

PART 1

**City and Crown**  
**The Reality of Royal Power**



# The Demands of the Crown

AT THE DEATH of John in 1216 the Londoners were actively supporting Prince Louis of France against the late king's 12-year old son: to win over the Londoners was one of the many tasks facing William the Marshal, who had been appointed by the Council to act as the guardian of the king and the kingdom. Without the support of the city of London the kingdom would be lost to John's son. By contrast nearly three hundred years later, in 1485, the Londoners tamely acquiesced in the accession of Henry VII. By the end of the fifteenth century the city was better governed and more orderly than it had been in 1216 but, in the affairs of the kingdom at large, it carried less weight.

Throughout the period the Londoners (using the different voices of the mayor, the aldermen, or the commoners) maintained a continuous dialogue with the Crown. Over the years the matters for debate and negotiation changed: some issues were resolved and others came into prominence: some periods were comparatively harmonious and at other times the dialogue degenerated into a shouting match. Some periods are much better documented than others and this may give the impression of greater dialogue when it is simply that the sources are richer. Before 1272 there are almost no records surviving from the administration of the city and yet, in compensation, we have an extremely detailed 'insider' chronicle written by Arnald fitz-Thedmar who was an alderman of the city from c.1255 until his death in c.1272. This provides an insight into aldermanic faction which is available for no other period.<sup>1</sup> The sources are again very rich for the reign of Richard II when the faction fighting in London reached its zenith.<sup>2</sup> Do the controversies provoke more detailed records or do we perceive greater controversy because the records are richer? The relentless march of the annual chronicle can obscure not only the importance of general and continuing points of conflict between the Londoners and the Crown but also the significant changes as contentious issues of one generation give way to new disputes and concerns.

At the simplest level the king needed money and the Londoners wanted self-government which largely (albeit not completely) contributed to their ability to

<sup>1</sup> The Latin text of this MS (which is now in the Corporation of London Records Office) was edited, not very accurately as *Liber de Antiquis Legibus seu Chronica Maiorum et Vicecomitum Londoniarum*, ed. T. Stapleton (Camden Society, London, 1846) and later a more accurate translation was produced as *Chronicles of the Mayors and Sheriffs of London*, ed. and trans. H. T. Riley (London, 1863), 1–178. All references to fitz-Thedmar's chronicle will be taken from Riley's translation.

<sup>2</sup> See R. Bird, *The Turbulent London of Richard II* (London, 1949), xi–xv.

make money. These were not the only matters of debate and contention but they underlay many of the overt struggles and complex negotiations. It is worth remembering that what the Crown wrung from the city tended to be permanent, what the city won from the Crown was constantly subject to review and renegotiation. Even when the Crown appeared at its weakest as in 1263, 1311, 1388, or 1460, yet it always retained the power (*de iure* if not *de facto*) to take back all that had been conceded to the city and to govern it directly through appointed royal wardens who could collect and manage all the city's revenue. London was not a semi-autonomous city like Ghent, Augsburg, or Venice, and it was clear to all who was, ultimately, the cat and who the mouse.

The city of London was disadvantaged in its dealings with the Crown in that it did not speak with a single voice. It is true that during minorities the will of the Crown might be fragmented (as in 1216–27, 1377–86, 1423–44, 1483) and even when the king was of full age the magnates who opposed his policies might claim to speak for, or in defence of, the Crown. But for the city the problem was a chronic one for it was not a single person but a commune composed of many people who were expected to speak with one voice in pursuit of a common goal. In practice such harmony was rarely achieved and at periods the faction fighting among the aldermen reached fever pitch as in the 1380s. Moreover at times there were deep rifts between the governing aldermen and the common people of the city. When it suited him, a king might appeal over the heads of the aldermen (who comprised the official voice of the city) to the citizens at large (as did Henry III in 1257 and the Yorkist lords in 1459). But if the Crown could, on occasion, pick and choose to whom it spoke in the city, so the Londoners might support particular magnates or claimants to the throne in the risky hope of securing more advantages or privileges for the citizens, or for a particular group among them. But, on the whole, the Crown spoke with fewer voices than did the rulers of London: the king and his council were a smaller and more homogeneous group than the mayor, twenty-four aldermen and 40,000–80,000 inhabitants of the city. So the king had a distinct advantage in formulating and carrying out policy but, if push came to shove, the Londoners could muster a sizeable military force.

#### FINANCE

Most obviously the Crown needed money but the nature and extent of that need changed over the years. In the thirteenth century the Crown was struggling to find sources of revenue to augment the dwindling income from the diminished Crown estates and the unwieldy and contentious feudal revenues. John's efficient attempts to increase royal revenue during a period of inflation led to the drawing-up of Magna Carta in which the concerns of the Londoners, as well as those of the baronage, were carefully addressed. Clause 12 of the Charter laid down that financial aids were to be paid to the king only after they were agreed by the common counsel of the realm and to this clause was added, doubtless at the insistence of the

Londoners, that 'Aids from the City of London are to be treated likewise'.<sup>3</sup> This implied that the city of London was not required to pay the arbitrary royal taxation, known as tallage as other royal boroughs were bound to do, but would be expected only to offer the voluntary aid such as was asked of the king's tenants-in-chief. Not surprisingly this clause was omitted from the later reissues of the Great Charter yet the Londoners fought on, and persistently attempted to resist Henry III's demands for tallage. Without doubt this was the single most significant issue at stake between the Londoners and Henry III: between 1217 and 1268 tallage was levied from the Londoners fourteen times.<sup>4</sup>

The king, however, devised other ways, over and above tallage, of extracting money from the Londoners: 1,000 marks in 1253 for jostling the king's household servants;<sup>5</sup> 400 marks in 1256 in lieu of paying Queen's Gold,<sup>6</sup> and, of course, a swingeing fine of 20,000 marks in 1265 for having supported Simon de Montfort, followed by a further fine of 1,000 marks paid to the king's brother Richard of Almaine for damage done to his manors at Isleworth;<sup>7</sup> in 1269 the Londoners were obliged to contribute 100 marks for the new abbey at Westminster and 500 marks for the forthcoming crusade of Prince Edward.<sup>8</sup> When in 1257 it appeared that the aldermen might not agree to pay the sum demanded, the king appealed over their heads to the commonalty at large and ordered an investigation into those who had avoided contributing their due share to recent tallages.<sup>9</sup>

Although the king was, by and large, successful at extracting tallage from the Londoners it was clear that some new system of raising royal revenue needed to be developed. In the first place the Crown began systematically to levy a charge on goods passing in and out of English ports. The tax on the export of wool was at first levied intermittently,<sup>10</sup> but became a regular imposition from the 1270s and more general customs dues payable on imported wine (tunnage) and other imports and exports (poundage and petty custom) were gradually introduced and accepted. The export of cloth was not taxed until the 1340s. By the second half of the fourteenth century the export and import trade of England was, subject to the consent of Parliament, regularly taxed to provide income (some £30,000 p.a.) for the Crown. This taxation was not the subject of direct negotiation between the Londoners and the Crown but was mediated first through separate assemblies of merchants (1320s–1360s) and then through the Commons in Parliament.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>3</sup> J. C. Holt, *Magna Carta* (Cambridge, 1965), 321.

<sup>4</sup> G. A. Williams, *Medieval London from Commune to Capital* (London, 1963), 88–9; see S. K. Mitchell, *Taxation in Medieval England* (New Haven, Conn., 1951), esp. ch. 7.

<sup>5</sup> *Chronica Johannis de Oxenedes* ed. H. Ellis (Rolls Series, 1889), 195–6.

<sup>6</sup> *Chronicles of the Mayors and Sheriffs*, 25. For Queen's Gold, see M. Howell, 'The Resources of Eleanor of Provence as Queen Consort', *EHR* 102 (1987), 372–93, esp. 378; *CPMR* 1323–64, 156 n. 1.

