CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Review of periodical articles

Frederik Buylaert, Jim Van Der Meulen, Gerrit Verhoeven, Reinoud Vermoesen
and Tim Verlaan

Ghent University, Department of History, Henri Pirenne Institute for Medieval Studies,
Sint-Pietersnieuwstraat 35, B-9000 Ghent, Belgium, Jesus College, Oxford, OX1 3DW, UK, Department of
Heritage, University of Antwerp, Blinestraat 9, 2000 Antwerp, Belgium, Department of History, Sint-
Jacobsmarkt 13, University of Antwerp, 2000 Antwerp, Belgium and Amsterdam Centre for Urban History,
Faculty of Humanities, University of Amsterdam, Bushuis/Oost-Indisch Huis, Kloveniersburgwal 48,
Amsterdam, Netherlands

Pre-1500

In 2011, Carol Symes published a thought-provoking essay on the persistence of
the concept of the 'The Middle Ages' in the face of postmodern critiques focusing
on the ideological and instrumental aspects of periodization. While scholars have
long recognized 'The Middle Ages' as a questionable intellectual construct, she
argues, this concept is still reified as a foil to 'modernity' in a narrative that privi-
leges specific interest groups and identities by marginalizing others, that is, past
societies as well as non-western societies, both of which are tacitly denied the
same agency and complexity that is routinely ascribed to the west.[1] A decade
later, Symes' mordant reflections provide a useful backdrop to take stock of recent
publications on 'medieval' urban history: while her comments about the politics of
periodization remain as relevant as ever, much is stirring under the surface and
students of urban history should take notice of how towns and urbanization are
at the fore of these intellectual experiments. While the notion of 'modernity'
may still be as influential in conceptualizing human history in 2021 as it was in
2011, the impression of the authors of this periodical review is that both the tem-
poral and spatial aspects of the notion of 'medieval history' have entered a state of
flux. Some of the most important work in urban history published in the past year
tends to subsume 'medieval' and 'early modern' in a 'pre-modern' epoch. In add-
ition, scholars are progressively abandoning the Eurocentric perspective that
underpinned traditional conceptions of medieval history, a move that is sometimes,
but not always, inspired by the important work done by Carol Symes and others to
promote a 'Global Middle Ages'.

The first article that must be highlighted in this respect is a provocative essay by
Chris Wickham. In light of his stellar work on the social and economic history of
the Mediterranean world between the fourth and the twelfth centuries, the editors
of *Past & Present* gave him a forum to reimagine the 'economic logic of medieval
societies' as an expansive concept, namely a mode of production that was shared by
all Eurasian societies up to at least 1700 CE and which revolved around peasants

---

[1]C. Symes, 'When we talk about modernity', *American Historical Review*, 116 (2011), 715–26.

suffering surplus extraction by a wide range of coercive institutions – lords, religious bodies, cities and states. Most, if not all, scholars imagine 'feudal economies' as restrictive societal configurations with a relatively low productive ceiling that eroded, first slowly and then rapidly, by the thirteenth century at the latest, but Wickham argues against the deep-rooted assumption that progressive urbanization and commercialization were inimical to these 'feudal' arrangements. Responding to elite demand, peasants increasingly entered the market, thus providing important stimuli to the rise of industry, commerce and towns. This led to 'high-functioning systems', including, for example, Song China and seventeenth-century Holland with true change coming much later than most historians imagine it. Wickham points out that the peasantry continued to constitute the majority of the population in all Eurasian societies and while they were unable to shake off the rents and taxes imposed on them by a wide range of elites, peasants were sufficiently well-organized to thwart all systemic changes initiated by these elites (Chris Wickham, 'How did the feudal economy work? The economic logic of medieval societies', *Past & Present*, 251 (2021), 3–40). Apart from the question whether the concept of a 'feudal economy' is so loaded with ideological and historiographical ballast as to make it ineffective as a pitch for this aggressive reinterpretation of pre-industrial societies – after all, all things 'feudal' figure largely in the reductionist vignettes challenged by Carol Symes and others – the merit of Wickham's argument is difficult to assess because it rests on claims about the comparable similar economic development of European and Central and East Asian societies up to the eighteenth century, which themselves are subject to fierce debate.[2] That said, Wickham is certainly right to remind scholars that progressive urbanization and commercialization are not intrinsically incompatible with the interests of peasants, a reminder that builds on post-war scholarship demonstrating that many medieval towns took shape around seigneurial centres as hotspots of consumer demand. Focusing on the Lower Normandy region in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, Mathieu Arnoux provides empirical evidence for Wickham's point by illuminating the mutual interests of small-scale peasants and towns such as Caen or Saint-Lô. Large ecclesiastical and urban institutions often provided substantial credit to the peasantry of the town's hinterland in return for grain annuities that were paid in kind. These credit arrangements helped to ensure food security for urban society, but they were never so exploitative as to undermine the position of peasants as small-scale landowners (Mathieu Arnoux, 'Credit and investment between town and countryside: the market in grain annuities in Normandy (thirteenth–fourteenth centuries)', *Continuity and Change*, 36 (2021), 149–76). As it stands, Wickham's essay provides an interesting *marxisant* alternative to the famous 2002 essay of Jack A. Goldstone, arguing that the structural constraints shared by all pre-modern Eurasian economies were only lifted with the introduction of cheap, storage-friendly energy in the form of fossil fuels.[3]

---

[2]A recent overview in V. Court, 'A reassessment of the great divergence debate: towards a reconciliation of apparently distinct determinants', *European Review of Economic History*, 24 (2019), 633–74. While avoiding the old trope that the economic rise of the west was inevitable, recent scholarship sees an earlier and stronger differentiation between European and Asian economies than is allowed for in Wickham's essay.

[3]J.A. Goldstone, 'Efflorescences and economic growth in world history: rethinking "the rise of the West" and the industrial revolution', *J. of World History*, 13 (2002), 323–89.

The bold moves of Jack Goldstone (a sociologist and political scientist turned historian) and Chris Wickham (a historian) are mirrored by two political scientists, Gary W. Cox and Valentin Figueroa. One of the cornerstones of the 'great divergence' debate is the idea that the political fragmentation of Europe was a blessing in disguise, as competition between different political actors for societal support may have stimulated a more secure concept of individual property rights than in, say, the Ottoman, Safavid, Mughal or Chinese Empires. Cox and Figueroa expand this perspective by testing the hypothesis that the relative independence of European towns may have had a similar effect, in that autonomous towns were more prone to undermining the coercive labour arrangements that lords imposed on peasants in their hinterlands (e.g. the famous dictum 'urban air makes you free'). As commercial, town-based elites ensured that peasants and former peasants could engage freely in urban labour markets, they not only stimulated the urban economy but also that of the entire region. Focusing on Europe east of the Urals, North Africa and the lands between the Eastern Mediterranean and the Indian peninsula between *c.* 800 and 1800 CE, Cox and Figueroa point to a strong positive correlation between proxies for urban independence and those for economic growth (Gary W. Cox and Valentin Figueroa, 'Political fragmentation, rural-to-urban migration and urban growth patterns in western Eurasia, 800–1800', *European R. of Economic History*, 35 (2020), 203–22). This perspective, too, situates a watershed in the social and economic history of Eurasian societies around 1800 CE, as the growing control over (would-be) nation-states over towns changed the rules of the game.

The year 2021 saw the publication of two other noteworthy publications that transcend the divide between 'medieval' and 'early modern' towns. In the first article, Jessica Dijkman explores how the urban authorities and poor-relief organizations of Dutch towns worked together to anticipate occasional grain shortages by securing relief stocks on the international grain markets, a procedure that took shape in the wake of a famine in Rotterdam and Gouda in 1437–39 and which remained in force well into the nineteenth century (Jessica Dijkman, 'Managing food crises: urban relief stocks in pre-industrial Holland', *Past & Present*, 251 (2021), 41–74). This long-run perspective also resurfaces in Daniel Curtis' discussion of an exceptional set of burial registers for St Bavo Church in Haarlem, a town of *c.* 7,000–12,000 inhabitants which, in the fifteenth century, largely derived its income from textile industries and breweries. By comparing the available records for 1412–1547 with the records for 1599–1699, Curtis is able to show that – contrary to a persistent myth in post-war scholarship – the towns of the Low Countries were hit hard by the Black Death, and that the demographic impact of the epidemic was greater in the fifteenth century than in the seventeenth. Another important finding is that the impact of the disease was sex-selective in that women were more prone to die of the Black Death than men, a remarkable inversion of the gendered impact of most infectious diseases which may have had something to do with patriarchal caregiving and household arrangements that exposed women more systematically to plague vectors than men (Daniel R. Curtis, 'From one mortality regime to another? Mortality crises in late medieval Haarlem, Holland, in perspective', *Speculum*, 96 (2021), 127–55).

