'DISCORDS HAVE ARISEN AND BROTHERLY LOVE DECREASED': THE SPATIAL AND MATERIAL CONTEXTS OF THE GUILD FEAST IN EARLY MODERN LONDON

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On 17 March 1629, tensions were running high at a private court of the Goldsmiths' Company. A dispute had broken out between the wardens (the four most senior members of the guild) and the renters (the guildsmen responsible for the management of Company land and properties). The disagreement stemmed from the fact that the renters, Gabriell Newman and Robert Jenner, 'men of habilitie and worthe', had

wilfully refused to make a Dynner at their charge for the loueing and brotherly meetinge of the Company in their Comon hall ... the said hall beeing then prepared and fitted for that purpose.

The wardens were outraged that Newman and Jenner refused to pay for the dinner held at the election of the new wardens, a celebration of guildsmen 'as members of one societie' and a feast which 'by all the tyme whereof the memory of man is not to the contrary hath bin usually kept on St. Nicholas' Day'.[1] Under pressure from the wardens, Newman eventually agreed to provide for one half of the customary dinner but Jenner remained unmoved and for this 'violacon and breach of good order and government' was committed to Newgate gaol, 'there to remayne untill hee shall conforme'.[2]

This particular instance of strife - not atypical of relations within the guild in the early seventeenth-century - clearly demonstrates that despite the potential for conflict, communal drinking and eating were regarded as essential, time-honoured celebrations of the 'loving bonds' between guildsmen. Some years earlier, on 5 February 1610, the wardens of the Armourers' and Brasiers' Company had expressed concern that as a

result of the 'neglect' of quarterly dinners, 'discords have arisen and brotherly love decreased'.[3] This link between ritualised feasting - of which the consumption of alcohol was a central component - and harmonious relations between guildsmen was a commonplace association within civic society; the material and rhetorical stress upon collective participation especially urgent during an era of unprecedented socioeconomic and political strain. Contributions and attendance at the numerous guild dinners and feasts which punctuated the ritual calendar were understood to be an essential element of guild membership. Failure to participate in bouts of communal drinking seriously damaged one's reputation as a company man of worth or credit; at times it even jeopardised a man's membership of a guild and the civic rights and privileges that such an association entailed.

Though participation was essential, the consumption of alcohol (and food) was expected to occur within strictly prescribed material and spatial contexts; guilds were deeply hierarchical bodies and rites of drinking in particular, exactingly reflected status differences between men of the same brotherhood. Communal feasting was thus expected to be both an expression of, and inducement to collective harmony, and simultaneously an articulation of company hierarchy.[4] In this article it will be suggested that from the later sixteenth century, these objectives were increasingly hard to reconcile and feasts frequently became sites of contention, not demonstrations of loving fellowship. Within an institutional context in which full 'patriarchal manhood' - namely membership of the livery - was increasingly hard to achieve and maintain, guild elites (or those who aspired

to positions of privilege), were not primarily concerned with 'excessive' alcohol consumption, but rather the material and spatial contexts within which alcohol was consumed.[5] Liverymen appear to have cared more about the space in which they drunk, and the vessel out of which they were entitled to do so, than about the potentially deleterious or disorderly effects of alcohol upon the bodies of their contemporaries and subordinates; the emphasis of much of the existing historiography concerning the construction of early modern masculinities.[6] Political or social tensions between men of the same guild were repeatedly expressed and shaped through disputes over material contributions to feasts, spatial hierarchies at the table and privileged access to the company plate and treasures.

The decades under scrutiny here [c. 1570-1640] were undoubtedly an era in which the governing elites of London faced extraordinary political, economic and social challenges; including rapid demographic growth, an expansion of 'alien' immigration, price inflation and heavy taxation.[7] Guild authorities in particular faced the double financial burden of loan requests from the Crown and compulsory levies such as ship money. Tensions between City and Crown were further heightened by the contentious issue of royal grants of incorporation, which established new independent companies, such as the Glovers in the 1630s, despite the sustained opposition of the aldermanic authorities.[8] Towards the end of the sixteenth century, some livery companies also began to encounter challenges to their traditional jurisdiction over the standards of their crafts and trades, exercised through the regulation of apprenticeship systems and the 'search' or inspection of artisanal workshops.[9] The rapid geographical spread of the metropolis, far beyond the boundaries of the ancient City walls, and the growth in numbers of those that adopted the Custom of London - the right of a guild member to practice any trade or craft in the City - certainly stretched the resources and tested the authority of company elites.

