



## History of Epigraphical Studies in India

### 5.1 Do you know?

Description	Image	Source
<p>Bilingual coin deciphered by James Prinsep and identified the Khroshti letters with the help of Greek legend. He also identified the Brahmi legends on the coin.</p>	 <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Menander Coin- Bilingual ob-Greek re-Khroshti Script</b></p>	<p><a href="https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_Prinsep">https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_Prinsep</a></p>
<p>Asokan inscriptions- Brahmi script is the earliest script in India</p>	 <p style="text-align: center;">Girnar Asokan Edicts</p>	<p>Sources</p> <p><a href="https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ashoka%27s_Major_Rock_Edicts">https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ashoka%27s_Major_Rock_Edicts</a></p> <p>Richard Salomon, Indian Epigraphy, Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt.Ltd,1996</p>

Asoka predominantly employed the script known as Brahmi script. This was a national script in 3<sup>rd</sup> century B.C.E. The name Brahmi is widely used by the modern scholars to refer to the Asokan script. It has 9 vowels and 34 consonant sounds.

a	ā	i	ī	u
e	ai	o		
ka	kha	ga	gha	ṅa
ca	cha	ja	jha	ña
ṭa	ṭha	ḍa	ḍha	ṇa
ta	tha	da	dha	na
pa	pha	ba	bha	ma
ya	ra	la	ḷa	va
śa	ṣa	sa	ha	

Brahmi script

Sources

Richard Salomon,  
Indian Epigraphy,  
Munshiram  
Manoharlal  
Publishers  
Pvt.Ltd,1996

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ashoka%27s\\_Major\\_Rock\\_Edicts](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ashoka%27s_Major_Rock_Edicts)

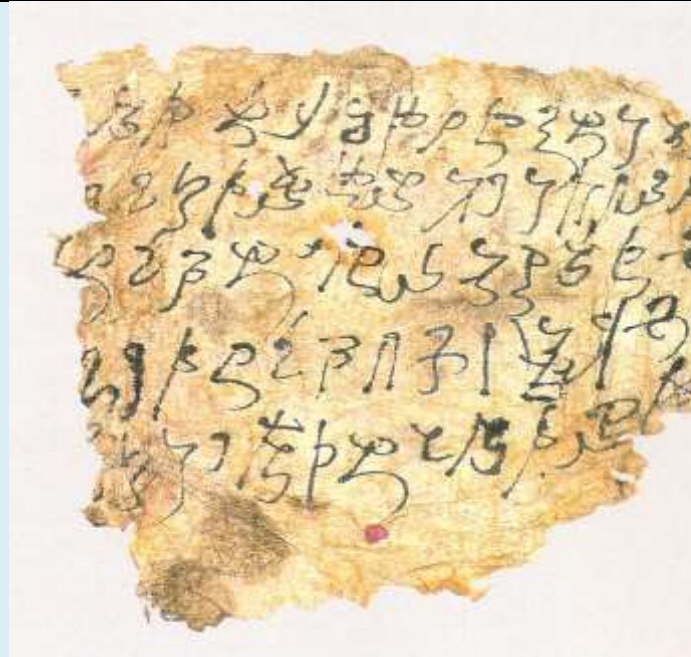
Kharoshthi script was found in the Asokan edicts in the region of Swat and Kabul River Valleys of modern North-West Frontier Province of Pakistan (Ancient Gandhara and adjoining region). It is written in right to left.

