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Author Queries & Comments:

Q1 : The distinction between surnames can be ambiguous, therefore to ensure accurate tagging for indexing purposes online (e.g. for PubMed entries), please check that the highlighted surnames have been correctly identified, that all names are in the correct order and spelt correctly.

Response: Resolved. Pope is the surname.

Q2 : Is this figure from Fox (1932)?

Response: No. Resolved

Q3 : Should this be Table 7.1?

Response: No. Resolved.

Q4 : Is this chapter number correct?

Response: Yes. Resolved.

CM1 : Delete the second 'was needed'.

Color coding for Comments and editing changes:

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Review

Verso running head : Review

Recto running head : *American Antiquity*

Rachel Pope[Q1]

Department of Archaeology, Classics, and Egyptology, University of Liverpool, Liverpool, UK

English Landscapes and Identities: Investigating Landscape Change from 1500 BC to AD 1086

. Chris Gosden, Chris Green, Anwen Cooper, Miranda Creswell, Victoria Donnelly, Tyler Franconi, Roger Glyde, Zena Kamash, Sarah Mallet, Laura Morley, Daniel Stansbie, and Letty ten Harkel. 2021. Oxford University Press, Oxford. xxiv + 470 pp. \$110.00 (hardcover), ISBN 978-0-19-887062-3.

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This book's aim is to provide a new long-term history of the English landscape, to be a modern version of William G. Hoskins's *The Making of the English Landscape* (1955) from the perspective of archaeology, recognizing prehistoric origins to medieval land use. It covers 2,500 years from the Middle Bronze Age origins of England's field systems (around 1500 BC) through the publication of the Domesday Book in AD 1086. A large team, applying a long-term approach to the study of "big data" in archaeology (through 2013), asks what total data analysis can reveal. An ambitious project, the book is the outcome of a decade of work devoted to developing a fresh perspective on the history of the English landscape. So, does it succeed?

The introduction provides historical grounding in the development since 1900 of archaeological knowledge and heritage protection and management around an ever-expanding resource. In prehistoric studies, "big data" projects originated in northern Britain, increasing over time to 6,000 sites. By comparison, this project has 900,000 data records. Chapter 2 discusses data decisions. Accessible and well illustrated, it successfully describes a multiscale approach: England as a whole, 14 well-chosen regional case studies, and local "test-squares."

The excellent work of Victoria Donnelly on developer-led gray literature and inherent biases stands out in Chapter 3. A study of regional "test-squares" provides an interesting data exercise but ultimately frustrates the project of regionality. Instead, the differences in settlements and landscape of southeast and northwest Britain, noted by Sir Cyril Fox (*The Personality of Britain*, 1932), are reprised in discussions of ceramics, excavation, and Portable Antiquities Scheme (PAS) data; these betray a lack of reading in Iron Age studies, where these differences were resolved as an issue of geography, ancient economic strategy, relative density, and modern resources. Instead, persistent grappling with Fox (1932) ignores Figure 9.12 [Q2], which flattens data across geography and should have enabled greater narrative balance. Without modern scholarship as the baseline, a 1930s notion of cultural difference is reified.

Chapter 4 on topography, geology, climate, river basins, clearance, and soil erosion and Chapter 5 on the ease of movement across terrain and water relative to archaeological distributions provide some truly outstanding geography. Figure 1.2 illustrates the importance of the continental bridge for Bronze Age southeast England, the expansion of settlement by the Iron Age, the material culture boom during the Late Iron Age and Roman periods, and an early medieval focus on eastern England. This important contribution might have been the book's focus.

A slightly less successful fit are Chapters 6 and 7 on food, agriculture, and field systems. Chapter 6 provides a very good technical review of isotope research (96 sites using animal and human data), although broad period categories and restricted scope lead to difficult flow within the wider book. Chapter 7 analyzes orientations of 40 field systems, finding limited conformity linked to its cross-period analysis. The argument here on sun-based cosmology is not immediately convincing, although it may see further support from finer-grained temporal study. Ideas in Chapter 7 on orientation are incorrectly attributed. Table 8.1 [Q3] gives incorrect terminology for Iron Age chronology, and reliance on a nonspecialist text for Northumberland leads to the misdating of palisaded enclosures and ladder settlements. Broader specialist consultation could have helped in these cases.

Chapter 8 gives a summary on prehistoric settlement and an early medieval placename study. An excellent graphic device in Figures 8.1–8.4 breaks down multiperiod sites, with flashes of understanding on land use continuities as site biographies. A consideration of Northumbrian data isolates "periodic return"—something elucidated in the archaeological literature from northern Britain now for some time. By this point, the lack of broader reading on landscape temporalities and later prehistoric and medieval transhumance is apparent. By page 321, we find more modern ideas about persistence of place and landscapes as practice—ideas that might have more usefully guided project objectives. Chapter 10 very successfully discusses long-term continuity, and it would have meshed well with the biographical themes identified in Chapter 8.

Overall, the book has a distinctly southern English gaze. Although specialist data from southern England are integrated, such as David Yates's (2007) *Bronze Age Field Systems*, comparable data for northern regions are absent. Chapters 4 and 6 both consider the Thames Valley; Chapters 6 and 8 address Kent; Chapter 7's argument about houses focuses on Wessex, rather than considering the larger English dataset; Chapters 9 and 10 focus on the Isle of Wight; and Chapter 9 [Q4] concentrates on villa landscapes of southeast England, with a more than awkward reference to "highland England" (p. 311).

This view from the south causes error. Chapter 7 sees roundhouses “appear” in the Middle Bronze Age, when they are an established Early Bronze Age tradition in Scotland known to extend into northern England. Exclusion of data from Wales prevents recognition of the important western distribution of hillforts.

These points should not, however, detract from what is often outstanding scholarship (especially Chapters 1, 2, 4, 5, 8, and 10). The greatest problem is more one of structure than content. Certainly, Chapters 4 and 5 would have been more usefully positioned earlier to set the scene for the interpretation of social data. Then, by the later chapters, the reader might have expected a more general, discursive elucidation of landscape continuity and change, linked more to the introductory Hoskins premise. A strong editorial voice seems lacking.

This project was ambitious and complex, and composing the monograph was a monumental task. In its data collection, presentation, geography, and thinking around continuity the book more than succeeds. Overall, however, it lacks scholarly overview, beyond that of Anwen Cooper. Frequently shrinking down to case studies, the promised scope feels misleading. It was refreshing, at the start, to hear a move against defining regions and to consider them instead as fluid entities. By the end of the book, the lack of consideration of even broad regional trends was disappointing. Fox (1932) again led the conclusion, as if three generations of scholarship had not happened in the north and west and the potential of Figures 1.2 and 9.12 went unrecognized. Overall, slightly greater deferral to expert advice was needed for this ambitious project, and in its absence a stronger editorial hand was needed 🙄.