

SHANJU's

Your Exam Partner

HISTORY, CULTURE, HERITAGE, AND SOCIO-POLITICAL MOVEMENTS IN TAMIL NADU

For TNPSC Group I, II, IIA, IV &

TNUSRB Exams

Comprehensive | Exam-Focused | Easy to Learn

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL DISCOVERIES

INTRODUCTION

- The term **Archaeology** originates from the Greek word **archaios**, meaning **ancient**.

Historical Period	Approximate Period	Major Features
Paleolithic Age	2 million years BCE–8,000 BCE	Hunting and food gathering
Mesolithic Age	8,000 BCE–1,300 BCE	Use of microlithic or small stone tools
Neolithic Age	2,000 BCE–1,000 BCE	Beginning of animal domestication and agriculture
Iron Age	1,300 BCE–300 BCE	Megalithic burial practices and specialised crafts such as pottery and blacksmithing
Sangam Age	300 BCE–300 CE	Rise of the Chera, Chola, and Pandya dynasties; growth of maritime trade and literary traditions

ARCHAEOLOGICAL DEPARTMENTS

Archaeological Survey of India

- The **Archaeological Survey of India** was established in **1861** by **Alexander Cunningham**.

PALEOLITHIC FINDINGS

Initial Discovery

- In **1862**, **Robert Bruce Foote** discovered artefacts in the Pallavaram area of the Thiruvallur district, near the Kosasthalaiyar River.

Upper Paleolithic Evidence

Tools belonging to this period have been unearthed at:

1. Athirampakkam
2. Gudiyam Caves

Note on Human Ancestors

- These sites served as important habitats for human ancestors known as **Homo erectus**.
- The hand axes discovered at these locations are historically referred to as the **Madras Hand Axe Industry**.

LOWER PALEOLITHIC AGE

Tools

- During this period, tools were made of wood and bone.

Important Sites

1. North Arcot
2. Dharmapuri
3. Athirampakkam
4. Vadamadurai

MIDDLE PALEOLITHIC AGE

Tools

- The tools belonging to this period were smaller in size.

Important Sites

- Pudupatti
- Seerakottai

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- Thanjavur

MESOLITHIC AGE

Important Sites

Mesolithic tools have been discovered in:

- Chennai
- North Arcot
- Dharmapuri
- Salem
- Coimbatore
- Ariyalur
- Pudukkottai
- Madurai
- Sivagangai
- Tirunelveli
- Kanyakumari

Teri Sites

- Mesolithic tools have been found in the **Teri region** near Tuticorin.
- The term **Teri** refers to red sand dunes.

Materials Used

- Chert
- Quartz or crystal

NEOLITHIC AGE

Agriculture

Evidence has been found for the cultivation of:

- Ragi or finger millet
- Horse gram
- Green gram

Archaeological Sites

- Payyampalli in Vellore district
- Dharmapuri

IRON AGE OR MEGALITHIC AGE

Technology

- People used iron technology.

Cultural Development

- This was a period of significant cultural growth.

Historical Importance

- The foundations of the Sangam Age were laid during this period.

Materials Used

- Carnelian beads
- Gold
- Bronze
- Iron
- Quartz or crystal

Notable Archaeological Sites

1. Adichanallur, Thoothukudi
2. Sanur, Madurantakam
3. Sittannavasal, Pudukkottai
4. Porundal, Dindigul district

TYPES OF MEGALITHIC BURIAL STRUCTURES

1. Dolmens or Karthittai

Description

- Two stone slabs were planted vertically on either side.
- A large stone slab was placed horizontally over them.

Locations

- Veera Raghavapuram, Kanchipuram
- Kummaala Marudupatti, Dindigul
- Narsingampatti, Madurai district

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2. Cists or Kallarai

Description

- Four stone slabs were erected to form four sides.
- They were covered with a single capstone.

Location

- Kodumanal, Erode

3. Burial Urns or Mudumakkal Thazhigal

Description

- Large earthenware jars were used to bury the deceased.

Location

- Adichanallur

4. Sarcophagus

Description

- Trough-shaped structures made of terracotta or baked clay were used for burial.

5. Menhirs or Nedungal

Description

- Pillar-like standing stones were erected as memorial monuments in honour of the deceased.

6. Hero Stones or Nadukarkal

Description

- Stones were erected to commemorate fallen heroes.

Locations

- Pulimankombai
- Porpanaikottai

TAMIL NADU STATE DEPARTMENT OF ARCHAEOLOGY

Objectives of the Department

The Department of Archaeology was established in **1961**. It is committed to archaeological exploration, excavation, conservation, preservation, and research.

