INTRODUCTION

The history of ancient Mālava-Janapada has drawn attention of learned scholars since the thirties of the 20th Century. D.C. Ganguly’s *History of the Paramara Dynasty* (Dacca, 1933) and Raghuvir Singh’s *Mālwa in Transition* (Bombay, 1936) may be regarded as pioneering efforts for breaking new grounds in the field of research in regional history. B.C. Law’s *Ujjayinī in Ancient India* (Gwalior, 1944) is an attempt to reconstruct the history of ancient city of Ujjayinī, capital of Western Mālwa. A growing interest in the Vikramāditya tradition, closely associated with the history of ancient Mālwa, is evident from the *Vikram Volume* (Ujjayinī, 1948) edited by R.K. Mukherjee, R.B. Pandey’s *Vikramāditya of Ujjayinī* (Benares, 1954) and D.C. Sircar’s *Ancient Mālwa and Vikramāditya Tradition* (Delhi, 1969). Archaeological excavations and explorations have thrown light on the ‘Pre & Protohistory of Mālwa’ which has become the title of H.D. Sankalia’s work published from Poona in 1960. Mention may also be made of A.P. Khatri’s *Stone Age Culture of Mālwa* (Poona, 1958), an earlier work in the field of archaeological research. The migration and settlement of the Mālava tribe cannot be dissociated from the emergence and growth of Mālava-janapada. Recently K.K. Das Gupta has made a numismatic study of the history of ‘The Mālavas’ (Calcutta, 1966) and M.K. Sharan’s *Tribal Coins* (Delhi, 1972) includes an account
of the Mālavas. Some Aspects of Mālwa's cultural history may be traced in D.R. Patil's 'The Cultural Heritage of Madhya Bharat' (Gwalior, 1952). A study of the history and culture of Mālwa has been made by K.C. Jain in his 'Mālwa Through the Ages' (Delhi, 1972), without giving an emphasis on any aspect or a period. The 'History & Culture of Indian People' (Vols. II-V) edited by R.C. Majumdar & A.D. Pusalkar, and the 'Comprehensive History of India' (Vol. II) edited by K.A.N. Sastri contain some chapters with reference to the history of Mālwa within a greater canvas of Indian history. But no attempt is known to have yet been made to assess the political and economic changes that occurred in Mālwa during the Post-Maurya period.

During my Post-graduate study of Ancient Indian History, I developed a keen interest in the history of Mālwa after the downfall of the Mauryas and before the rise of the Imperial Guptas. Although we had a limited opportunity to study Ancient Indian History within the syllabus on History in general, we were provided with training in historiography needed for advanced Indological studies. The Museum and Art Gallery, Burdwan University also provided a scope for having a first-hand knowledge of archaeological finds. The U.G.C. Junior Research Fellowship in the Department of History, Burdwan University, being offered,
provided me with an opportunity for making an attempt to make use of the original sources, both literary and archaeological. The excavation-site at Bharatpur, near Burdwan, was visited by me in 1974 to have an experience in field-archaeology.

The present study on the political changes in Mālwa during the Post-Maurya period is the result of a fresh examination of the materials already discovered. Some of the data included in this thesis were not previously used by any scholar. For Mālwa, the literary data are useful so long we do not question their dates. The epigraphic records are too insufficient to meet our requirements. Naturally, we have to fall back upon the numismatic evidences, of course, keeping in view the limited scope they cover. The scheme of the present work may be indicated in the following Chapters:

Chapter I: Historical Geography of Mālwa since 6th Century B.C.;
Chapter II: Śuṅga-Kāñya rule in Mālwa; Chapter III: Historicity of Vikramāditya of Ujjainī; Chapter IV: Struggle for supremacy in Mālwa; Chapter V: Economic background of the political changes; Chapter VI: Cultural background of the political rivalries; Chapter VIII: Coinage of Mālwa; Appendix - Epigraphic records having bearing upon the history of Mālwa.

