

JACK CADE AT LONDON STONE

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SUMMARY

In view of recent press and public interest in the once famous London Stone, now no more than a small block of limestone behind a grille in the wall of an office building near Cannon Street station in the City of London, this paper summarises the scantily-documented history of the Stone from the first record of it in about 1100. Speculation about its origin and purpose began at least as early as the 16th century, and, without proposing any new hypothesis, we revisit some of those early conjectures and their modern counterparts. As witness that London Stone once symbolised London itself, and that possession of it was thought to grant power over the City, most writers have cited the action of Jack Cade, leader of the rebels against Henry VI's corrupt government in 1450, in striking it with his sword and claiming to be 'Lord of London'. However, near-contemporary accounts of the few days during which the rebels effectively controlled London are confused and inconsistent. There is no clear evidence as to how Cade intended his action to be understood, nor how either his followers or the people of London interpreted it. The incident cannot be used to prove that London Stone had a special significance or ceremonial function in medieval London.

INTRODUCTION

In July 1450 the Kentish rebel leader Jack Cade struck his sword on London Stone in Candlewick Street (now Cannon Street) in the City of London, and claimed to be 'Lord of London'. The purpose of this paper is to consider the near-contemporary accounts of that incident, and attempt to interpret its significance for the history of one of London's most obscure monuments. Before doing so we shall need to clarify some of that dubious and much romanticised history.

London Stone is not a novel concern for the London and Middlesex Archaeological Society, for in 1869 a special committee of the Society was

formed to discuss the welfare of the Stone with the Rector and Churchwardens of St Swithun's church, then its guardians. And in the following year John Edward Price (at that time the Society's Director of Evening Meetings) included in a monograph (published by the Society) on the Roman mosaic pavement recently discovered in Bucklersbury, a discussion of the course of the adjacent Walbrook, together with information on 'that famous monument of ancient London, "London Stone"' (Price 1870, 55–65). He drew, he tells us, on 'materials [...] collected by my esteemed friend Mr. W. H. Overall, F.S.A. [the Guildhall Librarian]' (*ibid.*, 55), and this work is a valuable contribution to the subject.

First referred to by name at the beginning of the 12th century, as we shall see, London Stone is represented today by no more than a small rectangular block of oolitic limestone, about 21 inches wide, 17 inches high, and 12 inches front to back.¹ It is set behind an iron grille within a decorative stone casing built into the outside wall of a building (No. 111) on the north side of Cannon Street (formerly Candlewick Street) in the City of London, nearly opposite Cannon Street station (Fig 1). A bronze plaque on the sloping top of the casing, dating from 1962, proclaims:

LONDON STONE

This is a fragment of the original piece of limestone once securely fixed in the ground now fronting Cannon Street Station.

Removed in 1742 to the north side of the street, in 1798 it was built into the south wall of the Church of St. Swithun London Stone which stood here until demolished in 1962.

Its origin and purpose are unknown but in 1188 there was a reference to Henry, son of Eylwin de Lundenstane, subsequently Lord Mayor of London.

The Stone is also viewable inside the building



Fig 1. London Stone in 2006, in the frontage of the then Sportec shop (Photo: John Clark)

(once the Bank of China, latterly the Oversea-Chinese Banking Corporation, most recently, until its closure in April 2007, a sportswear shop), where it is protected by a glass case. The site is soon to be redeveloped, leading to press and public interest in London Stone and its fate — for example in the online *BBC News Magazine* (Coughlan 2006).

Yet — as journalists never fail to point out — few of the thousands of commuters who pass it every working day have any knowledge of (or interest in) London Stone, or the mythology that has grown up around it and its supposed significance.

LONDON STONE: EARLY HISTORY

Those same journalists, as well as many popular writers, such as Peter Ackroyd (2000, 18), are in general agreement that in the past London Stone had a 'special significance' for London and Londoners. This view is well summed up in the opening words of the current entry on 'London Stone' in the online encyclopedia Wikipedia:

The **London Stone** is an ancient stone, that is said to be the place from which the Romans

measured all distances in Britannia. Whether or not this is true, the London Stone was for many hundreds of years recognised as the symbolic authority and heart of the City of London. It was the place that deals were forged, and oaths were sworn. It was also the point from which official proclamations were made. Jack Cade, popular leader of those who rebelled against Henry VI in 1450, observed the tradition by striking his sword against it as a symbol of sovereignty after his forces entered London; on striking the stone, he then felt emboldened to declare himself lord of the city. (Wikipedia contributors 2008)

Most of this is untrue — or since it is so difficult to prove a negative, it is perhaps fairer to say that there is no evidence to support most of this farrago of myth. Fairer still, perhaps, to say that the present author has failed to find such evidence during the course of considerable research, and can in most cases identify who first made each claim and on what shaky grounds they did so!² I can find no confirmation that the Stone was ever recognised as the symbolic heart and authority of the City; or that it was a place where deals were forged, oaths sworn, or official

proclamations made; or that there was ever a *tradition* that involved striking a sword on it to confirm authority over London.

In so far as we can be certain of anything, there is one core historical fact. Jack Cade, leader of a rebellion in 1450, *did* strike his sword on the Stone and *did* claim to be Lord of London. But this seems to have been an isolated and apparently unprecedented act. Much has been made of it, but it is never discussed properly in context — and its significance may be rather less than recent enthusiastic writers on London Stone have believed. Before returning to Jack Cade, however, we should review the bare facts of the Stone's recorded history.

The small block of stone in its alcove is singularly unimpressive and attracts little attention today. Yet London Stone was clearly once much more imposing. In 1598 John Stow described it as 'a great stone' (Stow 1908, 1: 224); it was 'pitched upright', he tells us, 'fixed in the ground very deep, fastened with bars of iron, and otherwise so strongly set, that if carts do run against it through negligence, the wheels be broken, and the stone itself unshaken'. It stood on the south side of the then Candlewick Street, 'near unto the channel' according to Stow. It was within the parish of St Swithin (the church called 'St Swithin at London Stone' in 1557 (Harben 1918, 565)) and in Walbrook ward.

Stow was the first writer to attempt to elucidate the Stone's history (Stow 1908, 1: 224–5). The earliest reference to it that he could find was, he says, 'in the end of a fair written Gospel book given to Christ's church in Canterbury [Canterbury Cathedral], by Ethelstane, King of the West Saxons'. There he found 'noted of lands or rents in London belonging to the said church, whereof one parcel is described to lie near unto London stone'. This citation is usually quoted uncritically, and usually with an implication that the reference must date to the reign of King Æthelstan, West Saxon king of England (924–39), although Stow does not claim as much. One could respond that a list of church properties might well be bound into the back of a volume of very different date. Binding such a record into a volume containing the scriptures might be thought to give it added authority and security.

In fact, there can be little doubt that the list of Canterbury Cathedral properties in London that Stow saw was the same that was later published by B W Kissan (1940) and dated by

him between 1098 and 1108, or a lost copy of a very similar list. Kissan's list appears to be the earliest such list extant (Keene & Harding 1985, 71).³ Among the properties listed is one given to Canterbury by 'Eadwaker æt lundene stane' (Kissan 1940, 58). Presumably, Stow interpreted the local cognomen of the man who lived 'at London Stone' as the 'address' of the property he gave to Canterbury.

The most famous Londoner to have dwelt like Eadwaker 'at London Stone' is without doubt the first mayor, Henry Fitz Ailwin, although the designation 'of London Stone' belongs first to his father. The earliest London chronicle, included in the City volume known as *Liber de Antiquis Legibus* (the *Book of Ancient Laws*) and probably compiled by the alderman Arnald Fitz Thedmar between 1258 and 1272 (Gransden 1974, 509–12), says that in the first year of the reign of Richard I (1189) 'factus est Henricus filius Eylwini de Londene-stane Maior Londoniarum', 'Henry, son of Eylwin of London Stone, was made mayor of London' (Stapleton 1846, 1). The date that he became mayor may be disputed, but it is usually assumed that his father 'Eylwin' or 'Ailwin' was Æthelwine son of Leofstan, in whose house the husting court had met before 1130 (Keene 2004; Page 1923, 250).

