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## Book Reviews:

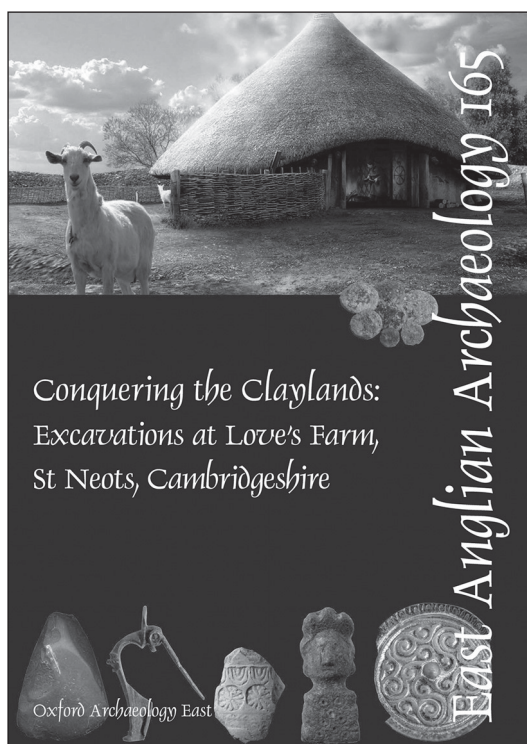
*Conquering the Claylands: Excavations at Love's Farm, St Neots, Cambridgeshire.*

Martin Millett

*The Parliamentary Surveys of the Cambridgeshire Properties of the Dean and Chapter of Ely 1649-1652.*

Elizabeth van Wessem

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*Conquering the Claylands: Excavations at Love's Farm, St Neots, Cambridgeshire.*

Mark Hinman and John Zant. East Anglian Archaeology Report 165, 2018. 390pp, numerous illus. £40. ISBN 978 1 907588 11 2

This volume reports on the large-scale excavations on the eastern side of the Ouse valley immediately to the east of St Neots. The fieldwork, undertaken between 2005–08 by what is now Oxford Archaeology East in advance of housing development, covered 60ha. This report has been brought to publication by John Zant, based on the work of Mark Hinman and his team. As we have come to expect from such professional teams, this is a well-produced and detailed publication of the results of the excavation and the analyses of the finds and environmental analyses (helpfully including a

good index). Equally, given a range of recent projects, it comes as no surprise now that the project has revealed a long and complex history of settlement on this heavy clayland landscape that until a generation or so ago, was assumed to be largely unoccupied: the areas that were shown as 'densely forested' on Cyril Fox's maps in *The Archaeology of the Cambridge Region* (1923, reissued 1948).

This project explored an area that is very large by the standards of traditional excavation, and hence the publication contains a mass of information. Early exploitation is indicated by features of both earlier and late Neolithic date, with a comparatively large assemblage of pottery and flint, mostly associated with natural hollows on the slope. There was similarly slight evidence for earlier Bronze Age activity associated with a waterhole, but middle and later Bronze Age activity was absent save for a few isolated finds.

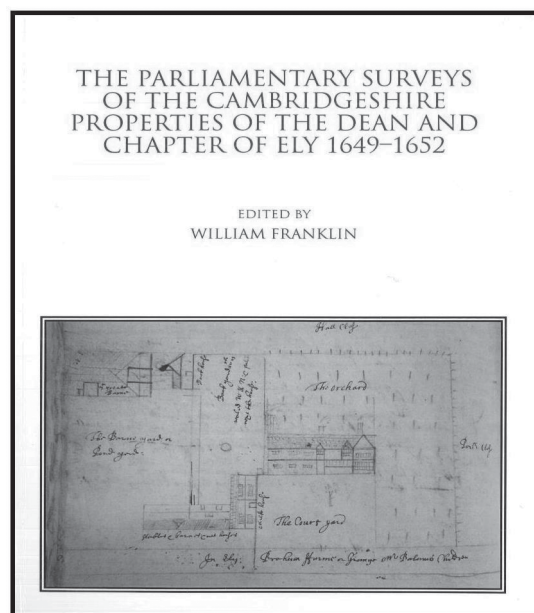
The main phase of settlement starts in the middle Iron Age (after c. 400 BC), with continuous development continuing into the late Roman period or slightly beyond. Given the scale of the fieldwork, through this period we are able to see the development of a series of settlement foci together with associated boundaries, enclosures and, in several cases, some their burials. The volume traces this story in detail across seven settlement foci, dividing it into Periods 3.1–3.5 (Middle Iron Age to earlier Roman) and 4.1–4.5 (earlier Roman to 'very late Roman–early post Roman'). In broad terms we see first the development of a landscape of enclosed field systems and routeways, within which a series of farms was established. Activity intensified during the later Iron Age, with six separate settlements emerging, largely focused on the relict stream channel that runs south-westwards across the area. Although there was strong evidence for continuity into the late Iron Age–early Roman period, there is evidence for new developments, most significantly the establishment of a new enclosure complex which was the focus for a series of new boundaries. The enclosure does not appear to have been domestic, and produced unusual faunal assemblages as well as some odd finds, surely suggesting a religious function. It seems clear that this grew in the context of

the existing society, and there is no evidence that it resulted from contact with the Roman world. Such indirect contacts are however witnessed in the arrival of imported ceramics and the occurrence of cremation in the Aylesford-Swarling type cremation burials.