<sup>7</sup> *Chronicles of the Mayors and Sheriffs*, 85, 98, 112.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.* 130.

<sup>9</sup> Fitz-Thedmar's enraged account of the way in which the king, through the agency of John Maunsel, turned the Londoners against their aldermen provides an excellent insight into royal tactics: *ibid.*, 33–40.

<sup>10</sup> In 1268 the Londoners paid 200 marks to be free of the 'new custom': *ibid.*, 114–15.

<sup>11</sup> Roger Axworthy, 'The Financial Relationship of the London Merchant Community with Edward III, 1327–1377' (University of London. Ph.D. thesis, 2000).

In parallel with the development of the royal taxation of overseas trade came the emergence of Parliament where the representatives of the shires and the boroughs met together with the lords and with the king himself to debate and discuss the business of the realm. Edward I used this body to provide the consent to direct taxation which could then be levied more widely, and more equitably, than the contentious feudal tallage. In the Parliament of 1275 the knights and burgesses agreed to a tax assessed at the rate of one-fifteenth of the value of moveable goods.<sup>12</sup> Such taxation was at first intermittent, and the king continued to collect tallage when he could, which led the Londoners to secure, in their charter of 1327, a confirmation of their right to pay taxes as other commons of the realm and to be free of all liability to tallage.<sup>13</sup> The assessments for the taxes on moveables were extremely laborious and this made them difficult to collect, so in 1334 it was agreed that the sum raised by the grant of one-tenth and one-fifteenth to the Crown should be standardized and raised by quotas to produce c.£34,000.<sup>14</sup> Although all boroughs were assessed at the rate of one-tenth, London, on the grounds that it had not been liable to tallage as other towns were, asserted its right to pay at the lower rate of one-fifteenth. As a result London contributed only £733 to the national total throughout the period. In relation to its wealth London was seriously undertaxed.

These developments in national taxation in the years 1272 to 1334, by eliminating the insistent royal demands for tallage from London, removed the most serious source of discord between the city and the Crown. Debates about financial support for the Crown were now transferred to Parliament: London paid what the Commons agreed and the king no longer demanded arbitrary tallage. But the king's financial thirst was not slaked. The Crown still expected gifts from the city and privileges, in the form of new and renewed charters, continued to be sold to the Londoners. Moreover, increasingly, the Crown needed loans of ready cash in anticipation of the Parliamentary taxes, which always took time to collect.

The Londoners were expected to provide gifts at royal marriages and coronations and on other special occasions. In 1305–6 the Londoners paid £2,000 when Prince Edward (the future Edward II) was knighted (a relic of the old feudal aid).<sup>15</sup> Henry IV was given 1,000 marks as a coronation gift and the French princess Katherine also received 1,000 marks and two silver-gilt basins when she came to England in 1421 for her marriage to Henry V and for her coronation.<sup>16</sup> Henry VI had £1,000 on his return to England after his coronation at Paris and he received a further £1,000 on his marriage to Margaret of Anjou in 1444.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>12</sup> See M. Jurkowski, C. L. Smith and D. Crook, *Lay Taxes in England and Wales 1188–1688* (London, 1998), esp. p. xxvi.

<sup>13</sup> *Historical Charters and Constitutional Documents of the City of London*, ed. W. de Gray Birch (rev. edn. London, 1887), 57.

<sup>14</sup> Jurkowski et al., *Lay Taxes*, 38.

<sup>15</sup> *Annales Londonienses in Chronicles of the Reigns of Edward I and II*, ed. W. Stubbs, 2 vols. (Rolls Series, 1882–3), i. 146; *Croniques de London depuis L'An 44 Hen. III jusqu'à l'an 17 Edw. III*, ed. G. J. Aungier (Camden Society, London, 1844), 31 and n.

<sup>16</sup> 6 July 1400, PRO E401/619; 7 February 1421, CLRO Journal 1 fo. 88.

<sup>17</sup> 21 January 1432, *LBK*, 129–30; 26 August 1444, CLRO Journal 4 fo. 39<sup>v</sup>, 40, 49<sup>v</sup>.

On other occasions the London citizens had to buy their charters, which might be straightforward confirmations or might incorporate substantial new privileges. The important charter of 1319 cost the citizens £1,000.<sup>18</sup> Richard II charged the Londoners £10,000 for the restoration of their charter in the years 1392–7 (since the rulers of London were deemed to have committed an offence in failing to keep peace in the city this was a fine as well as a sale) and the contentious new charter of 1444 cost £1,000.<sup>19</sup> In fact the gift offered to a new king at his coronation was simply the price to be paid for the confirmation of earlier charters.

From the 1330s onwards the negotiations between the king and the citizens of London came to be dominated by negotiations about loans. In the thirteenth century the Londoners were tallaged and, on occasion, they provided gifts but it was the Jewish community and, later, the Italian companies who provided the ready cash to finance the day-to-day costs of the household and the king's relentless military expeditions. In the early years of Edward III it was still the Italians, in particular the Bardi and the Perruzzi, who financed the king but after their bankruptcies in the 1340s the city of London began to play an increasingly large part in financing royal government.<sup>20</sup> Some loans were provided by the city corporately, but many more were provided by individual Londoners such as Sir John de Pulteney or the mercer Adam Fraunceys. Often groups of London merchants were associated together in providing a joint stock loan for the king. But whereas interest was payable (as it had been to the Jews and to the Italians) on these 'private' loans, those provided by the city in its corporate capacity were interest-free. These loans were provided for the king because of his 'necessity'.<sup>21</sup> By Richard II's reign such corporate loans had become a regular feature of royal finance. Between October 1377 and March 1388 the Londoners corporately made seven loans to the king ranging in amount from £2,000 to £5,000. The failure of the city to lend any sum to the king in the next four years may well have contributed to Richard's displeasure and seizure of the city's liberties in 1392. The Lancastrian kings borrowed steadily and desperately from the city: there were corporate loans provided by London in thirty-eight out of the sixty years of Lancastrian rule.<sup>22</sup> From 1429 to 1450 these loans were authorized by Parliament in anticipation of the money to be collected from Parliamentary taxation. In this way the city of London had developed into a quasi-Bank of England. The timing, and the amount, of such loans could still be matters of dispute but the Londoners were able, if they had a

<sup>18</sup> *Croniques*, 40; *Annales Paulini in Chronicles of the Reigns of Edward I and II*, ed. W. Stubbs, 2 vols. (Rolls Series, 1882–3), i. 287.

<sup>19</sup> C. Barron, 'The Quarrel of Richard II with London 1392–7', in F. R. H. DuBoulay and C. Barron (eds.), *The Reign of Richard II: Essays in Honour of May McKisack* (London, 1971), 173–201; 7 June 1443, PRO E401/781.

<sup>20</sup> The city of London made five corporate loans on three occasions to the Crown between March 1340 and June 1346, see Axworthy, 'London Merchant Community', app. A.

<sup>21</sup> See G. L. Harriss, 'Aids, Loans and Benevolences', *Historical Journal*, 4 (1963), 1–19.

<sup>22</sup> C. Barron, 'London and the Crown 1451–61' in J. R. L. Highfield and R. Jeffs (eds.), *The Crown and the Local Communities in England and France in the Fifteenth Century* (Gloucester, 1981), 88–109, esp. 102.

reasonable excuse, to refuse to lend. Between 1448 and 1460 the city refused to lend to the Crown on seven occasions although they did provide loans fourteen times in those same years. The desperate situation in France led the Crown to make unprecedented demands.

By the fifteenth century a rich London merchant might be contributing to royal finances in several different ways: he paid customs dues on the goods that he imported and exported; he contributed to Parliamentary taxation assessed on the value of his moveable goods, and he might lend money to the Crown in three ways: as an individual creditor (e.g. Richard Whittington or John Heende), as a merchant of the Calais Staple whose members also provided corporate loans, or as a citizen of London contributing to the city's corporate loans.<sup>23</sup> Although areas of conflict and dispute remained there is none of the bitterness that characterizes the financial relations between London and the Crown in the thirteenth century. The replacement of arbitrary royal tallage by Parliamentary taxation was the single most important factor in securing better relations between London and the Crown in the later medieval period.