How urban communities weathered and managed the wide-ranging effects of the Black Death is deftly discussed for Siena by Mattia Fochesato. The case of Siena is an interesting one, because its political trajectory was different from that of other city-states in the Italian peninsula. Where Florence, Venice and many other city-states moved towards oligarchy, with seigneurial elites establishing dynastic rule over the town, Siena was ruled from the 1350s by a complex coalition of interest groups that had wrested control over the town from a clique of bankers and great merchants. Faced with massive loss of fiscal income because Siena had lost about half of its population to the plague, the new government had to meet rising expenditure to protect the town's independence in a growing number of wars between the Italian city-states. Not only did the new coalition manage to return the extractive fiscal power of Siena to its pre-plague level by 1400 CE, but this was partly realized by shifting the town's tax base away from indirect taxes (which hit poor consumers much harder than rich ones) towards a more equitable regime of forced loans and taxes that tapped into the main commercial circuits of the Sienese hinterland. While his careful analysis makes for uplifting reading in times when governments are grappling with inflation, social inequality, tax evasion, interest groups with anti-democratic agendas and the rising costs of the current health crisis and climate crisis, Fochesato is also careful to point out that this policy made Siena dependent on the income from commercial taxes. With the economic downturn of the late fifteenth century, fiscal revenue plummeted and Siena eventually fell under the rule of Florence (Mattia Fochesato, 'Plagues, wars, political change, and fiscal capacity: late medieval and renaissance Siena, 1337–1556', *Economic History R.*, 74 (2021), 1031–61).

Another innovative contribution to the history of Italian city-states comes from Michael Martoccio, who points out that the political map of the peninsula not only changed because of wars, but also because urban rulers and governors were not shy of selling an entire city-state and its hinterland to interested bidders. Comparing Florence's purchase of Lucca (a failure) and Pisa (a success), Martoccio provides a pertinent discussion of how this market for city-states helped shape a political culture in which 'a language of empire [was] filled with the vernacular of the marketplace'. Leading members of Florence's upper class distinguished themselves by helping set up the vast and complex credit networks that were necessary for such massive expenditures, as well as by insinuating themselves in delicate negotiations. As a result, the plotting and scheming to expand Florence's might by purchase rather than by war created a forum for ambitious individuals to articulate a concept of elite masculinity that revolved around patriotism and business acumen. The article also discusses how this long-ignored aspect of urban politics may have informed the better-known experiments of Europeans abroad in purchasing or exchanging land and power with other groups (Michael Martoccio, 'The art of *mercato*: buying city-states in Renaissance Tuscany', *Past & Present*, 252 (2021), 54–99).

This reassessment of the political culture of Italian city-states chimes well with Christian Liddy's wide-ranging essay on urban political communities and decision-making processes. Drawing mainly on the evidence for English towns such as York and Norwich, but with asides to German, French and Italian towns, Liddy argues that urban politics were not the restrictive, elitist affair that many historians have thought them to be. Access to office was often fairly open, at least to adult male

city-dwellers (Liddy cites preliminary research by Samantha Sagui for English towns). Above all, whoever was in office had to take into account the wishes and opinions of a well-developed and articulate political community. The bulk of the article spells out the implications of this situation, in that urban political communities had to develop stringent rules about individual attendance for the decision-making process, a delicate affair in times when urban office-holders were not paid and thus had to juggle their responsibilities as a burgomaster or alderman with their personal affairs as a merchant or landlord. Following the inspiring work of, among others, Ian Forrest on the social basis of church politics, Liddy puts the notion of trust at the heart of urban politics, pointing out that a 'political system that could operate only through trust and through the trustworthiness of its citizens was open to abuse'. Countering and preventing that abuse was crucial to realize the goal of consensus-based politics. Consequently, so Liddy argues, the well-studied contestations and revolts in towns are best understood not as isolated events that punctured normal routines, but as an integral part of a political culture in which discussion and dissent were supposed to lead to consensus-based policies (Christian D. Liddy, 'Who decides? Urban councils and consensus in the late Middle Ages', *Social History*, 46 (2021), 406–34).

Liddy's argument finds support in Bart Lambert's discussion of the role of immigrants in the governance of English towns. Towns close to the Scottish border and in the southern counties often hosted substantial numbers of immigrants by the fourteenth century, and detailed research reveals that immigrants with substantial means, talent and connections often managed to take up political office in their new hometown. This is not to say that these ambitious newcomers never provoked resistance, but Lambert convincingly argues that this resistance is best understood not as a widely shared aversion to foreigners meddling in urban politics, but as the targeted actions of specific interest groups – often organized in guilds – who recognized these capable foreigners as doughty competitors in the pursuit of wealth and power, thus fomenting anti-immigrant resentments and whipping up restrictive regulations to protect their own interests. This instrumental use of ambivalent attitudes towards foreigners, however, must be put in a context in which city-dwellers were, as a rule, happy to make use of the talents and assets of foreigners in their midst (Bart Lambert, 'Citizenry and nationality: the participation of immigrants in urban politics in later medieval England', *History Workshop J.*, 90 (2020), 52–73).

The issue of how urban politics intersected with the overarching apparatus and administrative structures of the budding late medieval 'state' has long been the subject of fierce debate as well. While older scholarship conceptualized state-building in the late Middle Ages as a top-down process of centralization and concentration of princely power, from the 1980s historians such as Wim Blockmans and Jean-Philippe Genet have inserted a more bottom-up approach to this question by focusing on the bargaining power and pushback of urban representatives in this process. This theme was revisited in a 2021 special issue of *Histoire urbaine* titled *Villes et construction étatique au Moyen Âge*. The main takeaway from the contributions in this special issue is that the impact of urban interest groups on state formation was diversified, multifaceted and non-linear in the late medieval period. In fact, the nature of the political interactions between urban societies and princely governments could differ even within the zone of influence of the

same ruler. Cécile Becchia, for example, adopts a prosopographical approach to illuminate the contrasting inter-relationships between urban and princely officials in the fifteenth-century cities of Dijon and Lille when both belonged to the realm of the Valois dukes of Burgundy. In Dijon, which was the original heartland of Burgundian ducal power, the barriers between the princely court and the citizenry were highly porous. In the Flemish city of Lille, however, the number of citizens who were also princely officials were few and far between, just as princely officials had little sway over local governance of the city. Becchia attributes this to a combination of factors, from Lille's normative framework which forestalled individuals from simultaneously holding offices at the urban and princely level by ancient custom, to the relatively 'open' nature of Dijon's urban elite, which enabled the dukes of Burgundy to insert their political dependants (Cécile Becchia, 'Investir la principauté de Bourgogne: deux exemples contrastés d'intégration des sociétés urbaines, Lille et Dijon au au XVe siècle', *Histoire urbaine*, Special Issue 1 (2021), 79–93). If this contrast within the patchwork political realm of the Burgundians is not altogether surprising, it is notable that a similar multiplicity of agents can be seen in the precociously centralized kingdom of England. Eliza Hartrich demonstrates how the combination of individuals, government officials and organizations which were in some way connected with urban life in late medieval England – what she calls the 'urban sector' – formed a loose interest group with highly diverse tools and methods to affect the political actions of the crown, from lending money to filling judicial offices. Thus, Hartrich's analysis complements Liddy's argument about the breadth of the spectrum of political participation between 1350 and 1500. While her contribution emphasizes that within that time frame, there were still periods when a select number of powerful merchants held a disproportionate influence over the crown (e.g. during the reign of Henry IV, 1399–1413), these periods alternated with times when the collective voice of associations of relatively ordinary people carried through into royal policy (Eliza Hartrich, 'Municipalités, marchands et reseaux: les villes et le fonctionnement du gouvernement anglais, vers 1350–1550', *Histoire urbaine*, Special Issue 1 (2021), 121–44).

