

Archaeological Theory An Introduction

Archaeological record documenting and interpreting the archaeological record. The archaeological record can consist of the earliest ancient findings as well as contemporary artifacts. It is the story of the human world. Archaeology can be a destructive science for the finite resources of the archaeological record are lost to excavation. Archaeological theory is used to interpret the archaeological record for a better understanding. The archaeological record is the body of physical (not written) evidence about the past. Human activity has had a large impact on the archaeological record. Destructive human processes, such as agriculture and land development, may damage or destroy potential archaeological sites. The archaeological record is the physical record of human prehistory and history, of why ancient civilizations prospered or failed and why those cultures changed and grew. Archaeological theory is used to interpret the archaeological record for a better understanding of human cultures. Other threats to the archaeological record include natural phenomena and scavenging. Therefore, archaeologists limit the amount of excavation that they do at each site and keep meticulous records of what is found. It is one of the core concepts in archaeology, the academic discipline concerned with documenting and interpreting the archaeological record 68ff2102f4

Gender archaeologists examine the relative positions in society of men, women, and children through identifying and studying the differences in power and authority they held, as they are manifested in material (and skeletal) remains. These differences can survive in the physical record although they are not always immediately apparent and are often open to interpretation. The relationship between the genders can also inform relationships between other social groups such as families, different classes, ages and religions. 68ff2102f4

Processual archaeology Processual archaeology (formerly, the New Archaeology) is a form of archaeological theory. It had its beginnings in 1958 with the work of Gordon Willey. Processual archaeology (formerly, the New Archaeology) is a form of archaeological theory. It had its beginnings in 1958 with the work of Gordon Willey and Philip Phillips, *Method and Theory in American Archaeology*, in which the pair stated that "American archaeology is anthropology, or it is nothing" (Willey and Phillips, 1958:2), a rephrasing of Frederic William Maitland's comment: "My own belief is that by and by, anthropology will have the choice between being history, and being nothing. Willey and Phillips believed all that could be done was to catalogue, describe, and create timelines based on the artifacts. " The idea implied that the goals of archaeology were the goals of anthropology, which were to answer questions about humans and human culture. This was meant to be a critique of the former period in archaeology, the cultural-history phase in which archaeologists thought that information artifacts contained about past culture would be lost once the items became included in the archaeological record 68ff2102f4

Different cultural groups have material culture items that differ both functionally and aesthetically due to varying cultural and social practices. This notion is observably true on the broadest scales. For example, the equipment associated with the brewing of tea varies greatly across the world. Social relations to material culture often include notions of identity and status. 68ff2102f4 == Definitions... == 68ff2102f4

Journal of Archaeological Method and Theory The Journal of Archaeological Method and Theory is a peer-reviewed academic journal which focuses on methodology and theory in archaeology. It is published quarterly by Springer Science+Business Media. It is published The Journal of Archaeological Method and Theory is a peer-reviewed academic journal which focuses on methodology and theory in archaeology 68ff2102f4

Post-processual archaeology Within the post-processualist movement, a wide variety of theoretical viewpoints have been embraced, including structuralism and Neo-Marxism, as have a variety of different archaeological techniques, such as phenomenology. Despite having a vague series of similarities, post-processualism consists of "very diverse strands of thought coalesced into a loose cluster of traditions". its adherents, is a movement in archaeological theory that emphasizes the subjectivity of archaeological interpretations. Despite having a vague series Post-processual archaeology, which is sometimes alternatively referred to as the interpretative archaeologies by its adherents, is a movement in archaeological theory that emphasizes the subjectivity of archaeological interpretations 68ff2102f4

The post-processual movement originated in the United Kingdom during the late 1970s and early 1980s, pioneered by archaeologists such as Ian Hodder, Daniel Miller, Christopher Tilley and Peter Ucko, who were influenced by French Marxist anthropology, postmodernism and similar trends in sociocultural anthropology. Parallel developments soon followed in the United States. Initially post-processualism was primarily a reaction to and critique of processual archaeology, a paradigm developed in the 1960s by 'New Archaeologists' such as Lewis Binford, and which had become dominant in Anglophone... 68ff2102f4 The theory was developed as a reaction to changes in archaeological thought, and expanding archaeological practise during the mid-late 20th century. It reacted to the increasing number of sub-disciplines emerging within archaeology as each came with their own unique methodologies. The theory was also a reaction to the processual thought process that emerged within the discipline some years prior. 68ff2102f4

Evolutionary archaeology The former assumes that cultural change observed in the archaeological record can be best explained by the direct action of natural selection and other Darwinian processes on heritable variation in artifacts and behavior. approaches currently used to analyze archaeological remains from an evolutionary perspective: evolutionary archaeology and behavioral (or evolutionary) ecology There are two main approaches currently used to analyze archaeological remains from an evolutionary perspective: evolutionary archaeology and behavioral (or evolutionary) ecology. The latter assumes that cultural and behavioral change results from phenotypic adaptations to varying social and ecological environments 68ff2102f4

