Chapter – I

Historical Background of Musiri Region
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HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF MUSIRI REGION

The word Musiri means 'gifted land'. It may be due to the location of the place on the river bank of Cauvery. It is situated on the North bank of Cauvery river 40 kms, North West of Tiruchirappallli and 45 kms, East of Namakkal. In this study the Musiri region denotes the present taluks comprised of Musiri, Thuraiyur and Thottiyam.

Musiri region has its own historical significance - the temples, the antiquities unearthed, the monuments spread over, inscriptions found at the various places of Musiri region reflecting the history and culture and of the district. Moreover, the unique social composition of Musiri region, augment the importance of the Musiri region in a historical perspective.

Geographical Features of Musiri Region
Musiri is located at 10°57' latitude 78°30' longitude.¹ It has an average elevation of 82 metres (269 feet).² The Musiri region comprised Thuraiyur Taluk, Musiri Taluk and Thottiyam Taluk. This region is bounded by the Perambalur district on the North by

Cauvery River on the South by Manachanallur taluk on the East by Namakkal district on the West. The villages of these region are mostly located on the Northern side of the Cauvery river, being irrigated by well, channels, from Cauvery river which are very fertile. Musiri is a moderate sized village, situated on the bank of Cauvery, almost exactly opposite to Kulithalai of Karur District.

Climate in Musiri
The climate in Musiri Region is characterized by a high mean temperature and low degree of humidity, while at the same time the extremes of heat and cold are as a rule moderate. During the month of December, January and February the North-East monsoon prevails. The hot season, consisting of the months of March, April and May, is very dry, the range of temperature being high and the atmosphere remarkably dry. Popularly the climate is said to consist of eight months hot and four months hotter.

Mountains in Musiri Region
Kollimalai
The Kollimalai range spreads into Namakkal and Attur taluks of Salem district between 11°10'-11°27' N latitude and 78° 18'-78° 30'E

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6 Report on the Civil and Military Station of Trichinopoly, drawn up in 1867 by Dr J. L. Ranking, Sanitary Commissioner.
longitudes. The hill rises abruptly from the otherwise plain surrounding and has the appearance of a flat-topped mass of mountain. The upper reaches are cut with deep and narrow valleys. The hill rises to an approximate height of 1219 plus metre.

**Pachhamalai**

Pachhamalai (11°51'-11°29'N and 78°31'-78°51' E) borders the Tiruchirappalli - Salem districts and spreads in the Musiri-Perambalur taluks of Tiruchirappalli and Attur and Salem taluks of Salem district. The range is about 32 kms long having the shape of an hour-glass. The Western slope is steeper than the opposite one and attains a height of nearly 760 metre.

This is the only important hill in the district inhabited by the Malayalis. It is in the shape of an hour-glass, the length of which is about 20 kms. It has many hairpin bends and the road is well maintained one. At the end of the ghat and on the top of the hills, there are two travelers' bungalows. The hill is replete with many herbal plants. The people live in this hill are called Malayalis. The

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Pachamalai hill is inhabited only by the Malayalis and others are not allowed to migrate to this place.\textsuperscript{10}

**Thalamalai**

In the Musiri region there are also scattered, throughout the district, isolated hills here and there, the most striking being the 'Thalamalai' in the Musiri taluk, which rises abruptly to a very considerable elevation.\textsuperscript{11}

The Thalamalais are a small range of hills lying fourteen miles South-East of Namakkal. They possess a peculiar jagged outline. One of the peaks selected as a survey station rises to 2,785 feet above the sea. They are covered with grass and low brushwood. A well-known Vishnu temple stands on one of their peaks and is much visited by pilgrims from the neighbouring plains, especially on Saturdays in the Tamil month Purttasi (September-October).\textsuperscript{12}

**Thiruvengimalai or Thiruingoimalai**

Thiruvengi hill is situated about 6 kms West of Musiri. The Siva temple is situated on a hill of 900 feet height. From the Southern part of this hill, one has to climb a plight of 500 steps, well illuminated and with drinking water facilities for the devotees. The width of this hill is 4.5 kms. This place is also known as


\textsuperscript{11} C. D. Maclean, *loc. cit.*

Thiruvengimalai, which is the corruption of Thiru-i-ongi-malai) (The Holy High Bees Mountain) and this is so called because the sage Agastya finding the gates of the Siva temple closed one evening turned himself into a bee and secured entrance in this temple to perform on his worship.\(^{13}\)

**Perumalmalai**

There is a small hill 5 kms away from Thuraiyur in Musiri region called Perumalmalai and is about 2000 feet high.\(^{14}\) It covers full of forest and on the top of the hill there is a temple called, Sri Alamelu Mangai Sametha Venkatachalapathi Swami temple.\(^{15}\) One can reach this temple at the top of the hill by climbing a flight of 1532 steps from the foot of the hill or by a vehicle. The ghat road for a distance of five kilometre from the foot of hill has been constructed by the devotees from Thatthaiyangarpettai village in memory of Veerabhadra Chettiar. Power and water supply has been provided at the hill top.\(^{16}\)

**Rivers in Musiri Region**

**The Aiyar River**

The Aiyar River rises in the gorge which separates the Kollimalai from Pachchamalai and receiving numerous tributaries from both

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\(^{13}\) K. S. K. Velmani, *op. cit.*, p. 1599.


\(^{16}\) *The Hindu*, 16\(^{th}\) September 1994.
ranges of hills, falls into the Cauvery not far from the head of Srirangam island after a short course of about 30 miles through the Musiri taluk.