But the Crown was never anxious to be dependent upon London alone for finance and this need for plurality led the Crown to encourage and protect groups of alien merchants who wished to trade and, sometimes, to live in London and in other parts of England. The Londoners resented the presence of these privileged and distinctive outsiders and, on occasion, vented their fury and prejudice upon them. In the thirteenth century the Jews were not only important royal creditors but they also paid large sums of money to be allowed to remain and to do business in English towns. The Londoners used and abused them and, as the royal dependence upon the Jews decreased, so the protection of the Crown became less effective. In the lawlessness of the mid-thirteenth century the London Jewry was frequently attacked, for example in 1262 and again two years later when the Italians and the Cahorsins were also victims.<sup>24</sup> On these occasions the mayor and aldermen did their best to protect the Jews from the enraged mobs, for the city's rulers were bound to the king to protect merchant strangers in their midst. In 1287 the Crown itself imposed an impossibly heavy fine on the Jews and then, in 1290, came the final expulsion.<sup>25</sup> The Londoners would have liked the Crown to expel all aliens but it was unlikely to do this while the aliens were willing to pay for the privilege of being allowed to stay and to trade. Moreover alien merchants paid additional customs on the goods that they imported and exported (see figures in Ch. 5) and so were particularly valuable from the point of view of the Crown. Groups of alien merchants were expected also to provide loans at short notice and

<sup>23</sup> For London merchants lending to the Crown as members of the Calais Staple, see D. Grummit, 'The Financial Administration of Calais during the Reign of Henry IV, 1399–1413', *EHR* 113 (1998), 277–99.

<sup>24</sup> *Chronicles of the Mayors and Sheriffs*, 66. 'Chronicle of Thomas Wykes', printed with the *Chronicles of Oseney Abbey in Annales Monastici*, ed. H. R. Luard (Rolls Series, 1869), iv, 141; J. Hillaby, 'London: The Thirteenth-Century Jewry Revisited', *Jewish Historical Studies: Transactions of the Jewish Historical Society of England*, 32 (1990–2), 89–158.

<sup>25</sup> *Chronicles of the Mayors and Sheriffs*, 96; 'Chronicle of Thomas Wykes', 308, 311.

in this way they afforded an important source of financial support and prevented the Crown from becoming exclusively dependent upon the Londoners. The sophisticated business skills both of the Jews and of the Italians, and their aloofness, caused jealousy and resentment but the king consistently turned a deaf ear to London protests. Although the role of the Italians in royal finance diminished after the bankruptcies of the 1340s it never disappeared altogether: they lent substantial sums to Richard II in the 1390s<sup>26</sup> and the Caniziani, as agents of the Medici, played an important part in financing royal government in the reign of Edward IV.<sup>27</sup> Moreover the alien share of London's overseas trade (see Ch. 5) remained very considerable even at the end of the period. In the face of royal protection the Londoners could make no headway in eroding the privileges that alien merchants enjoyed in England. For example in 1402 Henry IV agreed that Genoese merchants would not be liable to pay the local tax, known as scavage, on the goods they brought from Southampton to London for sale. The Londoners challenged and fought this decision but had, in the end, to accept a compromise drawn up in 1455 whereby the Genoese paid an annual compounded sum of £28.<sup>28</sup> As Lancastrian finances worsened in the 1450s the Crown began to sell licences to Italian merchants which allowed them to export wool without passing through the Staple at Calais, and this provoked violence against the Italians living in London in 1456 and 1457. The ringleaders in these orchestrated attacks seem to have been mercers and, in particular, William Cantelowe who was imprisoned by the Lancastrians but was quickly knighted by Edward IV, which suggests that there may have been a dynastic as well as an economic motive behind the violence.<sup>29</sup>

The merchants from the northern European countries (collectively known as the Hanse merchants) who came originally from Cologne, but by the thirteenth century included men from Hamburg and Lübeck, occupied their own fortress/ghetto in the Steelyard on the Thames. They imported fish, timber, furs, wax, wood, and, on occasion, grain, and they largely exported cloth. These merchants were crucial to the economy of London but this did not make them loved. Some of the hostility that, according to his own chronicle, Arnald fitz-Thedmar encountered in his adopted city, may well have been due to his Cologne origins.<sup>30</sup> The numbers of Hanse merchants living in the Steelyard at any one time were small, perhaps twenty or thirty, but they enjoyed distinctive privileges: they were allowed to have a London alderman to act on their behalf and they were free from paying local tolls on goods brought to London for sale.<sup>31</sup> The Londoners were

<sup>26</sup> Helen Bradley, 'The Italian Community in London' (University of London, Ph.D. thesis, 1992), 214–15, 456–57.

<sup>27</sup> George Holmes, 'Lorenzo de' Medici's London Branch', in R. Britnell and J. Hatcher (eds.), *Progress and Problems in Medieval England: Essays in Honour of Edward Miller* (Cambridge, 1996), 273–85.

<sup>28</sup> C. Barron, 'The Government of London and Its Relations with the Crown 1400–1450' (University of London Ph.D. thesis, 1970), 372–8.

<sup>29</sup> J. L. Bolton, 'The City and the Crown, 1456–61', *The London Journal*, 12 (1986), 11–24.

<sup>30</sup> See J. P. Huffman, *Family, Commerce and Religion in London and Cologne: Anglo-German Emigrants c.1000–c.1300* (Cambridge, 1998), 189–95.

<sup>31</sup> Barron, 'Government of London', 368.

quite unable to secure reciprocal privileges in Hanse towns and the English kings made little serious attempt either to help the Londoners or to diminish Hanseatic privileges in England. Henry IV confirmed their charter and Edward IV issued them with royal protections in 1461 and again in 1463.<sup>32</sup> In 1462 when he confirmed the city's privileges, the king specifically preserved earlier royal grants 'to merchants of Almaine'.<sup>33</sup> It was, in fact, in Hanseatic ships that Edward and his supporters returned to England in 1471 after his brief exile, and so it is clear that the royal policy of dividing royal favour between native and alien merchants had been a wise one. It was in the interests of the Crown to preserve alien communities as alternative sources of revenue and other support and the Londoners were impotent to prevent this counter-challenge to their economic monopoly. It was only when the English merchants began in the 1530s to take over their own export trade using their own ships that the Italian and Hanse merchants were squeezed out, not by any decline in royal favour but by shifts in the patterns of trade. Only in the sixteenth century did the privileges enjoyed by alien merchants cease to be an issue between the city and the Crown.

#### MILITARY AID

Money was not, however, all that the king required from London. Attention has recently been drawn to the importance of towns in providing soldiers both for the late Anglo-Saxon kings and for their Norman successors. It may be somewhat anachronistic to think of medieval towns as non-military islands in the midst of warring feudal armies. These towns, even in the comparative security of well-governed medieval England had, on occasion, to defend themselves. The military character of London in the twelfth century was probably formed by the great magnates of the realm who lived for periods of time in the city. Robert fitz-Walter, one of the leaders of the opposition to John in 1215, was the lord of Baynard's Castle which, together with Montfichet's castle, controlled access to the city from the west.<sup>34</sup> To what extent the Londoners expected, in the thirteenth century, to array themselves in arms to fight, other than in the defence of the city, is hard to say. In 1232 fitz-Thedmar recorded that in August the citizens of London 'mustered in arms at Mile End, and (marched) well arrayed in the London Chepe' and this may be the origin of the later Midsummer Watch.<sup>35</sup> It was the events of 1263 and, in particular, Louis IX's arbitration at Amiens in favour of Henry III, that brought the Londoners into the field. Thomas Puleston was chosen as constable of the city's host and Stephen Bukerel its marshal. The army sallied forth in May 1264 and met the royal troops at Lewes where the London militia broke when charged by the

<sup>32</sup> *CPR 1399–1401*, 57, 140; *CPR 1461–67*, 261; *LBL* 18.

