PREFACE

History is a continuous stream of events in human affairs, ideas and ideals, in politics, society and culture including literature, philosophy, religion and art. Any attempt at periodisation is bound to be somewhat arbitrary and inadequate. One period shades imperceptibly into another. Nevertheless periodisation has been found to be convenient. In Europe the Middle Ages are considered to have lasted for about 1000 years, from the fall of Rome in A.D. 476 before the barbarians to the fall of Constantinople in A.D. 1453 before the Turks leading first to the Renaissance and then the Reformation. In India the Middle Ages are usually considered to have lasted from the Turkish conquests in Northern India from the 13th century to mid-eighteenth century when the British established their supremacy in Bengal. For purposes of the subject under consideration, viz., Medieval Indian historiography, we have to consider the period from c A.D. 700—c. 1757 i.e., roughly a little more than 1000 years.

The house of medieval Indian history which we are examining today and which we are endeavouring to reconstruct, develop or beautify is the legacy of the past thirteen hundred years or so. True, the modern conception of a scientific, humanistic, rational, self-revelatory and interpretative history was unknown to the medieval historians. But it was on a medieval base, partly Hindu and mainly Muslim, that the pioneers of modern Indian historiography on medieval period raised their structure of history. To this culmination have contributed successive generations of scholars of various nationalities, British, non-British (French, Dutch, German, Russian, American and others), Indian and Pakistani during wellnigh two centuries. So an Indian writer commenting in the late seventies of the twentieth century on the writing of Indian history during the medieval period, cannot afford to forget the deep debt he owes to his purvasuris. The book is, therefore, respectfully dedicated to them.

In the post-graduate and honours classes of most of our Indian universities, we study and teach political and economic theories, history of political and economic thought, history of literature and history of philosophy. But the study or teaching of
history of historical thought is an exception rather than the rule. The result has been that our students and even advanced research scholars are practically in the dark about the history of History, the history of historical writings. We come into close touch with the master minds of the world through the ages in the fields of philosophy, religion, literature, economics and politics. But in most Indian universities students in the post-graduate and honours classes know very little about the ideas of history of historians of the world from Herodotus, the father of History, to our own day, about the varieties of History and the changing concepts of History in different epochs. Far less do we know of the ideas of History and currents of historical thought—if any, in different periods of Indian History. Very recently a few universities in India are seeking to introduce the subject in their post-graduate courses of study.

The importance of making bibliographical and historiographical studies can hardly be overemphasized. There are numerous books on the subject in Europe and America. Mention may be made of the following among others: J. B. Bury, The Ancient Greek Historians (1909); J. H. Robinson, History (1908), The New History (1912); J. T. Shotwell, Introduction to the History of History (1922); G. P. Gooch, History & Historians in the Nineteenth Century (1928); D. S. Margoliouth, Lectures on Arabic Historians (1930); H. E. Barnes, History of Historical Writing (1937); J. W. Thompson (with collaboration of B. J. Holmes), A History of Historical Writing (N.Y. 2 vols. 1954); Richard Hofstadter, Social Darwinism in American Thought, 1860-1915 (1945); Collingwood, The Idea of History (1946); H. Ausubel, The Historians and Their Craft (1950); F. Rosenthal, A History of Muslim Historiography (1952); P. Hardy, Historians of Medieval India (1960).


As regards articles in periodicals one may conveniently and profitably refer to works like J. D. Pearson’s Index Islamicus,
1906-60 and 1960- , being catalogues of articles on Islamic subjects, in periodicals as well as B. A. Fernendez, Bibliography of Indian History & Oriental Research. A Guide to Indian Periodical Literature is also being published by Prabhu Book Service, Gurgaon (Haryana) from 1964. Mrs Margaret H. Case's South Asian History 1750-1950 is an extremely valuable 'Guide to Periodicals Dissertations & Newspapers (Princeton University Press, 1968). In the words of Stephen N. Hay, who has written a Foreword to that work, "This volume greatly extends our bibliographical control over several types of source material important for the study of the history of the Indian-Pakistan sub-continent during the past two centuries."

