



HIS6E01 – PRINCIPLES AND METHODS OF ARCHAEOLOGY –
ELECTIVE COURSE

MODULE–1
TOPIC– PITT RIVERS

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- ▶ Lt. Gen. Augustus Henry Lane Fox Pitt Rivers – 1827– 1900
 - ▶ An English army officer–deeply interested in Ethnology, Anthropology & Archaeology
 - ▶ Known for his innovations in archaeological methods, museum display of excavated materials & ethnographic collection
 - ▶ Amassed ethnographic collections numbering to thousands of items from all over the world
 - ▶ Influenced by the evolutionary writing of Charles Darwin & Herbert Spencer, he arranged them typologically & within types chronologically
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- ▶ This style of arrangement, designed to highlight the evolutionary trends in human artifacts was a revolutionary innovation in museum design
 - ▶ His ethnological collections form the basis of the 'Pitt Rivers Museum' at Oxford– which was a wealth of archaeological materials from Roman & Saxon periods
 - ▶ His interest in archaeology began in 1850's– became a noted scientist while he was serving as a military officer
 - ▶ His approach towards archaeological excavation was highly methodical by standards of the time & he is widely regarded as the first scientific archaeologist of England
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- ▶ Most imp methodological innovation of Rivers– his insistence that all artifacts, not just beautiful or unique ones, must be collected & catalogued– this focus on everyday objects as the key to understand the past, broke decisively with earlier archaeological practice, which had often verged on treasure hunting
- ▶ Described intellectual frame work for his collection & museum display, thus–'the objects with a view to show..... the successive ideas by which the minds of men in a primitive condition of culture have progressed in the development of their arts from the simple to the complex & from the homogenous to heterogenous.... Human ideas as represented by various products of human identity, are capable of classification to general species & varieties in the same manner as the products of vegetable & animal kingdoms.... If therefore, we can obtain a sufficient number of objects to represent the succession of ideas, it will be found that they are capable of being arranged in museums upon a similar plan'

- ▶ Realized the value of three dimensional recording of antiquities– which is the essence of modern excavation
 - ▶ He personally supervise the diggings & insisted on recordings of the antiquities
 - ▶ He brought anthropological & sociological approach to the study of pre–historic artifacts
 - ▶ Glyn Daniel– ‘Pitt Rivers & Flinders Petrie were responsible for the transformation of the archaeological outlook from one of curiosity to one which was frankly sociological’
 - ▶ His approach explained in works like ‘The Principals of Classification ‘, ‘The Evolution of Culture: Primitive Warfare & Early Modes of Navigation’
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