

# Introduction to Archaeology

Fall 2024  
Lecture 4 (9/12)



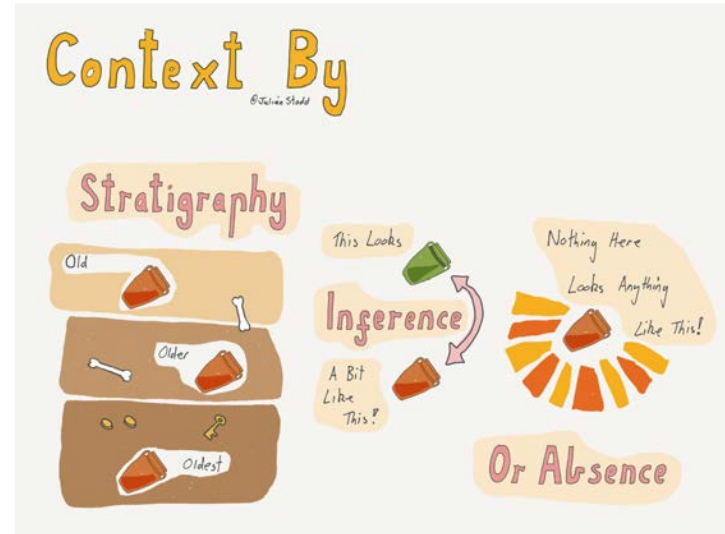
# Week 2

## Situating Archaeology

- [Archaeology is Having a Great Century](#) (Prendergast & Sawchuk)
  - [Grand Challenges for Archaeology](#) (Kintigh et al. 2014)
  - [SAA Archaeological Record](#)
  - [Archaeology as History](#) (Frieman 2023)
    - Intro, 1 (Places) & 2 (Things)
-

# Archaeology as History

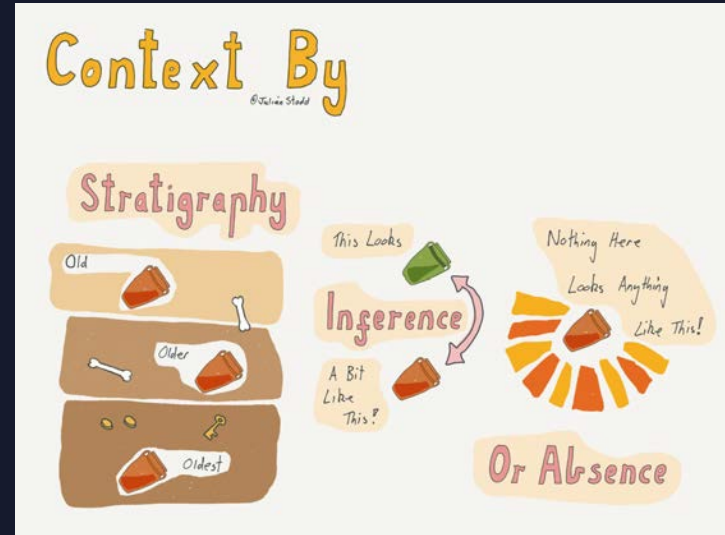
Introduction



<https://julianstodd.wordpress.com/tag/inference/>

# Terminology & Themes

- What is archaeology?
- Journalist's standard set of questions
- Hawkes' "Ladder of inference"
- *Archaeological record*
- *Underdetermination of the discipline*
- "Magpie science"
- "Telling stories" framework



# Telling Stories

*“The point here is that the **fragmentation** of the archaeological record, the enormous variety of **methodological and theoretical tools** we have developed (or borrowed) to **interpret** it, and the very different traditions in which global archaeologists are trained all contribute to a diversity of pasts, a diversity of truths, and a diversity of stories that connect the dots of broken pottery, crumbling buildings, and burnt seeds.”*

(Frieman 2023: 2)

