



## HISTORY

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# EARLY TAMIL SOCIETY AND CULTURE

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## HISTORY

## I. CHOOSE THE CORRECT ANSWER: [www.nammakalvi.org](http://www.nammakalvi.org)

- The name of the script used in the Sangam Age - .....**  
 a) English      b) Devanagari      c) Tamil – Brahmi      d) Granta      **Ans: c)**
- The Sri Lankan chronicle composed in the Pali language mentioning about merchants and horse traders from Tamil Nadu - .....**  
 a) Deepa vamsa      b) Arthasastra      c) Mahavamsa      d) Indica      **Ans: c)**
- The notable Chola king credited with bringing forest lands under the plough and developing irrigational facilities - .....**  
 a) Karikalan      b) Rajarajan – I      c) Kulothungan      d) Rajendran – I      **Ans: a)**
- Inscription that mentions the Cheras - .....**  
 a) Pugalur      b) Girnar      c) Pulimankombai      d) Madurai      **Ans: a)**
- The famous Venetian traveler who described Kayal as a great and noble city - .....**  
 a) Vasco d agama      b) Alberuni      c) Marco Polo      d) Megasthenes      **Ans: c)**
- i) Coins as a medium of exchange were introduced for the first time in the Sangam Age. (T)  
 ii) Prakrit was the language used by the common people in Northern India during the Mauryan period. (F)  
 iii) Vienna Papyrus, a Roman document mentions trade related to Muziri. (T)  
 iv) The concept of Thinaï is presented in the Tamil grammar work of Pathupattu. (F)  
 a) (i) is correct      b) (ii) is correct  
 c) (i) and (iii) is correct      d) (iii) and (iv) is correct      **Ans: c)**
- i) Pathitru Pathu speaks about the Pandya kings and their territory. (F)  
 ii) The Akanaanuru describes the trading activities at Kaveri poompattinam. (F)  
 iii) The Chola Emblem was the tiger and they issued square copper coins with images of a tiger. (T)  
 iv) Neythal is a sandy desert region. (F)  
 a) (i) is correct      b) (ii) and (iii) is correct  
 c) (iii) is correct      d) (iv) is correct      **Ans: c)**

### ADDITIONAL

- Epigraphy is the study of**  
 a) Inscriptions      b) Coins      c) Weapons      d) Temples      **Ans: a)**

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**10. The Sangam Age has its roots in the ..... Age.**

- a) Palaeolithic      b) Neolithic      c) Iron      d) Mesolithic

**Ans: c)**

**11. During Sangam period, the Pamban coast is famous for**

- a) Architecture      b) Pearl fishing      c) Agriculture      d) Trade

**Ans: b)**

**12. Kodumanal, an Archaeological site is located near ..... in Tamil Nadu.**

- a) Chennai      b) Vellore      c) Pudukkottai      d) Erode

**Ans: d)**

**13. .... are the memorials erected for those who lost their lives in the battles and in cattle rides.**

- a) Tombs      b) Temples      c) Hero stones      d) Buildings

**Ans: c)**

**14. Arikamedu, near ..... is a Sangam Age port.**

- a) Puducherry      b) Cochin      c) Tuticorin      d) Kanniyakumari

**Ans: a)**

**15. Ptolemy's ..... is a gazetteer and atlas of Roman times.**

- a) History      b) Geography      c) World Chart      d) Gate way to world

**Ans: b)**

- 16.** i) Bullock carts and animals were used to transport goods by land. (T)  
 ii) Salt merchants were called Yavanars. (F)  
 iii) Barter was the primary mode of exchange. (T)  
 iv) Soldiers travelled in groups with trading goods and commodities between regions. (F)

- a) (i) is correct      b) (ii) and (iii) is correct  
 c) (i) and (iii) is correct      d) (iv) is correct

**Ans: c)**

- 17.** i) Agriculture was the one of the mains sources of subsistence. (T)  
 ii) Millets were cultivated in dry lands. (T)  
 iii) In the Sangam literature, there is no evidence about rice. (F)  
 iv) People in the Palai region(desert) adopted shifting cultivation. (F)

- a) (i) is correct      b) (i) and (ii) is correct  
 c) (i) and (iii) is correct      d) (ii) and (iv) is correct

**Ans: b)**

- 18.** i) Silappathikaaram describes the procedures for effecting hero stones. (F)  
 ii) In Mullai landscape, the people followed the pastoral way of life. (T)  
 iii) Epics or Kappiyams are long narrative poem of very high quality. (T)  
 iv) The Pathinen Kilkanakku comprises of ten texts elaborating on ethics and morals. (F)

