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Notice for the PhD Viva Voce Examination

Ms Ann Rose Davis, Registration Number: 2270041, PhD Scholar at the Department of English and Cultural Studies, School of Humanities and Performing Arts, CHRIST (Deemed to be University) will defend her PhD thesis at the public viva-voce examination on Thursday, 25 June 2026 at 03.30 pm in Room No. 044, Ground Floor, R&D Block, CHRIST (Deemed to be University), Bengaluru - 560029, Karnataka, India.

- Title of the Thesis** : **Seasoning the Food Narratives: Examining the Relationship between Memory and Culinary Artefacts in Muziris**
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The members of the Research Advisory Committee of the Scholar, the faculty members of the Department and the School, interested experts and research scholars of all the branches of research are cordially invited to attend this open viva-voce examination.

Place: Bengaluru
Date: 08 June 2026


Registrar (Academics)

ABSTRACT

Muziris is one of India's most prominent ancient ports in Kerala from the 1st Century BCE. This ancient port has trade connections with Romans, Greeks, Persians, Chinese, Egyptians and holds an important place in the maritime history of Kerala. The Muziris Heritage Project (MHP), established with an objective of preserving this history of Muziris, has built and renovated museums and monumental sites for a global audience. Muziris is studied in terms of the archaeological findings from Pattanam, through socio-political contexts, yet the continuity of the living history of the space is absent in the scholarly works. The research addresses this gap through examining culinary artefacts to understand how Muziris is remembered, re-imagined and presented in private domestic spaces. For this, the research will evaluate and analyse the reproduction of personal memories and familial identities to identify the tensions between the everyday practices and official narratives, thereby questioning representations that exclude the living culinary continuity of Muziris. Considering that Muziris was the first place to welcome Christianity, the site of the Cheraman Juma Masjid (the first mosque in India), the venue of the famous Kodungallur Bharani festival, home to Jewish cultural heritage and royal palaces, this research employs an ethnographic study to analyse Muziris as a 'religious microcosm'. The ethnographic study will focus on the regions now considered as part of Muziris, extending from North Paravur in Ernakulam to Kodungallur in Thrissur under the Muziris Heritage Project (MHP). Incorporating evidence from semi-structured interviews, participant observation methods, maps and photographs, the research will collect narratives from families about their personal and collective memories, family history, culture and traditions of culinary practices to examine them closely in relation to the excavations happening in Muziris, by Kerala Council for Historical Research (KCHR), in collaboration with the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI). The research findings reveal the selective representation and remembrance of identities, the exclusion of regional culinary culture from the official narratives of Muziris, while emphasising the importance of culinary artefacts, power dynamics, and discontinuities in living culinary history.

Keywords: Culinary heritage, Living history, Maritime trade, Memory, Ethnography

Publications:

1. **Davis, A.R.** Savoring traditions: culinary memory, familial identity, and authenticity of meen curry in Kerala. *J. Ethn. Food* 11, 41 (2024). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s42779-024-00256-0> (Q1 Scopus-Indexed)
2. **Davis, Ann Rose,** and Rolla Das. "I Can't Talk to You': Reflecting on the Situated Knowledge of Women Researchers in Ethnographic Contexts in 'South Asia.'" *Innovative Approaches to Social Research Challenges*, edited by Zamokuhle Mbandlwa and Bonginkosi Wellington Zondi, IGI Global Scientific Publishing, 2026, pp. 275–290. DOI: 10.4018/979-8-3373-6410-0.ch010 (Scopus-Indexed)