



**Catalogue of the Stone Sculptures in  
the Collections of the Government  
Museum Trichy**

By

**Dr. N. Sankaranarayana**

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1997

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of the Government Museum  
Trichy

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## **FOREWARD**

The Government Museum at Tiruchirapalli has fairly a good collection of stone sculptures belonging to Pallava, Chola and Vijayanagar periods and some of them being outstanding examples of those periods. Dr. N. Sankaranarayana, the former Curator of Tiruchirapalli Government Museum has brought out a guide book on these sculptures to enable the visitors and scholars to understand them properly, which objective, I feel for certain will be achieved fully.

Government Museum,  
Chennai-600 008.

**K. DHEENADHAYALAN**  
*Commissioner of Museums*

Dated : 19th May 1997.



## CHAPTER-1.

### Introduction:

The district Museum at Tiruchirappalli, was inaugurated on 6th February 1983. The main reason for setting up district museums at district headquarters is to present under one roof the different facets of the district, viz., Cultural, Natural and industrial aspects.

The Museum was started with a rudimentary collection from the reserve stock of exhibits from the Madras Museum. Over the years, the museum collection was enriched with the acquisition of more exhibits through treasure trove, surface collection, purchase, gift etc.

The Museum has an impressive collection of stone sculptures, thanks to the efforts of some individuals who helped in the collection of those sculptures.

Some of the sculptures which were acquired after the inauguration of the Museum in 1983 are outstanding examples of sculptures of South India.

An attempt is made to present in this book, the catalogue of sculptures in the collection of the Museum with an introduction of sculptural art of India beginning from the Indus Valley period.

### History of Development of art in India:

The earliest works of plastic art in India may be dated to about the third and the fourth millennium B.C. The torso of a statuette of red stone, from Harappa is an early example of the beginnings of plastic art in India. The bronze figurine of a dancing girl from Mohanjo-Daro is another example of the great antiquity of art in India. Incidentally this figurine of the dancing girl is the earliest example of metal sculpture in this country.

### Mauryan Sculpture:

It was during the 3rd Century B.C. the art of sculpture started flourishing under the Mauryas the terracotta figures and the beautiful pillar with animal figures mark the beginning of sculptural art in India. The stupas at Amaravathi and Bharahut are fine examples of plastic art in India, datable to the 2nd Century B.C to the early centuries of the Christian era. The previous births of the Buddha, known as Jatakas and the important incidents in the Buddha's life, such as birth, renunciation, enlightenment and the great parinivana were the subject of the sculpture.

### Sculptures belonging to early centuries of the Christian Era.

The sculptural wealth of India is so vast both in space and time that it is not possible to go into details of the history of its development. But it is sufficient to make a short reference to the important periods and the dynasties which were responsible for their growth. The sculpture of the stupas of Sanchi, Amaravathi, Nagarjunakonda. Bodhi Gaya which are datable to about the 3rd Century B.C. to 2nd Century A.D. may be cited as examples of sculptural art of early period. In the words of Stella Kramrisch. "The work of Sanchi is tumultuously naturalistic. There a profusely surging plastic mass demands a high relief, with rich interplay of light and darkness, that combined with the three dimensional tangibility of objects, their variegated grouping and the freedom of movement of the full-limbed figures, produces massive and vigorous compositions"<sup>1</sup>. The Amaravati Sculpture of the first century B.C. are noted for their delicate movement and elegance. The men women and the beasts which are represented in reliefs look natural.

### Western Chalukyas, Visnukundins, Ikshvakus etc.

The Salankayanas, who ruled from Vengi in the 4th-5th A.d. the Visnukundins, the lords of the Vengi Country, in the 5th-6th Centuries A.D. the Western Chalukyas and other dynasties in the early medieval

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<sup>1</sup> Stella Kramrisch p. 32

period contributed to the growth and development of art. The earliest examples of early Western Chaucy art are from Aihole, Badami and Pattadakal, where beautiful monuments exist. The magnificent caves at Badami are great examples of (Chalukyas art. They created such splendid figures of Nataraja, Ardhanarisvara panels of Visnu seated on Ananta, Trivikrama etc. The aforesaid works of art which belong to the medieval period and to the Decan were fore-runners of the Pallava, Chola and Vijayanagar period.

