

council's attempts to nourish a sense of union and a commitment to the common good. Jara Fuente offers the example of a public reading of an ordinance in 1408 to that effect. The urban government adopted the rhetoric of concord not only for the sake of the city but for the kingdom as a whole, which should be understood in the context of the prolonged period of civil wars that plagued Castile from the beginning of the century to the dynastic union of Isabella and Ferdinand (José Antonio Jara Fuente, 'In (political) love. Building social order and consensus through emotional politics in fifteenth-century urban Castile: the case of the city of Cuenca', *Journal of Medieval History*, 49 (2023), 537–57).

All in all, then, last year saw the continuation of several trends in pre-1500 European urban history scholarship, starting with the relatively restricted number of published articles. Scholarly interest in themes such as gender, food security, international diplomacy and urban dissent continue to thrive unabated. In contrast, as noted at the outset, the themes of war and religious discrimination seem to have fallen in popularity somewhat compared to previous years, as has the analytical framework of the spatial turn. Instead, we see a renewed interest in alternative approaches to familiar source material through against-the-grain readings, for example influenced by the history of emotions. Finally, as demonstrated by the McDonough/Armstrong-Partida (or Armstrong-Partida/McDonough) diptych in particular, the scholarship remains of very high quality indeed.

1500–1800

doi:[10.1017/S0963926824000063](https://doi.org/10.1017/S0963926824000063)

Food history is a particularly topical theme these days. In their latest article, a multidisciplinary team of historians, microbiologists and brewers takes a fresh look at early modern beer (Susan Flavin *et al.*, 'Understanding early modern beer: an interdisciplinary case-study', *Historical Journal*, 66 (2023), 497–515). Even though ale and beer were among the most basic staples in early modern Europe, surprisingly little is known about their main features. For want of evidence, it is commonly assumed that the alcohol percentage was rather low for ordinary beer, as people drank several pints a day (estimates ranging from 6 to 12 units). It is also taken for granted that the calorific value was high (up to 400 kCal). However, up until now these (gu) estimates were based on shaky ground, taking grain content or modern equivalents as a proxy. Slavin and her team did things differently by recreating the actual brewing process with the original recipes, old strains of barley and oats, ancient yeasts and replicas of early modern technology such as quern stones, mash vats and wilch tube taps. This piece of experimental archaeology leads to some fascinating results. Slavin *et al.*'s experimental brews were – in most cases – much higher in ABV than expected and come close to our modern 5 per cent lagers. With a consumption of five to ten pints a day, the risk of being permanently inebriated would have been real. Moreover, the calorific intake was with 260–70 kCal per unit significantly lower than earlier estimates. Nevertheless, given the large volumes consumed in terms of calories, beer would have been one of the most important – if not the most important – cornerstone of early modern (urban) diets.

From beer it seems but a small step to punch, but Tyler Rainford immediately makes clear that this is not the case, as liquors, in contrast to more traditional alcoholic beverages such as ale or beer, were increasingly stigmatized in the

eighteenth century ('Pro bono publico: publicans, punch and print in eighteenth-century London', *Cultural and Social History*, 20 (2023), 161–81). It took some shrewd marketing to make these new intoxicants acceptable for a middle- and upper-class public. Focusing on James Ashley, owner of the London Punch House, Rainford explores how the publican launched a large media campaign – by placing hundreds of newspaper advertisements, by designing his own trade cart and even by press-ganging journalists to write positive articles about punch – in order to give his business a more positive, and more genteel, aura. Even his slogan – *pro bono publico* – capitalized on the argument that the drinking of punch filled the state coffers through tax revenues and was thus beneficial for society as a whole. Rainford argues that the boundaries between intoxicants that were accepted, tolerated, frowned upon or strictly curbed were not only set by the social and cultural elites, but could also be bent by shrewd businessmen such as Ashley. According to Rainford, newspaper advertisements were not only used to draw more customers, but also served as an important communication tool in the sector for price-fixing, quality control and other issues.