A bibliography of Indology, mentioning basic publications on all aspects of Indian history & culture in different languages is published yearwise regularly by the National Library, Calcutta. The Bulletins of the Indian Council of Historical Research, New Delhi, the publications of the Inter-University Board of India and Ceylon, and of some universities like Allahabad (1887-1967, published 1969), Benares (1927-65), Rajasthan (Jaipur), Patna, Ranchi and Bhagalpur, throw helpful light on the state of research in progress or theses and dissertations accepted for doctorate. If such bulletins or guide books are easily available in all universities and important libraries it will be extremely useful for research scholars and teachers.

Again, apart from books and journals, several study conferences were held during 1956-1958 by the School of Oriental and African Studies, London, to review and assess the development and nature of historical writing on the peoples of Asia, viz., China and Japan, South East Asia, the Near and Middle East, India, Pakistan and Ceylon, under the general direction of Professor C. H. Philips. But so far as Indian historiography is concerned we are still in a backwater compared to the west. The literature on the subject is very meagre indeed. Until recently there were no standard works on Indian historiography, ancient, medieval and modern. For the Mughal period and also for the medieval period the first bibliography was written by Professor Sri Ram Sharma (Bibliography of Mughal India 1526-1707, undated). For the modern period Dr. K. K. Dutta compiled 'A Survey of recent studies on Modern Indian History' (1957). The last twenty years have, however, witnessed increasing interest in
bibliographical and historiographical studies. Buddhaprakasa wrote on *The Modern Approach to History* (1963). Several conferences were held on different aspects of historiography. The credit for setting the ball rolling belongs to Dr. S. P. Sen, Director of the Institute of Historical Studies, Calcutta. In 1963 he organised the first symposium on Indian historiography, ancient, medieval and modern, in connection with the Annual Conference of his Institute, and commissioned me to write a survey of Indian historiography for the medieval period, reviewing briefly but critically Indian historical writing, bringing out the general trends and indicating the fields which have not been covered adequately so far. My paper was read in the Annual Conference of his Institute in September 1963 and was published in the *Quarterly Review of Historical Studies*, vol. III (1963-64) Parts I and II. Next year too, at this request I submitted another paper on ‘Ideas of History (Medieval Period)’ which was read in the Annual Conference of the Institute and was published in the above-mentioned journal vol. IV (1964-65), Parts I and II. These were also published by me as separate monographs. In November 1965, Dr. Biseshwar Prasad, then Professor of History, University of Delhi, organised a seminar on Ideas motivating History (Modern Period of Indian History). This was followed by another seminar in January 1966 on Ideas motivating History (Medieval Period), to which I sent a paper entitled ‘Political Expediency in Pre-Akbaride Period.’ But the proceedings have not yet been published. At the request of Dr. Mohibbul Hasan, then Professor and Head of the Department of Indian History and Culture, Jamia Millia, New Delhi, I submitted a paper entitled ‘Personal History of Some Medieval Historians and Their Writings’ to the seminar organised by him in January 1966, which has been published in *’Historians of Medieval India’* (1968). My paper on ‘Writing of Indian History (Medieval Period): Retrospect and Prospect’, submitted at the request of Dr. Sukumar Bhattacharyya, then Professor and Head of the Department of History, Visva Bharati, Santiniketan (now deceased), on the occasion of a seminar organised there in August-September 1966, has also been published in the proceedings of the seminar (1968). Lastly, at the request of Dr. Ram Saran Sharma, then Professor & Head of the Department of History, Patna University, I submitted a paper
on "The Stages of the growth of Historical Literature in Medieval India" for the seminar on "The Periodisation of Indian History", organised by him in November 1967. Miss Katharine Smith Diehl of the American Institute of Indian Studies, Calcutta, organised a seminar at Calcutta on Primary Printed Sources for Sixteenth to Nineteenth Century Studies Available in Bengal Libraries in June 1968, where I gave a talk on Political and Socio-Economic History Primary Printed Sources (see the Proceedings vol. American Institute of Indian Studies, Calcutta, 1968). Dr. S. P. Sen arranged a symposium on 'Historians and Historiography in Modern India' at the Sixth Annual Conference of his Institute at Srinagar in October 1968, the proceedings of which were published with the above title in 1973. I read a paper entitled 'Historical Biography in Persian Literature' in the Eleventh Annual Conference of his Institute at Kolhapur in October, 1973, the proceedings of which have not yet been published.

