

### **The Archaeology of Micronesia**

This is the first book-length archaeological study of Micronesia, an island group in the western Pacific Ocean. Drawing on a wide range of archaeological, anthropological and historical sources, the author explores the various ways that the societies of these islands have been interpreted since European navigators first arrived there in the sixteenth century. Considering the process of initial colonization on the island groups of Marianas, Carolines, Marshalls and Kiribati, he examines the histories of these islands and explores how the neighbouring areas are drawn together through notions of fusion, fluidity and flux. The author places this region within the broader arena of Pacific island studies and addresses contemporary debates such as origins, processes of colonization, social organization, environmental change and the interpretation of material culture. This book will be essential reading for any scholar with an interest in the archaeology of the Pacific.

PAUL RAINBIRD is a Lecturer in Archaeology, Department of Archaeology and Anthropology, University of Wales, Lampeter. He has conducted archaeological fieldwork in the Pacific islands, Australia and Europe. He co-edited *Interrogating Pedagogies: Archaeology in Higher Education* (2001).

---

CAMBRIDGE WORLD ARCHAEOLOGY

---

*Series editor*

NORMAN YOFFEE, *University of Michigan*

*Editorial board*

SUSAN ALCOCK, *University of Michigan*

TOM DILLEHAY, *University of Kentucky*

STEPHEN SHENNAN, *University College, London*

CARLA SINOPOLI, *University of Michigan*

The Cambridge World Archaeology series is addressed to students and professional archaeologists, and to academics in related disciplines. Most volumes present a survey of the archaeology of a region of the world, providing an up-to-date account of research and integrating recent findings with new concerns of interpretation. While the focus is on a specific region, broader cultural trends are discussed and the implications of regional findings for cross-cultural interpretations considered. The authors also bring anthropological and historical expertise to bear on archaeological problems and show how both new data and changing intellectual trends in archaeology shape inferences about the past. More recently, the series has expanded to include thematic volumes.

*Books in the series*

A.F. HARDING, *European Societies in the Bronze Age*

RAYMOND ALLCHIN AND BRIDGET ALLCHIN, *The Rise of Civilization in India and Pakistan*

CLIVE GAMBLE, *The Palaeolithic Settlement of Europe*

CHARLES HIGHAM, *Archaeology of Mainland South East Asia*

SARAH MILLEDGE NELSON, *The Archaeology of Korea*

DAVID PHILLIPSON, *African Archaeology (second revised edition)*

OLIVER DICKINSON, *The Aegean Bronze Age*

KAREN OLSEN BRUHNS, *Ancient South America*

ALASDAIR WHITTLE, *Europe in the Neolithic*

CHARLES HIGHAM, *The Bronze Age of Southeast Asia*

CLIVE GAMBLE, *The Palaeolithic Societies of Europe*

DAN POTTS, *The Archaeology of Elam*

NICHOLAS DAVID AND CAROL KRAMER, *Ethnoarchaeology in Action*

CATHERINE PERLÈS, *The Early Neolithic in Greece*

JAMES WHITLEY, *The Archaeology of Ancient Greece*

PETER MITCHELL, *The Archaeology of Southern Africa*

HIMANSHU PRABHA RAY, *The Archaeology of Seafaring in Ancient South Asia*

TIMOTHY INSOLL, *The Archaeology of Islam in Sub-Saharan Africa*

M.M.G. AKKERMANS AND GLENN M. SCHWARTZ, *The Archaeology of Syria*

PAUL RAINBIRD, *The Archaeology of Micronesia*

CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge University Press  
978-0-521-65630-6 — The Archaeology of Micronesia  
Paul Rainbird  
Frontmatter  
[More Information](#)

CAMBRIDGE WORLD ARCHAEOLOGY

---

# THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF MICRONESIA

PAUL RAINBIRD

*Department of Archaeology and Anthropology  
University of Wales, Lampeter*



**CAMBRIDGE**  
UNIVERSITY PRESS

**CAMBRIDGE**  
UNIVERSITY PRESS

32 Avenue of the Americas, New York NY 10013-2473, USA

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.

