THE RĀŚHṬRAKŪṬAS 
AND THEIR TIMES
being
a political, administrative, religious, social, economic and literary
history of the Deccan (i.e. Southern Gujarat, Maharashtra,
Karnatak, Nizam's Dominions, and Northern Mysore),
during C. 750 A.D. to C. 1000 A.D.

BY

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in Western-India', 'Education in Ancient India,'
'A New Gupta King' etc.

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TRANSLITERATION

In the transliteration scheme followed in this book the following deserve to be noted:—

Long vowels: by a line above the short ones.

\( \text{क} \), \( \text{र} \), \( \text{च} \), \( \text{छ} \), \( \text{cbd} \), \( \text{म} \)

\( \text{त} \), \( \text{द} \), \( \text{थ} \), \( \text{ध} \), \( \text{न} \)

\( \text{ष} \), \( \text{श} \), \( \text{स} \), \( \text{ह} \)

Sanskrit, Prakrit and Pali words and ancient names are spelt according to the above system; modern current names and terms are spelt without any diacritical marks.

BOOKS BY THE SAME AUTHOR


3. Education in Ancient India. The Indian Book Shop, Benares City, 1934. Pp. vi + 386. Price Rs. 3
PREFACE

The reconstruction of Ancient Indian History has passed through several stages. In the beginning, almost everything appeared to be of the nature of a dim legend; hardly any historical data were available. When the key to the ancient Indian inscriptions was discovered, abundant historical material became available, and the energies of scholars were for some time directed towards the task of assorting it. The first generation of scholars was naturally engaged in determining the chronology and giving the frame-work of the political history. These problems became more or less settled in course of time. Owing to the commendable zeal of the Indian Government and of the various research societies, both in India and abroad, immense historical material became available in course of time. The discovery of the Arthasastra, which coincided with the political awakening in the country, gave a powerful impetus to the study of the political institutions of Ancient India. The material now available is, however, so ample that the historian need not longer be exclusively or mainly occupied with the court, but can give equal attention to the cottage.

In this book, which substantially represents a thesis accepted for the D. Litt. degree of the Benares Hindu University, an attempt has been made to give a comprehensive history of the Deccan under the Rashtrakutas (c. 750-1000 A.D.).

The first Part (Chapters I-VI) deals with the political history of the Rashtrakuta dynasty. More than 40 years have elapsed since the late Drs. R. G. Bhandarkar and Fleet wrote upon this subject. During this time, several new inscriptions of the Rashtrakutas and their contemporaries have been published, necessitating the rewriting of the history of the dynasty. Some idea of the new material, that has be-
come subsequently available in this period, may perhaps be
gained, when it is pointed out that in the present work, it
was found necessary to devote about four times the space
that was found more than sufficient by Bhandarkar and
Fleet for narrating the political history of the house. Like
a novel, political history cannot be all new or original. It
is, however, hoped that scholars will find the history of
the Rashtrakūtas expounded here much more fully than in
any book so far published. Several new suggestions, view-
points, and conclusions will be met with, and Chapter I,
dealing with the predecessors of Dantidurga, will be found
to be substantially new and original. The political relations
of the Rashtrakūtas with their contemporaries and feuda-
tories have been fully discussed. The history of the feudal-
tories, however, has not been dealt with in detail as it was
outside the scope of the present work.

Part II (Chapters VII-XII) contains a comparative
study of the Rashtrakūta administration. The books on the
subject of Ancient Indian Politics are now so numerous,
that the students of the subject may be inclined to feel some
apprehension at the prospect of a new one being added to
their number. It is, however, confidently hoped that a
perusal of this part will show that epigraphical documents
have a rich store of material bearing on the subject, which
has been practically untouched to the present day. The
information from the Rashtrakūta inscriptions has been in
several places compared to, contrasted with, and in some
cases, where it seemed justifiable to do so, supplemented by
the data supplied by the earlier, contemporary, and later
inscriptions and works on the Nitisūtra, Dharmasūtra, and
Arthasūtra.

Part III (Chapters XIII-XVII) attempts to delineate the
religious, social, literary, educational and economic conditions
of the times. Here the background had to be necessarily
wider. The method in this part is also comparative. I have
not only tried to show what the things were in the Deccan
under the Rashtrakutas, but also introduced comparisons with
a view to illustrate the state of affairs in the earlier and later
times. In this part the treatment has been mainly confined
to the Deccan under the Rashtrakutas; in a few cases evi-
dence from Northern India is also considered with a view to
emphasise the points of similarity and contrast. While con-
sidering the economic conditions, the data supplied by some
Chola records had to be utilised, as it was necessary to do
so in order to interpret properly the numerous Rashtrakuta
inscriptions, hailing from the northern districts of Tamil
country. Epigraphical sources have been primarily relied
upon, but at every step an effort has been made to show how
far the realities of the situation, as disclosed by the inscrip-
tions, confirm, modify or contradict the picture based upon
the Smritis and Puranas. As social and religious customs
and institutions do not change suddenly, the information
in this part is in some cases supplemented by the data supplied
by the 7th and the 11th century inscriptions also.

The reader will thus find in this work not only the
political history of the times, but also the religious, social,
economic, literary and administrative history of the age.
Unlike most of the books on the subject of Ancient Indian
History, he will find here equal attention given to the cultural
as well as to the political history. A perusal of the book will
show that there hardly exists any work at present, which
offers so complete and comprehensive a study of any period
in Ancient Indian History.

