

Tamil university

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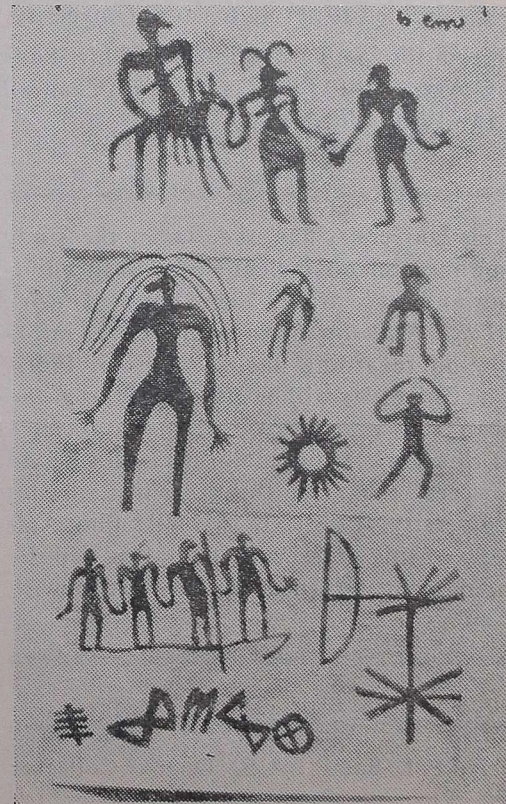
Important Discovery of Paintings near Villupuram, Tamil Nadu

A set of paintings found on the rock caves, twelve kilometres from Villupuram on the Tiruvannamalai Road is an important discovery of this decade. The picture block found on this page will give an idea of the type of pictures found in the cave, drawn with red ochre. The pictures were pieced out and were photographed together. The writing containing five letters resembling the Harappa-Mohenjodaro scripts clarifies the continuity of that culture upto Villupuram. Many scholars argued against the Dravidian origin of this culture by pointing out that the culture has no continuity beyond Lothal in Gujarat. The survival of the pottery and the red brick work in the South, according to the Japanese scholars who published a book on Harappa-Mohenjodaro culture, is sufficient evidence of the continuity of that culture in the South. The availability of the script is a firm evidence for the spread of this culture upto South Arcot District, Tamil Nadu.

The figures in the pictures are reminiscent of the folk pictures on mats and rugs in the Punjab. The members of the Historical Society of Pondicherry headed by P.L. Samy and served by Pulavar Kuppasamy and others are responsible for this discovery.

The paintings reported by Dr. K. V. Raman, Madras University in 'Man and Environment' Vol.V., 1981 as found in Mallapadi near Barugur on the Madras Krishnagiri-Bangalore highway in the

Dharmapuri District in a shallow rock shelter on the slopes of the bald rocky hills are important for the history of painting in Tamil Nadu and in the South. But the paintings have no Harappa-Mohenjodaro



connections. The fight of the horseman is aesthetically satisfying. But plates 2 and 3 are primitive. Hence Dr. Raman has classified them as proto-historic.

The Governor and Chancellor of the Tamil University outlines the University's Goal

The Fifth World Tamil Conference as also its earlier sessions emphasised the richness of the language and its copious character and brought out the fact that it is spoken by considerable number of people in several other countries of the world. Its rich cultural heritage is a treasure we have to guard well and bequeath to generations to come with whatever new wealth we could create with our own devotion to the language and the great culture associated with it. The struggle for Indian independence made its own contribution to the resurgence of the language and its growth in some new fields. Now that we are a free country it is natural that Tamil should assume its legitimate and honoured place in the lives of our people, in education, administration and in other ways. It has a rich literature : but no language however advanced and developed can rest content with its past achievement. It has to grow and keep growing in order to keep abreast of new knowledge, new visions and new insights that may be vouchsafed to the modern man as he grapples with new situations and challenges.

It is in this context that the Government of Tamil Nadu has decided to set up a Tamil University.

—from the inaugural address of Thiru Sadiq Ali, Governor of Tamil Nadu and Chancellor of the Tamil University.

