

the main section of the Dyke at Treuddyn in southern Flintshire (SJ 268577). From there to a termination at or near Prestatyn we can summarize Fox's findings as a gap of eleven miles (17.7 km.), then the Ysceifog section, followed by a gap of a mile ($\frac{5}{8}$ km.), the section at Brynbella, a gap of one and a half miles ($\frac{7}{8}$ km.), the section from Tre-Abbot-Bach to Trelawnyd and then the final gap of two and a half miles (4 km.) to the sea. To follow Fox's line we have to accept first a gap of eleven miles (17.7 km) before the supposed earthworks begin, a line where we have three miles (4.8 km.) of postulated earthwork and sixteen miles (24 km.) of gaps and where the postulated earthworks bear little relation to the type of earthworks which make up the main section of the Dyke. Finally it should be noted that Fox's observations do not appear to be borne out by the archaeological investigations carried out by him or by later investigators.

If the only early source has any validity the Dyke must, in Asser's phrase, run *de mari usque ad mare*, 'from sea to sea' and should exist between Treuddyn and the Irish Sea. If, however, we attempt to carry the Dyke north from Treuddyn there are other lines available to us. A feature of both Offa's and Wat's Dykes is the use of the line of the earthworks makes of ravines and rivers. Between Prestatyn and Treuddyn there is none running in even remotely the right direction, which is north-westerly. At Treuddyn there are two possible lines running north, those along the valleys of the river Terrig and the Nant Brook which both open out into the Alun Valley. On the north side of this valley we find Wat's Dyke which, in coming from the north, makes a

notable right-angled turn to carry it behind the line of Offa's Dyke. If a line can be established between this turn (SJ 269627) and Treuddyn then the 'missing' portion of the Dyke is not the eleven miles (17.7 km.) from Treuddyn to the suspect dyke at Ysceifog but the two and a half miles (4 km.) from Treuddyn to the Alun (FIG. 2).

This suggestion has much to recommend it. The 'gap' is foreshortened, the persistence of the natives questioned by Guest in 1858 in calling part of Wat's Dyke 'Offa's' is explained, and an explanation is offered for the place-names 'Bôd Offa', 'Bryn Offa', 'Llwyn Offa' and 'Clawdd-Offa' on that section of Wat's Dyke immediately to the north of the River Alun.

This would not be a new suggestion; Asser said that the Dyke ran from sea to sea but did not specify its terminations. The late versions of the *Brut y Tywysogion* state in 787:

In the summer the Welsh devastated the territory of Offa, and then Offa caused a dike to be made between him and Wales, to enable him the more easily to withstand the attack and that is called glawd Offa from that time to this day and it extends from one sea to the other, from the south near Bristol, to the north, above Flint, between the monastery of Basingwerk and Coleshill. (William ab Ithel, 1860).

The line of Offa's Dyke from the Wye to Treuddyn and then along the northern stretch of Wat's Dyke from the Alun to its termination at Basingwerk would fit this description exactly.

AB ITHEL, W. J. 1860. *Brut y Tywysogion* (London).
FOX, SIR CYRIL. 1955. *Offa's Dyke* (London).
STEVENSON, W. H. 1959. *Asser's life of King Alfred* (Oxford).

Governor Pownall's American vases

Governor Pownall, to whom Miss Orme and ANTIQUITY have so rightly drawn our attention (1974, 116-25), is notable not merely for his advanced intellectual attitude to the past, but also as apparently the first person to publish Pre-Columbian American archaeological material in this country. His paper in *Archaeologia* for 1779 on three 'vases found on

the Mosquito Shore in South America' is only the second contribution to that journal to deal with non-insular archaeological material (an earlier paper being an account of south Siberian barrows of Pazyryk type). In his paper, the philosophical portions of which are in the direct tradition of an earlier antiquary's *Urne Burial*, Pownall says that he was 'sit down at

his wits end' to explain the apparently Old-World 'Greek-key' step-fret motif on one of the vases, and could only speculate that the vessel was of Colonial date, the design copied from a Spanish hooped and presumably wooden vessel. The intervening two centuries have given us more information on these striking artifacts, and this note is offered in the hope that it may bring retrospective comfort to Pownall's shade.

Lord Hillsborough was correct in telling Pownall that the two vases in his possession came from the 'Mosquito Shore', not in fact in South America but the northern coast of the Republics of Honduras and Nicaragua in upper Central America, named for the Mosquito or Miskito Indians whose kingdom flourished there under British protection until this responsibility was ceded to the United States in the craven Dallas-Clarendon Treaty of 1856 (after which both kingdom and Indians swiftly perished). The unfinished specimen of which Pownall was told was found on Guanaja, the easternmost of the Bay Islands which lie off the coast and which were in British possession until 1783. A fourth vase in the British Museum, from the collection of Sir Hans Sloane, Pownall surmises as having been acquired by Sloane in Jamaica, another British possession a short sail to the north of the Mosquito Shore.

Similar vases have more recently been found *in situ* at sites on the Rio Platano in northern Honduras (Spinden, 1925, Pl. 1), in ritual deposits consisting of several such vessels and

several giant *metates* for grinding corn which possess similar rectangular-sectioned legs. They are characteristic of the late prehistoric, probably Paya Indian, culture of the area, dating to the later first or early second millennium AD. The Greek-key ornament which so much worried Pownall is found in simplified form on a fragmentary vase from Las Vegas in the Comayagua valley of northern Honduras (Stone, 1957, Fig. 42D (c)), but is widespread in Pre-Columbian Mesoamerica, occurring in the first millennium AD in the cultures of Monte Alban and Teotihuacan, at El Tajín on the Gulf Coast and in the Puuc architecture of the Yucatecan Maya; it is probably best known from the stone-mosaic walls of Mitla, Oaxaca, dating from the early second millennium AD, and this may be why the British Museum mistakenly labelled Sloane's specimen as being from Mexico. Thus the decoration of the vases is consonant with their indubitable local manufacture, and also a Pre-Columbian date, and Pownall can rest in peace.

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Finglesham Man: a documentary postscript

Dr M. J. Swanton is Reader in Medieval English at the University of Exeter, and also Honorary Editor of 'The Archaeological Journal'. He says that he has been contemplating some notes on Finglesham Man ever since he read Mrs Sonia Hawkes's contribution to these pages nearly ten years ago (1965, 17-32). Here they are.

Discussion of the so-called 'dancing god' iconography, best represented in this country by the figure of Finglesham Man (Hawkes *et al.*, 1965) has so far omitted to mention the

good documentary evidence which exists for the wearing of horned or antlered headdresses in religious or quasi-religious contexts in Dark Age Europe. Unlike the Beowulfian 'boar-helmets' depicted in related iconographies, these cumbersome horned headdresses are unlikely to have had any defensive function. They represent instead ceremonial wear for which there was a lengthy European tradition, perhaps best known in the antler frontlets from Mesolithic Star Carr (Clark, 1954, 168 ff.), but