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RESEARCH ARTICLE

**THE LEGACY OF LATER PANDYA RULE IN CUDDALORE: A STUDY THROUGH THE
INSCRIPTIONAL RESOURCES**

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Abstract

For many years, the Pandas' illustrious Kings ruled over the entire Tamil nation. They outlasted other rulers in the area thanks to their excellent ideas, strong leadership, and cunning military strategies. Because of this, the Pandyas ruled Cuddalore for a very long time, as shown by the epigraphic evidence found in and around the temples in the Cuddalore area. Around 21 Pandya inscriptions were discovered in the Devanathaswamy temple, and the majority of them include inscriptional records that came from temples. The majority of these epigraphs discuss donations given to the temple, such as land or money, as well as the upkeep of a flower garden, unique festivals established in honour of the monarchs, and the lighting of lamps. Only two Pandya inscriptions could be found in the Vamanapurishwara temple. The Padaleeshawara temple in Thiruppadiripuliyur contains four inscriptions. It provides information about pujas, festivals, taxation, administration, warfare, endowment, and architecture. The political, economic, and social history of the Pandyas in the Cuddalore region is covered in this chapter. While this is going on, this area is ruled more by strong chieftains like the Kadavarayas and feudatories like the Sambuvarayas than by the Pandyas. This article uses inscriptional resources to discuss the effects of later Pandya dominance in Cuddalore.

Keywords: Later Pandya Kings, feudatories, Cuddalore region, Pandya inscriptions, endowment and architecture

Introduction

For many years, the Pandas' illustrious Kings ruled over the entire Tamil nation. They outlasted other rulers in the area thanks to their excellent ideas, strong leadership, and cunning military strategies. Because of this, the Pandyas ruled Cuddalore for a very long time, as shown by the epigraphic evidence found in and around the temples in the

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Pandya kingdom

The Sanskrit writers referred to the Pandya Kingdom as the "Pandi kingdom," which refers to the nation's inhabitants. Aryans first became familiar with it when the Pandya dynasty rose to prominence. Asoka's inscriptions, which are dated 260 B.C., refer to it under the name "Pada," alongside the Cholas under the name Cholas and the Chera king under the name Keralaputra. In A.D., 20 Strabo describes an embassy dispatched by the Pandyan king, most likely from the west coast. ¹Pliny later in A.D 77 calls these people the Pandae, and says that they were the only race in India ruled by women. Similar remarks are made in the Periplus of the Erythrean Sea, which notes that although the people who ruled them were known as Pandis, their real name was Maran rather than Pandyan. ²The Pudukkottai Vellar, which falls into the sea south of Point Calmere, Cape Comorin, the sea (Palk's strait), the town of Vannasi, and the great pass, or "Peruvazhi," were said to be the boundaries of the Pandya kingdom in Tamil literature. On the west, various authorities have referred to "the great plain," also known as Peruveli. At the time of Vijayalaya, Korkai was the Pandya nation's oldest capital. Even the Greeks, who lived several centuries later, respected it as the first port in India.³

Emergence of Later Pandyas

The Pandya Empire's most significant era was the thirteenth century. In Tamil Nadu, there are numerous instances of smart monarchs who used original concepts to expand their realms. The Pandyas ascended to become the largest power in this region after the Cholas. According to the inscriptions, Jatavarman Sundara Pandya's rule over the Cuddalore region marked the peak of territorial growth.

Maravarman Sundra Pandya-I (A.D. 1216- A.D. 1238)