PATH-BREAKING DISCOVERIES

- A series of **AMS 14C** and **OSL** scientific dates were obtained from carbon and ceramic samples collected from:
 - Telunganur
 - Mangadu
 - Kilanamandi
 - Mayiladumparai
 - Adichanallur
 - Sivagalai
- The scientific dates received were:

Scientific Dates
2171 BCE
2427 BCE
2450 BCE
2459 BCE
2522 BCE
2953 BCE
3259 BCE
3345 BCE

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- Paddy and other millets collected from the excavations at **Adichanallur** and **Sivagalai** proved that Tamils were familiar with both dry and wet cultivation as early as **3,500 years ago**.
- The Thulukkarpatti excavation in Tirunelveli district yielded nearly **5,000 graffiti-bearing potsherds**.
- This is one of the highest numbers of graffiti-bearing potsherds ever found in India.
- Around **60% of the graffiti signs found in Tamil Nadu** had parallels with signs found on seals belonging to the Indus civilisation.
- Recent excavations have shown that the **Iron Age of South India** and the **Indus Valley Civilisation**, which belonged to the Bronze and Copper Age of North India, were contemporary.
- The Government of Tamil Nadu enacted the:

Tamil Nadu Ancient Monuments and Historical and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1966

(Tamil Nadu Act 25 of 1966) and Rules, 1971

- The legislation was introduced to protect, preserve, and restore historical monuments in the state.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXPLORATIONS AND EXCAVATIONS – 2024

During the year **2024**, the following eight excavations were carried out:

S. No.	Site	District	Details
1	Keeladi and its cluster site Kodangai	Sivagangai	10th season
2	Vembakkottai	Virudhunagar	3rd season
3	Kilanamandi	Tiruvannamalai	2nd season
4	Porpanaikottai	Pudukkottai	2nd season
5	Tirumalapuram	Pudukkottai	1st season
6	Chennanoor	Krishnagiri	1st season
7	Kongalnagaram	Tiruppur	1st season
8	Marungur	Cuddalore	1st season

REVISION TABLE

Topic	Key Point
Archaeology	Derived from the Greek word <i>archaios</i> , meaning ancient
Archaeological Survey of India	Established in 1861 by Alexander Cunningham
Robert Bruce Foote	Discovered artefacts at Pallavaram in 1862
Madras Hand Axe Industry	Hand axes associated with Paleolithic sites
Mesolithic Tools	Small stone or microlithic tools
Teri	Red sand dunes near Tuticorin
Neolithic Crops	Ragi, horse gram, and green gram

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Iron Age	Associated with iron technology and megalithic burials
Dolmen	Burial structure made using large stone slabs
Cist	Four-sided stone burial chamber with a capstone
Burial Urn	Large earthenware burial jar
Menhir	Standing memorial stone
Hero Stone	Nadukal erected for fallen heroes
Tamil Nadu Archaeology Department	Established in 1961
Thulukkarpatti	Nearly 5,000 graffiti-bearing pots
2024 Excavations	Eight archaeological excavations

MAJOR ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES OF TAMIL NADU

1. ADICHANALLUR

Thoothukudi District

Location

- Situated on the banks of the **Thamirabarani River**.

Excavation History

- Excavations were conducted in:
 - 1876
 - 1885
 - 2003
- Adichanallur is regarded as the **Cradle of Tamil Civilization**.

Historical Period

- Belongs to the **Iron Age**.
- It represents the pre-Sangam period, approximately the **9th century BCE**.

Notable Findings

- Ten complete burial urns known as **Mudumakkal Thazhigal**.
- Copper bangles.
- Bronze toys and idols.
- Black-and-Red Ware pottery.
- Gold earrings.
- Urns bearing Tamil-Brahmi inscriptions.
- Twenty-one terracotta cylindrical pipes indicating an advanced water-management system.
- Evidence of iron usage dating back approximately **5,300 years**.

Unique Artefact

A painting was found on a pot depicting:

- A tall woman holding a bundle of paddy
- A stork
- A deer

Global Connection

- Several artefacts recovered from Adichanallur are housed in the **Berlin Museum, Germany**.

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Museums

Museum	Details
Porunai Museum, Tirunelveli	Displays artefacts discovered at Adichanallur
Adichanallur On-site Museum	Adichanallur is the first archaeological site in India to have a museum established directly at the excavation site

2. ARIKAMEDU

Puducherry

Excavation

- Excavated in **1944**.
- Archaeologists associated with the excavation:
 - Mortimer Wheeler
 - J. M. Casal
 - A. Ghosh
 - Krishna Deva

Historical Period

- Belongs to the **Sangam Age**, approximately **300 BCE–300 CE**.

Historical Significance

- Functioned as an important fishing village.
- Served as a major port for **Indo-Roman trade**.
- It was under the rule of the Cholas.

