

## 2017 ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATIONS BEGIN AT KOLLAM PORT, KERALA, INDIA

The Palace Museum and Kerala Council for Historical Research (KCHR) recently received official approval from the Archaeological Survey of India (Government of India) to undertake further archaeological excavations at the Kollam Port site in Kerala, India. Accordingly, the collaborative project between Chinese and Indian archaeologists at Kollam is now officially launched.

The Kollam Port lies on the southwest coast of India and is the second largest port in Kerala, following the Cochin Port—the largest port in the whole of India. In February 2014, the port authorities began extensive dredging operations to deepen the draught and expand the service capacity. During the dredging process, large quantities of artifacts were discovered on the ocean floor at a depth of 4.5-8 meters. Researchers at KCHR took note of this important discovery and began preliminary surveys of the site.

By the end of 2016, KCHR researchers had already collected over 10,000 potsherds and fragments of ceramics and over 1,000 coins along the coast of Kollam. Most of the sherds are fragments of local Indian pottery. Other finds include articles of decorative colored glass from the Mediterranean region, coins from Islamic principalities, and teal-glazed pottery. Among the various excavated items, only the Chinese artifacts have been consistently dated; these samples include about 500 sherds produced during the 10<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> centuries in Zhejiang, Jiangxi, Guangdong, and Fujian. Additionally, researchers also uncovered approximately 1,300 coins dated to the 8<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> centuries.

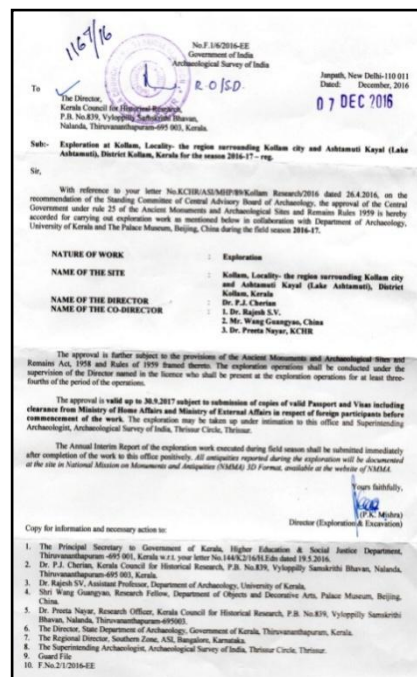


Fig.1 Approval from ASI



Fig.2 Map of Kollam in Kerala



Fig.3 View of the whole Kollam Port



Fig.4 Construction Site inside the Kollam Port



Fig.5 Chinese ceramics found from Kollam Port site



Fig.6 Chinese ceramics found from Kollam Port site



Fig.7 Coins of Tang Dynasty (8<sup>th</sup> century) from Kollam Port



Fig.8 Coins of Song Dynasty (11<sup>th</sup> century) from Kollam Port

Indian historians believe the Kollam Port was originally constructed during the middle of the 9<sup>th</sup> century. Several coins found at the site have proven that the port and its surrounding shores belonged to the territory of the Chola dynasty. *The History of the Song (Song shi)* records the existence of a settlement called Guli belonging to the Chola dynasty in the southwest part of India. Scholars believe

the name and location of the settlement correspond to the place currently known as Kollam or Quilon. Chinese ceramics and coins have provided important evidence for dating and understanding the historical exchange between India and China.

Additionally, researchers have found fragments of teal-glazed ceramics, which are identical to artifacts dated to the middle of the 10<sup>th</sup> century that were excavated from the tomb of Liu Hua in Fujian Province. These findings could be evidence that

Kollam was not merely a destination for merchants but also a transportation hub on the maritime trade route between Asia and Europe during the 10<sup>th</sup> century.



Fig.9 TGP found from Kollam Port site

The cooperation between the Palace Museum and KCHR began in 2013 and was listed in China as a National Cultural Cooperation Program for 2014-2015. In order to formalize the agreement and details of the research programs, Mr. Feng Nai'en, a deputy-director of the Palace Museum; Mr. Li Ji, the director of the Palace Museum's Institute of Archaeology; and Mr. Ronnie Chan, chairman of the China Heritage Fund have conducted several meetings at Kerala. This cooperative effort is the culmination of efforts for promoting mutual interests in archaeological and cultural exchange.