<sup>33</sup> Birch, *Charters*, 79.

<sup>34</sup> Williams, *Medieval London*, 6.

<sup>35</sup> *Chronicles of the Mayors and Sheriffs* 7; S. Lindenbaum, 'Ceremony and Oligarchy: The London Midsummer Watch', in B. A. Hanawalt and K. L. Reyerson (eds.), *City and Spectacle in Medieval Europe* (Minneapolis, 1994), 171–88.

well-trained cavalry of Prince Edward. The Londoners fled home but their ally and leader, Simon de Montfort, remained to claim the field for the baronial opposition. His victory, it has been claimed, was bought 'with the Londoners' blood'.<sup>36</sup> It is possible that at Lewes Edward realized the military potential of the Londoners: certainly in his reign the city began to equip men for the king's wars rather than simply to supply money. In 1276–7 the city provided a hundred arblasters for the wars in Wales,<sup>37</sup> but it seems to have been Edward II who particularly exploited this form of royal pressure: in 1317 the Londoners sent two hundred men-at-arms for the Scottish campaign and a further hundred men four years later.<sup>38</sup> In the autumn of 1321 Edward attempted to formalize the military obligations of the Londoners and the mayor, Hamo de Chigwell, was obliged to offer five hundred men to join the army sent to crush the rebellious Bartholomew Badlesmere at Ledes castle in Kent.<sup>39</sup> These military demands were deeply resented by the Londoners and Edward, in an unusually placatory gesture, wrote to the citizens in December 1321 to thank them and to assure them that the provision of armed footmen, 'so thankfully done, shall not be prejudicial to the said mayor and good men, their heirs and successors'.<sup>40</sup> But it is clear that Edward's demand for military help in 1321 (perhaps especially resented because the troops were not to be used against an external threat but, in effect, for faction fighting) certainly contributed to the Londoners' support for Isabella and Mortimer in 1326. In the new charter which the Londoners received in March 1327 it was conceded by the new king that the citizens should 'not be compelled to go or send to war out of the city'.<sup>41</sup> In the future kings might ask for military support but the Londoners were not obliged to provide it. The city certainly raised contingents to fight with Edward III's contract armies in France, but the increased professionalism of these armies may have discouraged the enthusiastic part-time London soldier. It is possible that the city was also developing its own non-militaristic ethos. Few London aldermen in the fourteenth century sought (or were offered) knighthoods while they were aldermen. In June 1381 the mayor and aldermen made an unimpressive military showing and when, in November 1387, Richard II asked the mayor of London what military help the city could supply in Richard's forthcoming struggle with the Appellant lords, the mayor Nicholas Exton and his fellow aldermen replied 'that the inhabitants of the city were in the main craftsmen and merchants, with no great military

<sup>36</sup> Williams, *Medieval London*, 225; *Chronicles of the Mayors and Sheriffs*, 66.

<sup>37</sup> *Croniques de London*, 14.

<sup>38</sup> *The Great Chronicle of London*, ed. A. H. Thomas and I. D. Thornley (London, 1938), 28; *Croniques de London*, 45.

<sup>39</sup> *Annales Paulini*, 298–300, where the rates of pay offered to the soldiers are recorded: 8*d.* for a 'balistarius', 6*d.* for an archer, 24*d.* for a knight, and 12*d.* for an esquire; Williams, *Medieval London*, 298–9; the French chronicle also describes these events and records that the Londoners had earlier in the year sent 380 men to the king at Worcester: *Croniques de London*, 42–5.

<sup>40</sup> Birch, *Charters*, 51; but it should be noted that in 1324–5 the Londoners sent 140 'hommes armez' to fight in Gascony: *Croniques de London*, 48.

<sup>41</sup> Birch, *Charters*, 55. Almost immediately after the granting of this charter, the city sent 100 well-armed men to fight against the Scots, 'but for shame, they did no good there and returned without honour': *Annales Paulini*, 333.

experience, and it was not permissible for them to devote themselves to warfare save for the defence of the city alone'.<sup>42</sup> On the whole the citizens confined their support for military ventures to the financial sphere but on occasion they did raise troops themselves. In 1436 when Calais was threatened by the duke of Burgundy the Londoners raised a hasty army and in 1449 they again provided 319 archers and 43 lancers to protect the town from the rapidly advancing French armies. Two years later a London contingent of some two hundred men was sent to Calais under the command of Sir Thomas Fyndern.<sup>43</sup> After the drift into civil war in the middle of the fifteenth century the Londoners tried hard to remain neutral and to avoid sending armed citizens to fight on either side. When in July 1460 the mayor and aldermen committed the city to the Yorkist cause by admitting their leaders into the city, they had a vested interest in a Yorkist victory. A contingent of Londoners, led by the mercer John Harowe, marched north to be defeated with York at Wakefield in December 1460: their second away defeat in two hundred years.<sup>44</sup> In 1471, however, the citizens effectively held the city for Edward IV against the challenge of the Lancastrian supporter Fauconberg and some real military skill was required to defend the city from his attack.<sup>45</sup> By the end of this period it is clear that the Londoners were not anxious to pay for the king's wars but they were even less eager to fight in them. For the aristocracy and the knightly classes fighting was a way of life, perhaps their *only* way of life, but the Londoners knew of other, and easier, ways of making a living and they tacitly accepted the need to pay someone else to do the fighting.

#### CIVIC PAGEANTRY FOR ROYAL OCCASIONS

The Crown had another use for the wealth and craftsmanship of the Londoners: it needed the city to provide impressive receptions for foreign visitors which would enhance the king's prestige and, at the same time, remind the Londoners of the authority and grandeur of their monarch. These welcome pageants might also be enjoyable, both for the participants and for the crowds lining the streets who might take time off work to admire the magnificence of others, and to scoop up some of the free wine. The first recorded royal reception in London appears to be the welcome provided for Eleanor of Provence in 1236 when she came to England for her coronation. The historian John Stow, writing at the end of the sixteenth century, provides a description of the festivities (although his source is unknown):

the citie was adorned with silkes, and in the night with many pageants, and straunge devices there presented, the citizens also rode to meet the King and Queene, clothed in long gar-

<sup>42</sup> *The Westminster Chronicle 1381–1394*, ed. L. C. Hector and B. F. Harvey (Oxford, 1982), 217.

<sup>43</sup> C. Barron, 'Chivalry, Pageantry and Merchant Culture in Medieval London', in P. Coss and M. Keen (eds.), *Heraldry, Pageantry and Social Display in Medieval England* (Woodbridge, 2002), 219–41, esp. 227.

<sup>44</sup> Barron, 'London and the Crown', 98.

