

Trowel through the Ages
**Milestones in Archaeology of
Jammu and Kashmir- A Review**

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Introduction:-

The Jammu and Kashmir Valley ($32^{\circ}17'$ to $36^{\circ}58'$ N and $73^{\circ}26'$ to $80^{\circ}30'$ E) lies towards the North of peninsular India. Despite its geographical isolation, Kashmir has from ancient times, been a melting pot of nations and cultures. Ancient routes towards Kashmir valley led to the migrations of prehistoric people, as well as Harappans, Muaryans, Shakas, Kushanas, Hunas, Sayyids, Mughals, Sikhs, Dogras, etc. The valley developed close contacts with its neighbors- Gandhara, Afghanistan, Iran, Western-Turkistan, and Republics of Central Asia, Eastern Turkistan or Sinkiang, Tibet and China right from prehistoric times. These people from ancient times have left their Cultural traits and have erected monumental buildings, throughout the length and breadth of the valley.

This paper will mainly try to analyze, the work done by archaeologists to trace the ancient monumental buildings from the very beginning of the archaeology till the turn of the 21st century in Jammu and Kashmir. Besides, this paper will also serve as an index work for researchers in History and Archaeology of Jammu and Kashmir. This paper has been divided into following three phases:-

Phase-I: 1800-1900 A.D.

Phase-II: 1900-1945 A.D.

Phase-III: 1945-2000 A.D.

PHASE-I

During the 19th century in India, Kashmir was the resting place for Europeans, who were interested in the past of this pictur-

esque valley. The pioneering work in the rediscovery of Kashmir's past was done by the Europeans, who undertook systematic geological and archaeological expeditions in the beginning of the 19th century and collected a lot of useful and reliable information on the environmental and geological features, ancient monuments, buildings, statues of stones or metals, terracotta, ornamental or decorative fragments, etc. William Moorcraft and Trebeck were the first observers who visited the valley between 1819-1825. Besides the description of the valley, they recorded many archaeological sites as well. As they observed, "Carved stones, the remains both of Hindu and Mohammedan architecture were scattered about in great numbers" (Moorcraft and Trebeck 1841: 242). Apart from this they visited almost all monuments including Avantipora, Mughal gardens, Verinag, etc. In the history of Kashmir archaeology, this was certainly the first probe later followed by G.T.Vigne and Baron Hugel in 1833. Both have recorded the drawings of the monumental buildings with accuracy and brought to light the talent the artists had exhibited in the construction of these buildings.

Kashmir as was a heaven for Europeans, archaeology got impetus due to these visitors. In his book Sir Richard Temple, has given copy of the inscription engraved by Baron Hugel and others in the memory of the people who visited Kashmir before them. The inscription goes like;

"Three Travelers,
Baron Carl von Hugel from Jammu,
John Henderson from Ladakh,
Godfrey Thomas Vigne from Skardu,
Who met in Srinagar on 18th November 1853,
Have caused the names of those European travelers who previously
Visited the Vale of Kashmir, to be here under Engraved:-

Bernier, 1663,
Froster, 1786,
Moorecraft, Trebeck and Guthier, 1823,
Jacquemont, 1831,
Wolff, 1832,

Of these, three only lived to return to their native country".
(Temple 1887: 294)

A pioneering work the first of its kind, duly illustrated by folding plates, maps, plans, elevation etc, was attempted by General Alexander Cunningham, in 1848. He visited Ladakh twice in 1846 and 1847 and on each occasion by a different route. He has given great description of Ladakh in his book, "Ladakh: Physical, Statistical and Historical". He touched the very heart of archaeology of Ladakh and the surrounding regions, followed by Rev. W. G. Cowie in the year 1866. He published further details about the temple buildings which were elaborately illustrated. In 1868, R. E. Cole obtained an appointment as superintendent in the Archaeological Survey of India, and proceeded to Kashmir with a staff quite sufficient to settle all the remaining outstanding questions (Cole 1869). Unfortunately, he had no qualification for the investigations he was deputed for, and led to the most erroneous conclusions. Some of the great works in the field of Geology of Kashmir was done by Maj. Godwin Austen (1864), Lydekker (1878), Oldham (1893), and Middlemiss (1911). James Fergusson's analysis and comparison of architecture in the Himalayas with Kashmir architecture was definitely the first scientific investigation of some of the important temples of Kashmir including, Martand, Avantipur, Buniar and Pandrethan. The temples of Kashmir do form a group well worthy of attention and singularly uniform in their development and very local being unlike any other style known in India. "They have besides this a certain classical element, which can hardly be mistaken

