



## ARCHAEOLOGICAL DISCOVERIES

Keeladi | Adichanallur | Arikamedu | Excavation Sites  
Prehistoric Periods | Epigraphy | Archaeological Methods

Based on 56 Previous Year Questions

### AT A GLANCE: PYQ DISTRIBUTION BY SUB-TOPIC

This analysis is based on 56 PYQs across 7 sub-topics within Archaeological Discoveries. The table below shows question distribution and priority.

#	Sub-Topic	Q Count	% Share	Priority Level
1	Arikamedu	9	16.1%	★★★★★ SUPER HIGH
2	Keeladi	7	12.5%	★★★★★ SUPER HIGH
3	Site-District Matching & General Archaeology	12	21.4%	★★★★ HIGH
4	Adichanallur	4	7.1%	★★★ MEDIUM-HIGH
5	Epigraphy & Inscriptions (Archaeology-linked)	6	10.7%	★★★ MEDIUM
6	Prehistoric Periods & Artifacts	8	14.3%	★★★ MEDIUM
7	Archaeological Methods & General Knowledge	10	17.9%	★★★ MEDIUM

### 1. THE "DECODED" SYLLABUS

The official syllabus says: "Archaeological Excavations." Here is the real, tested syllabus decoded from 56 PYQs:

#### Official vs. Actually Tested

Syllabus Implies	What is ACTUALLY Tested (PYQ Evidence)
Archaeological excavations - general	THREE specific sites dominate: Arikamedu (9Q), Keeladi (7Q), Adichanallur (4Q). Together = 35.7% of all questions. You MUST know each site's excavator, district, river, key finds, and connected dynasty.
Excavation sites	Site-to-District matching is a SUPER-HIT pattern: Keeladi=Sivagangai, Adichanallur=Tirunelveli/Thoothukudi, Arikamedu=Pondicherry, Kodumanal=Erode, Porunthal=Dindigul, Alagangulam=Ramanathapuram. Asked in Q3, Q25, Q46, Q55, Q56.
Prehistoric periods	Palaeolithic tools at Pallavaram (Robert Bruce Foote), Athirapakkam (Mesolithic), Paiyampalli (polished stone axes / Neolithic), Thoothukudi (oldest microlithic). Stone Age classification is tested.
Roman trade evidence	Deeply tested through Arikamedu: Mortimer Wheeler excavation, Augustus-period coins, Roman pottery, Roman Factory, scientific soil-layer method. Also: Karur = earliest Republican Roman coins.

## The "Hidden Syllabus" – Unexpected Topics Asked

- Carbon-14 dating (C<sup>14</sup>) for age estimation in archaeology – Q50
- Ethno Archaeology = study of living people and material culture – Q54
- Archaeological Survey of India HQ = New Delhi – Q53
- Indian Treasure Trove Act = 1878 – Q36
- Kudimiyamalai inscription about Music, Parivadini = Veena – Q38, Q39
- I. Mahadevan stated Indus script is related to Old Tamil – Q37
- Porunthal = Glass beads (correct pair) – Q51

## 2. NATURE OF QUESTIONS – TYPE-WISE BREAKDOWN

Question Type	Approx %	Count	Skill Required
Factual / Direct Recall	~36%	~20	Pure memorization: Who excavated where? Which district? What was found?
Match the Following (Site-District)	~20%	~11	Photographic recall of Site→District, Site→Excavator, Site→Finds pairings
Statement-based (Which is true/false)	~21%	~12	Multi-fact verification: need precise details about each site to eliminate wrong options
Assertion-Reason	~7%	~4	Cause-effect understanding: Why do we say Tamil-Rome trade existed? (A-R on Arikamedu)
Passage / Comprehension-based	~9%	~5	Read clues (river, district, finds) and identify the site. Tests holistic site knowledge.
Odd One Out / Not Matching	~7%	~4	Identify incorrect pairing from a list of site-find or site-district pairs

### ► KEY TAKEAWAY FOR STUDENTS

- This topic is 56% PURE RECALL. No analysis needed – just precise memory of site details.
- Site-District matching is the SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT pattern. Prepare a master site-district table and revise daily.
- Passage-based questions are a GIFT if you know your sites well – they give clues (river, district, finds) that directly point to the answer.
- Assertion-Reason is exclusively on Arikamedu-Roman trade connection. Master this one A-R pattern.

## 3. HIGH-PRIORITY FOCUS AREAS (MUST MASTER)

### ► SUPER-HIT #1: The Big Three Sites – Arikamedu, Keeladi, Adichanallur

These three sites alone account for 20 out of 56 questions (35.7%). Here is the master reference table:

Detail	ARIKAMEDU	KEELADI	ADICHANALLUR
District	Pondicherry	Sivagangai (NOT Madurai!)	Tirunelveli / Thoothukudi
River	Ariyankuppam River	Vaigai (12 km SE of Madurai)	Thamiraparani
Excavator	Mortimer Wheeler (used scientific soil-layer method)	ASI (Site established Feb 2017)	Jagor (first discovery); Bruce Foote (excavation)

Detail	ARIKAMEDU	KEELADI	ADICHANALLUR
<b>Key Finds</b>	Roman pottery, Augustus-period coins, Roman Factory, evidence of Rome-Tamil trade	Tamil-Brahmi inscribed pottery, brick buildings, copper rods (eyelash decoration), 6th c. BCE urbanization	Urn burials (114 acres), iron spear, bronze cock flag, gold lids/frontlets
<b>Significance</b>	Proves Tamil-Roman maritime trade; Roman Factory in 1st c. AD	Proves 6th c. BCE urbanization in TN; Sangam Age urban civilization on Vaigai	Iron Age burial culture; Urn burial site; Bronze Age artifacts
<b>Times Asked</b>	<b>9 times</b>	<b>7 times</b>	<b>4 times</b>

### ▲ TRAP ALERTS – Big Three Sites

- Keeladi is in SIVAGANGAI district (Q3), NOT Madurai. It is 12 km SE of Madurai but administratively in Sivagangai. This is the #1 trap!
- Adichanallur: JAGOR discovered the urn burial site first (Q7, Q9). Bruce Foote EXCAVATED it later (Q8). Don't confuse discoverer vs. excavator.
- Arikamedu is in PONDICHERRY (Q10), NOT Tanjavur. Q14 specifically tests this – Statement (1) "Arikamedu found at Tanjavur" is FALSE.
- Keeladi is NOT mentioned in Pathitruppattu (Q5, statement iv is FALSE).
- Arikamedu coins are from AUGUSTUS period (Q17), not Julius or Justinian.

### | SUPER-HIT #2: The Master Site-District Table

This is the single most tested pattern in this topic. Memorize this table completely:

Site	District	Key Association	Q Refs
<b>Keeladi</b>	<b>Sivagangai</b>	Vaigai, Tamil-Brahmi, 6th c. BCE	Q3, Q46, Q55
<b>Adichanallur</b>	<b>Tirunelveli / Thoothukudi</b>	Thamiraparani, Urn burials	Q8, Q46, Q56
<b>Arikamedu</b>	<b>Pondicherry</b>	Roman Factory, Wheeler	Q10, Q14
<b>Kodumanal</b>	<b>Erode</b>	Iron smelting furnace	Q46, Q56
<b>Porunthal</b>	<b>Dindigul</b>	Glass beads	Q51, Q56
<b>Alagangulam</b>	<b>Ramanathapuram</b>	Sangam port town	Q25
<b>Pallavaram</b>	Chennai (Kancheepuram)	First palaeolithic tool (Foote)	Q18
<b>Paiyampalli</b>	Tiruvannamalai / Vellore	Polished stone axes, Neolithic	Q19, Q28
<b>Athirapakkam (Attirampakkam)</b>	Kancheepuram	Mesolithic tools	Q24, Q33
<b>Korkai</b>	Thoothukudi	Pearl diving, Pandya port	Q55
<b>Mankulam (Mangulam)</b>	Madurai	Tamil-Brahmi inscriptions	Q46
<b>Thulukkarpatti</b>	Tirunelveli	Nambi river, Iron Age culture	Q20, Q45
<b>Perumbalai</b>	Dharmapuri	-	Q45
<b>Tiruvakarai</b>	Villupuram	-	Q56
<b>Ovamalai</b>	Madurai	-	Q23

## SUPER-HIT #3: Excavator-Site Pairing

Excavator / Scholar	Site / Contribution	Q Refs
Mortimer Wheeler	Arikamedu – Roman Factory; scientific soil-layer method	<b>Q12, Q13, Q43, Q48 – asked 4 times!</b>
Robert Bruce Foote	Pallavaram – first palaeolithic tool; Adichanallur – excavation	Q8, Q18 – asked 2 times
Jagor (Andrew Jagor)	Adichanallur – first discovery of urn burial site	Q7, Q9 – asked 2 times
I. Mahadevan	Stated Indus script related to Old Tamil	Q37
Caldwell	First excavated Pandya's Pearl market	Q29
R. Balakrishnan (IAS, retired)	Pointed to Keeladi-Indus Valley similarities	Q1

## SUPER-HIT #4: Roman Coins & Trade Evidence Cluster

- **Arikamedu:** Augustus-period coins confirm Rome-Tamil trade (Q11, Q16, Q17)
- **Karur:** Earliest REPUBLICAN Roman coins in Tamil Nadu (Q27)
- **Puhar:** Roman coins minted/found during Sangam age (Q21)
- **Arikamedu:** Roman Factory – Wheeler discovery (Q15, Q26, Q43)
- **Uraiyur excavation:** Roman pottery found (Q49)
- **Overall significance:** Arikamedu illustrates extent & richness of Tamil-Rome maritime trade (Q52)

## 4. LOW-YIELD / "READ ONCE" AREAS

Topic	Freq.	Advice
Ovamalai archaeological site location	1	Just know: Ovamalai = Madurai. One-time question. Skim.
Gangaikonda Cholapuram district (Ariyalur)	1	More likely to appear under Chola dynasty topic. Just note the district.
Ethno Archaeology definition	1	One fact: Ethno Archaeology = study of living people & material culture. Done.
ASI HQ location	1	ASI HQ = New Delhi. One-time GK question.
Primitive stone tool types (spear, round, knife, egg-shaped)	1	All four are correct (Q32). Read once. Low repeat probability.
Thiruchirapalli inscription – Pallava village admin	1	Very niche. Just note: Trichy inscription = Pallava village admin (Q42).
Siddharmalai & Alagarmalai inscriptions mentioning 'Madura'	1	Deep epigraphy. Just know: (a) and (b) mention 'Madura'. Skip details.

## PREVIOUS YEAR QUESTION

1. This place is located 12 km South East of Madurai. It proves the fact that an urban civilization existed in Tamilnadu in the Sangam era on the banks of the river Vaigai. A researcher and retired civil servant Thiru R.

Balakrishnan points to the similarities between this civilization and Indus valley civilization. Which of the following places is described in the paragraph above?  
(A) Azhagankulam  
(B) Porunthal

- (C) Keeladi  
(D) Kodumanal  
(E) Answer not known
2. Keezhadi site founded in the year  
(A) February 2016  
(B) February 2017  
(C) February 2018  
(D) February 2019  
(E) Answer not known
3. The Archaeological excavation of Keeladi site is located in \_\_\_\_\_ district.  
(A) Tirunelveli  
(B) Pudukkottai  
(C) Sivagangai  
(D) Madurai  
(E) Answer not known
4. High literacy level of Tamil people by 6th century BCE has been indicated in the Tamil-Brahmi script excavated at  
(A) Keezhadi  
(B) Kodumanal  
(C) Alangulam  
(D) Uraiyur  
(E) Answer not known
5. Which of the following statements are true about Keezhadi?  
(i) Evidence for brick buildings  
(ii) Tamil-Brahmi inscriptions on pottery  
(iii) Copper rods used for decorating eyelashes  
(iv) Keezhadi has been mentioned in Pathitrapattu  
(A) (i), (ii) and (iv) only  
(B) (i), (ii), (iii) and (iv) are true  
(C) (i), (ii) and (iii) only  
(D) (ii) and (iv) only  
(E) Answer not known

### Adichanallur (அதிசனல்லூர்)

6.  
(i) This place is situated on the bank of the Thamiraparani river.  
(ii) There are Urn burial site spread over 114 acres of land.  
Which archaeological site is described in the above statements?  
(A) Adichanallur  
(B) Arikamedu

- (C) Keelavalavu  
(D) Kalugumalai  
(E) Answer not known
7. Adichanallur site was first excavated by  
(A) John Marshall  
(B) Andrew Jagor  
(C) Bruce Foote  
(D) Cunning Ham  
(E) Answer not known
8. Which one of the following statements is/are correct regarding Adichanallur Excavation?  
(1) Adichanallur locates in Tirunelveli District.  
(2) Robert Bruce Foote made excavation in Adichanallur.  
(3) The iron spear and bronze cock flag found in Adichanallur.  
(4) The gold lids found in Adichanallur.  
(A) (1) only  
(B) (2) only  
(C) (1), (2), (3) only  
(D) (1), (2), (3), (4)  
(E) Answer not known
9. The urn burial site of Adichanallur was discovered by  
(A) Bruce foote  
(B) Jagor  
(C) Sagar  
(D) Cunningham  
(E) Answer not known
- Arikamedu (அரிக்கமேடு)**
10. Arikamedu is located in  
(A) Tirunelveli  
(B) Dindugal  
(C) Pondicherry  
(D) Goa  
(E) Answer not known
11. The discovery of Augustino coins help to confirm further the trade contacts with Rome at  
(A) Arikamedu  
(B) Coimbatore  
(C) Karur  
(D) Adichitanallur  
(E) Answer not known
12. In Arikamedu, the excavation was conducted by

- (A) Dr. Jagor  
(B) Steward  
(C) Robert Bruce Foote  
(D) Mortimer Wheeler  
(E) Answer not known
13. Who among the following excavated Arikamedu?  
(A) K. Rajan  
(B) Mortimer Wheeler  
(C) S.R. Rao  
(D) Alexander Rea  
(E) Answer not known
14. Which one of the following statements is/are correct regarding the Arikamedu excavation?  
(1) Arikamedu found at Tanjavur  
(2) It was a port under the Cholas  
(3) It has a trade relation with Rome  
(4) The Arikamedu Fort has close trading contact with Kaveripattanam, Alagankulam and Musiri  
(A) (1), (2) are correct (3), (4) are incorrect  
(B) (1), (2), (3) are correct (4) is incorrect  
(C) (2), (3), (4) are correct (1) is incorrect  
(D) (1), (3), (4) are correct (2) is incorrect  
(E) Answer not known
15. Archaeology through literary evidence confirms the presence of a 'Roman Factory' in the neighbourhood of Pondicherry during the first century A.D. and where was it located?  
(A) Arikamedu  
(B) Poombuhar  
(C) Mahabalipuram  
(D) Kodumanal  
(E) Answer not known
16. Assertion [A] : The trade contacts of the Tamils with the Roman Empire.  
Reason [R] : The Roman Pottery and gold coins unearthed in the Arikamedu excavation.  
(A) [A] and [R] are true, and [R] is correct explanation of [A]  
(B) [A] is true, but [R] is false  
(C) [A] and [R] are false  
(D) [A] is false but [R] is true  
(E) Answer not known

17. The discovery of Roman coins at Arikamedu help to confirm Indias trade contacts with Rome issued during \_\_\_\_\_ period.

