

ANNUAL ALLCHIN SYMPOSIUM ON SOUTH ASIAN ARCHAEOLOGY



3 December 2022

VENUE

The Ancient India and Iran Trust, Cambridge

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The Call for Papers is now open until Friday 18 November 2022

The *Annual Allchin Symposium on South Asian Archaeology* was established to commemorate the work of Raymond and Bridget Allchin, and the outstanding contribution that they made to development of South Asian studies in the United Kingdom.

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Allchin Symposium 2022. Schedule and Abstracts

- 09:00 Registration
- 09:20 Welcome
- 09:30 *Abdul Adil Paray (zoom)*
Transition from Neolithic to Megalithic Culture in Kashmir Valley, India - A New Perspective
- 09:50 *Himanshu Shekar (zoom)*
Megalithic monuments and ancestral sites of Austroasiatic communities of Jharkhand
- 10:10 *Aditi Mann (zoom)*
Study of Art Remains of Sacred Landscape of Kurukshetra, India
- 10:30 Tea break
- 10:50 *Varada Khaladkar (zoom)*
From Margins and beyond: Middle Bhima Basin in Early Historic Western Deccan
- 11:10 *Sneha Kapote (zoom)*
A Numismatic Survey of The Kidarite Coinage of Kashmir in The Light of New Material
- 11:30 *Ritvik Balvally (zoom)*
Polity and Trade: A study of Sasanian and Early Islamic contact with Western India
- 11:50 *Gaurav Kumar Pal and MB Rajani (zoom)*
Geo-spatial analyses and field investigation of the remains of Jahanpanah Fort and its drainage network
- 12:10 Lunch break
- 12:50 *Kaushik Gangopadhyay (zoom)*
Northern Bay of Bengal in the early historic and early medieval period: Recent archaeological investigations in coastal Medinipur district, West Bengal.
- 13:10 *Mayur Thakare (zoom)*
Archaeology of European Expansion and Colonial Archaeology in India: Prospect and Present Status with a Case Study from Coastal Maharashtra
- 13:30 *Christos Nikolaou (in person)*
An Investigation into Religion and Hybridity in the Urban Landscapes of Ai Khanoum
- 13:50 *Elisa Iori (zoom)*
Kushano-Sasanian material culture in Gandhara: the archaeological case of Barikot (Swat, Pakistan)
- 14:10 Tea break
- 14:30 *Iqtedar Alam (in person)*
Mapping the Shah Nahr: A Study of the Mughal Hydrological Landscape of Shahjahanabad, Delhi
- 14:50 *Shreya Gupta (in person)*
Punjab, "an ideal hunting ground for the coin collector": Collecting coins in colonial India
- 15:00 Close

Iqtedar Alam

University of Cambridge

Mapping the Shah Nahr: A Study of the Mughal Hydrological Landscape of Shahjahanabad, Delhi

Documenting the everyday society, and the culture and life of people in an 'engineered landscape' requires the study of an element that binds the landscape and its behaviour. Water acts as that unifying element of the 'everyday landscape' which finds its presence in household activities, religious and cultural practices, transport, irrigation and recreation. The paper will present a study of the landscape features and water infrastructure of the revenue district of Shahjahanabad based on archival reports produced by the British engineers and surveyors: Fortescue (1820), Colvin (1833), Khan (1847), Baker (1849) and Greathed (1852); and British cartographic sources of the mid-19th century Delhi, reveals the scale of the relationship between the two. The paper will also discuss on how the Mughal canal acted as a central 'everyday' element carrying multiple functions that weaved the landscape and its associated components, besides mapping the socio-cultural context of the infrastructure. Lastly, the paper will present a landform reconstruction exercise at a micro-regional scale introducing GIS-based historical archaeology method using toponymy and information from Mughal chronicles to digitally model the elevational profile of the Late Mughal Period. The canal can also help build the conceptual and contextual framework within which to understand Mughal water practices in Shahjahanabad as an expression of the water management systems of their Turko-Mongolian 'patrilineal ancestors'. As a central element of the landform, hydrology, state economy, and urbanism practice, the canal provides a sectional glimpse of the Mughal hydrological landscape and the socio-political contours of control, use and access to water.

