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Jo Storey and W. Mark Ormrod (eds), *Migrants in Medieval England, c. 500–c. 1500* (British Academy, 2020).

- Abstract

This chapter argues that population mobility was central to the development of medieval urban society, environment and institutions. The first part provides an overview of the changing extent and nature of English urbanisation in the centuries between 600 and 1500, and addresses both mobility and migration within England, and beyond England. It outlines some of the multi-disciplinary and conceptual approaches underpinning this work and then focuses in greater depth on urban migration fields, and on the infrastructure, regulation, and experience of urban mobility. The chapter identifies competing cultural contexts within which values associated with urban mobility were conceived, and argues that both political language and developing social customs concerning the regulation of mobility were central to the experience of migrants. (120 words).

- Key Words. (apart from mobility and migration).
Urban government, urban environment, urban society, trade, employment, family life, charity, hospitality, poverty, travel.

ENGLISH TOWNS IN THE LATER MIDDLE AGES:

THE RULES AND REALITIES OF POPULATION MOBILITY

Sarah Rees Jones

Introduction

Most urban residents in the Middle Ages were either immigrants or the children or grandchildren of immigrants.[1] So far as we can tell, it was rare for urban families to survive for more than three generations in the male line.[2] Urban populations could only grow through net immigration, and such immigration was inter-linked with constant population mobility as both women and men of all social levels moved in and out of town. Population mobility was integral to the labour market and to education, to the organisation of trade and to the staffing of royal and ecclesiastical courts, while all kinds of travellers from pilgrims to political refugees might seek refuge in urban centres.

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[1] M. Kowaleski, 'Medieval People in Town and Country: New Perspectives from Demography and Bioarchaeology', *Speculum*, 89 (3) (2014), 600.

[2] S. Thrupp, *The Merchant Class of Medieval London, 1300–1500* (Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press, 1962), pp. 191–206; M. Kowaleski, 'The History of Urban Families in Medieval England', *Journal of Medieval History*, 14 (1) (1988), 47–63; J. Kermode, *Medieval Merchants: York, Beverley and Hull in the Later Middle Ages* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 78.

This constant mobility was the result of two interconnected dynamics: the development of trade and of new forms of government. During the period *c*. 600–1500 the development of a commercial economy, based first in the circulation of currency and later in credit, led to increasing specialisation in the production and delivery of goods and services and resulted in the growth and proliferation of towns as both markets and ports, and as centres of specialist manufacturing and training.[3] The more sophisticated such commerce became the more need there was for the movement of people. The roots of such commercial growth were evident by the ninth century, in the development of regional centres such as Winchester, London, Worcester, Chester, or York. Between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries the numbers of towns grew dramatically until the country was covered by an urban network of both larger and smaller towns supporting local as well as international trade with perhaps 20% of the population living in towns large and small by 1300 (compared to perhaps 10% around 1086). It was over the same period that a largely new network of primary roads emerged linking towns and villages and largely replacing older Roman road systems.[4] By *c*. 1300 commercial exchange characterised most kinds of work and across lowland Britain nobody lived more than

[3] For further bibliography see: D. M. Palliser (ed.), *Cambridge Urban History of Britain*, vol. 1, *600–1540* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2000); and 'Living in Towns and Ports', in C. Gerrard and A. Gutierrez (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of Later Medieval Archaeology*, part IV (Oxford, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2018).

[4] D. Harrison, *The Bridges of Medieval England: Transport and Society 400–1800* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2004), pp. 47–73.

a day's walk from at least a small town.[5] Just as important to these commercial developments, and closely integrated with them, was the creation of new territorial units of lordship and, indeed, ultimately states.[6] Kings and lords fostered commerce through the foundation of markets and by providing legal and military protection for traders. They also prospered from it through innovations in taxation and the regulation of markets, money and credit.[7] In some cases their rapidly developing administrations grew out of established urban centres (such as the offices of royal government in and around Winchester and later London), in other cases they founded new towns (such as the episcopal foundation of a new cathedral city in Salisbury to replace the older settlement at Old Sarum).[8]

The administrative function of towns meant that political patronage could dramatically influence patterns of urban immigration. Following the Norman Conquest of England in 1066 there was an influx of new immigrants from Normandy, Brittany, France, and Flanders. Such

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[5] R. Britnell, *The Commercialisation of English Society, 1000–1500* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1993).

[6] A. Sims and H. B. Clarke (eds), *Lords and Towns in Medieval Europe: The European Historic Towns Atlas Project* (Farnham, Routledge, 2015).

[7] G. Astill, 'Medieval Towns and Urbanization', in R. Gilchrist and A. Reynolds (eds), *Reflections: 50 Years of Medieval Archaeology 1957–2007*, Society for Medieval Archaeology Monograph, 30 (London, Maney, 2009), pp. 255–70; Britnell, *Commercialisation*, pp. 53–78, 128–54, 204–27.

[8] K. H. Rogers, 'Salisbury', in M. D. Lobel (ed.), *Historic Towns: Maps and Plans of Towns and Cities in the British Isles*, vol. 1, *Banbury, Caernarvon, Glasgow, Gloucester, Hereford, Nottingham, Reading, Salisbury* (London, Lovell Johns-Cook, 1969), pp. 1–4.

'Frenchmen' settling in towns resulted in radical changes to town plans through the insertion of castles and new market places, and through the addition of entire new districts that were known as the 'French' borough (in Hereford, Norwich, Nottingham, Shrewsbury, and elsewhere).[9] When Anglo-Norman rulers extended their rule over Wales and Ireland in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, similar encouragement of emigration from England and Flanders to populate new towns and increase old ones were employed (for example at Conwy, Caernarfon, Pembroke, Dublin, and Limerick).[10] Later, in the fourteenth century, royal patronage was similarly instrumental to the settlement in Colchester and London of artisans fleeing conflict in Flanders.[11]

In cultural terms, Christianity also influenced migration. After 1066 the colonisation of towns included the immigration of Jews from Normandy at first into London and then into other provincial towns. Their presence was not long-lived. When royal protection turned to persecution in the later thirteenth century those Jews who survived were exiled from the realm

[9] K. D. Lilley, *Urban Life in the Middle Ages, 1000–1450* (Basingstoke, Palgrave, 2002), pp. 93–9.

[10] M. W. Beresford, *New Towns of the Middle Ages: Town Plantation in England, Wales and Gascony*, 2nd edn (Gloucester, Alan Sutton, 1988); H. B. Clarke, 'Planning and Regulation in the Formation of New Towns and New Quarters in Ireland, 1170–1641', in *Lords and Towns in Medieval Europe*, pp. 322–31; Eamon O'Flaherty, *Limerick* (Dublin, Irish Historic Towns Atlas, 2010).

[11] B. Lambert and M. Pajic, 'Immigration and the Common Profit: Native Cloth Workers, Flemish Exiles, and Royal Policy in Fourteenth-Century London', *Journal of British Studies*, 55 (2016), 633–57.

in 1290.[12] Jews were barred from England because of their different religion from the Christian majority, and we have little evidence of any settlement in later medieval England by people of other faiths.[13] On the other hand Christian faith encouraged pilgrimage to shrines, such as those of St Ursula in Cologne or Thomas Becket in London, or even further afield to Rome and Jerusalem and may have aided the integration of Christian immigrants from overseas.[14]

Urban fortunes after 1300 are better documented, allowing a finer-grained approach. Some towns, in north-western and central parts of the country and in grain-producing regions, suffered economic problems and population decline as the overall population of England fell sharply as a consequence of a series of natural disasters including famine and plague in the fourteenth century.[15] Yet this decline was compensated for by new urban growth elsewhere; for example, in the cloth towns of the Cotswolds, East Anglia, and West Yorkshire. As a result the proportion of the population living in towns was much the same around 1500 as it had been in 1300 (*c*. 20%), but the urban distribution was different with a greater concentration of prospering towns in the southern and eastern counties. This dynamic pattern indicates the

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[12] J. Hillaby and C. Hillaby, *The Palgrave Dictionary of Medieval Anglo-Jewish History* (London, Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).

[13] W. M. Ormrod, B. Lambert, and J. Mackman, *Immigrant England, 1300–1550* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2019), pp. 183–92.

[14] J. P. Hoffman, *Family, Commerce and Religion in London and Cologne: Anglo-German Emigrants, c. 1000–c. 1300* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1998); *Immigrant England*, p. 218.

[15] C. Dyer, *Making a Living in the Middle Ages: The People of Britain 850–1520* (London, Yale University Press, 2002), pp. 298–329.

extraordinary vitality of the continual movement of people in response to innovations and this constant movement was fundamental to urban life and was at the heart of urban culture.

Approaches and Sources

Approaches to medieval urban immigration have shifted over the past few decades from quantitative to qualitative. By the mid 20th century 'central place theory', a model of inter-urban mobility with its roots in 19th-century economics, in particular was used to explain the number, size, and distribution of settlements within an urban system as smaller settlements (villages or small towns) with simpler economies developed around and shared resources and services with larger settlements (larger towns and cities) with more complex economies.[16] This approach was refined by the application of other theories derived from classical economics about the relationship between resources, exchange systems, and demographic growth.[17] As a consequence, by the end of the 1980s, it was considered axiomatic that medieval urban and rural societies were interdependent economically, culturally, and politically.[18] Medieval towns were 'central places' within a hierarchically structured urban network (or system) sustained by constant population mobility. Individual towns flourished or declined, not in isolation, but as a

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[16] Fernand Braudel, *Civilization and Capitalism, 15th–18th Century, vol III, The Perspective of the World*, trans. Sîan Reynolds (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1992), pp. 38–9.

[17] J. Hatcher and M. Bailey, *Modelling the Middle Ages: The History and Theory of England's Economic Development* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2001).

[18] See note 3 above.

result of the strength or weaknesses of the interactions and movement of people across the whole urban network.[19]

Recently new developments in network theory have in their turn been applied by medievalists.[20] Such approaches trace the processes that might lead to the creation of central places (or nodes of interaction) by analysing the density, frequency, and duration of interactions between entities (whether people, livestock, commodities, or ideas). Such work is also influenced by the work of anthropologists and sociologists seeking to understand the complex dynamics of modern urban cultures who consider towns, not as stable structures, but as constantly being reconstituted and changed from very large numbers of small transactions and interactions.[21] Network theory, in various different guises, has been adopted by scholars in a number of different disciplines who are interested not just in the metrics of population movement but also in the qualitative relationships between mobility on the one hand and social or cultural values on the other, such as status, gender, and national or ethnic identity. In the 1980s the historian Judith Bennett, building on earlier work by J. Ambrose Raftis, analysed the different nature of the social networks of peasant men and women to expose the gendered

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[19] R. Britnell, 'Town Life', in R. Horrox and W. M. Ormrod (eds), *A Social History of England, 1200–1500* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 149–50.

