2. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The discussion has hitherto centred on earlier settlements in the western Deccan and the topographical factors that dominated the pattern of settlement. We shall now focus on the political environment during the Śatavāhana period. The inscriptions of the Śatavāhanas have been used to date the excavation of Buddhist caves in the western Deccan. These cuttings are in turn indicators of periods of prosperity as they were supported by donations from a large number of lay devotees. If a link is to be established between trade and the opening up of the western Deccan, we should as a first step, determine the chronology of the Śatavāhanas.

2.1 The Purāṇas: Considerable reliance has been placed by a section of the scholars on the Purāṇas for working out the Śatavāhana chronology. The most important ones for this purpose are: the Brahma, Harivamsa, Vāyu, Matsya, Brahmānda and Viṣṇu Purāṇas. Vāyu and Brahmānda Purāṇas agree closely and have probably the best account of the genealogies; Brahma and Harivamsa show a close correspondence in their lists; the Viṣṇu account is mainly in prose; and the Matsya record is valuable and in many points an independent authority. The accounts given in the Garuḍa, Agni and Bhāgavata Purāṇas are late recombinations and not very dependable (Pargiter, 1962:77-80). Before we compare the dynastic lists of the Śatavāhanas, it would be necessary to examine the reliability of the Puranic evidence.

Vamsāncaritam or genealogy forms one of the five characteristic features of the Mahāpurāṇas. These genealogies are interwoven with myths and legends about the kings and seldom refer to their political achievements. The complete
lists of kings are not given in one place, but have to be collated from different chapters dealing with different dynasties. The texts of the different *Purāṇas*, sometimes even of different manuscripts of the same *Purāṇa* show material divergence by way of additions, omissions or substitutions of names (Majumdar, 1969:97). Though the authors of the *Purāṇas* claim great antiquity for the *itihāsa-purāṇa* tradition, in the present written form the *Purāṇas* date only from the Gupta period. The historical value of these texts is further reduced by the fact that the *Purāṇas* represent a conscious and deliberate attempt at compilation of the scattered oral historical tradition hitherto preserved by the *sūtas* and *māgadhas* and later re-written by the various *brahmaṇa* families (Thapar, 1978:272). In this attempt their objective seems to have been to provide an elite status in the *varṇa* structure to a large number of tribes who had produced ruling families. It is not surprising then that the genealogies of oligarchies or rudimentary republics have been largely ignored. In the fifth chapter we shall mention references to the Andhra tribe in early literature and hence the need to include them in the Brahmanical fold once they had risen to power.

This social bias of Puranic literature should be borne in mind while using it for historical reconstruction. The *Purāṇas* are relevant primarily for making a rough outline of the dynasties and for providing a starting point. As such it becomes essential to use Puranic evidence in conjunction with other primary sources.

The *Sātavāhanas*, referred to as the *Āndhras* or *Āndhrabhrtyas*, are assigned different regnal years by the different *Purāṇas*. The *Vāyu* and *Brahmāṇda Purāṇas* have two relevant passages one giving the duration of the dynasty as 300 years and the other a little over 400 years. One manuscript of *Matsya*
quotes 412 years though most other manuscripts refer to the period as 460 years. The Visnu, Bhāgyaṭa and one manuscript of the Brahmanda give 456 years (Pargiter, 1962a:37).

The discrepancy continues regarding the names of the kings. The Vāyu, Brahmanda, Visnu and Bhāgyaṭa record that there were thirty Andhra kings but do not provide details of all of them. The Vāyu refers to only 17, 18, 19 or 25 names and the Visnu to 22, 23 or 24, while Brahmanda and Bhāgyaṭa mention 17 and 23 kings respectively. On the other hand, the Matsya Purāṇa says that there were 19 kings but three of its manuscripts give details of 30 rulers while in others the number varies from 21 to 28 (ibid.:35-6).

The Purāṇas also mention that Simuka (whose name occurs in various forms) established Andhra rule after overthrowing the last Kava king Suśarmā. Bhandarkar (1975, reprint:43) has sought to explain the discrepancy between the Purāṇas by suggesting that 300 years and 17 names given in the Vāyu Purāṇa refer probably to the main branch, while Matsya seems to have put together princes of all the branches and thus arrived at the inflated figure of 30. The Andhras according to him came to power in 73 B.C. with Dhānyakaṭaka as their capital (ibid.:40).

This has been countered by Srinivas Iyengar (1913:280) on the basis that the association of the Sātavāhanas with Dhānyakaṭaka is based on an erroneous reading of the phrase dhanakaṭasamanehi, i.e. Śramaṇas of Dhānyakaṭaka, which occurs in the Nasik inscription of Vāsiṣṭhiputra Pulumāvi (Senart, 1905-6:65). Bhandarkar has misinterpreted the phrase as dhanakata-saminehi or dhanakata-samiyehi, i.e. by the lord of Dhanakata. Epigraphical reference to the association of Dhānyakaṭaka with the Andhras first occurs only in the Mayidavolu plates of the Pallava king Śivaskandaverman dated
to the third century A.D. (Sircar, 1964:457).