Ritvik Balvally

The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda, India

Polity and Trade: A study of Sasanian and Early Islamic contact with Western India

Since the discovery of torpedo jars in western and peninsular India, a new route outside of the protracted "Indo-Roman" trade has become apparent. One realises how much of an impact West Asian contact with western India has had. In this study, the researcher tries to organise the geographic and temporal dispersion of the contacts limited to Western India from the third to the tenth centuries C.E. To clarify the nature of the interaction, the polity that prevailed in the area and its impact on the contact would also be examined. To determine the origin of the ceramics that were exported from West Asia to Western India, thin-section petrographic examination is used.

Kaushik Gangopadhyay

Department of Archaeology, University of Calcutta

Northern Bay of Bengal in the early historic and early medieval period: Recent archaeological investigations in coastal Medinipur district, West Bengal

Archaeological sources on interactions in the Indian Ocean region, in the early historic and early medieval period has been largely biased towards the western Indian Ocean and the connections between ports of southeastern India and regions of mainland and island South-East Asia. The Northern Bay of Bengal posits a rather different problem where urbanization and cultural interactions can be investigated by comparing sites from West Bengal, Bangladesh and Myanmar. In most cases, the archaeological investigations have failed to correlate the material

culture data beyond construction of regional cultural sequences and developing only broad understanding of urban sites. In this paper, the author will discuss recent archaeological excavations from sites in coastal Medinipur district with emphasis on the ceramic repertoire from the early historic and early medieval period. This ongoing research demonstrates the role of ceramics as key artefacts in the understanding the contexts of coastal sites with long cultural continuity and interactions between different zones of the Northern Bay of Bengal region from the early historic to the early medieval period.

Shreya Gupta

University of Exeter and Ashmolean Museum

Punjab, “an ideal hunting ground for the coin collector”: Collecting coins in colonial India

Many British officials stationed in Punjab in the late nineteenth and early twentieth-century in the British civil or military service, developed interests in collecting South Asian coins, building large coin collections that were then deposited in various UK museums. The processes through which these collections were formed remain rather elusive. My paper will show how the network of these European numismatists and coin collectors shared expertise regarding various aspects of coin collecting from the location of hoards, the study of the coins collected, and the forgeries found among them. I will place this network in the context of the ‘information order’ of colonial India, studying the relationships of the European collectors with their Indian counterparts to demonstrate the role of networks in furthering numismatic research in colonial India. My paper will also highlight the role of Indians, particularly dealers in Punjab in influencing the collecting activities of colonial servants posted in this region. I will show that coin dealers remained crucial suppliers for these collectors, helping in the collection, circulation, and study of coins in the northwest for a long period. Examining their history helps in writing fuller histories of the transfer of coins from South Asia to Western museums.

Elisa Iori

Max Weber Centre for Advanced Cultural and Social Studies (Erfurt University, Germany)

Kushano-Sasanian material culture in Gandhara: the archaeological case of Barikot (Swat, Pakistan)

The scholarship of Kushano-Sasanian political history has so far been based mainly on the study of coinage, as well as Sasanian imperial inscriptions. Also, inscriptions and images on coins play a dominant role in discussions of the continuity and innovation in political ideology, religion, and processes of cultural appropriation, from exchange to transculturation. However, when it comes to defining changes in the elements of material culture not directly associated with political power, crucial urban sites (e.g., Taxila, Begram, Delberjin Tepe) are characterized by a fundamental scarcity of stratigraphic and contextual data. An important role must have been played by the fact that the contexts in question, in almost all cases, coincide with the final or abandonment stratigraphies of cities, stratigraphies typically neglected in traditional archaeology. The aim of this contribution is to address the issue of continuity and changes in the material culture focusing on the evidence documented by archaeological fieldwork attentive to these phases. The contribution will examine the data revealed by the final stratigraphy of an important urban site in outer Gandhara, near Barikot (Swat, Pakistan), which has been excavated by the Italian Archaeological Mission ISMEO/Ca' Foscari University of Venice in Pakistan over the past 40 years.