It is a happy sign that during this period the attention of a few scholars has also been drawn to this subject. The trend is exemplified in S. R. Tikekar, On Historiography, a study of methods of historical research and narration of Sir Jadunath Sarkar, G. S. Sardesai and P. K. Gode (1964); J. D. Pearson, Oriental and Asian Bibliography (1966); Dr. U. N. Ghoshal, Studies in Indian History & Culture (1965), Dr. Vishwambhar Sharan Pathak, Ancient Historians of India, A Study in Historical Biographies (1966). While Dr. P. Saran has compiled a 'Descriptive Catalogue of Non-Persian Sources on Medieval Indian History' (1965), D. B. Taraporewala and D. N. Marshall wrote Mughal Bibliography; Select Persian Sources for the study of Mughals in India (1962). Prof. D. N. Marshall has also written a detailed and critical bibliographical survey entitled Mughals in India, a Bibliographical Survey (Vol. 1, mss. 1967). Dr. G. N. Sharma has written on Bibliography of Medieval Rajasthan (1966), and Dr. K. S. Lal on 'Studies in Medieval History' (1966), containing an essay on 'History & Historiography'. Professor Ganda Singh has compiled 'A Bibliography of the Punjab' (1966); Kalyan Kumar Das Gupta has edited the Bulletin of the School of Historical and Cultural Studies (Vol. I, No. 1, 1965). Binayendra Sengupta has compiled Indiana, a select list of reference and representative books on all aspects of Indian life and culture' (1966). In his Asian Studies (Vol. 1), Balkrishna
Gokhale has given a collection of papers on aspects of Asian history and civilization (1966). A concise but critical account of Historiography in Modern India has been given by R. C. Majumdar (1970). Asis Basu has prepared an inventory of source materials on Urbanisation in India (1970); Sankar Sen Gupta has written A Bibliography of Indian Folklore & related subjects (1971); A. K. Warder on An Introduction to Indian Historiography (1971); Nirmal Singal on Bibliography of Selected Indian Books (1971); Haris Chandraprasad and Gita Sen Gupta have compiled 'A Bibliography of Folklore of Bihar, books, articles, reports and monographs in English and Hindi, 1971. Mukundalal Chakrabarti has discussed Bibliography in theory and practice (1971). Kulkarni and D'Souza have written on Historiography in Indian Languages (1972). Vijay Singal has compiled a Bibliography of Selected Indian Books on art and culture published from late 1974 to the first half of 1975. Historiography in Akbar's reign has been critically studied by Dr. S. A. A. Rizvi (Australia) and Dr. H. Mukhia, the former in Religious and Intellectual History of the Muslims in Akbar's Reign (1975), the latter in Historians and Historiography during the Reign of Akbar (1976).

The present work represents in a consolidated form the fruits of my occasional studies on Medieval Indian Historiography during the last fourteen years. The favourable reception of the above mentioned essays of mine (and particularly those published in 1963-64 and 1964-65) by my colleagues and students has encouraged me to have these published now as a comprehensive book. The materials have been rearranged, revised with additions and alterations to give an underlying unity to the broad theme of the work. Originally I had planned to bring out the book in one volume with two parts. The material was prepared nearly ten years ago but various difficulties and pre-occupations unfortunately stood in the way of giving the book its final form for publication. The book was about to be handed over to one publisher about fifteen months ago when the negotiations fell through. My subsequent visit to Mexico to attend the 30th International Congress of Orientalists in August 1976, followed by visits to Canada and the States, my participation in the Indian History Congress as its General President at the Calicut session in December, 1976, some domestic and personal events like
bereavements, marriages, illness etc., all combined to keep the typescript in the cold storage again. An urgency has, however, now been provided by an apprehension that further delay might adversely affect whatever claims my book may have as a pioneering work in the field. Hence it is now being rushed through in two separate companion volumes so as to maintain that claim of priority.

Of these two volumes, the present one, entitled 'History of History Writing in Medieval India', deals with the writings of contemporary medieval historians. The second companion volume entitled 'History of History Writing on Medieval India', analyses the trends of the writings of modern historians working thereon. Both the volumes are intended to serve as an introduction to the study of Medieval Indian Historiography as the subtitle will show.

