwise missing from the earlier charter suggested by John Stow. The guild's liberties were not enrolled in London's civic records until 1340,⁴⁶ but of the twenty-four armourers and tailors listed in that confirmation whose assent was required for prospective citizens to be enrolled by the guild, only two were persons that I could elsewhere identify as possible linen-armourers or members of the broader armourers' craft network (William Spark and John Kyng). This is important because these men's inclusion demonstrates that while armour was only a small portion of the tailors' industry, in 1340, the linen-armourer representatives were still closely connected with the other armoury crafts. The records show that William Spark had numerous social connections to

⁴⁶ *LBF*, 52.

members of the cloth, leather, and metal industries,⁴⁷ and so it is likely that he was either a very diversified craftsman, or an armour retailer; John Kyng had similar connections with the leather trade, and with painted armour.⁴⁸ These connections are important to note because while these armourers are members of the linen-armourers' fraternity, their actual daily social and economic interactions continued to involve a much more diverse network of armourers and suppliers.

4.2: Social Developments 1347-1453: The Development of the Metal Armourers'

Industrial Organisations

This section argues that the armourers' mid-fourteenth-century industrial organisations represented an attempt to secure their industry against import competition by engaging with the civic, royal, and ecclesiastical courts in order for them to take action on the armourers' behalf. The questions of when and how the metalworking armourers formed their own primarily voluntary associations of guild and fraternity are much more difficult to answer than their association within the oversight of the 1322 craft ordinances. As will be shown, a structure very much like a guild and fraternity was beginning to coalesce among the London armourers in the 1340s, but no guild charter exists in the records until 1453, and the earliest fraternal associations with Saint George discussed by historians are

⁴⁷ In 1347 Spark was a surety to the inheritance of Alice Doo (daughter of a leather dealer) alongside another leather dealer; in 1350 he and a furbisher were sureties to the guardianship of the children of John de Thame (probably a mercer); in 1353 he acted in the same capacity alongside two drapers and a chandler; and he was certainly an acquaintance of John Northampton's mercer ally William Essex, as he, Essex, and the armourer William de Skelton were all parishioners of St Mary le Bow, and on several occasions acted as witnesses together. His craft is never specifically identified in the records, though his name may have been a forge-related nickname. However, his associations above, primarily among leather and cloth dealers imply that he may have been a leather or linen-armourer, or, more likely, that he was working in mixed-materials. See: *LBF*, 162; *LBF*, 211; *LBG*, 13; *LAoN*, 451; *CCR 1374-1377*, 516.

⁴⁸ The "Kyng" family are often associated with kissers and butchers, although it is possible that this is a mistranscription of "botcher" – or one who repairs second-hand clothing. If the records relating to John Kyng and John le Kyng are the same man, it is likely that he was working in leather, or mixed-material armour. Like Spark, he appears as a surety in several records, one alongside a brewer and two butchers, and he was identified in the records as an armourer and "peyntour." Painted armour in England is rare, though painted shields were common. As Kyng's identification as an armourer and "peyntour" was associated with a knight owing Kyng forty pounds, it is probable that the debt was for painted armour of some variety. See: *LBF*, 66; *CCR 1346-1349*, 289.

in the early fifteenth century.⁴⁹ The development of this structure occurred as a reaction to the challenges faced by the metal-armourers in the mid fourteenth century, of which the technological challenges of iron bloom weight limits have already been touched upon in Section 2.3. The structures that emerged in response to these challenges drew upon the authority of the civic and royal court, but clearly emerged out of a strong sense of industrial self-interest. The interactions between the courts and the armourers' leadership resulted in civic, royal, and eventually ecclesiastical connections which allowed them to establish a competitive market against foreign imports; to weather royal price controls, seizures of their goods, and a highly restricted raw materials market; and to establish their members in positions of authority which would place the group in a central position on both sides of the 1384 mayoralty conflict discussed in the next chapter. As will be shown, the armourers' transitional status between traditional forms of organisation actually enabled the group greater agility to resist attempts at external control over the industry.

As stated above, the beginnings of the metal-armourers' attempts at their own organisation appear in the 1340s, most prominently in the records with the enrolment of their ordinances as the heaumers in 1347; however, this did not end their association with the linen-armourers, as the demands for cooperation in production and wholesaling discussed in Chapter 2 remained true throughout the century. The very prominent metal-working armourer Simon de Wynchecombe even appeared as a member of the Tailors' and Linen-Armourers Fraternity as late as 1396.⁵⁰ However, while the establishment of a mystery exclusively for metal-armourers suggests the rising importance of this single specialism, London's metal-armour industry was only beginning to develop itself, and it remained small, and relatively poor, when compared to other crafts of the time.

⁴⁹ Claude Blair, *Armourers' and Brasiers' Company: Cursory Calendar of Documents Relating to the Hall in Guildhall Library (MS 12121)* (London: Guildhall Library, 1993); Guildhall Archives CLC/L/AB/G/031/MS12121/17.

⁵⁰ *CWPH ii*, 340-342; *Memorials of the Guild of Merchant Taylors of the Fraternity of St. John the Baptist in the City of London*, ed. C.M. Clode (London: Harrison, 1875), 65-69.

The 1347 ordinances were very wide-reaching, and represented a far more coherent code of rules for the organisation of a craft than those enrolled in 1322. These ordinances consist of regulations which are for the benefit of the industry at large, rather than the City, or any single specialism of the craft. This suggests that these regulations were internally generated by the metal-armourers, rather than externally imposed upon them. The question of whether this more coherent set of ordinances reflected actual industrial practice, and represented the reality of London's armourers' craft remains unanswered, however.⁵¹ The goals of this document primarily concerned the control of production, competition, apprentices, and broadly, its own self-government. Apprentices and production methods among this craft have been examined in Chapters 2 and 3. Here, I will examine challenges faced by the industry that required the metal-armourers to organise themselves in order to impose control over the production and sale of armour in London, and impose limits on foreign competitors.

Those working as heaumers were required to be free of the City, "good..., sufficient work[men],... [and] proper and lawful...", and have their own maker's mark that could be used to identify their products, which could only be sold after they had also been marked with the warden's mark.⁵² As discussed in Section 2.3, this was clearly not occurring with regularity across the entire craft, but the demand that armourers present their work to the craft wardens before it could be sold is undoubtedly an attempt by the craft leadership to centralise the industrial activities of the craftsmen and the market activities of the armour retailers. While they did not yet possess a hall of their own, the fourteenth century saw the development of several armourers' districts which would have aided in the development of the armourers' market and the centralisation of their industrial organisation. Warden's marks were intended to ensure that the work of members was of high quality, but it also created a legal dependency upon the goodwill of the craft wardens,

⁵¹ This idea is discussed in detail in: Rosser, "Crafts, Guilds, and Work", 7-8, 16.

⁵² *Mem*, 238.

and demanded that members regularly interact with their officials, simultaneously increasing the group's moral and material densities and creating what Justin Colson called a "para-local community" where resident industrial members regularly interacted with those compelled to bring their wares to the armourers' districts.⁵³ As will be demonstrated in section 4.4, armourers lived in at least forty-four different parishes in several large multi-parish communities and marketplaces in London, and were members of several parochial guilds. By requiring armourers to regularly interact with centralised wardens, the armourers indirectly encouraged the development of these districts, benefited from the social networks established by their members in their local parishes; lowered the "search costs" (cost in time for finding appropriate buyers and sellers in a market) for its members and their customers;⁵⁴ provided the armourers with central locations for the regulation of trade, and perhaps most importantly, established a market for their goods away from where the Hansa merchants sold theirs, reducing direct competition.

These ordinances were also concerned with the control of competition both within the city and by foreign importers by mandating that only those with the freedom of the city could operate as metal-armourers within it; that anyone, foreign or domestic, working as a metal-armourer within the city must be proved a good workman by the wardens; and "...that helmetry, and other arms forged with the hammer, which are brought from the parts without this land beyond sea, or from any other place, unto the said city for sale, shall not from henceforth be in any way offered for sale, privily or openly..."⁵⁵ until they had been inspected. If the armour was found to be deficient, or could be presented as such, the wardens had the right to confiscate it. One application of this ordinance was that London's armourers were able to hinder importers from bringing armour into London and trading in the same marketplaces that they did. Gary Richardson has challenged this interpretation, claiming that "All primary sources concur" that manufacturers did not possess legal control

⁵³ Justin Colson, "Alien Communities", 112.

⁵⁴ For a discussion of the benefits of centralisation in medieval urban markets, see: Kowaleski, *Local Markets*, 179.

⁵⁵ *Mem*, 238.

over markets or the right to be the sole sellers of their craft in a marketplace.⁵⁶ However, here Richardson has mistaken the lack of a legal monopoly with a lack of control in the market: while he is correct in that London's armourers could not legally exclude the import trade in armour, they could make entering the market difficult or more costly, or could confiscate the wares of importers by demanding that the City uphold their ordinances. Evidence for this application of their ordinances can be seen in the presence of an armour counterfeiting trade: in 1383, the armourer John Hood was summoned to appear before the mayor for counterfeiting the maker's mark of a London armourer onto Flemish helmets that he wished to sell. In the same record, a Thomas Hogeote was sworn to be obedient to the armourers' surveyors, likely on similar grounds.⁵⁷ By counterfeiting London marks onto imported helmets, they could be sold at any market in London without the potentially expensive and time-consuming process of garnering the approval of the overseers; so this case testifies to the effectiveness of these exclusionary measures.

This kind of exclusion was a particularly important privilege for the London metal-armourers to secure, as the scarcity of high-quality iron in England meant that London's armourers could not compete on quality with foreign importers, whose craftsmen had access to higher quality, cheaper, and most importantly larger iron bloomeries. In order to compete, London's metal-armourers needed to raise their prices to account for their increased raw materials import costs, which the king prohibited them from doing in the latter half of the century,⁵⁸ or to reduce the quality of the armour produced, for which the king admonished them in 1365.⁵⁹ Without recourse to these tactics, the ordinances allowed them to appeal to civic or royal authority in order to ensure that the better-quality foreign

⁵⁶ Gary Richardson, "Guilds, laws, and markets for manufactured merchandise in late-medieval England", *Explorations in Economic History* 41 (2004): 13.

⁵⁷ *CPMR iii*, 36.

⁵⁸ See Chapter 5, note 16.

⁵⁹ *Foedera iii*, 772. Ffoulkes, *Armourer*, 57.

imports could not easily enter their marketplaces, which the Hansa had secured the right to do since the thirteenth century.⁶⁰

As the Hansa commune and their members were largely outside of the London civic government's authority, and their trading area of Steelyard was granted customs and tax concessions which allowed them to interfere with the local armour industry, these were one of the most significant competitors.⁶¹ The Hanseatic merchants were able to bring in the Swedish and Spanish iron needed by the London armourers to produce their wares, but also the arguably superior armour of Cologne, which competed directly with those wares.⁶² The armourers had no jurisdiction or ability to impose trade restrictions upon goods sold in the Steelyard by the Hansa, but they could hinder foreign merchants from trading in the City by enforcing their right of inspection, and restrict the trade of imported armour once it was out of the Steelyard. Therefore the purpose of this regulation is akin to restrictions against forestalling, and was meant to restrict London's resale merchants and wholesalers more than its private consumers. No records of seizures of Hansa goods during this period exist outside of those ordered by the crown,⁶³ and so the Hansa trading post was a frustrating but untouchable competitor to the London armourers' attempts at a trade monopoly.

Evidence to support this interpretation can be found in the ways in which the armourers' ordinances were enforced. In December 1347, only two months after the enrolment of the heaumers' ordinances, the mayor, aldermen, and sheriffs were ordered by Edward III to search the city ordinances for any existing laws to put down "nuisances arising from the sale of small victuals and other merchandise in the highways of Chepe,

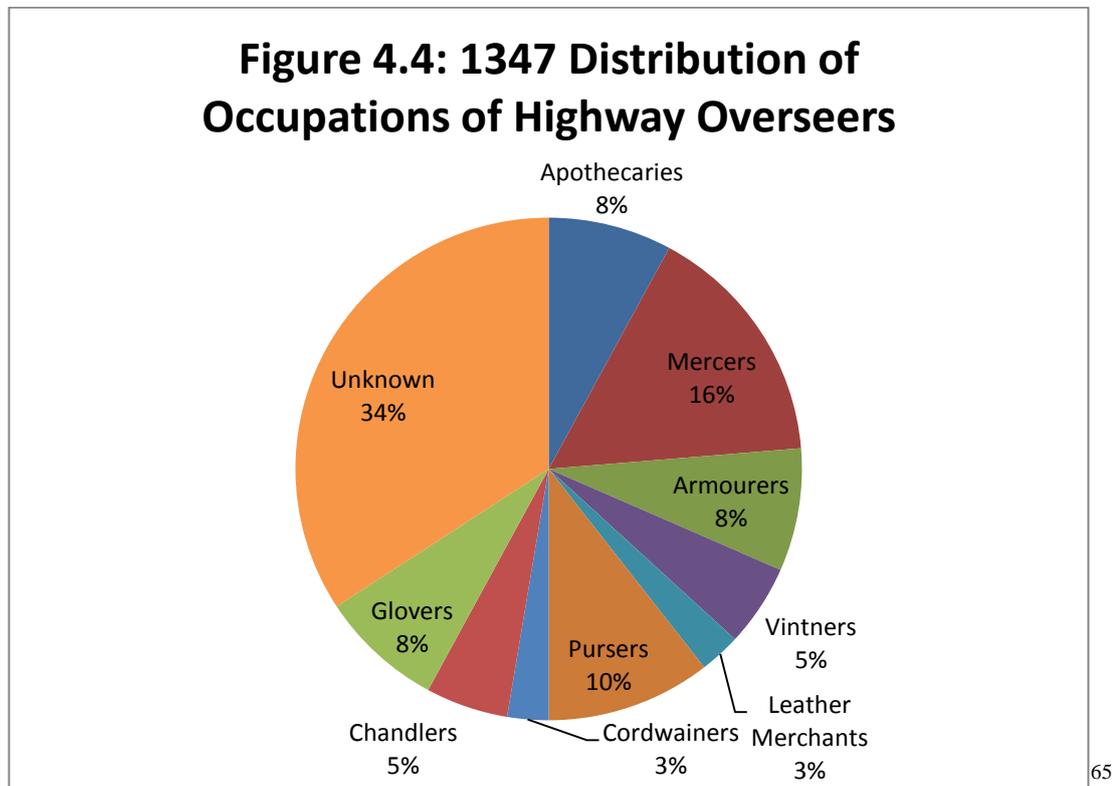
⁶⁰ Nightingale, *Medieval Mercantile*, 87.

⁶¹ Philippe Dollinger, *The German Hansa* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1970), 187; Thrupp, "The Gilds", 247.

⁶² Dollinger, *Hansa*, 6; Nightingale, *Medieval Mercantile*, 87.

⁶³ On July 30, 1351 Edward III ordered the seizure of all goods belonging to the Hansa. A second proclamation was made August 7th that year clarifying his intention that the merchants were not to suffer bodily injury. See: *LBF*, 233.

Cornhull, and elsewhere”.⁶⁴ The heaumers’ ordinances were clearly significant to this order against highway retailers, because of the thirty-eight men charged with executing the order, three were armourers, and from the remaining figures, a picture of the crafts for which this nuisance existed can be constructed (Figure 4.4).



Source: *LBF*, 180

While it is possible that the persons chosen to execute these writs were simply random “good men of the City,” it is more likely that the victuals and merchandise that were causing the nuisances were related to their own ordinances, and that the search for enrolled ordinances in the first record was to confirm what rights the City had to prosecute offenders on behalf of the crafts. The “small victuals” therefore was almost certainly primarily wine, as vintners were the only victuallers identified as elected to enforce the ordinances. Likewise, it can be assumed that the armourers, here represented by William

⁶⁴ *LBF*, 180.

⁶⁵ Of the unknown figures here, Walter le Pursere, based on his occupational surname and listing with the pursers was almost certainly a purser as well; William Smith was probably a smith, whose interests would have aligned with the heaumers; and Ekwall noted a trend among London figures named “de Farnham” with the pepperers, and so John de Farnham may have been one of these. John Albon may have been a relation of the armourer William Albon. Persons named John Albon appear as both an armourer and a mercer at the end of the century, but these are almost certainly not the same man. See: *Subs*, 265 n. 45; *CPMR iii*, 66; *CCR 1346-1349*, 611; *CCR 1396-1399*, 214.

Spark, Nicholas le Clerk, and William Albon, had a significant interest in the small merchandise being sold in the highways. As stated above, William Spark was one of the armourers mentioned in the Charter of Liberties of the Tailors and Linen-Armourers in 1340, and based on other records relating to him, he was probably a craftsman of mixed materials, or a retailer of all types of armour. Nicholas le Clerk was certainly working in both metal and leather, and he is also identified as a clerk through his surname, and both a girdler and an armourer through occupational identification.⁶⁶ Finally, William Albon, if all records represent the same man, is identified as an armourer in 1348, the governor of the smiths in 1364, a master of the smiths in 1371, a master of the bladesmiths in 1376, and a common councilman representing the smiths in 1381, demonstrating the degree of craft overlap among metal-workers during the latter half of the fourteenth century and the varied kinds of crafts in which armourers practised their trades.⁶⁷

These three armourers were some of the most active multidisciplinary armourers I found in my survey of the crafts, and so it is compelling that they were chosen to identify and prosecute illegal trade here. It is probable that they were chosen as each person was directly involved in, or had economic connections to, the crafts most affected by the illegal trade. Furthermore, when one considers that armoured gloves (which London's armourers were found producing *en masse* in earlier records)⁶⁸ required metal armourers, glovers, and leather-sellers (an industry occasionally entered by cordwainers); that pouchmakers (functionally identical to the pursers discussed in this record)⁶⁹ expressed their interest in combatting counterfeit leather sales specifically as that leather was used in armour;⁷⁰ and that fourteenth-century mercers were often found selling armour and armour components,⁷¹ it becomes clear that controlling the raw materials for armour and its sale and resale within

⁶⁶ See Chapter 1, note 122.

⁶⁷ *CCR 1346-1349*, 611; *LBG*, 174, 291; *LBH*, 45; *CPMR iii*, 31.

⁶⁸ *LBE*, 170.

⁶⁹ They existed as separate guilds until they merged in the 16th century. See: Cherry, "Leather", 316.

⁷⁰ *CPMR iii*, 230.

⁷¹ For example, the mercer Robert Guppy in 1395 collected 7000 white plates used for armour, a sword, and an "old *basynett* with *visere*" among numerous other mercantile items from the goods of the merchant John Chiveley, in lieu of a debt owed to him. See: *CPMR i*, 40.

the City was of great economic interest to many of the crafts chosen to enforce the heaumers' and other relevant ordinances here. The challenges that the armourers faced in controlling their market were greater than the aldermanic courts could reasonably address for them, however, and so different methods of organisation and enforcement of rights were required, which required money in order to court royal approval, to rent other companies' halls, lease and eventually purchase their own hall, and to establish their own fraternity.

Despite the metal-armourers' rise to the status of mystery, their industry was poor and small when compared to other trades. This poverty is seen in the records by the armourers' contributions to civic loans; but while these records demonstrate their poverty compared to other crafts, they also demonstrate a strong desire among the group to seek royal approval (a requirement for the establishment of a guild) by being counted among the "wealthier and more reputable men of the City."⁷² In 1340, a loan of 5,000 marks granted to the crown by these men included five armourers, a swordmaker, and a furbisher,⁷³ whose total contributions amounted to nearly £25 less than their fair share of the loan, and marked them, with William de Poumfreyt's exception (he paid more than double his portion), in the bottom half of the contributors. In 1346, a similar loan for 3,000 marks⁷⁴ recorded de Poumfreyt, "Nicholas le Gurdelere" and Thomas Canon (who would be warden of the heaumers the next year)⁷⁵ contributing, but by 1363 when the heaumers granted money to the crown as a craft, rather than as individuals,⁷⁶ their gift of only £3

⁷² *LBF*, 45-49.

⁷³ William de Poumfreyt (probably an armourer, as a later person of the same name was. This Poumfreyt was married to the widow of the furbisher William Love), Nicholas le Girdelere (the same as Nicholas le Clerk mentioned elsewhere, he was probably a metal and leather armourer, as well as a retailer). John de Romburgh, (unknown specialism), William de Skeltone (unknown specialism), and John Marchaunt (armour retailer), the bladesmith Thomas Bole, and the furbisher Reginald le Fourbour (identified by occupational surname).

⁷⁴ LMA COL/AD/01/006 cxxi-xxxvb.

⁷⁵ *Mem*, 238.

⁷⁶ Herbert erroneously calculates 37 Edward III to 1355, rather than 1363. See: Herbert, *The History of the Twelve Great Livery Companies of London* (1834), 31.

represented less than 1% of the total gift of £391 9s 4d.⁷⁷ This placed them in the bottom 16% of the crafts, alongside the tanners, spurriers, wax-chandlers, and pouchmakers. The tailors, however, who would still have included linen-armourers in their numbers, were in the top 24% of crafts, giving Edward £20, or 5% of the total funds given by all of the crafts. Despite their poverty, the armourers' contributions in the years leading up to their enrolment as a mystery can therefore be seen as an attempt to demonstrate good faith with the crown, which no doubt contributed to the royal order discussed above demanding that the city enforce their ordinances. The 1363 donation may similarly have been an attempt to appeal to royal favour in order to change restrictive policies on their market, which, as will be discussed in Section 5.1, the armourers desperately desired, but did not receive at that time.⁷⁸

The challenges faced by the metal-armourers which impoverished the industry closely match Durkheim's Darwinian ideas about the development of more complex and specialised social groups in response to greater difficulties imposed upon the workers. In his words, the reasons for increasing specialisation, or in this case organisation, "...n'est pas parce que les circonstances extérieures y sont plus variées, c'est que la lutte pour la vie y est plus ardent."⁷⁹ Specialising themselves and attempting to regulate their niche markets through the different forms of industrial control offered by royal, civic, and religious forms of organisation and approval allowed the industry to continue to grow. One of the greatest challenges that drove these pursuits was the Black Death, which directly impacted their population, but more importantly indirectly affected the industry by killing off miners and

⁷⁷ The original scribe miscalculated this, claiming the gifts totaled £428 9s 4d. This has been compounded by Herbert's own mathematical errors in interpreting it, in which he claims that 10 marks totalled £3 13s 4d rather than £6 13s 4d See: Herbert, *Livery Companies*, 31-32.

⁷⁸ These smaller private donations were evidently extraordinary for the nascent armourers' industry. Roger Axworthy's research into the receipt rolls at the exchequer found that between 1336 and 1370, all loans or donations from armourers that he uncovered came from armourers either occupying or having previously occupied the position of king's armourer. See: Roger Axworthy, "The Financial Relationship of the London Merchant Community with Edward III, 1327-1377" vol. 1 (PhD diss., University of London, 2000) 152; Roger Axworthy, "The Financial Relationship of the London Merchant Community with Edward III, 1327-1377" vol. 2 (PhD diss., University of London, 2000) 27, 30, 57, 63, 135.

⁷⁹ "...is not because the external circumstances are more varied, but because the fight for life is more ardent." Durkheim, *De la division*, 39. Translation mine.

iron-merchants, and nearly obliterating the local iron economy. By 1354, the scarcity led to a statute forbidding iron-merchants to export any iron out of England even if it had originally come from abroad, and petitioners in parliament that year claimed that the cost of bar iron had increased to four times its 1348 price.⁸⁰ The increase in cost due to the scarcity of raw materials led the armourers to raise their prices, but the demand for armour because of the crown's wars meant that by the following year, Edward was forced to order a general purveyance of armour, because of his great need and the "excessive price[s]" charged by the armourers.⁸¹ Price manipulation, as will be discussed below, was one of the primary purposes of craft-based fraternal organisations.

While most fourteenth-century guild charters were simply licences to hold property in mortmain,⁸² they also formalised access to royal authority, or enabled a craft to conduct its own affairs in circumvention of the Mayor and Aldermen's authority.⁸³ The earliest surviving guild charter of the metalworking armourers in 1453 was also a fraternity dedicated to Saint George,⁸⁴ but some form of the armourers' fraternity of St George had existed long before 1453. In its preamble, the petition for their guild charter states that it

⁸⁰ *SotR i*, 345; Thrupp, "The Gilds", 254.

⁸¹ *CCR 1354-1360*, 134.

⁸² Barron, *London in the Later Middle Ages*, 208.

⁸³ Pamela Nightingale convincingly argued that a fraternity's ability to appeal to the Church to uphold its ordinances (bypassing the City's authorities) allowed craft groups greater control over their trade, because this arrangement both allowed for additional sources of authority to be petitioned to prosecute the craft's rights, but it also created jurisdictional confusion which helped to ensure a certain degree of independence from a single authority. Similarly, the implications of royal charters to further bypass the City's authorities and allow access to royal authority has been observed in other guild charters. Steven Epstein defined English guilds by the earliest guild charter of Henry II to the weavers, which specifically granted them power to circumvent London's political leaders and petition the king directly. Sylvia Thrupp categorised both French and Spanish guilds as organisations designed to "[take] shelter from town controls under the Church and under monarchical protection..." and that their chief political effect was to "weaken local authority." Nicholas Brembre would have agreed with this assessment for London in 1377 when he ordered that all craft charters be deposited with the Chamberlain, because he felt that they infringed upon his mayoral powers. Elspeth Veale recognised the fourteenth-century desire of English craft and trade groups to cultivate multiple avenues of legal appeal through which they could pursue greater independence. She characterised guilds as organisations which "grew together, and the authority of the[ir] association [was] strengthened by royal or municipal recognition... these are the associations, drawing their strength from several roots, which we may rightly call gilds." Countering these definitions, Gary Richardson has strongly argued against the idea that guild charters enabled crafts the ability to circumvent authority, but his argument was built upon an assumption that medieval law was uniform, universally applied, and lacked any jurisdictional confusion, when this was simply not the case. See: Nightingale, *Medieval Mercantile*, 178; *CPR 1452-1461*, 105; Epstein, *Wage, Labour, and Guilds*, 58; Thrupp, "The Gilds", 240, 242; Veale, "Craftsmen and the Economy of London in the Fourteenth Century", 138; Richardson, "Guilds, laws, and markets," 13-16.

⁸⁴ *CPR 1452-1461*, 105.

was requested because although the fraternity had already existed for a long time past, “they fear[ed] [that it was] not legally established”.⁸⁵ This suggests that an earlier charter may have existed, but was lost, or that they, seeking the methods of industrial control associated with a fraternity or guild, had imitated one without a charter. In 1377, Nicholas Brembre required all crafts that had received charters to deposit them with the Chamberlain because he felt that guild charters were infringing upon his powers as the mayor, and in 1389 guilds were further required to deposit their charters in the king’s chancery.⁸⁶ Those crafts whose charters were returned to them in 1389 (ie: seized in 1377) were the drapers, saddlers, goldsmiths, skinners, girdlers, and tailors,⁸⁷ while additional charters not already held by the Chamberlain were deposited from the glovers, cordwainers, curriers, minstrels, barbers, cutlers, and painters.⁸⁸ Only ten of these certificates remain today, and four of them were separated and lost before being rediscovered in the Rawlinson collection of the Bodleian library.⁸⁹ As will be discussed in Sections 4.3 and 4.4, the crafts for which charters were returned appear alongside one another socially in crime analysis, and living in proximity in property analysis; and in Chapter 5, the armourers and several of these industries appear alongside one another as political allies.

The absence of the armourers among these crafts is conspicuous, and so it is possible that a charter for a fourteenth-century armourers’ guild existed, and that sometime between its deposit with the chamberlain or chancery in 1377 or 1389, and the petition for a charter in 1453 when the armourers were unsure of the legality of their already-existing fraternal guild, these documents were lost, destroyed, or revoked. This is a reasonable hypothesis, since only forty-two fourteenth-century guild certificates for London currently

⁸⁵ *CPR 1452-1461*, 105.

⁸⁶ *CPMR iii*, 148-149; *LBH*, 193, 336; Unwin, *Gilds*, 157-158; Barron, *London in the Later Middle Ages*, 208-9.

⁸⁷ *CPMR iii*, 148-149; Caroline Barron and Laura Wright, “The London Middle English Guild Certificates of 1388-9”, *Nottingham Medieval Studies*, 39 (1995): 117.

⁸⁸ Barron and Wright, “Guild Certificates”, 115.

⁸⁹ Barron and Wright, “Guild Certificates”, 109-110.

survive.⁹⁰ This interpretation is further suggested by the fact that it is known that the armourers were acting as a fraternal guild long before they received their 1453 charter: they had acquired their Coleman Street hall to hold their gatherings by 1428, records survive of their rentals of other halls for the same purpose prior to this, and court minutes for the armourers survive from 1413.⁹¹ As it is known for a certainty that the “long time previously”⁹² that armourers had acted as a fraternal guild extended at least forty years prior to the date they received their surviving charter, it is possible that their organisation dates back even further.

The acquisition of a hall is extremely significant: Unwin claimed that in Richard II’s time, only a few livery companies possessed their own halls, although many attached themselves to parish churches or hired out other fraternities’ halls for their feasts, official activities, and religious services, as the metal-armourers apparently did with the Brewers’ hall in Addle Street on four occasions between 1422 and 1423.⁹³ These are evidently the records that John Stow and those who have cited him have confused for the earliest purchase of the Coleman Street hall and the foundation of the Fraternity of St. George, although this is incorrect.⁹⁴ Further confusion about the date of the Coleman Street hall has emerged more recently out of documents of property ownership found in the London Metropolitan Archives: King’s College’s *AIM25* archives and the current Armourers’ and Brasiers’ Company both claim that the hall was used “for [the armourers’] gatherings since 1346.”⁹⁵ While this date aligns well with the establishment of the heaumers’ mistery,⁹⁶ it is unfortunately a misinterpretation based on the nature of the property-holding documents.

