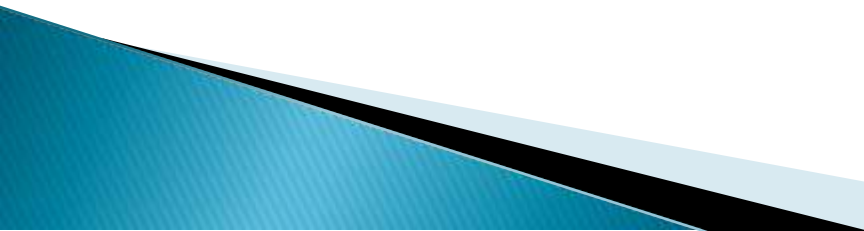


# KINDS OF SITES IN PREHISTORIC ARCHAEOLOGY

SUBRAT KUMAR NAIK  
P.G. DEPARTMENT OF ANTHROPOLOGY  
UTKAL UNIVERSITY, VANI VIHAR

# WHAT IS PREHISTORIC-ARCHAEOLOGY?

- ▶ In its broadest sense archaeology is the study of man's past. It is also a set of methods for eliciting information and a manner of investigating the past that is a reflection both of the data that are available and of the academic training and theoretical orientation of archaeologists.
- ▶ The term "Prehistory" has been used several times without explaining it. In the parts of the world where English is spoken it is usual divide man's past into the historic and the prehistoric. If we define the historic past as that which was not recorded by writing. The prehistorian ,or archaeologist, lacking the written records used by historians, must work with other artifacts that are usually uncovered through excavation.
- ▶ The word 'prehistoric' is so familiar and widely used that we might assume that the term has been in use for a very long time. This is not true, however ; the first modern used of the word Prehistory dates from just a little more than 100 years ago, in1851, when Daniel Wilson used it in the title of his book *The Archaeology and Prehistoric Annals of Scotland*.

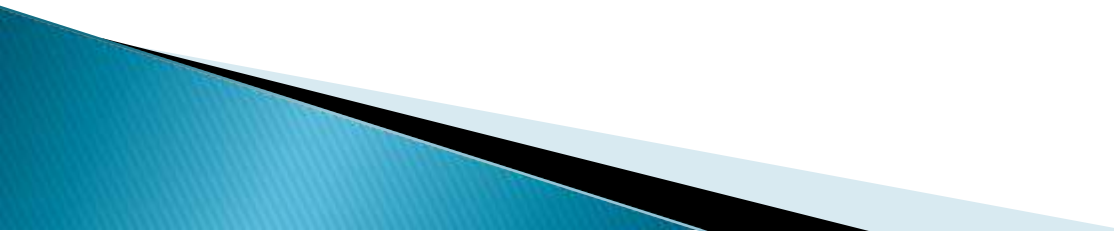
- ▶ Some what earlier in 1833 Tournal proposed that the “ Age of Man” could be divided into a “ Prehistoric Period which extended from the time of man’s appearance on the surface of the earth to the beginning of the most ancient traditions”, and a “Historic Period which hardly dates beyond 7000 years ago”. T.Wilson (1899) wrote, in explanation , “ Man may be assume to be prehistoric where ever his chroniclings of himself are undersigned and his history is wholly recoverable by induction”.
  - ▶ **Definition of Prehistory**
  - ▶ D.K.Bhattacharya, “ Prehistory attempts to know all about man’s total activity during that period of his developmental history when man had not evolved writing.”
  - ▶ M.C. Burkitt, “Prehistory is that subject which deals with the story of man and everything that concern him from that dim remote moment when he first emerged from his animal ancestry until the time when the existence of written record leads the investigator into the realm of history proper.”
- 

# ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE

- ▶ Each and every site has its own distinct character and problems. Types of sites are often labeled by their prehistoric or historic context, their function, their general topographical nature, or according to whether they are composed of one or many levels of occupation.
- ▶ Sites represent a body of data relevant to their setting and their cultural patterning and must be interpreted in relation to both this local setting and to their function as a link between like cultures.
- ▶ Site may be large or small. Large sites are generally cities, temples, large tells etc; small sites are far more numerous throughout the old and may range from hunting or fishing stations to small village communities
- ▶ Sites are distinguished by the presence of both artifacts and features.
- ▶ Common features include the remains of hearths and houses.
- ▶ Ecofacts, biological materials (such as bones, scales, and even faeces) that are the result of human activity but are not deliberately modified, are also common at many archaeological site.

