In our last year’s review, we discussed Judy Stephenson’s latest article, where she claimed that institutional wage series have a tendency to overestimate the earning of building workers by 20 or 30 percent. As stated in our review, her findings may have some serious ramifications for the classic ‘high wage hypothesis’ of Robert C. Allen. Traditionally, the industrial revolution has been explained by referring to a mix of high wages and the relatively low cost of energy, which spurred technological innovation, mechanization, and industrial development. Yet, when the point of departure – the high wages – is questioned, the whole hypothesis becomes a house of cards. In a response, Robert Allen argues that Stephenson’s findings do not undermine his hypothesis on the relative high wages in Britain when compared to the rest of the world. (‘Real wages once more; a response to Judy Stephenson’, *The Economic History Review*, 72 (2019) 738-753.) Stephenson picks up the thread again in her latest reply (‘Mistaken wages: the cost of labour in the early modern English economy, a reply to Robert Allen’, *The Economic History Review*, 72 (2019) 755-796.) where she underlines the implications of the use of piecework for the ‘high wage hypothesis’ which should, in Stephenson’s opinion, not be mistaken for wages. Moreover, she argues that the historiography prior to Allen’s hypothesis and more recent findings challenge the whole idea of a British high wage economy. It is a discussion that will probably flare up again in the (near) future.

In his latest article, Allen corroborates the idea of relative prosperity of England and Wales during the industrial revolution with new evidence. (‘Class structure and inequality during the industrial revolution: lessons from England’s social tables, 1688–1867’, *The Economic History Review*, 72, 2019, 755-769). Therefore, he uses the social tables – for instance, Gregory King’s estimates on population and wealth in 1688 – which are excellent sources to examine the structure and evolution of society in the early modern period and the nineteenth century. Following Lindert and Williamson’s revision of the tables, Allen makes some crucial adjustments. The result is a meticulous analysis of six major classes across the industrial revolution. The research corroborates the idea that England was by and large a prosperous country in the eighteenth century. Yet, the composition of these social groups changed dramatically over time. While the landed gentry remained roughly the same, the number of farmers declined a little. At the same time, the upper middle class grew by a factor of seven, the lower middle class by eight. Between 1688 and 1867 the working class even quadrupled. In the eighteenth century, the number of poor tripled, but then fell quickly afterwards. During the early modern period, the largest income gains were for the landed classes and the upper middle class. Yet, in the early nineteenth century, the tide turned. Farmers and the lower middle classes were then growing richer. During the industrial revolution, the income of the middle class slowly but surely drew even with the landed classes. However, the latter succeeded in freezing their incomes at a high level. After 1846, the relative well-being of the working classes improved. Overall, changes in incomes – and the relative size of these groups – translated in a rising inequality at first, followed by a steady decline. Apparently, the benefits of economic growth slowly but surely percolated through the lower rungs of society.

Peter Laslett’s famous ‘nuclear hardship hypothesis’ still inspires a lot of research today. Laslett claimed that in a society dominated by nuclear families, and with rather weak relations with other kin, collective and formal aid prevailed. The most striking example of the latter in early modern England was the Elizabethan poor law. Parishes were forced to set up a poor tax tailored to the local needs. However, recent studies of family and kinship in Britain have questioned the basic idea of an isolated nuclear household. It forces us to look with a fresh perspective at the English poor. Jonathan Healey’s latest article rides the wave. (‘Kin support and the English poor: evidence from Lancashire, c.1620–1710’ argued (Historical Research, 92 (2019), 318-339.) Tapping new evidence from the pauper petitions in seventeenth-century Lancashire, Healey suggests that family support – even with distant
kin – was not uncommon. Families stuck together in times of crisis and provided a vital safety-net in times of dire need, which could be ‘inactive and unacknowledged for extensive period, but it could kick decisively into action when an immediate crisis occurred.’ However, it remains extremely difficult to assess the impact of these extended family ties on the idea of nuclear hardship.

