

Episcopal entries and urban liberties in late medieval and Renaissance France, c. 1200–c. 1600

Neil Murphy*

ABSTRACT

In comparison to the ceremonial entries of French kings, little work has been done on episcopal entries. Whereas royal entries underwent a period of massive elaboration during the later Middle Ages and Renaissance, there was less change to bishops' entries during this period, especially in towns where civic administrations used these ceremonies to compel bishops to acknowledge their rights. While less susceptible to modification than royal entries, important changes did occur to the episcopal entry by the later sixteenth century because of the increased Counter-Reformation emphasis on the power of the bishop, as well as the impact of the Wars of Religion. By the seventeenth century, the requirement to confirm urban liberties at entries was far less a part of an episcopal entry than it had been during the heights of this ceremony during the later Middle Ages. Nonetheless, the episcopal entry remained an important way for towns to recruit brokers.

In comparison to the ceremonial entries of medieval and early modern French kings, historians have paid little attention to those made by bishops.¹ There is no monograph on this subject and only a handful of articles, most of which approach the subject from a local perspective.² This

* The author is Professor of Medieval and Early Modern History at Northumbria University, Newcastle, United Kingdom. He may be contacted at neil.murphy@northumbria.ac.uk. He would like to thank Laura O'Brien, Felicia Gottmann and Graeme Small as well as the two anonymous reviewers of this article.

1 For prominent studies of French royal entries, L. Bryant, *The King and the City in the Parisian Royal Entry Ceremony: Politics, Ritual, and Art in the Renaissance* (Geneva, 1986); G. Kipling, *Enter the King: Theater, Liturgy, and Ritual in the Medieval Civic Triumph* (Oxford, 1998); N. Murphy, *Ceremonial Entries, Municipal Liberties and the Negotiation of Power in Valois France, 1328–1589* (Leiden, 2016); M. Wintroub, *A Savage Mirror: Power, Identity, and Knowledge in Early Modern France* (Stanford, 2006).

2 The only attempt to take a broader geographical perspective for France is Véronique Julerot's 2006 article on the origins of the medieval French ceremony, which does not focus on the bishop's confirmation of urban rights: V. Julerot, 'La première entrée de l'évêque: réflexions sur son origine', *Revue historique*, 638 (2006), 635–75. For episcopal entries in other parts of Europe: J. Tyler, *Lord of the Sacred City: The Episcopus Exclusus in Late Medieval and Early Modern Germany* (Leiden, 1999), 123–50; M. Miller, 'The Florentine bishop's ritual entry and the origins of medieval episcopal Adventus', *Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique*, 308 (2006), 5–28; M. Miller, 'Urban space, sacred topography, and ritual meanings in Florence: the route of the bishop's entry, c. 1200–1600', in *The Bishop Reformed: Studies of Episcopal Power and Culture in the Central Middle Ages*, ed. J. S. Ott and A. T. Jones (Aldershot, 2007), 237–49; K. Harvey, 'The first entry of the bishop: episcopal Adventus in fourteenth-century England', in *Fourteenth-Century England VIII*, ed. J. Hamilton (Woodbridge, 2014), 43–58; S. Strocchia, 'When the bishop married the abbess: masculinity and power in Florentine episcopal entry rites, 1300–1600', *Gender and History*, 19 (2007), 346–68; J. Maciejewski, 'Nudo pede intrat urbem: research on the Adventus of a medieval bishop through the first half of the twelfth century', *Viator*, 21 (2010), 89–100; S. Twyman, 'Papal adventus

dearth of studies on bishops' entries reflects a wider lack of work on the French Church during this period. When bishops are discussed, it is often in terms of the role they played in the construction and operation of the royal state.³ Yet, while late medieval bishops generally possessed less temporal power than their early medieval predecessors, nonetheless they also remained powerful local figures who could wield considerable influence in the day-to-day running of towns.⁴ Furthermore, some bishops, such as those of Albi or Rodez, continued to act as temporal lords of their cities in the later Middle Ages. This article argues that it was precisely because bishops remained powerful local figures that urban governments used oath-taking during an entry to define and limit their temporal authority. Accordingly, a study of episcopal entries provides us with a new perspective on power relations in later medieval and Renaissance France.

While historians have argued that the late medieval royal entry ceremony borrowed much of its initial form from bishops' entries, there were major differences between the two.⁵ Whereas the later Middle Ages saw a massive elaboration in the character of royal entries, which were transformed from unostentatious ceremonies into audio-visual feasts, there was less change to episcopal entries. Although Mâcon's municipal council welcomed French kings with increasingly magnificent entries during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, they did not incorporate these theatrical elements into a bishop's entry. This allowed them to keep the focus of the public entry squarely on the bishop's oath-taking.

Although recent works on French royal and princely entries have drawn attention to the important role these ceremonies played in obtaining the ruler's confirmation of rights and liberties, oath-taking was arguably an even more extensive feature of episcopal entries. As part of these ceremonies, French bishops were expected to give a succession of oaths to various individuals and institutions when they came to take possession of their see. When Philippe de Coetquis entered the Breton town of Saint-Pol-de-Léon as bishop-elect in 1422, he took oaths to respect the privileges of the burgesses as well as the rights of the church, the cathedral chapter and the local nobility.⁶ Each of these groups considered the bishop's oath to them to be the most important part of the ceremony. Certainly, the oath-taking ceremony was given the

at Rome in the twelfth century', *Hist Research*, 69 (1996), 233–53; I. Fosi, 'Court and city in the ceremony of the possesso in the sixteenth century', in *Court and Politics in Papal Rome, 1492–1700*, ed. A. Visceglia and G. Signorotto (Cambridge, 2004), 30–52; G. Zujijene, 'Ceremonial ingressu biskupów wileńskich w XVII–XVIII wieku', *Barok*, 13 (2006), 59–73; J. Maciejewski, *Adventus episcopi. Pozaliturgiczne aspekty inauguracji władzy biskupiej w Polsce średniowiecznej na tle europejskim* (Bydgoszcz, 2013).

3 B. Guenée, *Entre l'Église et l'état: quatre vies de prélats français à la fin du Moyen Âge, XIII^e–XV^e siècles* (Paris, 1987); V. Tabbagh, *Les Évêques dans le royaume de France au XIV^e siècle* (Dijon, 2015); idem, *Gens d'église, gens de pouvoir (France, XIII^e–XV^e siècles)* (Dijon, 2006). For the French Church and the development of state power: M. Edelstein, 'The social origins of the episcopacy in the reign of Francis I', *Fr Hist Stud*, 8 (1974), 377–92; M. Edelstein, 'Les Origines sociales de l'épiscopat sous Louis XII et François I^{er}', *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine* 24 (1977), 239–47; T. Lange, *The First French Reformation: Church Reform and the Origins of the Old Regime* (Cambridge, 2014). There is more work on early modern bishops, though again the historiography is limited: J. Bergin, *The Making of the French Episcopate, 1589–1661* (New Haven and London, 1996); F. J. Baumgartner, *Change and Continuity in the French Episcopate: The Bishops and the Wars of Religion, 1547–1610* (Durham, NC, 1986); N. Ravitch, *Sword and Mitre: Government and Episcopacy in France and England in the Age of the Aristocracy* (The Hague, 1966); M. Péronnet, *Les Évêques de l'ancienne France*, 2 vols (Lille, 1978).

4 For the powers of bishops in early medieval France: P. Desportes, 'Les archevêques de Reims et les droits comtaux aux X^e et XI^e siècles', in *Économies et sociétés au Moyen Âge: mélanges offerts à E. Perroy* (Paris, 1973), 78–89; L. Broche, 'Note sur l'origine du comté épiscopal de Laon', in *Bulletin de la société historique de Haute-Picardie*, 2 (1924), 195–202; C. Bouchard, *Spirituality and Administration: The Role of the Bishop in Twelfth-Century Auxerre* (Cambridge, MA, 1979); C. Porée, 'Les évêques-comtes de Gévaudan, étude sur le pouvoir temporel des évêques de Mende aux XII^e et XIII^e s', in C. Porée, *Études historiques sur le Gévaudan* (Paris, 1919), 347–509; J. K. Bulman, *The Court Book of Mende and the Secular Lordship of the Bishop: Recollecting the Past in Thirteenth-Century Gévaudan* (Toronto, 2008).

5 L. Bryant, 'The medieval entry ceremony at Paris', in *Coronations: Medieval and Early Modern Monarchic Ritual*, ed. J. M. Bak (Berkeley, 1990), 88; Bryant, *King and the City*, 66–73. For late antique and early medieval bishops' entries: P. Dufraigne, *Adventus Augusti, Adventus Christi: recherche sur l'exploitation idéologique et littéraire d'un cérémonial dans l'antiquité tardive* (Paris, 1994); M. McCormick, *Eternal Victory: Triumphal Rulership in Late Antiquity, Byzantium and the Early Medieval West* (Cambridge, 1990), 30–31; S. McCormick, 'Change and continuity in late antiquity: the ceremony of "Adventus"', *Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte*, 21 (1972), 721–52; S. G. McCormick, *Art and Ceremony in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1981); P. Mountaubin, 'Pater urbis et orbis: les cortèges pontificaux dans la Rome médiévale (VIII^e–XIV^e siècles)', *Rivista di storia della Chiesa in Italia*, 63 (2009), 9–47.