(A) Copernicus  
(B) Julius  
(C) Augustus  
(D) Justinian  
(E) Answer not known

### Other Specific Excavation Sites & Discoveries

18. The first Old Stone Age tool was discovered at Pallavaram in Tamil Nadu by  
(A) Robert Bruce Foote  
(B) Alexander Flemming  
(C) Joseph Prestwich  
(D) Henry Geoghegan  
(E) Answer not known
19. Where a large number of polished stone cults are found in Tamil Nadu.  
(A) Paiyampalli  
(B) Pudukkottai  
(C) Tirunelveli  
(D) Tiruvannamalai  
(E) Answer not known
20. Read the passage carefully and choose the correct option(s) from below :  
This town is located on the left bank of Nambi river in Tirunelvely district. An excavation was carried out to search for the roots of the Iron Age culture along the Nambi river banks. It is a fertile archaeological site and is known for its antiques.  
Name the archaeological site.  
(A) Thulukkar patti  
(B) Keezhadi  
(C) Vembakottai  
(D) Perambalur  
(E) Answer not known
21. During the Sangam age, in which place Roman coins were minted?  
(A) Adichanallur  
(B) Arikamedu  
(C) Korkai  
(D) Puhar  
(E) Answer not known
22. Where did the oldest Microlithic relics find in TamilNadu?

- (A) Chengalpattu  
(B) Thanjavur  
(C) Tiruvannamalai  
(D) Thoothukudi  
(E) Answer not known
23. The Archaeological site of Ovamalai is located at  
(A) Madurai  
(B) Tirunelveli  
(C) Sivaganga  
(D) Tanjore  
(E) Answer not known
24. The stone tools found at Athirapakkam belongs to \_\_\_\_\_.  
(A) Paleolithic Age  
(B) Meolithic Age  
(C) Mesolithic Age  
(D) Megalithic Age  
(E) Answer not known
25. Alagangulam archaeological site is located in \_\_\_\_\_ District.  
(A) Ramanathapuram  
(B) Madurai  
(C) Tirunelveli  
(D) Tanjore  
(E) Answer not known
26. Roman Factory was excavated in  
(A) Arikamedu  
(B) Adichchanalur  
(C) Keeladi  
(D) Poompuhar  
(E) Answer not known
27. Where are the earliest Republic of Roman coins available in Tamilnadu?  
(A) Chennai  
(B) Karur  
(C) Madurai  
(D) Thanjavur  
(E) Answer not known
28. In Tamil Nadu Neolithic culture site found in  
(A) Kanniyakumari  
(B) Paiyampalli  
(C) Kodumanal  
(D) Adichanallur  
(E) Answer not known
29. Who was the archeologist, who first excavated the Pandya's Pearl market?  
(A) Nagasamy  
(B) Caldwell  
(C) K.V. Raman  
(D) S. Parnavithana  
(E) Answer not known
30. In Tamil Nadu 'Stone Alignment Burial' is found in  
(A) Kodumanal  
(B) Kanchipuram  
(C) Adhichanallur  
(D) Keezhadi  
(E) Answer not known
31. Which one of the following is not a palaeolithic site?  
(A) Salem  
(B) Madurai  
(C) Vallam  
(D) Pallavaram  
(E) Answer not known
- Prehistoric Periods & Artifacts**
32. Primitive stone tools are  
1) Spears  
2) Round stones with sharp ends  
3) Knives with sharp edge  
4) Egg shaped sharp tools  
(A) 1 only  
(B) 2 only  
(C) 1, 2 and 3 only  
(D) 1, 2, 3 and 4  
(E) Answer not known
33. Consider the statements on the middle Palaeolithic period and pick out the correct answer.  
(i) The tools are smaller in size  
(ii) They are found at Attirampakkam, Gudiyam and Vadamadurai  
(iii) Urn burials have been found  
(iv) Cultivation of food plants is an important trait  
(A) (i) and (ii) are correct  
(B) (ii) and (iii) are correct  
(C) (iii) and (iv) are correct  
(D) (i) and (iv) are correct  
(E) Answer not known

## Sangam Age & Metallurgy

34. Name the metal used by the people of South India from the Sources
- (A) Copper
  - (B) Gold
  - (C) Silver
  - (D) Iron
  - (E) Answer not known
35. Assertion [A] : There are references in the Sangam Literature to those who made tools in Iron.  
Reason [R] : Excavations have revealed iron smelting furnaces at Kodumanal and Guttur.
- (A) [A] is True but [R] is False
  - (B) Both [A] and [R] are True; and [R] is the correct explanation of [A] (Answer: B)
  - (C) [A] is False, [R] is True
  - (D) Both [A] and [R] are True, But [R] is not the correct explanation of [A] is correct
  - (E) Answer not known
36. Choose the correct statement
- (i) Hero stones of the Sangam Age can be found at Porpanaikottai in Pudukkottai district.
  - (ii) Arikamedu is a Sangam Age Port
  - (iii) The Indian Treasure Trove Act was passed in 1878
  - (iv) Roman coins are concentrated in the Thirunelveli regions
- (A) (i), (ii) and (iv) are correct
  - (B) (i), (ii) and (iii) are correct
  - (C) (ii), (iii) are correct
  - (D) (ii) and (iv) are correct
  - (E) Answer not known

## Epigraphy & Inscriptions

37. Who stated Indus script is related to Old Tamil?
- (A) I. Mahadevan
  - (B) R. Nagasamy
  - (C) Yu. Knovozov
  - (D) A. Velupillai
  - (E) Answer not known
38. The word 'Parivadini' in Kudimiyanmalai Inscription denotes
- (A) A teacher
  - (B) Veena
  - (C) A raga

- (D) Mridangam
- (E) Answer not known

39. Kudimiyanmalai inscription describes about
- (A) Music
  - (B) Drama
  - (C) Local Self Government
  - (D) Dance
  - (E) Answer not known
40. Which of the following inscription mentions about the destruction of the Tamil Confederacy?
- (A) Allahabad Pillar Inscription
  - (B) Hathigumpa Inscription of Kharavela
  - (C) Junagadh Rock Inscription
  - (D) Mehrauli Pillar Inscription
  - (E) Answer not known
41. Which among the following Inscriptions mention the ancient word 'Madura'?
- (a) Inscription at Siddharmalai
  - (b) Inscription at Alagarmalai
  - (c) Inscription at Mamandur
  - (d) Inscription at Paatipurai
- (A) (a) and (b) only
  - (B) (a) and (c) only
  - (C) (b) and (d) only
  - (D) (c) and (d) only
  - (E) Answer not known
42. One among the following inscriptions speaks about the village administrations of the Pallavas.
- (A) Manur Inscription
  - (B) Thiruchirapalli Inscription
  - (C) Kalugumalai Inscription
  - (D) Ervadi Inscription
  - (E) Answer not known

## Archaeological Methods & General Knowledge

43. Sir Martimer Wheeler discovered a Roman factory at
- (A) Adichanallur
  - (B) Arikamedu
  - (C) Kaliyur
  - (D) Kanchi
  - (E) Answer not known
44. Which of the following is (are) not matched correctly?
- (i) Megalithic burial site - Sittanavasal

- (ii) Urn burial - Mallapadi  
(iii) Glass Industry - Karaikadu  
(iv) Music inscription - Arachalur  
(A) (i) only  
(B) (ii) and (iv) only  
(C) (iii) and (iv) only  
(D) (iv) only  
(E) Answer not known
45. Choose the right matches from the following :
- (1) Perumpalai - Dharmapuri District  
(2) Mayiladumparai - Thoothukudi District  
(3) Sivakalai - Krishnagiri District  
(4) Thulukkar patti - Tirunelveli District  
(A) 1 and 4 are correct  
(B) 2 and 3 are correct  
(C) 1 and 2 are correct  
(D) 3 and 4 are correct  
(E) Answer not known
46. Match the following archaeological sites :
- (a) Adichanallur | 1. Sivagangai  
(b) Mankulam | 2. Thoothukudi  
(c) Kodumanal | 3. Madurai  
(d) Keeladi | 4. Erode  
(a) (b) (c) (d)  
(A) 2 3 4 1  
(B) 3 4 2 1  
(C) 4 3 1 2  
(D) 2 3 1 4  
(E) Answer not known
47. The coins of Sangam Cholas were unearthed by the archaeologists at
- (A) Arikamedu  
(B) Karur  
(C) Thanjavur  
(D) Uraiyur  
(E) Answer not known
48. In which excavation site Sir. Mortimer Wheeler used scientific and soil layer method?
- (A) Pallavaram  
(B) Attirampakkam  
(C) Arikamedu  
(D) Kaayal  
(E) Answer not known
49. Match correctly the Excavated information with the Excavation sites :
- (a) Thanjavur excavation | 1. Roman Pottery  
(b) Kilaiyur excavation | 2. Centre of Buddhism  
(c) Tirukkampuliyur excavation | 3. Commercial contact between Rome and Tamilagam  
(d) Uraiyur excavation | 4. Culture of Kaveri  
(a) (b) (c) (d)  
(A) 1 2 4 3  
(B) 3 4 2 1  
(C) 4 3 1 2  
(D) 2 3 1 4  
(E) Answer not known
50. \_\_\_\_\_ is used to find age estimation in the archaeology.
- (A) Co<sup>60</sup>  
(B) C<sup>14</sup>  
(C) I<sup>131</sup>  
(D) Na<sup>24</sup>  
(E) Answer not known
51. Choose the correct pair :
- (A) Glass beads - Porunthal  
(B) Shell wastes of Bangle - Keezhadi  
(C) Furnace - Kodumanal  
(D) Canoe - Auroville, Puducherry  
(E) Answer not known
52. Which archeological excavation illustrates the extent and richness of the maritime trade between Tamil Nadu and Rome?
- (A) Keezhadi  
(B) Arikamedu  
(C) Mauriyakudi  
(D) Sengalpattu  
(E) Answer not known
53. The Archaeological survey of India headquarters is located in
- (A) New Delhi  
(B) Mumbai  
(C) Chennai  
(D) Kolkatta  
(E) Answer not known
54. Which of the following deals with the study of living people and their material culture?
- (A) Ethno Archaeology  
(B) Historical Archaeology  
(C) Economic Archaeology  
(D) Pre-historic Archaeology  
(E) Answer not known

55. Match the place of excavation with the district it is located :

Place of excavation | District

---|---

- (a) Keezhadi | 1. Thoothukudi
- (b) Korkai | 2. Ariyalur
- (c) Gangaikonda Cholapuram | 3. Thanjavur
- (d) Kurumbanmedu | 4. Sivagangai

(a) (b) (c) (d)

(A) 4 3 2 1

(B) 3 2 1 4

(C) 4 1 2 3

(D) 1 4 3 2

(E) Answer not known

56. Match the Column-I (Archaeological Sites) with their districts in Column II

Column - I | Column - II

---|---

- (a) Kodumanal | 1. Thoothukudi
- (b) Porunthal | 2. Villupuram
- (c) Truvakkarai | 3. Erode
- (d) Adichanallur | 4. Dindigul

(a) (b) (c) (d)

(A) 1 3 2 4

(B) 3 4 2 1

(C) 3 4 1 2

(D) 1 2 4 3

(E) Answer not known

## 5. PREPARATION STRATEGY

### A. Mnemonics & Memory Hacks

#### ✓ MNEMONIC 1: Big Three Sites - "KAS"

- K = Keeladi → Sivagangai → Vaigai → "King Sivagangai on Vaigai"
- A = Adichanallur → Tirunelveli → Thamiraparani → "Adichi on Thamira"
- S = (Arikamedu) → Pondicherry → Wheeler → "Wheeler's Pondi Shop (Roman Factory)"

#### ✓ MNEMONIC 2: Excavators - "WFJ" (Wheeler-Foote-Jagor)

- Wheeler = Arikamedu (W and A both have vowels)
- Foote = Pallavaram + Adichanallur excavation ("Foote walked to Pallava-Adichi")
- Jagor = Adichanallur DISCOVERY only ("Jagor found the jars (urns)")

#### ✓ MNEMONIC 3: Stone Ages - Sites

- PALaeolithic = PALlavaram (Robert Bruce Foote) - both start with PAL!
- MESolithic = Athirapakkam - "Mess at Athira"
- NEOLithic = Paiyampalli - "New (Neo) Palli (school)"
- MICROLithic = Thoothukudi - "Tiny (micro) tools at Thoothukudi"

#### ✓ MNEMONIC 4: Roman Coins Locations

- Republican coins (earliest) = KARUR - "Republic Karur" (both have R)
- Augustus coins = ARIKAMEDU - "Augustus at Ari" (both start with A)
- General Roman coins = PUHAR - "Puhar = Port = Roman ships"

## Common Traps & Confusions

TRAP / Common Confusion	CORRECT ANSWER
Keeladi is in Madurai district	WRONG. Keeladi = Sivagangai district. It is near Madurai but not in it. (Q3)
Bruce Foote discovered Adichanallur urn burials	WRONG. JAGOR discovered them first. Foote EXCAVATED later. (Q7 vs Q8)
Arikamedu is in Tanjavur	WRONG. Arikamedu = Pondicherry. (Q10, Q14)
Julius Caesar coins found at Arikamedu	WRONG. Augustus-period coins, NOT Julius. (Q17)
Keeladi mentioned in Pathitruppattu	WRONG. Statement (iv) is false. Keeladi has NO literary reference in Pathitruppattu. (Q5)
Athirapakkam = Palaeolithic	WRONG. Athirapakkam (Attirampakkam) = MESOLITHIC / Middle Palaeolithic. Pallavaram = Palaeolithic. (Q24, Q33)
Kodumanal is in Coimbatore	WRONG. Kodumanal = Erode district. (Q46, Q56)
First metal used in South India was Iron	WRONG. First metal = COPPER (Thamiram). Iron came later. (Q34)

## TAMIL NADU — PREHISTORY & ARCHAEOLOGY

### WHY TAMIL NADU'S ARCHAEOLOGY MATTERS

- Tamil Nadu has one of the **richest and most debated archaeological records in South Asia**. Recent excavations — **Keeladi, Sivagalai, Mayiladumparai** — have challenged assumptions about **when iron technology began, when urban settlements emerged**, and **how early Tamil-Brahmi literacy appeared**, with major implications for rewriting South Indian chronology.
- Distinctive feature:** unlike the Gangetic sequence (Palaeo → Meso → Neo → **Chalcolithic** → Iron), most of TN shows a **direct Neolithic-to-Iron Age transition**, with Chalcolithic **largely absent/transitional**.
- River basins — **Tamiraparani, Vaigai, Palar, Cauvery, Amaravati, Ponnaiyar** — are TN's stratified laboratories of continuous human occupation (spanning **~1.5 million years**).

### Three broad chronological layers:

- (1) Pre-Megalithic (Neolithic-Chalcolithic, c. 3000–1500 BCE)** — earliest settled communities; polished stone tools; early pottery.
- (2) Megalithic / Iron Age (c. 1500–200 BCE)** — iron technology; megalithic burials (dolmens, cairn circles, urn burials); pastoral-agrarian society.
- (3) Early Historical / Sangam Age (c. 600 BCE–300 CE)** — urban settlements; Tamil-Brahmi literacy; Greco-Roman trade; Sangam literary corpus.

**Agencies involved:** ASI, Tamil Nadu State Dept of Archaeology (TNSDA), Puducherry State Archaeology, academic institutions (IIT Madras, IIT Gandhinagar, Anna University), international collaborations. **TNSDA Keeladi Phases 7 & 8** have been especially significant.

### THEME

- The narrative shift is from **burial-centric prehistory** to **early urbanism + literacy + global trade**.
- The **missing Copper/Bronze Age** is TN's signature anomaly.
- TNSDA's rise** (post-2019) marks the State leading its own archaeology.

## THE ANTIQUITY OF THE NAME "TAMIL NADU" (LITERARY ATTESTATION)

Work	Author/Era	Phrase used for the land
Purananuru	Sangam	"வையக வரைப்பின் தமிழகம்"
Silappadikaram	Ilango Adigal	"இமிழ்கடல் வரைப்பில் தமிழகம்"
Manimekalai	Sattanar	"சம்புத் தீவினில் தமிழகம்"
Periya Puranam	Sekkizhar	"நற்றமிழ் நாடு"
Kamba Ramayanam	Kambar	"தென் தமிழ்நாடு"
Modern	Bharathiyar	"செந்தமிழ் நாடு"

The name has persisted ~3,000 years, evidencing an unbroken cultural-linguistic identity.

## CHRONOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK (PREHISTORIC TIMELINE)

Period	Approximate Range
Palaeolithic (Lower)	~1.5 Mya - 100,000 BCE
Palaeolithic (Middle)	~100,000 - 40,000 BCE
Palaeolithic (Upper)	~40,000 - 10,000 BCE
Mesolithic	~10,000 - 5,000 BCE
Neolithic	~3,000 - 1,000 BCE
Chalcolithic	Limited/transitional; ~2,000 - 700 BCE
Iron Age / Megalithic	~1,200 - 300 BCE (overlaps Sangam)
Proto-Historic / Sangam	~300 BCE - 300 CE

## REDEFINING INDIA'S HISTORY — EARLY IRON (SIVAGALAI, MAYILADUMPARAI, ADICHANALLUR)

### Headline claims:

- **Sivagalai** (near Adichanallur, **Thamirabarani/Porunai basin**) iron dated to **3345 BCE** via **AMS radiocarbon dating** by **Beta Analytic (USA)** — predates the earlier Indian Iron Age benchmark (1900–2000 BCE, UP & Bihar) by **1,300+ years**.
- **Mayiladumparai (Krishnagiri)**: radiocarbon confirms iron use as early as **2172 BCE** (earlier earliest was 1510 BCE); **Late Neolithic began before 2200 BCE**; **Black-and-Red Ware introduced in the late Neolithic**, predating its usual Iron Age association.
- **85+ iron objects** (swords, knives, arrowheads) across Sivagalai, Mayiladumparai, Adichanallur — spanning **3345 BCE to 2172 BCE**.

### Global context — why revolutionary:

- Traditional global benchmark = **Hittite Empire, Anatolia (~1300 BCE)**, using **meteoritic iron** (e.g., **Tutankhamun's dagger, 1323 BCE**, high nickel; Egyptian beads). Over 200 Hittite texts + Assyrian records show iron's value by 13th c. BCE. Early smelted iron in Anatolia dated 2100–1900 BCE (**Kaman-Kalehöyük**).
- TN iron was **smelted, not meteoritic** — **XRF analysis shows NO nickel**; furnaces at **Kodumanal reached 1,300°C** by 3345 BCE; smelting furnaces at **Perungalur (Pudukkottai)**.
- **No meteoritic-iron deposits** in south India → reinforces **indigenous smelting innovation**.

## The Copper Age Conundrum:

- **C.J. Thomsen's 1836 classification:** Stone → **Copper (smelting ~1,200°C)** → **Bronze (Cu-Sn)** → **Iron (1,200–1,500°C, bloomery process)**.
- Copper smelting normally precedes iron (lower complexity); **TN's leap to iron WITHOUT a distinct Copper Age is an anomaly** — caused by **lack of copper deposits but abundant iron ore**.
- **Theory:** migrant metalworkers from NW India (familiar with copper-bronze) experimented with local iron ores → early smelting. **High-tin bronze (22–23% Sn)** at Adichanallur (13th c. BCE) suggests some (imported/influenced) copper metallurgy.
- **Crucible/wootz steel** produced at **Kodumanal by 500 BCE**, later exported globally.

## Dating methodology & key AMS dates:

- Early Indian dating used standard radiocarbon (limited); **AMS (accelerator mass spectrometry)** gives precision with smaller samples; **Beta Analytic** used AMS + **High Probability Density (HPD)** calibration.

Sample	Site / Context	Date (BCE)
Charcoal, Trench B3, Urn 10	Sivagalai	3519–3371
Charcoal, Trench A2, Urn 1	Sivagalai	3243–3102
Paddy, Trench A, Urn 3	Sivagalai	1260–1051
Habitation Layer 4	Adichanallur	2580–2465
Millet/paddy	Adichanallur	1506–1110

## Expert validation:

- **Prof. David Killick** — validates iron use by **1300 BCE** (cereal dates); accepts charcoal dates 2500–3000 BCE; dismisses "old wood" concerns (regional tree types + sealed urns).
- **Ümit Güder** — TN artefacts (axes, chisels) show **advanced forms**, unlike Anatolia's gradual development.
- Validated by **Physical Research Laboratory (India)** + international labs.
- **200+ ASI sites** excavated since 2014; **Keeladi yielded 12,000+ artefacts**; UNESCO interest in megalithic sites.
- **CM M.K. Stalin:** "India's history must begin here."
- Mining evidence: **Adichanallur possibly an opencast mining pit** (quartzite ore mined out for urn placement; traces of **malachite** and **titanium-bearing magnetite**); iron-smelting slags near Porunai River and in Adichanallur urns (7th c. BCE AMS); Rea's 1906 report + Sasisekaran's 2010 study.

### THEME

- The Sivagalai/Mayiladumparai dates **re-centre India's technological origins in the South**, challenging the north-to-south diffusion model.
- **Indigenous smelting** (no meteoritic iron) is the strongest scientific pillar.
- Iron → agrarian surplus → population growth → urbanism (Keeladi) → spread of megalith-building northward.

## THE ORIGINS OF THE TAMILS — RACE, MIGRATION & THE LEMURIA DEBATE

**Core questions:** Were the Tamils **autochthonous** to Tamilaham, or **immigrants**? If immigrants, from where, and with whom did they fuse?

## Methodological caution (balanced historiography):

- Avoid **cultural chauvinism** / fanciful claims of impossible antiquity (often Tamilian writers).
- Equally avoid **cold cynicism** / **pseudo-scientific negativism** (often European/some Indian scholars). Both extremes must be managed.

- Difficulties are real due to the **great antiquity** and limited sources.

## The Lemurian Theory:

- Proposes the Tamil homeland extended across a **vast submerged landmass** south/east/west of **Kanyakumari (Cape Comorin)**.
- **Earliest reference: Nakkirar's commentary on Iraiyanar Ahapporul** (not earlier than **9th c. A.D.**) — proposed **three Tamil Sangams**, locating earlier ones beyond Kanyakumari. Elaborated by **Adiyarkunallar & Nachinarkiniyar** (12th–14th c. A.D.).
- Term "**Lemuria**" coined by **Sclater (Englishman)** — after **lemurs** (monkey-like animals).
- **European supporters: Sir Walter Raleigh** (History of the World — "cradle of mankind"), **Prof. Haeckel** (History of Creation, Pedigree of Man — Indian Ocean once a continent), **Sir John Evans** (South India = original home of mankind), **Scott Elliot** (Lost Lemuria; **five deluges**, last swallowed Lemuria), **Sir J.W. Holderness** (peninsula geologically distinct, remnant of a former continent).
- Theory: a landmass connected South India with **Ceylon, Malaya, Indonesia, Australia, Madagascar, South Africa**; Lemuria = original home of the human race.
- **Geological hints:** similar land-surface patterns across Burma, China, Indonesia, Vindhya, South Africa, South Australia; **aquatic-animal skeletons in the Himalayas** (once under sea).
- **Ethno-cultural affinities:** Maori (NZ) & Tamil language links; **boomerang** use (Kallans of South India); **incisor-clipping** (Kadars, Mala Vedans, Jakuns of Malaya); **Negrito elements** linking to South Africa & SE Asia.

## Critical assessment of Lemuria:

- India assumed present shape **~50 million years ago** — far **before** Homo sapiens → even if Lemuria existed, its inhabitants weren't necessarily Tamil ancestors. Destruction occurred in **stages**, not one event.
- A residual island — **Kumarinādu/Kumaridvipu** (South India + Ceylon + Sumatra + Java) — said to survive; ancient Tamilaham allegedly stretched over it **~15,000 years ago**, ruled by **Pandyas from (southern) Madurai**, bounded by the **Pahruli river (north)** and **Kumari river (south)**; **Adiyarkunallar** says it had **seven nadus**.
- First inhabitants likely **pre-Dravidian** aboriginals. **Dr. A.K. Keane:** Dravidians preceded Aryan-speaking Hindus but were themselves preceded by dark-skinned (possibly **Negrito**) peoples; Dravidian Tamils are **ethnically distinct** from Kadar/Malavedans/Pulayas (some fusion).

## The Three Sangams legend (and why it is unreliable):

Sangam	Seat	Duration	Poets	Notable (lost) works
<b>First</b>	Ten (South) Madurai	<b>4,440 yrs</b>	549 (incl. <b>Siva, Muruga</b> )	Lost
<b>Second</b>	Kapādapuram	3,700 yrs	3,700	Agattiyam, <b>Tolkappiyam</b> , Mapuranam
<b>Third</b>	Modern Madurai	—	—	Extant Sangam corpus

- Total span claimed: **9,990 years**, with **gods as members** and **exaggerated durations** → historically unreliable; first appears only in the **9th c. A.D.** Ahapporul commentary. Sea-encroachment on coasts (**Korkai, Kaverippumpattinam, Kalingapattinam, Musiri**) is historically attested. **Kapādapuram** appears in **Ramayana & Mahabharata** (Pandyas' 2nd capital) and **Kautilya's Arthashastra** (pearl imports to North India).

## Migration hypotheses (scholarly debate):

- **Western Asian origin:** anthropometric + linguistic + cultural parallels — **Lycians of Asia Minor called themselves "Trimmilai"** (≈ Tamil); Dravidian-pattern place names in **Afghanistan, Iran, Mesopotamia**; **snake worship** in early Persepolis; **Brahui-Tamil** link; finds at **Adichanallur, Cyprus, Palestine**.
- **Autochthon view (P.T. Srinivasa Iyengar):** no Tamil text says Tamils came from outside India → any inflow came from the **southern lands**, not outside.

- The "iron" clincher: Cyprus/Palestine finds (2nd millennium BCE) **lack iron**; **Adichanallur has iron hoes & tridents** → its people belong to the **Iron Age, later than West Asia** → suggests **Dravidians migrated FROM West Asia** via **Baluchistan** (Muruha cult persistence supports the counter-view too). No historical evidence of South Indians migrating NW; the reverse occurred.
- **Linguistic evidence: Prof. Burrow** found **20 Dravidian words in the Rig Veda**; **Lahovary** linked **Basque-Dravidian** and grouped **Sumerian, Elamite, Cappadocian** as one family; civilisations from Iberia to India shared religious customs.

## Final synthesis (textbook conclusion):

- Dravidians likely occupied **North & NW India before the Aryans**; were the **authors of the Indus Valley Civilisation**.
- A section **migrated south**, became **ancestors of the Tamils**, and **fused with Austroloid/Negroid** populations of SE Asia/Far East.
- **Dravidian Tamils = product of this fusion** — conclusions drawn without predilection.

## THEME

- Lemuria = **legend with partial geological support**, not proof of Tamil origins.
- The **iron-chronology argument** reverses the migration direction (West Asia → South India).
- Mainstream link: **Dravidians ↔ Indus Valley ↔ Tamils**, fused with older southern aboriginals.

## PREHISTORIC PERIODS — THE STONE AGE SEQUENCE

### Palaeolithic (Old Stone Age)

- Crude **hand-axes, choppers, knives, hammer-stones, spears, digging tools**; food-**gathering**, nomadic hunters; **no pottery**; **no burial** (dead exposed to animals/birds); stone scrapers for hides; leaves/barks for clothing.
- Sites: **Deccan** (Guntur, Kurnool, Cuddappah, Nellore); **Chengalpattu, North Arcot; Kortalayar valley** (near Madras) & **Vadamadurai** (hand-axe evidence). **Africa-South India hand-axe similarity** → possible migration.
- **Billasurgam (Kurnool) caves** = distinct Palaeolithic rock shelters; contain animal species now extinct in India but found in Africa (supports Lemuria/migration ideas).
- **Absent south of Madurai** — lack of **quartzite** + thick forests; Palaeolithic man avoided forests (no strong forest-clearing weapons), lived in plains/plateaus.

### Mesolithic / Microlithic (Middle-Late Stone Age)

- **Microliths** of **jasper, agate, quartz**; flakes, primitive **arrowheads** → refined hunting. Corresponds to Europe's Upper Palaeolithic / late Pleistocene; tools in Narmada, Godavari, Krishna valleys; limited in Kortalayar valley.
- **Oldest microliths**: red sand-dunes ("**Teris**") near **Tirunelveli & Tuticorin** — first noticed by **Bruce Foote** (fossil dunes), sequence by **Zeuner**; dated **~4,000 BCE** by sea-level correlation → early-Holocene hunting-fishing coastal communities.
- **Sir Mortimer Wheeler**: microlithic cultures influenced by **SW Asian & East African** cultures.
- **Microlithic sites**: Attirampakkam, Madurai, **Mangudi, Tiruthangal, Terruveli, T. Kallupatti, Mayiladumparai, Dailamalai, Togarapalli, Mullikadu, Kovalanpottal**.
- **Mangudi importance**: microliths in a **stratified layer** with a **sterile layer** beneath megalithic deposits and above microliths → establishes the Microlithic as **earlier and distinct**.

### Neolithic (New Stone Age)

- Great shift: **food-gatherer** → **food-producer**; settled agriculture, animal domestication, pottery, polished tools (made of **black trap**, abundant in Deccan); techniques: **pecking, grinding, polishing**.
- Huge tool variety: **12 types of celts**, 6 chisels, 3 hammers, 2 adzes, anvils, corn-crushers, mace-heads, mortars, pestles, steatite pencils, phalli, stone vessels; pottery (rough & polished) in later Neolithic.

- Dated by **C-14** to ~**3500 BCE**; sites in **Salem District; Paiyampalli (North Arcot/Vellore)** excavated by ASI — polished celts, **pit dwellings**, microliths alongside Neolithic artefacts (TN **type site / largest Neolithic site**).
- **Modur excavation**: many stone objects (grinders, pestles); **beaked Mother Goddess figurine** (resembles a Maharashtra find); stratified Neolithic implements in pre-Iron levels (parallels Karnataka); pottery sherds consistent with **3000 BCE**.
- **Mayiladumparai**: evidence for all three phases (**Microlithic → Neolithic → Iron Age**); hand-made red ware + Neolithic tools = cultural transformation; iron + BRW = Neolithic-to-Megalithic transition.
- **Society**: oxen in agriculture; **burial of dead emerges in late Neolithic** (belief in spirit → **ancestor worship**); **Mother Goddess worship**; **phallic worship debated** (Kapgallu lingam/bull drawings disputed).

## THEME

- TN's missing Copper/Bronze Age → Neolithic flows **directly into Iron Age** (Mayiladumparai captures the transition).
- **Late-Neolithic burial customs** mark the birth of ritual/afterlife belief.
- The **Mangudi/Modur stratigraphy** scientifically anchors a distinct Microlithic and Neolithic in TN.

## THE IRON AGE & MEGALITHIC CULTURE

- **Megalith (Greek: Mega = large, Lithos = stone)** = a burial/monument-building culture using **large stone structures** for funerary purposes. In TN/South India dated **c. 1500/1000 BCE – 200 BCE**; associated with **early iron technology, pastoralism + early agriculture, emerging social stratification, pre-Sangam communities**. Sits **between Neolithic and Early Historic (Sangam)**.
- Iron's spread driven by **hardness, affordability, accessibility** vs copper/bronze; iron tools **revolutionised agriculture** → social advancement.
- General Iron Age traits: writing systems & languages; artistic/architectural advances; large empires & urban centres; wealthy middle class & migration; early **social stratification**.
- Investigation urged by **Sewell & Bruce Foote**, initiated by ASI; sites at Chingleput, South Arcot, Chittoor, Tiruchirappalli; **Perumbair & Kattur** notable.
- **Brahmagiri (Mysore)** revealed **3 phases**: Stone-axe Chalcolithic → **Megalithic Iron Age** → Andhra (russet pottery).
- Common traits: **iron implements + Black-and-Red Ware (BRW) + funerary objects**. Culture extended **south of the Godavari**; **NE India megaliths = Neolithic** (different), **South Indian = Iron Age**. Structural parallels in Mediterranean, France, Germany, Sweden, Black Sea, Africa, Caucasus → possible movement of people. Mediterranean megaliths = **2500–1500 BCE**; Adichanallur urn-burials **no earlier than 1st millennium BCE**; South Indian megaliths generally **700–400 BCE**.
- **Iron Age evidence sites: Sanur, Amirthamangalam, Kodumanal, Adichanallur, Mallappadi** (settlements + cultural traits). Burial sites: Sanur, Amirthamangalam, Kunrattur; habitation: Sangamedu, Tirukkampuliyur, Alagarai, Uraiyyur. Iron objects: lances, **tanged arrowheads**, nut-cutters, daggers; limited copper; domesticated **short-horned humpless cattle & sheep**; **stone balls** (hunting persisted).