Yet the much-needed critique, articulated by Liddy and others, of the traditional concept of medieval urban politics as a closed, oligarchic affair that was somehow separated from the rest of urban society should not lead scholars to develop an overly roseate counter-image in which the wishes of the urban community always came first. In her discussion of Troyes – a town in the county of Champagne with approximately 2,200 taxable inhabitants around 1430 – Cléo Rager deftly shows how control over the town was a high-stakes game in the context of the conflict over the control of the kingdom of France between the Lancastrian kings of England and the Valois dynasty, a struggle that merged with increasingly fierce factional conflicts between leading French princes (the so-called Armagnacs and Bourguignons). A detailed social study of the town's ruling classes shows that Charles VII and his royal entourage had a hands-on approach towards Troyes, which was, incidentally, in 1420 the site of a humiliating treaty that signalled the nadir of the Valois dynasty. From 1429 onwards, the royal bailiff of the bailliage of Troyes and the '*procureur du roi*' were closely involved in Troyes politics, which helped to ensure the ascendancy of a Valois-minded coalition of wealthy

merchants, goldsmiths and tavernkeepers at the expense of drapers, tailors, wine-makers and so on. A general pardon for earlier support for Henry V and Henry VI of England was combined with targeted executions of opposition leaders and the repression of those segments of the urban population that were not too happy with this coalition between the Valois monarchy and a specific elite in Troyes (Cléo Rager, '"Recognoissant leur seigneur souverain et naturel": élites troyennes et fidelité royale à la fin de la Guerre de Cent Ans', *Revue historique*, 699 (2021), 765–90). The dark side of urban political communities also surfaces in Rudi Beaulant's discussion of Dijon's *registre du papier rouge*, a fifteenth-century manuscript in which the officials of this Burgundian town carefully listed the names of all individuals who had incurred a criminal sentence. On the one hand, the register had to signal good governance in the form of effective public order management by the city council, which had only recently regained its autonomy after a lengthy spell of tutelage by John the Fearless, duke of Burgundy. On the other hand, the register was also key to reputation management among city-dwellers, as someone's standing, credit and trustworthiness could be undermined by rumours that his or her name was in that notorious register, a situation that was not easily remedied precisely because consulting its contents was a privilege appropriated by established elites (Rudi Beaulant, 'Entre administration et mémoire du crime: constitution et usages du registre du Papier Rouge de la mairie de Dijon à la fin du Moyen Âge', *Revue historique*, 690 (2021), 593–627).

The past year also saw several studies on how urban political communities took shape. Art historian Laura Tillery analysed painted cityscapes of Lübeck found in the backgrounds of a series of fifteenth-century *Dance of Death* paintings (some of them no longer extant), to argue that the use of local landmarks and marine imagery in these paintings evinces a visual strategy that forged links of a shared civic identity among towns that were part of the Hansa trade network; an indirect way of 'producing' urban space (Laura Tillery, 'Hanse cultural geography and communal identity in late-medieval city views of Lübeck', *J. of Urban History*, 47 (2021), 1251–74). Other publications focused upon transformations to the socio-political fabric of European towns. Thus, in two interconnected articles, Anna Gutgarts bridges the gap between the more established scholarly framework on urban development in late medieval north-western European cities and the relatively neglected Latin East, specifically the city of Jerusalem in the twelfth century. Earlier scholarship has often skirted over the urbanization of Jerusalem in the Crusader period in favour of the city's place in more wide-ranging geopolitical developments. When historians have looked at Jerusalem's urbanization, moreover, they have mainly highlighted the city's symbolic importance to the Frankish settlers, which has led to the misconception of a swift and linear process of urban transformation in the wake of the First Crusade (1095–99). In her diptych, Gutgarts puts paid to this notion, first by re-examining the evidence of building projects – including archeological evidence – and real estate transactions in the twelfth century, which leads her to distinguish between different phases of development. These phases centred upon the interactions between, on the one hand, major religious institutions such as the patriarchs of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and the Hospitallers of St John, and, on the other hand, the rising class of burgesses whose socio-economic motivations and municipal engagement may have ultimately

become the motor of urbanization after *c.* 1130 through the establishment of a 'proto real estate market'. In her second article, Gutgarts further examines the role of internal turmoil and disputes between these same groups in the process of urban development. She connects her conclusions on the Latin East to broader discussions of medieval urban unrest, wherein authors such as Patrick Lantschner have argued that urban space was partly negotiated through complex and multifaceted conflicts within urban society. Gutgarts illuminates how occasional outbursts of protest from the city's burgesses against building projects of institutions, such as the Hospital of St John, gradually became enmeshed in Jerusalem's municipal mechanisms of negotiating urban space, boosting the accountability of major religious authorities with regards to the citizens (Anna Gutgarts, 'Shaping society and urban fabric in Crusader Jerusalem', *Urban History*, 48 (2021), 2–19; and *idem*, 'Between violent outbreaks and legal disputes: the contested cityscape of Frankish Jerusalem through the prism of institutional and socio-economic conflicts, *J. of Medieval History*, 47 (2021), 332–49).

Leen Bervoets and Jan Dumolyn provide a wide-ranging overview of political contestations that took shape in the textile centres of Flanders, Brabant, Artois, Picardy and Tournaisis between *c.* 1220 and 1285, and which were – to an extent – representative of a broader pattern of urban change in north-western Europe. Starting as a series of uncoordinated strikes against an urban government that was usually dominated by great merchants, protests by urban workers helped to galvanize new frameworks for collective action: within the 'artisan class', specific segments of labourers were increasingly successful in organizing themselves into guilds. As economic growth propelled upward social mobility, coalitions of artisans often found effective leaders amongst well-to-do drapers, whose wealth and social standing was increasingly at odds with their exclusion from urban office. From the mid-thirteenth century onwards, wealthy guild masters also managed to secure access to the city council, thus laying the foundation for the craft guild regimes that dominated the larger Netherlandish towns until the abolition of their political privileges by the Habsburg state in the sixteenth century. From the late thirteenth century onwards, the drivers behind this reform movement changed, as an economic downturn provoked craftsmen to cement their own incomes and standing through control of the urban government (Leen Bervoets and Jan Dumolyn, 'Urban protest in thirteenth-century north-western Europe: a comparative approach', *J. of Medieval History* (2021), 1–28). This last line of enquiry is followed up in another publication by Jan Dumolyn, co-authored with Wouter Ryckbosch and Mathijs Speecke, on the social and economic position of rebellious craftsmen in late fourteenth-century Bruges. Thanks to the inventories for 286 rebels who saw their properties confiscated after the military repression of the Bruges revolt in 1383–84 by the count of Flanders, the authors are able to challenge recent scholarship arguing that fourteenth-century revolts were mainly the work of thriving groups who were intent on leveraging political representation with their newfound wealth. This article provides a fascinating insight into the often dismal living standards of ordinary craftsmen – mainly weavers, metalworkers and tailors – through a detailed analysis of their clothing, household utensils, furniture and housing rents. The late fourteenth century is often imagined as the start of a 'golden age of labour' in the wake of plague-induced labour shortages, but the authors provide a salutary

reminder that these effects often only took shape after 1400 and that in the preceding decades, labourers were often crushed between stagnant wages in the face of inflation, and serious decline in demand for the export-oriented textile industries that were the lifeblood of many towns. The result was relative deprivation for craftsmen, which was felt all the more sharply because other, more successful groups cemented their position in the middling strata of urban society at that time by developing a material culture of domesticity (Jan Dumolyn, Wouter Ryckbosch and Mathijs Speecke, 'Did inequality produce medieval revolt? The material position and political agency of textile workers during the Flemish Revolt of 1379–1385', *Social History*, 46 (2021), 372–405).