6 B. Yeuch, 'Les premières entrées épiscopales en Bretagne ducal', *Britannia monastica*, 16 (2012), 113–14. For oaths Breton bishops took at their entries: Y. Bourges and P. Kernévez, 'Les premières entrées épiscopales en Bretagne ducal', *Britannia monastica*, 16 (2012), 93–161.

central place in civic accounts of episcopal entries and in many towns it was the only part of the entry recorded in municipal deliberations.⁷ The expansion in urban record-keeping in French towns during the later Middle Ages took place in part because of a need to keep a record of the confirmation of such rights.⁸ The very act of recording these bishops' ceremonies in civic registers was part of the process which saw religious institutions lose their monopoly on written records.⁹ Record-keeping was directly tied to the form of bishops' entries because town councils checked their accounts for precedents when preparing to receive their new bishop. When Odet de Coligny wrote to Beauvais' town council in 1536 to announce his intention to enter the town, the councillors searched their records for accounts of previous receptions.¹⁰ At the other end of the kingdom, the *consuls* of Aix-en-Provence looked back through their registers in 1500 to see what bishops customarily received at their entries.¹¹

Using municipal records, this article will examine the form and function of the bishop's oath-taking ceremony in late medieval and Renaissance France. It will begin with an examination of the mechanisms that town councils employed to ensure that they obtained confirmation of their authority, before moving on to consider the strategies they devised to develop a positive relationship with the bishop at these ceremonies. While the system of brokerage which underpinned the operation of the political system of pre-modern France has been well studied, bishops are largely absent from these works.¹² Yet bishops remained vitally important to the government of the kingdom throughout this period and they held considerable influence at court. Six of the twelve peers of the realm were bishops in the later Middle Ages, and they filled the ranks of the king's council.¹³ The formation of a Gallican Church during this period, with the king gaining power over episcopal appointments, particularly through the Pragmatic Sanction of Bourges (1438) and the Concordat of Bologna (1516), meant that bishops were often the king's men.¹⁴ Even during the challenges the Catholic League mounted to the Crown in the 1570s, bishops largely remained loyal to the monarch.¹⁵ Given their influence with the king, as well as using an entry to obtain a formal recognition of municipal liberties, urban governments sought to win a bishop's favour and acquire his services as a broker.

The article looks widely across France at dozens of towns and at bishops of various statuses, from metropolitans who oversaw large ecclesiastical provinces to bishops of small dioceses. Regardless of a bishop's position in the wider structure of the Church, the key issue for municipal councils was that he took an oath to recognize their authority.¹⁶ The size of a bishop's ecclesiastical jurisdiction did not significantly impact the form of his confirmation of municipal liberties at an entry. Some of the most powerful archbishops in France are largely absent from

7 For the importance of recording bishops' entries, R. C. Trexler, *Public Life in Renaissance Florence* (Ithaca, 1991), 273–74; J. Tyler, *Lord of the Sacred City: The Episcopus Exclusus in Late Medieval and Early Modern Germany* (Leiden, 1999), 24.

8 For the development of urban record-keeping in later medieval France, G. Small, 'Municipal registers of deliberations in the late middle ages: cross-Channel comparisons', in *Les Idées: passent-elles La Manche?*, ed. J.-P. Genet (Paris, 2007), 37–66.

9 On this point, B. Bedos-Rezak, 'Civic liturgies and urban records in northern France, 1100–1400', in *City and Spectacle in Medieval Europe*, ed. B. A. Hanawalt and K. L. Reyerson (Minneapolis and London, 1994), 34–53.

10 B[ibliothèque] M[unicipale], Beauvais, Collection Bucquet-aux-Cousteaux, vol. 57, 559.

11 A[rchives] M[unicipales] Aix-en-Provence, BB 33, fos 49r, 60r.

12 For the key studies of brokerage in France, S. Kettering, *Patrons, Brokers and Clients in Seventeenth-Century France* (Oxford, 1986); S. Kettering, *Patronage in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century France* (Aldershot, 2002).

13 T. Langue, 'The birth of a maxim: "a bishop has no territory"', *Speculum*, 89 (2014), 130; J.-P. Labatut, *Les Ducs et pairs de France au XVII^e siècle: étude sociale* (Paris, 1972), 70–72; P.-R. Gaussin, 'Les conseillers de Louis XI (1461–1483)', in *La France de la fin du XV^e siècle: renouveau et apogée*, ed. B. Chevalier and P. Contamine (Paris, 1985), 105–34.

14 Baumgartner, *French Episcopate*, 10–54.

15 Baumgartner, *French Episcopate*, 144. Though the episcopacy would split following the former Protestant Henry IV's accession to the throne in 1589: Baumgartner, *French Episcopate*, 157–81.

16 Though a metropolitan could become involved in discussions over rights between a bishop and the town council. For instance, the archbishop of Bourges intervened in a dispute in the late thirteenth century between the new bishop of Albi, Bernard de Combret, and the townspeople regarding the extent of his temporal juridical powers in the town. Similarly, in 1229 a dispute between the bishop of Laon and the municipal council was arbitrated by the archbishop of Reims and agreed by public oath-taking: E. Jolibois, *Ville d'Albi: inventaire sommaire des archives communales antérieures à 1790* (Paris, 1869), 1–2; L. Broche (ed.), 'Documents relatifs aux rapports de l'évêque et de la commune de Laon', *Revue historique de droit français et étranger*, 25 (1901), 729–32.

this article, including those of Lyon and Rouen. As these archbishops held little secular power in these cities, there was no need for municipal councils to devise an oath-taking ceremony for their entry. In contrast, many less powerful bishops, who were in charge of small dioceses, such as those of Tulle or Lodève, feature prominently in this research because the confirmation of urban liberties was a key feature of their ceremonies. While, as we shall see, winning the favour of the archbishops of Lyon or Rouen could bring benefits to the town in the form of influence at court, it was principally the scale of a bishop's local power which most concerned urban governments at episcopal entries.

I

Our knowledge of oath-taking to towns at episcopal entries is tied to the emergence of urban record-keeping in later medieval France. This aspect of the ceremony appears to have existed in earlier centuries, though it is much less well documented because of a lack of municipal sources before the fourteenth century. Some of the earliest urban records suggest that the custom of oath-taking predates the development of written accounts of the ceremony, and that there was already a requirement for some bishops to confirm municipal liberties at their inaugural entries. Although the first text we have of a bishop's entry at Bourges is for Pierre Bertrand in 1329, the record of the ceremony states that it 'followed the old custom'; similarly, while the first mention we have of an episcopal oath at Mâcon is for the entry of Jean de Boisy in 1382, the bishop was asked to confirm the oath in the manner of his predecessors.¹⁷ The fact that a record of a bishop's oath was amongst the first things urban governments chose to set down in these new forms of documentation is a testament to the importance they attached to this act. At Langres, the town council first kept a record of the bishop's entry for that of Louis of Bar in 1398 and they continued to keep accounts of episcopal entries in their archives until the mid-eighteenth century.¹⁸ The recording of these ceremonies in urban registers thus forms part of the move from memory to written record.¹⁹

The inclusion of oaths into bishops' entries was possibly a development of the urban resurgence of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Whereas early medieval French bishops were often the principal authority in their towns, many of which had developed around cathedrals, the central Middle Ages saw many bishops lose temporal power. In a move that was spearheaded by Philip Augustus in the early thirteenth century, the urban governments of towns across France largely came to hold their powers from the king rather than from an episcopal overlord.²⁰ Town councils asked bishops to take an oath to respect the liberties which the monarch had already granted them. While the bishops of Beauvais held extensive powers as count-bishops in the central Middle Ages, the extent of their power had declined by the late medieval period and it was the king who granted the town its rights, which the bishop then reconfirmed at his inaugural entry.²¹ When Odet de Coligny entered Beauvais as bishop in 1536, for example, he took an oath to the mayor to keep the rights and privileges 'given by the kings of France to the mayor,

17 L. de Sainte-Marie, *Recherches historiques sur Nevers* (Paris, 1810), 325; A[rchives] M[unicipales] Mâcon, BB 5, fo. 84r; J.-L. Bazin (ed.), 'Les Rois de France à Mâcon', *Annales de l'académie de Mâcon: société des arts, sciences, belles-lettres et d'agriculture*, 7 (1890), 52–68. We have the occasional references to the presence of oaths in entries in earlier centuries. When Albert Le Grand, bishop of Rennes, entered his see in 1257 he took an oath to respect the liberties of the burgesses: Yeuch, 'Premières Entrées', 137.

18 F. Claudon, *Histoire de Langres et de ses institutions municipales jusqu'au commencement du XVI^e siècle* (Dijon, 1954), 81.

