

dique du thème ni l'aboutissement d'un forum réunissant des spécialistes de disciplines variées. Il n'est pas certain que la publication des discussions nouées avec les auditeurs — à laquelle on a dû renoncer — aurait changé grand-chose à cette situation. Le lecteur s'attend peut-être à ce qu'un censeur historien entonne la litanie des regrets rituels à l'endroit de « littéraires » trop enclins à traiter la littérature comme un phénomène autonome, comme si elle pouvait se comprendre indépendamment du milieu culturel plus large dont elle fait partie. En vérité, cela n'est plus si simple. D'abord, littéraires autant qu'historiens ont généralement fait montre d'un souci fort opportun de dater avec précision les textes qu'ils mettent en œuvre ; plus encore, ils sont dans l'ensemble à l'affût de tout ce qui pourrait les mettre sur la piste d'une évolution dans le temps du thème ou du problème qui retient leur attention. Dans une étape ultérieure, nous pourrions souhaiter que se généralisent les efforts de réinsertion des œuvres littéraires dans leur contexte historique propre ; une discussion interdisciplinaire aurait d'ailleurs pu avantageusement prendre place sur ce terrain.

Mais ce n'est pas à dire qu'il faille bouder les résultats de cette tribune annuelle ; même si toutes les contributions réunies ici ne sont pas des monuments impérissables de la science, le colloque aura permis à des chercheurs de faire valoir leurs travaux et exercé un effet d'entraînement au total bénéfique pour les médiévistes au Québec. Peut-on faire mieux et réduire certaines disparités de niveau ? Les actes des colloques ultérieurs se chargeront de répondre.

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EMMANUEL LE ROY LADURIE. — *Carnival in Romans*, tr. by Mary Feeney. New York : George Braziller, 1979. Pp. xvi, 426.

The protagonist of E. Le Roy Ladurie's majestic doctoral thesis, *The Peasants of Languedoc*, was a great agricultural cycle. Stretching from the fourteenth to the eighteenth century, the cycle, like the glaciers that Le Roy Ladurie had studied in his *History of Climate*, was inexorable in its rhythm. It fixed the limits of change in what was, fundamentally, a closed agricultural world, out of which men could not break into modernity. Individual characters — landowners, peasants, artisans — although vividly depicted, were secondary. Then, in *Montaillou*, Le Roy Ladurie focused directly on individuals. This history of the inquisition in a Pyrenean village at the turn of the fourteenth century imaginatively recreated two commanding personalities, and cast them in surprisingly modern terms. The book's hero was an itinerant shepherd, loyal to friends, relatives and mistresses, a critical thinker unwilling to abandon a way of life. The shepherd's antithesis was a carnal priest, a bully who acted both as a resistant and a collaborator in his role as the leader — and patriarch — of a village faction.

Now, in the *Carnival in Romans*, Le Roy Ladurie swings across the arc of the French south to the province of Dauphiné, on the east bank of the Rhône. He untangles the complications of a late-sixteenth-century urban revolt that was a fiscal protest in the guise of a bloody festival. He demonstrates the ways in which folklore, sport, and politics were closely related then, and by inference always, in human affairs. The book relates the urban outbreak to parallel rural risings. It

seeks, finally, to determine whether these protests were relatively modern attacks on abuses of privilege, rather than retreats into nostalgia.

Le Roy Ladurie analyses the economic and social structure of the small but industrially active town of Romans with his customary precision and finesse. He argues that the artisans had the numbers and resources to challenge the officers and landowners, who were clinching their hold on municipal politics. Gradually, individuals replace statistics at centre stage, for Le Roy Ladurie evokes the voices of the leaders of the two opposing groups. Antoine Guerin, the royal judge, left a manuscript account of the troubles, in order to justify himself to the Crown. Guerin's challenger was a local sportsman, the artisan-draper Jean Serve, called Paumier because of his skill at the *jeu de paume*. Paumier used his athletic success to become a popular leader. In 1579, at the festival of Saint Blaise, patron of the textile workers and agricultural labourers, Paumier was elected captain of the drapers, and by extension of the common people in general. This novel position enabled him to force his way into the town council, and to gain control, momentarily, of the keys to the town gates. In Le Roy Ladurie's words, a system of double power, Guerin's and Paumier's, now existed in Romans.