and is sufficient in itself to attract the attention of Europeans who are interested in detecting their own familiar forms in this remote valley in the Himalayas" (Fergusson 1994: 251-252).

In summer of 1875, Buhler, an expert of ancient Indian scripts who made a special trip to Kashmir only in search of the manuscripts of Rajatarangani. "Buhler set out to find it. In Kashmir, he traced it to the grandson of the pandit who had permitted Moorcraft to have it copied. There his good fortune deserted him. Buhler was permitted only a glimpse before the owner took the manuscript away, his pilgrimage to study archetype all came to naught; he left India having failed to get that manuscript" (Mirsky 1977: 24).

The memorable year in the history of archaeology of Kashmir is 1888, when Sir Aurel Stein visited the valley. Stein heard the story of manuscripts from Buhler himself. He continued the search for the manuscripts. Late the following year in 1889, the several parts of the codex archetypes of the Rajatarangani become once more for a time, reunited in his hands. Right from 1888 to 1898, he devoted his time in editing of the text, exploring archaeological sites and analyzing the geography of the region. In 1899 he published his Memoir on maps illustrating the ancient geography of Kashmir. In 1900, he published his monumental work in two volumes-the translation of Kalhana's Rajtarangani with notes, site identification and places of archaeological importance. Thus his investigations laid the foundation of the quest for research in archaeology of Kashmir.

PHASE-II

The work done by these earlier scholars was recognized by the authorities and there was still a great deal to be done. J.Ph.Vogel, archaeological surveyor of the then Punjab state observed that some of the parts of the state had not been explored.

On 20th June 1904, a new line of archaeological and historical research was introduced. A change of some importance to the organization of the survey, that had taken place, was the establishment of an independent Archaeological Research Department in Kashmir (ASIAR 1904-05: 1).

The department was headed by its Director, J. C. Chatterji. Vogel in his tour to Kashmir pinpointed some of the important ancient temples for undertaking preservative measures and also stressed the need for the maintenance of the Mohamaden buildings and Mughal gardens. A few of the inscriptions brought to light during the year (1905-06) go back to the times of the Mauryas and Kushanas. Some of those found are of considerable interest. The Moravian missionary, A. H. Francke, has given information about the existence of short epigraphs in Brahmi and Kharoshti characters in Ladakh at Khaltse. Dr. Vogel who had examined eye-copies of some of them is of the opinion that one goes back to the Mauryan period, while other two appear to belong to the time of the Kushanas. His interpretation is of considerable interest as it indicates that Ladakh had come under the influence of Aryan civilization at an early period (ASIAR 1905-06: 165). Mr. Nicholls has done a great work by surveying the most important examples of wooden architecture of that country (ASIAR 1906-07: 42, also see, p.161-70). In 1909, Dr. Stein Konow visited Kashmir as a government epigraphist. He brought to light many new monuments, inscriptions and manuscripts. While writing the description of Arigom sarda inscription, Stein Konow writes, "The stone mentioned above is square, measuring 203 each way and being 4 $\frac{3}{4}$ high. On top is a raised circle, apparently the base of an image. One of the four faces of the stone is inscribed with five lines in sharada letters" (Epigraphia Indica, IX: 300-02).

