

The Sea : a cultural history

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Résumé ou extrait : 'There is nothing more enticing, disenchanting, and enslaving than the life at sea' wrote Joseph Conrad. In *The Sea: A Cultural History* John Mack considers the ways in which human beings interact because of the sea, navigate their course across it, and live on and around it - whether promontories, estuaries, ports or coves. The Sea considers the characteristics of different seas and oceans and investigates how the sea is conceptualized in various cultures. It looks at the diversity of maritime technologies, especially the practice of navigation and the 'society' of the sea - in many cultures all-male, often cosmopolitan, always hierarchical. The separation of the sea and the land is evident in the use of different vocabularies for the same things, the change in a mariner's behaviour when on land for a period, and in the liminal status of points of interaction between the two realms, notably on beaches and at ports. Ships are also deployed in symbolic contexts on land from ship burials, such as that at Sutton Hoo, to ecclesiastical and public architecture. The two realms are thus in dialogue in both symbolic and economic terms, rather than irrevocably separated. In describing the diversities of maritime cultures, this book moves beyond conventional boundaries, using histories, maritime archaeology, biography, art history and literary sources to provide an innovative and experiential account of 'the great blue yonder'.

Sujet(s) : Civilisation maritime
Navigation
Vie en mer
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