⁹⁰ Barron, *London in the Later Middle Ages*, 208.

⁹¹ “London Metropolitan Archives: Worshipful Company of Armourers and Brasiers,” accessed December 25 2014, <http://www.aim25.ac.uk/cats/118/14141.htm>; Unwin, *Gilds*, 176; Rimmer, *Court Minutes*, 10; London Guildhall Library CLC/L/AB/B/MS12071/1.

⁹² Westlake, *Parish Gilds*, 23.

⁹³ Unwin, *Gilds*, 176.

⁹⁴ Stow, *Survey*, Vol.I, 284.

⁹⁵ “The Worshipful Company of Armourers and Brasiers: Armourers’ Hall,” The Armourers and Brasiers Corporation, accessed October 14, 2014, <http://www.armourershall.co.uk/index.php>; “London Metropolitan Archives: Worshipful Company of Armourers and Brasiers”, accessed December 25 2014, <http://www.aim25.ac.uk/cats/118/14141.htm>.

⁹⁶ Pfaaffenbichler’s research for the British Museum has caused further confusion here, as he mistook the heaumers’ ordinances with the foundation of the armourers’ guild. See: Pfaaffenbichler, *Armourers*, 29.

The property that would be purchased by the armourers John Sergeant, Robert Croke, Thomas Weddesbury, Laurence Blyton, Thomas Roblard, Walter Vital, John Aumfleys, Thomas Whyte, Thomas Parker, and John Garblesham in 1428 (Figure 4.3) is proven by the transference of all previous property-ownership documents, which, in this case, consist of a packet of documents dating back to the release of several properties that would eventually make up the hall in 1364.⁹⁷ However, the earliest deed relating to the property involving an armourer is from 1426.⁹⁸

Even without a hall of their own, the armourers were clearly attempting to centralise their industry through the establishment of markets. It is entirely possible that the armourers attached themselves to a parish fraternity's hall, or that they rented halls for which we have no record. As T.F. Reddaway put it when discussing the goldsmiths' fraternity, "a Company with a hall... was likely to be a much more closely-knit body than one without... [and] only Companies of established wealth could aspire to one and the legal complication for unincorporated bodies were great."⁹⁹ This echoes Durkheim's ideas about the relationship between the growth of social and material infrastructures already discussed in Chapter 2. However, that the armourers were clearly using halls for meetings and had acquired one collectively prior to being granted their surviving charter, suggests that the armourers were an exceptionally closely-knit group in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries.

⁹⁷ Guildhall Library CLC/L/AB/G/031/MS12121/2. The first document in the series is misdated as 1344, when it actually pertains to August 1364.

⁹⁸ Guildhall Library CLC/L/AB/G/031/MS12121/12.

⁹⁹ Reddaway, *Early History of the Goldsmiths*, 29.



Figure 4.5: Purchase of the Hall in Coleman Street by Ten Armourers (December 7th, 1428). London Guildhall Library: CLC/L/AB/G/031/MS12121/17. Personal Image.

When the armourers first acquired their Coleman Street hall in 1428, its dedication was to a Fraternity of St. George, meaning that they were established as a religious fraternity at least by that date. This idea is established by a poem by John Lydgate from that time,¹⁰⁰ which was written for “a steyned halle...¹⁰¹ at the request of th’armorieres of London for th’onour of theyre brotherhood and theyre feest of Saint George”,¹⁰² and a window in the Guildhall which ties the mistery to Saint George between 1410 and 1420 by the window’s sixteenth-century descriptions.¹⁰³ The window depicted a memorial for the

¹⁰⁰ Lydgate was dead in 1451, two years before the charter was granted. Floyd suggested the poem coincided with the construction of the new hall, April 23rd, 1430. See: Jennifer Floyd, “St. George and the ‘Steined Halle’: Lydgate’s Verse for the London Armourers” in, *Lydgate Matters: Poetry and Material Culture in the Fifteenth Century*, ed. Lisa H. Cooper and Andrea Denny-Brown (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 144.

¹⁰¹ A wall hanging.

¹⁰² Preamble to John Lydgate, “The Legend of St. George”, in *Mummings and Entertainments*, ed., Claire Sponsler (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 2010), accessed January 23, 2015,

<http://d.lib.rochester.edu/teams/text/sponsler-lydgate-mummings-and-entertainments-legend-of-saint-george#hn>

¹⁰³ I am thankful to the estate of Claude Blair for sharing his notes on this window with me, wherein Blair had transcribed Court Minutes describing the window for a court of 18 October 1555, but did not record which court, or the location of the documents. The relevant portion of his transcription follows: “Md. that in this mayres tyme & his sherves (sheriffs), Mr. Tho. Lee, Mercer, & [John Machell] clothworker, we ware abattyd from 8 persons to 6 persons to dyne at the gylde haull, and the place of our syttinge this yere was at the furst tabull in the northe syde of the haull in the west ende, At the begininge of the sam tabell right under the wyndow wherin doth stande the pyctere off Henry Redd armorer that was Sherve of London, & the pyctere of Matthew Redd armorer of London. Also in the sam glase wyndo doth stand the pictur of our blysyte lade the vyrgyn and the pyctur of Sanct George of [blank] & mystry of armorers.” He also recorded minutes from 6 October, 1556, describing the windows more fully and dating them to the early fifteenth century: “The Copy of the wordes in Englyshe that is now in the wy(n)ddo in the Gylde hall Of your charyte pray for the Soule of Mathew Rede Esquier somtyme Citezen and Armorer of londÇ A° 1417.Of your charyte pray for the soule of Henry Rede Cityzen and Armorer And sometyme sheryff of londÇ A° 1430.”

souls of the armourers Matthew Rede, Esquire, (d. 1410) and his brother Henry Rede, sheriff of London (d. 1420) along with Saint George and the Virgin Mary. Both of these men were prominent figures in the armourers' community at the end of the fourteenth century. Finally, the very prominent metal-armourer and sheriff of London Simon de Wynchecombe left bequests to the fraternity of Saint John the Baptist, but also to construct altars to Saint Anne and Saint George in Saint Mary Aldermanbury church in his 1396 will.¹⁰⁴

The most likely patron saint for the metal-working armourers was not George, but Saint Eligius, the patron saint of metalworkers.¹⁰⁵ Saint George was a martial saint, and so was chosen by Edward III to be the patron of the knightly Order of the Garter at its founding sometime between 1344 and 1352,¹⁰⁶ although, it is usually accepted to have been founded in 1348. However, upon Edward III's return to England in the autumn of 1347, he arranged for a series of tournaments, which Collins has suggested would have been the venue for Edward's announcement of his intentions to found the Order, "in conscious imitation... of his earlier proclamation of the Round Table project."¹⁰⁷ The abovementioned Lydgate poem predating the official foundation of the guild also links the fraternity to the foundation of the Order, stating that the poem was written in honour of "The thredde Edward of knighthood moost entier / In his tyme, b'assent at Wyndesore / Founded th'ordre first of the gartier".¹⁰⁸ While this poem may have been the armourers' attempt to retrospectively attach their 1347 mistery to the Order, the level of organisational development demonstrated here concurrent with the establishment of the Order suggests

¹⁰⁴ His Commissary Court will, preserved in the London Metropolitan Archives (DL/C/B/004/MS09171/001, 1399/1/431-435A) identifies bequests to construct altars to Saint Anne and Saint George. The Hustings Roll summary omits Saint George. It is impossible to know whether the original Hustings Will included this bequest for an altar to St. George as the original document, CLA/023/CP/01/128/17, has gone missing from the London Metropolitan Archives. See: *CWPH ii*, 324, 340.

¹⁰⁵ Patron of the blacksmiths', farriers', and lorimers' fraternity, established in 1424. See: LMA GL MS 2883, GB 0074 CLC/L/BD.

¹⁰⁶ George Frederick Beltz, *Memorials of the Order of the Garter* (London: William Pickering, 1841), xxx-xli; Hugh E. L. Collins, *The Order of the Garter, 1348-1361: Chivalry and Politics in Late Medieval England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 11-13; Lisa Jefferson, "MS Arundel 48 and the Earliest Statutes of the Order of the Garter", *The English Historical Review* 109.431 (April, 1994): 356-60.

¹⁰⁷ Collins, *Order of the Garter*, 12-13.

¹⁰⁸ "The Legend of St. George" ll. 7-11.

the possibility that the embryonic armourers' industrial organisation, having newly enrolled their regulations with the City, may have been consciously aligning itself religiously with the nascent knightly order. If so, this earliest possible date for the armourers' fraternity would represent a shrewd attempt to court royal power, the culture of English chivalry, and the wealthy members of that chivalry whose patronage they desired.

At least one Fraternity of Saint George contemporary to the mid fourteenth century existed in London, though little evidence remains of it. In 1361, Hugh Peyntour, a painter, probably of painted armour or helmets like John le Kyng,¹⁰⁹ left a bequest to the light of the Fraternity of Saint George in the church of Saint Giles without Cripplegate,¹¹⁰ and the 1379 poll tax recorded the taxes paid by the chaplain of the Fraternity of Saint George at Saint George's Church in Botolph Lane.¹¹¹ Saint Giles' is the more likely location for an armourers' fraternity if it existed at the time, as it is closer to one of the centres of the armourers' trade discussed in Section 4.4. Furthermore, this parish was also where the prominent armourer Roger Choun (business associate of the very successful armourers William Randulf, William Pountfreyt, and Peter atte Hethe)¹¹² owned a messuage and two shops in 1381.¹¹³ Another possible location is in the church of St Mary Aldermanbury, where Simon de Wynchecombe left money for the establishment of an altar to Saint George in 1396, since it is even closer to the site of their future hall in Coleman Street. Armourers were also members of several other fraternities. As stated above, Simon de Wynchecombe was also a member of the Fraternity of St John the Baptist of the Tailors and Armourers, several well-to-do armourers belonged to the fraternity of St. Katherine at St. Mary Colechurch,¹¹⁴ and at least one was a member of the Fraternity of the Holy

¹⁰⁹ *CCR 1346-1349*, 289.

¹¹⁰ *CWPH ii*, 106-7.

¹¹¹ A.K. McHardy, *The Church in London 1375-1392*, vol. xiii of *London Record Society Publications* (London: London Record Society, 1977), 8.

¹¹² *CCR 1385-1389*, 599.

¹¹³ *LPA*, 56-58.

¹¹⁴ Thrupp, *Merchant Class*, 34.

Trinity at St Botolph without Aldersgate.¹¹⁵ Further research into these parishes may shed further light on this question.

As will be discussed in section 4.4, the many armourers' neighbourhoods spread throughout London contributed greatly to the development of nucleated inter- and intra-craft networks. Where armourers joined their local parochial guilds, this provided them with regular contact with a diverse group of related retailers and craftsmen living in proximity. A centralised Fraternity of St George of the Armourers, if it existed in the fourteenth century, could have provided them with a hall, and would have served the same purpose as their ordinances, to draw in armourers from all across the city to create a cohesive occupational society.¹¹⁶

The privacy enabled by such an arrangement may be one reason for the pursuit of both a hall and a fraternal organisation. A mystery's disciplinary fines upon its members were paid to the City Chamberlain, and as has been discussed, the City ardently pursued the breach of craft ordinances where illegal trade was concerned, which gave the City a certain degree of economic oversight. However, if within the mystery there was a fraternity, the City had no jurisdiction to know what occurred in its meetings. As Pamela Nightingale convincingly argued, such an organisation could secretly inflate prices across the industry, discriminate against individual competitors as a group, influence the raw materials market and prices, or even collectively impose themselves against entire crafts (as I have shown the linen-armourers and taylorers may have done in 1322) without any of the authorities knowing what was happening.¹¹⁷ Even without direct evidence of an armourers' fraternity, there is considerable evidence of organised price manipulation throughout the latter half of

¹¹⁵ *ParFrat*, 4-18.

¹¹⁶ This concept is examined thoroughly by Justin Colson among immigrant communities, primarily of the fifteenth century. See: Colson, "Alien Communities", 113, 124-126.

¹¹⁷ Nightingale, *Medieval Mercantile*, 178. Elspeth Veale's earlier work agrees with this. She argued that London fraternities were "used as pressure groups for political and economic purposes... [which] depended on the Church rather than on secular authority." Conversely, Caroline Barron has argued a more traditional interpretation, that "whatever else they may have been, [they] were essentially communal chantries." Veale, "Craftsmen and the Economy of London in the Fourteenth Century", 138; Caroline Barron, "The Parish Fraternities of Medieval London", in C.M. Barron & C. Harper-Bill (eds), *The Church in Pre-Reformation Society: Essays in Honour of F.R.H. Du Boulay* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1985), 23.

the fourteenth century by the metal-armourers, a practice that resulted in the crown ordering a general purveyance of armour in 1355.¹¹⁸ Similar complaints were raised in Parliament in 1369, and royal decrees were issued in 1377, 1380, 1385, twice in 1386, and 1388 reprimanding armourers for their collective manipulation of prices and demanding more reasonable prices.¹¹⁹ This frequency of price manipulation found in the records strongly implies the kind of conspiracy suggested by Nightingale, and thus also suggests that the armourers possessed a high level of industrial organisation and coordination throughout this period.¹²⁰

If this clandestine manipulation of the armour market indicated a fraternal organisation contemporary with the armourers' enrolment of their ordinances, it would allow them more complete autonomy in governing their apprentices, excluding foreign traders, and controlling the resale armour market, which were the goals of the 1347 ordinance. Having a fraternity also meant that if the Aldermanic courts did not prove satisfactory to their needs, the armourers could appeal to the Church court to uphold their ordinances, and enforce secrecy upon their members through holy oaths, the breach of which could be prosecuted in Church court.¹²¹

Whether the armourers' intentions to control the market were successful or not is difficult to judge due to a lack of surviving records. While Edward's wars certainly gave the armourers a great deal of business, as will be discussed in the next chapter, the surviving records of royal interactions with the craft were rarely positive, and while several would occupy positions in the royal household, the armourers received very little favour from the City or the Crown in the fourteenth century. The only direct sources for describing this early social organisation are the 1347 heaumers' ordinances, and what can

¹¹⁸ *CCR 1354-1360*, 134.

¹¹⁹ "Edward III: June 1369", in *PROME*, accessed November 29, 2013, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=116470>; *LBH*, 66; 160; 228; *CCR 1385-1389*, 260-2; 605-607.

¹²⁰ Nightingale, *Medieval Mercantile*, 178.

¹²¹ Nightingale, *Medieval Mercantile*, 177-178.

be gleaned from the prosopographical analysis of the industry's members, which will be examined in sections 4.3 and 4.4, below.

4.3: Evidence for Voluntary Social Organisation: Crime and Mainprisal

This section will argue that the voluntary social networks which armourers' self-regulation depended upon existed throughout the century, and that these networks are reflected in records of joint criminal activity and mainprisals. Countering the trend of social development through the overarching structures of mystery, fraternity, and guild are these less recorded modes of social organisation, especially (but not exclusively) found among the less-wealthy, and journeyman armourers. Committing crimes together and mainprising those who commit crimes are both evidence of voluntary associations not required by any ordinance or charter. In fact, in 1353, Edward III specifically forbade granting "maintenance, succour, prayer, or aid, to any person who is of bad covin or alliance, or accused of evil, on pain of forfeiting as much as he may forfeit".¹²² As will be shown here and in Chapter 5, armourers regularly appear in fourteenth-century documents accused of both evil and bad covin in criminal activities, and yet they regularly mainprised and were mainprised by their fellow armourers and members of economically and politically related crafts. When this evidence is considered alongside the trend of jointly owned workshops and properties, the prerequisite interdependence of armourers' specialisms on industrial growth, and of workshops operated by multiple armourers of multiple specialisms examined in Section 2.5.1, it becomes impossible to argue that the social developments observed among the armourers in the fourteenth century were primarily imposed upon them by external bodies.

A study of all crimes committed by armourers or instances of mainprisal cannot be presented within the bounds of this thesis, as many of the relevant records remain uncatalogued in the various London archives. However, some sense of crimes, mainprisals,

¹²² *Mem*, 272.

and networks of each can be gained by a careful search of Mayors' Court Rolls, Patent Rolls, Coroners' Rolls, Parliament Rolls, Assizes of Nuisance, Plea Rolls, Coroners Rolls, Close Rolls, and the Letter Books. However, because these series were not assembled for the purposes of recording crimes and mainprisals for historical analysis, only the most basic picture of the voluntary networks can be constructed with any confidence. In this section, I shall discuss the significance of twenty-seven selected criminal records where armourers were the accused, and thirty-six where armourers mainprised someone else. These records do not include mainprisals for actions taken during the Mayoralty Riots, as these will be examined in the next chapter.

While the majority of crimes mainprised by members of the armourers' crafts related to threats, trespass, or assault, those recorded as committed by armourers were more varied, from destruction of property¹²³ to home-invasion,¹²⁴ theft,¹²⁵ murder,¹²⁶ breaches of civic ordinances,¹²⁷ arming the Welsh rebels,¹²⁸ and even one case of storming a castle.¹²⁹ These records are of importance not only for what they tell us about the social conditions of life for fourteenth-century London armourers, but because where armourers

¹²³ In 1305, John le Furbour was arrested for practicing with a stonebow on churches and houses. In 1318, the furbisher William le Neve destroyed a "pentice" above the doors of the cellar and shop that he leased. In 1380, Arnold Ingelbright constructed a window in his home allowing guests access to the neighbouring church yard, where they might "defile it." See: *CoEMC*, 205; *LAoN*, 234; *LAoN*, 624.

¹²⁴ In 1323, William le Hauberger, Nicholas le Clerk and others invaded the home of Alice de Canterbrugge and stole £200 worth of armour. In 1344, Robert de Tatenhale and others broke into the home of Bartholomew le Renter, assaulted him, and left him for dead. De Tatenhale had been pardoned twice for mayhem the same month as this incident. See: *LBE*, 189; *Liber Albus*, 375-6; *CPR 1343-1345*, 253; *CPMR i*, 161.

¹²⁵ In 1328, John le Fourbour and others stole a gown and 18s 6d in cash, and was hung. In 1404, the armourer John Sergeant and the furbisher John Mot stole a coat of mail. See: *CPMR i*, 49; "Court of Common Pleas, CP 40/572, rot. 059" in, Jonathan Mackman and Matthew Stevens, *Court of Common Pleas: the National Archives, Cp40 1399-1500* (London: Centre for Metropolitan History, 2010), accessed September 15, 2015, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/no-series/common-pleas/1399-1500/hilary-term-1404>.

¹²⁶ In 1340, William Walroun, a "platemakere" stabbed John Wrenche in the chest and killed him. See: *Calendar of Coroners Rolls*, 254.

¹²⁷ In 1383, William Thornhill was imprisoned for selling wine in Fleet Street for 2d more per gallon than allowed. That same year, John Hood and Thomas Hogeote were sworn to be obedient to the surveyors of the armourers and not mark armour with false marks. See: *CPMR iii*, 41.

¹²⁸ In 1402, Thomas Jolyfe and John Sergeant both had to seek mainprisers to assure they were not sending the Welsh rebels armour or weapons. See: *CCR 1399-1402*, 512.

¹²⁹ In 1382, the armourer John Burnby, along with several others (including the occupationally surnamed "Brunus Armorer" who was named immediately before him in the record) scaled the walls of "Ostrynghangre" (probably Westenhanger) Castle, broke into the houses, assaulted the servants, stole twelve horses and other goods, and caused the Lady Kiriell to hide in some water in fear for her life. While Burnby was only identified as an armourer in this record, a "John Burnby, citizen and armourer of London" (italics mine) appears in the Patent Rolls for 1389. See: *CPR 1381-1385*, 133; *CPR 1388-1392*, 109.

have committed these crimes in the company of other men, it points towards primarily social interactions. The records of mainprisal of armourers are more valuable for this when the criminal armourer acted alone, because those mainprising him are certain to be members of that armourers' social network.

When armourers committed crimes with more than one person, in almost all of the criminal records I was able to uncover, their accomplices were either family members or members of the broader armourers' community. Barbara Hanawalt also noted the significance of family in her more general study of professional criminals in the fourteenth century. She also suggested that occupational networks could be as significant as family networks, but was not able to examine this trend fully.¹³⁰ An example of family members committing crimes together among the armourers is found in Manekin le Heaumer and his brother Peter, who were pardoned for "trespasses against the peace" together in 1305. These were probably related to Manekin's theft of the securities for £150 to pay "ninety-five poor men of London" whose provisions were consumed by the king's soldiers that year.¹³¹ Another example of familial accomplices occurred in 1344, when the armourer Robert de Tatenhale, along with his three brothers, and a lorimer associate Richard Henaud, broke into the home of a brewer and assaulted him, "leaving him half dead".¹³² The familial relation of accomplices in outlawry among these records highlights the close social relations among non-familial craft accomplices and mainperners.

The industrial networks that appear when examining records of non-familial accomplices and mainperners closely mirror the economic interdependencies discussed in Chapter 2. Examples of these include the 1324 home-invasion, threat, and robbery of the armour wholesaler Alice de Canterbrugge by several armourers and prominent figures,

¹³⁰ Barbara Hanawalt, *Crime and Conflict in English Communities 1300-1348* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1979) 198-201.

¹³¹ *CPR 1301-1307*, 379, 392; "Original Documents: Edward I Parliaments, Petition 3", in *PROME*, accessed January 23, 2015, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/no-series/parliament-rolls-medieval/petition-3>

¹³² *CPMR i*, 161.

which has already been discussed in Chapter 3,¹³³ but many more examples appear in these criminal networks. In 1340, Master Gerard le Armourer, along with the furbisher John de Lincoln and the smith John le Keu and his servants were arrested for being armed nightwalkers and threatening the beadle of Aldgate Ward for refusing to open the gate for them at midnight.¹³⁴ While the former example may have been driven by mutual business concerns, the latter is clearly a case of men from economically interdependent crafts engaged in a voluntary criminal social interaction. As will be shown with those who mainprise armourers, these crafts not only mirror the economic interdependencies, but also the political networks that will be examined in the next chapter.

Armourers and members of the broader armourers' industry are the most common mainprisers of armourers throughout the whole of the fourteenth century, with the earliest example in my survey being the mainprisal of William de Hereford, who was mainprised by an armourer, Manekin le Heaumer, a furbisher, Adam le Fourbour, a probable relative, John de Hereford, an ironmonger, John de Rippelawe, and several others, after William forced his way into the home of Juliana Romeyn, violently ejected her husband, grabbed her bosom and called her "false and double-tongued".¹³⁵ Similarly, in 1338, the armourer Roger de la Tour was mainprised for the assault of fellow armourer Thomas de Kestevene by the armourers John Tavy, Henry de Morle, and William de Trente, along with a girdler, a cutler, and a man whose craft I could not identify.¹³⁶ Non-armourer mainpernors, such as the bowyer, three mercers, two fletchers, draper and glover who in 1402 mainprised the armourers Thomas Jolyfe and John Sergeant, assuring that they had not sold Welsh rebels armour or "aught else which concerns their mistery",¹³⁷ are of interest because the crafts that those mainpernors belong to were often economically related to the armourers, and

¹³³ *LBE*, 189; *Liber Albus*, 375-6.

¹³⁴ *CPMR i*, 126.

¹³⁵ *CoEMC*, 20.

¹³⁶ Armourers also provided evidence against him for threatening a John de Hadyngton the next month. He was bound with six sureties – likely the same men – to keep the peace. See: *CPMR i*, 173, 191.

¹³⁷ *CCR 1399-1402*, 512.

were crafts often impressed alongside armourers within the Tower when the crown required cheap armour, bows, and arrows.

Other misteries that commonly appeared interacting with armourers in records of crime were the cutlers and the tailors, both of which were also, as will be shown in the next chapter, heavily involved in the mayoralty riots alongside the armourers. The links between the tailors and the armourers throughout the century have already been discussed, and so it is little surprise that many armourers and tailors had both social and economic relationships, such as the tailor William Brabourne, who was mainprised by the armourer Robert Raughton along with five tailors when Brabourne was arrested for the rape and abduction of the wife of the tailor John Coyfe in 1389.¹³⁸ Cutlers, some of whose economic links to armourers have already been examined in Sections 2.4.1, 2.4.3, and 2.5.1 appear repeatedly alongside armourers in mainprisals.¹³⁹ While their appearance together only implies that the armourers and cutlers acting as mainperners both were socially linked to the accused, the mayor, aldermen and commonalty clearly believed that the armourers, cutlers, and ironmongers would work well together when they assigned those three crafts the shared watch duty to provide forty men-at-arms and sixty archers every Sunday.¹⁴⁰ This is likely because these crafts were contemporarily believed to have been closely intertwined both economically and socially.

These interactions paint a picture of fourteenth-century life among armourers as one that was both economically and socially interdependent amongst the broader armourers' specialisms. Among the armourers' specialisms, these social interactions grew as the industrial organisations discussed in the above sections became more elaborate. This is an important parallel development to consider, because while the wealthy merchants, civic authorities, and the crown may have had motives to impose control over the armourers' industrial organisation, the social organisation and industrial cooperation that

¹³⁸ *CCR 1385-1392*, 45.

¹³⁹ *LBB*, 1-9; *LBF*, 29; *CPMR i*, 191; *CCR 1381-1385*, 115; *CCR 1396-1399*, 56, 90; *CCR 1399-1402*, 115.

¹⁴⁰ Other related misteries also shared the watch: Drapers with Tailors, Mercers with Apothecaries, Fishmongers with Butchers, etc. See: *Mem*, 344-5; Girtin, *The Mark of the Sword*, 37.

was a prerequisite for such control was never, and never could be, externally or involuntarily imposed.

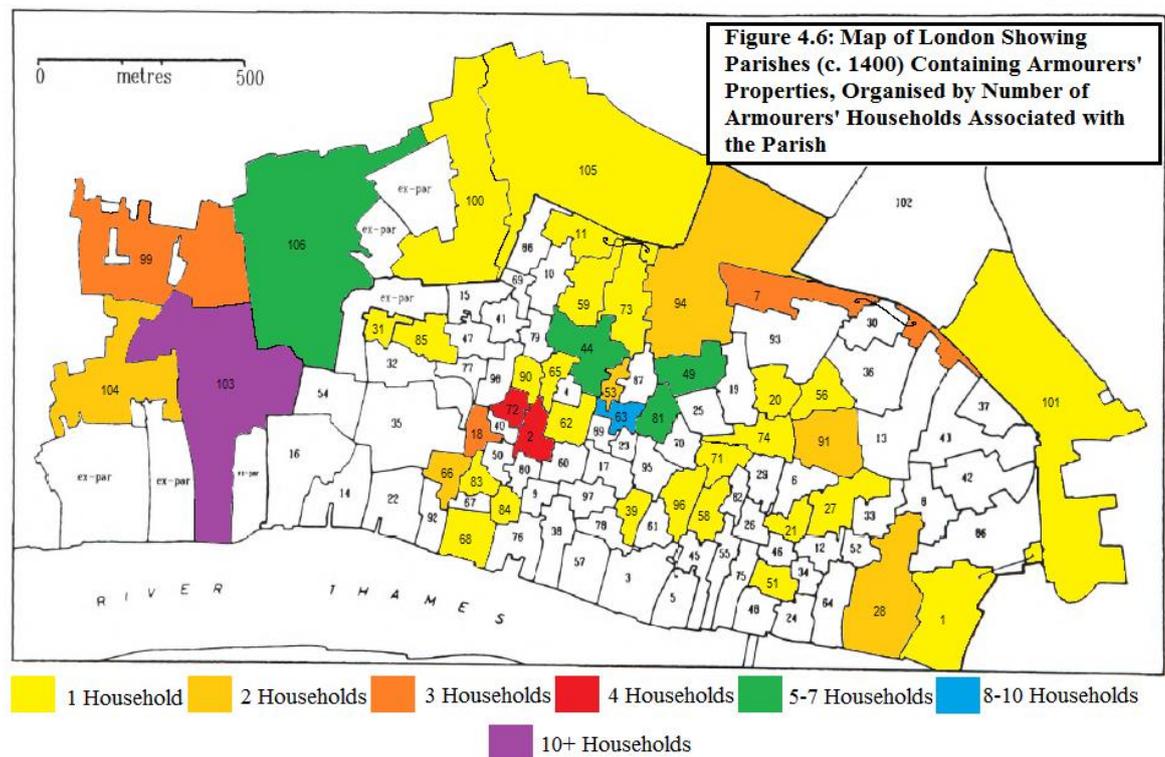
4.4: Armourers' Districts: Proximity and the Development of Voluntary Social Interaction

This section will argue that the development of voluntary self-regulation both depended upon and contributed towards the development of armourers' districts and markets in London. Very little specialist work has been done in this area, outside of Derek Keene's excellent survey of London metalworkers. However, as he was focussed on metalworkers more generally, his work dealt with the armourers only tangentially, and it did not consider the wider armourers' crafts in the cloth and leather trades, and what impact their marketplaces may have had upon the development of armourers' communities. Keene identified several communities of "diverse metalworkers" in his study, specifically batours, cutlers, founders, furbishers, girdlers, latteners, lorimers, pewterers, seal-engravers and wire-drawers in and around London Bridge, Cheapside, Newgate, Cornhill, Gracechurch, and particularly in the western suburbs on either side of Ludgate.¹⁴¹ Keene's general research is particularly important to the study of the armourers because it demonstrates where various specialist armourers were congregating with metalworkers of other sorts; and highlights the proximal connections between armourers and some of their political allies among related industries.