The dynamic personality of the Indian archaeology, Sir John Marshall visited the valley in the year 1908. He recommended con-

servation of some of the temples, Muslim monuments, and Mughal gardens. During his tenure as the Director General of Archaeological Survey of India, commendable work was done in conservation, exploration and research. Excavation was carried out under J.C. Chatterji in Avantipora. He exposed the area around the courtyard hardly two meters from the existing ground level and some part of the peristyle at Avantiswamin temple was exposed.

The two wings of the department were split on the advice of D.G. Sir John Marshall. Daya Ram Sahni was appointed as Superintendent of Archaeology in 1913. He excavated the Buddhist site at Pandrethan near Srinagar and the temples of Avantiswamin and Avantiswara at Awantipora, 28 kms south east of Srinagar and Ushkur in Baramulla (Shali 1993: 23). "By skilful underpinning and other well thought-out measures the state Superintendent of Archaeology, D.R. Sahni, has succeeded in putting the two temples at Pattan in the Srinagar valley and at Babapura and Krimchi in Jammu, in a thorough state of repair" (ASIAR 1915-16: 8). At Avantipora in Kashmir the two temples of Avantisvara-siva were completely excavated by Mr. D.R. Sahni, and they constitute a most striking and valuable addition to the known examples of Pre-Mohamaden architecture in this state (ASIAR 1915-16: 15). Besides this other well known sites in Kashmir where Mr. Sahani has made valuable discoveries are Puranadhistana-the ancient capital of the country and Parihaspora, which was founded by Lalitaditya in the 8th century A.D. The semi-classical influence which permeated from Taxila into the neighbouring hills of Kashmir is well illustrated by a fine collection of terracotta heads and other figures belonging to the Kushan and early Gupta epochs which D.R. Sahani found at Ushkur, near Baramulla (ASIAR 1916-17: 12-13).

Sahani was relieved of his duties and in his place another officer of the Archaeological Survey, Hiranand Shastri was deputed. During his tenure conservation was carried out at eight different

monuments at Avantipur, Pandrathan, Shankaracharya temple. Pattan etc (ASIAR 1917-18: 17-18). Conservation works were also carried out at Mughal gardens of Kashmir like Chashma Shahi, Nishat, Shalimar and Verinag.

The orders restricting excavation work in British India until the end of the war were naturally inoperative in the Indian states and P. Hiranand Shastri reports that excavations were carried out at two sites in Kashmir territory during 1918-19. The first of these was at a place called Fatehgardh, some 9 kilometers to the west of Baramulla. The other site in Kashmir where spade work was attempted was at the Indar spring, the reputed site of the ancient Naga (ASIAR 1918-19: 20-21; 1919-20: 18). During the exploration he also spotted the famous site of Harwan and he predicted that further findings would yield good results. A young Scholar from Kashmir, R. C. Kak, was selected by the government for training in different fields of archaeology under Sir John Marshall, Director General of Archaeological Survey of India. Kak took over charge as Superintendent Archaeologist of Kashmir. In Kashmir the only excavation work carried out by Mr. Kak, was at Harwan, which revealed the full-fledged Buddhist settlement laid out on the terraced slope of the hill (ASIAR 1919-20: 31-32; 1921-22: 42, 92-93). The conservation work continued at Harwan, Siligam, Sankaracharya, Zain-ul-abdin's mother's tomb and Ramgardh (ASIAR 1922-23: 179-81, 1923-24: 129-131). Mr. Kak reports that funds for archaeology, which had stood at about Rs. 14,000 for the previous year, were reduced to only Rs. 100. He says, "in consequence of this the excavation works begun at Harwan, Martand and Kakapur came to standstill and no new conservation or repair works could be taken in hand" (ASIAR 1924-25: 162). The allotment was insufficient even for winding up works which had been begun. In spite of the paucity of funds explorations were conducted in Lolab and Khuyahama (now Bandipora) in the Kashmir valley. Conservation on a large scale was impossible due

