

Prelims Master Program (2023-24) – Ancient, Medieval, Art and Culture
Handout 11: Post Mauryan Era (Polity, Economy, Society)

Kharvela of Kalinga (Chedis of Kalinga)

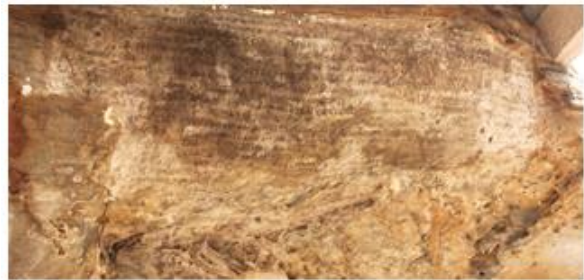
- The Chetti's were followers and patrons of Jainism.
- The Hathigumpha inscription of Kharvela informs us about Chettis.
- Kharavela pushed his kingdom beyond the Godavari in the south.
- He has boasted of bringing back Jaina idols from Magadha.

Jain Caves (Odisha, 2nd c BCE)

- **Udayagiri (18), Khandagiri Hills (15)**
- Partly natural, partly artificial
- By Kharvela, Mahameghavarman
- Most Important – Ranigumpha, Hathigumpha



- **Hathigumpha Prashasti (19th regnal year)**
- Prakrit language, Brahmi script



Shunga and Kanvas

- Supplanted Maurya dynasty but couldn't become as great. Smaller yet significant kingdom.
- Around 10 kings in 112 years as per Puranas

1. Pushyamitra Shunga -

- He was the Commander-in-Chief of the Mauryan empire, who - assassinated **Brihadratha**, the last Mauryan emperor, and usurped the throne.
- Conquests
 - Kalidasa mentions conflict between Pushyamitra and Yajnasena (king of Deccan) and victory of Shungas
 - He also defeated the Bactrian king **Demetrius** (or Menander?) and repulsed Greek invasion of India.
- **Patanjali** wrote his '**Mahabhashya**' during his reign.
 - It is a commentary on the works of Panini and Katyayana.
 - Examples from daily life.

2. Agnimitra -

- He is the protagonist of **Kalidasa's** famous play, '**Malavikagnimitram**'.
 - Love story between Malavika and Agnimitra

3. (Kashiputra) Bhagabhadra

- He was the 5th Sunga king.
- During his reign, the Greek ambassador, **Heliodorus** visited India and erected the Besnagar Pillar with an inscription devoted to 'Devadeva' (Vasudeva). It is in Sanskrit in the Brahmi script.

4. Last king **Devabhuti**

- Assassinated by his minister **Vasudeva Kanva** à Kanva dynasty.
- Andhra/Satavahans conquered the Vidisha region from Shungas.

Religious Policy:

- **Revival of Brahmanism:** Unlike the Mauryans, the Shungas were staunch followers of Brahmanism.
 - Vedic rites were invigorated.
 - Performed 2 Ashwamedha Yajnas - Deccan and roll-back of Greeks.
 - Hinduism especially, Bhagavatism became popular.
- **Persecution of Buddhism?**

Buddhist sources claims	Archaeological evidence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prize of 100 dinaras for a shramanas head • Destruction of 84000 stupas and other monasteries like Ghoshitarama (Kaushambi) and Kukkutarama (Pataliputra) • Harmed Bodhi tree • Ashokan pillared hall destroyed 	Renovation, enlargement and beautification of many great Buddhist stupas in Shunga territory – Sanchi, Bharhut, Mahabodhi

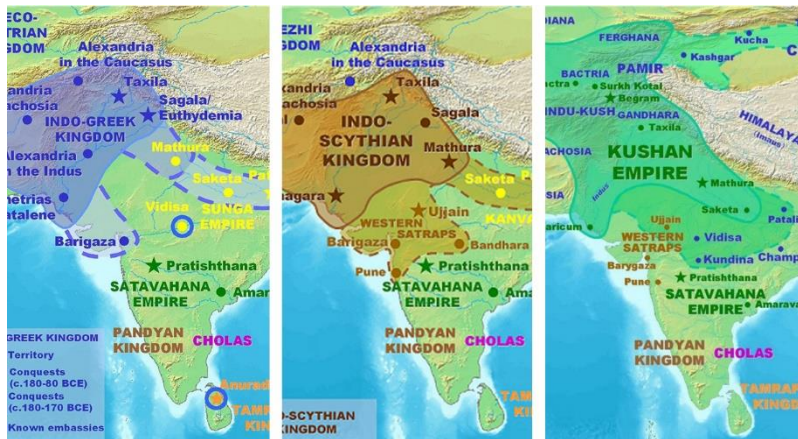
The achievements of the Shungas in **the field of art** are worth mentioning.

- Some of them are the vihara at Bhaja near Poona, also at Kaushambi, Sanchi, Bharut and Bodhgaya monuments.
- Human figures played a prominent role in the Sunga art.

Kanva Dynasty:

- Its founder was Vasudeva who **assassinated Devabhuti**, the last Sunga ruler, in 75 BCE.
- The extent of Kanva territory was confined to the areas of Shunga rule. Magadha was their main center of power.
- This period is said to have witnessed the rule of four kings extending to a period about 45 years.
- The short-lived dynasty was swept away by the Satavahanas of the Deccan.

Invasions from Northwest



Indo Greeks

Ionian island (Greece) → Yauna (old Persian) → Yavana (Sanskrit)



- They were descendants of Greeks who had come with Alexander, settled in Afghanistan and mingled with Indians.
- From the 2nd century BCE onwards, they established a strong kingdom in Bactria.
- **Seleucid Empire** → **Greco Bactrian kingdom** → **Indo-Greeks** south of Hindukush.
- They occupied a large part of NW India and had Taxila as their capital.
 - **Demetrius** - first known king
 - **Menander** (Milinda) - most important king, mentioned in 'Milindapanho'.
- **Important cities:** Ai Khanoum, Sirkap, Sagala



Indo-Greek Coinage

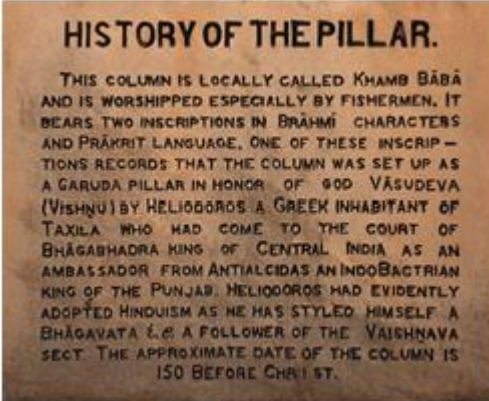

- First to issue **large number** of coins in India.
- Punch-mark coins → cast, die-struck coins.
- They were pioneers of **gold** coinage in India.
- Introduced the tradition of engraving individualistic images & names of rulers.
- **Images of gods:** They followed various faiths including Jainism, Buddhism and Vaishnavism.



 <p style="text-align: center;">Menander I's coin with Buddhist Dharmachakra</p>	 <p style="text-align: center;">Basileos Soterios Menandrou (of King Menander, the Savior); Maharaja Tratarasa Menadrassa (Prakrit)</p>
 <p style="text-align: center;">Agathokles silver coin at Ai-Khanoum</p>	 <p style="text-align: center;">Coin of Agathokles with Lakshmi and lion</p>

Indianization of Greeks

- The city of **Sirkap** founded by Demetrius
 - It combines **Greek and Indian influences** without signs of segregation between the two cultures.
- **Coins**
 - **Bilingual** Greek coins: Greek and Pali languages in Kharoshthi script.
 - A **tremendous concession** to another culture never before made in the Hellenic world.
 - Indian **weight system** – Not Roman
 - **Indian Gods** on coins
- **Heliodorus Pillar** – Bhagvatism
- **Milind Panho** – Buddhism

	
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More Contribution:

- They introduced the '**Yavanika**' (curtain in theatres).
- Made significant contributions to the development of **astrology** in India.
 - The names of known planets and heavenly bodies were used for naming the days of the week.
- They helped in the development of the **Gandhara school** of sculptural art.