An article by Jelle Haemers allows us to move from the houses of impoverished craftsmen to brothels. A set of 14 lease agreements from the Brabantine town of Leuven provides a peek behind the curtains of private 'stews', that is, bathing houses where customers could also purchase sexual services, a configuration for prostitution that would remain highly popular in the Low Countries until the Reformation. These contracts first reveal much about the organization of the sex trade, with great lords and bishops appearing as the landlords of the prime real estate that was required for a brothel (stews needed access to the waterways of the town as well as an attractive location to lure customers). Meanwhile, the brothel keepers often had enough wealth to claim middle-class respectability, even if this did not sit well with the moral onus of their profession. As to the sex workers themselves, Haemers not only provides a careful description of their surroundings, ranging from furniture to a discussion of the often poetically and erotically charged names of the brothels (the Parrot, the Rose and so on), but also of the complex mix of financial and social positions, with some prostitutes engaging in the trade on their own terms and with considerable financial success, whereas others were clearly in positions that made them vulnerable to all kinds of abuse (Jelle Haemers, 'Women and stews: the social and material history of prostitution in the late medieval southern Low Countries', *History Workshop J.*, 92 (2021), 29–50). The article on prostitution chimes nicely with Andrew Brown's discussion of playing at dice in Netherlandish pardon letters. While his article is not specifically geared towards urban history, many pardon letters reveal protagonists that engaged in the roll of the dice – a form of gambling that was at once the lightning rod for moral outrage and an extremely popular pastime that doubled as a forum for the articulation of masculine identities – in an urban setting, usually a tavern, where they got into all sorts of trouble, sometimes so serious that they had to seek a pardon for grievous bodily harm or manslaughter (Andrew Brown, 'Passing the time: the role of the dice in late medieval pardon letters', *Speculum*, 96 (2021), 699–725).

The year 2021 also saw the publication of a rare attempt at focused comparative history on the relative position of women in the labour markets of Bilbao, a coastal town in Castile, and Antwerp, a Brabantine harbour city in the Scheldt estuary. Nena Vandeweerdt develops a critical engagement with the well-established thesis that women were more emancipated in north-western Europe than in the Mediterranean world. The results are intriguing in that the share of women in tax registers, for example, shows an inversion of this claim, with women constituting 21 per cent of all taxpayers in Bilbao in 1470 but only 11 per cent of the taxpayers in Antwerp in 1537 and 1532. Then again, as the author correctly

acknowledges, the Antwerp evidence reveals more women of middling standing than in Bilbao, and the unequal visibility of women may be a trick of the sources: economically active women in Antwerp may be shielded from view in a legal regime in which women needed male representation in lawsuits and in which guild regulations only tacitly acknowledged the pivotal role of women in the workshops of their fathers and husbands (Nena Vandeweerdt, 'Women, town councils, and the organisation of work in Bilbao and Antwerp: a north–south comparison (1400–1560)', *Continuity and Change*, 36 (2021), 61–87).

1500–1800

Due to the Covid pandemic, we were all forced to spend more time at home than we were used to, which had some serious ramifications on our family lives – both in a good, but sometimes also in a bad, sense – in terms of how it affected our working habits, and other features of our daily lives. Looking at the range of articles on the history of the home/house, it also seems to have inspired many historians to look at this topic anew. Working from home is, for instance, a theme in Amanda Flather's latest article ('The organization and use of household space for work in early modern England, 1550–1750', *European History Quarterly*, 51 (2021), 450–503). Drawing on massive – yet somewhat heterogeneous – evidence from court proceedings, diaries and other sources, she challenges the classic hypothesis that domestic space, both in urban as well as rural contexts, was increasingly closed off in the sixteenth and seventieth centuries, when segregation along class and gender lines is assumed to have become stricter. Flather argues that there is little if any trace of a slow-burn closure of domestic space, as workshops, yards, shops and other workplaces remained relatively open for customers, passers-by, neighbours and other visitors, who also penetrated unhindered in the more private rooms. Inside the house, spatial boundaries along gender lines – if they even existed to begin with – were also regularly transgressed, as men and women frequently worked together in all sorts of occupations. According to Flather, the same held true for class boundaries, which were extremely permeable, as the masters of the house and the servants often used the same space. This porousness of spheres was often rather necessity than choice. Due to the lack of domestic space in – especially – urban environments, regular mixing between social classes and sexes was inevitable. Often the economy of space also forced people to work outside, where the door sill remained a favourite place to work or socialize.

The openness and porosity of domestic space also plays an important role in Eleonora Canepari's article in the same special issue ('Common places: sharing spaces in early modern "ordinary" houses', *European History Quarterly*, 51 (2021), 464–79), where the crucial function of stairs, landings, balconies, courtyards, halls, gardens and other intermediate spaces as 'extra' domestic space for work, socializing and other purposes is scrutinized in depth. While this residual space has often been branded as dysfunctional – being prone to promiscuity vandalism, and other problems – in contemporary or nineteenth-century theories, research about their role in early modern Europe remains thin on the ground. Drawing on new evidence from the administration of the *Presidenza della Strade* in Rome, where all sorts of micro renovations and interventions – both large and

small – in the public space were discussed, Canepari persuasively argues that these *loci comuni* became even more important in the course of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, when apartments, rooms and other domestic spaces were increasingly divided in ever smaller units. Co-habitation forced people to use the landings, balconies and other residual spaces more intensively and to construct new infrastructure. Occupants also became more watchful for rubbish that cluttered these hallways and staircases and were attentive to the maintenance of wells, latrines and other shared facilities, while noise, especially at night, became a bone of contention.

While the administration of the *Presidenza della Strade* allows us to scrutinize micro urbanism in Rome, a similar source – the *procès-verbaux d'expertise des greffiers de bâtiments* – is exploited by Michela Barbot and Robert Carvais in their article analysing the same issue in Paris ('Des archives pour analyser la ville et pour dessiner ses territoires. Les procès-verbaux d'expertise parisienne des greffiers des bâtiments', *Histoire urbaine*, 59 (2020), 63–84). Even though art historians have made extensive use of these sources, they have been largely ignored by historians, which is rather unfortunate as they provide detailed information about the value of houses and *hôtels*, the repair and renovation works, the conflicts with neighbours, and many other real estate topics. The reports on repair works, for example, which make up 17 per cent to 26 per cent of all files in the administration of the *greffiers de bâtiments*, are particularly fascinating. While art historians are predominantly interested in the buildings that were constructed *ex nihilo*, a large swathe of buildings were constantly repaired and renovated. The files also shed light on the comfort that was appreciated in early modern houses, such as kitchens, chimneys, wells, windowpanes and gardens. On the other hand, a location in a *cul-de-sac*, the absence of paved streets or too great a distance from the city centre were undesirable. Barbot and Carvais' analysis in *Histoire urbaine* is only a *hors d'oeuvre* or appetizer of the research results that can be expected to be drawn from this administration *de bâtiments*.

Eleonora Canepari looks at the extreme flexibility of micro urbanism leading to compartimentalization within the house in her article for *European History Quarterly*, while she zeroes in on the mobility of migrants and other unsettled people in another article (see 'Temporary housing and unsettled population: drivers of urban change in early modern Marseille and Rome', *J. of Early Modern History* (2021), 118–40). Inns, *fondaci*, boarding houses and *hotels meublés* were the hubs of this hypermobility. Temporary housing was not only used by migrants and travellers from outside the city, but also played a crucial part in the *intra muros* mobility, as city dwellers frequently moved to alternative accommodation within the same city. Especially important in this regard were the neighbourhoods, suburbs and *faubourgs* beyond the city walls where these temporary residents found accommodation in inns and rented apartments, but also in cellars or in attics. That inns were often visited by customers of different stripes and feathers is also emphasized in Rosa Salzberg's contribution to the same issue ('Little worlds in motion: mobility and space in the *osterie* of early modern Venice', *J. of Early Modern History* (2021), 96–177). Salzberg argues that these spaces, which have often been ignored in urban history, apart from their function of providing food and drink

for locals, have attracted much more attention in the last few years due to the 'mobilities paradigm'.

