Phillip IV Painting Part of South Carolina Colonial History
By Chester DePratter

On January 24, 2018, SCIAA Archaeological Research Trust (ART) board member, Sam McCuen, hosted an important meeting at the Palmetto Club in Columbia. In an effort to bring together organizations interested in South Carolina’s Spanish colonial history, Sam hosted representatives from SCIAA, Santa Elena Foundation, Columbia Museum of Art, South Carolina Humanities Council, and South Carolina Department of Archives and History. The focus of the meeting was a painting of Spanish King, Philip IV (reign 1621-1665), that is currently in the collection of the Columbia Museum of Art. This painting was the work of Juan Pareja, apprentice and slave of well-known artist, Diego Velazquez.

Philip IV was the grandson of Philip II (reign 1556-1598) who ruled Spain at the time when Pedro Menéndez de Avilés was dispatched to La Florida to terminate French intrusion into territory long claimed by Spain. Menéndez was successful in eradicating the French colony; he established St. Augustine in 1565 and Santa Elena, his capital, on Parris Island, SC, in 1566. Occupation at Santa Elena ended in 1587, but St. Augustine survived through the reigns of Kings Philip III (reign 1598-1621) and Philip IV and on to the present day.

Discussion at the Palmetto Club meeting centered on the history of Santa Elena, the Columbia Museum of Art’s Philip IV painting, and the way that connections could be made that would enhance knowledge of Spain’s important contribution to South Carolina’s early history. Plans are being considered for events celebrating the painting and its connections to Santa Elena.

Attendees at the meeting included Sam McCuen, Host, Archaeological Research Trust (ART), Steven Smith, Director, SC Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology, Chester DePratter, Research Professor, SC Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology, USC, Della Watkins, Executive Director, Columbia Museum of Art, Angi Wildt, Chief Development Officer, Columbia Museum of Art, Randy Akers, Executive Director, Humanities Council SC, Eric Emerson, Director, SC Department of Archives and History, Andy Beall, Chairman, Santa Elena Foundation, Megan Meyer, Executive Director, Santa Elena Foundation, and Chris Allen, Santa Elena Foundation Board.