



Man and Environment
ABSTRACTS
Volume XLVIII, No. 1 (January-June 2023)

1. [Notes on Geoarchaeology of Hunsgi-Baichbal Valleys of the Shorapur Doab, North Karnataka](#)
S.N. Rajaguru

After brief comments about the geological and climatic history of India, this paper highlights the principal geoarchaeological aspects of the Hunsgi-Baichbal valleys located in the southwestern corner of Shorapur Doab in North Karnataka. These observations relate to the lateral origin of high-level gravels found on the banks of the Krishna and Bhima rivers, the erosional origin of the two valleys in the Tertiary period, Pleistocene sedimentary stratigraphy and the Stone Age cultural record associated with it. The Early Acheulian levels at Hunsgi and Isampur are assigned to the Early Pleistocene on the basis of their association with weathered bedrock (granite/limestone), and the absence of calcrete in these levels suggests that the climate was of the wet semi-arid type.

S.N. Rajaguru, *Man and Environment* XLVIII (1): 1-4 [2023].
ME-2023-1A01

2. [Evidence for the Presence of Prehistoric Hunter-Gatherer Communities on Khadir Island, Great Rann of Kachchh, Gujarat](#)
V.N. Prabhakar, Shikha Rai, Vikrant Jain, J.S. Ray and Ravi Bhushan

The human occupation from Early Harappan times onwards on Khadir Island, the Great Rann of Kachchh, is well-known due to the excavations at Dholavira. The possible presence of other Early Harappan settlements on this island has also recently been indicated by researchers. The entire cultural dynamics of the Harappans and the related trade activities are well-attested by evidence at Dholavira. The well-planned settlements at a vantage location on the island would not have been possible without a proper understanding of the topography and surface run-off during the monsoon season. However, the discovery of an Early Harappan settlement between the streams of Mansar and Manhar has led to several questions being raised about human occupation during prehistoric times. The possibility of prehistoric sites on Khadir Island is strengthened by the discoveries made in the similar geographical location of the Las Bela region of Pakistan, where hunter-gatherer presence has been attested to in over 29 locations. The chance findings from a channel cutting on a hillock near Bambhanka exposed a compact shell-midden horizon of roughly 30-40 cm thickness. Most of the shell remains display breakage on the central part presumably to extract meat from them. The

evidence also corroborates similar findings from the Las Bela region of Pakistan, which are placed between the seventh and fifth millennia BCE. The possibility of hunter-gatherer communities depending on the shell remains as a food source and participating in long-distance trade with inland sites like Mehrgarh cannot be ruled out. This paper discusses in detail the discovery of shell-midden sites on Khadir Island.

V.N. Prabhakar, *et al.*, *Man and Environment* XLVIII (1): 5-14 [2023].
ME-2023-1A02

3. [An Appraisal of Shell Working Evidence from Harappan Settlements in Kachchh, Gujarat](#)
Arati Deshpande-Mukherjee

In Gujarat, evidence for shell working, i.e., the manufacture of shell objects, during the Harappan/Indus Valley Civilization (IVC) is now well attested from its several settlements. The shell evidence reveals the large-scale manufacture of shell objects such as bangles, beads, inlays, ladles, etc. between 2600 and 1900 BCE. Although attempts at reconstruction of shell working have been carried out for sites such as Nageshwar, Kuntasi, Nagwada, etc., for the sites in the Kachchh region they have been limited. In the last few decades, excavations of some important Harappan sites in this region have yielded appreciable evidence for this particular craft activity. Hence, this paper attempts to get insights into its various aspects by taking into account the shell evidence recovered from excavated sites such as Khirsara, Shikarpur, Dholavira, and Kotada Bhadli. These sites strongly indicate shell working as one of the important craft activities in Kachchh, which was chiefly carried out during the mature/urban phase, following which it declined only to be continued at very few sites like Dholavira.

Arati Deshpande-Mukherjee, *Man and Environment* XLVIII (1): 15-27 [2023].
ME-2023-1A03

4. [Cupules found in the Megalithic Site of Kalikavu in Meenachil Taluka, Kottayam District, Kerala](#)
Cyriac Jose

This paper provides details about recent investigations of Iron Age-Megalithic sites in the Meenachil River Basin in the Kottayam District of Kerala where evidence of a dolmen with cupules on its capstone was discovered. This paper briefly discusses the megalithic finds from the Meenachil River Basin and cupules reported from the other sites in Kerala with special attention on the cupules of the Megalithic site at Kalikavu.