It furthers the University's mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit of education, learning and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

[www.cambridge.org](http://www.cambridge.org)

Information on this title: [www.cambridge.org/9780521656306](http://www.cambridge.org/9780521656306)

© Paul Rainbird 2004

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements, no reproduction of any part may take place without the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 2004

*A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library*

ISBN 978-0-521-65630-6 Paperback

Cambridge University Press has no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy of URLs for external or third-party internet websites referred to in this publication, and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate.

Cambridge University Press  
978-0-521-65630-6 — The Archaeology of Micronesia  
Paul Rainbird  
Frontmatter  
[More Information](#)

---

Dedicated to the memory of my father,  
Ronald Gregory Rainbird (1931–2003),  
always a seafarer at heart

---

## CONTENTS

<i>List of figures</i>	<i>page</i>	ix
<i>Preface and acknowledgements</i>		xi
1 Micronesian/macrofusion		1
2 Micronesians: the people in history and anthropology		13
3 Fluid boundaries: horizons of the local, colonial and disciplinary		37
4 Settling the seascape: fusing islands and people		70
5 Identifying difference: the Mariana Islands		101
6 A sea of islands: Palau, Yap and the Carolinian atolls		134
7 'How the past speaks here!' – the eastern Caroline Islands		168
8 Islands and beaches: the atoll groups and outliers		225
9 The tropical north-west Pacific in context		245
<i>References</i>		255
<i>Index</i>		293

---

## FIGURES

1.1	Map of Micronesia.	3
1.2	The geographic range and high-order sub-groups of the Austronesian language group.	10
2.1	A Chuukese chief from a painting made during the <i>Südsee-Expedition</i> .	24
3.1	Pohnpei from the sea.	38
3.2	Ant Atoll from the sea.	39
3.3	Representation of the <i>etak</i> method.	54
3.4	Painting of a 'flying proa'.	55
3.5	View of Agana c. 1991.	60
4.1	Michiko Intoh's four-part model of the colonization of Micronesia.	77
4.2	Early ceramic types from the Mariana Islands.	84
4.3	The Sapota site, Fefen (Fefan) Island, Chuuk Lagoon.	90
4.4	Artefacts from Sapota, Fefen Island, Chuuk Lagoon.	91
5.1	Map of the Mariana Islands.	102
5.2	Map of southern Mariana Islands with site locations.	105
5.3	Intermediate Period Decorated ceramics from Chalan Piao, Saipan.	108
5.4	<i>Latte</i> stones at Latte Stone Park in Agana, Guam.	111
5.5	Plan of Site 5, Aguiguan.	114
5.6	Plan of the <i>latte</i> group at Tachogña, Tinian.	115
5.7	As Nieves <i>latte</i> stone quarry, Rota.	117
6.1	Map of the Caroline Islands.	135
6.2	Map of the Palau Archipelago.	139
6.3	The monumental terraces of Imelik on Babeldaob Island.	140
6.4	The <i>bai</i> in the village of Irrai, Babeldaob Island.	144
6.5	Map of Yap.	154
6.6	A Yapese <i>faluw</i> or men's house, Balabat, Yap Proper.	156
6.7	Map of participants in the <i>sawei</i> system.	158
7.1	Map of Chuuk Lagoon.	169
7.2	Coastal transgression on Polle, Chuuk Lagoon.	171
7.3	Mount Tonaachaw, Moen Island, Chuuk Lagoon.	174