The main sources of the book are the inscriptions of the
Rashtrakutas, their contemporaries, and their immediate
predecessors and successors. These are supplemented by
the accounts of the Arabic travellers and the valuable book of
Alberuni. Contemporary works like Somadeva's Yasastilaka
and Nātivākyāṃṛta, Pampa's Vikramārjunavijaya and later Śrīkṛṣṇa and Purāṇas have also been utilised. Later travellers like Marco Polo, Ibn Batuta, Bernier and Tavernier have also been consulted with a view to see whether they could throw any light on our period.

For the purpose of Parts II and III, I have thoroughly studied the whole of the Dharmasāstra, Nītisāstra, and Arthasāstra literature, and the relevant portions from the Purāṇas and the later Nibandhas. My principal aim is to find out how far the epigraphical data confirm, modify or contradict the conclusions based upon the theoretical works on the subject.

In Part III the aim is merely to describe the social, religious and economic conditions of our period. No attempt is made to account for the changes that we witness taking place at this time. To a student of the Dharmasāstra literature, the temptation to initiate this enquiry is almost irresistible, but that would have been beyond the scope of the present work and would have unnecessarily increased its size. I hope to write in course of time a few monographs on the origin, development and history of the various socio-religious institutions of the Hindus. The first of these, dealing with the history and development of Education in Ancient India, has been just published.

In conclusion I would like to offer my hearty thanks to the Oriental Book Agency and its enterprising manager Dr. N. G. Sardesai for undertaking the publication of this work, and to Mr. S. R. Sardesai, the manager of the Samarth Bharat Press, for printing it neatly.

Benares Hindu University, A. S. Altekar
February 20, 1934.
CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Transliteration</th>
<th></th>
<th>ii</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preface</td>
<td></td>
<td>iii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abbreviations</td>
<td></td>
<td>vii</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

PART I—Political History

Chapter I, Early Rashtra Rulers, Their Stock, Home and Relations with the Predecessors of Dantidurga... 1

Chapter II, The Rise of the Rashtra Rulers; Indra I, Dantidurga and Kshna I 29

Chapter III, The Empire at its Zenith 48

Chapter IV, Amoghavarsha I and the Gujarat Branch 71

Chapter V, From Kshna II to Govinda IV 90

Chapter VI, Last Four Rulers 117

PART II—A Comparative Study in the Rashtra Administration

Chapter VII, Political Divisions 135

Chapter VIII, Central Government: King and Ministry 150

Chapter IX, Provincial, District, Divisional and Town Government 173

Chapter X, Village Government 188

Chapter XI, Revenue and Expenditure 212

Chapter XII, The Military and the Police, and the Feudatories 246

PART III—A Comparative Study in the Religious, Social, Economic, Literary, and Educational Conditions of the Times

Chapter XIII, Religious Condition 269

Chapter XIV, Social Condition 317

Chapter XV, Economic Condition 353

Chapter XVI, Education and Literature 398

Chapter XVII, Conclusion 413

Errata and Addenda 419

Bibliography 423

Index 426 (vii)
ABBREVIATIONS

A.mg. Ardhamāgadhi
A. S. S. I. Archaeological Survey of South India Annual Reports.
A. S. W. I. Archaeological Survey of Western India, Annual Reports.
B, G. Bombay Gazetteer.
C. I. I. Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum.
Dynasties Dynasties of the Canarese Districts of the Bombay Presidency.
E, C. Epigraphia Carnatica.
E. I. Epigraphia Indica.
Elliot Elliot, History of India, 7 vols.
I. A. Indian Antiquary.
J. M. Jain-Mahārashṭrī.
M. Mahārashṭrī.
S. I. I. South Indian Inscriptions.
Sachau Alberuni’s India, edited by Sachau.
Skt. (viii)
however, admitted that fine arts do not seem to have received any impetus in the age of the Rashtrakūtas. The Mauryan, Gupta, Chalukya and Pallava ages had their own distinctive and creditable contributions in the sphere of fine arts; no such claim can be made for the Rashtrakūta age. Fine arts seem to have been practically neglected by the Malkhed Court. The rock-cut temple at Elora is no doubt an architectural wonder; but it is the only imposing monument of the age, handed down to the posterity, and there is no evidence to show that any other monuments of equal magnificence have been subsequently destroyed. The Elora temple, again, may, not unlikely, have been the work of artists imported from Kanchi.

