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Workshop on Social history project and Madakku

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Unfolding Matakku

Senthil Babu
Shibi Nandan
Ganesh Gopal

Guideline

1. Political Geography

1. Historical Atlas
2. Conquest Within

2. The Measuring Rod

1. Territory & Survey
2. Local, Royal measure
3. Diversity & Standardization

3. Engineering

1. Kannaaru & Sathuram
2. Square Grid
3. Logic of Equal allocation
within caste

4. Determinants of Value

1. Ideological
2. Material

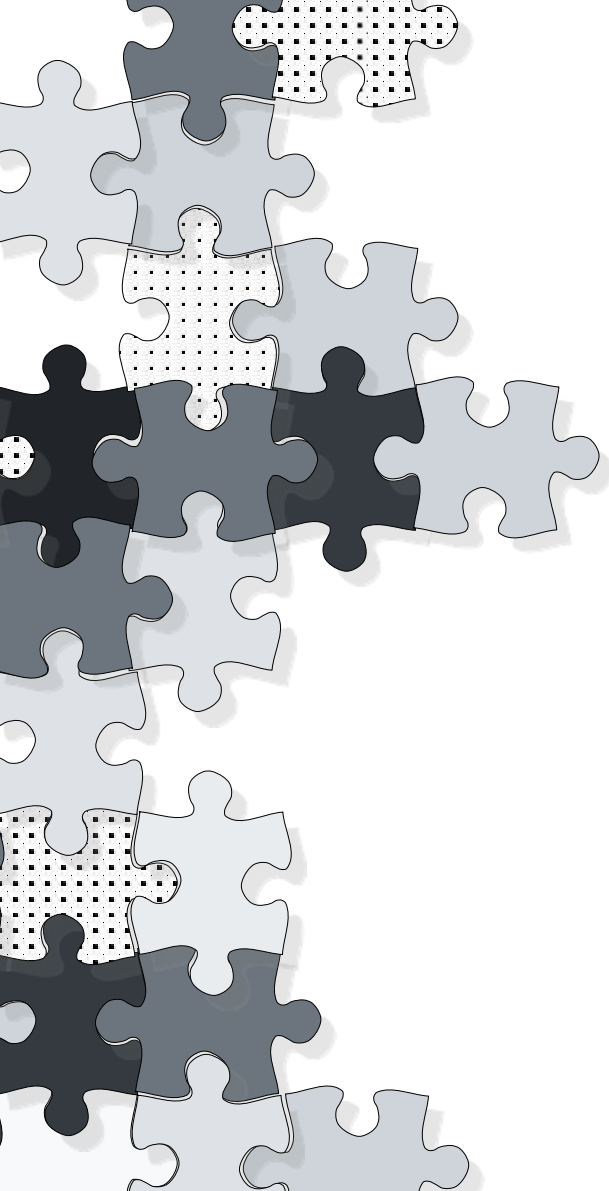
5. Accountant & Records of work

1. Trio: Measure, Calculation, and
Value
2. Folding the Social into Land

6. Unfolding matakku

1. matakku (Folding)
2. Examples
3. Space of Calculation
4. Known - Unknowns

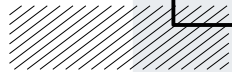




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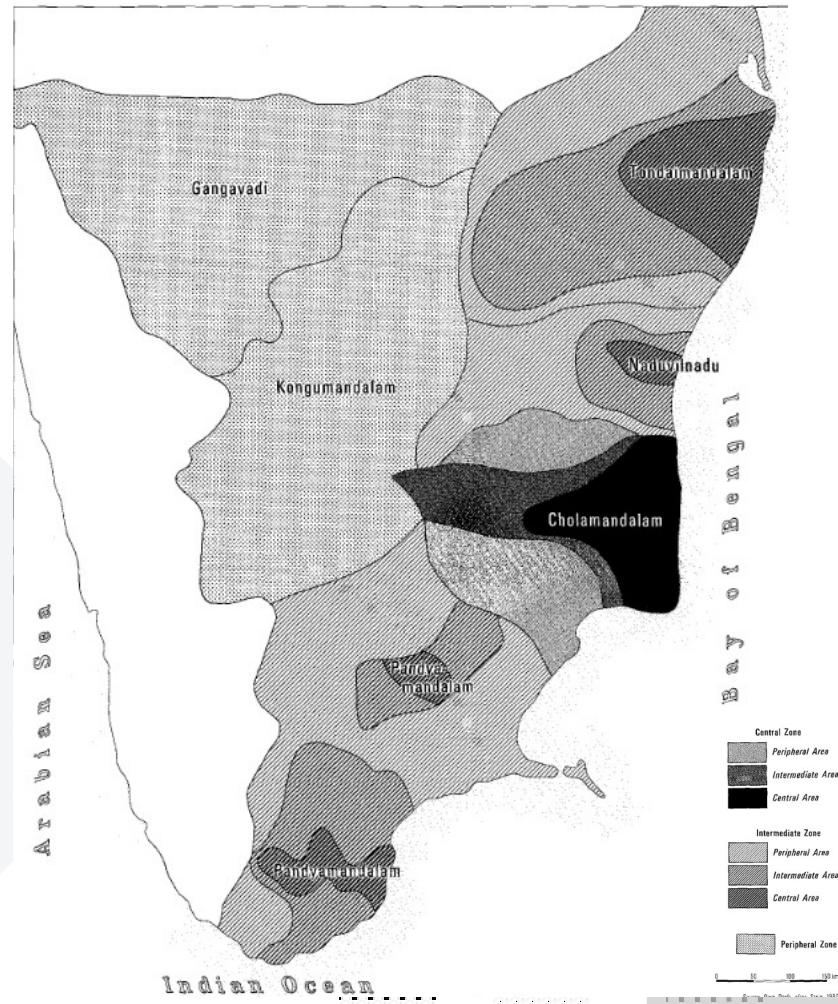
Political Geography