Punch, beer and other drinks could be ranged under the banner of comfort food, which is the topic of Rachel Winchcombe's latest article ('Comfort eating: food, drink and emotional health in early modern England', *English Historical Review*, 138 (2023), 61–91). Drawing on various sources such as medical treatises, moralizing texts, cookery books, diaries and letters, Winchcombe analyses how early modern people tried to maintain their physical and emotional health by a balanced diet. Eating the wrong foodstuff could throw the humours – blood, phlegm, yellow and black bile – out of balance and lead to serious mental or physical problems. Melancholy could, for instance, be triggered by eating cold and dry foodstuffs such as dried meat, cheese or cabbage, while onions, garlic and peppers could stir unwanted feelings of anger. Not only did the intrinsic qualities of foodstuff matter, but also when, where, with whom and in what quantities it was consumed. Winchcombe analyses how these theoretical guidelines, that were first and foremost found in medical treatises, sometimes clashed with more popular opinions on 'comfort food'. Letters, diaries and other life-writing show how the medical common-or-garden-knowledge often proclaimed that foodstuffs that tasted good and went down well were beneficial for one's emotional and physical well-being. Chocolate, sugar and other tasty foodstuffs were thus seen as the ultimate 'comfort food'.

Newspaper advertisements about all sorts of goods – including foodstuffs – are in the spotlight in Dinah Reed's latest article which opens with a – seemingly – rhetorical question ('Did eighteenth-century shopkeepers use newspapers to promote their goods? A comparison between Manchester and Norwich, 1765–1805', *History of Retailing and Consumption*, 9 (2023), 19–37). No, is the somewhat disconcerting answer. Reed analyses more than 30,000 newspaper advertisements from the *Manchester Mercury* and the *Norwich Mercury* to come to this rather surprising conclusion. In contrast to standard theories about the consumer revolution, advertising was only sparingly used to sell coffee or tea sets, clocks, snuffboxes, furniture and other fashionable consumer goods (6 to 8 per cent of all advertisements), since the lion's share of advertising space in both cities was filled with public announcements or real estate transactions. When they popped up nonetheless, consumer goods were rarely if ever described as fashionable, exotic or novel. Even advertisements for shops were quite rare. Reed concludes that these newspaper advertisements – few in number and not extremely compelling – could not have triggered the consumer revolution in their

own right and do not really mirror the local retail sector. Reed also sees some interesting differences between Manchester and Norwich, as Venetian blinds, pocket-watches and other smart consumer goods were advertised more frequently in the more established county town of Norwich while they were more or less absent from the booming, industrial hub of Manchester. Yet, the reasons for this difference remain shrouded in mystery.

While Reed explores the way in which new consumer goods were marketed and purchased, Franziska Neumann takes a fresh look at how early modern people got rid of their belongings ('Vormoderne Recycling-Mentalität. Abfall und Abfallregime im frühneuzeitlichen London', *Historische Zeitschrift*, 317 (2023), 63–92). According to Neumann, the way in which early modern Europe is often seen as the Valhalla of recycling – where clothes, metal, glass, paper or any other material that held some value were constantly salvaged and reused – is due for revision. Blinded by our modern concepts of recycling and waste, we tend to ascribe this urge for reuse to early modern society as a whole (while different actors may have had different opinions on this), while we also homogenize motivations in terms of need (since textbook wisdom has it that early modern people were forced to recycle as raw materials were scarce and expensive). Neumann aims to debunk these stereotypes by focusing on three major groups in London – the city administration, the commercial entrepreneurs in the waste industry and the households – and how they dealt with coal-dust and ashes, night-soil and other rubbish. An economic motivation could only be found among the dustmen, the *rakers* (cesspool cleaners) and other commercial entrepreneurs who turned refuse into money, while the city government only saw waste as a nuisance when it hampered circulation in the streets. Economic incentives were also thin on the ground among middle- and upper-class households, who were, first and foremost, keen to get rid of their rubbish in an efficient way. Drawing on new evidence from archaeological finds, Neumann asserts that the centuries-old urge to recycle all sorts of goods was in the eighteenth century tempered by the burgeoning consumer revolution. At least in the more settled households, the fact that new, fashionable consumer goods came in by the dozen would have gone hand in hand with a desire to get rid of old belongings.