Despite these challenges, recent scholarship has convincingly demonstrated that the notion of a generic 'decline' of the guilds during the early modern era is inaccurate and anachronistic; London companies remained the most significant institutions for the regulation and organisation of crafts and trades, at least until the eighteenth century. Key to survival was their dynamic nature, an ability to respond to resistance with 'flexibility and fluidity'.[10] The subject of this essay - the material and spatial contexts of feasting - is certainly not to suggest that the guilds of early modern London had been reduced to mere ceremonial husks; rather that heightened concern over these performances of 'company' are symptomatic of wider processes of political, social and gender (re)construction.[11] The material and spatial were not though merely reflective of tensions within the guild and the City at large, but were reflexive, giving shape and substance to a guildsman's reputation and manhood within a highly complex and competitive civic environment.[12]

The assertion by the court of Goldsmiths in March 1629 that a dinner had been held at the appointment of the new wardens 'by all the tyme whereof the memory of man', was certainly no exaggeration, for the association between guild identity and communal drinking had well-established medieval roots.[13] The Goldsmiths' Company of seventeenth-century London - along with other prominent City guilds - originated from a twelfth-century fraternity; an association of artisans and merchants bound together through material mutual assistance and support, regulation of their craft, shared standards of respectability and dedication to a patron saint.[14] Before the injunctions of 1547 regarding superstitious practices, the Goldsmiths' most prized communal possession had been a gold statue of their patron saint, St. Dunstan - said to be a skilled tenth-century Glastonbury metalworker - set up on the screen in the guild's internal hall and adorned with jewels that had been bequeathed by devoted guildsmen.[15] For members of these medieval fraternities, the yearly celebration of the patronal feast day was an essential site for the forging and maintenance of social and political bonds between men of quite diverse material circumstances; as Gervase Rosser has demonstrated, feasts were 'commonly described as being intended "for the promotion of love and charity among the members"'.[16] The central motif of such commensality was the circulation among participants of a cup or horn filled with wine, a rite which must have been evocative, perhaps even symbolic of Eucharistic practices.[17] Though civic identities had largely eclipsed saintly devotion within the guild by the later sixteenth century, at the election dinner of the new wardens, considered the most significant feast in the early modern company calendar, the circulation of a cup (or cups) among the wardens and the drinking of the

hippocras - a rich mixture of wine, sugar and spices - was still the ritual moment of most importance.[18] It is a testament to the significance of this act of communal drinking that the gold or silver election cup - usually a gift from a particularly eminent guildsman - was almost always the most ornate cup in a guild's plate collection and often one of the few pieces to physically survive, intact, throughout the religious, political and financial upheavals of the early modern era.[19]

Early modern account and court books reveal that guild feasts or dinners were held at significant points throughout the ritual calendar; usually on the patronal feast day, the first court day, at the election of new wardens and on the eve of the official search of artisanal workshops in the City.[20] A list of annual expenses compiled by the wardens of the Goldsmiths' Company in February 1609 included ceremonial events such as 'a breakfast and dynner in October on my Lo[rd] Maiors Day' and 'A dynner in March at the Hall [on] the view day'. The wardens also itemised relatively informal occasions hosted in City inns and taverns, after guild business, such as the search of workshops had been undertaken: for example 'A supper in September at the Kinges Head ... at our Lady faire'.[21] The tenants of drinking establishments that were owned by guilds were sometimes obliged to supply the wardens with alcohol for particular events as part of their rental contract. In 1624 for instance, the Goldsmiths leased *The Horn* tavern on Fleet Street on the condition that the leaseholders provided wine for Company dinners.[22] During the meal the most senior guildsmen expected to be served by 'comely young men' of their own company; choreography of space which clearly ensured that every man was constantly reminded of his relative social and political position. Responsibility for financing formal feasts and dinners, held within the livery hall, customarily lay with the senior guildsmen themselves. A man's obligation to contribute depended upon the event itself, so for example the incoming master was usually expected to pay for his own election 'breakfast'; whereas select members of the livery were typically requested by the wardens to finance meals hosted on the lord mayor's day.[23] The 'drinkings' held on quarter days - the points in the ritual calendar at which quarterage dues were collected from all guildsmen, and company ordinances read to the assembled body of freemen - were effectively funded, and sometimes attended, by all guildsmen. There is some evidence to suggest that the traditional provision

for feasts by guild elites was becoming something of a financial burden within certain companies by the turn of the century; Gabriel Newman and Robert Jenner's refusal to fund the wardens' election feast might thus be part of a wider trend.[24]

Feasts held within company halls were often very lavish; a wide range of meat, poultry and fish were frequently prepared for a single meal, of multiple courses.[25] At their annual 'Feast Dynner' in 1566, the Drapers' Company spent over one hundred and twelve pounds on a menu which included swan; venison and 'red deer' pasties; quails; 'jelly dishes' and 'marzepaynes'.[26] Their 'Dinner Book' - an account kept of feast menus and expenses for the last four decades of the sixteenth-century - reveals that a painter was even hired specifically to decorate or gild the desserts.[27] Though a relatively humble guild compared to the Great Twelve City Livery Companies, on a typical election day feast, members of the Carpenters' guild consumed four sirloins of beef; 'a she[e]p and a half'; two 'keges of sturgeon' and dozens of capons; chickens and geese.[28] Alcohol also flowed very freely: the guildsmen drank beer; ale; a gallon of white wine; 18 gallons 'and a potle of claret wine' and six gallons and 'a pottle and a quarte of sake'.[29] Unsurprisingly, the Drapers also consumed a wide variety of alcohol; 'wynne of all sorte' is listed in their 'Dinner Book', including 'gaskon' and 'ffrenche', which was sourced from several different vintners.[30] The geographical range of vineyards from which their wine originated was no doubt intended to be an impressive statement of their mercantile networks and overseas connections. Quantities were also designed to impress: at a 'Feast Dynner' in 1566 four gallons of wine was ordered simply for infusion into the 'Jelly'.[31] A published seventeenth-century description of the Printers' election feast plausibly claimed that guildsmen were served:

