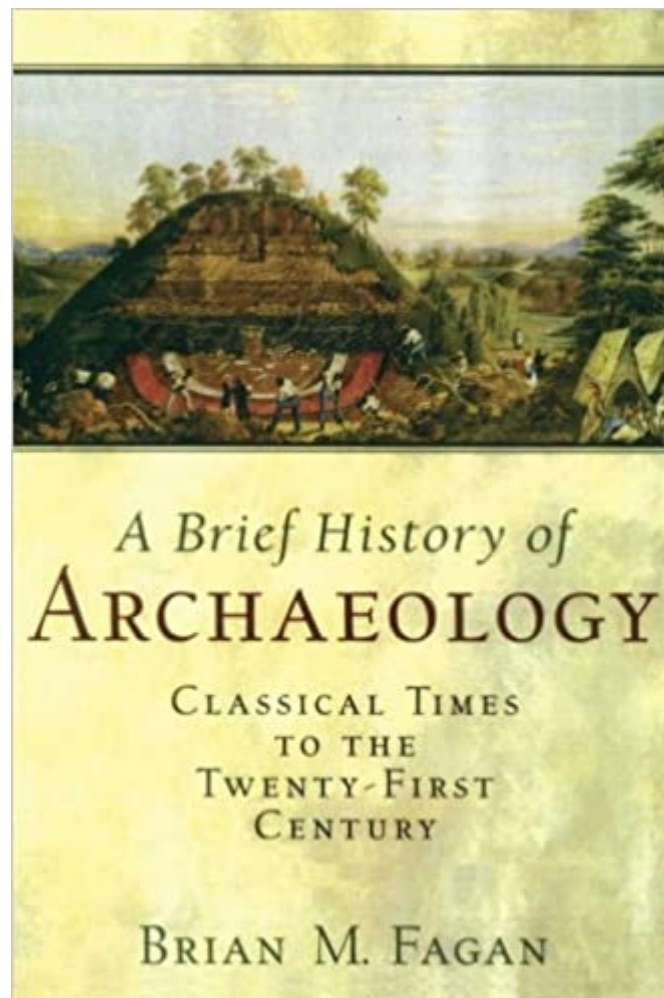




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# Brief History Of Archaeology: Classical Times To The Twenty-First Century



## Synopsis

For introductory courses in Archaeology. This brief text tells the story of how archaeology changed from a romantic adventure into a science. Its vivid narrative combines tales of archaeological discovery with the changing social conditions and theoretical perspectives that helped turn archaeology into a sophisticated discipline. Containing a simple, jargon-free style-and a lifetime of teaching experience-this text writer shares with today's students his unrivaled experience as an archaeologist and an author.

## Book Information

Paperback: 304 pages

Publisher: Routledge (March 4, 2004)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0131776983

ISBN-13: 978-0131776982

Product Dimensions: 6 x 0.7 x 8.9 inches

Shipping Weight: 11.2 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.3 out of 5 stars 5 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #256,509 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #207 in [Books > Textbooks > Social Sciences > Archaeology](#) #489 in [Books > History > Historical Study & Educational Resources > Archaeology](#) #1021 in [Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Anthropology > General](#)

## Customer Reviews

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.

Lost civilizations, richly adorned royal burials, overgrown cities emerging miraculously from clinging rain forest: Archaeology has a long and romantic history of spectacular discovery. But there is much more to archaeology's history than the finding of palaces and ancient states. I would go so far as to say that you cannot understand today's archaeology without a thorough knowledge of its beginnings, and of the ideas that nurtured it. Archaeology's achievements have been remarkable. Over the past century and a half, archaeologists have pushed back the story of human origins to a time more than 2.5 million years ago. They have traced the origins of modern humans&#151;ourselves&#151;to tropical Africa more than 150,000 years ago; chronicled the beginnings of agriculture; and reconstructed the minutest details of ancient life. The same 150 years have seen archaeology turn from an amateur pursuit into a sophisticated, multidisciplinary science in the hands of thousands of professional specialists. This history has unfolded against a background of changing intellectual and social environments: from the philosophical speculations of classical writers, and versions of human origins based on the Old Testament, to elaborate theories of multilineal evolution, cultural ecology, and the so-called "postprocessual archaeology" of the 1990s. This book is a brief introduction to the diverse strands of the history of archaeology, both intellectual and nonintellectual. It's a history that melds stories of compelling personalities and eminent archaeologists with accounts of spectacular and not-so-spectacular discoveries, and with ideas about the interpretation of our past. A Brief History of Archaeology is a journey through the intriguing highways and byways of a discipline that has been a science for less than a century. Books like this are hard to write, because they combine people, discoveries, and ideas in ways that can easily become a confusing melange of information. For this reason, I have chosen to write this book as a simple narrative, passing from archaeologists and their discoveries to changing ideas about the past in as seamless a way as possible. Chapter 1 traces the beginnings of archaeology

