

Hodder, Ian, *Archaeological Theory Today, Second Edition*

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Archaeological theory has changed considerably in the past decade since Hodder's original volume was published in 2001. In response, some contributions to this second edition have been amended and others replaced in order to engage in a more complex and convergent discussion of archaeological theory.

Hodder, an archaeologist and pioneer of archaeological theory, has assembled a revised collection of papers that comprehensively addresses the myriad approaches to archaeological theory. Updated chapters include those addressing behavioural archaeology (LaMotta, chapter 4), cognitive archaeology (Renfrew, chapter 6), agency (Barrett, chapter 7), landscape (Thomas, chapter 8), post-colonialism (Gosden, chapter 12), and archaeological visualisation (Moser, chapter 14). Chapters that have been replaced by those on similar subjects include Shennan's analysis of cultural evolution in chapter 2 and Knappett's discussion of materiality in chapter 9. New topics comprise behavioural ecology (Bird and O'Connell, chapter 3), complex systems (Kohler, chapter 5), symmetrical archaeology (Olsen, chapter 10) and indigenous engagement with cultural heritage (Meskell, chapter 11 and Colwell-Chanthaphonh, chapter 13).

As Hodder (2012, 2) rightly identifies, archaeologists in the past have often felt the need to borrow theoretical perspectives from other disciplines such as

anthropology or sociology. Today, archaeological theory has a new confidence, with theorists contributing to other disciplines from an archaeological perspective, based on their ability to engage with material culture and address data from a long-term perspective (Hodder 2012, 9-11). This conclusion, originally advanced in the first edition, has since been expanded, based on new theoretical approaches and deeper levels of analysis that have been developed in the past decade. Chapters in this second edition specifically address ways of connecting previously dichotomous subjects, such as the relationship between the person and the community, culture and biology, object and subject and “us” and “them”, symbolised by colonial power and indigenous marginalisation (Hodder 2012, 9).

The revised chapters in this second edition show more of a connection and relationship between their different theoretical approaches. While the authors often identify with one of the two main theoretical schools of thought in archaeology - processualism or postprocessualism - Hodder (2012, 9, Fig. 1.1) demonstrates that theoretical sub-sections, for example post-colonial or agency theory, often converge and, ultimately, the two key approaches are linked. This reveals that, while there is an increasing specialisation within archaeological theory, often demonstrated by the distinct language and organisation of publications, there are some unifying connections within archaeological theory (Hodder 2012, 8). Additionally, this second edition focuses more on post-colonialism, heritage management and indigenous knowledge, a reflection on the vast changes in these topics over the past decade (Gosden 2012, 252).

Archaeological theory can be a complex and sometimes purposefully impenetrable subject, often requiring the reader to try to connect theory with its practical application to a subject matter. In this way, Hodder has united a broad ensemble of theorists who strive to make their discussion applicable to their data. LaMotta (2012, 62) in his analysis of behavioural archaeology (chapter 4), states '[i] write from the perspective of a "dirt archaeologist" who struggles to make sense of the archaeological record', subsequently outlining aspects of this perspective that can be applied to an actual methodological framework by the reader.

Many of the revised chapters also demonstrate the extent of change in an author's field in the past decade, for example Barrett's (chapter 7) account of agency theory and Gosden's (chapter 12) discussion of post-colonial archaeology. These chapters are completely different from their original publications in 2001. Other areas of study, for example Renfrew's (chapter 6) study of cognitive archaeology, include only minor additions. Nonetheless, this is a small criticism and one that does not reflect the overall high quality of this scholarly book.

Ultimately, this collection of papers, loosely connected by the term 'archaeological theory', demonstrates the fact that archaeology is a vibrant, dynamic and broad-based discipline. Each of these authors address different data sets from a variety of theoretical perspectives based on the different questions that they are asking of their evidence (Hodder 2012, 5-6). These contrasting theoretical perspectives, while sometimes divisive or fragmentary, also keep the discipline active and engaged. Well-researched, with a comprehensive index and a broad range of subjects, Hodder's revised edition

of *Archaeological Theory Today* is an essential purchase for any archaeologist wishing to engage more deeply with their discipline.

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