The Gupta Period:

Shortly after the decline of the power of the Saka Ksatrapas in Western India, Gujarat passed under the sway of the Gupta empire. It was administered through governors during the reign of Chandragupta II - Vikramāditya (circa 376 A.C. - circa 414 A.C.), Kumāragupta I - Mahendrāditya (circa 414 A.C. - 455 A.C.) and Skandagupta - Kramāditya (455 A.C. - circa 467 A.C.). During the 5th century South Gujarat was under the sway of the Traikūṭaka kings. As for the chronological system or systems of this period, we find dates on coins and in stone inscriptions.

(i) The Gupta Era

The Gupta emperors issued a special currency in silver for this province, in imitation of the silver coins of the Western Ksatrapas. On these coins the tradition of mentioning the year was retained, but the Saka era was replaced by the Gupta era¹.

The earliest silver coins of the Gupta period belong to Chandragupta II, who conquered Western - - - -

India. The known date on his coins is read G.E. 90
(409-10 A.C.) or 90 + x = i.e. 91 to 94 (410-11 A.C.
to 413-14 A.C.) since the king died in about G.E. 94²
(413-14 A.C.) Kumāragupta I, the son and successor of
Chandragupta II extended the silver coinage over Madhya
Desa (located in modern U.P.). His successor Skāndagupta
continued both these types of silver coins³. Among these
the silver coins of Madhya Desa yield several dates
ranging up to G.E. 148⁴, while a few coins in Gujarat
bear impressions of dates and even among the few dates
that are impressed, only the digit of 100 is legible,
and digits of the tens and the units being entirely
illegible.

2. R. N. Saletore, *Life in the Gupta Age*, P. 25

3. One of the coins of Skāndagupta (455 A.C.) which
is found from Western India bears a date, but
it is illegible, as it has the symbol for 100,,
but the digit following has been partly preserved
(CGE., P. 252)

4. CGE., P. 279

The silver coins of the Kādhyādesa of
Budhagupta (476-77 A.C. to 494-95) are also
found dated and these dates range up to 175 G.E. 25²
(494-95 A.C.). The date 180 G.E. (499-500
A.C.) on one of his coins is illegibly read,
as the so-called symbol for 80 is doubtful.
(IA., XVIII. P. 227)
The Gupta period in Gujarat has left only one inscription which belongs to Skandagupta and bears dates of G.E. 136, 137 and 138. The dates of his inscription contain only the year, the month and the day.

As regards the designation of the Gupta era, there is no ancient authority whatever for connecting the name of the Guptas with it as the establishers of it. In fact the era used by the imperial Guptas of Magadha and their feudatories was called the year or the reckoning of the Guptas from about the middle of the 5th cent. A.C., i.e. more than a century after its start. In the earlier records it is treated as a regnal reckoning of particular kings without giving it any specific name. The earliest date of G.E. 61 (380 A.C.) is not specifically expressed in the Gupta era. Further there is no specification of the era in the earlier records of the imperial Guptas. They simply mention particular years of the era as belonging to a particular monarch.

5. D.C. Sircar, Select Inscriptions, book II, no. 25
7. This is indeed the nature of all eras developed from the regnal reckoning of a ruler continued by his successors. (I.E., P. 284)
8. Mathurā Pillar Inscription of Chandragupta II (SI., Book III. No. 9)
9. D.C. Sircar, SI., Book III no. 10-12
or to his reign\textsuperscript{10}. It was later specifically attributed to the Guptas\textsuperscript{11}. The word \textit{Gupta-Kala} seems to have been used in the sense of the Gupta era like the \textit{Saka-Kala}.

After the decline of the imperial Guptas especially in Western India their feudatories, the Maitrakas of Valabhi in Saurashtra continued the use of this era the earliest record of that family being the Bhamodra Mota plates of Dronasimha dated in the year 183\textsuperscript{12}.

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{10} \textit{Ibid.}, No. 15, Bilsad stone inscription of Kumāragupta I, G.E. 96 (A.C. 415-16)
  \item \textsuperscript{11} Bhandarkar's List, No. 1281, 1283, 1285 (Saranath stone inscription of the time of Kumāragupta dated 154 G.E. (473 A.C.).
  \item \textsuperscript{12} Select Inscriptions, PP. 403 ff.
\end{itemize}
The continuous use of the era by Drondsimha's successors for a few centuries made the era designated Valabhi Samvat in that region. In connection with this fact the tradition recorded by Alberuni is to be judged. He says 'As regards the Gupta Kāla, people say that the Guptas were wicked powerful people and that when they ceased to exist, this date was used as the epoch of an era. It seems that Valabhi was the last of them because the epoch of the Guptas falls like that of the Valabhi era 241 years later than the Saka Kāla'. Here Alberuni is right when he says that the Gupta and the Valabhi eras are identical and that the said era started in A.C. 319. But his statement that the era started from the extermination of the Gupta is wrong as it is obvious that the Maitrakas of Valabhi did not start any new era but continued the use of the era of their sovereigns, the imperial Guptas.

15. This fact is also proved on the basis of the epigraphical evidences, such as the date of the Girnar rock inscription of Skandagupta dated in G.E. 136, 137 and 138 and the date of the Bhamodra Kota plates of Dropasiṃha dated (Valabhi) sam. 133, which is the earliest date of the Maitrakas (D.C. Sircar, IE., P. 286)
As regards the origin of the Gupta era, it is generally accepted that the era has been founded by Chandragupta I, the first imperial monarch of the Gupta kings and that the first year of this era was counted from the first regnal year of that king's accession. The first two members of the early Gupta family, Sri Gupta and Sri Ghatotkacha who preceded Chandragupta I had not the authority to establish an era, as they held only the feudatory rank of Maharaja.

The unspecified era used in the records of the Guptas is identified with the Gupta era ascribed to Chandragupta I.

