

Kodumanal Excavation Site

June 23, 2020

Relevance for UPSC exam

The Kodumanal excavation of 10 pots and bowls, instead of the usual three or four pots, placed outside three-chambered burial cists and inside the cairn-circle, threw light on burial rituals and the concept of afterlife in megalithic culture.

Details of the Kodumanal site

- Kodumanal was once a flourishing ancient trade city known as Kodumanam, as inscribed in Patirrupattu of Sangam literature.
- It is located on the northern banks of Noyyal river.
- The city of the Chera dynasty was inhabited by highly skilled craftsmen specialized in making beads and high quality iron.
- The city played a major role in Indo-Roman trade since it is linked midway between Muziris port (Malabar coast) and Puhar port (Coromandel coast)

Findings at the excavation site

- The rectangular chambered cists, each two metres long and six metres wide, are made of stone slabs, and the entire grave is surrounded by boulders that form a circle.
- Previous excavations have revealed that multi-ethnic groups lived in the village the findings unearthed so far include an animal skull, possibly of a wolf or a dog; precious stones like beryl, carnelian, quartz, jasper, beads, gold pieces and needles; copper smelting units; the mud walls of a workshop; potteries; and Tamil Brahmi script.

[The Iron Age of the southern peninsula is often related to Megalithic Burials. Megalith means Large Stone. The burial pits were covered with these stones. Such graves are extensively found in South India. Some of the important megalithic sites are Hallur and Maski in Karnataka, Nagarjunakonda in Andhra Pradesh and Adichchanallur in Tamil Nadu. Black and red pottery, iron artifacts such as hoes and sickles and small weapons were found in the burial pits].

Source: *The Hindu*