

archaeological interpretation and how they apply, in particular, to butchery evidence.

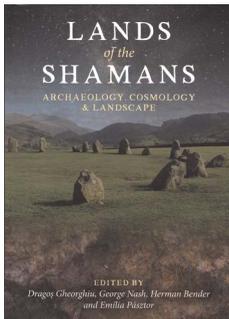
The book is nicely produced and well written, and it has many useful black and white illustrations, although I would have liked to have seen a more systematic illustration of the types of butchery marks included in the methods chapter. It is expensive, but no more than we have got used to in academic publishing; it will hopefully be available in paperback in the future. I strongly recommend this volume as a useful source for our understanding of an important human activity that has contributed greatly to defining the character of past human communities.

UMBERTO ALBARELLA

Department of Archaeology, University of Sheffield,
UK

(Email: u.albarella@sheffield.ac.uk)

DRAGOŞ GHEORGHIU, GEORGE NASH, HERMAN BENDER & EMÍLIA PÁSZTOR (ed.). 2018. *Lands of the shamans: archaeology, cosmology and landscape*. Oxford: Oxbow; 978-1-78570-954-8 £38.



This volume comprises 12 papers by specialists from several countries. Contributions range from analysis of ancient caves to astro-archaeology, and from the Upper Palaeolithic to the present. Factors unifying such diversity of approach are the

emphases on relationships between spiritual and natural environments, the perceived role of shamans as conduits between the material and supernatural worlds and the notion of landscapes as ‘thin’ places whose sacral qualities enable contact between them.

In general, this work is well presented, although the positioning of illustrations in relation to the text is not always effective. The editing, however, is inadequate and there are several grammatical and typographical errors. The lack of an index is detrimental, as is the absence of a list of illustrations. Many chapters share the theme of rock imagery, its association with sacred places and, by implication, shamans. In Chapter 1, Nash and Garcês discuss horse imagery

in Iberian Upper Palaeolithic rock art. Significant observations include links between images and quirks of the rocks, and the interpretation of two-headed animals as symbolic of movement. I like the notion of rock images turning ‘spaces’ into ‘places’. A worry, however, is the apparent dogmatism concerning the dating of these images without any explanation of the chronological evidence. Chapter 2, by Georghiu, examines rock art on the T-shaped stone pillars of the Pre-pottery Near Eastern Neolithic. Georghiu argues that the pillars are maps of landscapes and waterscapes, and lithophones. The author sees pillar images as an elaborate shamanic narrative; this is possibly accurate but needs to be presented with less certainty, leaving more room for alternative interpretations.

Chapters 3 and 4, by Peša and Malim respectively, explore the nature of hidden landscapes, although in very different contexts. The arena for Chapter 3 is caves and the sacral landscape of Neo/Aneolithic South-east and Central Europe, while Malim’s contribution is set in a remote Welsh valley, home of the medieval Christian saint Melangell. Both authors examine relationships between sacred beings and seclusion. Peša studies the archaeology of darkness and inaccessibility and the special finds within caves. He argues that caves were viewed as inhospitable and dangerous spaces belonging to invisible spirit-forces. Malim’s chapter diverges from the mainstream of this volume in her exploration of Melangell, whose legend is enshrined in texts. Her theme is tied into shamanism through the hare sheltered from the hunt by the saint, the prehistoric roots of the site and the presence of ancient yew trees whose berries might have been used to induce trance and altered states of consciousness, allowing access to the spiritual dimension. I found the suggestion that the site was originally a shrine to the moon—because of the hare motif and the animal’s nocturnal foraging activities—an evidential stretch.

The papers by Scarre and Devereux (Chapters 5 and 6) concern soundscapes. Scarre applies acoustic theory to ‘mute’ stones, speaking of caves as “aural architecture” (p. 112), thus resonating with Peša’s paper. Scarre’s is one of the book’s most powerful contributions, and I love the pertinent final reference to “rock-music” (p. 120). Devereux’s chapter is concerned with lithophonic rocks. His paper ranges perhaps too widely, embracing examples from the First Nations peoples of North America to the Himalayas, South Korea,

New Guinea, Japan and Wales! Although the author makes interesting connections between sacred and spiritual landscapes over space and time, there is a danger that this approach is too ‘scattergun’ and (to paraphrase Nennius) ‘making a heap of all you know’.

