The Maitraka Period

Of all the states that arose out of the break up of the Gupta empire in Western India, the Maitraka Kingdom of Valabhi proved to be the most powerful and the most durable one. The Maitrakas ruled over the whole of Gujarat (except the Southern parts of Mainland Gujarat) and Western Malwa for a pretty long period of about three centuries. In South Gujarat we come across small kingdoms of several dynasties, some of which held power in North Lāṭa and some others in South Lāṭa successively. But this period is generally styled the Maitraka period as the Maitraka Kingdom proved to be the most dominant and enduring kingdom during this period. Most of the records of this period are inscribed on copper plates and dated in detail. The other dated records are a few literary works and an earthenware inscription.

1 H. G. Shastri, Maitraka-Kalīn Gujarat, Appendix 1; M. R. Majumdar, Chronology of Gujarat, PP. 141 ff
2 Ibid. chapter V, Part iii below.
3 IA., Vol. XIV, p. 75
The Valabhi Era

The dates in the Maitraka records generally consist of years, months, fortnights and lunar days. The months include intercalary months. The dates also contain references to eclipses. The years obviously belong to some continuous era which is not specified therein. The years of this era range from the year 183 to the year 447.

As regards the identification of the unspecified era used in the Valabhi inscriptions several scholars discussed the problem and tried to identify this era with some of the different well-known eras of the ancient period.

In 1833 in his article on the Khaum Pillar Inscription of Skandagupta, James Prinsep stated that the dates recorded in the Valabhi Charters must be referred to the Vikrama era.

Then in 1850 in his article, on the basis of the Verawal inscription of Valabhi Samvat 945

4 G.J. Acharya, E.I.G., Part I, Nos. 16 to 96
Thomas proved that the Valabhi era commenced A.C. 319 or 318-19 A.C. As regards the founder of the era, Thomas showed that the Valabhi era commencing A.C. 319 may have been established by the Maharaja Guhasena of Valabhi and may have been dated from his accession or from some striking event of his reign.

In 1858 in his *Essays on Indian Antiquities*, Thomas wound up with the general conclusions that the dates in the Valabhi grants if applied to the Valabhi era of 318-19 A.C. would give far too modern a period, that these dates did not appear to belong to the same consecutive series with the numbers employed by the Gupta themselves, and that while still applying the Saka era to the Gupta dates, the Vikrama era was probably one which in spite of any appeared inconsistency involved should apply preferentially to the Valabhi grants.

In 1861 in his article *On the Sanskrit Poet Kalidas*, Bhau Daji expressed his opinion that the Gupta era commenced, with the Valabhi era, in 319 A.C.

In 1362 in his article entitled 'On The Śāh, Gupta and other Ancient Dynasties of Kathiawad and Gujarat', Newton concluded that the Śāh kings extended from A.C. 30 or 40 to 240 or 250 A.C., that they were immediately succeeded in Gujarat by Kumāragupta and Skandagupta, and that these two were followed by the Valabhi dynasty in 319 A.C. He further added that the Valabhi era had been satisfactorily fixed at 319 A.C. though he held the opinion that the dates in the Valabhi grants were probably to be referred to the Vikrama era.

In 1364 in his article named 'Brief Survey of Indian Chronology from the first cent. of the Christian era to the fifth' Bhau Daji expressed that the dates in the Valabhi grants refer to the Śaka era which he held was the era of Nahapāna and that the Valabhi era of Alberuni, if identical with the Gupta era, was certainly not the era used by the Kings of Valabhi themselves, but was the Gupta era introduced into Kathiawad by Kumāragupta and Skandagupta.

In 1370 Ferguson suggested that the

9 Ibid. Vol. VII., PP. 1 ff
Valabhi dates should be applied to the Valabhi era which must have been used by the Valabhi kings themselves

In 1872 in his article published in the Journal of the Bombay Branch of The Royal Asiatic Society, Thomas and Bhau Daji, that the era to which the dates in the Valabhi grants refer is the Saka era. His own opinion about the establishment of the Valabhi era was that it commenced the coronation as Mahārāja of Dronasiṃha, the second son of Bhaṭārka. Further in 1874 on the grounds that the alphabet used in the Valabhi grants resembles very much that used in the Western Cālukya grants belonging to the early part of the eighth century. Bhandarkar modified this opinion to the effect that the Valabhi dates must be referred to an era other than the Saka era, i.e. to an era commencing A.C. 318. Still he doubted that there was no individual named Ballabha or Valabhi in the Valabhi family and whether the era was really of Bhaṭārka family. He added if the era was not the era of the dynasty but was in use in Surastra before the foundation of the dynasty the Valabhi dates may be referred to it or more likely since the

11 JRAS, (M6.), Vol IV, P. 90
12 JEBRAST, Vol. X. PP. 92 ff
13 IA. Vol. III, PP. 303 ff
Guptas who preceded that dynasty introduced their era into the country, the grants must have been dated in that era. But there is no difference in effect, since the initial dates of both the eras are same. In 1876 in an article entitled 'Sah and Gupta coins, Thomas placed Senāpati Bhataṅka, the founder of the Valabhi family, on the authority of the supposed bardic tradition two years before the death of Skandagupta and added that the Valabhi era commencing A.C. 319 was established by Mahārāja Dharasena II who seems to have been the earliest monarch of any real pretensions.

In 1878 in his article published in *Indian Antiquary* Buhler drawing attention to the pointed similarity of the name of Śilāditya VII (whose birūda was Dhrūbhaṭa or Dhruvabhaṭa with the Tu-lu-Po-Po-tu of Hiuen Tsang's account, expressed himself as inclined to believe that Śilāditya VII was Hiuen Tsang's contemporary, the result of which would be that the era used in the Valabhi grants must have commenced either shortly before or shortly after A.C. 200.

14 CII., Vol. III, P. 49
15 ASWI., Vol. II, PP. 18 ff
16 IA., Vol. VII, PP. 79 ff
In 1881 in his paper entitled 'On the dates of ancient Indian Inscriptions and coins' Oldenburg suggested that the Tu-lu-Po-Po-fo of Hiuen Tsiang may be Derabhaṭa of Valabhi and that at any rate the occurrence of the title Dhrubhaṭa in the Alina grant as only a second title furnishes no conclusive evidence against the commencement of the era in 319 A.C. 

In 1883 in his Book of Indian Eras, General Cunningham held that that the era used by the Valabhi kings was that of the Guptas, seems to be almost certain; as the Senāpati Bhaṭārka, the founder of the Valabhi dynasty, is said to have been the governor of Surāśṭra during the last two years of Skandagupta's reign. And he suggested that the dates must be attributed to this use, by the Valabhi family, of the Gupta era of A.C. 166-67 instead of the Valabhi era itself.

In 1884 R. G. Bhandarkar issued a note on the question in his Early History of the Deccan and announced that the fact that this era came to be known in later times by the name of the Valabhi era was due only to its having been introduced into

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18 PP. 53 and 57
19 EHD., Appendix A. PP. 97 ff.
Saurashtra by the Valabhi kings who were originally dependants of the Guptas and the dates in whose grants could not be referred to the rise of the family under Senapati Bhatarka.

In 1888 in the Introduction to his Corpus of the Inscriptions of the Early Gupta Kings and their Successors, F. Fleet established that like the Gupta era, the Valabhi era also must be referred to the epoch of 319-20 A.C. or thereabouts, brought to notice by Alberuni and substantiated by the Veraval Inscription of Valabhi Samvat 945.

As regards the scheme of its years and months he contended that the Valabhi era in Saurashtra followed the original scheme of the Gupta era, namely Caitrādi years and Purvimanta months but that in Gujarat it was adapted to the local scheme of the Southern Vikrama era, i.e., Kārtikādi years with Amānta months.

In 1918 in his book Bharatiya Pracīna Lipimala, Pandit G. H. Ojha supported the view that the Valabhi era is identical with the Gupta era. On the basis of the statement of Alberuni he stated:

20 Fleet CIII, Vol III, PP. 65 ff.
21 Ibid, PP. 65 ff.
22 G. H. Ojha, Bharatiya Pracīna Lipimala, PP. 174 ff.
that the epoch of the Valabhi era is 319-20 A.C. and that it started 241 years after the Saka era. Further on the basis of the Verawal inscription of Gaṅgukya king Arjunadeva dated 1320 Vikrama Samvat, Pandit Ojha propounded that the difference between the Caitrādi Purnimānta Vikrama era and the Gupta era is 376 and between the Kārtikādi Amānta Vikrama era and the Gupta era is 375 from the first day of the bright half of Caitra to the Amāvāsyā of Kārtika and 376 years from the first day of the bright half of Kārtika to the Amāvāsyā of Phalguna.

Then in 1922-23 Shri Govind Pai23 suggested 272-73 A.C. the epoch of the Gupta era and 334-35 to 337-38 A.C. as the epoch of the era used in the Valabhi edicts and assumed that the Gupta era was in abeyance in the Valabhi country for 62 to 65 years and that this intervening period was left over when it was subsequently revived by King Dronasīma in Saka year 241.

In 1923-24 Shamsastry advocated the epoch 200-01 A.C. for the Valabhi era 24.

Then in 1932 in his article entitled 'The Genealogy and Chronology of the Early Imperial Guptas'25

23 JIH., Vol. XI, Pf. 175 ff., Vol. XII, Pf. 215 ff
24 An. Rep. MAD., 1923-24, Pf. 9 ff
D. N. Mookerji identified the Gupta era with the Vikrama era and applied it even to the dates in the Valabhi grants.

In 1941 Shri Shankar extended the application of the epoch 272-73 A.C. (proposed by Shri Govind Pai for the Gupta era) to the dates of the Valabhi edicts.

In 1948 in his paper entitled 'Valabhi era' H. G. Shastri accepted that the unspecified era in the Maitraka records is identical with the Valabhi era mentioned in the later records of Saurashtra and propounded that the Valabhi era cannot be assigned to any of the Valabhi kings, since even the first ruler Bhatarka cannot be dated at the time of its commencement. His sons reigned as late as circa Samvat 235 of the Valabhi era. In that case the Maitrakas must have adopted some era that was already current at the time of the rise of their power.

The use of the Gupta era in Surastra may be traced to the Junagadh rock inscription of Skandagupta, the Ghumli Copper edicts of the

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26 NIA., Vol. III, PP. 419. ff. Shankar distinguishes the era used in the Maitraka edicts from the valabhi era and designates it the Maitraka era.