# CLASSIFICATION OF SITES

Site can be classified on the basis of

- ❖ By the *kind of Artifacts found*:- Palaeolithic sites, Mesolithic sites , Neolithic sites, Chalcolithic site, Iron Age site.
  - ❖ By the *Location*:- Cave sites, Lakeside sites, Valley bottom sites.
  - ❖ By the *type of Activity* :- Kill site, Camp site, Quarry Sites.
  - ❖ By the *Habitation* :- Permanent , Seasonal,
  - ❖ By the *Archaeological contexts*:- Stratified, Non Stratified or Surface find
- 

Martha Joukowsky classified sites into seven major classes such as

1. ***Prehistoric plains or riverside terraces*** such as Olduvai Gorge in Tanzania, Africa.
2. ***Caves*** such as Chou Kou Tien, near Peking, China (where the famous pecking man skull was unearthed), or the caves containing upper Palaeolithic art at Altamira in Spain, or South American Palli Aiki, a cave in Pantagonia, or Danger cave, Utah.
3. ***Tells or Tumuli*** ( Known as Huyuk in Turkish and Tepe in Persian ). The ancient mound of Jericho, Israel, is a particularly important tell, because it revealed valuable stratigraphic evidence dating back to 8000 B.C. and earlier.
4. ***Monumental cities*** such as the Greco- Roman site of Aphrodisias or roman Ephesus in south- western Turkey, or the Mesoamerican site of Tikal in Guatemala, Mahenjo Daro in India.

Contd..

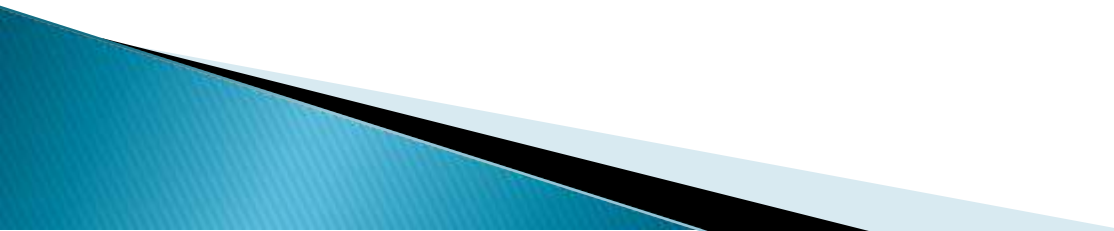
- ▶ **5. *Sacred areas*** reserved for ritualistic functions, such as Stone henge in England or the gigantic heads of the Easter Islands, or Olmec La Venta on the isle of Tabasco, Mexico.
- ▶ **6. *Cemeteries and tombs***, such as the great tholos tombs of Mycenae , or the mound sites in the United states which were used for burials.
- ▶ **7. *Underwater sites*** such as the shipwrecks discovered off the shores of Kyrenia in Cyprus, in the Penobscot Bay in Maine, the Yassi Ada and Cape Gelidonya wrecks excavated source of Turkey, Dwarika in india
- ▶

# Kinds of sites

- ▶ The kinds of site in archaeology are
  - Habitation sites
  - Quarry sites
  - Kill sites
  - Ceremonial sites
  - Burial sites
  - Trading centers
  - Surface scatters
  - Petroglyphs and Pictographs



# Habitation sites

- ▶ The most commonly sought and excavated sites are the places where people lived, for the simple reason that these sites were a focal point of prehistoric activities.
  - ▶ A habitation site is one around which a group of people centered their daily activities.
  - ▶ Habitation sites that were occupied the year round frequently have the remains of houses, but the dwellings may be caves or rock shelters or even open area in which no trace of a permanent shelter remains.
- 

# Quarry sites

- ▶ Sites in which a great variety of raw materials were mined are common through out the world, although there is Seldom any excavation of them.
- ▶ Example include the Alibates Ranch in Texas, where prehistoric men quarried for a widely used multi coloured flint; flint mines, dug into the chalk deposits at such places as Grimes Graves are well-known sites in England.
- ▶ Quarry sites may be workshop areas where ores were smelted, flint was chipped, or soapstone was worked into bowls.

# Kill sites

- ▶ Places where one or more animals were killed by hunters, some of whom may have had no permanent dwellings.
- ▶ At kill sites Archaeologist find the bones of the animals (skeletal remains of prey animals), projectile points used for killing them, and the tools for butchering.
- ▶ In some cases where the bone materials has been well preserved, the pattern of butchering, the animals can be reconstructed in considerable detail.

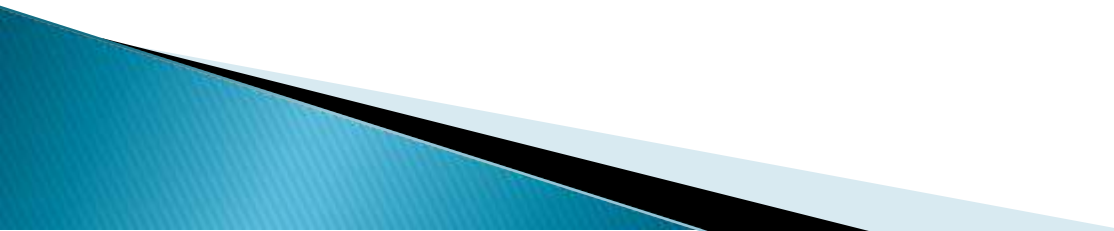
# Ceremonial sites

- ▶ Ceremonial sites include the imposing Megalithic monuments at Stone Henge, which is rivaled by the much older caves in France and Spain where remarkable paintings, Carvings, and Reliefs are found.
- ▶ Chogga Zambil, in south-western Iran

