

MODULE I:
PHASES IN THE EVOLUTION OF ARCHAEOLOGY

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Definitions

- Archaeology is the study of past through material remains.
- It deals with the study of human behaviors and cultural changes happened in the past.
- The word archaeology comes from the Greek-“arkhaiologia” or “archaeolos” and “logos” means ‘discourse about ancient things; but today it has come to mean the study of the human past through material traces.
- According to Colin Renfrew and Paul Bahn, since the aim of archaeology is the understanding of humankind, it is a humanistic discipline, a humane study.

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- Archaeology aims to study past of the human interactions with their living environment and the corresponding cultural changes.
 - The human past has broadly divided into the pre historic and historic period by the archaeologists and ancient historians.
 - Pre historic means the period of human beings before the beginning of writing. Paleolithic, Mesolithic, Neolithic and Chalcolithic periods are the example.
 - Historic means the period after the advent of writing or the period after the decipherment of ancient scripts. There is no rigid time limit for archaeology.
 - Archaeology intends to study the life of the human beings in the pre-historic, proto-historic and historic period. It deals with the material remains of the human beings from the early Stone Age primitive tools to the modern palaces, fortifications etc.

Antiquarianism

- Archaeology developed as a recognizable discipline in the late nineteenth century.
- Before this period, it had only an antiquarian status. A quest for searching the cultural heritage of the Rome and Mediterranean region had developed in the Renaissance period (14th and 15th centuries AD) onwards and it developed in to an antiquarian stage in the enlightenment period (16th to 18th centuries AD).
- Cyriacus of Ancona who traveled in Greece and Mediterranean for 25 years in the late 14th century for documenting the archaeological monuments, collecting books, copying inscriptions etc was one of such noteworthy endeavors

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- Antiquarianism represents the investigation of the ancient past. It is the study of archaeological objects in orderly manner to found its age and function.
 - An antiquarian researcher will be interested in artifacts only and does not give attention on its context.
 - Who is an antiquarian? A person interested in the past who collects and digs up antiquities unscientifically.
 - The collection of antiquities is based on the passion and curiosity of the Antiquarian. The digging methods of an antiquarian were brutally crude and the main intention was to recover the antiquities as quickly as possible.
 - The Renaissance thinking in the Europe resulted in to a series of the works of antiquarians who engaged in active field archaeology in Britain between the early sixteenth and mid-eighteenth centuries.
 - John Leland, William Camden, John Aubrey and William Stukeley are the prominent antiquarians of this period.

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- Advances in antiquarian research and fieldwork were not restricted to Britain.
 - In Scandinavia, Johan Bure and Ole Worm undertook antiquarian research— with royal patronage— in the early seventeenth century.
 - An indigenous archaeological tradition had also emerged in America by the nineteenth century.

Scientific Archaeology

- The systematic and scientific archaeological study developed in Scandinavia with the “Three Age System” of Christian Thomsen.
- In 1807, Danish government set up an Antiquities Commission to protect sites, promote public awareness of antiquities and establish a museum.
- The first curator of the resulting National Museum in Copenhagen was Christian Thomsen, who held the post from 1816 to his death in 1865.
- He analyzed the archaeological evidences kept in the museum based on material, style, decoration, shape and context and established their relative order.
- Consequently, Thomsen established a theory entitled “Three Age System” as a system of successive human development through the analysis of the archaeological remains of three successive periods; Stone Age, Bronze Age and Iron Age

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- The museum displays were described in a guide printed in 1836, and received wider attention after it was translated into English in 1848.
 - The archaeologists like as Pitt Rivers reinforced Thomsen's display method, and it remains characteristic of most museum curators today.
 - However, unlike Pitt Rivers, Thomsen did not attempt either to study the development of the forms of individual artifacts ('typology') or to explain the reasons for the changes that he had observed.
 - Jens Worsaae, Thomsen's successor as Director of the Danish National Museum, attempted to subdivide the Stone Age into three periods according to the nature of stone artifacts.

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- The earliest period was characterized by hand axes and large flakes found in the gravels and caves of Western Europe; these were followed by finer tools found in Denmark in 'kitchen middens' (mounds of shells and bones left by hunter-gatherers).
 - Finally, polished stone tools were associated with elaborate tombs that occasionally also contained the earliest metal objects.
 - These divisions of the Stone Age were soon named Palaeolithic, Mesolithic and Neolithic (old, middle and new) by **Sir John Lubbock** in his book *Prehistoric Times* (1865).
 - In short, The Scandinavian archaeologists were involved in identifying the cultural evolution of the human beings whereas the French and British archaeologists devoted much of their time in identifying the antiquity of mankind.