19 M. T. Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record: England 1066–1307* (London, 1979).

20 For Philip Augustus and French towns, see: S. J. Kupper, 'Town and crown: Philip Augustus and the towns of France' (PhD thesis, Johns Hopkins University, 1976). For this process more widely, D. Nicholas, *The Growth of the Medieval City: From Late Antiquity to the Early Fourteenth Century* (Abingdon, 1997), 144–68; D. Nicholas, *The Later Medieval City, 1300–1500* (Abingdon, 1997), 108–10.

21 O. Guyotjeannin, *Episcopus et comes: affirmation et déclin de la seigneurie épiscopale au nord du royaume de France (Beauvais-Noyon, X^e-début XIII^e siècles)* (Geneva, 1987).

residents and inhabitants of this town.²² Yet there are exceptions to this general trend. Some towns remained under episcopal rule and their rights were granted by the bishop rather than by the king. At Rodez, the bishop granted urban privileges at his entry by at least the thirteenth century and this practice continued right through to the sixteenth century.²³ At Albi, the bishops remained temporal lords of the town throughout the Middle Ages. In these circumstances, it was especially important that civic administrations obtained the bishop's oath. Even when a town was not ruled by an episcopal overlord, bishops could still hold significant temporal powers. At Langres, where the bishop's jurisdiction extended over half the town, the municipal government took considerable measures to ensure that he swore to maintain the privileges of the town at his entry (see below).²⁴

Bishops were only required to swear oaths to respect municipal privileges in towns where they held a significant level of temporal authority. While the bishops of Vannes were required to take three oaths regarding privileges at their entries, none of these related to urban privileges as they held little temporal power and posed little threat to municipal authority.²⁵ In such circumstances, the municipal council occupied a less prominent role in these ceremonies. Although Orléans' municipal council came to greet the new bishop at his pre-entry lodgings at the church of Saint-Euverte, they did not request an oath from him or play a significant role in the entry.²⁶ Similarly, the municipal councils of Rouen, Lyon and Montpellier attended episcopal entries, though they did not seek an oath from the bishop during the ceremony as these bishops held little or no temporal authority in these towns.²⁷

The oath-taking was a moment of tension for municipal councils because there was the risk that the bishop could refuse to engage with this element of the ceremony and thus cause a confrontation. To reduce the risk of this happening, some municipal councils wrote to the bishop (who typically stayed in an extramural monastery or episcopal residence) in advance of an entry to inform him of the custom. Châlons-en-Champagne's *échevins* sent the bishop a copy of the text of the oath he would be asked to take at the entry, while for Claude de Longwy's entry into Mâcon in 1516 the *échevins* travelled to the bishop's castle to discuss the oath with his officials.²⁸ In 1411, Albi's *consuls* travelled seventy kilometres to Toulouse to greet the new bishop, Pierre de Neveu, specifically to explain that at his entry he would be presented with a book listing the rights and customs of the town, following which he would be expected to take a public oath to uphold them.²⁹ This strategy was designed to ensure that a bishop did not refuse to take the oath on the day of his entry by claiming ignorance of the custom. The pre-entry discussions between bishops and municipal councils provided an opportunity to resolve issues regarding the nature of the oath and avoid a damaging public confrontation on the day of the entry. These talks also provided municipal governments with an opportunity to obtain the bishop's assent

22 BM Beauvais, Collection Bucquet-aux-Cousteaux, vol. 57, 559–60.

23 H. Affre, *Ville de Rodez: inventaire sommaire des archives communales antérieures à 1790* (Rodez, 1878), 34. For the confirmation of municipal rights during the entries of the sixteenth-century bishops of Rodez, A[rchives] D[épartementales] Tarn 4 EDT AA 6. See also Thérouanne: J. Théry, 'Les Entrées épiscopales à Thérouanne (X^e–XVI^e siècles)', *Album Thérouanne* (Paris, 1998), 1–16; Nicholas, *Later Medieval City*, 109.

24 J. de La Boullaye, *Inventaire-sommaire des archives communales de Langres antérieures à 1789* (Langres, 1882), 17. For the powers of the bishops of Langres, see: F. Claudon, 'Un Condominium ecclésiastique, pairie épiscopale et juridiction capitulaire', *Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique*, 44 (1949), 5–29.

25 Abbé Le Mené, 'Entrée d'un évêque de Vannes, en 1404', *Bulletin de la société polymathique du Morbihan*, (1874), 22–26; J.-M. Mouillard, 'Première entrée des évêques de Vannes dans leur ville épiscopale', *Revue de Bretagne et de Vendée*, 2 (1857), 491–94.

26 D. Lottin, *Recherches historiques sur la ville d'Orléans*, 8 vols (Orléans, 1836–45), i. 148.

27 Julerot, 'Première entrée', 661–62.

28 S. Guilbert (ed.), *Registre de délibérations du conseil de ville de Châlons-en-Champagne (1417–1421)* (Châlons-en-Champagne, 2001), 254; AM Mâcon BB 49, fos 41v–42.

29 *Inventaire sommaire*, Albi, 5.

that he would confirm urban liberties and thus remove uncertainties around this contentious part of the ceremony.

Bishops eager to build good relations with the leading families of their towns could go to some lengths to assure municipal councils that they would take the oath. In 1584, after receiving a letter from Mâcon's *échevins* about the entry, the bishop-elect, Luc Almani, replied that not only was he prepared to take the oath at the entry but that he could also provide a written confirmation of his intention to do so.³⁰ The pre-entry discussions were also important because it was essential to ensure that the bishop took the oath devised by the town council and not one of his own devising. As well as sending Gaspard Dinet a copy of the oath he was required to take at his entry in 1600, Mâcon's *échevins* wrote to his brother, Philippe, a lawyer at the *Parlement* of Paris, to explain that the form of episcopal entry had remained unchanged for three hundred years and that no alterations were to be made to it. This was a period when some bishops—including that of Mâcon's neighbour at Chalon-sur-Saône—were trying to amend the form of the ceremony, particularly with regards to the oath-taking (see below). The *échevins* possibly hoped that Philippe, as both the bishop's brother and a legal expert, would convince Gaspard of the necessity of not tampering with the wording of the oath. Indeed, the bishop-elect then responded to the *échevins*' efforts by stating that he would follow the customary form of the ceremony and not attempt to alter it.³¹

The advance communication of the texts of oaths also worked to the bishop's advantage as he knew what to expect on the day of the entry. In December 1507, after receiving a copy of the oath he would be required to take at his entry into Senlis, the incumbent bishop, Charles de Blanchefort, replied to say that he would take the given oath 'and no other', possibly concerned that the municipal council might attempt to insert further clauses into the text of the oath on the day of the entry limiting his powers further.³² As part of their efforts to persuade bishops to take the oath, town councils stressed the unchanging and customary nature of the ceremony by emphasizing that bishops took the same oaths as their predecessors and in the same manner. When Jean d'Étampes entered Nevers on 5 April 1461, he swore the oath as his predecessors had done.³³ At Bourges, the archbishop was asked to swear 'an oath that the archbishops of Bourges are accustomed to make', while bishops of Senlis swore to maintain municipal 'rights, franchises and liberties in the form and manner' that their predecessors had done.³⁴ Senlis' *échevins* looked through their records to find the text of the oath so that they could send a copy to the bishop in advance of his entry, while the oath Gaspard Dinet swore at Mâcon in 1600 was the same as that taken by Jean de Boisy in 1382.³⁵ The static nature of the oath worked to the advantage of both town and bishop as civic administrations could ensure that their privileges were confirmed, while bishops could make sure that no further limits to their power were inserted into the oath on the day of the entry.

Oaths typically encompassed the specific range of powers which the town council held and their nature of their relationship with the bishop. To ensure that the totality of the rights and liberties they had amassed, often over several centuries, town councils typically asked bishops to swear a general oath which encompassed all the full range of their powers. When Gilles Spifame entered Nevers as bishop in 1560, he took an oath to respect all municipal liberties, while at Senlis the bishop 'took the oath to keep the rights, liberties and privileges of the said town'.³⁶ As

30 AM Mâcon, BB 49, fo. 54v.

31 AM Mâcon, BB 68, fos 29v–30r.

32 BNF, Collection de Picardie 5, fo. 123v.

33 C. A., Parmentier, *Archives de Nevers, ou inventaire historique des titres de la ville*, 2 vols (Paris, 1842), i. 233.

34 Julerot, 'Première Entrée', 665; BNF, Collection de Picardie 5, fo. 123v.

35 BNF, Collection de Picardie 5, fo. 123v; AM Mâcon, BB 5, fo. 84r, 68, fos 29v–30r; Bazin, 'Rois de France à Mâcon', 168.