27 IHQ., Vol. XXIV, PP. 238 ff.

28 The reign of the last son is to be dated some-
Saindhavas and the Morbi grant of Jaika II. These are all assigned to the epoch 319-20 A.C. according to the original Caitradi scheme of the Gupta era. This era seems to have undergone modification in the system of the years soon after the decline of the Gupta power in Surāstrā. It is this modified era that received the new nomenclature 'Valabhi era'. The name 'Valabhi' evidently suggests that the modified system must have been adopted and propagated by the Valabhi Kingdom.

On the basis of a critical examination of the dates given in the Valabhi grants, he definitely established that the dates in the Valabhi grants as well as the dates of the Valabhi era given in the later records followed the scheme of Kartikādi years and Pūrmimanta months. Like Fleet he also established—where between Samvat 226 and Sam 240.

29 A concrete evidence for the Caitradi scheme is applied by the Ghumli copper edict of Agguka II in which the Gupta year 512 corresponds to the Christian year 832 A.C. even in the early period before the end of December. (EI.Vol. XXVI, p. 19)

30 The original era known as Gupta-Kāla retained its original name even when it was reintroduced into Western Surāstrā by the Saindhavas.
that the Kartikādi year of the Valabhi era commenced five lunations earlier than the corresponding Caitrādi year.

As regards the intercalation of months he examined the three cases of intercalation critically and established that all the cases uniformly apply to the system of mean intercalation and that the months were named according to the Mesādi rule.

In 1952 in his Indian Palaeography31 R. B. Pandey supported the view that the Valabhi era was the same as the Gupta era current in Surāstra. After the end of the Gupta rule there, the kings of Valabhi adopted the Gupta era but renamed it as the Valabhi era. Like the Gupta era, the Valabhi era also started in 319 A.C. according to Alberuni's statement32. Pandey does not discuss the scheme of the Valabhi era separately but seems to regard the Valabhi era entirely identical with the Gupta era.

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31 R. B. Pandey, IP., Part I, PP. 212 f

32 Alberuni's statement: "And as regards the era of Valabhi, its beginning was later than the Saka era by two hundred and forty one years. Those who use it put down (the year of) the Saka era and subtract from it the sum of the cube of six and the square of five".
However, he does not treat the question in detail.

In 1955 was published *Maitrakakālin Gujārat* by H. G. Shastri as well as *Ancient History of Saurashtra* by Miss Viraji. Both these scholars established that the Valabhi era was simply a modified form of the Gupta era, its years commencing with Kartika preceding the Caitra of the corresponding Gupta year and the months being Purīṃanta that the epoch of this era would accordingly fall 318-19 A.C., that the Maitraka kingdom followed the system of mean intercalation and that the months were named according to the Mesādi rule.\(^{33}\)

In 1965 in his book *Indian Epigraphy*\(^{34}\) D.C. Sircar stated that on the decline of the power of the imperial Guptas, especially in Western India, their feudatories\(^{35}\) the Maitrakas of Valabhi in Kathiawad continued the use of the Gupta era.\(^{36}\) The

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34 IE. P. 285

35 Ibid, PP. 403, ff

36 The earliest record of the Maitrakas is the Bhamodra Mota Plates of Dronasimha dated in the year 183. The identity of the Gupta-Valabhi reckonings is indicated by the fact that of two records of the same age, one is associated
continuous use of the era by Dronasimha's successors for a few centuries led to the era being designated the Valabhi Samvat\(^{37}\) in that region.

Like Shri Pandey D.C. Sircar also treated the Valabhi era cursorily, though the subject was already discussed in detail by that time.

Though the Maitraka records do not specify the name of the era used in their dates, it is quite probable that the unspecified era must have been identical with the Valabhi era mentioned in the later records. The years in the Maitraka records range from the year 133 to 447, while the years of the 'Valabhi era range from 500 to 945. The earliest known use of 'Valabhi Era' appears in year 500, i.e. shortly after the fall of the Maitraka kingdom, which is dated Vikrama Samvat 845, i.e. Valabhi Samvat 470.

However, it is difficult to decide whether the era was actually known as the Valabhi era during the Maitraka period, but it is quite probable that the name of the era was so well-known that it could be left understood.

\(^{37}\) E.I., Vol. IX, p. 6
The epoch of the Valabhi era falls 241 years later than that of the Saka era (i.e. in 319 A.C.) according to Alberuni's statement, which is also corroborated by the date given in the Veraval inscription of Arjunadeva. The known records of the Maitraka kings, which are dated from year 183 to 447, may accordingly be assigned to about 502 to 766 A.C. This is testified by the following observations:

1. In his *records* Yuan Chwang states that when he visited Valabhi (i.e. in or about 640 A.C.) the king reigning there was Dhruvapatu who is identified with the Maitraka king Dhruvasena II, whose known grants are dated year 310 to year 321 which may be equated with about 629 to 640 A.C.

2. The copper edicts of the Gurjara kings of South Gujarat* give evidence for the contemporaneity of some Valabhi kings with the Gurjara kings Dadda II (629-41 A.C.) and Jayabhata IV (735 A.C.). The chronology of the Maitraka kings of Valabhi well fits in with that of the Gurjara kings of South Gujarat according to the epoch of 319 A.C.

3. Even Palaeographically the characters of the

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38 Watters, On Yuan Chwang's Travels, Vol. II, P. 246
Valabhi copper edicts belong to the Western Script used in 400-900 A.C. and the chronology of the Maitraka kings corresponds to this period according to the epoch mentioned above.

As regards the scheme of the Valabhi era, Fleet contended that it generally followed the northern scheme of Gaitradi years with Purnimaanta months, the case of the Southern scheme being exceptional. However, it may be re-examined whether the months were Gaitradi or Kartikadi.

The dates in the Maitraka inscriptions do not include the week-day which would have been a very important factor for determining the exact scheme of the Valabhi era. A few dates afford the clue through two other factors, viz. eclipse and intercalation. The dates which provide these factors are as under:

1. The Bantiia copper edict of Dharasena II records a solar eclipse (Suryoparaga) in the Vaisakha

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40 Ojha, Hist., P. 152.
42 MG., Appendix I, No. 29. The year was read 257 by the editor and was corrected into 254 by K. N. Dixit.
of (Valabhi) Sama. 254. So there must have been a solar eclipse in the Vaisakha of 573 A.C. or thereabout. According to Pillai's Tables ⁴³ there is no solar eclipse in the (Manta) Vaisakha of 572, 573 or 574 A.C. The year 573 A.C. however had a solar eclipse in the Purnimanta Vaisakha. This instance shows that the Valabhi kingdom followed the Purnimanta system of months ⁴⁴.

(ii) The Kaira grant of King Dharmena IV ⁴⁵ records Second Margasira in the (Valabhi) year 330. So Margasira must have been intercalated in 649 A.C. or thereabout. But the months Margasira and Pausa could hardly be intercalated in the true system of intercalations as the lunar months are generally longer than the corresponding solar months in winter. It was only in the old system of mean intercalations that any month could be intercalated ⁴⁶. The intercalation of Margasira, therefore, shows that the

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⁴³ Pillai, Indian Chronology, p. 52
⁴⁴ MHQ., Vol. XXIV, pp. 238 f.
⁴⁵ MG., Appendix I. No. 69, CG. p. 174.²
⁴⁶ The mean lunar month is shorter than the mean solar month in all seasons. (IA., Vol. XV, p. 335)
almanacs of Valabhi followed the old system of mean intercalations. The tables of mean intercalations mention intercalary Pausa in 648 A.C. The difference of one month in this case can be explained by the difference in the system of naming lunar months for lunar months were named Caitradi in two different ways, either according to the Minadi signs occurring at the commencement or according to the Mesadi signs occurring at their completion. Accordingly, the intercalary month that was named Pausa after the succeeding month according to the new Minadi rule could be named Margasira after the preceding month according to the old Mesadi rule. This means that the almanacs of Valabhi followed the old Mesadi rule for naming the lunar months.

(iii) The Vala grant of Siladitya III records 'Second Šāśāna' in (Valabhi) Sañ. 343. So there must

47 Sripati's protest against the system of mean intercalations, mentioned in his Siddhánta Sekhara (1030 A.C.) shows that the use of this system continued even as late as the time of Sripati (Dixit, Bharatiya Jyotisa. P. 392)

48. Sewell-Dixit, Indian Calendar. Table I

49. Ibid. PP. 16 f.

50 MG., Part I, Appendix I, No. 63. CG., P. 179
have been an intercalation of Asadha in 662 or thereabout. The editor of the edict does not discuss the system of intercalation. There was an intercalary Asadha in 662 A.C. according to the tables of true intercalation. But if Valabhi followed the system of mean intercalation as testified by Kaira grant of 330, this date also must apply to that system. The tables of mean intercalation mention intercalary Sravana in 662 A.C. which may be named Asadha according to the old Mesadi rule. Thus this date applies to the system of mean intercalation as well.

(iv) The Jesgar Copper edict of Siladitya III records 'Second Pausa' in (Valabhi) seal 357. The intercalation of Pausa gives further evidence for the use of mean intercalation in the Valabhi kingdom. In the tables of mean intercalation this Pausa corresponds to intercalary Magha of 675 A.C. which may be named Pausa according to the Mesadi rule.

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51 H. G. Shastri, 'The Valabhi Era', (IHQ., Vol. 24, p. 239
52 MG., Appendix I, No.71, CG., p. 183
The above results may be summed up as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Valabhi year</th>
<th>Shaka year</th>
<th>Vikrama year</th>
<th>Christian year</th>
<th>Difference in years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mārgaśīra</td>
<td>330</td>
<td>570</td>
<td>705</td>
<td>648</td>
<td>318</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pausa</td>
<td>357</td>
<td>597</td>
<td>732</td>
<td>675</td>
<td>318</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vaiśākha</td>
<td>254</td>
<td>495</td>
<td>629</td>
<td>573</td>
<td>319</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Āṣāgha</td>
<td>343</td>
<td>584</td>
<td>718</td>
<td>662</td>
<td>319</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These results when taken together clearly show that the Valabhi years were Kārtikādi like the Southern Vikrama years. For the difference of years is one year less in the first few months (from Kārtika to December) than in all the subsequent months of the year. As regards the system of months the date of the solar eclipse has already shown that the months of the year are purely Pūrṇimānta. This conclusion is also corroborated by the study of the dates of Valabhi era given in the Post-Maitraka period.

Fleet assumed that the Kārtikādi year cannot be coupled with the Pūrṇimānta months and the Caitrādi.

