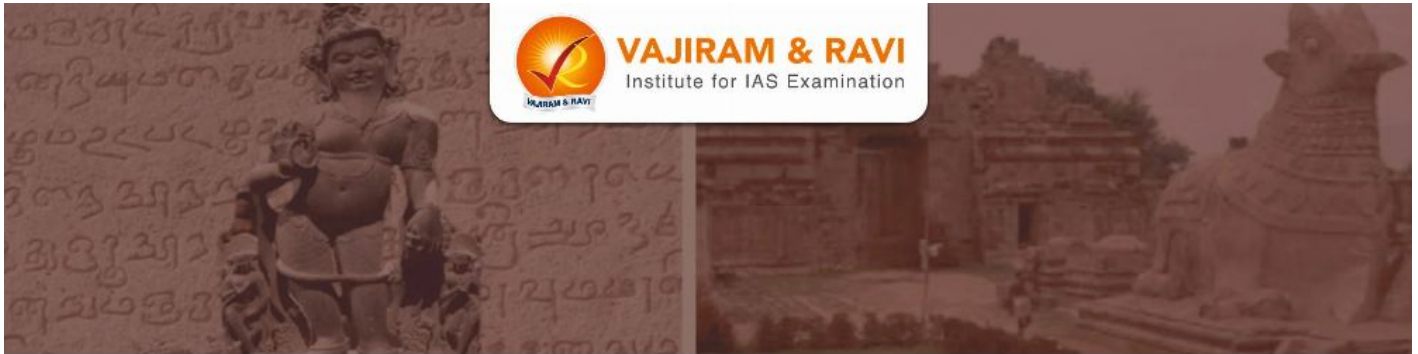


Art, Architecture & Literature of Sangam Age

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Sangam Literature

According to Tamil scholars, **three sangams** (academies of Tamil poets) existed in ancient Tamil Nadu, also known as **Muchchangam**. Under the Pandyan dynasty's royal patronage, these Sangam flourished. These Tamil literary works remain essential resources for rewriting Sangam era history.

- **First Sangam: Legendary gods and sages** attended the first Sangam held in **Madurai**, although there are no recorded accounts of it.
- **Second Sangam:** It was held in **Kapadapuram** in Tamilnadu. With the **exception of Tolkappiyam**, none of the literary works survived composed during this Sangam.
- **Third Sangam:** The third Sangam was established in **Madurai by Mudathirumaran**. Although many poets participated and created substantial work, only some persisted.
- The corpus of Sangam literature includes **Tolkappiyam, Ettutogai, Pattuppattu, Pathinenkilkanakku**, and the two epics– **Silappathigaram and Manimegalai**.
- Ettutogai and Pattuppattu are the part of **Pathinen Melkanakku**.

Earliest literature

Aham and Puram concept

An important feature of Sangam literature is the use of the poetic form. According to the ancient Tamil treatise, **Tolkappiyam**, **poetry's** subject matter is categorised under two heads: **Aham and Puram**. These two are **mutually** related in terms of being the **opposite** of the other and simultaneously complementing each other.

Aham (Agam)	Puram
Stands for the interior , the individual, the feminine, and the varied phases of love.	Stands for the exterior , the world, the masculine, violence and heroism.
Women dominated	Male-dominated
Concerns on subjects such as love and sexual relations.	Concerns many issues, such as wars, kings, poets and personal virtues

Table - Aham and Puram

Agattiyam (Akattiyam)

- **Agattiyam** was The earliest book on **Tamil grammar** according to Tamil tradition.
 - This book was a **non-extant text (not existing)**, written and compiled by sage **Agattiar** (Agastya) during the First Sangam.

Tolkappiyam

- **Feature:** It was written by **Tolkappiyar** and is considered the first Tamil literary work.
 - First mentioned by name in **Iraiyanar's Akapporul** as an authoritative text on Tamil grammar.
 - This was the most ancient Tamil grammar text and the **oldest extant long work of Tamil literature**.
 - Arranged into three books –
 - Eluttatikaram
 - Sollatikaram
 - Porulatikaram
- **Source:** It also gives an insight into the **political and socio-economic** conditions of the time.

