4 Placing the city commonwealth

'Fixed upon the surface of the Earth'

Robert Brady was no admirer of citizens and the 'Absurd Rights' they claimed. In 1690 he mocked 'the creation, and so many ready wrought, and framed, small commonwealths, lifted out of the chaos, and fixed upon the surface of the Earth, with their Walls, Gates, Town and Gild-Halls, Courts, Liberties, Customs, Privileges, Freedom, Jurisdictions, Magistrates and Officers, and Absolute Powers'. Deploying his considerable antiquarian skills, Brady demonstrated that cities and boroughs were not 'Eternal, appearing fully formed from heaven', but the product of grants and charters from 'our Ancient Kings, and their Successors' over time.[1] Self-consciously empirical, his treatise was nevertheless clearly weighted against both an expansive notion of *civitas* and a democratic conception of the 'ancient constitution'.[2] Coming so soon after the recent and wholesale assault on chartered privileges by 'Tory' gentlemen and the crown, it was a text both deeply partisan and strongly supportive of the monarchical state.[3] It nevertheless echoes some of the central contentions of the previous chapters. First, that Brady wrote his treatise at all was testimony to the fact that, as late as 1690, city or 'small commonwealths' remained a constitutive feature of early modern political culture. Second, the riddle that city commonwealths posed for the later Stuarts reflected at once the convergence of ideas and interests that had informed their creation, and the subsequent fragmentation of those ideas and interests after 1640. Third, Brady's mocking delineation of the incorporating process nevertheless captured the extraordinary corporate fecundity of the post-Reformation era and its impact on England's urban landscape.

Although Brady might seem an unlikely harbinger of modernity, his scepticism towards urban citizenship not only provided a framework for eighteenth-century historians but also anticipated more recent social historiography.[4] As

[1] Robert Brady, *An historical treatise of cities and burghs, or boroughs* (1690), p. A2.
[2] Rosemary Sweet, *The writing of urban histories in eighteenth-century England* (Oxford, 1997), pp. 66–7.
[3] Halliday, *Dismembering the body politic*, ch. 6; Joanne Innes and Nicholas Rogers, 'Politics and government, 1700–1840', in Clark, *Cambridge urban history*, p. 566.
[4] Sweet, *Writing of urban histories*, p. 67.

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Keith Wrightson puts it, labels like citizen, burgess, and freeman 'remained to a very large extent a vocabulary of formal social description' that, by the later seventeenth century, was 'jerry-built' from 'the debris of the society of estates'. The 'informal language of sorts' was, in contrast, 'a more authentic product of the social dynamism of the later sixteenth and seventeenth centuries', providing 'an altogether more relevant everyday guide to the basic realities of social distance'.[5] It is a perspective echoed by urban historians, who have eschewed the technical vocabulary of citizen, burgess, and freemen for more general terms like the 'urban community'. Within this framework, the development of social distinctions is based on class rather than community. Robert Tittler associates the 'invention' of civic culture in the 100 years after 1540 with restrictive practices of corporate office-holding and 'the enhancement of oligarchic rule'.[6] The 'resurgence' of urban 'civility and sociability' in the 'long eighteenth century' is likewise regarded by Peter Borsay as 'social polarisation', the pressures of urban 'gentility' driving 'a cultural wedge between the upper and middling ranks of society on the one hand, and the populace on the other'.[7] Even Jonathan Barry's more communally orientated account of 'bourgeois collectivism' conflates freedom and citizenship with the 'merely urban', elucidating a culture of 'collective identity' in which the more particular place of city commonwealth is implied but never stated.[8]

The apparent invisibility of 'small' or city commonwealths is surprising given the tangibility, even at the end of the seventeenth century, of their presence. Even as harsh a critic of citizens as Brady could not disguise the extent and durability of their institutional and material resources: the buildings, offices, evidences, and territories that embodied civic rights and freedoms. Although Wrightson regards the language of citizenship as 'increasingly archaic', he likewise acknowledges that, as a 'mode of social description', it was 'remarkably resilient'.[9] However, while both Brady and Wrightson agree on the durability of civic nomenclature, their reasons for regarding it as incongruous are different. For Wrightson, civic appellations invoked the 'ghost of the Tudor regime, sitting enthroned upon the grave thereof'. As 'modes of social description', they 'perpetuated the characteristic status designations of the sixteenth century' and all its 'implications of oneness and order in a graduated ladder of dominance and subordination'.[10] For Brady, the opposite was true. Far from constituting a morgue, the material and institutional resources vested in citizens – their power and sense of place – made them a palpable threat to the

[5] Keith Wrightson, 'Estates, degrees, and sorts: changing perceptions of society in Tudor and Stuart England', in Penelope Corfield, ed., *Language, history and class* (Oxford, 1991), p. 51.
[6] Robert Tittler, *Reformation and the towns*, p. 339.
[7] Borsay, *The English urban renaissance*, pp. 37, 318.
[8] Barry, 'Bourgeois collectivism?', pp. 84–113.
[9] Wrightson, 'Estates, degrees, and sorts', p. 51. [10] Ibid., p. 51.

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monarchical state. The divergence points to a paradox that is encapsulated by the concept of place. For Wrightson and others, 'place' was central to the 'hierarchy of degrees described by Elizabethan and early Stuart writers' attempting 'to impose intellectual order on a changing social reality'. This involved combining a 'God-ordained social order' in which everyone had their place 'with an overriding emphasis on authority and subordination'.[11] Brady, in contrast, implies place to be a source of autonomy, identity, and communal agency in much the same way that Andy Wood has found the robust and assertive political culture of mining communities in the Derbyshire Peak to be founded on a sense and control of place.[12] City commonwealths were certainly one manifestation of humanist and Protestant attempts to control, reform, and civilise behaviour through the creation and prescription of place. However, they were also institutional and physical landscapes that, as late as 1690, provided a basis for early modern *civitas*.

This chapter considers, therefore, both the places of city commonwealth and their implications for civic agency and identity; or, more particularly, how early modern people made sense of that relationship. To this end, it focuses on early modern concepts of 'place' and 'person', arguing that, in terms of both theory and practice, they provide an historicised vocabulary for recovering city commonwealths as structural and experiential entities. The first two sections argue that place was both a fundamental aspect of early modern citizenship as well as a primary condition of the relative structure and position of particular city commonwealths in their local and larger environments. By examining spatial configurations in three incorporated communities it shows that, far from constituting a monolithic culture, places differed from one locale to another: indeed, a defining feature of the corporate system was its structural diversity. Even more contingent was the kind of spatial relationship considered in section three. Outlining a number of early modern theories of place and person particularly pertinent to city commonwealths, the chapter argues that early modern people did not need post-structural theory to know that the political was personal and the personal political. Nor would they have been surprised that the appropriation of place was often very different to its prescription.

Place and city commonwealth

The word 'place' had two connected meanings in early modern England. On the one hand, it denoted a specific and bounded location: places were positions

[11] Ibid., p. 43; Paul Griffiths, *Youth and authority: formative experiences in England, 1560–1640* (Oxford, 1996), pp. 63–71.

[12] Andy Wood, *The politics of social conflict: the Peak country, 1520–1770* (Cambridge, 1999), pp. 1–10, 169–78.

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that people occupied and possessed, and which were characterised by a certain qualitative and functional unity. On the other hand, places were relational. Far from existing in a vacuum, they were located within – or in proximity to – other locations and positions. This relativity might involve similar kinds of place, in that they were characterised by the same qualities and functions, or different kinds of location entirely. Either way, bodies always existed in place. As Thomas Hobbes put it, 'we cannot but fancy it somewhere'. For Hobbes, place was 'the precise space within which the body is contained', the 'motion' of a body 'nothing but a change of place'. Motion was important because changes in place determined 'the Effect of a Body upon the Organs of our Senses': experience, perspective, and 'fancy' were at once relative to and dependent upon place.[13] This sense of the relativity of experience was matched by an equally generous sense of the kind of objective phenomena that could be described as places. A glance at the thirty-eight plays attributed to William Shakespeare between c.1590 and 1616 shows, for example, that among the 402 occasions a character used the word it referred to an institution eighty-nine times, an institutional role or office 127 times, and a geographical or physical site on 101 occasions. The institutions mentioned ranged from places of political authority and power, such as courts and prisons (twenty-eight times), to households and churches (both twenty-one times). Institutional roles and offices within institutions included places of public authority, such as monarch or magistrate (seventy-one times), soldiers and generals (nineteen times), and household positions, such as father, wife, brother, or servant (fifteen times). The 101 sites and locations included places demarcated for specific action, such as meeting places or gallows; objects and buildings; unspecified areas, like 'the country'; as well as named entities, such as the county of Kent or the city of Rome.[14]

These designations suggest that the term clearly resonated with what historians have styled 'local social systems', the 'framework of social relations', the 'built environment' or 'urban landscape', 'locality', and the 'embodied state'.[15] It implied, in effect, a broadly defined sense of structure – social, architectural, and geographical – that impinged in important ways upon the way in which a body experienced and perceived the world. While deployed unsystematically and, for the most part, descriptively, the ubiquity of the term nevertheless points to a prevailing and early modern sense of the structural basis of society. In this its use was not confined to Shakespeare who, like any playwright of the period,

[13] Thomas Hobbes, *Decameron physiologicum: or, ten dialogues of natural philosophy* (1678), pp. 16–17.

[14] The figures are based on a survey of the plays in Stanley Wells and Gary Taylor, eds., *The Oxford Shakespeare: the complete works* (Oxford, 1994).

[15] Keith Wrightson and David Levine, *Poverty and piety in an English village: Terling, 1525–1700* (Oxford, 1995), ch. 4; Archer, *The pursuit of stability*; Tittler, *Architecture and power*, p. 3; Borsay, *English urban renaissance*, pp. 41–6; Phythian Adams, 'Introduction', p. 7; Braddick, *State formation*, pp. 1–47.

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was in the business of both reflecting and developing the English vernacular. On the contrary, the word appears in a range of texts and genres of the time: sermons and advice books, histories and surveys, linguistic and architectural treatises, as well as records of everyday correspondence and conversation.[16] It also permeates most kinds of civic record, serving as a recurring and almost unconscious signifier of civic authority. In a single set of entries of the city 'house book' in York made in August 1612 five of the six entries were concerned directly with institutional or physical place. It was noted, for example, that the Lady Elizabeth Players, the acting company of the king's daughter, had arrived at the city with licence 'to play as given such houses or place . . . as in all most halls schoolhouses town halls within any other cities or towns within his Majesties Dominions'. As such, it was 'thought good to put them to play within this city in such place as they shall procure or get so as they do not play on the Sabbath days or the night time'. On the same day, two letters were written under the common seal of the city, one to the Privy Council, and another to the Earl of Northumberland, the High Steward of York. These refuted the claims of a citizen that 'he was unfit to undergo the charge and duty of these places' – that is, civic office – 'in respect of the infirmity of his body the disability of his estate and his utter abandoning of trade and residency here amongst us'. According to the common council, none of these claims was true, and they now looked to the authority of external place – the Privy Council – to enforce communal obligations.[17]

Places formed the social and material fabric of cities and boroughs: the roles, institutions, buildings, and territories that constituted them. This comprehensive sense of structure was pivotal to both the theory and practice of city commonwealth. An urban 'liberty' was, first and foremost, a territorial jurisdiction in which peculiar rights, customs, properties, and privileges granted to or claimed by burgesses were legitimate. In related fashion, 'freedom' was predicated on urban 'occupation': either of burghal property possessed by a burgess, or the economic trade or 'mystery' in which a freeman was apprenticed – and free to practise – within a given liberty. Civic 'office' was, in turn, an obligation of 'liberty' and 'freedom' that enabled – or demanded – male heads of enfranchised households to govern and represent the parishes, wards, guilds, and commonwealths in which they and their households were positioned. Theoretically at least, the liberty, freedom, and citizenship derived from city commonwealths were not qualities innate to the person so much as interconnected and reciprocal attributes, functions, and requirements of place. Indeed, most boroughs owed their fiscal evolution to the communal occupation and control of one or more

[16] For a recent survey see Griffiths, *Youth and authority*, pp. 63–71; Garrett A. Sullivan, Jr., *The drama of landscape: land, property, and social relations on the early modern stage* (Stanford, 1998); Wood, *Politics of social conflict*, pp. 1–10, 169–78.