Accordingly in 1936 in his article entitled *V.*

16. D.C. Sircar states, 'It is not at all impossible that the era started from the first regnal year of Sri Gupta, Ghatotkacha or Samudragupta who were respectively the grandfather, father and son of Chandragupta I' (IE., P.287).

17. In the same way the era cannot have been established by any member of the Valabhi family as the dynasty of the Maitrakas started after circa samvat 250.
'The Kahaum Pillar. Inscription of Skandagupta.'

James Prinsep suggested the existence of an era connected with the Guptas. From the examination of his rendering of this record this inscription was dated 'In the year one hundred and thirty three after the decease of Skandagupta.' On this basis he suggested the idea of an era dating from the extermination of the Gupta power at the death of Skandagupta.

Then in 1845 in his book 'Fragments Arabs et Persars' Reinaud rendered Alberuni as stating that the Gupta era dated from the extermination of the Guptas.

In 1854 General Cunningham published his 'Bhilsa Topes,' in which he drew particular attention that the era of the Guptas commenced with the settlement of their own dynasty, as the Guptas date their...

19. Prinsep read the word 'Santeh' instead of 'Sante' and translated it 'of the repose' i.e. 'after the decease' of Skandagupta. (Fleet, CII, Vol. III, P. 35)
20. Ibid, P. 36
21. Cunningham, Bhilsa Topes, pp 138 ff
inscriptions in an era of their own which was actually a Guptakāla. He applied the epoch of 319 A.C. to the Gupta dates.

In 1858 Thomas published a collection of the works of Prinsep, under the title of the Essays of Indian Antiquities in which he quoted a modification of the meaning of Alberuni's translation, 'Again the Gupta that was, as is said, a wicked and a powerful family; when it ceased, it was dated from and as it were, Balab was the last of them, for the first of their era also is 241 years after the Saka-Kala'.

Then in 1861 in his paper entitled, 'On the Sanskrit poet Kalidas', Bhau Daji expressed his opinion about the Gupta era that it commenced with the Valabhi era in 319 A.C.

In the same year in his article, published in the Journal of the Bengal Asiatic Society, Fitz Edward Hall concluded that an era was dated from the

---

extermination of the Gupta Kings. In 1862 Bhau Daji showed a clear reference to the Gupta era, and indicated that the Gupta dates were evidently expressed in the Gupta era.

Again in 1864 in his article published in the Journal of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society, Bhau Daji stated that the Gupta era commenced in A.C. 318 and that the Valabhi era of Alberuni, if identical with the Gupta era, was not certainly the era used by the kings of Valabhi themselves, but was the Gupta era introduced into Kathiawad by Kumāragupta and Skandagupta.

26. In support of his view Hall quoted, the tradition referred to by Alberuni, that the Saka era dates from the discomfiture of the Sakas. (CII., Vol. III. P. 42)


28. In line 15 of Skandagupta's inscription bhau Daji made same change in the reading 'Gupta Prakāla gahanam Vidhava' and read "Guptasya Kāla/g gahanam Vidhava" - 'counting from the era of the Gupta" (Ibid pp. 123, 129)

29. JBBRAS., Vol. VII, PP, 113 ff,
Meanwhile in 1863 in his Archaeological Reports for 1861-62, General Cunningham expressed his view that the year of the commencement of the Gupta era was really the date of the extermination of the dynasty and that their recorded dates should be referred to the Saka era. Again in 1865 in his paper A. Cunningham changed his view about the epoch of the G.E. and wrote that the Saka era which began in 79 A.C. was the actual era of the Gupta dynasty and attributed its establishment to Chandragupta I.

In 1870 in his article entitled On Indian Chronology Fergusson pointed out that the Valabhi era was established after the downfall of the Andhra dynasty in 318-19 A.C. that the Maharaja Gupta, the founder of the Gupta family must have been the viceroy of one of the Andhra kings and that the early Guptas and the kings of Valabhi derived the era which afterwards came to be known by the names of both of them.

Then in 1872 R.G. Bhandarkar opined that the era to which the dates of the Valabhi grants

31. Ibid., Vol. XXXIV, PP. 115 ff.
32. JRAS., N.S. Vol. IV, PP. 81 ff.
refer is the Saka era and the starting point for the Valabhi era is 319 A.C. In 1874 the same author stated on the alphabetical ground that the Valabhi must be referred to an era other than the Saka, which commenced in 318 A.C. He doubted that the era was really of Bhataka's family. More likely the Guptas who preceded the Valabhi dynasty introduced their own era into the country. But the initial dates of both the Valabhi and the Gupta eras are the same.

In 1874 in his article published in the Journal of the Bengal Asiatic Society Kajendralala Mitra expressed his view that Alberuni's Gupta era commemorates the expulsion of the Guptas from Gujarat by the kings of Valabhi.

Again in 1879 in the Archaeological Survey of Indian Reports General Cunningham rediscussed the epoch of the Gupta era and arrived at the conclusion that the probable epoch of the Gupta era was 194-95 A.C. and its commencement 195-96 A.C. Again he referred the establishment of the Gupta era to Chandragupta I.

and placed the foundation of the Valabhi era 319 A.C. in the 20th year of the reign of Kumāragupta\textsuperscript{37}.

The subject was taken again by General Cunningham in 1880 in Reports of Archaeological Survey of India\textsuperscript{38}, in which he concluded that the commencement of the era was probably 167 A.C. and, therefore, its epoch was 166-67 A.C. On the basis of the Allahabad Pillar inscription and the Chinese authority which recorded the establishment of the military chiefs by the Yue-chi during the period between A.C. 220-30, Cunningham inferred that Samudragupta must have reigned before the time when the Yue-chi put their kings to death not later than some time between A.C. 200 and 250 and Chandragupta I must be placed in the end of the 2nd cent. A.C. After the examination of the Alina grant of Silāditya VII he shewed that the initial point of the Gupta era must fall between 164 and 224 A.C.

