

## NEWS AND NOTES

### **Report on International Conference on Maritime Archaeology with Special Reference to Indian Ocean countries & 10th Biannual Conference of Society for Marine Archaeology, NIO, Goa – Sandhya Misra\*, Rajesh S.V., Abhyan G.S., Birbal Sahni Institute of Paleosciences, Lucknow. (\*E: sandhyabsip@gmail.com)**

An international conference sponsored by University of Kerala, Kerala Council of Historical Research (KCHR), Indian Council of Historical Research, New Delhi (ICHR) and Archaeological Council of Historical Research (ACHR) on the above mentioned theme was organized by Department of Archaeology, University of Kerala Kariavattom Campus, Thiruvananthapuram during 6<sup>th</sup> -9<sup>th</sup> Feb. 2018. This conference aimed at bringing together researchers and academicians from diversified background to a common platform with a view to discuss the latest emerging facets of Indian Ocean Archaeology. Scholars and researchers representing countries like China, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Iran and England participated in this conference.

First day of the conference started with the registration and inauguration and invocation by the students of Archaeology department. Prof. Ajit Kumar formally welcomed all the participants and delegates from India and abroad. Prof. Preeta Nayar briefly introduced participants with the aim and objective of the conference and highlighted some of the important research activities of department. The chief guest Dr. Daniel Babu Paul (IAS) in his inaugural address discussed several facts related to history and archaeology and said that archaeological recourses known and to be known are finite, hence must be preserved and researchers should treat them with respect and responsibility. During the presidential address Prof. K.S. Mathew (IRISH, Kannur) highlighted the relationship between history and archaeology and discussed about the crucial role played by ocean in maritime activities in past. Naval archaeology and ship building history on Malabar coast was also discussed in his talk. Later on, during the felicitation in the presence of Dr. A.S. Gaur (Principal Technical Officer, NIO, Goa), Dr. A.P. Pradeep Kumar (HOD, Dept. of Geology, University of Kerala), Dr. S. Hemachandran (former Director, State Archaeology Department, Govt. of Kerala), Dr. Jenne Peter (Assistant Professor, Dept. of History, Union Christian College, Aluva), Prof. Sunil Gupta (Director, Allahabad Museum) a book entitled, "Forts of Kerala" and journal Heritage Vol. 5 was released. Later Prof. Sunil Gupta in his keynote address highlighted the archaeo-historical idea of the early Indian ocean and said that there is a need to consolidate database to unlock the technological knowledge of heritage. His talk was preceded with the vote of thanks by Prof. Preeta Nayar where she expressed deep gratitude towards all the funding agencies, delegates, participants.

The second day of the conference started with a special lecture by Prof. P.J. Cherian who discussed the critical role of the Indian subcontinent in the Earliest Global-Maritime-Network by providing the evidences from the Artifacts from Pattanam. Ahead in this series Prof. Alok Tripathi highlighted the underwater Archaeological research in India while Prof. Joseph Chacko Chennattuserry (Christ University, Bangalore) and Dr. Jenee Peter highlighted the indigenous navigation and maritime archaeology from Malabar Coast and Kodungallur respectively. Mr. Ran Zhang (Durham University, Durham) presented a paper discussing the Chinese maritime economic withdrawal from the Indian ocean trade in the 15th century. Dr. Yi Zhai (Keyan chu, The Palace Museum, Beijing, China) on the trade of Chinese ceramic

in past. Four representatives from Iran representing university of Tehran and University of Nishapur presented paper on Sasanian Navigation and Maritime Trade, showed pottery of Iranian Maritime Trade from ports of Persian Gulf, on the basis of written records from the Ports of Mahrouban and Siraf, Iran a discussion on the maritime trade of Persian Gulf and India was also done. A visit to the departments museum fascinated the participants with its varied collection of ceramics, potteries, coins, beads, weights, stone tools etc recovered from diversified regions in south India.

On the third Day (8<sup>th</sup> Feb) of the conference special lectures by Prof. Vijayalakshmi, Dr. Preeta Nayar, Dr. J.S. Kharakwal (Sahitya Sansthan, JRN Rajasthan Vidyapeeth, Udaipur), Dr. Sila Tripathi (NIO, Goa) covered a wide range of topic discussing the evidences of Jews in the Indian Ocean Trade of Medieval period, evidences of Intaglios from Pattanam was also presented to trace the maritime connection, paper dealing with the timber used in Ship Building & evidences from Kanmer indicative Harappan Trading Center were also dealt in this session. Maritime trade and associated activities covering a wide range of topic and evidences from Sri Lanka were presented by eleven representatives from different academic and research institutions. These papers put forward ruins of Shiva and Buddhist Temples from the Seabed of Trincomalee, papers throwing light on ancient navigation, port city of Mantai (Mahatittha) continuity beyond the Assumed Demise were also presented. In Indian context papers dealing with ship building in Colonial South India, Varanasi as a Trading Centre of India during 3rd century BCE to 3rd century CE, history of Chaul Port of Konkan, Geospatial Techniques and Archaeological Evidences from Saurashtra coast, Sasanian Contacts with the Vakatakas' Realm with Special Reference to Nagardhan, Beliefs, Believers, Rituals and System related to Ship Wrecks in the Early Indian Ocean Trade and the Origin of Orthodox Religious Identity were well presented.

On the fourth and last day (9<sup>th</sup> Feb) of the conference special lecture by Prof. Alok Kumar Kanungo (IIT, Gandhinagar) enlightened the participants with the evidences of external trade in Nagaland with probable use of oceans as the trade routes. The last special lecture of conference was delivered by Dr. V. Selvakumar (Tamil University, Tanjavur) where he talked about the Water Craft and Navigation in the Inland Waters of South India. In the series of papers presented by the participants Diplomatic Relations between Kollam and China; Megaliths of Kerala and their Mediterranean-West Asian Connections gave a glimpse of ancient travel and trade route of southern Kerala as gleaned from Shuka Sandesham and Unnuneeli Sandesham; Examples of Maritime Archaeology from Andhra Pradesh - was also explored; using the foreign travelogues and epigraphs especially from Kollam an insight into the trade and socio-cultural Life in Venad was presented. Using the archaeobotanical remains a glimpse of the travel route of millets, cashew and other agricultural produce were discussed by the representatives from Birbal Sahni Institute of Palaeosciences, Lucknow. The conference concluded with the words of organizers of the conference Prof. Ajit Kumar, Prof. Preeta Nayar, Prof. Abhyan and Prof. Rajesh where they expressed their heartfelt gratitude for making the conference a grand success.

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