
History of the Chalukyas of Badami !

By the mid-sixth century A.D. the Vakatakas were supplanted by the Chalukyas of Badami as the major power in the Deccan.

Like the Chutu-Satakarnis and the Kadambas of Vijayanti, they are represented as belonging to the Manavya gotra and being Haritiputras.

In later times they claimed descent from the lunar race. Certain inscriptions of a branch of the family refer their origin to Ayodhya, and one tradition connects the dynastic name with Brahmadeva's Chuluka or hand hollowed out for the reception of water.

Some writers believe that the Chalukyas were in reality connected with the Chapas and the foreign Gurjara tribes of the north, but there is very little to be said in support of this conjecture. The Chalukyas, according to another opinion were a local Kanarese people, who improvised into the ruling Varna under Brahmanical influence. This opinion seems to be more probable, though there is no sufficient evidence for this also.

Political History:

The Chalukyas began with a base in northern Mysore at Vatapi or Badami and the adjacent Aihole, from where they moved northward and annexed the former kingdom of the Vakatakas, which was centred around Nasik and the upper Godavari.

Pulakesin I (550-566) was the real founder of the Chalukya dynasty of Badami. He made Badami or Vatapi as his capital. He adopted the title Vallabheshvara and performed the ashvamedha. He was succeeded by Kirtivarman I (566-597) who further extended the kingdom by defeating the Mauryas of North-Konkana, the Nalas of Nalavadi (Bellari) and the Kadambas of Banavasi.

He invaded the territories of Bihar and Bengal in the north and the Chola – Pandya regions in the South.

Kirtivarman I was succeeded by Mangalesa, his brother who began to rule as a regent, as Pulakesin II, son of Kirtivarman I was a minor. Mangalesa established the power of the Chalukyas over the entire region between the two seas and defeated the Kalachuris of Chedi.

Pulakesin II (609-642 A.D.) had to wage a civil war against his uncle, Mangalesa, who refused to hand over the power. He adopted the title of Satyashraya. With the expeditions of Pulakesin II, the Chalukyas became the paramount power in the Deccan, as the Western Gangas and the Alupas in the South and the Latas, Malavas and Gurjaras in the north offered their submission to him.

The army of Pulakesin II checked the forces of Harshavardhana on the banks of the Narmada. His first expedition against the Pallava kingdom, which was then ruled by Mahendravarman I was a complete success, and he annexed Vengi, the northern most territory of the Pallavas, lying between the mouths of the Krishna and Godavari. He appointed his brother Vishnuvardhana as Yuvaraja to govern that country.





Thus, begin the line of the Chalukyas of Vengi or Eastern Chalukyas. However Pulakesin's second invasion of the Pallava territory ended in failure. The Pallava King Narasimhavarman I (A.D. 630-668) occupied the Chalukya capital at Vatapi in about 642 A.D., when Pulakesin II was probably killed in fight against the Pallavas.

One of the paintings in Ajanta represents Pulakesin II receiving the ambassador from Iran. On account of the growing power of Pulakesin II and the trade relations with India, the Iranian king Khusrau II sent an ambassador to Badami in return for the ambassador sent by Pulakesin to Iran in 625 A.D.

Hiuen Tsang, the Chinese pilgrim visited the kingdom of Pulakesin in about 641 A.D. Pulakesin, during his rule of 33 years, encouraged art and architecture, promoted religion and learning. His court poet Ravi Kirti



▼ Description.

Vikramaditya I (644-681 A.D.) the son of Pulakesin II's son succeeded in bringing about semblance of unity and the power of Chalukyas was gradually restored with the regaining of the territory lost to the Pallavas. He plundered the Pallava capital, Kanchi, thus avenging his father's defeat and death at the hands of the Pallavas. Vinayadityas (681-693 A.D) reign was generally peaceful and prosperous. Vijayaditya (693-673 A.D.), the next ruler had the longest and also the most prosperous and peaceful reign. It was marked by a great increase in temple building

The Chalukyan king Vikramaditya II (733-745 A.D.) is said to have overrun Kanchi three times. In 740 A.D. he completely routed the Pallavas and his victory ended the Pallava supremacy in the far south. His reign is also significant for his repulsion of the Arab invasion of south Gujarat.





The last Chalukyan ruler Kirtivarman II (744-745 A.D.) was defeated by one of their feudatories, Dantidurga, the founder of the Rashtrakuta dynasty, and thus came an end to the Chalukya dynasty of Badami.

Contribution of the Chalukyas:

Art and Architecture:

The Chalukyas of Badami developed the Deccan or Vesara style in the building of structural temples, which reached culmination, however, only under the Rashtrakutas and the Hoysalas.

They perfected the art of stone building without mortar. Under their auspices, the Buddhists, Jainas and Brahmanas competed with each other in building cave temples. Some of the finest specimens of the cave frescoes belonged to the Chalukya era.





Temples:

The temple-building activity under the Chalukyas of Badami can be broadly divided into two stages. The first stage is represented by the temples at Aihole and Badami. Of the temples at Aihole, four are prominent.

The Ladh Khan temple is a flat roofed structure. The Durga temple was an experiment seeking to adopt the Buddhist Chaitya to a Brahmanical temple. The Hucimaligudi temple is very similar to the Durga temple, but smaller than it.

The Jaina temple of Meguti shows some progress in the construction of structural temples, but it is unfinished. Of the temples at Badami, the Melagitti Sivalaya is a small but finely proportioned and magnificently located temple. A group of four rock-cut halls (one Jaina and three of the Hindu) at Badami are all of the same type.





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The second stage is represented by the temples at Pattadakal. There are four temples in the northern style and six in the southern style. The Papanatha temple is the most notable among the temples of the northern style and it also reveals attempts to combine northern and southern features in one structure. The Virupaksha temple, a direct imitation of the Kailasanatha temple of Kanchi was built by one of the queens of Vikramaditya II.