#### **Pallava, Chola and Vijayanagar period:**

During the reign of the Pallavas, Cholas and Vijayanagar kings, Tamil Nadu witnessed a tremendous activity in art and architecture. The Pallavas have introduced rock cut emple architecture for the first time in their Kingdom in the South, that is in the Tamil Speaking area, Mahendravarman had the apt title "Vichitrachiotta" for he was a lover of art and a versatile person. The five Rathas at Mamallapuram and other places are the testimony of their encouragement to art and architecture.

It was during the period of the Cholas, art and architecture reached its Zenith. Hundreds of temples, big and small were constructed during the times of the Cholas. The Brihadeeswara temple at Thanjavur and the great temple at Gangaikondasolapuram by Rajaraja I and Rajendra-I are great monuments which reflect the mastery of the Chola Craftsmen in the art of temple building. The Chola artists adorned the different parts of the temple with sculptural art. The theme employed was drawn from the Ramayana, mythology, animals and dance scenes. The Chola art reached high water mark during the early phase i.e. 850-1,000 A.D. Dakshinamoorthi, Ganesa, Ardhanariswara, Durga, Brahma, Vishnu etc., are some of the sculptural representations in round which adorn the temples of the Cholas. images of the Chola period show a fine treatment of face, hands and posture. The Chola artist achieved the perfection in the iconoplastic art.

"All Chola sculptures of the tenth and eleventh centuries are endowed with a tough vitality and modelled vigorously, but leaves the surface as if in a state of animated flexibility" writes Nihar Rajan Ray<sup>1</sup>.

#### **Vijayanagar period:**

The Cholas were succeeded by the Vijayanagar rulers. During the Vijayanagar period, art and architecture received liberal, patronage. Additions were made to the existing temples. During the Vijayanagar period a marked change is discernible in the iconoplastic art. We find an excessive ornamentation. It is not unusual to find sculptures with sharp features. The attitude in the sculpture tend to be stiff.

<sup>1</sup> NIHAR RANJAN RAY—The Struggle for the Empire—p. 670.

## CHAPTER II.

### Some outstanding sculptures in the Museum at Trichy.

#### Vishnu-Mullikarumbur:

Vishnu from Mullikarumbur is an early piece and is datable to about 9th Century A.D. Vishnu is represented with four hands, in the upper hands, he holds conch and discus which are in prayoga aspect, which is a feature of early images. his lower left hand is on the hip and the lower right hand is in Varadamudra. He has a long Kirita makuta, Characteristic of Pallava period. He has a natural expression. The face is round. The ornamentation is scanty-a feature noticeable in sculptures of early period. because of the weathering of the rock, Yajnopavita (sacred thread) is not seen.

#### Visnu—Allundur:

This image of Visnu is also like the Visnu sculpture from Mullikarumbur is in standing posture. he has a long Kirita makuta. The face is round and the expression is natural. He has a thick yajnopavita, a feature of the sculptures belonging to early period. he has four hands and in the upper hands he carries conch and discus which is in prayoga pose. The lower left hand is on the hip and the lower right hand in abhaya mudra. Ornamentation is scanty-except for arm bands and anklets.

#### Buddha-Kulumani, Tiruchi Taluk:

Buddha seated under the Bodhi tree in abhya mudra (the lower part is not seen). He has long elongated ear lobes. he is flanked on both sides by attendants. Usnisa (hair) is in the form of a flame, similar to the Buddhist bronzes from Nagapattinam. The robe is folded and goes over the left arm. The right arm is bare.

#### Jyesthadevi-Allundur:

There are two relief sculptures of this deity in the collection. This image from Allundur is a good piece. The panel (relief) of Jyestha consists of three deities. The main deity is represented with breasts and big belly. She has two hands, one resting on the left thigh and the other holding something (lotus) which is not seen because of weathering of the stone. She is flanked on both sides by a bull faced human being to her right side holding a club and on the left side a woman who resemble the main deity. There is a crow seated on a standard.

#### Venugopala-Tiruchi District:

Krishna holding a flute a playing it. in the other two hands he holds conch and discus. The ornaments in the hands consist of arm bands and wristlets. The ears are adorned with rathana Kundaas. The ornamentation is comparatively much. The sculpture can be dated to about 14th Century.

#### Chandikeswara-Solapuram, North Arcot District:

he is represented with two hands and in the right hand he carries a club. His left hand is shown resting on the knee. His right leg is raised and the foot rests on the pedestal. He wears thick (ribbon like) sacred thread which goes over the right arm. The face is round and has a clear expression. The ornamentation is scanty. The image belongs to early period.

