

Building monuments, constructing communities : landscapes of the first millenium BC in the central Welsh Marches

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Abstract

This research examines the archaeological sequence from the first millennium BC in the central Welsh Marches. It situates the hillforts of this region within their broader landscape context by considering the practices involved in their construction, and their position within wider networks of routine activity. In order to achieve this, a detailed historiographical account of archaeological work on these monuments is presented. This forms the basis of a series of critically informed interpretations of the later prehistory of this region. My central thesis is that we must consider the landscape as Process if we wish to interpret the nested social relations that operated in this period. This demands that we develop a detailed understanding of the regional context of the practices associated with building and inhabiting the hillforts. As such, we need to explore the patterning and temporality of various forms of activity across the landscape, in order to comprehend how both places and objects were bound up in the reproduction of historically contingent social relations. I will work at different scales with a variety of forms of evidence. I examine the complex human palaeoecology of the region, considering how the structure of the landscape was created and sustained by the building and reworking of these monuments. In doing so, I place the developments we associate with the building of the first hillforts within their historical context. I also address the relationship between the hillforts and other classes of monuments, and how their inhabitation articulated with the creation, use and deposition of various forms of material culture. By moving beyond previous interpretative models, I demonstrate how these monuments became an integral part of the social worlds of the first millennium BC.

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Monument - Site - Cultural Landscape Exemplified by the Wachau (Austria, October 1998). Cultural Landscapes: Concept and Implementation (Italy, March 2000). Landscapes in the framework of the World Heritage Convention and other UNESCO Instruments and Programmes. In: Stephan Dömpke and Michael Succow (eds). Cultural Landscapes and Nature Conservation in Northern Eurasia. Proceedings of the Wörlitz Symposium, March 20-23, 1998. Naturschutzbund Deutschland (NABU), AIDEnvironment, The Nature Conservation Bureau, Bonn 1998. 24-32. Millennium Ecosystem Assessment. Ecosystem Studies: Ecosystem Science and Management. Island Press: 2005. Around 2550 BC, Imhotep, the first documented engineer, built a famous

stepped pyramid for King Djoser located at Saqqara Necropolis. With simple tools and mathematics he created a monument that stands to this day. His greatest contribution to engineering was his discovery of the art of building with shaped stones. Those who followed him carried engineering to remarkable heights using skill and imagination. The first self-proclaimed civil engineer was John Smeaton who constructed the Eddystone Lighthouse. In 1771, Smeaton and some of his colleagues formed the Smeatonian Society of Civil Engineers, a group of leaders of the profession who met informally over dinner. Though there was evidence of some technical meetings, it was little more than a social society.