Boundaries of Belonging in Early Modern London, 1550-1700

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Abstract

Citizenship in early modern London has been studied from a rich body of corporate records, but rarely has the freedom of the City been explored from the vantage of those on the peripheries of corporate culture. This thesis employs a wide range of sources outside company archives to offer a more inclusive understanding of how Londoners conceptualised and constituted civic freedoms in London, roughly between 1550 and 1700. Employing several 'edge' groups as case studies, this thesis proposes a new way of thinking about men and women's work outside the traditional sphere of livery companies and guilds.

The individuals and groups that comprise this study were not citizens nor outsiders; their status in the City was somewhere betwixt and between the political, economic and cultural boundaries of what it meant to be a Londoner in the early modern period. Chapters 1-3 investigate the quasi-free fellowships of carmen, porters and watermen to argue that these occupations were comprised of a complex and diverse range of individuals who actively participated in civic politics. Although they were large economic groups, they have been overlooked in favour of 'formal' companies in the City. Chapter 4 explores petitions signed by working women to demonstrate that they engaged in the 'male' domain of civic politics to gain admission to the freedom, and/or obtain economic rights traditionally granted to freemen. A closer examination of the different ways these groups and individuals negotiated rights and privileges in civic culture reveals a political process that worked both downwards and upwards. Taken together, this thesis argues that the permeability of civic culture has been significantly underestimated.

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In loving memory of my mother.

Acknowledgements

Author's declaration

I declare that this thesis is a presentation of original work and I am the sole author. This work has not previously been presented for an award at this, or any other, University. All sources are acknowledged as references.

A note on the text

In all titles and quotations of contemporary works, original spelling has been preserved (with the exception that *u's* and *v's, 'i's and 'j's,* and long *s's* have been regularised). However, all in-text abbreviations have been expanded for ease of clarification (i.e. 'w^ch' has been lengthened to 'which,' 'y^e' to 'the,' etc.). All dates have been modernised.

Introduction

Citizenship, known to contemporaries as the freedom of the City, has been called 'the defining marker of belonging' in early modern London.[1] The earliest documented use of the term 'citizen' was in 1314, though 'citizenship' was not recorded until the seventeenth century.[2] The theory and practices of pre-modern citizenship were peculiar to cities and towns. In England, the term 'freeman'—first recorded in 1387—referred to the inhabitants of a city or town who possessed the rights, privileges and responsibilities of a civic corporation.[3] In London, the Freedom was a commercial privilege to practice trade in the City without financial penalty. It also allowed freemen to engage in civic politics. Non-free Londoners were restricted from the economic and political communities of the City. Amid the accolades in *Londons Praise, or the Glory of the City*, the ballad issues a warning to outsiders:

> Unto themselves a Charter free,
> this wealthy City holds,
> All that have Freedom there to be,
> The chamberlain enrolls.
> No Forraigner can set up there,
> their Orders are so strong
> In shop they must sell no ware,
> Least they the Free-men wrong.[4]

In early modern England, a City's power was predicated upon a royal charter of incorporation. A royal charter was based on a legal formula that was more or less uniform by the seventeenth century. Its basic content outlined the economic and political rights of the city or town, including the freedom to empanel their own juries, choose their own Justices of the Peace and parliamentary representatives, and convene their own civic courts

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[1] Jacob Selwood, *Diversity and Difference in Early Modern London* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), 100.

[2] 'citizen, n. and adj.,' *OED Online* (Oxford University Press), accessed February 4, 2016, http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/33513?rskey=Qlsj7j&result=1&isAdvanced=false.

[3] 'freeman, n.,' *OED Online* (Oxford University Press), accessed February 4, 2016, http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/74415?redirectedFrom=freeman#eid.

[4] [Thomas Jordan], *Londons Praise, or the Glory of the City* [1666-1690]. All early modern texts were published in London, unless otherwise noted.

for a variety of suits, including the trespass of foreigners.[5] According to William Sheppard's 'A Discourse of Corporations,' the *raison d'etre* of a civic corporation was its ability to act collectively for political purposes, to admit their own members and raise funds from them, and to 'make lawes and ordinances tochinge' their common activities 'whereunto euery member of the same is subject.'[6]

Corporations were peopled by freemen. There were three main ways to become a freeman of London: 1) completing a seven-year apprenticeship in the City; 2) claiming patrimony; and 3) petitioning the Court of Aldermen, the central governing body in London, by redemption, or purchase. Rappaport suggests that nine out of ten freemen in the City became free through apprenticeship from 1530-1609.[7] It was a time consuming and costly process. After completing a seven-year indenture under a freeman of one of the City's liveries or guilds, he—and rarely, she—swore an oath in front of the livery's ruling group and became 'free' of that company. Soon after, the new member and his/her late master, as well as one of the company wardens, walked to the Guildhall where he/she swore another oath and became a freeman of London.[8]

All freemen had to be enrolled with the City Chamberlain, which cost 2*s*. 6*d*., plus 4*d*. to the clerk.[9] This practice originated in the late-thirteenth century when London's civic government designed a centralised register of apprenticeships and freedom admissions.[10] Individual companies also had their own fees. The 1531 Act of Parliament that established the cap on enrolment fees also limited company freedom admissions to 3*s*. 4*d*. for new members.[11] Regardless, the cost of an apprenticeship in terms of the premium paid to a master could be much higher depending upon the profitability and status of the trade— anywhere from a few pounds to several hundred.[12] Nonetheless, the costs required in other

[5] Phil Withington, *The Politics of Commonwealth: Freemen and Citizens in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 8-12.

[6] William Sheppard, *A Discourse of Corporations* (1659), 136-137.

[7] In sixteen companies, 85-90 per cent became free by apprenticeship, see Steve Rappaport, *Worlds Within Worlds: Structures of Life in Sixteenth-Century London* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 292.

[8] For a full breakdown of this process, see Rappaport, *Worlds within Worlds*, 23-24.

[9] Patrick Wallis, 'Labor, Law, and Training in Early Modern London: Apprenticeship and the City's Institutions,' *Journal of British Studies* 51, no. 4 (2012): 803.

[10] Derek Keene, 'English Urban Guilds, c. 900-1300: the Purposes and Politics of Association,' in *Guilds Society & Economy in London 1450-1800*, ed. Ian Anders Gadd and Patrick Wallis (London: Centre for Metropolitan History, 2002), 19.

[11] Rappaport, *Worlds Within Worlds*, 47-48.

[12] Christopher Brooks, 'Apprenticeship, Social mobility and the Middling Sort, 1550-1800,' in *The Middling Sort of People*, ed. Jonathan Barry and Christopher Brooks, (Houndsmills,

routes to citizenship were not much cheaper. Redemption could charge as much as £20, averaging around £11-12 in the mid-sixteenth century. On top of this fee, admission by redemption cost a man or woman several more pounds in fees or 'gifts' to his/her company.[13]

As *Londons Praise* elucidates above, the concept and daily practices of the freedom were as much about barriers as opportunities. The non-free population was often divided into two groups: strangers and foreigners. Strangers were immigrants from other countries, including the extensively studied French and Dutch communities in the City.[14] Foreigners were native-born English inhabitants who migrated and/or traded in London without the freedom. By 1650, London's high mortality rate joined with its low birth rate demanded an influx of 8,000 new inhabitants annually to sustain its growth. Most of these new arrivals were English migrants from outside the City.[15]

London was the land of opportunity for English migrants hoping to follow in the mythical footsteps of Dick Whittington. However, his rags-to-riches tale of a runaway apprentice-turned-Lord Mayor was a far cry from the difficult realities that faced aspiring freemen.[16] Belonging in London needed to be earned. According to *Londons Praise*:

> A country Boy comes up to town
> Perhaps no cloathes to his back:
> Nor to one creature there is known,
> yet he need never lack:
> If that he be just and true,
> and have an honest face,
> And willing any work to do,

Hampshire: Macmillian Press, 1994), 60; Chris Minns and Patrick Wallis have found that premiums were not as high as traditional estimates, see 'The Price of Human Capital in a Pre-Industrial Economy: Premiums and Apprenticeship Contracts in 18th Century England,' *Explorations in Economic History* 50, no. 3 (2013): 335-350.

[13] Rappaport, *Worlds Within Worlds*, 292.

[14] The study of strangers in early modern London has produced many insightful publications; see, for example, Andrew Pettegree, *Foreign Protestant Communities in Sixteenth-Century London* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986); Laura Hunt Yungblut, *'Strangers Settled Here Amongst Us': Policies, Perceptions and the Presence of Aliens in Elizabeth England* (London: Routledge, 1996); Lien Bich Luu, *Immigrants and the Industries of London, 1500-1700* (London: Routledge, 2005); Nigel Goose and Lien Bich Luu, eds., *Immigrants in Tudor and Early Stuart England* (Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2005); Selwood, *Diversity and Difference in Early Modern London*.

[15] E.A. Wrigley, 'A Simple Model of London's Importance in Changing English Society and Economy, 1650-1750,' *Past & Present* 37 (1967): 46.

[16] James Robertson, 'The Adventures of Dick Whittington and the Social Construction of Elizabethan London,' in *Guilds Society & Economy in London 1450-1800*, ed. Ian Anders Gadd and Patrick Wallis (London: Centre for Metropolitan History, 2002), 51-66.

<div align="center">he need not want a place.[17]</div>

Migration to London did not a Londoner make. As Robertson points out, young men—and women—would soon discover that one's 'place' in the City was fundamentally linked to one's occupation.[18] City membership in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was guarded by elaborate barriers set by London's livery companies and guilds. This authority was granted much earlier in the 1319 City charter, which made craft guilds the custodians of the City economy.[19] By the end of the fourteenth century, the power of craft guilds was granted by royal charter. Like a civic corporation, an incorporated company possessed a higher degree of independence, including the right to elect their own leaders and hold property in perpetuity.[20] They also were able to regulate the market through apprenticeships, search (inspection of goods), and other forms of corporate control.[21] Royal charters were coveted in London's corporate culture. As Richardson concisely states, they 'were necessary for trade organisations to exist as a 'company' than merely a 'fraternity.'[22] Company regulations were guided by the Custom of the City and enforced by various civic bodies, namely the Court of Aldermen and Court of Common Council. Civic custom shaped Londoners' understanding of their City. As the author of *A breefe discourse declaring and approving the necessaries and inviolable maintenance of the laudable customs of London* asked in 1584: 'For what is a citie but a manifold and joynt societie consisting of many housholdes, and living under the same Lawes, freedomes and franchises?'[23]

Yet, for historians, the study of urban boundaries in all its forms—political, economic, cultural, spatial—poses several analytical problems, not least in what is meant by 'London.' It is important to consider, for instance, that what contemporaries perceived as 'the City'—the urban area within the walls—and 'the city'—the five, ten or even twenty-mile suburban radius outside—changed drastically throughout the period. From 1550 to

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[17] *Londons Praise*.

[18] Robertson, 'The Adventures of Dick Whittington,' 51-66.

[19] Barbara Hanawalt, *Ceremony and Civility: Civic Culture in Late Medieval London* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2017), 34-35; see also, Caroline Barron, *London in the Later Middle Ages: Government and People 1200-1500* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 199-237.

[20] Malcolm Richardson, *Middle-Class Writing in Late Medieval London* (London: Routledge, 2015), 40; 61-65.

[21] Gadd and Wallis, ed., 'Introduction,' in *Guilds, Society and Economy in London*, 1-14.

[22] Richardson, *Middle-Class Writing*, 64.

[23] *A breefe discourse, declaring and approving the necessaries and inviolable maintenance of the laudable customs of London* (1584), 4.

1700, London's population grew exponentially. In 1550, there were roughly 70,000 Londoners in the City. By 1600, the population spilled outside the walls, tripling to number 200,000 in the City and suburbs. This number almost doubled again over the next fifty years to 375,000 in 1650. By 1700, an estimated 575,000 Londoners lived in the City and suburbs.[24]

Londons Praise uses the terms 'just,' 'true' and 'honest' to define those worthy of belonging in the City. The phrase 'willing any work to do' ambiguously suggests either manual labour or apprenticeship. On one hand, these qualities fit well with the humanist tradition of citizenship that expected members of the City commonwealth to emulate the virtues of *honestas*: honesty, fitness, wisdom and civility.[25] In formal trades, these traits were expressed in fair-dealing, profitable income, and technical skill within one's mystery or craft.[26] On the other hand, such qualities also met with the broader Christian ideology that valorised manual labour as a virtuous way to make ends meet.[27] Individuals who financially maintained themselves and their families by honest labour could claim a form of social standing in lieu of their poverty by establishing good 'credit' and 'honour.'[28] The language

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[24] Paul Griffiths, *Lost Londons: Change, Crime, and Control in the Capital City, 1550-1660* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 1-2; Roger Finlay and Beatrice Shearer, 'Population Growth and Suburban Expansion,' in *London 1500-1700: The Making of the Metropolis,* ed. A.L. Beier and Roger Finlay (Harlow, Essex: Longman Group, 1986), 37-59; Roger Finlay, *Population and Metropolis: The Demography of London 1580-1650* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), chapter 3; Vanessa Harding, 'The Population of London, 1550-1700: a Review of the Published Evidence,' *London Journal* 15, no. 2 (1990): 111-128; Chris Minns, et al., 'The Scale and Scope of Citizenship in Early Modern Europe: Preliminary Estimates,' (unpublished paper, bEu Citizen Project, 2014), work package 3.

[25] Withington, *The Politics of Commonwealth*, esp. 118; see also, Jonathan Barry, 'Urban Identity and the Middling Sort in Early-Modern England,' *Annales-Economies Societies Civilisatons* 48, no. 4 (1993), 853-883; Jonathan Barry, 'Bourgeois Collectivism? Urban Association and the Middling Sort,' in *The Middling Sort of People: Culture, Society and Politics in England, 1550-1800*, ed. Jonathan Barry and Chris Brooks (London: Macmillan Press, 1994), 84-112.

[26] Brooks, 'Apprenticeship, Social mobility and the Middling Sort,' 77.

[27] I am wary of using Max Weber's term 'protestant work ethic' to describe the virtues of labour that were endorsed by early modern Protestantism as it has been used somewhat haphazardly to describe the religious discourse of the period as a growing movement toward profiteering and capitalist self-aggrandisement. For a full discussion of the problems that arise with these assumptions, see Brodie Waddell, *God, Duty and Community in English Economic Life, 1660-1720* (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell Press, 2012), chapter 1.

[28] Alexandra Shepard, *Accounting for Oneself: Worth, Status and the Social Order in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), chapters 4 and 5; Steve Hindle, *On the Parish? The micro-politics of Poor Relief in Rural England c. 1550-1750* (Oxford,

and rhetorics associated with civic culture—honesty, industry, fitness, economic solvency—intersected in several discourses that straddled the boundaries between the 'formal' craft of tradesmen and the 'informal' work of labourers in the early modern period.

Londons Praise was printed sometime between 1666 and 1690.[29] It has been attributed to Thomas Jordan who was City laureate and pageant writer from 1671-1685.[30] Owen suggests that he was 'sensitive' to the tumultuous political climate that accompanied the Restoration period from the 1660s to 1680s. As a proponent of Whig values, his work exemplified an 'enduring commitment' to sovereignty, trade, and the City government.[31] It is not surprising, then, that the ballad claims that 'The worl'd [is] so wicked now adays' that Londoners are fortunate to have 'good substantial men […] to regulate mens ways.' Indeed, Jordan intimates a paternalistic protection of urban consumerism:

> If Bakers bread do prove too light,
> believe me what I say,
> My Lord Mayor puts them in a fright
> and takes their bread away […]
>
> The Ale-wives though they nick & froth,
> Their Pots must hold a quart,
> The swearers if they swear an Oath,

Oxford University Press, 2004), chapters 2 and 6; Waddell, *God, Duty and Community*, chapters 1 and 2.

[29] Dating the ballad is problematic. Scott Oldenburg suggests that Shakespeare might have come across it on his way into London, but this would have been impossible as the ballad mentions the Civil Wars in a subsequent stanza, see *Alien Albion: Literature and Immigration in Early Modern England* (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 2014), 146-7. More likely, *English Broadside Ballad Archive* (http://eeba.english.ucsb.edu) suggests the ballad was printed sometime between 1673 to 1690. Hyder Rollins attributed the ballad to Thomas Jordan (1614-1685) and suggested its publication in 1685. However, this would place it after London's charter was revoked by Charles II, making the opening line of the first cited verse a bit redundant, see *The Pepys Ballads, Volume 3 1666-1688* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1929), 218-222. I am hesitant to incorporate the ballad as part of the wider politics of the Charter Controversy because, as Rollins points out, a similar ballad that contains eight stanzas of near-identical verses (though slightly more satirical) was anonymously printed within Benjamin Rudyerd's collection of poems, *Le Prince D'Amour*, much earlier in 1660 and 1669. Angela McShane includes the ballad in her annotated bibliography, dating it between 1666 and 1675, but does not situate it within a particular political event, see *Political Broadside Ballads of Seventeenth-Century England: A Critical Bibliography* (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2011), 233-4.

[30] Rollins, *The Pepys Ballads, Volume 3 1666-1688*, 218-22.

[31] Susan J. Owen, *Restoration Theatre and Crisis* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 299; see also, Lynn Hulse, 'Jordan, Thomas (c. 1614-1685),' *ODNB*, accessed 11 August, 2018, https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/15122.

Their Purses must pay for't.[32]

The Lord Mayor and the Aldermen methodically policed the City economy: even bakers' bread and alewives' pints were weighed and sized to meet City standards. Moral behaviour was closely regulated too; London's tongues were closely monitored to ensure the civility of the City population.[33] The ballad's commendation of the strength and vitality of civic culture and corporate control complicates the traditional view that pinpoints the late seventeenth century as the period that witnessed its decline. The combined effects of suburban growth, the disruption caused by the Civil Wars and subsequent Interregnum, the Great Fire of 1666, and the London Charter Controversy are commonly utilised in twentieth-century literature to showcase the disintegration of economic regulation in the City and suburbs, and thus, the demise of London's livery companies and guilds by 1700.[34]

In some respects, this certainly was the case. Rappaport estimated that three-quarters of the adult male population in London entered the freedom in 1550 (75.1 per cent). However, this percentage drops to less than a quarter (21 per cent) when the entire City population is taken into account.[35] There was a small surge between 1675-1680 after City leaders relaxed the entry requirements to the freedom in an attempt to repopulate the square mile after the Great Fire.[36] Nonetheless, it is estimated that by 1700 the number of London

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[32] *Londons Praise*.

[33] The phrase 'the swearers if they swear an Oath' may also refer to the controversy between Tory and Whig supporters regarding covenants and oaths of association, especially the Solemn League and Covenant that remained a heated issue well into the 1680s. For more on Restoration politics of Oath-taking and its link to corporate office-holding in London, see Edward Vallance, *Revolutionary England and the National Covenant: State Oaths, Protestantism, and the Political Nation, 1533-1682* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2005), 179-99.

[34] For a detailed analysis of the historiography of guild decline, see Michael Berlin, 'Guilds in Decline? London Livery Companies and the Rise of a Liberal Economy, 1600-1800,' in *Guilds, Innovation and the European Economy, 1400-1800*, ed. S.R. Epstein and Maarten Prak (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 316-343.

[35] Rappaport, *Worlds Within Worlds*, 52-53. Historians have misquoted Rappaport to claim that three-fourths of 'Londoners' were citizens, though this number, as Rappaport states, was much lower when taking in the 'total population' of London. For example, see Withington, *The Politics of Commonwealth*, p. 30.

[36] LMA, COL/CC/01/01/47, f. 254b. J.R. Kellett estimates that this five-year period saw an increase of 10,000 freemen admissions, see 'The Breakdown of Gild and Corporation Control over the Handicraft and Retail Trade in London,' *The Economic History Review*, New Series 10, no. 3 (1958): 383.

freemen had plummeted to less than five percent of the total population.[37] It is worth emphasising, however, that London's citizenry were always a minority in early modern London. Although 'freeman' and citizen' have been employed interchangeably by both contemporaries and historians, there were subtle differences. The term 'freeman' denoted access to the economic privileges enjoyed by all members of urban corporations in England.[38] The title of 'Citizen,' however, usually implied additional public status and responsibilities in the civic commonwealth.[39] Despite gradations in status, both freemen and citizens of London were meant to be active participants in the City's political culture.

Boundaries

Many new residents settled inside and outside the City walls. They needed places to live and work, and new buildings were erected to accommodate them. Non-freemen and their families tended to live in the suburbs and liberties where they could eke out a living outside the Lord Mayor's jurisdiction. Most new growth was thus in extramural areas where rents were normally cheaper.[40] In these unregulated spaces, unchecked building and overcrowding did not go unnoticed. As early as 1598, Stow reminisced about London's once 'pleasant fields with wholesome air' that were now 'fully replenished with buildings outward, & pestered with diverse Allyes.'[41] As Harding has shown, these physical and material changes strongly affected contemporary perceptions and experiences of 'London.'[42]

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[37] Chris Minns, et al., 'The scale and scope of citizenship in early modern Europe: Preliminary estimates,' (working paper, bEu Citizen Project, 2014), work package 3.

[38] Iain Hampsher-Monk, 'Liberty and citizenship in early modern political discourse,' in *Freedom and the Construction of Europe*, ed. Quentin Skinner and Martin van Gelderen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013) 2: 107.

[39] Withington, *Politics of Commonwealth*, 10. In this study, the term 'freeman' will be used to signify Londoners who possessed the Freedom of the City. The term 'Citizen' will only be employed to refer to an individual if it can be ascertained that he/she attained that status. However, 'citizen' and its associated modifiers will be employed more broadly in discussions of the general characteristics and virtues that members of the Freedom were meant to possess.

[40] Vanessa Harding, 'City, Capital, and Metropolis: The Changing Shape of Seventeenth-century London,' in *Imagining Early Modern London: Perceptions & Portrayals of the City from Stow to Strype 1598-1720,* ed. J.F. Merritt (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 124.

[41] John Stow, *Survey of London*, 1: 127. Quoted from Harding, 'City, Capital, and Metropolis,' 121.

[42] Harding, 'City, Capital, and Metropolis,' 117-143; see also Matthew Davies, 'City and Suburbs: 1400-1700,' in *Evolução da Paisagem Urbana: Cidade e Periferia*, ed. Maria do Carmo Ribeiro and Arnaldo Sousa Melo (Porto, Portugal: CITCEM, 2014), 205-228; Rachel Ramsay, 'The Language of Urbanization in John Stow's *Survey of London*,'

The chaotic changes to the built environment in the City and suburbs was in direct opposition to civic magistrates' conceptions of 'good order,' and new buildings were closely linked to the host of social problems that accompanied rapid population growth. In 1610, several proposals were made to the Crown to regulate new buildings in the suburbs and, more radically, create a separate suburban corporation to mirror the jurisdiction of London. The writers claimed:

> there hath and daylie doth repayre from all
> partes of your highnes Realme men of divers
> Severall trades and Sciences which have not
> served anye Apprentishipp neither have skyll
> in their Trades and yet shrowde them selves
> neere the citye both keepinge shoppes and
> usinge Trades as well openly as pryvatlie,
> thereby greatly hurtinge as well the ancient
> Inhabitants which dwell nere the citie and
> have duely served apprenctishippe, as the
> Inhabitantes and companyes of the said
> citye.[43]

The proposals were likely the product of wealthy individuals who wanted to monopolise revenue from suburban trade—at least four individuals associated with the aristocracy were mentioned as potential 'overseers.'[44] To lobby their scheme, the proposal writers linked unregulated building with the migration of 'multitudes of Lewde people' and 'deceitfull workmen,' which they claimed to severely damage the privileges and protections of the freedom.[45] These were weighty words. Some years later in 1632, the Aldermen petitioned Whitehall for aid because they had grown anxious that the freedom, 'once of very great

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Philological Quarterly 85, no. 3-4 (2006): 247-270; Michael Power, 'Shadwell: The Development of a London Suburban Community in the Seventeenth Century,' *London Journal* 4, no. 1 (1978): 29-46.

[43] BL, Lansdowne MS 92, f. 26

[44] William Waad, Thomas Challoner, Walter Cope and Nicolas Lusher were named as men 'who we esteeme to be very fytt men for this imployment,' see BL, Lansdowne MS 92, f. 26. While their social backgrounds are only partially clear, it is likely they were elite patrons of the Court. Waad was mentored by William Cecil, and later held several prominent posts throughout his life, including Lieutenant of the Tower from 1603-1613. Cope also rose to prominence through his friendship with the Cecil family, and became a close favourite of James I after his succession. In 1609, a year before the petition was written, he was made chamberlain of the exchequer, see Gary M. Bell, 'Waad, Sir William (1546-1623),' *ODNB*, accessed December 8, 2014, https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/28364; Elizabeth Allen, 'Cope, Sir Walter (1553? – 1614),' *ODNB*, accessed December 8, 2015, https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/6257.

[45] BL, Lansdowne MS 160, f. 96.

esteem is [now] growne to be of little worth,' degraded by the 'multitudes' of new buildings and 'great numbers' of 'foreigners' who practiced trade in the suburbs without first serving an apprenticeship.[46]

In the minds of many seventeenth-century Londoners, there was an inexorable link between unregulated growth and the undoing of the City freedom. The wider rhetorics of overpopulation and disorder that accompanied this view have fanned the flames of two distinct—albeit overlapping—historiographies in twentieth-century scholarship. The first of these understands the decline of the freedom in the seventeenth century through the inability of guilds to cope with the pressures of economic change. This view was first promulgated by eighteenth and early-nineteenth-century followers of Adam Smith and became widely accepted by subsequent historical generations.[47] At the start of the twentieth century, Unwin's *The Gilds and Companies of London* interpreted the rise of trade unions in the late seventeenth century as the result of the growing proto-industrial economy, made feasible through the expanding sites of production outside the corporate guild structure.[48] Later twentieth-century historiography has perpetuated his chronology. In successive studies, London's companies and guilds are pictured as old-fashioned, backward-thinking opponents of technological advancement, or what Porter called 'capitalist realities.'[49]

Following the cue of contemporary Londoners, historians have attributed this process to the growing number of non-free migrants in the City and suburbs. As Rappaport suggests:

> By the close of the seventeenth century […] the freedom lost much of its meaning and the system of privileges based upon it collapsed. Though important political rights remained beyond their grasp, foreigners and strangers became *de facto* if not *de jure* citizens of London.[50]

He was not the first to make such claims. Earlier, Kellett pointed to the 1610 suburban reform proposals to conclude that contemporaries had a 'precise and accurate awareness of the problems facing the City.'[51] Due to the failure of guilds to curb the retail practices of

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[46] TNA, PC 2/42 ff. 305-6.
[47] Berlin, 'Guilds in Decline?,' 317-318.
[48] George Unwin, *The Gilds and Companies of London* (London: Methuen, 1908), 348-350.
[49] Roy Porter, *London: A Social History* (London: Penguin, 2000), 11. For the opposing viewpoint, see Mark Jenner, 'Guildwork,' in *Guilds, Society and Economy*, 163-170; Berlin, 'Guilds in Decline?,' 317-318.
[50] Rappaport, *Worlds Within Worlds*, 60.
[51] Kellett, 'Breakdown of Gild and Corporation Control,' 381-382.

foreigners in the suburbs, as well as restrict the practices of handicraftsmen who had not completed a City apprenticeship, he argued:

> There can […] be no doubt that by the end of the
> sixteenth century the gilds' control over entry to
> London's crafts and industries had been seriously
> weakened by the rapid extension of the built-up
> area around the square mile of the Old City and by
> the growth of suburban population.[52]

Nonetheless, he went on to demonstrate some of the ways City companies were able to reinvigorate their regulatory powers in the Georgian period, pointing to the Acts of Common Council in 1712 and 1750 that sharpened restrictions of non-free labour.[53] However, Kellett interpreted these attempts as mere acts of postponement. Following his predecessors, he concluded that the eventual breakdown of the corporate system was inevitable.

Subsequent work has continued to complicate linear trajectories of decline by drawing our attention to the heterogeneity of the corporate system. Looking at the activities of the Clockmakers', Spectaclemakers', and Weavers' companies, Berlin demonstrated that certain guilds were able regulate the economic functions of their trade well into the eighteenth century.[54] In a broader investigation, Ward explored the attempts of the Grocers' and Weavers' companies 'to evolve in response to the economic and social change' both within and without the City's walls. Although his argument is somewhat obscured in his attempt to construct a 'metropolitan-wide' identity, his suggestion that certain companies were able to cope with the growing suburbs is persuasive.[55]

While it is important to avoid overgeneralised conjectures of 'decline,' it is clear that the freedom in 1700 was different to the freedom in 1550. Despite a gradual weakening of economic regulation, historians have demonstrated that the corporate system in London was far more multifaceted than searches and fines. Exploring the daily practices of City companies in the Tudor period, Archer and Rappaport highlighted the social vitality of London's guilds, including the significance of feasting, charity, and other community-

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[52] Kellett, 'Breakdown of Gild and Corporation Control,' 381-382.
[53] Kellett, 381-394. For a broader analysis, See Michael Walker, 'The Extent of Guild Control of Trades in England, c. 1660-1820' (Ph.D. thesis, Cambridge University, 1986).
[54] Michael Berlin, 'Broken all in pieces:' Artisans and the Regulation of Workmanship in early modern London,' in *The Artisan and the European Town, 1500-1900*, ed. Geoffrey Crossick (Farnham: Ashgate, 1997), 75-91.
[55] Joseph Ward, *Metropolitan Communities: Trade, Guilds, Identity and Change in Early Modern London* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1997), 3.

building practices.[56] These socio-cultural aspects of the corporate system lasted well into the eighteenth century. For example, Riello demonstrated that the Cordwainers' Company was able to maintain a strong influence over its members through its relationship with individual household economies.[57] Gauci also highlighted the vibrant sociability companies offered in the early eighteenth century, in which guild affiliation served as an important cultural identifier of reputation and status.[58] As Gadd and Wallis aptly sum: 'What companies actually *did* changed constantly over the centuries.'[59] These studies suggest that although the economic functions were less important at the end of the seventeenth century, other equally important functions came to the fore.

Contemporary anxieties toward the changing size and shape of London produced another enduring historiographic legacy: the controversy about the relative stability or crisis in early modern London. The latter camp, headed by Beier, Clark, and Slack in the late 1970s and 1980s, likened seventeenth-century London to the 'ghettoes' of twentieth-century Calcutta. They argued that that the City was unable to cope with its expanding population and the associated social problems of vagrancy, food riots, and episodes of popular violence.[60] Writing around the same time, Pearl called this the 'doom and gloom' perspective, and instead imagined a City that 'proved stable' in contrast to 'the haphazard, sometimes chaotic conditions' of the suburbs.[61] Rappaport followed Pearl's lead, suggesting that London's corporate institutions encouraged upward mobility for its male inhabitants, which bolstered the City's stability through the participation of its citizens.[62] In 1991, Archer qualified the debate by emphasising the City's 'pursuit' of stability from one day to the next. Focusing on the cohesiveness of the City elite in the 1590s, he argued that crisis—

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[56] Archer, *Pursuit of Stability*, 111-24; Rappaport, *Worlds Within Worlds*, 184-201.

[57] Giorgio Riello, 'The Shaping of a Family Trade: The Cordwainers' Company in Eighteenth-Century London,' in *Guilds, Society and Economy*, ed. Gadd and Wallis, 141-162.

[58] Perry Gauci, 'Informality and Influence: The Overseas Merchant and the Livery Companies, 1660-1720,' in *Guilds, Society, and Economy*, ed. Gadd and Wallis, 127-140.

[59] Gadd and Wallis, ed., 'Introduction,' 9.

[60] A.L. Beier, 'Social Problems in Elizabethan London,' *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 9, no. 2 (1978): 203-221; Peter Clark and Paul Slack, eds., *Crisis and Order in English Towns, 1500-1700* (London: Routledge, 1973); Peter Clark and Paul Slack, *English Towns in Transition, 1500-1700* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1976); Peter Clark, 'A Crisis Contained? The Condition of English Towns in the 1590s,' in *The European Crisis of the* 1590s, ed. Peter Clark (London: Allen and Unwin, 1985), 44-67.

[61] Valerie Pearl, 'Change and Stability in Seventeenth-Century London,' *London Journal* 5, no. 1 (1979): 6.

[62] Rappaport, *Worlds Within Worlds*, esp. 363-377.

while very much a persistent threat—was largely avoided through a balance of charitable social policy and crime policing.[63]

The Achilles heel of the debate is intrinsic to its overall aim: is it possible to measure a City's 'stability' or 'instability?' Both sides of the debate use sources that were intentionally manufactured to serve a purpose. The 'crises' that Beier, Clark and Slack described were lifted directly from contemporary conversations that utilised urgent rhetorics to incite a response—such as the 1610 proposals above. Conversely, livery records, used earnestly by Rappaport and Pearl, were 'commissioned' by companies to project harmonious brotherhood and well-oiled machines.[64] Scholars have demonstrated that Londoners were remarkably equivocal in their conceptions of the City.[65] Inevitable falsehoods emerge when historians attempt to reconstruct social reality from the ambivalent attitudes of City elites, and ignore the rhetorics and languages that guided their perceptions of the capital over time. Without denying the very real problems that accompanied drastic population growth, the surviving records available to historians were constituted within a highly politicised setting meant to accomplish particular ends.[66] Griffiths's recent monograph focuses instead upon the language used to talk about vagrancy and petty crime in the City, arguing that the rhetorical strategies of magistrates tell us less about the reality of crisis or stability in early modern London, and more how magistrates made sense of the City as it experienced dramatic change throughout the period.[67]

Londoners commonly expressed their concerns over unregulated growth and overpopulation through demands to fortify the City's economic boundaries. Focusing upon the 1580s and 1590s, Archer found a marked increase in livery companies' agitation against

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[63] Archer, *The Pursuit of Stability*, introduction.
[64] For company politics of record-keeping, see Jennifer Bishop, 'The Clerk's Tale: Civic Writing in Sixteenth-Century London,' *Past and Present* 230 (2016): 112-130. For tensions within guilds, see Archer, *The Pursuit of Stability*, chapter four.
[65] For more on the ambivalent attitudes of contemporaries, see Peter Lake, 'From Troynouvant to Heliogabulus's Rome and back: 'Order' and its Others in the London of John Stow,' in *Imagining Early Modern London* (2001), 217-249; Griffths, *Lost Londons*, introduction; Slack 'Perceptions of the Metropolis in Seventeenth-Century England,' in *Civil Histories: Essays Presented to Keith Thomas*, ed. Peter Burke, et. al. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 161-180.
[66] Mark S.R. Jenner and Paul Griffiths, 'Introduction,' in *Londinopolis: Essays in the Cultural and Social History of Early Modern London*, ed. Griffiths and Jenner (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), 7.
[67] Griffiths, *Lost Londons*, esp. chapter one.

strangers and foreigners.[68] However, we would be mistaken to limit tensions against non-freemen to the 1590s. In 1606, City magistrates anxiously observed:

> Now forasmuch as divers and sundry strangers borne, and
> likewise Forreiners from the liberties of the saide Cittie,
> […] wholie intending their private profit, have of late yeares
> devised and practized by all sinister and subtil meanes, how
> to defraud and defeat the said Charters, Liberties, Customs,
> good orders, and ordinances, and to that end, do now
> inwardlie in privie and secret places, usually and ordinarily,
> shew, sel, & put to sale, their Wares, & Marchandizes, and
> use Arts, Trades, Occupations, Misteries, and Handicraftes
> within the said Cittie and Liberties of the same, to the great
> detriment and hurt of the Freemen of the said Cittie.[69]

I have already noted the 1610 proposals to reform suburban government to combat the growing number of vagrants and foreigners surrounding the City. In 1636, a similar plan to incorporate the suburbs was established—albeit temporarily— 'for keepeing out forreyners & Aliens who daylie doe intrude thither.'[70] Anxieties toward non-free migrants lasted well into the 1640s. A 1641 petition from 'the apprentices' of London denounced the ever-growing presence of foreigners and strangers in the City, lamenting that they 'doe snatch this Freedome from us, and pull the Trades out of our owne hands.'[71] Indeed, as Carlin points out, the key element in the corporate upheavals in London at the start of the Civil War decade was concerned with greater enforcement against non-freemen.[72]

Although the subsequent Commonwealth government has been viewed as a period of economic liberalisation, several companies successfully lobbied for tighter controls against non-free workmen.[73] There were bursts of complaints and legal action against non-free Londoners in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. In 1671, a proclamation by the Lord Mayor lamented that the 'Franchises and Liberties of this City are

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[68] Archer, *Pursuit of Stability*, 131-139.

[69] *By the Mayor An act of Common Councell, prohibiting all strangers borne, and forrainers, to use any trades, or keepe any maner of shops in any sort within this citty, liberties and freedome thereof* (1606).

[70] Bodl., Bankes MSS, 12/46. For its subsequent breakdown, see Robert Ashton, *The City and the court 1603-1643* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 165-167

[71] *The apprentices of Londons petition presented to the Honourable Court of Parliament* (1641), A4.

[72] Norah Carlin, 'Liberty and Fraternities in the English Revolution: The Politics of London Artisans' Protests,' *International Review of Social History* 39, no. 2 (1994): 223-254; Berlin, 'Broken all in Pieces,' 88.

[73] This was especially so for the Weavers' and Stationers' companies, see Berlin, 'Guilds in Decline?,' 326; Unwin, *The Gilds and Companies of London*, 340-343.

of late years much invaded and violated by Forreiners, Strangers, Aliens.'[74] In 1712, an Act of Common Council forbade any non-freeman to work in 'any manual occupation or handicraft or to sell or put to sale any Wares of Merchandises by Retail in any Shop inward or outward.'[75] Throughout this period, the language associated with stability and disorder gave magistrates and company elites a powerful vocabulary to exclude those who did not belong amongst its lustrous citizens: migrants, foreigners, and unskilled labourers. These boundaries—both real and rhetorical—were vital to the smooth running of the City economy. The freedom, and the stability it represented, was a fitting discourse for magistrates to project who belonged in the City, and who did not.

Belonging

At the same time that companies were lobbying civic magistrates for harsher restrictions against foreigners and other non-free groups in the late sixteenth century, the City established several new civic bodies comprised of labourers.[76] Watermen, carmen, and porters were organised into civic fellowships—but not autonomous companies—each with different statuses in civic culture. The Fellowship of Watermen was created in 1555 when an Act of Parliament appointed overseers over 'all the wherrymen and watermen' of London.[77] The Porters were designated into four distinct organisations in the 1570s and 1580s, including the Ticket Porters, who were granted their own separate society in 1584.[78] However, this was a temporary move. In 1609, they were combined with the Tacklehouse Porters, who were a smaller group of porters affiliated with different companies, such as the Grocers' or Haberdashers.'[79] The Fraternity of Carmen was originally founded in 1517. Its members were subsequently passed between several guardians in the late sixteenth century, including the governors of Christ's Hospital in 1582. However, like the Ticket Porters, their

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[74] *The right honourable the Lord Mayor, minding and intending, by Gods help and the concurrent endeavours of his brethren the aldermen, to discover, punish, and suppress to the uttermost of his power, as the proper work and most incumbent duty of his office, those manifold corruptions [...]* (1671).
[75] LMA, COL/CC/01/01/55, f. 303, ff. 324-25b.
[76] For company complaints against unregulated foreigners and strangers at the end of sixteenth century, see Rappaport, *Worlds Within Worlds*, 56-60; Archer, *The Pursuit of Stability*, 131-139; for London attitudes towards strangers more generally, see Selwood, *Diversity and Difference*.
[77] 'An Act touching Watermen and Bargemen upon the River Thames,' 1555, 2 & 3 Phil. & M., c. 16.
[78] LMA, COL/CA/01/01/21, f. 104; 108.
[79] LMA, COL/CA/01/01/29, ff. 41-42b; 102b.

semi-independence was transitory. They would later be amalgamated with the Company of Woodmongers in 1605, starting a long legacy of shifting alliances and takeovers throughout the seventeenth century until they were granted a separate fellowship in 1668.[80]

Another group that received the attention of civic magistrates in this period were women retailers. Although they did not share a single occupational identity as the fellowships outlined above, they were often defined collectively by their sex. However, they were sometimes grouped by their trade as well. Two years after the carmen were placed under the oversight of Christ's Hospital, London's fishwives—the most 'disreputable' of women traders—were put under 'thappointment, nominacon, and government' of Bridewell Hospital in 1584.[81] Bridewell notoriously policed the City's prostitutes and vagrant population. Despite such 'low' connotations, it is certainly possible that the order imbued a sense of collective association for fishwives placed under its control.

Rhetorics pose unique problems for the historian; they are never one-sided but often overlapping and ambiguous. Vagrancy in early modern England was a loosely defined category of social behaviour. As Fumerton explains, it not only encompassed individuals who were unhoused and/or passing through the capital, but itinerant and manual workers who were settled in the City but unregulated by the formal guild structure.[82] Similarly, Korda suggests that 'work in the informal sector was not only considered illegitimate by civic officials, it was not considered work at all. Unguilded [sic] labor was routinely relegated to the status of mere idleness.'[83] Indeed, in the minds of civic authorities, the line that separated vagrants, foreigners, and labourers was thin. For example, a 1617 Proclamation stated:

> in Favour and Compassion towards some Forriners that
> have been ancient Dwellers in and about this Citty, [the
> Aldermen] have by way of Tolleration and Convinence
> permitted some of them to be Porters and to intermeddle
> as Free Men. Which Lenity and Tolleration towards some
> few hath beene an occasion of late to invite and draw
> many other slight and vagrant People from all Parts of this

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[80] LMA, COL/AD/01/13, f. 38b-40; COL/CA/01/01/03, f. 119b; COL/CA/01/01/20, f. 120; COL/CA/01/01/20, f. 320b; COL/CA/01/01/26II, f. 470; Bodl., MS Rawlinson D 725 B, XVII, ff. 1-12; LMA, COL/CC/01/01/041x/178b; COL/CC/01/01/041x, f. 250; COL/CC/01/01/46, f. 69; COL/CA/01/01/73, f. 124.

[81] LMA, COL/CA/01/01/21, f. 115.

[82] Patricia Fumerton, *Unsettled: The Culture of Mobility and the Working Poor in Early Modern England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), part 1.

[83] Natasha Korda, *Labors Lost: Women's Work and the Early Modern Stage* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), 23.

> Kingdome unto this Citty, who here (presuming of the like
> Favour) become Lodgers and Inmates; and without any
> Order, Admittance, or Allowance, daily intrude
> themselves in to […] Market Places, Streetes, Lanes,
> Corners, Wharfes, Keyes, and Innes, in and about this
> Citty; many of them also being Hucksters, Forestallers
> and Regrators […] of all kinds of Victualls and other
> Merchandizes.[84]

Tolerance for one group in the City opened the floodgates for thousands more. Like the porters above, each occupational group in this study were, at one point or another, considered foreigners intruding upon the rights and privileges of City freemen. Their association with vagrancy was fortified by the itinerant nature of their work. Each day, watermen rowed their passengers to different stairs along the Thames, often travelling far outside the City limits and back again. Porters and carmen were constantly moving in the streets on foot or by cart, carrying goods and merchandise throughout the City and suburbs. Women's mobility was viewed in even harsher light. Often relegated to selling their wares outside the male domain of the City market place, the perambulations of women street sellers were perceived as especially disruptive. As Gowing observes, 'the public presence of women on the streets was persistently identified with sexual disorder.'[85]

This constant movement of unregulated persons in, out, and around the City—transgressing not only geographic boundaries, but in the case of women traders, patriarchal ones—was a severe source of anxiety for civic magistrates. At the turn of the sixteenth century, around the same time London mandated badges for the 'deserving poor,' the City utilised licences and badges to identify and separate individuals of these groups from those who were 'legitimate' from those who were not. However, as discussed in depth throughout each chapter, the relationship between identity and licensing was more complex than meets the eye, especially for ticket porters whose name derived from the badges, or 'tickets' they were obligated to wear. Despite previous interpretations that suggest badging was a

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[84] LMA, COL/CC/01/30, f. 227.

[85] Laura Gowing, "'The Freedom of the Streets': Women and Social Space, 1560-1640," in *Londinopolis: Essays in the Cultural and Social History of Early Modern London*, ed. Griffiths and Jenner (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), 131; see also Gowing, *Domestic Dangers: Women, Words, and Sex in Early Modern London* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998).

humiliating practice for the wearer, Hitchcock and Shoemaker have shown that it was a powerful symbol of belonging that could be used to negotiate individual rights.[86]

Citizenship

Recent scholarship in pre-modern citizenship has demonstrated its vitality in early modern English towns and cities. Influenced by Collinson's provocative essay on what he termed the 'monarchical republic,' historians have traced the origins of English *respublicanism* to the early modern humanist revival in England.[87] Through grammar school teaching and promulgation of classical Greek and Roman texts, scholars like Peltonen and Norbrook have suggested that a learned, humanist conception of citizenship emerged in the sixteenth century that inspired a new urban political culture in England.[88] This work has generated two waves of literature on citizenship in the last thirty years.

The first of these explored citizenship as an important mode of affiliation for the 'middling sort' in English political culture. In the 1990s, Barry published several works exploring urban civility and political culture, demonstrating the strength of civic association for the burgeoning middle class—or what he called 'bourgeois collectivism.'[89] In 2001, Goldie's seminal essay 'The Unacknowledged Republic' explored the widespread practices of office-holding in early modern England to show that more people participated in urban

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[86] For badging as source of humiliation, see Steve Hindle, 'Dependency, Shame and Belonging: Badging the Deserving Poor, c. 1550-1750,' *Cultural & Social History* 1, no. 1 (2004): 6-35. For the opposing view, see Tim Hitchcock and Robert Shoemaker, *London Lives: Poverty, Crime and the Making of a Modern City, 1690-1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 42-52.

[87] Patrick Collinson, 'The Monarchical Republic of Queen Elizabeth I,' *Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester* 69 (1987): 394-424.

[88] Markku Peltonen, *Classical Humanism and Republicanism in English Political Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); David Norbrook, *Writing the English Republic: Poetry, Rhetoric and Politics, 1627–1660* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

[89] Jonathan Barry, 'Bourgeois Collectivism? Urban Association and the Middling Sort,' in *The Middling Sort of People: Culture, Society and Politics in England, 1550-1800*, ed. Jonathan Barry and Chris Brooks (London: Macmillan Press, 1994), 84-112; Barry, Civility and Civic Culture in Early Modern England: The Meanings of Urban Freedom,' in *Civil Histories: Essays Presented to Keith Thomas*, ed. Peter Burke, Brian Harrison, and Paul Slack (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 181-196; see also Barry, 'Urban Identity and the Middling Sort in Early-Modern England,' 853-883.

politics than previously understood.[90] His estimations suggested that one in twenty adult males held office in any year by 1700.[91]

Another important facet in recent studies of citizenship has highlighted its significance as a political resource.[92] Withington demonstrated the centrality of incorporated towns—as well as the political activities of their Ciceronian-minded townsfolk—to wider developments in national politics.[93] For him, 'corporate citizenship [provided] the skills and acumen for citizens to utilize and engage in alternative and perhaps more accessible forms of discursive activity.'[94] Most recently, Liddy argued that the practices of citizenship in pre-modern England were not influenced by civic humanism but a 'home-grown' affair that, despite its communal elements, was responsible for 'enduring tensions within towns.'[95] According to his study, the concept of the freedom was so ambiguously constituted that it became a resource for citizens to challenge what the privileges and responsibilities of citizenship actually were.

Although Liddy and Withington dedicate a small amount of time discussing the particularities of the freedom of London, most citizenship studies focus elsewhere. While this scholarship has produced many important insights into the culture and practices of citizenship in English towns and boroughs, it is worth pointing out that these smaller

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[90] Mark Goldie, 'The Unacknowledged Republic: Officeholding in Early Modern England,' in *The Politics of the Excluded, c. 1500-1800*, ed. Tim Harris (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001), 153-194.

[91] Goldie, 'The Unacknowledged Republic,' 161.

[92] See, for example, Andrew Gordon and Trevor Stack, 'Citizenship beyond the State: Thinking with Early Modern Citizenship in the Contemporary World,' *Citizenship Studies* 11, no. 2 (2007): 117-133; David Harris Sacks, 'Freedom to, Freedom from, Freedom of: Urban Life and Political Participation in Early Modern England,' *Citizenship Studies* 11, no. 2 (2007): 135-150; Phil Withington, 'Public Discourse, Corporate Citizenship, and State Formation in Early Modern England,' *American Historical Review* 112, no. 4 (2007): 1016-27; Hampsher-Monk, 'Liberty and Citizenship in Early Modern English Political Discourse,' 105-127.

[93] Withington, *The Politics of Commonwealth.*

[94] Withington, 'Public Discourse, Corporate Citizenship, and State Formation in Early Modern England,' 1032.

[95] Christian Liddy, *Contesting the City: The Politics of Citizenship in English Towns, 1250-1530* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 2. For other works on late medieval urban political culture, see, for example, Samuel Cohn, *Popular Protest in Late Medieval English Towns* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012); Derek Keene, 'English Urban Guilds, c. 900-1300: The Purposes and Politics of Association,' in *Guilds and Association in Europe, 900- 1900*, ed. Ian A. Gadd and Patrick Wallis (London: Centre for Metropolitan History, 2006), 3-26; Matthew Davies, 'Lobbying Parliament: the London Companies in the Fifteenth Century,' *Parliamentary History* 23, no. 1 (2008): 136-148.

corporations did not experience problems of overpopulation and extramural growth to the same extent as London. Given the capital's national significance as a centre of commercial and political activity, it is interesting that there is not yet a systematic study of the London freedom that considers the specific issues the City faced as the largest and fastest growing civic corporation in the realm. How did citizenship work in a City whose boundaries were constantly shifting and changing?

Since the 'comeback' of citizenship studies some decades ago, scholars have made several observations about the 'flexible' 'fitful' and 'fluid' ways that civic identity and corporate control were construed and deployed long before its 'death knell' in 1837.[96] Barry argues that 'the freedom, like the guild system, had always been a legal fiction employed flexibly to stabilize urban society.'[97] Even in the 'height' of guild authority in the fifteenth century, Davies argues that the Merchant Taylors' Company adopted a 'flexible and pragmatic approach' to non-free practitioners of the trade.[98] In separate publications, Withington and Knights noted that the concept of 'civic commonwealth' was 'fluid and localised,' and 'intrinsically contested.'[99] Researching the main gateway into the freedom, Minns and Wallis concluded that the 'superficially rigid rules of apprenticeship,' were 'plural and flexible.'[100] In the same vein, Ward reconsidered the 'presumed inflexibility' historians have described to designate the 'unruly suburbs' of London from 'the well-governed City,' arguing that corporate control adapted to the growing metropolis.[101]

Although historians have unanimously noted the flexibility of early modern citizenship, its implications have been overlooked. Scholarship continues to neglect a wide and diverse range of historical actors by following limited parameters of the meaning and

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[96] The requirement that all traders in the square mile be freemen was lifted in 1837. See Michael Berlin, 'Guilds in Decline? London Livery Companies and the Rise of a Liberal Economy, 1600-1800,' in *Guilds, Innovation and the European Economy, 1400-1800*, ed. S.R. Epstein and Maarten Prak (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 318.

[97] Barry, 'Civility and Civic Culture in Early Modern England,' 18.

[98] Matthew Davies, 'Governors and Governed: The Practice of Power in the Merchant Taylors' Company in the Fifteenth Century,' in *Guilds, Society & Economy in London 1450-1800*, ed. Ian Anders Gadd and Patrick Wallis (London: Institute of Historical Research, 2002), 67-84.

[99] Phil Withington, *The Politics of Commonwealth*, 67; Mark Knights, 'Commonwealth: The Social, Cultural, and Conceptual Contexts of an Early Modern Keyword,' *The Historical Journal* 54, no. 3 (2011): 661

[100] Chris Minns and Patrick Wallis, 'Rules and Reality: Quantifying the Practice of Apprenticeship in Early Modern England,' *Economic History Review* 65, no. 2 (2012): 558.

[101] Joseph Ward, *Metropolitan Communities: Trade, Guilds, Identity and Change in Early Modern London* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1997), 3-4.

practices of the freedom. Consequently, there has been a lingering tendency to discuss early modern civic culture using distinct and delineated binaries: freemen versus non-freemen; citizens versus foreigners; included versus excluded. Even Liddy's recent monograph claims that citizenship was 'the major fault line within urban society: between foreigners and strangers, on the one hand, […] and burgesses and citizens on the other.'[102] Such categorical assumptions, albeit heuristically useful, continue to exaggerate the rigidity of the freedom, and dull its multifarious meanings in the early modern capital.

This thesis employs a different approach. Eschewing narrowly defined boundaries of what it meant to belong in early modern London, I explore several 'edge cases' in London's corporate society—carmen, porters, watermen, and women traders—whose experiences do not fit into monolithic models of civic culture and have thus been neglected by both traditional and revisionist urban political histories. The individuals and groups that form the case studies of these chapters were not citizens nor outsiders; their experiences in London were somewhere betwixt and between the political, economic and cultural boundaries of what it meant to be a Londoner in the early modern period. This grey area comprises the milieu of the thesis.

First and foremost, I argue that the permeability of London's civic culture has been underestimated. Barry, Goldie, Withington and Liddy have hitherto described urban politics as an arena characterised by distinct binaries of belonging and exclusion. The political culture of London, however, comprised of a larger number of participants than has been recognised in other urban case studies. Moreover, many of London's political actors were only partially included within the boundaries of formal citizenship. A Londoner could legitimise his/her participation in civic politics as 'an admitted Ticket Porter,' an 'ancient poore fishwife,' or a member of 'the body of the River Thames.'[103] Such markers of belonging had different implications in London's political culture and were deployed strategically by individuals and groups to obtain rights and privileges associated with the freedom of the City.

Rappaport, Archer, Barry, and others have viewed the creation of London's non-free and quasi-free fellowships as a top-down flow of control that allowed civic magistrates to

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[102] Liddy, *Contesting the* City, 21.
[103] For examples, see LMA, COL/CA/01/01/42, f. 214b; LMA, COL/CA/01/01/36, f. 139; COL/CA/01/01/46, ff. 172-176b; COL/CA/01/01/55, f. 355.

regulate potentially threatening groups in the City.[104] The main characterisation of this approach is the implicit understanding that London's political culture was confined to the purview of formal government, namely City magistrates, parliament, and the crown. Although previous historiography was correct to assume that 'informal' civic bodies were created by centralised powers in part to control different sectors of the City's 'low' trades, it is also true that these organisations provided their members with a powerful resource to negotiate political and economic rights in the City. Each chapter provides evidence that membership of an 'informal' corporate body allowed non-free and quasi-free Londoners access to civic culture. A closer examination of the different ways that these groups and individuals negotiated their rights and privileges in civic politics reveals a political process that worked both downwards and upwards.

I also argue that London's political culture extended beyond the historical conception of the early modern 'middling sort' to occupations that have been hitherto classed as 'labouring.'[105] A 1603 addendum to Stow's *Survey of London* specifically named porters, carmen and watermen in the lowest social class of 'Labourers and Hirelings,' deemed as 'those *quorum operae non arts emuntur*, as Tullie sayeth.'[106] This reference to the Ciceronian concept of the three-tiered social hierarchy—the bottommost consisting of those who were paid for their labour and not technical skill—encapsulates the complex relationship between civic identity and occupational identity in early modern London. It is important to emphasise that none of the occupational groups in this study were members of traditional companies. However, some were freemen, and all were allowed *de facto* rights of freemen through licences and other quasi-official sanctions. As wage-earning labourers, these groups constituted the lowest rank of London society. Their status as freemen or *de facto* freemen, however, meant that they were expected to emulate the virtues of London's citizenry. Accordingly, contemporaries had both positive and negative opinions towards these groups that reflected and reinforced their ambiguous status in the corporate hierarchy. Londoners lauded their trustworthiness, skill, and industry, and simultaneously condemned their idleness, dishonesty, and disorder. These contradictory responses take on new significance in the broader context of the City's preoccupation with the influx of foreigners

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[104] Archer, *Pursuit of Stability*, 62; Rappaport, *Worlds Within Worlds*, 60; Barry, 'Civility and Civic Culture,' 18.

[105] See, Barry, 'Bourgeois Collectivism,' 84-112; for more on the 'language of sorts,' see Keith Wrightson, '"Sorts of People" in Tudor and Stuart England,' in *The Middling Sort of People*, 28-52.

[106] Stow, 2: 207-11.

and vagrants. As will be explored in more detail throughout the thesis, the ambivalent attitudes towards these groups played a major role in shaping the nature of their political participation in the City.

Furthermore, previous scholarship has also failed to notice the financial diversity of these groups. Earle notes that watermen, carmen and porters lived with other 'poor Londoners' on the outskirts of the City. Boulton places them alongside other manual labourers as the most deprived group living in the Boroughside neighbourhood in Southwark in 1622. Porters, carmen and watermen, he claims, 'were indeed in the lowest social and economic category.'[107] While these observations are not altogether incorrect, they generally assume that *all* members of these occupational bodies were impoverished. Qualitative and quantitative research of the London carmen, porters, and watermen provide a unique perspective on the debate regarding living standards for English wage-earners that have tended to be dominated by building and/or agricultural labourers, and more recently, north-eastern industrial workers.[108]

The diversity of the membership of these groups carries important implications that have thus far evaded historical analysis. One implication of close attention to the political language of the freedom is the need to consider the terminological slippage that occurred when Londoners talked about these groups. In analyses of London's corporate culture, historians have employed the terms 'brotherhood,' 'fellowship,' or 'fraternity' to designate 'informal' civic bodies of non-freemen, and 'company,' 'guild,' or 'corporation' to 'formal'

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[107] Peter Earle, *A City Full of People: Men and Women of London, 1650-1750* (London: Methuen, 1994), 15; Steve Rappaport, *Worlds within Worlds* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 171-73; Jeremy Boulton, *Neighbourhood and Society: A London Suburb in the Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 119. Boulton does admit that his data represents a '*general* social classification' and each occupational group represented a wide range of wealth (his italics, 20); Roy Porter, *London: A Social History* (London: Penguin, 2000), 49.

[108] See, for example, Jeremy Boulton, 'Wage Labour in Seventeenth-Century London,' *Economic History Review* 49, no. 2 (1996): 268-290; Robert C. Allen, *The British Industrial Revolution in Global Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009). Allen's argument was challenged by Jane Humphries, 'The Lure of Aggregates and the Pitfalls of the Patriarchal Perspective: A Critique of the high wage economy interpretation of the British Industrial Revolution,' *The Economic History Review* 68, no. 1 (2015), 1-22; Judy Stephenson, '"Real" wages? Contractors, workers and pay in London building trades, 1650-1800,' in *Economic History Review* Vol 71, no. 1 (2018): 106-132. For the north-east perspective, see Donald Woodward, *Men at Work: Labourers and Building Craftsmen in the Towns of Northern England, 1450-1750* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); Andy Burn, 'Seasonal Work and Welfare in an Early Industrial Town: Newcastle upon Tyne 1600-1700,' *Continuity and Change* 32, no. 2 (2017): 157-182.

civic bodies of freemen and citizens. Once again, these either/or binaries take for granted the multiplicity of these groups and fail to recognize the variegated memberships that existed *within* different companies, guilds, and societies.[109] As the bodies of watermen, porters, and carmen were comprised of foreigners, freemen, and citizens, their 'official' titles in the corporate hierarchy were correspondingly ambiguous. To appreciate the complexity of London's political culture, we need to consider that contemporaries were far more imprecise in their terminology than historians have accounted for. Civic society utilised a variety of labels to describe different occupational bodies. A closer reading of the language used to define varying degrees of civic identity reveals the flexibility of corporate inclusion, and more broadly, demonstrates the multifarious definitions of what it meant to belong in the City.

Building upon these contentions, this thesis thus contributes to two key historiographies of early modern London. First, the following chapters demonstrate that individuals and groups outside traditional corporate society were active participants in London's economic and political culture. Notwithstanding their marginalised status in the freedom, these groups were vital to the City economy. The watermen, carmen and porters were the mainstays of City transport; in a literal sense, many of them carried London's trade on their backs. Women, too, were important to the economy of the early modern capital. Shepard recently demonstrated that more women contributed to the London economy as wage-earners and/or in task-specific work than previously recognised.[110] Moreover, Erickson argues that the unique status of unmarried women in England helped stimulate the growth of capitalism in sixteenth and seventeenth century England.[111] Equally significant, these were *large* groups. Contemporary estimates varied, but by the mid-seventeenth century there were somewhere around 1,000 carmen in 1654;[112] 3,000 ticket porters in 1646;[113] and 4,000 watermen in 1642.[114] Although there are no contemporary estimates for

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[109] See, for example, Rappaport, *Worlds within Worlds*, 42.

[110] Alexandra Shepard, 'Crediting Women in the Early Modern English Economy,' *History Workshop Journal* 79 (2015): 1-24; see also Shepard, *Accounting for Oneself*.

[111] Amy Louise Erickson, 'Coverture and Capitalism,' *History Workshop Journal* 59 (2005): 1-16.

[112] The estimation for carmen was calculated by the number of car licences allowed in the City in 1642 (420), doubled by the likelihood of each owner having at least one apprentice and/or 'worker' who hired a 'carroom' from another carman, see LMA, COL/CC/01/01/41x, f. 102.

[113] GL, MS 913, f. 76.

[114] John Taylor, *John Taylors manifestation* (1642), 7.

the total number of women traders, Reinke-Williams calculates that the female proportion of retailers in London by the end of the seventeenth century was somewhere around 14 per cent.[115] Indeed, for better and for worse, the presence of women street sellers and market traders was felt in the City. A 1590 Act of Common Council that allowed 160 fishwives to be badged as legitimate City fish-sellers was met with complaints that there were still many more women who continued to sell fish and other wares unregulated.[116]

The size and economic importance of these groups significantly re-orientates how we conceptualise the political culture of early modern London. All four chapters provide evidence that these individuals and groups were politically savvy civic participants. They possessed a clear understanding of the rhetorics associated with the language of citizenship and used them to pursue a variety of political ends. Significantly, they also aspired to more traditional modes of belonging in the corporate system. On an individual level, women petitioned for their formal admittance into the freedom as citizens. Many of their petitions were logged in the final decades of the seventeenth century. In a similar vein, groups associated with the watermen, porters, and carmen each tried to obtain a royal charter of incorporation several times throughout the period, especially in the 1670s, 1680s and 1690s.

Their efforts bring us to the second key historiographic contribution of this thesis. As we will see, the ambitions of individuals and groups to legitimise their position in the civic hierarchy as formal citizens or as an incorporated company endured throughout the seventeenth century. This observation complicates past scholarship that sees a decline in the importance and appeal of the freedom by the start of the eighteenth century. Without a doubt, guild regulation and accessibility to the freedom waxed and waned throughout the early modern period. Many groups in this study took advantage of these fluctuations with varying rates of success. For instance, women traders were granted admission into the freedom after moving into empty buildings after the Great Fire.[117] Sectional groups within the Society of Watermen had their first 'big success' in their century-long battle against the ruling group in the 1640s amid the Civil Wars.[118] Yet, many of the cases examined in the following pages did not result in an individual gaining citizenship. Moreover, not one fellowship in the following pages obtained incorporated status before the nineteenth century.

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[115] Tim Reinke-Williams, *Women, Work and Sociability in Early Modern London* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 107.

[116] LMA, COL/CC/01/01/22, f. 389.

[117] LMA, COL/CA/01/01/74, f. 54; f. 132b; COL/CA/01/01/72, f. 12; COL/CA/01/01/74, f. 32b; COL/CA/01/01/74, f. 110b; COL/CA/01/01/74 f. 132b; COL/CA/01/01/76, f. 77b.

[118] LMA, COL/CA/01/01/55, f. 373b-374.

The City's unrelenting rejection of the porters, carmen, and watermen's attempts to incorporate throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries not only demonstrate its lasting appeal to excluded groups, but the continued power of established companies who likely lobbied against their entrance.

