

**HIS6E01-PRINCIPLES AND METHODS OF  
ARCHAEOLOGY-ELECTIVE COURSE  
MODULE-1  
TOPIC-INDIAN ARCHAEOLOGY IN COLONIAL ERA**



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- Immense epigraphical, architectural & sculptural wealth- subject of reverence for Indians & curiosity for foreigners who visited India as traders, travellers & rulers
- Preservation of old objects & records- instances of renovation of ancient temples undertaken with due care to preserve older inscriptions
- Inscriptions of Chola period tell us that before older structures were pulled down for rebuilding a shrine, the inscriptions on the walls were copied out & engraved on the walls of new structure



- Near Pudukkottai- renovators who could not read or understand the old inscription took care to re-engage it on the new wall- show their interest in preserving older records- but no evidence about steps taken to decipher inscriptions
- Interest in collection & preservation of old objects – a royal pastime
- Royal palaces- collections of old jewels, sculptures & paintings & antiques
- Enlightened rulers looked these as cultural objects & took step to study & understand them



- Example of royal effort- by scholarly Marattha ruler Sarabhoji in his famous Saraswathi Mahal in Thanjavur
- Old royal collections become later days museums- Salarjung Museum, Ramnagar Palace Museum, Varanasi
- Foreign rulers & visitors in India impressed with Indian monuments & art objects- no attempt to understand the historical background of culture of people among whom they worked



- A few jesuit & other missionaries learned sanskrit & other ancient languages of India like Tamil- it is linguistic interest only
- Last quarter of 18<sup>th</sup> C- officers of British East India company –interest in antiquarian wealth of India
- In 1784- Sir William Jones- judge of Supreme Court & linguistic genius-Asiatic Society –Calcutta- for enquiring into History, the antiquities, arts, sciences, & literatures of Asia
- Charles Wilkins- good knowledge of Sanskrit & a passion for Indian classics
- Both had support of Warren Hastings, Governor General



- Asiatic society & Asiatic Researches in 1788- indological studies- translated several Indian classics-Hitopadesa, Bhagavat Gita, Sakuntala
- These are first step in revealing India's past
- Archaeological work limited to preparing of notes on monuments – unscientific
- Wilkins –works provided key for decipherment of Gupta script
- Explorations of H.H.Wilson in Afghanistan & Francis Buchanan in Bengal & Mysore- many findings like temples, coins etc



- James Fergusson- architectural survey of countries for 18 yrs & systematically classified monuments
- James Prinsep- decipher Brahmi script
- Alexander Cunningham- father of Indian archaeology
- Fleet & Hultzsch-
  - John Faithful Fleet- Govt Epigraphist in 1883
  - Hultzsch-well versed in sanskrit, Pali & Dravidian
  - did remarkable job in bringing to light valuable inscriptions & publishing them with their scholarly notes



- Medows Taylor- made lasting contribution- adopting scientific methods of enquiry – an administrator in service of Nizam of Hyderabad- ‘ The Confessions of a Thug’- excavated megalithic tombs of Central & Southern India – details which he recorded & published in the journal of the Bombay branch of *Royal Asiatic Society(1851)* & *Antiquities(1862)*- differentiated b/w layers & presented a sequences of deposits- Wheeler stated’ Medows was the first person , who know the true function of an excavator & recorder





- Robert Bruce Foote- pre & proto-historic archaeology of India- “Father of Indian pre-History”- served in Geological Survey of India from 1858 to 1891- contribution to the geology of Peninsular India- 1863 discovered the first Palaeolith at Pallavaram near Madras- explored different parts of south India & discovered Paleolithic, Neolithic, Megalithic sites-collections were deposited in Madras museum- 1914 published 2 vols “The Foote Collection of Indian Pre-historic & Proto- Historic Antiquities”



- James Burgess- succeeded Cunningham-started publication of Indian Antiquary in 1872 & Epigraphia Indica- published results of his elaborate surveys in 20 vols entitled Archaeological Survey of India, New Imperial Series- not a trained excavator, he insisted on professional control of excavation & took measures against indiscriminate digging
- Lord Curzon- 1899-1905- revived the Archaeology Dept after the retirement of Burgess- had sympathetic attitude for preservation of ancient cultural relics-& archaeological researches-” it is equally our duty to dig & discover, to classify, reproduce & describe, to copy & decipher & cherish & conserve”- his programmes included exploration, excavation, research, epigraphy, publication & preservation of monuments’- Archaeology dept was reorganised & enlarged- appointed John Mashall as Director General of ASI in 1902



- Sir John Marshall-DG 1902-1928- enacted Ancient Monuments Preservation Act 1904
- Mortimer Wheeler-
- Establishment of School of Archaeology-1960-New Delhi under ASI- Wheelers contribution- Prof. B.B.Lal, first Director
- Prior to Independence- princely states of Mysore, Hyderabad, Gwalior, Baroda, Travancore, Cochin, Pudukkottai, Jaipur- archaeology dept- works on epigraphy & museums- done excavation also
- All states have separate dept of archaeology



- Many univt's have depts of ancient history & archaeology
- Oung scholars trained in different branches of archaeology like exploration, excavations, art, architecture, numismatics etc
- Excavations at Maheshwar, Kausambi, Atiranjikera, Kanchi, Narsipur, Tekkalakotta-done by univty depts
- Deccan College Post Graduate & Research Institute, Poona & Jayswal Research Institute Patna-  
H.D.Sankalia



- Significant work in post independence era like A.Ghosh, V.D.krishnaswami, B.Subba Rao, B.B.Lal, G.R.Sharma, K.R.Srinivasan, M.N.Deshpande, B.K.Thapar, N.R. Banerjee, R. Subramaniyan, S.R.Rao, K.V. Soundarajan, R.V Joshi etc
- Recently environmental archaeology & scientific dating methods like carbon dating, tree ring method, pollen analysis & thermoluminescence developed
- Tata Institute of Fundamental Research Bombay & Physical Research Laboratory, Ahmadabad & Birbal Sahini institute of Paleo-Botany at Lucknow- for getting data scientifically analysed
- ASI had its conservation & scientific wings for chemical cleaning & preservation methods



- Anthropological, Botanical, Zoological survey collaborate with ASI
- Notable progress in all branches since independence
- Beginning of underwater archeology- with archaeological wing in Institute of Oceanography, Goa- work in ancient port towns of Dwaraka & Kaveripumpattinam
- Wheeler-1956 observed”Today no part of the world is better served in archaeological matters than is the republic of India”