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LOOKING TO THE PAST: THE ST THOMAS PAGEANT IN EARLY TUDOR CANTERBURY

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From the State Opening of Parliament to the commemoration services and parades to mark historic battles and the beginning and ending of wars, rituals, whether viewed on TV or computer screens, or 'by being there', continue to be part of British culture as they have been for centuries. What differs, however, are the societies in which ritual takes place, and this is equally the case whether we are looking chronologically and/or geographically. For the historian, therefore, it remains vital to analyse ritual and other related topics in terms of these specifics of time and place. This is not to discount the value of thinking cross-culturally or drawing on theoretical ideas developed in disciplines such as social anthropology and historical geography, but these need to be deployed with caution, and a realisation that a simple transference of ideas helps no one.¹

Such considerations have been highlighted by a number of historians, not least because there has been a considerable increase, particularly in medieval studies, in the number of essays published on a wide range of rituals, including royal progresses, liturgical worship, civic and guild ceremonies, and parochial processions.² One of the pioneers in this field is Charles Phythian-Adams, whose work in the 1970s on the ritual year in Coventry at the end of the Middle Ages drew attention to the range of secular and ecclesiastical rituals, the purpose and value of ceremonial activities for rulers, and the implications of such activities at times of socioeconomic difficulty.³ More recent scholarship has questioned some of his assertions, especially his demarcation of the ritual year and his concept that ritual in some way acted as a 'safety-value' for the release of tensions within society.⁴ Instead there has been greater emphasis on the inter-relationship between secular and ecclesiastical ritual practices and that rituals offered ways of negotiating relationships between different constituencies within urban society. Such negotiation employed often complex, changeable processes involving a mix of conflict, cooperation and compromise.⁵ By exploring these issues, historians have opened up the field of enquiry and have begun to consider matters like the deployment of space, the importance of audience – reception studies – as opposed to solely concentrating on the producers of rituals, and have looked beyond the ritual itself to assess ideas about interpretation – just how do we work with different types of texts and material objects which refer to or were used in these activities?⁶

Furthermore, for those working on urban society in the later Middle Ages, these more nuanced approaches have coincided with a growing awareness that the debate

regarding the state of English towns by the beginning of the sixteenth century cannot be seen as a simple dichotomy of general decline with a few successes, especially the exceptional growth of London. Rather, as the plethora of individual urban studies has increasingly demonstrated, the picture is exceedingly variable both between towns and for particular towns over time, albeit there is general agreement that national features such as the mid-fifteenth-century depression, which lasted for three decades from the 1430s, and inflation after 1518 did have widespread implications.⁷ Nonetheless it remains clear that while surveys such as the Cambridge Urban History series are important, regional and local conditions, and thus assessments of continuity and change are the cornerstone for any understanding of late medieval urban society.⁸

Another relevant area of scholarship that has developed greatly in recent decades is medieval theatre studies. Although not exclusively seen as an urban phenomenon, and within towns as civically-controlled, the prolific work of literary historians such as Pamela King and Meg Twycross, with the producers of *Records of Early English Drama* (REED) volumes, have underlined the significance of these biblical pageants, most particularly at York and Chester.⁹ In part this relates to the extensive survival of textual evidence, but these scholars have also highlighted the importance of analysing such records specifically in terms of their inter-relationship with the time and place of their production and reception. Notwithstanding the analytical problems of audience response, which are as equally difficult for biblical pageants as they are for ceremonies and processions, to consider them at all analytically is an important first step.

Consequently this investigation of the St Thomas pageant in early Tudor Canterbury will seek to build on a number of scholastic approaches. Of particular importance are those relating to understanding medieval rituals through the employment of space, the inter-dependency between civic and ecclesiastical bodies, and the specific nature of time and place in a ritual's production as it affected and was affected by both producers and consumers.

From the perspective of this analysis, the investigation takes its initial lead from the items listed in the Canterbury civic accounts for 1504/5 that relate to the (re)creation of a St Thomas pageant, which took place on 6 July 1505 as part of the city's celebrations to mark the eve of the feast day of the Translation of St Thomas.¹⁰ Whether this was a revival of an ancient custom or an innovation is not the focus here, rather it is the timing of the civic authorities' expenditure on their 'new' St Thomas pageant and associated festivities, which offers an opportunity to explore the relationship between saint and city at a time when ideas regarding pilgrimage were coming under increasing scrutiny in northern European society. Lollards, or at least those espousing heterodox beliefs, seem to have retained a foothold in Kentish and in sections of English society more generally during the fifteenth century, and, due to the county's proximity to continental Europe, the influence of new humanist attitudes in the early sixteenth century may have been especially significant.¹¹ This is not to devalue the importance of the established Church and still popular devotional activities such as pilgrimage in early Tudor society, but the mayor and aldermen's efforts may reveal ideas about how closely they believed Canterbury and St Thomas were intertwined ideologically.¹² And also financially, because presumably providing for pilgrims and other travellers

had comprised a significant portion of the city's economy.¹³ Thus at a time when other sectors of the economy were apparently encountering severe difficulties (or were so perceived locally), the civic authorities' initiatives in the early sixteenth century are noteworthy.¹⁴

As today, any policy to strengthen an ailing economy, or one that has recently suffered a deep depression, was neither straightforward nor uncontroversial – should expenses be pruned or should one spend to try to boost a flagging enterprise – a dilemma faced by the mayor and his brethren who needed to decide how, or even whether, they should finance projects to enhance the experience of those coming on pilgrimage to the city. Nor, seemingly, were the civic authorities the only institution considering such issues because Christ Church Priory would initiate a major construction enterprise a few years later; and both were keenly aware of the potential of the forthcoming Jubilee due to the success of previous anniversaries.¹⁵ Even though much had changed in three hundred years since the Translation of the saint's relics, the mayor and prior may have hoped for comparable elements in 1520: the attendance of a devout young King Henry VIII who was devoted to the blessed martyr, many and distinguished guests including those from overseas, and a host of ordinary pilgrims whose presence would return the cult of St Thomas to its rightful place among the principal shrines of Christendom.¹⁶ How successful the authorities in Canterbury were in 1520 remains a moot point, but the introduction or possibly re-introduction of the pageant fifteen years earlier may mark the beginning of a civic initiative regarding 'their' saint.¹⁷

To provide a context for this examination of the St Thomas pageant and the subsequent investigation of its role in Canterbury society, the first section of this essay will consider the state of the city at the beginning of the sixteenth century.

Early Tudor Canterbury

The demographic and economic fortunes of Canterbury in this period are not easy to determine, not least because the lay subsidy records of 1524-5 (with the poll tax records of 1377), which are frequently used by economic historians to assess trends during the late Middle Ages, may not be indicative of the situation in 1504. Nevertheless, these national taxation records remain a useful starting point, in part because they offer comparable sources, even though their interpretation also presents certain difficulties.

Looking first at population, Canterbury may be one of the very few greater towns where the population in the 1520s exceeded that in the 1370s.¹⁸ Although the use of taxation records and a suitable multiplier to give an estimate of the population is open to criticism, the calculated population figures of between c.4,500 and c.4,900 in 1377 compared to between c.4,700 and c.5,500 in 1524 would, as Jennifer Kermode has suggested, imply that the city as a whole was remarkably resilient in comparison to many others.¹⁹ Yet it is worth noting that the lay subsidy figure includes over ninety tax-paying aliens, indicating the significance of recent immigration and thus that Alan Dyer's classification of Canterbury as a town that had experienced periods of both growth and contraction in the later Middle Ages may be a more appropriate assessment.²⁰ This proposition would seem to be substantiated in terms of comparing a similar area for the two dates. The figures

for 1524 are based on the returns for Canterbury's six wards, which means the assessment extended beyond the walls to encompass the city's liberty.²¹ Even though it is not stated in the returns for 1377, they too seemingly covered the liberty, not least because the two assessments in 1381 included tax payers from St Paul's parish which was predominantly in the suburbs. However, Jacqueline Bower believes the population was markedly lower for the area within the walls, and she thinks a more 'realistic' figure is perhaps about 3,000 for the city itself.²² Consequently by the mid 1520s Derek Keene may be right to say that the city, 'enjoyed a standing in the region and the nation higher than ever before', but whether this would have been apparent to the mayor and his brethren planning the pageant twenty years earlier is unclear.²³