\textsuperscript{37} In connection with the Valabhi era of 319 A.C. Cunningham expressed the opinion that it could have no connection whatever with the downfall of the Gupta dynasty. For the reason that applied to the epoch of 194-95 A.C., the dates of 138 and 139 in the Junagadh rock inscription of Skandagupta shewed that the Gupta dominion was still intact in Saurashtra up to A.C. 333 (CII., Vol. III, P. 52).

\textsuperscript{38} ASI., Vol. X. PP, 111 ff.
He further determined A.C. 166-67 as the exact epoch of this era, on the basis of the information regarding the twelve year cycle of Jupiter\(^39\).

In the same year on the basis of the numismatic researches Fergusson fixed the commencement of the era in 319 A.C.\(^40\) and inferred that it was established in the reign of King Gautamputra.

In 1881 in his paper published in *Indian Antiquary\(^41\)* Oldenburg placed the rise of the early Guptas in 319 A.C., and their downfall about 480 A.C. and specified 318-19 A.C. as the beginning of the Gupta era.

In the same year in his article on 'The epoch of the Guptas'\(^42\), Thomas adhered to the view that the Gupta era was identical with the Saka era and the Gupta dates were referred to the Saka epoch. He also accepted Alberuni's statement that the Gupta era

---

\(^{39}\) From the calculation of the weekday given in the Eran Pillar inscription of Budhagupta he determined A.C. 166-67 as the epoch and A.C. 167-68 as the commencement of the Gupta era.

\(^{40}\) *JRAS.*, N. S. Vol. XII, PP. 259 ff.

Fergusson fixed the commencement of the G.E. with the expiration of four of Jupiter's sixty year cycles from the commencement of the Saka era.


\(^{42}\) *JRAS.*, N. S. Vol. XIII, PP. 524 ff.
dated from the extermination of the Guptas. In support of his view he quoted the coins of Syalapati as the proof of the practical survival of the method of dating from the extinction of the Gupta rule.

Then in 1882 E. Clive Bayley's paper was published in Numismatic Chronicle. This paper was issued in support of his theory of A.C. 189-90 or 190-91 for the epoch of the Gupta era. On the basis of Buhler's assumption from the Alina grant of Siladitya VII, that the era cannot have commenced later than A.C. 200, and the earliest coins of Syalapati Sir Clive shewed that the era commenced after 180 A.C.

In 1883 in his book entitled 'A book of Indian Eras' General Cunningham still preferred A.C. 166-67 as the epoch of the Gupta era and A.C. 167-68 as the commencement of it. On the assumption that king

44. As regards the era of A.C. 319 Sir Bayley's sucession was that it might date from the death of Kumāragupta and might memorialise a rebellion against Skandgupta by the members of the Valabhi family. (ClI., Vol.III, P. 58)
45. Cunningham, A Book of Indian Eras, PP. 53 ff
46. In addition to the use of this era, Cunningham held that the era used by the Valabhi kings was that of the Guptas as Senapati Bhapārka the founder of the Valabhi dynasty is said to have been the governor of Saurashtra during the last two years of Skandgupta's reign. (ClII., Vol. III, P. 61)
Jaikadeva of Dhinki copper plate inscription (794 vi. E = 736-37 A.C.) is identical with the Jainka of the Morti grant (G.E. 585 = 751-52 A.C. by Cunningham's view about the epoch of Gupta era) Cunningham fixed the epoch of this era 166-67 A.C. 47.

In 1884 in his book *Early History of the Deccan* R.G. Bhandarkar 48 announced his acceptance of the theory of A.C. 313-19 for the epoch of the Gupta era 49. He accepted the initial date of this era established by Alberuni but rejected his explanation of the circumstances under which it was established. Moreover the principal tests to this era applied by him were the record of the weekday in the Eran Pillar inscription of Buddhagupta and the names of Samvatsaras of the Twelve-year cycle of Jupiter recorded in the grants of Maharajas Hastin and Samkshobha 50.

47 Ibid. P. 61
48 *EHD.* Appendix A. P. 97
49 Bhandarkar seems to quote A.C. 319-20 as the epoch (Ibid. P. 99), but since he treated the Gupta years as expired years, the epoch he apparently proved is A.C. 318-19
50 CIII., Vol. III, P. 64
And in 1885 A.P.R. Hornle arrived at the opinion that the terminal date A.C. 319 of the Gupta empire as determined by Thomas may now be considered as one of those great historical landmarks the truth of which is no more open to question and Cunningham's theory of A.C. 166-67 for the epoch of the Gupta era has every prospect of ultimately meeting with universal assent.

In 1888 in his book on the Gupta Inscriptions, Fleet established that the first two members of the early Gupta family held only the feudatory rank of Maharaja and had not the authority to establish an era. The first paramount sovereign in the family was Chatotkacha's son Chandragupta I. So it might be possible that this paramount sovereign would be the founder of the era.

As regards the epoch and system of the Gupta era Fleet stated that the true and exact epoch of this era is 319-20 A.C. equivalent to Saka 241 expired. Further he expressed that the Gupta era

---

51 Centenary Review of Asiatic Society of Bengal From 1784 to 1882.

52 CII., Vol. III, P.130

The dates in the early Gupta records show clearly that the Gupta era cannot under any circumstances run from the accession of any member of the dynasty later than Chandragupta I.
commenced on the first day of the bright half of Caitra and its months were Purnimanta.

On the basis of the friendly relations between the early Guptas and the Lichchhavis Fleet identified the Gupta era with the Lichchhavi era dating a time when the republican or tribal constitution of the Lichchhavis was abolished in favour of a monarchy or from the commencement of the reign of Jayadeva I, as the founder of a royal house in a branch of the tribe that had settled in Nepal.\(^53\)

In 1913 in his book 'Bhāratīya Prāchīna Lipimāla', Pandit G. H. Ojha opined that the epoch of the Gupta era is 319-20 A.C. He then identified this era with the Valabhi era and made the difference 375 clear between the Vikrama and the Gupta-Valabhi era on the basis of the Verawal inscription of the Caulukya King Arjunadeva. Further he stated that the Gupta era commenced on the first lunar day of the bright half of Caitra and its months were Purnimanta. Generally the years of this era are expired.

