AL-BĪRŪNĪ
COMMENORATION VOLUME
AL-BĪRŪNĪ
COMMEMORATION VOLUME
A.H. 362—A.H. 1362

IRAN ȘOCIETY
159-B DHARAMTALA STREET
CALCUTTA
پیاد الیبیروئنی

زو الیبیروئنی امشب داستان گو
به چراغ هند از نورش فروزان
نهان بود آنپه از هر کس عیان کرد
خوشای ذکر یکه از هندوستان کرد
زم هر علم جهان ابی با خبر بود
جهان روشن ز علم و حکمت او
به خاطر خیال حرمت او
خوشای کنی بدلیا طاری از وی
کرامتها بجان پاک او یکن
رضا علی وحشت (کلکته)
## CONTENTS

**BA YAD-I AL-BIRUNI**  
*By Reza Ali Wahshat*  
... ... ... ... ... v

**FOREWORD**  
... ... ... ... ... xi

**INTRODUCTION**  
... ... ... ... ... xiii

**MUSLIM RESEARCHES IN GEODESY**  
*By Syed Hasan Barani, Bulandshahr*  
... ... ... ... ... 1

**L’INDIA VISTA DA DUE GRANDI PERSONALITA’ MUSULMANE: BÂBER E BÎRÜNî**  
*By Alessandro Bausani, Rome*  
... ... ... ... ... 53

**ALBERUNI AND THE RĀMA-KATHĀ**  
*By C. Bulcke, S.J., Ranchi*  
... ... ... ... ... 77

**AL-BÎRÜNî AND SANSKRIT**  
*By Suniti Kumar Chatterji, Calcutta*  
... ... ... ... ... 83

**AL-BÎRÜNî ET L’ALCHIMIE INDIENNE**  
*By Jean Filliozat, Paris*  
... ... ... ... ... 101

**LE CITAZIONI DELLE LEGGI PLATONICHE IN AL-BÎRÜNî**  
*By Francesco Gabrielli, Rome*  
... ... ... ... ... 107

**REMARKS ON AL-BÎRÜNî’S QUOTATIONS FROM SANSKRIT TEXTS**  
*By J. Gonda, Utrecht*  
... ... ... ... ... 111

**THE ADVÂITA DOCTRINE IN ALBERUNI**  
*By H. Heras, S.J., Bombay*  
... ... ... ... ... 119

**AL-BÎRÜNî’S CONTRIBUTION TO COMPARATIVE RELIGION**  
*By A. Jeffery, New York*  
... ... ... ... ... 125

**AL-BÎRÜNî AND TRIGONOMETRY**  
*By M. A. Kazim, Aligarh*  
... ... ... ... ... 161

**ON THE MINOR TRACTS OF ABU-RAIḤAN MUḤAMMAD BIN AHMAD AL-BERUNİ**  
*By Mohd. Abdur Rahman Khan, Hyderabad*  
... ... ... ... ... 171

**AL-BÎRÜNî’S DETERMINATION OF GEOGRAPHICAL LONGITUDE BY MEASURING THE DISTANCES**  
*By J. H. Kramers, Leiden*  
... ... ... ... ... 177

**BÎRÜNî AND THE MS. SULTAN FĀTİH NO. 3386**  
*By F. Krenkow, Cambridge*  
... ... ... ... ... 195
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Author/Location</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>L'ARTE DELL'ESPORRE IN AL-BİRŪNĪ</td>
<td>By Martino Mario Moreno, Rome</td>
<td>209</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AL-BERUNI ET LA VALEUR INTERNATIONALE DE LA SCIENCE ARABE</td>
<td>By Louis Massignon, Paris</td>
<td>217</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AL-BIRUNI SUGLI INIZI DEL CRISTIANESIMO A MERV</td>
<td>By Giuseppe Messina, S.J., Vatican City</td>
<td>221</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ON SOME OF BİRŪNĪ’S INFORMANTS</td>
<td>By V. Minorsky, Cambridge</td>
<td>233</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BA'Z-I FAWĀ‘ID-I LĪQHAWĪY-I KITĀB-AL-JAMĀḤĪR-I-BİRŪNĪ</td>
<td>By Mohammad Moin, Tehran</td>
<td>237</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AL-BIRUNI</td>
<td>By Maulana Abdus Salam Nadvi, Azamgarh</td>
<td>251</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AL-BERUNI AS A THINKER</td>
<td>By Arthur Upham Pope, New York</td>
<td>281</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AL-BİRŪNĪ AND ORIENTALISTICS</td>
<td>By J. C. Tavadia, Santiniketan</td>
<td>287</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INDEX</td>
<td></td>
<td>293</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PLATE

FACSIMILE OF AL-BIRUNI'S HANDWRITING
(By Courtesy of Islamic Culture, Hyderabad)
In Frontispiece.
FOREWORD

The Iran Society of Calcutta deserves indeed our warm felicitations on having embarked on the rather difficult yet noble mission of bringing out "Al-Biruni Commemoration Volume".

Already this society has extorted the genuine admiration of lovers of Culture all over India and Iran by trying to open paths in the field of high research, and by disseminating the light of the past amongst the modern advocates of science and literature.

It was therefore with a deep sense of joy that I set myself to write a few lines by way of a foreword to this monumental volume on Al-Biruni.

I regard Abu-Raihan Al-Biruni as one of the clearest thinkers, one of the gentlest natures and one of the best characters to figure prominently in the chronicle of Man.

Mathematician, astronomer, geographer, historian, philosopher, Al-Biruni should be looked upon as one of the greatest masters of all times and ages.

Few personalities of the history of science have fascinated the posterity as much as has the great Al-Biruni.

The Sheikh's disinterested pursuit for Truth, his restlessness as a perturbed spirit, his breadth of mind, his versatility of genius, his vision, his unbounded love for human Culture are and will remain for ever as beacon lights for the caravan of a misguided humanity.

He has much to give us today. We must earnestly endeavour to scale the heights which he had so well attained in his time. We must shed off narrow-mindedness, short-sightedness and all the fissiparous tendencies against which the great master waged a relentless war all through his life.

I am sure the volume published through the zeal and commendable initiative of Iran Society will help raise the Supreme Savant to his full stature before the modern world whose scientific spirit had been so fully imbibed by the great Al-Biruni.

M. NOURY-ESFANDIARY,
Ambassador for Iran, New Delhi.
INTRODUCTION

It is the privilege of the IRAN SOCIETY of Calcutta to have drawn the attention of the scholars of the world to the millenary (Anno Hegirae) which elapsed since the birth of Sheikh Abu Raihan AL-BIRUNI, the 'Master Aliboron' of the mediaeval West.