During the fifteenth century, local chronicle evidence indicates that the city had suffered a number of major plague outbreaks, one of the worst years being 1457, and on average there was at least one epidemic per decade.²⁴ In addition, John Hatcher's analysis of Christ Church Priory's obit lists points to a period of high mortality among the monks, particularly from the mid century onwards, and conditions in the city may mirror this scenario.²⁵ Thus even to maintain Canterbury's population at or near late fourteenth-century levels, immigration rather than a high birth rate is likely to have been the key factor. One measure of immigration levels is the number of intrants recorded in the chamberlains' accounts, these men and women paying an annual licence fee to live and trade independently in the city.²⁶ During the later fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries they were most numerous, but after about the mid-fifteenth century the number of intrants listed yearly dipped. Nevertheless, in the last decades of the century numbers had begun to recover, but the first decade of the new century witnessed a further fall before numbers again began to recover, but how far this reflects better economic conditions in Canterbury rather than problems elsewhere in the county is difficult to quantify.²⁷ Being outside the status of freemen, a sizeable proportion of the intrants seem to have led a precarious existence, and relatively few remained in Canterbury for more than five years, and this was even more marked for the far smaller number of women. However there were men who prospered sufficiently to become freemen. In addition, some moved between wards which similarly may reflect their rising fortunes, nonetheless conversely others may have had little option but to move to poorer wards such as Northgate and Ridingate.²⁸

Staying with the higher population figures for comparison purposes, one consequence of this apparent increase in the population was a rise in Canterbury's national ranking, the city moving from its position of thirteenth in 1377 to ninth in 1524, being in size almost midway between Salisbury (eighth) and Colchester (tenth). Moreover, the city's ranking of tenth based on taxable wealth in the 1520s might suggest the prosperity of Canterbury's business community was on a par with those of comparable sized towns, again taking Salisbury paying £411, Canterbury £269 and Colchester £204.²⁹ In addition, using Cornwall's breakdown by tax-paying group for seven comparable provincial towns, albeit Nottingham was the smallest with less than half the number of Canterbury's tax payers, the economic profile for Canterbury seemingly most resembles Exeter, a city that has been characterised by Alan Dyer as a successful urban community.³⁰ For both Exeter and Canterbury about 81 per cent of the taxpayers were assessed as having under

£10 worth of goods, equating, according to Cornwall, to less skilled craftsmen and poorer labourers, servants and artificers.³¹ Similar percentages of the next two socioeconomic groups were to be found in Exeter and Canterbury; that is, highly skilled craftsmen, and lesser merchants with the minor gentry, but in the highest echelons of these urban societies, at Exeter there was a greater number and also proportion of leading gentry and wealthy merchants.

Local sources are also problematic regarding any assessment of the profile of individual wealth among Canterbury's freemen but taxation lists by ward and testamentary materials do offer certain indicators. Using the latter, at the lower end of the city's tiny elite were citizens such as William Philpot of Holy Cross parish who, in 1506, was able to instruct his executors not to collect any debts after his death worth less than 6s. 8d., and who bequeathed between £3 and 10s. to each of his five servants.³² Yet within the same parish the local vicar had only five years earlier created an almshouse for five poor women, an indication of the variation in personal circumstances within a few streets.³³ This diversity at parochial level is even more marked when examined by ward because of their much larger size. Similarly each ward offers evidence of a wide range of occupations, but in every one victualling and allied trades accounted for a sizeable proportion of the workforce. In addition, all the wards embraced significant cross sections of the community, albeit the relative proportions did vary per ward, and topographically each extended from the centre of the city to its periphery. Furthermore, the evidence of exclusive enclaves of specialist producers is extremely limited; however butchers were predominantly located close to the Bullstake (today the Buttermarket).³⁴ This means it is difficult to examine any trends respecting economic changes across the city by trade, especially because there were numerous shops and different commodity markets located at various sites; also the civic authorities apparently moved certain markets between wards for political, not economic, reasons during this period. Nevertheless, as noted above, the social structure of the various wards did differ, the more prosperous being Burgate (close to the cathedral precincts) and Westgate (the intra-mural main road from London), to be joined by Newingate (bordering Burgate and containing several markets) in the early sixteenth century. The rise in the relative fortunes of those in Newingate is interesting because the ward contained the site of the cloth market and a significant proportion of the local intrants were involved in leather-working or cloth occupations, the latter industry having recently experienced major setbacks.³⁵

For the city's economy, any downturn in the cloth trade was a severe blow because Andrew Butcher has calculated that about a third of the population had been involved in this industry in the late fourteenth century, and such a reliance meant it was vulnerable to fluctuating trading conditions.³⁶ To try to mitigate what they saw as the disastrous loss of cloth making in early Tudor Canterbury to the Weald, the mayor and aldermen brought in several protectionist measures, as well as those to stimulate production, one of the former forbade the selling of wool to spinners and weavers outside the city, the latter a decree that each of the civic officers and others should buy a set length of locally-produced cloth the following year.³⁷ Nonetheless, it is feasible that even if the production of cloth was under threat, the finishing trades of tailoring and hat- and cap-making were more successful, thus mirroring the situation in Coventry at this time.³⁸ Other

ideas to stimulate or at least maintain manufacturing locally around 1500 were the introduction, or perhaps renewal, of a number of craft guilds as a means of controlling production and trade in certain industries, measures that were intended to safeguard the city's economy and its citizens.³⁹ Such protectionist strategies benefited some but were to the detriment of others, and poverty probably became more widespread. Testamentary provision for the poor appears to have increased, but may have been more targeted and Canterbury also offered some institutional care at several newly-founded, small almshouses, as well as its ancient hospitals.⁴⁰

Thus from an economic perspective, Canterbury seems to have experienced a testing period in the late fifteenth century, the city's role as a cloth-manufacturing centre having declined, albeit it remained a marketing hub for its agrarian hinterland.⁴¹ Such changes appear to have occurred at a number of English towns, but the evidence for Canterbury suggests that this transitional period brought its own problems. For example, the chamberlains' returns from the city-owned shambles and stalls of the fishmongers and butchers witnessed a decline in the 1490s, including considerable arrears in some years, although thereafter the scenario did improve.⁴² Another indicator of the problems of readjustment for Canterbury's citizens comes from the rental evidence of the city's largest institutional landlord, Christ Church Priory, whose holdings were mostly concentrated in the central commercial parishes. From Butcher's assessment of the priory accounts, it appears rent levels were already declining before the mid-fifteenth-century depression, which only exacerbated the prior's problems of rent arrears and the need to adjust rental values.⁴³ The later decades of the century also brought the difficulty of finding sufficient tenants, even at lower rents, and vacancies and decayed properties were present in all parishes. The situation seems to have deteriorated even further after 1500 because the extant rental of 1512-13 indicates the priory was achieving perhaps as little as 40 per cent of the declared rental value from its properties in the central parish of St Andrew and things may have been even worse in 1520-1.⁴⁴ Financing repairs, therefore, became a growing burden, and by this date seemingly could require over 60 per cent of the real rental income.⁴⁵ The priory was not the only institution facing such multiple problems regarding its property portfolio in the city, and for the civic authorities there was the added burden of overseeing the provision of Canterbury infrastructure.⁴⁶

The direct cost of paving, sewerage and refuse removal, and the upkeep of the city's walls and gates, was to some extent met by individuals and institutions but the civic chamberlains were frequently called upon to finance both capital projects and continuing maintenance. In part such initiatives and their upkeep were undertaken in response to national requirements, but successive mayors also appreciated the need to improve the urban environment for pilgrims and other visitors, as well as for the city's residents. This seems to have become particularly pressing in the aftermath of the 1470 Jubilee when it was reported that 'the ... Cite is often tymes full fowle noyous and uneasy ... whereof often tymes is spoken moch disworship in diverse places as well beyond the Se as on this side the See'.⁴⁷ Some of these problems were tackled through the adoption of new ordinances (paving the principal streets in 1478; street cleaning 1496) and construction (the main drain in 1485; St George's Gate in 1484/5), but the ability to sustain such improvements over the following decades varied considerably.⁴⁸ The civic authorities were often forced to aid individuals or institutions unable to fulfil their statutory obligations,

while on other occasions the mayor's only recourse was to bring those who refused to co-operate before the courts, and similarly those who openly flouted the law.⁴⁹