Shakas/Scythians



Background:

- They were a nomadic tribal group from Central Asia
- Successive waves of migration due to drying pastures, inter-tribal conflict and Chinese wall.
- Arrived in India in the 1st century BCE, settling over large parts of N-W India.
 - Crossed Syr Darya and attacked Bactria, ousted Indo-Greeks and established their kingdom.
- Their rule initially focussed on Seistan province
- Later, the rule extended from Punjab to Maharashtra.



Important Kings

- First Invasion – **Maues/Moga** (80 BCE)
 - The first Saka king of India
 - His kingdom disintegrated after his death. Indo-Greek kings again ruled.
- Second invasion – **Azes I** (55 BCE)
 - Shakas took final control of NW India

	Silver coin of the Indo-Scythian king Maues (85–60 BC)		Azes I in military dress, on a horse, with couched spear
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Shakas and Buddhism

				Shaka devotee, Butkara Stupa
Bimaran Casket – Azes I	Bajaur Casket	Tiratna symbol (left)		

- **Kushana subjugated them.**
 - Shakas were apparently subjugated by the Kushan Empire (king not exactly known)
 - Yet the Shaka continued to govern as satrapies, forming satrapies
- **Shaka Satrapies:**
 - Northern Satrapies (Kapisha/Taxila, Chuksha, Mathura)

- Western Satraps (Nashik, Ujjain)
- Satrap = military governor, practically free to rule in the province.
 - Satrap: Provincial governor in Achaemenid and Sassanid empire (Persian)
 - Strategos: Military General (Greek)

Mathura Satrapy: Buddhism and Vaishnavism

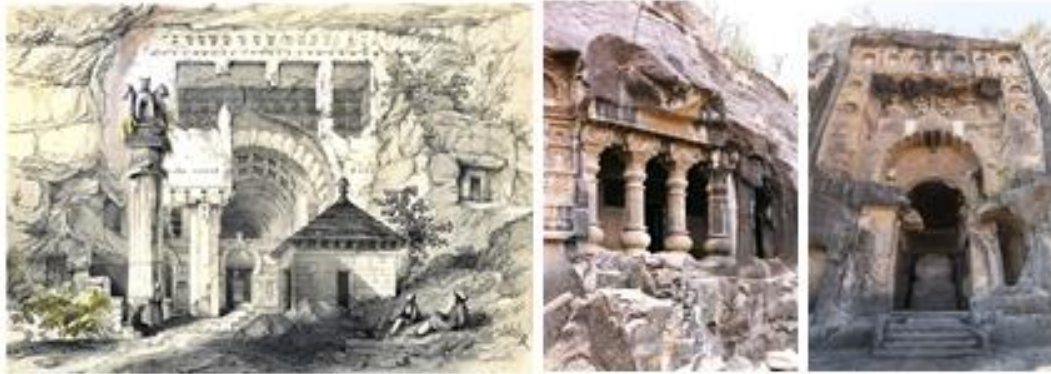
- **Rajavula**
 - **Mathura Lion Capital of Rajavula (1st c CE)**
 - References to **Queen Ayasia** (chief queen of Rajuvula) giving donation to Sarvastivada Buddhism.
 - It mentions gift of Stupa with Buddha's relics by the chief queen of Rajavula. The capital also displays at its center a Buddhist triratana symbol, further confirming the involvement of Indo-Scythian rulers with Buddhism.
- **Sodasa, son of Rajuvula (d. 15 CE)**
 - **Vasu Doorjamb Inscription**
 - It talks about the construction of temple for Vasudev at Mathura. The donor's name is **Vasu**.
 - **Mora Doorjamb Well inscription**
 - Mentions that it was dedicated to build a temple of five Vrishni heroes.



Nashik Satrapy (short-lived Kshaharatra family)	Ujjain Satrapy (Kardamaka Family)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The first two rulers of the family were Bhumik and Nahapana. ● Famous king – Nahapana (1st c CE) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Known from his silver coins and inscriptions. ● Important role in maritime trade (Periplus calls him Nambanus of Barygaza) ● Enlarged the empire by ousting Satavahanas initially but was later defeated by Gautamiputra. ● Built many Buddhist caves in western Maharashtra. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● It became important later, after the fall of Nasik Satrapy. ● Chashtana: his ascension to the throne is the beginning of the most famous Shaka era (78 CE) ● Another famous king was Rudradaman (130-150 CE) ● Rudrasimha III – Shaka rule ceased when the last Western Satrap Rudrasimha III was defeated by the Gupta emperor Chandragupta II in 395 CE.



Jogalthembi Hoard



Caves: Karle, Nashik, Manmodi/Junnar



Junagarh Prashasti of Rudradaman

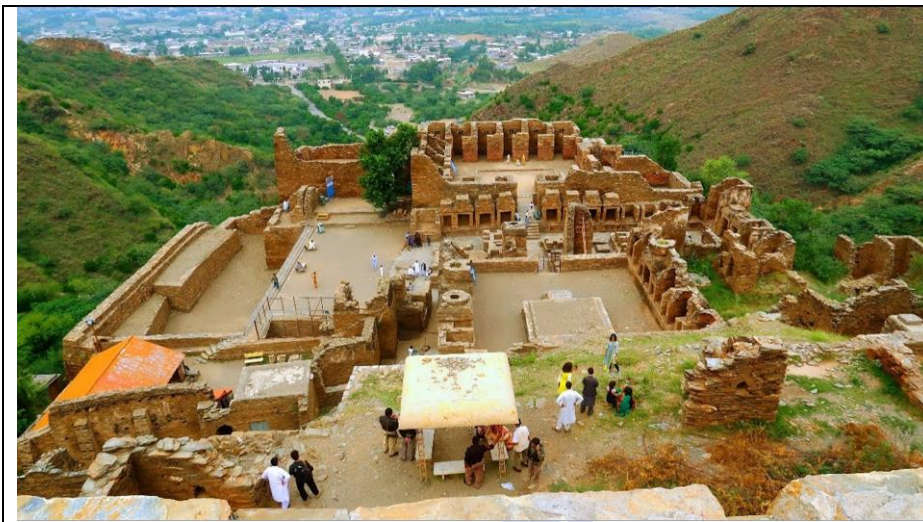


They came to India from Persia in the 1st century CE, and established rule in the NW part of India.

Gondophernes (19-46 CE)

- The most important king of this dynasty.
- Inscription has been found from the '**Takht-i- Bahi**' Buddhist Complex, Taxila.
 - It gives us information about his rule and foreign contacts.
- According to some Christian traditions, the first Christian Missionary, **St. Thomas**, came to his court in 52 CE.

Soon after Gondophernes, Pahalwa rule in India ended.



It's a well-preserved Gandhara site founded by Pahlawas and continued till 7th century.

Kushanas (Yueh Chi Tribe)

They came from Central Asia (Tarim Basin region) in the 1st century CE.

They established a huge empire including-

- UP, Kashmir, Punjab
- Afghanistan
- Central Asia
- China- Khotan and Kashgar

Among all foreign ruling groups, their empire was the largest and most prosperous, based on their status as the masters of the silk road.



Important Kings

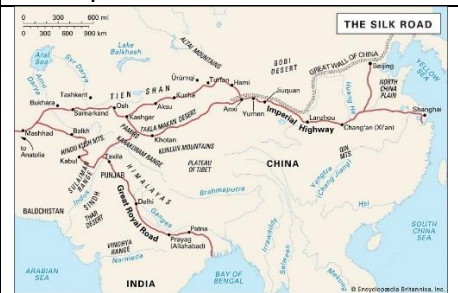
- **Kujula Kadphises** (15-70 CE) (Contemporary to Gondophernes.)
 - He established his authority over Afghanistan and called himself 'great king'.
 - With the conquest of the Indo-Greek cities of Bactria and Gandhara, the Kushanas were no longer mere tribal chiefs. They were now emperors and **masters of the Silk Route** – the commercial and cultural superhighway that connected Han China and India with Parthia and Rome.
 - Kujula's capital was **Taxila-Sirkap**.
 - Title Maharaja Rajarajasa Devaputra (Great King of Kings, Son of a Divine Being).
- **Vima Takto**
- **Vima Kadphises**
 - According to the Rabatak inscription, he was the son of Vima Takto and the father of Kanishka.
 - He extended his territory upto Punjab.
 - He issued gold and copper coins.
 - He was a devotee of Shiva.
 - He was the **first Kushana emperor to gold coinage**, thanks to the immense wealth generated by the trade along the Silk Route.