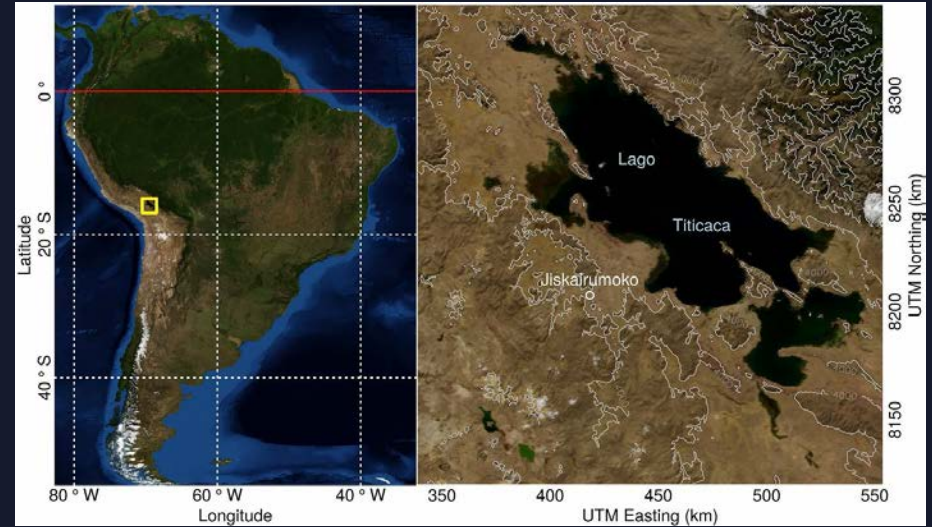
## How do we study the past?

*“This [book] seeks to explore these **diverse approaches** to the study of the past, emphasising that the data archaeologists present to the world are not innately meaningful but constructed through careful analysis and traditions of interpretation”*

(Frieman 2023: 3)

# “Traditional” Deductive Research Design (William Andrefsky)

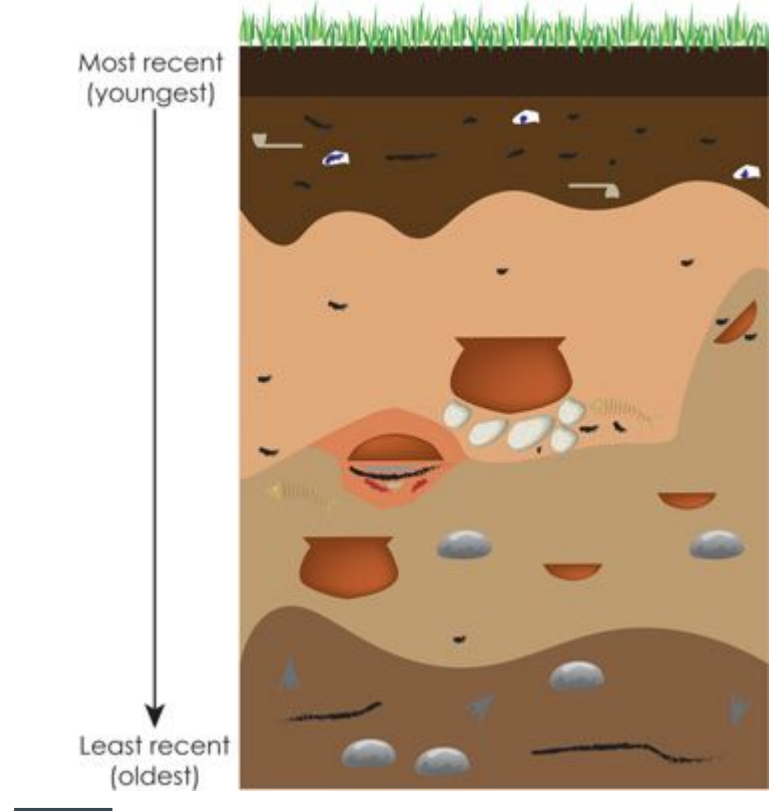
1. Formulation of Research
2. Implementation of research
3. Data acquisition
4. Processing (field lab)
5. Data analysis (formal lab)
6. Data Interpretation
7. Publication