Ailwin's house 'at London Stone' in fact lay well to the north of London Stone itself, on the north side of the churchyard of St Swithin's and abutting on St Swithin's Lane on the east (Kingsford 1920, 44–8), the property marked as 'Prior of Tortington's Inn' and 'Drapers' Hall' on the *Historic Towns Atlas* map of London in about 1520 (Lobel 1989).

Other medieval references to London Stone are few, and none — apart possibly from the incident in 1450 that is the chief subject of this paper — suggest any particular reverence for it. In the early 15th century it was noticed in passing by the hero of the oft-reprinted poem 'London Lickpenny' on his disconsolate way through the City (Dean 1996, 224); in about 1522 its marriage to the Bosse of Billingsgate was announced in a poem printed by Wynkyn de Worde (Anon 1860, 26–7); in 1598 it appeared on stage in William Haughton's comedy *Englishmen for my Money* (Haughton 1616, sig G1 verso; Stock 2004, 95); in 1608 it was one of the 'sights [...] most strange' shown to 'an honest Country foole' on a visit to London (Rowlands 1608, sig D3 recto).

London Stone, clearly an important land-



Fig 2. London Stone, opposite the door of St Swithin's church, on the 'Copperplate' map of c.1559 (Museum of London)

mark, was marked and named on the so-called 'Copperplate' map of the late 1550s, the earliest printed map of London, of which just three engraved printing plates survive. It is one of the few features other than streets and major buildings to be thought worth naming. On one of the two plates in the collection of the Museum of London, it is shown in side view as a rectangular block⁴ (Fig 2). It is not drawn to scale, and it is impossible to estimate its actual size, although it looks wider than it is high. It is positioned in the roadway opposite the main door of St Swithin's church. This door is shown set in the church tower, at the south-west corner of the church. However, John Schofield has pointed out that this depiction of the church seems to conflict with archaeological evidence that suggests that the medieval tower stood in the north-west of the building (Schofield 1994, 131), and we certainly cannot trust this map as necessarily an accurate representation of the location of the stone — or indeed of its appearance.

A derivative from the Copperplate map, the so-called 'Agas' map, printed from eight woodblocks at a date between 1561 and 1571, also names London Stone and marks its location by a small square in the same position as the block on the Copperplate map (Prockter & Taylor 1979, 24). The stone is neither named nor marked on the smaller scale map by Braun and Hogenberg, derived from the same original (Goss 1991, 68–9).

The next map to mark its site clearly is John Leake's manuscript map showing the extent of the Great Fire, completed in March 1667 (British Library Add Ms 5415.1.E; reproduced in Reddaway 1940, foldout opp p 54). This shows London Stone, marked by a dot in the roadway of Cannon Street, close to its south side, opposite the western end of the site of the destroyed St Swithin's church (shown as a blank area) — thus perhaps slightly to the west of the location we might infer from the Copperplate map. More recent southward widening of Cannon Street would place this original location closer to the

middle of the present roadway, and it is marked in this position on Ralph Merrifield's map of Roman sites in London (Merrifield 1965, 271–2 and map, no. 268).

Thus any hopes that the original location might be identified or a remaining stump of the stone be found by excavation are dashed by the realisation that the ground underlying the full width of the modern street was quarried away, to a depth of more than 30 feet, during the building of the Metropolitan District Railway (now the District Line) and its Cannon Street underground station by the 'cut-and-cover' method, when the line was extended from Mansion House to Tower Hill in 1884 (Lee 1988, 18–19).⁵

MOVING THE STONE

The Stone may have suffered damage during the Great Fire (which had destroyed St Swithin's church and neighbouring buildings on both sides of the street), for in 1671, when it was the venue for the ceremonious destruction by officers of the Worshipful Company of Spectacle Makers of a batch of spectacles that had been confiscated from a local shop as 'all very badd in the glasse and frames not fit to be put on sale' (Law 1977, 11), it was referred to as 'the remaining parte of London Stone' — perhaps suggesting that within living memory it had been larger.

In the 18th century, writers mostly copied John Stow in their accounts of London Stone, while giving more space to speculations about its original function, to which we shall return. However, John Strype, in his edition of Stow's *Survey* (Stow 1720, book 2: 193–4), does add a contemporary description:

This Stone before the Fire of *London*, was much worn away, and as it were but a Stump remaining. But is now for the Preservation of it cased over with a new Stone handsomely wrought, cut hollow underneath so as the old Stone may be seen, the new one being over it, to shelter and defend the old venerable one. (*ibid.*, 200)

London Stone with its new protective canopy is depicted in the foreground of an etching of St Swithin's church by Jacob Smith (*fl* 1733) in Guildhall Library (Fig 3). It stands opposite the south-west corner of the church, the stone casing shown with a domed top, and with a circular cut-out in the side through which the Stone itself can be glimpsed.



Fig 3. St Swithin's church, rebuilt after the Great Fire, depicted by Jacob Smith in about 1730. London Stone stands in the road in the foreground, protected by the little stone canopy described by John Strype (Guildhall Library, City of London)

By the middle of the 18th century London Stone was clearly considered an obstruction to traffic. It was moved and placed by the kerbstone against the wall of St Swithin's church on the north side of the street. The initiative was taken by the Vestry of St Swithin's, within whose parish the stone stood, and a Vestry minute of 13 May 1742 records: 'That the Stone, commonly called London Stone, be placed against the Church, according to the churchwardens' discretion' (Price 1870, 63; White 1898, 185). The operation cost the parish just 12 shillings, and what exactly was moved is unclear. Perhaps the lower part of the stone was left in the ground. If so, no remnant of the stone left *in situ* has ever been recognised, and if not already removed, it must have finally been destroyed during the building of the Metropolitan District Railway in 1884, as we have seen. The part of the Stone that was moved is said to have still been (in 1785) 'nearly four feet high, two feet broad and one foot thick



Fig 4. London Stone without its protective casing, probably at the time of its removal in 1798; anonymous drawing (Guildhall Library, City of London)

with a broken ornament on the top' (Leftwich 1934, 4). I have not traced the source from which Leftwich derived these measurements, but the overall proportions are confirmed by a drawing of about this date in Guildhall Library (Fig 4). The Stone was clearly cut down to its present sad size either in 1798 or during the subsequent move.

The Stone was placed against the church wall just to the east of the church's south-west door. It is shown in this position in an engraving published by J T Smith in 1791 (Smith 1791, [plate 1]), later reproduced by J E Price (1870, 61) (Fig 5). The domed casing with a circular cut-out is surely that which had protected the Stone in its earlier position in the roadway.