- a) (i) is correct      b) (ii) and (iii) is correct  
 c) (i) and (iii) is correct      d) (iv) is correct

**Ans: b)**

- 19.** i) Barter was the primary mode of exchange practiced during the Sangam Age. (T)  
 ii) Gold merchants were called Umanars. (F)  
 iii) Bullock carts and animals were used to transport goods by land. (T)  
 iv) Southwest Asia was known as Suvarna Bhumi in Tamil literature. (F)

- a) (i) and (ii) are correct      b) (ii) and (iii) are correct  
 c) (iii) and (iv) are correct      d) (i) and (iii) is correct

**Ans: d)**

**II. FILL IN THE BLANKS.**

1. .... are documents scripted on stones, copper plates, coins and rings.  
**Ans: Inscriptions**
2. .... refers to systematically digging a site to recover material evidence for exploring societies of the past.  
**Ans: Archaeological excavation**
3. .... is the classic work on economy and statecraft authorized by Kautilya during the Mauryan period.  
**Ans: Arthashastra**
4. .... is a poetic theme which means a class or category and refers to a habitant or eco-zone with specific physiographical characteristics.  
**Ans: Thinaï**
5. .... referred to the Westerners including the Greeks, Romans and West Asian people.  
**Ans: Yavanar**

**ADDITIONAL**

6. The development of script marked the beginning of the ..... period.  
**Ans: Historical period**
7. Bullion means ..... available in the form of ingots.  
**Ans: Precious metal**
8. Mahavamsa, the Sri Lankan Buddhist Chronicle composed in the ..... language.  
**Ans: Pali**
9. Pliny, the Elder wrote the book .....  
**Ans: Natural History**
10. During the Sangam period, Tamilagam was divided into ..... landscapes.  
**Ans: Five**
11. A planned town with brick architecture and a proper layout is called  
**Ans: Urban centre**
12. .... was a touchstone used to test the purity of gold. **Ans: Perumpattankal**
13. Ilango who composed the Silappathikaram was the brother of **Ans: Chera Senguttuvan**
14. Tholkappiyam, attributed to Tholkappiyar, is the earliest written work on  
**Ans: Tamil grammar**
15. The Cheras are referred to as ..... in the Ashokan inscriptions.  
**Ans: Keralaputras**

**III. FIND OUT THE CORRECT STATEMENT.**

1. a) Evidence of iron smelting has been found in Kodumanal and Guttur. (T)  
b) Periplus of Erythraean Sea mentions about the pepper trade with India. (F)  
c) Punch marked coins are the earliest coins used in India mostly made of gold. (F)  
d) The Sangam Age has its roots in the Bronze Age. (F)

**Ans: a) is the correct statement**

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2. a) The Cheras ruled over Kaveri delta and their capital was Uraiyur. (F)
- b) The Maangulam Tamil-Brahmi inscriptions mention the King Karikalan. (F)
- c) The terms Vanika and Nigama appear in Tamil-Brahmi inscriptions were different types of merchants. (T)
- d) Salt merchants were called Vanika and they travelled in bullock carts along with their family. (F)

**Ans: c) is the correct statement**

### ADDITIONAL

3. a) Textile production was also important occupation of Sangam people. (T)
- b) Evidence of spindle whorls and pieces of cloth have been found at Kodumanal. (T)
- c) Arthasasthra mentions the fine variety of textiles produced in the Tamil region. (F)
- d) Spindle whorls were used for making pottery from clay. (F)

**Ans: a) and b) are correct statements**

4. a) Bullion means precious metals available in the form ingots. (T)
- b) Punch marked coins are mostly made of gold. (F)
- c) Mahavamsa, the Sri Lankan Buddhist chronicle was composed in Sanskrit. (F)
- d) Peutingerian table is an illustrated map of the Indian roads. (F)

**Ans: a) is the correct statement**

5. a) During the Sangam Age, the Neythal landscape followed the pastoral way of life. (F)
- b) In the Sangam period, cattle were considered an important source of wealth. (T)
- c) Tholkappiyam describes the procedures for erecting hero stones. (T)
- d) Hero stones of the Sangam Age can be found at Porpanaikottai in Pudukkottai. (T)

**Ans: b), c) and d) are correct statements**

### IV. MATCH THE FOLLOWING.

- |                |   |  |
|----------------|---|--|
| 1. Epigraphy   | - | a) A narrative text presenting the important historical events |
| 2. Chronicle   | - | b) A sangam age port   |
| 3. Pastoralism | - | c) An ornament made in precious stone.                         |
| 4. Cameo       | - | d) The study of inscriptions                                   |
| 5. Arikamedu   | - | e) Nomadic people earning livelihood by rearing cattle.        |

**Ans: 1-d 2-a 3-e 4-c 5-b**

### V. ANSWER THE FOLLOWING BRIEFLY.

#### 1. Archaeological sites provide evidence of past history – Discuss.

- Archaeology is the scientific study of all the remains of the past that are discovered through digging or excavations conducted at various historical sites.
- Archaeological sites provide ample evidences to know the history of past.



