



**DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY  
LOYOLA COLLEGE (Autonomous)**



*cordially invites you to*

**Prof.S.Rajendran Endowment Lecture**

**On**

**Recent Archaeological Discoveries and its Impact on  
the Cultural History of TamilNadu**

**By**

**Prof.K . Rajan  
Professor, Department of History,  
Pondicherry University**

**07th Feb 2020**

**11.30 AM**

**Preview Theatre, Vis.Com Block**



## PROF. RAJENDRAN ENDOWMENT LECTURE REPORT

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The Department of History, Loyola College, Chennai, organized the *Prof. S. Rajendran Endowment Lecture on Recent Archaeological Discoveries and its Impacts on the Cultural History of Tamil Nadu* by **Prof. K. Rajan**, on 7<sup>th</sup> February 2019, at Preview Theatre, Vis. Com. Block, Loyola College at 11:30 AM. Students and faculty from the Department of History attended this programme.

Mr. J. Ranganathan, Co-ordinator, Shift II, honoured Prof. K. Rajan, the Chief Guest, with a shawl. Dr. P. J. Biju Joseph introduced Prof. K. Rajan, the Chief Guest of the endowment lecture, to the audience.

The stage was then taken over by Prof. K. Rajan, who delivered a lecture on **‘Recent Archaeological Discoveries and its Impacts on the Cultural History of India’**. He started off with acknowledging the contributions of his students and countless number of people who have helped him with his archaeological discoveries. He, then highlighted the six sources he and his team of archaeologists used in excavations. He talked about two questions – linking archaeological data with literary data, and linking literary data with archaeological data.

Prof. K. Rajan mentioned about memorial stones which are called *nadukarkal* in Tamil. He mentioned about the burial practices and the criteria to bury the deceased according to Tamil literary works like *Manimekalai* and *Tholkapiyam*. He talked about an earthenware that contained the images of a bird, a paddy plant, a deer, and a human who is supposedly thought to be a woman, and explained how Tamils have been concerned over their ecosystem in the classical time.

He explained the etymology of place names in Tamil with suffixes like *nallur*, *puram*, *sandhai*, *pettai*, *chavadi*, *palli* and *kadigai*. He particularly explained about the history of the word ‘Thaandrikudi’, a place in Dindigul district, which is now referred to as ‘Thaandikudi’. He also spoke about the Tamil words ‘Aadi’ which means glass and ‘Kannaadi’ which means an eye-wear or spectacle. He also mentioned how the names of the Tamils were in the classical period, where every individual had his/her father’s name as the first name and his/her given name as the last name.

Prof. K. Rajan mapped various archaeological sites in Tamilagam through his extensive archaeological studies. He specifically showed how trade routes in the classical period linked Musiri in the west coast,

and Poompuhar and Korkai in the east coast via places like Karur and Madurai. He mentioned about a highway named 'KongamPeruvazhi', a route that runs across Kongu Nadu.

He spoke about excavated sites and artefacts found within urns and graves. He mentioned about two semi-precious stones namely lapis lazuli, which means *Vaiduriyam* in Tamil, and Carnelian. He went on to explain how the Indian history starts around the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC from Tamil heritage and not the Prakri heritage, with proofs from recent excavations from Keezhadi.

Prof. K. Rajan highlighted the prosperity of the Sangam Tamils by showing the richness of artefacts, particularly, the voluminous presence of carnelian in the burial sites and urns. He also spoke about the extraordinary literary skills of the ancient Tamils by studying the words found on earthenware. He also spoke about the engineering and mathematical skills of Tamils by talking about bricks and crucibles.

He narrated his archaeological studies to the audience by sharing his work experience with people in places like Gujarat to as far as Afghanistan. He explained how a stone object was rightly interpreted by an ornament-maker, after he misinterpreted it. He also spoke about the importance of having an open mind to be effective in the field of archaeology.

Prof. K. Rajan established two theories on how the Indus culture or the language could have spread southwards from the Indus basin to Sri Lanka. He attested the graffiti marks and the Tamil Brahmi script to prove his theories. He said graffiti marks found in the Indus basin moved southwards via Malwa region, Maharashtra, Southern India and south of Sri Lanka. He also said that Tamils in Sri Lanka during the ancient time lived in large numbers in the southern part of Sri Lanka in contrary to the bustling Tamil populace in the northern and eastern parts of the island today.

He also spoke about how copper and tin came to South India from places like Thailand when the same materials were available in Rajasthan. He also mentioned about the creation of first steel in Asia in South India which was then exported to places like Damascus in Syria.

Prof. K. Rajan spoke about an MoU (Memorandum of Understanding) between Tamilagam and ancient Egypt, which is possibly the earliest in the world. He displayed a map to explain the trade route between Musiri, Kerala and Alexandria, Egypt via Gulf of Aden and Red Sea. He specifically spoke about the Socotra Island of Yemen which has archaeological sites containing black pepper and pots from Malabar region, gold from Karur and Arikamedu. He also theorised how the people from South India could have settled in Arabian Peninsula, Thailand, Vietnam and China.

He also showed pictures of him taking an underwater dive as part of his archaeological studies. He spoke about marine archaeology and ethno-archaeology in particular. He showed the pictures of successful restoration of monuments in places like Gangai Konda Cholapuram, Mahabalipura, Tanjore and Darusuram and concluded his two-hour elevating lecture.



Mr. Ahilan Joe Woutres J. J., Assistant professor Shift I, gave the vote of thanks. The lecture ended at 1:30 PM, with the attendees well-receiving the lecture.

### ***VISUAL REPORT***