[20] D. A. Postles, *Social Geographies in England (1200–1640)* (Washington, DC, New Academia Publishing, 2007).

[21] B. Latour, *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 2005).

nature of social experience and access to commerce.[22] In 1992 the literary scholar David Wallace developed a poststructuralist critique of a singular ideal of urban community in his reading of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*.[23] More recently the development of software tools such as Geographic Information and Social Network systems have enabled patterns in urban networks and mobility to be reconstructed in more detail revealing subtle changes in their character over time and between social groups.[24]

The move away from a focus on urban institutions has been underpinned by changes in the type of evidence used. A major source of evidence for the movement and experience of people in the Middle Ages comes from archaeology.[25] The distribution of everyday material culture, such as pottery, animal bones, or cereals, enables us to model the kinds of local and inland

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[22] J. M. Bennett, *Women in the Medieval English Countryside: Gender and Household in Brigstock before the Plague* (New York, Oxford University Press, 1987), pp. 57, 186.

[23] D. Wallace, 'Chaucer and the Absent City', in his *Chaucerian Polity: Absolutist Lineages and Associational Forms in England and Italy* (Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1997), pp. 156–81.

[24] J. Colson, 'Commerce, Clusters, and Community: A Re-Evaluation of the Occupational Geography of London, c. 1400–c.1550', *Economic History Review*, 2nd ser., 69 (1) (2016), 104–30; C. E. Berry, '"To avoide all envye, malys, grudge and displeasure": Sociability and Social Networking at the London Wardmote Inquest, c.1470–1540', *London Journal*, 42 (3) (2017), 201–17.

[25] S. Sindbaek, 'Urbanism and Exchange in the North Atlantic/Baltic, 600–1000CE', in T. Hodos (ed.), *The Routledge Handbook of Archaeology and Globalization* (New York, Routledge, 2017), pp. 553–65.

trade that sustained urban populations. The movement of higher status commodities provides evidence of the spread and development of skills and technology facilitated by population mobility, while the evidence of characteristically urban buildings can be better evidence of urban activity, particularly in smaller towns, than constitutional documents.[26] The analysis of human remains provides some evidence of large-scale migration over the longer term, but also provides clear evidence of the demographic characteristics of medieval urban populations that illuminate both the nature of immigrants moving into towns and the impact of urban life on their health.[27] Such evidence often illuminates experiences that are not well documented in the historical records. Nevertheless, administrative records remain a major source for studying later medieval urban migration and mobility. Royal and later urban records survive from around 1100 and then increase greatly in abundance and detail from the later thirteenth century.[28] Since they reflect an institutional or government perspective they also provide insight into the cultural values and power structures arising from the perpetual movement of people, and by the fourteenth century court records in particular often contain short narratives providing details of particular experiences.

[26] G. Hansen, S. Ashby, and I. Baug (eds), *Everyday Products in the Middle Ages: Crafts, Consumption and the Individual in Northern Europe c. 800–1600* (Oxford, Oxbow, 2015); K. Lilley, 'Overview: Living in Medieval Towns', in *Oxford Handbook of Later Medieval Archaeology*, pp. 275–96.

[27] Kowaleski, 'Medieval People'.

[28] M. Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record: England 1066–1307*, 3rd edn (Chichester, Wiley-Blackwell, 2013).

This chapter will look at each of these areas (migration fields, infrastructure, regulation, and experience) in turn. The City of London will be used throughout as a case study, since it was the 'primate' city of the British Isles and its attraction to migrants increasingly affected population movement between towns and cities throughout England and beyond. The following documentary example illustrates and introduces a number of these themes well. A record of a debt made in London in 1277 documents the geographical extent of urban networks, the regulatory framework that enabled such networks to function, and provides some insight into the experience of men from different countries and multiple locations working together in the development of an urban trade.

On 2 February 1277 a group of London shoemakers came before the court of the mayor to acknowledge a debt of £5. Henry of Pelham [Lincolnshire?], Richard of Burgo, John of Releye [Staffordshire?], Thomas of Derby [Derbyshire], and John of Westmulne [Hertfordshire?] owed the money to Peter Yvemeys, a merchant of Wamesel [Gamiz?, near Bilbao] in Spain for the purchase of leather. [29] This was just one of dozens of debt cases registered each year in the mayor's court, records of which survive from 1276 onwards. The names of the traders, in the majority of cases derived from place-names indicating their family's place of origin, reveal both the extensive international range of London's trading community by 1300 (including merchants from France, Spain, northern Italy, and the Low Countries) but also the extent to which 'Londoners' were drawn to the city from across the counties of England and beyond.

[29] *Calendar of Letter-Books of the City of London*, 9 volumes, *A–L*, ed. R. R. Sharpe (London, John Edward Francis, 1899–1912), *Letter Book A c. 1275–1298*, p. 17. On the Anglo-Spanish leather trade in London see W. Childs, *Anglo-Castilian Trade in the Later Middle Ages* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1978), pp. 15, 116.

Those registering debts in London in the later 1270s included men originating from nearly all the counties of England, as well as Wales, Scotland, and Ireland alongside others originally from the continent but temporarily or permanently settled in London, such as Roger of Amiens, a pepperer, or Gerard of Brye, a merchant of Cahors (France).[30]

Migration Fields

The distances over which people migrated permanently into medieval towns, or moved back and forth on a more frequent or even daily basis, have been studied in some detail from both historical and archaeological sources.[31]

London had the largest migration field of any town or city in the British Isles. Around 1100 it was already twice as populous as the next largest towns and by 1400 it was three to five times the size of the largest provincial cities (York, Norwich, and Bristol). With a population of perhaps 80,000 before the Black Death and 60,000 afterwards, London accounted for just under 2% of England's entire population and wealth. As a consequence London attracted immigrants from, and influenced population movement within, an extensive hinterland of smaller towns as

[30] *London Letter Book A*, p. 6 and *passim*. English place names have been identified using the *Key to English Place-Names*, kepn.nottingham.ac.uk (accessed 12 April 2018). Pelham may refer to Pilham in Lincolnshire, about 150 miles north of London. For the importance of merchants of Cahors in England at this time, see A. R. Bell, C. Brooks, and P. Dryburgh, *The English Wool Market, c. 1230–1327* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 37, 82.

[31] For a more detailed discussion of sources and methods see McClure, chapter 5 in this volume, pp. XXX–XXX, and Dyer, chapter 9 in this volume, pp. XXX–XXX.

far north as Yorkshire. By 1300 the city's demands for grain drew on an inner region that extended up to '50 miles (80 km) from the city where water transport was available, and 25 miles (40 km) when it was not', while livestock came from further afield: the midlands, Wales, and the north.[32] Smaller towns within London's catchment area, such as Henley (Oxfordshire), St Ives (Cambridgeshire), and Faversham (Kent), prospered by acting as collecting centres for such produce for London traders.[33] For other commodities (fish, textiles, coal, timber products), by the fifteenth century London merchants traded through the east coast ports as far north as Newcastle upon Tyne and Edinburgh and bought cloth in the inland towns of the west riding of Yorkshire. They maintained particularly strong links with Canterbury, Dover, Southampton, and Bristol through which they traded with Dublin, Ireland and down the Atlantic coast with France, the Iberian peninsula and into the Mediterranean importing wine, spices, and a wide range of luxury commodities. London's prosperity and commercial dominance made it truly unique in Britain. But all of this was in large part derived from the benefits it drew from its position on the circumference of a still larger and denser urban system that was centred in the Low Countries and the lower Rhineland, around cities such as Bruges and Cologne which were major entrepôts for trade across Europe.[34]

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[32] D. Keene, 'London from the Post-Roman Period to 1300', in Palliser (ed.), *Cambridge Urban History of Britain*, I, 190–203.

[33] B. M. S. Campbell *et al.*, *A Medieval Capital and its Grain Supply: Agrarian Production and Distribution in the London Region c. 1300*, Historical Geography Research Series, 30 (London, Institute of British Geographers, 1993), pp. 47–9.

[34] Keene, 'London from the Post-Roman Period to 1300', p. 196.

As a result, by 1441 London's reported population of people born outside the kingdom of England greatly exceeded in number that of any other town in the country (as shown in Figure 10.1). Such 'aliens' accounted for somewhere between 6 and 10% of its total population.[35] Italians (including Genoese, Lombards, and Florentines) were the largest national group reported, closely followed by people from the Low Countries and Germany (grouped together in Figure 10.1 as 'Dutch'). While most overseas immigrants came from Europe, the extensive and interconnected trade routes stretching across Eurasia brought small numbers of immigrants from further afield. In 1483 Benedict and Antonia Calaman from 'Inde' were reported as living in Bishopsgate Ward, while John Blanke was a black musician, perhaps originally from Africa, who moved to London with the court of Catherine of Aragon in 1501.[36] By the 1470s and 1480s the first steps in exploring new routes to the Americas were beginning to open up new possibilities for both trade and migration. Based out of the city of Bristol, these were international ventures employing English seafarers, including the famous voyage in 1497 led by the Venetian adventurer, John Cabot, that was backed financially by Bristol merchants, the English crown, and Florentine bankers based in London.[37] The success of such voyages would eventually give English merchant ships direct access to global trade routes for the first time.

Nevertheless, the major part of London's population was still drawn from within England. The incentives for migration likely varied between occupations and status groups. New

[35] Ormrod, Lambert and Mackman, *Immigrant England*, pp. 60–1.

[36] TNA, E 179/242/25, m. 10 (tax assessment, 16 x 25 June 1483); M. Kaufmann, *Black Tudors: The Untold Story* (London, Oneworld, 2017), pp. 8–31.

[37] Charles Ross, *Edward IV* (London, Eyre Methuen, 1974), pp. 351–70; F. Guidi-Bruscoli, 'John Cabot and his Italian Financiers', *Historical Review*, 85 (2012), 372–93.

apprentices were particularly drawn from the counties nearest to London in 1309–12, but by the fifteenth century they were commonly also drawn from northern counties, Wales, and Ireland.[38] By contrast new freemen were already drawn from a somewhat wider area, including the East Midlands and East Anglia, by 1309–12.[39] Internal migration from well beyond London's grain-producing inner hinterland reflected the fact that trade in a much wider range of commodities than just staple grains pulled people into the city; indeed, this was already reflected in the diverse origin of the London shoemakers indebted to Spanish leather traders of 1277 noted above. However, such commercial success and population growth could also push people out of the city. The evidence of pottery found in archaeological excavations refines the picture. In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries many London pots were made locally but with strong stylistic influences from Northern France and Flanders reflecting London's cosmopolitan population. These wares have been found in the Welsh Marches and Perth in Scotland reflecting movement in and out of London across Britain.[40] By the later fourteenth century, however, potteries in London had ceased production and pottery production moved

[38] J. Wareing, 'Changes in the Geographical Distribution of Apprentices to the London Companies', *Journal of Historical Geography*, 6 (1980), 241–9; S. R. Hovland, 'Apprenticeship in Later Medieval London (c.1300–c.1530)', PhD thesis (London, 2006), pp. 60–72.

