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ANCIENT PORTS AND MARITIME
TRADE CENTRES IN TAMILNADU AND
THEIR SIGNIFICANCE

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IMPORTANT TRADE CENTRES IN TN

- **Alagankulam (Ramanathapuram)**
- **Mylarphan (Mylapore, near Chennai),**
- **Keberis (Kaveripumpattinam),**
- **Poduke or Poduce (Arikamedu, Pondicherry),**
- **Soptana (Marakanam),**
- **Nikam (Nagapattinam),**
- **Periyapattinam,**
- **Kayalpattinam,**
- **Colchi (Korkai)**
- **Comari (Kanyakumari)**

Important Trade centres in the Coastal Regions Of Tamil Nadu - A VIEW

1. ALAMBARAI

2. ALAGANKULAM

3. PUMPUHAR

4. MARAKKANAM

5. VASAVASAMUDRAM

6. MYLAPORE

ALAMBARAI FORT



ALAMBARAI FORT

Location: Situated 20 kms south east of Maduranthakam in Kanchipuram District.

Monument: Datable to the end of 17th century CE built by the local representatives of the Mughals. Nawabs of Arcot used this Fort as garrison in the war between British and the French.

Condition: Dilapidated and ruined.

Literature: Referred in the Aanandarangam Pillai diary

Significance: It was once a flourishing place of commerce. A mint also existed.

**Protected by the State Department of Archaeology,
Government of Tamil Nadu.**

ALAMBARAI FORT - REAR VIEW



ALAGANKULAM

Location

A village situated on the east coast of Bay of Bengal – Ramanathapuram dt.

Attankarai – confluence of river Vaigai situated near Sri Lanka



RIVER VAIGAI

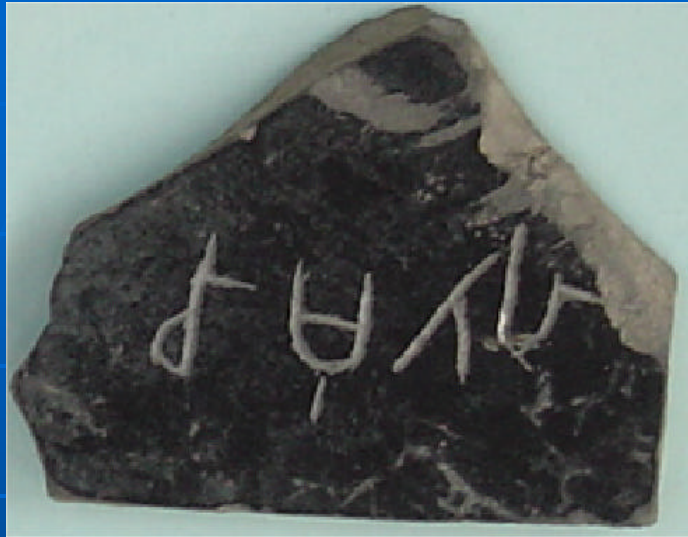


EXPLORATION - ALAGANKULAM

ALAGANKULAM - SIGNIFICANCE

- **Findings - large number of potsherds of mediterranean origin**
- **Roman coins of Valentine II, Arcadius & Theodosius II**
- **Pot sherds with Roman ship graffiti**
- **Sherds with two lady figurines identified with Egyptian origin**
- **Tamil brahmi sherds with Ceylon brahmi script found**
- **An ancient Roman port. The department carried out excavations in eight seasons and the collected artefacts revealed Indo-Roman trade contact. Report published.**