#### Durga-Solapuram, North Arcot District:

She is represented with four hands. in the upper hands she is carrying conch and discus. The lower right hand is in a abhaya mudra and the lower left hand rests on the left hip. The sacred thread is thick (ribbon like) and goes over the right arm, a characteristic of sculptures of early period. The expression is natural. The sculpture can be dated to about 9th or 10th Century.

**Neminatha-Sangaliandapuram, Tiruchi:**

Standing in samabhanga with hands hanging down. At the centre of the chest, a triangular symbol is seen, which is in a raised position. The figure is without garments. Two attendants are shown standing on either side. The sculpture may be dated to about 12th Century A.D.

**Sumathinatha-Sangaliandapuram, Trichi:**

The sculpture is almost identical with that of Neminatha, except a serpent hood over the head of the Tirthankara. This can also be dated to about 12th Century A.D.

**Dakshinamurthi-Alambakkam, Lalgudi:**

Fragment of a sculpture. The portion below the navel is broken and missing. Dakshinamoorthi is shown with four hands under a tree. There is a figure of a swan on the branch of the tree. The hands are broken. The Sculpture can be dated to about 12th Century A.D.

**Hero Stones:**

The cult of hero worship was a popular institution in Tamil Nadu, known as Natukal (The planted stone). There are two hero stones in the Museum which may be dated to about the 9th Century A.D. Both are relief sculptures in which the hero is shown as standing, preparing to cut the head. In the sculpture from Uyyamkondan, the hero is holding his locks in his left hand and cutting the neck with a dagger held in his right hand. The remarkable feature of this sculpture is that the act of cutting the neck is very well portrayed, especially the movement of the body.



## CATALOGUE

1. Name .. Visnu.  
 Material .. Stone  
 Provenance .. Thanjavur District.  
 Museum Accession No. .. T53/82.  
 Date .. 16th Century A.D.  
 Height .. 6'4".  
 Breadth .. 2'8".  
 Transferred from Government Museum, Chennai.
2. Name .. Buddha  
 Material .. Stone  
 Provenance .. Analai Village, Tiruchi Taluk, Tiruchirapalli district.  
 Museum Accession No. ..  
 Date .. 10th Century A.D.  
 Height .. 4'11".  
 Breadth .. 4'1".
3. Name .. Durga.  
 Material .. Stone  
 Provenance .. Solavaran, North Arcot District.  
 Museum Accession No. .. T54/82.  
 Date .. 9th Century A.D.  
 Height .. 3'4".  
 Breadth .. 1'5".
4. Name .. Chandikesvara.  
 Material .. Stone  
 Provenance .. Solavaram, North Arcot District.  
 Museum Accession No. .. T55/82.  
 Date .. 9th Century A.D.  
 Height .. 3'9".  
 Breadth .. 1'8".  
 Transferred from Government Museum, Chennai.
5. Name .. Venugopala.  
 Material .. Stone  
 Provenance .. Thiruchi District.  
 Museum Accession No. .. T56/82.  
 Date .. 15th Century A.D.  
 Height .. 2'5".  
 Breadth .. 1'6".  
 Transferred from Government Museum, Chennai.
6. Name .. Devi.  
 Material .. Stone  
 Provenance .. Thiruchi District.  
 Museum Accession No. .. T57/82.  
 Date .. 15th Century.  
 Height .. 2'6".  
 Breadth .. 1.  
 Transferred from Government Museum, Chennai.

7. Name .. Dakshinamurti.  
 Material .. Stone.  
 Provenance .. Alampakkam, Lalgudi, Tiruchi District.  
 Museum Accession No. .. T282/82.  
 Date .. 10th Century A.D.  
 Height .. 1'8".  
 Breadth .. 1'2".
8. Name .. Subrahmanya.  
 Material .. Stone.  
 Provenance .. Alampakkam, Lalgudi, Tiruchi District.  
 Museum Accession No. .. T283/82.  
 Date .. 10th Century A.D.  
 Height .. 1'3".  
 Breadth .. 1'5".
9. Name .. Buddha.  
 Material .. Stone.  
 Provenance .. Musiri Taluk, Tiruchi District.  
 Museum Accession No. .. T284/82.  
 Date .. 19th Century.  
 Height .. 1'8".  
 Breadth .. 1'.
10. Name .. Visnu.  
 Material .. Stone.  
 Provenance .. Kulitalai Taluk, Tiruchi District.  
 Museum Accession No. .. T60/83.  
 Date .. 17th Century.  
 Height .. 3'8".  
 Breadth .. 1'6".
11. Name .. Sri Devi.  
 Material .. Stone.  
 Provenance .. Kulitalai Taluk, Tiruchi District.  
 Museum Accession No. .. T61/83.  
 Date .. 17th Century.  
 Height .. 3'1".  
 Breadth .. 1'.
12. Name .. Rama.  
 Material .. Stone.  
 Provenance .. Mullikarumbur.  
 Museum Accession No. .. T2/84.  
 Date .. 10th Century.  
 Height .. 3'4".  
 Breadth .. 2'1".