<sup>45</sup> C. F. Richmond, 'Fauconberg's Kentish Rising of May 1471', *EHR* 85 (1970), 673–92.

ments embroidered about with gold, and silks of diverse colours, their horses gallantly trapped to the number of 360, every man bearing a cup of gold or silver in his hand, and the kings trumpeters sounding before them: these citizens did minister wine, as Bottlers, which is their service at the coronation.<sup>46</sup>

When Eleanor of Castille came to England as the new bride of Prince Edward in June 1255 the citizens joined the king in going out of the city to meet her and 'the city of London was most nobly tapestried and arrayed'.<sup>47</sup> The hanging-out of tapestries seems to have become a characteristic feature of these thirteenth-century celebrations.<sup>48</sup> The preparations for the coronation of Edward I in 1274 appear to have been particularly elaborate: for the first time it was recorded that the conduit in Chepe flowed with red and white wine for all to drink.<sup>49</sup> When Queen Margaret came from France for her coronation in 1299 the mayor and aldermen rode out to meet her dressed in a common livery and 300 citizens also wore matching outfits. There were two wooden towers set up in Cheapside, each with eight spouts for the free flowing of wine, and the street was covered with cloths of gold.<sup>50</sup>

As time went on the receptions became more ambitious and elaborate and pageants were added to the festivities. When the city celebrated Edward I's victory over the Scots in 1298 there were several pageants including a remarkable one provided by the fishmongers: four silver-gilt sturgeons were borne aloft on four horses and they were followed by four silver salmons also carried on horses followed by forty-six knights riding on lucas (sea-pikes), followed by St Magnus.<sup>51</sup> Andrew Horn, the city chamberlain, in writing about the reception for Edward II and his new bride Isabella of France, described the city as the 'new Jerusalem' and noted that the mayor, aldermen, and citizens displayed the arms of England and France on their liveries.<sup>52</sup> When the Londoners learned of the birth of the future Edward III on 13 November 1312 they took to the streets singing and the fishmongers again prepared a magnificent pageant in which a ship in full sail, bearing the arms of England and France, was carried through the streets of the city in front of the royal couple who were then accompanied back to Eltham with more singing and dancing.<sup>53</sup> Thus by the early fourteenth century all the customary elements in a royal 'entry' were already present: the mayor, aldermen, and citizens in special clothing;

<sup>46</sup> John Stow, *A Survey of London*, ed. C. L. Kingsford, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1908), i, 95.

<sup>47</sup> *Chronicles of the Mayors and Sheriffs*, 24.

<sup>48</sup> November 1255, Prince Edward welcomed to London; August 1256, king and queen of Scotland welcomed at London; February 1258, the king of Almaine to London: *ibid.* 25, 43–4.

<sup>49</sup> A detailed description of the preparations for the coronation at Westminster palace forms the last entry in fitz-Thedmar's chronicle: he died the next year: *ibid.* 178; 'Chronicle of Thomas Wykes', 259; *Croniques de London*, 13; see also D. Keene, 'London from the Post-Roman Period to 1300', in D. Palliser (ed.), *Cambridge Urban History of Britain* (Cambridge, 2000), 187–216, esp. 213–14.

<sup>50</sup> *Chronicles of the Mayors and Sheriffs*, 220.

<sup>51</sup> Stow, *Survey*, i, 95–6; the presence of St Magnus is explained by the fact that the celebrations took place on his feast day, 19 August. The church of St Magnus at the north end of London bridge was in the centre of the fishmongers' area. It is also possible that St Magnus's Scottish associations made him a particularly suitable saint to preside over festivities to celebrate a victory over the Scots.

<sup>52</sup> *Annales Londonienses*, 152.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.* 221; Riley, *Memorials*, 105–7.

a procession that included singing; the houses in the city hung with tapestries; the conduits flowing with wine and elaborate pageants appropriate to the particular person or occasion to be celebrated.

It is possible that there were written contemporary accounts of these celebrations that were circulated as early as the thirteenth century, and it may be something of this kind that Stow used for his account of the reception of Eleanor in 1236. It is clear that Thomas Walsingham had a written account of the coronation celebrations for Richard II in 1377 in which the conduit in Cheapside was transformed into the Heavenly City peopled by virgins and angels who scattered gold leaves and coins (presumably in limited quantities) and offered the king a golden crown and a cup of wine from the conduit.<sup>54</sup> This is also the first time that actors are recorded as taking part in these pageants, but it is not clear whether the king, or indeed the virgins, spoke. But in the elaborate reconciliation celebrations that marked the end of Richard II's quarrel with the city of London, the king and the queen certainly spoke and it seems clear that there was a newsletter account of the festivities as well as an elaborate Latin poem written by Richard of Maidstone describing all the four pageants and the royal response to them. This may have been commissioned by the king, but it is more likely that the Londoners paid for the verse account.<sup>55</sup>

In the fifteenth century civic receptions for the monarch at coronations and marriages or following victories abroad became quite commonplace and, to some extent, standardized. Elaborate accounts of the pageants and their meanings were circulated after the events and then found their way into contemporary chronicles. Moreover, the information from the chroniclers can now be augmented by traces of discussion and expenditure recorded in the city's own records. The magnificent reception offered to Henry V on his return from Agincourt is described in detail in the *Gesta Henrici Quinti* and noted in the accounts of the Bridgewardens who paid nearly £20 to decorate the Bridge with an antelope, a lion, St George, singing angels, and the figure of a giant 'to teach Frenchmen curtesy'.<sup>56</sup> The accounts of the Grocers' Company record payments of nearly £3 towards the costs of the minstrels who met the king 'at his coming out of France'.<sup>57</sup>

Perhaps the most detailed accounts have survived for the 'joyous entry' devised to welcome Henry VI in 1432 on his return from his coronation in Paris, where the apathy had been deafening. To ensure that the London reception was suitably

<sup>54</sup> [Thomas Walsingham], *Chronicon Anglie 1328–1388*, ed. E. M. Thompson (Rolls Series, 1874), 153–6.

<sup>55</sup> Richard of Maidstone's poem is printed in *Political Poems and Songs*, ed. T. Wright, 2 vols. (Rolls Series, 1859–61), i. 282–300; it is partially translated in E. Rickert, *Chaucer's World* (Oxford, 1948), 35–9; see also C. Barron, 'Richard II and London', in A. Goodman and J. Gillespie (eds.), *Richard II: The Art of Kingship* (Oxford, 1999), 129–54, esp. 152–3.

<sup>56</sup> *Gesta Henrici Quinti*, ed. F. Taylor and J. S. Roskell (Oxford, 1975), pp. xxxvii, 101–13. Lydgate's poetic account of the same event is printed *ibid.*, 191–2; CLRO, Bridge House Accounts, ii. fo. 171; see Vanessa Harding, 'Pageantry on London Bridge', in B. Watson, T. Brigham and A. Dyson, *London Bridge: 2000 Years of a River Crossing* (London, 2001), 114–15.

<sup>57</sup> *Facsimile Account of the First Volume of the Ms Archives of the Worshipful Company of Grocers of the City of London 1345–1463*, ed. J. A. Kingdon, 2 vols. (London, 1886), i. fo. 115.

triumphant, the poet laureate, John Lydgate, was employed to write a long verse account of the 'Triumphal Entry' which, it has been justly said, provides a sharp test for 'the flexibility of our concept of poetry'.<sup>58</sup> It is likely that Lydgate was employed by the city to memorialize this elaborate series of seven pageants and so his poem is, in effect, a 'souvenir programme'.<sup>59</sup> But, the deviser of the series of pageants was, probably, the city's common clerk, John Carpenter, a learned man with an extensive library. Carpenter wrote his own, less lengthy, account of the pageants and procession, which he entered in the city's letter book.<sup>60</sup> Whereas the reception for Henry V in 1415 was religious in tone and liturgical in form, that for his son adopted a more didactic style, offering the young king instructions on the duties and attributes of the good ruler. The change of tone may be a response to the youth of the king, but it may also owe something to Carpenter, the learned and serious-minded common clerk. What is striking, however, is that on neither occasion is there any reference to chivalric heroes, or to figures from the popular tales of romance. The first London welcome to incorporate heroes from chivalric literature was that offered to Katherine of Aragon in 1501 when, in allusion to her intended husband, King Arthur featured prominently.<sup>61</sup>

What is also striking about the London shows is the extent to which they were literate: the pageants were provided with explanatory texts, which the king and bystanders were expected to be able to read 'without a spectacle'.<sup>62</sup> In addition to these visible explanatory captions, speech was used extensively from at least 1445 when Margaret of Anjou was welcomed to London with a series of pageants at each of which she was addressed in a manner both ingratiating and bossy. Whether she replied is not recorded.<sup>63</sup> What is also clear is that by the fifteenth century these elaborate pageants were neither spontaneous offerings to the Crown, nor were they voluntary. The citizens might attempt to haggle over the size of the gift offered during the welcome, or they might try to limit the number of pageants, but they were unable to avoid providing such festivities. Whereas in the fourteenth century London had provided such celebrations roughly every seven years, by the fifteenth century the demands came more frequently, about every five years. Although such welcomes were expensive (the pageants for Margaret of Anjou cost 500 marks and the citizens also had to offer her a gift of £1,000)<sup>64</sup> yet the building of the pageants, supplying the costumes and the liveries, the food and drink, the provision of tapestries and other hanging cloths, the fashioning of the gold and silver-gilt presents

<sup>58</sup> D. Pearsall, *John Lydgate* (Charlottesville, Va., 1970), 171. The poem is printed in *Great Chronicle*, 156–70. Lydgate based his poem on a Latin prose account written by John Carpenter, see Henry N. MacCracken, 'King Henry's Triumphal Entry into London: Lydgate's Poem and Carpenter's Letter', *Archiv für das Studium der neuren Sprachen und Literaturen*, 126 (1911), 75–102.