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- Archaeological sources include monuments, coins ornaments, shells of pottery, sculpture, weapons, tools, bones, vessels, etc, used by people in the past.

**2. How important are coins as a source of evidence for the study of Sangam Age?**

- Coins as a medium of exchange were introduced for the first time in the Sangam Age.
- The coins of Cheras, Cholas and Pandyas and Romans were important source of evidence.
- The coins give information on the social and economic conditions of Sangam period.
- They also tell us the extent of the kingdom, its relation with neighboring and foreign kingdoms.
- Roman coins discovered in Coimbatore region, Karur and Madurai shows that our ancestors traded with the people of Rome.

**3. Agriculture was one of the main sources of subsistence in Sangam Age. Give reasons.**

- The economy of Sangam Age was mixed as elaborated in the Thinaï concept. Agriculture was one of the main occupations of the people.
- The people also involved in other occupations like fishing, pottery making, jewellery making iron manufacturing, trade, etc. But, agriculture was the main source of subsistence in Sangam Age.
- Both wet and dry land farming were practiced. In the river valleys and tank-irrigated areas, paddy was cultivated.
- People in the forest adopted Punam of shifting cultivation.

**4. Overseas interactions brought glory to ancient Tamilagam. Give examples in support.**

- Tamilagam had connections with countries overseas both in the east and west.
- Roman ships used monsoon winds to cross the Western Sea or the Arabian Sea to connect Tamilagam.
- Spices including pepper, ivory and precious stones were exported from Tamilagam.
- Metal including gold, silver and copper were imported for other countries.
- Roman coins discovered in Coimbatore region, Karur and Madurai shows the existence of brisk traded with Rome.

**ADDITIONAL**

**5. What are the sources useful to reconstruct the history of ancient Tamils?**

The sources for reconstructing the history of the ancient Tamils are-

- Classical Tamil literature
- Epigraphy (inscriptions)
- Archaeological excavations and materials culture
- Non-Tamil and Foreign literatures.

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**6. Name the texts of Elluthogai.**

The texts of Pathinen Melkanakku include Pathupaattu and Ettuthogai. These are the oldest among the classical Tamil texts. The Ettuthogai or the Eight Anthologies are –

- |                |                |               |                   |
|----------------|----------------|---------------|-------------------|
| 1) Natrinai    | 2) Kurunthogai | 3) Paripaadal | 4) Pathittrupathu |
| 5) Aingurunuru | 6) Kalithogai  | 7) Akanaanuru | 8) Puranaanuru    |

**7. Name the legislation passed to preserve the archaeological remains in India.**

- The Indian Treasure Trove Act (1878),
- The Antiquities and Art Treasures Act (1972) and
- The Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act (1958) are the legislation passed by the Central Government to preserve the archaeological remains in India.

**8. Write a note on Ptolemy's Geography.**

- Ptolemy wrote the book Geography. It is a gazetteer and atlas of Roman times.
- It provides geographical details of the Roman Empire in the second century CE.
- Kaveripoompattinam, Korkai, Kanniyakumari and Muciri are some of the places mentioned in his Geography.

**9. What are the five landscapes of ancient Tamilagam?**

Tamilagam was divided into five landscapes. They are-

- Kurunji refers to the hilly and mountainous region.
- Mullai is forested and pastoral region.
- Marutham is the fertile river valley.
- Neythal is coastal region and
- Paalai is sandy desert region.

**10. What is an urban centre?**

- A planned town with brick architecture and a proper layout is known as urban centre.
- Urban centres have a larger population involved in non-agrarian, commercial and political occupations.
- Various industrial activities are seen in these towns.

**VI. ANSWER ALL THE QUESTIONS GIVEN UNDER EACH CAPTION.****1. Hero Stones:****a) What was the common practice in a pastoral society?**

Raiding cattle owned by adjoining tribes and clans was common practice in a pastoral society.

**b) Who plundered the cattle wealth of enemies?**

Tibal chieftains.



c) **How were the dead warriors remembered?**

The dead warriors were remembered as Martyrs.

d) **Which Tamil text describes the procedures for effecting here stones?**

Tholkappiyam.