---

\(^{53}\) Fleet, GII., Vol. III, P. 136

\(^{54}\) G. H. Ojha, BPL., P. 195
In 1919 in his paper read at the first Oriental Conference, Poona, Shri H.A. Shah held that the starting point of the Gupta era is determined with the help of Jinasena who gives it in terms of Vira-Nirvana years. Valuing the Vira years into Saka years and in turn those Saka years into A.C. years, the Gupta year is found to begin in about 200 A.C.

In 1923 in the Mysore Archaeological Reports, Shri Shamsastri established a new theory about the epoch of the Gupta era. He fixed the initial date of the Gupta era as A.C. 200-01 on the authority of Jinasena's statement that the Guptas ruled for 231 years and preceded the rule of Kalki whose birth-date is fixed to be 402 A.C. It is clear that Kalki was born in circa 402 A.C. = March 402-3 A.C., and his accession to the throne of his father Sisupala took place 432 A.C. and that he ruled from 432 A.C. to 472 A.C. counting back the 231 years of the period of the Guptas from the commencement of Kalki's reign in 432 A.C. We arrive at 200-01 for the initial date of the Gupta era. (M.A.R., 1923, P. 20)
In 1932 in his article entitled 'The Gupta and the Valabhi eras' Mr. Govind Pai redetermined the epoch of the Gupta era 273 A.C. In this article first he refuted the theory of 319-20 A.C. as the epoch of the Gupta era. In support of his refutation he referred to the Bhattakapatra grant of Valabhi king Dharasena II dated in Valabhi Samvat 257, in which a solar eclipse has been mentioned. According to Alberuni's epoch the date cannot be correct. Another argument raised against the theory of 319-20 A.C. is based on the Khoh plates of Samkshobha dated in G.E. 209 and the plates of the Valabhi king Dhruvasena I dated in Valabhi Sam 207.

58 JIH, Vol. XI, 1932, PP. 173 ff
59 MAR, 1927, P. 27
60 Gupta Inscriptions, No. 25
61 IA., Vol. V, P. 205

If Alberuni's date 319-20 A.C. as the true epoch is accepted, then the date of Dhruvasena's plates Valabhi Sam 207 would be 526-27 A.C. when Yasovarman was ruling and the date of Khoh plates when the Gupta kings should be ruling (Gupta-npapajyabhuktau) would be 528-29 A.C. But at that time the Gupta sway had already been swept away by Mihirakula in about 505 A.C. (JIH, Vol. XI, 1932, P. 174.)
Then Govind Pal tried to establish his own opinion about this era. His main sources for determining the approximate epoch are the two inscriptions namely the Eran Pillar inscription of 165 G.E. of two brothers Matrivissnu and Dhanayavismu and the Eran Boar inscription dated in the 1st regnal year of Toramana.

Finally on the basis of calculated tables he proved that the epoch of the Gupta era can be assigned to 272-73 A.C.

In the same year (1932) in his article 'The Gupta Era', Dhirendranath Mookerji established a new epoch 57 B.C. for the Gupta era and identified it with the Vikrama era.

---

62 Gupta Inscriptions, No.19
63 Ibid, No. 36
64 In the Eran Boar inscription Matrivisnu is said to have been dead whereas it may be 10 years later than Eran Pillar inscription (165 G.E.) i.e. 175 G.S., the date of which may be approximately assigned to 445 A.C. Thus the initial year of the Gupta era must be close to 445-175 = 270 A.C. (JIH., Vol.XI,1932, P.185).
65 Govind Pal tested the date of New Mathura Pillar inscription of Chandragupta II which is dated the 5th day of the bright fortnight of the first month of Asadh in G.E. and by means of the intercalary month he fixed the initial date of this era as 272-73 A.C.
In 1936 in her article named 'some recent view on the Gupta era', Miss Karuna Kana Gupta supported Fleet’s theory, about the epoch of the Gupta era. On the basis of the Mandsor inscription, the Ganjam plates of Sasanka dated G.S. 300 and the history of the Western Ksatrapas, she endorsed the view of Fleet.

In 1941 in this article entitled 'The epoch of the Gupta era', published in New Indian Antiquary, G. Sankar tried to disprove the theory presented by Fleet about the epoch of the Gupta era. He refuted the theory established by Fleet by arguing that Kumaragupta mentioned in the Mandesor inscription was not other than Kumaragupta II who ruled in the G.E. 154.

Another argument raised by this author is against Fleet’s acceptance of Alberuni’s epoch 320 A.C. for the Gupta era. In connection he argued that there is no reason to think that the Gupta era and the Valabhi era are identical and that it is not clear why the Guptas should

67 JIC., 1936, P. 61

68 On assuming that Sasanka was a contemporary of Harshavardhan, Miss Gupta viewed that the Gupta era must have started in the first quarter of the 4th cent. A.C. i.e. 319-20 A.C. (JIC., 1936, P.64)

69 NIA., Vol. IV, 1941, PP. 419 ff.

70 Ibid, P. 419

71 Alberuni (1030 A.C.) identified the Gupta era with the Valabhi era placing its epoch 241 years after the S.E. in 320 A.C.
On the basis of two inscriptions - the Gangam plates of G.E. 300 and the Apsas inscription of later Gupta Adityasena he fixed the epoch of the Gupta era 276 A.C.

Again from the examination of the Mandsor inscription of years 493 and 539, Sankar fixed the epoch of this era Circa 270 A.C., and further from the astrological data he established the true epoch

72 NIA., Vol. IV. PP. 420 f.

73 Gangam plates of G.E. 300 (EI, Vol. VI No.14) refer to Sasa as Mahārajādhiraśa and from the contemporaneous mention of king Sasanka and Harsavardhana (606 A.C.) the former is placed before 612 A.C. and thus the epoch of the said (Gupta) era is before 312 A.C.

