Maldives Heritage Survey

Project Synopsis

The Maldives Heritage Survey (MHS) worked to systematically inventory and document endangered tangible cultural heritage in the Maldives and Indonesia – including historical structures, archaeological sites, manuscripts and physical objects. The documentation produced in the course of our work includes site, feature, and object records with geospatial data, digital photography, LiDAR point clouds, ortho-photomaps, photogrammetric 3D models, CAD site plans and architectural elevations, IIIF digitized manuscripts, and oral history video interviews.

The materials documented through this work are critically endangered, facing both natural and human threats. Our work thus creates a digital archive of multimedia source material for the history of Maritime Southern Asia and the Indian Ocean world. All field data and digital heritage assets created incorporating that data are made open-access available on our project website: https://maldivesheritage.oxcis.ac.uk

The Maldives Heritage Survey was led by Prof. R. Michael Feener (PI and Director) with Dr Patrick Daly as Co-PI. The project is financially supported by the Arcadia Fund, a charitable fund of Lisbet Rausing and Peter Baldwin (project number 3984).

The MHS was based at the Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies, working in partnership with the Earth Observatory of Singapore at Nanyang Technological University and SAIELab at Washington University in St. Louis. Work in the Maldives was done in partnership with the Maldives National Center for Cultural Heritage, Ministry of Arts, Culture and Heritage.

Project Team 2018-2020

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Archive organisation

This archive contains data collected in the Maldives over the course of the Maldives Heritage Survey (2018-2020), which was a pilot phase for the later expanded Maritime Asia Heritage Survey (MAHS): https://maritimeasiaheritage.cseas.kyoto-u.ac.jp

The MHS archive includes raw and edited material from the sites covered by the Field Survey Teams as well as digital heritage assets produced based on that. The documentation produced in the course of our work includes site, feature, and object records with geospatial data, digital photography, LiDAR point clouds, ortho-photomaps, photogrammetric 3D models, CAD site plans and architectural elevations, IIIF digitized manuscripts, and oral history video interviews.

The records for each item were compiled for integration into our online Arches database. We provide two kinds of backup of this database in the archive, one is a CSV export of the heritage records, and the other one is a pg_dump (PostgreSQL Dump), which is a text file in SQL format, that can be used to reconstruct the database. Field books are included in the archive containing information on the regions where the surveys were carried out and were used as initial guides for the MHS and MAHS Field Survey Team for each atoll.

The document **MHS_Catalogue** contains inventories of sites, collections, features, objects, oral history videos, 3D models, and OpenHeritage 3D data sets from the Maldives Heritage Survey, together with basic metadata to facilitate easier access to the archive and related digital assets files on specified platforms.

For a detailed folder structure of the archive, please see the supplementary material.

Data organisation

All project data is organized here geographically, with file names reflecting the conventions used for recording sites, features, and objects by our field survey. This consists in a three-letter code for the name of the atoll where it is located:

GNI   Gnaviyani

HAF   Haa Alif

KFA   Kaafu

LAM   Laamu

SEN   Seenu

HDH   Haa Dhaalu

This is followed by a three-letter code unique to each island in the given atoll:

GNI-DDG   Gnaviyani – Dhoodigan

HAF-AFF   Haa Alif – Alidhuffaru Finolhu

KFA-MLE   Kaafu – Malé City

LAM-FND   Laamu – Funadhoo

SEN-GAN   Seenu – Gan

HDH-KDF   Haa Dhaalu – Kuludufushi

After that, each site is given a unique number, and records within that site are organized by a second series of numbers after that are distinguished by the following system of abbreviations:

MS   Manuscript

S   Structure

SO   Small Object

OH   Oral History

The MHS Site location codes for all the surveyed locations and the folder structure of the archive can be found in the supplementary material enclosed to this document.