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LITERATURE REVIEW

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The year 2022 again saw a significant number of publications in late medieval economic and social history, including a bumper six articles in this journal which at least partly covered this period. Political structures and their economic impacts were a particularly popular topic. Angelucci, Meraglia and Voigtländer examine the development of self-governing merchant towns in England using a dataset of 555 boroughs which existed before the Black Death. They demonstrate that a combination of involvement in trade and being in royal hands caused specific towns to seek 'Farm Grants' (conferring rights to self-governance including in tax collection and law enforcement) from the crown. They argue this process was triggered by the Commercial Revolution of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, in which towns sought more flexible institutional arrangements to handle commerce. They further show that towns with Farm Grants were more likely to be represented directly in parliament, creating a virtuous re-enforcing relationship by which urban autonomy led to a stronger nationally representative body. This leads to their wider argument that this relationship helped create stronger constraints on rulers in early modern England than elsewhere in Europe. Lantschner examines city states across the Mediterranean world, comparing Christian and Islamic regions. He challenges previous assessments that have seen Italian city-republics as a stage in the development of western-European democracy and as imperfect versions of modern states. Instead, he argues that city states thrived in areas of political fragmentation and are best seen as 'brittle regimes' in which actors including political organisations and city-based lords, often in alliance with external agents outside the city, vied for control.

Two articles focused specifically on Tuscan city leagues. Caferro calls for a deeper understanding of these leagues beyond their military function in marshalling collective armies. He highlights their significant economic role, through creating tariff-free zones among participants and cancelling reprisals between members (where a whole city would be held responsible for the

fraudulent behaviour of bad actors from that city). Caferro also argues that the share of troops provided by each city in a league can act as a proxy for its relative wealth, allowing for cross-city comparisons which are hard to make using other sources. Martoccio looks at the role of leagues as collective organisations to respond to the threat of bands of mercenaries in the late fourteenth century. While previous scholarship largely based on chronicles has presented leagues as collapsing due to rivalries between member cities, he argues that leagues were often effective in breaking apart mercenary companies by organising collectively raised bribes for specific captains and marshalling military forces for short periods.

Other studies concentrated on the openness of political structures. Schulz examines the role of the medieval western Church in creating democratic participatory institutions through dissolving clan-based kin networks. He combines information on whether a set of 339 cities in Europe, the Middle East and North Africa had a commune-based government in any century, with data on the number of half-decades in which each city was within 100-km of a bishopric (to measure church exposure). He demonstrates a positive relationship between church exposure generally, and exposure to extended marriage prohibitions specifically, and commune formation, supporting his wider argument that weak kin networks are significant for economic development. Martín Romera explores the *sindacato*, a procedure by which individuals at the end of their terms in political office in Italian communes were subject to an audit that included a formal inquiry and allowed for all citizens to bring unprompted claims against ex-officials. Taking Sienna as a case study, she argues that previous interpretations have been too quick to dismiss the *sindacato* as empty rhetoric. Instead, she demonstrates that in 1340 this procedure involved a substantial number of individuals from non-elite groups. While *sindacati* of the later fourteenth century became more formalised, she argues that this does not necessarily reflect the exclusion of popular groups, who instead sought satisfaction in the alternative forum of a court of appeal. Gibbs examines presentment juries in English manorial courts between 1310 and 1600, to see whether these were characterised by wide participation or dominated by cliques of elites. Through applying four different measures of participation to three case-study manors, he shows that juries after the Black Death were open in that a large proportion of the population served and there was continuous turnover in panels, but closed in that a subset of individuals served a disproportionate number of times. The results also challenge any uniform pattern towards increasing restriction in officeholding in the early modern era, as argued in much of the pre-existing historiography, instead showing a variable set of trends.