Beer, Ale, and Wine, of all sorts, to accommodate each Guest according to his desire. And to make their Cheer go cheerfuller down, are entertained with Musick and Songs all Dinner time.[32]

The Printers were certainly not unusual in providing musical entertainments as accompaniments to gastronomic delights. At the feast held in St. Dunstan's honour by the wardens of the Goldsmiths' guild in 1568, the Queen's trumpeters played while the courses were

being served.[33] Eight years earlier, at the same commemorative occasion:

all ye dynner tyme ye syngynge children of paules [the choirboys of St. Paul's Cathedral] palyed upon their vialles and songe verye pleasaunt songes to ye great delectacion and rejoysynge of ye whole companie.[34]

The term 'whole companie' is rather disingenuous, as the most lavish, formal feasts did not, by the later decades of the sixteenth-century, include the whole body of the guild; a trend towards exclusivity which has been observed across Europe.[35] Often only the wardens and liverymen - on occasion accompanied by their wives - would be invited to such extravagant occasions of collective consumption. Some more modest convivial events were conversely hosted specifically for members of the yeomanry. The Armourers' Company were not unusual in keeping a specific register of quarterage dues which recorded sums paid by the yeomanry for their own suppers.[36] If invited to a formal feasting or 'drinking' event, the type and quantity of food or alcohol which a guildsman received would have been associated with - and concurrently reinforced - his socioeconomic station. When the wardens of the Goldsmiths' Company 'sett downe in writing some reasonable proporcon what was fitt to be spent on those [quarter] daies', in 1620, events at which ale and spiced bread were usually consumed by all members of the guild, the Company elite also gave an 'order for the distributing of ye cheise'. It was specified that the wardens were allocated a third of a cheese each to take home; whereas the rest of the livery were given a sixth.[37] One can only assume that members of the yeomanry left the Hall empty-handed. At sixteenth-century election day feasts, having served their seniors swan, quail and deer, Bachelors of the Drapers' Company - the elite of the yeomanry - were provided with the relatively humble menu of boiled capon, roast goose and custard.[38]

The displeasure of the Goldsmiths' Company wardens in 1629 at the refusal of the renters, Newman and Jenner, to contribute towards the election feast was not simply about the undermining of a significant custom; their annoyance also demonstrates that participation in rites of consumption was perceived as essential for upholding one's personal status as a man of authority within the contemporary guild.[39] As an institution composed solely of men - women were barred from

membership - the guild was an important site within which males of varying ages, social backgrounds and artisanal skills, might demonstrate or compete for manhood; a significant arena, beyond the household, for the construction of masculine and civic identities.[40] Guildsmen were bound together horizontally by ties of fraternal loyalty and mutual assistance and vertically by patriarchal notions of deference to one's seniors.[41] Contributions to the communal treasury were essential for fulfilling both these obligations. Men paid a charge at the point of being bound to a master; when they entered the guild as a freeman and again if they were elected to the livery; once a member, guildsmen paid quarterage fees into the communal treasury. Livery members might donate a 'hogshead' of wine or a deer from their own private estates, instead of giving a monetary payment. The elite of the Drapers' Company established a tradition of giving bucks which were then baked into 'venison pasties' that could be 'geven awaye by the Mr Wardens to their ffrendes, to officers of thoswe and others' [including the cook and the porters].[42] In an unremarkable year the 'Dinner Book' shows that the remains of the carcasses of 25 bucks had been transformed into 135 pasties.[43] Such a distribution of gourmet foodstuffs was clearly a material means of garnering loyalty from the ranks of relatively humble persons - within and outside the guild - and simultaneously advertising the landed, leisured social status of their beneficent patrons. A donation to the guild often took material form, beyond the consumable, and as within all middling and elite social networks, silver was the standard currency of obligation, patronage and honour.[44] A silver drinking vessel was the customary gift upon admission to a guild, as a fine for unacceptable behaviour or compensation for declining office. Significant collections of plate were necessary for large-scale dining - for use at the table and display on the buffet - and also formed essential reserves of ready cash.[45]

Material contributions and participation in rites of commensality were not just a priority for the living. A guildsman even demonstrated his communal loyalty after death; providing funds for his fellows to host a memorial drink or dinner at the company hall after his funeral or a commemorative service. Guildsmen also frequently made bequests of silver, engraved with their familial arms and inscriptions that spoke of fraternal love and memorialisation.[46] In 1630 Mr Warden

Leadam presented to the Goldsmiths' Court a great standing cup and cover, with his own arms and that of the Company engraved upon and the inscription that: 'This guifte I leave amongst my friends, Of that which God did give, That when I dye this guifte of myne Amongst my friends may live'.[47] Two years later Mr Avenon also donated a silver cup and cover, with an inscription that clearly anticipated the convivial context in which the gift would operate: 'When at your Hall doth shine with plate, And all your dishes served in state, When mirth abound, and wine is free, Then (freely drinking) think on me'.[48] Through the use and display of such objects at guild feasts and dinners, 'amongst my friends', there must have been a very real sense that the community of guildsmen extended beyond the living, present company.[49] Though plate collections were on occasion melted down or sold for the inherent value of the material during particularly acute financial crises, guilds might record crucial details before sale or destruction, which would subsequently be re-inscribed on new pieces of silver when the economic climate improved, thus preserving the memory of donors.[50]