Among those groups who seem to have caused the authorities particular problems were the innkeepers, keepers of tippling houses, and others involved in victualling. Some of these traders had presumably suffered in the later fifteenth century as the demand for their services declined, and such people were among those renting shops and inns from Christ Church who were finding it increasingly difficult to meet their obligations.⁵⁰ Whether conditions had improved somewhat by the early sixteenth century remains a matter for debate, but for those making a living from these service trades, the intrants lists and the ward registers (Assize of Bread and Ale and associated licensing systems) suggest such occupations were still seen as offering commercial opportunities. Furthermore, some of these victuallers and others may have been seen by their law-abiding neighbours as part of the problem when these traders were indicted for dumping offal, dung and other rubbish, keeping 'suspect' persons and damaging the city wall and ditch.⁵¹ The reasons for this continuity in provisioning and hospitality as a source of prosperity for Canterbury rested primarily on the city's position between London and many of the Kent ports, as well as St Thomas' shrine, albeit by this period the number of pilgrims had seemingly declined. The days of 'a hundred thousand' – said to have attended the 1420 Jubilee – were long past, and the few surviving prior's accounts from the later fifteenth century point to a fall in the level of offerings received at the shrine and associated altars.⁵² However St Thomas was not totally eclipsed by national cults such as Our Lady at Walsingham; those overseas, especially St James de Compostella; or even the growth of regional and local shrines: the Holy Rood at Boxley Abbey and Our Lady of Poulton, respectively.⁵³ In addition, royal pilgrims, including Henry VII, and senior churchmen such as Richard Fox the Bishop of Winchester (1504), and the papal legate (1518) helped to maintain the cult through their attendance at the saint's shrine.⁵⁴

An incomplete sixteenth-century account book of the keeper of the martyrdom, a site that had never received large sums compared to the Corona and St Thomas' shrine, provides an indication of the continuing presence of pilgrims in Canterbury Cathedral during the early sixteenth century. Even though the accounts only cover a short period, they show that rarely on a day by day basis was nothing collected at the martyrdom. Not that the daily totals were large, often barely a penny, but it seems likely the shrine itself would have received much more.⁵⁵ Nevertheless in the context of this investigation of the St Thomas pageant, perhaps of greater significance is the larger amount given at the martyrdom on the vigil and feast of the Translation during the 1500s. For example, rather than the daily few pence on these two days in 1504 the sums were 7s. and 3s. 4d. respectively; and two years later they were even more substantial: 16s. 4d. and 13s. 4d. Also interesting is the higher sum collected on the vigil compared to the feast day itself, and for the period between 1504 and 1510 this occurred in five of the seven years.⁵⁶

Whether this continuing flow of pilgrims to Canterbury, whose presence in the city was also a boon to a wide variety of traders beyond the cathedral precincts, was due in part to more stable political conditions after the turmoil of the dynastic struggles of the previous fifty years is unclear. Yet it seems likely such times had deterred some potential pilgrims, not least because the city and region had

witnessed civil strife on several occasions between 1450 (Jack Cade) and 1496 (Perkin Warbeck).⁵⁷ Particularly serious was the mayor and his followers' support for the Earl of Warwick during the Readeption, which, following Edward IV's return to power, led to the mayor's execution in the city's premier market place outside Christ Church gate in May 1471.⁵⁸ In the short-term such conflict was extremely serious for the civic authorities, although at other times they were able to maintain good relations with the Crown, and Henry VII issued the city with several important charters.⁵⁹ Frequently this was not the case concerning relations with the local premier Benedictine houses, and successive mayors had conducted long-running disputes over jurisdiction against both St Augustine's Abbey and the priory in the fifteenth century.⁶⁰ These territorial arguments in part related to financial matters, especially local taxation, again especially relevant at this time, and on occasion such quarrels resulted in physical conflict. A number of nasty incidents took place in and around 1500 involving the city and the priory, and, as in the earlier dispute with St Augustine's, outside arbitrators were required to settle the matter.⁶¹ Yet arbitration itself dragged on for several years in the early 1500s, and had not been resolved when the mayor watched the St Thomas pageant on 6 July 1505.⁶²

St Thomas Pageant

Like many other counties, Kent is fortunate that the *REED* project covering the diocese of Canterbury has been published (Rochester diocese for the remainder of the county is forthcoming), so providing a superb resource for the study of medieval drama.⁶³ Possibly taking pride of place among the references to plays and playing in the many towns and villages of east Kent is the section on Canterbury. Yet chronologically the early entries for the city derive from the religious houses and the arrival of civic drama is remarkably late, perhaps at least a century after the first Corpus Christi pageants at York.⁶⁴ Furthermore evidence for the presence of such guild-sponsored pageants at Canterbury rests on a single reference from the city's burghmote book and one item in the St Andrew's churchwardens' accounts.⁶⁵ An undated civic memo, probably from the late 1520s, states that the Corpus Christi play had previously been 'plaide att the costes and charges of the Craftes & Mistiers within the same Cite' but recently had not taken place 'to the grete hurte and decay of the seid Cite'.⁶⁶

Early sixteenth-century references in the civic archive to the festivities held on the eve of the Translation are more numerous, and they do provide valuable information regarding the form of the procession and some details concerning the St Thomas pageant within it. Even though the route taken by the marching watch is not recorded and the form of the watch itself comes from a later copy of a memorandum dated 1531-2, it seems feasible that it began and perhaps ended at the city's guildhall (**Fig. 1**).⁶⁷ The guildhall was adjacent to the civic-owned inn, the *Lion*, and close to St Mary Bredman church, also used by the corporation.

If the London waits were not in attendance 'the gyantes' were at the head of the procession.⁶⁸ Such artefacts may have been used at Sandwich in the town's St Bartholomew's day celebration and large puppets are also recorded in London, Norwich and Coventry.⁶⁹ Close behind were the first of the gunners and pike men and then the first of the five pageants, the 'Salutacyn' (Annunciation). Among

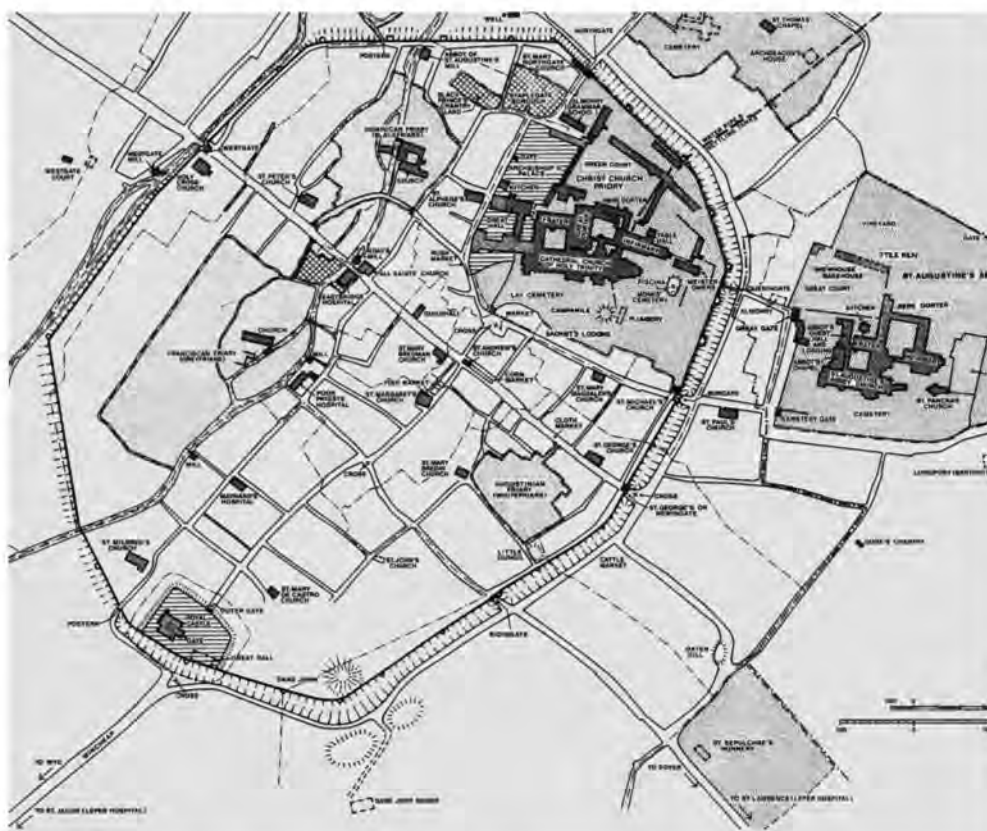


Fig. 1 Map of Canterbury in 1500 (© Canterbury Archaeological Trust).

those before the second pageant, which depicted St George, were forty 'byllmen' and the Ridigate constable, and a similar contingent followed with the Wor[th] gate constable, who preceded the third pageant of the Nativity. Thereafter archers replaced byllmen with first the constable of Northgate and then his Westgate counterpart, the former preceding the Assumption pageant, the latter St Thomas. This pageant was followed by another group of archers, the other constables, and the great two-handed sword, with the mayor and aldermen leading the rearguard. The importance placed on the procession by the leading citizens in the early sixteenth century can be inferred from the rules governing its conduct. These included the regulation that the aldermen were to come on horseback and, depending on the mayor's decision, were either to wear their scarlet and crimson gowns or their armour.⁷⁰ Their position towards the rear of the marching watch is indicative of their superior role within the city, as is the presence of the sheriff close behind. The placing of St Thomas as the fifth and final pageant may be similarly hierarchical, a reflection of its special nature which would be in keeping with the timing of the parade on the eve of the saint's summer feast day.