In theory, it would be relatively simple to sketch a group portrait of the *clientele* of these early modern *osterie*, as the Venetian government forced innkeepers to keep a detailed register of their incoming and outgoing guests, but unfortunately most of these sources have been lost. Piecing together bits and pieces of information drawn from court records, government regulation, diaries and other sources, Salzberg was able to shed some light on their profile. Some of these customers came from far away, such as diplomats, foreign merchants and artisans, artists, nobles on the Grand Tour, but others – including local elite and middle-class customers, but also recently arrived migrants – literally came from around the corner. Inns were 'frenetic teeming organisms' or little worlds in motion, where a variety of people on the move, whether on a global or a local scale, shared space, met and interacted with each other. They were there to eat and drink, to socialize, to do business, to enjoy music, sex or other extras, or simply to sleep. There are also fascinating insights about the interior of these *osterie*. Drawing on a variety of sources, Salzberg welcomes her reader into the *Lion Bianco* near the *Rialto* and other inns, where guests could enjoy the luxury of a nicely set table, candlesticks and lanterns, canopied beds and other comforts. She is even able to reconstruct the menu that was served.

Ottaway and Mason's recent article also allows us to take a peek inside early modern interiors, although their research focuses on eighteenth-century workhouses ('Reconsidering Poor Law institutions by virtually reconstructing and re-viewing an eighteenth-century workhouse', *Historical J.*, 64 (2021), 557–82). By combining insights from traditional archival research with a trailblazing digital reconstruction of the workhouse by using SketchUp and Unity 3D software, Ottaway and Mason are able to shed new light on how these institutions worked on a daily basis. Some classic truisms about workhouses are debunked. First and foremost, although we are bound to envisage these urban and rural workhouses as carceral, prison-like institutions where inmates were kept under lock and key, the reconstruction of the Mitford and Launditch Hundred House shows the extremely permeable nature of these buildings with large windows, open arcades and numerous back doors. It ties in with more traditional research based on historical archives of these institutions that show how paupers came and went at a dizzying rate. They were allowed to go out regularly to visit friends and family, to look for a job, or to receive medical treatment. Although inmates frequently made improper use of these 'outings' to drink, carouse, thieve or partake in other activities, this basic right to leave was never revoked. Second, Ottaway and Mason's spatial analysis of workhouses seems to refute the idea that these institutions were successful in keeping the disparate categories of the poor apart. Even though children, able-bodied adults and the old and disabled were indeed housed in separate parts of the building, they inevitably mixed when they moved through the building to reach workrooms, dining spaces or the schoolroom.

(Pious) sounds of city also reverberate through academia. In her latest article ('Sound faith: religion and the aural environment of towns in northern England, ca. 1740–1830', *Cultural and Social History*, 18 (2021), 463–80), Caris Brown looks at the noises that echoed through the industrial cities of northern England

and how this clamour fostered piety. Traditionally, eighteenth-century city life has been associated with secularization and the decline of religion, but Brown persuasively argues that religion was still an important part of the daily lives of eighteenth-century people. Squeezing evidence from letters, diaries, travel accounts and other life-writings, she explores the enduring relationship between the – often mundane – sounds of the city and religion in three ways. First of all, there were the impious sounds – loud gossiping in church, slanderous words, bawdy jests, lewd songs – that offered the reverent urbanites the much-needed spiritual fuel to distance themselves from the mob by putting their hands to their ears or by steering clear away from inns, coffee-houses, concert halls and other aural hell holes. Then, there were the more pious sounds that structured everyday life in cities, such as the chiming of bells – still important in the eighteenth century despite David Garrioch's claims – or the noise of people going to church on Sundays. Finally, religion also flourished in eighteenth-century cities, as all sorts of congregations – especially the evangelicals – rediscovered that the aural space of towns provided unparalleled opportunities to spread the word of God through outdoor preaching and the singing of hymns.

Debunking crude stereotypes about secularization is also at the heart of Andrei Pesic's research about the Paris *Concert Spirituel* ('Concerts and inadvertent secularization: religious music in the entertainment market of eighteenth-century Paris', *Past & Present*, 250 (2021), 135–69). In the course of the eighteenth century, the religious repertoire of this famous concert series, which was performed from 1725 to 1790 in the Tuileries Palace, was much reduced. Traditionally, this has often been linked to a gradual process of secularization that was fuelled by the burgeoning culture of the Enlightenment. Drawing data from the programmes, Pesic meticulously quantifies these changes, whereby the classic sacred motets of Michel-Richard de Lalanda indeed gradually gave way to more profane music and symphonies composed by Mozart, Hadyn and other 'German' composers and Italian *virtuosi*. However, this secularization was not audience-driven, as many experts have claimed in the past. An eclectic range of archival sources – including letters and diaries, but also the files of the aliens registration office – seem to suggest that the rather conservative crowd of court aristocrats, churchmen, diplomats and foreign visitors still reigned supreme in the late eighteenth century. They were unlikely to foment a secularist programme, but even the lone *philosophe*, such as Jean-Jacques Rousseau, who attended the *Concert Spirituel* was not necessarily keen on reform. Therefore, Pesic claims that the ongoing secularization of the repertoire was rather fuelled by increasing competition in the entertainment sector. Late eighteenth-century Paris offered all sorts of opportunities for entertainment such as bull-fighting and bear-beating, but also the immensely popular profane concert series of the *Concert des Amateurs* or the *Société Olympique*. Due to this highly competitive environment, the *Concert Spirituel* was forced upon the slippery slope of 'inadvertent secularization' where mimetic behaviour – programming the more popular symphonies that swept through Europe – became a strategy to survive.

Where Pesic zeroes in on the high society of Paris, Hannah Greig and Amanda Vickery focus on the political rainmakers in early modern London and their daily rhythms ('The political day in London, *c.* 1697–1834', *Past & Present*, 252 (2021),

101–37). Drawing evidence from a *mélange* of sources, they try to answer the seemingly simple question: what did an eighteenth-century politician do all day? First, they map the urban geography of high politics in early modern London, concentrated within an extremely dense campus: a square mile around St James's Palace and Square where most Lords and MPs lived and worked, but also attended shops, clubs and coffee-houses. This compact political campus, easily accessible on foot or by carriage, was the perfect stage for the whimsical rhythms of politics in the metropolis. Even though the official *Journal of the House of Commons* stipulated a consistent timetable, political life was anything but highly synchronized or regulated in the eighteenth century. MPs rose about 9am and started their day with prayer, reading and dealing with their correspondence. By 10am, they went out for some intimate, semi-formal politicking. Face-to-face lobbying during daily visits was necessary to muster enough political support. Even if Britain was a parliamentary monarchy, daily visits to the court during the *levée* were also a prerequisite for successful lobbying, as the court was still an important political venue. After a short lunch break, around 4pm parliamentary work *strictu sensu* began and could linger on – thanks to Christoper Wren's lighting – well into the small hours. Yet, even when the parliamentary 'business' was shelved after dinner, politicking went on during private assemblies, in coffee-houses, in the opera and in other venues. Morning bedtimes at 4am or 5am or even 6am were not unusual.

Daily rhythms – and early modern sleep – are also centre stage in Gerrit Verhoeven's latest article ('(Pre)modern sleep. New evidence from the Antwerp criminal court (1715–1795)', *J. of Sleep Research*, 30 (2021), DOI: 10.1111/jsr. 13099). Deriving new data from the eyewitness reports of the *Hoge Vierschaar* – the court of criminal justice in Antwerp – Verhoeven questions Roger Ekirch's widely accepted theory of segmented sleep. According to Ekirch, early modern people slept in two phases: the *first* and *second sleep*, interrupted by one or two hours of wakefulness in the dead of night. During this nocturnal interval, people would have engaged in various sorts of activities. They prayed, smoked or chatted with their bed partner, or even rose to do small, household chores, talk with the neighbours or chop some firewood. According to Ekirch, biphasic sleep only disappeared in the nineteenth century, when (high wattage) artificial light, growing time awareness and sleep deprivation led to our modern, monophasic pattern. Verhoeven's empirical evidence seems to contradict such a linear evolution, as there are few if any traces of segmented sleep to be found in the eyewitness reports. Eighteenth-century Antwerpers slept for seven hours a day. They went to bed several hours after sunset and rose well before sunrise in winter. During the day, there was not much opportunity for napping. According to Verhoeven, these 'modern' features of Antwerp sleep were shaped by urbanization: the spread of artificial light (in the form of candles, oil lamps and fires) enhanced time consciousness (fuelled by pocket watches and public clocks), and the synchronization of urban life.

An important factor of the west-European marriage pattern (W-EMP) is the autonomy of women to choose their life partner at their own time. To obtain such autonomy, women had to earn a decent wage, according to Alexandra de Pleijt and Jan Luiten van Zanden ('Two worlds of female labour: gender wage inequality in western Europe 1300–1800', *Economic History R.*, 74 (2021), 611–38).

