

#### IV

### RISE AND FALL OF THE PARAMĀRA PATRONS

The central Indian tableland, known as Malwa (ancient Mālava), comprises territories, which was once within old Central Indian Agency. This Agency was a collection of native states, viz. Gwalior, Indore, Dhar, Bhopal, Bundelkhand, Baghelkhand, Bhil and a group of states like Jaora, Ratlam, Sillana and Sitamau. Taken together, they are commonly referred to as western Mālava. The contiguous district of Sangor is also within the geographical periphery of Mālava. In this region, the family representing the main monarchical branch of the Paramāras, began its career as a vice regal house of the Rāṣṭrakūṭas of Mānyakheṭa in the late eighth and early ninth century, under the leadership of Upendra. The political fate of his early successors was, intimately connected with the Pratihāra-Rāṣṭrakūṭa struggle, for Mālava being situated between the territories of these two imperial powers had to bear the first onslaught when these two states clashed. The decline of the Pratihāras, the dominant power in Mālava, after their discomfiture at the hands of the Rāṣṭrakūṭa king Kṛṣṇa III (c.A.D. 940-51) gave the Paramāras an opportunity to gain undisputed political control over this region. When Śīyaka II ascended the throne sometimes during the second half of the 10<sup>th</sup> century A.D., the Paramāras were so powerful as to endeavour for removing the yoke of the Imperial Rāṣṭrakūṭas. Śīyaka not only achieved military victory against Khoṭṭiga in A.D. 971, brother and successor of Kṛṣṇa

III, but also plundered the city of Mānyakheta.<sup>1</sup> He assumed the title *Mahārājādhirājapati*, signifying a sovereign status, in complete disregard of his Rāṣṭrakūṭa overlords. In this way Śīyaka became the real founder of the Paramāra kingdom of Mālava. When he abdicated the throne in favour of his son Vākpati-Muñja, he left behind a kingdom extending to the Banswara State on the north, to the Godavari on the south, Vidisha on the east and Mahi on the west.

Vākpati-Muñja, (c.A.D. 973 - c.A.D.995) like his father, was a powerful king. Literary and epigraphic evidences show his military victories against a number of contemporary rulers. He conquered Mewar, Marwar, Gujarat and Lāta defeating respectively the Guhilas of Medāpata, Cahamānas, Gurjaras and Caulukyās. He is also credited with the victory over Tripurī. However, his hold over other regions except southern Marwar was temporary. He was not only a great general but also a great poet and patron of art and literature. The poets Dhanika, Padmagupta, Amitagati and many others benefited from his munificence. He also dug many tanks and built a number of temples. Muñja-sāgara, a big tank at Dhārā was built by him.

The next ruler Sindhurāja (c. A.D.995- c.A.D.1000) was the younger brother of Vākpati-Muñja. He extended his dominions in the south-eastern direction and established his supremacy over a part of Berar.

With the accession of Bhōja (c.A.D.1000-c.A.D.1055), the son and successor of Sindhurāja, a brilliant chapter was opened in the history of the art and architecture of Mālava. Epigraphical evidence eloquently testifies his participation in a vigorous

temple building activity. For example v.20 of the Udaypur *Prasasti* of Udayāditya eulogies Bhōja for beautifying the world with temples dedicated to Śiva under such names as Kedāreśvara, Rāmeśvara, Somanātha, Sunḍira, Kāla, Anala and Rudra.<sup>2</sup> While Ganguly believes that all these temples were built in the Mālava region,<sup>3</sup> Trivedi asserts that the first three correspond to the famous temples of similar names respectively in the north, south and west.<sup>4</sup> Trivedi further assumes that the fourth temple, Sunḍira, must have been built somewhere in the eastern quarter though no trace of it can be found today. Of the other temples, mentioned in the inscription, Kāla has been identified with the Mahākāla temple at Ujjayinī. The Bhōjasālā located at the Paramāra capital Dhārā (modern Dhar), as its name suggests, was obviously built by Bhōja. Presumably other great work of Bhōja was the Bhōjpura (modern Bhojpur) which seems to have been founded and named after him. That Bhōja had active interest in building all kinds of art is attested by the *Samarāṅgaṇasutradhāra*, a canonical treatise on architecture composed by him. Also a man of letters, he extended patronage to a large number of scholars, poets and *śilpis*.

