

<b>M14</b>	<b>POPULAR POLITICS IN THE LATE MEDIEVAL AND EARLY MODERN TOWN (1200-1800)</b>
<b>Organisers:</b>	Jelle Haemers (Leuven) Christian Liddy (University of Durham, UK)
<b>Period:</b>	Medieval/Early Modern
<b>Date:</b>	Friday, 31 August 2012
<b>Time:</b>	09:00-12:30
<b>Room:</b>	200

### Description

Until the second half of the twentieth century, historians believed that the great majority of the people in late medieval and early modern towns lacked not only political participation, but also political consciousness. Urban uprisings were seen as brutal actions against legitimate power holders, such as state officers, clerics, and urban elites. However, in more recent decades, historical research has re-evaluated popular protest and it has gained new insights in the politics of late medieval and early modern citizens. Influenced by contemporary psychological, anthropological and sociological research on human behaviour, and a more critical scrutiny of sources, historians now see urban revolts no longer as irrational behaviour caused by uncontrollable feelings or by untamed reactions to stimuli. Investigating crowds in eighteenth-century and modern history, George Rudé, Eric Hobsbawm and others have discovered a self-confident political world of 'those from below'. Medievalists such as Rodney Hilton, Michel Mollat and Philippe Wolff have shown convincingly that in the medieval town collective anger was caused by the threat of harm to the common interest of a significant number of people. Rational arguments and a self-conscious urban ideology seem to have inspired late medieval townsmen to organize collective actions if there was felt the need. In Sam Cohn's recent study of popular revolt in late medieval Europe, he contended that rebels in France, Flanders and Italy had similar political beliefs and even shared modes of political action, such as communicative rituals, coherent ideological tools, and sophisticated means of uttering grievances. Cohn's book, however, had very little to say about regions other than those mentioned above, and it focused on the most famous cases of medieval dissent (such as the revolt of the Ciompi, the Jacques, the van Arteveldes in Ghent etc.). This session seeks to widen the geographical and chronological scope of research on popular politics by including urban revolts and forms of popular politics in other European regions. Though popular revolts have been studied for England (such as the Peasants' Revolt of 1381), for instance, a lacuna exists in its urban history of the late Middle Ages: historians have devoted considerably more attention to rural rather than urban insurrection. Neither is political resistance in smaller towns in peripheral regions of Europe included in the research on medieval and early modern popular politics. The proposal for this session is therefore written in the spirit of Cohn's plea for more detailed and systematic research into popular revolt across Europe. It aims to 'venture beyond local settings' in order to compare the patterns of popular politics, especially protest and revolt, across linguistic and (later) national boundaries. Therefore we call for papers that study urban revolts in Central- and Southern Europe (such as the Hussite movement, urban uprisings in the southern Italian, Greek and Spanish peninsula, and the Baltic cities), as well as new research on urban revolts elsewhere in the late medieval and early modern town. Studies that compare

findings on different revolts across cities are very welcome. The leading question of the session is: to what extent should historians interpret popular politics solely in terms of revolt, rebellion and resistance?

To address this question, we propose several key issues:

- the political beliefs of the townspeople;
- the discourse in which grievances were uttered;
- the question of continuity or change in the patterns of popular politics in the late medieval and early modern town. Through a study of late medieval collective action in comparative perspective, we hope to explore the contents, the meaning and the function of popular politics, and to find a European rationale behind popular collective action.

This proposal is based on the outcome of previous workshops which were organised by Jelle Haemers or/and Christian Liddy on specific topics of urban collective action. In Kalamazoo, MI (May 2009), Seville (September 2010), and Durham (April 2011) smaller workshops and sessions were organised to set out a research agenda on this topic. The EAUH offers an excellent forum in which to compare the conclusions of these workshops with research of urban historians from other parts of Europe. The experience gained through the organisation of the aforementioned workshops (and the previous EAUH conference in Ghent, 2010) will help to make this session a coherent and balanced gathering, which will involve scholars from all over Europe.

### **Scientific Programme**

- 234     **INTRODUCTION: POPULAR POLITICS IN THE LATE MEDIEVAL AND EARLY MODERN TOWN**  
*Jelle Haemers* (Leuven, Medieval History, Leuven, Belgium)  
*Christian Liddy* (University of Durham, UK, London)
- 412     **'FOR THE COMMON GOOD OF THE REPUBLIC': COMMONS' ACHIEVEMENTS FOR THEIR POLITICAL REPRESENTATION IN LATE MEDIEVAL NORTHERN TOWNS OF SPAIN (1350-1520)**  
*Jesus Angel Solorzano Telechea* (Cantabria, Historical Sciences, Santander, Spain)
- 1499    **POPULAR REVOLT AND MUNICIPAL POLITICS IN SIXTEENTH-CENTURY SEVILLE**  
*Igor Knezevic* (University of Pennsylvania, Department of History, Toronto, Canada)
- 1279    **URBAN PROTEST IN LATE MEDIEVAL EGYPT AND SYRIA**  
*Amina Elbendary* (American University in Cairo, Arab and Islamic Civilizations, New Cairo, Egypt)
- 305     **POLITICS AND REVOLT IN EUROPEAN AND MIDDLE EASTERN CITIES IN THE LATE MIDDLE AGES: COMPARISONS AND CONTRASTS**  
*Patrick Lantschner* (University of Oxford, Merton College, Oxford, U.K.)
- 1399    **ON A RED LINE ACROSS EUROPE. BUTCHERS AND REBELLIONS IN XIVTH CENTURY SIENA**  
*Valentina Costantini* (Siena, Department of History, Siena, Italy)
- 444     **THE POPULAR POLITICS ON THE MEDITERRANEAN PERIPHERY. SOCIAL CONFLICTS AND SOLIDARITY IN THE VENETIAN TOWNS OF THE EASTERN ADRIATIC IN THE 16TH CENTURY**  
*Klemen Pust* (University of Ljubljana, Idrija, Slovenia)

**1082 POPULAR MOVEMENTS IN URBAN CONTEXT: THE CASE OF LATE MEDIEVAL HUNGARY**

*Balázs Nagy* (Central European University, Department of Medieval Studies, Budapest, Hungary)

**1241 VIOLENT CROWDS IN THE PREINDUSTRIAL SCANDINAVIAN CAPITALS**

*Mats Berglund* (Umeå University, Department of Historical, Philosophical and Religious Studies, Umeå, Sweden)

**CONCLUSIONS**

Jan Dumolyn (Ghent University, Ghent, Belgium)