

History 33Q

Shakespeare's London: the Politics and Culture of Growth

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London was not a typical city in the early modern era. More than ten times the size of Norwich, England's second largest city in 1600, it was the country's only metropolis, and was rapidly becoming the largest city in western Europe, a position it reached by 1700. London was therefore unique in England and in terms of the rapidity of its growth unique in western Europe. We will be looking at the population dynamics which help to explain the growth, the patterns of disease and their impact on growth, the changing composition of neighborhoods, the early attempts at city planning, the emergence of urban crime as a peculiarly urban problem, the morality of trade and industry, the values of the citizenry, the development of civic ritual and the representation of civic pride, and some aspects of the new civic culture.

This course is an introduction to early modern London and does not assume prior knowledge of early modern England. A couple of signposts suggesting how the course fits into the larger history of England: growth began to accelerate in the 1570s, a few years before William Shakespeare arrived in the city, and continued through the last years of Queen Elizabeth's reign and on through the reigns of the Stuart kings, James I and Charles I, through the civil wars of the 1640s and the brief republic of the 1650s, and, despite the great visitation of the plague in 1665 and the fire that burnt most of the ancient city the following year, growth continued through the later Stuart era, the reigns of Charles II and James II and of William, Mary, and Ann, the era in which John Locke wrote and Isaac Newton's physics and astronomy came to dominate the new cosmology.

#### **Requirements:**

1. A twelve to fifteen page term paper will be due on the last day of class or two six-page book reviews. I will hand out suggested paper topics and bibliography, but papers need not be limited to the topics which have occurred to me, and I will be happy to help with bibliography. I do ask that you turn in a brief paragraph describing the topic of your paper or the books you have chosen to review and a bibliography by the time of our class in week 7.
2. One or two short (3-4 page) reports on reading supplementary to the reading assigned for each week.
3. Each participant in the class should e-mail me ([seaver@stanford.edu](mailto:seaver@stanford.edu)), by 5 p.m. the afternoon before each class meeting if possible, two questions or issues that you believe should be addressed at our weekly meetings. I will use these to set an agenda for the class meeting.

#### **Syllabus**

\* designates a reading in the course reader

# designates that the work is available in the Bookstore

® designates a reading placed on reserve

#### **1. Introduction**

(1) Themes and objectives of the course.

(2) Maps & views: what can be learned from contemporary maps and views: what features of contemporary maps and views distinguish the early seventeenth-century

City from modern cities? What are the most prominent buildings in the City? What does the fact that the City walls were originally constructed by the Romans suggest about the medieval City? What might be inferred from the location of the Tower of London outside the eastern walls? What would you judge to be the principal economic activity of the City?

(3) Background reading:

®A.L. Beier and Roger Finlay, "Introduction: The Significance of the Metropolis," in Beier and Finlay, eds., *The Making of the Metropolis. London 1500-1700* (London, 1986), 1-33.

®Roy Porter, *London: A Social History* (Cambridge, Mass., 1995), 1-92.

®Francis Sheppard, *London: A History* (Oxford, 1998), 125-201.

## 2. Population Growth & the Dynamics of Mortality

London grew very rapidly from c.1570 to c.1640. What produced the growth? Were London families large or small? What was the nature of immigration (at what age did people immigrate)? Was disease a major determinant of population size? What were the key factors determining London's population?

(1) Required reading:

Using a parish register for one of the London parishes, aggregate baptisms, marriages and burials yearly for a twenty-year period between c.1580-1680 and present the data in tabular form. Include in your table at least one of the plague years: 1593, 1603, 1625, or 1665. Do baptisms increase over time, and do baptisms total more than aggregated burials? Parish registers are published by the Harleian Society [CS434.H3] A list of London parishes that have been published is contained in the front matter of the Course Reader, as are some sample pages from the registers of St Helen's Bishopsgate and St Mary Aldermary.

To provide a context, please read:

\*Roger Finlay and Beatrice Shearer, "Population Growth and Suburban Expansion," in Beier and Finlay, *Making of the Metropolis*, 37-57.

\*M.J. Kitch, "Capital and Kingdom: Migration to Later Stuart London," in *ibid.*, 224-251.

