TRADERS

The literature of the Sangam age informs us that in the big cities of south India lived great caravan traders who constantly travelled by road and sea routes. According to the Silappadikaram in pukar or Kaveripattinam there lived a sea caravan leader (manaikan) and another master of caravan on the land route (Masattuvan). The Tamil literature does not give enough information about the sea-route, but there is no doubt that the south had trade relations with Ujjain through Paithan. South Indian merchants and pilgrims reached Varanasi via Ujjain. The Manimekalai mentions that a Brahman pilgrim from Varanasi along with his wife paid visit to the Cape Comorin. The Silappadikaram mentions the sealed goods from North India reached the south and merchants had to pay customs duties and other taxes on the loads.

Sea ports serve as gateways, foreign lands. Coming out from these gateways Indian merchants met foreigners and through these gateways entered foreign merchants who sold their articles to Indian merchants and bought manufactured and raw products of the country. This commerce continued for a very long time. Ancient India merchants exporting Indian goods to foreign lands and importing foreign goods were not merely mercenary traders but also ambassadors of Indian culture, who though working for their own profits, had enlarged their social viewpoint.
Inter Tinai Exchange

The impact of maritime trade may be recognized in the changing fortunes of the Paratavar, who became the most distinctive merchant group in the latter part of this period of intensive trade. According to the traditional tinai scheme they were inhabitants of the neital tract, simple rustic folk, following occupations such as fishing, manufacturing salt and making toddy. Pattuppattu depict them as being involved in long-distance commerce and also pearl fishing. Under the influence of commercial activities, they diversified from these traditional pursuits and took to organizing trade in pearls, conches, chank bangles, tamarind, fish, gems, horses and other riches. Here trade seems to have been a dynamic intrusive element leading to the development of this tract and its people.

Number of other types of merchants were also involved in the buying of goods from the hilly regions and from the sea coast areas and carrying them to other centres within Tamilnadu. The specialists merchants in large trade centres like Madurai, Uraiyur and Puhar, where market facilities were available to their commercial activities. Their names were mentioned such as Aruvai Vanikan, Ilampon Vanikan etc.

Silappadikaram says that in Puhar different kinds of goods were brought in ships by foreign merchants who have left their native
homes and settled here. There is very little information about the regions from where these foreign merchants hailed, but certainly they included people from Rome, Southeast Asia, Srilanka and other parts of the subcontinent. In land, the production and transportation to the waiting ships, were in the hands of local traders and craftsmen. Pliny and Periplus support this.

The Tamil anthologies mention several kinds of traders, including hawkers, peddlers- vambalar, vilainar, pakarnar and big traders as well as those who traded in specific items salt merchants-umanar. In the market places of big centres like Puhar and Madurai, several specialist traders selling particular wares are known. Most of them were however, producers as well as sellers of such articles. They were in general different from those involved in trade with distant regions and foreign traders. It would be rather difficult to rank the different traders on the basis of the volume of trade which they conducted. Epics speaks these merchants were wealthy, whose presence in the commercial and port town was significant.

They would most likely be those who conducted large-scale trading and commercial activities and possibly also controlled the movement of goods within the region. thus guild would have been important in regulating such movement. The references to Masattuvan in
the Silappadikaram, to Kaviti and nigama in Tamil Brahmi inscriptions, interpreted as guild chief and guild respectively, would indicate the prevalence of such organization.

Generally industry and the trade was carried on by groups of hereditary craftsman pursuing their profession at the ancestral workplace. Rare instances of persons of any one caste being engaged in activity not prescribed for their caste are not wanting. Nakkirar, the poet considered to be a brahmin was engaged in the conch-cutting industry. Many instances of merchants and traders being poets are known. Kannan Puhundaryattanar was a palm-leaf (olai) sellers, Sittalai Sattanar was a seller of millet and grains Beri Sattanar and Domadaranar were lapidaries. It is clear that the leisured and moneyed merchant community was interested in literary activities.¹

