



Book Reviews

INDIGENOUS HERITAGE AND ROCK ART: WORLDWIDE RESEARCH IN MEMORY OF DANIEL ARSENAULT EDITED BY CAROLE CHARETTE, ARON MAZEL AND GEORGE NASH

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This volume is dedicated to Daniel Arsenault (1957–2016) who was a Professor in the Department of Art History at the Université du Québec à Montréal (UQAM), Québec. His main research focus was the study of Canadian rock art and indigenous heritage, especially the rock paintings and engravings of the Canadian Shield and the eastern Arctic. Notably, he carried out his fieldwork seeking active engagements with members of Canada's First Nation communities.

Daniel Arsenault had also organised two 'Rock Art International' workshops in 2011 and 2012, which addressed issues facing the medium around the world including its interpretation, conservation and protection. The volume on offer follows this pursuit and features various articles by him and several of his colleagues, which examine a wide range of topics. A number of the papers also offer personal reflections upon Daniel Arsenault.

The volume starts with Aron Mazel in Chapter 1 investigating the rock paintings found in the uKhahlamba-Drakensberg mountains of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. The imagery was mainly monochrome with some animals being executed in polychrome shades. The sacred eland was notably painted in full colour consisting of red, yellow, orange, black and white pigments. Mazel argues the shades created a sense of perspective and motion on the walls in rock shelters that, in turn, strengthened the San belief in the potency of paintings.

In Chapter 2, George Nash provides an overview of megalithic rock art in the Neolithic chambered tombs of Wales. Interestingly, only 18 tombs out of 240 known ones were decorated, and cupmarks were the most common motif used on inner walls and roofing slabs. This is followed by a second paper by the same author studying the topography of the Bedolina rock art panels in Valcamonica, Italy. These panels are believed to create a stage for the performance of stories while at the same time artistically replicating social, economic and ritual landscapes.

Sara Garcês and co-authors in Chapter 4 discuss research carried out at the Tagus Valley Rock Art Complex in central Portugal. It was submerged in waters by a dam and latex moulds of the petroglyphs have greatly assisted post-dam investigations. Additionally, ochre paintings have also been found in some rock shelters and their pigments are analysed in detail.

Oscar Moro Abadía and Bryn Tapper reflect on the study of Palaeolithic rock art since the 19th century in Chapter 5. Importantly, the refinements in dating techniques allowed a shift of perception from it being solely European cave art to a global phenomenon found in Africa, Asia and Australia.

Chapter 6 offers previously unpublished research in the Canadian Shield by Daniel Arsenault, which is based on a paper delivered to the Rock Art Summer School in Mação, Portugal, 2015. The rock art sites were found to be an integral part of many Algonquian-speaking peoples' sacred landscapes in the past while some are still visited and interacted with as sacred places in the present. This is followed by a second paper where he outlines a step-by-step method of inquiry

into studying rock art. It is then applied to the case study of the Qajartalik petroglyph site in Nunavut province, Canada, which was created by the Dorset culture c. 12th–13th centuries AD.

Chapter 8 is the shortest in the volume where Jean Tanguay briefly describes the setup of an online exhibition of Canadian rock art inspired and worked upon by Daniel Arsenault. 'Images on Stone. A Virtual Exhibition on Rock Art in Canada' did not go online until in 2019 – three years after his death – but represents an important part of his legacy. It offers rich and detailed multi-media content about five Canadian sites ranging from Kejimikujik, Nova Scotia and Pepeshapissinikan, Québec in the east to Áísínai'pi (Writing-on-Stone Park), Alberta and K'ak'awin, British Columbia in the west as well as Qajartalik, Nunavut up far north.

This is followed by a paper by Adelphine Bonneau and Michel Lamothe who work on the direct dating of rock art. Radiocarbon and optically stimulated luminescence techniques were applied to samples from sites in the Canadian Shield as well as to San fine-line rock paintings found in Botswana, Lesotho and South Africa. Detailed discussions are offered on the methods employed, geochemical analysis and their varying degrees of success.

In Chapter 10, Fernando Augusto Coimbra undertakes the highly elusive pursuit of identifying astronomical representations in rock art from around the world. He also devotes a lengthy preface to his article on personal recollections of Daniel Arsenault.

Serge Lemaitre then examines the nuances of sacred and shamanistic connections to rock paintings and engravings of the Canadian Shield. The paintings are mainly executed in red ochre, which is considered to be a powerful form of medicine among Algonquian-speaking societies. Medicine persons and other individuals in societies, such as chiefs, have been also identified in the creation of rock art. Additionally, the 19th-century Ojibwa were recorded to distinguish motifs and signs understandable to all Ojibwa, *kekeewin*, from images only known to members of shamanistic secret societies, *kekeenowin*. It is concluded that the rock art may also possess both *kekeewin* and *kekeenowin* qualities.

In Chapter 12, Carole Charette analyses the styles of Innu, Naskapi and Cree clothing from the north-eastern subarctic area of Canada, which are found scattered throughout numerous ethnographic collections. Hunting robes made of caribou hides were produced not only to be comfortable outdoor garments but were also decorated with designs derived from visions and dreams to ensure the wearer would be successful in hunting. Moreover, the skill, dexterity and beauty of a wide range of designs are explored, which are unique to the culture of these subarctic dwelling societies.

This is followed by Douglas Herman's discussion of the development of a database for documenting place-based cultural heritage. It, in part, follows in spirit Daniel Arsenault's pursuit of the sustainable development of Indigenous heritages. As a result, the 'Pacific Worlds' project (2000–2005) recorded community knowledge gathered from Hawai'i and the Pacific Islands.

The final chapter in the volume by Florence Bouvry examines the limitations of the Western concept of art in understanding the designs found in Cucuteni-Trypillia culture of eastern Europe dating to the Neo-Chalcolithic (5th–4th millennium BC). The idea of 'art' as a higher aesthetic form of culture is unfamiliar to non-Western peoples as in many small-scale societies it is an activity that is not differentiated from other kinds of works.

'Art', however, is not the only idea that needs to be reassessed. Some aforementioned papers also veer into traditional characterisations of the peoples of the past using problematic terms, such as 'artistic genius', the 'profane' and 'superstition' (beliefs which instilled fear in non-literate societies), without carefully examining the issues inherent these Western conceptualisations.

Overall, this volume provides plenty of informative articles that prominently feature Canadian rock art and ethnographic studies supplemented with research from other countries around the world.

It is a fitting tribute to the work and legacy of Daniel Arsenault with its highlight being the offering of one of his previously unpublished papers.

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