CHOLA EMPIRE 300 BC–1279CE :

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THE EARLY CHOLAS

- Inscriptions talk about life of the rulers, administration, political, economic, religious, social, and cultural conditions during the Chola period.
- Important inscriptions are found at Cuddalore, Villupuram, Trichy, Tanjore, Chidambaram, Kumbakonam and Nagapattinam.
- Monuments are part of temples.
- Numismatics (study of coins).
- Chola Kings issued gold, silver and copper coins figure of tiger was engraved has the Chola emblem on every Chola coin.
COINS
GEOGRAPHY

• Heartland, the fertile valley of the Kaveri River
• The power of the new empire was proclaimed to the eastern world by the expedition to the Ganges which Rajendra Chola I undertook and by the occupation of the maritime empire of Srivijaya (Indonesia)
• During the period 1010–1200, the Chola territories stretched from:
  – the islands of the Maldives (south)
  – the banks of the Godavari River (north)
  – annexed parts of what is now Sri Lanka.
  – Victorious expedition to North India to the river Ganges
  – invaded kingdoms of the Malay Archipelago
SOURCES

• Sangam literature gives an unusually complete and true picture of the social and economic conditions during the early Chola period.
  – The culture, mix of the Dravidian and Aryan.
  – The stories of Mahabharata and Ramayana were well known to the Tamil people.

The land of the Cholas was fertile and there was ample food. Sangam poems say that in the Chola country watered by the river Kaveri, in a space in which an elephant could lie, one can produce enough grain to feed seven.

• Hereditary monarchy was the prevailing form of government.
• In a society steeped in respect for custom, even the most perverse dictator could not have done much harm.
• The Chola monarchs were approachable by subjects and justice was meted out directly by the king in most occasions.
Conquests

**Rajaraja:**
*Srilanka, Maldives, Sumatra*

**Rajendra:**
*Andaman Nicobar Islands*

Kings

**Rajaraja** was a great administrator and builder. He defeated the Chalukyas, Pandyas & Gangas. He built Brihadeeshwara temple.

**Rajendra** was an able ruler. He assumed the title of ‘Gangaikonda’. He built the new capital GangaikondaCholapuram.
RAJARAJACHOLLA - (985–1014)

- Thiruvalangadu (copper) plates speak of Rajaraja-I
- He was the most powerful king of Chola dynasty
- He brought glory to the Chola kingdom but also to the Tamil country
- He successfully conquered Kalinga and Maldives
RAJENDRA CHOLA 1012–1044

- Rajaraja the great was succeeded by his able son Rajendra-I
- He captured the whole of Ceylon
- He bought water from Ganges and put it into Chola gangam now called has gangaikonda Cholapuram
Golden Age

Kulothunga gave turning point to Chola history he introduced many reforms to improve the economic conditions

He abolished many taxes and gave relife to the people

His rule gave the benefits of internal peace and benevolent administration
CHOLA ADMINISTRATION

• The entire Tanjore district, parts of Trichy, Pudukottai and South Arcot districts formed the part of the Chola Mandalam

• They had three major administrative Divisions

  ➢ **Central Government**
  ➢ **Provincial Government** and
  ➢ **Local Government**
CENTRAL GOVERNMENT

• Central Government under the headship of the King
  – Council of ministers and officials took active part in running the administration of Central Government

  – The higher officials were called Peruntaram and the lower officials were called Siruntaram.

• The king was the supreme leader and a benevolent authoritarian.

