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The powers of rocks: topography and monument construction on Bodmin Moor

Christopher Tilley

Abstract

This paper is an exploration of the relationship between topographic features of the landscape, agency and power in small-scale societies. In it I argue that topographic features of the landscape constitute a series of symbolic resources of essential significance in the formation of personal biographies and the creation and reproduction of structures of power. I attempt to explore these ideas through a discussion of the prehistoric landscapes of Bodmin Moor from the Neolithic to the end of the Bronze Age.

Keywords

Landscape; locales; power; prehistory; Bodmin Moor.

This paper is an exploration of the relationship between topographic features of the landscape, agency and power in small-scale societies. In it I argue that topographic features of the landscape constitute a series of symbolic resources of essential significance in the formation of personal biographies and the creation and reproduction of structures of power. I attempt to explore these ideas through a discussion of the prehistoric landscapes of Bodmin Moor from the Neolithic to the end of the Bronze Age. The interpretative basis of the account rests on four main propositions.

First Landscape is a holistic term. It may be defined as a set of relationships between named locales. The latter are specific physical settings for social interaction (e.g. forest glades, rocks, monuments, rooms, dwellings, settlements) which presence material and symbolic potentialities on which actors draw in the conduct of their activities. Locales have individual and particular embedded meanings and are of vital significance in the formation of the existential self. A concept of landscape, by contrast, transcends the particular meanings of locales, signifying a set of conventional and normative understandings through which people construct and make sense of their cultural world. Locales stand, then, in relation to landscapes as parts to wholes (Tilley 1994).

Second Landscapes are relationally constituted as embedded sets of space–time relations. They are experienced and known through the movement of the human body in space and through time (Bradley 1993; Barrett 1994). The meaningful spaces of landscapes are constructed through the temporalities of historical acts, forming both the medium for, and outcome of, movement and memory. Past actions, events, myths and stories ‘colour’ landscapes. An important aspect of the experience of landscape is the directness or indirectness of experience – locales that are close at hand or far away, those which are familiar or unfamiliar, visited daily or only on special occasions, those that have been seen and those that exist in the imagination. Knowledges of particular locales previously encountered set up structures of expectation and feeling affecting the interpretation and ‘reading’ of others.

Third Learning about the landscape acts as a primary medium of socialization. Knowledge of it is intimately bound up with knowledge of the self. Knowing ‘how to go on’ in a landscape involves a practical mastery of space which is simultaneously a process of finding oneself and one’s social world. Landscapes *empower*, they form personal biographical understandings of an agent’s place. While people create their landscapes these landscapes recursively act back so as to create the people who belong to them. Consciousness works on an always already socially objectified landscape that in turn affects it. As a shared set of socially mediated conventional understandings landscapes can be claimed to be an extension of the social self, providing a series of principles and norms for living, relating to others and the past.

Fourth Precisely because the landscape plays such an important role in the constitution of self-identity, controlling knowledge of it may become a primary resource in the creation and reproduction of repressive power or structures of social dominance. Since landscapes are experienced by the individual as pre-existing external social realities they cannot be understood by introspection. Their meanings and significance must be taught by some and learnt by others. The paradox of landscape, the double bind, is that, while they are produced culturally, they may be typically experienced as something other than a human product. And along these lines networks of power may be legitimized, appear natural and beyond challenge.

Topography and place

Bodmin Moor is a brown, treeless, windswept and rain-sodden boss of granite, around 200 sq km in size, situated near to the eastern county boundary of Cornwall in south-west England (Fig. 1). It is today one of the best preserved upland ‘fossil’ prehistoric landscapes of southern Britain, and is exceptionally rich in archaeological remains. The area has recently been the subject of one of the most comprehensive and meticulous archaeological landscape surveys undertaken in Britain (Johnson and Rose 1994). The results of this fieldwork provide an invaluable basis for the interpretative work presented here.

The Moor is a dissected plateau, the highest points being near its edges, crossed by sluggish streams, associated with extensive marshy areas. Although occupying a rather

