CHAPTER V

PARTHIAN INFLUENCES

The Parthian Monarchies and their Influence.

Parthia, the home of the warrior race played an important role in the history of Persia. The map shows it was a part of Persia located in the north-western side between the Caspian and Black Seas. (See map between p. 233-234.)

The two modern provinces viz., Khorasan and Astravan of Iran constituted Parthian Kingdom. On the east it was bounded by the Tejern River which in part of its course marks the frontier of Iran today. The northern boundary was the desert, then termed 'Chorasmian' and today Kara Kum. To the South there were the settled districts of Zarangidma and Arachosia, but the Lut was the principal boundary. Consequently there was a country which from the Tejen (river) on the east to its western extremity, measured in length some eight hundred kilometers, but was nowhere proportionately broad.

Strabo says that the Parthians conquered Bactria from the Skythians and gradually occupied the north-western parts of India where they left their impact for the posterity. The Parthian occupation appears to be of a short duration.

1. H.C.P. p. 305
The origin of the Arsacid dynasty cannot be ascertained with certainty. The Arsacids were not a native dynasty but came from outside. The native Parthians are mentioned as Parthava by Darius with the Verkan or Hyrcanians in the Behistun inscription (ST. No 1. P. 4) and are apparently as such Aryans as their neighbours Parthia and Drangiana are mentioned separately in inscriptions of Darius. The invaders were a Turanian tribe from the north termed Parni, a division of nomadic people known as the Daeae or Dahae whose habitat was that of the modern Yasm Turkmen to the east of the Caspian sea and who fought in the left wing of the Persian Army at Arbela (in 330 B.C.).

The Parthians have also been called Pahlavas or Drangians (lake dwellers) referred to by Justin. It may be made clear that the main Parthian dynasty did not play any important role in India except their rulers like Mithridates I and II Vonones and Condophasma who played a major role in Indian history were from a subsidiary line. Ray Chandra says Vonones is a Parthian (Imperial name and hence many scholars.

* See the Parthian Line of Succession on page 230.

© Daheae a tribe of Indo-Iranian origin, equivalent to Das mentioned in the Rigveda.

1. H.O.P, p. 307
2. Vedic index by Macdonell and Keith.
call his dynasty a Parthian family, and some go so far as to assert that this Vonones is the Arsaces King of that name who reigned from 8-14 A.D.\(^1\) But names are not sure proof of nationality. Dr. Chandraker calls the dynasty 'Saka'. The best name for the family would be Drangians because the chief centre of their power was probably in the Helmund valley.

Thomas says "It would seem probable that the tribes from eastern Iran who invaded India included diverse elements mingled indistinguishably together so that it is not possible to assert that one dynasty was definitely Parthian\(^3\) while another was Saka\(^2\). Hence in Indian history they are sometimes better known as 'Scytho-Parthians'. Here we deal with both, the main dynasty and those who ruled India as Scytho-Parthians to distinguish from the Sakas.

The Nabhesharat mentions the Pahalvas. In the Udyogaparva, they (V.4.15) are mentioned with reference to Kukas. The Pahalva (48.14) are linked with Vastrepa. Dr. Notischand is searching (Upayana Parva- p. 104) them in the vicinity of Junagadh (modern Gujarat). Corp bell has traced the trade connections between Persian Gulf and the Western Indian Sea board (Bombay Gaz. Vol.I Part I p. 35) which must have led to the settlement of Pahalvas in Gujarat. Tusasha who had completed the Sudarshan lake on behalf of Asoka was an Iranian (Ap. IND. VIII. pp.46-7). The case of minister Suisakha the son of Kulaipa, a Pahalva who was the Governor of Merta in the time of Indradaman(150 A.D.) was personally responsible for stopping the breach in the Sudarshana lake shows that the Pahalva community wielded considerable influence in this part of India (Upayana parva p. 105). Prof. Jarl Charpentier holds that Parmadatta of Gimar inscription (453-456 A.D.) of Skandgupta was actually Parmadatta "an Iranian". To prove the existence of an ancient Iranian colony in India, Kothivolu gives a novel explanation of Raghu's conquest of the Parsees (Kalidas Raghuvasa - IV 61.ff) - actually a Parsi colony in Western India. (JBAAS. Dec. 1930 pp.282).