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54 IHR, Vol. XXIV, PP. 239 f.
55 Vide Chapter VI below.
year cannot be coupled with the Amānta months. But the above results go against the first clause of the statement, while the second clause goes against the practice in the Deccan, where the Saka era has the system of Gaitrādi years coupled with the Amānta months.

As regards the system of the Valabhi years, it may be argued that the Valabhi years may be Gaitrādi like the Gupta years and that the difference between them may be explained by assuming that the Valabhi years were counted as current thought the Gupta years were reckoned as expired. The dates mentioned above may, therefore, be re-examined in view of this assumption.

(1) The eclipse dated in the Vaisākha of the (Valabhi) year 254 applies to the expired year (Kārtikādi) as well as Gaitrādi) and not to the current year (Kārtikādi or Gaitrādi)

(2) The intercalation of Margāśira in the (Valabhi) year 330 tallies according to only the expired

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Kārtikādi year or the current Caitrādi year.

(3) The intercalation of Asadha in the (Valabhi) year 343 fits in only according to the expired year (Kārtikādi as well as the Caitrādi)

(4) The intercalation of Pauṣa in the (Valabhi) year 357 applies to the expired Kārtikādi year as well as the current Caitrādi year.

The results may be tabulated as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>expired</th>
<th>expired</th>
<th>Current</th>
<th>Current</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>254</td>
<td>expired</td>
<td>expired</td>
<td>Kārtikādi</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>330</td>
<td></td>
<td>expired</td>
<td>current</td>
<td>Caitrādi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>343</td>
<td>expired</td>
<td>expired</td>
<td>Kārtikādi</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>357</td>
<td></td>
<td>expired</td>
<td>current</td>
<td>Caitrādi</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From this it clearly follows that the Valabhi records apply uniformly in all cases only to the system of expired Kārtikādi years. The assumption of the system of current years, therefore, does not hold good,
while the system of expired Kārtikādi years seems to be the only system that would apply to all the Valabhi dates uniformly.

Moreover, the examination of the test date also indicates that the Maitraka kingdom followed the system of mean intercalation and named the lunar months according to the Mesādi rule of nomenclature.

In this context it should also be examined whether the other epochs proposed for the dates in the Valabhi records can hold good on chronological grounds. The epoch of 58-57 B.C., proposed by Mookerji would upset the chronology of the Maitraka kings by as many as 375 years. According to this view the Valabhi dates 183-447 would correspond to 126-390 A.C. But this is not acceptable as it terminates about two centuries and a half earlier than the time of Yuan Chwang who visited Valabhi in about 640 A.C. during the reign of King Dhruvapaṭu and the time of Harsa (606-647 A.C.) who was the father-in-law of that king of Valabhi.

Nor can the year 200-01 A.C. be accepted as the initial year of the Valabhi era inasmuch as the

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58 MG., P, 576, f. n, 65, Miss, K.J. Virji, Ancient History of Saurashtra, PP, 113 ff.
(Valabhi) year 447 would then correspond to 647-48 A.C. but the reign of the last King (Silāditya VII) of Valabhi must be dated at least up to 725 A.C. as we are bound to infer from the grant of Jayabhata IV issued in 735 A.C. 59.

The epochs of 272-73 A.C. and 334-35 to 337-38 A.C. fall nearer to the epoch of 318-19 A.C. and, therefore, involve few difficulties in comparative chronology. However, it may be observed that King Dhruvapatu mentioned by Yaun Chwang as reigning at Valabhi at the time of his visit in 640 would be chronologically identified with King Silāditya IV according to the epoch 272-73 A.C., and Dharasena III according to the epoch 334-38 A.C. while the names bear no resemblance. The reference that King Dhruvapatu was the nephew of King Silāditya of Valabhi may apply to Dharasena III, but not to Silāditya IV.

K.C. Shankar agreed that the Valabhi era started in 319 A.C., but distinguishes it from the era used in the Maitraka edicts, which he identifies with the Gupta era. Then he applies the epoch of 273 A.C. to the Gupta dates and the Maitraka dates as well.

59 NG., P. 576, Miss Virji, Ibid, P. 114
K. G. Shankar has examined all the four test dates in the Valabhi edicts and tried to show that they all apply to the epoch of 272-73 A.C. As for the solar eclipse of Vaisakha in year 254 he ascribes it to 28th March 526 A.C., though it was not visible in India. But this explanation is not very convincing, as the grants were particularly made on the eclipse day to get additional merit as recommended by the Dharmasūtras and if the eclipse was not visible in the country, the writer of the grant would not have given as much importance to mentioning it as he has. Moreover intercalary Asādha of year 343, which he puts in 616 A.C., would fall one year later than expected in his scheme of the Caitrādi year as the difference between the Valabhi year and the Christian year is 273 in Asādha, though it is 272 in Vaisakha and Margasira. Thus the epoch suggested by him involves some inevitable discrepancies.

As regards the epoch of 334-37 A.C. Pai examines only two of the four test cases obtained in the Valabhi edicts. He takes the old reading of

61 AHS., pp. 114 f.
the year of the solar eclipse as 257\textsuperscript{62} and applies
the date to 18th March 592 A.C. The intercalary
Margasira of year 330 is ascribed to November 667 A.C.
according to the system of mean intercalation and the
Mēṣādi rule, for the nomenclature of lunar months\textsuperscript{63}.
But he also suggests that the date contains an error
of the scribe and the real intercalary month was
preferably Kartika which was intercalated in 667 A.C.
according to the system of true intercalation and the
current Mīnādi rule for nomenclature\textsuperscript{64}. The other two
cases which are not treated by Pai may here be examined
according to the epoch suggested by him.

The intercalary Asadha of year 343 would
fall in 641 A.C. both according to the system of
mean intercalation as well as that of true intercalation.
The intercalary Pausa of year 351 would fall in
694-95 according to the system mean intercalation and
the Mēṣādi rule of nomenclature. No intercalation of
Pausa can be traced to this year or any of the
adjoining years according to the system of true
intercalation either by the Mīnādi or the Mēṣādi
rule. This fact indicates the untenability of the

\textsuperscript{62} JEH. Vol. XII, P. 222
\textsuperscript{63} Ibid., PP. 222 to 226
\textsuperscript{64} Ibid. P. 226
probability of true intercalation suggested by Pai in the case of the intercalation of the year 330 A.C.

The results of the examination of the four test cases, made according to the epoch 334-37 A.C. may be tabulated as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Vaisakha</th>
<th>Asadha</th>
<th>Margasira</th>
<th>Pausa</th>
<th>Difference of years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>257</td>
<td>592 A.C.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>335</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>330</td>
<td></td>
<td>667 A.C.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>337</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>343</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>681 A.C.</td>
<td></td>
<td>338</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>357</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>694-95 A.C.</td>
<td>337-38</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thus the results do not yield any uniform difference between the years in the Valabhi edicts and the corresponding years of the Christian era. Pai contends that the era used in the Valabhi edicts was simply a continuation of the Gupta era, which was when interpreted for more than 60 years and that it was resumed the exact number of the years for which it remained in abeyance, had been last sight of. In that case the true period may have been replaced by some approximate period which would remain uniform throughout, but it is hardly possible to accept with his suggestion
that the epoch of the resumed era would fluctuate from 334-35 A.C. to 337-38 A.C. at random. Like Shankar Pai also has to distinguish the era used in the Valabhi edicts from the Valabhi era. Again his assumption that the Gupta era remained here in abeyance for more than 60 years, and was resumed with the omission of that interval seems far-fetched. Thus Pai's theory, too, contains several discrepancies.

As regards the origin of the Valabhi era Alberuni (Circa 1030 A.C.) has recorded that it belonged to the king of Valabhi, who seems to be the last of the Guptas. In 1850 Thomas suggested that the Valabhi era may have been established by King Guhasena of Valabhi and may have dated from his accession or from some striking event of his reign. In 1870 Ferguson suggested that the Valabhi era was established probably on the building of the city of Valabhi. In 1872 R.C. Shandarkar ascribed the establishment of the Valabhi era to the coronation of Dronasimha as Maharaja. But he ascribed the dates in the Valabhi grants to the Saka era. In 1874 he modified this view, referred the

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65 CII, Vol. III, P. 30
66 Ibid, P. 37
67 Ibid, P. 47
Valabhi dates to the era commencing A.C. 318 and remarked that the era was in use in Saurashtra before the foundation of Valabhi dynasty and was probably introduced there by the Guptas who preceeded that dynasty. In 1876 Thomas suggested that the Valabhi era was established by King Dharasena II, who seems to have been the earliest monarch of any real pretensions. In 1880 Cunningham ascribed the foundation of the Valabhi era to Senāpati Bhatarka, the founder of the Valabhi kingdom.

In his introduction to Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum, Vol. III, J. F. Fleet firmly established that the era cannot have been established by any member of the Valabhi family, and that the kings of that dynasty adopted it from the Gupta kings who had probably adopted it from the Licchvis.

Later Scholars, including even those like Govind Pai and Shankar, suggested other epochs for the Gupta era and the Maitraka era and agreed that the Maitraka era was an interrupted or uninterrupted

69 CLI, Vol. III, P. 51
70 Ibid, PP. 130 ff.
continuation of the Gupta era, while the Valabhi era used in later times applies to the epoch 319 A.C.

In 1947 H. G. Shastri\(^1\) established that the era used in the Valabhi edicts was the same as the Valabhi era of the later period, that it was adopted by the Maitraka kings of Valabhi from the Gupta regime which preceded the establishment of their power, that they introduced a modification in the system of its years and that the modified era came to be distinctly known as the Valabhi era\(^2\). The same view is repeated in \textit{Maitrekkalālin Gujarat}\(^3\) as well as \textit{Ancient History of Saurashtra} in 1955\(^4\).

In the present state of our knowledge the chronology of the early Gupta kings of Magadha and the Maitraka kings of Valabhi seems well established and accordingly the unspecified era used in the Valabhi edicts seems identifiable with the Valabhi era, used in later records and the Valabhi era seems to be but a continuation of the Gupta era that had been current in Gujarat during the preceding period, the only difference being in the system of its years.

