

*International Conference on
Archaeology and Cultural Heritage
in Pakistan and Adjacent Regions*

**Marriott Hotel, Islamabad, Jan 5, 2012
Margalla Hotel, Islamabad, Jan 6-8, 2012**

Sponsored by the **American Institute of Pakistan Studies**
with support from the **US Embassy, Islamabad**
In collaboration with the **Department of Archaeology and Museums**
Ministry of National Heritage and Integration
Government of Pakistan
Official Media Partner **Radio Pakistan**

Conference Theme: Pakistan lies at the intersection of important historical and modern trade and exchange networks that link Afghanistan and Central Asia to the Indus Valley region and beyond to Peninsular India. The Indus valley and adjacent regions have also played an important role in maritime trade to the regions of Gujarat, Oman and the Arabian/Persian Gulf area. This conference brought together leading archaeologists and museum specialists of Pakistan with US scholars and scholars from Afghanistan and India to discuss their most current research and develop future collaborative projects. The topics ranged from the Prehistoric and Proto-Historic Indus Valley, to the Early Historic and Islamic Periods.

This conference provided a forum for Pakistani, US, Afghan and Indian scholars to share their recent discoveries and discuss ongoing problems of dating and classification. Other aspects of Cultural Heritage research, preservation, conservation and education will also be discussed. In addition to inviting leading scholars from throughout Pakistan, we have invited three leading scholars from Afghanistan and six scholars from India.

Faculty and students from universities throughout Pakistan were invited to attend the conference and see the importance of cultural heritage. Since the conference was held in Islamabad, members of the various ministries and NGOs were able to attend to find out what the most important issues are. The conference will result in a significant edited volume that will be printed in Pakistan in order to make it available to the local schools and universities. In this way the results of the conference will be disseminated widely within the country as well as internationally.

This conference is the second major Archaeology conference organized by the American Institute of Pakistan Studies with the support of the US Embassy in Islamabad. There were 54 papers presented by 37 Pakistani Scholars, 3 Afghan, 6

Indian, and 8 US scholars. A complete program is attached with this report and although many more people wanted to make presentations, it was not possible to add them to the program at the last minute. The conference was extremely successful and was attended by a large number of scholars and students from Pakistani universities and institutions involved in cultural heritage management. The first day of the conference was held at the Marriott Hotel and saw around 220 attendees and subsequent days had attendances of around 180 to 200. The Indian participants were not able to make the first two days of the conference due to delays in issuing their visas. Eventually, with the help of Faridullah Khan, Secretary of Culture they did get their visas and were able to reach Islamabad to join the conference. (see attached program and abstracts for full details)

The first morning of the conference began with a short welcome by Dr. Kamran Ali, President of the American Institute of Pakistan Studies. This was followed by a special inaugural welcome by the Honorable US Ambassador to Pakistan, Mr. Cameron Munter. The Ambassador stressed the importance of cultural heritage study and preservation, and the need to develop regional collaborations. His presentation was followed by overviews of the important aspects of archaeology of Pakistan by Mr. Faridullah Khan, Secretary of National Heritage and Integration and Dr. Fazal Dad Kakar, Director General of Archaeology and Museums, from the same ministry. Mr. Haroon Ahmed Khan, Director General, Directorate General of Archaeology, Govt. of the Punjab, also gave a welcome address followed a short presentation about the general theme and goals of the conference by Dr. J. Mark Kenoyer, AIPS Trustee and conference organizer.

The conference was organized into seven sessions with themes that included overviews of the archaeology of Afghanistan as well as various regions of Pakistan and India. Another theme was museum development and ways of presenting the archaeology of Pakistan to the general public and to special groups of people, such as physically disabled/challenged visitors. All thirteen of the Pakistani scholars who were invited to the US for the Cultural Heritage Training workshop in 2011 were invited to present a summary of what they have done in their respective museums since returning from their tour. Ten out of the thirteen participants presented papers and showed that the training that they had received was very worthwhile. Other papers focused on issues relating to site and monument conservation as well as conservation and documentation of artifacts. One paper focused on the huge impact that the Pakistan 18th amendment and devolution has had on the organization and implementation of archaeological excavation and conservation in different regions. The remaining papers presented the most current research in a specific region or at a specific site in Pakistan, India and Afghanistan. After each paper or at the end of a session the audience had a chance to ask questions and this provided for some very stimulating discussions. One presenter, Dr. Brent Huffman from Northwestern University showed some clips from a film that he is preparing on the salvage archaeology and the pending destruction of the Mes Aynak Buddhist site in Afghanistan. The film was very moving and led to a lively discussion of

similar projects in Pakistan, such as the Bashar Dam project that will destroy hundreds of rock art sites along the Indus river.

