

## Evolution of Film as a Source of History

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### Summary :

*From the outset, historians have a deep scepticism towards the notion that films can be considered as historical evidences. The time has come to seriously contest this approach of the historians towards films. Historians generally considered early historical films as breaches. If they ever associated with films, it was as if they were masters of historical facts. They immensely trusted at the immortality of raw historical facts.*

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### Introduction :

The traditional paradigm of history writing is often associated with the legacy of the Greco-Roman school at a time when the discipline was engaged in history writing based on hearsay accounts from those who witnessed great events, especially wars. Political history was the main focus in their writings and other aspects though mentioned at some points, were subordinated to political events. When Herodotus stressed on truthful enquiry, Polybius looked at the utilitarian purposes and Cicero stood for literary and rhetorical genres. In the Hellenistic period, the notion of history as a factual account and a literary genre (or a mode of writing) prevailed. The word 'historia', both in Latin and Greek, refer to 'a literary genre with its rules and styles, canons of greatness

and social utility'. In the Roman Age, there was a shift in function of history from pure enquiry to a higher level of philosophy. Dionysius of Halicarnassus asserted that 'history is philosophy from examples.' In the period of the Roman Empire, the emphasis again shifted to literary truth and factual information. Also history began to be seen as an account of the past.

The Church and the Jewish historiography stressed on moral values than literary truth. In the period of later Roman Empire, facts began to acquire prominence than fiction. The Greco-Roman philosophy's metaphysical doctrine of substance was challenged by the Christians doctrine of creation, which stressed that only God is eternal and everything else has been created by God. Historical process came to be the working out of God's purposes. Christian philosophy was also, universal, providential, apocalyptic and periodized. The Greeks saw history as story whereas the Latin Christians stressed on literary truthfulness. The Christian historiographers saw history as a collective past of the selected people, who were not non-Christians. The rhetoric nature of history was strengthened.

In the European Middle Ages, 'historia' referred to 'narrative works of art, saints' lives, part of the Bible, the literal sense of scriptural texts, liturgical offices, epic poems, other texts and objects.' Though 'truth' was the prime factor, 'truth' itself had diverse meanings.