(2) Projects & Reports

1. How large were London families? Most parishes list the father of the baptized child. Compile a table of how often a father's name appears with a child to be christened over a 15 year period.

2. Using Bower Marsh, ed., *Records of the Worshipful Company of Carpenters*, vol.1, *Apprentice Entry books 1654-1694* (Oxford, 1913), compile a table of the counties of origin of London carpenters' apprentices for a decade. Counties of origin should be grouped so as to be comparable to Table 3.5 in Finlay, *Population and Metropolis*, p.64. What percentage of the apprentices had a deceased father at the time of entering the apprenticeship? Compare the decade analyzed with S.R. Smith, "The Social and Geographical Origins of the London Apprentices," *Guildhall Miscellany*, 4 (1971-3), 195-206.

3. Sharlin argued that native urban populations were capable of reproducing themselves. Does life table data refute this claim? See Allan Sharlin, "Natural Decrease in Early Modern Cities: A Reconsideration," *Past & Present*, 79 (1978), 126-138; Roger

Finlay, *Population and Metropolis. The Demography of London 1580-1650* (Cambridge, 1981), 63-69;

Roger Finlay and Allan Sharlin, "Debate: Natural Decrease in Early Modern Cities," *Past & Present*, 92 (1981), 169-180.

(3) Background reading:

Vanessa Harding, "The Population of London: a review of the published evidence," *London Journal*, 15/2 (1990), 111-128.

### 3. The Special Case of Plague: Epidemics in an urban setting

As you will have discovered in the course of aggregating burials for a London parish, not a generation went by without London being visited by the scourge of bubonic plague -- in 1593, 1603, 1625, 1636, and 1665. How did the mortality pattern of plague years differ from the ordinary high mortality experienced at all times in London? Do visitations of the plague reveal any seasonal regularity? Daniel Defoe wrote his thinly fictionalized account of the plague in 1665 in a year when the plague was expected to reach London for the first time since the great plague of 1665. What does his fictional *Journal* tell us about the strategies citizens employed to cope with the plague? Did these strategies change over time? How did the urban government respond to this demographic crisis? Did the royal government play any role in seeking either to control the disease or to ameliorate its effects? How did Londoners in 1665 understand the causes of this epidemic?

(1) Required reading:

#Daniel Defoe, *A Journal of the Plague Year* (London, 1723), any edition.

\*Paul Slack, "Metropolitan Government in Crisis: the Response to the Plague," in Beier and Finlay, 60-81.

\*Thomas R. Forbes, "By what disease or causalty: the changing face of death in London," in Charles Webster, ed., *Health, Medicine and Mortality in the Sixteenth Century* (Cambridge, 1979), 117-139.

(2) Projects & Reports

1. Obviously seventeenth-century understandings of the plague differ from those of modern medicine. Nevertheless, much about the plague, where it came from and its etiology remain in some debate. See Andrew B. Appleby, "The Disappearance of Plague: A Continuing Puzzle," *Economic History Review*, 2nd series, 33 (1980), 161-173; L. Bradley, "Some Medical Aspects of the Plague," in Paul Slack, ed., *The Plague Reconsidered* (Local Population Studies, Supplement, 1977), 11-23; J. Norris, "East or West? The Geographical Origin of the Black Death," *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, 51 (1977), 16-17; 52 (1978), 117-119.

2. Mark Jenner, who wrote an Oxford D.Phil. dissertation on concepts of cleanliness in early modern London, has published two interesting articles that throw light on reactions to the plague: "The Great Dog Massacre," in William G. Naphy and Penny Roberts, eds., *Fear in Early Modern Society* (Manchester, 1997), 44-61; and "Quakery and Enthusiasm, or Why Drinking Water Cured the Plague," in Ole Peter Grell and Andrew Cunningham, eds., *Religio medici: Medicine and Religion in seventeenth-century England* (Aldershot, 1996), 313-339.