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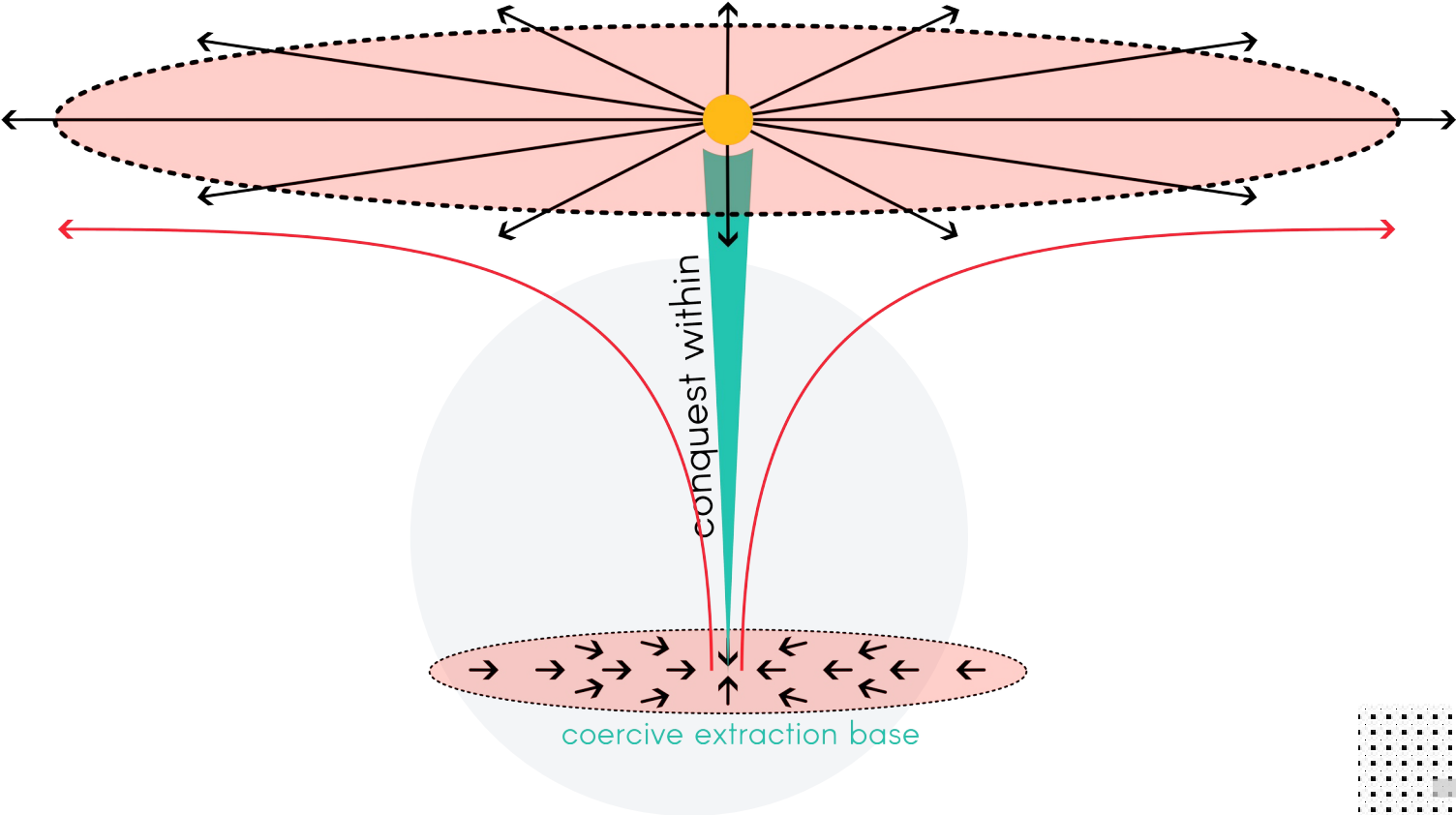


