

Recorded places, experienced places. Some remarks

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1. Introduction

Landscapes result from the human condition of interaction with the world, and it is generally accepted that past evocation forms part of this phenomenon (Gosden, 1994; Bradley, 2000; Ingold, 2000; Brück and Goodman, 2001; Tilley, 2004). Whether the product of past generations' agency or ascribed to inexplicable supernatural powers – underlining the importance of animism to past societies (Sahlins, 1972; Descola, 1996; Bradley, 2000; Ingold, 2000; Thomas, 2001; Tilley, 2004) – landscape is something mentally constructed, comprising both natural and artificial (or anthropic) elements (Ingold, 2000). As such, landscape can also be considered as the perception and experience that communities obtain and achieve from their contact with the surrounding world. In addition, the complex and permanent (re)construction of landscape has the power to act as an agent in certain circumstances.

Also, due to the existence of landscape, people and communities often embody different kinds of loci (Campelo, 2009), contributing to the emergence of a network of places (Thomas, 2001). The experience and practice of landscape produce both a sense of belonging and social integration, creating what Feld and Basso (1996) refer to as 'senses of place'. Its use and frequency stimulates a connection and interlinks with histories and memories, meanings and feelings, developing an increasingly emotive relation with those known loci. In many cases the materialization of these relations leaves 'readable' archaeological traces.

Considering human consciousness, the socialness of things (Latour, 1991), the power of memory – also deriving from the subjective interaction materialized by being in the world (Bachelard, 1969; Merleau-Ponty, 2002) – especially the effect of social memory – the collective representation of the past associated with social practices (Connerton, 1989) responsible for the communal awareness of things (Halbwachs, 1975; Connerton, 1989) – and the importance of iconographic memory as a possible container of subjective, aesthetic and metaphorical understandings of the world (Thomas, 1991), the importance of rock art sites is undoubted. Even though they are one of the most difficult

expressions of past agency to interpret, rock art sites were definitely lived and experienced places. Therefore, the rock art of the north-western Iberian peninsula is the main subject of this book, as well as the different methodological perspectives for studying this kind of materialization of past societies' thought.

2. The book structure

This book, which results from the compilation of some oral presentations or posters, presented in 2013 and 2014 during the second and third Enardas Colloquia, entitled 'Living Places, Experienced Places. The North-Western Iberia in Prehistory' and 'Recorded Places, Experienced Places in Iberian Peninsula Atlantic Margin', respectively, is divided into four parts and 15 chapters.

The first part, 'Concepts and Tools to Study Rock Art', comprises two chapters. The first chapter, authored by Campelo, concerns the interpretation of symbolic spaces in north-western Portugal through the perspective of the anthropology of space, which is important for understanding the pre-modern way of experiencing this landscape. The author stresses that the north-west, outlined by a particular orography, where boulders, springs and mountains are widespread, is symbolically organized in legendary narratives and cultural processes of appropriation and control of the space. This process confers properties on the natural elements of the landscape, conducting rituals in order to appease those forces and delimiting the uses and benefits of the men that dwell in such landscape, which Campelo regards as 'cultural imbibed spaces'.

The second paper, by Bettencourt, Abad Vidal and Rodrigues, introduces the Rock Art Virtual Corpus of the North-West of Portugal (CVARN), a database dedicated to post-Palaeolithic rock art in north-west Portugal that exhibits both its social and scientific potential.

Part 2, 'From Sub-naturalistic to Schematic Rock Art Tradition', discusses various expressions of recorded art in the north-west Iberian hinterland, as well as expressions of the schematic art tradition from north-central Portugal.

The study of the latter kind of art has achieved particular importance, since it has been considered as belonging to prehistory. It should be stressed that in many regions of the Iberian north-west, particularly in Galicia, this type of rock art has not yet been studied in depth as it has been considered medieval or later. Thus we do not know its true spatial distribution, iconography, subtypes and interrelation with other types of rock art developed in the north-west. The fourth chapter included in this part addresses such issues in general studies, such as Comendador Rey and González Ínsua and Silva *et al.*, or in monographs, as in the cases of Sanches and Teixeira and Sanches and Gomes.

