



## Communications.

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### MUNICIPAL PRECEDENCE IN THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY.

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SOME years since, in conjunction with the Hon. Assist. Sec., I contributed to the *Transactions* (vol. xxxv) of this Society transcripts of the three burgess rolls of Liverpool which were drawn up in the sixteenth century—viz., in 1565, 1572, and 1589 respectively. Subsequent comparison of these rolls with a document—contemporaneous with the first of them—containing the assessments of the various householders in Liverpool to a levy in aid of the repair of Walton Parish Church, and with the lists of mayors and bailiffs given on pages 234 and 235 of Baines' *History of Liverpool*, has not only revealed in detail the principles upon which the rolls were constructed, but brought to light certain facts which are not without interest, as bearing on the subject of municipal and social precedence and the changes which took place therein during the reign of Elizabeth.

As originally prepared, the first roll contained—omitting heirs and duplicates—just 139 names, carefully arranged in order of precedence, and comprising 2 noblemen, 3 knights, 7 esquires, and 14 gentlemen (including the 5 "aldermen"), together with 113 ordinary burgesses. First come

Lord Derby and his eldest son, then the mayor, followed by knights and esquires. After the esquires come the aldermen—*i.e.*, the ex-mayors, or the “mayor’s brethren”—in the order of their seniority, and then ordinary gentlemen. These are succeeded by the bailiffs for the time being, followed by the “bailiffs’ peers”—*i.e.*, the ex-bailiffs—in the order of their seniority, and, it would appear, by some five other officers, including the “serjeant”. Then come the ordinary resident burgesses,\* according to their places of residence, the streets being arranged as follows:—Water Street, Castle Street, Dale Street, Jugler Street, More Street, Mylne Street, and Chapel Street; the last three streets, however, supplying between them only eight freemen. Last of all come any undistinguished “foreign” burgesses.

The mayor’s order of precedence was evidently a little unsettled at this period: in the first roll, 1565, he follows the noblemen, but precedes the knights; in the second roll, 1572, he follows both nobles and knights; and it is not until the third roll, 1589, that he attains to the position which he now holds as the first subject within the borough bounds.

The position assigned to the mayor on the third roll is evidently not attributable to accident, but to a genuine development of the municipal spirit; for a precisely similar advance in precedence is accorded to the bailiffs—the officers next in importance to the mayor. In the first and second rolls these officers are not inserted until after the “gentlemen,” but in the third roll, while the ex-bailiffs are still placed after the gentlemen, the

\* It does not seem to have been absolutely necessary that even resident freemen should be householders; for Rauff and Thomas Balie—sons of the Rauff Balie who was Mayor in 1551—appear to have resided with their mother, “Wydowe” Balie, in Water Street.

bailiffs for the time being take precedence of the latter, and come immediately after the "esquires."

The care which was evidently devoted to questions of precedence and seniority in the preparation of these rolls has led to the discovery of a considerable number of inaccuracies in the list of bailiffs given on page 235 of Baines' *History of Liverpool*. The senior (or mayor's bailiff) in 1556 was Thomas Bastwell (a contraction for Bastwysyll), not Thomas Bostock; in 1562 the senior bailiff was Radulphus (or Rauff) Jamisson, not Thomas Jannison; in 1574 the junior (or town's) bailiff was William Golbrand, not Gellond; the mayor's bailiff in 1576 was Robert Baule, not Thomas Bank, and in 1580 Roger Roose, not Moore. In 1581 the town's bailiff was Alan, not Alexander, Gogney, and in 1584 Edmund, not Edward, Erlome (or Irlam); while in the following year the mayor's bailiff was Richard, not Thomas, Hodgeson. The bailiffs for the years 1555 and 1589—not given in Baines' list—were, for the former year Radulphus (or Ralph) Barlowe and Thomas Bolton, and for the latter year Thomas Hichmough and Richard Baylie. The position, also, of their names on the first roll makes it probable that Robert Holden, Thomas Bastwysyll, and William Lawrence filled this office during some of the years between 1540 and 1553, for which period no records are known.

In the third roll, for some reason—not yet apparent—the order of seniority seems to have been slightly departed from in the cases of the first six ex-bailiffs, but in the remaining twelve it is strictly followed.

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