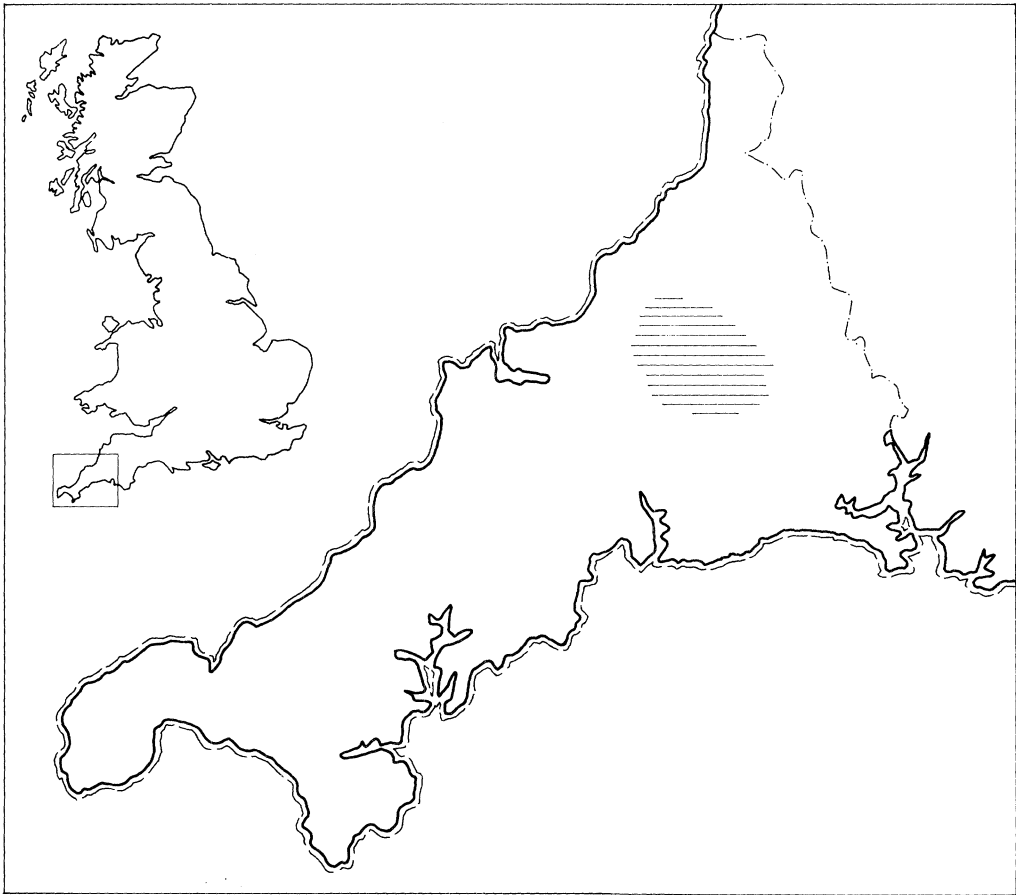


Figure 1 The location of Bodmin Moor, Cornwall.

small total area, the most dramatic and memorable landscape features of Bodmin Moor are the bold grey-coloured craggy granite hill and ridge summits with their fantastically weathered Tors (Plates 1, 2 and 3) and surrounding boulder or clitter spreads. Locally visually dominant summits with rock stacks or Tors are found all over the Moor. Some of these have only a local significance as landmarks. Others form distinctive silhouettes on the skyline visible from far away. Today these Tors are a constant source of fascination. Visitors assiduously climb up to them and on them, walk between them, gaze at them, photograph them and enjoy the panoramic vistas. The human fascination, a sense of awe and wonder for these places, notwithstanding a modern rational geological explanation for their formation, continues.

There is virtually no natural tree cover. The extreme exposure of the Moor to blustery winds has always limited woodland development. Environmental evidence (Brown 1977; Caseldine 1980; Walker and Austin 1985) indicates that, throughout the prehistoric past, trees were substantially confined to the more sheltered valleys with the rest of the landscape being dominated by grassland and heath as today. Tree and shrub pollen never



Plate 1 The Cheesewring Tor at Stowe's Pound, south-east Bodmin Moor. Remains of the enclosure walls are visible to the left.

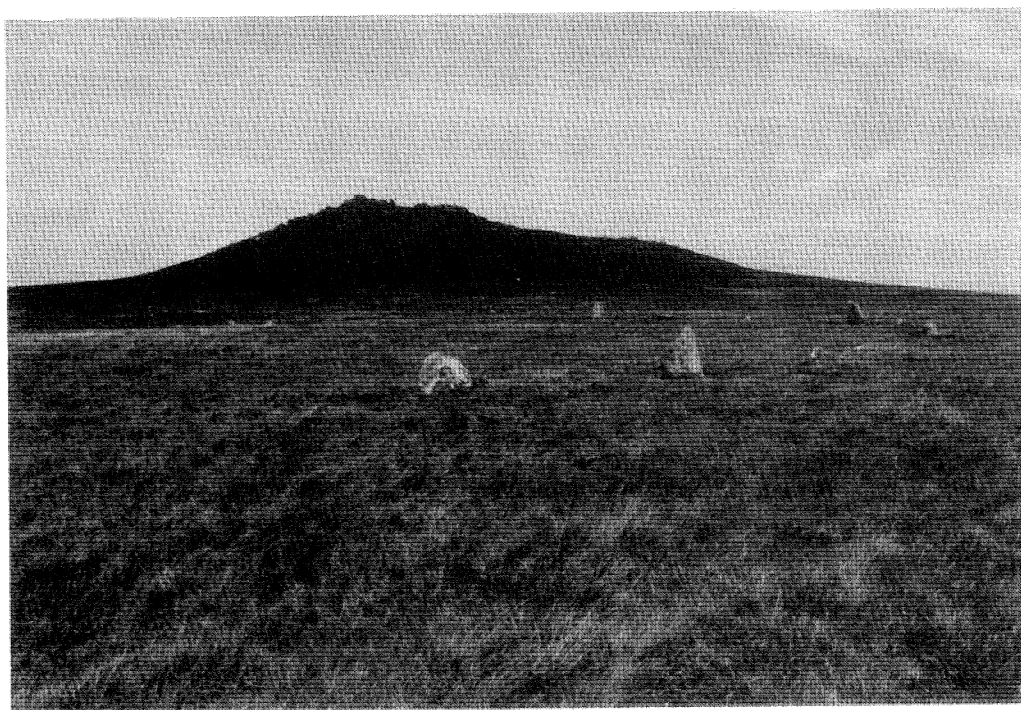


Plate 2 The Fernacre stone circle with the Rough Tor ridge beyond seen from the south.