Al-Biruni was born in Dhu’l-Hijjah 362 or according to the Christian Era in September, 973; he died on the 3d Radjab 440 corresponding to December 13th, 1048. In 1948 there were therefore nine hundred years that the Sheikh had died, and it was first proposed to call the celebrations to be held in his honour 'AL BIRUNI'S NINTH CENTENARY'. But it was pointed out that if the years were counted according to the Muslim way, a little over one thousand hegira years had passed since the hero's birth: Dhu’l-Hijjah 1362 fell in December 1943. Since minimum pro nihil o reputatur and Al Biruni himself surely reckoned the days of his life in lunar months and hegira years, it was decided to call the planned celebrations 'AL-BIRUNI'S MILLENNARY'.

It was in 1946 that the Council of the IRAN SOCIETY were making plans to honour the memory of a man who so well symbolizes the cultural aims of the Society. An 'Al-Biruni Celebrations Committee' was formed under the able chairmanship of the first Patron and President of the Society, Dr. B. C. Law, M.A., B.L., Ph.D., D.Litt., F.R.A.S. (Lond.), F.R.A.S.B. The other members of the Committee were Prof. Dr. B. M. Barua, M.A., D.Litt. (Lond.), Dr. M. Ishaque, B.Sc., M.A., Ph.D., Honorary Secretary of the Iran Society, Mr. Percy Brown, M.B.E., A.R.C.A., F.R.A.S.B., Prof. Dr. Suniti Kumar Chatterji, M.A., D.Litt. (Lond.), F.R.A.S.B. and Rev. Fr. V. Courtois, s.j., the Secretary to the Committee.

The plans foresaw an international convocation of Orientalists, an exhibition of works of Al-Biruni and things connected with his researches, series of popular lectures, some social entertainments and some publications adapted to the circumstances. But the hopes and plans of the Committee were frustrated by the unfortunate situation which developed out of the partition of India. Communal tension in Calcutta and in the rest of India precluded the possibility of holding cultural celebrations at the time. The attention of the public was then diverted towards the big and urgent problems confronting the newly born Nation: reorganization of the administration, the procurement of food, rehabilitation of refugees, international relations, etc. The 'Al-Biruni Millenary' had perforce to be postponed till better days.

As part of the celebrations it had been resolved to prepare an AL-BIRUNI COMMEMORATION VOLUME. The task of
gathering the material for the book was entrusted to the Secretary of the 'Al-Biruni Celebrations Committee'. Scholars all over the world were approached for literary contributions to the volume; a generous and gratifying response was received. Besides several scholars of India, leading Orientalists of England, the United States of America, Italy, the Netherlands, France, the Vatican City and Iran sent in original and valuable articles on various aspects of the intellectual and scientific achievements of Abu Raihan: an international tribute of admiration to the genius of a great Muslim who by his disinterested scholarship belongs to the whole world.

With pride and pleasure the IRAN SOCIETY presents today to the public the Al-Biruni Commemoration Volume.

The Committee thank the Orientalists who have contributed to the success of the undertaking. We thank Hon'ble Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Minister for Education in India, for the special interest shown in the work and for the step taken to help covering the heavy expenses incurred by the publication of the book. We thank our former President Dr. B. C. Law under whose aegis the work was begun and whose encouragements have always been much appreciated. We thank the Managing Editor of the Islamic Culture of Hyderabad for having kindly allowed us to reproduce a plate of Al-Biruni's handwriting published in the October 1932 issue of the review; Rev. Fr. F. Goreux, S.J., Professor of Mathematics at St. Xavier's College, Calcutta, for the neat drawing of the diagrams illustrating some of the articles; Prof. A. A. Khan Bekhad, M.A., for compiling the Index of the Persian and the Urdu papers; and the Superintendent and Staff of the Baptist Mission Press, Calcutta, for the patience and thoroughness with which they tackled a difficult and exacting job.

Biographical details on Al-Biruni and an appraisement of his work will be found in the various chapters of this book, but it may not be out of place to recall here the main data of the life of the great Sheikh to serve as a broad frame in which to fit the studies that follow.

ABU'L-RAIHĀN MUḤAMMAD IBN AḤMAD AL-BĪRŪNĪ—
or perhaps more correctly 'Bērūnī'—was born of Iranian stock in the month of Dhū'l-Ḥijjah 362/September 973 in the territory of Khiva, a Khanate of Türkistan in Central Asia, now part of the U.S.S.R. Khiva was then known as Khwārizm; hence Al-Biruni is sometimes called simply 'al-Khwārizmi' by Arabic authors such as Yaqt. He was a Sunni Muslim by conviction with Ismailian sympathies in religion and universalist tendencies in philosophy.

Khwārizm had in former days been the centre of an old culture which is gradually coming to light. Imposing ruins were in recent times discovered in the country around by Prof. S. P. Tolstoy; already in the beginning of this century when visiting Al-Biruni's
INTRODUCTION

birthplace Prof. V. Minorsky had been impressed by the ancient system of irrigation he had found there.

Although Al-Biruni, who had fallen under the spell of Arabic, wrote rather disparagingly of his mother-tongue—an Iranian dialect of the North with strong Turkish influence—yet there seems to have been some interesting literature in old Khwārizmian. The language itself was deciphered by Prof. W. Henning of London and Prof. A. Freiman of Leningrad; written documents in old Khwārizmian are increasing in number; Prof. Tolstov discovered 81 of them in 1948.

Al-Biruni wrote a history of his own mother-country, the 'History of Khwārizm' where he gives a long list of local rulers; the names of some were discovered on old coins of the place. Unfortunately this work is known only through quotations.

Throughout his life Al-Biruni showed an ever growing interest in the exact sciences, and in fact in every field of knowledge. He studied mathematics, astronomy, medicine, chronology and history, and in all these branches he became a master and a creator. He was a contemporary of Ibn Sina with whom he corresponded and he must have known the cruel disappointment of Firdausi at the court of Mahmud of Ghazna.

Al-Biruni's first great work was the Kitāb al-Āthār al-Bāqiyā 'an'il-Qurūn al-Khāliya which Edward Sachau edited (Leipzig, 1878) and then translated into English under the commonly known title of 'Chronology of Ancient Nations' (Or. Transl. Fund., London, 1879).

The Sheikh's vast knowledge and sound judgment won him the favour of the ruling prince of Khiva who appointed him a councillor at court. But the policy of the Ruler of Khwārizm displeased so much his powerful neighbour of Ghazna, Sultan Mahmud, that the latter invaded Khiva, annexed the land and took as hostages to Ghazna the leading men of the defeated country. Among them was Abu Raihan Al-Biruni. All this happened in 1017.

