

SAIVA BRONZES IN SRILANKA

(10 — 12th Cent. A. D.)

BY

S. KRISHNARAJAH

No. 15689

DISSERTATION SUBMITTED
In partial Fulfilment of M. A. Degree in
Ancient History and Archaeology,
University of Mysore,
Mysore

1983





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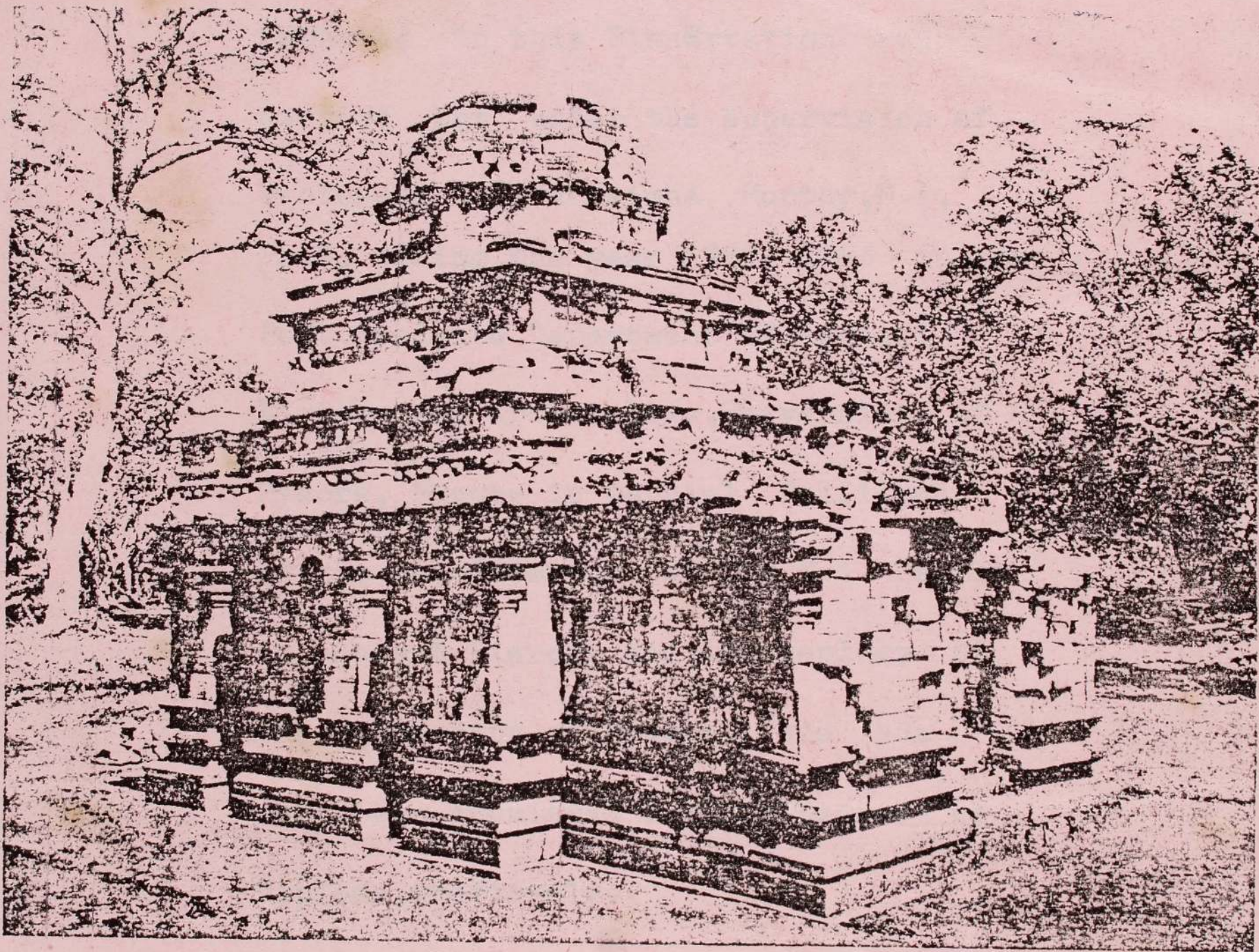
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*Archaeological Survey
photo.*

SIVA DÉVALÉ, No. 2.
View from S. E.

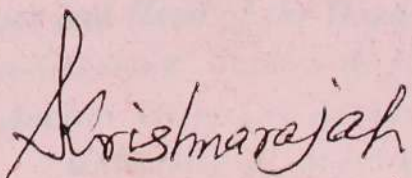
*Survey Office
half-tone block.*

DECLARATION

I declare that the investigations reported in this Dissertation was carried out under the supervision of Professor A.V.Narasimha Murthy, M.A., Ph.D, during the year 1982- 1983 in the Post Graduate Department Of Ancient History and Archaeology, University of Mysore, Mysore in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the M.A. Degree in Ancient History and Archaeology of the University of Mysore. This has not been submitted for any Degree or Diploma, previously.

Mysore

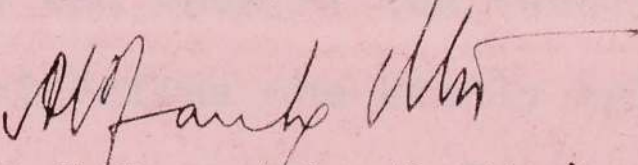
10-5-1983


(S. Krishnarajah)

C E R T I F I C A T E

This is to certify that the dissertation^t
entitled " Saiva Bronzes in Srilanka " (10th
to 12th century A.D.) submitted by
Sri. S.Krishnarajah for the partial
fulfilment of the requirements of the M.A.
degree in Ancient History and Archaeology
of the University of Mysore, Mysore is
the result of the research work done
under my guidance in this department.
It has not been submitted for any
degree or diploma before.

Mysore
10-5-1983


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P R E F A C E

The study of the Saiva bronzes in Srilanka has not recieved enough attention from the scholars though it offers a very fruitful field of reseach. Hence, I was tempted to take up this work for a preliminary study in the form of this dissertation. I would like to stress that it is purely exploratory in nature and I would like to continue the same for a more detailed study in the years to come.

In this work, I have recieved able guidance from Dr. A. V. Narasimha Murthy, Professor and Head of the Department of Ancient History and Archaeology, Mysore university, Mysore. I am highly grateful to him. I am also indebted to Dr. K. Indrapala, Professor of History and Dean of the Faculty of Arts, University of Jaffna who kindly helped me to select this topic and other help rendered by him.

I thank the Director of Evelylin Ratnum Poly Cultural Institute and Curator of the Colombo museum who kindly permitted me to collect material and take photographs. There are many friends who have directly or indirectly helped me in completing this work and to all of them my thanks are due.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The discovery of the metal bronze has brought a revolutionary change in human life. It marked the change of man's life from barbarism to civilization. This phase of development has been called Bronze Age which appeared as early as 3000 B.C. Since the dawn of this technology this metal has been used for man's domestic and other purposes. Later with the advancement of culture man made use of this metal even for his artistic activities. Due to the flexible quality of the metal it was predominantly used in the field of art, especially sculpture. In Srilanka the antiquity of bronze for this purpose has been traced back to the fifth century A.D.¹

Though it is a part of the study of South India, the investigation relating to the Saiva bronzes in Srilanka has assumed great importance. Since archæology provides new specimens of bronzes day by day, the scope of this study in Srilanka is being widened day by day. Since the discovery of Saiva bronzes by Bell, a British archaeologist, in the ruined city at Polonnaruwa in 1907, many sites were located relating to Saivism among which few are specially studied in connection with iconography.

The scholars of Hindu iconography of south India were unable to find the finest bronzes as illustrated in the silpasastras in south India and for this they relied upon the

discoveries in Srilanka wherein were brought to light the finest bronzes. It is specially note worthy that the works of some authors like Smith, Rowland, Zimmer, Ganguly and Gopinatha Rao who included in their works bronzes from Srilanka. Those scholars who studied saiva bronzes in Srilanka unsuccessfully attempted to show its origins and ornamental styles with the background of parellel socio-religious aspects of the period. Moreover these scholars have expressed their view only in relation to the first three series of discoveries of saiva bronzes in the island. Only the fourth, fifth and sixth series of discoveries made after 1908, the finest specimens were recognised. Even after these discoveries no serious attempt has been made so far with regard to the identification of the bronzes nor to interpret them with the socio-religious point of view. Thus the objectives of this study are threefold;

1. To collect and organise the available data regarding saiva bronzes in Srilanka in a comprehensive manner
2. To make correct interpretation in the light of socio-religious and cultural contexts that prevailed *and*
3. To find and analyse the salient features of Srilankan bronzes and identify their unique features.

It is with this goal that this study of Saiva bronzes for the period between tenth and twelfth centuries A.D has been undertaken. The period marks a turning point in the annals of Srilanka. For the first time the island

was brought under a foreign power, i.e. the Cholas for a period of 77 years (997-1070 A.D). Within this short period of time in Srilanka the Hindu-Dravidian art, particularly sculpture in stone and metal flourished.

Under the Chola hegemony Srilanka was called 'Eela mandalam' as appears in the Chola inscriptions in Srilanka.² As a country Srilanka consists of 2500 square miles in area. Though Srilanka is geologically a part of the vast peninsula of south India it had a continuity in its civilization much better than any part of India.³ The island is separated from the southern peninsula of India by a narrow sea called as Palk strait which is only 32.2 km in width. Moreover the location of Srilanka in close proximity to south India encouraged it to become the receiver of every great change in political, social and religious aspects that took place in the main land. "Every great change in India had its repercussions in the island and every wave of Indian civilization upto the end of the fifteenth century made its way and left its mark on the life and thought of its people."⁴

It should be understood that in this study the term saiva bronzes is used in the narrowest sense in order to be precise and to bring about its salient features. The term 'saiva' denotes the cult of Siva. Here saiva is spelled out to denote certain bronzes which are related to saiva cult. The term bronze is technically known as

panchaloha.⁵ According to silpasastras panchaloha consists of five metals such as copper, silver, gold, brass and white lead. In the present practice gold and silver are generally dispensed with. The figures made in bronze are associated and ritually connected with saiva worship of divinities such as Śiva, Pārvathi etc.

From the point of view of religion, the period of eleventh and twelfth centuries witnessed the rise of Hinduism in Srilanka as well as South India. The Bhakti movement which appeared during the Pallava period attained its fulfillment in its aspects during tenth-twelfth centuries A.D.⁶ The Bhakti movement was greatly responsible for the flourishing of metal art during the Chola rule in Srilanka and also in south India. While reviewing the theme of saiva bronzes in Srilanka one can easily understand the relationship of Bhakti movement and the art of metal work. "Challenges to public debate, competition in the performance of miracles, tests of truth of the doctrines by means of ordeals became the order of the day. Parties of devotees under the leadership of one gifted saint or another traversed the country many times over singing, dancing and debating all their way. This great wave of religious enthusiasm attained its peak in the early seventh century. Among the saiva teachers Manikka Vachakar, Jnana Sambhandar,

Appar, Sundaramurthy were leaders in the Bhakti movement. It is because of their religious services that the Cholas honoured all Saiva saints by depicting their figures in bronze. Thus the art of bronze having this religious background attained its high peak during the period between tenth and twelfth centuries.

The significance of this study can be understood through the following hypothesis which is formed after careful study and understanding of the problem. Since the discovery of Saiva bronzes in Srilanka there is no unanimous opinion among the scholars relating to their origin as well as their identification. Therefore, a complete, collective and comprehensive study is at our disposal yet to be done with regard to the problem with newly found source materials. The following hypotheses are enunciated for our purpose;

1. Srilankan saiva bronzes are indigenous by their origin.
2. Srilankan Saiva bronzes are unique in character but with local variations and
3. Srilankan saiva bronzes are thematically parallel to South Indian bronzes.

Keeping in mind these three main hypotheses, an attempt has been made here to study the problem.

Particularly in this study the descriptive method is followed for testing the hypotheses. The collecting of data includes the examination of the originals, inscriptions, literary texts and archaeological evidences. A review of the literary data relating to the study is ~~xxxx~~ essential under this introductory part. Since the discovery of the saiva bronzes has been started by an English judge as well as an archaeologist, namely Harry Charles Purvius Bell,⁸ when the buried city of Polonnaruwa was excavated by him (1906-10). As the first archaeological Commissioner Bell paved the way to investigate the Hindu culture in Srilanka. For the first time in the history of the island a brief description was made relating to Hindu emblems in bronze which were excavated from Anuradhapura and Sigiriya. This description appeared in the periodicals ~~xxx~~ like "Guide to Collection in the Colombo Museum" which was published in 1905. In this issue Hindu emblems are referred to in a short para on page 22.

The next attempt in the study was made with notable descriptions in the next year. The work was ~~xxx~~ entitled 'Catalogue of the Finds' which was published by John Still, formerly Assistant to the Archaeological Commissioner and he included the finds from time to time over a period of sixteen years upto 1906. A number of Hindu bronzes and their

their description were given in that work without a proper chronological order and localities. Due to the increasing number of bronzes an attempt was made to keep these antiquities in proper manner at Colombo museum. Thus all the bronzes were published in the Administrative Reports of the Colombo museum with photographs in 1908. This marked the beginning of the remarkable activities in the study of Hindu culture in Srilanka. In spite of these attempts the authorities of the museum were facing difficulties to date these bronzes. Arunachalam wrote a short paper regarding the identification and chronology of these bronzes. This was published in the journal *Spolio Zeylonica* in September 1909. This consists of location and classification of all bronzes. But he was neither an archaeologist nor a specialist in the field.

The account of excavations at Polonnaruwa which was conducted by Bell between 1900 and 1910 was published in several series. But the reports relating to saiva bronzes were published for the years 1911 and 1914. These reports consist of sections entitled *Siva devalae no 1* and *Siva devale no 5* respectively under which the Hindu finds were included with illustration. In 1914 A.K. Coomaraswamy wrote an introduction to the

Hindu bronzes in the Memoirs of the Colombo museum series A, published by the Department of Archaeology. As a basic source this helps in the study of the saiva bronzes in Srilanka.

In the following year Arunachalam realised the significance of the saiva philosophical background and made an attempt to give an elaborate explanation of Siva worship and symbolism relating to these bronzes. As the president of the Royal Asiatic society of Ceylon he delivered a lecture on Polonnaruva bronzes and Siva worship and symbolism in 1915 and this was published in J.R.A.S.C, volume XXIV for the year 1915-16. This work proved useful for further investigations. The first part of the work gives the summary of the study that had been done so far. The second part deals with proper date of the bronzes and classification and the third part gives the description about Nataraja images which are most striking among the Saiva bronzes. The fourth division refers to silpasastras in connection with Hindu bronzes. The divisions from ~~xxxxxx~~ fifth to tenth consists of various aspects such as Sanskrit, Tamil, philosophy of Nataraja etc. The eleventh part as the core of the work gives an elaborate description of all saiva bronzes.

After the year 1915, the investigators of bronzes in south India paid attention to the bronzes found in Srilanka. The immediate reason for this is the works by Coomaraswamy and Arunachalam relating to the bronzes in the island. Having these as the guidelines south Indian scholars began to compare these bronzes with those found in South India. But one important thing to note here is that these authors seem to have been familiar with the bronzes found between 1906 -1908 in Srilanka. Nevertheless the study of the bronzes acquires greater scope due to discoveries made in 1950, 1960 and 1980 at Trincomolee, Polannaruva and Anuradhapura respectively.

Among the scholars Gangooly was the pioneer to pay special attention towards the bronzes in Srilanka. His work is a source material very useful for the study of the bronzes. In 1963, Madras museum published "Bronzes of South India" in which a separate chapter was given for the study of Srilankan bronzes. The next attempt was made by Zimmer. He paid special attention to the South Indian bronzes. The work includes several pages relating to the bronzes of Srilanka.

The bronzes at Trincomolee was discovered while digging a well in 1950. Though seven bronzes were found there, only five are now available for study. The first description was made by Krishna Iyer who wrote an article in New Lanka in 1951.

This article refers in brief to the significance of the bronzes and the history of Trincomolee. The next remarkable attempt was made by W. Balendra regarding these finds. He delivered a lecture at the Royal Asiatic Society of Ceylon on Trincomolee bronzes. And this lecture has been published in 1952. With another wave of discovery of saiva bronzes at Polonnaruva, Godakumbare published a guide in 1960 which consists of a brief description with identification of bronzes. Later they were reported in the Annual Report of the Archaeological Survey of Ceylon for 1960. The work done by late Dr. C. Sivaramamurthy relating to south Indian bronzes ~~deserves~~ deserves special mention. His opinions in connection with Srilankan bronzes are very valuable.

The present study is based mostly on these works in addition to the first hand study of these bronzes made by the author.

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CHAPTER TWO

HISTORY OF THE DISCOVERY

The aim of this chapter is to give an account of the saiva bronzes which belong to the period between tenth and twelfth centuries, discovered so far, from the two main sites namely Polonnaruva and Trincomolee in Srilanka. These two sites have played an important role in the cultural history of Srilanka. As already mentioned both these sites were mainly occupied by the Cholas during their rule in the island. Thus as a result many temples were built and this tradition continued later even later after the chola rule. An attempt is made here to point out the main features of Saiva devales from which the Polonnaruva bronzes were discovered.

The first attempt to explore the antiquities at Polonnaruva was made accidentally by Fagan, an army officer in 1818.¹ On his first visit, he was attracted by the ancient monuments and antiquities therein and he published his impressions in 1820. But until the arrival of Bell as the Commissioner of Archaeology in 1890, we are not able to trace any event in this regard. From Sigiriya ~~and~~ Anuradhapura Bell discovered many Hindu bronze objects.² But he was unable to obtain saiva bronzes from these sites. Since 1900 the survey

and excavations of the Polonnaruva district were undertaken by Bell, many Hindu temples and monuments were brought to light. In the course of these works for the first time saiva bronzes were discovered and were taken away to the Colombo museum in three series.

✓ SAIVA BRONZES FROM SIVA DEVALES:

In course of these excavations conducted by Bell at Polonnaruva, more than thirteen temples were discovered.³ Among them there were seven devales which have been identified as siva temples, five as Vishnu temples and one as Kali temple. Some general features observed among these Hindu temples are as follows.⁴

They stand within brick prakara and are entered on the east. Four or possibly five of the main ~~shr~~ shrines in a total of thirteen Hindu temples were built of stone. In plan and exterior ornamentation the devales follow almost uniformly one type. Basements on which rise walls relieved on three sides by a simple central niche (occasionally more) flanked by pilasters with capitals more or less embellished shapely, the whole crowned by well defined curvilinear cornice. Both inner vestibule and sanctuary of Devales sacred to Siva were flat with stone slabs and the latter chamber domed in stone.

No inscriptions have come to light to help us in fixing the the period of the erection of the temples except the devale number 2.

Most of the bronzes discovered at Polonnaruva are from Devale no 5. More than sixteen saiva bronzes were found from this temple so far. But the greatest surprise along with very valuable set of bronzes was afforded by the discovery of eight pots containing human bones which were exhumed along with the walls both inside and outside of the mahamandapam.