Neumann's rejection of homogenization complements Kat Hill and Ulinka Rublack's exploration of 'material regimes' or 'material communities' in early modern Germany. In their introduction to a special issue ('Introduction: material cultures and communities in the Holy Roman Empire', *German History*, 41 (2023), 327–36), they introduce these two concepts to break up the homogeneous picture of consumption in early modern Europe. Instead, we have to look for 'material communities' who used their material culture to distinguish themselves from other social groups. Consumption patterns obviously differed in terms of class and status, but were also determined by gender, religion and other variables. These material regimes were also time- and space-specific. Hill and Rublack not only explore these different 'material regimes' in depth, but also prompt us to look beyond the bare facts and figures of what was actually owned by early modern people. More interesting is the question how these goods and chattels may have functioned as a means for cultural expression. How were silver spoons, for instance, used as a token for wealth (obviously), but also as a symbol of trust, devotion and other meanings? Various papers in the special issue delve into these questions.

Fashions – and even 'material communities' – are also the topic of Paul Scott's recent article ('Décolletage disputes in early modern France', *The Seventeenth*

Century, 38 (2023), 853–83). During the seventeenth century, France was increasingly swamped by polemical treatises, sermons and cartoons that criticized the burgeoning fashion of *décolletage* or plunging necklines. Scott argues that this moralizing campaign was not just the obsession of sexually frustrated and radically misogynistic priests, but was strategically planned by the Compagnie du Saint-Sacrement. The Compagnie was a secret, hydra-headed organization which opposed what they regarded as degenerate developments in French society such as low necklines, extravagant wigs, *taches de beauté* and other indecent fashions. According to Scott, it is no coincidence that the campaign ran parallel with the growing participation of women in the public sphere. Ethical arguments about the lewdness of the *décolletage* were nothing short of a smoke screen to bar women from the salons, coffee houses and other public venues. No argument was left untouched in the campaign whereby women showing too much cleavage were said to be the devil's accomplices or were compared with animals. They were also frequently banned from attending mass or excluded from getting absolution for their mortal sins in the confessional.

In the last few years, Judy Stephenson has successfully reopened long-lasting debates about labour rhythms in early modern Europe by unearthing new archival sources on the construction of St Paul's Cathedral in London. In her latest article, written together with Meredith Paker and Patrick Wallis ('Job tenure and unskilled workers before the industrial revolution: St Paul's Cathedral, 1672–1748', *Journal of Economic History*, 83 (2023), 1101–37), they take a fresh look at the common idea that early modern labour was extremely volatile, as most workers were employed by the day. Drawing on evidence relating to more than 1,000 unskilled labourers, excluding stonemasons, plasterers and other highly specialized craftsmen, from the cathedral's registers and account books, Paker, Stephenson and Wallis show that work at the construction site was much more stable for a small group of labourers who were continuously employed for months or even years on end. Econometric analysis reveals that they were systematically given precedence over workers with a shorter record of service. More than 60 per cent of the workdays at the site were, for example, given to labourers with five or more years of seniority, while this 'hard core' was able to bridge unexpected lulls in building activity much more efficiently. They even had more opportunities to obtain additional employment as night watchmen at the construction site and could supplement their income by 15 per cent. This leads to the conclusion that the clerk overseeing the building activities at St Paul's Cathedral had a clear idea of whom to hire from the crowds of day labourers that gathered at the gates of the construction site every morning. London's largest building site had created its own internal labour market.

Labour rhythms are also analysed in Gerrit Verhoeven's latest article ('The remains of the night. Nocturnalization, street lighting, and urban life in eighteenth-century Antwerp', *Early Modern Low Countries*, 7 (2023), 239–59) where Craig Koslofsky's hypothesis on 'nocturnalization' is put under scrutiny. In his famous book, *Evening's Empire*, Koslofsky claims that the advent of street lighting in the eighteenth century disrupted the traditional rhythms of early modern city life. Bathed in the bright glare of *réverbères* and other new, artificial lighting technology, people were able to remain active long after sunset and 'colonize' the darkness. Work, leisure and other activities would have moved into the night time. Drawing evidence from the eyewitness reports of the local court of criminal justice, Verhoeven focuses on early modern Antwerp: a city which, in contrast to the brightly illuminated

metropolises such as London, Paris or Amsterdam, was still shrouded in darkness until the early nineteenth century. However, even without *réverbères* and other street lighting life was already highly ‘nocturnalized’ in early modern Antwerp, as people were engaged in all sorts of professional or leisure activities even long after sunset. Even sleep was only determined by the stations of the sun to a small extent. Apparently, new public lighting technology was not a *conditio sine qua non* to colonize the night.