The form of the pageants is difficult to gauge but their presence within the

marching watch may suggest that they were not like the biblical plays performed in late fifteenth-century York, called pageants by contemporaries, and instead resembled something closer to a *tableau vivant*. Indeed, it has been suggested that initially the York pageants, too, may have taken a form not dissimilar to those which today can be seen in some Spanish and Belgian city processions, and Canterbury's may fit the earlier York pattern.⁷¹ Furthermore, the employment of boys to play the various parts would appear to substantiate this because it would have been very difficult for an audience to hear (m)any of the actors even if they had stopped at preset playing places, as at York. Also Canterbury is predominantly a city of narrow streets and small market places, and although some of the latter were employed as proclamation sites, enacting a pageant to a large crowd would have been more problematical. Nevertheless it does appear there was some level of narrative sequence concerning Becket's death, which implies a performance of some sort, but whether this was only done once, maybe at the Bullstake outside the cathedral gate or at the conclusion of the procession, is impossible to determine.

Interestingly, it seems that St Thomas was the sole pageant funded by the city chamberlains, or if the others were so supported the details are not recorded in the civic accounts, nor are they mentioned in any other respect. However the mayor and aldermen were prepared to spend sizeable sums on 'their' pageant, although seemingly not after 1522 for almost a decade. The initial expenditure in 1505 was over 25s., but almost half the cost was building and fitting out the pageant wagon, which included the making and fitting of 114 feet of boards for the floor of the cart.⁷² Unfortunately the width of these boards is not recorded so it is unclear how much space was available for the players. Yet it seems to have been a fairly large vehicle because it was pulled by a horse with frequently two or three men in attendance, whose payment included their supper, perhaps at the *Lion*. These attendants were not the only ones who ate at the city's expense and those playing the four knights were similarly recompensed, occasionally eating before and after the event.⁷³ Unlike the knights, the part of St Thomas does not appear to have been played by a cast member, rather a puppet or something similar may have been employed and likewise for the angel.

Evidence for a backdrop or painted scenery comes from the money spent on the purchase of ten yards of new canvas (as replacement?) to hang about the pageant in 1514-15.⁷⁴ Props too seem to have been used, especially to depict the murder which required the purchase of a leather bag and blood that must have been attached in some way to 'St Thomas'. The regular repainting of St Thomas' head may infer it became blood-stained during the enactment, a scenario that may also have included 'slicing off' part of the head to emulate the well-known event and to highlight the importance of the Corona in the cathedral.⁷⁵ The knights too were well equipped, for in addition to wearing armour they carried swords, the chamberlains almost annually paying for tin, silver and gold foil, leather, points, needles and thread. Moreover, the pageant may have become ever more elaborate over time and one piece of equipment that appears to have been introduced several years after its inception was the 'vyce'.⁷⁶ This device was worked by a man who was paid to turn it, the wire seeming attached to the angel who could be raised, presumably carrying the martyred archbishop's soul to heaven.

The civic authorities were apparently prepared to enhance their pageant even

further for the 1520 Jubilee. Among the purchases that year were two yards of green satin for two curtains, and a painter was paid 3*s.* 4*d.* to paint an image of Our Lady with two angels that was 'to hang ayenst the ymage of saynt Thomas vppon the auter'.⁷⁷ The saint was also given some new clothing, which was made from two yards of white canvas and half a yard of black 'tuke', and his mitre was repaired at a cost of 4½*d.*⁷⁸ Moreover it is likely that some of the expenditure on the pageant recorded in the 1520-1 chamberlains' accounts may refer to preparations for the 1520 festivities, especially as the total was higher than normal at 44*s.* 5*d.* Much of this was due to 'the new making of seynt Thomas Pagent' that included the buying of considerable quantities of timber, nails, cloth, and for work on the same. Similarly the horse which pulled the new cart was well presented for the celebration because two ash hoops had been acquired over which painted cloths were draped.⁷⁹ Yet thereafter for most of the next decade the pageant is mentioned hardly at all in the city accounts, except for its storage in the barn at St Sepulchre's nunnery, and it is only from 1530 that itemised expenses on the pageant reappear. Consequently it seems more worthwhile regarding the value of the pageant to the city to concentrate on its character in the lead up to the Jubilee.

Looking to the past

As James Stokes has argued in his consideration of the St Anne's day celebrations involving the city and cathedral of Lincoln in the fifteenth century, it is unhelpful 'to use a fragmenting approach in discussing religious drama, custom and ceremony' because this distorts 'the harmonious integration of worship and mimesis, church and community, metaphysics and history, politics and piety' that he believes provides a more nuanced understanding of such festivities.⁸⁰ Even though this approach may not be totally applicable to the St Thomas pageant within the marching watch because, unlike the St Anne's procession, the procession does not appear to have directly involved the cathedral community, for some involved in its production the interdependency of sacred and civic would have seemed only natural. In addition, what might be viewed as the distinctiveness of a regional culture, more commonly discussed with respect to late medieval East Anglia, may be equally germane for early Tudor Kent.⁸¹

Unfortunately nothing further is known regarding the marching watch, including the route taken. Nevertheless, by its very nature the procession can be construed as an act of worship by the mayor and his brethren, because like the procession on the feast of Corpus Christi, 'worship held two related senses for the medieval civic community, conveying, as well as 'religious observation', the sense of 'civic honour'.⁸² Such a bringing together of religion and secular society seems to have taken place in other Kentish towns in this period. Even though the St Bartholomew's day procession at Sandwich may not have been that well known in Canterbury, the Dover porters' journey from the coastal port to St Thomas' shrine in the cathedral once every three years on the vigil of the Translation was probably a familiar sight.⁸³ The porters were called upon to transport the Dover 'trendyll', a great candle the length of the circumference of the town that was wound onto a great reel which, on its arrival at the shrine, was used daily and at the saint's special feasts.⁸⁴ Whether it was met by the marching watch and perhaps escorted

through the city is unknown, but its presence and function may have led those in Canterbury to see parallels between the two civic rituals and pilgrimage, what Stokes calls 'a sacred space on wheels'.⁸⁵ In this context it is worth noting that there was a tradition of seeing Becket's return from exile in France, that is the final lap of his journey, from Sandwich to Canterbury, as evocative of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday.⁸⁶ Consequently, if the watch and its pageants were so envisaged, they perhaps provoked a heightened devotional response among some of those involved – participants and witnesses – especially in the highly charged atmosphere of a city where the residents were joined by pilgrims and visitors.

As a spectacle, the marching watch was presumably aided by its timing at the beginning of July, because not only is this close to midsummer, of value in terms of daylight hours and temperature, but it was presumably a relatively slack period in the agricultural calendar. In addition one of Canterbury's fairs took place during the octave of the Translation, such elements likely to draw in those from outside the city for a variety of reasons.⁸⁷ Although probably not the sole consideration, the civic authorities presumably wished to stimulate the local economy. Pageants covering the holy family, nationally important St George, and Canterbury's internationally recognised St Thomas might have been expected to have had special appeal in east Kent and perhaps more widely. The procession also featured a large number of armed men including gunners, who seem to have fired their pieces because gunpowder was purchased annually, and this cacophony would have added to the generally noisy atmosphere that included the city's waits and often musicians from London. In addition, many of those involved carried torches, all of which must have contributed to the magnificence of the display that at a time of austerity may have been a welcome diversion for those experiencing hardship and possibly poverty. Yet whether these measures were sufficient to attract a sizeable increase in the numbers visiting Canterbury and the shrine in the early sixteenth century is unclear. For example, there does not appear to have been an increase in the weekly fees from the city's flesh and fish stalls at this time. Moreover, the later rhetoric (c.1529-30) in the burghmote orders seems to imply that the mayor believed the problems concerning the city's Corpus Christi play, rather than those linked to the marching watch, were the principal reasons for 'the grete hurte & decay of the seide Cite' especially for the victuallers.⁸⁸