[39] E. Ekwall, *Studies in the Population of Medieval London* (Stockholm, 1956), pp. xxxix–lxviii.

[40] J. E. Pearce, A.G. Vince, and M. A. Jenner, *A Dated Type-Series of London Medieval Pottery: Pt 2, London-Type Ware*, London and Middlesex Archaeological Society, Special Paper No. 6 (London, London and Middlesex Archaeological Society, 1985).

out to Surrey and Essex. The city seems to have reached a tipping point around the mid-fourteenth century after which its success as an international entrepôt forced out some less profitable industries and occupations. Medieval migration was complex and was shaped by competing push and pull factors across the two urban systems of the British Isles and the European continent in which London was simultaneously located.

The largest of England's provincial cities, the major county towns and ports, were considerably smaller than London. In the centuries before 1100 their growth was largely autonomous, but by the fifteenth century their ability to thrive and attract settlers was increasingly affected by the impact of London's fluctuating demand for goods and people. Yet, the largest provincial cities also depended on immigration to replenish their populations and were the beneficiaries both of long-distance migration and of constant population mobility across networks of smaller market towns and villages in their more immediate hinterlands.[41] By *c.* 1300 York, with a population of perhaps between 21,000 and 24,000, was between two and six times as large as any other town in the north.[42] York's primary catchment area, from which it drew half of its population, encompassed an area within a radius of 20 miles from the city.[43] This was about half the size of London's primary catchment area but was similar to

[41] M. Kowaleski, *Local Markets and Regional Trade in Medieval Exeter* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 83–7, 279–324; James Masschaele, *Peasants, Merchants and Markets: Inland Trade in Medieval England, 1150–1350* (Basingstoke, Macmillan, 1997).

[42] S. Rees Jones, *York: The Making of a City 1068–1350* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2013), p. 237.

[43] McClure, 'Patterns of Migration', p. 178.

those of Exeter and Norwich and approximately twice the size of the primary catchment areas of the midland county towns of Leicester and Nottingham. Within its core catchment area the centripetal pull of York resulted in an absence of competing towns of any size, although a number of small markets, often located at the intersection of major routes by land and water, sustained traffic towards and away from the city.[44] As York's markets grew so too did its wider migration field which expanded, particularly towards the east, over the course of the fourteenth century. By the fifteenth century York shared a common migration field with the town of Beverley and the port of Hull (some 40 miles distant) and the same mercantile families shared positions of power in all three towns, providing a network for the continued movement of family members and employees.[45] While London may have been England's primary city, dynamic fields of migration were equally characteristic of the larger provincial cities too. Towns with a population above *c*. 5000 developed as centres of specialist crafts and services but depended on smaller towns and external markets for the supply of essential goods. By contrast a smaller town such as Colchester, with a population of about 3000, was able to feed itself without depending on external markets.[46]

International trade also sustained immigration from outside England to the English provinces. English fairs, such as Boston, St Ives, Great Yarmouth, Winchester, and Southwark,

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[44] Rees Jones, *York*, pp. 235–54.

[45] Kermode, *Medieval Merchants*, pp. 74–5.

[46] R. H. Britnell, 'Urban Demand in the English Economy, 1300–1600', in J. A. Galloway, *Trade, Urban Hinterlands and Market Integration, c. 1300–1600*, Centre for Metropolitan History, Working Paper Series, 3 (London, Centre for Metropolitan History, 1999), pp. 1–21 at p. 7.

attracted hundreds of visiting merchants and seamen seasonally each year, and a proportion settled to become permanent residents.[47] In some cases such immigration from overseas may not have been voluntary and there is evidence of trafficking of labour from Iceland and the Mediterranean bringing young people from overseas into service in England through ports such as Bristol, Great Yarmouth, and Hull.[48] Some thirty provincial towns reported alien populations of more than 40 in 1440–41, with another 30, mostly smaller and inland towns, reporting alien populations in double figures (as shown in Figure 10.1 and Figure 10.2). Migration was closely tied to commerce. Port towns such as Bristol, the Cinque Ports, and Southampton were home to the most diverse reported immigrant communities and also the largest (as a percentage of their total population).[49] Otherwise geographical proximity determined patterns of mobility to some extent. Scots were to be found concentrated in northern towns (such as Newcastle, Alnwick, and Carlisle), Irish in western towns (such as Bristol and Fowey) and French in the south (London, Salisbury, Exeter, Reading, and Worcester). However while 'French' immigrants (who included people from the Plantagenets' continental

[47] D. Keene, *Survey of Medieval Winchester*, 2 vols (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1985–90), I, 94–6; II, 1119–23; C. Dyer and T. R. Slater, 'The Midlands', in Palliser (ed.), *Cambridge Urban History of Britain*, I, 621–2; C. Liddy and B. Lambert, 'The Civic Franchise and the Regulation of Aliens in Great Yarmouth, c. 1430–c. 1490', in W. M. Ormrod, N. McDonald, and C. Taylor (eds), *Resident Aliens in Later Medieval England*, Studies in European Urban History, 42 (Turnhout, Brepols, 2017), p. 126.

[48] P. Fleming, 'Icelanders in England in the Fifteenth Century', in Ormrod, McDonald, and Taylor (eds), *Resident Aliens*, pp. 77–88.

[49] Ormrod, Lambert, and Mackman, *Immigrant England*, p. 62.

dominions) were the largest group reported overall in England, it was 'Dutch' migrants who were the largest national group reported in towns, reflecting the importance of trading connections with the Low Countries and Germany. They were particularly noticeable in the towns of East Anglia and London. In fact, though, 'Dutch' artisans, merchants, and servants were widely spread across the entire English urban network. And there are strong indications that the movement went both ways. In the case of York, some Flemish and German families achieved such prominence in the city between 1300 and 1450 that they achieved the highest civic offices. But close trading links encouraged emigration also: the York family of Goldbeter settled in Bruges and became successful entrepreneurs and financiers there.[50]

Urban Infrastructure, Institutions, and Ideas

The built environment of towns was shaped in every way by their function as centres of population movement. Town plans were defined by the intersection of long-distance routes and centred on their points of convergence in markets, ports, and bridges. Market places encouraged movement and mingling, and changes in their design over time reveal changes in the nature of that movement. Earlier market places (of the ninth to eleventh century) were often funnel-shaped to facilitate the congregation of traffic (such as the market streets of Cheapside in London or around the Shambles and Ousegate in York), while later market places, introduced from the later eleventh century, might be rectilinear in form and sited near

[50] Rees Jones, *York*, pp. 198–9; J. M. Murray, *Bruges, Cradle of Capitalism, 1280–1390* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 265–72; Kermode, *Medieval Merchants*, p. 346.

to seats of power as they were the product of new forms of regulation (such as the large market place in Norwich positioned beneath the new Norman castle *c*. 1100).[51] Such intramural market places generally replaced in importance suburban fair sites for everyday commerce by around 1300. Nevertheless, most towns maintained at least one annual fair attracting traders from across the region or even further afield, even if their attraction to merchants from continental Europe declined from the late thirteenth century as the trade in major exports (such as wool and cloth) came to be focused on major port towns, particularly London.[52]

Major streets were broad and urban communities attempted to keep them repaired and free from obstructions to traffic.[53] Suburban roads were wide enough to host fairs while intra-mural streets close to markets were lined with shops and taverns. The importance of travel inspired both significant public and private investment from town governments and wealthier residents. Urban communities raised funds for paving major streets and to repair bridges to

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[51] Lilley, *Urban Life*, pp. 146–50, 228–30; J. Masschaele, 'The Public Space of the Marketplace in Medieval England', *Speculum*, 77 (2) (2002), 383–421.

[52] J. Lee, 'The Role of Fairs in Late Medieval England', in S. Rigby and M. Bailey (eds), *Town and Countryside in the Age of the Black Death: Essays in Honour of John Hatcher*, The Medieval Countryside, 12 (Turnhout, Brepols, 2012), pp. 407–37; and see note 47 above.

[53] Valerie Allen, 'When Things Break: Mending Roads, Being Social', in V. Allen and R. Evans (eds), *Roadworks: Medieval Britain, Medieval Roads*, Manchester Medieval Literature and Culture (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2016), pp. 74–96; S. Rees Jones, 'The Word on the Street: Chaucer and the Regulation of Nuisance in Post-plague London', in Allen and Evans (eds), *Roadworks*, pp. 97–126.

withstand wheeled traffic, and attempted to regulate fares for passengers, such as those travelling by ferry into London by river from the port of Gravesend.[54]

Bridges, as the sites where road and river intersected, were especially important to travel and the site of particular investment. From the twelfth century bridges were rebuilt in stone and those in town centres were often chosen as the location for public buildings such as chapels, defensive gates, gaols, hospitals, or council meeting rooms as well as shops and houses.[55] This investment turned what would have been merely functional intersections in the town plan into celebrated destinations. For William Worcestre, the son of a citizen of Bristol, the buildings upon Bristol's bridge were such imposing monuments that he referred to them frequently in his description of the city in 1480.[56] The bridge chapel was a multi-storied structure that spanned the bridge and extended beyond onto piers on either side. It included a council meeting chamber, a defensive gateway and a bell tower some 90' high. Completed in 1361, it was 150 years younger than similar buildings on the central bridges of London and York but was much grander in scale, perhaps indicating a degree of inter-urban imitation and

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[54] E. Harvey, 'Pavage Grants and Urban Street Paving in Medieval England, 1249–1462', *Journal of Transport History* 31 (2) (2012), 151–63; C. A. Martin, 'London: The Hub of an English River Transport Network, 1250–1550', in *Roadworks*, pp. 264–9.

[55] Harrison, *Bridges*, pp. 190–213; B. Wilson and F. Mee, *'The Fairest Arch in England': Old Ouse Bridge, York and Its Buildings: The Pictorial Evidence, Archaeology of York*, Supplementary Series, 1 (2) (York, Council for British Archaeology, 2002).

[56] William Worcestre, *The Topography of Medieval Bristol*, ed. Frances Neale, Bristol Record Society Publications, 51 (Bristol, Bristol Record Society, 2000), pp. 2–3, 76–7, 142–3, 151–2, 166–7.

rivalry: a particular example not only of the cultural investment in travel but also of how population mobility spurred innovation.

