

BIOARCHAEOLOGY: DIGGING FOR THE TRUTH

By

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ABSTRACT

Using skeletal and material remains respectively, archaeologists and physical anthropologists attempt to reconstruct the lives of past peoples. The combination of these two types of evidence within one discipline is referred to as bioarchaeology.

Bioarchaeology includes studies in palaeodemography and palaeopathology, as well as exploring theories of mortuary behavior, lifestyle and activity, violence and interpersonal activity, and technology.

This thesis contains a brief history of bioarchaeology, followed by how it can be used worldwide to explore what we can discover about past populations and their culture by studying their skeletal and archaeological remains, specifically through palaeopathology. Topics covered include acquired skeletal pathologies, congenital diseases, infectious diseases, dental diseases, metabolic and endocrine diseases, and nutrition. The thesis also includes analysis of case studies conducted using a bioarchaeological approach and specifically addresses why it is important for archaeologists and physical anthropologists to work together and unite bioarchaeology. The ultimate objective of this thesis is to demonstrate that bioarchaeology can assist in filling a void between physical anthropology and archaeology.