



## Pattanam Site

**For Prelims:** Archaeological site, Muziris, Greco-Roman classical age, South Indian civilization.

**For Mains:** Pattanam Site.

### Why in News?

Recently, some excavations have uncovered the Pattanam Site in Kerala, revealing that Pattanam was a thriving urban center from the **5<sup>th</sup> century B.C.** to the **5<sup>th</sup> century A.D.**

### What are the Key Points of Pattanam Site?

#### ▪ About:

- Pattanam, located in central Kerala, is home to the **only multi-cultural archaeological site** on the southwestern coast of the Indian subcontinent.
- The excavations have uncovered **less than 1% of the site so far**, but the evidence has found that it was a thriving urban center around 5th century A.D., with its **peak phase from 100 B.C. to A.D. 300.**
- It was known as Muziris, the "**first emporium**" of the Indian Ocean, having rigorous cultural and commercial exchanges between the **Greco-Roman classical age** and ancient **South Indian civilization.**
  - The name Muziris is believed to have originated from the Tamil word "Muciri", which means "**the land of seven rivers**".

#### ▪ Pattanam Excavations:

- The technological, metallurgical, literary, and artistic advances of this phase bear witness to rigorous cultural and commercial exchanges.
- The Pattanam excavations have unearthed over 45 lakh sherds (ceramic fragments); these include approximately 1.4 lakh belonging to the **littoral regions of the Mediterranean, the River Nile, the Red Sea, the western and eastern Indian Oceans, and the South China Sea.** Recent findings include the seal of a sphinx, native to the ancient Greek city of Thebes.

#### ▪ New Findings:

- **No Social Hierarchy:**
  - There is no evidence of **institutionalized religion or caste system** in ancient Pattanam.
- **No Idol Worship:**
  - No idols of gods and goddesses or grandiose places of worship were found.
- **Absence of Weaponry:**
  - The absence of sophisticated weaponry also **stands in contrast with some other Pattanam-contemporary sites.**
  - The people of Pattanam **may have been a peace-loving people** who did not harbor **religious and caste boundaries.**
- **Cremation and Burial Practices:**
  - The burial practices at the Pattanam site were confined to fragmentary skeleton

remains, and the **burials were of a "secondary" nature**, where the dead were cremated first and the **osseous remains ceremoniously buried later**.

- **Secular Ethos:**

- The absence of religious customs in the artifacts found suggests that there **was a secular ethos prevalent in society**.
- People of widely differing backgrounds **were buried the same way**, pointing to the prevalence of a secular society.
  - The researchers focusing on **Sangam-era literature** connect the observation of secularism with the evidence from Sangam sources to point out that the **people of the time were secular in every aspect of their highly sophisticated** and pluralistic society.

- **Significance:**

- The Pattanam site holds **immense value for those who aspire to meaningful alternatives** to community living, looking beyond a casteless society towards a closer connection with nature.

## What Greco-Roman Classical Age?

- The Greco-Roman classical age refers to a period of ancient history spanning from the 8<sup>th</sup> century BC to the 5<sup>th</sup> century AD, when the **cultures of Greece and Rome exerted a significant influence** on the Mediterranean world and beyond.
- This period is known for its many achievements in art, literature, philosophy, science, and politics, and it laid the foundation for many of the cultural traditions that continue to shape the modern world.
- During this time, **Greece and Rome produced some of the most influential thinkers** (Socrates, Plato, Aristotle), artists, and leaders in human history, and their ideas and achievements continue to inspire people to this day.

[Source: TH](#)

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