



Book Reviews

FONCTIONS, UTILISATION ET REPRÉSENTATIONS DE L'ESPACE DANS LES SÉPULTURES MONUMENTALES DU NÉOLITHIQUE EUROPÉEN/FUNCTIONS, USES AND REPRESENTATION OF SPACE IN THE MONUMENTAL GRAVES OF NEOLITHIC EUROPE BY GUILLAUME ROBIN, ANDRÉ D'ANNA, AURORE SCHMITT AND MAXENCE BAILLY (EDS)

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Given perennial research interest in the Neolithic funerary monuments of the Atlantic and Mediterranean areas of Europe, and the extensive disciplinary focus on spatial patterns and analysis, it is perhaps surprising that the editors of this volume can argue – and quite convincingly – that the use of 'space' has been under explored at monumental graves. This is surprising given the myriad approaches and importance of, space to archaeological approaches to monuments. Typological approaches to internal layout have developed detailed understandings of chronological development (Boujot & Cassen 1993). Spatial layout in the landscape was mapped in order to determine territorial boundaries and social structure (Renfrew 1973). Careful attention to the movement in megaliths has envisaged space as co-created by human bodies and materials, and this approach has been used to explore social power, materialities and identities (Barrett 1994; Brück 2001; Cummings & Whittle 2004; Richards 1993; Thomas 1990; Tilley 1994). Space has, therefore, often played an important secondary role in debate, but has rarely been placed central to the discussion. This volume proposes that close attention to how space was designed, used and responded to, is a productive avenue for the analysis and interpretation of monumental architecture.

This collection of papers arises from an international conference held at the *Maison Méditerranéenne des Sciences et de l'Homme* (Aix-en-Provence) in June 2011 bearing the same title as the volume. The conference surveyed different approaches to the organisation of space at Neolithic monuments, and this handsome and well-illustrated edited volume has arisen from the research presented. The geographical coverage is impressive, ranging across France, Spain, Portugal, Ireland, the UK, Poland and even, in one paper, drawing on sites from Caucasus, Siberia and Mongolia. Given this spatial distribution, the papers broadly fall across two millennia, between the 5th and 3rd millenniums cal BC. With such variety of sites and times, the 21 peer reviewed research papers take a myriad of different approaches to defining space, and its significance to the study of monuments. The volume is helpfully grouped into three sections, each focused on a particular scale of analysis. In the first, and largest, 11 papers focus on the use of internal space, considering themes of building, funerary rituals and megalithic art. The second theme expands out to explore the space created by and around monumental architecture, with four papers focusing on illuminating the social and symbolic roles monuments may have played for those who built and dwelt around them. The final theme expands the spatial analysis yet further, and six papers examine the environment, territories and landscapes of Neolithic monuments. The volume also includes an introduction and conclusion, which seek to contextualise the current approaches to spatial analysis of monuments in the study of megaliths and funerary tombs more broadly. The papers are written either in French and English, but each paper has an abstract in both French and English, and begins with a short abridged version in the other language to the main text.

The introduction, by one of the editors (Robin), sets out the competing definitions of space used by archaeologists, drawing heavily on anthropological conceptions. Paul-Lévy and Séguad's (1983) insight that spaces are formed by human practice is the starting point for posing a series of questions about how Neolithic communities may have

chosen to shape the monuments which received the dead. It is argued that the spaces created by tombs and their interiors, bring together issues of skill, economy, social relations and symbolism. These concepts are envisaged as an interconnecting network of concerns through which Neolithic funerary practices were mediated. This introduction is concluded with a useful thematic bibliography, which lists key texts on functional, landscape and symbolic approaches to monumental spaces.

Internal space is the focus of the first 11 papers. This section is organised by country, with the first three papers on monuments from France (Bizot and Sauzade, Dreton, Blin). All three papers focus on the interplay of architectural design and burial sequences. Among these papers, a particular highlight is Blin's analysis of how mourners could have moved within the human remains interred at the Chaussée-Tirancourt (Somme), arguing that architectural changes to monument accommodated certain movements for accessing the tomb. The next two papers arise from the Irish Neolithic (Hensey, Powell). Hensey asks whether the human bone and objects found at tombs were incidental to tombs, and argues they played a secondary rôle to the rites and rituals that took place at monuments. Powell raises debates about how archaeologists approach space, challenging plan-view as means of capturing the design intention of Neolithic builders. The next three papers are based on evidence from Great Britain (Sévin-Allouet, Gibson, Cummings and Richards), though take very different approaches. Sévin-Allouet explores the phenomenological approaches to the myriad of different shapes and forms of Neolithic monument in the UK. The paper shows a route to blending the philosophies of human thought (positivism) and the human sense (phenomenology), often divided in archaeological approaches to monuments. Gibson presents a summary of the recent programme of dating and Bayesian chronological modelling at Duggleby Howe, one of the largest round barrows in the UK, demonstrating how crucial chronology is to understanding the use of space (Gibson & Bayliss 2009). Cummings and Richards report on the progress of their project *Building the Great Dolmens*, which analysed the Welsh Portal Dolmens. Their paper evocatively captures that building and the spaces created may not be directly connected, arguing that the primary intention in building these monuments was to display the massive capstones.

