

from the Low Countries who migrated to England engaged in brewing and retailing ale, and in prostitution, as well as working within the cloth industry. The massacre of Flemings in London in June 1381 during the Peasants' Revolt is seen as a turning point, reducing the numbers and importance of textile workers from the Low Countries in England. Although immigration continued, artisans were now engaged in the production of beer and ale and in leather working, rather than in textiles.

The key question addressed in this book is how the immigrant textile workers influenced the development of the English woollen cloth industry which grew exponentially from the mid-fourteenth century. When the commons in parliament petitioned in 1333 to protect foreign cloth-workers from arrest, they believed that the immigrants could 'teach the people of this land to work the cloth'. Pajic explores the quantities and types of cloth produced by the immigrants, and their interactions and occasional confrontations with the native population. The immigrants brought with them not only their craft skills but also practices in organizing manufacturing, through elements of a putting-out system, that were subsequently to be adopted by English clothiers in the fifteenth century. Pajic offers a major new contribution to our understanding of the role of Flemish immigrants in the growth of the English textile industry in the fourteenth century, as well as offering a valuable historical case-study to inform current debates about immigration and integration.

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**Jelle Haemers and Ben Eersels** (eds.), *Words and Deeds: Shaping Urban Politics from below in Late Medieval Europe*. Turnhout: Brepols, 2020. 224pp. 3 plates, 3 figures. €85.00 hbk.

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For urban historians of medieval Europe, *Words and Deeds: Shaping Urban Politics from below* provides current cultural and political approaches to the methodology of 'history from below'. In the introduction, editors Jelle Haemers and Ben Eersels chart one of the most prominent recent developments in the methodology of 'history from below' for medievalists: the shift away from using rebellion as the framework for studying public opinion. Violence – usually symbolic and deliberate – was, rather, deployed at the very end of a series of political processes already exhausted by those wishing to enact/institute change in the late medieval city. Each of the essays in this collection seeks to reconsider the involvement of citizens in urban politics.

*Words and Deeds* demonstrates the power of a strong introduction in an edited collection: Haemers and Eersels' is persuasive, argumentative and firmly rooted in the long durée of medieval urban historiography. Despite being a collection of essays, there are two important arguments that Haemers and Eersels make about the experience of urban politics across western European towns. First, that a shared vocabulary was deployed by citizens, centred around an ideology of the common good. Second, that citizens were active: they demanded financial accountability, they often corroborated important political decisions made by urban councils, and they deployed collective action when it was required to enact change. These commonalities were, the editors conclude, a result of dissemination of ideas through highly connected urban cities,

bolstered by a shared Christian faith. This claim is made credible by the range of cities studied by the contributing authors. But while the essays demonstrate similar patterns of citizen participation across Europe, the editors are keen to stress that the success and form of political activity varied due to local and regional contexts.

The first section of the collection is entitled 'Institutional Bargaining' and comprises essays by François Otchakovsky-Laurens, Pablo Gonzalez Martin and Sofia Gustafsson which seek to uncover the ways in which political participation could be exercised by those excluded from membership in the principal governing institutions. Pushing back against what appears as an impenetrable divide between the 'governors' and the 'governed', these authors reveal a complex environment in which disenfranchised individuals were able to influence decision-making processes. In Marseille, Otchakovsky-Laurens found that craft guilds and marginalized individuals (such as the poor, women and Jews) used councillors to support petitions to the town council. Gustafsson's essay likewise focuses on urban councils, primarily the existence of, and processes associated with, a large council in fifteenth-century Stockholm. The simultaneous existence of large and small councils within a city could – and did – lead to collaboration, particularly in reinforcing the legitimacy of council decisions. Like Gustafsson, Gonzalez Martin's study of Burgos leads him to argue that moments of conflict should not overshadow the collaborative nature of urban politics. He persuasively argues that historians should not view political participation in terms of numbers, or by the amount of power that different groups possessed: each group was treated according to the way in which they affected a political system.

