

EARLY HISTORIANS OF INDIA  
(PART-2)  
P.G. SEM-3, CC-10,

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# HISTORICAL BIOGRAPHY

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Historical biography deals with the life, character and deeds of a historical personality, royal personage, eminent king, great ruler or emperor, who occupies an important place in the history of a particular nation or region.

- ❑ These are based more on facts than fiction
- ❑ It can be easily distinguished from a biography by literary figure, religious saint or particular individual and a biography of semi-historical nature



# HISTORICAL BIOGRAPHY

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- ❑ The history of historical biography in India is not as old as in China, Greece and Rome
- ❑ In India, it was the Seventh Century C.E. which marked the beginning of the tradition of writing historical biography
- ❑ The ancient Indians had their own conception of a biographical history which needs no comparisons with that of ancient Greeks and Romans

# HISTORICAL BIOGRAPHY

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- ❑ Their historical tradition including the biographical one was different from each other. And so is the case with the themes and qualities of their biographical works.
- ❑ Historical biographies in ancient and early medieval India were generally composed in royal courts under the patronage of kings or princes concerned.



# HISTORICAL BIOGRAPHY

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- ❑ The court historiographers also received the encouragement to record the history of their respective times which gradually led to the development of historical writing in ancient India.
- ❑ The authors while dealing with the lives and achievements of their patrons have also launched on side by side their pedigree or genealogies, political relations, with other kings and the

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historical events which took place before and during their times, and also the culture and civilization of the contemporary age.

- ❑ Some authors have focused mainly on the contemporary history and culture.
- ❑ The writing of historical biographies in ancient India marked the significant stage in the development of the *Itihasa* tradition.

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□ Carlyle pointing to the place of biography in history observed:

**“history is the biography of great men”**

**“history is no more than the sum total of innumerable biographies”**

□ These biographies are in Sanskrit, Prakrit and Apabhramsa.

**(Concluded)**