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978-0-521-63278-2 - London Civic Theatre: City Drama and Pageantry from Roman Times to 1558

Anne Lancashire

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LONDON CIVIC THEATRE

Civic theatre – drama and pageantry sponsored by city and town governing bodies – is prominent in histories of early English provincial drama, but has been largely ignored for pre-Elizabethan London. Anne Lancashire explodes the widely held notion that significant London theatre arose only in the age of Shakespeare, when the first commercial playhouses were built. She outlines the extent and types of early civic theatrical performance, specifically in London, from Roman times to Elizabeth I's accession to the throne in 1558, focusing on Roman amphitheatre shows, medieval and early Tudor plays, mumming, royal entries, and other kinds of street pageantry. With evidence from a multitude of primary sources and extensive use of early chronicle histories, the book raises new questions about this urban, largely political theatre which provided an important foundation for the work of Shakespeare and his contemporaries.

ANNE LANCASHIRE is Professor of English at the University of Toronto. She has edited the texts of John Lyly's *Gallathea* and *Midas*, of Thomas Middleton's *The Second Maiden's Tragedy*, and of Clifford Leech's *Christopher Marlowe: Poet for the Stage*, and has published numerous articles and essays, and given many conference papers and public lectures, on medieval and early modern theatre and drama.

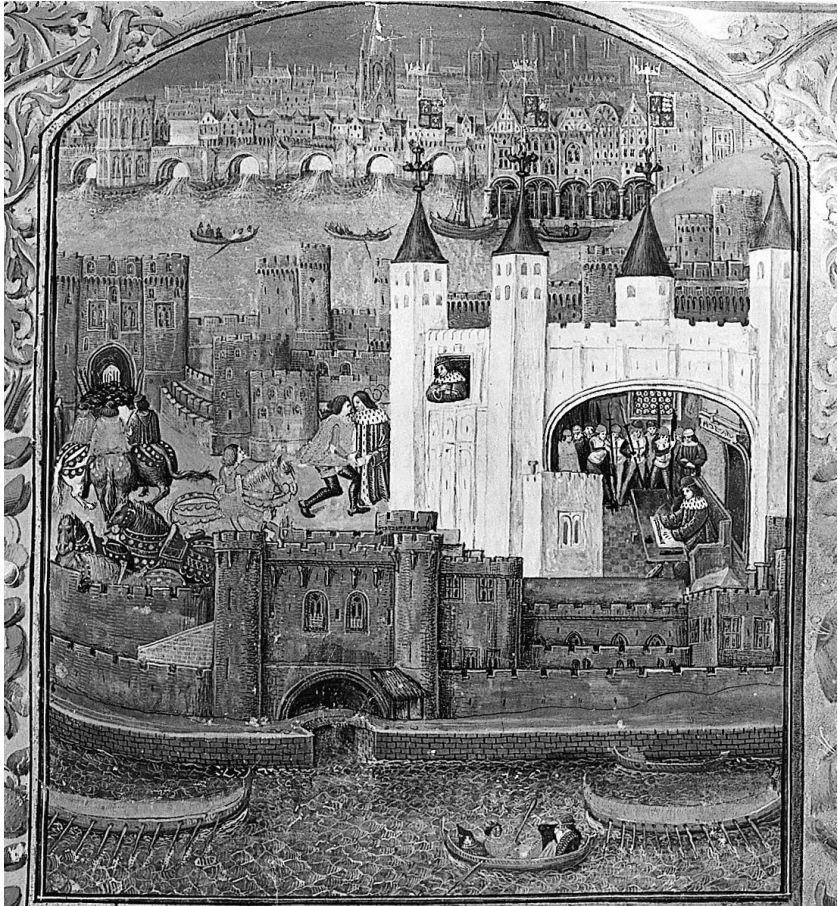
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View of London, late fifteenth century. Duke of Orleans in the Tower of London.
BL Royal MS 16, Fii, f. 73 (by permission of the British Library).