to the limited funds allotted. Excavation at Zehanpora Baramulla was finished (ASIAR 1925-26: 186-87). Pandith Madhusudhan Koul took over the reins of the department. During his tenure the then Director General of Archaeological survey of India, Rai Bahadur K. N. Dikshit, visited some of the monuments and recommended that work should be done on the lines followed by Kak, his predecessor (Shali 1993: 25). In the year 1931, Department of Archaeology and Research suffered a setback. Revenue department was given additional charges of maintenance of monuments. During this period there is no mention of Kashmir archaeology in Archaeological Survey of India, Annual Reports. After the gap of four years, field survey in the valley was undertaken by the Yale Cambridge expedition led by H. D. Terra and T. T. Paterson. Besides working on the glaciations of the valley they highlighted the Pre-historic cultures and their fruitful and investigative pursuits compelled the State Government to review the situation and in the year 1936, the Department of Archaeology was again revived.

In 1938, excavations at Nawapura, Gilgit by M. Koul, brought to light, the great Buddhist Manuscripts dating back to 7th Century A.D. M. Koul also excavated Tapar (ancient pratapapura) on Srinagar-Baramulla road. Inscription in Sharda script was also discovered from Kothier (Kapatesvara) near Acchabal, district Anantnag. Conservation work was also undertaken of the tomb of zain-ul-Abidin's mother in Srinagar (Koul: Note on the recent Archaeological activities in his Highness State of Jammu & Kashmir from the Year 1929 till 1945).

PHASE III

The appointment of Sir Motimer Wheeler as Director General of Archaeology gave new direction to Indian Archaeology. The research in archaeology was taken to new heights. Wheeler was a dynamic person, well versed in scientific and specialized techniques

of archaeological explorations and excavations. He conducted training in archaeological techniques at Taxila. A young scholar from Kashmir T. N. Khazanchi was selected for attending the course of training in exploration, excavation, conservation and publications. He was appointed as Superintendent of Archaeology, Research and Museums. At the same time political and administrative changes as well as tribal invasion restricted him in many ways, to undertake serious archaeological work in Kashmir. The then government of S. M. Abdullah ordered that the department should be closed down as it was considered to be the least productive department. Different steps were taken by the central government under Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, to revive the department and many committees were sent to Kashmir to take stock of the situation. On their recommendations, the then cabinet issued orders for revival of the department. T. N. Khazanchi was redesignated as Archaeologist-cum-curator.

Excavations at Mumma Khan in Srinagar, was conducted by State Archaeology Department. Few coins and some structures of rubble of medieval period were brought to light (IAR 1953-54: 12).

During 1960-61, excavation at the well known megalithic site of Burzoham in Srinagar was undertaken by Shri. T. N. Khazanchi for the first time (IAR 1960-61: 11). Many seasons of excavations at Burzoham have proved the Neolithic occupation of Kashmir Valley for the first time (IAR 1961-62: 17-21; 1962-63: 9-10; 1964-65: 13; 1965-66: 19; 1966-67: 16-17; 1968-69: 9-10; 1971-72: 24; 1973-74: 15, Pant 1979: 11-18). Four phases of occupation revealed that Burzoham was occupied from Neolithic to Early Historical times. With a view to finding the geographical extant of Northern Neolithic culture, identified at Burzoham, many Neolithic sites were explored in Anantnag district including Gufkral, pampur, Panzgom, Sombur, Thajiwor, etc.

H. D. Sankalia of the Deccan College, PGRI, Pune, discov-

ered Early Stone Age tools at Pahalgam and Liddar valley assignable respectively to the second glacial and second interglacial periods. In the same year T. N. Khazanchi, undertook a trial excavation near Martand Temple (IAR 1969-70: 10-13). Prof. H. D. Sankalia continued his research in 1970 and collected Chopper type tools and Scrapers from Pahalgam in the Liddar valley and around Prang and Wusan in the Sind Valley and also on the hill slope on the way to Gulmarg and in glacial deposits near Sonmarg (IAR 1970-71: 17).

