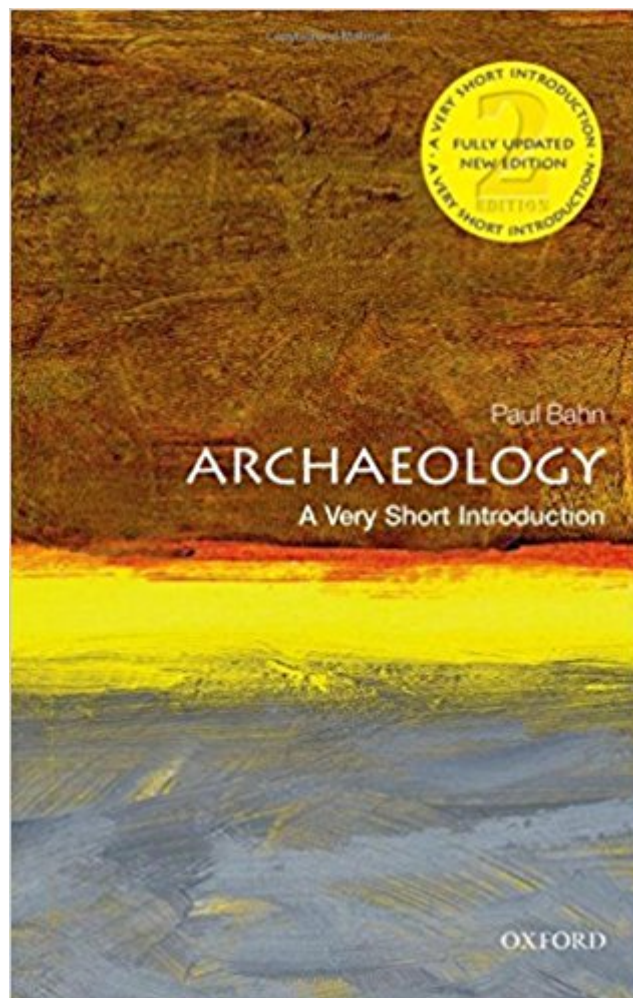




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# **Archaeology: A Very Short Introduction (Very Short Introductions)**



## Synopsis

In this revised and updated edition of *Archaeology: A Very Short Introduction*, Paul Bahn presents an engaging introduction and a superb overview of a field that embraces everything from the cave art of Lascaux to the great stone heads of Easter Island. This entertaining introduction reflects the enduring popularity of archaeology--a subject which appeals as a pastime, career, and academic discipline, encompasses the whole globe, and spans some 2.5 million years. From deserts to jungles, from deep caves to mountain tops, from pebble tools to satellite photographs, from excavation to abstract theory, archaeology interacts with nearly every other discipline in its attempts to reconstruct the past. In this new edition, Bahn brings his text completely up to date, including information about recent discoveries and interpretations in the field, and highlighting the impact of developments such as the potential use of DNA and stable isotopes in teeth, as well the effect technology and science are having on archaeological exploration, from nuclear imaging to GPS. Bahn also shows how archaeologists have contributed to some of the most prominent debates of our age, such as the role of climate change, the effects of rises in sea-level, and the possibility of global warming. This edition also includes updated suggestions for further reading.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Acclaim for the first edition: "A quite brilliant and level-headed look at the curious world of archaeology." --Barry Cunliffe, Oxford University, author of *Europe Between the Oceans*

Paul Bahn is a freelance writer, translator, and broadcaster in archaeology. He is a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries magazine, vice-president of the Easter Island foundation, and corresponding member of the Archaeological Institute of America.

This is a nice summary of the field as well as a brief history of archaeology, including what archaeologists set out to do when they investigate a site and indeed what a site is. It blows away a lot of the myths that people might have about the field as well as discusses some of the latest trends and how it is an often inter-disciplinarian field. Interesting and covers a few of the main issues (it seems) from the field. Oftentimes funny and self-deprecating. I really enjoyed the anecdotes too. So, if you want to know broadly what archaeologists do, where they came from, how they approach their field and what's next, this is a great introduction to the topic.

