

religion/société. D'autre part, les formes prises par le culte des reliques et la dévotion aux saints ne sont pas un simple prolongement christianisé d'habitudes païennes, mais aussi leur subversion; de cette opération de transfert est sortie une nouvelle structure psychique à la fin du IV^e siècle. Le texte clé autour duquel pivote l'analyse est la biographie sulpicienne de saint Martin de Tours, premier saint guérisseur de la Gaule.

A sa manière, cet essai confirme une conclusion de plus en plus largement reçue chez les historiens des sociétés du haut Moyen Age, à savoir l'absence de coupure nette entre une culture populaire et une culture savante : les membres de l'« élite » partagent avec les masses un ensemble de convictions et de comportements qui les mettent largement sur un même pied dans la civilisation de leur temps. Il ne s'agit pas davantage d'un clivage entre monde celtique et monde romain. Mais l'angle d'attaque choisi au départ — le sort des sanctuaires païens de l'eau —, explicable par la disponibilité des sources, demeure cependant étroit et partiel. Du côté du christianisme, outre l'étude des récits de miracles, d'autres voies sont praticables pour explorer le mouvement de passage du paganisme au christianisme : ainsi, la transposition des systèmes de valeurs, ou le cheminement des profils de carrière des leaders d'opinion, d'abord laïcs puis ecclésiastiques... L'auteur ne pouvait évidemment tout faire à la fois dans ce livre; nous avons tout de même regretté la brièveté de la conclusion, où nous aurions souhaité trouver une justification plus étoffée de la distance qu'elle prend par rapport aux idées d'Henri-Irénée Marrou sur la « nouvelle religiosité » du Bas-Empire.

D'importantes annexes, sous forme de tableaux et de cartes (non numérotées), fournissent une documentation abondante et bien ordonnée relativement aux 93 sanctuaires païens utiles pour cette étude grâce à la possibilité de dater leur abandon, provisoire ou définitif. Quelques imperfections subsistent toutefois dans ces récapitulatifs : carte de la page 319 — il n'y a pas accord parfait avec le texte de la page 39 ni avec les tableaux I et Ia; carte de la page 329 — souligner St-Aubin-sur-Gaillon; tableau V — ajouter la mention de Bayeux. Une bibliographie abondante révèle bien les orientations méthodologiques de l'entreprise; il conviendrait d'y ajouter les travaux classiques de Dieter Harmening sur la superstition (1979) et de Martin Heinzlmann sur le culte des reliques (1979).

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David Thoms — *War, Industry and Society: The Midlands, 1939-1945*. London and New York: Routledge, 1989. Pp. v, 197.

Professor Thom's monograph joins a number of other recent works which have analyzed Britain's industrial effort during World War II, its relative effectiveness and impact on society. But while earlier studies surveyed the national economy, this book focuses only on the Midlands and primarily on the Birmingham-Coventry axis. It is not a general economic and social history of this area, but "an investigation of selected themes within the particular context of the Midland region" (ix). In the process, it

provides a start in the direction of testing and modifying the earlier general assessments of domestic events in Britain as a whole during the war.

Based on a wide range of primary sources, Thoms' work provides much useful information and numerous thoughtful insights. His selected themes include the creation of aircraft shadow factories, growth of manufacturing production, management of resources, relationship of government and industry, economic impact of air raids, civilian morale in the aftermath of these raids and the controversy over the planning and execution of civil defense measures.

Unfortunately, the book also has some weaknesses. Its focus is so narrowly regional that it fails to adequately relate the industrial role of Birmingham-Coventry axis to the war economy of the rest of the nation. This shortcoming could have been remedied by an introductory chapter which briefly surveyed the other industrial areas of Britain, their war production specialties and the connections of their industrial efforts to those of the Midlands. An explanation of the relationship between the aircraft engine and airframe production of the Midlands and the aircraft industries elsewhere would have been particularly useful.