- **Kanishka** (greatest and most famous Kushana king)
 - Kushana Empire reached greatest extent under him
 - Within a century since Kajula, his grandson Kanishka had conquered most of Shakastan, and subjugated the mahajanapadas of the Gangetic Plains.
 - Now, the Kushana empire extended from the Aral Sea through areas that include present-day Uzbekistan, Afghanistan and Pakistan into northern India, as far east as Bhagalpur and as far south as Sanchi.
 - **Two headquarters**
 - Pushkalvati → Purushpur (Peshawar)
 - Mathura
 - Controlled and pacified **Silk route**



Hoard of Kushana coins have been found in the remote Rautahat district of Nepal.

Rabatak inscription in Afghanistan (disc 1993): Kushana emperors ruled 'as far as Sri Champa'.



Silk Route

Kanishka's court was adorned by some **great scholars**, such as:

Charak	Vasumitra	Ashvaghosha
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He was Kanishka's court physician. • Authored the 'Charak Samhita', the first Indian scientific book on medicine. • It contains detailed descriptions of diseases, their symptoms, causes and remedies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He was a Buddhist scholar and the president of the 4th Buddhist Council. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Buddhist scholar and co-president of the 4th Buddhist Council. • His famous works include 'Buddhacharita' (Sanskrit), 'Sariputraprakarana', possibly the earliest known Sanskrit drama.

Kanishka and Mahayana Buddhism:

- Kanishka is celebrated in Buddhist texts as a **great patron** of Buddhism.
- He is supposed to have enshrined the Buddha's relics in a **stupa** at **Purushapura**, which became the centre of a major monastery.
- **4th Buddhist conclave** was held during his reign, possibly in Kashmir.
- Kanishka also patronized Buddhist **scholars** such as **Ashvaghosha** and **Vasumitra**.
- He minted many **coins with Buddha's images**.
- **Missionaries** were sent to Kashgar, Yunan, and China.
 - E.g Dharmaratna, Kashyapa Matanga, Lokakshema.
- He patronised the **Gandhara** and **Mathura schools**. (plurality of patronage)



Kanishka's Stupa, Shah-jī-ki-Dheri, Peshawar



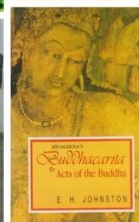
Kanishka's casket

Harwan Monastery, Kashmir



400 kg Buddha Begging Bowl, Afghanistan

Nagarjuna



Ashvaghosha

Kanishka inaugurates Mahayana Buddhism

Later Kushana kings:

- The immediate successors of Kanishka were **Vasishka, Huvishka, Kanishka II, and Vasudeva I.**
- The empire started **declining from the time of Vasudeva I**, in about the mid-2nd century CE, and Vasudeva II was the known last Kushana emperor in India.
- Kushana rule in north-western India made way for the Sassanians in the second quarter of the 3rd century CE. However, some remnants seem to have **lingered on in the area till as late as the 4th to 5th century.**



Inscription of Kushan King Huvishka dated 123 CE on a pedestal of Buddha image from Mathura.

Kushana Multi-culturalism and cosmopolitan attitude:

Multi-culturalism	Kushana Kingship	Militarism
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kushan court regularly moved across this empire of disparate ethnic, religious and linguistic communities, with a summer capital at Begram and a winter one on the Ganges at Mathura. • Kushans relied on existing local institutions (castes, guilds, monasteries etc) to manage affairs. • They also adopted parts of the political and cultural legacies of former rulers (Persians, Greeks, Parthians, and Sakas) 	<p>Titles</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kaiser • Shahanushaho • Devaputra, dom-arta, devmanusha <p>Coins</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individualistic representations of Kushana kings. • Religious eclecticism: Numerous deities (Greek goddess Helios and Selene, Sumerian goddess Nana, Persian gods Oado, Mithra, Atash, Hindu gods Vasudeva and Shiva, and Buddha) <p>Devakula Tradition</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The hat, leather shoes, over coat and trousers to India, indicating their origin from a cold place. • Saddle and stirrup, which revolutionised Indian cavalry.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greek cities Ai-Khanoum, Taxila-Sirkap: re-purposed grand temples and palaces for their own use. • Patronised regional and local cults rather than imposing a single imperial dhamma. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mat (Mathura), Rabatak, Surkh Kotal (Afgh) • Two headless stone images from Sonkh (Mathura): <u>India's first monumental/life-size dynastic sculptures of rulers</u> 	
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	 <p>'Maharaja Rajadhiraja Devaputra Kushanaputra Vema Takshama'</p>	 <p>"the great king, king of kings, son of the gods, Kanishka."</p>
	<p>Rabatak inscription in Bactrian language and Greek script, describes king Kanishka as <u>"the great deliverer, the righteous, the just, the autocrat, the god, one who is worthy of worship, who has obtained kingship from Nana [a West Asian goddess] and all the gods."</u></p>	

Quantity of Chinese lacquer-work, Roman glass and Indian ivory recovered from the hoard at Begram indicates a fraction of the material which crossed its borders. It is important also to recognise that the exchange of goods was accompanied by highly significant exchanges of art, architecture, religion and philosophy.

Important Kushana Cities:

Afghanistan	Gandhara	Ganga Valley
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mes Aynak (Hill of Copper) • Bamiyan • Bagram 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taxila-Sirkap, • Pushkalavati (Charsadda) • Purushapura (Peshawar) 	<p>Mathura: An important trading town in north India.</p>

Post- Mauryan: Satavahanas

Background:

- Before Satavahanas there were **30 walled towns** in Deccan: Megasthenes
- First Deccani state
 - Obscure origin: rathikas, bhojakas, Andhrabhrityas. They ruled various parts of MH after Mauryans. Satavahana emerged out of them through wars and matrimonial alliances.
- They ruled over parts of South-Central India (parts of MP, Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh)
- Capital at Pratishthan/ **Paithan** (Maharashtra).
 - Initially possibly **Junnar** capital. Then gradually moved eastward under pressure of Nahapana. Then Pratisthana and then **Amaravati**.
- Their rulers claimed **Brahmin status** to legitimise their rule.



Important Kings:

- **Simuka and Kanha:** founders of the dynasty. (Jain literature)
- **Sri Satakarni I** (First major ruler)
 - Elder Saraganus (Pliny)
 - His name is also mentioned on one of the gateways of the **Sanchi stupa** due to donations made for its renovation and expansion.
 - His achievements are described in the **Naneghat inscription** of **Queen Naganika/Nayanika** (70/60 BCE)
 - Naneghat was on an important **trade route**
 - He is referred to as the **Lord of Dakshinapatha**. (Dakshinadhipati)
 - It starts with salutations to a **series of Vedic deities** such as Dhamma, Indra, Sankarsana, Vasudeva, Chandra, Surya, Lokapala, Yama, Varuna, Kubera, and Vasava. It enumerates the **various sacrifices performed (including Ashvamedha)**, as also the **donations** made to brahmanas at each of these, in terms of cows, elephants, horses, villages, money, and so on.
 - Oldest numerals: 2, 4, 7, 9




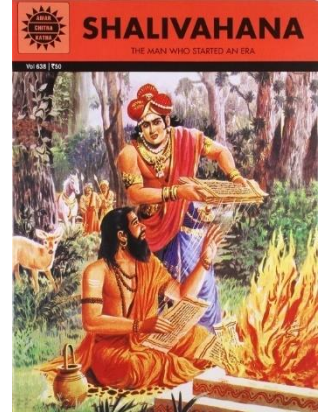
		Artist Vibha Oke's recreation of the sculptures in the gallery	
Rājā Simuka Sātavāhana sīmātō	Devī Nāyanikāyā rāṇō cā Sīrī-Sātavaninō		
Kumārō Bhāyā[ṇō]	Mahārāṭhī Tranākayirō	Kumārō Hakusirī	Kumārō Sātavāhanō

TABLE SHOWING THE PROGRESS OF NUMBER FORMS IN INDIA																						
NUMERALS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100	200	1000	
• Aśoka	I	II	III	IIII																		c. 250 BCE
• Śaka	I	II	III	IX	IIIX	xx	7	3														c. 50 BCE
• Aśoka	I	II	+	6																		c. 250 BCE
• Nāgarī (Naneghat)	=	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	c. 75 BCE
• Nasik	=	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	c. 100 CE
• Kṣatrapa	=	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	c. 200 CE
• Kuṣāna	=	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	c. 150 CE
• Gupta	=	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	c. 350 CE

- **Hala Satavahana**
 - Maharashtra Prakrit Literature: **Gatha Saptashati** or **Gaha Sattasai** (compiler)
- **Shiva Satkarni**
 - Shaka-Satavahana struggle for generations started.
- **Gautamiputra Satkarni** He was the first ruler to bear a **matronym**, and this tradition was followed by nearly all his successors.
 - He created alliance with various petty kings from southern Maharashtra - battle of Govardhan (near Nashik) in 78 CE.
 - His achievements are recorded in the **Nasik Prashasti inscription** (in Trirashmi cave) of Queen Mother, **Gautami Balashri**, where
 - The king is compared to the epic heroes Rama, Kesava, Bhimsena, and Arjuna.
 - There is an emphasis is on his duty towards his subjects (**pura-jana**).
 - He has been described as the one who destroyed **Sakas, Yavanas**, and **Pahlavas**.