Notable Findings

- Ancient port structures.
- Warehouses.
- Circular wells.
- Roman coins.
- Roman pottery.
- Amphora jars.

Bead-Making Industry

- Arikamedu is known as the **Mother of All Bead-Making Centres**.

Trade

- Trade between India and Rome reached its peak during the period of the Roman Emperor **Augustus**, around **30 BCE**.
- Important exports to Rome included:
 - Textiles
 - Glass
 - Bangles
 - Shells

3. PAIYAMPALLI

Vellore–Tirupattur Region

Excavation

- Excavated in **1964** by **S. R. Rao**.

Historical Period

- Approximately **1000 BCE**.
- Belongs to the pre-Sangam period.

Notable Findings

- Evidence of Neolithic culture.
- Evidence of early agriculture.
- Polished stone tools.

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- Burial urns.

4. KODUMANAL

Erode District

Location

- Situated on the banks of the **Noyyal River**.

Excavation Years

- 1980
- 1990
- 2012

Literary Reference

- Referred to as **Kodumanam** in the Sangam work *Pathitirupathu*.

Rulers

- Kodumanal was under the Cheras.

Chera Branch	Region Governed
Poraiyar Lineage	Tamil Nadu region
Kuttanadu Cheras	Kerala region

ARCHAEOLOGICAL FINDINGS AT KODUMANAL

1. Inscriptions

- More than **300 pottery sherds** bearing Tamil-Brahmi inscriptions were discovered.

2. Industry

- Evidence of iron smelting and steel production was found.

3. Trade

- Roman coins were recovered.
- These findings indicate active maritime trade.

4. Tools

- A **169 mm-long iron lance** or spear-like object was discovered.

5. Ornaments

- Carnelian beads were found.

6. Craftsmanship

- Elaborately carved shell objects were discovered.

7. Human Remains

- Human skeletal remains were found.

8. Textiles

- Evidence of spinning activities indicates the existence of a developed textile industry.

INSCRIPTIONS AND ARTEFACTS

Names Found on Pottery

- Aadhan
- Ilkuravar

Significance

- These inscriptions provide evidence that the people of the period possessed literacy skills.

INDUSTRIAL AND HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

- Kodumanal functioned as an important industrial centre.
- The site is deeply connected with Megalithic history.

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- Artefacts recovered from Kodumanal are planned to be preserved and displayed at the **Noyyal Museum**.

OTHER IMPORTANT FINDINGS

Finding	Description
Ring-stands	Known as Modhira Nilaimatti; used to support round-bottomed vessels
Four-legged Vessels	Unusual pots or jars supported by four legs
Carnelian Beads	A collection of 782 semi-precious stone beads
Copper Eye-filter	A copper sieve engraved with lotus and peacock designs

5. PORUNTHAL

Palani, Dindigul District

Alternate Name

- Known as **Kavi Naattu Porunthal**.

Historical Period

- Dated to the **5th century CE**.
- It is mentioned as belonging to the pre-Sangam period.

Ruler

- Vellavikko Perumpegan.

Excavation

- Excavated during **2009–2010** by **K. Rajan**.

EXCAVATION FINDINGS

1. Glass-Bead Industry

- Evidence of a specialised glass-bead manufacturing centre was found.

2. Brick Walls

- Remains of brick walls indicate planned settlements.

3. Terracotta Objects

- Several artefacts made from baked clay were discovered.

4. Ivory Dice

- Dice made from elephant tusks indicate the existence of leisure activities.

5. Carnelian Beads

- Semi-precious stone beads were used for ornamentation.

6. Inscribed Pottery

- Pottery sherds bearing the name **Vaira** were found.

7. Paddy Husk Remains

- Remains of paddy husks provide evidence of early agricultural practices.

6. POOMPUHAR

Mayiladuthurai District

Literary References

Poompuhar is mentioned in the classical Tamil epics:

- Silappathikaram
- Manimekalai

Historical Significance

- Served as the port city of the Cholas.

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- Functioned as the second capital of the Sangam-era Chola rulers.

KEY FINDINGS

Brick Structures

- Remains of ancient brick walls and buildings were discovered.

Religious Architecture

- The foundation of a Buddhist monastery or **Vihara** was found.

Museum

- An on-site museum preserves the artefacts and history of Poompuhar.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATION SITES

1. Kizharveli, Poompuhar
2. Dharmakulam

Deep-Sea Research

- Deep-sea archaeological research was carried out during **1996–1997**.
- It was conducted in association with the **National Institute of Oceanography, Goa**.

Historical Period

- The findings belong to the early historic period.

Kizharveli Findings

- A wall measuring approximately **20 cm in width** was found.
- Pillars made from:
 - Palm wood
 - Mahua or Iluppai wood

7. KEEZHADI

Sivagangai District

Location

- Situated on the banks of the **Vaigai River**.