In the religious and social spheres, our age was an age of transition. It was towards the end of our period that Buddhism, reconversions into Hinduism, intercaste dinners and marriages, and religious parishads having powers to settle socio-religious matters, disappeared from the Hindu society. Vratas, tonsure of widows, provincial sub-castes, the association of dancing girls with temples, the resuscitation of the Sātī custom in the Deccan, and the more intricate Śmārta ritual are innovations that can be traced either to our, or to the immediately succeeding age. It is probable that our age believed that most of these changes were changes for the better, but the subsequent history of the Hindu society has shown that they have weakened its unity and cohesion. One cannot help thinking that the thinkers of the age should have taken a longer view of the situation, and realised the full consequences of the new changes that were being either forced upon or recommended by them.
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Line</th>
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<td>5</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Hoshangabad</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Nannaraja</td>
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<td>10</td>
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<td>Indra II</td>
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<td>13</td>
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<td>51</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>तस्याद्विगो</td>
<td>तस्याद्विगो</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>62</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Śivamāra</td>
<td>Muttarasa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>62</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>क्षत्रिय</td>
<td>हिति</td>
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<tr>
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<td>11</td>
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<td>88</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Karnāṭakaśābdā-</td>
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<td>नुसाननम</td>
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<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>95</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Kirnapur</td>
<td>Kiranyur</td>
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<tr>
<td>95</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>150</td>
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<tr>
<td>106</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>रेल्ली</td>
<td>रेल्ली</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>108</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Amoghavarsa III</td>
<td>Amoghavarsa II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>123</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>was</td>
<td>wa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>127</td>
<td>16-17</td>
<td>Bhimaparākrama</td>
<td>Bhimaparākrama</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>129</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Govinda IV</td>
<td>Govinda II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>151</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Raṭṭarājya—</td>
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<tr>
<td>160</td>
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<td>165</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Rashtrakūta</td>
<td>Rashtragkūta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>166</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>समारिद्व:</td>
<td>समारिद्वि:</td>
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<td>195</td>
<td>16</td>
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<td>26</td>
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<td>218</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>tola</td>
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<td>257</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Rashtrakūtas</td>
<td>Rashtrakūjas</td>
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<tr>
<td>259</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>in contradiction to</td>
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<td>bhūṣaṇa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>267</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>indignities</td>
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<tr>
<td>278</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>Amoghavarsha I</td>
<td>Amoghavarshal</td>
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<tr>
<td>281</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>founded</td>
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<tr>
<td>294</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>buffaloes</td>
<td>buffalos</td>
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<tr>
<td>308</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Kāmpilya</td>
<td>Kāmpailya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>337</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Pāraśava</td>
<td>Pāraśava</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>345</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>but</td>
<td>bu</td>
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<td>364</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Paramamāheśvara</td>
<td>Paramamahēśvara</td>
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<tr>
<td>374</td>
<td>2</td>
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</table>
ADDENDA.

Pp. 52–3. The conjecture hazarded here that Śrīvallabha mentioned by Hariśeṇa in the colophon of the Harivansā was ruling the Deccan in the year 783 A.D. would be Dhrūva rather than Govinda II, is now confirmed by an unpublished grant of Dhrūva lying in the treasury of the State of Bhor, which is dated in Śaka 702 i.e. 780 A.D., and is issued by Dhrūva Dhāravārṣa. The plates will be shortly published.

P. 85. The statement in the book that Dantivarman had succeeded his elder brother Dhrūva II was based on the fact that there was a long interval of 21 years between the last known date of Dhrūva II and the first known date of his successor Kiṣṇa. Recently, however, a new grant of Dhrūva II has come to light, which I am editing for the Epigraphia Indica, and which reduces this interval to a period of less than four years. The passage giving the date is in words, but is defective; it reads शक्याख्यातितिसंवर्षसत्तमएव प्रत्येकः. The word for the number of centuries is omitted by inadvertence, but there can be no doubt that the expression was intended to be संवर्षसत्तमएव. This record thus supplies 884 A.D. as the latest date for Dhrūva II. It, therefore, now looks extremely improbable that Dantivarman could have reigned between Dhrūva II and Kiṣṇa Akālavarṣa II. In my paper on this plate I have adduced reasons to show that Kiṣṇa Akālavarṣa II was very probably a son of his predecessor Dhrūva II and not of his brother Dantivarman.
Pp. 124-5. The sack of Malkhed. In Śāradāśrāma Vārsīka, p. 6, Prof. Hiralal Jain has suggested that the sack of Malkhed by the Paramāra ruler Siyaka may have taken place in 962 A.D. and not 972 A.D. He relies on the colophon of the Mahāparāṇa of Puṣpadanta, which according to its colophon was completed on the 11th of June 965 A.D., and which refers to the sack of Malkhed in a verse of its 87th chapter. Until the Purāṇa is published, it will be difficult to assess the value of these passages. It, however, seems extremely improbable that the Rāṣṭrakūṭa capital could have been captured during the reign of the mighty emperor Kṛṣṇa III. He was holding even Tamil districts down to the last year of his reign; this would have been impossible if the Rāṣṭrakūṭa prestige had been shattered by the capture and plunder of the imperial capital in 962 A.D. We must further note that the Malva Praśasti distinctly states that the opponent of Siyaka was Khoṭṭiga:—श्रीहरिदेव इति श्रीहरिदेवराज्य-बलमी जयाद यो बुधरि। This statement in the Paramāra official document would show that the sack of Malkhed took place during the reign of Khoṭṭiga, rather than that of Kṛṣṇa. We must, therefore, accept 972 A.D., as the date of the event as supplied by Dhanapāla in the colophon of his Pāiyalachechhi.