[17] YCA B33, f313v, 314.

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kinds of urban place: the levying of tolls at markets and fairs; the rents from walls, bridges, and other burghal property; or the local monopolies and exemptions of a guild merchant.[18] The centrality of place was nicely illustrated in Cambridge, a 'small commonwealth' with which Robert Brady, as a fellow of Caius College, would certainly have been acquainted. In 1613 the Cambridge common council asserted that 'divers charters by divers kings and queens [and] confirmed by his Majesty that now is' made the free burgesses of the borough 'chief lords of that soil immediately under the king'.[19] By 1650, it was no longer felt necessary to mention higher authority: the burgesses were simply 'lords of the soil'.[20] With or without the sanction of prerogative, land and liberty were synonymous. Certainly it enabled them to combat encroachments 'upon the wastes of the said town' and the erection of 'large and many stalls [and] shops . . . contrary to any of the customs and ordinances of this town and to the great hindrance and decay of rents and revenues of this town'.[21] With the benefits of property, however, came the responsibilities of citizenship. The common council of Cambridge observed in September 1638 that 'divers foreigners have admittance to the freedom of this town whereby they do enjoy all the liberties and privileges belonging to the same freedom', in particular 'the several possessions which they hold by virtue of the said freedom'. Despite these economic benefits, they 'are not . . . charged with any office or . . . burden of the town affairs so that the Town does not receive any ease or benefit from them'. To ease a situation that was both 'unreasonable and repugnant to the orders of this town', it was agreed 'that henceforth all such foreign burgesses shall stand eligible and be yearly chosen at either of the elections into any offices of this town' or pay a fine of £10.[22]

The conglomeration of households, neighbourhoods, and civic structures that ideally constituted city commonwealths were positioned in larger local environments: far from being coterminous with a city or town, they shared and contested urban space with other inhabitants and visitors. The borough of Cambridge was unusual in that it was located in a town in which the colleges and university constituted rival communities at once wealthier and better equipped politically. Cambridge burgesses did not possess magisterial authority, which was situated instead with the university officers, and their attempts to control and regulate manufacture and trade were constantly undermined by the productive, purchasing, and regulative powers of the university population and its affiliates. As a result, the corporation lacked any control over economic 'occupations' and was without the usual constituency of manufacturers and tradesmen who made

[18] Faraday, *Ludlow*, pp. 20–31; Maitland, *Township and borough passim*; Sarah Rees Jones, 'Property, tenure and rents: some aspects of the topography and economy of medieval York' (unpublished D. Phil., University of York, 1987). Wrightson, *Earthly necessities*, p. 79.

[19] CCRO, City Shelf C, Book 7, f. 30. [20] CCRO, City Shelf C, Book 8, f. 24v.

[21] Ibid., f. 51v. [22] CCRO, City Shelf C, Book 7, ff. 289, 289v.

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up bodies of freemen.[23] In addition, the parochial structure of the town was not integrated into and responsive to corporate government: whereas in places like York and Ludlow poor relief and the constabulary were co-ordinated by common councils, in Cambridge the civic business of parishes was much more autonomous. As such, free burgesses constantly struggled to protect and justify what places and attendant rights they possessed in an often hostile urban environment. This infra-structural weakness explains the ritual of conflict between 'town' and 'gown' – a rivalry that, for enfranchised burgesses, extended beyond the 'rhetoric' of contest described by Alexandra Shepard.[24] It was also a feature of daily social interaction among inhabitants. For example, in 1595 Francis Clarke, free burgess and bailiff for the year, approached Hugh Jones, a parish constable, in an inn. As bailiff, Clarke was responsible for policing the city markets. Jones, it seems, had been infringing his jurisdiction. Clarke now confronted him, saying 'what a busy fellow art thou to deal in those things which thou has nothing to do in, as to take upon thou to place and displace folks in the market, which does not belong to thy office'. Jones in return accused Clarke of being a poor inmate, or lodger, rather than householder, questioning not only his personal status but also the legitimacy of the city commonwealth he served.[25]

The structural exceptionality of Cambridge illuminates those spatial configurations that characterised the corporate system as a whole. In the first instance, the liberty and freedom of city commonwealths were usually placed in direct proximity to other, potentially antagonistic communities and interests within the same urban area. The burgesses and citizens of Cambridge and Oxford interacted and competed with the populations of colleges and universities. From the City of London outwards, common councils across the corporate system were in perpetual negotiation with the inhabitants and office-holders of cathedral precincts; royal precincts, garrisons and castles; autonomous 'liberties'; civil and common law courts; and the town mansions and lands of noble and gentry families.[26] Second, across a civic liberty the authority and influence of common councils was exercised in conjunction with, and depended upon, other, smaller civic bodies: parishes, trade companies and guilds, wardmoots and officers.[27]

[23] Ibid., f. 50.

[24] Alexandra Shepard, 'Contesting communities? 'Town' and 'gown' in Cambridge, *c*.1560–1640', in Shepard and Withington, *Communities in early modern England*, p. 231; CCRO, City Shelf C, Book 7, f. 348v.

[25] Cited in Alexandra Jane Shepard, 'Meanings of manhood in early modern England with specific reference to Cambridge, *c*.1560–1640' (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Cambridge, 1998), p. 88.

[26] Pearl, *London and the outbreak of the puritan revolution*, ch. 1; Evans, *Seventeenth-century Norwich*, ch. 3; D. M. Palliser, *Tudor York* (Oxford, 1979), pp. 88–90; Walter, *Understanding popular violence*, ch. 3.

[27] Archer, *Pursuit of stability*; Nick Allridge, 'Loyalty and identity in Chester parishes 1540–1640', in Susan Wright, ed., *Parish, church and people: local studies in lay religion 1350–1750* (London, 1988), pp. 84–124.

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Participants in one were often participants in another: James Wright, baker of York, was not only a 'citizen of great respect' and 'one of the Commons of this City' but also a parish, ward, and guild officer, and common councillor.[28] John Bradford, while intermittently excluded from the corporation in Ludlow for his democratic sensibilities, was nevertheless a conscientious churchwarden and also the first burgess to act as a searcher of the poor after the passing of the Elizabethan statute.[29] However, these smaller corporate bodies also encouraged degrees of autonomy and communal agency within the civic nexus. The very viability of guild economies depended on a close relationship between companies and councils in terms of representation, arbitration, and the protection of interests.[30] Incorporated trading and manufacturing companies were particularly well placed to establish their own boundaries, monopolies, and metropolitan connections, and transpose their interests on to conciliar government.[31] In London and the larger cities, the politics of lobbying and 'private bills' extended to parliament itself.[32] Such bodies could constitute, as John Wildman argued, places of power that contravened the representational rights of enfranchised inhabitants in parish and ward.[33] That said, parochial opinion and representation could also be marshalled into a corporate and coherent interest, especially when galvanised by religious activists: a process captured in satirical pamphlets like *The Reformado* of 1642.[34] Certainly the degree of representation enjoyed by the 'puritan' parishioners of St Martin's in Micklegate in York was far in excess of their number. Third, given the complex and potentially conflicting structural configurations within cities and boroughs, the relative power of any civic body – corporation or otherwise – depended not only on its local dimensions but also the quality of its connections with external, and especially metropolitan, institutions and interests.[35] Positioned within a corporate system, city commonwealths were, by and large, intrinsically privileged in this respect. As 'fictional persons', they possessed a legal personality that transcended the lives of their participatory members, constituting bodies designed to be represented at court, law, and, in the majority of instances, parliament. As conduits of magistracy, their local authority was compounded by direct link

[28] Morrell, *Biography of the common man*, p. 79; BIHI, MF 1718 (Will of James Wright); PR Y/J 17, f. 22.
[29] HCRO, HD4/2/17, 1611, Joyce Larkin c. William Sherwood; SA, LB2/1/1, f. 39.
[30] Donald Woodward, *Men at work: labourers and building craftsmen in the towns of northern England, 1450–1750* (Cambridge, 1995).
[31] Jenny Kermode, *Medieval merchants*, ch. 2.
[32] David Dean, 'London lobbies and parliament: the case of the brewers and coopers in the parliament of 1593', *Parliamentary History*, 8/2, 1989, pp. 341–65; Withington, 'Two renaissances', p. 257.
[33] See above, ch. 3. [34] *The Reformado* (1642).
[35] Tittler, 'Elizabethan towns and the "points of contact"', pp. 287–8; Patterson, *Urban patronage passim*.,

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to monarchical sovereignty, marking the convergence, in effect, of *res*publican and prerogative power. The common council in Cambridge was always careful to cultivate its legal and parliamentary presence, appointing state officials as high stewards and vigorously working the bonds of parliamentary clientage – a relationship that courtiers were likewise keen to cultivate.[36] Bacon, Coventry, and Finch formed an impressively well-placed series of patrons by any standards.[37] However, the free burgesses' lack of magisterial authority could not be ignored. On one occasion, for example, Toby Wood shoved the leading burgess Thomas Smart in the chest and called him a 'pillory knave millerly knave', reminding him 'thou art no Justice of the Peace, thou art but a shitten Alderman, go Goodman shit breech'.[38] Attempts by the burgesses to address this anomaly by renewing their charter were, in turn, repeatedly undermined by university officers possessing an even more effective metropolitan presence than their own.[39]

Finally, and perhaps most significantly, the precarious position of free burgesses in Cambridge reveals the tenet lying at the heart of an Aristotelian notion of commonwealth: that civic places, whether aristocratic or democratic, should be attuned to and symbiotic with the households and neighbourhoods they governed and represented. In Cambridge, household, neighbourhood, and citizenship were far from synonymous or mutually reinforcing. Reasons for this included the absence of an integrated craft-guild economy; an unusually high number of absent or 'foreign' freemen; a large and transient population of university students and tradesmen drawn to the markets and fairs; and the social and economic influence of the colleges. Although a residential and productive 'core' of free burgesses undoubtedly existed, alternative political, social, and economic networks were more significant than in urban centres where burgesses enjoyed a more integrated sense of place.[40] This disjunction was problematic, as ideally it was the household that constituted the primary institution of commonwealth. Just as the usual ways of achieving urban freedom – through apprenticeship, paternalism, or residence – were predicated on household occupation, so civic position ideally reflected the 'credit' of not simply the head of household but also the other household members he represented.[41] Commentators emphasised that a 'well-ordered commonwealth' ideally depended on the orderly constitution of households and the ability of household members to learn and act their places.[42] Outwith the household, familial roles and the relationships they

[36] Kishlansky, *Parliamentary selection*, pp. 37–48.
[37] CCRO, City Shelf C, Book 7, ff. 76, 131v, 145v, 146, 171, 310, 325.
[38] Shepard, 'Meanings of manhood', p. 145. [39] CCRO, City Shelf C, Book 7, f. 68v.
[40] Shepard, 'Contesting communities?', pp. 228–9.
[41] Muldrew, *Economy of obligation*, pp. 159–72.
[42] Susan Dwyer Amussen, *An ordered society: gender and class in early modern England* (Oxford, 1988); Margot Todd, *Christian humanism and the puritan social order* (Cambridge, 1987).

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structured extended through networks of kin, commerce, credit, friendship, and, within the propinquity of the city, neighbourliness.[43] A neighbour was someone 'that dwells near us or next unto us, or in the same street'; 'of one household of faith with us, in the love and possession of the same Gospel'; and 'whatsoever he be, with whom we have any dealings in our fellowship and trade of life'.[44] Along with the household, neighbourhood was the primary social context of civic authority; and while Cambridge contained many households and neighbours, relatively few were either positioned or participatory in the city commonwealth.

