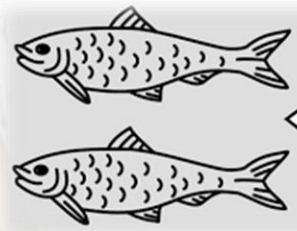


INTACH



Pandya Dynasty

600BCE to 17th century CE



**Pandyan coins in Government
Museum, Chennai**

About the object...

The Government Museum in Chennai has a huge collection of coins in gold, silver, copper, lead, potin and billion from ancient, medieval and modern periods and also foreign coins. The Pandyas were one of the three dynasties who ruled Tamil Nadu during the **Sangam period** (circa 500 BC - circa 200 AD). The Pandyas issued square silver punch marked and die struck copper coins in their early period. The coins had elephant, fish sometimes boars carved on them. The inscription on the silver and gold coins is in Sanskrit and for copper coins; they have Tamil legends on them.



Pandya chola fish coin

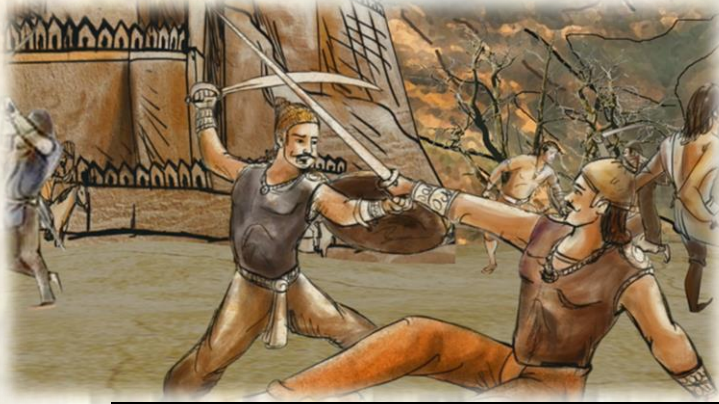


Pandya coin

About the dynasty...

The word Pandya is taken from the Tamil word, '**Pandi**' which means the 'bull' which was a symbol of masculinity, strength and valour for the early Tamils. The Pandyas ruled many regions in southern India along with other dynasties such as the Cholas, the Cheras, the Pallavas, etc, till the 15th century AD. In the first century AD, the Pandyan only controlled Madurai and Tinnevely. Famous traveller **Marco Polo** observed that in the beginning of the 13th century AD that this dynasty was the richest existing empire. Their main capital was **Korkai**, a seaport situated on the southernmost and later the capital was moved to Madurai. The dynasty expanded at a great pace and spread over Kerala and Sri Lanka. It reached the heights during the rule of kings like **Kadungon** (590-620), **Arikesar Maravarman** (670-700), **Varagunamaharaja I** (765-815), and **Srimara Srivallabha** (815-862). In 1311, Madurai was invaded by the Delhi Sultanate which worsened the conditions of the Pandyas and forced them to be just mere local rulers. In 940 AD, **Chola king Rajaraja** reduced the alliance with Pandyas which lasted for another wing two centuries. The Cholas along with **Madurai Sultans, Vijayanagara Rayas, Nayakas of Madurai, Nawabs of Arcot** etc weakened the Pandya rule. Towards the end of the sixteenth century, the Pandyan dynasty completely disappeared from the scene forever.

The Pandya kings adopted the fish or a pair of Fishes as their family crest.



The powerful pandyas...

For a very long time, Pandyas enjoyed ties with the Roman Empire and had friendly ties with Mauryans in India. Other than Marco Polo, Megasthenes in his work the Indika, and the Chinese traveller Yu Huan, mention Pandyan kingdom as one of the richest they had ever seen. Korkai was center of Pearl trade which was the chief source of wealth for the Pandya Kings. We also find mentions of Pandya Empire in Sangam literature.

Describe Pandya dynasty in your creative style.

Architecture during the Pandya dynasty...

Pandya architecture includes both rock-cut and temples with **vimana, mandapa and sikhara**. The earliest monuments in the Tamil country are the rock-cut caves under the Pallavas and later by the Pandyas, **Muttaraiyars, and Atiyas**. Pandyas soon adopted the rock-cut technique and made interesting variations in their work which includes Shiva cave shrine at **Malaiyadikurichi, Narasimha cave at Anamalai, Subrahmanya cave** at Tirupparankunram etc dating to 770 to 773 A.D. Caves such as **Chittannavasal cave temples** etc have beautiful mural painting of dancing girls, kings, queens, plants, animals, including lotus, bathing elephants, playing fishes etc. Temples were built at Madurai, Chidambaram, Kumbakonam, Thiruvannamalai, Srirangam etc. The images of horses and other animals are carved on pillars and beautiful sculptures in the temples such as sculptures of **Somaskandar, Durgai, Ganapathy, Narasimha, Nataraja** etc. The **Pandya Nayaka shrine** within the Chidambaram temple complex was built by King **Sundara Pandya**. In the 18th century the shrine was renovated with the help of Dutch merchants stationed in Porto Novo, a village near Chidambaram on the coast a trading post for the Dutch in the 17th and 18th century.





Imagine if you were to be a Pandyan King, what regions in South India will you conquer and what kinds of buildings will you construct?

Draw a new symbol for the flag of Pandya dynasty, based on the information discussed in the worksheet.

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