Discoveries of Civilizations

- The archaeological discoveries of ancient civilizations of Egypt, Mesopotamia, Indus, China and the remains of classical Greco-Roman world laid a strong foundation to the archaeology discipline.
- **Egyptian civilization** was considered to be the oldest civilization developed on the bank of Nile river.
- It is often termed as the **Gift of Nile**.
- **Nekhen** (3500 BC) was the oldest settlement in Egypt and archaeologist believed that it was the **capital of upper Egypt** .
- **Memphis** was another area excavated and considered as the **capital of ancient Egypt after Nekhen**.
- Circa 3100 BC marks the beginning of the Dynastic Period of ancient Egyptian history.

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- **Manetho's**, a Greco-Egyptian priest and historian lived in the 3rd century BC, *Aegyptiaca (History of Egypt)* listed thirty-one dynasties which had ruled over Egypt.
 - He classified these dynasties into three as **Old Kingdom, Middle Kingdom and New Kingdom**, which is followed by the modern historians as well.
 - Egyptians had a writing system named Hieroglyphics deciphered by Thomas Young and Jean Francois.

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- **Mesopotamia** (C. 3000 to 2000 BC) broadly corresponds to present Iraq.
 - Mesopotamia produced the earliest known Bronze Age civilization- the Sumerian civilization.
 - It was developed on the banks of two rivers; Euphrates and Tigris.
 - The archaeological relics from the major cities of Sumeria like Ur, Uruk, Kish, Lagash etc have given indication on the splendors of the civilization.
 - Based on the excavation of a royal cemetery at Ur city, archaeologist **Leonard Woolley** proved that C. 2150-2000 BC was the glorious period of Mesopotamian civilization.
 - It had a writing system called Cuneiform, deciphered by Henry Rawlinson.

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- **Indus valley civilization** was one of the three Bronze Age civilizations of the world that presently located in India, Pakistan and Afghanistan.
 - **Alexander Cunningham**, a Colonial Officer cum archaeologist, noticed the remnants of Indus Valley civilization.
 - It was realized with the excavations in 1920-22 at two important sites like Harappa, on the banks of the river Ravi, (D. R. Sahani) and Mohenjodaro, on the banks of the Indus (R.D. Bannerji).
 - It was a well planned urban civilization of bronze age dated between 2500 B.C–1500 BC. The major features unearthed include the **great Bath** (Mohenjodaro), **Great Granary** (Harappa) and **Dockyard** (Lothal).
 - It had a writing system which still remained as undeciphered. It is a pictographic script. Many attempts have done to decipher it and the work of Asko Parpola, Iravatham Mahadevan, who identified it as a proto Dravidian script, are noteworthy.

Processual Archaeology or New Archaeology

- The **1960s** witnessed the development of **scientific archaeology or Processual archaeology**. It represented a drastic change from the culture, the historical and antiquarian approaches to more scientific theories.
- Processual archaeologist argued that **Archaeology is a science and disagree to the traditional view that archaeology is a branch of history that provide material evidences for the historical explanation of the past of prehistoric societies.**
- The new archaeologists argued that **archaeology should focus on explanation of archaeological materials.**
- Scientific explanations would demand that archaeologists focus on dynamic systems—an approach called **“systems theory”**—with the goal of **understanding the complex factors driving cultural change, and explaining how people adapted to the environmental factors that drove cultural changes.**

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- **Focus on culture process:** Arguing that culture–historical archaeology results in static snapshots of phases of occupation (an artifact of archaeological collection and not a representation of reality), the processualists focused on generating a more lifelike, fluid understanding of the past, one based on understanding the complex interrelated cultural and environmental factors that contribute to cultural (and archaeological) change over time.
 - **An expressly theoretical approach:** The theoretical goals of processual archaeology resulted in a number of methodological changes in the ways in which archaeology was (and is) practiced, resulting in a strong focus on survey, the integration of a wide range of new types of data, and on the replacement of the solo archaeologist with an archaeological team of experts, representing a number of fields that contribute to the explanation of the past.

Post- processual archaeology

- This theory of archaeology, also known as Interpretive Explanation, has developed as a reaction against Processual or New Archaeology theory. It was pioneered by Bruce Trigger in his book *Time and Tradition* in 1978.
- He preferred the historiographic approach, the broadly descriptive approach of the traditional historian.
- However, Ian Hodder is the chief proponent of this theory (see Ian Hodder).
- He felt that archaeology's closest link with history, and wanted to see the role of the individual in history more fully recognized.
- He also very validly stressed what he called "the active role of material culture", emphasizing that the artifacts and the material world we construct are not simply the reflections of our social reality that become embodied in the material record.