Once more 'doomed to destruction as a nuisance' in 1798, London Stone was 'saved by the praiseworthy intervention of Mr. Thomas Maiden, a printer in Sherborne Lane, who prevailed on one of the parish officers to have it placed against the Church-wall, on the spot which it now occupies' (Brayley 1829, 1: 21). The Vestry minutes for 13 June 1798 duly instruct 'that the porter's block and seats be taken away, and a new block be erected in the blank doorway, under the direction of the surveyor, with the old material, of the length and width of

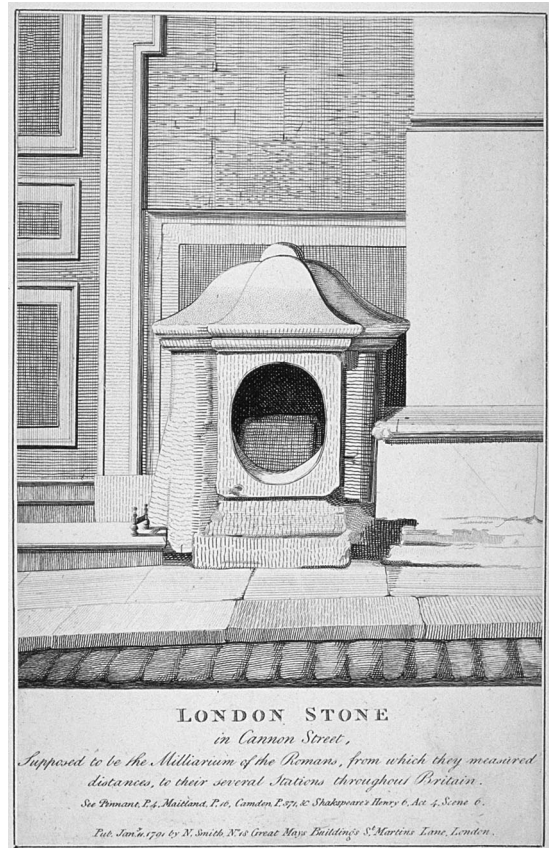


Fig 5. London Stone in front of St Swithin's church, in its first location, after 1742, just to the right of the west door; from J T Smith *Antiquities of London and its Environs* 1791 (Guildhall Library, City of London)

the blank doorway; and the stone, called *London Stone* to be fixed at the west end of the same, on a plinth' (Price 1870, 61; White 1898, 185). It is in this position that it is shown in early 19th-century illustrations, standing on a shelf within the arch formed by the blocked doorway (Fig 6). The same domed canopy with a circular cut-out continues to shelter it.

Brayley's comment that in 1798 the Stone was placed 'on the spot which it now occupies' was, by the time his book was published in 1829, no longer true — for it had been moved again. Thomas Allen, in 1828, says that the Stone was then 'below the central window [contained in] a hollow pedestal' (Allen 1827–8, 3: 765). Illustrations from this time onwards show it in what was to be its location for more than a hundred years, set back into an alcove in the *centre* of the church's south wall, raised on a



Fig 6. London Stone set in front of the blocked east doorway of St Swithin's church, after 1798 and before its removal to the middle of the church wall; anonymous watercolour, c.1801 (Guildhall Library, City of London)

three-sided plinth (Fig 7). It was still protected by a canopy of the same form as previously, presumably the original casing reshaped to fit in front of the alcove cut back into the thickness of the church wall.⁶

In the course of J E Price's account of the history of London Stone, he also reported that in 1869 the Council of the London and Middlesex Archaeological Society had discussed the better preservation of the stone with the Rector and Churchwardens of St Swithin's (Price 1870, 64–5). The Society's own 'Proceedings' for 10 May 1869 confirm that a 'London Stone committee' had been appointed by the Society's Council to undertake this consultation (Anon 1870, 585). The improvements recommended and put into effect involved the addition of a protective iron

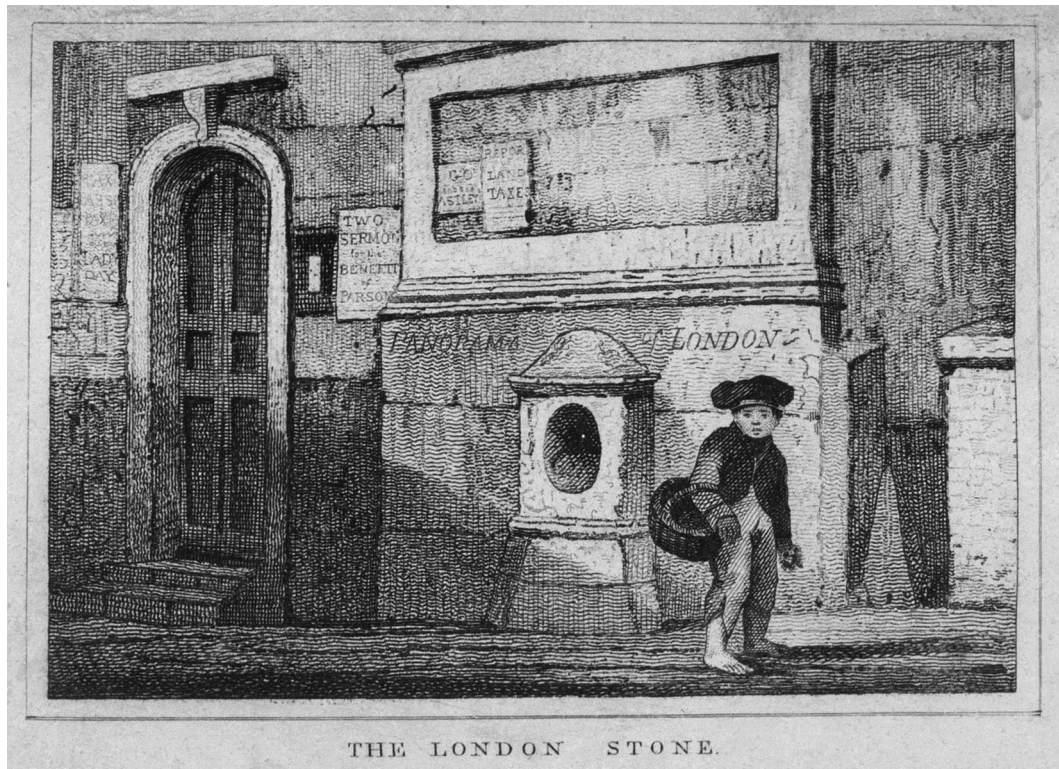


Fig 7. London Stone in its final position in the middle of the south wall of St Swithin's church; anonymous engraving, 1820s (Guildhall Library, City of London)



Fig 8. London Stone in 1937, with the protective grille and the plaque above it in Latin and English installed at the instigation of the London and Middlesex Archaeological Society in 1869 (Photo: Hulton Archive/Getty Images)

grille (Fig 8) and the erection on the church wall above the Stone of a descriptive plaque, with an inscription in Latin and English (Harrison 1891). The English text read as follows:

LONDON STONE

Commonly believed to be a Roman work long placed about xxxv feet hence towards

the South West and afterwards built into the wall of this Church was for more careful protection and transmission to future ages better secured by the Churchwardens in the year of our Lord MDCCCLXIX. (*ibid*)⁷

The Society's efforts, however, do not seem to have promoted greater public awareness of

or interest in London Stone. By the late 19th century, it was said to be ‘seldom noticed, even by the most inquisitive of country cousins’ (Anon 1888, 241). The same anonymous contributor to *Chambers’s Journal* continues: ‘During the greater part of the year, a fruit-stall largely obscures it from public view. Hanks of twine are twisted round the iron grating, and on the Stone itself rest piles of paper bags.’

Wren’s church was bombed and burnt out in the Second World War. It was decided that it was ‘too severely damaged to be capable of satisfactory restoration’, and that the site should be sold for development (Bishop of London’s Commission 1946, 12). The shell of the building, with London Stone still behind its grille in the south wall, was left standing for many years. When the surviving ruins of the church were finally demolished to make way for a new building in 1961–2, London Stone itself, the rectangular lump of limestone that we are now familiar with, was temporarily placed in the care of Guildhall Museum (Fig 9). During this period a sample of the stone was taken. It was identified as Lincolnshire Limestone both by F G Dimes and later by F W Anderson of the Institute of Geological Studies — the latter adding ‘your specimen, making allowances for its weathered condition, resembles Clipsham Stone more clearly than it resembles the others’ (Merrifield 1965, 123; and correspondence in Museum of

London, Guildhall Museum file T10). However, re-examination of the same sample, now in the Natural History Museum (Earth Sciences), by Kevin Hayward (pers comm) has indicated that rather than Lincolnshire it may be Bath Stone — the stone most used for monuments and sculptures in early Roman London, and in use also in the late Saxon period (probably by the reworking of stone salvaged from the Roman city).