Urban history with a social touch is also the focus in Benedetta Borello’s latest article. (‘Being Brothers or Pretending to Be: Merchants, Artisans, Inn-keepers, Painters & Brothers in Seventeenth-Century Rome’, European History Quarterly, 49 (2019) 5-27.) Borello looks with a fresh eye at the importance of brotherhood – both in a strict literally and a broad figurative sense – in an early modern metropolis. Male siblings often stuck together. They lived under the same roof and practiced the same trade or craft, ranging from wealthy bankers, merchants or painters to famers, blacksmiths, and publicans. Living together had some obvious benefits for younger brothers, who could capitalize on the family fortune and were able to learn the tricks of trade passed down through the generations, while the pater familias or the firstborn could rest assured that the family business would be continued if they passed away. Due to the unwritten law of the affectio, the elder brother was bound to protect and to help his younger siblings when they were in need. Fraternal assistance was, however, far from unconditional. Family members who did not struggle to escape from poverty, unemployment or other mishap on their own were given the cold shoulder. Kinship was especially important for migrants who had to settle down in a foreign metropolis. Finding a new job, lodgings or friends was much easier when an elder or younger brother – or any other relative who had arrived some years before – was around and was able to show the ins and outs. Brotherly bonds had such a strong, symbolical resonance that lots of craftsmen worked and even lived together, even if they were not related. The affratellamento was a common practice in early modern Rome. It provided more security for both partners. At least, in theory, because the ties that bound could easily wax weak. Fraternal relations were cemented by gifts, godparenthood, and other symbolical exchanges. Myriad examples show that this mutual understanding could evaporate in a blink.

Women and the urban sphere are scrutinized in Danielle van den Heuvel’s research (‘(‘Gender in the Streets of the Premodern City’, Journal of Urban History, 45 (2019), 693-710), by taking a fresh look at the powerful narrative that women gradually withdrew from the public sphere in between 1600 and 1850. Due to modernization, women were less frequently found at the street, as their natural habitat was increasingly envisioned at the fireside. Van den Heuvel’s debunks these classic stereotypes by reviewing some revisionist scholarship. Findings evidence that the traditional division between private and public sphere cannot be equated with a clear-cut rift between feminine and masculine spaces. On the contrary, new research on the gendered use of streets and other spaces shows that women were extremely active in appropriating space.

Taking a bird’s-eye view over some classic and recent strands in the historiography on women’s work in preindustrial Europe, Jane Whittle also drops a bombshell with her recent article. (‘A Critique of Approaches to ‘Domestic Work’: Women, Work and the Pre-Industrial Economy’, Past & Present, 243 (2019) 35-70.) Whittle starts with the observation that the larger part of the historiography on women’s labour – and on economic history as such – is clouded by a rather anachronistic definition of work, which was coined by classic economic theorists such as Adam Smith, David Ricardo, John Stuart Mill or even Karl Marx. They almost exclusively focussed on wage labour, while other forms of work – household chores (washing, cleaning, cooking,…), care taking (of children or the elderly), and toiling for subsistence – were largely ignored. Until recently, their narrow concept of work strongly determined how organisations such as the United Nations looked at the economies in developing countries. GDP was – and is often still – exclusively measured in terms of paid work. Unremunerated activities are usually brushed aside. Obviously, this modern lens is detrimental to our understanding
of early modern economies where most labour was not remunerated. At the same time, it clouds our notion of women’s work, who were often engaged in household or care work. It leads to some crude estimates, such as Broadberry et alii’s educated guess that early modern women barely worked 30% of men’s average input, as they were entangled in endless household chores and childcare. Whittle points out that these figures have been rarely if ever corroborated with solid evidence. Time-use analysis, as pioneered by Sheilagh Ogilvie in her research on two communities in early modern southwest Germany, and pursued by recent studies on pre-industrial Sweden and England, may provide fresh perspective, as these studies show that women were more frequently engaged in agriculture, crafts, and trade than previously assumed. Men might have worked less and women more. Moreover, traditional household and care work was more often outsourced and commercialised than one should think. Further research should spell out these differences in detail.

