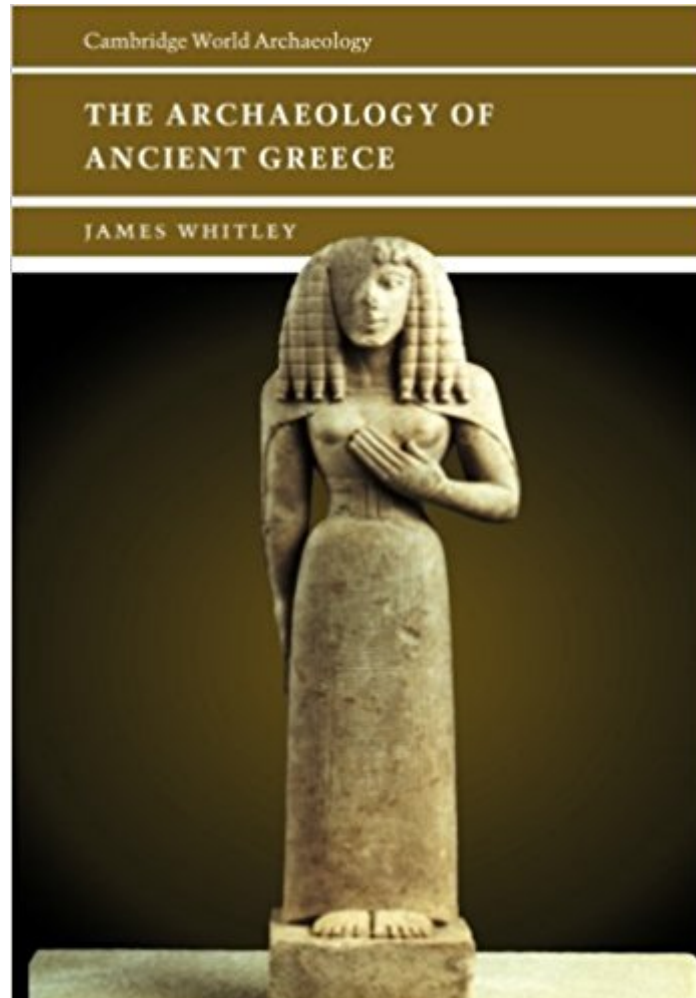




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The Archaeology Of Ancient Greece (Cambridge World Archaeology)



Synopsis

The Archaeology of Ancient Greece provides an up-to-date synthesis of current research on the material culture of Greece in the Archaic and Classical periods. Its rich and diverse material has always provoked admiration and even wonder, but it is seldom analyzed as a key to our understanding of Greek civilization. Dr. Whitley shows how the material evidence can be used to address central historical questions for which literary evidence is often insufficient, and he also situates Greek art within the broader field of Greek material culture.

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Customer Reviews

"It is an excellent account of what the discipline is, where it has been, and where it is now.

Especially good is Whitley's tracking of the influences on the contemporary scene of science,

structuralism, and the 'new' archaeology." Paul D. Scotton, University of Washington

"In this invaluable and long-needed book on Greek archaeology, Whitley begins with a discussion on the

nature of classical art, then draws on his own expertise to present an outstanding account of the

early development of Greek culture.... Accessible to a general archaeological readership, this book

is essential for academic libraries, where it will become a standard sourcebook." Choice

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understanding of Greek civilisation. Dr Whitley shows how the material evidence can be used to address central historical questions for which literary evidence is often insufficient, and he also situates Greek art within the broader field of Greek material culture.

This book is mainly a general synthesis of the state of archaeological knowledge and research on the Greek Archaic and Classical periods, with some great explanation of the most important controversies (such as the gender division in society, the continuity of religion from the Dark Age, or the Orientalizing influence, etc) to be found in the study of this culture and period. However, the author takes great pains with his writing, so as not to have another dry academic book with piles of extremely interesting information buried under tones of arid sentences. As a result, you soon find yourself immerse in a fascinating, colourful world, so different from what many classicists want to give as as "Classic Greek Culture" as to really be a totally "New World". Here, temples and stoas are painted in bright colours, fire-eaters and dancers perform in the Agoras next to philosophers who discuss ethics. This is not, however, a way to make Greek culture look less important than it was. I think the author succeeds in communicating to his readers what the archaeologists have known for some time. These very same archaeologists, though, had to first overcome the reticence shown by the "Classicist Establishment" to consider the overwhelming evidence that Ancient Greece had very little to do with what they had been teaching at Western universities for decades (if not centuries). Thus, the author begins his book by making the point that much of the vision of "Classical Greece" that we have inherited is really a 18th-century-cum-Victorian Eurocentrist construct, a somewhat imperialistic (one could even say [...]) ideal of what a "perfect society" should be, and an excuse to model many typical western institutions on. But don't get the wrong idea that this is the aim of the book. As I said before, the author just intends to give an up-to-date synthesis on what archaeologists have to say. Of course, when the subject is one so dear to, and near, the very core of European identity, controversy is unavoidable. Whitley just states the most important of these controversies, but sometimes, and although he doesn't seem keen on taking positions, his own views show through. On the whole, the world glimpsed through the pages of this book is so fascinating that I found I needed to know more about some of the issues, so I went to the "Further reading for each chapter" section, and now have a nice pile of books to read on the subjects of Greek Sanctuaries (a truly fascinating topic, especially once you've visited Delphi). I recomend this book for people who are intersted in the subject and want to have up-to-date information, but also as a well-written, never boring introduction to the wonders of Ancient Greece, a culture that, even if we don't know it, is part of ourselves and does not deserve the many

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The archaeology of Ancient Greece by James Whitley is a classic. It provides to the reader a general view of the studies of Greek ware, of the historiography and the recent studies about the theme.

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