

toward decolonizing the city's museum collections (p.187). The aim is to move from presenting 'accounts from a single perspective' to that of 'multiple voices: multiple histories referring to the multiple realities of equally many narrators, telling a never-ending story' (p.188).

The book concludes with a case study by Francio Guadeloupe, Paul Van De Laar, and Liane Van Der Linden of Rotterdam's summer carnival, an 'alternative community formation' for Antilleans in Rotterdam (p.237). The chapter interrogates the postcolonial city, demonstrating that systemic racism, inequalities, and being bound to its colonial past are postcolonial traits of Rotterdam. However, it also encompasses a wish for a better future, one that celebrates and understands multiculturalism (p.224). It provides an apt conclusion to the book, reminding us of Rotterdam's continuous efforts to engage with and understand its colonial past.

Overall, *Colonialism and Slavery* is an expertly collected analysis of Rotterdam's central importance to Dutch colonialism. The book provides an impressive survey of historical, physical, and cultural legacies in the city, drawing on a wide body of evidence from local and national archives. Despite its curation as condensed material from three existing books, *Colonialism and Slavery* retains rigorous methodologies. It convincingly reshapes our understandings of the European city, and future city histories should look to its success in capturing impact across place, demographics, and culture. Perhaps its only oversight is that this comprehensive study should not be viewed as an 'alternative' history of Rotterdam at all. It is rather a necessary history clearly presenting how slavery and colonialism are inextricably woven into the city's fabric.

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Jaap Evert Abrahamse and Heidi Deneweth (eds), *Transforming Space. Visible and Invisible Changes in Premodern European Cities* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2022). 250 p. ISBN 9782503579849.

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This spatial history of urban Europe turns to the 'sometimes radical but often gradual transformations of inner cities' (p.14.) in the medieval and early modern period. It tackles an interesting dynamic of continuity and change: Compared to later drastic transformations, the

period before industrial modernity saw relatively few grand expansions and as such showed many continuities on the city-wide scale of urban morphology. Yet, on the smaller scale of districts, blocks, and individual plots, late medieval and early modern cities were full of changes. This edited volume discusses those subtle and also other not-so-subtle changes within city boundaries. The volume speaks to a specialist audience of urban historians and ‘does not aim to posit a general theory or model of urban change’, but is rather intended as ‘a starting point for discussion of change in late medieval and early modern towns’ (p.15).

In the words of the editors, the different chapters form a ‘somewhat eclectic compilation with the common theme of urban transformation’ (p.26). Here, they may be selling themselves short. The volume is tied together by the introduction, which discusses some major themes in research on urban change that will be useful especially to the intended target audience of urban historians who want to embark on future comparative research. Although hesitantly, and with a call for future research, the editors provide some interesting conclusions. Most important of these is that the shift in temporal and spatial perspectives that many of the chapters employ has been fruitful. Combining analyses at micro-, meso-, and macro-scale showed that gradual bottom-up processes were also important drivers of change. Furthermore, the long-term perspective that some of the chapters adopt is useful to getting to ‘root causes of change’ to ‘disentangle th[e] interplay of economic, social, political, cultural, and spatial factors’ (p.27).

In the first section about geopolitical and fire risks (I), the chapter by Liisa Seppänen looks at Turku between 1300-1830. As an account of long-term development, it discusses late medieval and early modern growth, as well as the destruction caused by fires. The second chapter by Rafał Eysymontt discusses Silesian urbanization in the late medieval period. Earlier research looked at the wave of thirteenth-century towns that were built with geometrically designed plans, but this chapter goes further by looking at the changes that happened after the towns were established. Thirdly, Janna Coomans discusses fire safety policies in the Low Countries. The most theoretically innovative chapter of the volume, it shows how Actor Network Theory (ANT) can be employed to understand medieval fire safety policies. In terms of the aims of the volume, this approach also allows shifts between the different scales, from the hearth within a home to the level of city-wide policy.

