

# Pratiharas, Palas and Rastrakutas : Tripartite struggle

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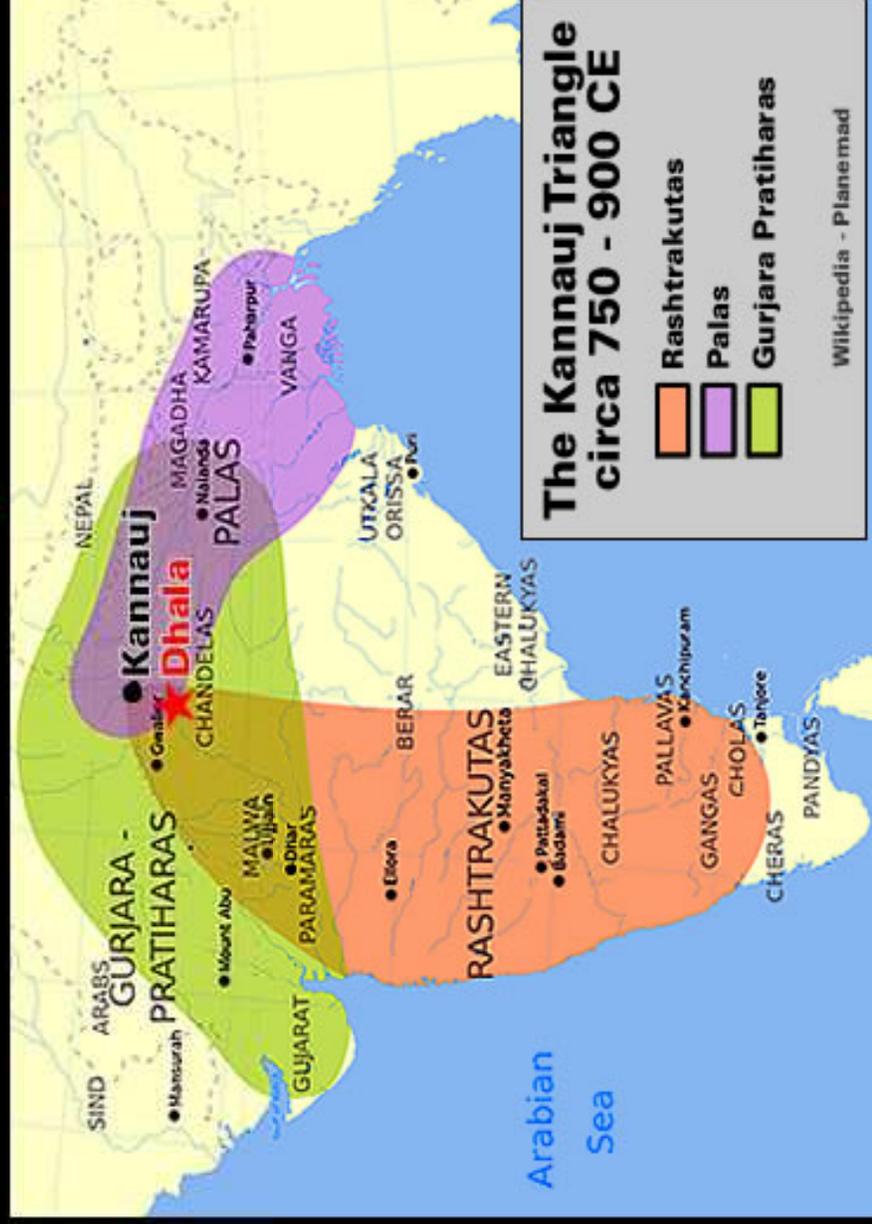