Scholars like Sircar (1968:195), Raychaudhuri (1972:359) and Barrett (1954:14) date the accession of the Andhras after the downfall of the Kanva dynasty in 30 B.C., i.e. 294 years after Candragupta Maurya had overthrown the Nandas. Venket Rao, on the other hand, accepts the authenticity of the detailed account of the Matsya Purana and places the rise of Sātavāhana rule in 271 B.C. (1960:112). This view is also accepted by Gopalachari (1957:295) who dates the dynasty from 235 B.C. to A.D. 225. Smith (1957, reprint:183-91) and Altekar (1952:40-5) are two other scholars who suggest that the Sātavāhanas rose to power in the last quarter of the third century B.C. soon after the death of Aśoka. Altekar holds the view that not Simuka but a descendant of his defeated the last Kanva ruler sometime in 30 B.C. The Nasik inscription of Kanha (Burgess, 1964, reprint:98), the second king in the Sātavāhana line, refers to samana-mahāmātā. This close imitation of a peculiar feature of the Aśokan administration would imply that Kanha and Aśoka were not far removed in time. Altekar further explains that the Puranic discrepancy about the longer and shorter durations of Sātavāhana rule arises because of the inclusion in the former of the regnal years of Śunga and Kanva kings also. The shorter list enumerates only those rulers who succeeded after the fall of the Kanvas (Altekar, 1952:44-5). This line of argument has been followed by Chattopadhyaya who places the beginnings of Sātavāhana rule in the middle of the third century B.C. but accepts that Simuka, the restorer of the dynasty's fortunes ascended the throne only in 30 B.C. (1974:ch.II).

2.2 Inscriptions: Perhaps the best way of explaining discrepancies in Puranic literature would be to compare the dynastic lists with epigraphical evidence. A major handicap
in arriving at absolute dates is the dearth of dated inscriptions of the early Satavahanas. The situation is not much better as regards later Satavahana records which mention regnal years of the rulers, but there is no certainty about the era in use. An alternative solution would be to reconstruct the chronology of the dynasty on the basis of a palaeographic analysis of the inscriptions.

Nearly 800 rock-cut caves were made during the Satavahana period of which 128 bear inscriptions (Nagaraju, 1981:311). A majority of them record donations and gifts by the inhabitants of the different cities and towns and provide important clues to the social and economic history of the period. Twelve of the caves record royal inscriptions and are valuable evidence for determining Satavahana chronology.

The earliest inscription is in Nasik and records its making during the reign of King Kanha (Burgess, 1964, reprint:98). Another epigraph inscribed in a cave at the head of Nanaghat, 30 kms. north-west of Junnar, by the widowed queen of Satakarni is significant in that it mentions the names of different members of the royal family while listing their generosity at Brahmanical sacrifices (Burgess, 1883:60-4). Against the back wall of the cave are traces of bas-relief portraits of Satavahana royalty identified by labels above their heads. The figures are now totally lost but the labels above them (some of them damaged) indicate that the portraits once depicted Simuka Satavahana, queen Nayanikā, her husband Satakarni, kumāra Bha...(obiterated), mahārathi Tranakayiro, kumāra Hakusiri and kumāra Satavahana (ibid.:64).

There seems to have been some difference of opinion regarding the identity of the queen responsible for the Nanaghat

The Girnar inscription of Rudradāman (Kielhorn, 1905-6a:39-46), a Kanheri inscription (Burgess, 1883:78) and the Talgunda inscription (Kielhorn, 1905-6:24) establish that the name is to be spelt with the dental sa and not the palatal sa.
inscriptions (Mirashi, 1960:26f; Gupta, 1976; Mirashi, 1977:86-9). A majority of the scholars are now unanimous in attributing the inscription to the widowed queen of Sātakarni, who performed several Vedic sacrifices. A silver coin found at Junnar further corroborates this view. It has the legend sīrī śāt(a)ka and Nāganikāya with the figure of a horse on the obverse and the Ujjain symbol with a svastika on the reverse (Mirashi, 1977:89).

It has been suggested that the absence of the name of Kanha at Nanaghat is due to the fact that 'being Simuka's brother he was a usurper of the throne, the Śātakarni who followed him being the son and rightful heir. Since Śātakarni's queen was responsible for the inscription she might have considered it proper to omit the name of the usurper' (Dehejia, 1972:19).

Some scholars date the Nanaghat inscription to the first half of the second century B.C. (Burgess, 1883:73; Mirashi, 1962:2) on the basis of palaeography. This early date is said to be supported by the Hathigumpha inscription of Khāravela which mentions that the Kalinga king despatched an army to the west without caring for Śātakarni, identified by these scholars with Śātakarni I. The dating of the Hathigumpha inscription to the second century B.C. is itself controversial and is based on supposed references in it to the 165th year of the Muriya-kāla and the 103rd year after Nandarāja. Sircar places the Hathigumpha inscription at the beginning of the first century A.D. after the Nanaghat record and closer in time to the Sanchi inscription, though he attempts to identify both Śātakarnis as Śātakarni I (Sircar, 1964:215). Lueders, on the other hand, declares that the Hathigumpha inscription contains no date at all (1912:no.1345). A fresh palaeographic analysis of these inscriptions, especially after the discovery of the Besnagar epigraph, suggests that the Nanaghat record may be placed not earlier than 70-60 B.C. (Dehejia, 1972:19; Shastri, 1972:104).
Satakarnī I is the third king of the Andhra dynasty as mentioned in the Purāṇas. The Nanaghat inscription of his queen engraved in 70–60 B.C. would lead to the conclusion that the Ṣātavāhana dynasty began its rule early in the first century B.C. (or c. 120/110 B.C., Dehejia, 1972:19).