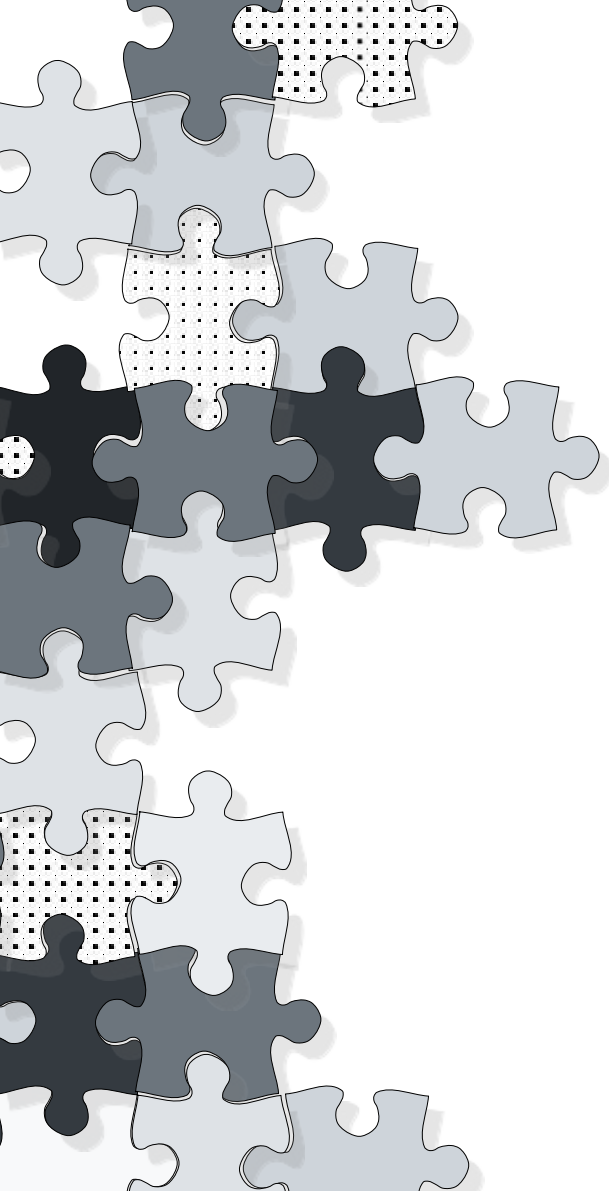
Historical Background

1. Medieval Chola Empire (900 CE – 1400 CE)
2. Empire
 1. Territorial Expansion ?
 2. **Digging deeper**, conquer within, institute coercive extraction
 3. Develop means and instruments/tools/apparatus of **abstraction**.
3. Only available historical records are inscriptions. Most inscriptions are fragmented pieces of information about **land transactions**.
4. Historical scholarship on land records have studied agrarian, social relationships and state formation.
5. Land transactions in relation to diversity in measures, conversion, standardization led to the construction of metrological atlas.



empire expansion

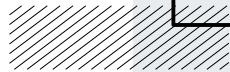


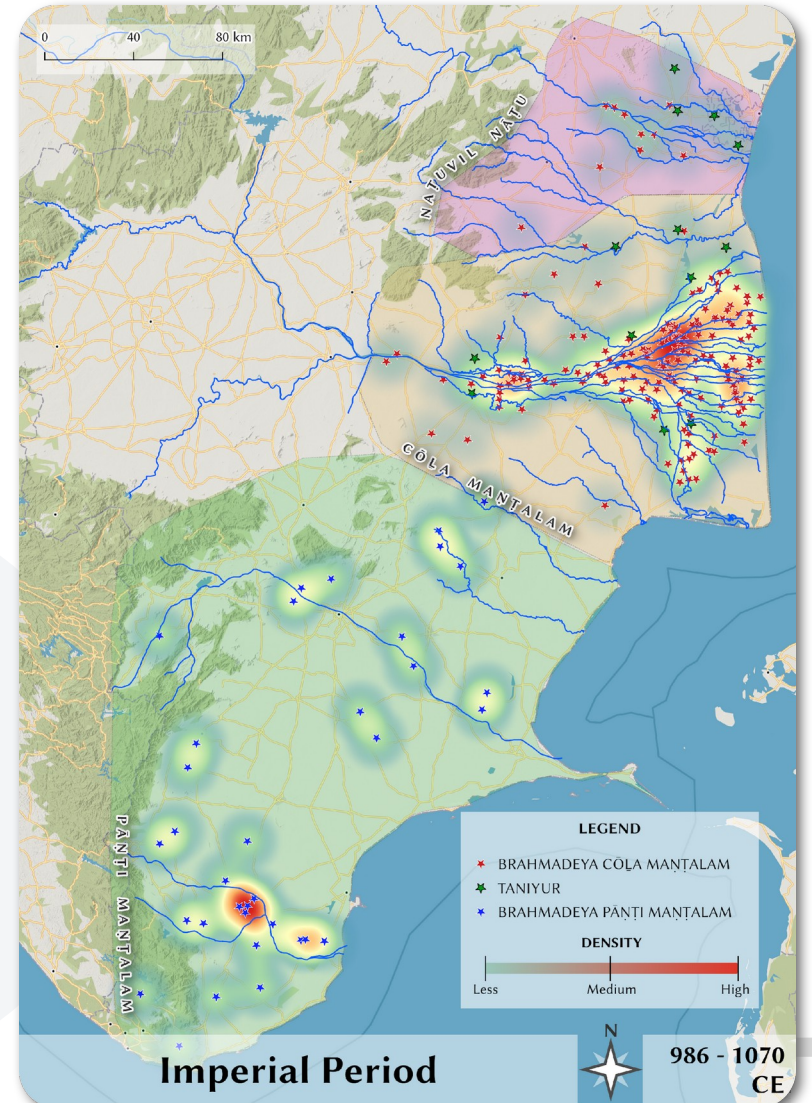
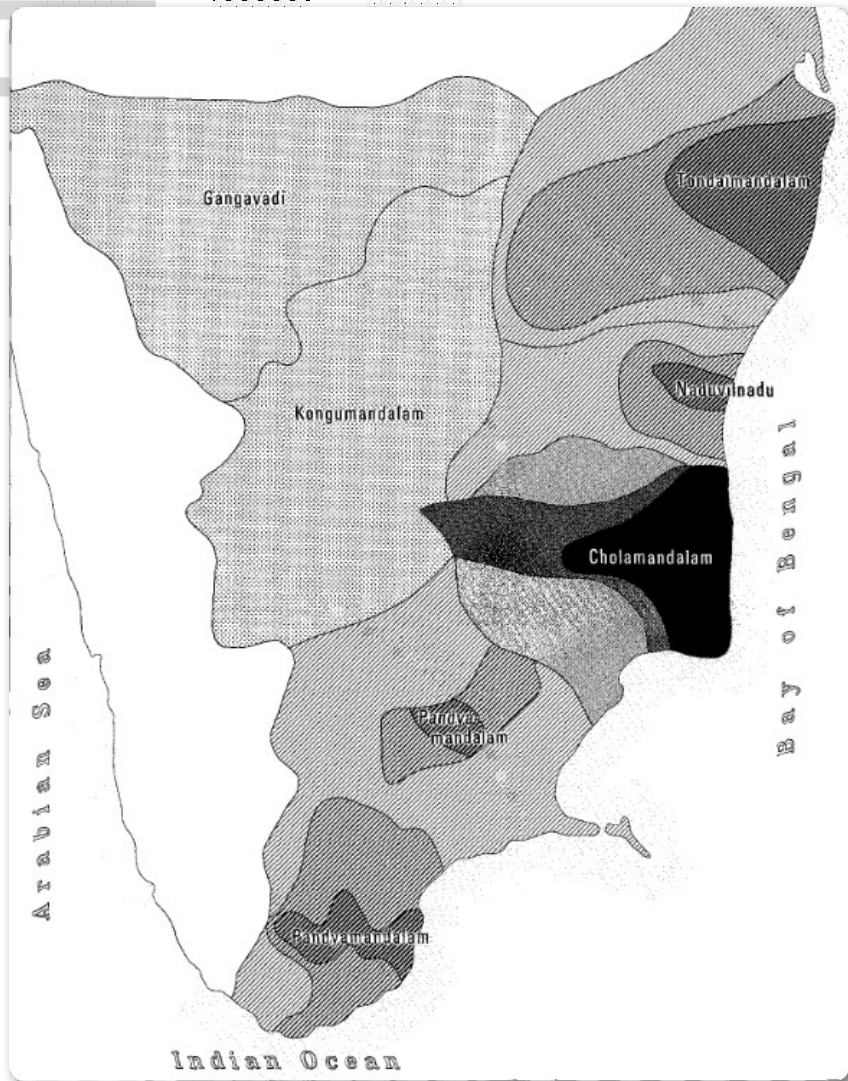