In 1219 A.D., Maravarman Sundara Pandya I, a capable leader of the Pandya dynasty, attacked the Chola Kingdom and overthrew Rajaraja III. He was crowned during the reign of Jatavarman Kulasekara Pandya in the Tamil nation. ⁴In 1231 A.D., Maravarman Sundara Pandya I attacked the Chola nation once more and overthrew Rajaraja III. After being overthrown by the Pandya, Rajaraja III was forced to flee his homeland. However, after Rajaraja III's loss, the Devanathaswami temple was not given a proper portrait of him. He served as the Pandyan Kingdom's regional administrator. The Hoysalas rise to prominence at the same time as the Cholas need their help to drive the Pandyans out of their nation. On the route, major cities like Tanjore and Uraiyur were completely destroyed by fire. There are several inscriptions from Sundra Pandya that were discovered in the south wall of the Devanatha Swamy Temple. They are dated to the sixteenth regnal year and describe an agreement made by the tanattar of the Devanayaka temple. The same kinds of traditions that are practised in pandi mandalam, cholamandalam, makara mandalam, and naduvil mandalam should be followed by parasivas.⁵

There is another inscription in the south prakara of the temple, dated in the third year of Sundara-I Pandya, recording the gift of the village Maligaipattu to the image of "Ellanthaliyana Perumal" in the temple set up in the memory of "Annalvi" (his elder brother) by Sundra Pandya. ²⁰"Annalvi" is Maravarman Kulasekarapandaya, the elder brother of Jatavarman Sundarapandya, and he is also called "Ellan Thalianya Perumal."⁶ Jatavarman Kulasekaran II governed the Pandyan kingdom from 1238 to 1240 after Maravarman Sundara Pandya I passed away. However, it was unclear how the two kings were related.²² However, the Cuddalore region lacked the sources of the aforementioned ruler.

Maravarman Sundara Pandyan II (A.D. 1238–A.D. 1251)

In 1238 A.D., King Maravarman Kulasekara Pandyan succeeded Jatavarman Kulasekara Pandya II, who had died. Between 1238 and 1251 A.D., he controlled the Tamil nation. Rajendran III, who

governed the Cholas during the reign of Maravarman Sundara Pandya II, is credited with some triumphs over a few raids into Pandyan territory. In contrast, the Pandyas made a deal with Hoysala King Veera Someswaran. As a result, the Cholas were driven from this area. The gift of land made as tiruvilakkuppuram, tirumalaippuram, and mandappuram to the temple was ratified by the Ur of Cholakula Vallinallur, according to an inscription discovered in the south wall of the Devanathaswamy temple⁷. This inscription provided information about the Pandya rule in the Cuddalore area, or "puram."

Jatavarman Sundra Pandya I (A.D. 1251– A.D 1270)

After the death of Maravarman Sundara Pandyan II, the Pandya territories were ruled by Jatavaraman Sundra Pandya I, who ascended the throne in A.D. 1251. The Pandya kingdom reached its height during the period of Jatavarman Sundra Pandya, who defeated the Cheras, the Telugu Cholas, and the Hoysalas and subjugated Ceylon.⁸ He ruled an enormous kingdom, albeit for a limited duration. His kingdom stretched north from Ceylon to Nellore and the Cuddappah. When the Chola kingdom was conquered by Jatavarman Sundara Pandya, the present Cuddalore region, which was a part of the Chola Kingdom, came under Pandya rule.⁹ In Tiruvandipuram, the Vamanathapurishwarar temple, which has an inscription belonging to Jatavarman Sundra Pandya and is located in the southern wall, he mentioned an order issued to the trustees of the temple of Deyvanayaka perumal granting of cholakulavalinallur in his 8th regnal year (A.D. 1259).¹⁰ This inscription authenticated the supremacy of the king in the Cuddalore region.

Maravarman Kulasekara Pandyan I (A.D. 1268–A.D. 1310)

Maravarman Kulasekhara Bhuvanekaviran and Kollamkonda Pandya were the titles I assumed. Kulasekhara considerably enlarged his kingdom. He made an expedition over Cylon (modern-day Sri Lanka), then captured Kollam (modern-day Kerala) in the Chera country. According to Marco Polo, the Pandyan nation was ruled by five members of the royal line in Kulasedhara's time, as is customary.