Pargitar connects the Pahalvas with the great struggle that ensued between the Echrigus and the Halihays in which Ayodhya King Babu was driven from power by the Halihayas. (IAST. p. 206-268) with the aid of Pahalvas etc.

\(^1\) CSH, p. 69
\(^2\) Thomas, JAS. 190 6. p. 215
PARTHIAN LINES OF SUCCESSION

MAIN LINE 249-2 B.C.)

2. Arsaces II (247-214 B.C.) Founded a new capital
3. Arsaces III (214-209 B.C.)
4. Phraates IV (209-181 B.C.)
5. Phraates I (181-170 B.C.)
7. Phraates II (138-123 B.C.)
8. Mithradates II (123-78 B.C.)
10. Phraates III (63-61 B.C.)
   Orodos (61-37 B.C.) Resigns in favour of his son
   Phraates IV (37 - 2 B.C.) Parthian glory at its heights
   Phraataxes V (2 B.C. ? ) End of the main line

SUBSIDIARY LINE

Venones dynasty (58 B.C. - 79 A.D.)
Venones (58 - 18 B.C.)
Spalrises (18 - 21 B.C.)
Gondophernes (21 - 46)
Phraates (governor) (46 - 79 ? A.D.) End
Sanabares
Miars
Arsaces Theos
Arsaces Dicaus
Hyroodes
Spaldeynes
Phseigacharis

Their dates and relationship not yet known.
The Chief Arsaces, who is somewhat shadowy founder of the dynasty, appears to have settled in Asaak in the district of Astabene which seems to be identical with the Akhal Oasis, although Gut Schmid identifies it with Kuchan.

The name Arsaces by which the dynasty is known is believed not to have been a personal one but to have been adopted deliberately in order to correct the Turanian dynasty with the royal Achaemenian line. It will also be remembered that Artaxerxes II (Mansion) was named Arsaces and the Arsacid dynasty was descended from Artaxerxes. It is worth noting that the Achaemenian Arsaces was born when his father was Satrap of Hyrcania and probably also of Parthia, and this fact strengthens the theory just mentioned.

Arsaces, had attacked a Seleucid representative, probably the Sub Governor of the district of Asaak in revenge for an insult offered to his younger brother - Tiridates.

Arsaces I probably was killed in a battle in c. 247 B.C. Though a shadowy figure, he was nevertheless the founder of a mighty dynasty.

1. H.O.P., p. 308
3. H.O.P., p.308
ARSACES II (247-224 B.C.)

Tiridates who is conjectured to be Arsaces II, succeeded his brother in 247 B.C. He is probably the 1st Parthian monarch of whom we possess coins. He was perhaps the real founder of the Parthian empire. The defeat of Seleucid King Callinicus in 247 B.C. by Ptolemy Euergetes created favourable condition for this King, who attacked and annexed Hyrcania. Tiridates also defeated the troops of Callinicus but it was not a serious disaster and the main body (of Seleucids) was probably not involved.\(^1\)

Tiridates fortified the Parthian cities and selected a site for a new capital of Parthian empire at Dare (Dareium).

ARSACES III (214-209 B.C.)

Arsaces III, like his brother took advantage of the difficulties to the house of Seleucus to extend the sway of Parthia.\(^2\) Ultimately he was, after a duel accepted an alloy by Antiochus the Great. After the departure of the Syrian King, Arsaces devoted his energies to developing his war worn country as also did his son and successor Phnapatius.\(^3\) Both of them did not play any role in the east. This was left to his brother and successor Mithradates who is said to be the Parthian King who conquered the north-western parts of India.\(^4\)

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1. H.O.P., p. 310
2. Ibid., p. 312
3. Ibid., p. 312
4. The Parthian Era was started probably from the region of Arsaces II.
Mithradates I (170 – 130 B.C.)