Nevertheless, even if it is not clear whether or how far Canterbury benefited financially from the pageant's (re)introduction, it may have been valued in terms of the public demonstration of the connection between the city and its saint (**Fig. 2**). This symbiotic relationship was also visible officially through the common seal, but the pageant offered greater scope to demonstrate the relationship to a wider audience.⁸⁹ Moreover, by highlighting certain aspects of the saint's history at the expense of others, the civic authorities were able to produce their own narrative of past events. For even though much of this was in keeping with the narrative produced by the Christ Church monks through the Becket windows, the accounts of the saint's life and martyrdom, the early miracle narratives and the various shrines, what Patrick Geary has called 'relics' – tangible or written relics that gave access to the past – the mayor and his fellows could, through the pageant, draw attention to their ancestors' part in these same events.⁹⁰ Thus the choices made by Canterbury's leading citizens of what to include and what to omit from their



Fig. 2 The City of Canterbury's late medieval seal depicts Becket's murder. CCAL: DCc/Ch.Ant./C/1154 (© Dean & Chapter, Canterbury).

pageant may be seen as helping to create the city's civic identity, their 'collective recollections of the past ... [giving] meaning to the transformed present'.⁹¹ Most frequently, as James Fentress and Christopher Wickham have indicated, such social memory is articulated through words, yet for them ritual can also offer considerable scope where the meaning is acted out, the resulting mental images

to be meaningful to the group, in this case the city's leading citizens, having to be 'conventionalized and simplified'.⁹² Nor, as Fentress and Wickham explain, 'may these ideas necessarily be true in factual terms, instead an image held in memory is a concept, and though we may normally assume that memories are real, that they derive from a real event, with regard to social memory the images may refer to circumstances which took place so long ago that they were not witnessed by the group'.⁹³ Consequently it is feasible to envisage the mayor and his brethren in early sixteenth-century Canterbury as conducting a 'conversation with the past ... the process [involving] evolution and change, thereby giving meaning to the group ... [who could only assume] that their traditions must refer to something real', but which they believed continued to be viewed as relevant by those taking part and those who watched the pageant.⁹⁴

Even though the portrayal of the saint's martyrdom might be seen as an obvious choice, being the subject of contemporary woodcuts which presumably meant the image was in greater circulation than ever before, it nevertheless appears to mark an important decision on the part of the civic authorities.⁹⁵ By showing the archbishop's death at the hands of four assailants as he knelt, perhaps, before an altar, the knights' swords and the pigs' blood adding to the horror of the moment, the leading citizens may have sought to emphasise Becket's sacrifice and suffering, especially if the crown of his 'head' was also sliced off (Fig. 3).⁹⁶ The subsequent carrying of the martyr's soul to heaven by the angel as it was wound up to the roof of the pageant offered a spur to further pious thoughts of redemption and spiritual rewards, ideas that might have resonated at both personal and corporate levels.

Notwithstanding the impossibility of recreating either individual or collective responses to the pageant, it may be feasible to explore what might have influenced contemporaries, or at least the ideas of the civic authorities. St Thomas' suffering and sacrifice on behalf of the Church in England, but especially of his parishioners within the province and diocese of Canterbury, the ancestors of the pageant's creators who had flocked to welcome him back to Kent after his time in exile, echoed Christ's sacrifice for all generations of these men from Kent. In addition the saint, like his exemplum, had faced martyrdom with humility, a man of sorrows whose death had revealed the full extent of his sacrifice to his appointed role through his wearing of a hairshirt. Even though Becket's death did not bring salvation for mankind, the aftermath of the murder was seen to bring other benefits for 'his people' – healing miracles, a contrite king and victory over the Scots. In the longer term too, the saint bestowed other gifts on Canterbury and its hinterland, economic and political certainly, but also spiritual according to sources such as the miracle narratives, records of penitential pilgrimages and testamentary bequests. Furthermore, despite the apparent reduction in Becket's popularity by the later Middle Ages, in part due to a growing emphasis on Christ's humanity and the holy family, and consequently the rise of shrines such as Walsingham, by including other pageants earlier in the procession that featured Christ and his mother, the pageant makers may have been attempting to link Becket not only to Christ but to Our Lady.⁹⁷ Also by focusing on the manner of St Thomas' death and his consequent honoured place in the company of heaven as the final pageant, the saint might additionally have been considered to share certain attributes with Christ's mother, albeit at a lesser level, because he too could aid spiritually those who sought his

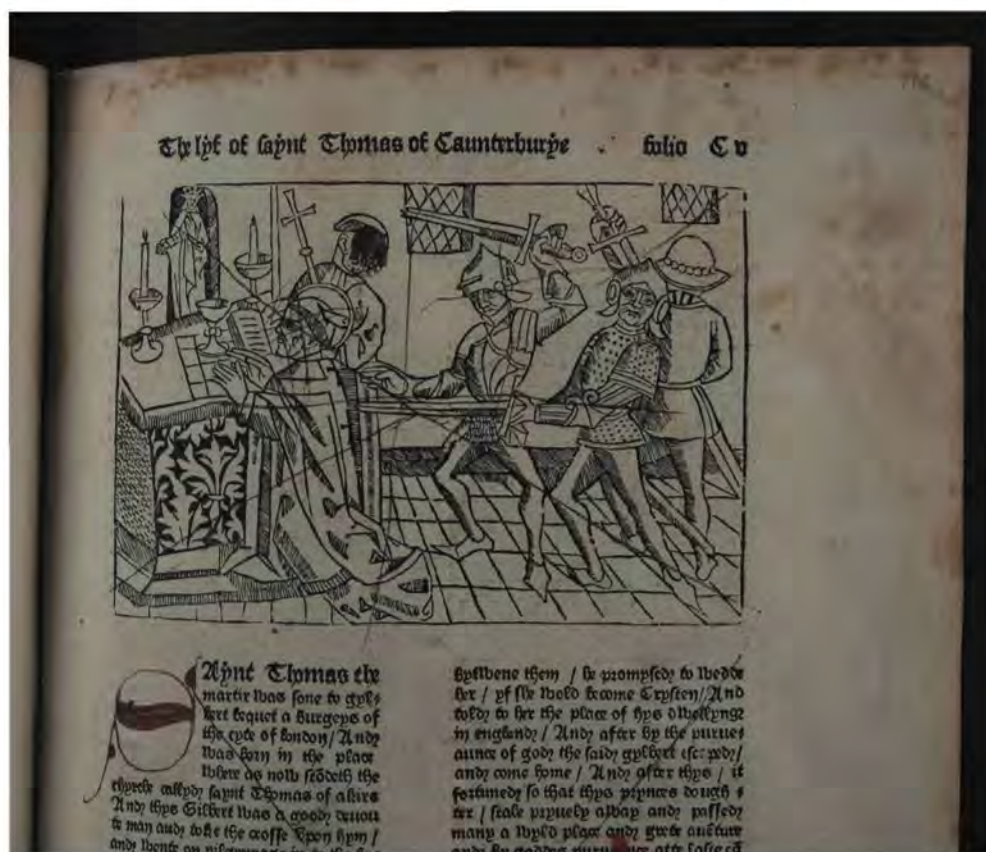


Fig. 3 Woodcut showing Becket's murder, *Golden Legend* [London: William Caxton, 1483, i.e. 1487?] [*Legenda aurea sanctorum, sive, Lombardica historia*], fol. 105. Special Collections Department, Glasgow University Library: Sp Coll Hunterian Bh.1.1 (© University of Glasgow).

benefaction. Thus the form and content of the civic pageants, especially the St Thomas pageant, may have appealed affectively to contemporaries seeing in the mind's eye, as well as the physical eye, the saving torments of 'their' archbishop.⁹⁸

Through their stress on Becket's martyrdom as the part of the narrative that mattered most, the mayor and aldermen may have been keen to highlight their corporate credentials; theirs was a responsible regime within the body politic. This included the vulnerable that belonged to the city, and such a symbolic gesture of their *caritas* may have seemed particularly pertinent at a time of economic difficulty when the strains on urban society were increasing. In addition, for those in civic office at Canterbury the St Thomas pageant within the marching watch provided a tangible demonstration of their power and authority. They controlled but also protected the city's streets and its citizens, and this protection encompassed not only the might of the watch but also the spiritual power of Canterbury's saintly guardian. The archbishop had been murdered seeking to protect his flock as

individuals but equally collectively, and his saintly body had continued to assist the city since that time. Yet whether there was a feeling amongst the civic authorities in the 1500s that more was required on their part to revive this reciprocal relationship with their saint is unclear, but it may have contributed to their initiation of this aspect of the civic festivities.

