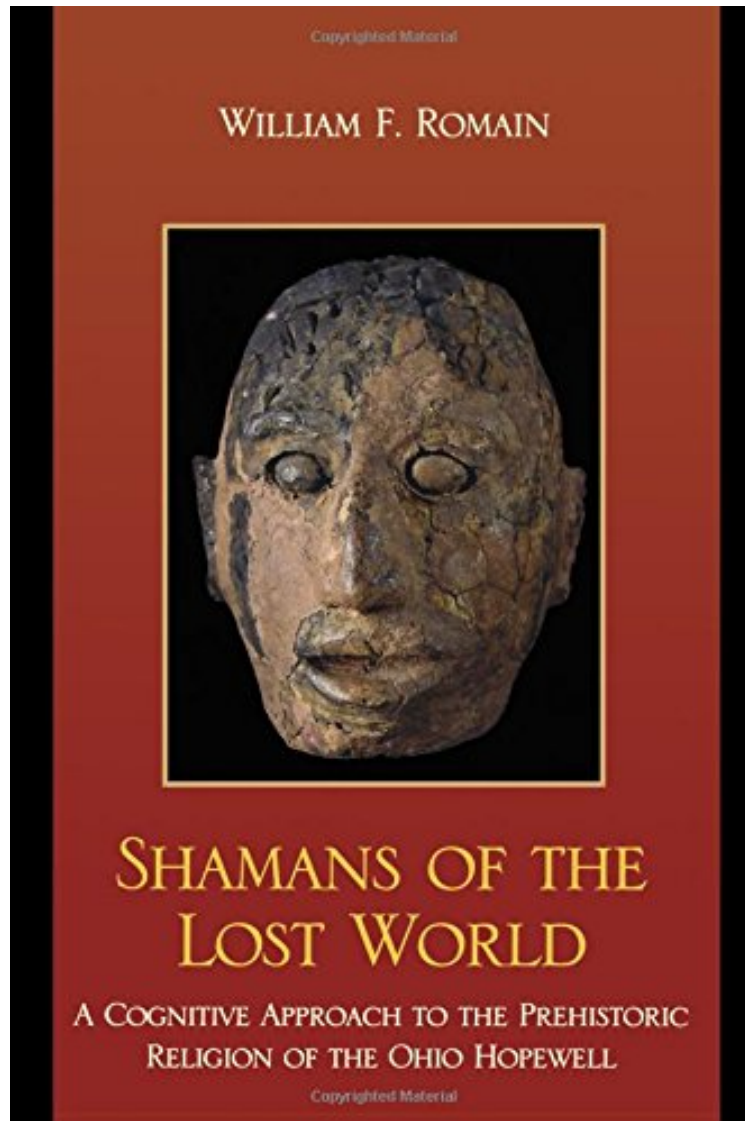


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## **Shamans of the Lost World: A Cognitive Approach to the Prehistoric Religion of the Ohio Hopewell (Issues in Eastern Woodlands Archaeology)**

*William F. Romain*

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**William F. Romain : Shamans of the Lost World: A Cognitive Approach to the Prehistoric Religion of the Ohio Hopewell (Issues in Eastern Woodlands Archaeology)** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Shamans of the Lost World: A Cognitive Approach to the Prehistoric Religion of the

## Ohio Hopewell (Issues in Eastern Woodlands Archaeology):

5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Cognitive World of Ancient Native America By D. R. Hamilton This book takes what seems from the outset an almost hardline stand on a soft science subject, and yet at the same time delivers a palatable amount of thought provoking interpretation. There hasn't been much written on Hopewell Culture shamanistic practice, and Dr. Romain really takes the proverbial bull by the horns in a serious effort to amend that scarcity. 'Cognitive' is the key word here, and although another interpretation might create an entirely different picture than the one presented, Romain works all the legitimate angles to bring home his points. There is no real link to any ideas of Western spiritual philosophy, and one gets the impression that the author saw his shamans of the Hopewell Cultural period not as holy people as one might expect, but more like mystical guides, consultants, or perhaps something darker for their people. He goes to some lengths to explain his ideas which, true to title, are cognitive. Cognition is defined as the act of knowing or perception but also pertains to the mental processes of drawing on memory, reasoning and even judgment. Romain does invoke some emotion as in the example of the trophy-like skull at the beginning, but seems to refrain from volitional outbursts, focusing more on the purpose, meaning, and structure of the Hopewellian medicine system. There are other well conceived books on Native American medicine practice and their doctors, but I would venture that attempting a work like this--focusing on a cultural ethos from 2,000 years ago with little more than artifactual evidence to support a psychological thesis--is more than entertaining, it is insightful and, to a degree, enriching. Oh, BTW, there's a little irony in there too.

Shamans of the Lost World bridges the gap between recent work in the cognitive sciences and some of humankind's oldest religious expressions. In this detailed look at the prehistoric shamanism of the Ohio Hopewell, Romain uses cognitive science, archaeology, and ethnology to propose that the shamanic worldview results from psychological mechanisms that have a basis in our cognitive evolutionary development. The discussions in this volume of the most current theories concerning how early peoples came to believe in spirits and gods, as well as how those theories help account for what we find in the archaeological record of the Hopewell, are of interest to archaeologists and cognitive scientists alike.

Essential for programs in anthropology, archaeology, and cognitive, religious, and Native American studies. Highly recommended. (CHOICE, July 2010) William Romain attempts to do the magic of mind-reading a people long gone. How did the Hopewell understand their world, or make meaning from their existence? By laying out the physical, ethnographic, and historical evidence, and mixing this brew with ingredients from the cognitive sciences, Romain concocts a potion that evokes a compelling vision of the shamanic Hopewell's lives and thoughts. Efficiently written, Shamans of the Lost World offers a model of how to do scientifically informed cognitive archaeology. (Justin L. Barrett, Institute of Cognitive and Evolutionary Anthropology, University of Oxford) Overall, this is a valuable contribution to the study of religion in general and of the structure and origins of Hopewellian religion in particular. In addition to the thoroughness of basic principles and archaeological data, the book is well written and well illustrated. This book is essential for anyone interested in these important topics. (Northwest Ohio History) About the Author William F. Romain is a research associate at Ohio State University and author of Mysteries of the Hopewell: Astronomers, Geometers, and Magicians of the Eastern Woodland.