In refusing to provide material contributions for the wardens' election feast - offerings which were within their means as men of 'habilitie' - Newman and Jenner were thus neglecting their responsibility to provide mutual assistance to their fellows and their obligation to show due respect to their seniors, both living and dead. From the wardens' perspective, these individuals had undermined their status as men of the guild; though perhaps Newman and Jenner believed that the feast was an apposite site for asserting their somewhat beleaguered manhood. As guild dinners were intended to be demonstrations of brotherly love, underpinned by visual and spatial markers of political and social distinction, refusal to partake or subversion of the rituals of communal consumption appear to have been very effective means of expressing competing claims to status or articulating disapproval of some aspect of internal governance.

As in the all-male institutional setting of the Oxford or Cambridge college, rites of consumption were organised hierarchically by the guilds.[51] At the feast, wardens and other senior members of the livery would be seated at the dais end of the hall, at the high table, with the remaining livery and freemen on tables below, organised according to their relative prestige within the company. Entries from the court minutes of the Ironmongers' and Armourers' companies indicate that the relative spatial location of members, at the table, was becoming a particularly sensitive issue from the later decades of the sixteenth century. During the 1560s it was decided by the court of the Armourers' Company that 'where as afore tyme there was no place apoynted for the old wardens' it was now agreed that former wardens would sit with the current authorities at the 'feast dener' and that they might all 'ryse jointly together and goe with their garlands'.[52] In 1595, by a command of the court of the Ironmongers' Company, the precise seating arrangements and the order of service for the 'Highe Table', the 'Seconde Table' and the 'Thirde Table' were clearly outlined. The desire for written codification of hierarchies within both companies is certainly suggestive of a growing political and social imperative to mark out one's spatial territory in relation to other company men.[53] Architectural features within the guild hall would have further reinforced status differences, with timber frames employed to create 'complex hierarchical spaces'.[54] Visual decorative mediums, such as tapestries or paintings, might have also accentuated the relative exclusivity of the dais end of the hall. In 1570, the 'Keper of the Wardropp in the tower' was rewarded with 20 shillings 'and a hot venyson pastie' for bringing to the Drapers' Hall 'the storye of King Davyd and others' - in textile form - for the decoration of the high-end of the hall.[55] Early in the same decade the wardens of the Carpenters' guild commissioned a frieze of four paintings, for the dais end of their internal hall, depicting the instrumental role of the craft of carpentry throughout Old and New Testament biblical history. In each picture of this narrative frieze - approximately 3 foot high and 23 foot in length - a respected male figure of authority is depicted in the act of instruction; a highly suitable, didactic visual motif, placed directly above the high table, for the communication of authority and institutional hierarchy.[56]

Inventories of guild possessions demonstrate that one's place within the hierarchy of the guild was also marked out materially within the hall through moveable fixtures. An inventory of communal goods owned by the Pewterers' guild in 1559 itemised textiles of various qualities 'in the Black Chest bound with Iron' which was stored in the 'countyng house'. The distinction between the 'table clothis of damaske' and those described as 'playne', almost certainly reflected the

statuses of those sitting at particular tables within the communal hall.[57] In the same inventory, a list of furniture gives us some sense of hierarchies expressed and enforced materially. Whereas the livery would have sat at the 'long tables', those of more modest ranking would have been positioned at the 'ffolding table with ii leavis of the gifte of the yeomandry'.[58] The flexible nature of the latter fixture suggests that it could have been stored away - moved out of sight along with its donors - when the guild was hosting a relatively exclusive feasting occasion. A contemporaneous inventory taken by the Armourers' guild specifically mentions the high table and 'a carpitt' and nine cushions which had been acquired for its ornamentation and the comfort of the livery; by contrast the other tables and frames listed were left bare.[59] Such was the symbolic significance of different types of furniture that when in 1611 a generous - though initially anonymous - donor undertook to give six pounds eight shillings every year to twelve 'poor' of the Carpenters' Company and to provide a dinner for them, he also presented a table and seats to be used specifically for this occasion.[60] The furniture might have been a means of materialising and thus permanently memorialising the donor's generosity, but it also seems likely that the alternative scenario: the use of Company fixtures by the poor, was perceived as somewhat distasteful. Those institutionally inferior to the liverymen thus sat on lower benches, were served with napkins made of inferior quality materials and in many guilds would have eaten off pewter not the company silver. Differentiation between participants at the feast had always been a significant aspect of the ritual, but court minutes and accounts of the Goldsmiths' Company from the late-sixteenth to mid-seventeenth centuries suggest that both governors and governed were unusually preoccupied with the spatial and material dynamics of communal consumption during these decades.