Side by side with his contribution to the field of culture, Bhōja was involved in a number of aggressive military ventures in territories not always near his kingdom. It antagonized the western Cālukya king Bhīma who forming an alliance with Kalacūrī Karṇa proceeded against the Paramāra ruler. Meanwhile Bhōja died and was succeeded by his son Jayasīmha I.

The uncertain conditions, under which Jayasīmha (c.A.D.1055-1070) was enthroned, continued throughout his reign. Always engaged in a struggle for survival,

he tried to follow Bhōja's tradition of patronizing a vigorous activity in building temples.

Udayāditya (c.A.D.1070-c.A.D.1093), who became the Paramāra king after Jayasinha's tragic end in the war against Someśvara II of the Western Cālukya dynasty, was an able general. He restored the lost fortune of the family by recovering the kingdom from the grip of hostile enemies. He defeated Karṇa, king of Gujarat and subdued the revolting feudatories. The resultant political stability witnessed the efflorescence of culture of Mālava particularly in the domain of art and literature. Under Udayāditya's enlightened rule, the traditional process of learning Sanskrit at Ujjayinī received a boosting. The Udaypur temple *prāsasti* of Udayāditya is composed in a style, which speaks of the high literary standard the age had attained. As in the field of literature so also in the domain of architecture Udayāditya's reign constitutes the brightest chapter in the history of Paramāras. He renovated the Mahākāla temple at Ujjayinī which was probably built by Bhōja. His name occurs in an inscription in Chaubara Dera No.1 at Un but in what context cannot be said as the epigraph is almost effaced.<sup>5</sup> However, the style of the temple suggests that it was built before the time of Udayāditya. The purpose of the inscription, therefore, may have been to record the institution of some kind of grant in favour of the temple by Udayāditya. If that be the case, the religious activities at Un used to receive liberal patronage of the Paramāra king. Udayāditya's signal achievement was the construction of the Nīlakanṭheśvara, also known as Udayeśvara, Śiva temple at Udaypura (modern Udaypur), the city named after him. Representing the quintessence of the *Bhūmija* temple style that was

nurtured and developed by the Paramāras, the Nīlakanṭheśvara provided the model to be followed by the later architects of Mālava. The *in situ* inscription on the temple records that the hoisting of flag by Udayāditya on the temple took place in 1080 A.D.<sup>6</sup>

After Udayāditya's death, his immediate successor was Naravarman who had three brothers named Rindhuwal (Raṇadhaval ?), Lakṣmadeva and Jaggadeva. The misfortune of the Paramāras continued to grow before it assumed serious proportion when Naravarman (c.A.D.1093-1134) came to power. Harassed on all sides by the Cāndellas, Cahamānas and Caulukyās, the Paramāra kingdom under Naravarman steadily advanced towards its downfall. Though an incapable military leader, he was a talented poet and patron of learning.

Naravarman was succeeded by his son Yaśovarman (got the throne in about c.A.D.1134). Two copper-plate grants, found at Ujjayinī, and one weatherworn stone inscription, found at Jhalrapatan, reveal the history of Yaśovarman. The Ujjayinī copper-plate dated V.S.1192 informs us that he granted the village named Laghu-Vaiṅgaṇapadra and half of the village named Thikārikā. Trivedi has identified these ancient villages which were located in modern West Nimar district.<sup>7</sup> So, it seems, Un (in West Nimar district) was under his rule and the temples of Un were in their days of glory. He had to suffer in the hands of Caulukya king Jayasīṃha and Cāndella king Madanavarman. According to the Jain chroniclers such as Merutuṅga, Arisīṃha, Someśvara and Hemacandra, Yaśovarman was defeated and imprisoned by Jayasīṃha of Gujarat. Jayasīṃha established his supremacy over Dhārā and assumed the title Avantīnātha. By A.D.1142, Yaśovarman regained a portion of his kingdom, most

probably as a Caulukya feudatory. Indeed in the Jhalrapatan inscription (dated V.S. 1199), he is called *Mahārāja*, a title commonly used by the feudatory rulers.<sup>8</sup>