Cyriac Jose, *Man and Environment* XLVIII (1): 28-36 [2023].
ME-2022-1A04

5. [A Note on Rock Shelters from Pennagaram Region, Middle Cauvery Basin, Tamil Nadu](#)
Mutharasu Anbalagan, Aditti Ponnaiyan and M. Don Wesley

The abundance of rock art in South India from the Late Pleistocene period provides a glimpse of the early human artistic, cognitive, symbolic and aesthetic behaviours. Six new sites from the authors' micro-regional survey in Tamil Nadu's Pennagaram region are reported in this note.

Mutharasu Anbalagan *et al.*, *Man and Environment* XLVIII (1): 37-41 [2023].
ME-2022-1A05

6. [A Preliminary Report of the Excavation at Bhorkala \(2021-22\), District Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh](#)
Anil Kumar Dubey, Virag G. Sontakke and Rahul Kumar Tyagi

Bhorkala is situated about 35 km west of Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh. The site was excavated by the department of Ancient Indian History, Culture, and Archaeology, Banaras Hindu University, to understand the cultural sequence of the site, nature of the site, and its relationship with adjoining big centres like Agiabir and Rajghat. The small-scale excavation of the session 2021-22 revealed ceramics like Black Slipped Ware, Red Ware, and Red Slipped Ware including the NBPW and associated Grey Ware. The excavations yielded significant artefacts such as bone points and arrowheads, terracotta discs, and a few terracotta and stone beads from the NBPW period. The material recovered during surface exploration indicates that the site was inhabited till the Gupta and post-Gupta periods. The present paper focuses on the preliminary results of the first session of excavations at the site.

Anil Kumar Dubey *et al.*, *Man and Environment* XLVIII (1): 42-51 [2023].
ME-2023-1A06

7. [An Annotated Bibliography of Prof. S.N. Rajaguru's Research Publications \(1966 to 2023\)](#)
Sushama G. Deo and Jayendra J. Joglekar

This is a compilation of a comprehensive annotated bibliography highlighting Prof. S.N. Rajaguru's extensive contributions.

Sushama G. Deo and J.J. Joglekar, *Man and Environment* XLVIII (1): 52-89 [2023].
ME-2023-1A07

8. Reminiscences about Prof. S.N. Rajaguru

Hema Achyuthan, R.K. Ganjoo, Niranjan Ghate, Savita Ghate, Vishwas S. Kale, Shrikant Karlekar, Kiran Kaul, Ravi Korisettar, Arun Kumar, Sheila Mishra, S.B. Ota, K. Paddayya, R.S. Pappu, Shanti Pappu, Kumar Akhilesh and Prachi B. Joshi, A.K. Singhvi, Sudha Vaddadi

This is a collection of reminiscences about Prof. S.N. Rajaguru written by various academics that were influenced and motivated by this eminent person's exceptional work and intellectual accomplishments. These reminiscences contain a rich tapestry of personal accounts, anecdotes, and reflections that collectively paint a vivid portrait of Prof. Rajaguru's life, achievements, and impact on their respective fields.

Hema Achyuthan *et al.*, *Man and Environment* XLVIII (1): 90-111 [2023].
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Man and Environment

ABSTRACTS

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1. Colonial Archaeology of Northeast India

Tilok Thakuria and Monika Kalita

Antiquarian and archaeological interests in Northeast India, in a real sense, began during Colonial British rule. Northeast India came under the direct rule of British Colonial power in 1826, and this paved the path for the British evangelists and officers to explore the region for antiquarian and archaeological remains. They reported mainly their accidental encounters with ancient ruins and prehistoric artefacts gifted to them by locals. These reports are simple but bring the region to the archaeological map. Despite this, the region remained excluded from Alexander Cunningham's survey and even from the agenda of the Archaeological Survey of India until 1947. The native scholars, however, formed a society in 1912 to counter such ignorance in the study of the region's past, and this indeed instilled nationalism in the study of the history and archaeology of the region. This paper attempts to evaluate the development of archaeological research in Northeast India under colonial rule. It also attempts to understand the contributions of colonial evangelists and officers from the "Colonialist Archaeology" perspective and the nationalistic reactions of native scholars.