P. 309. The identification of Kāṃpilya suggested here is wrong. The new copper plate of Dhrūva II, dated 884 A.D., makes it clear that this Kāṃpilya is to be identified with the village Kāpliā in Bardoli Taluka, Surat district.
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INDEX

A
Abhidhanarajyendra, 142-3
Abhimanyu Rāṣṭrakūṭa and his house, 4-6
Aboriginal goda, 288
Adhikārikamohattaro, 206
Adipurāṇa, 88, 99, 410
Adipūraṇa of Pampa, 411
Ādavallāṇa measure, 376
Adverse possession, 348
Āgnihoṭra, 284
Āgrahara villages as centres of education, 402-4
Āhāra or Āharani, 137
Ājītātirthankarapurāṇa, 412
Akulankadeva, 409
Akūlavarsha Subhutunga, Early Rāṣṭrakūṭa rulers, 1-2
Akūlavarsha Subhutunga, of Gujarat branch, 81
Ākkam, 366
Alienation of inam lands, 194
".. property, taxes payable at, 195; see also under Property
Āmātya, 169-70
Ambulance corps, 254
Amoghavarsha I: born in 808, A. D., 68; his career, 71-79; his deposition, 73; his reinstation, 74; further rebellions against, 76; defeated by Vijayāditya, II, 74; defeats Guṇaga Vijayāditya 75; war with the Pūlas, 77-8; his religion, 88-9; his abdication 89

Amoghavarsha II, 105-6
Amoghavarsha III, pressed to accept the crown, 108; his career, 111-5
Amoghavṛtti, 410
Amusements, 350-1
Anarchy and village councils, 211
Animal sacrifices, 294
Annexation policy, 262, 416
Anniga, a Nolamba king, 112, n. 5
Appīyika, a contemporary of Puliakesin II, 28
Āptamimansa, 409
Arakku, 376
Ārdhamāṇya tenure, 224
Ārikeśarā I, 51 n. 10; 129
II. 107-8; 129-30
Army of the Rāṣṭrakūṭas: strength, 255-6; its divisions, 247-8; relative strength of the three arms, 248-9; hereditary forces in, 250-1; recruitment for, 249; training of, 252; allowances and death pensions, 251-2; presence of women in, 254-5
Āśhpasahastri, 409
Āshīṭātir, 409
Astrologers and astrology, 156; 351
Asvasionā, of Prthvīvyāghra, 37
Attivarman, 4
Austerity, 299-300
Āvalok-a-ending epithets, 83, n. 33
Ayānā, 127
Āyuktaka, 196
Āyuspadēva Nanniga, 112 n. 5

426
INDEX

B

Bādana, of Vengi, 121-2
Badēga, See under Vadēga
... a Chālukya chief, 129
Bhukavallabha, 66 n. 50
Balagachchu, 224
Bankeya, 77-8, 85
Banking by village councils, 208-9
Bappa, 130
Bengavarivishaya, 51 n. 10; 129
Bhaga-kara, 214-5
Bhakti movement, 299
Bhāmaha, Taila’s father-in-law, 127
Bhagadārikā, 171
Bharoch, 358
Bhāja, 233-4
Bhāhattakalanka, on Amoghavarma
I, 88
Bhavonāga, 29
Bhillama II, 126 n. 49; 130
Bhima, Taila’s ancestor, 127
Bhūma I of Vengi, wins back his kingdom, 76, 91; his son killed in battle, 96
Bhūma II of Vengi, 107
Bhūmapārākrama, 127
Bhōgopati, 137; 177-8
Bhoja I, Prathāhāra emperor, 77; 82; 85; 97
Bhoja II, Prathāhāra emperor, 101
Bhūṭtī, 137
Bhūtavatapratyāya, 228-9
Bhūteyadeva, 132
Bīgarī, 231
Bontādēvī, 104; 127
Brahmahara, same as Bhāmaha, 127
Brahmanas, exemption from the capital punishment of, 329-30; from taxation of, 327-8; inferior to the Kshatriyas?, 324; professions followed by, 325-6
Budharīja, 159
Budhavarsha, 46
Buddhism, and military emasculation, 315; declining, 269-71; its establishments in the Deccan, 308-9
Būtga II, 79; 87; 94; marries a daughter of Amoghavarsha III, 100; supplants Rāchamalla, 112; helps Kṛṣṇa III at his accession, 115, and in the Chola war by killing Rājāditya, 118; provinces ceded to him by Kṛṣṇa, 119