Most of the trade was carried on by barter. It is not clear if cattle which was considered wealth was an exchange commodity. Paddy constituted the most commonly accepted medium of exchange, especially in the more rural parts of the land. Well purified white salt was sold for paddy.² Paddy was sold by mentioning its price in terms of salt³. Honey and roots were exchanged for fish(liver) oil and arrack⁴. Sugarcane and rice flakes were exchanged for vension and toddy⁵.
In the Pandya land the prosperous housewife whose house was well stocked with white paddy poured that grain into the basket of the shepherdess who had brought wnxkm. The housewife exchanged green grams for the thorny fish of the minstrel, and poured the white paddy into the vessel in which the wandering bard had brought the fish. It is noteworthy that the system of purchasing food stuffs, especially vegetables from street hawkers by paying for them in rice or in paddy. A different type of barter which can be called 'deferred exchange' was known as kuri edirppai which means taking a loan of a fixed quantity of a commodity to be repaid as the same quantity of the same commodity at a later date. In view of the wide prevalence of the system of barter, it may be supposed that coins were used for purposes of exchange mostly in the case of foreign trade.

There were established markets or bazars called angadi in the bigger towns while elsewhere hawkers brought most of the things to the doorstep of the householder. In some cases articles were sold at the centre of manufacture, e.g. Salt was in the case of those who resided in the coastal tracks, sold near the salt pans. But salt is such a necessary article of consumption that the salt merchants called Umanar carried large bags of the commodity from the salt pans to many places in the country in carts which had no covering overhead. The numerous references to
manufacture and sale of salt, make it appear to be a very important
object of trade. Strings of rickerty cards passed along the mud-made
roads carrying salt into the interoir right up to the hill country and salt
carts and salt sellers are frequently referred to by poets. Thus the lord
of the crowded of salt-sellers who appears on the hill is addressed in
Agam. A king is compared to the strong bull which dargs with strength
out of holes in the road the many felloed cart which carries to the hill
county the salt which grows from sea-water.

Rice and cotton cloth were taken from the valleys to the drier
region. The pulse and milk products of mullai were taken to the region
where wet-cultivation was carried on. The millets honey and other hill
products were carried to other regions. There articles were bartered in
greatest quantities where the highlands(Mullai and Kurinji) met the
lowlands and the great centres of barter developed into trade centre.

The economic and wise habits of the cowherds and the
sheperds are brought out in a passage in Perurbanarrupadai where it is
said that"the young cowherdess sold buttermilk and clarified butter in
the Kurinji villages and took back paddy" for domestic consumption
and buffaloes for their professional use.
There were two kinds of trades. (1) those who manufactured and sold at the place of manufacture and (2) those who went about selling the goods - the retailers who were mostly hawkers. Bags of pepper were taken about on mules and sold in many places.

There were two kinds of markets i.e. bazars in the leading cities like Puhar and Madurai. 1. Nalangadi the morning bazaar and 2. allangadi or andikkadai the evening bazaar. In the markets such large varieties and such large quantities of goods were sold and purchased and such crowds thronged and such busy transaction took place that the poet Ilango calls them. 'The residence of Tirumagal - the goddess of wealth'. There is a detailed description of the markets in the city of Puhar in Silappadikaram, and of the bazaars of Madurai in Maduraikkani and in Silappadikaram.

Many people of many counties speaking many languages crowded in the bazaar streets of Madurai, naturally the foreigners who permanently resided there must have gone about shopping in the bazaar or perhaps the foreigners included those who had come from outside Tamilaham to make wholesale purchases of Tamilian goods for sale elsewhere or those who had brought demanded goods from foreign places for delivery here. In the evening bazaar in Madurai, the following persons were busy selling and buying, the grocers the sellers of conch-bangles,
goldsmiths, appraisers of gold and gold articles, dealers in foreign cloth like kalingam other textile dealers, sellers of copper wares, painters, dealers in perfumes flowers and sandal paste.

In the bazaar of Puhar: dyes, scented powder, sandal paste, flowers and aromatic wood like ahil were sold in abundance. Flowers were greatly in demand especially during festivals and more particularly during the festival of India, so that the flower bazaar looked like a forest of flowers. Normally textile dealers, sellers of perfumes flowers, sandal paste, scented powder, sellers of salt, oil mongers, dealers in bronze and copper wares, carpenters, goldsmiths, artists like painters and sculptors, dealers in dolls, lapidaries, those that sold false hair or false wigs, traders in sheep, fish and mutton and sellers of cakes and vegetable edibles thronged the bazaar.

