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**BAD YEAR ECONOMICS**

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052161192X - Bad Year Economics: Cultural Responses to Risk and Uncertainty

Edited by Paul Halstead and John O'Shea

Frontmatter

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**BAD YEAR  
ECONOMICS:  
CULTURAL  
RESPONSES TO  
RISK AND  
UNCERTAINTY**

EDITED BY

PAUL HALSTEAD AND JOHN O'SHEA

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**PREFACE**

The idea of a volume looking at cultural responses to uncertainty and scarcity across a range of social scales and economic systems had its origin in discussions between the editors and Peter Rowley-Conwy during an extended car journey in 1982. The idea was developed in more concrete form in a symposium entitled 'Cultural responses to risk and uncertainty' at the 1984 Theoretical Archaeology Group (TAG) meeting in Cambridge. The session brought together many of the present contributors and established an organisation that has been retained in this volume. Following the TAG session, the participants were asked to produce expanded versions of their papers, and a number of other researchers with similar interests were approached in an effort to broaden the scope of the volume. The present volume consists of nine studies, ranging in their focus from simple hunter-gatherers to modern states. We have added to these an introductory and concluding chapter, which attempt to draw the various studies together and to consider at a more general level the potential value and limitations of the study of risk and uncertainty.

The editors would like to acknowledge a number of individuals who helped make this volume possible. Todd Whitelaw bore much of the burden for organising the TAG session and we gratefully acknowledge his contribution to its success. Thanks are due to Glynis Jones, who compiled the unified bibliography, Amy Steffian, who created the index, and Kay Clahassey, who produced many of the illustrations for the volume. We would also like to thank the contributors for enduring our editorial interven-



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*Preface*

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Finally, we must thank Glynis Jones and Sue O'Shea who, by their encouragement, persuasion and threats, curbed our more glaring excesses and ensured our completion of this task.