Thus moving away from the economic factors that have overwhelmed previous studies of corporate regulation in early modern London, the political factors that defined the meaning of the freedom are emphasised in this study. Davies, Dean, Archer, and Kyle have demonstrated that the fate of the corporate system in pre-modern London was in many ways dependent upon extra-civic lobbying.[119] As *Londons Praise* reminds us, the all-important status of 'a Charter free' was the prerogative of the Crown, and thus one's position in the freedom was very much consequent upon national politics. This thesis asserts that the freedom remained a powerful status of belonging throughout the early modern period as many occupational groups attempted to appeal to civic, royal, and parliamentary audiences, even as powers over economic regulation began to fade.

Participation

There is a rich range of evidence that demonstrates the active engagement of watermen, porters, carmen and women traders in London's civic culture. Over the course of the seventeenth century, individuals and groups associated with these occupations engaged with different City and Crown institutions using a variety of mediums. Their petitions, and the responses they elicited, are the key sources of this thesis. In the absence of first-person narratives, it is difficult—if not impossible—to gauge the extent of inclusion that these individuals and groups actually felt. However, it is clear that the language of the freedom was a powerful resource that could be deployed to secure political and economic rights in London, especially for those who enjoyed only partial inclusion into the City.

This study represents a self-conscious step away from the dominance of formal corporate history. In recent investigations of London's civic culture, historians like Archer and Ward have understandably drawn from the rich records made available in corporate archives. However, this methodology produces a very particular way of thinking about the

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[119] Davies, 'Lobbying Parliament: the London Companies in the Fifteenth Century,'136-148; David Dean, 'Pressure Groups and Lobbies in the Elizabethan and Early Jacobean Parliaments,' *Parliaments, Estates and Representation* 11, no. 2 (1991): 139-152; Ian Archer, 'London Lobbies in the Later sixteenth century,' *Historical Journal* 31 (1988): 17-44; Chris Kyle, 'Parliament and the Politics of Carting in Early Stuart London,' *The London Journal* 27, no. 2 (2002): 1-11; see also, Jenner, 'Guildwork,' 164-165.

meanings and practices of the freedom, which results in three major consequences. First, London's non-free English population has been virtually ignored. As we can recall above, contemporaries made distinctions between strangers, who were usually continental immigrants, and foreigners, who were English migrants. Approaching the term 'foreigner' anachronistically, historians have nonetheless conflated English-born non-free into the overarching category of strangers. Others have observed that contemporaries distinguished between the two but neglect to emulate the significance of such distinctions in their own work. For instance, Ward assumes that 'since the relationship of strangers and foreigners to livery companies, was, for the most part, similar, in this study the terms will sometimes be used interchangeably.'[120] Selwood determined that non-free English men and women were altogether unimportant to his study, claiming his 'attention to occupational and economic issues, and particularly civic citizenship and guild membership' forces him to ignore English foreigners, who 'play only a minor role.'[121]

This prioritization, however unintended, has drastic implications. Ward and Selwood's emphases do not necessarily reflect historical reality but modern political trends that emphasise race, ethnicity, and nationality as the key markers of difference. While contemporaries certainly blurred distinctions between strangers and foreigners in particularly tense moments, there were key distinctions between them that should not be cast aside. Both groups made attempts to integrate themselves into urban institutions, such as neighbourhoods, parishes, and guilds. However, as Archer and others have shown, their participation and reception were emphatically different.[122] More crucially, the modern term 'foreigner' does not capture the wide and varying degrees of what is was to be a non-free English man or woman in the City. Historians have glossed over many 'foreigner' groups that were, in many respects, free. By ignoring the ambiguity of their civic status—and the ways different sorts of foreigners legitimised their participation in civic politics—we neglect a large and economically significant group of Londoners who negotiated belonging in the City.

Second, women are virtually absent. The percentage of female apprentices in early modern corporate records is estimated as at most 1 to 2 per cent.[123] However, women can be

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[120] Ward, *Metropolitan* Communities, 150n5.
[121] Selwood, *Diversity and Difference*, 10.
[122] Archer, *Pursuit of Stability,* 131-148.
[123] Laura Gowing, 'Girls on Forms: Apprenticing Young Women in Seventeenth-Century London,' *Journal of British Studies* 55, no. 3 (2016): 450; see also, Amy Louise Erickson,

found participating in the practices associated with the freedom by examining different manuscript resources, such as the Court of Aldermen and the Lord Mayor's Court. Although the percentage of women in these records are still nowhere comparable to their male counterparts, they do reveal that more women participated in the culture of citizenship than has been previously recognised. Moreover, they also demonstrate the different ways women participated outside apprenticeship and formal membership. As we will see, female politics in the culture of citizenship extended far beyond the roles of apprentices and widowed mistresses.

Finally, the third consequence produced by the prominence of formal corporate histories is the assumption that the freedom was the preserve of the City's companies. As Wallis and Gadd conclude:

> To be a freeman of London—to be an economically and politically active citizen—one needed to be a member of one of the companies which represented and regulated various trades and crafts in the city. In short, a freeman was a company-man.[124]

This narrow definition of what it meant to belong in the City's corporate culture forces historians to make false choices: a freeman was either a member of a company or no freeman at all. This is despite the rich archival evidence of politically and economically active freemen and non-freemen who were not members of the formal corporate structure. As Archer briefly mentions, 'the principle of guild organisation applied even to some groups that we might be otherwise tempted to think of as the more casual sectors of the labour market.'[125] Too often, however, has this temptation led historians to disregard these groups completely.

As none of the freemen or freewomen examined in this thesis were full members of formal companies, corporate records are largely absent from this study. The records of the Tacklehouse and Ticket Porters, held at the Guildhall Library, are sporadic before the eighteenth century, though there is an extant Order Book from 1605, as well as a few surviving membership records from the seventeenth century. Similarly, the records of the Watermen are patchy before the eighteenth century, though some pre-1700 sources have

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'Married Women's Occupations in Eighteenth-Century London,' *Continuity and Change* 23, no. 2 (2008): 267-307.

[124] Gadd and Wallis, 'Introduction,' in *Guilds, Society and Economy*, 9; see also Rappaport who uses 'companymen' and 'freemen' synonymously in *Worlds within Worlds*.

[125] Archer, *Pursuit of Stability*, 62.

survived from after the Great Fire. The archives of the Fellowship of Carmen, however, are more extensive, especially after 1668. Yet, the records of the Woodmongers' Company—who oversaw the Carmen for most of the seventeenth century—were destroyed in the Great Fire, bar a few surviving manuscripts that are now housed at the Bodleian Library in Oxford. I have, however, located many petitions and other ephemera associated with the fellowships of watermen, carmen and porters in various boxes of material related to their civic regulation archived at the London Metropolitan Archives (LMA), and, in regard to the carmen, in the records of Christ's Hospital as well.

Most evidence has been sourced from the repertories of the Court of Aldermen, also held at the LMA. These books contain records of the meetings of the Court and give references to hundreds of petitions signed by Londoners associated with these occupations. The repertories give varying degrees of detail regarding the content of their appeals, and so caution must be practiced. When possible, references have been supplemented by the original petitions. However, many of the papers of the Court of Aldermen did not survive the Great Fire, and many more were lost in the subsequent centuries since. Moreover, many of those that have survived have been archived in unindexed boxes. As such, many petitions in this study were discovered on a hunch—or by sheer luck. I have also relied on the Journals of the Court of Common Council, which recorded more formal acts and ordinances.

Women's petitions to City courts have been the trickiest to locate. Many original documents were indexed in the nineteenth century and thus reflect the mentality of Victorian archivists who had little interest for women's political participation. As such, the 'voices' of London's women retailers, if they have survived, are scattered across the LMA in unindexed repositories marked 'miscellaneous,' or in loosely-related Market Papers, such as Leadenhall or Billingsgate. Nonetheless, I have been able to locate a handful of women's freedom petitions in the papers of the Court of Aldermen, as well other traces of civic participation in the papers of the Middlesex Quarter Sessions. I have also accessed the court books of Bridewell Hospital regarding women street sellers and traders. Many of these books are unindexed. Griffith's *Lost Londons* has been an invaluable starting point for references in the court books that shed light on the different sorts of female traders in the City.[126] Lastly, I have utilised records from the Lord Mayor's Court, namely apprenticeship

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[126] Griffiths, *Lost Londons*, 122-134.

dissolution cases that tell us a lot about the different ways women participated in the culture of citizenship.

I have also drawn heavily from archives outside the LMA and Guildhall. Men and women associated with the watermen, porters and carmen petitioned the House of Commons several times over the period, which have been consulted at the Parliamentary Archives. I have also made extensive use of evidence held at the National Archives, including petitions from cases in the Court of Chancery and Star Chamber. Finally, I have also looked at manuscripts in the Lansdowne papers at the British Library, as well as the Bankes papers at the Bodleian Library in Oxford.

Each chapter comprises a microhistory of a marginalised group that provides wider insights into the different ways that Londoners constituted belonging in early modern London. The first three chapters look at the activities of the carmen, porters, and watermen to demonstrate the accessibility of London's political culture, even for those who were not formal citizens. The fourth and final chapter looks at women's political participation in civic culture to show that they also operated within the 'male' public domain of City life. All four chapters demonstrate that groups outside the corporate system had access to civic culture and were able to claim rights and privileges of citizenship using the rhetorics and political languages associated with regulation, social order, and the freedom of London.

Chapter 1

'the most insolent fellows in the world':
The Carmen of London

To return to the carts of London, there is such a multitude of them, both large and small, that is to say on two wheels and on four, that it would be impossible to estimate them correctly. Those which circulate in the city are for the most part on two broad and high wheels like those of Rome, and serve for the conveyance of sundry articles such as beer, coal, wood, etc. ... and it is precisely the drivers of these who are usually the most insolent fellows in the world.[1]

Busino was not exaggerating. Since his observation, it has been estimated that as many as two thousand carts, coaches, and drays moved along London's bustling streets each day by the end of the seventeenth century.[2] Londoners employed horse-drawn vehicles for a variety of tasks. Hundreds of brewers' drays carried heavy loads of ale from brewhouses to alehouses across the City.[3] The legal limit of hackney coaches, estimated at two hundred in 1637, quadrupled by 1700 in response to London's burgeoning population.[4] Carts—flat-bedded and roughly twelve feet long and three feet wide—were particularly versatile in London's narrow streets and lanes.[5] They were key to the City's sanitation system; rakers

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[1] Horatio Busino, 'The Diary of Horatio Busino (1618),' in *The Journals of Two Travellers in Elizabethan and Early Stuart England: Thomas Platter and Horatio Busino,* ed. Peter Razzell (London: Caliban, 1995), 122.

[2] Craig Spence, *London in the 1690s: A Social Atlas* (London, Centre for Metropolitan History, 2000), 31-37.

[3] Spence, *London in the 1690s*, 30. Spence estimates around 300-500 Brewers' drays employed by London brewers by 1699, 31-32.

[4] Mark Jenner, 'Circulation and Disorder: London Streets and Hackney Coaches, c.1640–c.1740' in *The Streets of London: From the Great Fire to the Great Stink,* ed. Tim Hitchcock and Heather Stone (London: Rivers Oram Press, 2003), 41.

[5] For more on the material characteristics of pre-modern carts, see Claire Martin, 'Transport for London' (Ph.D. thesis, Royal Holloway University, 2008), 198; 226-231.

transported filth, soil and waste by the cart-load to laystalls on the riverside.[6] During the Great Fire, carts were used to transport salvaged valuables and belongings for Londoners fleeing their homes.[7] A year earlier, in 1665, parishes overwhelmed with plague dead hired carts to collect corpses for burial across the City and suburbs.[8] They were essential props in the theatre of punishment: vagrants were whipped 'at the carts tail,' and condemned prisoners were ritually carted to the infamous 'fatal tree' of Tyburn.[9] Wheeled-transport, in all its forms, was ubiquitous in the early modern capital.

However, the largest and most economically important demand of carriage was the conveyance of goods and merchandise throughout the City, liberties, and suburbs. The men and women associated with this trade were called carmen, though the term was imprecisely deployed in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and covered a wide range of carriage-related tasks. However, the occupational identity of a carman as an individual who specifically dealt in the transport of commercial goods was rendered more precise at certain moments, notably in the establishment of a brotherhood of commercial carters—the Fraternity of St Katherine the Virgin and Martyr of Carters—in 1517.[10] Yet, even though its members were required to be freemen of the City, the fraternity's status as a Free fellowship was not established until 1668, 151 years later.[11]

The Carmen were unlike most civic bodies in London. They were not a livery company or guild but a voluntary fellowship under the supervision of the City. Yet, the carmen's position in the civic hierarchy was remarkably inconsistent throughout the seventeenth century. While the organisational administration of most fellowships in London remained relatively stable throughout the period, the carmen experienced seven managerial changes from 1517 to 1668 [see table 1.1].

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[6] Emily Cockayne, *Hubbub: Filth, Noise and Stench in England 1600-1770* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007), 184.

[7] Jacob F. Field, *London, Londoners and the Great Fire of 1666* (Oxford: Routledge, 2018), 14.

[8] Vanessa Harding, 'Burial of the plague dead in early modern London,' *Epidemic Disease in London*, ed. J.A.I. Champion, Centre for Metropolitan Working Papers Series, no. 1 (1993): 58.

[9] For more examples of the use of carts in punishing vagrants and petty criminals, see David Hitchcock, *Vagrancy in English Culture and Society, 1650-1750* (London: Bloomsbury, 2018).

[10] LMA, COL/CA/01/01/03, f. 124b. Martin notes that despite the title, there was no religious element to the founding ordinances of the fraternity, see 'Transport for London,' 240.

[11] LMA, COL/CA/01/01/73, f. 124.

Table 1.1. *Regulation of cars, carts and carmen, 1517-1668.*

Date	From whom regulation and government was taken	To whom regulation and government was given
1580	Fraternity of St. Katherine	Fellowship of Woodmongers
1582	Fellowship of Woodmongers	Christ's Hospital
1605	Christ's Hospital	Company of Woodmongers
1658	Company of Woodmongers	President and Governors of the Poor
1661	President and Governors of the Poor	Company of Woodmongers
1665	Company of Woodmongers	Christ's Hospital
1667	Christ's Hospital	Company of Woodmongers*
1667	Company of Woodmongers	Christ's Hospital
1668	Christ's Hospital	Fellowship of Carmen**

In 1580, the original fraternity was dissolved, and the carmen were unceremoniously placed under the control of the Woodmongers, a powerful group in the City with the role of carting timber and coal. Only two years later, however, the City reassigned the responsibility of governing the carmen and licensing carts to Christ's Hospital. This scheme particularly suited the civic magistrates—the profits of the trade gave them a lucrative revenue stream to finance the Hospital. Nonetheless, in 1605, the carmen were re-amalgamated with the Company of Woodmongers, and together, incorporated by James I the same year. The union between the carmen and woodmongers was fraught; however, their stormy relationship persisted for nearly half a century until 1658 when the carmen were removed to the supervision of the governing body of the Corporation of the Poor, the City's unsuccessful workhouse experiment established earlier in 1648.[12]

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* This transition of power was ambiguously worded by the Court of Aldermen and not an 'official' changeover, LMA, COL/CA/01/01/72, f. 36.

** Christ's Hospital still had oversight over the transfer of carrooms. The Fellowship had power in matters of apprenticeships, freedom enrolment, and disputes between members, see section IV for further detail.

[12] LMA, COL/CA/01/01/20, f. 120; COL/CA/01/01/20, f. 320b; COL/CA/01/01/26II, f. 470; Bodl., MS Rawlinson D 725 B, XVII, ff. 1-12; LMA, COL/CC/01/01/041x, f. 178b; COL/CC/01/01/041x, f. 250. For a background of Christ's Hospital in the late sixteenth century, see Carol Kazmierczak Manzione, *Christ's Hospital of London, 1552-1598: A Passing Deed of Pity* (Selinsgrove, PA: Susquehanna University Press, 1995); for London's Corporation of the Poor, see Valerie Pearl 'Puritans and Poor Relief: The London Workhouse, 1649-1660,' in *Puritans and Revolutionaries: Essays in Seventeenth-Century*

In 1661, the Woodmongers regained control but this too was short-lived. In 1665, the governors of Christ's Hospital were restored as overseers. In 1667, the Court of Aldermen ordered the carmen 'to comply in all things to the just and good government of the Company of Woodmongers,' though there is no indication that the company was formally reinstated as governors. Nonetheless, in a few months—and after decades of mounting distrust for their trade practices—the Company of Woodmongers were forced to give up their charter. Finally, in 1668, the carmen were granted their own independent identity as a fellowship, although Christ's Hospital retained chaperone privileges.[13] Amid these many transitions, groups identifying as the carmen attempted to incorporate themselves several times in the second half of the seventeenth century—in 1649, 1666, 1689, 1694, and 1700.[14] However, such aspirations were fruitless: they were not incorporated as a company until 1946.

This extraordinary succession of overseers is anomalous in London guild politics. Yet, its implications have been surprisingly overlooked. The only systematic study of the carmen's history is Eric Bennett's *The Worshipful Company of Carmen of London*, first commissioned by the company in 1952.[15] Despite his upbeat timeline of progress, Bennett tends to depict the carmen as powerless victims subjected to the whims of their more powerful contemporaries.[16] This one-sided approach of top-down control fails to interrogate the important implications of the carmen's civic identity. The carmen's history clearly demonstrates that the City expended a lot of energy to regulate them and appointed powerful chaperones to oversee their trade. Nonetheless, I argue that membership in these civic

History Presented to Christopher Hill, ed. Donald Pennington and Keith Thomas (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1982), 206-232.

[13] LMA, COL/CC/01/01/046, f. 69; COL/CA/01/01/72, f. 36; COL/CA/01/01/073, f. 124; TNA, SP 29/224 f. 88.

[14] LMA, COL/CA/01/01/72, f. 36; COL/CA/01/01/95, f. 87; CLC/210/E/002/MS12830, 97-98; TNA, SP 44/18, f. 211; GL, MS 4907/1, ff. 101-103.

[15] Eric Bennett, *The Worshipful Company of Carmen of London*, 2nd ed. (London: Simpkin Marshall, 1982). I have been unable to find background information regarding Bennett, but he was also commissioned by the Company of Wheelwrights to write their history in 1970.

[16] For a similar viewpoint regarding top-down civic control of fellowships, see Ian Archer, *The Pursuit of Stability: Social Relations in Elizabethan London* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991). 62; Steve Rappaport, *Worlds within Worlds* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 60; Jonathan Barry, Civility and Civic Culture in Early Modern England: The Meanings of Urban Freedom,' in *Civil Histories: Essays Presented to Keith Thomas*, ed. Peter Burke, Brian Harrison, and Paul Slack (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 181.

bodies afforded the carmen a powerful resource to negotiate with authorities and engage in civic politics. As this chapter will show, the carmen participated in their own regulation regardless of the fact that they did not formally belong to a livery company or guild.

When studies of early modern London have mentioned the carmen, they have tended to lump them into the poorest echelons of City society.[17] Yet, a few studies have qualified this view. 'Even the humble carts which carried goods in the City,' Earle claimed, 'did not evade the attention of the accumulator.'[18] As we will see, the mounting regulation over the number of cart licences—called carrooms—produced a different sort of carman who capitalised on the carting trade by accruing carrooms and hiring them out to others. In reference to the growing debate regarding wage labour in early modern England, Stephenson recently argued that mid-seventeenth century London witnessed the emergence of large-scale building contractors who acted as middlemen to labourers in their employ.[19] This has distinct echoes in the carting trade. As we will see, many carmen—and carwomen—were wealthy individuals who owned carts and employed others to labour on their behalf.

The main argument of this chapter is that the occupational group known as 'the carmen' cannot be neatly categorised into the apolitical multitudes of London's poor. To begin, the first section introduces the background and chronology of the carrying trades in early modern London. The second section explores conflicting discourses of carting to shed light upon overlooked accounts that showcase the carmen's civic participation in various City institutions. The third section homes in on the slippery and opaque boundaries that separated various carrying trades to demonstrate that occupational labels were politically charged in London's civic culture. The concluding section looks at how the Fellowship of Carmen struggled for incorporation in the final decade of the seventeenth century, focusing upon the language and rhetorics used in petitions to legitimise their claim for a royal charter. The carmen's participation in various levels of civic culture demonstrates that City politics

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[17] Rappaport, *Worlds Within Worlds*, 173; Archer, *The Pursuit of* Stability,189; Jeremy Boulton, *Neighbourhood and Society: A London Suburb in the Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 72, 118-119; Paul Griffiths briefly discusses the City's regulation of cart licences but does not comment on the carmen's economic backgrounds, *Lost Londons: Change, Crime, and Control in the Capital City, 1550-1660* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 98-100.
[18] Peter Earle, *The Making of the English Middle Class* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 76-77.
[19] Judy Stephenson, '"Real" wages? Contractors, workers and pay in London building trades, 1650-1800,' *Economic History Review* 71, no. 1 (2018): 106-132.

was not confined to the engagement of formal citizens but a wide range of free and non-free Londoners.

I.   London's carmen

When the carmen's fraternity was formed in 1517, only forty carts were permitted to haul goods within the City.[20] However, by 1600, four hundred carts were licenced in London.[21] This number was slightly increased to 420 in 1654.[22] By 1700, a further 120 carts were approved to transport commodities in the City, bringing the total number of licensed carts close to six hundred.[23] The soaring number of licensed carts in London—increasing more than tenfold in the sixteenth century—is impressive, even by London's standards of expansion during the period. The number of carts carrying goods in the City multiplied at a faster rate than the population of London itself.

The growing number of carts in London in the early modern period is indicative of the expansion of commercial trade in the City. Overseas commerce increased considerably in the seventeenth century; there was a marked increase of imported and exported goods in London, as well as the creation of new industries and commercial networks across the globe.[24] However, many imported commodities had only short distances to travel. London was the centre of consumerism in seventeenth-century England; the volume of goods leaving and entering the City to/from other regions across Britain expanded alongside the development of road networks and coastal trade.[25] The burgeoning population in London generated increased spending for staple necessities: agricultural goods were carted through the City gates from local counties, and raw materials like stone and timber were lugged in

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[20] LMA, COL/CA/01/01/03, f. 124b; LMA, COL/AD/01/13, f. 38b-40.
[21] LMA, COL/CA/01/01/20, f. 120.
[22] LMA, COL/CC/01/01/41x, f. 102.
[23] LMA, COL/CC/01/01/51, f. 93. This number does not include brewers' drays and non-regulated commercial carts in the City. Rakers' carts were also not included in the post-1600 tallies. However, their carts were licensed by Christ's Hospital. For the 1586 ordinances of carmen under Christ's Hospital, see LMA, COL/CC/01/01/21, f. 386.
[24] Ben Coates, *The Impact of the English Civil War on the Economy of London, 1642-50* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2004), 6. For growth in international trade in Tudor and early Stuart London, see Stephen Alford, *London's Triumph: Merchants, Adventurers, and Money in Shakespeare's City* (London: Bloomsbury Press, 2017).
[25] Coates, *The Impact of the Civil war*, 11.

by the waggon-load to sustain the incessant construction of new buildings within and without the City walls.

One of the most significant imports in London in the seventeenth century was coal from Newcastle—or 'sea-coal' as it was known to contemporaries. Towards the end of the sixteenth century, coal largely replaced wood in London's fireplaces and furnaces.[26] Harding estimates that from 1600 onward, London consumed about one ton of coal per person annually.[27] Most of the City's coal supply was mined in North East England and shipped to London wharves and transported throughout the City. Many of these wharves were outside the boundaries of the City. By the mid-seventeenth century, petitions claimed to represent wharf operators—called wharfingers—on the Thames from as far afield as Surrey, Kent, and Essex.[28] The principal purveyors of sea-coal in the City were members of the Company of Woodmongers, later known as the Fuellers. As the carmen's main economic rivals in cart transport in the City, the Woodmongers—who were normally wealthier individuals—have traditionally been construed as the antagonist in the Carmen's story.[29]

The prime point of contention between groups participating in the carriage trades concerned 'carrooms'—that is, the licence to operate a cart for hire. Despite the steady growth of London's economy, magistrates strived to limit the number of carrooms to 400 in order to moderate perceptions of increasing traffic congestion. The cap on carrooms made them valuable commodities. In the 1620s, they were reportedly sold for fifty or sixty pounds each.[30] More controversially, the legal meaning of a carroom was vigorously debated throughout the period. According to the City, a carroom was the *privilege* to operate a cart. By 1582, each new cart was assigned a number—much like modern licence plates—that could be removed for a number of infractions.[31] The carmen, however, maintained that a carroom was a *right* and should be considered part of an individual's property, something which could be purchased, gifted, or passed between generations. This distinction

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[26] William M. Cavert, *The Smoke of London* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 23-28.
[27] Vanessa Harding, 'The Population of London, 1550-1700: a review of the published evidence,' *The London Journal* 15, no. 2 (1990): 11-28.
[28] PA, HL/PO/JO/10/1/62.
[29] See, for example, George Unwin, *The Gilds and Companies of London* (London: Methuen, 1908), 355-358; Bennett, *The Carmen*, 46-54; Chris Kyle, 'Parliament and the Politics of Carting in Early Stuart London,' *The London Journal* 27, no. 2 (2002): 1-11.
[30] PA, HL/PO/JO/10/1/14.
[31] LMA, COL/CC/01/01/22, f. 326.

underpinned the century-long conflict that embroiled different groups engaged in carrying trades in the City and suburbs.

Fraternity of Freemen

From the establishment of their fraternity in 1517, carmen were meant to be freemen of London. Many carmen served apprenticeships and belonged to other companies in the City. Members of the fraternity were usually male cart-owners who transported company goods or were hired by others to convey merchandise throughout the City. Suburban and other non-free carters were also allowed to join the brotherhood, though they were not made free upon joining. Most importantly, the ordinances stipulated that only freemen members of the fraternity could hire out carts for commercial carriage within the City, suburbs and liberties of London.[32]

The idea of a carmen's fraternity was conceived by Thomas Newman, an innholder and cart-owner. Alongside fourteen other cart-owners, he struck a deal with the Lord Mayor and Aldermen to provide sufficient carts for the Royal household and to 'clense, purge and kepe clene all the Streets and lanes' of London. In return, the men would be allowed to form a fellowship, in which they could annually elect four rulers to oversee the fraternity. They were also granted the privilege of transporting commercial goods—food, fuel, wine, oil, fabric and other merchandise—within the City and liberties.[33] In theory, the deal was beneficial for both sides. The City would have two main concerns—royal purveyance and scavenging—taken care of, and cart-owners would obtain the privileges of a civic fellowship.[34]

Like the porters, watermen and other 'low' quasi-skilled transport organisations, the fraternity did not enjoy the social or political status of 'formal' guilds and companies in the City. Importantly, they did not possess a monopoly over the vehicular transport of goods in London. Non-members who were freemen were still allowed to use a cart to haul their own goods and merchandise. Even within the membership, there were no precise conditions for admittance. As mentioned above, suburban foreigners who joined the fraternity retained their non-free status. Moreover, the fraternity had no regulatory jurisdiction over their

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[32] LMA, COL/AD/01/13, f. 38b-40; COL/CA/01/01/03, f. 119b.

[33] LMA, COL/CA/01/01/03, f. 124b; COL/AD/01/13, f. 38b-40.

[34] For more detail on the medieval origins and ordinances of the carting trade, see Martin, *Transport for London,* chapter four; for the politics of royal purveyance in Tudor and Stuart London, see Pauline Croft, 'Parliament, Purveyance and the City of London, 1598-1608,' *Parliamentary History* 4, no. 1 (1985): 9-35.

members. Perhaps due to their stunted oversight concerning transport into and within the City, complaints surfaced within a few years of the fraternity's foundation, including the fellowship's 'outrageous prices taken for carriage.'[35]

Within a decade of the brotherhood's establishment, several members associated with wheeled transport made an ambitious attempt to strengthen its control over the carrying trades in the City and suburbs. In 1528, three founding members of the fraternity—John Scott, Robert Anderson, and Thomas Cure—put forward new regulations for those who employed carts in the City.[36] Scott was described as a woodmonger, and the others represented 'colliers, vitellers and fuellars dwellyng and resortynge to the same citie.'[37] Their appeal was successful. The Court of Aldermen approved several new ordinances that increased the fraternity's influence over civic transport. At the heart of the changes was the extension of the fraternity's powers to regulate those who lived within twenty-four miles of the City, as well mandating all rakers and owners of wood wharves who kept carts to join the brotherhood.[38] Despite the court's approval of the order, complaints continued to be logged in the repertories in the second half of the sixteenth century.[39]

At the same time, the Woodmongers began to exercise greater influence in the politics of transport in the City. At the behest of the Aldermen, they assumed authority over the transfer of carrooms in 1548 and kept the register of licenced cars.[40] Soon after, the fraternity made several complaints about the Woodmongers' oversight, asking the Court of Aldermen for a reduction in quarterage fees.[41] While the court granted their request, the Aldermen enjoined the carmen 'to be obedient' and 'to comen redilly at all tymes at the lawfull somons of the Wardens of the […] Woodmongers.' However, the Woodmongers' control over the fraternity was not ironclad; the fraternity still possessed an independent corporate identity.

In conjunction with these developments, the mood of the Court changed as well. Aldermanic orders were no longer concerned with scavenging and royal purveyance but grew increasingly anxious of the growing number of carmen in the City. In 1575, a

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[35] LMA, COL/CA/01/01/05, f. 13b; COL/CA/01/01/05, f. 207b.
[36] LMA, COL/AD/01/14, f. 90b-91.
[37] LMA, COL/AD/01/14, f. 90b-91; COL/CA/01/01/08, f. 132b.
[38] LMA, COL/CA/01/01/08, f. 132b.
[39] See, for example, LMA, COL/CA/01/01/11, f. 188b; COL/CA/01/01/12, f. 297; COL/CA/01/01/12, f. 329; COL/CA/01/01/13, f. 276.
[40] LMA, COL/CA/01/01/11, f. 429.
[41] See, for example, LMA, COL/CA/01/01/11, ff. 465b-66, ff. 505b-506.

committee was appointed to ascertain how many carts were in the City, and to design new orders to stem their growth.[42] In 1580, the Woodmongers' control over the carmen was formalised. The Court maintained their decision was to avoid 'the excessive number of carremen and for the better government of theyre companye.' However, foreigners were still allowed to join the fellowship, and even keep apprentices as long as indentures lasted over five years 'and that suche servants be entered in the books of the Hall.'[43] The presence of foreigners is not necessarily surprising; although the Woodmongers were described as company several times in the order, the organisation was officially regarded as a fellowship.[44]

The overall language of the order betrays the City's distrust of the carmen. The Court hoped the Woodmongers' governance would aid the 'reformacon of [the carmen's] unruliness and dysorders' and implemented new ordinances to remedy the price of carriage and other 'inconveniens.' Theft was also an issue. The court claimed that 'cityzens goods sometymes miscarry by neglygence or untruthe of carmen,' and anticipated that the Woodmongers would have more success in 'the fynding of goodds imbeasled amonge them.'[45] The increase in regulatory oversight over transport in the second half of the sixteenth century was likely one part of increasing civic control over semi-skilled groups who played major roles in the London economy.[46]

The Woodmongers' governance was brief. Only two years later, three men—Robert Shardlowe, William Cornewall and Edward Drane—approached Christ's Hospital with a proposal to put the government of carmen and carts in their care. The aldermen readily assented; quarterage dues, fines and other profits associated with regulating the carmen would provide adequate funding for the Hospital. Indeed, the scheme benefitted both Christ's Hospital and the City— not to mention the men who brokered the deal. Shardlowe, Cornewall and Drane were deemed 'honest and painefull' men by the Hospital and gifted a pension of £4 for 'bringinge this benefitte to Christs Hospitall.'[47]

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42 LMA, COL/CA/01/01/19, f. 23.
43 LMA, COL/CA/01/01/20, f. 120.
44 That the Woodmongers were still a fellowship when they were first given control over the carmen is confirmed later by a 1643 Aldermanic report: 'That about sixty years ago the Government was transferred by the Court of Aldermen to the Company of Woodmongers being then a fraternatie and no otherwise incorporated.' LMA, COL/CA/01/01/56, f. 148.
45 LMA, COL/CA/01/01/20, f. 120.
46 See Rappaport, *Worlds within Worlds*, 60.
47 LMA, CLC/210/E/001/MS12829, f. 17; LMA, COL/CA/01/01/020, f. 320b.

The 1586 Act of Common Council that confirmed Christ's Hospital's oversight of the carmen introduced many new regulations for City transport. The ordinances were elaborate and far-reaching. Magistrates went as far as to impose fines on carts who were 'heard to Creake or Pype for drines and want of greasing in the Nave.'[48] Nonetheless, they remained ambivalent in their responses to foreigner carmen. For instance, the Act re-stipulated that non-free carmen were forbidden from hiring out their carts in the City. However, freemen unable to drive his/her own cart could hire a foreigner to labour for them. Moreover, foreigners who owned both a 'street cart' and 'long cart' possessed *de facto* rights of freemen to carry goods in and out of the City. Long carts were specifically used for Royal Purveyance, and it is worth mentioning that an earlier ordinance mandated all private wharf operators to maintain at least one long cart for Royal purveyance.[49] This suggests that while the City appeared to crack down on non-free carmen, foreigner wharf operators could continue employing carts in the City without actually being free.

At this point, it appears that members of the fellowship were a mixture of freemen and foreigners. Like earlier orders in the sixteenth century, the Act specified freemen carmen from their foreign brethren, and dedicated significant time to devise separate regulations for each.[50] Even though the 1586 Act of Common Council mandated that all carmen had to complete an apprenticeship before they could drive a cart, the Court of Aldermen continued to grant carrooms to those who had not completed apprenticeships and/or were not freemen under Christ's Hospital governance. For example, the Aldermen gave Simon Nycholson a carroom in 1588 without offering any explanation.[51] This blatant disregard for their own rules demonstrates that we should not consider official regulations at face-value. It is one thing to make an ordinance, and another to enforce it.

In the 1590s, tensions escalated between the governors of Christ's Hospital and the carmen. At the start of the seventeenth century, certain members successfully petitioned for the carmen to be re-amalgamated with the Woodmongers in 1605, and together, they were incorporated by a Royal charter the same year. Instigated by a combination of company lobbying and growing anxiety about traffic control, the City pursued the new amalgamation

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[48] LMA, COL/CC/01/01/22, f. 326. A 'nave' is the central part or block of a spoked wheel, 'nave, n.,' *OED Online* (Oxford University Press), accessed 27 September 2018, http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/125448?rskey=xAg7jf&result=1&isAdvanced=false#eid.
[49] LMA, COL/CA/01/01/10, f. 267.
[50] LMA, COL/CC/01/01/22, f. 326; LMA, COL/CA/01/01/20, f. 320b.
[51] LMA, COL/CA/01/01/22, f. 65; COL/CA/01/01/23, f. 269.

energetically.[52] In the year the Charter was granted, an Act of Common Council ordered all freemen Londoners who employed a cart in the City to translate to the company. A year later, the Court of Aldermen mandated that all freemen who refused to translate to the Woodmongers would not only be barred from using a cart, but incarcerated at Newgate 'untill they shall conforme themselves or become bound not to use anye Carres within the Libertyes of this Citty hereafter.'[53] As Ashton notes, the City's vigorous response to transferring carmen to the new company was uncharacteristic of their typical nonchalance towards translation.[54] To civic magistrates, there was no doubt that traffic regulation was intimately connected to the broader issues that plagued the overcrowded City.

The City's vigorous approach to transfer free carmen to the Company of Woodmongers resulted in the emergence of a new category of illegitimate carriage. While the threat of foreigner carmen did not completely fade from magistrates' attention, the Court of Aldermen focused their efforts upon individuals who were free of other companies and refused to translate to the Woodmongers. For example, John Blinkhorne, a free carman of the Carpenters' Company, was called before magistrates on seven separate occasions between 1616 and 1618 regarding his illegal use of carts.[55] In the minds of civic magistrates, there was a clear re-definition of who was considered a threat to the 'well ordering' and 'good government' of the streets. As the Woodmongers complained in 1607: 'the disorders and abuses of Carrmen and such as used Carrs and Carts [that are not free of the Woodmongers] are not reformed but through their refractorie and uncorrigable obstinacy was like to grow bad to worse.'[56] The boundaries that separated licensed carriage from unlicensed carriage were redrawn. Freemen cart owners who lived in the City but were not free of the Woodmongers were branded illegitimate and foreign. This not only adds a degree of complexity to the politics of licenced transport in the City but overturns the traditional 'orderly City' versus 'disorderly suburbs' narrative that has dominated London historiography.[57]

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52 Robert Ashton, *The City and the Court 1603*-1643 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 58.
53 LMA, COL/CA/01/01/26(II), f. 502b.
54 Ashton, *The City and the* Court, 58-70.
55 LMA, COL/CA/01/01/33, f. 150b; f. 153; f. 170b; f. 178b; f. 182b; f. 245; f. 310.
56 LMA, COL/CA/01/01/27, f. 344.
57 Joseph Ward has also questioned the 'disorderly suburbs' perspective, see *Metropolitan Communities* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1997), 27-29.

However, many carmen did translate to the Woodmongers' Company immediately after the Act: James Deble transferred from the Clothworkers' Company in May 1606; Richard Johnson from the Pewterers a month later in June; William Bryan transferred soon after from the Innholders in July, to name a few.[58] As members of an incorporated company, translated carmen enjoyed the rights of that status. The Common Council Act that combined the groups insisted:

> Any p(er)son who use the trade of a carreman or
> keepe use or worke any carre or carres carte or cartes
> within the cytie or the libertyes thereof shallbe free of
> unto the said company of Woodmongers [and will
> enjoy] the same privlidges as any other free brother of
> the company.[59]

Such 'privileges' were no small matter. A royal charter was a legal monopoly for a trade or occupation, thus providing a shield against economic competition for members across the company hierarchy. Carmen who translated to the company were free of a Crown-endorsed occupation; their civic status and belonging in the City powerfully buttressed by the collective identity of the corporation to which they belonged.

The carmen continued under the oversight of the Woodmongers for nearly half a century more. However, the union was not without tension. Disagreements over carrooms, jurisdiction, and quarterage dues led to several protracted disputes in the 1620s and 1640s (discussed in depth in section 3). In 1667, the Woodmongers forfeited their charter.[60] Nonetheless, certain members presenting themselves as carmen took steps to ensure that they would not be ousted from the freedom altogether.[61] Led by two wealthy carroom owners, John Hill and William Turner, a group of men petitioned Christ's Hospital for their support to form a fellowship of carmen in 1668. The Hospital accepted, and in April that year, the Court of Aldermen ratified a 'Booke of Orders' that established the Fellowship of Free Carmen. The City was adamant that they remained under the authority of the City *vis-à-vis* Christ's Hospital. Seventeen articles establishing the Hospital's authority over the fellowship preceded its Orders, including the Hospital's executive power over traffic regulations, carrooms, and other matters. As such, the carmen did not possess the powers

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[58] LMA, COL/CA/01/01/27, f. 211b; COL/CA/01/01/27, f. 234; COL/CA/01/01/27, f. 222b.
[59] LMA, COL/CC/01/01/26, f. 390.
[60] TNA, SP 29/224 f. 88. LMA, COL/CA/01/01/72, f. 28b; f. 36; f. 66.
[61] LMA, COL/CA/01/01/72, f. 28b; f. 36; f. 66.

normally afforded to a London company. Nonetheless, their belonging in the City was sustained by the fellowship.[62]

II.   'a legion of devils'?

In pre-modern England, the word 'company' had several meanings. Broadly speaking, the term denoted 'companionship,' 'fellowship,' or 'society' in the sense of a group of individuals gathered together.[63] By the fourteenth century, however, 'company' acquired a more particular meaning to describe formal institutional bodies—such as trade guilds or City incorporations.[64] In London, the formal title of a company usually designated an incorporated body of free craftsmen or merchants. A 'fellowship,' however, was used to describe 'a voluntary Society' that normally comprised labourers or unskilled workers.[65]

Londoners used different corporate labels when describing the carmen, including 'fraternity,' 'fellowship,' 'brotherhood,' and 'company.' These terms, however, were often deployed imprecisely. In 1528, when the Fraternity of St. Katherine compiled new ordinances for the fellowship, the individuals leading the charge were recorded as 'John Scott […] and dyvers other of their *Company* that occupietth cartes within the citie of London and Suburbes of the same citie.'[66] As Withington points out, however, the distinction between institutional (formal) and social (informal) company was not necessarily sharp, and the ordinance could be describing 'company' in the social sense.[67] In 1601, however, the Privy Council wrote a letter to the Lord Mayor regarding the 'abuses and misgovernment of the companie of Carmen in the city of London.'[68] This label—*the*

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[62] GL, MS 4907/1, ff. 4-10. For a full transcription of the 'Booke of Orders,' see Bennet, 57-62.

[63] 'company, n.,' *OED Online* (Oxford University Press), accessed June 8, 2018, http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/37420?rskey=U8ZTRC&result=2&isAdvanced=false#eid.

[64] Phil Withington, 'Company and Sociability in Early Modern England,' *Social History* 32, no. 3 (2007): 291-307. For a full discussion of the culture of guilds and livery companies in the middle ages, see Gervase Rosser, *The Art of Solidarity in the Middle Ages: Guilds in England, 1250-1550* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015); for their emergence in the fourteenth century, see Caroline Barron, *London in the Later Middle Ages: Government and People 1200-1500* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 199-237.

[65] Rappaport, *Worlds within Worlds*, 60; Archer, *Pursuit of Stability*, 173; see also.

[66] LMA, COL/AD/01/13, ff. 38b-40. My emphasis.

[67] Withington, *Company and Sociability*, 300.

[68] John Roche Dasent (ed.), *Acts of the Privy Council of England 1601-1604* (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1907), 32: 421.

Company of Carmen—was also incorrect. From 1582 to 1604, the carmen were under the oversight of Christ's Hospital, and by no means an independent company. These inconsistencies should not be brushed off as quibbles over semantics. Each label reflected a dramatically different standing in the corporate hierarchy. Although markers like 'fellowship' afforded the group a collective identity of labourers, a 'company' carried more political freight as a body of freemen.

Nonetheless, scholarship has lumped carmen into the broad category of poor labourers without questioning the implications of their civic status.[69] For example, Porter leaves carmen out of 'the large metropolitan midriff […] of solid citizens,' grouping them instead among London's 'labouring masses.'[70] His view has a long lineage. According to many contemporary accounts, carmen were poor, unskilled labourers. They were described as 'mean conditioned people' that belonged amongst 'the baser sort.'[71] As befitted contemporary caricatures of the poor, carmen were perceived as 'rude,' 'unmannerly,' 'insolent' and 'surlie.'[72] By the sixteenth century, the occupation was tantamount to incivility: a 'carter' was a man of low birth or breeding; to act 'carterly' was 'to behave in a rude or boorish manner.'[73]

Such hostile perceptions of carmen can be situated within the large discourse denouncing civic disorder in the burgeoning City and suburbs. In 1663, the Lord Mayor warned London constables against carmen, regarding them as 'the meaner sort of people. […] borne up in undutifulness,' and 'who, by their rudeness and insolent behaviour to persons of quality riding or walking through the City, compel them to trade in the suburbs.'[74] The disruptive practices of carmen, like hackney coachmen and other operators of wheeled transport, troubled what Jenner aptly describes as the 'deferential choreography

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[69] See, for example, Peter Earle, *A City Full of People: Men and Women of London, 1650-1750* (London: Methuen, 1994), 15; Rappaport, *Worlds within Worlds*, 171-73; Jeremy Boulton, *Neighbourhood and Society: A London Suburb in the Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 119.

[70] Roy Porter, *London: A Social History* (London: Penguin, 2000), 49.

[71] Vincent LeBlanc, *The world surveyed, or the Famous voyages & travailes of Vincent le Blanc* (1660), 35; Patrick Hennay, *Two Elegies* (1619), D1.

[72] See, for example, LMA, CLA/048/PS/01, f. 52; Horace, *Poems of Horace* [translated by 'several persons'] (1666), 224; Bartholomew Lane, *A modest vindication* (1683), 2.

[73] 'carter, n.,' *OED Online* (Oxford University Press), accessed May 3, 2018, http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/28280?rskey=7XESx3&result=1&isAdvanced=false#eid; 'carterly, adj.,' *OED* Online (Oxford University Press), accessed May 3, 2018, http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/28283?redirectedFrom=carterly#eid.

[74] TNA, SP 29/69, f. 20.

that was supposed to govern London traffic.'[75] That the carmen's disorder displaced trade to the suburbs was particularly heinous; like the market offenses of engrossing and forestalling, any interference to the thriving economy of London was zealously prosecuted in the early modern capital.

Yet, the carmen's status as freemen produced very different representations of the group. Although their occupational identity was poorly regarded by contemporaries, their civic identity incorporated them into wider discourses that lauded the virtuousness and integrity of London's citizens. As the following section demonstrates, there were many accounts of carmen that praised their honesty, skilfulness, industry, and other virtues associated with the culture of citizenship. They also reveal that carmen participated actively in civic culture, and fulfilled important civic duties ranging from training apprentices to cleaning the streets. These accounts—both fictionalised and historical—have important political implications. As we will see in the final section, the carmen drew upon the different ways they participated in civic culture to justify their claim for incorporation in the final decade of the seventeenth century.

Skilful employment

Concerned with pedestrian safety and the good ordering of the streets, a 1586 Act of Common Council forbade carmen from riding on their carts. They were instead ordered to 'leade [their horses] by the Coller' on foot. This mandate, while not strictly followed, meant that carmen trudged alongside their horses, reinforcing elite prejudices that they shared many characteristics with their equine companions. Indeed, the figurative hybridisation of carmen and quadrupeds was a common theme in descriptions of carmen throughout the seventeenth century.[76] In 1656, Richard Flecknoe described a brawl between a drayman and a carman on his way to Westminster:

> Such a fight they did present there
> as was 'twixt Lapithe and Centaur.[77]

It is not coincidence that Flecknoe described the carman as the monstrous half-horse-half-man of Grecian mythology. In 1636, Robert Chamberlain scornfully declared: 'All Carmen are as arrant beasts as their horses, and deserve indeed no other imployment than to carry

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[75] Jenner, 'Circulation and Disorder,' 44.

[76] For similar comments of wheeled-transport workers in the eighteenth century, see Thomas Almeroth-Williams, 'Horses & Livestock in Hanoverian London' (Ph.D. thesis, University of York, 2013), 393.

[77] Richard Flecknoe, *The Diarium* (1656), 34. Original emphasis.

one another to Tyburne.'[78] In John Dryden's 1679 adaptation of *Troilus and Cressida*, Pandarus scoffs his niece's positive opinion of Achilles, calling him 'a Carman; A beast of burden, a very camel.'[79]

Perceptions of carmen as low, simple-minded labourers can be glimpsed in contemporary literature throughout the seventeenth century. One commentator merged them into the larger group of unskilled Londoners who 'hourely attend [warehouses] to be set on worke.'[80] Edmund Wingate noted in 1658 that it would be unseemly for a carman 'or other mechanical person' to bring suit in the Palace Court, due to his background in manual labour.[81] In 1690, the City passed harsh judgment on the group:

> Their imployment requires stout bodyes and naturaly
> renders their minds unthinking and unheeding, rough and
> sturdy, untractable and ungovernable by themselves or by
> one another.[82]

According to civic magistrates, all carmen needed was absent-minded strength. Driving a cart was categorised as a base, unskilled labour to undermine any claims of the carmen's competencies as tradesmen. However, before accepting the City's verdict uncritically, it is important we situate such remarks within their political context. The statement was put together by a committee comprised of Aldermen and representatives of Christ's Hospital to oppose the fellowship's campaign for independent incorporation. Directed at the Attorney-General who was considering the case, the language is saturated in rhetorics of disorder to lobby the Crown on the City's behalf. As discussed in the final section, the City's chief strategy to disrupt the carmen's incorporation was to present the group as unskilled, lawless and ungovernable.

The talent required to cart goods in the City was in no way comparable to the artistry of a goldsmith, armourer, or other handicraft tradesman. However, it would be incorrect to regard carmen as completely void of skill. A 1586 Act of Common Council required carmen to complete apprenticeships before they could employ a cart. Although they did not make things or sell things as other freemen, apprenticeships imbued the occupation with a degree of status and legitimacy. The Act mandated that servants of carmen should be apprenticed for seven years 'or such time as the Governors [of Christ's Hospital] think right,' and

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[78] Robert Chamberlain, *The Booke of bulls* (1636), 33.
[79] William Shakespeare, *Troilus and Cressida*, adapted by John Dryden (1679), 9.
[80] Lewes Roberts, *The merchants mappe of commerce* (1638), 23.
[81] Edmund Wingate, *Maximes of Reason* (1658), 268.
[82] LMA, CLC/210/E/002/MS12830, 102-103 (paginated manuscript).

presented and registered by the Hospital Court.[83] Completing a *seven-year* apprenticeship was important. As William Scott explained, a 'complete citizen' was 'a man whom seven yeeres service having made a Citizen' traded 'just, pleasing, profitably.'[84] Scholars have posited that indentures that lasted for less or more than seven years usually signified 'informal' and/or domestic servitude in lieu of 'formal,' skill-based training.[85] A seven-year term correlated to the entrance requirements for the City freedom, and set carmen apart from other labouring groups in London, such as ticket porters and tankard-bearers, who, it was thought did not need to learn skills before plying their trade. Like 'formal' companies in the City, the Hospital was ordered to keep records as to when an apprentice was first engaged, and whether an apprentice was turned over to another master during his indenture.

The custom of binding carmen apprentices for seven years continued after the carmen were amalgamated with the Woodmongers. Although apprenticeship records for the company have not survived, indenture dissolutions in the Lord Mayor's Court show that many young men entered into apprenticeships with the company to become freemen of the City. In 1608, for example, Gabriel Baker was indentured as a carman to John Jackson, citizen and woodmonger, for seven years for his freedom. Similarly, Alexander Horne, a carman, was apprenticed to John West, a woodmonger, three decades later.[86] While most apprenticeships in the Lord Mayor's Court ended in dissolution, this does not mean that all carman-woodmonger relationships were ill-fated. Edward Miles, for example, was recorded as a 'Carman Citizen and Woodmonger in his will in 1657.[87]

Most likely, the principal motivation for a carman to undergo an apprenticeship was to fulfil the requirement to become a freeman of London, and thus drive his cart without the risk of civic prosecution. However, learning the skills of the trade from other carmen was

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[83] LMA, COL/CC/01/01/22, f. 326.

[84] William Scott, *An essay of drapery, or the complete citizen,* (1635), 146.

[85] 'Pauper apprenticeships' normally did not follow seven-year terms and did not include craft or skill-based training, see Pamela Sharpe, 'Poor children as apprentices in Colyton, 1598-1830,' *Continuity and Change* 6, no. 2 (1991): 253-270. For more on apprenticeship lengths in early modern London, see Chris Minns and Patrick Wallis, 'Rules and Reality: Quantifying the Practice of Apprenticeship in Early Modern England,' *Economic History Review* 65, no. 2 (2012): 556-579; Patrick Wallis, 'Labor, Law, and Training in Early Modern London: Apprenticeship and the City's Institutions,' *Journal of British Studies* 51, no. 4 (2012): 791-819.

[86] Michael Scott (ed.), *Apprenticeship Disputes in the Lord Mayor's Court of London 1573-1723* (London: The British Record Society, 2016), 1: 128; 537.

[87] TNA, PROB 11/271/104.

surely important as well.[88] The Lord Mayor's Court adjudicated several cases in which a carman apprentice petitioned to dissolve his apprenticeship because his master failed to properly instruct him in the trade. For example, Michael Bastion was successfully discharged from his apprenticeship after a year of service in 1689, citing a lack of training. Similarly, in 1695, John Netherwood cut ties with his master, John Wyers, because he was not able to sufficiently instruct him in the trade.[89] Even if a lack of instruction was a form of 'legal fiction' to dissolve an indenture contract for reasons hidden from the record, it is revealing that the Court believed the explanation was valid. All carman cases citing a lack of instruction were successful; contemporaries acknowledged that skill and learning was essential to the carmen's trade.[90] However, such attitudes might have been a late development. Cases citing a lack of instruction only appear after the 1670s, which suggests that the occupational status of carmen might have grown only after they were granted free fellowship status.

Indeed, contemporaries did seem to think that a degree of expertise was required to safely transport London's commodities in narrow, over-crowded streets. This took more than brute strength—navigational skills were needed, especially as traffic restrictions grew more complex throughout the period. The carman's aptitude in his trade was in the interest of public safety. Great 'care' was needed to avoid collisions with other vehicles, as well as prevent accidents with pedestrians who used the same thoroughfares. To avoid 'the danger of unruly horses,' the Common Council decreed in 1647 that only 'able persons' and 'none under the age of Eighteen years' should be employed as carmen.[91] Complaints that inexperienced boys drove carts in the City suggest that the abilities of older, experienced carmen were recognised by their contemporaries. In 1687, for instance, the inhabitants of

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[88] Wallis has concluded that less than half (forty-one per cent) of non-pauper apprenticeships in seventeenth-century London concluded in the Freedom; however, an often-cited cause for early termination was that an apprentice felt that he/she had sufficiently acquired the skills needed for his/her trade after a few years, see 'Apprenticeship and Training in Premodern England,' *The Journal of Economic History* 68, no. 3 (2008): 832-861, esp. 839, 844.

[89] Michael Scott, ed., *Apprenticeship Disputes in the Lord Mayor's Court*, 1: 703; 2: 1020.

[90] As discussed in detail in chapter 4, it is important that we interpret dissolution cases with a grain of salt; the reasons apprentices cited in dissolution cases—such as a lack of instruction or care—were not always reflective of reality. However, as Wallis and Scott have pointed out, it would have been easier to cite non-enrolment—that is, the failure of a master to enrol an apprentice upon binding—as most dissolution cases did, see, for example, Wallis, 'Labor, Law, and Training in Early Modern London: Apprenticeship and the City's Institutions,' *Journal of British Studies* 51, no. 4 (2012): 791-819.

[91] *And being above -- xxiijc. weight upon every hundred ijd [...]* (1647).

Thames Street petitioned against the system of turn keeping, citing 'the First Carrs sometimes proves to be a boy, not fitting to carry a Leakage load, or other goods that require strength care and conduct.'[92] Finally, carmen also had to learn skills to care for their equine companions. In 1660, a pamphlet 'The perfect and experienced farrier' was published for 'gentleman-troopers […] carmen,' and others, containing a list of remedies for horse-related ailments. Stabling and care of horses was a set of transferable skills valued by early modern society and conveyed a degree of status in London's transport-dependent commercial world.[93]

Citizen-Soldiers

The physical requirements of guiding a heavy-laden cart and horses on foot also meant that carmen needed a measure of physical stamina and strength.[94] It is not surprising, therefore, that contemporaries often commented on the carman's physical stature and assertive, if not belligerent, temperament. They were 'strong,' 'tough,' 'courageous,' and 'stout.'[95] These perceptions had roots in Galenic medicine. Carmen were sometimes associated with a choleric temperament, a masculine disposition prone to anger and rage due to a humoral overabundance of yellow bile.[96] In 1691, Thomas Tryon reasoned that if a 'sanguine youth' was made to follow the occupation of a carman 'or [an]other robustick Trade,' he would 'become more cholorick.'[97] Similarly, in Henry Peacham's *Coach and Sedan,* the carman is described as a 'lustie tall fellow' and 'red-hayr'd,' physical traits that were often associated to individuals with choleric proclivities.[98]

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[92] LMA, CLC/210/E/ 002/MS12830.

[93] See Jenner, 'Circulation and Disorder,' 52; Tim Meldrum, *Domestic Service and Gender, 1660-1750: Life and Work in the London Household* (Oxford: Routledge, 2000), 174-176.

[94] For a similar discussion on hackney coachmen, see Jenner, 'Circulation and Disorder,' 44-45.

[95] See, for example, *The courteous carman, and the amorous maid* [1678-1681]; *A pleasant jigg betwixt Jack and his mistress: or, The young carman's courage cool'd by the suddain approach, of his master* [1684-1685]; Edward Gulpin, *Skialetheia* (1598), D4.

[96] For a background on Galenic medicine in early modern Europe, see Susan Broomhall, *Early Modern Emotions: An Introduction* (London: Routledge, 2016); for early modern perceptions of choler and aggression, see, Ruth Leila Anderson, *Elizabethan Psychology and Shakespeare's Plays* (New York: Haskell House, 1964), 75, 176.

[97] Thomas Tryon, *A way to health, long life and happiness* (1691), 11.

[98] Henry Peacham, *Coach and Sedan […]* (1636), B4. For early modern perceptions of red-hair and choler, see Mark Albert Johnston, *Beard Fetish in Early Modern England: Sex, Gender, and Registers of Value* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011), 79-85.

The aggressive nature of choleric carmen fuelled hostile attitudes towards them. They were notorious for reckless driving and frequent brawls with other drivers. In 1698, one contemporary observed:

> Carmen and draymen oft-times have great Lists,
> And when they drive, are hard put to their shifts
> Oft-times in narrow Lanes there's such a Throng,
> They hazard sore their Lives to pass along;
> They pull, they lift, they curse, they bawl and flight;
> Sometimes to downright Blows they fall, and sight
> All blood and Dirt, with Hair all torn, they've been,
> And hardly can be parted, they're so keen.[99]

Such vivid portrayals of carmen viciously jockeying for the right-of-way share similarities with real-life accounts. In 1693, two carmen—Adam Martyn and Richard Norman—were tried for the death of Jane Austin on Cannon Street. The defendants were 'driving their Carts hastily along the Street, striving which should get foremost; and Martin's Cart drove Norman's Cart upon the Child, and squeezed it to death.'[100] Urban carriers like Martyn and Norman were dependent upon accumulating as many jobs as possible to make ends meet. Such unforgiving financial incentives suggest that the carmen's infamy for reckless driving and bloody fistfights can be attributed to the competition they faced with other transport workers, as well as the need to rush between jobs—their 'great Lists'—to keep their employers contented.[101] However, contemporaries were not sympathetic. The court presiding over Martyn and Norman's case reminded the jury 'that tho the Prisoners were about their lawful Imployment […] they ought to be careful how they drive their Carts.' As such, the court recommended that they make an example of the girl's tragic death: 'it might be a warning to others, and they must not think to escape.' The jurors were swayed, and the men were branded for manslaughter.

Their strength and aggression also made them good candidates for military service. In 1642, Donald Lupton named carmen amongst the trades 'most commendable for warlike imployment.' They were 'able, lusty, strong and hardy men' who were 'fit for service.'[102] It has been widely argued that participation in the military was part and parcel of the construction of civic identity and masculinity in early modern English cities.[103] Military

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99 L. Menton, *Money masters all things* (1698), 83.
100 Proceedings, *LL*, t16930906-6, 6 September 1693, Adam Martyn and Richard Norman.
101 For the same on hackney coachmen, see Mark Jenner, 'Circulation and Disorder, 44-45.
102 Donald Lupton, *A warre-like treatise of the pike* (1642), 32.
103 Jonathan Barry, 'Bourgeois Collectivism? Urban Association and the Middling Sort,' in *The Middling Sort of People: Culture, Society and Politics in England, 1550-1800*, ed.

service provided urban dwellers an opportunity to express civic pride and attachment, as well as their dedication to protect and preserve the urban commonwealth.[104] In 1649, a group of carmen appealed to Parliament by reminding them of their service in the Civil Wars: 'the Carmen, who now doe become petitioners for a Charter, who have been all of them active for the Parliament, and most of them out in their service, and ventured their lives.'[105] The carmen based their claim for incorporation on their military efforts to defend the City. As Donagan suggests, 'citizenship and soldiership' were closely linked in post-civil war England.[106]

Moreover, horses and carts were instrumental to warfare. Edwards notes that 6,704 horses were collected in the early summer months of 1642 for the defence of the City, and a further 2,000 acquired by August.[107] London carmen's experienced draught horses and carts were particularly useful for the support of military efforts. In the same petition noted above, the writers stressed their refusal to provide support for the City leaders' counter-revolution in 1647, even at the Woodmongers' bidding:

> when the ever honoured and renowned Army [...] came
> marching towards London for the defence of the Parliament,
> the Woodmongers sent about to the Carmen, commanding
> their horses to help draw out the Gunnes to the Workes, to
> charge the Army, and keepe them out of the Citie, and
> because they refused, the Woodmongers threatened to cut
> out their Car-roomes.[108]

Jonathan Barry and Chris Brooks (London: Macmillan Press, 1994), 84; Claire Snyder, *Citizen-Soldiers and Manly Warriors: Military Service and Gender in the Civic Republican Tradition* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1999); David Lawrence, 'Great Yarmouth's Exercise: Honour, Masculinity and Civic Military Performance in Early Stuart England,' in Worth and Repute: *Valuing Gender in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe: Essays in Honour of Barbara Todd*, ed. Kim Kippen and Lori Woods (Toronto: CRRS, 2011), 365-390; Phil Withington, 'Citizens and Soldiers – the Renaissance Context,' *Journal of Early Modern History* 15, no. 1-2 (2011): 3-30; William Hunt, 'Civic Chivalry and the English Civil War,' in *The Transmission of Culture in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Anthony Grafton and Ann Blair (Philadelphia: University of Philadelphia Press, 1990), 204-237.
[104] Lawrence, 'Great Yarmouth's Exercise,' 374; Hunt, 'Civic Chivalry,' 205.
[105] Stephen Spratt, *The carmen's remonstrance [...]* (1649), C.
[106] Barbara Donagan, *War in England, 1642-1649* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 55.
[107] Peter Edwards, 'The Supply of Horses to the Parliamentarian and Royalist Armies in the English Civil War,' *Historical Research* 68, no. 165 (1995): 58; for carts and horses in military service more generally, see Edwards, *Horse and Man in Early Modern England* (London: Bloomsbury, 2007), 166-169.
[108] Stephen Spratt, *The carmen's remonstrance [...]* (1649), C.

Here, the carmen highlighted their centrality to the war effort, and their readiness to lay down their lives should and when the need arise. Printed in 1649, the petition would surely prick the ears of its parliamentary audience embroiled in the final stage of the Civil Wars.[109]

Cart Drivers and Cart Owners

Manual labour had its merits too. Although elite society snubbed labour-heavy employment, honest industry was well-regarded by many Londoners. Civic ethos expected freemen from all financial backgrounds to maintain themselves independent of poor relief; self-sufficiency afforded social credit and esteem even to those who lived on meagre wages. Carmen who struggled financially could gain some form of social standing by their ability to provide for themselves and their families through an honest calling. As Shepard comments: 'The defensive strategies that anticipated the negative associations of limited means principally rested on assertions of honesty rooted in painstaking industry and efforts to avoid dependence upon the relief of others.'[110] For example, one contemporary observed that his neighbour was 'a poor labouring man viz a carman and therby getteth his living honestlie and truilie […].'[111] Civic virtues such as honesty and industry enhanced an individual's social credit. In 1665, for instance, the Governors of Christ's Hospital granted a widow, Amy Beare, her deceased husband's carroom that had been confiscated by the Woodmongers 'during the Long Parliament.' Since she was a 'miserable poore Creature' who was 'altogether past labour,' they assigned Thomas Horth to employ her cart, as he was a 'poore man, an honest man, and [an] Ancient Carman.'[112]

Additionally, the carmen's labour was recognised as a key component of London's economy. While historians are yet to notice their mercantile importance to the urban commonwealth, it did not escape the appreciation of contemporaries. John Taylor's *The world runnes on wheeles: or oddes, betwixt carts and coaches* offers a hyperbolic comparison between carts and coaches to lobby support toward the watermen's crusade against their economic rivals, the hackney coachmen. While coaches are 'needless, upstart,

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[109] For London in the Civil Wars, see Stephen Porter (ed.), *London and the Civil War* (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 1996); Keith Lindley, *Popular Politics and Religion in Civil War London* (Farnham: Ashgate, 1995); Valerie Pearl, *London and the Outbreak of the Puritan Revolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1961).

[110] Alexandra Shepard, *Accounting for Oneself: Worth, Status and the Social Order in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 141.

[111] GL, MS 9065A/1A, f. 31.