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**Engineering control
over Labour and
Ecology**

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Land & Water Engineering

1. Productivity (yield)

1. Water Irrigation

2. Land Reconstruction

2. Logic of Equal Allocation within

Caste

1. Access to water

2. Soil Fertility

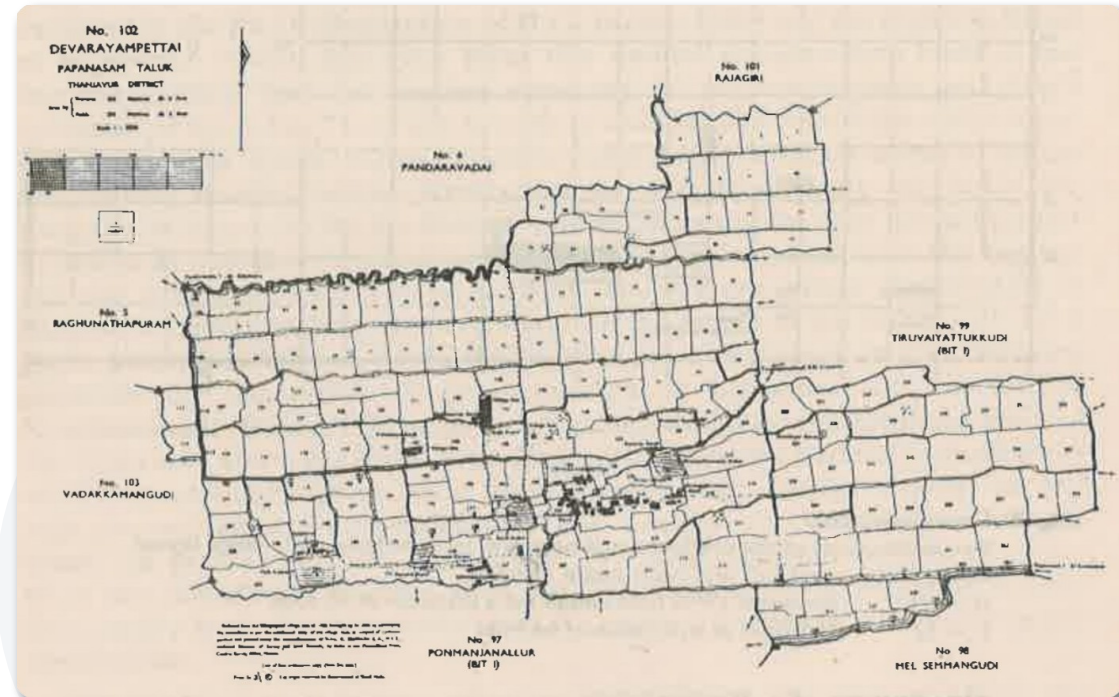
3. Engineering (Square Grid)

1. Vaykal

2. Vadhi

3. Kannaaru

4. Sathuram



Do.