This section will further examine records relating to armourers' properties to establish a map of London's armourers' communities. Little can be hypothesised about the nature of those communities, because the descriptions of those properties rarely give any indication as to their use. Some were undoubtedly workshops, others warehouses, shops, or homes, but others still would have been properties for rent, or inherited, and so have little to do with the craft or trade of the owner. A further challenge to interpretation lies in the

¹⁴¹ Keene, "Metalworking in Medieval London", 97-99.

limited scope of the survey: as with other surveys conducted in this thesis, it is limited by the availability of records relating to properties and so is incomplete. However, when those records overwhelmingly suggest concentration of armourers in specific regions or parishes in London, it still suggests the existence of the development of armourers' districts. When those districts overlap with the areas Keene associated with other metalworkers, it suggests one source for the armourers' interdisciplinary workshops, close interdependence, occupational pluralism, and political homogeneity discussed in Chapters 2 and 5.



Source: Various. This map is an adaptation of Derek Keene and Vanessa Harding's "Map of London Parishes" contained in *A Survey of Documentary Sources for Property Holding in London Before the Great Fire*, and Matthew Davies' "Map 1 (a), The City of London and its Parishes, c.1400" contained in his PhD, "The Tailors of London and their Guild, c. 1300-1500". See Appendix 3 for the legend to the parishes in this map.¹⁴²

Figure 4.6 highlights the general locations of at least one-hundred-and-forty-one properties owned or occupied by members of the wider armourers' industry throughout London in the fourteenth century. The majority of documents I examined while

¹⁴² "Map and key to references", in *A Survey of Documentary Sources For Property Holding in London Before the Great Fire*, ed. Derek Keene and Vanessa Harding, vol. xxii of *London Record Society Publications* (London: London Record Society, 1985), xvi-xix, accessed April 24, 2015, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/london-record-soc/vol22/xvi-xix>; Davies, "The Tailors of London", 44-45.

researching the armourers' records recorded properties only by parish or ward, rather than specific locations.¹⁴³ Many armourers either owned or were associated with numerous properties within the same parish; however, in most cases these were described formulaically, with the majority of records simply stating that the armourer in question possessed some combination of tenements, houses, rents, messuages, gardens, and shops within a parish, but without stating how many, or exactly where. Therefore, while some districts clearly held larger numbers of properties belonging to armourers than others, it would be misleading to map the densities of armourers' districts by properties. Because of these challenges, I have chosen to trace the armourers' craft and trade districts by the number of individual armourers in possession of properties in each parish, rather than the apparent number of properties.

The limitations of the sources for armourers' properties placed restrictions upon the kinds of data that could be extracted here. It is not always clear whether individual properties were utilised by the armourers, or if they had anything to do with the armourers' industrial or social network. I divided properties by parish because this was often the smallest area by which properties were identified consistently in the records; however, parishes' varied sizes make it difficult to compare for population density among the armourers' communities. Some parishes, such as the parish of St. Mary Colechurch (#63) and those which surrounded it clearly held a great concentration of armourers' households, which suggests that they were where armourers' market or craft communities were developing. It is these "clusters" of armourers' properties that I will examine here.

Another challenge to interpreting this data is that the limited number of armourers' properties that I was able to identify across the fourteenth century meant that mapping for change-over-time or by specialism resulted in too small a data set to draw uniform

¹⁴³ These were primarily wills, records of property transfer, or otherwise records which identified the location of an armourers property, but Derek Keene and Vanessa Harding's work on property holdings in London were also of great help here. See: *HGL*, 1-810, accessed April 24, 2015, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/no-series/london-gazetteer-pre-fire?page=1>; Keene and Harding, *Survey of Documentary Sources*, xi-221, accessed April 24, 2015, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/london-record-soc/vol22>.

conclusions from. Nevertheless, in preparing this data, I did discover several clusters of properties which only appeared either before or after 1349, such as the cluster of properties owned by the *kisser le Kyng* family and their apprentices in St. Giles Cripplegate (#105) at the beginning of the century.¹⁴⁴ Similarly, mapping only individual specialisms resulted in very small, scattered community maps. However, by combining this data together, a more cohesive picture of growing interdependent communities can be carefully constructed. As Justin Colson succinctly argued, "...it is not possible to recreate a historical neighbourhood with precision, yet the component networks which operated, along with their inter-connections, can be visible to historical study, and can at least suggest a 'flavour' of the *communities* that shaped the lives that were lived within neighbourhoods."¹⁴⁵ It is this sense of growing craft and trade communities that I seek to engage with in this section.

As Figure 4.6 demonstrates, the largest armourers' district was in Farringdon Without to the west of London outside the walls. Farringdon Without consists of St. Bride's parish (#103) and the surrounding parishes of St. Dunstan in the West (#104), St. Andrew Holborn (#99), and St. Sepulchre without Newgate (#106), with St. Bride's containing the greatest concentration. St. Bride's was home to at least fifteen different armourers, comprising four metal-armourers, three furbishers, one hauberger, one linen-armourer, three unspecified specialists, and three men that identified as both armourers and furbishers.¹⁴⁶ The other three adjoining parishes held properties of two other retailers, two other metal-armourers, and properties belonging to John Scorfeyn, who was a linen-armourer, a furbisher, and a metal-armourer. Those parishes also held additional properties of metal-armourer Simon le Heamer, unspecified armourer Henry Bel, metal-armourer and furbisher William Trippelowe, and furbisher and smith Edward Siende, the latter two

¹⁴⁴ *CWPH i*, 202-3; *LPA*, 148-50.

¹⁴⁵ Colson, "Local Communities", 31.

¹⁴⁶ Peter Nuyer (unspecified), William de Hales (unspecified), Henry Bel (unspecified), John Hauberger, John Creke (linen-armourer), Hugh le Armorer (metal-armourer), Simon le Heamer, Gerard Larmurer (metal-armourer), Robert Sendale (metal-armourer and smith), William Thornhill (metal-armourer and furbisher), William Trippelowe (metal-armourer and furbisher), John Herman (metal-armourer and furbisher), Adam le Furbour, Cristina le Fourbour, and Geoffrey Boteston (furbisher).

of whom also held properties in each of the other parishes save St. Dunstan in the West. From at least the mid thirteenth century this district contained forges and the workshops of tanners and marshals;¹⁴⁷ and by the fourteenth century it was also home to bladesmiths,¹⁴⁸ cutlers, coal-merchants, cordwainers, spurriers, and arbalesters, or makers of cross-bows.¹⁴⁹ Clearly, this district had a diverse community of craftsmen with mutual interdependence upon one another: the furbishers' and arbalesters' communities likely developing as a direct result of the presence of so many armourers, bladesmiths, and cutlers, and all of the metalworking craftsmen benefitting from the proximity of the highway, as coal was imported to the city via pack-horse.¹⁵⁰

This was most likely the centre of the armourers' craft community, where they took advantage of the proximity of the highway as an artery for raw materials entering London, the proximity of other armour specialists to craft items that required the incorporation of different materials, and the low search cost of the occupationally pluralist district for customers and wholesalers looking for armour and weaponry of all kinds. These factors served to maximise their exposure, efficiency, and profitability of the workshops of the armourers and their related industrial colleagues. Here, more than anywhere else in London, the constant interaction between specialists brought about the birth of new techniques in armour manufacture and combinations of materials, as well as the social networks that would lead to the developments of mystery, fraternity, and guild, discussed above.¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁷ *Eyre*, 137(2), 138, 139, 147.

¹⁴⁸ *LPA*, 52.

¹⁴⁹ *Subs*, 305-314; Keene, "Metalworking in Medieval London", 99.

¹⁵⁰ James Galloway, Derek Keene & Margaret Murphy, "Fuelling the City: Production and Distribution of Firewood and Fuel in London's Region, 1290-1400", *The Economic History Review*, New Series, 49.3(Aug., 1996): 454.

¹⁵¹ Justin Colson's work on London communities identified a large community of ironmongers in the eastern part of the City at Billingsgate. However, no large community of armourers appears in the fourteenth century in that area. Colson's community of ironmongers emerged in this area because by the fifteenth century, Billingsgate became the regulated landing place for iron imports. While it goes beyond the bounds of this thesis, a rigorous search for armourers in this area in the fifteenth century might yield similar patterns of development around the supply industry as those seen in Farringdon Without. See: Colson, "Local Communities", 115-117.

The second important district to consider is the area around Coleman Street, Bassishaw, and Cheap wards. Cheapside was the City's principal site for the retail of luxury goods, and so it is no surprise that armourers had a presence here. The adjacent parishes of St Mary le Bow (#62) and St Mary Colechurch (#63) were home to the armourers Nicholas le Clerk, Simon de Wynchecombe, Matthew Rede, Henry Rede, and Richard Person, the hauberger Reginald le Hauberger,¹⁵² the furbisher Thomas de Norwich,¹⁵³ and the signatory of the 1322 armourers' ordinances, Robert Seymor.¹⁵⁴ These were all very wealthy and prominent armourers: Simon de Wynchecombe and Henry Rede were both sheriffs of London, and the latter inherited a share in a shop along with de Wynchecombe's son; while de Wynchecombe and Henry's brother Matthew Rede (also an armourer and resident of the parishes), were both "esquires".¹⁵⁵ This is clearly a market district for the wealthier armourers' retail properties: Nicholas le Clerk held one third of a seld here, along with his tenements; Simon de Wynchecombe had several tenements, houses, and shops, which were variously inherited by the armourers Matthew Rede, Henry Rede, and Richard Person; and the furbisher Thomas de Norwych also owned a shop here.¹⁵⁶ Once again, a full variety of armourers' craftsmen appear in close proximity, taking advantage of a usefully diverse market that, besides armourers, contained girdlers, cutlers, spurriers, and most importantly, the raw-materials market of the ironmongers.¹⁵⁷

Similar wealthy craftsmen and retailers appear in adjacent parishes of St Margaret Lothbury (#49), St Stephen Coleman Street (#94), and St Giles Cripplegate (#105), just to the north of the trading Cheapside district described above. These are important to examine because the armourers' hall was next to the city walls within the parish of St Stephen Coleman Street, while the Fraternity of St George described in Section 4.2 was within St

¹⁵² *DCoAD v*, 11940, 11943.

¹⁵³ He also held a tenement in the adjacent parish of St Mildred Poultry. See: *CWPH i*, 355.

¹⁵⁴ *LAoN*, 344.

¹⁵⁵ Stow, *Survey*, Vol.I, 293. In the notes, Kingsford remarks that Stow may have mistaken *armurarius* (armourer) for *armiger* (esquire); *LBF* 292.

¹⁵⁶ *LPA*, 9; *HGL*, St. Mary Colechurch 105/25, St. Mary Colechurch 105/32A.

¹⁵⁷ Keene, "Metalworking", 99.

Giles' church just outside the walls. However, neither of these districts had very large populations of armourers in the fourteenth century: the only records of armourers' properties I found were the large property bequeathed by the kisser William le Kyng to the armourer and painter John le Kyng within St Stephen Coleman Street, and Roger Choun's messuage and shops in St Giles Cripplegate.¹⁵⁸ St Margaret Lothbury, however, immediately south of St Stephen Coleman Street, had the third highest population of armourers in the property records I examined. Both Nicholas le Clerk and Simon de Wynchecombe held properties there, along with the armourer and hauberger William atte Castelle, and the metal-armourers John Henham, and Thomas de Kestevene.¹⁵⁹

These armourers clearly interacted with each other and the other armourers who frequented the district on a regular basis, and this interaction helped to foster the strong ties that allowed the armourers to quickly form the structures of industrial organisation discussed in sections 4.1 and 4.2. The importance of Simon de Wynchecombe and Nicholas le Clerk to the community have been discussed above, but the armourer John Henham also appears regularly alongside local armourers: as a juror alongside William atte Castelle in 1382, and mainprising six armourers arrested for their role in the Mayoralty Riots in 1384.¹⁶⁰ Even before the establishment of the heaumers' mistery, there was a strong network of armour craftsmen and retailers around Coleman Street, as evidenced by the interactions of the local property holder Thomas de Kestevene, who volunteered as one of the sureties for the armourers John le Kyng, William Stille, John Scot, and John Marchaunt, who likely also lived there and were foot soldiers and horsemen fighting together in Scotland in 1334.¹⁶¹

Caroline Barron has commented on the role of proximity and neighbourhood parishes in the development of craft and trade fraternities,¹⁶² but the armourers of London

¹⁵⁸ *CWPH i*, 202-3; *LPA*, 148-50.

¹⁵⁹ *CWPH i*, 539; *CWPH ii*, 270; 340-42; LMA DL/C/B/004/MS09171/001, 1391/1/231; *DCoAD ii*, A 2247.

¹⁶⁰ *LAoN*, 163; *CPMR iii*, 66.

¹⁶¹ *LBE*, 4.

¹⁶² Barron, *London in the Later Middle Ages*, 206.

did not organise themselves through proximity to a single parish – rather, the records indicate property holdings of armourers in forty-four separate parishes spread throughout London and its suburbs, with a handful of concentrations of properties implying centres of work, trade, and close proximal interaction. These coalesced over the course of the fourteenth century into several industrial and retail zones which contributed to the development of the armourers’ workshop, market, and industrial spheres of organisation. Unlike parochial foundations of craft and trade fraternities, this kind of social organisation was not primarily limited to a single craft, but dependent upon the multiple interdependent crafts that lived and worked in these districts. While a fraternity may have been of great use for top-down industrial organisations to control prices, regulate apprenticeships and memberships, and exclude foreign competition; this informal interaction through proximity provided the opportunities for craftsmen and retailers to transgress the industrial boundaries regulated by those formal industrial organisations. The common, everyday interactions between craftsmen and traders in these districts contributed to the development of informal craft and trade alliances, and the atmosphere of occupational pluralism discussed in Chapter 2, but forbidden by the craft ordinances and by royal statute.¹⁶³

4.5: Conclusions

The development of the London armourers as an industrial and social entity is inexorably tied to its technological and economic development in Chapter 2, and its political development in Chapter 5. However, to understand the processes that occurred during these developments, they must be separated from one another. Examining their top-down methods of industrial control, through mystery, fraternity, and guild; and the evidence for their bottom-up voluntary association through criminal activity, mainprisals, and the development of armourers’ industrial and market districts, the armourers’ industrial organisation appears neither wholly as a result of external imposed regulation, nor of a

¹⁶³ *SotR i*, 379-380.

coordinated internal agenda. Rather, these developments were intertwined, and emerged as a result of constantly shifting agendas between the civic, religious, and royal courts, and the factions within the armourers and the larger craft and market communities.

For a relatively small and poor industry to successfully control a highly competitive marketplace, what it lacked in financial power it had to compensate for with agility and organisation. Over the course of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the armourers utilised informal social structures alongside the structures of mystery, fraternity, and guild in order to provide central organisation; secure legal rights to exclude, limit, or hinder competition. That organisation developed out of a complex network of crafts, craftsmen, and retailers related by similar economic requirements, marketplaces, and proximity from the interaction of the powerful linen-armourers and their tailor allies attempting to control the production of the other armourers' crafts in 1322; to the development of a fully independent and economically dominant mystery of the metal-armourers twenty-five years later; to the establishment of a fraternity to organise the craft, trade, and marketplaces away from the eyes of the courts; to the possession of a hall, and finally, to the full establishment of a legal, property-owning guild. This complexity supported the development of new armour technologies, new methods of workplace and industrial organisation; and as will be explored in the next chapter, to the rise of the wealthiest armourers to positions of civic and royal authority, and the development of the armourers as a political force in the turbulent political landscape of Richard II.

Chapter 5: The Riots, the Rift, and the (Privy) Wardrobe: The Armourers' Role in the Mayoralty Riots of 1383-4

5.0: Introduction

In the fourth quarter of the fourteenth century, London underwent a period of significant civil unrest. For London's mercantile and craft communities, the greatest turbulence in this period centred on the three major mayoralty riots of 1383-1384, but for the armourers specifically, the tensions that culminated in those events had been building for thirty years by the time they exploded into rioting, and the riots were intrinsically tied to their industrial concerns and growth during those years. The largest of these riots occurred on 13th October 1383, 7th February 1384, and the 13th October 1384, and while they are each important events in the history of London, the most important for the armourers specifically were the latter two, which this chapter will examine. These riots, and the undeniable scale of the armourers' involvement in them, represented a crucible for their industry, and forced the industry to both hold its members accountable for their actions, but also provide those responsible with financial, legal, and social support, creating the framework for what would become the Armourers' Guild in the fifteenth century. In this chapter, I shall examine the role of the armourers in this period of political unrest, from their early poor relations with the crown, to their role in the conflicts between London's victualing and non-victualing trades, and the difficulty that the armourers and other craftsmen faced finding a voice in civic government before John Northampton's constitutional changes enabled the armourers to achieve their first positions in the London Common Council. It will then examine the armourers' place in the riots, and how their actions during this period of unrest both reflected and helped to define their social and political organisation at the end of the century.

As discussed in Chapter 4, the armourers' industry can be examined through the contexts of a wealthy elite class of armourers who engaged with and sought the support of civic, royal, and religious spheres of authority in order to establish and extend their

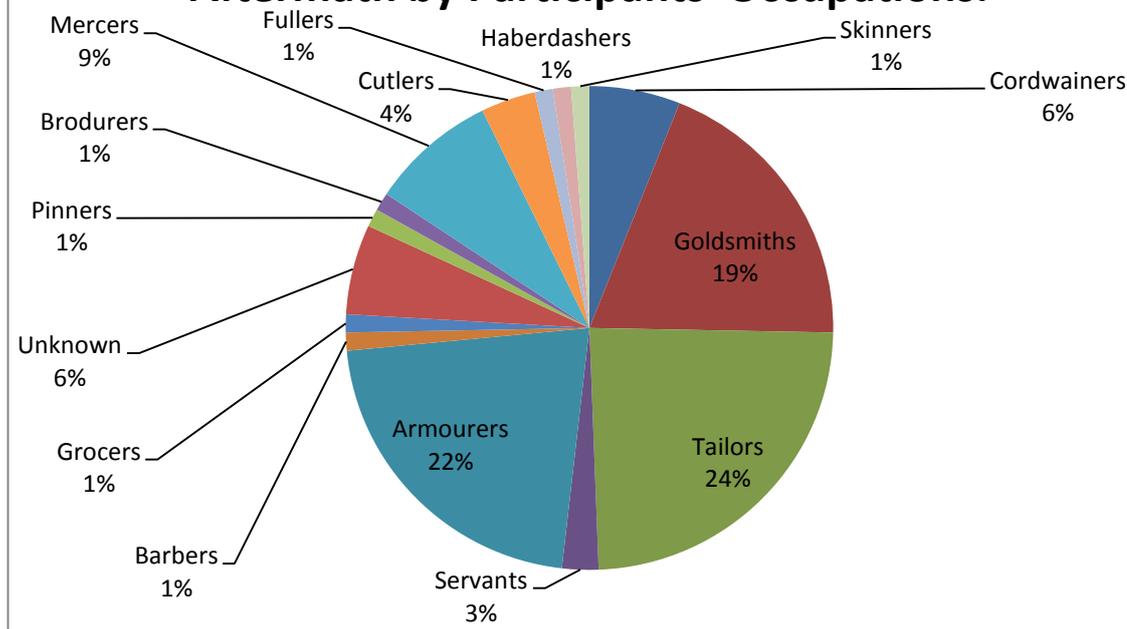
markets; and a separate form of socio-economic networking found particularly among armour craftsmen who had little individual influence upon their larger industrial organisation. Members of each of these groups are found in the records relating to the 1384 Election Day Riots especially, but this chapter will also examine their involvement in the February 1384 riots, led by John Northampton himself, as well.¹ As this chapter will show, the armourers' involvement in these events demonstrated that the growth of the armourers' industry was closely tied to the growth of the other small crafts and trades which this thesis has examined in the previous chapters. It will ask how similar economic conditions aligned these crafts' and trades' political goals, and their social, familial, and workshop interactions provided the networking that allowed them to develop into a political counterculture.² The armourers involved in the 1384 Election Day Riots represented 22% of all participants found in the arrest and mainprisal records of the event.³ However, if the associated crafts and raw-materials networks of the tailors, cutlers, skimmers, and cordwainers are included, the broader armourers' socio-economic network of industries represented 57% of those recorded participating in the 1384 Election Day Riots alone, as demonstrated in Figure 5.1.

¹ See: Section 5.4.

² This form of organisation mirrors Joseph de Rivera's concept of "emotional climate", where common emotional relationships with local social structures are "palpably sensed". Stephanie Alice Baker has applied this to riot theory and argued that when the emotional climate leads to a riot, it is not the result of a "homogenous group mind", but rather a collective of individuals whose individual emotional interactions with the broader emotional climate result in the same actions. This counters Gustav le Bon's nineteenth-century ideas of mob mentalities and is particularly applicable to the study of the Mayoralty riots because the riots arose out of several different groups that shared similar emotional responses but had different economic, political, and social goals and group structures, as will be examined in Sections 5.1 and 5.2. See: Joseph deRivera, "Emotional Climate: Social Structure and Emotional Dynamics", in *International Review of Studies of Emotion*, ed. K.T. Strongman, ed (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1992), 197-218; Stephanie Alice Baker, "The Mediated Crowd: New Social Media and New Forms of Rioting", *Sociological Research Online* 16.4 (Nov. 2011): <http://www.socresonline.org.uk/16/4/21.html> Accessed July 29, 2014; Gustav le Bon, *The Crowd: A Study of the Popular Mind*, 1896, reprint (Mineola: Dover Publications, 2002) 1-20.

³ No arrest or mainprisal records from the 1383 Election Riots survive, and armourers do not appear in the surviving records for the February 7th 1384 riot, but only twenty-seven mainprisals and arrest records survive in the Plea Rolls, Close Rolls, and Patent Rolls related to that riot. See: *CPMR iii*, 50, 57-60; *CCR 1381-1385*, 474-475; *CPR 1381-1385*, 500.

Figure 5.1: Arrest and Mainprisal Records for the October 13th 1384 Mayoralty Riots and Aftermath by Participants' Occupations.



Source: *CPMR iii*, 60-68.

On their own, these ratios only represent surviving records of mainprisals and arrests, and therefore do not represent the total population of the riots. Most of the surviving records of arrest and mainprisal from the whole of the Mayoralty Riots relate to the 1384 Election Day riots, when Northampton's opponent Nicholas Brembre was re-elected for his second term, and "...persons of the middle sort..." who supported Northampton assembled in front of the Guildhall, and "...made a great clamour and outcry to the great affray of the mayor, aldermen and commonalty...".⁴ While there are fewer surviving records relating to those who made up the crowds in John Northampton's February riot that year, it is certain that the armourers were prominently involved in both instances of civil uprising. There are only 111 arrest, mainprisal, and bail records out of nineteen separate misteries in the aftermath of all political disturbances related to John

⁴ *CPMR iii*, 62-63.

Northampton's mayoralty,⁵ but Northampton's scrivener Thomas Usk,⁶ testified that "about xxx craftes"⁷ were involved in the 7th February 1384 riot alone, and the Westminster Chronicle claimed that this comprised about four hundred people.⁸ Ruth Bird argued that this number was even greater, stating that about five hundred people were involved,⁹ while Northampton himself claimed he could have assembled more than eight thousand people.¹⁰ While it is impossible to know how many men actually participated, as will be discussed in Section 5.4, the crowd swelled as the procession marched towards Ludgate and into Farringdon Without, both areas where armour craftsmen's properties were clustered.¹¹ This chapter seeks to answer the question of why and how the armourers participated in this political uprising, and how their participation in the riots led to greater organisation and industrial development going forward into the fifteenth century.

5.1: Bad Relations Between The Crown and the Armourers: A Just Cause for Revolt?

This section is an investigation into the division between the armourers' industry, the crown, and the City and will ask how the goals of these bodies were in opposition, and how this contributed to the unrest among the armourers' community that would lead eventually to their participation in the riots. After forming the heaumers' mistery in 1347, the armourers desired the patronage of the crown in order to secure their nascent industrial organisation against interference from the Mayor and Aldermen's Court. However, Edward and Richard's respective wars drove the crown to impose increasingly difficult economic conditions onto the armour craftsmen and retail armourers alike. As the outfitters of the military, the armourers were vital to the security of the realm, which meant that the crown

⁵ Twenty-seven records between twelve industries for February 7th, 1384 and eighty-four records between fifteen industries for October 13th, 1384. See: *CPMR iii*, 50, 57-69; *CCR 1381-1385*, 474-475; *CPR 1381-1385*, 500.

⁶ Who was arrested following the February 7th 1384 riot. See: *CPR 1381-1385*, 500.

⁷ Thomas Usk, "The Appeal of Thomas Usk against John Northampton", in *Testament of Love*, ed. R. Allen Shoaf (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 1998), 426-27.

⁸ *The Westminster Chronicle*, ed. L.C. Hector et al. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), 63.

⁹ Bird, *Turbulent London*, 83. Bird unfortunately did not cite her sources for this claim.

¹⁰ Bird, *Turbulent London*, 83.

¹¹ See: Section 4.4; Appendix 3.

required armourers to be sufficiently well-organised in order to efficiently meet its needs. Frank Rexroth even went so far as to argue that fulfilling the king's wishes for equipping his army was "the greatest problem for the Londoners", above even "ensur[ing] the internal and external security of the city", because the latter was a prerequisite to the former.¹² However, the same necessity that created the armour market also imposed strict economic limitations upon it: the crown could not allow the armourers too much independence or would risk them using their products as leverage for political agendas, for securing greater rights, or to engage in profiteering off of their large market share of the armour trade. This section will examine how the crown sought to meet this need for large, well-equipped armies by impressing the armourers into forced labour in the Tower,¹³ by seizing armour from the shops and workshops of the armourers, by restricting the local export market, and by attempting to implement price controls on armour. The armourers were certainly not the only group to suffer under the restrictive policies of Edward III and Richard II, but their paramount importance to the crown and their relative lack of power when compared to larger mercantile trades makes them a useful case study in trying to understand the power dynamics of fourteenth-century London.

As the armourers could not meet all the demand for armour in England, and the crown did not want English armour in the hands of its enemies, or to reduce the local armour supply and therefore drive up the prices because of the increased demand,¹⁴ the importation of armour from the continent was encouraged, while its export was strictly prohibited. This reduced profit in the local market, and drove armourers to increase their prices, lower their quality, or attempt to export their wares illegally. In the fourteenth

¹² Rexroth, *Deviance and Power*, 31.

¹³ The impressment of fourteenth-century sailors and ships, as well as masons has received some scholarly attention in the last century, but as with other areas related to the London armourers, their impressment has never been examined by scholars. See: Timothy J. Runyan, "Ships and Mariners in Later Medieval England", *Journal of British Studies* 16.2 (Spring, 1977): 1-17; and Douglas Knoop & G.P. Jones, "The Impressment of Masons in the Middle Ages", *The Economic History Review* 8.1(Nov., 1937): 57-67.

¹⁴ The crown regularly claimed that "seeing the need of those about to set out [to war]..., [armourers] now strive to sell... armour... at an excessive price." *CCR 1354-1360*, 134; *LBH*, 160, 269; *CCR 1385-1389*, 262, 606; *CPR 1385-1389*, 261.

century, prohibitions against exporting armour or references to those prohibitions in response to cases of armour exportation appear thirty-four times in the Close Rolls, Patent Rolls, Plea Rolls, and Letter Books, indicating that the export market for London's armour was very large, and that it remained lucrative despite increasing royal penalties.¹⁵ The retail armourers were further prohibited from raising their prices on nine occasions between 1350 and 1390;¹⁶ and on nine occasions between the enrolment of the heaumers' ordinances and the aftermath of the 1383-1384 mayoralty riots, armourers were forcibly moved to the Tower of London to work their craft for the king for low or no wages, on penalty of indefinite imprisonment.¹⁷

Impressing labour, especially for military works, was done throughout the fourteenth century, although the term is modern. In general, "impressment" was the forced collection of workers on the king's authority to take part in royal works, on pain of imprisonment. The earliest fourteenth-century case of impressing armourers to work in the Tower of London occurs in February 1354, when John de London, the yeoman of the king's armour, was granted licence to take "as many armourers as shall be necessary for the works... and [to] put them to... work at the king's wages."¹⁸ This coincides with a new phase in the war in France and increasing hostilities in the lead-up to the Poitiers campaign, as well as difficulties in Scotland, and so the impressment of the armourers can

¹⁵ See: *CCR 1307-1313*, 44, 225, 522; *CCR 1313-1318*, 218; *CCR 1318-1323*, 369, 694; *CCR 1323-1327*, 545, 545; *CCR, 1327-1330* 403; *CCR 1330-1333*, 289, 289; *CCR 1333-1337*, 671, 675, 731; *CPMR i*, 102; *CPR 1340-1343*, 212; *CCR 1341-1343*, 351, 496; *CCR 1349-1354*, 134; *CCR 1354-1360*, 62; *LBG*, 109; *CCR 1360-1364*, 127, 405; *CCR 1364-1368*, 370; *CCR 1369-1374*, 114; *CCR 1374-1377*, 358; *LBH*, 27; *CCR 1396-1399*, 510; *CCR 1327-1330*, 403; *CCR 1330-1333*, 289, 289; *CCR 1333-1337*, 671, 675, 731; *CPMR i*, 102; *CPR 1340-1343*, 212; *CCR 1341-1343*, 351, 496; *CCR 1349-1354*, 134; *CCR 1354-1360*, 62; *LBG*, 109; *CCR 1360-1364*, 127, 405; *CCR 1364-1368*, 370, 370; *CCR 1369-1374*, 114, 387, 568; *CCR 1374-1377*, 358; *CCR 1377-1381*, 17, 424; *CCR 1381-1385*, 421 *LBH*, 27.

¹⁶ *CCR 1354-1360*, 134; "Edward III: June 1369", in *PROME*, accessed September 4, 2014, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/no-series/parliament-rolls-medieval/june-1369>; *LBH* 69, 160, 269, 288; *CPR 1385-1389*, 261; *CCR 1385-1389*, 261-262, 606.