[112] LMA, CLC/210/E/002/MS12830, 19-20 (paginated manuscript).

fantasticall, and Time-troubling,' the carmen's labour is 'honest and needful' and 'more nobly to be regarded and esteemed.' Carmen were key to London's survival: 'For stone, Timber, Corne, Wine, Beere […] there is a necessity that they should be carried […] which necessity the honest cart doth supply.'[113]

However, not all carmen laboured. Although less recognised by historians, there was a degree of social and financial gradation within different groups employed in the carting trade. Simply put, there was a perceivable difference between carmen who drove carts and carmen who owned carts. One such cart-owner was Thomas Haines, a founding member of the ruling group of the free fellowship in 1668. Despite Haines's possession of three carrooms that he hired out to others, his will did not record him as a freemen or Citizen of London, but as a 'gentleman' who lived in the parish of Wandsworth, Surrey, nearly ten miles outside the City walls.[114] His wealth and status is remarkably at odds with the prevailing assumption that all carmen toiled alongside tankard-bearers and porters in the streets.

When the carmen were recommitted to the oversight of Christ's Hospital in 1665, the Governors held their first sealing day. 275 street carts were branded, and they were owned by 219 individuals. Two carmen held four carrooms each, two held three, forty-six held two carrooms, and the remaining 169 each owned a single carroom.[115] Ownership of even one carroom was still a small fortune. By the end of the seventeenth century, carrooms could carry a price at £130 apiece.[116] The numbers did not alter significantly when the Fellowship of Carmen was established in 1668. By the spring of 1669, 351 members were admitted to the fellowship: 279 men and 72 women.[117] Many members held at least one carroom, though a few members owned as many as four. Nearly one hundred members of the fellowship did not own a carroom but hired one from other members. However, at this point, around seventy per cent of the members of the fellowship owned at least one or two carrooms, suggesting that the group was not necessarily the ragtag group of labourers that has been intimated by both contemporary and historical accounts.[118]

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[113] John Taylor, *The world runnes on wheeles: or oddes, betwixt carts and coaches* (1623).
[114] TNA, PROB/11/383/247.
[115] LMA, CLC/210/E/004/MS12832/001, 1-5 (paginated manuscript).
[116] Bennett, *The Carmen*, 130.
[117] For 'the names of the Fellowship and Fraternitye of carmen,' see GL, MS 4919, 1-10 (paginated manuscript). For 'widows' and 'women' admitted to a carroom, see GL, MS 4919, 12-13.
[118] Christ's Hospital still held the carroom receipt books. For the list of carmen and carwomen from 1665-1716, see LMA, CLC/210/E/004/MS12832/001.

Wills and probate inventories are excellent sources of the material relaties of carriage contractors.[119] As noted above, members of the ruling group usually owned two or more carrooms. William Turner, for example, owned five carrooms at the time of his death in 1684, as well as property in Stepney parish, and a house in Berkshire.[120] John Hill, deceased in 1672, owned four carrooms, and bequeathed sums of money totalling £400 to various members of kin.[121] Both men were founding members of the fellowship in 1668 and served as wardens at least once before their death. However, carriage contractors existed outside the fellowship's wardens and assistants as well. For instance, in 1668, Valentine Darby owned four carrooms, Thomas Eales owned three carrooms, and Thomas Sherwood owned two carrooms—none of them formally participated in the fellowship's ruling group. Regardless, possession of only a single carroom did not necessarily suggest modest income. For example, the probate inventory of Nicholas Clacke's estate, a carman of St. Giles Cripplegate, was worth around £239 at his death in 1689, including 'contents of the shop […] a carroom, and eighty-one barrels of beer and some ale.'[122] This suggests that he was also a shopkeeper or innkeeper who supplemented his income by hiring out a carroom. Such cases demonstrate that carriage contractors did not always own multiple carrooms, and that ownership over a single cart license did not necessarily mean that its owner employed it him or herself.

Even carmen on the other side of a carriage contract were not always financially destitute. For example, Thomas Tompkins was recorded as a carman of St. Giles Cripplegate in his will in 1677, and in the probate inventories of his estate in 1678.[123] He is not listed as a carroom owner in the fellowship records within the decade before his death. However, his estate—valued at £23 in the inventories—included a 'horse and cart' amongst his possessions, which suggests that he leased a carroom instead. In the records of Christ's Hospital in 1676, one 'Thomas Tompsin' is listed as a 'worker' of a carroom allocated for Baynard's Castle, which was made into a wood wharf after the Great Fire.[124] Although he

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[119] While not a transparent account of an individual's wealth, wills can provide a window into their general means and capital. For the methodological issues of probate inventories as historical evidence of wealth, see Greig Parker (ed.), *Probate Inventories of French Immigrants in Early Modern London* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).
[120] TNA, PROB 11/375/156.
[121] TNA, PROB 11/340/380.
[122] LMA, CLC/313/K/C/009/MS19504/040/18.
[123] LMA, CLC/313/K/C/006/MS25628/19; CLC/313/K/C/009/MS19504/023/27.
[124] LMA, CLC/210/E/004/MS12832/001, 16. John Strype, *Survey of London* (1720),1: xiv, 62.

did not own a carroom, he was by no means impoverished: his will bequeathed nearly £100 to various members of kin, a silver tankard and silver cup to two of his friends, plus numerous 10*s*. rings to be made in his remembrance.[125] Although Tompkin's financial situation was likely more an exception to the rule, his case demonstrates that not all labouring carmen were poor.

Civic Service

Street cleaning was also a profitable opportunity for carmen contractors. After the Great Fire, the fellowship brokered a deal with the Commissioners of the Sewers to allow a further eighty cars 'for the better Paving and Cleansing the Streets and Sewers in and about the City of London.'[126] Of the 37 men and women assigned to the role of 'undertaker,' at least six were founding members of the wealthy ruling group. The position was akin to a scavenger, a minor office in the City responsible for the collection of the rate of rakers and the supervision of street cleaning.[127] While it was not glamorous work, scavenging did carry some clout. As Jenner explains, 'for many citizens, service as scavenger was the first step on the *cursus honorum* of ward office or marked their admission to the upper ranks of society.'[128] Each cleaning contractor was assigned a surplus number of carrooms and a particular ward to oversee. For instance, Robert Campion was granted 15 extra carrooms to cleanse 'At and about Whitefriars.'[129] The extra carrooms were excellent sources of profit: other than an annual annuity of £2,400 to the fellowship for raking the streets, the owners of the surplus carrooms were also 'hereby enabled to do such other work as other Street-Cars do or may do.' Essentially, the deal allowed the wealthiest members of the fellowship to accumulate further wealth by acquiring more carrooms to employ rakers on their behalf. It also emphasised their civic participation as scavengers, performing a duty 'so requisite and

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[125] LMA, CLC/313/K/C/009/MS19504/023/27.

[126] *An Act of Common Council together with certain orders, rules, and directions touching the paving and cleansing the streets, lanes and common passages with the city of London, and liberties thereof* (1671).

[127] Archer, *Pursuit of Stability*, 67.

[128] Mark Jenner, 'Early Modern English Conceptions of "Cleanliness" and "Dirt," As Reflected in the Environmental Regulation of London c. 1530 – c. 1700' (D.Phil. thesis, University of Oxford, 1991), 58.

[129] *An Act of Common Council together with certain orders, rules, and directions touching the paving and cleansing the streets, lanes and common passages with the city of London, and liberties thereof*, 34-35.

necessary to the *Health* and *Trade* of the Inhabitants of this City.'[130] The carmen's appointment as overseers of the entire street sanitation of London doubtless underscored their belonging in the City. Nonetheless, the scheme was short-lived. Within six months, the carmen reneged on the deal, and by 1672 the system was voided completely.[131] However, this did not stop the undertakers from profiting from the deal. Several of the original contractors maintained their position for several more months even after the fellowship withdrew from the scheme.[132]

The carmen's participation in street cleaning was not a new development. The establishment of the Fraternity of St. Katherine's in 1514 was largely predicated upon the agreement that carmen would 'clense, purge and kepe clene all the Stretes and lanes of this Citie and Suburbes of the same of Donge and other filth […] for such sumes of money and at suche prises as the wardes be now appointed and assessed to paye.'[133] In 1528, the Court of Common Council decreed that each cart was to be marked with a specific symbol dependent upon its function: long carts—those especially allocated for royal purveyance— were imprinted with a sword and crown; wharf carts carried the sign of a faggot; and lastly, rakers' carts were marked with the symbol of a sword and dung fork.[134] Such specific modes of identification were important for civic surveillance and regulation. Each marking was an outwardly visible sign based on a job description, which meant that carmen were no longer able to rebound between jobs—a problem faced by sixteenth-century magistrates who were charged with requisitioning carts for civic and/or royal prerogative. The specific licencing of carts might have implemented a hierarchy amongst their owners; there were doubtless differences in esteem between those who carted London's merchandise and those who carted London's excrement. Nonetheless, such cart markings symbolised the civic belonging

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[130] Although the Act uses the term 'carmen' or 'undertaker' throughout the majority of the text, the second-to-last clause specifically describes the carmen's roles as 'scavengers,' *An Act of Common Council together with certain orders, rules, and directions touching the paving and cleansing the streets, lanes and common passages with the city of London, and liberties thereof*, 33.

[131] Bennett, *The Carmen*, 91-92.

[132] GL, MS 4907/1, ff. 67b-76b; 4906/1, ff. 32-33b; see also, Jenner, 'Early Modern English Conceptions of "Cleanliness" and "Dirt,"' 61.

[133] LMA, COL/AD/01/13, f. 38b-40; COL/CA/01/01/03, f. 119b; for the civic practices of street cleaning in late-medieval London, see Barron, *London in the Later Middle Ages*, 261-263.

[134] LMA, COL/CA/01/01/08, f. 132b.

of their owners, even the uninspiring sign of a 'sword and dung fork' on a cart gave its driver a visible representation of his important civic service.

The civic duties that accompanied street cleaning were not confined to men. Anne Gee was also given the role of a scavenger in the 1671 Act, earning herself two extra carrooms to supervise cleaning on 'St. Olave's Street' in Southwark.[135] Indeed, many women were prominent members of the new fellowship. As noted above, 68 women were admitted into the fellowship in 1668. Some of them owned three or more carrooms apiece. Priscilla Turner, the widow of William Turner mentioned above, owned three carrooms in 1686.[136] She was not alone: Elizabeth Gadsbury paid rent for four carrooms in 1666; Rebecca Ayres possessed three in 1676; and Elizabeth Marston had three cars sealed in 1685.[137]

Female civic participation was not limited to the newly established fellowship. Countless petitions written on behalf of widows regarding carrooms and similar occupational privileges were delivered to the Court of Aldermen earlier in the seventeenth century.[138] Dorothy Widrop, for instance, petitioned the Court in 1618 concerning her late husband's carrooms that had been confiscated by the Woodmongers.[139] In 1643, the Court of Aldermen granted Anne Lightbourne three of her late husband's carroom licences that had been redistributed by the Woodmongers after his death. A year later, she successfully petitioned for two more to be returned to her.[140] However, married women were also recorded as carroom owners even before their husbands' death. For instance, John and Mary Thompson were recorded as joint owners of five carrooms in 1686.[141] Similarly, John Osmond a 'freeman and carman' wrote a petition on behalf of himself and his wife, Mary, for their carroom to be returned to them in 1647.[142] They also participated in the fellowship as mistresses in carmen apprenticeships. For instance, John Compton was apprenticed to

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[135] *An Act of Common Council together with certain orders, rules, and directions touching the paving and cleansing the streets, lanes and common passages with the city of London, and liberties thereof* (1671), 34.
[136] LMA, CLC/210/E/004/MS12832/001, 328.
[137] LMA, CLC/210/E/004/MS12832/001, 26; CLC/210/E/004/MS12832/001, 93; CLC/210/E/004/MS12832/001, 327.
[138] For women carroom owners in the medieval period, see Claire Martin, 'Transport for London,' 257.
[139] LMA, COL/CA/01/01, f. 32, f. 82b; f. 215b; f. 223b.
[140] LMA, COL/CA/01/01/57, f. 100b; f. 102b; f. 106; COL/CA/01/01/59, f. 152b; f. 225b.
[141] LMA, CLC/210/E/004/MS12832/001, 328.
[142] GL, MS 4907/1, f. 10.

widow Susan Carter for seven years in 1682.[143] As chapter 4 elucidates further, London women often drew upon their experiences in apprenticeships to highlight their contribution to civic culture.

Many women were also recorded as 'workers' of cars employed by other male and female carroom owners. In 1676, ten women were recorded as carroom workers. For example, Elizabeth Hooker worked car no. 381 for William Standley. Similarly, Anne Bayes worked car no. 232 for Margaret Slaughter.[144] Whether these women laboured in the streets themselves or rented carrooms and employed their own servant or apprentice is unclear. However, it is certainly possible that some women physically held the reins. Although rare, a few carwomen became free of the fellowship through a seven-year apprenticeship at the turn of the eighteenth century. For example, Mary Fowkes became free after serving out her indenture to Thomas Haynes in 1698. Similarly, Margaret Clark became free after she was apprenticed to 'Widow Mould' in 1707.[145]

III.   Street Politics

On 26 April 1641, Parliament read a petition 'for the better government of the Corporation of the Master, Wardens and Fellowship of Woodmongers of London and for the relief of the Carrmen of London, members of the said Corporacon.'[146] A sole surviving copy of the bill tells us that the petitioners presented themselves as 'the Carrmen of the Cittie of London and Suburbs' and 'members of the Woodmongers.'[147] The petition asked Parliament to consider two main grievances. First, they implored the House to void the Star Chamber decree of 1625 that gave the Woodmongers' Company authority over the transfer of carrooms.[148] The bill argued that carrooms should be regarded as property, which their owners (or the widows and children of deceased owners) could lease, sell or bequeath as chattels. They complained that the Star Chamber order was 'unduely obteyned' because the carmen were not parties of the original case between the Woodmongers and wharfingers, and so 'they ought not to be concluded by the same.'[149]

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[143] GL, MS 4914.
[144] LMA, CLC/210/E/005/MS12833/002, S (alphabetised manuscript book).
[145] GL, MS 4916, C, F (alphabetised manuscript book).
[146] *Journal of the House of Commons, 1640-1643* (London, 1802), 6: 128.
[147] HL/PO/JO/10/1/56.
[148] For a copy of the 1625 Star Chamber Order, see TNA, C 89/17/2.
[149] PA, HL/PO/JO/10/1/56.

Their second grievance accused the wardens and masters of the Woodmongers of acting selfishly against the common benefit of the company, and the citizens of London more generally, 'serving onlie for the great Advantages of the said Woodmongers and other peticular members of the said Corporation.' The petition blamed the Woodmongers' abuse of power on the unbalanced representation in company government:

> 'that [Th]e Carrmen, though they bee the greater number of
> the said Corporation [they are] not at all elected unto the
> Offices of Master of the said fellowship and seldome into
> the offices of Wardens or Assistants, but are kept back, and
> from time to time are restrained to soe smalle a number as
> they cannot have any prevalent voice […] in making
> constitutions for the general Good of the said Fellowship.'

To remedy this, the petitioners asked for a diversification in the company's ruling group: 'that the said Carmen as well as the Woodmongers and Wharfingers shall be according to their severall and respective times places and senorities in the Liverie of the said Companie be elected and chosen into […] the places and offices of Master or Warden respectively.'[150]

Historians have demonstrated that London experienced heightened political participation from various groups in the City and suburbs during the Civil Wars.[151] Unwin viewed these politics as evidence of a widespread movement to democratise the companies of London.[152] Bennett follows suit, suggesting that the freemen of London were 'preparing to revolt against government' and that the carmen were 'among the first in the field.'[153] However, a closer reading of the documents signed by individuals in the carriage industry reveals that many of the 'democratic' appeals were actually grounded upon the participatory concept of civic culture that was both conservative and elitist.[154] For example, in the petition

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[150] PA, HL/PO/JO/10/1/56.

[151] Significant contributions include Keith Lindley, *Popular Politics and Religion in Civil War London* (Farnham: Ashgate, 1995); Valerie Pearl, *London and the Outbreak of the Puritan Revolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1961); Robert Ashton, *The City and the Court 1603-1643*.

[152] For the carmen in particular, Unwin claims that these petitions resulted in 'considerable concessions' though I have not found any evidence that supports this claim, *The Gilds and Companies of London* (London: Methuen, 1908), 355-358; see also, Norah Carlin, 'Liberty and Fraternities in the English Revolution: the politics of London Artisans' Protests,' *International Review of Social History* 39, no. 2 (1994): 223-254.

[153] Bennett, *The Carmen*, 46.

[154] For the argument that the exclusionary character of office-holding was based upon 'community' rather than 'class,' see Phil Withington, 'Citizens, Community, and Political Culture in Restoration England,' in *Communities in Early Modern England*, ed. Alexandra Shepard and Phil Withington (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000),134-156.

above, it is worth underscoring that the writers did not ask for company governance to be opened to the entire membership of the corporation, but only a select few according to their 'times places and senorities.'[155] Their request that company authority be limited to those who were longstanding members suggests that the petition was not a product of 'poor' or 'ordinary' carmen waging war against the oligarchy, but rather a group of powerful individuals attempting to wrestle influence from the current ruling group.

Building upon the work of Dean and Archer, Kyle has looked at printed parliamentary petitions by groups within the carriage industry to demonstrate the 'increasing sophistication of lobbying techniques' in early Stuart London.[156] Despite the merits of his overarching argument, his analysis is somewhat skewed. He reads the conflict as a battle of interest groups 'between three London companies: the Carmen, the Wharfingers and the Woodmongers.'[157] These anachronistic distinctions fail to appreciate the wider politics of corporate identity that permeated the dispute. Crucially, the 'London Company of Wharfingers' that Kyle refers to never existed.[158]

Biographical evidence of key figures reveals that the occupational labels associated with the carriage industry were more opaque and slippery than has been hitherto appreciated. As we saw above, the writers of the 1641 petition presented themselves as 'the Carrmen of the Cittie of London and Suburbs *and* members of the Woodmongers.'[159] This was not unusual. Wrightson, Tawny-Paul, and Shepard have shown that occupational overlap was a common fixture of early modern work for both men and women.[160] However, it does have important implications for how we interpret the motivations of the individuals participating in the 1640s dispute.

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[155] PA, HL/PO/JO/10/1/56.
[156] Ian Archer, 'London Lobbies in the Later sixteenth century,' *Historical Journal* 31 (1988): 17-44; David Dean, 'Pressure Groups and Lobbies in the Elizabethan and Early Jacobean Parliaments,' *Parliaments, Estates and Representation* 11, no. 2 (1991): 139-152; Chris Kyle, 'Parliament and the Politics of Carting in Early Stuart London,' *The London Journal* 27, no. 2 (2002): 1-11.
[157] Kyle, 'Parliament and the Politics of Carting,' 1.
[158] Ibid, 2.
[159] PA, HL/PO/JO/10/1/56. My emphasis.
[160] Keith Wrightson, *Earthly Necessities: Economic Lives in Early Modern Britain* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2000), esp. 313; K. Tawny Paul, 'Accounting for Men's Work: Multiple Employments and Occupations Identities in Early Modern England,' *Historical Workshop Journal* 85 (Spring 2018): 26-46; Alexandra Shepherd, *Accounting for Oneself: Worth, Status, and the Social Order in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 232-276.

As this section will show, the lobbying strategies of various groups associated with commercial transport were crafted to appeal to both parliamentary and civic audiences in order to claim the right to carry goods in the City. The writers of these petitions deployed languages associated with economic regulation, good government, and the freedom to negotiate power in the carriage industry. Moreover, once we start to pay closer attention to the political languages that informed the dispute, it becomes evident that the term 'carmen' was politically charged and appropriated by different groups to serve various political ends. This becomes especially clear in the mid-seventeenth century when hostile attitudes towards the coal industry went from bad to worse.

'Carmen, members of the Company of Woodmongers'

On 10 June 1641, a second petition was submitted to parliament.[161] It was written on behalf of 'Philippa Turner, widow, Anne Mills, Margaret Holloway, Joyce Campion, and Henry Gardner, and diverse others, Orphans of poor Carmen, members of the Company of Woodmongers in London.' Holloway and Turner both signed the petition. Mills made a mark, as well another woman, Mary Sutton. Many of the ideas of the April petition were repeated in the Widow and Orphans' petition. The petitioners implored Parliament to return their deceased husbands and fathers' carrooms to their widows and children, asking for reparations from the woodmongers and wharfingers who confiscated them under authority of the 1625 Star Chamber decree.

Similar to the earlier April petition, the authors presented themselves as 'Carrmen, members of the Woodmongers Company.' They opened their appeal with the claim that until the 1625 Star Chamber ruling, carrooms were regarded as inheritable property since 'tyme out of mynde.' Furthermore, they argued, 'the wharfingers' were granted rights over carrooms under false pretences of reducing the cost of fuel in the City. The authors again claimed that the original suit was 'altogether unknown' to them, and that the decree caused widows and orphans—who were 'once in good fashion'—to be 'chargeable to the several parishes where they weare borne,' and 'divers of them famished in the streets.'[162] Claiming ignorance, the authors distanced themselves from both the Woodmongers and wharfingers by denying any involvement in the 1620s dispute.

Despite their urgent rhetorics of destitution and starvation, we should remain mindful that the petitioners were not necessarily from impoverished backgrounds. The

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[161] PA, HL/PO/JO/10/1/60.
[162] PA, HL/PO/JO/10/1/60.

petition claims that some widows and orphans had three or more carrooms taken from them—which, as we can recall, were worth a large sum. Indeed, the petition argues that some wharfingers had sold their deceased family members' carrooms for £50 or £60 each. At this rate, ownership of three or more carrooms would have positioned the petitioners in the wealthiest tiers of the company. Like the April petitioners, the widow and orphans' petitioners situated their demands to suit the propertied, wealthy 'carmen' of the company.

A third petition was submitted to Parliament on 19 June 1641—only nine days after the Widow and Orphans' petition. It was signed by Thomas Farey, Arthur Turner and Richard Clarke.[163] The petitioners identified themselves as 'Woodmongers and Carmen,' claiming to speak on behalf of themselves, and 'hundred others poore members of the fellowship or incorporate body of Woodmongers.' The petition shares many parallels with its predecessors. The men complained that the Woodmongers' ruling group commit 'great oppressions and wrongs' to members of the company, and the 'subjects of England' who dwell in the City, suburbs, and nearby counties of Middlesex, Essex, and Surrey. It is worth highlighting the large radius of persons the petitioners claim to represent—it is likely many of its supporters were likely wharf operators along the River Thames.

The petitioners followed a similar strategy as earlier petitions to undermine the accountability of the Woodmonger governors. They accused the wardens of breaching the economic regulations of the City, including engrossing fuel and handing out carrooms to foreigners and non-free servants. Following the preamble, the petitioners listed several grievances. Topping the list was the allegation that the wardens engrossed carrooms above the permitted 140 for wharves, detracting from the number of carrooms meant for street cars dealing with non-fuel items. Another grievance accused the wardens of clandestine record-keeping; they refused to report the list of carroom owners so that 'no man can discover what becomes of the disposable carre rooms.'[164] A separate complaint referenced an Act of Common Council of 1605 that set limits on the number of carrooms each member could possess at one time. Wardens and masters were permitted to own three carrooms; general members could possess one carroom within the first four years of obtaining the freedom, and two thereafter. However, the petitioners claimed that 'some have 4 5 6 or more carre rooms, not qualified.' The subsequent demands concerned rates of carriage, royal purveyance, hiring of cars, and the plight of widows whose carrooms were taken from them.

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[163] PA, HL/PO/JO/10/1/62.
[164] PA, HL/PO/JO/10/1/62.

As with their predecessors, financial grievances dominate the theme of the petitioners' complaints.[165]

The petition intimates that it was written by representatives of rank and file carmen. However, the social backgrounds of the petition's authors complicate this reading. Turner has proven elusive; there is an Arthur Turner, Esq., listed in the 1638 Settlement of Tithes, paying a substantial £16 rent in St. Dunstans in the West, but no further information is given.[166] Thomas Fayre's will, however, has survived. Penned in 1663, it records him as a 'woodmonger' living in Saint Saviour, Southwark. Although he does not specify the value of his estate, it worth mentioning that it was witnessed by William Byrd, Nicholas Clark and Edward Benson, who were all wealthy members of the future carmen fellowship (Byrd and Benson being original members of ruling group).[167] More revealing, an agreement was reached in 1665 between the Company of Woodmongers and 'the wharfingers Inhabiting within the Citty of London,' regarding the allocation of wharf cars in the City and suburbs. The agreement lists 'Thomas Fary' as a 'Southwarke' wharfinger, allocating him 2 cars for his use.[168] Moreover, it appears that his two sons, Robert and Francis, were embroiled in a legal battle over inherited property in the small riverside port town of Erith, Kent in 1697. All this suggests that the Fayre family played a considerable role in the import of coal into the City.[169]

Richard Clarke also made a will in 1672. Like Thomas Fayre, he lived in Saint Saviour, Southwark, and was recorded as a woodmonger. He bequeathed his possessions and estate to his wife, Agnes, barring 'only one of my carroomes which I have mortgaged to my son, John Clarke.'[170] The Clarkes managed to obtain possession over their carrooms throughout the second half of the seventeenth century. Richard and John Clarke each had two cars sealed in July 1665 at Christ's Hospital. In 1667, John obtained another carroom. In 1669, Richard translated from the defunct Company of Woodmongers to the Fellowship

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[165] PA, HL/PO/JO/10/1/56. For the 1605 Act of Common Council, see LMA, COL/CA/01/01/26II, f. 470.
[166] T.C. Dale, *The Inhabitants in London in 1638* (London: The Society of Genealogists, 1931), 230-35.
[167] Fayre's probate is recorded as 'Thomas Ffery,' TNA, PROB 11/312/402.
[168] Bodl., MS Rawlinson D 725 B, XVII, 57b.
[169] TNA, C 6/291/25.
[170] TNA, PROB 11/341/13.

of Carmen (where his brother John may have been part of the ruling group).[171] In the quarterage records from the same year, there is a 'Richard Clarke of Broaken Wharf.'[172] Like the Fayre family dynasty, the evidence suggests that Clarkes were also key figures of the import of coal into the City.

Fayre and Clarke downplayed their wealth, wharf ownership, and membership in the Company of Woodmongers. Instead, they highlighted their status in the City as 'carmen.' This may have been a strategy to align themselves with a traditionally impoverished group in the City. Deferential rhetorics were certainly a powerful tool in petitionary politics; writers often exaggerated their poverty to underscore the urgency of their claim, as well as highlight their dependence and expected remediation from their audience.[173] Moreover, the petitioners' association with a large impoverished group in the City may have been part of a larger strategy to seize the attention of parliamentary magistrates who were anxious of the potential of popular rebellion in the City.[174]

The petitioners' textual presentation as 'carmen' also could have been a rhetorical device to distance themselves from the reputation of Woodmongers and other individuals associated with the coal industry. Although the Woodmongers were never considerably well-liked amongst their peers, perceptions toward the group were particularly fraught during years when Londoners could not obtain affordable fuel in the City.[175] In the 'crisis' years of the 1580s and 1590s, the 'greedy covetousness' of Woodmongers came under fire by the City. Similarly, in Robert Wilson's *The pleasant and stately morall, of the three lordes and three ladies of London*, the character Simplicity reminds his companion, Pleasure, of the fellowship's alleged practice of hiring 'poore men' to ascertain the stock of fuel in the City so they could garner the opportune moment 'to raise the price of billets so

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[171] There is a John Clarke listed as an assistant in 1668, but I am uncertain if this is the same John Clarke who was the son of Richard Clarke. GL, MS 4907/1, f. 43.

[172] GL, MS 4919, 2 (paginated manuscript).

[173] See, for example, Andy Wood, 'Fear, Hatred and the Hidden Injuries of Class in Early Modern England,' *Journal of Social History* 39, no. 3 (2006): 803-826.

[174] Ian Archer notes that Tudor London magistrates often utilised the rhetorical threat of large, disorderly assemblies to lobby the Crown to their agenda, see 'Rhetorics of Metropolitan Incorporation: the Dialogue between City and Crown in Elizabethan London,' in *Trouver sa place: Individus et communautes dans l'Europe modern*, ed. A. Roulett, O. Spina and N. Szczech (Madrid: Casa de Velázquez, 2011), 153-167.

[175] Cavert, *The Smoke of* London, 144-152.

bie, that the poore can buy none.'[176] Similarly, after a particularly cold winter in 1621, John

Taylor's *The Cold Tearme* remarked:

> And in this gnashing age of Snow and Ice,
> The Wood-mongers did mount so high their price:
> That many did to lye a bed desire,
> To save the charge of Wood, and Cole, and Fire.[177]

Later, the Privy Council ordered an investigation into the trading practices of the coal

industry in 1627 when war with Spain led to decreased exports and increased prices. The

Company of Woodmongers were specifically accused of engrossing 'greate quantities of sea

coales' outside the City in the coastal town of Harwich in order to increase demand and hike

prices of fuel in London.[178]

Sentiments towards Woodmongers continued to sour in the decade leading up to the

Civil Wars. In 1630, the Privy Council ordered the Lord Mayor to review the 'abuses' of the

Company of Woodmongers concerning the increasing prices of coal, and encouraged the

Attorney General to 'question' their Charter by the notorious threat of *quo warranto*.[179] In

1639, they were again under scrutiny for hiking prices, and an Order of Council in January

set their rates to no more than 23s. a chaldron.[180] In 1640, the Coal Merchants petitioned the

King, complaining that the Woodmongers continued to mount the price of fuel in the City

'for the profits of some few men.'[181] Tales of the Woodmongers' illicit trading practices

were promulgated outside the City walls. In Sussex, the diocese of Chichester released a

treatise in 1631 to encourage the morality of its parishes. Church wardens were implored to

ask themselves if their ministers were 'vehemently suspected to be, an Usurer, Regrator,

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[176] *By the mayor. Where I and my brethren the aldermen, calling to our remembraunce the greedy covetuousness [...] of woodmongers as others the owners and sellers of billets and faggots* (1584); Robert Wilson, *The pleasant and stately morall, of the three lordes and three ladies of London* (1590), H4.

[177] John Taylor, *The Cold tearme* (1621).

[178] TNA, PC 2/36, f. 179; LMA, COL/CA/01/01/41, f. 314, f. 325b, f. 334. For a discussion of parliamentary and civic reactions to coal scarcities, see Cavert, *Smoke of London*, 115-117.

[179] TNA, PC 2/39, f. 823. For an overview on *quo warranto* in the 1630s, see Catherine Patterson 'Quo Warranto and Borough Corporations in Early Stuart England: Royal Prerogative and Local Privileges in the Central Courts,' *The English Historical Review* 120, no. 488 (2005): 879-906.

[180] TNA, SP 16/409, f. 247

[181] TNA, SP 16/465, f. 130.

Wood-monger, buyer and seller of Timber, or use any other scandalous and defamed trade.'[182]

Around the same time the Carmen and Woodmongers' petitions were submitted to parliament, Hugh Adamson's *Sea-coale, Char-coale, and small-coale* reflected some of the wider sentiments towards Woodmongers and others involved in the coal trade in London.[183] The pamphlet narrates a discourse between a 'Newcastle collier, a collier of Croydon and a small-Coale-man' at the start of the Civil Wars, after Parliament's naval blockade of the north-east coast precluded coal exports into the City.[184] The Newcastle collier, 'Sea-Coale,' rejoices in the embargo, proclaiming that coal prices will increase at double the rate, in which 'my prime Chapmen the Wood-mongers, [will] put a large value upon me.' In response, 'brother small-cole' cautions his companion's delight and offers him sage advice:

> this inhancing your price already, and the feare that you
> will daily rise higher and higher, begets no small
> murmures in the City […] and accuse your factors (Sea-
> Coal) as Wharfers, Wood-mongers, Chandlers, and the
> like, of too apparent injustice and covetousness, ingrossing
> the whole store into their hands […] to that if some course
> be not taken, the people, especially the pooer sort, must
> undergoe great want.[185]

Tensions between the Woodmongers and Parliament were particularly strained in the years leading up to and throughout the Civil Wars. The maintenance of affordable prices for fuel in the City became, as Cavert aptly sums, 'a political issue of national importance.'[186] Negative opinions of the group may explain why the petitioners downplayed their association with the Company of Woodmongers and instead identified as carmen. As the conversation surrounding the coal industry grew more negative and suspecting, the individuals within the coal industry rebranded themselves as 'carmen' to flee the sinking ship.

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[182] *Articles to be enquired of, throughout the whole diocesse of Chichester* (1631), B2.
[183] Hugh Adamson, *Sea-coale, char-coale, and small-coale […]* (1643), A2.
[184] Stephen Porter, 'The Economic and Social Impact of the Civil War upon London,' in *London and the Civil War*, ed. Stephen Porter (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 1996), 186.
[185] Hugh Adamson, *Sea-coale, char-coale, and small*-coale, A3.
[186] Cavert, *The Smoke of London*, 147.

'the Carmens Controversie'

On 2 July 1649, the journals of the House of Commons recorded the reading of 'the humble petition of the carmen of London, Southwark and places adjacent, being part of the Company of Woodmongers.'[187] The manuscript has not survived in the Parliamentary Archives, and the journals reveal little else about the substance of the bill. However, in the heated pamphlet battle that followed its submission to Parliament, we can glean that the petition asked for the carmen to be separated from the Company of Woodmongers and 'to be incorporate in one Body by themselves.'[188] Two pamphlets were printed after the bill was submitted: *The Wood-mongers Remonstrance, Or the Carmens Controversie rightly stated*, followed by *The carmens remonstrance, or a reply to the false and scurrilous papers of the woodmongers*. Piecing together reprinted fragments of the petition from both pamphlets, it appears the petitioners justified their appeal for a separate incorporation upon claims that the Woodmongers were oppressive guardians who abused their power over carrooms and engrossed fuel in the City.

The author of the Woodmongers' pamphlet, a solicitor called 'W.L.,' denied the petition's charges, arguing that the 'Wood-mongers and Car-men 'are all one Body equally concerned […] being joynt in Power, Privlidge, Office and Trade,' in which 'divers of [carmen] drive the very trade of Wood-mongers.'[189] Deploying regulatory rhetorics of good order, the Woodmongers' pamphlet hoped to play on magistrates anxieties of disorder by accusing the petitioners of alienating themselves from civic government for private gain: 'should Car-rooms and Car-men be in their own power, and not subordinate to Government […] they themselves would become oppressive and injurious […], much to the 'abuse' of the 'publike good.'[190] Enhancing its denunciation of the carmen's inability to regulate the City's carriage industry, the pamphlet reminds their audiences of the many 'disorders' and 'abuses' of carmen. Moreover, the author highlighted the fact that the carmen required constant oversight over the years: 'Certainly he that hath not learned to be governed, will never be fit to be a Governor.'[191]

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[187] 'House of Commons Journal: 2 July 1649,' *Journal of the House of Commons* (London: 1802), 6: 247.
[188] Spratt, *the carmens remonstrance*, 1.
[189] W.L., *The Wood-mongers Remonstrance, or the Carmens Controversie rightly stated* (1649), 2. In *the carmens remonstrance*, Spratt refers to the Woodmongers' solicitor as one 'Captaine Oxford,' but I have been unable to locate a connection with 'W.L.'.
[190] W.L., *The Wood-mongers Remonstrance*, 17.
[191] Ibid.

The pamphlet was addressed to Samuel Garland, chairman of the parliamentary committee assigned to consider the petition.[192] Alongside its larger lobbying tactics to portray the carmen as harbingers of disorder, it closes with a long-winded apologia of the company's coal trading practices, including 'divers Reasons why Sea-coals are at so deer a rate.' The length and detail of the defence—taking up more than half of the pamphlet—intimates that public opinion towards the Woodmongers' involvement in the coal industry had grown increasingly hostile. Indeed, one of the chief strategies of the group attempting separation from the company was to attack the civic fitness of its wardens by their monopolisation of coal—even though, as W.L. appropriately contends, many individuals who publicly presented themselves as carmen were involved in the fuel trade themselves.

The carmen's counterattack was written by the group's solicitor, Stephen Spratt. *The carmens remonstrance* highlights the carmen's capacity to not only govern themselves but restore order to the City's poorly-managed transport system. Spratt was a Leveller who had experience stirring up controversy; his attacks against the corruption of the House of Lords landed him in Newgate on several occasions. [193] His lobbying strategies in the pamphlet have links to earlier protests within the carriage trade and was likely the collaboration of his personal politics and that of his clients who led the charge against the company. Like the Woodmongers' circular, the pamphlet is also directed towards Garland and the rest of the parliamentary committee, though Spratt includes the Lord Mayor and Court of Aldermen as well, who he hopes 'will become Advocates to the Parliament, on behalf of the poore Carmen.'[194] Accordingly, the pamphlet is steeped in civic rhetorics of good government and regulation to lobby civic magistrates to their side.

Spratt argues that the carmen did not wish to alienate themselves from the City as the Woodmongers suggest, but only from the tyrannical governance of the company:

> [The carmen endeavour] to be under the Rule, prescription,
> and protection of the Lord Mayor, and the Court of
> Aldermen (were they but incorporate by themselves, as
> other companies are) and to pay the Citie the hundred and

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[192] For more on printed petitions and lobbying in the Civil Wars, see David Zaret, 'Petitions and the "Invention" of Public Opinion in the English Revolution,' *American Journal of Sociology* 101, no. 6 (1996): 1497-1555; and more generally, Zaret, *Origins of Democratic Culture: Printing, Petitions, and the Public Sphere in Early-Modern England* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000).

[193] For more on Spratt, see Keith Lindley, *Popular Politics and Religion in Civil War London* 330, 400; Gary S. De Krey *Following the Levellers* (London: Palgrave, 2018), 2: 114.

[194] Spratt, *The carmens remonstrance*, 1.

> fifty pounds per annum more faithfully then the
> Woodmongers have done.[195]

This was an attempt to pacify civic anxieties not only losing power over the regulation of carting, but also the profits the carmen's trade provided to fund Christ's Hospital. Demonstrating the Woodmongers' unsuitability for corporate governance, the pamphlet accuses the company of forestalling the coal markets by 'horrible' and 'unjust' practices and turning a blind eye to the 'rudenesse' and 'abuse' of the Woodmongers' apprentices and journeymen in the streets of the City. Spratt's tactics were bold: he cautions his audience with portents of catastrophe should the Woodmongers continue their poor regulation over cars and carmen, concluding with the apocalyptic warning that that their practices were 'destructive to all Companies in London' and 'destroy all Government.'[196]

In contrast to his descriptions of chaos and disorder, Spratt's key strategy was to present an improved image of 'the carmen' to his audiences. Responding to the Woodmongers' argument that the group have always been too disorderly to govern themselves, he untangles the 'wiser' carmen 'of these days' from their disobedient brethren 'of those days' who required authoritative oversight.[197] In doing so, he attempts to textually redefine a modern, 'more capable' sort of carmen in the minds of civic magistrates. In a similar vein, he highlights—if not invents—hard-line distinctions between the occupational identities of carmen and woodmongers. Countering the company's claim that the carmen and woodmongers were all one in the same, Spratt argued that the 'dangers' and 'disturbances' caused by negligent carts in London's streets were not the 'Town Carmen who now petition the Parliament for a Charter,' but 'the Woodmongers own Carmen, who drive their Carts with Coles.'[198] Importantly, this last point also distances the petitioners from any involvement in the corrupt practices of the coal industry.

His argument also draws upon long-established civic custom to cater to the sentiments of the Court of Aldermen, as well as imbue the carmen's protest with legitimacy and uprightness. Reproaching the Woodmongers' practices of transferring poor freemen's carrooms to their friends on the pretence that they were 'deserving, honest Carmen.' Spratt argues:

> That the carmen must serve seven years Apprenticeship in
> London for a Freedome, and [yet] not work at his Trade

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[195] Spratt, *The carmens remonstrance*, 3.
[196] Spratt, *The carmens remonstrance*, 1, 12.
[197] Ibid, 4.
[198] Ibid, 12.

without the favour of the Woodmongers […]; no doubt but
the Lord Mayor and Aldermen will look to this: For they are
the Fathers of every Free-man, and ought to take care that
every Free-man, who hath a trade to work on, may worke
quietly without molestation, or putting from his Trade by
any Company, or else what is a Freedome worth, or to what
end doth any man serve an Apprenticeship? [199]

Here, Spratt's Leveller politics shine through.[200] Evoking the most ancient and revered tenet of City custom guaranteed by the Magna Carta, Spratt reminds his reader that every apprentice who served an apprenticeship and was made free of the City should be allowed to practice trade without persecution.[201] This powerful language was meant to pander to his audience's sentiments of the importance of maintaining the allure and stability of the civic freedom—something that would no doubt resonate with civic magistrates at the end of the Civil Wars.

Spratt's pamphlet, however spirited, was unsuccessful. The Court of Aldermen did not come to the aid of the carmen but continued their staunch rejection of incorporating the group. Nonetheless, on 1 May 1650, the parliamentary committee appointed to consider the case presented their judgement. They reported 'that the Carmen [should] be a distinct Company from the Woodmongers […] as other Companies are.' The House approved the report, and the Committee was tasked 'to bring in an Act Accordingly.'[202] However, after a flurry of petitions by groups presenting themselves as woodmongers and 'several Merchants, Shopkeepers, and other Traders,' the Act did not go beyond a second reading and the Rump Parliament was dissolved in 1653.[203] After another failed effort in 1666, the Woodmongers formally surrendered their charter on 5 December 1667. [204] As the next section will show, the carmen did not make another bid for incorporation for more than a decade later.

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[199] Spratt, *The carmens remonstrance*, 12.
[200] For a fascinating discussion of how leveller politics were shaped by civic custom in London, see Phillip Baker, '*Londons Liberty in Chains Discovered*: The Levellers, the Civic Past, and Popular Protest in Civil War London,' *Huntington Library Quarterly* 76, no. 4 (2013): 559-587.
[201] For more on common law, civic custom and trade, see Chris Brooks, *Law, politics and society in early modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 385-391.
[202] 'House of Commons Journal: 1 May 1650,' in *Journal of the House of Commons:1648-1651* (London, 1802), 6: 407.
[203] 'House of Commons Journal: 3 September 1651,' in *Journal of the House of Commons:1651-1660* (London, 1802), 7: 11.
[204] LMA, COL/CA/01/01/72, f. 28b; f. 36; f. 66.

IV.   Fellowship of Carmen

In 1668, the 'Fellowship and Fraternity by the name of the Carrmen of the City of London' was established.[205] However, Christ's Hospital maintained oversight over the group, betraying the City's unwillingness to grant them complete autonomy. Their position in the City was thus ambiguous. The carmen were not formal members of a corporate body. However, they did have important powers and responsibilities over apprenticeship and other civic institutions that were part and parcel of the culture of citizenship. The following section explores how these factors informed the language, content, and form of their campaign for corporate inclusion, as well as civic and Crown responses to their efforts.

Unlike their predecessors who presented themselves as a group within a larger authority, petitions written on behalf of the fellowship did not include Christ's Hospital in their official title. Instead, they presented themselves as the 'Fellowship of Carmen,' or the more politically energized, 'Fellowship of Free Carmen.'[206] This textual representation no doubt reflected and reinforced their sense of independence. Although the fellowship had stunted power in regard to the transference of carrooms and traffic regulation in the City, they began to emulate a 'formal' company in several ways. They were given the authority to elect their own wardens, assistants and clerk, as well as regulate the bad behaviour of their members and settle disputes amongst them, including the acrimonious row between 'Mrs Benson' and 'Mrs Bates' after the latter slandered Benson's 'good name.'[207] More crucially, the Carmen were given the power to participate in the time-honoured civic institution of apprenticeship. Unlike other voluntary fellowships in London, the Carmen had the power to create *bona fide* freemen of the City. This important claim would become the main strategy of their struggle for incorporation at the end of the seventeenth century.

The Carmen were devoted to their civic responsibilities. The fellowship's new orders contained a lengthy directive for the management of apprenticeships. Guidelines included the enrolment of apprentices with Christ's Hospital, indenture fees, the mandatory length of contracts— 'none shorter or lesser time than Seven years'—and the costs of

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[205] GL, MS 4907/1, ff. 4-10; for a full transcription of the 'Booke of Orders,' see Bennet, 57-62.
[206] See, for example, LMA, COL/CA/01/01/74, f. 30; COL/CA/01/01/92, f. 100b; COL/CA/01/01/95, f. 88; COL/CA/01/01/96, f. 145.
[207] GL, MS 4907/1, f. 48.

admittance to the brotherhood 'before his admittance into the Freedom of this City.'[208] It has been argued that one of the most important tenets of urban citizenship was the regulation of apprenticeship.[209] The Oath of the Freeman, sworn by every Londoner upon his/her entrance into the freedom, articulated the City-wide rules of indentures, which included seven-year terms, enrolment with the Chamberlain, and making the apprentice free after his term 'if he have well and truly served you.'[210] The fellowship attached much value to their guardianship of the City's metaphorical gates. The rules of apprenticeships comprised the majority of the 1668 Carman's Oath:

> You shall not take a forreigne man into your Serivce, but
> onely such as use the Occupation of a Carrman or eles an
> Apprentice fuly bound without Fraude At the beginning of
> their Termes or before you shall bring and present them
> before the Wardens of the said Fellowship for the time
> being And here have the Indentures to be made and every
> such Apprentice to be enrolled within the first yeare as
> Custom is.[211]

Further to this, the fellowship's surviving books include several volumes to the meticulous recording of apprenticeships and the enrolling of freemen. Such zealousness almost betrays a level of insecurity. Through their diligent practices of compiling apprenticeship and freedom records, the fellowship aimed to proclaim the integrity and good order of the current government.[212] In all likelihood, their fastidiousness was a combination of ordinary business practice as well as a demonstration of their adherence to the citizenly responsibilities granted to them.

Similarly, under the 'better governance' of the fellowship, even refractory carmen were better dealt with. In 1678, John Vernon's *The Compleat Compting House* offered sound advice to newcomers to London's trade:

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[208] GL, MS 4907/1, ff. 4-10.

[209] This claim is highlighted in Christopher Brooks, 'Apprenticeship, Social mobility and the Middling Sort, 1550-1800,' in *The Middling Sort of People*, ed. Jonathan Barry and Christopher Brooks, (Houndsmills, Hampshire: Macmillian Press, 1994), 77; Phil Withington, *Politics of Commonwealth* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 115-119; Withington, 'Citizens, Community and Political Culture in Restoration England,' 134-155.

[210] *The Oath of every free-man of the citie of London* (1628).

[211] GL, MS 4907/1, f. 18.

[212] See Jennifer Bishop for a similar discussion of record-keeping in the Goldsmiths' Company, 'The Clerk's Tale: Civic Writing in Sixteenth-Century London,' 112.

> Another thing you must learn to grapple with, is unruly
> Carmen: And that you may pretty well do, if you keep in
> your Pocket, from time to time, an abstract of the laws for
> their Regulation, […] take but their Names, or Number of
> the Carmens Carr, and you will find a present alteration in
> them; nay, if you proceed, you will find good Justice
> immediately done you.[213]

As we can recall from section 2, the identification system of cars and carts was mandated long before the fellowship's existence. Carroom owners held close affinities to their cart numbers and markings that could be passed through generations. Carmen sometimes bestowed carrooms in their wills by their licence number or referred to their carrooms by a seal or mark. In 1673, for instance, Robert Hardy gave 'all my three carrooms seales or burnt markes' to his wife and children. [214] By the time the fellowship was in power, however, the licensing of carts had evolved. Regulated carts belonged to members of a free civic society and were thus imprinted with the City Arms. This powerful symbol of affiliation highlighted the new status of the fellowship. A City-endorsed number plate doubtless granted the driver a degree of civic standing, and 'sealed' their belonging in the City. This new feature of the fellowship's government, alongside their management of apprenticeships, repositories of freemen lists, and regulation of the behavioural conduct of their membership was not aimless. The performance of civic functions instilled the fellowship with a company-like persona that supported their campaign for incorporation.

In 1689, the Carmen made their first attempt to obtain a Royal charter after separating from the Woodmongers.[215] A year earlier, a group of woodmongers had petitioned James II to be re-incorporated, but was promptly rejected after 'caveats' were delivered to the Attorney General on behalf of Christ's Hospital and the Court of Aldermen.[216] The Carmen were perhaps emboldened by the woodmongers' failure, and in December 1689, the fellowship petitioned the newly crowned William III for a Royal charter.[217] The King referred the matter to the Attorney General who, in turn, informed the Court of Aldermen. Upon learning of the petition, the Court set up a committee to obstruct the fellowship's incorporation, supported by Christ's Hospital who themselves found the

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[213] John Vernon, *The Compleat Compting House* (1678), 11.
[214] TNA, PROB 11/338/280.
[215] LMA, CLC/210/E/002/MS12830, 102-103 (paginated manuscript).
[216] LMA, CLC/210/E/002/MS12830, 75.
[217] LMA, CLC/210/E/002/MS12830, 97-98.

notion to be a 'gross prejudice' to the inhabitants and trade of the City.[218] Although the subsequent petitions by the fellowship and Court of Aldermen have not survived, many of the manuscripts were copied into the record books of Christ's Hospital, who had taken a keen interest in the matter.

The fellowship's petition for incorporation was addressed to the King and privy council, addended with a six-point list of 'Reasons why the Carrmen should have Authority to Govern their owne Members.'[219] The body of the petition retells a slightly skewed version of the fall of the Woodmongers, claiming that it was their petition to King Charles I regarding the Woodmongers' abuses of carrooms that led to the discovery of their corrupt practices and subsequent demise. After thus presenting themselves as law-abiding protectors of the City's economy, the petitioners claimed that woodmongers and wharfingers continued to use their carts in the City above the 420 allowed, which in turn, reduced the City transport system into chaos.

In the succinct list of 'Reasons' attached, the fellowship reiterated the problems caused by the woodmongers, including the 'publicke being cheated' by their high prices and disorderly streets by their 'supernumerary' carts. They reminded the King and privy council that they completed seven-year apprenticeships, and as such, they should be able to practice their trade without 'the ruing of their families.' They concluded with the compelling justification that 'it is allowed by most men that no Arts or Tradesmen can be so well Governed by persons of other Trades or arts as by them of the same.' The language of the addenda is revealing of their overall strategy. The fellowship compared themselves to artisans and tradesmen; using the ambiguity of their occupational status to present their position in the culture of citizenship in the best light possible.[220]

Powerful though these arguments might have been, the Aldermanic committee appointed to obstruct the incorporation presented the Court with their own list for the Attorney General, 'Reasons why the Carrmen should not be incorporated.'[221] The main strategy of the Court was to present the fellowship as illegitimate and incapable of self-government. Accordingly, the committee who penned the list did not hold their punches. They began with a swift opposition of the fellowship's association with tradesmen: 'their

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[218] LMA, CLC/210/E/002/MS12830, 97-98; CLC/210/B/001/MS12806/008.
[219] LMA, CLC/210/E/002/MS12830, 97.
[220] LMA, CLC/210/E/002/MS12830, 98.
[221] LMA, CLC/210/E/002/MS12830, 102-105.

businesses is not a Trade but a mere labour.'[222] As far as regulating carts and carrooms, the committee protested that the fellowship 'have not the skill or temper' to resolve disputes between their own members, even less manage the organisation of wheeled transport in the City. Moreover, they warned the Council that incorporating the carmen would set a dangerous precedent:

> The other Sorts of Labourers herein before mentioned may as well as the Carrmen pray to be Incorporated, and in time having Liveryes may become part of the Common hall in the choice of Magistrates, where they are not like to be more regular than they are in the Streetes.[223]

This was not an attack on the labouring carmen of the fellowship who had virtually no chance of joining the ruling elite of the prospective company, but the higher echelons of the fellowship—the wardens and assistants—who would in theory comprise the livery if the corporation were to reach that status. Yet, despite their wealth and, for the most part, status as freemen, the City deemed even the highest members of the fellowship unworthy of joining the ranks of established companies. This was a conflicting response from past Aldermanic orders that underscored their civic duties as freemen of the City. Indeed, the 'Booke of Orders' that mandated apprenticeship regulations, freedom admissions and other civic responsibilities of 'the Carrmen of the City of London' was drafted only twenty years before.[224]

The ambiguous constitution of the fellowship played a key role in the conflict. The fellowship highlighted their company-like qualities, especially their diligent regulation of freemen apprenticeships. The Aldermen, however, emphasised the fellowship's unofficial status to depict the Carmen as little more than a rabble of manual labourers. Each side demonstrates a very different image of the fellowship, highlighting how representations of civic status could be utilised for very different ends.

The Aldermen's harsh attack against the Carmen's incorporation might have been part of a wider resistance to royal interference in corporate affairs, or perhaps reflected the complicated networks and friendships of the corporate elite, many of which might have been allied to some degree to wharf operators or coal traders who would have been threatened by

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[222] LMA, CLC/210/E/002/MS12830, 102-103
[223] LMA, CLC/210/E/002/MS12830, 102-105.
[224] GL, MS 4907/1, ff. 4-10. For a full transcription of the 'Booke of Orders,' see Bennett, *The Carmen*, 57-62.

the new corporation.[225] Equally likely, the Aldermen simply resisted parting with their oversight over carrooms, which was a major source of income for Christ's Hospital. Whatever the case, the committee's riposte was successful. The Attorney General sided with the City and recommended the King to reject the fellowship's petition. The Carmen would attempt to incorporate themselves again in 1690s—even joining forces with the Woodmongers to secure a favourable outcome—but to no avail.[226] The Aldermen's refusal to support the fellowship's quest for incorporation condemned the group to permanent 'edge' status until the twentieth century.

By delving deeper into the lives of carmen, this chapter has challenged the prevailing narrative of London transport history. Although carmen did not belong to a formal guild or company, their occupational identity provided a political resource for individuals and groups associated with carting to engage and participate in civic culture. As we have seen, this complicates the traditional view that urban politics was an exclusive circle composed of City elite. Moreover, this chapter demonstrated that individuals involved in the carrying trades were financially stratified and involved Londoners from all tiers of urban society.

These new insights have considerable implications for how we interpret the carmen's political goals, especially in the final decades of the seventeenth century. Their political ambitions to gain incorporated status from the Crown—and subsequent failure to do so—intimate that the freedom maintained its appeal for members and non-members alike. This, in turn, shows that corporate culture was by no means on the decline during the early modern period. Rather, it demonstrates how the languages and rhetorics of the freedom remained a viable political resource for occupational groups to claim the economic and political rights that accompanied belonging in the City.

The history of the carmen also calls into question the division between 'informal' labour and 'formal' trade. Although they are traditionally viewed as a rabble of manual workers with little ties to the City, this chapter has demonstrated that members across the fellowship hierarchy were aware that their employment prospects were intimately linked to their civic status. Despite their lack of a formal company culture, the carmen made concerted efforts to climb the corporate ladder to amalgamate power in the carting industry.

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[225] For more on Aldermanic resistance to new incorporations, see David Marsh, 'A Fellowship on the Fringes: The Gardeners' Company of London in the Seventeenth Century,' in *Guilds and Association in Europe, 900-1900*, ed. Ian A. Gadd and Patrick Wallis (London: Institute of Historical Research, 2006), 123-146, esp. 128.
[226] GL, MS 4907/1, ff. 101-103.

In doing so, various individuals and groups within the carrying trades engaged with civic magistrates to negotiate their political, cultural, and social status in the City. Taken together, it is clear that the carmen—both free and non-free—had a significant role in shaping what it meant to belong in early modern London.

Chapter 2

'Both free and Ancient Foreigners':
The Porters of London

I pray now attend to what I have penn'd
It is a new Ditty, the which here I lend
to my friends I hope, true Boys that can cope
I mean the Stout Yeomen of Ticket and Rope,
Bonny Porters [...] [1]

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, London was one of the busiest trading ports in the world.[2] Once at the waterside, goods and commodities from around the world were unloaded from ships and transported to various destinations throughout the City. Many of the narrow alleys and passageways of London precluded the use of carts. In such cases, cargo needed to be carried by human labour from ship to quay and from warehouse to market. This was the task of the London porters. Sometimes transporting burdens as far as three miles in a single journey, porters sweated under heavy loads slung on their backs and shoulders. It was gruelling work and required considerable strength. Unlike most City trades and occupations, an apprenticeship was not a prerequisite for employment as a porter. Although less acknowledged by contemporaries and historians, porterage required a degree of skill. They needed navigational skills to move around the City, and the ability to lift cumbersome loads without self-injury or damaging expensive cargo. The intense physical strain of porterage often resulted in a short-lived career—even experienced porters were prone to crippling accidents.[3] Despite such occupational hazards, porters comprised a large occupational group in London. In 1646, an Act of Common Council numbered 3,000 men in the Ticket Porters society alone—though this was likely a modest estimate.[4]

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[1] *The Jolly Porters, or the Merry Lads of London* [1675-1696].
[2] Robert Bucholz and Joseph Ward, *London: A Social and Cultural History, 1550-1750* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 365-364.
[3] Walter Stern, *The Porters of London* (London: Longmans, 1960), 6-9.
[4] GL, MS 913, 76.

The number of porters, combined with their importance to the City's commercial sustainability, brought them to the attention of civic magistrates. By 1584 there were four distinct fellowships of porters under the City's watchful eye.[5] Each group possessed a different degree of civic status and esteem; like the carting industry, London's porterage encompassed a diverse body of workers that comprised both labourers and contractors. The Tacklehouse Porters were at the top of this hierarchy. They were members of established liveries—such as the Vinters', Grocers' or Fishmongers' companies. Tacklehouse Porters were generally regarded as 'decayed freemen,' or men who had fallen on hard times and resorted to porterage to make ends meet. Like the wealthier carmen from the previous chapter, they did not normally engage in hard labour themselves but acted as contractors for companies requiring porterage service. Next were the Corn, Salt, and Coal Porters of Billingsgate, or the Fellowship Porters. They too were meant to be freemen but did not possess membership of a company. The Fellowship Porters engaged in hard labour, and were mainly concerned in the transport of corn, salt, coal, and other market goods. The Aliens' Porters comprised another category. They were freemen porters who handled the porterage of Stranger Merchant goods, including the loading and unloading of Dutch and French imports. Finally, the Street Porters—later known as the Ticket Porters—occupied the lowest rung on the civic ladder.[6] They were a mix of free and non-free labourers, who transported goods not already allocated to the others. Such specific demarcation of the porters' occupational jurisdictions doubtless enhanced their members' sense of belonging in the City. As this chapter will show, membership in these civic bodies afforded porters— both free and non-free—a collective identity from which to negotiate with authorities and participate in civic politics.

Considering their vital role in the economic expansion of early modern London, it comes as a surprise that the historiography comprises of only one systematic account of the porters' life and work. Stern's *The Porters of London* undertakes the arduous task of chronicling the porters' activities from the thirteenth century, principally focusing upon the lengthy period between 1600 and 1900. Due to a scarcity of evidence from the medieval and early modern period—and perhaps personal inclination—Stern's focus is unevenly

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[5] Stern, *Porters*, 12-13.

[6] For more on the different classes of Porters, see Stern, *Porters*, 13-15; George Unwin, *The Gilds and Companies of London* (London: Methuen, 1908), 358-362. Both 'Street Porters' and 'Ticket Porters' were used interchangeably until about 1640. After, 'Ticket Porters' was employed exclusively. To avoid confusion, the term 'Ticket Porters' will be used throughout the chapter, unless when specifically designated as 'Street Porters' in a primary source.

distributed. He gives most of his attention to what he deems the 'decline' of porterage in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, limiting his focus of their 'heyday' in the seventeenth century to a descriptive sketch of the different fellowships' governing structures. Despite his impressive archival undertaking, Stern's overall opinion of the porters is skewed. He casually refers to the group as 'human flotsam and jetsam' who formed the 'lowest stratum of society.'[7] Indeed, he considers the occupational identity of porters as 'unpleasant,' and 'depressing,' and claims that they had 'no prospect of participating in the exercise of City government.'[8] Such remarks are part and parcel of a larger view that presents the porters as an impersonal labour force lacking social agency, thus resulting in a circumscribed history of one of London's largest pre-industrial working groups. This chapter reconsiders Stern's outlook. Burn's recent work on the lives of Newcastle keelmen has questioned the prevailing narrative of early modern working groups to show that manual occupations cannot be packaged into a single neat 'labouring poor' category.[9] By applying the same challenge to the stereotypes of London's porters, we can consider the deeper implications of their participation in civic politics.

Elsewhere, the porters have received little scholarly attention. London historians Earle and Archer briefly mention the porters, but both brush past any substantial analysis.[10] Unwin commits a small section of his *Gilds of London* to the porters, arguing that the 'gilds of transport entered upon the most active period of their existence' in the seventeenth century, and attributes this to their attempts to introduce a 'democratic form' of government within their organisations.[11] Following in his footsteps, O'Riordan also dedicates a chapter of his work on the watermen to the porters, but is too engrossed in pursuing his overarching argument—that their activities were a symptom of a larger democratic revolution in Civil War London—to explore deeper issues of their civic status or identity.[12] While both studies

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[7] Stern, *Porters*, 6-8.

[8] Stern, *Porters*, 10.

[9] Andy Burn 'Wage Labour, Wealth and the Power of a Database: Unlocking Communities of Work Outside Urban Guilds in Newcastle upon Tyne,' in *Cities and Solidarities: Urban Communities in Pre-Modern Europe*, ed. Justin Colson and Arie van Steensel (London: Routledge, 2017), 169-187; Burn, 'Seasonal Work and Welfare in an Early Industrial Town: Newcastle upon Tyne, 1600-1700,' *Continuity and Change* 32, no. 2 (2017): 157-182.

[10] Peter Earle, *A City Full of People: Men and Women of London 1650-1750* (London: Methuen, 1994), 95-97; Ian Archer, *The Pursuit of Stability: Social Relations in Elizabethan London* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 62.

[11] Unwin, *Gilds and Companies*, 353-365.

[12] Christopher O'Riordan, 'The Thames Watermen in the Century of Revolution' (unpublished manuscript, 2008), http://www.geocities.org/thameswatermen.

grant political agency to the porters, their aims are misdirected. As will be analysed in depth in the next chapter, 'democratic reform' is a reductive term that fails to consider the sorts of politics that imbued fellowships who enjoyed quasi-free civic status. Finally, Ward allots a small section to the porters in his work regarding 'metropolitan' identities.[13] However, his reading is also problematic because he misinterprets porterage as a company-based prerogative, minimising the significant role of the City corporation in the porters' activities.

This chapter looks at the experiences of Londoners engaged in porterage in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, focusing mainly on the representations and political activities of the Ticket Porters. They were the largest group of porters and composed the bulk of complaints to the Court of Aldermen, largely concerning conflicts that arose after their amalgamation with the Tacklehouse Porters in 1609.[14] The overarching argument of this chapter is that the freedom was not the preserve of citizens; occupational groups commonly regarded as 'labourers' and 'wage-earners' were also active participants in the culture of citizenship. The Ticket Porters' ambiguous position in the City—non-free members of a 'free society'—forces us to rethink our understanding of London's political culture to appreciate the diverse composition of its participants.

The first section of this chapter introduces the background and early chronology of the Ticket Porters and their hostile relationship with the Tacklehouse Porters. The second and third sections explore different moments of civic legislation regarding the regulation of the Ticket Porters, looking at conflicting responses towards non-free porterage, and the ambiguous language used by civic authorities regarding their status as non-free members of a free fellowship. These sections look at different representations of porters in popular literature, civic record, and other texts to demonstrate that attitudes toward the group were more contradictory than past scholarship has appreciated. The final section concludes by exploring the different ways the Ticket Porters legitimised political power in petitions using civic rhetorics associated with regulation, social stability, and the freedom. The participation of both free and non-free porters in civic politics reveals competing discourses of porterage and provides wider insights into how civic status was construed and deployed in early modern London.

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[13] Joseph Ward, *Metropolitan Communities: Trade Guilds, Identity, and Change in Early Modern London* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1997), 57-72.
[14] LMA, COL/CA/01/01/29, f. 41.

I.   London's porters

Scholarly neglect of the porters' political agency stems in part from the lack of available evidence, but also from the assumption that porters were an unruly, vagrant population who did not enjoy a sense of belonging in London, and thus did not engage in civic politics in a meaningful way. Such attitudes have a long tradition. In the minds of civic authorities, porterage and vagrancy were closely intertwined. City magistrates feared that foreigners and other 'masterless men' swarmed to London to seek opportunities for short-term employment as porters before moving elsewhere, or worse, to take refuge in the City and become burdens on their local parishes.[15] To counter the porters' ostensible threat, civic magistrates introduced various legislation to regulate the various societies of porters.

