

ment would, on ground of analogy, seem to be corroborated by Dr. Hunter's list, for two other dates at least, those of Bhaṭṭa-Utpala and Bhāskara-ācārya admit of being verified, and as they refer to some works of these authors, not to the year of their birth, it is but natural to suppose that the same holds good in reference to Varāha-mihira. There are, however, two facts that make the date assigned to the Pancasiddhāntikā, not indeed incredible, but improbable. The first is the date of Varāha-mihira's death, as recently ascertained by Dr. Bhau Daji, viz. 587 A. D. The second difficulty is the fact that Varāha-mihira quotes Āryabhaṭa in a work which cannot have been any other but the Pancasiddhāntikā.\* Now, as Āryabhaṭa was born 476 A. D., it is unlikely that 29 years after, in 505 A. D., a work of his would have become so celebrated as to induce Varāha-mihira to quote it as an authority. It is of course not impossible, but not probable, while on the other hand the error of Albīrūnī in taking 505 A. D. for the date of the Pancasiddhāntikā, while it really was the date of the author's birth, may be readily explained. The inferences from astronomical data, although proving indisputably that Varāha-mihira cannot have lived many years before 500 A. D., are not numerous enough, nor precise enough, to determine the date with more precision, it being impossible to eliminate from one or two data the errors of observation, and sometimes necessary to make suppositions in order to arrive at any conclusion at all. For a discussion of these data I refer the reader to Colebrooke's Algebra.†

\* More about this in the sequel.

† The trustworthiness of the *scientific* Hindu astronomers may now-a-days be considered to be above suspicion. Not so in the days of Colebrooke and Bentley, and we are largely indebted to the former for his indefatigable researches in the history of Hindu astronomy. The worth of Bentley's results in determining the age of Varāha-mihira is perspicuous from the fact that he places this author in the 16th century of our era, that is, 500 years after Albīrūnī. The main argument of Bentley, wholly worthless in itself, may serve as a curious specimen of his method. Colebrooke having tried to