

TRENDS IN HISTORIOGRAPHY

MODULE 1-EVOLUTION OF HISTORY AS A DISCIPLINE



TOPIC-RANKE AND DUTY OF HISTORIAN
REMYA MT
ASSISANT PROFESSOR
DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY
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LEOPOLD VON RANKE(1795-1885)



- Ranke is the foremost historian Germany has produced, who inaugurated a new era in historiography
- Called the father or ‘Columbus’ of modern history
- Intellectual curiosity and desire for reliable information made him the leading historian of the 19th cy
- He claimed that he firmly stood for objectivity in history
- He stated that the value of a written document as a source material must be assessed by studying about the personality of the writer
- Ranke ‘s collected works comprise fifty-four volumes.
- Most famous among them are his ‘History of the popes’, ‘History of the Reformation in Germany’, ‘French History’, ‘English History’ and ‘Prussian History’ in Twelve volumes
- The range of all these histories is from the 15th cy to the 18th cy’



- Ranke's main attempt was to provide a scientific basis for the study of modern history
- In these volumes he applied his technique of writing objective history by a critical analysis of sources
- Ranke's academic career as the professor of history at the University of Berlin
- He started the famous 'Seminar' on history to provide training and guidance to young historians
- The participants of the seminar were given special academic training for writing historical works
- The journal, 'Historische Zeitschrift', basically stood for objective analysis of sources



- He wanted to give an objective account of the past with the help of scrupulous methodology
- He urged historians to write history as ‘the strict presentation of facts’ as it is the supreme law of historical writing
- He reminded the historians to avoid passions of the present while studying the past
- Tried to construct history strictly on the basis of contemporary sources
- Applied the critical study of source materials for historical writing
- Editing the sources became an essential activity of historical scholarship, since Ranke
- He believed that divine power has vital role in the historical development of human society
- To him, ideas are thoughts of God in the world and in the interaction of these ideas lies the great secret of history



- He stated that each period is equally close to God
- Each period in History has its own individual features
- Tried to write Universal history as he believed that it only can provide a comprehensive vision
- He wanted to consider history as an autonomous branch of knowledge, separate from religion and philosophy
- His conception of history, came to be called as ‘Historicism’
- Historicism meant the appropriate use of historical knowledge to all phenomena and the idea that history determines each event
- The changes affected by Ranke and his followers in the methodology of historical writing is characterized as ‘Berlin Revolution’ in historiography
- He developed the science of evidence by introducing scientific study of materials



- Ranke and his students like Wilhem Wattenback, George Waitz, Henrich Sybel etc together formed the Berlin school of Historiography, or the Rankaeen school of historiography
- Ranke is a great writer