Other aspects of the urban built environment also reflected the needs of a mobile population. Town walls may have begun as urban defences, but they later acquired more psychological significance in marking the entrance to towns and their distinctive regulatory environments.[57] Burgage plots, the main units of landownership in towns, were laid out to maximise intensive use of street frontages for commerce but were also long enough to enable the temporary storage of goods or livestock bound for urban markets, in warehouses and yards away from the street frontage.[58] The perimeters of larger towns were often ringed by the town houses of both lay and ecclesiastical rural landowners, and also by charitably endowed hospitals for housing 'lepers', poorer travellers, and pilgrims.[59] In the later Middle

[57] G. Rosser, 'Urban Culture and the Church 1300–1540', in Palliser (ed.), *Cambridge Urban History of Britain*, I, 335–70 at p. 339.

[58] Rees Jones, *York*, pp. 39–40, 71–82.

[59] C. Rawcliffe, 'The Earthly and Spiritual Topography of Suburban Hospitals', in K. Giles and C. Dyer (eds), *Town and Country in the Middle Ages* (Leeds, Maney, 2007), pp. 251–74; S. Watson, 'City as Charter: Charity and Lordship of English Towns, 1170–1250', in C. Goodson, A. E. Lester, and C. Symes (eds), *Cities, Texts and Social Networks 400–1500: Experiences and Perceptions of Medieval Urban Space* (Farnham, Ashgate, 2010), pp. 235–62 at p. 237: C. Barron, 'The Later Middle Ages: 1270–1520', in *British Historic Towns Atlas*, ed. M. D. Lobel, vol. iii, *The City of London from Prehistoric Times to c. 1520* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1989), pp. 42–56 at p. 49; Rees Jones, *York*, pp. 257–60.

Ages the provision of commercial inns in town centres was a growing industry.[60] By 1384 a single parish in Holborn, London already had 75 innkeepers, while by 1537 York had 'more than 1000 beds in the city inns and stables for more than 1,700 horses'.[61]

The provision and maintenance of roads, bridges, and markets were among the core functions of urban governments. Debate among historians has been vigorous and found little agreement on the role of town councils and guilds in regulating urban immigration. Some have taken a positive view. Early scholars believed that urban institutions were beneficial to urban growth because they freed townsmen from the constraints of feudal authority, but this way of thinking of towns as non-feudal islands in feudal seas has been largely abandoned since the 1970s.[62] More recently, positive assessments have instead emphasised the social benefits that guilds offered to their members and to the wider community.[63] More negative views have argued that guilds were harmful monopolies that inhibited urban immigration and

[60] Alan Everitt, 'The English Urban Inn', in A. M. Everitt (ed.), *Perspectives in English Urban History* (London, Palgrave Macmillan, 1973), pp. 91–137.

[61] C. Barron, *Parish of St Andrew Holborn* (London, 1979), pp. 22–5; Everitt, 'Urban Inn', pp. 93–4.

[62] M. M. Postan, *The Medieval Economy and Society: An Economic History of Britain 1100–1500* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1972), pp. 215–23; R. Hilton, 'Towns in English Feudal Society', in *Review* (Fernand Braudel Center), 3 (1) (1979), 3–20.

[63] Gervase Rosser, *The Art of Solidarity in the Middle Ages: Guilds in England, 1250–1550* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2015).

oppressed working people (especially women),[64] while others have simply argued that guild regulation was ineffective in the face of agile commercial development and the continuous movement of people into and out of towns.[65] Scholars have therefore often turned away from a focus on these institutions and their regulations altogether, preferring a 'bottom-up' approach to the experience of immigrants. Much of this work has been concerned with the gendered nature of migration and has a particular focus on women; but more recently studies have begun to consider the experience of those from outside England.[66] Little work has yet been done on poorer male migrants. Of late there has also been a reappraisal of the use of regulation as a form of political discourse that may even have enabled both population and social mobility.[67]

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[64] S. Ogilvie, *Institutions and European Trade: Merchant Guilds, 1000–1800* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2011); H. Swanson, *Medieval Artisans: An Urban Class in Late Medieval England* (Oxford, Blackwell, 1988).

[65] Dyer, *Making a Living*, pp. 318–20.

[66] R. H. Hilton, 'Women Traders in Medieval England', *Women's Studies*, 11 (1984), 139–55; P. J. P. Goldberg, *Women, Work and Life-Cycle: Women in York and Yorkshire c. 1300–1520* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1992); J. M. Bennett, 'Women (and Men) on the Move: Scots in the English North c. 1440', *Journal of British Studies*, 57 (2018), 1–28; Ormrod, Lambert, and Mackman, *Immigrant England*, pp. 169–78.

[67] G. Rosser, 'Crafts, Guilds and the Negotiation of Work in the Medieval Town', *Past & Present*, 154 (1997), 3–31; Matthew Davies, 'Governors and Governed: The Practice of Power in the Merchant Taylor's Company in the Fifteenth Century', in I. A. Gadd and P. Wallis (eds), *Guilds, Society and Economy in London 1450–1800* (London, Centre for

The development of an urban political language focused on mobility and issues of inclusion/exclusion was one of the most notable legacies of medieval municipalities. A core premise was that not everyone present in a town necessarily belonged there or should enjoy equality of privilege and opportunity. Such political language was immensely important in realising attitudes towards mobility that conditioned much social experience both locally and, indeed, nationally: after the Black Death in the fourteenth century, town customs (especially the customs of London) were particularly influential in the development of new national laws regulating mobile labour within England.[68] In relation to overseas trade and the immigration of 'aliens', the picture was more complicated. The crown often pursued its own interests in negotiating separate agreements and this in turn could lead to violent attacks on such privileged groups of alien merchants and artisans.[69] However, over the fifteenth century certain London merchants with particular interests in overseas trade steadily became a more

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Metropolitan History, 2002), pp. 67–85; C. Liddy, *Contesting the City: The Politics of Citizenship in English Towns, 1250–1550* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2017).

[68] See essays in J. Bothwell, P. J. P. Goldberg, and W. M. Ormrod (eds), *The Problem of Labour in Fourteenth-Century England* (York, York Medieval Press, 2000); C. Given-Wilson, 'Service, Serfdom and English Labour Legislation, 1350–1500', in A. Curry and E. Matthew (eds), *Concepts and Patterns of Service in the Later Middle Ages* (Woodbridge, Boydell and Brewer, 2000), pp. 21–37.

[69] Lambert and Ormrod, chapter 11 in this volume, pp. XXX–XXX.

dominant voice in the crown's developing regulation of 'aliens', contributing to increasingly strong regulation of alien immigration and trade.[70]

Urban discourse concerning mobility was also capable of adaptation because it emerged out of competing and contrasting values of religious and secular origin. On the one hand, the broad Christian framework of medieval culture favoured and promoted mobility. From the early days of the Church, life had been understood as a journey towards a better place. While this may have begun as a spiritual metaphor, it was soon translated into cultural practice in the form of pilgrimage and other forms of 'adventuring' including trade, thus providing a spiritual justification for investment in travel.[71] These different forms of travel were closely associated. English county towns were often both markets and centres of pilgrimage, their saints' shrines attracting pilgrims from the same hinterlands as their markets attracted traders.[72] The spiritual connotations of travelling were reflected further in the extensive charitable provisions made for travellers (in the patronage of roads, bridges, and

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[70] *The Views of the Hosts of Alien Merchants, 1440–1444*, ed. H. Bradley, London Record Society Publications, 46 (Woodbridge, Boydell, 2012), pp. xiii–xvii; J. L. Bolton, 'London and the Anti-Alien Legislation of 1439–40', in *Resident Aliens*, pp. 33–50; Ormrod, Lambert, and Mackman, *Immigrant England*, pp. 31–7.

[71] See the definition of the Middle English term *aventure* in MED online as both a knightly quest and an enterprise in trade: https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/med/ (accessed 2 October 2018); M. M. Sauer, 'The Function of Material and Spiritual Roads in the English Eremitic Tradition', in Allen and Evans (eds), *Roadworks*, pp. 157–76.

[72] R. C. Finucane, *Miracles and Pilgrims: Popular Beliefs in Medieval England*, paperback edn (New York, St. Martin's Press, 1995), pp. 152–72.

hostels) and even in the foundations of royal law in which sovereigns, distinguished by their overarching claims to defend the peace of God, protected travellers by bringing them within royal jurisdiction. In the so-called *Laws of Edward the Confessor*, compiled in the 1130s, the king's peace (or jurisdiction) was particularly extended over major roads and waterways with a special emphasis on 'roads from city to cities, from boroughs to boroughs, on which people travel to markets or for their other business affairs' and the 'waterways used by ships bearing necessities … to cities and boroughs'.[73] Such routes were to be maintained and not obstructed, and their users came under the special protection of royal courts. Spiritual motivations coexisted with material profits. In the following centuries extensive and complex rules were developed for the movement and taxation of goods destined for urban markets, and of goods imported and exported overseas.[74] As well as creating a burden, such regulation also provided a framework in which trade (and with it mobility) could grow. In particular, the development of a system for registering and enforcing debts, at first based on the royal regulation of Jewish loans but later extended to all mercantile credit, was fundamental to the

[73] http://www.earlyenglishlaws.ac.uk/laws/texts/ecf2/view/#translation-12.4/commentary-12.3 (accessed 30 July 2018); B. O'Brien, *God's Peace and King's Peace: The Laws of Edward the Confessor* (Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), p. 75.

[74] Britnell, *Commercialisation*, pp. 5–28, 79–101, 155–78; J. Davis, *Medieval Market Morality: Life, Law and Ethics in the English Marketplace, 1200–1500* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2012).

secure development of more sophisticated commercial transactions among both migrant and peripatetic traders (as in the London debt case of 1277 noted above).[75]

Yet, despite these strong cultural imperatives towards protecting and profiting from mobility, on the other hand developing systems of local and national government also depended fundamentally on the notion of settlement. Collecting taxes and rents and administering law depended on putting people in their place: knowing and controlling people's tenure of land or locating them in communities of sworn neighbours who would stand pledge for each other.[76] Such a view of local communities did not sit well with the essential mobility of urban populations or the cultural values given to movement as a form of advancement. Urban debates about who belonged in urban society developed within these somewhat contradictory frameworks of cultural expectation.

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Regulation: Insiders and Outsiders

[75] P. Brand, 'Introduction', in *Calendar of the Plea Rolls of the Exchequer of the Jews*, VI, *Edward I, 1279–81* (London, Jewish Historical Society of England, 2005), pp. 1–73; M. M. Postan, 'Private Financial Instruments in Medieval England', in M. M. Postan, *Medieval Trade and Finance* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1973), pp. 37–8. As in so many other things, London practice here anticipated later national legislation in the Statutes of Merchants of 1283 and 1285.

