

CHERA KINGDOM

Early Cheras

- Uthiyar Cheralathan - 1st of the known rulers & his capital was at Kuzhumer.
- Nedum Cheralathan - consolidated the Chera kingdom.
- Sangam literature describes about a no. of Chera kings, princes & court poets.
- Penguttuvan - Ilango Adigal wrote the legendary Tamil epic Silappatikaram during his rule.

Later Cheras

- formerly k/a Kulasekharas were the nominal rulers of the Chera kingdom.
- Capital - Mohodayapuram in Kerala.

Geographical advantages

- Abundance of exotic spices.
- Navigable rivers connecting western Ghats with Arabian Sea.
- favourable monsoon winds carried sailing ships directly from the Arabian coast to Chera kingdom.

Geographical extent

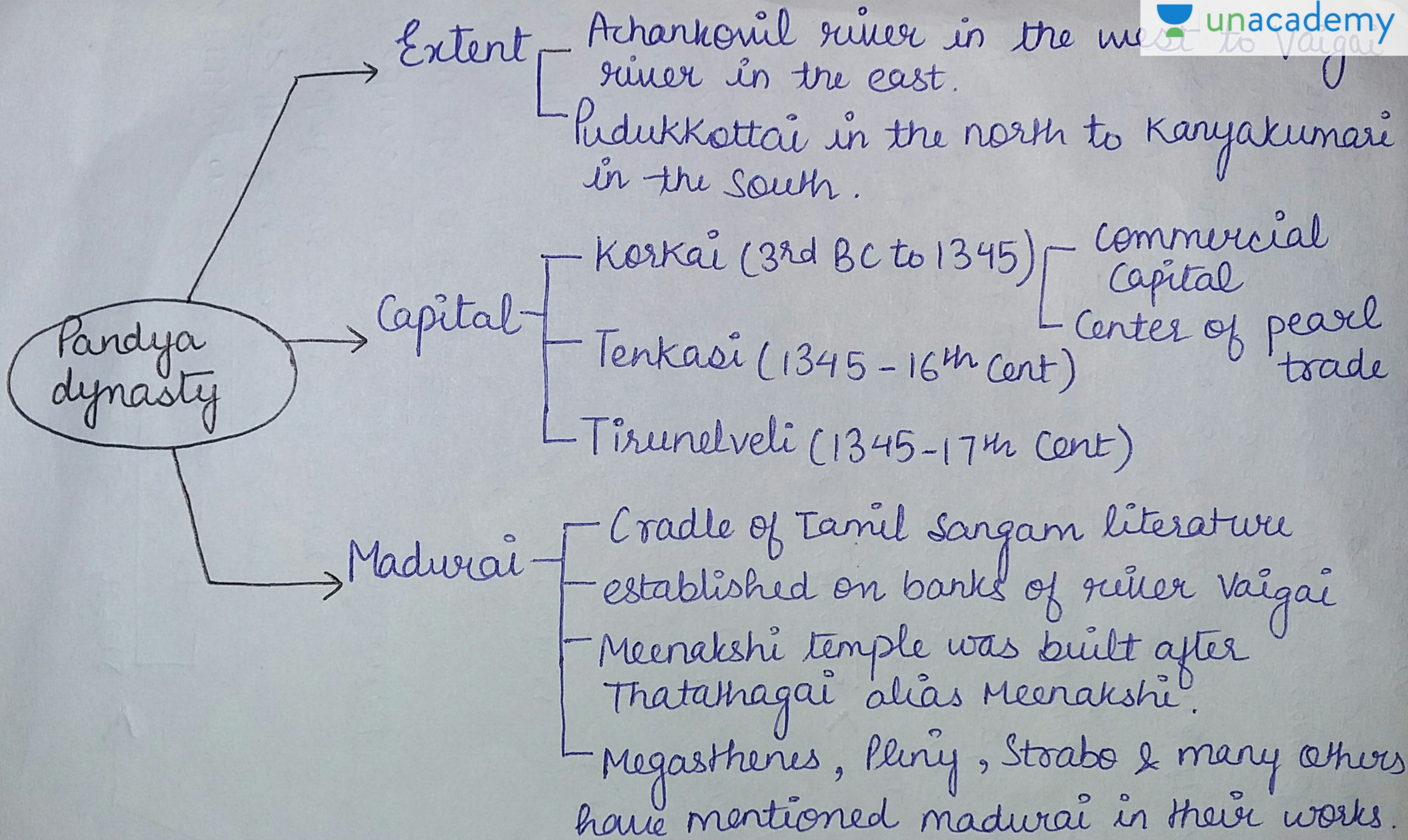
- Parts of TN & Kerala
- Location of the Chera Capital is generally assumed to be at modern Karur.
- controlled 2 harbour towns
 - Tondi
 - Muziris - Roman trade settlement flourished here