Using the local court registers as a source, Verhoeven also explores the local leisure scene in Antwerp. Callan Davies looks at another, underexplored theme of early modern leisure history in ‘The place of bearwards in early modern England’, *Historical Journal*, 66 (2023), 303–24. In a masterly example of microhistory, Davies focuses on the Whitstones, a local family of bearwards in Lancashire, to take a fresh look at the history of mass entertainment in small-town England. Davies manages to reconstruct the activities, assets and networks of three generations of bearwards by carefully piecing bits and pieces of information together from court registers, post-mortem inventories and other sources. It leads to a ‘pocket-size’ social history of this exceptional occupation, whereby the Whitstones slowly but surely slid down the social ladder from the wealthy yeoman primogenitor Ralph, whose inventory exuded moderate wealth, to the penniless third-generation Griffith, who was forced to wander around Lancashire with his bear to make ends meet. Davies’ sources also shed light on the specific material culture of the trade, since Ralph’s post-mortem inventory includes a *bear house* (maybe only a shed in which to keep the bear, possibly a more luxurious theatre-like venue for performances), several bear skins (that were a token of considerable wealth) and obviously also the bear himself called Chester. Finally, Davies uses his material to write about human–animal relations. Court registers tell us that Griffith was maimed during an attack by one of his bears, reminding us that the occupation of bearward was extremely risky, as the bears had to be trained to be aggressive to fight dogs, but at the same time needed to be docile enough to be manageable.

Social inequality remains a grand narrative in present-day historiography. In his article, ‘Warfare and economic inequality: evidence from preindustrial Germany (c. 1400–1800)’, *Explorations in Economic History*, 89 (2023), 1–21, Felix S.F. Schaff tackles the question whether warfare had an impact on social inequality. He distinguishes between ordinary military conflicts and large, continuous wars. Schaff argues that ordinary military conflicts increased local economic inequality. Warfare increased the financial needs of communities in pre-industrial times, leading to more resource extraction from the population, which took place via inequality-promoting channels, such as regressive taxation. Only in truly major wars might inequality-reducing destruction outweigh inequality-promoting extraction and reduce inequality. These findings are based on the analysis of a novel dataset combining information on economic inequality from 75 localities and more than 700 conflicts over four centuries. This database shows that many ordinary conflicts, which he calls ‘paradigmatic of life in the preindustrial world’, were continuous reinforcers of economic inequality. Only the Thirty Years’ War in the first half of the seventeenth century was indeed a great equalizer, but Schaff sees this period as an exception and not the rule. He states that rising inequality was a negative externality in times of conflict.

Debates on social inequality and the standard of living are constantly being fed by ever more elaborate databases. Cédric Chambru and Paul Maneuvrier-Hervieu compiled two new datasets for Normandy that allowed them to establish a new

consumer price index, in addition to several new wage series ('The evolution of wages in early modern Normandy (1600–1850)', *Economic History Review*, 76 (2023), 917–40). As a result, they were able to establish that unskilled labourers earned similar wages across the agricultural, maritime and textile sectors. They explain this situation with reference to the combination of the early fertility transition, resulting in slow demographic growth and the rapid development of the textile industry, accelerated by the arrival of cotton. From a comparative perspective, it should be noted that French labourers with stable employment may have earned a little less than their English counterparts during this period.

Early modern authorities responded to epidemic outbreaks by restricting migration from infected areas. In some cases, such as Bristol in 1603–04, urban authorities took it a step further. Family quarantine was widely imposed. Although contemporaries and historians point to the great risks that healthy family members of these quarantined households endured, there has been no detailed study of the actual effects of these drastic measures to date. Charles Udale, however, has examined parish records linked to family reconstructions in order to measure the real impact of this action ('Evaluating early modern lockdowns: household quarantine in Bristol, 1565–1604', *Economic History Review*, 76 (2023), 118–44). He examined three epidemics that occurred in one major English city. In 1603–04, the Bristol corporation strictly enforced household quarantine. The impact on the wealthier parishes was particularly striking: the corporation was more attentive to enforcement in these areas. Yet it appeared to be particularly concerned to check the spread of the epidemics, rather than expand discipline and control.