Yaśovarman was succeeded by Jayavarman. According to both Kielhorn and Trivedi, Jayavarman was the eldest son of Yaśovarman. The period of the reign of this prince is purely conjectural. The Ujjayinī Grant of A.D.1142-1143, the only known inscription issued during his reign shows that he ascended the throne not after A.D.1143.<sup>9</sup> But the upper limit of his reign can not be determined with certainty. The Ujjayinī grant suggests that he fled away to the easternmost part of the territory of his kingdom after the annexation of the Paramāra kingdom by Jayasimha Siddharāja, and in course of time, he established himself there and made some gifts from his camp at Candrapurī, which was situated in the Bhopal region. Later he regained some parts of his ancestral kingdom. Most probably, Jayavarman ruled for an extremely short period, probably for a few months. Due to political instability after his reign Mālava had to suffer in the hands of Cālukya Jagadekamalla II (A.D.1138-50) and Hoyasala chief Viṣṇuvardhana (A.D.1128-42) and his son Narasimha (A.D.1142-1173). All these rulers, mentioned above, claimed themselves as winning victories over Mālava. But none of them mentioned the name of the defeated king of Mālava in their records.

There was even a period of interregnum. Taking advantage of the chaos and confusion created by the weakness of the later Paramāras, Ballāla an impostor of unknown identity usurped the power and began to rule Mālava from his capital at Dhārā. He was, however, not destined to rule for a long time. Kumārapāla (A.D.1143-1173) the Caulukya king of Gujarat, sent an invading army against him. Ballāla was

killed in a battle and, Mālava was brought under the Caulukya rule.<sup>10</sup> He appears to have been slain sometime in 1150 or 1151 A.D.

In the second half of the twelfth century A.D. a major part of the Paramāra kingdom was incorporated into the Caulukya kingdom. The Gala inscription first proclaims Jayasīṃha Siddharāja as Lord of Avanti. An inscription at Udaypur (Vidisha District), dated V.S. 1220, tells us that this place was being governed in that year by a *Mahāsādhanika* Rājyapāla, Ku (mārapāla) of Ana (hilapātaka), the vanquisher of the lord of Śākambharī and Avanti was the reigning king at that time.<sup>11</sup> The Paramāra princes moved to the east and established themselves in the region of Bhopal and Hoshangabad. Un, which lies in the west of the Mālava kingdom was, in all probability, lost its former glory and royal patronage in this period of political instability. We hear about several Paramāra princes who ruled in the eastern region of Mālava. They are as follows- *Mahākumāra* Lakṣmīvarman, *Mahākumāra* Hariścandra, *Mahākumāra* Trailōkyavarman and *Mahākumāra* Udayavarman.

*Māhākumara* Lakṣmīvarman ( c. A.D. 1143-1155) was the younger brother of Jayavarman. He fought with the Cāndellas who were advancing on the other side of Betwa, and drove them away from the principality, which originally belonged to his father Yaśovarman. A pillar inscription of Bhopal informs that the Lakṣmīvarman's feudatory Vijayasīṃha won a battle against his enemy. According to Trivedi, perhaps this enemy was the Cāndella king Madanavarman, with whom he had to fight in Mahādvādaśaka-maṇḍala (comprising parts of modern districts of Vidisha and Bhopal).

When Hariścandra, the son of Lakṣmīvarman got the throne he was a child. *Mahākumāra* Trailōkyavarman, who was a brother of Lakṣmīvarman, seems to have acted as a regent during the minority of his nephew Hariścandra.<sup>12</sup> Both the Vidisha stone inscription of V.S. 1216<sup>13</sup> and Gyaraspur stone inscription (date is missing)<sup>14</sup>, issued in his period of regency, inform us that several temples were built, images of gods were installed and villages were granted to provide resources for the worship of the deities in these temples.

The Bhopal copper plate grant of V.S.1214 shows that Hariścandra ruled in the eastern part of Mālava.<sup>15</sup> He had to face the army of Kumārapāla and lost a portion of his territory. But sometime before A.D.1178 . Hariścandra reoccupied this region and to commemorate his victory, granted land to Brāhmaṇas, and issued the Piplianagar grant.<sup>16</sup> This grant refers to a new territory, named Nīlagiri-maṇḍala (comprising parts of the Hoshangabad district) whose south-eastern border touched Mahādvādaśaka-maṇḍala (modern Bhopal region). It seems that the growing pressure of the Caulukyās compelled him to move further east.

