

Richard Rastall

**Secular Musicians in Late Medieval England
(1968)**

My doctoral thesis on minstrelsy in late medieval England (with a section on the Scottish royal household) is now 45 years old. This is to me an amazing fact: but even more amazing is that it has not been superseded. A few scholars have worked on sections of this subject, sometimes very usefully, but no real progress has been made in our understanding of English minstrels and minstrelsy. More worryingly, some of those who have published on the subject did not bother to read either this thesis or the doctoral dissertation by Rosalind Conklin, and so undertook a lot of unnecessary work, not always with good results.

This thesis has been available for some years on the website of The University of Leeds, with links from my personal page there and from the IGTP site. Following my retirement from the University in 2006 and a major revision of the School of Music website in 2012, my webpage has disappeared, and with it the link to this thesis. I am therefore very grateful to the IGTP Webmaster, who has kindly agreed to give it room on the Waits website.

The thesis has been retyped (it was written, of course, long before the age of computers) but is otherwise given here in its original state. It is very out-of-date in many respects, and the reader must bear this in mind: but it should be noted that over the years I have done further work on the subject, some of which is also available on the IGTP website - notably the more detailed discussions of the royal pipers and of the myth of the town waits as watchmen. A detailed consideration of the royal citolers was made for a conference held in the British Museum in 2011, and this is due to be published in a book arising from the conference; a paper on Princess Eleanor's journey to Nijmegen to be married to the Count of Guelders in 1332 was given at the Medieval Congress in Kalamazoo in May 2012, but has not been published.

The whole thesis is now undergoing major revision and rewriting for publication by Boydell and Brewer in 2014 or 2015. This will include not only a radical reworking of the existing material but also new sections on minstrel performance: much of this is the work of Andrew Taylor, whose book on the 16th-century minstrel Richard Sheale appeared in 2012.

I hope that the original thesis will continue to be useful meanwhile. The pagination of this version is not the same as the original, but the original page-numbers appear here in [], so that internal references can be followed. In the footnotes, short bibliographical references lead to full citations in the Bibliography. For various reasons the illustrations that appeared in the thesis are not included here: they are however listed, and can be followed up using online and other resources. In quotations from documents in Latin or French I have usually extended scribal abbreviations, in which case the omitted letters are here italicised.

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