The first volume consists of six chapters, Hindu history, Muslim history, Indo-Muslim historiography, Ideals and Methodology of the medieval historians, New spirit and Conclusion. Attention has mainly been concentrated on historical works. Purely literary and non-historical works, inscriptions references, accounts of contemporary foreign travellers, Asiatic or European, have been excluded from the purview of this study here. It is an attempt to illustrate the dichotomy in historiography, corresponding to the social dichotomy of the medieval period, by an analytical review of the broad characteristics, the diverse forms, the ideas and trends of history-writing by contemporary medieval historians, Hindu and Muslim, during a period of more than one thousand years. By its very nature it can neither claim to be an analytical research work in the usual sense of the term, nor be an exhaustive and definitive study of the subject. Within its brief compass, however, it seeks to give an intelligible and synthetic picture of one phase of intellectual history in medieval India. This is the first work of its kind which treats medieval Indian historiography not in isolation but in the background of Western historiography, of Islamic historiography outside India and of ancient Indian non-historical and semi-historical works. This approach has been adopted in the firm conviction that this will be of great help to us in having a better and clearer perspective of medieval Indian historiography as well as history. Ancient India is usually associated with idealism,
tolerance, liberalism and cultural assimilation and Medieval India with intolerance, orthodoxy, bloodshed and horrors. But perhaps such a view of history is unhistorical. Medieval history in India as in Europe has often been distorted and perverted by sentiment and prejudice. Many of the waters of our modern life, good or bad, have flowed from the Middle Ages. 'What we are, we are in large measure because of the Middle Ages. The Middle Ages live in us; they are alive all around us.' (M. Paul Violet). Human history has to be understood. It is necessary to shed off prejudices and one-sided interpretations and to know the ideas of the historians of medieval India.

The second companion volume will deal with the survey of modern historiography on medieval India. This volume consists of seven chapters: The Beginnings of modern historiography on medieval India; Growth of Indian historiography; Political history and Biography; Non-political aspects (archaeological, epigraphic and numismatic; political and legal theory, administrative and military institutions; Social and economic aspects; European records); Recent Trends; Suggestions for filling up gaps; Assessment and Conclusion.

The survey could have been made a cruise along the indented and indurated coastline of medieval Indian historiography, along its creeks, inlets, bays and havens, by discussing printed works of individual scholars, the periodical literature and the valuable contributions of different societies, memorial serieses, works on source materials (either editing, or translation or bibliographical), standard histories, dynastic chronicles, biographies of kings, ministers or generals, monographs on special aspects of policy—imperial, religious, or social,—studies on government and institutions, military history or art of war, agrarian or industrial systems, economic history, social, religious or cultural aspects, religious or political thought, corpses etc, which bands of scholars, European and Indian, dead and alive, have contributed during the last 200 years or so. But there is neither time nor space for such a treatment. The survey could also have been in the nature of a bird's eye-view of only the high mountain peaks linked in an unending chain excluding the smaller ranges, the rising slopes or mediate valleys, all of which together constitutes the range. But this will perhaps give a distorted or one-sided picture, and never for a moment can one minimise the magnitude and the im-
portance of the exploratory studies and the value of the vast storehouse of knowledge of this period garnered by strenuous efforts and selfless devotion of successive generations of scholars. In either case, however, the picture will be a still picture lacking the rhythm of life.

This survey of the period covering approximately eleven hundred years (c. 700-1757 A.D.) is mainly of books written in English language and does not cover periodical literature.