# Burial sites

- ▶ Burial sites have attract looters since early historic times, and many archaeologists concentrate their efforts on cemeteries because they often contain useful information about social practices.
- ▶ Burial sites may range from isolated burial in shallow holes to elaborate masonry constructions, earth mound and megalithic monuments.
- ▶ Burials may also be found in the garbage dumps of large villages; they may be under the floors of houses ; or they may occur singly, away from habitation sites.
- ▶ Examples :-
  - The pyramids of Egypt
  - Mounds used by Hopewell Indians Of Ohio (America)
  - Maya site of Palenque in state of Chiapas, Mexico,
  - Surkotada in Gujurat, Burzhaom in Kashmir

# Trading centers

- ▶ Trading centers have been reported from a few places, though they are hard to recognize with certainty. Sites centrally situated between the Maya and Aztec areas have been identified as pots of trade, though of course they were habitation sites as well.
  - ▶ In turkey, Archaeologist have found a site on nonarable land that was favorably placed for the salt and obsidian trade, and the wide spread trade in the latter commodity and in copper raises the possibility of finding definite evidence of mining and manufacturing sites.
  - ▶ Cleared pathways across open ground , or roads such as the Roman roads of Britain and Inca highways are features related to trade.
- 

# Surface scatters

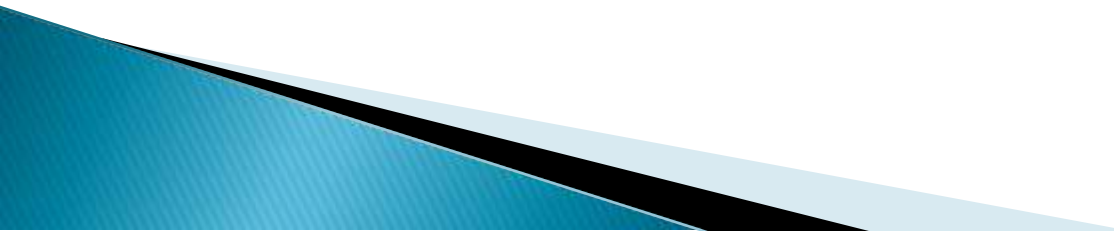
- ▶ Surface scatters are sites that have a geological or geographical context, but no archaeological associations.
- ▶ The numerous finds of flint tools in river gravels around the world can sometimes be classified as surface scatters.
- ▶ In these sites flint tools are found alone without associate fire places, houses, or bones.
- ▶ Infact, the first ancient tools of man to be identified as such were found in river gravels by Jacques Boucher Crevecoeur de Perthes, a customs official of Abbeville of France, who exhibited his finds in 1838.
- ▶ Although most such sites cannot be classified by activity , flints are sometimes found on the surface in situations that suggests activities for example in West Iran, in hilly country on the edges of large valleys, one frequently finds flints on the tops of the hills, as though hunters had waited and watched for their quarry there.

# Petroglyphs and Pictographs

- ▶ Petroglyphs and pictographs are pecked and painted pictures of animals , men, mythical beings, or geometric and curvilinear designs whose meaning has not been interpreted with any reliability.
- ▶ They usually found exposed, flat surface either in the open air or on the protected walls of caves and shelter.
- ▶ Pecked or painted designs are spread over most of the world , and vary from the great painted caves of France and Spain, such as Lascaux and Altamira, and the marvelous painted art of South Africa to rude designs pecked on boulders in the Western United States and some quiet remarkable painted caves in Texas in California.
- ▶ Bhimbetka in Madhya Pradesh



# HOW IS A SITE MADE ?

- ▶ Sites are the results of human activity, and as a consequence, one might think they would be easily recognizable. But so few persons have seen an archaeological site that they very likely would not recognize one.
  - ▶ It is easy to recognize and understand the Pyramids and mounds that were built as tombs and memorials to the dead, but it is some times impossible to see, and it is much harder to understand, how some sites came to be 'buried'.
- 

# EXCAVATION IN PROGRESS AT ATTIRAMPAKKAM



# A GENERAL VIEW OF MESOLITHIC SITE BAGOR





# GENERAL VIEW OF A SITE IN ISRAEL





# ROCKPAINTING OF BHIMBETKA



# AUDITORIUM(BHIMBETKA)





# GENERAL VIEW OF CITADEL MOUND, INDUS VALLEY



# References

- ▶ Bhattacharya D.K. An Introduction to Indian Prehistory
- ▶ Burkitt M.C. The Old Stone Age
- ▶ Dancey, William S. 1985 Archaeological Field Methods: An Introduction, Surjeet Publication, Delhi
- ▶ Hole. Frank R.F. Heizer. An introduction to Prehistoric Archaeology , Holt, Rinehart and Winston inc, New York.
- ▶ Joukowsky. Martha.: 1986 A complete Manual of Field Archaeology Tools and Techniques of Field Archaeology ,Prentice hall press New York.
- ▶ Ranfrew,C. and P. Bahn Archaeology: Theory, Methods and Practice



THANK YOU

