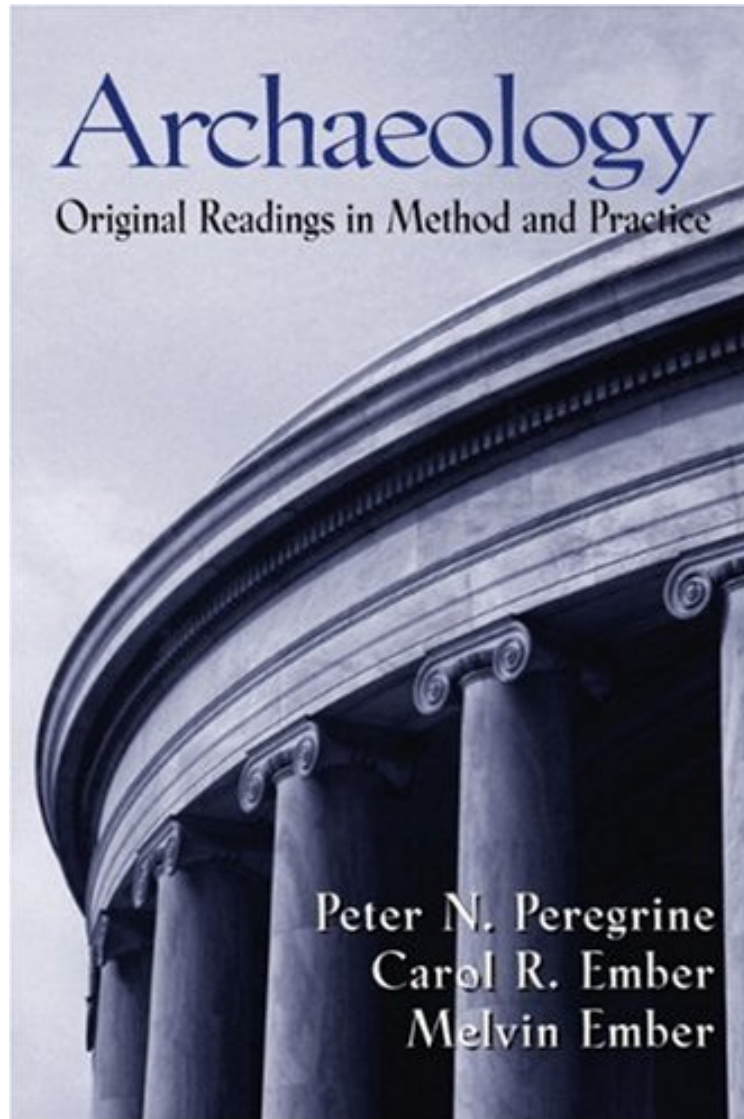


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Archaeology: Original Readings in Method and Practice

Peter N. Peregrine, Carol R. Ember, Melvin R. Ember
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Written by some of the top archaeologists in the country, this collection of 25 articles covers the entire range of archaeological methods as well as issues and controversies in contemporary archaeology. Illustrates through case studies how archaeologists put methods into practice to solve problems. Explores how ideas were formed and research conducted along with the people behind the process of archaeological discovery. Focuses on how archaeologists find and recover data from archaeological sites and materials, with examples from the contributors' own research. Examines issues and controversies in contemporary archaeology, discussing different theories, opinions, and evidence on various issues. For anyone interested in learning more about archaeological methods and discoveries.

From the Back Cover Written by some of the top archaeologists in the country, this collection of 25 articles covers the entire range of archaeological methods as well as issues and controversies in contemporary archaeology. Illustrates through case studies how archaeologists put methods into practice to solve problems. Explores how ideas were formed and research conducted along with the people behind the process of archaeological discovery. Focuses on how archaeologists find and recover data from archaeological sites and materials, with examples from the contributors' own research. Examines issues and controversies in contemporary archaeology, discussing different theories, opinions, and evidence on various issues. For anyone interested in learning more about archaeological methods and discoveries. Excerpt. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved. Which would you rather read: (A) "The stratigraphic profile was partially obscured due to the extremely arid conditions," or (B) "The dust rising from the strong desert wind made it hard for me to see the stratigraphy"? If you answered B, then this book is for you. Most collections of articles that are used in undergraduate courses are made up of works patched together from material written by archaeologists for other archaeologists or, in some cases, for a popular audience. Rarely are works included that were written explicitly for college students. This is a problem, for works written for scholars are too detailed and jargon-laden for students to digest easily, while works written for a popular audience contain little information that would be new to students who have already been exposed to archaeology. This book, on the other hand, is composed of chapters written explicitly for college students. The chapters are not reprints of articles published elsewhere, but were composed for you, a student of archaeology, to help you appreciate the methods, practices, and experiences of some of the top archaeologists working today. How do the chapters in this book differ from those in other collections? Usually when we read an article or book chapter about a piece of research, we find out about the results what the researchers think they have discovered, what they think they know. Rarely do we get to understand the process. Where do ideas come from? How does an idea get transformed into a research project? What was exciting about the research? What was disappointing? What is the person behind the process like? These questions are rarely addressed in scholarly writing, and they are often absent even in popular accounts of research. Here these questions are central, for the archaeologists who wrote the chapters in this collection wanted to help you understand the process of archaeological discovery. They wanted you to understand not only what they found, but also how they went about finding it, and what the experience was like. Most of all, they wanted to excite you about archaeology not only about the findings in archaeology, but also about the process of doing archaeology itself. The purpose of this collection is to make research more alive for students like you who are just beginning to get to know archaeology. Part I, "Archaeological Methods," focuses on the way archaeologists find and recover data from archaeological sites and materials. Rather than being dry "by-the-numbers" instructions for doing research, each chapter brings the experiences and insights of an active archaeologist to the practical matters of doing archaeological research. The authors all provide examples from their own research to give you a better sense of how archaeological methods are actually employed in the field and laboratory. Part II, "Issues and Controversies in Contemporary Archaeology," also tries to convey a feeling for the research process, but each chapter is focused on a particular issue or controversy rather than a method. Here the authors deal with some of the following kinds of questions: "What are the different theories or opinions in this controversy?" "What is the evidence, if any, for each side?" "What kinds of research might be brought to bear on this issue to help resolve it?" "What rethinking might be necessary?" By focusing on issues and controversies where there is no obvious agreement in the archaeological community, the authors convey a feeling for the dynamics of research and the excitement of debate. The dynamics of research are further explored in Part III, "Archaeological Case Studies." Here the authors illustrate how they applied archaeological methods to particular cases of interest to them from the origins of complex polities in sub-Saharan Africa to gender roles in the Inka empire. As in Part II, the authors in Part III deal with a set of related questions: "What made you interested in this particular case?" "What data did you need to examine this case?" "What methods did you use to collect the data?" "What did you discover and what new questions did your research raise?" The purpose of Part III is to illustrate the variety of questions asked by archaeologists and the diverse methods they use to answer them. Finally, Part IV, "Archaeologists at Work," includes two autobiographical articles. We left it up to the archaeologists to choose what they wanted to write about. After all, we want you to get a feeling for how archaeological researchers vary, not just how archaeological research varies. In these ways, we hope you will come to appreciate that archaeology is not just an unemotional set of methods and data, but rather a bunch of hard-working, insightful people who employ those methods to answer particular questions about

the past.