



RESEARCH ARTICLE

‘Look out! Get back!’ Horse-drawn traffic and its challenges in Belgian cities in the early modern period

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Abstract

The horses transporting men and merchandise were key actors in urban development at the very time they placed the city's ability to organize and adapt in doubt. Cities of the southernmost Netherlands and the Principality of Liège were forced to cope with the constant challenge represented by traffic in poorly designed arteries, with a morphology inherited from the medieval period and completely ill-suited to the movement of carriages and wagons. The problem posed by traffic in Belgian cities reached a critical threshold in the seventeenth century, a period in which we observe an increase in the number of horses and harnessed teams. The complications caused by this growing surge culminated in the next century and were marked by the formation of a police force obliged to face the challenge traffic represented. Consequently, numerous urban decisions were taken, transforming both the street's 'lifestyle' and physiognomy.

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the distinction between the urban and the rural environment was less clear cut than it is today. Green spaces and vegetable gardens covered considerable expanses *intra muros*, and animals abounded, evolving in close proximity to humans and in symbiosis with the surrounding countryside. Urban society was indeed largely dependent on animals, their work, their strength, their flesh and their energy to meet various needs, ranging from transport to food.¹ Since the 1980s, the 'animal turn' has seen a proliferation of studies, with historians focusing on fauna as a means of studying both human society and urban history.² Animals, it is now recognized, have contributed to the creation of towns,

¹See in particular issues 44 (2015) and 47 (2016) of the journal *Histoire urbaine*, as well as P. Atkins (ed.), *Animal Cities: Beastly Urban Histories* (Burlington, 2012); H. Velten (ed.), *Beastly London. A History of Animals in the City* (London, 2013); J. Dean, D. Ingram and C. Sethna (eds.), *Animal Metropolis: Histories of Human–Animal Relations in Urban Canada* (Calgary, 2017).

²See in particular K. Kete, *The Beast in the Boudoir: Petkeeping in Nineteenth-Century Paris* (Berkeley, 1994); E. Fudge, 'A left-hand blow. Writing the history of animals', in N. Rothfels (ed.), *Representing Animals* (Bloomington, 2002), 3–18, at 8; H. Ritvo, 'Animal planet', *Environmental History*, 9 (2004), 204–20; K. Thomas, *Man and the Natural World. Changing Attitudes in England 1500–1800* (London, 1983).

and have had an impact on their materiality, management and development.³ Exploring how they have shaped towns, guided urban planning and responded to major developments in society is therefore a legitimate objective, one that gives us a perspective of them as living beings, which, in spite of themselves, have played a leading role in this environment.

Of all the animals living alongside urban dwellers in the early modern period, the horse is undoubtedly the one twenty-first-century men and women most associate with towns and cities of the past. Providing transportation for people and goods before the invention of the internal-combustion engine, horses, carriages and wagons increased street traffic in nineteenth-century towns in Europe and North America.⁴ Their omnipresence in written and iconographic sources, as well as in recent studies on equids,⁵ attest to their absolute necessity to daily life during the *ancien régime*, and hence the considerable role they played in economic development and in preserving social relations. The theme of transport in urban history has attracted considerable attention in the last few years, particularly in view of trends in the international historiography of technology, as attested at the SHOT meeting (Society for the History of Technology) held in Atlanta in 2003 and the T²M conferences (Traffic, Transport and Mobility) (Eindhoven, 2003; Dearborn, 2004).⁶ The role and importance of the horse as engine have also been addressed by Daniel Roche in France, Clay McShane and Joel Tarr in the United States and Peter Edwards and Thomas Almeroth-Williams in the United Kingdom.⁷ In *City of Beasts*, Almeroth-Williams examines how animals shaped Georgian London and agrees with Ann Norton Greene's observations concerning the continuing fundamental role of work horses in the nineteenth century, despite the industrial revolution and the use of machines.⁸ Greene also highlights the key social and political imperatives behind the gradual phasing out of horses in cities, an observation that is also underlined by Andrew A. Robichaud in *Animal City. The Domestication of America*.⁹ The historiography of the modern period, on the other hand, emphasizes the noise and polluting odour caused by

³J. Estebanez, 'Pour une ville vivante? Les animaux dans la fabrique de la ville, histoire d'une requalification partagée', *Histoire urbaine*, 44 (2015), 5–20, at 13.

⁴C. McShane and J. Tarr, *The Horse in the City. Living Machines in the Nineteenth Century* (Baltimore, 2007).

⁵On this subject, see D. Roche, *La culture équestre de l'Occident, XVIe–XIXe siècles: l'ombre du cheval*, 3 vols. (Paris, 2008–15).

⁶M. Flonneau, 'Présentation', *Histoire urbaine*, 11 (2004), 5–8, at 4.

⁷McShane and Tarr, *The Horse in the City*; P. Edwards, *Horse and Man in Early Modern England* (London, 2007); Roche, *La culture équestre de l'Occident*; É. Baratay, *Bêtes de somme. Des animaux au service des hommes* (Paris, 2008). Some studies address these issues: C. Denys, *Police et sécurité au XVIIIe siècle dans les villes de la frontière franco-belge* (Paris, 2002); C. Studeny, *L'invention de la vitesse. France, XVIIIe–XXe siècle* (Paris, 1995); P. Borsay and P. Salnot, 'Transport et divertissement dans les villes anglaises à travers le long XVIIIe siècle', *Histoire urbaine*, 38 (2013), 89–110. For Belgian territory, see A. Badot, 'L'organisation du transport des personnes entre Bruxelles et Anvers au XVIIIe siècle, Concurrence et complémentarité de la voie d'eau et de la chaussée', UC Louvain MA thesis, 2007; C. Loir and F. Preyat, 'À pieds, à cheval, en voiture... Mobilité et mendicité chez le prince de Ligne', *Études sur le 18e siècle*, 45 (2017), 53–72.

⁸T. Almeroth-Williams, *City of Beasts. How Animals Shaped Georgian London* (Manchester, 2019); A. Norton Greene, *Horses at Work. Harnessing Power in Industrial America* (Cambridge, 2008).

⁹A.A. Robichaud, *Animal City. The Domestication of America* (Cambridge, 2019).