### Types of Megaliths (master table):

Type	Tamil Name	Description	Distribution	Associated Finds
<b>Dolmen</b>	Thodum-kal	Upright orthostats supporting a massive capstone; table-like; burial under capstone	W. Ghats foothills; Krishnagiri; Dharmapuri; Tirunelveli; Nilgiris (forested uplands)	Iron tools (axes, chisels, sickles); BRW; iron weapons; occasional bronze/copper; skeletal remains
<b>Cairn Circle</b>	Kalvettukadu	Circular stone ring around a central burial pit (usually urn/pit)	Statewide — esp. Tirunelveli, Pudukottai, Ramanathapuram, Salem	BRW; iron tools; sometimes gold/copper ornaments; animal bones

Type	Tamil Name	Description	Distribution	Associated Finds
<b>Urn Burial</b>	Mudhumakkal Thaazhi	Human remains in a large terracotta urn in a pit, often slab/cairn covered; multiple urns per pit	Statewide — <b>Adichanallur, Kodumanal, Keeladi, Arikamedu</b>	Iron tools/weapons; <b>gold diadems (Adichanallur)</b> ; bronze; pottery; food offerings; glass & carnelian beads
<b>Menhir</b>	Kal-thoodu / Nadukal (hero-stone precursor)	Single standing monolith; memorial marker; ancestor of Nadukal	Nilgiris (living Toda tradition); Krishnagiri; Dharmapuri; Coimbatore foothills	Sometimes no burial; where present: iron objects, pottery
<b>Rock-cut / Cave Burial</b>	Tharai-illam	Natural outcrops modified into burial chambers, slab-sealed	W. Ghats; Nilgiris; Coimbatore	BRW; iron tools; occasional bronze
<b>Cist Burial</b>	Kal-petti (stone box)	Rectangular stone-lined pit + capstone; <b>below ground</b> (vs above-ground dolmen)	Statewide — concentrated N. districts (Krishnagiri, Dharmapuri, Vellore)	Iron tools; pottery; occasional beads; better-preserved skeletons

## THEME

- Iron Age + megaliths form the **bridge into the historical Sangam Age**.
- **BRW** is the diagnostic Iron Age marker (established by **Wheeler at Brahmagiri**).
- **Adichanallur–Harappa parallels** fuel the Dravidian–Indus debate.

## MAJOR EXCAVATION SITES (DETAILED)

### Attirampakkam (Kancheepuram) — Lower Palaeolithic

- Open-air Palaeolithic site NW of Chennai on a tributary of the **Kortallaiyar**; **discovered Sept 1863**.
- **1.5-million-year-old Acheulian tools** (early-Pleistocene hominins) — challenges underestimation of Indian antiquity; among **India's oldest stone-age tools**, may alter Africa→India migration understanding.
- Examined by **T.T. Paterson, V.D. Krishnaswami, K.D. Banerjee, A. Swami**; **S. Pappu's** dissertation; **Cosmogenic nuclide burial dating** → tools  $\geq 1.07$  My, up to 1.5 My; **Levallois flaking ~385,000 BP**.
- **12 years' excavation** by **Shanti Pappu & Kumar Akhilesh (Sharma Centre for Heritage Education)** → **3,528 artefacts**; **2018 Nature paper**. Acheulian tools resemble W. Asia/Africa (first made by Homo erectus ~1.6 Mya). (Hunsgi valley, Karnataka — 1.27 My — was previously India's oldest.)
- **Revelations:** human activity >500,000 yrs (Lower/Middle/Upper Palaeolithic); thousands of buried Acheulian tools; **17 round impressions + hoof prints** (first in South Asia); **3 rare fossil teeth** (water buffalo, horse, nilgai); paleo-Kortallayar lagoon/swamp environment. Reinforced by Vadamadurai & Gudiyam.

### Pallavaram (Chennai) — Lower Palaeolithic

- **Robert Bruce Foote's 1863 find** here = **first prehistoric tool discovery in India** (Acheulian handaxe in laterite gravel; GSI).

### Gudiyam Cave (Tiruvallur) — Middle Palaeolithic

- Near **Poondi reservoir**; first investigated by **R.B. Foote**; rare peninsular **cave/rock shelter**; animal bones + stone tools; major South Indian Palaeolithic site.

## Paiyampalli / "Baiyampalli" (Vellore/North Arcot) — Neolithic

- Headed by **Dr. S.R. Rao (ASI, 1960s)**. Finds: implements/tools, pulse-grinding stones, precious stones, clay lamps & bangles → **Iron Age + Megalithic + Neolithic**; **pit dwellings**, polished stone celts, microliths. TN Neolithic **type site**.

## Adichanallur (Thoothukudi) — Iron Age (largest urn-burial site in India)

- On the lower **Tamiraparani**, near Sangam seaport **Korkai**; only **7 km from Sivakalai**.
- 1876**: first drawn attention by **German ethnologist Feodor (F.) Jagor** (finds taken to **Berlin**). **1903-04**: **Louis Laticque** studies.
- Alexander Rea (Supt., ASI)**: annual excavations **1899-1904** → baked earthenware, iron weapons, bones/skulls, **rice husks**, burial urns, skeletal remains, iron & bronze objects, **golden diadems**, iron agricultural tools; palm-sized **bronze figurine**. Finds at **Chennai Egmore Museum**. **1915 Catalogue** ("Prehistoric Antiquities from Adichanallur and Perumbair").
- 2004**: ASI under **Dr. T. Sathyamurthy** unearthed **169 clay burial urns** with skeletons over **114 acres**. **2019 carbon dating: 905-696 BCE** → one of TN's oldest sites.
- Mudhumakkal Thaazhi** = urn for secondary burials (skeletal remains after exposure), buried in the **quartz ridge** with offerings (afterlife belief).
- Racial representation in skeletons: 14% Negroid, 5% Australoid, 30% Mongoloid, 35% Caucasoid, 8% ethnic Dravidian**, rest mixed.
- Gold Diadems (Pattayam)**: thin oval forehead ornaments, like **Mycenae (Greece)** → socially stratified society (elite/chieftain burials).
- Bronze**: ornamental finials with animal motifs (**buffalo, tiger, antelope, elephant**); **notable absence of horse motifs**; **Murugan lance (vel)**, **iron fork/trident**, unique gold-plated stone drop. **Copper-alloy female figurine** echoing **Harappan "mother goddess"**.
- Pottery**: predominantly **Black-and-Red Ware** (thin, polished). Harappan echoes (dish-on-stand; **Cemetery H, Lothal**); swords resemble **Gangetic Copper Hoard antennae swords (1865-1550 BCE)**. **UNESCO Tentative List**.

## Sivakalai / Sivagalai (Thoothukudi) — Porunai River Civilisation

- Rice** in a burial urn carbon-dated by **Beta Analytic (Miami)** to **1155 BCE (~3,200 yrs)** → contemporary of the **Indus Valley Civilisation**.
- With **Adichanallur & Korkai (9th-8th c. BCE)** substantiates a mature '**Porunai (Thamirabarani) river civilisation**', validating Sangam-era urban descriptions (1st-4th c. CE).

## Mayiladumparai (Krishnagiri) — earliest iron (2172 BCE)

- See "Redefining India's History" above — iron from **2172 BCE**, Late Neolithic before 2200 BCE, BRW in late Neolithic; all three phases (Microlithic/Neolithic/Iron Age) present.

## Keeladi (Sivagangai) — urban Sangam settlement on the Vaigai

- ASI began March 2015**; **K. Amarnath Ramakrishna** director (Phases I-IV; transfer controversy in round 3).
- Phase IV (2018): **5,820 antiquities** (terracotta ring wells, gold ornaments). Phase V (2018-19): guided excavation, more structures.
- 6 carbon samples** → **Beta Analytic (USA), AMS**; samples from **353 cm depth = 580 BCE**; cultural deposit **6th c. BCE - 1st c. CE** → **urbanisation of the Vaigai plains by ~6th c. BCE** (like the Gangetic plains); **Tamil-Brahmi origin pushed back to 6th c. BCE**.
- Described as the "**Vaigai Valley Civilisation**"; **urban habitat with no signs of religious worship** ("celebration of life"); high literacy, advanced agriculture, industries (**pottery, weaving, bead-making**), luxury items (gold, semi-precious stones). **Madurai Kamaraj Univ. DNA analysis** planned; TN seeks **heritage-cluster** recognition; redefines Sangam Age start to **~800 BCE**.
- 56 Tamil-Brahmi inscribed potsherds** (names **kuviraṇāṭaṅ, āṭaṅ**); **1,001 graffiti sherds**; letters engraved on vessel shoulders (leather stage or post-firing); early Tamil-Brahmi lacks short/long vowel diacritics.

- **Associated sites: Kondagai** (burial — 40 urn + 1 pit + 16 surface burials; 17 human + 2 animal skeletons; red/red-slipped/BRW); **Agaram** (microlithic blades/lunates, carbonised rice, polished axes, beads, terracotta, glass, shell, **gold coin**); **Manalur** (smoking pipes, beads, terracotta wheels, hop-scotches — leisure/cultural practices).

## **Kodumanal (Erode) — Iron Age industrial/trade hub on the Noyyal/Amaravati**

- Noticed by ASI **1961**; formal excavations by Tamil scholar **S. Raju (1985)**; **Prof. K. Rajan (Pondicherry Univ.)** discovered the **ancient gemstone industry**.
- **~2,300 years ago**: industrial centre producing **iron, steel, shell bangles, beads**; habitation-cum-industrial area + megalithic burials. Finds: **Tamil-Brahmi potsherds, Roman silver coins, quartz, precious stones**; beads exported. Mentioned as "**Kodumanam**" in **Padhitrupathu** (Sangam) on the ancient trade route.
- Recent **10-member team (J. Ranjith)** → **1,535 antiques** (glass/shell bangles, beads, rings, iron, pottery, terracotta, copper, coins, stone); **5 megalithic burial sites 500 m from the Noyyal** (legged jars, ring stands, bowls, ceremonial pots, skulls — afterlife belief). Industrial site on N. bank of Noyyal; burials across 5 acres.

## **Korkai (Thoothukudi)**

- Earliest **Pandya capital; pearl-diving economy**; urn burials; BRW; Palaeolithic traces → Iron Age → Sangam; **Northern Black Polished Ware (3rd–4th c. BCE)**; on the Porunai, near the **Gulf of Mannar**; praised in **Purananuru & Aganaanooru**; trade with **Yavanas** (pearls, pepper).

## **Porunthal (Dindigul) — AMS paddy ~490 BCE**

- **K. Rajan (2009)**; earliest AMS-dated paddy in TN (~490 BCE); **wine jars (imports)**; Tamil-Brahmi pottery graffiti; a grave **ring with Tamil-Brahmi (Va-i-ra)** + massive paddy → established agriculture + literacy.

## **Thiruthangal (near Sivakasi, Virudhunagar)**

- Black-and-red earthen pot tiles + copper pieces → linked to a **Pandya king of the Sangam Age**; Palaeolithic micro-implements too.

## **Pattaraiperumbudur (Tiruvallur)**

- E. bank of **Kosathalaiyar**, ~60 km from Chennai; near Gudiyam, Attirampakkam, Vadamadurai, Neyveli, Parikulam; mounds at **anaimedu, nathamedu, irulanthoppu**. **April 2016** excavations → stone tools, pottery, bricks, iron, roofing tiles, carnelian/glass beads, shell bangles, terracotta, copper; **Tamil-Brahmi inscribed sherds**, graffiti, painted potsherds, ivory, terracotta ring wells. Continuous habitation: **Stone Age + Iron Age + Early Historic**.

## **Saluvankuppam (near Mamallapuram) — first Sangam-age brick temple**

- **Brick temple** (late Sangam, 1st c. BCE–2nd c. CE) beneath a later **8th-c. Pallava** temple; **27 courses of bricks**, square **garbhagriha** to **Muruga** (2 × 2.2 m; bricks 40×20×7 cm). Pallava kings (8th–9th c.) rebuilt in granite. Two inscribed pillars: **Dantivarman (813 CE) & Nandivarman III (850 CE)** — gold donation for a perpetual lamp in the Subramanya temple. **First Hindu brick temple of the Sangam age found in TN**.

## **Uraiyur (Tiruchirappalli) — Chola Sangam capital**

- **21 postholes** (likely for **Yajna/sacrifice**); a brick **dyeing tub** (square + rectangular, 7 courses, bricks 17×3 in); **Tamil-inscribed potsherds** (nail-engraved post-firing) + graffiti; habitation **discontinuous** (Kaveri flooding). Finds: terracotta images, beads, glass bangles, conch, gamesman, ear lobes, smoking pipes, spindle whorl. Exported **fine muslins** (Argaru of the Periplus).

## **Kurumbannedu (near Thanjavur) — Chola palace search**

- ~3 km W of **Brihadeeswarar Temple**; imperial Chola capital region. Two trenches → medieval artefacts (iron nails, tiles, large bricks, terracotta lids/lamps, **porcelain potsherds**) → construction + **Far-Eastern trade**; similar tiles/nails at **Gangaikondacholapuram**.

## Gangaikondacholapuram (Ariyalur) — Chola capital

- Founded by **Rajendra I** after his Ganges march; Chola capital ~**250 years**; temple is a **UNESCO World Heritage** monument.
- Planned city with **two fortifications** (outer + inner = **Rajendra Cholan Madil**; inner around palace = **Utpadai Veetu Madil**). Mostly buried; **Maligai Medu (Palace Mound)**. Excavations at **Kizharveli & Dharmakulam**: well-burnt bricks + clay binder; granite pillar bases (wooden pillars), decayed wood, **many iron nails** (wood-iron superstructure).

## Periya Patnam — China trade

- Excavated by **Tanjore Tamil University**; **Chinese coins + earthen pots** in Tanjore, Tirunelveli, Periyakulam; coins bear "**RIUBIN**" and "**TANGBO**"; **Ming dynasty** coins → China-TN trade extending south of the Pandya kingdom.

## Madurai — "Athens of the East/South India"

- Inhabited since at least **3rd c. BCE**; one of South Asia's oldest cities on the **Vaigai**; centre of worship & commerce. **Megasthenes** (302 BC) praised it and its queen **Pandai**; **Strabo** criticised luxury (silk, pearls, spices draining Rome). **Third Tamil Sangam** prominent (1780 BCE–3rd c. CE per the source). Recorded history from 3rd c. BCE (**Megasthenes, Kautilya**). Ruled by Early/Medieval/Later Cholas, Early/Later Pandyas, Madurai Sultanate, Vijayanagar, Madurai Nayaks, Chanda Sahib, Carnatic kingdom, British. Pandya Rome trade; **Meenakshi Sundareswarar temple** stands on the old Pandya fort site. Mentioned by **Pliny the Younger, Ptolemy, Strabo, Periplus**.
- **Jainism** spread from Karnataka; monks settled in natural rock shelters; **Mankulam** hillock → Jain beds + **Brahmi inscriptions (3rd c. BCE)**. **2006–07** at **Kalugumalai/Ovamalai** → 4 trenches; buried structure with grooved tiles, potsherds, iron nails; **brick 35×17×6 cm** (Sangam, 300 BCE–300 CE); **34 rock beds** (Jain monks) → continuous Jain occupation.