Besides excavations at Burzoham continued under the direction of T. N. Khazanchi, many explorations were also carried out during this time. In North Kashmir, Baramulla district, the early-historic site near the village Kanishpur was located by Sarvashri Sardari Lai (IAR 1971-72: 24). Exploration in District Katuhua and Udhampur also resulted in the collection of early Stone Age tools like Scrappers, Hand axes and Choppers. Dr. R. V. Joshi and a team from Deccan College, carried out exploration work in Jammu & Kashmir region, which brought to light some Neolithic as well as Early Historic sites (IAR 1972-73: 13). Excavation was also resumed at Burzahom in Srinagar. Small scale excavation at the famous Buddhist site of Harwan was also started. Excavation was undertaken in Pambarwan in district Jammu, close to Akhnoor on the northern bank of the river Chenab (IAR 1973-74: 13-16). Besides excavations, explorations of many districts like Anantnag, Jammu, Punch, Rajouri and Srinagar were undertaken. Some ancient sculptures were unearthed in Narang Wangat, district Srinagar during the course of clearance work by the Archaeological Survey of India (IAR 1975-76: 76). Excavation was carried out at Manda, Akhnoor, situated about 28kms north-west of Jammu along the river Chenab in the foot hills of pir panjal range under the supervision of J. P. Joshi. This excavation was important as it exposed a northern most extent of the Harappan Civilisation and only site of its kind in Jammu & Kashmir. Apart from excavations, explorations were conducted in Baramulla

and Jammu districts, which located some Neolithic as well as Early Historical sites (IAR 1976-77: 19-21, also see, p.75).

Excavation at Semthan, District Anantnag was carried out by H. K. Narain and S.L. Shah. The floor yielded medium to thin red ware of the early historical period represented by bowls, vases and dishes (Buth et al., 1982: 41-45). In the course of exploration an ancient site Takiya bala in Anantnag district was discovered datable to the Kushan Period. During the exploration of the imperial Mughal route from Kalal to Rajauri (Jammu), remains of sarai, mosques, fort and baolies have been found at different places (IAR 1977-78: 23-24; 1978-79: 69, see also, IAR 1980-81: 21-23).

With the objective of studying geomorphological, chemical and cultural aspects of the Neolithic and Early Historical sites in the Kashmir Valley, a team from Deccan College, including R.V. Joshi, M.K. Dhavalikar and S.N. Rajaguru, carried out studies around Burzahom, Nagdandi (Neolithic sites) and Semthan (Early Historical Site) and collected samples for laboratory analysis. Explorations were carried out in Doda and Jammu also (IAR 1979-80: 32-33, see also 1980-81: 23-26). Under the direction of R. D. Banerjee and A .K. Sharma, excavation was carried out at Gufkral near Tral in district Pulwama. The objectives of the excavation were to ascertain the cultural sequence of the site including suspected 'Aceramic Neolithic Level' (IAR 1981-82: 19-25, Sharma 1979-80: 19-25, Sharma 1980-81: 31-36). Exploration was carried out in Baramulla and Jammu districts, and lots of sites were discovered ranging from Neolithic to the late medieval period (IAR 1983-84: 33-35, 1985-86: 33).

In course of exploration in upper Siwaliks of the Jammu area, G. L. Badam and R. K. Ganjoo of the Deccan College, PGRI, Pune, brought to light many fossils (IAR 1982-83: 31-32, for other discoveries see, IAR 1982-83: 167-168). Directorate of Archives, Archaeology and Museums, Govt. of Jammu & Kashmir discovered two polished stone axes of the Neolithic period at Tarakpora,

Bandipora. The axes were abnormally long, polished, ground pecked and have unifacially leveled cutting edges (IAR 1984-85: 23-24, for other discoveries see Pant et al., 1982: 31-40). The exploration of the imperial Mughal route was conducted by the Centre of Central Asian Studies, Kashmir University. Many important sites were identified and documented. Explorations were also carried out in district Kathua, Pulwama and Udhampur resulted in the discovery of many sites. Scientific Clearance of the stupa of Tisseru, Leh was done under the direction of R. C. Aggarwal (IAR 1986-87: 36-37, Agrawal 1993-94: 39-41, for other discoveries see, IAR 1986-87: 118; 1987-88: 31, 136-137).