The Hathigumpha script is said to bear a close similarity to the southern gateway inscriptions at Sanchi, and these are dated to c. 50–25 B.C. One of the latter records the gift of Ananda, the son of Vasithi, the foreman of the artisans of rājan sīri Satakarnī (Lueders, 1912: no. 346). It has been shown that this Satakarnī is the one mentioned in the Hathigumpha inscription and may be identified with Satakarnī II, the sixth ruler in the Matsya list (Dehejia, 1972:20).

After Satakarnī II there is an absence of dynastic inscriptions until the rule of Gautamiputra Satakarnī. The Vāyu Purāṇa enumerates nine kings to fill this gap, while the Matsya gives sixteen names. Of these Āpīlaka and Meghasvāti are known from one coin each (Altekar, 1960:792), while literary sources indicate two other rulers – Kuntala Satakarnī who is referred to in Vatsyāyana's Kāmasūtra and Hāla who is traditionally assigned the authorship of the Gāthāsattasai (cf., p.13).

Perhaps the discrepancies in the Puranic lists arise owing to the uncertain fortunes of the dynasty at this time. There are ample indications that the Ṣātavāhanas were ousted from several areas of their dominions by the Kṣaharātas. The history of the latter rulers continues to be unsatisfactory and the only king who stands out is Nahapāna.

Inscriptions of Nahapāna's son-in-law Usavādāta are found at Nasik (Burgess, 1964, reprint: 99) and Karle (ibid.: 101) and a record of his minister occurs at Junnar (Burgess &
Indraji, 1976, reprint: 51). These are dated to between 41 and 46 years which have been interpreted as referring to the Saka era of A.D. 78 and accordingly Nahapana's last known date has been taken as A.D. 124 (Mirashi, 1965: 111-8). Other scholars assign these to the Vikrama era of 58 B.C. (Venket Rao, 1960: 100-1). Dehejia concludes that the dates refer not to any known era, but as in the case of Sātavāhana inscriptions, to the rēgnal year (1972: 23). Contrary to Sircar's view (1966b: 241-9) Nahapana is commonly identified with Mambaros or Nambanus mentioned in the Periplus, the text being dated between A.D. 40 and 71 (cf., p. 8). This provides evidence that Nahapana was ruling in A.D. 71.

The dates of Nahapana's rule are closely linked with those of Gautamiputra Sātakarni. The Nasik inscription of the latter's mother Balsārī describes Gautamiputra as the uprooter of the Kṣaharātas and the restorer of the glory of the Sātavāhanas (Burgess, 1964, reprint: 109). Evidence of Gautamiputra's victory over Nahapana is also provided by the Jogalthembi hoard of coins. Of the 13,250 silver coins in the hoard, 9,270 coins of Nahapana were counter-marked by Gautamiputra Sātakarni (Scott, 1908: 223-44). By collating the evidence from a Nasik inscription dated to the fourteenth year of Gautamiputra Sātakarni (Burgess, 1964, reprint: 104) corresponding to the 46th year of Nahapana and from the Andhau inscriptions¹ of Castana and Rudradāman, Dehejia (1972: 26-7) puts forward a strong argument for placing Nahapana's rule from A.D. 54 to 100. These dates conform to those put forward by Altekar (1950: 35-42) and Gopalachari (1941). Gautamiputra's reign may then be dated from A.D. 86 to 110².

¹ These indicate that the Kṣatrapas ruled over Malwa in A.D. 125. Gautamiputra conquered Malwa and retained it during his reign. This would have been possible if he defeated Nahapana latest by A.D. 114 and conquered Malwa soon thereafter.

² An adjustment of four years would be necessary if Senart's reading is accepted.
According to the Puranic lists the successor of Gautamiputra Sātakarni may be taken as Pulumāvi who ruled between A.D. 110 and 138. Bhandarkar (1975, reprint: 29) propounded the unique theory that Gautamiputra and his son Pulumāvi reigned jointly, the latter in the western Deccan and the former in the east with his capital at Dhanakaṭaka. This has since been refuted by several scholars like Raychaudhuri (1972:491-7) and Sircar (1964:203). Pulumāvi's inscriptions have been found at Karle (Burgess, 1964, reprint:107,113) and Nasik (ibid.:107, 109) and for the first time outside the limits of the western Deccan at Amaravati (Burgess,1887:100). He was succeeded by Śivasrī Sātakarni who has been identified with Vāsiśṭhiputra Śrī Sātakarni mentioned in a Kanheri inscription (Dehejia, 1972:27). This epigraph describes his queen as having descended from the Kārddamaka kings and as the daughter of Mahāksatrapa Ru... (Rudradāman) (Burgess,1883:78). At this point of Sātavāhana chronology, inscriptional evidence is at variance with the list of the Purāṇas. The latter mention only one ruler by the name of Śivasrī whereas two kings by that name are known from inscriptions. We have referred to Vāsiśṭhiputra Śrī Sātakarni above. The other ruler is Vāsiśṭhiputra Śiva Śrī Pulumāvi whose inscription has been found in front of the Madhukesvara temple at Banavasi and records the setting up of a memorial stone for his queen (Murthy & Bhat,1975:34-9). Do these names refer to one ruler or to two? We shall attempt to answer this question in the next section and discuss the numismatic evidence in this regard.