Turning to urban history, Geltner explores the role of *campari* (officials appointed by towns to police rural hinterlands) in Piedmont between 1250 and 1500. Combining normative sources with registers recording the work of the *campari* in practice, he demonstrates how cities used these officials to ensure local agriculture was productive through maintaining infrastructure and preventing damage, so cities did not have to rely on long-distance trade. However, rural dwellers were not passive in response to this expansion of urban authority, challenging interpretations of urban expansion which take a centre-periphery approach. Szende examines the factors behind the creation of small towns in Hungary between 1301 and 1387. She highlights the significant role played by the intersection of the interests of monarchs and aristocrats in this process, as even though these towns were created on the private estates of landlords, the crown was vital in securing their privileges including the right to hold annual fairs. Maleszka and Czaja use a comparative approach to look at the formation of urban networks in processes of colonisation. Through case studies of Anglo-Norman Meath and the Teutonic Order's Kulmerland (in historic Prussia), they show how colonisers initially sited castles and settlements at pre-existing central places. However,

in the later thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, the particularisation of the functions of specific central places was largely based on the economic potential of their locations.

Other contributions examined internal urban geographies. Zaneri and Geltner use a GIS dataset to examine municipal public health policies in Bologna between 1287 and 1383. Analysing 3,540 nuisance offences recorded in the registers of *fango* officials, who were responsible for maintaining public amenities, they demonstrate that authorities were engaged in 'healthscaping' according to Galenic medical principles. Moreover, their efforts were dynamic, responding to changes in population and urban morphology, and shifting from market and waste management violations to policing commerce and more peripheral areas. Coomans takes a material approach to understand social practices between neighbours in five cities in the Low Countries during the long fifteenth century. She argues that networks of neighbours worked together to produce what contemporaries perceived to be a 'good' living environment, marked by social harmony and well-functioning material structures. This had wider ramifications for the way urban political structures operated, showing how groups of neighbours acted as a link between governments and households, providing such groups with significant local autonomy.

Raven contributed two articles exploring wool smuggling during the reign of Edward III. In this journal, he demonstrates the significance of the illicit trade of wool as an informal economic sector, showing that smuggling occurred both along less regulated parts of England's coastline and through weaknesses which allowed collusion between merchants and officials in regulated customs ports. He argues that smuggling was driven by the increasing costs of trade caused by high levels of indirect taxation, embargos on exports due to warfare and the difficulty of having enough liquidity to pay taxes due to the scarcity of coinage. He further argues for a potential change in crown policy after 1343, as the royal government attempted to build a 'community of interest' with parts of the mercantile elite by helping them monopolise the wool trade through Calais. In *Law and History Review*, Raven considers the legal mechanisms through which wool smuggling was prosecuted. He argues that the crown struggled to secure the support of local elites to prevent this illicit trade as the heavy burdens placed on wool exports through taxation jarred with the 'moral economy' of royal economic paternalism held by English society. More widely, this shows the limits of the growth of state capacity in the fourteenth century and how subjects could negotiate the development of central governance.

An insight into medieval sovereign debt is provided by de la Torre Gonzalo's investigation into the issue of annuities by the Kingdom of Aragon between 1376 and 1436. By analysing a set of inventories of debt contracts recorded in later sixteenth-century documents, she investigates the early formation of sovereign debt from the late fourteenth century in a chronological survey. She demonstrates how the Aragonese crown was able borrow significantly through *Censales*, a form of annuity, which were issued by the *Diputación*, a representative political body. This system was effective, allowing rulers to borrow sums against which they only paid annual interest, while providing investors with a reliable rate of return on their capital.

Inequality was a substantial topic for publications in 2022. Alfani brings together several studies to examine the impact of epidemics on inequality throughout the pre-industrial era. He shows that the Black Death had a unique effect through its role in significantly reducing inequality unlike later epidemics. Alfani argues that this is due in part to changes in institutional frameworks. While the Black Death had a Malthusian effect in raising real wages and increasing access to land in a system of partible inheritance, by the seventeenth century elites had learnt to adapt to plague, creating inheritance systems which avoided fragmentation of patrimonies, and this combined with falls in labour demand which led to little increase in real wages. He also highlights that the Black Death was likely a more 'virtuous' example of pandemic-related inequality reduction as

