

‘Hindu’ Kingdoms of Early Medieval India: The Chalukyas

Dr Smita Halder

Assistant Professor, Dept. of GS

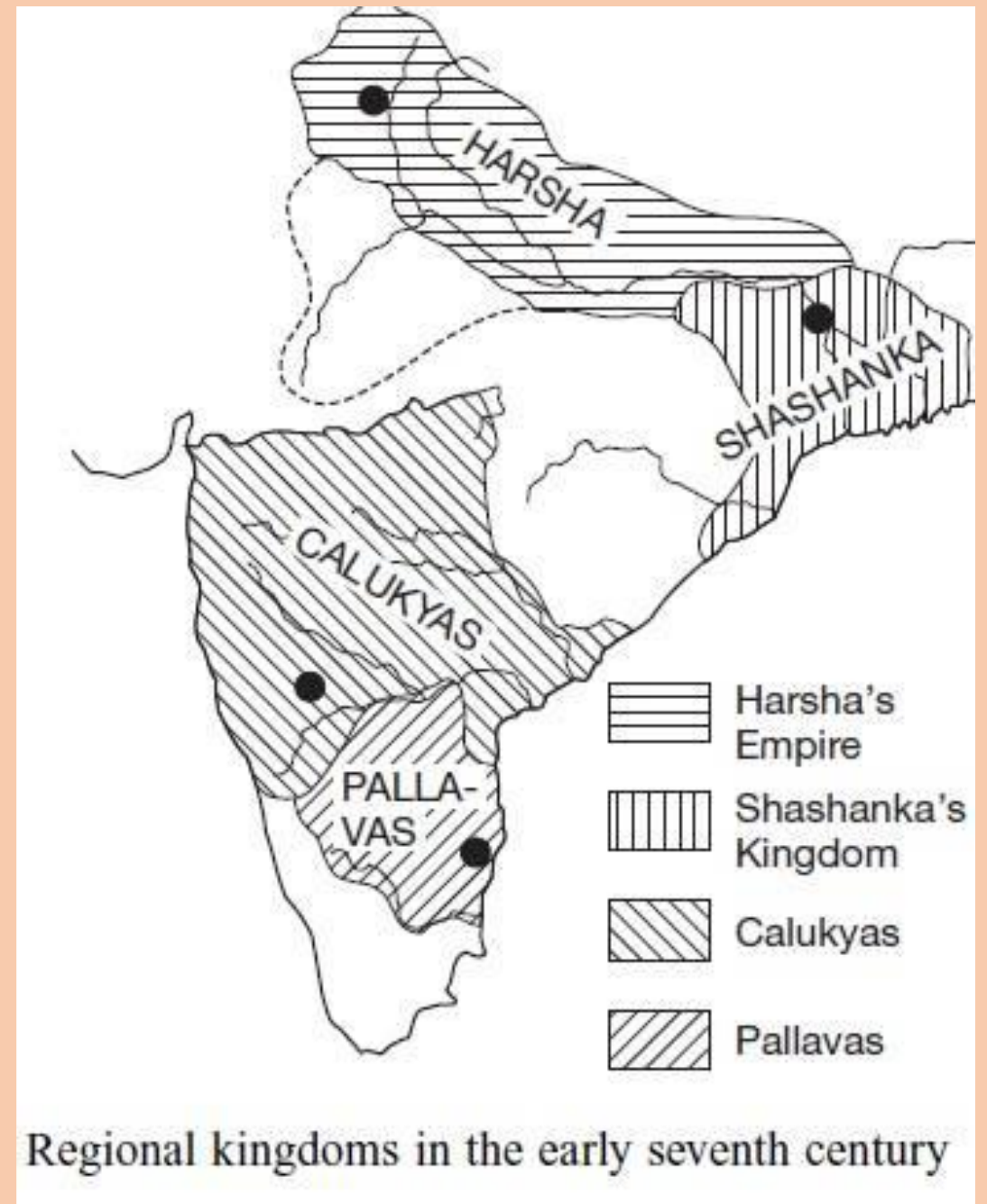
UEM Kolkata

Time Between c. 4th Century CE and Mid-6th Century CE

- Far South: Tamil Nadu and Kerala
 - The history of this area from the 4th to the mid-6th century CE is obscure
- Kanchi Area (Palar River Valley) – Under the Pallavas
 - Tussles between the Kalabhras and the Pallavas can be attested in this period
- Badami Area (North Karnataka): Chalukyas
 - Tussles between the Kalabhras and the Chalukyas can be attested in this period