The Matsya list mentions the next two rulers as Śiva Skanda Sātakarni and Yajñaśrī Sātakarni. Śiva Skanda Sātakarni has been identified with the Sātavāhana ruler mentioned by Rudradāman in his Girnar inscription of A.D. 150. This epigraph states that though Rudradāman defeated Sātakarni, the lord of the Deccan, twice, he did not destroy him on
account of their 'not too distant relationship'. It has been suggested that Śiva Skanda was possibly not the son of Rudrādāman's daughter but was born of some other queen of Śiva Śrī or else he was a successor and not a son (Dehejia, 1972:27). A fragmentary inscription from Amaravati mentions a king - Sivameka Sada - who has been identified with Śiva Skanda Sātakarni (Burgess, 1887:61).

Yajñāśrī Sātakarni (A.D. 152-181) was the last important Sātavāhana king. His inscriptions include one at Nasik in the seventh year of his reign (Burgess, 1864, reprint:114); two records in the caves at Kanheri, one of which is dated to his sixteenth year (Burgess, 1883:79); and an epigraph at Chinna in the Krishna district belonging to the twenty-seventh year of his reign. An inscription of Vāsiṣṭhiputra Catarapāna Sātakarni dated in the thirteenth regnal year and found at Nanaghat has also been ascribed to Yajñāśrī Sātakarni on the basis of a coin which bears the word caturapāna together with the legend Gotamiputa Kumāru Yajña Sātakani (Indraji, 1883:313-4). Gopalachari suggests that caturapāna may have been a Dravidian corruption of a name like Kṣatrapanakā (1957:295-8). Rapson also questions the reading and indicates that the legend may have been written in Tamil Brahmi (1905:797).

Inscriptions of the last three Sātavāhana rulers are confined to the eastern region of the Deccan. These include a record at Nagarjunakonda dated in the sixth year of Vijaya (Sarkar, 1966:273-4); an epigraph from Koḍavolu, Godavari district, in the second year of Candrasrī (Lueders, 1912:no.1341); and an inscription at Myakadoni, Bellary district, in the eighth year of Pulumāvi (Sukthanker, 1917-18:153-5).

The Tarhala hoard of late Sātavāhana coins has revealed names of several rulers not mentioned in the Purāṇas,
such as Kumbha Śatākarni, Kṛṣṇa Śatākarni and Śaka Śatākarni (Mirashi, 1940:83-94) and Kauśikīputra Śatākarni (Mirashi, 1946:116).

A Pali inscription on a large slate slab at Banavasi records the gift of a tank and a monastery by the daughter of Ḥāritīputra Śatākarni, 'the joy of Vinhukadadutu race'. This inscription is dated in his twelfth regnal year. On palaeographic grounds, Buehler places this inscription at the end of the first or the beginning of the second century A.D. (1885:331-4). Another inscription of the same king has been found at Malavalli, Shimoga district (Epigraphia Carnatica, VIII:251). These inscriptions testify to the existence of a line of the Śatavāhanas called the Cutukula which was in possession of south-western Deccan before the conquest of Banavasi by the Kadambas (Sircar, 1939:219). The relationship between the Cutu Śatākarnis and the main line of the Śatavāhanas is still uncertain. It has been suggested that as the Cutus were intimately connected with the Maharathīs and the Mahābhhojas, the branch of Kuntala was originally subordinate to the main line of the Śatavāhanas and that it shook off the yoke when the imperial power began to decline after Yajña Śatākarni (ibid.). Raychaudhuri (1972:445) is of the view that Hāla credited with the Gathāsattasaī and Kuntala Śatākarni mentioned in the Kāmasūtra belong to this so-called Cutukula in Kuntala.

An analysis of the inscriptions shows that the first epigraph is engraved at Nasik together with eight other records of the early Śatavāhanas. Nanaghat was chosen as the site for the important royal record of Nāyanikā, as the upper Godavari valley provided a fertile hinterland for the ports of the Konkan coast with the Thal- and Nanaghats forming strategic routes of communication. This has, however, not set at rest the controversy regarding the original home of the Śatavāhanas.
The Purāṇas refer to the Śatavāhanas as Āndhras or Āndhra-bhṛtyas. Bhandarkar takes the latter term to mean 'Andhras who were feudatories' (Karmadhāraya samāsa), but Sukthankar (1945:256-8) regards this explanation as unsatisfactory, especially since the term Śunga-bhṛtyas or servants of the Śungas is taken in the Purāṇas to mean the Kanvas (Tatpurusa samāsa). It is perhaps the ambiguous references to the Andhra tribe living on the fringes of Aryan settlements, in early literature, that have led scholars to propound various theories about the original home of the Śatavāhanas. We have discussed the views of Bhandarkar who would place the seat of early Śatavāhana rule in the eastern Deccan at Dhānyakaṭaka (cf., p.57). Burgess (1887:3-4) and Smith (1957, reprint:184) have suggested Srikakulam as the likely capital. This has been criticised by Gopalachari (1957:298) on the grounds that it is based on the unsubstantiated evidence of a twelfth century Telugu work. Gopalachari (1941:15-6, 26-7) and Sukthankar (1945:251-65) accept the Andhra connection of the Śatavāhanas and suggest that they had moved to the western Deccan even before the time of Simuka and Satakarni.