mortality seemingly did not differ much by socio-economic status, while other epidemics tended only to reduce inequality temporarily due to greater mortality among the poor. Taking a long view of inequality in Germany between c.1300 and c.1850, Alfani, Gierok and Schaff tell a similar story of the impact of the Black Death reducing inequality. Drawing on a newly constructed dataset of gini-coefficients created using property tax registers from 29 cities and 76 rural communities, they demonstrate that the Plague had a long-term impact in reducing inequality for around a century, but that inequality began to increase again after 1450. Alfani and Montero also produce new wealth inequality estimates for England in the early fourteenth century and early sixteenth century using taxation data from a sample of 17 counties and London. To overcome the issue of the wealth threshold required to be assessed for taxation payments, which means that only a proportion of the wealth distribution is observed, they develop an estimation technique to predict the distribution over the whole population. While they find only a modest increase in inequality at the national level, decomposing this reveals that inequality between regions grew from accounting for 4.5 per cent of total inequality in 1327–32, to accounting for 38 per cent in 1524–5, showing the deep roots of the regional inequality present in England today.

Concentrating on the role of associative organisations such as guilds, charitable foundations, commons and communities, van Bavel's contribution investigates the mechanisms by which inequality was constrained in pre-industrial Europe. He highlights that while such organisations were undoubtedly exclusive and had a middle-class membership profile, they both protected the wealth of their members from predatory elites and enhanced equality between their members through capping wealth ownership, relatively equal tax distribution and providing broad access to communal resources. This increased levels of equality in the aggregate, leading van Bavel to conclude that future research should be careful not to generalise findings about inequality from the most market-dominated societies in Europe to other regions. Cooper provides a more micro study of poverty in London during the 1190s. Utilising a case study of William fitz Osbert, a Londoner who criticised the treatment of the poor, Cooper highlights the chronicle and archaeological evidence demonstrating the great extent of urban poverty in this decade. He also shows how elites reacted through the foundation of charitable institutions and introduction of more progressive forms of taxation, but also the use of violence as seen in William's eventual execution.

The Black Death continues to capture the attention of scholars. In a wide-ranging summary of the existing scholarship, Jedwab, Johnson and Koyama provide a detailed review of arguments about the spread and economic impacts of the Plague. While it is impossible to summarise all their points here, they generally argue that the Black Death had a very significant impact on European economic development (and regional differences within this) but highlight that future research could usefully look in more detail at the effects of the Plague on rural economies, the decline of serfdom, and developments in state capacity before 1500. Prados de la Escosura and Rodríguez-Caballero also argue for the Plague's significance in a study of the origins of modern economic growth in Europe. By taking a 'long memory' approach to identify structural breaks in GDP per capita between c.1300 and 2019, they identify the Black Death, along with the World Wars, as the most persistent breaks. However, the Plague's impact differed between areas; while in most of Europe the impact was Malthusian, this was not true in Spain and Sweden, arguably because these were frontier economies with scarce population and plentiful natural resources. At the regional level, they contend that in the North Sea area slow but persistent increases in per capita income and population concurrently reveal that modern economic growth began in the late middle ages, supporting an early date for the origins of the Great Divergence. In a further article, Prados de la Escosura, Alvarez-Nogal and Santiago-Cabarello confirm some of these

findings through reconstructing real GDP per head for Spain between 1277 and 1850. Although they observe stagnation in the long-run, short-term patterns do not reflect a Malthusian economy. Instead, periods of Smithian growth where population and output per head grew simultaneously occurred up to the Black Death and in the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, while a period of shrinking took place in the late fourteenth century.