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- The post processual archaeologists see the context of the material remains and the intention of the deposition of the material in the ground, both in relation to each other and in relation to other elements of the site.
 - They will see the individual's role or action and the whole process involved in the deposition.
 - The social and the ideology factors are now recognized as active forces of change. The mental structure and belief systems that prevailed in a particular society guide cultural adaptations.

Indian archaeology in colonial independent period

- The history of Indian archaeology started from 18th century AD when the British colonial government took initiative to establish Asiatic Society of Bengal.
- It was established in 15th January, 1784 under the leadership of Sir William Jones in order to compile and study various texts and scripts of Indian tradition.
- Thus, Indology formalized as an academic discipline.
- William John and Charles Wilkins translated many Indian texts include Sakuntalam, Gita Govinda and Bhagavad Gita.

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- J Babington excavated a cluster of Megaliths at Feroke in Kerala , which he termed as Pandukoolies, in 1819 and unearthed a huge amount burial goods.
 - In 1800, Robert Sewell has done detailed antiquarian survey in the Madras Presidency.
 - James Prinsep, who deciphered Brahmi and Kharoshti script, also emerged as a legendary figure in Indological studies.

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- Robert Bruce Foote discovered the first Palaeolithic tool from Pallavaram, near Madras in 1861.
 - In 1861, Alexander Cunningham appointed as the first surveyor of the then established Archaeological Survey of India, which marked the development of archaeological investigations in India.
 - He gave more importance on historical archaeology (see Alexander Cunningham).
 - He was also responsible for the first volume Indian inscriptions entitled *Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum* in 1877.
 - James Burgess, James Fergusson, J F Fleet, Hultzch, Meadows Taylor, John Marshall, Mortimer Wheeler etc were served the archaeological survey of India during colonial period.

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- In the post-independent period, it came under the Ministry of Culture. It is the premier organization for the archaeological researches and protection of the cultural heritage of the nation.
 - Maintenance of ancient monuments and archaeological sites and remains of national importance is the prime concern of the ASI.
 - Besides it regulate all archaeological activities in the country as per the provisions of the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1958. It also regulates Antiquities and Art Treasure Act, 1972.

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- For the maintenance of ancient monuments and archaeological sites and remains of national importance, the entire country is divided into 24 Circles.
 - The organization has a large work force of trained archaeologists, conservators, epigraphist and scientists for conducting archaeological research projects through its Circles, Museums, Excavation Branches, Prehistory Branch, Epigraphy Branches, Science Branch, Horticulture Branch, Building Survey Project, Temple Survey Projects and Underwater Archaeology Wing.
 - In Kerala its branch is functioning at Trissur (ASI Trissur Circle).

Pitt Rivers

- Flinders Petrie was a British Archaeologist and Egyptologist.
- From 1880 to 1883, Flinders studied and excavated The Great Pyramid of Giza.
- In 1884, Flinders discovered fragments of the statue of Ramses II during his excavation of the Temple of Tanis.
- Petrie excavated two Nile Delta sites at Naukratis and Daphnae and unearthed potteries of different periods.
- Based on the findings he has developed a 'sequential dating method' that would enable him to determine the chronology of any civilization by pottery fragment comparison.

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- He has carried out a six-week season of excavations at Tell el-Hesi of Palestine in the spring of 1890 and introduced the concept that a "Tell is a manmade mound of successive, superimposed 'cities'".
 - He established the dating of these 'cities' by means of their associated deeply stratified ceramic remains and of the "cross-dating" of these remains with reference to similar finds made in their Egyptian contexts.
 - He has published a work entitled "Methods and Aims of Archaeology," in 1904.
 - He was popularly awarded the title of "The Father of Modern Archaeology."