Al-Biruni's 'captivity' in Afghanistan proved beneficial both for him and for culture in general. His reputation as a munāḍdījīm opened to him the gates of the palace and attracted attention on his usefulness; he seems not, however, to have filled any official post at the Court of Mahmud.

The proximity of India which Mahmud Shah's campaigns had just opened to Islam, exercised a strange fascination on Al-Biruni's mind; he longed to visit the mysterious continent and to penetrate its secret. He crossed therefore into India where he stayed for several years teaching the Greek sciences and acquainting himself with Hindu lore. He learned Sanskrit that he might go to the sources of Hindu thought; he read with delight the Bhagavad Gita; he studied Samkhya of Kapila, the book of Patanjali and acquainted
himself somewhat with the Puranas; he quoted abundantly from those works and from others in his own writings.

For a Muslim living in the days of Sultan Mahmud, almost under his roof, to study Sanskrit and things Hindu was no mean achievement; it demanded an exceptional spirit of determination and perseverance and not a little audacity. 'I found it very hard', he confessed in the Tahqiq, 'to work my way into the subject, although I have a great liking for it, in which respect I stand quite alone in my time, and although I do not spare neither trouble nor money in collecting Sanskrit books from places where I supposed they were likely to be found, and in procuring for myself, even from remote places, Hindu scholars who understand them and are able to teach me' (Ed. Sachau's India, Trubner, Vol. I, p. 24).

The fruits of Al-Biruni's researches in Hindustan are consigned in his well-known Tahrir (or Tahqiq) ma li'l-Hind min magāla maqāla fi'l-'aql wa madhūla, more usually referred to as Târikh'al-Hind or Indica. It was also Edward Sachau who edited the text (London, 1887) and translated the masterpiece into English (London, 1887; new edition, 1910).

When Al-Biruni returned to Ghazna he set himself to write an exhaustive account of the science of astronomy and dedicated his work in A.H. 421/A.D. 1030 to Sultan Mas'ud ibn Mahmud, hence the book's name Al-Qānūn al-Mas'ūdī fi'l-Hai'a wa'l-Nudjām. The Qānūn is considered as one of the most important works of Al-Biruni, but owing to technical difficulties the original text of it has not been edited as yet, and only fragmentary translations have so far been attempted.

Besides these three great studies, Sheikh Abu Raihan wrote scores of smaller ones on a variety of subjects: the Al-T afsīm li A wā'il Šinā'at al-Tandājum a popular introduction to astronomy and astrology in the form of questions and answers; Istīʿāb al-Wudjūh al-Munkina fi Ṣan'at al-Aṣṭurlāb, a work on the astrolabe, its manufacture and use; Kitāb al-Djamāhīr fi ma'rifat al-Djawāhīr, an opuscule on mineralogy and the study of gems; the Kitāb al-Ṣaidana fi'l-Ṭibb, a kind of materia medica of his days; Vaqut refers also to a book on literary criticism, and it is said that the Sheikh wrote some verse, but it was surely not much in his line. According to C. Brockelmann (Geschichte der Arabischen Litteratur, Suppl. I, pp. 870 ff.) some 27 works of Al-Biruni are extant to this day, but there are references to many more. In fact it is said of the great Sheikh that if all the books he wrote (more than 114?) were gathered into a bundle they would exceed a camel's load!

Abu Raihan died at Ghazna at the ripe old age of 75 on Radjab 3d, 440 which corresponds to December 13th, 1048.

Al-Biruni was one of the most versatile and thorough scholars whom the Middle Ages have known. His passion for truth, his
spirit of work undaunted by difficulties of any sort, his intellectual
fairness, his sincere religious convictions, make of him a most
attractive personality. All this will be borne with telling force by
the papers contributed to this volume, which we presume, now,
briefly to summarize.

The first article by Janab Syed Hasan Barani of Bulandshahr
is a part only of the author’s unpublished work on MUSLIM RE-
SEARCHES IN GEODESY. With his kind permission we culled
from that work what had more direct reference to Al-Biruni’s
contribution to the science of Geodesy.

Mr. Barani is a great admirer of Sheikh Abu Raihan whom he
never ceased to study since his college days. He wrote in Urdu a
much appreciated biography of Al-Biruni which has known two
editions, and he contributed many learned articles to oriental
reviews.

The astronomers of ancient Greece and India already knew that
the earth is a globe and they even tried to calculate its actual
dimensions; but although their efforts were praiseworthy, the
results arrived at lacked both in precision and accuracy. The
Muslim astronomers, then, took up the task and by devising new
methods of experimentation and calculation they were able to make
very satisfactory measurements of the earth. Much credit must
go to the scholars employed by the Caliph Al-Mamun who in the
first half of the IXth century A.D. had the full length of an arc of
the meridian measured on the surface of the earth.

In the early XIth century, Al-Biruni, who took nothing for
granted, first resumed and checked the calculations so far made,
then, forging far ahead, by means of abstruse trigonometrical
calculations he worked out the entire length of the radius and of
the circumference of the earth. His were the most accurate results
arrived at until modern times; his measurement of the earth’s
radius was short by less than 12 miles, and the one of the circum-
ference of the globe by about 70 miles only!

The records of the calculations that were made by Al-Mamun’s
astronomers are lost; only some reference to them is found in
various books. Mr. Barani has very painstakingly put together
and discussed all the data he could find on these early computations.
From Al-Biruni’s writings four different versions are obtained of
the measurement of the arc of the meridian by Al-Mamun’s scientific
staff; they are found in the Tahādīd, the Kitāb al-Tafhīm, and in two
places of the Qānūn al-Mas‘ūdī. The other sources of information
on the subject are the Biographical Dictionary of Ibn Khallikān,
the Kitāb al-Tanbih of Al-Mas‘ūdī and the ‘Ain-i-Akbari of Abul
Fazl.
Mr. Barani has taken the trouble of verifying the calculations made by Al-Biruni and of expressing them in miles and feet. He also discussed the results arrived at in the light of modern scientific researches.

The second article of the volume, L'INDIA VISTA DA DUE GRANDI PERSONALITÀ MUSULMANI: BABAR E BERUNI, is a fine study in psychology. Professor Alessandro Bausani of the University of Rome compares with much tact and acumen the reactions of two great Muslim personalities before the old civilization of India; he studies them in the context of the Tārikh Al-Hind and the Bābnāmāh.