The sailors wandered about the bazaar which was situated in Maruvurppakkam, the suburb of Puhar. There the traders lived in separate streets. When merchants from various places crowded in the bazaar with their bags of goods they took care to indicate on the parcels the names of the owners and the contents of the packages. The carts on which the packages were piled also had particulars about the owners and the goods written on them. Near the bazaar, there were ware houses, in which goods could be stored in rooms which had no ventilators or
windows. A very simple type of advertisement which announced what goods were available and where was adopted by these traders, each shopkeeper had his flag which waved over his shop and the inscription on the flag announced the commodities sold in the shop. The merchants sold their goods by openly announcing the profit they were aiming at. It was believed that honest trade led to increased trade which meant increased wealth, integrity in trade was generally appreciated 9.

Vanikachchattu:

The merchants functioned often in a body. Apart from the tendency to associate as 'Guilds' and 'Chambers of Commerce'. The wandering hawkers literally went about in large numbers together. In Sangam age as till a century ago, 'Caravans' of traders used to go from place to place as a 'whole group' and never even in small units for they were in mortal fear of highway robbers. Such merchants bodies were called 'Vanikachchattu' and members of the warrior clan were recruited to escort their caravans. Inspite of these protective measures they were not free from danger from robber gangs. If the robbers beat their tannumai- kind of shrill drum it was almost certain that some Vanikachchattu was near at hand, the many reference to Aralai kalvar show that these caravans of trade were not always left unmolested 10. In Agananuru and Kurunthogai we learn about the difficulties faced by them, while travelling through forest.
In Silapathikaram and Perunkathai there are references about Sathu. In Silapathikaram Kovalan was advised not to go alone, but with the Sathu during his travel. Perunkathai says about 'VairaSathu' who are diamond traders. So for each commodity, there was a Sathu. Traders paid their customs duty. Customs officers were there on highways for collecting such taxes.

The Greeks were the greatest intermediaries of trade to India with Europe in the early days of the birth of Christ. Augustus conquered Egypt in 30 B.C. and tried to develop a direct sea-trade between India and the Roman empire. Strabo says that he saw in 25 B.C. about 120 ships sailing from Hormus to India. Embassies went to him from several Indian states, for Augustus himself says that Indian embassies came frequently. This led to the volume of India's trade with Rome there is evidence of the brisk trade between Tamilaham and Rome resulting in the inflow of considerable gold into Tamilaham. Pliny litterly remarked that not a year passed without the Empire paying out 100 million sesterces to India, Cheraland and Arabia. The direct trade route between Tamilaham and Aabi, Egypt and Rome had been well established by the date of the periplus. Red sea ports were the point up to which the Tamil vessels could go, Alexandria was the point up to which the Roman vessels came and the Tamil ports were reached by the
Egyptian vessels, the eastern trade beyond Tamilaham with Burma, Malaya, Java, Sumatra and China was mostly in the hands of the Tamils.

**Yavana:**

The Western merchants who visited the Tamil land, were known as Yavanas. The word Yavana is derived from the Greek laones, which is the name of the Greek nation in their own languages. In the old Sanskrit epic poetry, the word Yavana is invariably used to denote the Greeks. Similarly in ancient Tamil poems also the name Yavana appears to have been applied exclusively to the Greeks and Romans.