A similar theme is addressed by Stan Pannier ('From crisis management towards a Mediterranean model? Maritime quarantine in the Austrian Netherlands, c. 1720–1795', *BMGN – Low Countries Historical Review*, 138 (2023), 32–74). He examines maritime quarantine applied in the port cities of early modern north-western Europe. This area has received much less attention from historians than the Mediterranean. Pannier discusses the measures taken in the Austrian Netherlands between 1715 and 1795, including in the port cities of Ostend and Nieuwpoort, but also in other cities in the coastal area. Mediterranean measures such as the 40-day quarantine were applied, but there were also other procedures such as the interrogation of crew members by pilots. Importantly, the actions fostered co-operation throughout the North Sea region and the author also sees an important evolution towards growing government intervention.

Located at the border with France and the Holy Roman Empire, the Swiss city of Basel has always captured the international imagination. Susanna Burghartz, in 'Localizing globality in early capitalist Basel', *Journal of Early Modern History*, 27 (2023), 83–107, examines how the urban elite engaged in a new global context between 1670 and 1780. She examines how they were globally active at a time of dynamic economic growth and social change. Merchants, entrepreneurs and officers benefited from the neutral position the city could occupy during periods of war without ever compromising its own local economy. Strong local roots and geographically dispersed opportunities created opportunities for the local elite.

Prince Antoni Sulkowski's arrival in Genoa, on 15 December 1776, provides the starting point for Andrea Zanini to study an underexplored theme in history: financial diplomacy ('Restoring the king's creditworthiness in troubled times: the mission of a Polish prince in Genoa (1776–1777)', *Journal of Early Modern History*, 27 (2023), 444–61). Prince Anton had a mission: to raise capital for the Polish–

Lithuanian Commonwealth through a loan financed by wealthy citizens of Genoa. Although the Mediterranean port city was already past its economic peak, it could still attract money-seeking foreigners to its financial market in the second half of the eighteenth century. So it is not surprising that the Polish elite came knocking on the doors of Genoa's financiers to negotiate a loan. The Polish nobility interacted with financiers from Genoa with the goal of confirming the creditworthiness of the Polish monarchy and its state, which ultimately resulted in the transaction of a substantial loan. The article highlights the dynamics of formal and informal relations between monarchs, states and foreign creditors in establishing creditworthiness in the context of increasing geopolitical tensions.

In the last few years, political historians have increasingly paid attention to the procedures of early modern government administrations, courts and other institutions. Police forces are also under scrutiny. In her latest article, Nicole Bauer examines the culture of secrecy of the Parisian police with regard to the Bastille prison ('Keeping you in the dark: the Bastille archives and police secrecy in eighteenth-century France', *Continuity and Change*, 38 (2023), 53–73). Long before the French Revolution, the Bastille was the subject of a *légende noire*. Numerous tall tales circulated in print and in word about the atrocities that were committed within the prison's walls. Drawing on new evidence from the Bastille's many rules and regulations, memoranda and court registers, Bauer analyses how the Parisian police contributed to the creation of its notoriety. Turnkeys, officers and even the governor of the Bastille were sworn to a strict policy of secrecy, while prisoners were brought in by night, were only allowed limited communication with the outside world and were under constant surveillance. It created a frenzy where all sorts of rumours circulated in print, in song and in image. While the police first saw this *légende noire* as an interesting deterrent to keep the mob at bay, it soon turned into a media storm which threatened the survival of the institution – and the *ancien régime* – itself. Bauer analyses how reformers such as Malesherbes, minister under Louis XVI, tried to turn the tide by launching ambitious reorganizations of the police and the prisons, but were seriously hindered by the regime of secrecy until it was too late. While secrecy was originally designed to protect the system, it would ultimately be its doom.