Five hundred years separate Emperor Babar from Al-Biruni; the India they saw was considerably different. In the time of Babar a big portion of the country had been islamized, and then Babar was able to travel far and wide in the sub-continent. Al-Biruni's India had scarcely been touched by the Faith of Islam, and he saw of it probably only the Punjab and some adjacent districts. Both, however, Babar and Al-Biruni have tried to understand India and they wrote of it with much sympathy and admiration. Both also remained very personal in their appreciation of the Indian culture and—a rather noteworthy and praiseworthy feature in travellers' relations of the past—there is no plagiarism: Babar did not plunder the Indica to stuff his Bābnāmāh.

The point of view of the men were very different. Babar was subdued by the physical beauty of India and records what he sees or what he hears without enquiring much into the 'why' of anything. Al-Biruni on the other hand was always haunted by the religious or philosophical aspect of things. Both do describe the same objects, for instance, the rhinoceros, or the monkey, or physiographical details of India, its rivers, its mountains and many other things, but what a difference in the result arrived at! Babar's picture is like a faithful photograph reproducing the exact contour of the thing; Al-Biruni's picture is an X-ray of the object, less colourful but deeper in its attempt at finding the raison d'être of it all. Babar is interested in facts, Al-Biruni looks for theories and explanations. This natural bias is found in all the subjects they described whether it be geography or fauna or flora, religious practices or dancing or superstitions. To classify the types of the two writers, concludes the Author, one might perhaps, using the terminology of the psycho-analyst C. G. Jung, see in Al-Biruni 'un tipo introvertito' and in Babar 'un estrovertito'.

In AL-BIRUNI AND THE RAMA KATHA Rev. C. Bulcke, s.j., Professor at St. Xavier's College, Ranchi, tells us what Abu Raihan knew of the Rama story. The Ram-Katha (Uspatti aur
**Bikas** or Rama Story is an extensive study written in Hindi of the Rama Legend; the thesis, thorough and exhaustive, earned for its Author the Doctorate in Hindi Literature and Language from the Allahabad University. Al-Biruni contents the Author, seems not to have read nor even seen a copy of the *Ramayana*; yet he managed to acquire a remarkable knowledge of the deeds of the hero of the great epic and of the authorship of the work itself; he knew that it had been composed by Valmiki, a contemporary of Rama. Dr. Bulcke has carefully gleaned from Al-Biruni's *Indica* all the references to Rama and he has analyzed them briefly.

**AL-BIRUNI AND SANSKRIT** by Professor Dr. Suniti Kumar Chatterji of the Calcutta University, shows the special value of Al-Biruni's work on India from the point of view of philology and Sanskrit. The writer thinks that Abu Raihan may have picked up some Sanskrit already at Ghazna from Hindu captives and settlers; this helped him considerably when later he came to India. His knowledge of Sanskrit was perhaps not very profound, but it was 'wide enough and practical', and he could make intelligent use of the Pandits and Sastris whom he engaged from time to time.

From Al-Biruni's *Indica* can be gathered some 2,500 Sanskrit words in Arabic transcription, valuable data from which can be determined to a certain extent the phonology of Sanskrit in North India in the XIth century. The Sheikh knew enough Sanskrit to translate or at least to check carefully translations made by Pandits under his guidance of the Elements of Euclid, the Almagest of Ptolemy, and a work of his on the Astrolabe. 'Unfortunately all trace of his translation is lost.'

Close contact with India developed in Al-Biruni a real love for the country and its venerable culture. Prof. S. K. Chatterji appreciatively writes about the great Sheikh: 'In outwardly a very small but very highly significant matter, it seems that we can see Al-Biruni in the role of a translator into Sanskrit, as a lover of India and Indian culture, and at the same time a practical supporter of the principle of self-determination among peoples'.

Was it not most likely due to the influence of the Muslim Sanskrit scholar that Mahmud of Ghazna, who surely was not over-soft with the 'idolator' Hindus,—should have issued in India bilingual coins with the usual Arabic legend on the obverse rendered in Sanskrit on the reverse: the *kalima*, the name and title of the ruler, the place and date of minting? It is particularly interesting to see the rendering of technical Arabic religious terms into a Sanskrit garb: *Allāh-Avyakta*; *RasūlAllāh-Muhammada avatāra*; *Hīdjrāt'al-Nabi-Jināyana-samvati* (in the year of the passing of the prophet, jina), or *Tājīkīyera-samvati* according to the reading of Dr. Vasudeva Śaraṇa Agrāvāla; *Bism'Illāh-Avyaktīya-nāme*. 
For Al-Biruni alchemy was a quasi-science invented by greedy men in their lust after easy money. But right or wrong alchemy did occupy the attention of many people and played its part in the birth of modern chemistry. Alchemy was popular in India as elsewhere in the days of Sheikh Abu Raihan. In a faithful account of India's culture Al-Biruni had to give at least some sidelights on Indian alchemy. Monsieur Jean Filliozat, the able Secretary of the Société Asiatique, Paris, has put together the bits of information given by Al-Biruni about alchemy in India. The title of the article is AL-BIRUNI ET L'ALCHIMIE INDIENNE.

Because of the esoteric nature of alchemy and the reluctance of the alchemists to communicate their secrets to the uninitiated, Al-Biruni found it difficult to penetrate deep into the mysteries of Indian alchemy. Yet he gathered some precious notes on the Indian legends about alchemy such as the story of the Raja of Shara and the oil bath that was to give him immortality.

Al-Biruni tried to find out the origin of alchemy in India. He mentions somewhere a certain Vyadi who practised the science at Ujjain during the reign of Vikramaditya, the founder of the Vikrama Era in B.C. 57. He does not affirm that Vyadi invented the 'science' since Vyadi himself made use of a book on alchemy which he misinterpreted, but he may well have been close to the beginnings.

Professor Francesco Gabrieli of the University of Rome takes the reader away for a while from Sanskrit and from India to show us Al-Biruni and the Greeks in LE CITAZIONI DELLE LEGGI PLATONICHE IN ALBIRUNI.

The Arabic translations of Plato's Greek works were as a rule little reliable; they were paraphrases or commentaries of the original rather than true translations. Professor Gabrieli tries to determine what Arabic text Al-Biruni used in his quotations of Plato's De Legibus: was it also a paraphrase or a relatively faithful translation? The Author selected seven quotations from the De Legibus in the Tārikh’al-Hind and compared them with the same quotations found in the summary of the Greek Philosopher's work made by Al-Farabi. From this comparison it is clear that the text used by Al-Biruni was no mere paraphrase of the book of Plato, but a real, though at times somewhat free, translation of the same. Whose text it was is difficult to surmise; the Author suggests the names of Hunain ibn Ishāq or of Yahya ibn 'Adi, both mentioned in the Fihrist.