Archaeologists study human prehistory and history, from the development of the first stone tools at Lomekwi in East Africa 3.3 million years ago up until recent decades. Archaeology is distinct from palaeontology, which is the study of fossil remains. Archaeology is particularly important for learning about prehistoric societies, for which, by definition, there are no written records. Prehistory includes over 99% of the human past, from the Paleolithic until the advent of literacy in societies around the world. Archaeology... 68ff2102f4 Archaeologist Bruce Trigger noted that gender archaeology differed from other variants of the discipline... 68ff2102f4

Archaeology The archaeological record consists of artifacts, architecture, biofacts or ecofacts, sites, and cultural landscapes. Archaeology can be considered both a social science and a branch of the humanities. The discipline involves surveying, excavation, and eventually analysis of data collected, to

learn more about the past. Archaeology or archeology is the study of human activity through the recovery and analysis of material culture. The archaeological record consists of artifacts Archaeology or archeology is the study of human activity through the recovery and analysis of material culture. In broad scope, archaeology relies on cross-disciplinary research. It is usually considered an independent academic discipline, but may also be classified as part of anthropology (in North America - the four-field approach), history or geography 68ff2102f4

== History of evolutionary theory in archaeology == 68ff2102f4

Archaeological theory Throughout the history of the discipline, various trends of support for certain archaeological theories have emerged, peaked, and in some cases died out. Different archaeological theories differ on what the goals of the discipline are and how they can be achieved. There is no one singular theory of archaeology, but many, with different archaeologists believing that information should be interpreted in different ways. Archaeological theory functions as the application of philosophy of science to archaeology, and is occasionally referred to as philosophy of archaeology. Archaeological theory refers to the various intellectual frameworks through which archaeologists interpret archaeological data. Archaeological theory Archaeological theory refers to the various intellectual frameworks through which archaeologists interpret archaeological data 68ff2102f4

The journal originated in an annual edited volume series, *Advances in Archaeological Method and Theory*, established by Michael Schiffer in 1978. The purpose of the series was to publish review articles covering current issues in archaeological theory. It was published by Academic Press between 1978 and 1987, and by Plenum Press between 1989 and 1993 as *Archaeological Method and Theory*. The series moved to a quarterly journal format in 1994, in order to expand its scope from reviews to other types of papers. Schiffer continued as editor until 2000. From 2000 to 2018, it was edited by Catherine M. Cameron and James M. Skibo. The current editors are Valentine Roux and Margaret E. Beck. 68ff2102f4 Proponents of processual archaeology claimed that the rigorous use of the scientific method made it possible to get past the limits of the archaeological record and to learn something... 68ff2102f4 Some archaeological theories, such as processual archaeology, holds that archaeologists are able to develop accurate, objective information about past societies by applying the scientific method to their investigations, whilst others, such as post-processual archaeology, dispute this, and claim all archaeological data is tainted by human interpretation and social factors, and any interpretation they make about past societies is therefore subjective. 68ff2102f4

Gender archaeology religions. Feminist theory in gender archaeology has presented a new perspective and identifies biases in the overall archaeological theory. This new perspective Gender archaeology is a method of studying past societies through their material culture by closely examining the social construction of gender identities and relations 68ff2102f4

In recent years the use of behavioural archaeology has been regarded as a significant contribution to the archaeological community. The strategies outlined by Schiffer and his colleagues have developed into sub-disciplines or methodologies that are used and well-regarded in contemporary... 68ff2102f4

Behavioural archaeology Jefferson Reid, and William L. The theory was first published in 1975 by American archaeologist Michael B. Rathje. The theory proposes four strategies that answer questions about past, and present cultural behaviour. It is also a means for archaeologists to observe human behaviour

and the archaeological consequences that follow. Schiffer and his colleagues J. Behavioural archaeology is an archaeological theory that expands upon the nature and aims of archaeology in regards to human behaviour and material culture Behavioural archaeology is an archaeological theory that expands upon the nature and aims of archaeology in regards to human behaviour and material culture 68ff2102f4

Feminist theory in gender archaeology has presented a new perspective and identifies biases in the overall archaeological theory. This new perspective that focused on feminist viewpoint in archaeology was initiated by the rapid evolution in the 20th century, of the Western Societies outlook and interpretation of gender. The development of this perspective commenced from the late 1960s feminist movement. 68ff2102f4 Advocates of culture-historical archaeology use the notion to argue that sets of material culture can be used to trace ancient groups of people that were either self-identifying societies or ethnic groups. Archaeological culture is a classifying device to order archaeological... 68ff2102f4 == Concept == 68ff2102f4 The journal is often associated with the processual, behavioural, and evolutionary schools of archaeological theory, but aims to "welcome 'all theoretical archaeology'". For example, a landmark paper by Ian Hodder, which established the name post-processual archaeology for the theoretical reaction to processual... 68ff2102f4

Archaeological culture The connection between these types is an empirical observation. —Matthew Johnson, Archaeological Theory: An Introduction, p. However, this is often subject to long-unresolved debates. 19–20 This view of culture would be "entirely satisfactory if the aim of archaeology were solely An archaeological culture is a recurring assemblage of types of artifacts, buildings, and monuments from a specific period and region that may constitute the material culture remains of a particular past human society. Their interpretation in terms of ethnic or political groups is based on archaeologists' understanding. The concept of the archaeological culture is fundamental to culture-historical archaeology 68ff2102f4

Other archaeological theories, such as Marxist... 68ff2102f4

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