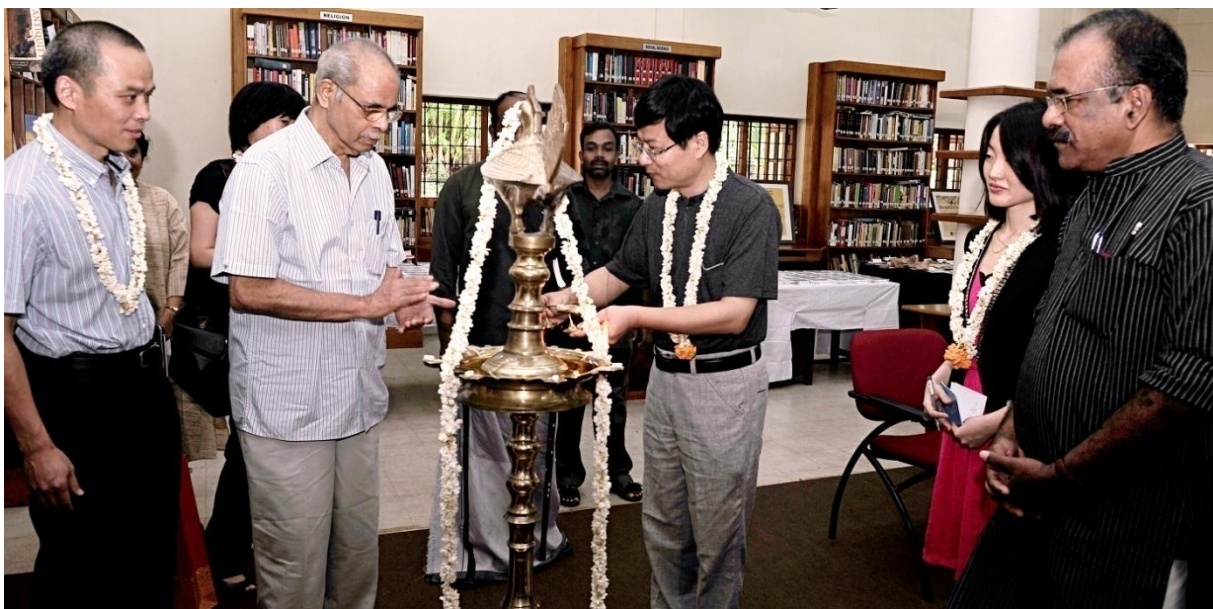


Fig.10 Mr. Feng Nai'en (3rd Left) visiting KCHR (2013)

The year 2016 marked three years of collaborative efforts. From 2014-2015, the Palace Museum's Institute of Archaeology sent three teams to India to participate in the archaeological excavations along the west coast of Kerala and conduct several research projects related to the Chinese artifacts

discovered at various sites in Indian. In October 2016, the Palace Museum welcomed a team of six representatives from KCHR to participate in training at the Musuem's ceramics laboratory, conduct archaeological excavation inside the Forbidden City, and visit archaeological sites and museums in Jingdezhen. These mutually beneficial programs have served to develop trust and a strong relationship between the Museum and KCHR.



Fig.11 Mr. Li Ji (Front 2nd Left) and Ms. Ren Wanping (Front 3rd Right) welcomed KCHR visiting The Palace Museum (2016)



Fig.12 KCHR team visiting Luomaqiao Site at Jingdezhen, Jiangxi Province (2016)

The Kollam Port site was discovered one month before the first planned trip to Kerala by a team from the Palace Museum. The subsequent excavations of the newly discovered site corresponded with the visit by the Museum's team. After gaining an understanding of the site and the excavated artifacts, researches here in Beijing realized the importance of these findings. Consequently, the Museum's Institute of Archaeology sent several groups of specialists to Kollam, including the Institute's director and archaeologist Mr. Li Ji. After discussions with KCHR, a cooperative agreement was reached and joint archaeological exploration and excavations began at the site.



Fig.13 Archaeology team from The Palace Museum doing research on the example found from Kollam Port site (2014)



Fig.14 Archaeology team from The Palace Museum visiting Kollam Port for the first time in 2014

On this collaborative foundation, the 2017 excavations will be conducted by a joint team of researchers and staff from the Kerala Council for Historical Research, University of Kerala, and the Palace Museum. The project involves archaeological surveys, test pitting, and excavation at the port site and will seek to archive primary archaeological finds. The cooperative effort also shows the recognition of the Museum's Institute of Archaeology by the Archaeological Survey of India.

Expanding archaeological research at the Palace Museum, this work also serves to promote the Belt and Road Initiative of China's State Council. As more artifacts are recovered, the Museum will seek to provide further reports on the project and deepen understandings of how the Kollam Port site fits into the overall historical context and archaeological enterprise.