74 Apsas inscription of Adityasena (Gupta Inscriptions, p. 42) refers to Kumara Gupta's fighting with Isanavaman (Mālava year 611 = 554 A.C., Haraha ins.) As the three generations of both these kings ruled before them in 600 A.C. and they were still ruling in the year 224 the epoch of this era cannot be later than (500-224) 276 A.C.

75 Fleet, CII, Vol. III, Gupta Inscriptions, No.18

In support of his view he stated that Kumara Gupta contemporary of Visavaran (480 Mālava year = 423 A.C., EI, Vol. XII, No.35) was succeeded in 157 B.C. by Bhag Gupta (ASI, 1914-15, p. 125) whose date is not later than 423 A.C. Thus the epoch may be dated 266 A.C. (270 A.C.)
of the Gupta era as 273 A.C.\textsuperscript{77}

In 1951 in his *Puranic Chronology*\textsuperscript{78} D.R. Mankad presented almost a different theory about the epoch of the Gupta era. On the assumption of an earlier Saka era started in C. 552 B.C. he interpreted Alberuni's statement in a quite different way and fixed the accession of Chandragupta I as well as the Epoch of the Guptih Era in 312-10 B.C. (552 B.C. - 241 = 311-10 B.C.)

In 1952 in his *Indian Palaeography*\textsuperscript{79} R.B. Pandey stated that the third king of the Gupta dynasty, Chandragupta I, founded the Gupta era. On the basis of the statement of Alberuni, R. B. Pandey fixed the epoch of this era as 319 A.C.

---

\textsuperscript{77} NIA. Vol. IV, 1941, PP. 425 ff.
\textsuperscript{78} D.R. Mankad, *Puranic Chronology*, P. 290

\textsuperscript{79} The latest record of Chandragupta II, the grandson of Chandragupta I is dated G.E. 93 and the earliest record of Kumāragupta I, the great grandson of Chandragupta I is dated G.E. 96. Under the circumstances, it can be safely maintained that Chandragupta II died in C.G.E. 95. Thus for the reign periods of three kings we get 95 years, in case we hold that the reign of Chandragupta I started from G.E. I. Thus it was quite possible for Chandragupta I to found the Gupta era (IP., PR, 211 f).
Lastly in 1965 in his book 'Indian Epigraphy' D.C. Sircar supported the theory presented by Fleet about the epoch of the Gupta era, on the basis of Alberuni's statement. He agreed with Alberuni's statement for the commencement of the Gupta era, but he did not accept his further statement that the said era started from the end of the Guptas.

As regards the epoch of the Gupta era, it is well-known that the epoch of this era is ascribed to 319-20 A.C. and now it is universally accepted as the true and exact epoch. The zero year (current) of this era corresponds to the period from the 9th March 319 A.C. to the 25th Feb. 320 A.C. and the first current year corresponds to the period from the 26th Feb. 320 A.C. to the 15th Mar. 321 A.C. However the years in the Gupta-Valabhi dates are current years. To obtain the Christian years equivalent to the Gupta year we have to add 319-20 A.C. to the latter.

---

80 D.C. Sircar IE*, PP. 286 f.
81 It is generally assumed that the well-known Gupta era commenced on Feb. 26th, 320 A.C. (G.ed. R.C. Majumdar, Classical Age, P. 4)
82 Fleet, CII, Vol. III. p. 127
83 IA., Vol. XVII, p. 362
84 The equation between the Gupta era and the A.C. is 319 years from Caitra to Asvina and 320 years from Kartika to Phalguna.
As for the scheme of the Gupta era, Fleet has shown that in North India the years of the Gupta era commenced with Caitra and the months ended with Pūrṇimā. As the week-day is not given in the Junagadh rock inscription of Skandagupta, we are unable to determine the system of years and months in the Gupta era, used in Gujarat during this period. But its years were Caitrādi in North India in this period and they were so in Gujarat during the Post-Maitraka period. Again in North India the months were Pūrṇimānta and during the Maitraka period in Gujarat also the months were Pūrṇimānta. From this it is quite probable that the same system would be applied in the case of the Gupta era used during the Gupta period.

85 Fleet, CII, Vol. III, P. 80
(11) The Kalacuri Era:

By this time another era was prevalent in South Gujarat. Only one date (year 207) of this era is found during this period. This date contains the year, the month, the fortnight and the lunar day. A number of inscriptions of the succeeding period in South Gujarat seem dated in this era.

In 1859 in his article published in the Journal of the American Oriental Society, Fitz Edward Hall fixed the exact epoch of this era about 250 A.C. on the basis of two inscriptions, the Bhera Chat Inscription of Alhanadevi dated year 907 and the Tewar Inscription of Jayasimhadeva dated 928.

---

1 "Pardi copper-plate inscription of King Dahrasena" (V.V. Mirashi, CII, Vol. IV, No.8)

2 The era is not specified in the inscriptions, but it is identified with the Kalachuri-Chedi era of the later period.

The phrase Chedisgaya Sam occurs in the date 831 of No.76, Chedi Samvat in the dates 919 and 933 of nos. 98 and 100 and Chedi-digita in the date 902 of No.58. The expression Kalacuri Samvatsara is noticed in the dates 885, 893, 896, 898 and 910 of Nos. 122, 87, 88, 110, 95 respectively (CII,, Vol. P. 22, F.n. 2)

3. JAOs., Vol. VI (1860), P. 501

4. Edward Hall assigned the reign of Alhamadevi's grandfather about 1075 A.C. and from her
Then in 1878 in his Reports of the Archaeological Survey of India, Cunningham announced that among the inscriptions from North India, two were actually dated in the Chedi Samvat and two others in the Kalachuri Samvat. He then identified the two eras as 'the princes of Chedi were of the Kalachuri branch of the Haihaya tribe'. He further stated that he had examined some eight verifiable dates of the era and had found by calculation that the era began in 249 A.C., the year 250 A.C. being the year 1st of the Chedi Samvat.

