

Principles and Methods of Archaeology

EXCAVATION - STAFF AND EQUIPMENT

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Archaeological excavation



Introduction

Excavation is an elaborate process involving time, money, labour and equipment. The services of different transport of materials back to the head quarters, and preparation of technical reports and publication of the results.

1. Director

Director is the captain of the excavation team and he has to give the right lead throughout the expedition. He should be an experienced field archaeologist having worked in a number of excavations. Theoretical knowledge should be combined with practical skills. Being the brain behind the campaign, he plans the general scheme and the strategy, distributes the work to various technical persons and coordinates their activities towards his objectives. If archaeology is a craft, the Director should be a master craftsman.

He has to choose the workmen of experience and intelligence and assign them the right job. He plans the budgeting and funding for the excavation. He has to contact other scientific organisations for any assistance or collaboration. The director is responsible for all the legal aspects of the excavation.

Keezhadi excavation Director



2. Assistant Directors

The direction should have able assistants who closely work with him and understand the problems and strategies. Assistant Director to take the command in the Director's absence and to act as coordinator. He can also look after the administration and management of the camp, and problems relating to accommodation for staff, supply of equipments, accounts supplies, health care etc.

3. Excavation Assistant

Technical Assistant, he works closely with the Director whom he assists in many ways-from setting up of the camp to its closure. He should be a qualified and well trained archaeologist. He is responsible to keep all the records like the Antiquity Registers etc.

4. Site Supervisors or Trench Recorders

They need not be full-time employees. They should be trained to record the excavation of strata and the antiquities, put up the labels, and separate the pottery to be sent to the pottery yard. They write the Record note-book, keep the sketch plans, sections and record the qntiquities.

5. Pottery Assistant

He should mainly work in the pottery yard where he attends to the classification of the potteries according to the trench and strata, have them cleaned and labeled. He should have an intimate and thorough knowledge of the potteries found in a site and in the region to make a comparative analysis. At the headquarters, he will be incharge of the Pottery Section.

6. Antiquity Assistant - Cum - Curator

He attends to the cleaning and the preservation of the antiquities, arranges for their photography and drawing in consultation with the Director. He Should prepare a card index to all individual objects. He is personally responsible for accurate record, correct marking, display and storage.

7. Photographer

He is incharge of the photographic documentation of the excavation at every stage. It is his duty to prepare the subject for photography with the help of the Excavation Assistant, choose the correct timing and light, improvise the scaffolding or any other suitable elevation for his camera and prepare readily accessible dark room for cleaning the film the same day to be seen by the Director.

8. Surveyor

A qualified surveyor has an important role to play in an excavation. He is responsible for the preparation of a general and contour plans of the site. He prepares a scale drawing of the entire mound and shows the excavated trenches. The Surveyor also help in the preparation of elevation of the structures and in laying out the trenches for excavation.

9. Draftsman

The services of a draftsman are equally essential for an excavation work. The preparation of measured drawings of the plans and sections of the excavated trenches and structures besides general maps and the numerous potteries and other antiquities that come up in the excavation are his primary responsibilities.

- ❖ Drawing of plans, sections and elevation of the excavated structures.
- ❖ Section drawings-showing the layers, pits, structures etc.
- ❖ Pottery-drawings including sections, elevations, designs graffit etc.
- ❖ Drawing of antiquities.

10. Marksman

He attends to the marking work in different states. While laying out the trenches, he does the peg marking with black (Indian) ink. During excavations, he works in the pottery yard and attends to the cleaning and marketing of the potteries.

11. Foreman-Cum-Store Keeper

He is an important figure in an excavation. He is in charge of all the materials like the Camp equipment, excavation tools and plants and the like, He maintains stock register for the articles. He is primarily in-charge of transporting the materials to the camp site and setting of the camp and arrangement of other camp facilities. In some of these duties he may be assisted by the Excavation Assistant.

12. Field Chemist

The presence of a chemist would be desirable to attend to the work of conservation of excavated objects including giving first aid attention to fragile objects, consolidation. transport and preservation.

13. Labourers

Indian archaeologists employ casual labourers to do all the mechanical work. Men are employed to do the harder work like digging, and carrying earth while women do the lighter works like washing the potteries, cleaning etc.

They are found useful in helping to set up the camp and the tents, providing water supply and help the photographer, the surveyor, the draftsman the store-keeper and the marksmen in various ways. A disciplined and intelligent labour force is a boon to the expedition.



Tools and Equipment in excavation

- ❖ Tents
- ❖ Tent Equipment
- ❖ Water facilities
- ❖ Camp Kitchen
- ❖ Transport



Draftsman's Equipment

- ❖ Tripod Stand
- ❖ Plane table
- ❖ Drawing board
- ❖ Metallic tapes etc.

Surveyor's Equipment

- ❖ Theodolite
- ❖ Dumpy level
- ❖ Levelling staff
- ❖ Prismatic compass
- ❖ Survey levels etc.

Photographers' Equipment

1. Field Camera, full size with camera stand.
2. Quarter size camera like Linhof is found very handy and effective.
3. A Camera of 120 size like Rollicard or Rolliflex.
4. A 35 mm camera for preparation of slides.
5. Cut films
6. Film rolls etc.

Excavation Equipment

- ❖ Pick Axes
- ❖ Shovels
- ❖ Short handled shovel
- ❖ Bale or turf cutter with “T” handle
- ❖ Crow bars
- ❖ Trolley : Small two wheeled trolley
- ❖ Excavation knives
- ❖ Angle measure
- ❖ Brushes of various types
- ❖ Scissors big sized scissors to cut out the rootlets in the excavation trenches and small sized scissors for other uses.
- ❖ Pen knife
- ❖ Tapes
- ❖ Plumb bob
- ❖ Labels to mark the pottery bags and also the layers on the section.
- ❖ Cloth mounted antiquity envelops-to keep the small antiquities.

Thank You