36 F. Boutillier, *Ville de Nevers: inventaire sommaire des archives communales antérieures à 1790* (Nevers, 1876), 4; BNF, Collection de Picardie 5, fo. 123v.

well as insisting that this general oath covered all municipal rights and privileges, some towns underlined the point by producing books listing their mass of privileges at the oath-taking ceremony. Cahors' *consuls* presented the new bishop with the book detailing all the town's rights, while Gap's town council showed the bishop copies of their privileges and insisted that he had to confirm them if he wished to enter the town.³⁷ At Albi, where the bishops were lords of the city, municipal liberties were set down in *Ayso es lo libre de algunas libertats, privileges, franquetas, costumas, perrogativesque an los consols et habitants de la cieutat de Alby*, which the bishop then confirmed. Indeed, the copies of this book were kept next to accounts of bishops' entries in the civic archive.³⁸ Some towns required bishops to take multiple oaths confirming urban liberties. Bishops of Noyon took the oath regarding municipal liberties twice, while a new bishop of Rodez was required to take an oath respecting municipal privileges three times before he was permitted to enter the cathedral for his enthronement.³⁹ Having multiple confirmations of the oath was particularly important in towns such as Rodez where the bishop held extensive powers.⁴⁰ In the same way that towns sought to have multiple copies of legal documents, they required multiple performances of legal acts such as the bishop's oath to confirm their privileges, which again emphasizes the weight that they continued to give to a performed act.⁴¹

Bishops could also be asked to take specific oaths which went beyond a general confirmation of urban rights. These typically reflected local issues of particular concern for the town council. When Clement de Brillhac entered Tulle in 1495, he swore a special oath to maintain the town council's right to keep the keys to the gates and to appoint the four captains to whom they would be given, ensuring that they maintained control over the entrances to the town. As the bishop held extensive authority in Tulle, the *consuls* also required him specifically to confirm their right to form a civic administration and to take a further oath stipulating that he would ensure his *greffier*, who attended council meetings, was a resident of the town (this derived from concerns that an outsider would act to the prejudice of the town's inhabitants).⁴² Other towns inserted clauses into the oath relating to the bishop's military responsibilities. Bishops of Mâcon swore to guard the town's Bourgneuf gate, the main route into the town, as well as the gate leading on to the River Saône, which separated France from the Holy Roman Empire.⁴³ Throughout the Middle Ages, there were tensions between municipal councils and bishops about the obligation for clergy to contribute to the construction and maintenance of fortifications and the obligation to help defend the town during an attack. Having confirmation of the specific nature of a bishop's responsibility towards urban defence was especially important for frontier towns such as Mâcon which were threatened regularly with attack.⁴⁴

During times of conflict some municipal councils insisted that bishops' officials also took oaths regarding the town's security. When the bishop of Châlons-en-Champagne made his entry into the city in November 1420, the municipal council had eleven of his servants and officials swear an oath 'to be good, true, and loyal subjects and obedient to the king our lord and the good town of Châlons'. In March that year, the town council had declined one of the

37 P. Debofle, 'Le cérémonial des archevêques au temps de la Renaissance: l'exemple de l'entrée du cardinal de Clermont-Lodève dans la ville d'Auch en 1512', *Bulletin de la société archéologique historique littéraire et scientifique du Gers*, (2002), 422; P. Guillaume, *Inventaire sommaire des archives communales antérieures à 1790. Hautes Alpes. Ville de Gap*, 2 vols (Gap, 1908–13), i. 8.

38 *Inventaire sommaire, Albi*, 1–2.

39 M. Champollion-Figeac (ed.), *Documents historiques inédits*, 5 vols (Paris, 1841–74), iv. 368–69; Debofle, 'Cérémonial des archevêques', 422.

40 For the bishop's authority at Rodez, Nicholas, *Later Medieval City*, 109.

41 Bedos-Rezak, 'Civic liturgies', 39. On the continued importance of the performed act, rather than just written confirmation, Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record*, 208–09.

42 'Procès-verbaux de remises des clés aux évêques de Tulle (1495 et 1565)', *Bulletin de la société des lettres, sciences et arts de la Corrèze*, 2 (1879), 212–26.

43 AM Mâcon, BB 5, fo. 84r; Bazin, 'Rois de France à Mâcon', 168.

44 Renaud-Joly, 'Entrée des évêques', 93–94.

bishop-elect's officers, Gilet de Roucourt, entry to the town because they considered him to be an enemy of the city.⁴⁵ Security was a particularly important issue in 1420 because Châlons lay at the centre of the Armagnac–Burgundian conflict, while the renewal of the Hundred Years' War and the appearance of both English soldiers and mercenary bands in the surrounding region placed the town under considerable pressure. The municipal council took a range of major security measures to protect the town, with the special security conditions devised around the bishop's entry forming a strand in its wider defence. Indeed, Châlons' *échevins* required the bishop's officials to swear that they would help in the defence of the town and obey the authority of the municipal council 'and live and die with those of the good town of Châlons in keeping strongly to the party of the king our lord'.⁴⁶

II

Municipal delegations typically came out of the town to greet the bishop on the day of his entry and required him to take the oath before allowing him to proceed through the gates. When Guy de Bouchet arrived at Quimper on 15 October 1480, the town's *procureur*, Guillaume Le Fustec, greeted the bishop at the gate of entry and asked him to swear an oath to uphold urban rights and privileges.⁴⁷ At Béziers, the oath was taken to the *consuls* outside the walls, while Pierre de Trosseau confirmed the municipal liberties of Poitiers at the gate of entry in 1407.⁴⁸ Accordingly, the bishop had to recognize the power and authority of the municipal council at the gate, a key symbol of urban liberties, before he was allowed to pass into the town. At Die, the town council requested the oath from the bishop at the St Pierre gate as this structure symbolized the liberties the town council held in respect of the bishop.⁴⁹

By standing across the road and bringing a halt to the bishop's progress, municipal administrations used the extramural greeting to assert the extent of their power to the bishop and the members of his entourage. Some towns put physical impediments along the processional route to prevent the bishop entering the town before taking the oath. At Châlons-en-Champagne the *échevins* blocked the processional route, while the bishops of Mâcon were required to take the oath to the municipal councils at a barrier outside the gate of entry, which was only removed after they had taken the oath 'between the hands of the said *échevins*'.⁵⁰ At Beauvais, the municipal council set up a barrier at the hôtel-Dieu—which was under the control of the town council rather than the bishop and acted as a symbol of municipal jurisdiction—that was only raised after the bishop had taken an oath 'to keep the inhabitants in their privileges and franchises'.⁵¹

While oaths to respect municipal councils were normally taken outside the gate, in some towns it was customary to wait until the bishop had passed into the town before asking for his oath. For example, the bishops of Rennes took an oath to defend urban rights at the entrance to the cathedral rather than outside the gate.⁵² Waiting until the bishop had entered the town before asking him to confirm municipal liberties was potentially dangerous, as urban governments

45 E. de Barthélemy, *Histoire de la ville de Châlons-sur-Marne et de ses institutions: depuis son origine jusqu'en 1789* (Châlons, 1854), 159.

46 *Délibérations, Châlons-en-Champagne*, 257–58. For the oath taken by the bishops of Chalons in the fifteenth century, AM Châlons, BB 3, fo. 85.

47 Yeuch, 'Entrées épiscopales', 121–22.

48 Julerot, 'Première entrée', 661; D. Rivaud (ed.), *Entrées épiscopales, royales et princières dans les villes du centre-ouest de la France XIV^e–XVI^e siècles* (Geneva, 2013), 67, 85.

49 'Chronique', *Bulletin de la société d'archéologie et de statistique de la Drôme*, 30 (1896), 378–84.

50 P. Pélacier, *Ville de Châlons-sur-Marne: inventaire sommaire des archives communales antérieures à 1790* (Châlons-sur-Marne, 1903), 27; Renaud-Joly, 'Entrée des évêques', 63, 90–91.

51 BM Beauvais, Collection Bucquet-aux-Cousteaux, vol. 57, 558–59.

52 J.-P. Leguay, 'L'évêque et la cité aux XIV^e et XV^e siècles: exemples Bretons et Savoyards', in *Les Prélats, l'église et la société, XI^e–XV^e siècles*, ed. F. Bériac-Lainé (Bordeaux, 1994), 269–83.

were then left with little leverage to compel him to confirm their rights should he refuse to take the oath. In these circumstances, towns devised other ways to emphasize their authority, including placing a physical barrier around the bishop while he took the oath. Like gates, chains were symbolic of urban liberties.⁵³ When Jean d'Étampes entered Nevers in April 1461, the *échevins* drew an iron chain across the street which was only removed after the bishop took the oath.⁵⁴

As well as requiring bishops to take oaths at symbolically important locations, such as city gates, some municipal councils used sacred objects to sacralize the oath-taking process. In this respect, urban governments relied on the co-operation of the local clergy to bring relics to the entry. While there were often disagreements between municipal councils and religious institutions, it was in the interests of the clergy to help ensure that the swearing of municipal oaths went smoothly because the oaths taken to the clergy typically followed the oath to the town. At Auch, for instance, the clergy of the church of Saint-Orens brought the saint's relics to the gate of entry, where they were displayed on a table. These objects were particularly suitable for this entry because, as well as possessing sacred powers, the saint's bones embodied civic identity. The bishop of Auch was thus obliged to pay his respect to the relics before entering the town in procession with the municipal council and clergy, with the saint's bones displayed at the head of the procession.⁵⁵ Devotional objects were at their most powerful when they were attached to the swearing of oaths to respect municipal rights. At Nevers, the bishop was required to take his oath to the town with his hand placed on a copy of the Gospels.⁵⁶ Municipal councils wanted representatives of the leading families (who filled the ranks of urban oligarchies) at the oath-taking ceremony as it added further legitimacy to the act and helped ensure its memory. For the entry of Louis Guillard, bishop-elect of Chalon-sur-Saône, in 1554, the municipal council instructed 'large numbers of the distinct and notable citizens' to attend the entry.⁵⁷