Though porters plied their trade long before the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, there is no recorded attempt to organise them into different fellowships until the 1570s.[16] Civic records from this period are rife with demarcation disputes between different groups of porters, as well as regulatory legislation concerning the illegal employment of foreigners and 'unadmitted' porters.[17] Growth in trade played a major role in many of these disputes; changes in the volume and structure of international commerce in the seventeenth century, as well as changing consumer trends for different commodities, meant that the employability of different porters' groups increased and decreased throughout the period.[18] The most heated differences regarding prerogative over different goods occurred between the Tacklehouse Porters and the Ticket Porters. As tensions escalated in the 1620s, issues concerning the freedom and civic regulation of foreigners became the backdrop to their dispute.

Street Porters

The repertories logged several grievances from the Tacklehouse Porters and other porter groups complaining of foreigners encroaching upon the work of freemen porters in 1584.[19] Even after foreigners were organised into their own civic society of 'Street Porters'

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[15] LMA, COL/CC/01/30, f. 227.

[16] Stern, *Porters*, 13-15.

[17] See, for example, LMA, COL/CA/01/01/19, f. 204b; COL/CA/CA/01/21, f. 104; f. 108

[18] Stern, *Porters*, 17. For growth in international trade in Tudor and early Stuart London, see Stephen Alford, *London's Triumph: Merchants, Adventurers, and Money in Shakespeare's City* (London: Bloomsbury Press, 2017).

[19] LMA, COL/CA/01/01/21, f. 104; f. 108

the same year, frequent complaints kept the Aldermen occupied.[20] Tensions between free and non-free porters continued to escalate, and in 1597, an Act of Common Council ordered that only freemen could join the Street Porters.[21] Re-enacted in 1608, the Common Council observed:

> And where by Toleration of foreginers without
> Restraint or Order […] many people of bad and
> lewd Condition daily resort from the most part of
> this Realm to the said City, Suburbs and Places
> adjoining […] to the great increase and pestering
> of this City with poor people.[22]

To 'redress of all which Complaints and Enormities,' civic authorities hoped that making the freedom an occupational requirement for porterage would place a cap on the influx of foreigners and vagrants migrating into the City.[23] Perhaps they also expected that it would quell the tension amongst the Tacklehouse and Ticket Porters by removing the main difference between them. Tacklehouse Porters could no longer claim that 'non-free' Street Porters usurped their work now that they were all free—at least theoretically.

After their formation in 1597, the Street Porters were re-christened the Ticket Porters, although both styles were used intermittently until 1641 when the latter completely replaced the former.[24] Their new name came from the tin badge that all members were required to wear. Upon acquiring membership, a Ticket Porter had to purchase a badge costing 6*d*. by the next court day; each one was inscribed with the wearer's name and proved his admission to the brotherhood.[25] The Aldermen also introduced a registry of the Ticket Porters, including their names and dwelling places, as part of a larger design to monitor and control their growing labour force, though unfortunately the records of this registry no longer exist before 1673.[26]

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[20] LMA, COL/CA/01/01/21, ff. 114b-115
[21] LMA, COL/CC/01/01/24, ff. 285b-286; 288b.
[22] LMA, COL/CC/01/01/27, ff. 142b-146.
[23] For examples of contemporary anxieties toward new migrants in London, see LMA, COL/CA/01/01/16, f. 340; COL/CA/01/01/38, f. 114b; COL/CC/01/01/16, f. 127; COL/CC/01/01/CC/26(I), f. 7b; f. 186b; TNA, PC 2/42 ff. 305-6; BL, Lansdowne MS 92, f. 26; Lansdowne MS 160, f. 96; Bodl., Bankes MSS, 12/46; see also, Paul Griffiths, *Lost Londons: Change, Crime, and Control in the Capital City, 1550-1660* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), esp. 27-67.
[24] LMA, COL/CA/01/01/54, ff. 334b-336; COL/CA/01/01/55, f. 16; f. 165b; f. 416b; f. 438; COL/CA/01/01/57I, f. 151b.
[25] LMA, COL/CA/01/01/26(II), ff. 521b-524.
[26] LMA, COL/CA/01/01/27, f. 176. For the 1673-1706 list of members, see GL, MS 2836.

In 1605, the Aldermen assigned two of their own to oversee the fellowship.[27] As we saw in the previous chapter, civic oversight was not unheard of in fraternity politics. However, the structure of the Street Porters fellowship was anomalous. Its governing body was made up of twelve men: five freemen and seven non-freemen. Under the supervision of two aldermen, the twelve rulers of the Street Porters oversaw the society with the aid of thirty assistants, who were also of a mixed civic status. It is striking that there was a larger ratio of foreigners to freemen in the Street Porters ruling group. In theory, foreigners were not official members of the City and thus their civic status was below that of freemen. It is unlikely that the aldermen were short of choice of freemen Street Porters—only seven more were needed to accommodate twelve freemen rulers. Their choice perhaps suggests that the Street Porters largely consisted of foreigners, despite their official designation as a free society in 1597. This implies that civic authorities were more flexible towards what constituted the membership body of a 'free' fellowship than historians have appreciated. The exact number of Ticket Porters at this point is unknown, but the fact that its governing functions were carried out by 44 individuals (12 rulers and 32 assistants) implies that it boasted a large membership.[28]

The ambiguous admission criteria of the Ticket Porters carry significant implications. Despite several acts and orders commanding that only freemen were permitted to practice employment as porters, there were numerous exceptions. In the 1597 Act, foreigners who were already Street Porters could continue their occupation—though it is unclear whether this entailed automatic admission to the freedom. Moreover, aldermen retained the privilege to appoint any person they deemed fit to be a porter regardless of their civic status. Throughout the seventeenth century, the court was not reluctant to use such power over fellowship admissions. For example, William Rumford of St Saviours petitioned the court the same year the Act was mandated and was granted 'a licence or Tickett to bee a porter within this City.'[29] Soon after, Cuthbert Vincent, 'a poore labouring man,' was 'admitted into the fellowship or brotherhood of Streete Porters London […] to reliefe himself and his wife.'[30]

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[27] LMA, COL/CA/01/01/26(II), ff. 521-524.
[28] LMA, COL/CA/01/01/26(II), ff. 521b-524.
[29] LMA, COL/CA/01/01/48, f. 276b.
[30] LMA, COL/CA/01/01/49, f. 122.

Politics of Fellowship

The Ticket Porters brotherhood was short-lived. Just a year later, in 1606, the society was dissolved 'on account of diverse misdemeanours and disorders committed and daily practiced by the late brotherhood of Street Porters.'[31] The court's indignation is palpable: the aldermen voided all previous orders and ordinances, rescinded the brotherhood's warrants under the Lord Mayor's seal, and appointed a committee to watch over the Ticket Porters until a more permanent decision could be made.

This sudden change-of-heart is suspicious. It is worth noting that the 1605 'chief overseer' of the Ticket Porters was Richard Stringer, who may have been associated with the Company of Haberdashers.[32] A year earlier, the Haberdashers paid Stringer a significant sum of £8 to contract the service of 64 porters to work in Ben Jonson's Lord Mayor's Pageant *Device for Sir Thomas Lowe, Haberdasher*.[33] Though speculative, the 1605 appointment of the independent society of Ticket Porters might have been part of guild politics in the Company of Haberdashers to bestow favour and/or assert control over a group of porters whose elite members—like Stringer—had a history of doing business with the company. If so, it can be ventured that the dissolving of the Ticket Porters the following year had less to do with their 'divers misdemeanours and disorders' and more with the loss of patronage when the new Lord Mayor, the Merchant Taylor Leonard Halliday, succeeded.

This theory is somewhat supported by the fact that the Ticket Porters immediately appealed the dissolution order, defiantly defending their 'good government.'[34] Their petition did not receive much attention and there was no attempt to solve the issue until 1609. In an unexpected turn of events, the Aldermen combined the Ticket Porters with the Tacklehouse Porters into a single brotherhood. [35] Until this point, the groups did not have much in common. As mentioned earlier, the Tacklehouse Porters were essentially warehouse men.

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[31] LMA, COL/CA/01/01/27, f. 176.

[32] Though slightly tenuous, there is a 'Richard Stringer' in the registers of freedom records in the Company of Haberdashers, listed as the master to Benjamyn North in 1637, GL MS15857/001, f. 230.

[33] Ian Donaldson, *Ben Jonson: A Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 91; Jean Robertson and D.J. Gordon, eds., *A Calendar of Dramatic Records of the Livery Companies of London* (London: The Malone Society Collections, 1954), 3: 61-8; Martin Wiggins and Catherine Teresa Richardson, *British Drama, 1533-1642* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2015) 5: 150-151. For more on the role of porters in Lord Mayor's pageants, see Tracey Hill, *Pageantry and Power: A Cultural History of the Early Modern Lord Mayor's Show, 1585-1639* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2011), 118-213.

[34] LMA, COL/CA/01/01/27, f. 183b.

[35] LMA, COL/CA/01/01/29, ff. 41-42b; f. 102b.

They did not engage in hard labour themselves but employed non-free 'servants' to carry out the heavy lifting. While Tacklehouse Porters enjoyed more power in the society due to their status as company members, Ticket Porters—both freemen and foreigners—still held roles in the governing structure. The amalgamation of free company men with non-free labourers calls into question the hard-line scholarship has drawn between freemen and foreigners. The motley society of Tacklehouse and Ticket Porters is an exception that begs further exploration.

The Tacklehouse Porters were first mentioned in relation to the Vintners' Company in 1508 regarding their authority over the import of wines into the City.[36] In 1576, the only groups allowed to appoint Tacklehouse Porters were the Vintners', Grocers', Salters', and Fishmongers' companies. A few years later, the privilege was extended to the Haberdashers', Drapers', Skinners' and Clothworkers' companies.[37] All other guilds were restricted from employing Tacklehouse Porters to prevent overcrowding in the trade; those who required waterside porterage services were obligated to hire Tacklehouse Porters from one of the companies listed above. They were a relatively small group—most companies had around two to four Tacklehouse Porters employed.[38]

The Street Porters had very different origins. Up until their official recognition in 1584, they were often dismissed as foreigners or unadmitted porters interfering in the work of freemen porters. After their formation, they were given prerogative over specific imported goods, but maintained their reputation for usurping the work of other porter groups. While they never experienced complete autonomy—for example, new members needed to register with an established Tacklehouse Porter—the forced combination with the Tacklehouse Porters was certainly to their disadvantage.[39] Although they maintained some rights over certain commodities, their livelihood mostly depended upon their relationship with their new employers. In the new joint society, Tacklehouse Porters were ordered to

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[36] Stern, *Porters*, 39.

[37] LMA, COL/CA/01/01/19, f. 95; f. 174b; f. 309b; see also LMA, COL/CC/14/007.

[38] The Mercers, Ironmongers and Goldsmiths obtained their own Tacklehouse Porters in 1609, 1640 and 1706 respectively, Stern, 38-40. I have looked at several company histories' indices for mention of porters to no avail, including Ian Archer, *The History of the Haberdashers' Company* (London: Phillimore, 1991); Matthew Davies and Ann Saunders, *The History of the Merchant Taylors' Company* (London: Routledge, 2004); William Herbert, *History of the Worshipful Company of Mercers of London* (London, 1837). However, Ward has found several references of Tacklehouse Porters in the Court minutes of the Grocers', Skinners', Vintners', Drapers', and Clothworkers' companies, *Metropolitan Communities*, 57-72.

[39] LMA, COL/CA/01/01/21, ff. 114b-115.

only contract Street Porters to unload, load and transport goods across the City. However, at the outset, Tacklehouse Porters were still allowed to keep one 'servant' each, on the stipulation that when such positions were vacated, they were to be filled by a Ticket Porter.[40]

Unsurprisingly, this attempt to gradually diminish the population of Tacklehouse servants was not strictly followed. In 1613, 1617, 1621, 1636, 1640, 1656 and 1676, the Ticket Porters complained that Tacklehouse Porters continued to allocate employment to servants and other unauthorised workers and foreigners.[41] As late as 1682, a printed petition from the Ticket Porters to Common Council complained that Tacklehouse Porters 'have constantly employ'd Foreginers and Unticketed Free-men [as their servants], to the number of three or four hundred a day.'[42] The City made several attempts to intervene on behalf of the Ticket Porters. For example, the Court of Common Council increased the fine for Tacklehouse Porters employing non-Ticket Porters from 1*s*. to 5*s*. in 1645.[43] However, perhaps due to a lack of enforcement, such attempts were fruitless. The Ticket Porters continued to chafe against the new organisation well into the eighteenth century.[44]

Indeed, the 1609 union was not a happy one. The Ticket Porters filed for separation from the Tacklehouse Porters in 1621, 1641, 1642, 1644 and 1651.[45] The dearth of surviving records creates difficulties in pinpointing specific figures or groups within the Ticket Porters that drove their political activities.[46] However, it seems that there were certain groups that engaged in civic politics to further sectional interests. Sometime after their formation, the Ticket Porters formed small, but relatively wealthy, organisations within the society called 'Ticket Gangs.' While waterside Ticket Porters normally worked in ad hoc teams, gangs were permanent groupings of men who loaded and unloaded specific goods claimed under

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[40] LMA, COL/CA/01/01/29, ff. 41-42b; f. 102b; Stern, 54-55.
[41] LMA, COL/CA/01/01/31(II), f. 246b; COL/CA/01/01/33, f. 196b; COL/CA/01/01/36, f. 31b; COL/CA/01/01/51, f. 49; COL/CA/01/01/55, f. 165b; COL/CA/01/01/64, f. 218; COL/CA/01/01/82, f. 50.
[42] LMA, COL/CC/16/004.
[43] LMA, COL/CC/01/01/40, ff. 126b-128.
[44] For a discussion of issues that arose between the Ticket Porters and Tacklehouse Porters in the eighteenth century, see Stern, 119-164.
[45] LMA, COL/CA/01/01/36, f. 4b; COL/CA/01/01/54, ff. 334b-336; COL/CA/01/01/55, ff. 16; f. 165b; f. 416b; f. 438; COL/CA/01/01/57(I), f. 151b; COL/CC/01/01/41x, f. 47; f. 55; f. 57.
[46] Unfortunately, the repertories in the Court of Aldermen do not specifically name individuals who petitioned against the Tacklehouse Porters. As such, I have been unable to research biographies of the petitioners.

their jurisdiction. As Stern observes, 'gangsmen constituted the undoubted aristocracy of Ticket Porters, enjoying earnings and opportunities far in excess of those available to ordinary waterside porters.'[47] Admission fees to join porter gangs were often extortionate, and reveal that there were large sums of money circulating within the fellowship. Ticket Porter gangs first reached the attention of Aldermen in 1674 when a gang brought a suit against a porter for withholding his £30 admission fee. A short while later, a Ticket Porter paid £20 for admission into a waterside gang; he sued the gang when he was later not admitted nor refunded.[48] Although the Aldermen were alarmed to learn of their existence and attempted to squash such practices, Ticket Porter gangs lasted well into the nineteenth century.[49]

The Ticket Porters' first attempt to separate from the Tacklehouse Porters occurred in 1621.[50] The writers of the petition were astute in civic rhetorics. To grab the attention of the Court, they appealed to civic notions of good government and regulation. Although the original petition no longer exists, we can glean from the Aldermanic report that the Ticket Porters complained of members defaulting on quarterage payments, and directly accused the Tacklehouse Porters of employing foreigners against civic custom. In answer, the Aldermen banned all porters who had fallen behind in their quarterage dues 'for the better establishment of good government,' and forbade the Tacklehouse Porters from employing 'unadmitted porters' to counter the growing number of vagrants in the City.[51] However, the Ticket Porters were unsuccessful—the court still found their joint-organisation with the Tacklehouse Porters to be beneficial to the well-running of the fellowship.

Like the carmen, the Ticket Porters made bids to separate from the Tacklehouse Porters in the 1640s, namely in 1641, 1642 and 1644.[52] The first of these efforts received a similar result to their 1621 attempt, albeit with a few minor concessions. The Tacklehouse Porters were again admonished for employing foreigners and were ordered to start paying quarterage fees alongside the Ticket Porters.[53] The report informs us that the Tacklehouse Porters swiftly accepted the ruling. However, the Ticket Porters were less amenable. The

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[47] Stern, *Porters*, 62.
[48] LMA, COL/CA/01/01/81, f. 56; COL/CA/01/01/88; f. 162
[49] LMA, COL/CA/01/01/81, f. 56; Stern, *Porters*, 62-65.
[50] LMA, COL/CA/01/01/36, f. 4b; ff. 31b-32b.
[51] LMA, COL/CA/01/01/36, ff. 31b-32b.
[52] LMA, COL/CA/01/01/54, ff. 334b-336; COL/CA/01/01/55, f. 16; f. 165b; f. 416b; f. 438; COL/CA/01/01/57(I), f. 151b.
[53] Tacklehouse Porters had previously paid quarterage fees to their respective companies, Stern, *Porters*, 38-41.

court recorded that 'they desired a separation from the Tacklehouse Porters and would not give consent to any thing we should order except a separation in which wee held in noe wise fit.'[54]

Even by the Ticket Porters' 'disorderly' reputation, this was a bold refusal—doubtless they were animated by London's turbulent political climate of the time. Their newfound confidence also might have had to do with the development of overseas trade in their favour. Caribbean and English plantation imports were traditionally under the Ticket Porters' jurisdiction; when the trade was assigned to them at the end of the sixteenth century, it was too insignificant to concern the Tacklehouse Porters who, at the time, possessed the lion's share of overseas imports. However, the prominence of such goods ballooned in popularity by the middle of seventeenth century, and the Ticket Porters' workload and influence grew to match it.[55] Whatever the case, their rebellion was not met gracefully, and in 1641, the Aldermen anxiously ordered the Ticket Porters to submit themselves or 'stand suspended from the execution of their places.'[56]

Despite several attempts, the Ticket Porters' dream of divorcing from the Tacklehouse Porters was never realised. It is surprising, however, that their incorporation as a joint company was up for discussion at least three times over the seventeenth century—in 1606, 1614, and 1633.[57] Each of these occasions was taken seriously—the 1614 patent lacked only the Lord Mayor's seal to make it official. However, all other attempts were mooted in bureaucratic committees. An unsuccessful 1691 proposal by the projector Thomas Neale to become the controller of the society of Ticket Porters was the last attempt to monopolise the groups.[58]

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[54] LMA, COL/CA/01/01/54, ff. 334b-336.

[55] According to Ralph Davis, England's total merchant tonnage increased from around 150,000 tons in 1640 to 200,000 tons in 1660, see *The Rise of the English Shipping Industry in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (London: Newton Abbot, 1962), 1-21. For late seventeenth-century colonial trade in London, see Nuala Zahedieh, *The Capital and the Colonies: London and the Atlantic Economy, 1660-1700* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010). For a summary of the Ticket Porters' prerogative of overseas trade, see Stern, *Porters*, 70-78.

[56] LMA, COL/CA/01/01/55, f. 16b.

[57] LMA, COL/CA/01/01/27, f. 191; COL/CA/01/01/31(II), f. 307; COL/CA/01/01/47, f. 361.

[58] TNA, SP 44/235, f. 179; see also Stern, *Porters*, 20-21. Thomas Neale was a prominent politician and projector. In 1691, he petitioned for the right to search for mines royal in the American colonies and became an assistant in the new company of Tapestry Makers. He is best known, however, for his property development in Westminster, the Seven Dials, see

(Non-)free Porterage

Although the Society of Tacklehouse and Ticket Porters was formally regarded as a 'free' society, many ticket porter members were not freemen of the City. This ambiguity lasted well into the late seventeenth century. A 1646 Act of Common Council offered a deal to foreigners who had been employed as porters for a year or more. They could be admitted to the society as Ticket Porters, provided they applied to become a member within three months. Foreigner porters were also required to secure references from their neighbours, which doubtless cemented a sense of belonging in one's local community. While the one-year employment requirement might have had more to do with separating settled non-free porters from the vagrant population who 'usurped' jobs from authorised members, it also underlines the City's lax attitude towards non-free porterage. However, this offer came with a significant caveat: all porters who continued to practice illegally after the three-month amnesty period were to be fined an excessive sum of £5 for each offence.[59] By the end of the century, the society was still comprised of both freemen and foreigners. In 1682, for example, 24 men were admitted into the society, of which four were foreigners.[60]

Conversely, there were several occasions when the Aldermen cracked down on non-free porterage. For example, in 1636, the court sued Alexander King for 'intermeddling as a street porter being a forreiner contrary to the [1597] act.'[61] Earlier, in 1628, the Billingsgate Porters complained of two 'forreiners,' John Morris and his wife, who transported fruit to 'diverse parts of the City.' The Court immediately ordered that they 'be from henceforth restrained and not suffered to hinder or prejudice the petitioners.'[62] Later, in 1672, the Court censured the East India Company for employing foreigner porters 'contrary to the rights and privlidges of this City in regard noe person that is forreyne to the freedome of this Citty ought to be imployed as a porter within this City.'[63]

C.E. Challis, 'Neal, Thomas (1641-1699),' *ODNB*, accessed July 14, 2016, https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/19829.

[59] LMA, COL/CC/01/01/41, ff. 194-196.

[60] GL, MS 3455, ff. 1-4.

[61] LMA, COL/CA/01/01/51, f. 49.

[62] LMA, COL/CA/01/01/42, f. 280.

[63] LMA, COL/CA/01/01/78, f. 15b. I have looked at the subject indices for the East India Company Court records from 1635-1679 for mentions of porterage to no effect, see Ethel Bruce Sainsbury, William Foster and William Ottewill, eds., *A Calander of the Court Minutes, etc. of the East India Company*, Vols. 1-11 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1907-1938).

The City permitted foreigners to work as porters in quasi-official capacities in the liberties. In 1681, the Court received a petition signed by 'forrayne Porters labouring within St Katherines' so they 'may be permitted quietly to laboure […] For their releife and maynetenice […] and for the rendering and establishing of their Ancient brotherhood and fraternatie of Porters.'[64] Yet, even in the City, the restrictions of non-free porterage were vaguely articulated. Earlier, in 1642, the Court ordered the Tacklehouse Porters that 'none be sett to worke' unless they were 'freemen of Lond(on) *and forreyne(ers) granted exempt*.'[65] Such ambiguity suggests that authorities were more lenient of non-free porterage than has been appreciated. The inconsistent enforcement of foreigners employed as porters, as well as the mixed membership of the Street Porters, suggests that there were many ways of practicing the employment of a London porter without actually being free.

II.   The 'corporation' of Ticket Porters

The ambiguity regarding the civic standing of the Ticket Porters is not limited to the composition of their membership. The 1584 order that introduced the Street Porters labelled the society a 'company,' but we should not assume that this meant they enjoyed corporate status.[66] However, as we saw with the carmen, this usage does demonstrate a degree of flexibility in such markers. Indeed, civic bodies deployed various group descriptors for the Ticket Porters, and the terms should not be taken at face-value. Throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, they were intermittently called a 'company,' 'fraternity,' 'fellowship,' or 'society.' None of these titles reflects the diversity of their membership: many porters completed apprenticeships and became free of other companies or became free through civic legislation during their employment as porters. In addition, as we have seen, a large number remained foreigners but could work as 'admitted' porters in the City.

However, former scholarship has carelessly lumped porters into the category of non-free labourers without investigating the implications of their diversity.[67] At the other end of

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[64] LMA, COL/CA/01/01/33, f. 65.
[65] LMA, COL/CA/01/01/54, f. 334b. My emphasis.
[66] LMA, COL/CA/01/01/21, f. 104; f. 108.
[67] See, for example, Peter Earle, *A City Full of People* (London: Methuen, 1994), 15; Steve Rappaport, *Worlds within Worlds* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 171-73; Jeremy Boulton, *Neighbourhood and Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 119. Boulton does admit that his data represents a '*general* social classification' and each occupational group represented a wide range of wealth (his italics, 20); and Roy Porter, *London: A Social History* (London: Penguin, 2000), 49.

the spectrum, others have assumed that *all* porters enjoyed the freedom. Pearl's estimation of 'freemen' living in London includes '3,000 from the Company of Ticket Porters,' though we can presume a large number of their membership were foreigners.[68] Similarly, Ward argues that 'there was not company of porters as such,' because they were all 'members of livery companies.'[69] While he is correct that there was no incorporated company of porters, and indeed, that the Tacklehouse Porters were freemen of various companies, he leaves out a substantial number of porters who were not automatically associated with a livery, including the Street Porters, Fellowship Porters, and Aliens' Porters.

Positive labels

Due to the 'low' manual labour of porterage, historians have underestimated the company-like qualities of their fellowship. However, as mentioned above, even the aldermen identified the Ticket Porters as a 'company' more than once.[70] The imprecise labelling of the Ticket Porters' corporate status shaped how Londoners perceived the group. As Unwin points out: 'porters continued to enjoy in practice many of the powers and privileges of a corporation […], their status was an object of emulation to other bodies of London labourers.'[71] Indeed, as we can recall from chapter 1, a petition signed in 1649 by a group associated with the Carmen asked the Aldermen: 'Why not the Carmen to be a Company incorporate by their selves, as well as the Woodmongers, Porters, Watermen, and Tankard-bearers. Are these people so able to governe above the Car-men?'[72]

The imprecise labelling of the Ticket Porters' civic status may have had a positive effect on how their fellow Londoners perceived them. In 1605, Thomas Brewer published *A newe Ballad, composed in commendation of the new Societie, or Companie of the Porters* lauding their new status.[73] Brewer published several tracts of prose and verse between 1605 and 1640, ranging in theme from infanticide, plague, to the infamous Overbury affair. He is thought to have been a 'common man,' who was 'more or less a professional ballad-

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[68] Valerie Pearl, 'Change and Stability in seventeenth-century London,' *London Journal* 5, no. 1 (1979): 30n24.

[69] Ward, *Metropolitan Communities*, 162n65.

[70] See, for example, LMA, COL/CA/01/01/85, f. 108.

[71] Unwin, *Gilds and Companies*, 363.

[72] Stephen Spratt, *The carmens remonstrance* (1649), 7.

[73] Thomas Brewer, *A newe Ballad, composed in commendation of the Societie, or Companie of the Porters* (1605).

writer.'[74] In the ballad, Brewer contrasts the status of street porters before and after they were formally recognised as a society in 1605:

> Now that they were before
> of meanest estimation
> by suite have salude that sore,
> and gainde a Corporation:
> excludes, and shuts out many
> that were of base esteeme,
> and will not suffer any
> such person bide with them.[75]

Brewer stresses the new respectability of the Street Porters now they were 'incorporated.' He notes their exclusivity; the new company of porters rejected 'base' and 'mean' members hoping to join their ranks, which likely refers to the aldermanic order requiring sureties and court approval for all new candidates. The ballad's woodcut—likely prepared exclusively for it—is also telling of their new status [see fig. 2.1].[76]

Figure 2.1. Thomas Brewer, *A newe Ballad, composed in commendation of the Societie, or Companie of the Porters* (1605).

The woodcut depicts three porters: the first is shown idle with an empty basket, the heading above reads 'At the first went we, as here you see;' the second image illustrates a

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[74] Hyder E. Rollins, ed., *A Pepsian Garland: black-letter broadside ballads of the years 1595-1639, chiefly from the collection of Samuel Pepys* (1922, repr, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1971), 11; see also Elizabeth Haresnape, 'Brewer, Thomas (fl.1605-1640),' *ODNB*, accessed August 1, 2016, https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/3367.
[75] Brewer, *A newe Ballad [...]* (1605).
[76] I have not been able to locate an identical woodcut on *British Printed Images to 1700* (www.bpi1700.org.uk, 2018).

porter moving through the City with a heavy basket full of goods, captioned 'But since our Corporation, on this fashion;' the third and final image is a porter clothed head-to-toe in stylish attire for a company meeting, the heading above reads 'And to our Hall, thus we goe all.' In the first two images, the link between gainful employment and a strong company identity is pronounced: the empty basket of the unaffiliated porter is starkly contrasted to the heavy basket of the 'incorporated' porter. The final image underscores the respectability of the newly 'incorporated' porters on their way to a hall meeting, presenting them within the ceremonial culture of formal City companies and guilds. Interestingly, there is no evidence of the Ticket Porters actually possessing a hall in the early seventeenth century, though they did have quarterage days and held meetings at various pubs and taverns throughout the City.[77] Regardless, the woodcut overall depicts an optimistic portrayal of the new and improved society, a very different focus from other representations of porterage in the period.

Badges of Trust

The ballad also makes a point to admire 'there marks of Admittaince made out of tin,' deeming their badges as 'the cheife, of silver weare.'[78] As mentioned above, Ticket Porters derived their name from badges—or 'tickets'—they were ordered to wear to visibly indicate their membership in the brotherhood. As can be viewed above, the third porter in Brewer's woodcut appears to be wearing some sort of badge or ticket around his neck as part of his ceremonial garb [see fig. 2.1]. The Ticket Porters were not the only porterage group to visibly distinguish themselves as legitimate porters. Fellowship Porters wore a tally, a piece of leather with sixty holes to keep track of each journey they made. [see fig. 2.2]. Such tickets and tallies were essential to the porters' identification with their respective societies, and as Stern comments, represents their 'essential work and signified their freedom from impressment.'[79] Equally important, the badges also symbolised a promise of trust. In 1682, for example, porters were nominated for removing and carrying goods

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[77] For example, the Court elected a new clerk in 1667 at the White Horse inn, Cripplegate without, LMA, COL/CA/01/01/72, ff. 69-69b. An anonymous author wrote that the porters met at the Turners' Hall in the mid-eighteenth century, *A general description of all trades* (1647), 172. Stern mentions that there was a 'Porters' Hall' in the 1680s, but I have been unable to substantiate this claim, see *Porters*, 49.

[78] Brewer, *A newe ballad [...]* (1605).

[79] Stern, *Porters*, 45, 86.

affected by London building fires. The proposal suggested that badges should be given to 'porters of known credit […] for the true performance of their Trust.'[80]

Figure 2.2 *Brass Fellowship Porter Tally* (1769), © Museum of London.

The Porters' tickets and tallies can be seen as akin to the badges worn by members of the 'deserving poor' that legitimised the wearers' right to engage in petty trading or begging. Hindle argues that such technologies of identification carried humiliating connotations meant to stigmatise the poor and deter parish appeals for relief.[81] However, Hitchcock and Shoemaker emphasise the powerful claim to belonging that accompanied practices of badging. They argue that badges and certificates afforded the poor a powerful

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[80] *The Friendly Society, or, A proposal of a new way or method for securing houses from any considerable loss by fire* (1682).

[81] Steve Hindle, 'Dependency, Shame and Belonging: Badging the Deserving Poor, c. 1550-1750,' *Cultural and Social History* 1, no. 1 (2004): 6-35; see also, Hindle, *On the Parish? The Micro-Politics of Poor Relief in Rural England, 1550-1750* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

symbol of affiliation that could be used to negotiate their settlement and/or rights to relief.[82] A similar argument can be applied to the badging of porters. Their tickets legitimised their civic attachment and right to work in the City. However, the Ticket Porters' requirement to wear badges was not without tension: on the one hand, they represented their position as one of the lowest economic groups of society, in which the ticket was a symbol of their compulsory regulation and inability to govern themselves without civic oversight. On the other hand, the badges were a clear indicator of their authority and social status as *bona fide* London porters. Badging characterised the fraught relationship between the porters' subordination to the City and their political agency as members belonging to a free society.

The demand for porters' badges and certificates can be gauged through the extent of which they became articles of fraud and counterfeit.[83] The Court of Aldermen were certainly anxious about porters misappropriating their badges. For example, in 1605, an order warned that 'whosoever doth deliver his badge unto another thereby to delude and deceive the Brotherhood shall receive condigne punishment.' The report also demanded that all that badges were to be returned upon the retirement or death of its wearer, suggesting that tickets were being sold or passed off to unregulated labourers.[84] The tickets were not only a commodity for porters seeking work in the City, but for pick-pockets and thieves as well. Mary Carthensey of St Andrew Holborn was indicted at the Old Bailey in July 1697 for 'feloniously stealing a Porter's Silver badge, value 3*l.* 10*s.*' amongst other household items from John Sands.[85] This tells us that porters' badges were not only powerful symbols of belonging and civic affiliation, they were worth good money too. Moreover, the account suggests that by the end of the seventeenth century, porters' tickets may have evolved from the lesser-quality cloth badges used to label the 'deserving' poor to something closer to a livery.

The OED defines livery as 'the distinctive dress or uniform provided for and worn by an official, retainer, or employee,' by which the wearer can be recognized.[86] The badges and clothing worn by porters resembles several kinds of livery and its accompanying

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[82] Tim Hitchcock and Robert Shoemaker, *London Lives: Poverty, Crime and the Making of a Modern City, 1690-1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 42-52.

[83] For a similar argument regarding fraudulent poor badges, see Hitchcock and Shoemaker, *London Lives*, 50-52.

[84] LMA, COL/CA/01/01/26(II), ff. 521-524.

[85] Old Bailey Proceedings, *London Lives, 1690-1800*, t16970707-23 (www.londonlives.org, version 1.1, April 2012), July 1697, trial of Mary Carthensey.

[86] 'livery, n.,' *OED Online* (Oxford University Press), accessed 4 July, 2016, http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/109344?rskey=3sffL4&result=1&isAdvanced=false.

practices in different circles of early modern English society. First, the porters' tin badges and clothing can be linked to the practice of livery in the domestic service sphere. In this sense, livery was clothing worn by servants to distinguish their belonging to a specific household or family, usually accompanied by a badge or similar material marker.[87] There are a few characteristics of porterage that are akin to domestic service—not least of all including their roles as wage-earners and day-labourers.[88] In this sense, the 'ticket' of a porter could be construed as a form of livery worn by servants belonging to the City and its corporations. Nevertheless, historians have argued that outside its connotations of subservience and dependence, servants' livery was a source of social agency.[89] For Chakravarty, livery had 'real political benefits' that enhanced the wearer's social position by affiliation to powerful families and households.[90] Similar to the carmen's cart marks discussed in chapter 1, it is very possible that Ticket Porters drew social prestige from their badges and clothing that symbolised their affiliation to the City.

Badges separated regulated porters from unregulated porters. However, regulation was not only beneficial to civic magistrates. An efficiently run fellowship was vital to ensuring employers' trust in porters' services. Although many were of a humble background, porters often carried expensive cargo and goods. Merchants were required to rely upon porters to not only guard their wares against damage or loss but trust them not to steal or embezzle part or all their cargo. Even Stern, the porters' most critical modern observer, concedes that 'they were more than mere human beasts of burden, at least in theory: they occupied a position of trust and authority.'[91]

In Martin Parker's ballad *The honest plaine dealing Porter* (discussed at length below), the porter proclaims: 'I am a porter my habit shows/ my trade I doe not care who knows.'[92] Other than demonstrating occupational pride, this passage suggests that the 'habit' of the porter was easily identifiable to their peers, and thus subject to imposture. James

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[87] Urvashi Chakravarty, 'Livery, Liberty and Legal Fictions,' *English Literary Renaissance* 42, no. 3 (2012): 367.

[88] Ann Kussmaul suggests that the terms 'servant' and 'day-labourer' were not always differentiated until the nineteenth century, see *Servants in Husbandry in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 5-7.

[89] Chakravarty, 'Livery, Liberty and Legal Fictions,' 365-390; Amanda Bailey, 'Livery and its Discontents: "Braving it" in *The Taming of the Shrew,'* Renaissance Drama 33 (2004): 87-135.

[90] Chakravarty, 'Livery, Liberty and Legal Fictions,' 366.

[91] Stern, *Porters*, 6.

[92] Martin Parker, *The honest plaine dealing Porter* (1630).

Baker was indicted at the Old Bailey as a 'popish priest' in 1680; his informant claimed that he used to visit her in 'several habits' especially 'with cords about him like a porter.'[93] Accordingly, for Ticket Porters looking for work, badges were vital to their livelihood. Prospective clients doubtless felt more at ease hiring labourers that could be recognised by their badges as lawful porters. Similar to the ways in which servants' livery allowed viewers to recognize their affiliation to powerful families, porters' badges augmented their social position and authority as a City-endorsed labour force.

As their status grew over the seventeenth century, porters' badges can also be linked to the kind of livery worn by members of City companies. London's livery companies drew their name from the practice of wearing livery—the ceremonial garb worn by elite members of a company or guild. Company livery also usually involved some sort of badge or marker to denote the wearer's corporate identity.[94] Livery was commonly paraded at hall meetings and feasts—we can recall the finely dressed porter in the woodcut of Brewer's ballad above.[95] The tickets and tallies worn by different groups of porters reminded them—and others—of their corporate attachment to the City, and enhanced their civic identity as belonging to free societies of London. It is also worth remembering that the name of the Ticket Porter society is specifically derived from their badges. The notion that they were only called Ticket Porters after 1640—around the same time they no longer referred to themselves as foreigners but exclusively 'freemen'—suggests a link between material markers of belonging and political agency. Their tickets—made from sturdy material and stamped with the City Arms—were a strong corporate symbol of their civic identity. They were no longer a disparate group of Street Porters but an integrated society of City Porters.

Good Securities

Porters themselves seemed to take this position of trust seriously. One peculiar example is the case of Joseph Johnson, a highway robber executed at Tyburn in 1705. He was indicted of countless incidents of theft over the course of his 34-year criminal career, during which he was employed in several occupations—he moved to London in his youth as a brewer's apprentice, then plied as a Ticket Porter 'under protection of a freeman of the

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[93] Proceedings, *LL,* t 6800226-14, July 1697, James Baker.

[94] 'livery, n.,' *OED Online* (Oxford University Press), accessed 4 July, 2016, http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/109344?rskey=3sffL4&result=1&isAdvanced=false.

[95] For more on elite livery practices in companies, see Chakravarti, 'Livery, Liberty, and Legal Fictions,' 368-369; Caroline Barron, *London in the Later Middle Ages: Government and People 1200-1500* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 214-216.

City.'[96] After saving up money—though it is unclear if the improvement of his finances was due to porterage or by extra-legal means—he switched occupations once again and became a fruiterer. The account states that he 'plainly-confessed' to all his crimes, but adamantly swore that he never took advantage of his role transporting expensive goods throughout the City. The prison ordinary reported:

> And moreover, [Johnson] said, that when he was a Porter,
> being often employed in carrying things of Value, as Plate
> and Money (which he had done sometimes to the Worth of
> 200l. at once) he ever was faithful to his Trust.[97]

Trust was integral to a porter's livelihood and formed a large part of their occupational identity. Moreover, belonging to an 'incorporated' brotherhood that could financially secure one's honesty certainly enhanced one's reputation, and provided a sense of order and regulation that benefitted both the City and the porter.

The money required to insure every Ticket Porter working in the City did not grow from trees. Upon admission to the society in 1605, Ticket Porters were required to furnish the brotherhood with sureties for good behaviour. Each bond was valued at £100; guarantors could be a friend, relative or neighbour—as long they were a freeman and householder, but not themselves a Ticket Porter. If a guarantor died, Ticket Porters theoretically had six months to locate a new surety for the Society. Bonds were not only used to recompense merchants and employers in the case of damaged or lost goods, but were also put forward to assist in legal action undertaken by the society against refractory members and/or those who defaulted on quarterage payments.[98] The bonds were especially worthwhile to employers; those who hired porters outside City-regulated societies had no choice but to prosecute larcenous porters in criminal courts. In 1697, for example, Randall Kittle, a porter who worked on lighters, was prosecuted at the Old Bailey for embezzling goods. His employer caught him stuffing raw silk worth £3 into his breeches whilst loading cargo for transport.[99] In 1685, Timothy Scarborough was accused of stealing 34 yards of paragon valued at 34 shillings, and 2.5 yards of crimson damask from his employer, Richard Beeling. The prosecutor had often employed Scarborough as a porter and had 'intrusted him in his house'

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[96] Ordinary of Newgate's Account, London Lives, 1690-1800, OA170502070502070002 (www.londonlives.org, version 1.1, April 2012), 7 Feb 1705.
[97] Ibid.
[98] LMA, COL/CA/01/01/26(II), ff. 521-524; see also Stern, 44-45.
[99] Proceedings, LL, t16970707-14, February 1697, Randall Kittle.

where the theft occurred.[100] While both victims received some form of justice for the theft and likely had the stolen goods returned to them, doubtless there were plenty of cases where acts of theft or damage committed by unregulated porters went unresolved.

For the most part, however, it seems that Ticket Porters were trustworthy; they were often celebrated for their honesty and reliability. In 1684, *The compleat tradesman* observed the 'good government and orders' of the Ticket Porters, and offered its readers a favourable review:

> [They] give good security for their Honesty, and Fidelity, so
> that no more need be done, but to take notice of his name,
> which is stampt on his Ticket that hangs at his Girdle, and
> repairing to their Governour, satisfaction may be had for any
> wrong or misbehaviour.[101]

This account not only paints a flattering portrait of honest and reliable Ticket Porters but highlights the efficacy of their fellowship as well. Patrons who had an unfortunate experience had only to report the badge of the insubordinate porter to the fellowship for compensation. The viability of London's companies and guilds was bound to the reputation and standard of their trade; artisans and merchants' goods carried the name of their company, and so companies exerted great efforts to make sure that such items were created 'virtuously.'[102] The Porters were no different, only that they dealt in the honesty of their carriage instead of their craft.

III.   Free Foreigners

Despite contemporary perceptions that porters were vagrants and foreigners, a significant number of them settled in London and were employed regularly—thousands were full-time fellowship members.[103] Robert Haynes, for example, was employed as porter for over ten years, and behaved himself 'very honestly, diligently, and soberly in his calling and business.'[104] Similarly, a petition written on behalf of Henry Bates, a citizen and late-grocer, to join the Society of Porters after falling into financial distress expressed that Bates

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[100] Proceedings, LL, t16851209-10, December 1685, Timothy Scarborough.
[101] N.H., *The Compleat Tradesmen* (1684), 96-97.
[102] Natasha Korda, *Labors Lost: Women's Work and the Early Modern Stage* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), 175.
[103] Stern, *Porters*, 50-51.
[104] LMA, DL/C/631, f. 314.

'hath demeaned himself Honestly and Civelly' and was 'Industrious and Willing to worke for his liveing.'[105]   As we saw with the carmen, such virtues were important to labouring groups who lacked the wealth and social standing to assert civic credit through landownership or office-holding.   Although the Ticket Porters' occupational identity placed them in the lowest stratum of the City, their status as members of a free fellowship meant that they were expected to behave as freemen. This ambiguity is significant. As we will see in the final section, porters drew upon the charitable language of their low occupational status, as well as the regulatory language of the freedom to legitimise their participation in civic politics.

Occupational identity and civic identity were closely linked in early modern London. To join the ranks of freemen, Londoners usually completed a seven-year apprenticeship in a specific trade or occupation, and subsequently were sworn in as a member of the company or guild associated with his/her trade. Unlike the carmen and watermen, porters did not complete apprenticeships, nor was there a formal scheme in which experienced porters imparted skills to newly admitted members—though a few Tacklehouse Porters did have 'servants.' Although some had been apprenticed and became free in other trades before entering porterage, many members—especially Ticket Porters—sidestepped the system altogether and were admitted into the fellowship without obtaining the City freedom. The fact that most porters skirted the formal apprenticeship process must have made their status in the freedom less prestigious then others who had committed a significant part of their youth to obtaining it. In any case, the magistrates' practice of liberally handing out memberships to non-apprenticed foreigners likely contributed to perceptions of the decline of the freedom in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Noise and Rudeness

Contemporaries certainly held poor opinions of the men who laboured under heavy goods throughout the City. Although some porters made a decent livelihood—and even more were free of the City—they were often cast as the antithesis of the ideal London citizen. In many instances, porters were deemed rude, uncivil, and disorderly. One pamphlet described a porter as a 'fellow compos'd of noise and rudeness.'[106] Another claimed porters were 'paltry,' 'refractory' and 'obstinate irregular men.'[107] Such rhetorics extended outside

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[105] City of London Sessions, *LL*, LMSLPS150040208, Henry Bates.
[106] *Bedlam broke loose* (1659), 6.
[107] A. D. B. *The Court of the most illustrious and magnificent James* (1619), 129.

the nexus of trade regulation. In 1612, Dekker wrote that he purposefully designed his civic pageant, *Troia-nova Triumphans*, to be drawn by horses 'to avoid the trouble and pestering of Porters, who with much noyse and little comlinesse are every year most unnescessarily imployed.'[108] Thomas Brown's *Amusements Serious and Comical* described the chaos of London's streets, warning pedestrians against the 'fat Greasie Porter [who] runs a Trunk full Butt upon you.'[109] A 1673 Mayoral Proclamation commanded that porters behave themselves more courteously in streets, claiming they 'do forbear to run against, justle or offer the least uncivil Action to Persons of better Quality.'[110] They were 'churlish,' 'impious' and 'common.'[111] Harsher still, another commentator grouped them alongside beggars and wounded soldiers as 'the most despicable creatures alive.'[112] In 1641, a printed petition addressed to Parliament from 15,000 porters called themselves 'the lowest and meanest Members of this City.' The petition was likely printed by Richard Overton, a Leveller unaffiliated with the porters, and does not necessarily reflect the group's self-image or political aims. Yet, it still reveals wider attitudes regarding the status of the 'poor labouring group.'[113]

Despite their free status, porters were not skilled artisans or merchants. Like other transport groups discussed in this thesis, they did not make things or sell things. This lack of training set them apart from other freemen in the City. In 1670, for example, Henry Calthrop observed:

> So an Husbandman, Tankard-bearer, Brickmaker, Porter,
> Miller, and such like Trades, are not within the Statute of 5.
> Eliz. cap. 4. […] for they are arts which require rather abillity
> of body than skill.[114]

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[108] Thomas Dekker, *Troia-Nova trumphans London Triumphing* (1612), B.

[109] Thomas Brown, *Amusements Serious and Comical […]* (1700), 21.

[110] *By the mayor whereas divers persons rudely disposed, within this city, have of late years been observed to behave themselves in an uncivil and insolent manner towards persons of quality* (1673).

[111] Thomas Adams, *The black devil* (1615), 26; Robert Ainsworth *The most natural and easie way of institution* (1698), 9.

[112] Dirk Ameyden, *Pietas Romana et Parisiensis […]* (1687), 21.

[113] *To the honourable the knights citizens and burgesses, in the Commons House of Parliament now assembled The humble petition of 15000 poore labouring men, known by the name of porters* (1642). For its connection to Richard Overton, see John Walter, *Covenanting Citizens: The Protestation Oath and Popular Culture in the English Revolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 217-218.

[114] Henry Calthrop, *Reports of special cases touching several customes and liberties of the city of London* (1670), 23.

Calthrop asserted that the 1563 Statute of Artificers did not apply to porters simply because they were not skilled enough to warrant notice. Scholars have emphasised this negative, 'dockworker' view of porterage. For instance, Stern claimed that 'men engage in [porterage] because they have been unable to acquire any skill valued more highly by society.'[115]

More recently, however, Ward has demonstrated that London companies gauged the employability of porters by their skill and experience.[116] In 1572, the Grocers' hired 'an ancient man' who was employed as porter 'above fourteen years,' and 'is the skillfullest man among [the other candidates] and a very honest man.'[117] Furthermore, despite perceptions that 'anyone could carry a load,' the lifting and carriage of heavy goods throughout the City did necessitate some form of skill. As Ramazzini notes in *A Treatise of the Diseases of Tradesmen*: 'For tho' [porters] are Ignorant of the Rules of the Mechanicks, Nature has taught 'em, that they bear Burdens upon their Shoulders better with their Breasts bended, than when the Body is rais'd upright.'[118] Although he stresses the porters' unsurprising lack of medical knowledge, his comment reveals that experience and learning were required to prevent injury and accidents. Accordingly, the Clothworkers' Company desired to employ 'able and skillfull men' who were able to ensure the 'skillful and safe handling' of company freight.[119] Porters deployed rhetorics of skill in their petitions to the Court of Aldermen as well. In 1619, a coal trader, Richard Stuckley, fell into a disagreement with the Fellowship Porters. Amongst other complaints, he accused the group of being unpunctual and insufficiently manned to unload his coal—though perhaps this was an excuse to employ cheaper, unadmitted workers. The porters responded that they would employ more able men to appear for work on time, in which they will be 'sufficient to doe his work with expedition.'[120] By highlighting their ability to do the work quickly and efficiently, the Fellowship Porters underscored their expertise in their trade.

As labourers, Ticket Porters constituted the lowest rank of London society. As freemen, however, they were meant to imbue *honestas* into their work, and as we have seen above, credibility was an occupational requisite. However, freemen were also meant to be proficient in their trades. The economic health of the civic commonwealth rested upon the

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[115] Stern, *Porters*, 6.
[116] Ward, *Metropolitan Communities*, 59-61.
[117] GL, MS 11588/1, f. 234, Quoted from Ward, *Metropolitan Communities*, 60.
[118] Bernadino Ramazzini, *A Treatise of the Diseases of Tradesmen* (1705), 210.
[119] Clothworkers' Hall Archive, Court Minutes 1558-81, f. 157b. Quoted from Ward, *Metropolitan Communities*, 60.
[120] LMA, COL/CA/01/01/34, f. 244b.

talents of tradesmen and merchants. As such, the Ticket Porters' status as a free fellowship—as well as their vital role in the economy—meant that they were expected to be qualified and capable in their occupation as all freemen were. Accordingly, the Court of Aldermen remarked on several occasions that only 'duely able' men, and those thought 'fitting,' should be employed to work as porters.[121] Terms like 'able' and 'fit' are part and parcel of the classical humanist virtues meant to imbue London's citizenry, and in this context, are used to describe the proficiencies of London's porters.[122] The deployment of rhetorics associated with the culture of citizenship further underscores the civic requirement of porters to possess a degree of fitness in their calling that freemen were expected to have—even as manual labourers.

Poor Porters

The parable of the poor tradesman forced into porterage was a common rhetoric in company petitions seeking financial redress from civic and royal authorities. In 1624, the Clothworkers' petitioned Parliament that their financial troubles had grown so dire that 'some of them are enforced for want of worke to betake themselves to labour in the Citie as Porters, Waterbearers, and in other such like meane callings.'[123] A 1642 petition written in favour of 'the multitude of poore trades-men and artificers' claimed that they 'are forced through want of Imployment to be chargeable to the parishes in which we live, many even to beg, many to turne Porters, Day-labourers, Waterbearers, Chimney-sweepers, and the like.'[124] In 1669, members of the Dyers' Company complained to the Aldermen that after completing 'hard and various laborious apprenticeships' they were forced to become porters and labourers to make ends meet.[125] Later, a 1690 petition signed by the Pinmakers' Company complained that their profession was deteriorating to such an extent that 'many have been compelled to give over their Trades, and betake themselves to be Porters, Tankard-Bearers, and other Day-Laborours.'[126] Similarly, a petition printed in 1693 on

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[121] LMA, COL/CA/01/01/36, f. 31b; COL/CA/01/01/80, f. 237.

[122] Phil Withington, *Politics of Commonwealth* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 115-119.

[123] Cloth-workers of London, *To the most honorable assembly of the Commons House of Parliament the humble petition of the artizan cloth-workers of the citie of London* (1624).

[124] Andrew Church, *To the honourable the knights, citizens and burgesses now assembled in Parliament. The humble petition of Andrew Church, George Allen, Thomas Sander, Robert Parkinson John Tippin, and John Wigmore* (1641).

[125] LMA, COL/CA/01/01/74, f. 215.

[126] *The case or petition of the corporation of pin-makers* (1690).

behalf of 'the widows in and about London and Westminster ' asserted that their financial condition had corroded to the point that they were performing 'drudgery fit for porters.'[127]

The stereotype of the poor, travailing porter was pervasive and not without truth. Looking at the declared wealth of church deponents in London, Earle demonstrates that most porters—23 of 29 cases (79.4 per cent)—declared their earnings were under £10 per annum.[128] However, it is important to note that this sampling represents a very small percentage of the thousands of porters who dwelled in the City and suburbs. Some porters claimed to be modestly wealthy. For example, in 1708, William Rawlinson, a 'tickett porter,' deposed that he owned a house in 'Poppinge Court in Fleet Street,' and was worth somewhere around £30.[129] Such cases, however atypical, are an important reminder to exercise caution when stereotyping labouring men and women as inevitably poor.

In 1621, the Aldermen ordered Tacklehouse Porters to pay Ticket Porters 2*d.* per hour (if employed for three hours or less); the daily rate (over five hours) was 14*d.* in the winter and 16*d.* in the summer. Their remuneration is similar to other labourers' wages in the decade. Boulton found that building labourers in the 1620s were also paid 16*d.* in the summer months.[130] In 1640, the Ticket Porters justified their desire to separate from the Tacklehouse Porters by inadequate compensation (other waged labourers were making on average 18*d.* in this decade), accusing the Tacklehouse Porters of evading the rules to avoid paying them accordingly. In response, the Aldermen raised the Ticket Porters' rates to 16*d.* in the winter, and 18*d.* in the summer—but still the Ticket Porters were not appeased. Accordingly, wages increased five years later (20*d.* and 2*s.* respectively), and different guidelines were drawn up regarding what constituted a full day's work.[131] Their 1645 compensation was higher than the average labourers' wages in London—their summer rate was 4*d.* more than Boulton's estimate for building labourers in the 1640s. Taking this into account, it seems that the porters' average remuneration in the second half of the seventeenth century was slightly higher than the annual earnings claimed by Earle.

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[127] *The petition of the widows in and about London and Westminster for a redress of their grievances* (1693).

[128] Earle, *A City full of People*, 105.

[129] GL, MS9065A/10, f. 100.

[130] Jeremy Boulton, 'Wage Labour in Seventeenth-Century London,' *Economic History Review* 49, no. 2 (1996): 279. However, waged-labour might not reflect the actual earnings of porters, but those who contracted them. See Judy Stephenson, '"Real" wages? Contractors, workers and pay in London building trades, 1650-1800,' in *Economic History Review* Vol 71, no. 1 (2018): 106-132.

[131] LMA, COL/CA/01/01/54, f. 334b.

It is difficult to gauge the general wealth of ticket porters using probate records because most porters' wills in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were ambiguously identified as 'porter,' which could denote association with any fellowship engaged in porterage (i.e. Fellowship Porters). However, there is a surviving list of quarterage payments in the records of the Tacklehouse and Ticket Porters that list several names of Ticket Porters who paid quarterage or admittance fees in 1682 and 1683. From this list, I was able to locate three surviving wills. Thomas Dumbleton paid 3*s.* 8*d.* in quarterage in August 1682.[132] His will, recorded in 1704, tells us that he lived in St Michael Bassishaw in the City. He bequeathed his general property and goods to his wife, including his 'wearing apparel either linens or woollens.' On top of this, however, he also left her his lucrative estate in Staffordshire that earned £15 per year in rent.[133] His colleague, Herbert Thomas, paid 3*s.* 2*d.* in 1683 for his admittance into the society in 1683. At his death, Thomas bequeathed his wife his estate and household furniture, his 'best suit of clothes' to his cousin, and a little more than £20 to his remaining kin.[134] Lastly, William Skipton paid the society 5*s.* in quarterage dues in 1683. His will is slightly less revealing. He left an unspecified worth of 'goods, chattel, plate, ready money rings and estate' to his wife. However, he also left 10*s.* to two friends to buy remembrance rings, which suggests that his finances were not struggling.[135] While only a very small sample, these wills demonstrate that not all ticket porters were down-and-out wage earners living from job to job.

'The sweat of Poore Mens labour'

Yet, there were potential merits of financial struggle that correlated with civic ethos. As touched upon in the previous chapter, living by one's labour—however small the return—permitted a degree of esteem even to those on the lowest end of the economic spectrum. The notion that honest labour was godly and virtuous can be traced to earlier medieval didactic texts against idleness and its relationship to 'the undeserving poor.'[136] As Keith Thomas comments, 'laborious' and 'honest' were 'virtually interchangeable.' [137] In *The honest plaine dealing Porter*, written in 1630 by the celebrated balladeer Martin Parker,

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[132] GL, MS 3455, f. 1.
[133] TNA, PROB 11/476/378.
[134] TNA, PROB 11/753/387.
[135] TNA, PROB 11/376/38.
[136] Keith Thomas, *The Ends of Life: Roads to Fulfilment in Early Modern England*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 85.
[137] Thomas, *The Ends of Life*, 103.

the titular porter expresses a powerful sense of pride for his ability to make a livelihood by his own labour:

> When I doe meet with any friend,
> I seldome want a penny to spend,
> Which brings me to a good report,
> because I live in honest sort,
> Ide rather earne my living deare,
> Then steale for bed or bread or beere,
> For charity is cold God wot,
> When need doth make the old wife trot.[138]

Despite his low wages, the porter maintains a sociable lifestyle, and pays his share of the tavern bill. Because he supports himself though his labour 'in an honest sort,' he maintains a good reputation in his community.[139] The passage promotes masculinity and fraternal bonding; not only does he support himself and his family but can afford the small luxury of alehouse fellowship with his male peers.

Earlier in the ballad, the porter acknowledges that he once was a wealthy man who owned land and held office but resorted to porterage after confronting financial hardship. As we saw above, poor members of companies who fell on hard times were called 'decayed freemen,' and were often in receipt of charity from their company or guild.[140] However, if they were physically able, decayed freemen were expected to pursue casual labour to make ends meet. In lieu of company poor relief, which was not always readily available, decayed freemen pursued employment in 'honest' and 'skilful' occupations so that they could 'live without dependence.'[141] The criteria for casual employment enforced civic rhetorics of self-sufficiency, industry and honest labour, which likely encouraged a sense of pride for financially decayed Londoners in their new occupations. In the ballad, the Porter asserts that his new employment is by no means disreputable, if not the opposite:

> When some who knew me rich before,
> doe shun to meet me now I'm poore,
> I dare to look them in the face,

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[138] Martin Parker, *The honest plaine dealing porter* (1630).

[139] For a full discussion of how labouring groups could bolster their social credit through alehouse sociability, see Mark Hailwood, 'Sociability, Work and Labouring Identity in Seventeenth-Century England,' *Cultural and Social History* 8, no. 1 (2011): 9-29

[140] Rappaport, *Worlds Within Worlds*, 195-201; Archer, *Pursuit of Stability*, 120-124; see also, Archer, 'The Livery Companies and Charity in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries,' in *Guilds, Society & Economy*, ed. Gadd and Wallis, 15-28.

[141] 'Extract from the debates at the General Council of the Army, Putney, 29 October 1647' in Andrew Sharp, *The English Levellers* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 116.

because my calling is not base.[142]

The final line boldly defends the occupational identity of porters; he feels no shame in manual labour and deems it a commendable and virtuous way to make a living.[143] This notion is also evident in Brewer's *Commendation of the soceitie or companie of the porters* (discussed above). In Brewer's ballad, the porter claims that the hard graft of porterage has made men more civil and virtuous than their wealthier counterparts:

> Thus therefore I conclude,
> more happie men are they,
> then many that delude
> the world, and beare away
> the sweat of poore mens labour
> their chests to cram and stuffe,
> not caring for Gods favour,
> so they have golde enough.[144]

Here, the ballad intersects with representations of work that encouraged personal fulfilment through honest labour. Brewer asserts that porters derived happiness and satisfaction from their hard graft—their work is backbreaking but rewarding. [145] The ballad not only intimates a distaste for the contemptible poor who rely on the outreach of others, but the moral corruptness of the idle rich as well. The final stanza intimates the importance of manual labour to the social hierarchy. The wealthy depended upon the industry of the poor to maintain their comfortable (albeit depraved) lifestyle—society depended on the 'sweat of poore mens labour.'[146]

It is important to consider that these ballads were not produced in a vacuum. Parker was likely an alehouse keeper, and like his peers Thomas Brewer and John Taylor, he published several other broadsides exalting the virtues of honest labour.[147] In *The honest-plaine dealing porter*, Parker's porter asserts:

> My calling's honest, good and just,
> well worthy to be put in trust,

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142 Parker, *The honest plaine dealing porter* (1630).
143 Hailwood, 'Sociability, Work and Labouring Identity in Seventeenth-Century England,' 9-29, esp. 14.
144 Thomas Brewer, *A newe ballad* (1605).
145 Thomas, *Ends of Life*, 91-110.
146 Brewer, *A newe ballad* (1605).
147 Hyder Edward Rollins, 'Martin Parker, Ballad-Monger,' *Modern Philology* 16, no. 9 (1919): 462. Parker seems to have been in good fellowship with Taylor, especially during the civil wars when they both shared royalist views, see Rollins, 'Martin Parker, Ballad-Monger,' 465-468.

> I am a Porter my habit showes,
> my trade I doe not care who knowes,
> I am a man that's borne to beare,
> I carry burthens farre and neere,
> By which an honest means is got,
> thus need doth make the old wife trot.[148]

Here, the porter's pride rests upon his honest labour and ability to reliably transport goods throughout the City. The required qualities of employment as a porter—trustworthiness, muscle, stamina, and technical skill—allowed porters a sense of dignity and self-respect despite their low economic status. Once again, the porter's manliness and physical strength are emphasised. Bread-winning was proof of manhood; the porter's ability to care for his wife and family doubtless afforded him a secure position at the top of the patriarchal family unit.

Rhetorics of honesty were also vital to their status as freemen porters as well. As Withington points out, freemen were expected to uphold virtues of honesty and fitness into the structures and practices of everyday life.[149] Although many porters were not freemen, their position in a free fellowship meant that they were expected to follow the same guidelines as free Londoners. Thus, their honesty was not only celebrated, but a professional necessity. In 1627, the City admitted a petitioner into the fellowship 'as long as he shall well and honestly use and behave himselfe in the execution thereof provided.'[150] The relationship between 'good behaviour' and the execution of one's position was an important tenet in the culture of citizenship. As Withington points out, it reflected a 'widespread conviction that persons needed to earn, deserve and fit themselves to their place.' A decade later, another group of porters were 'allowed and admitted' to carry burdens at Leadenhall 'soe long as they & every of them respectively shall well & honestly use & behave themselves in their said places.'[151] 'Fitness' for one's position was important; porters were expected to behave in their places as citizens were expected to behave their offices: honestly, respectfully and fairly. In 1673, for example, the Tacklehouse Porters petitioned the Court of Aldermen that the new Ticket Porter registrar—that it, their financial overseer—was not suitable for his place. They claimed he was 'very unfitting for that service and desir[ed] that another fitting

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[148] Parker, *The honest-plaine dealing porter* (1630).
[149] Withington, *Politics of Commonwealth*, 118; see also, Jonathan Barry, 'Urban Identity and the Middling Sort in Early-Modern England,' *Annales-Economies Societies Civilisatons* 48, no. 4 (1993): 853-883.
[150] LMA, COL/CA/01/01/42, f. 22.
[151] LMA, COL/CA/01/01/54, f. 243.

person might bee admitted in his roome.'[152] Moreover, the notion of 'place' implies possession and a degree of civic authority; being 'admitted' into the 'place' of a porter no doubt imparted to the owner a sense of civic identity and belonging in the City.

The flattering language used to describe porters in popular literature was wide-reaching. Contrasting porters to thieves in one of his cony-catching pamphlets, Thomas Dekker's *The Bel-man of London* described porters as those who 'honestly […] carrie a barthen for a penny, and safely to deliver it to the owner backe againe.'[153] Later, in 1643, the Cheapside Cross, originally erected by Edward I in the thirteenth century, became a site of religious controversy for its overt Catholic imagery and was demolished. According to James Howell's *Londinopolis* (1657), the monument was soon replaced by 'a high square table of stone, left in legacy of one Russel a Porter, and well-minded man.' The tablet's inscription read:

> God blesse the porter who great Pains doth take,
> Rest here, and welcome when thy Back doth ake.[154]

It is difficult to ascertain the truth behind Howell's account; there is no other evidence to verify its presence.[155] However, its existence is plausible. Later in 1693, the Tacklehouse and Ticket Porters received permission from the City to erect two pitching-places where they could rest in between long hauls through the City: one next to the Cheapside conduit and another on Rood Lane in Eastcheap.[156] A monument dedicated to porters in Cheapside—even if only metaphorically—is significant and not without symbolism. Cheapside was a commercial hub, and a common site for royal and civic pageantry. [157] Howell claims that the porters' ceremonial stone enjoyed a place of prominence; it was situated in the middle of the busy street (where the Cross once stood), opposite the Standard and near the popular water conduit.[158] It is possible that the new monument was a nod to the porter's centrality to the early modern London economy.

