



Defining a Regional Neolithic: Evidence from Britain and Ireland (Neolithic Studies Group Seminar Papers)

Kenneth Brophy, G. Barclay

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This book is the ninth published collection of papers from a Neolithic Studies Group day conference, and it continues the Group's aim of presenting research on the Neolithic of all parts of the British Isles. The topic - regional diversity - is an important theme in Neolithic studies today, and embraces traditions of monumentality, settlement patterns and material culture. The contributors to this volume address issues of regionality through a series of case-studies that focus not on the traditional 'cores' of Wessex and Orkney, but rather on other areas - the 'Irish Sea Zone', Ireland, Scotland, Yorkshire and the Midlands. The volume commences with an introduction (Gordon Barclay) that expands on the initial impetus and research questions behind the 2001 conference this volume is based on. This is followed by a more abstract contribution analysing that most familiar of tools for the display of 'regional' archaeological data, the distribution map (Kenneth Brophy). Two papers follow that address the role material culture plays in both defining and characterising regional trends, one addressing the distinctive regionality of querns in the Neolithic (Fiona Roe), the other a wide-ranging analysis of high status material culture and monumentality in Yorkshire (Roy Loveday). A series of regional studies follows, with three papers focusing explicitly on a range of evidence from the 'Irish Sea zone' (Vicki Cummings, Tom Clare and Aaron Watson and Richard Bradley). A large and detailed body of evidence from the East Midlands is also considered (Patrick Clay) and the volume is completed by two papers considering very different regional scales in Ireland. At a more localised level, a series of islands off the east coast of Ireland are discussed in a local and wider context (Gabriel Cooney) and a still wider scale approach is taken to landscape and routeways across Ireland as a whole (Carleton Jones). These papers do not simply set up 'rival' distinctive regions, but rather suggest that local, regional and national traditions cross-cut and combine in different ways in different places. The interaction between regions is as significant as intra-regional distinctiveness. This volume addresses how we might begin to develop a more nuanced vision of the Neolithic of the British Isles.

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