"Success! In the nineteenth -19th- year of king Siri-Pulumayi Vasithiputra,..... the great queen Gotami Balasiri,.... the mother of the king of kings, Siri-Satakani Gotamiputa, who was in strength equal to mount Himavat, mount Meru, mount Mandara; king of Asika, Asaka, Mulaka, Suratha, Kukura, Aparanta, Anupa, Vidabha, Akaravanti; lord of the mountains Vindhya..... obeyed by the circle of all kings on earth; whose face was beautiful and pure like the lotus opened by the rays of the sun; whose chargers had drunk the water of three oceans; whose face was lovely and radiant like the orb of the full moon; whose gait was beautiful like the gait of a choice elephant; whose arms were as muscular and rounded..... who properly devised time and place for the pursuit of the triple object (of human activity); who sympathised fully with the weal and woe of the citizens; who crushed down the pride and conceit of the Kshatriyas; who destroyed the Sakas, Yavanas and Palhavas; who never levied nor employed taxes but in conformity to justice; alien to hurting life even towards an offending enemy; the furtherer of the homesteads of the low as well as of the twice-born; who rooted out the Khakharata race; who restored the glory of the Satavahana family; whose feet were saluted by all provinces; who stopped the contamination of the four varnas; who conquered multitudes of enemies in many battles; whose victorious banner was unvanquished; whose capital was unassailable to his foes; the fountain of good manners; the unique controller; the unique archer; the unique hero; the unique Brahmana; in prowess equal to Rama, Kesava, Arjuna and Bhimasena;lord of [Dakshina]patha, making over the merit of the gift to his father, grants to this meritorious donation (vis. the cave) the village Pisajipadaka on the south-west side of mount Tiranhu. Renunciation to the enjoyments of every kind."

Jogalthumbi coin hoard: 13000 silver coins - counter-striking of Nahapana coins.



- **Vasisthaputra Sri Pulumavi** (85-125 or 110-38 CE)
 - His coins and inscriptions are found in **Andhra Pradesh**, showing that he annexed it to the empire.
 - Called as *Siriptolemaios* by Ptolemy.
 - Donative inscriptions in Nasik, Karle etc
 - During his reign, **Gautamiputra Balashri** inscribed **Nashik Prashasti**.
- **Vasishthaputra Satkarni** (r. 138-45 or 158-65 CE)
 - In **conflict with Shakas** but
 - **Married the daughter of Rudradaman** (Saka ruler) to prevent Saka invasions.
 - Mentioned in Kanheri inscription "*Of the queen ... of the illustrious Satakarni Vasishthiputra, descended from the race of Karddamaka kings, (and) daughter of the Mahakshatrapa Ru(dra)..... of the confidential minister Sateraka, a water-cistern, the meritorious gift.*"
 - Also mentioned in Junagarh Inscription.
 - Despite this, **Rudradaman defeated** the Satavahanas **twice**. It led to serious blow to Satavahana prestige.
 - Junagarh Inscription: "*Rudradaman (...) who obtained good report because he, in spite of having twice in fair fight completely defeated Satakarni, the lord of Dakshinapatha, on account of the nearness of their connection did not destroy him.*"
- **Sri Yajna Satakarni**
 - Brother of Vashishtiputra Satkarni
 - Last great Satavahana king
 - His inscriptions have been found from Andhra Pradesh, MP and Maharashtra, and he is said to have regained the territory conquered by Sakas by defeating Western Kshatrapas.

Some Important Aspects of Satavahanas:

- **Polity**
 - **Capitals:** Pratishthana, Amaravati
 - **Hereditary monarchy** through male-line
- **Administration**
 - Feudatories – Mahabhojakas, Maharathis
 - Ahara administrative unit headed by Amatya.
 - Military prominence
 - Practice of tax-free **land grants** emerged for the first time.
 - They were made by the **state to both Buddhist and Brahmin priests**.
 - Such grants were recorded on stone inscriptions.
 - Apart from the royalty, many inscriptions by traders and bankers.
- **Coinage**
 - One of the earliest Indian rulers to start the **coins with the portraits of the rulers**
 - Portrait-style silver coins were usually **struck over coins** of the Western Kshatrapa kings.
 - They issued mainly **lead** and **copper** coins. The Satavahanas were the first to issue **lead coins** in India, by importing large quantities of lead from West Asia.
- **Socio-Religious Aspects**
 - Prominent role of **women in public life**
 - Many donative **inscriptions**
 - **Queen Naganika's coins** are also found.
 - **Sculptures** show worshipping Buddha, taking part in assembly.
 - The tradition of using **matronyms** indicates the strong **status of women** in the society.
 - **Devoted Brahmins**
 - Performed **Ashvamedha**
 - Epic-Puranic **titles** for kings, and names like Vedishri and Yajnashri
 - Gatha Saptashati invokes Shiva and mentions temple dedicated to Gauri.
 - Royal ideal set by **Dharmashastra**
 - **Multi-culturalism** and toleration
 - Support to **Buddhism**: Golden age of Buddhism in Deccan
 - Ushavadata's records at Nashik refer to his generosity to the Buddhists, as also to the brahmanas.
 - Balasiri, mother of Gotamiputa Siri Satakani, records the gift of a cave to the Sangha.
 - **Assimilation of foreigners**: Shaka/Yavanas either as Buddhist or 'fallen' Kshatriyas.
 - eg names Dharmadeva, Rishabhadata
 - Agnivarma' support to pilgrimage, donating cows.
 - **Culture**
 - The official Satavahana language was **Prakrit**.
 - They patronised the **Amravati school**.



Fig. 2.5: Chhimukha Satavahana with his queen

Sangam Era of Tamilkam

Sangam Literature

- Tamil is a Classical Language
- The word 'Sangam' literally means 'confluence'. In the context of Tamil history, it refers to an 'assembly of poets'.
- **Three Sangams:** According to Tamil legend, 3 Sangams over 9,990 years, patronised by 197 Pandyan kings in which 6598 poets participated.

Sangam	Place	President	Presidential composition
First Sangam	Madurai	Agastya	Agatyam
Second Sangam	Kapatpuram	Tolkappiyar	Tolkappiyam
Third Sangam	Madurai	Nakkirar	Nedunal Vaday (7th in Pattupattu)

- Historically, this legend seems inaccurate.
- Subject matter
 - Nature Bardic and oral
 - This literature depicts the political, economic, social and cultural life of the Tamil region during the Sangam age.
- **Prominent Sangam and Post-Sangam literary works include:**

Sangam Era Literature (200 BCE 300 CE)	Post-Sangam Literature (300 CE 600 CE)
18 Major works (Pathinen Melkanakku) by various poets <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8 Anthologies (Ettutokoi) • 10 Long Poems (Pattupattu) • Tolkappiyam (Grammar) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written by Tolkappiyar • It is the oldest of all sangam literature and is the first work on Tamil grammar. • It throws light on the political, economic, cultural and religious life of Tamil people during the Sangam age. • Ezhuthu (phonetics), Chol/Sol (Syntax), <u>Porul (Poetics)</u> 	18 Minor Works (Pathinen Kilkanakku) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mostly Ethical Poetry • Most Popular of the 18 minor works is Thirukkural by Thurivalluvar. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is a work on ethics and morals and is often referred to as the Fifth Veda of the Tamil land. • Among them, total 6 are Jain poems • Poem Acharakkovai belongs to the Brahmanical school and is a digest of ideas - from the dharmasastras.