[76] S. Rees Jones, 'The Household and English Urban Government in the Later Middle Ages', in Myriam Carlier and Tim Soens (eds), *The Household in Late Medieval Cities, Italy and North Western Europe Compared* (Leuven, Garant, 2000), pp. 71–87 at pp. 76–7.

Not surprisingly, given its focus on the ownership of land, the emerging common law of England focused on the tenurial conditions that distinguished members of an urban community from others. Immigration into towns was something that lords in the twelfth century both encouraged, by offering settlers in towns greater personal legal freedom than they might have enjoyed as a servile tenant (*servus*/serf or *villein*) on a rural manor, and tried to control.[77] Early borough custom also therefore often restricted the acquisition of personal freedom not to all who lived in a town but only to those who fulfilled certain conditions. In London, for example, by the later twelfth century residence for a year and a day was required for any serf to acquire personal freedom.[78] However, becoming a full burgess or citizen (a 'freeman') required a further step of 'entering the liberty' of the privileged borough community and taking an oath of loyalty to that community.[79] Such a step was only possible for people of free condition. By the sixteenth century the London Mercers had elaborated on this requirement in suggesting that new apprentices should not only be free but also literate and of a suitable physical appearance: 'sixteen years old, free of birth, tall, lithe of limb and not disfigured'.[80] Full access to the

[77] S. Alsford, 'Urban Safe Havens for the Unfree in Medieval England: A Reconsideration', *Journal of Slavery and Abolition*, 32 (3) (2011), 363–75; P. Hyams, *King, Lords and Peasants in Medieval England: The Common Law of Villeinage in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1980), pp. 34–5, 167–9.

[78] A. H. Thomas, ed., *Calendar of Plea and Memoranda Rolls of the City of London*, vol. 2 (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1929), p. xxiv.

[79] Liddy, *Contesting the City*, pp. 22, 25.

[80] B. Hanawalt, '"The Childe of Bristowe" and the Making of Middle-Class Adolescence', in B. Hanawalt and D. Wallace (eds), *Bodies and Disciplines: Intersections of Literature and*

chartered privileges of a town was therefore dependent in practice not only on legal status, but also on social acceptance by the urban community.

Taking the legal aspects first: as a consequence of urban, manorial, and royal legal initiative, by the thirteenth century two kinds of urban resident were recognised in law. First was the *burgess* (or *citizen* in cities), also sometimes referred to as a 'freeman' or 'insider' (*intrinsecus*), who was a sworn and privileged member of the borough community. Nearly all such 'insiders' were male, and they accounted for between a quarter and three-quarters of established urban householders (the proportion varied from town to town and tended to increase over time). Second, there were other migrants living in or visiting towns who did not acquire the status of an 'insider'. This latter group might form the majority of a town's population, but were referred to as 'outsiders': *forinsecus* (literally 'outsider' but also the root of 'foreigner') or *extraneus* in Latin (*forein* or *(e)straunger* in Anglo-Norman and Middle English). At first *foreigner* and *stranger* were used in similar ways, but in London a distinction emerged in which *stranger* was used primarily for people from overseas and *foreigner* for outsiders of English origin. Even after the term 'alien' (*alienigenus* in Latin) was developed to distinguish those born outside the realm of England, stranger (often *merchant stranger*) continued in common usage.[81] Such terminology became an ingrained feature of the political discourse of London life. For example, rules about itinerant traders proclaimed in London in 1403 assumed a clear verbal distinction between those selling poultry ('foreigners' who entered

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History in Fifteenth-Century England (Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1996), pp. 155–78 at p. 157.

[81] LMA, COL/AD/01/009, fols 40, 41, 74 ; COL/AD/01/010, fols 184v, 201v, 290v; COL/AD/01/011, fols 14, 18–18v, 19v, 135, 185v, 222v, 302, 303, 310v.

the city by land through Newgate and Aldersgate) and corn sellers ('strangers' who shipped their goods into Queenhithe and Billingsgate).[82] Even more explicitly some blade smiths were '*foreyns as wele of forein townes as of places nygh the suburbs of the seide Citee*', while laws regulating aliens referred to them as '*nul homme estraunge nalien*'.[83] For this reason this chapter will continue to use the words *foreigner* and *stranger* as meaning different kinds of 'outsider', and not as they are used in contemporary modern English.

The use of such terminology was also common within the associations (guilds) that developed for the protection of trading interests. Such associations negotiated collective agreements to ensure the safe passage of their goods, provided forms of mutual assurance and assistance to fellow members, regulated standards, and negotiated collectively with external powers. Smaller towns might have a single guild, such as Henley (Oxfordshire) where there was a merchant guild by 1269 whose members paid a custom called *gildesilver* to the lord of the manor and who later were synonymous with the borough government.[84] Larger cities, such as London and York, developed many such associations for different trades. Population mobility was, perhaps, the main reason for the existence and longevity of guilds: in communities made up of immigrants with few family ties to bind them, such associations were a means of establishing trust between and for their members.[85] They provided the sworn brotherhood and community of pledges that in a more settled community might have been

[82] LMA, COL/AD/01/009 fols 33v–34.

[83] LMA, COL/AD/01/009, fol. 35; LMA, COL/AD/01/011, fols 14v–15v.

[84] *Henley Borough Records, Assembly Books* i–iv, *1395–1543*, transcribed and ed. P. M. Briers, Oxfordshire Record Society, 41 (Oxford, Oxfordshire Record Society, 1960), p. 3.

[85] Rosser, *Solidarity.*

provided by neighbours. Such trust was offered both for the individual (providing him with security in trading agreements and validation of his standard of work) and more generally for the wider community as a whole (providing validation of the standard of goods produced and sold by members of the guild).

A core function of such guilds was managing the admission of new members, the great majority of whom were immigrants. The wealthier mercantile guilds, which tended to dominate town councils, in particular became the major voices in the regulation of urban immigration.[86] As a result, older forms of identifying burgesses through their tenure of burgage land, which were primarily of interest to lords, came largely to be supplemented by entry controlled by guilds, in which the main criteria were recognised skill in a relevant trade or craft, the ability to pay an entry fine and, more intangibly, reputation. From 1319 a new constitution for London agreed that in the future no 'alien' should be admitted to the freedom of the city except by the assent of the Commonalty [the collective body of freemen] in the city courts unless he belonged to a mystery [guild], in which case he must find six men from the same mystery to indemnify him, just as a native seeking admission was required to do.[87] New burgesses might have completed an apprenticeship with a guild master, or simply been sponsored by a guild. Craftsmen moving between towns might be asked to produce a written affidavit of their skill from their previous guild, as in the rule, dated to 1307, of the girdlers of York: 'that na, maister of the crafte take na hald any straunger that comes fra any other cite or burgh in his service,

[86] C. Barron, *London in the Later Middle Ages: Government and People 1200–1500* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2004), pp. 199–236; Swanson, *Artisans*, pp. 107–26.

[87] G. A. Williams, *Medieval London: From Commune to Capital* (London, Athlone Press, 1963), pp. 282–4.

bot if he have fulfillyd wele and treuly his apprentished and bryng lettres with hym of his gude conversacion sealed with seales of foure gude treu men of the girdelercrafte.'[88]

Further ordinances sought to control the extent of business between such insiders and outsiders, and regulated the hiring and training of apprentices. Such ordinances give the impression that guild masters could control immigration by dictating trading terms, adjusting the tariff charged for admission, and by varying the number and length of apprenticeships that masters were allowed to offer, though not all local town governments or London guilds necessarily discriminated between foreigners, strangers, and aliens to the same extent that London civic ordinances did.[89] Recent work has suggested that, rather than creating a straitjacket, the application of such rules provided a flexible process through which outsiders could be accommodated and immigration fostered. For example, in theory apprentices were indentured to their masters for between four and seven years, at the end of which period of training they could become freemen. Practice was somewhat different. Between 75% and 82% of apprentices to the London Goldsmiths were recruited from counties outside London, but just

[88] *York Memorandum Book A/Y*, vol. 1, ed. M. Sellers, Publications of the Surtees Society, 120 (Durham, published for the Surtees Society by Andrews & Co., 1912), p. 181. Here 'stranger' seems to encompass all outsiders or foreigners.

[89] M. Davies, 'Citizens and "Foreyns": Crafts, Guilds and Regulation in Late Medieval London', in *Between Regulation and Freedom: Work and Manufactures in European Cities, 14th–18th Centuries*, ed. A. Caracausi, M. Davies, and L. Mocarelli (Newcastle upon Tyne, Cambridge Scholars, 2018), pp. 1–21.

over one half of these failed to complete their indentures and so did not become freemen.[90] In York, by the last quarter of the fifteenth century, perhaps only 12% of apprentice weavers became freemen.[91] Apprenticeships were ended prematurely for many reasons, but one of the most commonly recorded was because either apprentice or master had left town. Such was the case for John Forneys from Wath in Yorkshire who was exonerated from his apprenticeship to a London chandler and assigned to a new master in 1461 on the grounds that his original master had left the franchise and given up his shop.[92] The persistent use of apprenticeship contracts in such cases suggests that the enrolling of apprentices provided both parties with more security in negotiating short-term working relationships than an unregulated system would have done. In practice, apprenticeship was more flexible and more accommodating of mobility, for better or worse, than the formal rules suggested, and so it persisted for several centuries.[93]

The degree of control over immigration that town councils and guilds attempted changed in response to historical events, as did the precise focus of their concerns. Increases in regulation have been detected in periods of increased urban immigration, such as the decades

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[90] S. E. Hovland, 'Apprenticeship in the Records of the Goldsmith's Company of London, 1444–1500', *Medieval Prosopography*, 22 (2001), 89–114.

[91] Swanson, *Artisans*, p. 36.

[92] *Calendar of the Plea and Memoranda Rolls of the City of London 1458–1482*, ed. P. E. Jones (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1961), p. 19.

[93] For mobility among apprentices in the seventeenth century, see C. Minns and P. Wallis, 'Rules and Reality: Quantifying the Practice of Apprenticeship in Early Modern England', *Economic History Review*, 2nd ser., 65 (2) (2012), 556–79.

after the Black Death in 1348–9, or the decades after 1475.[94] In both these periods, London concerns were reproduced nationally by parliamentary legislation against the activities of certain kinds of non-citizens, particularly vagabonds, mobile labourers, and aliens.[95] The fuller significance of these new laws was revealed by a Statute of Parliament in 1531 that reduced entry fees to the franchise of London for both apprentices and guildsmen, with the effect of perhaps tripling the proportion of male householders becoming freemen of the city.[96] A perceived hardening in attitudes towards some aliens and itinerant labourers therefore went hand in hand with an opening up of the franchise to other more settled 'foreigners'. The precise conditions of legal and social forms of discrimination were changing with aliens and vagrants (rather than foreigners) being more particularly identified as the 'outsiders' of concern.

