

Agrarian Archaeology in Northwestern Iberia

Local societies: the off-site record

Edited by

Juan Antonio Quirós Castillo

Access Archaeology





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Abstract

This volume is devoted to the archaeological study of the societies and agrarian landscapes of Northwestern Iberia in terms of *longue durée*. The book brings together, for the first time, the results of some of the main projects carried out in recent decades from off-site records providing a fresh perspective for the understanding of historical landscapes. The papers evaluate the ‘manure hypothesis’ and other variables that have influenced the formation of pottery carpets in several territories of the Ebro and Douro basins. The interpretation of this record is done through critical integration with other historical, ethnographic and archaeological evidence. In thematic terms, the processes of early medieval colonization, the transformation of rural societies between the Roman and medieval periods, the agency of subaltern groups, the transformations of agrarian practices from a social perspective, and the morphology of agrarian landscapes from prehistory to contemporary age are analysed. In addition, off-site records singularities in non-Mediterranean spaces are considered. In summary, this volume introduces new topics, concepts and case studies useful for developing a multiproxy agrarian archaeology.

Preface

Juan Antonio Quirós Castillo

This volume is dedicated to the study of the societies and landscapes of Northwestern Iberia from the perspective of agrarian archaeology. This is one of the most promising lines of research developed in the Iberian Peninsula filling the gap between the archaeological record and the traditional rural societies. To address this issue, different concepts, methodologies, and records have been used, which are not always easy to interpret due to the characteristics of the material footprint generated by agricultural practices. The critical integration of diverse information is proving to be the best way to overcome ambiguities and limitations.

Among other topics covered by agrarian archaeology, the interpretation of non-sites or off-sites records is one of the most controversial ones. This evidence has been defined in the context of intensive archaeological surveys, and their interpretation is complex because it is affected by a number of dynamics: the formative processes of archaeological deposits, agricultural practices, the degree of transformation of rural landscapes, etc.

This book takes into consideration the off-site records of Northwestern Iberia in the light of some archaeological projects carried out in recent years which, so far, have not been examined together. The works presented at a meeting held in Vitoria-Gasteiz in June 2019 are on the basis of this book, even though they are not the meeting proceedings. Some papers have not been included and other studies that were not presented in the workshop have been added instead. The discussions that took place at the Vitoria meeting are of particular interest and are accessible through the recordings made at the time¹.

This volume has been carried out within the framework of the research projects 'Peasant agency and socio-political complexity in the northwest of the Iberian Peninsula in medieval times' (AEI/FEDER UE HUM2016-76094-C4-2-R) and 'Archaeology of local societies in Southern Europe: Identities, collectives and identities' (PID2020-112506GB-C41) funded by the National Research & Development Plan, the activity of the Research Group on Heritage and Cultural Landscapes of the University of the Basque Country and its Associated Group of Rural Studies Unit, UPV/EHU-CSIC.

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