### THEME

- Foote → **discovery (Pallavaram first, Attirampakkam oldest)**; Rea → **Adichanallur**; Wheeler → **Arikamedu/BRW**; Rajan → **Iron Age redefinition (Kodumanal, Porunthal, Sivagalai)**.
- **Keeladi** shifts the story to **early urbanism + democratic literacy**.
- River-basin clustering + **Porunai/Vaigai civilisations** anchor TN's deep-time urban claim.

## EARLY HISTORIC ROMAN & GLOBAL TRADE

### Arikamedu (Puducherry UT) — the Indo-Roman trading station

- On the E. bank of the **Ariyankuppam** near the Bay of Bengal; SE coast near Pondicherry.
- **Name**: from Tamil "**Arikanmedu**" ("Eroding Mount") / '**Arukumedu**' ("mound on a river bank"); alt. theories link to "**Arugan**" (Shramana — a black-stone Buddha found nearby) or to **Murugan**. Identified as Ptolemy's/Periplus's "**Poduke**".
- **Discovery & excavation history**:
- **1768–1771**: French astronomer **Guillaume Le Gentil** noted walls/tanks/remnants.
- **1940s**: **Gabriel Jouveau-Dubreuil** recognised its importance (found a **gem carved with Augustus Caesar's head**); identified it as **Poduke Emporium (1941)**.
- **1945**: **Sir Mortimer Wheeler (ASI DG)** — famous scientific excavation; identified **northern (harbour/Yavana)** vs **southern (industrial/native)** sectors; finds: warehouses, ring wells, tanks, **Arretine ware, Red Table ware, Amphora fragments, beads, metallic objects**; Rome trade **100 BC–100 AD**; concluded ~200-yr span, a small fishing village pre-Rome.
- **1947–1950**: **J.M. Casal** — found earlier **Megalithic/Iron Age (BRW)** foundations beneath Roman layers; linked to the **Suttukeny** megalithic burial site (pottery, gold, diamond jewellery); showed continuity through **Chola, Pallava, Vijayanagara** periods.

- **1989–1992: Dr. Vimala Begley** — proved Arikamedu was a **thriving indigenous port BEFORE the Romans** (southern sector settled by **2nd c. BCE**), correcting Wheeler; trade peaked **50 BC–50 AD**; distinct ethnic occupation of the two sectors.
- **Industries:** textiles (**muslin**), terracotta (**Rouletted ware**), and **bead-making** (glass/precious stones/gold) — called the "**mother of all bead centres**"; mostly for export; **tiny glass beads** resemble those in **Thailand, Korea, East Africa** → wider networks.
- **Continuity:** unbroken settlement **300 BC–1800 AD**; **18th-c. French Mission/seminary** house (Jesuits) reused Roman bricks. **ASI acquired the site in 2004**. Roman trade peaked under **Augustus & Nero**; **Purananuru** anecdote urges a Pandyan king to taste Roman wine. Not named in Silappadikaram/Sangam poetry (composed after its peak). Commodities: wine, olive oil, cotton, sandalwood, peacock feathers, gemstones, spices. **Coins:** early copper (insignia), later **3rd-c. AD gold** ("**PANAM**" / "**VARAAGAN**"). Primary sources: **Periplus, Ptolemy, Pliny, Strabo** (scarce because Alexandria/Cleopatra libraries destroyed).

## Azhagankulam / Alagankulam (Ramanathapuram) — Pandya–Roman port on the Vaigai estuary

- ~3 km from the sea; trade post **Sangam Pandyas ↔ Romans, c. 50 BCE–500 CE**. Possibly ancient "**Saliyur**" (Maduraikkanchi) or Ptolemy's "**Kolkhoi**" (also linked to Korkai). Primary **eastern maritime hub** of the early Pandyas.
- **Dual economic engine:** exported to Rome (west), **imported from the Ganges (NBPW, north)**, shipped east to **SE Asia** — a true **transshipment hub**; part of a trio with **Arikamedu** and **Pattanam (Muziris)**.
- TNSDA finds: broken **Roman amphorae, copper coins, Chinese Celadon ware**, Tamil-Brahmi potsherds, beads (carnelian, quartz, glass). **Kottaimedu** trench: amphorae, copper coins, roofing tiles; **Pariithikaadu:** 3 corroded copper coins. **Roman gold-coin hoards** at **Utthamapuram, Nathampatti, Karivalamvandha Nallur**. **3 Roman coins** of emperors **Valentine(ian) II & Arcadius**; **square copper Pandya coins + Mauryan black polished ware**; Romans sought Pandya **pearls**.

## Muziris (Pattanam, Kerala) — premier Chera port

- Present-day **Pattanam** (near North Paravur, Ernakulam) on the **Periyar delta** ("Chulli" in Sangam lit); Chera port (**Muciri/Muchiri**); **Pliny: "Primum Emporium Indiae"** (first emporium of India).
- Validates **Akananuru (Poem 149, Tayankannanar)**: "beautiful large ships of the Yavanas, bringing gold... returning laden with pepper" on the **Periyar**.
- Economy exploded after **Hippalus** observed the **SW monsoon** → Roman freighters from the Red Sea to Muziris in **40 days**; Roman gold drained for **pepper**. **Tabula Peutingeriana** (Roman map) marks Muziris with a "**Temple of Augustus**" → settled **Yavana colonies**. Rediscovered (rain-revealed) at Pattanam; cultural gateway to Buddhists, Arabs, Chinese, Jews, Romans, Portuguese, Dutch, British. Sites: Paravur market, **Chendamangalam synagogue**, Pattanam excavation.

## Karur — Chera inland capital "Vanchi"

- On the **Amaravathi** (Kaveri tributary); identified by **Irvatham Mahadevan** as **Vanchi**, Sangam Chera (Irumporai) capital; mentioned by **Ptolemy (2nd c.)**.
- **Copper/silver coins** with Tamil-Brahmi legends ("**Makkotai**", "**Kuttuvan Kotai**") + Chera **bow-and-arrow** emblem; massive **Roman gold (aurei) & silver (denarii)** hoards (**Augustus, Tiberius, Claudius**); **signet rings** with Tamil-Brahmi personal names (**Sathan, Kuviran**) → literate merchant class.
- Strategic on the **Palghat Gap** trans-peninsular route (Chera ports like Muziris ↔ Chola ports like Puhar/Arikamedu) — inland toll-gate + manufacturing stop.
- **Merchant guilds** managed trade: **Anjuvannam, Ainnurruvar (Ainnurruvar), Manigramam, Padinervisayam** — collected levies, secured ports, built tanks/temples (corporate social responsibility); **Padinervisayam** ("eighteen countries") controlled other guilds + international trade; craftsmen sailed abroad. Inscriptions: "**Perumpatan Kal**" (3rd–4th c. Brahmi); **Dhammasenapathi** (Buddhist temple donor); **Pagan, Myanmar (13th c.)** Vaishnavite mantra by **Irayiran Kulasekhara Nambi**; "**Thava-Chakravarthigal**" (land grant, ThiruKhaneeswaram temple by Champaanda Perumal); **Ponneri Vishnu temple "Pattinapakudi"** harbour-levy by guilds.

## Roman coins & trade — cluster table

Site	District	Roman coins	Trade evidence	Significance
<b>Arikamedu</b>	Puducherry	Augustus, Tiberius	Amphorae, rouletted ware, glass, Indo-Pacific beads	Primary Roman factory; Ptolemy's "Poduke"; Wheeler (1945)
<b>Alagangulam</b>	Ramanathapuram	Yes (Valentinian II, Arcadius)	Amphorae, RW, glass, Tamil-Brahmi	Vaigai estuary Pandya port; transshipment hub
<b>Kaveripattinam (Puhar)</b>	Nagapattinam/Cuddalore	Yes	Amphorae, RW, glass beads	Chola port; in Silappadikaram & Manimekalai; Kaveri mouth
<b>Kodumanal</b>	Erode	Roman silver	Amphorae sherds, RW traces	Carnelian/quartz bead exports; iron-smelting centre
<b>Uraiyur</b>	Tiruchirappalli	Yes	RW, BRW, <b>fine muslin</b>	Chola capital; cotton-textile trade with Rome
<b>Korkai</b>	Thoothukudi	—	Pearl exports; Sangam evidence	Earliest Pandya capital; pearl diving (Gulf of Mannar)
<b>Kanchipuram</b>	Kancheepuram	Coin hoards	Silk/textile	Sangam trade town → Pallava capital; punch-marked coins (terracotta molds)
<b>Porunthal</b>	Dindigul	—	Wine jars (import)	Indirect western contact by Iron Age
<b>Periya Patnam</b>	(Tanjore region)	Chinese (Ming; "RIUBIN/TANGBO")	Earthen pots	China-TN trade south of Pandya kingdom

## Sangam-era ports & foreign accounts

- **Roman pottery types:** Amphorae (wine/olive oil/fish sauce); **Coarse ware** (utilitarian); **Fine ware** (red-slip) — **Arretine** (1st c. CE), **Terra Sigillata**, **African Red Slip (ARS, 2nd–8th c. CE)**. **Pottery stamps** identify maker/origin (Arikamedu & Alagankulam yielded stamped Arretine + ARS).
- **Other finds:** **Korkai** NBPW (3rd–4th c. BCE); **Vasavasamudram** Mediterranean amphora neck; **Kodumanal** inscribed sherds/carnelian beads/spindle whorls; **Kanchipuram** punch-marked coins (terracotta molds); inscribed sherds at **Uraiyur**, **Tirukkampuliyur**, **Alagarai** (widespread literacy).
- **West-coast ports:** Muziris (Peryar mouth), **Tyndis/Tondi (Cera; Ponnani)**, **Naura (Cannanore)**, **Nelcynda (Pandyan, near Kottayam)**, **Becare/Neac-don (Porakad; Pandion's port)**, **Balita (Varkkala)**, **Comari (Kanyakumari)**, **Maandai**, **Melkinda**, **Vizhignam**, **Kumari**.
- **East-coast (Bay of Bengal) ports:** **Kaviripoompattinam (most significant)**, **Eyirpatnam**, **Marakkanam**, **Arikamedu**, **Thondi**, **Korkai**, **Camara**, **Poolnca (Pondicherry)**, **Sopatma (Marakkanam)**, **Argaru (Uraiyur)**. East & west coasts linked by roads; a highway ran **Puhar → west coast**.
- **Hippalus (Egyptian pilot, ~45 CE):** discovered the favourable **monsoon route** → faster, safer (less piracy), near-daily sailings from Egypt.
- **Foreign writers:** **Herodotus (5th c. BCE — earliest)**, **Megasthenes' Indika (~300 BCE — first direct notice of Tamilagam; Pandya Nadu; Taprobane/Lanka; "Pondaen nation ruled by females, first queen daughter of Heracles")**, **Periplus (~1st CE)**, **Pliny the Elder (Natural History, 75 CE — Taprobane; Muziris in 40 days; pirates; Pandion's Becare; pepper from Cottonara; Rome's gold drain ~550 million sesterces/yr)**, **Ptolemy (2nd c. — Poduke, Camara)**, **Strabo**, **Livy**. **Chinese (Pankou 1st c. CE):** **Kanchi = "Houng-**

tche/Houangtche"; Wang Mang sent gifts + requested **live-rhinoceros tribute**; Emperor Wou (140–86 BCE) traded with Kanchi.

- **Yavana:** Tamil term for Greeks/Romans — served as **royal bodyguards**; Tamil borrowed Greek words (**mattigai, surungai, kalam, kannal**); evidence (Paavai Vilakku/oil lamps, wine, glass) of Roman luxury imports.
- **Hebrew link:** shared word "Tuki" (**peacock**) → early contact. **Pandyan embassy to Rome** under **Augustus** to enhance trade. Roman trade continued to ~215 AD; gold & silver coins confirm prosperity.
- **Exports:** pepper, **pearls**, ivory, **cotton/fine muslin (Uraiyur)**, tortoiseshell, beryl, iron, malabathrum, sandalwood, peacock feathers. **Imports:** wine, olive oil, glass, copper, tin, lead, **gold coins**, topaz.

## THEME

- TN's Sangam prosperity rested on a **two-ocean network** (Rome/Egypt west; China/SE Asia east), with **Karur as the inland hinge** (Palghat Gap).
- **Literary + archaeological convergence** — Akananuru/Purananuru ↔ Arikamedu/Muziris finds.
- **Merchant guilds (Padinenvisayam etc.)** show organised, semi-autonomous corporate trade with CSR.

## PREHISTORIC ROCK ART OF TAMIL NADU

### Famous individual sites:

- **Kizhvalai** (22 km from Villupuram) — pyramid-like boulder entrance; team (incl. Commissioner) crawl to enter; **old red-ochre art**; a **cross-symbol closed on both sides** (claimed Indus-script precursor).
- **Usilampatti (Madurai)** — lone man taming a bull; prehistoric.
- **Kumittipathi/Pathimalai (Coimbatore, Kongu region)** — ~3,000-yr-old **white-pigment** elephant, chariot (possibly peacock), early-dweller life; rare **easily accessible** site (foot of a hillock amid farmland); similar art at Vellarukkam Palayam (Thondamuthur), Viraliyur, Kovanur (hilltops).
- **Tirumalai (Sivaganga)** — **2,500+ yrs**; two men in **bird masks** (beaks) in a **pugilistic/fighting** stance; red ochre, fully formed figures; renowned execution on rough surfaces.
- **Karikaiyur (Nilgiris, Kothagiri)** — **300+ paintings** on a cliff face; animals (deer, bulls, elephants), humans, geometric shapes, weapons (swords, tridents); red & white earthen pigments; possibly **5,000+ yrs**.
- **Gudiyam Caves** (near Poondi reservoir) — first studied by **R.B. Foote**; key Palaeolithic site/rock shelters.

### Rock-art distribution by zone (TNSDA documentation):

Zone	Key sites	Notes
<b>Madurai–Dindigul (Vaigai)</b>	Ovamai, <b>Arittapatti</b> , Kongarpuliyankulam, Keezhvalavu, Settipatti, Azhagapuri, Kumittipatti, Meenakshipuram	"Ova"=drawing; <b>Arittapatti = TN's first Biodiversity Heritage Village (2022)</b>
<b>Dindigul</b>	Kumittipatti (B. Vijayakumar), Meenakshipuram, <b>Mahadeva Hills/Thenkalampatti (T.B. Rajaguru)</b>	Microliths + markings; Rajaguru's key Mesolithic zone
<b>Pudukkottai</b>	<b>Sittannavasal, Pugalur</b>	Jain frescoes over prehistoric layer; Pugalur = early Tamil-Brahmi (incised)
<b>Virudhunagar–Tirunelveli</b>	Vellaipallivasal, Krishnapuram, Keelakuyilkudi, Panaiyur	Southern TN belt (Tamiraparani)
<b>Villupuram–Cuddalore (Ponnaiyar)</b>	Thiruvannamalai shelters, Tirukoilur	Eastern Ghats foothills

Zone	Key sites	Notes
Krishnagiri-Dharmapuri (Cauvery)	Bargur Hills, Anchetty, Pappireddipatti	Cup marks/incised megalithic art; Deccan corridor
Salem-Namakkal	Yercaud Hills, Tiruchengode	Eastern Ghats
Erode-Coimbatore (Amaravati)	Amaravati shelters (near Kodumanal), Anamalai Hills	Meso-art into Iron Age continuity
Theni-Ramanathapuram	Theni shelters, Alagangulam vicinity	Upper Vaigai; coastal cup-marks

## Technique & motifs:

- **Red ochre (haematite)** primary pigment (iron oxide from laterite + fat/water); **white (kaolin/quartz)** rarer.
- **Painting** (finger/brush) in Mesolithic; **pecking/incising + cup marks (Kundam)** dominate the megalithic Iron Age.
- **Motifs:** animals (deer, bovids, boar, elephant, fish), human hunters, geometric (circles, grids, ladders, dots), handprints, abstract symbols.
- **Cognitive significance:** symbolic thinking, planning, group identity, ritual — hallmarks of fully modern humans.
- **Art → Script transition:** Mesolithic geometric symbols → Iron Age pottery graffiti → **Tamil-Brahmi**; physically layered at **Sittannavasal & Pugalur**.
- **Sittannavasal Jain frescoes** (Pallava, 7th–9th CE) over a prehistoric shelter = **finest pre-Chola painting in India** (celestial pond/Samavasarana; lotuses, fish, elephants, geese, dancers; natural dyes). ASI-protected; **8,000+ yrs** layered occupation.
- **Threats:** quarrying, agricultural encroachment, vandalism, urban expansion (esp. Madurai–Dindigul); most sites lack legal protection. **Arittappatti model** integrates rock-art protection + ecological conservation + community.
- **TNSDA** = primary documenter (field surveys 1970s–2010s); **ASI** protects major sites (Sittannavasal), focuses on megalithic/proto-historic.