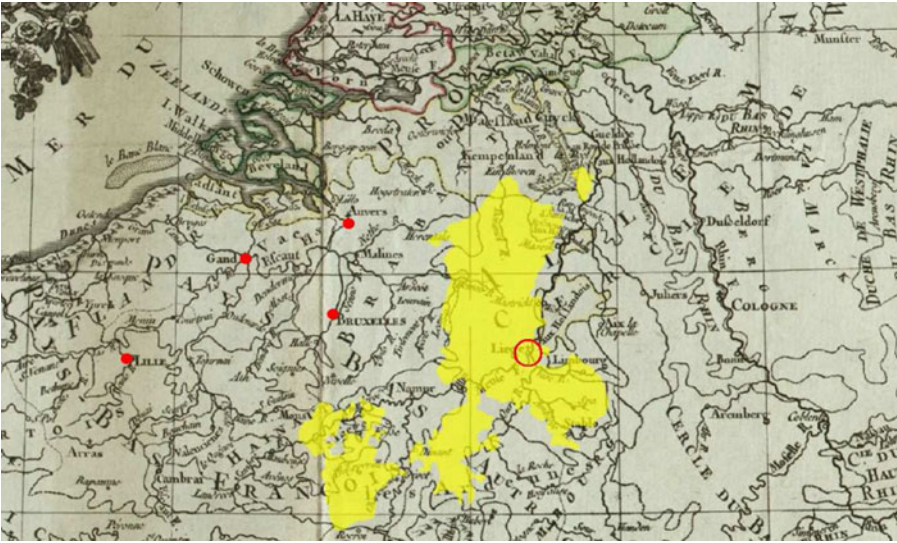


Figure 1. Map of the Principality of Liège in the eighteenth century, indicating the locations of Liège and Namur – the two cities of most interest here – as well as a few large towns in the vicinity.

Source: L.-C. Desnos, *General Civil and Ecclesiastical Atlas. The French, Austrian and Dutch Netherlands, Divided into Civil and Ecclesiastical Provinces* (Paris, 1766). Image retouched by I. Gilles, ‘Les demeures patriciennes et leur organisation intérieure à Liège au XVIIIe siècle. L’influence du modèle français’, University of Liège Ph.D. thesis, 2012, 23.

animals and horses in the city, as well as the impact of equids on the organization of the urban space, such as traffic jams and accidents and the ensuing police regulations.¹⁰ The approach is generally anthropological – with a focus on human representations, decisions and facts – rather than ethological. Animal studies have steered away from the latter perspective over the past 40 years, in an attempt to restore focus on animals in investigations of anthrozoological relations, in an interdisciplinary perspective.¹¹ Although some historians, including Éric Baratay and Chris Pearson,¹² take this route, this article does not pursue the fashionable ‘animalist turn’, nor does it address the issue of animal ‘agency’. The objective is not to consider history from the point of view of animals; however, this does not mean considering them as merely passive actors, but rather looking at their true influence and roles.

In spite of the increasing volume of literature relating to horses in the city, there are not yet any studies that focus upon how Belgian cities dealt with horse-drawn traffic in the early modern period. This article fills that gap by specifying how traffic was managed and by shedding light on the urban environment and how it was ordered in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (see [Figure 1](#)).

¹⁰E. Cockayne, *Hubbub: Filth, Noise, and Stench in England, 1600–1770* (New Haven, 2007); Roche, *La culture équestre de l’Occident*; Denys, *Police et sécurité*; Velten (ed.), *Beastly London*.

¹¹J. Michalon, A. Doré and C. Mondémé, ‘Une sociologie avec les animaux: faut-il changer de sociologie pour étudier les relations humains/animaux?’, *Sociologies* (2016), 2–3; D. Lestel, *L’animalité* (Paris, 1996).

¹²É. Baratay, *Le point de vue animal, une autre version de l’histoire* (Paris, 2012); C. Pearson, ‘Beyond “resistance”: rethinking nonhuman agency for a “more-than-human world”’, *European Review of History*, 22 (2015).

Horses and vehicles may be taken to represent the impact of animals on the way the city was built. They are among the key figures in the planning process, a challenge to 'the road network's ability to manage traffic, limit problems, and authorize the parking required for trade'.¹³ This also means paying attention to chronology and studying the evolution of the phenomenon in the urban environment: when did the vehicularization of cities take on exponential momentum? Hence, it is through this vital means of transport that we begin to see the organization of the urban community – and its actors – taking shape.¹⁴

Located in the heart of Europe and having the continent's densest urban make-up in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the territory of present-day Belgium was a combination of two quite distinct socio-political realities: on the one hand, we find the Netherlands, administered by a sovereign issuing from the Spanish House of Habsburg and later, after the Treaties of Utrecht (1713), by the Austrian branch. Brussels was the capital. On the other hand, in the east, we find the Principality of Liège, an autonomous region led by a prince-bishop, albeit a vassal of the Holy Roman Empire since the tenth century. Dependent on the great European powers and close to France, these two states included a dense network of cities mostly vying for position, which had nowhere near the demographic numbers of major European cities, but which, for that very reason, are representative of urbanism in the early modern period.¹⁵ Studies often focus on remarkable agglomerations like London or Paris, extremely large and densely populated capitals that were not necessarily representative of the urban reality of the period. Most agglomerations were more modest and are worthy of investigation. In doing so, it is interesting to look at several elements of comparison, particularly relating to urban planning and governance. For example, were the paths taken by small and medium-sized cities and the urban planning measures they adopted similar to those of the European behemoths? Was there a perceptible difference in the rate at which these measures were implemented? Does research on Belgian cities confirm the impression given by Emily Cockayne in *Hubbub* that English cities in early modern times were particularly chaotic and unregulated?

Furthermore, towns in the southernmost Netherlands and the Principality of Liège have rich archives that are of great assistance in the study of human–non-human animal relations. The cities of Liège and Namur will be the main focus of this study. They were chosen for the different political and demographic advantages they present, as well as the complementary nature of their documentation.

¹³D. Roche, 'Histoire des animaux. Questions pour l'histoire des villes', *Histoire urbaine*, 47 (2016), 5–12, at 9.

¹⁴McShane and Tarr, for example, have shown the importance of equids in the nineteenth century, particularly as they helped maintain social relations and supplies. McShane and Tarr, *The Horse in the City*.

¹⁵Brussels, with 75,000 inhabitants at the end of the eighteenth century, was the largest city in Belgium. Antwerp, Ghent and Liège were next, with around 50,000 inhabitants in the same period, followed by a number of cities like Namur and Verviers, with around 10,000 inhabitants. By comparison, London had almost a million inhabitants by 1800 and Paris had in excess of 500,000 at the same date. European agglomerations like Madrid, Lisbon, Rome, Berlin and Vienna numbered 100,000 inhabitants. A. Lottin and H. Solly, 'Aspects de l'histoire des villes des Pays-Bas méridionaux et de la principauté de Liège (milieu du XVIIIe siècle à la veille de la Révolution française)', in A. Lottin and H. Solly, *Études sur les villes en Europe occidentale. Milieu du XVIIe siècle à la veille de la Révolution française. Angleterre, Pays-Bas et Provinces-Unies, Allemagne rhénane*, vol. II (Paris, 1983), 213–306, at 227.

The regulations of authorities, the townspeople's requests, police reports listing infringements, judicial enquiries and newspapers are utilized here alongside iconographic and material evidence. Pursuing this trans-documentary approach in which different types of sources are compared, we also propose a methodological process in which anthrozoological relationships are examined.