<sup>59</sup> Pearsall, *Lydgate*, 171.

<sup>60</sup> *LBK*, 138.

<sup>61</sup> S. Anglo, 'The London Pageants for the Reception of Katherine of Aragon in 1501', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 26 (1963), 53–89.

<sup>62</sup> *Great Chronicle*, 163.

<sup>63</sup> G. Kipling, 'The London Pageants for Margaret of Anjou: A Medieval Script Restored', *Medieval English Theatre* (1982), 5–27.

<sup>64</sup> CLRO, Journal 4 fos. 44, 49<sup>v</sup>.

for the honorands and the business generated for inns, taverns, and cookshops (not forgetting the scribes, albeit not the spectacle-makers) must have gone some way towards compensating the citizens for the taxation involved. Indeed it could be argued that the frequent royal demands for pageants and processions eliminated the need in London for the kind of play festivals devised at York or Coventry or Chester to attract visitors and customers. In London the king called the tune, the city paid, and the crowds came.

Royal entries, victory processions, and marriages were occasions when the London craftsmen could display their wares to the king, the court, the aristocracy, country gentry, and foreign visitors. Much of the money raised by taxation in London found its way back into the pockets of London merchant suppliers and craftsmen. Many of the mayors of the thirteenth century who led the city in opposition to the payment of tallage were those who sold goods on a large scale to the royal household. Adam de Basing (mayor 1251–2) was ‘an outstanding supplier of costly fabrics and luxury goods’ to the royal household; John Gisors (mayor 1246, 1258–9) was a vintner whose wine ‘flowed into the royal cellars’, and the immigrant Henry le Waleys from Gascony (mayor 1273–4, 1281–4, 1298–9) sold wine to the average value of £300 a year to the royal household.<sup>65</sup> Richard II, who extracted some £30,000 from the Londoners in 1392, spent £13,000 on purchases for the Great Wardrobe in 1392–4, and almost all the goods were supplied by London merchants and craftsmen.<sup>66</sup> Kings and royal courtiers travelled abroad and developed sophisticated tastes for foreign luxuries and skills. If the king could not find among the Londoners the skilled craftsmen he needed, then he would encourage alien craftsmen to come to London and set up workshops in the city. Henry III brought craftsmen from the Cosmati workshop in Rome to work on the floor of Westminster Abbey, on the shrine of Edward the Confessor, and on his own tomb there.<sup>67</sup> Richard II encouraged Baldwin of Lucca to come to England to weave gold cloths<sup>68</sup> and Andronicus and Alexius Effomatus from Constantinople were allowed by Henry VI to remain in England in 1445 in order to practise their craft of making ‘damask gold’ or gold wire for embroidery.<sup>69</sup> The Crown needed the city of London to provide the skilled craftsmen and merchants who could create a magnificent and impressive royal court. In this area at least the needs of the Crown met an eager response from the Londoners, although it must be remembered that whereas all citizens contributed to royal taxation, not all benefited from royal patronage.

<sup>65</sup> Williams, *Medieval London*, 69, 72–3, 323–5, 333.

<sup>66</sup> PRO E101/402/13.

<sup>67</sup> P. Binski, *Westminster Abbey and the Plantagenets: Kingship and the Representation of Power 1200–1400* (New Haven, Conn., 1995), 93–104.

<sup>68</sup> L. Monnas, ‘Fit for a King: Figured Silks shown in the Wilton Diptych’, in D. Gordon, L. Monnas, and C. Elam (eds.), *The Regal Image of Richard II and the Wilton Diptych* (London, 1997), 165–77 esp. 171–2.

<sup>69</sup> J. Harris, ‘Two Byzantine Craftsmen in Fifteenth-Century London’, *Journal of Medieval History*, 21 (1995), 387–403.

A HEALTHY AND PEACEFUL CITY

If the king was to process through the city and to show it off to foreign visitors such as the Byzantine Emperor Manuel who came in 1402 or the Emperor Sigismund who visited Henry V in 1416, then it was important that London should look impressive and, in particular, that it should be clean.<sup>70</sup> In 1274 the mayor, Henry le Waleys, swept the butchers' and fishmongers' stalls out of Cheapside 'in order that that no refuse might be found remaining in Chepe on the arrival of his lordship the King'.<sup>71</sup> The rights of the ousted victuallers were voiced by Walter Hervi but, after 'wordy strife', le Waleys finally disposed of the popular champion.<sup>72</sup> Le Waleys was right: kings disliked dirty and smelly cities and Cheapside was the city's main processional way. The Black Death of 1348–9 heightened the awareness of the link between dirt and disease and the city appears to have taken serious steps to improve civic hygiene.<sup>73</sup> But by the later fourteenth century, as the standard of living rose and more fresh meat was consumed, so the health hazards posed by urban butchering became more acute. In 1369 Edward III sent a fierce writ to the Londoners complaining about the 'grievous corruption and filth' which arose in the city streets from discarded butcher's waste. The king demanded that beasts should be slaughtered outside the city at Knightsbridge or Stratford. Since this would have been difficult to implement and would certainly have led to a rise in prices, the mayor and aldermen prevaricated and their sloth in this matter may have been one of the many 'defaults' that led Richard II to seize the liberties of the city in 1392.<sup>74</sup> The city may well have taken this royal reprimand to heart because there seem to have been no royal complaints about dirt in London in the fifteenth century and there is considerable evidence of communal concern about street cleaning and public health.

Dirt may have been a hazard, but lawlessness was an even greater one. By his oath the mayor undertook to hold the city peaceably for the king and the taking of the city into the king's hand both in 1285 and again in 1392 was provoked by the unchecked lawlessness and violence on the streets of London. In the thirteenth century the assembling of the folkmoot in St Paul's churchyard was often the start of civic riot and disorder. In June 1285 the king ordered the dean and canons to enclose the area around the cathedral and incorporate it into the churchyard. This marked the beginning of the end of the folkmoot.<sup>75</sup> A certain amount of violence was acceptable but the mayor had to be able to establish his control and when he failed to do this the king would intervene. In 1267 a dispute between the goldsmiths and the tailors escalated into three nights of street fighting. The sheriffs imprisoned

<sup>70</sup> For a more detailed discussion of this, see Ch. 10.

<sup>71</sup> *Chronicles of the Mayors and Sheriffs*, 73.

<sup>72</sup> Le Waleys later created the Stocks market in 1283 at the east end of Cheapside as a place where butchers and fishmongers could sell their wares: Williams, *Medieval London*, 86–7; see Ch. 3.

<sup>73</sup> See Ch. 10. <sup>74</sup> Riley, *Memorials*, 339, 356–8; Barron, 'Richard II and London', 143–4.