In October 1962, following the completion of the new building on the site to house the Bank of China, the stone was placed without ceremony in the specially constructed gridded and glazed alcove that it occupies today (Fig 1). The present plaque, as we have seen above, records merely ‘Its origin and purpose are unknown but in 1188 [correctly 1189] there was a reference to Henry, son of Eylwin de Lundenstane, subsequently Lord Mayor of London’.

SPECULATIONS

The reluctance of the anonymous composer of the text of the present plaque to speculate on the origin and significance of the Stone is understandable. But such speculation began at latest in the reign of Elizabeth I, and continues today. *None* of these conjectures has been proven, some can be disproved, and others are at best improbable!



Fig 9. The last remnant of London Stone. The block of oolite removed from its resting place in the wall of the ruined church of St Swithin in 1961 (Photo: Museum of London)

It was William Camden, in 1586, who first proposed that London Stone had been ‘a *Milliarie*, or *Milemarke*, such as was in the mercat place [the Forum] of Rome: From which was taken the dimension of all journeys every way’ (Camden 1610, 423). That the stone was the Roman *milliarium*, in the form of a monolithic milestone, and that it marked the point from which distances throughout the province of Roman Britain were measured, was to become, as it were, the default opinion among 17th- and 18th-century antiquarians, like William Stukeley (1724, 112), and has not lost its popularity today. Christopher Wren, however, considered it had been not a simple monolith but a substantial building: ‘by reason of the large foundation, it was rather some more considerable monument in the *Forum* [imitating] the *Milliarium Aureum* at Constantinople’ (Wren 1750, 265–6).⁸ John Strype, on the other hand, was the first to suggest it might have been ‘an Object, or Monument, of Heathen Worship’, since, he says, it was well known ‘[...] that the *Britains* erected Stones for religious Worship, and that the *Druids* had Pillars of Stone in Veneration’ (Stow 1720, book 2: 194).

One or two 19th-century writers considered that at one time the Stone must have been regarded as a talisman for the City, and that ‘like the *Palladium* of Troy, the fate and safety of the City was argued to be dependent on its preservation’ (Brayley 1829, 1: 17). This concept was later reinforced by the appearance of what was claimed to be a traditional saying:

So long as the Stone of Brutus is safe,
So long will London flourish.

This reputedly medieval saying not only identifies London Stone as London’s *palladium*, the object that symbolises and embodies the well-being of the City, but links it explicitly with the belief that London was founded, as New Troy, by Brutus, descendant of the Trojan exile Aeneas and first king of Britain.⁹

Sadly, the saying (cited, for example, in Peter Ackroyd’s *London: The Biography* (2000, 18) and in almost every recent description of London Stone) can be traced no earlier than 1862, when it was quoted in a contribution to *Notes and Queries* (Mor Merriion 1862). Indeed, it is almost certain that the saying was invented by the author of that note, one ‘Mor Merriion’. This, a misprint by the printer of *Notes and Queries*, was properly ‘Môr Meirion’ or ‘Morgan of Merioneth’, the bardic name adopted by the Revd Richard Williams

Morgan (c.1815–89), Welsh patriot and writer, co-organiser of the great Llangollen eisteddfod of 1858, and later the first Bishop of the revived Ancient British Church (Clark 2007).¹⁰

At the end of the 19th century, the folklorist, London historian and Clerk to the fledgling London County Council George Laurence Gomme argued that London Stone was London’s fetish stone: ‘In early days, when a village was first established, a stone was set up. To this stone the head man of the village made an offering once a year’ (Gomme 1890, 218–19).

‘Alternative’ archaeologists in the early 20th century identified London Stone as an ancient British ‘index stone’ pointing to a great Druidic stone circle on the site of St Paul’s Cathedral, like Stonehenge’s Heel Stone (Gordon 1914, 11), or as a mark stone on a ley line (Watkins 1925, 87–8).

Among more orthodox archaeologists, Ralph Merrifield concluded ‘it is [...] feasible that it was a roadside monument of some kind, set up in the Roman period’ (Merrifield 1965, 124), but later drew attention to its apparent alignment with the centre of a major Roman building lying on the south side of Cannon Street, which he tentatively identified as the Roman governor’s palace (1969, 78–81; 97) — a view taken also by Peter Marsden, who considered that London Stone was possibly ‘part of the monumental entrance to the Roman palace’ (Marsden 1975, 63–4). More recent writers on Roman London seem not to have committed themselves, although London Stone’s present site *was* marked, without discussion, on the Ordnance Survey map of Roman London (Ordnance Survey 1983).

But recent writers of both the ‘geomantic’ (or ‘earth mysteries’) and so-called ‘psycho-geographical’ schools have insisted on London Stone’s essential place in the ‘sacred geometry’ of London, however variously they interpret the significance of that geometry. Perhaps the most developed of geomantic theories to incorporate London Stone is Christopher Street’s ‘Earthstar’, a gigantic pentagram drawn across Greater London from Barnet to Croydon (Street 2000, 70, illus 28), its lines defined by churches, prominent hills and similar features, and confirmed by dreams, visions and ‘on-site mediumship’. Meanwhile, Iain Sinclair, included with Peter Ackroyd in any list of London’s psycho-geographical writers, suspects a deliberate policy of disrupting London’s inherent sacred alignments. In *Lights Out for*

the Territory (1997, 102) he notes ‘The London Stone, with its mantic cargo, is now kept behind bars, beneath the pavement; a trophy for the Overseas Chinese Banking Corporation Limited in Cannon Street. Grievously misaligned’. He adds ‘A policy of deliberate misalignment (the Temple of Mithras, London Stone, the surviving effigies from Ludgate) has violated the integrity of the City’s sacred geometry’ (*ibid*, 116).

This is not the place for a new conjecture. One may only comment that the fact that the stone is of a type of limestone used in London in the Roman period, and stood on the southern edge of a Roman street (Merrifield 1965, 122–3), possibly in a significant relationship to a grand building of the 2nd century that has been identified by some as ‘the governor’s palace’ (Merrifield 1969, 78–81; 97; Marsden 1975), would seem to support a hypothesis of Romano-British origin and an original function within the context of the Roman city. However, Roman stonework was reused in the later Saxon period, for example in the construction of churches (Schofield 1994, 43).¹¹ London Stone could have been moved and re-erected by the post-Roman citizens of London, or simply have taken on a novel significance to them. And its unique name, first recorded at the end of the 11th century, certainly hints at a special significance to the people of late Saxon London.

As we have already noted, popular writers on London have gone to great lengths to identify London Stone as a monument of symbolic authority over London, where oaths were sworn and official proclamations made (Wikipedia contributors 2008). And all quote as a prime example of this an incident on Friday 3 July 1450, when Jack Cade led his rebel followers from Southwark across London Bridge into the City of London.

THE REBELLION OF 1450

After years of heavy taxation to fund the war with France, complaints at the corruption and mismanagement of Henry VI’s government reached a peak in 1450, in mass petitions to the King, naming those thought to be most corrupt, who included the Duke of Suffolk and the Royal Treasurer, Lord Saye. There was an armed uprising in Kent, supported in Essex and the other home counties. In a rerun of events in 1381, the Kentish rebels gathered at Blackheath in early June. But this was no Peasants’

Revolt. The rebels included yeoman farmers, prosperous villagers and townsfolk, and even some of the lesser gentry. The fighting men were the well-equipped and trained troops of the county militia. Their leader was John Cade, known as ‘the Captain of Kent’, a man of obscure origins. Cade took the name ‘John Mortimer’, connoting kinship with Richard Mortimer, Duke of York, currently out of favour at court and not seen to be implicated in the corrupt government.