**Thalugai River**

It is originated from the North West of Kollimalai and tributary of Aiyar. The Thalugai River in Musiri region receives a considerable supply during the South-West monsoon.¹⁷

**The Karaipottanar River**

The Karaipottanar (also called Karuvattar) is a small stream rising in the Kollimalai and emptying itself, after a short course through the Namakkal and Musiri taluks, into the Cauvery. The name signifies the river which marked the boundary and native tradition, which appears to be founded on fact. It says that the stream was once the boundary between the Pandya, Chola and Chera kingdoms. The Karaipottanar receives nearly all its water during the North East monsoon. It is used a good deal for irrigation.¹⁸

**River Cauvery**

Cauvery is the life-stream of Tamil Nadu and rises from Brahmagiri (12°35' N, 75°34' E) and in the hills of Coorg in Karnataka, which is part of the larger Western Ghats. Cauvery's general course is a South Easterly direction. After traversing hundreds of kilometres the

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¹⁷ F. R. Hemingway, op. cit., p. 3.
¹⁸ Ibid., p. 3.
river joins the Bay of Bengal at Kaveripattinam. Cauvery is also known as Dakshina Ganga, denoting its sanctity to indicate that is not in any way less sacred than the holy Ganga of the North. The source, Talaikkaveri, is a holy pilgrim centre where people throng in thousands to take a dip in its waters on the occasion of the sun entering Libra in the Zodiac in the middle of the September. Many tributaries namely Aiyar, Karaipottanar and Mamundiyar are joining to make it bigger. So it attains its maximum width in the Tiruchirappalli district in Tamil Nadu, where its width is known as ‘Akhanda Cauvery’.

In Musiri region the principal sources of irrigation are the Cauvery. The portion of the Musiri region is lying by the Cauvery River, possesses a most fertile soil and excellent means of irrigation. North of the Musiri region is dry Land and there is no Cauvery water for irrigation.

Soil
The Soil of the Musiri Region has been arranged in three main clauses, namely the alluvial, the regar or black and the red. In Musiri region, the different type of soils prevailing as follows:

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19 K. S. Ramachandran, op. cit., p. 5.
21 K. S. Ramachandran, op. cit., p. 5.
22 Lewis Moore, op. cit., p. 11.
The Alluvial soil - 3%
The Regar soil - 29%
The Red soil - 68%\(^23\)

A portion of the Musiri taluk lying along the Cauvery River possesses most fertile soil and excellent means of irrigation. The North of the valley of the Cauvery and South of the Pachamalai hills is very uniform in character. The soil is black in the hollows, and red on the higher levels and in the neighbourhood of the hills.\(^24\)

**Soil Classification in Musiri Region**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Alluvial</th>
<th>Regar</th>
<th>Red</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Musiri clay</td>
<td>Loamy Clay-Loamy-Sandy</td>
<td>Loamy Sandy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>0.9 1.8 1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1.3 2.6(^25)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The lands in the adjacent area of Cauvery River in Musiri, Thottiyam are alluvial. Nearly one third of each soil is found in Musiri taluk.\(^26\)

In the Thuraiyur taluk the lands were classed as (1) Karisal (black) (2) Sheval (red) (3) Manal (sand) and (4) Kalar (waste land), and were divided into nunjah, punjah and Tottakkal (garden). The

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\(^23\) F. R. Hemingway, *op. cit.*, p. 11.
\(^24\) Lewis Moore, *op. cit.*, p. 11.
\(^25\) Based on guidelines for the preparation of socio-economic and environmental evaluation reports of the completed surface irrigation projects, central water commission, Basin planning and management organisation water recourses, New Delhi, 1995, p. 10.
nunjah was sub-divided into (1) Ayan (or) actual Nunjah and (2) Nunjah Taram Punjab (wet land cultivated with dry crops). The Punjab was divided into (1) tavasam, and (2) grains of superior.

In the Thuraiyur valley, between the Kollimalai and Pachamalai, regar occurs, in several detached and rounded patches, about three miles North West of Kannanur at Badarpettai, four or five miles South of Uppiliyapuram and at Ammapatti, three miles South of Thuraiyur. The garden land consists of single and double crop.

**Name Description of Musiri**

An inscription of Rajaraja III (1220 AD) in Musiri Periyavaikkal refers to the construction of a stone sluice of the Karikala Chola Peraru at Musiri (شروط) alias Mummudicholapettai.

The name Musiri is derived from the Tamil word ‘musiram’ (شرط), which means liberality or courteousness. The other word musiru (شرط) means one who is easily enraged. In the above two words (ٌ) Ra, Ru (ٌ) make significant difference in meaning. There is also a third word called ‘Musiran’ which means unbounded liberty. Hence the Tamil letter, (ٌ) Ra and Ri (ٍ) is closure to the meaning of Musiri, is gifted land or more courteousness persons

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27 Ibid., p. 62.
28 Lewis Moore, op. cit., p. 189.
29 ARE 890 No. 70; SII Vol. IV, No 394, p. 119.
30 Ibid., p. 876.
were living in this village. So the name Musiri is used in all inscriptions of this region. But at present in the revenue records the name is written as Musiri (IPA: Musiri).