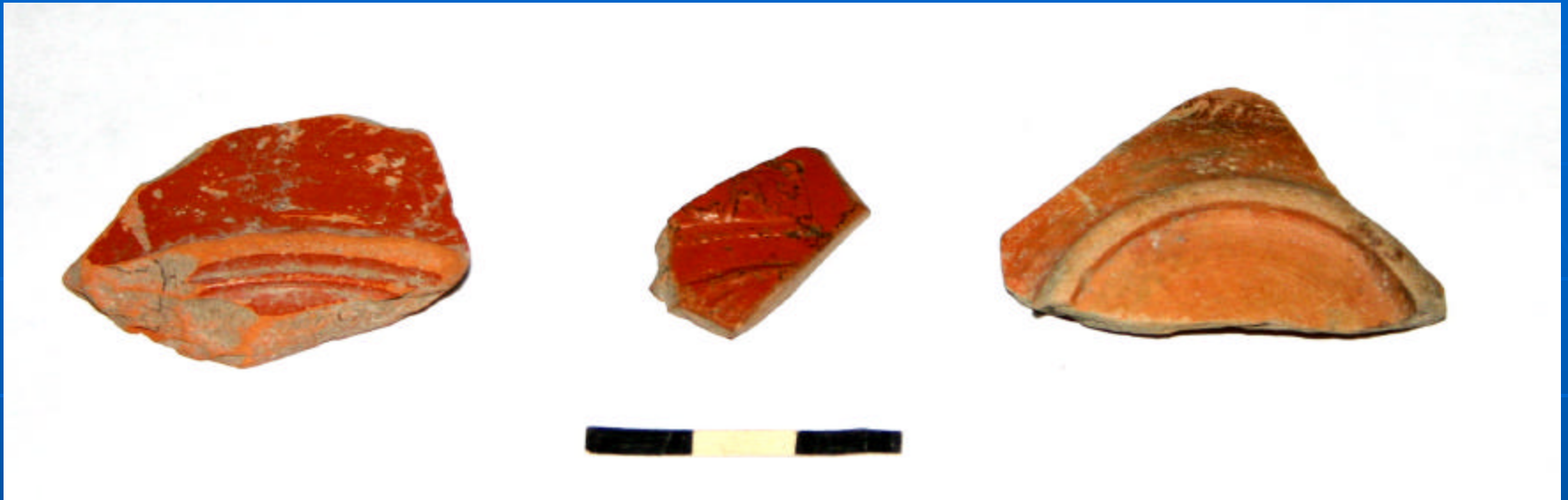
INFLUENCE OF SINHALA - PRAKRIT- 'CAMUTAHA'



AMPHORAE

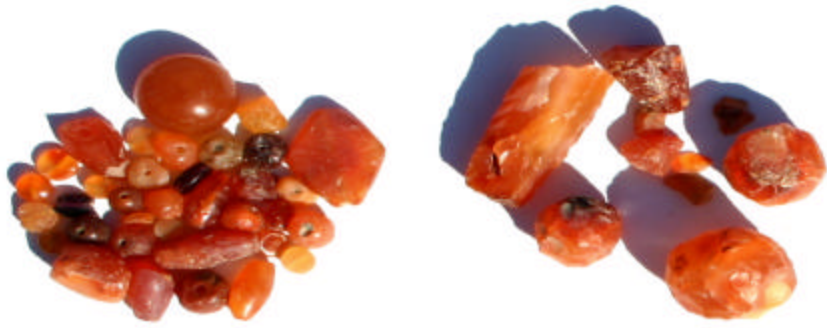


VALENTINE
COIN



ALAGANKULAM POTTERIES – ROMAN INFLUENCE





ALAGANKULAM BEADS



POOMPUHAR

Location: 108 Kms north east of Thanjavur at the estuary of river Cauvery. Celebrated port town of the Early Chola kings referred to in the Tamil Literature. Important tourist centre.

Monument: 1. Excavated Buddhist Vihara in Pallavaneeswaram. Brick structure dated 4th-5th century CE. Maintained By ASI.
2. Excavations by State Department of Archaeology at Manigramam (about 3 km from the sea) brought to light a wharf dated to 2nd century BCE.
3. Under- sea exploration was conducted by the State Department of Archaeology in collaboration with National Institute of Oceanography, Goa during 1990-1994 and 1997

Site Museum : Has been set up to exhibit the Archaeological findings in this area.