From Mid-6th Century CE: Three Prominent Powers in Deccan and Far South

- Chalukyas of Badami
- Pallavas of Kanchi



Rise of the Chalukyas

- The Chalukyas had originally been tributary princes under the Kadambas
- In the sixth century, the first Chalukya king Pulakeshin I established his capital at Vatapi (Badami) and celebrated the great horse sacrifice to declare his independence from the Kadambas.
- The Chalukyas ruled in Deccan and adjoining region for around six centuries (from 6th century to 12th century)
- Branches of the Chalukyas
 - Main branch of Badami
 - Eastern Chalukyas of Vengi
 - Western Chalukyas of Kalyani

Pulakeshin -I

- Pulakesin was the eldest son of Ranaraga
- Pulakesin's rule, which started in c.540, is also the beginning of clear records regarding the dynasty, which give a convincing chronology of important events of that time.
- **ROCK INSCRIPTION OF BADAMI - IT IS CLEAR THAT PULAKESIN I RULED AT LEAST UPTO C. 567 A.D.**
- He built a fort at Batapi near Malaprabha River and established his capital at the fort
- Pulakesin I left behind a stable and considerably enlarged kingdom to his two sons - Kirtivarman I and Mangalesa.

Kirtivarman I

- Kirtivarman I, came to the throne around 566-567 CE
- The Badami inscriptions give the starting date of Kirtivarman's 12th regnal year as c.578 A.D. that in turn confirms the year c.566A.D. as his coronation year.
- Annexed the **Mauryas of Konkan in the north-west, Shimoga** including Dharwar and Belgaum in **the south** and **Guntur** including Bellary and Karnool District in Andhra Pradesh in **the north east**.
- Chalukya records clearly show that Kirtivarman had three sons- **Pulakesin II, Vishnuvradhana, and Budhavarasa** - who were all minors at the time of his death.
- Therefore, his younger brother **Mangalesa** assumed the role of regent.

Mangalesa

- He invaded the **Kalachuri** kingdom, at that time ruled by King Buddharaja and consisting of Gujarat, Kathiawad and Nasik districts, and defeated their forces.
- The Chalukya domain extended to the River Mahi and it is highly probable that Mangalesa attacked or raided the Kalachuri territories multiple times.
- He then conquered **Revatidvipa (present day Goa)** south of Ratnagiri district on the Konkan coast.
- At the end of his reign the Chalukyan empire extended from the lower part of Gujarat and Kathiawad to the northern regions of Karnataka and encompassed the Bellary and Karnool regions of Andhra.

The Regent became the King!

- Refused to handover the power to Pulakeshin II
- A civil war started
- Mangalesa was killed
- Glorious period of the Chalukyas under the leadership of **PULAKESIN-II** started

