'Citie ... of stickes': toward a material history of medieval London

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SUMMARY

This concluding paper comprises three elements. The first part provides a brief review of the research on medieval London that has been published to date. Through such archaeological and historical studies our knowledge of medieval London has been significantly advanced. The second part comprises a summary of those presentations made to the 'Medieval London: Recent Archaeological Work and Research Conference' held in 1998, and to the papers contained within the present volume. The third and final part looks forward and considers how future research and publication could be framed in order to yet further enrich our understanding of the form, function, roles and people of the medieval city, its suburbs and its hinterland.

LOOKING BACK

Over the last 20 or so years medieval London has been the subject of a great amount of archaeological investigation and historical research. Such work has revealed much of the form and structure of the medieval capital and also deepened our understanding of London's demography, commercial functions and its role within the wider context of England. It has been possible to explore many diverse aspects of medieval life through the particularly extensive volume of artefact and documentary resources that London enjoys. Such aspects include religion and learning, food supply and diet, ceremony and architecture, health and death. Yet, what is most significant about this recent work is the way that so many differing elements of the medieval city are being brought together within single or collaborative studies and which consequently provide a more thorough exposition of current knowledge than it has been usual to undertake in the past.

For the greater part of the 20th century, studies of Saxon London have been dogged by a lack of historical resources and confusion over the apparently conflicting nature of what little documentary and archaeological evidence there was. While it was established that there was essentially no occupation of the walled city in the immediate post-Roman era the whereabouts of the Venerable Bede's Saxon 'emporium' fell to little more than speculation. Writing about the archaeology of early medieval London in 1984 one well informed archaeologist was obliged to concede the following statement of contemporary knowledge: 'the buildings of this formative [Saxon] period have still to be found. Largely they will already have been destroyed' (Schofield 1984, 23). Yet in the following year field work in the West End, especially in the area of Covent Garden, began to demonstrate just how many traces of Saxon London had in fact survived (Cowie 1988). Moreover within the walled circuit of the City of London a number of sites began to supply evidence for early medieval occupation onwards (see Horsman *et al* 1988, Vince 1991, Steedman *et al* 1992). All those investigations have helped to establish the manner in which London was reformulated in the post-Roman period and the process by which the walled City came to be re-occupied from the 9th century.

Other areas of inner London have been subjected to both archaeological and documentary investigation, in particular the suburbs of Southwark and Westminster. At the same time a small number of investigations in the outer London suburbs have importantly helped to

build a picture of the area in the early Saxon period. Discussion of the Westminster suburb by various historians has focused on the form and nature of the ecclesiastical and royal precincts, and the particular relationship between the two in the early medieval period (Rosser 1989, Mason 1991). More recently the archaeology of the area has been explored during the construction of the London Underground Jubilee Line Extension (Thomas, 1995, Thomas & Cowie forthcoming). Southwark has, by way of contrast, seen much archaeological excavation but somewhat less documentary-based study. A notable exception to that trend being Martha Carlin's monograph which admirably reviews the economic, social and topographical development of Southwark. That work demonstrates the increasing fortunes of the suburban community on the south bank of the Thames towards the end of the medieval period (Carlin 1996).

The physical or topographic nature of London's development has been subject to intense study in two particularly significant areas. On the archaeological side the excavation of London's waterfront structures has shed a great deal of light on both the economic ups and downs of the City and on the development of medieval carpentry techniques. Between 1974–76 excavation of a series of revetments and reclamations dated from the 13th to the 15th centuries was undertaken at Trig Lane. That excavation was later the subject of a notable publication by the London and Middlesex Archaeological Society (Milne 1982). Since that date archaeological endeavour in London has been marked by an important specialisation in the study of timber construction methods and more general research into the port and its apparatus (Milne & Goodburn 1990, Milne 1992a, Marsden 1994 & 1996, Ayre *et al* 1996). Historical research in this field has been more limited but has nonetheless come to provide a useful and, in a sense, less introverted view of the activity and economy of the port (Harding 1983 & 1995, Cobb 1990, Holmes 1993, Harding & Wright 1995).