Another consideration may have been a desire to establish a better relationship with the cathedral monks after a prolonged and sometimes particularly bitter dispute. Not that the conflict between the city and the cathedral had been resolved in 1505, but relations were somewhat less strained than they had been five years earlier.⁹⁹ Furthermore cost was probably a growing issue, as well as disruption to civic governance and the need to attract pilgrims and others to Canterbury. The latter was important to both parties and the instigation of the St Thomas pageant may have aided the process of reconciliation. For the prior and convent their authority over the Becket story was far greater than that enjoyed by the mayor and aldermen, and their control extended beyond the bounds of the precincts. Nevertheless, the choice of the martyrdom was as attractive to the monks as it was to the civic authorities, not least because the site of Becket's murder was one of the principal places in Canterbury Cathedral. Consequently the portrayal of the bloody attack on the eve of the Translation as the pageant passed through Canterbury's streets was likely to raise the status of the martyrdom among those who saw the procession. Moreover, the priory may have viewed the city's pageant as a reminder of the dangers faced by the Church in the past from royal authority, even though in its early years the likelihood that the priory would face similar dangers again and shortly was presumably not apparent. Instead it is credible that the new Christ Church gate, which was constructed in the first two decades of the century, was a complimentary project involving the priory, archbishop and Crown, the prior intending to enhance his house's relations with the city.¹⁰⁰ The gate's design and execution thought to inspire awe among pilgrims as a fitting prelude to the magnificent sights in the cathedral itself.¹⁰¹ Thus in the decade before the 1520 Jubilee the corporation and priory seem to have demonstrated optimism regarding their saint, their engagement with the past viewed as heralding a brighter future. Even in the Jubilee year this feeling may have remained because, although the priory failed to acquire a papal indulgence, the monks still saw it in such terms, while the civic authorities made special provisions to accommodate pilgrims and among those who came to Canterbury (at 'Whitsontide') that year were Henry VIII and the Holy Roman Emperor.¹⁰² However not everyone in Canterbury welcomed the pilgrims, but John Martyn was probably exceptional regarding his level of opposition.¹⁰³

Epilogue

For many residents and visitors these festivities presumably offered an attractive annual occasion, and perhaps especially so in 1520, but the heresy trials almost a decade earlier indicate that at least for a tiny minority in Kent such emotional religiosity was an anathema.¹⁰⁴ Whether or how far similar views became more widespread across the county from the late 1520s remains controversial but the apparent revival of civic payments towards the pageant's upkeep from this period suggests that successive mayors continued to value the relationship between

Canterbury and its saint almost until the shrine's destruction in 1538.¹⁰⁵ Similarly the revival of the pageant under Mary may imply that some within the city government continued to hold traditionalist views.¹⁰⁶ Nevertheless, it may also reflect feelings that Canterbury had to a large degree lost its identity when it lost St Thomas' shrine because the Canterbury bell and the St Thomas ampulla were equally indicative of the pilgrims' destination.¹⁰⁷ Thus the final discarding of the pageant in 1559 might be envisaged as the end of more than the old religion in Canterbury, the new world of Protestantism looking to a different past that privileged figures such as John Bale's *Kynge Johan* and the 'martyrs' described by John Foxe.¹⁰⁸

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ENDNOTES

¹ For an example of such anthropological ideas, see *Understanding Rituals*, European Association of Social Anthropologists, ed. D. de Coppet (London, 1992). Frances Andrews provides a useful critique of these issues; eadem, 'Ritual and space: definitions and ways forward', *Ritual and Space in the Middle Ages*, ed. eadem (Donington, 2011), pp. 1-29.

² The literature is extensive, see for example: M. Rubin, *Corpus Christi: The Eucharist in Late Medieval Culture* (Cambridge, 1991), pp. 213-87; G. Rosser, 'Myth, image and social process in the English medieval town', *Urban History*, 23 (1996), 5-25; idem, 'Urban culture and the Church 1300-1540', *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain, 600-1540*, ed. D.M. Palliser (Cambridge, 2000), pp. 335-69; A.J. Fletcher, 'Playing and staying together: projecting the corporate image in sixteenth-century Dublin', *Civic Ritual and Drama*, ed. A.F. Johnston and W. Husken (Amsterdam and Atlanta, 1997), pp. 15-37.

³ First published as: C. Phythian-Adams, 'Ceremony and the citizen: the communal year at Coventry, 1450-1550', *Crisis and Order in English Towns, 1500-1700*, ed. P. Clark and P. Slack (London, 1972), pp. 57-85; reprinted in *The Medieval Town. A Reader in English Urban History 1200-1540*, ed. R. Holt and G. Rosser (London and New York, 1990), pp. 238-264.

⁴ For example: M. James, 'Ritual, drama and the social body in the late medieval English town', *Past and Present*, 98 (1983), 3-29.

⁵ For a Canterbury example, see S. Sweetinburgh, 'Placing the hospital: the production of St Lawrence's hospital registers in fifteenth-century Canterbury', *The Fifteenth Century XIII*, ed. L. Clark (Woodbridge, 2014), pp. 109-29.

⁶ Among such works are a number of essay collections, including: *City and Spectacle in Medieval Europe*, ed. B.A. Hanawalt and K.L. Reyerson (Minneapolis, 1994); *Civic Ritual and Drama*, ed. A.F. Johnston and W. Husken (Amsterdam and Atlanta, 1997); *The Use and Abuse of Sacred Places in Late Medieval Towns*, ed. P. Trio and M. de Smet (Leuven, 2006); *Cities, Texts and Social Networks, 400-1500: Experiences and Perceptions of Medieval Urban Space*, ed. C. Goodson, A.E. Lester and C. Symes (Farnham, 2010); *Urban Space in the Middle Ages and the Early Modern Age*, ed. A. Classen (Berlin, 2009); *Ritual and Space*, ed. Andrews; *Negotiating the Political in Northern European Urban Society, c.1400-c.1600*, ed. S. Sweetinburgh (Turnhout and Tempe, Arizona, 2013).

⁷ As an example, see for Coventry: C. Phythian-Adams, *Desolation of a City: Coventry and the Urban Crisis of the Late Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 1979), and a re-evaluation of the evidence; D. Leech, 'Stability and change at the end of the Middle Ages: Coventry, 1450-1525', *Midland History*, 34 (2009), 1-21. Also: C. Dyer, *An Age of Transition? Economy and Society in England in the Later Middle Ages* (Oxford, 2005), p. 244.

⁸ See also: A. Dyer, *Decline and Growth in English Towns, 1400-1640* (Basingstoke, 1991).

⁹ Their published works include: P. King, 'The York plays in performance: *Civitas versus Templum*', *Medieval English Theatre*, 22 (2005), 84-97; eadem, *The York Mystery Cycle and the Worship of the City* (Cambridge, 2006); M. Twycross, 'Some approaches to dramatic festivity, especially processions', *Festive Drama*, ed. eadem (Cambridge, 1996), pp. 1-33.

¹⁰ J.M. Gibson, ed., *Kent: Diocese of Canterbury*, Records of Early English Drama, vol. 1 (Toronto and London, 2002), pp. 98-99; Canterbury Cathedral Archives and Library [hereafter CCAL]: CC/FA 2, fols 411-11v.

¹¹ Among those who have discussed such issues see: R. Lutton, *Lollardy and Orthodox Religion in Pre-Reformation England*, The Royal Historical Society (Woodbridge, 2006); E.H. Shagan, *Popular Politics and the English Reformation*, Cambridge Studies in Early Modern British History (Cambridge, 2003). Although somewhat older Peter Clark's work remains a valuable starting point for a study of these issues; P. Clark, *English Provincial Society from the Reformation to the Revolution: Religion, Politics and Society in Kent, 1500-1640* (Hassocks, 1977).

¹² For specific considerations of pilgrimage, see R.C. Finucane, *Miracles and Pilgrims: Popular Beliefs in Medieval England*, 2nd ed. (Basingstoke, 1995), chapters 11, 12; D. Webb, *Pilgrimage in Medieval England* (London and New York, 2000), chapter 10; S. Sweetinburgh, 'Pilgrimage in "an Age of Plague": seeking Canterbury's "hooly blissful martir" in 1420 and 1470', *The Fifteenth Century, XII*, ed. L. Clark and C. Rawcliffe (Woodbridge, 2013), pp. 57-77.

¹³ As well as those offering board, lodging, horse hire or catering, were men such as the badge maker (and candle maker) Robert Lambe who bequeathed all his pins and several moulds to William Bote in 1518; Kent History and Library Centre [hereafter KHLCC]: PRC 17/13, fol. 328. He had inherited the business from William his father a year earlier, receiving all his father's moulds, pans, casting ladles, and a frame on which to hang tapers; KHLCC: PRC 17/13, fol. 28.

¹⁴ Gibson, *Kent*, p. xxx, citing the plea that Canterbury 'ys now of late in grete ruine & decaye', in *Statutes of the Realm*, vol. 3 (London, 1817), p. 134.