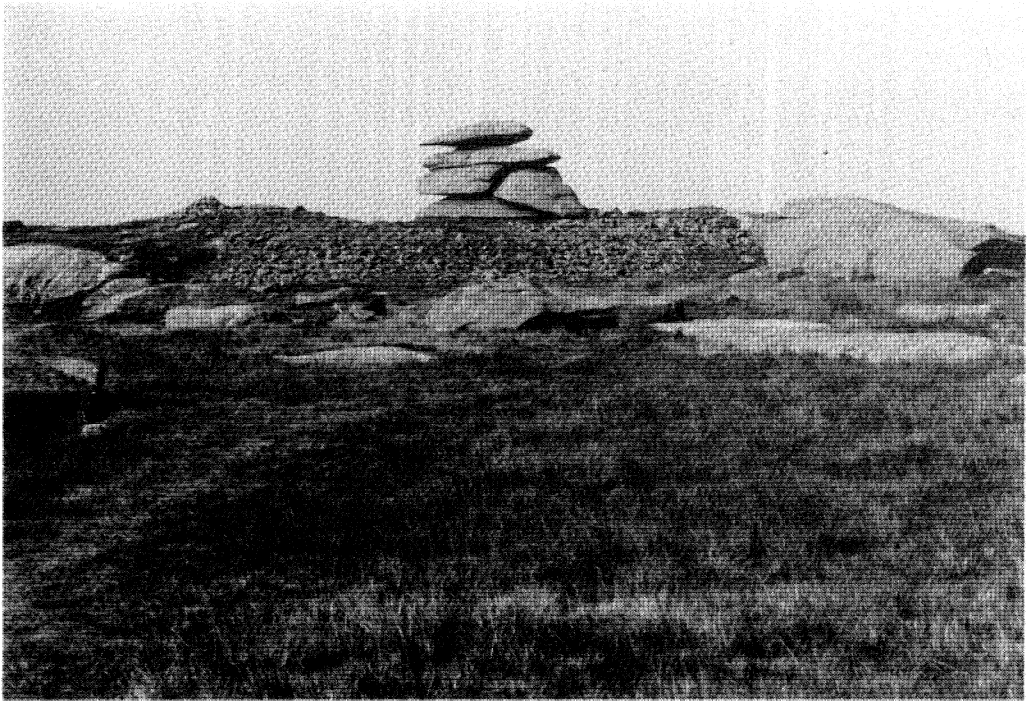


Plate 3 Showery Tor cairn at the end of the Rough Tor ridge, north-west Bodmin Moor.

amount to more than c. 50–70 per cent of total regional pollen counts throughout the entire post-glacial sequence (Caseldine 1980: 10).

The Mesolithic populations left no deliberate permanent and tangible trace of their activities and occupation of the Moor. The majority of documented Mesolithic flint scatters (Berridge and Roberts 1986; Herring and Lewis 1992; Jacobi 1979; Wymer 1977) appear to mark paths of movement through the landscape. Those places in the landscape that would appear to have had a particular symbolic and sacred importance are the inland lake of Dozmary Pool, springheads, marsh areas and the more prominent craggy Tors.

Movement up to and into the Moor would almost certainly have taken place by following the routes provided by the main river courses and their tributaries. Once in the centre of the Moor the rock outcrops, ridges, hilltops and Tors would have provided natural vantage points to hide and wait for game and survey the land below. They would be important focal points. Together with the river valleys, they provided an indispensable means for human orientation in the landscape. In the past, as today, the Tors would be named and significant places, invested with meaning, between which people moved. It is not hard to imagine that the fabulously weathered Tors would be great sources of symbolic potency and power, signifying a wide range of enduring relationships between people, the land, time and space. The Tors were, in effect, non-domesticated ‘megaliths’ or stone monuments, sculptured by the elements and imbued with cultural significance in the Mesolithic imagination in the forms of stories, myths and events of cosmological import.

The early and middle Neolithic c. 3500–2300 BC

The major change occurring during the earlier and middle Neolithic on Bodmin Moor was not of an economic character but involved monument construction in the landscape. There are two distinct classes of ritual and ceremonial monuments attributable to this period: long cairns and hill-top enclosures (Fig. 2).

Long cairns

Three long cairns have been recently documented from Bodmin Moor: Louden in the north-west, Catshole in the central part of the Moor and Bearah in the south-east (Herring 1983; Johnson and Rose 1994: 24–6). Others are probably still to be found. The lineal alignment in the landscape of the Catshole and Bearah long cairns is such that at both sites one end points towards impressive Tors, while at the other end there are much more