The opening up of London's guilds and franchise in 1531 reflected the reality that, for many decades, the privileges of the crafts and the Commonalty won in 1319 had been hard to enforce in practice. There were multiple complaints that foreigners and strangers traded in the city without becoming freemen at all and that city officials sold entry to the franchise without consulting guild officers. Guilds were also believed to be undercutting each other by allowing

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[94] F. Rexroth, *Deviance and Power in Late Medieval London* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 68–125; Barron, 'London 1300–1540, in Palliser (ed.), *Cambridge Urban History of Britain*, pp. 395–440 at p. 397.

[95] M. K. McIntosh, *Controlling Misbehavior in England, 1370–1600* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 81–4. For aliens see Lambert and Ormrod, chapter 11 in this volume, pp. XXX–XXX.

[96] S. Rappaport, *Worlds Within Worlds: Structures of Life in Sixteenth-Century London* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp. 31–2.

incomers to enter the franchise under one trade but practise another, as in 1421 when the Haberdashers complained that

> John Van Uden, a merchant stranger, from whom the King would derive large sums of by way of custom if he were not a freeman of the city, had fraudulently obtained the freedom for a moderate payment through the mystery of the Linen-weavers, which was only an inferior mystery, … [but that] he never exercised the art of the Linen-weavers, but always the art of the Mercers and Haberdashers.[97]

These complaints reflected the fact that different trades had different approaches to immigration and the contribution of foreigners to the economy. Conflicts between freemen selling food (victuallers) or raw materials and other groups of artisan freemen were a particularly marked feature of contemporary arguments about immigration into towns. Merchants and manufacturers typically wanted cheap food in order to keep wages low. Much urban market legislation was therefore designed to encourage foreign victuallers from out of town and to prevent freemen victuallers from monopolising markets and raising prices. Foreign poultry sellers visiting urban markets with flocks of geese, and nets of field-fares and finches freshly caught in the countryside, were a daily sight in medieval towns, as were the sellers of fruit grown in urban suburbs who cried their wares on street corners.[98] In addition, itinerant traders supplemented regulated markets with many useful unofficial fairs and services, such as the street hawkers (often women) who sold goods door to door, or the 'afternoon' fair set up in

[97] *London Letter Book I*, *1400–1422*, pp. 257–8.

[98] LMA, COL/AD/01/011 fols 33v–34, 18–18v: *York Memorandum Book*, pp. 45, 47, 223.

Soper Lane, London by 1297 by 'strangers, foreigners, beggars and others' living just outside the city's formal jurisdiction, 'three to four miles away', and commuting daily into the city.[99] Such 'hidden' and highly mobile trade, sometimes undertaken in spite of official regulation, was a crucial element of the medieval economy, but led to divided opinions as to its desirability between different guilds.[100]

Given these conflicts of interest between freemen, and the laxity in the administration of their rules, it is not surprising to find the distinction between freeman and some types of foreigner (particularly skilled workers) evaporating over the course of the later Middle Ages. The London Merchant Taylors tolerated non-freemen working in the clothing trade; the London craft of Glovers successfully petitioned for the abolition of many of the regulations that made it hard for them to compete with 'foreigners' in 1482; and in both Norwich and York members of the weavers' guilds worked alongside country weavers, and freemen alongside foreigners, as masters and in the search juries employed to check the quality of cloth.[101] There was great fluidity and little social distinction between poorer craft members and employed journeymen or foreign weavers, as the former often worked for wages and some of the latter

[99] LMA, COL/AD/01/002, fol. 108.

[100] C. Dyer, 'The Hidden Trade of the Middle Ages: Evidence from the West Midlands', *Journal of Historical Geography*, 18 (2) (1992), 141–57.

[101] Davies, 'Governors and Governed', pp. 67–85; *London Letter Book L*, *Edward IV–Henry VII*, p. 203; Swanson, *Artisans*, p. 36; D. Durkee, 'A Cursus for Craftsmen? Career Cycles of the Worsted Weavers of Late-Medieval Norwich', in J. Colson and A. van Steensel (eds), *Cities and Solidarities: Urban Communities in Pre-Modern Europe* (Abingdon, Routledge, 2017), pp. 152–68.

developed businesses of their own. In London in 1435 some members of the craft of girdlers complained that richer craftsmen were taking on so many apprentices that they were throwing out of work those freemen of lesser means who used to work for them, and that such unemployed freemen were being forced to work in menial jobs as water-bearers and labourers, and that some had even left the city and gone to their 'owen contreys' to work at the cart and plough.[102] There was often a bigger social gulf between richer and poorer guildsmen than between freemen and foreigners, and as some immigrants succeeded in the city so some freemen were less fortunate and moved out. This outward mobility of poorer craftsmen provides some context for the material evidence of the movement out from city to country of low-profit industries such as pottery manufacture, noted above.

It was, therefore, with the rise of the guilds that social selection began to replace legal criteria for regulating admission of immigrants to the burgess community. However processes of admission to the franchise were only one aspect of the debates about who belonged in urban society. More fundamental, and contributing to the social values of the guilds, were the older and continuing systems of community organisation at the level of the household and neighbourhood.

Deleted: At no point were outsiders denied such membership. Rather, they were the lifeblood of the continuing prosperity of both guild and town.

Regulation: The Idea of Home

The idea of the household underpinned all forms of neighbourhood policing in medieval towns, including the regulation of population movement. 'Good' mobility was licensed movement between two such sanctioned places of residence or business. 'Bad' mobility was 'rootless': the condition of people with no home. 'Wanderers' (vagrants or vagabonds) were people

[102] *London Letter Book K*, *Henry VI*, p. 200.

without masters or friends who could provide surety for their good behaviour. The idea of the household was therefore not only central to the medieval regulation of mobility, but was also largely defined by it. Householders were responsible for ensuring that their dependants (other than children) were accountable in the local courts. Their dependants might include guests, who were defined in the *Laws of Edward the Confessor* as those staying no more than two nights (after which they became a member of the household),[103] and dependants might, in theory, even include subtenants. In practice, however, by *c*. 1300 this definition of dependence seems to have been more narrowly restricted in towns to near kin, household servants, and apprentices.[104] As a result other groups of people, such as day labourers (journeymen) or those renting as 'tenants-at-will' (tenancies that were occupied without any written title), were increasingly marginalised. Such 'non-householders' were sometimes referred to collectively as 'cottagers', 'inmates', or occupants of 'rents' to distinguish them from 'house-' or 'hall-holders'. By the fifteenth century the distinction between householders and non-householders was a form of social categorisation found in all forms of regulation and it did not map easily onto the other regulatory binary of 'insider' and 'outsider'. Indeed, when aliens were taxed from 1440 the two main categories of assessment were 'householders' and 'non-householders'. In effect this system valued householders as 'more settled' and non-householders as 'more

[103] J. Hudson, *The Oxford History of the Laws of England, II, 871–1216* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2012), p. 394.

[104] Rees Jones, 'Household and English Urban Government'; S. Rees Jones, 'Household, Work and the Problem of Mobile Labour: The Regulation of Labour in Medieval English Towns', in *Problem of Labour*, pp. 133–53.

mobile', conferring social responsibility on the first and associating social irresponsibility with the second.

It is not surprising, then, that regulating and providing a household substitute was at the heart of most systems for regulating migrants into towns. In London, by the fourteenth century, concerns were expressed that outsiders, in establishing their own household enterprises in the city, might compete with master freemen. By an ordinance made in 1376, and frequently repeated, the searchers (officials) of the London grocers, mercers, drapers, fishmongers, goldsmiths, skinners, ironmongers, and vinters were required to swear that

> no merchant who is not of the franchise of the City of London sell by retail any wines or other merchandise within the City or its suburbs, and that all merchants coming to England sell their merchandise within forty days after their arrival, and that they board at the tables of a freeman hosteler of the City and not keep hostel or company by themselves, and that no merchant stranger of the franchise of the City sell his merchandise within the franchise to another merchant stranger, and that no such merchant stranger buy such merchandise of another merchant stranger.[105]

These concerns were eventually given royal legislative force in the hosting laws passed in the Parliament of 1439–40, which required alien merchants to live with native merchants who would oversee their trade. Evidence of the application of this legislation survives from London and from ports such as Southampton, Kingston-upon-Hull, King's Lynn, and Great

[105] *London Letter Book H, 1375–1399*, pp. 90–1.

Yarmouth.[106] Similar efforts were made to control the places out of which foreigners and aliens could sell their goods: in London, their cloth was to be sold in Bakewellhall near the Guild Hall, while a wide range of goods including fruit, poultry, knives, and worsteds were to be sold in the Leadenhall, a new hall constructed in the fourteenth century in an effort to regulate more strongly the sale of foodstuffs imported into London.[107] Not all towns could afford purpose-built market buildings but they might designate market places or repurpose existing guild halls, as happened in both Norwich and York.

As ever, these regulations were easily evaded or developed a function rather different from that intended and did not remain effective for long. In Great Yarmouth the hosting laws were used strategically to try to force the large numbers of Dutch immigrants running seasonal hostels there to become burgesses (and so contribute to the town purse), while in Southampton and London most Italian merchants continued to live in their own homes, which included some of the largest houses in Southampton.[108] Germans of the Hanseatic League in London maintained their own guild hall in London from at least the middle twelfth century and by 1382 this had evolved into the 'Steelyard'; a district in the centre of the city by the River Thames including residences and warehousing that fell entirely within their jurisdiction and which exempted them from both civic and royal taxation under licence of royal charter.[109] The

[106] *The Views of the Hosts of Alien Merchants, 1440–1444*; Liddy and Lambert, 'Civic Franchise and Regulation of Aliens'.

[107] *London Letter Book I*, pp. 41–2; *London Letter Book L*, pp. 25, 31–4, 36.

[108] A. Ruddock, 'Alien Hosting in Southampton in the Fifteenth Century', *Economic History Review*, 1st ser., 16 (1946), 30–7.

