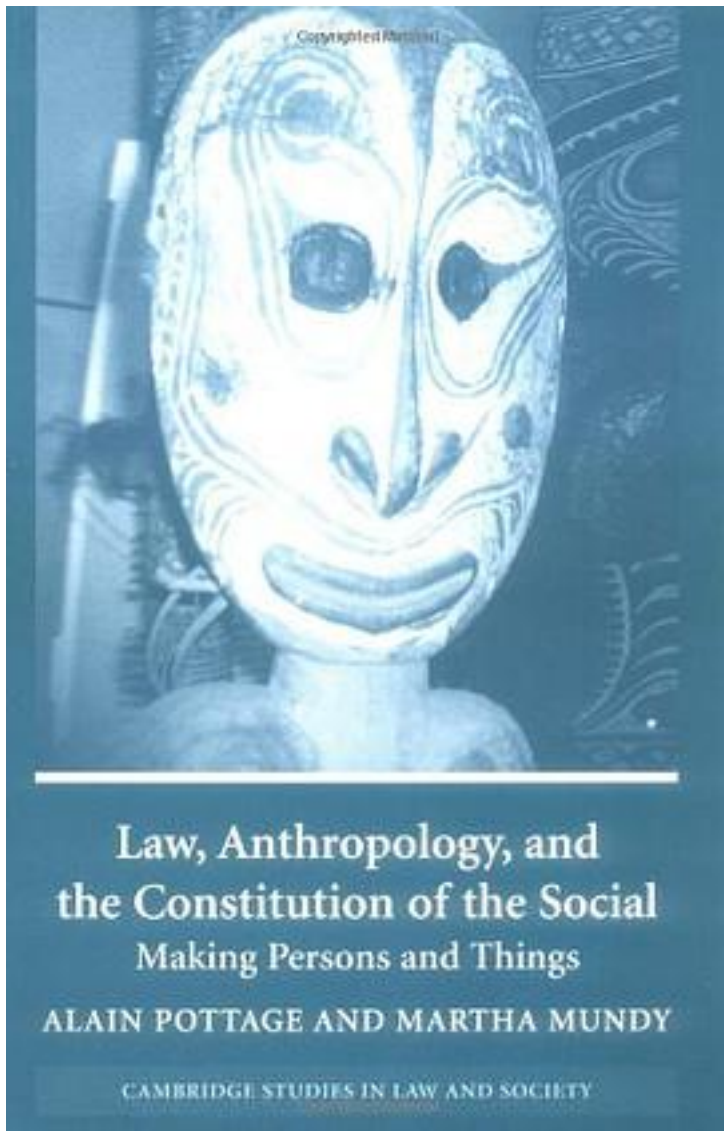


Law, Anthropology, and the Constitution of the Social



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This collection of interdisciplinary essays explores how persons and things - the central elements of the social - are fabricated by legal rituals and institutions. The contributors, legal and anthropological theorists alike, focus on a set of specific institutional and ethnographic contexts, and some unexpected and thought-provoking analogies emerge from this intellectual encounter between law and anthropology. For example, contemporary anxieties about the legal status of the biotechnological body seem to resonate with the questions addressed by ancient Roman law in its treatment of dead bodies. The analogy between copyright and the transmission of intangible designs in Melanesia suddenly makes western images of authorship seem quite unfamiliar. A comparison between law and laboratory science presents the production of legal artefacts in new light. These studies are of particular relevance at a time when law, faced with the inventiveness of biotechnology, finds it increasingly difficult to draw the line between persons and things.

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