Pásztor (Chapter 7) and Devlet (Chapter 8) examine the evidence for shamans in later prehistoric Europe. Pásztor’s contribution is concerned with Bronze Age waterscapes, in the context of structured deposition in the Carpathian Basin. She rightly identifies liminal, unstable watery places, such as tidal shorelines, as potentially significant in terms of spirit-forces. I like her observation that “a sacred area must, in origin, be identified by geography, not buildings” (p. 154). But I was dismayed by the naivety with which she speaks of gender differences in deposition, and of the choice by women and men respectively to deposit gentle or martial/aggressive objects. Devlet’s chapter, on the Northern Asian Bronze Age, deals with factors influencing rock selection for petroglyphs. She identifies ‘core’ sites, associated with important events, and other, peripheral carved rock faces. Her exploration of the fly agaric as a significant psychotrope, and her linkage with ‘mushroom figures’ in rock art, is persuasive. Séfériadès’s work on shamanic landscapes (Chapter 9) explores the identification of shamans in rock art. He attempts to identify trance, altered states of consciousness and shape-shifting within rock art across a vast part of Eurasia, starting with the enigmatic Palaeolithic Trois Frères dancing animal-man. As in some earlier chapters, there is a risk of over-interpretation from a slender, context-poor evidence base.

Enrico Comba and Herman Bender (Chapters 10 & 11) present shamanic myths from the Americas: the Bororo (Brazilian) bird-nester myth and the North American bear myths. Both are shared across several community groups. Comba reinterprets bird-nester stories as hidden chronicles of shamanic initiation trials. Bender’s paper relates ancient bear-shaped mounds to regular lunar events. He relates such structures to the significance of bears to First Nation cultures, and the perceived link between the bear and death-cults associated with the journey of the soul through the night-sky. The author’s observations are persuasive, but he admits the lack of specific evidence to make direct connections between the bear monuments and celestial phenomena.

The final chapter (Colorado & Hurd) offers a powerful statement concerning the need for a marriage between Western archaeological perspectives and the

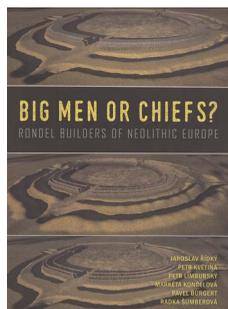
“knowledge system and wisdom traditions of indigenous peoples” (p. 258), a theme touched upon in earlier chapters. The chapter delivers a fitting, thought-provoking polemic that shamanic studies must not ignore. It sets out a framework for new approaches to landscape archaeology, with the requirement to search widely for contexts of imagination: “The ceremonies integral to a shamanic archaeology are iconic bridges between the deep-rooted wisdom of traditional cultures and landscape archaeology” (p. 266). Amen to that!

MIRANDA ALDHOUSE-GREEN

School of History, Archaeology and Religion,
Cardiff University, UK

(Email: aldhouse-greenmj@cardiff.ac.uk)

JAROSLAV ŘÍDKÝ, PETR KVĚTINA, PETR LIMBURSKÝ, MARKÉTA KONČELOVÁ, PAVEL BURGERT & RADKA ŠUMBEROVÁ. 2018. *Big men or chiefs? Rondel builders of Neolithic Europe*. Oxford: Oxbow; 978-1-789-25026-8 £38.



Over the last 20 years, much fieldwork and research has been undertaken on the so-called *Kreisgrabenanlagen* or rondels, a type of circular monument comprising ditches and post-built rings that appeared and flourished across Europe

in the early fifth millennium BC. In light of the increase in data, the monograph under review is an important contribution to rondel research. The authors have a profound knowledge of the archaeology of this period in Central Europe and in the field of rondel research, having undertaken excavations on numerous sites. As the title suggests, however, the authors’ aim goes beyond *Kreisgrabenanlagen*, and they challenge the traditional view that societies in the Stroke pottery/Lengyel periods were egalitarian.

Chapter 2 summarises anthropological schemes of social differentiation that classify communities, particularly with respect to hierarchy and the size of the social unit. The problems inherent in studies of demographics and population are emphasised, but unfortunately are not returned to subsequently. The chapter includes a list of archaeologically detectable attributes