C

Camp followers, 254
Cannarese, mother tongue of the Rāṣṭrakūṭas, 21; spoken upto the Godāvari, 24
Castes, their number, 317-19; interdining among, 338-9; inter-marriages among, 336-7; provincial, 335
Ceylon king submits to Gavinda III, 69; to Kṛṣṇa III, 118-9
Chākīrīja, 46
Chakrakota, 92; 95
Chakrāyudha, king of Kanauj, 30; championed by Dharmapāla, 56 installed at Kanauj, 64; but expelled by Nigabhaṭa, 65; submits to Gavinda III, 66
Chāluḥyakas, Early, their dominions 30; by whom overthrown, 36-9, 44; their connection with later Chāluḥyakas, 127-8
Chāluḥyakas, Eastern, see under Vengi
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INDEX</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-Chalukya feudatories under the Rashtrakutas, 46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Chalukyas, later, their connection with the Early Chalukyas, 127-8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Chamundaraya, 412</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chamundarayapurana 413</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Chandragupta of Kosala, 66 n. 51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Character, Indian, estimate of, 314-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chauruponna, of Nolambavadi, 63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chaitra, 234</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chedia, their marriage relations with the Rashtrakutas, 104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Chief justice, 167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Chitrakuta, conquered by Krishna III, 112; reconquered by Vaivaranman, 113, 120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chitrakuta king defeated by Govinda III, 66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Chitravahana, 174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cholas defeated by Govinda III, 69; by Krishna III, 116-20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choroddharapika, 261</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Chudvara, 227</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cloth industry, 356-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coinage, 364-67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Commander-in-chief, 167-8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concubinage, 346</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Constitutional checks, 157-60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Copper, its price in relation to other metals, 366-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cosharam, 363</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Cost of living, 389-90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Court, royal, 155-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Courtesans, 155-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cow, 298</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creps, 354</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dancing girls, 295-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dantidurga, his career, 33-41; Sarva, his epithet, 34 n. 12; declares independence, 36; not an oppressor, 41-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dantivarman, of the main line, 27 of the Gujarat branch, 85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daśāvatāra inscription, belongs to Dantidurga's time, 34-5, n. 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deccan, wealth of, 353-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democracy, 150-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dēṣagṛmakūṭa, 178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Devadāśis, see under Dancing girls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dhamapala, 412</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dhammadhamāmātya, 169</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dharmānusk'a, 169</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dharmapala, marries a Rashtrakūṭa princess, 55; champions Chakrāyudha but defeated by Vatsaraja, 56; second march against Vatsaraja, 57; defeated Dhrupa, 57, defeats Vatsaraja and installs Chakrāyudha, 64; submits to Govinda III, 66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dhrapradhāna, 169</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dharmavaloja, 88 n. 33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dharmottarāśāraya, 410</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dharmottaraprayaka 410</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dhrupa, of the main branch, 52-9; his plot against Govinda II, 50-2; imprisons Śivamūra, 54; attacks Kānchī, 55; defeats Vatsaraja and Dhrampala, 56-7; his abdication? 60-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dhrupa I, of Gujarat, 81 of Gujarat, 81, 84-5 see also Addenda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District councils, 158-9; 211</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
INDEX

D

Doctor, 157: 326
Drama, 364
Drangā, 214
Dress, 348-9
Dūma, 166-7
Dugdhamalla, 129

E

Education, general condition, 398-9; how financed, 404-5; Educational qualifications, for government service, 185
Election, of king, 150-1; of the village councils, 198-9; of the town councils, 183
Ellipur, capital of Yudhāsura, 9; pre-Malkhed capital? 48
Eṣeyappa, 112 n. 5
Excise duties, 229-30
Export articles, 358-59

F

Family, joint, 339-40
Favourites, royal, 185-6
Ferry duties, 232
Feudatories. 262-8; their different grades, 263; degrees of control over, 264-7; effects of the feudatory policy, 416
Fighting, rules of, 258-9
Fine Arts, 418
Fines, 235-6
Foreign minister, 166-7
Forests, ownership of, 240
Fornication, 346
Forts, 256-7

G

Gaḍīyānaka, 366
Gaṇḍagaviḍi, invaded by Kṣruṇa I, 44; annexed by Dhuva; 54; handed back to Śivamāra, 62; again annexed, 63; armies of, defeated, 69; becomes independent, 78; given to Bātaka after the overthrow of Rāchamalla I, 112; under Nolambāntaka Mūrasimha, 119; under Panchiladava; 132; under Rāchamalla II, 132
Gaṅgoṭesārasamgraha, 88; 410
Gaudī style, 407
Generals, status, privileges and paraphernalia of, 168? 253
Gayaśaṃ, 121
Goggi, 128
Govardhana, 49
Government expenditure, 244-6
Government properties, income from, 236-44
Government revenues, sources of, 212-3
Governors, their selection, 173- and powers, 174-6; military forces under, 174; central government control over, 175
Govinda I, 27-8
Govinda II, defeats the Chālukyas, 44; career as king, 48-52; controversy about the accession of, 48 n. 1; becomes licentious, 50; overthrown by Dhuva, 51-2
Govinda III, career, 59-71; war after accession, 62-3; war with the Pallavas and Chālukyas, 63-4; expedition in northern India, 64-68; second war with the Pallavas, 69-70
Govinda IV, his sensuousness, 106-7; defeated by Bhima, 107; rebellion against and overthrow of, 107-110
Govinda, Pulakoṣa's contemporary, 28
INDEX

Govindaraja of Narava plates, 14-5
Grana, various interpretations discussed, 142-7; average size of, 148
Graramahattara, 158-9
Gulda, 367-71
Gujarat, conquered by Dantidurga, 38; by Govinda III, 70 n. 65; Konkan not invaded by Amoghavarsha I, 84 n. 34
Gujarat Rashtrakutas; 79-87; extent of their kingdom, 85; line founded by Indra, 79; his son Karkka helps Amoghavarsha I, 72-4, 79; his younger brother Govinda not a usurper, 80; Dhruva I dies fighting against Amoghavarsha I, his son Akalavarsha regains the throne, 81, 85; his son Dhruva II makes peace with Amoghavarsha I, 81; his son Dantivarman, 85; his successor Krsna Akalavarsha, 85, and Addenda; expelled by Krsna II, 98; end of the line, 98
Gupabhada, 99
Gupachandra, 410
Gupavalaoka, 83 n. 33
Gurava, 293

H
Halayudha, 438
Haribhadra, 409
Harivans'a, on contemporary kings, 52; its authorship, 410
Headman, see under Village headman
Heir-apparent, see under Yuvaraja
Heirless property, 242-4
Hereditary officers, 178-80
184-5
Himalaya, reached by Govinda III, 66 n. 32
Hiranyakarbhodana, 35, 40, 29
House tax, 231-2