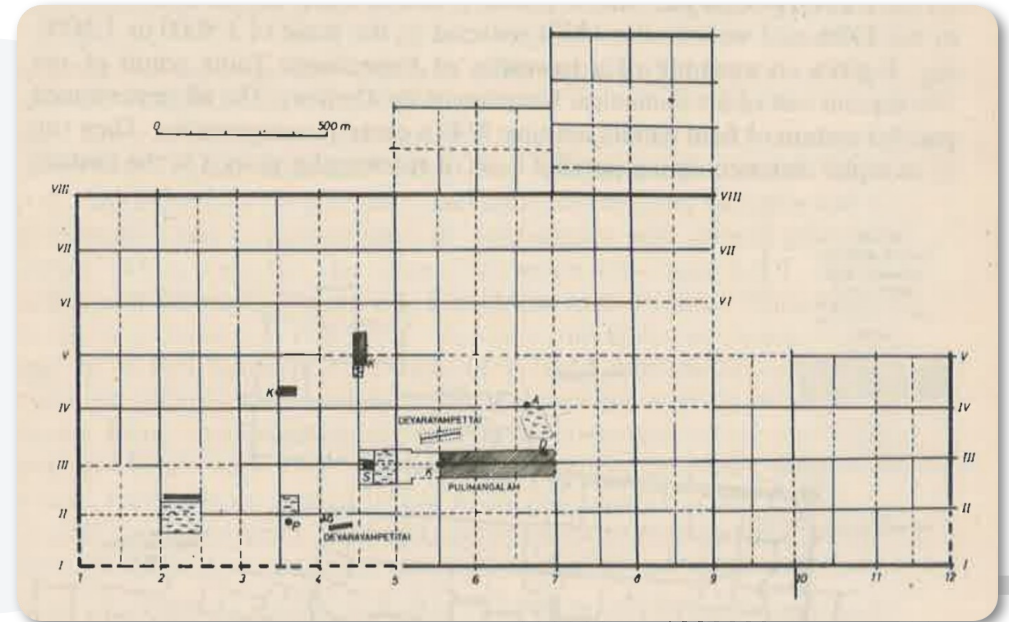
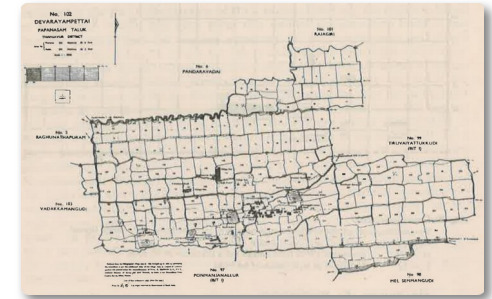
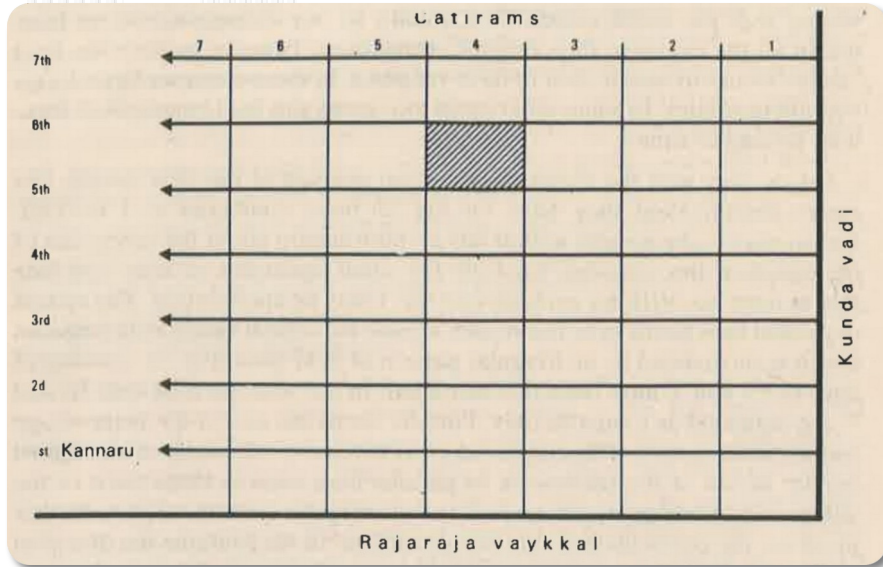
This is very probably an inscription of **Parāntaka I**. It records an endowment of 4 mā of land for the maintenance of a Brāhmana versed in the *Vēdas* who was to perform worship to god Tiruchcheyalūr-Perumāḷ at Rājakēsari-chaturvēdi-maṅgalain a *bramaḍēya* on the southern bank of the river, by one Kāri Kaḷaikupichchi, a native of Eṅaṅguḍi in Kīḷvēmbai-nāḍu a subdivision of Pāṇḍi-nāḍu. Among the boundaries of the land are mentioned **Sōlachūḷāmaṇi-vāykkāl** and **Kōṇḍarāma-vāykkāl**. **Kōṇḍarāma** is a well-known surname of **Āditya I** (*Trav. Arch. Series, III, p. 109*), and it is possible he also bore the title **Sōlachūḷāmaṇi**.

Text.