In 1880 in the same Reports Cunningham reiterated his conclusion that 249 A.C. was the initial point of the Chedi or Kalachuri Samvat, the year 250 being the year 1st of the era. He then gave the details of the calculated dates.

inscription it is clear that her sons reigned in the years 907 and 928 of an unspecified era. Naturally Hall placed Ahanadevi's birth date about the year 850 of the so called era i.e. Circa 1100 A.C. (CII., Vol.IV, Intro., P. 7)

7. CII., Vol. IV. P.2

On the basis of the evidence of Alberuni's reference to Cangeya as a contemporary King of Dahala and Bilhana's residence at the court of Raja Kara of Dahala from 1070 A.C. to 1075 A.C. Cunningham fixed the approximate periods of the Kalachuri kings. (Ibid. Vol. IV., P.3)
In 1884 in his article published in *Indian Antiquary* Bhagavatilal Indraji on the basis of Navsari grant of Jayabhata III and four other grants of the Calukya dynasty concluded that the Kalachuri era started from 244-45 A.C. and the first year of this era is 245-46 A.C. Indraji then identified the era with 'the era of the Traikutakas', mentioned in the Kanheri plate dated in 245 year.

In the same year in his article on the Pardi Plates of Dahrasena Pandit Indraji accepted the view that the era used by the Gurjaras and the Calukyas of Gujarat commenced in 249 A.C. He referred the date 207 of the Pardi plates of the Traikutaka king Dahrasena to the same era.


9. Among the four grants two grants made by Sryasraya-Siladitya were found to be dated in year 421 and 443 the third made by Mangalaraja in Saka,653 and the fourth by Pulakesivallabha Janasraya in y. 490 (CII., Vol. IV. p.3)

10. But the expression occurring in the Kanheri plate does not really indicate any reference to the Traikutakas as pointed out by Fleet. (JRAS., 1905, P. 567). It simply means "During the augmenting sovereignty of the Traikutakas"

11. JBBRAS., Vol. XVI. P. 346
In the same year in his Early History of the Deccan, R. G. Bhandarkar questioned the correctness of Indraji's view that the date 421 of Śṛyāṣṭrāya Śilāditya's grant is in an era with 250 A.C. as its initial date on the ground that the interval between the two brothers Mangalaraja and Śṛyāṣṭrāya becomes 60 years which is too long. He further suggested that the date in the above mentioned inscription was in the Gupta era which was one of those in ordinary use in Gujarat.

In 1886 in his paper entitled 'Two new grants of the Calukya dynasty', Indraji pointed out that the founder of the Traikūṭakā era was king Iśvaradatta who interrupted the rule of the Western Ksatrapas and whose coins dated in the first and second years of his reign show that he assumed the titles Rājan and Ksatrapa. He also supposed that the king belonged to the Ābhīra dynasty and identified the later Traikūṭakas (and Kalachuris) with the Ābhīras.

12 Bhandarkar, L.H.D., (first ed.) P. 102

13 But subsequently two more dates of these kings have come to light. The Surat Plates of Śṛyāṣṭrāya Śilāditya are dated year 443 (692 A.C.) and the Manor Plates of Vinayaditya Mangalarasa are dated S.E. 613 (691 A.C.). These dates make it clear that the objection raised by Bhandarkar now does not hold good any longer.

14 Proceedings of International Oriental Congress, Vienna, PP. 221 f.
In 1663 in his letters published in the Academy Kielhorn made a definite suggestion about the month and the tithi of its actual commencement and announced that his calculations of numerous weekdays of later Chedi inscriptions showed the epoch of Chedi era not in 249 but in 248 A.C.\textsuperscript{15}

Later on in an article published in Indian Antiquary, Kielhorn\textsuperscript{16} showed from an examination of twelve dates of the Kalachuris and their feudatories and two of the Gurjaras that the only equation which yields correct weekdays for those Chedi inscriptions in which the weekday is mentioned is Chedi Sam 0 = 248-49 A.C. and Chedi Sam 1 = 249-50 A.C.\textsuperscript{17}

Prof. Kielhorn further stated that if we wish to work out the dates by a uniform process, we must take Chedi year to commence with the month Bhadrapada and must start from July 28, 249 A.C. = Bhadrapada Su, di. 1 of the Northern Vikrama year 307 current as the first day of the first current year of the Chedi era. He preferred the Bhadrapadi year because Alberuni does mention a year beginning with Bhadrapada\textsuperscript{18}.

As regards the arrangement of the

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{15} IA., Vol.XVII, P. 139, n. 14
\bibitem{16} GII., Vol. IV, P. 5
\bibitem{17} IA., Vol. XVII, PP. 215 ff.
\bibitem{18} IA., Vol. XVII, P. 215 n. 5
\end{thebibliography}
fortnights, Kielhorn showed from three dates that it was the Būrmanātaka one in which the dark half of a month precedes the bright half.

In 1893 in his article published in *Epigraphia Indica* Kielhorn proposed 247-48 A.C. as the epoch of the era. He then fixed the 5th September (Asvina, su. di. 1) 248 A.C. as the first day of the first current year and the 26th August (Asvina su. di. 1) 249 A.C. as the first day of the first expired year of the Ghedi era.

In 1896 Sh. B. Dīxit who differed from Kielhorn suggested that the Ghedi year might have commenced on the first tithi of the dark fortnight of the Pūrmāntaka Asvina.

In 1905 in his article "Trikūta and the so-called Kalacuri or Ghedi era", Fleet refuted the theory presented by Pandit Indraji and pointed out that all the early dates of the era came...