Traffic: dense, complicated and ever on the increase

On 6 July 1776, François Laderière, a middle-class Namur fish merchant, saw a wagon on the corner of the bridge over the Sambre bounding at great speed towards Rue Saint Hilaire, right in the city centre. It was not travelling in the middle of the road, but near the edge. The vehicle struck a horse laden with a bag of flour, despite the cries and attempts of the owner's son to prevent the collision.¹⁶ Flour flew everywhere, the driver took flight and the horse, whose leg was broken by the wagon wheel, lay stricken on the public road.

That the city was regarded as 'a hell for horses' is a fact: the urban environment exhausted them, wounded them and subjected them to endless changes in speed and the often slippery surface slowed them down.¹⁷ However, the questions raised by the event witnessed by François Laderière in the summer of 1776 also pose a challenge to the policing of urban traffic in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Were such accidents frequent? Did a highway code exist? Drawn from a judicial enquiry, this example illustrates the extent to which urban layout, driving rules and city planning strategies were needed to ensure the daily flow of traffic while preventing accidents.

City traffic in the early modern period was largely characterized by its density. This was mainly a result of the major economic and commercial role played by large towns, where agricultural and industrial goods were traded in indoor and outdoor markets and workshops, thus leading to a heavy flow of traffic. Furthermore, from the Renaissance to the turn of the twentieth century, the number of equids increased considerably throughout Europe, as a result of a rise in energy needs before the success of railways.¹⁸ This factor goes hand in hand with the development of transportation routes on land and by river, seen in the Netherlands in the eighteenth century.¹⁹ In addition to draught horses and wagons, we might also point to the carriages and riding horses used by the social and ecclesiastical

¹⁶Namur, State Archives, Namur, Provincial Council, 10774 [18 Apr. 1777 – 28 Oct. 1777].

¹⁷É. Baratay, *Et l'homme créa l'animal. Histoire d'une condition* (Paris, 2003), 324.

¹⁸Roche, *La culture équestre de l'Occident*, vol. II, 9. The author points out that the number of horses tripled in that period. *Ibid.*, vol. III, 7.

¹⁹Both water and land routes increased and improved in quality in that period, which considerably strengthened links between cities and the countryside. On this subject, see Badot, 'L'organisation du transport des personnes', 105–33, at 105; B. Blondé, 'De transportwegen en de economische ontwikkeling in de regio Antwerpen-Mechelen-Lier (1710–1790)', *Bijdragen tot geschiedenis*, 78 (1995), 93–106; C. Bruneel and L. Delporte, 'La chaussée gage de prospérité? Le Roman Pays au XVIIIe siècle', *ibid.*, 67–91; H. Deceulaer, 'Urban artisans and their countryside customers: different interactions between town and hinterland in Antwerp, Brussels and Ghent (18th century)', in B. Blondé, E. Vanhaute and M. Galand (eds.), *Labour and Labour Markets, between Town and Countryside (Middle Ages–19th Century)* (Turnhout, 2001), 218–35; B. Blondé, 'Feeding cities. Transportation costs, paved roads and town–countryside relationships in eighteenth-century Brabant', in P. van Cruyningen and E. Thoen (eds.), *Food Supply, Demand*

elite for travel and, more especially, to demonstrate their social standing.²⁰ Stagecoaches also enabled town dwellers to travel from one city to another. Thus, a coach would leave Brussels bound for Paris twice a week, stopping at Mons and Valenciennes, for a total journey time of 30 hours.²¹ Saddle horses and vehicles were also available for hire.²² Indeed, there were numerous vehicles in towns, as attested in the reports of the governor general of the Netherlands, Charles de Lorraine.²³ They became even more diverse in the seventeenth century, and especially in the eighteenth century, when berlins and berlin coupés, trucks, vis-à-vis, cabriolets, barouches and wursts plied the roads day and night.²⁴ As these vehicles became more diversified, they also increased in number. Referring to repairs on a quay in Liège in 1662, the author of the *Sommaire historial de Liège* stated that the work was done in order to enable coaches to travel on it, 'which at that time were coming into vogue among the rich and people of means'.²⁵ Indeed, the seventeenth century saw the rise of the fashion for carriages in the Mosan city. In June 1660, another chronicler pointed out that before, 'there were but two carriages in Liège, whereas now they are found by the hundred'.²⁶ These numbers are clearly to be treated with caution, especially since one contemporary wrote on the subject in 1709: 'Sixty years back, there were no more than a half dozen; and they were only built of leather; we now see more than sixty for which as many valets, coachmen and other servants are needed.'²⁷ While the authors do not agree on the number of vehicles present in the city in the late seventeenth century, they both underline an increase that seemed considerable to them.

This development, alongside the proliferation and increased sophistication of horse-drawn vehicles, advanced even further in the next century, once cutting-edge French coachwork had become notable right across Europe, helping to increase trade with Paris.²⁸ In addition to the French capital and London, Brussels became another important manufacturing centre for carriages,²⁹ and went on to achieve international renown in the field. Hence, production was on a considerable upswing by the end of the *ancien régime*, and the issue of mobility became more pressing

and Trade. Aspects of the Economic Relationship between Town and Countryside (Middle Ages–19th Century) (Turnhout, 2012), 123–41.

²⁰P. Edwards, 'Horses and elite identity in early modern England: the case of Sir Richard Newdigate II of Arbury Hall, Warwickshire (1644–1710)', in P.F. Cuneo (ed.), *Animals and Early Modern Identity* (Aldershot, 2014), 131–48.

²¹C. Rommelaere, *Voitures et carrossiers de XVIIIe et XIXe siècle. La Belgique face à la France et l'Angleterre* (Brussels, 2004), 25.

²²Liège, State Archives, Liège, Aldermen, Grand Registry, 43, 21 Jan. 1778, fols. 101v–103v, at fol. 102r; 'Ordonnance touchant les aubergistes et les loueurs de chevaux, qui exercent leur industrie au détriment du service public de la poste au chevaux', 19 Jan. 1778, in M.-L. Polain (ed.), *Recueil des anciennes ordonnances de la Belgique. Principauté de Liège (ROBPL)* (1860), 797–8.

²³Roche, *La culture équestre de l'Occident*, vol. II, 64–6.

²⁴For information on these types of vehicles and their characteristics, see Rommelaere, *Voitures et carrossiers*, 50–65.

²⁵Liège, Liège University Library (LUL), manuscripts, 174, *Sommaire historial de Liège depuis l'an 1538 jusqu'à 1668*, [n.d.], fol. 939.

²⁶*Ibid.*, 1014, Chronique du Pays de Liège, 1736, fol. 1164.

²⁷L. Abry, 'Revue de Liège en 1700', *BIAL*, 8 (1866), 273–99, at 289.

²⁸Roche, *La culture équestre de l'Occident*, vol. I, 360.

