

Students visited the Government Museum Palayamkottai

The Department of Archaeology organized a museum visit on 10th July 2024 to the Local Government Museum, Palayamkottai, for the I B.A. Archaeology students. The museum houses a diverse collection of antiquities that vividly illustrate the cultural evolution of human societies.

Among the exhibits were prehistoric artefacts, including hand axes, microliths, and a polished stone axe, which provided students with tangible insights into early technological innovations. From the Iron Age, the museum displayed a variety of offering vessels, funerary urns, and storage jars, attesting to the complexity of ancient ritual and domestic practices. In addition, a collection of historical sculptures, preserved in fragmentary yet significant form, offered perspectives on artistic expression and religious symbolism.

The professors meticulously interpreted each object and its functional significance, while also imparting training in the identification and stylistic analysis of sculptures, including their postures, attributes, and iconographic features. Through these explanations, students gained a deeper understanding of material culture and its pivotal role in reconstructing the social, economic, and religious history of the past.

The session further highlighted the critical role of museums in heritage preservation, education, and historical interpretation. Students expressed keen interest and intellectual curiosity, engaging enthusiastically with the displays and demonstrating a genuine excitement in exploring the material vestiges of antiquity.



**The Asst. professor delivered a gallery talk,
providing detailed explanations of the artefacts.**



**The Asst. professor offered
an interpretation of the Jain Sculpture**



**The Asst. professor offered
an interpretation of the sculptural
representation of Goddess**



Asst. Professors and I B.A., Archaeology Students



I B.A., Archaeology Students



**Activities- Observation and Feedback
IB.A., Student, Durgairajeshwaran**



Asst. Professors and I B.A., Archaeology Students

Association Meeting:2024-2025

The Department Association Meeting was convened on 26 July 2024, marking a significant academic gathering for the students and faculty of the Department of Archaeology. The session commenced with a gracious welcome address delivered by Dr. P. Ramesh, who set a dignified tone for the proceedings.

Following the welcome, the Presidential Address was delivered by the Rev. Fr. Principal, whose insightful words offered motivation and intellectual direction to the audience. The meeting was further enriched by felicitations extended by Dr. A. Lourdusamy and Rev. Fr. Dr. S. Aruldoss, both of whom acknowledged the importance of such academic interactions and encouraged students to pursue scholarly excellence.

The highlight of the event was the special lecture by the Chief Guest, Mr. Sivakumar, M.A., Curator, Government Museum, Tirunelveli. He delivered an engaging and academically stimulating presentation on various Prehistoric and Protohistoric sites, shedding light on their cultural significance and archaeological value. He also showcased a wide range of historical monuments and sculptural masterpieces, thereby deepening the students' understanding of heritage and material culture.

Beyond the structured curriculum, the Chief Guest offered valuable guidance on career opportunities in the field of Archaeology, discussing diverse job avenues and skill requirements in museums, research institutions, heritage management, and field archaeology. His address sparked great enthusiasm among the students, who actively participated by posing numerous questions related both to academic content and career prospects.

The programme concluded with a heartfelt Vote of Thanks proposed by Mr. K. Dinesh Kumar, Assistant Professor, who expressed gratitude to all dignitaries, organizers, and participants. The event was smoothly coordinated under the capable leadership of Mr. S. Sudharsan, I B.A., Archaeology, who served as the Master of the Ceremony, ensuring the seamless flow of proceedings.

Exploration in and around Kansapuram, Palayamkottai

The Department faculty, Dr. P. Ramesh, Assistant Professor, and Mr. K. Dinesh Kumar, Assistant Professor, together with I B.A. student, Petchimuthu Praveen, undertook an archaeological exploration on 10th September 2024 in and around Kansapuram, near Palayamkottai. During the survey, the team identified a stone bearing a religious wheel symbol, positioned upon a sacred pedestal, which is tentatively dated to a very late historical period.

In recognition of his active participation, keen observation, and genuine enthusiasm for archaeological fieldwork, student Petchimuthu Praveen was appreciated and commended for his exemplary involvement throughout the exploration.



**Asst Prof Dr. P.Ramesh
with IB.A.,Student Petchimuthu Praveen**



Conducting Inspection

Exploration- Kazhugumalai

The Department of Archaeology, St.Xavier's College (Autonomous), Palayamkottai organized an exploration programme on 24 September 2024 to Kazhugumalai and Vembakottai in commemoration of the birth anniversary of Sir John Marshall (late), former Director General of the Archaeological Survey of India.

At Kazhugumalai, students showed great enthusiasm as the professors elaborated on the architectural techniques of the rock-cut temple and the iconographic themes of the Jain sculptures. This session provided the students with a deeper understanding of the region's religious art and architectural heritage.