13. Name .. Mahavira.  
 Material .. Stone.  
 Provenance .. Mullikarumbur.  
 Museum Accession No. .. T3/84.  
 Date .. 10th Century.  
 Height .. 3'.  
 Breadth .. 2'.
14. Name .. Visnu.  
 Material .. Stone.  
 Provenance .. Mullikarumbur.  
 Museum Accession No. .. T4/84.  
 Date .. 9th Century.  
 Height .. 4'.  
 Breadth .. 2'8".
15. Name .. Visnu.  
 Material .. Stone.  
 Provenance .. Vaigai Nalattur Village, Kulitalai Taluk, Tiruchi District.  
 Museum Accession No. .. T1/85.  
 Date .. 12th Century.  
 Height .. 5'10".  
 Breadth .. 3'1".
16. Name .. Sumatinatha.  
 Material .. Stone.  
 Provenance .. Sangliandapuram, Tiruchi District.  
 Museum Accession No. .. T2/85.  
 Date .. 14th Century.  
 Height .. 2'3".  
 Breadth .. 9'5".
17. Name .. Neminatha.  
 Material .. Stone.  
 Provenance .. Sangliandapuram, Tiruchi District.  
 Museum Accession No. .. T3/85.  
 Date .. 14th Century.  
 Height .. 2'7".  
 Breadth .. 1'5".
18. Name .. Devi.  
 Material .. Stone.  
 Provenance .. Poyyamani, Kulitalai Taluk, Tiruchi District.  
 Museum Accession No. .. T1/86.  
 Date .. 14th Century.  
 Height .. 3'5".  
 Breadth .. 1'3.5".

19. Name .. Visnu.  
 Material .. Stone.  
 Provenance .. Allundur, Viralimalai, Tiruchi District.  
 Museum Accession No. .. T2/86.  
 Date .. 9th Century A.D.  
 Height .. 5'7".  
 Breadth .. 2'7".
20. Name .. Jyesthadevi.  
 Material .. Stone.  
 Provenance .. Allundur, via Viralimalai, Tiruchi District.  
 Museum Accession No. .. T3/86.  
 Date .. 10th Century.  
 Height .. 3'4".  
 Breadth .. 3'4".
21. Name .. Jyesthadevi.  
 Material .. Stone.  
 Provenance .. Allundur, via Viralimalai, Tiruchi District.  
 Museum Accession No. .. T3/86.  
 Date .. 10th Century.  
 Height .. 2'10".  
 Breadth .. 2'10".  
 Condition—The State of preservation is bad. Stone is peeling off.
22. Name .. Hero Stone.  
 Material .. Stone.  
 Provenance .. Allundur, via Viralimalai, Tiruchi District.  
 Museum Accession No. .. T5/86.  
 Date .. 11th Century.  
 Height .. 2'9".  
 Breadth .. 1'8".
23. Name .. Kotaravai.  
 Material .. Stone.  
 Provenance .. Allundur, via Viralimalai, Tiruchi District.  
 Museum Accession No. .. T6/86.  
 Date .. 12th Century.  
 Height .. 2'4".  
 Breadth .. 2'1".  
 Condition.—In bad condition. Weather beaten.
24. Name .. Window with inscription.  
 Material .. Stone.  
 Provenance .. Allundur, via Viralimalai, Tiruchi District.  
 Museum Accession No. .. T7/86.  
 Date .. 10th Century A.D.  
 Height .. 2'8".  
 Breadth .. 2'8".