Many bronzes were found from temple no 1 and 3. These temples were built of granite. The temple number 1 represents the Pandya school. The sharpness and glossy polish are notable characters. The typical Chola style of Vimana is preserved in devale no 2 in Polonnaruva happens to be the earliest monument discovered in Polonnaruva and is datable to the early Chola rule in this city. There are Tamil inscriptions mostly on southern ~~walls~~ walls stating that the temple was named after Vanavan Madevi Isvaramudaiyar, the chief queen of Rajaraja I and the mother of Rajendra I. Its architectural form seems at once to class it with the Hindu temples of South India erected from the 10th to 12th centuries of which the great

temple of Tanjore is the finest and most elaborate.⁵

FIRST SERIES OF FINDS--1906⁶

Siva devale no 2,5,6 and 7 were excavated by Bell in 1906 and it resulted in the discovery of saiva emblems in bronzes such as temple bell etc. In the course of the first series Bell could not find any bronze sculpture. But many stone sculptures were discovered. Therefore the first series consists of stone sculptures like Ganesha, Parvathi, Vishnu, Siva Kartikeya etc.

✓ SECOND SERIES-1907⁷

Siva devale 1,3 and 5 were excavated in 1907 and many saiva bronzes were discovered. A table of finds is given below;

Nataraja	90.4 cms
Siva and Parvathi	60.3 and 51 cms
Parvathi	78.7 cms
Appar	55 cms
Siva and Parvathi	47 cms
Manikka Vachakar	54.2 cms
Appar	58.4 cms
Nataraja	64.5 cms

While Siva devale no 3 was excavated in the same year the solitary find made at this temple was a bronzes figure of a goddess similar to those found

at Devales no 1,5 and 6. The bronze was found near the entrance of the temple.

Finds from Devale number 5; In the course of an excavation made again at the temple numerous saiva bronzes were discovered which are of exceptional variety and interest. The following table gives the details of them;

Parvathi- standing-	2.25 ft
Parvathi- do	1.45 ft
Parvathi- seated	- 1.11 inches
Siva Nataraja	2 ft
Siva Nataraja	1ft 11.5 inches
Siva Nataraja	1ft 10.5 inches
Tirugnana Sambandhar	1ft 4 inches
Chandescara Standing-	1ft 10 inches
Sundramurthi do	1ft 8 inches
Sundaramurthi do	1 ft 4.5 inches

✓ THIRD SERIES OF FINDS- 1908⁸

Siva devale number 6 was excavated in 1908 and as a result of it few saiva bronzes were found. The finds were made near but not within the temple. The details are as follows;

Siva Nataraja-	1 ft 6 inches
Parvathi	2ft 3 inches
Parvathi	1 ft

✓ FOURTH SERIES OF FINDS - 1960

A remarkable extensive excavation was conducted at the back of the devale number 5 in 1960 by the Department of archaeology lead by Godekumbure.⁹ In this scientific excavation the old walls of the temple were dug out. The total length of the wall excavated was 150 ft and bredth 2.5 ft. The average height of the wall was 2 ft. In the course of this work numerous Hindu bronzes particularly, ten saiva bronzes finer than those of the earlier discoveries at the same place were found. The details of the finds are asx follows;

Nataraja with halo	37 inches
Somaskanda	21 inches
Nataraja	ear lobes not found
Parvathi	
Parvathi	-

A few days after these discoveries another find was reported from the same site. A number of bronzes were found in an earthen pot at the southern plinth of the shrine. The finds are listed below;

Siva Nataraja complete with halo and pedestal
 Siva as Batuka Bhairava with dog behind
 Goddess in standing pose
 Karikkalamme, a femalw devotee of Siva
 Ganesha, a large figure of exceptional beauty

The fourth series of finds of Saiva bronzes brought into light contain certain distinct features and peculiar characters among the finds of Saiva bronzes which are found at Polonnaruva. And it can be traced as being parallel to the Trincomolee finds where the fifth series of bronzes were discovered.

✓ FIFTH SERIES OF FINDS-1950¹⁰

The bronzes at Trincomolee unlike Polonnaruva, happened to be discovered accidentally while digging a well on the north coast road of the town in 1950. This event shows the importance of the need for systematic archaeological excavations to be conducted wherever the Chola kings ruled in Srilanka. The hypothesis relating to the Srilankan origin of Saiva bronzes can be proved and established beyond doubt by a more systematic and wider excavations in certain places such as Mantai, Nallur at Jaffna, Kanagarayan kullam¹¹ at Vavunia and Trincomolee. In 1830 a large and celebrated figure of Tara was found at Trincomolee district which represents the Mahayana cult that was prevalent in the whole of South Asia.¹² Thus these bronzes occupy a more important and unique position in the history of the island.

THE STORY OF TRINCOMOLEE FINDS;¹³

A public meeting was called upon at Swamy rock in fort Frederick with the aim of considering and executing the reconstruction of the temple at Konesar where the celebrated Saiva saint Tirugnana Sambandhar had composed hymns and which was later destroyed by the Portuguese captain General Constaintine de Saa in 1624. During the course of the discussion of the problem, a committee was appointed to report on the proposed temple structure and to invite experts from Benares that was to be dedicated in the temple. At the same time while some employees of the urban council of Trincomlee were digging a well for the common use in July 1950, they discovered the saiva bronzes. This discovery comprised of Somaskanda Siva, Consort of Somaskanda, and Siva as Chandrasekhara. In the meantime another great discovery was made when the roots of a coconut tree were being dug out on the north coast road at Trincomolee. Ganesha and Parvathi in seated position were brought to light besides a few saivite things. All these saiva bronzes were given to the chairman of the council and now they are reinstalled in the temple.

The details of the discovery are as follows;

Siva in seated pose- 20.5 inches

Parvathi in seated pose - 16inches

Siva standing- 20 inches

Parvathi standing- 20 inches

Ganesha standing- 20 inches

Very recently a unique discovery has been made by Archaeological Department of Srilanka on the Cultural triangular project lead by Chandra, Wickremagamage, that of a celebrated saiva bronze ardhanarineshvara.¹⁴ For the first time the image was discovered at Abhayagiri near Anuradhapura, the earliest ancient capital of Srilanka. The statue has been identified as having two halves that of Siva and Parvathi. In the next chapter an analysis of the bronzes is attempted.

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4. Ibid.
5. Nilakantha Sastri; The Cholas, p.173

6. Arunachalam, p. Description of the Bronzes found in the Siva Devale at Polonnaruva by the Archaeological Commissioner in 1907, p.64-69.
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid.
9. Archaeological Survey of Ceylon; Ceylon Administrative Report 1960, p.72
10. Ibid, 1950
11. This temple was discovered by Professor Indrapala and myself. The area of the temple is a quarter acre and is covered by dense bushes. The temple is built of brick and resembles those at Polonnaruva. There is no doubt that this temple belongs to the Cholas. The excavation is yet to be done.
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14. The bronzes has been discovered at Abhayagiri in Anuradhapura district in 1981. But I could not take the photo of it. But I got the picture of it with paper cutting which I have used for investigation here.

CHAPTER THREE

ANALYSIS OF THE BRONZES

The scholars who studied the saiva bronzes in Srilanka had to face serious problems even at the period of the discovery. Bell and Coomaraswamy are of the opinion that most of the bronzes might have been brought from South India.¹ Scholars like Zimmer,² Godegumbara³ and Balendra⁴ have traced the origin of these bronzes to an indigenous school of art. They traced some distinctive characteristic features of the bronzes to establish the Srilankan school of metallic art.

Hence in this chapter an attempt is made to analyse the identification and chronology of the bronzes.

MOVING IMAGES: The bronzes of Srilanka belong to the category of moving images or 'utsavamurtis' which were carried in procession during the festivals. Because of this we are lead to believe that the art tradition in south Asia grew and flourished along with the religious life.

The pedestal portion of each bronze has hooks or hoops which helped safe portability. The moving images display the different manifestations of the divinity of that religion to which they belong. All these bronzes have been made according to rules of the Silpasastras.

Srilankan silpasastra is known as 'Rupabaliya',⁶ which gives directions to the casting of metal images of Siva, Parvathi and other divinities. Gangoly is of the opinion that although various⁷ Buddhist texts ~~like~~ of sculptures, temple constructions and bronzes have been found in Srilanka, none of the south Indian manuscripts of the silpasastras have been discovered there. By this some may attempt to advocate that all saiva bronzes found in Srilanka might have been brought from south India. But we can not accept this view because Srilankan bronzes are indigenous. It is worthy of note that no trace of any south Indian manuscript was found in the island so far; instead we have Srilanken Silpasastras.⁸

Generally the silpasastras state two methods of casting namely Wax and hollow for the casting of metal images. The statement " Lohajam sakalam yat tu madhucchistena nirmitam",⁹ means that all metal images are made by means of wax process. In the second method of hollow, to begin with a core of clay was shaped on which the details of the intended image was moulded. Almost all south Indian bronzes were made in the wax process. In Srilanka also majority of the saiva bronzes have been made by the wax method. There are a

few unfinished saiva bronzes at Polonnaruva which show the hollow process. Srilankan silpasastras forbid the casting of hollow images. This is found in the canons attributed to Sariputra which states " No image of gold or other metal should be cast hollow within. The making of hollow images will result in the loss of wife and wealth and leads to quarrels and famine ".¹⁰

The most striking forms among saiva images in Srilanka are Nataraja images. There were seven Nataraja bronzes found from Polonnaruva and Trincomolee. They are famous all over for their aesthetic value. Coomaraswamy opines that perhaps the 108 kinds of dances mentioned in the sastras are identical with 108 modes of dance of Siva.¹¹ It is very interesting to note that all the 108 kinds of dances are sculptured on either side of a gopura in the Nataraja temple at Chidambaram with their description in Sanskrit as they are found in Natyasastra engraved below each one of them.¹² But discovered Nataraja bronzes in Srilanka belong to the Chola metallic school according to Coomaraswamy who says " as a group they belong to prolific south Indian school of medieval bronzes represented by Madras Nataraja."¹³

There are many works both in Tamil and Sanskrit which give the details of Nataraja images.¹⁴ According to Tamil works, the dancing Siva is known as Nataraja or Adavallar. The Skanda puranam and Koyil puranam are the most important among the Tamil works to speak about Nataraja. Now we may discuss the Nataraja images found in Srilanka.

We have seven pieces of this deity. When compared to South India they are less in number and assume more importance. Many scholars refuse to accept that the Polonnaruwa ~~and~~ Trincomolee bronzes have been cast in Srilanka because of their physical features and their contours. A view from Gangoly that 'it cannot be contested that Buddhism of Ceylon has laid the foundation of a very interesting school of sculpture both in stone and metal and that for several centuries artists both in metal and stone have flourished in Ceylon. But it will be impossible to associate the saiva images from Polonnaruwa with local artists of Ceylon brought up in the traditions of Buddhist art',¹⁵ shows that the bronze art that flourished in the island is not indigenous. But most of the scholars have accepted that Srilanka had a school of its own in bronze. Now let us describe some of these images in detail.

NATARAJA number 1 (Ht 90.4 cms; CMR no 13.88.283)

This image was discovered at Siva devale no 1 in Polonnaruva. This temple stylistically belongs to Pandyan school of art in South India. The encircled Nataraja image with a complete prabhamandala or tituvasi stands on a beautiful lotus pedestal. Of four arms of Nataraja the upper hands in left and right hold flame and damaru while the lower hands in left and right are hanging down in abhayamudra. The manner of holding damaru with a single finger is a notable character. Among the two legs of Nataraja the right one is kept on the back of the apasmarapurusha while the left one is kept raised and bent kunchitapada. Though many scholars have described this Nataraja they have failed to observe the dress and technology which distinguishes it from other specimens. The head dress of Nataraja as a crown, triangle in shape is formed of peacock feathers. On the bottom of this crown a human skull is shown clearly. These are two salient features which we could not find on other specimens in Srilanka. From the observations of Arunachalam¹⁶ and Coomaraswamy¹⁷ there are only two cobras on the Nataraja, of which one is depicted as coiled

on the wrist of the right lower hand and the other found coiled at the top on the left side of the jata. The description given by Arunachalam needs reconsideration and will be discussed elsewhere.¹⁸

The upper half of the prabha is occupied by the jatas horizontally which arise from the siraschakra but not from jatamukuta as mentioned by Arunachalam¹⁹ and Srinivasan.²⁰ According to silpa texts the figure of Ganga should be represented to equal of the face of Nataraja.²¹ But here this rule in relation to Ganga seems to have been overlooked by the sculptor. The rudrakshamala is elongated upto the waist of Nataraja which is the important criterion to determine the style of this Nataraja. Very important or distinctive character of this Nataraja is the scroll design of armlets which we could not trace in any Nataraja. But the same scroll design is depicted on Parvathi.²²

Arunachalam is of the opinion that the bronze shows the artists struggling with imperfect realization of its ideal, defective knowledge and training and insufficient mastery of the technical difficulties.²³ But contrary to Arunachalam's statement Willey, who was the Director of the Colombo museum, has pointed out that "perhaps it may be thought that admirable reproductions

accompanying this description render unnecessary any further appreciation here of the bronze, the first of its class to be recorded from Ceylon. It is desirable, however, to be clear on one point. There are some experts who will declare that these bronzes are not so good as South Indian bronzes, such a statement rests upon the conscious or unconscious assumption that Ceylon is a paradise of mediocrities and that whilst it produces many good things, it never has produced one excellent thing. The assumption may be correct, but it should be stated if it is so. Other experts will beg the question in an equally grotesque manner by claiming that these are in fact south Indian bronzes. Let it be asserted once for all that they are Polonnaruwa bronzes for better or worse.²⁴

Vincient Smith has considered this Nataraja as equal to Nataraja which is in Madras museum.²⁵ This bronze has not been dated satisfactorily so far by any scholar. Coomaraswamy²⁶ gives a date which ranges from tenth to thirteenth century A. D. The long garland of rudraksha and the head dress as crown as well as a pair of long flowing end show the later Chola style.

NATARAJA number 2 (Ht 64.5 cms; CMR no 13.89.293)

This image was also discovered in Siva devale no 1 in 1908. It has no prabha or tiruvasi, and stands on a pedestal. Many special features of this image have been identified by scholars. However, there are many new features which we can refer here. For instance, there were only two cobras mentioned but there are many more which are coiled. A cobra with five heads²⁷ is kept on the waist of Nataraja. It seems to be coiled on the waist and the backview of the Nataraja clearly shows the five heads of the cobra. Another cobra is kept with flame on the upper left hand in which only the head of the cobra is depicted clearly. Though scholars have mentioned only one crescent on the right jata, a keen observation will provide another crescent which is depicted on the top of the left jata makuta. Another important feature of this Nataraja is the ear ornaments. We find a man's ear ring on the left ear in undeveloped manner and a woman's ear ring with a moving bull on the right which is known as Rishabhakundala.²⁸ A Nataraja with rishabhakundala was found for the first time in Srilanka but no other specimen has been reported in south India so far.

As mentioned by a few observers²⁹ the facial feature the manner of holding the damaru and anklets show that this bronze was based upon ancient traditions. From Srinivasan's study of this figure " it may show that it is distinctly different from other Natesas in concept and execution. The square cut face is obviously of the later Chola type. But the modelling and decorations have much to be desired. In view of these features this may be dated to the first quarter of the 14th century.²⁹ But contrary to this Coomaraswamy has dated the figure as belonging between the tenth and thirteenth century.³⁰ Arunschalam opines that the figure is an incomplete one.³¹ The image has attracted the attention of many scholars. Benjamin Rowland remarks " One of the greatest Nataraja images is preserved in the Colombo museum. The figure a perfect fusion of serenity and balance moves in slow and gracious rhythm lacking the usual violence of the cosmic dance; this is a cadenced movement communicated largely by the centrifugal space embracing position of the arms and the suggestion of the figure's revolving in space. The turning effect that comes from the arrangement of the multiple arms ..."

According to Sivaramamurthy,³² this image differs from South India specimens because of the style of the jatamakuta which is not found in any specimen of south India. Therefore, the specimen would have been made in Srilanka itself.

NATARAJA number 3 (Ht 61.5 cms; CMR no 13.19.284)

This image was discovered at Devale no 5 . In this figure many features which differ from the earlier two specimens are seen. The Nataraja stands on the back of the Apasmara but the pedestal is missing. According to Arunachalam this figure was incomplete one.³³ Gangoly says that it is perhaps the most decadent specimen of the image discovered upto date.³⁴ Thus these authors have assumed this image as defective. This is probably due to the fact that the maker of this bronze was quite new to the art of modelling in wax, perhaps a novice in the field. Prof. Indrapala is of the opinion that this image can not be compared to any Nataraja bronze either aesthetically or technically. On the basis of these accounts this figure may be attributed to about 1300 A.D. The facial expression suggests divinity.

NATARAJA number 4 (Ht 46.2 cms; CMB no 13,106,287)

Though this bronze was discovered from Polonnaruwa in 1908, it is not known from which Devale it was discovered. This is almost similar to Nataraja no 1 but less in height. The oval shape of the prabha is plain without inner band stars and decorations. The jata on either side has not touched the prabha. The crescent is placed on the left side of the jata as prescribed in silpa texts. The date of this Nataraja has been given as 10th to 13th century by Coomaraswamy.³⁵

NATARAJA number 5 (Ht 90.5 cms,)

Having many special features on it the specimen is the sole example to advocate the indigenous origin of Saiva bronzes in Sri Lanka. We do not know when and where it was found. But most probably it might have been discovered at Polonnaruwa. The highly decorated prabha and its both inner and outer bands arise from the mouths of a pair of makaras and the perfect circle of makaratorana shows its indigenous origin. The anatomical features clearly distinguish it from the similar images from south India. Gangoly is right when he says "these beautiful images which the Chola colonists brought to Ceylon excite" to wonder and emulation of the local Sinhalese craftsmen some of whom

attempted to copy copy these models and to reproduce the conventions of its poses and peculiarities without a previous knowledge of its traditional rules and measurements".³⁶ Though some moot points are in this statement, keeping in view the Nataraja no 5 this statement seems to be right. As mentioned by him this figure shows that an attempt was made to chisel the Nataraja in a perfect Sinhalese character. The inverted lotus flower found as a part of the pedestal. The manner of holding damaru and flame deserve ~~special~~ special mention. The absence of the hoops or the hooks on the pedestal shows that it was not meant to be a moving image. Indrapala rightly points out that the manifestation of the figure too proves no doubt, the metal sculptor of this bronze should have mastered the Sinhalese local traditions.³⁷ Coomaraswamy also has mentioned that it is more definitely having Sinhalese character than any of those found at Polonnaruwa.³⁸

NATARAJA no 6 (Ht 146.8 cms; Find no 1960/02)

Among the finds of Nataraja bronzes in Srilanka this specimen stands first in size. This image marks a landmark in the history of Hindu iconography in Srilanka. The prabha is having the makara which is smaller in size on either side.

The shape of tiruvasi decorated with stars in inner band and the flames of fire on the outer band are connected or linked with one another at the top.

The lotus pedestal is rectangular in shape and on the front of which there are five friezes of musicians with musical instruments. The musician from right to left are a woman beating a pair of ~~sym~~ cymbals, a conch blower, a flute player and a cymbalist. Godakumbara says that no Nataraja bronze with a similar frieze of musicians is known.

Sivaramamurthi has also remarked the distinctive characteristics of this bronze and has identified a cobra with five heads on the right hand of Nataraja. He is of the opinion that the metal sculptor in Srilanka chiselled out this bronze on the basis of the hymns sung by the Saiva saint~~x~~ Tirugnana Sambandhar.⁴⁰ The face of the musicians according to Godakumbara⁴¹ admits comparison with similar sculptures found at Vatadage in Polonnaruva district. Thus the indigenous origin of the Nataraja no 5 is strengthened on one more evidence. The elongated Rudraksha and the square cut facial feature obviously proves that this bronze belongs to the later Chola period i e 11th century.