Henry VI, adjourning parliament at Leicester, hastened back to London and marched on Blackheath with an armed force. Cade’s followers, perhaps unwilling to meet their king in open warfare, dispersed; but after rebels had defeated royal troops in a skirmish near Sevenoaks, the main rebel force reassembled with even greater support at Blackheath on 29 June, joined by men from Surrey and Sussex. At about this same time rebels from Essex headed to Mile End. Meanwhile the king and most of his court and officials had left London for Kenilworth, leaving the defence of the City in the hands of the mayor and a small royal garrison at the Tower.

On 1 or 2 July Cade led the rebels from Blackheath into Southwark, where he made his headquarters at the White Hart inn. On the late afternoon of Friday 3 July Cade and his followers crossed London Bridge into the City. There may have been some resistance at the Bridge, but Cade’s men cut the ropes of the drawbridge so that it could not be raised against them, and, according to one account, Cade was handed the keys of the City. Many Londoners, including wealthy and influential ones, clearly supported the rebels’ campaign against the corruptions of royal government. Cade made proclamations against looting and violence, and at first his followers seem to have obeyed. The rebels returned to Southwark for the night.

The next day, Saturday 4 July, things turned more ugly, and accounts of what followed are confused and inconsistent. The king, apparently swayed by popular feeling, had already ordered a commission to meet at London’s Guildhall to try some of the most hated of the royal ministers and officials, among them the Treasurer, Lord Saye. The rebels demanded he be handed over to them for justice. He was led to the Standard in Cheapside and beheaded. His head and those of other victims were mounted on spears, paraded through the streets, and finally set up over the gate on London Bridge; his naked body was

dragged behind Cade's horse around the City and across the Bridge into Southwark.

Perhaps fuelled by this act of rough justice, there was an outbreak of looting and killing. Even Cade seems to have taken part in the looting.

Late on Sunday 5 July, the City authorities decided to make a stand. London Bridge must be held to prevent further incursions from the rebel base in Southwark. A mixed force of Londoners and king's men from the Tower faced the rebels on the Bridge. A fierce battle lasted through the night. There were many casualties on both sides, and houses on the Bridge were set on fire, but by the morning of 6 July the Londoners held the Bridge and were able to barricade the gate against the rebels.

A truce was called. Later that day a deputation led by the Archbishop of Canterbury met Cade in Southwark, received the rebels' petitions and offered free pardons. The rebels soon dispersed, satisfied. As far as London was concerned, the rebellion was over — until the body of John Cade, who was declared a traitor on 10 July

and captured and killed a few days later, was returned to London. The corpse was beheaded and quartered at Newgate, and the head placed on London Bridge.¹²

The three days of turmoil were long remembered in London. London chroniclers give accounts, often incoherent and inconsistent, presumably reflecting the recollections of eyewitnesses. And several mention one particular incident — that with which we began this paper: 'He rode thorough dyvers stretes of the cytie, and as he came by London stone, he strake it with his sworde, and sayd, "Nowe is Mortymer lorde of this cytie"' (Fabyan 1811, 624).

JACK CADE AT LONDON STONE: SHAKESPEARE

The incident at London Stone is most familiar today in the dramatic reinterpretation by William Shakespeare in *Henry VI Part 2* – Act IV scene vi (Shakespeare 1999, 317–18) (Fig 10). Perhaps written in collaboration with others, the play



Fig 10. Jack Cade seated on London Stone. Illustration by Sir John Gilbert for Henry VI Part 2 (in Howard Staunton (ed) The Works of William Shakespeare vol 8 (1881))

was first performed in 1591 or 1592, and first printed in 1594 under the title *The First Part of the Contention Betwixt the Two Famous Houses of Yorke and Lancaster*.

We quote the London Stone scene here in full, as it was printed in 1619 in the ‘Third Quarto’ edition. This was the first printed edition to attribute the play to Shakespeare. The scene is slightly shorter than in the First Folio edition of 1623, the text of which is followed by most modern editions.

Enter Iacke Cade, and the rest, and strikys
his sword vpon London stone
Cade. Now is Mortemer Lord of this City,
And now sitting vpon London stone, We
command,
That the first yeare of ovr reigne,
The pissing Cundit run nothing but red wine.
And now henceforward, it shall bee treason
For any that calles me any otherwise then
Lord Mortemer.

Enter a souldier.

Soul. Iacke Cade, Iacke Cade.
Cade. Zounds knocke him downe.
They kil him
Dicke. My Lord,
Ther’s an Army gathered together into
Smithfield.

Cade. Come then, let’s go fight with them,
But first go on and set London-bridge a fire,
And if you can, burn downe the Tower too.
Come, let’s away. *Exit omnes*

(Shakespeare 1619, sig G1 verso–G2 recto)

The scene is a drastic piece of compression of events.¹³ As we shall see, Cade, who had taken the name of John Mortimer (implying kinship with Richard, Duke of York (Harvey 2004)),¹⁴ did indeed strike London Stone with his sword, and claim to be Lord of London; he did on his first arrival in the City make regal-sounding proclamations (‘in the Kinges name & in his name’ according to one chronicler) — not at London Stone, but rather at St Magnus church and at Leadenhall, and not to order the conduits to flow with wine but to restrain his followers from plundering the city.¹⁵ Moreover it was rumoured that he had old companions killed because they might reveal his real name and lowly origins. Thus Shakespeare’s probable source, Edward Hall (Halle 1548, fol clx recto), describes Cade in Southwark ordering the killing of various men ‘of his olde acquaintance, lest they shoulde blase & declare his base byrthe,

and lowsy lynage, disparagyng him from his usurped surname of Mortymer’. But the ‘throne’ and ‘seat of judgement’ role that London Stone plays in this scene appears to be Shakespeare’s own contribution to the story (Fig 10).

His immediate inspiration for the scene was apparently a very brief passage in Edward Hall’s account of the Wars of the Roses (printed in 1548 under the title *The Union of the Two Noble and Illustrate Famelies of Lancaster and York*, although Hall had completed it a few years earlier, in about 1532 (Gransden 1982, 470–1)): ‘he entred into Londo’, and cut the ropes of the draw bridge, stryking his sworde on london stone, sayyng: now is Mortymer lorde of this citie, and rode in euery street lyke a lordly Capitayn’ (Halle 1548, fol clx verso–clx recto). A very similar passage occurs in Raphael Holinshed’s *Chronicles*, published in 1577, with an extended edition in 1587, and the source of much of Shakespeare’s historical knowledge: ‘[Cade] entered into London, cut the ropes of the draw bridge, & strooke his sword on London stone; saieng: “Now is Mortimer lord of this citie!”’ (Holinshed 1587, 3: 634). The similarity of the play’s title in the First Quarto edition, *The First Part of the Contention Betwixt the Two Famous Houses of Yorke and Lancaster*, to that of Hall’s book *The Union of the Two Noble and Illustrate Famelies of Lancaster and York* may suggest it was Hall rather than Holinshed who was the primary inspiration in this case. And indeed, Kenneth Muir (1977, 29) concluded that the play was based almost wholly on Hall’s work.

The Quarto edition of the play follows its source or sources in making Cade strike the stone with his sword, although in the First Folio of 1623 (a fuller and apparently a more authoritative text) and in modern editions he does so with a staff. Why the playwright (if he did), or perhaps an editor, made this change to the historical narrative is not clear.¹⁶

The relationship between the Quarto (by reputation a ‘bad quarto’) and Folio editions of this play has been much discussed. Wells and Taylor, in the *Oxford Textual Companion to Shakespeare* (1987, 175–8), conclude that the three Quarto editions probably derive from a ‘memorial reconstruction’ of actual performances of the play by one or more of those involved, and the Folio from ‘foul papers’ (manuscript drafts) with later amendments. Thus it is likely that in actual performance the actor playing Cade struck the stone with his sword, as readers of the chronicles might expect (*ibid.*, 177 and 189).