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University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom

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It furthers the University's mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit of
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www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9780521632782

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First published 2002

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publication data

Lancashire, Anne Begor.

London civic theatre : city drama and pageantry from Roman times to 1558 / Anne Lancashire.
 p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 0 521 63278 1

1. Theater – England – London – History. 2. Pageants – England – London – History.
 3. Festivals – England – London – History. I. Title.

PN2596.L6 L35 2002 792'.09421 – dc21 2002023378

ISBN 978-0-521-63278-2 Hardback

ISBN 978-0-521-12036-4 Paperback

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Acknowledgments

My debts to the various institutions and individuals who have aided me in the writing of this book are numerous and extensive. First, my most appreciative thanks, for generous provision of access to their records both at Guildhall Library (Corporation of London) and in their halls, and for citation and quotation permissions, to all the London livery companies whose manuscripts are cited here (in alphabetical order, the Worshipful Companies of Armourers and Brasiers, Bakers, Blacksmiths, Brewers, Butchers, Carpenters, Coopers, Curriers, Cutlers, Drapers, Founders, Goldsmiths, Grocers, Ironmongers, Leathersellers, Mercers, Merchant Taylors, Parish Clerks, Pewterers, Scriveners, Skinners, Stationers, Tallow Chandlers, Vintners, Wax Chandlers, and Weavers. (The Pinners/Wiresellers no longer exist.) My sincere thanks also to all the other companies whose archives, by their kind permission, I consulted as well but whose manuscripts are not cited here. I owe special thanks (in alphabetical order of company) to Mr. Claude Blair (Armourers and Brasiers' Company), Mr. D. E. Wickham (Archivist and Librarian, Clothworkers' Company), the late Mr. R. T. Brown (Education Officer, Drapers' Company), Ms Penelope Fussell (Archivist, Drapers' Company), Ms Raya McGeorge (Archivist/Librarian, Fishmongers' Company), Miss Susan M. Hare and Mr. David Beasley (former and current Librarians, Goldsmiths' Company), the late Mr. R. Cother and the late Mr. J. B. Hadlow (Leathersellers' Company), Mr. Negley Harte (Historian, Leathersellers' Company), Ms Ursula Carlyle (Archivist, Mercers' Company), Dr. Anne Sutton (Archivist/Historian, Mercers' Company), and Mr. E. J. Hall (Skinners' Company).

At the Corporation of London Records Office, the former Deputy Keeper of the Records, Ms Betty R. Masters, and the present City Archivist, Mr. James R. Sewell, with all of their staff members, have been of enormous help, as have also the former and current Keepers of Manuscripts at the Guildhall Library, Mr. C. R. H. Cooper and Mr. Stephen

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Freeth, and the Guildhall Library staff members also (both in Manuscripts and in Printed Books). I have been privileged to have worked also at the British Library, the Institutes of Historical Research and of Classical Studies (University of London), the Bodleian Library, Cambridge University Library, and the Public Record Office; all have been generous with access and with help. (Other libraries both at Oxford and at Cambridge have yielded material not for this book but for the next, and will be acknowledged there.) In Toronto I have been fortunate in having the resources of the University of Toronto Library available to me. Funding support has been gratefully received from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, from the Travel Fund of the Dean of Arts and Science, University of Toronto, and from the conference travel funds of the Department of English, University of Toronto.

For kind permission to publish in this volume the more extensive transcriptions from various company and city manuscripts, I am grateful to the companies concerned – the Worshipful Companies of Blacksmiths, Brewers, Drapers, and Mercers, largely in relation to the transcriptions in Appendix B – and to the Corporation of London. For permission to publish revised versions of previous articles, as cited in detail at the relevant points in this volume, I am grateful to Editions Rodopi BV (for “Continuing Civic Ceremonies of 1530s London” – see chapter 10), to the Board of the Medieval Institute, Kalamazoo, Michigan (for “Medieval to Renaissance: Plays and the London Drapers’ Company to 1558” – see chapter 4), and to the Records of Early English Drama project (for two items from the *REED Newsletter* – see chapter 4). For image reproduction permissions, I owe thanks to the Society of Antiquaries of London and to the British Library.