𑀀	𑀁	𑀂	𑀃	𑀄
a	i	u	e	o
𑀅	𑀆	𑀇	𑀈	𑀉
ka	kha	ga	gha	na
𑀊	𑀋	𑀌	𑀍	𑀎
ca	cha	ja	jha	ña
𑀏	𑀐	𑀑	𑀒	𑀓
ṭa	ṭha	ḍa	ḍha	ṇa
𑀔	𑀕	𑀖	𑀗	𑀘
ta	tha	da	dha	na
𑀙	𑀚	𑀛	𑀜	𑀝
pa	pha	ba	bha	ma
𑀞	𑀟	𑀠	𑀡	
ya	ra	la	va	
𑀢	𑀣	𑀤	𑀥	
śa	ṣa	sa	ha	

Source: Richard Salomon, Indian Epigraphy, Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt.Ltd,1996

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ashoka%27s\\_Major\\_Rock\\_Edicts](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ashoka%27s_Major_Rock_Edicts)

Khorshthi inscription. This script is the modification of Aramaic script introduced in the northwestern part of India. After Asoka the use of Kharoshthi script spread up to Madura region



Source: Richard Salomon, Indian Epigraphy, Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt.Ltd,1996

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James\\_Priensep](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_Priensep)

In Tamil Nadu the cattle breeding people used a script known as Tamil-Brahmi script which is a variant form of Asokan Brahmi to suit the Tamil Language in the Hero stone. This hero stone inscription is the earliest hero stone or memorial Stone inscription in India erected for the velour of a Hero. It is dated to 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> century C.E., Pre Asokan period



Puliman Kompai –Hero stone Tamil Brahmi inscription

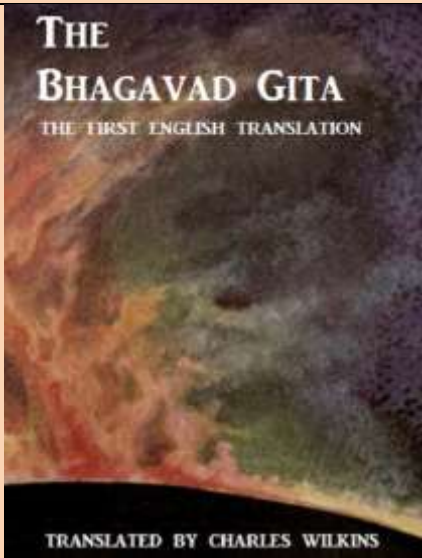
Sources

Rajan,K., Recent Researches in the Archaeology of Tamil Nadu,

Photo: S.Rajavelu

<p>This Asokan pillar was originally from Meerat brought by Sultan Feroz shah Tuhluq to Delhi, his capital city for having curiosity to know about the inscriptions and its script</p>		<p><a href="https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_Prinsep">https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_Prinsep</a></p>
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## 5. 2 Timeline

Timelines	Image	Description
<p>Charles Wilkins (1749-1836) was the versatile genius in Sanskrit who translated the <i>Bhagavad Gita</i> in to English</p>		<p><a href="https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_Wilkins">https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_Wilkins</a></p>

<p>(1764-1794) Pioneer in Indological studies. Sir William Jones He contributed to the development of Asiatic Researches Journals. He founded the Asiatic Society of Bengal in 1784.</p>		<p><a href="https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Jones_(philologist)">https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Jones_(philologist)</a></p>
<p>A man behind the decipherment of Brahmi script successfully was James Prinsep in 1837. He was an assay master at the Kolkata Mint</p>		<p><a href="https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_Prinsep">https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_Prinsep</a></p>
<p><b>J.F.Fleet- 1883</b> Another noteworthy personality to promote the</p>		<p><a href="https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Faithfull_Fleet">https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Faithfull_Fleet</a></p>