Mythology

A mythological story mentions Musiri with the name ‘Musugunthapuri’. ‘Musu’ means a large and black kind of wild bearded-ape and Musukunthan means universal monarch or one of the six Chakravarthis. The following is the story: “A person by name Manthathavina Kanishtaputhiran waged war in support of Gods (Devars) and in the process lost his sleep for years. Satisfied with Puthiran’s sacrifice, Gods blessed him with a prolonged period of sleep and also gives a warning that if anybody interrupts puthiran’s sleep they would be cursed to death.

With the cunningness of Lord Krishna, Kalayavaran interrupted puthiran’s sleep and lost his life. So Puthiran is considered one of the knowledgeable chakkaravarthis. In honour of his name Musugunthapuri is formed. Musiri is the corruption of Musugunthapuri. He worshipped Lord Siva (Kameswara) in the form of monkey to relieve from his curse and the statue he worshipped is available in Vellore Kameswara Temple.

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31 Ibid., p. 876.
Different Names of Musiri

Musiri is also known as Gopala Krishnapura, a Sanskrit version. It means ‘a residence of Lord Krishna’. As evidence one can find a Lord Krishna temple in Musiri on Tiruchirappalli – Salem High road.34

Musiri Chandramoulisvara temple inscription mentions the name as Musiri alias Mummudisolan Pettai in Amur nadu.35 Another inscription in Pasupatisvara Temple at Tinnakkonam mentions Tinnakkonam as Tiruneerkunram belongs to Valluvappadi nadu. During the period of Rajarajadeva Musiri was called as Valluvappadi nadu.36

Walhouse, in the Indian Antiquary IV, 273, describes the old granite bridge here which spans a channel by the river side. On the side of it, there is an inscription which mentions Musiri alias Mummudicholappettai, according to Walhouse’s doubtful rendering, states that the head of the channel was cut by king Lorakkonan in memory of Karikala Chola.37

In the olden days Musiri was called by different names, such as Gopala Krishna Samudram and Mummudicholappettai. A copper

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35 SII 318 of 1966.
36 ARE 257 of 1932-1933.
37 Robert Sewell, op. cit, p. 266.
plate of Chandramoulisvara temple, Musiri records the endowment of lands for the god and goddesses Cholisvara and Karpuravalli Amman by the learned residents of Musiri alias Gopalakrishna Samudram. Another copper plate of the Vijayanagara king Venkata IV, mentions Musiri as Mummudi Cholapettai.

**Historical Background of Musiri Region**

**Neolithic Age**

To make progress is the natural tendency of man. After many centuries the primitive man advanced towards a civilized, cultured and settled life and entered a new age known as the Neolithic Age or New Stone Age in history. Mankind still uses tools and weapons made of stone but they were not crude rough and unpolished like the tools of the Paleolithic Age. The tools during this period were properly chipped and polished. Physically the men of this age were very much liked by modern men. They had invented new and better ways of doing things and progressed much more rapidly than those of the people of the Old Stone Age. They were profited by the experiences of the earlier cultures and added many new ideas.

Based on the articles and equipments used by people and the changes that took place in the life-style of people of ancient time,

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38 Copper Plate No. 18 of 1966.
39 Copper Plate No. 17 of 1966.
the period during which such changes took place, is called 'Neolithic Age'. People of Neolithic age used to produce glazed and minute articles. They gave up the wandering life, and started living in a fertile area by setting up a permanent dwelling place and producing things of their necessity. S. R. Rao has undertaken the research at Paiyampalli near Thiruppathur. Materials of Neolithic age seem to have transited. While making area research, these materials have been found in the following places.41

**Neolithic Villages in Musiri Region**

**Vadakkipatti**

This place is situated at a distance of 8 kms to the South of Thuraiyur. A Piece of front edge of a tool namely Celt belonging to Neolithic age was found in the adjoining places to a large lake situated in the East of Vadakkipatti. Further some microlithic Stone Age tools are also found during the survey.

**Puliyancholai**

This place is situated at a distance of 12 K.ms., to the North-West of Thuraiyur. During a locational research at a perennial river point, a tool measuring 8 x12 cms was found. Many identical tools were found in the water. But they could not be brought out as Puliyancholai is treated as ‘Tourist Destination’.

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**Venkatachalapuram**

This place is situated at a distance of 16 kms on the Thuraiyur to Thammampatti route leading to Salem. On the East and West to this place, some tools pertaining to Neolithic age, dolls made of charred clay and some pieces of bangles were found.

**Thanneer Pallam**

This place is situated at an altitude of 1250 feet from Pachaimalai, where two tools in broken condition were found on the eastern slope. Some pearls and some pieces of bangles in black colour were also discovered from the agricultural lands.\(^\text{42}\)

**Megalithic Age**

Megalithic Age is a word derived from Greek language. ‘Mega’ means big and ‘lithic’ means ‘stone’. The culture disclosed by the monuments installed in memory of the deceased is called Megalithic Age culture. It is found all over India with unique characteristics. Breекs, a researcher in history had undertaken a research before 1837 in Nilgiris on the monuments of Megalithic Age even before the commencement of Archaeological Survey by Robert Bruce Foote in India. But formal research was made in a commonly acceptable manner in 1872 on the monuments of Megalithic Age.

Megalithic tombs and related monuments constructed usually of large slabs or blocks of stone either in their natural form or

\(^{42}\) Ibid., p. 7.
The term ‘Megalithic’ was used to describe a class of monuments in Europe consisting of huge undressed stones which were termed as Dolmens, Cromlechs and Menhirs. Etymology indicates the word ‘Megathos’ or the magnitude and ‘Lithoi’ or the stones. The Megalithic sites are generally located on the slopes of a hill or in an elevated place. In India megalithic tombs at Malabar attracted the attention of the scholars in 1823. The tombs at Malabar were termed as ‘Pandoo Coolies’. Since 1823 many scholars took interest and many monuments were excavated.

