

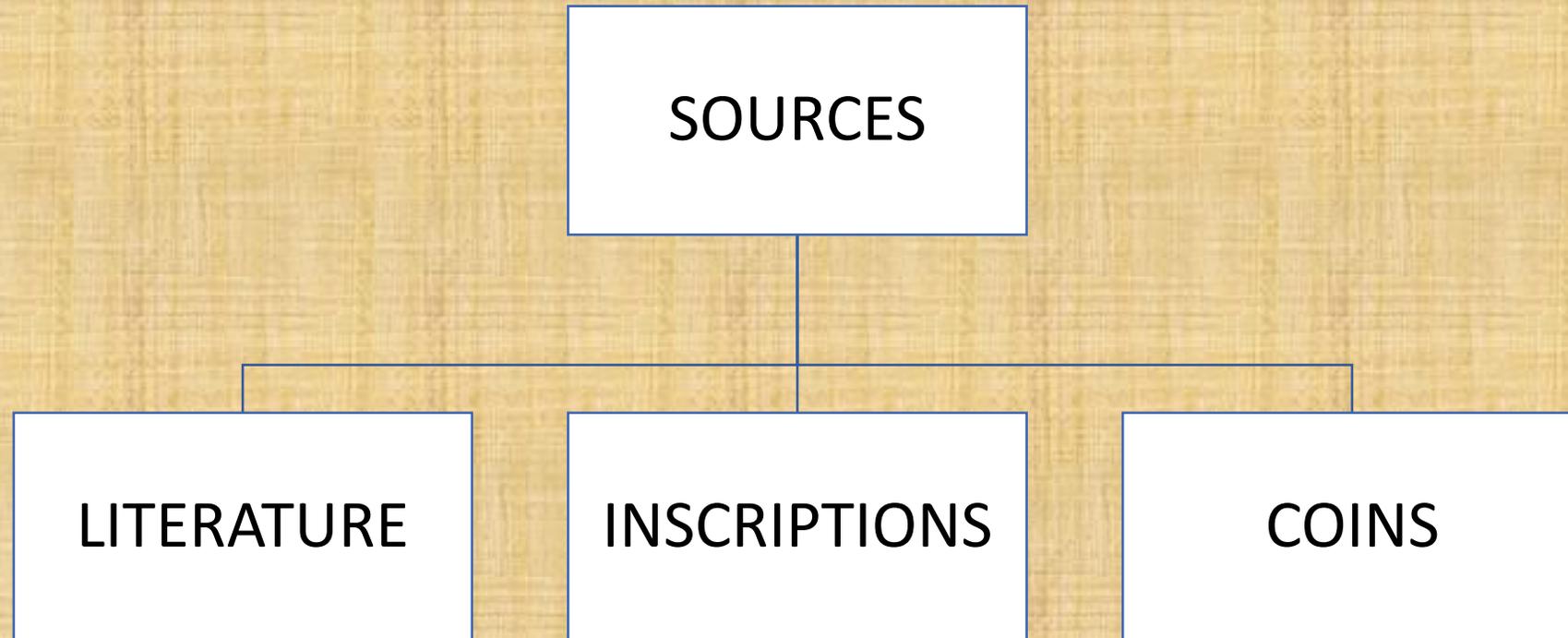
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HISTORY OF INDIA (CE 750-1206)

# SOURCES OF EARLY MEDIEVAL INDIAN HISTORY

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- EARLY MEDIEVAL INDIAN HISTORY CAN BE TERMED AS THE PERIOD BETWEEN 650 A.D. -1200 A.D.



# LITERATURE

- THERE ARE SEVERAL LITERARY WORKS OF THIS PERIOD FROM WHICH WE GATHER INFORMATION ABOUT THOSE TIMES
- NOTABLE AMONG THESE ARE HARSHACHARITA WRITTEN BY BANA BHATTA, KING HARSHA'S COURT POET. THIS BOOK IS NOT RELIABLE AS THE AUTHOR HAS SHOWN PARTIALITY TOWARDS HIS PATRON
- BILHANA WROTE THE BIOGRAPHY OF THE CHALUKYA KING VIKRAMADITYA VI. THIS WAS TITLED AS VIKRAMANKADEVCHARITA
- VAKPATI WROTE GAURVAHA KAVYA. IT IS A POEM.
- SANDHYAKAR NANDI WROTE RAMACHARITA. THIS IS A HISTORY OF RAMAPALA, THE PALA RULER. THIS BOOK ALSO DOES NOT GIVE A FAIR PICTURE OF RAMAPALA'S REIGN AS THE AUTHOR WAS PARTIAL TOWARDS HIS PATRON
- THIS TEXT HAS MENTIONED THE KAIVARTA REVOLT THAT OCCURRED DURING RAMAPALA'S REIGN