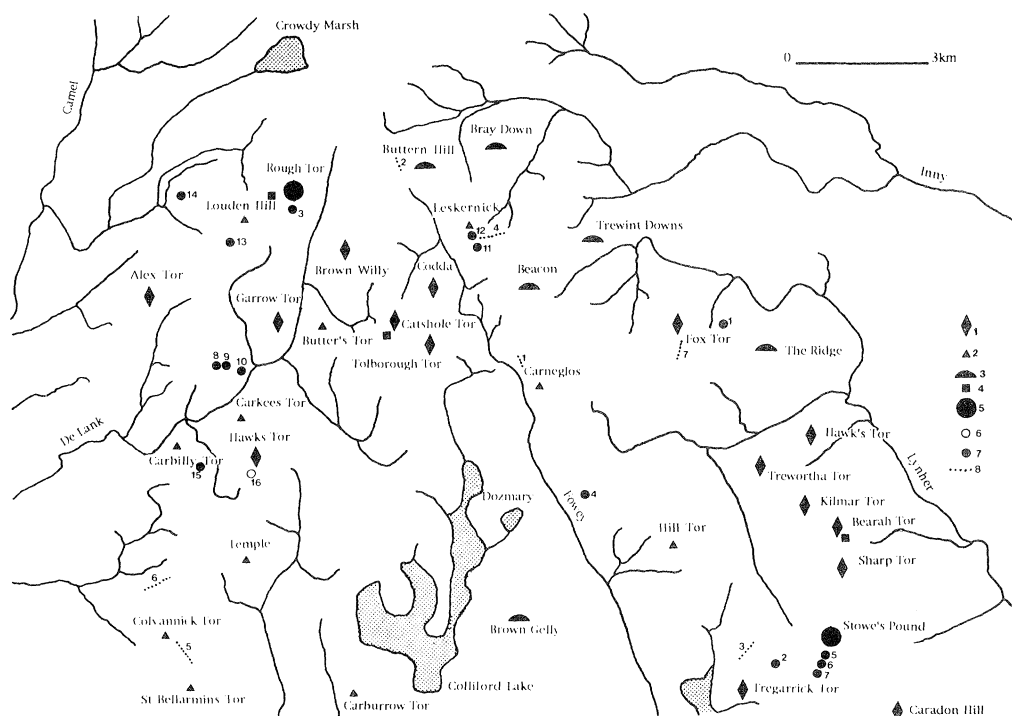


Figure 2 The distribution of earlier and later Neolithic monuments on Bodmin Moor in relation to Tors and hills: 1) Major Tor or rocky outcrop; 2) Minor Tor; 3) significant hills or ridges without visually significant rock outcrops; 4) long cairn; 5) ceremonial hill top enclosure; 6) henge with stone circle; 7) stone circle; 8) stone row.

Stone circles 1) Nine Stones, Altarnum; 2) Craddock Moor; 3) Fernacre; 4) Goodaver; 5–7) The Hurlers; 8–9) King Arthur's Downs; 10) Leaze; 11–12) Leskernick; 13) Louden Hill; 14) Stannon; 15) Trippet Stones; 16) Stripple Stones (Circle Henge)

Stone rows 1) Carneglos; 2) Buttern Hill; 3) Craddock Moor; 4) Leskernick; 5) Cardinham Moor; 6) Trehudreth Downs

extensive and open views across the landscape. Although there is no such precise alignment in relation to a localized Tor at Louden it is situated just below Rough Tor, one of the most visually impressive landmarks on Bodmin Moor. These three long cairns are, then, all situated *below* impressive Tors to which the *higher* end of the long axis of two of them points, thus serving to highlight a specific symbolic relationship between cultural monument and natural rock outcrop, and to emphasize the cultural significance of the latter which had, almost certainly, already been established, or encultured, during the Mesolithic. The construction of the long cairns served to formalize, objectify and make explicitly *visible*, for the first time, a relationship between social Being and the physical form of the landscape which had already existed in human *thought* for thousands of years. The building of these long cairns thus served to establish in a material and enduring form a relationship between ritual practices and the landscape. It indicates a new ideological concern – to stabilize a cultural relationship with significant features of the topography by freezing them in time.

Hill-top enclosures

There are at least two hill-top enclosures on Bodmin Moor, Rough Tor in the north-west and Stowe's Pound in the south-east (see Fig. 2), which may have their origins in the Neolithic, although both were probably extensively remodelled during the Bronze Age. Excavation has taken place at neither site. Mercer (1981, 1986a: 52, 1986b), Johnson and Rose (1994: 48) and others have all stressed similarities in position and constructional form between the Rough Tor and Stowe's Pound enclosures and excavated Cornish examples of proven Neolithic date at Carn Brea and Helman Tor. The Rough Tor and Stowe's Pound enclosures share a number of features in common. In terms of altitude, lack of water and extreme exposure to wind, few worse positions for a permanent settlement could be imagined. Both are particularly prominent locales dominating the landscape for miles around. They were meant to be seen, climbed up to, visited for ceremonial events and then left. The association of the Rough Tor and the Stowe's Pound enclosures with the most visually impressive individual Tors on Bodmin Moor, the former with Showery Tor (see Plate 3) and the Rough Tor summits, and the latter with the Cheesewring (Plate 1) is of particular significance. All three Neolithic long cairns are situated within a few kilometres of these enclosures, Louden Hill, the largest, just below the Rough Tor summit.

During the earlier and middle Neolithic the positioning and orientation of the long cairns made symbolic reference to the Tors but they were located at a *reserved* distance. The long cairns provided a fixed spatial context for the playing out of local rites connected with the ancestors and ancestral powers. The hilltop enclosures, requiring much greater effort for their construction, may have acted as communal ritual centres. Both types of monument probably drew part of their power and significance through appropriating and making reference to landmarks that already had an embedded cultural significance going back to the Mesolithic. The past sacred powers of topographic space became incorporated in the present of monument construction and use which served to 'draw out' ancestral powers from the landscape, making them visible and providing symbolic potentiality for their ritual control. The hilltop enclosures marked out the two most important hills at opposite ends of Bodmin Moor. The long cairns acted to focus attention on other Tors

along their axis. In the social context of an area of moorland that was only seasonally occupied by small numbers of people the use of these monuments would be integrated with movement patterns involving the dispersal and coming together of populations. The locations of these sites both harmonized and intervened in the topographical structure of the landscape altering and transforming it for good. For the first time, for an individual to possess personal knowledge of important symbolic and sacred topographic elements of the Moor was no longer sufficient in social discourse. Knowledge of these things was now both formalized and to be gained *through* the mediation of monuments. But the potential for social control remained slight and became more fully realized only during the late Neolithic and Bronze Age.