These megalithics represent a widespread phenomena and its geographical significance varies from place to place. Interrelationship between the areas and social customs are not an easy one. But the megalithic sites in Peninsular India, particularly in Tamil Nadu, are far more impressive than their resemblances elsewhere. Some megalithic monuments are also to be seen on rocky high ground unfit for cultivation and near irrigation tanks. The beginning and end of this culture on the Indian soil is an unsolved

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43 V. Childe Garden, Megalithic - Ancient India, Bulletin of the Archaeological Survey of India, New Delhi, p. 4.
problem. The beginning of this culture would go back to 1000 BC while the terminal date would be c. 500 AD. Sangam works particularly Purananuru, Akananuru and Pathupattu give references to burial monuments.46

The megalithic builders did not bury their dead in arable land. They are found in association with irrigation tanks forcing the calculation that the megalithic people were responsible for the excellent tank-irrigation system (e.g. Chingleput burials). They had a settled community life and mutual contact with others.47 They knew smelting and forging of iron for the implements and weapons making. They also believed in life after death. Their tombs are known as ‘Pandukuzhis’, ‘Pandukuris’ or ‘Pandavan Kall’, etc.48

Megalithic Culture in Musiri Region

The materials and articles belonging to the Megalithic Age are found in Musiri region. This period is called Black and Red Ware culture.

Kinds of Megalithic Age

The Megalithic monuments are classified as Kalthittai, Karkuvai, Karpadukkai, Karkidai, Kalvattam, Thoppikkal, Kudaivarai, Kuthukkal, Nedunkal, Kudaivarai Thazhvarai, Thozhi, Nadukal Paral

48 Ibid.
and Uyarpadhukkai. In and around Thuraiyur, proof of Megalithic Age such as Kuthukkal, Nedungal, Karkuvai and Kalvattam are found.

The areas where the Megalithic Age monuments available are called as Nathakkadu, Kalasakkadu, Pandavar Kuli, Pandavar Padukkai, Kurangu Padai. Similarly inscriptions available from various parts of Tamil Nadu can also be compared for instance and inscription at Thirukkattalai of Alangudi taluk at Pudukkottai District is called as Kalaskkadu and the other one belongs to Narthamalai belonging to 13th century AD is called as Kuranguppadai. It is evident from the above that the Megalithic Age was prevalent in the region.49

Megalithic Age Villages

Alagarai

Alagarai is a village situated just a mile away on the north bank of the Cauvery, in Musiri taluk and some five miles West of Musiri – Salem road. Adjoining the early historic habitation site on the North, excavated by the Department of Ancient History and Archaeology of the University of Madras, is an extensive high-ground, barren and made up of disintegrated laterite which caps the area. Small pits are cut into these human skeletal remains and other grave goods are lowered. It is interesting to note in this connection,

49 Ibid., pp. 8-9.
that the place was under habitation from the megalithic period up to
the 10th century A.D. as indicated by cultural debris in the adjacent
habitation area.\textsuperscript{50}

The cultural deposit of the mound was from 2 to 6 metres
divisible into three periods from the megalithic to the Vijayanagara
periods (15th – 16th centuries AD). The pottery of the first period
constituted the black and red ware and the russet coated ware, shell
bangles, beads of glass and terracotta and ear ornaments. In Period-
II, some copper coins came into use and in Period-III a few coins of
the Vijayanagara period were found. Alagarai sites also yield urn
burials.\textsuperscript{51}

The name Alagarai seems to have derived from the waves of
the river Cauvery. As the waves of the river hit the place, the name
Alagarai came into use. Brahmi inscriptions of the 2nd century A.D.
are also found on the pottery.\textsuperscript{52}

\textbf{Ammapalayam}

This place is situated at a distance of 12 kms to the East of
Thuraiyur on the Perambalur – Thuraiyur Highway. Some kinds of
tomb and iron scraps belonging to the Megalithic Age were found

\textsuperscript{50} B. K. Gururaja Rao, \textit{Megalithic Culture in South India}, University of Mysore, Mysore,
1972, p. 91.


\textsuperscript{52} S. Gurumoorthy, \textit{Tholporul Aayvum Tamilar Panpadum} (Tamil), University of Madras,
Chennai, 1974, p. 35.
near Amma Odai and at a Lotus tank on the way to Andaliyappan Temple adjoining to the highway.\textsuperscript{53}

**Kottathur**

This place is situated at a distance of nearly 16 kms to the South-East of Thuraiyur. Two vertical stones measuring 5 feet, each are found in front of Chellandiyamman Temple, which is situated on the South of Kotthathur. The idols of Lord Vinayagar and Lord Siva are found in the near by temple. This temple based on its architecture, is considered to have been constructed during the period of Nayaks.

**Keerambur**

This place is situated at a distance of 6 kms to the East of Thuraiyur. According to the local residents, Madamadakasal, commonly known as pots, are found innumerable near irrigation canal in the northern part of the place. During the spot research, pieces of clay articles in black and red colours and some pieces of bangles were found in this area.\textsuperscript{54}

**Sengattuppati**

This place is situated at a distance of 9 kms to the East of Thuraiyur. The articles such as black and red pots sieves with pillar of lights, colored and glazed pieces of pots, found at Vellamanakkadu near the temple of Lord Muniyandavar on the South of this place give reason

\textsuperscript{53} Ibid., p. 10
\textsuperscript{54} Ibid., p. 11.
to infer that people of Megalithic Age had been dwelling in this place. Further it is said that big pots with copper coin have been dug out in this area. It is believed that an extensive research may bring out many useful information.