The Black Death is a recurrent topic in recent historiography. Joris Roosen and Daniel Curtis present some new evidence suggesting that the bubonic plague was no less severe in the Southern Netherlands than in other European regions, despite the tenacious truism about the ‘light touch’ of the epidemic in the Low Countries. (The ‘light touch’ of the Black Death in the Southern Netherlands: an urban trick?, Economic History Review, 72 (2019), 32-56). Roosen and Curtis also offer an explanation for this recurring myth of the unique position of the Low Countries. Drawing evidence from a broad variety of sources and a brand-new database of mortmain accounts, they argue that the densely populated countryside offered plenty of opportunity to fill the demographic loss of the cities in no time. Migration simply obscured the massive mortality. Moreover, the Low Countries were not recovering much faster from the outbreak than other parts of Europe. Demographic pressure on the countryside provided a reservoir to replenish the losses. The variable impact of the plague is also at the heart of the contribution of Charles and Angela Evans (‘Plague – a disease of children and servants? A study of the parish records of St Peter upon Cornhill, London from 1580 to 1605’, Continuity and Change, 34 (2019), 183-208). Tapping evidence from late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century parish records, the Evans’s reveal that children were much more vulnerable for epidemic outbreaks than their parents. Servants in their teens and twenties were also a high-risk group. Nevertheless, the evidence does not reveal gender differences.

In their article, based on a large database of urban mortality rates in plague years, Guido Alfani and Marco Percoco, provide an analysis of the demographic impact of an early modern outbreak that ravaged Northern Italy in the early seventeenth century. (‘Plague and long-term development: the lasting effects of the 1629–30 epidemic on the Italian cities’, The Economic History Review, 72 (2019), 1175-1201). According to their analysis, the epidemic deeply unhinged the economic life in the large cities such as Milan and Venice. With their research, Alfani and Percoco also provide a new perspective on long-term economic development in Northern Italy and, especially when compared with the booming urban economies of North-West Europe, the progressive “ruralisation” of the peninsula. Comparative perspectives are also found in disasters history. David Garrioch examines why Paris was not consumed by fire in the seventeenth and eighteenth century, while other European cities witnessed cataclysmic blazes. Textbook example is, of course, the Great Fire of London in 1666. (Why Didn’t Paris Burn in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries?, French Historical Studies, 42 (2019), 35-65). Differences in building materials might explain why Paris was spared from great inferno’s, while London was set ablaze, but, according to Garrioch, there are other important differences. More than Paris, London was an industrial centre and a thriving consumption hub with an important seaport. All these activities contributed to a higher fire hazard. Another factor that may have tilted the balance was the increasingly effective fire prevention and the large investments in firefighting by the French monarchy. In Paris, the municipality was under direct royal control, while in London, a wide range of institutions was responsible for fire prevention. Moreover, both cities had a different ideology towards
government intervention. London taxpayers were suspicious of the central state and therefore reluctant to invest in public infrastructure, such as fire protection and water supply. In Paris, providing access to water was seen as a vital public service and therefore a key responsibility for the government.

Fire – but even more prominently social and spatial segregation - is the focus of Mads Perner’s recent article (‘Segregated behind the walls: residential patterns in pre-industrial Copenhagen’, *Social History*, 44 (2019), 412-439). Drawing data from censuses, tax registers, and other classic sources, Perner not only provides a meticulous analysis of the residential patterns in Copenhagen between 1711 and 1845, but he also adds an innovative element by coding these sources with HISCO – Historical International Standard Classification of Occupations – and HISCLASS. It enables him to move beyond the classic models of Sjoberg and Vance on segregation in early modern cities. Copenhagen followed the classic core-periphery model, as the lion’s share of upper-crust citizens were mainly found in the city centre, while the less fortunate ones were driven to the fringes. However, the model was thwarted by two anomalies. First of all, the elite’s monopoly of living in the Old Town was never absolute. Low- and middle-class neighbours were never far away, as they lived in the less posh – and more affordable – side streets. It ties in with Lesger’s and Van Leeuwen’s concept of “around the corner” segregation. Moreover, vertical segregation was ubiquitous with the rich and the famous living on the ground and first floors, while lower-class citizens lived in cramped conditions in attics, garrets, and cellars. Interestingly, this *modus vivendi* was disrupted in the course of the eighteenth and nineteenth century, as a series of fires reduced the Old Town to ashes. In the aftermath, the houses in the city centre were transformed into smart, fashionable apartments. As a result, prices rocketed and gentrification ran rampant. Lower classes were increasingly ousted to outer Christianshavn, western Sankt Annae, and other fringe areas. Fires – and the policy of the city council – strengthened the tendency towards horizontal segregation.