Udayavarman succeeded his father Hariścandra whose last known date is A.D.1186. Udayavarman must have begun his rule in or after that year. The lower limit of his reign is highly speculative. No political event of the reign of Udayavarman is so far known to us. The Bhopal copper plate of V.S.1256 records the donation to a Brāhmaṇa of a village which was located in the Vindhya-maṇḍala (eastern part of the modern Dewas district) in the reign of Udayavarman, who succeeded Hariścandra.<sup>17</sup>

After Udayavarman, Vindhyavarman (c.A.D.1187-c.A.D.1194) ascended the throne. Literary sources show that Vindhyavarman succeeded in liberating a large part of his ancestral dominion from the weak hands of the Caulukya king Mularāja II or Bhīma II sometimes before A.D.1190. His court poet Sulhaṇa, wrote his commentary on the Vṛttaratnākara in A.D.1190, and Vindhyavarman is mentioned here as a king of Avanti, Dhārā and Mālava. Jain teacher Āśādhara migrated to Mālava during his reign and settled in Nalakacchapura, which became a center of literary activity.<sup>18</sup> Vindhyavarman had to contend with Yādava ruler Bhillama V of Devagiri and Hoyasāla ruler Ballāla.

Subhaṭavarman was the successor of Vindhyavarman (c.A.D.1194-c.A.D.1209). A ruler of military talent, he defeated Simha, a feudatory of the Caulukya ruler Bhīma, in the Lāṭa country and plundered its wealth, including the golden cupolas of temples. Thereafter he penetrated into Gujarat, defeated Bhīma and took a huge booty. But he could not make any territorial extension into Gujarat. Subhaṭavarman also had to face Yādava Jaitugi (A.D.1192-1207). Beside his military achievement, he was a patron of scholars.

After Subhaṭavarman's death, his son and successor Arjunavarman (c.A.D. 1210-1215) continued the traditional war with the Caulukyias of Gujarat. He defeated the Caulukya king Jayasimha, overran his kingdom and annexed Lāṭa to his kingdom. But he could not become successful against the Yādava ruler Simhana (c.A.D.1210-1247). The Mamdapur inscription of 1251 A.D. shows that Simhana decisively

defeated and killed Arjunavarman. Apparently, Arjunavarman met his tragic end sometime in or after 1218 A.D. which happens to be his last known date. He granted villages to many brāhmaṇas.<sup>19</sup> The three grants issued by him speak highly of his personal achievements as a scholar, as a poet and also as a patron of literature and art. Great scholars like Upādhyāya Madana, Paṇḍita Āśādhara and Mahāpaṇḍita Bilhana adorned his court.

After Arjunavarman fell in the battlefield, Devapāla (c.A.D.1218-c.A.D.1235), son of Mahākumāra Hariścandra was enthroned. According to Trivedi, Arjunavarman adopted him, as he has no male child. Devapāla's elder brother Mahākumāra Udayavarman also had no son. Thus inheriting both of his elder brother's and adoptive father's domain, Devapāla united the kingdom of the Mahākumāra branch line with that of the main line.<sup>20</sup> The activity of building temples continued in the time of this ruler. The Harasauda inscription of V.S.1275 records the construction of a temple in honour of Śiva by a merchant Keśava, a resident of Undapura.<sup>21</sup> The place has not yet been satisfactorily identified.<sup>22</sup> It is likely that Undapura was not far from Harasauda or ancient Harṣapura, in East Nimar district. In that event, ancient Undapura may be identified with modern Un, a place not far away from the border of the East Nimar District.