## THEME

- Rock art = proof of **modern human cognition**; clusters **map onto river basins** (same logic as habitation sites).
- The **art → graffiti → Tamil-Brahmi continuum** links prehistory to literacy.

## KEY ARCHAEOLOGISTS (RECALL TABLE)

Archaeologist	Contribution
Robert Bruce Foote	" <b>Father of Indian Prehistory</b> " (GSI); <b>Pallavaram &amp; Attirampakkam, 1863</b> ; Gudiyam; early Adichanallur survey; 1914/1915 catalogue
Alexander Rea	ASI; <b>Adichanallur (1899–1905)</b> — India's largest urn-burial site
Mortimer Wheeler	ASI DG; <b>Brahmagiri (1947)</b> — BRW as Iron Age diagnostic; <b>Arikamedu (1945)</b> — Indo-Roman trade proof
K. Rajan	Pondicherry Univ.; <b>Kodumanal, Porunthal, Sivagalai</b> — <b>redefined TN Iron Age</b> ; Tamil-Brahmi
Amarnath Ramakrishna	ASI; <b>Keeladi</b> director (2015–18)

Archaeologist	Contribution
T. Satyamurthy (Sathyamurthy)	ASI; <b>Adichanallur re-excavation (2004)</b> ; Sivagalai (2017–18); Saluvankuppam
Iravatham Mahadevan	<b>Tamil-Brahmi corpus (1971, 2003)</b> ; Indus script; Mankulam/Pugalur/Karur epigraphy
S.R. Rao	ASI; <b>Paiyampalli</b> Neolithic; Kaveripattinam; Dwarka underwater site
J.M. Casal	French Institute; <b>Arikamedu (1941/1949)</b> ; Suttukeny/Kottaimedu
Vimala Begley (Bagley)	<b>Arikamedu (1989–92)</b> — proved pre-Roman indigenous port
Gabriel Jouveau-Dubreuil	Identified Arikamedu as Poduke Emporium (1941); Augustus-head gem
Feodor Jagor	German ethnologist; first drew attention to <b>Adichanallur (1876)</b>
Guillaume Le Gentil	French astronomer; earliest note on Arikamedu (1768–71)
Sharma Centre (Chennai)	Attirampakkam 2011–18; <b>2018 Nature paper</b> (1.5 Mya Acheulian)
Shanti Pappu & Kumar Akhilesh	Attirampakkam 12-yr excavation; 3,528 artefacts
V.D. Krishnaswamy / T.B. Rajaguru	Mesolithic & microlithic typology (Vaigai–Tamiraparani; Mahadeva Hills)
N.R. Banerjee, K.V. Soundararajan	Early ASI megalithic excavations (Sanur etc.)

## POTTERY & MATERIAL CULTURE

- Pot-making in TN dates back **at least 7000 BCE** (the craft said to be **~9,000 years old**); **Puranaanuru & Aganaanooru** mention it; **Puranaanuru** describes pots fired in **kilns** with rising smoke.
- **Black-and-Red Ware (BRW)** = the Megalithic/Iron Age diagnostic; **NBPW** (3rd–4th c. BCE) at Korkai; **Rouletted Ware** = Indo-Roman marker; **Arretine/Terra Sigillata/ARS** = imported Roman fine ware.

### THEME

- Pottery is the **continuity thread** from Neolithic → Sangam, and its **graffiti** → **Tamil-Brahmi** carries the literacy story.

## THE PORUNAI (THAMIRABARANI) RIVER CIVILISATION

- **Sivakalai rice = 1155 BCE**; with **Adichanallur & Korkai (9th–8th c. BCE)** → mature **Porunai river civilisation**. Adichanallur is only **7 km from Sivakalai** along the Porunai.
- **Porunai in Sangam literature**: referenced in **Puranaanooru & Tolkappiyam** (1st–4th c. CE). Name evolution: "**Than Porunai**" → "**Tamira Porunai**" → "**Thamirabarani**" (researchers propose "**Porunai**" as the original, **non-Sanskritised** Tamil term). Puranaanooru-11 praises its cool waters and customs (Tamil verse cited in source).
- **Geography**: Porunai flows **128 km** from the Western Ghats to the **Gulf of Mannar**, meeting **Korkai** (major Pandya trade centre; **pearl trade** per Aganaanooru; **Yavanar/Roman** links — pearls & pepper).
- **Paddy cultivation** in the Porunai valley for **~3,000 years**.

## COINS

- **Sangam coins**: square, with **Brahmi** script; period **300 BCE–300 CE**; **punch-marked coins** prevalent.

- **Royal emblems: Chera = bow & arrow; Chola = tiger; Pandya = fish** (Pandyas also stamped their **fish** on Magadha punch-marked coins). **Adiyamans & Malayamans** also issued coins. Tamil kingdoms stayed **independent (Asoka to Aurangzeb)** despite Magadha.
- **Neidhal** seaside regions = '**Pattinam**' (river mouths/coast). Foreign coins (Roman, Magadha punch-marked) found in large treasure-troves.
- Post-Sangam: rise of the **Kalabhras**. **Andipatty lead coins** bear the Brahmi legend '**Athinan Ethinan Senthan**'.
- **Pallava coins: a bull + two sail ships**; also **Swastika & lion** symbols.
- Arikamedu later coins (3rd c. AD): **gold**, called "**PANAM**"/"**VARAAGAN**".

## THEME

- Coin emblems are a clean Chera/Chola/Pandya recall set; **independence-from-Magadha + Roman/Magadha coin hoards** are the two big takeaways.

## TAMIL-BRAHMI INSCRIPTIONS

- Vital records of ancient Tamil history/culture/language; **predate Sangam poetry**; **Iravatham Mahadevan** = the authority (Tamil-Brahmi + Indus script). Also the **oldest Jaina inscriptions in India**; occur on **coins, rings, pottery**. Found alongside megalithic & early-historic periods.
- **4 functional categories:**

- (1) **Natural rock caverns** (Jain ascetic settlements — donations of stone beds on cave drip-lines);
- (2) **Inscribed hero stones (Nadukal)** — prove warrior-memorial tradition began in the **BCE era**, not Pallava era;
- (3) **Urban potsherd inscriptions** — commoner/merchant/artisan scratches → **democratic, widespread literacy**;
- (4) **Overseas discoveries** — Tamil merchants living abroad carrying script.

### (1) Natural rock caverns — key sites:

Site	District/Region	Significance
<b>Mangulam (Meenakshipuram)</b>	Madurai	Mentions Pandya <b>Nedunchezhiyan</b> ; royal patronage of Jainism, 2nd c. BCE
<b>Jambai</b>	Tiruvannamalai	Links Velir chief <b>Athiyaman</b> as " <b>Satiyaputo</b> " to Ashoka's edicts
<b>Pugalur (Aranattarmalai)</b>	Karur	Three generations of the <b>Irumporai Chera</b> line — proof for Pathitru Pathu
<b>Alagarmalai</b>	Madurai	Merchant guilds (Kavithi, <b>Uppu Vanikan</b> /salt, <b>Panitha Vanikan</b> /sugar)
<b>Arittapatti</b>	Madurai	Chieftain <b>Yakkan</b> ; title <b>Kani Nandan</b>
<b>Thirupparankundram</b>	Madurai	Individuals from <b>Eelam (Sri Lanka)</b> — cross-strait links
<b>Anaimalai</b>	Madurai	<b>Iva Kunram</b> ; cave donated by a local chief
<b>Kizhavalavu (Panchapandavar Malai)</b>	Madurai	Inscriptions <b>upside down</b> (read from inside cave); donor from <b>Thondi</b> (Chera port)
<b>Sittanavasal (Eladipattam)</b>	Pudukkottai	Donors of polished stone beds ( <b>sallekhana</b> fasting beds)
<b>Edakal Caves</b>	Wayanad (Kerala)	<b>Kadummi Putha Chera</b> — Tamil-Brahmi/Chera spread across W. Ghats
<b>Thondur</b>	Villupuram	<b>Ilam Kadungo</b> — northern spread of the script

## (2) Inscribed hero stones (Nadukal):

Site	District	Significance
Pulimankombai	Theni	<b>Oldest inscribed hero stone in India (c. 3rd c. BCE); Tiyan Antavan died in Aakol Poosal</b> (cattle raid)
Thathappatti	Dindigul	Early Iron Age hero stone; Vetchi/Karanthai warfare tradition
Porunthal	Dindigul	Grave ring with Tamil-Brahmi ( <b>Va-i-ra</b> ) + paddy → agriculture + literacy

## (3) Urban potsherd inscriptions:

Site	District	Significance
Keeladi	Sivaganga	Earliest dated Tamil-Brahmi ( <b>6th c. BCE</b> ); names <b>Kuviran, Athan, Urai</b>
Kodumanal	Erode	Inscribed sherds in a gem/weaving hub → literate artisans (names in <b>-an, -makan</b> )
Karur	Karur	Gold/silver <b>signet rings</b> in the Amaravathi (e.g., <b>Makkotai</b> ) → literate goldsmiths
Arikamedu	Puducherry	Tamil-Brahmi mixed with <b>Roman Arretine ware</b> → merchants kept inventory
Azhagankulam	Ramanathapuram	Pandyan port sherds with Tamil names → literate coastal admin
Pattanam (Muziris)	Ernakulam (Kerala)	Sherds with <b>Aman</b> → Sangam Tamil identity of early Kerala coast

## (4) Overseas discoveries (the global Tamil merchant):

Site	Country	Significance
Quseir al-Qadim	Egypt (Red Sea)	Names <b>Panaiori, Kanan</b> in a Roman port
Berenike	Egypt (Red Sea)	Sherd inscribed <b>Korrapuman</b> → sustained Tamil diaspora in Roman Egypt
Khor Rori (Sumhuram)	Oman	Sherd <b>Nandai Kīran</b> in the frankincense hub
Phu Khao Thong	Thailand	Goldsmith's touchstone " <b>Perumpatan Kal</b> " → trade with SE Asia (Suvarnabhumi)

## Sangam-period historical inscriptions (2nd c. BCE – 2nd c. AD; Tamil/Brahmi, mostly natural caverns, many Jaina):

- **Nedunceliyan Inscription (Kalugumalai, near Mangulam/Arittappatti/Minakshipuram):** a **palli** (monastery) dedicated to Jaina monk **Kani Nanta Siri Ikuvan** by **Nedunceliyan** (also Panavan, Kadalan, Valudi — or Panavan/Kadalan may be officers). **Earliest record in Tamilagam referring to a contemporary Pandya king; likely 2nd c. BCE.**
- **Second Kalugumalai inscription:** **palli** to Kani Nanta by **Catikan** (father of Ilañcatikan, brother-in-law of Nedunceliyan).
- **Third Kalugumalai inscription:** gift of **Pinavu (lattice)** to **Kalitika** (son of Antai), a **kavithi** of the merchant guild (**Nigama**) of **Vellārai** → Jainism's merchant support.
- **Ilangadunko Inscription (Arunāttar Hill, near Pugalur, Tiruchirappalli):** **Ilan-kadunko**, son of **Perunkadunko**, son of **Atan Cellirumporai**, made a stone abode for Jaina monk **Amannan Cenkāyappan of Yarrur** — **3 generations of the Chera line** (heroes of Patirrupattu; identifications: Atan Cellirumporai = Kō

Atan Cel Inumporai/Selvakkadunko Vali Atan; the others = royal poets Palai Padiya Perunkadunkō & Marutam Pādiya Ilankadunkō).

- **Atiyaman Inscription (Jambai/Stambai): "Satiyaputra Atiyan Neduman Anci itta palli"** — identifies **Satiyaputra with the Atiyamans** (Satiyaputra earliest in **Asokan edicts at Brahmagiri**); some link Satiyaputras to **Kosars** (truth-speakers) but "Satiya" ≠ "Satya" (controversial; **K.G. Sessa Iyer** = Atiyaman). Confirms **Atiyaman Neduman Anchi** (celebrated by **Paranar & Avvaiyar**) endowed a Jain abode → Sangam-age **religious tolerance**.
- **Pulankurichi inscription: ~2nd c. BCE** (Sangam Age), Tamil-Brahmi; mentions "**Koran Kotran**" and land donations referencing "**Nedunkundram**."
- **Distribution of graffiti potsherds:** Adichchanallur, Korkai, Alagankulam, Kodumanal, Karur, Teriruvveli, Uraiur, Mangulam, Perur (and **Sri Lanka**). **Over 75%** of subcontinental graffiti symbols are from **Tamil Nadu**; **1,001 graffiti sherds at Keeladi**; **56 Tamil-Brahmi sherds at Keeladi**. **Indus script (~4,500 yrs)** = earliest in India → graffiti → Brahmi (graffiti = undeciphered symbolic communication; found in Chalcolithic & Megalithic cultures).

## Inscription source overview (non-copper-plate):

Source	Location(s)	Language(s)	Key Insight
Early stone inscriptions	Rameswaram, Brahmagiri, Maski; Kanheri, Nasik	Tamil, Brahmi, Prakrit	Varied regional origins
Asoka's rock inscriptions	Siddapuram, Brahmagiri, Errakudi	(Not Tamil)	Mention <b>Chera, Chola, Pandya</b> (+ Satyaputra)
Hathigumpha (Kharavela)	Kalinga (Odisha)	(Not Tamil)	Reference a <b>confederacy of Tamil kings</b>
Samudragupta's Allahabad Pillar	—	Sanskrit	Mentions Pallava <b>Kanchi Vishnugopan</b>
Aihole inscription (Pulikeshin II)	—	Sanskrit	Chalukya (Pulikeshin II) vs Pallava (Mahendravarman) wars
Chola stone inscriptions	Numerous	Tamil	Vast source of Chola history

Inscription	Ruler	Key Insight
Malpadi & Raja Rajeswaran temple	Rajendra Chola I	Chola political structure, administration, expansion
Tirumukkudal	Veera Rajendra Chola	Chola patronage of <b>education &amp; healthcare</b>
Thiruvedipuram	Rajendra Chola III	Detailed Chola records
Velvikudi grant	Paranthaka Nedunchadayan (Pandya)	Pandya land practices/social structure (Sangam Age)
Kudumiyamalai	Mahendravarman (Pallava)	Development of <b>music &amp; arts</b>
Pulankurichi	Sangam Age	~2nd c. BCE; Tamil-Brahmi; "Koran Kotran", "Nedunkundram"

### THEME

- Tamil-Brahmi proves **early (6th c. BCE), democratic, and global** literacy — from cave beds to Roman Egypt.
- **Asokan + Hathigumpha** inscriptions independently confirm the **Chera-Chola-Pandya + Tamil-confederacy** political reality.

