



Archaeological Theory

Matthew Johnson

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Archaeological Theory: An Introduction is a book that has been needed for the last twenty years. It is an accessible, lively account of current thinking in archaeology. Taking a historical approach and using clear and jargon-free language, the book examines the roots of current debates in the development of archaeology over the last thirty years. Mathew Johnson discusses different ways of approaching the Human Past, ranging from positivism to Postmodernism. He conveys to students that theory is important and can be exciting and stimulating. He reveals the historical origins of different schools of thought and sets theories against the practical problems they are intended to solve, as well as against wider developments in other disciplines. The book discusses what the new Archaeology meant and means, what the differences are between processual and post processual archaeology, what cognitive archaeology is or might be, and addresses politics, gender and evolution within archaeological theory. The author outlines the social and political context of different intellectual trends and provides a route map to a complex and much debated area of the subject. This introduction will be invaluable not only to students encountering archaeology for the first time, but also to archaeologists of all areas and periods needing a lucid and concise guide to current thinking and terminology.

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