NATARAJA no 7 (Ht 13.8 Cms find no 1960/10)

This bronze image was found in a clay pot intact with tuft of hair; halo and pedestal. This Nataraja figure is incomplete. Even though its anatomical features reflect the perfect knowledge its master, the upper part of the ~~body~~ prabha has connections with the tuft of hair on either side. The edges of the prabha inner and outer-are decorated with stars.

BRONZES OF PARVATHI;

Srilankan Parvathi images have represented various forms with extreme ornateness of the decorations, sharp facial characters and a form in unity. There were twelve Parvathi images. Each consists of its own pedestal except one. Zimmer rightly mentions with regard to these images "it is a work of the southern school of theatre of Ceylon... It is the moment of romance..."⁴²

PARVATHI no 1 (Ht 51.2 cms; CMR no 13.104.286)

This standing image in tribhanga posture was found at Siva devale number 5. It is clear that an attempt was made to depict the goddess by a metal sculptor who has been trained in the traditional local Buddhist customs. If we compare this figure with similar figures of the same

We can realise the deviation of this figure both in casting and treatment of the figure. Gngoly who has studied this figure carefully has identified some features which have been applied to it against the rules found in the silpasastras.⁴³ An important character of this image is the tribhanga as shown by bending the hip towards the right hand side while most of the Parvathi figures show the bending towards the left side. The head dress, the facial features and the style of the lotus pedestal are notable ones. The makuta shows the typical Buddhist character. More over the sculptor has failed to balance the aesthetic value between the head dress and space of the face. To sum up, we can say that the standing figure is perhaps a less successful attempt of a metal sculptor of Buddhist tradition to reproduce a model of Parvathi.

PARVATHI no 2 (Ht 63.6 cms:CMR no 13.108.287)

This was discovered at Siva devale no 3. The standing figure with slight tribhanga posture on well polished lotus pedestal represents according to Arunachalam⁴⁴ Sivakami, the consort of Siva no 8. But Willey does not accept this identification.⁴⁵ But we could not trace the same design on any Nataraja or Siva bronze

except Nataraja no 4. Moreover the lotus pedestals of both Nataraja no 1 and Parvathi no 2 are closely related whereas pedestal style of Siva no 8 is far from that of the pedestal of Parvathi no 2. The facial features of Parvathi no and Siva also differ from one another. Parvathi's face is almost elongated while Siva's face is almost round or oval in shape. On the other hand, facial features of Nataraja no 1 and Parvathi no 2 show close similarity. The similarity between the two can be identified in two ways. The first is the back view of both bronzes. The round shape of siraschakra behind the head of these two have the same character and style. The second point is that the square designs on the front and back pedestals of Parvathi no 2 and Nataraja no 1 show and suggest that the consort of Nataraja no 1 is Parvathi no 2. Thus Arunachalam's opinion is wrong.

PARVATHI no 3 (Ht 82.34 cms; CNR no 13.109.287)

This bronze which was discovered at Siva devale no 5 is a standing figure on a fine lotus pedestal in tribhanga posture, is highly decorated and ornamented with richly flowered armlets of delicate workmanship. The right hand of the figure is broken while the left hand is hanging down. The elongated square cut facial

features show the style of the later Chola school. The elongated karanda makuta is formed of six tiers one over the other. The elongated and highly decorated makarakundalas on either ears are not only striking but also of other Parvathi images found in Polonnaruva. The modelling of the figure is superb and the anatomical proportions are depicted as illustrated in silpa texts. The folds on the belly is treated in a delicate manner. The thick necklaces as well as the shoulder ornaments are of remarkable workmanship. The pedestal is also worked skilfully in a unique manner. Coomaraswamy has dated this image to 10th-13th century A.D.⁴⁶

PARVATHI no 4 (Ht 84.2 cms CMR no 13.110.287)

This standing figure on a lotus pedestal in tribhanga was discovered at Polonnaruva but we do not know from which Devale it was found. Though we could not find any special feature from the former one, we can trace a few changes relating to head dress and facial features as well as the hip. The karanda makuta is shown in small size. The formation of the hip also slightly differs. The anklets and armlets are similar in no 3 and 4. Coomaraswamy dates it approximately to 10th and 13th century A.D.⁴⁷

PARVATHI no 5 (ht 62.6 cms;CMR no 13.111 a;288)

This standing figure on a lotus pedestal in tribhanga posture was discovered at Polonnaruva in 1908. But we do not know from which Devale it was found. Though the bronze is having resemblance with the former, it has some special features. The bracelet and a pair of toe rings distinguish it from other Parvathi images. Arunachalam has identified this figure as Sivakami, the consort of Siva. He says that the round thread cord with the marriage symbol is mangalasutra.⁴⁸ At the same time one more Parvathi bronze with mangalasutra (no 10) has been identified with consort of Nataraja rightly. On this basis we can attribute that the Parvathi figure no 5 is a consort of Nataraja.

PARVATHI no 6 (Ht 78.7 cms CMR no 13.111B.288)

This standing figure of tribhanga was found in devale no 1 which belongs to the Pandya style. This is different from that of Parvathi nos 2 and 5. The ear ornaments and lotus pedestal are notable ones.

PARVATHI no 7 (ht 31 cms;CMR no 13.206. 299)

This is the only small bronze discovered at Polonnaruva district but the exact findspot is not known. The standing figure with samabhanga posture shows the typical Indian ideal of feminine beauty. The character of the hip is notable.

This figure is dated to 10th to 13th century A.D.⁴⁹
 PARVATHI no 8 (ht 41 cms. CMR no 13.96.285)

This seated figure was discovered at Polonnaruwa itself. The pedestal is missing. As parvathi no 1 this seated figure was cast in Srilanka by a traditional local Buddhist metal sculptor. The right arm of Parvathis holds a lotus bud and it overreaches the nipple of the right breast. After a careful observation of the figure, Gangoly says " if we compare this image with a somewhat similar figure of the same goddess it will be apparent that there is a deviation both in the modelling and the treatment of the figure as also in ornaments and details in the Ceylonese example which makes it out as the work of an artist unacquainted with the rules and conventions of south Indian sculpture.⁵⁰ The significance of this image is that it is the only one of sitting posture. Coomaraswamy has dated this figure to 10th-13th century A.D.⁵¹

PARVATHI no 9 (CMR no 13.213.299) As this figure is recorded to have been discovered at Anuradhapura dated to 9th century.⁵²

As this is outside the scope of this study, it has been excluded in our framework.

PARVATHI no 10 (ht 93.5 cms. Find no 1960/05)

This is the largest Parvathi image found at Polonnaruwa behind Sivadevale no 5 in 1960. The treatment of the figure and the modelling as well as the ornamentations represent that it was made by a Buddhist sculptor who was aware of the Saiva silpasastra systematically. There is no doubt that many of the details of ornament and dress are derived from the practices of old Buddhist sculptures. The right hand of the figure is kept in Kataka hasta. The fold on the belly is shown beautifully. The drapery and the ornaments are chiselled delicately. The bracelets and the anklets are depicted thickly. Godakumbara⁵³ says that in certain respects the drapery of Parvathi consists of similarities with a statue in stone identified as Parakramabahuat Polonnaruwa and also bronze image called Tara. He has also identified this figure as the consort of Nataraja no 6. The right armlet of Parvathi closely resembles the left armlet of Nataraja. But one problem is that we cannot find the elongated rudraksha garland on Parvathi as we find in Nataraja. As mentioned earlier, it indicates later Chola period. Anyhow it can be concluded that this was the consort of Nataraja no 6 and belongs to 11th or 12th century A.D.

PARVATHI no 11 (ht 47.6 cms Trincomolee 1950)

This seated parvathi image was discovered at Trincomolee. This specimen is known for its special features. The seated posture of Parvathi no doubt represents as consort of Siva or of Somaskanda. It contains the decorated ornaments and the right arm of Parvathi holds a blue lotus bud while her left arm is in varadamudra. The right leg of the figure is nearly touching the knee of the other leg which is kept hanging down. Balendra has identified the figure of Parvathi as the consort of Somaskanda.⁵⁴ Raghavan who also shares the opinion of Balendra says that this seated Parvathi in all probability belongs to Somaskanda group. This could not be further probed as this figure is reinstalled in the temple at Trincomolee into which access is restricted now.⁵⁵

PARVATHI no 12 (ht 50 cms. Trincomolee 1950)

The standing figure on lotus pedestal in tribhanga posture was discovered at Trincomolee in 1950. This is one of the finest bronzes in Srilanka. The typical tribhanga posture found in this very elegant. As mentioned by Zimmer, it is the moment of Romance.⁵⁶ The figure stands

on the pedestal resting mainly on the right foot and bending at the hips. The left hand hangs down loosely by the side while the right one is in the posture of katihasta. This Parvathi bronze has been identified as Sakti, the consort of Siva. According to Krishna Iyer, this is dated to 11th century A.D.⁵⁷

SIVA AND PARVATHI no 1 (ht 60.3 & 51 cms; Cmr no 13.90.284)

This was discovered in Siva devale no 1 in 1908. Siva is four armed; the two front hands are in katihasta and abhaya mudra while the upper hands hold a deer and parasu. Parvathi is represented by two hands. They are represented in skhasana.⁵⁸ According to Arunachalam⁵⁹ these two seated figures represent Somaskandamurti. But the space and formation of the pedestal does not prove the conjecture. The pedestal of Somaskanda should be an elongated one to accommodate three figures. But here Siva and Parvathi are represented in individual pedestals. Thus it is difficult to accept the opinion of Arunachalam. And another criterion to find out the Somaskandamurti is the ear ornamentation of Parvathi. As mentioned earlier Parvathi is depicted with lotus petals with feathers of peacock as her ear ornaments.⁶⁰ But in this group we did not find the same ornamental style on Parvathi.

According to Gangoly, this group of bronzes is having similarity with that of the Madras museum specimen. He says that the Colombo example suffers by the comparison not only with the Madras copy but also in comparison with the artistic qualities of other images, eg Siva (no 8), Sundaramurti or Chandeshvara.⁶¹

SIVA AND PARVATHI no 2 (ht 37.5&32.5;CMR 13.94.284)

The standing figures in tribhanga posture on two individual pedestals in one block, encircled with Tiruvasi was found at siva devale no 1. The pose of these figures no doubt represents their indigenous origin. The facial features of Parvathi reflects its origin in the Buddhist island. The local metal sculptor seems to have tried to make a perfect Hindu bronze. The interior and exterior phase of Tiruvasi is highly decorated which is based on the local style. It represents the early phase of the development of Tiruvasi in medieval Srilanka. The Tiruvasi of Nataraja no 5 and 6 as well as this group have been made by the local sculptors. The drapery of these two figures reminds us of the dress of Trincomolee bronzes. It can be said that these figures are the bridge in connecting the

Trincomolee figures with those of Polonnaruva. Moreover these two specimens are the best examples to focus the local variation of the Srilankan make of Saiva bronzes. On these grounds it can be dated to 11th century A.D. SIVA no 8 (ht 67 cms; CMR no 13.92.284)

The standing figure on a circular lotus pedestal in tribhanga posture was found at Siva devale no 5 in 1908. Siva is represented with four arms; the front left and right hands are kept in lolahasta or katakahasta while the other hands hold a deer and parasu. The remarkable feature is that the extra arms branch out from the elbow but not from the shoulder. Arunachalam has identified this figure in half dancing pose as Sandhya nritta murthi.⁶² But according to another scholar⁶³ it represents Vrisabhavahanamurthi. Thus the concept of Vrisabhavahanamurthi seems to be applicable here to Siva.⁶⁴ Moreover a bull (ht 42 cms; CMR no 13.185.297) in standing posture also was discovered from Siva devale no 5. Therefore on these grounds it can be identified as Vrisabhavahanamurthi instead of the Sandhyanrittamurthi.

SOMASKANDA SIVA (ht 52.5 cms; Find no 1960/03)

This figure was found at Polonnaruva behind the Siva devale no 5 in 1960. The rectangular shape of lotus pedestal with Tiruvasi was found separately. It has been identified as Somaskanda.⁶⁵

A peculiar character of this figure is the style in the representation of the legs. Contrary to the Agamic tradition the right leg is kept folded in padmasana while the left leg is hanging down. No one has identified the consort of this figure though Parvathi no 8 can be attributed as the consort of this figure. Thus in these two figures there are many features which we find contrary to Agamic traditions and this helps us to determine the origin of the Somaskanda group which is by local artists of Srilanka.

SIVA (ht 51.25 cms; Trincomolee 1950)

The sitting posture of Siva is a special character which is absent in the Polonnaruva finds. For anatomical proportions, the Trincomolee seated Siva excels the Madras museum specimens. It is one of the most outstanding examples of Hindu metal art available today according to Paranavita.⁶⁶ Krishna Iyer is of the opinion that the Sitting Siva icon makes it appear as karunamurthi.⁶⁷

According to Balendra⁶⁸ this figure of Siva represents the Somaskanda posture. Even Krishna ~~Iyer~~ Iyer accepts it as Somaskanda without any doubt. But Indrapala is of the opinion that this figure represents not Somaskanda but a posture of Siva known as Sukhasanamurthi. He says that the pedestal of Somaskanda should have wide space in which three persons like Siva, Parvathi and Skanda could be accommodated together. But here the pedestal space is sufficient only for a single figure. Hence it is difficult to accept the opinion of Balendra. Indrapala himself attributed this figure to the later Chola period purely based upon ornamentations of the figure.⁶⁹

SIVA (ht 50cms; Trincomolee 1950)

The standing figure in samabhanga on lotus pedestal was found in Trincomolee ~~ix~~ in 1950. He has been identified as Chandrasekharamurthi. A remarkable character of this figure is the shape and the manner of holding deer on the upper left hand. In this specimen the body of the deer is kept towards the face of Siva. Thus this feature may help to attribute this bronze to early Chola period. According to Balendra⁷⁰ this Chandrasekhara ~~x~~ represents

Mangolian in appearance. On these grounds he attributed the age of this bronze to early tenth century A.D.⁷⁰ Krishna Iyer too suggests the date as 9th or 10th century A.D.⁷¹

ARDHANARISVARA Ht 13 cms;

The most important discovery among the Saiva bronzes in Srilanka is the Ardhanarisvara unearthed at Abhayagiri in Anuradhapura in 1982. This was the first discovery of Ardhanarisvara in Srilanka. This bronze contains three arms of which two are on the right and the remaining on the left side. The bronze is in tribhanga. In several aspects this Ardhanarisvara reflects many indigenous, distinctive characteristic features.⁷³ The jatamakuta and makarakundala are in the left side but usually they will have ~~xxxxx~~ to be placed on the right of the image. Hence in many respects Srilankan Ardhanarisvara differs from South Indian specimens.⁷⁴ Though there are many specimens found in south India, the one from Nagesvarasvami temple at Kumbhakonam helps to determine the date of our specimen.⁷⁵ The Ardhanarisvara from Nagesvarasvami temple is one of the finest bronzes of the Chola period and it resembles with our finds in many ways. The proportions of both the specimens

are same and have lot of resemblances. Thus it can be stated that the Srilankan Ardhanarisvara is indigenous by its origin and technique.

SIVA AS BHAIRAVA (Ht 14.1 cms)

This specimen was found at Polonnaruva in 1960 and was styled Bhairava by Godakumbara. His identification of the image as Bhairava, no doubt, is supplemented with parallel specimens in south India. But his identification of the Bhairava among the subdivisions of the cult is doubtful. The eight armed Baluka Bhairava bronzes in South India were found at two places; at Tiruvengadu⁷⁵ and at Kalahasti.⁷⁶ The former is dated to 10th century while the latter is 17th century. The ten armed Bhairava was also discovered at Tanjore district⁷⁷ which is dated to the first quarter of the 14th century. This Bhairava having some special features represents the Chola style of Srilankan school of art. This is the only specimen in bronze representing the Kevala Bhairava group which was discovered at Polonnaruva. On the basis of the Pattisvaram stone specimen, this can be dated to the end of the 12th century.⁷⁸

GANESHA Nos 1 and 2 (ht 57.5 & 50 cms; 1960/13)

Origin of Ganesha in Srilanka goes back to



third century B.C. The famous site at Mihindale in Anuradhapura, we have a beautiful stone sculpture of Ganesha which is supposed to be the earliest one in South Asia. But in metal two icons of Ganesha have been found so far; one from Polonnaruva and another from Trincomalee. The Polonnaruva specimen in seated posture was discovered behind the Siva devale no 5 and the Trincomalee icon was discovered with pedestal on which Ganesha was standing. The seated Ganesha on circular lotus pedestal is depicted with four arms of which the upper hands on the left and right holds flower and battle axe; while the front arms on the left and right are kept with the rice cake and broken tusk respectively. It can be said that this bronze belongs to the later Chola period with local origin. The manner in which the armlets are shown helps to determine the date while the karandamakuta represents the indigenous origin of Ganesha. The local artist has skilfully depicted Ganesha on the basis of Sivagamas and texts. There is no doubt that the Polonnaruva specimen is most outstanding one in South Asia.

The trincomolee standing bronze Ganesha on the lotus pedestal is represented with four arms, in which the front left hand is connected with trunk which represents the posture of eating rice cake. The upper hands on the left and right are kept with conch and elephant goad. The elongated square type of facial features with decorated Karanda makuta distinguishes it from the Polonnaruva specimen. The dressing style of Trincomolee specimen reminds us of Parvathi no 11. A comparative study of saiva bronzes from Polonnaruva and Trincomolee clearly reveals the influence of local variations on them. Especially the Trincomolee specimens are known for their anatomical accuracy which is absent in the case of Polonnaruva bronzes.⁷⁹

SUNDARAMURTHI 1 and 2 Ht 62 & 52.7 cms

Both these bronzes were discovered in Siva devale no 5 at Polonnaruva in 1908. In both these figures he is represented with a tiara on his head. The standing figure in tribhanga posture on a highly decorated pedestal represents their indigenous origin in Sri Lanka. As Arunachalam says the appearance of these figures represent a young bridegroom from a royal family.⁸⁰ Coomaraswamy says these

figures of Sundaramurthi are superior to any south Indian examples and which must have been made by south Indian sthapatis at Polonnaruva.⁸¹ In fact the figure of Sundaramurthi undoubtedly claims to be one of the best specimens of its kind which is difficult to match with any example from the mainland.⁸² There are many noteworthy characteristic features in both the figures. The significance of the armlets represent the local style. The additional armlets represent rudraksha. In the anatomical features of these bronzes are shown natural manner of attaching the arms to the shoulders. Moreover, the thick and stiff necklaces and other ornaments represent medieval period of clothing of Srilanka. But according to another scholar⁸³ the ornamentation and clothing would belong to 13th century of Tamilnadu. Due to this the bronze may be dated to the end of 13th century. But Coomaraswamy has dated these specimens to 10th-13th century A.D.⁸⁴

CHANDESVARA nos 3 and 8;

So far only two bronzes have been identified as Chandeesvara. Both are from Polonnaruva. The standing figure in samabhanga posture on an inverted lotus pedestal is in anjali pose.