**Veliyanur**

This place is situated at a distance of 13 kms to the South – West of Thuraiyur. Plenty of pieces, black and red pots are found at Nathakkadu, which is on the eastern direction of this place. Pieces of human bones too are found scattered in some places here. Based on the environment of this place, it is felt that a burial ground, known as Karkuvai, is situated there as Madamadakasals (Pots) were believed to be here. It is felt that this place was used by people belonging to Megalithic Age.

**Kalladippatti**

This place is situated at a distance of 12 kms to the South of Thuraiyur Numpu of burial grounds, known as Karkuvai had been in the forest on the east of this place. This place seems to have been defaced due to the agricultural operation being undertaken by the local residents.

**Nagama Nayakkanpatti**

This place is situated at a distance of 12 kms to the East of Thuraiyur. This place is situated on the way to Kaveripattinam.
There are proofs to substantiate that it had been the burial grounds (Karkuvai) and Kalvattam near the forest owned by the Department of Forest on the South of this place. But this place looks damaged due to the operations of the local residents.\textsuperscript{55}

**Kottappalayam**
This place is situated at a distance of 14 kms to the North – West of Thuraiyur. Black, red and grey devoured pots of Megalithic Age are found near a lake in this place and it is believed to be one of the places connected to Megalithic Age. People call it as ‘Veliyin Kaadu’.

**Top Chenkattuppatti**
This place is situated at a height of nearly 1180 feet on the top of Pachaimalai. Pieces of pots pertaining to the Megalithic Age are found in the nearby forests. Local residents say that treasures have been taken out in red pot.\textsuperscript{56}

**Perumal Palayam**
This place is situated at a distance of 14 kms to the North of Thuraiyur. Burial grounds known as Karkuvai, are found in the forest on the northern side at an area of nearly seven acres. Each burial ground has got a radius of eight metres. In many places, bones

\textsuperscript{55} Ibid., p. 12.
\textsuperscript{56} Ibid., p. 13.
of human beings are found. This is the first burial ground found in Tiruchirappalli district.

**Chinnasalem Patti**

This place is situated at a distance of 8 kms from Thuraiyur. Evidence is available to prove that an iron melting unit belonging to Megalithic Age had been there near Perumal Temple on the eastern direction. Many pieces of iron melt and black and red pot are found in the forest and therefore it is believed that this place might have been a part of Megalithic Age. Sculptures of temples, idols, inscriptions at the famous temples belonging to Chola regime help the research work in Tamil and Grantha letters based on historical inscriptions and copper plates help the research work.\(^{57}\)

**Kattuputthur**

Kattuputthur, also in Musiri taluk, is an extensive habitation site of similar culture – complex but there are definite traces of urn burials. The local people reported that in their casual diggings, they came across urns containing black and red vessels, human bones etc., and sometimes iron objects.\(^{58}\)

**Chinnamettukali**

Chinnamettukali is another extensive megalithic site near Kattuputthur. There are fifty stone circles counted in a field.

\(^{57}\) Ibid., p. 14.
Adjoining this cemetery on the South, is an urn field without any megalithic appendage. There are definite indications of fruitful results if further investigations are carried out at this site. All the three last mentioned sites are in Musiri taluk.  

**Tranquility of Sculptures**

A sculpture portraying a soldier holding a bullock with a humped back is placed towards east, two women and two soldiers have also been placed. Below this, a sculpture portraying two soldiers beating drums and a sculpture of dancing women are also seen. A few sculptures portraying the scene of the traditional Jallikkattu (Bull taming ceremony) is portrayed. It is connected to Megalithic Age. A stone laid in the opposite direction makes one think that it might have been installed in memory of Kudukuduppi Nayakkan or Thottiyanayakkan. As the stone in opposite direction is in worshipping and obeying position a strong reason is inferred to be the cause of this sculpture.

**Buildings at Nagalapuram**

This place is situated near Thuraiyur. On the southern side, three heaps of sand is seen near the forests. While reclaiming the heaps of sand, some building and pieces of pots were seen. Some bones and pieces of bangles are also seen in an area of nearly two acres of

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59 Ibid.
land. Some pieces of pots in the shape of jars, holed pots and in cube have been found.

At a short distance from here, a temple called Sabdha Kanniyar temple is situated. It shows that this deity is worshipped before going to wage war. It is connected to the Megalithic Age based on the evidences available.\textsuperscript{60}

**Nagalapuram Hero Stone (Nadukal)**

This place is situated at a distance of 12 kms to the East of Thuraiyur. It is inferred that this place, one among those which were formed in memory of Nagaladevi wife of Krishnadevaraya of Vijayanagara kingdom. At a distance of 50 feet from the bus stop towards West, a big stone at the centre has been set up. It has the height of 4 feet width of 3 feet and $\frac{3}{4}$ of a foot of thickness and is placed towards east. In the opposite side a stone of 2 feet height, is also placed there. Around these stones, big stones have been placed in the form of a circle.