**POOMPUHAR –
BUDDHA SCULPTURE
RECOVERED FROM SEA**



**WHARF FOUND
AT POOMPUHAR**

UNDERWATER ARCHAEOLOGY

- **TN FAMOUS FOR NUMBER OF ANCIENT PORTS IN THE EAST COAST**
VASAVASAMUDRAM, SOPATTINAM (MARAKKANAM), ARIKAMEDU, KAVERIPUMPATTINAM, TARANGAMPADI, PERIYAPATTINAM, KORKAI, ALAGANKULAM
- **SUBMERGED POOMPUHAR EXPLORED WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF NIO, GOA. (1981)**
- **STRUCTURES FOUND NEAR VANAGIRI AT A DEPTH OF 30 MTS.**
- **SHIP WRECK DISCOVERED AT THE DEPTH OF 19MTS (1991)**
- **LEAD INGOTS WITH INSCRIPTION 'W.BLACKETT' RECOVERED**

LEAD INGOTS - UNDER SEA



RECOVERED LEAD INGOTS



MARAKKANAM

- **Location :** 35 kms from Tindivanam town in Villupuram district; 13 ° 4 ' N 80 ° 15 ' E
- **Significance:** It was an ancient sea port on the coast of Bay of Bengal in the early Sangam period dating back to 300 BCE.
- **Literature :** The Sangam literary works like Sirupanarrupadai & Perumpanarrupadai mention Marakkanam as Eyirpattinam (means frontier wall). Referred as su-patana-fair town by Ptolemy
- **Akil and Sandal wood imported from Java**
A proposed excavated site.



**SURFACE
COLLECTION**

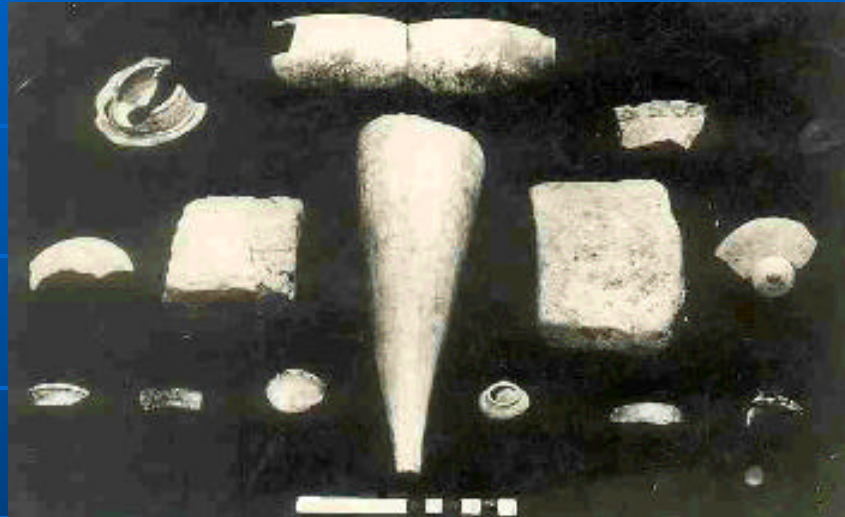
VASAVASAMUDRAM

- Location: Coastal village in Kanchipuram district. 11 miles south of Mamallapuram and north of Vayalur.

Significance

- Conical jars and neck of an amphorae of 1st-2nd century CE.
- Proves the trade contact with Rome.
- Artefacts - Rouletted ware, red ware, red slipped ware, black slipped ware & brown ware

EXCAVATED
ANTIQUITIES



AMPHORAE

MYLAPORE

- Location: Chennai
- Literature: Mentioned in the Thevaram, Divyaprabantham
- Inscriptions of Kulothunga III, Rajendra III, Sundara Pandya & Viraprabhadhan of Vijayanagara exists
- Was also once a trading center from Pallava period.
- Also a Portuguese settlement – famous Santhome church

MYLAPORE



SANTHOMÉ
CHURCH



MADRAS
PORT



CAR
FESTIVAL

TARANGAMBADI

Location: 31 kms South East of Mayiladuthurai and 33 kms north of Nagapattinam. Name denotes **TENDER WAVES**.

Monuments:

1. DANSBORG, a Fort built by Ove Gedde, the admiral of the Royal Danish Navy in 1620 CE.
2. Gateway: Built in the year 1792 has the monogram of CHRISTIAN VII, the Danish king.
3. Masilamaninathar temple: Siva temple built in 1306 CE – most part of the temple structure washed away by sea erosion.

Protected and Preserved by The Department of Archaeology, Government of Tamil Nadu

Site Museum: Is functioning in the Fort.

