

## The Archaeology of Islands

Archaeologists have traditionally considered islands as distinct physical and social entities. In this book, Paul Rainbird discusses the historical construction of this characterisation and questions the basis for such an understanding of island archaeology. Through a series of case studies of prehistoric archaeology in the Mediterranean, Pacific, Baltic and Atlantic seas and oceans, he argues for a decentring of the land in favour of an emphasis on the archaeology of the sea and, ultimately, a new perspective on the making of maritime communities. The archaeology of islands is thus unshackled from approaches that highlight boundedness and isolation, and is replaced with a new set of principles – that boundaries are fuzzy, islanders are distinctive in their expectation of contacts with people from over the seas and island life can tell us much about maritime communities. Debating islands, thus, brings to the fore issues of identity and community and a concern with Western construction of other peoples.

Paul Rainbird is Head of Department and Senior Lecturer in Archaeology at the University of Wales, Lampeter. A Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries and a Fellow of the Royal Anthropological Institute, he is the author of *The Archaeology of Micronesia* and he serves on the editorial boards of the *Journal of Island and Coastal Archaeology* and *Research in Archaeological Education*.

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■ **PAUL RAINBIRD**

*University of Wales, Lampeter*



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**For Sarah and Cerys**

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