²⁹Rommelaere, *Voitures et carrossiers*, 36.

than ever.³⁰ Through its geographical proximity to France and the presence of a very famous carriage works in the territory, the cities of the Netherlands and the Principality of Liège followed the same general process of the ‘vehicularization’ of space as other major European cities of the time.³¹ In Paris and London, the dizzying expansion of transport linked to trade and entertainment in the eighteenth century accentuated the problem and posed similar issues, although on a different scale altogether. By comparison, Brussels counted 180 horse-drawn carriages in 1802. The number of carriages in Paris rose from around 300 in the mid-seventeenth century to 15,000 by 1750 and had reached 20,000 by 1765. Although less impressive, in London the increase was nonetheless considerable.³²

From then on, traffic density and difficulties were attributed to the urban layout and lifestyles of the early modern period. Stuck within its ramparts, the city was a concentrated environment lacking space.³³ Medieval walls imposed a significant limit on urban leaders and improvers that should not be overlooked. Although some of Liège’s ramparts collapsed at the end of the eighteenth century, it was not until the nineteenth century that they eventually disappeared as a result of private construction. The situation in Namur was similar: although demolition of fortifications began in 1784, the city would not be rid of them for another century.³⁴ Unlike larger cities like London and Paris, whose walls and old city gates were demolished in the mid-eighteenth century or earlier,³⁵ Belgian cities were trapped within their walls for the entire duration of the *ancien régime*, which limited opportunities for development. The winding narrow arteries inherited from the Middle Ages, where numerous obstacles sprouted from the densely built-up urban fabric and professional activities proliferated, did not facilitate movement.³⁶ Thus, in Verviers, one inhabitant of Rue de Heusy said he was unable to get his horses out of his courtyard to take them to water, because of obstacles on the public road.³⁷ The narrow lanes, the abundance of manure, the absence of demarcation between the spaces used by vehicles and pedestrians, the stalls and shop fronts, the protruding constructions and cellar hatches in the ground were all totally

³⁰Loir and Preyat, ‘À pieds, à cheval, en voiture’, 56. It also depends on different contexts, such as war and sieges, when troops and their mounts are withdrawn to the city. On this, see Liège, LUL, manuscripts, 174, *Sommaire historique de Liège depuis l’an 1538 jusqu’à 1668*, [n.d.], fol. 834; Liège, State Archives, Liège, Chapitre Saint-Lambert, secrétariat, 94 [n.d.], fol. 394r; Namur, State Archives, Ville de Namur, 765, 18–20 Jul. 1745.

³¹A. Pardailhé-Galabrun, ‘Les déplacements des Parisiens dans la ville aux XVII^e et XVIII^e siècles. Un essai de problématique’, *Histoire, économie et société*, 2 (1983), 205–53, at 224.

³²Borsay and Salnot, ‘Transport et divertissement’, 94.

³³Horses also took up a lot of space, requiring the construction of stables, drinking troughs and considerable additional space to store their food, as evidenced by several visits made in the mid-eighteenth century to cloister houses in ecclesiastical establishments of Liège, in order to inventory their reserves of hay, straw and oats. Liège, State Archives, Liège, Privy Council, 389, *Visites des établissements ecclésiastiques et recensement de leurs réserves de foin, paille et avoine*, 23 Oct. 1747.

³⁴P. Bragard *et al.*, *Namur et ses enceintes. Une fortification urbaine du Moyen Âge à nos jours* (Namur, 2009).

³⁵P. Whitfield, *London: A Life in Maps* (London, 2006), 59.

³⁶On the role of the street, see also M. Garden, ‘Histoire de la rue’, *Pouvoirs*, 116 (2006), 5–17; A. Farge, *Vivre dans la rue à Paris au XVIII^e siècle* (Paris, 1979).

³⁷Liège, State Archives, Commune of Verviers, R15, 13 May 1773, fols. 274–5.



Figure 2. *La place du Meir à Anvers, 1601–1700*, oil painting, 90 x 140 cm, Musées royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique, Brussels (Institut royal du Patrimoine artistique – IRPA).

incompatible with horse and carriage traffic. Streets were not built for this purpose, hence the mobility issues, as illustrated in a painting depicting *Meir in Antwerp* (Figure 2).

Vehicles particularly ‘highlight the extent to which the morphology of urban space inherited from medieval times was unsuited to such traffic’.³⁸ In Rue des Bouchers in Namur, monks residing at the Floreffe convent testified to this state of affairs and lamented the daily complexity involved in moving up and down the street. It was so narrow that it was impossible for two wagons to pass each other. One had ‘to back up into the houses’ to allow the other to go by. Not to mention the fact that the same street was often inaccessible because of the ‘stench of animals’ or flooding from the river:

Remonstrance from the Monks and Abbot of the Convent of Floreffe that their house of refuge which they hold and possess in Namur is located in an extremely inconvenient place, that is, Rue des Bouchers; being only 9 and a half feet wide, when there is an oncoming wagon, one of them is forced to withdraw into the houses, because there is only room for one wagon; the street is always filled with rubbish and filth caused by the continual and daily slaughtering of animals, such that it is practically uninhabitable.³⁹

³⁸J.-L. Laffont, ‘L’animal dans la ville à l’époque moderne. Le cas de Toulouse’, in M.-C. Marandet (ed.), *L’homme et l’animal dans les sociétés méditerranéennes (4ème journée d’étude du Centre de Recherches Historiques sur les Sociétés Méditerranéennes et du Pôle Universitaire Européen de Montpellier et du Languedoc-Roussillon, 20 novembre 1998)* (Perpignan, 2000), 187–251, at 237.

³⁹Namur, State Archives, Namur, Provincial Council, 110, 23 Oct. 1641.

Likewise, the inhabitants of the centre of Liège also expressed their dissatisfaction with the narrowness of the roads, where ‘city wagons...have a hard time getting through’.⁴⁰ Such testimonies are explicit about the city’s difficulties in dealing with the situation, opening the way to questions regarding accidents that might occur and traffic rules.

Bad-tempered coachmen, reckless drivers and child-killing carters: road hazards and their originators

Although it can be assumed that accidents were becoming more frequent with the growing number of horse-drawn vehicles, they were still relatively few, according to the sources consulted, and fatal cases were rare. In Lille, there were 45 traffic deaths between 1713 and 1791, accounting for 6 per cent of all accidental deaths in the city.⁴¹ Across almost the entire eighteenth century, a total of 12 people met their deaths for similar reasons in Douai.⁴² In Namur, the sergeants reported at least six injuries, while a few Provincial Council investigations also reported on disastrous ends. Although these accidents were few in number and were part of the general events of urban life, the danger was very real and was perceived as such by residents, who grew accustomed to shielding themselves from it. In a context where the population moved about on streets with no pavements, and thus with no clear separation between the space for vehicles and the space for pedestrians, the latter were often forced to stand back to let carriages go by, sometimes at the very last moment.⁴³ It should be noted that carriages could go as fast as they wanted, which increased the risk of collisions with people on foot as well as with other vehicles, as observed earlier.⁴⁴

Among the individuals targeted by the authorities because of their non-compliant behaviour on the road, merchants, young people and above all coachmen – those who drove horse-drawn carriages – were singled out in particular. The image of the bad-tempered, aggressive coachman is a commonplace that was spread through iconography and literature alike.⁴⁵ For example, Louis-Sebastien Mercier and horse veterinarian Guillaume-Etienne Lafosse described the martyrdom of animals and pedestrians in Enlightenment Paris.⁴⁶ The situation was similar in the city of Liège, where the attitude of coachmen and the difficulties in getting around were described by a traveller from Paris to Spa: ‘All the streets leading to the palace are

⁴⁰Liège, State Archives, Liège, Cité de Liège, 19, 30 Oct. 1750, fol. 181v.