Structural dynamics in Cambridge were replicated – in different forms, arrangements, and relationships – across the corporate system. In any city commonwealth, they contributed to a cumulative sense of place that was at once particular to locale and generic in its constitutive elements. In Ludlow, burgesses were fully integrated into the city commonwealth, claiming membership by inhabitancy and scot and lot as well as economic occupation. By no means a premier centre of consumption and exchange like Cambridge, and bereft of its medieval woollen industry, the borough nevertheless had a significant place in the economy of the Marches.[45] The governing corporation was well endowed with commons, lands, and properties since the absorption of the Palmers Guild in 1551; it also administered educational, religious, and charitable institutions. In addition to its corporate personality, it possessed parliamentary and magisterial status. Its single parochial boundary was contiguous and responsive to corporate governance; its liberty divided into wards based on the four main streets of the town; and the borough economy was organised into two trading and manufacturing guilds that subdivided into particular companies.[46] The local challenges to civic authority were significant, however, consisting of the Council of the Marches, which occasionally assembled in the castle precinct, and neighbouring gentry, who intermarried with burgesses and allied with the 'parties' during the troubled 1590s.[47] Other positions of authority within the city commonwealth included the parish living; legal offices within the corporation, such as recorder and town clerk; and the borough court, from where attorney Philip Bradford criticised oligarchic malpractice. However, it was the essential synonymy of commonwealth and town, especially when compared to a place like Cambridge, which was striking in Ludlow. This extended to the parliamentary sphere. Cambridge burgesses preferred to exploit clientage

[43] Naomi Tadmor, *Family and friends in eighteenth-century England: household, kinship, and patronage* (Cambridge, 2001), chs. 4, 5; Wrightson, *English society*, pp. 51–7.
[44] Robert Horne, *The Christian governor in the common-wealth and private families* (1614), p. 192.
[45] Williams, 'Government and politics in Ludlow', p. 282; Faraday, *Ludlow*, ch. 6.
[46] SA, LB2/1/1; LB17/1; LB17/2; LB17/3.
[47] HCRO, HD4/2/17, Guardians of Ludlow c. Rowland Higgins, 1639; TNA STAC 8/269/27; E134/39 and 440 Elizabeth/Mich. 37, deposition of Richard Rascall; Faraday, *Ludlow*, p. 141.

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networks, entrusting their representation to qualified 'foreigners' recommended by the high steward of the moment: in this respect, the election of Cromwell at the behest of the godly party within the borough marked a significant break with recent custom. In contrast, the common council of early Stuart Ludlow was one of many boroughs that retained at least one of its two parliamentary places for its own burgesses and legal officers.[48]

This is not to suggest that Ludlow enjoyed structural equilibrium. The very comprehensiveness of its city commonwealth made for faction and division. As the previous chapter suggested, this was due not to differences between the free burgesses and competing urban interests but rather to conflict within the city commonwealth itself. While freedom in Cambridge had a relatively marginal place within the urban community it was nevertheless organised democratically.[49] In Ludlow, conflict over the democratic or aristocratic nature of the constitution made for a tumultuous beginning to the seventeenth century. For all this political turmoil, just what was meant to constitute the 'public good' was suggested by a set of articles entered into the borough's 'Red Book' in February 1591 and supplemented in June 1594.[50] Brokered by the Recorder of the borough and marking a compromise between the borough's warring parties, the articles made for a 'mixed' civic polity that was referred to repeatedly by the burgesses and their attorneys over the course of the decade as a suitable pretext for civic government. Their sense of place was tangible. The articles delineated a city commonwealth supremely conscious of its boundaries, resources, privileges, and civic processes. The basis of freedom was, for example, clarified. To become a burgess any inhabitant had to be 'thought worthy' and pay 'scot and lot' (that is, local rates). Charges for entry for those 'born out of the town' were set (after the next feast day) at £3 6*s*. 4*d*.; apprentices were to pay 20*s*.; and freedom by paternalism or marriage to a freeman's widow or daughter remained as 'accustomed'.[51] Manufacture and trading within the borough were to remain the preserve of burgesses and conducted openly. Only burgesses were to brew or bake; the selling of linen cloth was to be based in the guildhall 'and not to be suffered to be sold in any private house'; and burgesses were to remain 'free at our fairs and markets' as accustomed.[52] Their 'liberties' were to be 'yearly walked and trodden by the masters [office holders] and common burgesses' and 'our charter be read over in English once every third year . . . in the hearing of all the burgesses that shall come thereunto by the Town Clock'.[53] Before every perambulation 'our' common lands were 'to be given to the burgesses beforehand' and 'surveyed by the said commons and masters' and 'recorded on a ledger immediately after harvest'. The same commons were to be 'maintained and cast open after sickle and scythe' and 'if any person or persons shall presume

[48] Williams, 'Politics and government', pp. 289–90. [49] Maitland and Bateson, *Charters*, p. xi.
[50] LB2/1/16. [51] Ibid., item 6. [52] Ibid., items 4, 5, 11, 15. [53] Ibid., items 17, 19.

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to enclose any of the commons, which of right ought to lie open . . . he or they shall be prosecuted by law'.[54] In similar vein, the granting of all lands was to be equitable and transparent: no burgess was to have more than three parcels of land, public meetings would be informed who held what lands, and outstanding leases checked, confirmed, and limited to twenty-one years under the common seal. Opponents of the 'articles regarding land' were to be prosecuted at law and costs met from the common treasury.[55]

This pronounced sense of an integrated and participatory place extended to the civic constitution. It was anticipated that, for the election of burgesses into the common council, the bailiffs would select seventeen of the 'most ablest, wisest, and discreet common burgesses' to 'deliver' the names of three burgesses to be considered by the common council 'to supply the room'.[56] Bailiffs would select eight of the 'wisest and discreet' burgesses to audit accounts, and as many burgesses as masters would set and collect assessments. As a supplement, the seventeen common burgesses were to 'have access and liberty to peruse in the Town Clerk's office all accompts as well of the receipts . . . for that year'.[57] 'None but burgesses' were to serve on juries and inquests; 'decent places' should be provided for sessions; and the 'presentment of affrays and blood' were to be placed on a regular and procedural footing.[58] A house of correction was 'to be devised . . . according to the statute'. Moreover, admittance to the borough almshouses was to be limited to the 'aged and impotent' and those who 'spent their youth in the town'. While occasional searches would expel those 'thought not necessary by the company', the 'doors [were] to be locked every night at nine . . . and a key keeper appointed to shut and open the same'.[59] Finally, in the spirit of the Edwardian charter that had placed the Palmers' Guild under the liberty of the burgesses, a bailiff and ten 'discreet brethren of the company' were to inspect the material and intellectual fabric of the grammar school. Accompanied by 'the parson, preacher or some other learned man', they would check the state of the building and 'by convenient means try and examine how the free scholars of the said school do proceed and profit in their learning by the good industry of the schoolmaster'. It was also expected that 'from henceforth every morning and evening the scholars do sing among themselves to the glory of God some short psalm of David in metre verse as is used in the free school for the Town of Salop'.[60]

The burgesses envisaged, in short, the city commonwealth as a place that was judicious, reformed, discrete, and, for the freemen and burgesses enfranchised to it, accountable and participatory. Its boundaries were clear and protected; relations between household, neighbourhood, and the civic realm symbiotic; common and private interest appropriately balanced; and its constitution mixed

[54] Ibid., items 17, 18. [55] Ibid., items 22, 23, 24, 25, 26. [56] Ibid., item 1.
[57] Ibid., items 2, 3. [58] Ibid., items 7, 10, 21. [59] Ibid., 13, 14. [60] Ibid., item 27.

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between 'masters' and 'commons'. The rights, liberty, and property of the person were communal attributes rooted in active participation in the city commonwealth and the civic culture by which it was governed and represented. Variations on the mixed civic polity were found across the corporate system, participation in which defined the public identity of freemen. York, for example, was a different kind of place to either Ludlow or Cambridge. Endowed with a county jurisdiction, containing twenty-six administrative parishes as well as a functioning guild economy, serving as an ecclesiastical and provincial centre, the city was described by Postmaster General Whitley in 1673 as 'one of the greatest spheres in England'.[61] Whereas urban citizenship was marginal in Cambridge and contested in Ludlow, in York a properly 'mixed' civic polity that formally combined democratic and aristocratic elements remained a pivotal and relatively straightforward source of urban authority and identity throughout the period.[62] Corporate power was organised into the mayoral office and aldermanic bench; a 'privy-council' of ex-sheriffs; the shrieval office, with close connections to the borough court; and a common council of seventy-two drawn equally from the four wards of the city. The infrastructure was complemented by eight annually elected chamberlains – young citizens responsible for city finances – and the twenty-four jurors chosen four times a year to attend the quarter sessions. The city was also constituted by other powerful urban interests: as Whitley continued, 'besides the business of the city' there existed 'the Archbishopric, the Chancellors Court, and all their dependencies; the Garrison, and many other advantages' for a postmaster connecting these interests to London.[63] It was perceived encroachments by cathedral, gentry, crown, or army that were most likely to enflame a collective civic consciousness that derived from strong and effective connections between civic structures and the households and neighbourhoods they governed, forming a participatory culture reminiscent of England's other 'great' and 'ancient' cities.[64] Civic practice was based in parish, ward, guild, and quarter session as well as corporation, providing a plethora of public forums and offices for a large number of heads of enfranchised households. The councils of the corporation were positioned above these smaller civic groupings, providing representation, legislation, and arbitration for different interests and also linking the city to the larger corporate system. The result was a palimpsest of semi-autonomous civic bodies: a city commonwealth in which common councillors were also parishioners, jurymen,

[61] PORO, PO 94/12, Whitley to Rigden, 24 July 1673.
[62] For outlines see Palliser, *Tudor York*, ch. 3; B. M. Wilson, 'The corporation of York 1580–1660' (unpublished M.Phil., University of York, 1967); Withington, 'Urban political culture in later seventeenth-century England: York 1649–1689' (unpublished Ph.D., University of Cambridge, 1998), chs. 2, 3.
[63] PORO, PO 94/12, Whitley to Rigden, July 24 1673.
[64] Slack, 'Great and good towns', pp. 243–5.

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and freemen, and in which a large proportion of corporate time was spent either responding to the petitions of guilds, parishes, and householders or intervening in local disputes and conflicts. This interpenetration was exemplified by the poor rate: administered and collected on a weekly basis by parishioners, but overseen and redistributed by the corporation from the council chamber on Ouse Bridge.[65] It was also reflected in the lexicography of status. The term 'elite', which today carries generalised connotations of wealth, status, and power, was derived specifically from the electoral procedures in parish, ward, and corporation. In York, urban 'elites' were those citizens, usually three, selected by the greater part of a civic body to be considered for office by the body's head.[66] Likewise the appellation of 'master', noted by Sir Thomas Smith as signifying England's new gentility 'made cheap', was also an attribute of civic participation. Much to the chagrin of local gentry, in York men only earned the right to be called 'master' after serving as city chamberlain, the most junior civic office: a custom that, as late as the 1730s, 'vulgar' citizens were energetic in enforcing.[67]

The very different city commonwealths of Cambridge, Ludlow, and York raise important questions about just how 'formal' and 'inauthentic' civic nomenclature was for those enfranchised householders who participated in, and contested and appropriated, the places that the language of citizenship signified. That is not to argue that city commonwealth formed the only, or even predominant, source of self-identification for freemen, burgesses, and citizens.[68] However, it was certainly part of the mix: one forged by the quite precise powers, rights, rituals, conflicts, and exclusions associated with this particular kind of community. The different places of civic participation provided the fullest possible context in which a personal and (as Hobbes would have stressed) relative sense of civic identity developed. The pinner John Fawcett and tailor William Smith, for example, were never in a position to hold corporate office. However, when stopped by soldiers in 1651 and asked 'what they were' both replied that 'they were citizens': 'lawful men' going 'about their occasions'.[69] The bakers, wine-coopers, carpenters, joiners, and tailors of York who in their wills described themselves as 'citizens of York' never dreamed of sitting on the aldermanic bench.[70] However, they were well acquainted with the more humble and interconnected sites of parish, ward, and guild governance. Across the neighbourhoods of the city there existed significant enclaves and networks of enfranchised householders who, while never considered the elites of the corporation, were elites of lesser civic bodies, performing and

[65] Withington, 'Views from the bridge', pp. 132–3. [66] Ibid., p. 129.
[67] Smith, *De Republica Anglorum*, p. 27; Francis Drake, *Eboracum* (1736), p. 183.
[68] Allridge, 'Loyalty and identity', pp. 84–5. [69] TNA ASSI 45 4/1.
[70] Withington, 'Urban political culture', p. 46.

