

REVIEWS

The Coritani by Malcolm Todd. Stroud: Alan Sutton, second edition, 1991. ix + 164pp; 46 Figs. £14.95. ISBN 0 86299 878 6

The Peoples of Roman Britain series was created in the early 1970s with the declared aim of giving 'a comprehensive picture of the archaeology of Roman Britain', each volume covering a single tribal unit. The first edition of *The Coritani* appeared in 1973, written by Todd when he was a lecturer at the University of Nottingham. Since then both he and the General Editor, Keith Branigan, have risen to the rank of professor, and the publisher has changed. The format of the series remains the same, as does the statement of objectives carried on the dust jacket. The presumption that Rome was a civilising influence in Britain, enshrined in the phrase 'the impact of civilisation' that appeared on the original dust jacket, has been rejected. The phrase 'the impact of Roman institutions' is now preferred.

The adoption of a regional perspective must be of interest to those whose research largely confines them to a single modern county; the Leicestershire reader will benefit from Todd's particular knowledge of the Nottinghamshire-Trent Valley area. The author's speculation on the foundation of Leicester and Lincoln reflects his scholarship in the wider field of the Roman Empire, in which his name commands deserved respect. That he is not content to review simply the evidence in a narrative style is clear from the preface, in which he chastises excavators for the non-publication of their sites. Throughout the book research aims are proposed, such as the examination of one of the minor towns 'as fully as possible', the clarification of the routes of roads, and the excavation of villas and farmsteads in the context of their outbuildings and fields. The last has been pursued, of course, at Stanwick in the Nene Valley, believed to be in the Catuvellaunian civitas.

It is one of the limitations of the format that the six standard chapters do not provide an obvious place for the diverse objectives to be assembled in a concluding statement. Todd states that 'the principle themes of research pursued in the early 1970s are still with us' twenty years on; that may be so, though some would argue with it, but it cannot be denied that a wide range of theoretical templates has been developed during that period, and that environmental and finds analyses have come on apace. It is disappointing to find so little reference made to these aspects of research, which might bring us closer to the people themselves through the choices they made in diet, burial rites and styles of decoration for example.

A scan of the reissue which 'required substantial rewriting' reveals that some errors present in the first edition have not been corrected; for example, the *palaestra* of the public baths at Leicester is still labelled the basilica, on Fig.15. The bibliography contains no less than 61 new references, accommodated by dropping 51 items dated 1971 or earlier, but Todd has failed to absorb the full import of recent research. The Fenland Survey and the Lower Welland Valley Project are overlooked in the chapter on rural settlement, and he appears ignorant of the south Leicestershire landscape surveys in the parishes of the Langtons and around Medbourne. The contemporaneity of rampart and wall circumvallating Leicester has not been demonstrated, as Buckley and Lucas made clear in their 1987 work *Leicester Town Defences*, and yet Todd states that they were contemporary (p.60). The Leicester Blackfriars mosaic pavement was lifted in 1977 and moved to the Jewry Wall Museum, as reported in a volume

cited by Todd, and yet on p.65 we read that it is 'preserved in situ beneath Leicester railway station'.

The last oversight draws attention to the most serious problem with this new edition, and that is that substantial blocks of text have been lifted directly from its predecessor with little, if any, amendment. This applies to the illustrations, too; of the 46 published, 25 are simply reproductions, and only 14 new. Four maps have been redrawn, but no new aerial photographs appear. The insertion of a section on 'Minor Towns' is welcome, but none of the maps plots these settlements comprehensively, and no new sites have been added to the 'general distribution' of villas and such towns (Fig.25) despite the statement that the number of 'known villas' has increased by ten. The forts and minor town at Mancetter have been dropped from the book's coverage although it would still fall within the boundaries of the *civitas* as defined by Todd. The rural settlement and kiln site at Ravenstone, in north west Leicestershire, is overlooked altogether despite notices appearing in the Leicestershire *Transactions* and in the journal *Britannia*, the latter when Todd was on the Editorial Committee. The eighteenth century excavations on the large villa at Scampton are described at length, but the equally substantial villa at Norfolk Street, Leicester, investigated in the 1970s, gets scant mention. There is little co-ordination between figures or between them and the text: the accounts of the villas at Empingham and Mansfield Woodhouse, for example, are still not illustrated, and several sites that merit mention, such as Sapperton and Dorket Wood do not appear on the map of 'rural settlements noted in the text' (Fig.36). The *colonia* at Lincoln receives attention, having been omitted from the first edition, but the map selected to accompany the text (Fig.19) is one that omits the lower defences.