The anatomical features of the hand and shoulders are perfectly chiselled out with a heavy but smooth moulding. The head dress as striking features of the ~~next~~ figure consists of many special characters. The elongated kesamakuta is domical in shape in which a beautiful design is carved. Coomaraswamy says that 'one other figure of a saint offering flowers most probably represents Chandeshvara, a young brahman cowherd and devotee of Siva or possibly Vyaghrapada, a brahman boy-devotee of Siva.'⁸⁶ Srinivasan says that "the expression is beautiful and the pose is akin to that of many a Chandeshvara of Tamilnad belonging to the 12th century. The manner of holding the flower garland in his anjali hands is also comparable to the detail met within similar bronzes belonging to Tamilnad."⁸⁷ A standing Chandeshvara at Marudantanallur⁸⁸ in south India is almost similar with this icon. But from these considerations no one can advocate that this figure of Chandeshvara was brought from Tamilnad because we have strong evidence of an inscription⁸⁹ found on the pedestal in grantha and Sinhales and this shows its origin as indigenous.

Regarding the identification of icon no 8 as Chandeshvara we have some difficulties. But

Godagumbara says ' the statue of Sivabhakta
Chandesvara retains fairly good proportion.
However, the figure tends to stiffen out,
perhaps due to its attitude of prayer.⁹⁰

MANIKYAVACHAKAR (ht 54.2 cms CMR no ,3.101.286)

The figure was unearthed at Siva devale
no 1 in Polonneruva. The attractive feature of
elongated rudraksha garland and the hair style
are the criteria of later Chola style. The
figure is depicted with two arms of which the
right one is kept in teaching posture known
as vitarkahasta while the left hand holds a
palm leaf on which ~~is~~ is inscribed Namassivaya
in Tamil. The palaeographical character of the
script shows that it belongs to tenth century.

TIRUGNANASAMBANTHAR (ht 48.6 cms, CMR no 13.102)

This bronze was discovered at Sivadevale no 5
in 1908. The standing figure on lotus pedestal
in samabhanga posture is the representation
of Tirugnana Sambandhar. The rudrakshamala
in the neck represent the ascetic life. Though
a few bronzes of Tirugnana Sambandhar are
discovered in Tamilnad⁹¹ the Srilankan specimen
is very attractive one on the basis of its ~~anatomical~~
anatomical details. We can not find the
same features in the mainland. Hence the scholars

have agreed that this bronze is indigenous. 6
 Coomaraswamy has dated it to 10th^o 13th century.
 SAINT APPAR (ht 58.4 cms CMR no 13.103.286)

These two bronzes were discovered at
 Sivadevale no 1 in Polonnaruva. The standing figures
 on the lotus pedestals were treated in different
 manner. But both are identified as Appar. On the
 identification of no 6 and 7 there is no doubt.
 The figures are shown with folded hands in a
 worshipping form, shaven head and carrying the
 weeding implement on the left shoulder. This
 is the main character to identify it as Appar.
 KARAIKKAL AMMAIYAR (ht 27.1, no 1960/12)

This bronze was discovered ~~at~~ behind
 the devale no 5 at Polonnaruva in 1960. The ~~seated~~
 seated figure without pedestal represents the
 only female devotee of Siva namely Karaikkal
 Ammaiyar. Having a very interesting story behind
 the figure is depicted with an emaciated look.
 Godakumbara has rightly identified this
 bronze as that of Karaikkala Ammaiyar., a female
 devotee of Siva.

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 art, p.167. and Bell H.C.P.: Archaeological
 Survey of Ceylon, 1913, p.36

2. Zimmer .H.: The Art of Indian Asia, p.17.

Now review of Indian art would be complete if the branches of tradition that opened southward to Ceylon and Indonesia.. The more we find and reconstruct, interpret and understand the more do we realise how much has been lost. The additional fragments preserved in colonial territories help to fill in new gaps. For the Indic civilization, both Buddhist and Hindu of Ceylon, Cambodia, Siam and Java possessed superb art tradition of their own.

3. RASC, part IV, p.74 In the early report Bell appreciated the Bronze images as doubtless cast in India. This may be true of some smaller statues; but a closer examination of the larger bronzes compel one to revise the inference of Bell.

4. Balendra.W: Trincomolee Bronzes; Tamil Culture, Vol.II April 1953, p.179

5. Coomaraswamy; The transformation of Nature in Art, p.20-21; 37-8

6. Gangoly; South Indian Bronzes, f.n.p.65

7. Ibid

8. The work Kamikagama mentions about Simhaladesa silpa sastra in connection with Chandesvara.

9. Zimmer; op.cit, p.110

10. Coomaraswamy; Medieval Sinhalese art, p.154
11. Ibid.
12. Ibid.
13. Bronze from Ceylon, 1914, p.9
14. Ibid.

~~xxxxxx~~

15. Gangoly ; Op.cit;p.65
16. Arunachalam, p.; Polonnaruva Bronzes, p.214
17. Coomaraswamy; Bronzes from Ceylon, p.9
18. The identification of Hindu bronzes in Srilanka made by Arunachalam is misleading and has failed to interpret them properly which I would discuss in my future research.
19. Arunachalam; op cit.p.212
20. Srinivasan F.R.; Bronzes of South India p.190
21. The work Uttarakamikagama says that the height of Ganga should be equal to that of the face of Siva or Nataraja.
22. Willey; who was a Director of Colombo museum has distinguished this Parvathi figure by finding this scroll design for the first time.
23. Arunachalam; op cit; p.194
24. Willey; Spolia Zeylanica, p.44, Sept 1909
25. Smith V.A; A History of Fine Art in India and Ceylon; p.254.

26. Coomaraswamy ; op.cit,p.13
27. No one has identified so far cobra with five heads.Sivaramamurthi has identified a cobra with five heads on Nataraja no 6.
28. For the first time Nataraja no 2 has been identified with Risabhakundala which we could not find so far in South Indian Nataraja bronzes.
29. Srinivasan,p.r. op.cit,p.333
30. Coomaraswamy; op cit,p.13
31. Arunachalam; Spolia Zeylanica,1909,p.67
32. Rowland; op cit,p.330
33. Arunachalam; op cit,p.67
34. Gangoly; op cit; p.66
35. Coomaraswamy;op cit.p.13
36. Gangoly ; op cit;p.64
37. Indrapala,K.; 'Siva bronzes in Srilanka',Jaffna Archaeological Society,p.8
38. Coomaraswamy;op cit,p.13
39. Godakumbara,C.E.; Polonnaruva Bronzesp.12
40. Sivaramamurthi;Nataraja in art thought and literature,1914
41. Godagumpure; op cit;p. 12
42. Zimmer; The art of Indian Asia. p.120
43. Gangoly;op cit;p.67
44. Arunachalam;op cit,p.218

45. Willey, A: Note by Editor, Spolia Zeylanica, 1909, p.44
46. Coomaraswamy; Bronzes from....1914, p.14
47. Ibid.
48. Arunachalam; op cit, p.217
49. Coomaraswamy; op cit, p.14
50. Gangoly; op cit, p.57
51. Coomaraswamy; op.cit; p.14
52. Ibid.
53. Godakumbara; op cit; p.12
54. Balendra; Trincomolee bronzes, p.177
55. Trivedi, R.D.,: Iconography of Parvathi, p.84
56. Zimmer; op.cit, p.120
57. Krishna Iyer; Newly found Trincomolee icons, Madras Hindu, 4th Nov 1951. p.12
58. Arunachalam; op cit; p.219
59. Ibid.
60. Trivedi; op. cit, p.84
61. Gangoly; op.cit,
62. Arunachalam; op cit, p.218
63. Srinivasan; op cit, p.272
64. Gopinatha Rao; Elements of Hindu Iconography.
65. Godakumbare; op cit, p.13
66. Balendra; op cit, p.180
67. Krishna Iyer; op cit, p.12

68. Balendra; Tmil culture, 1953. p. 176
69. Indrapala, op cit, p.
70. Balendra; op cit, p. 180
71. Krishna Iyengar; op cit, p. 12
72. Ibid.
73. Gopinatha Rao; op cit, p. 321
74. Ibid.
75. Srinivasan; op cit, p. 130
76. Ibid, fig 324
77. Ibid. fig 295
78. Gopinatha Rao; op cit, p. 178
79. Balendra; op cit; p. 180
80. Arunachalam; op cit, p. 219.
81. Coomaraswamy op cit; p. 167
82. Gangoly; op cit, plate XXII
83. Srinivasan; op cit, fig 268 A.
84. Coomaraswamy ; op cit, ; p. 12
85. Gopinatha Rao; op cit, p. 467
86. Coomaraswamy; op cit, p. 12
87. Srinivasa; op cit.
88. Gopinatha Rao, op cit, p. 469
89. Report of the Archaeological Survey of
Ceylon for 1908, p. 18. The inscription
found at the base of Chandesvara has been read
as follows by Wickramasinghe; The inscription

at the base of the statue of Chandesvara is in a dialect composed and mixed Grantha and Sinhalese. The first character is a composed letter which gives the proper name of the person the figure is supposed to represent. The first letter of the compound is unreadable but the last letter like a cerebral n or long u. The word cannot be Ganapati to judge from the figure. The next word is pati meaning chief or lord; the next is usba a Sinhalese word found in inscriptions meaning excellent which is derived from Sanskrit Risubh meaning ox. The final word is vamsa (Sinhalese Vahanse) as honourable title given to lay or clerical personage. (pati risabha vamshe).

90. Godakumbara; op cit; p.13

91. Sivaramamurthi; op cit; plate 566

92. Ibid.

93. Gangoly; op cit, p.

94. Basham; The Wonder that Was India, ;360.

CHAPTER FOUR

CONCLUSION

In conclusion we can make the following few remarks pertaining to our study. While introducing the subject in the first chapter we have discussed at length about the origin antiquity and importance of bronze right from the chalcolithic times upto 12th century A.D. We have also discussed the antiquity of bronze both in South India and Srilanka. Although bronze was used to represent the artistic feelings which are religious in nature as early as 5th century A.D, in Srilanka, we see the culmination point during the Chola colonial period. Besides this we have also tried to analyse the contribution of various scholars relating to the subject under review. From our study it becomes clear that scholars have failed to concentrate on the subject which it badly needs. They have also failed to apply Archaeo-chemical analysis to date the Saiva bronzes of Srilanka which has been extensively used in South India in order to find the chronology of the bronzes of South India. It has prevented the scholars from determining a scientific chronology to the Saiva bronzes in Srilanka.

In order to provide a systematic cultural background for our study, we have dealt with the cultural relations of South India and Srilanka from prehistoric period to the end of the 12th century A.D. From this birds eye view of the cultural relations we have understood the basic elements of Srilankan culture which provides a good background to study the Saiva bronzes in the island. In the cultural annals of the two countries 6th century A.D. is a milestone because of a remarkable change in the relationship that existed before the sixth century and that of after the sixth century A.D. The institutionalised cultural contacts were started by the Pallavas from sixth century A.D, onwards.

Then we have seen the advent of the Cholas into the island and their cultural impact in all walks of life in Srilanka. The assimilation policy of the Cholas in Srilanka made an impact deeply in Srilanka's cultural life. As we have seen the political assimilation policy of the Cholas in Srilanka, we could see the same theory in the cultural institutions also. Though the schools of metallic art in Srilanka

was flourishing since fifth century A.D., in different parts of the country by the advent of the Cholas to the island, not only a new impetus was provided to them but also the object and theme of bronze making activity changed into saivism for over a century. Under the new wave of impetus the metallic art in Srilanka attained the zenith as the output of Saiva bronzes with local variations. While we have made a survey of Saiva bronzes ~~ix~~ discovered in Srilanka we have seen that there thirty seven bronzes relatibg to Saiva cult. Along with the discoveries of Saiva bronzes we have also noted some characteristic features of temples or Siva Devales in which Saiva bronzes were buried.

In the course of our analysis of 37 Saiva bronzes which are found so far in Srilanka, we have attempted to figure out the several issues relating to them. Determing the dates for each bronze and tracing their origin are few among the such issues.

While discussing about the Nataraja bronzes we have seen many distinctive characteristic features which are also found

in South Indian specimens. There is no doubt that many features so far as the theme is concerned are found in Nataraja bronzes in Srilanka are also found in South Indian specimens. But there are few more special features of Srilankan bronzes which distinguish themselves from south Indian specimens. A comparative view of these Nataraja bronzes four main categories. In the first division Nataraja nos 1 and 2 can be included. In the second division Nataraja nos 3 and 7; in the third group Nataraja nos 4 and 6 and in the fourth category Nataraja number 5 can be included. These divisions speak about the four main local variations in the Polonnaruwa Nataraja bronzes. Of the seven Nataraja specimens five are with Tiruvasi which differs from one another both in style and execution. A comparative study of Tiruvasi, lotus pedestals and head dress will also help us to determine the development and the local variation of the bronzes.

Nataraja number 5 doubtlessly has been cast in Srilanka itself with

Buddhist school of metal art, as its base. Nataraja number 7 is an incomplete one and therefore one can not advocate that Nataraja number 7 has been brought from South India. Nataraja numbers 2 and 6 with their distinctive characters prove their indigenous origin. Nataraja figures 1 and 3 according to outstanding scholars, both have deviation from the Madras museum specimen. Thus it can be proved that all Nataraja bronzes are indigenous both by origin and characters.

In the analysing part of the Parvathi bronzes we have identified three main deviations among the specimens. The first group consists of nine Parvathi bronzes i e 2 to 7, 9 and 10. These nine figures are similar both in features and postures. But in this group Parvathi number 7 may be attributed to imported one because it is the only one closely similar with South Indian specimens. The second group consists of two figures numbers 1 and 8. These two Parvathi bronzes are borne out by Buddhist school of art. One

can not deny their indigenous origin. The third group comprises of Trincomolee bronzes of Parvathis specimens i e 11 and 12. Trincomolee Parvathi icons are the tangible evidence to advocate the concept give by Bell which supplements the statement of Willey. Even in South India one can not trace out or identify such Parvathi bronze as that of Trincomolee.

While discussing the bronzes of Saiva saints we have quoted some opinions of the outstanding scholars in order to prove not only the indigenous origin of this metallic art but also to refute the statements like "Srilanka never produced one really excellent thing". According to Coomaraswamy the bronzes figures of Sundaramurthi, undoubtedly claims one of the best example of its kind. There are many specimens of other Hindu groups of bronzes which claim fame for their excellent artistic value. Likewise, Ardhanarisvara from Trincomolee are the indigenous products of metal art.

While discussing the bronzes of Ganesha we have mentioned that the credit of antiquity of Ganesha belongs to Srilanka. The famous site at Mihindale belonged to third century B.C. Anuradhapura where a beautiful stone sculpture of Ganesha which is supposed to be the earliest one in South Asia was found. Likewise, the bronzes of Ganesha also claims their indigenous origin. It is crystal clear that there is no parellel bronze specimen in south India in these kinds. The Trincomolee specimen containing more gold is known for its anotomical accuracy which is almost absent in the case of Polonnaruva Ganesha.

It is noteworthy to quote a statement given by Nilakantha Sastri relating to 'A south India portarit bronze from Sumatra' that "image may not have been cast in Sumatra but carried from South India, in which case it will be no evidence of the growth of amore or less independent school of Buddhist art in Padang Lawas." 1

But in the case of Srilanka, it is crystal clear that there were two or more independent schools of metallic art. Thus it can be attributed that all Saiva bronzes were made in the island itself. Thus in the light of this we can conclude our study by citing our hypothesis earlier put forward in the first chapter that;-

1. Srilankan Saiva bronzes are indigenous by their origin.
2. Srilankan Saiva bronzes are unique in characters but with local variations.
3. Srilankan Saiva bronzes are thematically parallel with South Indian saiva bronzes.

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Ceylon. 1930.
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ILLUSTRATIONS