## COPPER PLATE GRANTS

### First Pandyan Empire

Plate	Issued by / Regnal yr	Plates	Where preserved	Key facts
<b>Velvikkudi</b>	Neduncadaiyan Parantakan (A.D. 768–815), 3rd yr	10	<b>British Museum, London</b>	Sanskrit + Tamil; first reported in Annual Report for Epigraphy (1907); pub. Epigraphia Indica Vol. XVIII (1923); also Sentamil Vol. 20
<b>Srivaramangalam</b>	Neduncadaiyan Parantakan, 17th yr	7	<b>Madras Museum</b> ("Plate No. 15")	Sanskrit + Tamil; pub. by <b>Venkayya</b> , Indian Antiquary Vol. XXII (1893); Velankudi given as <b>brahmadeya</b> , renamed Srivaramangalam; Sentamil Vol. IV
<b>Smaller Sinnamanur</b>	(Madurai dist.)	3 (some missing)	Central Archaeological Dept, <b>Mysore</b>	In Sewell's list (Vol. I, p.290); pub. as No. 206, South Indian Inscriptions Vol. III Pt IV; described in Epig. Reports 1907 (Pt-II pp.62–69)
<b>Dalavaipuram (Viranarayana)</b>	Parantaka Virananayana (brother of Varaguna, grandson of Neduncadaiyan)	7	T.N. Subramanian, Madras	First pub. <b>Tamil History Academy, 1967</b> ; Tamil portion opens "onku tirai viyan parappil" = first line of Maduraikkāñci (Ten Idylls, for Nedunceliyan)
<b>Larger Sinnamanur</b>	Rajasimha-II, 16th yr (~A.D. 916)	(first & last missing)	Central Arch. Dept, <b>Mysore</b>	Sanskrit + Tamil (Tamil in <b>vatteluttu</b> ); pub. SII Vol. III Pt IV No. 206 (1927)

### Later Pallavas

Plate	Issued by / Regnal yr	Plates	Key facts
<b>Pallankoil</b>	Simhavarman III, 6th yr	5	Tanjavur dist.; owned by S. Rajam; pub. Trans. Arch. Soc. of South India (1958–59, <b>T.N. Subramanian</b> ); praises son <b>Simhavishnu</b> ; grants <b>Amansērkkai</b> as <b>palliccandam</b> to <b>Vajranandi Kuravar</b> (Jain patronage)
<b>Kuram</b>	Paramesvaravarman I	7	Madras Museum; pub. <b>Hultzsch</b> , SII Vol. I; Sanskrit describes <b>battle of Peruvalanallur</b> ; provisions for Mahābhārata exposition + daily Siva worship
<b>Unnaguravapalayam</b>	Paramesvaravarman I, 19th yr	3	Nellore dist.; <b>Sanskrit only</b> ; Epigraphia Indica Vol. XXXII
<b>Reyuru</b>	Narasimhavarman II	5	Pub. (Telugu) by <b>V. Prabhakara Sastri</b> (JSVOI VIII–IX); later <b>P.P. Desai</b> , EI XXIX; king = <b>Parama Bhagavata</b> + <b>Parama Maheswara</b>
<b>Udayendiram-I</b>	Nandivarman II	5	Found 1850, North Arcot; pub. by <b>Rev. Foulks</b> (Salem Manual), then <b>Hultzsch</b> ; 109 lines (last 4 = Tamil endorsement of <b>Parantaka I</b> ); at <b>Udayachandran's</b> request; services of Udayachandra to <b>Pallavamalla</b>

Plate	Issued by / Regnal yr	Plates	Key facts
<b>Kasakkudi</b>	Nandivarman II, 22nd yr	11	Found 1879 near Karaikkal; <b>Jules de la Fon / Julien Vinson / Hultzsch</b> (SII II Pt III); genealogy from <b>Bhimavarman</b> ; Kudukolli renamed <b>Ekadiramangalam</b> ; 2 pattis (1200 kulis each) to <b>Jyeshthapātha Somayājīn</b>
<b>Pullur</b>	Nandivarman II, 33rd yr	9	Found 1939, North Arcot; <b>Calcutta Museum</b> ; Sanskrit + Tamil; <b>108 donees</b>
<b>Tandantottam</b>	Nandivarman II, 58th yr	14	308/214 Brahmins/donees; pub. <b>H. Krishna Sastri</b> , SII III Pt V; biruda <b>Ekadira</b> , elephant <b>Pattavardhana</b> ; Mahabharata recitation; 10 km SE of Kumbakonam
<b>Pattattalmangalam (Korrangudi)</b>	Nandivarman II, 61st yr	5	Pub. <b>T.N. Subramanian</b> (Mythic Society JI XIV) & <b>K.V. Subramaniya Iyer</b> (EI XVIII); 16 donees; at request of <b>Mangalanādālvān</b>
<b>Velurppalayam</b>	Nandivarman III, 6th yr	5	Near Arakkonam; <b>Madras Museum</b> ; <b>V. Venkayya / H. Krishna Sastri</b> (SII III Pt V); Sri Kattupalli village to a Siva temple (built by Yajñabhatta) at request of Chola <b>Kumarānkusa</b> ; king = hero of <b>Nandikkalambakam</b>
<b>Bahur</b>	Nripatunga Varman, 8th yr	5	Found 1879 near Pondicherry; <b>Hultzsch</b> (EI IV; SII II Pt V); 3 villages to a <b>Vedic college at Bahur</b> , tax-exempt
<b>Velanjeri</b>	Aparajitavarman (9th yr) + Parantaka Chola I	—	Found 1977 near Tiruttani; gifted to <b>TNSDA</b> ; tax-gift to <b>Subramanya temple, Tiruttani hill</b> ; Aparajita = son of <b>Kampavarman</b> & Ganga princess <b>Vijaya</b> ; Kampavarman & Nripatungavarman = sons of <b>Nandivarman III</b>

## Other dynastic copper plates

Dynasty	Plates	Key insight
<b>Chola</b>	<b>Anbil</b>	King <b>Chenganan</b>
<b>Pallava</b>	Various (Prakrit & Sanskrit); <b>Pallan Kovil</b> (Narasimhavarman)	Patronage of <b>Jains</b>
<b>Chola</b>	<b>Leiden, Thiruvallangadu, Karandai</b> (Rajaraja I, Rajendra I), <b>Sarala</b> (Veera Rajendra)	Chola administration, conquests, society
<b>Vijayanagara</b>	<b>Banganapalli</b> (Harihara I), <b>Amaravathi</b> (Krishnadevaraya), <b>Srirangam</b> (Devaraya II)	Vijayanagara governance/achievements

### THEME

- The **Velvikkudi grant** is the cornerstone — re-grant of a brahmadeya, key for Pandya history; many Pallava plates are **bilingual (Sanskrit + Tamil/vatteluttu)**.
- Plates double as **dynastic genealogies + land-grant + religious-patronage** records (Jain, Saiva, Vaishnava, Vedic).

## SOURCES OF TAMIL NADU HISTORY

### Dating of Tolkappiyam (oldest extant Tamil grammar)

- Uniquely covers **letters (எழுத்து)**, **words (சொல்)**, **human life (பொருள்)**; placed in the **Second Sangam**; predates the Third Sangam corpus (Ettutogai, Pattuppattu, the epics).

Scholar	Proposed date	Basis
Vaiyapuri Pillai, K.A.N. Sastri, K.N. Sivaraja Pillai	4th–5th c. A.D.	Greek-derived word "Hora" (ஓரா) (interpretation disputed)
P.S. Subramanya Sastry	2nd c. B.C.	Aligns with Bharata's Natya Sastra
Mayilai Seeni Venkatasami	8th–9th c. B.C.	—
Panamparanar's preface	Predates Panini	Tolkappiyar knew Aiyindhiram (pre-Panini grammar)
Prof. N. Subramanian	Older than Panini	Panini unaware of the south/Tamil Nadu

- **Conclusion:** at least **7th–8th c. B.C.** — challenges the "Tamil history begins only in the 4th c. B.C." claim. Tolkappiyar = **Kaappiyarkudi** family (not Brahmin); preface **omits Agattiar** as teacher → independent. Legends linking him to **Jamadagni/Parasurama** treated skeptically. The **32-techniques section** may predate **Arthasastra** → earlier Tamil origin.

## Sangam Literature

- Three Sangams in **Pandyan capitals**; historical core ~**3rd c. B.C. – 3rd c. A.D.** (anthologised by **4th–5th c. A.D.**). **Nakkirar:** 3 Sangams over **9990 years** (1st Sangam 549 members incl. Siva & Murugan; seat Madurai → Kapaadapuram after a deluge; 2nd Sangam grammarians Agathiyan & Tolkaappiyar, works Agathiyam & Tolkappiyam — only the latter survives).
- **Dr. C.E. Ramachandran:** Purananuru poems ~**1000 B.C. – 300 A.D.** (overlap Mahabharata-war era); **K.A.N. Sastri** skeptical of early dating. **Pahruli river** (Sangam lit) implies land before the deluge (Puram-9 verse cited in source). Anthologised no later than **4th–5th c. A.D.**

**The Eight Anthologies (Ettuttogai):** Narrinai, Kuruntogai, Aingurunuru, **Padirrupattu**, Paripaatal, Kalittogai, Ahanaanuru, **Puranaanuru**. (Tamil mnemonic verse: "நற்றிணை நல்ல குறுந்தொகை ஐங்குறுநூறு / ஒத்த பதிற்றுப்பத் தோங்கு பரிபாடல் / கற்றறிந்தார் ஏத்தும் கலியோடகம்புறமென் / றித்திறத்த எட்டுத் தொகை.")

**The Ten Idylls (Pattuppattu):** Tirumurugarrupadai, Porunararrupadai, Sirupaanaarrupadai, Perumpanarrupadai, Mullaippattu, Maduraikkanji, Nedunalvaadai, Kurunjippaattu, Pattinappaalai, Malaipadukadaam. (Tamil mnemonic verse: "முருகு பொருநாறு பாணிரண்டு முல்லை / பெருகு வளமதுரைக் காஞ்சி-மருவினிய / கோலநெடு நல் வாடை கோல்குறிஞ்சி பட்டினப் / பாலை கடாத்தொடும் பத்து.")

## Akam vs Puram:

	Akam (அகம்)	Puram (புறம்)
<b>Theme</b>	Internal — love, universal emotion	External — war, kings, public life
<b>Time-sense</b>	<b>Timeless/undateable</b> ; hero deliberately <b>unnamed</b> (per Tolkappiyam)	Historical/quasi-historical; <b>anachronism = flaw</b>
<b>Historical value</b>	Indirect (Ahanaanuru, Narrinai mix fact + love)	<b>High</b> — Purananuru; Padirrupattu (10 Chera kings); Ten Idylls (Karikala Chola, Nedunjezhian)

- **Dr. K.K. Pillay:** Tamil retained a **distinct identity** despite Sanskrit/North-Indian contact. The "**Kadai Ezhu Vallals**" (Last Seven Patrons) anchor Sangam patronage. Both Akam & Puram link external action to inner emotion.

## Literary source classification

- **(a) Inland literary** (Indian laureates); **(b) Foreign literary** (foreign works mentioning South India); **(c) Foreigners' diaries/travelogues.**

## Inland sources (period-wise):

Era	Key works
<b>Sanskrit</b>	<b>Arthashastra</b> (Pandyen pearls, Madurai; Kautilya possibly from TN), Dandin's <i>Avantisundari Katha</i> (Pallava), Mahendravarman's <b>Mattavilasa Prahasanam</b> , Chola Vamsa Charithai, Kongudesa Rasaakkal Savisthaara Charithai, <b>Ganga Devi's Madhura Vijayam</b> (Kumara Kampana vs Madurai Sultanate)
<b>Telugu (Vijayanagara)</b>	Jaimini Bharatamu, Parijatapaharanamu, Yarahapuranam, Rayavachakamu, Krishnaraya Vijayam, <b>Amukthamalyada</b> (Krishnadevaraya, Telugu), <b>Jambavati Kalyanam</b> (Sanskrit), Madurai Tala Varalaru, Sriranga Koil Oluku, Tanjavur Andhra Rajulu Charitra
<b>Sangam (Golden Age)</b>	Authentic: <b>Ettuthogai, Pattuppattu</b> ; others: Agathiyam, <b>Tolkappiyam</b> , Pathinenkizhkanakku, <b>Silappadigaram, Manimekalai, Valayapathi, Kundalakesi, Seevagachinthamani, Thirukkural</b> ; Puranaanooru praises rulers; Pathitrupattu highlights Chera virtues
<b>Kalabhra (Dark Age)</b>	Limited — Tamil Navalar Sarithai, Periya Puranam, Yaapperungalam
<b>Pallava</b>	<b>Thevaram</b> (Appar, Sundarar, Gnana Sambandar), Nalayira Divyaprabandham (Pallava-Chalukya), <b>Nandikkalambakam</b> (Nandivarman), Bharata Venba (Perundevanar), Dandin's Periya Puraanam & Paandikkovai
<b>Early Pandya</b>	Pandikovai, Periya Puranam, Divya Sucharitha, Guru Paramparai, Vaishnava lit, <b>Tiruvilayadal (Paranjothi)</b>
<b>Later Chola</b>	SeevagaChinthamani, Valayapathi, Kundalakesi; <b>Veera Choliyam (Buddha Mithirar), Kamba Ramayanam, Kalingathu Parani (Jayangondar — Kalinga War), Moovarula (Ottakkoothar — 3 Chola kings)</b>

## Foreign sources & inscriptions:

Source	Date	Contribution
<b>Herodotus</b>	5th c. BCE	Earliest classical mention of India
<b>Megasthenes' Indika</b>	~300 BCE	First direct notice of Tamilagam; Pandya Nadu; queen Pandai (disputed); Taprobane; "Pondaen nation ruled by females"
<b>Periplus of the Erythraean Sea</b>	~1st CE	All Tamil ports; Damirica = Tamilagam; exports/imports; Hippalus route
<b>Pliny the Elder</b>	75 CE	Taprobane; Muziris in 40 days; pirates; Becare/Pandion; Rome's gold drain
<b>Ptolemy's Geography</b>	2nd c. CE	Poduke (Arikamedu), Camara
<b>Strabo / Livy</b>	~1st c. BCE-CE	Reference Tamil Nadu
<b>Chinese (Pankou, Wang Mang, Wou)</b>	1st c. CE	Houng-tche = Kanchi; rhinoceros tribute
<b>Mahavamsa / Dipavamsa</b>	Ancient	Prince <b>Vijaya</b> married a Pandyan princess; <b>Kajabahu</b> visited during <b>Cheran Senguttuvan</b>
<b>Asokan Edicts</b>	3rd c. BCE	Chera, Chola, Pandya, <b>Satyaputra</b> ; <b>TN independent</b> ; Asoka's allies (Buddhism spread)
<b>Hathigumpha (Kharavela)</b>	~1st c. BCE	Defeat of a <b>Tamil confederacy</b> (Tamil unity)
<b>Ramayana / Mahabharata</b>	Ancient	Mention <b>Kapādapuram</b> (Pandyas' 2nd capital)
<b>Hebrew</b>	Ancient	Shared word " <b>Tuki</b> " ( <b>peacock</b> )

Source	Date	Contribution
<b>Mauryan invasion</b>	Bindusara's reign	" <b>Vambamoriyar</b> " in Tamil texts — Mauryans defeated
<b>Katyayana vs Panini</b>	4th c. BCE	Katyayana mentions TN, Panini doesn't → Aryan contact possibly post-6th c. BCE

- **Agathiya — myth vs history:** said to bring Vedic religion south (Aryanisation); multiple Agathiyas (one in Rigveda); ashram in **Podiya Hills**, created lost grammar **Agathiyam**; possibly Tolkappiyar's teacher (Tolkappiyam silent); **Navalar Somasundara Bharathiar** — Agathiya cult a deliberate invention to downplay Tolkappiyam's author; **A. Ramasamy** — mere fabrication.
- **Tamil-Ceylon:** Vijaya-Pandya marriage; Kajabahu-Senguttuvan; cooperation + conflict. **Tamil-Roman:** Pandyan embassy to Augustus; Megasthenes' Pandya queen (disputed). **Yavanas** = Greeks/Romans (bodyguards; loanwords). **China:** Kanchi = Houangtche. Ports (Musiri, Tondi, Korkai, Kavirippoompattinam). **Archaeology:** Adichanallur (Foote; West-Asian links), **Arikamedu (Wheeler; Roman glass factory)**, Roman coins (pre-3rd c. CE), Paavai Vilakku/wine/glass, Roman bodyguards.

