

Caves in Context: The Cultural Significance of Caves and Rockshelters in Europe



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Caves in Context provides the thriving inter-disciplinary field of cave studies with a European-scale survey of current research in cave archaeology. It is unified by a contemporary theoretical emphasis on the cultural significance and diversity of caves over space and time. Caves and rockshelters are found all over Europe, and have frequently been occupied by human groups, from prehistory right up to the present day. Some appear to have only traces of short occupations, while others contain deep cultural deposits, indicating longer and multiple occupations. Above all, there is great variability in their human use, both secular and sacred. The aim of this book is to explore the multiple significances of these natural places in a range of chronological, spatial, and cultural contexts across Europe. The volume demonstrates, through a diversity of archaeological approaches and examples, that cave studies, whist necessarily focussed, can also be of significance to wider, contemporary, archaeological research agendas, particularly when a contextual approach is adopted. The book is also of relevance to other scholars working in the related fields of speleology, earth sciences, landscape studies, and anthropology, which together comprise the inter-disciplinary field of cave studies.

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