The final three papers of the first section focus on Iberian and Mediterranean monuments (Portugal, Gonçalves, Sardinia, Robin, Iberian peninsula, Bueno Ramírez *et al.*). Gonçalves provides an overview of the passage graves annexed by *tholoi* from the Alentejo region, Portugal, describing the great diversity of spatial use, funerary rites and schist plaques found in the tombs. Robin uses a detailed analysis of the position of art inside the Neolithic megalithic tombs of Sardinia, to challenge the existing approach to variation in designs. Currently the different engraving patterns and styles are thought to show chronological evolution, but Robin argues they are synchronic. Bueno Ramírez *et al.* survey the rock art in both funerary and open air contexts in the Iberian peninsula and compares it to that found along the Atlantic façade. This paper also details recent dating successes on pigment residues; rarely are the internal spaces of Neolithic tombs envisaged as coloured. Papers such as these are useful reminders that the art in tombs should be an integral part of any analysis of space, rather than as a specialised 'extra'.

Moving out from focusing on internal spaces to that made up by and around funerary monuments, the second section is formed from four papers. Ingravallo *et al.* introduce the site of Serra Cicora, southern Italy. This interesting funerary site consists of burials and structures associated with ritual spread out across two hectares and enclosed by a wall. The next two papers draw on the Polish evidence from the Funnel Beaker period (TRB). Tunia and Włodarczak illustrate the impact tombs can have on later use of landscape at the TRB long mound monumental cemeteries in the Upper Vistula Basin, southeast Poland. Przbył describes the newly discovered TRB earthen long mounds in the Muszkowice forest, southwest Poland, some 200km south from the previously known distribution! This outstanding find was made through the use of Lidar technology. The final paper in this section, by Turek, revisits the connection between central Europe longhouses and monuments, providing a useful survey of the history of burial mounds in Moravia and Bohemia, from the Neolithic to the Bronze Age.

The six papers that make up the final section of the volume, focus on tombs in the context of the landscape, taking the reader to France, Sardinia, northern Spain and to the Steppes by way of Carnac, and emphasising the need to see beyond the concept of territories. Laporte *et al.* present the long mounds from the Charente region of western France and Soula, the varied funerary structures from Mamoiada region of Sardinia, using ArcGIS to investigate orientation and intervisibility between the monuments. The Laporte *et al.* paper concludes with a useful reminder that the long mounds were the final stage in a complex history of structures and the authors urge caution in extrapolating solely from the orientation and arrangement of long mounds in the landscape, as these may have been imposed by earlier practices rather than deliberate choice. Châteauneuf *et al.* analyse what they call *dolmens* (though this may have been better translated into English as 'passage graves') in the Hérault river valley and neighbouring Ardèche region, south-central France. Basoli *et al.* describe the long-used *hypogea* of the Monte Acuto region, Sardinia. García analyses the funerary and domestic evidence from Northern Meseta, Spain. These three papers interpret landscape in the broadest sense, proposing social histories for the use of these monuments. In the final paper, Cassen compares the spatial arrangement of Carnac to the similar stone rows constructed by more recent pastoral nomads in the much hillier landscapes of the southern Caucasus.

To end the volume, the editors provide a short conclusion, in which they highlight the on-going discussions raised by the papers. Key issues for them are the multiple functions monumental space had in the Neolithic, the importance, or lack thereof, the deceased and their remains played in defining use of space, and significance of the activities and rites carried out at tombs. Their final conclusion is to urge, researchers to investigate the interplay between different aspects of the monuments, such as the architecture, its materials, objects and human remains, iconography, and place in the landscape, with the use and shape of the internal and external spaces of monuments.

This is a very handsome volume, beautifully produced with colour photos and very well illustrated, so it is easy to forgive the numerous typos. There are also a couple of places where the translations could have been tightened up, but I do not believe that there are any errors serious enough to prevent understanding. The primary strength of the volume is the diversity of regions, methods and conceptions of space covered. With few researchers working across the entire periods and regions covered by the volume, it will provide a useful compendia of comparisons. Most papers do not explicitly set out to define what is meant by Neolithic 'space', but respond to the central question set by the editors by contextualising their research under the banner of spatial research. Therefore, it is perhaps surprising how few of the papers entered into theoretical discussions about space. The volume is centred more on presenting new research and individual case studies, sometimes only lightly connected to the theme, than presenting regional syntheses or new visions of Neolithic use of space. As such, it is probably more suited to those scholars already engaged in the literature on monumental architecture in Europe than those wishing an overview. Throughout the papers, however, two broad conclusions pertaining to the Archaeological study of space can be discerned; the importance of paying attention to data at various nested scales, from the immediate locale to the wider region, and the need for these scales to be matched by an appreciation of the ways in which the use and functions of space changed over time.

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