**Musiri During Sangam Age**

In Tamil literary history the age of Sangam is said to be in between 3\textsuperscript{rd} century BC to 3\textsuperscript{rd} century AD. The region lying North bank of the river Cauvery consisted of Pachchil Kurram, Kalar Kurram and Mimalai Nadu. These are referred to in the inscriptions of Chola

\textsuperscript{60} Ibid., p. 16.
period as part of Mala Nadu. In this area a clan called ‘Malavar’ lived and hence the land was known as Mala Nadu. Their leader or king was Ori and he is mentioned in the Sangam literature. He ruled over Kollimalai.\textsuperscript{61}

This region was created as revenue division in the name of ‘Rajaraya Valanadu’ by Rajaraja I. The Tiruvasi inscription belonging to 1004 AD makes mention of this as ‘Rajasraya Valanadu’.\textsuperscript{62}

**Musiri Region under Different Dynasties**

**Pallava Period (6\textsuperscript{th} to 9\textsuperscript{th} Century AD)**

The advent of the rule of the Pallavas of Kanchipuram opens a significant chapter in the history of Tamil Nadu. In the Musiri region there is a village called Mahendramangalam (a Brahmadeya village) established by the Pallava king Mahendravarman I (598 – 690 AD). The other Pallava kings namely Nandhivarman II (732 – 796 AD), Dandivarman (796 – 846 AD) and Nandhivarman III (846 – 869 AD) held sway over this area.\textsuperscript{63}

**Pallava King Mahendravarman-I**

Srinivasanallur should have been included in the Pallava kingdom during the reign of Mahendravarman-I, and it seems to have been in


\textsuperscript{62} ARE 239 of 1973-1974.

the past called Mahendramangalam evidently after this Pallava ruler of the 7th century AD who is said to have seized "the country of the Cholas, embellished by the daughter of Kavera (river Cauvery) whose ornaments are the forests of paddy fields and where one found brilliant groves of acre". Close to this village, there is even now a hamlet called Mahendramangalam. 64

The Pallava King Mahendravarman established Brahmadeya namely Mahendramangalam in Musiri. Therefore it is clear that parts of the Tiruchirappalli district came under the rule of Mahendravarman-I. 65

Chola Period

Walhouse66 describes about an old granite bridge here which spans a channel by the river side near the Siva temple at Musiri and states that the head of the channel was cut by king Lorakkonan in memory of Karikala Chola. 67

With the advent of the Imperial Cholas of Thanjavur, begins a clear and chronologically continuous history of Musiri region. About 67 Chola inscriptions have been discovered in this area. 68 They are dated from 895 AD to 1248 AD. These inscriptions have been copied

64 Ibid, pp. 100-101.
67 Robert Sewell, op. cit, p. 266.
68 Appendix: Chronological List of Inscriptions of Musiri Region.
from the villages of Musiri region namely Alagarai, Alathudaiyanpatti, Maradi, Mahendramangalam, Thiruingoimalai, Thiruthiyamalai, Thinnakkonam, Thuraiyur, Thirunarayanapuram, Singalanthapuram, Srinivasanallur, Musiri, Karkudi and Sriramasamudram.

The Musiri region was ruled by the following Chola kings such as Aditya Chola I (871-907 AD), Parantaka I (907-955 AD), Kandaraditya (950 – 958 AD), Rajaraja I (985 – 1014 AD), Rajendra I (1012 – 1054 AD), Adi Rajendra (1068 – 1071 AD), Kulottunga I (1070 – 1120 AD), Rajaraja II (1146 – 1166 AD), Vikrama Chola (1118 – 1135 AD), Kulottunga III (1178 – 1218 AD), Rajaraja III (1216 – 1257 AD) and Rajendra III (1246 – 1279 AD).^69

Thuraiyur in Chola Inscription

According to a local inscription, Thuraiyur is said to be on the banks of Kilp-Palaru in Pachil Kurram, a subdivision of Raja raja Valanadu. It is mentioned in the Karandai Tamil Sangam plates of Rajendra Chola-I.70

Eriveerathalam at Singalanthapuram

Eriveerathalam inscription is at Singalanthapuram in Musiri region, 11th Century AD. It consists of 103 lines. Lines 1 to 6 are in Sanskrit. Lines 7 to 20 contain the meikirthi (eulogy) of the

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69 Ibid.
70 S. R. Balasubramaniam, op. cit., p. 308.
Inurruvar. Lines 19 and 20 refer to the place as Eriyum Erivirathalam. The achievements of the warrior group, called Valangai Uyyakkondar are mentioned in the lines between 22 and 65. As a token of appreciation of the achievements of the above said group, the Pathinenbhumi Virakodiayar of Singalanthakapuram assembled together and decided to donate the revenue enjoyed by them to the Uyyakkondars.\(^{71}\)

This place is situated at a distance of 12 kms from Thuraiyur on the way to Tiruchirappalli. At the centre of the village, there is an inscription in a beautiful stone on four sides. Though it was taken out in 1943 – 44, barring a few small notes, it was not fully read. On the one side, sculptures such as knife, lamp, etc., used as symbols by the trade group of Ayyappazhil Ainootruvar, were made. On the left and right side some lines were inscribed, but in dilapidated condition.\(^{72}\)

The fame of the people and the integrity of the people have been given on the inscription. With the help of the lord who got 500 victories and the people’s commitment to Lord Parameswaran at Ayyapazhinagar for their better part, the people may live a good life. Group of Padhinen Boomi Veera Kodiayar remembered the acts of bravery of the group of Valangai Uyyakkondar. When Vaikunda