- **Two Later Kavyas**

Epic	Silappadikaram	Manimekalai
Author	Ilango Adigal (a Chera prince)	Sattanar
Content	It has 3 protagonists <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kovalan - Merchant of Puhar • Kannagi - Kovalan's wife 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It continues the tale of Silpaddikaram, the daughter of Kovalan and Madhavi.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Madhavi - famous courtesan of Madurai, and paramour of Kovalan Established the cult of Kannagi as the goddess of chastity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is a valuable source of information about the economic life, urban culture and flourishing state of Buddhism during the Sangam Age.
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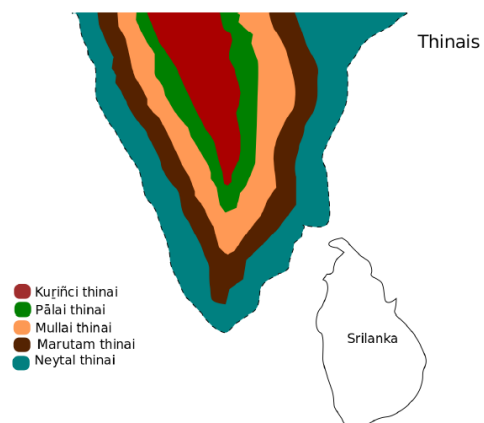
Analysis of Tamil Sangam Poetry

Tamil poetry is largely secular and can be divided into two genres:

- Akam:** It revolves around the themes of love, loneliness and longing. It reflects the feminine sensibilities of Tamil poetry.
- Puram:** It revolves around heroism usually set in cities and covering the **masculine themes** of war, death, sacrifice, martyrdom and valour.

Poems	Akam (interior/love/family)	Puram (war/heroic/material life)
Total Poems – 2381 (some are missing today) Varying lengths (3-800 lines)	1862	519
Ettutokoi (8 anthologies)	5 (eg Akananuru)	2 (eg Purunanuru)
Pattupattu (10 long idylls)	3	7
	Women's world...! (Rule – no one to be named) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 785 (girls' speech) 550 (heroine's speech) 72 (mother's voice) 51 (concubine) 401 – Heroes or others not explicitly women 	The world of heroes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gruesome wars, laying waste the enemy territory Bravery of kings and warriors Patronage and mutual dependency of kings-poets

Tinai System of Classification



- Tinai-Mayakkam complexity

Akam Tinalis

Tinai	Ecozone	Subsistence	Uri
Kurinji	Hills	Hunting and Gathering	Clandestine Meeting of the lovers
Mullai	Dry Pastures	Pastoralism	Hopeful Waiting of the wife
Marutam	Fertile River Valley	Agriculture (with plough and irrigation)	Man's infidelity and wife's sulk
Neital/Neytal	Coastal Region	Fishing, salt-making etc	Wife's anxious wait for the return of her husband
Palai	Arid/scrubland	Cattle-raids, waylaying	Lover's departure for education or adventure of earning money through wilderness

Two minor categories of "inferior love" –
 Kilkkilai (one-sided, unrequited love) – only 4 poems
 Perumthanai (excessive lust) – only 10 poems



Tinai	Uri Theme
Vetchi	Capturing enemy cattle as a prelude to war
Karanthai	Retrieval of cattle after enemy raid
Kanchi	Invading the enemy
Ulaighnai	Encirclement of enemy fortifications
Thumbai	Waging a war
Vagai	Celebrating war victory
Padan	Glory in battle/charity/honour

Puram Tinalis

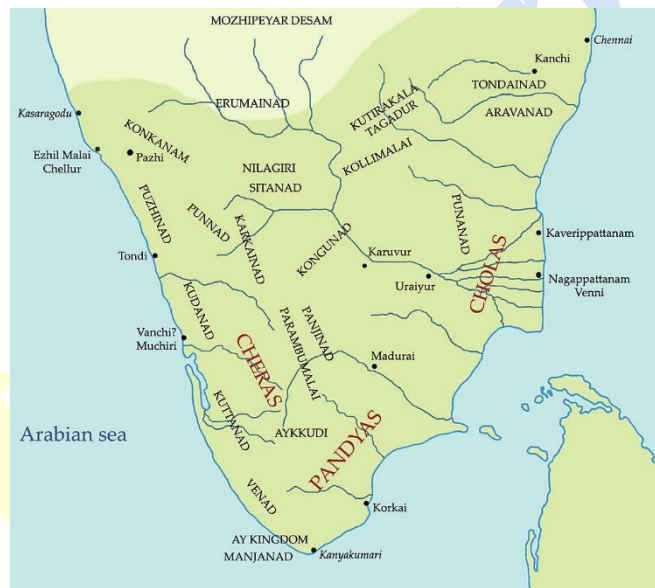
- War themes
- Puram as a residual category
- Barely ¼ of total - total of 519 poems – but important for history



Sangam era Polity

The following three kingdoms constantly fought against each other for supremacy.

Kingdom	Region	Capital	Ports	Famous kings
Chera (Kerala Putra)	Kerala region	Vanji	Tondi, Muziris	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Udayinjeral • Nedunjeral (extended upto Himalayas. • Senguttuvan (greatest, started Pattini cult)
Cholas	Northern TN, Kaveri delta	Uraiyr	Puhar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ellalan (captured Srilanka, Dakkhina Stupa tomb in Sri Lanka. • Karikala (many heroic exploits, battle of Vanni, founded Puhar, embankment on Kaveri with Srilankan slaves, Kallinai dam)
Pandyas	Southern TN	Madurai	Korkai	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nedunjeliyan (battle of Talaiyanganam)

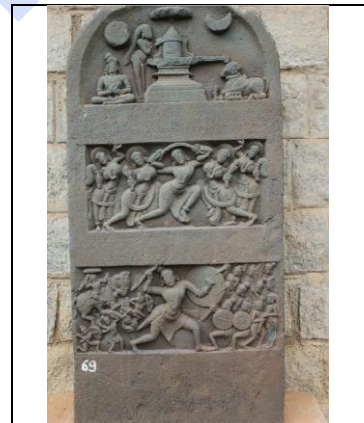


The Chera, Chola, and Pandya kings were the **vendar** (crowned kings). These great kings had their special insignia of royalty such as the staff, drum, and umbrella. They also had specific emblems of power—the tiger, bow, and fish were the emblems of the Cholas, Cheras, and Pandyas respectively. They expanded their kingdoms ruthlessly.

A number of chieftains known as **velir**. Internecine conflict was a feature of the politics of the time. The kings and chieftains also often fought against each other by forming alliances. The independent Velirs were attempted to be turned into subordinates (to pay tribute) or eliminated to annex their kingdoms.

- **Social classification**

- Initially **horizontally** divided:
 - Kurinji (hilly tracts), Mullai (pastoral), Marudam (agricultural), Neydal (coastal), Palai (desert)
 - However, these divisions were not clearly demarcated, and were scattered all around the region.
- Gradual emergence of **Varna**-based hierarchy is noticed:
 - Unlike north India, only **two-fold division**: Brahmins and Non-Brahmins
 - **Brahmins** enjoyed the supreme position:
 - Tamil kings sometimes claimed Brahmin **status**.
 - Brahmins held important government **offices**.
 - Their importance increased with the growing popularity of large-scale **Vedic rituals and yajnas**. The priestly class among them was rewarded heavily by the kings and society at large, with **elaborate gifts**.
 - They controlled **education** and **religious institutions**.
 - Unlike north India, there was **no taboo against the consumption of alcohol or meat**.
- **Kuti** (clan based decent groups)
- **Occupational Division**
 - The sangam society was also divided on the basis of occupation, such as artisans, salt merchants, textile merchants, etc.
 - **Tolkappiyam's Four Castes**
 - Arasar - the ruling class
 - Anthanar - the priestly class
 - Vanigar - the trading class
 - Vellalar - the agriculturists
- **Slaves**: Adimai
 - PoWs were enslaved - both Brahmins and non-Brahmins.
 - Used for agriculture labour and domestic labour.
- The society had a complex **class structure** as well:
 - The rich lived in well decorated brick houses and wore costly clothing, but the poor lived in mud huts and had scanty clothes to wear.