Thakuria and Kalita, *Man and Environment* XLVIII (2): 1-10 [2023].
ME-2023-2A01

2. Neolithic Fragments from the Khasi-Jaintia Hills, Thus Far

Marco Mitri

The recent excavations in the Khasi-Jaintia Hills of the central Meghalaya Plateau has revealed the potential for an indepth study of the Neolithic culture in this geographical area. This region is inhabited by the Khasi-Pnar communities, who speak the Austro-Asiatic language and share similar genetic makeup with the Munda group and other Austro-Asiatic-speaking populations of Southeast Asia, thus making it one of the most conspicuous regions in Northeast India, even for the prehistoric period. This paper will discuss the development of archaeological research in the hills to date, with an emphasis on the recent excavations of two Neolithic sites in Khasi Hills and future prospects.

Mitri, Marco, *Man and Environment* XLVIII (2): 11-18 [2023].
ME-2023-2A02

3. Reviewing the Typology of the Khasi-Jaintia Megaliths and their Symbolic Meaning *Cecile A. Mawlong*

The term 'Megalith' is of Greek derivation, signifying a large stone. First introduced by antiquaries in the middle of the 19th century, it was used to define a class of monuments in western and northern Europe consisting of huge undressed stones bearing Celtic names such as dolmens, cromlechs, and menhirs. Subsequently, the term was used to describe a complex of stone structures widely distributed in time and space. But as pointed out by Gordon Childe, the criteria used in applying the term are not indicated by etymology alone, i.e., the material or magnitude of the stones, but rather the function and purpose behind the erection, which is the proper basis for classification. Further, as asserted by Childe, the term is applied only to monuments whose use is known imperfectly or not at all but presumed to have been erected for some superstitions, ritual, or religious end (Childe 1948: 5). Since then, the word has been used to describe a variety of stone monuments not only associated with burial sites and funerary assemblages but also to memorials raised in honour of ancestral spirits, feasting, fertility-promoting rituals, etc., by groups practicing a living megalithic tradition.

In the context of Northeast India, megalithic traditions are an important cultural component of a number of tribes, among whom it was a living tradition rooted in the belief in an intimate connection between the world of the living and the world of spirits and the powerful influence that the departed exert on the living. The material manifestations of the megalithic ritual are the setting up of menhirs, dolmens, stone seats, and stone circles, as well as forked and straight wooden posts both as memorials to the dead and to the living.

The Khasi-Jaintia of Meghalaya is one such group that has a well-established megalithic tradition, as indicated by the profuse distribution of stone monuments in various parts of the Khasi-Jaintia Hills. The objective of this paper is to review the typology of Khasi-Jaintia megaliths, exploring their symbolic meaning.

Mawlong, Cecile, *Man and Environment* XLVIII (2): 19-29 [2023].
ME-2023-2A03

4. The Practice of Log Coffin Burial among Naga Communities of Highland Northeast India *Tiatoshi Jamir, David Tetso, Mepusangba and Taliyanger Changkiri*

The use of log coffins in Northeast India is a tradition that is confined to some of the Naga communities of Kiphire and Phek districts of Nagaland in Northeast India. Little is known of these wooden vessels that served as mortuary containers for the dead. Their use is confined to the broader mortuary practice of jar burial, largely associated with Mimi and Laruri Naga villages adjoining the Myanmar border. Ethnohistorical accounts inform us of their early use until the arrival of Christianity in the region, which was thereafter abandoned along with other age-old indigenous traditions. The present paper is a result of a rescue archaeology programme for the State Museum, Kohima; it draws upon the surviving evidence of log coffins reported from caves and rock shelters in the Mimi and Laruri regions of Nagaland.

Jamir *et al.*, *Man and Environment* XLVIII (2): 30-28 [2023].
ME-2023-2A04

5. Aspects of the Prehistory of Asian Agricultural Dispersals: A Focus on Northeast India
Alison Betts and Michael Spate

Northeast India is remarkably bio-diverse and has been suggested as a region of original domestication for a number of possible plant species. It is largely scientific *terra incognita* in the highly complex story of the early dispersal of cultivated and domesticated rice, and its role in Holocene vegiculture is likely to have been significant. The prehistory of Northeast India is poorly understood. Its interpretation involves not only archaeology but also a complex mix involving linguistics, genetics, palaeobotany, and folklore. This paper reviews the debates around early domestications and crop dispersals across the Indian sub-continent, Central, Eastern and Southeastern Asia, and examines what these offer to an understanding of the prehistory of Northeast India.