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acting in public positions that were only one or two mediated steps from the highest offices. Solidarity was further inured through networks of friendship, kinship, and neighbourliness.[71] James Wright, for example, called upon neighbours Richard Baines and Edward Cowper to be executors of his will. One was a merchant, the other an alderman; and both men were significantly wealthier than Wright.[72] This sense of place was apparent even for someone like William Smith. The son of a York citizen, Smith was a renowned petty criminal of the early 1660s who was eventually transported to Virginia while still an apprentice in order to protect him from appearing before the city magistrates. Assumed to have died in transit, Smith was nevertheless spotted by Catherine Lupton, a friend of his mother's, at Billingsgate almost twenty years later, in 1680. Lupton asked him 'what Smith he was and where he was born'. Smith answered 'I am William Smith, son of York and born in St Andrews Gate'.[73]

Household, neighbourhood, and citizenship

The different structural configurations of Cambridge, Ludlow, and York were reflected in the number and distribution of enfranchised households and neighbourhoods in each. An unusually detailed hearth tax return for Cambridge from 1664 highlights the somewhat precarious position of this particular body of freemen within the wider urban milieu.[74] Although the number of enfranchised Cambridge burgesses residing in the town is unknown, a conservative estimate, based simply on the number of free burgesses named in the corporate minutes in 1661 and 1662, suggests a figure of 120 (an underestimate dictated by the nature of the source).[75] Given that the 1664 hearth tax listed 1,667 households, then the freedom encompassed only 7 per cent of the urban population. Neither was this urban population stable. The 1664 hearth tax return included two surveys of the town, the latter coming six months after the former. A comparison of the two shows that, in the course of one year, 324 places of occupancy – 19 per cent – changed hands. While a third of new occupancies involved Cambridge inhabitants either moving to other places or acquiring additional property within the town, the remaining two-thirds were new inhabitants. This sense of flux was accentuated on the hearth tax return by the inclusion, in the second survey, of 456 entries that were not recorded at the beginning of the year. These 'new' entries, which mostly consisted of one or two hearth tenements, made up 27 per cent of the full list of entries. Half of them were noted as unable to contribute

[71] Shani D'Cruze, 'The middling sort in eighteenth-century Colchester: independence, social relations and the community broker', in Barry and Brooks, *Middling sort of people*, pp. 181–207; Tadmor, *Family and friends*, p. 165.
[72] BIHR MF1718, 'Will of James Wright'.
[73] BIHR CPH 3497, 1681, Jane Mabson c. William Richardson and Ann Saltmarsh.
[74] TNA E179/84/437. [75] CCRO, City Shelf C, Book 8.

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to the hearth tax, swelling the ranks of the town's 'poor' households to 326. At almost 20 per cent of the urban population, this represented a significantly larger proportion of locations than that occupied by the (conservatively) estimated number of free burgesses. That is not to say that there was a total absence of continuity. Of a parliamentary subscription list of 1641, which named 250 of Cambridge's wealthiest inhabitants, seventy-two heads of household still lived in the town twenty-four years later.[76] Discounting the Smiths, Coopers, Cooks, Greens, and Johnsons too numerous to trace, so did a further seventy local family names: the likely offspring and kin of the previous generation. Given the complexities of familial and kinship relations, this local genealogy was probably more significant than this estimated 30 per cent survival rate suggests. Even so, it was unlikely to have been much in excess of 10 per cent of the urban population, confirming Nigel Goose's impression of a town full of small households showing little sign of relationships of kin or the development of lineage over generations.[77] Moreover, free burgesses, or at least those listed in the civic records for 1661 and 1662, accounted for only just over a third of these 'core households', emphasising once again the disjunction between the city commonwealth and the larger urban economy.

The instability of place within Cambridge was all the greater because of the recent political troubles. As in other corporate towns, the Restoration brought a relatively rapid replacement of councillors and aldermen who had been energetic in supporting the parliamentary and Protectorate regimes. Authorised either by commission or by the threat of *quo warranto* proceedings, county gentlemen aided loyal townsmen in securing positions on the common council and aldermanic bench. Legal and parliamentary places were also targeted, as were seats on sessions' juries and other locations of civic authority. Struggles for civic place had long been a feature of the politics of commonwealth, and the 1640s and 1650s had seen similar state-sanctioned purges. However, manoeuvres at the Restoration were the more notable for their systematic nature, the retributive attitude of local gentry, the influence of partisan divisions inherited from the 1640s and 1650s, and the unprecedented use of parliamentary statute to co-ordinate policy.[78] With its Cromwellian associations, the corporation in Cambridge was particularly vulnerable, and the purge came in the summer of 1662. Alderman Samuel Spalding, who had opposed the corporation's support of 'the parliament power', exacted political revenge on his rival, Thomas French, by displacing him as mayor; seven additional aldermen were removed from office; and fourteen common councillors joined them. A further fifteen

[76] William Matlock Palmer, ed., *Cambridgeshire subsidy roles 1250–1695* (Norwich, 1912), pp. 70–3; Phythian Adams, 'An agenda', p. 19.
[77] Nigel Goose, 'Household size and structure in early Stuart Cambridge' in Barry, ed., *The Tudor and Stuart town*, p. 117.
[78] Halliday, *Dismembering the body politic*, chs. 3, 4.

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Table 4.1 *Distribution of wealth in Cambridge in 1664*

	Distribution in town (1667 households)	Distribution among free burgesses (121 households)
Number of hearths	%	%
1 to 2	59	36
3 to 6	32	39
7 to 10	5	18
Over 11	2	7
Total	98	100

Sources: CCRO, City Shelf C, Book 8; PRO E179/84/437.

burgesses subsequently surrendered corporate leases. Of the civic replacements, five aldermen and six common councillors had not previously been sworn members of the body of freemen, although a significant minority had lived in the town throughout the revolutionary era.[79]

It should be reiterated that the relative position of the city commonwealth in Cambridge meant that the number of persons involved in this politics represented only a fraction of the urban population. However, in terms of their material status they provide a useful insight into the wealth of free burgesses in relation to the rest of the town. Table 4.1 suggests that, across Cambridge, the majority of householders owned either 1-to-2 or 3-to-6 hearths respectively, with only 7 per cent of householders owning seven hearths or more. The generality of free burgesses – that is, enfranchised householders without civic office – more or less replicated this pattern, clustering in the lower two hearth brackets but also including a fair proportion of 7-to-10 hearth owners. In terms of wealth, therefore, free burgesses constituted a differentiated community within Cambridge rather than a particular class of tax-paying inhabitant. As Table 4.2 demonstrates, common councillors who preceded the Restoration reflected this constituency, being primarily drawn from the second hearth bracket. Aldermen were more often, though not exclusively, positioned in the third echelon. In contrast, a much higher proportion of inhabitants who became aldermen and common councillors at the Restoration were positioned in the upper two strands of urban society. This suggests that while civic authority had previously been dominated by middling inhabitants within the city, the Restoration witnessed an elevation in the status of civic office-holders. While a result of the immediate political situation, this was a shift that Caroline statesmen had pushed for – and which councillors in Cambridge had consistently resisted – throughout the 1630s.[80]

[79] CCRO, City Shelf C, Book 8, ff. 153–4. [80] CCRO, City Shelf C, Book 7, f. 218.

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Table 4.2 *Wealth and civic office-holding in Cambridge at the Restoration*

Number of hearths	Surviving aldermen	Excluded aldermen	New aldermen	Surviving common councillors	Excluded common councillors	New common councillors
	%	%	%	%	%	%
1 to 2	0	0	0	33	9	7
3 to 6	20	43	14	33	82	64
7 to 10	60	43	29	33	0	7
Over 11	20	14	57	0	9	21
Total	100	100	100	99	100	99

Sources: CCRO, City Shelf C, Book 8; PRO E179/84/437.

Households in seventeenth-century Cambridge formed a volatile topography in which the city commonwealth was as demographically marginal and unstable as it was functionally deficient. Comparison with Ludlow in the 1590s and 1660s is illuminating. While the topography of Elizabethan Ludlow was hardly stable, it was also different to Cambridge in important respects. Although it is impossible to be precise, an estimated 450 households lived in the Shropshire market town during the 1590s: a figure in line with Michael Faraday's estimate based on the parish register.[81] The figure is derived from a tax assessment of 1595; the number of burgesses registered as freemen between 1557 and 1600; and those inhabitants who either petitioned against oligarchy in the 1590s or were accused, alternatively, of oligarchic connections.[82] On this basis, it appears that 184 male heads of household were enfranchised to the corporation; 153 were inhabitants prosperous enough to be financially assessed; and 69 were both. Over the 1590s, 13 per cent of the population participated in civic office, either as aldermen and common councillors or as other, annually elected officers.[83] Those who were at once freemen and taxpaying inhabitants dominated this civic realm, making up half of the corporation's sixty office-holders. If this suggests that an authoritative place in the city commonwealth derived from the conjunction of economic and residential occupancy, then it is worth bearing in mind that a significant number of office-holders appear to have been either freemen or taxpayers, not both. Moreover, thirty-six persons who were neither one nor the other also participated in the frenetic politics that characterised the town. They did so not as common councillors but as affiliates of the aristocratic and democratic parties contesting civic resources. Four persons without an obvious place in the city commonwealth were listed among the thirty-eight kinsmen, friends,

[81] Faraday, *Ludlow,* p. 180.
[82] SA, LB7/2224; LB7/734; LB7/738; LB7/745; LB7/751, LB Fiche 1, 2–3.
[83] SA, LB2/1/1.

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Table 4.3 *Wealth and civic allegiances in Elizabethan Ludlow*

Class of taxpayer in Ludlow	Aristocrat in Ludlow		Democrats in Ludlow		Aristocratic councillors		Democratic councillors		Neutral councillors	
	Nos.	%	Nos.	%	Nos.	%	Nos.	%	Nos.	%
2 to 8 pence			28	33			2	15	1	8
10 to 20 pence	8	33	51	61	5	24	7	54	7	58
Over 20 pence	16	67	4	5	16	76	4	31	4	33
Total	24	100	83	99	21	100	13	100	12	99

Sources: SA, LB2/1/1; LB7/2224; LB7/734; LB7/738; LB7/745; LB7/751.

and allies who constituted the oligarchic faction; thirty-two 'un-placed' persons joined the 141 petitioners or demonstrators against oligarchy between 1593 and 1600.[84] This wider politics of commonwealth embroiled, in effect, 40 per cent of the town's populace: over the course of the decade, 8 per cent of the town was involved in the local aristocratic network, 32 per cent were democrats, and the remaining two-thirds of households were apparently neutral. The problem for the popular party was that, while they were a major interest in the town, they controlled only 30 per cent of the common council. This was in comparison to the 47 per cent share enjoyed by the aristocrats and the further 23 per cent of councillors who remained uncommitted to either side.