The second approach to the topographic study of medieval London is based essentially on the study of documentary evidence. Through the extensive collation and analysis of title deeds, rentals, accounts and surveys the detailed patterns of property development and ownership for both the waterfront and Cheapside areas of the City have been delineated. Such work has demonstrated admirably how the great wealth of London's documentary archives can be exploited to reveal information on the physical structure and social organisation of the Capital that is in a very real sense greater than the sum of its various parts. Indeed such work has allowed an important reassessment to be made of the magnitude of London's population during the 14th century (Keene 1984 & 1985, Keene & Harding 1985 & 1987, Dyson 1989, Macleod 1990). More recently these techniques have been applied to the excavated medieval sequence on the Number 1 Poultry site, thus demonstrating the practical utility of combining such documentary and archaeological work (Keene 1987, Treveil & Rowsome 1998). At a more general level the topography of two phases of the medieval city has been outlined within the third volume of the *British Atlas of Historic Towns* series (Lobel 1989).

Those primarily plan-based studies have been further enhanced by work on the three-dimensional structures of the medieval city. The analysis of house carpentry techniques follows in the wake of that carried out on waterfront structures (Horsman *et al* 1988, Goodburn 1993). Applying a meticulous forensic method to the material and documentary remnants of long vanished masonry buildings has allowed a number of the more substantial structures of the medieval city to be reconstructed graphically. The market building at Leadenhall and more recently the church of St John Clerkenwell (see Fig 1, **26**) provide good examples of such work (Samuel 1987 & 1989, Milne 1992b, Sloane & Malcolm forthcoming). Finally the more general form, appearance and organisation of London's built environment has been effectively reviewed in the works of John Schofield (Schofield 1990, 1993 & 1994a).

The last two decades have also seen an enormous amount of work focused on the much smaller material components of life and commerce in the medieval city. A number of important studies based on the pottery and small finds that have been recovered in their tens of thousands during both formal and informal excavation have now been published. Chief amongst these publications is the HMSO monograph series *Medieval Finds from Excavations in London.* The subjects of those volumes range from knives and scabbards through horse equipment to pilgrim badges, and so act to reveal many facets of the daily lives and beliefs of medieval Londoners (Cowgill *et al* 1987, Grew &

de Neegaard 1988, Egan & Pritchard 1991, Crowfoot *et al* 1992, Clark 1995, Egan 1998, Spencer 1999).

The results of expert research into the important collections of medieval pottery recovered from London excavations, especially those on the waterfront, has found its audience through a wide range of books and journal articles, (as noted elsewhere in this volume). The London and Middlesex Archaeological Society has published a number of important works concerned with the chronology and distribution of later Saxon and medieval ceramics, while more recent and on-going research focuses on those products of the earlier Saxon period (Pearce *et al* 1982 & 1985, Pearce & Vince 1988, Vince 1991).

Studies of the broader commercial functions of the City and in particular its impact on the economy of the London hinterland have been undertaken by a number of historians, in particular those working at the Centre for Metropolitan History. By analysing detailed patterns of supply and market exchange our understanding of the significance of London's economy within the medieval realm as a whole has been greatly enhanced (Keene 1989a, Galloway & Murphy 1991, Campbell *et al* 1993, Murphy 1995, Galloway 1995 & 1998, Galloway *et al* 1996).

While ceramics, small finds and the patterns of trade can tell us a great deal about everyday life in the medieval city it is the mortal remains of Londoners that provide a resource through which a number of important questions can be addressed. Several thousand individuals buried in London's chapels and churches, monastic houses and graveyards have been excavated and analysed. The nature of medieval burial practice has attracted the attentions of historians and archaeologists alike, with questions of status, gender, and social structure being addressed both in isolation and in the context of parochial and monastic life (White 1988, Harding 1989, Hawkins 1990, Thomas *et al* 1997). Much work on the skeletal remains of medieval Londoners is yet to be done, but if successful should tell us much about the lifestyles, dietary habits and general health of this large and diverse urban population.

Religious activity was central to the life of the medieval city. As a consequence there has been a great deal of research into the form, character and significance of London's religious communities, both parochial and monastic. With a wealth of documentary sources to draw upon a number of studies by historians have been focused in this area (Barron 1985, Brigden 1989, Burgess 1996, Harvey 1993, Paxton 1992). Archaeologists have perhaps fewer sources with which to fuel their investigations but what little remains of London's medieval ecclesiastical architecture has been, and continues to be, extensively studied (Atkinson & Malcolm 1990, Carlin 1985, Jeffery *et al* 1992, Schofield 1994b, Treveil & Rowsome 1998, Thomas *et al* 1997, Watson 1994). There has also been the important recognition that medieval Londoners engaged in diverse forms of religious observance and came from a variety of European cultural backgrounds. Relatively recent works have been published, for example, on London's Jewish community (Hillaby 1990–2 & 1992–4, Stacey 1995), the merchants of the Hanse (Keene 1989b), and on London's significant Italian community (Bradley 1992 & 1994, Dempsey 1993).