\(^{71}\) H. G. Shastri, 'Data supplied by the Sanskrit Inscriptions of the Valabhi Kingdom, PP. 54 f.
\(^{72}\) IHQ. Vol. XXIV, P. 239
\(^{73}\) H. G. Shastri, MG., PP. 585 ff.
\(^{74}\) AHS., PP. 106 ff.
(ii) The Kalacuri Era:

During this period the Southern parts of mainland Gujarat were ruled over by several successive dynasties. The records of these dynasties are dated in the years of an unspecified era which is found to be identical with the Kalacuri or Chedi era of later times. In the absence of its original name it is generally known as the Kalacuri era for the sake of convenience. The dates of this era range from the year 207 to the year 490. The dates generally consist of years, months, fortnights and lunar days. A few dates also contain references to weekdays eclipses and solar saṃkrāntis.

As we have seen above that the Gupta period left only one inscription of this era. But a number of dates of this era are found in the records of this period. The epoch and origin of this era are already discussed in the previous chapter.

As for this period it supplies a few dates which contain some important factors, viz. saṃkrāntis

1. Such as the Traikūtakas, the Kāṭaccuris, the Gurjaras, the Sendrekas and the Gālukyas.
2. CII., Vol. IV. Part i, Nos. 9 to 30
3. See chapter IV, Part ii.
and week-days that help us to determine the system of the Kalacuri era. The main sources are as follows:

(i) Navasari plates of Jayabhata III\(^4\) record a lunar eclipse on the 15th day of the bright half of Māgha in the year 456\(^5\). The name of the week-day is lost in the missing left-hand corner of the same plate and only the letters Vāre can be read with certainty in the beginning of the preserved portion\(^6\). The aksara which preceded Vā of Vāre is also partially broken away, but what remains of it shows that it was Ma and therefore the day was either Soma (Monday) or Bhauma Tuesday\(^7\).

According to the epoch of 247-48 A.C. the date would fall in 704 A.C. if the year was current and in 705 A.C. if the year was expired. In 704 A.C. the tithi falls on Friday\(^8\) and in 705 A.C. it falls on Wednesday\(^9\). Moreover there was no lunar eclipse on the specified day in either year.

\(^{4}\) CII., Vol. IV, Part 1, No. 21
\(^{5}\) The lunar eclipse is mentioned along with the tithi in line 30, while the year is given in the last line along with the same tithi (Ibid PP.86 f.)
\(^{6}\) Of line 43 (Ibid. No.21)
\(^{7}\) Ibid, P. 84
\(^{8}\) Pillai, IC., Table X
\(^{9}\) CII.-Vol.IV,P. I, intro. P.XI. The corresponding Christian date is 14th Janu. 705 A.C.
On applying the date to the epoch of 246-49 A.C. the date would fall either in 705 A.C. or 706 A.C. as the year 456 was current or expired. The date of 705 A.C. does not suit as noticed above, while the date corresponds to Tuesday, the 2nd Feb. 706 A.C. if the year is taken as expired. There was also a lunar eclipse on that day.

The date gives no indication about the systems of the years and months.

(ii) The Anjaneri plates of Jayabhata III record a Tula Samkranti on the 11th day of the dark fortnight of Asvayuja in the year 460.

According to Kielhorn's final view of the epoch of 247-48 A.C. the date would fall in 707 A.C. if the Kalacuri year 460 was current and in 708 A.C. if it was expired. But the Tula Samkranti did not occur on the 11th tithi of the dark fortnight of Amanta.

10 Ibid., P. XI
11 Ibid., No. 22
12 The Samkranti is mentioned along with the tithi in line 30 and the year is given in the last line along with the same tithi.
Asvina in either year\(^1\).

According to the epoch of 248-49 A.C. with the year commencing with Asvina, the date would fall in 708 A.C. or 709 A.C., according as the year 460 was current or expired. The Tula Samkranti did not fall on the specified day in either year\(^2\).

But if the year be taken as Kartikadi, the date would fall in 709 A.C. if the year was current and in 710 A.C. if the year was expired. As noticed above 709 A.C. would not apply. But the date would regularly suit 710 A.C. as the Tula Samkranti fell on the specified day in that year, corresponding to 23rd Sept. 710 A.C. if the month be taken as Amanta\(^3\).

(iii) Kavi Plate of Jayabhata IV\(^4\) records Karkataka Samkranti of the sun on the 10th tithi of the bright fortnight of Asadha which obviously

\(^{13}\) In 707 A.C. the Tula Samkranti fell on Amanta Asvina va.di. 8 and in 708 A.C. on Asvina su.di.5 (CII., Vol. IV, P. 1, P. 91. f. n. 4)

\(^{14}\) In 709 A.C. Tula Samkranti fell on Asvina Purvima (Ibid. f.n.5)

\(^{15}\) Ibid. intro. PP. xii, 91 f.

\(^{16}\) Ibid, no. 23
belonged to the year 486 mentioned later on. The grant was recorded on Sunday, (the 10th or the 11th or) the 12th-tithi of the bright fortnight of Asadha in the year 486.

According to the epoch of 247-48 A.C. the dates would fall in 734 A.C. if the year 486 was current and in 735 A.C. if it was expired. The specified Samkranti did not occur on Asadha su. di. 10 in either year.

According to the epoch of 248-49 A.C. the date would fall in 735 A.C., if the year was current and in 736 A.C. if the year was expired. The year 735 A.C. would not suit as mentioned above. But on taking the year 486 as expired, it is found that the Karkataka Samkranti occurred exactly on the specified tithi (Asadha su. di 10) which corresponds to the 22nd June.

17 The symbol for 10 is seen almost clearly, but it is difficult to say whether the marks after that symbol are accidental scratches or intended to denote the unit 1 or 2. The tithi may, therefore, be the 10th, 11th or 12th. On referring the date to Chronological tables, it is found that the 12th tithi suits Sunday in the specified date.

18 It fell on the first day of the dark fortnight of the month Asadha in 734 A.C. and on the 13th tithi of the dark half of Asadha in the year 735 A.C. (Pillai, IC. tables II, X.)
736 A.C. The week-day on that tithi, however, was Friday and not Sunday. From this it follows that the tithi given along with Sunday represents a different day on which the grant was recorded, the tithi mentioned along with the Kartataaka rasi representing the day on which the grant was made. Accordingly the numerical figures of the tithi, which can be read 10, 11 or 12, must be taken as 12, that being the definite tithi which fell on Sunday.

The examination of the cases mentioned above clearly indicates that all these dates apply to the epoch of 248-49 A.C.

As regards the system of the commencement of the year and the completion of the month, the results of the above cases may be tabulated as follows:
Kalacuri date | Equivalent Christian date | Difference in years | Indications if any
---|---|---|---
456, Magha su. | 2nd Feb, 706 A.C. | 250 | year-expired
460, Asvina va. | 23rd Sep, 710 A.C. | 250 | year-expired
486, Asadha gu.| 22nd June, 736 A.C. | 250 | Year-expired

From these results it follows that

(i) The years of this era, as indicated by the Gujara Kings of South Gujarat, were counted as expired years in that region.

(ii) As the difference in years indicates, the Kalacuri year did not begin with Caitra or any other.

19 In the contemporary records of this period two dates apply to the system of current years (CII., Vol. IV, Part I, PP. xii. f.) but both of them are from other regions, one being from Khandesh and the other from Maharashtra.
month from Māgha to Āsvina. In other words it is found to have commenced in Kārtika, Mārgasīra or Pauṣa, and since no Hindu year begins in Mārgasīra or Pauṣa it is quite probable that like the Valabhi year used in Gujarat during this period and the Vikrama year later adopted in Gujarat, the Kalacuri year also commenced on the 1st lunar day of the bright fortnight of Kārtika. This means that the years of this era were most probably Kārtikādi.

(iii) Among the three dates there is only one which fell in the dark fortnight. But it clearly indicates that the month was Amānta. Presumably all the Kalacuri dates in South Gujarat followed the system of Amānta months,

As the epoch for these dates is 248-49 A.C., the first day of the first current year of this era which fell on the 1st lunar day of the bright fortnight of Amānta Kārtika corresponds to the 25th Sept. 249 A.C. Therefore to convert an expired Kalacuri year into the corresponding year of the Christian era, we have to add 249 when the date falls between Kārtika su.d. 1 and 31st December

20 CII., Vol. IV., P. xiii
and 250, when the date falls between 1st January and Amānta Phālguna, ba. di. 15.

The Kalacuri era remained current in South Gujarat for about three centuries, the latest known date of that era being year 490 occurring in the Navsari plates of Avanijanasraya Pulakesin. When the power of the early Gālukyas passed to the Rāstrakūtas, the Kalacuri era was here given up for ever and replaced by the Śaka era. The Kalacuri era got extinct also from Khandesh and Maharashtra by this time. Later on it got current in Vindhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh where it was introduced with the extension of the Kalacuri power.21

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21 Ibid., PP. xi, xxvi ff.
(iii) The Šaka Era

The Šaka era which was in common use during the Ksatrapa period in Western India including Gujarat was replaced by the Gupta era in about 400 A.G. It seems to have been extinct for about two centuries. However, we come across a few dates given in the Šaka era in the 7th and 8th centuries of the Christian era. The earliest known date among these appears in a palm-leaf manuscript of Viśesāvāsya Bhāṣya by Jinabhadragani Ksamāśramaṇa. The date fell in the year 531 (609 A.G.). The next date of the Šaka year 598 (676-77 A.G.) marks the year of the completion of the Nandistrācūrṇi by Jinadāśagani Mahattara. The third known date of the Šaka year 679 (757 A.G.) is recorded in the Antrolī-Charoli copper plates of the Rastrakūta King Kakka II.

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2. Saγaraghnaḥ paγcasu varṣasateṣu vidhīⁿaṁ saγnāvatiṣu nandiyadhāyanacūrṇī samāpataḥ. (S.J. Saṇḍesara, Jeinācēna Ṣaṇṭyamāṇ Gujarat P. 74, n. 1.)

3. Saγanpakālātīta gaṁvatsara sataṣṭke ekōnaśītyadhike
The next known date of the Saka year 700 (779 A.C.) marks the completion of Kuvalayamālā by Udyotanasūri⁴. The last known Saka date of this period of the year 705 (783-84 A.C.) occurs as the date of the completion of Harivansha Purāṇa⁵ by Jinasenasūri. Here it is interesting to note that all these dates are expressly ascribed to the Saka era generally represented as the era of the Śaka king⁶ or the Śakas⁷. The name of the era was left unspecified in the

4 Sagakāle volīpe varisāpa sāshim sattahī gagehī l
ēgadiṇemīnehim raiya avaranhavelae ll (Vasanta
Rajata mahotsava smāraka grāntha jinavijayaji,
article 'Kuvalayamālā', p. 270)

5 Śakeśvabdasatesu saptasu diśam paccotarasuttaram
(Harivansapurāṇam, sarga 66, verse no. 52)

6 Śakanrapatisāvatsara, Śakanrapasāvatsara,
Śakanrapakāla (R. B. Pandey, IP., P. 191).