The Greeks sailed from Egypt in the month of July and arrived at Musiri in about forty days. As the Indian seas were infested by pirates, the Greek merchants brought with them chords of archers on board their ships. Egypt being at this period subject to Rome the archers who accompanied the Greek merchants have been Roman soldiers. The Pandyan king was the first to realise the benefits of an alliance with the Romans. He sent two embassies to Augustus Caesar, desiring to become his friend and ally. One of the reached Augustus when he was at Terracona in the eighteenth year after the death of Julius Caesar (B.C.26) and another six years afterwards (B.C.20) when that prince was at Samos. Roman soldiers were enlisted in the service of the Pandyas and other Tamil Kings.
There is enough evidence in the Tamil literature to prove that Roman soldiers and Roman officers lived in various parts of the Tamil country. The Roman merchants brought wine and gold coins into South India, and the name Yavana which originally meant 'Greek' was by this time extended to the Romans too, the Greeks having sunk to insignificance in matter of international relations. A poem refers to "the cool, sweet, smelling wine, brought by the yavanas, in beautiful vessels and drunk daily from gold cups held by damsels who wore bright bracelets". Another poem refers to the import of gold coins. It says that "the beautifully built ships of the Yavanas came agitating the white foams of the periyaru, with gold and returned with pepper and Musiri resounded with the noise".

Roman soldiers settled in the Tamil country and were employed as bodyguards of kings. They acted as the gatekeepers of palaces. It is stated as 'the yavanas with murderous swords, excellent guardians of the gates of the fort-walls'. Many Roman engineers and artificers also settled in the Tamilnadu. Tolkappiyam defines Vlinai one of the stages of war, as comprising the siege and the defence of a fort. Naccinarkkinlyar the commentator, explains that forts possessed engines made by Yavanas.
Though ocean-going ships were known to the Tamils and the Romans, the western sea was so much infested with pirates that the Roman merchants convoys took military protection for their ships, cohorts of archers came on board their ships escorting them. The Tamils must have realized the excellent military discipline of the Romans and benefited by their example. Romans were employed as guards of the fortress gates.

Encarved potteries were excavated at Alexendria by American researchers. It is written in prakirth language. Some were written in Greek loetters which belongs to 2nd century A.D. This proves the eminent trade between the South Indian trader and Yavana trader. Romila Thaper says about an inscription given by Asuraipalan belongs to north Sematic about Pandya country and Kudak nagar, which belongs to 7th century B.C. A temple known as Baladevan was worshipped by Tamils. These shows that Tamil traders went in groups to western countries trade.

As late as the 2nd century A.D. evidence of trade in bulk goods between Musiri and Alexandria in Egypt comes from a Papyrus in the Vienna Museum recording a trade agreement in Greek between a vanikar from Musiri and a trader from Alexandria. The agreement was apparently written in Alexandria, according to which certain specified
quantities of Gangetic nard, ivory items and a variety of textiles whose value was equal to the price of 2400 acres of land in Egypt were to be exported from Muciri, in ships to a Red sea port, then taken on Camel crossing the desert and the Nile, reaching Coptos and then shipped to the mediterranean town of Alexandria. This clearly attested the trade of Tamils with Alexandria.

Kautilya's Arthasastra mentions that Suvarnadvipa or Malaysia was visited by Indian merchants in search of aromatics and spices for a very long time. The Sankha Jataka mentions a voyage to Suvarnadvipa. A Brahman named Sankha seeing his property diminishing on account of his munificent habits, took to a voyage to Suvarnadvipa. The ship was built by himself and loaded with cargo. In ancient India the wooden ships were often drowned by whirlpools because of its simple construction. It is mentioned that on the 7th day of Sankha's voyage the ship developed leaks and the sailors were unable to bale the water out. Sankha, keeping calm took a servant with him and oiling his body and partaking a meal of ghee and sugar climbed the mast and plunged into the sea and floated for 7 days.

The Mahajanaka Jataka gives an eyewitness account of a sinking ship. The ship of Mahajanaka sailing with speed towards Sri Lanka developed cracks and began sinking. When the ship began sub-
merging in the water then he caught hold of the floating mast. Others floating in the sea were attached by dangerous fishes and turtles and the sea became red with their blood. After floating to some distance Mahajanaka left the mast and began swimming freely. In the end he was rescued by manimekala the goddess of sailors. According to the Sankha and Mahajanaka Jatakas, the goddess Manimekala presiding over the seas protected voyagers with religious bent of mind. As a goddess her worship was common in the city of Puhar situated at the mouth of the Kaveri and there was another temple of hers situated at Kanchi. As a goddess her influence extended from the Cape Comorin to lower Burma (Tara is known as Maimekala goddess in Burma).