The second section has a tighter focus, with Dominique Adrian, Sabine von Heusinger and Ben Eersels each demonstrating how electoral rights were the lynchpin to political power wielded by craft guilds in Swabia, the middle Rhine and the Meuse valley. Eersels' essay – a masterclass in presenting statistical data alongside qualitative evidence – argues that the combined political actions of petitioning, consent-giving and striking was integral to the political position of guilds in Maastricht. In Maastricht and Swabian cities, both Eersels and Adrian uncover informal influences upon urban political decision-making. This, of course, makes Adrian's task difficult: unlike in Maastricht, where a plethora of petitions survive, there is limited documentary evidence that expresses the demands of the guilds to the council, as political participation was mostly oral and indirect (p. 118). In a turn from informal (or 'soft') power, the last essay in this section focuses on office-holding in German towns. Through an examination of the three regiments of urban government (upper patrician, lower patrician and the guilds), von Heusinger concludes that the fourteenth century was when merchants and artisans gained a voice in city politics and the power of guilds underlined.

The final section explores the ideology of urban politics. In Jesus Solórzano Telechea's essay, the priorities of the commons (again seen through the lens of petitions) are held to be the accountability of governmental bodies and the prioritization of common good over self-interest. The 'common good' also appeared in the conflict present in Castilian cities in the early sixteenth century, as Beatriz Majo Tomé's essay argues, with exceptional clarity and persuasiveness: the commoners, in advance of the Revolt of the *Comuneros* in 1520/21, had determined a full political programme laced with rhetoric of the common good. The focus on urban discourse, and the centring of the 'common good', is continued – and complicated – by Jelle Haemers' study of the language used by both governors and the governed in the

southern Low Countries. Concluding that the language that justified protest was little different from that used by governors in accounting for their own actions, he argues that there was a shared conceptual framework, wherein the same forms of communication were deployed by those engaged in urban politics, comprising medical terminology, moral/biblical discourse and reference to both the common law and urban legislation. Eliza Hartrich's essay also looks at language but focuses on the recording of slanderous speech. In doing so, she asks a crucial question: who had access to this information? Record-keeping practices, she argues, are an important route through which to uncover political participation.

The conclusion to this collection (written by Jan Dumolyn) once again places *Words and Deeds* in the context of historiographical trends. While historians once turned to economic considerations (such as famine, taxation, poverty) as instigators of popular revolt, recent work has stressed the political focus of uprisings. Dumolyn asks whether future studies should be more holistic, seeking to combine social and economic history into the political-culture framework. In short, *Words and Deeds* finishes as it starts, with a strong historiographical focus and a call to future historians to think critically about their methodological approach to popular politics.

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**Mats Berglund, Lars Nilsson and Per Gunnar Sidén**, *Swedish Urban History: An Introduction*. Stockholm: Stads- och kommunhistoriska institutet, 2023. 185pp. 5 figures. 1 table. Bibliography. 180 SEK pbk.  
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Today, nearly 90 per cent of the population of Sweden resides in urban areas as they are defined by the state. In addition to the great capital city of Stockholm and the large cities of Gothenburg and Malmö, Sweden has about 2,000 urban areas, some of which are roughly the size of a village. Most of the bigger cities are on the coasts, while many inland cities are on the shores of a lake. This rich urban landscape was formed over many centuries and the physical legacy of all these eras of city-building is still very much present. Though it is among the most urbanized nations in the world, the country as a whole is sparsely settled. The urban core is in the centre and the south, whereas much of the north is forest, grassland and mountains.

In their introduction to Swedish urban history, three historians in Stockholm have written a chronicle of more than a thousand years of urban growth and change. Published by the Institute of Urban History at Stockholm University, their book summarizes the latest research in the field and offers a useful guide for historians unfamiliar with the region. Their focus is on the history of Sweden as the borders of the country exist today, but for much of its history it was bound in a union with its neighbours or ruled them outright when it was a great power. Naturally, then, they analyse the urban history of Sweden in the larger context of Scandinavia and the Baltic region.

This short book covers a lot of ground and the authors have divided the subject into five periods. A chapter on the first substantial settlements in Sweden during the Iron Age and Viking Age is followed by chapters on the medieval period, the early