

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 Heralds 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.¹ 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.