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Anthropology 103

#0210302

Essay #2

Archaeology is a very extensive field and has a number of different specialties. The wide range of specialties in archaeology are usually determined by time period or the area being studied geographically. The two major divisions of archaeology are pre-historic and historic. The major dividing line between these two is the period before and after written history.

Prehistoric Archaeology is the study of the past before historic records were ever written. With having no written evidence of the prehistoric past, we determine who specific people were or names or places. Archaeologists will speak in terms of cultures. Because there is no written evidence Archaeologists must rely entirely on material remains alone for evidence of past times. For example, the set of hominid footprints found in hardened volcanic ash. This was crucial evidence that hominids walked upright 3.6 million years ago. Prehistoric Archaeology consists of the Stone Age (Paleolithic Period) in which the stone tools were being used and made by humans. Hunter-gatherers, and the first farming communities were also in prehistoric times. Prehistoric archaeology is more of a mystery and leaves much room for thought, investigation, and argumentation.

Historical Archaeology is where the writing of history all started and began to be recorded. It is considered to be archaeology of the most recent past, which is from approximately AD 1500 to the present. Even though historical archaeology is recorded it still is just as crucial to understand human cultures and behavior. Also because everything has been written and recorded there are still bias views and things can be altered. So with that in mind it is good to have an open point of view about historical writings and not see it all as factual evidence. This leaves holes in these historical eras that still need to be filled. For example, in the book it says that there is much written records of the sale and transport of Africans, but not much evidence of their daily lives. This leads to much interest and as a result an archaeological investigation is started.

Public Archaeology is the preservation of past and the remains that help to solve unanswered questions or reveal hidden cultures by involving the community. Public archaeology can work in all areas of Archaeology. Sites and areas need to be preserved and not just demolished by modern day humans. So much knowledge and history is being damaged and with public archaeology some of the past can be preserved. The National Museum of Denmark was formed to preserve their history, and this has lead other nations to do the same thing.

Prehistoric and Historic Archaeology are different in times, but still can be very complex. Past writings can help explain many things, but what also needs to be taken in account is factual evidence.