3,000-year-old rock paintings found near Denkanikottai

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News

Rock paintings about 3,000 years old were found on the 'Vedankal' rock at Choolakunda village in Denkanikottai taluk, Krishnagiri district. History students of Government Men's Arts College, Krishnagiri, led by Prof. Venkateswaran, studied them for Periyar University, Salem's professional training / PG research. The paintings appear in three clusters on one rock, and megalithic dolmens lie on the southern part of the same rock (reported 7 Oct 2026).

Key facts

Place	Vedankal rock, Choolakunda, Denkanikottai taluk, Krishnagiri
Age	About 3,000 years – Iron Age / Megalithic
Team	Govt Men's Arts College, Krishnagiri students (Periyar University study) – Prof. Venkateswaran
Motifs	Dancers holding hands, armed men, grids (fields), circles (sun / time-wheel), raised-hand ritual figures
Also found	Dolmens (megalithic burial markers)

Background

- Types of rock art: painted (pictographs) and engraved (petroglyphs). Red comes from iron oxide (ochre / haematite); white from lime or kaolin clay.

- India's best-known rock-art site is Bhimbetka (Raisen district, Madhya Pradesh), discovered by V.S. Wakankar in 1957 and a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 2003.
- Rock-art sites in Tamil Nadu: Kilvalai and Sethavarai (Villupuram), Mallapadi (Krishnagiri), Karikkiyur (Nilgiris). Megalithic burial types: dolmen, stone circle, menhir, urn burial.
- Iron Age in Tamil Nadu: the 'Antiquity of Iron' report (Jan 2025) dated iron from Sivakalai (Thoothukudi) to about 3345 BCE; the Adichanallur urn burials are also well known.
- History: the Krishnagiri–Hosur tract was called 'Baramahal'; after the Third Anglo-Mysore War, Tipu Sultan ceded it to the British by the Treaty of Seringapatam (1792).
- Geography: Krishnagiri district was carved out of Dharmapuri on 9 February 2004; it borders both Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh and is known for mangoes.

Tamil Nadu link: the find is evidence of Krishnagiri's Iron Age and megalithic heritage. Nearby Mallapadi also has ancient rock paintings. Periyar University, Salem, was founded in 1997.

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