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[152] LMA, COL/CA/01/01/80, f. 237.
[153] Thomas Dekker, *The Bel-man of London* (1608), 29.
[154] James Howell, *Londinopolis* (1657),115.
[155] I have looked at various civic records (namely the Court of Aldermen and Common Council papers) and the records of the Company of Tacklehouse and Ticket Porters without success. I have also been unable to locate a porter with the surname of 'Russell' or similar in the records of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury, or in other London probate records.
[156] GL, MS 913, 91.
[157] See Vanessa Harding, 'Cheapside: Commerce and Commemoration,' *Huntington Library Quarterly* 71, no. 1 (2008): 77-96.
[158] Howell, 115.

IV.   Admitted Identities

There were thus two representations of porterage in early modern London. On one hand, porters were foreigners and vagrants who encroached upon the privileges of London citizens. On the other hand, they were honest freemen who were vital to the City economy. The virtues of reliability, fitness and industry were implicit to porterage, as they were implicit to their status as freemen. In Brewer and Parker's ballads, the speaker cultivates a positive occupational identity of porterage based upon the shared experience of strenuous labour and self-sufficiency. As Watt has shown, ballads should be read as a representation of 'shared values' across the social scale, and not just a reflection of 'popular' attitudes at the lower levels of society. However, ballads *were* written for a particular audience, and it is possible that the producers of ballads mingled in the same social circles as those who inspired their subject matter. It is not unlikely that Parker accommodated porters in his alehouse and drew inspiration for his ballad from socialising with them.[159]

It is possible that these rhetorics had a mobilising effect. In his work on alehouse sociability, Hailwood argues that this form of 'collective self-definition' could 'inform, or even encourage, a degree of political activity.'[160] The self-perceived virtues of hard work, financial responsibility, and positive behaviour doubtless amplified the porters' sense of belonging and legitimacy as members of the City. Moreover, as they grew more economically powerful as the chief carriers of plantation imports over the course of the seventeenth century, this, too, doubtless augmented their political consciousness at important members of the City commonwealth. Nonetheless, at the end of the seventeenth century, many porters were not freemen. Even though some were free, in most cases, they were 'admitted' into the freedom without first completing an apprenticeship as civic custom dictated. This unsettled position in the City hierarchy flags up the yet unanswered question of how being a London porter simultaneously integrated and excluded individuals associated with the fellowship from civic politics.

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[159] Tessa Watt, *Cheap Print and Popular Piety, 1550-1640* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993),1-2; Hailwood, 'Sociability, Work and Labouring Identity in Seventeenth-Century England,' 11-12.
[160] Hailwood, 'Sociability, Work and Labouring Identity,' 17.

Much of the confusion regarding the porters' civic status resulted from a lack of transparency on the part of the aldermen. As we saw above, different groups of porters were given different labels at various moments over the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In line with this trend, the aldermen often deployed vague descriptions to distinguish authorised employees of the Street Porters from their unauthorised counterparts. The most commonly used label in the repertories was 'admitted,' which was originally employed to describe the free Tacklehouse Porters in their 1584 petition against the non-free Street Porters.[161] However, the court quickly adopted the term to describe the Street Porters as well. The 1605 order concerning the newly-christened Ticket Porters 'admitted them into a fraternatie or brotherhood,' and permitted only 'admitted porters' to carry the badge or licence that formalised their status.[162] Later, when the Ticket Porters were combined with the Tacklehouse Porters in 1609, this order was a response to the threat of 'unadmitted' porters usurping the work of 'admitted' Ticket Porters.[163] A 1621 order attempting to 'quiet' the bickering between the Tacklehouse and Ticket Porters instructed the Tacklehouse Porters to employ only those who were 'admitted' Street Porters.[164] None of these instances mention the freedom, and the Street Porters are not designated as freemen.

It is very possible that aldermen's equivocality was intentional. By neither outwardly condoning or denying the Street Porters' free status, the aldermen might have hoped to avoid confrontation with the Tacklehouse Porters who wanted to distinguish themselves from their labour-intensive colleagues. Or, perhaps, the aldermen were wary of the Street Porters' disorderly reputation and feared that any un-citizen-like behaviour on their part would result in a further 'decline' in the status of the freedom. It is most likely, however, that the ambiguity regarding the Ticket Porters' civic status was to avoid misunderstanding regarding the nature of their mixed membership; 'admitted' served as an umbrella term to denote both free and non-free street porters. This was not the first time the court deployed obscure terms to avoid confrontation. In 1619, the Aldermen themselves criticised an earlier order regarding the dividing of jurisdiction between the four groups of porter of being 'so darkly penned' that it had resulted in demarcation disputes between different porters.[165]

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[161] LMA, COL/CA/01/01/21, f. 108, ff. 114-115b.
[162] LMA, COL/CA/01/01/26(II), f. 521b.
[163] LMA, COL/CA/01/01/29, ff. 41-42b; 102b; see also, GL, MS 913, ff. 1-12.
[164] LMA, COL/CA/01/01/36, f. 4b.
[165] LMA, COL/CA/01/01/34, f. 244b.

To be 'admitted' to a civic body strongly intimates a sense of inclusion and belonging in the City. Members of guilds and livery companies often framed their petitions against foreigners by designating themselves as freemen or citizens. The term also has charitable connotations—London's poor were 'admitted' into alms-houses and hospitals after proving their belonging or affiliation to the City.[166] Borrowing from these languages, the Ticket Porters used the term 'admitted' to distinguish themselves from porters who did not have authorisation to work in the City. In 1614, a petition signed by the Ticket Porters styled themselves as 'admitted porters' against the Tacklehouse Porters who employed unauthorised labourers.[167] These petitions reveal the widespread accessibility of the language of belonging. Although the Ticket Porters could not identify themselves collectively as freemen or citizens, they borrowed from the powerful civic dichotomy of authorised versus unauthorised workers; those who belonged and those who did not.

The Ticket Porters appropriated other civic idioms as well. As Barry, Withington, and Griffiths have demonstrated, the Aristotelian concept of citizenship and civic freedom was intrinsically linked to classical rhetorics of antiquity.[168] The term 'ancient' was often deployed to appeal to precedent: rights and roots were intimately connected.[169] Appeals to antiquity were also linked to notions of civic order. In their petitions, different groups of porters appealed to long-established models and values of civic life. The Tacklehouse Porters, for instance, claimed their superiority over the Ticket Porters temporally:

> the Tackle-house Porter's Employment is a Labour that
> hath been used for the Service of Merchants before such
> times the Name of Street or Ticket Porters were known in
> this City.[170]

The Tacklehouse Porters existed even before the Ticket porters had a name; thus, they were more legitimate. Similarly, custom and tradition were often invoked to establish precedent in jurisdictional disputes. In 1705, the Fellowship Porters claimed that they had

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[166] For a detailed discussion of poor relief and hospital admissions, see Archer, *Pursuit of Stability*, 154-161; Angela Nicholls, *Almshouses in Early Modern England: Charitable House in the Mixed Economy of Welfare 1550 -1725* (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2017), 90-136.

[167] LMA, COL/CA/01/01/31(II), f. 246b.

[168] See, for example, Barry, 'Urban Identity and the Middling Sort in Early-Modern England,' 853-883; Withington, *Politics of Commonwealth*, 80, 118.

[169] Griffiths, *Lost Londons*, 142-43.

[170] LMA, COL/CC/14/007, f. 90.

'ancient right of portage' over certain goods when they felt that foreigners were intruding upon their livelihood.[171]

Another way to assert belonging in the City outside formal citizenship was to appeal to antiquity. In 1621, the Street Porters identified themselves to the Court of Aldermen as 'both free and ancient foreigners.'[172] The term, 'ancient foreigner' was a wholly new civic status in London, likely self-styled by the Ticket Porters in their efforts to legitimise their standing in the court. The label had multiple meanings. An 'ancient foreigner' was positioned separately and above the vagrant porters that civic magistrates exerted their energy worrying about. It also highlighted the Ticket Porters' long-standing affiliation to the civic community of their nonfree members. The confidence in their deployment of 'ancient foreigners' alongside free members implies that they were on par, which suggests that an established attachment to the City was comparable to possessing the freedom. An 'ancient foreigner' was a Londoner.

From around the mid-century onward, however, there was a change in how the Ticket Porters framed their belonging in the City. Perhaps in parallel with their increasing status in the City, the Ticket Porters frequently referred to themselves solely as 'freemen.' In 1642, their second attempt to separate from the Tacklehouse Porters was lobbied under the name of 'the poore Tickett Porters decayed freemen of the Citty of London.'[173] The Court agreed to consider their case and investigate their grievances.[174] The petition did not seem to have an immediate effect. However, a short while later, the Court decided to consider the Ticket Porters' desire to 'bee admitted a Societie or fraternatie of themselves.'[175]

Although the request was eventually buried, it is clear that the Aldermen had a slightly improved opinion of the Ticket Porters. In the later report, the clerk records the group as 'the greate number of poore decayed freemen knowne by the name of Ticket Porters.'[176] This a is far cry from the 'obstinate' and 'masterless' foreigners that encroached upon the livelihoods of hardworking Londoners. Moreover, the position of *decayed* freemen demanded the attention—and pockets—of civic magistrates. The same strategy proved more successful a few years later in 1650 when the Court approved 'the humble petition of the

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[171] LMA, COL/CC/15/010, f. 2.
[172] LMA, COL/CA/01/01/36, f. 4b.
[173] LMA, COL/CA/01/01/55, f. 165.
[174] Ibid.
[175] LMA, COL/CA/01/01/55, f. 416b.
[176] Ibid.

poore decayed freemen of the Ticket Porters' to prosecute Miles Arundell, a 'refractory person using the labour of a Porter.'[177]

Their status continued to evolve through the end of the century. For instance, a group of 'freemen and free ticket porters' complained to the Court of Aldermen about 'forreigne Baskett Women' for usurping their work at Newgate Market.[178] In 1675, the court received a petition from 'diverse persons styling themselves as freemen of the fellowship of Ticket Porters complaining about some opposition received […] to the hindrances of their common profit.[179] It is significant that the society felt confident to negotiate with the City as 'freemen' despite the more variegated reality of their membership. Nonetheless, by constituting themselves as 'freemen,' the Ticket Porters contextually situated themselves within London's corporate culture. Remarkably, the Court recorders accepted their self-styled status as freemen—the transformation was complete.

This chapter has shown that both free and non-free porters were active participants in urban politics. This challenges traditional historiography that views labouring groups as disinterested parties in London's culture of citizenship. By focusing on the relationship between the Tacklehouse and Ticket Porters, this chapter has demonstrated that porters politically engaged with City magistrates to solve jurisdictional disputes over London's import and export trades. Although the Ticket Porters were not uniformly free of the City, they grouped collectively under a single occupational identity to assert control over the transport of valuable goods and commodities. In doing so, they emphasised their centrality to the London economy and their attachment to the City.

By paying special attention to the representations of porters in early modern literature, this chapter has also provided a fuller account of their public character. In contrary to contemporary and historical stereotypes, the porters were often viewed in positive light. This was especially seen in accounts that highlighted their trustworthiness and honesty. Moreover, the analysis of porters' tickets afforded an alternative view to the historiography of badging practices in early modern England. Although porters' tickets can be understood as part of a larger early modern trend to ease the identification between the 'deserving' and 'undeserving' poor, this study has conversely shown that porters' badges were important markers of civic status and belonging. This was especially so in the second half of the seventeenth century as the occupational status of porters improved alongside their value in

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[177] LMA, COL/CA/01/01/61, f. 118b.
[178] Undated late seventeenth-century petition. LMA, CLA/014/01/001.
[179] LMA, COL, CA/01/01/81, f. 56.

the City economy. Despite their enhanced status, many porters remained foreigners and continued to occupy the fringes of corporate culture. Nonetheless, their self-fashioned belonging as 'admitted' and 'ancient' porters supported their strategies to acquire the rights and privileges of freemen Londoners.

Chapter 3

'Belonging to the river':
The Watermen of London

Next to that famous navigable Thames
Whose breasts are silv'red with compounded streams
Which bear up floating houses, what a train
Of lusty watermen doth Thames maintaine?
Who though with rapid force they'r backwards hurl'd
Yet are they often forwards in the world.
Great London is the Bow, the Thames the string
The Boats are arrows which about do spring [1]

The River Thames flowed through the heart of London. As the City and suburbs expanded far beyond its ragstone walls, the river offered an expedient way of travelling long distances within the growing metropolis. For those seeking escape from the discipline of City life, a quick skim across the river afforded respite from the Lord Mayor's stifling embrace. Outside his jurisdiction, Southwark's brothels and playhouses were only a half-penny boat ride away. For a few pennies more, individuals going to or from the royal court at Whitehall, or the legal courts of Westminster, could hire a 'pair of oars' and avoid the dangers and congestion of London's overcrowded streets. From further afield, those entering England by ship could pay 2*d.* to be ferried by barge from Gravesend—the landing place for most sea voyages—to Billingsgate. Of course, for the more fashionable or time-conscious traveller, a private wherry from Gravesend to the City cost 2*s.* in the mid-sixteenth century. For those who could afford it, river transport was the fastest and most convenient mode of travel in London. [2]

The transport of people on the River Thames was the business of the London watermen. In 1514, they were assigned a Table of Fares, and in 1555, they were formed into

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[1] Nicholas Billingsley, *Kosmobrephia* (1658), 5.
[2] *The Prices and rates that everye perticuler person oweth to pay for his fayre or passage* (1555).

an occupational body by an Act of Parliament.[3] In conjunction with London's expansion, their numbers grew dramatically throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In 1582, a naval survey counted 957 watermen in the City. In 1603, however, Stow—quoting Holinshed before him—estimated 2,000 wherries on the River that maintained 3,000 'poore men.'[4] Nearly thirty years later, an Admiralty Muster of 1629 tells us that nearly 2,500 watermen lived in the City, suburbs, and liberties.[5] This number continued to grow. According to waterman John Taylor, the self-proclaimed 'water poet,' the fellowship comprised 4,000 men in 1642.[6] Indeed, the watermen were a considerable presence in London. Estimates in 1621 and 1648 suggested no fewer than 20,000 watermen and their families living between Windsor and Gravesend.[7] Many watermen lived in the Paris Garden and Clink liberties in Southwark near the river, but the itinerant nature of their work meant their presence was widespread across the City and suburbs.[8]

As discussed in chapters 1 and 2, the politics of London's fellowships and fraternities provides new insights into the ambiguous ways civic identity was construed and deployed in the seventeenth century. To recall, the Fellowship of Carmen completed apprenticeships and were made free of the City yet were barred from the formal guild system as an autonomous company. The Fellowship of Ticket Porters were a mixed group of freemen and foreigners who were granted the freedom of the City without progressing though the traditional routes to citizenship. Thus far, the ambiguity of both groups' civic status has forced us to rethink our understanding of London's political culture to appreciate the broader composition of its participants. This chapter turns our focus to the Watermen to continue our exploration of how occupational groups on the edges of London's corporate system engaged in civic politics, and what the ambivalent responses to their participation reveals about early modern citizenship more generally.

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[3] *An Act concerning Watermen on the Thames*, 1514, 6 Hen. 8., c. 7; *An Act touching Watermen and Bargemen upon the River Thames*, 1555, 2 & 3 Phil. & M., c. 16.

[4] Michael Oppenheim, *A History of the Administration of the Royal Navy* (1896, repr. London: Temple Smith, 1988), 177; John Stow, *Survey of London* (1603), 1: 12; Ralph Holinshed, *The firste volume of the chronicles of England* (1577), 20.

[5] TNA, SP 16/145.

[6] John Taylor, *John Taylors manifestation* (1642), 7.

[7] Taylor, *The Colde Tearme* (1621); PA, HL/PO/JO/10/2/11. This number seems consistent with earlier estimates of 3,000 to 4,000 watermen, including spouses, 1-2 children, and 1-2 apprentices.

[8] TNA, SP 16/145.

The watermen's social, cultural, and political experiences share many similarities with the fellowships examined in previous chapters. Their distinguishing feature was that although apprentices were made 'free' watermen after serving a seven-year apprenticeship, they were not allowed entrance into the freedom of the City.[9] This likely had to do with their high value to the royal navy. Whereas the freedom of the City would have exempted them from impressment, during times of war, all watermen except company rulers were at risk for maritime conscription.[10] Moreover, allowing watermen into the freedom would have created a large plebeian constituency in the City, a possibility that had dangerous potential in the minds of civic magistrates. Nonetheless, like the Carmen and Ticket Porters, their petitions to civic and Crown authorities adopted rhetorical strategies associated with the culture of citizenship to obtain political and economic rights normally afforded to traditional citizens.

The politics of the Thames may have also played a role in the watermen's exclusion from the City freedom. From the thirteenth century, the City was appointed Conservator of the River. However, this did not prevent the Crown's involvement, and the two often clashed over jurisdiction.[11] It is thus likely that the Court of Aldermen wanted to maintain authority over the Watermen as part of a larger jurisdictional struggle with the Crown. It is interesting to point out, however, that it was an Act of Parliament that put the Watermen under the authority of the Aldermen in the first place. If nothing else, this highlights the variety of interests that were attached to the fate of the Watermen—the City, the Crown, and by extension, the Admiralty. In 1565, the motto of the Watermen, 'At command of our superiors,' served an ironic foreshadowing of the upheavals yet to come.[12]

The fellowship was amalgamated with the lightermen in 1700, together forming the Company of Watermen and Lightermen. However, surviving evidence leading up to this transition is fragmented. Few fellowship records survive before the eighteenth century, the earliest being an apprenticeship register from 1688.[13] However, we can learn a lot about the

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[9] *An Act concerning wherrymen and watermen*, 1603, 1 Jas. 1, c. 16.

[10] Henry Humpherus, *History of the Origin and Progress of the Company of Watermen and Lightermen of the River Thames* (1874, repr., Wakefield: E.P. Microform, 1981), 1: 6. Humpherus was the clerk of the Company of Watermen in the late nineteenth century, see Michael Holden, 'Royal River: The Watermen's Company and Pageantry on the Thames,' in *Waterborne Pageants and Festivities in the Renaissance: Essays in Hour of J.R. Mulryne*, ed. Margaret Shewring (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013), 275-289.

[11] Claire Martin, 'Transport for London' (Ph.D. thesis, Royal Holloway University, 2008), 47-51.

[12] Henry Humpherus, *History of the Company of Watermen*, 1: 138.

[13] GL, MS 6289/001.

Watermen from extant court records, especially in the Repertories and Papers of the Court of Aldermen. The Parliamentary Archives also hold a mine of information regarding the politics of the fellowship. Petitions written to these bodies tell us that the Watermen were particularly active in London politics. They voiced their complaints concerning many issues, ranging from funds to repair stairs along the river to demands for a complete reorganization of their government. Because of their recurring appearance in these courts, the Watermen are an excellent case study by which the politics of non-free brotherhoods of London can be explored.

Notwithstanding their remarkable numbers and economic importance to the City, the Watermen are often overlooked in London urban history. Humpherus's nineteenth-century account is the only published monograph about the group. Some historians have acknowledged the watermen's role in royal river processions but are more interested in the politics of spectacle than the men who actually rowed the boats.[14] Elsewhere, scholars have focused their attention on John Taylor and his colourful repertoire of popular literature.[15] Several histories have briefly looked at the fellowship in larger narratives of London politics in the English Civil Wars.[16] These latter studies, however, have inappropriately cast the watermen's political activities as evidence of a widespread movement to democratise the companies of London. As we saw with the carmen, this viewpoint echoes Unwin's survey, who interpreted the political activities of tradesmen in the mid-seventeenth century as a collective attempt to revolt against the oligarchic rule of company elites.[17] Following suit, O'Riordan argues that 'the watermen's tracts offer fairly strong circumstantial evidence of an attempt at self-government by the rank and file.'[18] Similarly, Carlin calls the watermen's

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[14] Holden, 'The Watermen's Company and Pageantry on the River Thames,' 275-289. Strangely, the watermen are not mentioned in Ian Archer's essay on civic river pageantry, 'The City of London and River Pageantry, 1400-1856,' in *Royal River: Power, Pageantry & the Thames*, ed. Susan Doran, Robert J. Blyth, and David Starkey (London: Scala, 2012), 80-86.

[15] Bernard Capp, *The World of John Taylor the Water Poet 1578-1653* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994); Laurie Ellinghausen, *Labor and Writing in Early Modern England, 1567-1667* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2008).

[16] Christopher O'Riordan, 'The Democratic Revolution of the Thames Watermen,' *East London Record* 6 (1983): 17-27; Norah Carlin, 'Liberty and Fraternities in the English Revolution: the politics of London Artisans' Protests,' *International Review of Social History* 39, no. 2 (1994): 223-254.

[17] George Unwin, *The Gilds and Companies of London* (London: Methuen, 1908), 329-351.

[18] O'Riordan, 'The Democratic Revolution,' 20.

campaign in the 1630s and 1640s the 'first major revolt' in London that encompassed both brotherly 'guild ethos' and 'collective and individual concepts of liberty.'[19]

More recently, however, scholars have qualified the democratic extent of these movements. Ellinghausen has drawn our attention to the radical protestant undertones of 1640s London politics and the 'conflict between the drive for political self-determination and a belief in absolute order, authority and governance.'[20] Similarly, Capp mentions that the watermen's 1640s campaign against the overseers 'was most probably a powerful but unstable alliance between genuine [democratic] reformers and the disorderly elements for which the trade had long been notorious.'[21] However, an 'unstable alliance' is still too easy an explanation. As we will see, the century-long dispute between members in the Society of Watermen cannot be simplified as class conflict between the oppressive rich and disorderly poor.

Several misconceptions thus require clarification. First, it must be emphasised that the watermen were not a 'formal' company, and thus did not possess a monopoly over passenger transport on the Thames. However, many groups associated with the watermen had an obvious understanding of how to utilise key terms associated with the culture of citizenship to pursue a variety of economic interests. The watermen's petitions are steeped in civic rhetorics associated with regulation, civic order, and social stability. Closer attention to how these political languages worked in London's civic culture challenges the assumption that the watermen's politics in the seventeenth century were part of a widespread movement to overthrow the oligarchy.

Biographical research of the key figures in the dispute adds further scepticism to the view that the politics within the fellowship was the product of 'grassroots' democracy.[22] As we saw with the carmen and porters, the membership of the watermen was more complex than a 'rough breed' of poor labourers.[23] Although the fellowship certainly garnered an unruly reputation over the early modern period, there were also different accounts—both fictionalised and historical—that complicate their categorisation into London's lowest tier of 'hyrlings and labourers.'[24] Protest leaders that have been hitherto described as 'rank and

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[19] Carlin, 'Liberty and Fraternities in the English Revolution,' 225.

[20] Ellinghausen, *Labor and Writing*, 103.

[21] Capp, *The World of John Taylor*, 150.

[22] Quote is from O'Riordan, 'The Democratic Revolution,'18.

[23] Quote is from Capp, *John Taylor the Water-Poet*, 10.

[24] John Stow, 'The singularities of London,' in C. L. Kingsford (ed.) *A Survey of London. Reprinted from the Text of 1603*, (Oxford: Clarendon, 1908), 199-217.

file' or 'genuine reformers' were, in fact, wealthy individuals. Moreover, several of them were rulers themselves at one time or another—a surprising detail that has been mentioned without examining its implications.

The watermen's petitions to the City and Crown claimed to be acting for 'good order,' 'peace and unity,' and 'better regulation,' of the river by 'the greate parte of able and sufficient watermen.'[25] Historians unfamiliar with the political languages associated with the freedom could easily mistake such amplificatory rhetorics with an egalitarian agenda.[26] Traces of 'democratic ideals,' however intriguing, are misleading on their own. A closer reading of the sources, contextualised with biographical snippets of individual members, reveals a much more complex group of individuals who deployed civic rhetorics to aggrandise control over river transport.

The main argument of this chapter is that different groups and individuals within the society utilised their status as free watermen to legitimise their participation in City politics. Despite their exclusion from the freedom of the City, their strategies demonstrate a key awareness of the ins-and-outs of London's political culture. The politics of the watermen demonstrate some of the ways that Londoners, even those who were excluded from the formal privileges of citizenship, were able to adopt rhetorics associated with civic regulation to advance their interests. Their active participation in civic politics demonstrates the permeability of civic culture for groups who were not formal members of the freedom of the City.

The first section provides a background of the Watermen from the mid-sixteenth century, focusing upon the ambiguous language contemporaries used to describe their status as free Watermen and non-free Londoners. The second section looks at how the watermen were seen and written about, as well as the material realities of individual members, to demonstrate that their collective identity cannot be simplified to what Unwin called a 'federation' of labourers.[27] Having established that there was social, political, and financial

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[25] See, for example, LMA, COL/CA/01/01/37; f. 139; COL/CA/01/01/55, ff.373b-374; COL/CA/01/01/46, ff. 2b-3; PA, HL/PO/JO/10/1/56.

[26] For more on the vitality of civic language in early modern English towns, see Phil Withington, *The Politics of Commonwealth: Freemen and Citizens in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Jonathan Barry, 'Civility and Civic Culture in Early Modern England: The Meanings of Urban Freedom,' in *Civil Histories: Essays Presented to Keith Thomas*, ed. Peter Burke, Brian Harrison, and Paul Slack (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 181-196.

[27] Unwin, *The Gilds and Companies of London*, 365.

gradation between members of the society, the third section explores a gamut of complaints and grievances signed by various watermen over the seventeenth century. Focusing upon the language of the petitions and the backgrounds of the historical actors who engineered them, this section demonstrates that groups within the fellowship had a keen awareness of how to lobby the support of various audiences using civic rhetorics associated with the freedom. The final section concludes by exploring the languages of the watermen's self-presentation, and how official records of their civic status could be manipulated for political purposes. On the surface, the traces left by their political participation fits well with a story of democratisation. This chapter is concerned with what was occurring on a deeper level.

I.   London's watermen

In 1514, the earliest Act of Parliament was passed for regulating the fares of watermen, wherrymen and bargemen.[28] Well-travelled routes included passages between the City and Gravesend, Greenwich, and Westminster. The fare between Gravesend and London was the most expensive. It cost 2*s.*to hire a private wherry, or 2*d.* per person on the barge.[29] Unlike the Carmen who were made into a fraternity, no mention is made of a governing body to enforce the provisions of the Act.[30] Indeed, at this point, the term 'watermen' was non-specific. It could signify anyone who worked on the River Thames or in one of its many tributaries near the City, and included the transport of both people and goods.[31] By the seventeenth century, however, a 'waterman' evolved to specifically mean a boatman who chartered passengers in wherries and barges, while a 'lighterman' transported goods in lighters, or flat-bottomed boats used in loading and unloading ships.[32]

Wherries were small, sharp-bowed boats that could normally hold up to five passengers. They were usually rowed by two watermen with long oars, though shorter, cross-river journeys were piloted by a single waterman with shorter oars called 'sculls'

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[28] *An Act concerning Watermen on the Thames*, 1514, 6 Hen. 8., c. 7.
[29] *The Prices and rates that everye perticuler person oweth to pay for his fayre or passage* (1555).
[30] *An Act concerning Watermen on the Thames*, 1514, 6 Hen. 8., c. 7.
[31] Martin, 'Transport for London,' 46-47.
[32] Walter M. Stern, 'The Company of Watermen and Lightermen of the City of London: The Earliest London Transport Executive,' *Guildhall Studies in London History*, 5 (1981): 38.

(hence the term 'sculler').[33]   There were also barges that transported large numbers of passengers via designated routes along the River, including the popular Long Ferry between Gravesend and Billingsgate (discussed in depth below). During the seventeenth century, barges were largely replaced by tilt-boats, which were propelled by a sail and had a 'tilt' or awning so that passengers travelled in more comfort.[34] In 1595, a cap of thirty passengers was placed on tilt-boats 'of what bigness soever.' [35] This was also likely to protect the interests of the Gravesend barge owners who were meant to have pre-eminence to transport passengers between Gravesend and London.

A Parliamentary Act of 1555 decreed that all wherry boats be 22 ½ feet in length and 4 ½ feet in width midship, and 'well able and sufficient to carry two persons on one side tight.' They were also required to be built of substantial material, including 'thickness of board, goodness and good proportion.'[36] The Act also set out a new table of fares, which was printed several times the same year [see fig. 3.1].[37] The fare for the Long Ferry between Gravesend and London, and the rate to hire a wherry for the same journey, remained the same as in 1514: 2*d.* and 2*s.* respectably. Most fares, however, increased by about 4*d.* each way. Moreover, the new fares also took into account the changing tides of the River. For instance, the passage between London and Greenwich cost 8*d.* going with the tide, and 12*d.* rowing against it. The 1555 table of fares was not adjusted for more than a century. In 1673, however, prices nearly tripled.[38] It is odd that the Watermen did not push for changes sooner. The rates of the carmen, for example, were reviewed by the Court of Aldermen several times in the seventeenth century, increasing from 6*d.* in 1606 to 2*s.*2*d.* in 1684 for journeys within the City.[39] One explanation is that the watermen's fares were not followed

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[33] 'sculler, n.,' *OED Online* (Oxford University Press), accessed April 2, 2018, http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/173849?rskey=Dk5Aub&result=1&isAdvanced=false.
[34] Joseph Broodbank, *The History of the Port of London* (London: D. O'Connor, 1921), 2: 396-398; Humpherus, *History of the Company of Watermen*, 1: 148-153.
[35] Humpherus, *History of the Company of Watermen*, 1: 149.
[36] *An Act touching Watermen and Bargemen upon the River Thames*, 1555, 2 & 3 Phil. & M., c. 16.
[37] *The Prices and rates that everye perticuler person oweth to pay for his fayre or passage, unto Watermen or Wherrymen* (1555).
[38] LMA, COL/CA/01/01/76, f. 177b.
[39] *Orders set down by the right Honorable, Sir John Watts Knight, Lord Maior of this citty of London with the co[n]sent of the aldermen his brethren concerning the rates of cariages with cartes within this cittie and borough of Southwarke at the Guild Hall* (1606); N.H., *The compleat tradesman* (1684), 168-171; see also, LMA, COL/CA/01/01/14, f. 502b; COL/CA/01/01/27, f. 150b; COL/CA/01/01/58(II), f. 79b.

in practice, despite the 40*s.* fine and six months imprisonment for charging more than the official price list dictated.[40]

¶ The Prices and Rates that

euerye perticuler perfon ovveth to pay for his fayre or paffage, vnto Watermen, or Whyrrymen, from Londō to Grauef-ende, and likewife from Grauefende to London, and to euery commen landyng place, betwene the fayd two places, and the rates and pryces alfo of an hole fare in a Whyrye, Tylte Bote, or tyde Bote, to and from any of the faid places hereafter bryefely appeareth.

from Lon-
don to

Grauefend

Paffenger in the common Bardge. ii.d.
In a Tylte Boate with foure ores. iiii.d.
Item for the hole fare of a Whyrye to or fro eyther of the fayde places. ii.s.

Brenforde
and Grayes
Thoroke.

A paffinger in a tyde boate fo that there be twelue in nūmber. i.d.
The hole fare of a Tylte boate with iiii. ores and a ſterefman. vi.s
And of a Whyrye with two ores. xx.d.

Barnelete.

A paffinger in a tyde bote fo there be ten in number. i.d
The hole fare of a tylt boate with foure ores and a ſterefman. v.s
A Whyrye with two ores. xviii.d.

Raynam &
Erythe.

A paffynger in the tyde Boate. i.d.
The hole fare of a tylte boate with foure ores & a ſterefman. v.s.
And of a Whyrye with two ores. xvi.d

Wolwich.

A paffinger in the tyde Boate. i.d.
The hole fare of a Whyrye with two ores. xii.d

Grenewi-
che.

The whole fare of a whyrye with ii. ores with the tyde. viii.d
And agaynſt the tyde. xii.d.

from Rat-
life to gren
wich.

The hole fare of a Whyrye with ii. ores with the tyde. iiii.d.
And agaynſt the tyde. vi.d

from Lon-
don to Rat
life or lyme
houfe.
from Lō-
key or S.
Olaues.

The hole fare of a Whyrye with two ores with the tyde. iiii.d.
And agaynſt the tyde. vi.d.

The hole fare of a whyrye with two ores to .S. Katerins or Rad-tylfe or other places of lyke dyſtaunce. ii.d.

A commer
into any boa
te by the
way.

No perfon that ſhal come a borde of any of the faid boates by the way betwene London and Grauefend, ſhall paye for hys fare aboue the pryce afore lymytted.

Figure 3.1. *The Prices and rates that everye perticuler person oweth to pay for his fayre or passage, unto Watermen or Wherrymen* (1555).

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[40] *An Act touching Watermen and Bargemen upon the River Thames*, 1555, 2 & 3 Phil. & M., c. 16.

The most important aspect of the 1555 Act, however, was the establishment of the government of Watermen. Every March, the Lord Mayor and Aldermen would handpick eight persons 'of the most wise, discreet and best sort of watermen' to be the 'overseers and rulers of all the wherrymen and watermen […] betwixt Gravesend and Windsor.' They were expected to be watermen and householders. They had the power to call general meetings of the Watermen and keep a register of all the names of those who used the trade of rowing on the River. All new boats were to be signed off by an overseer before they were launched to ensure that they observed the above regulations. Overseers did not, however, have the authority to punish offenders of the Act. All complaints and offences were to be reported to the Court of Aldermen, or justices of the Peace in shires adjoining the River, who had the authority to fine and/or imprison refractory watermen as they deemed fit.

The 1555 Act also mandated that every two-manned wherry should be rowed by at least one waterman with two years' experience on the Thames. Moreover, he was to be 'duly admitted and allowed' by the overseers and certified in writing 'to be a sufficient and able waterman.' No single sculler, not being a householder, could row commercially on the Thames unless he was an apprentice or servant indentured for at least one year.[41] In 1603, an Act of Parliament ordered all watermen apprentices to be indentured in seven-year terms, the formal length of time before apprentices in other London companies would be admitted into the freedom of the City.[42] However, as noted earlier, watermen apprentices were not eligible to become freemen of London upon completing their term.

Ambiguous Bodies

Historians have assumed that watermen were not freemen as this would have protected them from naval impressment. Indeed, whereas freemen were safeguarded from the press, watermen were penalised if they evaded maritime service. A 1673 letter written to the Navy Board listed twenty watermen who were 'disenfranchised' for not appearing on ships to which they were pressed.[43] This flags up an important question that has been overlooked in the historiography. How could watermen be disenfranchised if they were not members of the franchise to begin with?

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[41] *An Act touching Watermen and Bargemen upon the River Thames*, 1555, 2 & 3 Phil. & M., c. 16.
[42] *An Act concerning wherrymen and watermen*, 1603, 1 Jas. 1, c. 16.
[43] TNA, ADM/106/282/364.

An explanation possibly lies in the blurred distinction between possessing 'freedom of the Company' and 'freedom of the City.' References in the Court of Aldermen strictly designate members as 'free of the Company of Watermen,' whereas freemen of other companies—such as the Drapers, Goldsmiths, or Fishmongers—were styled 'free of the City.'[44] However, like City freemen, watermen utilised their status as free members of their company to enhance the legitimacy of their petitions to the City and Crown. For example, a petition to the Court of Aldermen from 'the severall free watermen plying att Blackfryres stairs' complained about the 'annoyances' caused by the overcrowding of lighters and other cargo boats at their plying place.[45] By highlighting their identity as 'free watermen' the petitioners hoped to legitimise their right to voice their complaints.

The watermen's civic identity was unique. Their ambiguous position in the civic hierarchy—free watermen but not freemen of the City—left room for interpretation. Like the carmen and porters, a range of nouns were used to identify the group throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, including 'company,' 'corporation,' 'fraternity,' 'brotherhood,' and 'society.' For example, in 1602, Samuel Rowlands unflatteringly compared London's fictional society of cony-catchers to 'another fraternity […] Watermen I meane.' Yet, in 1632, Donald Lupton described the Thames as 'the maintainer of a great company of Watermen.'[46] A few years later, the waterman in Henry Peacham's *Coach and Sedan* told his audience: 'wee are an auncient company […] though the last in the ranke of companies.' In 1637, however, another commentator was surprised to learn that 'the Society of the Watermen' existed at all.[47] A decade later, a pamphlet described the Watermen as 'that Company [who] hath always beene a Nursery of able Sea-men.' Nonetheless, in 1681, *Historical Remaques and observations* described the group as a 'brotherhood' regulated by the City aldermen.[48]

As we saw with the carmen, it is possible that the liberal application of 'company' in the examples above is a result of the blurred boundaries between institutional and social

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[44] In the repertories of the aldermen, there are hundreds, if not thousands, of references of Londoners who were 'free of the City,' see LMA, COL/CA/01/01.

[45] LMA, COL/CP/02/273.

[46] Samuel Rowlands, *Greenes ghost haunting cony-catchers* (1602), C4; Donald Lupton, *London and the country carbonadoed* (1632), 20.

[47] Henry Peacham, *Coach and Sedan* (1636), C3; Robert Chamberlain, *A new booke of mistakes* (1637), 18.

[48] William Batten, *The sea-mans dial* (1648), 8; R.B., *Historical Remarques and observations* (1681), 91.

types of company.[49] However, the imprecise terminology used to talk about the Watermen's civic identity was not limited to popular literature. Even in formal civic settings, the Watermen were loosely defined. The 1555 Act that created the group does not include any form of official title to identify the watermen—only 'person or persons […] using the occupation.' In 1603, a new Act christened the watermen the 'society or company of wherrymen or watermen.'[50] However, two years later, the Court of Aldermen referenced a suit between a member and the 'overseers of the Company of Watermen.' A 1634 order was similarly forthright; the Court of Aldermen confirmed new regulations that all watermen were required to serve seven years before being 'made free of the […] Company.'[51] This transparency was short-lived: in a 1642 parliamentary petition, the overseers referred to themselves as 'Rulers of that societie.' As late as 1682, the Court of Aldermen labelled the watermen as 'the Society Company or Fraternity of Watermen.'[52]

Each label had a slightly different implication for the watermen's social and political status in the City and it is possible that different modes of corporate description reveal the motivations of various groups who articulated them. While identifiers like 'society' might have allowed the City a way to describe the group collectively, it lacked political significance. An incorporated company held more sway in civic culture. In 1698, the rulers of the Watermen asked the Recorder of London, Salathiel Lovell, for legal advice regarding their ability to make and—more importantly—enforce laws for the 'better government' of the Watermen. He replied:

> I have fully considered your case, and I am sorry I cannot give you assurance that your bye laws and orders are soe good as to support an action for the penalties inflicted by them. *You are not a corporation, but a bare voluntary society*, and bound by your own consents for the good of the whole, and if any unreasonable member be refractory, we shall find you better ways to reduce him to obedience by law, wherein you shall ever have hearty assistance from me.[53]

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[49] Phil Withington, 'Company and Sociability in Early Modern England,' *Social History* 32, no. 3 (2007): 300; see also chapter 1 of this thesis, 53-53.

[50] *An Act touching Watermen and Bargemen upon the River Thames*, 1555, 2 & 3 Phil. & M., c. 16; *An Act concerning wherrymen and watermen*, 1603, 1 Jas. 1, c. 16.

[51] LMA, COL/CA/01/01/27, f. 298; COL/CA/01/01/49, f. 164.

[52] PA, HL/PO/JO/10/1/140; COL/CA/01/01/88, f. 96b.

[53] Humpherus, *History of the Company of Watermen*, 1: 427-428. Unidentified original source. My italics. I have scoured the archives to find the original manuscript containing Lovell's opinion without success. I was unable to locate it in the Company records at the

As a mere 'society,' the overseers did not possess the power to enforce penalties upon 'refractory' members. Yet, Lovell's ruling is oddly harsh. While the watermen were not incorporated, as he suggests, the group did acquire considerably more power in 1641 to elect their own ruling group and similar 'company-like' privileges. [54] In the years surrounding his ruling, however, certain members within the company were attempting to remove the company Hall to Southwark, and thus outside City control.[55] As we will discuss more at the end of this chapter, this potential transfer threatened the Court of Aldermen, and might explain Lovell's stern judgement. Nonetheless, it is revealing that nearly 150 years after their formation, the rulers still felt compelled to ask.

'Company' of Watermen

Notwithstanding their limited powers, the Watermen emulated many characteristics of guilds in the formal corporate system. They regulated their trade through apprenticeship and training, and collected admission fees and quarterage from their members. Additionally, many ordinances and byelaws were centred upon poor relief. In 1584, the Court of Aldermen ordered the fellowship to give 8*d*. per week to watermen who reached old age or were unable to work due to illness or injury.[56] In 1663, watermen widows were singled out

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Guildhall Archives, which do not exist from before 1700. There is also no mention of it in the repertories of the Court of Aldermen, nor other accessible civic records at the LMA. However, there is a stack of miscellaneous papers from the Court of Aldermen relating to the Watermen at the LMA that have been deemed 'unfit' for access (COL/CP/02/230). This is still undergoing assessment by their conservatory team at the time of this thesis submission. It is possible that Lovell's letter is located there. Another possibility, however, is that Humpherus, writing in 1874, was able to access the Watermen's court minutes from before 1700—which may have recorded Lovell's judgement—but are now lost. Throughout his volume, he makes several mentions of 'court records' from the second half of the seventeenth century after the Fire (which destroyed pre-1666 fellowship records). I have contacted the Company of Watermen who are not in possession of them. Humpherus has proved trustworthy in his transcriptions of original manuscripts in all other instances where original sources can be located and compared (albeit minor omissions or transcription errors). Thus, his transcriptions of the fellowship court minutes after 1666 will be used throughout the chapter.

[54] LMA, COL/CA/01/01/46 ff. 209; f. 406b; f. 411. It is worth highlighting that Lovell was approaching his seventies at this point, and there were rumours floating within legal circles of his alleged senility. One critic decried that he should be called the 'Obliviscor' ('forgetter') rather than recorder. See Tim Wales, 'Lovell, Sir Salathiel (1631/2-1713),' *ODNB*, accessed August 11, 2015, https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/17064.

[55] Humpherus, *History of the Company of Watermen*, 1: 415; see also, LMA, COL/CA/01/01/102, f. 120.

[56] LMA, COL/CA/01/01/21, f. 37b.

for financial relief, though they likely were informal recipients of charity throughout the seventeenth century as well.[57] The administration of charity should not be underestimated. Archer has demonstrated that poor relief was an important aspect of trade identity and instilled a relatively strong degree of corporate 'loyalty' amongst company hierarchies.[58]

Like many London companies, the Watermen may have enjoyed a lively communal scene as well. As mentioned earlier, the fellowship acquired a hall in 1565.[59] This was a unique development; many labouring occupational bodies in the City, such as the Carmen and the Ticket Porters, did not possess a hall in the early modern period.[60] As civic spaces, guild halls were, using Lefebvrean terms, 'politically instrumental.'[61] They were crucial to the daily operation of trades, and as Kilburn-Toppin points out, an important symbol of corporate self-representation.[62] Historians have viewed the decades between 1560 and 1640 as a period in which London's guild halls underwent particularly intense construction and remodelling, which produced a greater sensitivity to the connection of trade identity and space.[63] The first Watermen's Hall was situated at Three Cranes Wharf, south of the Guildhall in the Vintry Ward.[64] Although it was not housed in one of London's finer neighbourhoods, it had an important civic position as the starting-point for Mayoral water processions in the City. The hall was too small to accommodate the large generality of Watermen, and it is likely that the entire membership met in an open space somewhere in

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[57] Humpherus, *History of the Company of Watermen*, 1: 286.

[58] Ian Archer, *Pursuit of Stability*, 111-124; see also, Priscilla Metcalf, *Halls of the Fishmongers' Company* (Felpham: Phillimore, 1977); Robert Tittler, *Architecture and Power: The Town Hall and the English Urban Community c. 1500-1640* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991).

[59] O'Riordan, 'The Thames Watermen in the Age of Revolution,' chapter 2; GL, MS 34169.

[60] The Water-bearers, however, did possess a hall from 1568, see Henry A. Harben, *A Dictionary of London* (London: H. Jenkins, 1918), 237.

[61] Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1991), 31, 349; see also Jasmine Kilburn-Toppin, 'Crafting Artisanal Identities in Early Modern London: The Spatial, Material and Social Practices of Guild Communities c.1580-1640,' (Ph.D. thesis, Royal College of Art, 2013), 23.

[62] Kilburn-Toppin, 'Crafting Artisanal Identities,' 116-119.

[63] Ibid.

[64] Humpherus suggests that the Waterman's Hall was located at Cold Harbour Mansion before 1650, but the evidence substantiating his claim no longer survives, Humpherus, *History of the Company of Watermen*, 1: 254-255. O'Riordan, however, disputes his claim, instead demonstrating that the Fellowship leased the hall in Three Cranes Wharf from the Merchant Taylor's Company, O'Riordan, 'The Thames Watermen,' chapter 2; GL, MS 34169.

the City or suburbs.[65] Nonetheless, a hall dedicated to the government and daily operation of the fellowship doubtless enhanced its standing in corporate politics, and perhaps instilled a sense of pride and belonging for its members, even if some only entered it on the day they were admitted to the trade.

They were also granted a coat of arms in 1585.[66] Howell's *Londinopolis* describes it thus in 1657:

> The Company of Watermen have for their arms barry
> waive of six azure and argent, a Lighter proper on a chief
> gules, a pair of Oares Salterwayes, twixt two cushions.[67]

The watermen's arms featured in several broadsides and pamphlets extolling the crests of the great companies of London, including Benjamin Wright's *The armes of all the cheife corporations of England* (1596), *The Emperiall Achievement of our dread Soveraigne King Charles* (1635) and *Historical Remarques and observations* (1681) [see figs. 3.2, 3.3 & 3.4].[68] The fellowship was ranked last or nearly last in all three prints—numbered 60, 60, and 62 respectively. Nonetheless, it is still significant that it was celebrated alongside London companies in a conscious attempt to showcase the civic pride of the City. Corporate arms were a vital element of London's civic identity. As Gadd explains:

> For a London company, a coat of arms was a significant
> investment, proof of its permanence and distinguished
> heritage, it defined a company's membership of
> London's corporate club at the same time as carefully
> distinguishing it from its peers.[69]

The wide proliferation of these prints—especially Wright's large, two-sheet poster that was likely intended for public display—exposed Londoners of all backgrounds to the prestige of corporate culture and solidified the 'company' identity of Watermen in the minds of Londoners.

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[65] O'Riordan suggests that they met at St. Georges Fields in Southwark, see 'The Thames Waterman,' chapter 2.

[66] Humpherus, *History of the Company of Watermen*, 1: 137.

[67] James Howell, *Londinopolis* (1657), 46.

[68] Benjamin Wright, *The armes of all the cheife corporations of England* (1596); *The Emperiall Achievement of our dread soveraigne King Charles* (1635), 7; R.B., *Historical Remarques and observations* (1681), 91.

[69] Ian Anders Gadd, 'Early Modern Printed Histories of the London Livery Companies,' in *Guilds, Society & Economy in London 1450-1800*, ed. Gadd and Wallis (Centre for Metropolitan History: London, 2002), 37; see also Kathryn Karen Will, 'Cultivating Heraldic Histories in Early Modern English Literature' (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Michigan, 2014).
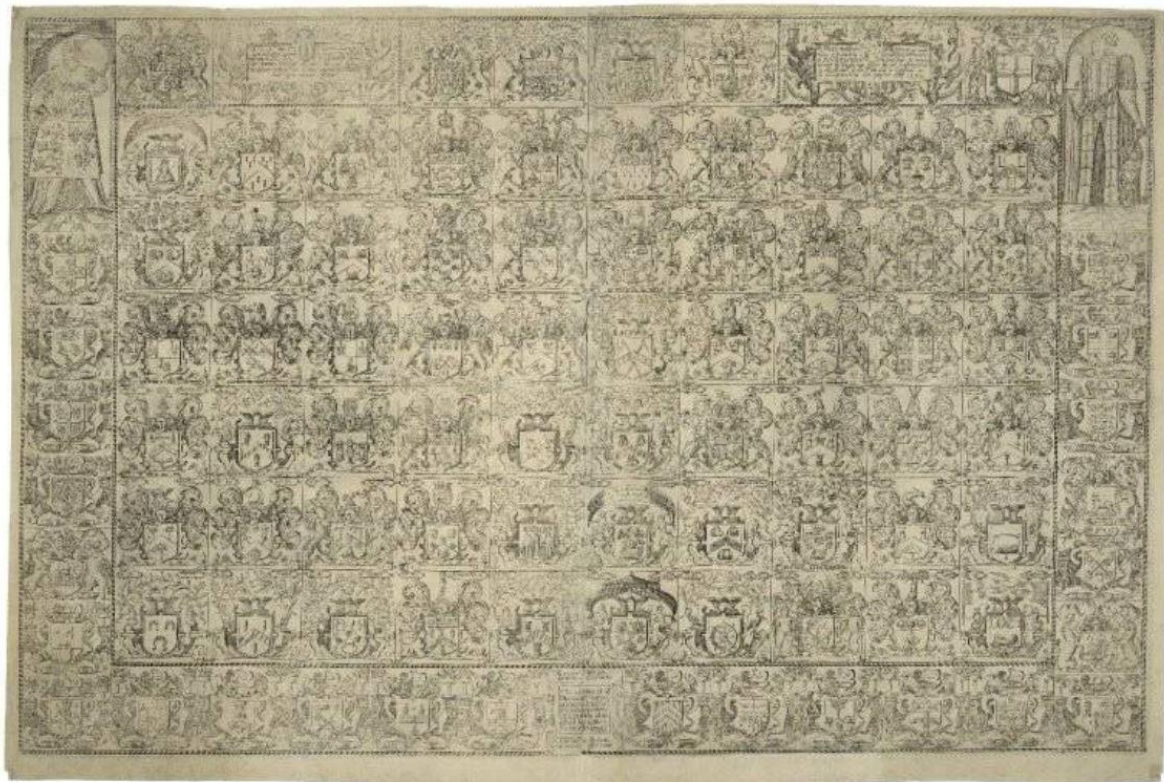
Figure 3.2. Benjamin Wright's *The armes of all the cheife corporations of England* (1596).

Figure 3.3. The Arms of the Watermen in *The Emperiall Achievement of our dread Soveraigne King Charles* (1635).

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Figure 3.4. *Historical Remarques and observations* (1681).

There were other semblances of a 'formal' company as well. The Oath of the Watermen, created in 1626, was similar to those sworn by members of City companies. It begins with a pledge of allegiance to the Crown, swears obedience to the overseers, and threatens 'paynes and penalties' for offending the rules and ordinances of their said government. Yet, the Watermen's Oath did contain a wordy instruction against the embezzlement of merchandise or wares from ships, and/or defrauding customs:

> [you] shall not directly nor indirectly of yourselves, or by
> the procurement of any others, embezzle, purloyne, or
> convey awaye any wares, merchanize or other stuff or
> goods whatsoever, inward or outward, into or from any ship
> or vessel whatsoever, to the defrauding or impairing of such
> customs or duties as are or may be due unto his Majesty...[70]

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[70] LMA, COL/CA/01/01/40, f. 361b.

The Oath lacked a swearing of keeping 'the mystery' of the trade. For the Watermen, this was likely thought to be irrelevant to the 'unskilled' nature of their employment.

Arguably, the key function of a company was its ability to regulate its trade and maintain order within its membership. In 1614, John Taylor emphasised the ability of the Watermen to effectively govern unruly members:

> And sure no Company hath Lawes more strict,
> Then Watermen, which weekely they inflict
> Upon offenders, who are made pay duely
> Their fines, or prisone'd, because they plide unruly.[71]

Taylor's language is significant. He calls the Watermen a 'company' and highlights their ability to regulate their members as any other legitimate corporation in the City. Naturally, as a waterman himself, his account is somewhat biased. However, he was not the only Londoner to draw that conclusion. The anonymous 1610 proposal to create a corporation in the suburbs singled out the Waterman as a model of the good government that accompanied incorporation:

> then let it be considered whether the good lawes
> established for the orderly governinge of Watermen a
> people heretofore as disordered as anye other yett now
> lyveinge in as good order as anye other men only by
> draweinge them into a Companie and placeinge
> Governers over them […].[72]

The petitioners note the good order of the watermen 'as anye other men' now that they were made into a 'Companie.' Although the 1610 proposal was rejected, it is still revealing that the author(s) believed that the 'company' of Watermen was a strong enough case to base their argument upon.

II.   'A watery occupation'

The 1555 Act of Parliament that established the fellowship painted an unflattering portrait of the men who taxied Londoners by boat between Gravesend and Windsor. Due to 'a lack of good government and due order,' watermen extorted their passengers of both money and life. Londoners were 'robbed and spoiled of their goods,' and 'danger of

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[71] Taylor, *The nipping and snipping of abuses* (1614).
[72] BL, Lansdowne MS 92, f. 26.

drowning hath many times ensued.' Watermen were deemed 'rude, ignorant, and unskilful,' likely to commit crime 'and other evil, detestable facts, to the great annoyance of the commonwealth.' More than their physical threat to London's citizens and visitors, they were a danger to the social order as well. Watermen were 'masterless' and 'single' men and boys who operated outside the well-ordered systems of apprenticeship and household. This affront to civil society made them an 'evil and great example to others,' and in urgent need of reformation.[73]

By these descriptions alone, it is not difficult to imagine why the watermen acquired a poor reputation in early modern London. According to other accounts, they were 'troublesome,' 'boysterous,' 'surly' and 'rude.'[74] Some insults were more creative. They were called 'Hogs snout,' 'a company of fowle-mouth'd fellowes' and 'a peece of Hebrew spel'd backeward, or the embleame of deceite.'[75] Indeed, watermen were the antithesis of urban civility. They were 'inferior people' who 'neglected to live 'piously, soberly, and uprightly.'[76] As Prynne aptly sums, a waterman was 'the meanest commoner' of England.[77] For many contemporaries, the notion that watermen could emulate the virtues expected of London's citizenry was beyond the realm of fantasy.

Scholars have perpetuated contemporary elitism. Ellinghausen suggests that their 'work afforded no opportunity for the accumulation of capital,' and that they 'shared the status of porters and lightermen as laborers with no need of merchants or middlemen.'[78] According to Capp, the 'nature of the watermen and their problems' meant that 'order and harmony were bound to be precarious.'[79] They are not necessarily wrong. Watermen were manual labourers. Like the carmen and porters, they did not make things or sell things as other tradesmen in the City. Moreover, as Capp suggests, there are plenty of accounts of watermen behaving badly, especially during the turbulent decade of the 1640s.

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[73] *An Act touching Watermen and Bargemen upon the River Thames*, 1555, 2 & 3 Phil. & M., c. 16.

[74] Nicolas Goodman, *Hollands leaguer* (1632), D2; Thomas Nabbes, *Covent Garden* (1638), 54; Jeremiah Burroughs, *An exposition of the propesie of Hosea* (1652), 477; John Taylor, *an arrant theif* (1622).

[75] Blasius Multibibus, *A solemn jovial disputation* (1617), p. 151; Robert Anton, *Moriomachia* (1613), C; Wye Saltonstall, *Picturae loqentes* (1631), D10.

[76] *Cloria and Narcissus* (1653), 321; A B D, *The court of the most illustrious and most magnificent James* (1619), 129.

[77] William Prynne, *Seven Additional quaeres in behalf of the secluded Members* (1660), 1.

[78] Ellinghausen, *Labor and Writing*, 97.

[79] Capp, *John Taylor the Water*-Poet, 150.

However, watermen were members of a 'company' too. Unsurprisingly, their ambiguous status as both labourers and company-men produced conflicting attitudes from their contemporaries. The following section explores the many sides of watermen that have been omitted from historical narratives of the group. Looking at the conflicting ways that Londoners talked about watermen, this section continues to flesh out the one-sided view of watermen to show that they were an immeasurably complex group of people.

'the veriest Knaves in the World'

Watermen were liquid-based labourers. The geographic necessity of rowing a boat meant that they spent most of their lives on water. According to contemporaries, they surrounded themselves with liquid off the River as well. As one contemporary noticed, watermen 'did nothing but drinke, domineere, and swagger in Alehouses.'[80] For Wye Saltonstall, their water-logged occupation meant they were perpetually suspended between sobriety and intoxication: 'Though hee bee ne're sober yet hee's never drunke, for he lives by water.' Even Taylor's defence of watermen admitted that his fellow scullers tended to overindulge:

> A Waterman can be a Theife no way.
> Except one way, which I halfe forgot
> He now and then perhaps may Rob the Pot,
> Steale himself Drunke, and be his owne Purspicker,
> And Chimically turnes his Coyne to Liquer.[81]

Despite Taylor's playful apology, the stereotype of the ever-intoxicated watermen had poor connotations. Drunkenness was closely linked to idleness. In 1631, the Crown complained that London was 'greatly pestered with idle and dissolute persons' who 'are lodged in obscure and beggarly Alehouses' and 'will in no sorte betake themselves to any coursse of honest labour.'[82]

All this idle time spent in the alehouse had disastrous consequences. As Sir Formal observes in Shadwell's *The Virtuoso*, 'the Watermen, who had drunk too deep of a Liquor, somewhat stronger than that which is the Scene of their Vocation, were stirr'd up into so popular a heat and fervour [that they were] blown into a Tempest.'[83] As we saw with the

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[80] Robert Anton, *Moriomachia* (1613), C.
[81] Taylor, *an arrant theif* (1622).
[82] *Acts of the Privy Council of England*, ed. P. A. Penfold (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1964), 46: 260.
[83] Thomas Shadwell, *The Virtuoso* (1676), 72.

Ticket Porters, 'alehouse sociability' was an important way for labouring groups to assert their masculinity and demonstrate good standing in their communities.[84] In the minds of contemporaries, however, the watery composition of those who laboured on the River left them unable to socialise in alehouses with self-restraint. Such incontinence—as associated with 'wet' temperaments—often resulted in uncivil verbal leakage. [85] In 1645, a story circulated in London about a New England waterman who possessed a 'watery element,' in which 'his spirits being predisposed by the roughnesse of winds and waves […] he might (you will say) easily be inflamed.'[86] So it was true closer to home. After drinking to excess, London watermen 'would sweare, curse, rayle, even against those men that set them on worke, from whom they had their cheifest meanes of living.'[87]

Indeed, making a living on the Thames was not for the gentle-mannered. Competition on the River was fierce, and like other service-based trades, watermen were known to violently quarrel over fares. Henry Peacham offered a particularly vibrant image in 1639:

> [At] Westminster Bridge, they found the Water-men
> pitifully fallen out, and railing on at another, and almost
> together by the eares, about their Fares; one crying out, Sir
> Thomas, or Sir Henry, I am your first man […] they seeing
> the Gentlemen so vexed, with haling and calling on every
> side, with such a thunder of severall tones, they were able
> to make a man more deafe than the Cataracts of Nilus.[88]

The necessity for watermen to aggressively jockey for fares shaped their occupational identity as unruly and ill-bred.[89] For Londoners and tourists alike, the 'deafening' din

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[84] Mark Hailwood, 'Sociability, Work and Labouring Identity in Seventeenth-Century England,' *Cultural and Social History* 8, no. 1 (2011): 9-29; see also, chapter 2 of this thesis, 116-120.

[85] According to Galenic medicine, water was a feminine trait that produced incontinence, or a lack of self-control over bodily functions, as well as excessive chatter, and in general, a lack of restraint in all matters. For more on effeminate incontinence, see Gail Kern Paster, 'Leaky vessels: the incontinent women of city comedy,' *Renaissance Drama* 18 (1987): 43-65.

[86] John Wheelwright, *Mercurius Americanus* (1645), 5.

[87] Anton, *Moriomachia*, C.

[88] Henry Peacham, *A merry discourse of Meum, and Tuum, or, Mine and Thine* (1639), 17.

[89] For a similar argument regarding hackney coaches, see Jenner, 'Circulation and Disorder: London Streets and Hackney Coaches, c.1640–c.1740' in *The Streets of London: From the Great Fire to the Great Stink,* ed. Tim Hitchcock and Heather Stone (London: Rivers Oram Press, 2003); for the same on the carmen, see chapter 1 of this thesis.

caused by watermen was an acoustic blemish on the Thames soundscape. In D'Avenant's *The first days entertainment at Rut-land house*, a Parisian visitor bemoans the 'importunate noise' of 'the Watermen (who snatch Fares as if they were to catch Prisoners, plying the Gentry so uncivilly, as if they never row'd any other passengers but Bear wards.)'[90] Such jarring sales techniques anxiously disrupted the social order. As Wye Saltonstall observed, 'when you come within ken of them, you shall heare a noyse worse than the confusion of Bedlam, and if you go with a Skuller, the Oares thinke you no gentlemen.'[91] Loudness was linked to coarse manners and incivility.[92] The dissonance of London's watermen alienated them from the sort of behaviour expected of London freemen.

Watermen were commonly regarded as deceitful and untrustworthy. The caricature of a waterman who faced backward while he rowed forward became a symbol of deceit and hypocrisy in early modern sermons and pamphlets.[93] More tangibly, they were known to cheat their passengers. In 1602, Samuel Rowlands cautioned his readers:

> [watermen] will be readie & very diligent for anie man,
> until they can get them to their boates, but when they
> come to land to pay their fare, if you paie them not to
> their owne contentments, you shall be sure of some gird
> or other.[94]

Moreover, they were notorious for aggressively pitching new fares once passengers were river-borne and pitching passengers over if they refused to pay a higher price. In 1616, Thomas Overbury remarked, 'little trust is to be given to [a waterman], for he thinks that day he does best when he fetches most men over.'[95] In a similar vein, another contemporary bemoaned: 'You Watermen are the veriest Knaves in the World, for to gain six pence, you care not to cast a man away.'[96]

The ostensible deceitfulness of watermen combined with the vulnerability of water transport led many passengers to fear for their lives. Not all anxieties were unfounded.

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[90] William D'avenant, *The first days entertainment at Rutland-House* (1656), 51.

[91] Wye Saltonstall, *Picturae loquentes* (1631), D10.

[92] David Garrioch, 'Sounds of the City: The Soundscape of Early Modern European Towns,' *Urban History* 30, no. 1 (2003): 16.

[93] For one of many examples, see *The character of the Presbyter* (1660), 8.

[94] Samuel Rowlands, Greenes ghost (1602), C4. A 'gird' is a sharp hit or blow, either verbal or physical. See 'gird, n.2,' *OED Online* (Oxford University Press), accessed August 24, 2018, http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/78455?rskey=R1uZ4s&result=2&isAdvanced=false.

[95] Thomas Overbury, *Sir Thomas Overburie his wife with new elegies upon his (now knowne) untimely death* (1616), L.

[96] *The Complaisant companion* (1674), 23.

Spence suggests that 4,187 people drowned in the Thames and riverside parishes between 1654 and 1735. However, as he points out, many of these were individuals employed in maritime occupations, including seamen, lightermen and watermen.[97] All the same, reports of murderous watermen were commonplace. In 1689, one writer told a story that he 'often heard related' about a gentleman who hired a wherry to carry him down the River at night. The watermen, believing the man to be carrying a large sum of money, 'concluded to throw this Gentleman Over-board, which they did accordingly, and so drowned him, and then shared the Spoil.'[98] Earlier, in 1656, *a true Relation of a most horrific Murder on the River Thames by two Watermen* described a particularly grisly case of a young man who was mercilessly killed on the River:

> […] whereupon the Watermen seeing the Coast to be clear, laid by their Oars and ran suddenly upon him, to one held him that he should not stirre whilst the other cut his throat; No sooner was this bloody murder performed, but they took away his money, tyed a great stone about his body, because he should sink to the bottom, & so threw him over-boord into the water, thinking that he should never be seen nor heard of again.[99]

Allegedly, they would have got away with it too. However, a few years later, the men were discovered arguing over who had received a larger share of the spoils. They were both apprehended, tried and executed. The veracity of the story is, of course, questionable. Regardless, it surely shaped Londoners' opinions of watermen as dangerous river pirates who preyed upon London's citizenry, much less belonged amongst their ranks.

