

## ROYAL VISITS AND CIVIC CEREMONY

### A Research Opportunity

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By this time *REED* readers have become familiar with records of royal visits to provincial towns and cities and the payment of rewards to the royal officials, servants, and entertainers accompanying the monarch. When Queen Elizabeth visited Canterbury during her progress through Kent in September 1573, to cite just one example, the mayor and aldermen of Canterbury not only gave the Queen a gift of £30, but also distributed an additional £13 8s 10d in rewards to such officials as the King of Heraldry and the Clerk of the Market; to the Queen's footmen, coachmen, porters, and other servants; and to the trumpeters, the drums and flutes, the musicians, the Queen's bearward, and Walter the jester.<sup>1</sup> What is usually missing on such occasions, however, is any mention of the home team — the city waits, the town drummers, and other civic musicians and minstrels — who must have performed during the welcoming ceremony or provided background music for the civic dinners and receptions during the monarch's visit. Since these civic musicians usually received quarterly or annual wages, they are rarely singled out in the town accounts for specific performances, unless unusual circumstances called for comment, such as the time the Canterbury waits played their sackbuts and oboes from the top of West Gate to welcome the Spanish ambassador in June 1623.

What is not clear from these provincial accounts of royal visits is that readers may be getting only one side of the story. The other side, for the most part still untold, lies hidden in the royal wardrobe and household accounts in The National Archives. Exploratory research in these accounts from Edward I to Charles I reveals that protocol during royal visits to provincial towns and cities seems to have required not only the mayor and aldermen to reward the royal entertainers but also the monarch to reward the civic entertainers. The former rewards, of course, appear in the town chamberlains' accounts, but the latter appear only in the royal household accounts and reveal many instances of town musicians performing during civic welcoming ceremonies that do not appear in the *REED* county volumes.

In some cases royal visits to provincial towns and cities have passed under the REED radar, because no mention of REED activity appears in the town accounts. This happened, for instance, when Henry VII visited Canterbury in 1508. Both a payment related to this visit in the Canterbury chamberlains' accounts dated 20 April 1508 and letters patent signed and sealed in Canterbury between 19 April and 26 April 1508 confirm the presence of Henry VII in the city during Holy Week and Easter that year, yet the royal visit does not appear in the *REED* volume for Kent, because the city chamberlains' accounts do not mention minstrels, musicians, or other REED activity. When we turn to the king's daily book of payments in the royal Wardrobe accounts, however, we find on Holy Saturday, 22 April 1508, the payment 'Item to the mynstrelles in Rewarde xx s'.<sup>2</sup> Although this payment does not mention Canterbury, when the evidence from *The Calendar of Letters Patent* and the city chamberlains' accounts is put together with the evidence from the king's book of payments, it turns out that there was REED activity during the royal visit to Canterbury after all. Since no other minstrels appear in the city accounts at this time, it is reasonable to assume that the unnamed minstrels in the royal accounts may have been the Canterbury city waits.

A similar situation appears the previous year during the progress of Henry VII from Greenwich to Richmond, taking in Cambridge, Abington, Woodstock, Reading, and other towns between July and October 1507. On Saturday, 31 July 1507, Henry delivered £300 'towardses the belding of the kings new Churche at Cambrige', and also gave 6s 8d 'to the mynstrelles of Cambrige in Reward'.<sup>3</sup> Payments relating to the context of royal visits were routinely excluded from the Cambridge *REED* volumes; however, this direct evidence of minstrel activity in Cambridge on 31 July 1507 also passed under the REED radar because this payment to the home team of civic musicians appears not in the college or city accounts but only in the royal accounts. As the royal progress continued westward, the royal accounts include payments on 8 August at Somersham in Cambridgeshire 'to them that played vpon their stilles affore the king at Somersham in Rewardes iij s. iiij d.',<sup>4</sup> on 4 October at Abington in Northamptonshire 'to vj mynstrelles of ffraunce that played afore the kinges grace at habynghon xl s.', on 5 October a further iij s. iiij d 'to the mynstrelles that played vpon habynghon brigge in Rewarde',<sup>5</sup> and on 11 October at Reading 10s. to Master Hastynges 'for to bye certain thynges for master John the frenche ffoole'.<sup>6</sup> All of these REED activities, although performed in provincial

locations, appear only in the royal household accounts rather than in the corresponding provincial town or city accounts.