A powerful bureaucracy assisted the king in the tasks of administration and in executing his orders. Due to the lack of a legislature or a legislative system in the modern sense, the fairness of king's orders dependent on his morality and belief in Dharma.
PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT

- The Chola Empire was divided into nine provinces
- They were also called mandalams
- The head of the province was called viceroy
- Viceroyys received orders from the king
- They sent regular reply to the king

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LOCAL GOVERNMENT

- Each mandalam was divided into number of Kottams or Valanadus
- Each kottam was sub divided into nadu
- Each nadu was further divided into (Urs) villages which form part of the last unit of the administration

Diagram:
- Local
  - City
    - Town
      - Village
        - Unit
REVENUE

• The land revenue was the main source of income of the Chola Government
• Lands were classified as taxable land and non taxable land
• Generally 1/6 of the land yield was collected as tax either in cash or in kind or both according to the convenience of the farmers
• The temples acted not only as places of worship but also as centers of economic activity, benefiting the community as a whole.
MILITARY

- The Cholas had an efficient army and navy
- The Chola army consisted of elephant, cavalry and infantry
- Soldiers were given proper training
- The Chola arm had 60,000 war elephants
- The Chola navy was formidable one in South India
- With the help of their navy the Cholas controlled the seas from Lanka to the Sumatra.
- "Gunboat diplomacy"
  - This multi-dimensional force enabled the Cholas to achieve the Military, Political and cultural hegemony over their vast dominion.
- The king/emperor head of all the military forces
MILITARY ADMINISTRATION

• The Chola Navy was an autonomous service unlike many of its contemporaries.
  – The Army depended on the Naval-fleets for transportation and logistics. The navy also had a core of marines.
  – Even **saboteurs**, who were trained **pearl-fishermen** were used, to dive and disable enemy vessels by destroying or damaging the rudder.

• The Chola Navy could undertake any of the following combat and non-combat missions:
  – Peacetime patrol and interdiction of piracy.
  – Escort trade conveys.
  – Escort friendly vessels.
  – Naval battle close to home ports and at high-seas.
  – Establish a beachhead and or reinforce the army in times of need.
  – Denial of passage for allies of the state's enemies.
  – Sabotage of enemy vessels
JUSTICE

• The Chola king was the chief justice
• The Chola kings gave enough care for the judicial administration
• Punishments were awarded by the judicial officers
  – Justice was mostly a local matter in the Chola Empire; minor disputes were settled at the village level.
  – Punishment for minor crimes were in the form of fines or a direction for the offender to donate to some charitable endowment.
  – Even crimes such as manslaughter or murder were punished with fines.
• Crimes of the state were heard by the king himself
ARTS

• Under the Cholas, the Tamil country reached new heights of excellence in art, religion and literature.
• In all of these spheres, the Chola period marked the culmination of movements that had begun in an earlier age under the Pallavas.
• Monumental architecture in the form of majestic temples and sculpture in stone and bronze reached a finesse never before achieved in India
SOCIETY

• There were different sections in society
• The society was based as Varnasrama
• According to the Varnasrama, society was divided into four major divisions
• Namely Brahmans, Kshatriyas, Vaisyas and Sudras
• Chola Kings gave importance for the development of education
• Women were given high status and freedom in the Chola society
ECONOMIC

- Special officers were appointed to look into the income and expenditure of the state
- Government money was spent on public works, defense, justice, education, temples, irrigation, police, king and his households, secretariat etc.
- The Chola kings issued gold, silver and copper coins
- The Chola economy mainly depended on agriculture and trade
- The Tang dynasty of China, the Srivijaya empire in the Malayan archipelago under the Sailendras, and the Abbasid Kalifat at Baghdad were the main trading partners.
- Chinese Song Dynasty reports record that an embassy from (Chola) reached the Chinese court in the year 1077.
RELIGION

- Chola Kings were tolerant towards other religions
- Chola rulers supported the spread of Vaishnavism
- Tanjore, Kumbakonam, Avudaiyarkoil, Kalahasti, Tirukadaiyur and Kanchipuram were important temple cities
- Bakthi songs were sung in all temples
- Some people followed Buddhism and Jainism
DONE!
EXTRAS