¹⁷ Knoop and Jones' study of masons' impressment suggests that the practice was used far more than it was recorded. See: Knoop and Jones, "Impressment", 58; *CPR 1354-1358*, 11; *CPR 1358-1361*, 221-222, 323, 422; *CPR 1361-1364*, 282; *CPR 1367-1370*, 240-241, 300; *CPR 1381-1385*, 230, 574; *TNA SC 8/247/12310*.

¹⁸ *CPR 1354-1358*, 11.

be seen as an extreme measure under unusual circumstances.¹⁹ Further extreme measures fell upon the London armourers the next year following the sabotage of Scottish peace negotiations by Robert the Steward that would have secured Edward's northern border.²⁰

In June 1355, in preparation for the renewed invasion of France, the mayor and sheriffs of London, along with the king's yeomen, were sent to search

...all inns, houses and places of armourers and others who have armour for sale [in London]... and cause the armour to be appraised, taking into consideration the value of the metal, the work and the furniture and a moderate profit, by the advice of those having knowledge thereof if necessary, and to cause it to be sold to the magnates and other lieges about to set out for the defence of the realm, at a reasonable price, and if they find any armourers concealing or eloigning armour, they shall cause such armour to be taken into the king's hand as forfeit...as armourers and others in that city having armour for sale, seeing the need of those about to set out as aforesaid, now strive to sell all manner of armour... at an excessive price.²¹

The manipulation of armour prices following the Black Death and the establishment of the armourers' mystery has already been addressed;²² here, however, it is important to note two clauses of the above order. Firstly, that the order allows for the consideration of the value of the materials, labour, and furniture (the cloth or leather coverings), and a moderate profit, but secondly, that the order anticipated that the armourers would see this as such a poor deal that they would attempt to conceal or eloin their wares. This is explained by accusing the armourers of war profiteering here, but there can be little doubt that the king's yeomen had a broad definition of "concealing or eloigning", and would have been greatly rewarded for rooting out armourers that the yeomen could claim were acting contrary to the interests of the realm.

These yeomen had the authority not only to appraise the value of the armour that they were seizing, but also to set the price at which it was to be sold to the "magnates and

¹⁹ For discussion of some of these, see: Adam Kosto, *Hostages in the Middle Ages* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 183-184; Chris Given-Wilson and Francois Beriac, "Edward III's Prisoners of War: The Battle of Poitiers and Its Context", *The English Historical Review* 116.468 (Sep., 2001): 810-11.

²⁰ Kosto, *Hostages*, 184.

²¹ *CCR 1354-1360*, 134.

²² See: Section 4.2.

other lieges” once they had acquired it. It was therefore also in the yeomen’s best interests to undervalue the armour that they seized as much as possible, so that they could defalcate more from the armours’ resale. This means that while the retail armourers’ businesses were certainly hurt by this seizure, the greatest damage would have been to the craftsmen, primarily living in the armourers’ district of Farringdon Without.²³ These poorer and middling craftsmen lived by their labour, which Edward had already impressed for his own purposes the previous year. By interfering with the armourers’ retail market, this order damaged the wholesale market that craftsmen depended upon to make their livelihoods, and fostered discontent amongst both groups. This policy of seizing goods at below market value meant that even if armour craftsmen’s goods were overlooked, they could no longer sell to the retailers, from whom armour would be immediately seized by the greedy yeomen taking advantage of the centralisation of the retail market. These royal policies effectively destroyed the armourers’ legal market whenever they were implemented. However, while the results of seizures were negative for the industry, the manner in which the armour was seized actually highlights the growth in the civic power of the armourers: forty-three years earlier, Edward II, facing similarly extreme circumstances, simply ordered the wholesale seizure of all armour and warhorses in London without any remuneration to their owners.²⁴

While craftsmen impressed in the Tower were paid “at the king’s rate”, this would not match the wages or profits that many armourers could command working independently during a wartime economy (which had necessitated the above seizure of goods and complaints of profiteering). As records impressing the armourers also often impressed fletchers, smiths, bowyers, and furbishers,²⁵ this practice was probably a source of some of the inter-industrial, -social, and -political networks that are seen throughout this

²³ See: Chapter 4.4

²⁴ *LBD*, 290; *CCR 1307-1313*, 428.

²⁵ Furbishers particularly appear in these records after 1369, and always in the context of the work of the armourers in the Tower, highlighting both the similarities of their crafts and the close interaction between them. See: *CPR 1367-1370*, 240, 300; *CPR 1377-1381*, 230; *CPR 1381-1385*, 574.

thesis. A thorough study of the various collections containing records relating to impressments in the Tower may reveal more names of impressed persons, and comparing their life records among other sources could confirm this hypothesis.²⁶ However, such a study is beyond the scope of this thesis. While the shared imposed austerity of impressment may have created fertile ground for growing networks amongst these crafts, it interrupted their private businesses, and so harmed them more than it helped their development, and further contributed to the negative emotional climate among the small crafts, which led to the political unrest of the last quarter of the fourteenth century.

These problems continued into the following decade. In March 1359, William de Rothwell, the keeper of the privy wardrobe, was ordered to take “armourers, workers of bows, arrows and bowstrings, and other labourers as required for his office and put them to work at the wardrobe at the king’s wages [for] as long as shall be necessary; and to arrest any found contrariant... and commit them to prison until they find security to serve the king in his... works.”²⁷ Another similarly-worded order that appeared in November that year would have seen the armour craftsmen again impressed within the Tower, alongside the smiths and fletchers ordered to make arrowheads and to repurpose the old armour of the Tower into light plate armour for the king’s mariners.²⁸ An identically-worded order to Henry de Snaith, the new keeper of the privy wardrobe, appeared only nine months later and was again repeated in June 1362, indicating that these impressments had been constant over the course of the previous four years.²⁹ This is important to recognise because it means that for the best part of a decade following the initial outbreak of the Black Death, the armourers of London had their workshops and businesses repeatedly and routinely disrupted by the crown, and because these impressments were enforced through the Mayor

²⁶ The only named armourers impressed within the Tower I have discovered were John de Wyndesore, Richard Cobbe, and Walter de Kent, who were imprisoned within the Tower to work “as long as shall be necessary” in October of 1363. I have found no other records relating to these men. See: *CPR 1361-1364*, 393.

²⁷ *CPR 1358-1361*, 221-222; TNA SC 8/247/12310, where the clerk of the privy seal requests for a warrant to Rothwell to impress the London armourers (contained in TNA C 81/380/24406).

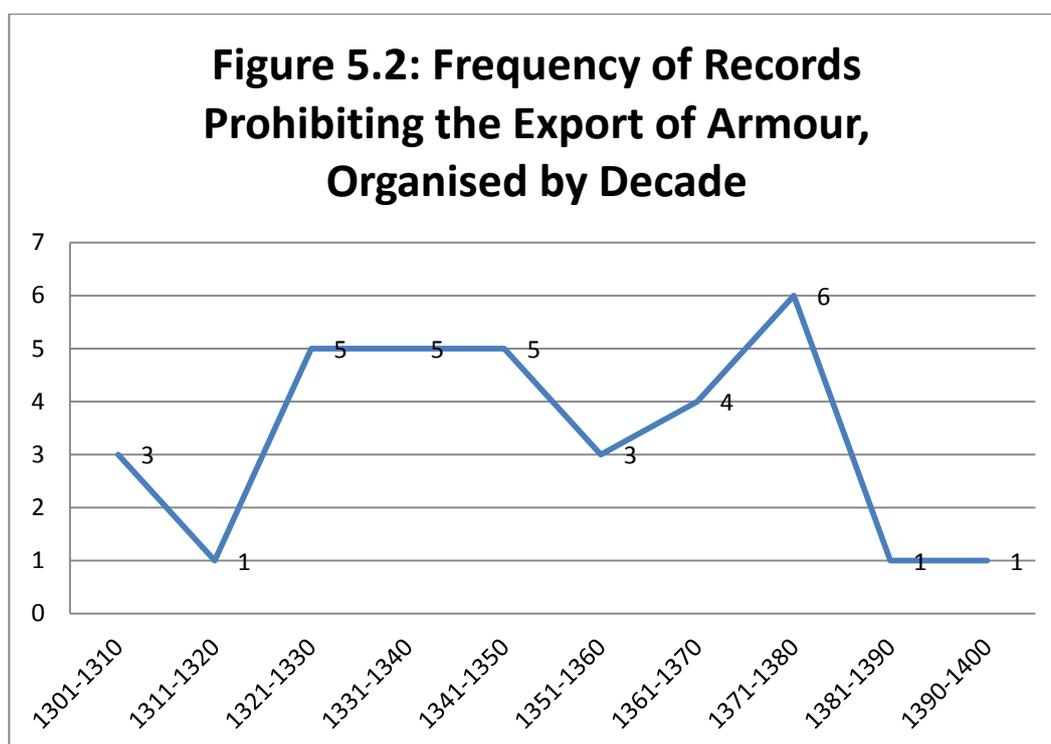
²⁸ *CPR 1358-1361*, 323.

²⁹ *CPR 1358-1361*, 422; *CPR 1361-1364*, 282.

and Sheriffs of London, the armourers had reason to resent the civic government as well. That these orders always carried the provision for arrest if armourers resisted implies that resistance to these orders was a common occurrence following the establishment of the armourers' mystery. The armourers' craft had little cause for loyalty to the crown or civic authorities, and over the next several decades, this relationship only worsened.

After 1362 there would be no further forced impressments in the Tower until the end of the decade, but as the Treaty of Brétigny ensured peace with France until 1369, and the Treaty of Berwick brought about a truce with Scotland, the market for armour shrank drastically, and so London's retail armourers sought more profitable markets by illegally exporting their wares abroad. The illegal trade of armour occurred regularly throughout the century, as shown in Figure 5.2, with nine proclamations against exporting armour appearing in the records between the start of the Hundred Years' War and the release of the armourers from the Tower in 1362.³⁰ These repeated proclamations indicate that the armourers' export market grew in response to the restrictions on their local industry because those restrictions incentivised the illegal export market.

³⁰ *CPMR* i, 102; *CPR 1340-1343*, 212; *CCR 1341-1343*, 351, 496; *CCR 1349-1354*, 134; *CCR 1354-1360*, 62; *LBG*, 109; *CCR 1360-1364*, 127, 405.



Source: *CCR 1307-1313*, 44, 225, 522; *CCR 1313-1318*, 218; *CCR 1318-1323*, 369, 694; *CCR 1323-1327*, 545, 545; *CCR 1327-1330*, 403; *CCR 1330-1333*, 289, 289; *CCR 1333-1337*, 671, 675, 731; *CPMR i*, 102; *CPR 1340-1343*, 212; *CCR 1341-1343*, 351, 496; *CCR 1349-1354*, 134; *CCR 1354-1360*, 62; *LBG*, 109; *CCR 1360-1364*, 127, 405; *CCR 1364-1368*, 370; *CCR 1369-1374*, 114; *CCR 1374-1377*, 358; *LBH*, 27; *CCR 1396-1399*, 510.

This growth is hardly surprising: as Mark Ormrod commented in his examination of the wool trade, smuggling “...was so endemic in medieval England that the Crown could hope only to reduce rather than eliminate this practice.”³¹ As the practice was illegal, few detailed records exist: the Lombard John de Plesancia was charged in 1339 with buying arms in the Conduit and exporting them illegally to the king’s enemies,³² and commissions were established in 1341 and 1342 to seize English ships leaving from Lincolnshire, Essex, Norfolk, and Suffolk laden with armour to be sold in Scotland and Norway.³³ These records probably exemplify the trade occurring throughout the mid

³¹ W.M. Ormrod, “The English Crown and the Customs, 1349-63”, *The Economic History Review*, New Series 40.1 (Feb., 1987): 31.

³² *CPMR i*, 102.

³³ *CPR 1340-1343*, 212; *CCR 1341-1343*, 351; 496. The records of the King’s Remembrancer in E 122 at The National Archives also contain some detailed accounts of arms intended for illegal export (and thus forfeit by the various statutes discussed above). TNA E 122/189/144 provides some particulars of seizures of arms illegally shipped from London in 1367/8, but illegal shipping of armour originally made in London is likely represented in many of the southern ports. However, this is a very large record series, and while it is organised by port, a complete survey of these documents as they relate to the London armour industry goes beyond the scope of this thesis.

fourteenth century: as London was the largest armour market within easy maritime trading distance to these counties, much of the armour contraband on those ships probably originated in the armourers' workshop districts in Farringdon Without. This is particularly important because the majority of iron used by London armourers came from the North Sea trade,³⁴ and the baleen occasionally used as a cheap replacement for metal plates certainly came from Scandinavian whalers.³⁵ Therefore, the simultaneous import of raw materials from Scandinavian countries, and illegal export of completed armour made by the London industry using those materials is an important area for future research.

Despite Edward's great need for well-equipped armies, many of his policies relating to the armourers stunted their legal industrial activities. Edward's wartime policies were intended to create a surplus of armour, and so keep costs down. However, those policies taught the armourers that it was not wise to develop a surplus of product within the king's grasp, or risk its seizure. Without a booming wartime local market to sell their products in, London's illegal armour export industry grew during the period 1362-1369, as evidenced by the increasing penalties against this practice. In this period, the penalty for being caught smuggling armour out of England increased from seizure of the contraband goods and recording of the offender's name in 1360 to indefinite imprisonment in 1367, "certifying the king from time to time of the names of those arrested"; and by 1369, to imprisonment of all buyers, sellers, and crew of any ships without the possibility of mainprisal, and the additional forfeiture of all of the offenders' lands and chattels.³⁶ While Edward was trying to prevent potential enemies from benefitting from his country's

³⁴ See: Section 2.3; Geddes, "Iron", 168; Williams, *Blast Furnace*, 883.

³⁵ See: Section 2.3; *CPR 1324-1327*, 29; W.M.A. de Smet discusses the possibility of Gray Whales calving in the English Channel and North Sea in the Middle Ages in "Evidence of Whaling in the North Sea and English Channel during the Middle Ages," in *Mammals in the Seas Volume 3: General Papers and Large Cetaceans: Selected Papers of the Scientific Consultation on the Conservation and Management of Marine Mammals and Their Environment*, ed. Joanna Clark (Rome: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, 1981) 307; while Ralph Moffat, James Spriggs and Sonia O'Connor, discuss the North Atlantic Right whale as a source for baleen possibly used in armour, in "The Use of Baleen for Arms, Armour and Heraldic Crests in Medieval Britain," *The Antiquities Journal* 88 (2008): 207. However, as whaling requires large ships working together (See: de Smet, 304, source i) and as impressment of English ships locked the English merchant fleets in ports, the whalebone used in England must have been imported, most likely from Scandinavia (See: de Smet, 304, source iii).

³⁶ *CCR 1360-1364*, 405; *CCR 1364-1368*, 370; *CCR 1369-1374*, 114.

armour industry, his wartime policies of impressment, purveyance, and seizure were the most effective encouragements for the armourers' civil disobedience and the growth of the illegal armour export industry.

In 1369, hostilities resumed in France, and the need for armour again increased, and the commons turned to parliament, complaining that in response to their great need, “les armurers et coceours de chivalx qe vendent les armures et chivalx a trop excessive pris, a grant damage de tout le roialme; qe remedie ent soit fait, issint qe tielx singulers profitz ne soient my soeffertz a grant damage du dit roialme”,³⁷ and orders were given to the mayor, sheriffs, aldermen, and commons to impose price controls in the City. Armourers, furbishers, smiths, bowyers, and fletchers were again taken to the Tower in April 1369 by the new keeper of the privy wardrobe, John de Sleaford, with orders for those that resisted to be imprisoned “until the king give other order touching them,” with similar orders appearing again in August of that year.³⁸ The stricter penalties imposed upon those armourers who proved contrariant to these orders indicates the seriousness of the crown's position, but also that more lenient penalties for resisting the forced labour had resulted in disobedience among the armourers' craft community. While no complaints about this practice by armourers have been uncovered, mariners in 1372 complained to parliament about the loss of wages involved in their impressment,³⁹ and Timothy Runyan argued that, “...doubtless there were more complaints to the crown of which we have no record.”⁴⁰ In 1376, the retail armourers were once again found illegally exporting their wares. The result was a royal order to the Mayor and Sheriffs to search all of the London armourers' properties and to seize all armour found therein that might have been “destined for exportation”, leaving the judgement of whether armour was destined for export or not to

³⁷ “...armourers and shoers of horses sell armour and [shoes for] horses at too excessive a price, to the great damage of all the realm; that remedy be made thereon, so that such private profit shall not be permitted to damage the said realm.” “Edward III: June 1369, Record 13,” in *PROME*, accessed July 15, 2014, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/no-series/parliament-rolls-medieval/june-1369>

³⁸ *CPR 1367-1370*, 240-241, 300.

³⁹ “Edward III: November 1372, Record 20”, in *PROME*, accessed July 15, 2014, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/no-series/parliament-rolls-medieval/november-1372>.

⁴⁰ Runyan, “Ships and Mariners”, 3.

those tasked with seizing the armour.⁴¹ Furthermore, a royal proclamation was issued that London's armourers were henceforth forbidden from selling to "any man of whatsoever estate or condition any armour [that might] secretly or openly... be taken out of the realm",⁴² a clearly impossible requirement, but illustrative of the prevalence of the practice it forbade. One of the sheriffs responsible for executing these orders was future London mayor John Northampton, and it is likely that he became familiar with the plight of their industry during these inspections. This plight would grow worse under Richard II, because while Edward's policies relating to the armourers became increasingly draconian toward the end of his life, and the armourers' attempts to operate outside of those policies more overt, Richard was even more severe.

In June of 1378, Richard issued orders to John Hatfield, his clerk and keeper of the privy wardrobe in the Tower, to remove to the Tower as many fletchers, smiths, bowmakers, armourers, and furbishers "as may be necessary" with the same powers to arrest and imprison the disobedient as in his grandfather's time. However, while every impressment of armourers that Edward issued during his lifetime mentioned provision for the armourers to be paid, "at the king's wages," it is conspicuous that this record does not make any mention of remuneration.⁴³ A second summons to the Tower under Richard occurred in the aftermath of the riots in June 1385 where impressed workers are, once again, paid at the king's rate, with the disobedient imprisoned as per previous impressments.⁴⁴ Finally, while it postdates the armourers' participation in the Mayoralty Riots, in July of 1399, two months before Richard was deposed, the last order of his reign relating to the armourers demonstrates the lowest point in a poor relationship between the armourers and the crown in the fourteenth century. This order proclaimed that "...no armourer... shall, *under pain of forfeiture of life and limb*... give, hire, sell or deliver armour... to any man save such as he shall know for a surety to be true lieges of the

⁴¹ *LBH*, 27.

⁴² *CCR 1374-1376*, 358.

⁴³ *CPR 1377-1381*, 230.

⁴⁴ *CPR 1381-1385*, 574.

king.”⁴⁵ The fourteenth century saw the punishment for the unlawful sale of armour increase from seizure of the offending items to indefinite imprisonment and forfeiture of all property, and finally to death.

This period from the armourers’ 1347 ordinances until the end of the century demonstrates increasing attempts by the crown to control the products of the armour craftsmen, and to control how they were sold by the armour retailers. It is hardly surprising, then, that armourers circumvented the imposition of royal control through illegal export sales; that they resisted the crown’s forced-labour for low, and eventually no remuneration; and that they concealed and eligned their merchandise when the crown’s agents came to search their homes and shops. Furthermore, when presented with the unequal treatment of other industries in London, and the politicisation of that inequality by Common Councillor and later Mayor John Northampton, the reasons for why armourers were so willing to disobey the king, mayor, sheriffs, and aldermanic courts, and eventually rise up in armed disobedience, becomes clear.

5.2: Food Dearer than Steel: The Effect of Post-Plague Economics on the Armourers

Scholarship on the political communities of London has provided a wealth of debate and analysis about the period that Ruth Bird first called, “The Turbulent London”⁴⁶ of the last quarter of the fourteenth century. The most important studies in the past twenty-five years on this topic have come from Pamela Nightingale, who shed new light upon the financial and economic aspects of John Northampton’s political communities, and Frank Rexroth, who examined the political disturbances around Northampton from the perspective of deviance, and concepts of the “underworld.”⁴⁷ These works are responses to Ruth Bird, who argued against the dichotomy of a conflict between non-victualing and

⁴⁵ *CCR 1396-1399*, 510.

⁴⁶ Ruth Bird, *The Turbulent London of Richard II* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1949).

⁴⁷ Nightingale, “Capitalists,” 3-35; *Medieval Mercantile*, 263-291; Rexroth, *Deviance and Power*, 27-51, 126-57.

victualing political parties that had been originally suggested by George Unwin.⁴⁸ Bird showed that both victuallers and non-victuallers composed Northampton's political base, and put forward an interpretation of a conflict between small and middling craftsmen banding together against wealthier wholesale merchants.⁴⁹ While Bird's interpretation is vital to understanding some of the social and political concerns, the armourers involved in the riots and found mainprising those arrested came from both the craft and market aspects of the industry, indicating that the situation was more complex than Bird's analysis suggests. More recent scholarship has examined the conflict utilising more complex social, political, and economic frameworks.

Pamela Nightingale's economic study argued that the division of conflicting parties was not between the wealthy and middling classes, but between those who took part in the overseas trade and profited from wool exports in Bruges and Calais, and those who benefitted more from the presence of a local wool staple, arguing that Northampton's opponents' interests lay primarily in protecting the overseas staple, so that they could act as both wool exporters and importers of continental products to be sold in London.⁵⁰ Furthermore, her studies of the effects of the staple suggested that the conflict was further divided among those mercantile misteries who benefitted by the location of the staple, based on the regional trade of the staple city. Misteries such as the mercers and drapers "...could reap no advantage from the overseas staple at Calais" because their imports primarily came from Antwerp, while their export market was chiefly in Flanders.⁵¹ Similarly, the armourers benefitted little from the continental staple: their most important raw materials were imported from Germany and Scandinavia, while their legal trade of finished products was wholly restricted to the English market by the royal embargo. While the debate over the location of the staple between the wealthy mercers and grocers

⁴⁸ Unwin did not see his argument as a dichotomy, but as "wheels within wheels; [and] secret compacts between unlikely allies", however, the core of his argument is largely black-and-white. See: Unwin, *Gilds*, 127-154.

⁴⁹ Bird, 75-76.

⁵⁰ Nightingale, "Capitalists", 3-35; *Medieval Mercantile*, 124.

⁵¹ Nightingale, *Medieval Mercantile*, 218.

certainly bypassed the much poorer retail armourers, it must be stated that the closer the staple was to German and Scandinavian ports, the easier it was for the armourers to acquire cheap, high-quality raw materials. This meant that the armourers' interests in the location of the staple aligned more closely with the mercers than with the grocers, and this mutual interest may be another reason that both the craft and retail armourers are found alongside the mercers and their allies in this conflict.⁵²

Frank Rexroth, examining the conflict from the perspective of the "underworld", argued that Northampton's rise was a result of his campaigns against immorality and falsehood and for greater transparency "at the expense of beggars, persons of ill fame, sinister brothel keepers, procuresses, ruffians, prostitutes and also the lower clergy as well as servants and labourers dependent upon wages."⁵³ Rexroth's argument against Bird and Nightingale largely ignores their political and economic contributions and the agendas of the mercantile elites, but it does present a hitherto unexamined facet of London politics at the close of the fourteenth century. Rexroth's examination of Northampton's campaign against immorality examines not only the potential ambitions of the parties involved, but also how those ambitions and identities were constructed and presented to the public. Understanding that the conflicts of this period were as much political constructions as real divisions in the populace is imperative to understanding the armourers and their place within the conflicts of the last two decades of the fourteenth century, and this is an area of inquiry that I intend to further examine here.

This section will examine the economic and social climate of the period and argue that while the conflicts of victualler against non-victualler; exporter against non-exporter; wealthy against middling merchant; and moral against immoral persons were each facets of the conflicts that led to the mayoralty riots, these dichotomies do not fully express the motivations of the actual participants of those conflicts. It will show that these dichotomies

⁵² Nightingale found that German imports of cloth and wool was increasingly paid for by bartering wax, iron, canvas, and timber, which were important to the armourers' crafts. See: Nightingale, *Medieval Mercantile*, 560.

⁵³ Rexroth, *Deviance and Power*, 144.

are historiographically artificial constructions, but through the propagandist manipulations of Northampton and his supporters, that they were contemporarily artificial constructions as well. It will furthermore examine how Northampton's political agenda aligned with the armourers' goals for their industry, leading to the particularly strong support for him among the armourers' craft community, as well as the more tentative support or opposition among the wealthier and politically active retailing community of armourers.

The political and economic factors examined by Nightingale and Bird are important in understanding the motivations of the politicians and crown in these conflicts; however, Rexroth's "morality" and Unwin's recognition of the rising costs of food were the most important issues for the common people, and these were the issues which Northampton politicised in order to garner their support. The latter of these was especially effective among armour craftsmen: working in a forge is very difficult and so metal-armourers needed a more protein-rich diet than most Londoners. As a result, access to high-quality, inexpensive food was even more important to armourers than to Londoners in general. The church calendar required fasting from meat on every Friday, Saturday, and many Wednesdays, as well as throughout Lent and Advent, and this meant that fish was "of almost equal importance to meat for upper classes" as well as more broadly in large urban marketplaces.⁵⁴ However, London's large fish market and status as a port city meant that regardless of how strictly the fast days were observed, fish, particularly salted herring and molluscs, along with milk, cheese, and legumes, were the cheapest sources of protein.⁵⁵ For middling armour craftsmen, these were the most important parts of their diet all year round. Therefore the relationship between the costs of these food items, the costs of raw materials, and the rate at which armour could be sold are some of the most important

⁵⁴ Gundula Müldner & Michael Richards, "Fast or feast: reconstructing diet in later medieval England by stable isotope analysis," *Journal of Archaeological Science* 32 (2005): 40-41.

⁵⁵ Müldner & Richards, "Fast or feast", 41.

factors in understanding the impact of the royal and civic policies of post-plague London on the armourers.⁵⁶

There have been numerous studies into real- versus money-wages in the inflationary or deflationary economics of London after the Black Death, most importantly that of Penn and Dyer's 1990 work, which summarised previous scholarship, stating that "the evidence for a rise in both cash wages and real wages... coinciding with the sudden and sustained population decline after the Black Death... has been well established."⁵⁷

However, these studies have all been weakened by the fact that they depend upon generalised and widespread sources which were never meant to form a record of the medieval cost of living, and therefore do not reflect the real economic situation of fourteenth-century London among individual trades. This is not a new challenge: in 1941, Sylvia Thrupp suggested that it was "impossible" to make any kind of conclusions about real wages in the absence of more complete and specific records for all trades.⁵⁸

Recognising this problem and the limitations of the sources, John Munro re-examined these concepts by analysing records of the cost of goods, coinage output, money supplies, increased war-taxation, and the well-recorded wages of masons; and he argued for a severe deflationary era following the Black Death and a rise in real wages for masons and others whose wages remained relatively constant in a period of generally falling prices.⁵⁹ In his examination of the cost of living, however, he found that between the periods of 1356-1360 and 1361-1365, there was a 10.93% increase in the average cost of meat, fish, and

⁵⁶ Margaret Murphy argued that grain represented the most important part of the medieval English diet, but her studies were based upon studies of the diets of garrisoned soldiers in Scotland, rural harvest workers, and household records of the lay nobility. Grain was undoubtedly a large part of armourers' diets as well, and an armourer, Salomon le Coffrer, was even one of the assayers of wheat on seven occasions between 1313 and 1330. However, fish remained one of the cheapest sources of animal protein. See: Margaret Murphy, "Feeding Medieval Cities: Some Historical Approaches", in *Food and Eating in Medieval Europe*, ed. Martha Carlin and Joel Rosenthal (London: The Hambledon Press, 1998), 120-122; Gwen Seabourne, "Assize matters: Regulation of the price of bread in medieval London", *The Journal of Legal History* 27.01 (July 2006): 35.

⁵⁷ Simon Penn & Christopher Dyer, "Wages and earnings in late medieval England: evidence from the enforcement of the labour laws", *Economic History Review*, 2nd series 43.3 (1990): 356.

⁵⁸ Sylvia Thrupp, "Social Control in the Medieval Town", 14.

⁵⁹ Munro, "Money, Prices, and Wages", 335-364.

dairy products; and a 29.95% increase in the cost of grains and barley malt.⁶⁰ While these rates are specific to records from a single large household, if they represented general trends, it is easy to understand how London artisans and retailers would resent imposed wage and price controls, because while the crown attempted to freeze the prices at which most consumer goods could be sold, the inflation on food was steadily increasing.

It is very difficult to evaluate the prevailing sale prices of armour in London, because what records exist rarely indicate the quality of the armours that warranted different prices, and the methods of appraisal used by contemporary record-keepers are not fully understood. Even among large armouries such as at the Tower of London, the value of armour purchased or inventoried by the keepers could vary by a large margin, owing to quality or weight of materials, furnishings, workmanship, or even the armour's country of origin, which are rarely recorded in the inventories. As a result, it is impossible to determine whether differences in prices over time of apparently identical armour is the result of inflation or deflation, or because there was a significant difference in quality between pieces.⁶¹ All that can be stated with any confidence about the armourers' real wages and profits is that the crown attempted to restrict prices on the sale of armour in order to meet its own demand with undervalued or seized products, impressment, and price controls. This restricted the value of work that went into making the armour, and thus drove down journeyman real-wages and workshop and real-market-profits,⁶² in an economic climate where raw materials were increasingly dear. Furthermore, "victuallers... concluded that they could sell their wares in the London markets at whatever prices they chose..." because the Statute of Labourers only vaguely defined price restrictions on

⁶⁰ Munro, "Money, Prices, and Wages", 338-9. He cites E.H. Phelps Brown & S. Hopkins, "Seven Centuries of the Prices of Consumables, Compared with Builders' Wage Rates", *Economica* 23(1956): 296-314.

