THE PREHISTORY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND

Sited at the furthest limits of the Neolithic revolution and standing at the confluence of the two great sea routes of prehistory, Britain and Ireland are distinct from Continental Europe for much of the prehistoric sequence. In this landmark study, Richard Bradley offers an interpretation of the unique archaeological record of these islands. Highlighting the achievements of its inhabitants, Bradley surveys the entire archaeological sequence over a 5,000-year period, from the last hunter gatherers and the adoption of agriculture in the Neolithic period, to the discovery of Britain and Ireland by travellers from the Mediterranean during the later pre-Roman Iron Age. His study places special emphasis on landscapes, settlements, monuments, and ritual practices.

This edition has been thoroughly revised and updated. The text takes account of recent developments in archaeological science, such as isotopic analyses of human and animal bone, recovery of ancient DNA, and more subtle and precise methods of radiocarbon dating.

Richard Bradley is Emeritus Professor in the Department of Archaeology, University of Reading. A Fellow of the British Academy and Honorary Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, he is the author of The Use and Reuse of Stone Circles and The Idea of Order, among many other publications.
CAMBRIDGE WORLD ARCHAEOLOGY

SERIES EDITOR
NORMAN YOFFEE, UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

EDITORIAL BOARD
CORISANDE FENWICK, INSTITUTE OF ARCHAEOLOGY,
UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LONDON
STEPHEN SHENNAN, INSTITUTE OF ARCHAEOLOGY,
UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LONDON
CARLA SINOPOLI, UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN
TOM DILLEHAY, VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY
TIM PAUKETAT, UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS, URBANA-CHAMPAIGN
DAVID WENGROW, INSTITUTE OF ARCHAEOLOGY,
UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

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.

RECENT BOOKS IN THE SERIES
ANTONIO SAGONA, The Archaeology of the Caucasus
D. T. POTTS, The Archaeology of Elam
ROBIN CONINGHAM AND RUTH YOUNG, The Archaeology of South Asia
CLAUDIA SAGONA, The Archaeology of Malta
FRANCES F. BERDAN, Aztec Archaeology and Ethnohistory
PETER MAGEE, The Archaeology of Prehistoric Arabia
KOJI MIZOGUCHI, The Archaeology of Japan
MIKE SMITH, The Archaeology of Australia's Deserts
A. BERNARD KNAPP, The Archaeology of Cyprus
LI LIU AND XINGCAN CHEN, The Archaeology of China
STEPHEN D. HOUSTON AND TAKESHI INOMATA, The Classic Maya
PHILIP L. KOHL, The Making of Bronze Age Eurasia
LAWRENCE BARHAM AND PETER MITCHELL, The First Africans
ROBIN DENNELL, The Palaeolithic Settlement of Asia
CHRISTOPHER POOL, Olmec Archaeology and Early Mesoamerica
SAMUEL M. WILSON, The Archaeology of the Caribbean
RICHARD BRADLEY, The Prehistory of Britain and Ireland
LUDMILA KORYAKOVA AND ANDREJ EPIMAKHOV, The Urals and Western Siberia
in the Bronze and Iron Ages
DAVID WENGROW, The Archaeology of Early Egypt
PAUL RAINBIRD, The Archaeology of Micronesia
PETER M.M.G. AKKERMANS AND GLENN M. SCHWARTZ, The Archaeology of Syria
TIMOTHY INSOLL, The Archaeology of Islam in Sub-Saharan Africa
View of Ireland from the coast of south-west Scotland, emphasising the short sea crossing between them.
Photograph: Aaron Watson.
THE PREHISTORY
OF BRITAIN AND
IRELAND

RICHARD BRADLEY

University of Reading
## CONTENTS

*Preface to the Revised Edition* | page ix
---|---
1. The Offshore Islands | 1
2. A New Beginning | 30
3. North, South, East, and West | 88
4. A World Elsewhere | 150
5. Ploughshares into Swords | 207
6. The Ending of Prehistory | 266

*Bibliography* | 327
*Index* | 369
This book takes the place of a volume published a decade or so ago. Why was a revision needed, and how does it differ from its predecessor? The first question is perhaps the easier one to answer. The last few years have seen a massive increase in the number of field projects undertaken in Britain and Ireland, and significant developments in the dissemination of the results. During the same period work in archaeological science has shed new light on questions that had exercised prehistorians for years. The clearest indication of the increasing pace of research is provided by the bibliography. Rather to my surprise, I find that 50 per cent of the references are to sources that became available after the first edition appeared. Not surprisingly, that account is no longer accurate or up to date.

The new book has a different structure from that first edition and to some extent it draws on different sources of information. The version published in 2007 was unusual in emphasising the results of development-led archaeology. Its preparation involved visits to numerous fieldworkers and regional archives, as it was the only way of discovering what information was available. Over ten years later many significant projects have achieved final publication and information is widely disseminated through the internet. Like the original version, this book has a substantial bibliography, but it is still the case that more information is available from some regions than from others.

In 2007 I evoked the timescale of insular prehistory by scaling the accounts of different periods to the number of years involved; I devoted approximately 2,000 words to each century of the overall sequence. This was not a good idea, as it meant that my account of the later Bronze Age and Iron Age was unduly compressed. In the revised edition I have abandoned that scheme, dividing the main part of the text between five main chapters of approximately equal lengths. In this version the Chalcolithic and Early Bronze Age periods are discussed separately from the Late Neolithic. The narrative ends with Caesar’s invasions of southern England in 55 and 54 BC, and the brief coda that discussed the Late Iron Age in the original version has been omitted. One feature that
Preface to the Revised Edition

has been retained is the format of the maps, which divide the study area into twenty-six separate regions. Within each of these areas individual places are listed in the captions.

This revision has been more radical than I envisaged when I offered to write a new edition, although some of the original drawings and photographs have been retained or revised. As before, they are by Aaron Watson. I am very grateful to him for the skill with which he undertook the work and for his extraordinary visual flair. I must also thank Courtney Nimura for her help in preparing the final text.

Since this is really a new book it requires its own dedication. And there can be only one candidate. Alison Sheridan read and commented in detail on the first edition; she has contributed to most of my projects in Scotland; and her research features in many parts of this text. In its new guise this study is for her.