Nadalvar was in trouble meted out by Irungolar and his group, group of Uyyakkondar saved Vaigunda. Two men of Uyyakkondan group lost their life. In a battle between trade group and Magada Nadalvar, a soldier called Sethan Thidaikkal killed Magada Nadalvar. Veerakkodiyar saved some life. It is considered to be a salvation. It is said that memory of this Padinen Kodiyar stone at Singalanthapuram, has been erected.\(^73\) The name Alagarai seems to derive from the waves of the river Cauvery. As the waves of the river hit the place, the name Alagarai came into use. Brahmi inscription of the 2\(^{nd}\) century A.D are found on the pottery, on some of which, terracotta figurines of god Ganapathy are inscribed.\(^74\)

**Musiri Periyavaaikkal Inscription**

Musiri Periyavaaikkal inscription, depicted the period of Rajaraja III, the Chola king, in his regnal year 1220 AD, refers to the construction of a stone sluice of the Karikala Chola Peraru at Musiri alias Mummudicholappettai in Rajarajavalanadu by a Samanata Mudali of Vaanakoovarayar.\(^75\)

**Chola Inscription at Karukudi**

A Chola inscription with bas-relief sculptures referring to a settlement of security guards of the merchant guilds was recently

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\(^73\) *Ibid.*


\(^75\) *ARE* 1890 No.70; *SII* Vol. IV, No. 394, p. 119.
found in Karukudi village, six kilometres from Thatthaiyangarpettai near Thuraiyur in Tiruchirappalli district.

The inscription identifies Karukudi as an agricultural village that was included under Karikalachola Valanadu that lay on the Northern bank of the Cauvery. The inscription mentions about the security forces of the eighteen lands of 79 states and a village called Vikrama Cholapuram.

Vikramacholapuram lying on the Western side of the main sluice was identified as ‘Eriviratalam’ and renamed as ‘Tribhuvana Virapattinam’. It is interesting to note that such inscriptions mentioning the security forces of the mercantile guilds and the renaming of existing villages either by the guards, merchant guilds or by local folks in honour of the security men are rarely found.

**Watchman for Villages in the Chola Period**

Rajaraja I also appointed 143 watchmen drawn from as many as 131 villages, one from each village was the minimum. These guards or watchmen were known by the name of Meykappu, meaning body guards. In the Rajasraya Valanadu Mahendramangalam in Mimalai Nadu a village watchman was appointed during the period of Rajaraja I. 

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77 Ibid.
An inscription of Rajaraja III mentions Musiri in Tamil (முசிரி) as Mummudi Chola Pettai. In Tamil it refers to the chief of the three kingdoms: Chera, Chola and Pandya. It also refers to the economic centre.\(^{78}\)

**Village Assembly in Thottiyam (Musiri Region)**

On the South wall of the Pattabhirama Swami Shrine in the same temple, there is an inscription in a damaged condition. It records an endowment of 8 \(\frac{1}{2}\) Kalanju of gold by the standard weight called Pachchirkal left by Niliyar a lady resident of Thottiyam in charge of the assembly of the village, who set apart some land in return as Archana-bhoga out of which the daily offerings to the god were to be provided for. The Assembly is said to have consisted of 48 members.\(^{79}\)

**Brahmadeya in Musiri Region**

It is generally believed that the creation of Brahmadeya was for attaining religious merit. However the Pallava copper plates mention the following as the reasons for the creation of Brahmadeyas.

1. Long life.
2. Strength.
3. Victory.
4. Dharma.

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\(^{78}\) ARE No.70 of 1890.

\(^{79}\) SII Vol. XIII; ARE No.600 of 1904.
5. Wealth and greatness.\(^{80}\)

The Pallava king Nandhivarman III created Brahmadeya village in the Chola region known as Kumaradi Mangalam for 24 Brahmins. Kumaradi Mangalam village is located near Musiri in Tiruchirappalli District.\(^{81}\)

Musiri region was in Mimalai Nadu. In this Nadu a Brahmadeya was created for Brahmanas in the name of Jayangonda Chola Chathurvethimangalam or Mahendramangalam Brahmadeyam.\(^{82}\) The Brahmadeya settlements as tax free villages created by ruling families and their subordinate authorities for the religious merit that it conferred on the founder. The first historiographically significant reappraisal of the Tamil region was that of Burton Stein, who described it as a rural/agrarian institution, with a very high degree of influence in the village.\(^{83}\)

**Pandya Period**

There are six inscriptions of Pandya period available in Musiri region. The King Jatavarman I (1253 – 1283 AD), Maravarman Vikrama Pandya II (1250 – 1276 AD), Jatavarman Sundara Pandya III (1278 – 1301 AD) and Jatavarman Sundara Pandya II (1277 –

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81 Ibid., p. 334.
82 SII 653, 659 / SII 17; 165; 38-39.
83 R. Champakalakshmi, *op. cit.*, p. 60.
1294 AD) ruled this area. They built temples at Srinivasanallur, Thuraiyur and Vellore.

**Historical Importance of Ayilur (Sriramasamudram)**

Ayilur, the abode of Valeeswarar, is a fertile village in Musiri taluk, Tiruchirappalli district. It is on the banks of river Cauvery. The village is a place of historical importance as evidenced by inscriptions. It was here that Pandiyan Nedunjadayan Paranthakan defeated Adigan of Kongunadu (Dhera). The inscriptions at Anamalai and Tiruchirappalli give various names as Jatila, Paranthakan and Varaguna to glorify Nedunjadayan. Nedunjadayan, the son of Rajasimha and Malava Queen was successor to the throne. He is said to have ruled for nearly fifty years (from 765 to 815 AD). He fought battles at Vellur, Vinnam and Saliyakkudi against the foes whose identity is not known.