Sneha Kapote

Deccan College Post Graduate and Research Institution

A Numismatic Survey of The Kidarite Coinage of Kashmir in The Light of New Material

The Kidarite-Hunnic numismatic heritage of Kashmir (6th-13th c. CE) has shown a distinctive ability to adopt aspects of foreign and Indian coinage traditions in terms of the origin of design with an unbroken link of absorption and remodelling of coin devices through several centuries. The current research will offer an insight into the stylistic and typological sequences of the progenitors of the Hindu kings of Kashmir based on a number of visible clues: evolution of the king and goddess design, a geometric progression of the style of motifs, —its origins, linkages, and the discovery of new types that emerged from the recently discovered coin hoards.

Varada Khaladkar

Department of Archaeology, University of Calcutta

From Margins and beyond: Middle Bhima Basin in Early Historic Western Deccan

Our understanding of early historic western Deccan largely centers on the emergence of polities, urbanization, trade, introduction of coinage, script and north Indian religious ideologies and the consequent development of cave architecture. The historical and archaeological investigations have rarely examined areas away from nodal/urban sites and their immediate hinterlands. The region of middle Bhima basin, covering large parts of southwestern Deccan, has been Terra incognita for history and archaeology, largely due to its absence in the early literary sources. The extensive regional survey, documenting 90 early historic sites, carried out by the present researcher has enabled us to reconstruct settlement histories in detail from the protohistoric period onwards. It has revealed to us a region without the presence of any urban or trade centres, which was located on or beyond the peripheries of our present knowledge of early western Deccan. The present paper examines in detail the settlement processes, their form, nature and their connections with the economic networks that spanned the early historic Deccan. It aims to chart the region's transformation from being on the margin to 'mainstream' by the onset of early medieval period.

Gaurav Kumar Pal and MB Rajani

National Institute of Advanced Studies

Geo-spatial analyses and field investigation of the remains of Jahanpanah Fort and its drainage network

The recent geospatial analyses conducted by georeferencing old maps identified the present locations at which extant remains of the fortification of Jahanpanah could be found. The paper talks about the result of the field explorations that were conducted by tracing the georeferenced map and using a GPS tracker and a mobile application. The investigation pointed out the archaeological importance of the landscape and the reason for the original selection of this site for laying out the settlement of Jahanpanah, which is flanked by Qila Rai Pithora (first city of Delhi) on the west and Siri (third city of Delhi) on the northeast. The paper mentions the importance of the Satpula dam which was constructed as part of the southern boundary of Jahanpanah for the dual purpose of channeling water and defense. In the present study, DEM (Digital Elevation Model) is used to understand the site selection for the Satpula dam to divert water on the arable land in the south of the city. The study highlights the neglect of heritage sites due to insensitive urban sprawl and briefly talks about the varied distributions of the remains of Jahanpanah in South Delhi.

Aditi Mann

Vivekananda Institute of Professional Studies, Delhi

Study of Art Remains of Sacred Landscape of Kurukshetra, India

Kurukshetra, or the land of Kurus also known as the 'land of great war of Mahābhārata', is a popular pilgrimage centre for the people of Northern India. This city holds significance among Hindus as it is associated with the epic Mahābhārata' and its protagonist Lord Kṛṣṇa. However, contradictory to the popular opinion and literary traditions, there are hardly any stone images of Kṛṣṇa which have been reported so far from this district. The majority of sculptures which are displayed in the Sri Kṛṣṇa state museum are of Lord Viṣṇu as according to the Brahmanic traditions Kṛṣṇa is believed to be the eighth avtār (manifestation) of Viṣṇu. Only two images of Kṛṣṇa were found during the fieldwork and both showed Kṛṣṇa along with Balarāma and Ekānaṃśa/Subhadrā. The archaeological evidence has also suggested that this region was influenced by the five cults of Brahmanical religion i.e Śaivism, Vaiṣṇavism, Śakta, Gaṇapatya and Saura. Besides this, there are also some Buddhist and Jaina stone sculptures that have been reported and this indicates the coexistence of different religious faiths. This work intends to examine the religious landscape from an archaeological perspective of Kurukshetra beyond the Kṛṣṇa cult. It will further examine all those religious shrines in villages where stone images of ancient and early medieval times are installed and are worshipped in various forms.