As he retraces Guerin's counter-attack, Le Roy Ladurie takes a tough moral stance. There is no longer any trace of the robust acceptance of man's ambition for power, which he had shown in *Montaillou*. The oligarchy of Romans is a mafia, and Guerin, their leader, a prevaricator, a manipulator, a Tartuffe. Mary Feeney's translation frequently softens the force of such epithets, without however removing their sting. Hitherto Le Roy Ladurie had shown his unorthodoxy by writing challenging books on difficult or even apparently impossible subjects. Here he shows that the historian need not treat authority, when it cloaks a grasping élite, with respect.

Unfortunately, Le Roy Ladurie's acid indignation is neutralized by a melodramatic treatment and a facetious tone. Guerin becomes a macabre figure, a "personnage de série noire". When the judge plans to use the carnival of 1580 to destroy Paumier, the air becomes heavy with an impending doom that leads, inexorably, to "la nuit noire et rouge du Mardi gras". (The translator sensibly tempers this to "the early and violent hours".) Along the way, Le Roy Ladurie chooses jocular and at times archaic terms, like "trucider" for kill, that undermine the respect he otherwise accords the underdogs. Explicit references to the twentieth century — blitzkrieg, the gnomes of Zurich — do not to my mind convincingly link past and present. *Montaillou*, by depicting a perennial human drama, had achieved a fuller resonance.

Le Roy Ladurie adopts a structuralist interpretation, or at least illustration, of the popular party's loss of nerve, which made the "blitzkrieg" possible. As emblems of their folkloric kingdoms or societies, he argues, the patricians chose fierce and virile fowl: the rooster, the eagle, the partridge. Their opponents preferred less threatening animals: the capon and the hare, for example. But this suggests, implausibly, a sort of death-wish on the part of Paumier and his allies. Such explanations are more revealing of their author's sparkling mind than of the motives of the actors in his history.

In many ways, this is a provocative book. Aside from the structuralism, Le Roy Ladurie's analysis of carnival symbolism is rich. His arguments for the solid political realism that underlay the protests against privilege is convincing. He draws interesting analogies between developments in Romans, and conditions in other Alpine and Mediterranean regions. Sustained comparisons, however, are not attempted — nor were they in *Montaillou*. Perhaps that will be Le Roy Ladurie's

next challenge: to place the French south, which he has studied so brilliantly, in the wider canvas of the Mediterranean world.

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JOHN T. EVANS. — *Seventeenth-Century Norwich. Politics, Religion and Government, 1620-1690*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979. Pp. 346.

The historiography of English urban history lies fundamentally in two schools. The more traditional, evolving from the work of learned antiquaries to the concerns of professional historians, deals with the constitutional and political past. The younger and, at present, more heavily subscribed deals with the town in its social, economic and even anthropological setting. As one of the two or three largest and most important English towns of the pre-industrial period, Norwich's rich and well documented past leaves room for both approaches. By apparent agreement John Pound is to represent the latter school in a forthcoming work, while John T. Evans's *Seventeenth-Century Norwich* sits firmly in the former.

It may be argued that the politics of the nation entered more constantly and profoundly into the affairs of English municipalities in the seventeenth century than ever before. Choosing religious ideology and the desire for local autonomy as his guideposts, Evans steers us through seven decades in which national events played upon local tensions to create almost constant instability in Norwich political life.

Evans finds that Norwich differed from most other provincial centres in several respects. It followed the patterns and pace of political change in London more closely, its franchise was more participatory and hence more democratic, it enjoyed deeper traditions of Independency, and it lacked a sustained oligarchy. He also finds that its conflicts were more continuous, and the narrative of these episodes of conflict makes up the bulk of the work.

Provocatively enough, Evans finds no evidence of social or economic motivation in Norwich's political upheavals, little to choose in socio-economic status between its successive regimes, and an absence of social or economic programmes put forth by those regimes. Conceivably, he may not have looked in the right places for such evidence. The Mayor's Court records are missing for crucial periods, and records of the central courts — especially Chancery, Exchequer, Star Chamber, and even oyer and terminer hearings on the popular riot of April 1648 — do not seem to have been utilized. On the other hand, Evans may also have established that provincial centres such as Norwich still lacked the breadth of political awareness which one finds in London and allegedly elsewhere even at such extraordinary times as the 1640s.

Though Evans's work has much to tell, it leaves the reader somewhat dissatisfied on several counts. One such area of disappointment may well rest with the publisher (aside, that is, from the outrageous Canadian sale price of \$43.75!). One wonders if, in this late-1979 publication, the failure to cite or presumably to consult anything published after 1975 (and only one work from that year) has resulted from delays in press. While the delay has not rendered Evans's work obsolete