Ship in the British Atlantic will be an essential guide for anyone interested in shipping, trade, or the maritime world in the early modern period.

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In *Cities of Strangers: Making Lives in Medieval Europe*, Miri Rubin speaks beautifully and thoughtfully to the myriad challenges that define and complicate practices of belonging and exclusion both in the medieval past and in our own day. With characteristic erudition, Rubin has crafted a book of medieval history that sustains a dialogue with contemporary questions and offers an elegant synthesis of past practices. First presented as the Wiles Lectures in 2017, the book is a set of interlocking essays engaged with how to think about the definition and reception of strangers in medieval towns and cities. The goal is not to formulate a new conception of the city as a space, or form, or institution, but to understand the fluid interactions and decisions that defined the experience of living within ever changing communities, which grew and contracted through migration, diaspora, devastations of disease, religious persecution, and political change.

Mirroring the lectures, the book unfolds over four succinct chapters. In the first, "Cities and Their Strangers," Rubin lays out the conceptual framing of the book, and her definition of cities as "assemblages" that encompassed humans, materials, animals, together in shared spaces (22). Urban statues offer some of the most useful sources for understanding how communities constituted themselves in idealized and programmatic ways, belying who was included and excluded from the benefits and franchises of community and who was given the power to govern. This is not to say that urban life always conformed to its laws and norms, but such ideals are telling. The stranger sat at the limits of the law, often excluded, suspect, and defined as different, at least for a time; the stranger also defined salient aspects of the civic core, of those included within.

In the subsequent chapters Rubin explores case studies of key categories and groups that were excluded and included differently at various moments. Chapter 2, "Strangers into Neighbors," is a careful exploration of the ways cities extended fundamental aspects of legal belonging to strangers in the form of franchise and citizenship. The thirteenth century marked the period of the greatest urban growth and concomitant proliferation of urban statutes that legislated pathways to belonging. In Perugia, for example, the statutes of 1279 outlined what was required of its citizens: "continuous residence, property ownership, hearth and family, a good reputation, and service to no other lord or city" (39). Rubin traces parallel stipulations throughout southern France, Burgundy, northern Italy, Iberia, and the German lands. As conditionally free spaces, cities governed themselves with relative autonomy and thus are wonderful case studies for how social groups functioned in the later Middle Ages. Beginning in the early fourteenth century, when faced with economic constriction, famine, and then cycles of plague, many municipalities closed in on themselves. Guided by the directive voices of preachers, the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries brought increased religious persecution, successive inquisitions, intolerance of difference, more rigid definitions of deviance, and stricter controls over gendered behavior.

Rubin charts the contours of these later changes in chapter 3, "Jews: Familiar Strangers," and chapter 4, "Women: Sometimes Strangers in Their Cities," where she explores the telling exceptions to full belonging. Jews and women were always embedded within cities but also always exceptional categories of persons over which sovereign power was exercised differently. Medieval Jewish communities in many European cities, even to this day, remain a haunting presence, indicative of the vital, integrated role that Jewish communities played in most thriving medieval urban communities, where synagogues existed alongside parish churches, where Jews and Christians, and in many Mediterranean cities and towns Muslims, lived together sharing streets and spaces. As Rubin states, "the position of Jews in their cities [was] one of utter embeddedness and yet of not-quite-full enfranchisement" (57). And "this blended into a tentative but intimate familiarity. It was an arrangement both fragile and enduring" (58). Indeed, many scholars, Rubin herself included, have traced how this fragility was negotiated and when—especially in moments of economic constriction and political and religious anxiety—it collapsed. By the late fifteenth century, when cities of northern Europe had systematically expelled their Jewish communities, cities in southern Europe either forced Jews to endure conversion or expelled them too.

With the same acuity, Rubin analyzes the role of women in cities and offers another yet different exploration of an exceptional category of difference defined by the experience of gender. Although women's labor was "essential to the collective thriving," women were also seen to possess qualities that "justified their exclusion from full participation in urban life and its benefits" (71). Like other types of difference, women's exclusion existed in degrees and was tied to the household as both a unit of labor and production (of children and of goods) and to marital status, economic position, and permissible degrees of independence. Religion, foreignness, and class also affected women's status and determined access to occupational opportunities, social networks, and degrees of franchise within urban communities. Although "women remained in families and homes, [they were] also in a state of troubling strangeness" (90).

Throughout, Rubin demonstrates the ways that communities chose to constitute themselves and how this changed overtime, particularly in negative and restrictive ways when social conditions worsened. There is a sense that other choices could have been made, other forms of communities imagined. This is a possibility that hangs in the air; a powerful teaching moment for all who read this book. As Rubin argues, "exclusion and separation are never about a sole group and its attributes, but are related to a vision of power and privilege that affected everyone" (96). Our present is filled with many urgent questions, heightened only more so by the COVID pandemic and the further polarization of many of our communities as a consequence. Rubin shows us just how much we have to learn from looking probingly at the past, especially the medieval past, to consider differences, and what a different future might entail.

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Among the classic questions of legal history is why the law changes. While early modern English jurists sometimes liked to pretend that the common law was unvarying, change was a constant. In her new book, *Law Reform in Early Modern England: Crown, Parliament and*