¹⁵ For an account of the preceding Jubilee in 1470; M. Connor, select., trans. & intro., *John Stone's Chronicle: Christ Church Priory, Canterbury, 1417-1472* (Kalamazoo, 2010), pp. 127-8.

¹⁶ For an assessment of the cult's value to the priory over time; C.E. Woodruff, 'Financial aspects of the cult of St Thomas of Canterbury', *Archaeologia Cantiana*, 44 (1932), 13-32.

¹⁷ J. Zeigler, 'The survival of the cult of St Thomas of Canterbury in the later middle ages' (unpubl. M.A. dissertation, University of Kent, 1997), pp. 31-2, 38-9; B. Dobson, 'Canterbury in the later Middle Ages', *A History of Canterbury Cathedral*, ed. P. Collinson, N. Ramsey and M. Sparks (Oxford, 1995), pp. 140, 149-50.

¹⁸ J. Kermode, 'The greater towns 1300-1540', *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain, 600-1540*, ed. D.M. Palliser (Cambridge, 2000), p. 444.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, using figures from A. Dyer, 'Appendix: ranking lists of English medieval towns', *Cambridge Urban History*, ed. Palliser, pp. 760, 763.

²⁰ The author would like to thank Dr Jonathan Mackman for the use of his transcription of Canterbury's 1524 lay subsidy returns; The National Archives: E179-124-188. Dyer, *Decline and Growth in English Towns*, p. 73.

²¹ See Urry's map of the city's liberty, comprising six wards, which he believed had probably been laid out in 1166; W. Urry, *Canterbury under the Angevin Kings* (London, 1967), map 1(a).

²² J. Bower, 'Kent towns, 1540-1640', *Early Modern Kent, 1540-1640*, ed. M. Zell (Woodbridge, 2000), p. 144; Gibson, *Kent*, p. xxix.

²³ D. Keene, 'The South-East of England', *Cambridge Urban History*, ed. Palliser, pp. 573, 581.

²⁴ M. Connor, 'John Stone, monk of Christ Church, Canterbury and his chronicle, 1417-1472' (unpubl. M.Phil. thesis, Royal Holloway, University of London, 2001), pp. 146, 147, 153, 154, 169, 186, 213-16, 240, 247, 263-4, 267.

²⁵ J. Hatcher, 'Mortality in the fifteenth century: some new evidence', *Economic History Review*, 2nd series 39 (1986), 19-38 (p. 36). See also: J. Connor, 'Profession and Death at Christ Church Priory, Canterbury, 1207-1534', *Archaeologia Cantiana*, 131 (2011), 282, 288, 289; and for a recent more general assessment of monastic mortality and its implications; R. Smith, 'Measuring Adult Mortality in an Age of Plague: England, 1349-1540', *Town and Countryside in the Age of the Black Death. Essays in Honour of John Hatcher*, ed. M. Bailey and S.H. Rigby (Turnhout, 2012), pp. 48-85.

²⁶ J.M. Cowper, ed., *Intrantes: A List of Persons Admitted to Live and Trade within the City of Canterbury, 1392-1592* (Canterbury, 1904).

²⁷ According to Mate the state of the economy varied across the county, but problems in the 1520s may have been countywide; M. Mate, 'The economy of Kent, 1220-1540', *Later Medieval Kent, 1220-1540*, ed. S. Sweetinburgh (Woodbridge, 2010), p. 24.

²⁸ Harman Johnson, shoemaker, may have been one of the former, James Holman one of the latter; Cowper, *Intrantes*.

²⁹ Dyer, 'Appendix', pp. 765, 768-9.

³⁰ J.C.K. Cornwall, *Wealth and Society in Early Sixteenth Century England* (London, 1988), pp. 54-64, 259; Dyer, *Decline and Growth in English Towns*, pp. 34, 42-3, 44.

³¹ Cornwall, *Wealth and Society*, p. 29.

³² KHL: PRC 17/2, fol. 227.

³³ KHL: PRC 32/6, fol. 26.

³⁴ S. Sweetinburgh, 'Kentish towns: urban culture and the Church in the later Middle Ages', *Later Medieval Kent*, ed. eadem, p. 145.

³⁵ Craftsmen such as tailors and cappers were still present but the weavers had disappeared; M. Mate, *Trade and Economic Developments, 1450-1550: the Experience of Kent, Surrey and Sussex* (Woodbridge, 2006), p. 12.

³⁶ A.F. Butcher, 'The social structure of Canterbury at the end of the fourteenth century' (unpubl., CCAL: Pamphlet M/22/34).

³⁷ *Historical Manuscript Commission 9th Report & Appendix* [hereafter *HMC* 9], p. 174, CCAL: CC/AC 1, fol. 34.

³⁸ Leach, 'Stability and change', pp. 19-20.

³⁹ *HMC* 9, p. 174. Among these were the smiths and armourers; CCAL: CC/Woodruff's/54/9. Regulations were also made regarding limitations placed on merchant strangers who wished to sell in the city; CCAL: CC/AC 1, fol. 33.

⁴⁰ S. Sweetinburgh, *The Role of the Hospital in Medieval England: Gift-giving and the Spiritual Economy* (Dublin, 2004), pp. 118-19.

⁴¹ Mate, *Trade*, p. 37.

⁴² CCAL: CC/FA 2; CC/FA 9; CC/FA 10; CC/FA 11.

⁴³ A.F. Butcher, 'Rent and the urban economy: Oxford and Canterbury in the later Middle Ages', *Southern History*, 1 (1979), 39-40.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 41.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 42.

⁴⁶ Mate, *Trade*, p. 126.

⁴⁷ CCAL: CC/A/A/36.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*; *HMC* 9, p. 145; CCAL: CC/AC 1, fol. 14; CC/FA 7, fol. 13.

⁴⁹ The mayor aided the three friaries towards paying for paving outside their precincts; CCAL: CC/Supp MS6, p. 90. William Andele was indicted for the state of the gutter outside his property in Turnagenlane and Christopher Prowde was before the courts for setting up a hedge in the king's highway outside St Michael's gate; CCAL: CC/J/Q/286; CC/J/Q/300.

⁵⁰ Even Rafe Preston, the inn keeper at the great *Cheker of the Hope*, was not immune from such difficulties; CCAL: DCc/RE 16.

⁵¹ Among those indicted in 1502 were the sexton at Christ Church for the state of Thurwall Lane, Thomas at Wode for encroaching four feet in the town ditch, and Thomas Stark for harbouring 'pokke people to the nuisance of his neighbours'; CCAL: CC/J/Q/302.

⁵² W. Urry, 'The Jubilee of St. Thomas, 1420: billeting and rationing problems in the fifteenth century', *Canterbury Cathedral Chronicle*, 42 (1947), 24. Woodruff, 'Financial aspects', pp. 23-4.

⁵³ Even on the eve of the Dissolution St Thomas' shrine still ranked second in terms of offerings at English monastic houses behind Our Lady of Walsingham; Dobson, 'Canterbury', p. 136. Webb, *Pilgrimage*, pp. 251-2.

⁵⁴ Like his predecessors, the mayor provided accommodation for the king in the Hale in the Blean; CCAL: CC/FA 7, fols 26, 28. Zeigler, 'Survival of the cult', p. 35. Dobson, 'Canterbury', p. 141.