x	<i>List of figures</i>	
	7.4 Platform at the Fauba hilltop enclosure with Mount Ulibot.	175
	7.5 Etten Island, Chuuk Lagoon.	178
	7.6 Map of Pohnpei.	180
	7.7 Plan of Nan Madol.	182
	7.8 The mound on Idehd Islet, Nan Madol.	183
	7.9 The central tomb ( <i>lolong</i> ) at Nan Douwas, Nan Madol.	186
	7.10 Plan of Nan Madol indicating the postulated mortuary area.	187
	7.11 Nan Douwas.	188
	7.12 Plan of Sapwtakai.	191
	7.13 Plan of tombs at Panpei West.	192
	7.14 A selection of engravings from the Pohnpaid site, Pohnpei.	197
	7.15 Map of Kosrae.	200
	7.16 Map of the Leluh area, Kosrae.	202
	7.17 Selection of early enclosure plans.	204
	7.18 Plan of Leluh, Kosrae.	207
	7.19 Development phases of Leluh, Kosrae.	209
	7.20 Compound of Posral, Leluh, Kosrae.	211
	7.21 Map showing the sections of Kosrae.	213
	7.22 Plan of Lacl, Kosrae.	214
	7.23 Plan of Likihnluhlwen, Kosrae.	215
	7.24 Plan of Nefalil, Kosrae.	216
	7.25 Plan of Putuk Hamlet, Kosrae.	217
	7.26 Selection of later enclosure plans, Kosrae.	219
	7.27 Plan of Lela Ruins.	221
	8.1 Map of eastern Micronesia and Tuvalu.	226
	8.2 Stone setting at Arorae.	236
	8.3 Map of Banaba.	239
	9.1 A selection of <i>Terebra</i> shell adzes from Chuuk Lagoon.	248
	9.2 A beaked adze from Chuuk Lagoon.	249
	9.3 Mortuary compounds at Leluh, Kosrae.	253



---

## PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It feels as though this book has been a very long time in the making. My first trip to the region was in 1991 as part of a team working in contract archaeology and it was that experience, and discussion with John Craib, Peter White and Roland Fletcher at the University of Sydney, which led me to propose PhD research conducted between 1992 and 1995. Of course, I have continued to maintain my research interests in the region, and although I returned to Europe from Australia in 1997 I have found a new set of colleagues who have been energetic enough to organize colloquia and create a stimulating community through the European Colloquium on Micronesia and for that I thank Beatriz Moral and Anne Di Piazza.

My training in European archaeology, as an undergraduate at the University of Sheffield, has guided my research and interpretations, I think, in many ways not typical for the part of the world under discussion in this volume. As such, although I hope it provides a coherent and comprehensive account of the archaeology of the region, in its interpretative stance my intention is to provide a fresh understanding of the material evidence.

There are so many individuals and organizations that I have benefited from over the period of the preparation of this book that it is impossible to name them all here. Many I have acknowledged in previous publications, and I thank them again, but others have directly aided the production of the current volume. For reading and commenting on parts or all of the text I'd like to thank Atholl Anderson, Chris Ballard, John Craib, Sarah Daligan, Chris Gosden, Kate Howell, Anne Di Piazza, Miranda Richardson, Jim Specht, Matthew Spriggs, Peter White, Steve Wickler and Norman Yoffee. For answering questions and providing information I would like to thank Sophie Bickford, Paul D'Arcy, Roger Green, Scott Russell, Serge Tcherkézoff and the National Library of Australia.

I am very pleased to acknowledge a Research Leave Grant from the Arts and Humanities Research Board, which allowed me an extended period of time to complete this work as a Visiting Fellow in the Centre for Archaeological Research based in the Division of Archaeology and Natural History, Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies, The Australian National University. My Fellowship there provided an unparalleled environment for research and writing and I thank Professors Atholl Anderson and Geoff Hope for their hospitality.

xii            *Preface and acknowledgements*

My current and former colleagues in the Department of Archaeology, University of Wales, Lampeter have over many years provided a stimulating working environment where the range of expertise and geographical interests can only have served to keep critical thought alive, and I thank them.

A big debt of thanks is owed to Meredith 'Mem' Wilson, a stalwart friend, who is not afraid to ask difficult questions of me. Finally, I would like to thank Sarah and my family for their love, support and encouragement during the difficult times in which this book was completed.