Betts and Spate, *Man and Environment* XLVIII (2): 39-49 [2023].
ME-2023-2A05

6. Archaeological Explorations at Chakrashila Wildlife Sanctuary, District Kokrajhar, Assam
Pankaj Brahma Choudhury and Tilok Thakuria

Research conducted on the northern bank of the Brahmaputra River in western Assam has witnessed huge archaeological potential, with the majority of the remains reported from the districts of Bongaigaon, Darrang, Dhubri, and Goalpara. Some of the areas of the region, although rich in archaeological records, have remained unexplored from an archaeological perspective. The current investigation examined the archaeological potentiality of the Chakrashila Wildlife Sanctuary located on the northern bank of the River Brahmaputra in the Kokrajhar District through a foot survey. It revealed the presence of prehistoric and historical archaeological localities in the sanctuary. The prehistoric assemblages resemble a similar typology to the prehistoric cultures of the Garo Hills of Meghalaya. The historical remains, with their engravings and quarried rocks, revealed a new dimension to the region's past culture.

Choudhury and Thakuria, *Man and Environment* XLVIII (2): 50-58 [2023].
ME-2023-2A06

7. Figurations of Iron in Ethnography: Pre-Colonial Northeast India in Perspective
Amrendra Kumar Thakur and Pili Rigam

Iron is a significant metal that has been used by most human societies including the tribes of Northeast India since Historical times. The socio-cultural significance of iron has been explored and explained by many scholars in the context of other regions of the Indian sub-continent except for Northeast India. The scholars interested in the Northeast India have

mainly focused on the diversity of ethnicity, flora, and fauna in the region; as a result, iron is usually represented as a mere mineral with insignificant socio-cultural importance. The lack of archaeological excavations is another hindrance. Also, due to the absence of written sources among the tribes, much of the knowledge about iron technology could not be retained until the arrival of colonialists. Still, colonial ethnography is able to salvage some methods and processes related to the ironwork in Northeast India. Hence, this paper attempts to reconstruct the work and trade in iron by the tribes of Northeast India through colonial ethnographic sources.

Thakur and Rigam, *Man and Environment XLVIII* (2): 59-64 [2023].
ME-2023-2A07

8. Sacred Temple of the Ahoms: A Case Study of the Deo-shal Archaeological Site, Charaideo, Assam
Nabajit Deori, Chabina Hassan and Simran Sambhi

The sacred place of the Barahis, the temple at the Deo-shal site in Charaideo was established by Siu-ka-Pha when he founded the capital of the Ahom Dynasty in 1253 CE. This temple is located atop a hillock overlooking the necropolis on the northeastern side and the residential complex on the northwestern side. This site contains remnants of the temple, and the recent archaeological excavations by the Directorate of Archaeology, Assam, have brought to light more details about the Medieval archaeology of this region. This article is an attempt to shed light on fresh observations and evidence recorded during the first season of the excavation (2022-23).

Deori *et al.*, *Man and Environment XLVIII* (2): 65-68 [2023].
ME-2023-2A08

9. Longtsaok Tradition among the Lepcha Community of Sikkim
Garima Thakuri

The Lepchas, or Rong, are an indigenous community living in Sikkim, a northeastern region of India. They revere the Kanchenjunga or the Konchen Kongchlo as the 'original big stone' or the source of their origin. Thus, since time immemorial, stones have been considered an essential part of Lepcha culture. The Lepchas erect upright stones called longtsaok, which is derived from the two Lepcha words, long meaning 'stone' and tsaok meaning 'hard' on different occasions. The erecting of longtsaok, or megaliths, in archaeological parlance, shows resemblance to the megalithic tradition practiced by communities like the Karbi of Assam, the Khasis and Garo of Meghalaya, various Naga communities of Manipur and Nagaland, the Hrusso of Arunachal Pradesh, as well as the Mizo of Mizoram, among others. These longtsaok, either standing as a single stone or in clusters of three, seven, or more stones, have been considered sacred symbols among the Lepchas, which are associated with some important life events and erected as markers to commemorate those special occasions. This paper is a humble attempt to understand the tradition of megalithic culture found among the Lepchas from an ethno-archaeological perspective.