Instead, after a brief preface, the author launches into a discussion of the problems involved in creating aircraft shadow factories, starting in the mid-1930s and continuing into the early phase of the war. While, clearly, this is necessary, Thoms moves into the subject quite abruptly and does not even define the term "shadow factory". The specialist, of course, needs no explanation, but the general reader, for whom the book in part appears to be intended, is not so fortunate. The author's treatment of the individual firms involved also is somewhat vague and the relationship between them and shadow factories is not clearly developed. Some of the same weaknesses appear in regard to Thoms' treatment of the growth of production during the war. Too little attention is paid to how the firms of the region converted their existing factories from peacetime manufacturing to wartime production. For example, he refers briefly to the reallocation of some of Cadbury's resources "from the manufacture of chocolate to that of aircraft components" (41). It would be interesting to know something of how this remarkable transformation was achieved.

But despite these flaws, Thoms does a commendable overall job of analyzing the growth in production and the obstacles which had to be overcome, including shortages of resources, both material and human. He is particularly effective in his treatment of how the demands of the wartime economy exacerbated the problems of a tight prewar labour market in the Midlands. Labour shortages were already widespread in the fall of 1940, and by the second half of 1942, even unskilled labour was in short supply. The author dwells in some detail on the increasing contribution of women to the industrial war effort of the region. He also explains that a number of middle-class and upper-working-class women refused to engage in factory work because of its low social status. In addition, he points out some of the special problems facing female workers. Many of them, after toiling long hours in factories, had to stand in queues at food markets before going home to prepare meals and perform other household tasks.

The author notes a number of industrial problems, which became apparent soon after the start of the war, most notably the inadequacy of assembly-line methods in aircraft production. This technique, so successful in manufacturing motor vehicles, was much less satisfactory in producing such labour-intensive and time-consuming components as aircraft engines.

The book is noteworthy for its balanced interpretation of the wartime performance of industry, labour and government and the relationships between them. His treatment of labour probes the problems of absenteeism and negative attitudes on the part of many workers as well as their willingness to cope with the multitude of wartime difficulties, including the dangers of air attacks.

Thoms also touches on the conflict's impact on the character of the postwar industrial economy of the Midlands. This included the problems of adjusting to the loss of government contracts, the overspecialization of the region in a relatively narrow range of engineering industries, the large number of small firms, some of which were inefficient and had survived only because of government support, and the sharp increase in trade union numbership.

Among the most interesting chapters are those dealing with the effects of air raids on Coventry and Birmingham, the question of civilian morale in the aftermath of these raids and the role of civil defense. Thoms demonstrates that air raids had a greater impact on Coventry than on Birmingham. This apparently was due largely to Coventry's smaller population, more compact configuration and concentration of industries in the central part of the city. Birmingham, with its much larger population and area, as well as relatively dispersed factories, was better able to withstand the Luftwaffe's destructive efforts. Thoms challenges charges made in government reports that panic gripped the population of Coventry as a result of the great 14 November 1940 incendiary raid. He agrees with Terence O'Brien that, although many people were stunned by onslaught, there is no evidence of mass panic or a general collapse in morale.

The author notes that the quality of civil defense planning, organization and performance varied widely. Clearly, there were many problems, such as inadequate funding, unsatisfactory recruiting, poor training and considerable inefficiency. Air raid shelters were not overly abundant or well designed, but appear to have fulfilled their purpose relatively well. Malfunctioning of air raid warning systems were frequent, especially in 1940, but the air raid wardens tended to their tasks in generally exemplary fashion. Rescue and after-care services were poorly handled in many cases. Much of the latter problem, according to Thoms, was due to prewar government's exaggerated fears about the likely extent of damage and casualties that air raids would cause. This concern focused on the danger from high explosive and gas bombs instead of incendiary bombs which the Germans were to use with lethal effect. As a result, more attention was paid to procedures for mass burials of bombing victims than to fire fighting techniques, rescue of survivors and measures to aid the homeless.

Thoms' work grows stronger as it progresses. One wishes that he had done a better job of setting the stage for his analysis, but despite this reservation, he has made a useful contribution to the difficult task of developing a clear picture of what was really involved in Britain's economic war effort and its impact on society.

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