The proceedings from the Goldsmiths' court indicate that from the early seventeenth-century, the wardens were attempting to regulate table service - thus movement through space and access to company silver - more tightly than ever before; in the process distinctions between guildmen were intensified. Contrary to tradition: that as 'of ancient tyme it hath bene accustomed that a certain number of the Yeomanrie should wayte in their gownes at the Renters feast', in December 1611 it was ordered that this year

there shalle 20 of the riche batchelers appointed to carry the service unto the highe Table and other tables in the hall in their gownes ... and satten hoodes ... [but] there shalbe none of the Yeomanrie imployed in that service'.[61]

This decision to promote the wealthiest group of freemen was probably related to the fact that a goldsmith, Sir James Pemberton was Lord Mayor of London that year, but the total exclusion of the rest of the yeomanry from service at the feast might also have related to an internal political controversy. Earlier that same month the wardens had received an unsigned and thus libellous petition 'devised by some of the yeomanry of the Companie for reformation of dyuers abuses and inconveniences crept into the gouernment of this Society'.[62] To forbid the yeomanry from serving senior guildsmen was essentially punitive, a demotion of status; service was necessary for eventual promotion within the institution.[63]

The guild elite were not just concerned about the spatial privileges accorded to the yeomanry within the context of feasting practices. In 1622 it was decreed that 'it is for manye respects thought verie unfitting and unseemely that the companie should be attended at their dynners and meetings here by the almes men'.[64] It was therefore decided that

those six [chosen by the wardens] onely being decentlie apparrelled shall accordinglie attend and none other of the Almes men ... and that any of them shall misbehave themselves in that service being drunke or other uncivill carriage ... to be instantlie dismissed.

It was also ordered that the practice of giving the almsmen 'releife from the tables here in the hall and parlor' was categorically forbidden and that 'none of the almes men presume to come to the Taverene at suche tyme as anie of the Wardeins or assistants dyne or sup there'.[65] Unkempt or drunken almsmen evidently reflected badly on the status of the Goldsmiths' Company; their casual access to the high table in hall or parlour - or even semi-public tavern - undermined guild hierarchies. Spatial distinctions and privileges which had formerly operated as tacit customs were being newly codified through formal, written regulations.[66]

The issue of table service was not only a matter of tension between governors and governed; it might also be

a point of contention between men of high prestige within a guild, particularly when there was a broader civic context to the dinner. In 1612 a meal had been 'prepared for the upper table in the [Goldsmiths'] hall for the right honourable Sir James Pemberton Knight Lord Maior of this citie'. The purpose, 'according to the anncient custome of his predecessors', was to

make choise of him that shalbe the Kinges sheriffe for the year ensueing and drinke to him in a great cup of [h]yppocras ... with one of the flagon potts of the Citie.[67]

The spectacle had clearly been well designed in advance and every man was sitting in his appropriate place. The Lord Mayor - a goldsmith - 'in the myddest of the [high] table', his immediate junior within the guild at his left-hand side 'with onely the Wardens and Assistants in their seuerall degrees sate at the table with them'. The officeholders of the guild, including assayer and beadle 'dyned at the syde table next the parlour doore'. Despite careful choreography beforehand, this event did not run its course without challenges to material hierarchies; towards the end of the meal 'a question was moved whether the Mr warden or the renter should rise and present the Lord Maior with the cup of wyne to welcome him'.[68] It is notable that tension within the guild over the relative honours of wardens and renters was exhibited through competing claims of privileged access to service and precious plate. Within a dense network of symbolic, civic meanings, 'the [physical] cup of wyne' clearly had a certain agency, and authority was invested in the guildsman with the closest physical proximity to the vessel and its contents.[69]

Tensions between guildsmen at the feast were not simply related to who was permitted to serve one's seniors; challenges to guild authorities or disputes between guildsmen of similar status were frequently articulated through physical absence at the table and thus non-participation in rituals of communal consumption. At the warden's dinner in June 1575 for example,

Mr Gardiner and Mr Brandy with a fowe other their associates of the assisents and lyuey dyd absent themselfe ... a rec[en]te strif or contencon by them rayled in the companie, and as yet not decided.

Presumably to make their displeasure with their fellows all the more explicit, and as a statement of their contin-

ued authority, these wardens refused to return their key to the treasury: the storeroom in which the communal silver plate and jewels were housed.[70] Though Gardiner and Brandy were physically absent they were clearly unwilling to relinquish their - symbolic and practical - access rights to a highly privileged space within the Goldsmiths' Hall. In other instances men evidently felt that it was preferable to be absent from the feasting table than to accept a place which insulted their political and social status. In October 1612, following a court meeting attended by all the wardens and assistants, the guildsmen were about to 'repair into the hall for dynner' when a 'question was moved betweene Sir William Herrick [the King's jeweller and a major lender to the crown] and Mr Alderman Smithe for their placing at the table'. Both men presented their respective cases to the assembled company, but the matter still being unresolved, 'the Remembrancer of the Citie was sent for to deliuer his knowledge'. When this figure - William Dyos - decreed that

the Alderman of this Citie should in all places within the Citie have precedence before the knights Commoners ... Sir William departed and would not be intreated to staye dynner, leaving Mr Sheriffe present and his other guests the Assistants in the hall.[71]

The disruption that this sudden absence caused to the guild community is tangible within the written record; it also reveals how wider disputes between City elites and the crown and court might overflow into the halls of companies, demonstrated - and exacerbated - as a disagreement over relative spatial privileges at the high table.