- 1 லூவீதி (*) கொப்புகெ-
- 2 ஸாஸிவநு[*]க்கு யாண்டு [௩] (தெங்)-
- 3 லுவது தெ-
- 4 [னா]னை ஸுலூத்தெ-
- 5 ம் [ர]ராசகொரிச-
- 6 குவெ-திமங்க-
- 7 லதது லரு-
- 8 சசெய[லா] [ா]ய
- 9 பெருமாலை
- 10 திருவாரா-
- 11 தலை
- 12 செ[ய்]யும் ஸுரா-
- 13 லூண-
- 14 லா வெ-
- 15 தமவல
- 16 லார்க்கு
- 17 பாண்ட-
- 18 ஸா ரு
- 19 கிழ்வெ-
- 20 மலய-
- 21 நுட்டு எ-
- 22 நற்குடி எ-
- 23 க்குண்ட-ய-

- 24 ன் காரி கடைகு-
- 25 றிச்சி கொண்டு
- 26 குடுத்த நில[மா]-
- 27 வது இவ்வூர் ச-
- 28 ண்டசண்டவதி-
- 29 சூ மெற்க்கு அ-கண்-
- 30 ணற்று சொழுகுளா-
- 31 (ம்) மணிவாய்க்காலு-
- 32 சூ தெற்சூ கூ-றஞ்சதிர-
- 33 த்து மெற்க்கடைந்த
- 34 ஸு மாவு[ம்*] மாதெவவ-
- 35 திசூ கிழசூ [கி]-கண்ணூ-
- 36 று கொதண்டராமவாய்க்கா-
- 37 லுசூ வடசூ முதற்சதிர[த்*]து
- 38 தென்மெற்க்கடைய ஸு மாவி-
- 39 ல் தெற்க்கடைய வ ஸுமாக
- 40 ஸ [ா*]

Land & Water Engineering






Squaring (grid) Land and the rise of precise measures

One of the largest Brahmadeya grants inscribed on copper plates, mentions the equal sharing of land parcels being given to each Brahmin. (Tiruvintalur copper plate)
Thus justifying the square grid land parceling

Precise measurements and classifications of land are absent in the Pre-Brahmadeya records. Similarly the location of a particular piece of land in these records are vague and are in relation with natural geographic features, such “beside the rock found in the southern end of the village”, etc.

Records from the late 10th century, start to demarcate land and locate them in relation to square grids bordered by canal and drain, which is precise addressing and measurement



Bringing commons under the measurement regime

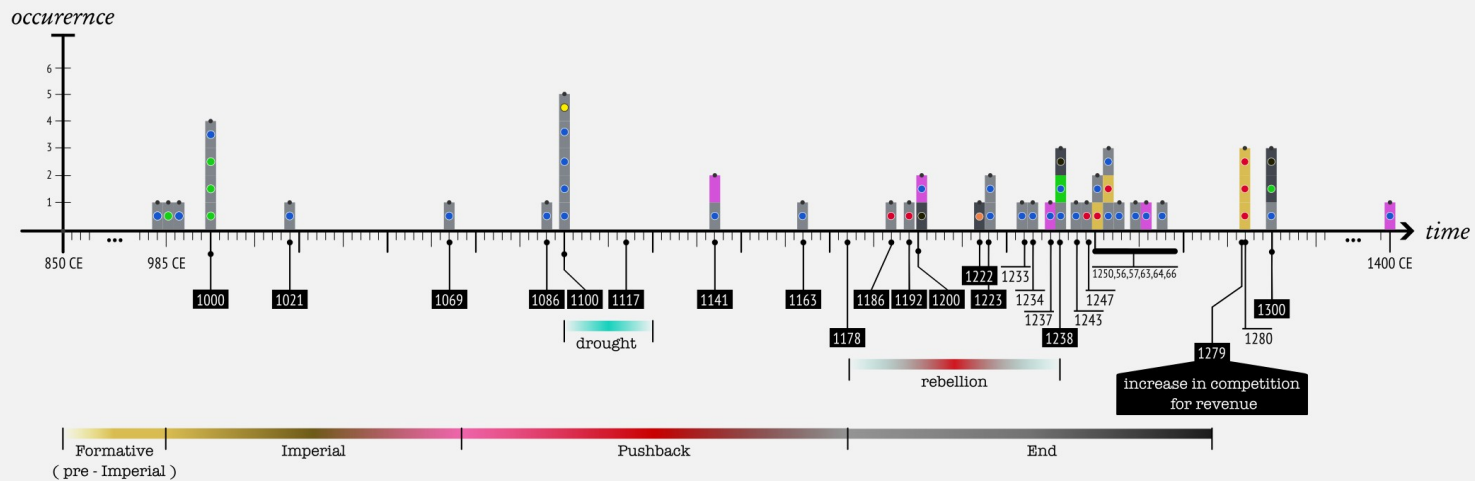
The expansion of **precise measurements** and **gradation** along with the expansion of square grid. The cited inscription mentions that a particular piece of land belonging to the temple becomes **uncultivable** as it gets silted up during a flood. It describes the process of demarcating a new **common piece of land** that is to be brought under cultivation in place of the damaged land.