Other sections of medieval society, once generally ignored by historian and archaeologist alike, have recently become the focus for a range of studies. The children and youth of medieval London have began to emerge from the shadows cast by their adult contemporaries through works on their legal status, their toys, and in Barbara Hanawalt's somewhat unconventional, yet evocative, study entitled *Growing up in Medieval London* (Barron 1996, Clark 1990, Hanawalt 1993, Egan 1996). In general the women of London held a minority position within the formal structures of medieval society, a status that was for many years reinforced by the paucity of research focused upon their lives. Since the mid 1980s, however, that pattern has begun to change as a number of studies have been undertaken that address the roles and status of women within the medieval city (Lacey 1985, Barron 1989, Barron & Sutton 1994). While children continue to appear only rarely in more general works on medieval London it is now unusual for such publications to omit some relevant consideration of women or gender.

It is apparent from the foregoing text that the last 20 or so years have seen a great quantity of documentary and archaeological research focused on medieval London. Much of that work has been completed, published and distributed amongst both an academic and more general readership. Nonetheless, research into London's past goes on apace, especially as a result of the great intensity of recent archaeological discovery.

It was in order to make available some of the detail and ideas concerned with that recent work (in some cases well before we might expect to see the results in print) that the 1998 'Medieval London: Recent Archaeological Work and Research Conference' was organised. What follows is a summary account of the papers presented at the conference and which are, for the most part, within this present volume.

THE MEDIEVAL CONFERENCE

The 'Medieval London Conference' brought together a number of archaeologists and historians who have interests in the medieval city. In all 15 papers were given that ranged from new archaeological discoveries about middle Saxon London, through small finds and ceramics, to documentary based studies of London's wider hinterland. The day ended with a brief open forum discussion during which a number of concerns were raised about both current and future research directions.

The first presentation on the day, also the first paper in this collection, concerned the discoveries made during the large-scale excavations associated with the redevelopment of London's Royal Opera House. During 1996 those excavations produced evidence for the development of the middle Saxon settlement known as *Lundenwic*. In doing so they add immeasurably to the evidence collected during the 1985 excavations that took place immediately to the south. The more recent work has helped to delineate the developmental evolution of *Lundenwic*, expanding as it did from the smaller southern settlement in the 7th century to the larger and more economically prosperous settlement of the 8th century. The great assemblage of artefacts recovered from the site were concentrated in those parts of the excavated sequence dated to the late 8th century and help to consolidate the theory of economic success during that period. The excavations also shed some light on the relatively poorly understood process of decline that led to the abandonment of the settlement in the 9th century.

The second presentation on the day further examined that 9th-century episode in London's history when *Lundenwic* was abandoned and the walled area of the City of London was re-occupied. Robin Wroe-Brown's paper provides an admirable description of how a variety of sources and techniques can be brought together to assist our understanding of excavated material. The Bull Wharf site produced evidence for the foundation of the important London harbour of Queenhithe (see Fig 1, **8**). A limited amount of dendrochronological dating and other artefact information suggest Queenhithe, or Aethelred's Hithe as it was known, was first established in the later decades of the 9th century. The subsequent development of the area was explored through a range of approaches including the use of some documentary evidence.

Trade, and its material culture, was the focus for the third conference paper by Lyn Blackmore. Work on medieval ceramics has made substantial progress during the last decade or so and the paper presented here provides an excellent summary of the current state of knowledge of middle Saxon to 15th-century pottery. But the paper goes further than this and assesses briefly the nature and extent of London's trading networks. In particular the contribution of northern European production to the commercial activities of London via the Thames is highlighted.

Bruce Watson continued the theme of London's river and its wider significance through an interesting account of the military importance of London Bridge (see Fig 1, **14**). The paper he presents here describes the physical structures of the stone bridge and their contribution toward its defensive capability. He also provides a detailed summary of the occasions, between 1014 and 1554, that the late Saxon wooden bridge and, later, the stone-built bridge, came under attack. That the civic authorities of London were concerned to maintain and defend London Bridge is without doubt, however, as the ruling power of a great medieval city they were also concerned to establish their own presence within the confines of the city itself. Two associated papers, one based on documentary research the other on archaeological excavation, addressed that issue.