By the end of the first century AD, settlement becomes more nucleated, with two complexes remaining in occupation and growing in scale. Both were well integrated into the system of trackways that cross the site, and via one of them to the broader network provided by nearby Roman roads. There is little good structural evidence for buildings, with only a couple of large rectilinear timber halls. Nevertheless, both settlements show a good range of finds and features indicating that they were fully networked into the Roman province. One of the complexes seems to fall out of use in the fourth century, with the other showing some evidence for continuity beyond. As with most other rural sites in eastern England, there is sound evidence for a mixed agricultural economy, and also strong indications for votive deposition within the settlements. One of the settlements also produced a small assemblage of 5th–6th century ceramics, argued to indicate re-occupation, long after which ridge-and-furrow cultivation is evidenced.

The volume contains a substantial discussion (pp. 292–324) in which John Zant draws together the strands of evidence and places it in the broader context of other work in the region. Like many such accounts, it is driven by the research aims defined in the post-excavation design, and deals with these very thoroughly. Readers will certainly find this a helpful summary. However, it is a pity that this was clearly prepared before the outputs from the Reading–Cotswold Archaeology *Roman Rural Settlement Project* were available as that would have enabled the important material from Love's Farm to be better placed in a broader context. Equally, given the results of this project and others in the region, the time is surely due for new and more expansive local synthesis that seeks to develop new questions.

Martin Millett



*The Parliamentary Surveys of the Cambridgeshire Properties of the Dean and Chapter of Ely 1649–1652.*

W Franklin (ed.). Cambridgeshire Records Society, Cambridgeshire Vol. 25. viii + 294pp, 2 black and white photographs, 3 tables. £22.50. ISBN: 978-0-904323-27-6

The rather dry sounding title does little to draw the average reader in, but to pass over this work would be a mistake, as it hides a rather interesting book that has much to offer in the wealth of detail. The book contains transcriptions of the surveys conducted on behalf of a financially struggling Parliament who were looking to monetise caputal land and property from the then-defunct dean and chapters of cathedrals throughout the country during the Interregnum. These transcriptions have been collected from two archives (University of Cambridge Library and Lambeth Palace) and thus have the potential to open up the use of these records to other historians.

The book was developed out of William Franklin's discovery of the Parliamentary Surveys in Cambridge University Library. He has made a second career out of studying the local landscape and agricultural history of Cambridgeshire, Huntingdonshire and Northamptonshire, with numerous books to his name, including a book on the agricultural history of Ely and another on the history of Burwell, a village on the edge of the Fens.

Part of the book's usefulness is that the surveys transcribed are 'amongst the most complete to survive of anywhere in England', and that they are an 'understudied resource'.<sup>1</sup> In his 'Introduction', Franklin explains why these records are so important, why some of the Parliamentary Survey records have not survived and how the Ely surveys have survived so completely to the modern day. The surveys themselves are useful because, like the Domesday

book and the *Valor Ecclesiasticus*, to which Franklin compares the Parliamentary surveys at one point, they contain essential details of land and property, some of which does not survive to the modern day—for example, the Dean's lodging in the cathedral precinct at Ely). Other details are included in the surveys which could be of use to landscape historians: land use, form, size, names, value and so on.<sup>2</sup>

The book primarily consists of the transcriptions of a number of manors, rectories, and tithes of properties in Cambridgeshire. It should be noted that it does not contain transcriptions of the surveys of properties belonging to the Dean and Chapter of Ely that lay outside Cambridgeshire. The transcriptions begin after a substantive introduction (27 pages) by Mr Franklin, which contains useful background information to the surveys, explaining why the surveys were in a state of disarray after the sale of ecclesiastical land was completed by 1654; and why the surveys were deemed useful after the Restoration. It explores why the surveys were originally constructed, how the administrative process worked, what Parliament instructed the surveyors to include (and not to include) in the surveys, and where the surveys are today. There is a useful section of summarising the findings from the Ely surveys. While this could, no doubt, be longer, Franklin has crafted a fine balance between giving a useful summary and an in-depth analysis. Instead Franklin has wisely allowed the transcriptions, the strongest point of the book, to speak for themselves. The transcriptions themselves begin with properties that were found in the cathedral precinct of Ely, before moving to surveys from Cambridge. After that, the properties are listed in alphabetical order. There are notes on the transcription methods and editorial conventions, a list of leases detailed in the surveys, and a useful glossary, and extensive references (both primary and secondary). The book ends with a ten page index.

The one area where the introduction does fall short is in any discussion of the historiography of the Parliamentary Surveys. Close reading of the references given by Mr Franklin suggest that two academic pieces of work on the surveys have been written by other historians, on Surrey and Worcester, but the references section suggest that the wider Surveys have been explored by historians before now, if not in the full depth exhibited by Franklin. Some insight as to the historiography of the cathedral of Ely would be useful too—if only briefly, and to explore how these surveys might contribute to knowledge of the ecclesiastical history of the diocese of Ely.

However, despite the historiographic gap, the book remains an extremely useful one. It will be of immense interest to local historians of Cambridgeshire. Outside of the immediate local interest however, agricultural, and church historians will also find much of value here, as Mr Franklin recognises, in the summary at the end of his 'Introduction'.<sup>3</sup> In this I would argue that Mr Franklin is doing his work a disservice—other historians, social and landscape, for example, will also find value in this book. The book

would certainly also be a useful comparative for anyone looking to examine the surviving Parliamentary Surveys for other dioceses.

Franklin ends his introduction by commenting on the 'extent and content of the surviving Ely documentation'. He specifies that 'no attempt has been made to compare the amount of documentation for the Ely estate with all of that surviving from other capitular estates'.<sup>4</sup> While he may well be correct that the records from the Ely surveys are the most extensive, I for one (perhaps futilely) rather hope that he is proven to be mistaken. If he is, then the wealth of information that can be gleaned from these surveys promises to reveal much information about the role that the church played in the workings of early-to-mid seventeenth-century society in England and Wales.

Elizabeth van Wessem

### Notes

1. Reverse, p. vii.
2. p. 26.
3. p. 26
4. p. 27.