<https://www.pnas.org/content/early/2016/11/08/1604265113>

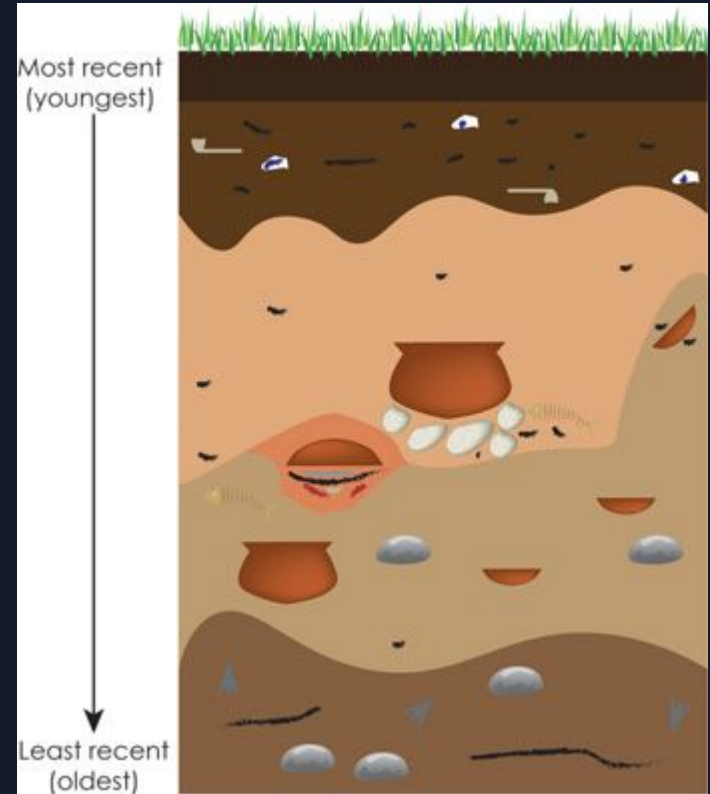
# *Archaeology as History*

Ch 1: Telling Stories about Places



# Terminology & Themes

- **Why various *scales* of analysis?**
  - Research questions
  - Available analytical methods & expertise
  - Legal/ethical considerations
  - Time/money & other logistical concerns
- **Different sub-fields?**
  - Archaeobotany (flora)
  - Zooarchaeology (fauna)
  - Bioarchaeology
  - Geoarchaeology
    - Geomorphology
    - Geophysics

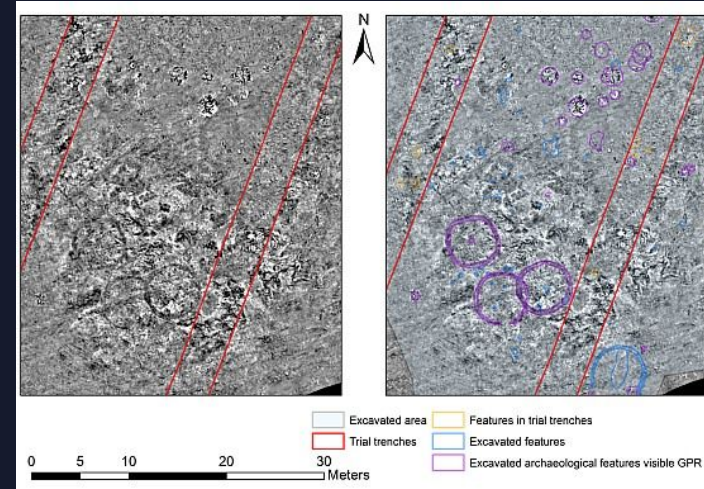


# Locating Sites (Survey)

- **Landscape survey**
  - Low tech vs. high tech [Table 1]
  - Ground-based vs. aerial
  - Non-invasive vs. destructive
- **Sample collecting-** “extractive logics of colonial invasions” (Frieman 13)
  - links to military technologies
- **Cartography/ map-making**



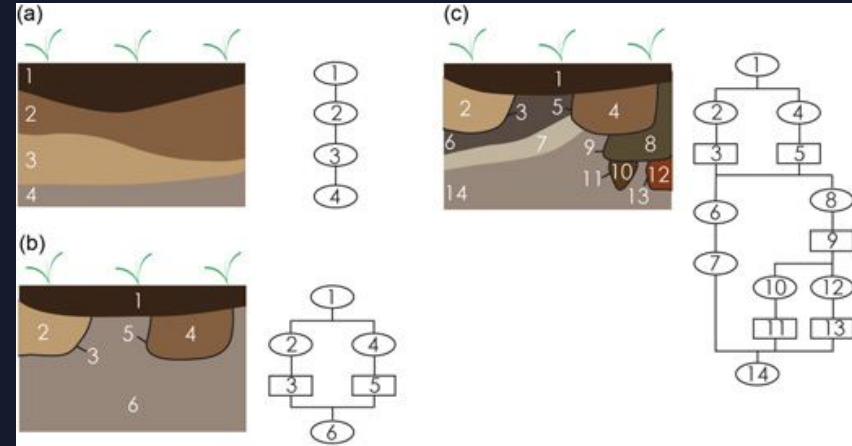
<https://scholar.harvard.edu/jasonur/pages/erbil>