Professor Dr. J. Gonda of Utrecht takes us back to Sanskrit with a well documented study REMARKS ON AL-BIRUNI'S QUOTATIONS FROM SANSKRIT TEXTS.
INTRODUCTION

In the *Tārikh'AL-Hind* Al-Biruni gives the list of 18 Purāṇas, but he apparently consulted only parts of the Matsya, the Āditya, the Vāyu and Vīshnū Purāṇas and the Vīshnū-dharmottara. Now according to Ed. Sachau, the quotations which the Muslim scholar makes from these works do not always tally well with the texts in our possession.

But Ed. Sachau was writing over sixty years ago and many new Sanskrit texts have been discovered since then. In the light of those discoveries and modern research, Prof. Gonda goes over Al-Biruni's quotations carefully and he is able to point out in several instances to the correctness of Al-Biruni's text and so revise some of the notes and remarks of Ed. Sachau. 'It would appear to me that the learned translator (of the *Tārikh'AL-Hind*) has put too many question marks in his commentary. Now that we have more texts at our disposal and have gained deeper insight into the Puranic traditions and the history of this kind of literature, it is possible to give some additions and to propose some corrections on his notes. In most cases these corrections remove any doubt as to Al-Biruni's accuracy and familiarity with the texts which he consulted.'

The Author studies especially the names and number of Hells mentioned in the Vīshnū Purāṇa and quoted by Al-Biruni; also the list of the different peoples inhabiting Bharat.

One detail which at first misled the Western scholars was Al-Biruni's transliteration or cutting of proper names of places (*Sālvāni Pōjjihāna* for *Salvā, Nipā, Ujjihāna*) another stumbling-block were omissions or transpositions in the nomenclature of proper names; but then the native authors of those days were not always very particular, nor accurate about transliteration and position.

Prof. Gonda on the strength of critical examination of the context of those quotations vindicates the accuracy of Al-Biruni in many instances, and finds that his readings 'are even of value to those scholars who apply themselves to the study of Puranic traditions'.

The Rev. H. Heras, s.j., the Director of the Indian Historical Research Institute of Bombay, considers THE ADVAITA DOCTRINE IN ALBERUNI. Although Abu Raihan does not mention in his *Tārikh'AL-Hind* any Vedantic author, 'yet while delving into the nature of God he clearly explains the foundation of the Advaita School'.

In a very original and important article Prof. Dr. Arthur Jeffery of the Columbia University, New York, studies AL-BIRUNI'S CONTRIBUTION TO COMPARATIVE RELIGION. 'The importance of Al-Biruni's contributions to the more strictly scientific disciplines has tended to obscure the fact that he stands
unique in his age, and perhaps unique in the history of his own faith, for his contributions to the study of Comparative Religion'.

The gathering of facts and information about religions other than one's own is very old indeed; instances are found in Mesopotamia and in Greece, among the Romans and even among the Muslims before Al-Biruni (see Al-'Ash'ari's Maqālāt al-Islāmiyān, and the writings of al-Ya'qūbī and al-Mas'ūdī and others). But what interests us in Al-Biruni is less what he can teach us about other faiths, which we surely know better than he, but it is the method he followed in his investigations.

As Al-Biruni himself confessed, 'he was led to write down his observations on the religions, customs and beliefs of the Hindus, at the instance of Abu Sahl of Tiflis on the ground that he discovered that most of the available literature on the subject of the non-Muslim religions sadly misrepresented those religions, both because of inadequate acquaintance with source material, and because of a highly prejudiced attitude towards the religions they were describing'.

Al-Biruni adopted in his research a comparative method which he based on original and reliable information. He set himself as guiding principles to aim at completeness, accuracy and unprejudiced presentation of other faiths. He would use all the available means to that end such as the 'careful examination of witnesses to ascertain what value their evidence has', and an exacting criticism of the evidence given.

But the obvious is not always the simplest. The attainment of the ideal chosen was fraught with technical difficulties. How, indeed, to explain to the adherents of Islam the more difficult and subtle tenets of a faith totally alien to Islam without betraying or belittling their content and without antagonizing the easily prejudiced reader. Al-Biruni realized all the import of a correct terminology to fulfil his purpose and one of the most laudable achievements in this field is to have endeavoured always to thoroughness and accuracy. We may in this connection refer to the paper on 'Al-Biruni and Sanskrit' by Prof. S. K. Chatterji.

After explaining the methodology of the great scholar in his presentation of other religious disciplines, Prof. Jeffery records some of Al-Biruni's theoretical discussions on certain general problems of religion such as Idolatry, the Force of the Sunna, Cosmologies, Demons, etc.

In a third section the writer summarizes the information given by Al-Biruni on the great religions of the world and some sects of his days: Hinduism, Buddhism, Zoroastrianism, Manichaeism, the Greek religion, Judaism, the Samaritan Faith, Christianity, the beliefs of the Sabians and the Khwārizmians, Arabian Paganism and finally Islam.
INTRODUCTION

Prof. Jeffery based his extensive and well-conducted study on Al-Biruni’s *India* and his *Chronology*, but it suffices to show the unique place Abu Raihan holds in the history of that fairly modern branch of knowledge, the Comparative Study of Religion. ‘It is rare until modern times to find so fair and unprejudiced a statement of the views of other religions, so earnest an attempt to study them in the best sources, and such care to find a method which for this branch of study would be both rigorous and just. Might it be after all that his greatest contribution to learning was not in the field of the more exact sciences but in this field of the sciences of the spirit?’

The purpose of the paper on *AL-BIRUNI AND TRIGONOMETRY* by Janab M. A. Kazim, Lecturer in Mathematics at the Muslim University of Aligarh, ‘is to give a critical estimate of the merits of the Third Book of the *Qānūn-i-Mas‘ūdī*. The Author is of opinion that it is Al-Biruni and not Nasiruddin at-Tusi—as Brahminmühl believes—who was the first to approach trigonometry as an independent subject. The book in question is all about trigonometry, plane trigonometry in the first chapters and spherical trigonometry in the last two chapters; there are also trigonometrical tables.

Mr. Kazim gives in detail the contents of the various chapters of the book and points out the systematic way with which the great scientist handled his subject. To him ‘goes the credit of, for the first time, keeping it (trigonometry) independent of astronomical calculations’. Nay more Al-Biruni may well have been the inventor of calculus of finite differences. But ‘the formulae derived by Al-Biruni seemed to have gone into the background till they appear again in the 17th century of the Christian Era in a modified form’.

Many mathematical treasures lie hidden in the pages of the *Qānūn-i-Mas‘ūdī* which still awaits to be scientifically edited and translated. The author hopes with many that the day will soon dawn when Al-Biruni’s greatest mathematical work will be made available to scholars for further researches.