Mithradates I succeeded to the throne by the desire of his brother Phraates I, who during his life had assumed the title of Philadelphia. He laid the foundations of the Parthian greatness by conquering Persia and Babylonia. Thus in a short period, Parthia had created an empire reaching from Bactria to the Euphrates and from the Caspian sea to the Persian Gulf. Mithradates, who was the Darius of the Arsacid dynasty, attempted an invasion NW of India—including provinces of the Sindh and Jhelum.

The Parthian king penetrated even into India. Croesus, a Roman historian, who flourished about 430 A.D., makes a definite statement to the effect that Mithradates (C.171-138 B.C.) subdued the natives between the Hydaspes and the Indus. His conquest thus appears to have driven a wedge between the kingdom of Eucratides and that of his rival of the house of Euthydemus. Arachesia (Kandahar) region in Southern Afghanistan must have passed from the Greeks to the Parthians probably in the reign of Mithradates-I.

Thus we have probably a reference to the expansion of Parthian power to the lower Sindh from their bases in East Iran.

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1. H.O.P., p. 328
2. SOHI p. 100
3. EHI p. 425
4. A.I.U. p. 111
5. Ibid., p. 119
Phraates II (138 - 128 B.C. ?)

Phraates, son of Mithridates succeeded his father who died full of years and honours in 138 B.C. Phraates died fighting with the Seleucid forces in 123 B.C. did not make any impact on India.

Artabanus I (128-123 B.C.) also lost his life fighting with the Scythians.

Mithridates II (123 - 88 B.C.)

Mithridates II was a brave and courageous ruler. His military operation against the Sakas changed the whole aspect of affairs. The Scythian nomads received such severe lessons that they turned their arms to a quarter where the resistance was weaker and poured into the state now termed Afghanistan. Indeed so successful was Mithridates that he annexed various provinces towards the east. The coins prove the princes with Parthian names ruled near the Himalayas during this period.

The tide of Scythian movement thus checked by the Parthians ultimately flowed towards the valley of the Hindus. This diversion of the Saka influence the course of Indian history when the Sakas dominated a large chunk of Indian territory for centuries.

1. H.O.P., p. 350
2. A.I.U., p. 121.
Mithradates III (88-63 B.C.)

His war with Sulla in 86 B.C. ended in disaster. His war against Rome ended in failure. He ran towards the eastern corner of the Black sea pursued by Pompey of Rome. Mithradates II committed suicide by drinking a cup of poison in 63 B.C. The whole army of Pompey upon hearing the news fell to feasting as if in the person of Mithradates alone they had died many thousands of their enemies.

Phraates III (63 - B.C. - 61 B.C.)

Phraates who crossed the sword with mighty Roman General Pompey succeeded to the throne but he was assassinated by his two sons. Mithradates IV the elder ascended the throne, but was deposed on account of his injustice and cruelty and Orodes became "the King of Kings". He sent an embassy to the Roman General (Crassus) in 53 B.C. but had to fight him.

Orodes (61 B.C.-37 B.C.)

Orodes had a son named Pacorus who fought against the Romans but he was killed in 38 B.C. by the Roman army. This was a heavy blow to the aged king Orodes, who resigned his throne to his eldest son Phraates IV in 37 B.C.

During his reign, Ctesiphon became the capital of Parthia.

1. Plutarch's Lives—Pompey
2. H.O.P., p. 347
3. Ibid., p. 359
Phraates IV (37 - 2 B.C.)

Phraates killed his brothers and even his father who had raised Parthia to the pinnacle of glory. He himself was murdered by his son in 2 B.C. whose mother was an Italian slave.

Phraateses (2 B.C.)

The parricide seized the throne and as a price for this, Rome agreed to withdraw from Armenia. But he was hated by the people and was put to death so was his successor - Ordes who was an Arsacid elected to the throne but as none was left to take the throne, Rome was requested to release Vonones the eldest son of Phraates who was sent to mount the Parthian throne.

THE DYNASTY OF VONONES
( VONONES 58 / 18 B.C.)