<https://www.mdpi.com/2072-4292/12/9/1408#>

# Investigating Sites (**Excavation**)

- Trenches, Open area excavations
- Shovel test pits & test pits
- *Sondages* (trial trench, stratigraphy)
- Levels- arbitrary vs. stratigraphic
- Stratigraphic layers, *In situ* vs. inverted
- Vertical profile or section
- Law of superposition
- Context & association
- Site formation processes (natural, cultural)
- Taphonomy
- Harris Matrix (deposits, cuts, fills)
- Record keeping (forms, small finds, features)



**Figure 4** Composing a Harris matrix from archaeological stratigraphy:

(a) simple matrix showing four layers deposited in succession;

(b) a matrix in which two pits are cut into deposit 6;

(c) a more complex matrix that shows multiple intercutting pits and successive layers of deposits (redrawn after Bibby 1993: fig. 7).

# Documenting Sites & Landscapes

## 3D to 2D

- Plan views
- Section views
- Planometric drawings

## Technologies used?

- Drawings
- Photography
- Photogrammetry (3D)
- Geographical Information Systems (GIS)



<https://www.harappa.com/blog/indus-industry-binjor-rajasthan>

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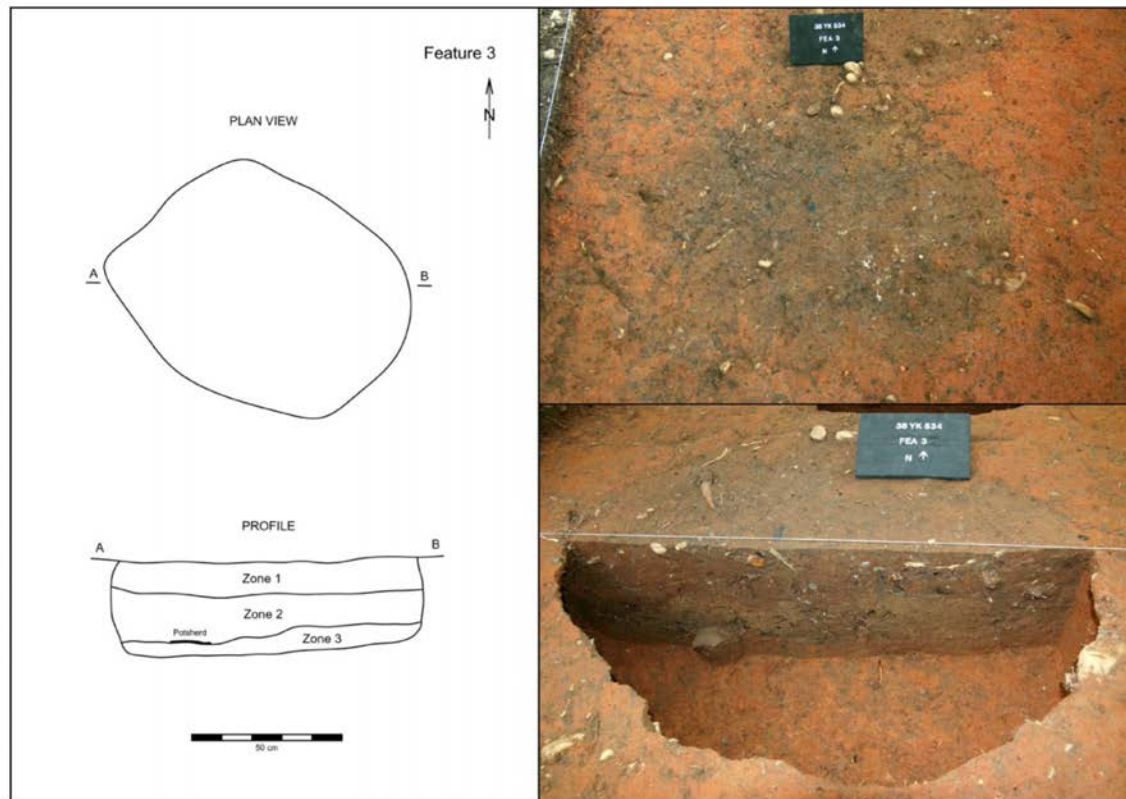


Figure 5.2. Flat-based storage pit (Feature 3) plan view and profile drawings, and excavation photographs: top of feature (top, view to north) and fill profile with south half excavated (bottom, view to north).

