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978-0-521-78795-6 - Archaeology and Colonialism: Cultural Contact from 5000 BC to the Present

Chris Gosden

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Archaeology and Colonialism

Cultural Contact from 5000 BC to the Present

Archaeology is the only discipline that allows us to take a long-term view across all forms of colonialism, from the Uruk cities of early Mesopotamia, through the empires of the Romans and the Aztecs, to the colonies of modern European states. In this innovative study, Chris Gosden presents a comparative survey of 5000 years of colonialism. Defining colonialism as, crucially, a relationship with material culture, destabilising older values and changing both incomers and natives, Gosden attempts to understand the history of power, how it is exercised through material culture and how this understanding can generate new notions of interaction and encounter. By defining colonialism through its relationship with material culture, Gosden argues that modern colonialism, giving rise to settler societies, is historically unusual. Synthesising theoretical approaches and evidence from a broad span of colonial regions, this book provides an important new field of enquiry connecting historic and prehistoric archaeology.

CHRIS GOSDEN is Lecturer and Curator at the Pitt Rivers Museum, University of Oxford.

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For Hugh and Margaret Gosden

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