#### 4. The Dynamics of Neighborhoods

Rich merchants and small tradesmen and artisans lived all over the square mile of medieval London within the City walls, although certain trades predominated in certain neighborhoods and along certain streets. Did the social geography of London change during its period of rapid growth? Did suburban development beyond the walls reproduce the social mixing found within the old City, and if not, how was the consequent social segregation to be explained?

(1) Required reading:

\*M.J. Power, "The Social Topography of Restoration London," in Beier and Finlay, *Making of the Metropolis*, 199-223.

\*M.J. Power, "The East and West in Early Modern London," in E. Ives, et al, eds., *Wealth and Power in Tudor England* (London, 1978), 167-185.

\*Michael J. Power, "The East London Working Community in the Seventeenth Century," in Penelope J. Corfield and Derek Keene, eds., *Work in Towns 850-1850* (Leicester, 1990), 103-120.

\*Lawrence Stone, "The Residential Development of the West End of London in the Seventeenth Century," in Barbara Malamant, ed., *After the Reformation* (Philadelphia, 1980), 167-212.

\*John Stowe, *A Survey of London* (1603), ed. C.L. Kingsford (Oxford, 1908), II, 69-91 ("The Suburbs without the Walls").

(2) Projects & Reports

1. How stable were these new urban communities in metropolitan London? Take a parish register where the parish clerk records the occupation of fathers of children christened and list the occupations noted. If you find an occupational designation that is unknown to you, look it up in the Oxford English Dictionary. See Jeremy Bolton, "Neighborhood Migration in Early Modern London," in Peter Clark and David Souden, eds., *Migration and Society in Early Modern England* (Totowa, N.J., 1988), 107-149.

2. Recent work has modified the simple picture of social differentiation in east and west London; see: Paul Griffiths. "Politics made visible: order, residence and uniformity in Cheapside, 1600-1625," and Jeremy Boulton, "The poor among the rich: paupers and the parish, in the West End, 1600-1724," in Paul Griffiths and Mark S. R. Jenner, eds., *Londonopolis: Essays in the Cultural and Social History of Early Modern London* (Manchester, 2000), 176-196, 197-225; John Schofield, "The Topography and Buildings of London, ca.1600," in Lena Cowen Orlin, ed., *Material London, ca.1600* (Philadelphia, 2000), 296-321.

3. Did suburban growth change housing patterns? See M.J. Power, "Shadwell: the Development of a London Suburban Community in the Seventeenth Century," *London Journal*, 4 (1978), 29-46; F.E. Brown, "Continuity and Change in the Urban House: Developments in Domestic Space Organisation in Seventeenth-Century London," *Comparative Society and History*, 28 (1986), 558-590. For a discussion of housing and building construction in the City prior to 1600, see John Schofield, *Medieval London Houses* (New Haven and London, 1994), 6-152; John Schofield, *The Building of London from the Conquest to the Great Fire* (Stroud, Gl., 1999).

## 5. The beginnings of urban planning

Although the city fathers, the mayor and aldermen, largely took a *laissez faire* attitude toward urban growth, the monarchs, from Queen Elizabeth on, viewed the unprecedented growth with a mixture of horror and pride, and from 1580 on issued a series of royal proclamations in which they attempted to influence and control building in the metropolitan area. What measures did the Crown promulgate? What were the ostensible motives for the actions to be taken? How did the regulation sought by the Crown change over time, and can you tell how successful these measures were?

(1) Required reading:

©Paul L. Hughes and James F. Larkin, eds., *Tudor Royal Proclamations* (New Haven, 1969), vol.II, no. 649, vol.III, no.815; James F. Larkin and Paul L. Hughes, eds., *Stuart Royal Proclamations*, Vol.I (Oxford, 1973), nos.25, 51, 87, 120, 121, 152, 186; James F. Larkin, ed., *Stuart Royal Proclamations*, Vol.II (Oxford, 1983), nos.77, 136. [xeroxes of these will be handed out in week 4]

(2) Projects and Reports:

1. It was possible in the late seventeenth century for William Penn as governor and planter of Pennsylvania to lay out a plan for Philadelphia on a clean slate, as it were, for there was no previous city there. When the Queen Elizabeth and the early Stuarts faced the problems posed by London's unprecedented growth, they were confronted by a burgeoning urban area, largely self-governing, and a multitude of private property rights. The following are two judgments made concerning their efforts, the first by a legal historian, the second by a city planner: T. G. Barnes, "Control of London Building in the Early Seventeenth Century: the Lost Opportunity," *California Law Review*, 58 (1970), 1332-1363; William C. Baer, "Housing the Poor and Mechanick Class in Seventeenth-Century London," *London Journal*, 25/2 (2000), 13-39.