Ettuttogai

Ettuttogai is a classical Tamil poetic work consisting of eight works long and short, both or eight anthologies. It is a part of **Pathinen Melkanakku** (Eighteen Greater Texts).

Eight anthologies	Significance
Natrinai	Mentions the Tamil legend about Kannagi (Kannaki) to protest against her husband's unjust execution.

Kurunthogai	The influence of Kuruntokai can be seen in contemporary Tamil movies.
Aingurunuru	Compiled by Kudalur Kilar and includes a colophon that states it to be a Chera (Kerala) text rather than the more common Pandyan kingdom-based.
Patitruppathu	About ten decades of Chera kings, known as Cheramals .
Paripadal	Expresses love in the form of religious devotion and includes dialogue-based poems . These poems are longer than the poems in other major Sangam anthologies.
Kalithogai	Compiled by Nallantuvanar , notable for the relatively higher number of Sanskrit loan words, categorised into the five tinais conforming to the Sangam landscape.
Akananuru	Notable for its mathematical arrangement, it has a reference to the Ramayana.
Purananuru	Information on the political and social history of ancient Tamil Nadu

Table - Eight anthologies

Pattuppattu

It is an anthology of ten longer poems in the Sangam literature – the earliest known Tamil literature.

Poem	Meaning	Author	Source/ Information about
Thirumurugatrupatai	Guide to Lord Murugan	Nakkīrar	Murugan
Porunaratrupatai	Guide for the war bards	Mutattamakkanniyar	Karikal
Sirupanatruppatai	Guide to bards with small lutes	Narrattanar	Nalliyakkotan
Perumpanatruppatai	Guide to bards with large lutes	Uruttiran Kannanar	Tontaiman Ilantiraiyan
Mullaipattu	Song about the forest	Nappitanar	
Maduraikanchi	Reflection on Maturai	Mankuti Marutanar	Netunceliyan
Nedunalvadai	Good long northern wind	Nakkirar	Netunceliyan
Kurinjipattu	Song about the hills	Kapilar	
Pattinappalai	Poem about the separation and the city	Uruttiran Kannanar	Karikal
Malaipadukadam	Poem of the sound about the mountains	Perunkunrur, Perunkaucikanar	Nannan

Table - Ten Idylls

Later Sangam Literature

The Sangam period was a time of great literary achievement, where poets and scholars thrived, creating a vibrant literary tradition.

- The works produced during this era continue to be revered for their poetic excellence, imaginative storytelling, and cultural significance.
- This includes mainly poetic work **Patinen Kilkanakku**, also known as the “The Eighteen Lesser Texts”, and **five great epics**, extensive narrative Tamil epics according to later Tamil literary tradition.

Patinen Kilkanakku (The Eighteen Lesser Texts)

It is a collection of eighteen poetic works created during the post-Sangam period. It mainly deals with morals and ethics.

Book	Author	Significance
Naladiyar	Various poets (mainly Jain monks)	The most important ancient didactic text in Tamil is next after Tirukkural .
Nankakatigai	Vilambi Naganaar	Contains one hundred songs, and each poem has four ideas.
Inna Narpathu	Kapilar	Describes the most undesirable things one should avoid.
Iniyavai Narpathu	Putham Sernthamar	Explains the most desirable things in life.
Kaar Narpathu	Kannankoothanaar	Deals with the intangibles of life, such as human emotions, love, separation etc.
Kalavazhi Narpathu	Poigayaar	Deals with the puram (external) subjects.
Ainthinai Aimpattu	Kannankoothanaar	Deals with the aham (internal) subjects
Tiṇaimozhi Aimpattu	Kannan Chenthanaar	Deals with the aham (internal) subjects
Aintinai Elupatu	Muvathiyar	Deals with the subjective (aham) concepts.
Tiṇaimālai Nūṟraimpattu	Kanimeytaviyar	Deals with the subjective (aham) concepts.
Thirukkural	Thiruvalluvar	Discusses epics, love, polity and governance.
Tirikaṭukam	Nallathanaar	Uses the analogy of traditional herbal medicine.
Acharakkovai	Peruvaayin Mulliyar	Concerned with personal rituals and the correct method to follow.
Pazhamozhi Nanuru	Munrurai Araiyanar	Employs old Tamil proverbs to illustrate its messages.
Siruppanchamulam	Kariyaasaan	Uses the analogy of traditional herbal medicine.
Muthumozhikkanchi	Mathuraikkoodalaar Kilaar	Employs a simple poetic style to enable the layperson to understand the messages.