The third part of the book, 'Rock Art of the Atlantic Tradition', is subdivided into four chapters. The first of these corresponds to a rock art inventory in the northern area of Galicia, from Vázquez Martínez *et al.*, which forms the basis of future interpretative works. By applying statistical analysis, the authors present some considerations about the spatial distribution of rock engravings, which is mainly littoral. Furthermore, they observe differences between the distribution of figurative (animals, weapons, etc.) and abstract motifs, and identify correlations between them.

The next two articles seek to interpret Atlantic tradition rock art, although using different scales of analysis. Rey Castiñeira *et al.*, using as a case study the rock engravings of Cova da Bruxa – an impressive outcrop that includes images of deer and abstract motifs – and giving special attention to the spatial location of the carved outcrops, to the internal positioning of the engraved motifs, and to the historical data available for hunting, hypothesize that these engravings appear to result from repeated carving episodes, during different times. As such, they may represent narratives of hunting scenes (related to forest or water) that could have been religiously meaningful – related with the sun – and could represent a 'psychopomp' animal that accompanies and protects individuals as they travel to the afterlife.

Sousa, working on the rock art complex of Monte Eiró, parses the interrelation between motifs and their spatial context at different levels as an important guide to the interpretation of this complex. Using this case study, he highlights the accessibility of the site and the possibility of its being seen by a large audience, hypothesizing that this place hosted the celebration of rites regarding both water and the fertility, considering the site's physical features and the kind of motifs represented there. According to what one can observe from the engraved locus (the impressive morphological appearance of Montedeiras sierra), this also raises the hypothesis that this 'scenographic space', with a deeply 'symbolic' character, would be 'suitable for the most diverse rites and celebrations, involving the elements of the physical environment or the properties that inhabit them'.

The last article in Part 3 is from Cardoso *et al.*, and addresses the theme of past representation during the Iron

Age, according to prehistoric engravings located in the area and in the vicinity of the fortified settlement of Briteiros. Its major objective is to discuss the implication of the ideology behind the concept of respecting previous rock art by a later group of inhabitants of Monte de S. Romão.

The fourth part of the book, 'Other Styles', includes five chapters. These focus on some depictions that the editors considered unsuitable for inclusion in the best-known regional styles, i.e. in the traditionally considered schematic and Atlantic engravings addressed in Parts 2 and 3, respectively, of this book.

The first chapter from Bettencourt reviews the rock art of north-west Portugal, discussing what is considered Atlantic and schematic art and proposing the existence of a new iconography that can be inserted, essentially, into the Bronze Age.

The chapter from Santos-Estévez *et al.* is about the context and meanings of engraved weapons dating back to the Late Chalcolithic/Early Bronze Age, located in the south-west of Galicia and north-west of Portugal. Based on the assumption that they can be carved in active and passive positions, some differences in the contextual location of each group were noted and lead to some interpretations. Taking into consideration both the physical context and the orientation of weapons in active positions, it appears likely that these materialise a cosmogony connected to the symbolic importance of the celestial world and of some hills that seem to have served as structuring places in the Bronze Age landscapes. The group of sites with passive engraved weapons, although more heterogeneous, seems to be related to intersection areas and several natural paths, indicating the importance of votive offerings to deities associated with outcrops, water sources and earth.

The chapter by Bettencourt and colleagues, which studies engraved places, is focused on the application of the concept of magical and symbolic geography (Campelo, 2017) and the interaction between the morphology of the outcrops and the motifs engraved or inscribed thereupon. The case study considered is Fornelos, in northern Portugal, carved mainly with schematic horses and horse-riders, interpreted as the materialisation of a Late Bronze Age or Iron Age mythical narrative, probably a rite of passage. This kind of place is also considered an 'imbibed space', a place of appropriation, control and integration of the elements of territory, in everyday life and in the social practices of communities.

The chapter by Malde concerns Pena Furada, considered an important Iron Age ceremonial site in north-west Iberia. To interpret this place the author focuses on the importance of archaeoastronomy, the spatial and archaeological context at different scales of analysis, and the features of the 'visible' territory. According to this approach, Pena Furada is linked to the Celtic festival of Imbolc and to an Iron Age sacred territory, without hillforts and directly related to sunrise.

The last chapter, by Pereira and Arruda, concerns a stone plate, carved with several boat-like motifs, found in the city of Oporto, probably belonging to the Second Iron Age and the Roman period. In order to interpret this item, other representations of boats found along the Atlantic coast of the Iberian peninsula are analysed, with the aim of discussing the meaning of places via these kinds of depictions.

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