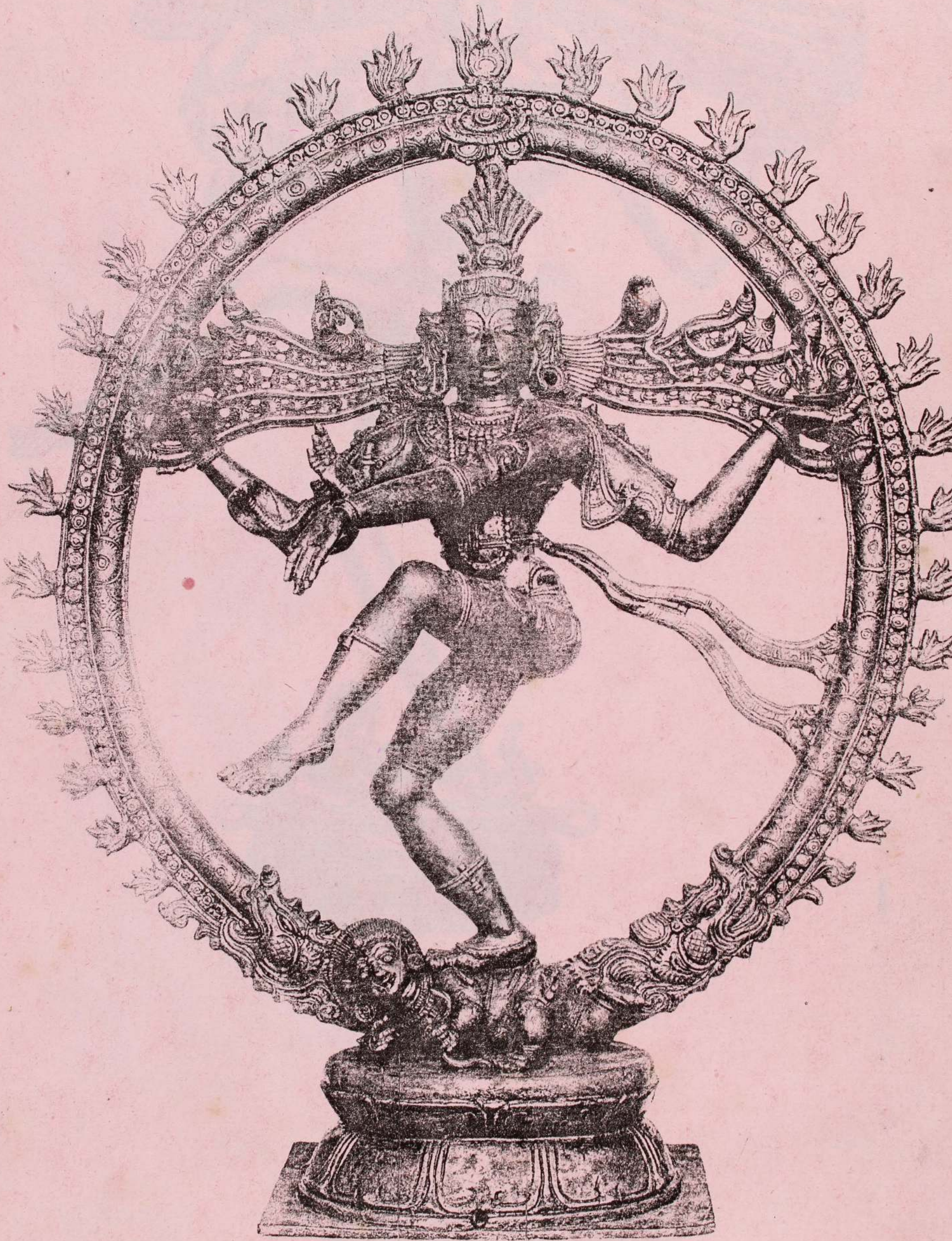
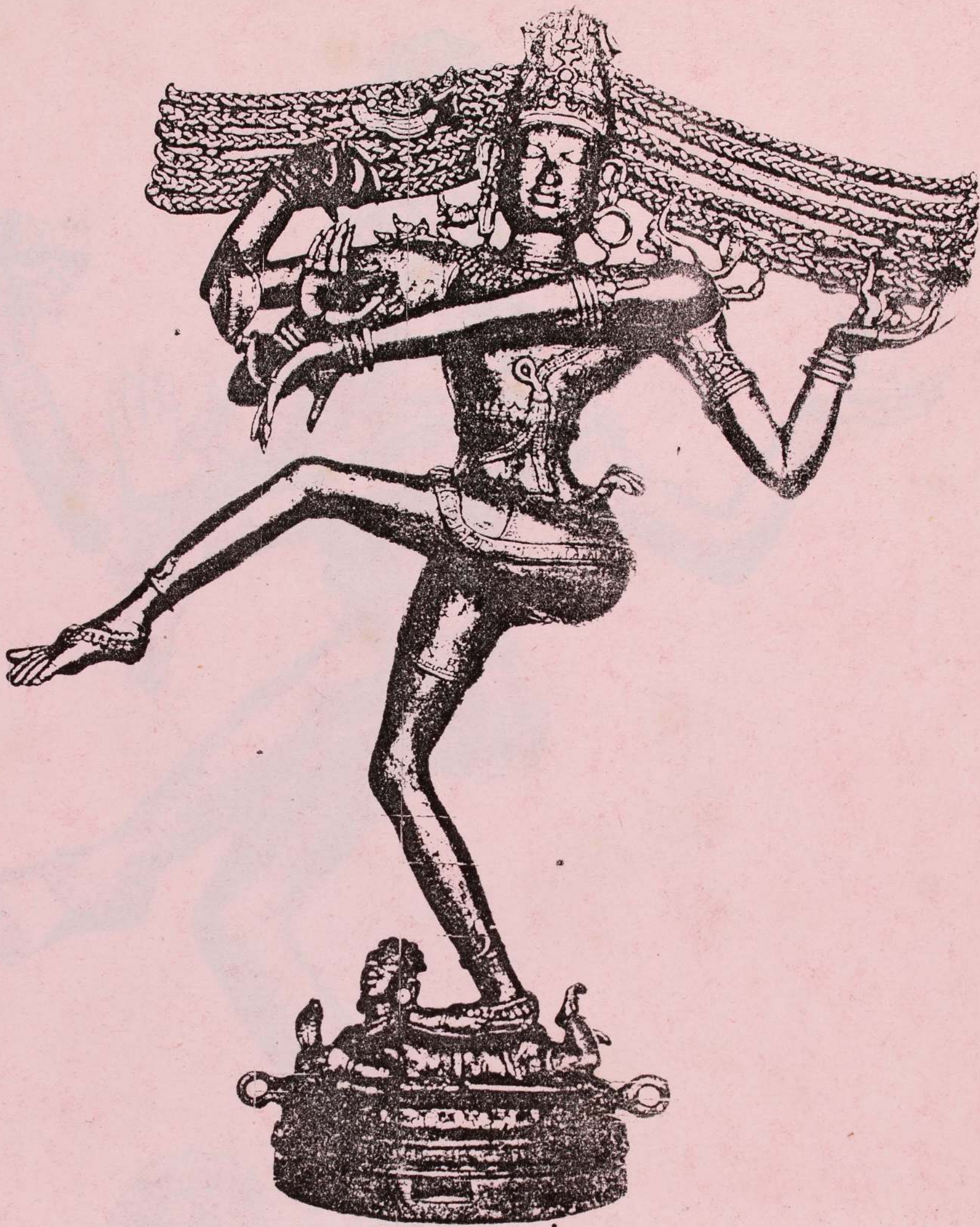


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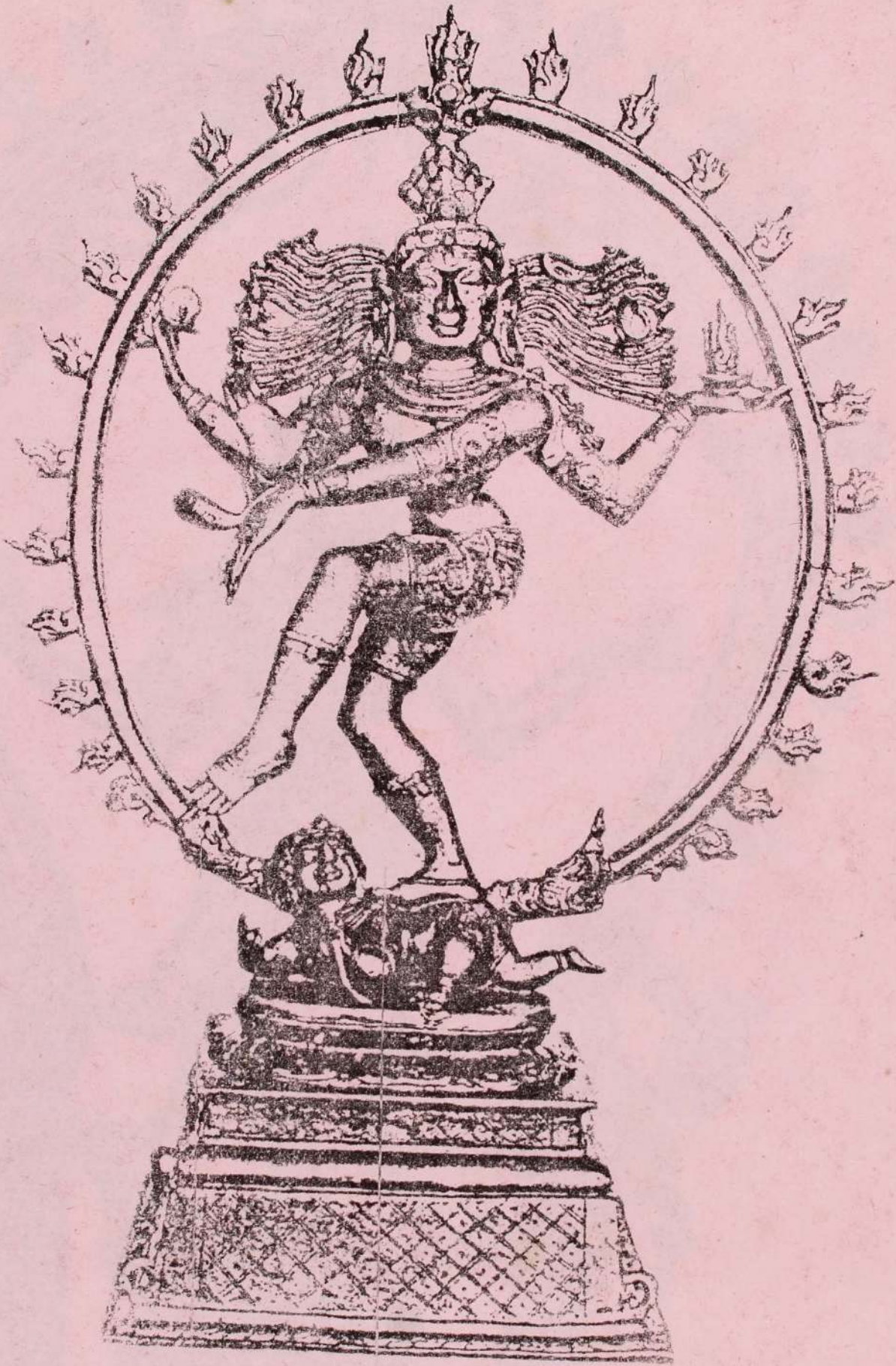
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NATARAJA NO. 2



NATARAJA NO. 3



NATARAJA NO. 4



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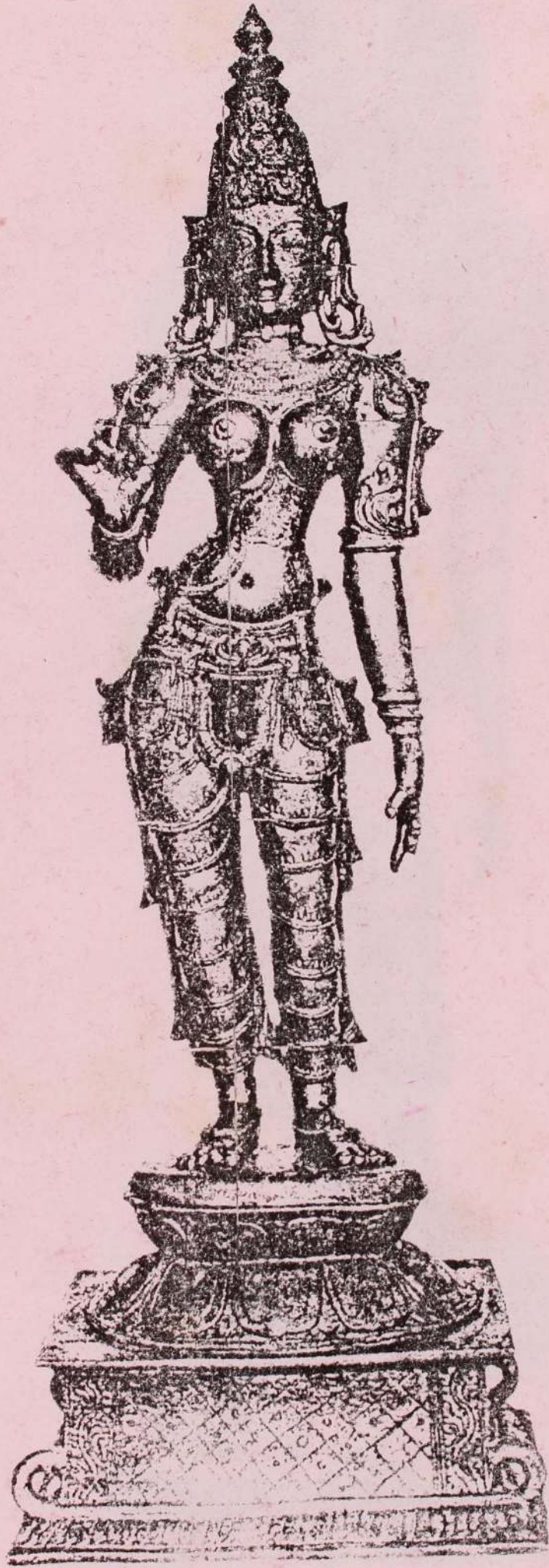


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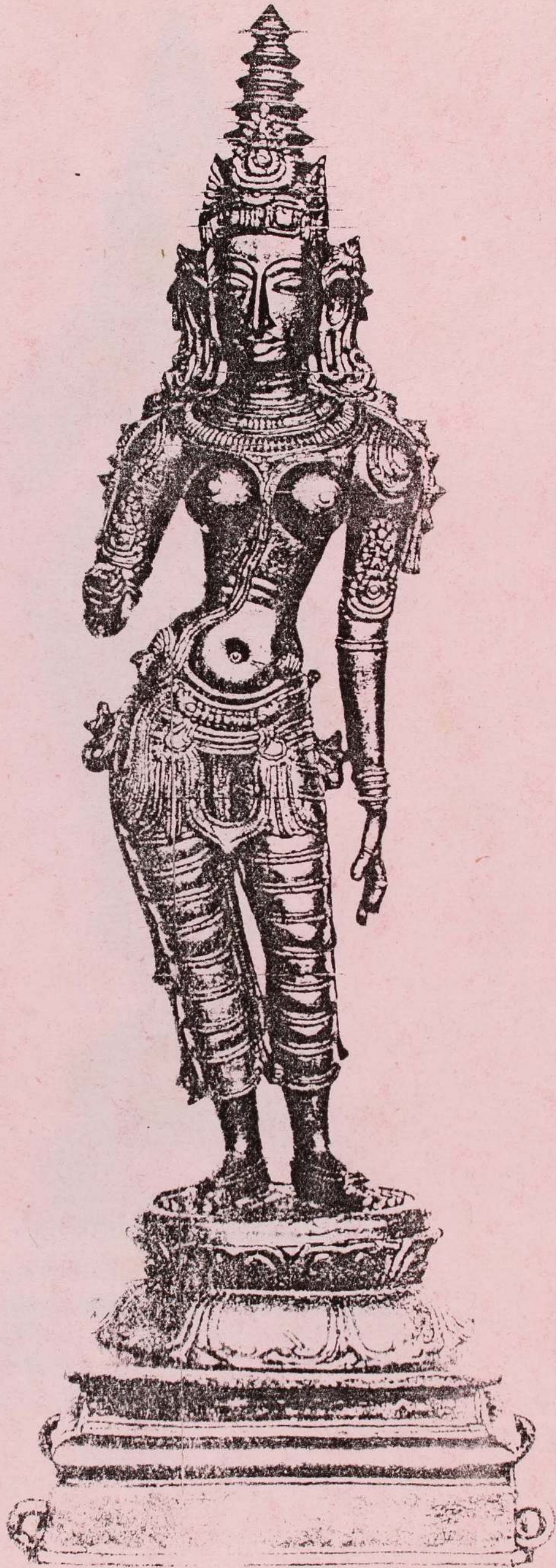