TRANQUEBAR FORT





PAINTING OF DANSBORG - 1790



TRANQUEBAR MUSEUM



INTERIOR VIEW

NAGAPATTINAM

Location: About 90 kms towards the east of Thanjavur

History : It was a Buddhist centre from the 8th century onwards. In the 11th century CE, the Indonesian king Sri Vijaya Soolamanivarman built a Buddhist Vihara with the patronage of Rajaraja Chola I (985-1014 CE). Many Buddhist images unearthed from here are being preserved in the Government Museum, Chennai.

Monuments:
warehouses

1. Dutch East India company had its factory, and a Fort here.
2. Cemeteries of Dutch people are the only remnants and preserved by the State Department of Archaeology, Government of Tamil Nadu.

MANORA

Location: About 85 km south east of Thanjavur near Mallipattinam, Pattukottai Taluk. Panoramic view with the Bay of Bengal in the background.

Monument: Constructed by Maratha king Sarafoji II in 1814 CE. Manora means Victory Pillar. Also used as Light House.

Constructed to commemorate the Victory of British Arms and the down fall of Napoleon Bonaparte.

Protected by the State Department of Archaeology, Government of Tamil Nadu.

MANORA



RAMESWARAM

Location: 55 kms to the east of Ramanathapuram Town,

Monuments Pilgrimage centre for the Hindus.

1.Siva temple with its exquisite corridor with a length of 197 metres East-West and a length of 133 metres North- South.Longest corridor in Asia.

2.Has a Balipeeta with an inscription of Ceylon king Parakarama Bahu dated 12th century CE.

From 17th century onwards patronised by Sethupathi kings of Ramanathapuram.

TRIBUTES BY PORTUGUESE MERCHANTS TO KING SETHUPATHI



PAINTINGS WITH INS.- SETHUPATHI ART RAMNAD





FOREIGNERS AT SETHUPATHI'S DHARBAR

KANNIYAKUMARI

Location: Situated in the southernmost tip of India.
19 km from Nagercoil - the District headquarters.
Pilgrimage centre mentioned in Tamil epics
Silappatikaram and Manimekalai.

*Archaeological
significance:* Kumari Amman Temple with inscriptions of Chola
kings dated to 11th century CE.
Microlithic tools dated to 4000 BCE have been found.
at Muttam-Teri site near Kanyakumari

*Tourist
importance:* Vivekanandar Memorial, Monumental statue of Saint
Tiruvalluvar on a huge rock off shore, and Gandhi
Mandapam on the sea shore.

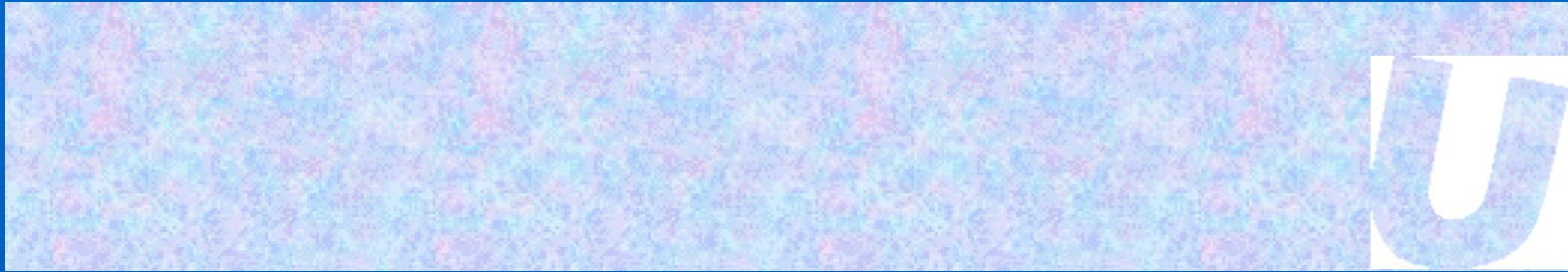
UDYAGIRI FORT

KANYAKUMARI DIST.



Conclusion

- This paper mainly focuses attention on the unfamiliar trade centres like Alambarai, Marakkanam, Alagankulam, Mylapore etc. in the east coast and their significances.
- Exploration at Marakkanam & Excavations at Alagankulam highlights the early history (i.e. Sangam period) and the trade contacts with west and eastern countries.
- Excavated antiquities reveal the influence on socio-economic & cultural life of Tamils.
- Further commercial contact will be brought to light in the future excavations of these sites.



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