7 Śaka Saṃvat, Śaka, Śaka (Ibid P. 191)
Ksatrapa period. The earliest mention of the 'Saka Era' in the records of Gujarat can thus be traced to the Maitraka period.

On examining the five dates mentioned above, it is found that three of them (Nos. 2, 4 and 5) give only the year and that two other dates (Nos. 1 and 3) refer to the month, fortnight and lunar day along with the day of solar Sāmkṛanti in date No. 3 and naksatra in date No. 1.

The Visuva Sāmkṛanti mentioned in the epigraphic record dated S.E. 679 is Tula Sāmkṛanti which occurred on 23rd September, A.C. 757. This date falls two days before the day on which the grant was issued. From this the year is found to be Cāitrādi and expired, but we get no indication about the scheme of months as the lunar day given therein belongs to the bright fortnight.

8. The specific mention of 'Saka Kāla' occurs in Pancasiddhāntikā dated 505 A.C. (I-3) written by Varāhamīhīra in the adjoining region of Ujjain. His Brahmaśāhīta also contains references to Saka-nrpa-kāla (Brahmasāhīta, cha. VIII, Verses Nos. 20, 21).

9. Tula Sāmkṛanti occurred several days after this day in S.E. 679 current (S.E. 678 expired).
It is only one date (No. 1) which consists of all the necessary data including the week-day. The given tithi (the full-moon day of Caitra of the Saka year 531) corresponds to 26th of March 609 A.C. the day falling on Wednesday. The year is found to be Caitradi, but the years of the Saka era are invariably Caitradi in all the states where lunar months are in vogue. As the lunar day belongs to the bright fortnight, it gives no indication as to whether the months of the Saka era used in Gujarat during the Maitra period were Amanta or Purnimanta.

As noticed above the Saka era was in vogue in Gujarat during the Ksatrapa period (C.100 to 400 A.C.) but it remained extinct for about two centuries thereafter. It is again found to be in use to a small extent in Gujarat since the beginning of the 7th cent. A.C. This gives rise to an investigation into the circumstances which led to its reemergence of the Saka era in Gujarat during this period.

10 in the areas of the South where solar months are in use, the year begins from the Mega-Samkranti of the Sun. (D.C. Sircar, IE. P. 266)

11 The months of the Saka era appear to be Purnimanta in North India and Amanta in South India. (Ojha, FG., P.173, D.C. Sircar. IE., P. 266)
Among the dates one (No. 3) belongs to a royal Charter of the Rāstrakūta dynasty which originally rose to power in South India and used the Saka era in almost all its records. But the Lata branch of the Rāstrakūtas seems to have been established as late as C. 750 A.C. 12. The known dates supplied by the literary sources, however, commenced with the Saka year 531 (609 A.C.). The earliest of these dates occurs in the Vīśeśāvāṣyakābhāṣya by Jīnabhadragni Kṣamaśramana who is identified with Jīnabhādra Vācanaśārya of Nīṛti Kūla 13. As this Kūla originated from Nīṛti, a son of Sresthin Jīnadeva of Surparāka 14, the origin of the use of the Saka era in the work of his descendant may be ascribed to Konkan. The association of the use of the Saka era with South India becomes more clear in the case of the Saka date given in the Harivaṃśa Purāṇa by Jinasenaśūri, who belonged to the Punnāṭa Saṅgha of Karnataka and settled at Vardhamānapura in Saurashtra.

The era commonly used in Karnataka was the Saka era since the 6th Cent. A.C. It is, however, difficult to

12 H.G. Shastri, MG., P. II, p. 330
13 Shah U.P., Akota Bronzes, p.29.
14 Malavaniya, Canadha-ravāda, intro. P. 31
account for the use of the Saka era in the works of Jinadasagapi Mahattara and Udyotanasuri. D.C. Sircar indicates that the Jains gave special preference to the Saka era and explains the preference by the fact that the Sakas are represented as the defenders of the Jain faith in their tradition recorded in works like Kalakacaryakatha.

This view deserves special notice here as all the literary dates mentioned above occur in Jain works. But this assumption lacks in adequate evidence, since Saka dates can hardly be traced to the Jain works composed in the earlier centuries of the Saka era.

As far as the political history of Gujarat is concerned, it is clear that the era used by the Saka Ksatrapas, yielded place to the Gupta era and probably the Kalacuri era. Politically the Saka era ceased to be in vogue in Gujarat from about 400 to about 750 A.C.

The occurrence of its use in Jain works, seems to be

15 The original place of Jinadasagapi Mahattara is not known. But Udyotanasuri seems to have belonged to North India. (Vasanta Rajstra Mahotsava Samagra Grantha, PP, 267 ff).
16 D.C. Sircar, LL., P. 263
incidental, in the sense that the Śaka era was not adopted into the official records of the dynasties ruling over the regions associated with those works.

The Śaka era thus seems to have been regularly re-introduced into Gujarat through the Rastrakūtas who extended their power over Gujarat by the middle of the 8th cent. A.D. The Rastrakūtas hailed from South India where the Śaka era was in common use. They seem to have adopted it from the Early Calukyas, the earliest known date in whose records is Saka year 465 given in the Badami Rock Inscription of Pulakesin I. The early records of the Calukya appear in the Bijapur District of the Mysore State. The era gradually spread northward with the extension of the Calukya empire. For long they, however, dated their records in the Kalacuri era in the Northern parts of their empire including Gujarat. The records of the Lāha branch of the Early Calukyas are accordingly dated in the Kalacuri era which was current there since long. The Rastrakūtas, however, extended the use of the Śaka era over Gujarat when they extended their power there.

17 EI, Vol. XXV. PP. 4 ff.
The era of the Saka Ksatrapas had disappeared from Maharashtra in the 2nd cent. A.C. and its later emergence in South India can be traced from the 6th cent. A.C. It is difficult to account for the intervening gap of about four centuries. The Ksatrapas did not specify the name of this era, while the Early Gālukyas specifically referred to it as the era of the Sakas or Saka Kings. From these facts Mirashi suggests that the Saka era, though superseded in Northern Maharashtra when it passed under the power of the Śatavāhanas, seems to have obtained a foothold in the South and continued in use there till the 6th cent. A.C. when it received the patronage of the Early Gālukyas. As for the period from Saka 46 to Saka 465, he suggests that the era was used there by the Saka kings who ruled over the country where the Early Gālukyas rose to power. From the evidence of the Purānic tradition and coins, he identifies these Saka kings with the Saka king Māna of the Mahisa dynasty and his descendants. He also assumes that these Saka kings were probably descendants of Nahapāna. According to Mirashi’s view, the ancestors of the Saka king Māna appear to have moved to the South after Nahapāna’s defeat by Gautamiputra Śatakarni; they must have continued to use the Saka era throughout
their dominions, which seem to have comprised the
Southern portion of the former Hyderabad State (ancient
Mahishaka) and the adjoining Kanarese District of Bijapur
and Dharwad, and the era seems to have continued in
use in that region even after the downfall of the Saka
dynasty, as it had become the habitual reckoning of the
people.

In the present state of our knowledge
Mirashi's view deserves special consideration as
a very probable assumption. Anyhow, the official
re-emergence of the Saka era in Gujarat took place
through the Rastrakutas of the South, by the middle
of the 8th cent. A.C, its use in the Jain works
being incidental.

18 V.V. Mirashi, Studies In Indology, Vol. II,
pp. 95 ff.
(iv) The Vikrama Era

The Hansot plates of the Cāhamāna King Bhartṛvadādhya II are dated in the year 813 of an unspecified era. The Cāhamāna king officiated as a feudatory of Nāgāvaloka. Kélhorn, D.R. Bhandarkar, and Sten Konow discussed the identification of Nāgāvaloka and the era of this date. The latter two scholars have established that king Nāgāvaloka, the overlord of the Cāhamāna king, should be identified with Nāgabhaṭa I of the imperial Pratīhāra dynasty and that the date should be ascribed to the Vikrama era.

The Vikrama era is current in Western India including Gujarat since long. Traditionally its origin is ascribed to King Vikrama or Vikramaditya of Ujjain who is renowned as the destroyer of the Sakas.

1 El., Vol. XII, PP. 197 ff.
2 The year is expressed in words as well as in figures in lines 36, 36.
3 El. M. IX, PP. 62 and 251
4 IA, Vol. X, P. 239
5 El., Vol. XII, PP. 197 ff.
According to the current reckoning the Vikrama era seems to have commenced in 58 B.C. However it is doubtful whether this era was associated with the name of Vikrama during its early centuries.

As for the specific references to this era as the Vikrama era, it should be made clear at the outset that the name of Vikrama is found associated with this era not earlier than the 9th cent. 6

The earliest reliable known reference to the association of the era with the name of Vikrama occurs in the Dholapur Inscription of Cāhamāna King Gandanāhasena, dated in the Vikrama year 696 which corresponds to 642 A.C. 7

The traditional account about the establishment of this era by King Vikrama, therefore, hardly appears acceptable at its face value. Moreover, it is also difficult to identify this King Vikrama with any

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6 The Dhinki plates of King Jaikadeva (IA.,Vol.XII pp. 155 f.) are dated in the Vikrama year 794 (737 A.C.), but on the scrutiny of the details of the date and other particulars e the plates are found to be spurious (IA., Vol. XVI, P. 198; XIX pp. 369 ff.)

7 Bhandarkar's List No. 27
known eminent king of the 1st cent. B.C. These difficulties have given rise to several views about the founding of this era, the identification of King Vikrama associated with it and the period of its association.

In 1870 in his article published in the Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, Fergusson propounded a new theory about the origin of the Vikrama era. According to him King Harsa Vikramaditya of Mālavā defeated the Hunas in 544 A.C. and in commemoration of this victory set up the Vikrama era with a view to embellishing it with a halo of antiquity and dated its beginning by 600 years and identified the era with the so-called era started from 56 B.C.

This theory is refuted on the basis of several inscriptions that can be clearly referred to this era and are dated prior even to 544 A.C.9.