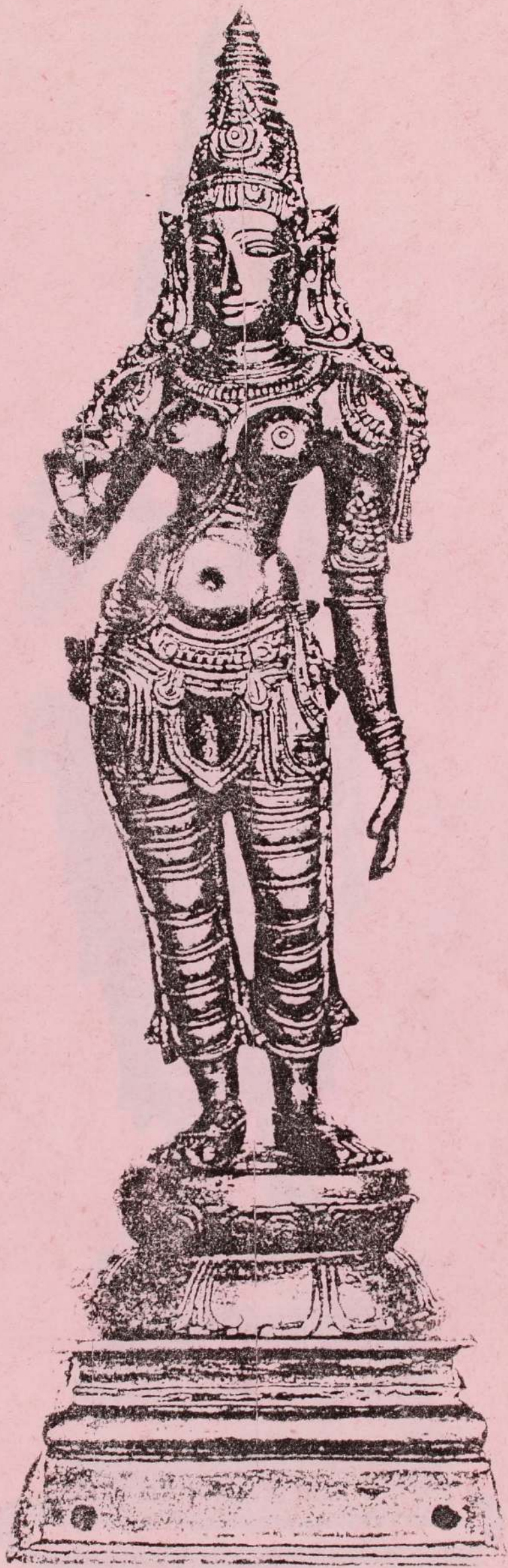
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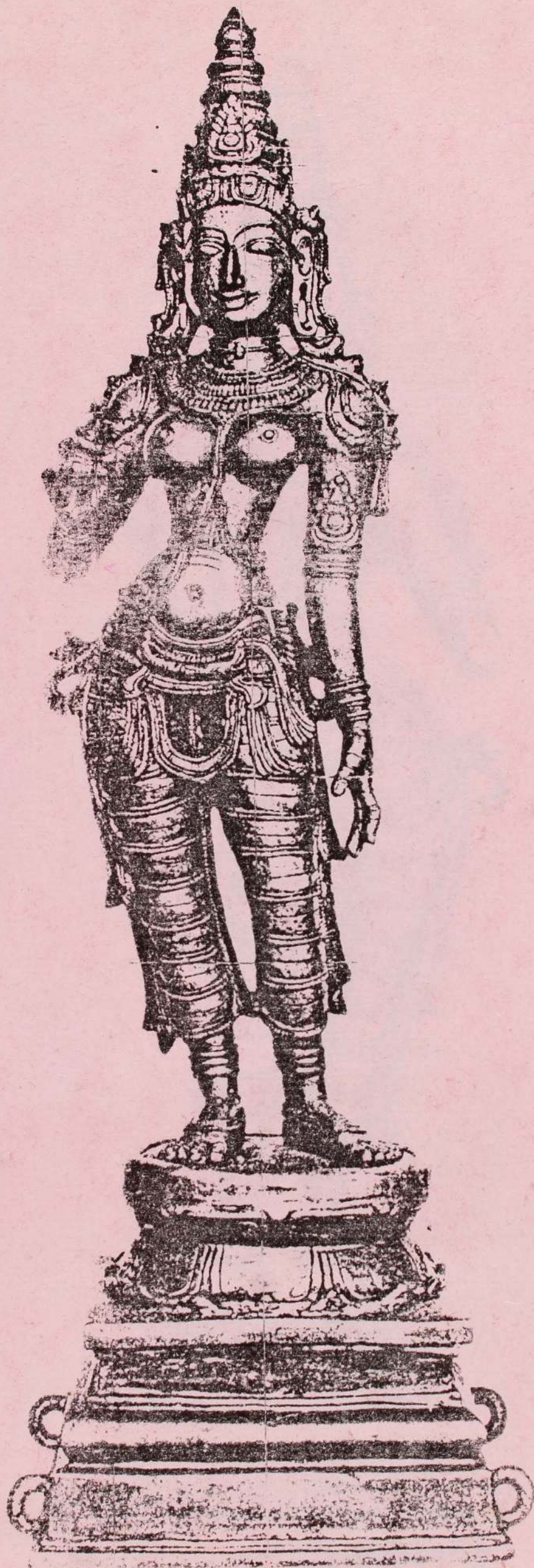
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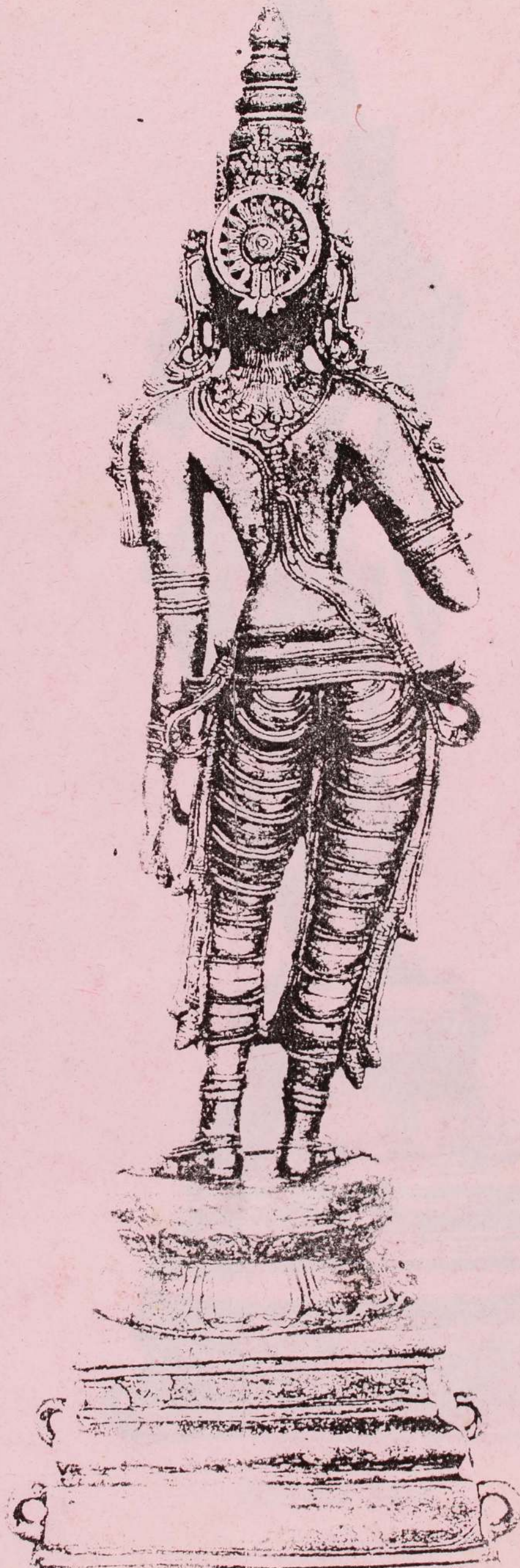
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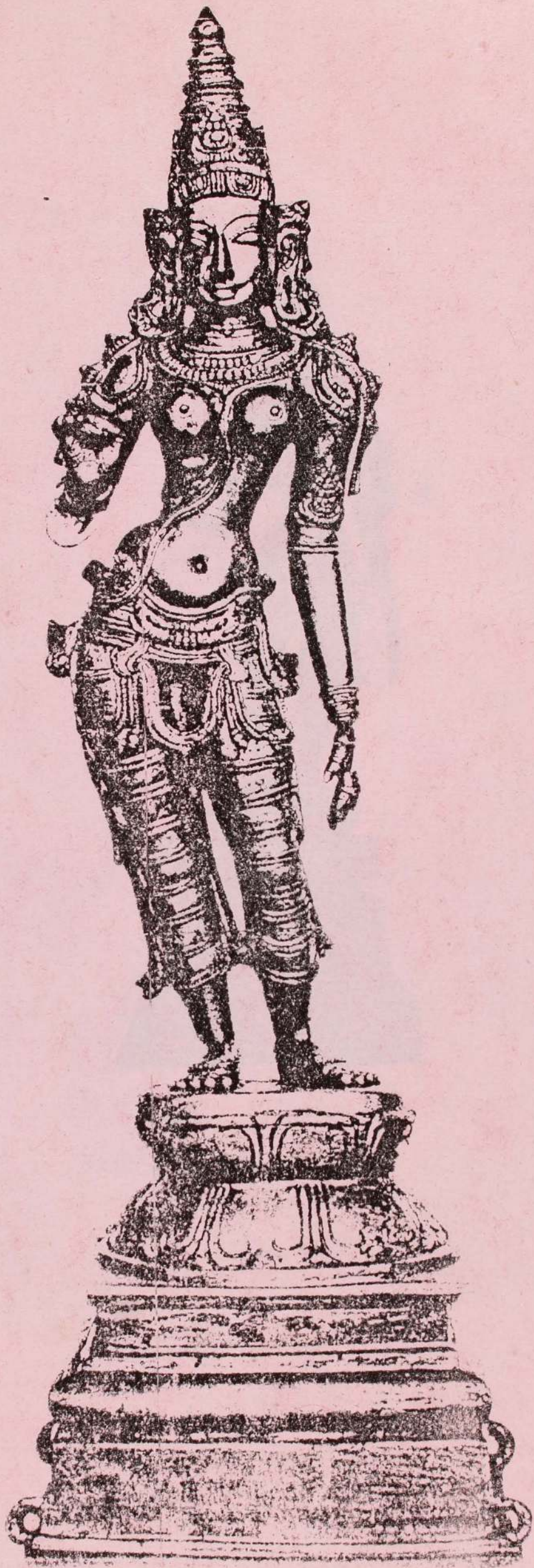
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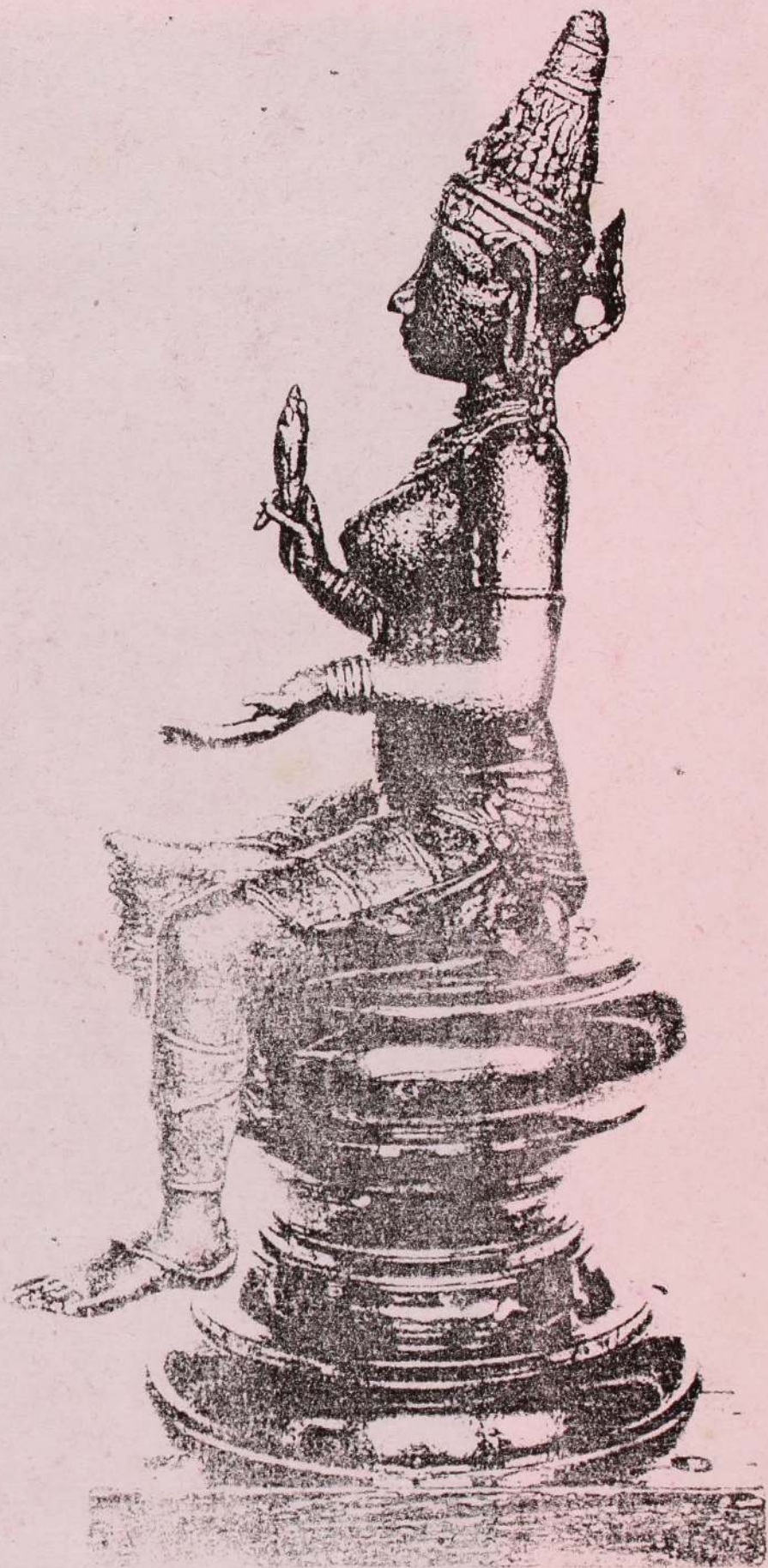
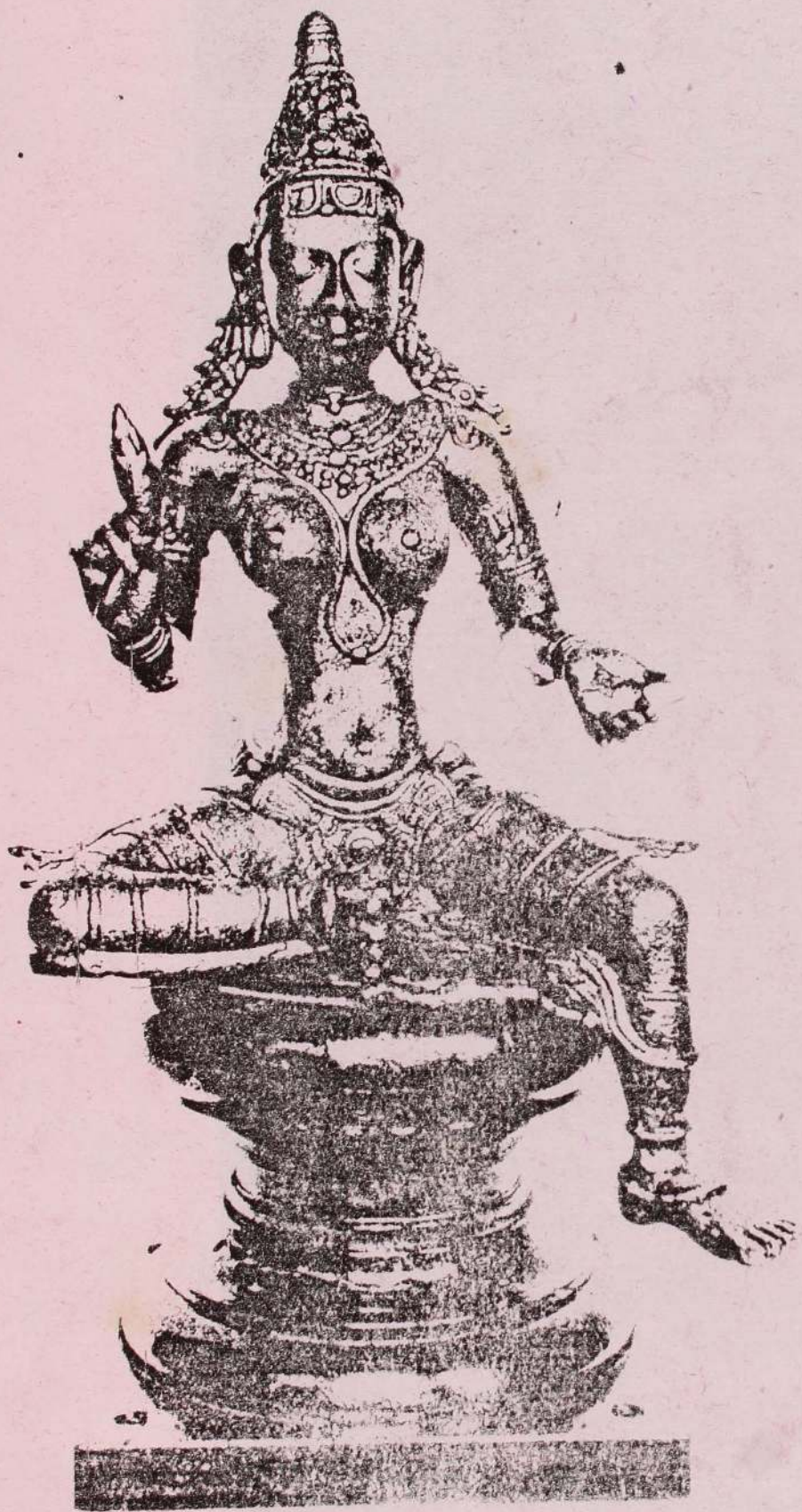
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PARVATI NO.6



PARVATI NO. 7



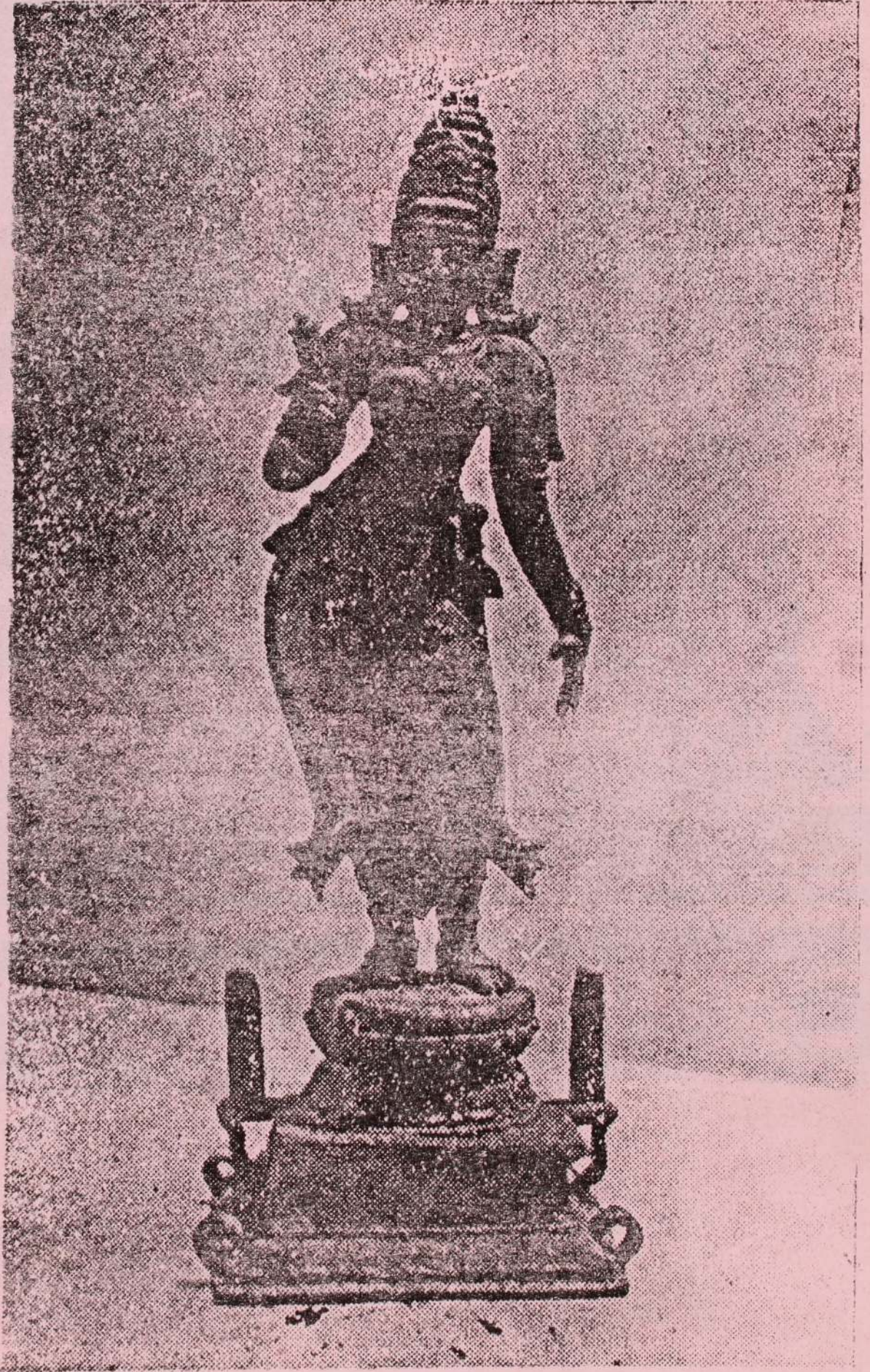
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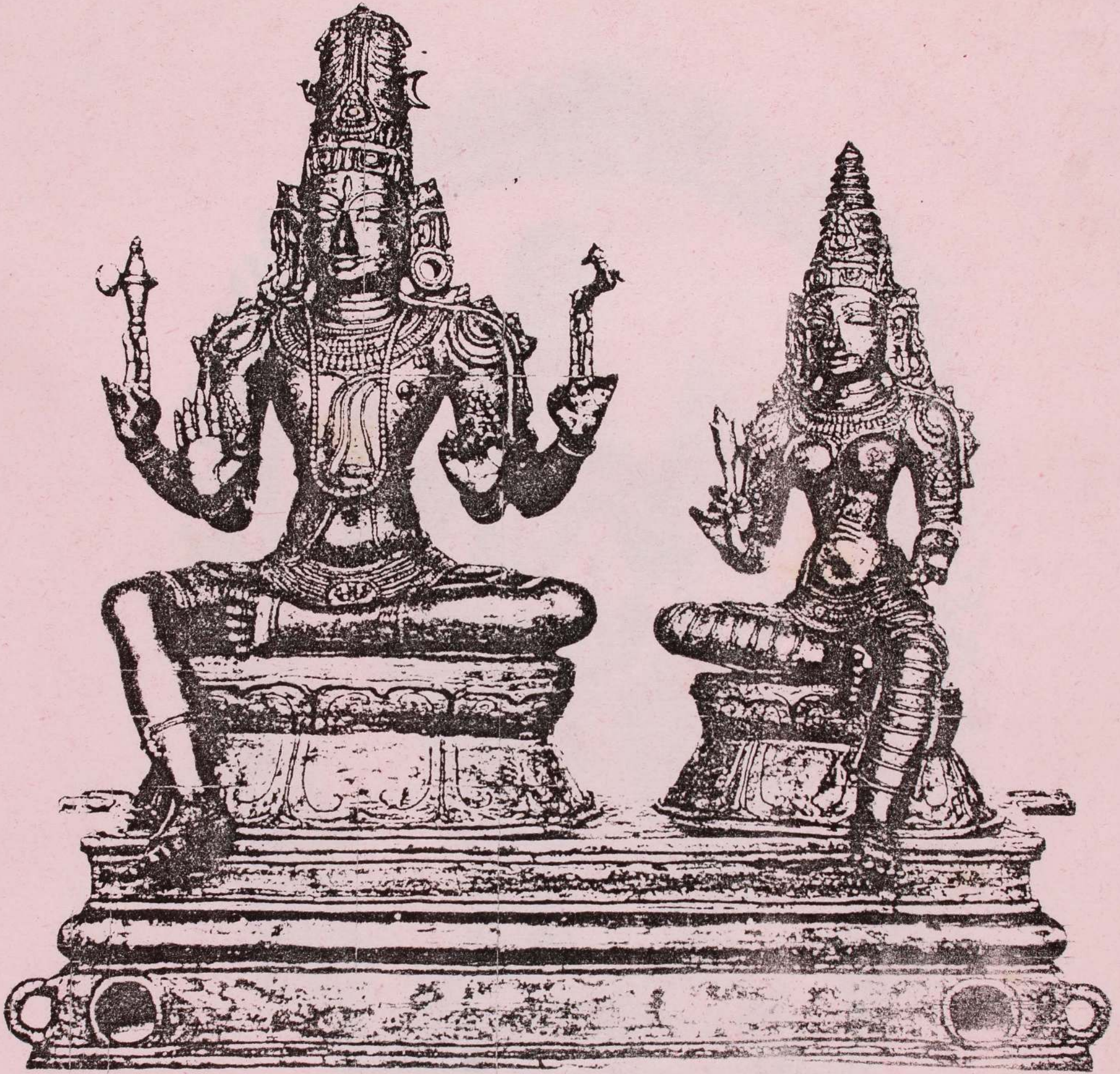
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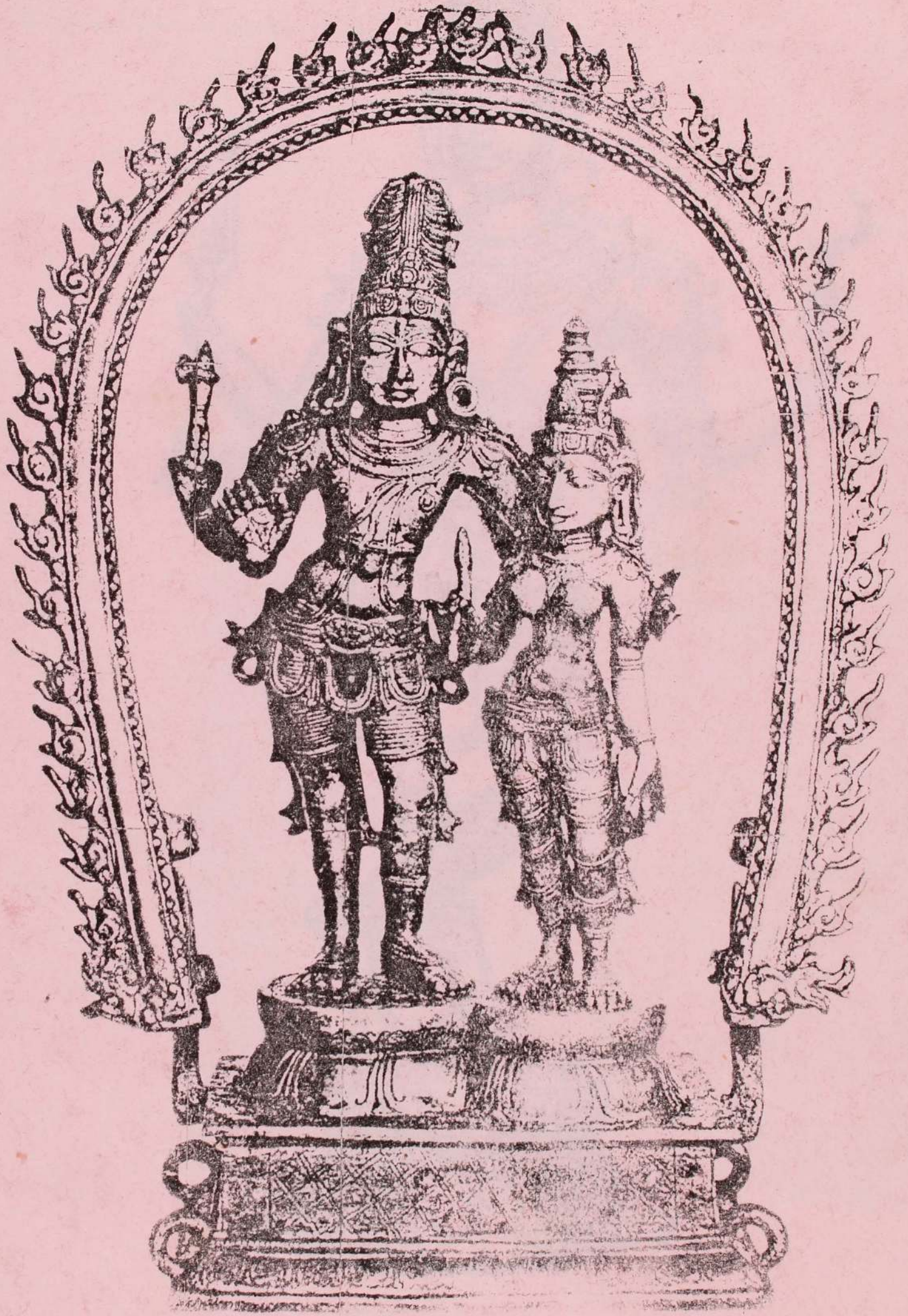