V. Gordon Childe

- V. Gordon Childe, was an Australian archaeologist and philologist.
- He specialized in the study of European prehistory and working most of his life as an academician in the United Kingdom for the University of Edinburgh and then the Institute of Archaeology London.
- He was an early proponent of Culture- historical archaeology and Marxist archaeology.
- His insistence on an international, comparative, and materialist approach to culture change was highly influential in both archaeology and cultural anthropology.
- His works include *The Dawn of European Civilization*, 6th ed. (2003; originally published in 1925), and *The Danube in Prehistory* (1929), both classics of European prehistory

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- His books that are aimed at a general readership include *Man Makes Himself*, 4th ed. (2003; originally printed in 1936), an exposition of the parallel evolution of society and technology, and *What Happened in History* (1942), an introduction to prehistoric archaeology.
 - Childe also became one of the first scholars to describe the transition from hunting and gathering to agriculture.
 - He termed this transition as the agricultural revolution, Neolithic revolution.
 - Childe also coined the term urban revolution to denote the shift from small, village-based societies to those with towns and cities. Both terms have retained their currency in archaeology.

Sir Alexander Cunningham

- Cunningham was a British army officer and archaeologist who became the first Archaeological Surveyor of India.
- He was concentrated on the historical archaeology and located many Buddhist sites referred to the Chinese travelogues of Fa-Hien and Hiuen – Tsang like Taxila, Sravasti, Kausambi and Barhut.
- He was responsible for the publication of the first volume of Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum in 1877.
- His main contribution to the archaeology of India was the discovery of the Harappan remains. Thus, he is considered as one of the pioneer archaeologist and the Father of Indian Archaeology.

Sir John Hubert Marshall

- Marshall was the **Director-General of the Archaeological Survey of India** from 1902 to 1928.
- He was **responsible for the excavation that led to the discovery of Harappa and Mohenjodaro**, two of the main cities that comprise the Indus Valley Civilization.
- He conducted **excavations at Taxila, Sravasti, Vaisali, Rajagriha, Saranath, Sanchi, Pataliputra and Nalanda**.
- During his tenure, the important legislation called **Ancient Monument and Preservation Act 1904** was enacted.
- He laid the **foundation stone for the Taxila museum in 1918**.

Pitt Rivers

- **Augustus Henry Lane-Fox Pitt Rivers** was an **English army officer, ethnologist, and archaeologist.**
- He was noted for **innovations in archaeological methodology, and in the museum display of archaeological and ethnological collections.**
- His international **collections were exhibited in the Pitt Rivers Museum at the University of Oxford and at the Salisbury Museum in Wiltshire.**
- He made **valuable contributions to the techniques and methods of field excavation and invented a sequence dating method that made possible the reconstruction of history from the remains of ancient cultures.**

Hasmukh Dhirajlal Sankalia

- H.D Sankalia was an **Indian archaeologist specializing in proto- and ancient Indian history.**
- **In 1939, Sankalia joined Deccan College as Professor in Proto and Ancient Indian History and started systematic surveys of the archaeological sites in and around Pune with the support of his students.**
- Sankalia's early explorations are on the **Megaliths of Bhavsari(near Poona).**
- He **discovered the first ever-discovered human skeleton of the Stone Age Man at Gujarat.**
- He has **scientifically excavated a Mesolithic site at Langhnaj for the first time by applying stratigraphical method.**

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- The other noteworthy contributions of Sankalia includes the **discovery of the historical site of Kolhapur, the stratigraphical deposit of Palaeolithic industry at Gangapur (Gangawadi) near Nasik, the Palaeolithic industries includes animal fossils at Nevasa, the report of the occurrence of Northern Polished Ware (NBPW) at Nasik-Jorwe, excavations at Navdatoli etc.**
 - The Navdatoli excavation has unearthed a full-fledged Chalcolithic culture dated between the decline of the Harappan Civilization and the beginning of Early Historical Period.

Sir Robert Eric Mortimer Wheeler

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- Mortimer Wheeler was a **British archaeologist** appointed as the **Director General of the Archaeological Survey of India** in 1944.
 - He has **introduced the scientific method** in Indian archaeology and established a **training school at Taxila**.
 - He strictly **emphasized the principles of stratigraphy** in the excavations and insisted **on problem-oriented excavations**.
 - His research focused on the **origins and development of the Indus Civilization**.
 - He also carried out **excavations at the early historic Roman site at Arikamedu and the Megalithic site at Brahmagiri**.
 - The **official journal Ancient India** started during his tenure.

Raymond Allchin and Bridget Allchin

- Frank Raymond Allchin and his wife, Bridget Allchin are the most influential **British partnerships in the post-Independence study of South Asian archaeology.**
- **Producing a large body of scholarship ranging from archaeological excavations, ethno-archaeology as well as epigraphy and linguistics, the Allchins made their work and that of others highly accessible through a series of sole, joint and edited publications.**
- Seminal works include “*The Birth of Indian Civilization*” (1968), which was later superseded only by their books “*The Rise of Indian Civilisation in India and Pakistan*”(1982) and “*The Archaeology of Early Historic South Asia*” (1995).

