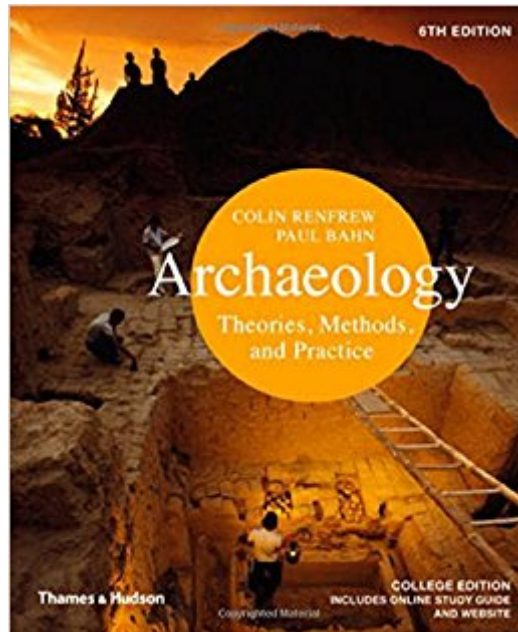


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# Archaeology: Theories, Methods, And Practice (Sixth Edition)



## Synopsis

The most authoritative and up-to-date archaeology textbook, revised and updated, and now in full color. Since its first edition, Renfrew and Bahn's Archaeology: Theories, Methods, and Practice has been the leading academic source on what archaeologists do and how they do it. This indispensable resource is a comprehensive introduction to archaeology's theories, methods, and practices in the field, the laboratory, and the library. Archaeology is organized around the key questions that archaeologists ask about the past and details the theories and methods used to answer those questions, from technical methods to theoretical approaches. The Sixth Edition has been thoroughly revised and updated to include the newest developments in the field and features an attractive new full-color design with additional box features, extensive drawings, charts, and photographs. 700+ illustrations

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This is certainly one of the better general summary books on archaeological method and theory out there. To the student, the book comes with serious credentials: Colin Renfrew is the Disney Professor of Archaeology at Cambridge while his co-author is a professional writer on archaeological topics. Like many other introductory texts, there is, however, a serious agenda behind this book. Therefore, while I think the authors do a fairly good job of introducing the different aspects of archaeology to the novice, (contrary to the blurb, there is no real way in which this book could function as a serious reference for a professional archaeologist), I have a couple of comments I want to make about the book from a theoretical point of view. While Renfrew and Bahn position

themselves as heirs to all the different schools of archaeology, they do in fact, pick and choose the archaeologists (and the theoretical paradigms they support) quite specifically. Certain works and authors are praised effusively and others are presented with cautionary tags attached to them. This is of course Renfrew and Bahn's prerogative. However, the overall effect of the book is the promotion of a fairly traditional positivist view of archaeology (not the radical extreme of Binford exactly, but certainly archaeology as science nonetheless except where Renfrew's own "mentalist" leanings towards specific issues such as the peopling of Europe still come into play). If you are looking for a book that seriously tries to introduce some of the real theoretical advances in archaeology over the last twenty years, this is not the book to read. Renfrew and Bahn are not really presenting a synthesis of old and new approaches to archaeology, but the old dressed up in a new party dress (one that doesn't fit too well at that). This may seem a little nit-picky to non-archaeologists but the point I want to make is this: Archaeologists use scientific techniques and approaches but we are different kinds of scientists than say physicists or mathematicians. We deal with people (much more complex than subatomic particles) and the cultural and political contexts of the past. Many of the advocates of archaeology as science hold the view that only science and scientists are the proper and legitimate custodians of the past. Anyone who doubts where Renfrew and Bahn's sympathies really lie should check out the section on archaeology and indigenous people. One should bear in mind that the Disney Professor did not come of age when such concerns were really prominent in people's minds. However, the apparent open-endedness of the authors' commentary, at least to my way of thinking, overlies a much more conservative stance in which indigenous people are a problem to be overcome rather than partners to be accommodated. So here's my view: buy the book if you want a how-to manual. But please please be aware of its limitations. Renfrew and Bahn do a pretty good job presenting their point of view but it's a point of view not a law of physics.

Archaeology: Theories, Methods and Practice provides a great introduction to the various aspects of archaeology. It would be a marvellous addition to the library of any archaeology enthusiast. It provides the theory and description of archaeological methods as well as many real world examples. As a result, despite a potentially very dry subject matter, this book is not a hard read. It is especially appropriate for any amateur who tries to keep up on archaeology and encounters new words/ideas. Since the coverage is encyclopedic, you will undoubtedly find the explanations you want in this book!

This is probably one of the best books I've ever read on the subject, and although I've studied archaeology as an interest since childhood, this text rekindled an old love. It is well written and easily read and gives a good overview of the discipline with interesting archaeological sites from all over the world used to illustrate the techniques discussed. I enjoyed the volume so thoroughly I've actually read it twice and will probably read it again in the future just for the enjoyment alone.

Speaking as an archaeology student who just finished a class using this textbook, I can do naught else but overflow with praise for this book. Eminently readable, it proved to be well-adapted to taking notes, and was interesting enough that it was sometimes hard to put down. Renfrew and Bahn provide an excellent survey of world archaeology, and they do not fall into the trap of using jargon and big words. This contrasts sharply with the anthropology textbooks I've suffered through, many of which seem to have been written while the authors were constipated. Overall, a superior book. Also notable for being relatively low-priced, which is a bonus for us students. Perhaps this is proof that someone in academia does care! It compares well to some of the \$80, razor-thin anthropology textbooks I've wasted my money on. I highly recommend this book to anyone at all interested in archaeology.

When my husband and I were given the opportunity to travel to Greece in 2004, I realized how much I had studied archaeology when I was younger, but instead I am now reading about it and other books which I have picked up along the way. I really like the book, its just not a book to look at, but to learn from. Thank you.

Solid content, but, wow, there's a lot of it. Don't be fooled either: as long as it looks, it's even longer. They use a pretty tiny font to cram in more words per page than is reasonable. I used this with a student in an independent study and she liked the book, learned from, but found it occasionally exhausting to push through the volume of information. There's nothing wrong with the writing, but it might have been paced differently. Great textbook in terms of it's instructional value, however.

This is a great book. I read this book for my methods and theories class and it was very complete and easy to understand. Especially helpful are the explicit "real life" examples of the text concepts. I would recommend this book to trained archaeologists, 'armchair' archaeologists and students.

Got this for a class. My professor says it is archaeology porn, and he is right! The pictures in this

textbook are just beautiful, and it is written in such a way that one Saturday I came home to find my wife reading it. She had been reading it for about four hours straight, she enjoyed it so much. Probably one of our favorite textbooks, so we'll probably end up keeping it and not selling it at the end of the semester.

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