The struggle of the Parthians with the Scythians in which two of their emperors lost their lives, must have led to relaxation of the grip of the central Parthian government on the remote provinces. This naturally led to the establishment of independent or semi-independent States in the eastern part of the empire under the governors of Parthian or mixed Scytho-Parthian nationality.

1. H.O.P, p. 347
2. Ibid., p. 347
The earliest local Parthian ruler of east Iran who is known from his coins to have assumed the imperial title "Great King of Kings was Vonones and (Persian Vanama) this title was for the first time \(\text{\textit{\textdagger}}\) assumed by Mithradates II\(^1\) (123–88 B.C.). He must, therefore, have ruled after the latter Vonones ruled southern Afghanistan and the eastern parts of his dominions through viceroys.\(^2\)

Vonones 'the great King of Kings' is seen (from the coins) to have ruled conjointly with the brother (a step brother) Spalahora and his nephew Spalagndama (son of Spalahora).

The earliest independent Scythian King of Indo Scythia seems to have been Maues (Moga) known also from a Taxila Inscription\(^3\) (S.P. No. 27 p. 120) dated in the year 78 of an era said to be of Scythian Parthian institution. Some historian believe that the origin of the era was associated with Vonones, the founder of an independent kingdom in Drangiana and that was carried to India by the Scythians and ultimately, after many centuries, came to be known as "Vikram Samvat". Vonones seems to have begun his viceregal career in 58 B.C., the epoch of this era quite early in life. Later he assumed independence and probably ended his career about 18 B.C.

\(^1\) CHI, Vol. I p. 567  
\(^2\) ATU p. 125  
\(^3\) SF, No. 27, p. 120
He was succeeded in the sovereignty of eastern Iran by his
brother or step brother Spalirises (c. 13 B.C. - 1 B.C.)

SPALIRISES (c. 13 B.C. - 21 A.D.)

Spalirises was a brother (or step brother) of Vonones and
ruled as his viceroy over a territory (probably about South
Afghanistan) where the "Zeus standing coin type" of Helickles
prevailed. The numismatic evidence probably indicates that Vonones
in his old age, was overthrown by his younger brother or step
brother Spalirises.

D.C. Sircar points out that the eastern most districts of
the old empire of Mithradates I appear later to have been under
rulers of Saka nationality who were probably either semi
independent viceroys owing allegiance to Vonones or subordinate
of that King but appear to have assumed complete independence
by disregarding Spalirises' claim of suzerainty after his
usurpation of Vonones' throne. Thus the seeds of Scytho Parthian
decline were sown.

GONDOPHERNES (c. 21 - 46 A.D.)

Gondophernes was the most eminent Parthian ruler in India.
His Persian name 'Vindapharma' means 'Winner of Glory'. He
seems to have been originally the Parthian Viceroy of Arachosia

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1. A.I.U., p. 125
2. A.I.U., p. 124
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid., p. 128
under the Great King of Kings. Orthagnes (Veretragna— the victorious). As a viceroy Gondophernes was associated with another subordinate ruler (perhaps brother) named Gudea or Gudana whose name sometimes appear alone on some coins of Orthagnes & Gondophernes gradually extended his power in different directions and became an emperor.

According to Rapson the two brothers were associated as sub kings under the suzerainty of Orthagnes (Veretragna)1. Sten Konow however identifies Orthagnes with Guduvhana himself Herzfeld suggests that he was the unnamed Son of Vardanes who claimed the throne against Volagases I about 55 A.D.2

Gondophernes used some of the coin types of Orthagnes which may point to his control over east Iran. The distinctive sign of Gondophernes found on his coins is sometimes found counter marked on the issues of the Parthian emperors Orodes I (57 - 38 B.C.) and Artabanus (c. 10-40 A.D.). This has been taken to indicate that he conquered certain district of the Parthian empire.3

1. CSAH, p. 70
2. Ibid,
3. A.I.U, p. 128
Gondophernes seem to have ousted Hermaeus, the last Greek King of the upper Kabul Valley, in spite of the help the later received from his Kushan ally Kujula Kadphises. As regards the Parthian occupation of Kabul, Isidor record (about 1st century beginning) does not include that region in the list of eastern provinces of the empire of the Parthians, although Philostratus refers about 43-44 A.D. to the extension of Parthian rule to this land. Fan Ye seems to refer to Parthian occupation of Kabul about the middle of the 1st century A.D. before the Kushan conquest.

