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Jan Broadway. *No Historie So Meete: Gentry Culture and the Development of Local History in Elizabethan and Early Stuart England.* Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006. 256 pp.p Illustrations. $85.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-7190-7294-9.

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The Historie of England

"It was in the Elizabethan and early Stuart period that the study of the past became the interest of the many rather than the preserve of the few" (p. 1) and this book shows how the literate elements of English society (encompassing noble as well as gentleman) were able to satisfy that interest. In a wide-ranging study encompassing a wealth of detail Jan Broadway opens up the subject of local history and its development in an arresting and accessible manner.

Broadway begins with a comprehensive survey of the medieval antecedents upon which Elizabethan and early Stuart antiquaries (a term rescued from its pejorative sense on p. 4) drew, taking in the impact of Henry VIIIâs dissolution of the monasteries and the consequences of civil war. She goes on to trace the extent of cross-fertilization across the early modern antiquarian community which was extended to include the emerging craft of the cartographers. This growing relationship was exemplified in William Camdenâs *Britannia* which is acknowledged as being "of seminal importance in the development of local history" (p. 32); for, while *Britannia* was first compiled in 1586, it was not until 1607 that it first appeared with maps.

In looking at the national context, Broadway considers the role of the College of Arms in fostering interest in local history. She also discusses the short-lived Society of Antiquaries, apparently doomed by James Iâs suspicions of its purpose, thereby introducing a rather hazardous note into the pursuit of local history. Certainly, Sir Francis Bacon, who had good reason to be cautious, distinguished between history (that is, ancient history), which could provide models for officers of the state, and antiquarianism, with its emphasis on more recent (and potentially more controversial) history. Particularly interesting, for current users of the public records, is her account of the maze of early modern records and their embryonic cataloguing systems. Continental influences are introduced by reference to the preface of John Weeverâs *Ancient Funerall Monuments* (1631), which was inspired by "having seene ... how carefully in other Kingdomes the Monuments of the dead are preserved" (p. 64). Broadway might also have drawn attention to the widely

traveled Sir Philip Sidneyâs "Apologie for Poetrie," which appeared in 1595, and noted that it was customary in Hungary for "songes of their Auncestors valour" to be a feature of their "Feasts, and other such meetings," thereby stirring a sense of history amongst their audiences.[1]

Broadwayâs careful and judicious assessment of regional networks is mindful of the pitfalls in assuming connections on flimsy evidence. Even so, she provides a fascinating and detailed description of intricate relationships between innumerable Elizabethan and early Stuart antiquarians. She overstates the malign impact of doctrinal segregation on aspiring county historians, however. She suggests that some Protestant gentry were reluctant to invite Catholic antiquaries into their private studies or to engage in the close associations necessary for them to conduct their research. Yet, William Claxton, of Durham was part of the broad national network of antiquarians and was closely involved with the work of the visitation heralds in 1575, despite his father-in-law being a 1569 rebel and his cousin and namesake a convicted recusant. And, Broadway herself refers to the close links between the godly Roger Dodsworth and the openly Catholic Lord William Howard, whose daughter was married to the eldest son of Sir Robert Cotton. In fact, it is increasingly clear that familial, commercial, and intellectual networks generally overrode confessional considerations in the Elizabethan and early Stuart period. She does conclude that the concept of an insular county community no longer has the resonance it once had–having been convincingly rejected by Keith Wrightson and Clive Holmes, for example–but she does not recognize the more nuanced internal divisions within those communities.

A very useful survey of the sources available to early modern historians provides descriptions of the full array of documents and information about where they were located. These ranged from records in central archives and in local repositories–some of which were as jealously guarded as those of today–to ecclesiastical and private papers. But Broadway goes far beyond these, incorporating heraldic and funerary evidence as well as oral testimonies and the popular memory, amongst the variety of resources at the local historianâs disposal. She also comments upon the "absence of modern referencing standards in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries," which is curious given this bookâs inexplicable failure to include a bibliography and its rather scanty index (p. 113).

Broadway ascribes the Elizabethan and early Stuart gentryâs interest in local history to their obsession with genealogy which, in turn, was driven by the "patriarchal concept of descent" and by their need for a sense of identity (p. 154). The importance of continuity of tenure led some to claim links to ancestral estates even after they were lost or sold while others went to the length of concocting or commissioning bogus pedigrees. But the suggestion that local historians might compromise their integrity and run the risk of being accused on undermining the very fabric of society is perhaps overdrawn. There was by no means a universal reverence for the past. For example, in the mid-seventeenth century, Lord Craven announced to the earl of Oxford, who could trace his ancestry over several hundred years, "I am William Lord Craven; my father was Lord Mayor of London, and my grandfather was the Lord knows who; wherefore I think my pedigree as good as yours, my lord."[2] Again, a little more light and shade needs to be observed.

Broadway does present a very interesting discussion of the didactic purpose of the early modern local historiansâ work. For, despite this being the principal justification for their writing, little attention has been paid to this aspect by later historians. Thus, martial virtue, civil magistracy, and religious piety loomed large in those Elizabethan and early Stuart local histories which celebrated local families and encouraged emulation of these qualities in their contemporaries. Finally, she returns to the coincidence of developments in cartography with the growth of local history in the period covered by this book. Accordingly, an entire chapter in devoted to these two means of recording the gentryâs relationship to their physical and cultural space and, perhaps more importantly, the impression they made on both maps and county histories. The conjunction of the two branches is also reckoned to have laid the foundations for the later development of archaeology as a scientific pursuit.

Perhaps inevitably, the book is rather heavily slanted towards the Midland counties (and especially the Berkeley family), evolving as it has out of the authorâs University of Birmingham doctoral thesis on *Antiquarianism and the Development of County History in the Midlands, 1586-1656*, but that aside, it is a fine exposition of gentry culture and the development of local history in early modern England.

Notes

[1]. Sir Philip Sidney, "An apologie for Poetrie," in *Elizabethan Critical Essays*, ed. G. Gregory Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1904), i, 178.

[2]. Daniel Defoe, *The Complete English Tradesman* (London, 1726), 377-78.

Craven by Charles II. He was later created earl of

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