For senior members of the Goldsmiths' guild in this era, spatial hierarchies within the Company Hall and at the high table, and access to the silver service - positioning in relation to things and other men - were the chief concerns surrounding the consumption of food and drink. Worries about the 'excessive' consumption of alcohol among their yeoman subordinates, and the social and bodily disorder which might accompany such binges - the framework within which 'antipatriarchal' or competing masculinities are usually understood - were of minor concern, compared to these issues.[72] Despite the escalating costs associated with feasting, a matter which caused continual anxiety, guildsmen evidently felt that taking part in ritual practices of consumption were a

crucial means of establishing and maintaining one's position; but to uphold honour, civic identity or manhood, it was necessary to partake in the appropriate material and spatial contexts. The material culture of feasting - silver plate, textiles, even the physical configuration of the tables themselves - might simultaneously reflect and inform the complex dynamics of social relations within and outside the company halls.

The particularly intense competition between guildsmen at the dinner-table, disrupting the choreographed performances of communal harmony, is partly explicable in relation to the numerical growth of guilds. From the mid-to-late-sixteenth-century all London guilds grew considerably in size, the most prestigious Great Twelve numbering in the late hundreds or even thousands of members, meaning that space was at a premium and inclusive communal feasting was a practical impossibility. The guildsmen could not all physically fit in the hall.[73] Tellingly, in the Goldsmiths' court minutes of 1595, it is revealed that an order was given for eight new short forms [benches] to be made for the yeomanry in the hall and the extant long tables to be lengthened; necessary measures because the great increase in the size of this social group within the guild had exceeded existing seating provisions.[74] The sheer number of guildsmen attempting to gain access to the hall inevitably created anxieties regarding associated hierarchies and spatial privileges. Concerns about one's own status compared to other brothers within the guild must also have been intensified by the growing exclusivity of the company elite. Though numbers of freemen being admitted into companies increased, mobility into the livery was highly restricted, especially in the largest guilds: only one in twenty members of the Drapers' Company, for example, was a liveryman in the later 1600s.[75] Such limitations could cause considerable frustrations, especially when the yeomanry, in almost all guilds, had no influence over the election of the wardens. The aforementioned anonymous petition by the yeomanry of the Goldsmiths' Company in 1611 'for reformation of dyuers abuses and inconveniences crept into the gouernment of this Society', a quarrel which appears to have jeopardised their serving privileges within the hall, touched precisely on this contentious issue of secret elections.[76]

It is significant that such exclusivity became a physical, built and experienced reality as the ruling elite of guilds progressively retreated into relatively private spaces within halls - such as the parlour and dining room - for the conduction of company business and court affairs from the later decades of the sixteenth-century.[77] Degrees of access (or restriction) to exclusive spaces within the company hall thus became increasingly significant markers of a man's status in relation to other guildsmen.[78] The Goldsmiths are a case in point. When the Company rebuilt their Hall during the 1630s - entirely demolishing the medieval wooden house on Foster Lane, which had been the focal point of guild governance and sociability for nearly three centuries, and in its place, constructing a Palladian-style mansion, of Portland stone - the wardens used this opportunity to physically restructure spatial relations between guildsmen.[79] It was decided, for instance, by fourteen votes to one at a court meeting in March 1636 to build a terrace and gallery deep within the new building; highly specialised spaces which allowed for exclusive social and political exchanges.[80] It was also ordered that two pairs of 'great' new staircases were to be designed and built, 'which shalbee more large and Convenient for the Companyes use' and were to lead straight into an exclusive first floor suite of rooms.[81] The spatial dynamics of authority and privilege were literally built into the structure of the new guild hall, reflecting and crucially informing complex communal politics.[82] The heightened controversies over hierarchies and material privileges at the feasting or dinner table must be contextualised within this larger process of internal spatial reorganisation within company halls.

When the guild came to feast together, social, economic and political hierarchies - a man's position in relation to his fellows - were made material and thus on occasion intolerable. Though in principle tightly choreographed, disputes over contributions, service, seating arrangements or even attendance at the dinner-table were valuable, though under-historicised tools, through which antagonisms between guildsmen might be played out and civic reputations upheld or asserted. The delicate balance between communal brotherhood and internal hierarchy had always created a somewhat uneasy tension at the heart of the guild feast; but during times of acute social and political unease, accompanied by spatial reorganisation, this delicate equilibrium became impossible to maintain and the notion of 'loving fraternity' a hollow rhetoric.

References

1. G[oldsmiths'] C[ompany] L[ibrary], Wardens' Accounts and Court Minutes, Q1, fo. 167r.

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3. Guildhall Library, Armourers' and Brasiers' Company, Court Book 1559-1621, MS 12071/2.

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8. Ashton, R. (1979) op. cit. pp.58-82.