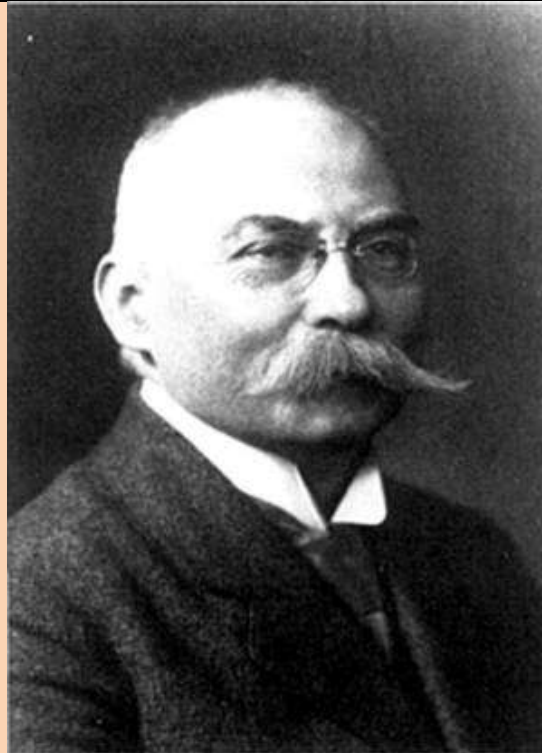
research of Indian Epigraphy. The first Epigraphist of India in the year 1883 for a term of three years. He concentrated on the publication of further series of CII Volumes.



**John Faithfull Fleet**

**Eugen Hultzsch-1887**

E.Hultzsch- A German scholar who was well versed in Sanskrit and Dravidian languages. He continued to publish articles in *Epigraphia Indica* and published South Indian Inscriptions Voumes. He widely travelled North Arcot, Chengleput Districts and copied many inscriptions in these regions which were published in his South Indian Inscriptions-vol-I. Vol-II mainly contains of Thanjavur Rajarajaisvarn temple Inscriptions.



**Eugen Hultzsch-**

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles\\_Wilkins](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_Wilkins)

### 5. 3 Glossary

Staring Character	Term	Definition	Related Term
A	Asiatic Society of Bengal	A Society founded by Sir William Jones which mainly concentrated on Indological Studies	William Jones
B	Bilingual	Using two languages for same message or contents.	
B	Brahmi	The script employed by Asoka during Third Century B.C.E. It was used in Asokan inscriptions. Many of the Indian and Southeast Asian scripts evolved from this script. The rudimentary and simple form of the Brahmi script utilized in Tamil Nadu without aspirate and soft sounds is known as Tamil-Brahmi.	Asokan Brahmi & Tamil Brahmi
D	Decipher	Decrypt. To read the script with meaningful manner.	Script
E	Epigraphy	Greek word. It deals with the Study of inscriptions	Inscription
K	Kharoshthi	The Indian Alphabet running from right to left which was employed by Asokan in the north-western part of India, Gandhara region. The term is derived from Khara-postha meaning ass lips. The script is more curvature form like an unshaped ass lips.	Asokan Edicts
P	Prakrit	The early Indo- Aryan language predominated during Asoka Maurya period. In the early stage the language was not standardized. The Colloquial form of Sanskrit especially the Magadha dialect.	Asokan Brahmi



## 5.4. Weblinks

Web links
<a href="https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_Prinsep">https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_Prinsep</a>
<a href="http://www.ancient.eu/image/6648/">http://www.ancient.eu/image/6648/</a>
<a href="https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_Wilkins">https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_Wilkins</a>
<a href="https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ashoka%27s_Major_Rock_Edicts">https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ashoka%27s_Major_Rock_Edicts</a>
<a href="https://www.amazon.in/Bhagavad-Gita-First-Translation-English-ebook/dp/B00ACX08Z2">https://www.amazon.in/Bhagavad-Gita-First-Translation-English-ebook/dp/B00ACX08Z2</a>
<a href="https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Jones_(philologist)">https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Jones_(philologist)</a>
<a href="https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/E._Hultzsch">https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/E._Hultzsch</a>
<a href="https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Faithfull_Fleet">https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Faithfull_Fleet</a>

## 5.5. Bibliography

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Upasak,C.S.,1960, History and Palaeography of Mauryan Brahmi Script., The Tara Printing works, Nalanda
Varma, T.P., 1971, The Palaeography of Brahmi Script in North India (from 236 B.C to c.200 A.D) Varanasi