The late Neolithic and Bronze Age c. 3000–500 BC

This period was one in which there occurred a quite massive cultural transformation of the landscape. While the material traces of earlier Mesolithic and Neolithic activity on the Moor are few, and found in restricted areas, monuments and settlements dating to the late Neolithic and Bronze Age are almost everywhere. There are four main developments:

- 1 For the first time there is widespread evidence of permanent and substantial domestic settlement areas associated with enclosures, fields, the cultivation of the land and localized woodland destruction.
- 2 Major ceremonial monuments are built, stone circles and stone rows.
- 3 Cairns and cairn cemeteries were constructed in a wide variety of locations.
- 4 Towards the end of the Bronze Age major land divisions were constructed in some areas, restructuring access to, and experience of, both monuments and the land.

Ceremonial monuments

The circle and the line are two basic forms which could not be more contrasting in terms of their basic geometry. The former encloses and delimits a space for activity and event, the latter cuts a line across space, in a manner similar to the axis of the long cairn. Circles imply motion within and around, lines motion along. Both types of monument demarcated spaces to cross, to go beyond, spaces to move into and out of, move between, look at and look beyond. I want to argue that these were stones by which to learn, stones by which to remember, stones by which to orient, and stones by which to think. Learning, remembering, orientation and thinking are all processes requiring education and instruction. And such knowledge was both empowering to the individual, and offered the potential for structures of ritual authority to be effective. Controlling access to the ritual secrets of the stones enabled social inequalities to be both established and then reproduced. I want to argue that one vitally important part of the ritual knowledge embodied in the stones, to be both conveyed and selectively 'released' by ritual specialists, was knowledge of the landscape and the spirit powers embedded in it.

Stone circles

Sixteen stone circles are now known on Bodmin Moor (Fig. 2), (Tregelles 1906; Burl 1976: 115–22; Barnatt 1980, 1989; Johnson and Rose 1994: 31–3). Only two have been partially excavated and there are no radiocarbon dates. They are all probably fairly early in date, being constructed towards the end of the late Neolithic and in the earlier Bronze Age, but it is likely they were in use throughout the period. Most were probably built in tandem with the earliest phase of permanent settlement on Bodmin Moor. They vary quite considerably in terms of diameter and form, stone dimensions, numbers of stones and the sizes of gaps between them. The Stripple Stones is unique: a circle henge with a ring of stones and central stone being surrounded by a ditch with an external bank cut through by a single entrance to the WSW.

The spaces in which the stone circles are located are, for the most part, conspicuously distant from other monuments, cairns or settlement areas. The nearest prehistoric settlement areas (of any period or date) to the circles are located at distances varying between 250 m and more than 1 km. Few cairns are located in the immediate vicinity of the circles. As Barnatt (1982: 69) suggests, the circles would appear to be at the centres of reserved sacred spaces, but the size of such areas differs considerably: up to 1 km or more around the Trippet Stones and Stripple Stones, but much more confined spaces around others such as Craddock Moor and Louden Hill.

All the circles are located only a short distance away from streams and substantial boggy areas. Walking from one circle to another invariably requires crossing, or going round, these streams and bogs. It appears as if the natural boundaries formed by these wet areas may have played an important role in marking out the areas of sacred space in the landscape occupied by the circles. A special relationship exists between the circles and individual Tors. All the circles are situated at a short distance, 2 km or considerably less, from the nearest Tor. Some, such as the Hurlers, Fernacre, Leskernick Hill North and Stripple Stones circles, are actually situated on the lower slopes of land immediately rising up to the Tor (Plate 2). In all except three cases the circles are situated to the *south* of these Tors. Entering the circles from the south and west would be to move into an area delimited by the stones with a far more constricted view of hills and Tors to the north and east, their jagged outlines serving as a spectacular backdrop to the events and ceremonies that took place within these rings of stone.

That a desire that prominent Tors be visible from the circles played a major role in their precise location is evident from a consideration of a number of specific instances. Had the Leaze circle, positioned on a slope, been located no more than 30 m. or so to the south of its present position the outline of Rough Tor would have been invisible. Locating the Louden Hill circle south and down-slope from its present position would have had a similar effect.