Historical Names

- Kunthidevi Chaturvedi Mangalam
- Perumanalur

Keezhadi Excavation Cluster

The cluster includes:

- Pallisanthai Thidal
- Konthagai
- Manalur
- Agaram

Historical Timeline

- Approximately **580 BCE–500 CE**.
- Associated with the Sangam period.

Initial Planning

- The excavation project was first initiated in **2013**.

EXCAVATION PHASES

Phase 1 – 2015

- The first three phases were conducted by the **Archaeological Survey of India**.
- The first and second phases were led by **Amarnath Ramakrishnan**.

Phase 2 – 2016

- Conducted as the second phase of excavation.

Phase 3 – 2017

- Conducted under the leadership of **Ramanan**.

Phases 4–9

- Conducted by the **Tamil Nadu State Department of Archaeology**.
- Led by **R. Sivanandam**.

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SCIENTIFIC ANALYSIS

Artefacts recovered from Keezhadi were sent to the following institutions:

Material	Institution
Fossils	Beta Analytic Center, Florida, USA
Pottery Sherds	University of Pisa, Italy
Skeletons	Deccan College, Pune, and Madurai Kamaraj University, Tamil Nadu

KEY FINDINGS AT KEEZHADI

1. Structural Remains

- Buildings constructed using kiln-fired bricks.

2. Burial Practices

- Megalithic burial urns known as **Mudumakkal Thazhigal**.

3. Water Management

- Circular brick-lined wells.

4. Industrial Activity

- Ancient furnaces used for manufacturing activities.

5. Ornaments

- Carnelian beads.

- Gold jewellery.

6. Games and Leisure

- Chess pieces.

- Ivory and bone dice.

7. Art

- Terracotta figurines.

8. Economy

- Seals bearing impressions of rice husks.

9. Epigraphy

- More than **72 pottery sherds** carrying Tamil-Brahmi inscriptions.

Names Found on Pottery

- Aadhan
- Thieesan

- Uthiran

KONTHAGAI

Part of the Keezhadi Cluster

Location

- Situated in Sivagangai district.

Significance

- Known as a **Burial City**.

Excavation Milestone

- The sixth phase of the Keezhadi excavation project began at Konthagai.

FINDINGS AT KONTHAGAI AND KEEZHADI

Skeletal Remains

- A total of **17 human skeletons** were unearthed.
- Among them:

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- Six were identified as child skeletons.
- Two animal skeletons were also identified.

Keezhadi Museum

- The state-of-the-art Keezhadi Museum is situated in the Konthagai region.

Evidence of Literacy

- Tamil-Brahmi inscriptions on pottery provide evidence that the Tamil people were literate as early as the **6th century BCE**.

Ornaments

- Fragments of broken shell bangles were found.
- These indicate established trade and craftsmanship.

Faunal Remains

- Remains belonging to more than **70 types of animals** were found.
- They provide information about:
 - The local ecosystem
 - Animal life of the period
 - Food practices

8. SIVAKALAI

Thoothukudi District

Historical Period

- Approximately **1155 BCE**.

Excavating Authority

- Tamil Nadu State Department of Archaeology.

Location

- Situated on the banks of the **Thamirabarani River**.

Excavation Years

- 2019–2020
- 2020–2021
- 2021–2022

Historical Significance

- Known as **Little Ceylon** by the British.
- Significant evidence of Megalithic burial practices was found.

FINDINGS

Pottery

- Black-and-Red Ware pottery.

Inscriptions

- Pottery sherds bearing the name **Aadhan**.

Museum

- Recovered artefacts are preserved and displayed in the museum.

Agriculture

- Dehusked paddy was discovered.
- It indicates that paddy was cultivated and used approximately **3,200 years ago**.

9. MAYILADUMPARAI

Krishnagiri District

Excavation Years

- 1980
- 2003

Historical Period

- Belongs to the **Neolithic Age**.

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KEY FINDINGS

Iron Technology

- Archaeological evidence confirms the use of iron approximately **4,200 years ago**.

Artefact

- A **70 cm-long iron sword** was discovered.

Geographical Importance

- One of the most important hill-based archaeological sites in Tamil Nadu.

FINDINGS AT SANARAPPAN HILL

Burial Monuments

- Traditional funerary and burial monuments were discovered.

Pottery

- Four pots belonging to the Megalithic period were recovered.

10. VEMBAKKOTTAI

Virudhunagar District

Historical Timeline

- Approximately **4000 BCE–3000 BCE**.

Research and Excavation

- Initial archaeological explorations began in **2017**.
- Systematic excavations began in **2022**.