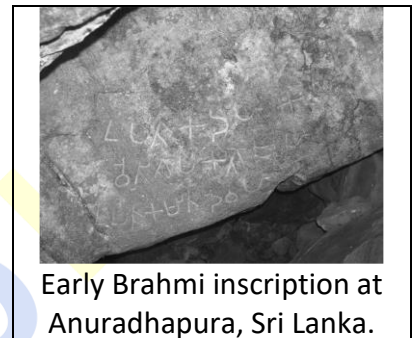
- **Warrior ethic**

- Glory and fame
- Heroic death: spirit to heaven
- **Natukal** memorial stones
- **Vattakirutal**
- Death rituals: to simulate battlefield death.

- **Status of Women**

- Overall, the position of women was better than their North-Indian counterparts

- **Education:** Women poets like Avvaiyar, Nachchellaiyar, and Kakkaipadiniyar contributed to Sangam poetry
- Women numerous references doing **variety of work**.
 - They were also engaged in various economic activities such as paddy plantation, cattle rearing, basket-making, spinning, etc.
 - A class of women **dancers** was patronised by the kings and nobles.
- **Love marriage** was common, and women were allowed to choose their life partners.
- Tolkappiyam: Aryans introduced **marriage ritual**, ceremonies (Karanam)
- **Courage** of women was also appreciated in many poems.
- However, elements of decline had started becoming visible.
 - **Kannagi** cult glorified the ideal of dutiful wife.
 - '**Karpu**' or chaste life was considered as the highest virtue of women.
 - The practice of 'Sati' called '**Tippayadal**' was prevalent in society.
 - However, the position of **widows** was miserable as they were prohibited to decorate themselves or participate in any form of amusement.
 - **Ananku** (magical element)
- **Vibrant literary culture**, higher education (*kattikati*)
- **Religious Diversity**
 - **Tinai:** diversity of belief system
 - **Animism** dominant trend.
 - **Funerary practices** diversity (urn, cremation, exposure)
 - As per Sangam texts, both **Vedic tradition** and **non-Vedic sentiments** existed in Tamil Nadu even before the beginning of documented history.
 - **Vedic Deities** (Shiva, Krishna-Mayon, Lakshmi-Tiru) and **Indigenous deities** Murugan (later Skanda-Kartikeya), Korraivai (later Durga)
 - **Philosophy** (ideas of karma, reincarnation) and **sacrifices** (Rajasuya yajna). The **Epic tradition** was known and referred to in the poetry.
 - Both **Jainism** and **Buddhism** reached by 1st c CE and were the dominant religions till Pallava era
 - **Abrahamic Religions**
 - Arrival of **Saint Thomas** in Kerala.
 - According to tradition, St Thomas Syro-Malabar Church in Palayoor was established by him in 52 CE.
 - Arrival of **Jews**
 - Jews came as exiles from Israel in the year 70 CE, after the destruction of the Second Temple during the siege of Jerusalem. They were warmly received by Cheraman Perumal, the ruler of the Chera dynasty.

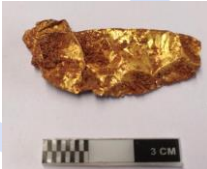


Remembering the Saint



Sangam Text and Archaeology



Mayiladum-parai	Krishnagiri district	2200 BCE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Perhaps the oldest Iron Age site in India
Sivakalai	Thoothukudi district	1155 BCE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grain of rice from burial urn. Thamirabarani (Porunai) basin
Adichanallur	Thoothukudi district, Thamirabarani (Porunai) basin	1000 BCE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many iron objects Burials Gold objects (local gold from nearby Hutti gold mine, Raichur, KN) Near Korkai port Many Skeletons: DNA Analysis → only 8% were local Dravidians. Rest were mix of races from the world over.  <p>Gold Diadem</p>
Keeladi (Keezhadi)	Shivganga district, Vaigai basin	600 BCE	<p><u>Urbanization features found, as old as Ganga plain cities.</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potsherd with Tamil-Brahmi script in 6th c BCE Beads made of carnelian, agate, quartz, sapphire. Some kind of bead warehouse/market?
Thulukkar-patti	Tirunelveli District	600 BCE	<p>Iron tools, terracotta dolls, silver coins, silver stamps, copper products, carnelian bead, polished ornaments and abundant potsherds with graffiti.</p>
Kodumanal	Erode District	500 BCE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Iron and steel furnaces. Graffiti on potsherds Roman artefacts Features of urbanization Commercial centre
Porunthal	Dindigul district	500 BCE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence of Tamil-Brahmi script Rice evidence Graveyard Habitation Area indicating features of urbanization

The significance of the findings in Keeladi

What are the different artefacts which have been unearthed from the excavations in Keeladi? How does it shed light on the Sangam age? Why did the transfer of Superintending Archaeologist Amarnath Ramakrishna create a controversy? Are there links to the Indus Valley civilisation?

EXPLAINER

B. Aravind Kumar

The story so far:

Keeladi is a tiny hamlet in the Sivaganga district in south Tamil Nadu. It is about 12 km south-east to the temple city of Madurai and is located along the Vaigai river. The excavations here from 2015 prove that an urban civilisation existed in Tamil Nadu in the Sangam age on the banks of the Vaigai river.

How is Keeladi linked to Sangam age?

The Sangam age is a period of history in ancient Tamil Nadu which was believed to be from the third century BCE to the third century CE. The name is derived from the renowned Sangam poets of Madurai from that time. Excavations by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) and Tamil Nadu State Archaeology Department (TNSDA) has pushed the Sangam age further back. In 2019, a TNSDA report dated the unearthed artefacts from Keeladi to a period between sixth century BCE and first century BCE. One of the six samples collected at a depth of 353 cm, sent for carbon dating in the U.S., dated back to 580 BCE. The findings in the TNSDA report placed Keeladi artefacts about 300 years earlier than the previously believed third century BCE. A recent ASI report by K. Amarnath Ramakrishna, the Superintending Archaeologist who discovered Keeladi in 2015, has pushed the Sangam age to 800 BCE based on these archaeological findings.

Keeladi could also provide crucial evidence for understanding the missing links of the Iron Age (12th century BCE to sixth century BCE) to the Early Historic Period (sixth century BCE to fourth century BCE) and subsequent cultural developments.

What was the controversy surrounding Keeladi?

After reports of possible links with the Indus Valley Civilisation, the third round (2017) of diggings by the ASI saw a delayed start. Superintending Archaeologist Amar-



Deeper and deeper: A cluster of 74 carnelian beads found underneath an offering pot at the Keeladi-Kondagai site in Tamil Nadu in 2022. MOORTHY. G

nath Ramakrishna was transferred to Assam, allegedly in a perceived attempt to play down the excavation findings. Keeladi almost faded from public memory as there was no "significant finding" in the third round. This led to criticism that the excavation had been deliberately restricted to 400 metres. Tamil Nadu politicians criticised the BJP-led Union Government of trying to suppress information about an ancient Tamil civilisation that had flourished on the banks of the Vaigai river. On the intervention of the Madurai Bench of the Madras High Court, the ASI permitted the TNSDA to take up further excavation on its own. Since then, the TNSDA has been carrying out excavations to unearth more about the history of Tamil civilisation.

Are there links to Indus Valley?

The unearthed Keeladi artefacts have led academics to describe the site as part of the Vaigai Valley Civilisation. The findings have also invited comparisons with the In-

dus Valley Civilisation while acknowledging the cultural gap of 1,000 years between the two places. Till now, the gap is filled with Iron Age material in south India, which serve as residual links. However, some of the symbols found in pot sherds of Keeladi bear a close resemblance to Indus Valley signs. A lot of digging and study has to be done to establish the links between these two civilisations. TNSDA affirms that Keeladi has all the characteristics of an urban civilisation, with brick structures, luxury items and proof of internal and external trade. It comes across as an industrious and advanced civilisation and has given evidence of urban life and settlements in Tamil Nadu during the Early Historic Period. Keeladi has also added to the credibility of Sangam Literature.

What has been unearthed so far?

In the eight rounds of excavations, including the first three by the ASI, over 18,000 artefacts have been unearthed from the site and the unique artefacts will be on display at the museum to be opened soon.

Unearthing of heaps of pottery suggest the existence of a pottery making industry, mostly made of locally available raw materials. Over 120 potsherds containing Tamil Brahmi inscriptions have been found. Keeladi, along with other Tamil Nadu sites which have over a thousand inscribed potsherds, clearly suggest the long survival of the script. Spindle whorls, copper needles, terracotta seal, hanging stones of the yarn, terracotta spheres and earthen vessels to hold liquid suggest various stages of a weaving industry. There also existed a dyeing industry and a glass bead industry.