In 1871 General Cunningham started the theory that this era was established by Kaniṣka10

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8 JAAS., 1870, P. 81
9 Mandasor Inscription of Kumāragupta dated the year 529 (Fleet, CII., Vol. III, No. 18)
Kavi Inscription dated year 430 (IA., 1876, P. 152)
10 ASI., Vol. II, P. 68
But it is now established that Kaniska flourished not in the 1st cent. B.C., but in the 1st cent. A.D. if not later.\(^1\)

In 1891 in his article entitled 'Examination of Questions connected with the Vikrama era'\(^2\) Prof. F. Kielhorn had given his weight to the curious theory that the Vikrama era was named not after any king of that name, but after Valour as it begins from Autumn, which is, according to Indian traditions, pre-eminently the season for valour (Vikrama-kāla) and that the Vikrama-kāla of the dates is originally nothing else but the poets' Vikrama-kāla transferred from autumn to the year, as Sārad (autumn) also denoted year.

In 1901 in his book named The Chronology of Ancient India\(^3\) Shri Velandai Gopal Aiyer put forward a new theory that the founder of the Vikrama era was Mahākṣatrapa Gaṅgādhara. This era is essentially a Mālava era as it is expressly stated in the Mandsore Inscription\(^4\).

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\(^1\) [CII, Vol. II, Pt. I, P. lxxxv]
\(^2\) [IA., 1891, Vol. XX, PP. 407 f.]
\(^3\) [Velandai Gopal Aiyer, Chronology of Ancient India, PP. 175 ff.]
\(^4\) [Malavanam Ganasthitya (Fleet, CII., Vol. III, No. 18)]
First he refuted the theory that Kaniska established the Vikrama era, on the ground that it has not been yet shown that the Kushan rule extended beyond Mathura and Banaras and that longlived dynasty of any importance except that of the Ksatrapas is known to history as having ruled over Malwa.

Then in favour of his own theory he held that from the Girnar Inscription of Rudradaman it is recognised that the independent tribe of Malwa and Gujarat elected him as their king just as they probably did his father Jayadaman and his grandfather Caśṭana before him. These independent tribes of Malwa, recognising strength in union and making a virtue of necessity combined together and elected Caśṭana as their common king and that great event 'the consolidation of the tribes of Malwa under one great ruler' was most probably celebrated by the epoch of 57 B.C.

This theory has been refuted by R. B. Pandey.

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15 It is a well-known fact that these tribes of the West were famous even in early times for self-rule. For that is the significance of the statement of such an ancient work as the Aitareya Brāhmaṇa. 'All the kings of the Western countries are inaugurated to independent rule (śvarajya) and called śvarūt. (R. B. Pandey, Vikramaditya of Ujjain, P. 57)
who contended that Castana, who was less powerful than Kaniska and was simply a local Ksatrapa, cannot be the founder of this era. The reference to the election by all the castes is only a Prasasti (Eulogy). Moreover Aiyer's statement the tribes like the Mālaves combined together under the sovereignty of Castana looks funny, in the sense that no foreign ruler would make all the conquered tribes consolidated.

In 1903 in his article published in the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, Hoernle maintained that the Mālava warrior Yaśodharman set up the Vikrama Saṁvat.

But Mandasor Stone Inscription of his time is dated in the year 539 of the Mālava-gana era.

From 1903 onwards J.F. Fleet supported Cunningham's theory and maintained that the Vikrama era was started by Kaniska, the great. This theory of Cunningham was also supported by O. Franke, Luders, etc.

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17 *Vikrama Sapti Grantha*, P. 56.
18 Ibid, (English) P. 119, F.n. 4
19 CIII., Vol. II, Pt. i. P. 85
21 This view was once held by Luders, but was later
Kennedy\textsuperscript{22}, Barnett\textsuperscript{23}, Oldenburg\textsuperscript{24} and Thomas\textsuperscript{25}. But this view is now untenable as shown above.

In 1914, on the basis of an inscription discovered at Taxila dated the year 136 of Azes\textsuperscript{26}, Sir John Marshall put forward a view that the founder of the Vikrama era was not king Vikramādiṭya, but it was Azes I, the Saka king of Gandhar.

In this inscription 'Sam. 136' is followed by Ayasa, John Marshall took Ayas as equivalent to Azes and construed it with the year given before that word Ayasa.

But Marshall's interpretation of the passage in the Taxila inscription seems to hang on a slender thread, and is refuted by certain scholars.
D.R. Bhandarkar rendered *Ayasa* into *Advasya* and construed the word with the succeeding word *Asadhasa* so as to refer the day to the 1st *Asadha*.

Franklin Edgerton remarks that the theory of Marshall seems based on a disputed interpretation of the word 'Ayasa' in the Taxila inscription and if this word should turn out not to refer to an era of Azes, there would be no evidence left for the founding of an era by King Azes.

But *Ayasa* is now taken as referring to King Azes II, and the year mentioned before his name is taken as falling during his reign.

The insertion of the name of the then reigning king between the year and the month would appear peculiar but a similar usage in the Taxila copper plate inscription dated year 76 during the reign of Moga leaves no doubt that *Ayasa* like *Maga*, denotes the name of a king and should no longer be taken as

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28 Indian Epigraphy P. 246
29 D.C. Sircar, *SI.*, Book II, No.27, P. 120
Nevertheless the passages cannot be taken as ascribing the date to an era of Azes, even according to the new interpretation of the passages. However, it may be tempting to bring Azes into relation with the era of 58 B.C., since that Azes ruled about 58 B.C. seems, indeed, quite well-established.

R. B. Pandey adds some more objections against this view. (i) He objects that Azes's epithets Maharaja Kajaraja Mahata, which are given on his coins, do not figure in the Taxila Inscription. But the date in question is now associated with the reign of Azes II, while the coins mentioned above were issued by Azes I. (ii) Pandey also draws attention to the absence of this era on the coins of Azilies, the son of Azes I. But it may be pointed that the coins of Azes I as well as Azilies were left undated.

However, it may be admitted that the name of Azes I is nowhere found associated with the dates

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30 R. B. Pandey, Vikramaditya of Ujjain, PP. 55 f.
32 Here it is interesting to note that the Taxila copper plate inscription of the time of Moga
given in the Scytho-Parthian records, if the inscriptions dated year 134 and 136 are ascribed to Azes II.\(^32\)

In 1922 in *Cambridge History of India Vol I*\(^33\), Sir E.J. Rapson supported the theory presented by John Marshall, that Azes is the founder of the Vikrama era. In support of his theory he stated that the assignment of the reign of Azes I to the period of 58-57 B.C. is justified by other considerations. It is consistent with the date ascribed independently to his predecessor, Maues (Circa 75 B.C.) and with the date of his third successor on the throne, Gondopharnes who almost certainly began to rule in 19 A.C. Further it is almost supported by evidence drawn from the epigraphy of the Greek coin-legends.

In 1926 in his book entitled *The Kharosthi Inscriptions*\(^34\), Sten Konow put forward the

\(^32\) Ibid Book I, No. 33, 34, PP. 127 ff.
\(^33\) Ibid Book I, No. 33, 34, PP. 127 ff.
\(^34\) Ibid Book I, No. 33, 34, PP. 127 ff.
traditional view that the era was instituted by Vikramaditya, a ruler of Malwa, who made an end to the dominion of the Sakas and began to rule in 57 B.C. There is also another detail which supports the theory that the Vikrama era was a national Indian reckoning. It is evidently based on the old Sāvana year with its three Chāturmāsya. Such was the case inferred from the designation Krta[^35] used in ancient records about the Vikrama years.

Sten Konow also refuted the theory presented by John Marshall and made it clear that whenever a ruler

[^35]: This term has been explained in different ways. Prof. Bhandarkar thought that it means 'made' and characterises for the purpose of reckoning years. (IA., Vol. XIII, P. 163). Fleet objected that the Vikrama era was never an astronomical reckoning. His explanation is that Krta may be connected with ki-li-to, the name of the race which according to Huan Tsang seized the sovereignty of Kāsmira after the death of Kaniska. According to Haraprasad Shastri, Krta is the name of the first year of a cycle of years which was used in the Vedic period. Sten Konow explained this word in this manner. Krta is the best throw in the play of dice when the number of points divisible by four and a Krta year is a year divided into three seasons each comprising four months (CII., Vol. II, Pt.I, intro. P. lxxxvi.)
is mentioned in connection with a date, he is always the king or chief actually reigning at the time of the record and there is no single instance in old inscriptions where a ruler is mentioned without a title.\textsuperscript{36}

In 1930 in an article entitled 'The Problems of Saka Satavahana History', K. P. Jayaswal propounded that Gautamiputra Śatakarni was the Vikramāditya of the popular stories and the Jain Gāthās.\textsuperscript{37} From the coins of the Malavas we get the information that in the 1st cent. B.C. the Gana of the Malavas struck coins commemoration of some great victory of theirs,\textsuperscript{38} which are in characters of the 1st cent. B.C. Both Śatakarni and the Malava tribe defeated the Sakas. That Śatakarni who played the dominant part in the defeat of the Sakas was famous by the designation of Vikramāditya and he founded the Vikrama era.\textsuperscript{40}

\textsuperscript{36} Ibid, P. lxxxv
\textsuperscript{37} JBORAS, Vol. A 1930, PP. 251 ff
\textsuperscript{38} This theory has been supported by Haritakṛṣṇa (Kishora Vikramanaka, Part VI, Kirena I)
\textsuperscript{39} Malavanamjahan Malavagananamjayah (Smith, UIN., PP. 170 ff).
\textsuperscript{40} Malavagaṇa also consolidated them by making Sandhi with them and from that period onwards started the Malavaganasthitikāla.
This theory was refuted by R. B. Pandey⁴¹ by showing Sūtakarni's identification with Vikrama fanciful and incongruous. He added that Sūtakarni not only defeated the Sakas, but exterminated the Kṣaharātas and established sovereignty over the territories of Avanti and Akara. The incident of his victory seems to be later than the establishment of the Mālavagana era. The lengthy inscription describing so many attainments of Gautamiputra contains no clear reference to the title Vikramāditya. Moreover there is no clear evidence literary or epigraphic, that any Sātavāhana king assumed the epithet Vikramāditya.

All the more Sātavāhanas were using regnal years⁴₂.

In 1936 in his article published in Nagari Pracāripī Patrika⁴³, Beni Prasad Shukla attributed the authorship of this era to Pusyamitra Śunga.

But there is no evidence that Pusyamitra assumed the title Vikramāditya. Moreover his reign is almost definitely dated in the 2nd cent. B.C. and falls about a century earlier than the epoch of the Vikrama era.