As well as ensuring that a delegation of the urban elite witnessed the oath-taking, municipal councils made written accounts of the act. Once Raymond de Bar, bishop of Gap, had taken the oath to the municipal council at his entry in 1399, a civic notary prepared a document confirming the oath-taking, which was witnessed by a range of secular and religious officials, including leading local lawyers, the *juge majeur des appels* for Dauphiné and the *quêteur* of the church of Notre-Dame du Puy, amongst others.⁵⁸ Given that these people represented different legal and jurisdictional authorities in the town and region, this probably represented a further municipal effort to ensure that the oath was respected and remembered over time. Certainly, civic governments in pre-modern France laid stress on the public validation of documents relating to urban jurisdiction.⁵⁹ A notary was present when Arnaud d'Aix took his oath at his entry into Poitiers in 1307, while Nevers' *échevins* made written copies of Pierre Bertrand's oath confirming urban liberties when he entered the town in 1329.⁶⁰ As well as committing their own version of the oath-taking to paper, some urban governments required bishops to provide their written confirmation of the act. When Philippe de Coetquis entered Saint-Pol-de-Léon, the town council's *procurer* requested a deed from the bishop affirming that he had taken an oath to respect the rights and privileges of the bourgeois.⁶¹ It was beneficial to have the bishop's written confirmation of the oath in case he contested the town's version of events in the future. Municipal

53 P. Contamine, 'Les chaînes dans les bonnes villes de France (spécialement Paris), XIV^e-XVI^e siècles', in *Guerre et société en France, en Angleterre et en Bourgogne XIV^e-XV^e siècles*, ed. P. Contamine, C. Giry-Deloison and M. H. Keen (Lille, 1991), 293-314.

54 Parmentier, *Archives de Nevers*, i. 233.

55 Debofle, 'Cérémonial des archevêques', 426.

56 F. Rebrion, 'Le joyeux avènement des archevêques de Bourges au Moyen-Âge', *Revue du centre*, 3 (1879), 113-33.

57 Renaud-Joly, 'Entrée des évêques', 97. See also: Bazin, 'Rois de France à Mâcon', 181; Julerot, 'Première entrée', 653.

58 *Inventaire sommaire, Gap*, 8.

59 Bedos-Rezak, 'Civic liturgies', 38.

60 Rivaud, *Entrées épiscopales*, 67; Parmentier, *Archives de Nevers*, i. 232.

61 Yeuch, 'Entrées épiscopales', 113-14.

councils checked and confirmed the bishop's version of the event so that there were no discrepancies. The bishop of Mâcon had his secretary draw up and seal an account of the oath, which was countersigned by the town's notaries and then placed in the civic archives to have a 'perpetual memory' in case the bishop threatened to infringe municipal rights in the future.⁶² The use of a seal was important as it authenticated the record of the words the bishop took at his entry, lending further authority to the written account of the ceremony.⁶³

III

In some towns, there was a reciprocal swearing of oaths, with the bishop receiving an oath from the townspeople in return for his confirmation of urban liberties. Once the mutual oaths had been taken, the bishop and the civic elite crossed into the city together, symbolizing the bond the ceremony had created between them.⁶⁴ At Beauvais the bishop 'made an oath to the mayor', following which 'the mayor took an oath to him to protect his body and goods.'⁶⁵ In some towns the wider urban elite—who dominated municipal administration and whose rights in particular the bishop guaranteed at his entry—swore the reciprocal oath. For instance, a range of notables took the oath to archbishop Guillaume de Joinville after his entry into Reims on 9 June 1219.⁶⁶ Municipal councils only gave their oath to the bishop after they had received his confirmation of urban rights; indeed, some towns separated it entirely from the entry. While Bourges and Noyon gave their oaths on the same day, the inhabitants of Lodève and Reims gave their oath of loyalty to the new bishop in the days following his entry.⁶⁷ In some circumstances there could be a significant delay between the swearing of oaths. While Bernard Gui made his inaugural entry on 7 October 1324, the population did not take oaths of loyalty to him until March the following year.⁶⁸ As well as separating the two oaths so that urban rulers could show they were not immediately obliged to give an oath, the townspeople used the later swearing of an oath to extract a further confirmation of their liberties from the bishop. At Noyon, the townspeople gave their oath to the bishop in the episcopal palace following the entry, and 'raising the hands high towards the church', the principal symbol of episcopal authority, the mayor swore on behalf of the townspeople 'that in all our powers we will protect you and your rights.' In response, the bishop put his hand to his chest and repeated the oath he had taken during the public entry, swearing: 'I promise you also that with all my power I will protect and maintain you in all your rights, franchises and liberties.'⁶⁹ Gestures were also used as part of the process of sacralizing the oath. When Odet de Coligny entered Beauvais in 1536, he raised his hand towards the mayor, the individual most invested with municipal power and representative of the liberties the bishop was there to confirm.⁷⁰ At Noyon the bishop took the oath with his hand on his chest, an act which the clergy often used when swearing oaths.⁷¹ Such gestures reinforced the legitimacy of the town council's rule and their privileges.

62 AM Mâcon, BB 49, fos 58v; Bazin, 'Rois de France à Mâcon', 175–76.

63 On the importance of seals to validate written accounts of performed speech, Clanchy, *Memory to Written Record*, 203, 208.

64 Champollion-Figeac, *Documents historiques inédits*, iv. 368–69; P. Desportes, *Reims et le Rémois aux XIII^e et XIV^e siècles* (Paris, 1979), 89; J.-M. Carbasse, 'Bernard Gui, évêque de Lodeve (1324–1331)', in *Bernard Gui et son monde* (Toulouse, 1981), 333–56; *Inventaire sommaire, Langres*, 71.

65 BM Beauvais, Collection Bucquet-aux-Cousteaux, vol. 57, 559–60.

66 Desportes, *Reims et le Rémois*, 132.

67 Julerot, 'Première Entrée', 663; Champollion-Figeac, *Documents historiques inédits*, iv. 368–69; Reberieux, 'Joyeux Avènement', 127–28.

68 Barbasse, 'Bernard Gui', 334.

69 Champollion-Figeac, *Documents historiques inédits*, iv. 369.

70 BM Beauvais, Collection Bucquet-aux-Cousteaux, vol. 57, 559–60.

71 Champollion-Figeac, *Documents historiques inédits*, iv. 368.

As townspeople took oaths to the bishop in his temporal rather than spiritual capacity, the act was often accompanied by the presentation of urban keys as they symbolized the bishop's secular jurisdiction. When the mayor of Beauvais presented the bishop with the keys, 'he swore to keep the rights of the said bishop' except when this conflicted with loyalty to the king.⁷² While the key presentation acknowledged the bishop's temporal authority, by accepting urban keys the bishop was also bound to uphold municipal privileges. The scale of the key presentation corresponded to the extent of the bishop's temporal jurisdiction in the town. When Guillaume d'Auvergne entered Paris as its new bishop in 1228 he was given all the keys to the gates. Yet the bishop declared in an unusually modest gesture that as his authority only encompassed a third of the city, he should only receive one third of the number of keys.⁷³ During royal entries, the French king often handed back the keys to the urban administration as a sign of public trust in their leadership.⁷⁴ Yet urban governments had no assurances that bishops would return the keys and sought to obtain guarantees that the bishop would return their keys. During their oath-taking, the bishops of Tulle were required to swear that when the *syndic* handed him the keys to the town at the gate of entry, he would confirm the privileges of the town and immediately return the keys to the town council.⁷⁵

The key presentation could also be bound up with other marks of honour, such as the proferring of the canopy. For instance, once the bishop of Cahors took the oath to respect municipal liberties, the *consuls* handed him the keys and raised a canopy over his head.⁷⁶ Yet such gestures were increasingly rare by the later Middle Ages, as the granting of a canopy, one of the key symbols of lordship, to anyone but the king of France had become an increasingly contentious issue.⁷⁷ Nonetheless, the competitive environment for honours amongst nobles meant that bishops sought to use the confirmation of liberties as a means to force towns to grant them the privilege of a canopy.⁷⁸ When Gilles de Luxembourg arrived at Châlons-en-Champagne as bishop-elect on 24 January 1504, he met the town council at the extramural greeting and demanded that they carry a canopy above him during the entry. When the *échevins* refused to grant him this honour, Luxembourg refused to take the oath to confirm urban privileges, which led the town council to rule that 'we will leave him to enter alone, without making the accustomed honour to him and without presenting him the gilded cup', and the entry ceremony was aborted.⁷⁹

As the presentation of an ornate cup was one of the marks of honour which a bishop could expect at his entry, Châlons-en-Champagne's refusal to offer him this gift was a further important snub to his power. Municipal administrations customarily gave bishops gifts at their entries. Langres gifted Michael Boudet a cross and silver chandelier at his entry in 1512, while Rodez gave Guillaume de La Tour a silver cup at his entry in 1397.⁸⁰ When Pierre de Neveu entered Albi in 1410, he was given an item of silverware following his entry.⁸¹ Yet while it was customary to present some silverware to bishops at their entries, municipal councils made it clear that it

72 BM Beauvais, Collection Bucquet-aux-Cousteaux, vol. 57, 558–59.

73 G. d'Avenel, *Les Évêques et archevêques de Paris depuis Saint Denis jusqu'à nos jours avec documents inédits*, 2 vols (Tournai, 1878), i, 162.