⁴¹C. Denys, ‘La mort accidentelle à Lille et Douai au XVIIIe siècle: mesure du risque et opposition d’une politique de prévention’, *Histoire urbaine*, 2 (2000), 95–112, at 104.

⁴²Or 12.5% of all accidents. *Ibid.*

⁴³Pavements only began to appear in the late eighteenth century, and then only in limited numbers owing to the difficulty of laying them in many streets. *Ibid.*, 105, 108.

⁴⁴No mention of collisions with other animals can be found in the sources consulted. However, it is more than likely that accidents with livestock or dogs did occur, but have left no trace.

⁴⁵This very real situation, Daniel Roche explains, runs counter to the one recommended in handbooks of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, which instructed coachmen to be patient, control their speed and respect their animals. Roche, *La culture équestre de l’Occident*, vol. I, 315–16.

⁴⁶É.-G. Lafosse, *Nouvelle pratique de ferrer les chevaux* (Paris, 1758), 32–3; L.-S. Mercier, *Tableau de Paris*, vol. V (Amsterdam, 1783), 329–30. Étienne-Guillaume Lafosse (? –1765) was a blacksmith in the king’s small stables in Versailles.



Figure 3. Johann Georg Bergmüller, *View of the Large Church of Saint Lambert, in Liège* [n.d.], Liège, Cabinet des Estampes, inv. 377.

dirty, narrow and unsafe for a man on foot. Coachmen, who by nature are hard and insensitive, are that much worse here: they make sport of forcing you back against a wall.⁴⁷ Johann Georg Bergmüller (1688–1762) was someone who seemingly tried to escape from in front of a carriage near Saint Lambert Cathedral (Figure 3), whereas the poet Guérineau de Saint Péravi described his walk through the streets of Liège as follows:

Just I think I have escaped a menacing carriage,
 The clumsy coachman lays upon my back
 A mighty resounding whip crack
 Which forces me to howl in lamentation
 And utter a curse that would take a Christian aback.⁴⁸

Inconveniences and road accidents could also be caused by merchants and anyone else using carts or wagons in their occupation. In addition to the testimony of François Laderière referred to above, another good example is found in the investigation by the Provincial Council of Namur concerning a miller named Martin Motte.⁴⁹ This individual worked for the Sambre mill in Namur and was charged with murder after a four-year-old boy was crushed to death beneath the wheel of his wagon as he was returning to his place of work.⁵⁰ On another occasion, the

⁴⁷ *L'homme sans-façon ou lettres d'un voyageur allant de Paris à Spa*, 1st part ([n.p.], 1786), 198.

⁴⁸ F. Magnette, 'Un poème sur Liège à la fin du XVIIIe siècle', *Wallonia*, 19 (1911), 277–300, at 284.

⁴⁹ Namur, State Archives, Namur, Provincial Council, 3686, 31 Jan. 1711.

⁵⁰ It should be noted that no regulations concerning the maximum weight wagons could carry have been found.

same miller was at the market with his vehicle loaded with grain. Unable to move easily because of the density of the crowd, he ran into a pillar. The pillar fell on a twelve-year-old child who, unable to get out of the way fast enough, was crushed and perished. Martin Motte pleaded not guilty, especially since, in the first case, the young victim had shot out from the left side of the wagon, so the driver was unable to see him. He wrote to Philippe V requesting a letter of remission and won his case.⁵¹ As noted above, these accidents were probably relatively unusual, but the layout of buildings coupled with the concentration of population made the risk very real.

While coachmen were widely criticized and drivers in general could cause damage, it should be stressed that their task was far from simple. They had to manoeuvre in narrow, winding, densely populated streets, encountering difficulties related to the weight of their vehicles and their ease of handling. More difficult to drive, carriages without tillers were prohibited in Liège and in towns along the Franco-Belgian border.⁵² Another complexity was the unforeseeable reactions of animals who were hard to control and were easily frightened: 'Horse-drawn transport remains an unruly engine, always highly temperamental.'⁵³ Vulnerable on unsteady ground and subject to injuries, horses are living creatures that can experience fear and can be frightened by noise, a sudden event or contact with other animals, such as dogs.⁵⁴ Such an incident happened in December 1775, when the *Netherlands Gazette* reported that a saddler's horse pulling a light cabriolet in the city of Brussels, suddenly kicked several times and ended up careening off at full gallop.⁵⁵ Ideally, drivers were expected to be able to lead the animal, that is, to control it, communicate through language and have the manual dexterity to handle the reins correctly. Yet it was technically impossible to deal with unforeseen situations requiring the horse to stop abruptly, as sudden braking was not possible.⁵⁶ Despite the coachman's cries of 'Look out! Get back!', it was sometimes hard for city dwellers to get out of the way in time. The coachman's skills were, however, paramount for mitigating such difficulties as far as possible, as horses driven by an inexperienced coachman were more likely to cause injury. Classified advertisements published in newspapers to recruit a coachman might state that he should have a good licence and mention the number of horses he should be capable of handling.⁵⁷

Another danger was imprudent individuals galloping their horses in town. Catherine Denys records 45 speeders in the reports of the Namur sergeants between 1761 and 1778, two-thirds of whom were young men (31 individuals).⁵⁸

⁵¹Namur, State Archives, Namur, Provincial Council, 3686, 31 Jan. 1711.

⁵²Liège, State Archives, Liège, Privy Council, 1083, 24 Apr. 1723, fols. 10r–12v; Denys, *Police et sécurité*, 218.

⁵³Studeny, *L'invention de la vitesse*, 124.

⁵⁴C. Degueurce, 'La ferrure des chevaux de travail à Paris aux XVIIIe et XIXe siècle', *Histoire urbaine*, 44 (2015), 41–60, at 41; Liège, Bibliothèque Ulysse Capitaine (BUC), Cap. 10360, *Gazette de Liège, avec privilège*, 28 Oct. 1785.

⁵⁵Brussels, Koninklijke Bibliotheek Bibliothèque royale, VB 7845A, *Gazette des Pays-Bas*, 14 Dec. 1775.