S R. Rao

- S. R. Rao, was an **Indian archeologist** who led excavations of many important sites such as **Rangpur, Amreli, Bhagatrav, Dwarka, Hanur, Aihole, Kaveripattinam** etc.
- He has discovered a number of **Harappan sites** including the port city **Lothal and Bet Dwaraka** in Gujarat.
- He was the **founder of the Society of Marine Archaeology in India.**

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- The discovery of **three-holed triangular stone anchors from Dwarka waters in Gujarat** suggested a continuity in evolution of the anchors in Lothal and Mohenjodaro., which had a single hole.
 - According to him, the **three-holed triangular anchors of Dwarka** belonged to late **Harappan phase**.
 - In **1992**, Rao claimed to have deciphered the Indus script and postulating uniformity of the script over the full extent of Indus-era civilization.
 - He has **confirmed** that it is definitely an **Indo-Aryan language**.

David Leonard Clarke

- D L Clarke was an English archaeologist who is well known for his work on processual archaeology.
- His main works include *“Analytical Archaeology”*, *“Beaker Pottery of Great Britain and Ireland”*, *“Models in Archaeology”*, *“Spatial Archaeology”* etc.
- David Clarke has claimed that as a discipline, archaeology had moved from its original "noble innocence" through to "self-consciousness" and then onto "critical self-consciousness", a symptom of which was the development of the New Archaeology.

Lewis Roberts Binford

- Lewis R. Binford was an American archaeologist who is renowned as the proponent of “New Archaeology”.
- The proponents of the new archaeology stated that archaeological cultures were no longer regarded merely as the sum total of their preserved artifacts; therefore, each can be treated as configurations or functionally integrated systems.
- Archaeologists must explain changes in archaeological cultures in terms of cultural process.
- Binford popularized this concept among the younger generation of American Archaeologists and this concept has been recognized around the world as the American New Archaeology since 1960s.

Colin Renfrew

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- Renfrew is a British archeologist. He is a Senior Fellow of the McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research, Cambridge University, UK and interested in archaeological theories especially the Cognitive archaeology, European prehistory (especially the Aegean), Archaeological science (with particular interest in DNA and molecular genetics) and Origins of linguistic diversity.
 - His works include *The Emergence of Civilization: The Cyclades and the Aegean in The Third Millennium BC*, *Archaeology and Language: The Puzzle of Indo-European Origins*, *The ancient mind: elements of cognitive archaeology* etc. his edited work with Paul Bahn, entitled *Archaeology: Theories, Methods and Practice*, is one of the leading references among the archaeology students of the world.

Ian Hodder

- Ian Hodder is a British archaeologist and pioneer of postprocessual theory in archaeology.
- He has attempted to explore the effects of non-positivistic methods in archaeology, which includes providing each excavator with the opportunity to record his or her own individual interpretation of the site.
- Ian Hodder teaches and writes about archaeological method and theory.
- He is interested in Archaeological theories, European prehistory, material culture, long term social and cultural changes. His publication includes Symbols in Action, Reading the Past, The Domestication of Europe, The Archaeological Process etc

Bruce Graham Trigger

- Trigger was a Canadian archaeologist, anthropologist, and ethno historian.
- He was best known his ethno-historical study entitled *The Children of Aataentsic*, Trigger's book *A History of Archaeological Thought* investigates the development of theory and archaeology as a discipline.
- In *Understanding Early Civilizations: A Comparative Study* Trigger uses an integrated theoretical approach to look at the meaning of similarities and differences in the formation of complex societies in ancient civilizations.
- Trigger also made significant contributions to theory and debates on epistemological issues within archaeology.

Michael Brian Schiffer

- Michael Schiffer is an American archaeologist and one of the founders and pre-eminent exponents of behavioral archaeology.
- Schiffer's earliest ideas, set out in his 1976 book *Behavioral Archeology* and many journal articles, are mainly concerned with the formation processes of the archaeological record.
- His most important early contribution to archaeology was the rejection of the common processualist assumption that the archaeological record is a transparent fossil record of actual ancient societies.

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- In fact, he argues, artifacts and sites undergo, respectively post-use and post-occupational modification by diverse formation processes.
 - His works comprised of Behavioral Archeology. Academic Press, Formation Processes of the Archaeological Record, Technological Perspectives on Behavioral Change, Behavioral Archaeology: Principles and Practice etc.