Fig.15 Mr. Li Ji and Archaeology team from The Palace Museum visiting Kollam Port with KCHR (2015)

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## 2017 年印度奎隆港口遗址考古工作正式启动

近日，故宫博物院考古研究所与印度喀拉拉邦历史研究委员会（Kerala Council for Historical Research）正式收到印度国家考古局（Archaeology Survey of India）批复，获得了 2017 年度印度喀拉拉邦奎隆港口遗址（Kollam Port Site）考古发掘项目资质。自此，印度奎隆港口遗址中印联合考古发掘工作正式启动。

奎隆港口位于印度西南沿海，是喀拉拉邦（Kerala）境内位列柯钦港（Cochin Port）之后的第二大港口。2014 年 2 月开始，港口拟对码头长度和深度进行扩建，在中部偏北的靠岸位置开始向下挖沙，挖深至水下约 4.5 至 8 米深处，沙土中发现大量陶、瓷及金属质文物。喀拉拉邦历史研究委员会（KCHR）对此高度关注，遣专人对遗址进行了调查，并对出水文物进行了跟踪收集。

迄今，奎隆港口遗址出土的陶、瓷残片已约万余件，金属文物约千余件。其中，数量最多的是印度本地生产的红砂胎陶器。印度本土以外的文物，还包括可能来自地中海地区的彩色玻璃装饰物，以及来自伊斯兰地区的铜钱、孔雀蓝釉陶器。同时出土的中国文物，包括五百多件瓷器残片，以及一千三百多枚铜钱（含残件）。其中瓷器残片包含产自浙江、江西、广东、福建等省的产品，年代约在 10 至 14 世纪。铜钱纪年自 8 至 13 世纪。这是目前奎隆港口遗址出土的年代序列较为明确、来自同一国家的唯一一批文物。

根据印度历史学家的考证，今天的奎隆港口始建于 9 世纪中叶<sup>1</sup>，港口遗址新出土的几枚注辇王国（Chola Dynasty）钱币可印证其时奎隆属注辇国管辖。《宋史》卷四百八十九记载，西南印度的注辇国有部落名故里<sup>2</sup>，其名称与位置均与今天的奎隆（Kollam / Quilon）相近。奎隆港口发现的大批来自 9 世纪以后的中国陶瓷及钱币，可以为确认奎隆港口遗址的年代、性质，及其与古代中国的关系提供重要实物参考。

除出土印、中文物外，奎隆港口遗址还出土有一定量的来自地中海、伊斯兰地区的文物。其中，有几件孔雀蓝釉陶器残片，与福建刘华墓出土的孔雀蓝陶瓶基本相同，年代不晚于 10 世纪中叶<sup>3</sup>。这一现象表明，奎隆港口遗址是一处海上贸易的中转，而非仅是中印贸易的终点，这也为我们勾勒 10 世纪以来印度-地中海区域的航线提供了重要线索。

故宫博物院与喀拉拉邦历史研究委员会（KCHR）的考古交流与合作项目开启于 2013 年，

<sup>1</sup> V. NagamAiyar, Travancore State Manual, 1906 CE. Revised by T. K. Velupillai in 1940.

<sup>2</sup> 《宋史》卷四百八十九，“注辇国东距海五里，西至天竺千五百里，南至罗兰二千五百里，北至顿田三千里，自古不通中国，水行至广州约四十一万一千四百里……所统有三十一部落，其西十二，曰……故里……”

<sup>3</sup> 王振镛、杨作鉴《刘华墓出土文物》，《福建论坛》1983 年 10 月。

并被列为《中华人民共和国与印度政府 2014-2015 年度文化合作项目》。为促成该项目的建立与具体工作的展开,我院冯乃恩副院长、考古所李季所长先后多次赴印度进行实地调研与协调,促成双方达成广泛共识。

迄今,双方已进行了为期三年的考古研究交流合作。其间,我院考古研究人员组成的工作组于 2014-2015 年间三度赴印,与 KCHR 会在印度沿海遗址考古调查与发掘、陶瓷标本科技检测研究等方面开展了多项具体合作。2016 年 10 月,我院邀请 KCHR 工作组访华,在故宫进行了为期一个月的田野考古及实验室考古交流培训工作,并前往景德镇瓷器窑址进行了有针对性的实地调研。通过上述工作,双方建立了良好的互信合作关系。

奎隆港口遗址的发现与初步调查,正是在故宫博物院考古工作组第一次赴印工作期间进行的。根据对出土遗物的初步整理,结合相关文献记录,工作组明确了遗址的重要价值,随后,故宫博物院考古研究所领导多次赴奎隆港口遗址考察,经与 KCHR 协商,明确了在此进行正式考古发掘的工作计划。

在此基础上,2017 年度奎隆港口遗址考古工作,将由喀拉拉邦历史研究委员会(KCHR)、喀拉拉邦大学(University of Kerela)、故宫博物院三方组成联合考古队,进行包括考古调查、试掘及正式发掘在内的全面工作。这不仅标志我院的考古学研究能力得到印度国家考古局的认可,也是我院考古学研究范围的拓展,更是我院的相关学术研究服务于一带一路的具体表现。相信随着此项工作的逐步展开,更多遗址及遗物材料将使我们对奎隆港口遗址的认识更加全面与深入。我们也将竭力把此项考古发掘与科研成果,第一时间刊布,以供国内外学者参看使用。