Green and Slavin wrote articles in response to the latter's 2021 article locating the origins of the second plague outbreak of the early 1360s in Germany. Green supports Slavin's identification of a plague reservoir in central Europe but argues that the same genetic lineage of Plague also exploited trade routes between the Golden Horde and Hanseatic League, meaning that there were other reservoirs in eastern Eurasia, rather than subsequent outbreaks emanating from central Europe. Moreover, she suggests that the 'birth' of two plague lineages which caused the 1360s and later outbreaks of the disease occurred before 1347, rather than emerging sequentially in Europe. Green's article has wider calls for researchers to consider how they incorporate epidemiological evidence into their arguments, especially as this field continues to generate new data, and to take a global approach to plague studies. Slavin's response challenges Green's critiques. He argues that paleogenetic evidence refutes the existence of a plague reservoir which could have caused the second outbreak in eastern Eurasia, that trade between the Golden Horde and Hanseatic League was limited in the relevant period, that documentary and scientific evidence does not support the spreading of two plague lineages concurrently, and that a new study of plague genomes from North Kyrgystan has confirmed that the birth of the two plague lineages could not have occurred before the initial outbreak of the Black Death. Guzowski investigates the debate over whether the Black Death impacted the Kingdom of Poland. Investigating wide-ranging evidence, he suggests that there is neither direct evidence for a population decline nor any signs of the economic dislocation the Plague is argued to have caused in western Europe, with Poland instead experiencing a period of economic development under the policies of King Casimir. This leads him to argue that future investigations into the Black Death should account for local factors in explaining the spread and scale of the disease.

The impact of lordship on medieval societies saw three contributions. Carocci focuses on developing an understanding of what he terms the 'pervasiveness' of lordship, namely the degree to which lords shaped the daily lives of their dependents, using examples from Italy and France. He highlights that this concept is distinct from the powerfulness of lords, as many lords who ruled large territories had little direct influence on the lives of their subjects, while many minor lords intervened heavily in the conditions of the peasantry dwelling on their lands. He argues that this pervasiveness was made possible by instruments beyond simply violence, including holding large directly managed lands, requiring military service, controlling certain resources and being able to intervene at key stages in subjects' life cycles, particularly highlighting the role of control over women's bodies. Claridge and Gibbs examine lord-tenant relations through the prism of the 'stray system' used to manage wandering livestock in England between 1274 and 1453. Using a sample of 1,781 manorial court sessions, they demonstrate that this system prevented livestock from damaging crops but also protected the property rights of owners of these lost animals through providing a system by which they were advertised and could be retrieved. By comparing the costs of maintaining horses against their value in a counterfactual study, they demonstrate that it was impossible for lords to have meaningfully profited from this facet of lordship. This leads to their wider conclusion that the management of strays supports a revisionist perspective on lord-tenant relations which focuses on how these parties could cooperate to achieve mutual benefits. Graham-Goering's article switches the focus onto how lords interacted with the crown via a study of Charles VI's royal progress through Languedoc in 1389–90. By mapping their home locations, she argues

that local lords were active participants in performing homage to the king, making individually calculated decisions about whether to meet the king at a nearby local centre or a large gathering at Toulouse. She also shows that many individuals chose to perform the ceremony in person with the king, which differs from the later period in which the role was taken by the king's representative and many lords were instead represented by a proxy. Graham-Goering thus highlights the dynamic role of local lords in creating reciprocal bonds as part of cooperative structures in late medieval governance.

Environmental and agricultural history remain central to the field. Moore and Bednarski examine how water management changed in Sussex in response to increasing storm frequency and consequent flooding of agricultural land in the late middle ages. They focus on a case study of the record of a 1396 royal commission into flooding at Pevensey, which shows the tension between local landowners' customs surrounding water management, and the aim of royal agents to create new schemes to prevent inundation. They argue that this document reflects a wider shift away from local to royal authority over aquatic infrastructure, which was accompanied by a transition from a reliance on oral custom to written statutes, and led to a decline in royal commissions surrounding this issue as these became more pre-emptive and strategic. Austin, Bezant and Barker's investigation into Abbey Wood, a forest south of the Cistercian monastery of Strata Florida (Wales) uses a multi-disciplinary approach to investigate the site's medieval history for which few documentary records survive. They find that the monks likely planted this woodland soon after the monastery's foundation in 1184 and engaged in close management of the forest for several economic functions. Overall, they argue that the history of Abbey Wood challenges generalisations about Cistercian land management practices, showing that monastic estates engaged in future planning by converting arable to woodland and worked with indigenous communities to maintain local economies. Langton examines the legal and economic status of vert, the vegetation required to maintain deer in forests held by the crown and other landlords. He sets out the complex set of regulations surrounding this resource which had significant economic value in housebuilding, hedge making, and as fuel and fodder.