Rama Rao (1953:35-8) proposes that the Śatavāhanas started their political career in Telengana, on the basis of the discovery of a coin with the legend 'Śatavāhana' at Kondapur. We shall discuss this in greater detail in the next section and show that this coin cannot be assigned to the founder of the dynasty as several coins bearing the legend 'Śatavāhana' are known to have been issued by different kings of the dynasty. Rama Rao has further argued that the inscriptions of the first rulers are found in the western Deccan, not because that was their home, but because the Śatavāhanas had to shift their headquarters to counteract foreign invasions. This does not seem convincing as the first Graeco-Bactrian invasions in no way threatened the Deccan.
None of the Buddhist records discovered in the stūpa at Amaravati and dated to the second and first centuries B.C. refers to the presence of the Sātavāhanas in Andhra. This provides reliable negative evidence as the association of the early Sātavāhanas with the Buddhists is well known; the second ruler Kṛśna is known to have appointed a mahāmātra to look after the Buddhist śramaṇas (Sircar, 1964:189).

Furthermore the use of the term Andhras is confined to the Purāṇas. The inscriptions, either of the rulers of the dynasty itself or of other kings like Kharavela or Rudradāman nowhere refer to the Sātavāhanas as Andhras. Andhra as the name of a tribe is evident from early literature and Aśokan inscriptions, but as the name of a region it first occurs in the third century A.D. Mayidavolu copper plates (Sircar, 1964:457). A plausible explanation is that Andhra was the name of a tribe or jāti, while Sātavāhana was the name of the kula or clan. We shall discuss this at length in the last chapter.

2.3 Numismatic Evidence: Numismatic evidence, unless dateable, can only be used to prove the existence of the rulers, though attempts have been made to work out the Sātavāhana chronology on this basis (Sarma, 1972:75-100). It should be stressed that though the overall pattern of coin finds may be of historical value, individual finds need not. Besides, coin hoards are an imprecise index of political and territorial expansion.

Sātavāhana currency was imposed on a more or less uniform system represented by the already prevalent punch-marked coins and there is evidence to suggest that the latter continued in circulation during the Sātavāhana rule as well (Chattopadhyaya, 1977:101). The earliest Sātavāhana coins have been recovered from Kotalingala on the right bank of
the Godavari, 60 kms. from the district headquarters of Karimnagar. These die-struck copper and potin coins bearing the legend raño siri Chimuka Sātavāhanaśa are said to belong to the founder of the dynasty Simuka Sātavāhana (Sastry, 1978: 10-21; Bajpai, 1981: 302). This identification with Simuka of the Nanaghat inscription has been convincingly countered by Gupta (1978: 24). A reference to the second king Kanha may be seen in the Brahmi legend Kanhasa on an ivory seal found in the excavations at Nevasa (Sankalia et al., 1960: 202).

Opinion is divided on the large number of coins bearing the ambiguous legend Siri Sātakanisa, as several Sātavāhana kings are known by that name. On typological grounds, however, coins found at Nasik, Nevasa (Sankalia et al., 1960: 176-81), Bheraghat (Rama Rao, 1958), Rauni (Shastri, 1973: 106), Tripuri and Amaravati have been attributed to Sātakarni I. An important issue of the ruler is the silver coin obtained at Junnar (Mirashi, 1977: 89), which has the legend Siri Sātaka and Nāganikāya together with the figure of a horse on the obverse and the Ujjain symbol with the svastika on the reverse. This makes Sātakarni I the first Sātavāhana ruler to issue silver coins.¹

Lead coins with the legend raño Siri Sātasa have been attributed by Rapson (1908: 1-2) to western Malwa and accepted as issues of Sātakarni I. Coins from Tripuri (Katare, 1951: 35-9) have a variation of the legend - raño Sri Sātisa. The identification of Sāta and Sāti with Sātakarni seems doubtful as the coins reveal certain typological differences. It has been suggested by Gupta (1953a: 178-84) that these issues could be attributed to three different rulers: Sati, mentioned in the Nanaghat inscription of Nāyanikā; Mādhārīputra Sri Sāta, whose record occurs at Kanheri (Burgess, 1883: 79); or Saliputra Siri Sāta as mentioned on a

¹Sarma (1980: 107-8) contests this claim.
coin in the Kaus collection. The wide time-span between these rulers further complicates the problem. Similarly a good deal of controversy exists about the attribution of coins which bear the legend Sirī Sādavāhana or Sātavāhana. Rama Rao (1961:12) suggests that these coins belong to Sātavāhana, the founder of the dynasty and the predecessor of Simuka. Sarma (1980:151ff) assigns these coins to prince Sātavāhana mentioned in the Nanaghat inscription. Others have shown that palaeographically these coins can be divided into two main categories, with several subdivisions. It is thus clear that these coins cannot be assigned to a single ruler and that several kings used the name Sātavāhana or Ṣādavāhana for their issues (Siddiqui, 1977:77-84).

The next ruler known from numismatic data is Sātakarnī II. His issues occur at Nasik, Nevasa, Paithan and Kolhapur in the western Deccan and farther east at Pauni, Tripuri, Kondapur and Hyderabad. Sātakarnī II is also the first ruler whose coins have been found at Karvan and Kamrej in Gujarat.

