

Special Issue

Archaeology of Religion, Ideas and Aspirations

Message from the Guest Editor

Archaeology as a field and laboratory science promotes interpretations grounded in material evidence and the testing of ideas with such evidence: it is a Western belief system. The relevant material evidence regularly entails symbols and intentional patterns that can be argued to be symbolic—often defined as manifestations of ritual. That such evidence of past behavior is pervasive in time and space is widely acknowledged in archaeology. How to interpret it is a matter of diverse approaches, in part because archaeologists today debate the utility of key comparatist vocabulary, and in part because they debate the necessity of, or even the possibility of, perceiving and conceiving of patterns in evidence from the epistemological perspective of the people who made the record of the past. The papers in this section come from many experienced specialists. The call is for them to report from the edges of their understanding, to explain to people interested in religion, in plain terms and minimal reliance on definitions, generally what they think might be possible to say with some confidence about religion in the past.

Guest Editor

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Message from the Editorial Board

Fresh developments in the disciplines that consistently make significant contributions to our understanding of religious personality, authority, devotion, and community – disciplines ranging from psychology, sociology, and anthropology to history, art history, philosophy, literary criticism, and political science – fuel general, as well as scholarly, interest in the world's religions.

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