9. Kellett, J.R. (1957-8) 'The Breakdown of Gild and Corporation Control over the Handicraft and Retail Trade in London', *Economic History Review*, 2nd ser. 10, pp.381-94; Berlin, M. (1997) '"Broken all in pieces": Artisans and the Regulation of Workmanship in Early Modern London', in Crossick, G. (ed.) *The Artisan and the European Town*. Aldershot: Scolar Press. pp.75-91; Wallis, P. (2002) 'Controlling Commodities: Search and Reconciliation in the Early Modern Livery Companies', in Anders Gadd, I. and Wallis, P. (eds.) *Guilds, Society and Economy in London*

1450-1800. Loughborough: Centre for Metropolitan History, Institute of Historical Research. pp.85-100.

10. Anders Gadd, I. and Wallis, P. (2002) 'Introduction', in Anders Gadd, I. and Wallis, P. (eds.) (2002) op. cit. p.9. See also: Ward, J.P. (1997) *Metropolitan Communities: Trade Guilds, Identity and Change in Early Modern England*. Stanford: Stanford University Press; Epstein, S.R. and Prak, M. (eds.) *Guilds, Innovation and the European Economy, 1400-1800*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

11. Withington, P. (2007) 'Company and Sociability in Early Modern England', *Social History*. 32:3, pp.291-307.

12. Kuchta, D. (2002) *The Three-Piece Suit and Modern Masculinity: England, 1550-1850*. Berkeley: University of California Press. p.7, 'Manners and material culture gave shape to ideological processes; material signs formed and informed systems of power, rather than standing outside them in some exterior symbolic realm'.

13. GCL, Q1, fo. 167r.

14. Reddaway, T.F. and Walker, L.E. (1975) *The Early History of the Goldsmiths' Company, 1327-1509*. London: Arnold; Rosser, G. (1997) 'Crafts, Guilds and the Negotiation of Work in the Medieval Town', *Past and Present*. 154, pp.3-31.

15. Dales, R. (2008) 'Saint Dunstan, Patron Saint of Goldsmiths', in Schroder, T. (ed.) *Treasures of the English Church: A Thousand Years of Sacred Gold and Silver*. London: Goldsmiths' Company in association with Paul Holberton Publishing. pp.11-15.

16. Rosser, G. (1994) op. cit. p.431; James, M. (1983) 'Ritual, Drama and Social Body in the Late Medieval English Town', *Past and Present*. 98, pp.3-29.

17. Rosser, G. (1994) op. cit. p.436.

18. For the reformation of the ritual calendar see: Cressy, D. (1989) *Bonfires and Bells: National Memory and the Protestant Calendar in Elizabethan and Stuart England*. Berkeley: University of California Press; Hutton, R. (1994) *The Rise and Fall of Merry England: The Ritual Year 1400-1700*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

19. Glanville, P. (1990) *Silver in Tudor and Early Stuart England*. London: Victoria and Albert Museum. p.235.

20. Dinners were probably held at midday, whereas feasts were evening occasions.

21. GCL, O3, fos. 636r-637v.

22. Prideaux, W.S. (1896) *Memorials of the Goldsmiths Company*, Vol. I. London: Eyre. p.140.

23. Archer, I.W. (1991) op. cit. p.117.

24. In July 1577, the Master of the Armourers' Company, Roger Tindall 'made request that the Companye would have consideration concerninge the chargis of his dinner at the

election daye' [Armourers' and Brasiers' Company, Court Minutes, MS 12071/2, fo. 357].

25. Albala, K. (2007) *The Banquet: Dining in the Great Courts of Late Renaissance Europe*. Champaign: University of Illinois Press.

26. Drapers' Company Hall, Renter Wardens' Accounts, DB 1 [Dinner Book 1563-1602]. Henceforth referenced as DB 1. The Dinner Book is only paginated up to fo. 30.

27. Drapers' Company, DB 1.

28. Guildhall Library, Carpenters' Company, Wardens' Accounts [1592-1622], MS 4326/6, fo. 43v.

29. Carpenters' Company, Wardens' Accounts, MS 4326/6, fo. 43v

30. Drapers' Company, DB 1.

31. ibid.

32. Moxon, J. (1677) *The Mechanick Exercises*. London. pp.364-65.

33. Prideaux, W.S. (1896) Vol. I. op. cit. p.69.

34. GCL, K1, fo. 125.

35. Archer, I.W. (1991) op. cit. pp.118-119; Deceulaer, H. and Verleysen, F. (2006) 'Excessive Eating or Political Display? Guild Meals in the Southern Netherlands, late 16th-late 18th centuries', *Food and History*. 4:2, pp.165-185.

36. Armourers' and Brasiers' Company, Yeomen Quarterage Book 1603-39, MS 12079/2. Desire for promotion into the company elite and the close supervision - by the livery - of these relatively youthful gatherings, appear to have hampered the development of any clear sense of alternative manhood or identity.

37. GCL, P2, fos. 226v-227v.

38. Drapers' Company, DB 1. See also: Rappaport, S. (1989) op. cit. p.226, 'In great companies a separate livery of the yeomanry, called 'the bachelors', was created for one year when a member of the company was elected mayor of London'.

39. Withington, P. (2007) op. cit. p.300, '... institutional companies ... were themselves constituted by both regular and irregular instances of sociability: it was through company that companies, so to speak, perpetuated and regenerated themselves'.