# *Archaeology as History*

Ch 2: Telling Stories about Things



“In the **17th and 18th centuries** , many middle- and upper-class people (mostly men, although not universally) began to develop an interest in the things past people made and used... The **antiquarian** fascination with exotic and ancient things – ancient and ethnographic artefacts as well as elements of the natural environment – underlies the **emergence of collecting institutions** and **material culture studies**, both foundational to archaeological practice” (Frieman 2023: 21)

“By the **middle of the 19th century** , we see the emergence of archaeology as a discipline, distinct from the (sometimes indiscriminate) collecting practices of individual antiquarians. However, in line with antiquarian interests, early archaeologists expended considerable effort to create structure in the disordered mess of the past. They did so by inventing methodologies to cluster material into coherent **geographical and chronological units** that could be studied as an assemblage” (Frieman, 21)

“While **19th- and early 20th century** excavations were aimed at finding (and often then stealing) valuable treasure from tombs or ancient cities, most archaeologists today find more value in broken bits of pottery, ratty stone tools, and old floor surfaces or foundations because these offer **insights into habitual practices and daily life**” (Frieman 2023: 2)

# Studying Things (Artifacts & Time/Space)

## Artifacts

- Style
- Function
- Technology
- Dating
- Meaning

## Time & Space

- Typologies (or typo-chronologies)
  - Formal & Functional
  - Whose typologies? Interpretation?



Figure 8- Examples of colonial gravestones from cemeteries in Massachusetts, USA.

# Ceramics

- Morphology
- Function
- Style
- Clay sourcing
- Residue analysis



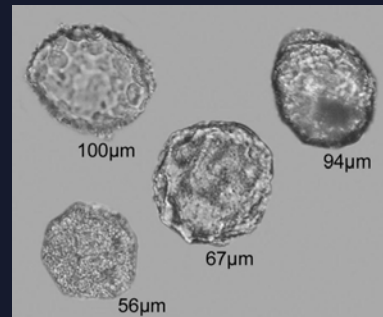
# Lithics (Flaked Stone & Ground Stone)

- Morphology
- Technology
- Material
- Function
- Debitage analysis
- Use-wear analysis



# Botanical & Faunal Remains

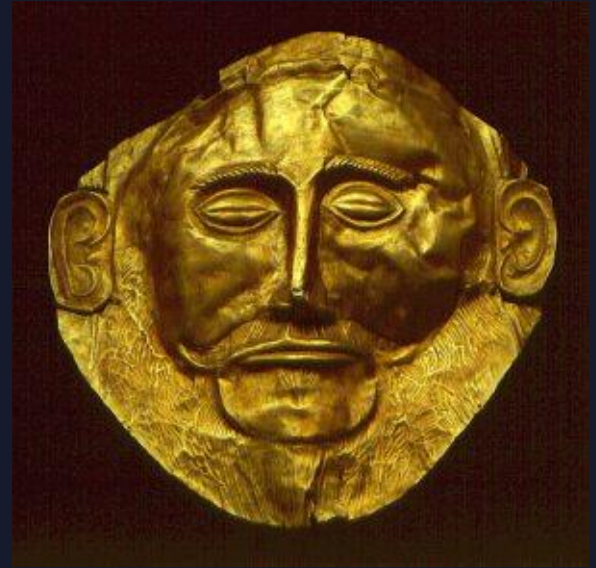
- Domestication
- Subsistence strategies
- Past environments
- Seasonality
- Social Identity
- “Other” uses
  - Medicinal, tools



