

**MODULE I-EVOLUTION OF HISTORY AS A  
DISCIPLINE**

**TOPIC- GREEK HISTORIOGRAPHY THUCYDIDES**

# THUCYDIDES(460-396 BC)

- ▶ Thucydides, the author of the ‘History of Peloponnesian War’
- ▶ Another great Greek historian of ancient period
- ▶ As a Historian, he excelled his predecessor, Herodotus
- ▶ While Herodotus concentrated mainly on the narration of events, Thucydides was more concerned in analyzing the causes of events
- ▶ He is characterized as ‘the father of scientific history’ as he is the first historian to analyze the cause and effect pattern in historical writing
- ▶ Herodotus had confined himself only to ‘What’ but Thucydides was more interested in ‘how’ and ‘why’
- ▶ Thucydides ought to be credited with inaugurating the scientific approach to historical problems
- ▶ His range of study is wide and his history covers all aspect of human life

- ▶ He touched on pragmatic historic that centres attention on the motives, purposes and ends which appear in events
- ▶ He is the first historian to bestow attention on Economic history
- ▶ His weakest point is his chronology
- ▶ In him the faculty of writing history reached its highest mark of glory, both in critical analysis and lucid exposition of facts
- ▶ He never deviated from his high standard of truthfulness and painstaking endeavour to be accurate
- ▶ Adopted the method of constructive reasoning by which he made enquiries from the known facts to unknown, to find out probable causes of historical events
- ▶ Acclaimed as a ‘Didactic historian

# HELLENISTIC HISTORIOGRAPHY– POLYBIUS

- ▶ The Hellenistic period History covers the two hundred years between the conquests of Alexander and the Roman conquest of Egypt
- ▶ The world for the Greeks became a ‘Historical expression’ rather than a ‘Geographical Expression’
- ▶ Polybius was the greatest of the Hellenistic historian
- ▶ His immense ‘Histories’ is the story of the expansion of Rome to a world power
- ▶ The History of Polybius is noted for three features, namely the use of official documents as a source, the description of the topography of the places mentioned and a thorough discussion of the political affairs of the contemporary world in an interesting manner
- ▶ Polybius considered the question of reliability of sources as of paramount importance

- ▶ Provided a new vigour to the theory of history and so he is often characterized as the ‘historian’s historian’
- ▶ Will Durant calls him as one of the ‘greatest theorists and practitioners of Historiography’

# FEATURES OF GREEK HISTORIOGRAPHY

- ▶ Gave primary importance to ‘Humanism’, and considered history as the record of success and failures of man, his deeds and purposes, his hopes and aims
- ▶ Humanism was built upon the notion of ‘ man is essentially a rational animal’
- ▶ Substantialism was its main defect says Collingwood
- ▶ The concept of substantialism denotes that there is an unchanging reality or substance behind any historical event
- ▶ Fundamental character of human beings never change throughout his life
- ▶ Greek historical writing had developed the idea of the ‘ Cyclic’ view of history
- ▶ The ancient Greeks believed that human civilization would make great progress up to a certain point and then collapse

- ▶ It had to start from the beginning once again
- ▶ This cyclic view of the Greeks had a bad connotation that history repeat by itself
- ▶ The concept of ‘universal history’ in its rudimentary form had its origin in the Hellenistic period
- ▶ The concept of universal history was very much influenced by the stoic philosophy of brotherhood(stoicism is a school of Hellenistic philosophy)