Gold ornaments, copper articles, semi-precious stones, shell bangles, ivory bangles and ivory combs reflect the artistic, culturally rich and prosperous lifestyle of the Keeladi people. Agate and carnelian beads suggest import through commercial networks while terracotta and ivory dice, gamesmen and evidence of hopscotch have been unearthed revealing their pastime hobbies.

THE GIST

▼ The Sangam age is a period of history in ancient Tamil Nadu which was believed to be from the third century BCE to the third century CE. Excavations by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) and Tamil Nadu State Archaeology Department (TNSDA) in Keeladi has pushed the Sangam age further back.

▼ The unearthed Keeladi artefacts have led academics to describe the site as part of the Vaigai Valley Civilisation. The findings have also invited comparisons with the Indus Valley Civilisation while acknowledging the cultural gap of 1,000 years between the two places.

▼ The transfer of Superintending Archaeologist Amarnath Ramakrishna was perceived as an alleged attempt to play down the excavation findings. Tamil Nadu politicians criticised the BJP-led Union Government of trying to suppress information about an ancient Tamil civilisation that had flourished on the banks of the Vaigai river

Post-Mauryan Economy
 (Age of Commerce)

Domestic Developments:

- Expansion of **Money economy**
- **Industry:** Craft Specialisation, Localisation and Hereditary
- **Organization:** Significant progress of guilds (*same as before, more evolved now*)
 - **Jataka** mentions 18 guilds, inscriptional evidence also there.
 - **Heads** Jetthaka, Pamukkha, Setthi
 - Various additional **functions** including banking, judicial, philanthropy
 - **Special relationship with the king:** royal entourage, honorific
 - Comments by Arthashastra and Manu
 - Even minted their own coins
- Development of **commercial law**
 - Manu and Yajnavalkya
- **Infra: Transportation and Markets**
 - **Jataka stories** of long journey of **caravans on Uttarapath**
 - **Sangam literature** bustling **Puhar** and **Madurai** markets
 - **Strabo** mentions boats from ocean coming **upto Pataliputra**
 - **Periplus** refers to market towns of the **western India** Paithan Ter, Sopara etc.
 - **Shipping** technology

Satavahana Coins with ship:



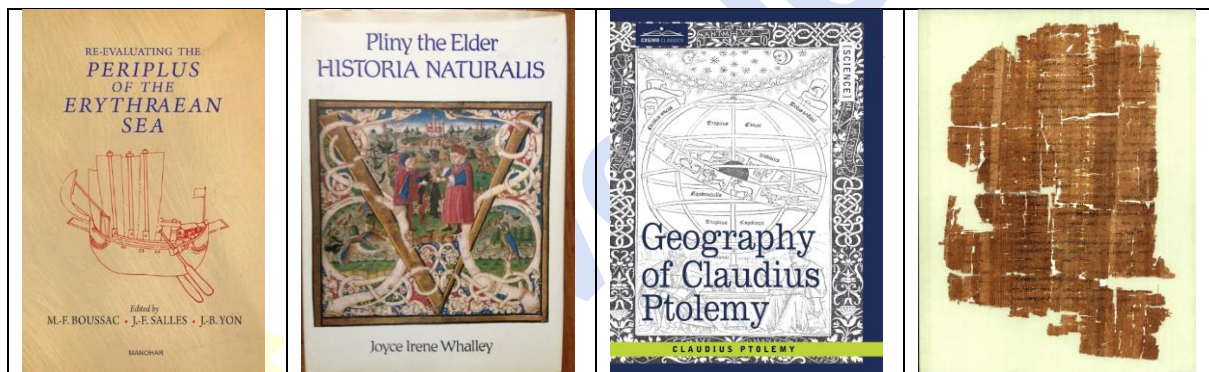
Ports Development:

Western coast	Eastern coast
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sindh - Barbaricum (at the mouth of the Indus) • Gujarat: Barygaza (Bhrigukachchha/ Bharuch), Dwarka • Maharashtra: Sopara, Calliene (Kalyan), Semylla (Chaul), • Kerala: Muziris (Pattanam) 	<p>More data by the time of Ptolemy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TN: Korkai Alagankulam Kaveripattinam (Puhar, Nagapattinam district. Poduke (Arikamedu), Vasavasamudram • Andhra – Ghantashala/Kantaksola (ship type coin from here, Periplus comment) • Bengal - Gange (Ptolemy), Tamralipti (Tamalites , Talactae by Pliny)


(A) INDO-ROMAN TRADE

Sources:

Literary	Archaeological
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Periplus of the Erythraean sea' written by an unknown Greek writer (1st c CE): • 'Historia Naturalis' - written by Pliny the Elder. (23-79 CE). • 'Geographia' - written by Claudius Ptolemy.  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buddhist literature, such as 'Mahavastu' and 'Ashokavadana' • Sangam literature 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roman artefacts: ceramics, glassware, and bronze statuettes, while Tamil inscriptions discovered on potsherds in Roman Egypt/ • Large number of Roman coins discovered from TN, Kerala and Arikamedu (Pondicherry)  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These places have also yielded some Roman settlements and temples. • Aurentineware (Roman glassware)

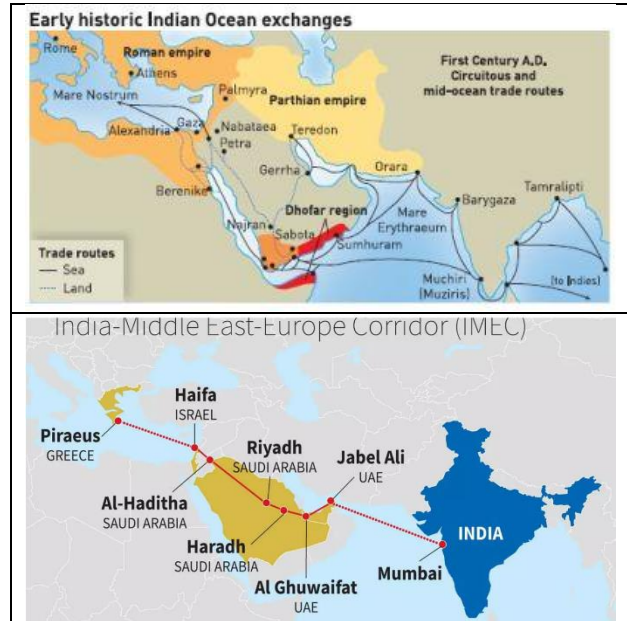


Sangam Poems

<p>Beautiful Yavana ships come, Agitating white foams of Periyar river, Laden with Gold, returned with pepper, And Muziris resounded with noise. (Agananuru)</p>	<p>Cool sweet smelling wine brought by Yavanas In beautiful ships and drunk daily, From gold cups held by damsels who wore bright bracelets. (Purunanru)</p>	 <p>Amphorae found at Muziri to store wine</p>
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Trend

- Age of Rome's commercial expansion
- Conquest of Egypt, demand for luxury
- Initially carried out over the land route via Taxila to the Trans-Oxiana region, and then to Rome and Egypt.
- Later, the sea route was preferred:
 - Augustus (1st c BCE) Aurelius (2nd c CE): Disturbances in Parthia
 - Discovery of Monsoon winds - Hippalus?
 - **Augustus' voyages to India:** He started Europe's first concerted bid for exotic products from the east by arranging annual sailing expeditions from Red Sea.