⁴¹ Vikrama Sṛtī Grantha, PP. 56 ff.
⁴² Ibid., PP. 56 ff.
In 1939 in an article entitled 'Chandragupta Sahasanka alias Vikramāditya and the nine Jewels' S.K. Dixit stated that Chandragupta II, Vikramāditya, commemorated his victory over the Sakas with an era in 405 A.C. But as this era was started in Ujjain, the capital of Malwa, it came to be confounded with the Mālava samvat now probably rightly identified with the Azes era. Thus what was formerly known as the Azes era came to be known sometime after the 5th cent. A.C. as the Vikrama era.

Though this view is not confirmed by the Indian tradition, it is accepted as very probable by several scholars, since Chandragupta II was also renowned as Vikramāditya and was a mighty sovereign who had extended his sway over Malwa. It is, therefore, not improbable if the name of this Vikramāditya got later on associated with the old era current in Malwa.

In 1948 in his article 'The riddle of the Vikrama era' A.S. Altekar put forward a view that the Vikrama era/formerly called the Kṛta era because it was

44 IC., Vol. VI, 1939, PP. 191 ff
45 Vikrama Volume PP. 16 ff.
founded by a king, general or president named Krta. In support of his theory he stated that Krta was the name of the General of the Malava republic. The conquest of the famous city of Ujjain and the expulsion of the Sakas from there were celebrated by the starting of an era known after their successful general Krta. It is quite possible that this Malava hero may have had the Biruda of Vikramaditya, though there is yet no evidence to show that such was the case. At any rate the era, started to commemorate his victory, was known as Krta for its first three or four centuries.

Later on the memory of the achievements of Krta became dim and it began to be popularly described as the Malava era. Later on from the 8th or 9th centuries onwards, when this era began to spread to Bundelkhand, Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat and Kathiawar, the name Vikrama era began to be gradually popular.

This theory is refuted by D.R. Bhandarkar.

46 It is true that in the early literature, the name Krta was quite common. The name of one of the sons of Vivasvata was Krta, Hiranyakshna of the Upanisadic period had a pupil of that name, the father of Uparicura and a son of Devaki both bore this name (ibid, p. 16)

47 'Vikrama Sāhitya, its origin and nomenclature in different periods', Vikrama Volume, pp. 64 f.
who doubted that if Krta was the name of a ruler or
general, not even once the honorific prefix 'Sri'
or 'Srimali' is attached to his name, nor is the title
'Nra' or 'Senapati' affixed to it. Such is not the
case with Vikramaditya. Besides Krta cannot be taken
as the name of an individual ruler in such a compound
as Krtayor-advayoh Satyor expressed in the Nandasa
Inscription. Thus Krta always stands in apposition to
Vatsara or SaAvatsara.

In the same year in his article entitled
'Vikramaditya and the Vikrama era' Harihar Nivas
Dvivedi concluded that the Saka had subjugated the
Malava Ganas near about 57 B.C., the primary reason
of their defeat being the religious rivalries and
internal dissensions in the land. A hero named
Vikramaditya gathered together and unified the
Malava-ganas, and drove away the Saka-s from India.
To commemorate this great national victory a new era
Vikrama was started. It was quite natural for the
Malava-gana people to attach more importance to their
community. In preference to the individuality of their
leader they preferred to call this era as Malava or

48 Vikrama Volume, PF. 115 ff.
Krta after their clan or its heroic deed. But outside Malwa, however, the people under monarchical government did not like to accept it in the name of the clan but regarded it a beginning of the golden age (Krta) and to give honour to the great hero of the event, called it Vikrama Samvat 49.

This view is gaining ground as it contrives to explain the Indian tradition on the basis of plausible assumptions.

In 1951 in chapter VIII of the book The Age of Imperial Unity 50 D.C. Sircar attributed the establishment of the Vikrama era to the Parthian ruler Vonones. In favour of his theory he opined that early Indian rulers used to date their records according to their regnal reckoning which fact points to the absence of any popular era in ancient India. The use of an era is first noticed in India in the records of Scytho-Parthians and the Kushans, who were responsible for its popularisation in this country. Moreover the name of the month in the date of the Taxila Inscription of the year 78 is Parthian. It is, therefore, quite

49 Ibid, PP. 115 ff.
50 R.C. Majumdar (ed.) AIU.,PP.124 f. and p. 125 f. n. 1
probable that the first year of the reign of Vonones, the earliest independent ruler of Drangiana, came to be regarded as the beginning of a new reckoning that was instituted to oust the imperial Parthian era of 243 B.C. As he seems to have flourished about the middle of the 1st cent. B.C., it is not unreasonable to place his accession in 58 B.C., which is the epoch of the extant Indian reckoning of a historical character. It is thus possible that the Scytho-Parthian era starting from the accession of Vonones about the middle of the 1st cent. B.C. is no other than the so-called V.K. of 58 B.C.51.

The Mālavas originally lived in the Punjab and apparently submitted to the Greek and Scytho-Parthian conquerors of that land. Under foreign pressure they gradually migrated to Rajputana and ruled over the district round Nāgar (Mālava nāgar) in Jaipur State. It was, therefore, the Mālavas who probably carried the Scytho-Parthian era of 58 B.C. from the Punjab to Rajputana and Madhya Bharat. The era came to be known in these regions as the reckoning associated with the Mālasas and with Kṛta who seems to have been an illustrious leader of the Mālava tribe.

With the development of the legend of Vikramāditya Sakara, the rival of the Śaka era became about the 8th cent. A.C. associated with the name of Vikramāditya, the extirpator of the foreigners. The identification of the Scytho-Parthian reckoning of Drangiana with the Vikrama era of 58 B.C. is supported by Takht-i-bahi Inscription of Condophernes dated in the year 10352.

In the same year in Chapter X of the 'Age of Imperial Unity', R.C. Majumdar reviewed the different traditions about king Vikramāditya, and showed that the Jain tradition has definite historical background inspite of minor discrepancies in dates. The absence of specific association of the era with Vikramāditya in the earlier period cannot be regarded as disproving the historicity of the king. The fact that all the early records, definitely known to be dated in the era 58 B.C. have been found in Malwa and Rajputana, certainly supports the Vikramāditya tradition. Krta was probably the name of the king who founded the era and assumed the title Vikramāditya.

Nevertheless, Majumdar is not dogmatic

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52 CII, Vol. II, Pt. I. P. 62
and accepts that the era might after-all have been founded by a foreigner, but he remarks, there is not inherent incongruity in the belief that King Vikramāditya founded it in 53 B.C. to commemorate his recovery of Ujjain by defeating the Sakas.

In 1952 in his book 'Indian Palaeography', R. B. Pandey put forward his opinion that Vikramāditya was the leader of a republic and not an absolute monarch. Though he was mainly instrumental in the foundation of the era, in a republic state, the gana is more important than an individual leader. Under the circumstances the era was to be named after the Malava-gana. The era was started to commemorate the victory of the Malava republic against the barbarous Sakas whose expulsion from India freed the country from foreign invasion and inaugurated an era of peace and prosperity, which figuratively might be regarded as Kṛtayuga (Golden age).

53 R.C. Majumdar, 'The Vikrama Samvat' and Šaṅkaraśana Age of Imperial Unity, PP. 154 ff.
54 R. B. Pandey, 'Indian Palaeography', PP. 193 ff.
55 Kṛta is not only a chronological division of time in Hindu astronomy but also a conceptual term denoting a virtuous and happy age. This is borne out by a verse found in the Aitareya-Brahmana (Ibid, F. 198)
The people of India enjoyed peace and prosperity for about 135 years from 37 B.C. At the end of this period the Sakas again started their invasions and occupied the whole of Sindhu, Surāstra and Avanti.

Nevertheless they survived the catastrophe as a people, carved out of a new Mālava territory to the North-east of Avanti, cherished the hope of regaining Avanti and continued to call their era Kṛta for a few centuries more.

The Mālava people continued their struggle with the Sakas but owing to the disintegration of their power, they were not able to restore their dream of Kṛtayuga. The name Kṛta was dropped from the era. As the Mālava-gana was alive, the era was still remembered as to commemorate the firm foundation of the Mālava republic in 57 B.C., when the Sakas were defeated. It came to be called the Mālava era, the era of the Mālava-gana, the Mālava people and the Mālava lords.

When the Gupta power was rising in the first half of the 4th cent. the Mālavas were still a powerful republic beyond the South-west horizon of the Gupta kingdom. Chandragupta II exterminated them. The
Guptas had their own era starting from 319-20 A.C. But the ideal of freedom for which the Mālavas stood, still possessed the mind of people in Malwa. They continued to use the Mālava era in spite of the Gupta rule. The era of the Mālavas overlived Gupta imperialism and continued in the name of the Mālava gana.

But in course of time the conception of the republic was lost to oblivion and the memory of the Mālava-gana entirely merged into the individual personality of its leader Vikramāditya. The era was now called after Vikramāditya who came to be regarded as a king when monarchy became the only form of government in India. The earliest known association of the name of Vikrama with this era is found in the Dhaulpur inscription of the year 698.

In 1955 in the Report of the Calendar Reform Committee it is presented that the early inscriptions of the Vikrama era show that the method

56 Sircar, IE., P. 253
57 Report of Calendar Reform Committee, P. 255

It may be mentioned here that the Vikrama era is never used by Indian astronomers for their Calendaric calculations, for which purpose the Saka era is exclusively used.
of date recording is not typically Indian, as in the Sātavahana inscriptions, but follows the Śaka Kusana method, which follows the contemporary Graeco-Chaldean method. It was, therefore, a foreign reckoning introduced either by the Greeks or Śakas or an Indian prince or tribe, who had imbibed some Graeco-Chaldean culture, but was adopted by the Mālava tribes who migrated from the Punjab to Rajasthan about the 1st cent. B.C. The association with a king Vikrama occurred 800 years later and is probably due to lapse of historical memory, for the only historical King Vikramāditya who is known to have crushed the Śaka power in Ujjain was king Chandragupta II of the Gupta dynasty. The association of the Mālava era with King Vikrama and assignment of King Vikrama to Ujjain was due to confusion of historical memory.