We have referred to the lacuna in inscriptional evidence between the reigns of Sātakarnī II and Gautamīputra Sātakarnī (cf., p.61). Numismatic data generally corroborates this hiatus. Recently attempts have been made to identify single issues of rulers mentioned in the Puranic lists in this intervening period. These rulers include: Āpiḷaka (from the legend rañño Siva Sirisāpiḷaka)\(^1\); Meghasvāti (from the obverse legend Hatamakasa, and the reverse legend maṭha); Svāṭi (from the legend Sātasa); Puḷumāvi II (from the legend lumāvi); and Siva Svāṭi (from Śādasa) (Ahmad, 1972:4). As is evident, the

\(^1\)Gupta (1972:49) interprets the name as Sāpiḷaka since Sirī is nowhere used in the genitive form on Sātavāhana coins.
legends on several of these are either not clear or can be differently interpreted.

Gautamiputra Satakarni not only issued a large variety of coins of base metals but also circulated the silver issues of Nahapana after restriking them. Of the 13,250 silver coins of Nahapana in the Jogalthembi hoard, 9270 were restruck with the name and devices of Gautamiputra Satakarni (Scott, 1908:223-44). A copper coin of Nahapana from Ajmer has also been attributed to him as it has on the reverse a tree with oval leaves, a symbol which occurs on several coins of Gautamiputra Satakarni at Nevasa (Sarma, 1980:95). Gautamiputra is also credited with the independent issue of silver coins, and a coin with the legend Gotami may be assigned to him (Prasad, 1972:68). His coins have been found at several sites in the western Deccan, Gujarat and the eastern Deccan including the coastal regions (Rama Rao, 1961:17). Two coins without legends from Malwa have been attributed to Gautamiputra Satakarni. The identification of the ruler may be debated but the provenance of the coin is important as these are the only Sathavahana coins definitely located in Malwa (Gupta, 1953a:183).

Gautamiputra Satakarni was followed by Vasiṣṭhiputra Śrī Pulumāvi whose coins show as wide a distribution as those of his predecessor, though they seem to be absent in Gujarat. Potin coins of Vasiṣṭhiputra Pulumāvi together with those of later kings have been found in large hoards at Tarhala and Brahmapuri in the western Deccan (Mirashi, 1940a:503-5). Three silver portrait coins of the ruler are known, and he was the first Sathavahana king to issue bilingual and bicauscriptual coins (Gokhale, 1978:14). The dialect on the reverse has been variously identified as Tamil or as Telugu (Prasad, 1972:68-74). The use of bilingual coins definitely shows an increase in the area of circulation.
The next ruler according to the Purānas is Śivasrī identified with Vāsiṣṭhiputra Śrī Sātakarni of the Kanheri inscription. The Banavasi inscription, on the other hand, clearly mentions the name of the ruler as Vāsiṣṭhiputa Siva Śrī Pulumāvi. The debate on the identification of these two kings arises from ambiguous references in the Purānas. Pargiter, in his reconstruction of the Andhra dynastic list mentions Śiva Śrī Pulumāvi as the successor of Vāsiṣṭhiputra Pulumāvi, the heir of Gautamīputra Sātakarni (1962a: 42), though elsewhere he refers to the king simply as Śiva Śrī (ibid.: 26). The Viṣṇu Purāṇa gives the name of the king as Sātakarni Śiva Śrī but a manuscript of this Purāṇa enumerates two rulers in place of one and places a Sātakarni between Pulumāvi and Śiva Śrī.

Mirashi (1969: 151-4) has tried to explain this discrepancy by suggesting that Śivasrī was an honorific title and not a name. Hence Śiva Śrī Pulumāvi may be equated with Vāsiṣṭhiputra Pulumāvi, the successor of Gautamīputra Sātakarni. He in turn was succeeded by Vāsiṣṭhiputra Sātakarni and then by Śiva Skanda Sātakarni. This argument fails to convince as it is based on the evidence of the legend rāno Siva Sirisāmbālakasa, the reading of which has been questioned by Gupta (1972: 49). To accept Śiva Skanda as a title is thus arbitrary.

Rama Rao (1973: 113-7), on the contrary, regards Śivasrī as a personal name. He states: 'It is not, therefore, correct to take only Śiva Śrī Sātakarni into consideration and brush aside Śiva Śrī Pulumāvi. As the identity or otherwise of these two names still remains a problem, it is most reasonable to designate this Sātavāhana king as Śiva Śrī without any title and place him after Sātakarni IV' (ibid.: 117). Gopalachari (1941: 66) and Sircar (1968: 205) accept only one ruler after Pulumāvi and that is Vāsiṣṭhiputra Śiva Śrī Sātakarni.

An analysis of the numismatic evidence shows that some silver
issues, a lead coin from Sopara and one from Bhokardan may definitely be assigned to Vāsisthīputra Śrī Sātakarnī (Rama Rao, 1958; Sarma, 1980). On the other hand, coins bearing the legend rāṇa Siva Śrī Pulumāvīsa and variations of it have been found at sites in the eastern Deccan in hoards obtained from Brahmapuri (Gupta, 1955-7: 65), Wategaon (Mirashi, 1972: 205), Chanda, Tarhala (Mirashi, 1940: 83-94) and Hyderabad (Shastri & Sethi, 1975: 25). This evidence seems to support the two ruler hypothesis, giving separate identity to both Vāsisthīputra Śiva Śrī Sātakarnī and Śiva Śrī Pulumāvi. It may be conjectured that the two were contemporary kings ruling over different regions of the Deccan and hence the confusion in the Purāṇas.