[109] 'Gazetteer', *Historic Towns Atlas: London*, pp. 76, 94.

presence of this privileged enclave at the heart of the city illustrates the degree to which neither city nor crown were completely in control of immigration, and were often in conflict over the licensing of particular groups and trades. Much to the dismay of some English artisans, for example, the Hansards were increasingly engaged in the export of English cloth, particularly from the cloth-producing town of Colchester which was home to many immigrant Flemish weavers, who were also protected by royal charter.[110]

Ineffectual efforts to prevent skilled foreigners from establishing households and thus competing with guildsmen were also made in relation to servants. Apprentices were discouraged from marrying and journeymen (including former apprentices who had not become freemen) were discouraged from establishing their own households in case these became a base for rival guilds.[111] Eventually, however, journeymen were admitted to many London companies as a discreet category of members, as 'bachelors' or 'yeomen', within the fellowship and oversight of the company; this had the effect of broadening the company membership and thus anticipated the widening of the franchise in 1531.[112] In these ways, assumptions about the civic purpose of householders cross-fertilised with guild conceptions of mastery and trust and the guilds' growing ability to accept and include skilled employees,

[110] E. Spindler, 'Flemings in the Peasants' Revolt, 1381', in H. Skoda, P. Lantschner, and R. L. J. Shaw (eds), *Contact and Exchange in Later Medieval Europe: Essays in Honour of Malcolm Vale* (Woodbridge, Boydell, 2012), pp. 59–78; Lambert and Pajic, 'Immigration and the Common Profit'.

[111] *London Letter Book I*, pp. 136–7.

[112] Davies, 'Governors and Governed'.

foreigners, and aliens within their fraternities was in part based on their standing as householders.

Such efforts to accommodate skilled workers under the authority of their masters and within the fellowship of guilds only exposed further the vulnerability of the mobile poor, who made up perhaps one third of the urban population by 1500.[113] A series of natural disasters encouraged migration into towns in the fourteenth century, leading to heightened concern among elites about those who lived beyond the regulatory powers of guilds and households. Once again, providing a household-substitute was a preferred solution for at least some of the mobile poor. Hospitals were provided in towns, in growing numbers. Where once they may have been designated for lepers or travellers, they were increasingly used in the late Middle Ages to house and settle those who were either 'impotent' (too sick or old to work or maintain a household) or 'masterless' such as homeless children, women, and even elderly priests.[114] Many hospitals also sold places to incomers who could afford to pay for their own care. But for those who were not considered such worthy dependants, the regulations were harsher. Building on precedents already set in London, between 1351 and 1430 more than one third of all parliaments passed legislation seeking to control both wages and the mobility of labour among men and women. Much of this, moreover, was delegated to urban officials for local

[113] Kowaleski, 'Medieval People', 600.

[114] C. Rawcliffe, 'The Hospitals of Later Medieval London', *Medical History*, 28 (1984), 1–21; P. H. Cullum, *Cremetts and Corrodies: Care of the Poor and Sick at St Leonard's Hospital York, in the Middle Ages*, Borthwick Papers, 79 (York, University of York, 1991).

enforcement.[115] Itinerant hawkers of goods, beggars, unemployed soldiers, and people on the move seeking work attracted increasing suspicion across the fifteenth century, leading to the development of specialised vocabulary relating to the mobile poor, all of which was derogatory: 'wastours', 'wandering beggars', 'staffstrikers', and 'vagabonds'.[116] In 1403 London issued a comprehensive set of regulations aimed at the different kinds of people flocking daily to the city's streets and markets.[117] These included ordinances about keeping the streets clear for traffic and finished with a long set of rules encouraging and protecting foreigners and strangers who imported staple foods. But they began with a strong ordinance against vagrants who lingered in the city overnight and against the kinds of establishments, such as taverns, cookhouses, or pie shops, that might harbour them. From 1495 national legislation against vagabonds was to become an enduring feature of national laws regulating poverty.[118] As civic society found ways of accommodating and encouraging necessary, skilled, and deserving visitors and immigrants, whether as householders, servants, traders, or hospital inmates, the basic and foundational premise that not all people living in a city necessarily belonged there enabled the refinement of much tougher legislation against those who did not

[115] Given Wilson, 'Service, Serfdom and English Labour Legislation', in Curry and Matthew (eds), *Concepts and Patterns of Service*, pp. 21–37.

[116] Elaine Clark, 'Institutional and Legal Responses to Begging in Medieval England', *Social Science History*, 26 (3) (2002), 447–73; Judith Bennett, 'Compulsory Service in the Late Middle Ages', *Past & Present*, 209 (2010), 7–51; and see notes 68, 95, 104 above.

[117] LMA, COL/AD/01/009 fols 33v–35.

[118] Paul Slack, *Poverty and Policy in Tudor and Stuart England* (London, Longman, 1988), p. 115.

meet these criteria for social acceptance. This, in turn, contributed to—and indeed defined—their poverty.

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Mobility in and out of towns was such that it often overwhelmed the structures and regulations put in place to facilitate and manage it, reshaping the conditions and processes of urban life. By the later Middle Ages it was not just the physical infrastructure of towns but also the social infrastructure of guilds, households, and hospitals that had developed in response to the perceived needs of a highly mobile society. Through all this, a highly gradated approach to issues of mobility developed that shaped ideas about social acceptability and effectively laid down guidelines for incomers seeking to participate in urban society, at the heart of which were normalised codes of conduct rather than legal distinctions and barriers. The rules may not have been totally effective but they undeniably shaped social attitudes and confirmed certain patterns of poverty and exclusion not only during the later Middle Ages but also beyond.

Experience: Integration, Social Status, and Gender

The growing emphasis on social conduct rather than legal criteria for successful participation in town life meant that all kinds of informal institutions flourished in the later medieval town that enabled immigrants to find their place either permanently or as more transient members of the community. This is a growing area of research in which much remains to be done. Getting married, making or executing a will, serving in the local neighbourhood court, frequenting a local tavern, worshipping in the parish church, and joining a fraternity were all ways in which people moving into towns might become more networked to some degree or another both with each other and with established residents, either prior to joining a guild and becoming a

freeman or as an alternative.[119] Indeed the strength of such social bonds may explain why, despite the anti-alien legislation of the fifteenth century, there is little evidence (especially outside London) that aliens were commonly recognised as such in civic records: aliens in Exeter, Lincoln, and York are hard to see, for example, because they were not distinguished as such; and their names were often anglicised, suggesting scant regard for their 'alien' status.[120] Similarly foreigners were increasingly reported to neighbourhood courts in London not because they were trading illegally outside the franchise, but only if they committed some other kind of social crime or nuisance.[121]

These different methods of networking in towns were available to a broad spectrum of immigrants and also helped sustain networks among those regularly moving between town and country. We need to know more about them and about the softer aspects of culture and its use in maintaining or dissolving social networks. Prior to around 1400, cultural integration for

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[119] Suzanne Dempsey, 'The Italian Community in London during the Reign of Edward II', *London Journal*, 18 (1) (1993), 14–22; J. Colson, 'Alien Communities and Alien Fraternities in Later Medieval London', *London Journal*, 35 (2) (2010), 111–43; Berry, 'Sociability and Social Networking'; Durkee, 'Career Cycles'; M. Kowaleski, 'The Assimilation of Foreigners in Late Medieval Exeter: A Prosopographical Analysis, in *Resident Aliens*, pp. 163–80; A. Ruddick, 'Immigrants and Intermarriage in Late Medieval England', in *Resident Aliens*, pp. 181–200; M. Davies, 'Aliens, Crafts and Guilds' (unpublished paper).

[120] Kowaleski, 'Assimilation', 179–80; A. Kissane and J. Mackman, 'Aliens and the Law in Late Medieval Lincolnshire', in *Resident Aliens*, pp. 106–7; S. Rees Jones, 'Scots in the North of England: The First Alien Subsidy, 1440–43', in *Resident Aliens*, p. 62.

[121] Rees Jones, 'The Word on the Street', 106–14.

elites was aided by a normative multilingualism in two languages in particular (Latin and French) but also in Dutch, Low German, and English, between all of which there was considerable sharing of vocabulary and syntax. Middle and later standard English emerged from these many languages, combining vocabulary from each. It was only from the 1480s that monolingual English usage decisively replaced multilingualism among most London merchants even in domestic record keeping.[122] This coincided with the development of more rigorous national anti-alien legislation from the reign of Richard III.[123] Was this a simple coincidence?

Wealth was an important factor. It is possible that wealthier migrants were more strongly networked with each other and that this facilitated their movement between towns. Mercantile guilds frequently admitted members from different towns, mercantile and local gentry intermarried, while some groups of wealthy alien immigrants, notably Italians, made little effort to integrate with native society but were strongly networked with each other as an expatriate community.[124] Networking without such wealth is less well understood, though new

[122] Laura Wright, 'A Multilingual Approach to the History of Standard English', in Paivi Pahta, Janne Skaffari, and Laura Wright (eds), *Multilingual Practices in Language History: English and Beyond*, Language Contact and Bilingualism, 15 (Helsinki, Mouton de Gruyter, 2017), pp. 339–58; Christopher Baswell *et al*., 'Competing Archives, Competing Histories: French and Its Cultural Locations in Late-Medieval England', *Speculum*, 90 (2015), 674–700.

[123] For the background, see Ormrod, Lambert, and Mackman, *Immigrant England*, pp. 34–7.

[124] Kermode, *Medieval Merchants*, pp. 70–116; Rosser, 'Urban Culture', pp. 359–60; F. Guido-Bruscoli and J. Lutkin, 'Perception, Identity and Culture: The Italian Communities in Fifteenth-Century London and Southampton Revisited', in *Resident Aliens*, pp. 89–104.

work is suggesting the possibilities.[125] Occasional glimpses can be found among people of more modest means. In 1472 one Rose Langtoft was in service in London with a tailor, Thomas Howdon. There she met and married a servant, of lower status than herself, in a different household but at first she denied this (and was backed up by her master) and said that she did not have the approval of her parents.[126] Langtoft and Howden are settlements in the East Riding of Yorkshire so this was perhaps a case where country networks enabled a girl to find a trusted place in service in London, through which it was hoped that parental influence might still have some power.

There is some evidence that groups of peripatetic workers formed their own communities settling on the edges of towns or in ecclesiastical precincts beyond civic control. [127] Recent work on the western suburbs of London has also suggested that neighbourhood (rather than occupation or family) was at the heart of many social networks.[128] And such neighbourliness could provide a safe base for further integration into the city: as in the case of Peter Peterson, a child immigrant from Holland, who, grew up to become a freeman

[125] C. Berry, 'Margins and Marginality in Fifteenth-Century London', Ph.D. thesis (London, 2018).

[126] S. McSheffrey, *Love and Marriage in Late Medieval London*, pp. 59–65; S. McSheffrey, *Marriage*, *Sex and Civic Culture in Late Medieval London*, The Middle Ages Series (Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006), pp. 113–16.

[127] S. McSheffrey, *Seeking Sanctuary: Crime, Mercy, and Politics in English Courts, 1400–1550* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2017), pp. 124–27.

[128] Berry, 'Margins and Marginality'.