20 On the basis of Colebrooke's expression that the new year begins at Nagpur with the light fortnight of Asvina but opening in the midst of Durga's festival, New Year's day is celebrated on the 10th lunar day, Kielhorn thought that the Asvināḍī year which was current down to the Colebrooke's time in a part of the country previously included in the Chedi kingdom might be reminiscent of the Chedi year (VII. Vol. IV, p. vi)
21 History of Indian Astrology (in Marathi) (first ed. 1896) sa. ed. p. 375
22 JNAS., 1905, PP. 566. ff
from Gujarat and the Thana District in Bombay and none
from Saurashtra and that there was nothing to stamp the
era as the Traikutaka era. He proposed to identify the
founder of the era with Abhira Isvarasena or with his
father Abhira Sivadatta.

In 1908 in his Catalogue of the Andhra
dynasty, the Western Ksatrapas, the Traikutaka
dynasty etc. Prof. Rapson fixed the dates of both
Isvarasena and Isvaradatta before 249 A.C. As
regards the circumstances which led to the foundation
of the era, he observed, 'It is of course quite
possible that the establishment of the era may mark
the consolidation of the Abhira kingdom during the
reign of one of their successors. The foundation of an
era must be held to denote the successful establishment
of the new power rather than its first beginnings
or the downfall of the Andhras.

In 1911 in the Annual Report of the
Archaeological Survey of India, D.R. Bhandarkar
placed the rise of Isvaradatta in the period
110-112 S.E, (188-90 A.C.) on the basis of a coin
23 GII., Vol.IV. P, 7
24 CAD., PP, 135 f.
of Yasodaman dated in the 160\textsuperscript{25}.

In 1913 in his book \textit{Bharatiya Prachina Lipimala},\textsuperscript{26} Pandit G. H. Ojha stated that this
Kalachuri era is seen to have been used in the
ingscriptions of the south Gujarat Konkan, i.e.,
Madhyapradesh\textsuperscript{a}. Moreover many of the inscriptions
belong to the Kalachuris, and there the era is
specified as the Kalachuri Chedi era. From this
Pandit Ojha held it possible that some king of the
Kalachuri dynasty would have started this era.
Further he showed the difference between the Kalachuri
era and the Chedi era, on the basis of the three dates
given in the inscriptions of the Kalachuri King
Narasimhadeva of Tripuri\textsuperscript{27}

\textsuperscript{25} Bhandarkar pointed out that this date lessens
the gap between Yasodaman and his predecessor
by one year. He further wrote, 'It is still not
impossible to adjust the two years of Isvaradatta's
reign even in this lessened gap between 158 and
160, but just as the gap between 171 and 176
which was imagined by Indrajit no longer exists,
a day will no doubt come when with the further
find of coins, the gap between 158 and 160
will also be completely filled. (ARASL, for
1913-14, P.229)

\textsuperscript{26} G.H. Ojha, BPL. PP, 173 f.

\textsuperscript{27} These dates are Kalachuri Sam 907 (IA., Vol. II,
PP.10 ff), Kalachuri Sam 909 (IA., Vol.XVIII,
P. 212 f.) and Vikrama Sam. 1216 (IA., Vol. XVIII,
P. 214). As all the three dates are of the same
king, it is clear that the difference between the
Kalachuri and the Vikrama eras is about 308 years.
As regards the commencement of the Kalachuri era Pandit Ojha mentioned Kielhorn's view that this era commenced on 26th August 249 A.C. on the 1st day of the bright half of the month Asvina of Vikrama samvat 306.28

In 1920 in an article entitled 'The Kushan Chronology'29, R. C. Majumdar fixed the date of Kaniska who flourished after Wima Kadphises (214 A.C.)30 and put forward the view that Kaniska founded the so-called Kalachuri era of 243-49 A.C. Majumdar attributed this era to the establishment by the Kushan emperor of a rival dynasty in the south to hold in check the power of the Western Ksatrapas and suggested that this ultimately became instrumental in preserving the era of the Kushans long after it had become extinct in the province of its origin.

MirZashi refuted the theory presented by Majumdar and established that there is no evidence for the establishment by the Kushanas of such a rival dynasty in the south which curtailed the power of the Western Ksatrapas.

28. G. H. Ojha, BPL., P. 174
30. Majumdar referred the dates ranging from 72 to 136 found in the inscriptions of the Northern Ksatrapas, Gondophares, Kujula Kadphises and Wema Kadphises to the S.E. of 78 A.C.
In 1928 in his article entitled 'The Kalachuris of Tripuri' Rai Bahadur Hiralal tried to revive Pandit Bhagawalal's theory that the era owed its origin to the dynasty of the Traikutakas by identifying the Traikutakas with the Kalachuris. His suggestion that the Trikūta from which the dynasty derived its name was the Vindya mountain, was negatived by Mirashi who indicated that there is no evidence to show that the Vindhyā mountain was called Trikūta in ancient times.

In 1933 in his History of India K. P. Jayaswal attempted to prove that the Chedi era was started by the Vākāṭakas. He observed that the Purāṇas after the fall of the Sātavāhanas register the rise of Vindyasakti as the next great power or as the imperial power succeeding the Sātavāhanas. Jayaswal concluded that Pravarasena I of the Vākāṭaka dynasty became an emperor, must have started the era dating it from the coronation of his father.


32 Jayaswal read the dates on two coins which he ascribed to Pravarasena I and Kudrasena I as 76 and 100 respectively and referred these dates together with the date 52 of the Ginga inscription of Maharaja Sri Bhimasena to the Chedi era dating from the rise of the Vākāṭaka power.
This theory was also refuted by V. V. Mirashi on the ground that the Vakātakas themselves never used this era, but dated all their records in regnal years.\(^3\)

In 1936 while editing the Kosam stone Inscription of Maharaja BhimaVarman dated in the year 130\(^3\)\(^4\), Aghosh referred this date to the Chedi era on the Palaeographical ground and proved that the records of the Magha kings found at Cina, Kosam and Bandhogarh supplied the early dates of the Chedi era.