In other cases royal visits to provincial towns and cities pass unnoticed in the *REED* county volumes, simply because the provincial civic accounts have not survived. When Henry VII visited Salisbury in October 1505, for example, the details of the civic welcome remain unknown because the mayor's bill of expenses covering the period 2 November 1504 to 1 November 1505 is no longer extant. The payments in the royal accounts on 1 October 1505 of xij s. iiijd 'for offering at the high aulter & at the Shiryne at the kinges comyng to Salesbury' and a further xijd 'to a Taberer at Salesbury in Rewarde' demonstrate that the civic welcome included drumming by the town drummer.<sup>7</sup>

Such references in the royal accounts to civic musicians and minstrels can make significant contributions to the history of local entertainment and ceremony. The earliest surviving civic accounts in Canterbury, for example, date from 1393, and the earliest mention of the Canterbury city waits in the civic accounts comes eight years later in 1401–1402, when three silver gilt scutcheons are purchased at a cost of 26s 8d. The history of the Canterbury city waits, however, can now be extended back to the visit of Edward II to Canterbury in 1312. The daily household accounts of Edward II (E101/375/8) contain numerous payments by the king for minstrels between 8 July 1312 and 7 July 1313, including the payment *Iohanni de Bolonae Lumbardo facienti menestralciam suam cum serpentibus coram Rege de dono ipsius Regis per manus proprias apud Cantuarie .xvj. die Augusti. iij s.* ('To John of Bologna in Lombardy for making his minstrelsy with the serpents before the King by the gift of that same King through his own hand at Canterbury on 16 August 3 s.'). *The Calendar of Close Rolls* and *The Calendar of Patent Rolls* both confirm that Edward II did indeed visit Canterbury on 16 August 1312. Although only John of Bologna, the apparent leader of the minstrels, is singled out in this payment for his minstrelsy, the number of musical instruments is plural, thus implying a band of musicians. Their instruments — the serpents or large bass cornetts — were commonly used in loud ceremonial music, rather than intimate chamber music. This payment in the royal accounts by the king's own hand almost certainly refers to the city waits performing as part of the welcoming ceremony when the king visited Canterbury in 1312, eighty-one years before the first surviving Canterbury civic accounts begin and a full ninety years before the first mention of the Canterbury waits in the civic accounts in 1402. Not until all these payments to

provincial civic minstrels and musicians have been collected from the royal wardrobe and household accounts will the full history of civic welcoming ceremonies during royal visits be known.

Where are these royal accounts to be found, and what else might they contain of interest for historians of medieval and renaissance drama, minstrelsy, and ceremony? Most of the royal wardrobe and household accounts are found in the records of the Exchequer in The National Archives. The main series of wardrobe and household accounts for the period before 1642 is found in E101/349/1A to E101/440/20. Arranged in chronological order by regnal year, this series contains detailed information about the Wardrobe and Household in various subseries, including Wardrobe *dietae*, foreign expense rolls, accounts of individual household officers, inventories of royal treasure, and Great Wardrobe accounts. Not all of these are relevant, the most useful being the foreign expense rolls that record the extraordinary expenditure of the Wardrobe, usually divided into separate sections for alms, gifts, necessities, and messengers. Included in the gifts section are not only the rewards to civic minstrels when the monarch is out and about on progress, but also payments to minstrels and players visiting the royal household. In the gifts section of the wardrobe accounts for 8–9 Edward II (E101/376/7), for example, there are numerous payments to various minstrels and to players at Christmas 1314. The accounts for Edward II's brothers Thomas and Edward (E101/374/19) between Michaelmas 1311 and Michaelmas 1312 include payments to the minstrels of the Duke of Gloucester and on 24 June 1312 an unusual payment to a female minstrel: *saltatrici facienti menestralciam suam in presencia dominorum* ('to a dancing girl for making her minstrelsy in the presence of the lords'). Not only the record of provincial civic ceremony, but also the full itineraries of travelling minstrels and players will remain incomplete until these payments in the royal household accounts are included.

In addition to this main series of royal wardrobe and household accounts, there are several other shorter, but equally important, series of accounts in the records of the Exchequer. As anyone who has worked in the Public Record Office and its successor The National Archives will readily attest, finding the relevant information can be anything but straightforward, and the royal household accounts are no exception. E36 contains a group of miscellaneous Tudor Wardrobe and Revels accounts rich in entertainment information. For example, E36/210 records the receipts and payments of Elizabeth of York, queen of Henry VII, from

March 1502 to March 1503, including payments to the Queen's fool, the Queen's minstrels, the Queen of Scots' minstrels, the St. Nicholas Bishop, jackets for the 'disguising' or Christmas masque, and New Year's gifts to the King's shawms, the Queen's minstrels, the Lord of Misrule, and the Privy Seal's fool. E36/217 and E36/227–E36/229, containing Revels accounts for the early reign of Henry VIII, are supplemented by the daily accounts of Henry VII and Henry VIII in the King's books of payments (E36/214–E36/216). Even E36/209, a book of payments for clothes for the royal family and livery for the royal household during 1498 and 1499, includes payments for the livery of the King's waits and banners for the King's trumpets.