KEY FINDINGS

Category	Findings
Metal and Trade	Copper coins
Ornaments	Shell bangles and round ceramic beads
Terracotta Objects	Seals, oil lamps, dolls, and figurines
Personal Objects	Smoking pipes

11. GANGAIKONDA CHOLAPURAM

Jayankondam, Ariyalur District

Historical Significance

- Served as the secondary capital of the Chola Empire.

Main Excavation Area

- Important discoveries were made in the **Maligaimedu** region.

Excavation History

- The first archaeological excavation was conducted in **1980**.

Historical Period

- Belongs to the **Medieval Period**.

KEY FINDINGS

Structural Evidence

- Evidence of two forts.
- Evidence of two palaces.
- Massive brick walls measuring approximately **1.10 metres in thickness**.

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Architectural Elements

- Granite stone pillars.

Craftsmanship

- Tools made from animal bones.
- Intricately carved ivory objects.
- Shell bangles.

International Trade

- Celadon pottery imported from China.
- Chinese porcelain vessels.
- These findings indicate extensive maritime trade during the Chola period.

REVISION

Topic	Key Point
Cradle of Tamil Civilization	Adichanallur
Indo-Roman Port	Arikamedu
Mother of Bead-Making Centres	Arikamedu
Early Neolithic Agriculture	Paiyampalli
Industrial Centre	Kodumanal
Tamil-Brahmi Pottery	Kodumanal and Keezhadi
Glass-Bead Industry	Porunthal
Chola Port City	Poompuhar
Urban Sangam Settlement	Keezhadi
Burial City	Konthagai
Ancient Paddy Evidence	Sivakalai
Early Iron Technology	Mayiladumparai
Terracotta Figurines	Vembakkottai
Secondary Chola Capital	Gangaikonda Cholapuram

12. PERUMPALAI

Ponnagaram, Dharmapuri District

Excavation Year

- Excavation work commenced in **2022**.

Historical Period

- Iron Age

Historical Significance

- Perumpalai is identified as the northern boundary of the Kongu region.

Key Findings

The site yielded pottery associated with the Iron Age:

- Black Ware pottery sherds.
- Red Ware pottery sherds.
- Black-and-Red Ware pottery sherds.

13. VASAVASAMUDRAM

Near Mahabalipuram, Kanchipuram District

Key Findings

Pottery

- Cone-shaped jars.
- Roman Amphora jars.

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Historical Significance

- The discoveries provide evidence of trade relations with the Romans during approximately **100–200 CE**.

14. BOLUVAMPATTI

Kottaikkadu, Coimbatore District

Historical Period

- Probably dates to the **7th century CE**.

Key Findings

Ornaments

- More than 50 large and small beads made of coloured stones.
- Terracotta earrings.
- Shell bangles.

Metal Objects

- Various iron objects.

Seals and Symbols

Terracotta seals bearing the following emblems were discovered:

- Bow and arrow associated with the Cheras.
- Fish.
- Tiger.

Epigraphy

- Pottery sherds bearing inscriptions in Tamil Vatteluttu were found.

15. ALAGANKULAM

Ramanathapuram District

Location

- Situated on the banks of the **Vaigai River**.

Epigraphy

- Pottery sherds bearing Tamil-Brahmi inscriptions dating to approximately **100 CE** were discovered.

International Trade

- Rouletted Ware pottery originating from the Mediterranean region was found.
- This provides evidence of long-distance overseas trade.

Roman Coin

A notable Roman coin was discovered at the site.

Side	Design
Obverse	Head of the Roman Emperor
Reverse	Figure of the Goddess of Victory

Historical Dating

- The coin was issued in **375 CE** during the reign of Roman Emperor **Valentinian II**.

Museum

- Artefacts recovered from Alagankulam are to be preserved and displayed at the **Naavai Museum in Ramanathapuram**.

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Historical Importance

- The findings provide information about the maritime history and naval power of the Pandya kingdom.

16. PORPANAIKOTTAI

Pudukkottai District

Excavation Timeline

Phase	Period
Phase 1	2022–2023
Phase 2	2024–2025

Key Findings

Fortress

- Structural remains of a fort covering approximately **17 acres** were discovered.

Infrastructure

- Evidence of an ancient water-supply canal system.

Artefacts

Tools

- Various bone tools.
- Specialised bone-tip tools.

Numismatics

- A silver coin dating to the **2nd century**.

Trade Evidence

- Carnelian beads indicating long-distance trade connections with North India.

Hardware

- Copper nails.

17. KARUR

Historical Significance

- Karur served as an important commercial centre in ancient times.

Key Findings

Urban Planning

- Evidence of an advanced drainage system.

Epigraphy

- Pottery sherds bearing Tamil-Brahmi inscriptions dating to approximately **100 CE**.

International Trade

- Roman Amphora jars.
- Roman coins.
- These discoveries demonstrate strong transcontinental trade connections.