In contrast to seventeenth-century Cambridge, therefore, city commonwealth in Elizabethan Ludlow was a central and defining aspect of urban culture: a presence with mutable and contested boundaries, the politics of which extended far beyond the formal civic realm. This politics was closely connected to economic and geographical place. As table 4.3 shows, among resident taxpayers the division between democrats and aristocrats was clearly related to differences in wealth: not between rich and poor, or even between common councillors and the larger body of inhabitants, but between the wealthiest and middling householders within the town.

Over two-thirds of Ludlow's aristocrats were in the highest class of taxpayer; in contrast, a third of democrats were in the lowest bracket and almost two-thirds in the middle bracket. These distinctions were replicated in the common council, although the fact that neutral councillors had almost an identical economic profile to democrats warns against regarding political differences as purely economic. They were also reflected geographically, though in slightly different ways. Table 4.4 shows the distribution of wealth across Ludlow's four wards. On each street the wealthier residents were a minority. In Broad Street and Old Street, the middle bracket predominated; in Corve Street and Castle

[84] SA, LB7/734; LB7/738; LB7/745; LB7/751; E134/39 and 440 Elizabeth/Mich. 37.

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Table 4.4 *Topographies of wealth in Elizabethan Ludlow*

Class of taxpayer	Broad Street		Old Street		Corve Street		Castle Street	
	Nos.	%	Nos.	%	Nos.	%	Nos.	%
2 to 8 pence	14	27	24	35	24	44	18	40
10 to 20 pence	32	63	39	57	24	44	20	44
Over 20 pence	5	10	5	7	6	11	7	16
Total	51	100	68	99	54	99	45	100

Sources: SA, LB2/1/1; LB7/2224; LB7/734; LB7/738; LB7/745; LB7/751.

Table 4.5 *Neighbourhood and politics in Elizabethan Ludlow*

Class of taxpayer	Corve Street				Old Street			
	Democrats		Common councillors		Democrats		Common councillors	
	Nos.	%	Nos.	%	Nos.	%	Nos.	%
2 to 8 pence	6	30	0	0	8	35	1	14
10 to 20 pence	11	55	1	11	15	65	1	14
Over 20 pence	3	15	8	89	0	0	5	71
Total	20	100	9	100	23	100	7	99

Sources: SA, LB7/2224; LB2/1/1; LB7/734; LB7/738; LB7/745; LB7/751.

Street, there was an even distribution of first- and second-class taxpayers. Table 4.5 suggests that the structure of politics varied accordingly. In all the wards, common councillors were drawn predominantly from the upper tax bracket and democrats from the first and especially second class of taxpayer. However, while in Corve Street and Castle Street democrats also numbered among the wealthiest inhabitants, in Old Street and Broad Street they were excluded, the wealthiest inhabitants instead forming aristocratic neighbourhoods within the larger urban milieu.

By 1667, Ludlow was a different kind of place. This might be a chimera born of the evidence: without explicit statements of aristocratic or democratic sentiment, it is impossible to know what happened to political divisions in the intervening years. Available material instead includes a 1667 poll tax – which gives detailed information about the household wealth, structure, and occupations of inhabitants – and somewhat cursory borough and guild records: official documents hardly designed to reflect deep-seated political animosities.[85]

[85] M. A. Faraday, 'The Ludlow poll-tax return of 1667', *Transactions of the Shropshire Archaeological Society*, 59, 1971–72; LB2/1/1.

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Table 4.6 *Household, wealth, and occupation in Ludlow in 1667*

Occupation/status	Heads of household nos.	Average paid per house shilling	Proportion of population %	Proportion of town wealth %
Female heads	42	2	7	4
Victuals	34	4	12	5
Services	15	13	6	8
Merchants	6	4	2	1
Artisan manufacturers	36	4	10	6
Artisan builders	22	3	6	2
Cloth (trade/manufacture)	60	3	18	8
Leather (trade/manufacture)	31	4	11	4
Gentlemen	22	20	6	18
Yeomen	20	3	5	2
Labourers	48	2	8	3
Titular	12	64	3	30
Unrecorded	70	3	7	9
TOTAL	418	6	101	100

Source: M. A. Faraday, 'The Ludlow poll-tax return of 1667', *Shropshire Archaeological Society* 59,1917–2.

What they do provide, however, is a fairly nuanced snapshot of a small urban community and the place of city commonwealth within it.

Table 4.6 divides the taxpaying population according to occupation and/or status. The labels 'gentlemen', 'labourer', and 'yeomen' were all used on the tax list; the remaining categories conflate occupational or other kinds of social description. The first column shows the number of households who paid tax. The second column shows the mean amount of tax paid by each household according to occupation or status. The third column shows the percentage of all town inhabitants belonging to each group (including spouses, children, kin, servants, apprentices, and journeymen). Column four demonstrates, finally, the percentage of town wealth (as suggested by the tax) in each group. Together they show that wealth in the town was concentrated in three groups that accounted for only a minority of the town's population: 'service' households (barbers, physicians, booksellers, scriveners, schoolmasters, clerics, carriers, and innkeepers); self-styled 'gentlemen'; and, in particular, titular households (esquire and above). Indeed, the latter accounted for almost a third of the tax and only 3 per cent of the population. At the other end of the spectrum were labouring and female households, although gradations between all the lower and more populous groups were much less pronounced.

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The poll tax suggests, then, a fairly typical market town of the Restoration era: one dominated by a minority of magnates, gentry, and professionals; populated by a broad 'middling sort' of artisans, tradesmen, and yeomen; and containing a large bottom tier of labourers, spinsters, and widows. Although the city commonwealth had become more stratified, it had not disappeared. By the 1660s a clear distinction existed between the civic councillors and officers who formed its governing body; a larger number of burgesses enfranchised to the corporation; and the freemen who participated within – and were governed by – its craft guilds. In 1667, councillors and officers accounted for around 6 per cent of the town's heads of household and burgesses a further 15 per cent. Freemen – all those legitimately practising a trade within the town – accounted for a further 45 per cent of household-heads.[86] Most identifiable in this respect were the 'Hammermen', the guild controlling artisan crafts, and the 'Stitchers', the guild controlling those involved not only in the cloth and leather trades but also mercantile activity more generally. In both its political and economic roles, therefore, city commonwealth remained an important presence within the town. Moreover, as table 4.7 suggests, its key participants were drawn not from titular households so much as guild members: those involved in leather and cloth, as well as 'gentlemen' merchants and service 'professionals'. That the 'gentlemen' in question were two mercers, a haberdasher, a glover, and an ironmonger further suggests the close link between civic governance and economy – a link confirmed by the fact that the distribution of apprentices and journeymen remained closely linked to freedom and citizenship. The survival of the Hammermen in turn provided artisan manufacturers and builders with a civic forum, albeit one subjected to conciliar authority in a way that Newcastle guilds (for example) were not.[87] An estimated 75 per cent of 'Stitchers' and 59 per cent of Hammermen were involved in civic business in the 1660s. In contrast, women and labourers joined unenfranchised gentry, lawyers, and magnates by being firmly excluded from this civic terrain.

As in Cambridge, the Restoration had a significant impact on the social profile of civic office-holding. The commissioners of the 1662 Corporation Act displaced seventeen burgesses from office and placed fifteen new ones, including three of the gentry responsible for the purge. By 1667, nine displaced and nine placed burgesses were resident in the borough. A further twenty-seven burgesses survived the purge, twenty-two of whom were still participants in civic government at the time of the poll tax. The discrepancies in wealth between displaced, placed, and remaining burgesses likewise echoed the situation in Cambridge. Paying an average of only 4*s*. to the tax, those displaced from office were significantly less wealthy than either the incomers or, in particular, the civic survivors: the former paid an average of 9*s*., the latter 16*s*. Those

[86] SA, LB2/1/2; LB17/1–3. [87] See below, ch. 6.

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Table 4.7 *Economy and office-holding in Ludlow in 1667*

Occupation/status	Apprentices (nos. 44) %	Journeymen (nos. 15) %	Councillors resident (nos. 25) %	Officers resident (nos. 25) %	Burgesses resident (nos. 64) %
Female heads	0	0	0	0	0
Victuals	8	0	4	8	6
Services	0	0	16	16	11
Merchants	9	0	8	8	6
Artisan manufacturers	14	13	4	4	5
Artisan builders	9	0	0	0	3
Cloth (trade/ manufacture)	34	67	12	12	20
Leather	18	20	20	12	17
Gentlemen	9	0	20	24	14
Yeomen	0	0	4	0	5
Labourers	0	0	0	0	0
Titular	0	0	4	0	3
Unrecorded	0	0	8	16	9
TOTAL	101	100	100	100	99

Sources: M. A. Faraday, 'The Ludlow poll-tax return of 1667', *Shropshire Archaeological Society,* 59,1971–2; SA, LB2/1/2.

displaced also came from occupational groups underrepresented in common council: they included a distiller, a maltster, and a weaver.[88] Although city commonwealth in Ludlow survived the Restoration, it seems the possibility of democracy did not.

In the mixed polity of York, in contrast, enfranchised householders remained socially distinct and demographically dominant throughout the seventeenth century. That said, there was undoubted differentiation in levels of corporate participation, some neighbourhoods containing more freemen – or freemen with better access to corporate authority – than other areas of the city. A snapshot of residential patterns in each of the city's four quarters illuminates this variability. It also provides a fairly precise sense of the place of citizens within the larger urban environment. It can be taken by combining surviving parochial tax lists with the names of contributors to the poor rate and its recipients. The result can be seen in table 4.8, which shows the household profiles of four York parishes during the 1660s: St Trinity Goodramgate in Monk Ward, Peter Little in Walmgate Ward, St Martin's and Gregories in Micklegate Ward, and

[88] Faraday, ed., 'The Ludlow poll-tax return of 1667'; SA, LB2/1/2.

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Table 4.8 *Household distribution in four York parishes during the 1660s*

	Belfrey Bootham 1665		Martin's Micklegate 1666		Peter Little Walmgate 1660		Trinity Goodramgate Monk 1663	
Parishioners	Nos.	%	Nos.	%	Nos.	%	Nos.	%
All households	146		59		86		60	
Relieved poor	8	5	2	3	10	12	12	20
Ratepayers	88	60	38	64	24	28	17	28
Free households	117	80	37	63	54	63	34	57
Female households	18	12	12	20	19	22	13	22
Non-free households	11	8	10	17	13	15	12	20

Source: See fn. 89.

St Michael le Belfrey in Bootham Ward.[89] Each of the assessments was raised for different purposes, and so cannot be used to compare in any precise fashion the wealth of each parish. However, when combined with records of poor relief and freemen's records, they provide as comprehensive a framework as possible for comparing residential patterns in parishes located in the four quarters of the city.[90] Table 4.8 shows that, in each of the four parishes, enfranchised households predominated, constituting as much as 80 per cent of houses in the Michael le Belfrey in Bootham to just under 60 per cent in Trinity Goodramgate in Monk.

Female-headed households – usually the widows of citizens – were the second largest category; and tables 4.8 and 4.9 demonstrate that it was female householders who most usually received poor relief and least often paid assessments. This is not to argue that female-headed households were invariably impoverished: the two largest inns in St Martin's were owned by Mrs Key and Mrs Hey, for example, while across the city women could be prominent ratepayers. Nevertheless, male-headed houses without the freedom formed a slightly larger proportion of ratepaying households to women but a smaller number overall, emphasising the extent to which citizens and their dependants dominated each of these different areas of the city. The tables also show that those either receiving or contributing to poor relief, while by and large dominated by freemen and female householders, nevertheless formed only a proportion of the population of each parish. A majority of householders in Goodramgate and

[89] Trinity Goodramgate, Monk Ward: BIHI, Y/HTG 15 (assessment for constable 1665); Peter Little, Walmgate: BIHR, CPH 2542, Samuel Buck c. William Green (for wages for parish clerk); Martin's Micklegate: BIHR, PR.Y/MG 19 (parish subscription for 1666); Michael le Belfrey, Bootham: BIHR, Y/MB 34 (churchwardens' assessment for 1665).

[90] Collins, *Register*; YCA Series E (1653–78).