• Timeline
• Fleet Organization
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Department</th>
<th>Duties</th>
<th>Assets</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thirvai (Customs duty &amp; Exercise)</td>
<td>This unit employed some of the brilliant merchants of the time and most were professional economists. They deduced and fixed the percentage of the Customs duty of a commodity for a particular season. (trade-voyages were influenced by ocean currents and hence the price changed accordingly)</td>
<td>They normally had boarding officers, boarding crafts and some sea vessels; as most of their duty was inland.</td>
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<td>Aaivu (Inspection &amp; enforcement)</td>
<td>This unit was the Action arm of the trade law, they inspected ships for contraband, illegal goods, wrong declaring of tonnage, small crimes control and the protection of the Harbors under Chola dominion.</td>
<td>These units employed some of the fast assault and boarding vessels of the time and in more than one reported occasion, the navy had sought its help in intercepting rogue vessels.†</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ottru (intelligence corps)</td>
<td>They were the intelligence corps of the territorial waters of the Chola dominion. They normally tailed foreign vessels, performed path-finding for larger forces or conveys and gave periodic updates for the kings and the trade-guilds of the happenings in the sea.</td>
<td>They operated highly capable vessels which are noted for stealth and speed, rather than brute force and weapons platforms. Most of the ships they operated were privateers and contained no national markings. We have some understandings of their crafts, which seemed to have been equipped with concealable catapults and napalm throwers (not trebuchets like the ones employed by the naval ships.)</td>
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<td>Kallarani (pirate squad)</td>
<td>Technically, they weren’t employed by either the sovereign or the state. But rather, they are pirates themselves who have received the Royal Pardon on the pledge of their support of the Chola Empire. They had been used in more than a few instances to deal with the Arab piracy in the western water. They have also been used as Coast Guard.</td>
<td>These mercenaries operated anything that they could capture and composed of multi-national-ethnic corps. Notable among them are the Arabian Amir, who were highly respected upon their oath of allegiance and their fervor in combat.</td>
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<td>Karaipirivu (Coastal defense)</td>
<td>They performed duties akin to the modern coast-guard, search &amp; rescue and coastal patrols. But mainly they were land-based and scattered along the long coast-line to provide a seaward defense.</td>
<td>they operated substantially smaller crafts and occasionally even catamarans. Nevertheless, they were feared by petty crooks and coastal thieves.</td>
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†: Alternative listing of the report.
TIMELINE OF EVENTS

- The major events which had direct impact in the development of the Chola Naval capability are listed here, which is in no case comprehensive. But, some of the events had deep impact nevertheless.
- **Archeological evidence:** The dated excavations,
  - 3000 BCE - Dugboats were found in Arikamedu, what is now in Puducherry. [citation needed]
  - 2400 BCE - Highly functional port is in operation in Lothal of what is now Gujarat. [citation needed]
  - 700 BCE - The first mention of the word *Yavana* in pottery around korkai. (meaning Greeks or Romans)
  - 300 BCE - A load-stone compass with Chinese inscriptions is found off the coast of Kaaveripoompatnam. [citation needed]
  - 100 BCE - A settlement of Tamil/Pakrit speaking merchants founded in Rome. [citation needed]
  - Late 1st century BCE - Roman glass was found in southern coastal regions of Tamilnadu. [citation needed]
- **Literary references and recordings**
  - 356-321 BCE: The Periplus of Niarchus, an officer of Alexander the Great, describes the Persian coast. Niarchus commissioned thirty oared galleys to transport the troops of Alexander the Great from northwest India back to Mesopotamia, via the Persian Gulf and the Tigris, an established commercial route. [43]
  - 334-323 BCE: Eratosthenes, the librarian at Alexandria, drew a map which includes Sri Lanka and the mouth of the Ganges. Which states the exchange of traffic and commodity in the regions. [46]
  - 207-190 BCE: In a puranaanuru song, there is an advice for enterprising soldiers, which when translated literally comes to "He should ride the horse like the Phalavas, Muster the elephant like cherals, and must organize the defense of a fort like the Yavanas, this brings to light the existence of Roman settlements.
  - 1st century BCE: When Vennikkuyithiar mentions about Karikala, he mentions several class of inland vessels by Name some are Kalam, Punai & Patri.
DISCOVERY: THE LOST TEMPLES OF INDIA

• Available on Youtube.com
• Narrated by Michael Bell