This view was criticised by Mirashi in an article entitled 'Dates of some early Kings of Kausambi' which was published in 1962\(^3\)\(^5\). On the basis of the coins issued by the Magha kings in their own names indicating their independence\(^3\)\(^6\), Mirashi put them before the rise of the Gupta kings. Further the Palaeographic peculiarities noticed in their records he pointed out that the dates of their records have to be referred to the era of Kaniska.

---

33 Mirashi, Nagpur University Journal No.3, P.26
36 JNSI, Vol. II, pp. 95 ff
In 1937 in an article entitled, 'The epoch of the Kalachuri Chedi era', V. V. Mirashi showed on the basis of thirteen later dates of the era discovered since Kielhorn's time that this era must have begun on some day between Asvina su. di. 15 and Phālguna Wa. di. 7. Moreover it is not known of any Hindu year beginning in any of the months from Margasīrṣa to Phālguna and it appears probable that like the southern Vikrama year the Chedi year also commenced on Kārttiḳa Su. di. 1. 

In 1944 V. V. Mirashi showed from an examination of the so-called Indore plates of the Maharaja Swāmidāsa and Bhūlunda that they originally belonged to Khandesh and that their dates and also the date 117 of the Sirpur Plate of Maharaja Rudradāsa should be referred to the era founded by the Ābhīra king Iśvarasena.

In 1945 Mirashi showed that the date 167 of the Barvani Plate of Maharaja Subandh must be referred to the same reckoning.

In 1946 Mirashi again showed that the date of the Kānkherā stone inscription of the Śaka Śrīdharavarman which he read as 102 also refers to

38. ABORI, Vol. XXIV, PP. 159 ff.
the so-called Kalachuri Chedi era.\textsuperscript{40}

In 1949 in an article entitled 'New light on the epoch of the Kalachuri era', Mirashi showed that the date 322 of the Nagardhan plates of Swamiraja, which had been discovered in the preceding year, probably referred to the Kalachuri era and that the details of the date recorded in the grant indicated a new epoch of the era 250-51 A.C.\textsuperscript{41}

In 1952 in his book \textit{Indian Palaeography} Shri R. B. Pandey suggested that Kalachuri-Chedi era had almost local currency and could not survive long. This era was replaced by Vikrama era.\textsuperscript{42}

In \textit{Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum} Vol. IV on the inscriptions of the Kalachuri-Chedi era published in 1955\textsuperscript{43}, Mirashi has discussed the problem

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{40} \textit{Ibid.} XXII, PP. 34 ff.
  \item \textsuperscript{41} \textit{IHQ.}, Vol. XXV, PP. 81 ff.
  \item \textsuperscript{42} The same epoch appears to be applicable in the case of the date of the Ellara plates of Dantidurga which should be read as Sam. 463 not as Sam. 663 (\textit{JBRAS.}, N.S. Vol. XXYI, PP. 163 ff.)
  \item \textsuperscript{43} R. B. Pandey, IP., P. 216
  \item \textsuperscript{44} GII, Vol. IV. Intro. PP. 1 to 30
\end{itemize}
of the Kalachuri-Chedi era at length. Therein he has established that the early dates of the Kalachuri era found in Gujarat and its neighbourhood, must be ascribed to the epoch 248-49 A.C. and that the first current year of this era commenced on 25th September 249 A.C. corresponding to the first day of the bright half of Amānta Kārtika.\(^4\) As for the origin of this era he has suggested that it seems to have commenced with the reign of the Abhira king Isvarasena, whose inscription dated year 9 is found at Nasik. Mirashi regards Isvarasena as the founder of the Abhira dynasty and supposes that the era was apparently continued by his successors of whom as many as nine reigned according to the Purāṇas. He also suggested that the Traikūtakas were not identical with the Abhira but were probably feudatory to the Abhira.

But as the Purāṇas do not specify the names of the Abhira kings, it is not possible to ascertain whether Isvārasena was the first among them. Nor have we come across records of any other Abhira kings. The assumption that the era was continued by Isvārasena's successors, therefore, lacks in evidence. In the present state of our knowledge it is, therefore, difficult to ascribe this era to Abhira Isvārasena definitely.

---

45. Ibid, PP, 11 to 14
In 1965, in his book, 'Indian Epigraphy', D.C. Sircar stated that the so-called Kalcuri-Chedi era was used by the Kalacuris, who ruled over the ancient Chedi country with their capital at Tripuri near Jabalpur. It was started from the first regnal year of Ābhīra Iyvarasena mentioned in the Nasik inscription and it was continued by the erstwhile subordinate families like the Traikūṭakas and early Kalacuris. He further stated that the era was started from the foundation of an independent kingdom carved out of the dominions of the Šakas in order to oust the use of the Šaka era from the said area.

As for the epoch of the era, he accepted Kielhorn’s suggestion that the expired year 1 of the era started on the 26 August 249 = Vikrama 306, Āsvina, su. di. By adding 248-49 to its expired years we get those of the Christian reckoning, although it has to be admitted that this epoch does not suit all the dates in this era found in inscriptions.

The early dates ascribable to this era in the inscriptions of Gujarat occur in the copper-

46 IP., PP. 282 ff.
47 IA., Vol. XVII, P. 216
48 IP. P. 284
plates of the Traikutatas the earliest known date falls in year 207 and belongs to king Dahrasena, the second known king of the Traikutaka dynasty. It is, therefore, clear that the Traikutakas probably adopted the era from some earlier dynasty.

The date contains no week-day and does not admit of verification for the system of the year and the month.

On chronological and palaeographical grounds certain inscriptions dated year 67 to 167 are ascribed to the Kalachuri era. These records belong to different dynasties that mostly ruled in Khandesh and in Madhya Pradesh. But the assumption that they were feudatories of Abhiras is not substantiated by any concrete evidence. The origin of the Kalachuri era may, therefore, be regarded as lost to oblivion and we should wait for the discovery of the missing links. That may supply a clue for the solution of the problem.