

Landscapes, Rock-Art and the Dreaming: An Archaeology of Preunderstanding (New Approaches to Anthropological Archaeology)

Bruno David



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The apparent timelessness of the Dreaming of Aboriginal Australia has long mystified European observers, conjuring images of an ancient people in harmony with their surroundings. It may come as a surprise, therefore, that the Dreaming's historical antiquity has never been explored by archaeologists. In this book, Bruno David examines the archaeological evidence for Dreaming-mediated places, rituals and symbolism. What emerges is not a static culture, but a mode of conceiving the world that emerged in its recognizable form only about 1000 years ago. This is a world of what the philosopher Hans-Georg Gadamer has called pre-understanding, a condition of knowledge that shapes one's experience of the world. By tracing through time the archaeological visibility of one well known mode of pre-understanding - the Dreaming of Aboriginal Australia - the author argues that it is possible to scientifically explore an archaeology of preunderstanding; of body and mind, identity and Being-in-the-world.



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