# Shell



# Metal



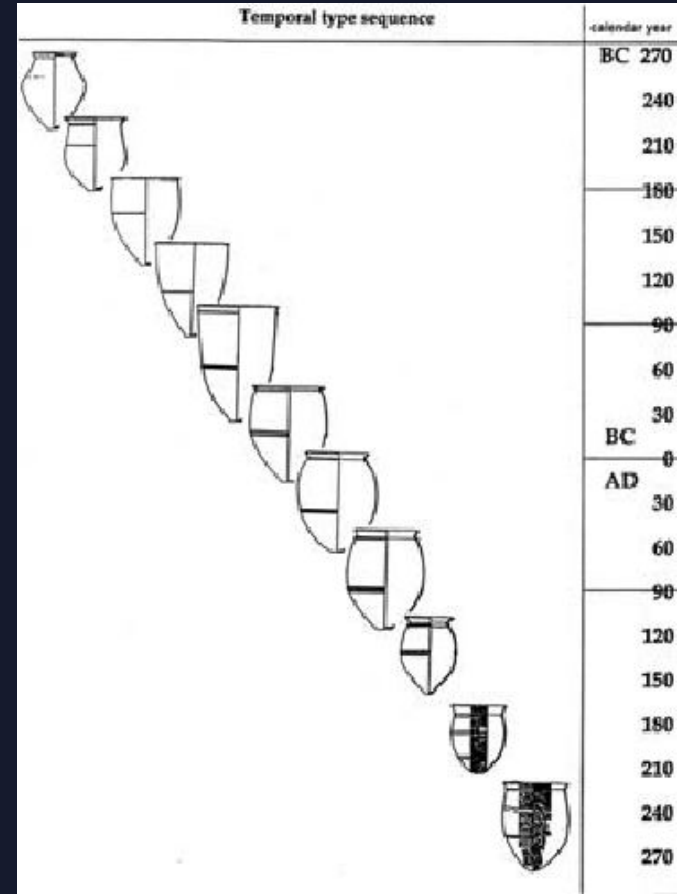
<https://twitter.com/archaeologyart/status/1460367024119500812?lang=fi>