Processional ways must have led between these circles and there is evidence that their placement and passing between them communicated specific messages about the wider landscape and points of essential significance in it. The most interesting case concerns the Trippet Stones and the Stripple Stones (Fig. 2: Nos 15 and 16). These two circles are situated 1.2 km. apart, the former just below Carbilly Tor to its north, the latter on the southern slopes of Hawk's Tor. From the centres of both circles the view is dominated by

the distant outline of Rough Tor. They are intervisible, with the entrance to the Stripple Stones henge positioned so that the Trippet Stones is visible through it to the WSW. Walking east towards the Stripple Stones from the Trippet Stones one starts going down a fairly steep slope. After no more than c. 50 m Rough Tor becomes lost on the skyline, before crossing a stream. After this natural landscape boundary has been passed the only visible landmark ahead is the tip of Hawk's Tor. Walking now up-slope, away from the stream, the tips of the Stripple Stones gradually come into view again, but Rough Tor remains concealed behind Hawk's Tor to the north-east. Passing through the entrance to the Stripple Stones, across the bank, Rough Tor is still invisible. The tip becomes visible on the skyline only immediately after crossing the ditch. It gradually becomes more and more prominent as one proceeds to enter the stone ring and move towards the centre of the circle with its large marker stone.

The entrance area of the Stripple Stones ditch marks and emphasizes an important *transition point* in relation to the visibility of Rough Tor. It seems highly likely that the Stripple Stones is a multi-period site, the circle having been erected first and the ditch and bank added later to surround it. The effect of elaborating on the monument through the provision of ditch and bank and clearly demarcated entrance area was to emphasize on the ground that which was already known in the minds of the builders: that the impact and significance of the monument was bound up with its relationship both to the Trippet Stones to the west and to Rough Tor to the north. Moving between these sites, in either direction, it is only just before entering the stone rings that Rough Tor becomes visible on the skyline. The major difference is that this transition point is marked on the ground at the Stripple Stones, but not at the Trippet Stones.

Stone rows

Seven stone rows have recently been documented on Bodmin Moor (Johnson and Rose 1994: 32–4) and are found in all areas except the north-west. Trying to take into account variations in the morphological characteristics of the stone rows, their topographic locations, relationships to prominent Tors and other landscape features on Bodmin Moor, it seems clear that the purposes for which they were constructed differed. In three cases (Carneglos, Trehudreth Downs and Craddock Moor) they defined the margins of higher sacred space occupied by cairns and standing stones. These stone rows all run along and beneath higher ground to the east or south on which the cairns and standing stones are situated and from which the stone rows themselves are invisible. They would mark transition points one would have to cross in order to climb up to the monuments beyond them. For example, on Trehudreth Downs a complex of cairns and standing stones occurs to the south of a stone row, while in the area immediately to the north none are known. These monuments are all situated on the top and western and eastern edges of a plateau with the stone row running diagonally up its side. The stone row is not aligned in relation to any of the monuments, nor does it in any obvious way lead up to them. It may be marking the northern boundary of the high sacred space which the barrows and standing stones occupy.

In another four cases (Leskernick, Cardinham Moor, East Moor and Buttern Hill) the stone rows may themselves have been at the centres of sacred spaces. Like the stone

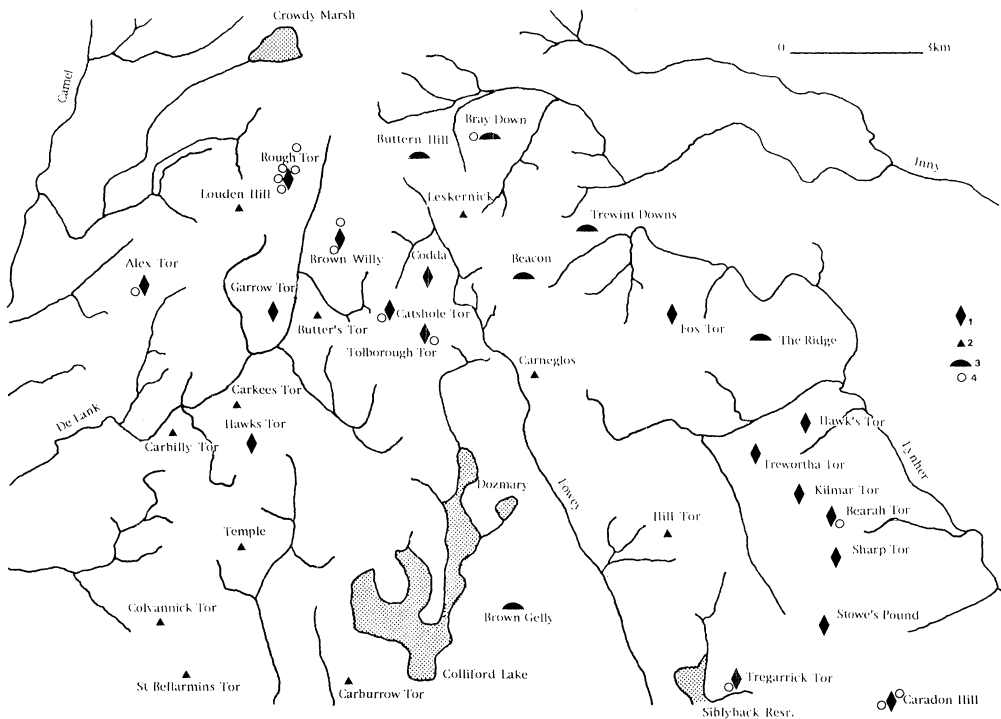


Figure 3 The distribution of Tor cairns on Bodmin Moor. 1) Major Tor or rocky outcrop; 2) Minor Tor; 3) significant hill without prominent outcrops; 4) Tor cairns built on or around rock outcrops.

circles, they occur in relative isolation in wide ‘empty’ tracts of land usually devoid of other monuments or traces of settlements. It is of great interest to note that it is only in those cases where the rows may have formed the centres of a ritual space that what I term ‘perspectival effects’ occur in relation to the wider landscape as one walks along them from one terminal to the other. Moving west down the Leskernick stone row the tip of Rough Tor becomes visible for the first time shortly before approaching the row end, immediately after crossing over a marshy transitional area, and then becomes increasingly visually dominant as one approaches the terminal setting of three standing stones on the midpoint of a gentle slope by a cairn.