'An honest paire of Oares'

Yet, there were other portrayals—hitherto neglected by historians—that depicted the watermen as paradigms of urban freemen. For Barry and Withington, the City economy reinforced a self-conscious code of honour for tradesmen that revolved around notions of honesty and good manners.[100] For Brooks, this included a 'mode of behaviour and speaking'

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[97] Craig Spence, *Accidents and Violent Death in Early Modern London 1650-1750* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2016), 81-83.

[98] Laurence Braddon, *Innocency and truth vindicated* (1689), 97.

[99] L.P., *A weapon of defence against sudden death* (1656), 9-11.

[100] This is not to be conflated with 'gentility,' see Withington, *Politics of Commonwealth*, 118; Jonathan Barry, 'Civility and Civic Culture in Early Modern England: The Meanings of Urban Freedom,' in *Civil Histories: Essays Presented to Keith Thomas*, ed. Peter Burke, Brian Harrison, and Paul Slack (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 181-196.

and 'a certain dignity and deportment' for urban tradesmen and their apprentices.[101]
Similarly, contemporaries appreciated the civil behaviour of watermen. For example, a 1688
ballad related a tale of how a waterman charmed his sweetheart:

> His modest mild behaviour,
> did so affect her mind,
> That he did gain her favour so,
> She was to him most kind.[102]

Such anecdotes had real-life counterparts. In 1680, an argument erupted at a set of stairs
after an ostensibly drunk group of Scotsmen attempted to steal a waterman's wherry. In the
ensuing fray, a constable—that the waterman himself had called—was fatally wounded.
According to one eyewitness, the waterman himself had committed the mortal blow.
However, at his trial, several neighbours came forward to attest to his reputation as 'an
honest, civil, quiet man.'[103] Soon after, the charges were dropped.

Unlike 'masterless' vagrants and foreigners who encroached City professions without
sufficient skill or knowledge, the Watermen completed seven-year apprenticeships.[104]
Accordingly, they were perceived as skilled and proficient in their trades. One contemporary
admired the 'strength and indevour' in the way a waterman 'handle[d] his Oares.' [105] The
waterman's expertise in his trade was described using the language associated with the
culture of the freedom. London's artisans and merchants were meant to be proficient in their
trades, demonstrated in their skill and expertise to create and/or sell 'honest' products.[106] In
the trade of river transport, an 'honest' waterman was one who was competently skilled to
safely convey passengers to their intended destination. For example, In *Westward for Smelts*,
the fishwives thank the 'honest waterman' for alighting them safely in Brainford.[107]
Similarly, John Vernon is grateful to the 'honest waterman' who rowed his child to safety

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[101] Christopher Brooks, 'Apprenticeship, Social mobility and the Middling Sort, 1550-
1800,' in *The Middling Sort of People*, ed. Jonathan Barry and Christopher Brooks,
(Houndsmills, Hampshire: Macmillian Press, 1994), 77.
[102] *The Water-Mans Delight; Or, the Fair Maid* (1686-1688).
[103] Old Bailey Proceedings, *London Lives*, 1690-1800, t16800526-2 26
(www.londonlives.org version 1.1, 17 June 2012), May 1680, trial of 'poor waterman.'
[104] For the politico-cultural importance of apprenticeships in civic culture, see Phil
Withington, 'Citizens, Community and Political Culture in Restoration England,' in
Communities in Early Modern England, ed. Alexandra Shepard and Phil Withington
(Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000): 134-155.
[105] John Downame, *A guide to godlynesse* (1622), 23.
[106] Natasha Korda, *Labors Lost: Women's Work and the Early Modern English Stage*
(Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), chap. 4.
[107] Kinde Kit of Kingstone, *Westward for smelts* (1620), F2.

during the plague.[108] In Middleton's *A chast mayd in Cheape-Side*, Touchwood Senior calls watermen 'honest' several times after two wherrymen help Touchwood Junior escape from City sergeants:

> But for the honest watermen; I am bound to them;
> They are the most requiteful'st people living,
> For as they get their meanes by Gentlemen,
> They are still the forwardest to helpe Gentlemen […]
> Whilst [I was] so pursued and bandied
> Was by an honest pair of oares safely landed.[109]

As Spain-Savage observes, Touchwood Senior's comments are not without tension. He praises the wherrymen's skills to honestly alight him at his chosen destination. Yet, at the same time, he reveals how they defied civic authority to help him escape the law. Even so, the verses were likely well received by Middleton's audiences. As Wall points out, the story of the escape has nothing to do with the plot of the play, and was likely a 'piece of rather obvious flattery to the watermen.'[110]

Middleton was not the only contemporary to portray watermen as honest tradesmen. Robert Greene's *A quip for upstart courtiers* groups watermen in a band of 'seeming poore honest citizens,' including a skinner, joiner, sadler, and others. Before selecting worthy individuals to comprise a 'jury' to settle a dispute between a domestic and foreign cloth merchant, Greene assesses each man's dishonest trading practices, censuring the other citizens of producing subpar goods to save costs. In the end, the waterman is reserved as one of the most honest: 'Now maister waterman […] there is no subtillty in you, for there is none so simple that knows your fares [..] & how you earn your mony painfully with the sweat of your brows, all this is true.'[111] Because the waterman does not create 'deceitful wares' but is engaged in manual labour, he stands out amongst his cohort as the most virtuous. Remarkably, his identity as a wage-earner makes him the most honest 'citizen' in the group.

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[108] John Vernon, *The compleat scholler* (1666), 21.
[109] Thomas Middleton, *A chast mayd in Cheape-Side* (1630), 53.
[110] For an interesting discussion about the economic relationship between watermen and the Bankside theatre scene, see Christi Spain-Savage, 'An Honest Pair of Oars: Players, Watermen, and A Chaste Maid in Cheapside,' *Early Theatre* 19, no. 2 (2016), 167-178; Richard J. Wall, 'A Critical Edition of Thomas Middleton's *A Chast Mayd in Cheap-side*' (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Michigan, 1958), 8.
[111] Robert Greene. *A quip for an upstart courtier* (1592), C2.

The superiority of 'honest service' over 'deceitful wares' was reprised in other texts as well. In 1614, Taylor argued that while most London merchants were guilty of plying their trade, the watermen's honest labour singles them out as the most virtuous. He claimed:

> [Watermen] keepe no shopes, nor sell deceitful wares,
> But like to pilgrims travel for their fares,
> And they must aske the question where they goe.
> If men will goe by water yea or no
> Which being spoke aright, the fault's not such,
> But any Tradesmen (sure) will doe as much […]
> This being granted, as none can deny,
> Most trades as well as Watermen doe plye.[112]

Taylor goes on to compare watermen with members of the Mercers', Drapers', and Goldsmiths' companies, claiming that watermen who ply for fares were no different to merchants' practices of soliciting passers-by in front of their shops. His language is revealing. He situates watermen not as labourers, but 'tradesmen,' thus elevating their services within the wider commercial network of corporate culture.

The concept of honesty featured prominently in other early modern discourses too. As we have seen with the carmen and porters, living by one's labour—however small the return—permitted a degree of esteem even to those on the lowest end of the economic spectrum. As Taylor writes in *The nipping and snipping of abuses*:

> And this I know, and therefore dare maintaine,
> That he that truely labours and takes paine,
> May with a better Conscience sleepe in bed,
> Then he that is with ill got thousands sped.[113]

Like the porters celebrated by Brewer and Parker, Taylor claimed that honest labour is morally superior to ill-begotten wealth.[114] Peacham's *Coach and Sedan* offers a similar perspective of the watermen's virtuous labour. Condemning the illicit practices of hackney coaches, the waterman proudly proclaims:

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[112] Taylor, *The nipping and snipping of abuses*, L4.
[113] Taylor, *The nipping and snipping of abuses*, L2.
[114] For a broader discussion of early modern ballads that amalgamated idleness and wealth, see Brodie Waddell, *God, Duty and Community in English Economic Life, 1660-1720* (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell Press, 2012), chapter two, esp. 96-97.

wee are an auncient companie […] wee are the first and
cheife in getting our livings honestly (and as God
commandeth) with the sweat of our brows, our profession
is free from deceit and lying which many trades are
subject unto.[115]

This speech is the perfect elucidation of how the concept of honesty linked Christian notions of virtuous labour with humanist corporatism. Like Taylor's *Apologie for Watermen*, Peacham deploys key terms associated with civic culture. The watermen are an 'ancient company' whose work is described as a 'profession.' Simultaneously, however, the waterman's manual labour is highlighted in the phrase 'with the sweat of our brows.' Rather than being a marker of his place amongst the rabble, it is exactly this 'low' work that sets him above other tradesmen who are subject to 'deceit.'

Although scullers and oarsmen are believed to be universally impoverished, there was a very real financial hierarchy in the fellowship. In 1603, the will of Roger Swayne of St Saviour left his boat to another waterman, two large platters to a friend, and a bed to his brother-in-law. He also arranged to pay his deceased cousin's 20*s*. debt.[116] In 1654, London waterman Thomas White left ten pounds to his son, plus an unspecified amount of 'botes and vessals' to his wife.[117] Others thrived. The same year, waterman John Reade left thirty pounds to his sister, plus his 'house and orchard' in Kent.[118] In 1680, Nicholas Hutton, 'citizen and waterman of London,' bequeathed the rents and profits of several houses to his wife, plus £45 to his friends and family.[119] Two years earlier, William Knight of St Olave signed a will that left £185 to his kin, a room in his dwelling house to his wife, and an amusing 1*s*. to his son-in-law.[120] Earlier in 1623, Thomas Early methodically listed each one of his four boats, pewter dishes, and brass candlesticks to his surviving children and grandchildren, plus £200 to be divided amongst them.[121] In 1669, waterman John Howell of London bequeathed £100 to each of his three children, not including his other property and chattels that he left to his wife.[122] Surely, when Jeremiah Burroughs singled out the

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[115] Henry Peacham, *Coach and sedan*, C3.
[116] TNA, PROB 11/102/333.
[117] TNA, PROB 11/236/078.
[118] TNA, PROB 11/242/228.
[119] TNA, PROB 11/363/502.
[120] TNA. PROB 11/359/329.
[121] TNA. PROB 11/142/633.
[122] TNA, PROB 11/331/167.

Watermen as the 'meanest' of 'poore labouring men,' he could not have meant *all* watermen.[123]

River transport was a potentially lucrative trade, especially for those who accumulated boats for hire, or ran ferries between well-travelled routes. Without more surviving evidence, it is difficult to tell for certain how many watermen had contracting roles in river transport. However, the evidence above suggests that there were affluent members within the company, which complicates how we interpret the motivations of their political participation. As we will see, 'rank and file' protest leaders were often wealthy members of the ruling group. This undermines the view that their political campaigns over the seventeenth century were part and parcel of a grassroots revolution in early modern London.

III. River Politics

Early modern historians have interpreted the formation of labour organisations as a top-down authoritative process to curb the disorderly practices of low socio-economic groups in the City. For the members of those occupations, it has been argued that the freedom was an unwanted burden.[124] However, groups within the Watermen also benefited from the rights and responsibilities that accompanied their status as free watermen. As we will see, the heightened regulation of river transport in the 1620s and 1640s was a response to petitions from watermen seeking to protect their trade and financial interests from rival groups—both within and without the fellowship. These petitions have acquired some attention in historical scholarship.[125] Yet, as we saw with the carmen, studies have focused more on whether the protesters' demands were democratic, rather than political significance of the petitions themselves. Instead, this section demonstrates that the watermen's petitions were expertly crafted to appeal to several audiences in order to negotiate power in City politics. At the heart of their strategy were bids for 'good government,' 'order,' and other

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[123] Jeremiah Burroughs, *An exposition of the prophesie of Hosea* (1652), 477.
[124] Archer, *Pursuit of Stability*, 62; Rappaport, *Worlds Within Worlds*, 60; Barry, 'Civility and Civic Culture' 18.
[125] O'Riordan, 'The Democratic Revolution of the Thames Watermen,' 17-27; Carlin, 'Liberty and Fraternities in the English Revolution: the politics of London Artisans' Protests,' 223-254; Unwin, *Gilds and Companies of London,* 329-351.

regulatory rhetorics associated with civic control. These concepts carried political weight for a wide range of individuals, from the MP at Westminster to the sculler on the Thames.

Gravesend Competition

The watermen had many competitors in passenger transport both on and off the River. Their chief economic rival was the Corporation of Gravesend. The route between Gravesend and the City was significant for several reasons. As noted earlier, it was the landing place of most long-distance voyages to London. Once moored at Gravesend, ship passengers would transfer into wherries or boats for the last leg of the journey into London. The main ferry between Gravesend and Billingsgate, aptly called the Long Ferry, was first mentioned in 1293.[126] The journey was roughly twenty miles and could take several hours [see fig. 3.5]. Stow described Thomas Wolsey's journey from the City to Gravesend in 1506: 'With a prosperous tyde and winde,' he arrived by barge in little over three hours.[127] However, it could take longer going against the tide or in less favourable conditions. In the summer of 1663, it took Pepys somewhere between three and five hours to reach London from Gravesend: 'We were called up about four-a-clock, and being ready went and took a Gravesend boat, and to London by nine a-clock.'[128]

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[126] *An Act concerning Watermen on the Thames*, 1514, 6 Hen. 8., c. 7.

[127] John Stow, *Annales or a general chronicle of England* (1631), 498; see also, Martin, 'Transport for London,' 56.

[128] Samuel Pepys, *The Diary of Samuel Pepys*, ed. Rev. Mynors Bright (1893), 237. 3-5 hours is only an estimate as Pepys does not reveal how long it took for him and his companion to be 'ready.'

Figure 3.5. Distance between London and Gravesend. Base map: Capt. Greenville Collins, *East Coast of England and Thames Estuary, from London* (c. 1676).

By 1514, the Long Ferry could charter up to eighteen passengers at a time, charging 2*d*. per person.[129] In 1562, it was put under the authority of the newly incorporated town of Gravesend. The corporation had a shaky start: the charter was swiftly revoked due to negligence the same year but re-incorporated in 1568.[130] Other than internal conflict within the corporation between owners of barges and tilt boats competing for fares, it also ran into problems with City watermen plying in Gravesend and poaching passengers from the ferry. Towards the end of the sixteenth century, the growing number of people entering and exiting the City from Gravesend exacerbated these issues. By 1595, the Court of Aldermen assumed the right to regulate the return ferry from Billingsgate to London. The arrangement seemed to benefit the barge owners of Gravesend who were given 'pre-eminence to take in all the passengers that shall be willing to pass by barge.'[131] Wherries and other boats were not allowed to ply for fares until the barge was full, on pain of forfeiting 2*d*. per passenger to the barge owner from which the fare was 'stolen.'[132] The alliance between the Gravesend and the City doubtless aggravated watermen who felt their livelihoods infringed upon by the large ferries and tilt boats of Gravesend. As we can recall, the passage between Gravesend and London was the most lucrative fare for watermen—costing 2*s*. per journey in 1555.[133]

At the turn of the seventeenth century, several individuals associated with the Society of Watermen submitted complaints to the Court of Aldermen regarding the Gravesend ferry.[134] The petitions did not seem to garner much response. However, in 1621, a short, double-sided sheet, *The Contents of the Water-mans Bill into the Parliament House*, was printed in London.[135] It was a synopsis of a bill read in the House of Commons on 5 May 1621 that expounded the grievances of the watermen against their overseers.[136] The bill writers opened with the complaint that the Aldermen selected rulers unfit for civic office.

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[129] *An Act concerning Watermen on the Thames*, 1514, 6 Hen. 8., c. 7.

[130] Robert Cruden, *The History of the Town of Gravesend in the County of Kent and of the Port of London* (London: 1843), 189-195; Humpherus, *History of the Company of Watermen*, 1: 124-125.

[131] Cruden, *The History of the Town of Gravesend*, 205.

[132] Humpherus, *History of the Company of Watermen*, 1: 124-125.

[133] *An Act touching Watermen and Bargemen upon the River Thames*, 1555, 2 & 3 Phil. & M., c. 16.

[134] LMA, COL/CA/01/01/28, f. 141; COL/CA/01/01/29, f. 186; COL/CA/01/01/34, f. 324; COL/CA/01/01/39; f. 24b.

[135] *The Contents of the Water-mans Bill into the Parliament House, May 1621* (1621).

[136] 'House of Commons Journal: 5 May 1621,' *Journal of the House of Commons* (London, 1802), 1: 609.

They claimed: 'the Lord Mayor and aldermen, (for affection of some others by respect) do usually choose such watermen to be rulers that are not fit to governe themselves, much lesse to take upon the charge of so great a company.'[137] Foreshadowing later accusations in the 1630s and 1640s, the 1621 bill accused the rulers of the inability to govern themselves as required of civic office-holders. By adopting the same rhetorics used to justify Aldermanic control, the watermen exploited the City's justification for power as their own.

The remaining proposals of the 1621 bill are countered by the responses of the rulers; the ten clauses of the watermen are met with the rulers' objections, divided into separate columns down the page. By all appearances, the document is quite ordinary, if not a bit lacklustre. The document tells us that the original bill was ostensibly proposed by the generality of watermen. It asked that the fellowship be permitted to choose thirty assistants to have 'as absolute a power to rule and governe, in the absence of the overseers, as the overseers themselves.' From those selected, the current overseers would then nominate eight men (from which the City would select half) to join the remaining four 'ancient rulers' who would retain their position for another year.[138] This was a gesture towards compromise and an attempt to ensure continuity: four 'ancient' overseers would sit alongside four 'younger and inferior' men for one-year terms. As the document was double-sided, it was not meant to be pinned up in alehouses and other public places for popular consumption. Instead, it was likely printed to be passed out to MPs as a lobbying tactic—though only one copy survives at the Guildhall Library. Kyle has demonstrated that 1621 witnessed the highest number of single-sheets printed for the purpose of influencing Parliamentary legislation. City companies were one of the main groups to take advantage of this lobbying strategy.[139] The author remains anonymous, but the fact that it included the responses of the rulers hints that it was an attempt to influence opinion in their favour.

O'Riordan has read the document as evidence of a growing democratic movement within the rank and file of the watermen's company.[140] However, there are elements within the text that complicate this view. To begin, there are a few clauses in the original bill that call into question the intentions of its writers. Although it opens with a proposal to reorganize company government and give the power of election to the 'entire generality,'

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[137] *The Contents of the Water-mans Bill into the Parliament House, May 1621*.
[138] Ibid.
[139] Chris Kyle, 'From Broadside to Pamphlet: Print and Parliament in the late 1620s,' *Parliamentary History* 26, no. 1 (2007):17-29.
[140] O'Riordan, 'The Thames Watermen in the Century of Revolution,' chapter 3.

five of the ten 'acts' are preoccupied with the jurisdictional conflict between London watermen and the Corporation of Gravesend regarding the Long Ferry. O'Riordan deems the conflict 'unspectacular.' It is, however, a recurrent issue in the 1621 bill.[141]

For instance, in the rulers' rejoinder to the clause that would extend the authority of the company to the large stretch of river between 'Cliff in Kent to Reading in Berkshire,' they responded:

> This Act would not onely take away the interest and property of
> the Cittie of London, & the Towne of Gravesend in that great
> Ferry: but also to all those who have any other Ferries upon the
> River of Thames. For if the watermen may freely carry and
> recary to and from all places, it would be no benefit, but an
> exceeding great losse to the Owners of Ferries […].[142]

The bill also requested that all watermen using barges, tilt boats, lighter boats and wherries serve seven years under a waterman of the company, and/or be approved by the company overseers and assistants. The opposition countered that the Gravesend corporation had a 'right' to choose the 'maisters of their owne boats,' and that it would give too much power to the overseers, who 'are not compellable to allow but whom they please.'[143]

According to the Admiralty Muster of 1628/9, there were 121 watermen living in Gravesend—hardly five per cent of the total estimate of watermen living in the City and surrounding suburbs and liberties.[144] Still, even with the support of other members of the generality, there is no evidence to suggest that they organised on their own accord to unseat the oligarchy. Despite the bill's preamble condemning aldermanic power to choose the company's overseers, the bill's fixation on the Gravesend Ferry hints more towards a dispute regarding the monopolisation of river transport than democratic reform.

Biographical research of the leaders of the 1620s revolt supports this view. In 1622, certain watermen petitioned the Court of Aldermen against the rulers. The committee appointed to consider their complaints were less than sympathetic. Their report singled out three men in particular: 'one Parry, Jourden, Jenckins […] have combined with a great company of unruly and stubbern watermen […] to become turbulent, malicious and troublesome against the said Rulers […] and against the laudable and ancient government of the said River of Thames.'[145] The protest was rebuked as anarchy: '[the watermen] thirst

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[141] Ibid.
[142] *The Contents of the Water-mans Bill into the Parliament House, May 1621.*
[143] *The Contents of the Water-mans Bill into the Parliament House, May 1621.*
[144] TNA, SP 16/145.
[145] LMA, COL/CA/01/01/37; f. 139.

after nothing more than alteration, and so to be alienated from the City's government (of which they grow weary) and list to […] dissolute and rebellious rules amongst themselves.'[146]

David Parry was a middle-aged, wealthy householder living on Harp Lane in St Dunstan's East; he left £250 to each of his four daughters in his will.[147] Jourden can be identified as Roger Jordan, dwelling St Saviour, Southwark, who was around the same age as Parry.[148] Although he does not turn up in the Admiralty Muster of 1628/29, he is listed in the St Saviour's baptism records, which tells us he fathered five children.[149] Although less can be discerned of his financial standing, his second eldest son, Ralph Jordan, was later recorded as Master of the Queen's Barge in 1636, which suggests family status and/or elite connections.[150] The most significant link between Jordan and Parry, however, was that they both served as rulers in the Watermen's Company: Jordan in 1618-1620 and Parry in 1625, 1626, 1633, 1635, and 1636.[151] The fact that both men were rulers either before or after the protest thickens the plot. What were their motivations to incite a revolt?

Earlier, in the spring of 1622, a few of the wealthier members of the Watermen petitioned the Court of Aldermen for second servants—that is, the right to keep more than one apprentice.[152] Although it is unclear when the order limiting the number of apprentices per waterman was instituted, it seems that rulers and royal bargemen were the only groups permitted to have more than one apprentice. This possibly frustrated other watermen who could afford two apprentices—and thus acquire more capital by contracting several vessels—but did not possess the political standing to have them. One was Parry himself, who was committed by the Court of Aldermen for working more apprentices than was allowed.[153] It is possible, then, that the leaders were driven by personal economic interest, and rallied the approval of the 'great company of unruly and stubborn watermen' by hiding

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[146] LMA, COL/CA/01/01/37; f. 139.

[147] LPL, VH 95/1482.

[148] Jourdan has been spelled Jordan, Joorden, Jurdane, Jorden, Jourdaine in the St Saviour's Parish registers of baptisms, LMA, P92/SAV/3002. There is also mention of 'Ralph Jordan' of St Saviour in the Admiralty Muster of 1628/29, and 'Richard Jordan' of Whitefriars. The former is Roger Jourdan's second eldest son.

[149] LMA, P92/SAV/3002. I am grateful to Alan H. Nelson and William Ingram for generously supplying me with their indices of St Savior baptism registers.

[150] LMA, P92/SAV/3002.

[151] LMA, COL/CA/01/01/39, 121b; COL/CA/01/01/40, 146b; COL/CA/01/01/47, f. 151; COL/CA/01/01/49, f. 112b; COL/CA/01/01/50, f.136b.

[152] LMA, COL/CA/01/01/36, f. 75; f. 116; f. 127.

[153] LMA, COL/CA/01/01/37, f. 44.

their interests—such as the appeal for 'second servants'—under a veneer of preventing economic competition from the Gravesend Ferry. Equally likely, it is possible that men like Parry and Jordan were owners of large ferries or barges that competed with the Long Ferry, which would also explain their need for more apprentices to work on their vessels.

The protest leaders' approach was politically astute. As a non-free company, the watermen's jurisdictional control depended on the whims of the Aldermen and their appointed rulers. Appealing to the generality's demands to protect their economic position on the Thames was a compelling strategy to garner their support. As Archer notes, London magistrates sometimes utilised the rhetorical threat of large, disorderly assemblies to lobby the Crown to their agenda. Even the warning of disorder—in this case, in the form of thousands of unhappy watermen—was a powerful negotiating tactic in civic politics.[154] It would not be the last time that interest groups within the watermen profited on the misguided support of the rank and file. In 1675, a large group of watermen complained that they had signed their names to a royalist petition under the pretence that it was against the economic competition of hackney coachmen.[155]

To imbue their complaints with legitimacy, the 1621 bill espoused regulations associated with corporate control. The bill writers asked that apprentices serve seven years before being made free of the company (as per City custom); to extend the fellowship's authority along the Thames; to suppress non-free watermen using the trade; and various other stipulations commonplace in London company books. It was no coincidence that the bill upheld civic paradigms of regulation. The protest leaders adopted the procedures and rules of company culture to secure the privileges that accompanied incorporated status—including the right to choose their own ruling group. However, to demonstrate to the Crown that they were willing and able to fulfil the duties required of a corporation, protest leaders needed to overturn negative perceptions of watermen as a disorderly rabble of labourers. Projecting a 'City-friendly' image using the language and rhetorics of regulation and good government was paramount to achieving this goal.

In their response to the 1621 bill, the rulers drew upon public perceptions of the watermen's dishonest and disorderly reputation. The rulers' tongue-in-cheek rejoinder that

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[154] Ian Archer, 'Rhetorics of Metropolitan Incorporation: the Dialogue between City and Crown in Elizabethan London,' in *Trouver sa place: Individus et communautes dans l'Europe modern*, ed. A. Roulett, O. Spina and N. Szczech (Madrid: Casa de Velázquez, 2011), 153-167.
[155] *A Declaration of All the Watermen ... or, a Hue and Cry After Col. Whitton and His Decoys* (1675).

the watermen 'desire to bee alienated from the Cittie to themselves, as men more fitter for government' did not go unnoticed.[156] The rulers consciously deployed the term 'alienation' to imply that the watermen were not only divorcing themselves from company government but the City itself, threatening a complete breakdown of control over the Thames. This notion played directly into the anxieties of authorities—the river was not only an economically vital civic space, but also a crucial border, both culturally and geographically, between the well-governed City and the dangerous world without it. It was also a touchy subject for magistrates. As we can recall, the City and the Crown often disputed jurisdiction rights over the river, especially issues concerning naval privileges and water conservancy.

Taylor's *Manifestation*

In October 1631, the Aldermen attempted a ceasefire. New orders were ostensibly agreed upon by six rulers and six other watermen who styled themselves 'representatives' of the generality: Joshua Church, John Heather, Thomas Gibson, Thomas Atkins, William Hawkins, and Marmaduke Hudson.[157] Yet, the conflict between the parties persisted. In 1632, the rulers petitioned against two men in particular: Joshua Church and John Heather. The Aldermen committed both men to Newgate 'for their contemptuous carriage towards the said Rulers in Speech and gesture and for refusing to performe the orders of this court of late made for the better Rule and government of the said company.'[158] Church's background has proven elusive; other than his notoriety in the rulers' petitions and a damning character reference from John Taylor, the only other archival evidence of his existence is an Admiralty Muster of 1628/9 and evidence in the St. Saviour's parish records telling us he had three daughters baptised in in the 1630s.[159] However, in the 1641 *Manifestation*, Taylor wrote that Church 'hardly pay[s] one halfe penny a week to the poore' and 'never had any other office but a box-keeper at the Temple.'[160]

It would be naïve to accept Taylor's comments without scepticism—he was notorious for his over-the-top antagonism towards political rivals.[161] However, the pamphlet is still significant in the way it underscores the importance of civic status in the wider dispute. It is clear that Taylor's acerbic comments regarding Church's financial status and

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[156] *The Contents of the Water-mans Bill into the Parliament House, May 1621.*
[157] LMA, COL/CA/01/01/46, f. 235b.
[158] LMA, COL/CA/01/01/47, ff. 2b-3.
[159] TNA, SP 16/45; LMA, P92/SAV/3002.
[160] Taylor, *Manifestation*, B2.
[161] Ellinghausen, 93-120

offices was intended to damage his reputation and the credibility of the protest movement. Earlier in the pamphlet, he attacks the method by which Church attained his freedom, claiming that his apprenticeship was obtained in dubious conditions:

> It is further known, that [in your mother's widowhood] you were bound Apprentice to her, and for the true deserving of your freedome, you oftentimes spent what you got, allowing her little or nothing […] your lodging was the most fitting for you those days, […] where you bathed in warme dung; […] and in these kinde of courses you came to be a Waterman.[162]

Taylor's colourful insults were a politically shrewd defamation of Church's character; apprenticeship, office-holding and the freedom were the trifecta of an upright and virtuous Londoner. His pamphlet was an obvious attempt to cast a low pall to the anti-ruler campaign by singling out Church as its leader and highlighting his humble background. Given Taylor's flair for embellishment, we cannot assume his attack as a true reflection of Church's low social status. Even so, there is no real evidence that links Church to the wealthier ruling group of the company, which sets him apart from the 1620s protest organizers.[163] The same cannot be said of his co-leader, John Heather, who Taylor discloses was 'one of the Overseers now Opposer.'[164] Additional evidence of Heather's economic background has not survived. However, the fact that he was a ruler before the 1620s allows us to assume that he did not lack a comfortable lifestyle. Given the larger strategy of the rulers to mark the protest as riotous and unruly, it seems more than coincidence that Church was singled out as its primary instigator.

'Parliament Time'

The anti-ruling group re-ignited their protest in a petition written to Parliament in 1641. Four new players—Richard Perkins, Robert Snowden, John Clifen and Robert Broune—signed the document. Two of these men—Perkins and Broune—would become overseers themselves in the next few years (1643 and 1647 respectively).[165] The petitioners asked to allow the entire generality to choose fifty-five men who would then *recommend*

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[162] Taylor, *Manifestation*, A1.
[163] There was, however, a waterman named John Church who was 'elected' overseer of the Watermen for two terms from 1625-1627, though I have been unable to find any evidence that links him to Joshua Church, LMA, COL/CA/01/01/40, f. 121b; COL/CA/01/01/41, 43b.
[164] John Taylor, *To the Right Honorable assembly […] the humble petition of the antient overseers […]*(1642), 3.
[165] LMA, COL/CA/01/01/57(I), f. 77b; COL/CA/01/01/59, f. 168b.

rulers for the Aldermen to make their own selection from. In a very limited sense, this can be interpreted as a nod towards democracy as the generality had a slightly larger—albeit detached—role in the election process. Nonetheless, a more detailed annex of their proposals casts doubts upon the extent of their 'democratic aims.'

The annex consists of five grievances and their solutions. Its aims are similar to past requests, and for the most part, appear to benefit 'rank and file' watermen. Many clauses deal with apprenticeship regulations. For example, one item complains that the overseers steal dissatisfied apprentices from their masters without 'mature examynation of the business.'[166] A consistent theme throughout the annex concerns economic competition on the river. It complains of unregulated boatmen poaching passengers from free watermen and causing excessive traffic on the river.[167] Once again, the anti-ruling faction singles out Gravesend as the Watermen's main competitor. The annex asked for company jurisdiction to be extended from Windsor to Milton Bridge, east of Gravesend, because 'of many unjust suits which have beene raised by Milton and Gravesend men and others against the Said generalitie in which Suits the generalitie of Watermen have expended at least £3000 to theire great damages.'[168] The annex encapsulates the key concerns of ordinary watermen: master and apprentice relationships, gripes over unregulated labour and impressment. In bringing these issues to the forefront of their petition, the anti-ruler faction provided the generality an articulation of their grievances and offered them the protection of a City company. Concurrently, their efforts of company-building and emphasis upon regulation granted legitimacy to their subversion in the eyes of Parliament as well.

However, despite their outward claims of full elections, we should remain mindful that the petitioners wanted company authority to remain within their exclusive circle. This is revealed in the first proposal of the annex that expounds their appeal for annual elections in more detail. The annex repeats the petitioners' call for annual elections of the overseers' electors but includes a significant caveat: 'That from henceforth the generalitie of watermen, or the greatest p[ar]te of able and suffycient watermen […] elect and make choice of suffycient watermen of good life and reputation.' Here, the annex writers employed a simple yet compelling language of social description to exclude the everyday sort of watermen

[166] PA, HL/PO/JO/10/1/56. The annex, now archived with the overseer's counter-petition, is likely to have been originally attached to the earlier March petition, as alluded by its authors.

[167] PA, HL/PO/JO/10/1/56.

[168] Ibid.

from power, who 'are kept in ignorance of theire great damage' by the overseers.[169] As non-free Londoners attempting to secure the privileges of incorporation, it was important for the anti-ruling faction to present themselves and their requests within a conservative framework that underscored the social hierarchy. The anti-ruling group were keen to present themselves as 'the better sort' of Londoners; they were not the disorderly poor who were prone to rebellion, nor the corrupt aristocrats that were driving the fellowship—and more broadly, the monarchy—into the ground.[170] They instead attempted to represent the City's archetypal citizens—the industrious, 'better sort' of inhabitants who propelled London's companies forward in ways that maintained the economic and social stability of the nation.

As in past disputes, the rulers counter-petitioned. In May, they told Parliament that 'diverse refractory watermen […] have tooke such lawless liberty upon them as to goe to all the places where watermen doth ply from Gravesend to Kingstone encouraging thousands of them nott to obey your petitioners Government.' Moreover, they claimed, 'some of the Rude apprentices have come to the Hall in troops to offer violence to your petitioners,' and have 'debard' watermen who were made free by royal decree from rowing on the River. The rulers' petition underscores the economic motivations of the generality to ban watermen who did not obtain membership by a hard-earned apprenticeship—and therefore restrict competition on the river. It is also reflective of the growing level of popular participation in the City. The 'mob' of apprentices was ostensibly led by Joshua Church, who being told that 'hee ought to bee obedient to lawe order and the Lord Mayor,' answered 'that it was Parliament tyme nowe' and the Mayor was 'but their slave.'[171] Both parties' campaigns were positioned against one another in a clash of image: each side was out to represent the other as enemies of good order. Charging the campaigners with 'riotous' ambitions created a

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[169] For more on the 'language of sorts,' see Keith Wrightson, '"Sorts of People" in Tudor and Stuart England, in *The Middling Sort of People*, ed. Barry and Brooks, in *The Middling Sort of People: Culture, Society and Politics in England, 1550-1800*, ed. Jonathan Barry and Chris Brooks (London: Macmillan Press, 1994), 28-52.

[170] Withington emphasises that terms such as 'fit,' and 'able' were intrinsic to the language of citizenship, see 'Citizens, Community and Political Culture in Restoration England,' in *Communities in Early Modern England*, ed. Alexandra Shepard and Phil Withington (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000): 140-141; Withington, *Politics of Commonwealth* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 115-119.

[171] PA, HL/PO/JO/10/1/56.

sense of urgency and denigrated the political participation of those involved to the disorderly rabble of a Shrove Tide riot.[172]

In 1642, the anti-ruling group petitioned again. They implored the Court to give them 'the benefit' of the 1555 Act 'for the generall election of Rulers.'[173] This bold shift in direction is perplexing; the petitioners doubtless knew that the Aldermen were aware that the Act granted the power of selecting rulers to the Court. The Aldermanic committee appointed to the case reported:

> We have considered of the said Act by which it plainely
> appeareth that the choice and election of the eight Overseers and
> Rulers of the Watermen doth onely belong to the Lord Mayor
> and Court of Ald(er)men of the Cittie of London. [174]

It is painfully clear that the Aldermen were in no hurry to break with tradition. Yet, the committee members recommended that fifty-five of 'the most honest and sufficentest' watermen were to nominate twenty amongst them each year, from which the Aldermen had the option to choose new rulers. O'Riordan interprets this order as the 'overthrow of the oligarchy,' in which the new electors were 'a long term democratic gain of the English Revolution.'[175] It goes without saying that such claims run the danger of overgeneralisation. Using the same exclusionary language as in earlier reports, the committee maintained that the chosen rulers were required to be the 'most wise discret and best sort of watermen,' 'most able' of the company, and 'householders' living between Gravesend and Windsor. Moreover, the Aldermen maintained that they were authorised to choose anyone to become a ruler—even those that were not nominated by the fifty-five electors.[176] Although the Aldermanic order may have had some markings of a democratic victory, the method of selecting rulers was still an unabashedly private affair reserved for the wealthier members of the company.

The protests in the watermen's company throughout the seventeenth century can be summarised as a power struggle between its wealthier members regarding the regulatory oversight of the Thames. While there is some evidence that the anti-ruling faction was in

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[172] For a discussion of representations of popular violence in civil war London, see Keith Lindley, *Popular Politics and Religion in Civil War London* (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1997), 128-157; see also, Valerie Pearl, *London and the Outbreak of the Puritan Revolution: City Government and National Politics, 1625-43* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1961).
[173] LMA, COL/CA/01/01/55, f. 373b.
[174] LMA, COL/CA/01/01/55, f. 373b-374.
[175] O'Riordan, 'The Thames Watermen,' chapter four.
[176] LMA, COL/CA/01/01/55, ff. 373b-374.

alliance with popular forces, this was not due to democratic fervour on either part. Instead, by padding their petitions with demands that concerned the generality, the protest leaders were able to garner their support by invoking the economic livelihood of the entire fellowship. The rhetorics of the dispute overwhelmingly played into civic discourses of stability and disorder. They centred upon who was more 'able' or 'fit' to ensure the company followed a program of 'good governance.' Such expressions were not empty words; both sides knew they were appealing to London magistrates who held powerful ideological conceptions of the City. Several points in the anti-ruler petitions suggest that protest leaders attempted to instil the watermen with a collective identity akin to an incorporated company. This strategy worked to legitimize their complaints in a corporate setting and provided a variety of verbal cues that both civic and parliamentary magistrates would doubtless respond to. It also allowed the protest a platform to garner popular support by adopting civic legislation that safeguarded the economic livelihood of the watermen on the River.

Meanwhile, the ruling group attempted to preserve the status-quo by threatening magistrates with warnings of brimstone and disorder. Taylor's *Manifestation* decried that the protests had 'made the Thames a wildernesse.'[177] The overseers' greatest weapon in maintaining power was to convince Parliament that the watermen were a rebellious, dangerous group that required the oversight of better men. The rulers had plenty of ammunition to work with; as we have seen, popular descriptions of watermen were no more charitable. As such, the rulers attempted to maintain their control by replicating and projecting narratives of disorder. City-granted authority, they claimed, was necessary to keep the multitudes of 'uncivil' and 'turbulent' men in check.[178]

IV.   Body of the River

The Watermen were not incorporated by an act of charter until 1837. However, when the rulers of the Watermen petitioned the Aldermen in 1666, they 'sett forth that their Company are incorporated by Severall Acts of Parliament and their Priveledges and Orders allowed and confirmed according to Lawe.'[179] Needless to say, this claim raises questions.

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[177] Taylor, *Manifestation*, A4.
[178] LMA, COL/CA/01/01/47, f. 57; f. 139b; f. 170b.
[179] LMA, COL/CA/ 01/01/70, ff. 110-112b.

Civic incorporation was normally the Crown's prerogative by the grant of a royal charter or letters patent.[180] It is true, however, that a few corporations were created exclusively by acts of Parliament—though this was rare and normally reserved for hospitals and colleges.[181] Even so, the rulers' claim that the Watermen were incorporated was pure invention. The 'Severall Acts of Parliament' they refer to—the 1514, 1555, and 1603 acts concerning watermen—do not once mention the term 'incorporated' or 'corporation.'[182]

As Barry and Ellinghausen have demonstrated, textual self-presentation was a useful tool to construct and affirm civic identity in the early modern period.[183] Incorporation allowed a company to acquire permanent property, substantiated its legal identity, and most coveted of all, confirmed its rights, privileges and jurisdiction over a trade or craft.[184] It was a particularly prestigious status in London as it essentially legalised a company's monopolisation over its associated trade.[185] Accordingly, the rulers may have informed the Court that the Watermen were 'incorporated' to boost the credibility and prestige of the fellowship. It seems to have been a persuasive strategy. The Aldermen's report does not refute their claim, but records the petition's language into the repertories, thus making their parliamentary 'incorporation' part of the civic canon.

In a similar vein, groups associated with the watermen frequently identified themselves as 'the men belonging to the River,' or 'the body of the River.'[186] This self-assigned authority over London space is significant for several reasons. The River Thames

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[180] Samuel Williston, 'History of the Law of Business Corporations before 1800,' *Harvard Law Review* 2, no. 3 (1888): 105-124; see also, Caroline Barron, *London in the Later Middle Ages: Government and People 1200-1500* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 202-204.

[181] One such example was the case of Sutton Hospital, which became the centre of a famous legal ruling by Coke regarding the lawful constitution of a corporation, see Victor Morgan, 'Whose Prerogative in Late Sixteenth and Early Seventeenth Century England?' *The Journal of Legal History* 5, no. 3 (1984): 52; Williston, 'History of the Law of Business Corporations before 1800,' 113-115.

[182] *An Act concerning Watermen on the Thames*, 1514, 6 Hen. 8., c. 7; *An Act touching Watermen and Bargemen upon the River Thames*, 1555, 2 & 3 Phil. & M., c. 16; *An Act concerning wherrymen and watermen*, 1603, 1 Jas. 1, c. 16.

[183] Barry, 'Civility and Civic Culture,' 181; Ellinghausen, *Labor and Writing*, 104-111.

[184] William Sheppard, *Of corporations, fraternities, and guilds* (1659), 1-6; 8; see also, Malcolm Richardson, *Middle-Class Writing in Late Medieval London* (London: Routledge, 2015), 40, 61-65.

[185] Ian Gadd and Patrick Wallis, 'Introduction,' in *Guilds, Society & Economy in London 1450-1800*, ed. Gadd and Wallis (Centre for Metropolitan History: London, 2002), 5-6.

[186] For a few examples, see: LMA, COL/CA/01/01/36, f.139; COL/CA/01/01/46, ff. 172-176b; COL/CA/01/01/55, f. 355.

was a dominant presence in London; it was the focal point of maps and ran quite literally through the City. It was also a source of pride for Londoners; Stow called it 'the most famous river in this land,' and Lupton christened it 'the glory and wealth of the City.'[187] By referring to themselves as the 'body of the River,' the petitioners claimed their attachment to an important—and powerful—dimension of the City. It is also possible that it was a method of rallying popular support by imparting spatial belonging to a group that were not formal citizens of London but felt a strong attachment to the City as one of its main transport industries.

More crucially, however, are its political connotations. The expression 'body of the River' possibly alludes to contemporary notions of the 'body corporate.' The term denotes an incorporated company of a city or town. In 1541, for example, the Barber Surgeons were granted their charter 'to be from hens forthe one company and a body corporate.' Similarly, in 1612, the Company of Shipwrights in London were made into 'a bodie Corporate […] to have, hold, occupie' all 'customes, liberties, priviledges, immunities, jurisdictions, franchises […] for such a Corporation to have and enjoy.'[188] As the Watermen did not automatically possess incorporated status but wished to participate in civic politics with all the rights of a body corporate, the protesters penned themselves into existence by self-identifying as 'the body of the River,' that is, the incorporated company of the Thames. This strategy possessed more than one head. As we saw in the previous section, certain groups in the Watermen attempted to capitalise upon the City's preoccupation with corporate regulation by imbuing their petitions with a 'corporate' feel. Such allusions were part and parcel of their larger strategy to instil order and legitimacy to their participation in civic politics. Companies, especially those with the status of a body corporate, were fundamental to the maintenance of good order and stability of early modern London.

The question remains, however, whether the Watermen had any legal claim to this title, or if was a status by their own invention. A debate concerning this very point emerged in the last decade of the seventeenth century between company rulers and the Court of Aldermen. According to Humpherus, in 1698, the ruling group held a meeting to discuss ordinary matters of governance. Running alongside negotiations of new fares, watermen working on Sunday, and other routine matters, they issued an order that 'a purchase should

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[187] Stow, *Survey of London*, 1: 11-19; Donald Lupton, *London and the country carbonadoed* (1632), 22; see also, Ian Archer, 'The City of London and River Pageantry,' 80-86.
[188] *the abregement of the statutes of Anno.xxxj. Henrici.viij* (1541), A1; *Charter of the Company of Shipwrights* (1612).

be made of several houses in Southwark […] out of the company's stock […] to erect a hall for the company, and a school […] for the benefit of the company.'[189] The new hall was to be built across the river in the Southwark liberty of Paris Garden. The Lord Mayor and Aldermen were immediately opposed to the relocation, probably due to fears of losing control over the company once outside their jurisdictional limits. The Aldermen ordered the ruling group, as well as their auditors, to appear at court with the supporting documents and book-keeping related to the new purchase.[190]

The rulers of the company prepared a statement to the Court of Aldermen outlining their objections to remaining at their current site at Cold Harbour House on the north bank. Their first point countered the embezzlement charge, claiming that 'every person made free of the said company' for the last thirty years paid six shillings towards their hall, of which 'stock' the new purchase was made. They asserted that the old hall was cramped to the detriment of conducting business efficiently. The company clerk, they complained, was 'tyed up in a closet of less than four feet square,' and that 'filthy smells' surrounded the hall, which were 'so intolerable as none would endure it.' Moreover, they claimed: 'Great search hath been made for ground to build in the freedom, but none could be procured, except as the whole stock could hardly purchase.'[191] According to the rulers, they had no choice but to leave City jurisdiction, the square mile had become too crowded and too expensive to host them.

The aldermen were unimpressed by their argument. They accused the rulers of embezzling company funds to make the purchase, resulting in a protracted dispute over whether the Aldermen had the authority to impede their relocation outside the City.[192] In turn, the Watermen pleaded their case to Edward Northey, Attorney General, asking for his legal opinion on the matter. He responded:

> I conceive the rulers may execute their authority and fix
> themselves where they please, and build their hall anywhere
> out of the City of London, and the Lord Mayor of London
> cannot hinder them, but the power of the Lord Mayor and
> Court of Aldermen to name the rulers, may draw some
> inconvenience on them if they fall out with the mayor, and I
> do not see the rulers are a corporation by the Act.[193]

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[189] Humpherus, *History of the Company of Watermen*, 1: 415.
[190] LMA, COL/CA/01/01/103, f. 43.
[191] Humpherus, *History of the Company of Watermen*, 1: 416-18.
[192] LMA, COL/CA/01/01/103, f. 50b.
[193] Humpherus, *History of the Company of Watermen*, 1: 420.

Northey's judgement was a bittersweet victory. He adjudicated that the Lord Mayor did not have the power to force the Watermen to keep their hall within City jurisdiction, but emphasised that the Watermen were not a corporation, and thus had no power to choose their own rulers. With a hint of amusement, he noted the 'inconvenience' for the current rulers if they were to 'fall out' with the City, reminding the rulers that the Aldermen had the final say in 'electing' the ruling group. As Northey predicted, the Aldermen soon replaced the Watermen's ruling group with new overseers.[194]

A few years earlier, in 1694, the Watermen petitioned the City to amalgamate the lightermen into their fellowship.[195] Both the City and the lightermen were in favour of the merger, and negotiations proceeded without issue. Nonetheless, matters of impressment, decreasing numbers of watermen apprentices, and no doubt the dispute outlined above, engaged the attention of the parties and the amalgamation was postponed for several years. In 1699, the watermen petitioned parliament 'that a bill might be brought in for the explaining and more effectually putting into executions the previous statutes, and for the providing of one good government amongst the watermen and the lightermen for the future, subject to the powers given by the said statutes to the Lord Mayor.'[196] The resulting act established the Company of Watermen and Lightermen, and bestowed its rulers with the authority to craft their own bye laws. However, it also gave the Aldermen the power to veto any rules or regulations they disapproved of.[197] A few months later, the rulers of the Company of Watermen and Lightermen presented their new bye laws to the Court of Aldermen 'for their correction and approbation, which was necessary to give life to those rules.'[198]

The aldermen, however, found issue with several clauses of the bye-laws and refused.[199] In 1704, the rulers appealed to Northey for his legal opinion. The rulers were

[194] LMA, COL/CA/01/01/103, f. 50b-51.
[195] LMA, COL/CA/01/01/99, ff. 154-155b.
[196] 'House of Commons Journal: 8 January 1699,' *Journal of the House of Commons* (London, 1802), 13: 97-98. No copy of the bill survives.
[197] *An Act for the explanation and better execution of former acts, made touching watermen and wherrymen upon the river Thames, and for the better ordering and governing the said watermen, wherrymen and lightermen, upon the said river between Gravesend and Windsor*, 1699, 11 Will. 3, c. 21.
[198] LMA, COL/CA/01/01/105, f. 7.
[199] A copy of the bye-laws do not exist, but it can be deduced by the ensuing debate that the main rifts were concerned with impressment and the number of apprentices allowed to each lighterman, see Humpherus, *History of the Company of Watermen*, 2: 20-34.

ordered to bring the company bye laws to the Attorney General's chambers to be reviewed. The result of the inspection was as follows:

> The disputes with the court of the Lord Mayor […] on the question as to their right of making bye laws […] it was stated in the case, that the old books of the company which contained their bye laws, had been lost by the carelessness of former rulers or their clerks, and the most ancient then in their possession was made in the year 1626.[200]

The former clerk's 'carelessness' was very convenient for the watermen. While we cannot establish with certainty that there was no truth in the matter, it did not lack precedent. Bishop recently uncovered a similar case of 'clerkly malpractice' in the Goldsmiths' Company, demonstrating that archives could be manipulated by contemporaries for political purposes.[201] Moreover, it was not the first time that Watermen rulers 'lost' important pieces of information from the company archive. In the earlier dispute that concerned the company's relocation to Southwark, several cheques went missing when the Court of Aldermen asked to validate the legality of the funds raised for the purchase.[202]

Whatever the case, their strategy was a remarkable victory. Northey's report stated that 'the court of aldermen had no power by either of the statutes, to make the bye laws and ordinances they had at various times made, and that the powers had always been vested in the company.'[203] Record-keeping, or in the watermen's case, record-*losing* was instrumental in their success. Similar to their self-fashioned parliamentary incorporation, the case demonstrates that 'official' records could be manipulated for political purposes. And, as the Aldermen doubtless realised, such manipulation had powerful consequences.

Although the Watermen were excluded from the freedom of the City, this chapter has demonstrated that they were active participants in civic culture. A thorough analysis of their petitions to the City and Parliament has demonstrated that the overarching goal of their political pursuits was not to incite a democratic revolution. Rather, different groups within the Watermen drew upon civic rhetorics of the freedom to pursue sectional interests within

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[200] Humpherus, *History of the Company of Watermen*, 2: 35.
[201] Jennifer Bishop, 'The Clerk's Tale: Civic Writing in Sixteenth-Century London,' *Past and Present* 230 (2016): 112-130; see also, Shannon McSheffrey, 'Detective Fiction in the Archives: Court Records and the Uses of Law in Late Medieval England,' *History Workshop Journal* 65 (2008): 65-78.
[202] LMA, COL/CA/01/01/103, f. 65.
[203] Humpherus, *History of the Company of Watermen*, 2: 35.

the company. This has allowed a better appreciation of the implications of the wider dispute, in which the language and practices of citizenship were a powerful resource to aggrandise political control over river transport.

Their status as free watermen and non-free Londoners created a lot confusion in the minds of contemporaries. Popular writers and City officials held conflicting opinions of their public character and position in the civic hierarchy. However, this ambiguity proved useful. In the final decades of the seventeenth century, the Watermen manipulated the obscurity surrounding their civic status to claim the powers of an incorporated body, ensuing in the successful amalgamation with the lightermen in 1700. Crucially, the fact that the Watermen were not technically members of London's corporate culture did not seem to matter. By the start of the eighteenth century, the Company of Watermen was the most dynamic corporation that never existed.

Chapter 4

'Desirous of her Freedom':
Women, citizenship, and trading rights in early modern London

> *A woman cannot be capable of this Immunity, though a Citizen; to what end say I; She cannot bear* Civilia, *or* publicae onera *of the City; she cannot doe anything for the benefit of the City; she cannot perform Watch, and Ward; she cannot bear no office in the City; neither can she be of any of the Companies; she cannot be an Attorney; she may be a Free-Woman, but this is only to have her will (as many so have) but to no other purpose.*[1]

John Brydall's *Camera Regis, or, A short view of London* elucidates contemporary perceptions regarding the status of female citizens and freewomen in early modern London. Although it was widely accepted that some women were able to enjoy a few benefits of the freedom at the behest of their husbands (living or dead), it was believed that most women were indifferent toward citizenship, or, as Brydall states, altogether unable to engage with its customs and practices. Civic virtue was inherently male.[2] Observers lauded the 'good conscience and discretion' of freemen, and their dedication to 'honesty,' 'credit,' 'honour,' 'painful industry,' and 'just profit.' A freeman was a stalwart of the civic community; he was 'a common-wealth man, not a private-wealth man.'[3]

There was less consensus in attitudes towards freewomen. Many texts advised freemen to moderate the behaviour of female citizens, especially their wives. One tract

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[1] John Brydall, *Camera Regis, or, A short view of London* (1676), 33

[2] Hilda L. Smith, *All Men and Both Sexes: Gender, Politics, and the False Universal in England, 1640-1832* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2002), 73-109; Natasha Korda, *Labors Lost: Women's Work and the Early Modern English Stage* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), esp. chap. 4.

[3] William Scott, *An essay of drapery: or, The compleate citizen* (1635), 3; *A breefe discourse, declaring and approuing the necessarie and inuiolable maintenance of the laudable customes of London* (1584), 13-14; John Taylor; *The triumphs of fame and honour* (1634), B; Edmund Calamy, *The city remembrancer* (1657), 43.

warned its readers that 'my Citizens wife must have no power over [her husband]; for suffer her today to tread upon thy foot, and tomorrow she will not stick to set her foot on thy neck.'[4] Other works parodied the dishonesty and sexual voraciousness of 'she-citizens.'[5] As Sir Harry Wildair in George Farquhar's *The constant couple* exclaims: 'No tempest […] but as fair weather as ever entic'd a Citizen's wife to Cuckold her Husband in fresh Air.'[6]

Plays by Dekker, Middleton, and Jonson depicted citizen wives as comically unchaste, while subtly highlighting their business acumen and authority as retailers.[7] A 1667 broadside about a 'bloody butcher' who murdered his wife commented on her business acumen at the marketplace:

> This Butchers Wife did keep a Seat
> I'the Market-place to sell her Meat;
> And was by report that's made,
> A careful house-wife in the Trade.[8]

Other texts depicted women as guardians of the civic community. Despite its satirical undertone, an anonymous ballad printed sometime in the first half of the seventeenth century credited a group of market fishwives of driving 'old Beelzebub' from the City after he conducted some off-hand deals with a few citizens and their wives.[9] John Stow dedicated a section of his *Survey* to freewomen benefactors who made generous donations to the City. 'The matrons of this Citie,' he proclaimed, 'are the very modest Sabine Ladies of *Italy*.'[10] Stow's comparison—borrowed from William Fitzstephen's twelfth-century account of London, *Descriptio Nobilissimi Civitatis Londoniae*—is noteworthy. In Roman mythology, the Sabine women were abducted by Roman men and forced into marriage to populate the newly established City. On their wedding day, Romulus promised the women they would enjoy the full privileges of citizenship by virtue of their marriage to a Roman citizen.

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[4] *The citizen's companion: or The trades-man's mirrour* (1673), 132.

[5] The term 'she-citizen' was sometimes used to describe a freewoman. See, for example, *The citizen's* companion, 131.

[6] George Farquhar, *The constant couple, or, A trip to the Jubilee* (1700), 40.

[7] David Pennington, '"Three women and a Goose make a Market": Representations of Market Women in Seventeenth-Century Popular Literature,' *The Seventeenth Century* 25, no. 1 (2010): 37-43.

[8] *The Bloody Butcher, And the two wicked and cruel Bawds* (1667).

[9] *An excellent new Ditty: Or, Which proveth that women the best Warriers be* [1601-1640].

[10] Stow, *Survey*, 1: 118.

According to Livy's account, many of these women would go on to fulfil important political roles as citizens in the Roman state.[11]

London freewomen were rarely acknowledged in freedom registries, apprenticeship records, guild manifestos, and other civic records, or hidden by male universalisms such as 'freemen,' 'brethren,' or 'fraternity.'[12] With a few notable exceptions, scholars have perpetuated women's invisibility in citizenship; in most studies, they are mentioned only to observe their absence.[13] Recently, Liddy suggested that women's experience of citizenship 'was indirect and of a secondary character, dependent upon their place within the household of a male citizen, whether he was father or husband.'[14] It is a popular assumption. Rappaport, Archer, Pearl, Ward, Griffiths, and Selwood have limited their discussions of women and citizenship to their lack of 'formal participation,' or overlooked women as a social or political category altogether. [15] As Crawford and Mendelson have argued, this omission stems in part from a narrow understanding of early modern citizenship, and political participation more

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[11] Livy, *The History of Rome*, trans. George Baker: 1; Jo-Marie Claassen, 'The Familiar Other: The Pivotal Role of Women in Livy's Narrative of Political Development in Early Rome,' *Acta Classica* 41 (1998): 71-103. For Stow's use of Fitzstephen in his *Survey*, see Ian Archer, 'Discourses of History in Elizabethan and Early Stuart London,' in *The Uses of History in Early Modern England*, ed. Paulina Kewes (San Marino, CA: Huntington Library, 2006), 212.

[12] For more on women and false universals in early modern guilds, see Hilda Smith, *All Men and Both Sexes*, 73-109.

[13] Most studies of women citizens and/or women who participated in petitionary politics are limited to the period of the civil wars. See, for example, Patricia Crawford, 'The Poorest She: Women and Citizenship in Early Modern England,' in *The Putney Debates of 1647: The Army, the Levellers and the English State*, ed. Michael Mendle (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 197-218; Ann Hughes 'Gender and politics in Leveller Literature' in *Political Culture and Cultural Politics in Early Modern England: Essays Presented to David Underdown*, ed. Susan D. Amussen and Mark Kishlansky (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995), 162-188; Ann Marie McEntee '"The [un]Civill Sisterhood of Oranges and Lemons:" Female Petitioners and Demonstrators, 1642-53' in *Pamphlet Wars: Prose in the English Revolution*, ed. James Holstun (London: Frank Cass & Co., 1992), 92 – 111.

[14] Christian Liddy, *Contesting the City: The Politics of Citizenship in English Towns, 1250-1530* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 23.

[15] See, for example, Steve Rappaport, *Worlds Within Worlds: Structures of Life in Sixteenth-Century London* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 36-42; Ian Archer, *The Pursuit of Stability: Social Relations in Elizabethan London* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 194-196; Joseph Ward, *Metropolitan Communities: Trade, Guilds, Identity and Change in Early Modern London* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1997), 6; Jacob Selwood, *Diversity and Difference in Early Modern London* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), 40.

generally, that emphasises 'male' aspects of civic engagement, such as office-holding.[16] Although recent scholarship has brought our attention to the social inclusiveness of political participation in early modern England, civic politics remains an affluent all-boys club when characterised solely by the practices of office-holding and franchise. In short, the 'unacknowledged republic' has yet to acknowledge women.

As the last few chapters have shown, London's political culture was accessible to a wide range of people. It is true that women were usually not allowed to hold office or vote in local elections, though they were required to pay taxes and parish rates.[17] They also participated in livery companies and guilds. Gowing recently demonstrated that guild culture in late seventeenth-century London 'made room for women.'[18] Looking at manuscript and printed indentures in the Chamberlain's freedom records, she suggested that company record keeping adapted to the presence of female apprentices to allow their participation in the urban workplace.[19] Although significant, her purview is small: from 1680 to 1705, only 105 women were given the freedom by service.[20] Yet, women could participate in company life in ways that are absent from manuscript records. Helen Smith, for example, demonstrated that women could be visible members of guild culture through contributions of labour, gifts, and other 'material engagements' associated with the guild hall.[21]

Despite these recent offerings, scholarship of early modern citizenship is mostly devoid of gender-sensitive analysis. Nevertheless, economic historians have been more willing to incorporate women into the historiography. There is a tradition in women's economic history, however, that assumes that the transition from a 'feudal' to a 'capitalist' economy resulted in a dramatic decline in the number of opportunities for working women in

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[16] Sara Mendelson and Patricia Crawford, *Women in Early Modern England, 1550-1720* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 49-58; see also, Crawford, 'The Poorest She,' 198; Hilda Smith, *All Men and Both Sexes*, 73-109, and Hilda Smith, 'Free and willing to remit": Women's Petitions to the Court of Aldermen, 1670-1750,' in *Worth and Repute: Valuing Gender in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe: Essays in Honour of Barbara Todd*, ed. Kim Kippen and Lori Woods (Toronto: CRRS Publications, 2011), 277-308.

[17] There were very few exceptions of women holding office and taking part in local elections throughout England, but they did exist. See Mendelson and Crawford, *Women in Early Modern England*, 49-58.

[18] Laura Gowing, 'Girls on Forms:' Apprenticing Young Women in Seventeenth-Century London,' *Journal of British Studies* 55 (July 2016): 447-473.

[19] Gowing, 'Girls on Forms,' 447-473.

[20] Ibid, 457.

[21] Helen Smith, 'Gender and Material Culture in the Early Modern London Guilds,' in *Gender and Material Culture in Britain since 1600*, ed. Hannah Greig, Jane Hamlett, and Leonie Hannan (London: Palgrave, 2016), 16-27.

early modern England.[22] First articulated in the early twentieth century by Alice Clark, this view has been embraced by several studies, including Barron's seminal essay that imagined a 'Golden Age' of women's work in late medieval London.[23] Although there is some disagreement as to the precise date, Snell, Hill and Cahn suggested that women largely disappeared from the English economy sometime after the fifteenth century.[24] This viewpoint was subsequently challenged by Bennett's research on the late medieval brewing trade, claiming that women's opportunities did not decline over the early modern period because women had always worked in occupations that were low-skilled and underpaid.[25] For Bennett, the history of women's work is 'a history, at least for Europe since the twelfth century, of new designs embroidered on a cloth of oppression and deprivation.'[26] Early modern historians have continued to perpetuate similar dismal claims. Writing of the perceived 'gender-crisis' in the late sixteenth-century London economy, Archer suggested that due to 'the burdens of child-rearing and the marginal nature of most of the economic activities open to them, women possessed very weak occupational identities; denied participation in guild structures, save as widows carrying on their husband's businesses, they lacked institutional means of expression.'[27] While women may have contributed to the economy, their work was, in Earle's words, 'of a casual nature and none of it organized by guilds or livery companies.'[28]

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[22] Judith Bennett, 'Medieval Women, Modern Women: Across the Great Divide,' in *Culture and History 1500-1800: Essays on English Communities, Identities, and Writing*, ed. David Aers (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 1992), 147-175.

[23] Alice Clark, *Working Life of Women in the Seventeenth Century* (1919, repr., London: Routledge, 1992); Caroline Barron, 'The 'Golden Age' of Women in Medieval London,' *Reading Medieval Studies 15*, (1990): 35-58.

[24] Keith Snell, *Annals of the Labouring Poor: Social Change and Agrarian England, 1660-1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 1985), 270-319; Bridget Hill, *Women, Work and Sexual Politics in Eighteenth-Century England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989); Susan Cahn, *Industry and Devotion: The Transformation of Women's Work in England, 1500-1660* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987).

[25] Judith Bennett, *Ale, Beer, and Brewsters in England: Women's Work in a Changing World, 1300-1600* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996).

[26] Judith Bennett, '"History that Stands Still": Women's Work in the European Past,' *Feminist Studies* 14, no. 2 (1988): 269-83; see also, Marjorie McIntosh, *Working Women in English Society, 1300-1620* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

[27] Ian Archer, 'Material Londoners?' in *Material London, ca. 1600*, ed. Lena Cowen Orlin, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000), 187.

[28] Peter Earle, 'The Female Labour Market in London in the Late Seventeenth and Early Eighteenth Centuries,' *The Economic History Review* 42, no. 3 (1989): 342.