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Table 4.9 *Poor households in four York parishes during the 1660s*

Parish	Relieved poor	Freemen		Women		Non-free	
	Nos.	Nos.	%	Nos.	%	Nos.	%
Belfrey 1665	8	2	25	5	63	1	13
Martin's 1666	2	1	50	1	50	0	0
Peter Little 1660	10	6	60	4	40	0	0
Trinity Goodramgate 1663	12	1	8	8	67	3	25

Sources: BIHI, Y/HTG 15; CPH 2542; PR.Y/MG 19; Y/MB 34; Francis Collins, ed., *Register of the freemen of the city of York, II, 1559–1759* (Durham, 1900); YCA Series E (1653–1678).

Table 4.10 *Occupations in four York parishes during the 1660s*

Occupation of households	Belfrey 1665 %	Martin's 1666 %	Peter Little 1661 %	Trinity Goodramgate 1663 %
Female heads of house	12	20	22	22
Victuals	8	2	10	5
Services	5	0	2	3
Merchants	12	32	6	5
Artisan manufactures	8	5	6	2
Artisan builders	1	5	7	7
Cloth trade and industry	24	7	20	15
Leather trade and industry	5	3	1	3
Free labourers	2	0	0	2
Unknown	16	8	10	15
Not free	8	17	15	22
Total	101	99	99	101

Sources: BIHI, Y/HTG 15; CPH 2542; PR.Y/MG 19; Y/MB 34; Francis Collins, ed., *Register of the freemen of the city of York* (Durham, 1900); YCA Series E (1653–1678).

Peter Little neither gave nor received money, while a third of occupants were exempt from the process in the wealthier parishes of Belfrey and Martin's.

The parishes can be regarded as fairly representative of the wards in which they were located. Records of poor relief and a more reliable hearth tax from 1671 suggests that Monk Ward, in the shadow of the Minster, contained by far the highest number of poor in the city as well as a higher number of unenfranchised households than other wards.[91] Bootham and Walmgate were at once the

[91] YCA, E80 (1671).

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Table 4.11 *A snapshot of corporate participation in four York parishes in the 1660s*

Parish	Population nos.	Free nos.	Jurors nos.	Chamberlains nos.	Sheriffs nos.	Magistrates nos.
Martin's 1666	59	37	4	2	1	2
Belfrey 1665	146	117	6	0	0	1
Peter Little 1661	86	52	4	0	0	0
Trinity Goodramgate 1663	60	34	1	0	0	0

Sources: BIHI, Y/HTG 15; CPH 2542; PR.Y/MG 19; Y/MB 34; Francis Collins, ed., *Register of the freemen of the city of York* (Durham, 1900); Phil Withington, *Urban political culture*, ch. 3.

most populous and commercially active of the four wards, while Micklegate, separated from the rest of the city by the River Ouse, had the highest proportion of merchants, corporation land, and civic mansions. These patterns were reflected in the occupational profiles of the four parishes. The greatest concentration of occupational specialisation was among the merchants, mercers, and grocers of St Martin's in Micklegate. Moreover, of this mercantile network, three-quarters were merchants involved in long-distance trade. In Michael le Belfrey, a similar number of traders formed a much smaller proportion of the parish economy. In contrast to St Martin's, it was mercers and grocers rather than merchants who made up four-fifths of the mercantile community. As the most populous and urbane of the four parishes, Michael le Belfrey also had the most variegated of the four economies as well as the highest number and proportion of service, manufacturing, and clothworking households. The book trade was concentrated in Minster Yard, just as there were more apothecaries and barbers than elsewhere. In contrast, female household-heads were in the majority in Trinity Goodramgate along with householders not enfranchised to the city commonwealth.

Tables 4.11 and 4.12 illuminate, finally, the variations in corporate office-holding across the four parishes. Most apparent is the degree of participation in St Martin's compared to elsewhere. Although almost three times smaller than the Belfrey, and with a much smaller population of enfranchised households, more heads of household nevertheless served either as juror, chamberlain, sheriff, or magistrate. Almost a quarter of residents in St Martin's were involved in corporate governance in 1666 compared to only 6 per cent in the Belfrey a year earlier, 8 per cent in Peter Little in 1661, and only 3 per cent in Trinity Goodramgate in 1663. Table 4.12 suggests that this difference in participation was reflective of long-term patterns. While St Martin's was the best represented of any parish in the city, it is also indicative of four more general trends

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Table 4.12 *An aggregate of corporate office-holding in four York parishes, 1649 to 1689*

Parish	Jurors 1649 to 1670	Chamberlains 1649 to 1673	Sheriffs 1649 to 1689	Privy Council 1649 to 1689	Magistrates 1649 to 1689
Martin's	55	23	13	19	9
Belfrey	100	33	16	8	4
Peter	20	3	1	1	0
Trinity	17	1	2	1	2

Sources: YCA, Series B (1649–1689), F7, F8; BIHI, Y/HTG 15; CPH 2542; PR.Y/MG 19; Y/MB 34; Withington, 'Urban Political Culture', ch. 3.

regarding corporate office-holding in York. First, corporate office-holders were concentrated in the parishes adjacent to the Micklegate and Walmgate thoroughfares that converged on the council chamber on Ouse Bridge: All Saints on the Pavement, St Michael in Spurriergate, St Johns on Ouse Bridge, and St Martin's and Gregories itself. Second, merchants tended to dominate the higher places of corporate governance: while the Belfrey and to a lesser extent Peter Little had good representation among jurors and chamberlains, highest office was monopolised not by craftsmen, artisans, and shopkeepers, or even mercers and grocers, but by freemen involved in large-scale distribution. Third, corporate office-holding was, by and large, related to levels of taxation: while all office-holders, from jurymen up, tended to contribute to the poor rate, the more senior the office the more significant the contribution. Finally, the physical separation of Micklegate Ward from the rest of the city by the River Ouse was reflected institutionally in the fact that, until the amalgamation of 1668, it also formed its own jury at the quarter sessions. This encouraged an intensity of civic participation not matched by the much larger body of freemen living in the west of the city. Instead, the wealthiest inhabitants of Bootham – in St Martin's on Coney Street and Minster Yard – tended to form the heart of the 'town', consisting of lawyers, church officials, and other urbane gentry rather than citizens (for discussion of the 'town' see below, chapter 5). Monk Ward, the poorest and least incorporated of the four wards, also displayed the lowest levels of office-holding.

The relative homogeneity of city commonwealth in York is suggested by the fact that, unlike in Cambridge and Ludlow, the Restoration saw no major shift in the sociology or topography of corporate office-holding. Faced with vengeful and well-positioned gentry, as well as an influx of ecclesiastics and soldiers, York's citizens fought a desperate rearguard action of lobbying, soliciting, and the cultivation of patronage to preserve their corporate integrity at the Restoration. The result was that, although five aldermen lost their places,

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citizens of almost identical wealth and background replaced them.[92] This continuity is neatly encapsulated by the vignette of Leonard Thomson, an excluded alderman and wine merchant, entertaining Henry Brearey, his replacement, friend, and neighbour in St Johns Micklegate, in front of his parlour-hearth during Christmas 1661.[93] There was a much more dramatic shift relating to jury membership, the number of non-ratepayers called to present at the quarter sessions increasing from 4 per cent to 19 per cent between 1659 and 1663. Even this change did not last, however, and by mid-decade participation was once more the preserve of enfranchised ratepayers.[94]

Just as the place of city commonwealth varied across the country, so there were significant variations of place within a complex city like York. Both types of diversity pose empirical, descriptive, and comparative problems: for all their structural similarities, no two city commonwealths were places – or indeed placed – in the same way. While invaluable as a rule of thumb, ranking or grouping types of city commonwealth according to sociological categories runs the risk of removing them from precisely the contexts from which their spatial character was derived and understood.[95] As significantly, it can also obscure the fact that places – whether roles and offices, institutions, locations, territories, or buildings – were nothing without the people who contested, occupied, and used them. That any particular moment – whether the 1590s or 1660s – can only be a keyhole into an ongoing historical process makes analysis and interpretation all the more difficult. The differences between Cambridge, Ludlow, and York are striking nevertheless: city commonwealths that were either marginal in their urban context and separated from their household constituencies; institutionally extensive but also contested and divided; or sufficiently extensive, 'mixed', autonomous, and participatory. Of course, in such diverse and mutable urban landscapes, the meaning of citizenship, and its implications for agency and identity, was complex. It is to how contemporaries conceptualised that problem that we can now, finally, turn.

Place and person

If the corporate system can be regarded as a kind of extended structural penumbra, then the problem of agency raises two related issues that only confuse the picture further. These are social practice and cultural meaning. A danger of purely empirical structuralism is that places are taken to be fixed, unitary, and deterministic in terms of behaviour and attitudes: that people and communities were, to a very large extent, defined and constricted by the structure of their social relationships and physical environments. The value of

[92] YCA, B37, f. 177. [93] BIHR, CPH 2560, Hester c. Hodgson.
[94] Withington, 'Views from the bridge', p. 145. [95] Phythian Adams, 'An agenda', p. 17.

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'post-structuralism' has been to bring what early modern people understood to be 'the person' back into the equation: not simply as a demographic quotient, but as a thinking, interpreting, and acting being.[96] It was on this basis that places and other shared resources were 'appropriated' in different ways and for different purposes; that they were prescribed with different and perhaps contradictory meanings; and that perspectives and identities varied according to the relative position of a person both synchronically and diachronically.[97] That city commonwealths were simultaneously regarded as embodiments of monarchical, *res*publican, and civic power demonstrates the difficulties in assuming a single 'language of place', even among England's ruling 'elites'. The possibilities of aristocratic, democratic, or mixed polities – and their corruption into oligarchic or populist regimes – similarly depended on how civic structures were conceived, occupied, and used. So, too, did their characterisation as 'public' or 'private' bodies within the national polity. Indeed, the only certainty about the places of city commonwealth is that they were contested and mutable terrain – something hardly surprising given the numerous and competing interests vested in them, and the ferment of Renaissance and Reformation ideology upon which early modern people could draw.

This was something of which even the most didactic of early modern moralists were aware. Certainly the amount of attention that early modern writers paid to the relationship between place and person rests uneasily with the recent assertion that place depersonalised 'its occupier, because the simple fact of authority was of far greater consequence than the character of whoever happened to possess it'.[98] On the contrary, in their concern for how and for what motives places were appropriated, as well as their acknowledgement of the vicissitudes of social practice, commentators displayed a profound interest in the dangers and possibilities of agency. Both civic aristocracy and civic democracy centred on the relationship between place and person: the one linking personal and public virtue to distinctions in wealth and learning, the other focusing on the symbiosis between household, neighbourhood, and civic position and participation. So, too, did another spatial theory close to the heart of city commonwealths: that of 'place and calling'. For that strand of humanist thinking exemplified by Thomas Wilson, callings were a form of social control designed to thwart

[96] Michel de Certeau, *The practice of everyday life*, trans. Steven F. Randall (California, 2002); Pierre Bourdieu, *Language and symbolic power*, edited and introduced by J. B. Thompson (Cambridge, 1991), pp. 1–29.

[97] Bob Scribner, 'Is a history of popular culture possible?', *History of European Ideas*, 10, 1989, pp. 175–91; Andy Wood, 'Custom, identity and resistance: English free miners and their law', in Griffiths et al., *Experience of authority*, pp. 250–1, 278–9; Martin Ingram, 'From reformation to toleration: popular religious cultures in England, 1540–1690', in Tim Harris, ed., *Popular culture in England, c.1500–1850* (Basingstoke, 1995), pp. 95–101; Walter, *Understanding popular violence*, p. 352; Shagan, *Popular politics*, p. 22.

[98] Griffiths, *Youth and authority*, p. 70.