This University has undertaken the study and research on ancient ships, ship building and navigation. The Sanskrit work "Yukti Kalpataru" contains useful information regarding ancient ships of India. The University will be grateful if those who have any palm leaf or written manuscripts of this work or other similar works would forward them to the Registrar, Tamil University, Thanjavur, 613 001. Photostat copy of this work will be taken and the manuscript returned to the owner with thanks.

Thiru P. L. Sami, I.A.S., District Collector and Revenue Secretary, Government of Pondicherry, has donated a sizeable collection of ancient and rare copper coins to the Tamil University in memory of his brother Thiru P. L. Joseph.

COLLEGE PRINCIPALS/COLLEGE FINE ARTS
ASSOCIATION SECRETARIES, TAMIL NADU

Please put us on your mailing list in respect of your College/Inter-collegiate dramatic performances and programmes.

Thanks.

—Drama Department,
Tamil University.

Caldwell Recalled

The study of history, ancient literature and archaeology of the country will never reach anything like completeness till it is systematically undertaken by educated natives.

The most important aid educated natives can render to the study of history of their country is by means of a search after inscriptions, which hitherto unnoticed and unknown, they will find inviting their attention, on the walls of the temples in almost every village in the interior.

Something has already been done in the search for, and decipherment of inscriptions by Europeans. But much remains to be done, and will always remain, till educated natives enter upon this branch of study with zeal.

Natives possess various facilities for this study which are denied to Europeans. They have no reason to fear the sun. They can generally stop in their journeys without inconvenience and examine any antiquity they see, and whilst Europeans must be content with examining only the inscriptions on the outer walls of temples, inscriptions in the interior also can be examined by natives. They will also be allowed to examine inscriptions on copper plates in the possession of respectable native families which would not readily be allowed to pass into the hands of Europeans.

A humbler, but still very important, branch of archaeological work lies open to every educated Hindu in the Tamil districts. Let him set himself, before it is too late, to search out and discover the vernacular works that are commonly supposed to be lost. The names only of many Tamil works of the earlier period survive, and many works must have been composed at a still earlier period of which even the names have been forgotten. A careful search made by educated natives in houses and mathas would be rewarded by some valuable discoveries.

—Extracts from a convocation address, University of Madras, 1879, by Bishop R. Caldwell. A History of Tinnevely 1882, reprint 1982, Asian Educational Services, New Delhi.

News from Singapore

THE STRAITS TIMES, FRIDAY, MAY 21, 1982

AFTER the end of World War II, Tamil schools sprang up in those parts of Singapore where Indian dwellings were clustered together. Most of them were started with the help of voluntary donations in cash and kind. Even the running of the schools, including staff salary, relied heavily on public donation.

A school that was built many years ago, in 1946, was named Jeevanantham Tamil School. The first batch of 15 students attended kindergarten and Standard I classes. The teacher was paid \$25 per month, the sum being collected from door-to-door. This was a great achievement because during that time there were no other Chinese or English schools in that vicinity. This school was basically an attap house built from a donation of \$340 and some building materials.

In 1948, the name Jeevanantham Tamil School was changed to Changi Tamil School. The school's physical state was deteriorating and so a newer, zinc-roofed school was built and opened on September 16, 1952, again with help from the generous public.

Readers write . . .

We welcome your decision to grant facilities, at the Tamil University, for all Tamils to study and do research in Tamil. Joint research by our scholars with professors and scholars of your University will be a rich experience to them.

— M. SIVASITHAMPARAM,
Member of Parliament,
Sri Lanka.

"...Archaeology as a discipline includes many aspects such as pre and protohistoric archaeology, art, architecture, sculpture, painting and epigraphy. Unfortunately, the State of Tamil Nadu is lagging far behind in comparison to other States in this research on pre and protohistoric archaeology, although relatively there is much of a scope for this in Tamil Nadu.....More concentration in this field will help us to trace the roots of Tamil civilisation which should form an important field of research in the specially instituted Tamil University... It devolves upon you to open a separate Department for Archaeology...The Department of Archaeology must have, besides trained archaeologists, an expert each in Geography, Geology, Botany, Zoology, Chemistry and Computer Science....Recent archaeological finds in Sri Lanka are of absorbing interest to students of Tamil pre-history and protohistory".