(SII 3. 162, Uttaramerur, 959 CE)

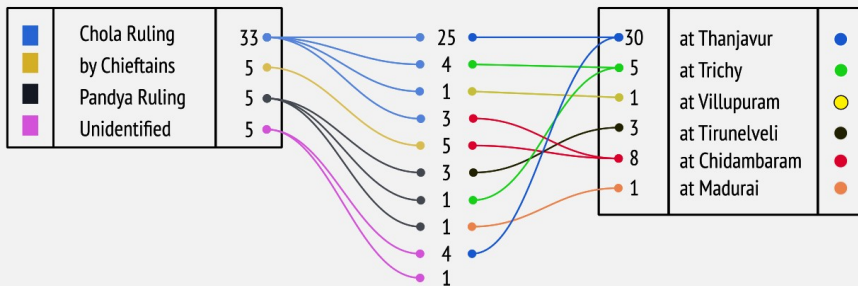
The Matakku

- Matakku is a system of land measurement, used in **accounting practices to assess taxes**
- The term literally means 'to fold' or 'to club'. It co-measures the area and the quality of the land
- The actual physical measure of the land was called 'parappu', meaning spread
- The actual measure of the land, along with its grade, is converted in relation to the '**standard land**' into a notional area, known as the matakku land (matakku nilam)

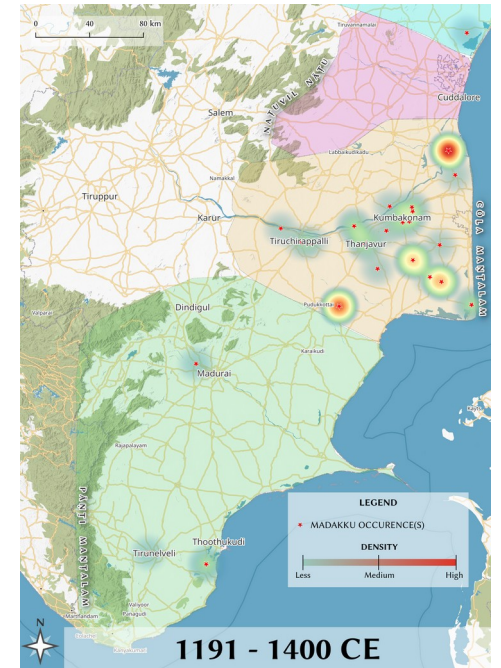
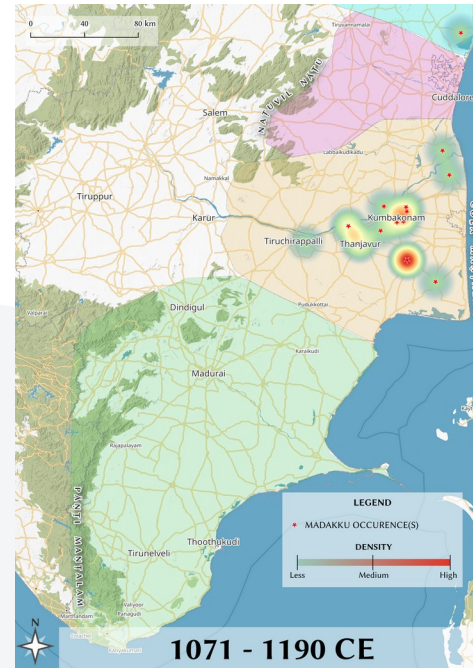
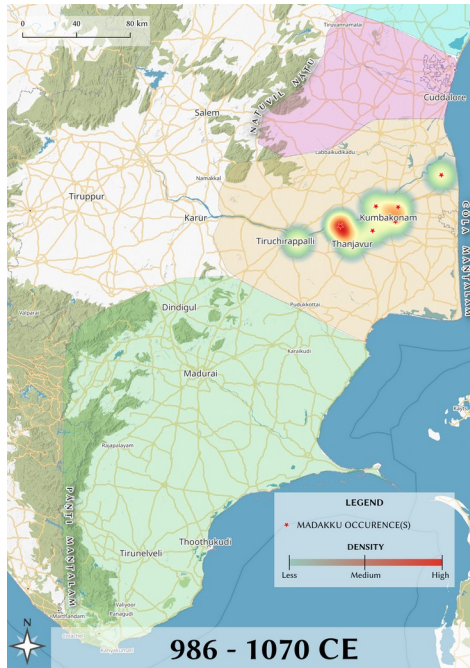
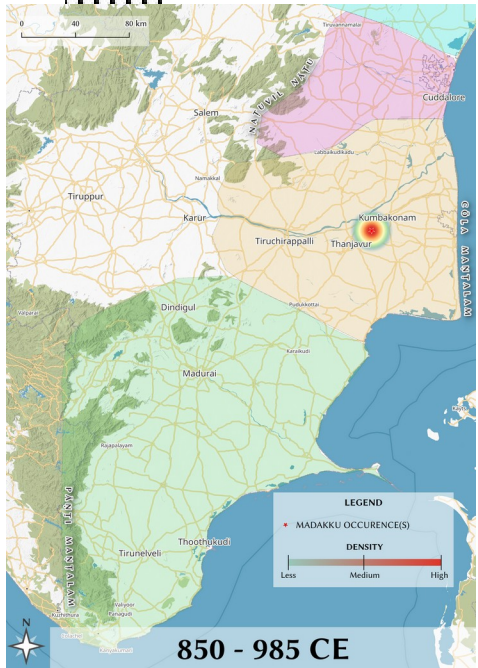
Matakku, Spatio -Temporal change