The sailors had their own guild, whose chief was called as myamakjettha. It is said that at the age of sixteen, Supparakkumara had become the chief of his guild and gained proficiency in the art of navigation\(^\text{25}\). ('Manayakan' is known as Sailors chief in Tamilnadu.)

In ancient times Indian ships sailed to Malaya, east Africa and the Persian Gulf beyond which they could not proceed owing to the restraints put by the Arabs. In the first century A.D. with the permission of the Kshatrapas some big ships sailed to the Persian Gulf. From the north western sea-coast of India ships sailed to north eastern Africa upto the point of Guardafai and transacted business there. But even for
that they had to take permission of the Arabs and Axumites. Upto this century the Arabs were the monopolists of the western trade and therefore, they did not allow Indian merchants beyond Ocdis though Axumites allowed them the use of this port\textsuperscript{26}. They were, however, free to sail on the Indian sea-coasts. After the discovery of the monsoon the trade monopoly of the Arabs broke down and many Indians began sailing to Egypt. An inscription found in the temple of Pan at Benenice near Rhodesia informs us that there was an Indian traveller named Subahu who sailed between India and Alexandria. But in Rome proper except for envoys, slaves, merchants and acrobats no other Indian went.

Recent archaeological excavations in Burma, Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia have added to the range of objects of Indian origin found in Southeast Asia, but more significantly they have pushed back the antiquity of these early contacts\textsuperscript{27}. The sites involved in this maritime network include both coastal and inland centres and date from 500-400 B.C. onwards, coinciding with the beginning of the late Metal Age in Southeast Asia.

Beads of agate carnelian and glass are widely distributed in southeast Asia, both in time and space. Neolithic sites in general seem to have produced beads in locally occurring substances such as stone and shell. Imports such as coloured glass, faceted carnelian and etched
agate beads are characteristic of Metal Age sites and range from 500 B.C. to A.D. 1500\textsuperscript{28}. Sources of carnelian are rare in mainland southeast Asia, though scattered in the Indonesian archipelago. Hence the origin of Carnelian beads has been traced to the Indian subcontinent. Carnelian beads have been found at Ban Chiang in Thailand, the slab graves of Malaysia, the Tabon caves on Palawan in Bali. The manufacture of etched carnelian beads was a specialized craft practised in the Indian subcontinent from the Harappan period onwards and was one that became particularly important in the Early Historical period.

Analogies with ceramic, stone and metal specimens from the Indian subcontinent area also sought for the bronze bowls with a central knob found in the cemetery of Don Ta Phet. About thirty of these vessels made from a high-tin bronze were found during the excavations at Don Ta Phet\textsuperscript{29} and these are associated with other prestige goods such as the carnelian and glass beads, very thin walls and the Knob in the centre of the base is in the form of a sharply pointed cone which is sometimes cast integrally with the vessel, but more often made separately and rivetted through a hole in the base. Bronze bowls with a central knob occur in the Megalithic burials of the Nilgiri Hills\textsuperscript{30} and another specimen comes from Souttoukeny located 30 Kilometers upstream from
Arikamedu on the river Gingee. Unlike the beads, the bronze Knobbed vessels in central Thailand were locally made and only model may be traced to a south Asian origin. Indeed it has been suggested that as the use of a high, tin bronze was not so common in India, these bowls were perhaps imported into the subcontinent and hence their occurrence in Adichanallur, Taxila and the Nilgiri Hills. More recent analysis shows that a distinction should perhaps be made between imports from India as contrasted to objects produced locally from Indian prototypes and those showing Indian influence adapted to local traditions. Thus glass beads were initially introduced from India, but later locally produced using clay crucibles which have a long ancestry in the region. Similarly the use of ston double moulds has great antiquity in Southeast Asia where they were used for bronze casting. At Oc Eo these double moulds were employed in the casting of tin pendants and one of them bears a legend in a mixed kharoshti - Brahmi script. At Buni, gold and carnelian beads, gold eye-covers, a range of pottery, stone adzes and metal artefacts have been recovered very distinctive, are the gold eye-covers made of silver with a thin facing of gold, these shows similarities with the nineteen 'diadems' recovered from the Megalithic graves at Adichanallur in South India. Another import was a stamped sherd with a bird motif, similar to Wheelers type 10 at Arikamadu.
Carnelian seals are most common inscribed with Brahmi characters, of which the earliest specimen from Khuan Lukpad (15-20 Kms. from the Andaman) dates to the first century A.D. though they continued until the 6th-7th centuries. Carnelian seals have been found at three major coastal centres, Kuala Selinsing, Chaiya and QeEo. Excavations at Beikthano have yielded one of the sealings of unbaked clay with Brahmi letters of the 2nd century A.D. The finds of seals and sealings has so far been restricted to mainland and peninsular Southeast Asia with little contribution from the Indonesian archipelago. The widespread distribution nevertheless indicates trade rather than exchange and the use of Brahmi and Kharoshti around the beginning of the Christian era may be taken as the use of the script for secular purposes such as trading transactions.

