

ANT-309 Elements of Archaeology Lecture Outline Wednesday January 20, 2010

IV A Brief History of Archaeology

A Early Precursors

- 1 Nabonidus 550 B.C.
- 2 Renaissance when there was a revived interest in learning
- 3 Diletanti
- 4 Pompeii
- 5 Antiquarianism

a British Antiquarian Movement 1573

B Steps toward a Science of Archaeology

- 1 Prevailing Orthodoxy: Earth began 4004 BC (from James Usher) and existed in a fixed immutable state (Medieval Concept of Order) There was nothing different that had existed in the past (1600s)
- 2 Recognition that artifacts were products of human beings ((late 1600s to early 1700s)- based on ethnographic analogy
- 3 Contributions from Geology, Charles Lyell and James Hutton
 - a Uniformitarianism-- This is the idea that the process that are observable today that are shaping the earth's surface-- processes like volcanism, erosion, alluviation, are the same ones that have been in effect throughout time. Because many of these processes are very slow, the creation of the earth had to have taken longer than 6000 years. The earth might be old but people were not -
-James Hutton (1795)
 - b The law of Superposition-- This principle says that in a sequence of observable strata, the order from bottom to top reflects the temporal order of deposition-- the bottom stratum is the oldest, the top one is younger than the bottom one.
 - c Index Fossils
- 4 The Discovery of European Prehistory
 - a Recognition that fossils represented creatures that had once lived and that extinctions occurred. Georges Cuvier (1812)
 - b Esper in 1774
 - c 1797 John Frere An Acheulian hand axe in deeply buried context- below diluvium—associated with bones of apparently extinct animals- rejected
 - d Jacque Boucher de Perthes 1836 recovered stone tools from gravel bars in the Somme River in France near a community known as Abbeville. Along with the tools, he found the bones of extinct animals.
 - e 1858 participants in the debate decided to dig at Brixham Cave in England: Acheulian hand axes

- 5 Contributions from the Danes
 - a Christian Thomsen - Danish National Museum- Three Age System 1816
 - i Stone
 - ii Bronze
 - iii Iron
 - b Shell Midden Archaeology
 - c Principles of Modern archaeology
 - i Fieldwork is important. The real answers must be dug up out of the ground
 - ii All excavated material must be completely and accurately described
 - iii All excavated material must be ordered or classified
 - iv Efforts should be made to standardize terminology used to classify artifacts
 - v They developed the concept of "cross-dating" as a method for establishing the approximate age of an artifact
 - vi It was critical to see artifacts "in situ"
 - vii It is important to describe everything from an excavation- artifacts, features, human skeletons. All objects can provide information about the past. What may seem to be trivial now could prove important to later researchers.
- 6 Early European Archaeologists
 - a General Pitt-Rivers
 - b Flinders-Petrie
- 7 Discovery of New World Prehistory
 - a Thomas Jefferson: Conducted the first excavation in America, trenching a 12 foot mound in the Rivanna River Valley of Virginia and published the results in Notes on Virginia (1787).
 - b John Lloyd Stevens and Fredrick Catherwood: 1841-1843 Ruins of lost Maya civilization in the jungles of Yucatan, concluded they were built by Native Americans.
 - c E.G. Squire and E.H. Davis 1848 Mapped mounds in the Mississippi Valley and argued Native Americans couldn't be Responsible for mounds.
 - d Cyrus Thomas, Smithsonian Institute: Excavated mounds and declared they were products of Native Americans
 - e Alfred Kroeber founds the first Department of Anthropology in California ca. 1903 Salvage ethno