Not social segregation, but ethnoreligious ghettoization in early modern Italy is put under the microscope by Guillaume Calafat and Michael Gasperoni (‘Une économie de ghetto? Activités et acteurs économiques juifs dans l’Italie du XVIIe siècle’, *Dix-septième siècle*, 282 (2019), 117-148). Drawing evidence from a series of sources, they argue that we have to rethink the classic stereotype of impoverished, deprived, and powerless Jewish communities, who were, from the middle of the sixteenth century onwards, increasingly forced to live in urban ghettos. Their meticulous and comparative analysis shows the immense flexibility and resilience of these Jewish communities to adapt to rapidly and dramatically changing circumstances. First of all, the conditions varied widely across the Italian peninsula, as the elbowroom of Jews in the ghettos of Urbino, Mantua or Rome was poles apart from the freedom of action in Livorno or Pisa. Yet, even in the former, where the odds to develop their talents were much more restricted, Jews were found in a whole range of occupations, including bankers, merchants, craftsmen, retailers, schoolmasters, and pedlars. In the late seventeenth century, the Roman community was hit hard when Pope Innocent XI ordered the closing of the Jewish *banchi* after a series of devastating epidemics of plague. It led to grinding poverty in the ghetto. Yet even in Rome, the Jewish community adapted quickly to the new circumstances by specializing in the second-hand trade in clothes or by launching into real-estate. For Jewish traders and merchants, the prospects were the brightest in Livorno (Leghorn) where they were protected by a battery of ducal laws and regulations. To bolster the economic boom of the harbour, officials even actively enticed Jewish merchants from far and near – especially Levantine, Sephardic, and *Tedeschi* – to come to Tuscany. Catholic quibblers, who were asking for a restriction of the Jewish privileges in the seventeenth century, were rebuffed by the government, as they were well aware of the parallel between a thriving economy and these ethnoreligious freedoms.
During the last few decades, academia has been flooded by a series of books and articles on the history of emotions. Numerous historians have taken a look at early modern love, hate, anger, sadness, melancholy, and a range of other feelings. At the same time, the history of the senses – of seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, and feeling – has been on the march ever since Alain Corbin’s pioneering work. For a long time, urban history was only marginally affected by these new strands of history. In her introduction to the latest issue of Histoire Urbaine, Pauline Valade provides a fascinating overview of these new lines of research in French urban history and muses on how these trends can reinforce each other. (‘Sens et Émotions dans la ville: des critères d’urbanité?’, Histoire Urbaine, 54 (2019) 5-18.) It ties in with yet another strand in (French) urban history to look at the histoire vécu or how local residents experienced their own city. To uncover their everyday emotions and sensations, ego-documents have been hailed as promising sources. A recent textbook- example of this histoire croisée of history of the senses and emotions is Gaël Rideau’s analysis of religious processions in eighteenth-century France (‘Émotions, sens et expérience religieuse. Le cas des processions urbaines en France au XVIIIe siècle’ Histoire Urbaine, 54 (2019) 37-54.) Rideau sets out to uncover the experiences of the various protagonists: the church and the police, travellers and participants. For the counterreformation church, processions were an ideal instrument to overwhelm the faithful in every possible and sensual way – by the smell of incense, by the dramatic tolling of bells, entrancing prayers, and sweet-voiced hymns, by the cadence of marching bodies and the – almost magical – touch of the reliquaries, and, last but not least, by the visual spectacle – in order to arouse strong emotions. Jansenist often saw these emotions as fake and superficial and pressed for more modest – and more heartfelt – acts of devotion. The critique was often shared by protestant travellers, who witnessed these popish processions on their Grand Tour through Europe and reacted with anxiety, derision, or bewilderment. Another leading figure was the police. They tried to control emotions and religious zeal, quite often in tandem with religious dignitaries, as processions often turned into rows and riots.