⁶¹ Thom Richardson's work on the inventories of the Tower of London provides some insight here, but he ascribes too much significance to the importance of the prices recorded, which does not provide sufficient data on their own to evaluate market conditions or changes over time. See: Thom Richardson, "Armour in England", 309, 314, 315, 320; Thom Richardson, *The medieval inventories of the Tower armouries 1320-1410* (PhD diss., University of York, 2012), 47-48, 73-74, 252, 263.

⁶² The Statute of Labourers does not specifically mention armourers, but it does mention smiths and "all other artisans and labourers". See: *SotR* i, 307.

victuallers, binding them to sell “at a reasonable price”, and the London price regulations only restricted forestalling of food items, rather than freezing or imposing common prices for specific goods, as was done to the crafts and other mercantile industries.⁶³

This meant that for armourers who obeyed the law and did not seek to sell their wares abroad, the money-wages or profits that came into their households remained constant or decreased, while the cost of food rose, eroding the value of those wages and profits. A particularly illustrative example of how food impacted the value of real wages in London appears in 1350, when the fusters were taken to the Mayor’s Court accused of conspiring to control prices. The fusters testified that because the cost of ale and other victuals had doubled, if they did not proportionately raise their prices, “they would be spending more in a year than they could earn in three.”⁶⁴ While their claim does not agree with Munro’s data discussed above, any increase in food prices would, as Frank Rexroth phrased the situation, “create an avalanche in [real-] wage and price levels throughout the city.”⁶⁵ For the armourers and other Londoners, this meant that as food costs rose, their goods further deflated in real value and their cost of living steadily increased.

As stated above, in London, fish was one of the most important food commodities, and therefore any change in fish prices was likely to be politicised, and the London armourers were especially receptive to the political demonization of the victuallers. However, because food is an inelastic commodity, the fishmongers themselves were among the most powerful merchants in the City.⁶⁶ In 1363, Edward had decreed that no artisan may work in more than one craft, a proclamation which, as shown in Chapter 2, was entirely ignored by the armourers.⁶⁷ However, in July 1364, the mayor was instructed to investigate the fishmongers’ halimot and inquire as to any who were meddling in other

⁶³ Rexroth, *Deviance and Power*, 82; *SotR i*, 307; 349-53; *Mem*, 255-256.

⁶⁴ *CPMR i*, 238-9.

⁶⁵ Rexroth, *Deviance and Power*, 77.

⁶⁶ Nightingale, *Medieval Mercantile*, 218.

⁶⁷ *SotR i*, 379-380.

trades in contravention of the earlier proclamation.⁶⁸ This was almost certainly at the instigation of the fishmongers as a pretense to restrict the size of their trade⁶⁹ by removing men of other trades, because a similar proclamation specifically forbade all Londoners (except the vintners) from participating in the fish trade that same month.⁷⁰ This granted the London fishmongers a more exclusive trade monopoly, which in turn resulted in a sharp and immediate rise in fish prices.⁷¹ While there are no records from within the armourers' craft recording how they reacted to these changes, a similar scenario occurred when costs rose immediately following the Black Death among the shearmen, whose journeymen secured the right to be paid by piece-rate, rather than day-rate, for their labour. This meant that they could increase their earnings to keep pace with rising food costs by "greatly hurry[ing]" their production, which resulted in complaints "that they do great damage to the... cloths".⁷² Journeymen armourers may have gained a piece-rate following the rise in fish costs in 1364, or had it already, and similarly rushed out sloppy work in response to the rising cost of living. Such a tactic would explain Edward's complaints about the much poorer quality of armour that the London armourers produced over the next year.⁷³

Pamela Nightingale has argued that contemporary accusations against the fishmongers of profiteering at the expense of the poor and unenfranchised can be seen more as political maneuvering to attract support among the lower classes than as a realistic portrayal of the victualing industry, and that "the mayor and aldermen had always taken stringent measures to control the price of victuals... since they knew that the peace of the

⁶⁸ *LBG*, 168.

⁶⁹ Reducing the legal membership of the mistery was a tactic that the fusters were accused of when they were accused of conspiring to inflate their prices in 1350. See: *CPMR i*, 238-9.

⁷⁰ Rexroth believed the vintners had learned of the fishmongers' plans to exclude other industries from their trade and intervened, and while this is possible, the vintners' were only permitted to barter herring for export with imported Gascon wines in order to keep their money within the country, and so their business was not directly involved in the London retail trade and does not represent the interference Rexroth supposed that it did. See: *LBG*, 168, Rexroth, *Deviance and Power*, 114.

⁷¹ Rexroth, *Deviance and Power*, 114; Munro's data indicates that fish (along with meat and dairy) prices continue to rise during this period and peak in 1371-1375 at 36% higher than their 1346 prices, while grain peaks in 1361-1365 at 51.1% higher than in 1346. See: Munro, "Money, Prices, and Wages", 338-9.

⁷² *Mem*, 250-1.

⁷³ *Foedera iii*, 772; Ffoulkes, *Armourer's Craft*, 57.

City depended upon adequate supplies of cheap food.”⁷⁴ She was primarily arguing against Unwin’s thesis that the 1376-1386 civil unrest was between victuallers and non-victuallers,⁷⁵ but she failed to appreciate that the factional unrest which those conflicts unleashed had been developing slowly since at least the 1350s. Furthermore, while Nightingale’s argument that these accusations were primarily political is correct, in order to cause unrest, Northampton’s accusations did not need to be true, but merely convincing. Finally, the commons had more than enough reason to trust Northampton’s accusations against the fishmongers: in 1369 all victuallers were censured by the crown for charging unreasonable prices,⁷⁶ and while the prices of victuals would begin to receive far more stringent controls and oversight after Northampton entered the political arena in 1375,⁷⁷ the mayors and aldermen had not only consistently failed to regulate the price of victuals in an otherwise deflationary economy, as demonstrated above, but civil unrest related to food prices was not unique to the last quarter of the century. Johannes de Reading’s chronicle described a major dispute in 1364 between the “majors et populares Londoniarum” that required the king’s own sentries to be sent into London to restore the peace.⁷⁸ Frank Rexroth has suggested that this conflict originated when craftsmen sought to voice their grievances to the king over rising fish prices following the fishmongers increasing their 1364 monopoly, for which the craftsmen were arrested,⁷⁹ and a rumour spread in London that ten thousand Londoners were ready “to slay all the best people, and the great folks and officers of the... city.”⁸⁰

5.3: Inciting to Riot: The Politicisation of the Armourers’ Issues and Community,

1376-1384

⁷⁴ Nightingale, “Capitalists”, 25-6.

⁷⁵ Unwin, *Gilds*, 37-42; Nightingale *Medieval Mercantile*, 78-9; Bird, *Turbulent London*, 14-15, 79.

⁷⁶ *LBG*, 242.

⁷⁷ *LBH*, 9.

⁷⁸ Johannes de Reading, *Chronica Johannis de Reading et Anonymi Cantuariensis*, ed., J. Tait (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1914), 161.

⁷⁹ *LBG*, 168; Rexroth, *Deviance and Power*, 114.

⁸⁰ *Mem*, 315-16.

Throughout John Northampton's political career, he was able to harness the latent hostility towards those in power during a time of recurring plague, war, and economic hardship and turn it towards his own purposes.⁸¹ To the middling armourers and craftsmen who would eventually participate in the Mayoralty Riots, Nightingale's arguments about the importance of the wool staple would mean little. Their motivation was a perceived conflict between those they identified with, and those who could be blamed for their current economic hardship: victuallers, alien merchants, and a civic government that could be portrayed as corrupt. When Northampton entered civic politics in August 1375 as the alderman for Cordwainer Street Ward,⁸² London was awash with rumours of price gouging, embezzlement, and corruption among the city officials.⁸³ Two aldermen and victuallers, the vintner Richard Lyons and fishmonger John Pecche shared in a monopoly on the sale of all sweet wines,⁸⁴ and Lyons had secured the right to sell his wool outside of the staple, thus avoiding the wool-tax.⁸⁵ They were also both accused of inflating the prices of "all the merchandise that came into England" and fraudulently obtaining (through bribery) and exploiting their monopoly.⁸⁶ These persons were emblematic of the corruption and cronyism endemic within London's civic government.

John Northampton was placed at the head of a council to investigate and prosecute Lyons, Pecche, and another alderman, a skinner named Adam de Bury, at the Guildhall, summoning a council of "principal misteries"⁸⁷ in what Sylvia Thrupp called a "spirit of reformist indignation".⁸⁸ This was not a political party, but rather a collective of individuals who had little or no previous authority within civic government, and were eager to have their voices heard. However, by placing the misteries in judgement of the

⁸¹ Nightingale, *Medieval Mercantile*, 245; Nightingale, "Capitalists", 16, 23; Bird, *Turbulent London*, 35-37; Unwin, *Gilds*, 142-154; Rexroth, *Deviance and Power*, 141-144; McKisack, *The Fourteenth Century*, 377-378, 435.

⁸² *LBH*, 9.

⁸³ Thrupp, *Merchant Class*, 75.

⁸⁴ *LBG*, 199.

⁸⁵ Walter Besant, *Medieval London*, 2 vols., vol. 1 (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1906), 75.

⁸⁶ William Letwin, "The English Common Law Concerning Monopolies", *University of Chicago Law Review* 21 (1953-1954): 358.

⁸⁷ *LBH*, 38.

⁸⁸ Thrupp, *Merchant Class*, 77.

corrupt aldermen, Northampton placed them in opposition with what could be portrayed as the dominant civic oligarchy, and engineered the conflict identified by Unwin as victuallers against non-victuallers, by Bird as powerful against middling merchants and craftsmen, by Nightingale as exporters against non-exporters, and by Rexroth as the moral against the immoral. All of these interpretations have some truth to them, but the true political conflict arose from a combination of all of these issues. From the perspective of politically engaged armourers, who had reason to resent the price-gouging victuallers and privileged exporters, this conflict was between honest Londoners like themselves and corrupt politicians. However, from the perspective of those in power, it was between the wise and the “...mochel smale people that konne non skyl of gouernaunce ne of gode conseyl”.⁸⁹

This is important for understanding why the armourers were so closely allied with Northampton’s politics, because Northampton was clearly attempting to align himself with the misteries from the beginning of his political career. When the council of misteries was assembled under Northampton in August of 1376 to deal with Lyons, Pecche, and De Bury, it drew representatives from forty-one crafts, including the armourers, tailors, cordwainers, girdlers, spurriers, bowyers, cutlers, leather-sellers, brasiers, and smiths, all of whom shared close economic and social connections with the armourers.⁹⁰ These misteries had rarely had any representatives in civic office, but this council was integral to understanding Northampton’s relationship with the misteries because it granted its members civic authority as representatives of their misteries, rather than as citizens of London. Among the armourers’ representatives were the heaumer, Robert Sendale, who would again be a common councillor in 1381-2 during Northampton’s mayoralty;⁹¹ the armourer Simon de Wynchecombe, who would be elected alderman for the Cheap in 1382 and for Walbrook in 1383 during Northampton’s mayoralty, sheriff of London in 1383,

⁸⁹ Usk, “Appeal”, 427; Thrupp, *Merchant Class*, 15-17; Williams, *Medieval London*, 197.

⁹⁰ *LBH*, 41-44.

⁹¹ *CPMR iii*, 30.

deputy of Coleman Street Ward in 1384, common councillor for the Cheap in 1384-5 and alderman of Walbrook Ward in 1385;⁹² and the armourer John Walsyngham, who would again serve as a Common Councillor in 1386.⁹³ For all of these men, Northampton gave them their first positions within civic politics, and in each of their cases, they represented the first armourers recorded to ever occupy those positions.⁹⁴

During this same period, Northampton arranged a series of constitutional experiments which changed the electoral procedures for the Common Council so that they were elected through the misteries, rather than through the wards; limited the terms of political offices to a single year;⁹⁵ and changed electoral procedure for the mayor and sheriffs to be elected by the Common Council alone.⁹⁶ Together, these shifted the balance of power in the civic government and gave the misteries more political power than they had ever had before. The idea of a conflict between the misteries and the dominant figures of civic government was further polarised and solidified in the London zeitgeist by the resistance that those in power had towards the misteries participating in government. On 29 July 1376, conflicts spread from the Guildhall to the streets over Northampton's attempts to make the mayor, sheriffs, and aldermen also elected by the misteries.⁹⁷ The turmoil in London over this issue grew so severe that the king demanded that Londoners cease their conflict or forfeit the city's franchise, at which point a compromise was agreed on the election of only the Common Council by the misteries.⁹⁸ However, even in compromise, this policy was fervently opposed by Northampton's political enemies, who, by doing so, proclaimed themselves the enemies of the members of the misteries who were elected

⁹² *Aldermen*, 100, 217, 351, 396, 399; *LBH*, 177, 218, 247, 263; *CPMR iii*, 86.

⁹³ *LBH*, 281.

⁹⁴ *Aldermen*, 379-404; Thrupp, *Merchant Class*, 321-377.

⁹⁵ This was a return to the terms of the original London charter of 1319. See: Williams, *Medieval London*, 282-284.

⁹⁶ Bird, *Turbulent London*, 17, 30; *LBH*, 39, 58.

⁹⁷ *LBH*, 35.

⁹⁸ In London's reply to the king, dissention in the City is denied, and it is claimed that the troubles had been settled by the agreement for the Common Council to be elected by the misteries. No mention is given to the election of the mayor, sheriffs, and aldermen, suggesting a compromise had been reached. The letter was delivered by Northampton's allies Richard Northbury and Robert Launde, as well as Nicholas Brembre and several others who would become Northampton's bitterest rivals, presenting parties from both sides of the conflict united before the king. See: *LBH*, 36.

under these constitutional changes. When this mode of election was overturned following Northampton's 1383 mayoralty defeat, his opponents claimed that the individuals chosen by the misteries were "insufficient" and that they made their decisions "by clamour rather than by reason".⁹⁹

There is no doubt as to the armourers' political affiliation with Northampton during this period and during his later mayoralties: The King's Bench Plea Roll described several of the charges against Northampton after the riots and stated that representatives of the armourers' mistery, along with representatives from nineteen other small misteries would customarily meet with Northampton in a tavern in Bowe to discuss "various matters... so that those who were present might vote together unanimously at the meeting of the Common Council."¹⁰⁰ It is perhaps an indication of how closely allied the armourers were with Northampton that they were the first mistery named in this charge, even though the list was not assembled in alphabetical order. This caucus mirrors Nightingale's interpretation of fraternities as places to discuss secret business away from the oversight of the Mayor's Court,¹⁰¹ and so it is not surprising that misteries would adopt such a familiar format for political gatherings if this was their custom in internal business already. This is an important structure to consider because it highlights the links between the novel structures used by Northampton's "party" and the misteries' association with civic politics as representatives of their crafts, rather than as Londoners.

While this charge certainly disagrees with the claim that the misteries made their decisions "by clamour", these caucuses were seen by their opponents as a usurpation of power. Having secured this power base, Northampton and his allies among the misteries then began to systematically attack the privileges of the victualing trades. This helped him to gain popularity among the poor and middling craftsmen, including the armour craftsmen

⁹⁹ *Liber Albus*, 397.

¹⁰⁰ "Extracts from Inquisitions Taken at the Trial of John Northampton: Coram Rege Roll, Hill. 11 Ric. II 507, Rex 39", in *The Peasants' Rising and the Lollards: A Collection of Unpublished Documents Forming an Appendix to 'England in the Age of Wycliffe*, ed. Edgar Powell and G.M Trevelyan (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1899), 27. Translation from Unwin, *Gilds*, 144.

¹⁰¹ Nightingale, *Medieval Mercantile*, 178.

of Farringdon Without,¹⁰² who were strongly affected by the high costs of food and had been hurt by the crown and city's deflationary economic policies. In 1376, Northampton and several close political allies sat on a committee charged with examining the ordinances in the Guildhall to present to the Commonalty those that were beneficial and those that were not.¹⁰³ According to Unwin, this position was used to undermine the ordinances of the victualing trades and impose price controls on the sale of food, further winning the support of those whose real wages had suffered under the deflationary economy.¹⁰⁴

When Northampton won the mayoralty following the Peasants' Revolt in October 1381, his support once again came from persecuting the fishmongers. They were seen by Londoners as both literally and figuratively steeped in corruption: in August of 1382, Northampton prosecuted a London fishmonger who had brought 7,000 herring and 800 mackerel into London that were "putrid and corrupt, unwholesome as food for man, and an abomination", which the court found the fishmonger to have been aware of when he brought them into the city to sell "to the common people".¹⁰⁵ While jealousies of the fishmongers' privileges contributed to the common peoples' animus against the fishmongers, records like this help to explain the support given to Northampton for his and his allies' attacks against the fishmongers and other victuallers, and further explain why the October parliament of 1382 presented a picture of the victuallers as corrupt profiteers working against the common good. There, complaints were heard against the fishmongers for seizing fish brought in by wholesalers, overcharging for the fish at retail, and paying the wholesalers "as little as [they] wish", beating any who complained; selling their wares using weighted baskets; and refusing to participate in any court but their own halimot.¹⁰⁶ As a result of these accusations, fishmongers and all other victuallers were prohibited from

¹⁰² See Section 4.4.

¹⁰³ *LBH*, 41.

¹⁰⁴ Unwin, *Gilds*, 133.

¹⁰⁵ *LBH*, 197; *Mem*, 471-72.

¹⁰⁶ "Richard II: October 1382, Records 55-58" in, *PROME*, accessed April 28 2014, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/no-series/parliament-rolls-medieval/october-1382>; Bird, *Turbulent London*, 78.

occupying judicial posts, and parliament opened the fish trade to foreign competition and restricted the retail trade of fish to eels, bream, and pike.

While these measures would have resulted in cheaper fish for Londoners,¹⁰⁷ and thus explain some of the support that the armourers had for Northampton's politics, it was how the accusations of parliament were received that truly polarised the hostility against the fishmongers and their allies in the civic government. When parliament agreed to enact measures against the fishmongers, it implicitly stated with all the authority of parliament that the fishmongers were corrupt, more oppressive than the king's own purveyors,¹⁰⁸ and not fit to hold office, regardless of whether or not the accusations were actually true. The result was "considerable tumult in the city" which drove a group of fishmongers to flee to parliament to request the king's special protection, as they feared that "bodily harm might... come to them because of this affair."¹⁰⁹ The political solidarity that Northampton had engineered among the common people of London is best expressed with his own words recorded in parliament: "...the mayor replied that in all his life the commons had never shown greater unity, love and concord, except only towards the fishmongers, who strove to oppress the people and extort them" and concluded by suggesting that the fishmongers were planning "to commence riot and madness" in the City.¹¹⁰ This is an important accusation, because it redefined a political and economic conflict into one which represented an immediate danger to the City. While this was almost certainly not true, once rumours of it returned to London, it fanned the flames of anger among the commons and reinforced Northampton's reputation in the City as the only civic politician standing for the common good.

¹⁰⁷ They were overturned at the next parliament. See: *St Albans Chronicle: The Chronica maiora of Thomas Walsingham, 1376-1394*, ed. John Taylor, Wendy Childs, & Leslie Watkiss (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2003), 626; "Introduction to Richard II: October 1382", in *PROME*, accessed April 28 2014, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/no-series/parliament-rolls-medieval/october-1382>.

¹⁰⁸ "Richard II: October 1382, Record 55", in *PROME*, accessed April 28 2014, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/no-series/parliament-rolls-medieval/october-1382>.

¹⁰⁹ "Richard II: October 1382, Record 61", in *PROME*, accessed April 28, 2014, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/no-series/parliament-rolls-medieval/october-1382>.

¹¹⁰ "Richard II: October 1382, Record 61", in *PROME*, accessed April 28, 2014, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/no-series/parliament-rolls-medieval/october-1382>.

The conflict engineered by Northampton and so greatly subscribed to by the armourers was therefore as much about the political goals of the participants as it was about how those goals were presented to the London commoners. The final debate in that parliament occurred when the fishmonger Walter Sibil requested measures be taken to ensure “good security of the peace” from Northampton and his supporters, to which John More replied that the peace would be kept unless Sibil and his allies “lead the commons of Kent and Essex... into the said city, as [they] recently did during the treacherous uprising”, and cited “common rumour... that [they were]... the prime advisors, supporters, abettors, and instigators of the idea that the commons of Kent and Essex... should approach and enter the said city” during the Peasants’ Revolt.¹¹¹ Whether this was true or not did not matter for the escalation of their conflict: the accusation was made in parliament, and parliament assented to investigate the matter. Rumours then spread throughout the city that the opponents of Northampton were under investigation for orchestrating the most damaging and treasonous uprising in London’s living memory.

The armour craftsmen had been pushed to the breaking point over the past several decades by restrictive crown policies enforced by a corrupt civic government. Deflationary economic policies, export restrictions and armour seizures had crippled the armourers’ livelihoods on multiple occasions, while those in power had secured privilege in the literal sense of the word through their greater representation among the civic government, and the fishmongers’ *halimot*. Trade jealousy of those privileges was compounded by the harsh economic conditions and the very public accusations and investigations of corruption of members of the civic government. When Northampton spearheaded the investigation into that corruption and attacked the privileges of the fishmongers, he only steered the latent anger toward the victuallers and the civic government to his own ends. Northampton gave the crafts their first voice in government to speak against the policies that had hurt their

¹¹¹ “Richard II: October 1382, Record 64”, in *PROME*, accessed April 28, 2014, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/no-series/parliament-rolls-medieval/october-1382> ; Unwin *Gilds* 143; Bird, *Turbulent London*, 56-58; Rodney Hilton, *Bond Men Made Free* (London: Maurice Temple Smith, 1973) 189; Charles Oman, *The Great Revolt of 1381* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1906), 194; McKisack, *Fourteenth Century*, 435.

businesses and livelihoods. That representatives were now elected by the misteries meant that each individual armourer saw himself as having a voice in London's government *as an armourer* rather than as a Londoner, and so Northampton's government was characterised by the concerns of the misteries. When victuallers, wealthy exporters, or men who could be characterised as part of the old "corrupt" order opposed Northampton, they opposed the misteries, and by extension, the individual armourers examined here who spoke through them. When fights broke out on Election Day in 1383 in attempts to prevent men from entering the Guildhall,¹¹² and Northampton lost his mayoralty to Nicholas Brembre – a wealthy, wool exporting victualler, strongly supported by men Northampton's supporters had accused of treason – the riots that followed were inevitable.

5.4: "Ruffians Dance and Leap":¹¹³ The Armourers' Crucible in the Riots and Their Aftermath

This thesis began in part with a question of why the armourers were so involved in the riots following Northampton's election loss. However, it is important to realise that there were three factions acting within the armourers' larger community both in the riots, and in their aftermath: those who instigated the riots among the armourers' leadership; those who participated, who were primarily middling and poorer armourers, journeymen, and servants; and those among the industrial leadership who both turned in their craft brethren and mainprised them afterwards. The sole sheriff of London between the aftermath of Northampton's February riot until the 1384 Election Day riot was the armourer Simon de Wynchecombe (as his co-sheriff John More was arrested for his own participation in the February riot),¹¹⁴ and so de Wynchecombe found his loyalty to his civic

¹¹² TNA SC/8/20/997-1006, SC 8/199/9925, SC 8/198/9882; Thomas Usk, "Appeal", 426.

¹¹³ "The pale-faced moon looks bloody on the earth / And lean-looked prophets whisper fearful change. / Rich men look sad and ruffians dance and leap, / The one in fear to lose what they enjoy, / The other to enjoy by rage and war, / These signs forerun the death or fall of kings..." William Shakespeare, "Richard II", in *The Oxford Shakespeare: Richard II*, ed. Anthony B. Dawson and Paul Yachnin (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011) 3.1. 10-15.

¹¹⁴ *CCR 1381-1385*, 477-478.

position at odds with his loyalty to his industry. But after the leaders of the armourers (including Simon de Wynchecombe) delivered their riotous colleagues to the new mayor and sheriffs,¹¹⁵ they paid their colleagues' bail or mainprised them for their good behaviour. These actions tell us three things: that those in power in the armourers' mystery felt that they needed to distance themselves from those who had rioted; that the industrial leadership feared retribution against the industry if it could not be laid against individuals; and that enough of the mystery had participated in the riots that if the leaders did not bring forward at least some of their brethren, they would risk sanctions brought against their industry from the crown and new civic government. If the armourers' industrial gatherings were to be portrayed as unlawful "covin[s], conventicler[s], league[s], or congregation[s]",¹¹⁶ as John Northampton's had, they could lose all of the power and influence that they had gained over the past forty years as an industry. This section will examine these concerns, beginning with an investigation into the armourers who were arrested and the question of how large a body of armourers actually participated in the two main riots of February and October 1384; then examining the goals of the mainpernors; and finally, examining how the armourers moved forward in the aftermath of the riots.

As discussed in the introduction, the numbers of rioters recorded in arrest or mainprisal records after the riots represented only a fraction of the numbers that actually participated in them, which could have been between four hundred¹¹⁷ and eight thousand.¹¹⁸ Given that the length of the crowd in the February riot was at least a third of a mile in length,¹¹⁹ the crowd's population was certainly much greater than recorded in the chronicles and mainprisal records. Even if the individuals in the crowd were widely spaced, a crowd the width of a street and a third of a mile long implies more than a thousand persons. The differences in numbers recorded by chroniclers, arrests, and this

¹¹⁵ *CPMR iii*, 63.

¹¹⁶ *CPMR iii*, 57.

¹¹⁷ *The Westminster Chronicle*, 63.

¹¹⁸ Bird, *Turbulent London*, 83.

¹¹⁹ Bird, *Turbulent London*, 83; Unwin, *Gilds*, 150-151; Appendix 3.

logic can be explained by the numbers of persons not “there by [Northampton’s] invitation”¹²⁰ who would have joined the procession as it passed by, and whom the *St Albans Chronicle* recorded as consisting of “all those who took pleasure in plunder.”¹²¹ The rioters’ route took them between two of the largest hubs of armourers’ workshops and other properties in London,¹²² and Northampton chose to wait for Brembre to catch up to him on Fleet Bridge, which would have allowed ample opportunity for residents of surrounding Farringdon Without to join the crowd that surrounded him. It is probable that a large number of these unrecorded participants in the riots were armourers.

The *Westminster Chronicle* recorded that the rioters in February 1384 had gathered with the intent to murder several people “inside the city and without it, not to speak of the king or other eminent people”.¹²³ Furthermore, in preparation for 1384’s Election Day, Nicholas Brembre issued a proclamation on the orders of the king, specifically barring anyone to go abroad in the streets “armed or wearing breastplate or jack, or should lead an armed force against the king’s peace”.¹²⁴ I judge the king and Brembre’s proclamation barring going armed and armoured and leading armed forces in October 1384 to be in anticipation of a repeat of what had occurred during Northampton’s riots in February that year.¹²⁵ Finally, it is clear that when Northampton confessed to high treason in the wake of the February riot,¹²⁶ and when Richard II named him “a great peril... to the realm”,¹²⁷ it was because the men who followed Northampton out of Ludgate in February 1384 did so *en masse*, armed, and along the road that led to Westminster Palace. High treason was first defined in English law in the fourteenth century as the murder or planned murder of the

¹²⁰ *The Westminster Chronicle*, 63.

¹²¹ *The St Albans Chronicle*, 214.

¹²² See: Section 4.4.

¹²³ *The Westminster Chronicle*, 94-95.

¹²⁴ The records also cite the Statute of Northampton. *CPMR iii*, 62; *LBH*, 249; *LBF*, 19; *SotR i*, 258.

¹²⁵ *CPMR iii*, 60-62.

¹²⁶ *LBH*, 315.

¹²⁷ *CCR 1381-1385*, 369.

sovereign: a feat that would have been impossible for Northampton without an armed force.¹²⁸

Going armed to riot or pursue civil disobedience was common among all of the mayoralty riots, and so the political support of those who produced and distributed those arms and armour were just as important to attempted insurrectionists as they were to the military. Northampton's scribe,¹²⁹ Thomas Usk, accused one of Northampton's principal supporters, John More of arming sergeants to keep the doors to the Guildhall and prevent Brembre's supporters from voting in the 1383 elections.¹³⁰ Northampton's men were driven back by the supporters of Nicholas Brembre, who took the hall "with strong honde".¹³¹ Reginald Sharpe noted that in 1378, Brembre had armed his own followers and hidden them near the Guildhall to chase off his opponent's supporters and secure his re-election; and so this small battle for the Guildhall was certainly a result of Brembre's followers being likewise armed in 1383 when they clashed with Northampton's.¹³² Furthermore, only three months prior to Northampton's February 1384 riot, Richard ordered all of London's Aldermen to "set an armed watch every night... for the purpose of preserving the peace and preventing riots."¹³³ Even without the organisation of the politicians, going armed to the election had grown into a common problem in the 1380s: such as in the case of the tailor William Wodecok, who was arrested on Election Day in 1384 for running out of his home carrying a sword, buckler, and poleaxe "hoping that a riot would arise", and that its participants would be armed, as had occurred the previous

¹²⁸ Legislation.gov.uk, "Treason Act: 1351", accessed January 23, 2015, <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/aep/Edw3Stat5/25/2>.

¹²⁹ Caroline Barron identified Usk as primarily working for the Goldsmiths, but he was clearly working for other guilds and individuals within Northampton's political circle. See: Caroline Barron, Rev. of "Wardens' Accounts and Court Minute Books of the Goldsmiths' Mistery of London 1334-1446", ed. Lisa Jefferson, *Urban History* 32.1 (2005): 173-175; *LBH*, 30-31.