Christos Nikolaou

University of Cambridge

An Investigation into Religion and Hybridity in the Urban Landscapes of Ai Khanoum

I aim to analyse the religious landscapes of the Hellenistic site of Ai Khanoum and using excavation reports from the French Archaeological Delegation in Afghanistan (Bernard, 1972, Francfort 2011). Specifically, I aim to utilize analyses of cultural hybridity (Liebmann, 2012, Mairs, 2014), as well as patronage (Pollock, 2006, Halkias, 2013) to compare how religious hybridity manifested itself in the city and test notions of 'Greekness' and 'Otherness'. To do this, I am using GIS-based analysis (Laricella et al, 2017, Martinez-Seve, 2014), as well as analysis in R to identify the spread of religious structures and artefacts in the city. Using that data, I am then using statistics to analyze the patterns of hybridity in Bactria. This presentation specifically tests if we can identify patterns of bottom-up versus top-down patronage and patterns of religious hybridity at one of the case studies sites that is being studied. I also to delineate a method for identifying how religious diversity manifests in an urban landscape.

Abdul Adil Paray

AIHC and Archaeology, Indira Gandhi National Tribal University , Amarkantak, MP, India

Transition from Neolithic to Megalithic Culture in Kashmir Valley, India - A New Perspective

Based on the new preliminary survey of landscape and settlement patterns (of excavated and mostly unexcavated sites) and the analytical analyses of material culture, this study suggests that the so called concept of Megalithic culture in the Kashmir valley is problematic. At present it is argued, based on limited variability in subsistence, settlement pattern and technology, that the Megalithic Culture of Kashmir was likely a continuation of the Neolithic rather than marking substantive socio-economic and cultural change in the prehistory of the region. It is commonly termed the 'Advanced Neolithic Culture'. This presentation addresses outstanding questions regarding 'change or continuity from the Neolithic to megalithic cultures' in Kashmir. It draws on the outcomes of site reconnaissance both random and systematic (e.g., transect survey), and

site catchment and material cultural analyses with an interpretive focus on patterns of socio-economic change and stability.

Himanshu Shekar

Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Pune

Megalithic monuments and ancestral sites of Austroasiatic communities of Jharkhand

Over the years, several megalithic sites have been reported from different region of Jharkhand. The initial investigations were conducted during the second half of 19th century and initial phase of 20th century by colonial ethnographers and anthropologists. An excavation was conducted by Archaeological Survey of India in year 1965-66 at the site of Khuntitoli, where evidence of cremated bones of multiple individuals were found in separate under a stone slab, indicating an evidence of a secondary family burial. The author of this paper has recently conducted an ethnoarchaeological study as doctoral research under which he has studied the continuing tradition and culture of raising megalithic monuments, comparing them with the archaeological parallels in lights of evidences found through the survey of ancient sites and ethnographic analogy. This paper briefs the research of present tradition of Austroasiatic communities; Mundas, Bhumij and Hos in lights of present monuments and ancestral sites, which indicate the distribution of megaliths on their possible route of the movement in Chotanagpur plateau throughout the past and existence of old and recent burial monuments over different ancestral sites.

Mayur Thakare

ARTIS, University of Lisbon, Portugal & Directorate of Archaeology and Museums, Government of Maharashtra, Mumbai, India

Archaeology of European Expansion and Colonial Archaeology in India: Prospect and Present Status with a Case Study from Coastal Maharashtra

In 1897, Alexander Rea, the then Superintendent of Archaeological Survey of India, Madras published a well-researched monograph, "Monumental Remains of the Dutch East India Company in the Presidency of Madras" in the New Imperial Series (Volume XXV) of Archaeological Survey of India. India was still under the British Raj by then but the monumental remains of the European colonial power which tried to subjugate the Eastern coast of India in the 17th and 18th centuries had become an object of scholarly interest and had transpired into publication of the above-mentioned work which despite the explicit mention of "Archaeology of European Expansion or Colonial Archaeology" in it, had set up a mark for the future works in this domain. However, it was not until 2003 that the first systematic work in this domain in the form of Prof. D.K. Chakrabarti's "The Archaeology of European Expansion in Gujarat c.16th – 18th Centuries" was produced which attempted to provide a theoretical base to this domain which is still nascent in approaches and field studies. Through his paper, the author has made a humble attempt to initiate a field study with well-defined theoretical parameters on the Western coastal region of Maharashtra which remained a prime area of European colonization from the 16th century onwards.