# Fiber Artifacts



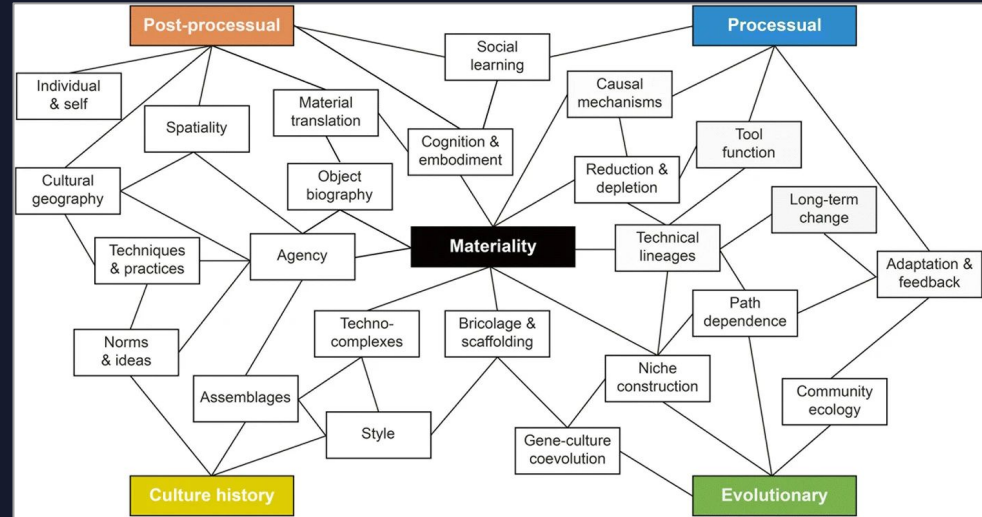
# Time & Space

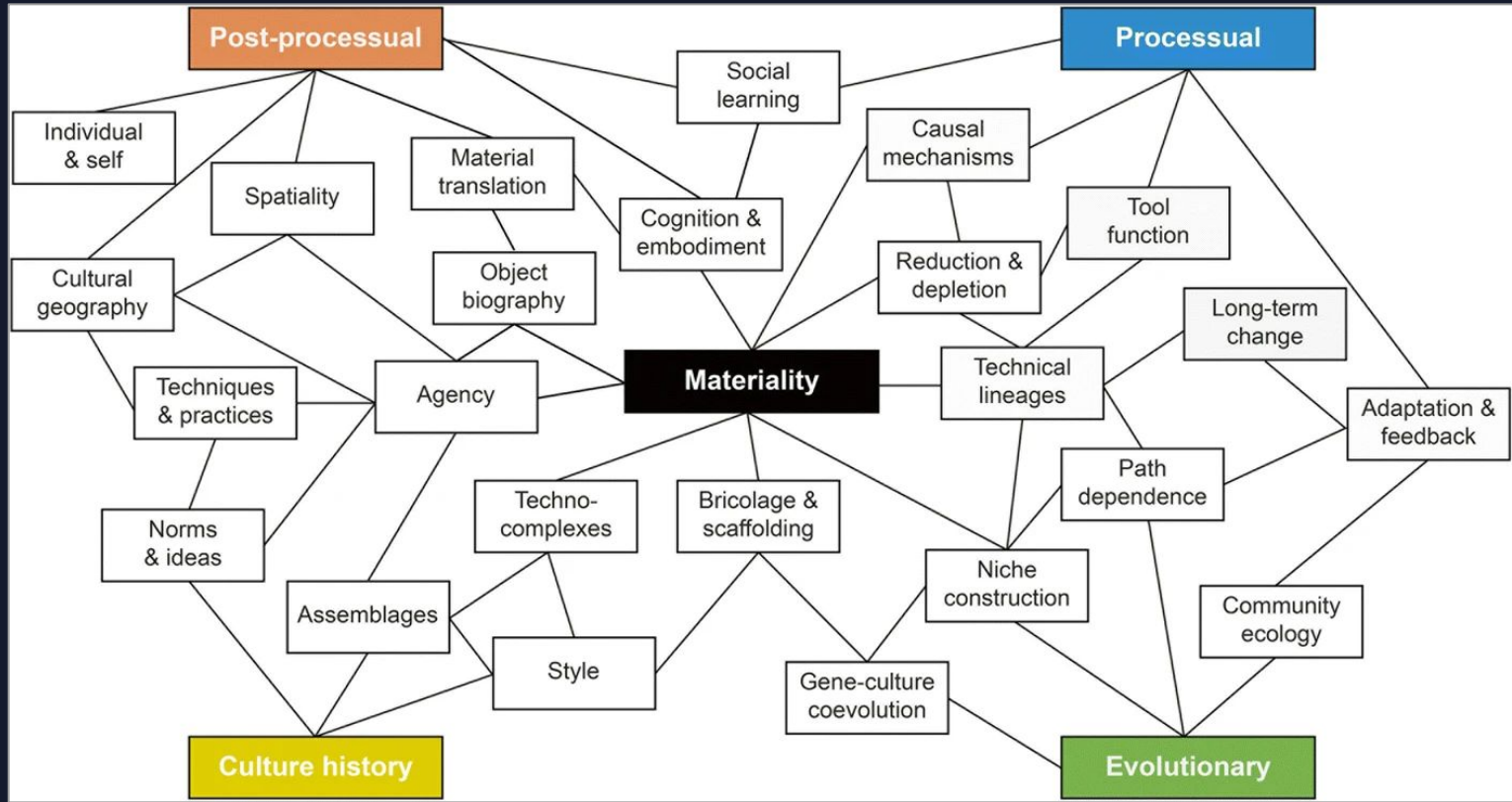
- **Typologies**
  - Formal (morphology/shape)
  - Functional (various approaches!)
- **Chrono-Typologies**
- **Other systems of classification?**



# History of Archaeology

- **Evolutionary models**
  - Change- one way, one direction
  - “Progress” & colonial biases
- **Culture history**
  - Change- via migration & diffusion
  - Archaeology & nationalism
- **New (or processual) archaeology**
  - “Multilinear explanations of change”
  - Science, computation, model building
- **Post-processual/”material turn”**
  - Entangled objects, relationships





# Week 3

## Archaeology's Roots

- General History
    - Method, theory & practice
    - Will post WE2 today
  - Victorian archaeology
    - *Ladies of the Field* (Adams 2010)
    - Harriet Boyd Hawes & Smith College
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