

Read rulers through their historical sources

Connect Mauryan, Gupta, Pushyabhuti and Ghaznavid-era accounts to their authors and polities

• Rulers, Capitals & Historical Texts

◆ Mauryas and Megasthenes

Pataliputra was the Mauryan capital; Chandragupta Maurya founded the empire.

Megasthenes, Greek envoy of Seleucus Nicator to Chandragupta Maurya's court, wrote the account Indika.

Indika survives through extracts quoted by later Greek and Roman writers such as Strabo, Arrian and Pliny.

◇ Harsha and visitor accounts

Harshavardhana ruled from 606 to 647 CE, shifting his seat from Thanesar to Kannauj.

Court poet Banabhatta wrote Harshacharita; Chinese pilgrim Xuanzang (Hiuen Tsang) visited his court.

A court biography and a traveller's account reflect different purposes and viewpoints.

○ Guptas and the Prayag Prashasti

Harishena composed the Sanskrit Prayag Prashasti (Allahabad Pillar Inscription) for Gupta ruler Samudragupta.

Records Samudragupta's military campaigns and conquests across Aryavarta, Dakshinapatha and frontier kingdoms.

A prashasti praises its patron; assess its claims alongside other historical evidence.

□ Al-Biruni and Kitab-ul-Hind

Following Sultan Mahmud's conquest of Khwarizm in 1017 CE, scholar Al-Biruni was brought to Ghazni.

In Ghazni and Punjab, Al-Biruni learned Sanskrit and studied Indian astronomy, mathematics and philosophy.

He wrote the Arabic treatise Kitab-ul-Hind (Tahqiq-i-Hind), distinct from Megasthenes' Greek Indika.

REMEMBER Match the ruler, author and text, then ask what that kind of source can reliably show.