40. Wiesner, M.E. (1989) 'Guilds, Male Bonding and Women's Work in Early Modern Germany', *Gender and History*. 1:2, pp.125-137; Shepard, A. (2005) 'From Anxious Patriarchs to Refined Gentlemen? Manhood in Britain, circa 1500-1700', *Journal of British Studies*. 44:2, pp.282-84.

41. Withington, P. (2000) 'Citizens, Community and Political Culture in Restoration England', in Shepard, A. and Withington, P. (eds.) *Communities in Early Modern England: Networks, Place, Rhetoric*. Manchester: Manchester

University Press. pp.134-155.

42. Drapers' Company, DB 1.

43. ibid.

44. Glanville, P. (1987) *Silver in England*. London: Unwin Hyman. pp.302-337.

45. The Goldsmiths' Company sold the vast majority of their silver plate in the late 1630s, and again in the late 1660s.

46. Archer, I.W. (2001) 'The Arts and Acts of Memorialization in Early Modern London', in Merritt, J.F (ed.) *Imagining Early Modern London: Perceptions and Portrayals of the City from Stow to Strype 1598-1720*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. pp.98-99.

47. Prideaux, W.S. (1896) Vol. I. op. cit. p.150.

48. ibid., pp. 156-57.

49. Sweetinburgh, S. (2010) 'Remembering the Dead at Dinner-Time', in Hamling, T. and Richardson, C. (eds.) *Everyday Objects: Medieval and Early Modern Material Culture and its Meanings*. Ashgate: Farnham. pp.257-266.

50. The Drapers recorded benefactors' details and inscriptions on silver before disposal of plate in the 1640s; the Goldsmiths in the 1630s and 1660s.

51. During, L. (2009) 'The Oxford College as Household, 1580-1640', in Cavallo, S. and Evangelisti, S. (eds.) *Institutional Interiors in Early Modern Europe*. Ashgate: Farnham. pp.83-101.

52. Armourers' and Brasiers' Company, Court Book 1559-1621, MS 12071/2, fo. 33.

53. Guildhall Library, Ironmongers' Company, Charter, Ordinance and Memorandum Book, MS 16960, fo. 65v.

54. Giles, K. (1999) 'The 'Familiar' Fraternity: The Appropriation and Consumption of Medieval Guildhalls in Early Modern York', in West, S. and Tarlow, S. (eds.) *The Familiar Past? Archaeologies of Later Historical Britain*. London: Routledge. p.90.

55. Drapers' Company, DB 1.

56. Carpenters' Company, Wardens' Accounts, MS 4343. See also: Jupp, E.B. (1848) *An Historical Account of the Worshipful Company of Carpenters' of the City of London: Compiled Chiefly from Records in their Possession*. London: W. Pickering. pp.236-239.

57. Guildhall Library, Pewterers' Company, Inventory, MS 7110, fo. 33v.

58. ibid. fo. 34v.

59. Armourers' and Brasiers' Company, Court Minutes, MS 12071/2, fo. 475v.

60. Carpenters' Company, Court Minutes, MS 4326/6.

61. GCL, P1, fo. 28r.

62. ibid. fo. 28v.

63. Archer, I.W. (1991) op. cit. p.117.

64. GCL, P2, fo. 311r.

65. ibid. fo. 312v.

66. Fox, A. (1996) 'Custom, memory and the authority of writing', in Griffiths, P., Fox, A. and Hindle, S. (eds.) *The Experience of Authority in Early Modern England*. London: MacMillan. pp.89-116.

67. GCL, P1, fo. 41r.

68. ibid. fo. 41r.

69. Taylor, V. (2005) 'Banquet plate and Renaissance culture: a day in the life', in Olson, R., Reilly, P. and Shepherd, R. (eds.) *The Biography of the Object in Late Medieval and Renaissance Italy*. Oxford: Wiley. pp.41-53.

70. GCL, L2, fo. 234.

71. GCL, P1, fos. 49r-50v. See also: Overall, W.H. (1878) *Analytical Index, to the Series of Records known as the Remembrancia: Preserved among the Archives in the City of London A.D. 1579-1664*. London. p.xi.

72. See endnote no. 6.

73. Archer, I.W. (1991) op. cit. pp.118-119.

74. Prideaux, W.S. (1896) Vol. I. op. cit. p.89.

75. Archer, I.W. (1991) op. cit. pp.114-116.

76. This issue was raised again in 1624 through a petition for a yeomanry specifically composed of 'working goldsmiths'.

77. Tittler, R. (1991) *Architecture and Power: The Town Hall and the English Urban Community c. 1500-1640*. Oxford: Clarendon Press; Griffiths, P. (1997) 'Secrecy and Authority in Late Sixteenth-and Seventeenth-Century London', *The Historical Journal*. 40:4, pp.925-951; Giles, K. (1999) op. cit.

78. Bailey, A. and Hentschell, R. (2010) 'Introduction: Gendered Geographies of Vice', in their *Masculinity and the Metropolis of Vice, 1550-1650*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan. p.12, 'that perceptions and experiences of masculinities in early modern England were predicated on one's access to and mobility across particular spaces'.

79. GCL, R2-V.

80. GCL, S, fo. 182r.

81. GCL, T, fo. 31r.

82. Giles, K. (1999) op. cit. p.90.