However, no attempt has been made to compare the wages of pre-industrial women in order to detect a wage gap between northern and western Europe on the one hand and southern and eastern Europe on the other. A study of female wages could unravel a divergence between both regions that co-exists with the W-EMP. In their contribution, de Pleijt and van Zanden analysed data from seven European cities or regions and found that the gender wage ratio in the Mediterranean was lower than in north-western Europe. But even in the latter, wage discrimination existed: when demand for labour grew more than supply, female labourers were drawn into the labour market, but they were kicked out as soon as men found it difficult to get a job. In southern and eastern Europe, it appears that custom had a strong impact on society, whereas in north-western Europe, market forces had a greater impact on the position of women.

In recent years, the canonical model used to compute real wages and GDP per capita has been contested by several scholars as discussed in our contributions of 2019 and 2020. The dominant narrative describes diverging patterns between Britain (and to a lesser extent the Low Countries) and their continental counterparts. The fifteenth century was the last time that labourers enjoyed comparable wages all around Europe. After the decline in the sixteenth century in the high-wage economies of north-western Europe, wages stabilized or recovered, whereas in the other parts of the continent, real wages declined. While most of the dispute covered in the reviews of 2019 and 2020 has focused on the reconstruction of the cost of labour, Ernesto Lópezlosa and Santiago Piquero Zarauz's article elaborates on computing the cost of subsistence ('Spanish subsistence wages and the Little Divergence in Europe, 1500–1800', *European R. of Economic History*, 25 (2021), 59–84). For instance, instead of using cereal prices in their model, bread prices, a finished product, were applied. Furthermore, data was analysed not from Valencia, the most used but atypical Spanish reference, but from the main cities of the Kingdom of Castile. The results derived from this newly computed basket reveal that the real wages of labourers in the leading cities of north-western Europe were lower than those estimated in the 'traditional' (read high-wage) model. In addition, the Spanish divergence occurred later than previously thought and was not as wide. Yet again, these findings will have some impact on the grand narratives of the 'Little Divergence' and on high-wage-theories.

In a way, Nena Vandeweerdt also contributes to the debate on the Little Divergence. In her article, she compares women's work opportunities in Bilbao in northern Castile and in Antwerp in the Low Countries, between 1400 and 1560 ('Women, town councils, and the organisation of work in Bilbao and Antwerp: a north–south comparison (1400–1560)', *Continuity and Change*, 36 (2021), 61–87). She is able to assess the 'north–south thesis', which stipulates that women in north-western Europe were more economically independent than their southern counterparts. In southern countries, it is argued, Roman law was the prevailing legal system, with restrictions for women considering the inheritance of property, and southern economies were based on extended family ties. In northern countries, however, the legal status of women was more favourable and the nuclear family was the unit of production. Alongside other factors such as the high level of urbanization and the high rates of literacy, the 'north–south thesis' describes the different position of women in both societies. Vandeweerdt proposes

a new comparative approach. Instead of analysing two regions as a whole, she studies the economic position of women in two specific cities via by-laws, the records of court cases and tax registers. She finds that in Antwerp, the labour market was structured around craft guilds and the family workshop, though some women worked outside the craft guilds. In Bilbao, many women were able to make an independent living, in the informal trades, without a male supervisor, but in Antwerp, though craft guilds offered security for women, they could only operate within a tight framework. Vandeweerdt found that these differences in agency were reflected in the sources. All sorts of independent women appear in the sources of the Castilian harbour town, whereas women in Antwerp depended more on men. Women also take centre stage in Jenny Dyer's analysis of the part-time and casual workforce of the Georgian washerwomen ('Georgian washerwomen: tales of the tub from the long eighteenth century', *Continuity and Change*, 36 (2021), 89–110). It was a profession which was relatively easy for women to enter and one which remained almost exclusively female. Analysing their presence in the records of the Old Bailey in London, she describes a multilayered picture of washerwomen, combining their washing role with a miscellany of mending, nursing, prostitution, petty crime, child minding and more besides.

What was the impact of climate change on market integration? Hakon Albers and Ulrich Pfister took on the challenge to confront climate change during the pre-industrial period with market integration in Germany ('Climate change, weather shocks, and price convergence in pre-industrial Germany', *European R. of Economic History*, 25 (2021), 467–89). From the seventeenth century onwards, market integration of European inland regions caught up with north-western Europe. The authors' analysis indicates that population growth and river transport rather than climate change are plausible explanations for price convergence. Prices converged mostly in (urban) north-western Germany, a hinterland of the North Sea Basin, which experienced strong economic development during the rise of Atlantic trade, but also in cities with access to the Elbe river system and along the Rhine. Pre-industrial trade via river transport and market extensions through population growth appear as likely forces contributing to market integration in inland areas in pre-industrial times, whereas weather shocks should be seen as 'noise' in the measurement of market integration.

For several years, a significant number of studies on the evolution of economic inequality have been published, focusing on either wealth (a set of assets) or income (a flow). According to Esteban A. Nicolini and Fernando Ramos-Palencia, many researchers assume implicitly comparable results based on either wealth or income analyses, because both variables are supposedly substitutes of each other ('Comparing income and wealth inequality in pre-industrial economies: the case of Castile (Spain) in the eighteenth century', *European R. of Economic History*, 25 (2021), 680–702). However, this assumption has never been tested. The authors gathered a unique dataset for a sample of mid-eighteenth-century Spanish households, containing information on both wealth and income. Their analysis shows a strong correlation between both variables, suggesting that both capture a unique dimension of economic inequality in pre-industrial economies very well. As is often the case, data scarcity forces researchers to use the distribution of wealth, real estate or other assets to estimate the distribution of income. This contribution

confirms that a household's wealth can be a very good predictor of income. When the authors compare the three economic sectors, agriculture, manufacturing and services, they find that there is not a unique pattern of inequality in the different parts of the society. However, they describe a kind of a 'traditional' inequality. For instance, rural households are characterized by a close relationship between real estate wealth and income in the agrarian sector but, in more dynamic urban sectors, inequality is different and more related to labour incomes, entrepreneurial activity and human capital. This multidimensional nature of the income inequality has been emphasized for urban, more developed, economies in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries already, but the authors show that this pattern is confirmed in a relatively backward and traditional economy.

Post-1800

The global housing crisis has continued to worsen in 2021, with cities bearing the brunt. While most national constitutions and the United Nations recognize adequate housing as a basic human right, today the increasing unaffordability of cities not only threatens the urban poor but the middle classes as well. One important reason for the current situation is the widespread assumption that promoting homeownership leads to fairer and more secure societies, which since the 1970s has led to the ongoing marketization of housing and the introduction of policies favouring homeowners by both sides of the political spectrum. Adopting a historical approach, the myth of homeownership as inherently good is debunked by socio-political geographers Rowan Arundel and Richard Ronald in 'The false promise of homeownership: homeowners societies in an era of declining access and rising inequality', *Urban Studies*, 58 (2021), 1120–40. Based on data from the United States, United Kingdom and Australia – three classic homeowner societies – the authors conclude that homeownership has only increased inequality and insecurity. In a similarly broad sweep, Joshua K. Leon in 'The global governance of housing: 1945–2016', *Planning Perspectives*, 36 (2021), 475–94, connects the global with the local by examining the United Nations' post-war efforts to address housing as an international issue. The governance model that arose from this ambition brought city officials, urban planners and global organizations together, and was an important arena for the circulation of key planning principles and architectural styles.

One of the few global cities that is trying to take effective control of its housing market is Berlin, which over the recent decades has become a haven for developers and investors looking to flip tenement houses. Ironically, while popular as saleable assets today, at the time of their construction in the late nineteenth century these 'rental barracks' were seen by bourgeois reformers as a gathering place of social misery and transgressive behaviour. In 'The industrious, the labouring and the sunken: Berlin's *Mietskaserne* and the housing question', *J. of Urban History*, 47 (2021), 1275–300, Isabel Rousset explores the moral terms underpinning the reformers' response to living conditions in the city's rapidly expanding working-class districts, demonstrating that this response was part of a broader social imaginary that gave meaning to the urban environment and even the awakening German nation. For a much more recent period, Lyndsey Rolheiser in 'Old small and unwanted: post-war housing and neighbourhood socioeconomic status', *Urban*

Studies, 58 (2021), 2952–70, examines 'middle-aged' housing built between 1945 and 1969 in American cities and towns. The article questions whether the declining socio-economic prestige of these suburbs is related to housing age and physical deterioration or due to a 'true post-war vintage'. Indeed, Rolheiser concludes that a significant share of post-war housing in a specific area does have a negative effect on status, and that this effect varies between urban and suburban neighbourhoods and – unsurprisingly – different metropolitan regions.

