THE PALLAVAS (AD 330-796)

With the decline of the Shathavahanas, Shivaskandavarma emerged in the South Indian political scenario. He is supposed to be the founder of the Pallavas. He made Kanchi his capital and extended his kingdom from the Krishna River to the north of the Arabian Sea in the west. However, some Prakrit edicts suggest that Simhavaranman preceeded Shivaskandavarrun. The Pallavas are mentioned in Sumudragupla’s pillar, where he is said to have defeated a Pallava king Vishnugopa. The chronology of the Pallava kings is sketchy, but texts suggest that they were powerful between AD 330 and 550 and the noteworthy rulers during this period were Simhavarma I, Sikandavarma I, Veerakurcha, Skandavarma II, Kumaravishnu I, Sinihavarma III and Vishnugopa. After Vishnugopa’s defeat to Samudragupta, the Pallavas became weaker and the Cholas and the Kalabhras repeatedly attacked the Pallava kingdom and robbed it of wealth and territories. It was Simhavishnu, son of Simhavarma II, who eventually crushed the Kalabhra dominance in AD 575 and re-established his kingdom. Although both the Pallava and Pandya kingdom were enemies, the real struggle for political domination was between the Pallava and Chalukya realms. The Pallava history between AD 600 and 900 is full of accounts of wars between the Pallava and the Chalukya rulers.

Some of the important

Some of the important rulers and their wars with the contemporary Chalukya rulers are:

King Mahendravarma (ruled from AD600-630)—fought the first battle between the Pallavas and the Chalukyas and was defeated by Pulakesin II.

NarasimhavarmaMamalla—son of Mahendravitrm, ruled from ad 630 to 668, remembered as one of the most powerful kings of the Pallava Dynasty, he waged many wars against the Chalukyas and defeated them atPollahur, Periyala and Surmara. The scene of the battle between the Chalukyas and the Pallavas has been carved on the rocks near the Mallikarjunaswamy temple near Badami. Later, he was defeated by the Chalukyan king Vikramaditya I (son of Pulakesin II).

He was succeeded by Mahendarvarma II who was killed in a battle against Vikramaditya I.

In AD 670, Prameshwara varma I came to the throne and restricted the advance of Vikramaditya I. However, the Chalukyas joined hands with the Pandya king Arikeasari Maravarna, another prominent enemy of the Pallavas, and defeated Prameshvaravarma I. Prameshwar I died in AD 695 and was succeeded by Narasimhavarma II, a Peace loving ruler. During his reign the clashes between the Pallavas and the Chalukyas were few. He is also remembered for building the famous Kailashanatha temple at Kanchi. He died grieving his elder son’s accidental death in AD722. His youngest son, Parameshwaravarman II, came to power in ad 722. He was a patron of arts, but had little interest in fighting. He proved a very soft opponent to his contemporary Chalukya king, Vikramaditya II, who had the support of the Ganga king, Yereyappa. He died in AD 730 with no heirs to the throne, which left the Pallava kingdom in a state of disarray.

Nandivarman II came to power after some infighting for the throne among relatives and officials of the kingdom. He waged, war against the Pandyas and crushed them as they got no support from the Chalukyas during this war. Instead, the Chalukya king Keerivarman (son of Vikramaditya II) waited for the defeat of the Pandyas at the hands of Pallavas, and immediately after waged war against the wabar Pallava army and defeated it. However, Nandivarman married the Rashtrakuta princess Reetadevi and reestablished the Pallava kingdom. He was succeeded by Dantiverma (AD 796-846) who ruled for 54 long years. Dantiverma was defeated by the Rattravita king, Danduranga and subsequently by the Pandyas. He was succeeded by Nandivarman III in AD 846. Accounts in the Tamil book Nandikkalubalakam say that the Pallava kings who followed were powerful. Nandivarman III was succeeded by Nrupatungavarma, who had two brothers, Aparajitavarma and Kamavarna. The Chola king provoked Aprajitananda and supported him to wage a civil war in the Pallava kingdom. With the help of the Cholas, Aprajitananda captured the throne but had to
pay heavy costs to the Cholas for their help. Later, incompetent kings and political instability reduced the the Pallavas to a petty kingdom. This brought the Cholas to a formidable position in the South Indian political stage.

FIG. 1.5 The chakukya and pallava Dynasties

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**CHALUKYAS of Badami**

- Jayasinha
- Ramaraga
- Pulakesin I r.c 543-566

Mangalesa r.c.597-609

Kirti-varman I r.c 566-597

Vishnuvardhana founds Eastern Chalukyas

- Pulakesin II r.c. 609-642 extensive conquests including Kanchi

Vikram Aditya I 654-668

Vinay-Aditya 681-696

Vijay-Aditya 696-733

builds temple of Alhole

Vikramadity II 733-744

retakes Kanchi three times

Kritivarman II 744-755

overthrown by Dantidurga, the first Rashtrakuta

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**PALLAVAS of Kanchipuram**

- Simhavarman

Vishnugopa

Simha-vishnu 55-590

Mahendravarma I 590-630

Naraimhavarman I 630-688 conquers Badam

Mahendravarma II 660-670

Prameshvaravarman I 670-700

Renivades Chalukyas

Narasimhavarman i 695-728

builds temples at kanchi and Mamalapuram

Nandivarman 731-796

builds temples at kanchi and Mamalapuram

Prameshvaravarman II 728-731
## Rise of Pulakesin II

**Mangalesha** (ruled 597-610) conquered the Kalachuris and Revatidvipa, but he lost his life in a civil war over the succession with his nephew **Pulakesin II** (ruled 610-642). Starting in darkness enveloped by enemies, this king made Govinda an ally and regained the Chalukya Empire by reducing the Kadamba capital: Vanavasi the Gangas and the Mouryas, marrying a Ganga princess. In the north, Pulakesin I subdued the Latas, Molavas and Gurjarat he even defeated the mighty Harsha of Kanauj at Narmada and won the three kingdoms of Maharashtra, Konkana and Karnata. After conquering the Kosalas and the Kalingas, an eastern Chalukya Dynasty was inaugurated by his brother Kubja Vishnuvardhana and absorbed the Andhra: country when vishnukundin king Vikramendravarman III was defeated, Moving south, akesl in allied himself with the Chalas, Keralas and Pandyas invade the powerful Pallavas. By 631, the Chalukya empire extended from sea to sea. **Xuan Zang** described Chalukya people as stern and vindictive towards enemies.enough they would not kill those who submitted. They and their elephants fought white inebriated, and Chalukya laws did not binish soldiers who killed. However, Pulakesin it was defeated, and probably killed in AD 642, when the Pallavas in retaliation for an attack on their capital captured the Chalukya capital at Badami. )