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personal ambition and social envy: his self-defined role as a rhetorician was to convince people that they were hierarchically fixed and subordinated by the vocation in which they were placed.[99] For Sir Thomas Smith, in contrast, callings structured not so much social hierarchy as civil society. All persons claimed some kind of social and participatory role – and also some degree of social worth – because all persons 'in their callings are taken wise'.[100] However, it was in the hands of Calvinist divines like William Perkins that callings were theorised most elaborately. According to Perkins, every man had both a general calling to God and a personal calling derived from 'the practice and execution of that particular office, wherein any man is placed'. The 'final cause or end' of each was '*for the common good*'.[101] Perkins directed his treatise at 'corporations', 'civil societies', and 'bodies or societies of men' – places where calling and vocation formed the traditional structure of governance and economy. He appropriated the concept by outlining a theory of social interaction in which every calling was endowed with communal and moral significance. In household, commonwealth, and church, each person worked, as the organs of the body of a man, 'not for it self [sic], but for the good of the whole body'.[102] Those unwilling to find their place in and contribute to the 'common-wealth', who 'are of no civil society or corporation', had the 'life of a beast'. This not only included 'rogues, beggars, vagabonds' – the 'rotten legs and arms that drop from the body' – but also the idle rich and men drawn to 'monkish living'.[103]

The adoption of place assumed, in turn, the recognition of both structural and personal distinctions. Persons were 'distinguished by order, whereby God hath appointed that in every society one person should be above or under another'. They were also separated by 'the inward gifts which God bestowed on every man'. It was 'by reason of the distinction of men, partly in respect of gifts, partly in respect of order, come personal callings'.[104] Central to this process of social calibration was the conviction that callings should be 'fitted to the man, and every man be fitted to his calling'. Choice depended on personal 'affection' and 'gifts': a reflective sense on the part of the man of 'what mind he hath to any calling' as well as 'for and to what calling they are fittest'.[105] Because men were 'partial in judging of their inclination and gifts', the advice of others should be sought, and Perkins recommended the Athenian custom of testing the inclinations and gifts of children by providing 'instruments of all

[99] Thomas Wilson, *The art of rhetorique* (1563), A3v.
[100] Smith, *A discourse of the commonweal*, p. 12.
[101] William Perkins, 'A treatise of the vocation or calling of men, with the sorts and kinds of them, and the right use thereof', in *The works of that famous and worthy minister of Christ in the University of Cambridge, Mr William Perkins*, vol. 1 (1626), pp. 749–51. The italics are Perkins'.
[102] Ibid., p. 751 [103] Ibid., p. 755. [104] Ibid., p. 755. [105] Ibid., p. 758.

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sorts' in a 'public place' and seeing 'with what instrument they took delight'. A principal 'duty of parents' was, in turn, to establish for their child suitable callings 'before they apply them to any particular condition of life', assuring them that 'even in his first years' a child 'does affect some one particular calling'. Echoing Mulcaster, Perkins argued that 'parents cannot do greater wrong to their children, and the society of men, then to apply them into unfit callings . . . and set the members of the body out of their proper places'.[106] As Henry Manship told the burgesses of Great Yarmouth, there 'can no greater profit arise to the commonwealth than instruction of youth': 'truly that commonwealth is most miserable, wherein the tillage of infancy is neglected'.[107] One of the main criticisms advanced by democrats in Ludlow was likewise that the oligarchs had no 'fitness' or 'calling' for government.

Ideally at least, the fitness of person to place was based on the 'trial of gifts and free election, without particularity': an extension of moral and personal aptitude rather than privilege.[108] In this way, callings enabled not only the mobility of the 'active' and 'able' within the social body but also social reform and change, as the 'fittest' people were called to exercise and work their roles and affect the commonwealth accordingly. If this suggests the inextricability of theory and ideology, then the lawyer and writer Angel Daye provided a less idealistic account of agency. Ruminating in 1586 on the place of a 'secretary', Daye observed that the social position and actions of 'any one' were dependent on three, interrelated factors: their 'will, disposition or ability'. In this widely disseminated schema, the 'will' was 'the outward quality or condition of a man': the passions and humours discerned 'by his readiness, hate, affection, or dislike of a thing'. Dispositions were, in turn, 'the residue of his being'. Constructed from a person's life-positions and cycle, they constituted at once a person's 'whole manner of living' and 'his continual practices'. Daye regarded dispositions as shaped by, among other things, 'the country or soil wherein one is born'; 'off-spring', or how the person was 'born and bred'; and education: how the person was 'trained-up' and 'inured'. Finally, 'ability' depended on the social resources at someone's disposal: the social 'aids and supports' that could be 'measured by the credit, want, company, conceit, or instability of the person'.[109] It was this nexus of will, disposition, and ability that was seen to determine both the kinds of place a person occupied and the ways in which he or she appropriated them. The person, that is, was the product of place; but place was also the product and instrument of person. Daye was particularly concerned with 'the parts, place and office of secretary', and noted a series of characteristics 'of the person' that made for a suitable fit: 'good education';

[106] Ibid., p. 759. [107] Manship, *History of Great Yarmouth*, p. 43.
[108] Perkins, 'A treatise of the vocation or calling of men', p. 761.
[109] Angel Daye, *The second part of the English secretorie* (1635), pp. 235–6.

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'mind well-disposed'; 'sound conversation and order of living'; 'skill, knowledge and ability wherewith to discharge the place and calling'. He should also 'be of shape and countenance proportional to those required virtues', as it was 'by countenance we do further judge the qualities and disposition of men'.[110] For other places, the fit was less important. As the Presbyterian minister Edward Bowles said of episcopacy, 'If you suggest, Put better men in their Places, We answer, the places will make them worse by the office, the office never better by the person.'[111]

It was the contingency of place that at once fascinated and concerned seventeenth-century writers. City comedies were nothing if not commentaries on not only the failure of householders to meet the expectations of their respective callings, but also their flagrant exploitation and manipulation of social roles and relationships.[112] While Shakespeare made general use of the concept of place, in three of his major Jacobean plays the word figured much more often and notably than elsewhere, signifying in each instance a systematic exploration of the relationship between roles and offices and the person occupying, using, or coveting them. *Measure for Measure*, *All is True*, and *Othello* each scrutinised the disjunction between will, disposition, and ability on the one hand and the powers, platitudes, and necessity of place on the other. The hypocrisy and lusts of Angelo; the wolfish ambition of Wolsey; and the pathological scheming of Iago were constantly juxtaposed with the duties and appearances of office.[113] As Queen Katherine tells Wolsey: 'You're meek and humble-mouthed; / You sign your place and calling, in full seeming, / With meekness and humility – but your heart / Is crammed with arrogancy, spleen and pride'.[114] The very narrative of *Othello* rests on Iago's quest 'to get his [Othello's] place, and to plume up my will'.[115] The 1669 edition of *Flagellum*, the posthumous and vitriolic polemic against Oliver Cromwell, used precisely the same idiom to explain the civil war and 'tyranny' of the past twenty years.[116] Like Iago, Wolsey, and Angelo, Cromwell's public actions were characterised as a function of personality: he was 'a rebel in manners, long before he was a *Belial* in Policy'. Moreover, his delinquency was a direct result of the failure of the structural constraints of the city commonwealth in which he grew up. 'From his Infancy to his Childhood' in Huntingdon 'he was of a cross and peevish disposition', an 'obstinate and

[110] Ibid., p. 422. [111] Edward Bowles, *Plaine English* (1643), p. 11.
[112] Swapen Chakravorty, *Society and politics in the plays of Thomas Middleton* (Oxford, 1996), p. 15.
[113] For example: *Measure for Measure*, 1.4.50–5; 2.4.12–15; 3.1.152–8; *All is True*, 1.1.161, 2.1.82, 5.2.74; 3.1.155, *Othello*, 1.1.11, 1.1.147, 3.3.251.
[114] *All is True*, 2.4.106. [115] *Othello*, 1.3.385.
[116] James Heath, *Flagellum: or the life and death, birth and burial of O. Cromwell the late usurper* (1669).

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perverse inclination', that was civilised neither by the free school or university. Indeed, it was only his father 'being in his own nature of a difficult disposition, and great Spirit . . . [that] . . . kept him in some awe and subjection'.[117] His father's death left 'him to the scope of his own inordinate and irregular will, swayed by the bent of very violent and strong passions'. Rejecting his mother's 'Employment and Calling of a Brewer', Cromwell, 'now in the room and place of his Father . . . his uncontrolled debaucheries did publicly declare; for Drinking, Whoring, and the like outrages of licentious youth'.[118] The only relief came when 'Lincoln's Inn was the place pitched upon' 'to remove the Scandal which had been cast upon the Family by his means . . . and thither Mr Cromwell in a suitable Garb to his fortunes was sent'. He did not remain there long, however. The 'nature of the place and the Students there, were so far regretful beyond all his tedious Apprenticeship to the more facile Academic Sciences . . . that he had a kind of antipathy to his Company and Converse there; and so spent his time in an inward spite'. Returning to Huntingdon he 'fell to his old trade' of tippling, fighting, whoring, and terrorising the burgesses. It was only with his trumpeted Reformation that his 'lustful wantonness' allayed, the 'heat of his blood' cooled, and his 'strange, wild, and dishonest actions' curtailed.[119] While his religious conversion was primarily to secure an inheritance, his 'scrupulous' and well-publicised 'conscience' allowed the 'cunning' cultivation of the godly friends, kin, and civility that eventually brought his return to parliament in 1640. Neither was his dispute with the new Recorder of Huntingdon in 1630 at all related to the defence of the commons. Rather it was because 'some difference about precedence of place happened betwixt them (Oliver's spirit being too high to yield to any person in that town, where his Family had continued of the best rank some years together)'. It was in order 'to avoid the Cession of his Honour to another' that 'he withdrew himself into the Isle of Ely'.[120]

While *Flagellum* was a profoundly biased, partisan, and unsubstantiated text, the presentation of Cromwell as an ill-mannered, disordered, uncivil, and dishonest person of problematic will, disposition, and conscience was rhetorically astute. As a character assassination it combined not simply the hypocritical, politic, and Machiavellian elements of Shakespeare's 'place plays' but also the dissolute gallants and gentry of city comedy. These were characters who, in their uncivil and wilful behaviour, suggested, crystallised, or exposed as bankrupt the values underpinning the place and places of city commonwealth: men like Whorehound in *A chaste maid in Cheapside* and Falstaff in *The merry wives of Windsor*.[121] As importantly, by exploiting what by the mid-seventeenth century

[117] Ibid., pp. 8, 9, 11. [118] Ibid., pp. 11–12. [119] Ibid., p. 13. [120] Ibid., p. 21.
[121] Barton, 'Falstaff and the comic community', pp. 84, 80.

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were established stereotypes, *Flagellum* cast Cromwell as the monster at the margins of what might be called a civic civility: those precepts and expectations that governed the practice of social roles and relationships in household, neighbourhood, and the civic realm. For social historians, such language was part and parcel of the perennial, ubiquitous, and multifaceted quest for 'order' in the face of social, economic, and cultural dislocation.[122] However, another dimension, less discussed in the historiography but perhaps more telling for city commonwealths, was the Ciceronian notion of *honestas*: those qualities of honesty, discretion, wisdom, fitness, and decorum designed to enable men and women to constructively engage in community without the dangers of wilfulness, passion, and violence.[123] As a template for social interaction, *honestas* expected a 'fitness' between place and behaviour; reason and self-control on the part of communicants; and the mediation, wherever possible, of will and power, especially between parties of unequal wealth and status. Such criteria had important implications for the kind of behaviour expected of freemen as well as the form that communicative processes took. It also suggested that only the social and self-regulation of the person, in conjunction with the enforcement of structural obligations, could secure the city and indeed national commonwealth from the dangers of wilful and dishonest persons.

