

## Tamil Inscriptions of the Eastern Province

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There are more than one hundred and fifty Tamil inscriptions in the Island. They are mostly from the Trincomalee, Polonnaruwa, Anuradhapura, Kurunegala, Mannar and Ampara districts. Tamil inscriptions of Chola period have been discovered in the Eastern Province of the Island at Trincomalee, Padaviya, Kantalai, Nilaveli, Manankeni, Periyakulam, Tiriya and Nathanaar koyil. The Chola interlude in Sri Lanka's history was dated as 993 – 1070 A.D. The highest concentration of Tamil inscriptions in the Eastern Province shows that Eastern Province played an important role in the affairs of the Cholas.

These inscriptions mainly record the Tamil trading corporations such as *Nanadesis*, *Ainnuruvar*, *Virakkoti*. They played an important role in the Island trade and these mercantile communities built many Hindu temples and donated lands to these temples of this area. This period marked a deepening of the Tamil historical presence in the East. These inscriptions record vital information pertaining to kingship, establishments and cultural interactions. They are complementary to other sources of historical information.

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