25. Name .. Stone inscription.  
 Material .. Stone.  
 Provenance .. Allundur, via Viralimalai, Tiruchi District.  
 Museum Accession No. .. T5/86.  
 Date .. 14th Century.  
 Height .. 1'8".  
 Breadth .. 1'2".
26. Name .. Worshipper.  
 Material .. Stone.  
 Provenance .. Allundur, via Viralimalai, Tiruchi District.  
 Museum Accession No. .. T9/86.  
 Date .. 10th Century.  
 Height .. 2'9".  
 Breadth .. 1'6".
27. Name .. Worshipper.  
 Material .. Stone.  
 Provenance .. Allundur, via Viralimalai, Tiruchi District.  
 Museum Accession No. .. T10/86.  
 Date .. 10th Century.  
 Height .. 2'7".  
 Breadth .. 1'2".
28. Name .. Hero Stone.  
 Material .. Stone.  
 Provenance .. Uyyankondan.  
 Museum Accession No. .. T28/86.  
 Date .. 11th Century.  
 Height .. 4'2".  
 Breadth .. 1'5".
29. Name .. Visnu.  
 Material .. Stone.  
 Provenance .. Sengalam.  
 Museum Accession No. .. T29/86.  
 Date .. 14th Century.  
 Height .. 2'5".  
 Breadth .. 1'4".
30. Name .. Hero Stone.  
 Material .. Stone.  
 Provenance .. Lalgudi, Tiruchi District.  
 Museum Accession No. .. T31/86.  
 Date .. 12th Century.  
 Height .. 4'9".  
 Breadth .. 1'8".

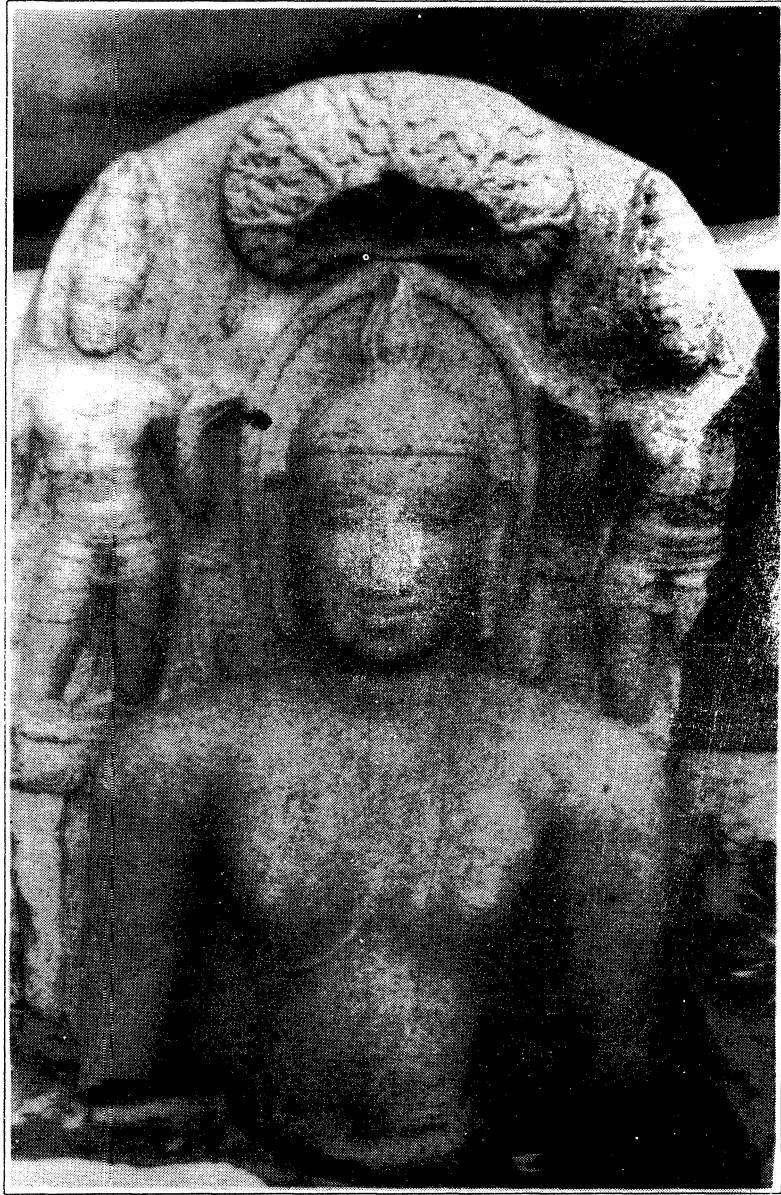
31. Name .. Rama.  
 Material .. Stone.  
 Provenance .. Kandiratheertham, Ariyalur Taluk, Tiruchi District.  
 Museum Accession No. .. T21/90.  
 Date .. 15th Century.  
 Height .. 2'8".  
 Breadth .. 1'2".
32. Name .. Durga.  
 Material .. Stone.  
 Provenance .. Tiruengoimalai, Musiri Taluk, Tiruchi District.  
 Museum Accession No. .. T4/92.  
 Date .. 12th Century.  
 Height .. 3'5".  
 Breadth .. 1'7".
33. Name .. Inscribed Stone Slab.  
 Material .. Stone.  
 Provenance .. Allundur, via Viralimalai, Tiruchi District.  
 Museum Accession No. .. T79/90.  
 Date .. 11th Century.  
 Height .. 1'6".  
 Breadth .. 1'2".
34. Name .. Suparsvanatha.  
 Material .. Stone.  
 Museum Accession No. .. T151/90.  
 Date .. 12th Century.  
 Height .. 3'11".  
 Breadth .. 1'4".
35. Name .. Iyarpagai Nayanar.  
 Material .. Stone.  
 Provenance .. Uraiyr, Tiruchi District.  
 Museum Accession No. .. T178/90.  
 Date .. 19th Century.  
 Height .. 2'4".  
 Breadth .. 8'5".
36. Name .. Rama.  
 Material .. Stone.  
 Provenance .. Kandirateertham, Ariyalur Taluk, Tiruchi District.  
 Museum Accession No. .. T30/90.  
 Date .. 14th Century.  
 Height .. 35 cm.  
 Breadth .. 30 cm.