The post-war period of massive suburbanization and disinvestment in the inner cities was followed by what some authors have labelled an urban renaissance, which is usually situated in the late 1980s. Taking London's south bank of the Thames as a case-study, Stephen Murray demonstrates in 'The evolution and transformation of bankside, London, 1947–2019', *J. of Urban History*, 47 (2021), 68–84, that it can take decades for regeneration schemes to come to fruition. Only since the 1990s have ongoing industrial decline, building policies, the availability of finance, public–private partnerships and culture-driven regeneration created the perfect circumstances for the emergence of a proper leisure and residential quarter. This outcome was also envisioned for Copenhagen's dilapidated waterfront, as exemplified by Florian Urban in 'Copenhagen's "return to the inner city" 1990–2010', *J. of Urban History*, 47 (2021), 651–73. In contrast to London's bankside however, regeneration also benefited the less affluent and yielded a social mix and truly public spaces – the result of strong government interference and elected officials who remained loyal to the promises of the welfare state. An entirely different case-study of urban regeneration is presented by Csaba Jelinek in 'Turning a "socialist" policy into a "capitalist" one: urban rehabilitation in Hungary during the long transformation of 1989', *J. of Urban History*, 47 (2021), 511–25. Jelinek examines how the rehabilitation of dilapidated buildings in Hungary took off in the 1970s as a socially and historically sensitive process, which was then transformed into a vehicle of gentrification in the 1990s. According to the author, this was much less the outcome of the 1989 regime change, than the consequence of a much longer transformation initiated by the global economic crises of the 1970s.

Another revisionist perspective on historical turning points is provided by Alistair Kefford, 'Actually existing managerialism: planning, politics and property development in post-1945 Britain', *Urban Studies*, 58 (2021), 2441–55. While the retrenchment of the welfare state is usually associated with the transition from managerialism to entrepreneurialism in the closing decades of the twentieth century, Kefford demonstrates that much of what urban scholars see as key features of neoliberal urbanism, e.g. public–private partnerships and financialization, had already made their way into the British planning system during the immediate post-war years; thus, he cautions historians against drawing a clean line between welfare state policies and the entrepreneurial modes of urban governance we have seen in more recent decades. A more traditional perspective on the role of the welfare state in post-war planning is offered by Johan Pries and Mattias Qviström, who in 'The patchwork of a welfare landscape: reappraising the role of leisure planning in the Swedish welfare state', *Planning Perspectives*, 36 (2021), 923–4, investigates the recreational facilities and green spaces laid out by the Swedish welfare state from the 1950s until the 1980s as a form of patchwork urban planning. In a similar way, Janina Gosseye in 'Leisure politics: the construction of social infrastructure and

Flemish cultural identity in Belgium, 1950s to 1970s', *J. of Urban History*, 47 (2021), 526–48, examines leisure infrastructure such as cultural and sports centres, vacation and recreation domains as political tools that could reinforce Flemish nationalism. Thus, her contribution emphasizes once again that planning is rarely an apolitical project, and that (urban) space can be moulded to foster particular national, regional and local identities.

Urban history's roots can be found in the field of social history, and thus it is no surprise that this subdiscipline looms large again in 2021's periodical review. Marco Soresina in 'White-collar workers in Milan: c. 1880–1915', *Social History*, 46 (2021), 145–63, takes Milan as a case-study to investigate the social milieu of white-collar employees at the turn of the twentieth century, who through their associations exerted influence within the city and fulfilled their desire to achieve respectable status. Urban associationism declined with the advent of World War I, when public employees increasingly joined national unions and private employees failed to come up with a viable alternative. Focusing on roughly the same period but a different social stratum in urban societies, Amerigo Caruso and Claire Morelon in 'The threat from within across empires: strikes, labor migration, and violence in central Europe', *Central European History*, 54 (2021), 86–111, display the tensions between strikers and state-employed strike-breakers in German and Austro-Hungarian cities. By doing so, the authors explore the circulation of anti-labour measures across national borders and city limits, their radicalizing impact and the multiple ways in which they relate to labour migration patterns. From the mid-nineteenth century onwards, worker co-operatives became an important tool to effectively organize labour in European cities, but also to put food on the table for their members, as demonstrated by Peter Scholliers in 'Quality in the eye of the storm: the bread of the Ghent co-operative Vooruit, 1880 to 1914', *Cultural and Social History*, 18 (2021), 79–96.

Tensions between working-class organizations were frequent during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. One example was the conflict in Barcelona between the anarcho-syndicalist National Confederation of Labour and the reactionary *Sindicators Libres*, which is the topic of Arturo Zoffmann Rodriquez and Juan Cristóbal Marinello Bonnefoy's 'A proletarian turf war: the rise and fall of Barcelona's *Sindicatos Libres*, 1919–1923', *International R. of Social History*, 66 (2021), 243–71. The *Libres* mobilized the religious, corporatist and regionalist sentiments amongst the city's workforce using tactics that foreshadowed fascist strategies in other European cities. Thus, not only do the authors offer a glimpse of working-class organization and conflict in Spain's industrial powerhouse, they also lay bare the intricate relationship between trade unionists and their political and cultural identities. Solidarity between labour movements was also hard to find in 1960s San Francisco, where a conflict emerged over urban redevelopment that pitted labour leaders and retired workers against each other. In 'Fighting for the working-class city: retired workers, organized labor, and redevelopment in San Francisco', *Radical History R.*, 139 (2021), 145–65, Laura Reneta Martin asserts that working-class retired elders have often been overlooked in histories of urban renewal, which have mostly focused on issues of race, ethnicity and class instead of generational divisions. Indeed, Martin's perspective brings new intra-class conflicts into focus, which often emerged over urban affairs.

One of the most famous class struggles is the Paris Commune, which celebrated its 150-year anniversary in 2021. Laura C. Forster, 'Radical commemoration, the politics of the street, and the 150th anniversary of the Paris Commune of 1871', *History Workshop J.*, 92 (2021), 83–105, examines how and why the communards and their radical urban resistance are remembered today, in particular with regard to recent events such as the privatization of Parisian public spaces.

In our time, the rapidly growing number of people living alone is one of the most profound social changes in cities since the baby boom of the immediate post-war years. One-person households now make up more than 50 per cent of the population in Paris and Stockholm. This rise in solo living has increased the risk of loneliness and makes specific social groups particularly vulnerable to the whims of the housing market. Going back to interbellum Cape Town, Will Jackson in 'The kindness of strangers: single mothers and the politics of friendship in interwar Cape Town', *J. of Social History*, 54 (2021), 819–42, examines the social bonds of single white mothers as one such group. These often young women were subject to the far-reaching involvement of the state in their daily lives, which saw their friends as a disturbing presence instead of social anchors that could prevent isolation. That urban living can be a lonely experience is also demonstrated in Joachim C. Häberlen's 'Feeling at home in lonely cities: an emotional history of the West German urban commune movement during the long 1970s', *Urban History*, 48 (2021), 143–61. During the post-war period, modern cities came to be seen as alienating and hostile environments, which could be countered by the domesticity of communes – a non-family living arrangement that was particularly attractive to leftist students. Adopting ideas from the history of emotions, Häberlen examines what it actually meant for young people to feel at home in cities.