74 Murphy, *Ceremonial Entries*, 57–58.

75 BNF, Baluze 249, fos 873r–90r.

76 Debofle, 'Cérémonial des archevêques', 622. A canopy was also used for the entry of Laurent Aleman into Grenoble in 1518: U. Chevalier, *Mystère des trois dons, joué à Romans en 1509: documents relatifs aux représentations théâtrales en Dauphiné de 1400 à 1535* (Romans, 1887), 11.

77 B. Guenée and F. Lehoux (eds.), *Les Entrées royales françaises de 1328 à 1515* (Paris, 1968), 14–15.

78 There was no issue around granting canopies to bishop-legates, as they were seen as representing the person of the pope. For the entries of papal legates into French towns, M. H. Smith, 'Ordre et désordres dans quelques entrées de légats, à la fin du XVI^e siècle', in *Les Entrées: gloire et déclin d'un cérémonial*, ed. C. Desplat and P. Mironneau (Biarritz, 1997), 65–91.

79 P. Pélicier, *Inventaire sommaire des archives communales antérieures à 1790: ville de Châlons-sur-Marne* (Châlons, 1903), 54; G. Clause and J.-P. Ravoux, *Histoire de Châlons-sur-Marne* (Roanne-le-Coteau, 1983), 130.

80 *Inventaire sommaire, Langres*, 105; AD Tarn, 4 EDT CC 209, 222; *Inventaire sommaire, Rodez*, 37, 42.

81 *Inventaire sommaire, Albi*, 5.

was a gift given freely and not an obligation that symbolized a wider authority which the bishop held over the civic administration. At the entries of the bishops of Langres, the town council obtained the bishop's written sealed confirmation that the gift was given freely and not because they were bound to do so.⁸²

Recent studies of gift-giving in medieval Europe have moved away from the view that gift-giving was 'first and last ... an instrument for the manipulation of interpersonal relationships'; Lars Kjær has argued that gifts could be offered freely, without seeking anything in return, as demonstrations of virtue or good will.⁸³ Yet by offering a gift, municipal councils could hope for some return on their largesse in the future. In his influential study of gift-giving, Marshall Sahlins (developing Marcel Mauss' ideas) argues for a 'spectrum of reciprocities' in gift-giving, including 'generalised reciprocity', where gifts are made freely without specifying when the return will take place, and 'balanced reciprocity', where a gift comes soon after and is similar in value to that offered.⁸⁴ As Sharon Kettering, Natalie Davis and others have shown, this type of gift-giving pervaded political society in late medieval and early modern France.⁸⁵ This was particularly the case with urban governments, who regularly offered gifts to powerful people in expectation of assistance with municipal business.

Towns customarily made their gift presentation to the bishop at his lodgings following the conclusion of the public entry, linking the act to the greeting and confirmation of urban liberties which took place at the gate of entry. Yet whereas municipal councils used the extramural greeting to have the bishop confirm the existing rights of the town, they used the second greeting and accompanying gift presentation to try and obtain the bishop's services as a broker. Bishops frequently came from the leading families in the kingdom and they were powerful figures at court, which put them in a good position to help towns obtain new rights and liberties. To take one example, Francis Guillaume de Castelnau de Clermont-Lodève, bishop of Auch, came from a prominent family and was close to the most powerful men in France. His uncle was the chancellor, Georges d'Amboise, archbishop of Rouen, and a favourite of Louis XI. Given these connections, when Castelnau entered Auch in 1507 the town council devised a greeting speech aimed at securing his influence and services. They declared that 'the inhabitants of the city of Auch recommend themselves very humbly to your good favour', in response to which the bishop thanked them for the honour they had shown him and offered to place himself at their service. The *consuls* then declared that they would speak to him 'at length about the business of your city and [its] inhabitants'. The *consuls* developed this theme in the second greeting and gift presentation at the bishop's residence, where the less public setting of the *chambre* facilitated the development of links between the municipal council and the bishop, who once again offered to act on their behalf.⁸⁶ The use of courteous phrases conveyed the town council's goodwill towards the bishop and the *consuls'* recognition of his authority, which was underscored by the key presentation included in the extramural greeting. It was made in the bishop's *chambre*

82 *Inventaire sommaire, Langres*, 16.

83 L. Kjær, *The Medieval Gift and the Classical Tradition: Ideas and the Performance of Generosity in Medieval England, 1100–1300* (Cambridge, 2019), 5. On this point, also, W. David and P. Fouracre (eds.), *The Languages of Gift in the Early Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 2010); G. Algazi, V. Groebner and B. Jussen (eds.), *Negotiating the Gift: Pre-Modern Figurations of Exchange* (Göttingen, 2003).

84 M. Sahlins, *Stone Age Economics* (London, 1974), 191–96.

85 N. Davis, *The Gift in Sixteenth-Century France* (Oxford, 2000), 142–65; Kettering, *Patrons, Brokers and Clients*; Murphy, *Ceremonial Entries*, 79–111.

86 L. Couture (ed.), 'L'Entrada de Mossen Frances de Clarмонт, cardinal et arcevesque d'Auch (1507)', *Revue de Gascogne: bulletin mensuel du Comité d'histoire et d'archéologie de la province ecclésiastique d'Auch*, 13 (1872), 37–45; L. Clouture, 'En l'arrivée de Monseigneur Pierre-Henri Gérauld de Langalerie, archevêque d'Auch', *Revue de Gascogne: bulletin mensuel du Comité d'histoire et d'archéologie de la province ecclésiastique d'Auch*, 13 (1872), 38; Debofle, 'Cérémonial des archevêques', 424. For entries of bishops into Auch, see also: AD Gers, série 1E, dépôt AA 1, fols 80r–83r, 83v–84v; L. Couture, 'Procès verbaux de l'entrée solennelle en la ville d'Auch des archevêques François de Tournon (1547), Léonard de Trapes (1600), Dominique de Vic (1634)', *Annuaire du département du Gers*, (1873), 215–40.

and involved a more restricted group, formed of senior members of the town's leading families, which allowed them to seek to develop a close bond between them and the bishop.

The urban elite expected the bishop to respond in kind to their gifts by using his influence on their behalf and looking to the interests of the town.⁸⁷ Municipal councils used the second harangue to draw attention to the reciprocal relationship they expected from the bishop. While French bishops could play a limited pastoral role for their flocks because they were often absent from their sees, they remained useful to their towns as brokers for precisely this reason.⁸⁸ It was the bishop's political influence at court rather than his spiritual mediation that townspeople were most concerned with accessing at an entry. As bishops were amongst the most powerful men in the kingdom and held the highest places in government, municipal governments could profit by tapping into their networks of influence. Bishops often had access to the monarch and some held especially influential roles, such as Regnault de Chartres who entered Orléans as bishop in October 1437, who was Charles VII's chancellor, or Jean de Rély, bishop of Angers, who was his confessor.⁸⁹ Confessors occupied positions of particular influence with monarchs, while the chancellor played a key role in the process by which towns won liberties. Municipal councils approached bishops about specific issues. In August 1506, the *échevins* of Paris asked the city's bishop, Étienne de Poncher (whom they described as 'principal head and protector of the bourgeois and inhabitants of this town of Paris') to use his influence with the king to settle in their favour a dispute over jurisdiction which they were having with Rouen.⁹⁰

Bishops welcomed approaches by municipal councils as they implicitly acknowledged that they were powerful figures. After receiving the municipal greeting at Poitiers in 1542, Claude de Longwy 'offered to make pleasure and service to the town' while the bishops of towns such as of Langres, Chalon-sur-Saône, Thérouanne and Noyon all swore to increase urban liberties as part of the oaths they took at their entries.⁹¹ Offering to use their power to increase municipal liberties allowed bishops to develop good relations with the urban dynasties who dominated civic governments. It was desirable to obtain the co-operation and goodwill of municipal administrations by acting as their brokers, as in return these councillors could use their local authority to help the bishop. Immediately following his entry into Rodez in September 1530, the bishop, Georges d'Armagnac, asked the council to authorize the construction of a passage to join the cathedral to the episcopal palace.⁹²

Bishops' entries also offered towns an opportunity to recruit new brokers or reward those who had performed services for them in the past. When the bishop of Amiens entered in 1538 the town council made gifts to the 'prelates and great lords' who travelled with him.⁹³ Nantes' municipal council offered gifts to men who accompanied bishops Jean d'Espinay (1493) and Guillaume Guégen (1553) at their inaugural entries, including the archdeacon of Vannes who had obtained a pardon in favour of the hospital of Nantes from the pope.⁹⁴ Offering gifts to visiting bishops was a good way to try and win the favour of the king. In 1459, Nevers offered hip-pocras and other gifts to the archbishop of Tours, bishop of Paris, Thomas de Courcelle, doyen of Paris, and others going on embassy from the king to the pope 'so that they would report well to the king of the city and its inhabitants'.⁹⁵

87 For the political power of French bishops and their influence with the king, C. Michon, *La Crosse et le sceptre: les prélats d'état sous François I^{er} et Henri VIII* (Paris, 2008).