⁵⁶Denys, 'La mort accidentelle à Lille et Douai', 104.

⁵⁷Liège, BUC, Cap. 10360, *Gazette de Liège, avec privilège*, 31 Dec. 1784; *ibid.*, 20 Oct. 1788.

⁵⁸C. Denys, 'Les activités des sergents de ville de Namur au XVIIIe siècle', *ASAN*, 70 (1996), 199. See in particular Namur, State Archives, Namur, High Court, 1340, 18 Sep. 1761, fol. 79; *ibid.*, 10 Mar. 1763,

Some even organized races through the city, as two people did in 1771, from the Benedictines to Rue Saint Jacques.⁵⁹ Such behaviour led to accidents on several occasions. On 9 March 1765, a sergeant reported seeing an innkeeper on horseback knock down an old woman and two children,⁶⁰ while in June 1770, another man was mown down.⁶¹ This was not new. Previously, in August 1602, a boy rushing to the butter market on his horse, missed his turn and ended up in the street leading to the grain exchange, leaving one child with a serious head injury.⁶² Thus, casualties were primarily found among the young and the elderly, who were less vigilant and had slower reflexes to get out of the way.⁶³ Children run without paying attention to their surroundings, which explains the plethora of ordinances prohibiting them from playing and fighting in the street.⁶⁴

A highway code?

The absence of general rules of conduct and a highway code laid down by the authorities is one of the fundamental causes of the problems mentioned above. While much was written on how to ride a horse, there was very little focus on how to drive a carriage.⁶⁵ There was, on the other hand, a set of tacit behaviours that regulated traffic in the city.

The first attitude to be adopted was driving at a reasonable speed. In town, this meant moving not much faster than at a walk. The sergeants' reports in Namur, however, have offered up several testimonies of individuals galloping through the city on their mounts.⁶⁶ Drivers of hackney carriages, carts, wagons and other carriages also deviated from the rules; for instead of driving their animals at an ordinary pace, they made them run wildly, especially at street corners, to the extent 'that pedestrians are constantly caught off guard and risk being crushed'.⁶⁷ The aldermen of Namur expressed their dissatisfaction on this matter and meted out a fine of five guilders, thereby establishing a sentence for speeding.

Secondly, there were methods in place aimed at co-ordinating the passage of vehicles at crossroads and junctions. One of these is reported in an accident in Namur involving two vehicles and injuring a horse at the Quatre Coins. Here are the facts: in 1765, a wagon coming from the iron gate, and thus coming down the street, went through the intersection at full speed and hit the horses of a

fol. 117; *ibid.*, 10 Jun. 1763, fol. 121; *ibid.*, 5 Aug. 1763, fol. 123; *ibid.*, 24 Jan. 1764, fol. 131; *ibid.*, 21 Feb. 1764, fol. 134; *ibid.*, 18 Jul. 1767, fol. 208.

⁵⁹Namur, State Archives, Namur, High Court, 1340, 29 Apr. 1771, fol. 313.

⁶⁰*Ibid.*, 9 Mar. 1765, fol. 153.

⁶¹*Ibid.*, 18 Jun. 1770, fol. 293.

⁶²Namur, State Archives, Namur, Provincial Council, 2202, 7 Aug. 1602, [n.f.].

⁶³See, for example, Namur, State Archives, Namur, Reports, 773, *Règlement de police pour la ville de Charleroi*, 1779, fol. 19v.

⁶⁴On this subject, see in particular Namur, State Archives, Namur, Borgnet and Golenvaux, 3757, 22 Apr. 1749; Namur, State Archives, Namur, Provincial Council, 231, 13 Oct. 1790; Denys, *Police et sécurité*, 219.

⁶⁵Studený, *L'invention de la vitesse*, 124.

⁶⁶Namur, State Archives, Namur, Borgnet and Golenvaux, 3858, 8 Aug. 1761; at *infra*.

⁶⁷*Ibid.* Drivers should slow down at street corners.

wagon coming from Rue Saint Jacques.⁶⁸ The witnesses in the ensuing investigation said the collision had occurred even though the ‘initiator had been cracking his whip from the Carmelites through to the Quatre Coins, in such a manner that it was impossible, so to speak, not to hear the noise from Rue Saint Jacques’.⁶⁹ This detail suggests that it was use of the whip that established a priority. ‘All that whip cracking was a signal carters usually made as they arrived at street corners to avoid running into other wagons.’⁷⁰ The fact that the driver coming from Rue Saint Jacques was reproached for not having heard the racket made by the wagon coming down at a good clip also worked against him, as he was judged to have been in the wrong. Therefore, drivers had to listen carefully and judge by the noise who had right of way.

Intersections in narrow streets also required certain rules to avoid hazardous manoeuvres and obstruction of the public way. It was even more important to clarify and co-ordinate these situations, as they occurred frequently. First, the rule for driving on the right side of the road existed, but was poorly adhered to and sometimes even forgotten, which led to drivers travelling abreast of each other.⁷¹ In the narrow streets where carriages could not get past each other, drivers ‘had to make room’ for carriages they encountered.⁷² Thus, on meeting a cabriolet or a berlin, millers and brewers would have to stop, move their wagon to the side of the road at the widest point and give way. Priority was based on social rank. However, this custom was not always respected by Liège carters, ‘hence pedestrians were in constant danger of misfortune’.⁷³ As for the rule applying to when two coaches or wagons passed each other in small alleys, legislation was silent and drivers had to work things out as best they could, which led to chaotic situations, like those occurring in Rue des Bouchers.

Passage was often obstructed by carriages that were poorly placed or else parked right in the middle of the street. That was the case when farmers or other traders who used coal or grain stopped in the street to unload raw materials. In 1780, for example, a sergeant reported that an ass harnessed to a cart blocked the passage in front of the grain market.⁷⁴ To deal with such situations, the authorities in Liège and Namur urged drivers ‘to get as far out of the way as possible’ when a wagon, a carriage or other vehicle stopped in the street to load or unload.⁷⁵ However, there was no space ‘to move to the side’ or park. The Namur magistrates thus required millers, carters, merchants or farmers coming to the grain market

⁶⁸Namur, State Archives, Namur, Provincial Council, 7406, 1765, [n.f.]; State Archives, Namur, Provincial Council, 10461 [9 Dec. 1765 – 10 Feb. 1766]. The Quatre Coins or ‘four corners’ was a crossroads at the intersection of the present-day Rue Saint Jacques, Rue de Fer, de l’Ange and Rue Émile Cuvelier.

⁶⁹Namur, State Archives, Namur, Provincial Council, 10461 [9 Dec. 1765 – 10 Feb. 1766].

⁷⁰*Ibid.*

⁷¹Studený, *L’invention de la vitesse*, 71.

⁷²Liège, State Archives, Liège, Cité de Liège, 1083, 8 Feb. 1745 [n.f.].