In Chapter I an attempt has been made to determine the boundaries of Avanti and Ākara and to show how Mālwa emerged through centuries of political vicissitudes. Chapter II presents
the history of Avanti after the downfall of the Maurya empire.

It is shown how the centre of political gravity was gradually shifted from Pātaliputra to Vidiśā (in eastern Mālwa) during the Śunga-Kānya period. The economic factors contributing to this political change are taken into account. In Chapter III an assessment has been made of the historicity of Vikramāditya of Indian tradition. The tradition, being accepted as historically valid, would have thrown much light on the history of Mālwa in the first century B.C. In Chapter IV we have traced the long-drawn struggle for supremacy in Mālwa, characterised as a political rivalry between indigenous and foreign imperialist powers. Suggestions have been putforward to fill in the chronological gaps as far as possible. Chapter V deals with the economic background of the political changes in Mālwa. The natural resources, industrial products, and important position held by Ujjainī and Vidiśā on the junction of the trade-routes are taken into account to explain the growth of a mercantile community in Mālwa. It has been shown how the commercial prosperity of Mālwa attracted covetous imperialists. Chapter VI presents the cultural background of the political rivalries that went on for centuries. A spirit of rivalry between Buddhism and Brahmanism on the one hand, and between foreign and indigenous rulers upholding different social values on the other are treated as factors contributing to the growth of culture. A compromise between the ruling class and the mercantile community is also taken into account.
In Chapter VII we have made a fresh classification of the coinage of Mālwa, although we have not missed the views, or of contributions made by the previous numismatists. The study of local, dynastic and tribal coinage of Mālwa gives us a glimpse into the history of Janapada which is hardly provided by other sources. In spite of the predominance of the numismatic data for the history of Mālwa, we have given in an appendix, an introduction to the epigraphic records, having bearing upon the history of Mālwa.

I may indicate the Institutions wherefrom I obtained materials for the present study. I began to study at the Central Library of the University of Burdwan. Later on at the Library of the Asiatic Society of Calcutta I continued to work. Indian Museum, Calcutta, Sanskrit College Library, the Library of the Department of Ancient Indian History & Culture, Calcutta University, the Library and Museum of the Vikrama University, Ujjayini, Scindia Oriental Research Institute, Ujjayini, Gwalior Archaeological Museum, Gwalior, Sāñchī Museum, Vīdisā Museum and Indore Museum are some of the institutions where I was allowed an opportunity by the authorities concerned to work.

I have an obligation to acknowledge my indebtedness to my Supervisor, Dr. Bhaskar Chatterjee, M.A., Ph.D., Reader, Department of History, Burdwan University, under whose guidance I have worked.
as U.G.C. Junior Research Fellow since 30th March, 1972. I remain grateful to Dr. D.K. Ghosh, M.A., Ph.D. (Cal), Ph.D. (Lond.), Professor and Head of the Department of History, Burdwan University, whose valuable suggestions have been of substantial help for the progress of the work. I owe my indebtedness to Prof. K.C. Jain, Head of Department of Ancient Indian History, Culture and Archaeology, Vikram University, Ujjayini, Mr. H.V. Trivedi and Dr. Nagu whom I met at Indore, Dr. Kalyan Kumar Das Gupta, Reader in Ancient Indian History & Culture, Calcutta University for their valuable suggestions and to the Curators of different Museums who extended co-operation to me. Prof. Kalipada Sinha, Department of Bengali, Burdwan Raj College helped me by extending liberal loans of books from his College library. Dr. Ashoke Mukherjee, Lecturer in Botany, Burdwan University, has done for me the preparation of the coin-plates. Needless to say I have derived all sorts of help and encouragement from my parents and other members of my family, including my younger brother Sreeman Partha Chakrabarty. I am thankful to the Director, Indian Museum, Calcutta for permitting me to study coins in the Coin-Cabinet and to use the relevant coin-plates of Indian Museum Catalogue (Vol.I) for the present thesis.