Such assumptions had long underpinned participation in the households, neighbourhoods, and civic constitutions of England's 'ancient' cities and boroughs.[124] However, the humanist 'rediscovery' of Cicero, together with the expansion and incorporation of England's city commonwealths, at once revitalised and disseminated its principles as a basis for early modern urbanity. Civic bodies expended an enormous amount of time, money, and energy regulating the will and dispositions of both participatory members and their household dependants while promulgating the virtues of fitness, discretion, and honesty. The leading Jacobean burgess in Cambridge, fish merchant Thomas French, observed in 1615 that, if ancient history taught anything, it was that 'if everyone might live according to his own will without order or restraint there would be no peaceful government but desolation and confusion'. It was 'in all civilly governed commonwealths . . . where people in uniformity live to good orders' that 'towns and cities flourish and increase'.[125] His rhetoric was aimed not at 'the vulgar' or 'poor' but at certain 'gentry' burgesses who were flaunting ceremonial codes of dress.[126] Seventy years earlier, ordinances of the Newcastle-upon-Tyne Goldsmiths, Plumbers, Pewtherers, and Painter-Glaisers were justified

[122] Wrightson, *English society*, ch. 6; Steve Hindle, 'The keeping of the public peace', in Griffiths et al., *The experience of authority*, pp. 213–48.
[123] Jennifer Richards, *Rhetoric and courtliness*, pp. 2–3.
[124] Barry, 'Civility and civic culture', pp. 181–96; Brooks, 'Apprenticeship', pp. 76–80; Slack, 'Great and good towns', p. 364.
[125] CCRO, City Shelf C, Book 7, f. 58. [126] Ibid., f. 51v.

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on the grounds that they mediated the 'wilful' and 'malicious' energies of its members.[127] Such concerns did not emanate merely from positions of authority. Rather, the discipline and mediation of will was equally sought by those socially and politically vulnerable as a stop to unrestrained power. Complaints against civic oligarchy invariably focused, for example, on the personal deficiencies of corrupt rulers and their appropriation of commonwealth for private gain. As we saw in the previous chapter, the democratic weaver John Bradford complained that councillors were not only unfit for office, but that they were using their places 'to effect their own wills and purpose'. By its very definition, oligarchy meant that they 'did and might use the common seal of the said corporation at their wills to the great oppression of the rest of the burgesses and commonalty of the said Town'.[128] It was not governance or authority that was the problem so much as its misappropriation. The epitaph of James Wright, baker of York, was written in a similar spirit.[129]

Rooted in the reciprocity of person and place, this conception of citizenship was very different to the unquestioning deference of hierarchy and degree associated with the language of estates and degrees. On the contrary, it reflected at the local level the more widespread conviction that persons needed to earn, deserve, and fit themselves to their place: that, ideally at least, office and calling were to be attained and achieved rather than simply given. There were at least two implications of this for seventeenth-century political culture. In the first instance, the fitness (or not) between person and place provided a critical perspective on how public positions were occupied and executed. While this was true within city commonwealths, where public personas of men, women, and youths were constantly and communally assessed, it also held for persons and places within the larger polity. This was the more so because James VI and I described monarchy in precisely these terms. Princes, like everyone else, 'are clothed with two callings'. Moreover, they discharged their worldly office through the just and equitable execution of place; and 'by your behaviour in your own person'.[130] Instructing Prince Henry 'in all the points of his calling', James prepared him for 'excelling all your people' not so much 'in rank and honour as in daily care and hazardous pains-taking, for the dutiful administration of that great office'.[131] By framing monarchy as 'the best of the best', he self-consciously drew attention to the suitability – or not – of the bodily person that filled it. Moreover, he did so in an idiom that the humblest civic office-holder could understand. This language of justification was also, as Charles discovered in the 1640s, a basis for criticism. As Samuel Pepys observed in 1660: 'I went . . . with a dog that the King loved (which shit in the boat, which made us laugh and me think that a King and all that belong to him are but just as

[127] TWA, GU/GP/1/2. [128] TNA, E134/39 and 440 Elizabeth/Mich. 37, items 11, 18.
[129] See above, pp. 14–15. [130] 'Basilikon Doron' in *Workes*, p. 155. [131] Ibid., p. 138

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others are).'[132] Second, as sources of power, status, and agency, the nature and relative position of places were taken very seriously indeed. The Stuarts had, for example, an extremely developed sense of their monarchical position, Charles pushing the Aristotelian definition of monarchy to its perfect and 'absolute', or 'thorough', conclusion. However, it was an equally pronounced right and sense of place that many citizens, as either the self-styled aristocrats or democratic representatives of their communities, claimed as theirs. That similar levels of spatial conceit also characterised the perspectives of lawyers, divines, bishops, landed elites, and, by the 1650s, the soldiers and grandees of the New Model Army points to both the spatial complexity and dissonance of the English polity. In a very real sense, England's seventeenth-century troubles stemmed not from the 'crisis of order' so much as the opposite: a plethora of places, powers, and authority, those of city commonwealth very much among them.

Placing 'true liberty'

'The whole social order in the church-state – imitated throughout the counties, towns, boroughs and hamlets, as at the political centre at Westminster – was buttressed by belief in a divinely ordained series of gradations between all things that existed: from God through the ranks of angels, humans, animate and inanimate creation.' So observes Andrew Sharp in his 1998 edition of Leveller writings – the corpus of petitions and pamphlets that, he claims, challenged for the first time 'the practical beliefs of all but a few pockets of dissidents'.[133] Central to this consensus was what the Westminster Assembly of Divines described in 1648 as the 'honour inferiors owe to superiors': in particular, 'the defence and maintenance of their persons and authority according to their several ranks and the nature of their places'.[134] It rested on a sense of divine order and right encapsulated by the famous and oft-quoted observation of Ulysses in Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida* that 'The heavens themselves, the planets, and this centre / Observe degree, priority, and place' (1.3.85–8). All of which is to suggest that what Paul Griffiths terms 'the early modern language of place' was fundamental to the kind of social 'order' and 'authority' that England's elites at once craved and instituted in the 100 years after 1550.[135]

This perspective rests uneasily with events in Ludlow 1598. Common councillors reported that John Crowther, confronted with a borough charter that consolidated the government of his civic opponents, had 'broken up the doors of the council chamber and chest of the said town wherein the common seal ordinances and Records of the said town were kept'. The chamber secured, they 'thence did take the said common seal and the two books of survey and

[132] Vol. 1, p. 158.
[133] Sharp, *English Levellers*, p. xx. [134] Ibid. [135] Griffiths, *Youth and authority*, p. 70.

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particular of the lands of the said town'. The colonisation of the council chamber precipitated nothing less than the redistribution of common wealth. It was recorded that, he 'being one of the Bailiffs of the said town did call a great chamber of Burgesses together of his own Authority'. An assembly called, 'he the said Crowther And the same multitude of Burgesses did contrary to the said ancient form of government displace four of the ancient councillors and the Town Clerk of the said Town and elected and placed in their stead or places new councillors and Town Clerk'. At the same time, they 'did replace and remove divers of the ancient tenants of the said town their tenements and possessions and placed others in their stead'.[136] In so doing, they demonstrated what the democrat John Bradford later called the 'virtue of their office', acting with the 'discretion', 'reason', and 'indifference' appropriate for a person executing civic authority.[137] The physicality of the process was also tangible. The institutional and symbolic resources of the borough were embodied in halls, chests, and common seals, and defined and exercised on the basis of personal presence as much as political abstraction. Whereas previously they had structured civic aristocracy, they now facilitated civic democracy: two different conceptions of the meaning and practice of city commonwealth and the places that constituted it.

Neither did Ludlow's aristocrats exhibit a complacent or even God-given attitude to power. Rather, their claim to the same buildings, offices, and lands was based on the sustained politicking that culminated in the drafting of the Elizabethan charter. The town clerk, Francis Jenks, described how he, the bailiff Thomas Langford, and five other aldermen had been advised by legal counsel to petition for the right to re-incorporate once they realised that a writ of *quo warranto* had been taken against them. As soon as 'her Majesty had signified her pleasure for the granting the said charter', the faction 'did repair unto Edward Coke Esquire Her Majesty's Attorney General for the drawing of the same'. Although secured under the authority of the common seal, no 'motion [was] made to the so-called common council in any public assembly or upon any summons . . . as usually they have done for matters of less importance, whereby voices might be asked'. In London, Coke oversaw a first draft of the charter 'which being drawn in paper' Jenks 'brought home to this Town and delivered the same paper draft' for consultation by the six aldermen behind the petition. Their alterations and additions made, the paper was returned to Coke 'who perused the same', engrossed it, and 'did subscribe his name'. Thomas Langford then 'procured the same to be signed by her Majesty by means of one of Dr [Julius] Caesar's men, and to be signed out under the great seal of England'. Kin aided the faction in seeing through the transaction. A London goldsmith, brother of one aristocrat, provided the credit for the purchase, while the son of

[136] SA, LB7/745 [137] HCRO, HD4/2/17, 1611, Joyce Larkin c. William Sherwood.

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another, also London-based, liaised with the legal offices of Coke and Caesar.[138] Confronted with the newly minted charter, the Court of Exchequer ordered that 'seal and Evidences' be restored 'to the place where the same were formerly kept' and the 'four councillors and Town Clerk . . . placed again in their former places and use and exercise their places as formerly they were accustomed'. In the same way, 'all such Tenants and farmers as are also displaced are also restored to their former possessions'.[139] Anticipating Cromwell's dèbâcle in Huntingdon thirty years later, this political defeat undermined the position of Crowther in the town. Curtailed in his civic activities and deprived of a place in parliament, it was recorded in August 1600 that he had 'departed out of the town and does not bear scot and lot in the same therefore [he] be displaced and another chosen in his place'.[140]

Just as there was no single 'language of place' in early modern England, so in its various meanings and uses it was by no means limited to a singular and an integrated theory of subordination – whether divine right or oligarchy. Rather there was an early modern *concept* of place that positioned the person in a variety of structures – institutional, geographical, and architectural – and which was used within a number of political traditions. Shakespeare used the concept of place to dramatise political ideologies quite distinct from the 'great chain of being' – noble factionalism in *Macbeth*, civic republicanism in *Coriolanus*, and, indeed, city commonwealth in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. So within the 'practical beliefs' of England's citizens and freemen, place was something to be contested, controlled, and used. It was also, as Robert Brady well knew, pivotal to civic ideology. The formation of the corporate system at once extended and invigorated civic conceptions and practices of place within national political culture. It is precisely this process that provided the context for events in Newcastle-upon-Tyne in 1651. The common council noted that the 'late King's Arms and the Portrait of King James were by Order of Parliament taken down from off the new building upon the Bridge and the Commonwealths Arms to be set in the same place instead thereof'. As part of this act of appropriation 'Latin words' were 'presented to the Common Council as a fit subscription to be ingraven under the same'. Read aloud, they were 'thought very fit and pertinent thereto', and it was 'Ordered therefore . . . that the same be forthwith Ingraven in these Latin words only the same being Englished as follows':'Princedome and liberty things unsociable in the year 1651'; 'True liberty takes away no man's right, or hinders no mans right'; 'That indeed (or at least) is true liberty that defends every man's right or property'. Moreover 'Licentiousness confounds all things' was considered but rejected.[141] It was at the grammar school in Newcastle, of course, that John Lilburne was educated: the place where, as

[138] TNA, E134/39 and 440 Elizabeth/Mich. 37, depositions of Francis Jenks, Richard Rascal.
[139] SA, LB7/745. [140] SA, LB2/1/1, ff. 28v, 37v. [141] TWA, MD/NC/2/2, f. 30.

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Richard Tuck has shown, he would have learnt the same classical meanings of liberty, right, and property that councillors now engraved on their bridge.[142] However, those notions were not simply the stuff of an arcane curriculum or tiny elite. Used and contested on a daily basis, they were constitutive of city commonwealth itself.

[142] Richard Tuck, 'Civil conflict in school and town 1500–1700', in Brian Mains and Anthony Tuck, eds., *Royal Grammar School, Newcastle upon Tyne: a history of the school in its community* (London, 1986), pp. 1–138.

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