- KUMARPALCHARITA WAS WRITTEN BY JAISINGHA. THIS WAS WRITTEN IN THE PALI LANGUAGE IN WHICH THE DETAILS OF THE CHALUKYAN RULER KUMARPALA FINDS MENTION. BUT AGAIN DOES NOT GIVE A BALANCED VIEW OF HIS REIGN.
- THE FIRST SYSTEMATIC WRITING OF THE KINGS OF KASHMIR OR RAJATARANGINI WAS MADE BY KALHANA IN THE TWELFTH CENTURY. HE HAD CONSULTED SEVERAL BOOKS BEFORE WRITING IT.
- NOT ONLY HAD HE CONSULTED INSCRIPTIONS, EDICTS, WRITTEN HISTORIES OF KASHMIR BUT DUE TO THE PAUCITY OF INFORMATION, HE COULD NOT COMPILE AN EARLY HISTORY OF KASHMIR.
- KALHANA HAS PRESENTED AN IMPARTIAL HISTORY OF KASHMIR FROM THE SEVENTH CENTURY A.D. AND DESCRIBED IN DETAIL THE RISE AND FALL OF KASHMIR.

- HISTORIANS WHO CAME AFTER HIM FOLLOWED IN HIS FOOTSTEPS. THE HISTORY OF GUJARAT IS A CASE IN POINT. SOMESWARA HAD WRITTEN RASAMALA AND KIRTIKAUMUDI. BALCHANDRA HAD WRITTEN BASANTABILASH. FROM THESE WE GET THE HISTORY OF GUJARAT. THE VAMSAVALIS GIVE THE HISTORY OF NEPAL.
- THE PURAN IS ANOTHER IMPORTANT LITERARY SOURCE OF THIS PERIOD. THESE NUMBER AROUND 18 BUT NOT ALL CONTAIN HISTORICAL FACTS.
- HISTORIAN R.S. SHARMA HAS USED THE PURANNAS AS A SOURCE TO CONSTRUCT HIS THEORY OF INDIAN FEUDALISM. THE BHAGAVAT PURANA THROWS LIGHT ON THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITIONS OF THE TIME. THE PURANAS CANNOT BE USED AS A RELIABLE SOURCE FOR WRITING POLITICAL HISTORY. RATHER IT IS AN IMPORTANT SOURCE TO KNOW THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITIONS OF THE TIME.

# FOREIGN TRAVELLER'S ACCOUNTS

- HIEUN TSANG WHO VISITED INDIA IN THE MID 7<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY A.D. AND ENJOYED THE PATRONAGE OF KING HARSHAVARDHANA AT THAT TIME, NOT ONLY WROTE ON HARSHA BUT HAS LEFT BEHIND INTERESTING HISTORICAL FACTS ON OTHER CONTEMPORARY RULERS, BUDDHISM, PHILOSOPHY ETC.
- HIS CELEBRATED BOOK IS SI-YU-KI OR TRAVELS OF THE WEST. HIS BIOGRAPHY WAS WRITTEN BY HUI-LI. HOWEVER, HIS WRITINGS LACK AUTHENTICITY AS HE SHOWED PARTISANSHIP TO THE EMPEROR HARSHA AND TO BUDDHISM
- ITSING WAS ANOTHER TRAVELLER WHO CAME AROUND THE SAME TIME AS HIEUN TSANG AND LEFT BEHIND HIS FINDINGS ON BUDDHISM. HE WAS ALSO AN EXPERT IN THE SANSKRIT LANGUAGE

# ARAB WRITERS

- THE ARAB WRITERS CAME TO INDIA IN THE EIGHTH CENTURY A.D. THE ARAB TRADERS, GEOGRAPHERS AND TRAVELLERS WROTE ON INDIA. THREE OF THEM ARE MOST PROMINENT. THE ARAB TRADER SULEIMAN CAME TO INDIA AROUND 851 A.D.
- HE TOURED THE EMPIRE OF DEVPALA AND WROTE AN DESCRIPTIVE ACCOUNT OF HIS REIGN. HE HAS DESCRIBED IN DETAIL THE SUPERIOR MILITARY MIGHT OF THE PALAS IN COMPARISON TO THE OTHER POWERS SUCH AS RASHTRAKUTAS OR GURJAR-PRATI HARAS WHO FORMED THE TRIO OF THE TRIPARTITE POWER STRUGGLE.
- AL-MASUDI FROM BAGHDAD VISITED GUJARAT AROUND 915-916 A.D. HE HAS DESCRIBED THE GURJAR-PRATI HARA RULE AND THE EMPIRE IN GUJARAT. THE RULER AT THAT TIME WAS MAHIPAL