**2. Non-Tamil sources (Foreign Accounts):**

a) **What does the presence of the non-Tamil sources reveal?**

Non-Tamil literary sources offer information on early Tamil society.

b) **Name the classic work of the Mauryan period that makes a mention that the pearl and shells came from Pandya country.**

Arthasastra.

c) **What is a chronicle?**

It is a narrative text presenting the important historical events in chronological order.

d) **Who speaks about the pepper trade between Roman Empire and India?**

Pliny speaks about the pepper trade between Roman Empire and India.

**3. Industries and Crafts of the Sangam Age:**

a) **What were the important aspects of urbanization?**

Emergence of cities, development of industries, economic life of the people, literature, Systematic administration, etc are the important aspects of urbanization.

b) **What is the Tamil name for a potter?**

Kalamceyko.

c) **What were the different types of pottery used by the people?**

Black ware, russet coated painted ware, black and red ware were types of pottery.

d) **Identify the Iron implements required for agriculture and warfare.**

Swords, daggers and spears were required for agriculture and warfare.

**ADDITIONAL**

**4. Archaeology:**

a) **What is Archaeology?**

Archaeology is the study of the past by interpretation of the material cultural remains.

b) **What are Archeological sites?**

The old inhabitation sites where the systematic excavation conducted to unearth the remains of past is called Archeological sites.

c) **What do the sites provide?**

The sites provide evidences to know how the people lived in the past.

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**d) Where is Arikkamedu?**

Arikkamedu is near Puducherry.

**5. Trade during Sangam Age:****a) Mention the different types of traders.**

Gold merchants, Cloth merchants and salt merchants.

**b) What are the terms used to denote water crafts and sea-going vessels?**

Kalam, Pahri, Odam, Toni, Teppam and Navai.

**c) What were the goods exported from Tamil Nadu?**

Pepper, ivory and precious stones.

**d) What were the goods imported from foreign countries?**

Metal including gold, silver and copper and precious stones.

**VII. ANSWER THE FOLLOWING IN DETAIL:****1. To what extent do you think the political powers of Tamilagam influenced Sangam age polity?**

Among the political powers of the Sangam Age, the Cheras, the Cholas and the Pandyas occupied pre-eminent positions. They were known as Muvendhar.

**The Cheras:**

- The Cheras ruled Kerala and the Western part of Tamil Nadu.
- Vanchi was the capital of the Cheras while Musiri and Thondi were their port towns.
- Pathiruppathu speaks about the Chera kings and their conquests.

**The Cholas:**

- The Cholas ruled over the Kaveri delta and Northern parts of Tamil Nadu.
- Their capital was Uraiyr and their port town was Kaveripoompattinam.
- Karikalan is notable among the Chola Kings.
- The administration of the Cholas reached its zenith in the later Chola period.
- During this period, literature, art and architecture flourished.

**The Pandyas:**

- The Pandyas ruled the southern part of Tamil Nadu.
- Madurai was their capital. They were the patrons of Tamil scholars.
- They patronized Tamil Sangams in which Tamil poets and poetess assembled and composed poems and literary texts.

**Velirs:**

- Apart from the Vendars, there were Velirs who occupied territories on the margins of the muvendhar.





- The velirs were seven in number. They were Pari, Kari, Ori, Nalli, Pegan, Ai and Athiyaman.
- These chieftains had alliance with one or other of the muvendhar and helped them in their battles against the other Vendhars.

## 2. Indicate how the industries and crafts of the Sangam Age contribute to their economy.

In the Sangam Age, there were professional groups that produced various commodities. The system of production of commodities is called industry. Apart of agriculture, they also practiced Iron manufacturing, Jewellery making, textile production, etc.

### Iron Industry:

Iron manufacturing was an important artisanal activity. Iron smelting was undertaken in traditional furnaces. Iron implements were required for agriculture and warfare.

### Jewellery making:

Sangam Age people adorned themselves with a variety of ornaments. The rich people wore jewels made of gold, precious stones and copper. They wore ornaments made of clay, terracotta, iron and glass beads. Gold coins from Rome were used to make jewellery.

### Textile production:

Textile production was another important occupation. Tamil literatures refer to cloth 'Kalingam' and other fine varieties of textiles. Periplus mention the fine variety of textiles produced in the Tamil region.

### Trade:

- Foreign traders especially the Greeks, Romans and West Asians popularly known as Yavanars had a brisk trade with Tamil people. The Roman coins excavated at Coimbatore, Madurai and Karur proves it.
- From the above, we can understand that the industries and crafts of the Sangam Age contributed to the economy of Tamil people.