While the arrival of young newcomers in western European cities was often due to domestic migration, during the post-war period the same cities also saw a massive influx of guest workers from southern Europe, northern Africa and Turkey as well as ex-colonial subjects from Asia, the Caribbean and South America. Examining the aftermath of the Liverpool 'race riots' of 1948, Christopher Fevre in '"Race" and resistance to policing before the "Windrush years": the Colonial Defence Committee and the Liverpool "race riots" of 1948', *Twentieth Century British History*, 32 (2021), 1–23, investigates this clash between the local police force and black Liverpudlians as a run-up to black political resistance to British policing later in the twentieth century. One infamous event in British black history is the New Cross house fire of 1981, when 13 young black men, women and children were killed and 25 more injured – examined by Aaron Andrews in 'Truth, justice, and expertise in 1980s Britain: the cultural politics of the New Cross massacre', *History Workshop J.*, 91 (2021), 182–209. The discussions between the action committee formed in the fire's aftermath and the authorities show how racism had eroded the trust of black communities in state institutions. According to Andrews, the massacre in the London borough of Lewisham was not an isolated case and should be seen against a background of continuous government neglect of marginalized urban communities. In post-war Chicago, the relationship between the black community and (police) authorities was also tense to say the least, as evidenced by Peter C. Pihos in 'Police brutality exposed: Chicago, 1960–74', *Radical History R.*, 141 (2021), 128–50. Pihos demonstrates how the *Chicago Tribune* with its

resources, experience, institutional position and narrative expertise was instrumental in revealing the true nature of the city's police force and its excessive use of violence against harmless individuals.

Obviously, with the advent of modern surveillance technology, authorities have a much wider array of tools at their disposal to control deviant behaviour and social groups than brute force. Wim de Jong and Litska Strikwerda in 'Controlling risks in the safe city: the rise of pre-emptive practices in law enforcement, public surveillance and mental health and addiction care (1970–2020)', *Urban Studies*, 58 (2021), 2514–30, analyse the development of a 'preventive gaze' in the Dutch medium-sized city of Amersfoort, which emerged during the urban crisis of the 1970s and was aimed at early stage crime prevention. This controlling of the urban environment is analysed through the lens of Ulrich Beck's concept of the risk society, and contextualized within the Disneyfication of Dutch city centres towards the end of the twentieth century. A whole different form of control was exercised over the physical fabric of cities in the case of advertising, as investigated in the British context by James Greenhalgh in 'The control of outdoor advertising, amenity, and urban governance in Britain, 1893–1962', *Historical J.*, 64 (2021), 384–409. Greenhalgh shows how from the late nineteenth century local authorities came to see billboards, hoardings and posters as a visual nuisance, which had to be dealt with accordingly. Advertising in public spaces proliferated at the same time as British retail culture was revolutionized, which led to unexpected side effects in the streets of inter-war Manchester. Due to the increased autonomy and mobility of working-class women, during this period the city saw a remarkable rise in shoplifting. The illicit access to consumer culture is worth studying, according to Charlotte Wildman in 'An "epidemic of shoplifting"? Working-class women, shop theft and Manchester's new retail culture, 1918–1939', *Social History*, 46 (2021), 278–99, as it reveals a stronger presence and greater freedom for poorer women in the urban sphere than assumed so far.

Due to their rowdy behaviour, sailors are one social group that has never been short of attention in cities. Brad Beaven in '"One of the toughest streets in the world": exploring violence, class and ethnicity in London's Sailortown 1850–1880', *Social History*, 46 (2021), 1–21, demonstrates how foreign sailors were adept at embracing local working-class culture and masculinity, whereas contemporaries often portrayed them as knife-wielding strangers with no respect for English customs. On the other side of the globe, British Christian missionaries were burdened with the task of regulating the daily lives of European seamen in colonial Indian port cities, which is the topic of Manikarnika Dutta's 'The sailor's home and moral regulation of white European seamen in nineteenth-century India', *Cultural and Social History*, 18 (2021), 201–20. In the words of Dutta, missionaries 'conceived seamen as not only the victims of government apathy and a malevolent labour market, but also tropical climate and unforgiving urban space'. The cure for their transgressive behaviour was a Victorian mix of moral regulation, the promotion of healthy living and hygienic practices, which according to the author was part and parcel of the missionaries' global effort at making ideal Christians and imperial subjects. A moral panic over the decline of Christian values was also seen in the industrial town of Falkirk in Central Scotland, where in the late 1960s moral entrepreneurs sought to ignite a religious revival with the help of

North American and Canadian evangelicals – a local urban history that sheds a new light on post-war secularization investigated by Charlie Lynch in 'Moral panic in the industrial town: teenage "deviancy" and religious crisis in Central Scotland c. 1968–1969', *Twentieth Century British History*, 32 (2021), 371–91.

Religion and broader urban developments are also brought together by Robert Shea Terrell in 'Building the Berlin Mosque: an episode in *Weltpolitik*', *Contemporary European History*, 30 (2021), 46–59. The Berlin Mosque was the first permanent place of worship for German Muslims, which in 1920s Berlin counted some 3,000 believers. Connecting the local to the global, Shea Terrell analyses how this religious community became the target of the imperial ideologies and ambitions of both German and non-German activists and diplomats. In the immediate post-war years, Frankfurt's Paulskirche, a church building that in 1848 had served as a meeting place for Germany's first democratic parliament, became entangled in political ambitions as well. The question was whether its ruins were to be faithfully restored as a 'sacred site for renovated ideals of German nationalism', or if Frankfurt and by extension the German nation was better off without the bombed-out shell. Andrew Demshuk in 'Building the cathedral of democracy: Frankfurt's Paulskirche in Hitler's shadow', *German History*, 39 (2021), 602–25, concludes that Germans in a time of material suffering longed for a physical space untainted by Nazism, which could be reconciled with its democratic past. As such, Demshuk's contribution is another reminder that (urban) space is never neutral. The urban voids and brownfields left by World War II took on a whole different function and meaning in the closing decades of the twentieth century, especially in West Berlin, which in the late 1970s established a grant programme to support independent artists and thus restore the city's former glory as a hotbed of culture and creativity. Briana J. Smith, '"Berlin does you good": experimental art, place marketing and the urban public sphere in 1980s West Berlin', *Contemporary European History*, 30 (2021), 414–26, shows that while such grants were mainly aimed at city promotion and attracting tourists, experimental artists also managed to involve local crowds in their manifestations.

While it is probably too early to speak of an environmental turn in the field of urban history, this year certainly saw a great number of research articles bringing the environmental and the urban closer together, for example in Stephanie Weismann's 'Scents and sensibilities: interwar Lublin's courtyards', *Contemporary European History*, 30 (2021), 335–50. Using primary sources that describe the smell of the Polish city, Weismann discerns a developing olfactory sense amongst its citizens that was used to differentiate between native and non-native. Smells associated with migrants from rural settlements, often Jewish, were considered backward and alien in comparison to Lublin's alleged cosmopolitanism. While smell seems a relatively harmless aspect of the urban living environment, temperature can be potentially lethal to its inhabitants, as might be exemplified by the heatwaves of recent summers. W. Walker Hanlon, Casper Worm Hansen and Jake Kantor in 'Temperature, disease, and death in London: analyzing weekly data for the century from 1866 to 1965', *J. of Economic History*, 81 (2021), 40–80, show that until World War I higher temperatures led to higher mortality – a causality that largely disappeared when infant digestive diseases became less prevalent. Taking a more ecological approach to environmental issues, Şevin Yıldız in

'Planning a "regional breathing space": the ecological shift in the comprehensive land use plan for the New Jersey Meadowlands, 1970', *Planning Perspectives*, 36 (2021), 95–123, sheds light on how policy-makers and planners conceptualized an ecosystem problem in densely populated urban surroundings at the crux of the environmental movement of the 1960s. On a much smaller scale, Julia G. Triman in the concisely titled 'Weeding Washington', *J. of Planning History*, 20 (2021), 117–33, explores how urban weeds complicated discourses of urban nature in early twentieth-century Washington DC.

All over the world, people are increasingly worried about the state of our environment. As the aforementioned articles demonstrate, this is not the first time the future of the earth's climate, its biodiversity and our way of living are at stake, and it is certainly not the first time the relationship between humans and their living environment is under discussion. In the words of Shane Ewen, urban historians are naturally 'present-minded' and are keen to pursue topics that are relevant to the world that we live in today.[4] If we want to solve contemporary urban problems related to the environment, it is essential that policy-makers begin considering the lessons to be learned from our field as well.

---

[4] S. Ewen, *What Is Urban History?* (Cambridge, 2016), 5.