Cordwainer, but continued to live in the 'strangers' precinct of St Martin-le-Grand.[129] Both 'alien' and 'freeman' simultaneously, his networking enabled him both to assimilate to civic society and retain his Dutch family roots. Southwark, on the south bank of the Thames and just outside the jurisdiction of London, may be taken as an extreme example of this kind of phenomenon.[130] Southwark was not a formal borough but grew up *ad hoc* on a group of manors adjacent to the southern end of London Bridge (then the only bridge across the Thames and the main entrance point to London from the south). Most of its population were immigrants from London, from all over England and from overseas. Many were employed in the kinds of trades and occupations in demand in London but which were perhaps 'over-regulated' there, such as the victualling and clothing trades, as well as sex work. Indeed, the numbers of women working as sex workers meant that Southwark was one of the few places in England to have regulated brothels (places where these itinerant workers could be hosted and settled in quasi-households under the rule of masters and mistresses).[131] By 1525 Southwark had grown to become the twelfth largest town in England, although its inhabitants overall were relatively poor. Within Southwark, however, further social clustering distinguished more settled from more mobile residents; more prosperous households (some owner-occupied) stretched along Tooley Street, while poorer and more peripatetic singleton households occupied rents in the precincts of the

[129] Shannon McSheffrey, 'Stranger Artisans and the London Sanctuary of St. Martin Le Grand in the Reign of Henry VIII', *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies*, 43 (2013), 559–62.

[130] Martha Carlin, *Medieval Southwark* (London, Hambledon, 1996), Table 1.

[131] Ruth Mazo Karras, *Common Women: Prostitution and Sexuality in Medieval England* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1996), pp. 32–47.

hospital of St Thomas. More precariously still, the truly itinerant and sometimes homeless poor were present in numbers that regularly overwhelmed the charities set up to provide for them. A dole handed out at Southwark Priory in April 1533 attracted such a press of poor people that four men, two women, and one boy were crushed to death in the street.[132] Such social clustering, based around degrees of mobility, most likely characterised other towns too.

Servants living in households, whether as apprentices or as domestics, are better documented. Urban households typically had a larger number of servants than rural ones, and this employment was a major stimulus to both local and life-cycle mobility and longer-term migration.[133] As we have seen, most apprentices, in many ways the elite among young servants, were typically in their middle teens when they were recruited from out of town, while domestic servants could also be hired via networks of kinship and friendship extending into the countryside.[134] For others, regular hiring fairs, typically held in the autumn in urban market places, provided an opportunity to move between urban and rural employment on a regular basis. Others again might be impelled to move by poverty or by crime. When John Sely, the son of a wealthy skinner, committed a murder in mid-fourteenth-century London, he fled to the

[132] Carlin, *Southwark*, p. 188.

[133] Goldberg, *Women, Work and Lifecycle*, pp. 280–304; Kowaleski, 'Medieval People', 580–3.

[134] Bennett, *Women in the Medieval English Countryside*, pp. 57, 186; B. Hamblen, 'Communities of the Hinterland: Social Networks and Geographical Mobility beyond the Walls of Late Medieval York', Ph.D. thesis (York, 2008).

countryside, taking up work as a labourer and marrying the 'idiot' sister of the local squire.[135] Of his three sons one followed him into agricultural work, a second became a country tailor, and the third moved back to London and became a butcher. Rather than the exception, such recursive mobility, within and across generations, seems to have been typical.[136]

Certainly, the evidence suggests that most urban immigrants were of lower status and were highly transient. In London in 1441, 1,014 (68%) of alien immigrants reported for the new alien subsidy were non-householders, of whom 887 (89%) were male. We do not have exactly comparable data for non-alien lower-status migrants into towns, but a significantly higher proportion were female. Poll tax assessments of the fourteenth century and the evidence of urban cemeteries strongly suggest that women equalled or slightly outnumbered men in towns, particularly as servants and non-householders, so the number of English women seeking urban employment as servants must have equalled or even outnumbered men.[137] Whereas most immigrants from continental Europe had to negotiate a sea passage, local migrants could walk. In the north of England, most aliens reported in 1440 were Scots, of whom nearly 30% were female (nearly twice the national average for alien female immigrants); many clearly engaged in step migration, walking slowly further south by stages.[138]

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[135] *Calendar of Plea and Memoranda Rolls of the City of London, 1458–1482*, ed. Philip E. Jones (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1961), pp. 4–7.

[136] See Dyer, chapter 9 in this volume, pp. XXX–XXX.

[137] See note 133 above.

[138] Rees Jones, 'Scots', in *Resident Aliens*, pp. 58–60; Bennett, 'Women (and Men) on the Move'.

Such migrant workers were vulnerable. Urban life expectancy was (in general) always lower than rural life expectancy, but was particularly low for the poor. Indeed increasing urbanisation over the Middle Ages is generally interpreted as having a negative impact on health as a result of the poorer air quality, hygiene, sanitation, and housing in towns.[139] On the data currently available, poor urban women had the lowest life expectancy of all.[140] Poor diet, lack of hygiene, and the dangers of childbirth were all strong factors. Migrant young men in towns were also exposed to dangers: both archaeological and archival evidence suggested that they led more violent lives.[141] Lack of social networks also suggests that male migrants not enjoying an apprenticeship were more likely to be sentenced to the death penalty for petty crimes. Lacking neighbours and masters who could vouch for them, the literacy necessary to claim 'benefit of clergy', or property to pay a fine, all of those who are recorded as having been condemned to death by hanging for burglary in fourteenth-century London were male, were from outside London and were probably young.[142] They included 'Richard de Lambertone of Lostwithiel' (Cornwall) in 1338, 'Henry van Tene' (presumably 'Dutch') in 1358, and 'John Munde, junior otherwise called John Andreu' of Abbey Waltham (Essex) in 1381.

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[139] C. Roberts, 'Health and Welfare in Medieval England: The Human Skeletal Remains Contextualised', in Gilchrist and Reynolds (eds), *Reflections*, pp. 307–25.

[140] M. Lewis, 'Work and the Adolescent in Medieval England (AD 900–1550): The Osteological Evidence', *Medieval Archaeology*, 60 (1) (2016), 138–71.

[141] Lewis, 'Work and the Adolescent'; Kissane and Mackman, 'Aliens and the Law', pp. 119–20.

[142] *Letter-Book F, 1337–1352*, pp. 249–75.

Going to town was a universal social phenomenon, yet while for some it brought the benefits of social advancement, for others it could result in the loss of status, even loss of life. Movement was ubiquitous but also dangerous; successful movement depended on being able to join and maintain a social network that would provide friends who would confirm reputation and stand pledge. The failure or inability, because of the lack of resources or skills, to participate in such a network exposed the immigrant to isolation that *in extremis* posed a threat to life. However, while the evidence of osteoarchaeology starkly exposes the jeopardy in which many urban migrants lived, and the sharpening rhetoric against vagrancy exposes their social disadvantage, the risks of moving to town did not deter urban immigrants. Towns in the later Middle Ages continued to attract large numbers of migrants from across the British Isles and continental Europe and London, in particular, led and influenced this urban growth.

Stories of the advantages of such migration are plentiful. In the fifteenth century male members of the Paston family, a family of landowning gentry in Norfolk, maintained a London residence, partly because some members of the family were lawyers and politicians working in the royal courts at Westminster, but also because they wanted to buy the kinds of fashionable, imported clothing that could only be purchased in London and was not available in Norwich, the provincial county town in which their main town house was located.[143] In this case, mobility contributed to their elite social status in at least two ways: it enabled them to be active members of the ruling elite and to benefit from the advantages of their London-

[143] Colin Richmond, 'The Pastons and London', in S. Rees Jones, R. Marks, and A. J. Minnis (eds), *Courts and Regions in Medieval Europe* (York, York Medieval Press, 2000), pp. 211–28.

centric network; and it enabled them to dress in a conspicuous manner that further signalled their social aspirations and status.[144] Indeed, mobility—in particular urban mobility—was a distinguishing characteristic of both clerical and lay elites in medieval England. A key component of such movement, however, is that it was licensed, often literally, and even assigned spiritual value. The attributes of such movement thus also became attributes of social status. The use of signs, maps, and pilgrim tokens, the ability to ride on horseback, the endowment of roads and bridges, and the provision of charity to 'deserving' fellow travellers were all aspirational forms of knowledge developed through social networking.[145]

Although for lower-status migrants the consequences of movement were less certain, they were still judged worth the risk. Rural districts within relatively close proximity of large cities could act, to some degree, as 'social escalators', allowing enhanced opportunities for upward social mobility both to young people born into those communities and to those arriving there as migrants from further afield. Such might be the case for successful apprentices moving, for example, from counties nearer to London into the city. One famous, if extreme, example of such upward social mobility achieved through 'going to town' was William of Wykeham, who was born in a small village in Hampshire in the early 1320s but, after attending school in the

[144] David Hinton, *Gold and Gilt and Pots and Pans: Possessions and People in Medieval Britain* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 206–32.

[145] R. Evans, 'Getting There: Wayfinding in the Middle Ages', in *Roadworks*, pp. 127–56.

county town of Winchester, moved into royal employment and eventually rose to become bishop of Winchester (1366–1404) and Chancellor of England (1367–71).[146]

Conclusion

The constant movement of people was the very essence of medieval town life and shaped its institutions, infrastructure, cultural values, and communities. The near universal practice of using toponyms as surnames, the development of roads, markets, and the hospitality industry, the evolution of urban guilds, the labour market, town councils and neighbourhood forums, systems of training and social care, and the organisation of households all developed as mechanisms for coping with the effects of urban mobility and provided lasting legacies for the future.

There has been a great deal of debate about whether the laws and urban institutions developed to sustain and regulate mobility had any impact on the movement of people. Generally such structures were not impervious to adaptation but there were exceptions to their flexibility in practice. One exception was the successful and near complete banishment of Jews from English towns after 1290. Another exception was the continuing and increasing hostility towards those with 'no fixed abode'. The common premise that people were bound together in sworn communities of faith in which householders (commonly headed by conjugal couples) played a role of particular responsibility militated against the easy acceptance of such particular 'outsiders'. Other immigrants, who by faithful marriage or service could integrate into urban

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[146] Peter Partner, 'William of Wykeham', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-30127 (accessed 14 December 2017).

society, were more easily assimilated to the extent that legal conventions about insiders and outsiders were easily eroded.

In these ways, the basic premise—that some people belonged in town more than others—never ceased to condition the experience of mobility, even if such rules never really controlled its realities. Poverty and wealth, success and failure, even living and dying, were not just the accidental consequences of movement to town; they were, to a large extent, structured and shaped by discussions about who was 'in' and who was 'out'.

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