I
Idol worship, 292
Immolation by royal officers, 186, by widows, see under Sat Import articles, 359; duties, 229-30
Indra I, Panchakaraja, 27-8
Indra II, marries Bhavanaga, 29
his career, 31-2
Indra III, career, 99-103; defeats the Paramaras, 106-11; defeats Mahipala and conquers Kausavya, 101-3
Indra IV, 131-2
Indra, brother of Govinda III, 62, 65-6, 71 n. 66, 79
Indra, son of Krsna, 2-3
Indrayudha, 56
Industries of the Deccan, 356-7
Inheritance, order of, 243-4; 340-1
Interest rates, 371-6, 386
Ivory industry, 357

J
Jagadguru, 282
Jagattunga, son of Krsna II, 90, 97, 99
Jagattunga, a younger brother of Krsna III, 124
Jainism, patronised by Amoghavarsha I, 88 and Krsna II,
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INDEX</th>
<th>431</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>99; why prospered during our period</td>
<td>272, 310–13; Matha life in, 313; responsible for military decline?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jākavā, 127</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jānapada, 157–8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jayasimha, 154</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jayavarman, 31, 37</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jejja, 82</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jhanja, 126 n. 49</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jinachandra, 412</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jinasa, Amoghavarsha’s Guru, 88, 410</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judicial powers of the village councils</td>
<td>210–1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**K**

Kalam, 376–7

Kalanjur, 115, 120

Kalanju, 365–6

Kalas college, 403

Kalavijarasa, 174

Kalhana on elective kingship, 151

Kalivallabha, 53

Kalpi, 102 n. 44

Kalyan, 358

Kamalavardhana, 150

Kampana 168

Kānchhi, see under Pallavas

Karka I of the main branch, 28

Karka II of the main branch: 125–7; 130–31

Karkarāja II of the Gujarāt branch, his relations with the imperial family, 11–4; governor under Dantidurga, 40, ousted by Kṛṣṇa, 43

Karka Suvarṇavarma, a brother of Guvinda III, 59

Karka Suvarṇavarma, a son of Indra, Amoghavarsha’s guardian, 72–3; same as Pātālimala, 72 n. 3

Karkarāja, father of Parabala, 82

Karkara, 110

Karṇāyakalabandhanasana, 88

Kāśā, 366

Kattiyira, 46

Kaviyathasa, 408

Kaviyajamarga, 88, 408, 411

Kavunus anuvam, 408

Kavya style, 406

Khādgavala, 83

Keral kingdom, 69; 118–9

Keshirāja on Amoghavarsha I, 88

Ketalađevi, 154

Khoṭṭiga, 124–5; see also Addenda

King, hereditary or elective, 150–1 and n. 2; age at accession of, 154; how far constitutional, 157

Kirnapura, 75, 95 n. 18

Kirtivarman II, 39; Rāhapa his epithet? 43

Kekkala, 90–1, 101

Konnur inscription, its reliability, 76

Kosa king, defeated by durgā, 37

Kṛṣṇa I career, 41–8; did not oust Dantidurga, 42; overthrew Kirtivarman, 44; invaded Gangavadi, 44; defeats Vishnukvardhana 45; conquers Konkana, 45

Kṛṣṇa II, career, 91; 99; war with Vijayāditya, 91–6; with Bhoja I, 97; puts an end to the Gujarāt branch, 98

Kṛṣṇa III, his career, 111–23; his part in winning the throne for his father, 109; wins Gangawadi for Būtuga, 112; defeats the Che-
INDEX

M
Mūdevi measure, 376
Mahājanas, 199-202
Mahādēva pujalaka, 170
Mahāprachandadeva āgya, 168
Mahāpradīhāna, 165
Mahāpurushita, 169
Mahārothi, 25
Mahāsandhisūgrāhīka, 166-7
Maḥattaras, council of, 205-6
Maḥattaranāthākūrīśa, 206
Maḥattarasavādhikārīna, 159-60
Maḥśrāhārya, 88
Mahīpāla, 101-2
Mailādeva, 154
Malkhed, when it became capital, 46-8; not plundered by Viṣayā- ditya III, 95 n. 18; sacked by Siyaka, 124-5; see Addenda
Mailavādin, 410
Malva 67, 68
Maṅgala, 136
Mangī, 75, 91-2
Maṇjū, 366
Maṅkikyanandita, 409
Manne, the Ganga capital, 44
Mantarī, 169
Māṇya tenure, 224
Mārakkaḷor, 376
Mārasimha, a Chāluṇka feudatory 128
Mārasimha, Nolambāntaka, his succession, 119; helps Kṛṣṇa III in the Malva expedition, 120-1; scenes of his victories, 125; helps Khoṭṭiga, 125; espouses the cause of Indra IV, 131; dies by Sallēkhaṇā vow., 132
Marathi language, 412-3

L
Lakshmana, a Chedi king, 104, 130
Lakṣmīdevi, 154
Lakṣmīvallabha, 84
Land leases, 351-2
Land ownership, 236-9
Land prices, 384-5
Land taxation, in theory and practice, 217-23; for temple lands, 223; for special tenures, 224; revision of rates and remissions of 225; collected in instalments and in kind, 226-8
Land tenures, 251
Land transfer, 346-7; 362-3
Lāṭṭalīra, 22-3
Lemdeyaranā, 177
Loyalty, instances of, 352