The development of the medieval Guildhall (see Fig 1, **10**) was described by Nick Bateman, who provides a discussion of the dedication of the Guildhall Chapel, evidenced by two uniquely inscribed foundation stones, in this present volume. On the day Nick Bateman's paper demonstrated how well connected documentary sources and the excavated remains and sequences were. A complimentary discussion of the documentary evidence for the development and function of the Guildhall and its precinct was then provided by the historian Caroline Barron.

A strong case was made for seeing the Guildhall complex as a vital centre of civic ceremony for London. The coincidence of such well structured historical and archaeological research bodes well for any future integrated publication based on this site (unfortunately Caroline Barron's paper could not be included in the current volume).

Taking a wider and more inclusive view of medieval London Geoff Egan concentrates on the enormous range of non-ceramic artefacts recovered from excavations, and also as isolated finds chiefly from the Thames foreshore and associated reclamation deposits. The large number of artefacts collected by the Museum of London during the last two decades join the extensive collections already held, partly published, and now deserving of greater research activity. Geoff Egan draws attention to the important HMSO series of publications on London's medieval finds, but comments that the publication of recently recovered early medieval artefacts would make a valuable addition to even that lately produced series.

A major excavation relatively recently completed in the City of London was that of No 1 Poultry (see Fig 1, **11**). The paper by Philip Treveil and Mark Burch outlines the medieval development of this significant site at the east end of Cheapside. Aspects of the topographic development of this area of the re-occupied late Saxon city, the form and arrangement of successive buildings and open-spaces, and the direct links with extensively researched documentary sources are all outlined. Two substantial masonry structures of medieval date were investigated during the excavation, the remains of the church of St Benet Sherehog and an underground chamber associated with the Great Conduit. The foundation date of the church remains an issue for debate; documentary sources suggest the early 12th century, while the archaeological evidence hints at a somewhat earlier, late 11th-century date, but perhaps as a private chapel. The construction of the Great Conduit is more firmly dated at *c.*1245, however its near complete survival beneath the busy city street of Cheapside makes it one of the most remarkable discoveries of the 1990s.

Staying with the subject of parish churches Clive Burgess presented an informative insight into the social hierarchy and religious dynamism of St Andrew Hubbard, Eastcheap (see Fig 1, **16**). Churchwardens' accounts were the core material for his study, and with their focus on the material fixtures and fittings, as well as general expenditures and the ceremonial costs of the activities of the parish, this type of source does much to flesh-out the structural evidence of the archaeological record. By concentrating on the later medieval period Clive Burgess has been able to carefully reconstruct the character of this somewhat poor medieval parochial community. Sixteenth century churchwardens' accounts are also of central use within studies of the English Reformations. Reversing certain destructive elements of one of those Reformations, that of Henry VIII, forms the basis of Barney Sloane's paper which reviews current research towards a publication series on London's medieval monasteries. These publications form part of the major new series of Museum of London Archaeology Service monographs. Works that go some substantial way in developing the type of integrated archaeological and historical accounts rarely seen in print before the 1990s.

The buried skeletal remains of the good Christians of medieval London provide the material upon which Jan Conheeney and William White undertake their studies. Two papers are presented here, the first considers the range of demographic information that can be obtained from such studies, also suggesting some of the osteological characteristics of London's population. The second paper, by William White, discusses how the delays in the publication of medieval cemetery material for London are currently being addressed. Once again much confidence is placed in the new MoLAS monograph series.

During the conference the dietary habits of some medieval Londoners were considered by Alan Pipe, who not only reviewed the environmental evidence for two specific London households but chose, unlike so many other contributors, to look at a location south of the River Thames (unfortunately Alan Pipe's paper could not be included in the current volume). Taking an even wider view of what constituted medieval London, or at least its influence, James Galloway presented the results of extensive documentary research into the development of the economic hinterland of the later medieval city. Through studies of the commercial demand for food and fuel, the supply of the same, and transport and market networks the impact of the medieval city on the country at large can now be ascertained. It is clear from the work of James Galloway and his colleagues at the Centre for

Metropolitan History that by 1400 medieval London lay at the centre of a vast regional market economy.