The premiss behind the 'Peoples' series is that the tribes can be recognised, defined, and named. The first chapter is entitled 'Tribal Territory and the pre-Roman Iron Age', in which authors attempt to draw the boundaries of the *civitas*, amongst other tasks. Todd chose to extract a section on the name of the tribe from the second chapter, 'History', in order to give prominence to the debate over the identity of the East Midlands canton. Here he dismisses the arguments of Tomlin for the epithet Corieltauvi, whilst acknowledging that the names of some British tribes are imprecisely known, in presenting his case for retaining the book's original title. A quirk of fate led to the discovery in 1990 of an 'inscribed object', a lead seal found at Thorpe-by-Glebe, Notts, seemingly bearing the legend CCORIEL. This find evidently was made too late for Todd to alter his text, but it is to his credit that he alludes to it in a footnote which undermines his case.

The Coritani would make a useful addition to the bookshelves of this journal's readers, but owners of the first edition would be well advised to study it carefully before purchase. It contains much that is new, but the research and editorial control that have been injected into it reveal too many shortcomings for it to merit high commendation. It is to be hoped that the publishers will seek more rigorous reappraisal in future 'second editions' in the series.

Richard Pollard

Working-Class Life in Victorian Leicester: The Joseph Dare Reports, by Barry Haynes. Leicester: Leicestershire Libraries and Information Service. 1991. 105pp. £11.55. ISBN 085 022 294X

In 1845, Great Meeting, the Unitarian congregation in Leicester, followed the example of important Unitarian congregations elsewhere in the country and founded a domestic mission. The inspiration of the movement was the work of Joseph Tuckerman, who, in failing health and encouraged by his friend the great minister William Ellery Channing, gave up his pulpit at Chelsea, near Boston, Massachusetts, in 1826 and became 'minister at large', to serve the poorest and most neglected of the citizens of the town, without regard to parishes - not to convert them to Unitarianism, but to look to their social and moral welfare. Taken up by W.J. Fox and other Unitarian radicals in London, the idea gradually spread in England and was given notable impetus by Tuckerman's visit in 1834.

English congregations often chose as missionaries men from relatively humble backgrounds: Methodists turned Unitarian were particularly favoured as they were presumed to be more able to make direct, unembarrassed contact with their charges. True to type, Joseph Dare (1800-1883), the first Leicester missionary, came from a modest rural background in Hampshire, although from boyhood he had been associated with the Unitarian Great Meeting in Hinckley, where his family had moved (his mother was Jewish, incidentally) before ultimately emigrating to America. Joseph Dare remained behind, kept a school and was active in various voluntary agencies in the town. When, through no fault of his, the school failed, he became available for the assignment in Leicester, remaining at the post until 1876.

The Leicester mission was later, less well financed and imposing, and less famous than those in London, Manchester, Bristol and Liverpool, but, like them, it was concerned with what J.H. Thom, the prominent Liverpool minister, called 'the moral waste' in an urban landscape blighted by crowding, illness, poverty, and rapid social and economic change. The main reliance of the missionaries was on regular visiting of the poor in their homes - Tuckerman's biographer refers to him as a pioneer in social work, and the comparison rightly occurs to Barry Haynes - but there were other components of the enterprise. Invariably there was a school, or schools adapted to different levels of age and attainment, and there were religious services, despite the determination against proselytizing, a feature that distinguished Unitarian efforts from those of most other Protestant denominations. In some cities, the domestic missions evolved into full-fledged congregations; in others they continued as active social agencies down to the Second World War and after.

The missionaries produced annual reports to the subscribers, not only to account for their stewardship but to encourage further generosity. The best known reports were probably those of the Rev. John Johns, who died of cholera in Liverpool in 1847 as a result of his heroic efforts during the epidemic, but the reports of the Rev. John Layhe of Manchester became, as Dr Monica Frykstedt has shown, the source of much reportage in the social novels of Elizabeth Gaskell, whose husband was minister at Cross Street, Manchester. For every town in which they survived, the reports are a mine of information about social conditions, and Barry Haynes has done a valuable service in making extensive extracts available from the reports by Joseph Dare, in a handsomely illustrated volume.