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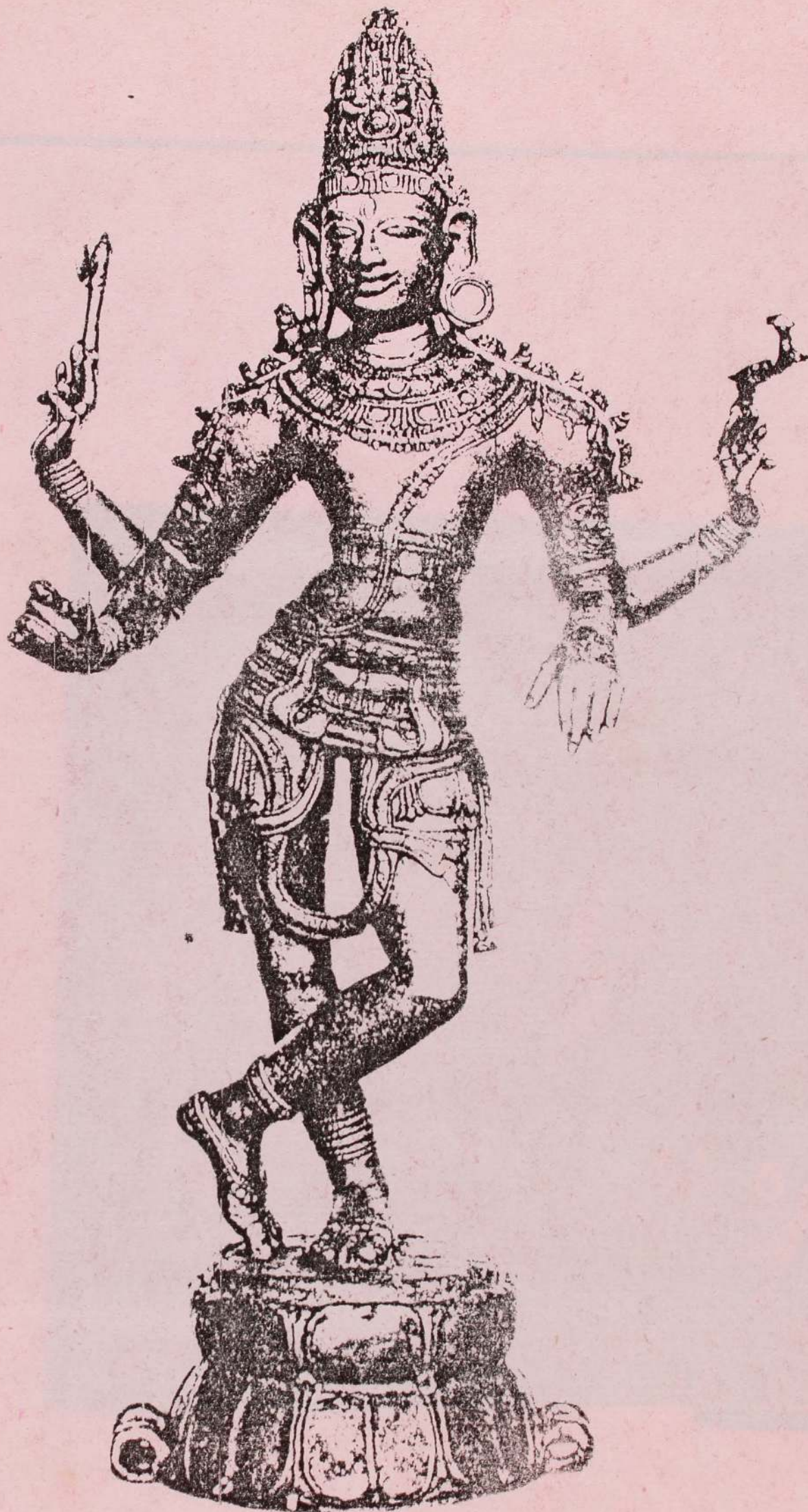
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SIVA & PARVATI NO. 1



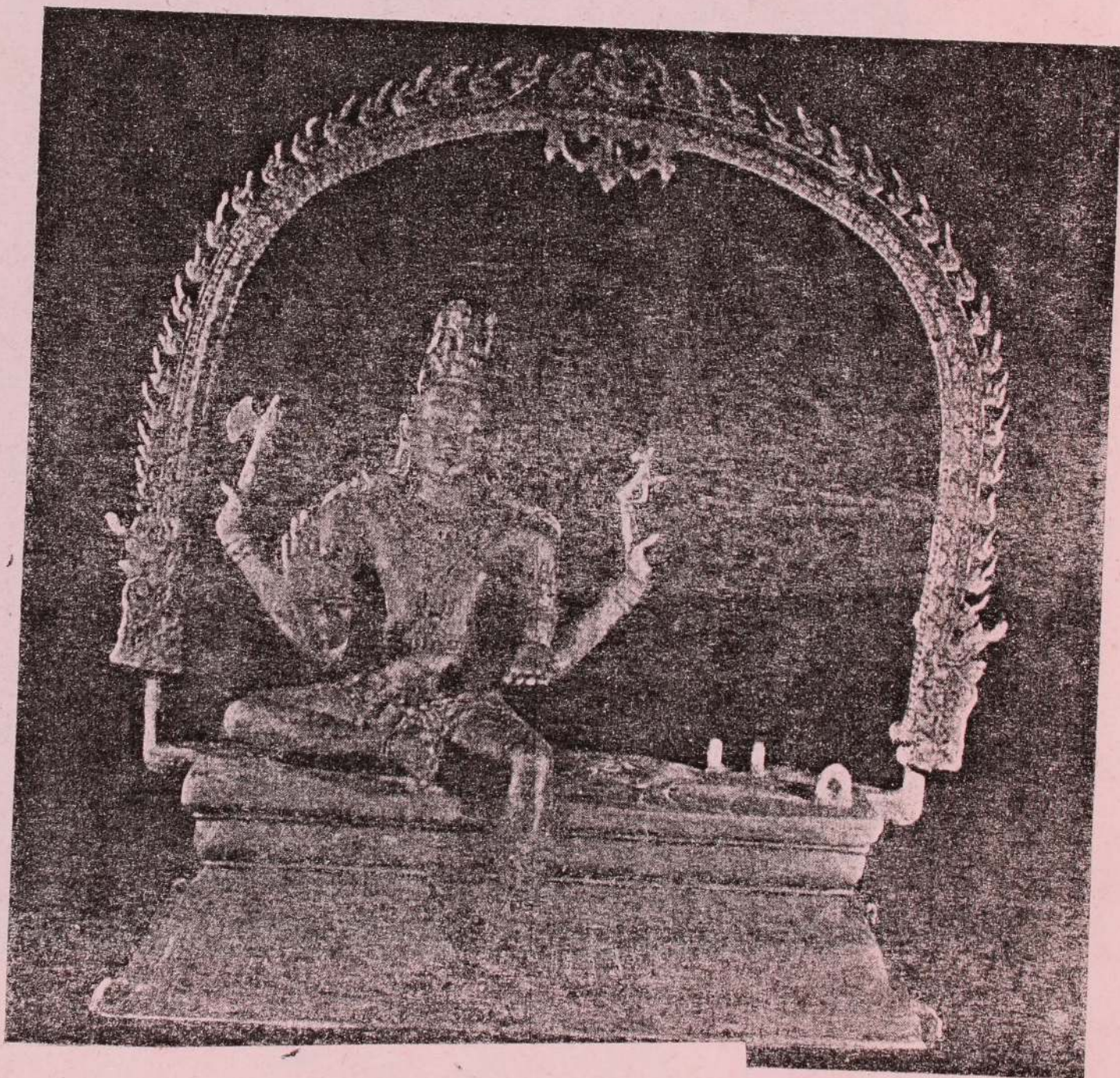
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SIVA & PARVATI NO. 2



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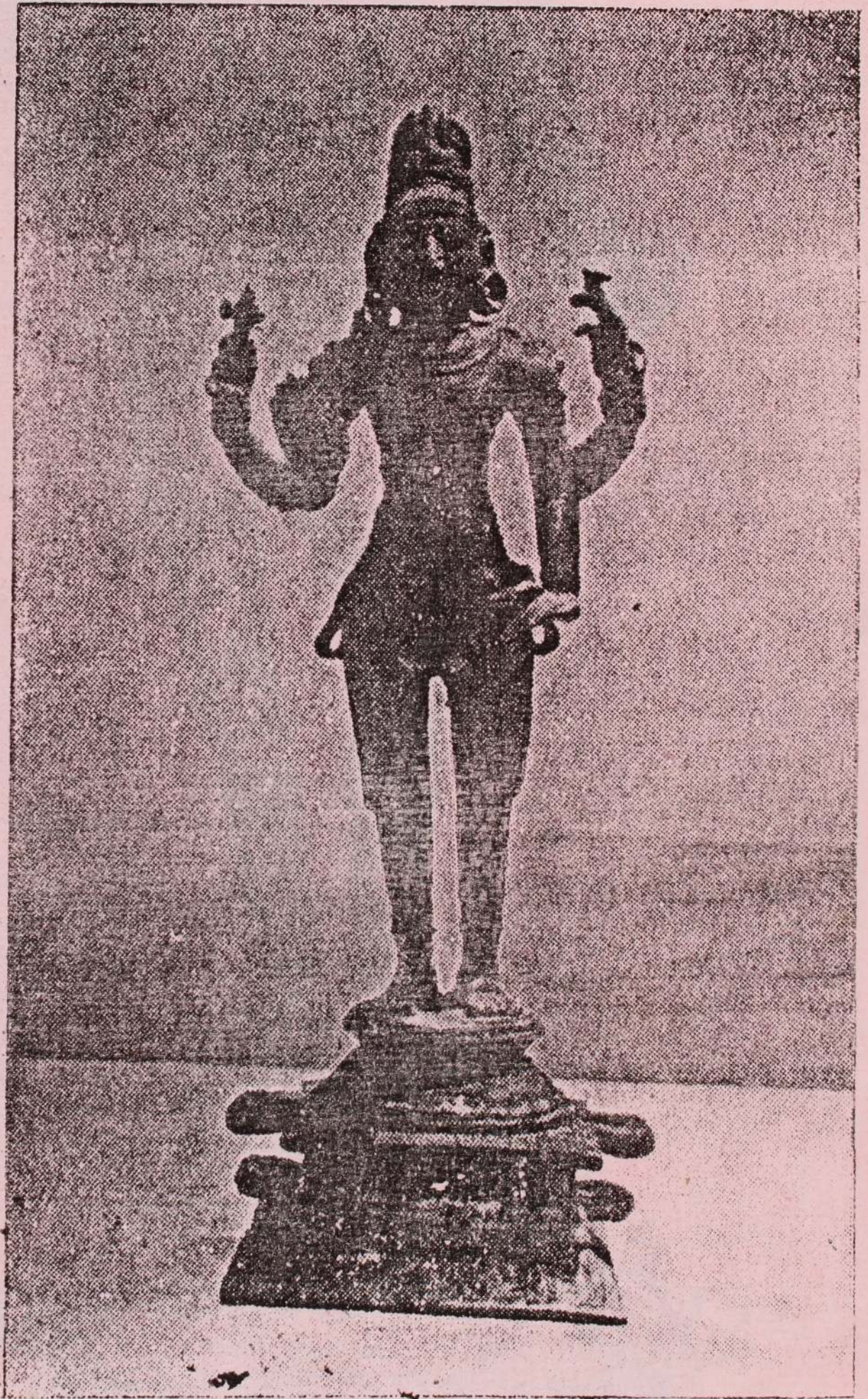
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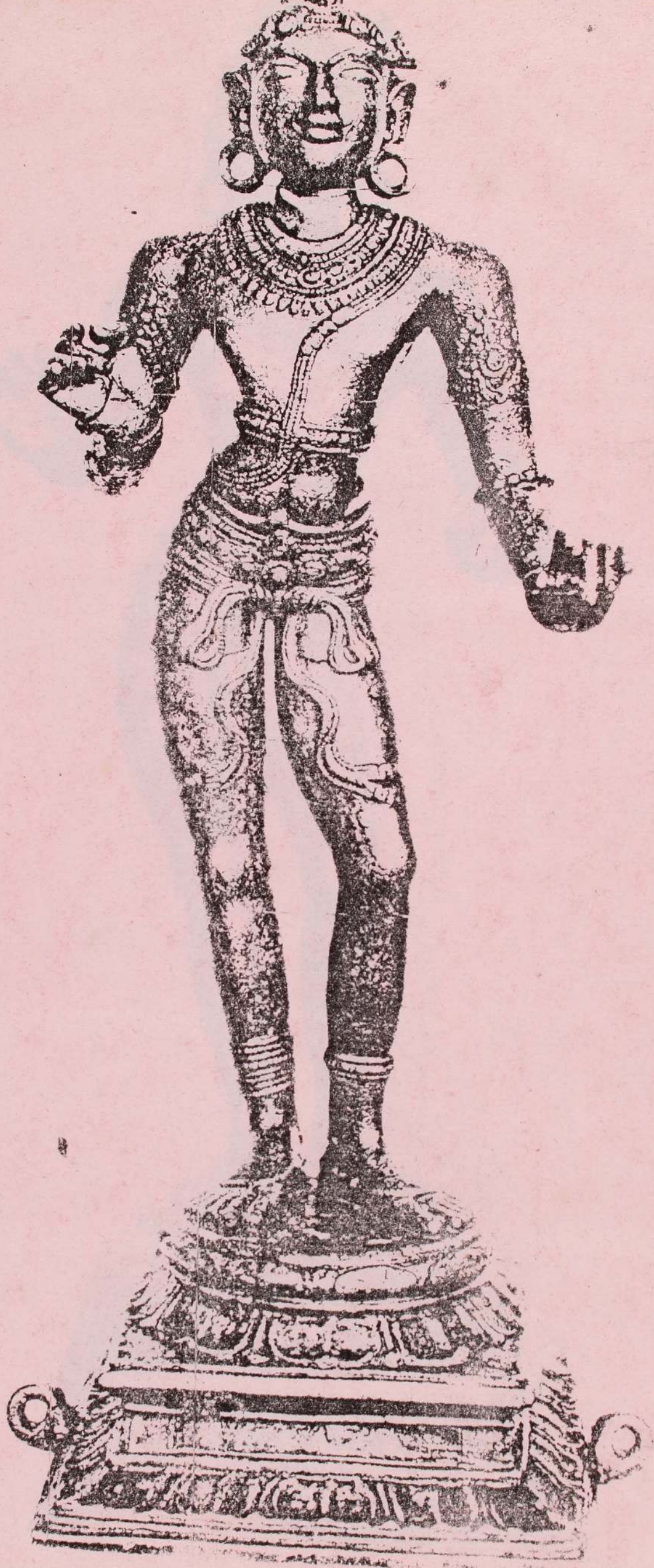
SIVA AS SOMASKANDHA



SIVA AS SOMASKANDHA
(TRINCOMALEE)



