



by Harald Meller, Kai Michel  
Rowohlt

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Non-Fiction

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## The Mystery of the Shaman – An Archaeological Journey to our Beginnings

*Das Rätsel der Schamanin: Eine archäologische Reise zu unseren Anfängen*

### review

Taking the story of the 9000-year-old Shaman of Bad-Dürrenberg as their starting point and anchor, Harald Meller (an archaeologist and academic) and Kai Michel (a writer on the evolution of human behaviour and historical issues) present a broad and readable exploration of a variety of spiritual and historical issues.

Meller and Michel offer a compelling account of a fascinating discovery, the nature of human life in the mesolithic period, and the Shaman's history since her unearthing. The themes they reflect on in the process include the origins of human religion and spirituality, the degree to which the idea of a 'shaman' is a useful concept, the ongoing influence of European colonial thought on our interpretation of language and the world, how we see our own ancestors, and the use and misuse of history for political (in this case National Socialist) ends.

'The Mystery of the Shaman' is well-written, informal in style, readable and accessible. It does not assume its readers will have an expert understanding of archaeology, or issues such as the National-

Socialist period or the legacy of colonialism. It will thus appeal to general readers with an interest in history and archaeology. Presented like a gradually unfolding crime story or drama, it is an exciting read that provides a fascinating account of an area of archaeology on which there has so far been little writing in English. Its engagement with postcolonial themes is timely and relevant. It is a truly intriguing and original exploration of what we know of our prehistory and the ways in which we often misunderstand it.

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Find out more here:

<https://www.rowohlt.de/verlag/rights/book/harald-meller-kai-michel-das-raetsel-der-schamanin-9783498003012>

## press quotes

*An exciting book: the reconstruction of a masterly work of detection that is without equal in recent German archaeology.*

Der Spiegel

*The Mystery of the Shaman' takes the reader on an extraordinary quest that leads all the way to the roots of spirituality and religion.*

ZEIT für Literatur

*As they did before in their books about the Nebra Sky Disc, the two authors tell such an enthralling tale that it's hard to put the book down. An archaeological detective story that saves the most exciting thing until last.*

Max Planck Research magazine

## about the authors



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Harald Meller is State Archaeologist for Saxony-Anhalt, a museum director and Professor of Archaeology at Halle an der Saale. He has achieved international recognition as an archaeologist and exhibition curator, having led the excavations and research on the Shaman of Bad Dürrenberg.

Previous works by these authors include *Die Himmelsscheibe von Nebra: Der Schlüssel zu einer untergegangenen Kultur im Herzen Europas, Propyläen*, (2018).



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Kai Michel is a historian and literary scholar, who co-authored the bestsellers 'The Nebra Sky Disc' and 'The Mystery of the Shaman' with Harald Meller. He lives in Zurich and the Black Forest.

Previous works by these authors include *Die Himmelsscheibe von Nebra: Der Schlüssel zu einer untergegangenen Kultur im Herzen Europas, Propyläen*, (2018).

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