The former Principal of the Osmania University, Hyderabad-Deccan, Janab Mohd. Abdur Rahman Khan, gives us a short introduction to the *THE MINOR TRACTS OF ABU RATHAN MUHAMMAD BIN AHMAD AL-BIRUNI*. Some of these tracts, of Al-Biruni himself or of his disciples, were published by the Dairat al-Ma‘arif of Hyderabad. A fuller description of the contents of these tracts may be obtained from an article by the author published in the Hyderabad quarterly *Islamic Culture*, Fascicle IV, 1950. Besides the list of tracts the writer gives an interesting conspectus of Al-Biruni’s scientific achievements.
In AL-BIRUNI'S DETERMINATION OF GEOGRAPHICAL LONGITUDE BY MEASURING THE DISTANCES Prof. J. H. Kramers of Leiden University studies the 2nd chapter of the VIth treatise of the Qānūn 'al-Mas'ūdī which was rendered into German by C. Schoy in Isis (Vol. V, 1923, pp. 51–74). But Schoy's translation is defective from the linguistic point of view. Prof. Kramers, therefore, gives us here a more correct English rendering from the original and makes some pertinent observations on the text. The article gives a glimpse of the 'laborious kitchen work' Al-Biruni had to do or to have done in the elaboration of the remarkable results he attained.

Dr. F. Krenkow of Cambridge wrote on BERUNI AND THE MS. SULTAN FATIH NO. 3386. The Doctor begins with reminding the reader of what should be the correct English spelling and pronunciation of Abu Raihan's laqab, viz. Beruni with a long E pronounced like ea in 'bear', and not Biruni with a long I. He strengthens his argument with a quotation from the introduction of Al-Biruni's Kitāb al-Saidana where the Iranian savant complains of the difficulty of expressing in one language, in the case 'Arabic', the sounds of other languages and especially of the vowels. We feel we should apologize to Dr. Krenkow for not having in this book on Al-Biruni adopted the spelling he advocates. We surely understand the strength of his argument, but then there is the force of habit and perhaps also a musical appeal in 'Al-Biruni' which is not so evident in 'Beruni'. We presume that Dr. Krenkow will forgive us a musical licence. In the papers contributed we, of course, kept the spelling adopted by their respective authors.

Dr. Krenkow then gives us an important extract of the MS. Sultan Fatih No. 3386. The title of the manuscript which was composed at Ghazna is Kitāb fi Tahdīd nahāyat al-Amākīn wa Tasfīh nasāfāt al-Masākīn. It is in the hand of Al-Biruni himself. The manuscript has not been published as yet, but it had been photographed by Prof. Ritter for the State Library of Berlin. Dr. Krenkow had the use of those photographs. The aim of the book is to enable scientists to ascertain the longitudes and latitudes of different places and thus determine the correct direction of the Qibla.

In the passage selected Al-Biruni insists on the importance of geographical knowledge and he reveals himself a foremost geographer. Some of the remarks he makes about the age of the Earth which might be millions of years, of lands which were formerly seas, etc. render a very modern sound. Dr. Krenkow gives in appendix to his article the original Arabic text of the passage translated.

L'ARTE DELL'ESPORRE IN AL-BIRUNI by Professor Martino Mario Moreno of the University of Rome is a study of the
Tārīkh al-Hind from the didactic esthetic point of view. Prof. Moreno reveals an aspect of Al-Biruni which may easily be overlooked; he shows us the artist and the master, 'il Maestro', within the scientist and the doctor. Al-Biruni was not merely erudite; he did not hide his vast knowledge under the thick veil of abstruse considerations; he longed to communicate his science to his fellow-men, he wanted to be understood and he possessed a wonderful gift of exposition, of communication: 'l'arte dell'esorre'. It was the fruit of a warm heart which readily vibrated in unison with the wonderful world his studies had revealed to him: 'egli e un cuore pulsante oltre che un cervello ragionante'. This natural sympathy with the beautiful, with the truth which he liked to share with others, made him discover as by instinct the way to overcome distrust and indifference, and to captivate the attention and interest of his readers: 'Il nuovo mondo che i suoi studi gli hanno rivelato ha fatto vibrare in lui le corde dell'umana simpatia, lo ha animato d'una passione che brama di comunicarse ad altri, e sa quindi trovare le vie più adatte per vincere la diffidenza e l'indifferenza ed accattivarsi l'interesse'.

The method which Al-Biruni patronized most is the one of comparison and he was keen on finding first some common ground to base his teaching of new things. The Author gives, as example, the clever way in which he taught the Hindu conception of the divinity to his Muslim contemporaries.

The Author also studies some quotations of the Bhagavad Gita and their rendering into a rythmical and rhyming Arabic. The translation is not literal when checked on the present day text of the sacred song; it seems to be combined with a commentary. But Al-Biruni wanted above all to be understood. Although not literal his translation is sufficiently faithful to the original for his purpose, elegant and clear.

The paper ends with some remarks on the way Al-Biruni translated into Arabic Sanskrit technical terms.

Monsieur Louis Massignon of Paris explains in his article on AL-BIRUNI ET LA VALEUR DE LA SCIENCE ARABE why the Iranian scholar of Khwārizm chose to write in Arabic rather than in Persian or in the dialect of his native place. The power of abstraction of the Arabic language made of it an ideal international vehicle for scientific thought; it was the language that had helped 'civilization' to spread all over the Mediterranean world. Al-Biruni wrote in the preface of his Book of Drugs: 'It is in the Arabic tongue that the sciences have been transmitted by means of translations coming from all parts of the world; their (value) is enhanced by it and this has allowed them to insinuate themselves into the hearts of men; and the beauty of that tongue has flown together with those
sciences into our arteries and into our veins.' If Al-Biruni was to express his thought in such a way as to be understood by others he could not have done so in his own mother-tongue, the dialect of Khwārizm 'où une science serait aussi étonnante de se voir éternisée qu’un chameau de se voir dans la rigole de la Ka’ba, ou une giraffe de se voir parmi des purs sang'.

Some of Al-Biruni’s works, especially the Āthār al-Bāqiya are considered as most important sources of information about the history and the liturgical customs of certain little known Christian sects of Central Asia. Rev. Giuseppe Messina, s.j., of the Pontifical Biblical Institute, City of the Vatican, has utilized Al-Biruni’s Chronicle to determine the beginnings of Christianity in the city of Merv: AL-BIRUNI SUGLI INIZI DEL CRISTIANESIMO A MERV.