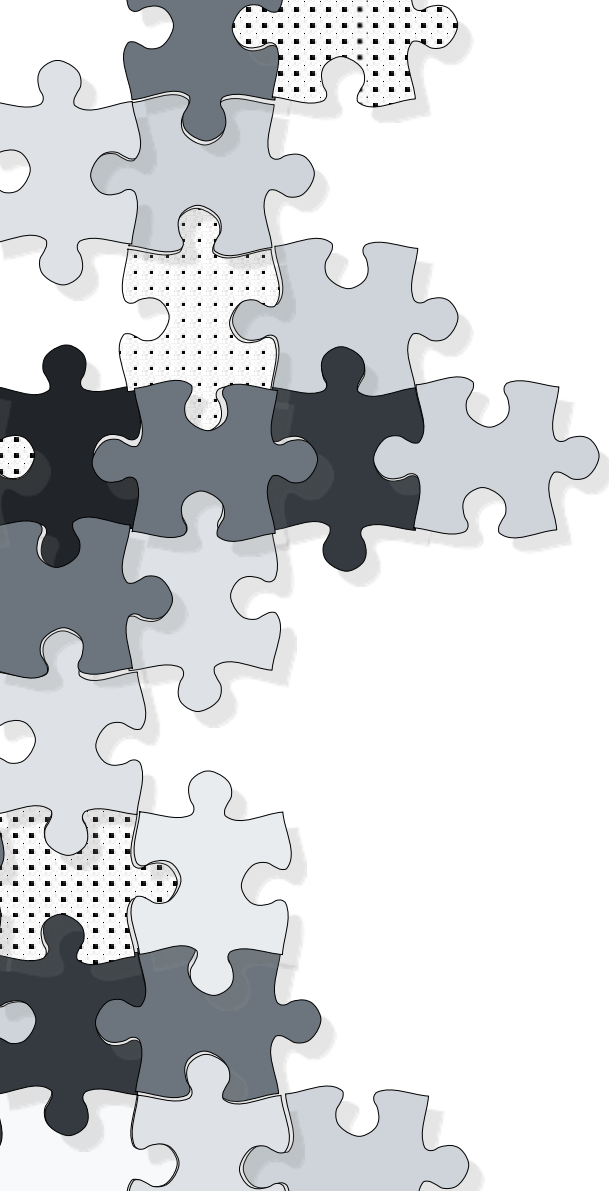


No. of Occurrences of madakku



Matakku, Spatio -Temporal change

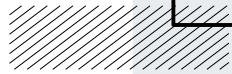




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Control over Labour

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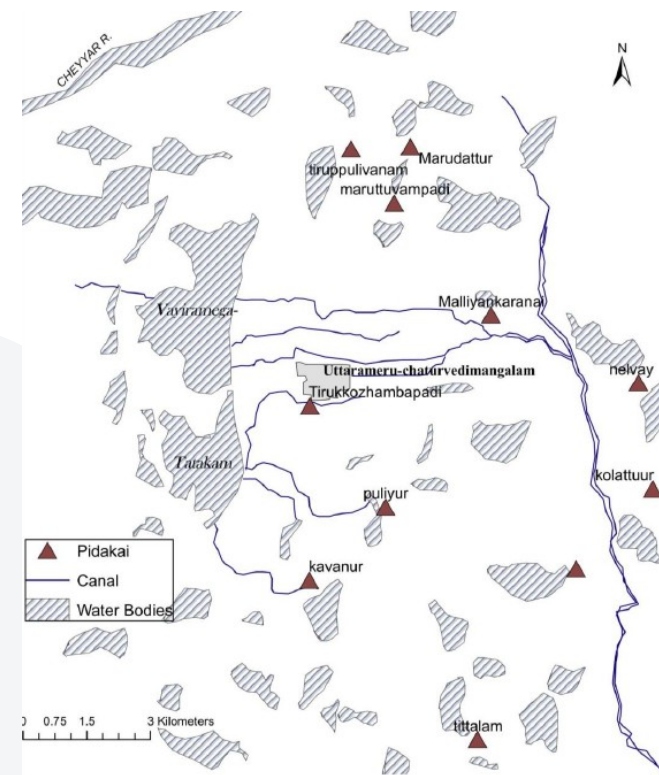


Control over labour

- Matakku practice seems to be a more refined tool of abstraction used to maintain this control over labour and ecology. Matakku is not only used to assess tax in the form of paddy, but also **tax that is rendered in the form of labour**
- Such labour taxes included mostly canal maintenance labour, such as to level the canal bed, strengthen the banks. This was rendered not by the owner or the tenant of the land, but by **labourers that are attached** to the land.
- First occurrence of the term **vetti** in inscriptions is in 9th century, and increases over time. By around the same time, terms that specifically indicate canal maintenance work emerge (**sennir Vetti**).

Spatial segregation: folding labour and caste into space

There is also a clear spatial segregation between the living quarters of the land owning Brahmins and the tenants and labourers. While the Brahmin quarters were called 'ur' the living quarters of tenants were called 'pitakai'.



Wage hierarchy

- 24 nāḷi per day for the person who chants the sacred hymn,
- 16 nāḷi per day for the guard,
- 16 nāḷi per day for the accountant (belonging to the potter caste),
- 8 nāḷi per day for the brahmin who fetches water from the Kaveri,
- 6 nāḷi of paddy per day for the brahmin who crushed the sacred sandal,
- 6 nāḷi per day for the potter,
- 4 nāḷi per day for the servant who sweeps the temple floors and smears them with cow dung,
- 3 nāḷi per day for the servant who picks flowers from the garden and strings them into garlands, and so on

SII 3, 151 A



Matakku and labour disciplining

Emergence of matakku seems to be made possible by disciplining labour and **quantifying** labour, **facilitating the increased productivity** in Brahmadeya lands by making square grids possible, giving rise to a 'highest quality' land.

In relations to which every other land is graded and measured





QUESTIONS ?

