

The limitations of this publication are unfortunately an all too common symptom of current thinking amongst archaeologists in Europe and elsewhere. The aerial photographic surveys are used as a backdrop against which small-scale excavations are ‘dropped in’; yet the interpretative process which created the often complex map of cropmark sites is nowhere to be seen or understood. A report which purports to be about landscape archaeology should, at least, contain a short explanation of the features seen on the aerial photographs. Maelmin West – one of the very few early medieval royal palace sites known in Britain – will serve as an example: the archaeological interpretation (derived from air photographs) is on Figure 5.51 but all the caption says is ‘Maelmin West location plan’. The archaeological features are ‘greyed out’ and the field boundaries are bold in black. Why diminish the visual representation of this very important ancient landscape and highlight the more recent?

This excavation-focused approach to archaeology is beginning to change, not least because of the success of the results of the National Mapping Programme (see <http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/server/show/nav.001002003004003>) which is transforming our understanding of England’s hidden landscapes (for example in Northamptonshire, published by Alison Deegan and Glenn Foard in 2007; reviewed in *Antiquity* 83 (2009): 521-3). There they discovered over 5000 Iron Age/Romano-British enclosures, suggesting a much larger population than once imagined.

This study, intended to enlighten those with the responsibility for the future management of Northumberland’s landscapes, has, we are told, developed a new approach: the Landform Element Approach. I had to re-read the relevant pages (pp. 281-2) as I thought there was a page missing. On p. 281 we are about to find out what the landform element approach is, only to be told that aggregate extraction is damaging to landscapes! It is not new to state that damage to different landforms (in the geological sense) depends on the nature of the landforms and the nature of the archaeological sites within them: this is first year undergraduate material. To wrap statements of the obvious in a greater theoretical framework does the work no service. This is a shame because the report represents a decade of dedicated archaeological research, and includes fine work by a variety of specialists (on radiocarbon dating, environmental analysis, field survey, aerial survey, air

photographic interpretation) who have produced a substantial report, which will, despite its flaws, be of benefit to professionals and public alike.

## References

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KEVIN J. VAUGHN. *The ancient Andean village: Marcaya in Prehispanic Nasca*. xiv+210 pages, 28 illustrations, 11 tables. 2009. Tucson (AZ): University of Arizona Press; 978-0-8165-2706-9 hardback \$50.

For the first half millennium CE a society (or societies) that we know as Nasca flourished along riverine oases across the painted desert of the south coast of Peru. Its vestiges have long attracted the attentions of tourists, New Age mystics and scholars alike. Chiefly this is due to their giant,



enigmatic geoglyphs, etched over the surface of a vast empty desert plain – the so-called ‘Nazca Lines’ – font of all manner of absurd speculations. But thousands of this society’s other artefacts also reside in museum collections worldwide: truly beautiful polychrome ceramics and textiles, almost miraculously preserved over millennia in an arid desert climate. The geoglyphs themselves have been interpreted persuasively, using ethnographic analogy, as pathways followed during the course of ancient rituals to coax an intermittent water supply into life. Indeed, some Andean peoples still process along lines towards sacred landscape locations or *huacas* (see Reinhard 1993). Yet, much else remains obscure about the society that underlies this material culture record. Little of the vast corpus of Nasca material in existence was excavated scientifically. Almost all comes from looted tombs.

Fifty years back, the great Peruvian archaeologist Julio C. Tello observed that while Nasca remains were scarce in terms of habitation sites and monumental structures, they were ‘very rich, abundant and illustrative in so far as tombs and their contents are concerned’ (Tello 1959: 60) – a society as ‘invisible in

*life as it is visible in death*, as two of today's prominent scholars, Silverman and Proulx (2002) put it. And there is an irony in Nasca's fame by virtue of the empty, ritual space of its geoglyphs, when the people who made them actually lived, farmed and collected elsewhere: amid a riparian dry forest ecology of which little trace remains today (Beresford-Jones *et al.* 2009).

Indeed, for all her mystique and beauty, Nasca has fared poorly even at the hands of her scholarly investigators. Much of the literature turns on interpretations of iconography washed clean, as it were, of the dirt (and data) of archaeological context. Surveys and major excavations, particularly of the monumental site of Cahuachi, have taken place but, for diverse reasons, and with some notable exceptions (see for instance Silverman 1993 and 2002), they have not all been properly published. This should cause us shame. For so long as publication does not follow excavation, archaeologists who protest at the depredations of *huaqueros* (looters) are hypocrites (see also pp xxx of this issue). Not so the author of this commendable book, Kevin Vaughn, who, for the first time, examines a Nasca community through the high magnification lens of its domestic context.

Vaughn's book follows a time-honoured format, first presenting the theoretical bases for his investigations, which are subtle and brim with enthusiasm for the modish theses of agency and power. These are set out with admirable clarity, as indeed is the book throughout. The author also recounts succinctly what we already know about Nasca. Here Vaughn offers a fine polemic on precisely why we need proper studies of Nasca domestic contexts. The book's heart then contains the results of his investigations of Marcaya: an Early Nasca hamlet of round stone buildings clustered around patios in some two dozen agglutinations on the edge of the Tierras Blancas Valley, 'just as the foothills begin to make their steep ascent into the Andean highlands' (p. 65). Vaughn's excavations are excellently described in the space available. The datasets derived are several and well analysed; they include faunal and shellfish remains; grinding stones, obsidian and other lithic tools; spindle whorls and panpipes; some human remains; and, of course, pottery.

Indeed, Vaughn's work on pottery is particularly intense, going well beyond the usual analyses of the form and iconography of fineware and extending to compositional analyses using instrumental neutron activation and clay sourcing. He uses these to argue

that all Early Nasca finewares were made at Cahuachi itself. This, in turn, has important consequences for Vaughn's interpretation of the Nasca political economy, exposed in the final chapter. Here, despite careful reading, I remain agnostic, for it seems to me that much more of the basic science still needs to be done to substantiate the arguments. If that comes to pass Vaughn will force a re-evaluation of a long-standing model of Nasca society (see Silverman 1993: 320-43). Regardless, with this book he is making an invaluable contribution by showing us much more about how these people *lived*, rather than how they *died*.

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BARBARA E. CRAWFORD. *The churches dedicated to St Clement in medieval England: a hagio-geography of the seafarer's saint in 11<sup>th</sup> century North Europe*. (Scripta Ecclesiastica 1, supplementary series of *Scrinium, Revue de Patrologie, d'Hagiographie et d'Histoire ecclésiastique*). xvi+237pages, 44 b&w illustrations. 2008. St Petersburg: Axiōma; 978-5-901410-67-7 hardback £45.

This monograph is the latest output from Dr Crawford's St Clement Research Project, previously marked by several papers on Clement churches in Scandinavia and Britain. Their impact has been recognised in additional studies, including that by Lidén in a *Festschrift* dedicated to the author (2007) on excavations at the Clement church in Oslo. Dr Crawford's book comprises an introduction