The term suvarnabhumi used in early Sanskrit and Pali texts to refer to Southeast Asia has generally been taken to indicate that gold was the principal attraction. In addition there was the demand for aromatics and spices. The Arthasastra refers to aloe - wood that came from beyond the sea[^32]. Sandalwood, particularly of the red variety, was obtained from the dry regions of eastern Indonesia, while the finest grades of cinnamon and cassia were native to mainland Southeast Asia.
Recently discovered a test stone bearing the legend of 'Perumpatan Kal' meaning the test stone of master goldsmith, a square copper coin of sangam age and a copper coin bearing the figure of a two masted ship of Thailand, the potsherds bearing the legends 'Catan', 'Kanan' and 'Kora Puman' from the Egyptian ports situated on the bank of Red Sea, and the Tamil names Velan and Ilam occurring in archaic Tamil script on the potsherds from Sri Lanka are the recent indisputable records for the sea voyage of ancient Tamils.

Inscriptions were discovered for the Tamil traders who had trade relation with East Indian islands and also with South East Asian Countries. Inscriptions with Sanskirt and Grandha letters were excavated at Sambha, Thailand and Loes. One among these speaks about 'Pourkai Pandiyan'. Another one denotes Konguvarman. These clearly says that they belonged to Tamil traders. Recently at Thailand a coin belongs to sangam age were excavated. This belongs to 4th century A.D. This also an evidence to say that tamil trader went southeast Asian countries for trade.

At Java an inscription was discovered. It belongs to 4th century A.D. and written in north Indian language. It speaks about Tamil traders as well as tamil rulers. Near Java at 'Pali' an island, at 'Porapudhur a world famous Buddha vajar is situated here. In this
Buddha image shows about Tamil traders ships and trade commodities.

Tamil Traders in Sri Lanka:

Inscription through light on Tamil merchants who went Sri Lanka for trade. Traders who visited 2nd B.C. to 1st B.C. were mentioned. 'Bed' (Pali) which belongs to Tamil traders was discovered at Anuradhapuram. Gems were decked at Sri Lanka Tamil traders may have gone for purchasing these Gems.

Recent archaeological evidences of Sri Lanka shows that Tamil people created urban culture there 'Kantharodai' known for Rudha pillars. This was known as a well-developed urban centre at 5th century B.C. Near Kantharodai a place known as yanaikaotai, here a seal with Tamil Brahmi letters were unearthed. It is written as 'Kovath'. Recently a pottery with Tamil Brahmi written as 'Villiye' was excavated. The above evidence clearly states the merchants of Tamil Nadu had healthy trade contact with Sri Lanka.

Pattinapalai speaks as "Ella thunayu". A name of a poet in Sangam literature is "Ellath Buthan Devanar". This gives an assumption that Srilankan traders were also well-versed poets.
Allagankulam excavation yields, Srilanka's names, marks, etc. Allagankulam situated near Srilanka. It may easy for the traders to vidit offen. The excavated pottery says that they went Deccan through Tamilnadu. The potteries which were unearthed at Tamilnadu. Srilanka and Deccan are similar of Yavana pottery. That confirms the trade extended from Srilanka upto Dhamlok.