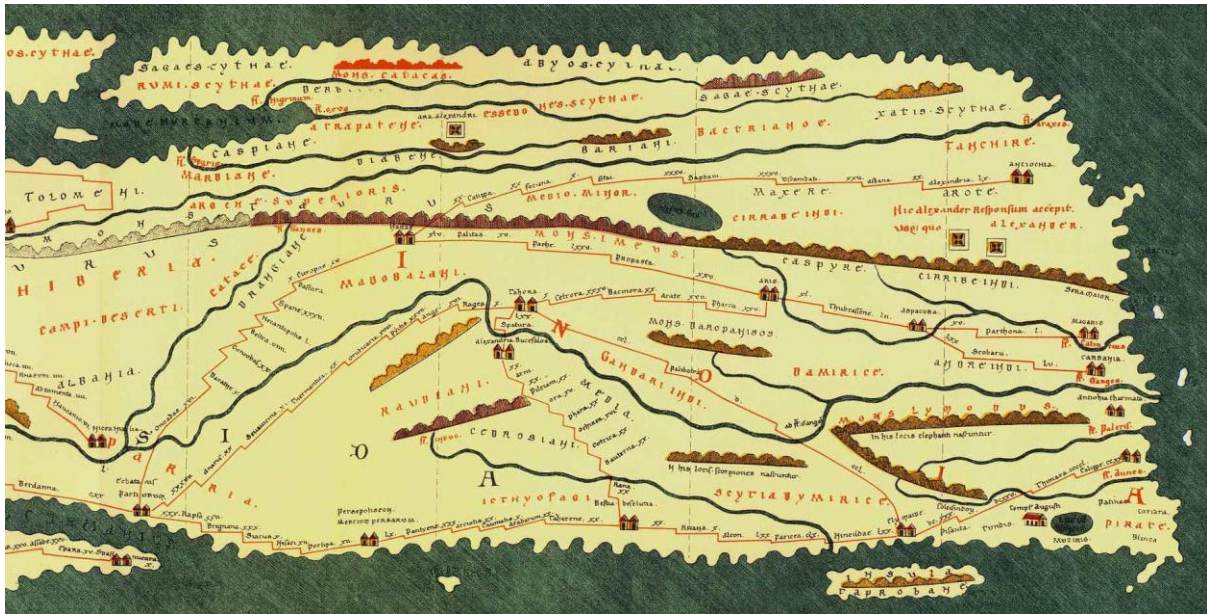


Commodities Exchanged:

Export	Import
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spices, especially Yavanpriya (<u>black pepper</u> - <u>black gold</u>), were exported in large quantities. • Cotton and silk were also exported in large quantities (Raw silk was imported from China, processed, dyed, and then exported westward). • Sandalwood and perfume were in high demand in Rome. • Gems, jewellery and ivory works, especially from Vidisha, were also exported in large quantities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Romans did not have anything substantial to export to India. Thus, they balanced their trade with gold and silver coins. • Roman wine was exported to India, but mostly for consumption by the Indian elite. Thus, the volume of wine trade was very low. • A ceramic cache from Arikamedu: from the potters in first-century Arezzo, Italy (Campania)



Peutinger Map



In bid to resurrect 'stitched' ship, a recall of India's vibrant maritime past

ARJUN SENGUPTA
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 25

EARLIER THIS month, a 'keel-laying' ceremony took place in Dwar, Goa, marking the beginning of construction of a 21-metre ship using an age-old technique of 'stitching' together planks of wood using ropes, cords, coconut fibre, natural resins, and oils. The ship will undertake a voyage from Odisha to Bali in 2025, manned by an Indian Navy crew.

Boat building traditions

The design chosen for the stitched ship, aimed at "reviving India's maritime traditions", is based on a ship painted on a wall in a cave in Ajanta in present-day Maharashtra.

Writing about India's native boat-building traditions, historian Lokita Varadarajan mentioned three mutually exclusive strands: "the coir-sewn tradition of the Arabian Sea... the jong tradition of Southeast Asia impinging on Bengal and perhaps Orissa... and the Austronesian tradition of outrigger boats" (*Indian Boat Building Traditions, The Ethnological Evidence*, 1993). All three of these traditions do not use nails, relying instead on some

form of stitching.

A variety of local woods was used to cater to the specific needs of ship building. "Mangrove wood made the sturdiest dowels... [whereas] teak lent itself to the fashioning of planks, keels, stem and stern posts," Varadarajan wrote.

India at centre of a 'trade lake'

Evidence of maritime activity in the subcontinent dates back to the Indus Valley Civilisation (circa 3300-1300 BCE). Ancient Indian literature, from the Vedas (composed circa 1500-500 BCE) to the Jataka Tales (circa 300 BCE-400 CE) and Tamil Sangam literature (300 BCE-300 CE), contain multiple references to the seas and to seafaring.

While the earliest maritime activity was largely coastal, by the first century BCE, ships began frequenting the deep seas, harnessing the power of monsoon winds. "Movement through the deep seas intensified with the emergence of the Roman Empire and its insatiable appetite for commodities from the East," PJ Cherian, former director of the Pattanam (Muziris) excavations in Kerala, told *The Indian Express*. In his words, by the beginning of the common era, the Indian Ocean transformed into a "trade



lake" with India at the centre of it.

To India's west was the route connecting the subcontinent to Europe through the Middle East and Africa. "The route connected Barygaza (present-day Bharuch) and Muziris to the Red Sea ports in Egypt, primarily Berenike and Myos Hormos," archaeologist Steven Sidebotham, best known for his work *Berenike*, said.

Towards the east, evidence of Indian artefacts have been unearthed as far away as in Hepu, China, dating back to the third century BCE. "In Roman sources, Muziris appears as the end of the world. But there is

evidence to suggest a maritime route, probably hugging the coastline, all the way to China, Malaysia and Indonesia," Cherian told *The Indian Express*. This route could have transported Chinese silk to Romans, via Muziris, Cherian said.

Goods, people and culture

The scale of this trade was massive. Scholar-historian William Dalrymple said that "custom taxes on the Red Sea trade with India, Persia and Ethiopia raised as much as one third of the income for the Roman exchequer".

And with commodities such as pepper and silk, moved a very large number of people who, in turn, spread their culture.

Prof Sidebotham said that in Berenike, numerous artefacts of Indian provenance or influence have been found, including the famous Berenike Buddha (actually, three Buddha fragments were found and pieced together), a relief showing three different Hindu gods, a terracotta statuette fragment made in India, and even an inscription in Sanskrit, the only one of its kind found in the Western world.

This phenomenon can be seen even more clearly in India's maritime relations with Southeast Asia. By the sixth-seventh centuries, Hindu temples and Buddhist monasteries were cropping up all across the region, "culminating in the building of the largest and most magnificent Hindu temple in the world — Angkor Wat — six centuries later, not in India, but in Cambodia," Dalrymple said.

A largely forgotten past

Despite this rich history, India's maritime heritage has not percolated into grand narratives of the country's past. Cherian blamed commonly held biases. "The development of states and organised land-based politics have affected our historiography,

sidelining the history of water bodies," he said. "You see, you cannot create an 'area of control' when it comes to the seas — it is thus far easier to write histories of land-based kingdoms... we see this tendency all over the world," he said.

Moreover, as Dalrymple pointed out, Indian history, till very recently, has been fairly North India-centric.

While recent archaeological work has been revealing, Prof Sidebotham said — "We have just about scratched the surface."

Even in Berenike, where excavations have been ongoing since 1994, only about 2 per cent of the total area of the site has been excavated. The situation is much worse in India. "An amazing amount of India's past has never been excavated, and many of the most promising archaeological sites haven't been dug since Victorian times," Dalrymple said.

But why should all this matter? Beyond the innate value of knowledge itself, there is value in what this knowledge might imply. "Scientific archaeology and engaging with the deep past is a subversive act," Cherian said, adding that "anyone embarking on an evidence-based journey into the human past will gradually realise the triviality of parochial identities".

LONGER VERSION
indianexpress.com/expained

(B) China Trade - Overland Silk Route

Silk Route Trade	Around 4500 miles road from Xian/Changan and Loyang (Huang He) on Yellow River in China to Ctesiphon on the bank of Tigris near Baghdad.
Eras	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 200 BCE – 300 CE → intensified Silk Route trade because 4 empires – strong Roman empire, Parthia, unified Kushana, <u>unified Han Chinese</u> • Disturbed in 4th century due to disturbances in Parthia – so trade moved halfway to India
Commodities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Silk most precious. Major demand over this trans regional route • Coral, glassware in demand in China • Gold, jewels • Tea, porcelain • Superior animal hides • Pearls, fragrances, frankincense

Silk Route Interactive Map on UNESCO Website

<https://en.unesco.org/silkroad/silkroad-interactive-map>

(C) Southeast Asia

- Suvarnavipa/SE Asia, Ratnavipa/Srilanka (in Milindapanho and Jataja katha)
- Even Arthashastra mentions Kaleyaka
- In Post Mauryan Era emergence of states in SE Asia was influenced by Indian culture.