- ⁵⁵ Zeigler, 'Survival of a cult', pp. 34-5.
- ⁵⁶ CCAL: Lit. MS C11, fols. 40-5.
- ⁵⁷ CCAL: CC/A/A/33; HMC 9, p. 146.
- ⁵⁸ C. Richmond, 'Fauconberg's Kentish rising of May 1471', *English Historical Review*, 337 (1970), 673-92 (p. 685).
- ⁵⁹ CCAL: CC/A/A/38; A/A/40; A/A/44.
- ⁶⁰ Sweetinburgh, 'Placing the hospital', pp. 110-13.
- ⁶¹ R. Warren, 'With rew and ryott': urban conflict between Church and state in fifteenth-century Canterbury' (forthcoming).
- ⁶² CCAL: CC/FA 9, fols 42, 42v, 44, 44v.
- ⁶³ See n. 10.
- ⁶⁴ King, 'York plays in performance', pp. 84-97.
- ⁶⁵ The grocers paid the churchwardens at St Andrew's church for wax tapers used about their pageant; C. Cotton, 'Churchwardens' accounts of the parish of St Andrew, Canterbury, from A.D. 1485 to A.D. 1685: Part I: 1509-1523', *Archaeologia Cantiana*, 33 (1918), 41.
- ⁶⁶ CCAL: CC/AB 1, fol. 6; Gibson, *Kent*, p. 139.
- ⁶⁷ CCAL: Lit. MS C13, fol. 10; Gibson, *Kent*, pp. 144-5.
- ⁶⁸ CCAL: CC/FA 9, fol. 43v; Gibson, *Kent*, p. 102.
- ⁶⁹ KHL: Sa/Fat 9. Rosser, 'Myth, image and social process', 22-3.
- ⁷⁰ CCAL: CC/AB 1, fols 5v-6; Gibson, *Kent*, p. 139.
- ⁷¹ King, *York Mystery Cycle*, p. 10.
- ⁷² CCAL: CC/FA 2, fols 411-11v; Gibson, *Kent*, pp. 98-9.
- ⁷³ CCAL: CC/FA 10, fol. 378; Gibson, *Kent*, p. 118.
- ⁷⁴ CCAL: CC/FA 10, fol. 139v; Gibson, *Kent*, p. 111.
- ⁷⁵ CCAL: CC/FA 9, fol. 155, 133v; Gibson, *Kent*, p. 106, 107.
- ⁷⁶ First recorded in 1514/15; CCAL: CC/FA 10, fol. 139v; Gibson, *Kent*, p. 111.
- ⁷⁷ CCAL: CC/FA 10, fol. 378; Gibson, *Kent*, p. 118.
- ⁷⁸ CCAL: CC/FA 10, fol. 378; Gibson, *Kent*, p. 117, 118.
- ⁷⁹ CCAL: CC/FA 11, fol. 28-8v; Gibson, *Kent*, p. 123.
- ⁸⁰ J. Stokes, 'Staging wonders: ritual and space in the drama and ceremony of Lincoln Cathedral and its environs', *Ritual and Space*, ed. Andrews, pp. 198-9.
- ⁸¹ A. Walsham, 'Afterword', *Pieties in Transition: Religious Practices and Experiences, c.1400-1640*, ed. R. Lutton and E. Salter (Basingstoke, 2007), pp. 188-9.
- ⁸² King, *York Mystery Cycle*, p. 5.
- ⁸³ For the St Bartholomew's day procession; KHL: Sa/LC 1, fol. 15v; W. Boys, *Collections for an History of Sandwich in Kent, with Notices of the other Cinque Ports and Members and of Richborough* (Canterbury, 1792), p. 17. For the Dover candle; P. Rowe, 'The Customary of the Shrine of St Thomas Becket, a translation of the Customary with notes' (unpubl. M.A. dissertation, University of London, 1990), pp. 21-2.
- ⁸⁴ S. Sweetinburgh, 'Wax, stone and iron: Dover's town defences in the late Middle Ages', *Archaeologia Cantiana*, 124 (2004), 187-8.
- ⁸⁵ Stokes, 'Staging wonders', p. 207.
- ⁸⁶ Rowe, 'Customary', p. 31.
- ⁸⁷ The fair was held within the cathedral precincts and seems to have become more lucrative because it was leased for 66s. 8d. a year in the 1530s, an annual increase of 26s. 8d. over the sums achieved in the 1470s; Mate, *Trade*, pp. 36-7. This fair had been granted by Richard II in 1383 and was under the control of the sacrist at Christ Church, C.E. Woodruff, 'The sacrist's rolls of Christ Church, Canterbury', *Archaeologia Cantiana*, 48 (1936), 40.
- ⁸⁸ CCAL: CC/A/B/1, fol. 6; Gibson, *Kent*, pp. 139-40.
- ⁸⁹ In terms of objects, seals have been viewed as important symbols of civic identity; J. Steane, *The Archaeology of Power* (Stroud, 2001), pp. 230-6. However seals were not the only artefacts and, as Christian Liddy has discussed, pictorial representations such as tapestries could function similarly,

and with all the same complexities of interpretation; idem, 'Urban politics and material culture at the end of the Middle Ages: the Coventry tapestry in St Mary's Hall', *Urban History*, 39 (2012), 203-24.

⁹⁰ P.J. Geary, *Phantoms of Remembrance: Memory and Oblivion at the End of the First Millennium* (Princeton, 1994), p. 7. See also: R. Koopmans, *Wonderful to Relate: Miracle Stories and Miracle Collecting in High Medieval England* (Philadelphia, PA, 2010).

⁹¹ Geary, *Phantoms of Remembrance*, p. 6.

⁹² J. Fentress and C. Wickham, *Social Memory* (Oxford, 1992), p. 32.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 24.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 26.

⁹⁵ Probably some of the best known woodcuts were produced by first William Caxton and then Wynkyn de Worde for their printed versions in the 1490s of Jacobus de Voragine's *Legenda Aurea* translated into English as *The Golden Legend*. It is interesting that Caxton's version shows Becket's martyrdom, whereas de Worde's shows the archbishop kneeling before an altar in the company of several clerics with a small figure of the crucified Christ standing on the altar. For Wynkyn de Worde: STC (2nd ed.) /24875 (Henry E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery), dated 1473; STC /1613:08 (British Library), dated 1498 (accessed on 6/5/2015 at http://eebo.chadwyck.com.kent.ac.uk/search/full_rec?Ecbold=9983947&ACTION=).

⁹⁶ To a degree this is portrayed in Caxton's woodcut of the saint's death (see Fig. 3) in that he shows the broken sword point protruding from Becket's head, and the link to Christ is shown through the presence of the chalice (Christ) on the altar and the diminutive crowned figure standing behind the altar; STC /2213:03 (University of Glasgow Library), dated 1487 (accessed on 6/5/2015 at http://eebo.chadwyck.com.chain.kent.ac.uk/search/full_rec?SOURCE=pgimages.cfg&ACTION=). It is worth noting that of the three extant images (EEBO) this one, like the text, has been slashed with a knife, whereas neither of the Becket images have been damaged in the later Wynkyn de Worde versions, and of these only the text in the British Library's copy has been similarly slashed.

⁹⁷ Finucane, *Miracles*, pp. 195-202; Webb, *Pilgrimage*, p. 252. In this context, see the woodcuts in the printed *Golden Legend* noted above.

⁹⁸ For several discussions on this topic see: J.F. Hamburger and A-M. Bouché, *The Mind's Eye: Art and Theological Argument in the Middle Ages* (Princeton, 2006).

⁹⁹ Yet it is worth noting that on a personal level the testamentary evidence of Canterbury's leading citizens and their wives indicates little support for the priory, rather St Augustine's Abbey was the preferred monastic house. For example: Elizabeth Sare, in 1514, followed her husband Thomas' lead, bequeathing 20s. towards repairs at the abbey church but nothing to Christ Church Priory; KHL: PRC 17/12, fol. 303.

¹⁰⁰ From the testamentary evidence construction work was taking place in 1505: James Nethersole's will TNA: PCC 11/25 cited in R. Austin and P. Seary, 'Christ Church Gate, Canterbury Cathedral: a desk-based assessment' (unpubl. report, CAT, 2009), p. 7; and was still taking place in 1516 because Robert Sare left 20s. towards it; KHL: PRC 17/18, fol. 165.

¹⁰¹ For an architectural assessment of the gate, see: Austin and Seary, 'Christ Church Gate'.

¹⁰² Zeigler, 'Survival of a cult', pp. 32, 37-40; *HMC* 9, p. 151; CCAL: CC/FA10, fol. 395v. Archbishop Warham, at his Canterbury palace, gave a grand feast for the Emperor; C. Woolgar, 'Fast and feast: conspicuous consumption and the diet of the nobility in the fifteenth century', *The Fifteenth Century II*, ed. M. Hicks (Woodbridge, 2001), p. 23.

¹⁰³ He was indicted before the city courts because 'he walketh in the city with a sword & a buckler & disseyas the honest pilgrims repayryng to the city'; CCAL: CC/AC 1, fol. 73.

¹⁰⁴ Pilgrimage was the topic most frequently cited within the abjurations of those accused of heresy; N. Tanner, ed., *Kent Heresy Proceedings 1511-12*, Kent Records 26 (Maidstone, 1997), p. xxv.

¹⁰⁵ P. Roberts, 'Politics, drama and the cult of St Thomas Becket in the sixteenth century', *Pilgrimage: the English Experience from Becket to Bunyan* ed. C. Morris and P. Roberts (Cambridge, 2002), pp. 201-2, 215-17.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 233-4; Gibson, *Kent*, p. xxix.

¹⁰⁷ The removal of St Thomas from the city's seal is another reminder of the breaking of this relationship, however it was not done until 1541/2; *HMC* 9, p. 153.

¹⁰⁸ Roberts, 'Politics', pp. 233-5.