## THEME

- Sources = **Inland literary** → **Foreign literary** → **Foreigners' travelogues**, plus **archaeology, coins, inscriptions, copper plates**.
- The **Tolkappiyam dating debate** ("Hora" vs "pre-Panini") is the central historiography fight.
- **Independence under Asoka + Tamil confederacy vs Kharavela** = the key political-source takeaways.

## RECENT TNSDA EXCAVATIONS — 2024 (PHASE-WISE)

Site (District)	Phase	Key facts
<b>Keeladi (Sivagangai)</b>	Phase IX	Pallichandai Thidal, Thirubuvanam circle; <b>110-acre mound</b> ; 14 pits; <b>804 antiquities</b> (gold jewelry, <b>ivory dice</b> , animal figures, takalis, circular chips, sticks of honor, copper coins, needles, iron nails); clay & lime floor; black-red/red-coated/red potsherds
<b>Konthagai (Sivagangai)</b>	Phase IV	<b>24 burial urns</b> at 3 levels (2 pits); <b>110+ BRW &amp; red-slipped grave goods</b> ; human skeletons; carnelian beads, iron knives, chisels, rings, <b>ivory ring</b>
<b>Vembakottai (Virudhunagar)</b>	Phase II	Local: <b>Mettukkadu/Uchimedu</b> ; 34 pits; <b>7,800+ items</b> (Mesolithic tools, glass beads, flint earrings, figurines, talismans)
<b>Kilnamandi (Tiruvannamalai)</b>	—	Vandavasi circle; 55 acres; <b>200+ megalithic stone circles</b> ; burial (12 pits, 21 urns) + habitat (10 pits)
<b>Porpanaikottai (Pudukkottai)</b>	—	Between Manimangalam & Alangudi; Sangam site; circular brick structure; 57 cm drain; <b>533 antiquities</b>
<b>Thirumalapuram (Tenkasi)</b>	—	Remains at 4 ft depth (road construction); 25 acres; <b>cists + burial urns</b>
<b>Chennanur (Krishnagiri)</b>	—	Uthangarai Taluk; 50-acre mound; <b>2.5 m cultural deposit</b> ; pottery; <b>rock shelters with paintings</b>
<b>Kongalnagaram (Tiruppur)</b>	—	Udumalpet Taluk; 20-acre mound; gravestones, dolmen, stacked stones, burial urns
<b>Marungur (Cuddalore)</b>	—	32 km W of Cuddalore; 4-acre mound near a pond; <b>light-grey Rouletted ware</b> , BRW, brick construction

**Headline district sites (quick recall):** Keezhadi → **Sivagangai**; Sivakalai → **Thoothukudi**; Gangaikondacholapuram → **Ariyalur**; Mayiladumparai → **Krishnagiri**; Thoolookarpatti (3 sites) → **Tirunelveli**; Vembakottai → **Virudhunagar**; Perumbalai → **Dharmapuri**.

## ASI EXCAVATIONS IN TAMIL NADU, 1950–2022 (REFERENCE LIST)

#	Year	Place	District	Type	Excavated by
1-2	1950, 1952	Sanur	Chengalpattu	Megalithic	N.R. Banerjee & K.V. Soundararajan
3	1952–53	Chengamedu	South Arcot	Historical	N.R. Banerjee
4	1953–54	Pallavamedu (Kanchipuram)	Chengalpattu	Historical	—
5	1954–55	Amirthamangalam	Chengalpattu	Megalithic	N.R. Banerjee
6-8	1955–58	Kunnattur	Chengalpattu	Megalithic	V.D. Krishnasamy
9	1962–63	Kanchipuram	Chengalpattu	Historical	R. Subramanian
10-11	1962–64	Kaveripattinam	Thanjavur	Early Historical	S.R. Rao
12	1964–65	<b>Paiyampalli</b>	North Arcot	<b>Neolithic</b>	S.R. Rao
13	1964–65	Kaveripattinam	Thanjavur	Early Historical	S.R. Rao
14	1965–66	Kaveripattinam	Thanjavur	Early Historical	Krishna Deva
15	1966–67	Karaikadu	South Arcot	Historical	K.V. Raman (surveyed by Dr. Yves Martin, Inst. de Physique du Globe, Paris)
16	1966–67	Kaveripattinam	Thanjavur	Early Historical	K.V. Raman
17	1970–71	Perur	Coimbatore	Megalithic	K.V. Soundararajan
18	1970–71	Malayamputtu	North Arcot	Megalithic	K.V. Soundararajan
19	1970–71	Kaveripattinam	Thanjavur	Early Historical	K.V. Soundararajan
20	1970–71	Ukkirankottai	Tirunelveli	Historical	K.V. Soundararajan
21	1972–73	Kaveripattinam	Thanjavur	Early Historical	K.V. Raman
22	1973–74	Nanganallur	Madras	Historical	K.V. Soundararajan
23	1973–74	Gingee fort	South Arcot	Historical	K.V. Soundararajan

#	Year	Place	District	Type	Excavated by
24	1973-74	Kaveripattinam	Thanjavur	Early Historical	K.V. Soundararajan
25	1976-77	T. Kallupatti	Madurai	<b>Middle Palaeolithic</b>	L.K. Srinivasan
26	1978-79	Mottur	North Arcot	Megalithic	L.K. Srinivasan
27	1979-80	T. Kallupatti	Madurai	Microlithic-Megalithic	L.K. Srinivasan
28	1982-83	Kambarmedu	Thanjavur	Historical	C.L. Suri
29	1983-84	Kambarmedu	Thanjavur	Historical	P. Narayana Babu
30-31	1984-86	Auroville	South Arcot	Megalithic	P. Narayana Babu
32	1985-86	Darasuram	Thanjavur	Historical	P. Narayana Babu
33	1986-87	Darasuram	Thanjavur	Historical	K.P. Poonacha
34	1990-91	Mamallapuram	Kanchipuram	Historical	B. Narasimhaiah
35-37	1993-96	Gingee	Villupuram	Historical	B. Narasimhaiah
38-39	1997-99	Mamallapuram	Kanchipuram	Historical	K.T. Narasimhan
40	1999-2000	Mamallapuram (Shore Temple)	Kanchipuram	Historical	K.T. Narasimhan
41-42	2001-03	Fort, Gingee	Villupuram	Historical	K.T. Narasimhan
43	2003-04	Dutch Fort, Sadras	Kanchipuram	Historical	K.T. Narasimhan
44-45	2003-05	<b>Adichchanallur</b>	Thoothukudi	<b>Megalithic</b>	T. Satyamurthy
46	2005-06	Saluvankuppam	Kanchipuram	Historical	T. Satyamurthy & Sathyabhama Badhreenath
47	2006-07	Saluvankuppam	Kanchipuram	Historical	Sathyabhama Badhreenath
48	2007-08	Siruthavur	Kanchipuram	Megalithic	Sathyabhama Badhreenath
49	2010-11	Malaiyadipatti	Pudukottai	Pre-Historic	Ramesh S. Mulimani
50	2013-14	Pulicat	Thiruvallur	Historical	Dr. Maheswari
51	2022-23	Vadakkupattu	Kanchipuram	Pre-Historic & Early Historical	Kalimuthu M

## THEME

- **Kaveripattinam** dominates the early ASI campaigns (Chola Puhar); **Mamallapuram/Gingee** dominate the historical-fort phase; **Adichanallur (2003–05)** reopened the prehistoric front.
- The shift toward **TNSDA-led, AMS-dated, multi-phase** work (Keeladi/Sivagalai/Vembakottai) marks the modern era.

## OVERALL SYNTHESIS / CONCLUSION

- Tamil Nadu's record runs **continuously from ~1.5 Mya (Attirampakkam) to the Sangam Age**, with a **Neolithic-to-Iron-Age leap** (no real Copper Age) as its defining trait.
- **Smelted iron at Sivagalai (3345 BCE) and Mayiladumparai (2172 BCE)**, validated by AMS + XRF, push South India to the **front of global iron history** and argue for **indigenous innovation**.
- **Keeladi** establishes **6th-c. BCE urbanism + literacy** on the Vaigai; **Adichanallur/Sivakalai/Korkai** establish the **Porunai river civilisation** — together redefining the Sangam Age start to **~800 BCE**.
- **Megalithic burials** (dolmen, cist, urn, menhir, cairn) bridge prehistory and history; **BRW + Tamil-Brahmi** are the diagnostic threads.
- A vast **Greco-Roman + Chinese + SE-Asian trade network** (Arikamedu, Muziris, Karur, Azhagankulam, Korkai) is confirmed by **rouletted ware, amphorae, Roman coin hoards, and Tamil-Brahmi sherds at home and abroad**.
- **Tamil-Brahmi inscriptions, coins, and copper plates** document a **literate, mercantile, religiously tolerant** society that stayed **politically independent** of northern empires.
- The **origins debate** (Lemuria, West-Asian migration, autochthon theory) ends in a measured synthesis: **Dravidians ↔ Indus Valley ↔ Tamils**, fused with older southern aboriginals.

## TAMIL-BRAHMI INSCRIPTIONS —OVERSEAS DISCOVERIES: THE GLOBAL TAMIL MERCHANT DIASPORA

Tamil-Brahmi sherds, inscriptions, rouletted ware and guild records found abroad prove Tamil merchants and artisans physically lived overseas — carrying their language, script and supply chains from Roman Egypt to the South China Sea.

### West — Roman Egypt, Arabia & the Mediterranean

Site	Location	Date	Find & Significance
★ Valley of the Kings (Theban Necropolis)	Egypt — Luxor, Upper Egypt	1st–3rd c. CE (documented 2024–25)	<b>Path-breaking 2024–25 find: ~30 Indian inscriptions</b> (Tamil-Brahmi + Prakrit + Sanskrit) across <b>6 tombs</b> ; name ' <b>Cikai Korran</b> ' <b>8× in 5 tombs</b> (one at <b>4 m height</b> near an entrance); ' <b>Kopan varata kantan</b> ' = "Kopan came and saw"; also names <b>Catan, Kiran</b> . Carved following the existing <b>Greek graffiti</b> tradition. Researchers: <b>Charlotte Schmid (EFEU, Paris) &amp; Ingo Strauch (Univ. of Lausanne)</b> ; paper "From the Valley of the Kings to India" ( <b>Intl. Conf. on Tamil Epigraphy, 2025</b> ); followed <b>Jules Baillet (1926, 2,000+ Greek graffiti)</b> . ' <b>Cikai</b> ' ≈ Skt sikha (tuft/crown); ' <b>Korran</b> ' distinctly Tamil from korram (victory/slaying) — echoes the Chera goddess <b>Korravai</b> and Purananuru's Chera king <b>Pittangkorran</b> ; <b>Kopan</b> also occurs at <b>Ammankovilpatti (TN)</b> . Proves <b>Tamil pilgrims/merchants reached Upper Egypt</b> .
<b>Quseir al-Qadim</b>	Egypt (Red Sea)	Roman era	Names <b>Panaiori, Kanan</b> in a Roman port

Site	Location	Date	Find & Significance
<b>Berenike</b>	Egypt (Red Sea)	Roman era	Sherd inscribed <b>Korrapuman</b> → sustained Tamil diaspora in Roman Egypt
<b>Khor Rori (Sumhuram)</b>	Oman — Dhofar	1st–3rd c. CE	Sherd ' <b>Nandai Kiran</b> ' in the ancient <b>frankincense</b> export hub; Periplus-era port → Tamils in the <b>incense-pepper-silk</b> network
<b>Ed-Dur</b>	UAE — Umm al-Qaiwain	1st c. CE	<b>Rouletted ware</b> + Indian <b>punch-marked coins</b> + Roman glass → Arabian Gulf <b>Tamil-Roman-Arabian trade triangle</b>
<b>Pompeii</b>	Italy — Campania	79 CE (Vesuvius)	<b>Black pepper</b> frozen in houses by the eruption; Indian textiles in Roman literature ('Yavanam' = Roman goods in Tamil) → TN = Rome's pepper supplier; <b>Pliny: 550 million sesterces</b> drained to India yearly; pepper as <b>ransom</b> (410 CE Visigoth siege demanded <b>3,000 lbs of pepper</b> )

## East — Suvarnabhumi (SE Asia), Sri Lanka & the Far East

Site	Location	Date	Find & Significance
<b>Phu Khao Thong</b>	Thailand — Nakhon Si Thammarat	2nd–3rd c. CE	Goldsmith's <b>touchstone 'Perumpatan Kal'</b> (gold-purity tester) → a <b>resident Tamil artisan</b> , not just a trader; earliest Tamil artefact in Thailand; ancient Tamil trading colony
<b>Takua Pa</b>	Thailand — Phang Nga (Kra Isthmus)	8th–9th c. CE	Rock inscription ' <b>Sigai Kotran</b> ' (= <b>Cikai Korran</b> ) — <b>same name as the Valley of the Kings</b> (different century/region); proves the <b>Kra Peninsula land-bridge</b> shortcut, <b>predating the Malacca sea route</b>
<b>Khuan Luk Pat</b>	Thailand — Krabi	2nd–4th c. CE	Tamil-Brahmi pottery; <b>carnelian/agate beads matching Kodumanal (Erode)</b> production; tin ingots; glass → <b>direct Kodumanal → Thailand supply chain</b>
<b>Sembaran</b>	Bali, Indonesia	1st–2nd c. CE	<b>Rouletted ware identical to Arikamedu</b> production → Tamil trade reached Bali (westernmost Indonesian evidence)
<b>Kota Cina</b>	Sumatra, Indonesia	10th–14th c. CE	Tamil inscriptions; <b>Chola-period coins</b> ; <b>Ainnurruvar</b> guild records → permanent <b>merchant-guild settlement</b>
<b>Anuradhapura</b>	Sri Lanka	3rd c. BCE – 2nd c. CE	Tamil-Brahmi pottery graffiti in <b>pre-Christian layers</b> (Buddhist monastery context); <b>predates Sinhalese script</b> ; confirms Mahavamsa Tamil-Sinhalese interaction
<b>Tissamaharama</b>	Sri Lanka — Southern Province	2nd c. BCE – 1st c. CE	Tamil-Brahmi on pottery → Tamil traders <b>preceded Pandyan political influence</b> in southern Sri Lanka
<b>Oc Eo</b>	Vietnam — Mekong Delta	2nd–6th c. CE	South Indian + Roman coins; Sanskrit/Tamil artefacts; <b>Funan kingdom</b> entrepôt → Tamil/Roman goods flowed onward to <b>China</b>
<b>Barus (Fansur)</b>	Sumatra, Indonesia	<b>1088 CE</b>	Stone inscription of the <b>Ainnurruvar ("Five Hundred")</b> guild — trade-protection & settlement rights; <b>the most important Tamil overseas guild inscription</b> ; guild operated <b>from Arabia to China</b>

## THEME

- Tamil presence abroad spans **two oceans and a millennium** — from **Roman Egypt and Pompeii's pepper** in the west to **Bali, Vietnam and the Kra Isthmus** in the east.
- The recurring name '**Cikai Korran**' / '**Sigai Kotran**' linking **Egypt (1st–3rd c. CE)** and **Thailand (8th–9th c. CE)** dramatises a continuous, named Tamil merchant diaspora.
- The evidence escalates from **traders** (rouletted ware, beads, coins) → **resident artisans** (Phu Khao Thong goldsmith) → **organised guild settlements** (**Ainnurruvar** at Kota Cina & Barus) — the maturing of Tamil overseas commerce.
- **Supply-chain proof:** Kodumanal (Erode) beads at Khuan Luk Pat and Arikamedu rouletted ware at Sembiran tie specific TN production centres to specific foreign markets.