Thakuria, Garima, *Man and Environment* XLVIII (2): 69-71 [2023].
ME-2023-2A09

10. Compound Pottery Manufacturing Techniques in Nagaland: Ethnographic Observations
R. Chumbeno Ngullie

Pottery is one of the most significant products manufactured by human beings. Since humans learned to manipulate clay, they have been producing varieties of pottery for diverse purposes. In the pottery manufacturing process, numerous forming techniques at different stages are usually employed but are often overlapped and obliterated by the latter techniques. Identification of such forming techniques is difficult, especially in the archaeological context. In such a scenario, ethnographic studies can perhaps provide some clues to the archaeologists in understanding the ancient technical process. This paper examines the handmade pottery of different ethnic communities in Nagaland to understand the forming techniques employed by the potters.

Ngullie, R. Chumbeno, *Man and Environment* XLVIII (2): 72-79 [2023].
ME-2023-2A10

11. Unspoken Culture of the Nagas': Traditional Knowledge Associated to Ferrous and Non-ferrous Metal Technologies
Tiatemjen Tzudir

The discovery of metals and the involvement of associated technologies created a great cultural impact among the early Nagas. This is reflected in the ways in which they interpreted the world around them. The impact clearly reflects the knowledge they had gained through their lasting relationship, particularly with metals, which they valued and saw as bizarre elements that they tried to understand and explore through varied techniques. The paper thus attempts to bring out certain unspoken insights into the Nagas' inherent scientific traditional practices for metal technologies. A discussion on the importance of technology, different cultural influences, the past identity of the practicing community, and ties far beyond their present settlements is documented herewith.

Tzudir, Tiatemjen, *Man and Environment* XLVIII (2): 80-86 [2023].
ME-2023-2A11

12. The Crafting of Lalaphao: An Ethnographic Study of Wui Pottery, Nagaland
Yabangri Changkiri

The Wui potters of Nagaland are known for their hand moulded technology, usage of paddle wrapped with cord, and anvil for producing pottery. Locally called as *Lalaphao*, the pottery was widely used for barter and trade among the community of this region in the past. Pot making is regarded as a part-time and women-oriented craft by the Wuis. At present, there are only few potters, whom are addressed as Walaphaolok 'old or experienced potters'. The present paper attempts to give an account of the manufacturing process and socio-economic

aspects of the Wui pottery mainly to understand its implications on the study of archaeological pottery.

Changkiri, *Man and Environment* XLVIII (2): 87-93 [2023].
ME-2023-2A12

13. An Experimental Case Study: Application of Dental Microwear Analysis (DMA) on Dental Remains from Naga Ancestral Sites (Nagaland)
Ruokuonuo Rose Yhome, Veena Mushrif-Tripathy and Tiatoshi Jamir

Dietary behaviour has been an important factor in understanding past populations, and the application of Dental Microwear Analysis (DMA) for understanding dietary behaviour, especially the texture of the food consumed, has recently developed into a preferred method for understanding dietary studies. Although numerous human remains from archaeological sites were recovered over the years from the Northeast region of India and osteological research has been conducted, yet the dietary indicators of the past population at large have not been explored to their full potential till date. The faunal and botanical remains have been the major contributors to dietary habits so far. Archaeological samples for this study were obtained from three archaeological sites, namely, Jotsoma (JTA), Leshemi (LSI), and Rikhelüwong (RKA), which belong to similar historical timeframes. This work examines whether, given a similar environment and lifestyle, the nature and texture of the diet of individuals from these three sites differ. The sample sites are categorised as ‘ancestral sites’ in which the lineage is still connected with modern Naga populations. In comparing the archaeological samples with samples from the contemporary population, a significant change in food-producing techniques has been observed. However, the dietary constituents consumed today appear to be similar to those consumed by the populations from which the archaeological samples were taken.

Yhome *et al.*, *Man and Environment* XLVIII (2): 94-107 [2023].
ME-2023-2A13