



Archaeology: A Brief Introduction, Books a la Carte Edition (11th Edition)

By Brian M. Fagan

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Method and Theory in Archaeology

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Editorial Review

About the Author

In This Section:

I. Author Bio

II. Author Letter

I. Author Bio

Brian Fagan is a leading archaeological writer and internationally recognized authority on world prehistory. He studied archaeology and anthropology at Pembroke College and Cambridge University. He then spent seven years in sub-Saharan Africa working in museums, monument conservation, and excavating early farming sites in Zambia and East Africa. He was a pioneer of multidisciplinary African history in the 1960s. From 1967 to 2003, he was professor of anthropology at the University of California, Santa Barbara, where he specialized in lecturing and writing about archaeology to wide audiences. He is now Emeritus Professor of Anthropology.

Brian Fagan has written six best-selling textbooks (all published by Prentice Hall): *Ancient Lives: An Introduction to Archaeology and Prehistory*; *In the Beginning, Archaeology: A Brief Introduction*; *World Prehistory*; *Ancient Civilizations* (with Chris Scarre); and this volume—which are used around the world. His general books include *The Rape of the Nile*, a classic history of *Egyptology*; *The Adventure of Archaeology*; *Time Detectives*; *Ancient North America*; *The Little Ice Age*; *Before California: An Archaeologist Looks at Our Earliest Inhabitants*; and *The Long Summer*. He was also General Editor of the Oxford Companion to Archaeology. In addition, he has published several scholarly monographs on African archaeology and numerous specialized articles in national and international journals. An expert on multimedia teaching, he has received the Society for American Archaeology's first Public Education Award for his indefatigable efforts on behalf of archaeology and education.

Brian Fagan's other interests include bicycling, sailing, kayaking, and good food. He is married and lives in Santa Barbara with his wife and daughter, four cats (who supervise his writing), and last but not least, a minimum of four rabbits.

II. Author Letter

Dear Colleague:

I became an archaeologist by accident, in large part because of the stories told by my very first university instructor, Miles Burkitt. Miles was an institution at Cambridge University where I studied archaeology. His lectures were long on artifacts and short on sophistication. But he was a consummate storyteller—about fellow archaeologists and copying Stone Age cave art with the legendary French prehistorian Abbé Breul before World War I, among other things. He taught me that storytelling is central to good teaching.

I started teaching introductory archaeology at the University of California - Santa Barbara in 1967, to an audience of 300 students. Finding no suitable textbooks, I ended up writing *Archaeology: A Brief Introduction*; a short account of the fundamental principles of method and theory in archaeology, which exposes students to archaeology as a career. To my delight, it has been widely used in many colleges and universities as a first introduction to a complex subject that has an important role to play in today's world. I'm proud that highly respected archaeologists first encountered archaeology through its pages!

Archaeology is a straightforward journey through the world of archaeology, which covers the basics--I mean the basics. Its chapters answer fundamental questions. How do we find sites, excavate them, and analyze their finds? How do we date the past? How do we study ancient landscapes and settlement patterns? What about gender in prehistory and the study of ethnicity? Are there career prospects in archaeology? It provides beginners with a short overview of archaeology, either a one-shot introduction to the subject as part of general education, or a basis for taking additional courses later on.

This new eleventh edition draws on the success of earlier editions, and encouragement from users and reviewers, as well as students. The basic approach is unchanged: produce a simple narrative of method and theory in archaeology, and of its importance in the contemporary world for beginners. I've updated examples throughout, added a chapter on Managing the Past that covers cultural resource management and public archaeology, and brought in some exciting new discoveries, such as the Göbekli carvings in Turkey and the Lords of Sicán from coastal Peru. The illustrations have been completely refreshed and revised for this edition. Otherwise, this updated and improved edition continues a successful formula that has introduced tens of thousands of students to the fascinating world of archaeology. Long may it continue to do so!

Please do let me know what you think of the new eleventh edition of Archaeology. If you have any comments, suggestions, or questions about the book, please do not hesitate to send me an e-mail: brian@brianfagan.com .

I look forward to hearing from you.

Best regards,

Brian Fagan

Professor Emeritus
University of California—Santa Barbara

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