



THE ROLE OF ABU RAYKHAN BIRUNI'S ATHAR UL-BAQIYA' IN THE ISLAMIC CIVILISATION

Ganiyev Avazbek Oybekovich

Doctor of Islamic studies DSc, Associate Professor
International Islamic Academy of Uzbekistan,
E-mail: avazganiyev@gmail.com

Annotation: Abu Rayhan Beruni is important in the advancement of Science with his famous works. In this article highlights of **the role of Abu Rayhan Biruni's Athar ul-Baqiya' in the islamic civilisation.**

Keywords: Al-Biruni, Athar ul-Baqiya', polymath, hisotry, islamic civilisation.

Abu Rayhan Mohammed ibn Ahmad al-Biruni, a prominent polymath scholar from Khwarazm, city of Kyat great representative of Mamun Academy in Khwarazm, he has written about 150 works in astronomy, mathematics, mining, geography, history, pharmacology and others, 31 of which have reached us. Among them are the following fundamental works of the scholar. In this paper we are discussing his work Asar al-Baqiya'[2, p.55].

The Remaining Signs of Past Centuries (Arabic: Kitab al-athar al-baqiyah 'an al-qurūn al-khaliyah, also known as Chronology of Ancient Nations or Vestiges of the Past, after the translation published by Eduard Sachau in 1879) by Abu Rayhan al-Biruni, is a comparative study of calendars of different cultures and civilizations, interlaced with mathematical, astronomical, and historical information, exploring the customs and religions of different peoples. Completed in 1000 AD (AH 390/1), it is Al-Biruni's first major work, compiled in Gorgan, at the court of Qabus, when he was in his late twenties.

In 998, he went to the court of the Ziyarid amir of Tabaristan, Shams al-Mo'ali Abol-hasan Ghaboos ibn Wushmgir. There he wrote his first important work, al-Athar al-Baqqa'ya 'an al-Qorun al-Khaliyya (literally: "The remaining traces of past centuries" and translated as "Chronology of ancient nations" or "Vestiges of the Past") on historical and scientific chronology, probably around 1000 A.D., though he later made some amendments to the book. The text survives in an early 14th-century Ilkhanid manuscript by Ibn al-Kutbi (the "Edinburgh codex", AH 707 / AD 1307–8, 179 folios, Northwestern Iran or northern Iraq, kept at the Edinburgh University Library, MS Arab 161). The manuscript contains 25 paintings and survives also in an exact 17th-century Ottoman copy (MS Arabe 1489, kept in the Bibliothèque nationale de France).

Hillenbrand interprets the choice and placement of illustrations throughout the text as a cycle which emphasizes the interest of the Ilkhanids in religions other than the predominant Islam, many illustrations showing specific episodes related to Manichaeism, Buddhism, Judaism, and Christianity. Other illustrations show a keen interest in topics of history and science. The account of the birth of Julius Caesar is illustrated with a realistic rendition of a cesarean section. The Shi`ite inclination of those responsible for the production is particularly evident from the two concluding images, the largest and most accomplished in the manuscript, which illustrate



Western European Journal of Historical Events and Social Science

Volume 3, Issue 4, April, 2025

<https://westerneuropeanstudies.com/index.php/4>

ISSN (E): 2942-1926

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two episodes in the life of Muhammad, both centrally involving `Ali, Hasan, and Husayn: The Day of Cursing (fol. 161r) and The Investiture of `Ali at Ghadir Khumm (fol. 162r). The manuscript has a total of five images depicting Muhammad, including the first miniature which shows the Prophet as he prohibits Nasī' (fol. 6v). The cycle is among the earliest depictions of Muhammad in Persian art. The earliest extant representation of Muhammad in a Persian manuscript is in the Marzubannama of 1299 (Archaeology Museum Library, Istanbul, MS 216).

The style of the images is kept in a hybrid style between that of pre-Mongol period Persia and the Chinese style introduced with the Mongol invasions.

He discussed his idea of history in The Chronology of the Ancient Nations, also known as The Remaining Signs of Past Centuries. It is a comparative study of calendars of different cultures and civilizations, interlaced with mathematical, astronomical, and historical information, exploring the customs and religions of different peoples.

In The Chronology Of Ancient Nations, he mentions the birth and death of the Caliphs, Shia Imams, Fatimah (daughter of Muhammad S.A.W.) and Khadija (Muhammad S.A.W.'s wife). Biruni's main essay on political history, *Kitab al-musamara fi akbar Khvarazm* (Book of nightly conversation concerning the affairs of Khvarazm) is now known only from quotations in Bayhaqi's *Tarikh-e Mas'udi*. In addition to this various discussions of historical events and methodology are found in connection with the lists of kings in his *al-Athar al-baqiya* and in the *Qanun* as well as elsewhere in the *Athar*, in India, and scattered throughout his other works. Al-Biruni's "Chronology of Ancient Nations" attempted to accurately establish the length of various historical eras.

Though Biruni often quotes the Qur'an as an irrefutable source of truth, his attitude toward the human sources of historical fact, whether written or oral, is characterized by intelligent skepticism. His method is, briefly, to collect as many traditions as he can concerning a topic, to subject them to impartial assessments of their plausibility, rejecting those that are contrary to reason or to nature, and to compare the remainder in a search for the most believable and consistent solution to any contradictions. He recognizes that this task can never be completely carried out, both because of the limitations of time and resources available to the historian and because of the loss or corruption of much relevant material, but feels it to be his duty to make the attempt for the benefit of future scholars [1, pp.3-4].

Examples of this methodology are easily found in the *Athar*. He assembles from books and from oral informants seven different versions of the Persian names of the five epagomenal days, but has no means for determining which, if any, is more authoritative than the others [1, pp. 53-54]. In chapter six he collects every available king list and records them accurately even when he is aware that they are full of scribal errors (p. 84, tr. p. 98), but is seldom able to resolve their differences [1, tr. pp. 108-09]. Only in the case of the Askanian, i.e., Parthians, was he able to solve this problem by comparing the lists with the evidence of Mani's *Sabuhragan* [1, pp. 116-122], which enabled him to condemn the Sasanian king list reconstructed by Kesrawi.

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Western European Journal of Historical Events and Social Science

Volume 3, Issue 4, April, 2025

<https://westerneuropeanstudies.com/index.php/4>

ISSN (E): 2942-1926

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