The goal of getting scholars from the region and the US to develop contacts and network for future collaborative projects was highly successful. On the evening of January 5, the whole group of participants and special guests from the Islamabad area were invited to a reception at the home of Tom Miller, the Minister Councilor of Public Affairs. This was a great opportunity for them to personally meet the Ambassador and the Embassy staff who were instrumental in helping AIPS with the grant that supported the conference and the cultural heritage workshop in the US. It also was a chance for them to discuss the Ambassador Fund program with the Embassy staff, as some of the participants had received support from this program. In addition to this first reception, everyone had the chance to talk during tea breaks and meals. This led to numerous programs for exchange of publications, and discussions for scholars to join projects in each other's country. All attendees agreed that we need to hold another conference next year. The venue could be Afghanistan or India and the senior scholars from each country said they would pursue this upon their return home.

Another important outcome of the conference was the fact that many of the US scholars had never been to Pakistan before or had not been back for many years. This led to the development of important contacts between US and regional scholars that will hopefully lead to future collaborations.

Six to ten students from each major university were invited to attend the conference, and many more came on their own. The press was also invited to film and record the event. The official media partner was Radio Pakistan and all the presentations were recorded and were to be aired at various times following the conference. Numerous media organizations filmed and recorded statements from the leading scholars of each region. Special emphasis was made in all interviews regarding the funding from the US Embassy, the conference organization by the American Institute of Pakistan Studies, and the collaborative support of the Department of Archaeology and Museums, Government of Pakistan.

After the conference, all of the US, Afghani, and Indian participants were taken on various tours of local museums, monuments and sites in the Islamabad area. The Afghan and some of the US participants were taken to Taxila after the final conference session on Sunday Jan 8. The next day they were taken to Lahore where they were able to visit the Lahore Museum. The following day they visited the site of Harappa and then returned to Lahore. On Jan. 11 they visited the major sites in Lahore and were able to see the high quality of conservation at the Badshahi Mosque, Shish Mahal, and the major gateway of the fort that was conserved with US Ambassador Funds. They then visited Jahangir's Tomb and Rohtas Fort on the way back to Islamabad. The Afghans returned to Kabul on Jan. 12 and the various US participants all returned to the US in the next few days after the conference.

Immediately following the conference the Indian scholars all flew to Mohenjo-daro via Karachi and Sukkur. During a short stop over in Karachi, they were able to visit the National Museum and the State Bank Museum in Karachi. While in Sukkur they were able to visit the newly excavated site of Lakhajodaro and also visited the stone tool workshops on the Rohri Hills. They spent a day visiting Mohenjo-daro and then flew to Lahore the next afternoon. In Lahore they were able to visit the Department of Archaeology, University of the Punjab to meet with Dr. Farzand Masih and his colleagues and students. They also visited the Lahore Fort and Badshahi Masjid. They were warmly received by the local Pakistani hosts at each location and in Lahore the Punjab Archaeology directors and architects took them out to dinner at a newly developed food street next to the Badshahi Mosque. The following day, Jan. 13, they visited the site of Harappa and then returned to India on the 14th of January. These post conference travels were arranged to provide more time for the regional scholars and US scholars to interact and discuss possible aspects of collaboration.

Overall we are happy to state that this conference has been a great success. An edited volume of the conference proceedings will also be prepared as noted in the introduction above.

On behalf of all the participants and the AIPS I want to thank the US Embassy and all of the people who have helped to make this conference possible, specifically the current and previous Ambassadors, the current and previous Public Affairs and Cultural Affairs officers. I also want to thank all the AIPS staff in Islamabad and the US for their assistance in making the travel arrangements and all local logistics for the participants and students.

Sincerely,

J. Mark Kenoyer,
AIPS Trustee,
Professor, Department of Anthropology.