Chera trade

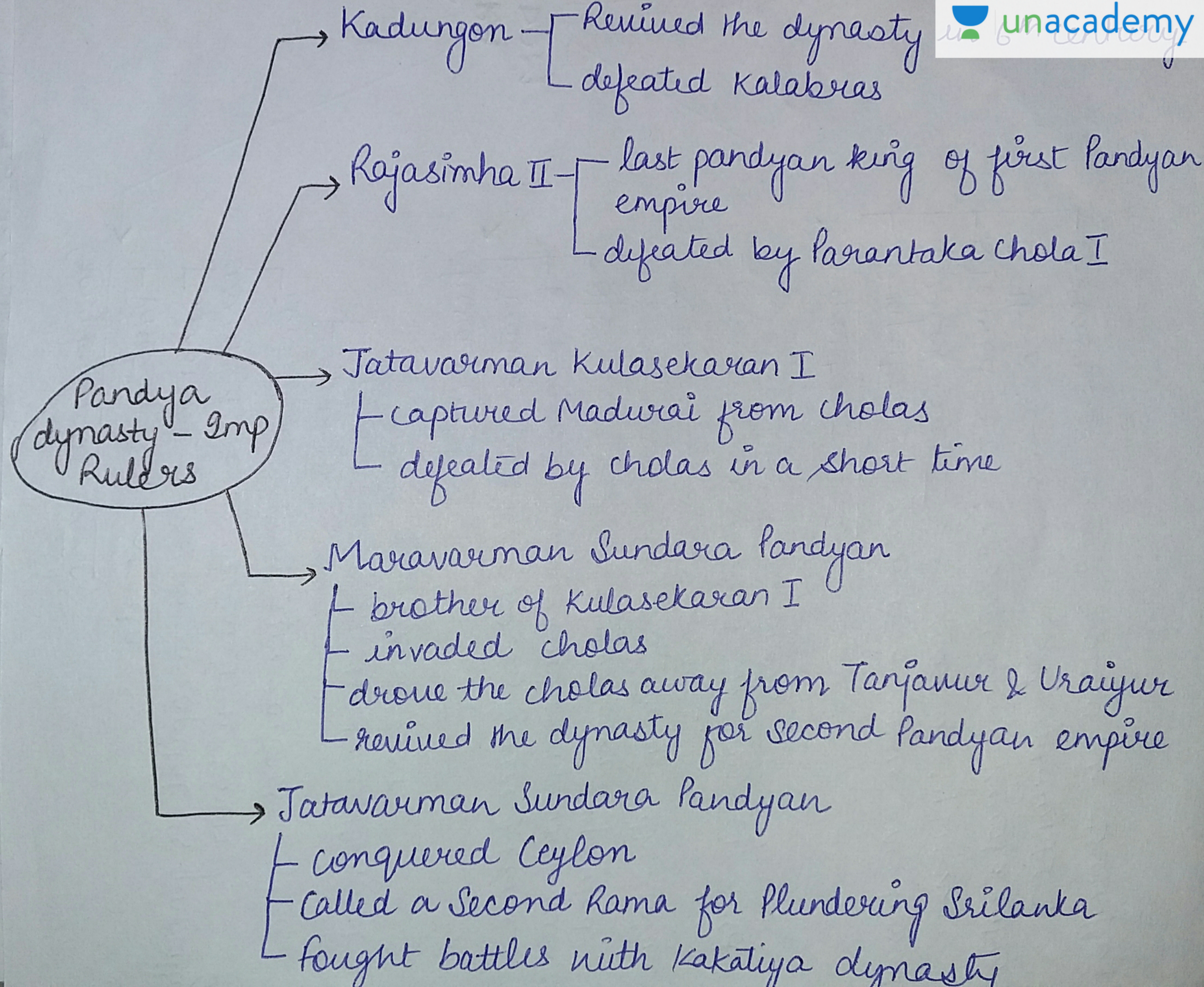
- Traded with West Asia, Greece & Rome
- Bulk spices, ivory, timber, pearls were exported
- After the 2nd century AD, the Cheras power decayed rapidly with decline of trade with the Romans.
- Romans brought vast amounts of gold in exchange for pepper.

Important facts

- Satyaputra & Keralaputra were mentioned in Rock edict II & Aihwar inscription
- Referred to as Kedalaputro ('Kerala putra') in the Ashoka's edicts (3rd century BC)
- Cheras used Bow & arrow in their flag



Kadunoom — Revived the dynasty in 6th century



Architecture

- Rock cut & structural temples are prominent
- Vimana, mandapa & Shikhara were built in early temples
- Vimanas were developed in the later stage
- gopurams were given more important than Shikharas.
- Meenakshi temple in Madurai & Nellaiappar temple were built by Pandyas

Pandyan dynasty - Architecture, Religion & coinage

Religion

- Initially Madurai was a stronghold of Saivism.
- Jainism gained a foothold after invasion of Kalabras
- finally Bhakti Movements revived Saivism & Vaishnavism.

Pandyan
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Shiharas

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Pandyan Coins

- Coins of Pandyas bear the legend of diff Pandyan rulers
- Issued silver punch marked & die struck copper coins
- Coins were basically square.
- Coins bore the image of fish, bow, conch etc.