to the curiosity of Babylonian monarchs and the philosophical musings of classical writers. We show how theological beliefs limited archaeological inquiry until the nineteenth century, and describe early antiquarian researches, including the first excavations at the Roman cities of Herculaneum and Pompeii. Chapter 2 discusses the establishment of human antiquity in the mid-nineteenth century, tracing the roots of the ideas that led to the development of archaeology as we know it today. In Chapters 3 to 6, we describe the beginnings of archaeology in Egypt, Mesopotamia, and Central America. We also discuss the Three Age System for dividing prehistory and the simplistic ideas of linear human progress that dominated nineteenth-century thinking about the prehistoric past. We visit Heinrich Schliemann's excavations at Homeric Troy and describe the beginnings of biblical archaeology. Chapter 6 ends with the work of Flinders Petrie along the Nile and that of Arthur Evans on the Palace of Knossos on Crete after 1900. Their researches ushered in a new era, which saw a new emphasis on artifacts, dating, and science. Chapter 7 traces the roots of such efforts in Europe and the Americas, combining a new emphasis on stratigraphic observation and dating with new discoveries in the Andes and Mesoamerica. Chapters 8 to 10 describe archaeology's coming of age. This was an era of spectacular discoveries like the tomb of Pharaoh Tutankhamun and Ur's royal cemetery, but also of much more sophisticated excavation methods and new ideas for explaining and understanding the remote past. Chapter 10 carries the story into the 1940s and 1950s, with the development of a sophisticated culture history in the Americas and the first efforts at ecological and settlement archaeology, as well as Julian Steward's development of cultural ecology. The story continues in Chapter 11, with the development of radiocarbon dating and increasingly pointed critiques of culture history. We also trace the beginnings of multidisciplinary research, and of salvage archaeology, and the development of world prehistory as a viable intellectual concept in the late 1950s. Chapters 12 and 13 carry the story from the 1960s through the new millennium, beginning with the intellectual ferment of the 1960s, which saw the birth of the so-called "new archaeology," today called processual archaeology. We assess its significance and its legacy. Chapter 13 surveys the many new theoretical approaches that developed, and are still developing, as a reaction to processualism, as well as other developments such as cultural resource management and the study of an engendered past. Finally, Chapter 14 takes a look at the developing archaeology of the future. Guides to Further Reading at the end of each chapter provide sources for additional research. A Glossary of Archaeological Sites and Cultural Terms at the end of the book gives additional information on the more important sites mentioned in the text. This book is not a history of archaeological theory, nor is it a history of archaeology by personality or discovery. It's an attempt to provide a balanced, and, I hope, entertaining account of the history of a

relative newcomer to the world of science. As these pages will testify, the discovery of the prehistory of humankind ranks among the greatest scientific achievements of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The perspective is international, for I believe that archaeology is a global enterprise, not just a narrowly focused view of the past based on, say, North America, Europe, or the eastern Mediterranean. A Brief History is written in as jargon-free a style as possible and is aimed, in general terms, at readers with no experience of archaeology whatsoever. However, beginners might be advised to acquire a short introduction to archaeological method and theory if they are hazy on the basic principles of the subject.

Interesting text. The summaries at the end of the chapters are extremely helpful because you don't have to pay super close attention to the content in the chapters, which can become overwhelming.

Easy to read and had a lot of information. Many names were mentioned giving the reader a good starting point for further research. Or could be good for someone who just wants to know the basics of archaeology.

Worked out great for class. Thanks.

good for class

Fagan provides a quick walkthrough of the development of archaeology. He starts with a description of how the ancient Romans would embark on tours of Egypt, to peer at the tombs that were already far older than Rome. And how we are now left with Roman graffiti that is two thousand years old! But the bulk of his narrative concerns archaeology as it developed since the Industrial Revolution. How it had to shake off the albatross of religious Christian dogma. Fagan describes this field primarily through recaps of its most prominent practitioners. Which include Heinrich Schliemann, who found Troy, and Howard Carter, who unearthed the tomb and treasures of Tutankhamen. From these and other notables like Mary Leakey, we see how understanding and techniques have vastly improved our understanding of our past.

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