SIVA AS CHANDRASCKERA
(TRANCOMALEE)

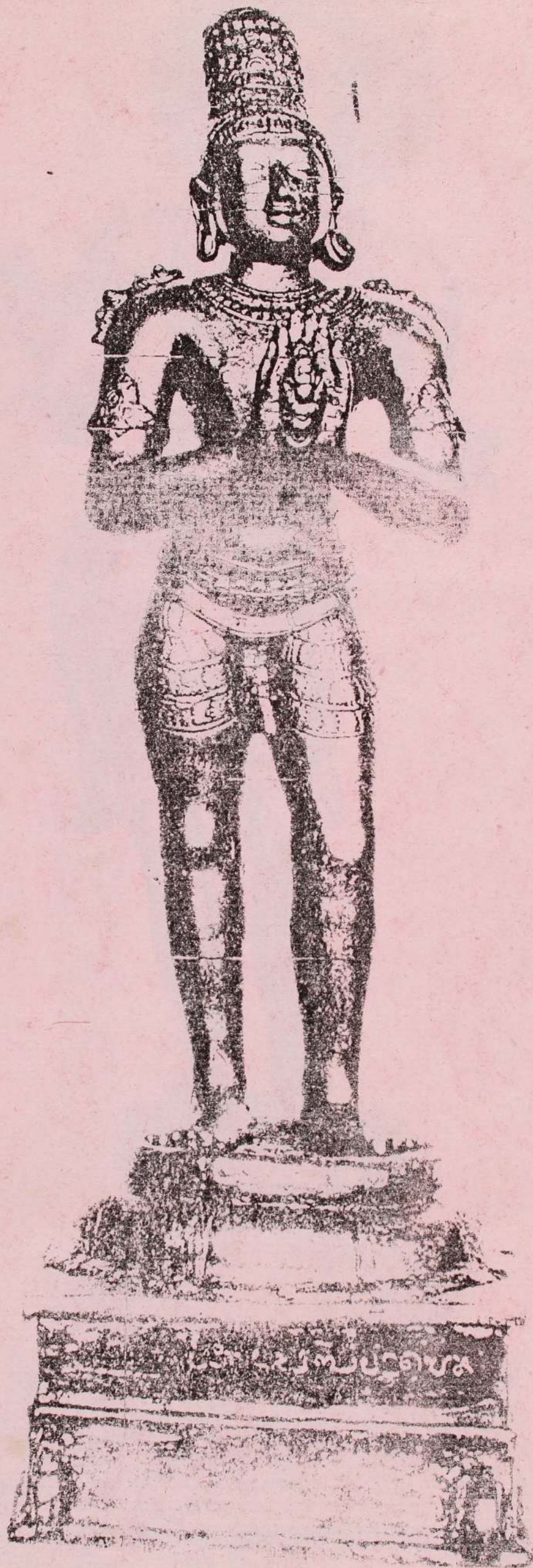


SIVA SAINT NO. 1

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SIVA SAINT NO. 1





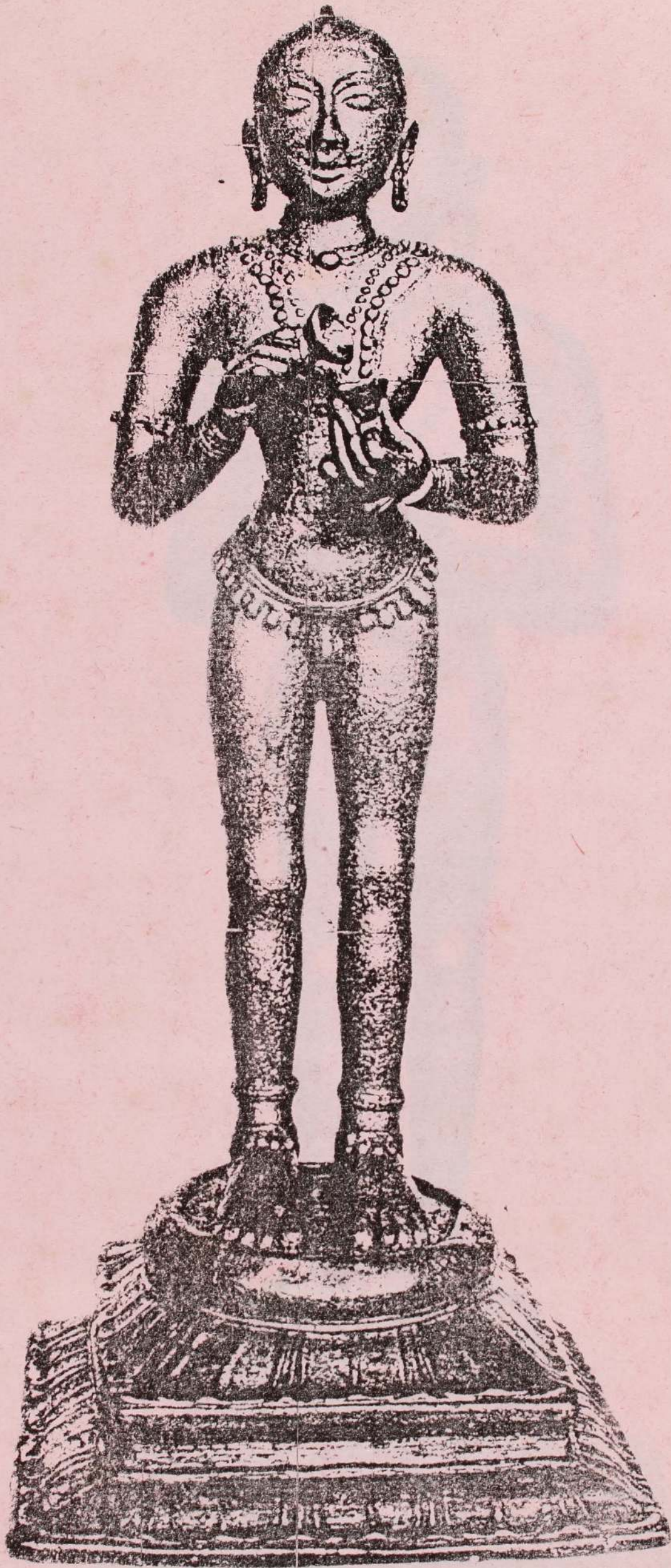
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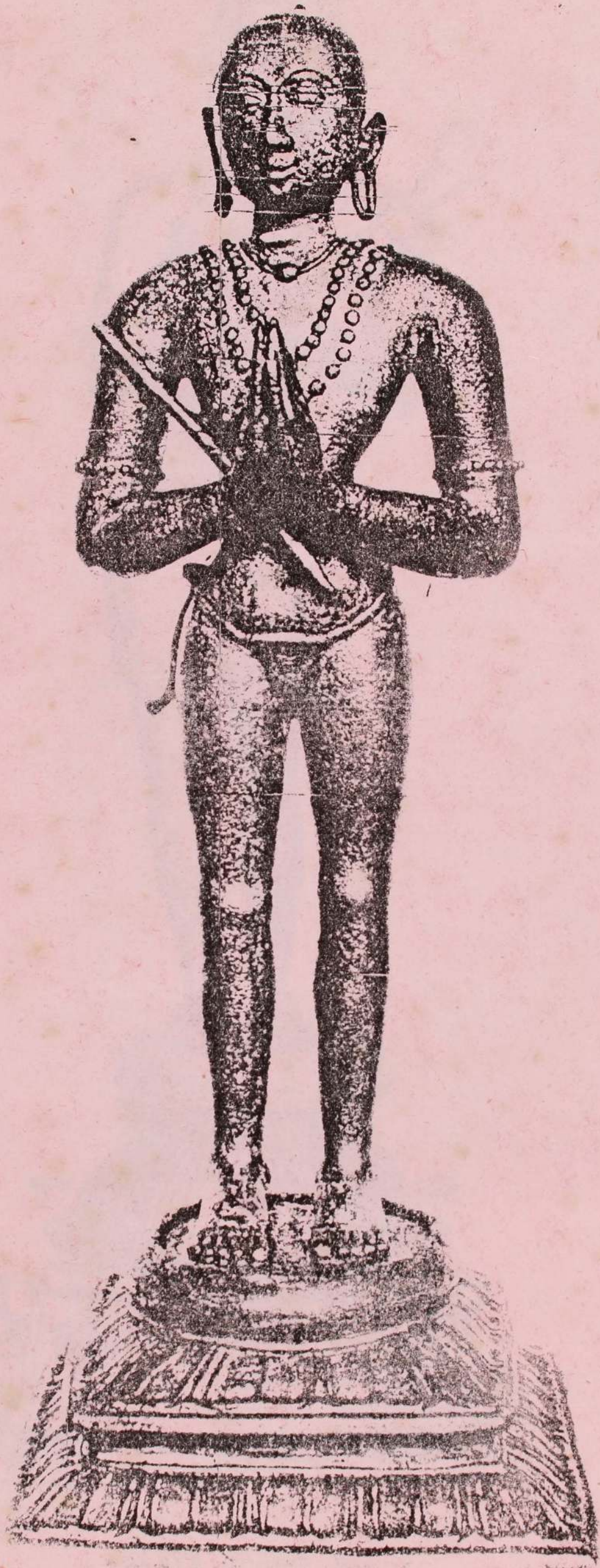
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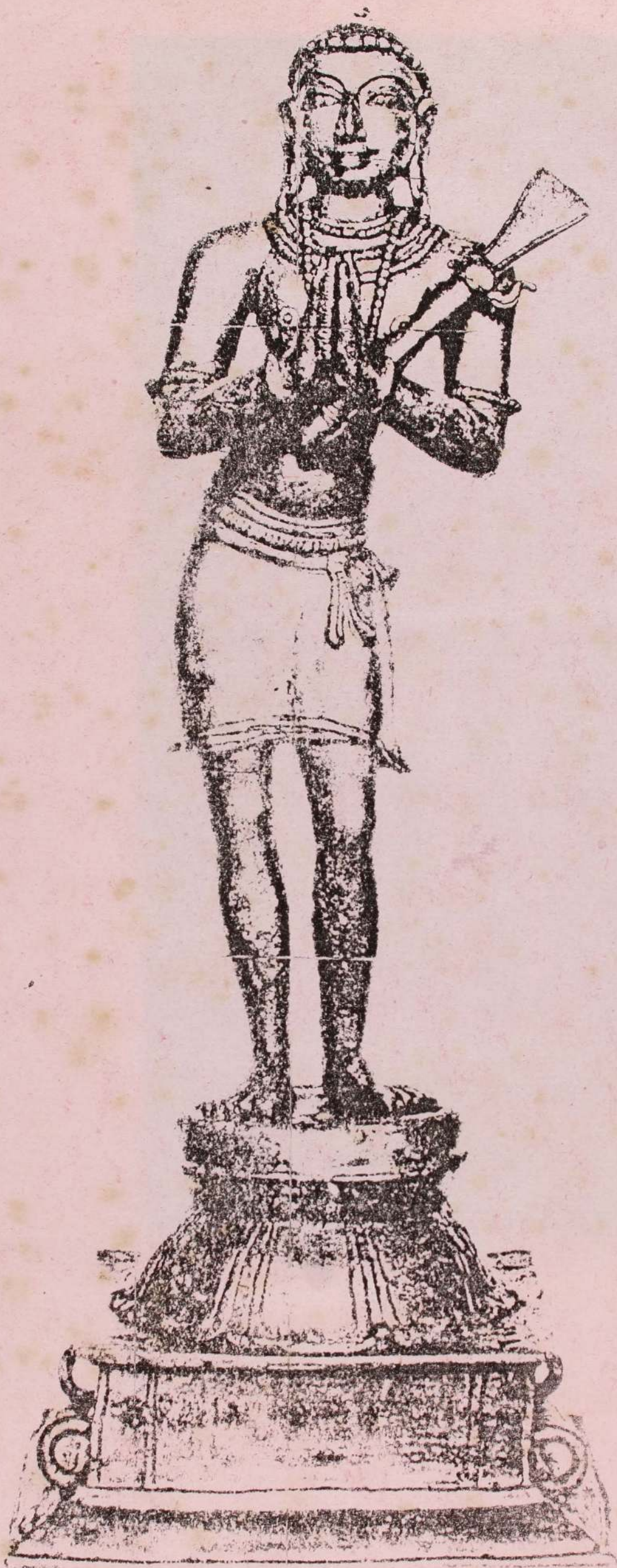
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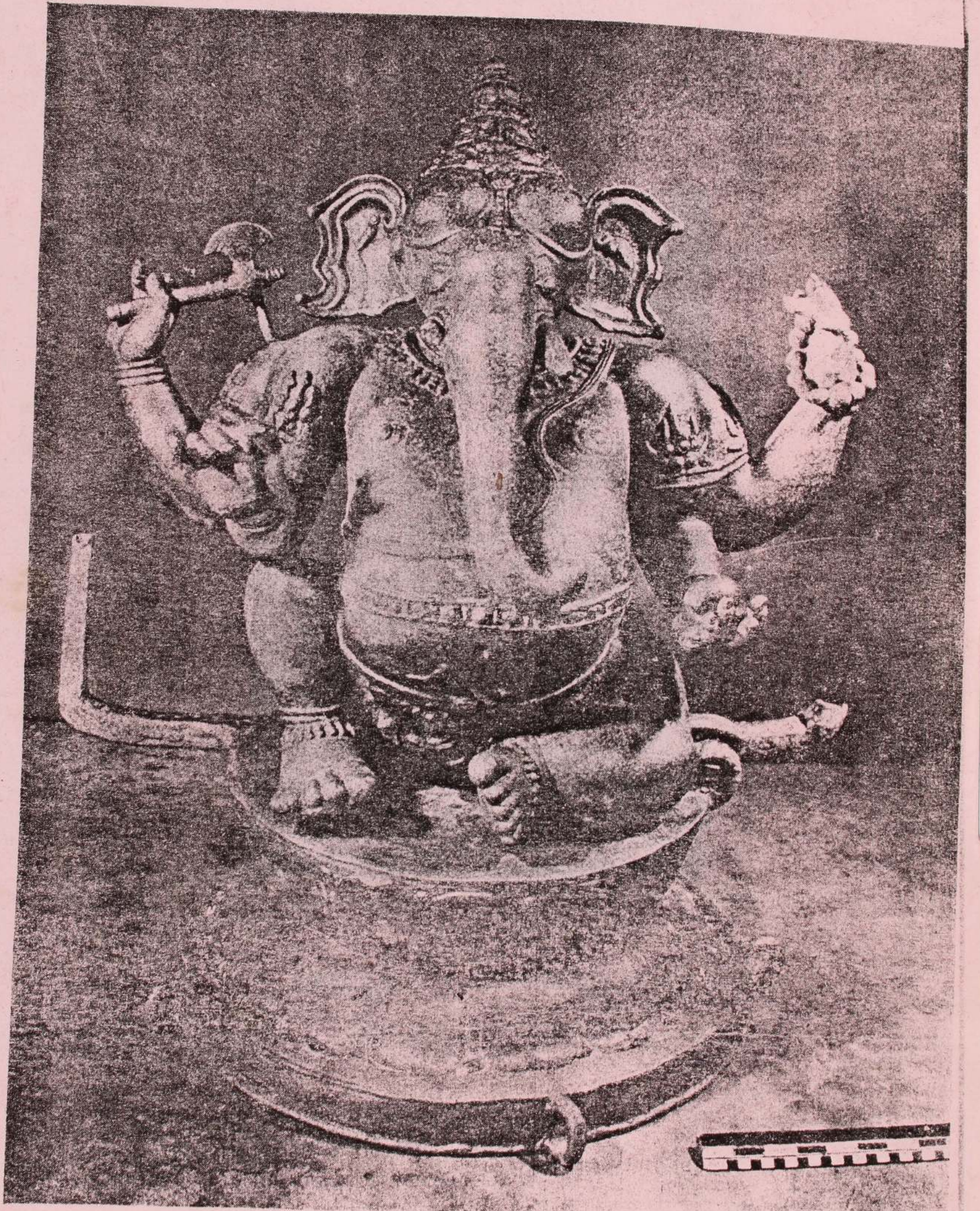
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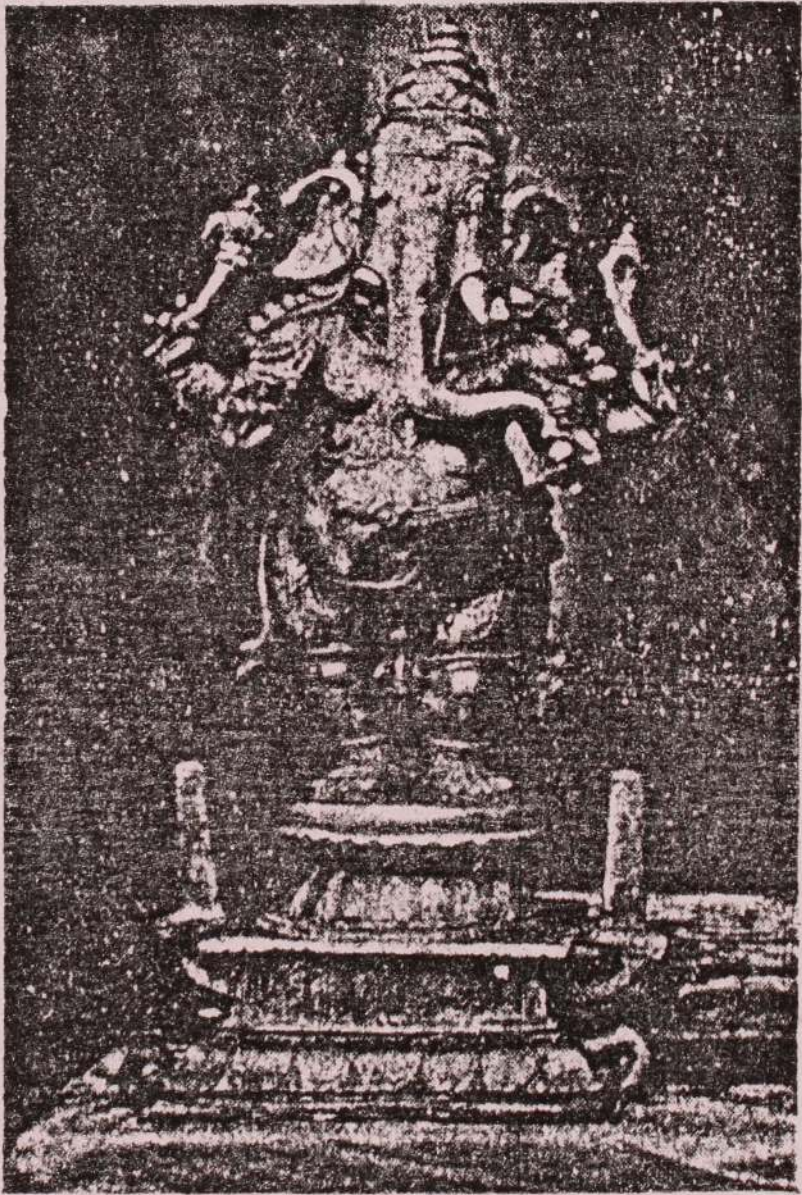
SAIVA SAINT NO. 8



SAIVA SAINT NO. 9



GANESA - POLONNARUWA



GANESA - (TRINCOMALEE)



SIVA AS BHAIRAVA.



ARDHANARISWARAR