Subsequently, the students visited the scientific excavation being conducted by the State Department of Archaeology at Vembakottai. The excavation was under the supervision of Archaeologist Pon. Baskar, who explained the systematic methods of excavation and offered detailed insights into the material culture unearthed at the site.

The field experience proved to be academically rewarding and intellectually stimulating, as it enriched the students' knowledge of both monumental studies and field archaeology.



Professors and I B.A., Students, Rock cut temple



Professors and I B.A, Students, Kazhugumalai



Kazhugumalai Jains sculptures, Kazhugumalai



**Asst. Prof. Mr.K. Dinesh Kumar,
Discussing about the Jain Sculptures**



**Professors along with I.B.A., Students
during the exploration in Jain beds**

Vembakottai Excavation



**Professors, Archaeologist and I B.A., Students
Vembakottai site**



Temporary Archaeological site museum, Vembakottai

Adichanallur Site Museum visits-2024-2025

The Department of Archaeology organized an exploration programme on October 8th 2024 for the I B.A. Archaeology students (2024–2025) to Adichanallur and Krishnapuram, two sites of immense historical and cultural significance. The Department invited Mr. Muthalankurichi Kamarasu as the Resource Person and Local Guide, whose expertise greatly enriched the academic experience.

At Adichanallur, considered one of the most remarkable in-situ museums of the Iron Age in India, the professors provided detailed explanations on the geological formations, geographical features, megalithic structures, and funerary urns—both handmade and wheel-made varieties—as well as offering vessels of varying dimensions. Discussions also encompassed the antiquities and diverse material culture uncovered through past excavations, highlighting the site's importance in understanding early Iron Age societies.

The historical context and general features of Adichanallur were further elaborated by the Resource Person, Mr. Kamarasu, whose insights offered students a holistic perspective on the cultural landscape of the region.

The visit continued at Krishnapuram, where attention was drawn to the architectural brilliance of the temple, its artistic embellishments, sculptural details, and the historical background of the Vijayanagara and Nayak periods. Professors also conducted hands-on training sessions in epigraphy, guiding students in the techniques of deciphering scripts and reading inscriptions.

Throughout the programme, students were actively engaged, interacting with both the professors and the resource person. The field experience proved to be academically stimulating and intellectually rewarding, deepening their knowledge of archaeological method, art history, and cultural heritage studies.



Muthalankurichi Kamarasu and Students



Asst Professor Dr. P. Ramesh and Students



**Asst Prof Mr. K.Dinesh Kumar
elucidating different locations of excavated areas
and material culture of Adichanallur**



Students observing on the excavated site, Adichanallur



Asst Prof Dr. P. Ramesh
Explaining the features of
Temple art and Architecture
Krishnapuram

Workshop-2024

The Historical Heritage Field Research Centre (HFRC) in collaboration with the Rotary Club organized a workshop entitled “Recent Explorations in Archaeology” at the District Museum, Tirunelveli, on 18 December 2024. Students and Assistant Professors from the Department of Archaeology, St. Xavier’s College (Autonomous), Palayamkottai, actively participated in the programme.

The session was intellectually enriching, as participants engaged in dynamic and thought-provoking interactions with the Resource Person, Mr. E. Mariappan, Founder of HFRC. The students displayed keen academic curiosity, asking insightful questions and exchanging perspectives on recent archaeological discoveries. The workshop not only enhanced their understanding of field explorations and heritage interpretation but also fostered a spirit of critical inquiry and collaborative learning.



Professors, Resource person and I.B.A., Students

Christmas Celebration 2024–2025

St. Xavier's College, as part of its annual tradition, joyously celebrated Christmas on 19th December 2024 with grandeur and festive spirit. The celebration brought together all Departments of SXC, fostering unity, creativity, and the essence of the season.

As part of the festivities, various competitions were organized, and each Department was assigned a unique theme. The Department of Archaeology enthusiastically participated and was entrusted with the theme **“Peace and War.”** Through their creative presentation, the students beautifully conveyed the timeless message of harmony, emphasizing the triumph of peace over conflict.

The Christmas setting was executed with great dedication and artistry, leaving a lasting impression on the audience. The celebration not only showcased the talents of the students but also highlighted the deeper values of Christmas—love, hope, and peace.



Christmas Setting



Peace and War

Exploration in the Village Tharuvai-2025

The Department faculty, Dr. P. Ramesh, Assistant Professor, and Mr. K. Dinesh Kumar, Assistant Professor, accompanied by the I B.A. Archaeology students, undertook a field exploration on 8th January 2025 in the village of Tharuvai, situated along the picturesque banks of the River Tamiraparani. This culturally significant settlement is renowned for its ancient Śiva temple, Vazha Vallaba Pandeewarar, dedicated to the presiding deity and his consort Akhilandeswari (Devi), datable to the reign of Sundara Pandya (1216–1239 CE).