For continuing encouragement, support, and useful queries and suggestions, I am much indebted to Drs. Caroline Barron and Vanessa Harding and their colleagues and students in the annual medieval and Tudor London history seminar at the University of London, to Dr. Alexandra Johnston of REED, to the REED staff and especially Dr. Abigail Young, and to my patient and ever-helpful colleagues in the annual theatre history seminar at the meetings of the Shakespeare Association of America. Dr. David Parkinson (University of Saskatchewan) has provided considerable aid with the early Goldsmiths’ and Merchant Taylors’ records; Dr. Stephen R. Reimer (University of Alberta) has expertly answered my queries about Lydgate; Dr. Nicholas Bateman (Museum of London Archaeology Service) has generously

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answered my questions on London's Roman amphitheatre. Dr. Brian Merrilees (University of Toronto) provided aid with Anglo-Norman problems; Dr. Marion O'Connor (University of Kent, Canterbury) responded nobly to a request for a last-minute manuscript check. Mr. Peter Snowden and Mr. Mark Loman (Corporation of London: Guildhall Art Gallery, Technical Services) kindly enabled me in summer 2000 to view the not-yet-exhibited amphitheatre. And, as always, I have relied on the knowledge, support, and unfailing encouragement of my colleague and husband, Dr. Ian Lancashire.

This book also would not have been completed without the support and interest of Richard and Elisabeth Hoskyns and, in its embryonic stages, of the late Isa Morley, and of Helen Burrows, former Accommodations Officer at William Goodenough House, London.

Despite so much information, help, and encouragement from others, I will inevitably have made errors, omissions, over-generalizations and too-wild speculations, the blame for which is mine alone.

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[More information](#)*Abbreviations*

- A Chronicle* *A Chronicle of London, from 1089 to 1483* [ed. Nicholas Nicolas and Edward Tyrrell]. London: Longman *et al.*, 1827
- A-ND* *Anglo-Norman Dictionary*, ed. Louise W. Stone and William Rothwell, 7 fascicles. London: Modern Humanities Research Association, 1977–88
- Anglo, Spectacle* Sydney Anglo, *Spectacle, Pageantry and Early Tudor Policy*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969; 2nd edn. 1997
- Annals* Alfred Harbage, ed., *Annals of English Drama 975–1700*, rev. S. Schoenbaum. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1964
- Anon. Cant.* *Chronicon Anonymi Cantuariensis*, in *Chronica Johannis de Reading et Anonymi Cantuariensis 1346–1367*, ed. James Tait. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1914, pp. 187–227
- Anon. Chronicle* *The Anonimale Chronicle 1333 to 1381*, ed. V. H. Galbraith. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1927
- Arber, Garner* Edward Arber, *An English Garner*, vol. 2. London: E. Arber, 1879
- Atlas* Mary D. Lobel, gen. ed., *The British Atlas of Historic Towns*, vol. 3: *The City of London: From Prehistoric Times to c. 1520*. Oxford: Oxford University Press in conjunction with The Historic Towns Trust, 1989
- Axton, European Drama* Richard Axton, *European Drama of the Early Middle Ages*. London: Hutchinson, 1974