In some respects, Dare's reports in the excerpts included here are more impressive than those I have seen by missionaries elsewhere.¹ With occasional exceptions they seem more objective, more hard-headed, less coloured in language than those of missionaries who, like Johns, came from a middle-class background and had to draw on a different kind of sensibility to reconcile themselves to the depressing scenes they encountered or who sought an impact to compel the attention of their prosperous supporters. Their reports are anecdotal, not statistical, but as most contemporary statistical efforts are open to question because of technical shortcomings and doubtful objectivity, that is not necessarily a disadvantage. The strength of social casework now, as a century and a half ago, is in the concentration on individuals, and that is reflected in the reports. But in that individual concentration also lies the great frustration of the system, where so much is to be done and there are so few resources in people and time to give to it.

The first section of Haynes's book deals with the structure and working of the mission; in the longer second part on working-class life, which is Haynes's main concern, the excerpts are organised under five headings: employment, poverty and charity; environment and health; education; recreation; and religion. In a way there is nothing very surprising: we are prepared to expect extensive illiteracy and highly irregular school attendance, appalling living conditions and ignorance about how even the most elementary decencies can be maintained, brutal amusements, resentment of parsons, and above all, drunkenness. Still, the sympathetic yet distanced piling up of evidence of individual cases is impressive and useful.

It may be that the most interesting aspect of the book is our seeing this society as refracted through the vision of Dare himself. He seems at times priggish, though, to borrow a phrase, he had much to be priggish about: he wastes little sympathy on the immigrant Irish, who were by universal testimony severe challenges to any working-class community; he does not take on individuals of higher station who might be held responsible for the suffering he chronicles - perhaps out of deference to his respectable patrons, for he is willing to criticize the central health authorities or, above all, bigoted and tyrannical churchmen or orthodox Dissenting ministers. But he was certainly no fatalist and no apologist. He held society responsible for the evils he confronted, while at the same time invoking a high standard of personal responsibility. An apostle of voluntary effort at the outset, he became an advocate of collective action and of legislation, especially against the abuse of drink. And, most interesting of all, the mosaic of Leicester life as it emerges from over thirty years of painstaking, devoted labour is one of material and moral progress, in which compulsion played a beneficent part in the reduction of drunkenness and, above all, in the marked change brought about by the advent of the Board Schools after 1870. However uneven, it was indeed an age of improvement, in which dedicated individuals like Dare were at once contributors and chroniclers.

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1. There was an admirable article on Dare's work by Jack Simmons, see 'A Victorian Social Worker: Joseph Dare and the Leicester Domestic Mission', *TLAHS*, 46 (1970-71), pp.65-80

S. Mastoris, *Around the Welland valley in old photographs*. Stroud: Alan Sutton and Leicestershire Museums, Arts & Records Service, 1991. 160pp. 270 plates. £7.95.

This book provides a valuable record of pictures, mostly unpublished, of a tract of country stretching from the source of the Welland near Naseby to around Great Easton and Rockingham. They span a hundred years from the early days of photography and the work of pioneer cameramen like William Law of Marston Trussell (c.1860) to the 1950s when major changes were taking place in Market Harborough. Steph Mastoris points out in a brief introduction that this is not intended as just another exercise in nostalgia. The book is, in fact, a useful document for local historians since all photographs are accompanied by well-researched descriptions which provide much interesting information and which help to dispel the idea of 'an idyll, unchanging and lacking social or economic problems'.

A series of photographs of rural work shows the dramatic change from a labour intensive industry. There are pictures of Market Harborough and the villages as they used to be. As Mastoris points out, an important change is the numbers of children visible in former times before street culture was eroded by the motor car, or are the television, computer games and the video more plausible explanations? As for villages, it is apparent that the buildings have generally altered little though shops have disappeared and verges have been marshalled by kerb-stones. A number of lost buildings, however, are shown, notably windmills, as well as Sulby Hall by Soane and Papillon Hall by Lutyens. There is a range of hunts, processions, carnivals and, of course, the Hallaton bottle-kicking to depict the ceremonial and recreational side of life.

The book forms a useful complement to Mastoris's well-received *Around Market Harborough in old photographs*. The illustrations (two-thirds Leicestershire, one-third Northamptonshire) are well reproduced at a reasonable size and show how many early photographers worked to a very high standard. A minor criticism is the lack of an index.

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