Devapāla continued the struggle with the Yādavas. Latter both thought that it was wise to be friends and as such a treaty was concluded between them. Meanwhile the army of Iltutmish, the Delhi Sultan, was advancing towards Mālava. Leading the victorious march of the Sultani army, Iltutmish penetrated in Mālava, proceeded to

Ujjayinī, destroyed the celebrated temple of Mahākāla and also appointed a governor at Vidishā in 1233 A.D. Both the Vidishā inscription and Mandhata inscription respectively of 1263 A.D. and 1274 A.D. inform that Devapala recaptured Vidisha and killed the *adhīpa* of the *Mlechchas* there. Vāgbhata, the uncle of the Cahamāna ruler of Ranthambhor is said to have come to Mālava and sought refuge there when his capital was captured by Iltutmish in A.D.1226 . It is further alleged that Devapāla, conspired to kill Vāgbhata. We are told that coming to know about this treacherous plot, Vāgbhata killed Devapāla. This story is confessed in some literary works, but there is no epigraphic evidence in its support. Whatever be the merit of this story, devastation of Mālava and destruction of temples of the region by the Turkish invaders admit of no doubt. This fact notwithstanding temple building activity and granting land to build temples continued years of Devapāla's reign. He is also credited with the foundation of the city named Devapālapura (modern Depalpur).

Jaitugi (c.A.D.1235-c.A.D.1255) was the son and successor of Devapāla. He was neither a foresighted ruler nor a war like commander. From his time the Paramāra kingdom began to deteriorate till it finally collapsed. His kingdom was successfully raided by Yādava Kṛṣṇa, Vāghela ruler Visāladeva of Gujarat and Nasir-ud-din Balban, the general of Iltutmish.

Jaitugi was succeeded by his younger brother Jayasīnha-Jayavarman II (c. A.D.1255-c.A.D.1275). He was a patron of learned persons and poets. He granted land and money to Brāhmanas. Tradition of building temples was still prevalent in his period. A temple was built at modern Mandasor (M.P.) by a Pāśupata sage named

Mallikārjuna.<sup>23</sup> Two Mandhata copper plates of V.S.1317 and V.S.1331, issued during his reign shows that the Nīmar region was under his rule. It is, therefore, likely that Un, a village in Nīmar, was included within his domain. The Yādava ruler Mahādeva and his son Rāmacandra invaded Mālava during his reign. He also had to face the Cahamāna king Jaitrisīmha who raided the northern territory of Mālava.

Jayavarman II appears to have been succeeded by Arjunavarman II. He was a weak ruler and never could stem the tide of invaders who attacked his kingdom from different sides. These invaders were the Yādava ruler Rāmacandra of Devagiri, Cahamāna ruler Hāmmīra, Vaghelā ruler Sarāngadeva and one Visāla, whose pedigree is unknown. Arjunavarman never launched any campaign against these adversaries.

Arjunavarman's successor was Bhōja II. He had to face his own minister who turned against him. Besides the internal dissension, Muslim invasion took place in Mālava. Ein-Ool-Moolk, the general of Allauddin Khalji proved victorious and overran the cities of Ujjayini, Mandu, Dhārā and Canderi (in 1305 A.D.). It was an uncertain period.

The growing weakness and the Muslim invasion gradually led to the Paramāra dynasty to its impending downfall. With the decay of the Paramāra dynasty, their patronage of arts, religion and literature decreased. Temple building activity suffered in consequence which is evident from the construction of some small insignificant temples evincing a degenerated style in Mālava-Nīmar area. As days gone by this feeble tradition of temple building also came to an end.

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- <sup>1</sup> P.Bhatia, *The Paramāras*, p.44.
  - <sup>2</sup> *Corpas Inscriptionum Indicarum*, VII (ed. Trivedi), part 2, p.79.
  - <sup>3</sup> D.C.Ganguly, *History of the Paramara Dynasty*, p.258.
  - <sup>4</sup> Trivedi, *op.cit.*, p.79.
  - <sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p.89.
  - <sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p.65.
  - <sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.126ff
  - <sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 1, p.37.
  - <sup>9</sup> *Loc. cit.*
  - <sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.38ff.
  - <sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p.39.
  - <sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p.43.
  - <sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 2, pp.141ff.
  - <sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.144ff.
  - <sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.146 ff.
  - <sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p.152.
  - <sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p.158.
  - <sup>18</sup> P.Bhatia, *op.cit.*, p.332.
  - <sup>19</sup> Trivedi, *op.cit.*, 2, pp.168ff.
  - <sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p.48.
  - <sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p.173.
  - <sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p.174.
  - <sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p.195.