**North Indian Traders:**

Sangam literature and Silapathygaram speak about north Indian traders in Tamilnadu Nagarams. In Tamil Brahmi inscriptions and potteries, north Indian names were encarved, such as Varuni, Vishaki, Kuharan, Chandrigan, Kuvavan, Sengayapan, Arithan, Kasyapan, Yathava. This indicates that north Indian traders visited Tamilnadu. Iebam, Nigamam, Thampam, Siri, Kani were also mentioned. Paunch marked coins, Blackware potteries were brought by north Indian traders to Tamilnadu.

**Deccan traders:**

Sangam literature speaks about Deccan traders. It says about the Tamil traders who went Deccan for trade. And there is no mention about Deccan traders in Tamilnadu. in the epic Manimagalai. We come across the names such as Maratiyar, Kammar, Avanthi Koller.
These labours were brought to Tamilnadu by Deccan traders. We get archaeological evidence for vaduka nadu traders in Tamilnadu. At Dharmapuri Satavahana terracotta figurings were unearthed. This may be brought by vaduga nadu traders for their workshop. The same terracotta figures were excavated at Coimbatore. 'Kaiylon' pottery which was belong to Satavahana unearthed at Karur.

Satavahana coins were excavated at Kanchipuram Kadalur Karur. The Satavahana coins which were unearthed at Andhra. The names embossed Tamil and Prakirth language. I.K. Sharma doubted about the language. But the Tamil words such as Magar, Arasan, thiru were embossed. May Satavahana rulers introduced two language coins, in north and south India. At Kanchipuram the seal of the Satavahana coin was unearthed. This may be brought to Tamilnadu by the vadugar traders.

The early Tamil poems are generally silent on the origin of merchants, although in early societies merchants are said to have emerged from among chiefly families led to concentration of economic wealth in the hands of those close to the chief. The circulation of wealth through gifts among Kinsmen close to the Sangam chiefs, both the Vendar and the Velir Chief, as Puhar was of the Cholas, Korkai of the Pandyas and Muciri of the Cheras all of which point to the direct involvement of the
ruling elite in the promotion of trade.

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The above discussions show that the traders of Tamilnadu who carried their activity not only inside Tamilnadu but in neighbouring countries also. Among this, Sri Lanka, Eastern countries like Java, Thailand etc. were proved the healthy trade not only in Sangam literature but also in archaeological evidence. Among foreign countries Greek merchants played a very prominent role in the economy of Tamilnadu.

The foregoing discussions attest their dominant role in the raising of urban centre.
1. Agnanur 24

2. Pattinapalai 29-30

3. Agananur 60

4. Porunarrupadai 214, 215

5. Ibid 216, 217

6. Aingurunuru 48

7. Kurunthogai 388

8. Maduraikkanci 1.439, 1.544

9. Ibid 365-373

10. N. Subramanian Sangam Polity, p. 235

11. Silapathigaram Conto II line 190

12. Perungathai Conto. I. Con 36 lines 223


14. Ibid 206

15. V. Kanakasabhi The Tamils Eighteen Hundred years ago, 37. P


17. Purananur Verse 56, line 18-20
18. Agananur Verse 149, line 9-12


20. Tolkapiyam - Commentary II 10


24. Modi chandra. Trade and Trade Routes in ancient India p. 61.

25. Ibid


27. Himanshu P. Ray The winds of change p. 92.

28. Ibid p. 94

29. Ibid p. 96

30. Ibid (F.T)

31. Ibid p. 101

33. 'Kalvettu' N.Kasinathan.

34. The Hindu 5,12 May 1992

35. T.N. Subramanian, The Pallavas of Kanchi in South East Asia, Madras - 1967 p.56


37. Ibid

38. S. Paranavitana, Inscription of Ceylon Vol. i No 94 a


40. Ibid p-202

41. Dinamani 9.5.91

42. Patinapalai line 191.

43. S. Vaiyapurippillai (? Sanga Jagiam p.1423.


45. Himanshu Prabha Ray, Op Cit p.140

46. Silappathikaram Contol Kaa - 4, Line 37.


49. Kuruntokai Verse II, line 7

50. Manimegalai Kaa 19, line 107-108.

51. The Hindu, 13 Augst, 1978


53. Himanshu Prabha Ray, Op Cit, p.150(map)