

commentary paper (p. 180), they are situated squarely within current developments in social and political theory, and have real implications for any understanding of archaeology as a human science.

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G. S. MAXWELL (ED.) The Impact of Aerial Reconnaissance on Archaeology. CBA Research Report 49. London, 1983. 150pp. £17.50 (Soft) ISBN 0 906780 24 1

Reviewed by Robert H. Bewley

This volume of collected papers (20 in all) is dedicated to Professor J.K.S St. Joseph, who has "advanced the technique of taking and interpreting air photographs towards its rightful status as a serious academic discipline." (Webster p.viii). The volume is the result of a conference held in Nottingham in December 1980; the delay in publication, "due to production and financial constraints" is a cause for regret, as current work in aerial photography is moving along rapidly. Unlike many conference volumes this one is a pleasure to read as the papers are short, concise, (usually) stimulating and well-written, for which the editor and the individual authors should take credit.

The purpose of the conference (and therefore these proceedings), was threefold; i) to discuss the achievements and failures of current aerial survey and their effect on archaeology ii) to examine techniques for plotting and interpretation, and iii) to discuss means of publication of archaeological evidence derived from air photography. The editor himself states that "many papers concentrated on the limitations and disadvantages of aerial survey" (p.ix) but I would argue that the papers do achieve (to varying degrees) the aims of the conference. However, the questions of

publication and plotting still remain to be solved and fully discussed.

There seem to be two main trends of thought regarding aerial photography and archaeology. One is to say that it is overplayed and not the great answer it is 'cracked up to be', and the other is to say that it is a complementary technique in the 'whole' of archaeology. This latter view can include specialist interpretations and studies such as Rog Palmer's Analysis of settlement features in the landscape of prehistoric Wessex (pp.41-53), where only aerial photographic evidence is presented. It is done so in such a way that it can be incorporated into a 'Total Archaeology' scheme as espoused by C.C. Taylor (pp. 54-59 Towards Total Archaeology? Aerial Photography in Northamptonshire.) The former sobering view of air photo-archaeology (to use the Brongers/Palmer term) reveals more about its exponents than it does about archaeology. Why should any particular technique have greater or dominant force? Archaeology as a process obviously needs to use all available techniques. Practitioners of air photo-archaeology happen to specialise in this technique (as well as being able to do others) and should be allowed to continue to do so. As Margaret Jones concludes and James Pickering states the aerial photographs ought to be 'interpreted' by those most experienced at it.

The ambivalent title of the volume means that it is for the reader to decide what the 'impact' of aerial reconnaissance on archaeology has been. The papers show that the impact has been great, but like most explosions caused by impact the effect is not uniform or universally welcomed. Many of the papers hint at a re-thinking of archaeological policy and strategy. Pickering's characteristically forthright paper argues that a new

generation of 'aerial archaeologists' ought to be trained, and that to do aerial survey properly there ought to be forty practitioners doing sixty hours of flying per summer.

The impact of aerial photography has been perceived, however superficially, for a long time. The real question is how do we cope with the information and data (in the form of aerial photographs). The substantive papers by Palmer, Riley, Clark, Johnson, Everson and Taylor show, in different ways, how this might be achieved. Palmer's 'Wessex Analysis' is perhaps the best attempt so far at classification of crop-marks leading to a model of Iron Age settlement and landuse in the Popham area of Hampshire. Clark's 'Testimony of the topsoil' is a tantalising example of the possibilities and potential of geophysical and chemical analysis as a prelude to excavation. Indeed I would argue that surveys of this type should be done (when the methods are further developed) prior to all excavations and in some cases as a substitute for excavation. Miles's article on the Claydon Pike project emphasises this relationship between aerial photography, ground survey and select excavation. These approaches are perhaps the precursor of the next generation of rural archaeology in Britain; a new Field Archaeology.