Merv was in the VIth century a commercial and cultural centre of Central Asia and a forward post of Christian penetration in the country. Now about the origin of Christianity at Merv one of the few sources of information so far available is Al-Biruni’s ‘Vestiges of the Past’, the Āthār al-Bāqiya. He mentions somewhere a date and a name which are a clue to identify the first apostle of the faith at Merv. The passage runs thus: ‘On the 21st day (of the month of Haziran—June) is made the commemoration of the priest Barshabba who brought Christianity to Merv about 200 years after Christ’.

Prof. Messina analyzes in details this reference of the Muslim historian and confronts it with the data of the Chronique de Séert published in the Patrologia Orientalis (Vol. V, pp. 217 ff.) under the title ‘Histoire Nestorienne’. The relevant passage about Saint Barshabba goes from page 253 to page 258. After a careful sifting of the documents available about that period the Author has to conclude that historical evidence labours in favour of Al-Biruni’s affirmation: ‘le notizie che abbiamo delle condizioni in cui vivevano i Cristiani quel tempo nell’impero persiano e dello sviluppo dell’apostolato cristiano no solo non contrastano con l’affermazione di Albiruni, ma depongono in suo favore’.

Al-Biruni was always on the look-out for opportunities of increasing his knowledge about the world around him. He was fond of questioning travellers, merchants, and ambassadors about the countries which they knew and which he, Al-Biruni, was unable to visit. He carefully consigned to writing their reports after checking them as best he could. But to judge of the value of the information he gives about far away countries, one should know whom he gathered his information from. Professor V. Minorsky of Cambridge has written enlightening notes ON SOME OF AL-BIRUNI’S INFORMANTS.
INTRODUCTION

Information about China and Mongolia must have reached the scholar through the ambassadors of the rulers of Qitay and Yughur who visited the court of Sultan Mahmud round about A.H. 418/A.D. 1027, shortly before the composition of the Qānūn (421/1030). In fact Al-Biruni himself acknowledged in his Kitāb al-Djamāhir that ‘he had interrogated the ambassador from the Qitay-Khan’.

Prof. Minorsky was able also to trace the informant from whom Al-Biruni received his information about the Polar regions. He discovered that the author of the History of Bayhaq mentions that in 415/1024 the padishah of the Bulghars had sent an embassy to the padishah of Khorasan with some offerings for the mosques of Sabzavar and Khosraugird. Al-Biruni’s Taḥdīd al-Amākīn was written one year after this visit: a striking coincidence.

Dr. Mohammad Mo’in, Professor of Persian Literature at the University of Tehran, gives us in his BĀ’I Z-I FAWA’T-I LUGHAWIY-I KITAB’AL-JAMĀHIR-I BIRUNI a very thorough philological study of some terms used by Al-Biruni in his work on mineralogy and precious stones, the Kitāb’al-Djamāhir fi ma‘rifat’al-Djavāhīr. It is interesting to note the pahlavi or avestic origin of several of these technical terms. To give but one example: Āzor-shust is the combination of an old pahlavi word ānāsh, fire, which passing through avestic became in course of time āzor in Persian. Shust is from shustan and means to wash, to bathe. The compound, then, conveys the meaning of bathing in fire and it is the name used for the Angel of fire, the salamander, and a kind of stone. The Author, of course, shows all the intermediaries through which the term passed before obtaining its final shape. Other terms considered are: nabharadj a baser coin, a bribe; khud-i-khuruh, the crest of a cock, amaranth; roznāmdah, a calendar; shustakāl, a kind of cloth; kadkhudāhiyah, the master of the house; and so on.

AL-BIRUNI by Maulana Abdus Salam Nadvi of the Dar’al-Musannifin, Azamgarh, is a comprehensive survey in Urdu of the life and achievements of the great Persian scholar. The study is based mainly on the sources mentioned by Edward Sachau in the introduction to the Āthār’al-Bāqiyyah. They are among others: Mu’djam’al-Udabā (Vol. VI), Akhbār’al-Ḥukmā, Ṭabaqāt’al-ʿIbā’, Ṣawān’al-Ḥikmah.

The author gathered from these works whatever information he could about Sheikh Abu Raihan, and out of them made an excellent biographical notice of our hero.

Apart from Syed Barani’s master work on Al-Biruni, there was in Urdu but little literature about the great scientist who wrote so well of the land and the people of India. Maulana A. S. Nadvi has rendered a great service to Urdu readers by giving in Urdu a well
thought-out, concise and reliable account of the life and work of Al-Biruni.

AL-BIRUNI AS A THINKER by Mr. Arthur Upham Pope of New York, the Author of the monumental 'Survey of Persian Art', is a glowing elegy of Al-Biruni's achievements in the various fields of knowledge. The greatness of the scholar was the natural outcome of the thoroughness of his scientific researches and of his remarkable intellectual honesty. Al-Biruni was empassioned for truth in which he saw the unifying principle of the universe. He was no eclectic, however, and would stand no compromise with half truth just for the sake of popularity or to please. A genuine and sincere Muslim, 'he believed that the Koran was in all essentials in perfect harmony with other religious codes' in so far as they all shared more or less in the unique Truth; but he would have been antagonistic to the vague sentimentalism and intellectual laziness that have produced our modern World Fellowship of Faiths. Al-Biruni was an accomplished scholar, nay an accomplished man.

The article of Professor Dr. J. C. Tavadia of Santiniketan on AL-BIRUNI AND ORIENTALISTICS brings the volume to a happy close. The Author shows how disinterested Al-Biruni was in his scientific pursuit: 'He was not actuated by any personal motives, but solely by the desire of knowledge about peoples of various countries and religions different from his own, and that out of pure intellectual curiosity of finding the truth, be it pleasant or not'. Yet far from him intellectual selfishness! He wanted his efforts to help in the advancement of culture and mutual understanding between peoples. This is clear from the aim he set himself when writing the Tārīkh'al-Hind. In the conclusion of the book he gives himself this testimony: 'We think now that what we have related in this book will be sufficient for any one who wants to converse with the Hindus, and to discuss with them questions of religion, science, or literature, on the very basis of their own civilization'.

Prof. Tavadia completes his paper with some suggestive remarks on some passages of the Tārīkh from which so many old Hindu customs can be gathered. He suggests even that a commentary should be made on the facts about Indian antiquities recorded in that unique book; he shows some striking illustrations.

We have added an INDEX to the volume. It will be found wanting in many ways. We did not, indeed, try to make it exhaustive, but suggestive only of the main topics touched in the book.

V. COURTOIS, S.J.,
President, Iran Society.

M. ISHAQUE,
Honorary Secretary, Iran Society.
MUSLIM RESEARCHES IN GEODESY

By

SYED HASAN BARANI, B.A., LL.B.,
Advocate, Bulandshahr.

