

a journey into Kerala pre-history

Pattanam Unearthed: Histories, Cultures, Crossings

An Exhibition on Pattanam finds



National Museum, New Delhi 28th November 2014 to 10th January 2015

On the initiative of the National Museum [NM], New Delhi, the Kerala Council for Historical Research [KCHR], Thiruvananthapuram has organised the exhibition "Pattanam Unearthed: Histories, Cultures, Crossings" at NM, New Delhi in collaboration with Sahapedia, New Delhi. It was inaugurated by the Union Minister for Cultural Affairs, Dr. Mahesh Sharma on 28th November 2014 and will be open till 10th January 2015.

The exhibition envisages to bring out the findings of Pattanam excavation, its inter-disciplinary and collaborative character of research, methodology of excavations, early maritime contacts of the Kerala region and their global significance to the general public. The exhibition also attempts to sensitize the younger generation on proto historic times and the need to conserve archaeological sites.



The exhibition conceptualized by Dr. VenuV., Director General, National Museum and supported by the NM team could ensure that the event matches world standards. Prof. P.J. Cherian (KCHR) is the Curator and Siddhartha Chatterji, Seechange, New Delhi, the Designer. The curatorial team comprises of Prof Jaya Menon (Shiv Nadar University), Dr.PreetaNayar (KCHR) and Arundhati Choudhury (New Delhi). Dr.SudhaGopalakrishnan and S. Gopalakrishnan of Sahapediaare the Co-ordinators.

This exhibition is a rare opportunity to engage in a journey into our deep ancestry. The importance of Pattanam is that so far we had only very few textual sources and sketchy archaeological evidence on the pre-9th c CE history of Kerala. Pattanam (Muziris?) in fact tells the story of the Kerala region from 1000 BCE and its maritime connections from 300 BCE onwards.

The highlights of the exhibition

- ✚ Replica of the Pattanam trench No. 51 and the excavation tools in original
- ✚ Excavation methodology - explained as a panel 'Excavation Wall' and in a video documentary 'A Glimpse into Pattanam Excavations Methodology'
- ✚ Pattanam objects on display include local and non-local ceramics, beads, semi-precious stone objects, coins, gold ornaments, stone moulds, spindle whorls etc. Only a fraction of the total of 1.29 lakhs artefacts, 5.16 lakhs of diagnostic potsherds, 1.40 lakhs of Non - Indian potsherds and 4.5 million local body sherds could be taken to Delhi.

- ✚ The panels exhibited include Pattanam chronology, the urban context, the wharf context, the maritime trade routes as reflected in the Peutinger table, contemporary port sites of Pattanam, textual references to MuciriPattinam or Muziris etc.
- ✚ Replicas of nine amphorae types so far identified at Pattanam and originally made some 2000 years ago in different parts of the Mediterranean and the Red Sea Ports are on display.
- ✚ The excavation reports of the eight seasons are on display and the reports of 2013 and 2014 are available to purchase.
- ✚ Another segment is on contemporary artists' engagement with Pattanam excavations. Creative works of Vivan Sundaram, Riyas Komu, EP Unny, Bara Bhaskaran and G Ajit Kumar are on display.
- ✚ The panels on Green Archaeology Project and Pattanam Research Design look towards the future of Pattanam site and developing Pattanam into a world heritage site and a knowledge centre of material culture studies.
- ✚ The kids' creative corner and clay workshops offer children a new experience in understanding Pattanam.
- ✚ 'The Pattanam Bowl', a carry home symbol of Pattanam times is available to purchase.
- ✚ An International Seminar on the theme 'The Indian Subcontinent: the Indian Ocean Perspectives' in collaboration with NM on 7th and 8th of January 2015 discusses five contemporary sites of Pattanam.

K N Panikkar
Chairman, KCHR

P J Cherian
Director, KCHR

Photo Gallery

http://www.keralahistory.ac.in/photo_gallery.htm

News clippings on the exhibition

<http://blogs.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/plumage/national-museum-to-host-exhibition-on-spice-route-excavations/>

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/Delhi/artefacts-from-the-lost-port-of-muziris/article6657446.ece>

<http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-in-school/artefacts-from-the-lost-port-of-muziris/article6662964.ece>

<http://barbaricum.net/news/6741273237147631680>

<http://www.deccanherald.com/content/445207/tiny-objects-rewrite-our-maritime.html>

<http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-national/tp-kerala/artefacts-from-the-lost-port-of-muziris-on-display-in-delhi/article6664007.ece>

<http://www.bnnwebtv.com/admin/info.php?recid=4132>

http://m.newshunt.com/india/english-newspapers/deccan-herald/metro-life/metrolife--tiny-objects-to-rewrite--our-maritime-history_34071644/996/c-in-l-english-n-deccan-ncat-MetroLife

<http://artofbihar.blogspot.in/>

<http://www.indusage.com.au/exhibitions-spread-message-of-indian-culture-mahesh-sharma/>

http://www.indiatribune.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=13267:exhibition-spread-message-of-indian-culture-mahesh-sharma&catid=125:general-news&Itemid=400