It appears that the ruler of the eastern provinces of the Parthian empire, even after their assumption of independence, were sometimes regarded as nominal subordinate of the Parthian emperor. Gondophernes first ruled in South Afghanistan and then in Western Gandhara in the 26th year. He didn't rule in the eastern Gandhara.

The story of supræssion of the rule of Azes II by him in one of the Scythian provinces is told by the coins of Aspavarmas. The latter at first acknowledged the suzerainty of Azes(II), but later on obeyed Gondophernes as his over lord. The Periplus proves the Parthian rule in the lower Indus Valley.

1 Fan Ye says "whenever any of the three Kingdoms of Thien Chou (India proper, Kipin (Kasistan) the adjoining region and Vgas-al- (Parthia) became powerful, it brought Kabul under subjection, when it grew weak it lost Kabul. Later Kabul fell under the rule of Parthia.

2 THAT, p. 453

3 WEBER, Ed. Schoff, The Periplus of the Erythrean Sea, p. 37
The success of Gondophernes in the upper Kabul Valley was, however, short lived. According to Pan-ye, Kujula Kadphises, the first Kushana King of the Yuch-Chi occupied Kao-fu (Kabul) apparently about the middle of the 1st century A.D. Numismatic evidence suggests that Kujula Kadphises also extended Kushana rule over southern Afghanistan.

Gondophernes’s success against the Sakas in India was more conspicuous. The discovery of a record of this region at Takh-i-Bahi in the Yusufzai territory near Maran in the Peshawar District (Pakistan) coupled with the tradition of a Parthian named Phraates, ruling in Taxila in 43-44 A.D. points to the Parthian occupation of Gandhara.

The inscription is dated regnal year 26 and (Vikram Sra) 103 (46 A.D.) From this it can be inferred the upper limit of his reign. The King bears the title 'Maharaja'. The inscription is in the Prakrit.

The King thus ruled from 21 A.D. to at least up to 46 A.D. The King bears the title of Maharaja.

According to a Christian Tradition, Guindaphar (Syriac version) or Goundapheres (Greek Version) was the King of India at whose court the Apostle Thomas was received, shortly after the crucifixion, in C. 29 or 33 A.D. There is a story about the conversion of Gondophernes to Christianity and the martyrdom of St. Thomas which has been doubted by many scholars. Scholars have identified this King with Gondophernes (Gudhvara of the Takt-i-Bahi inscription) who has to be assigned exactly to the above epoch if the date (year 103) to his record is referred to the Vikram Sra.

The Kushana occupation of the Gandhara region is indicated by the Panjtar record on the borders of the Peshawar and Hazara.

1. A.I.U. p. 129
2. BMH. 28 p. 121. It is dated the year 103 (i.e. 46 or 47 A.D.)
3. Foot Note No. 2 on p. 121 S.R. may also be referred to.
4. S.R. No. 32 p. 126
districts) inscription of the year 122 and the Taxila (Rawalpindi) district inscription of the year 136, both the dates being referable to the Scytho Parthian era and corresponding respectively to 65 A.D. and 79 A.D. The Kushanas thus appear to have driven out the Parthians from the Gandhara region before 65 A.D. The records do not mention any Kushan ruler by name. The Panjtar inscription referring to the Rajya probably of a governor styled Maharaja Gushana (Kushana) and the Taxila inscription to a King or a semi-independent governor designated Maharaja Rajatiraja Devaputra Kushana (Kushana). This shows that by the Indian language and customs had influenced the foreigners of this region. It appears that by 79 A.D. the Kushanas must have become absolute masters of large parts of northern India not only at the expense of Saka or semi-independent Scythian and Indian princes.