JACK CADE AT LONDON STONE: THE CHRONICLE ACCOUNTS

It is evident from fuller chronicle accounts that the incident described by Holinshed and Hall did indeed occur, although its context – let alone its significance — is less certain. Thus, in a version of the chronicle known as the *Brut* that extends to 1461 and written, almost certainly by a London-based chronicler, soon after that date (Gransden 1982, 222–3), we read:

And the third day of Iuyl he come & entred into London with al his peple, & did make A cry ther in the Kinges name & in his name, that no man shold robb ne take no mannes gode bot if he payd for it; and come ryding through the Cite in gret pride, & smote his swerde vpon London stone in Canwykstrete. (Brie 1908, 518)

There is a very similar account in an anonymous London chronicle that ends in 1509 (British Library Ms Cotton Vitellius A xvi), published by Kingsford in 1905:

[...] and in his entre at the Brigge he hewe the Ropys of the drawe brigge asunder; and whan he came to Saynt Magnus he made a proclamacion vpon payne of deth, that no man of his Ost shuld Robbe ne depoile no man w^t in the Cite. And in like wise at ledynhall and so thurgh the Cite w^t grete pride. And at London Stone he strak vpon it like a Conquerour. (Kingsford 1905, 160).

The same words are found in the so-called *Great Chronicle of London* (Thomas & Thornley 1938, 183–4).

But the fullest account of the event appears in *The New Chronicles of England and France*, a history which extended up to the year 1485, with a later continuation to 1509. These *New Chronicles* were printed by Richard Pynson in 1516 and later attributed to Robert Fabyan, London alderman and sheriff (*d* 1513). Whether or not that attribution is correct (McLaren 2002, 264–5; 2004), it is clear that the authors of this and of a number of other anonymous chronicles were London-based, and if not eyewitnesses themselves of the events of 1450, were clearly drawing on the recollections of some who *were* eyewitnesses — and the inconsistencies and differences in emphasis are just what one might expect of witness statements, or rather of witnesses' much later recollections of what happened.

And the same afternoone, aboute .v. of ye clok, the capitayne with his people entred by the brydge; and whan he came vpon the drawe brydge, he hewe the ropys that drewe the bridge, in sonder with his sworde, and so passed into the cytie, and made in sondry places therof proclamacions in the kynges name, that no man, payne of dethe, sholde robbe or take any thyng parforce without payinge therefore. By reason wherof he wanne many heretes of the comons of the cytie; but all was done to begyle wt the people, as after shall euydently appere. He rode thorough dyvers stretes of the cytie, and as he came by London stone, he strake it with his sworde, and sayd, 'Nowe is Mortymer lorde of this cytie'. (Fabyan 1811, 624)

Since the *New Chronicles* are the earliest account to mention the cry of 'Now is Mortimer lord of this city', they were presumably, in their printed form, the source from which Hall and Holinshed both made summaries.

Most of these accounts, of course, were written long after the events by people who were not eyewitnesses. For example, Robert Fabyan, if indeed he was one of our authors, was probably not yet born at the time of Cade's rebellion (he became apprenticed, as a draper, only in about 1470 (McLaren 2004)). But they may well, with their different wording and emphasis, reflect independent oral traditions of an episode that struck Londoners of the time as worthy of note.

Another account written within a few years of the events also places Cade at London Stone, but in a notably different context. John Benet was vicar of Harlington, in Bedfordshire, from 1443 until 1471, and compiled a chronicle in Latin extending to the year 1462 (Gransden 1982, 250, 254–7). Benet (or possibly an unknown original author whose work he used) seems to have had personal knowledge of or sources of information in both Oxford and London (*ibid*, 255). He mentions no incident at London Stone when Cade first entered London; instead he tells us that following the execution by beheading of Lord Saye at the Standard in Cheapside on Saturday 4 July — the day *after* Cade's first arrival — Cade set the dead man's head, with those of two other victims, on spears, and tied Saye's body behind his horse:

[...] he dragged him naked from the Standard out of Newgate and so through the Old Bailey and through Ludgate, into

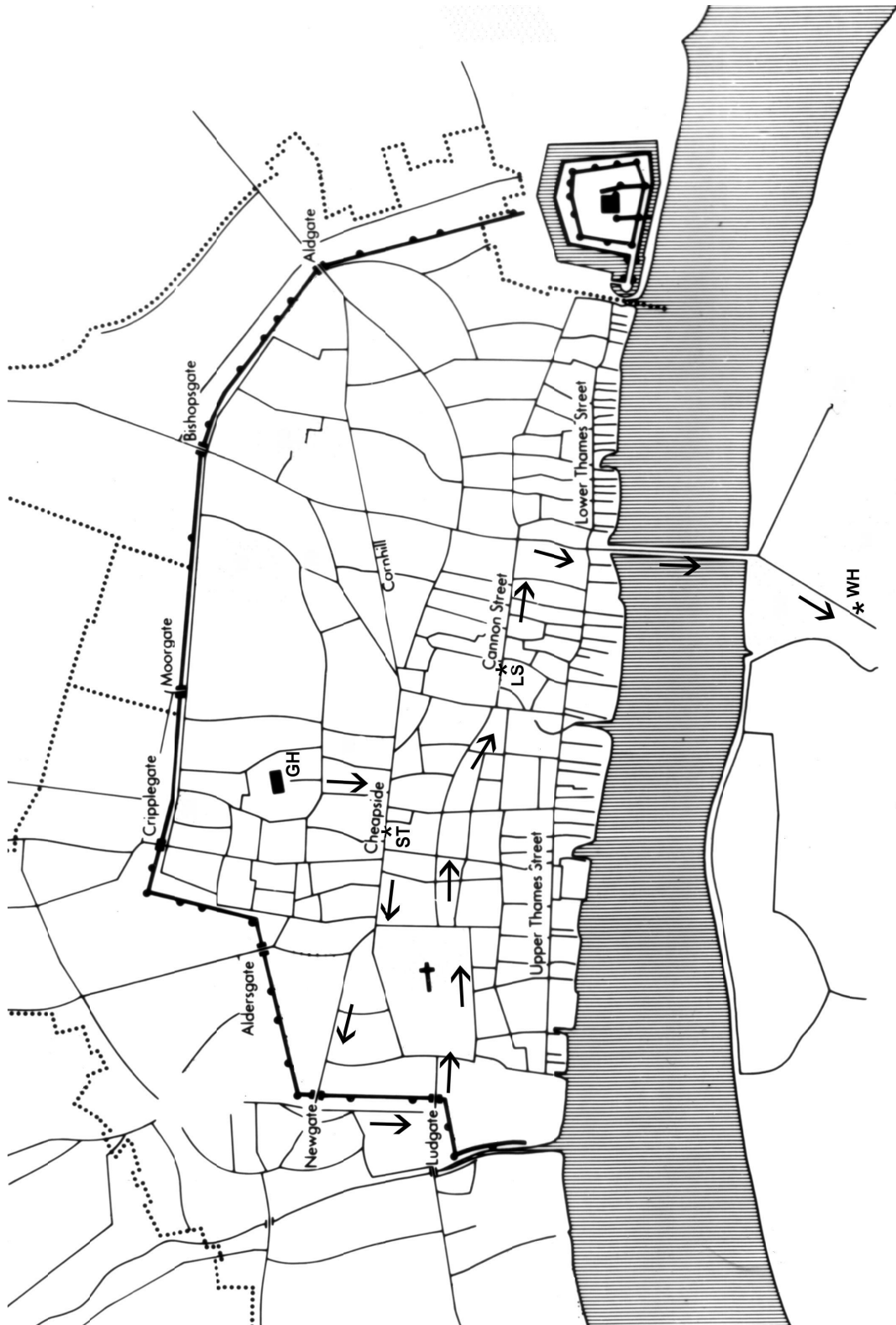


Fig 11. Saturday 4 July 1450. Lord Saye is taken from the Guildhall (GH) to the Standard (ST) in Cheapside, where he is beheaded. Cade drags Saye's body behind his horse, westwards out of Newgate, back through Ludgate, past St Paul's and London Stone (LS), and across London Bridge into Southwark, where Cade had set up headquarters at the White Hart (WH).