Cairns and the landscape

Over 350 cairns are now known on Bodmin Moor (Trahair 1978; Barnett 1982; Johnson and Rose 1994: 34). The majority of the larger cairns over 10 m. in diameter lie high up on hillcrests. There are at least fifteen cairns on Bodmin Moor where natural rock outcrops and stacks form the focus of the cairn or directly on top of which the cairn is built (Fig. 3). Four of these are located in the south-east part of the Moor, the remaining eleven in the north-west of the Moor. In addition to these Tor cairns there are a number of well-documented examples of ‘grunder’ cairns in which large earth-fast boulders form the central focus of the cairn or are incorporated within it.

Dramatic evidence of the significance of these Tors and grounders in relation to cairn location and construction is provided by the results of the excavation of a cairn I at Caerloggas on the nearby St Austell granite uplands 20 km to the west of Bodmin Moor (Miles 1975). This Tor cairn was a ceremonial enclosure, with the Tor as the central focus, below which a dedicatory burial of artefacts and bones had taken place. Access to the enclosure was both restricted and remodelled. A narrow entrance, internal screen, successive heightening of the surrounding cairn ring surmounted with posts, probably supporting a fence, all betray a concern for secrecy, to hide the activities taking place inside the ritual arena from observation from the outside. The deposits discovered around the Tor are of a highly symbolically charged nature including beach flints, amber, a dagger, white quartz pebbles, incised slate, a tourmaline pebble and two fragments of human long bones. Some are of an exotic nature from far-flung locations.

The cairns with rock stacks or large boulders forming their central foci were clearly of great significance on Bodmin Moor during the Bronze Age. The most prominent visual landmarks of all, the granite Tors, were being encultured through the stacking up of stones around or on them, while boulders acting only locally as landscape markers and orientational foci were being built into and concealed by other cairns. In the case of the Tors, a natural outcrop is being enhanced, controlled, domesticated, as part of a whole series of ritual activities. In both cases cairn location, quite literally, builds on natural features marking the landscape (Plate 3).

Clearly the construction of Tor cairns represents a very different type of symbolic relationship to the rock outcrops than during the Neolithic. While the Neolithic long cairns make reference to them at a reserved distance, they become enclosed, built over and bounded off during the Bronze Age. The emphasis on the relationship between rocks and monuments is further and deliberately emphasized, and in a manner which can hardly be described as discreet. In contrast to the Neolithic there is a much stronger will to *visibility* with cairns found in all the very highest locations in the landscape. There is a concern with *hiding* some of the smaller Tors as at Caerloggas. The emphasis seems to be to capture, appropriate and control the powers of the rocks which first become materially marked out through monument construction in the Neolithic. While in the Neolithic the Tors constituted a series of symbolic resources whose use and veneration was available to all, during the Bronze Age access to, and use of them, became far more restricted. Appropriating the Tors and controlling access to their embedded spirit powers and ancestral associations became part and parcel of the exercise of power and social control.

The form of the cairns and the activities taking place at them appear to link together all the most important features of the contemporary natural and cultural environment of Bodmin Moor and beyond: the rocks, sea and sky, thus emphasizing a continuum between them. They incorporated boulders and were built on or around Tors, they ran lineally on ridges and between prominent landmarks, the pits beneath them perhaps represented the fissures, clefts and 'caves' in these rocks. Excavations in the area (Ashbee 1958; Christie 1988; Dudley 1961; Griffith 1984; Harris, Hooper and Trudgian 1984; Wainwright 1965) have provided evidence for the layering of the mounds with different types of materials. The inclusion in some cairns and barrows of shiny granite and white shiny quartz, black loams and yellow and grey clay indicates a concern with both the tactile qualities of raw materials in the landscape and colour symbolism. The widespread constructional use

of granite, white quartz, clay and loam brought together at the barrow site highly significant elements of the surrounding natural landscape. The most significant tree, the oak, was repeatedly incorporated in charcoal and wooden deposits; its longevity suggests it as a metaphor for the ancestral past. Worked and modified stone tools and objects were made from the slates, granites and greenstones of the Moor and beach flint and pebbles were incorporated from the coast.

Conclusions

Ever since the first human encounter with Bodmin Moor in the early Mesolithic, craggy rock outcrops and their contrastive relationship to other elements – streams and bogs, plateau areas and rounded hills – played an extremely important role in the structuring of personal experience. Learning about the landscape was part and parcel of the process of understanding oneself, the social world and the entire cosmos. During the early and middle Neolithic sacred places began to be physically marked and referenced through the construction of long cairns and hill-top enclosures but knowledges of the significance of these places remained relatively unstructured as the small groups of Neolithic people moved through the landscape. During the later Neolithic, and throughout the Bronze Age, in tandem with the first permanent settling of the Moor, there was a dramatic increase in both the numbers and forms of monuments that were constructed. The day-to-day rhythms of social life altered significantly in that they now became bound up with permanent place-bound dwellings rather than seasonal movements across wide tracts of land.

