Tamil language and culture on American archaeology web channel

The Archaeology Channel (www.archaeologychannel.org), a non-profit, streaming media channel for archaeology-related content, founded by the Archaeological Legacy Institute (ALI), Eugene, Oregon, USA, is webcasting UR - A Video Essay on Tamil Part 1, produced and directed by M. V. Bhaskar and co-directed by K. T. Gandhirajan.

On the first day that UR went online - June 19, 2006 - it drew 8639 visitors according to Mr. Richard D. Pettigrew, the founder of ALI. The second day had 9942 hits. "While the video has been attracting an approximate average of 10000 visitors daily, Indian visitors rank #10 among all those coming to the page. Why?" wonders Dr. Pettigrew.

For one month, the video can be accessed on the home page of The Archaeology Channel, after which it moves to http://www.archaeologychannel.org/content/video/ur.html.

The page is sponsored by the Indian IT major HCL. Originally produced at the instance of Dr. E. Annamalai, former Director, Central Institute of Indian Languages and now Visiting Professor Emeritus, Yale, the 26 m video tracks - through music and images, and archaeology and literary history - the first 800 years of the known history of Tamil.

'Semmoorthal' - a play staged on the red palai dunes of Terikkadu in southern Ramanathapuram by Dr. Murugabaopathy and his theatre group Manal Magudi invokes UR.

Antediluvian myth, the art of interpretation (tina), epochs of poetry, Brahmni caves, Asokan Brahmi, Vatteluttu, Grantham, modern Tamil script, ancient petroglyphs, Indus script, Jain influence and medieval Hinduism are the broad themes explored.

There are performances in the video, each good enough to stand on its own without the rest of the video - an Amba or Temmannu style rendition of Silappadikaram by Poompuhar Sellakkuru at the confluence of Kaveri and Bay of Bengal, Silappadikaram in classical dance ballet by Sreethala Vinod, a 'numerical' prayer by the devotees of Mel Sittamur Jinalayam, Tirumurai by Tiruppanantal Tyagaraja Oduvar and instrumental performances (Bugiri, Kural) by Karikku R Iulas.

The video is a "successful conversion of a verbal and emotive content into a captivating visual and aural content", says E. Annamalai. Pettigrew adds: The production looks very good. The subject matter is one that is poorly understood in many parts of the world, especially the West, so it has special value. The images and sound are excellent and the research quite well done, although I myself am not an expert on Dravidian culture.

A limited number of DVD / tape copies will be available early August for educational and cultural purposes - for use in public exhibitions, festival / conference screenings, broadcast, libraries, government archives.

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 UR - A video essay on Tamil

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வேதியியல் நிறுவனத்தின் ஆராய்ச்சி முனைவெட்டினை வெளியிட்டுள்ளோம். இது தொடர்பில் காண முடியும் வழிகாட்டுதல் ஆகும். குறிப்பிட்டுள்ளோம், இவ்வாறு செய்யப்பட்டுள்ள வழிகாட்டுதல் என்றவுடன் இவ்வாறு செய்யப்பட்டுள்ள வழிகாட்டுதல் தொடர்பில் ஏற்படுத்தப்பட்டது. கொண்டுள்ள நூலை வெளியிட்டுள்ளோம். 

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