## 6. Crime and the Underworld in the Capital

Literature on crime and the London underworld grew along with the growth of the capital. What kind of urban crime did these pamphlets describe? Who were its purported victims? What was the ostensible aim of this literature and is it believable? How would you analyse the probable motives of its frequently anonymous authors? How does the picture of metropolitan crime presented by Londoners at the time compare to the treatment by a modern historian?

(1) Required reading:

\*Robert Green, *A Notable Discovery of Cozenage* (1591) in Arthur F. Kinney, ed., *Rogues, Vagabonds and Sturdy Beggars* (Amherst, 1990), 157-186.

\**Look on me London* (1613), in Joseph H. Marshburn and Alan R. Velie, eds, *Blood and Knavery. English Renaissance Pamphlets and Ballads of Crime and Sin* (Cranbury, N.J., 1973), 159-175.

\**Murder upon Murder* (1635), in *ibid.*, 65-73.

\**The Triumph of Truth* (1664), in Spiro Peterson, *The Counterfeit Lady Unveiled and other Criminal Fiction of Seventeenth Century England* (Garden City, NY, 1961), 103-136.

\*Ian W. Archer, *The Pursuit of Stability* (Cambridge, 1991), 204-256.

(2) Projects and Reports

1. Is the Elizabethan underworld as described by Harman, Green and Dekker a social reality or a literary creation? Compare their accounts with those of modern studies by G. Salgado, *The Elizabethan Underworld* (Gloucester, 1984), Ian Archer, cited above, and Robert B. Shoemaker, *Prosecution and Punishment. Petty Crime and the Law in London and Rural Middlesex, c.1660-1725* (Cambridge, 1991), esp. 3-18, 42-77, 311-319.

2. In the minds of Londoners were not only contemporary perceptions of crime, but also a knowledge of contemporary means of policing the metropolis. The following explore some of the mechanisms available for the policing of early modern London: J.M. Beattie, *Policing and Punishment in London 1660-1750* (Oxford, 2001), 77-168; Tim Wales, "Thief-takers and their clients in later Stuart London," in @Paul Griffiths and Mark S. R. Jenner, eds, *Londonopolis* (Manchester, 2000), 67-84.

3. Riots in London in particular were of concern to the Crown next door in Westminster. The following description is from a miscellaneous collection of letters and memoranda preserved by Sir Simonds D'Ewes and is found in the British Library, Harleian MSS. 383.

f.12r] [looks like a quick memorandum unsigned and unaddressed] 1621

On the 4th of April were whipt from Aldgate to the Temple Bar 3 boys for that they abused the Lord Ambassador of Spain in Fanchurch Street with opprobrious speeches, throwing a half penny loaf of bread in to the litter wherein he rid being thereunto animated by a brewer's clerk which was whipt on the 10th of April, the sheriffs of London seeing the beadles do their office.

At Temple Bar the boys were taken from the cart by 2 butchers and the carman went to the marshal's man who was appointed to see the beadle do his office for the money which was promised for his cart, he not presently paying the carman much abused him as by taking his cloak and threatened to carry him to the Temple stairs and throw him in the Thames, for which the 2 butchers and the carman were on the pillory by a sentence against them in the Sessions House the 17 of April.

On the 7 of April his Majesty came from Theobalds to the Guildhall and there in short speech to the mayor and aldermen somewhat reproved them for suffering such disorders in , the City as he was informed of which a charge for suppressing such further abuses to that end set out his proclamation dated the 8th of April against base people their abuses to strangers and others of [eminence?].

On the 9th of April the Lord Mayor, the Recorder and the aldermen held a court at the Guildhall and there agreed upon certain articles to be observed by constables and other officers of the City which were printed and bore date the same 9th of April.