With the village embodying nearly a millennium of historical continuity, the students and staff conducted a comprehensive survey of the surrounding landscape. They also engaged in fruitful interactions with local residents to ascertain the presence of any additional materials, traditions, or information of archaeological relevance.

The students exhibited remarkable enthusiasm, participating wholeheartedly in the fieldwork and demonstrating commendable dedication to experiential learning in archaeology.



**Asst Prof Dr. P.Ramesh and
IB.A., Archaeology students
interacting with villager**



**Asst Prof Mr. K. Dinesh Kumar
 explaining the features of
 Temple Architecture**



Gurukkal delivering mythological stories



**Asst Prof Dr. P. Ramesh
delivering a lecture
on the Historical Background of the Temple**

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXHIBITION

HELD ON 17th and 18th FEBRUARY 2025

The Department of Archaeology organized an Archaeological Exhibition on 17th and 18th February 2025, showcasing an extensive range of cultural, historical, and scientific materials. The event aimed to enrich students' understanding of ancient civilizations, material culture, and the evolution of human technology.

The exhibition featured a remarkable assemblage of natural and archaeological specimens. Among the natural collections were fossils, preserved wood samples, dinosaur eggs, and various marine species, all of which offered valuable insights into prehistoric life and environmental transformations.

The display of archaeological material culture was particularly noteworthy. Visitors observed a series of prehistoric tools, including Palaeolithic, Mesolithic, and Neolithic implements, which illustrated the technological progression of early humans. Objects from later periods, such as iron implements and an antimony rod, further emphasized advancements in metallurgy.

A diverse range of ceramic traditions was also showcased, comprising Black and Red Ware, Black Ware, and Red Ware pottery. Several pots bearing graffiti marks drew considerable attention for their cultural and symbolic significance. Additionally, replicas of Indus Valley Civilization seals enriched the exhibition by highlighting early urban culture and script traditions.

The numismatic section displayed a wide spectrum of coins, ranging from Punch-Marked coins to examples from various historical and late historical periods. Complementing these were rare stamps and early currency notes, illustrating the evolution of economic and administrative systems.

The exhibition also incorporated contemporary material culture, including traditional domestic vessels, enabling visitors to observe continuity and change in everyday objects. A rare collection of ancient manuscripts provided an exceptional opportunity to appreciate early writing traditions and literary heritage.

A significant visual component featured photographs and documentation from celebrated archaeological and historical significance such as, Tamil-Brahmi inscriptions, Stupa, Chaityas, rock-cut temples, structural temples, rock paintings, and historical artworks. These visual displays offered a comprehensive overview of South India's cultural and architectural legacy.

The exhibition witnessed an impressive turnout, with nearly 2,500 students from various colleges and schools actively participating. Their enthusiastic engagement reflected the educational value and impact of the event.

Overall, the exhibition proved to be a highly enriching and inspiring initiative, fostering curiosity and awareness among young learners about ancient cultures, technological evolution, and heritage conservation. It stands as a significant academic

milestone for the Department and an invaluable learning experience for all participants.

Archaeological Exhibition 2024-2025



**Rev Fr. Dr S. Ignacimuthu, Rector
Highlighting Archaeological significance**



**Rev Fr. Dr. G. Pushparaj, Secretary, pointed out
The importance of Archaeological material cultures**



**Rev Fr. Dr. Godwin Rufus, Principal
Delivering an address on the value of Archaeology
and its significance**



Rev Fr. Rector presenting a memento to the Chief Guest



Chief Guest Dr. A. Manikumar
Former Vice Chancellor of Swami Vivekanand University,
Madhya Pradesh
Elucidating the importance of Archaeology for History



Asst Prof Dr. S. Alphonsa, organizer
of Archaeological Exhibition with Staff members



Staff and School Students

One day Workshop-Tharuvai

Following the preliminary survey conducted in the village of Tharuvai, the Department resolved to organize a specialized training programme on 14 March 2025. This workshop focused on essential epigraphical techniques, including the preparation of carbon ink, the method of taking estampages, and the procedure for producing eye copies.

The faculty members provided detailed demonstrations, ensuring that every step was clearly explained. Under their guidance, the students actively participated in preparing carbon ink, meticulously practising estampage techniques, and carefully replicating inscriptions through eye copies.

Through this hands-on training, all students gained proficient technical skills in these fundamental archaeological and epigraphical methods, thereby strengthening their practical understanding and field competence.