88 B. Chevalier, *Les Bonnes Villes de France du XIV^e au XVI^e siècles* (Paris, 1982), 44.

89 Y. Labande-Mailfert, *Charles VIII et son milieu, 1470–1498: la jeunesse au pouvoir* (Paris, 1975), 140; R. Hubert, *Antiquitez historiques de l'église royale Saint-Aignan d'Orléans* (Orléans, 1661), 147.

90 F. Bonnardot (ed.), *Registres des délibérations du bureau de la ville de Paris. Tome premier: 1499–1526* (Paris, 1883), 125.

91 Rivaud, *Entrées épiscopales*, 97; Théry, 'Entrées épiscopales', 13; Julerot, 'Première entrée', 661.

92 *Inventaire sommaire, Rodez*, 5.

93 AM Amiens, BB 23, fo. 91v.

94 AM Nantes, AA 36.

95 Parmentier, *Archives de Nevers*, i. 203.

Even towns which did not require bishops to confirm municipal oaths used entries as opportunities to win their influence by offering banquets and gifts to the bishop.⁹⁶ Following the entry of Charles Hémard de Denonville into Amiens in 1538, the *échevins* went to the bishop to present him with a gift of twelve *quenens* of expensive Beaune wine and ‘recommended the business of the towns to him’, speaking particularly about issues of mutual concern for which they sought his co-operation.⁹⁷ Urban governments from neighbouring towns also sought out bishops at their entries into their sees and offered gifts in order to obtain their services as brokers. When Georges d’Amboise entered Rouen in 1494, Pont-Audemer sent a delegation to the entry ‘so that the said archbishop has the business of the town in good recommendation.’⁹⁸ Beyond promoting the town’s affairs at court, bishops could have strong local connections and influence. Pierre de Laval, who made his entry into Reims as bishop on 6 April 1474, was related to Louis de Laval, governor of Champagne.⁹⁹ Bishops could also hold the leading political positions in a province. In 1508, Aix-en-Provence staged a ceremonial entry for Pierre Filholi, who was both archbishop of the town and lieutenant of the governor of Provence.¹⁰⁰ Filholi moved on to become a figure of national importance and was appointed governor of the Île-de-France in September 1522 in place of the count of St Pol, a position which placed him in close proximity to the court and the major offices of state based in Paris, including the chancery which was crucial for the granting of urban liberties.¹⁰¹

Organizing or attending post-entry banquets gave municipal councils access to the bishops and those who travelled with them, as well as created a sense of conviviality through the provision of food, drink and entertainment.¹⁰² Étienne de Poncher’s entry into Paris in 1503 was concluded with a large banquet attended by the municipal council and five hundred bourgeois.¹⁰³ Poncher was an influential figure at court and had close links with Louis XII (and later Francis I), which made it desirable to obtain his good favour. Many towns organized their own festivities following the entry to gain further close contact with the bishop in a convivial setting conducive to the formation of good relations. While theatrical representations were much less common at episcopal entries than they were at royal entries, some towns staged plays as part of their efforts to develop good relations with the bishop by providing him with a ceremony which gave a public representation of his power (and one in which he was entirely dependent on townspeople for devising) in the expectation that he would use his power when in office to their benefit. Grenoble put on plays for the entries of Laurent Alleman in 1484 and his nephew Laurent II Alleman in 1518, while in 1506 Valence hired the poet Claude Chevalet, who had devised the plays for the entries of Charles VIII into Vienne (1490) and Lyon (1494), to compose the theatrical representation they staged in honour of their incumbent bishop, Gaspard de Tournon, in 1506.¹⁰⁴ If the performance of lavish theatrics in towns which required bishops to take oaths confirming liberties was rare, it was not entirely unknown. Some towns incorporated elements

96 E. Alicot et al. (eds), *Thalamus parvus: le petit Thalamus de Montpellier publié pour la première fois d’après les manuscrits originaux* (Montpellier, 1840), 445–46.

97 AM Amiens, BB 23, fo. 101v.

98 A. Canel, *Histoire de Pont-Audemer*, 2 vols (Pont-Audemer, 1885), ii, 44.

99 Julerot, ‘Première entrée’, 645; P. Desportes, *Diocèse de Reims, Fasti Ecclesie Gallicane* (Turnhout, 1998), 212.

100 AM Aix-en-Provence, BB 32, fo. 11.

101 *Registres des délibérations, Paris, 1499–1526*, 273.

102 J.-P. Leguay, ‘Banquets, cadeaux alimentaires et autres présents aux visiteurs de marque dans les villes françaises à la fin du Moyen Âge’, in *Jeux, sports et divertissements au Moyen Âge et à l’âge classique: actes du 116^e Congrès national des sociétés savantes* (Paris, 1993), 193–213; J.-P. Leguay, ‘Un aspect de la sociabilité urbaine cadeaux et banquets dans les réceptions municipales de la Bretagne ducale au XV^e siècle’, in *Charpiana: mélanges offerts par ses amis à Jacques Charpy*, (Rennes, 1991), 349–60.

103 *Registres des délibérations, Paris, 1499–1526*, 79. Indeed, gifts were often targeted around food and feasting as at Senlis where the bishop was offered large amounts of good wine: BNF, Collection de Picardie 5, fo. 123v.

104 Chevalier, *Mystère des trois doms*, 14–15; A. Péricaud, *Bibliographie lyonnaise du XV^e siècle* (Lyon, 1851), 9; U. Chevalier (ed.), ‘Les deux entrées et séjours du très-chrétien roi de France Charles VIII en la cite de Vienne les années 1491 et 1494: publiés d’après les mss de Grenoble, de Montpellier et de Vienne’, *Revue du Dauphiné et du Vivarais (Isère, Drôme, Hautes-Alpes, Ardèche)*, 5 (1881), 25–39.

drawn from royal entries into their episcopal welcomes to curry favour with the bishop and encourage him to win new rights for the town. In the sixteenth century, the municipal council of Langres incorporated the latest developments in ceremonial entries including features normally only used for the royal family, such as triumphal arches and theatrical representations, for a bishop who as well as taking an oath confirming municipal liberties during the entry also stated he would work to increase the scope of their privileges.¹⁰⁵ The use of an especially honourable greeting was part of the town council's efforts to encourage the bishop to use his influence on their behalf.

IV

While an episcopal entry was intended to create a reciprocal relationship between the bishop and the civic administration which would continue throughout the bishop's time in office, the ceremony could also cause division and dissension. As the oaths municipal councils included in episcopal entries constrained the bishop's power, it could be in the bishop's interests to avoid taking them, particularly because the town council controlled the form and manner of the ceremony which was designed to put a public check on the scope of his authority. In 1554, Louis Guillard, bishop of Chalon-sur-Saône avoided having to take a public oath to the civic administration by entering the town quietly and without the *échevins'* knowledge. The town council, which had lined up at the gate of entry to request the oath from the bishop, was informed by an approaching party of riders, who were told to wait outside the gate because of the expected entry, that the bishop had already entered the town by a side gate close to the episcopal palace.¹⁰⁶ Two days later, Guillard informed the *échevins* that he was prepared to take the customary oath to the town and claimed that Henry II had instructed him to enter the town without ceremony. As we saw earlier, the impact of the Concordat of Bologna meant that French bishops were often close to the king, while Guillard may have had suspicions concerning town councils. As bishop of Tournai, he refused to recognize Henry VIII's claims to the town following the English conquest of 1513, whereas the town council swore an oath at the Tudor monarch's entry into the city recognizing his right to the French throne in return for the confirmation of their liberties.¹⁰⁷ There may have also been some outside influence to his actions as in the neighbouring town of Constance the swearing and signing of a document outlining the relationship between the bishop and the town council (the *Verschreibung*) occurred after the bishop had entered the town rather than at the gate of entry.¹⁰⁸ Whatever the reason, Guillard's actions changed the nature of the oath-taking and the power dynamic between the bishop and his town. Rather than make it seem like an obligation placed on the bishop by the civic administration—which would only permit him to enter the town and complete his enthronement once he had taken the oath—the act became something given of his own volition.