The presence of exceptionally rich burials, such as that of the individual interred in the Rillaton barrow just below Stowe's Pound and the Cheesewring Tor together with a gold cup, bronze dagger, pieces of ivory and bone and faience beads (Borlase 1872: 37; Hencken 1932: 69–70), strongly suggests the existence of a small, but significant, social élite associated with these places. The most important resource being appropriated locally to maintain the authority of this social élite is unlikely to have been either land, crops, animals or raw materials such as quartz or tin – readily accessible to all and very cumbersome to control. Controlling flows of exotic exchange items also seems unlikely to have been important in an area such as Bodmin Moor that appears to have been of peripheral significance in the Bronze Age regional economy. Virtually all the prestigious items known from Cornwall in the Bronze Age are confined to coastal areas to the south and west (Christie 1986). Knowledges deemed essential to the reproduction and well-being of the social group were, by contrast, unlimited and quite easy to control and manipulate. One form this knowledge took was that embodied in the cultural significance of the landscape, mediated through monuments, and their potent structuring effects on the biographies of individuals, groups and collectivities. It provided a primary medium through which power was reproduced. The ritually and symbolically effective placing of monuments in the landscape became of vital significance in the creation, reproduction and articulation of authority, in a relationship between ritual specialists and those who were led and instructed. One of the purposes of using and visiting these monuments was to inform and sediment in the mind a sense of awe and wonder, of the significance of the

place, and its ancestral connotations, the events which had taken place there and the telling of myths recounting the spirit powers inhabiting it. This entailed an ever-increasing emphasis on creating, maintaining, working and re-working an intimate network of relationships between monuments and the topography. It was a process in which earlier social practices and attitudes to the land became transformed and appropriated. Throughout the Bronze Age the landscape underwent a constant process of structuration in relation to both the numbers and the architectural forms of the monuments being imposed on it. As each new monument was constructed it became more and more socially embedded as part of an all-encompassing system of ritual knowledge. The Neolithic past was actively appropriated so as to naturalize and legitimize the present. This may have involved the remodelling of the Rough Tor and Stowe's Pound enclosures through extending and modifying their entrance ways and by means of cairn construction. Tor cairns were built on or around those rocks referenced at a distance by the Neolithic long cairns.

The stone circles and stone rows variously acted so as to mark out or link sacred areas, or their margins. Ceremonial movement along, around and between them entailed passing transition points and the revelation of perspectival effects in relation to important topographic elements of the landscape beyond. All these features formed part and parcel of the selective structuring of the experience of the landscape for the people who were led into them, left them and followed in processions between them. The topography, and its significance, was thus re-worked by these monuments when people were led along them, or were taken into the specific and restricted spaces they served to define. This simultaneously entailed a closing down and restriction on the visibility of the landscape and options for movement through and knowledge of it. The single entrance to the Strippel Stones circle-henge may simply represent and formally mark on the ground what happened in the other circles: there was a single way to approach this monument and to leave it.

Natural boundaries in the landscape, particularly marsh areas and watercourses, always seem to have been important in defining the margins of sacred spaces. In the late Bronze Age, as well as particular *places* (cairns, Tors, stone circles, etc.) being of especial significance, marked out by monuments and surrounded by sacred areas delimited by marsh, stream and Tor, it also became important formally to delineate and bound off other spaces in the landscape lacking such topographic reference points. Linear boundaries were strung out between rocks and streams or along ridges in some areas of Bodmin Moor (Johnson and Rose 1994: 59–65) and in some cases derived further symbolic potency and power by incorporating cairns (Brisbane and Clews 1979). Two successive processes would seem to be at work here. First, the marking out of the Tors and the hilltops through the construction of large cairns as ritual foci. Second, the subsequent enclosure of these sites in landscape blocks. Access to the monuments and important rocks becomes increasingly formalized as a result.

The cairns display an almost obsessive concern with circularity, enclosure and boundedness, effected by various means – the construction of kerb stones, inner and outer rings of stones, stake and post circles, ditches and banks. Burial is all about containment – bones in pots in pits surrounded by fences or cairn rings finally heaped over with stones or turves. This emphasis on circularity and enclosure with entrances, where they occur, in the

southern sector of the cairns, links them with the stone circles, as does the use of quartz in both, deposited in piles under the cairns and used to cover the area enclosed by the central Hurlers stone circle (Radford 1935, 1938). Excavation of the Stripples Stones circle-henge revealed four pits near to the centre stone and quantities of charcoal and oak timbers from the ditch (Gray 1908), structures and types of deposits also featuring so prominently at the cairn sites.

The positioning of the stone circles and stone rows indicates a concern with processions and specific paths of movement through the landscape, of serially ordering and arranging activities and events. The frequent linear arrangement of the cairns in the landscape betrays a similar concern. During the Bronze Age the landscape of Bodmin Moor becomes, quite literally, filled with cairns. The eternities of the land, oak and stone were integrated by the cairns, in intervisible constellations. Unlike the stone circles and stone rows the cairns were built in their hundreds. They crowned the ridge and hilltops, resembled, encircled, incorporated and hid the Tors. Knowledge of the landscape became bound into them. Through time they became the most significant permanent sacred reference points in the landscape of Bodmin Moor, usurping the social role that the Tors had previously played, a cultural triumph over the sleeping powers of the rocks.

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