I B.A., Archaeology Students preparing Carbon ink



**Asst Prof Dr. P. Ramesh
explaining the preparation of Carbon ink**



**Asst Prof Mr. K. Dinesh Kumar,
taking Estampe along with students**



**IB.A., Archaeology students
taking Estampage**

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXPLORATION AT MARUKALTHALAI AND ULAKKUDI-23-03-2025

The Department staff, together with the I B.A. Archaeology students, undertook a field exploration at Marukalthalai and Ulakkudi, two culturally significant locales known for their rich archaeological potential.

At Marukalthalai, the team examined a highly noteworthy site distinguished by the presence of Jain beds and Tamil-Brahmi inscriptions. The students displayed keen interest in studying these early religious rock shelters and epigraphic remains, meticulously observing their form, layout, and cultural implications. Additionally, they recorded the geographical and geomorphological characteristics of the region, noting features that may have influenced ancient habitation and monastic activities.

During field interactions, local informants provided insights regarding the existence of Megalithic structures in the vicinity, particularly at Ulakkudi. Motivated by this information, the students proceeded to Ulakkudi, where they conducted systematic explorations. Here, they recovered iron slag—indicative of early metallurgical activity—and fragments of terracotta pipes.

Furthermore, the team identified and documented a variety of Megalithic monuments. Among these, a prominently standing Menhir captured the students' particular interest. They undertook measurements, recorded morphological details, and made detailed field observations to understand its cultural and chronological significance.

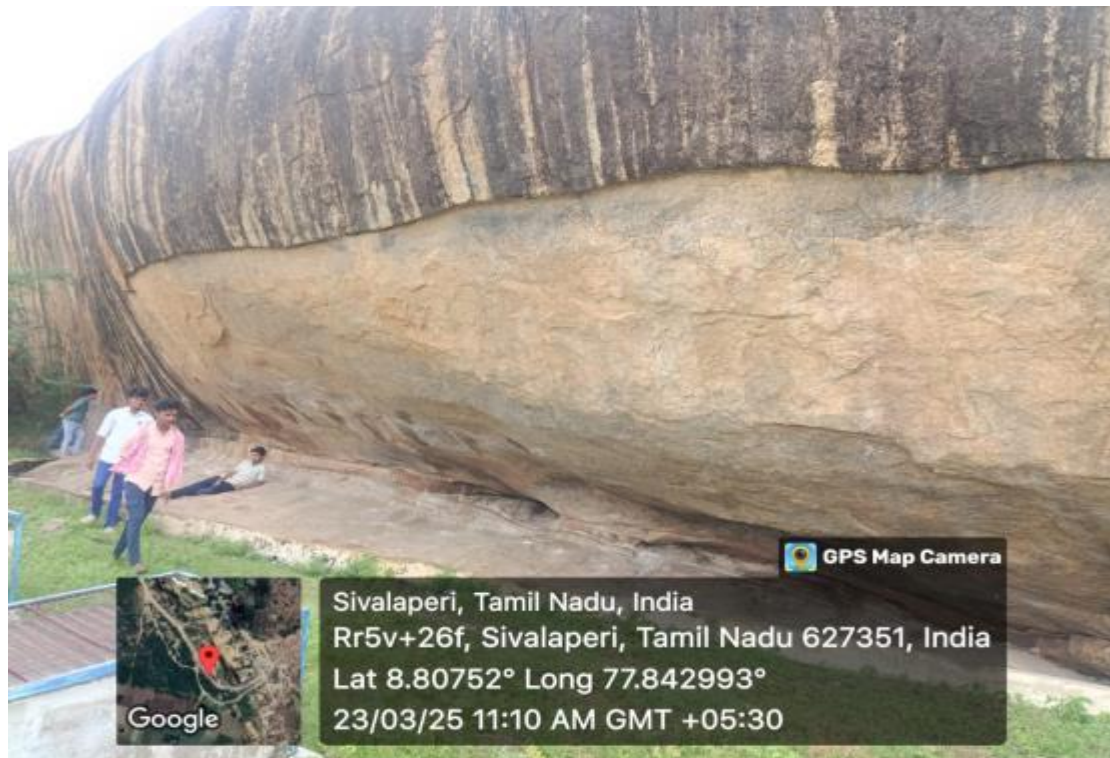
The exploration concluded with a comprehensive assessment of the geographical setting of the entire area, correlating environmental features with the archaeological evidence observed.



Jain Beds with Brahmi Inscriptions, Marukalthalai



I B.A., Students exploring the site



Jain beds, Marukalthalai



Brahmi inscriptions



Asst Prof. Mr K. Dinesh Kumar exploring the cave



I B.A., students exploring Early Historical site, Marukalthalai



Asst Professors along with I B.A., students



**Asst Prof. Dr. Ramesh instructing about Menhir
 I.B.A., students measuring the Menhir, Ulakkudi**

