

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

by a long chalk, it has deprived us of his reflection on several more recent works on both the national and urban scene. A second disappointment lies in the occasional narrowness in treating — or failing to treat — three groups which seem potentially relevant for Evans's theme. First, the important point about London-Norwich relations would have gained by some treatment of merchant or familial links between the two centres. Second, one wonders about the still substantial Dutch and Walloon immigrant population, which numbered about 3,000 at the turn of the century: what impact they might have had on local affairs, and to what extent their example of congregationalist religious organization (since c. 1570) may have influenced the rise of Independency in Norwich in the late 1640s. Finally, could the seventy percent or so of the population who were not freemen have been so devoid of influence as to justify such sparse treatment? We ought at least to learn something about the rioters of April 1648, and whether their outcry had further expression.

Despite a few flaws however, Evans's work does much credit to the genre of which it is a part. It takes a rightful place among other studies which illuminate politics on the periphery in England's most tumultuous century.

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G. R. QUAIFE. — *Wanton Wenches and Wayward Wives: Peasants and Illicit Sex in Early Seventeenth Century England*. New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1979. Pp. 282.

Wanton Wenches and Wayward Wives is an exceptionally well-documented analysis of illicit sex among peasants in Somerset (only, not England) between 1600 and 1660. Using mainly the records of the Quarter Sessions and the Consistory Court of the Diocese of Bath and Wells, G. R. Quaife located one case of a woman sexually touching another, two of male homosexuality, a few instances of incest, rape and masturbation, and no evidence of oral sex. Most prosecutions, running into the hundreds, were for fornication and adultery.

Attempting to "contain" the "tendency to dehumanize the past" with quantification (p. 242), Quaife sketches the experiences of individuals. Although he offers his work as a "basis for later comparative studies" (p. 5), historians will find his study of limited value because it is more anecdotal than quantitative. Phrases such as "one of every ten", "over three-fifths", "typical", and "common" fail to convince that chance results have been ruled out. What level of significance should be assigned to three-quarters of a "very few" (pp. 229-30) or to forty percent of a "small" sample (p. 235)? Researchers doing comparative studies need to know the size of the sample.

"What was the extent of illicit sex in early-seventeenth-century Somerset? — a stupid question. There is no way in which it can be answered satisfactorily" (p. 56). The recording and prosecution of illicit sex were affected by visibility, degree of concern, and definition. About a third of Quaife's book examines bastardy, undoubtedly because illicit sex that resulted in pregnancy was more visible than illicit sex that did not. Bastardy, of course, was of considerable concern to parish authorities who sought to avoid maintenance of illegitimate children. Quaife argues