Condition.—Badly damaged. No head and feet are broken.





*Venugopala*  
*Thiruchy*  
*15th Century A.D.*



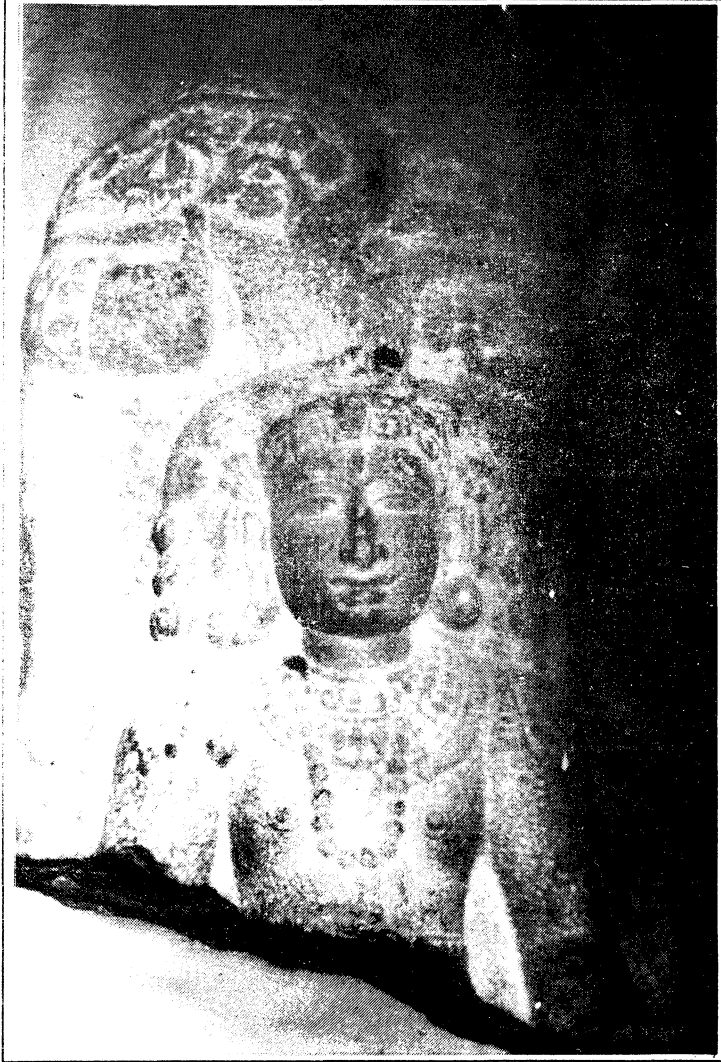
*Buddha*  
*Analai Village, Thiruchy District*  
*10th Century A.D.*