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- Bale Robert Bale, *Chronicle*, in Flenley, see below, pp. 114–153
- Barron, *Atlas* Caroline Barron, “The Later Middle Ages: 1270–1520,” in *Atlas*, see above, pp. 42–56
- Beadle Richard Beadle, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval English Theatre*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994; rpt. 1995
- Beaven Alfred B. Beaven, *The Aldermen of the City of London*, 2 vols. London: Corporation of London, 1908–13
- Bernardo Andrea* Bernardus Andreas, *Historia Regis Henrici Septimi, a Bernardo Andrea Tholosate Conscripta*, ed. James Gairdner. RS 10. London: HMSO, 1858; rpt. Lessing-Druckerei, Wiesbaden: Kraus Reprint, 1966
- BH Bridge House (MSS at CLRO)
- Biddle, *Atlas* Martin Biddle, “A City in Transition: 400–800,” in *Atlas*, see above, pp. 20–29
- BL British Library
- Brief Latin Chronicle* *A Brief Latin Chronicle*, in James Gairdner, ed., *Three Fifteenth-Century Chronicles*. Camden Society, NS 28, 1880, pp. 164–185
- Brooke, *Atlas* Christopher Brooke, “The Central Middle Ages: 800–1270,” in *Atlas*, see above, pp. 30–41
- Brut* *The Brut*, ed. Friedrich W. D. Brie, vol. 2. Early English Text Society, OS 136, 1908
- Cal. LB* Reginald R. Sharpe, ed., *Calendar of Letter-Books Preserved Among the Archives of the Corporation of the City of London at the Guildhall*, 11 vols. London: Corporation of London, 1899–1912. Volumes run A through L (without a J); each specific volume reference in this book therefore includes the alphabetical letter (e.g., *Cal. LB K*)
- CBA Council for British Archaeology
- Chronicle of Queen Jane* *The Chronicle of Queen Jane, and of Two Years*

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- of Queen Mary*, ed. John Gough Nichols. Camden Society, os 48, 1850
- CLRO Corporation of London Records Office
- Collections III* Jean Robertson and D. J. Gordon, eds., "A Calendar of Dramatic Records in the Books of the Livery Companies of London." *Collections III*. Malone Society, 1954
- Collectanea* John Leland, ed., *Antiquarii de Rebus Britannicis Collectanea*, ed. Thomas Hearne, vol. 4. London: Benjamin White, 1774
- CSPV *Calendar of State Papers and Manuscripts . . . Existing in the Archives and Collections of Venice*, vols. 3 (1520–1526) and 6.1 (1555–1556), ed. Rawdon Brown. London: HMSO, 1869 and 1877
- DTR Ian Lancashire, ed., *Dramatic Texts and Records of Britain: A Chronological Topography to 1558*. Studies in Early English Drama 1. Toronto/Cambridge: University of Toronto Press/Cambridge University Press, 1984
- EES Glynne Wickham, *Early English Stages 1300–1660*, 3 vols. London/New York: Routledge and Kegan Paul/Columbia University Press, 1959–81
- EETS Early English Text Society
- EP Robert Withington, *English Pageantry: An Historical Outline*, 2 vols. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1918–26; rpt. New York: Arno Press, 1980
- Fabyan Robert Fabyan, *The New Chronicles of England and France*, ed. Henry Ellis. London: F. C. and J. Rivington *et al.*, 1811
- Flenley Ralph Flenley, ed. *Six Town Chronicles of England*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1911
- GL Guildhall Library, Corporation of London
- Gesta* *Gesta Henrici Quinti*, ed. and tr. Frank Taylor and John S. Roskell. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975