Watling Street and so through Candlewick Street as far as the Bridge, and there he went around a great stone striking it with his sword, and there he set the three heads on a tower, and dragged the body as far as the hospital of St Thomas in Southwark. (Benet 1972, 201; my translation)

The 'great stone' by the Bridge is obviously London Stone, not far from the head of London Bridge. The topographical detail of this account suggests it is based on an eyewitness report — the route can readily be identified on a map of medieval London (Fig 11). No other account goes into such local detail, although several others describe the rebels carrying around the heads of Saye and others on spears, and setting them up on the gate tower of London Bridge.

Benet or his informant may have misremembered the sequence of events — unless we are to suppose that Cade repeated his actions on London Stone on the second day. The very fact that the context of the incident could be remembered in two different ways suggests that Cade's action struck onlookers as memorable in its own right — significant or perhaps puzzling — regardless of its context.¹⁷

Yet not all contemporaries seem to have thought of the London Stone episode as important. Whether or not the chronicle attributed to William Gregory, long serving alderman of Cordwainer ward and mayor in 1451–2, was in fact written by him, personal touches and comments suggest that it is a first-hand account by a local author with very strong opinions about the significance of the events of July 1450 (Gransden 1982, 230–1):

And a-pon the morowe, that was the Fryday, a gayn evyn, they smote a sondyr the ropys of the draught brygge and faught sore a manly, and many a man was mortheryde and kylde in the conflycte, I wot not what name hyt for the multytude of ryffe raffe. And thenne they enteryde in to the cytte of London as men that hadde ben halfe be-syde hyr wytte; and in that furyyns they wente, as they sayde, for the comyn wele of the realme of Ingelonde, evyn strayght unto a marchaunte ys place i-namyd Phyllyppe Malpas of London. (Gairdner 1876, 191)

So this account stresses otherwise unrecorded fighting at the time the drawbridge ropes were cut, omits Cade's proclamations against looting

and the London Stone episode, and takes us straight to a subsequent event, the sacking of the house of the alderman Philip Malpas in Lime Street — which other commentators tell us did not take place until the following day, *after* the killing of Lord Saye in Cheapside (Halle 1548, fol clx recto; Fabyan 1811, 624). Other chronicle accounts of Cade's attack on London, while mentioning one or more incidents (the cutting of the drawbridge ropes, the proclamation at St Magnus church, the attack on Philip Malpas's house), also omit the scene at London Stone (for example, Flenley 1911, 132–3 and 155; Gairdner 1880, 67–8; Nichols 1852, 19).

BUT WHAT DID IT SIGNIFY?

Thus not all our sources record the London Stone episode; none attempt to explain it. Yet those who include it treat it as a matter of some consequence — and the variations in their accounts suggest that the story had been passed down independently by a number of routes, presumably from original eyewitness reports. The episode occurs while Cade is riding through London 'in great pride'; he makes proclamations 'in the king's name' at St Magnus church and Leadenhall; he rides through the streets 'like a lordly captain'; he strikes London Stone with his sword 'like a conqueror'; according to Benet, he even circles the stone while striking it; and he cries 'Now is Mortimer lord of this city'.

All this suggests an event regarded by Cade himself as of ceremonial importance, and recognised as such by onlookers. It is not surprising that modern writers have regarded it as proof that in the 15th century Londoners and others considered that London Stone had a special meaning — that by asserting authority over the stone, Cade claimed possession of the City.

Yet what was the real significance of the incident? What was Cade's intent? Was he aware of an existing belief that possession of London Stone symbolised possession of London (as many modern authors have assumed)?

There seems to be nothing to indicate that there was ever such a belief in medieval times, and those who treat the Cade episode as proof of its existence are surely employing a circular argument. Too often they seem to be influenced by Shakespeare's interpretation of the event, in which Cade not only strikes the stone, but commandeers it as a throne from which to issue his first edicts as ruler, and then to deliver

judgement on the first man to offend against them. Thus Grant Allen (1891, 383) writes, ‘To sit upon [London Stone] was to enthrone himself on the collective city’, and Adrian Gilbert (2003, 60), ‘[Shakespeare] knew all about the London Stone and the idea about its being the omphalos or navel-stone of England. As such it functions as Cade’s throne, the seat of his authority. Such allusions would not have been wasted on a Tudor audience’. Eric Simons’s account of the event is imaginative: ‘Jumping off his horse, he walked to the Stone, took his sword from his swordbearer, struck the Stone with great force, seated himself upon it, and in the presence of the Lord Mayor, Sir Thomas Charlton, and a seething, jostling assembly of citizens, uttered the potent words: “*Now is Mortimer lord of this city.*”’ (Simons 1963, 82).

This is great theatre. It is also fiction.

William Shakespeare was a dramatist, not a historian. But perhaps the episode was theatre from the start — a piece of dramatic improvisation by the rebel leader.

With his claim of the name of Mortimer, and thus an implied royal descent through kinship with Richard Duke of York (Harvey 2004), Cade reveals himself as well aware of what we would today call his ‘image’. Edward Hall described him as of ‘pregnaunt wit’ (Halle 1548, fol clix recto) and ‘sober in comunicacion, wyse in disputyng, arrogant in hart, and styfe in his opinion’ (*ibid* fol clix verso). The chronicles concur that his progress through London was in the nature of a triumphal procession — in some chronicles the details are spelt out. He is described as riding in a blue velvet gown with sable trimmings, with gilded spurs and helmet, holding a naked sword in his hand, and ‘a swerde broghte befor hym pretendyng the state of a lorde, and yet wasse he nozt but a lurdeyne [rascal]’ (Marx 2003, 69).

Cade knew what was expected of a procession, whether he was imitating a royal progress, or, as Mary-Rose McLaren (2002, 68) suggests, parodying one. And recently Alexander Kaufman (2007) has contended that, rather than royalty, Cade was inspired by and imitating London’s annual Midsummer Watch, when mayor and aldermen led a thousand or more armed men in uniform, accompanied by ‘pageants’, musicians and morris dancers, in a torchlight procession through the City, on the eves of St John the Baptist (24 June) and of SS Peter and Paul (29 June). And certainly John Stow’s description of

the mayor on such an occasion — ‘the Mayor himselfe well mounted on horseback, the sword bearer before him in fayre Armour well mounted’ (Stow 1908, 1: 102–3)— is reminiscent of the earlier description of Cade riding with ‘a swerde broghte befor hym pretendyng the state of a lorde’ (above).

However, Kaufman’s claim (2007, 161) that ‘the procession route that Cade took through London mimics and parodies the civic route that the London officials followed during the fifteenth-century Midsummer Watch’ seems to be belied by Kaufman’s own quotation of John Stow’s description of the route taken by the Watch (*ibid*, 148).¹⁸ Instead, Cade’s peregrinations around the City seem rather to reflect a knowledge of royal practice. His original entry by way of London Bridge, stopping at St Magnus church and at Leadenhall (Kingsford 1905, 160), mirrors a number of royal entries (for example, that of Margaret of Anjou in 1445 (Withington 1918–20, 1: 148)). Later he followed the customary royal route through Cheapside to St Paul’s (Flenley 1911, 133); we may compare Henry V’s progress described in Withington (1918–20, 1: 134–5) and others. However, the route along which, according to John Benet (1972, 201), he dragged the dead body of Lord Saye (see above) was a novel one — not all Cade’s actions were simple imitations of customary practice.