*Durga*  
*Solavaram, North Arcot District*  
*9th Century A.D.*



*Chandikesvara*  
*Solavaram, North Arcot District*  
*9th Century A.D.*



*Dhakshinamurti*  
*Alampakkam, Lalgudi, Thiruchy District*  
*10th Century A.D.*



*Buddha (Seated)*  
*Musiri Taluk, Thiruchy District*  
*19th Century A.D.*

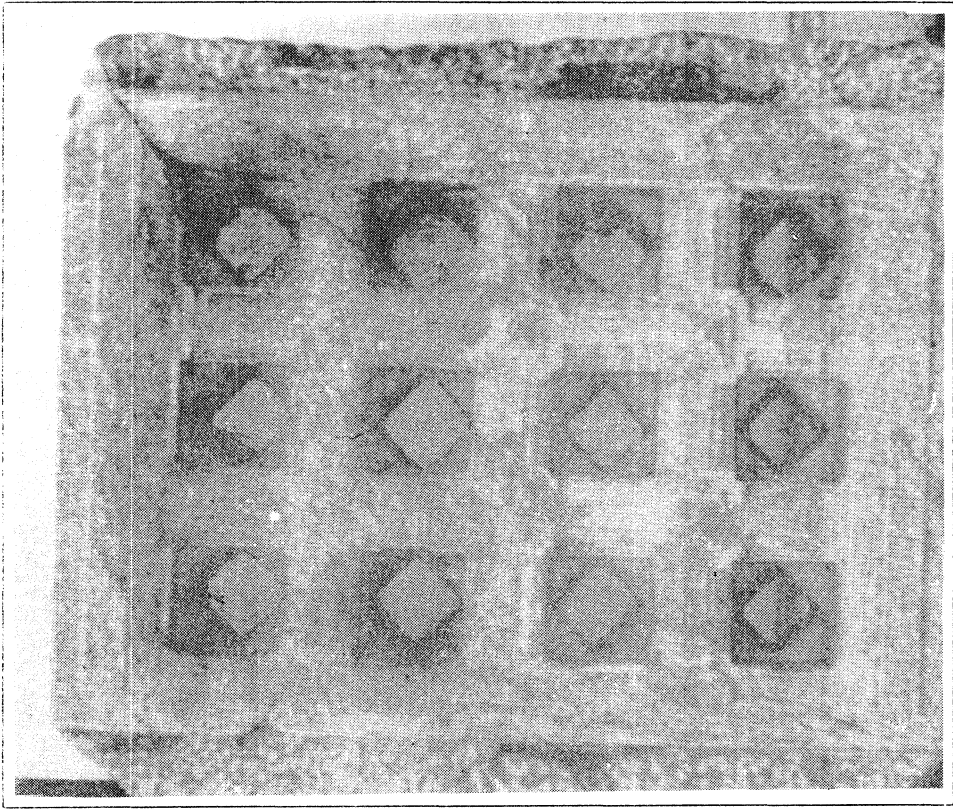




*Mahavira*  
*Mullikarumbur*  
*10th Century A.D.*



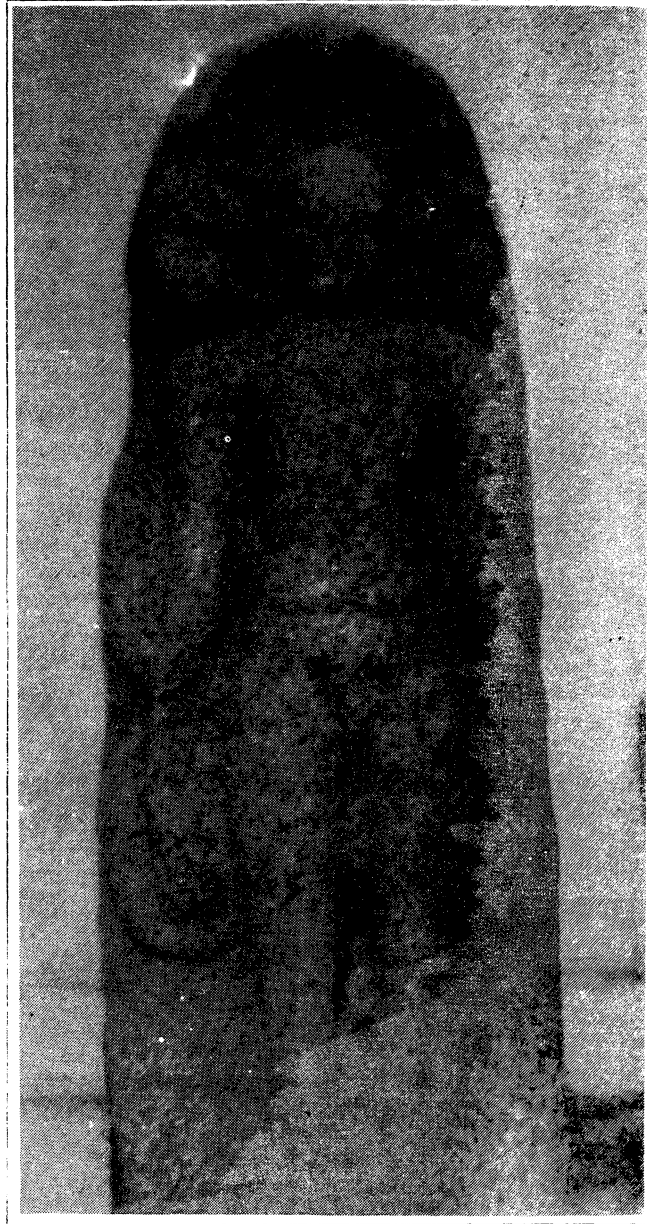