## ADDITIONAL

### 3. Write a note on Hero stones.

- Hero stones are memorials erected for those who lost their lives in the battles and in cattle raids. As cattle were considered an important source of wealth, raiding cattle owned by adjoining tribes and clans was common practice in the pastoral society.
- During the Sangam Age, tribal chieftains plundered the cattle wealth of enemies whose warriors fought to protect their cattle. Many warriors died in such battles. They were remembered as martyrs.
- Memorial stones were erected in their honour. Sangam literature gives a lot of information about these battles and hero stones. In due of the time, hero stones became an object of worship.

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- Hero stones of the post-Sangam Age and the Pallava period were erected in large numbers in pastoral regions. These hero stones have inscriptions and the images of warriors and names of heroes.

#### 4. What are the Non-Tamil sources that help us to know Tamil society? Explain.

Tamil literary sources are very helpful to know about Sangam polity and society. Equally, the Non-Tamil literary sources also offer information on early Tamil society. The important non-Tamil sources are-

##### **Arthasastra:**

It was written by Chanakya during the Mauryan period. It refers to Pandya Kavatak. It means the pearl and shells from the Pandya country. From this book, we can get the information of Sangam age.

##### **Mahavamsa:**

Mahavamsa is the Sri Lankan Buddhist chronicle. It gives information about the merchants and horse trades of Tamil Nadu and South India.

##### **Periplus of Erythraean Sea:**

Periplus of Erythraean sea is an ancient Greek text whose author is not known. It makes references to the Sangam age, mentions the port of Musiri, Thondi, Korkai and Kumari as well as the Cheras and the Pandyas.

**Pliny's Natural History:** Pliny the Elder was a Roman who wrote the book 'Natural History'. He speaks about the pepper trade with India. He also states that it took 40 days from Rome to reach India for trade. Further, he mentioned about the Pandyas of Madurai.

##### **Ptolemy's Geography:**

Ptolemy's Geography is a gazetteer and atlas of Roman times. He mentioned about the places such as Kaveripoompattinam, Korkai, Kanniyakumari and Musiri in his book 'Geography'.

##### **Peutingerian Table:**

Peutingerian table is an illustrated map of the Roman roads. It shows the areas of ancient Tamilagam and the port Musiri.

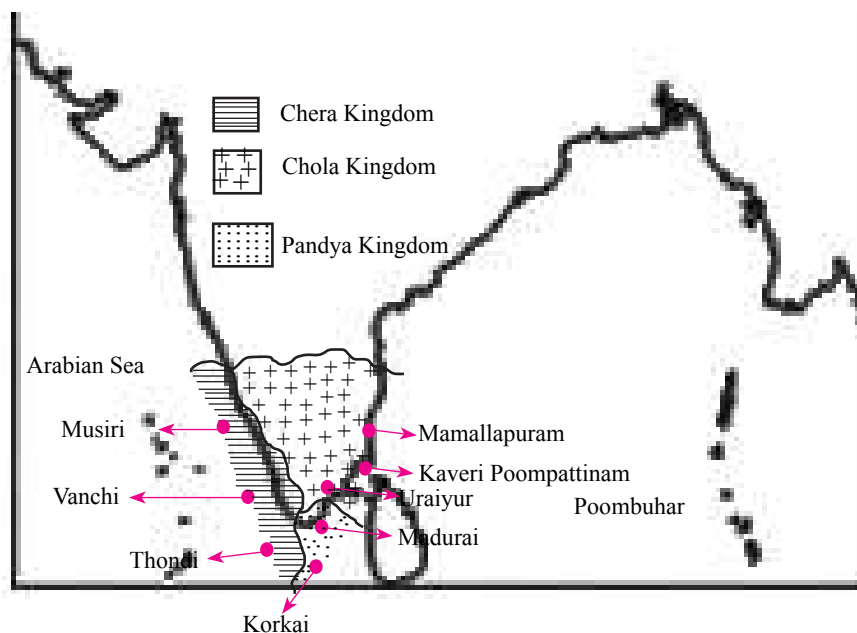
##### **Vienna Papyrus:**

Vienna papyrus is a Greek document of second century CE. It contains i) a written agreement between traders, ii) name of the ships and iii) list of articles of export such as pepper and ivory that were shipped from India to the Roman Empire.

## FUN WITH HISTORY

## STUDENTS ACTIVITIES

1. Mark on the map of South India, the ancient Tamilagam and the territories of Tamil Kingdoms.



2. Visit a museum and collect information about inscriptions, coins and instruments used by the ancient people.

(Self Activity)

3. Visit the early historic sites of Arikamedu, Kaveripoompattinam, Keezhadi, etc.,

(Self Activity)

4. Conduct a study on materials excavated from prehistoric sites and on Tamil-Brahmi script.

(Self Activity)