¹³⁰ John More was not above using violence. He murdered the Lombard Nicholas Sardouche in 1370 over a debt, and was involved in some kind of an attempted insurrection in 1371 alongside John Northampton. See: *CPR 1370-1374*, 159; Usk, 426; *LBG*, 281; *CCR 1369-1374*, 322-324.

¹³¹ Usk, "Appeal", 426; TNA SC 8/20/997-1000; TNA SC 8/21/1001B-1006; TNA SC 8/198/9882; TNA SC 8/199/9925.

¹³² *LBH*, 251 n.2.

¹³³ *LBH*, 224.

October and almost certainly occurred during the February riot.¹³⁴ This is a particularly interesting instance, because Wodecok physically could not have used a sword, buckler, and poleaxe at the same time, which means that he brought them out with the intention of arming others. The armourers arrested in the aftermath of the October 1384 riots were, as stated above, in breach of a similar proclamation against going out armed and armoured as part of a force arrayed against the king's peace, but as will be discussed, they were punished far more severely than any other group. One interpretation for this is that the armourers were held responsible for other rioters being armed and armoured against the proclamation. As the armourers had been vocal supporters of Northampton during his mayoralty, if they were associated with pro-Northampton armed rebellion, it would implicate the entire industry as a danger to the crown and invite crown sanctions, the loss of privileges, and the imposition of external controls, which would explain why the armourers' leadership were so eager to turn over their colleagues to the mayor.

The importance of going armed to riot, and the great support of the armour craftsmen for Northampton's politics, therefore takes on much greater meaning looking back at the February riots. If one takes Northampton's confession to high treason seriously, and the large numbers of unrecorded participants from the area along the February riot's route are taken into consideration, another threat becomes clear: the rioters' route towards Westminster meandered through the armourers' craft districts around Ludgate and Farringdon Without (See Appendix 4). These districts contained the multi-occupational workshops of the disaffected armour and weapon craftsmen, which held the largest privately-owned stockpiles of weapons and armour outside of the Tower of London. While many Londoners owned their own weapons and armour, the route taken would have allowed a much larger population of armourers and furbishers to join Northampton's march, many of whom would have had access to stockpiles of weapons and armour. Even without formal arms, the craft tools of the armourers and metal workers of that district

¹³⁴ *CPMR iii*, 67.

were easily adaptable as weapons, as *maillets*, similar in form to heavy smith's hammers, were used to deadly effect by civilians in the Parisian *Maillotin* uprisings just two years earlier (Figure 5.3).¹³⁵ In my research into crimes committed by armourers, I discovered that one of the most common crimes in the records among furbishers and armourers were armed assaults, breaking the king's peace, or going abroad with their weapons.¹³⁶ A few hundred men from thirty crafts making their way to Westminster to petition the king for a new election would have been unusual, but not particularly threatening. However, a crowd a third of a mile long of men armed with their tools and craft products marching towards the palace was rightfully termed both a "peril to the realm"¹³⁷ and "high treason".¹³⁸



Figure 5.3: A Mob of Maillotin Rioters Use Heavy Hammers against City Officials. Besançon Bibliotheque Municipale MS 677 f. 113, c. 1384-1400. http://www.enluminures.culture.fr/documentation/enlumine/fr/BM/besancon_122-05.htm (accessed June 14, 2015).

While this may seem extreme, it is in fact the culmination of a series of escalating attempts by Northampton to have Nicholas Brembre's election overturned. As discussed above, the 1383 election loss occurred after an armed conflict between John More's sergeants and Nicholas Brembre's supporters, who forced their way through the doors of

¹³⁵ For an account of the uprising, see Buonaccorso Pitti's fifteenth century account in: *Two Memoirs of Renaissance Florence: The Diaries of Buonaccorso Pitti and Gregorio Dati*, ed. Gene Brucker (Long Grove: Waveland Press, 1991) 39.

¹³⁶ *CoEMC 1298-1307*, 205; *LBE*, 82; *Mem*, 126; *LBE*, 189; *Liber Albus*, 375-76; *CPMR i*, 126; *LBF*, 164-65; *CPR 1381-1385*, 133; TNA KB/27/455/50.; Section 4.3.

¹³⁷ *CCR 1381-1385*, 369.

¹³⁸ *LBH*, 315.

the Guildhall to ensure Brembre's election.¹³⁹ After Northampton's election loss, Thomas Usk was sent to entreat Northampton's patron John of Gaunt to speak on his behalf to the king and procure a writ for a new election, which Gaunt refused.¹⁴⁰ Northampton then threatened and attacked the Chamberlain, Richard Odyham, probably intending to pressure him to do what Gaunt would not.¹⁴¹ Diplomatic avenues thus denied to him, Northampton then began planning his actions "to stir up the people to rebel against Brembre"¹⁴² and over a period of months engaged in a series of unlawful congregations that culminated in his arrest and subsequent mainprisal¹⁴³ for £5,000 requiring him to preserve the king's peace, keep from unlawful congregations, and be obedient to the officers of the City, which he broke within four days of his release.¹⁴⁴ It is impossible to know whether Northampton truly had the intention of leading an armed force to the king in order to have his grievances with the London government taken more seriously, or if the majority of the men around him were not, as he claimed, "... there by his invitation... [but by] their own free will and without his being privy to [why]... they flocked around him."¹⁴⁵ If he did intend to confront Richard, it must be said that he would have failed, because even if he had not been stopped by Brembre, the king was at Havering, not Westminster, that day.¹⁴⁶ However, it is clear that Brembre, Northampton's judges, the king, and the Aldermanic Court all believed that the February march was an escalation of Northampton's earlier violent methods, which strongly implies that the mob had armed itself.

In the political aftermath of the February riot, the armourers' industry could not afford to be associated with Northampton or his insurrectionist followers. Rumour began spreading through the City in the aftermath of Northampton's arrest that Brembre was

¹³⁹ TNA SC 8/20/997-1000; TNA SC 8/21/1001B-1006; TNA SC 8/198/9882; TNA SC 8/199/9925; Usk, 426.

¹⁴⁰ Usk, 426-27.

¹⁴¹ Bird, *Turbulent London*, 82.

¹⁴² Bird, *Turbulent London*, 82.

¹⁴³ Among his mainperners was the armourer Simon de Wynchecombe.

¹⁴⁴ *CPMR iii*, 57; Bird, *Turbulent London*, 82.

¹⁴⁵ *The Westminster Chronicle*, 63.

¹⁴⁶ *LBH*, 229.

“bent on smashing all those who supported John Northampton”, martial law was declared, and a cordwainer named John Constantyn was arrested and executed for encouraging shop owners in the West Cheap and Budge Row to close their shops and windows in protest.¹⁴⁷ In 1387-8, the armourers would join the embroiderers, goldsmiths, cutlers, bowyers, fletchers, spurriers, bladesmiths, painters, pinners, founders, leathersellers, white tawyers, saddlers, cordwainers, mercers, and drapers in accusing Brembre of various treasonous wrongdoings during this period.¹⁴⁸ The majority of these documents accuse Brembre of intimidation, corruption, misgovernment, and the usurpation of royal power, and request that the statute forbidding victuallers from holding office discussed above be put back into force (Figure 5.4). The goldsmiths accused him of falsely imprisoning several of their numbers, resulting in the deaths of two of them, and of stealing money from them; the saddlers and cordwainers both complain of John Constantyn’s arbitrary execution; the mercers stated that they could make further accusations if given an impartial judge and mayor; while an unknown guild (the document is damaged)¹⁴⁹ stated that Brembre took gangs of armed men into the Cheap to seize his opponents and conspired to falsely indict others of felonies so that they might be committed to prison.

¹⁴⁷ *The Westminster Chronicle*, 65; *Mem*, 482-83; Unwin, *Gilds*, 151; Bird, *Turbulent London*, 83.

¹⁴⁸ TNA SC 8/20/997-1000; TNA SC 8/21/1001B-1006; TNA SC 8/198/9882; TNA SC 8/94/4664; TNA SC 8/21/1006; TNA SC 8/21/1001B.

¹⁴⁹ All that is left of the guild’s name is “...steres” or “...sterers”. See: TNA SC 8/199/9925.

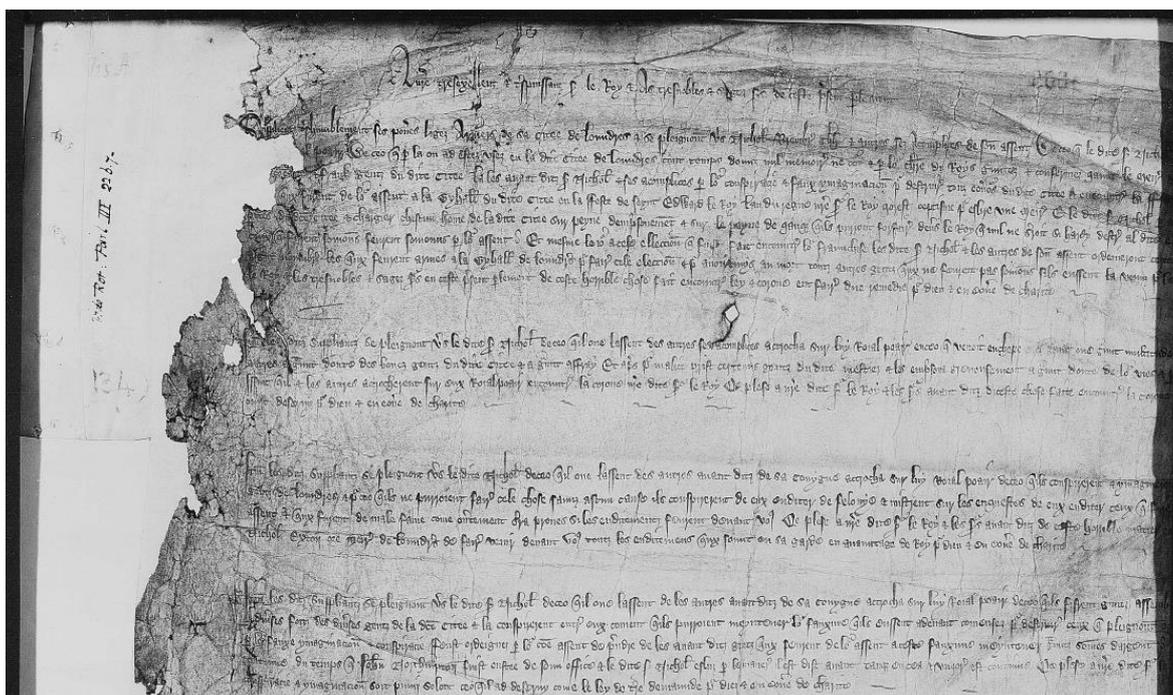
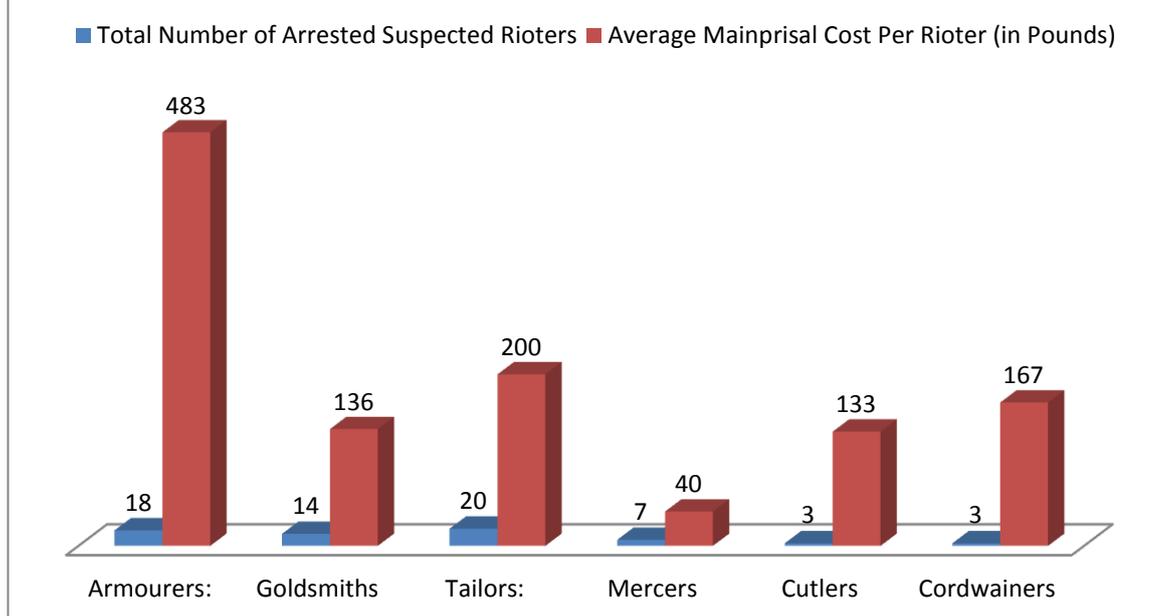


Figure 5.4: Petition of the armourers against Nicholas Brembre. London, The National Archives, SC 8/21/1005, c.1387. <http://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/details/r/C9061165> (accessed June 13, 2015).

Under such draconian political conditions, the leadership of the armourers would have been horrified when “certain persons of the middle sort” of their industry, “forgetting themselves and having no respect for or fear of the proclamation [against going about armed and armoured against the king’s peace] banded together in a great congregation... at the Guildhall” in October of 1384 and rioted against Brembre’s re-election.¹⁵⁰ Later, when Brembre asked the misteries to turn over men who had participated in those riots, the armourers were the first to comply, immediately turning over six individuals, and then arranging for their bail of £1,000 each. A further twelve armourers who had been arrested in the aftermath of the election riots were mainprised within the next three weeks for between £100 and £1,000 each. The bail amounts paid or pledged against their good behaviour by the armourers testify to their level of involvement: in this specific riot, armourers represented 22% of all mainprisal records, and their average mainprisal cost was more than double the average of the next highest-paying industry (Figures 5.1 and 5.5).

¹⁵⁰ CPMR iii, 62-63.

Figure 5.5: Mainprisal Records: Election Day Riots, 1384



Source: *CPMR iii*, 63-69.¹⁵¹

Each of the six armourers¹⁵² turned over by the “good men of the mistery” were mainprisal for £1,000, the highest mainprisal rate of all of the men arrested, and a rate shared by only four other individuals: two tailors, a brodurer, and another armourer mainprisal separately.¹⁵³ Those mainprisal at this rate were a diverse group of very prominent armourers from several sectors within the armourers’ industry. Among them, John Hood had recently been arrested for selling the counterfeit imported helmets discussed in Section 4.2; John Shirewode and Richard Pecok were probably both tailors and armourers;¹⁵⁴ William Pountfreyt and William Randulf were both armour retailers and also either craftsmen or organisers of large, diverse workshops;¹⁵⁵ and Stephen atte Fryth (mainprisal separately) was a prominent metal-armourer.¹⁵⁶ A 1360 statute stated that such

¹⁵¹ Chart data omits industries with only a single rioter from an industry was arrested. These were the brodurers, pinners, haberdashers, skimmers, and fullers. Cutler and tailor numbers include servants.

¹⁵² John Hood, William Randulf, Robert Wormewell, William Pountfreyt, Richard Pecok and John Shirewode.

¹⁵³ The tailors William Hotte and Thomas Mynton; the brodurer Robert Arderne; and the metal-armourer Stephen atte Frithe. See: *CPMR iii*, 65, 66.

¹⁵⁴ Individuals with those names identified as tailors are recorded in *CCR 1364-1369*, 93; *CCR 1402-1405*, 272, 526.

¹⁵⁵ TNA C 131/206/49; C 241/178/113; Section 2.5.1.

¹⁵⁶ See: Stephen atte Fryth’s business, described in Section 2.3.

mainprisal fines must be “reasonable and just, having regard to the quantity of the trespass and the causes for which they may be made”;¹⁵⁷ therefore, a mainprisal amount of £1,000 indicates that these were the men suspected to be most at fault for instigating or worsening the riots at the 1384 elections.

While the armourers’ exact actions are not recorded, for comparison, William Wodecok (discussed above) was bailed for only £100 for his part in attending the riots armed and intending to arm others, while the master of the goldsmiths, John Coraunt, was mainprised for only £500 after being found responsible for assembling his and other misteries at the affray, and for spreading a lie that the lords within the Guildhall wished all the misteries to come and attend the election, which established the conditions that allowed the riot to occur.¹⁵⁸ A.H. Thomas believed that the number of mainperners required increased based on the severity of the crime, suggesting that

...one might be allowed for the payment of a fine..., two was the usual number required for appearing to hear judgment... Four or six were demanded in assaults and offences against civic ordinances... When a defendant appeared to be a source of disorder in the City, he might be called upon to find twelve mainperners...¹⁵⁹

However, this was clearly not a uniform rule: the men brought before the Mayor by the mercers were charged with merely “speak[ing] maliciously of the Mayor and Aldermen and their government” and mainprised under penalty of £40 each by five mainperners, while John Coraunt was mainprised by only four, and John Northampton himself was mainprised by only seven individuals prior to the February riot.¹⁶⁰ The armourers averaged 5.7 mainperners each, while the entire mainprised population in the records averaged 4.6 mainperners, and so while Thomas’ observations about the number of mainperners reflecting the severity of the crime further suggests that the armourers’ role in these riots was larger than the other populations’, the relationship between the number of mainperners and the crime alone is not clear enough to make that claim. When this is considered

¹⁵⁷ *SotR i*, 365.

¹⁵⁸ *CPMR iii*, 66-67.

¹⁵⁹ A.H. Thomas, “Introduction”, *CoEMC*, xxix-xxx.

¹⁶⁰ *CPMR iii*, 57, 66-67.

alongside the much higher mainprisal costs among the armourers, however, the argument that the armourers were the most criminally responsible for the Election Day riots becomes much more convincing.

The armourers also represented the second largest population in the mainprisal records, behind the tailors. Besides the seven armourers bailed for £1,000, there were an additional eleven men mainprised for between £100 and £200. The majority of these armourers appear in group-mainprisal records, indicating they were being mainprised for similar actions at the same rate.¹⁶¹ The largest of these was a mainprisal for Nicholas Doby, John Albon, Gerard Furbour, Richard Kenyngton, John Raulyn, and John Wylde, where each was mainprised for £200. For five out of six of these men, this was their only appearance anywhere in the London records that identified them as armourers, indicating that it is very likely that these men were middling or poorer craftsmen, or possibly journeymen, and thus the hardest hit by the policies of the crown and city governments discussed in Sections 5.1 and 5.2. They were bailed by eight prominent armourers, three of whom were masters,¹⁶² while four were identified as both armourers and furbishers.¹⁶³ One of the men mainprised, “Gerald Furbour” bears the occupational surname for a furbisher, and so he may have been a journeyman of one of these master armourers whose workshops associated with both armouring and furbishing. Therefore, Gerald Furbour may be considered further evidence of the multi-occupational workshops described in Chapter 2 and possibly a rare example of an occupational surname reflecting the actual occupation after 1350. However, all of these mainperners were affluent craftsmen who owned and operated diverse workshops like those discussed in Section 2.5.1, and so the less-prominent figures mainprised here were almost certainly persons in their employment in

¹⁶¹ *CPMR iii*, 65, 66, 67-8.

¹⁶² John Shirewode, William Thornhull, and William Trippelowe. See: *LBH*, 62, 152.

¹⁶³ William Thornhull, William Trippelowe, John Herman, and John Whyte. See: *CPMR ii*, 301; *LBG*, 283; *CPR 1381-1385*, 148; *CCR 1381-1385*, 572; *CPMR ii*, 135.

some capacity, which meant that the masters were legally responsible for their conduct as though they were members of their own households, as discussed in Chapter 3.¹⁶⁴

The second group of mainprisals paints a similar picture. Three armourers were mainprised for £100: Thomas Hogeicot, Philip Chipstowe, and John Parfay. As with the above group, these armourers rarely appear anywhere else in the London records, indicating that they were probably poorer or journeymen armourers, and they were mainprised by a group of much more prominent armour retailers and workshop owners. This group of benefactors included three of the leaders of the armourers who mainprised those initially presented to the mayor two weeks earlier, and two of the rioters who had themselves been mainprised for £1,000. This indicates that there was a strong group cohesion both among the armourers' leadership who were not involved in the political disputes, those that were, and those poorer members that followed them. Therefore, these mainprisals are evidence of the disparate elements of the armourers trying to mend their industry in the aftermath of a divisive political uprising.

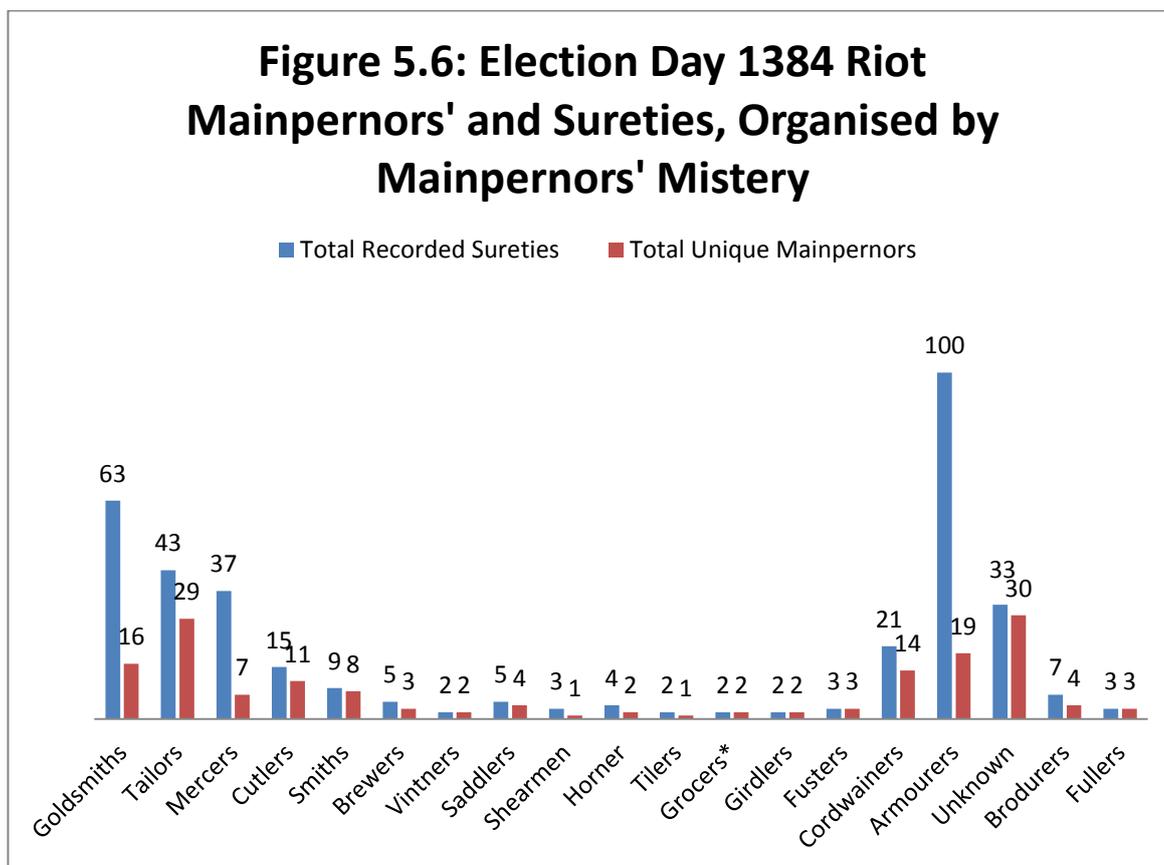
The other two records of mainprisals for armourers were each for individuals, and they are of interest because they demonstrate the broader socio-political networking between the participants of the riots. The armourer John Smyth was bailed by two girdlers,¹⁶⁵ a goldsmith, and an armourer, while the armourer John Whyte, who had helped to mainprise the first group of poorer armourers discussed above was himself mainprised by six smiths and a farrier. The links between girdlers, smiths, and farriers are probably trade or family connections; however, the goldsmith mainprising John Whyte can only be a social or political ally, as the industries rarely had much to do with one another outside of Northampton's illegal meetings in the Goldsmiths' Hall.¹⁶⁶ Armourers were also found mainprising their industrial allies: two armourers mainprised the cordwainer Edmund Clay, and two tailors were mainprised by the armourer John Scorfeyn and the buckler-maker

¹⁶⁴ *CCR 1360-1364*, 533.

¹⁶⁵ John Haylyngbury is unidentified in this record, but appears elsewhere as a girdler. See: *CCR 1392-1396*, 496.

¹⁶⁶ Bird, *Turbulent London*, 82.

Thomas Rakeswell, demonstrating the ongoing close relations between the armourers and those crafts at the end of the fourteenth century.¹⁶⁷

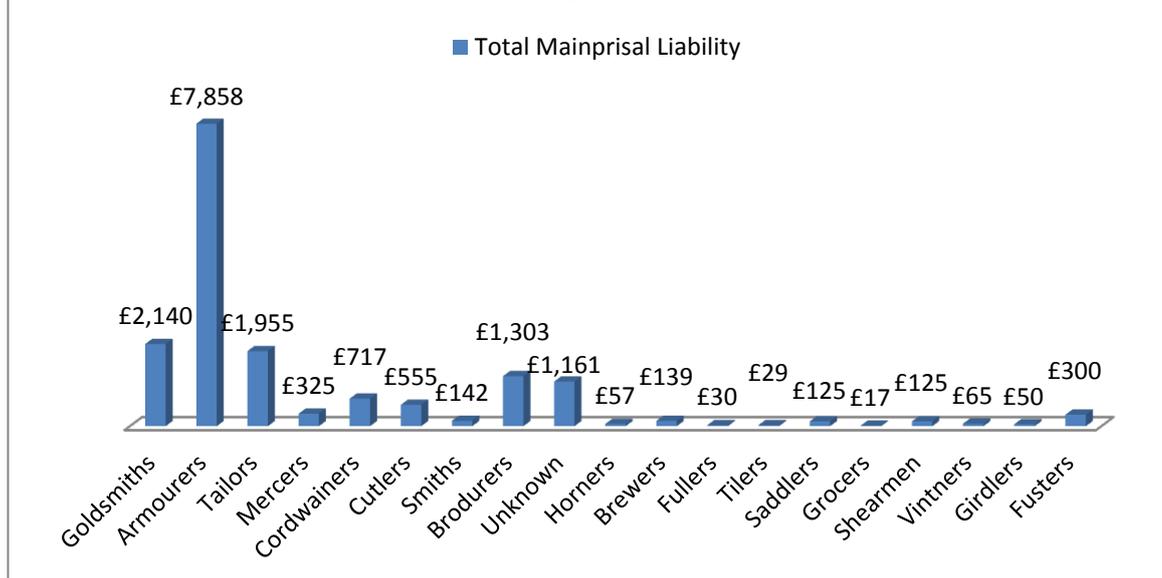


Source: *CPMR iii*, 60-69¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁷ *CPMR iii*, 65, 66, 67.

¹⁶⁸ The farriers, fellmongers, “plomers”, chandlers, weavers, glovers, poulterers, barbers, “steynours”, “peyntours”, skinnners, hostillers, drapers, lorimers, and “bokeler-makers” have been omitted from Figures 5.6 and 5.7 as only a single mainpernor is recorded from each industry. One of the grocers listed was Nicholas Brembre, acting as the mayor to grant favour to a prisoner who could not find mainpernors.

Figure 5.7: Election Day 1384 Riot Total Mainprisal Liability by Mystery (Assuming Equal Distribution of Liability between Each Mainpernor)



Source: *CPMR iii*, 60-69

These records are also important for understanding the armourers' organisation at the end of the century because they show that the armourers were among the most active of all Londoners in mainprising men arrested at the riots. As Figures 5.6 and 5.7 demonstrate, the Plea Rolls record nineteen armourer mainpernors who provided one hundred sureties for seventeen armourers, a tailor, a cordwainer, a haberdasher, and two persons of unknown crafts, generating a liability of £7,858, or nearly double the total risk assumed by both the goldsmiths and tailors combined.¹⁶⁹ The three industries with the highest liabilities all brought their own members to the mayor for arrest, and so it is expected that they would have a higher liability than those industries that did not (as turning their membership in led to a larger number of mainprisals), but even discounting this, the armourers' liability would be £1,858, still considerably higher than all other industries, including the goldsmiths' £1,040 and the tailors' £1,255 if their mainprisals for the men they turned over to the mayor are similarly discounted. While these numbers do not represent funds actually

¹⁶⁹ *CPMR iii*, 60-69.

paid (because the terms of their mainprisals were not broken), these amounts represent each mystery's faith in its own and other mysteries' membership. This is important to understand because it demonstrates that the armourers, who were generally less affluent than the goldsmiths, tailors, and mercers, were taking on far more liability than all of them to ensure that their mystery and those that they depended upon continued to prosper in the aftermath of the riots. This is probably in part because the armourers' industry was more interdependent than the goldsmiths, mercers, and tailors,¹⁷⁰ but the faith demonstrated by the armourers' mainperners here shows that armourers had developed a very strong sense of group and inter-group identity by the end of the century.

This is of particular interest because these records also demonstrate that the leadership among the armourers was split between those attempting to keep the peace and support the civic government, and those who radically opposed it even after John Northampton had been removed from politics. It is important to note that the armourers were not uniformly in favour of Northampton's politics or its effects on the City. One of the most prolific mainperners of his colleagues was the armourer John Scorfeyn, who took on £2,050 of the armourers' £7,858 worth of mainprisal risk recorded in the aftermath of the Election Day riots. However, while Scorfeyn was willing to risk his own money to help members of his mystery (as well as the tailors'), he was a staunch opponent of John Northampton: he mainprised a man for slandering the mayor during Northampton's mayoralty, and was the common councillor for Breadstreet when the council sent a unanimous petition to the king requesting that Northampton be put to death in 1385.¹⁷¹ That Scorfeyn risked as much money as he did to mainprise his colleagues, with whom he vehemently disagreed politically, indicates that his priorities placed the good of his industry above personal politics, an attitude which, if common, explains how the armourers were able to so swiftly recover from the aftermath of the riots.