COINS TELL OF GONDOPHERNES’ END

A remarkable hoard of coins from Taxilawas found to contain two types of Gondophernes’ coins, one of Pacores, and one of Wema Kadphises son of the Kushana Rjula Kadphises. The first two types bear the portrait and symbol of Gondophernes within the name respectively of his viceroy Sagedana and Satavanta, who as already noticed are styled great King, the King of Kings and were apparently reigning practically as independent rulers. The coins of Pacores have on the reverse

1. SJNo. 34, p. 129
2. Ibid.
3. A.I.U., p. 131
the name of the great King Casa, son of Aspa's brother
who had originally been a Viceroy of Gondophernes, the predeces-
sor of Pacores.

The finding of the coins of Mem Kadphises "the great King
Supreme King of Kings", the Kushana Chief along with those of
Gondophernes and Pacores may be regarded as indicating the expira-
tion of Parthian rule from the Taxila region by the Kushanas.

The titles 'King of Kings' and 'Great' are in Prakrit (Maharaja
Rajatiraj), Maharaja and Rajashiraj

PHERAORTES (46 - 79 A.D.)

The exact relation of Gondophernes with Phraortes apparently
a Parthian whom Apollodorus of Tyana is said to have been according
to Philostratus, in possession of Taxila in c. 43-44 A.P. is un-
known. Phraortes was not only independent of the Parthian emperor
Vardanes (c. 59-67 A.D.) but was himself powerful enough to exercise
suzerain power over the Satrap of the Sindhu Valley. It seems that
Phraortes was for sometime the semi-independent Governor of
Gandhara under Gondophernes. Philostratus refers to the perpetual
quarrel of the "barbarians with the ...

1. A.I.U., p. 131
2. Ibid., p. 132
3. Ibid., p. 132
with the Parthian king of the Indian border land. That Parthian
rule continued in the lower Sindh valley as late as the eighth
decade of the first century A.D. is evidenced by the Periplus
which says "Before it (Baroanica on the principal mouth of the
Sindhu), there lies a small island and inland behind it is
the metropolis of Sotheia, Minnagara; it is subject
to Parthian princes who are constantly driving each other out."

END OF THE PARTHIAN RUL IN INDIA

A Parthian king, known from his coins with a purely Greek legend
was Gnaeus, who probably ruled in Patrae as a successor
of Ptolemaeus. Some coins discovered in the Aelam district have
been attributed to the son of a chief named Baga Shama
probably an Indo-Parthian. Euphratic sources disclose the name of
an Indo-Scythian king called Athenes who is supposed to have
belonged to the family of Arsaces I. Athenes, however, was a subordinate
ruler. Some other rulers known from their coins may be mentioned
in this connection. They are Mien or Mien, Arsaces Theos,
Arsaces, Diosinus, Hyrcades, Saphathanes and Pasigachates. But
nothing definite is known about their history and nationality.
According to Ray Chandhari after the death of

2. A.I.U., p. 138
After the death of the Great Parthian monarch (Candhipheres) his empire split up into smaller principalities. One of these (probably Scistan) was ruled by Candhipheres another (Kushans) (Punjab) by Pehlevi and others by other princes. The epigraphic evidence proves that Pahlav or Parthian rule in Afghanistan, the Punjab, Sindh was supplanted by that of the Kushana Dynasty.

Cultural Impact

Religious Impact

Some scholars have contended that the alien concept of Messiah and the appellation Maitreya \(^2\) were adopted in India through Iranian contact during this age \(^3\). In support of this they do not advance any cogent reasons but on the other hand if we see the ruling deity Vedic Mitra, it would appear that is only a suggestion lacking forceful evidence. Mithra is a solar deity of Indo-Iranian origin. Mithra (Iranian) another solar deity is later on sandritised into Mihira (Surya).

It is true that the cult of Mithraism spread in Europe and the religion of Mithras appealed to mankind through its mystic ceremonies, and through the expectation of a better life beyond the grave \(^4\), but as the same provisions of better life after death were available in the Vedic religion, Mithraism did not have any direct impact in India. One Parthian prince named Lakshmana, renouncing the throne embraced Buddhism and preached this religion in China along with many Parthian followers.