Elathi	Kani Methaviyar	Uses the analogy of the traditional herbal medicine known as elathi.
Kainnilai	Pullangkaathanaar	Deals with the subjective (agam) concepts.

Five great epics

Epic	Author	Feature
Silappadikaram	Ilango Adigal	- Describes the story of Kovalan and Kannagi. - Gives insight into contemporary Tamil society, polity and social life of the people. - Called the Iliad of Tamil Literature.
Manimekhlai	Seetalaisattanar	Sequel to Silappadikaram, where Manimekhlai is the daughter of Kovalan, born to Madhavi (she becomes a Buddhist monk). - Provides valuable information on the Sangam polity and society. - Related to philosophical topics and Buddhism in South India. - Called the Odissi of Tamil literature.
Jivaka Chintamani	Tiruttakrdeva	- Related to the life of Jivaka, who marries eight queens and later becomes a Jain monk. (associated with Jainism) - Also called the Book of Deity and Manannul (Book of Marriages).
Valayapathi	Tamil Jain monk	- Story of a son and father, where the father left before the birth of the son, and the son seeks his father - Supported the ideologies found in early Jainism
Kundalakesi	Nathakuthanaar	- A story about love, marriage, getting tired of the married partner, murder and then discovering religion. - Related to Buddhism.

Table: Five Sangam epics

Other literary sources of the Sangam Period

- Greek authors like **Megasthenes**, **Strabo**, **Pliny** and **Ptolemy** mention the commercial contacts between the West and South India.
- Asokan inscriptions** mention the Chera, Chola and Pandya rulers in the south of the Mauryan empire.
- The **Hathigumpha** inscription of Kharavela of **Kalinga** also mentions Tamil kingdoms.

Art and architecture

Art

- **Poetry, music and dancing** were popular among the people of the Sangam age. **Liberal donations** were given to poets by the kings, chieftains and nobles.
- The royal courts were crowded with **singing bards called Panar and Viraliyar**. They were experts in folk songs and folk dances.
- The arts of music and dancing were **highly developed**. A variety of **Yazhs and drums** are referred to in the Sangam literature.
- Kanigaiyar performed dances. **Koothu** was the most popular entertainment of the people.
- Sangam **painters** employed the painting guidebook **Oviya Nul** to direct their creative endeavours.
 - Their sculptures were made of **plaster**, and the Pallava stone architecture's brick and timber precursor should have been the start of the architectural tradition.

Architecture

Information and documentation regarding the architecture of the Sangam ages are limited. However, it can be inferred from literary references.

- **The Hero Stone or Nadu Kal worship:** Nadu Kal worship was significant in the Sangam period. The Hero Stone was erected in memory of the **bravery shown by the warrior in battle**. Many hero stones with legends inscribed on them were found in different parts of Tamil Nadu.
- **Port cities:** Pattinappalai refers to the seaport of **Puhar**. Other seaports during the Sangam period are Tondi, Musiri and Korkai.
- **Construction of irrigation tanks:** Karaikala built Kallanai across the river Kaveri and constructed many irrigation tanks.

Keeladi Excavation:

- A tiny hamlet in the Sivaganga district in south **Tamil Nadu**.
- The Findings here prove that an **urban civilisation** existed in Tamil Nadu in the Sangam age on the banks of the Vaigai River.
- Excavations at Keeladi have pushed the Sangam age back about **300 years earlier than the previously believed** third century BCE.
- The unearthing of heaps of pottery suggests the existence of a **pottery-making industry**.
- Findings of inscribed potsherds suggest the **long survival of the script**.
- **Presence of the weaving industry:** Spindle whorls, copper needles, terracotta seals, hanging stones of the yarn, terracotta spheres and earthen vessels to hold liquid.
- **Dyeing industry and glass bead industry:** There is evidence of existence of a **dyeing industry and a glass bead industry** in the Keeladi finding.