— A. THEVA RAJAN,
Point-Pedro.

I am a sociologist from Jaffna, Sri Lanka... In the last few years I have started doing research on Jaffna Tamil matters. My interests are in Saiva Siddhantam, astrology and traditional medicine. A monograph on the inter-relationship between caste, saivism and astrology, entitled the *Karmic Theatre* will be published soon by the University of Massachusetts press. Hence I am particularly interested in your University's work in Siddha medicine.

I will be visiting India and Sri Lanka in June, July and August and would like to spend some time at your University...I would also like to subscribe to your two journals.

— P. S. PERINBANAYAGAM,
New York.

Questions

- 1) Would you please consider the publication of the summary of the Ph.D. thesis on Tamilology for which the degree is awarded?

—R.S., Maleya.

Indeed, we will publish it, provided a copy of the summary is promptly sent to us by the scholars or by their guides. The world of scholarship should know what has been done by the researchers in India and abroad on Tamilology.

- 2) The study of Sociology and Anthropology is weak in Tamil Nadu. What do you propose to do in the Tamil University?

—C.A., Madras.

We are conscious of this deficiency. The Tamil University can offer special fellowships to senior people to spend a year or two at the Tamil University and train the younger members. Once interest is created in the minds of younger researchers consolidation in research will follow.

- 3) How did you arrive at the value of the temples in the Tamil University?

—N.S., Tiruchirapalli.

One of the participants at the seminar on teaching engineering subjects in Tamil observed during discussions that the construction cost of the Raja Rajeswara Temple would be about Rs. 80 crores at the present day. When questioned, he said that it was his guesstimate.

Later the bases of evaluation were discussed in detail with the Archaeological Department at New Delhi and elsewhere by the Vice-Chancellor, Tamil University. The bases are the land value, materials used, and the pay of workmen and builders.

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MONTHLY
TAMIL UNIVERSITY
THANJAVUR
S. INDIA

The public works department makes a reduction in costs proportionate to the age of the building. But in the case of monuments, the aesthetic value, rarity of structure and ancientness add to the value. The sacredness of monuments and the use of precious stones built into the statues push up the value. If the object is movable, the buyer's affluence and competition in the market add to the cost.

Instead of saying that the work of a temple is priceless in terms of money, it is better to figure out, even approximately, what the construction would cost.

The estimated cost of eighty crores of rupees for the Raja Rajeswara temple is on the low side. It should be put at least at hundred crores. So also, the construction cost of all the temples in Thanjavur District would be of the order of, not 3000 crores, but 5000 crores.

Let us use norms of measurement instead of being vague.

During the last month....

- May 7: Visit of Thiru. T. S. Avinashilingam, former State Education Minister for detailed discussions on the Encyclopaedia project.
- May 10: Meeting of the Central Committee on Siddha medicine.
- May 12: Visit of Thiru Bahauddin, Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Aligarh Muslim University; & 13: discussions on scientific research in the past.
- May 15: Visit of Hon'ble Thiru S. D. Somasundaram, Minister for Revenue, Government of Tamil Nadu.
- May 16: Release of First issue of Tamil University's News Bulletin in English.
- May 20: Meetings of the Adhoc Finance Committee and of the Syndicate at Madras.
- May 24: Thiru T. Murugaratnam, Director, Tamil Expansion, leaves on a tour of Ceylon and Malaysia.
- May 27: Guest lecture programme of Drama Department. Talk by Thiru Komal Swaminathan on 'Current Trends in Tamil Drama'.

Mile Stones in Epigraphy

The Department of Epigraphy of the Tamil University has recently discovered two mile-stones belonging to the period of the East India Company. They record the exact distance between Kumbakonam and other places mentioned in the inscriptions from the place of find. The spelling of the place names is significant. In one of the inscriptions, the year 1845 A.D. is engraved below along with the name of an individual, Luvisu Parker probably a jailor.



These loose stones are strangely lying now in two different places, one in the heart of the town and another to the west of Kumbakonam on the Kumbakonam - Thanjavur highway. These bilingual inscriptions in Tamil and English are important for linguistic and topographical study. The noteworthy feature is that Tamil numerals are written along with Arabic numerals.