Potin, lead and copper coins with the legend khada Satarkanisa have been found in the Tarhala (Mirashi, 1940: 83-94), Brahmapuri (Gupta, 1955-7: 62-73) and Wategaon hoards (Mirashi, 1972: 205-12). Recently, a silver portrait coin has been obtained from Nasik bearing the legend rāṇo...Śrī Khana Satakanisa (Gokhale, 1978: 16-7). All these issues have been assigned to the next ruler SkandaŚrī Sātakarnī.

Base metal and silver coins of the last important ruler in the Sātavāhana line, Yajña Śrī Sātakarnī, have been found over a large area covering both eastern and western Deccan. The last three kings, Vijaya, Candra Śrī and Pulumāvi III mentioned in the Purāṇas are known by a few issues. Numismatic evidence has revealed the names of some rulers not referred to in the Puranic lists. These include Rudra Sātakarnī, Śaṅkara Sātakarnī, Karna Sātakarnī and Kumbha Sātakarnī. Elephant type coins with the legend kosikiṣupataṣaṣa have also been assigned to the Sātavāhana dynasty, though the name of the king is still controversial (Ahmad, 1972: 4).

Gupta (1955-7: 71) suggests that a comparison of the Chanda and Tarhala and the Brahmapuri hoards indicates a bifurcation of
the dynasty after Yajña Śrī Sātakarnī or after Śrī Śaka whose coins occur in both groups of hoards. One branch of the dynasty ruled in the Chanda–Tarhala region and the other was confined to Brahmapuri. Vijaya, Kumbha and Karna Sātakarnī are known from the Tarhala hoard, but their coins are absent at Brahmapuri. Ruđra Sātakarnī's issues occur at Brahmapuri only (ibid.).

In spite of this large number of coins recovered as hoards and surface finds, to date very few coins have been found in well dated stratified deposits. As such they are of little value in ascertaining absolute dates for Sātavāhana chronology.

2.4 Excavated Finds: Excavations at Nevasa have yielded remains of six periods, the only two of relevance here being Period IV (Early Historical) and Period V (Indo-Roman). Both these periods have been dated on the basis of associated finds as there is no continuity of occupation at the site. Period IV shows evidence of fresh settlement and habitation ceases at the end of Period V. Associated with the former is the use of iron, black-and-red ware, a sprinkling of NBPW, two punch-marked coins and coins with the legends sīrī Sātakarnī and Sātavāhana (Sankalia, et al., 1960:69; Sarma, 1980:31). The introduction of NBPW is dated from the fifth and the fourth centuries B.C. in the north, but is said to be 'later south of the Narmade'. On the basis of this and silver punch-marked coins attributed to the late Mauryan period, the excavators have assigned the beginning of Period IV to the first half of the second century B.C. (Sankalia, et al., 1960). Palaeographically coins with the legend sīrī Sātakarnī have been ascribed to Sātakarnī I and as they have been found in deposits dated to early second century B.C., this has been taken as sufficient evidence to place the beginning of Sātavāhana rule in the third century B.C.

This argument for dating Sātavāhana rule is grossly inadequate,
to say the least. NBPW is found over an extensive area and on the basis of radiocarbon dates it has been bracketed between 550 and 50 B.C. (Agrawal & Kusumgar, 1974:102). These figures are of not much use for working out a chronology as the dates for the introduction of the ware differ even at neighbouring sites like those of Hastinapur, Ahicchatra, Kausambi and Rajghat. Hence to assign NBPW at Nevasa to the second century B.C. is arbitrary. Similarly, punch-marked coins can no longer be confined to the late Mauryan period. The discovery of coin moulds for manufacturing punch-marked coins, in association with Sātavāhana objects at Kondapur shows that these coins continued in circulation under the Sātavāhanas as well (Chattopadhyaya, 1977:101). Another point to be reiterated is that coins can be used to provide relative dates only and not absolute ones, owing to the fact that coins are known to continue in circulation long after the rule of a king. Furthermore four of the five Sātavāhana coins at Nevasa have been found in the top layers of Period IV. Under these circumstances, it is not possible to fix absolute dates for the occupation deposit on the basis of coins or to use them to decide Sātavāhana chronology. It is unfortunate that radiocarbon dates from Nevasa are not of much help either. They appear to provide an earlier date for Period V than for Period IV (Kusumgar, et al., 1963:278).

Results from other sites continue to be ambiguous. Some of the sites such as those of Paithan and Kondapur may be ruled out to start with as no detailed reports are available for these excavations. At Bhokardan, though on typological grounds, a majority of the coins are assignable to the Sātavāhana period, very few of these can be attributed to specific rulers, owing to the fragmentary nature of the legends. Of these a copper specimen from the topmost layer (1) can be assigned to Gautamiputra Satakarni, while another from an earlier layer (3) bears the legend savasara sadakana leaving
the identification of the ruler in doubt (Deo & Gupte, 1974:23).