E351 is a series of over three thousand declared accounts from particular officials, ranging from Army paymasters to Collectors of Customs to victuallers for the Navy. Most will not contain entertainment expenses, but particularly important are the rolls of the Treasurers of the Chamber, E351/541 to E351/545. This subseries contains the annual record of warrants for payment, beginning with the wages and livery for all the monarch's servants, including the royal trumpeters, violins, flutes, drummers, sackbuts, harpers, minstrels, and players of interludes, each individually named and listed year by year. Digging deeper in the section labelled 'payments upon the council's warrants' in a couple of test years yielded payments to troupes of players performing at court and also payment to the Queen's bearward. Heavily mined by E.K. Chambers for his calendar of court performances at Christmas and Shrovetide in *The Elizabethan Stage*, this series of annual account rolls covering the reigns of Elizabeth and James still contains many unpublished nuggets of information about Elizabethan and Jacobean minstrelsy and entertainment. Also in E351 the miscellaneous privy purse accounts contain fascinating tidbits like the £15 for 'one greate Sagbutte prouided for the *Queens vse*' and an astonishing £74 13s 4d for lute strings 'prouided and bought by Thome Lytchfelde esquier one of the Gromes of the pryvie Chamber for her maiesties vse' over a period of 'sondrie yeres ended at Christemas 1568'.<sup>8</sup> Other privy purse accounts appear in the series of privy purse payment books in E403/2420 to E403/2429.

E361, an extensive series of wardrobe and household accounts enrolled in the Pipe Office, contains summary information of wardrobe and household expenditure for monarchs from Edward II to Edward IV. E364, the so-called 'foreign' account rolls, comprise a series of accounts 'foreign' to the normal county enrolments on the pipe rolls, covering a wide area of

governmental activity. Each account in the rolls is that of a particular accounting officer, such as the sheriff, clerk of works, the coroner, inspector of wool, or keeper of a castle, but the series again includes a number of stray household accounts. One should never underestimate the potential importance of these stray accounts, such as the account E407/57/1 listed under the unlikely heading of 'Miscellaneous Books, Rolls, and Papers' in the Exchequer of Receipt. This household wardrobe account lists the expenses for masques of Queen Anne in 1610, including the following 'Rewardes to the persons employed in the Maske': £40 'to Mr Benjamin Iohnson for his Invention', £40 'to Mr Inigo Iohnes for his paynes and Invention', £20 'to Mr Alfonso for making the songes', a further £5 'to Mr Iohnson for setting the songes to the lutes', £5 'to Thomas Lupo for setting the dances to the violens', and £50 to Mr Confesse for teachinge all the dances'.<sup>9</sup> Further household accounts and warrants for household expenditure for the Tudor and Stuart reigns can be found in the LC series, as from 1483 onwards the household accounts gradually became the responsibility of the Lord Chamberlain. Exploratory research for this paper has just scratched the surface of the golden research opportunity waiting to be exploited in the royal wardrobe and household accounts. Payments for entertainment by musicians and players on the royal payroll, payments for entertainment by travelling entertainers at royal residences, and payments to provincial civic musicians and minstrels by the monarch during royal progresses all deserve to be added to the growing body of knowledge about medieval and renaissance drama, minstrelsy, and civic ceremony.

*Kent*

## NOTES

1. *REED: Kent: Diocese of Canterbury* edited James M. Gibson, 3 vols (London: The British Library and Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002) 1 201–2.
2. London: The National Archives E36/214, fol. 128<sup>r</sup>.
3. London: The National Archives E36/214, fol. 90<sup>r</sup>.
4. London: The National Archives E36/214, fol. 91<sup>v</sup>.
5. London: The National Archives E36/214, fol. 100<sup>r</sup>.<sup>1</sup>
6. London: The National Archives E36/214, fol. 101<sup>r</sup>.
7. London: The National Archives E36/214, fol. 4<sup>r</sup>.
8. London: The National Archives E351/2791, mb 2.
9. London: The National Archives E407/57/1, fol. 1<sup>r</sup>.