



The "sacred rocks" of the Iberian Peninsula [

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Analítica

Overview of the studies on the "sacred rocks" of the Iberian Peninsula in recent years. Sacred rocks are rocks with "supernatural" and "magical" connotations, as reflected in their associated rites and myths. They have been known since Antiquity, as they respond to ancestral beliefs preserved in many parts of the world, such as the Atlantic Celtic areas and other parts of Europe. The "sacred rocks" attracted the interest of the antiquarians in the 18th and 19th centuries, but fell into disrepute in the 20th century. In recent years an interdisciplinary study has been carried out to establish its typology, its chronology and its parallels, combining ethnology, archaeology, toponymy, history of religions and comparative mythology. More than 1,300 rocks have been analyzed in Iberia, so they should be much more frequent than they were supposed to be. Their study confirms the prehistoric origin of these monuments, whose associated rites and myths reveal beliefs of the pre-Roman popular religion not documented by written sources, by epigraphy or by archaeological finds. These rocks reveal a supernatural and "magical" conception of the landscape originated in animist conceptions of the Paleolithic, with Neolithic beliefs in a Mother Goddess and with rites and myths of Indo-European origin of the Atlantic Celts that have endured to the present day more or less Christianized, in a surprising process of *longue durée*. These beliefs concern essential practices, as sacrifices to the numen or ancestral spirit embodied in the sacred rock and other rites to favor fertility, health, knowing the future and favoring the functioning of society by highlighting power, fixing the date of the ritual festivities to brought society together and fostering atmospheric weather. Finally, we highlight the need for its study and protection as archaeological and ethnological monuments in the face of their serious risk of current disappearance, as they are an important part of the Cultural Heritage

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