Not the scent of the city, but the fragrance of the surrounding countryside is the focus of the analysis in Pierre-Benoît Roumagnou’s latest article (‘Parfum de Banlieu. Les mauvaises odeurs et les environs de Paris au XVIIIe siècle’ Histoire Urbaine, 54 (2019), 19-36). Even though the rural fringe of Paris was in the eighteenth century increasingly envisaged as a place for Sunday walks, picnics and other fresh air entertainments, there was also a growing flood of complaints about bad smells. foul and fetid activities were increasingly banned from the city centre and transferred to the rural suburbs, where the sharp tang of the bleaching fields, the reek of stud farms, the stink of dumped night soil, the whiff of graveyards, and the fumes of factories were mixed into an unbearable perfume. There was also the endless trail of cattle brought to Paris for slaughter, littered with smelly dung and rancid carcasses, and a stream of urban corpses carried along by the rivers. Especially in the eighteenth century, the olfactory pressure on the rural fringe increased rapidly, as a flood of procès-verbaux and official reports evidence. Complaints were not only lodged by the rural population, but also by the urban elites who had fled the evil-smelling and boisterous city to their country houses, manors, and estates to find some peace. During the late eighteenth century, the nuisance was no longer limited to the sweltering summer months; the stench was also unbearable in spring and autumn, and even in cold winter months, as malodourous activities were increasingly transferred to the countryside.

Tea is centre stage in Wouter Ryckbosch’s latest analysis (‘From spice to tea: on consumer choice and the justification of value in the early modern Low Countries’, Past and Present, 242 (2019) 37-78.) Drawing evidence from a wide array of sources – including philosophical and medical treatise, sermons, songs and, ballads, plays, probate inventories and so much more – Ryckbosch traces continuity and change in the value conventions between the middle of the seventeenth and the late eighteenth century. Loosely inspired on Boltanski and Thévenot’s conventions theory, he unpacks the various social and cultural frameworks that led to another valuation of tea throughout history. While tea was
in the middle of the seventeenth century predominantly valued for its highly symbolical and ceremonial qualities – in forging relations between friends and foes – it soon became treasured for its utilitarian value, as a medicine for hangovers and headache, but also for more serious ailments. In the early eighteenth century, when tea evolved from a luxury good into a staple of mass consumption the symbolical and practical value gave way to fierce competition. Moral crusaders slated the idea that tea was increasingly popular among middle- and lower-class consumers. Their biting criticism reveals the tension between the different conventions of value: those of the market and those of traditional social hierarchy and order. Ryckbosch’s exhaustive analysis debunks and hones some highly teleological models in economic history, which reduce long-term evolutions in consumer behaviour to a black-and-white-opposition between the gift culture of medieval or renaissance Europe and modern – read rationalized and utilitarian – consumption. In reality, evolutions were much more complex. Ryckbosch’ analysis is a powerful cry to look beyond the simple facts and figures. If we truly aim to understand why consumption evolved in early modern Europe – and at different stages in various locations – we have to take the complex triangle between economic factors, social relations, and cultural norms into account.

Debunking a traditional and highly teleological narrative is also the point of departure in Stefan Hanß latest article (‘The Fetish of Accuracy: perspectives on early modern time(s)’, Past & Present, 243 (2019) 267-284.) Hanß claims that our modern obsession with accuracy has clouded our understanding of early modern time awareness and temporality, as they are – measured against this modern benchmark – often portrayed as primitive, irrational, and antediluvian. A textbook-example is Lucien Febvre’s famous characterisation of rural communities in the sixteenth century as societies out of time: “we find fancifulness, imprecision, inexactness everywhere, the doing of men who did not even know their ages precisely. Time was not measure with accuracy. No one bothered to keep track of it, reckon it, or regard in in an exact way.” Classic theories such as Koselleck’s Sättelzeit draw a sharp line between preindustrial and modern time consciousness. Feelings of acceleration, restlessness, and progress would only have popped up in the nineteenth century. The fetish of accuracy thus becomes a powerful tool to “other” early modern societies, but also to set the West apart from “the rest”. Letters, diaries, and other egodocuments show that the reality was much more complicated, as sixteenth-century writers cared about precision. They did not necessarily use clocks to keep track of time, but the stations of the sun, the length of common prayers, or even their own pulse provided efficient alternatives to measure time. Most early modern people used several beacons – natural, social, and horological – to locate events in time, so their temporal horizon is best described with the concept of pluritemporality. These practices lingered on in the nineteenth century and even beyond.