18. PAZHAIYARAI

Thanjavur District

Historical Significance

- Served as the secondary capital of the Chola dynasty during the medieval period.

Main Excavation Site

- Nandanmedu, located near Pazhaiyarai.

Key Findings

Burial Evidence

- Megalithic burial urns.

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Pottery

- Black-and-Red Ware pottery sherds.
- Porcelain sherds.

Personal Ornaments

- Shell bangles.
- Glass bangles.
- Terracotta earrings.

19. PERUR

Coimbatore District

Excavation Sites

- Kallimedu
- Thiruneetrumedu

Excavation Start Year

- 2022

Historical Period

- Approximately the **5th–6th centuries CE**.

Key Findings

Terracotta Seal

A terracotta seal was discovered featuring:

- A bow and arrow.
- Lamps on either side.
- A crescent moon symbol at the top.

Cultural Exchange

- A terracotta figurine discovered at Perur resembles a style found at Mathura in Uttar Pradesh.
- This indicates inter-regional cultural and trade connections.

20. THULUKKARPATTI OR VILANGADU

Valliyoor, Tirunelveli District

Location

- Situated on the banks of the **Nambi River**.

Excavation Start Year

- 2022

Historical Period

- Iron Age to Early Sangam Age.
- Also described as belonging to the First Sangam period.

Research Focus

- Investigation of the Iron Age roots of the civilisation that developed along the Nambi River.

Key Findings

Archaeologists recovered several varieties of pottery that are useful for dating the site:

- Black-and-Red Ware.
- Red Ware.
- Black Ware.
- White-spotted black pottery.
- Silver seals.

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21. MARUNGUR

Cuddalore District

Location

- Cuddalore

Key Findings

- Iron knives.
- Shell fragments or shell cores.

22. KORKAI

Thoothukudi District

Location

- Situated on the banks of the **Thamirabarani River**.

Excavation Period

- First excavated during **1968–1969**.

Historical Significance

- Archaeological findings indicate that organised trade and commercial activities flourished at Korkai as early as the **6th century BCE**.

Key Findings

Industry

- An ancient workshop for manufacturing shell bangles.

Numismatics

- Silver coins.
- Copper coins.

Pottery

- Numerous Black Ware pottery sherds.
- Roman Arretine pottery.
- Chinese Celadon pottery.

23. AANAIMALAI

Near Aliyar, Coimbatore District

Historical Period

- Approximately **1000 BCE–300 CE**.

Key Findings

- Iron knives.
- Black-and-Red Ware pottery.
- Megalithic burial pots.

24. PANAIYAKULAM

Dharmapuri District

Historical Period

- Approximately **300 CE–1300 CE**.

Key Findings

- Various terracotta antiquities and objects made of baked clay.

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25. KOVALAN POTTAL

Palanganatham, Madurai District

Historical Significance

- Traditionally identified as the site where Kovalan, the central character of *Silappathikaram*, was executed.

Key Findings

Burial Evidence

- Three ancient funerary urns known as **Mudumakkal Thazhigal**.

Coins

- Square-shaped copper coins.
- The coins bear the fish emblem on one side.

26. KANNANUR

Near Samayapuram, Tiruchirappalli District

Historical Period

- Approximately the **13th–14th centuries CE**.

Key Findings

- Red-coloured pottery sherds.
- Chinese pottery sherds indicating maritime trade.
- Terracotta beads.
- Glass bangles.
- Iron nails.

27. PADAVEEDU OR PADAIVEEDU

Tiruvannamalai District

Historical Significance

- Historically known as **Marutharasar Padaiveedu**.
- Served as the capital of the Sambuvarayars, who were feudatory rulers during the Chola period.

Key Findings

Period	Findings
14th–16th centuries CE	Smoking pipes, Sultanate coins, and ornamented red earthenware

28. THIRUTHANGAL

Sivakasi Taluk, Virudhunagar District

Historical Significance

- Silappathikaram* mentions Thiruthangal as an important ancient settlement.

Historical Period

- Approximately **1000 BCE–300 CE**.

Key Findings

Stone Tools

- Microlithic tools or small, sharp stone artefacts.

UNIT VI

Pottery

- Red Ware pottery sherds.
- Pots with narrow openings.
- Pots with wide openings.
- These varieties indicate different domestic and practical uses.

29. MANGUDI

Sankarankovil Taluk, Tirunelveli District

Historical Significance

- Birthplace of the poet **Mangudi Maruthanar**.
- He was the author of *Maduraikanchi*, an important work of Sangam literature.

Excavation History

- Systematic excavations commenced in **2002**.

Key Findings

Trade Evidence

- Fragments of Roman-style pottery indicating active overseas trade.