While Bauer focuses on a society that was slowly but surely torn asunder by the forces of revolution, Amy Burnett looks at the erosion of local communities by the 'rise of individualism' ('Group petitioning and the performance of neighbourliness in the West-Midlands, 1589–1700', *Cultural and Social History*, 20 (2023), 617–35). In her research, Burnett taps the potential of a large body of petitions from small urban and rural locales in Staffordshire and Worcestershire to explore the classic hypothesis of the 'decline of neighbourliness' once more. At first sight, one would say that petitions, which became ever more popular in the seventeenth century, contradict every claim about the fraying fabric of society, since the majority of requests were launched to help a neighbour in need or – the opposite – to ostracize unruly individuals from the local society. Through this lens, petitions seemed to reinforce (rather than weaken) the ties that bound communities together. Yet, through a careful analysis of the same petitions, Burnett urges us to look more closely at the facts and figures. Even though they are easily overlooked, numerous details seem to point to a growing individualization or a 'decline of neighbourliness'. First of all, there is the way in which the group of petitioners presented themselves, which evolved from the more community-minded 'parishioners' in the early seventeenth century to the more civic, individualistic 'inhabitants' in the later decades. At the same time, the

number of people who identified themselves by putting their name, signature or, at least, a mark under their petition grew significantly. Together with this quantitative evidence, Burnett develops a compelling qualitative line of reasoning. Intuitively, we would think that people put their names under the petition to support the community, but what if they saw their participation as a rather cheap way to gain social capital by buttressing their own reputation as a reliable neighbour?

Post-1800

doi:10.1017/S0963926824000051

At the time of writing this periodical review, the gaming world was in turmoil over the leaking of a promotional video for the next instalment of the *Grand Theft Auto* series. The action-adventure game is renowned for its accurate depiction of Miami set in different time periods, most notably the 1980s. It lets players freely roam the coastal metropolis – dubbed Vice City by the game developers – from a third-person perspective donning Hawaiian shirts or Scarface-like suits. Players are encouraged to engage in various kinds of criminal activity such as the cocaine trade, dealing with competing crooks and – obviously – the stealing of expensive cars. The game’s fictional tourist guide describes Vice City as a place that cares little for its history, where inequality is rampant and cash rules everything: ‘Expensive suits, flashy cars and beautiful women are the accessories of millionaires that spend their afternoon in the shade, determining the face of Vice City’s less fortunate and waging war on rival drug barons.’ Urban historians will know that the representation of cities as sites of corruption and moral decay is as old as the tale of Sodom and Gomorrah, but all clichés are partially true.

This year’s catch of articles dealing with the post-1800 period is a case in point. The city of Miami itself is the protagonist in Keith D. Revell’s “‘Snet,” our man in Miami: urban tourism, illegal gambling, and the challenge of a sinful southern city, 1941–1944’, *Journal of Urban History*, 49 (2023), 353–87. Revell explores the development of South Florida as an urban gambling resort and the cultural and political conflicts it posed to traditional southern values, focusing on the relationship between Governor Spessard Holland and former Miami Beach Mayor Louis ‘Snet’ Snedigar. Snet became an informant during the 1940s crackdown on illegal gambling, revealing the tensions between a conservative southern state and a ‘liberal’ urban outpost. Sex work is another well-known metropolitan vice, which in post-war Hamburg became the subject of proactive policing. Annalisa Martin, in “‘The chronicle must tell how it once was’: commercial sex and pimping in the chronicle of Hamburg’s postwar vice police’, *German History*, 41 (2023), 252–8, delves into the *Sittenpolizei*’s chronicles as a historical source, examining depictions of sex workers, transvestite prostitution and pimps, and exploring themes of violence documented by both police officers and the offenders themselves. By doing so, Martin exposes broader conflicts between vice police officers and Hamburg’s society at a time of perceived sexual liberalization.

Martin ends her historical narrative in the 1980s, a decade at the tail end of the so-called urban crisis. From the 1950s onwards, this term came to denote structural urban problems such as a dilapidated housing stock, deficient city services and the unprecedented suburbanization of middle-class families. Spiralling crime levels led several Western cities to adopt grassroots initiatives to counter petty crimes, which are examined for 1980s Amsterdam in Wim de Jong’s ‘Goon squad democracy? The