Margetts examines the role of the Weald (south-east England) in mast pannage, where pigs would be turned out on woodland to graze between August and November/December. He argues for a decline in this practice after the early medieval era, as seen through a fall in the proportion of pig remains in bone assemblages dating from 1066 to 1348, although the proportion did increase again in later assemblages. Margetts suggests this can be attributed to a shift away from personal transhumance (where peasants would take their pigs large distances to pasture before bringing them home for slaughter) to impersonal transhumance under seignorial control, followed by a rise of more sedentary forms of pig-keeping after the Black Death. Turning to arable cultivation, van Gils and Kasielke use airborne LiDAR (light detection and ranging) imagery to study the emergence of ridge-and-furrow ploughing in the central eastern Netherlands and northwestern Westphalia. They find that ridge-and-furrow ploughing was adopted from at least the late middle ages and strip farming and ridge-and-furrow were universally practiced together until the early nineteenth century.

Franklin-Lyons and Kelleher seek to expand historical knowledge of famines by bringing in the western Mediterranean experience. They find that famines suffered by Barcelona in the 1330s and 1370s were part of the greater shift in 'secular climate' (climatic changes in the medium run) in the early fourteenth century combined with a strong cultural preference for certain grains which similarly explain why famines occurred in northern Europe. However, they also stress the importance of conflicts which interrupted the regional trade networks that Barcelona relied upon to import foodstuffs. This leads the authors to emphasise a wider historiographical

point that researchers should consider both structures and contingency in explaining historical crises. Yehuda, Bronstein and Stern combine historical and archaeological evidence to reconstruct Frankish bread production in the Levant during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. They find that the Franks innovated baking ovens through the introduction of flues and siting ovens in indoor locations, techniques they likely borrowed from Byzantine monasteries and Arabic brick ovens, and invented a double-chambered oven to produce more bread faster and with less fuel in a militaristic environment where sieges were common. However, in other ways bread production was highly conservative, continuing to produce dome shaped bread (rather than flatbreads), likely revealing a desire to maintain separate European traditions.

Peasants remained an important subject for late medieval historians. In a special issue of *Continuity and Change*, contributions examined the ways commons allowed peasants to be resilient in the face of uncertainty. Introducing the issue, Soens and De Keyzer challenge simplistic analyses of commons as universally either supporting resilience or creating vulnerability among peasant communities. Instead, they draw attention to the fact that only in peasant societies where commons were inclusive, flexible and redistributive and where peasants had enough bargaining power to manage commons directly, did this type of resource support resilience. While two of the issue's contributions focus on post-medieval contexts, De Keyzer and Van Onacker take a long view on the Campine region of Belgium from 1350 to 1845. They find that peasants in this region were highly resilient in the face of long-term hazards and sudden shocks due to three specific conditions. Firstly, they combined strong property claims on their estates with common pool resources, giving them access to ghost acres; secondly, they combined mixed farming with other activities without specialising or relying on commodity markets; and thirdly they remained committed to providing poor relief. These strengths can be seen in the light touch of the late medieval crisis on the Campine region, with no evidence for long-term population decline, abandonment of agricultural land, or falls in sheep numbers. Dyer examines the way that peasants could form partnerships to pursue mutually beneficial economic goals in late medieval England. He suggests that partnerships demonstrate how peasants could form associations based on production rather than just groupings along kinship or village lines, mirroring the kind of contracts found between merchants. To demonstrate the existence of partnerships, he combines an array of evidence, including examples of shared landholding, employment in teams, and litigation showing how local courts were used to make peace between conflicting former partners. He further speculates that there may have been an increase in partnerships in the 1370s due to the changed economic circumstances after the Black Death and the problem of a shortage of cash.

