



Archaeology and the Senses: Human Experience, Memory, and Affect (Topics in Contemporary Archaeology)

By Yannis Hamilakis

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This book is an exciting new look at how archaeology has dealt with the bodily senses and offers an argument for how the discipline can offer a richer glimpse into the human sensory experience. Yannis Hamilakis shows how, despite its intensely physical engagement with the material traces of the past, archaeology has mostly neglected multi-sensory experience, instead prioritizing isolated vision and relying on the Western hierarchy of the five senses. In place of this limited view of experience, Hamilakis proposes a sensorial archaeology that can unearth the lost, suppressed, and forgotten sensory and affective modalities of humans. Using Bronze Age Crete as a case study, Hamilakis shows how sensorial memory can help us rethink questions ranging from the production of ancestral heritage to large-scale social change, and the cultural significance of monuments. Tracing the emergence of palaces in Bronze Age Crete as a celebration of the long-term, sensuous history and memory of their localities, Hamilakis points the way to reconstituting archaeology as a sensorial and affective multi-temporal practice. At the same time, he proposes a new framework on the interaction between bodily senses, things, and environments, which will be relevant to scholars in other fields.

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Review

"... [this] book is a bold statement on the nature of archaeology itself, for which it deserves to be read."
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"... a valuable study of cultural thinking - and a very enjoyable one to read at the same time ... [Hamilakis] produces a fact-based, culturally sensitive and theoretically subtle reading which, although at first might not seem groundbreaking, is in fact exactly that."

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"Despite the complex philosophical and historical analysis in the first half of the book, it is an accessible work that does not require specialist knowledge to decipher, something the author should be proud of."

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"Anyone familiar with Hamilakis' output will recognise recurrent themes in this book: memory, personhood, commensality, reflexivity, politics and, of course, the senses. Pulling these topics together, the book represents a significant statement by one of the leading thinkers within archaeology."

Jo Day, Antiquity

About the Author

Yannis Hamilakis is Professor of Archaeology at the University of Southampton. His research focuses on the archaeology of the bodily senses, the politics of the past, archaeological ethnography, social zooarchaeology, and the archaeology of Greece. He has been a member of the School of Advanced Study at Princeton, a scholar at the Getty Research Institute in Los Angeles, a Margo Tytus Fellow at the University of Cincinnati, and a visiting scholar at Princeton University. He serves on the editorial board of many journals including the Annual Review of Anthropology, the Journal of Contemporary Archaeology, Archaeologies: The Journal of the World Archaeological Congress, the Journal of Mediterranean Archaeology, and the Annual of the British School at Athens. He also co-directs the Koutroulou Magoula Archaeology and Archaeological Ethnography Project, focusing on the excavation of the tell site of Koutroulou Magoula in central Greece. He is the author of more than 130 articles and has authored, edited, or co-edited eleven books, including *The Nation and its Ruins: Antiquity, Archaeology, and National Imagination in Greece* (2007), which won the Edmund Keeley Prize and was shortlisted for the Runciman Prize.

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