He made a highly disastrous invasion of Ceylon. One Aryachakra, whose prowess is frequently praised in the epigraphs, commanded his forces. He may have transported the Buddha's tooth (a relic) from Sri Lanka to Madurai. The Mochavamsa describes how Parakrama III of Ceylon peacefully persuaded the Pandya to return the relic. His inscriptions are found in Chola and Tondaimandalams as well, which shows that his kingdom was very extensive. He was not as strong as Sundara Pandya himself. He appears to be responsible for establishing the practice of designating members of the royal family as viceroys over conquered regions.¹¹

The Pandya kings adopted the Chola practice of associating princes with the government, and they frequently issued inscriptions even before assuming the throne. Thus Maravarman Kulasekhara was associated with the administration by the four princes, namely Jatavarman Sundara Pandya II, Maravarman Vikrama Pandya, Jatavarman Vira Pandya II, and Jatavarman Sundara Pandya III. In the Later Pandyas, Maravarman was a great ruler. Maravarman Kulasekara Pandian inscription in Srivilliputhur with the titles "Konerinmaikondan" and "emmadalamum-Kondaruliya." Maravarman succeeded Jatavarma Sundra Pandya, who pursued an expansionist policy and is regarded as a great ruler of the Later Pandya dynasty. He conquered Kerala, Kongu, Cholamandalam, and Tondaimandalam. A famous traveler, namely Marco Polo, had visited the Pandya Kingdom and left a very vivid description of the state of affairs, which was promptly complimentary.¹² Perhaps his final years were crucial when they fought over their sons. Both the King's legitimate and illegitimate sons compete for the throne. The choice of Vira Pandya as heir apparent caused Sundara Pandya to usurp the throne after murdering his father in A.D. 1310. While the Vira Pandya expelled the parricide, the historic excursion of Malik Kafur invaded the Hoysala kingdom.

Maravarman Vikrama Pandya II (A.D. 1268 to A.D. 1281)

Maravarman Vikrama Pandya II was the brother of King Maravaraman Kulasekara Pandya. This information was exhibited in the source and

belongs to Thiruvannallur, near Cuddalore. He was the representative of the Pandya kingdom in the two regions, namely Thondai Nadu and Nadu Nadu. An inscription belonging to Tirumanikuzhi, found in the west wall and dated the 4th regnal year, records an agreement made by the uravar of Gangaikonda cholapperalam and Sundra pandyaperalam to give a specified quantity of salt to the temple.¹³

Jatavarman Sundara-Pandya (A.D. 1276 to A.D. 1293)

He served as the administrative head (co-regent) in the Kongu region under Maravarman Kulasekar Pandya I. However, the relationship between them was unknown. His capital was Karur. His inscriptions were identified in the Cuddalore region. The Devanatha Swamy Temple has received the great patronage of King Sundarapandian, and it is probable that Sundarapadya built the outer prakara of the temple. There was a mutt in Tiruvandipuram called Narayana Anubhava Sanyasi Mutt, and it might have been a centre of learning.¹⁴

Maravarman Vikrama Pandya III (A.D. 1283 – A.D. 1291)

Maravarman Vikrama Pandya was another co-regent who began to rule some time in A.D. 1283. There are two records of Vikrama Pandya III existing in Padaleeswarar Temple. The first one found at the east gopura of the left entrance refers to an endowment of panam as a permanent loan (mudal vadakkadan) by Karumanikkam Yadavarayan. According to this document, he placed and consecrated the Subramanya image at the Avanilappirandan tiruvasal in the temple. The second one, which was written in the fifth year of his reign, records his gift of specific territories to the temple's Subramanya shrine. Unfortunately, the Brahmins misappropriated the entire estate. It relates to an exceedingly interesting and sensational inquiry about the settlement of a land dispute.¹⁵ The dispute was brought to the attention of the Pandyan Empire, and he asked two of his high-ranking officers, Pillai Pallavarayar and Pillai Alagiya Manavala Perumal, to investigate the case. The officers came to the spot and summoned all the local people, including the land owners, the nattars, and the Sthanattars, for an inquiry.