What was this "disorder" all about? Investigate its circumstances in the *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic*, in John Chamberlain's *Letters*, in Birch's *Court and Times of James I*, in Overall's *Analytical Index to the ... Remembrancia*, and more generally in S.R. Gardiner's *History of England from the accession of James I* for background to the incident.

## 7. Religion & the Moral Community

Laymen as well as preachers had a moral vision of urban life. What do William Scott and Nehemiah Wallington think about entrepreneurial energy and civic

responsibility and about the morality of business? If they do not agree, how do you explain their differing views? Was it due to their different socio-economic position in London society, or to ideological commitments?

(1) Required reading:

\*William Scott, *An Essay on Drapery, or the Compleate Citizen* (London, 1635), introduction by Sylvia M. Thrupp. Boston, 1953.

\*Paul S. Seaver, *Wallington's World. A Puritan Artisan in Seventeenth-Century London* (Stanford, 1985), 112-142.

Background:

Susan Brigden, "Religion and Social Obligation in Early Sixteenth-Century London," *Past & Present*, 103 (1984), 67-112.

Jeremy Boulton, *Neighborhood and Society. A London Suburb in the Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge, 1987), 275-288.

F.J. Fisher, "The Growth of London," in F.J. Fisher, *London and the English Economy 1500-1700*, eds. P.J. Corfield and N.B. Harte (London, 1990), 173-183.

(2) Projects and Reports

1. The marriage of religious evangelism and the story of crime may seem an odd one, but there is some evidence that such occurred in seventeenth-century London: see Peter Lake, "Popular Form, Puritan Content? Two Puritan appropriations of the murder pamphlet from mid-seventeenth-century London," in Anthony Fletcher and Peter Roberts, eds., *Religion, Culture and Society in Early Modern Britain* (Cambridge, 1994), 313-334; Peter Lake and Michael Questier, "Prisons, priests and people," in Nicholas Tyacke, ed., *England's Long Reformation 1500-1800* (London, 1998), 195-233.

## 8. Civic Culture & Civic Pride

Towards the end of Queen Elizabeth's reign, there was a veritable explosion of tracts and books written about London, ranging from John Stow's serious, if nostalgic, survey of the City to popular broadsides and ballads. How did Londoners present themselves and their City to a London audience? What values did they see the City as upholding, at least ideally? Are these values explicitly urban? How did they envision London citizens fitting into the larger world of English subjects?

(1) Required reading:

\*Richard Johnson, *The Nine Worthies of London* (London, 1592) in *Harleian Miscellany* (London, 1811), XII, 164-193.

\*Richard Johnson, *A Song of Richard Whittington* (London, 1612) in Lawrence Manley, ed., *London in the Age of Shakespeare: an Anthology* (Bekenham, Kent, 1986), 232-236.

\*Thomas Dekker, *Troia-Nova Triumphans* [Lord Mayor's show, 1612] in *The Dramatic Works of Thomas Dekker*, ed. Fredson Bowers (Cambridge, 1958), III, 227-247.

Background:

\*Peter Burke, "Popular Culture in Seventeenth-Century London," *London Journal*, 3 (1977), 143-162.

\*Robert Ashton, "Popular Entertainment and Social Control in Later Elizabethan and Early Stuart London," *London Journal*, 9 (1983), 3-19.

## (2) Projects and Reports

1. What are the lord mayor's shows and what were they intended to praise in urban life? How did they differ from celebrations of the monarchy? David M. Bergeron, *English Civic Pageantry 1558-1642* (Columbus, S.C., 1971), 125-241. Dekker was not the only popular playwright to script a lord mayor's show. What are the themes treated in John Webster, *Monuments of Honor* [the Lord Mayor's show, 1624], in *Memorials of the Guild of Merchant Taylors*, compiled by the Master (London, 1875), 608-614. Others Lord Mayor's Shows were written by Thomas Middleton, Thomas Heywood, and other popular City playwrights of the time. Nancy E. Wright, "'Rival Traditions': civic and courtly ceremonies in Jacobean London," in David Bevington and Peter Holbrook, eds., *The Politics of the Stuart Court Masque* (Cambridge, 1998), 197-217.