A detailed analysis of the numismatic data from the Brahmapuri excavations provides valuable evidence, though with little bearing on the chronology. It indicates that the Kura kings were supplanted by the Sātavāhanas in this area. Of the seven Sātavāhana coins recovered only one can be definitely assigned to a ruler, viz., to Yajña Śri Sātakarni (Gupta, 1972a:130). The occurrence of Viṣṇukundin coins in the top layers indicates that they followed the Sātavāhanas at Brahmapuri (Kolhapur).

The paucity of inscribed Sātavāhana coinage is a consistent feature at several excavated sites. At Maheshwar no Sātavāhana coin was found, though one specimen from the surface bears the legend jñō (Sankalia et al., 1958:66). Excavations at Tripuri have yielded a coin with the legend raño Śri Sātisa. As mentioned earlier (cf., p.68), the identity of this ruler continues to be bogged by controversy (Dikshit, 1955:126). A similar situation exists at Pauni where the only Sātavāhana coin has the letter sa on the obverse (Deo & Joshi, 1972:33). Only two silver coins were recovered from Paunar, both assignable to Rudrasena (Deo & Dhavalikar, 1968:11). At Ter most of the coins were damaged except ten which carried the ambiguous legend Sātakanāśa (Chatikar, 1969:19-21). Of the eight coins found at Nasik, three can be attributed to the Sātavāhanas but none of these are inscribed (Sankalia & Deo, 1955:30-3).

Excavations at Chandraravalli show that this region was perhaps a later addition to the Sātavāhana kingdom. The earliest layers (7) to (10) have yielded coins of Sadakana Kalalāya Maharathī, Sadakana Chatakānha Maharathī and Sadakana Kana Maharathī-puta in the pre-Pulumāvi period. Apart from these, the excavation yielded few inscribed coins attributable to
the main line of the Sātavāhanas. Three coins from layers (5) and (6) are not of much use as one of them is damaged; another has an incomplete legend; and the third may be assigned to any one of the rulers with the title Pulumāvi. A well dated coin found in layer (5) is the Roman denarius of Tiberius (26-37 A.D.), together with a potin coin of Yajña Sātakarni. This only proves that the associated finds cannot be earlier than the first century A.D. (Wheeler, 1947-8: 287-9).

Coins have also been found in the excavations at Kaundinyapur (Dikshit, 1968:135), Nagarjunakonda (IAR, 1956-57:38) and Satanikota, district Kurnool (Ghosh & Shastri, 1981:8-16). Unfortunately, these are of little help in determining Sātavāhana chronology.

In view of these problems, numismatic data may be treated with caution in a quest for an absolute Sātavāhana chronology and greater reliance should be placed on inscriptions.

A criticism often levelled against taking the first century B.C. as the date for the commencement of Sātavāhana rule in the western Deccan is that it creates a political vacuum between the fall of the Mauryas and the rise of the Sātavāhanas in the region (Nagaraju, 1981:23). This argument is not valid since numismatic evidence suggests that after the fall of the Mauryas several cities acquired power and issued their own die-struck coins. The coins of cities like Mahismati (Gupta, 1953:70-3) and Tripuri (Katare, 1951a:40-5) are well known.

To this list may now be added Tagara or Ter (Gupta, 1971:37-40). The pre-Sātavāhana Kura kings at Brahmapuri and the Kalalāya rulers at Chandravalli have already been referred to. The Bhattiprolu inscriptions only a few decades later than Asoka's reign mention a non-Sātavāhana ruler like Khubiraka (Sircar, 1964:227). Recent coin finds at Kotalingala in the middle Godavari valley indicate the existence of two more pre-

On the basis of historical events described in the Mālavikāgnimitram of Kālidāsa, Shastri (1972: 106-7) postulates that Vidarbha rose to an independent status under Yajñasena while Magadha was being ruled by Pusyamitra Śunga (c. 187-151 B.C.). The recovery of coins of Satakarni I from Pauni, on the other hand, suggests that Vidarbha formed a part of the kingdom of the early Satavahanas. This evidence indicates that Yajñasena ruled sometime after the fall of the Mauryas and before the rise of the Satavahanas. It thus supports the first century B.C. date. Elsewhere in Vidarbha, notably at Khaiwara and Bhagi Mahari, district Nagpur, there is evidence for the continuity of occupation from the Megalithic to the Satavahan period.

A study of the development of coinage in north India shows that legends appeared rather late in the history of numismatics. Opinion on the issue is divided: some regard it as an indigenous development; while others view it as a result of Greek influence. It is generally agreed that this new development cannot be dated earlier than the first century B.C. (Shastri, 1972: 107).

To sum up, it may be said that the available evidence favours the theory that Satavahana rule commenced early in the first century B.C. The location of early inscriptions suggests that the western Deccan, especially the upper Godavari valley, formed the epicentre of early Satavahana rule. The distribution of coins generally bears out this observation. After an initial setback, Satavahana fortunes revived under Gautamiputra Satakarni whose reign has been dated from A.D. 86 to 110. This period coincided with the most prolific phase of rock-cutting in the western Deccan (Dehejia, 1972: 185).

1 This information has been gratefully received from Dr. S.B. Deo, Director, Deccan College, Pune
Under the later rulers Sātavāhana sway gradually extended to parts of the eastern and south-eastern Deccan. It is generally accepted that the rule of the dynasty came to an end around the beginning of the third century A.D. and that the Sātavāhanas were followed by the Abhiras and other rulers in the western Deccan.