

nieuwe blokcitaten—dit keer van historici. Overzichtelijke beschouwingen en historische contextualisering blijven veelal achterwege. Zo wordt de meetingbeweging nergens breder gekaderd en wordt de relatie tussen het vroegsocialisme, Kats' obsessie met het Nederlands als volkstaal en de Vlaamse beweging onvoldoende gecontextualiseerd. Ook de contouren van het jonge Belgische theaterleven zijn te vaag getekend.

*Kats!* is met andere woorden eerder een collage dan een verhalende biografie. In ieder geval spreken de talloze knipsels die Wambacq uit Kats' artistieke en activistische werk heeft geselecteerd erg tot de verbeelding. Aan de vurige en verbeterde toon die Kats aan de dag legde, kunnen de aan hem schatplichtige Vlaamse socialistenvandaag gerust een voorbeeld nemen.

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Charlotte Berry, *The Margins of Late Medieval London, 1430-1541* (London: University of London Press, 2022). 320 p. ISBN 9781914477010.

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Amid the heat wave during which this review was written (summer 2022), discussions about the disadvantaged position of those living in the concrete jungles of European urban fringes ('politics of heat') provide an acute reminder that inequality is often a spatially structured concern. Today as much as in the past, urban fringes are associated with a wide range of forms of deprivation, poverty, and marginality. In *The margins of late medieval London*, Berry takes us back to the fifteenth century to examine this association in closer detail. Cities were historically distinguished from surrounding territories by various privileges attached to membership of their institutions. Definitions of centre and margin were furthermore reinforced by ceremonial uses of city space, carrying symbolic value, as well as anxieties about ungoverned and dangerous suburbs. Berry asks the broad but important question what it meant to live on the spatial fringes of a city: did living on the geographical margins of late medieval London entail social marginality? To what extent were processes of social marginalization spatially informed? Did this spatial marginality pose a constraint on the use of space and the actions of people, and if so, how did it shape their responses to these constraints?

The book sets out to answer these questions by exploring how five neighbourhoods in London's urban fringe (three of which were extramural, and two were located just inside the city) fared in terms of economy, society, and sociability between the fifteenth and sixteenth century. To be able to shed light on life in these neighbourhoods, Berry employs an impressive range of source material – including wills, property records, and court records from the civic wardmote as well as the bishop of London's consistory court – and an equally inspiring mixed methods approach of digital (GIS and social network analysis), quantitative, and qualitative methodologies. In five subsequent chapters she discusses if the urban fringe could be considered particularly poor, how integrated or separated these neighbourhoods were socially, how mobility shaped life at the urban margins and what this meant for the relationship with the city centre, how various civil and ecclesiastical institutions exercised control over processes of inclusion and exclusion and, finally, the ways in which different categories of people attempted to defend themselves against processes of marginalization.

Three interconnected claims recur throughout the different chapters of the book. The first is that London's urban fringe was a socially mixed area rather than a homogenous one. Even though a lesser share of those eligible for taxation and lower average rents reveal these communities to have been relatively poor, there was also a lot of variation between extramural neighbourhoods. Some neighbourhoods were decidedly wealthier than others. Moreover, not only immigrant, unsettled poor found a home in London's urban periphery (as fears might suggest), but its culture of mobility also attracted keepers of inns and hostleries, the availability of larger premises outside city walls drew brewers, bakers and butchers to these spaces, the presence of religious houses afforded women a chance to escape domestic abuse, and the urban fringe in general provided locals opportunities down on their luck to maintain a household and livelihood with reduced means.

A second claim is that centre and margin were intrinsically connected to each other. Mobility of both permanent and temporary kinds shaped life at the margins of the city, fuelled by economic and social interconnections across the urban landscape. People moved in and out of neighbourhoods, or simply moved through them for reasons of work or sociability, fostering enduring relations. The book's third claim is that marginality was never a fixed state, but was inherently negotiable. Marginality depended on social knowledge and reputation, and interactions with institutions that could provide support or accommodation.

What this negotiation entailed in practice was gender and class specific, and was moreover contingent on one's social integration into local support networks – disadvantaging those unsettled in the community. At the same time, the urban periphery also provided spaces of tolerance towards certain acts such as prostitution as well as opportunities to escape reputation. Marginality ultimately meant suffering a hardship that could not be mitigated by social resources, Berry argues.

*The margins of late medieval London* provides a valuable and very readable window into the dynamism of urban life in the late medieval period and the differences in economy, society and sociability that existed between different neighbourhoods. With space at the heart of this book, it contributes to the growing historiographic awareness of the importance of spatial differences in urban social history. Berry emphatically seeks to integrate the experiences of poor and migrant communities into this history of life at the urban fringe, and, as mentioned, does so based on a wonderfully wide range of disparate archival sources and methods, enriching captivating anecdotal evidence with plots, maps, and social network analysis. It is made clear that London's urban fringe was inhabited by a multitude of social groups, who navigated processes of marginalization in different ways according to expectations about gender, class, and settledness. Although the book paints the broad strokes of these repertoires of inclusion and exclusion, the reader is left wondering about the finer details and nuances of these experiences on an intersectional level. How did opportunities and restrictions differ across intersecting and overlapping social identities? For whom was space a factor of disadvantage, and under what circumstances? Future research into these topics will be able to build on and highly benefit from Berry's thorough and creative work, which comes highly recommended to anyone interested in new social and urban history.

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