<sup>75</sup> *Liber Custumarum*, 338–46; Williams, *Medieval London*, 254.

thirty of the rioters and then brought them before the royal justiciar. Local juries declared that a number of the men had taken part in the riots and they were 'immediately hanged'. Fitz-Thedmar who described these events was shocked by the rioting but he was also taken aback at the severity of the punishment, for none of the men had actually been convicted of homicide, mayhem, or robbery and one of them had done no more than allow his house to be used by some of the rioters. But Fitz-Thedmar acknowledged that this was done 'so that others, put in awe thereby, might take warning, so that the peace of his lordship the king by all within the city might be the more rigidly maintained'.<sup>76</sup>

A hundred years later, when craft rivalries reached fever pitch at the mayoral election in 1384, the supporters of the defeated candidate John de Northampton took to the streets. John Constantine, a cordwainer, urged the citizens to close their shops and rise in support of Northampton. He was brought to a summary trial and executed, and his head was displayed on Newgate. The author of the *Westminster Chronicle*, like Fitz-Thedmar before him, was shocked at the severity of the punishment and noted that Constantine had been a man of godly life.<sup>77</sup> Richard supported the mayor in the measures which he took to keep the peace and prevent riots. It was in the interests of the Crown that the mayor and sheriffs should keep London under control: when the mayor, Simon de Swanlond, and the twenty-four aldermen were summoned to Woodstock in 1330 it was because the king wished to speak 'super pacem civitatis' and the Londoners assured the king that they would safeguard and hold the city for him.<sup>78</sup> Although Richard II took the city into his own hands for some months in 1392, on the whole the mayor and aldermen were able to keep the city peaceably for the king. There were no more great inquiries into the government and administration of justice in the city as had been held in 1321 and, after the 1380s, craft rivalries were contained and controlled. The artisan protesters of the 1430s and 1440s never posed a threat to mayoral control comparable to that of the 1380s (in part because, in the 1440s, the aldermen were not divided).<sup>79</sup> But the mayor and sheriffs had to be constantly vigilant to curb rioting before it got out of hand. The aristocratic rivalries of the 1450s certainly made their task more difficult, but they succeeded in avoiding the seizure of the city's liberties.<sup>80</sup> The evolution of responsible craft and trading companies with their own structures of authority may have helped in the maintenance of civic order.<sup>81</sup> In this matter the demands of the king were persistent and inescapable and so the maintenance of peace in London became crucial to the self-government of the city.

<sup>76</sup> *Chronicles of the Mayors and Sheriffs*, 105.

<sup>77</sup> *Westminster Chronicle*, 65; *LBH*, 231; *Memorials*, 482–3; *CPMR 1381–1412*, 50–1; *CPR 1381–85*, 391; Barron, 'Richard II and London', 146–7.

<sup>78</sup> *Annales Londonienses*, 251.

<sup>79</sup> C. Barron, 'Ralph Holland and the London Radicals, 1438–1444' in R. Holt and G. Rosser (eds.), *The English Medieval Town: A Reader in English Urban History 1200–1540* (London, 1990), 160–83.

<sup>80</sup> Barron, 'London and the Crown', esp. 94–5.

<sup>81</sup> See Ch. 9.

## PATRONAGE

In the later medieval period the Crown made new demands upon the city: patronage and legitimation. The Crown sought patronage, in the form of appointments to civic offices, as an extra source of income. In the fourteenth century the king had occasionally sought to secure offices in London for members of his household but from the 1430s the pressure on the city mounted. In the first place the king sought the freedom of the city for servants in his household so that they might be able to buy goods easily and cheaply in the city. Since 1319 the control of entry to the freedom had lain with the city crafts but in the fifteenth century the king presented his servants to Common Council so that they might persuade a suitable company to sponsor them.<sup>82</sup> In 1437 Thomas Brown of the royal larder was admitted to the freedom as a chandler and John Elyngham, a royal valet, as a pinner.<sup>83</sup> Further requests for enfranchisement followed and were usually agreed.<sup>84</sup> Henry VI and his queen also wrote to the city to seek civic offices, usually comparatively minor ones, for their nominees. Robert Watson in 1440 was given the office of rent-collector of London Bridge at the king's request but the city was able to refuse the queen's demand in 1450 that Alexander Manning should be reinstated as warden of Newgate prison.<sup>85</sup> The mayor and aldermen were also able to reject the queen's nominee for the office of common serjeant and chose Thomas Urswyk instead.<sup>86</sup> Again in August 1461 the city was able to reject Edward IV's candidate for the office of common clerk and selected instead the able and industrious William Dunthorne.<sup>87</sup> Royal demands of this kind were growing in number and although the city was largely able to maintain its independence of action, the pressure was to mount under the Tudors.

But there was a further twist to royal inventiveness: again it was in the 1430s that the minority government of Henry VI developed the idea of creating and selling monopolistic offices in the city. The offices of gauger of wines, garbeller of spices, packer of cloths, and drawers of wine were created and sold to royal servants, creditors and job-seekers. Such officers were empowered to charge what they liked for carrying out inescapable services for merchants. In the fourteenth century the charge for gauging a tun of wine had been a penny; now, following the sale of the office of gauger to Thomas Multon in 1432, it had risen to fourpence. The governors of the city struggled ineffectively to regain control of these offices. Edward IV at first offered the citizens simply the disposal of the offices for the next six years, then during royal pleasure, and, finally, in 1478 when he was deeply in debt to the Londoners, he sold the disposal of these four disputed offices to the city in

<sup>82</sup> See Ch. 6.

<sup>83</sup> CLRO, Journal 3 fo.188.

<sup>84</sup> Barron, 'The Government of London', 464–5.

<sup>85</sup> *LBK*, 238; CLRO, Journal 4 fo.172; Journal 5, f. 16, 48, 51; *Letters of Queen Margaret of Anjou, Bishop Beckington and others*, ed. C. Munro (Camden Series, 86, 1863), 161–2.

<sup>86</sup> CLRO, Journal 5 fos. 112<sup>v</sup>–113<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.* 6 fos. 46, 22<sup>v</sup>, 7<sup>v</sup>.

perpetuity.<sup>88</sup> But as one monopoly was recaptured, another was devised and the Lancastrian experiments were to bear fruit later, for the royal appetite for patronage was to prove voracious and the city, with its great wealth and ever-growing bureaucracy, proved to be a source of easy pickings. On the other hand the Londoners, who had fought since the twelfth century for self-government, were unwilling to see even the least of the city offices slip out of civic control.

#### LEGITIMATION

Several medieval English kings needed the help of the Londoners in order to make their rule legitimate and acceptable. In the mid-twelfth century the Londoners claimed that they had the right to elect the monarch and in 1135 they chose Stephen as king.<sup>89</sup> The proximity of Westminster, the usual place of coronation for English kings, tended to reinforce this claim. But the development of primogeniture diminished the role played by election: the Londoners might recognize and accept a new king but they did not choose him. By the fourteenth century sons succeeded fathers as kings of England and the Londoners were largely onlookers. In 1326, however, Isabella and Mortimer realized that if they were to be able to depose Edward II in favour of his son they would need the moral, as well as the physical, support of the Londoners. Isabella sent letters to the commons of London asking them to assist in the destruction of the king's enemies (i.e. the Despensers) and these letters were posted on the Cross in Cheapside and elsewhere in the city.<sup>90</sup> After a mob of Londoners had murdered Bishop Stapledon of Exeter on 15 October 1326 the city was fully committed to the deposition of the king. The Londoners, led by Richard de Betoyme (Bethune) who was elected mayor in November in place of the 'royalist' Hamo de Chigwell, together with John de Gisors, an alderman of twenty years' standing and an ex-mayor, played a leading role in the Parliament that met at Westminster on 7 January 1327.<sup>91</sup> When those summoned to Parliament seemed uncertain what course to take, Betoyme sent them an ultimatum: were they willing to join the city in the deposition of the king? On the morning of 13 January the lords rode to Guildhall and were there sworn by the mayor and the chamberlain of the city Andrew Horn, to stand by Isabella, queen of England and her son Edward, heir apparent, against the Despensers and Robert Baldock, to aid them with good counsel and to protect the liberties of

<sup>88</sup> Barron, 'London and the Crown', 99.

