



## UKKIRANKOTTAI: THE HISTORICAL STUDY OF PANDYA RULED VILLAGE

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### Abstract

*Ukkirankottai is a Village in Manur Taluk in Tirunelveli District of Tamil Nadu State, India. This place contains many historical pieces of evidence of ancient period. This place is well known to all the archeologist around the world. Many archeologists frequently visit this village to collect the traces of stone-age, Paleolithic Age and Neolithic age. The main object of this research survey is to analyze the traces of historical evidence and its specialties found from the ancient period in the Ukkirankottai village.*

**Keywords:** *Ukkirankottai, History, Pandya, Tirunelveli.*

### Introduction

In order to prevent encroachment in the border of Pandya's country, Nedunsadayan Parantaka alias Varaguna I (768-815 A.D) built a strong fort at Ukkirankottai near Manur. This fort still in this place and showing a lot of evidence of Pandya rulers who ruled in this place. Ukkirankottai was also known as Kalavanthapuram or Kalakkudi. Marankari, the Chief Minister of Varaguna I, hailed from Kalavanthapuram. Meraneyinar, a brother of Marankari, became Chief Minister of Pandya country after his brother. Varaguna I was succeeded by Sri Marasrivallabha (815-862 A.D) who defeated the Pallava Ruler Nandhivarman III at Tellaru battle. He subdued the combined forces of Pallavas, Cholas and the Gangas. Varaguna II ruled the Pandya country from 862 to 885 A.D. He was defeated by the combined forces of Aditya Chola, Aparajitha Pallava and Ganga ruler Pritavipathi at Kumbakonam. Parantaka Viranarayana ruled the country from 860 to 905 A.D.

### Sankaranainar Temple

In 1022 A.D. Maharaja Ukkirapandya, the ruler of Ukkirankottai situated near Manur in Tirunelveli district built the Sankaranainar Temple and around which Sankarankovil town came into existence. Before the construction of the temple, this place was surrounded by Pungai trees. Maharaja had the habit of worshipping God Sri Sundaesaperumal and Goddess Sri Meenakshi Amman at Madurai very often. One day while he was going to Madurai from Tenkasi and he witnessed a miracle. The elephant on which he was traveling hit the floor with its tusks, fell down and started rolling on the ground. The Pandya king did not know what to do. At the same time one Manikirivan, the watchman of nearby Pungai forest in Sankarankovil had cut a snake tail accidentally while digging near a flower bed. To his amazement he saw a Shivalinga inside the snake hole. At once he ran to the Maharaja who was standing nearby and informed the matter. Both of them went to the spot and found Shiva cobra beside an anthill. The deity Ayyanar appeared before him and informed that he need not go to Madurai and asked him to build a shrine on the spot. Thus the king Ukkirapandya built a temple and around which Sankarankovil town came into existence.

### Sokkalingeshwar Temple

In 800A.D, the conventions to display Cave Temple became unpopular and building like Temple came into existence. From the beginning of ninth century's inscription stone, many temples were built in Pandya Nadu during the time period from 800 to 900 A.D. The temples constructed during Pandya's period are still found in those places. The temples such as Amrthan Temple, Sokkalingeshwar Temple are some of the notable establishment of Pandya's period. The attractive shape of the sculpture of Pandya's period is still embracing us.

### Evidence of Traders

Many Traders were lived in Ukkirankottai and they were called as Nanoor Desaperunthar or Anoor Desaperunthar. There were much division exists among of traders. Traders were called as townfolk by the people. They specifically done a masonry and construction works in this place. Some of the peoples were involved in the construction of new churches and renovation of existing churches in the surrounding places. The Inscription found in Ukkirankottai Sokka Nayagi Amman Temple and the Inscriptions of Pandyas of 1318 proves the conventions and rights of the townfolk traded in Ukkirankottai.

### King's Officers

Alagiya Pandiyapuram is a beautiful village situated in near the Ukkirankottai in Sankarankovil Highway Road. This place was named by the ruler known as Alagiya Pandiyan. In the ancient period, this place was a rendezvous place for Emperor Alagiya Pandiyan to meet the people of his country. Dramas staged in Aathur Temple near Tirunelveli during Aavani month. The stage where the dramas took place were named Alagiya Pandiyan Hall. Dramas with the good stories were staged in this place to make the people happy. The participant of Dramas was awarded by the plenty of agricultural lands by the emperor.



### **Pandya Dynasty in Ukkirankottai: An Archaeology Report**

A team of experts from the Department of Archaeology has examined the badly damaged portion of a temple and a fort constructed by a famous king of Pandya Dynasty at Ukkirankottai near here 1,250 years ago. After, they stumble upon a few granite of “Nandhis” and a damaged dome of a temple-strewn all over a barren land. The experts from a department of Archaeology led by deputy superintendent S. Vasanthi, camped at the site for about two months and discovered long and five-foot- deep trenches at five places. The unearthed constructions found in this place have proved the presence of a temple, a fort of Pandya King Paraakrama Veera Naarayanana, popularly known as Ukkirapandiyan, had stored their weapons and the king’s soldiers were staying. The team had gathered broken conch and bangles terracotta dolls, floor tiles, granite Nandhis, damaged portion of a Siva Temple, pots used for melting metal’s etc.

### **Conclusion**

Ukkirankottai village one of the oldest places in Manur Taluk in Tirunelveli District is one of the mysteries for all people of an archeological department. This place is evidently reflecting all the architectural wonders created in the Pandya’s ruling period. Up till now, many archeological people from the various region of the world visiting this place to collect the evidence and traces of ancient period.

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