The claim that women could only participate in the 'informal' economy of early modern London has been since challenged in a number of important ways.[29] Growing distant from the view that the early modern period witnessed working women's 'descent from paradise,' new research has demonstrated that female participation in the seventeenth-century labour force was not as 'denied' or 'casual' as previously thought.[30] By the common law fiction of coverture, a married woman in England was stripped of her legal identity and denied the right to hold property on her own accord. However, an unmarried woman—either never married or widowed—was deemed the legal identity of a *feme sole*, and could hold property independently of a male guardian.[31] Shepherd, Whittle, Hubbard, and Reinke-Williams, however, have shown that women were able to fashion occupational identities regardless of their marital status, and build reputations of credit and honesty independent from sexual honour.[32] Erickson has recently shed light upon married women who participated in the economy independently from their husbands in eighteenth-century London—raising the question as to whether the restrictions of coverture were more prescriptive than they were in reality.[33] Looking at women's freedom petitions in the late seventeenth century, Hilda Smith pointed out that women married to freemen retained their *feme sole* status, which included the right to trade in the City.[34] Building upon these contributions, a main contention here is that women in early modern London identified themselves to the courts as economic and occupational actors, and in some cases, did so independently of their husband's civic status and trade.

To demonstrate women's participation in London's political culture, this chapter explores a range of petitions to various civic courts throughout the City and suburbs

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[29] For a detailed discussion of the problems that arise from attempts to distinguish 'formal' and 'informal' work, see Korda, *Labors Lost*, 19-25.

[30] Quote is from Cahn, *Industry and Devotion*, 9.

[31] Amy Louise Erickson, 'Coverture and Capitalism,' *History Workshop Journal* 59 (2005): 1-16.

[32] See, for example: Alexandra Shepard, *Accounting for Oneself: Worth, Status and the Social Order in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015); Shepard, 'Crediting Women in the Early Modern English Economy,' *History Workshop Journal* 79 (2015): 1-24; Jane Whittle, 'Enterprising Widows and Active Wives: Women's Unpaid Work in the Household Economy of Early Modern England,' *The History of Family* 19, no. 3 (2014): 283-300; Eleanor Hubbard, *City Women: Money, Sex, and the Social Order in Early Modern London* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012); Tim Reinke-Williams, *Women, Work and Sociability in Early Modern London* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014).

[33] Amy Louise Erickson, 'Married Women's Occupations in Eighteenth Century London' *Continuity and Change* 23, no. 2 (2008): 267-307.

[34] Hilda Smith, "'Free and Willing to Remit,'" 277-308.

concerning matters of apprenticeship, citizenship and trading rights. Admittedly, their presence in surviving records is by no means extensive. Statistics of women's involvement as apprentices or mistresses in the Lord Mayor's Court, for example, balance somewhere around two per cent.[35] Nonetheless, the intriguing nature of women's engagement with the courts encourages a departure from the traditional, male-oriented approach in the way we think about how Londoners participated in the culture of citizenship. These petitions demonstrate the different strategies of apprentices, mistresses, single women, wives, and widows to manipulate custom in ways that undercut the City's patriarchal vision of what citizenship should be, and who should belong within it. Their ability to deploy a range of rhetorics for political and economic purposes demonstrates a degree of agency in matters concerning citizenship and the freedom to trade.

It is worth emphasising, however, that most of these cases did not resolve in the petitioner gaining full citizenship. However, non-freewomen still participated in an oft-neglected side of civic culture: the freedom to pursue livelihood. As we have seen, the freedom of London granted its members economic autonomy. It barred, or at least severely limited, the liberty of non-members to practice trade in the City. Although women were circumscribed in the culture of office-holding, the right to eke out a living compelled them to care about citizenship and their status within it. As we will see, many women in early modern London were motivated to become citizens, or enjoy the privileges of *de facto* citizens, so they could practice their occupations without 'molestation' from livery companies. Such incentives behind women's aspirations for citizenship illuminate more generally the strong connections between civic politics and economic rights in the period.

The first section explores apprenticeship dissolution petitions in the Lord Mayor's Court and the Middlesex Quarter Sessions. Departing from the dichotomy of 'public' and 'private' politics, it offers a new way to gauge women's participation in guild culture outside the narrow scope of company records. The second section looks at petitions signed by women in the Court of Aldermen to obtain the freedom by redemption. These petitions shed light upon the different ways women legitimised their political and economic participation in the City, and hint that more women may have cared about obtaining the formal status of 'citizen' than has been previously suggested. The final section demonstrates the different

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[35] I am grateful to Michael Scott for allowing me access to his unpublished research on apprenticeship dissolutions in the Lord Mayor's Court, which posits two per cent of female apprentices, now published in *Apprenticeship Disputes in the Lord Mayor's Court of London 1573-1723*, 2 vols. (London: The British Record Society, 2016).

ways non-free women engaged with civic politics. Women retailers who sold fish, fruit and other wares in London's streets and marketplaces petitioned the Court of Aldermen for the licence to trade in the City—sometimes appropriating the political languages and rhetorics meant to exclude them. Although these sources cannot faithfully represent women's 'voices,' they offer valuable evidence that women operated in urban domains generally associated with the 'male' world of citizenship.

I.　　Women and Apprenticeship

Apprenticeship was the gateway to citizenship. Rappaport estimates that three-quarters of male householders became citizens in the sixteenth century, and at least 90 per cent of male citizens acquired the freedom through apprenticeship. [36] Previous studies have measured the presence of women in guild records by quantifying the sex of the apprentice. This method draws a bleak picture: between 1580 and 1640, not a single woman entered into an apprenticeship in the records of fifteen companies. Likewise, a broader scan of 57 companies covering various years throughout the seventeenth century found roughly 1000 girl apprentices, or 1 per cent.[37] Even when women have been found in apprenticeship records, historians have been led to believe that women did not enter into apprenticeships for the same reasons as their male peers, and for the most part, carried out domestic chores under the guise of craft training.[38]

According to this argument, women were 'increasingly confined to occupations which were an extension into the public arena, limited in scope, of tasks carried out in the household.'[39] More recently, Hubbard advanced a particularly cynical view that female apprentices were 'essentially unpaid servants.'[40] She and others are not altogether misguided: female apprentices of low economic backgrounds certainly lacked options when it came to

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[36] Steve Rappaport, *Worlds Within Worlds: Structures of Life in Sixteenth-Century London* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 11. This number would have been much lower in the suburbs outside the City.
[37] Erickson, 'Married Women's Occupations,' 287.
[38] Paul Griffiths, *Youth and Authority: Formative Experiences in England, 1560-1640* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 379.
[39] Margaret Pelling, 'Older Women: Household, Caring and Other Occupations in the Late Sixteenth Century Town,' in *The Common Lot: Sickness, Medical Occupations and the Urban Poor in Early Modern England*, ed. Margaret Pelling (London: Longman, 1998), 159.
[40] Hubbard, *City Women*, 43.

the London job market and many apprenticed as housewives, charmaids, and in other 'pauper' trades associated with domestic service.[41] Women of the middle and upper classes entered into domestic apprenticeships too, including Mary Merill, a seamstress, whose father was a gentleman.[42] Notwithstanding, domestic service was not always just a necessary pitstop before marriage. As Humfrey suggests, female servants often exhibited 'a degree of agency that took them well beyond the prescribed ambit for early modern women in civic life.'[43]

Despite the persistent growth of the metropolis, the labour market in London changed in the latter half of the seventeenth century as population pressures decreased. In 1665, London experienced yet another devastating plague, followed by the Great Fire a year later. Joined with a general trend of reduced in-migration in the second half of the seventeenth century, these events had significant effects on the size and shape of the City. As Ben-Amos suggests, it no doubt affected the rate of women entering into apprenticeships, as well as the kinds of trades they participated in. Looking at surviving evidence from different guilds from the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, historians are beginning to acknowledge that there were more women in the companies of Clockmakers, Weavers, and Haberdashers.[44] Other studies have shown that women were active in traditionally 'male' occupations such as blacksmiths, butchers, and gunmakers as early as the mid-sixteenth century.[45] Nonetheless, when historians have linked women to skilled-based training, it is still limited to the context of 'feminine trades' or what Earle deems 'women's work.' This viewpoint maintains that women entered into apprenticeships to learn skills that could be

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[41] For an engaging discussion of the occupational dimensions of housewifery, see Shepard, *Accounting for Oneself*, 258-9.

[42] LMA, CLA/024/07/62/183/12.

[43] Paula Humfrey (ed.), *The Experience of Domestic Service for Women in Early Modern London* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011), 1; see also, Tim Meldrum, *Domestic Service and Gender, 1660-1750: Life and Work in the London Household* (Oxford: Routledge, 2000).

[44] See, for example, Amy Louise Erickson, 'Eleanor Mosley and Other Milliners in the City of London Companies 1700-1750,' *History Workshop Journal* 71 (2011): 147-172;' Hilda Smith, *All Men and Both Sexes*, 277-309.

[45] Lois G. Schwoerer, 'Women and Guns in Early Modern London,' in *Challenging Orthodoxies: The Social and Cultural Worlds of Early Modern Women: Essays Presented to Hilda L. Smith*, ed. Sigrun Haude and Melinda S. Zook (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014), 33-53; Helen Smith, *'Grossly Material Things': Women and Book Production in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

easily transferred to the domestic sphere upon marriage, and that women's public role was little more than an adjunct of household tasks.[46]

Female Apprentices in the Lord Mayor's Court

Dissolution petitions in the Lord Mayor's Court offer new evidence regarding the different types of occupations women entered into, their motivations as apprentices, and their agency in the 'male' domain of civic politics. Assessing the degree of female political participation through the mechanism they used to bar, or at least delay, entry into the freedom seems an unlikely starting point to gauge women's participation in the culture of freedom. However, these petitions provide insights into the sorts of trades and occupations women apprenticed in, and their readiness to complain when their masters and/or mistresses did not measure up to expectation.

Female apprentices comprise only two per cent (284) of dissolution petitions in the Mayor's Court from 1573 to 1723. However, they were apprenticed in more than 70 different occupations. Of these, seamstresses are the most common, though only at 13 per cent (37). This figure is followed by milliners (6 per cent; 18), fruiterers (5 per cent; 14), button-makers (5 per cent; 14), lace-makers (4 per cent; 11), glovers (3.5 per cent; 10), and fringe-makers (2 per cent; 7) [see table 4.1]. Others were indentured in occupations such as butcher, gunsmith, bricklayer, fish-seller, barber surgeon, draper, blacksmith, silversmith, mercer, tailor, woodmonger, tyremaker, salter, blacksmith, bookbinder, shipwright, herbwoman, poulterer, pinmaker, haberdasher, brown baker and many more. It is worth noting that many of these occupations were highly skilled trades, which suggests that not all women's work in the public sphere was an extension of domestic service and/or household labour.[47]

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[46] Peter Earle, *The Making of the English Middle Class* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 162.

[47] For a similar conclusion in the eighteenth century, see Erickson 'Married Women's Occupations,' 267-307. For the alternative view, see Earle, *A City Full of People*, 107-113.

Table 4.2. *Most commonly named occupations by women in LMC apprenticeship dissolution bills.*

Occupation	Number	Percentage
Seamstresses	37	13%
Milliners	18	6%
Fruiterers	14	5%
Button-makers	14	5%
Lace-makers	11	4%
Glovers	10	3.5%
Fringe-makers	7	2%

Hubbard has highlighted the irregular lengths of women's apprenticeships to suggest that they were not intended to result in the freedom: 'while apprenticeship had the merit of stability [for women], it offered little else.'[48] However, nearly 80 per cent of women seeking apprenticeship dissolutions in the Mayor's Court were indentured in seven-year terms, the customary length of time before apprentices could enter the freedom. Moreover, 97 per cent of women who were indentured in seven-year apprenticeships were bound to a citizen, and were thus theoretically eligible for the freedom by service had they completed their term. Over 40 women were indentured in occupations that matched the trade of their master, which may suggest that they were trained in occupational skills outside domestic work. However, we can only speculate. An individual's guild identity, and the actual occupation he/she practiced, did not always correlate.[49]

However, women indentured in shorter terms were not necessarily banned from the freedom outright. In the records of the Court of Aldermen, there are many cases of women admitted to the freedom after serving only four or five years of an apprenticeship.[50] While the 1562 Statute of Artificers codified the seven-year term defined by the custom of London, its application was primarily at the discretion of local authorities.[51] Although the court often noted that female petitioners were not 'in strictness' eligible to the freedom by service

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[48] Hubbard, *City Women*, 45-46.
[49] Ian Archer, *The Pursuit of Stability: Social Relations in Elizabethan London* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 124.
[50] See, for example, LMA, COL/CA/01/01/74, f. 104; COL/CA/01/01/79, f. 120; COL/CA/01/01/80, f. 179.
[51] Donald Woodward, 'The Background of the Statute of Artificers: The Genesis of the Labour Policy, 1558-63,' *The Economic History Review* 33, 1 (1980): 32-44.

because they did not serve a full term, this never deterred a favourable ruling. A seamstress, Alice Challoner, was admitted to the freedom in 1673 after serving five years.[52] Sarah Packenham, a linen seller, joined the Company of Lorriners and obtained the freedom after serving five years under her mistress, Anne Warren.[53]

Other women were 'remitted' before serving a full seven-year term—that is, they were released from their indenture prematurely at the master and/or mistress's behest.[54] Some remittals were in stark opposition to City custom. Anne Water, for instance, was remitted by her mistress after serving four years of a five-year indenture and was admitted into the freedom in the Company of Shipwrights.[55] For the most part, however, remitalls were within one or two years of a seven-year indenture. Rachel Myles was only eight months shy from serving a seven-year term to a weaver when she petitioned for her freedom at her master's approval.[56] The Court of Aldermen did not rigorously apply City law, suggesting that the requirements of citizenship were flexible and open to manipulation.

Even when citizenship was not the end goal, serving less than seven years was more common for men and women than the prescribed literature would suggest. Wallis's research suggests that less than half of London's apprentices served out their terms, established businesses and took on apprentices of their own.[57] However, the surviving records from the Court of Aldermen suggest that both men and women who left their apprenticeship early could successfully petition for their freedom by redemption. This often-overlooked pathway to citizenship is discussed in depth in section 2 below.

The single-most cited reason for apprenticeship dissolution in the Mayor's Court was non-enrolment. Wallis estimates that four out of five apprentices suing for dissolution alleged that their master and/or mistress failed to enrol them before the City chamberlain. Enrolment was the responsibility of the master and/or mistress. Failure to enrol an apprentice was frequently censured by City officials:

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[52] LMA, COL/CA/01/01/79, f. 120.
[53] LMA, COL/CA/01/01/80, f. 179.
[54] Patrick Wallis, 'Labor, Law, and Training in Early Modern London: Apprenticeship and the City's Institutions,' *Journal of British Studies* 51, no. 4 (2012): 792; see also, Chris Minns and Patrick Wallis, 'Rules and Reality: Quantifying the Practice of Apprenticeship in Early Modern England,' *Economic History Review* 65, no. 2 (2012): 556-579.
[55] LMA, COL/CA/01/01/95, f. 112b. It is unlikely that Webster was a shipwright by trade.
[56] LMA, COL/CA/01/01/95, f. 199b.
[57] Wallis, 'Labor, Law, and Training,'792; see also, Griffiths, *Youth and Authority*, 330–34; Ilana Krausman Ben-Amos, 'Failure to Become Freemen: Urban Apprentices in Early Modern England,' *Social History* 16, no. 2 (1991): 155–72.

> The knowledge of this Custom of London, (which
> somebody or other is generally unkind enough to
> communicate to such Apprentices as are disposed to
> take Advantage of it) has proved the Ruin of Hundreds
> of them; for being sensible that it is entirely in their
> Power to leave their Service whenever they please, they
> too often presume upon it to behave in a pert
> unbecoming Manner to their Masters, to neglect their
> Business, and take such bad Courses as end in the Loss
> of a Servant to a Master.[58]

Why masters and mistresses consistently evaded this step of the process is not altogether understood. Although cost or commitment might have acted as deterrents, non-enrolment was more damaging to the master and/or mistress than the apprentice. Losing an apprentice to non-enrolment often meant forfeiting the premium paid at binding. Enrolment was relatively inexpensive: it cost 2*s*. 6*d*., plus 4*d*. to the clerk to enrol an apprentice, whereas the fine for non-enrolment was 9*s*. 2*d*.[59] Moreover, non-enrolment discharge complaints were incontestable in court—rendering the master and/or mistress powerless to object. [60] Wallis and Scott have questioned whether non-enrolment discharges were a form of legal fiction—a convenient way to formally sever the ties of apprenticeship due to other issues hidden from the record.[61] In this sense, non-enrolment might have been a way to maintain a flexible system so that apprentices and their parents would be more willing to sign themselves over to it. Discharge suits relating to mistreatment, failed business or a lack of training often involved expensive and lengthy arbitration. Apprentices could ensure a speedy dissolution by suing on the grounds of non-enrolment instead. All City officials had to do was check the books.

Like their male peers, female apprentices expected to be formally enrolled. 83 per cent (237) of women petitioners in the Mayor's court filed discharges based on non-enrolment. This provides several clues as to their motivations as apprentices. First, it allows us to speculate that some women cared about becoming free. Apprentices attempting to join the freedom by service without being previously enrolled and/or bound in the company by their master were rejected or faced a harsh financial fee. One pamphlet published in 1623 told

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[58] *Some Rules for the Conduct of Life* [n.d., seventeenth century], 22-23.

[59] *Lex Londinensis, or, The city law shewing the powers, customs, and practice of all the several courts belonging to the famous city of London* (1680), 42.

[60] Wallis, 'Labor, Law and Training,' 803-808; see also E. G. Dowdell, *A hundred years of Quarter Sessions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1932), 141-143

[61] Wallis, 'Labor, Law, and Training,' 803-808; Michael Scott, Michael Scott (ed.), *Apprenticeship Disputes in the Lord Mayor's Court of London 1573-1723* (London: The British Record Society, 2016), 1: 23-25.

a tale of a City informer who extorted funds from a non-free flaxmaid who set up shop in the City. Having served a twelve-year apprenticeship under a citizen, her friends counselled her to get her freedom, in which she 'was made free of a worshipfull Company, but not of the City, which was thought sufficient for a womans security to follow Flaxe-dressing.' Ultimately, this was poor guidance. The informer continued to harass the flaxmaid (as she was not enrolled) and the story concludes with the woman hanging herself with her girdle.[62] Although the overall design of the pamphlet is to expose the villainy of the City informer, the flaxmaid's tragic end surely functioned as a cautionary tale to young apprentices whose masters had not enrolled them.

In many cases, non-binding or similar administrative errors prevented an apprentice from obtaining the freedom. After serving a seven-year apprenticeship to a citizen and fruiterer, Eleanor Price petitioned the Court of Aldermen in 1674 because 'not having been bound at the hall of the said company shee is not in strictness capable of her freedom by service.'[63] Anne Parrett encountered a similar problem earlier in 1669. Parrett was a fruiterer, but 'not being free' was 'troubled & disturbed in her trade and imployment by the company of fruiterers.'[64] In her petition to the Court of Aldermen, Parrett told the court that she was theoretically eligible by patrimony, as her late father was a citizen and woodmonger, but the Company of Woodmongers lost its charter in 1667. The court also noted that she previously served a six-year apprenticeship to a fruiterer but was not eligible by service because 'the maister whome shee hath served denying her to have beene bound according to the custome.' Despite these complications, the court ruled in her favour, granting her the freedom by redemption in the Company of Fruiterers and stayed 'all prosecution against her for useing the said trade of a fruiterer.'[65] Despite Parrett's failure to serve a seven-year term, the court cited her lack of enrolment when they denied her the freedom by service. Although both circumstances might have impeded her from obtaining citizenship, her master's failure to enrol Parrett overrode her failure to serve a full term.

One way to avoid later problems was to petition to have one's apprenticeship put under the auspices of another citizen. Most petitioners informed the court of their hope to be 'turned over' to another freeman or freewoman. Joyce Vaughn petitioned in 1656 on the

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[62] *The life and death of Griffin Flood informer Whose cunning courses, churlish manners, and troublesome informations, molested a number of plaine dealing people in this city of London* (1623), B3.

[63] LMA, COL/CA/01//01/80, f. 78.

[64] LMA, COL/CA/01/01/74, f. 124b.

[65] Ibid.

grounds of non-enrolment, since her Master and Mistress, John Reddocke and Elizabeth Reddocke, 'or either of them' failed to enrol her in the first year of her term 'according to the custome of London.'[66] Vaughn asked to be discharged so that she may be 'comitted to another freeman or freewoman of the said Citty' to serve the remainder of her term.' Discharge petitions in the Lord Mayor's Court were rigidly formulaic, making it impossible to gauge her actual intentions of transferring over. In all likelihood, she was simply telling the court what they wanted to hear. All the same, her petition reveals Vaughn's political awareness in matters of City custom, and that she was ready to act upon her knowledge to ensure a desirable outcome.

Even if dissolution cases in the Lord Mayor' Court obscure the petitioners' true intentions, it is worth emphasising that female apprentices utilised the loophole of non-enrolment in the same way that male apprentices did. As Gowing points out, London women often expressed their understanding of civic custom with authority.[67] Women's participation in the Lord Mayor's Court suggests that they were knowledgeable of the benefits and restrictions of the freedom. Even if they were not legal experts themselves, they felt confident enough in the legality of their case to approach legal counsel to have their desires met. Whatever their motivation, their participation in civic politics is impossible to overlook.

Suburban apprenticeships

It is difficult to say with certainty whether female petitioners in the Middlesex Quarter Sessions were eligible for the freedom. The existing records for the seventeenth century are mostly limited to the 1680s and 1690s and hold fewer discharge petitions than the Mayor's Court. The small number of discharge petitions certainly does not reflect a lack of apprentices in the suburbs, or their readiness to commit to legal arbitration when relationships turned sour. Rather, it reveals the reluctance of Middlesex Justices to adjudicate over apprenticeship disputes. As Dowdell discusses, there does not seem to be much pro-active intervention by the court in regard to labour laws, which suggests that outside the City, apprenticeship might have been more a matter of national interest concerned with vagrancy and disorderly youth, than one of civic regulation.[68] The paucity of City Sessions Papers before 1700 precludes a

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[66] LMA, CLA/024/02/130/103.

[67] Gowing, 'Girls on Forms,' 469. For a rural perspective of women's authority and local custom, see Nicola Whyte, 'Custodians of Memory: Women and Custom in Rural England,' *Cultural and Social History* 8, no. 2 (2011): 153-73.

[68] Dowdell, *A Hundred Years of Quarter Sessions,* section 5; see also, Griffiths, *Youth and Authority*.

comparison. The proximity of Middlesex to the City, however, might explain petitioners' concerns of following civic custom on the grounds that they wanted to trade in the City at the conclusion of their apprenticeship. However, most petitioners do not specify whether they were apprenticed to a citizen—and so it is likely that they were not. Yet, it is important to note that the boundary between the City and suburbs was not as impenetrable as contemporaries liked to suggest. Many guilds had power to regulate trade in the suburbs, anywhere from three, five or ten miles from the City, and Ward has shown that many citizens lived, worked, and kept apprentices in the suburbs.[69]

Even if women in the suburbs were not eligible for the freedom, many still intended to legally trade after their apprenticeship was complete. In 1698, Mary Jemmet petitioned the Quarter Sessions to discharge her apprenticeship from the widow Jane Tilyard, because her five-year indenture was not 'pursuant to the statute of the 5th of Elizabeth, which appoint the term of seaven years at least.'[70] Jemmet had served three years of her term in the trade of 'keeping a linen shop.' She told the court that her Father not only paid Tilyard a £5 premium, but also took care of her food, clothing and 'other necessaries.' Her justification for her discharge, however, was not that Tilyard did not provide the required food and lodging as a mistress. Instead, Jemmet explained her actions by the questionable legality of her indenture:

> she conceives & is advised that she can receive noe benefit by such
> service at the expiracion of her sd. Indenture, but on the contrary
> may Incurr a penalty by following such Trade not having served
> seaven [years] apprenticeship thereto.[71]

Jemmet suggested that she had knowledge of labour regulation—the 1572 Statute of Artificers—before receiving outside counsel and petitioned independently to suspend her binding to Tilyard. Her petition also reveals that she intended to follow her trade after her term was complete; she was willing to go through exhaustive measures to ensure that authorities would not persecute her as non-free shopkeeper. She claimed that she could

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[69] Joseph Ward, *Metropolitan Communities: Trade, Guilds, Identity and Change in Early Modern London* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1997), 3-4.

[70] LMA, MJ/SP/1698/01/01. Jemmett referenced the Statute of Artificers of 1562, which, as well as setting the minimum apprenticeship term to seven years, established local wage requirements and restricted the mobility of labour. See Donald Woodward, 'The Background of the Statute of Artificers,' 32-44.

[71] LMA, MJ/SP/1698/01/01.

'receive no benefit' by her apprenticeship, playing upon the rhetorics of reciprocity that underscored master/apprentice relationships.[72]

Although she is not explicitly concerned with becoming a citizen of London, Jemmet was wary of the possibility of being persecuted as a foreigner if she did not complete a full apprenticeship. The question remains, however, if Jemmet kept her true motives for dissolution hidden and used the illegal term of her indenture as validation to the court. In other words, perhaps she was simply unhappy with her apprenticeship and sought a different life for herself. It is possible that Jemmet might have been more concerned about her local reputation; neighbourhood policing of illegal trading was a common occurrence, sometimes at the behest of rival traders. Such was the case for the fruit-seller Phelby Young, who was informed upon by her neighbour, Mary Rolles, because Young's husband 'was noe freeman.'[73] With this in mind, it is possible that Jemmet took pre-emptive steps to avoid the threat of a competitor by ensuring that her legitimacy as a shopkeeper was reinforced by a seven-year apprenticeship. Without further evidence as to whether Jemmet entered into another apprenticeship after she was discharged, we can only speculate at her true intentions. Whatever her fate, her agency in determining the course of her career is noteworthy.

'Strange kynde of woomen'

As spinsters, wives and widows, women participated in apprenticeships as mistresses. Operating within the assumption that freemen's wives were less likely to engage with the political and economic functions of apprenticeship, historians have mostly focused upon unmarried mistresses or widows.[74] Similarly, current scholarship suggests that female apprentices indentured to married women or couples were taught unskilled household labour

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[72] For more on apprentice/master relationships, see Griffiths, *Youth and Authority*, 333-34; see also, Margaret Pelling, 'Child Health as a Social Value in Early Modern England,' in *The Common Lot*, 123-128.

[73] LMA, COL/CA/05/02/003. Young's petition to the Court of Aldermen is undated. However, her petition was endorsed by several members of St Dunstan Church, the location where she sold her goods. The first signed endorsement was by the church vicar, John Grant, who published *A sermon preach'd at the parish church of St. Dunstan's in the West, London* in 1707. This allows us to deduce that Young's petition was submitted sometime in the late seventeenth century or early eighteenth century.

[74] See, for example, Sandra Cavallo and Lyndan Warner, eds., *Widowhood in Medieval and Early Modern Europe* (London: Pearson, 1999); Pamela Sharpe, 'Gender in the Economy: Female Merchants and Family Businesses in the British Isles, 1600–1850,' *Social History* 34, no. 68 (2001): 287-306.

under the wife's direction, and not the skilled trade of the husband.[75] Conversely, recent studies into the economic lives of married women in the early eighteenth century has shown us that women were able to acquire significant proficiency in a trade by practicing alongside their husbands, and that wives handled financial matters, such as property asset management, independently of their husbands.[76] Others were able to possess complete occupational independence in what has been termed 'dual business households,' in which both husband and wife oversaw separate businesses. Importantly, this practice was not only the case in low socio-economic families where two breadwinners were required to make ends meet.[77] Whether practicing alongside the trade of their husband, or in a business of their own, women took part in the culture of citizenship in the training of apprentices.

The important distinction between free and non-free traders is evident in the Oath of the Freeman. Sworn by every London apprentice upon his/her entry to the freedom, the Oath dictated the civic responsibilities that came with the privileges of the freedom. Although communal obligations such as 'watch, ward, and all manners of charges' are listed, a sizeable section is dedicated to the commercial duties of citizens, suggesting that the economic safeguarding of the City was just as important as public service, if not more so. Responsibilities included the policing of non-citizen traders and their goods, as well as upholding the regulations of apprenticeship.[78]

The responsibilities of masters and mistresses were vital to preserving the ethos of civic culture; they trained the next generation of citizens. At the end of their term, the 'political maturity' of apprentices was not only gauged by their acquired skills, but also by how well their master and mistress were able to instil the moral behaviour required of 'worthy citizens.'[79] In Edmund Bolton's 1674 *The Cities Great Concern*, the apprentice's education, 'bare-headed before his Master and Mistress,' guaranteed this transformation: 'But

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[75] Ilana Krausman Ben-Amos, *Adolescence and Youth in Early Modern England* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1994), 140; see also, Rappaport, *Worlds Within Worlds*, 41; Earle, 'The Female Labour Market,' 338; Earle, *A City Full of People*, 114-123.
[76] Amy Louise Erickson, 'Mistresses and Marriage: or, a Short History of the Mrs,' *History Workshop Journal* 78 (2014): 39-57; Erickson 'Married Women's Occupations,' 267-307.
[77] Shepard, *Accounting for Oneself*, 176; see also, McIntosh, *Working Women in English Society*, 16; Hubbard, *City Women*, 189.
[78] *The Oath of every free-man of the citie of* London (1628).
[79] For more on the moral parameters of apprenticeship, see Griffiths, *Youth and Authority*, 299-301; Smith, *All Men both Sexes*, 89-93.

into the body of the City none generally are incorporated, but such only as through the straight gates of Apprentiship aspire to the dignity and state of Citizens.'[80]

Although many texts referred only to a master, women were equally responsible in the upbringing of honest citizens. A 1612 Act of Common Council explicitly stated both male and female citizens had equal economic responsibilities in apprenticeships:

> upon his Oath made to the said City, the same Free-man or
> Free-woman assureth and affirmeth to the said
> Chamberlaine, that the said Apprentice hath fully served
> his saide terme (as Apprentice:) or if any Free-man or
> Free-woman of this Citie, take any Apprentice, which at
> the time of the saide taking hath any wife, or if any Free-
> man Free-woman of this City, give any wages to his or her
> Apprentice, or suffer the same Apprentices to take any
> part of their owne getting or games […] shall for evermore
> be disfranchised.[81]

Furthermore, as we saw earlier, discharge petitions often noted that both the master and mistress were obligated to enrol an apprentice, and that a 'freeman or freewoman' could take over an apprentice's indenture after dissolution.

In 1647, *The city-law, or, The course and practice in all manner of juridicall proceedings in the hustings in Guild-Hall, London* stated that a married woman was allowed to train female apprentices without the interference of her husband:

> And women covert that use certain crafts within the City
> by themselves without their husbands, may take women to
> their Apprentices, for to serve them, & learne their Crafts.
> And the which Apprentices shall be bound by their
> Indentures to the husband and his wife, to learn the
> Mystery of the wife, as is aforesaid. And such Indentures
> shall be enrolled, as well of women, as of men.[82]

The language of *The city-law*—published again in 1658—is revealing. Women's work is not described as household chores or labour, but as a 'craft' or 'mystery.' These terms were heavily associated with formal guild culture and suggest that women's work could be understood as a profession or calling. Although women could only train other women during

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[80] Edmund Bolton, *The Cities Great Concern* (1674); see also, Smith, *All Men and Both Sexes*, 89.

[81] *Commune consilium tentum in camera Guild-hall civitatis London* (1612).

[82] *The city-law, or, The course and practice in all manner of juridicall proceedings in the hustings in Guild-Hall, London* (1647), 10; *The City law shewing the customes, franchises, liberties, priviledges and immunities of the famous city of London* (1658), 19.

their marriage, it is important to underscore that women who were unmarried or widowed could have both male and female apprentices.

Although female apprenticeships are uncommon in the records, accounts of mistresses training apprentices are slightly more prevalent.[83] There are a few instances that stand out in particular, such as the petition signed by Mary Guttridge in July 1689 complaining against not one, but two mistresses (both 'spinsters'), who were apprenticing Guttridge's daughter in the trades of millinery and embroidery.[84] Most mistresses who trained apprentices independently, however, were widows who took over their husband's trade after his death, including the care and training of his apprentices. Widows also took on new apprentices even if they had not completed apprenticeships of their own—suggesting that the skills they learned during marriage was sufficient to supervise the education of others.[85]

From 1573 to 1723, 234 apprentices seeking dissolution in the Lord Mayor's Court were bound exclusively to a mistress. About a third of these mistresses were identified by their occupation (79). When marital status was mentioned, the unsurprising majority were widows (139). There were two mistresses identified as spinsters. Only nine married mistresses were independently listed—including Dorothy Gawthrone, 'feme sole merchant,' in 1682.[86] [see table 4.2]. However, the number of married mistresses grows exponentially to 163 when wives who were listed alongside their husbands are also included. Added together, there were 394 disputes in the Mayor's Court that involved a mistress. Some cases hint at a dual-business household, such as the case of Mary Clarke who was apprenticed to Elizabeth Clarke, the wife of a cordwainer, to learn the art of gold and silver wire spinning in 1672.[87] For the most part, however, there is no real indication as to which spouse was more in charge of the apprentice's training, and it is likely that couples shared responsibilities.[88] Finally, it is worth emphasising that an overwhelming 93% of women in the Lord Mayor's Court were in some way designated by a trade or craft. Needless to say, this figure complicates Archer's claim that early modern women possessed 'weak occupational identities.'[89]

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[83] Erickson estimates somewhere around 5,000 apprentices were set to mistresses between 1700-1750, see 'Mistresses and Marriage,' 50n65.

[84] LMA, MJ/SP/1690/12/02.

[85] Ben-Amos, *Adolescence and Youth*, 147.

[86] LMA, CLA/024/02/10/249/55.

[87] LMA, CLA/024/02/233/22. For more on 'dual-income' households, see Shepard, *Accounting for Oneself*, 176-77.

[88] Ben-Amos, *Adolescence and Youth*, 106-107.

[89] Archer, 'Material Londoners?,' 187.

Table 4.2. *Occupational and Marital Statues of female mistresses independently named in LMC dissolution cases.*

Identity given	Number	Percentage
Occupational only	**79**	**34%**
Marital Only	**12**	**5%**
Wife	2	1%
Widow	9	4%
Spinster	1	<1%
Occupational and marital	**138**	**59%**
Wife	7	3%
Widow	130	56%
Spinster	1	<1%
No information given	**5**	**2%**
TOTAL	**234**	

Assuming the 'informal' nature of female apprenticeships, it has been suggested that female apprenticeships were a form of dowry.[90] However, as Hill points out, if marriage was the main motivation for parents to place their daughters into apprenticeships to learn a set of skills for marriage, then most terms of five to seven years was 'an absurdly long one.'[91] On more than a few occasions, apprentices who trained under mistresses intended to become citizens, even in trades that have been mistakenly conflated with 'housewife' skills of the 'domestic' sphere. Katherine Venner, a seamstress, opened a shop on the Royal Exchange with a business partner, Hester Wright, after apprenticing to Katherine Allen, a citizen haberdasher's wife and seamstress.[92] Moreover, parents expected their money's worth. As we will see later in the section, relatives of apprentices had no qualms about stepping in when the apprentice's training was not up to par with the agreed upon indenture.

The argument that female apprentices who were indentured to a married couple automatically followed the occupation of the wife does not sit well with the number of male

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[90] Deborah Simonton, 'Earning and Learning: Girlhood in Pre-Industrial Europe,' *Women's History Reivew* 13, no. 3 (2004): 363-386.

[91] Bridget Hill, *Women, Work and Sexual Politics in Eighteenth-Century England* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989), 97.

[92] LMA, CLA/024/05/131.

apprentices that were also indentured to both a master and mistress—at least 16 per cent (25) of dissolution cases in the Mayor's Court. Indeed, both boys and girls were apprenticed to mistresses and/or to married couples in which the wife oversaw the majority of training. For instance, Edward Steele petitioned the Middlesex Quarter Sessions in 1691 to be discharged from Elizabeth Aprice, wife of John Aprice, a painter-stainer of Saint Martins in the Fields.[93] Other evidence of wives taking the rein in apprenticeship training can be found in discharge petitions filed by their apprentices after their death. Leonard Stable accused George Bell, a goldsmith, of failing to teach Dorothy Stable, his daughter, after Bell's wife, a seamstress, died. In 1690, Grace Reynolds complained that her master was unable to teach her the art of clockwork making, after his wife, a 'clockework woman' died.[94] More frequently, however, apprenticeship disputes involved a mistress after she took over her husband's business (and thus his apprentices) upon widowhood.

Male apprentices often complained that widows were unable, or refused, to provide the necessary provisions of apprenticeship, both in regards to instruction and basic care. However, the extent to which these accusations were based in reality is questionable. Female authority reversed patriarchal norms of the household hierarchy and caused a 'sense of strain' between male apprentices and their mistresses.[95] In a letter to his family, one apprentice wrote that 'moste of London mistrisses are strange kynde of woomen.'[96] Crime pamphlets reported the murderous tendencies of mistresses, including the story of a common councillor's wife who attempted to roast an apprentice on a spit after he displeased her.[97] Popular ballads emphasised the sexual voraciousness of mistresses, such as the freeman's wife who seduced an innocent apprentice, and paid him £50 after their encounter.[98] Although such literature certainly reveals anxiety towards female authority, it would be unfair to ignore that many apprentices also had authority issues with their masters as well. Texts that 'warned' apprentices of their mistress's lustful passions were as much an assault on her sexual honour as it was a fantasy of usurping the role of the master.

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[93] LMA, MJ/SP/1691/07/05.

[94] LMA, MJ/SP/1690/02/02.

[95] Bernard Capp, *When Gossips Meet: Women, Family and Neighborhood in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 155.

[96] Henry Oxiden, *The Oxiden Letters, 1607-1642*, ed. Dorothy Gardiner (London: Constable, 1933), 40.

[97] *Cruel and Barbarous News from Cheapside* (1676).

[98] *An Amorous Dialogue between John and his Mistris* (1685).

Patriarchal mentalities could explain the high number of male apprentices who complained about their mistresses' business failures. [99] Accusations of female incompetence in the world of skilled trade fit well into the prescriptive literature of the period and would have been a convenient scapegoat for an apprentice desiring an early discharge. Yet, civic courts were not always as prepared to question women's authority. In the Mayor's Court, nearly 30 per cent of dissolution petitions were rejected when the complaint was brought for reasons other than non-enrolment and underage apprentices. Moreover, when petitioners sued for non-enrolment, apprentice discharge rates for mistresses were nearly identical to masters.

In 1689, John Gordin petitioned the Middlesex Quarter Sessions to discharge him from his apprenticeship with Sarah Fellows, a watchcase maker. Gordin complained that Fellows was 'soe poor a condition that she is altogether <u>unable to provide for your petitioner</u>.'[100] Intriguingly, on the reverse of the petition, an anonymous source offered legal advice to Fellows, including where to find a good attorney and the best method to defend her case:

> Sister Fellows you must ally your selfe to one Cropley
> Attorney […] at the Flying Horse in Mouter Court in
> Fleet Street & Aquaint him with your condishon for his
> soun is An exalant Counciler & if Any one can get
> Anything for y[our] security Hee can direct you the best
> way […]. You must get as much Evidence as you can to
> informe the Court that hee neither wants for worke nor
> Any thing Ealse how that hee hath his traide & if worke
> bee scarce it is your losse more than his for his desire is
> to bee his owne master & to worke for him self being
> maister of his traide.[101]

There is no mention of Fellows's marital status; however, the anonymous writer calls her 'Sister Fellows,' which perhaps indicates that she was unwed or widowed. Although women in an authoritative position reversed the gender hierarchy, apprentices were still meant to submit to their mistresses. *The Apprentice's Companion*, for instance, cautioned apprentices about the repercussions of disobeying one's mistress. One spectacular tale told the story of an apprentice who angered his mistress by staying out late drinking, and 'having no sooner said this, but suddenly the earth fell down upon him and killed him outright.'[102]

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[99] Ben-Amos, *Adolescence and Youth*, 106.
[100] LMA, MJ/SP/1689/12/02. Underlined in original petition.
[101] Ibid.
[102] Richard Burton, *The Apprentices Companion* (1681), 150.

Apprenticeship disputes involving widows also reveal many insights into their economic lives as married women. Although discharge petitions themselves do not give much insight into the particularities of each case, surviving evidence from the Mayor's Court Interrogatories and Answers series are more revealing. After an appellant submitted his/her bill of dissolution to the Mayor's Court, the magistrates sometimes summoned witnesses for questioning if the case proved difficult to determine.[103] This often gave the widow a chance to defend herself against the charges through the testimony of neighbours in her community. Witness statements often testified to the mistress's ability to maintain trade after her husband's death, which suggests that women took part in their husband's trade and training of apprentices throughout marriage as well.

In May 1663, Richard Best and his son, Francis, accused the widow Elizabeth Fitzachary of not providing for Francis after his master's death. However, Fitzachary's defence claimed that she 'did for sometime keepe up shoppe and trade and during that time did very p(ro)vide for the said Francis.'[104] A few years later in 1677, William Warren accused the widow of a milliner, Anne Eaton, of neglecting her role as a mistress after she was widowed. Witnesses defended Anne's claims that she managed her husband's shop for twenty years and continued to manage his trade after his death. One witness declared that Eaton 'doth had as good a trade as her husband had for serverall years' and that she was 'well able to manage instruction [over her apprentice].' Another claimed William was to blame for the failed apprenticeship when he fled his service after Eaton left to trade at Bristol Fair, 'as her husband used to doe.'[105] The support of Anne's neighbours likely meant that Anne was proficient in her late husband's trade of millinery to manage his apprentices. This not only demonstrates Eaton's central role in her husbands shop after his death, but while he was alive as well. The responsibility of masters and mistresses to turn out citizens who were skilled in their crafts was integral to the citizen's oath. Women took part in this process both before and after their husband's death.

Female Guardians

Women also participated in apprenticeship disputes on behalf of a son or relative. In 300 apprenticeship disputes from the Interrogatories and Answers series of the Mayor's Court

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[103] Wallis, 'Labor, Law and Training,' 808-9; Margaret Pelling, 'Apprenticeship, Health and Social Cohesion in Early Modern London,' *History Workshop Journal* 37 (1994): 33-56.
[104] LMA, CLA/024/05/152.
[105] LMA, CLA/024/05/351.

between 1641 and 1700, only three per cent of the cases concerned a female apprentice. Although higher than previous findings, this figure still fits well with the general notion that very few women participated in freemen apprenticeships. However, in the same sample taken from Mayor's Court, nearly one-third (28 per cent) of apprenticeship cases in some way involved a woman—as apprentice, mistress, or mother/guardian petitioning on behalf of a son or daughter. This figure demonstrates that although we have uncovered only a small number of women as apprentices or mistresses, there is, in fact, a much higher number of women participating independently in the public sphere of civic culture, even if from their 'domestic' roles of mothers and guardians. Of these, 73 cases were female relatives suing on behalf of a male apprentice. Thirteen cases were brought against mistresses by the apprentice his/herself or a parent/guardian. Eight cases concerned a female apprentice, of which all but one was apprenticed to a mistress [see table 4.3]. [106]

Table 4.3. *Women's roles in petitions archived in the Lord Mayor's Court apprenticeship dissolutions Interrogatories and Answers series, 1641-1700.*

Participant	Number	Percentage
Female apprentice	8	3%
Female Mistress	13	4%
Female relative/guardian on behalf of male apprentice	73	24%
Total number of cases involving at least one woman	**85**	**28%***

Middlesex petitions present a similar pattern. In a ten-year sample from 1689 to 1699, there are 70 petitions dealing with apprenticeship disputes. Of these, women were involved in 38 per cent (33 of 70) of disputes [see table 4.4]. Seven women asked to be discharged from an apprenticeship indenture to a master or mistress. Two mistresses petitioned the court to dissolve an indenture agreement with an apprentice. 17 women signed petitions on behalf of a minor. Of the remaining petitions signed by a male, seven disputes concerned a female mistress or apprentice. Taken together, women participated in more than a third of all disputes. This adds to growing literature by Flather, Shoemaker, Crawford,

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[106] Out of the thirteen suits brought against mistresses, seven were sued as wives alongside their husbands. However, of these cases, charges were brought specifically against the wife's role as the mistress.

* This number reflects the total percentage of petitions involving at least one woman (85 of 300), as some petitions included multiple female participants and overlap in the categories listed.

Gowing and others that challenges the separate sphere paradigm of early modern gender relations. These petitioners were not disinterested bystanders circumscribed to the 'private' life of the household. Rather, they were active participants in the public domain of citizenship.[107]

Table 4.4. *Petitions including female participants in apprenticeship disputes in the Middlesex Quarter Sessions, 1689-1699.*

Women's roles and/or participation	*Number*	*Percentage*
Female apprentice petitioner	7	10%
Mistress petitioner	2	3%
Female petitioner on behalf of male apprentice	17	24%
Male petitioner concerning female apprentice and/or mistress	7	10%
Total number of cases involving as least one woman	**33**	**38%***

Most petitions accused the master or mistress of 'immoderate punishment,' 'misuse' or lack of teaching. Some complaints lifted words directly out of indenture certificates. For example, in 1690, Jane Rowell accused her son's master, a citizen glazier, of neglecting his duties by refusing her son 'meate, drinke, [and] washing, as according to the obligation of a Master.'[108] In 1696, Frances Hall petitioned the court against her daughter's mistress, Rebecca Osmond, a fishwoman. Hall claimed that Osbourne abused her daughter, and 'hath not nor will not allow your Petitoner's said daughter such nessarys as are fitting for an

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[107] The public/male and private/female dichotomy was first articulated by Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class, 1750-1850* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987). Their thesis was subsequently critiqued by Amanda Vickery, 'Golden Age to Separate Spheres?' A Review of the Categories and Chronology of English Women's History,' *The Historical Journal* 36, no. 2 (1993): 383-414. For a small example of others who have also challenged the separate spheres hypothesis, see Robert Shoemaker, *Gender in English Society 1650-1850: The Emergence of Separate Spheres?* (London: Longman, 1998); Patricia Crawford and Laura Gowing, eds., *Women's Worlds in Seventeenth-Century England* (London: Routledge, 2000); Amanda Flather, *Gender and Space in Early Modern England* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2007); Brian Cowan, 'What was Masculine about the Public Sphere? Gender and the Coffeehouse Milieu in Post-Restoration England,' *History Workshop Journal* 51 (2001): 127-157.

* This number reflects the total percentage of petitions involving at least one woman (33 of 70), as some petitions included multiple female participants and overlap in the categories listed.

[108] LMA, MJ/SP/1690/02/04.

apprentice.'[109] These petitions demonstrate that though a majority of women did not complete apprenticeships themselves, they still held considerable awareness of the law and customs of apprenticeship and felt comfortable stepping in when expectations went awry.

Some apprenticeship disputes dealt more directly with citizenship. Another concern of petitioners was ensuring their sons were apprenticed to a freeman of the City. Martha Morris, for example, petitioned the Court of Aldermen to disolve her son's apprenticeship because his master was not free. After receving charity for the premium, she was recommended to George Jeffs, who claimed to be a free cordwainer. Morris was doubtful of Jeffs's free status, telling him that she 'would not bring her son but to a freeman that he might be free when out of his time.' According to Morris, Jeffs promised that her son would be bound to a freeman, and 'ever perswaded and decieved' her into binding her son to him. Her first instinct proved correct and she later learned that Jeffs was a nonfree householder living in St. Anne Blackfriars. She accused Jeffs of defrauding her son 'of his freedom' and not acting in accordance with 'the law and customs of this City.'[110]

Morris was clearly concerned with her son's prospects as a citizen of the City. The boy's father was not likely a citizen since Morris did not plan to appeal his freedom by patrimony. More suggestive, her son had a different surname than Morris and her current husband at the time the indenture was signed, though she does not mention the boy's deceased father by name or title. Significantly, she acted independently from her husband and signed the petition unaccompanied. Hinting at her low economic status, she claimed she received charity for her son's premium. Morris understood the political significance of signing her son to a freeman, and once issues arose, she took it upon herself to contest it. While her own position in the freedom was not at stake, Morris's agency is demonstrated through her ability to intervene on behalf of her son.

Morris was not the only woman who challenged a son or daughter's apprenticeship due to the questionable status of his/her master. In 1668, Susan Lathum submitted a bill of complaint to the Mayor's Court alleging that her son was abandoned by Thomas Theed, citizen and grocer, within days of the Great Fire and 'turned over' to another grocer, Francis Cain. Her main grievances were that her son's new master was 'insolvent' and not a freeman

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[109] LMA, MJ/SP/1689/10/08. For more examples of women's petitions regarding abuse of the apprentice or inadequate training, see LMA, MJ/SP/1690/02/04; MJ/SP/1692/12/02; MJ/SP/1694/07/13; MJ/SP/1696/10/16; MJ/SP/1697/08/19, MJ/SP/1697/10/12; MJ/SP/1699/02/10.
[110] LMA, COL/CA/05/02/02.

of London.[111] In 1670, Bridget Chancery brought charges against Timothy Wade, a silkman and ex-alderman of London, that her son's indenture was not properly sealed.[112] She accused Wade of allowing card-playing and other 'uncivil' habits within his household. However, she was most concerned that her son was not formally apprenticed in the Grocers' Company. Again, this demonstrates considerable knowledge of the process—Chancery knew that if her son was not formally enrolled in the Grocers' Company, his odds of gaining the freedom were circumscribed. Both women were adamant that their sons would become freemen after their apprenticeships were complete. It is particularly revealing that Chancery was bold enough to bring charges against an ex-alderman, who, in theory, was meant to be a paradigm of citizen-like behaviour. Chancery's concern about her son's future in the freedom—as well as his upbringing in a civil household—suggests that she was more in line with the City's vision of citizenship than her son's master.

II.   Women and Citizenship

Scholarship has largely focused upon two ways that women could become citizens: apprenticeship and marriage. A less-acknowledged method, however, was to petition the Court of Aldermen for the freedom by redemption, or purchase. Most women petitioned the court because, in some way or another, they failed to meet the full requirements of citizenship. These petitions are unique in that they are not rigidly formulaic. Although written by a clerk or attorney and then logged second-hand by the court recorder, there are clear moments when we can distinguish the individuality of the petitioner from petitionary rhetoric. Many of the original manuscripts have not survived. However, the repertories contain accurate transcriptions of the petitions. In the cases where a comparison between a surviving petition and its recorded entry in the repertory can be made, there are few—if any—differences between them. The writers of women's freedom petitions took care in describing the petitioner's circumstances with methodical detail, and the court paid attention.

Yet, historians of early modern citizenship have virtually neglected women's freedom petitions. In the single study dedicated to their analysis, Hilda Smith argues that they 'are more apt to document women's claims to independence, strength, and competence rather than

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[111] LMA, CLA/024/05/229.
[112] LMA, CLA/024/05/252.

weakness and dependence.'[113] The following section adds a further dimension to her claim by looking at how women's freedom petitions deployed strategies and rhetorics of City custom—even 'negative' ones such as charity and dependence—to negotiate patriarchal boundaries of citizenship. Many of these petitions were the collaborative result of a woman and a professional or semi-professional clerk or scribe.[114] However, this does not necessarily mean that women had only a minor role in their production. Before approaching a scribe or clerk, it is likely that the appellant was aware that her case had legal standing based on her understanding of City custom.[115] The clerk, having listened to the petitioner's concerns, wrote the petition using his knowledge of rhetorical strategy. The resulting document was, to use Bailey's words, 'a multi-vocal effort, a combination of hands and minds.'[116] The language and structure of these petitions portray their signers as political participants, knowledgeable of civic custom and practices of City government. By emphasising certain aspects of their lives—apprenticeship, self-maintenance, long-standing residence, or proof of industry—freedom petitions demonstrate women's participation in civic culture.

Women's Freedom Petitions in the Court of Aldermen

Women who were citizens were sometimes referred to as free sisters.[117] There are 123 recorded petitions written to the Court of Aldermen from 1495 to 1692 regarding women's admittance to the freedom and/or their right to trade. However, these were found using a nineteenth-century index compiled by male Victorian archivists who likely had little interest for women's political participation. Of those found in the index, only 13 are from before 1649. This low number could reflect one of three explanations, or perhaps a degree of each: 1) women may not have petitioned as frequently before the Civil Wars; 2) freedom by redemption was more difficult to obtain before the Great Fire and subsequent rebuilding; 3)

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[113] Smith, 'Free and Willing to Remit' pp. 277-278; see also, Gowing, 'Girls on Forms,' 468-471.

[114] For collaborative petition-writing, see Robert Houston, *Peasant Petitions: Social Relations and Economic Life on Landed Estates. 1600-1850* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 77-87; Steven King and Peter Jones, 'From Petition to Pauper Letter: The Development of an Epistolary Form,' in *Obligation, Entitlement and Dispute Under the English Poor Laws*, ed. King and Jones (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars, 2015), 53-77.

[115] For women's understanding of common law, see Gowing, 'Girls on Forms,' 469; Whyte, 'Custodians of Memory: Women and Custom in Rural England,'153-73.

[116] Joanne Bailey, 'Voices in Court: lawyers' or litigants'?' *Historical Research* 74, no. 186 (2002): 393.

[117] Vivienne E. Aldous, *My Ancestors were Freemen of the City of London* (London: Society of Genealogists, 1999), 24.

the nature of pre-1660s records might not have been as attentive to women who petitioned by redemption.[118] Moreover, it is worth mentioning that all women's freedom petitions in the Repertories of the Aldermen in the seventeenth century were approved. This is not to suggest that every woman who petitioned the court received a favourable result. More likely, it suggests that the court handpicked cases by female petitioners that they intended to allow into the freedom, or that the clerks only recorded successful ones. What all this suggests is that the number of recorded petitions in repertories is likely unrepresentative of a larger number of women who petitioned for the freedom in the early modern period.

Out of 109 women's freedom petitions from 1649 onward, a little more than half (58) did not indicate marital status. When it was mentioned, 24 identified as widows, 21 as spinsters, and six as wives. [119] The most common marker of identity, however, was occupational trade—about one-third (33) claimed a specific occupation. Most were shopkeepers or milliners (18).[120] Seven were seamstresses, two were periwig-makers, others indentified as a gardener, tyre-maker, waterbearer, leatherseller, fruiterer, and weaver. The majority were admitted by redemption (91). Others were officially recognized as freemen's widows (given the right to buy and sell 'unmolested' in the City) or given special licence to trade without the freedom (see section 3 below). Three were admitted by patrimony. Only one woman—an orphaned girl named Mary Younger—was admitted to the freedom by service in 1690 [see tables 4.5, 4.6 & 4.7].[121]

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[118] See, for example, Ann Hughes, 'Gender and politics in Leveller Literature,'162-188; Ann Marie McEntee, 'The (un)civilised sisterhood of oranges and lemons,' 92-111.
[119] This number increases to 113 when including women receiving the privilege to make another person free.
[120] Women who sold 'sempstry wares' were included in this category.
[121] COL/CA/01/01/95, f. 50; COL/CA/01/01/96, f. 60b.

Table 4.5. *Marital status of women's freedom petitions to the Court of Aldermen, 1649-1692.*

Marital status	Number	Percentage
Spinster	21	19%
Wife	6	5%
Widow	24	22%
Not specified	58	53%
Total	**109**	

Table 4.6. *Occupational identity of women's freedom petitions to the Court of Aldermen, 1649-1692.*

Occupation	Number	Percentage
Shopkeeper and/or milliner	18	17%
Seamstress	7	6%
Periwig-maker	2	2%
Gardener	1	1%
Tyre-maker	1	1%
Waterbearer	1	1%
Leatherseller	1	1%
Fruiterer	1	1%
Coffee-house owner	1	1%
Weaver	1	1%
TOTAL	**34**	**32%**

Table 4.7. *Women's routes to the freedom through the Court of Aldermen, 1649-1692.*

Outcome of petition	Number	Percentage
Freedom by redemption	91	83%
Freedom by Patrimony	3	3%
Freedom by Service	1	1%
Freedom and/or licence to trade	14	13%
TOTAL	**109**	

Historians have downplayed redemption as a viable route to citizenship, often citing its hefty cost. Rappaport states that potential citizens had to pay anywhere from £2 to £20 to purchase the freedom, and that it often required the support of a powerful benefactor. With this in mind, he estimates that only four per cent of male Londoners gained the freedom by redemption.[122] However, the majority of women—83 per cent—gained the freedom by redemption in the repertories of the Aldermen. Many women did so without mentioning a financial sponsor. Of course, some may have simply refrained from mentioning a powerful benefactor in their petitions—but name-dropping a local bigwig would have only helped their cause. Only 17 women were 'presented' by a male patron or mentioned a special endorsement from an unreported supporter. The rest relied upon their own laurels.

Most women were fined £10 6*s.* 8*d.* to the City of London for the freedom by redemption.[123] This was a substantial sum. Others paid significantly less; some fines were £3 or £5, others only 20*s.*[124] Fees did not correlate between similar cases. In the early 1690s, Mary Redding and Elizabeth Harris were 'presented' to the court by patrons who had been granted the privilege to 'make another person free.' Redding was presented by the Master Chamberlain's clerk and Harris by a sergeant of the Chamber. Despite the similar circumstances of their admittance, Redding paid £10 6*s.* 8*d.* and Harris paid 46*s.*[125] There are several explanations for different levying of costs. City Aldermen often considered the financial background of the petitioner and other 'especial circumstances' were sometimes mentioned—though not always explicitly stated.[126] A single mother with several children, for example, might be allowed to pay a lower fee. If the petition benefitted from outside support, the social ranking of the sponsor might have also played into the equation—wealthier benefactors might have held more sway in reducing the cost of redemption for the petitioner. The company the petitioner was admitted into also might have made a difference—more prominent companies often determined pricier fees. Most of the time, however, payment was simply up to the discretion of the Aldermen. There is not a significant pattern over the seventeenth century that would suggest that aldermen charged more or less at specific intervals, such as moments of economic tension or otherwise. Nor is there a marked

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[122] Rappaport, *Worlds Within Worlds*, 291.
[123] This does not always mean that women necessarily paid the cost of redemption; some had their fines reduced as a later date. For an example of a woman asking to have her fine removed, see the petition of Mary Howsley, LMA, COL/CA/05/02/004.
[124] LMA, COL/CA/01/01/85, f. 196; COL/CA/01/01/95, f. 168b; COL/CA/01/01/95, f. 248.
[125] LMA, COL/CA/01/01/95, f. 157b; COL/CA/01/01/96, f. 56b.
[126] See, for example, LMA, COL/CA/01/01/80, f. 313.

increase or decrease in payment until the last decade of the seventeenth century; the last woman to pay more than £10 was Francis Wright, who joined the Clothworkers in 1690.[127]

It was, however, very unlikely for the Court to waive freedom fees at the outset of their decision—though exceptions exist. In 1679, for instance, Ann Robinson's fees were waived after her husband was lost at sea, leaving her financially destitute and 'in distress forced for a livelyhood.'[128] Similar tragedies were sometimes met with similar expressions of compassion. In 1674, Barbara Stanton, who also lost her husband at sea while in the King's Service, was required to pay only 20*s.* for her freedom.[129] In other moments, fee waivers or reductions were designated at the expense of an indolent master. In one remarkable ruling, Naomi Brixton's master had to pay for her freedom fees—worth over £10—after he failed to follow City custom and enrol her as an apprentice with his company—plus pay her a small remuneration for the trouble.[130] Petitioners did not need to be particularly wealthy nor well-connected to petition by redemption; they represented a diversity of social backgrounds.

Women's strategies for citizenship

In an attempt to entice people back into the City after the Great Plague and Fire, civic authorities relaxed the stipulations of the freedom and removed the requirement of livery company membership to work in the City.[131] In 1672, the Common Council stayed all prosecution of non-free inhabitants. A year later, all persons who moved to inhabit the new-built vacant buildings and/or shops in the City were admitted into the freedom.[132] Non-free artificers and labourers who were employed in the rebuilding of London were granted the same privileges of freemen after serving seven years.[133] As a result of these liberal measures, Kellett estimates that the number of admissions into the freedom increased to over 10,000 in the five years between 1675 and 1680.[134] Many women's petitions were written in the twenty or so years following the Great Fire: 44 were signed in the 1670s and 40 in 1680s. This number grew exceptionally in the final decade of the seventeenth century: 27 petitions alone were handed to the court between 1689 and 1692.

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[127] LMA, COL/CA/01/01/95, f. 245.
[128] LMA, COL/CA/01/01/85, f. 34.
[129] LMA, COL/CA/01/01/79, f. 208.
[130] LMA, COL/CA/01/01/93, ff. 51-52b.
[131] J.R. Kellett, 'The Breakdown of Gild and Corporation Control over the Handicraft and Retail Trade in London,' *The Economic History Review*, New Series 10, no. 3 (1958): 383.
[132] LMA, COL/CC/01/01/47, f. 155; f. 247b.
[133] *An Act for rebuilding the City of London*, 1667, 18 & 19 Car. II, c 7.
[134] Kellett, 'The Breakdown of Gild and Corporation Control,' pp.382-83.

In 1668 and 1669, at least six women petitioned the Court after their businesses in the liberty of St Martin le Grand were destroyed in the Great Fire. After seeking new opportunities in the City, the women complained that they were harassed by local inhabitants because they were not free. The women deployed emotive language to gain the compassion of the court: Mary Norton professed that she was 'greatly impoverished' by the recent fire, and Eleanor Stone claimed she 'was under much distress and difficulty.'[135] Others used different tactics: instead of trying to win favour through sympathy, Mary Rausterne, a seamstress, notified the court that she was also eligible by patrimony and service, having served a 'full seaven years' as a shop maid to a free merchant taylor.[136] Another cluster of petitions emerged between the years 1673 and 1675 by ten women who were granted the freedom by inhabiting new buildings in the City. For example, Martha Harris applied for the freedom after serving a millinery apprenticeship 'upwards three years' and 'hath taken a shop in the new buildings of this citty for exercise of her said trade.'[137] In a few of these cases, the company that the woman entered into was left blank, which could suggest that the company was not yet decided, and/or that women might have possessed some choice in selecting which company they joined.[138] Regardless, what is clear is that women took advantage of the growing tolerance toward freedom admissions in the years following the Great Fire. Although many of these women would have received legal advice, it is unlikely that they would have approached a clerk or scribe without prior knowledge that the City had introduced freedom grants through new construction or habitation.

Civic tradition was meant to be the guiding light in the court's decision-making process. Most women were barred from the freedom because their appeals were 'not in strictnesse by the custome of this Citty;' 'not capable by custome;' or 'not bound according to the custome.'[139] However, tradition could be bent to acquiesce to certain cases. According to custom, if a freewoman married a foreigner, she forfeited her status in the freedom. As a result of this practice, there are numerous petitions to the Court of Aldermen from women

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[135] LMA, COL/CA/01/01/74, f. 54; f. 132b. For other women who petitioned on the grounds they were 'burnt out' by the Fire, see COL/CA/01/01/72, f. 12; COL/CA/01/01/74, f. 32b; f. 110b; f. 132b; COL/CA/01/01/76, f. 77b.

[136] LMA, COL/CA/01/01/74, f. 23b.

[137] LMA, COL/CA/01/01/79, f. 250.

[138] For women who became free by 'inhabiting new buildings,' see LMA, COL/CA/01/01/79, f. 58; f. 184; f. 200b; f. 201; f. 250; COL/CA/01/01/80, f. 39; f. 45; f. 50; f. 90.

[139] See, for example, LMA, COL/CA/01/01/74, f. 109; COL/CA/01/01/79, f. 120; COL/CA/01/01/93, f. 178; COL/CA/01/01/80, f. 179.

who had lost the benefits of citizenship upon marriage to a foreigner or stranger. Mary Clarke, a widow, served an apprenticeship for seven years to become a freewoman, but after 'having intermarried before she tooke up her freedome […] with a foreigner […] is denied her freedome by service.'[140] Because she was able to verify that she had the right to citizenship by service under her maiden name (presumably with proof of an indenture), the court made an exception and granted her the freedom by redemption, admitting her into the Company of Embroiderers. In theory, even women who served a full term and married a foreigner *after* completing a full apprenticeship—as per City regulation—still lost their hard-earned rights to citizenship. Elizabeth Thomas, for instance, certified that she served a full apprenticeship in tailoring to Nicholas Wesfeild, a late citizen and Draper, and 'used, carried on, and exercised the said Trade of a Taylor in the City of London' to support her family, including an elderly mother. However, after marrying Jenkin Thomas, a foreigner 'now residing in Cadiz,' she was informed upon to the Chamberlain's Court by 'envious persons unknown to your Petitioner.' She asked the court to grant her licence to carry out her trade until her husband's return, as he was technically free in the Company of Clothworkers. Her petition was successful; the repertories document her entry into the freedom in 1691.[141] Despite the regulations of coverture, the evidence suggests that prior training took precedence over marriage to a foreigner.