⁷³*Ibid.*

⁷⁴Namur, State Archives, Namur, High Court, 1341, 28 May 1782, fol. 125.

⁷⁵Liège, State Archives, Liège, Cité de Liège, 1083, 8 Feb. 1745, [n.f.]; ‘Political edict of the city of Namur’, 6 Oct. 1687, in J. Grandgagnage (ed.), *Coutumes de Namur et coutume de Philippeville*, vol. I (Brussels, 1869), 344.

with their horses to leave them in stables or ‘somewhere else’.⁷⁶ While the last suggestion is rather vague, the reference to stables – urban or military – indicates that such infrastructure was considered to be somewhat akin to today’s carparks. They were available for rent and were intended to shelter the horses of residents doing business or individuals passing through town.⁷⁷ In some cities, on the other hand, there was no space expressly for parking. It was simply a matter of finding a place that did not block passage. For example, in Dinant, horses and wagons prevented the ‘comings and goings, and even access to the houses of the bourgeois’, and the aldermen simply reacted by ordering them to be placed ‘somewhere in the city’ where free passage would not be impeded, such as on bridges.⁷⁸

Given the growing number of horse-drawn vehicles, the authorities in Namur appeared to be more concerned about these issues in the eighteenth century. Parking areas were created in the busiest parts of towns and cities, such as indoor and outdoor markets, mills and at the city gates.⁷⁹ Space could also be leased along the dockyard.⁸⁰ Yet those spaces were still few and far between and horses were often left wherever people found somewhere for them, such as tied to the gates of people’s homes, or church or market hall doors.⁸¹ In Liège, carriage drivers and carters even hitched their horses to ‘window grates or in the courtyard of said town hall’, to the great displeasure of the authorities, who threatened to impound them.⁸² Seen explicitly in practice as well as in the imprecise and somewhat distraught discourse of those in power, the mismatch between the urban environment and the presence of horses, to say nothing of vehicles, evidences a certain circularity here. The fact is that traffic was compromised by the lack of space and infrastructure for parking needed for travel and for trade and commerce. Thus, once again it is this question of the difficulty of adaptation of a milieu to reality in terms of mobility that was posed, not in a new way, but with more intensity.

Driving well also meant staying close to one’s vehicle. However, the Liège authorities stressed that this obligation was far from being observed: ‘A good many misfortunes may yet happen, and various people may be seriously wounded, and risk being crushed, on account of millers and carters who, as they walk in the streets, get so far away from their horses and carts, that they are no longer in a position to drive them.’⁸³ Those individuals were thus ordered to hold onto the reins of their horses, or lead them by the tether strap as they walked through the streets of the city and the suburbs. Again, this recommendation appears not to have been

⁷⁶Namur, State Archives, Namur, Borgnet and Golenvaux, 3757, 22 Apr. 1749; Namur, State Archives, Namur, Provincial Council, 231, 13 Oct. 1790.

⁷⁷However, nothing was said about their carts, which is logical since they were the tools of their trade and were intended to be loaded at the market.

⁷⁸Ordonnance générale sur les marchés et la police de la ville’, 28 Oct. 1600, in L. Lahaye (ed.), *Cartulaire de la commune de Dinant*, vol. IV (Namur, 1891), 271–3, at 271.

⁷⁹F. Jacquet-Ladrier, ‘L’urbanisme à Namur au XVIIIe siècle’, *Confluent*, 29 (1974), 8–11, at 9.

⁸⁰Namur, State Archives, Namur, Reports, 773, *Règlement de police pour la ville de Charleroi*, 1779, fol. 19v.

⁸¹Namur, State Archives, Namur, High Court, 1341, 23 Dec. 1779, fol. 111; Liège, State Archives, Liège, Privy Council, 1091, 24 Sep. 1768, fols. 3v–4r.

⁸²Liège, State Archives, Liège, Cité de Liège, 29, 5 Jun. 1773, fol. 185r–v.

⁸³Ordonnance amplifiant celle du 29 avril 1724, touchant la conduite des charrettes dans les rues de Liège’, 13 Dec. 1725, in Polain (ed.), *ROBPL* (1860), 580.

particularly heeded by the mid-eighteenth century, with the privy council lamenting 'the increasing insolence' of some carters.⁸⁴ The horses of private individuals were subject to similar regulations and were required to be attached to prevent them wandering off.⁸⁵ However, some Namur residents left them in the market place untethered.⁸⁶ They were also occasionally observed wandering freely in the streets of Liège.⁸⁷

Renats, hurtoz and lighting: the emergence of a traffic police force

Apart from a few rules aimed at ensuring the flow of traffic, the authorities attempted to address the limitations posed by the urban layout and the road system. The seventeenth century, and to a greater extent the eighteenth century, saw the emergence of a traffic police, aimed at controlling space and, as far as possible, safeguarding the movement of goods and people. For example, Christophe Loir has shown the importance of the issue of access and traffic in the plans for a new theatre in Brussels at the end of the *ancien régime*.⁸⁸ More generally, this observation goes hand in hand with the development of urban policing and the requirement for safety in cities during the Enlightenment. This does not mean that the authorities' interest in making urban space safe was newly found, but rather that this objective was reinforced by an awareness of the need to prevent accidents, and this led to the establishment of various structures aimed at guaranteeing and improving safety and traffic. Authorities took steps to widen several streets, urging owners of houses with doorsteps, signs, shop fronts and roofs protruding onto the public way to remove them, to affix gutters to dwellings and to cover cellar hatches that opened onto the street.⁸⁹ Street lighting was another element that facilitated traffic: oil lamps were installed in the streets of Namur in the 1780s. Another were the fines issued by sergeants to drivers whose carriages had no lights.⁹⁰ By the end of the eighteenth century, in this context of urban improvement, there was a desire in Liège to separate the spaces intended for pedestrians from those meant for carriages. Once the

⁸⁴A similar situation can be seen with cart dogs, as a city ordinance in Mons stated (31 Jul. 1773) that drivers might allow them to roam freely when they were not using them.

⁸⁵Liège, State Archives, Liège, Cité de Liège, 1083, 8 Feb. 1745, [n.f.].

⁸⁶Namur, State Archives, Namur, Reports, 773, *Règlement de police pour la ville de Charleroi*, 1779, fol. 19v.

⁸⁷Liège, LUL, Cap. 10360, *Gazette de Liège, avec privilège*, 19 Jan. 1776; *ibid.*, 7 Dec. 1792; *ibid.*, 12 Dec. 1792; *ibid.*, 17 Dec. 1792; *ibid.*, 20 Feb. 1793. Horses could also escape from stables: *ibid.*, 13 Feb. 1793.

⁸⁸C. Loir, 'Circulation et théâtronomie au temps des embellissements. La question de la mobilité dans les projets de salles de spectacles à Bruxelles (1785–1792)', *Histoire urbaine*, 38 (2013), 111–31.