The great breadth of material and the detail of the research findings presented both during the conference and in the papers collected here demonstrate that our knowledge of medieval London has grown substantially over the last decade or so. That knowledge has been built upon two parallel forms of investigation: archaeological excavation and the consequent research associated with its publication, and a variety of documentary-based historical enquiries and studies. Some of this 'knowledge' has now found its way into print, yet more awaits future publication. Nonetheless, exactly what the research objectives of future studies into the medieval city and suburbs might be, and perhaps more importantly the mechanisms by which such objectives might be achieved is deserving of a little thought.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

As noted above, over the last 15 years archaeologists have effectively 'discovered' middle Saxon London, they have begun to characterise its structural form and outline aspects of its chronological development. Yet, the detailed chronology of *Lundenwic* and its full topographic extent requires further elucidation. At the same time archaeologists have continued their intensive investigations into the waterfront districts of the City, helping to develop our understanding of both the 9th-century re-occupation and later patterns of development. The reclamation dumps associated with those waterfront areas have also contributed much to our knowledge of London's wider trading contacts and commercial history: that work in particular building upon the important research so profitably undertaken by the ceramics specialists now located within the Museum of London Specialist Services division.

Historians, on the other hand, have added to our knowledge of the City's evolution by significantly developing methods of documentary-based property reconstruction. Most notable in this field is Derek Keene's work on the sample parishes of Cheapside, and Tony Dyson's work on the waterfront and other areas. That work has, by extension, supplied a raft of social and economic information with which to enhance our understanding of medieval London. Through Derek Keene's work, for example, it has been possible to suggest that London's early 14th-century population could have been as high as 100,000 (Keene 1984). Other historians have investigated the important relationship between the City and the Crown, and London's impact upon patterns of national development. The composition and activities of some of the alien communities within the walls have also been revealed, as have to a lesser degree those who held aristocratic property without the walls. It is still the case, however that our knowledge of the detailed economic life-cycles of a broader cross-section of medieval Londoners would greatly benefit from further investigation.

Despite the examples above it is the case generally that many historians tend toward discrete studies, whether biographical, institutional, or topographic. While, archaeologists tend, naturally enough, toward site-based studies, or artefact analysis within often relatively constrained period or type boundaries. Nonetheless it should be acknowledged that a few archaeologists and historians have undertaken wider and more thematic research, such activity is not however widespread. Problems often arise as historians labour in isolation, or as archaeologists become dependent upon site-related funding. An alternative to those situations can be exemplified by the organisation and activities of the Centre for Metropolitan History. Based in a larger research institute, the Institute for Historical Research, the centre houses a variety of scholars undertaking work on discrete projects but which fall within a broadly related field of study. The CMH environment has engendered a research culture expressed through a long-running IHR seminar, joint Museum of London/CMH artefact seminars, special conferences, and a number of post-graduate study days. It can only be hoped that the new London Archaeological Archive and Research Centre will come to play a similar role in fostering and promoting archaeological studies of medieval London within the institutional context of the Museum of London.

Whatever the object of study, and by whoever the work is undertaken – archaeologist or historian – it is axiomatic that a great deal of effort and resource will have gone into obtaining the information upon which such work is based. Whether it is the large sums of money expended on professional city-centre excavations, or the personal commitment and sacrifice of postgraduate students, it is important that such 'expendi-

ture' is made wisely and productively. While recognising that in real terms the financial resource available for the study of the medieval city is limited, perhaps it is time to consider increasing the proportion of the resource available for more structured, thematic and integrated research. In trying to understand the medieval city of London it is not adequate to simply study its buildings and structures nor is it sensible to focus on its people, the inhabitants, in isolation. Those two aspects must be brought together within a mutually beneficial research framework. It is only in this fashion that we will be able to capture and understand the significance and vitality that we believe characterised many aspects of medieval London.

It is to their great credit that a strong lead in this direction has been provided by London's archaeologists. It is now widely accepted that publication of the analysis of a simple archaeological sequence, albeit supported by appendices of finds and environmental reports, is insufficient. At the same time most historians are now prepared to approach wider thematic issues; such as household organisation, aspects of the family, cultural identities, social deviance, or market networks, rather than providing straightforward institutional narratives of an antiquarian nature. Archaeologists now readily enquire after and incorporate the results of documentary evidence within their research and publications. Historians have also been known to use archaeological evidence as an element within their studies. This is all to the good, yet that level of integration could be further enhanced. While we must continue to produce archaeological research that blends site-recovered data with specific documentary and visual material, and historical research which treats the documentary and visual source equally with structural and artefact-based information, there should ideally be no inequality between the various types of evidence.