There are other cases of foreigners' wives petitioning for their right to the freedom while still married. In 1675, Elizabeth Guicheret, a haberdasher of small wares, was given the right to trade 'although her husband was a foreigner.'[142] Similarly, Sarah Webster was granted license to maintain her small shop, even though her husband was not free. Webster claimed to have been the wife and widow of a freeman for over fifty years before marrying a foreigner, and played upon the court's empathy as well: '[her new husband] and her being both ancient and having noe other way of support.'[143] Webster's petition ticks more than one box: not only had she been a citizen and shopkeeper for half a century, she utilizes the rhetorics of charity by emphasising her old age and lack of support. It was in the City's favour to allow her to trade; a destitute couple was a burden on the community.

It is important to emphasise that men's petitions also utilised the language of poverty to gain the sympathy of the Court. In 1697, James Williams petitioned the Aldermen to be

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[140] LMA, COL/CA/01/01/95, f. 198.
[141] LMA, COL/CA/05/02/003; COL/CA/01/01/95, f. 263; f. 269b.
[142] LMA, COL/CA/01/01/80, f. 313.
[143] LMA, COL/CA/01/01/85, f. 201.

admitted to the freedom in the Company of Joiners. The Court granted his request, requiring him to pay 'some small fine being very poore.'[144] Similarly, Thomas Buttefant, a foreigner, petitioned the Court for aid after he was arrested 'by the Instigation of the Cordwainer's Company' for 'keeping a Cobler's Stall in Aldermanbury.' He claimed to have been incarcerated for thirty-six weeks 'till his Wife and four small children were ready to starve.' Since he was unable to work, he asked the court that his wife be granted the liberty to 'work att the Trade of mending old shooes' so that 'his family may nott be utterly undone.'[145] Since men also deployed rhetorics of charity, we cannot claim that the supplicatory language of poverty was wholly the preserve of women.

Another strategy employed by petitioners was to demonstrate proof of industry. Although rare, long-standing work in a trade could substitute for an apprenticeship. Jane Pearse successfully petitioned for her freedom in 1670 after telling the court that she 'for divers yeares past used the imployment of making perukes within this citty and liberty for maintenance of herself and children.'[146] Similarly, in 1675, Elizabeth Glover, a shopkeeper, was made free after she petitioned that she 'wrought to the Exchange for divers yeares past.' Elizabeth Kelly, a foreigner's widow, claimed she 'for twenty years & upwards kept a stall for selling of fruit [...] in the cittie.'[147] It is possible that these women expected to be admitted by special post-Fire clauses that allowed non-free inhabitants into the freedom after working in the City for more than seven years. By attesting to their established industry, the women were able to legitimize their belonging in the freedom through their contribution to the renewal of commercial activity in London.

It was important for married women who petitioned for their freedom to prove that they were self-sufficient. Elizabeth Cosens, for example, petitioned the court for the freedom 'to follow the trade of milliner, being for her own support, her husband not medling with it being in the king's service.' Mary Farr had similar petition. Her husband was also in the King's Service, and she asked the Court of Aldermen to assign her the privilege to trade as a milliner, 'being for her own maytenance, her husband not intermedling with it.'[148] Both women claimed they practiced trade separately from their husbands. It is possible that they

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[144] LMA, COL/CA/05/02/003.
[145] LMA, COL/CA/05/02/001.
[146] A 'peruke' is a style of wig, 'peruke n.2,' *OED Online* (Oxford University Press), accessed May 12, 2015, http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/141644?rskey=ZiMyqi&result=1 &isAdvanced=false.
[147] LMA, COL/CA/01/01/75, f. 56; COL/CA/01/01/79, f. 343; COL/CA/01/01/81, f. 35b.
[148] LMA, COL/CA/02/004.

emphasised their independent labour to imbue a sense of desperation to their petitions and win over the sympathy of the court. It also could have been a strategy to identify themselves as *feme sole* traders. The *Liber Albus of London* defined a feme sole trader as a married woman who follows any trade in the City 'with which the husband in no way intermeddles […] such a woman shall be bound as a single women as to all that concerns her said craft.'[149] Self-sufficiency also coincided with virtuous citizenship; citizens were meant to live without dependency on the community.

These strategies demonstrate political acumen; the petitioners framed their arguments to correspond with the traditions and customs of London. However, some petitioners were not as knowledgeable of civic law and regulation. In 1669, Mary Halford petitioned the Court of Aldermen for her freedom after serving a five-year apprenticeship with Frances Halsey, a freeman's widow. Subsequently, she served two more years 'in expectation of her freedome by service not doubting […] shee had beene bound and served according to the custome.'[150] The recorder noted that 'it appearing that the said. Indt was made for five yeares through the ignorance […] of her friends.' Halford was not aware that, at least in theory, the term agreed on her indenture mattered more than time she actually served. However, the Court considered her intentions and granted her the freedom by redemption into the Company of Haberdashers. The success of her case begs the question if Halford was feigning unfamiliarity with apprenticeship regulations to gain the court's sympathy. Susanna Nowlin also pleaded ignorance when she was considered ineligible for the freedom after serving only six years of a seven-year indenture: 'your petitioner did not turne herself over [to another master] for the remainder of her term so that your petitioner cannot have her freedom by service.'[151] Smith argues that women who acknowledged ignorance in their petitions was 'the only evidence of weakness.'[152] Yet, feigning ignorance could have been a political ploy to direct blame elsewhere. In apprenticeship dissolution cases, masters sometimes maintained ignorance when they were accused of not enrolling their apprentices.[153] There is no reason to assume that apprentices would not have utilised the same tactic to obtain a favourable ruling.

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[149] John Carpenter, *Liber Albus: The White Book of the City of London*, ed. H.T. Riley (London, 1862), 181.
[150] LMA, COL/CA/01/01/74, f. 104.
[151] LMA, COL/CA/05/02/002.
[152] Smith, 'Free and Willing to Remit,' 292.
[153] Wallis, 'Labor, Law and Training,' p. 806.

Londoners by service

Women who signed apprenticeship indentures hoped to eventually gain access to the freedom. Nonetheless, it remains true that only a small number of women became citizens in early modern London. It is significant, however, that those who did not become citizens still established civic identities as 'Londoners' by completing an apprenticeship in the City. Although only one woman was formally admitted by service in the Court of Aldermen, many others successful applicants claimed to have completed an apprenticeship at one point in their lifetime. 30 per cent of petitioners justified their requests to the court on the grounds of a full or partially-completed apprenticeship. Fifteen women were indentured for the customary seven-year term; five served the full tenure. However, as discussed earlier, the length of an apprenticeship did not always matter to the Court. An apprenticeship of any considerable length demonstrated that the petitioner was willing to overcome the same hurdles and responsibilities that all citizens had to endure to gain entry to the freedom.

As we have seen in previous chapters, skilled labour and craftmanship was a source of civic pride for the City. Women who could seperate themselves from the unskilled, unapprenticed foreigner significantly increased their chances of becoming free. In a late seventeenth-century petition, Mary Howsley told the Court that she was granted the freedom by redemption for £6 after her husband died at sea before he could be formally sworn as a citizen. She asked the court to revoke the fine since 'she had duely served an apprentiship to a freeman of London' before she was married.[154] Although she had lost her status as citizen when she married a foreigner, she still believed that her apprenticeship to a freeman in London would establish belonging in lieu of her marriage. She was not wrong. Her request was granted, and she was admitted into the freedom free-of-charge.

Women's freedom petitions provide many important insights as to how women were able to legitimise their belonging in London as citizens. On the whole, the petitioners highlighted their role as economic actors and downplayed their marital statuses as wives or widows. Their petitions represent the range of topics and justifications women utilised to win the favour of the Court of Aldermen, highlighting their training, skill and industry in their craft or trade. Whatever their background, it is clear that women cared about their status in citizenship and were ready to challenge their exclusion in the public arena of civic politics.

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[154] LMA, COL/CA/05/02/004.

III.   Women and trading rights

In 1602, Common Council decried: 'Nowe of late years there be two sorts of people' who 'greatlie hinder' the urban economy: 'forryners' and 'women' who 'walke upp and downe the streetes hawking with wares.'[155] Female retailers, no matter their origin, were presented as outsiders in early modern London. Like foreigners and aliens, women who sold goods outside the watchful eye of a livery company or guild were scapegoated for the City's economic problems. Their unregulated commercial practices were blamed for 'weakenige the Cittizens in suche sorte as they shall not be hable to yelde their aide in bearinge scott and lott and other charges ordinarie and extraordinarie for mayntenance of the good estate of the said cittie.'[156] Working women were suspected of subverting economic order. Their willingness to undercut prices and hawk wares impoverished honest freemen who preserved the City's fragile stability.[157] The most frequent market offences committed by unregulated traders were categorized into acts of engrossing, regrating and forestalling. To engross was to purchase an entire stock of a particular commodity to sell at a higher price; to regrate was to buy goods in one market to sell at another; to forestall was to purchase goods before the market opened from a vendor who would otherwise have sold their goods first-hand. While men were also known to commit these offenses, women were often singled out as the main transgressors.[158]

Yet, many hucksters who were apprehended and fined for infringing market regulations had only small quantities of goods for sale in their possession. In the 1590s, one woman had 'halfe a pake of small nuttes' confiscated from her 'for forestalling and regratinge the same.' Others were charged for 'engroc[ing]' two baskets of cherries, or hawking 'a quarter of veele

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[155] LMA, COL/CC/01/01/27, f. 205.

[156] LMA, COL/CC/01/01/27, f. 7.

[157] Korda, *Labors Lost*, 144-173; Gowing, 'The Freedom of the Streets,' 130-153.

[158] Ian Archer, Caroline Barron, and Vanessa Harding, eds., *Hugh Alley's Caveat: The Markets of London in 1598* (London: London Topographical Society, 1988), 5-6. For women as 'regratesses,' see Clark, *Working Women*, 208. Margaret Dorey has shown that the Fishmongers were also known to forestall the market, 'Lewd, Idle People Selling Corrupt, Unwholesome Food?: The Construction of Street Hawkers as the Corruptive Other in 17th Century London Records' (unpublished essay, 2008), 11, 14–15. For the culture of victualling in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, see Sara Pennell, '"Great quantities of gooseberry pye and baked clod of beef': Victualling and Eating Out in Early Modern London,' in *Londinopolis: Essays in the Cultural and Social History of Early Modern London*, ed. Paul Griffiths and Mark S.R. Jenner (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), 228-249.

and certein Egges.'[159] Indeed, according to most contemporary accounts, women street sellers sold goods in modest quantities as a form of desperate, hand-to-mouth sustenance. Nonetheless, their presence on the streets—walking 'upp and downe' to hawk their goods—was perceived not only as an economic menace, but a dangerous threat to the patriarchal order.[160]

Fishwives were perceived as especially disorderly and immoral. Donald Lupton's *London and the countrey carbonadoed and quartred into seuerall characters* captures the anxious responses produced by 'fisher-woemen':

> These Crying, Wandring, and Travailing Creatures carry
> their shops on their heads, and their Store-house is
> ordinarily Billingsgate or the Bridgefoote, and their
> habitation Turnagain-lane […] Their Shoppe's but little,
> some two yards compasse, yet it holds all sorts of Fish, or
> Hearbs, or Roots, Strawberries, Apples, or Plums,
> Cowcumbers, and such like ware: Nay, it is not destitute
> some times of Nutts, and Orenges, and Lemmons. They
> are free in all places, and pay nothing for shop-rent, but
> onely finde repaires to it.[161]

With a hint of amusement, Lupton depicted women fish-sellers as itinerant, haphazard, and loud. His comment—'they are free in all places'—reflects popular anxieties of women's mobility and sexual wantonness.[162] When they are not 'wandering' or 'travailing' the streets selling fish, they are 'home' at Turnagain Lane selling their bodies to fund their debauched lifestyles. His concluding observation likens fishwives to parasites who freeloaded on the fish trade while 'pay[ing] nothing' to contribute to the overhead of the market.

In what little scholarship that exists on women's commercial activities in London, studies have overwhelmingly focused upon negative representations and experiences of

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[159] LMA, COL/CHD/CM/10/001, see also Archer, Barron and Harding, *Hugh Alley's Caveat*, 23. A 'peck' is a unit of dry goods equal to a quarter of bushel, now equivalent to two imperial gallons, 'peck n.2,' *OED Online* (Oxford University Press), accessed 2 September 2018, http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/139413?rskey=ViIKud&result= 1&isAdvanced=false.
[160] Laura Gowing, "'The Freedom of the Streets': Women and Social Space, 1560-1640," in *Londinopolis,* ed. Griffiths and Jenner, 130-153; see also Gowing, *Domestic Dangers: Women, Words, and Sex in Early Modern London* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998).
[161] Donald Lupton, *London and the countrey carbonadoed and quartred into seuerall characters* (1632), 23.
[162] Gowing, 'Freedom of the Streets,' 131.

female hucksters, especially fish-sellers.[163] For Relihan, fishwives were perceived as a 'disruptive force in need of regulation.' Spain-Savage suggested that they were consigned to 'the fringes of the fish industry' at Billingsgate, and then scapegoated 'as the cause of the place's decline and illegitimacy.'[164] Documenting the swathes of legislation aimed at regulating fishwives at the turn of the seventeenth century, Griffiths suggested that they were hostilely 'characterised as sour-minded, sour-mouthed and flirtatious' and that 'no other street seller came close to their questionable reputations.'[165]

Although prohibitions of women's retailing practices have been well documented, less has been written about the subtle—and sometimes not so subtle—discursive strategies employed by women in their efforts to negotiate belonging in the City streets and marketplaces. This section focuses upon the experiences of fishwives, fruit-sellers, and other female traders who petitioned the Court of Aldermen for the licence to carry out trade independently in the 'male' domain of the City marketplace, or to have 'standing' in a specific location to sell their wares. In the last section, we saw that women's freedom petitions often highlighted some form of civic attachment, such as an apprenticeship or patrimonial tie. This section charts the experiences of women who did not possess an obvious claim to citizenship and instead petitioned for the *licence* to trade as freewomen. Rather than depending solely on their marital status, women traders adopted a variety of strategies to negotiate occupational identities that upheld civic ideals of honest commerce and fair trade.

City Reponses to Women Traders

By now, it should not be surprising that a non-free occupational group in the City provoked anxious responses from their contemporaries. Indeed, representations of fishwives and other women traders are not far from the negative attitudes contemporaries held towards

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[163] Pamela Allen Brown, 'Jonson among the Fishwives,' *Ben Jonson Journal* 6 (1999): 89–107; Constance Relihan, 'Fishwives' Tales: Narrative Agency, Female Subjectivity, and Telling Tales out of School,' in *Early Modern Prose Fiction: The Cultural Politics of Reading*, ed. Naomi Liebler (London: Routledge, 2007), 417-34; Alena Buis, Christi Spain-Savage, and Myla E. Wright, 'Attending to Fishwives: Views from Seventeenth Century London and Amsterdam,' in *Mapping Gendered Routes and Spaces in the Early Modern World*, ed. Mary E. Weisner-Hanks (London: Routledge, 2015), 177-201; Christi Spain-Savage, 'The Gendered Place Narratives of Billingsgate Fishwives,' *Studies in English Literature 1500-1900* 56, no. 2 (2016): 417–34.
[164] Relihan, 'Fishwives' Tales,' 56-57; Spain-Savage, 'The Gendered Place Narratives of Billingsgate Fishwives,' 420.
[165] Griffiths, *Lost Londons*, 124.

porters, carmen, and watermen explored elsewhere in this thesis. As women perpetrators, however, their disorder was often cast in sexualised language.[166] For example, in 1585, the Court of Common Council labelled fishwives as 'lewd and ill disposed women,' who 'commit sundrie horrible abuses.'[167] Around the same time, the Court of Aldermen described women traders as 'a great number of lewd and evyll disposed women' who resorted to prostitution and other illicit activities 'under pretence of buying fyshe and frute at Billinsgate.'[168] Such attitudes were not limited to formal ordinances. In 1600, Alice Price, an 'oysterwoman,' was taken to Bridewell because she was a 'notorious drunkard' and 'comon whore.'[169] In 1603, three women were arrested on suspicion of 'nightwalking' under 'collor of beinge fishwives.'[170] Later, in 1635, Margaret Sadler, an 'applewoman,' was 'sent in suspiciously' for sitting out late in the night 'to sell her apples.'[171]

In 1584, Bridewell was given the task to oversee 'theappointment, nominacon, and government' of fishwives.[172] To preclude associations with prostitution and other 'lewd' behaviour, women who wanted a licence to sell fish needed to show that they were married and over the age of thirty 'at the least.' They were also required to be 'honest of good name & fame and so reported by theyre Neighbours,' and to sell fish that was 'sweete' and 'wholesome for mans bodye.'[173] Over the next decade, the licensing criteria for fishwives grew more restrictive.[174] The 1590s were years of dearth and inflation, which doubtless added a sense of urgency to the City's efforts to curb illegitimate trading.[175] In April 1590, Common Council decreed an act 'for reformacion of disorders amongst Fishwives.' It required fish-sellers to be the wives or widows of freemen, and 'certified and reported by the Aldermen of the ward or his Deputie and six other honest and substanciall Inhabitauntes.'[176] These core

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[166] For an interesting discussion of how fishwives' sexuality was 'queered' in early modern London, see Rose Angelica Hadshar, '"[T]heir tales are sweet:" A Queer Social History of Fishwives in Early Modern London' (Unpublished MA by Research dissertation, University of York, 2016).

[167] LMA, COL/CC/01/01/21, f. 418.

[168] LMA, COL/CA/01/01/21, f. 73, f. 115.

[169] BMM, BCB 4, f. 147b.

[170] BMM, BCB 4, f. 416.

[171] BMM, BCB 8, f. 63.

[172] LMA, COL/CA/CA/21, f. 115.

[173] Ibid.

[174] LMA, COL/CC/01/01/22, ff. 378b-80; LMA, COL/CC/01/01/22, f. 389; COL/CA/01/01/22, f. 176b, f. 345; COL/CA/01/01/23, f. 384, f. 514b.

[175] Archer, *Pursuit of Stability*, 9-14.

[176] LMA, COL/CC/01/01/22, ff. 378b-80.

requirements were similar to the conditions placed on Ticket Porters, who, as we can recall, were also required to obtain endorsements from the Aldermen and their neighbours.[177]

To enforce these regulations, the City ordered fishwives to wear badges. The 1584 order that introduced badges for fishwives did not give a specific number, only that the governors should licence 'as fewe as conveniently they maye.'[178] In April 1590, Common Council limited the number of badges to 120.[179] A month later, however, the number was extended to 160.[180] Scholars have often pointed to the fishwives' badges as evidence of their persecution by City authorities. Griffiths, for example, claims they were part of the larger 'anti-fishwife drive […] to stamp out the fishwife problem.'[181] These claims echo Hindle's argument that the badging of the deserving poor carried humiliating connotations meant to stigmatise parish appeals for relief.[182]

The badges worn by fishwives, however, deserve further scrutiny. A 1596 order by the Court of Aldermen described them thus:

> the Thresorer and Governors of Brydewell shall cause badges of
> lead with the Armes of this Cittie the yere of our lorde and two
> lettres for the names of the partis that shall weare them to be
> presently made.[183]

Like those worn by Ticket Porters, fishwives' badges were inscribed with the arms of the City. This doubtless afforded the badge-wearer with a sense of belonging. Fishwives' badges were not cheap: each one was made from lead and cost 6*d*.[184] Moreover, each badge was personalised with the initials of the seller's name. Although this was likely a surveillance tactic to allow the City to identify fishwives more easily, it also may have bestowed the wearer with a sense of importance and self-worth. It also meant that badge-wearers were not recognised by the generic label of a 'fishwife,' but by their individual identity. This visible amalgamation of a fishwife's initials next to the City Arms doubtless increased their

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[177] LMA, COL/CA/01/01/26(II), ff. 521-524.
[178] LMA, COL/CA/01/01/21, f. 115.
[179] LMA, COL/CC/01/01/22, ff. 378b-80.
[180] LMA, COL/CC/01/01/22, f. 389.
[181] Griffiths, *Lost Londons*, 129; see also, Hubbard, *City Women*, 205.
[182] Steve Hindle, 'Dependency, Shame and Belonging: Badging the Deserving Poor, c. 1550-1750,' *Cultural and Social History* 1, no 1 (2004): 6-35; see also, Hindle, *On the Parish? The Micro-Politics of Poor Relief in Rural England, 1550-1750* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).
[183] LMA, COL/CA/01/01/23, f. 514b.
[184] Ibid. The price was the same in 1612, see LMA, COL/CA/01/01/30, f. 175; f. 340; COL/CA/01/01/31(I), f. 186.

accountability in the eyes of their customers. Rather than stigmatising their status as beggars, the badges highlighted their City-endorsed trustworthiness to sell 'sweet' and 'wholesome' fish. In all likelihood, this increased the sellers' earnings rather than hampering them.

Yet, throughout the seventeenth century, different bodies across the City continued to police the violations of women traders. Cornhill Ward, which housed the Royal Exchange, logged a series of complaints against fruit-women, yarn-women, butter-women and other female traders in the first half of the seventeenth century. In 1610, for example, the returns accused 'div[er]s yong women & maid servants' of living in an 'idle course of life' selling apples and fruit in front of the Exchange.[185] Livery companies also specifically targeted female hawkers and street sellers. The Poulterers' Company attempted to enforce regulations against butter-women in 1614 and 1634, and eventually took over licensing women who sold butter in the 1680s.[186]

The Fishmongers were especially active in their attempts to enforce trade regulations against fishwives. Their capacity to lobby civic action was most effective in 1612 when Common Council passed another act regarding female fish-sellers, *An Act concerning Fishwives*.[187] The act divided female fish sellers discursively into deserving and undeserving poor. Echoing legislation from the 1590s, the first condition declared that licensed fishwives must be wives or widows of freemen or 'other auncient dwellers within this cittie,' at least thirty years of age, and 'of honest name and conversation.'[188] Women who met these stipulations were permitted to trade certain types of fish in designated spaces, while 'lewd women and maids' were restricted completely. The act was intended to restrain the 'greate and oppressive number of men women widowes & maides which have been tolerated & permitted to carrie & convey, oysters ffishe fruite Roots, & other victuall about the streets lanes & other places.'[189] As Dorey points out, although men were mentioned as potential

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185 LMA, COL/W/HF/001/MS04069/001, f. 118.
186 LMA, COL/CA/01/01/36, f. 52b; f. 369b; COL/CA/01/01/52, ff. 283b-284; GL, MS 2168 f. 5; GL, MS 2148/1, ff. 31b-45. For contemporary anxieties about food quality and regulations against street victuallers, see Margaret Dorey, 'Unwholesome for Man's Body?: Concerns about food quality and regulation in London c1600 – c1740' (Ph.D. thesis, University of Western Australia, 2011), 115-155. For more anti-women regulations by the Weavers and other livery companies, see Alfred Plummer, *The London Weavers Company 1600-1970* (London: Routledge, 1972), 60-61; Hilda Smith, *All Men and Both Sexes*, 73-109.
187 LMA, COL/CC/01/01/28, ff. 300-301b.
188 LMA, COL/CC/01/01/28, ff. 300-301b.
189 Ibid.

lawbreakers, the use of three different identifications for women's involvement exposes the City's primary concern towards female culprits.[190]

Throughout the period, the Fishmongers continued to lobby civic authorities to suppress the practices of fishwives, who were often accused of forestalling the markets at Billingsgate and Leadenhall. After the 1612 act, the company had more success in 1644, when Common Council passed an act for the suppression of street hawkers, enforced by the Court of Aldermen two years later.[191] Further attempts to coax civic action in the late 1660s were met with reluctance, due in part to relaxed restrictions of trade as civic authorities became more concerned with rebuilding and sustaining the populace after the Great Fire in 1666.[192] In 1699, the Fishmongers' vigorous campaigns to prevent Billingsgate from becoming a free fish market failed outright.[193] Although this was a small victory for fishwives, women traders were still heavily restricted in the urban economy well into the eighteenth century.

Multiple Identities of the London Fishwives

After travelling to the Low Countries in 1614, Tobias Gentleman contrasted Dutch fishwives with their English counterparts:

> Where and when the Holland pinks commeth in, there
> daily the Merchants, that be but women, but not such
> women as the fishwives of Billingsgate, for these
> Netherland women do lade away many wagons with
> fresh fish daily […] I have seene these women
> Merchants have had their Aprones full...[194]

Unlike the vagrant fishwomen of Billingsgate, Dutch fishwives were astute businesswomen who knew how to turn a profit. The comparison is intriguing: the latter were portrayed as industrious, middle-class women who managed their own shops or stalls in city marketplaces. London's fishwives, on the other hand, were tied to their reprobate status as street walkers.

Historians have uncritically perpetuated Gentleman's view, grouping English fishwives, and women traders more generally, into a homogenous category of petty retailers

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[190] Dorey, 'Unwholesome for Man's Body?,' 207.
[191] LMA, COL/CC/01/01/29, f. 303b; COL/CA/01/01/61, f. 59; COL/CA/01/01/62, f. 191; f. 202.
[192] Kellett, 'Breakdown of Gild and Corporation Control,' 381-382.
[193] *An Act for Making Billingsgate a Free Market for Sale of Fish*, 1699, 10 Wil. 3., c. 13.
[194] Tobias Gentleman, *England's Way to Win Wealth, and to employ Ships and Marriners* (1614), 16.

that lived hand-to-mouth on the fringes of society.[195] Buis, Spain-Savage and Wright compared Dutch and English stereotypes of fishwives to suggest that 'portrayals of Dutch fishwives reveal a tendency towards their social and economic assimilation, [whereas] representations of their English counterparts underscore an entrenched societal unease regarding women street sellers.'[196] While their study does well to highlight that there was more than one 'type' of early modern fishwife, they problematically present a monolithic version of the London fish-seller as a flattened experience of unregulated, illegitimate street selling.

However, the term 'fishwife' was imprecisely defined. First, not all 'fishwives' were wives—many unlicensed fish-sellers were singled out as underage and/or unmarried.[197] Nor were all unregulated fish-sellers women, as demonstrated at Bridewell in May 1603:

> John Abbott of St Sepulchers parish London being put in
> Court & examined how many Servauntes he keeps to goe
> about with the fish or other wares saith he keeps none but
> Joane Lucas now prisoner in this house, and that he nor his
> wife have no anie license to sell fishe.[198]

Though Abbott and his wife employed a female servant to sell fish, he is publicly identified as a porter. It is interesting that he was prosecuted at Bridewell and not at Fishmongers' Hall or the Court of Aldermen, who normally oversaw male market abuses concerning fish.[199] It is likely that the Abbotts ran a dual-business household, and the unnamed wife was the main transgressor. Of course, it is also very possible that Abbott himself moonlighted as a 'fishwife.' As a porter, he surely spent enough time at the market to dabble in related commercial work. Whatever the case, his account suggests that more men may have acted as 'fishwives' but were identified in the formal record by their legitimate, masculine occupations.

Moreover, the occupational group known as 'fishwives' was not limited to purveyors of seafood. Women who sold fish also sold a variety of products, including fruit, nuts, and herbs. As Lupton anxiously observed, 'they change every day almost, for she that was this

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[195] See, for example, Griffiths, *Lost Londons*, 123-134; Korda, *Labors Lost*, 144-173; Spain-Savage, 'The Gendered Place Narratives of Billingsgate Fishwives,' 417-34.
[196] Buis, Spain-Savage, and Wright, 'Attending to Fishwives,'185.
[197] See, for example, BMM, BCB 7, f. 7b; f. 344b.
[198] BMM, BCB 4, f. 378.
[199] For example, see GL, MS 5570/1, ff. 396, 442; MS 5570/2, ff. 437-8, 557; GL, MS 570/3, 185, 217, 942, 946 & 958; see also, Dorey, 'Unwholesome for Man's Body?,' 17.

day for fish, may be tomorrow for fruit; next day for herbs, another for roots.'[200] The fish trade—like other perishable commodities in the capital—was seasonal. As Susan Bordman explained in 1621, 'she getteth her living by selling of fish & other things as the seaseon afordeth.'[201] Indeed, the regulatory acts and ordinances regarding fishwives were inclusive of nearly every victual imported into the early modern City. For instance, the 1590 'reformacion of disorders amongst Fishwives' included those who 'sell Oysters, Mussles, cockelles, nutts, Ploumes, or other victuals fish or fruite whatsoever.'[202] These all-encompassing labels were not limited to formal legislation. In February 1606, Johan Roberts and two other women were recorded in the Bridewell Minute Books as 'fishwomen' to be kept at the Lord Mayor's Pleasure.[203] The same month, Roberts's case was put before the governors 'for selling oranges without licence.'[204] Occupational categories such as 'fishwife' should thus be taken with a grain of salt. Women who sold fish could also be branded as herb-wives, oyster-wenches, fruit-women, butter-women, apple-women, orange-women, and other ostensibly precise occupational labels.

Most important, not all fishwives were proscribed. The colourful accounts of vagrant street sellers that have gripped the imagination of both contemporaries and historians reveal another category of female retailers who remain partially visible in the records of Bridewell, namely the mistresses and 'dames' who—like Abbott above—employed young women and servants to sell on their behalf. In April 1603, Bridewell authorities sent Elizabeth Williams back to her mistress 'goodwife Jones a fishwife dwelling in Rutland Court neere Puddlewharf.'[205] Similarly, in September 1622, Susan Edes was punished for vagrancy at Bridewell and 'sent home to her Mistress an herbewoman from whence shee runneth away.'[206] In 1633, Alice Taylor was brought before the governors 'for selling fish in the streets to enchance the prices of fish to the hinderance of the poore.' She was sent back 'to her Dame an applewoman.'[207] Other entries are more overt. In June 1601, Francis Wilkinson alias Griffin, Suzan Scarlett, Dorothy Clarke, and Goodwife Moore 'were brought into this hospital by warrant of this house for keepeing of wenches to crye fishe about the cittie and

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[200] Lupton, *London and the Countrey Carbonadoed*, 94.
[201] GL, 9065A/5, 12 Dec 1621.
[202] LMA, COL/CC/01/01/22, f. 379.
[203] BMM, BCB 5, f.163b
[204] BMM, BCB 5, f.164.
[205] BMM, BCB 4, f. 366b.
[206] BMM, BCB 6, f. 298.
[207] BMM, BCB 7, f. 344b.

for forestalling markets.' The same year, Johan Procter and Jane Wilkinson alias Griffin brought to Bridewell for employing three 'wenches and maydes to crye fysh about the citty.'[208] These final examples were brought to the attention of Bridewell not because they were women who contracted other women to sell fish in the City, but because they did so without a licence.

Moreover, some fishwives appear to have been modestly wealthy. On 14 June, 1595, the Lord Mayor wrote a letter to Burghley relating a remarkable incident that occurred at Billingsgate Market the day before. A group of apprentices were sent to the market to purchase mackerel, but upon realising that a group of Southwark fishwives had 'purchased the whole store,' the apprentices followed them over the River, seized the fish—one imagines quite violently—and paid them 'a former price set by the then Lord Mayor.'[209] Seaver highlighted this account to demonstrate the level of animosity contemporaries felt toward female fish sellers, as well as the sort of hands-on regulation enforced by those even on the lower end of London society.[210] It is also worth pointing out, however, that the fishwives under attack were wealthy enough to buy the *entire* stock of mackerel. A similar view was narrated in a late seventeenth-century ballad, *Joyful news for maids and young women*. The ballad described an angry mob of young women attacking a fishwife after she engrossed a shipment of 'white-puddings':

> There came an Old Fish-woman,
> Countess of *Billingsgate;*
> And she bid ready-money
> for all the whole Ships-Fraight:
> The Women up with puddings,
> and knockt her o're the pate.[211]

Other than demonstrating contemporary attitudes toward market women, this verse exemplifies the different sorts of women retailers in the City and the conflicting attitudes they

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[208] BMM, BCB 4, f. 240, 242. I have not been able to find evidence of a relationship between Francis and Jane 'Wilkinson alias Griffin,' but it is possible they were kin. A petition from a group of fishwives claimed that they sold fish 'as theire Mothers before them,' which suggests that fish-selling might have been a family business, LMA, CLA/011/AD/01/013; for more on this petition, see below, 224-226.

[209] Remembrancia, 2: 97; 98. London witnessed two food riots in the summer of 1595, see John Stow, *The Annales of Generall Chronicle of England* (1615), 768.

[210] Paul Seaver, 'Apprentice Riots in Early Modern London,' in *Violence, Politics, and Gender in Early Modern England*, ed. Joseph P. Ward (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 26.

[211] *Joyful news for maids and young women* [1688-1692].

conjured. On the one hand, the ballad perpetuates the stereotype of women street sellers who were prone to brawling, scolding and other forms of petty violence. On the other hand, we have an 'old Fish-woman' who is mockingly described as the 'Countess' of the fish market. Yet, derision aside, she is able to purchase the entire ship cargo, which suggests business acumen and wealth. As Monteyne notes, the fantastical representations of brawling and scolding fishwives should 'in no uncertain terms be taken to express the reality of the status of Billingsgate women.'[212]

The presence of women traders who employed servants to sell fish and other wares on their behalf raises doubts over the tendency of contemporary and historical accounts to group commercially active women into a tidy group of marginalised street sellers. Pennington has demonstrated that women were a common sight in the marketplace and often managed market stalls on account of their husband's trade.[213] Hugh Alley's 1598 drawings of London markets depict women sitting at stalls vending a variety of foodstuff, including fruit, eggs, tripe and other products [see fig 4.1]. However, this is not to follow Pennington's claim that they enjoyed a 'rough and ready' equality in the marketplace, nor anywhere else in the early modern City.[214] Indeed, Alley was ordered by the Lord Mayor to 'move' fishwives from 'comon sittings in Cheapside' in 1601, much to the approval of the Fishmongers.[215] Most women were restricted to specific zones in the market, and even legitimate market women were susceptible to negative attitudes towards their presence in the male-orientated, civic domain of the marketplace. Yet, figures for the period from 1570 to 1725 have shown that the spaces in which female retailers inhabited were changing, with more women in shops than the streets.[216] In line with this trend, there are records that demonstrate a small number of fishwives and other women traders who were culturally and economically separate from makeshift, itinerant sellers.[217]

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[212] Joseph Monteyne, *From Still Life to Screen: Print Culture, Display, and the Materiality of the Image in Eighteenth-Century London* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2013), 28.
[213] David Pennington, '"Three Women and a Goose make a Market": Representations of Market Women in Seventeenth-Century Popular Literature,' *The Seventeenth Century* 25, no. 1 (2010): 27-48.
[214] Pennington, '"Three Women and a Goose make a Market,"' 39.
[215] Archer, Barron, and Harding, eds., *Hugh Alley's Caveat*, 137.
[216] Reinke-Williams, *Women, Work and Sociability*, 124-6.
[217] For an engaging analysis of the financial diversity of early modern Dutch fishwives, see Danielle van den Heuvel, 'The Multiple Identities of Early Modern Dutch Fishwives,' *Signs* 37, no. 3 (2012): 587-94.
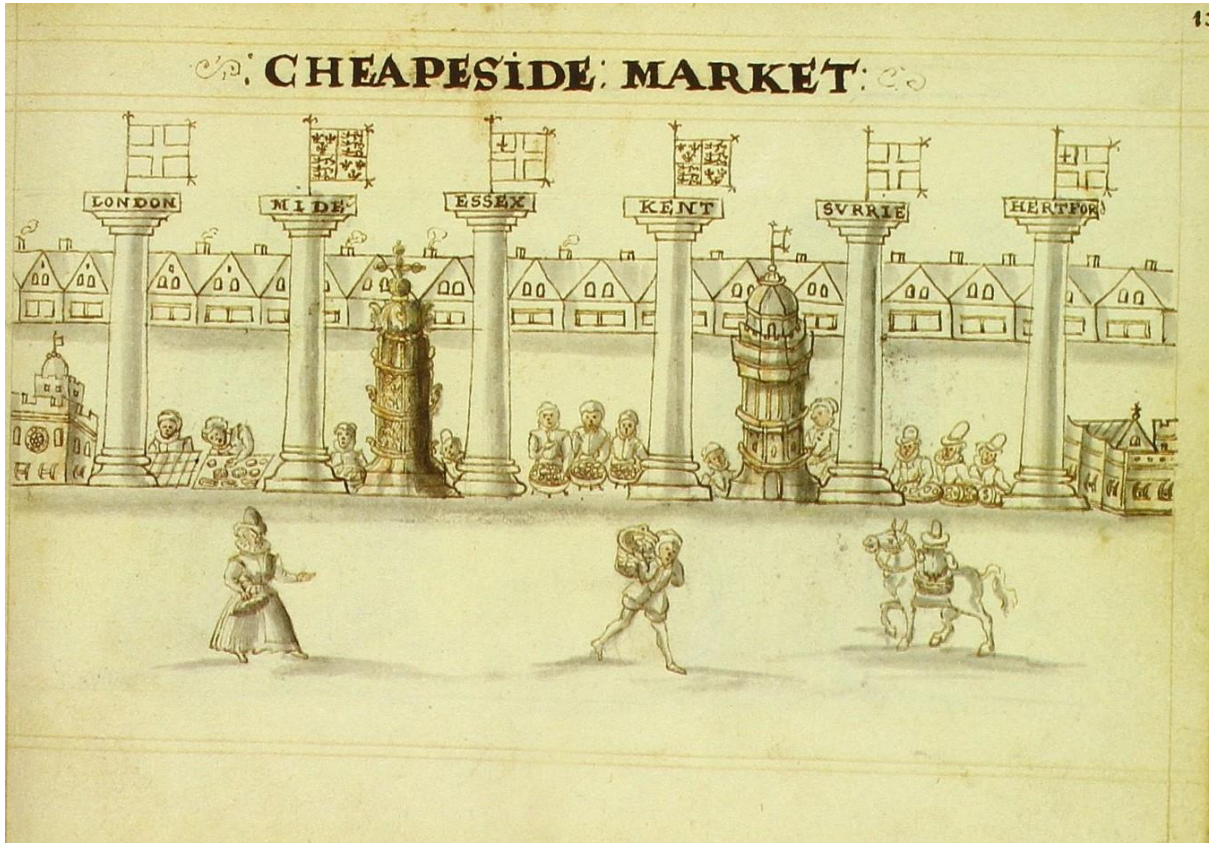
Figure 4.1. Cheapside Market in 1598. From Hugh Alley, *A Caveatt for the Cittie of London*; frontispiece of Archer, Baron and Harding, *Hugh Alley's Caveat*.

The Politics of Fishwives and Fruit-women

Previous accounts of women's commercial activities have suggested that women were severely circumscribed in the early modern London economy.[218] Less discussed is the other side of women's commercial practices: those who *were* licensed to trade. As Reinke-Williams points out, most evidence of women retailers concerns those who practiced their trade illegitimately, and so we know little about the ones who did conform to civic expectation.[219] However, there are hints. The final section of this chapter explores women's petitions to legitimise their work as fishwives, fruit-sellers and in other commercial activities. Their ability to adopt the regulatory language meant to exclude them highlights the accessibility of civic culture in early modern London.

In June 1628, the repertories logged a remarkable petition 'in the name of auntient poore Fishwives' against four 'foreign fishwives' who 'ingrosses and buy upp all fishe that come to Billingsgate, and doe imploye about two hundred yong wenches to sell the same.'[220] The language of the petition explicitly borrows from civic rhetorics: the fishwives present themselves as legitimate fish sellers against illegitimate 'foreigners.' Although this is an exceptional case, it demonstrates that the exclusionary rhetorics against fishwives could be adopted and manipulated by female fish sellers themselves.

The physical document no longer exists. However, the court also mentions that the petitioners described themselves as 'ancient.' As we can recall, contemporaries perceived young fishwives and maids as dangerous to the social order; their 'lewd' and idle' behaviour incited suspicion in the minds of male civic leaders. The petitioners therefore may have used the term 'ancient' to underscore their old age in order to imply that they were not a threat to the moral economy.[221] The court had considered a similar petition in 1631 by a group calling themselves 'the poore milke women,' who complained about 'young mades and wenches that buy up the milke and sell it againe within this citty.' The milk women's petition was successful, and the court ordered that the young milk sellers 'be supressed.'[222] By presenting themselves as 'Ancient poore fishwives' and 'poore milke women,' both groups played upon

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[218] See, for example, Spain-Savage, 'The Gendered Place Narratives of Billingsgate Fishwives,' 417-34; Gowing, 'Freedom of the Streets,'130-154; 'The Female Labour Market in London in the Late Seventeenth and Early Eighteenth Centuries,' 328-353.
[219] Reinke-Williams, *Women, Work and Sociability*, 124.
[220] LMA, COL/CA/01/01/42, f. 214b.
[221] Griffiths, *Lost Londons*, 130.
[222] LMA, COL/CA/01/01/45, f. 296b-297.

the rhetorics of charity and placed themselves into the discursive category of 'deserving' poor.

It is also possible that the petitioners were continuing their rhetorical alignment with the City's legitimate tradesmen. The term 'ancient' resonated with the sort of language that was utilised to describe the City's venerable past. Citizens were often described as 'ancient inhabitants' of London. Unlike strangers and foreigners who were unfamiliar and new, 'ancient inhabitants' were freemen with longstanding roots in the City. Contemporary literature waxed lyrical on men whose lives were intertwined in the antiquity of the city. The strategy is similar to that of the Ticket Porters who called themselves 'ancient foreigners' to underscore their long-standing affiliation with the City. By presenting themselves as 'ancient' fishwives and separating themselves from illegitimate, young traders, the petitioners asserted their legitimacy in the civic economy.

Forty years later, in 1668, the Court of Aldermen received a petition from 'divers poor women […] selling of fish' for the 'liberty and protection' to continue their employment and 'means of livelihood' free from 'divers abuses' that have 'lately been prosecuted against them.'[223] The sympathetic tone of the register foreshadows the favourable ruling towards the fishwives' request. The Aldermen determined that all prosecutions against the fishwives 'for using that employment' to be stayed until officers of the petitioners' wards could investigate further. Although a physical copy of the petition does not exist in the papers of the Court of Aldermen, an undated document matching its description has survived among the papers of the Leadenhall Market.[224]

Four women signed the Leadenhall petition: Mary Hinde, Anne Bergin, Judith Clerk, and Margaret Holmes. Like the petitioners recorded in the Repertories, the women sought respite from prosecutions perpetrated against them by the Fishmongers' Company. Addressed to the Lord Mayor and Aldermen, the fishwives framed their petition to present themselves as legitimate traders and contributors to the civic commonwealth. Yet, instead of asserting their right to the marketplace by their marital status as wives or widows of citizens, the women crafted occupational identities based on the ideals of the City freedom.

The fishwives opened their petition with the declaration that they paid 'above eight pounds per annum' to 'have standings' in the Greenyard of Leadenhall.[225] This is a

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[223] LMA, COL/CA/01/01/78, ff. 51-52b.
[224] The file in the Leadenhall Market records contains two seventeenth-century petitions, both of which appear to be copies of the non-extant original, LMA, CLA/011/AD/01/013.
[225] LMA, CLA/011/AD/01/013.

significant sum; it shows off their financial stability and situates them as wealthy participants in the market. They were careful to address popular stereotypes of women traders by highlighting their static attachment to a City market. Paying rent not only demonstrates their contribution to the financial sustainability of Leadenhall, but also separates them from stereotypes of makeshift street sellers stealing profit from male merchants. Unlike the ambiguous, changing work identity of street sellers, the petitioners highlight their roles as stable market women with clear, fixed identities.

As stationary tenants, they further attested their legitimacy by appealing to tradition: 'without interruption have some of [us] satt and sold fish there above 40 years. and theire Mothers before them as long a time.'[226] Remarkably, the women claim their right to civic space by matrilineal inheritance. The term 'satt' is important as well: they do not 'gad' or 'walk' as disorderly sellers but have occupied the same place for more than one generation.[227] As Buis, Spain-Savage, and Wright have shown, the static domain of the marketplace might have eased anxious responses to women traders.[228] A stall or booth could resemble a microcosm of the domestic sphere—a fixed space in the market that confirmed a woman's place and commercial duties in the household. However, this status is not without some tension—the seller's agency is not situated within the private or semi-private realm of the house or doorstep but in the open commerce of the City. Women who sold from fixed positions were still viewed suspiciously—and not always without cause. In October 1627, Anne Lancaster was put before Bridewell governors because she was found with another man 'together in a stall where she selleth things at 12 o clocke at night.' A year later, Suzan Slugger, 'a Fisherwoman' was found 'lying under a stall' at night.[229] With this is mind, operating from the confines of a market stall was still not enough to quell anxious responses to their business practices. To succeed, the women needed to downplay their ostensible sexual licentiousness as women retailers. By pointing out that they have been selling fish for nearly half a century the women confirmed that they surpassed the thirty-year age requirement of women fish sellers, and presented themselves as mature, orderly, and respectable traders.

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[226] LMA, CLA/011/AD/01/013.
[227] For anxious responses to itinerant women, see Gowing, 'The Freedom of the Streets,'131.
[228] Buis, Spain-Savage, and Wright, 'Attending to Fishwives,' 189.
[229] BMM, BCB 7, f. 44b; f. 97.

The fishwives in the 1668 Leadenhall petition also asserted financial independence, not only 'for the maintenance of themselves' but their families as well. Shephard has shown that contemporaries gauged the social credit of labourers by their ability to live independently from charity.[230] They were thus quick to point out that their presence in the marketplace was not at the expense of the community. Highlighting their contribution to the City commonwealth, the fishwives maintain that their trade preserves the greater good of society. The women claimed that they 'have been found to be very useful and commodious in supplying people that come thither to market with greater or lesser quantities of fish at reasonable rates as occasion hath required.' Here, they also demonstrate their aptitude for fair trade and honest business. As Muldrew demonstrated, maintaining reasonable prices through open competition was highly regarded in the early modern economy.[231] Lastly, the women made sure to mention that they purchase their fish at Billingsgate Market 'as the fishmongers do' to disqualify any accusation of forestalling.

A common phrase utilised by women in their petitions regarding trading rights was to 'have standing.' Phelby Young, for example, told the Court of Aldermen that she 'took a standing by St Dunstans church and sold apples and oranges […] and by her care got herself an Honest but poor livelyhood.'[232] To 'have standing' implies possession of space; it separates settled, established traders from unlicensed, displaced street sellers. Appealing to 'have standing' is a spatial negotiation that imparts belonging to the possessor. 'Standing' also had a hierarchal element. As Gowing points out, women competed over standing space in the City marketplaces. In 1591, a group of butter-women fell into a dispute in Cheapside. One woman told the other to 'get her down to the lower end of the market like a whore as she was and a theif.' The other responded, 'Down with her she may stand beneath at the cart's arse well enough for she is a whore a filth and an arrant theif.'[233] Other than highlighting the colourful language that made street sellers notorious, this incident demonstrates that standing was not only a physical designation of a seller's territory, but a social position and place in the marketplace pecking order.

The term 'standing' had a more specific meaning in the City marketplace as well. Other than physically inhabiting a fixed place, it could denote a stall or booth in a designated

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[230] Alexandra Shephard, 'Poverty, Labour and the Language of Social description in Early Modern England,' *Past and Present* 201 (2008): 51-95.
[231] Craig Muldrew, *The Economy of Obligation: The Culture of Credit and Social Relations in Early Modern England* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 1998), 127.
[232] LMA, COL/CA/05/02/003.
[233] LMA, DL/C 213, f. 103; quoted from Gowing 'Freedom of the Streets,' 143.

area.[234] As we recall, the fishwife petition argued that the women had 'standings' in the Greenyard in Leadenhall. However, legitimized standing was not confined to City markets. Elizabeth Kelly, for example, told the Court of Aldermen in 1673 that she 'for upwards 20 years hath kept a stall constantly for selling of fruit,' but does not mention a specific market where she traded.[235] Due to the perishable nature of food products, the Court of Aldermen had granted members of the Fruiterers' Company the ability to 'stand and sell their fruit in the streets of the City from morning until sunsett on all our market days' in 1618.[236]

An undated petition written to the Court of Aldermen by a group of non-free fruit sellers asked the court for the same privilege. Signed by eight women, the petitioners claimed they had sold fruit against the dead wall in St. Andrews Holborn (in Farringdon Without), in a 'just way, with great care and pains.'[237] Only two of the women are identified by their marital status (both widows), the remaining six are identified only by their occupation as fruit-sellers. The oldest amongst them is a widow who has held standing there for '32 years or whereabouts,' and that they all 'in general have no other visible way of getting their Bread and providing for their […] Families.' The tone of their petition is more desperate than examples outlined above. Unlike middle-class fishwives at Leadenhall, the non-free fruiterers did not pay rent at a market but claimed to 'have standing' next to a 'dead wall.'[238] The specific designation of place is important; they assert their spatial claim over a particular area of the City they believed to be their own. Without any financial means of support, their belonging in the City is predicated upon a long-standing tradition of selling fruit in the same physical place for more than three decades. Rather than having little attachment to public spaces outside the home, fishwives and fruit-sellers claimed the City as their own.

Women's status in the freedom was remarkably ambiguous. Some women were granted the official title of 'Citizen,' but were not allowed to participate in the traditional realm of civic politics. Others were barred from formal membership, but allowed certain privileges of the freedom, namely the right to practice trade in the City. Yet, women's petitions to civic authorities demonstrate the different ways women possessed social, economic and political agency in customs and practices associated with civic culture. Although their numbers are small, these petitions complicate the rigid separation between the 'formal' male economy and

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[234] 'standing n.5.,' *OED Online* (Oxford University Press), accessed June 19, 2015, http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/188987?rskey=5kO9Y0&result=2&isAdvanced=false.
[235] LMA, COL/CA/01/01/79, f. 343.
[236] LMA, COL/CA/01/01/38, f. 37.
[237] LMA, COL/CA/05/02/002.
[238] Ibid.

the 'casual' female economy. Rather, as this chapter has shown, we need to pay more attention to the language women used to define their commercial existence and the different aspects of their lives they emphasised to gain legitimacy in civic courts.

Their motivations were manifold. Fruit-women confidently asserted their ownership over public spaces of the City. Female apprentices submitted bills of dissolution when their masters or mistresses failed to live up to their expectation. Others petitioned for their freedom by highlighting their skill or previous training to win the favour of the court—a tactic commonly utilised by men as well. Significantly, many of these women petitioned the courts not as wives or widows, but as independent occupational actors with long-standing businesses or trades.

The most striking aspect of women's engagement in civic politics is its sense of routineness. The courts never commented upon the absurdity of women discharging themselves from formal apprenticeships, claiming their status as citizens, or negotiating trading rights as fishwives. Rather, the City treated their complaints seriously. The Court of Aldermen often sent the Chamberlain to research specific cases, and sometimes the Mayor's Court imposed lengthy arbitration to determine a guilty party in apprenticeship disputes. Whatever their ultimate goal, these petitions, and the responses they elicited, demonstrate that women were active participants in London's political culture—there was nothing 'casual' about it.

Conclusion: Freedoms of the City

In October 2016, Britain was told 'if you believe you're a citizen of the world, you're a citizen of nowhere.' Those who disregard national boundaries, it was claimed, 'don't understand what the very word 'citizenship' means.'

Such declarations ignore the long and contested history of citizenship and mistakenly assume that the term 'citizen' is static and inert. The image of nations as polarised into binary oppositions of citizens and foreigners has distant echoes in early modern urban communities. Much like politicians today, civic magistrates in London packaged individuals and groups into tidy dichotomies to instil a sense of harmony into their surroundings. The most important of these barriers, as Griffiths puts it, 'was the one that divided citizens from the ragbag unfree with no rights or roots in the city.'[1] This comment, though deliberately styled to emulate contemporary sentiments, is equally reflective of how scholarship has characterised individuals who did not possess the freedom of the City. Although historians have looked beyond rose-tinted accounts of civic order and stability, they continue to perpetuate contemporary attitudes that regard non-citizen groups as monolithically poor and powerless. The result of this approach is a very particular image of London's political culture that is confined to the 'formal' participation of the male 'middling sort.' However, as the past few chapters have shown, the assumption that the freedom was the sole preserve of citizens has been left intact for too long.

This thesis has shown that the boundaries of the freedom were permeable. Groups outside London's corporate system had access to civic culture and were able to claim rights and privileges associated with citizenship using the very rhetorics that were designed to exclude them. By limiting our understanding of power dynamics to the formal sphere of 'Politics'—office-holding, franchise, and other modes of central governance—historians have ignored the instrumental micro-politics of what it was to live and work in early modern London. Instead, this thesis has demonstrated the importance of the politics of identity, belonging and place, especially for peripheral groups who did not seamlessly fit into corporate culture and were thus required to adopt and/or invent new ways to negotiate their rights and privileges in the City.

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[1] Paul Griffiths, *Lost Londons: Change, Crime, and Control in the Capital City, 1550-1660* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 142.

A clearer understanding of the politics of London's quasi-free groups demonstrate the ambiguous and imprecise ways civic identity and occupational identity were construed and deployed in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. London's political culture was not confined to the liveried men of the Court of Aldermen, but a wide range of occupational groups that have been hitherto judged too poor and too disorderly to participate in City politics. By addressing these misconceptions head on, this thesis has occupied an important gap in our understanding of the society, economy and civic culture of early modern London. This reorientation of the City's political and economic culture has engendered several new observations about the nature and extent of civic participation that both complicates and challenges previous scholarship.

First, this thesis has made a substantial contribution to our understanding of men and women's work in the early modern period. By focusing upon occupations and occupational identities outside the behemoth of corporate culture, each chapter provided a comprehensive account of one of London's forgotten working class populations. The results, however, were unexpected. Surviving evidence—hitherto neglected by historical scholarship—illustrated that London's 'labouring multitudes' of carmen, porters, watermen and women traders were characterised by financial and social gradation. Despite contemporary and historical stereotypes, these groups were, for the most part, skilled in terms of bodily knowledge and technical craft. Moreover, each occupation required capital investment—from the carman's cart and horses to the fishwife's rent at Leadenhall Market. A closer analysis of these groups—moving beyond impersonal employment structures based upon numbers and statistics—has provided new insights into the history of labour in the period. In some cases, it has changed how we perceive the 'labouring' aspect of working groups altogether. As we saw especially with the carmen and watermen, many individuals who were associated with a labouring occupation did not, in fact, labour.

Second, the political participation of labouring groups has important implications for our understanding of non-free and quasi-free fellowships in early modern London. Each industry highlighted in this thesis was vital to the smooth running of the City—whether it entailed the transfer of goods and people or the retail of 'wholesome' food. Although the creation of these organisations has been understood as a form of 'top-down' control, it is clear that membership in these bodies provided a powerful resource for marginalised groups to negotiate civic rights. Harris argued that the key 'instrument of politicization' for excluded

groups was through their experience of authority.[2] This was made clear in the different ways the carmen, porters and watermen legitimised their claims for incorporation by adopting rhetorics associated with their regulation and control. Similarly, women working in a range of occupations manipulated the regulatory languages used to supress their commercial activities to assert their belonging as citizens. As highlighted throughout each chapter, there was a marked change over time in the different strategies employed by each group in their negotiations with the City and Crown. These developments can be attributed to a gradual shift in public attitudes towards these occupations and the freedom more generally, as well as rapid bursts of change in events like the Civil Wars and the Great Fire.

This thesis has also demonstrated that individuals and groups who did not formally belong within the corporate system adopted rhetorics and practices associated with the freedom to negotiate political power in the City. To fully demonstrate this point, each chapter employed manuscript and printed petitions written to different City and Crown representatives. These documents have proven to be a rich source and offered compelling evidence regarding the political ambitions held by carmen, porters, watermen and women traders, both in terms of their detailed content and authorship, as well as the sense of conversation that existed between various players in the City. More generally, these petitions demonstrate the undeniable importance of civic rhetorics in political negotiations, and how near-identical languages and vocabulary could be appropriated and exploited by various groups to achieve different ends.

An ongoing theme within this study is the way in which civic control was harnessed and politized by individuals and groups occupying both the periphery and the centre. Consequently, regulatory practices that have been formerly viewed as humiliating or shameful are reconstituted in a different light. The badging of 'low' occupational groups—such as the Ticket Porters and fishwives—was a major step towards regulating the group *and* legitimising their participation in the urban economy. Similarly, the licensing and imprinting of carts with the City arms underscored the carmen's essential service to the economy. These practices were not only essential to civic surveillance and control but considerably supported campaigns to highlight each groups' attachment to the City. These practices may have also contributed to the way in which different individuals associated with these occupations experienced a sense of collective identity. As visible symbols of their belonging, badges and

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[2] Tim Harris, 'Introduction,' in *The Politics of the Excluded, c. 1500-1800*, ed. Tim Harris (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001), 8.

licences may have provided a form of livery that mirrored the conventions of formal companies.

This thesis has also reconsidered the prevailing narrative of historical scholarship that has uncritically categorised men and women's work outside the corporate system as wholly illegitimate. Rather, each of these groups occupied a different position of belonging in civic culture that was both flexible and contested. The City's hazy articulation and enforcement of the freedom meant that civic labels were used imprecisely. Accordingly, the individual and collective identities of Londoners associated the Fellowships of Carmen, Watermen and Ticket Porters' acquired a variety of labels over the course of the period. They were inconsistently referred to as a 'company,' 'fraternity' 'corporation' and 'fellowship,' indicating that historians should not overemphasise the significance of such labels in modern studies. In a similar vein, women retailers in the City possessed a range of civic and occupational identities outside their marital status. All these labels were politically charged: each was a social, economic and cultural identity that publicly imparted different degrees of inclusion within the City. The stories of the groups and individuals behind these labels are an important reminder not to simply rehash these terms but situate them into their full political context.

This thesis has also drawn attention to civic identities absent from the current historiography. Peripheral groups did not only adopt pre-existing civic terminology to claim political and economic rights in the City but paved the way for new identities as well. The Ticket Porters, for example, borrowed from the civic ethos of antiquity and nostalgia to textually invent the identity of an 'ancient foreigner' in order to separate non-free members from newly-arrived migrant workers in the City. Women also exploited ambiguous labels of belonging. In chapter 4, we can recall a group of women retailers identifying as 'ancient fishwives' to distance themselves from illegitimate traders. These blurry categories demonstrate that belonging in the City cannot be dichotomised by sharp distinctions between freemen and outsiders. Rather, different markers of belonging—such as long-standing residence—could be used to negotiate the economic and political rights that traditionally accompanied citizenship.

The case studies of the carmen and watermen have also challenged the view that their political activities in the mid-seventeenth century were constituent of a larger anti-oligarchical movement in the City. A closer reading of primary sources, combined with biographical research into the lives of major figures, generates doubt that their petitions and appeals were the product of a grassroots revolution for free elections and equal

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representation. Rather, this study has focused upon the politics of the carmen and watermen in the 1640s and early 1650s to highlight the different ways that civic rhetorics could be utilised by peripheral groups to negotiate political power. While it is tempting to view these politics as 'bottom-up,' the material realities of the key petitioners contribute to a growing body of literature that overturns the polarisation of 'popular' and 'elite' political participation. Moreover, these sections have highlighted the importance of supplementing textual analysis of political documents with biographical details of the individuals who engineered them. Closer attention to the innerworkings of fellowship politics has revealed that we cannot simplify their disputes as class conflict between the rich and the poor.

Another important theme throughout the thesis was the way in which marginalised groups participated in civic culture through the organisation and management of apprenticeships. By extending research to records outside company archives, occupational groups not normally associated with formal skills training are shown to have had an instrumental role in freedom apprenticeships. This is especially important for our understanding of women's work and engagement with civic culture. Analyses of dissolution petitions in the Lord Mayor's Court—a particularly neglected trove of information— highlighted the surprising ways women were involved in apprenticeships. More significantly, these records reveal that that women were not hesitant to petition civic courts on behalf of themselves or a relative regarding matters associated with civic rights and responsibilities.

Unlike many occupations outside the formal guild structure, carmen and watermen were required to undergo apprenticeships before joining their fellowships and practicing their trades. This overlooked condition of their membership has important implications for how they crafted their appeals to City leaders. As discussed throughout this thesis, completing an apprenticeship was an important demonstration of one's belonging in the City. By regulating the quality of incoming members, the carmen and watermen were able to situate themselves above other labouring groups and fashion a more legitimate corporate persona. This sort of company-building was especially important for the carmen's attempts to justify their claim for Royal incorporation in the final decade of the seventeenth century.

There are some important areas in this thesis that would repay further investigation. Although time-consuming, a systematic investigation of company records would reveal more instances of interactions between these groups and 'formal' corporations, which in turn, may shed further light upon the wider economic networks between companies and wealthier members of the transport trades. This may become more feasible with the proliferation of

digitisation and online cataloguing of company records to increase their accessibility.[3] Burn's recent research on the Newcastle keelmen, for example, has highlighted the value of digital humanities in recovering the lives of individuals purposefully neglected from contemporary texts. As biographical research of key members of the carmen and watermen's political campaigns have shown, such methodologies can produce rewarding results, and in some instances, completely overturn previous assumptions regarding the political ambitions of labouring groups. Additionally, there are some groups absent from this study who shared similar experiences to the occupational groups explored within these pages. The tankard-bearers and coal heavers also belonged to civic societies and actively participated in London political culture. Given more time and space, an investigation into their activities would doubtless provide more insights into the politics of non-free and quasi-free groups and allow further links to be made between them.

The individuals and groups that comprised each chapter were on the peripheries of corporate inclusion—they were not quite free, but also not quite *not* free. By avoiding narrow definitions of belonging, it has been possible to move beyond anachronistic distinctions of who participated in civic culture and who did not. As this thesis has shown, the rights and privileges associated with citizenship were sought after and claimed by a wide range of Londoners who did not formally belong within the corporate world of livery companies and guilds. Adding to revisionist historiography that has problematised grand conjectures of decline, the experiences of these groups and individuals demonstrate that the freedom remained an instrumental part of people's lives throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. For Londoners betwixt and between the boundaries of belonging, the rhetorics and languages associated with citizenship were a powerful resource of political and economic freedoms in the early modern period.

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[3] Andy Burn 'Wage Labour, Wealth and the Power of a Database: Unlocking Communities of Work Outside Urban Guilds in Newcastle upon Tyne,' in *Cities and Solidarities: Urban Communities in Pre-Modern Europe*, ed. Justin Colson and Arie van Steensel (London: Routledge, 2017), 169-187; Burn, 'Seasonal Work and Welfare in an Early Industrial Town: Newcastle upon Tyne, 1600-1700,' *Continuity and Change* 32, no. 2 (2017): 157-182.

Abbreviations

BCB	Bridewell Court Books
BMM	Bethlem Museum of the Mind
BL	British Library
Bodl.	Bodleian Library, Oxford
C	Court of Chancery
DL/C	Consistory Court Records
GL	Guildhall Library
LL	London Lives
LMA	London Metropolitan Archives
LPL	Lambeth Palace Library
ODNB	Oxford Dictionary of National Biography
OED	Oxford English Dictionary
PA	Parliamentary Archives
SP	State Papers Domestic
STAC	Star Chamber
TNA	The National Archives

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                                            Copy Orders and Ordinances, 1604

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                                            List of Members; 1673-1706

MS 3455   Society of Tacklehouse and Ticket Porters;
                                            Copy Orders and Ordinances, 1690-1707

MS 4907/1   Worshipful Company of Carmen; Court Minute
                                            Books, 1668-1700

MS 4914/1   Worshipful Company of Carmen; Calendar of
                                            Apprentice Bindings, 1678-1700

MS 4916   Worshipful Company of Carmen; Rough
                                            Register of freemen, 1688-1728

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                                            Lists, 1668-1680

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