Historical records indicate that he fought two great battles at Ayiraveli Ayilur and Pugalur on the northern banks of the Cauvery. He captured Adigan's chariot and several of his war-horses. As a result of this battle against the Adigan of Kongunadu, the entire kingdom of the Chera was brought under the Pandyan rule. It is believed that Adigan who was resided at Ayilur and Pugalur was a feudatory of the Western Kongu Chief.

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This pilgrimage place is situated, on the banks of the river Amaravathi, is also popularly known as ‘Thiruveni Sangamam’, the confluence of Cauvery, Amaravathi and Andaravahini. Pushpavanakashi is yet another name by which this place is known.\(^{85}\)

**Hoysala Period**

The Hoysalas held sway over influenced in the Musiri region. There are four inscriptions available at Kannanur. The Hoysala king Viraramanathan (1254 – 1279 AD) and Poysaleswara ruled this area and constructed a temple for lord Kannan.

**Vijayanagar Period**

During the time of Vijayanagara period more donations were offered by the King Venkata IV to the Musiri Chandramouleeswara temple. Four copper plates and two inscriptions are available in the temple. Virapratapa Krishnadeva Maharaya (1509 – 1530 AD) made donation to this temple. Srirangadeva Maharaja (1572 – 1585 AD) also offered donation to the Musiri Chandramouleeswara temple.

**Chandramouleeswarar Temple Copper Plate**

The above copper plate was issued by Vijayanagara king Venkata IV records the assignment of income from the levy on merchandise from Kulittandalai at the rate of 1/32 (Panam) per load by some Chettis of Kulittandalai to provide for the palanquin service on the occasion of

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\(^{85}\) *Dinamani* (Tamil Daily), 11\(^{th}\) June 1978, p. 10.
ardhajama puja for the deities of the temple, at Musiri alias Mummudi Cholapettai for the merit of Muttuvira – Chokkanatha – Nayakkar during the reign of Tupakula Ramakrishnappa Nayakkar at the instance of Tandavaraya Mudaliyar.\(^\text{86}\)

The above Temple’s Copper plate No. 4 was issued by Vijayanagara King Venkata IV, records the gift of 72 pon annually out of the income from Padikkaval in Kudalur by Chinobakumara Kempaya Nayakkar, son of Periyoba Kempaya – Nayakkar of Vallantantaram in Viramalai Palayam to provide for daily worship in the temple.\(^\text{87}\)

**Musiri alias Mummudisolapettai**

Chandramoulisvara Temple, Copper Plate No. 2, Vijayanagara Venkata IV, Saka 1631, Vikritt, Avani, 3, records the assignment of income for the above temple at Musiri alias Mummudisolapettai.\(^\text{88}\)

**Musiri alias Gopalakrishnasamudram**

Chandramoulisvara Temple Copper Plate of Vijayanagara Venkata IV (Saka 1631, Vikritt, Avani 3), records the endowment of lands for the god and the goddess Cholisvara and Karpuravalli Amman for the

\(^{86}\) *Copper Plate*, No. 17, Chandramouleeswarar Temple, 1619 of 1966.

\(^{87}\) *Copper Plate*, No.19, 1619 of 1966.

\(^{88}\) *Copper Plate*, Musiri, 17 of 1966.
Talattar, Nambiyar, and the Desigal by the learned residents of Musiri alias Gopalakrishnasamudram.\textsuperscript{89}

**Musiri alias Mummudicholanpettai-Amur-nadu**

There is an inscription in the Chandramoulisvara temple, which records the grant of income from certain levies from the residents of a locality to Cholisvaramudaiya – Tambiranar in Musiri alias Mummudi Cholanpettai in Amur Nadu in Rajaraja Valanadu by Mulvay Viraiya Denayakkar.\textsuperscript{90}

**Thuraiyur Zamindar in Musiri Region**

According to tradition Thuraiyur Zamindari was founded by one Anna Reddiyar, who came from the north on his pilgrimage to Rameswaram and subdued a local miscreant in favour of a local chief of Chettikkulam (Perambalur District) and later established himself as a chief of Thuraiyur.\textsuperscript{91} However inscriptions reveal one Erama Reddiyar as the earliest known chief of the Zamindari system. An inscription of 1594 AD refers to Erama Reddy. The record also refers to him as a subordinate of Venkappa Nayaka of Gingee. An inscription mention the names of some eleven chiefs who ruled in the year 1594 AD, and their religious activities such as construction of temples and gifts for them.\textsuperscript{92}

\textsuperscript{89} Copper Plate, Musiri, 18 of 1966.
\textsuperscript{90} ARE 318 of 1966.
\textsuperscript{91} A. Vadivelu, The Aristocracy of Southern India, Madras, 1920, p. 295.
\textsuperscript{92} ARE 14 of 1920, SII XIII, No. 323.
The place Musiri is linked with the historic past. The name Musiri is mentioned in various literature. The geographical features of this region make this place as lush and fertile. The places of Musiri region is well knitted with Neolithic and Megalithic culture. The name description states this place as historically important place and it has puranic background. It was popular during the Pallava, Chola, Pandya, Hoysala, Vijayanagar kingdoms. With this background the political sovereignty over Musiri is going to be described in the next chapter.