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- Grafton Richard Grafton, *Grafton's Chronicle* [ed. Henry Ellis], 2 vols. London: J. Johnston *et al.*, 1809
- Great Chronicle* *The Great Chronicle of London*, ed. A. H. Thomas and I. D. Thornley. London: Corporation of London, 1938
- Gregory William Gregory, *Chronicle*, in James Gairdner, ed., *The Historical Collections of a Citizen of London in the Fifteenth Century*. Camden Society, ns 17, 1876
- Grey Friars* *Chronicle of the Grey Friars of London*, ed. John Gough Nichols. Camden Society, os 53, 1852
- Grose Francis Grose, ed., *The Antiquarian Repertory*, 4 vols. London: Edward Jeffery, 1807–09
- Hall Edward Hall, *Hall's Chronicle* [ed. Henry Ellis]. London: J. Johnston *et al.*, 1809
- Historical Charters* Walter de Gray Birch, ed., *The Historical Charters and Constitutional Documents of the City of London*. London: Whiting, 1887
- HMSO His/Her Majesty's Stationery Office
- Holinshed Raphael Holinshed, *Chronicles of England, Scotland, and Ireland* [ed. Henry Ellis], 6 vols. London: J. Johnston *et al.*, 1807–08
- Jor. Journal (MSS at CLRO)
- Kingsford, *Chronicles* Charles Lethbridge Kingsford, ed., *Chronicles of London*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1905
- Kingsford, *EHL* Charles Lethbridge Kingsford, *English Historical Literature in the Fifteenth Century*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1913; rpt. New York: Burt Franklin, Burt Franklin Bibliographical and Reference Series 37, n.d.
- Kipling, *King* Gordon Kipling, *Enter the King: Theatre, Liturgy, and Ritual in the Medieval Civic Triumph*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998
- Kipling, *Receyt* Gordon Kipling, ed., *The Receyt of the Ladie Katerylene*. EETS, os 296, 1990

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- xvi *List of abbreviations*
- L&PH* James Gairdner, ed., *Letters and Papers . . . of Richard III. and Henry VII.*, 2 vols. RS 24. London: HMSO, 1861–63
- LB Letter Book (MSS at CLRO)
- Legg Leopold G. Wickham Legg, *English Coronation Records*. Westminster: Archibald Constable, 1901
- LMAS London and Middlesex Archaeological Society
- Liber Albus* *Liber Albus: The White Book of The City of London*, ed. and tr. Henry Thomas Riley. London: Richard Griffin, 1861
- Liber Regalis* In Legg, see above, pp. 81–130
- Lyell-Watney Laetitia Lyell, assisted by Frank D. Watney, eds., *Acts of Court of the Mercers' Company 1453–1527*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1936
- Machyn Henry Machyn, *The Diary of Henry Machyn, Citizen and Merchant-Taylor of London, from A.D. 1550 to A.D. 1563*, ed. John Gough Nichols. Camden Society, os 42, 1848
- Malverne John Malverne's continuation of Higden's *Polychronicon*, in Ranulf Higden, *Polychronicon Ranulphi Higden Monachi Cestrensis*, ed. Joseph Rawson Lumby, vol. 9. rs 41. London: HMSO, 1886, pp. 1–283
- Manley, *Culture* Lawrence Manley, *Literature and Culture in Early Modern London*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995
- McGee-Meagher C. E. McGee and John C. Meagher, "Preliminary Checklist of Tudor and Stuart Entertainments: 1485–1558," *Research Opportunities in Renaissance Drama* 25 (1982), 31–114
- MG* Henry Thomas Riley, ed., *Munimenta Gildhallae Londoniensis*, 3 vols. (2nd in 2 parts). rs 12. London: HMSO, 1859–62
- New History* John D. Cox and David Scott Kastan, eds., *A New History of Early English Drama*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1997