K
Kṛṣṇa, 39
Kukkutā, 113; annexes Ton-daimadala, 116-7; conquers Tanjore and marches on Ramasvaran, 118-9; overawe Ceylon, 119; cedes some districts to Būtuga, 119; loses Chitra-kūṭa and Kālanjar, 120; it 116-7; annexes Ton-daimadala. 116-7; conquers Tanjore and marches on Ramasvaran, 118-9; overawe Ceylon, 119; cedes some districts to Būtuga, 119; loses Chitra-kūṭa and Kālanjar, 120; puts his own nominee on the Vengi throne, 122; death-date discussed, 122, and n. 39
Kṛṣṇaprāda, a Kalachuri ruler, 3, 364
Kabatriyas, superior to Brahmanas?, 324; exempted from the capital punishment? 330-1; religious position of, 331-2
Kumkumadevi, 154
Kurundabaka, 100 n. 38
Kurṇi, 376

Krśńarāja, a Kalachuri ruler, 3, 364
Kabatriyas, superior to Brahmanas?, 324; exempted from the capital punishment? 330-1; religious position of, 331-2
Kumkumadevi, 154
Kurundabaka, 100 n. 38
Kurṇi, 376

Mārasimha, a Chāluṇka feudatory 128
Mārasimha, Nolambāntaka, his succession, 119; helps Kṛṣṇa III in the Malva expedition, 120-1; scenes of his victories, 125; helps Khoṭṭiga, 125; espouses the cause of Indra IV, 131; dies by Sallēkhaṇā vow., 132
Marathi language, 412-3
INDEX -

Marriage, age at, 342; tax at, 232; with maternal uncle’s daughter, 343
Mat industry, 357
Maṭha as centre of education, 401-2
Mattar, 220
Maula bala, 250-1
Maulika arhaqa, 194
Mayūrkhindi, 47
Maṭēśvaram, 224
Moena, an unidentified place, 100
Motaile, their relative prices, 366-7
Military, ascendancy of the, 247
Mines, 241-2; 355-6
Ministry; 160-73; hold in high reverence, 160-2; feudal status of the members of, 161; national welfare dependent on, 162; qualifications for the members of, 162-3; military qualifications for the members of, 164; different members in, 164-173; its method of daily work, 172-3
Mīṭkharā, 166, 177, 341
Morality, minister of, 169
Mūlarāja, 121
Muslims, invasion of Gujarat by, 32; alliance with Nāgabhata of, treatment under the Rāštra-kūta administration of, 187; 276-7; 387; social relations with, 307
Muttrasa, 44, 54

N
Nāgarapati, 139, 181
Nāgaravahārakas, 139
Nāgāvaloka, identity of, 82-3; and n. 33
Nāgavarman, 88
Nolachampa, 408
Namasya tenure, 224
Nambudri Brahmanas, 338
Nandivarman, 37-8
Nanna Guṇāvaloka, 27-8
Nannarāja of Multai plates, 6-10
Nārasimha, a Chālukya feudatory, 102
Narasimhabhadradeva, 129
Nāri, a measure, 376
Nasir, 47
Navy, 257, 415-6
Nirupama, 125
Nitiśākṣyōṃrā, 411
Niyuktas, 196
Nolambaśākta, 63; under Ganga suzerainty, 94; Kṛṣṇa’s war against, 90, 92; attacked by, Vijayāditya III, 94; Dantiga and Vappuga of, killed by Kṛṣṇa III, 112; Ayyapadeva and Ereyappa of, 112 n. 5
Numerical figures attached to territorial divisions, their various interpretations, 139-49; revenue theory, 139-40; population theory, 141; estates theory, 142-48; village number theory, 141-4; division theory, 149
Nīyakumudāchandra, 410
Nīyakumudāchandra, 410

O
Officers, loyalty of, 186; salaries of, 187-8; selection of, 184-6; expenses of their stay, 234
Ostroi duties, 229-30
INDEX

Siluka, 39
Silver, its ratio with other metals, 366-7
Sindh, 84 n. 43
Sivamāra, 54, 61-2
Siyaka, 120-1, 122-5
Śārta; religion, 285, 300-4
Sedhāla, 408
Semadeva, 411
Sports, 330-1
Śrīharṣa, see under Siyaka
Śripurusha of Gāngavēţi, 44, 54
Śrīvallabha, in Harvanśa is Dhruva, 53 and Addenda; epithe
of both Govinda II and
Dhruva, 52-3
Śrīvijaya, 103
Stambha, 54, 61-3, 153
Stridhanam, 341
Sub-accountant, 196, 397
Sub-committees of village council
198, 202-4
Śūdrakayya, 121
Śumātra, 171
Superstitious, 352-3, see also
under Astrology
Surname, 349-50
Śveṣaryā, a coin, 365
Śuryavarman, 150