The present work is by no means a final study. On account of the enormous variety and scope of the subject, the survey can neither be exhaustive or definitive, however comprehensive it is sought to be made. In fact there can never be a finality to such a work, because one part of the subject is capable of different interpretations, while the other part is not static but constantly growing and the survey has to be brought up to date regularly. I am conscious of the difficulties inherent in the task. I am no less aware of my limitations in sketching the history of and assessing the nature and trends of medieval Indian historiography within a limited space. In the presentation of this volume I have kept in view the needs of our students and research scholars studying and working on this period. If it stimulates their interest in studying the growing historical literature of our country and in endeavouring to unravel the mysteries of the source materials of the period, I would deem my labours to have been amply rewarded. The general reader may also find in it a guide to modern historical writings on a dim and imperfectly known past. I am deeply conscious of the various sins of commission and omission that still disfigure the book. The history of this particular book, explained before, has naturally resulted in certain limitations and mistakes consequent on hurried and incomplete revision and avoidable printing errors, notwithstanding best efforts. Thus uniformity in spellings and in the system of transliteration of names of authors and titles of books in Arabic and Persian, in the use of hyphens therein, has not been maintained, e.g. 'Ai' and 'al' have been used before names. Mistakes have also crept in the use of inverted commas for general quotations (either single or double) as well as for technical needs, as for example in denoting 'ain'; thus Ma 'arif (p. 16) and al 'Ibar (p. 24) should be read respectively as Ma 'arif and al 'Ibar. Diacritical marks have not been given, e.g. 'Zahab' has been used
for 'dhahab' on p. 17; 'hadis' for 'Hadith' etc. Italics could not be given as a part of a line. I crave the indulgence of my readers for all these shortcomings and errors. Constructive suggestions for improvement of the book will be thankfully received.

It is now my most pleasant duty to express my thanks to all those who have encouraged or helped me to undertake this survey. First of all I think of all my students whom I have been privileged to teach since 1932. I also think of future generations of the young hopefuls whom it will never be my privilege to teach. The interest of the students has been an eternal source of inspiration. Next I express my indebtedness to Dr. S. P. Sen, Director, Institute of Historical Studies, Calcutta, Dr. Biseshwar Prasad, then Professor and Head, History Department, Delhi University, Dr. Mohibbul Hasan, then Professor and Head of Department of Indian History and Culture, Jamia Millia, New Delhi and Dr. M. A. Ansari, its present Head, Dr. Sukumar Bhattacharya, then Professor and Head, Department of History, Viswa Bharati (now deceased), Dr. R. S. Sharma, then Professor and Head, History Department, Patna University, now in Delhi University, for their occasional commissions which kept me engaged in this work from time to time. Dr. M. Saber Khan, Ex-Member, Public Service Commission, West Bengal, and now Fellow, Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Simla, deserves my thanks for going through the first volume, offering suggestions for improvement and lending me an unpublished work of his in typescript. My thanks are due to Sri Radhagovinda Basak, Proprietor of Sreekanta Press, Calcutta, and his staff for getting the book printed neatly and expeditiously. Sri Indrajit Chandra, B.Com., and Sri Mohan Lal Mandal have helped me in correction of proofs, while Sri Phanindra Nath Chakravarty, M.A., a research scholar of mine, has done the arduous task of preparing the index. Sri Kshitish Chandra Dey of Ratna Prakashan has very kindly agreed to be my publisher. I have to record my grateful thanks to all who have conveyed their consent to my utilising my materials published previously: Dr. S. P. Sen, Calcutta (in his 'Quarterly Review of Historical Studies'), Saraswat Library, Calcutta (in 'A Study of Eighteenth Century India', vol. I), Dr. M. A. Ansari, New Delhi and Meenakshi Prakashan, Meerut (in 'Historians of Medieval India'). My sincere gratitude
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is due to Dr. R. C. Majumdar, the doyen of Indian historians, who has not only taken great pains to peruse this volume but has most graciously recorded his opinion which is printed at the end.

The famous German historian and philosopher Ernst Troeltsch once observed that at times it is more important to make a beginning than to produce the finished article. Here I have just made a beginning with the hope that the finished article would be produced later, if not by me, by my younger compeers. I have found this study in intellectual history not only invigorating but fascinating as well. Others may also find it equally so. Let me conclude with the pregnant observations of Randall: "Intellectual history reveals to us men thinking, and something of how their minds are operating when they are thinking. The historical treatment of philosophy, it is clear, illuminates all the other strands of cultural history. Conceived as it has been here portrayed as the intellectual reaction of outstanding minds to other cultural and culturally significant events, it displays not merely ideas in the process of being worked out. It displays ideas in action, as they intervene in the other activities of men, and influence the course of institutional development. It thus helps us to understand ourselves, and our culture, our intellectual world. It throws light on...the ideas...that control our thinking, and that offer opportunities to us to think further by using them."

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