On the demand for documentary evidence, the Brahmins claimed prescriptive rights over the lands and declared that they were enjoying rights of sale and mortgaging even as late as the period of Kopperunjinga II. But the temple to Sthanattar produced documents establishing the right of the temple to the said land. Subsequently, the land was taken from the Brahmins and assigned to the temple. The aforementioned investigation took place in the ambalam of Chola Kulavallinallur on the fifth day of the month of Aippasi in the fourth regnal year of the king. Finally, in the 5th regnal year of Vikrama Pandya, the royal order cancelling the Tirumattukkani was communicated to the parties concerned, and the king's decision was engraved on the temple wall. This inscription seems to be the record of his royal order, and now it is found on the base of the verandah of the first prahara.¹⁶

Another inscription found in the eastern wall of Vamaniswara Temple, dated the 5th regnal year, reveals a royal order to the tanattar regarding the tirunamattulkkani gift to the temple of *Tirumanikuzhi aludiaya nayaanar* for worship. Another inscription, belonging to the 6th regnal year given the historical introduction *Samastabhuvanekavira*, etc., registers a royal gift of 40 ma of land as *devadanairaiyili* for worship and offering during the *vikrama-pandyan tirunal* in the month of Ani every year and for a service of *vikramanpandyan sandhi*.¹⁷

In Devanatha Swamy Temple, there are five inscriptions belonging to Vikrama Pandya that reveal the donation, tax, and other premises. The first one tells about the royal order issued to the trustees of the temple of Devanayaka for remitting the taxes on the village. The second is a tax-free land grant in Pullali, a hamlet of Cholaulavallinallur Rajakkalnayan-sandhi, and the Rajakkalnayan festival in Vaikasi. The third one, which brings out the historical introduction, *Samasta Bhuvanaikavira*, etc., seems to record the grant of land to provide for *Vikrama Pandyan Sandhi*. The dates above all three inscriptions are from King *Vikramapandaya's* fifth regnal year. The fourth one registers the sale of land in Naduvil Patta, alias Aiyan Ankakaranallur Mindikkadu, to the temple. The final inscription tells about the historical introduction (*Samasta Bhuvanaikavira*, etc.) and mentions

Adiyavarkumayangagiya Nayanars (Devanayaka)³⁹. After his period, some of the kings, namely Jatavarman Sundra Pandya III (A.D. 1303–A.D. 1319), ruled some places in Tamil country. However, there was no reference above the King in the Cuddalore region.¹⁸

Maravarman Vira Pandyan IV (A.D. 1309–A.D. 1345)

Maravarman Vira Pandya's inscriptions are found in the South Arcot district, especially in Chidambaram, Erumbur, and Thiruvandipuram. His inscription, found in the southern wall of the Devanathaswamy temple at Thiruvandipuram, mentioned a gift of land as tiruvilakkupuram for maintaining twilight lamps in the temple. He served as the army general in King Kulasekara Pandya's cabinet.

Virapandya is represented by two inscriptions in Padaleeswarar Temple. The former records a gift of land for food offerings to the gods, and the latter registers the exemption from taxes for temple lands.¹⁹ Finally, the Pandiya regime ruled from Orissa to Sri Lanka, from north to south India, including Andhra Pradesh. However, after their downfall, they were forced to rule small areas such as Tirunelveli, Tenkasi, and Tuticorin and attributed the Vijayanagar Empire's supremacy.

Conclusion

The Cuddalore region was ruled by Pandya kings and their consorts. The epigraphic evidence clearly demonstrates their administrative abilities. They have contributed much to the temples, both Saivite and Vaishnavite. It proves the religious harmony of the kings on those days. Some of the administrative procedures are similar to those of the Cholas in this region, like tax, cash, and administrative divisions. However, they ruled this region with their own style and provided a peaceful nature to the people of this region during their period. In the meantime,

some areas were dominated by the Kadavarayas and Sambuvarayas. This gives rise to the conclusion that the chieftains and feudatories were more powerful than imperial kings in this period. The Hoysals and Cheras also interacted with the local kings for some time. While the Vijayanagara king took over the place, the Pandyas, Kadavarayas, and Sambuvarayas lost their power in the region.

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