⁸⁹For the example of Liège, see Liège, State Archives, Liège, Privy Council, 66, Protocol, 13 Dec. 1725, fol. 375r; Liège, State Archives, Liège, Cité de Liège, 19, 30 Oct. 1750, fol. 181v; 'Ordonnance enjoignant aux possesseurs des maisons qui ont seuils, boutiques, toitures et entrées de caves faisant saillie sur les rues, de les faire disparaître', 19 Apr. 1692, in Polain (ed.), *ROBPL* (1855), 192; 'Ordonnance de police qui étend aux faubourgs de Liège, les dispositions du mandement du 4 septembre 1728, relatives aux auvents, grilles de fer, gouttières et enseignes des maisons', 14 Jun. 1779, in Polain (ed.), *ROBPL* (1860), 837–8; G.-L. De Berghes, 'Police ordinance for the city of Liège', 4 Sep. 1728, in Polain (ed.), *ROBPL* (1855), 614–16. See also S. Barles, 'La boue, la voiture et l'amuseur public. Les transformations de la voirie parisienne, fin XVIIIe – fin XIXe siècle', *Ethnologie française*, 153 (2015), 421–30.

⁹⁰Namur, State Archives, Namur, High Court, 1340, 7 Feb. 1760, fol. 38. Lighting was introduced in the eighteenth century.

refurbishment of the quays was completed, the authorities wanted the public alleys and promenades to be reserved for pedestrians, and no longer 'spoiled' by horses and carriages.⁹¹ In Namur, parking spaces were created, as mentioned above, and the city adopted rounded corners. This involved eliminating 90 degree angles on corner buildings, giving drivers better visibility and easier manoeuvring.⁹² Residents placed *renats* (protective stone barriers) on street corners, intended to prevent carriage axles from damaging houses. They also set up *hurtoz*, whose form and function were similar, but which were placed on either side of carriage entrances.⁹³ More rarely noted were structures that limited access by horse to some roads. The privy council of Liège ordered the installation of a turnstile on the path leading to the Saint Rémy shore to prevent animals from entering.⁹⁴ Similarly, Brussels had removable posts indicating which streets were prohibited to traffic on market days, in order to protect buyers and sellers.⁹⁵ The numerous ordinances on street cleaning – a horse produces 10 to 15 kg of excrement per day – and those related to animals roaming public space can be interpreted as concern for the smooth flow of goods and people.⁹⁶ Some of these developments and the expansion of these urban development projects can be seen as part of the increasing demand for embellishment during the Enlightenment in the Netherlands and the Principality of Liège, as well as the major European cities.⁹⁷ In English cities and in Paris, for example, municipal authorities embarked on a programme of street improvement throughout the eighteenth century, which involved cleaning, widening, paving and lighting streets and encouraging the reconstruction of buildings on corners.⁹⁸ Although the changes came earlier to those cities, the responses to them were similar. In London, the first flat pavement was laid in 1782, whereas street lighting was introduced in Paris and the English capital in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries.⁹⁹ Animals were an integral part of those developments and the desire to bring order to the city; in that sense, they were a profound marker of the great social and policing developments that took place in the early modern period.

Horses transporting men and goods by pack, draught or saddle were key figures in urban development and also challenged the city's ability to organize and adapt. Cities were forced to address the constant issue of traffic circulating on a poorly designed road network inherited from the medieval period and completely ill-suited to the movement of carriages and wagons. Road congestion was also frequent and driving rules were in their infancy; there was no highway code, only

⁹¹Liège, State Archives, Liège, Privy Council, 136, 22 Jul. 1791, fol. 209r-v.

⁹²Jacquet-Ladrier, 'L'urbanisme à Namur', 9.

⁹³H. De Beco, *La fermeté de Liège aux XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles* (Heule, 1975), 55. These elements can still be seen today in several cities.

⁹⁴Liège, State Archives, Liège, Cité de Liège, 30, 16 May 1774, fol. 37v.

⁹⁵C. Denys, *La police de Bruxelles entre réformes et révolutions (1784–1814)* (Paris, 2013), 67.

⁹⁶W. Riguelle, 'La police des animaux dans les Pays-Bas et la principauté de Liège (XVIIe–XVIIIe siècles)', *Revue belge de philologie et d'histoire*, 97 (2019), 459–84.

⁹⁷F. Vanhemelryck, 'Bijdrage tot de studie van het politieapparaat in het Ancien Regime', *Revue belge de philologie et d'histoire*, 50 (1996), 7–37.

⁹⁸Borsay and Salnot, 'Transport et divertissement', 101; Roche, 'Histoire des animaux', 10.

⁹⁹Borsay and Salnot, 'Transport et divertissement', 103.

unwritten rules that were rudimentary, sometimes rather vague and poorly observed. The situation raised concerns, although accidents appear not to have been very frequent, or at least, little evidence remains of them. The problem posed by traffic in Belgian cities reached a critical threshold in the seventeenth century, when the number of horses and vehicles increased. The complications caused by the increasing traffic culminated in the formation, in the following century, of a police force to deal with the challenges it posed. Consequently, in the Netherlands and the Principality of Liège, urban planning measures were put into action to transform both the 'lifestyle' and layout of streets and to facilitate movement. These included widening roads, creating parking zones, *hurtoz*, *renats* and demarcating the separate spaces intended for pedestrians and for carriages. Yet those measures appeared later than in more densely populated cities like London and Paris. They also seem to have been insufficient, given the increase in the number of carriages and other vehicles in circulation in the eighteenth century and, above all, because urban space does not change shape or move. It continued to confine people and animals within the limits of ramparts – although their demolition began earlier, ramparts generally remained until the nineteenth century in Belgian cities.¹⁰⁰ Fundamentally, the presence of horses was in conflict with demographic developments and urban policing, which led to the implementation of a series of regulations. For, although the picture painted is that of a dirty environment with numerous challenges and chaotic traffic, Belgian cities followed the example of the major European metropolises of the time, and the chaos did not go unregulated, as some historians have stated.¹⁰¹ Rather, we agree with Andrew A. Robichaud, who points out that leaders sought to control animals by developing broad regulatory powers.¹⁰² Adapting to growth is always difficult in such environments; the powerlessness of governments can be seen, for example, in the lack of clarity in parking regulations. Traffic and co-existence with the 'principal drivers of the transport system' was therefore a challenge for authorities and required solutions that demonstrated the extent to which urban planning was mindful of the animals who lived and moved around the city.

¹⁰⁰On this subject, see P. Lavedan, J. Huguéney and P. Henrat, *L'urbanisme à l'époque moderne. XVIe–XVIIIe siècles* (Geneva, 1982), 75; Bragard *et al.* (eds.), *Namur et ses enceintes*.

¹⁰¹Cockayne, *Hubbub*.

¹⁰²Robichaud, *Animal City*; Riguelle, 'La police des animaux'.