Pulakeshin II

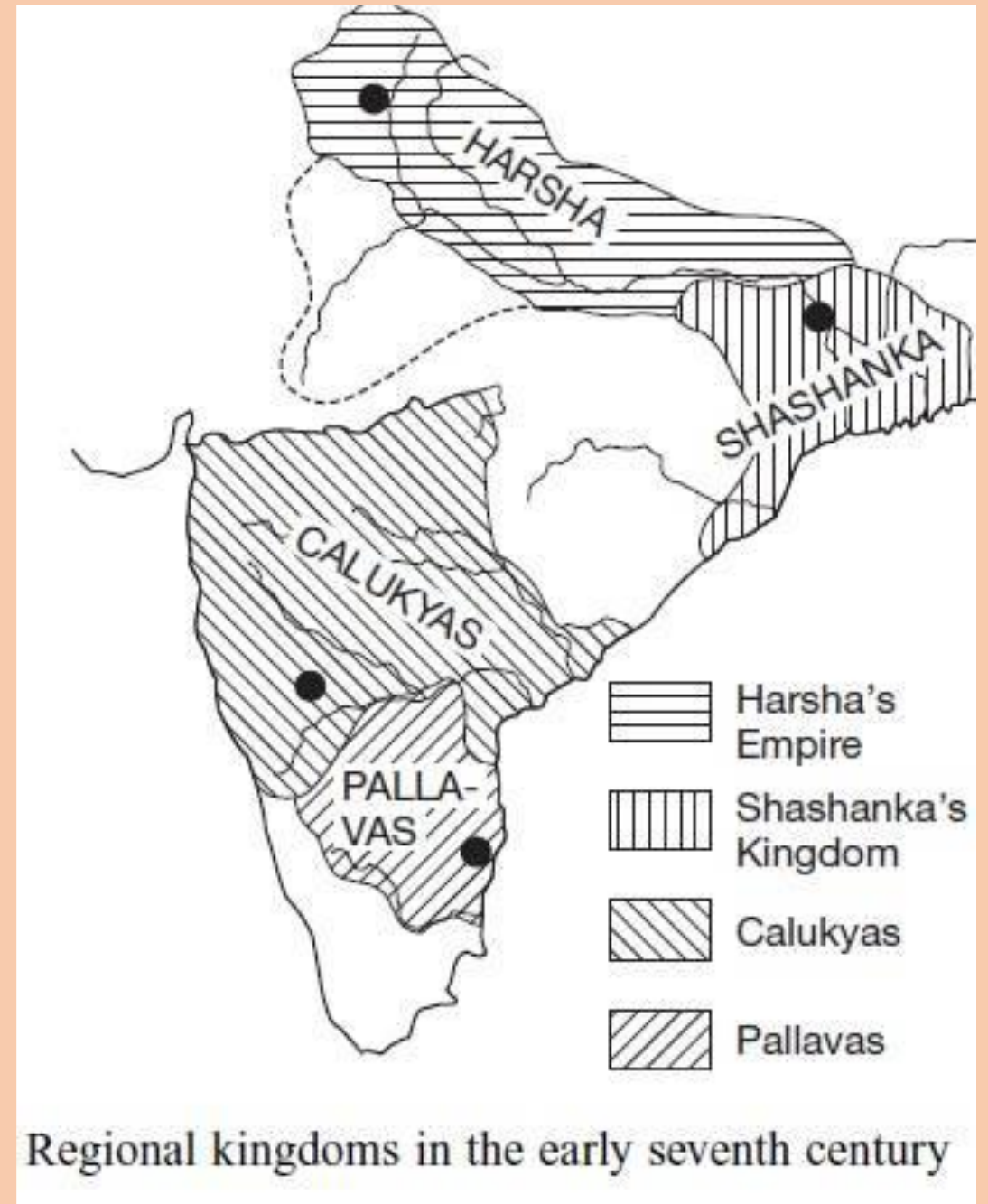
- Pulakeshin's Hyderabad inscription is dated 613 A.D. , and was issued during the third year of his reign, which suggests that he must have ascended the throne in **c. 610–611 A.D.**
- The Aihole Prasasti - This record written in praise of the king (dated to C.634) and having been written by **Ravikirti**, the court poet of Pulakeshin II.
- It provides a realistic chronological order and also particulars of the military exploits of Pulakesin-II and his ancestors.

Expansion of the Territory

- Kadambas of Banavasi rebelled and declared independence – Pulakeshin II compelled them to surrender, uprooted the Kadamba ruler (probably Bhojivarman) and annexed his kingdom.
- The Alupas accepted the supremacy of the Chalukyas
- Matrimonial Alliances – Ganga king Durvinita gave his daughter
- King of Dakshina Kosala – Mahashivagupta accepted the sovereignty of Pulakeshin II
- Eastern Gangas of Kalinga accepted the supremacy of the Chalukyas
- Area of the Latas recaptured by Pulakeshin
- Malava Kings came to his side
- Gurjara king submitted to the Chalukyas

Pulakeshin II Vs. Harshavardhana

- Harshavarshana was the lord of Uttarapatha
- Pulakeshin was the lord of South
- The reason for the conflict is unclear and still obscure and shrouded in conjuncture.
- The two empires did not share a common border, therefore border dispute as a primary cause can be effectively ruled out.



Attendance Link: STH (EVEN SEM
2025)