# Introduction

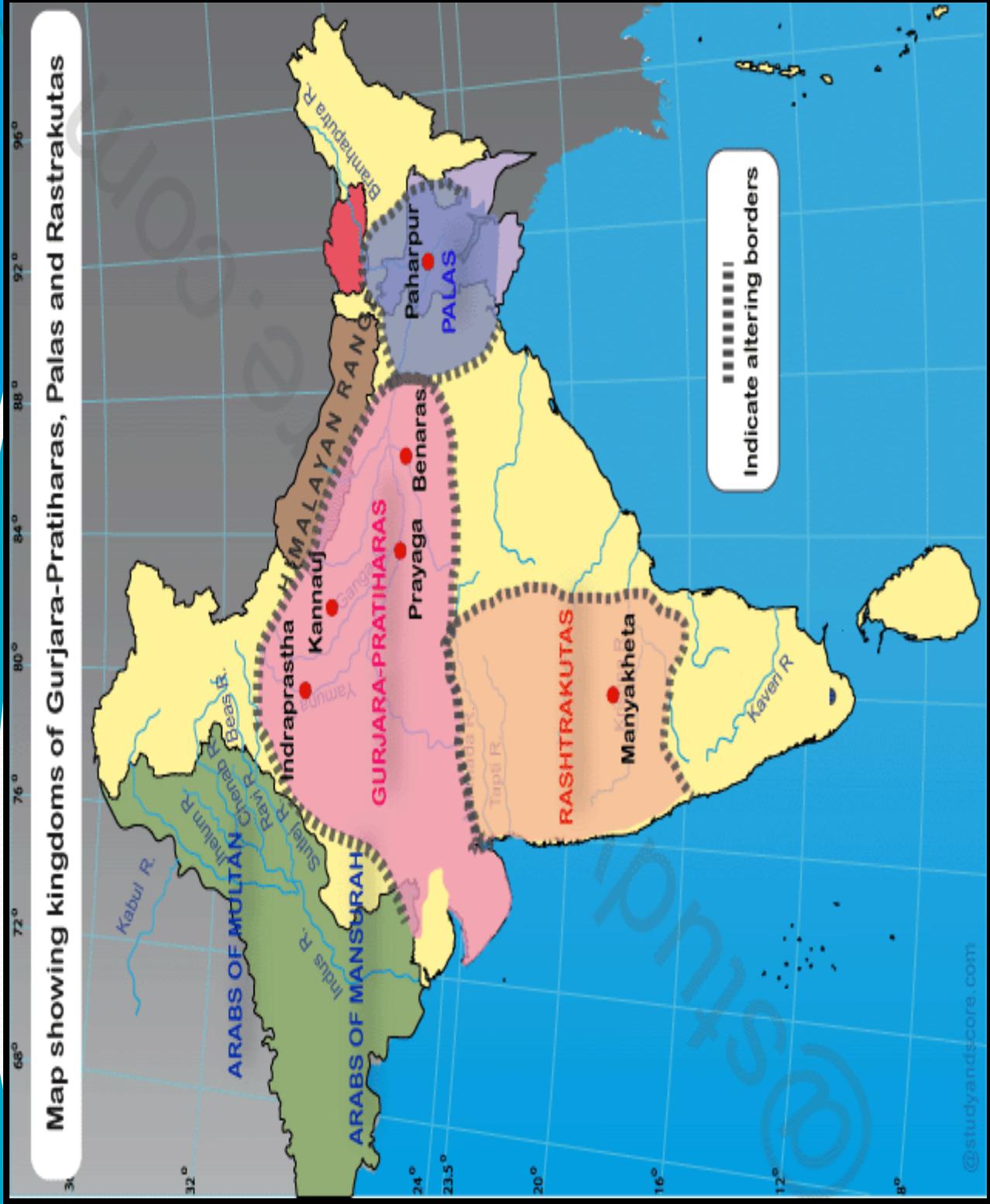
- ❖ The death of Harsha in the later half of the 7<sup>th</sup> century was an impending gloom in the history of Northern India. Kannauj which remained guarded by the strong arms of Harsha, suddenly turned into a scene of violent upheaval.
- ❖ Kannauj located in the central Gangetic valley was a very important center for trade and commerce. Hence obviously all the dominant dynasties of the time fought for power and control over this area. The dominant dynasties of this time were Gurjara-Pratiharas, Palas and Rashtrakutas. Historians often describe this fight between the three dominant dynasties of 8<sup>th</sup> century as the tripartite struggle.
- ❖ Palas ruled the eastern parts of India and Pratiharas dominated western India and Rashtrakutas controlled Deccan regions of India. The tripartite struggle ultimately ended in favor of Nagabhata II, Gurjara –Pratihara ruler.

# Indian Impacts

## The Kannauj Triangle



Map showing kingdoms of Gurjara-Pratiharas, Palas and Rastrakutas



# Causes of Tripartite Struggle

- ❖ Kannauj was the erstwhile capital of Harshavardhana Empire in North India. The following were the causes which provoked tripartite struggle,
- ❖ Kannauj was the symbol of prestige and power during early medieval period.
- ❖ Control of Kannauj also implied control of Central Gangetic valley which had plenty of resources and thus it was both strategically and commercial important.
- ❖ This center was best for trade and commerce as it was connected to silk route.
- ❖ Desire to loot through war.

## How did tripartite struggle begin?

The Pratihara ruler named Vatsaraja was very ambitious about Kannauj. Similarly Dharmapala, the Pala ruler also wanted to rule over Kannauj. And thus these two rulers were into a conflict. Vatsaraja defeated Dharmapala in a battle at Gangetic Doab. And at the same time Vatsaraja was defeated by the Rashtrakuta king Dhruva. Dhruva also defeated Dharmapala. Finally this pronounced enmity led to Tripartite Struggle between Palas, Rashtrakutas and Pratiharas.

# Consequences of tripartite struggle

- ❖ After the attack by Dhruva, Dharmapala could manage to get back control over his territory and placed Chakrayudha on the throne of Kannauj. But soon Nagabhata II, the successor of Pratihara ruler Vatsaraja conquered Kannauj and drove away Chakrayudha. Later Nagabhata II also defeated Dharmapala.
- ❖ The struggle for Kannauj became more severe after the Nagabhata II exercised control over it. During the rule of Rashtrakuta ruler Krishna III, there was successful campaign against the Cholas. The Rashtrakutas also formed a matrimonial relationship with other feudal kings. However, by the end of the 9<sup>th</sup> Century the power of the Rashtrakutas started to decline along with the Palas. And by the end of the tripartite struggle, the Pratiharas emerged victorious and established themselves as the rulers of central India.



**Thank You!**