Epigraphy

- A Black-and-Red Ware pottery sherd dated to approximately **200 BCE** was discovered.
- It bears the Tamil-Brahmi inscription:

“Kuru Mangala Adhan I Yanai Po”

30. THALAICHANGADU

Mayiladuthurai District

Excavation Year

- 2010

Historical Timeline

- The site represents three important cultural periods extending from the Iron Age to the Middle Sangam period.

Key Findings

Infrastructure

- Terracotta ring wells.
- Roof tiles.

Art and Culture

- Stucco sculptures.
- Terracotta lamps.

Religious History

- Structural remains and foundations of a temple belonging to the reign of **Parantaka Chola**.

31. ALAMPARAI

Kanchipuram District

Historical Period

- Approximately the **17th–18th centuries CE**.

Key Findings

Military History

- Granite cannonballs indicating the strategic military importance of the fort.

Trade and Luxury Goods

- Porcelain pottery sherds providing evidence of maritime trade.

Daily Life and Industry

UNIT VI

- Terracotta lamps.
- Terracotta moulds used for minting coins.
- These findings provide information about local manufacturing activities.

COMPARATIVE TABLE OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES

Site	District	Period	Important Findings
Adichanallur	Thoothukudi	Iron Age	Burial urns, iron use, water-management system
Arikamedu	Puducherry	Sangam Age	Indo-Roman port and bead-making centre
Paiyampalli	Vellore–Tirupattur	Neolithic Age	Early agriculture and polished stone tools
Kodumanal	Erode	Megalithic–Sangam Age	Industrial, textile, iron, and bead-making centre
Porunthal	Dindigul	Early Historic Period	Glass beads, paddy remains, and inscriptions
Poompuhar	Mayiladuthurai	Early Historic Period	Chola port city and Buddhist Vihara
Keezhadi	Sivagangai	Sangam Age	Urban settlement, literacy, industries, and water management
Sivakalai	Thoothukudi	Megalithic Age	Burial evidence and ancient paddy cultivation
Mayiladumparai	Krishnagiri	Neolithic Age	Early iron technology
Vembakkottai	Virudhunagar	Ancient Period	Terracotta objects, ornaments, and copper coins
Gangaikonda Cholapuram	Ariyalur	Medieval Period	Chola palaces, forts, and overseas trade
Perumpalai	Dharmapuri	Iron Age	Black, red, and Black-and-Red Ware pottery
Vasavasamudram	Kanchipuram	Early Historic Period	Roman Amphora jars
Boluvampatti	Coimbatore	7th century CE	Vatteluttu inscriptions and dynastic emblems
Alagankulam	Ramanathapuram	Early Historic Period	Roman coin and Rouletted Ware
Porpanaikottai	Pudukkottai	Early Historic Period	Fort, canal system, bone tools, and silver coin
Karur	Karur	Sangam Age	Drainage system, Roman coins, and Amphora jars
Pazhaiyurai	Thanjavur	Medieval Period	Burial urns, porcelain, and ornaments
Perur	Coimbatore	5th–6th centuries CE	Terracotta seal and Mathura-style figurine

UNIT VI

Thulukkappatti	Tirunelveli	Iron Age–Early Sangam	Pottery varieties and silver seals
Marungur	Cuddalore	Ancient Period	Iron knives and shell fragments
Korkai	Thoothukudi	From 6th century BCE	Shell-bangle industry and foreign pottery
Aanaimalai	Coimbatore	1000 BCE–300 CE	Megalithic pottery and iron knives
Panaiyakulam	Dharmapuri	300–1300 CE	Terracotta antiquities
Kovalan Pottal	Madurai	Ancient Period	Burial urns and Pandya fish-emblem coins
Kannanur	Tiruchirappalli	13th–14th centuries CE	Chinese pottery and personal ornaments
Padaveedu	Tiruvannamalai	Medieval Period	Sultanate coins and decorated pottery
Thiruthangal	Virudhunagar	1000 BCE–300 CE	Microliths and Red Ware
Mangudi	Tirunelveli	Sangam Age	Roman pottery and Tamil-Brahmi inscription
Thalaichangadu	Mayiladuthurai	Iron–Sangam Period	Ring wells, sculptures, and Chola temple remains
Alamparai	Kanchipuram	17th–18th centuries CE	Cannonballs and coin-minting moulds

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATION SITES

Tamil Nadu Budget Announcement, 2024–2025

Excavation works commenced at eight locations announced in the Tamil Nadu Budget for **2024–2025**.