In 1965 in his book *Indian Epigraphy* D.C. Sircar shewed that the Vikrama Samvat was earlier known as Krta. The word is sometimes taken to mean 'made' or created by astronomers. But the theory is improbable as the era, the years of which can be traced from its 1st cent., was apparently the continuation of a regnal reckoning. Sometimes the

58 Sircar, IE., PP. 253, ff.
word is taken to be actually Krta, 'Purchased' pointing to the origin of the reckoning with the barbarian Kings of North Western India who according to a Buddhist tradition recorded by Hiuen-Tsang⁵⁹ were known as the 'Purchased'. According to another theory Krta was the name of a King who founded the era. Krta as a personal name of a king is no doubt known to the Indian folklore⁶⁰. But the name is not found among the known Scytho-Parthian Kings who probably instituted the era. It may be surmised that the word Krta is the Indianised name of a Ganamukhya of the Mālava tribe or it indicates an era supposed to have been handed down from the Krta yuga or the Golden age.

As regards the founder of the Krta - Mālava-Vikrama era, D.C. Sircar stated that 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 who must have flourished sometime after the Parthian emperor Mitridates II (123-88 B.C.) as the latter assumed

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⁵⁹ Watters, Vol. I, P. 265
⁶⁰ Pezer, Ocean of Stories, P. III, P. 19
As the title mentioned in the Taxila inscription is Graeco-Parthian, it has been rightly suggested that the era used in that record is of Parthian origin and that it marks the establishment of a new kingdom in East Iran.

As Vonones seems to have flourished shortly after Mitridates II about the middle of the 1st cent. B.C., it is not unreasonable to place his accession in 58 B.C., which is the epoch of the earliest extant Indian reckoning of a historical character.

The use of the era seems to have been introduced in Sindh and the adjoining regions by the Śaka feudatories of Vonones and the Mālavas who originally lived in the Punjab within the dominions of these Śakas carried its use to Rajasthan and the neighbouring areas with their migration to those parts. The use of the Vikrama era by the Maukharis of U.P. and Bihar is clearly explained by the Badvā inscriptions.

61 Sircar, IE., P. 256
62 V.A. Smith, CHI., Vol. I, P. 570
63 R.G. Majumdar, (Ed.) The Age of Imperial Unity PP. 123 ff.
of the 3rd cent. A.C. found in the Kotah region of Rajasthan. These records belong to the Maukharis and are dated in the Kṛta-Vala era. The Maukharis, therefore appear to have carried the use of the above era from their home in Rajasthan to their new settlements in the east. There is no doubt that they were originally subordinate to the Malavas, and it is probable that they really belonged to the Malava stock.

Another factor that contributed to the expansion of the era was probably the Ujjain school of astronomers. Some of whom specially favoured the era of 58 B.C. Its use was continued in U.P. by the Malayaketus and the Gurjara-Pratihāra. With the gradual extension of the Gurjara-Pratihāra power over wide regions of Northern India, the popularity of this era increased considerably. Another contributing cause of its popularity was the development of the Vikramāditya saga.

From this review it becomes clear that

64 It is interesting to note, in this connection that the Maukharis claimed king Asvapati as their progenitor while the same epic ruler is represented in the Mahābhārata (III, 296, 59-60) as the progenitor of the Malavas. (IG., Vol.I, PP.298 ff)
the era which has the epoch of 58 B.C. and which has been prevalent in Northern and Western India since long, is known as the Vikrama era (or the era of King Vikrama or Vikramaditya) at least from its 9th cent. It seems that the reckoning was as first known as the Kṛta era and was prevalent in Rajasthan and Malwa, and that subsequently it came to be known as the era of the Mālava-gana, the Mālava people or the Mālavas lords or simply as the Mālava era. The popular traditions attribute the origin of this era to King Vikramaditya of Ujjain, who is esteemed as Sakārī on account of his victory over the Sakas.

Unfortunately, it is not possible to prove the historical existence of King Vikramaditya reigning at Ujjain about 57 B.C. except on the basis of the Jain traditions, pertaining to Kālakācārya. It is true that these traditions seem to have historical background in spite of some discrepancies in detail. Nevertheless, it is very difficult to explain the non-association of the name of Vikrama with this era for as many as the first eight centuries.

Similarly the assumption that it was Chandragupta II alias Vikramāditya, whose name was
subsequently associated with the Malava era, hardly seems convincing as the use of the era does not figure at all under that name even in Malwa during the Gupta regime.

Though the exact significance of the name Kṛta in association with this era is not definitely explicable, it is clear that the era was formerly known as the era of the Malava-gana and that the later name Vikrama denotes a popular king of Ujjain. Vikramāditya of the Gardabhilla dynasty may have been the leader of the Malava-gana, which expelled the Sakas from Ujjain and the republican leader may have been mistaken as a monarch in later times. Brahmanical traditions about King Vikramāditya of Ujjain, also probably contributed to the popularity of King Vikrama. However, it is difficult to account for the conspicuous non-association of the name of Vikrama (even as a leader) for several centuries.

The Vikrama era is extensively used at present all over Northern India except Bengal as well as in Western India.

According to the reckoning which is current since long the epoch of the Vikrama era is 58-57 B.C. 65

65 The first year of the Vikrama era is believed
The first current year of the era corresponds to 57-56 B.C. Its years begin with Caitra Sukla in North India, but with Kartika Sukla in Gujarat. The years of the era start seven months later in Gujarat than in North India. In the North again the months are Purnimaanta to have started after year 3044 of the Kali era, so that the Kali year 3045 corresponds to the Vikrama year 1.

The following tradition is cited in some modern Pancahagas:

Yudhisthiro Vikramaśālivahanāu tato nrpah syad-
Vajabhimanādenah [Tatas-tu Nagārjunabhināpatih
Kalau Kalkiḥ śadete Šakakāraṇah smṛtah ]

Prathama Indraprasthe Yudhīṣthiras-tasya śakah
3088 śāvitiya Ujjayinīyam Vikramaḥ ]

66 The years begin with Aṣāgha Sukla in some parts of Gujarat and Rajasthan, and with Śrāvana Bahula in the Udayapur region of Rajasthan (Ojha, Bharatiya Pracina Lipīlāmāla, Pp. 169 f.)

67 Ojha, Ibid. P. 169

D.C. Sircar observes that the years of the era now start seven months earlier in the South India than in the North India (IE., P. 256). The statement obviously seems erroneous and 'In the South India than in the North India' must be corrected into 'In the North India than in the South India'.
while they are Amanta in Gujarat. The corresponding year of the Christian year is obtained by subtracting 57 years from the year of the Vikrama era from Kartika Su. 1 to Deca. 31 and 56 years from Janu. 1 to Asvina ba 15.

The Hansot plates are dated simply in year 313, but make no mention of the month, fortnight and day. They, however, contain a reference to the occurrence of the Solar eclipse on the day of the grant. From the Tables of Pillai, the eclipse seems to have taken place on the Amāvasyā of Kārtika of the Vikrama year 313, corresponding to 28th of Octo. 756 A.C. Whether the year was Caitrādī or Kārtikādī and also on the Amāvasa of Vaiśākha (corresponding to 23rd April, A.C. 757), if the year was Kārtikādī. As the eclipse took place in the dark half of the lunar month, the name of the month would have been helpful in deciding whether the month was counted Pūrṇimānta or Amanta.

In the absence of requisite particulars, the date throws no light on the systems of the years and the months prevalent here during this period.

68 Pillai, Indian Chronology, Table K.
The traditional accounts of the Cāvaḍā dynasty of north Gujarat date the foundation of its capital Anahillapātsaka and the coronation of Venarāja, the founder of the dynasty in a Vikrama year which falls within this period. But the date is given differently in the different sources of information. They are as follows:

(i) V.S. 802, Magha, su-di. 7, Sani (R. K. Forbes, Ras Mala, Guj. trans. P. 41)

(ii) V.S. 802, Caitra, su-di. 2, Śukra
(Patan Ganapati Temple Umā - Mahēśvara Image Inscription69, Kāntamāla, P. 157)

(iii) V.S. 802, Vaiśākhā, su-di. 2, Soma.
(Merutūṅga, Prabandhacintamani, P. 13)

(iv) V.S. 802, Asāḍha, su-di. 3, Śani
(Padma Purāṇa, Dhamaranya-Mahatmya, LXVI. 84)

(v) V.S. 802, Śrāvana, su. 2 Soma (Forbes Sabhāna Hastalikhita Granthonī Vigatavāra Yādī, P. 51)

69 Palæographically the inscription is of late origin.
(vi) V.S. 821, Vaisākhā, su. di. 2, Soma
(Vicāraśreṇi, P.9)

A scrutiny of these divergent dates indicates that many of them are untenable as the given tithi does not tally with the given week-day. The date No. iii holds good according to the Kārtikādi system and the date No. V according to the Caitrādi system70.

Five of the six dates mentioned above date the events in V.S. 802, while the sixth one assigns them to V.S. 821. The latter date is unacceptable as the dates given in Vicāraśreṇi have proved to be unreliable especially in the light of the date of Mularāja's accession recorded in the Sambhar inscription71 of Siddhārāja Jayasimha.

Though V.S. 802 is the most common traditional date, even that is now regarded to be

70 R.C. Modi, got the dates verified by M.P. Khargāghat, found dates Nos. iii and iv tenable according to the Kārtikādi system and conjectured that the date no. iii marked the commencement of the religious ceremony of the foundation while the date No. iv. applied to its actual occupation by the people. (Kāntamaśa. P. 157)

71 IA., Vol. LVII, P. 234
unreliable, as Vanarāja is chronologically found to have flourished at least a century later72.

If the traditional dates be taken as misassigned to the Vikrama era and assigned to the Saka era as suggested by H.G. Shastri, all the different dates of V.S. 802 are found to be untenable, when they are referred to the Tables of Tithis and week-days.

These traditional dates, therefore, all seem to have been forged by mere surmise in later times73.

The Hansot plates of the Gāhmāna King Bhartrvaddha II represent the earliest known record in Gujarat, the date of which seems to belong to the Vikrama Era. Accordingly, the Vikrama era which has been common in Gujarat for several centuries


73 The earliest accounts are dated about V.S. 1285-1290, i.e. about 500 years later than the period assigned to Vanarāja.
appears since the year 813 (A.C. 756-57) by the end of the Maithaka period.

The appearance of the Vikrama era in the record of Broach between the extensive region of the Valabhi era in the North and the West and the region of the Saka era in the South by the middle of the 8th cent. A.C. seems to be sudden and unusual. It is traced to the influence of the imperial Pratiharas who reigned in North India and whose supremacy was acknowledged by the Gahamana of Broach. Unfortunately the records of the early Pratiharas have not come to light, but the records of the succeeding Pratiharas are all dated in the Vikrama era and bear testimony to its common use in their kingdom.