- AL-BERUNI VISITED INDIA IN THE 11<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY A.D. WITH SULTAN MAHMUD. HIS ACTUAL NAME WAS ABU RAIHAN. HE WAS A SCHOLAR IN THE SANSKRIT LANGUAGE. HIS RENOWNED BOOK IS THE TAHKIK-I-HIND. HE TRIED TO OVERCOME RELIGIOUS SECTARIANISM AND APPRECIATE HINDUISM.
- HE WROTE ON THE SOCIAL CONDITION OF INDIA AT THAT TIME BUT HIS BOOK IS NOT WITHOUT ITS LIMITATIONS. HE DID NOT WRITE ON THE POLITICAL CONDITIONS OF INDIA AT THAT TIME. MOREOVER HE DEPENDED MORE ON SECONDARY SOURCES OF LITERATURE TO WRITE THE BOOK RATHER THAN FROM REAL-LIFE EXPERIENCES.
- HE WROTE ON SUBJECTS SUCH AS MATHEMATICS, PHYSICS, GEOGRAPHY, PHILOSOPHY, RELIGION, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL CUSTOMS, CHEMISTRY, ASTRONOMY. SO MUCH ON THE LEARNING OF ANCIENT INDIA CAN BE GLEANED FROM HIS WORK.

# INSCRIPTIONS

- THESE ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT SOURCES OF STUDY OF EARLY MEDIEVAL INDIAN HISTORY
- THE GWALIOR INSCRIPTION OF THE PRatihAR RAJA BHOJA,, THE KHALIMPUR AND MONGHYR INSCRIPTIONS OF THE PALAS, THE DEOPARA LEKH OF THE SENAS COMPOSED BY UMAPATI DHAR HAVE HELPED US TO CONSTRUCT THE HISTORY OF THOSE TIMES. THE CHOLA KINGS HAVE ALSO LEFT BEHIND INNUMERABLE INSCRIPTIONS FROM WHICH WE CAN GATHER INFORMATION REGARDING THEIR AUTONOMOUS VILLAGE ADMINISTRATION
- INSCRIPTIONS ARE PRIMARILY OF **TWO** TYPES: OFFICIAL AND UNOFFICIAL
- THE FORMER ARE RELATED TO LAND GRANTS. THE FIRST PART OF THESE DEAL WITH THE EULOGY OR PRASASTI OF THE EMPEROR.

- THE NAME OF THE DONOR KING HIS DYNASTY, AREA OF HIS KINGDOM, THE AREA OF THE LAND GRANTED, VALUE OF THE LAND, LAND SYSTEM ARE ALSO MENTIONED IN THESE
- THE OFFICIAL INSCRIPTIONS ARE FAR OUTNUMBERED BY THE UNOFFICIAL INSCRIPTIONS
- THE LATTER ARE PRIMARILY WRITTEN TO EULOGISE THE PATRON KING. NOT MUCH POLITICAL HISTORY CAN BE GLEANED FROM THESE. THESE ARE RELATED TO GRANTS TO THE BRAHMINS AND TEMPLES. THE RELIGIOUS BELIEFS OF THE TIMES CAN BE INFERRED FROM THESE INSCRIPTIONS.

# COINS AND OTHER SOURCES

- AFTER THE GUPTAS, THE VOLUME OF COINS ISSUED BY INDIAN RULERS SEEMS TO HAVE DECREASED. THESE COLLABORATE THE LITERARY AND PURANIC TEXTS.
- POTTERY MADE FROM BAKED CLAY, EARTHEN POTTERY, FIGURES,, RUINS OF PALACES, TEMPLES ARE OTHER SOURCES OF INFORMATION. REMNANTS OF AGRICULTURAL IMPLEMENTS AND TOOLS, CHANDRAKETUGARH OF BERACHAMPA, RUINS OF THE SENA RULERS IN THE DISTRICT OF NADIA ALSO PLAY A MAJOR ROLE AS ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOURCES OF EARLY MEDIEVAL INDIAN HISTORY



A COIN FROM THE GUPTA PERIOD  
SOURCE: PINTEREST