S. No.	Excavation Site	District	Phase
1	Konthagai, Keezhadi, and Agaram	Sivagangai	9th Phase
2	Gangaikonda Cholapuram	Ariyalur	3rd Phase
3	Pattarai Perumbudur	Tiruvallur	3rd Phase
4	Vembakkottai	Virudhunagar	2nd Phase
5	Thulukkappatti	Tirunelveli	2nd Phase
6	Keezhamandi	Tiruvannamalai	1st Phase
7	Poothinatham	Dharmapuri	1st Phase
8	Porpanaikottai	Pudukkottai	1st Phase

REVISION TABLE

Topic	Key Point
Perumpalai	Northern boundary of Kongu region
Vasavasamudram	Roman Amphora jars
Boluvampatti	Vatteluttu inscriptions
Alagankulam	Roman coin of Valentinian II

UNIT VI

Porpanaikottai	Fort extending over 17 acres
Karur	Ancient commercial centre
Pazhaiyarai	Secondary medieval Chola capital
Perur	Evidence of cultural links with Mathura
Thulukkappatti	Iron Age settlement on the Nambi River
Korkai	Shell-bangle manufacturing centre
Kovalan Pottal	Traditional execution site of Kovalan
Padaveedu	Capital of the Sambuvarayars
Mangudi	Birthplace of Mangudi Maruthanar
Thalaichangadu	Temple remains of Parantaka Chola
Alamparai	Granite cannonballs and coin moulds

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXPLORATIONS AND EXCAVATIONS OUTSIDE TAMIL NADU

Introduction

- On **9 September 2021**, announced that the Department of Archaeology would undertake archaeological expeditions outside the state.
- The purpose of these expeditions was to trace the cultural roots and historical connections of the Tamil people across India and beyond.

PALUR

Odisha

- The Tamil Nadu State Department of Archaeology and the Odisha Institute of Maritime and South East Asian Studies jointly conducted an excavation at Palur in Odisha in **2024**.
- The excavation aimed to trace the historical relationship between Tamil Nadu and Odisha.
- More than **600 artefacts** were unearthed during the excavation.

VENGI AND MASKI

Joint archaeological efforts were undertaken at:

Site	State
Vengi	Andhra Pradesh
Maski	Karnataka

MUSIRI

Kerala

- Kerala was considered part of the larger Tamil cultural region until medieval times.
- Sangam and post-Sangam literature vividly describe the close cultural relationship between Tamil Nadu and Kerala.

COLLABORATIONS WITH INDIAN AND INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

The Tamil Nadu Department of Archaeology conducts scientific research in collaboration with renowned Indian and international scholars and institutions.

S. No.	Field of Study	Collaborating Institutions
1	Genetic Analysis	Madurai Kamaraj University; Harvard Medical School

UNIT VI

2	Palaeobotany	Deccan College; University College London
3	Cosmogenic Nuclide and Luminescence Dating	IUAC, New Delhi; University of Oxford
4	AMS Radiocarbon Dating	IUAC, New Delhi; Beta Analytic, USA; University of Vienna
5	Pyrotechnology and Archaeometallurgy	IIT Gandhinagar; Field Museum, Chicago; Hongik University, South Korea
6	Diatom and Shell Studies	Agharkar Research Institute; University of Wisconsin–Madison
7	Physical Anthropology and Archaeo-Zoology	Deccan College; University of Kerala
8	Ceramic Studies	VIT, Vellore; Manonmaniam Sundaranar University; University of Chicago
9	Isotopic Analysis	IUAC, New Delhi

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE MUSEUMS

Antiquities discovered through archaeological exploration and excavation are carefully preserved and displayed for scholars, researchers, students, and the public.

The following **15 archaeological site museums** are located across Tamil Nadu:

S. No.	Site Museum	Place / District
1	Prehistoric Museum	Poondi, Tiruvallur
2	Arcot Museum	Arcot, Ranipet
3	Hero Stone Museum	Dharmapuri
4	Tirukkivilur Museum	Tirukkivilur, Kallakurichi
5	Coimbatore Museum	Coimbatore
6	Chera Museum	Karur
7	Maratha Museum	Thanjavur
8	Rajarajan Museum	Thanjavur
9	Gangaikondacholapuram Museum	Gangaikondacholapuram, Ariyalur
10	Underwater Archaeological Museum	Poompuhar, Mayiladuthurai
11	Danish Fort Museum	Tarangambadi, Mayiladuthurai
12	Ramalinga Vilasam Museum	Ramanathapuram
13	Tirumalai Nayak Mahal Museum	Madurai
14	Folklore Museum	Courtallam, Tenkasi
15	Keezhadi Museum	Sivagangai

KEEZHADI MUSEUM

Sivagangai District

- The world-class Keezhadi Museum was established at Konthagai in Sivagangai district.
- It was constructed at a cost of **₹18.42 crore**.
- The museum was inaugurated on **5 March 2023**.
- The museum complex extends over approximately **2 acres**.