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- Nightingale Pamela Nightingale, *A Medieval Mercantile Community: The Grocers' Company & the Politics & Trade of London 1000–1485*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1995
- NS New Series
- OED *Oxford English Dictionary*. Compact edn., complete text reproduced micrographically, 2 vols. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971
- OS Old/Original Series
- PRO Public Record Office
- REED Records of Early English Drama
- Rep. Repertory (MSS at CLRO)
- RS Rolls Series
- RSTC A. W. Pollard and G. R. Redgrave, *A Short-Title Catalogue of Books Printed in England, Scotland & Ireland . . . 1475–1640*, rev. W. A. Jackson, F. S. Ferguson, and Katharine F. Pantzer, 3 vols. London: The Bibliographical Society, 1976–91
- Stow, *Annales* John Stow, *The Annales of England*. 1592. RSTC 23334
- Stow, *Survey* John Stow, *A Survey of London*, ed. Charles Lethbridge Kingsford, 2 vols. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1908
- Streitberger W. R. Streitberger, *Court Revels, 1485–1559*. Studies in Early English Drama 3. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994
- Thrupp, *London* Sylvia L. Thrupp, *The Merchant Class of Medieval London [1300–1500]*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948
- TLMAS *Transactions of the London and Middlesex Archaeological Society*
- Two London Chronicles* Charles Lethbridge Kingsford, ed., “Two London Chronicles from the Collections of John Stow,” in *Camden Miscellany* 12. Camden Society, 1910, pp. iii–x, 1–57
- Usk Adam Usk, *Chronicle of Adam Usk*, ed. and tr. C. Given-Wilson. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997

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<i>Vita & Gesta</i>	<i>Vita & Gesta Henrici Quinti</i> , ed. Thomas Hearne. Oxford, 1727
<i>Westminster Chronicle</i>	<i>The Westminster Chronicle 1381–1394</i> , ed. and tr. L. C. Hector and Barbara F. Harvey. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982
Wickham, <i>History</i>	Glynne Wickham, <i>A History of the Theatre</i> . New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985
William of Worcester	William of Worcester, <i>Annales</i> , in Joseph Stevenson, ed., <i>Letters and Papers Illustrative of . . . the Reign of Henry the Sixth</i> , vol. 2.2. RS 22. London: HSMO, 1864; rpt. Wiesbaden: Kraus Reprint, 1968, pp. 743–793
Williams	Gwyn A. Williams, <i>Medieval London: From Commune to Capital</i> . University of London Historical Studies 11. London: University of London, Athlone Press, 1963
Wriothesley	Charles Wriothesley, <i>A Chronicle of England during the Reigns of the Tudors</i> , ed. William Douglas Hamilton, 2 vols. Camden Society, NS 11, 1875, and NS 20, 1877
Wylie, <i>Reign</i>	James Hamilton Wylie, <i>The Reign of Henry the Fifth</i> , 3 vols. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1914–29 (vol. 3 with William Templeton Waugh)

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COMPANY DESIGNATIONS

In a few cases the names of the London livery companies discussed in this book changed during the period between their founding and 1558 or have changed since that date. In all such instances, for the sake of continuity and consistency, the current name has been used throughout: thus Grocers for Pepperers, Merchant Taylors for Tailors, Armourers and Brasiers (the combined company) for Armourers and Brasiers as separate companies, Fishmongers (the combined company) for Fishmongers and Stockfishmongers as separate companies.

A large number of London livery company manuscripts are cited throughout. The locations of these manuscripts are noted in the List of Works Cited, at the end of the volume, and my thanks for access are included in the Acknowledgments.

LONDON MAYORS AND SHERIFFS

The only list of London mayors and sheriffs, to 1558, which includes their livery company memberships and the exact day/month dates (where known) of replacements for mayors and sheriffs dying in office or removed from office is this author's "The Mayors and Sheriffs of London 1190–1558," forthcoming as an appendix in Caroline Barron's *The Government of London 1200–1500* (Oxford University Press). A typescript copy of this list is also available at the CLRO, and will eventually also be available on the Web. For all references to mayors and sheriffs by company, see this list, which is also used for the spellings of the names of mayors and sheriffs.

TRANSCRIPTION PRACTICES

MS abbreviations have been expanded in italic; MS letters raised above the line have been silently lowered except where misreadings might result; and MS deletions have been placed within square brackets. Interlineations have been indicated by half brackets (upper for above the line, lower for below the line) or are specified in footnotes. Original MS lineation has not been preserved unless so noted. In quotations from older printed works, long s is reproduced as short s, and thorn is reproduced as th.