¹⁷⁰ See: Chapter 2.

¹⁷¹ *Mem*, 476-77; *CPMR iii*, 54-57.

In the wake of the armourers' complicities in John Northampton's high treason, and their important role in the riots that followed his arrest, it is surprising that the armourers' organisations were able to survive, apparently unpunished or sanctioned by either the Crown or the City. Even more surprising, their members continually appear in records after this point being rewarded with positions of power and honour. Stephen atte Fryth, one of the men most responsible for the Election Day riot, would become the king's own armourer.¹⁷² Simon de Wynchecombe's last action as sheriff would have been putting down the Election Day riots instigated by his colleagues, but he went on to serve three terms as an alderman, was named an esquire, and his son John would go on to be knighted.¹⁷³ The armourer Henry Rede would also serve as sheriff and his brother Matthew, also an armourer, would be named an esquire.¹⁷⁴ As one looks past the riots and into the fifteenth century, the number of armourers in prominent positions in the city and crown courts grew: after a century of slow social, political, economic, and industrial centralisation, the riots were the crucible that finally forged the armourers of London into a solidified urban body. The surviving armourers' charter as the Fraternity of St George would not be granted for another sixty-five years, but in that moment, the armourers proved that they were a political force to be reckoned with, and that their industry was strong enough to temper their brother-members' passions with wisdom, authority, and collective finances. In that moment, they were a guild by every definition but the presence of a charter, and so it is no surprise that when they requested one in 1453 they admitted that they had been acting as a guild for a long time already.¹⁷⁵

5.5: Conclusions

The mayoralty riots were both the culmination and the crucible for the armourers as an organisation in the fourteenth century, and as such, the conditions that led to them were

¹⁷² *CPR 1391-1396*, 618.

¹⁷³ *HGL*, St. Mary Colechurch 105/32A; Kingsford, ed., *Survey of London*, 293; *LBF*, 292.

¹⁷⁴ *LBF*, 292.

¹⁷⁵ *CPR 1452-1461*, 105.

neither sudden nor particularly revolutionary. As a mystery, the armourers had overcome every force that had attempted to impose control upon them since the beginning of the century. However, when the goals of the crown opposed those of the mystery, they could not compromise. Edward's efforts to ensure a cheap, plentiful supply of arms and armour to outfit his massive armies were in direct conflict with the armourers' efforts to limit armour imports in their markets and sell their wares at the maximum profit. Every effort the crown took to control the industry drove more armourers into illegally exporting, concealing, eloigning, or resisting impressment in the Tower. The increasing punishments associated with this disobedience indicate the increasing tension between the crown and the armourers, and the increasing measures they took to avoid their work being controlled by the crown.

When the crown's interference in the armour industry combined with the rising privileges of the victuallers after the onset of the plague, the result was less real profit for the armourers' work, with more of their money going into feeding themselves than ever before. This furthered resentment against the crown and city, and so when John Northampton began politicising food costs, and framing the debate as a conflict between the good men of London and the corrupt politicians and victuallers, it is hardly surprising that so many of the armourers became more politically active. When Northampton arranged for the council to be elected by the mysteries, he gave all of the mysteries a voice in government that many had never had before, and forced them to take sides in a political conflict which he defined as being between them and the dominant corrupt oligarchy. When that oligarchy tried to prevent the mysteries from gaining power, they turned Northampton's propaganda into a concrete reality. When Nicholas Brembre reversed the governmental policy allowing the Council to be elected by the mysteries, he excluded the mysteries from the political processes of urban government and attacked their political identities. As Rodney Hilton has argued, such acts meant that artisans' "...rational and

justified opposition could only be expressed in protests which inevitably led to violence.”¹⁷⁶

For the armourers of London, the mayoralty riots can therefore be seen as partially the result of a long-standing, legitimate complaint about the interference of the crown and city into their businesses; partially the result of unequal economic measures that caused deflation in the armourers’ wares and inflation in the cost of food; and partially the result of a revolutionary political leader granting them a voice in government, followed by a mayor who sought to take that voice away. While many Londoners were affected by the latter two of these reasons, the crown’s interference with the armourers businesses specifically targeted their industry. While some other industries, such as mariners, masons, and fletchers were also impressed into labour and suffered under the crown’s wartime measures in the late fourteenth century, the armourers were certainly the hardest hit by these policies. Therefore, the question that began this thesis is answered: the armourers were so prominent in these riots because of thirty years of royal manipulation and marginalisation of their industry.

That the armourers were able to maintain their industry after the riots demonstrates that even in the face of insurmountable royal manipulation, plummeting real-wages, and following an event which could have resulted in many of the mistery being charged with treason, the many facets to the industry’s organisational development examined in this thesis also granted the armourers’ mistery remarkable resilience. If the armourers’ industry fell apart, so too would the English war effort and all of the contributory crafts that had come together over the past sixty years to the collective purpose of arming the English soldiery. Intermarriage among the contributory and related crafts, and a strong social and political network among both the craft and market aspects of the industry ensured that those arrested for their part in the riots were freed. Although the armourers were far from the wealthiest of London’s misteries, their workshop, family, social, industrial, and

¹⁷⁶ Rodney Hilton, “Unjust Taxation and Popular Resistance”, *New Left Review* 180 (1990): 177-184.

political networks made it among the strongest. While this thesis has examined the armourers individually, further studies into the smaller crafts and trades of London may reveal similar interdependent networks forming among other craft communities and through such further studies, deepen our understanding of the complex nature of London's urban organisation.

6.0: Conclusion

This thesis began with the question of why armourers were so involved in Northampton's politics and the riots of 1383 and 1384. The works of George Unwin, Ruth Bird, Pamela Nightingale, and Frank Rexroth all demonstrated that the politics of late fourteenth-century London was complicated by competing interests of oligarchical merchants, common people, and guilds;¹ as well as concerns over the location of the wool staple,² burgeoning political parties,³ conflicts between victuallers and non-victuallers,⁴ and "a spectacular fight against falsity and immorality."⁵ All of these contributed to the turbulence of late fourteenth-century London, but none of these theories addressed the armourers' roles except perhaps as members of the "mob", which Ruth Bird accorded little political will beyond violence and the pursuit of vendetta.⁶ Such a view reduces the complex political perspectives and individual agendas among the rioters to a generalisation of uniform class ideologies and goals, and is based upon an examination of records that recorded the perspectives of those *affected by* the riots, rather than its participants. In order to understand the riots, its participants need to be understood and incorporated into a larger scholarly discussion about the multifaceted nature of fourteenth-century civil unrest and urban political participation.

In order to examine the motivations of the armourers as a group, the first question that needed to be answered was "what was an armourer?" This was not an easy question to answer, because as Malcolm Mercer put it, our understanding of the industry has been limited to the context "of massed quantities of armour stored at the Tower of London and elsewhere. There remains a limited understanding of the organization of the armourers'

¹ Unwin, *Gilds*, 1-14; Bird, *Turbulent London*, 55-75.

² Nightingale, *Medieval Mercantile*, 124, 218; Nightingale, "Capitalists", 3-35.

³ Unwin, *Gilds*, 127-54.

⁴ Unwin, *Gilds*, 37-42; Nightingale *Medieval Mercantile*, 78-9; Bird, *Turbulent London*, 14-15, 79; Rexroth, *Deviance and Power*, 114.

⁵ Rexroth, *Deviance and Power*, 143-144.

⁶ Bird, *Turbulent London*, 75; Rexroth, *Deviance and Power*, 132.

craft...’’⁷ This is because there has never been a thorough examination of records relating to the armourers prior to the fifteenth century, and because there have been no significant works that have investigated the fourteenth-century development of the armourers from the perspective of a network of interdependent specialists. Therefore this thesis was assembled in part with the intention of filling this gap in historical scholarship.

Through the nominal record linkage and prosopographical methodologies that I developed out of the methodologies of Maryanne Kowaleski, Eilert Ekwall, Margaret Curtis, and P.H. Reaney and R.M. Wilson’s work on identifying and cataloguing medieval urbanites,⁸ I was able to provisionally identify three-hundred and eleven members of the armourers’ industry by examining over a thousand documents relating to the armourers over the course of the fourteenth century, from amongst those identified as linen-armourers, heaumers, haubergers, kissers, furbishers, and plate-armourers. I furthermore recognised that surnames are an insufficient form of evidence for identifying occupation after the middle of the fourteenth century, and chose to catalogue my data and to question the occupational identifications of other scholars accordingly. While M.M. Postan came to this same conclusion in 1972,⁹ directly conflating occupational surnames with actual occupations is an error that continues to be made in modern scholarship, and many works have been written that have based their conclusions upon work that has contained this erroneous assumption. Therefore, in examining my methodology I have endeavoured to be clear about how I identified armourers in my research, so that my findings can be used with greater confidence. While the limits of this thesis did not permit it, creating an indexed bibliography of records relating to the armourers prior to their 1453 guild charter is an area for future work.

While this thesis has contributed to discussions of fourteenth-century workshops, households, socio-economic industrial bodies, and medieval civic and political

⁷ Mercer, “King’s Armourers”, 1.

⁸ Kowaleski, “Appendix 1”, in *Local Markets*, 334-352; Ekwall, *Subs*; Ekwall, *Studies on the Population of Medieval London*; *LLS*, 35-92; Reaney & Wilson, *A Dictionary of English Surnames*.

⁹ Postan, *Economic History*, 202.

participation from the perspective of the armourers, it has most importantly contributed to two broad areas of scholarly discussion. The first of these developed out of the Durkheimian idea that the social and economic aspects of the armourers' production, family, social, and political networks were intrinsically related to one another. The second has been that the roles of grass-roots, individual, and voluntary circles of industrial development found in households, in the development of trade districts, in non-work social networks (such as crime or night-walking), and in political activism were just as important in the early development of production and trade groups as the "official" means of organisation, such as misteries, fraternities, and guilds. At their core, both of these arguments recognise the deeper complexities and interconnected forces at work in the formation of small urban craft groups in the late Middle Ages. Throughout this thesis, I have endeavoured to engage with the context of the armourers in order to better understand how medieval urbanites lived, and to test where armourers' experiences differed from other Londoners. While the theories that I engage with throughout this thesis which address Londoners in general are very useful for describing the broad principles which defined social and economic movements in the fourteenth century, my research has developed out of a desire to test those principles by examining the armourers' contemporary individual experience. Just as medieval urbanites understood that their complex social structures were born out of interactions between each of their structures' constituent parts, modern historiography must also (as much as it is possible) rigorously engage with the experiences of the individuals who made up the social, economic, civic, and political movements being studied.

In Chapter 2, I demonstrated that the armourers' industry was not a single industry at all, but a network of interconnected, interdependent specialist industries of craftsmen, retailers, wholesalers, and supply industries. While other scholars have touched upon this theme, no previous study has examined how this interdependence functioned among the armourers. I demonstrate that at the beginning of the century the linen-armour market was

the largest and most important of the armourers' specialisms, because it utilised the tailors' already-established raw materials market and trade organisation, and furthermore because mail and metal armour could not function without the padding and coverings manufactured by the linen-armourers. Requirements for cross-industry cooperation and market sharing meant that the linen-armour market was a prerequisite for the existence of the metal-armour market, but as the market for metal armour grew, linen-armourers became more dependent upon metal-armourers for the shared market that they provided.

The metal-armour industry was slow to develop, however. A lack of good-quality iron and large-scale bloomery furnaces in England meant that iron suitable for forging into the large plates used in the bespoke trade was expensive to acquire, and workshops capable of manufacturing such armour had a very high infrastructure cost. These challenges encouraged the development and practise of multiple specialisms, especially among the haubergers and furbishers, which required less of an equipment and raw materials investment, but could only operate amid an already established linen and metal armour industry (because mail armour does not function without linen-armour underneath, and furbishers would have nothing to repair without the metal-armour market). As a result, as the industry grew, it became exceptionally interdependent, requiring either occupationally pluralist strategies, or constant communication in order for any specialist to complete a finished product. This interdependence contributed to the development of market networks, and of trade districts which facilitated the development of the broader armourers' market.

Examining the workshop strategies utilised by the various armourers' groups, I was able to conclude that in the absence of a centrally regulated guild structure, the armourers utilised whatever strategy best fitted their individual opportunities. This meant that armourers blurred the lines between market and craft pursuits, and that a man who was identified as an armourer could potentially have been a craftsman, a retailer, a wholesaler or very often, a combination of each. Moreover, I found that armourers routinely occupied multiple craft occupations both within the armour industry and occasionally in other crafts

that utilised similar raw materials or equipment. This meant that armourers were not only exempted from the requirement that “artificers [must]... hold them every one to one mystery ... [and] none use other craft than the same which he hath chosen”,¹⁰ but furthermore that the traditional dichotomy of craftsmen vs. merchant capitalists that has been used to explain some of the social tensions in the late fourteenth century cannot easily be applied to the armourers, because no such stark dichotomy existed among them. The fluidity of specialism and of artisan or retailer status within the industry allowed for the armourers to capitalise upon opportunities for growth as they emerged in a changing economic climate, which was not possible for more narrowly-focussed industries. The interdependence between armourers’ various specialist industries, and the freedom to adopt the most appropriate workshop strategy based on individual economic ability contributed to the armourers’ industrial growth and to the complexity of their social networks as different specialist strategies emerged and interacted among the industry.

These social networks were the most readily apparent in the records relating to the armourers’ household economies, and records relating to women, servants, and apprentices acting as social and economic links between different households within the armourers’ networks. Building upon the works of Caroline Barron, Matthew Frank Stevens, and Martha Howell, I was able to conclude that women among the armourers experienced some additional exposure in their industry, but that this did not constitute a “Golden Age” of economic freedom.¹¹ Instead, I found that records of women working within the armourers’ craft and production economies tended to reflect contributions within the household, and represented contributory work to their husband or father’s occupation, rather than as independent economic presences. This supported Martha Howell’s ideas about the increasing importance of the household within the late medieval market

¹⁰ *SotR i*, 379-380.

¹¹ Barron, “Golden Age”, 35-58; Stevens, “London Women”, 67-88; Howell, “Gender”, 519-38.

economy,¹² and suggested that the labour of the household economy was just as important as the labour of the “primary” retailer, wholesaler, or artisan among London’s fourteenth-century armourers.

My research revealed that women in the armourers’ community often owned or inherited armourers’ shops, and probably acted as shopkeepers, but because this was an efficient use of the entire household’s labour, and not, as Derek Keene suggested, because their sexuality encouraged trade.¹³ From this starting point, I sought to provide a new perspective on the role of women from within the armourers’ production and market activities. Out of a close reading of the records related to the armourers, I argued that women within the armourers’ network acquired the skills needed to assist in the production of armour, and upon marriage and remarriage, I found that they became the channels through which the expensive infrastructure of shops, workshops, and equipment, as well as craft skills passed to new households.¹⁴ This contributed greatly to the armourers’ adoption of multiple specialisms within their households when a new wife had previously belonged to a household of a related specialism. Furthermore, I found that apprentices and servants similarly contributed to a wider framework of social connections between different specialisms, raw materials networks, and labourers. This was one of the most important sources for the development of more complex workshop and socioeconomic networks among the armourers, and directly contributed to occupational plurality, market centralisation, and the framework of networks that would attempt to bring about more centralised forms of industrial organisation.

Chapter 4 engaged with the scholarly dialogue about the nature of late medieval socio-industrial organisations, and addressed whether the regulation and regulatory organisations of the armourers’ industry were imposed upon them from outside, or if these

¹² Howell, “Gender”, 521-22.

¹³ Keene, “Tanners’ Widows”, 5-6; Keene “Shops and Shopping”, 41.

¹⁴ This idea applies the broader research of Barbara Hanawalt, Sylvia Thrupp, Caroline Barron, Margaret Curtis, and Martha Howell to the armourers specifically. See: Hanawalt, *Wealth of Wives*, 6-7, 120-21, 161, 169-170; Hanawalt, *Growing Up*, 179; Thrupp, *Merchant Class*, 28; Barron, “Golden Age”, 36; Margaret Curtis, *LLS*, 59; Martha Howell, “Women, Production, and Patriarchy”, 3.

structures emerged out of pre-existing, informal, voluntary socioeconomic networks that sought their own self-governance. While both sides of this debate have valid points, when the question is applied to the armourers specifically, neither scenario perfectly represents the armourers' "individual experience[s]", which Gervase Rosser argued was more relevant than craft regulations when seeking to understand these organisations.¹⁵ By examining the records of the armourers, I was able to conclude that these organisations were neither entirely imposed upon the armourers by powerful elites, nor wholly "spontaneous confederations of master craftsmen".¹⁶ Instead, the formation of the armourers' various socio-industrial organisations were influenced by and constantly negotiated between the agendas of their interdependent specialisms and the needs of the Crown, City, and more powerful related industries, such as the Tailors.

These organisations changed over the course of the fourteenth century, beginning with the 1322 armourers' ordinances, whose regulations predominantly served the linen-armourers' and tailors' interests, but were still upheld, apparently voluntarily, by a populationally-proportionate representative body of armourers from all of the armourers' specialist crafts. Because of the interdependence between metal- and linen-armourers, organisational links remained throughout the century between the specialist industries served by the 1322 armourers' ordinances. However, by 1347, metal-armourers grew powerful enough to present the City with their own ordinances, claiming authority over all "arms forged with the hammer",¹⁷ including the basinet that the 1322 armourers' ordinances required to be inspected by representatives of their organisation.¹⁸ This usurpation of craft inspection privileges from a much larger and wealthier craft highlights just how much the industry had grown in the twenty-five years since the 1322 ordinances.

The armourers' trade organisation continued to develop rapidly throughout the century. Their earliest surviving guild charter dates from 1453, dedicated to St George, but

¹⁵ Rosser, "Crafts, Guilds and Work", 6-7.

¹⁶ Miller & Hatcher, *Medieval England*, 369.

¹⁷ *Mem*, 238.

¹⁸ *Mem*, 145-46.

in the petition for that charter, they claimed to have been acting as a guild “for a long time previously”.¹⁹ I found that the armourers possessed a hall by 1428 at the latest and rented other halls on numerous occasions prior to this,²⁰ and that evidence existed for armourers taking part in a Fraternity of St George appears possibly as early as 1361.²¹ These kinds of organisations were not imposed, but were actively sought by an already existing social network of interdependent armourers’ workshops and household economies, even when armourers rightly “feared [that such organisations were] not legally established.”²² Given the restrictive policies of the crown towards the armourers’ industry, the measures that the fourteenth-century craft took in evading those policies, the level of organisation shown by the armourers’ contributions to Northampton’s political movement, and the scale of their involvement in the riots that followed his downfall, it should come as no surprise that when the armourers eventually petitioned the crown for permission to form a guild, they had already been one informally for some time.

Examining the evidence of social networks outside of misteries, fraternities, and guilds from a prosopographical, bottom-up methodology revealed that armourers’ industrial and trade networks were mirrored in their social networks. This was evidenced in their non-work-related activities in records of crime and mainprisal, and in the distribution of properties across London. Crime and mainprisal are by their very nature voluntary, non-work activities, and point towards voluntary social interactions amongst individual armourers which mirrored the development of economic interactions amongst the same groups in their socio-industrial networks.

My research into trade districts built on the work of Caroline Barron, who argued for the importance of such districts in the development of craft and trade fraternities.²³ But where Barron saw the importance of such organisations developing within single parishes,

¹⁹ Westlake, *Parish Gilds*, 23.

²⁰ Unwin, *Gilds*, 176.

²¹ See: Section 4.2.

²² *CPR 1452-1461*, 105.

²³ Barron, *London in the Later Middle Ages*, 206.

the armourers' districts consisted of several multi-parish industrial and market zones. Unlike the larger craft and parochial fraternities, the armourers' districts were not developed around a single craft or parish, but around many interdependent "para-local communities"²⁴ of the armourers' craft and market specialisms. I discovered that the craft communities of Farringdon Without incorporated all of the armourers' specialisms, while the centralised armour markets in the Cheap and Coleman Street wards brought the industry's craft and retail elements together. The centralisation of the crafts within craft districts allowed for easier specialist cooperation, and access to the raw materials market. Furthermore, this centralisation allowed for a lower search cost among consumers, and facilitated the development of both the armourers' social networks, and of their industrial-endogamous marriage networks which further tied their household economies into the local market economy. These trends represented voluntary social and industrial interactions which influenced the creation of a more efficient, centralised marketplace. To use Durkheim's concepts: the armourers' material and moral densities were fundamentally interrelated, and inseparable from one another.²⁵

The social interactions examined in Chapter 4 were intrinsically tied to the armourers' political organisations examined in Chapter 5. The armourers' constant contact and developing socio-industrial organisations ensured that the armourers saw themselves as a distinct group with shared economic and political interests. This impression was furthered by decades of the Crown's harsh economic impositions on the London armour market, which included purveyance and seizure of armour, export restrictions, the implementation of price controls on the armourers' marketplace, and impressment and forced labour. Crown interference in the armourers' industry increased dramatically during the Hundred Years' War, and penalties for resisting armour seizure, impressment, or for exporting wares became steadily stricter, suggesting growing resistance to these policies.

²⁴ Colson, "Alien Communities", 112.

²⁵ Durkheim, *De la division*, 32.

The shared adversity experienced by the armourers gave them a common enemy and encouraged them to become even more organised in their resistance of the crown's policies.

Previous studies of John Northampton's politics and the mayoralty riots have tended to propose explanations intended to describe why Londoners, or at least large populations of Londoners, followed Northampton or participated in the riots. Whether concerns over the price of food and apparent corrupt business practice among the victualing merchants proposed by Unwin, conflicts between the interests of small and middling merchants proposed by Bird, a "spirit of reformist indignation" proposed by Thrupp, political concerns over the location of the wool staple proposed by Nightingale, or the simple moralist outrage proposed by Rexroth, these kinds of explanations are flawed in that they attempt to reduce the political experience of thousands of individuals into a single theory.²⁶ In reality, all of these issues were pertinent to Londoners in the late fourteenth century, but none could be applied universally. Even looking at only the armourers, not every adherent of Northampton's politics or rioter in 1384 would have subscribed to all of the reasons that I propose the armourers had for representing the largest faction among the rioters. Many armourers likely lacked any high political ideals at all, and like the tailor William Wodecok, simply wanted to arm themselves with as many weapons as they could carry, and participate in a riot; while others, like the armourer John Scorfeyn vehemently disagreed with Northampton's political position and saw him as a threat to the City, and yet still mainprised armourers involved in civil disobedience against Nicholas Brembre.²⁷ The individual experiences of armourers differed greatly; however, by narrowing the focus of the question of what was behind the mayoralty riots to just one participatory group, some of the influences upon London's late medieval urban politics become clearer.

²⁶ Unwin, *Gilds*, 37-42; Bird, *Turbulent London*, 55-75; Thrupp, *Merchant Class*, 77; Nightingale, *Medieval Mercantile*, 124, 218; Nightingale, "Capitalists", 3-35; Rexroth, *Deviance and Power*, 143-144.

²⁷ *CPMR iii*, 67; *Mem*, 476-77; *CPMR iii*, 54-57.

While the paths which the fourteenth-century London armourers took to achieve their socio-industrial organisation, occupational identities, and political power were unique to their industry, their development still sheds some light on the ways in which small crafts were able to grow in London outside of the structures of guilds. For the armourers, their social and economic circles were inexorably tied, and so their workshop activities, household economies, socio-industrial organisations, non-work social networks, and networks of political participation all contributed to one another. These multifaceted aspects of their organisational growth allowed the armourers to slowly develop from a group of small interdependent specialists at the beginning of the fourteenth century, into a powerful, centrally organised craft and trade organisation capable of supplying England's armour for the Hundred Years' War. By the end of the century, the armourers had become the most prominent element in two riots which were seen at the time as a credible threat to the life of the king, and to the stability of London's government for years afterwards. Also by the end of the century, the armourers' organisation had grown wealthy and respectable enough that their leadership was able to occupy important positions in London's civic government, which meant that while that leadership immediately turned their membership over to the Mayor's Court, they also immediately financed their release. William Shakespeare's words perhaps best describe the armourers' craft as they moved through the turbulence of the late fourteenth century and into the challenges England faced in the fifteenth century: "Now all the youth of England are on fire..." but also, "Now thrive the armourers".²⁸

²⁸ William Shakespeare, *Henry V*, ed. T.N.R. Rogers (New York: Dover Publications, 2003), 2.1. 1-3.

Appendix 1: Armourers and First Appearance Sources in Figure 1.1: French Direct Object Usage

Individuals that could be confirmed in the records as holding the occupation suggested by their surname have been written in **bold**, and those whose associations strongly suggest the occupation have been underlined.

Reginald le Hauberg 1245;¹ Robert le Heaumer 1269;² Avice (Alice) la Haubergere 1271;³ Richard le Kyssere 1279;⁴ Richard le Heaumer 1283;⁵ **Manekin le Heaumer/Armurer** 1286;⁶ **Richard le Kissere** 1288;⁷ Druet le Armurer 1290;⁸ John le Plater/Platener/Platier/Plattour 1290;⁹ Gilbert le Armurer 1292;¹⁰ Henr' le Forebur/Fourbour 1292;¹¹ Iue le Furbur 1292;¹² **William le Platier** 1292;¹³ **Aunsel/Anselm/Ancelyn/ le Furbor/Furbour** 1295;¹⁴ William le Fourbour (Probably an alias for **William Love**) 1299;¹⁵ **Senn le Kisser** 1300;¹⁶ **Hugh le Armurer/Heaumer** 1303;¹⁷ Adam le Armurer 1305;¹⁸ John le Furbour 1305;¹⁹ Bernard le Fourbour 1306;²⁰

¹ *HGL*, St. Mary Colechurch 105/26; *CIPM ii*, 143. Keene and Harding suggest that he was dead by 1271, but his daughter's inheritances not appear in the Calendar of Inquisitions until 1275.

² *Eyre*, no. 215.

³ See: *HGL*, St. Mary Colechurch 105/26; *CPR 1301-1305*, 546. Her first usage of the name Avice la Haubergere (using the feminine form) appears to be in 1307. Before this she is identified by her connection to her husband or father.

⁴ *CWPH i*, 41.

⁵ *DCoAD vi*, 3978.

⁶ *LBD*, 143.

⁷ *LBA*, 171.

⁸ *LBA*, 176.

⁹ *LBA*, 176.

¹⁰ *Subs*, 148.

¹¹ If it is the same man, he, along with Simon le Fourbour, were wardens of the cutlers in 1345. See: *Subs*, 170; *CPMR i*, 218.

¹² *Subs*, 141.

¹³ *Subs*, 201.

¹⁴ *LBA*, 200.

¹⁵ Ekwall identifies this person as the same as the furbisher William Love. Even if this is not the same person, he is recorded as being ineligible to speak in the inquest of the furbisher Robert Wardeboys, as he "favours him." There is damage to this record and a name identified as a kinsman of Wardeboys is absent with the exception of the surname "le Fourbour." Love was the only figure in the record that used that surname, suggesting he had craft and familial connections to Wardeboys. See: *LBE*, 1; *Subs*, 296.

¹⁶ *CoEMC: 1298-1307*, 61.

¹⁷ TNA CLA/007/EM/02/C/024. Ekwall identifies this figure as the same as the Hugh le Heaumer who appears in the Armourers' Ordinances of 1322. See: *Subs*, 309; *Mem*, 145.

¹⁸ TNA SC 8/9/422; 423.

¹⁹ *CoEMC 1298-1307*, 205.

²⁰ *LBB*, 167.

Alexander le Fourbour 1306;²¹ Adam le Fourbour 1307;²² Maurice le Kissere 1309;²³ John le Haubergeour 1310;²⁴ John le Heaumer 1310;²⁵ **James le Kissere de Hestone** 1310;²⁶ **Hugh le Armurer of Brugges** 1312;²⁷ Richard le Playtour 1317;²⁸ **Simon le Heaumer/Larmurer** 1318;²⁹ **William le Hauberger** 1318;³⁰ **Oliver Larmurer/le Heaumer** 1319;³¹ Peter le Playtour 1319;³² **Master Richard Larmurer/le Heaumer** 1319;³³ **William Larmurer/le Heaumer** 1319;³⁴ **Thomas le Fourbour** 1319;³⁵ Hugh le Fourbour 1319;³⁶ **Reginald le Hauberger** 1320;³⁷ Stephen le Hauberger 1322;³⁸ **Nicholas le Armurer/Clerk/Girdelere** 1324;³⁹ Cristina le Fourbour 1330;⁴⁰ John le Armurer 1333;⁴¹ Robert le Fourbour 1338;⁴² Herman le Heaumer 1338;⁴³ Reginald le Fourbour 1338;⁴⁴ Master Gerard le Armourer 1340;⁴⁵ Richard le Fourbour 1341;⁴⁶ Simon le Fourbour of Fleet Street 1345;⁴⁷ Gilott le Fourbour 1356;⁴⁸ John le Fourbour 1378.⁴⁹

²¹ *LBB*, 167.

²² *LBC*, 240.

²³ *LBD*, 112.

²⁴ *CPR 1307-1313*, 212.

²⁵ *LAoN*, 34.

²⁶ *LBD*, 121.

²⁷ *CCR 1307-1313*, 426.

²⁸ *CPR 1313-1317*, 690.

²⁹ *LBE*, 97.

³⁰ *LBE*, 94.

³¹ *Subs*, 307.

³² *CPR 1317-1321*, 399.

³³ *Subs*, 307.

³⁴ *Subs*, 308.

