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## Main content

Article Preview :

ALDHOUSE-GREEN, MIRANDA & STEPHEN ALDHOUSE-GREEN. The quest for the shaman: shape-shifters, sorcerers and spirit healers in ancient Europe. 240 pp., maps, tables, plates, illus., bibliogr. London: Thames & Hudson, 2005. [pounds sterling]19.95 (cloth)

What do Bonnie and Clyde, Dr Dolittle, Pablo Neruda, Bert Jansch, Graham Greene, Eva Peron, V.S. Naipaul, Alfred Lord Tennyson, Aeschylus, cannibals, zombies, whirling dervishes, ritual murderers, and shamans all have in common? Not only are they all in this lavishly illustrated popular archaeology book, they are used in correlations that stretch the imagination. Unfortunately, refreshing creativity probably too often crosses into speculation here. The authors, both established archaeologists at the University of Wales, appear to be riding a commercial wave (the book was a recent History Club selection) that includes shamanic art and/or archaeology books by J. David Lewis-Williams, Piers Vitebsky, and Mihaly Hoppal.

The book is useful for its capsule descriptions of a huge range of specific, mostly European, sites that may well have some link to broadly defined shamanic world-views through a vast swathe of time--from the Palaeolithic to the unevenly Christianized Middle Ages. One of the most poignant examples is the child buried on a swan's wing in Mesolithic Jutland (pp. 78-9). The final chapter on Celtic culture is delightful when it weds shamanic themes to early Welsh and Irish texts, bringing in material culture evidence where possible. The argument that Irish seers and chanting Druids were shamanic builds on themes developed earlier concerning shape-shifting (between...

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Bates, Brian. *The Real Middle-Earth: Exploring the Magic and Mystery of the Middle Ages*, J.r.r. Tolkien and "the Lord of the Rings". New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004. Print. Hayden, Brian. *Shamans, Sorcerers, and Saints: A Prehistory of Religion*. Washington, D.C: Smithsonian Institution, 2003. Print. MacKillop, James. *Dictionary of Celtic Mythology*. S.I.: Oxford University Press, 2016. Print. *The Quest for the Shaman* provides a richly illustrated tour through prehistoric Europe and early historic Britain, describing all such evidence for shamans, or at least shaman-like persons. The images and bodies are unquestionably weird and often wonderful, almost as much as some of the archaeologists' interpretations cited here by the authors and to which they add their own contributions. *The Quest for the Shaman: Shape-shifters, Sorcerers and Spirit-healers of Ancient Europe*. Author - Miranda and Stephen Aldhouse-Green Publisher - Thames and Hudson Pages - 240 Price - £18.95 ISBN - 0 500 05134 8. Please login or register to read this article. *The Quest for the Shaman: Shape-Shifters, Sorcerers and Spirit Healers of Ancient Europe* 4. For example, Mircea Eliade *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy* Compare Marjorie Mandelstam Balzer. Jan 1951. Stephen Miranda. Aldhouse-Green. Compare David Whitley *Cave Paintings and the Human Spirit: The Origin of Creativity and Belief* (Amherst: Prometheus, 2009); Miranda and Stephen Aldhouse-Green, *The Quest for the Shaman: Shape-Shifters, Sorcerers and Spirit Healers of Ancient Europe* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2005). 4. For example, Mircea Eliade *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy* (Princ