

HISTORY

PRE-MODERN INDIA

MEGALITHIC SITES & DISCOVERIES (Video: 11)

Adichanallur – Tirunelveli

- 1876 - German ethnologist – **Andrew Jagor** - excavation at Adichanallur.
- He carried on with him samples of pottery, utensils, iron weapons and bones and skull. These are now housed in a Berlin Museum.
- Then district collector of Tirunelveli, **A.J. Stuart** & the famous **Robert Caldwell** visited Adichanallur found it was a quartz site (valuable stones are mined). A kind of Factory set up.
- Excavations commence under the supervision of **Alexander Rea**.
- Urns & pottery of various kinds in large numbers iron implements, including weapons (daggers, swords, spears, arrows).
- Some stone beads & few gold ornaments, traces of cloth, images of animals such as buffalo, goat, sheep & wild animals like tiger antelope & elephants – engraved on bronze objects. They domesticated animals.
- Indication on the use of wide range of textiles & trading facilities.
- The discovery of sacrificial implements prompted Caldwell to conclude that the people of Adichanallur were not adherents of Vedic religion.

Paiyampalli – Vellore.

- 1960s – unearthed black & red ware pottery in this site.
- Rock cut paintings were available from rock cut chambers.
- A large number of urn burials were also found.
- The date of this culture based on radiocarbon dating is 1000 BCE.
- One of the earliest megalithic sites.

Kodumanal – Erode

- A series of excavations – during the 1980s, 1990s, and 2012.
- The goods unearthed included pots, weapons, tools, ornaments and beads particularly carnelian, similar to those found at Mohenjo-Daro.
- Since carnelian was not known to this region in ancient times, it may have been brought to Kodumanal from outside through trade contact.
- Barter system existed at this time. Carnelian beads are an example of trade relations.
- In the Sangam work '*Pathirupattu*', a place called Kodumanam belonging to the Chera king is praised for gemstones.
- Some archaeologists argue that Kodumanam is the ancient name of Kodumanal.
- Hoards of roman coins have been discovered.
- It is believed that this is a result of export of gemstones to the roman world, resulting in a huge inflow of gold from the latter into the region.
- Conches & bangles, remnants of two iron furnaces, a kiln floor with the ash soot.
- Potsherds with Tamil – Brahmi script inscription are other fields in the site.
- Different types of burial practices were excavated: Pit burials, urn burials, and chamber tombs.

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- Indicate **habitation of multi – ethnic groups**.
- Kodumanal is a **habitation – cum – burial site** & dates from **300 BCE to 300 CE**.
- There are over **150 burials to the east & north east** of the habitation area at Kodumanal.
- Some of them were **secondary burials**.
- There were pit burials in the houses, close to floor level.
- The burials contained a large number of **bowls & cups** with post – firing.
- **Graffiti** – some resembling Brahmi letters.
- The **evidence of iron and steel making, gemstone cutting, spinning, weaving, and the manufacture of shell bangles**
- All of this suggests that Kodumanal was a **major industrial centre**.
- **Potsherds with Tamil Brahmi writing** have also been found.
- Over 100 inscribed pieces of pottery were also found in the excavations.
- Most of these were in the Tamil language and Brahmi script
- A few inscriptions are in the Prakrit language and Brahmi script.
- The writings on the pots includes the **names of people, some Tamil, others Sanskritic**.
- **K. Rajan** has given classifications and chronology for Kodumanal – divides into two phases: **megalithic (c.300 BCE – 100CE)** and **early historical (100 – 300 CE)**.