R. S. Fonia of the Srinagar circle of the Archaeological Survey of India carried out exploration along the banks of the rivers Zanaskar, Suru and their main tributaries. S. B. Ota, assisted by others of the prehistory branch of the survey carried out explorations in upper Indus valley in the region between Hemis and Alchi and brought to light, a stone age and three historical sites (IAR 1988-89: 27-28; 1989-90: 34; 1992-93: 36-38; 1994-95: 28, for other discoveries see, IAR 1988-89: 103-104). Excavation was conducted under the direction of R. S. Fonia in Malpur district Jammu. The main objective of the excavation was to ascertain the origin of cultures and chronology of tools, found from different sites of the area (IAR 1993-94: 53-54).

Due to the deterioration of the political situation in Jammu & Kashmir from 1990 onwards, very little archaeological work was carried out. Mostly conservation and preservation work was carried out in Jammu, Baramulla, Kathua, Leh and Udhampur (IAR 1993-94: 186; 1995-96: 193; 1996-97: 305; 1997-98: 316). With the objective to establish the nature and sequence of cultural deposits and to understand the link between late Harappan and early Historic cultures, trial excavation was carried out at Guru Baba ka Tibba, in district Jammu by P. C. Chaudhari (IAR 1997-98: 64).

Under the direction of B. R. Mani, Srinagar circle of the Archaeological Survey of India conducted excavation at Kanispur in Baramulla district, which confirmed Neolithic as well as early historic site on the left bank of the river Jehlum. Mentioned by Kalhana in Rajtarangani as Kanishkapur-the city founded by Kanishka was confirmed by archaeological findings (IAR 1998-99: 30-48). Excavation was also carried out at Jaffar chak in Jammu, under the supervision of B. R. Mani. Explorations in Ladakh were also carried out by him. Under his supervision excavations were carried out at Ambaran near Akhnur on the right bank of Chenab in Jammu. The site is famous for earlier yields of the so called Akhnur Buddhist terracotta heads (IAR 1999-2000: 52-63, 2000-2001: 47-68).

Remains of the stone temple were uncovered to the east of Kaladera-II group of temples after clearing the vegetational growth. Also five clay tablets from two ruined stupas in the complex of the Nyarma monastery datable to 11th century A.D., has been found (IAR 2000-2001: 184).

CONCLUSION

Kashmir Archaeological Research from 1800-2000 A.D., has revealed significant discoveries which helped us to understand the cultural and civilizational development of Jammu & Kashmir from Paleolithic to medieval times. These sensational discoveries helped us to trace out the vast archaeological heritage of the state of Jammu & Kashmir. In the course of these investigations many perplexing issues came up, and were successfully probed by the scholars. The valuable findings generated a lot of interest among scholars throughout India. Deccan College, PGRI, Pune, under H. D. Sankalia has also done a valuable work by studying prehistoric aspect of Kashmir Archaeology.

Archaeological Survey of India and State Archaeology department have done a commendable job by exploring and excavat-

ing large number of sites throughout the length and breadth of Jammu & Kashmir. Despite all these developments archaeology was not introduced at academic level in Jammu & Kashmir. The need of the hour is to take concrete steps to revive the department of state archaeology, which is functional without an adequate staff to look into the scientific investigations in archaeology. Jammu & Kashmir has a rich Cultural and Archaeological heritage. Sir Walter Lawrence's remarks are more valuable in this regard, "Hardly a year passes without rumors of fabulous treasure being discovered in Kashmir" (Lawrence 1895: 162). But there is no doubt that Jammu & Kashmir is filled with archaeological treasure which waits for future archaeologists to explore it.

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