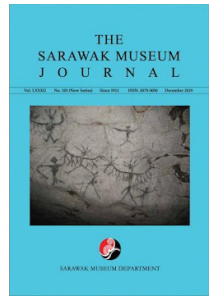




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**THE ECOLE FRANÇAISE D'EXTRÊME-ORIENT - SARAWAK MUSEUM DEPARTMENT
ARCHAEOLOGICAL PROJECT IN SANTUBONG**

Daniel Perret¹ and Mohd. Sherman bin Sauffi²

INTRODUCTION

Archaeological research in Sarawak began just after the Second World War under the leadership of Tom Harrisson. As Curator of the Sarawak Museum since 1947, he began exploring the Sarawak River Delta, a 600 km² area between Telaga Air in the northwest, Tanjung Sipang in the north, Tanjung Po in the northeast, Samarahan in the southeast and Kampung Makam in the southwest.

It is the village of Santubong at the mouth of the Santubong River, one of the branches of the delta, that first caught Harrisson's attention because of observations and chance finds made there since the middle of the nineteenth century. Mention should be made of the famous Batu Gambar, an anthropomorphic sculpture in high relief on a rock at the Sungai Jaong site, rediscovered by a local in the 1880s, and near which was found a "Hindu" terracotta figurine, of carved stones reported at the beginning of the twentieth century on the neighbouring site of Bongkissam, "Indian character" pottery, as well as various objects in gold, Chinese coins and a few residues from ironworking (cf. especially Evans 1929)..

Keywords:

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The identification of iron slag near Batu Gambar in the Sungai Jaong site led Harrisson to launch surveys using mine detectors in 1948. He uncovered five potential sites for excavation, later excavated intermittently between 1952 and 1966: Sungai Jaong, Sungai Buah, Bongkissam, Bukit Maras and Kampung Ayer. Two of them, Sungai Jaong and Bongkissam, about three kilometres apart, are the primary focus of a new archaeological project conducted by the Ecole française d'Extrême-Orient⁴ in cooperation with the Sarawak Museum Department.

The Sungai Jaong site (N 01°43.041'; E 110°20.699'), about three kilometres from Santubong, occupies the sides of a small hill (approx. alt., 15 m) overlooking the mangrove swamp, the tidal Jaong River, a tributary of the Santubong River, and the Raso River, a small tributary of the Jaong River.