But whether in the context of royal or of civic ceremony, what could be a more triumphant action than this? ‘They call this London Stone? Then at a single stroke I can make myself Lord of London.’ Sadly, none of our sources enlightens us; we do not know Cade’s thinking, nor how his followers or the Londoners who witnessed the event interpreted it. And some contemporaries seem not to have regarded it as worth recording at all.

There may be a clue in Shakespeare’s dramatic treatment, 140 years later — for it seems that Shakespeare did not expect his audience to take the episode seriously. And we have to assume there was no prior knowledge among Shakespeare’s audience of a custom of striking London Stone with a sword to claim the mastery of London, for otherwise Shakespeare or the editor of the Folio edition could not so readily have changed the incident to involve Cade’s staff rather than his sword.

In fact, the whole scene is played for laughs. The ironic comment by one of the rebels (in the

fuller First Folio text) on the fate of the soldier who had dared to call the rebel leader 'Jack Cade' instead of Lord Mortimer, 'If this fellow be wise, he'll never call you Jack Cade more; I think he hath a very fair warning' — the 'fair warning' was his murder; or Cade's desire that the Pissing Conduit (that most inadequate of all London's conduits) should run with wine for a year; or even his parting instruction to his followers 'if you can' to burn down the Tower of London, surely the most fireproof building in the whole city. Kenneth Muir (1977, 30) comments that Shakespeare depicts Cade as a 'sinister buffoon'.

CONCLUSION

Shakespeare's account of the London Stone episode cannot be read as history; nor can we trust his interpretation of Cade's motives. Sadly the sketchy accounts provided by our only near-contemporary sources give us even less basis for interpretation. Certainly we should not assume that Cade was carrying out a 'traditional' practice by striking London Stone. In the absence of corroborative evidence, we cannot use his apparently unprecedented act as proof of a pre-existing custom, or of a pre-existing reverence for London Stone as a symbol of authority.

Of all the events in the long history of London Stone, its treatment by Jack Cade remains the most mysterious — apart from its origin, on which Jack Cade throws no light!

NOTES

¹ Marsden (1975, 63) gives metric dimensions (0.53m by 0.42m by 0.305m). However, from the measurement '0.305m', which will be recognised as the usual metric conversion of 'one foot', it is obvious that these are artificial conversions from measurements in feet and inches, probably taken when the stone was in the Guildhall Museum in the 1960s. They give a spurious appearance of precision to the nearest 5mm. The measurements have been 'reconverted' here to the nearest inch, which given the roughness of the stone is probably sufficiently accurate — the stone is currently inaccessible for measurement.

² The tedious process of elimination that reduced each claim to its tenuous grasp on historical reality may warrant eventual publication.

³ This list of properties is today bound in a volume once in Sir Robert Cotton's library, now in the British Library: Ms Cotton Faustina B vi (British Museum 1802, 606–7). But although from its content this

volume clearly has a Canterbury provenance, it is no 'gospel book' — it does not incorporate the four gospels of the New Testament. Did Stow simply misremember in which particular book he had found the list of Canterbury properties, or did he perhaps see this manuscript when it was bound in a different volume? (It has clearly been trimmed for rebinding at some point, probably since Stow's time (Kissan 1940, 59).)

⁴ Although the details are evident on the original engraved plate, they do not show up well on reproductions of the map such as that in Saunders & Schofield (2001, pl II).

⁵ This fact was pointed out by Kathryn Stubbs of the City of London Planning Department in correspondence. The railway tunnel and underground station are clearly marked on large scale Ordnance Survey maps, and the extent of the excavations, to a marked depth of 33 feet below the surface of Cannon Street, is shown on a pair of contemporary cross-sections of the works in progress, now in the collection of London's Transport Museum (illustrated in Taylor 2001, 54).

⁶ J E Price assumed that it was the move of 1798 that brought the Stone to this location — 'At the repair of the church in 1798 it was placed in its present position in the centre of the south side of the church' (Price 1870, 63) — in spite of the fact that he cites the vestry minutes of June and August 1798 that confirmed the decision to place it in front of the blank doorway to the east (*ibid*, 61–2).

⁷ The text printed by Harrison differs a little from that which, according to Price, the Council of the London and Middlesex Archaeological Society had originally recommended (Price 1870, 64–5). In particular, the proposed text, published by Price, made no comment on the origin or age of the stone; the opening words, 'Commonly believed to be a Roman work', seem to have been an addition to the plaque.

⁸ Wren and his contemporaries assumed that London's Roman forum stood just east of the Walbrook in this area, where it is shown, for example, on William Stukeley's speculative map of Roman London (Stukeley 1724, pl 57; Clark 2008 forthcoming).

⁹ This story was first promulgated by Geoffrey of Monmouth in the 12th century, and subsequently had a long and influential existence (Clark 1981).

¹⁰ I hope to publish elsewhere the full argument to show that this popular saying is a 19th-century confection, and that it can be convincingly attributed to Richard Williams Morgan, who firmly believed in the historical reality of Brutus of Troy (Morgan 1857, iv–v; 26; 31–2). Meanwhile my brief note in the newsletter of the Folklore Society (Clark 2007) must suffice.

¹¹ The well-known early 11th-century grave slab with Ringerike decoration and a runic inscription, found in St Paul's Church Yard in 1852 and now in the Museum of London, is made of Bath (Coombe Down) limestone (Tweddle *et al* 1995, 226–8). This sculpture may represent the refacing and carving anew of a slab from some Roman monument or structure.

¹² This brief summary is derived largely from Griffiths' narrative (1981, 610–17; see also Harvey 1991; 2004). It makes no claim to be definitive or necessarily accurate in detail. Contemporary chroniclers differ in their accounts of the sequence of events as well as the absolute chronology. For example, the *New Chronicles* attributed to Robert Fabyan claim that Cade first entered London not on Friday 3 July but on Thursday 2 July (Fabyan 1811, 624).

¹³ Although the 'army gathered together into Smithfield' belongs in the context not of Cade's rebellion of 1450 but of the Peasants' Revolt of 1381!

¹⁴ Moreover Richard of York (1411–60) could claim descent through his mother Anne Mortimer from Edward III.

¹⁵ The 'Pissing Conduit' by the Stocks Market (Stow 1908, 1: 183) was presumably so called because it provided only a thin and intermittent stream of water. That the conduits should run with wine seems to have been an established feature, first recorded in 1399, of the pageants surrounding the formal reception of royal visitors to London (Withington 1918–20, 1: 132 and n 2), and Shakespeare's audience would have recognised Cade's demand (like his references to 'our reign' and to 'treason') as a presumptuous claim to royal privilege.

¹⁶ Ronald Knowles, in his edition of the play, suggests that 'staff carries great visual irony' given its function elsewhere in the play as a symbol of power or of a pilgrim's piety (Shakespeare 1999, 317 note).

¹⁷ In her authoritative account of Cade's rebellion, I M W Harvey does not mention — let alone attempt to explain — the London Stone episode (Harvey 1991, 90–8). Contrariwise, it provided the title *Lord of London* for Eric Simons's more popular book on Cade, and the excuse for a long disquisition on the presumed traditional 'magical qualities' of the stone (Simons 1963, 81–3).

¹⁸ '... a marching watch, that passed through the principal streets thereof, to wit, from the little Conduit by Paules gate, through west Cheape, by ye Stocks, through Cornhill, by Leaden hall to Aldgate, then backe downe Fenchurch streete, by Grasse church, aboute Grasse church Conduite, and vp Grasse church streete into Cornhill, and through it into west Cheape againe' (Stow 1908, 1: 102).

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