<sup>89</sup> C. N. L. Brooke with G. Keir, *London 800–1216: The Shaping of a City* (London, 1975), 84–5; M. McKisack, 'London and the Succession to the Crown during the Middle Ages', in R. W. Hunt, W. A. Pantin, and R. W. Southern (eds.), *Studies in Medieval History Presented to F. M. Powicke* (Oxford, 1948), 76–89.

<sup>90</sup> *Croniques de London*, 51–2; *Annales Paulini*, 315; *The Anonimale Chronicle 1307–1334*, eds., W. R. Childs and J. Taylor (Yorkshire Archaeological Society, 1991), 122–35; for Isabella's letters, see *CPMR* 1323–64, 41–2; for a helpful discussion of the events of 1326–7, see Claire Valente, 'The Deposition and Abdication of Edward II', *EHR* 113 (1998), 852–81, esp. 853–62.

<sup>91</sup> Williams, *Medieval London*, 297–9.

London.<sup>92</sup> In the afternoon in Parliament those assembled agreed to replace Edward with his son and to send a deputation to the king of Kenilworth in which John de Gisors was a prominent member. Edward was persuaded to abdicate in favour of his son 'by the clamour of the whole people' but, as has been pointed out, 'that clamour had a distinct London accent'.<sup>93</sup> Without the support of the Londoners it would have been much more difficult for Edward III to be made king. Not only did the Londoners organize the physical attacks on the Despensers and their supporters, but they also played a role in devising the means to depose the king and to justify the election of his son. It was their actions that made the partisan victory of Isabella and Mortimer appear as an expression of the common will.<sup>94</sup>

The role played by the Londoners in 1399 was no less crucial, but they were not the instigators of Richard's deposition; only after Henry Bolingbroke had been in England for six weeks did the Londoners send a deputation to Chester to renounce their allegiance to Richard and confirm their acceptance of Henry as king.<sup>95</sup> There is no account of the events in London in the autumn of 1399 comparable to that in the *Annales Paulini* describing what happened in 1326. It is clear, however, that once the citizens had decided to support Henry Bolingbroke they did so wholeheartedly and gave him counsel, service in his first Parliament, and cheering crowds for his importunate coronation. The prior of St Botolph's, Colchester, sourly remarked that Henry was only made king by the rabble of London.<sup>96</sup>

But the Londoners were losing their taste for kingmaking. In the 1450s the citizens were reluctant to play a partisan role and their cautious neutrality is in marked contrast to their proactive role in 1326. But just as the murder of Stapledon was decisive in committing the city to the cause of Isabella, so the entry of the Yorkist lords into London on 1 July 1460 converted the city's ineffective neutrality into partisan support. The Londoners in the next nine months supplied loans totalling an unprecedented £11,000, they sent troops to fight with the duke of York at Wakefield in December 1460, and in March 1461 they joined with the retinues of the earls of March and Warwick to proclaim Edward of York king at Clerkenwell fields. Three days later they played their accustomed roles at the coronation of the new king.<sup>97</sup> In so far as they had the power to do so, the Londoners helped Edward to be a *de iure* as well as a *de facto* king.

<sup>92</sup> *Annales Paulini*, 323; *CPMR 1328–1364*, 11–12. It is possible that Thomas, Lord Wake and John Stratford, bishop of Winchester, both supporters of Isabella, for political reasons contributed generously at Christmas 1326 to the repair of Guildhall chapel, see Riley, *Memorials*, 152.

<sup>93</sup> Williams, *Medieval London*, 298. The Londoners have been characterized as 'junior partners' in these events, which may be true, but their corporate threat of street violence must have been significant, and they certainly secured some important privileges in their new charter in 1327: P. Nightingale, *A Medieval Mercantile Community: The Grocers' Company and the Politics and Trade of London 1000–1485* (New Haven, Conn., 1995), 157.

<sup>94</sup> I am grateful to Anthony Moore for letting me read his unpublished Cambridge M.Phil. essay on 'London and the Crown in the Reign of Edward II, with Special Reference to the Period 1319–27'.

<sup>95</sup> C. Barron, 'The Deposition of Richard II', in J. Taylor and W. Childs (eds.), *Politics and Crisis in Fourteenth-Century England* (Gloucester, 1990), 132–49, esp. 139–42.

<sup>96</sup> J. H. Wylie, *Henry IV* (London, 1884), i. 420.

<sup>97</sup> Barron, 'London and the Crown', 98–9.

In 1483 the Londoners appear to have acquiesced in Richard's usurpation: following the death of Edward IV on 9 April the mayor Edmund Shaa and the aldermen made the customary preparations for the coronation of his son Edward V but seem to have made no protest when Gloucester ambushed the young king and postponed the coronation.<sup>98</sup> Gloucester had no particular following in the city and he took steps to strengthen his case. Mayor Shaa provided his brother Dr Ralph Shaa, who conveniently preached at Paul's Cross on 22 June propounding the view not only that Edward IV's children were illegitimate because of the king's prior contract of marriage, but also that Edward himself was illegitimate. Two days later the duke of Buckingham appears to have been sent to Guildhall to point out the same disqualifying circumstances and to urge the undoubted virtues of the duke of Gloucester: a scene made famous by Shakespeare and in which the role of the mayor of London is far from heroic. On 26 June in response to a petition from the lords and commons, Richard accepted the crown and two days later the common council of London agreed to give the new king and his queen Anne a coronation gift of £1,000. The events of the summer of 1483 reveal that Richard was anxious to win the support of the citizens and took trouble to manipulate public opinion. The mayor and aldermen went along with Richard's usurpation but the London citizens refrained from spontaneous enthusiasm for Buckingham's speech on 24 June.<sup>99</sup> It seems unlikely that many Londoners believed in the legitimacy of Richard's takeover but they were prepared to acquiesce since they could see that there were advantages in having a strong ruler rather than a young boy. Edmund Shaa seems to have led the Londoners in a passive, if inglorious, role in the making of Richard III. The new king remained anxious about his reputation in the city and when, after the death of his wife Anne, it was bruited about in the city that he had murdered her in order to marry his niece Elizabeth (daughter of Edward IV and future wife of Henry VII), Richard took the unprecedented step of summoning the mayor and aldermen to meet him in the Priory of St John at Clerkenwell on 30 March 1485. He then asserted that

It never came in his thought or mynde to marry in suche maner wise nor willyng or glad of the dethe of his quene but as sorye & in hert as heveye as man myght be, with muche more in the premyes spoken, for the whiche he then monysshed & charged every parson to ceas of suche untrue talkyng on parell of his indignacion.<sup>100</sup>

That Richard should have demeaned himself to make such a public protestation is suggestive of the perceived importance of a good political reputation in the city of London. Although Henry VII was also a usurper, he had the advantage of having only a dead, and not a living, predecessor. Following Henry's victory at Bosworth

<sup>98</sup> The best account of the events of 9 April to 13 July 1383, which includes the London material, is to be found in A. Sutton and P. Hammond (eds.) *The Coronation of Richard III* (Gloucester, 1983), 13–29.

<sup>99</sup> One author commented that a small number cried 'ye ye', more out of fear than love, *Great Chronicle*, 232.

<sup>100</sup> *Acts of Court of the Mercers' Company 1453–1527*, ed. L. Lyell and F. D. Watney (Cambridge, 1936), 173–4.

on 22 August, the mayor and aldermen had little difficulty in deciding to send a deputation northwards to greet king Henry and he was welcomed into the city in triumph early in September.<sup>101</sup> The first Tudor king owed little of his success to the support of London: the great age of the city as kingmaker was past.

<sup>101</sup> CLRO, Journal 9 fos. 85<sup>v</sup>–87; D. J. Guth, ‘Richard III, Henry VII and the City: London Politics and the “Dun Cow”’, in R. A. Griffiths and J. Sherborne (eds.), *Kings and Nobles in the Later Middle Ages: A Tribute to Charles Ross* (Gloucester, 1986), 185–99.