There are a few criticisms of the papers and the views they espouse. The joint article between Haigh, Kisch and Jones on the computer plotting of the Mucking crop-marks, and the comparison with the excavated reality, failed to convince. Their argument was that a small digitizer and plotter pad had advantages of speed over the use of a main frame; however from my own experience in Cambridge it is possible to produce a major plot of crop-marks (for the Haddenham complex) well within the day. The

major limitation of the Mucking plot-out was the line thickness had to be uniform, a limitation due solely to the plotting device. If aerial photographic research is to continue to aid the flow of information to a wider 'archaeology' then accurate plots detailing the different width of ditches or 'crop-mark' features should be the standard to aim for.

One question which has to be resolved in Britain is the continued programme of flying. Whimster's analysis of the Cambridge Committee's work showed (among other things) that 29% of sites photographed in 1977 (in the grid square TL) were new recordings "a figure that speaks eloquently for the need for many further years of unremitting work in the air." (p.104). Thus, how should this be organised? Should the Aerial Photographic Unit maintain a programme of 300 flying hours per year (more hours than a pilot in the RAF logs in an average year) from a London base? If the problem were tackled on a national scale then a base at Leeds/Bradford aerodrome would be sensible, or perhaps regional bases, for the north, south, west, and east.

The delay in printing the volume has allowed us to see if the concluding remarks of Fowler have born fruit. He asks for a basic text book on aerial photography for archaeologists; the recent publication of Wilson's Air-photo Interpretation for Archaeologists (1982), must in some way meet the need. He also makes a plea for the setting up of a Research Group; again something which has happened to the greater good of the subject.

For anyone interested in archaeology and the results of aerial photography this volume is a must; whether a practising archaeologist or student the information contained in the papers needs to be assimilated. The papers are a mine

of information, stimulation and food for thought. The time will soon be ripe for another conference, as it is over three years since the Nottingham one. Quantification of the scale of the problem is apparent in many of the papers, and the CBA deserves credit for maintaining a high standard of publication both in content and quality of line drawings and photographs. As always the odd spurious number or correlation appears, and this book's prize must go to Jim Pickering for the following: "There are approximately four million fields in Britain (approximately as many fields as there are spectators at 40 Wembley FA Cup Finals)." (p.2). Perhaps there is also a correlation between the number of goals scored during the season as there are crop-marks sites? Perhaps not!

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JOHN YELLEN, Archaeological Approaches to the Present: Models for Reconstructing the Past. Academic Press, New York. 1977. 259 pp. £29.80 (Hard) ISBN 0-12-770350-0.

Reviewed by Todd Whitelaw

While published in 1977, this book is essentially the author's doctoral dissertation, completed in 1974. Therefore the research described is now more than a decade old. Nevertheless, from the perspective of the last issue, on ethnoarchaeology, the work was one of the first major monographs concerned with ethnoarchaeology, and deserves continued critical attention. Contrary to expectations, the book is not dated, and still stands as one of the few major monographs in this field. It remains undated because the author's attitude is open-ended and exploratory, rather than dogmatic, but also because ethnoarchaeology, as a research area, has never been channelled in a single direction,

but has been pursued in a wide variety of ways, and for an equally wide variety of purposes. In this way, there has been little published work which has built directly on Yellen's study, and nothing which has superceded it. The work has remained novel for a number of reasons, primarily because:

1. It presents what remains the largest and most systematically documented body of data on hunter-gatherer camp-sites;
2. It is one of the few studies which has tried to generalise from a specific case to a behavioural concern of wider relevance cross-culturally;
- and 3. It tries to analyse the data and present its findings in a form which is directly relevant to archaeology.

In this review I shall focus on the latter two-thirds of the volume, which present and analyse the contents and distribution of material on sixteen mapped hunter-gatherer campsites. However, it is appropriate to mention briefly the other third of the book, which serves to put these data in context.

Despite the very general title of the volume, the work is concerned with the settlement patterns of the !Kung San of Botswana, from the scale of regional movement across the landscape, to the micro-spatial distribution of debris within camp-sites. The title of the original dissertation is more explicit: The !Kung Settlement Pattern: An Archaeological Perspective. The introductory chapter still provides a lively discussion of different approaches to ethnoarchaeology, and puts the author's aims in perspective. As with much of the research carried out by the Harvard University Bushman Studies Project, the emphasis of the work is heavily ecological. The second chapter presents in condensed form, some of the principal aspects of the