In the second section about religion as an accelerator of urban change, Anna Anisimova firstly discusses reformation as a catalyst

of urban change in monastic towns in southeastern England. During the Dissolution (1537-1540), monasteries were ceded to the Crown, resulting in change, although no radical change in the towns' layouts. Colin Arnaud next compares Bologna and Strasbourg from the medieval to early modern period. He shows how differences that might be seen as differences between Catholic and Protestant urban ideals were already in place before the Reformation. The Reformation and Counter-Reformation rather intensified those trends than initiate them. Finally, Maurizio Vesco and Valeria Viola discuss one specific intervention in the Palermo between 1600-1750, where a cross-shaped urban morphology was designed and implemented. Vesco and Viola conclude that while it was a success in terms of technical implementation, it may have failed in terms of it being 'fully appropriated by the city', as it was often excluded from processions.

In the third section about the impact of economic and demographic change, Jaap Evert Abrahamse's chapter discusses how Amsterdam's Singel canal has gotten its ambiguous role as transitory zone between the elite canal belt and the medieval city. The Singel, while not exactly part of the expansion area of the major seventeenth-century expansions of Amsterdam, was nonetheless transformed by these expansions. Its upscale branding as the Koningsgracht (King's Canal) was not successful and it remained a mixed-use area, but it was also gentrified considerably. Heidi Deneweth then follows with a chapter on Bruges between 1550 and 1900. Her analysis shows that despite the strong continuity of Bruges, where the medieval pattern was preserved until the nineteenth century, there were considerable changes at plot-level, which varied considerably between the city center and the periphery, leading to increasing segregation. Lastly, Sarah Collins' GIS analysis of Newcastle in the eighteenth century shows changes that were only observable through micro-analysis, starting with bottom-up change in the 1740s to 1780s initiated by real estate owners, followed by a late eighteenth-century pursuit of modernity by the urban government, in order to improve commercial and entertainment functions.

Some of the chapters are more theoretically informed, with a research question that explicitly engages in a wider historiography (notably those by Coomans, Arnaud, Vesco and Viola, Deneweth and, of course, the introductory chapter by the editors), while other chapters are more empirical and focus mainly on the details of urban transformation. Social historians will probably be most interested in the former, although both will of course be useful for the intended

future discussion and comparative research on urban transformation. With those future comparisons in mind, it is a pity that there is little shared historiography among the chapters. On the other hand, that means that the diversity of approaches within urban history is well-represented. And nevertheless, especially the chapters in section III speak most directly to each other, offering a glimpse of what a future comparative history of inner-city transformations can look like.

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Patrick Bek, *No Bicycle, No Bus, No Jobs. The Making of Workers' Mobility in the Netherlands, 1920-1990* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2022). 211 p. ISBN 9789463723183.

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As Patrick Bek points out, so far little ink has been devoted to the history of commuting despite the home/work split being a fully-fledged feature of contemporary labor markets. In the existing literature on the topic, the main focus has been on how the expansion of transport modes influenced choices regarding whether, how, and when to travel to work. Yet restricting the explanation of commuter flows to the opportunities that transport infrastructure offers, so as to bridge the physical distance in a home/work split, enhances a narrative of technological determinism. To avoid this risk, Patrick Bek has mingled transport history with labor history and mobility studies, thereby bringing economic motivations and power relations into his study of worker's mobility and job accessibility in the Netherlands between 1920 and 1990.

Accordingly, the powerful agents in labor history – namely, industrial employers and blue-collar workers – have been placed on the same level as the usual suspect for restricting or enhancing commuter flows: the state. Moreover, the context of industrialization and deindustrialization has been given as much explanatory value as the expansion of ever faster and more comfortable transport modes in grasping the spatial reorganization of living and working in the twentieth century. For this innovative approach alone, *No Bicycle, No Bus, No Job* is worth reading. Five industrial core centers were selected to let this enriched approach of commuting land in historical research: the Limburg mining region,