Commercial activities and economic strategies were also the subject of publications by Goddard, Nakaya and Dincer. Goddard tracks changes in the level of 'business confidence' (a measure of the optimism or pessimism managers feel about their organisation's commercial prospects) amongst English merchants between 1353 and 1532. To achieve this, he uses data on high-value lending contained in a sample of 9,989 staple debt certificates, arguing that demand and supply of credit was less when merchants both perceived few business opportunities and rationed credit. He sets out a pattern of high business confidence in the late fourteenth century, a nadir over the early fifteenth century, and then recovery in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century, arguing that these changes better reflect local commercial knowledge around consumer demand than the impact of traditional economic 'prime movers' like the Black Death or late medieval bullion famine. Nakaya explores the credit activity of Iacopo de Coluccino, a doctor living in Lucca, between 1373 and 1416. His study is based on a memorandum book kept by Coluccino, which allows him an unusual insight into non-professional credit networks. This reveals the low value of many transactions, the lack of reliance on notaries, and the personal nature of credit, with most

loans being made either to fellow citizens who were likely personal acquaintances or to tenants of Coluccino's lands. Nakaya also shows that while he did use legal remedies to pursue solvent creditors, Coluccino practiced forbearance when debts were owed by struggling tenants, occasionally supporting them with further credit in a way that shows the cooperative nature of his lending. Dincer studies the wealth-accumulation strategies of one Syrian-origin family (the Audeths) and one Greek-origin family (the Podocatros) in fifteenth-century Cyprus using evidence drawn from wills. She focuses on how these families prospered in a period of political instability through maintaining alliances with rival factions and the Venetian commune as an external authority, investing in products like camlets which were subject to strong demand from the island's Mamluk overlords, moving their capital to offshore Italian banks, and securing influential marriage alliances. She concludes that while most of these strategies were typical of late medieval Mediterranean society, they were also shaped by the exceptional political situation and religious diversity found in Cyprus.

The dynamics of markets naturally remains at the centre of many studies. Petracca examines the growth of fairs allowing toll-free trade in the Italian Mezzogiorno during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. She finds that royal policies generally promoted the expansion of trade networks, demonstrating the economic development of southern Italy during this period as local agriculturalists became more orientated towards producing a surplus for an interregional market. Comuzzi provides a study of the formation of a new craft guild on the market for artisanal training in Castelló d'Empúries (Catalonia) between 1260 and 1310. Through a study of 378 employment agreements and business partnerships recorded in notarial registers, she shows that the establishment of a craft guild of cloth-finishers led to a standardisation in the terms of apprenticeship contracts compared to the more flexible pre-guild system. She argues that the move to monitor training in the craft was not primarily to prevent opportunism but instead to enhance the power of artisan trainers through cartelisation, enabling them to offer training on more favourable terms to themselves than an unregulated market allowed. Turning to commodities, Whelan provides the first examination of the trade of mead by Hanseatic merchants in the late medieval Baltic. He highlights the significant cultural status associated with mead (especially that produced in Riga), partly due to the high cost of honey which was needed to produce it. This led mead to play an important role as a gift in diplomacy and a drink to offer high status visitors within the Baltic region.

Living standards were explored by two articles taking different approaches. Horrell, Humphries and Weisdorf challenge traditional estimates of family income in England which have relied on a male-breadwinner household. They model how income and expenditure varied across a 'typical' family's life cycle over six stages, including data about earnings for all family members and allowing families to smooth consumption by saving during stages of surplus. Their key findings (for the medieval era) are that families struggled before c.1400, meaning that their children were required to perform significant amounts of labour to support a respectable standard of living, but during the so-called 'Golden Age of Labour' in the fifteenth century family incomes improved, although likely not to the extent that previous studies have argued. Almenar Fernández and Belenguer González examine changes in the spatial organisation of Valencian housing between 1280 and 1450. Using information about the distribution of rooms of 336 dwellings recorded in probate inventories, they find a shift from the 1370s onwards away from a simplistic hall-chamber model to more complexity with the addition sequentially of kitchens, dining rooms and living rooms to houses. They also demonstrate this was largely an urban- and elite-led change, with new rooms filtering down to common townsmen and some rural areas.