Guillard's actions strengthened his power as the oath was something he chose to give and at a time which suited him, rather than something he was compelled to give by the townspeople to be permitted to enter the town. Instead of taking the oath at a barrier outside the walls, by circumventing the public entry the bishop was able to take control over the location and manner of the oath-taking. Rather than going to the town council at the gate of entry, which was symbolic of urban liberties, the *échevins* now came to the episcopal palace, the principal

105 A. Daguin, 'Les évêques de Langres: étude épigraphique, sigillographique et héraldique', *Mémoires de la société historique et archéologique de Langres*, 3 (1900), 4.

106 Renaud-Joly, 'Entrée des évêques', 97–98.

107 C. G. Cruickshank, *The English Occupation of Tournai, 1513–19* (Oxford, 1971), 143–87; N. Murphy, 'Henry VIII's French crown: his royal entry into Tournai revisited', *Hist Research*, 85 (2012), 617–31.

108 Tyler, *Sacred City*, 136–37.

symbol of the episcopal power in the city, and Guillard gave the oath in his *chambre*, a more restricted space—and one which he controlled.¹⁰⁹ There were long-term consequences to this act because Guillard had set a precedent for bishop's entries at Chalon-sur-Saône. At his installation in December 1578, his successor Ponthus de Thiard also entered the town quietly through a side gate while the *échevins* once again waited vainly at the gate of entry. It was only in 1596 for the entry of Cyrus de Thiard (over forty years after Guillard's entry) that oath-taking returned to the extramural element of the ceremony.¹¹⁰ The crisis which the French Church faced during the later sixteenth century because of the Wars of Religion may also have impacted on the actions of the bishops of Chalon-sur-Saône. Located close to Geneva, reformed ideas had spread into the region and a reform faction even took power for a time in the town. While Catholic rule was restored, the town faced regular threats from Huguenot armies. Given these internal and external factors, the bishops of Chalon-sur-Saône of the later sixteenth century may well have considered it prudent in terms of their personal security to enter the town covertly. In 1598, the bishop of Vence, Guillaume Le Blanc, narrowly avoided assassination during a public appearance at the cathedral, while a riot by Protestants at Montpellier in 1600 nearly led to the death of the bishop, Guitard de Ratte, as he sought to take possession of his cathedral.¹¹¹

There was a wider attempt by bishops to enter towns without taking an oath. In 1625, Dominique de Vic refused to take the customary oath to the *consuls* of Auch and he did not visit the town until 1634, when he entered Auch secretly at night without making a formal entry, using the presence of disease in the town to justify his actions. He eventually took the oath after receiving the complaints of the *consuls*, but again like Guillard his actions had placed him in a position to do this on his own terms and without having it form part of a public entry.¹¹² The ongoing impact of religious warfare in France in the early seventeenth century may have influenced de Vic's decision not to visit his diocese following his appointment to the see in 1625. Religious violence had returned to the south in 1619, particularly in the south-west of the kingdom, which continued until La Rochelle fell to royal forces in 1629. De Vic's continuing refusal to take the oath in the 1630s, when peace had returned, may be a result of the reforms made to the French episcopate in the early seventeenth century. These strengthened the power of bishops at the very time when the Crown—seeking to break the military threat cities posed to its power—under the direction of Cardinal Richelieu (a key advocate of the expansion of episcopal power) sought to reduce urban liberties and impose royal control more firmly over urban administrative structures, a process in which bishops as key agents of the Crown came to play a role.¹¹³ Bishops' actions in avoiding taking oaths and public entries as a result of these changes were doubly dangerous for municipal councils because, as well as causing immediate problems, they also set a precedent for the future. Indeed, like Guillard's successors at Chalon-sur-Saône those men who followed de Vic to the see of Auch, Henri de La Mothe-Houdancourt and Baume de Suze, also avoided making a public entry. De Suze was eventually compelled to make his entry following the intervention of the *Parlement* of Toulouse in 1704, almost two decades after he was named bishop in 1686.¹¹⁴

109 Renaud-Joly, 'Entrée des évêques', 99–100.

110 Renaud-Joly, 'Entrée des évêques', 98–101.

111 Baumgartner, *French Episcopate*, 194–95.

112 'Le procès de Mgr d'Apchon archevêque d'Auch, au sujet de son entrée solennelle, avec le baron de Montaut', *Revue de Gascogne: bulletin mensuel du Comité d'histoire et d'archéologie de la province ecclésiastique d'Auch*, (1882), 101–03.

113 Baumgartner, *French Episcopate*, 207; Bergin, *Making of the French Episcopate*, 460–93.

114 'Procès de Mgr d'Apchon', 101–03.

V

By the time of Baume de Suze's entry into Auch, the requirement to confirm urban liberties at entries was far less a part of an episcopal entry than it had been during the heights of this ceremony during the later Middle Ages. However, it did not disappear entirely. For instance, the bishops of Langres confirmed urban privileges during their entries well into the eighteenth century.¹¹⁵ Certainly, the oath bishops took to municipal councils was one of the most static parts of the ceremony. This was intentional because town councils sought to emphasize that bishops took the same oaths as their predecessors. With the onset of the Reformation, in Protestant towns the power of the bishop was removed and there was no episcopal entry and no need to gain his confirmation of urban rights. In towns which remained Catholic the increased Counter-Reformation emphasis on the power of the bishop and the reform of the papacy by the early Bourbon monarchs made it especially important for towns to secure the confirmation of their rights, though as we have seen bishops increasingly sought to avoid taking these oaths in public.

Not all episcopal entries succeeded in creating a rapport between civic administrations and their bishops. While historians such as Charles Phythian-Adams and Mervyn James have seen pre-modern urban ceremonies as creating cohesion amongst disparate and potentially antagonistic and rival groups in society, this was not guaranteed.¹¹⁶ In his study of episcopal entries in sixteenth-century Germany, Jeffrey Tyler found that 'the rituals of entry allowed the bishop and city to steer a careful course through a potentially hazardous, liminal phase in order to recreate a sacred, ritual community.'¹¹⁷ Yet, as we have seen, this did not always take place. Not only could the ceremony fail to achieve cohesion, but it could also create long-lasting animosity. Conflicts over jurisdiction between bishops and municipal councils continued throughout the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. There were disputes between the town and bishop of Albi in the 1490s which led to a siege of the bishop's palace, while Odet de Coligny's appointment as bishop of Beauvais in 1536 led to a deterioration in the relationship with the town council regarding jurisdiction in the town, which represented a failure of the ceremonial entry to ensure peaceful co-existence in the town.¹¹⁸

As Bernard Chevalier has demonstrated, the later Middle Ages was the era of urban oligarchy in France. During this period, towns were overwhelmingly ruled by a narrow caste of families whose members filled urban administrations over successive generations. Most French towns were not significantly polycentric in terms of power structures (guilds, for instance, were weak in France) and urban oligarchies largely succeeded in their efforts to prevent other civic groups gaining significant levels of political power.¹¹⁹ Yet bishops remained key players in the running of many French towns. In these instances, urban oligarchies devised a form of entry which compelled the bishop to recognize their power and authority. Certainly, the form of ceremony recorded in municipal deliberations across the kingdom pivoted around the oath to recognize the rights and authority of civic administrations. The oath-taking was a point of contact between the urban government and the bishop and there was only limited formal participation from other secular urban groups. They could attend the entry, but they did not do so as part of a

115 *Inventaire sommaire, Langres*, 17, 18, 164. For confirmation of privileges by bishops in the late eighteenth century, J. C. Nadal, *Histoire hagiologique, ou, vies des saints et des bienheureux du diocèse de Valence* (Valence, 1855), 441–42. For eighteenth-century episcopal entries, S. Gomis, 'Les entrées solennelles des évêques dans la France des XVII^e et XVIII^e siècles', in *Les Cérémonies extraordinaires du catholicisme baroque*, ed. B. Dompnier (Clermont-Ferrand, 2009), 509–23; G. Rideau, 'Ville et clergé dans la traditionnelle entrée des évêques d'Orléans (XVII^e–XVIII^e siècles)', in *Entrer en ville*, ed. F. Michaud-Fréjaville, N. Dauphin and J.-P. Guilhembert (Rennes, 2006), 245–66; L. Audiat, *Les Entrées épiscopales à Saintes* (Paris, 1869).

116 C. Phythian-Adams, *Desolation of a City: Coventry and the Urban Crisis of the Late Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 1979); M. James, 'Ritual drama and the social body in the late medieval English town', *Past & Present*, 98 (1983), 3–29.

117 Tyler, *Sacred City*, 150.

118 D. Potter, *A History of France, 1460–1560: The Emergence of a Nation State* (1995), 218.

119 Chevalier, *Bonnes Villes*, 65–83. For polycentric power, P. Lantschner, *The Logic of Political Conflict in Medieval Cities: Italy and the Southern Low Countries, 1370–1440* (Cambridge, 2015).

corporate group. This stands in contrast to royal entries, which tended to be much more socially diverse in terms of participation in the public ceremony. Overall, the oath-taking aspect of an episcopal entry was a moment for civic governments and bishops to publicly define the nature of urban secular authority. Rather than the late medieval episcopal entry providing 'evidence of a long-term decline in episcopal power', it was precisely because French bishops continued to wield considerable authority and influence such that episcopal entries remained vital ceremonies across several centuries.¹²⁰