2. One of the interesting questions about London civic culture is the degree to which metropolitan London was seen as a unity. The Lord Mayor was mayor of the City itself, and in fact urban Middlesex and much of the urban development south of the river in Surrey was outside his jurisdiction. Some scholars have seen this as creating two contrasting societies, the ordered City and the disorderly suburbs, while others suggest that contemporaries saw a single metropolis: see Jean-Christophe Agnew, *Worlds Apart: The Market and the Theater in Anglo-American Thought* (Cambridge, 1986), 49-56; Joseph P. Ward, "Imagining the metropolis in Elizabethan and Stuart London," in Gerald MacLean, Donna Landry, Joseph P. Ward, eds., *The Country and the City Revisited: England and the Politics of Culture, 1550-1850* (Cambridge, 1999), 24-40.

## 9. Civic Culture: Did London possess a unified bourgeois culture?

If a self-conscious culture is always the consequence of social relations, of defining oneself and one's community against others, who were the 'others' against whom Londoners defined themselves? As London society is staged by Dekker, was there a unified urban bourgeoisie, or was the City itself divided into distinct socio-economic groups? How did Londoners relate to the landed elite and to the monarchy in Dekker's popular play?

### (1) Required reading:

#Thomas Dekker, *The Shoemaker's Holiday*, ed. Anthony Parr. Mermaid Ser., London, 1975; 2nd ed., 1990.

\*Louis B. Wright, *Middle Class Culture in Elizabethan England* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1935), 1-42.

\*Jack Hexter, "The Myth of the Middle Class in Tudor England," in *Reappraisals in History* (2nd ed., Chicago, 1979), 71-115.

### (2) Projects and Reports

1. How did the writers and playwrights view urban society? Were they pro- or anti-bourgeois, or neither? Laura Stevenson O'Connell, "The Elizabethan Bourgeois Hero-Tale: Aspects of Adolescent Social Consciousness," in Barbara Malament, ed., *After the Reformation* (Philadelphia, 1980), 267-290; Susan Wells, "Jacobean City Comedy and the Ideology of the City," *Journ. of English Lit. Hist.*, 48 (1981), 37-60; Margo Heinemann, *Puritanism and the Theatre. Thomas Middleton and Opposition*



*Drama under the Early Stuarts* (Cambridge, 1980), ch.6 'Money and Morals in Middleton's City Comedies', pp.88-106.

## 10. Culture Wars?

Massinger's city comedy, *A New Way to Pay Old Debts*, presents the London audience then, and the modern reader now, with a clash of two cultures: overweening urban greed in the person of Sir Giles Overreach, and the rural virtue of the country gentry and peerage in the persons of young Alworth, Lady Alworth, and Lord Lovell. But what are we to make of Greedy, the Justice of the Peace, or Marrall, the lawyer, to say nothing of Welborne or Margaret, Overreach's daughter? How do you suppose a London audience at the time would have reacted? Does love conquer all?

(1) Required reading:

\*Philip Massinger, *A New Way to Pay Old Debts*, ed. T.W. Craik (New York, 1999).

Background:

Andrew Gurr. *Playgoing in Shakespeare's London* (Cambridge, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, 2004), ch.3.

Victor Kiernan, "Massinger, Mourner of an Unborn Past," in *Heart of the Heartless World*, eds. Daniel Margolies and Maroula Joannou (London, 1995), 161-176.

L.C. Knights, "Social Morality in *A New Way to Pay Old Debts*." In *Shakespeare's Contemporaries: Modern Studies in English Renaissance Drama*, eds. Max Bluestone and Norman Rabkin, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (1970), 378-386.

Daniel Defoe's *Journal of the Plague Year*, Thomas Dekker's *Shoemaker's Holiday*, and Philip Massinger's *A New Way to Pay Old Debts* are available in the Bookstore; the other required reading is in the Course Reader, which is also available in the Bookstore. Grading policy: class participation, c.40%; short reports, c.20%; final paper c.40% (the final essay should be c. 12-15 pages)