*Jyesthadevi*  
*Allundur, Thiruchi District*  
*10th Century A.D.*



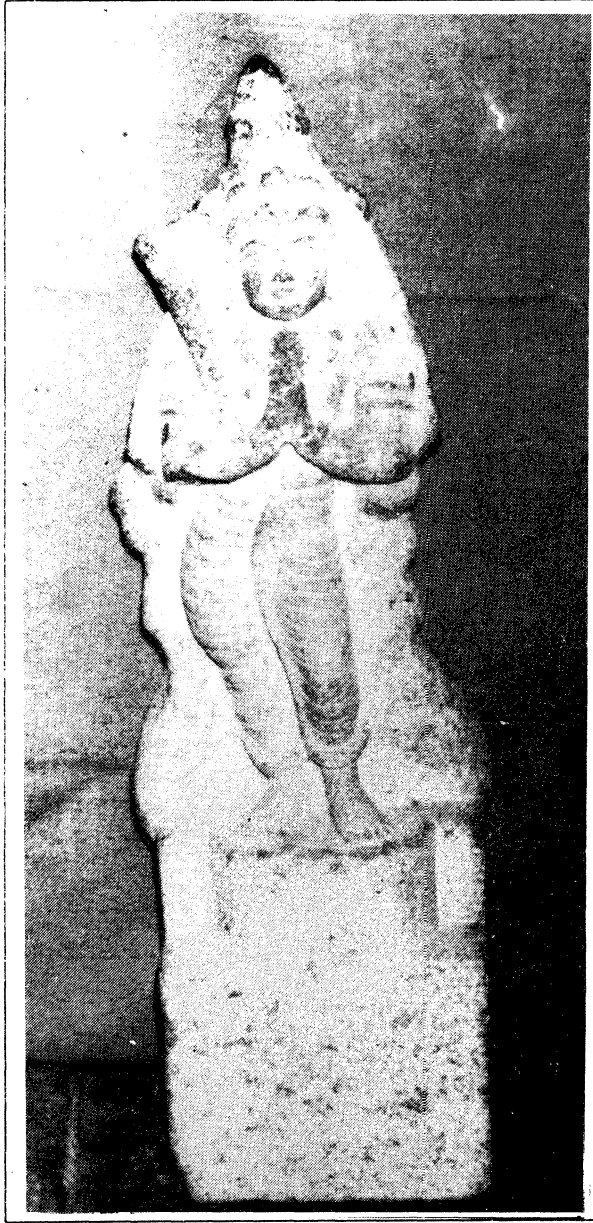
*Window with inscription  
Allundur, Thiruchi District  
10th Century A.D.*



*Visnu*  
*Sengalam, Thiruchi District*  
*14th Century A.D.*



*Suparsvanatha*  
*Contonment, Thiruchi*  
*12th Century A.D.*



*Iyarpagai Nayanar*  
*Uraiur, Thiruchi District*  
*19th Century A.D.*





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