T
Taila I, 127
Taila II, 125-6, 127-8, 130
Takkolam, battle of, 117-8
Tanjore, 118
Tāunig, 357
Tārā, 309
Taxes, in emergency, 235; exemp
tion from, 327-28; in labour,
231; on land, see under Land
taxation; on manufactured
articles, 228-9; on miscellaneous
articles, 194; 231-3; at puberty
ceremony, 232; on sonless
persons, 232
Temples, gods in, 287-8; wealth
of, 289-90; utility of, 290;
worship in 291; castes of the
Pujaris in, 293; dancing girls in,
295-6
Tenures, varieties of, 224
Thefts, compensation for, 260
Toleration, among Indian sects,
272-5; towards Muslims, 276
Tondaimandalam, 116-7
Tonsure, 344-5
Town administration, 181-4; com
mittee, 182-3
Transport, 339-60
Treasurer, 171-2
Treasurer's lust, 242-3
Trivikrama, 408
Tunga, 16-7
Tām, 376
Turbans, 349

U
Udbhayakavichakravarti, 412
Udayana, 31, 37
Udagastūdrarikathā, 408
Udramma, 203-6
Ujjayini, 39, 40, 102, and n. 44,
121
Umbrellas, 349
Untouchables, groups included
among, 320-2; grades among,
323; - depth of feeling about,
323-4
Upānīyātka, 196-7
Upārīka, 176
INDEX

Uparikara. 213-6
Upayukta. 196-7
Upendra. 78, 100-1
Urakkku. 376
Ur. 376
Viśa dynasty. 150
Utvangā. 134

V
Vadāga. (also spelled as Badāga), title of Kṛṣṇa III. 115
Vadāga, Yādava king. 133
Vadābadhā style. 407
Vaiṣhya. 332-3
Vaiśrayudha. 30
Vallabha, an opponent of the Gujarat branch. 81-4
Vallabhaṇasamchāriaṇah. 184
Vappuga. 112 and n. 5
Vatsarāja. 56, 57, 64
Vedic religion. did not revive. 278-9
Vedic studies. 400-1
Vengi Chāḷukya, defeated by Govinda Yuvarāja, 44; by Govinda III. 64; join Nāga-bhāṣa against Dharmapāla. 65
Vikramāditya I of Vengi, 73-5; reassert under Bhima. 76
Viddhāśīlabhanjakā. 109
Vidyānanda. 409
Vijayaḥāṭarikā. 152
Vijayāditya, a younger brother of Śivamāra. 152
Vijayāditya I of Vengi. 64. 74
Vijayāditya II of Vengi. 75
Vijayāditya III of Vengi. 91-6
Vikramāditya III. Bā. 116
Vikramāditya III. Chāḷukya princetord.
Vikramāditya of Vengi, writes :
Vikramāvaloka. 83
Village account
Village account, part of India
Village council, based upon a distinctive constitution and the relevant Tamil co-terminus. by external
their political and power, their judicial functions, 210; their meeting place. 211
Village defence, see under Village headman.
Village groups, for administrative purposes. 138
Village headmen. 188-95; hereditary, 185; their number per village. 189; in charge of defence. 191-2; and of revenue and general administration. 192-3; their remuneration. 193-4 and caste. 195
Village militia. 192
Village size. 148
Village Sanskrit schools. 404
Vinayasthitisthāpakā. 469
Vingavalli. 75
Vrācārīya. 410
Vishaya. 136-7
Vishayapati. 176-7
Vishāla. 231
Vishnuvardhana IV. 44
Vṛttāra temple. 288
Vratas. 286
Dr. F. W. Thomas, Professor of Sanskrit, Oxford, writes:

The work derives its unity from the nature of the subject, the history and culture of a fairly well defined part of India during the period of a particular dynasty. It is based upon a first-hand study of the epigraphical records and the relevant literature, including such information as is furnished by external sources. The materials have been carefully and thoroughly examined, with the result that the political and dynastic history has been expounded much more fully than before. The references seem to me exact, and the argumentation, where there is occasion for such, to be apposite. When previous views are controverted, the reasons are appropriately stated. Whether the mother (or original) ton of the Rāṣṭrakūta was Kanarese may perhaps be doubted.

In Part II (Administration) and Part III (Religious, Social and Economic conditions etc.) it is more difficult to distinguish the features proper to the Rāṣṭrakūta period and area from those of greater areas in space and time; and to a certain extent Professor Altekar is constrained to seek information outside the predetermined limits. He endeavours, however, and it seems successfully, to elicit the specialities. It is not his fault if for the most part the methods of Indian administration have rather been uniform and constant. The notes on p. 136 concerning the employment of the term rāṣṭrakūti and the discussion (pp. 213–6) of the meanings of the terms udraṅga and uparikara, adduce new points in matters of known obscurity.

The book may be described as a solid and well documented piece of work, and it constitutes an addition to previous knowledge of the subject.
2

Dr. D. R. Bhandarkar, Carmichael Professor of Ancient Indian History and Culture, Calcutta University, writes:—

The work is on the whole a meritorious production. The author has spared no pains in collecting facts bearing on his subject and his conclusions are almost invariably sober and thoughtful.

3

Dr. V. S. Sukhtankar, Editor of the Mahabharata, writes:—

This historical work is clearly based on a first-hand study of original documents and contains much sound and original research. The available materials have been thoroughly ransacked and carefully shifted. The author’s notions of historical criticism, his weighing of discordant versions, the clarity and the moderation with which he has presented his results—all these seem to me to merit high praise. It must be admitted that he has been able to expound the history of the House of the Rashtrakutas much more fully than before. The work must be pronounced to be a solid and well documented piece of research, and it constitutes a distinct addition to previous knowledge of the subject. The author shows a laudable grasp of his materials and a stern sense of impartiality.......