Surprisingly, as a voracious reader of numerous topic areas this is the first book (Archaeology: A very short introduction by Paul Bahn with illustrations by Bill Tidy) I have read in the **VERY SHORT INTRODUCTION SERIES**. I enjoyed reading this 118 page soft cover book so much that I intend to purchase more in this series. In college I took many different social studies courses but I never studied Archaeology. This little fantastic volume provided a basic overview of the topic in an amusing and unique way. The illustrations were also funny at times. This book is organized into ten subjects/areas which cover the following material: The origins and development of archaeology, making a date, technology, how did people live? How did people think? Settlement and society, how and why did things change? Minorities and minorities, presenting the past to the public, and the future of the past. There is also a further reading list and an index in this volume. If you are seeking a surprisingly detailed short introduction to archaeology this is a book you should check out. I found it very informative and an enjoyable read. Rating: 4 Stars. Joseph J. Truncale (Author: The Mighty Pen: Your self-defense friend: Tactical use of the pen for self-defense).

After 30 years of practicing law, I've decided to retire and take up a second career. To that end, I have enrolled in a university-level program to earn a certificate in field archaeology. As a prelude to beginning my coursework this coming fall, I purchased this book for enjoyable summer reading that would both inform and entertain. I'm glad I did, and enjoyed this book immensely. If you are interested in archaeology for any reason -- whether as a hobby, a career, or as a college course that you are thinking of taking in the future -- I highly recommend this book.

A quick and dirty explanation about how and WHY to do archaeology from a master trained in a post-processual tradition, but influenced by the likes of David Clarke. Bahn is the heir to the expertise of the last generation of Europeanists, but understands deeply and broadly the purposes of even beginning to dismantle, destructively, a heritage site. Excellent text for freshman diggers and lay public, FOR whom you would have a thorough and solid indoctrination for the right reasons for investigation. Bahn will eventually be one of the "greybeards" of Archaeology; for now, he is a powerhouse.

This book fulfils its basic objective as a concise and informal introduction to archaeology, however it is difficult not to compare it with other books from this excellent author, who is one of the most well renowned writers in the subject, and also with other titles in this series, for instance 'Human Evolution', which succeeds in explaining a complex subject through an enjoyable and relatively easy reading. The book content is fine, however I think its approach and style, which includes some cartoon-like illustrations, gives it a sensation of being less serious than it really is. This is not to say archaeology cannot be funny, it surely can; it's just a matter of doing it in the appropriate context.

In the Preface to this excellent little book, the author says his intention is to give the reader a taste of the subject and to help students decide if they want to study archeology at University. It performs those tasks admirably. It quite rightly provides a very broad overview rather than going deeply into specific topics, but manages to cram in loads of interesting facts along the way. The tone is jocular, and sometimes the humor is rather forced ("Relative dating does not mean going out with your cousin") but for the most part it works, and Bill Tidy's cartoons are well up to standard. Bahn is pretty harsh with some modern archeological notions, and objectivity toward his peers is clearly not a priority with him, but I don't think this seriously distorts what he has to say. The very title betrays the fact that this is a British publication with British usage and spellings, but I did not spot anything that would cause a problem for an American reader. I do not know of a better short introduction to the subject than this book. Following this, you might want to read Egyptology, another excellent entry in the same series.

I must say that I have loved reading this book for class. Usually reading for class is something that I enjoy but this book made it fun. It was lively, interesting, and full of humor that kept me interested. It is a great read for people who are not in an archaeology class too. It has wonderful background

information and creates a great foundation while keeping things light. After all- not all archaeologists take their work too seriously!

Very superficial introduction to the subject, so the concepts can be assimilated in one night to be sharp next date. Seller excellent.

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