³⁵ *Subs*, 298.

³⁶ *Subs*, 298.

³⁷ *LBE*, 132.

³⁸ *Sus 1308-1509*, record 1684.

³⁹ *Liber Albus*, 375-6.

⁴⁰ *CWPH i*, 361.

⁴¹ *CPR 1330-1334*, 449.

⁴² *LBF*, 27.

⁴³ *LBF*, 20.

⁴⁴ *LBF*, 48.

⁴⁵ *CPMR i*, 126.

⁴⁶ *LBF*, 256.

⁴⁷ *CPMR i*, 218.

⁴⁸ *LAoN*, 110-111.

⁴⁹ *LBH*, 103.

Appendix 2: Armourers and First Appearance Sources for Figure 1.2: Armourers

Network Self-Identification with Industry Subgroups: 1275-1400

Armourers: William Cosin 1281;¹ William de Hereford 1281;² William Sauvage 1281;³ Richard de Suffolk 1281;⁴ Thomas le Fleming 1299;⁵ Philip Cosin 1304;⁶ Richard Deveneys 1305;⁷ Manekyn le Armurer/Heaumer 1305;⁸ William de Lyndesseye 1306;⁹ Gilbert Ladde 1308;¹⁰ John de Kesteven 1309/10;¹¹ William de Wolde/Welde 1310;¹² Stephen le Mareschal 1310;¹³ John Bontynge 1311;¹⁴ Clement Passemer 1311;¹⁵ William le Platier 1311;¹⁶ Hugh le Armurer of Brugges 1312;¹⁷ William le Flemyng 1315;¹⁸ Hugh de Bungeye/Aungeye 1317;¹⁹ Walter de Maceu;²⁰ “Mannekynnesmanthearmurer” 1318;²¹ William de Segrave 1318;²² Richard de Kent 1319;²³ Henry de Ernesfast 1320;²⁴ Simon le Armurer/Heaumer 1322;²⁵ Oliver le Armurer/Heaumer 1322;²⁶ Master Richard Armurer/Heaumer 1322;²⁷ William le Armurer/Heaumer 1322;²⁸ Roger de Blakenhale 1322;²⁹ Salamon le Coffrer 1322;³⁰ Thomas de Copham 1322;³¹ Reginald le Hauberger

¹ *LBB*, 8.

² *LBA*, 39.

³ *LBB*, 9.

⁴ *LBA*, 39.

⁵ *LBB*, 93.

⁶ *LBB*, 132.

⁷ *LBB*, 156.

⁸ *CCR 1302-1307*, 302.

⁹ *LBB*, 188.

¹⁰ *LBB*, 206.

¹¹ *LBD*, 45.

¹² *LBD*, 294.

¹³ *LBB*, 16.

¹⁴ *LBD*, 67.

¹⁵ *LBD*, 143.

¹⁶ *LBB*, 24.

¹⁷ *CCR 1307-1313*, 426.

¹⁸ *LBE*, 49.

¹⁹ *LBE*, 78.

²⁰ *CPR 1313-1317*, 643.

²¹ *CPR 1317-1321*, 286.

²² *CCR 1318-1323*, 122.

²³ *Subs*, 277.

²⁴ *CCR 1318-1323*, 340.

²⁵ *Mem*, 145.

²⁶ *Mem*, 145.

²⁷ *Mem*, 145.

²⁸ *Mem*, 145.

²⁹ *Mem*, 145.

1322;³² William le Hauberger 1322;³³ Hugh le Heaumer 1322;³⁴ Henry Horpol 1322;³⁵
 William de Lausehell/Lansehulle 1322;³⁶ John Marchaunt also called “le Clerk” 1322;³⁷
 Geffray [Name Omitted] 1322;³⁸ Robert le Proude 1322;³⁹ Geoffrey de Rothinge 1322;⁴⁰
 Roger le Salte 1322;⁴¹ Roger Sauvage 1322;⁴² Robert Seymer 1322;⁴³ Richard de Seyntis
 1322;⁴⁴ Robert de Skeltone 1322;⁴⁵ William de Staunford 1322;⁴⁶ John Tavy/Tany 1322;⁴⁷
 William le Toneler 1322;⁴⁸ Elyas de Wodebern 1322;⁴⁹ John de Wyght 1322;⁵⁰ John de
 Colonia 1328;⁵¹ Roger de Redebourne 1329;⁵² Thomas Canun 1330;⁵³ William de
 Scanderwyk 1332;⁵⁴ Thomas de Kestevene 1334;⁵⁵ John le Kyng 1334;⁵⁶ William Stille
 1334;⁵⁷ Sayer Bouet 1335;⁵⁸ John Priour 1337;⁵⁹ John atte Grove 1338;⁶⁰ William de Hales
 1338;⁶¹ Henry de Morle 1338;⁶² Roger de la Tour 1338;⁶³ William de Trente 1338;⁶⁴ John
 de Flete 1339;⁶⁵ Nicholas le Armurer/Clerk/Girdelere 1340;⁶⁶ Adam atte Hulle 1344;⁶⁷

³⁰ *LBE*, 170.

³¹ *Mem*, 145.

³² *Mem*, 145.

³³ *Mem*, 145.

³⁴ *Mem*, 145.

³⁵ *Mem*, 145.

³⁶ *LBE*, 170.

³⁷ *LBE*, 170.

³⁸ *Mem*, 145.

³⁹ *Mem*, 145.

⁴⁰ *LBE*, 170.

⁴¹ *Mem*, 145.

⁴² *Mem*, 145.

⁴³ *Mem*, 145.

⁴⁴ *Mem*, 145.

⁴⁵ *Mem*, 145.

⁴⁶ *Mem*, 145.

⁴⁷ *Mem*, 145.

⁴⁸ *Mem*, 145.

⁴⁹ *Mem*, 145.

⁵⁰ *Mem*, 145.

⁵¹ *TNA E 43/20*.

⁵² *LBE*, 235.

⁵³ *LBE*, 247.

⁵⁴ *CCR 1330-1333*, 559.

⁵⁵ *DCoAD v.ii*, a2347.

⁵⁶ *LBE*, 3.

⁵⁷ *LBE*, 3.

⁵⁸ *CPR 1334-1338*, 57.

⁵⁹ *LBF*, 13.

⁶⁰ *CPMR i*, 173.

⁶¹ *CCR 1337-1339*, 412-13.

⁶² *CPMR i*, 191.

⁶³ *CPMR i*, 191.

⁶⁴ *CPMR i*, 191.

⁶⁵ *CCR 1339-1341*, 83.

Robert de Tatenhale 1344;⁶⁸ Peter Nuyer 1345;⁶⁹ John de Coppeham 1346;⁷⁰ William atte Castelle 1347;⁷¹ William de Farnberghwe 1347;⁷² John de Hoghton 1347;⁷³ John le Nuiz 1347;⁷⁴ William Spark 1347;⁷⁵ Robert de Shirwod 1348;⁷⁶ William Albon of Fletestrete 1348;⁷⁷ Simon de Rasen 1348;⁷⁸ Henry Bel 1349;⁷⁹ Thomas de Herlawe 1349;⁸⁰ John Moy 1349;⁸¹ Philip de Herlawe 1350;⁸² Richard de Wynchecombe 1351;⁸³ Richard atte Lee 1353;⁸⁴ John de London 1354;⁸⁵ William de Glendale 1358;⁸⁶ Richard Cully 1361;⁸⁷ John Payn 1364;⁸⁸ Richard Cobbe 1363;⁸⁹ Gerard le Hauberger 1363;⁹⁰ Walter de Kent 1364;⁹¹ John de Wyndesore 1363;⁹² John Grove 1364;⁹³ William atte Hawe 1364;⁹⁴ John Scot 1375;⁹⁵ John de Wynchecombe 1364;⁹⁶ Simon de Wynchecombe 1367;⁹⁷ Robert Berkenshawe 1368;⁹⁸ Richard Pecok 1371;⁹⁹ Arnold de Ingilbright 1373;¹⁰⁰ Walter Peryndon 1374;¹⁰¹ Robert Wormwell 1375;¹⁰² John Shirwode 1375;¹⁰³ Robert Culham

⁶⁶ *LBF*, 56-57.

⁶⁷ *LBF*, 56-57.

⁶⁸ *CPR 1343-1345*, 243.

⁶⁹ *LBF*, 128.

⁷⁰ *CWPH i*, 491.

⁷¹ *CCR 1346-1349*, 243.

⁷² *LBF*, 165.

⁷³ *LBF*, 165.

⁷⁴ *CCR 1346-1349*, 189.

⁷⁵ *LBF*, 162.

⁷⁶ *FoF i*, 125.

⁷⁷ *CCR 1346-1349*, 611.

⁷⁸ *CCR 1346-1349*, 545.

⁷⁹ *CWPH i*, 568.

⁸⁰ *CWPH i*, 571.

⁸¹ *CWPH i*, 629.

⁸² *LBF*, 224.

⁸³ *LBA*, 101.

⁸⁴ *CPR 1350-1354*, 483.

⁸⁵ *CPR 1354-1358*, 11.

⁸⁶ *CCR 1354-1360*, 519.

⁸⁷ *CWPH ii*, 41.

⁸⁸ *CCR 1364-1368*, 85.

⁸⁹ *CPR 1361-1364*, 393.

⁹⁰ *CPR 1361-1364*, 344.

⁹¹ *CPR 1361-1364*, 393.

⁹² *CPR 1361-1363*, 393.

⁹³ *CPMR ii*, 4.

⁹⁴ *CPMR ii*, 12.

⁹⁵ *CPMR ii*, 194.

⁹⁶ *CPMR ii*, 12.

⁹⁷ *CCR 1364-1368*, 398.

⁹⁸ *CPR 1364-1367*, 315.

⁹⁹ *CFR 1368-1377*, 128-129.

¹⁰⁰ *LBG*, 308.

¹⁰¹ *CCR 1374-1377*, 78.

1376;¹⁰⁴ Richard Glovere 1376;¹⁰⁵ John Walsyngham 1376;¹⁰⁶ Richard de Armes 1377;¹⁰⁷
 John Berfaire 1377;¹⁰⁸ John Game 1377;¹⁰⁹ Robert Kendale 1377;¹¹⁰ Richard Marshall
 1377;¹¹¹ Richard Owtre 1377;¹¹² John Scorfeyn 1377;¹¹³ William de Skelton 1377;¹¹⁴
 William Snell 1377;¹¹⁵ William Thornhill 1377;¹¹⁶ William Trippelow 1377;¹¹⁷ Peter atte
 Hethe 1377/78;¹¹⁸ Robert Colan/Collom 1378;¹¹⁹ Haukin Fox 1378;¹²⁰ Stephen atte Fryth
 1378;¹²¹ Guerkin Armurer “Doucheman” 1379;¹²² Richard Alfelde 1380;¹²³ Robert
 Cherteseye 1380;¹²⁴ Roger Comptone 1380;¹²⁵ Richard Frensch 1380;¹²⁶ John Morys
 1380;¹²⁷ William Randulf 1380;¹²⁸ John Whyte 1380;¹²⁹ John Hod/Hode/Hood 1381;¹³⁰
 John Burnby 1382;¹³¹ John Herman 1382;¹³² John Culham 1383;¹³³ Thomas Hogecot
 1383;¹³⁴ Richard de Jernemouth 1383;¹³⁵ John Albon 1384;¹³⁶ John Bredestret 1384;¹³⁷

¹⁰² *CPMR ii*, 194.

¹⁰³ *CPMR ii*, 196.

¹⁰⁴ *CCR 1374-1377*, 377.

¹⁰⁵ *CCR 1374-1377*, 313.

¹⁰⁶ *LBH*, 44.

¹⁰⁷ *CFR 1377-1383*, 50-51.

¹⁰⁸ *LBG*, 62.

¹⁰⁹ *LBH*, 62.

¹¹⁰ *LBH*, 62.

¹¹¹ *CCR 1377-1381*, 88.

¹¹² *LBH*, 62.

¹¹³ *CPR 1374-1377*, 458.

¹¹⁴ *CCR 1374-1377*, 516.

¹¹⁵ *CPR 1377-1381*, 61.

¹¹⁶ *CPR 1374-1377*, 458.

¹¹⁷ *LBH*, 62.

¹¹⁸ *LBH*, 66.

¹¹⁹ *CCR 1377-1381*, 206.

¹²⁰ *CCR 1377-1381*, 206.

¹²¹ *LAoN 1301-1431*, 617.

¹²² *CCR 1377-1381*, 260.

¹²³ *LBH*, 152.

¹²⁴ *CCR 1377-1381*, 474.

¹²⁵ *LBH*, 152.

¹²⁶ *LBH*, 152.

¹²⁷ *CPMR ii*, 276.

¹²⁸ *CPMR ii*, 262.

¹²⁹ *CPMR iii*, 66.

¹³⁰ *CPMR ii*, 281.

¹³¹ *CPR 1381-1385*, 133.

¹³² *CPR 1381-1385*, 148.

¹³³ *CPMR iii*, 70.

¹³⁴ *CPMR iii*, 36.

¹³⁵ *CPR 1381-1385*, 208.

¹³⁶ *CPMR iii*, 66.

¹³⁷ *CPMR iii*, 58.

Philip Chipstowe 1384;¹³⁸ Nicholas Doby 1384;¹³⁹ Michael Dundalk 1384;¹⁴⁰ Gerard Furbour 1384;¹⁴¹ John Henham 1384;¹⁴² Richard Kenyngton 1384;¹⁴³ Robert Knyght 1384;¹⁴⁴ William Morys 1384;¹⁴⁵ John Parfay 1384;¹⁴⁶ William Pountefreyt 1384;¹⁴⁷ John Raulyn 1384;¹⁴⁸ John Smyth 1384;¹⁴⁹ John Wylde 1384;¹⁵⁰ Thomas Bokyngham 1385;¹⁵¹ Ralph Burnham 1385;¹⁵² John Sloughter 1386;¹⁵³ Robert Sendale 1387;¹⁵⁴ William Waltham 1387;¹⁵⁵ Roger Choun 1388;¹⁵⁶ John Drusle 1389;¹⁵⁷ John Fosse 1389;¹⁵⁸ Robert Raughton 1389;¹⁵⁹ Henry Reede 1389;¹⁶⁰ Bartholomew Ware 1389;¹⁶¹ William Berfayre 1390;¹⁶² John Creke 1391;¹⁶³ William Broke 1392;¹⁶⁴ Richard Cobald 1392;¹⁶⁵ Richard Pycard 1395;¹⁶⁶ Richard Wyndyn 1395;¹⁶⁷ Reynold Holt 1396;¹⁶⁸ Richard Person 1396;¹⁶⁹ Richard Bedforde 1397;¹⁷⁰ John Ingram 1397;¹⁷¹ Robert Ladde 1397;¹⁷² William Sutton

¹³⁸ *CPMR iii*, 66.

¹³⁹ *CPMR iii*, 66.

¹⁴⁰ *CPMR iii*, 66.

¹⁴¹ *CPMR iii*, 66.

¹⁴² *CPMR iii*, 66.

¹⁴³ *CPMR iii*, 66.

¹⁴⁴ *CPMR iii*, 65.

¹⁴⁵ *CPMR iii*, 65.

¹⁴⁶ *CPMR iii*, 66.

¹⁴⁷ *CPMR iii*, 63.

¹⁴⁸ *CPMR iii*, 66.

¹⁴⁹ *CPMR iii*, 65.

¹⁵⁰ *CPMR iii*, 66.

¹⁵¹ *CPR 1381-1385*, 527.

¹⁵² *CPR 1381-1385*, 563.

¹⁵³ *CPMR iii*, 62.

¹⁵⁴ *CCR 1385-1389*, 318.

¹⁵⁵ *TNA C 241/177/131*.

¹⁵⁶ *CCR 1385-1389*, 599.

¹⁵⁷ *TNA SC 8/224*.

¹⁵⁸ *CCR 1389-1392*, 45.

¹⁵⁹ *CCR 1385-1389*, 662.

¹⁶⁰ *CCR 1385-1389*, 571.

¹⁶¹ *CCR 1389-1392*, 46.

¹⁶² *CCR 1389-1392*, 169.

¹⁶³ *CCR 1389-1392*, 348.

¹⁶⁴ *ParFrat*, 25.

¹⁶⁵ *CCR 1389-1392*, 558.

¹⁶⁶ *CCR 1392-1396*, 411.

¹⁶⁷ *CCR 1392-1396*, 411.

¹⁶⁸ *CCR 1396-1399*, 56.

¹⁶⁹ *CWPH ii*, 340-342.

¹⁷⁰ *CCR 1396-1399*, 90.

¹⁷¹ *CCR 1396-1399*, 279.

¹⁷² *CCR 1396-1399*, 206.

1397;¹⁷³ Richard Taillour 1397;¹⁷⁴ William Whiteby 1398;¹⁷⁵ John Torre 1398/99;¹⁷⁶ Henry Armurer 1399;¹⁷⁷ Matthew Rede 1399.¹⁷⁸

Furbishers: Robert Wardeboys 1299;¹⁷⁹ Anselm the Furbisher 1300;¹⁸⁰ William de Neue 1311/12;¹⁸¹ John de Saxton 1317;¹⁸² Thomas le Fourbour 1319;¹⁸³ William Love 1327/8;¹⁸⁴ Thomas de Norwych 1329;¹⁸⁵ John Mareys 1337;¹⁸⁶ John de Lincoln 1340;¹⁸⁷ John Lyoun 1345;¹⁸⁸ John Peyntour 1350;¹⁸⁹ John Andreu 1351;¹⁹⁰ John Payn 1361/2;¹⁹¹ Richard Bokeler 1365;¹⁹² Robert Berkenshawe 1368;¹⁹³ William Trippelowe 1371;¹⁹⁴ John Whyte 1371;¹⁹⁵ Edward Siende 1374;¹⁹⁶ Geoffrey Boteston 1380;¹⁹⁷ William Thornhill 1381;¹⁹⁸ John Herman 1382;¹⁹⁹ John Scorfeyn 1382;²⁰⁰ Stephen Baynor 1384;²⁰¹ John atte Broke 1395.²⁰²

Haubergers: Roger de Lymynton 1309;²⁰³ John de Cheleseye 1315;²⁰⁴ William le Hauberger 1328;²⁰⁵ William atte Castelle;²⁰⁶ Giles de Colonia 1350;²⁰⁷ Gerard le Hauberger 1363;²⁰⁸ William Morys 1384.²⁰⁹

¹⁷³ *CCR 1396-1399*, 219.

¹⁷⁴ *CCR 1396-1399*, 218.

¹⁷⁵ *CPR 1396-1399*, 389.

¹⁷⁶ *TNA E 163*.

¹⁷⁷ *CCR 1396-1399*, 517-18.

¹⁷⁸ *CCR 1396-1399*, 499.

¹⁷⁹ *LBB*, 1.

¹⁸⁰ *LBB*, 184.

¹⁸¹ *LBB*, 34.

¹⁸² *Mem*, 126.

¹⁸³ *Subs*, 298.

¹⁸⁴ *LBE*, 228.

¹⁸⁵ *CWPH i*, 355.

¹⁸⁶ *LBF*, 24.

¹⁸⁷ *CPMR i*, 126.

¹⁸⁸ *LBF*, 122.

¹⁸⁹ *LBF*, 211.

¹⁹⁰ *LBF*, 236.

¹⁹¹ *LBG*, 135.

¹⁹² *CPMR ii*, 30.

¹⁹³ *CPR 1364-1367*, 315.

¹⁹⁴ *LBG*, 283.

¹⁹⁵ *CPMR ii*, 256.

¹⁹⁶ *CWPH ii*, 164.

¹⁹⁷ *CWPH ii*, 226.

¹⁹⁸ *CPMR ii*, 301.

¹⁹⁹ *CPR 1381-1385*, 148.

²⁰⁰ *CCR 1381-1385*, 113.

²⁰¹ *CCR 1381-1385*, 572.

²⁰² *FoF i*, 147.

²⁰³ *LBD*, 86.

Heaumers: Manekyn le Armurer/Heaumer 1286;²¹⁰ “Mannekynnesmanthearmurer”

1318;²¹¹ Thomas Canun 1330;²¹² Richard Brid 1344;²¹³ John Scot 1364.²¹⁴

Kissers: Walter de Bedefonte 1300; John de Bedefunte 1300; Thomas Bruing 1300;

Geoffrey Canoun 1300; Walter de Chabenham 1300; John Elys 1300; William Fleye 1300;

Adam de Hakeneye 1300; Richard le Kissere 1300; William le Kyng 1300; John de Sancto

Salvatore 1300; John Tilli 1300; Robert Tilli 1300; Senn le Kisser 1300.²¹⁵ John le Kyng

1308/9;²¹⁶ John Adger de Craunford 1309;²¹⁷ James le Kissere de Hestone 1310;²¹⁸

William de Enefeld 1310;²¹⁹ Richard de Erdele 1310;²²⁰ John, son of Richard Nobili de

Mondene 1310;²²¹ John Blaunpayn 1311;²²² Thomas atte Brome 1311;²²³ Thomas le Kyng

1311;²²⁴ Gilbert Lefriche de Bedefont 1311;²²⁵ Ralph atte Brom 1348.²²⁶

²⁰⁴ *FoF i*, 90.

²⁰⁵ *CCR 1327-1330*, 423.

²⁰⁶ *CCR 1346-1349*, 243.

²⁰⁷ *CCR 1349-1354*, 220.

²⁰⁸ *CPR 1361-1364*, 344.

²⁰⁹ *CPMR iii*, 65.

²¹⁰ *LBD*, 143.

²¹¹ *CPR 1317-1321*, 286.

²¹² *LBE*, 247.

²¹³ *CPMR ii*, 210.

²¹⁴ *CPMR ii*, 4.

²¹⁵ All of the above kissers first appear in: *CoEMC 1298-1307*, 61.

²¹⁶ *CWPH i*, 202-203.

²¹⁷ *LBD*, 107.

²¹⁸ *LBD*, 121.

²¹⁹ *LBD*, 136.

²²⁰ *LBD*, 136.

²²¹ *LBD*, 136.

²²² *LBD*, 156.

²²³ *LBD*, 145.

²²⁴ *LBD*, 145.

²²⁵ *LBD*, 156.

²²⁶ *CWPH i*, 523.

Appendix 3: Legend to Parishes in

Figure 4.6¹

Within the Walls:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1: All Hallows, Barking | 25: St. Christopher le Stocks |
| 2: All Hallows, Bread Street | 26: St. Clement Eastcheap |
| 3: All Hallows the Great | 27: St. Dionis Backchurch |
| 4: All Hallows, Honey Lane | 28: St. Dunstan in the East |
| 5: All Hallows the Less | 29: St. Edmund, Lombard Street |
| 6: All Hallows, Lombard Street | 30: St. Ethelburga |
| 7: All Hallows, London Wall | 31: St. Ewen |
| 8: All Hallows, Staining | 32: St. Faith |
| 9: Holy Trinity the Less | 33: St. Gabriel Fenchurch |
| 10: St. Alban Wood Street | 34: St. George, Botolph Lane |
| 11: St. Alphage | 35: St. Gregory by St. Paul's |
| 12: St. Andrew Hubbard | 36: St. Helen, Bishopsgate |
| 13: St. Andrew Undershaft | 37: St. James, Duke's Place |
| 14: St. Andrew by the Wardrobe | 38: St. James Garlickhithe |
| 15: St. Anne Aldersgate | 39: St. John the Baptist |
| 16: St. Anne and St. Agnes | 40: St. John the Evangelist |
| 17: St. Antholin | 41: St. John Zachary |
| 18: St. Augustine | 42: St. Katherine, Coleman Street |
| 19: St. Bartholomew by the Exchange | 43: St. Katherine Cree |
| 20: St. Benet Fink | 44: St. Lawrence Jewry |
| 21: St. Benet Gracechurch | 45: St. Lawrence Pountney |
| 22: St. Benet Paul's Wharf | 46: St. Leonard, Eastcheap |
| 23: St. Benet Sherehog | 47: St. Leonard, Foster Lane |
| 24: St. Botolph Billingsgate | 48: St. Magnus the Martyr |
| | 49: St. Margaret Lothbury |
| | 50: St. Margaret Moyses |
| | 51: St. Margaret, New Fish Street |
| | 52: St. Margaret Patterns |

¹ Davies, "The Tailors of London", 45.

- 53: St. Martin, Ironmonger Lane
- 54: St. Martin, Ludgate
- 55: St. Martin Orgar
- 56: St. Martin Outwich
- 57: St. Martin, Vintry
- 58: St. Mary, Abchurch
- 59: St. Mary Aldermanbury
- 60: St. Mary Aldermary
- 61: St. Mary Bothaw
- 62: St. Mary le Bow
- 63: St. Mary Colechurch
- 64: St. Mary at Hill
- 65: St. Mary Magdalene, Milk Street
- 66: St. Mary Magdalene, Old Fish Street
- 67: St. Mary Mounthaw
- 68: St. Mary Somerset
- 69: St. Mary, Staining
- 70: St. Mary, Woolchurch
- 71: St. Mary, Woolnoth
- 72: St. Matthew, Friday Street
- 73: St. Michael, Bassishaw
- 74: St. Michael, Cornhill
- 75: St. Michael, Crookedlane
- 76: St. Michael, Queenhithe
- 77: St. Michael le Querne
- 78: St. Michael Paternoster
- 79: St. Michael, Wood Street
- 80: St. Mildred, Bread Street
- 81: St. Mildred, Poultry
- 82: St. Nicholas Acon
- 83: St. Nicholas Cole Abbey
- 84: St. Nicholas Olave
- 85: St. Nicholas Shambles
- 86: St Olave, Hart Street
- 87: St. Olave, Old Jewry
- 88: St. Olave, Silver Street
- 89: St. Pancras, Soper Lane
- 90: St. Peter, Westcheap
- 91: St. Peter, Cornhill
- 92: St. Peter, Paul's Wharf
- 93: St. Peter le Poor
- 94: St. Stephen, Coleman Street
- 95: St. Stephen, Walbrook
- 96: St. Swithin
- 97: St. Thomas the Apostle
- 98: St. Vedast, Foster Lane
- Without the Walls**
- 99: St. Andrew, Holborn
- 100: St. Botolph, Aldersgate
- 101: St. Botolph, Aldgate
- 102: St. Botolph, Bishopsgate
- 103: St. Bride, Fleet Street
- 104: St. Dunstan in the West
- 105: St. Giles, Cripplegate
- 106: St. Sepulchre

Appendix 4: Sketch Map of Northampton's Route through London, February 7th

1384

A Note on the Map

This map is an edited version of Marjorie Honeybourne's "A Sketch Map of London in the Time of the Peasant Revolt" found in Ruth Bird's *The Turbulent London of Richard II*, which was primarily a map of the churches at the time.¹ I have mapped Bird and Unwin's accounts for Northampton and Brembre's routes through London during the February 1384 Riots, as well as useful landmarks to the study of the armourers, such as the Guildhall, Armourers' Hall, and Brewers' Hall, and the halls of other important craft and trade groups.

Account of Northampton and Brembre's Routes through London on February 7,

1384²

A: About 500 men of approximately 30 guilds are summoned to meet at St. Mary Le Bow Church, then head west through West Cheap.

B: As Northampton passes through Ludgate, Brembre learns of the gathering in Hoggen Lane.

C: Brembre and four others leave Hoggen Lane to pursue Northampton.

D: Brembre sees the tail end of Northampton's gathering approaching St. Michael Quern, and sends a servant ahead to tell them to stop. The servant catches up to the tail end of the gathering in St. Paul's Churchyard.

E: Northampton and his followers line Fleet Bridge waiting for Brembre.

F: Northampton leads his followers to the Carmelite Church, where they hear mass. When it is over, Brembre attempts to persuade Northampton and his followers to leave the area.

On Northampton's refusal, Brembre arrests Northampton.

¹ Marjorie Honeybourne, "A Sketch Map of London in the Time of the Peasant Revolt", *The Turbulent London of Richard II*, by Ruth Bird (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1949). Details added are from: W.H. Johns, "City of London c.1520 Maps 1-4", *The City of London*, ed. Mary Lobel (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989); and *HGL*, "St. Mary le Bow 104/25-7", 326-332, accessed April 24, 2015, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=1540>.

² Bird, *Turbulent London*, 83; Unwin, *Gilds*, 150-151.

Abbreviations:

Aldermen: Alfred Beaven, *The Aldermen of the City of London, Temp Henry III – 1908* (London: Eden Fisher & Company, 1908).

CCR [Date Range]: *Calendar of Close Rolls Preserved in the Public Record Office, Edward I, Volume 5, A.D. 1302-1307* (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1908), through to *Calendar of Close Rolls Preserved in the Public Record Office, Henry IV, Volume 2, A.D. 1402-1405* (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1929).

CoEMC: *Calendar of Early Mayor's Court Rolls: 1298-1307*, ed. A.H. Thomas (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1924).

CIMC iv: *Calendar of Inquisitions Miscellaneous (Chancery) Preserved in the Public Record Office, Volume IV; 1377-1388* (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1957).

CFR [Date Range]: *Calendar of the Fine Rolls Preserved in the Public Record Office, Volume 8, Edward III, A.D. 1368-1377*, through to *Calendar of the Fine Rolls Preserved in the Public Record Office, Volume 9, Richard II, A.D. 1377-1383* (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1924-1926).

CIPM i, ii: *Calendar of Inquisitions Post Mortem, Volumes 1 & 2*, ed., J.E.E.S. Sharp (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1904-1906).

CPR [Date Range]: *Calendar of the Patent Rolls Preserved in the Public Record Office, Edward I, Volume 4, A.D. 1301-1307*, through to *Calendar of the Patent Rolls Preserved in the Public Record Office, Volume 19, Henry VI, A.D. 1452-1461* (London: Her/His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1898-1939).

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