Origin of Vikrama Era

Some scholars believe that the era now known as Vikrama era in India was originated by the Scytho-Parthian ruler - Vonones. D.C. Sircar opines that the earliest independent Scythian King of India - Scythian seems to have been Mauzas (Moos Moza) who is not only known from his coin but also from a Taxila inscription dated in the year 78 of an era apparently of Scytho-Parthian institution.

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1. PFAI, p. 455
2. Maitreya - a Bodhisattva destined to be the next future Buddha
3. BP Aberg, Der Messias glaubt in Indien und Iran, pp. 248-244
4. HOC, p. 383
5. H.G. Shestrty, China Meme Pracintii Bhavnastra Sandhatuli, p. 23
There is reason to believe that founder of an independent kingdom in Drangiana and that it was carried to India by Scythians and ultimately after many centuries came to be known as the Vikrama Era. 1

B.C. Sircar says that it is interesting to note that the earliest extant historical reckoning of India, i.e. Vikrama Era—Saka Era of 78 B.C. and 78 A.D., respectively, have epochs falling exactly in the Scytho-Parthian and Kushana periods of Indian history. There is no doubt that the foreign dynasties established themselves in India considerably after the early Indo Greek Kings, Demetrius and Eukratides who belong to the 1st half of the 3rd—2nd century B.C.

The identification of the Scytho-Parthian era in the Vikrama Svarat is again supported at least by one evidence. The Taka-i-Bahi inscription, as we have seen above, is dated in the year 103 of this era and the 26th regnal year of Gondophares called the King of India in some versions 2

If the year 103 of the Taka-i-Bahi inscription be referred to the Vikrama Svarat the reign of Gondophares exactly falls in

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1. A.I. U. p. 125
2. Ibid., foot note.
in the said period i.e. in the period 21-46 A.D. It should be pointed out that no difficulty that may be supposed to stand in the way of the identification of the Scytho Parthian reckoning with the Vikrama Sanka is insurmountable. But how it came to be associated with Vikramaditya.

The Mauryas and other early dynasties in India dated their records in regnal years. No continuous era came into vogue in India before the Scytho Parthian period.

In Western Asia the Greeks and the Seleucid dynasty had started the Seleucid era in 312 B.C. But the Indo-Greek Kings did not extend its use in India. They dated their records only in regnal years. The Parthians started their own era in C. 248 B.C. But they did not extend it in India.

The earliest use of a continuous era in India can be traced to the Scytho-Parthian inscriptions. They are dated years 72 to 100. The unspecified era is generally identified with the Kṛpāra (Years 281 to 421). The Malawana Era (Cyces 461 to 495) and the Vikrama Era are the earliest known year of the last King 829. Dhulpur inscription of Chaira King Chand Maharan mentions Vikrama Era in C 34 A.D. 4

It is supposed that the Scytho Parthians adopted it from the reign of Vologes, it was subsequently extended over Rajasthan and Malwa through the Malavas. At a very later stage it came to be ascribed to the legendary popular King Vikrama of Ujjain.

1. A.I.U., p. 125 foot note
2. Ibid.
3. Nir alvow cam. iur Jān Kala Canara p. 60
However, this view though accepted by the majority of Indian historians, is not established finally. Scholars like Dr. H.H. Fairsby have refuted it and dissociated it from the era Kaliya Vijaya = "Kalaran Prana."

Dr. Fairsby contends that the era used in the Scythian Parthian records in the Early Saka Era started by the Saka in 61 or 71 B.C. after they occupied Ujjain by defeating the tyrannous tyrannical king Bhagasa of the Gardhamihla dynasty. 1

However, the majority of scholars still favour the theory of the Partian origin of the Vikrama Parwa.

It was the era that stands on the story of the Malava and later the era belonging to the Malava country to the King or Kings of Malava. Sometime later, the era was further associated with Vikramaditya.

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1 Suri Muni Kaliya Vijaya Vir Miran Sanvat Aur Jain Kala Ganana p.53.