Urban and rural revolt continued to be a significant topic of studies. Bervoets and Dumolyn provide a new interpretation of thirteenth-century urban protest, which has been understudied compared to later revolts. They compare the textile towns of Flanders and their wider region with protests which occurred elsewhere in urban Europe. They argue that towns in northwestern Europe witnessed an emergence of intra-urban conflicts in the 1220s where craftsmen and workers sought political power and the ability to have greater control over working conditions, a change driven by increasing socio-economic polarisation in an era of economic growth. These tensions came to a head in a wave of revolts in Flanders in 1275–85 as economic growth stalled, leaving a middle class which remained politically excluded and artisans who had not received a significant share of the profits of industrial expansion. Combining the rich detail provided by judicial records with local material for Cambridgeshire, Xu analyses the motivations behind the Peasants' Revolt of 1381. He argues that an examination of the actions of the rebels in this county demonstrates that antagonism towards the activities of royal officials drove protest, with this category of motivation accounting for 69 per cent of incidents, and 60 per cent of victims targeted by rebels, in the countryside. This leads to his wider point that unpopular policies pursued by the crown, rather than a resentment against serfdom and manorial lordship, was the crucial trigger for this revolt.

Two articles explored sex work. McDonough's contribution seeks to move away from looking at prostitutes solely in relation to their sexual activity, instead arguing that these women played an important role as knowledge brokers in the late medieval Mediterranean world through their familiarity with local legal institutions and the economic relationships they created with city officials. In this role, they facilitated the interconnected culture of the Mediterranean, leading to McDonough's wider argument that this region was not an exclusively male space. Through an examination of *Frauenhausordnungen* (rules governing brothels made by civic governments) in late medieval southern German towns, Page looks at the ambiguous attitudes to sex work before the Protestant Reformation. He argues that the rise of a new form of moral regulation linked with the concept of *gute Policey*, which drew clear distinctions between right and wrong behaviour, increasingly made legalised prostitution untenable in the eyes of urban authorities. This meant that Reformation-era preaching against prostitution fell on fertile ground, hastening the end of legalised sex work.

The middle ages continue to play an important role in studies of economic development. van Zanden and Felice provide a new estimate of Tuscan GDP in the early fifteenth century. They argue that their direct approach to estimating GDP based on the detailed Florentine Catasto of 1427 is more accurate than indirect approaches using construction workers' wages which underestimate Italian growth between the medieval and industrial eras. Significantly, their new estimates suggest that Tuscan GDP per capita in the fifteenth century was only 13–20 per cent higher than northwestern European regions at the same time. They therefore suggest that the much richer material culture found in central Italy during the Renaissance was due to high rates of extraction by elites, which led to a concentration of spending on arts, but also helped create underdeveloped factor markets in the countryside, limiting demographic and economic growth. Moving northwest to Genoa, Oddo and Zanini investigate what they term 'the paradox of "Malthusian urbanization"', a phenomenon where high urbanisation was the result of severe levels of poverty rather than demonstrating economic growth. Using a new dataset of population and urbanisation in the Republic of Genoa between 1300 and 1800, they show that a shock in the rate of population growth led to a rise in the growth rate of urbanisation. They argue that the mechanism behind this relationship was that an increase in rural population led to urban migration due to the countryside's inability to absorb additional labour, while cities were also unable to deal with an influx of

urban poor, eventually resulting in emigration back to the countryside. This explains why Genoa's precocious late medieval urbanisation did not lead to sustained economic growth.

The roots of the economic advantage of northern over southern Italy in the nineteenth century leads Chilosi and Ciccarelli to reconstruct occupational structure back to 1400 using pre-unification censuses and estimated urbanisation rates. They show that the proportion of workers in agriculture in southern Italy fell dramatically between 1400 and 1600 suggesting a structural change was occurring in this region before this was arrested in the seventeenth century. Therefore, they challenge the idea that Italy's north-south economic divide has deep medieval roots. Mayhew and Ball put forward a monetary explanation for England's low population growth in the post-Black Death era in comparison with Scotland, the Low Countries and France. They argue that the English government's limited debasement of coinage led to a problem of small change and prevented price inflation. This helped cause a prolonged depression due to a high wage-low price disequilibrium which disincentivised entrepreneurial activity, limited employment opportunities and discouraged the taking on of available arable land. In turn, this led to a lack of confidence about the future which lowered nuptiality and fertility, preventing population recovery after the Plague, unlike in other polities which engaged in heavier debasement.

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