Building on such an integrated approach we might go even further, and several people in the research community are moving in that direction. An excellent example of such work is to be found within the pages of the Museum of London Archaeological Service's Monograph number 1, *The Excavations at the Priory and Hospital of St Mary Spital* (Thomas *et al* 1997). There is much about the structure and content of that publication that reflects and indeed answers the above concerns, but does it go far enough? The work provides an academically rigorous yet highly readable account of the archaeological history of the site and an equally thorough review of the related documentary sources. But it does not fully explore the social and cultural dimensions of life and death in St Mary Spital during the 15th or 16th centuries. Perhaps more significantly it disappoints in its limited consideration of the local context of the hospital (see Fig 1, **30**). Understanding the topographic, social and cultural context might have been better served by a more expansive and critical reading of the documentary evidence associated with the institution's neighbours. Nonetheless this work stands as an important model for an integrated approach to research which, with appropriate critical enhancement, might be termed 'material history'.

But not all research would appear to be so easily reconciled. It is important for us to know how the buildings of medieval London were constructed, what they looked like, (and for that matter who lived in them), it is equally important to understand the origins of artefact assemblages, and the character of the medieval environment. We also want to know, for example, about patterns of religious belief, the nature of criminal activity, access to education and the extents of poverty. But the key question remains, is it possible to follow those two paths to the same destination? I believe the St Mary Spital publication takes the first important steps toward this, but still only the first steps. More thought and strategic effort needs to be applied to the writing of integrated studies if we are to achieve appropriately informed material histories.

It is likely that such developments will, necessarily, be originated by the archaeologists. If the demand is there for big thematic studies of medieval London – and I believe it is – it seems only natural that they should be archaeologically-lead. The monumental archive of excavated data is waiting to be exploited to just such an end. But where will this leave the historians (at least those who wish to be part of such undertakings)? I would suggest that for large-scale thematic projects to produce worthwhile results it is necessary to acknowledge that historical research must stop taking the form of superficial documentary-excavation, or as one academic recently put it 'pinning the tail on the donkey'. Using documents to describe the arrangement of property ownership is one thing, critically interrogating them to elucidate the patterns and processes of the social, economic and cultural life of medieval London, and then seamlessly

integrating that with equally critical archaeological research is going one important step further.

There are, however, other issues that may stand in the way of such an approach. Most of the papers in this present volume focus on current or future areas for research, they all demonstrate how significantly our understanding of the medieval city has increased. But it is, in most instances, a city seen in isolation. If London was an important urban centre in the medieval world it was because of its complexity, its size and its status within its hinterland, within the realm, and within Europe. Despite their undoubted significance there were virtually no papers given at the conference that dealt substantially with London's suburbs (especially Westminster), its market outlyers, or the relationship between the surrounding counties and the Capital. It is possible that this omission came about as a result of contemporary market forces in the field of archaeological contracting and the generally negative affect this is having on stimulating and funding more expansive post-excavation research. Discussion of the major archaeological interventions at Barking Abbey, for example, is noticeable by its absence. If such commercial pressures begin to erode the Capital's archaeological research base it is unlikely that our understanding of London's past will be furthered as well in the next 20 years as it has been over the last 20.

Drawing to a close it is appropriate to return to the title of this paper and the description of London, by King James VI and I, as a 'Citie ... of Stickes'. It is possible to use that early 17th-century phrase to review what is required of us when we too take a backward look at the medieval metropolis. We would certainly expect that all the foregoing archaeological and historical research should, at the very least, be able to provide some indication of how accurate such a description might have been. But what do we mean by accuracy? Clearly we want to know how such a comment might relate to the built-fabric, physical extents, and environmental conditions of London, after all it was at these circumstances that the comment was directed. But, and for the sake of argument alone, we might also want to know how those words can be interpreted if they were thought to have been a contemptuous description of the economic, social and cultural structures of the late medieval/early modern Capital. We are, archaeologist and historian alike, well on the way to addressing such apparently divergent yet thematically linked questions. Yet we will only do so successfully with the active promotion of more integrated multi-disciplinary multi-site research through which we will generate new material histories of medieval London.

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