The Book tells an interesting story about the Saka occupation of Ujjain.

2Fairsby, Indian Paliography, p. 191
The titles of the Parthian Kings and the legends used on their coins prove that they were influenced by Indian languages and political traditions.

1. In India राज, राजार, निर्णाय, राजा राजा राजा, etc. and were used in the Vedic period.

2. राजा or महाराज in Pusakha.

3. In Greek Bactrian (King) नागिकास (Great)

These titles are supposed to be of Parthian origin.

Vonones "Great King of Kings"

5. Issues - "King of Kings" राजा राजा राजा, Great महाराज, महाराज, महाराज.

Arses I राजा, राजा, महाराज, महाराज, महाराज.

Ariiises महाराज महाराज महाराज महाराज.

Gondophares महाराज, महाराज महाराज महाराज.

The interesting feature of the coins of Vonones' family is the association of suzerain "great King of Kings" whose name is given in Greek legend on the obverse with the Viceroy whose name occurs in the Kharoshthi legend on the reverse. 1.

On Vonones' coin with two princes viz. (1) Spolcharis (Spalirias) who is called Maharaja bhata (the King's brother).

(2) Spola - dan - son of Spolcharis.

There is a silver coin of a Prince named Spolirises which bears on the reverse of the legend -

"Maharaja Bhetra dhanrave Spoliresas" i.e. of Spolires the Just, brother of the King.

This sounds Indian in every sense.

The Pahlavas also had no gold coins but struck bullion in copper and in rare instances, silver money.

WAS PUSHPYMUKTRA AN IRANIAN?

It has been suggested that some whose names ended in Mitra were Persian, worshippers of Mithra (the sun). 1

Smith is of the view that Pushpymuktra may have been an Iranian, a worshipper of the Sun-Mithra. 2 The reasoning appears to be that Mithra was once again adopted into the state religion by Arsaces VII, 3 when the Persian rulers were ruling in Iran.

It is true that the origin of Pushpymuktra is wrapped up in obscurity. In Mulavasutamitra (Act IV Verse 12 Torrens’s Translation p. 35) Arshenarson one of Pushpymuktra claims to belong to Ramesh who Parini connects with the well-known Bhrigu family of the Brahmanas. 4 Harerwet and Smith point out that the Sages are known as teachers in the Asvalayana Sutra Atra. 5

The fact that Pushpymuktra resisted the Ashvamedha horse sacrifice in India does not prove that he introduced the practice of the horse sacrifice of the Ashvamedha. 6

American or Babylonian? 8

1. JASS, 1912, p. 37
2. F. Smith, The Oxford History of India, p. 113
3. H. Ghishkara, Iran, p. 155
4. Parini, Sutra IV 2, 117
5. Asvalayana Sutra Sutra VI 4.21
6. Herodote, VII 13. When Xerxes arrived at the bank of the Strymon his priests sacrificed white horses.
7. Arrasins Andseias IV - 8.24
Smith forgets that Pushyamitra might have got inspiration from the Vedas where horse sacrifice is attested, (Ary Veda I, 162) and he was 'Nitra' and 'Mithra'. In fact the very name 'Pushyamitra' is entirely Indian and there is hardly scope to bring in the Persian origin of the Sages. Even his son was Agamitra which is the very Sanskrit name. Perhaps the signal success of the Avadhna sacrifice was due to the fact that it revived the high traditions mentioned in the Vedas.

Neither theory of Indian origin of Pushyamitra, therefore, has any substance in it.

Trade relations

The evidence of the Persians which supports the existence of a Persian rule in the region of the Indo-Greeks in the 1st century B.C., also proves the existence of active ties between India and Persia. A port was regularly loaded with copper, camel-wool, timber of various kinds and logs of blackwood and other barns from the province to Ashkaka a harbour at south of the Bayerns. (Chapter 36-38). The trade was so important that Rome looked with favour for five centuries to maintain trade routes to China and India.

1. Papinius of the Euphrates, pp. 37-38
2. Ibid.