'و إنما فعلت ما هو واجب على كل انسان، ان يعمله في صناعة من تقبل
إجتهاد من تقدسه بالله، و تصحيح خلل ان عثر عليه بلا حسنة، . . . .
و تخليد ما يلوح له فيها تذكرة لمن تأخر عنه بالزمان، و آتى بعده، *

(البروفون في القانون السعودي)

"And I have truly done what every one is bound to do in respect of any particular science, that is, to accept gratefully the original contributions of his predecessors, to correct fearlessly the errors that come to his notice and to preserve what he himself discovers and to leave it as a record for the future generations that are to follow him in time."

(Al-Biruni, in his Canon Masudicus.)

[This Study is dedicated with his kind permission to Dr. George Sarton, S.D., the illustrious author of "Introduction to the History of Science," and the founder and editor of "Isis," the International Review devoted to the history of Science and Civilization.]

The history of sciences, like that of all other human achievements, is the story of an endless adventure. Some of the best minds of various nations and countries, in different ages, have contributed to its total progress in various proportions. The part played by the Muslims in the course of their long history still awaits a just and proper recognition. They are generally assigned the modest rôle of being the mere transmitters of the ancient lore of the West and the East.¹ Their true share in the scientific development

¹ For instance, the latest expression of this erroneous view will be found in the well-known thinker and writer Bertrand Russell’s History of Western Philosophy, (1946), an excellent work on the whole, where in chapter X on Mohammadan Culture and Philosophy he remarks that 'Mohammedan civilization in its great days
is, however, really much greater than that of an intermediary. The credit of preserving different ancient sciences and transmitting them intact to the modern times would, by itself, be no small matter, but in truth the Muslims in many instances improved the old sciences, achieving better or more positive results than those of their pre-decessors, and in others broke fresh grounds, discovering new ideas, and sometimes even creating new sciences where there had existed none before. It is the business of the impartial historian to make a correct estimation of their labours and achievements.

All the sciences we know have advanced to the present state bit by bit and step by step, though often by tortuous paths, and not without many set-backs. Their total progress, however, is an established fact. Every step taken forward has its own significance, as it leaves behind the legacy of positive gains, which, when properly garnered, make their own contribution to the general stock. Our modern knowledge would as much count a background stage in the eyes of the future generations, when they would have advanced much beyond our present acquisitions, but not without receiving from us a handsome legacy of net gains. Similarly we all owe great debt to the past, and the only manner in which we can repay it is by recognizing the real significance of the previous labours, and expressing our sense of gratitude to the great masters of the former generations.

These preliminary observations of an abstract nature have a direct bearing on our present study, which deals with the labours of the Muslim astronomers in the field of Geodesy, a science which treats of the shape, size and curvature of the Earth. It is a branch of Astronomy as well as of Physical Geography, the two sciences in which the Muslims took a keen interest, and have left some notable results. In Geodesy itself they made splendid researches, which, although described now and then by several scholars, still await fuller and more correct treatment.

Among the Orientalists we owe their best treatment to that Great Italian Scholar C. A. Nallino, the editor and translator of Al-Battâni,¹ and the author of the most valuable lectures delivered in 1909 and 1910 in the Egyptian university on the history of the Arabian Astronomy:

"علم الفلك تاريخه عند العرب في ترون الوسطى"

An entirely independent, and in some respects detailed, treatment of the same subject was attempted by the present writer in

---

¹ Kitāb-ul-Zīj-ul-Sābī (Al-Battani), Rome, 1889.
the second edition of his 'Life of Al-Birûnî', published in 1927 by
the Anjuman-e-Taraqqi-e-Urdu (pp. 188–203), substantially based
on some previous articles of his own, published in different
Indian Journals.

I am now led to take up the whole subject afresh, as besides
some important new materials that have recently come to hand,
I have re-examined, checked, and thrashed out all the data, and
improved upon, and, at times, even corrected, my own previous
studies and researches.

The present study, therefore, although utilizing my own former
studies, as well as the most excellent studies of C. A. Nallino, are
substantially new, both in their content and treatment. I have
tried to make it as complete and exhaustive as possible, and have,
therefore, quoted in extenso the original texts, whether drawn
from the unpublished manuscripts or the printed books.

We find that although some further researches in Geodesy were
attempted by some subsequent Muslim astronomers,¹ the highest
mark had already been achieved by the most illustrious astronomers
of Al-Mâmûn, and by that greatest astronomer and mathematician
of all the Muslims, Al-Birûnî, whose scientific researches are always
of the first order, and deserve our special concern, being so often
closely associated with our own country—the scene of his most
important researches in Geodesy as well as of those other vast and
arduous labours in the entire field of languages, literature, sciences,
and culture of the ancient Hindû nation, of which he has left such
a precious account in his monumental work on India, known as
the 'INDICA' of Al-Birûnî.

Geodesy in modern times occupies the position of a distinct
science, having its own band of specialists as well as a number of
societies exclusively devoted to it. Before the war it also claimed
a world-wide International Organization.²

For at least about 2,500 years, if not for more, the scientists
have known the fact that the earth is round and a globe in its form.
It was known full well to the astronomers of ancient Greece and
India, and all the subsequent scientists of the world have learnt
the idea from them. The Muslim astronomers, who at first derived
their knowledge from both these original sources, readily accepted
it and tried to support it by adducing better and newer proofs.
But by the Greek, Hindû and Muslim astronomers the Earth was
always considered to be a perfect globe. It was reserved for the
modern astronomers, Newton and others that followed him, to

¹ Ullugh Beg, e.g., sent Qûshjî to China to measure an arc of the meridian.
I have described their results in my Al-Birûnî (2nd edition).
² See the article on 'Geodesy' in the Encyclopedia Britannica.
discover and establish that the Earth is not so much a perfect globe as an oblate spheroid of its own peculiar form—a 'geoid', with depressions at the two ends near the poles and a little bulging at the Equator.

As soon as it was known that the Earth is a globe the astronomers set about the task of finding out its actual dimensions. We have the results of such measurements by several astronomers in Ancient Greece and India. Judging by what we know of the methods employed and the actual results achieved by them, we have reasons to believe that their results were probably more or less of a tentative nature, and never very precise nor accurate.

The honour of obtaining the first approximately accurate measurements was reserved to the Muslims, whose astronomers employed distinct methods, in the first instance by (a) directly measuring and ascertaining the precise value of an arc of the meridian, and in the second instance, by (b) finding out by the most recondite trigonometrical processes the entire length of the Earth's radius, and thereby of the diameter and the circumference, and eventually working out the whole area and volume of the Earth's globe.

The former was the method adopted by the astronomers of Al-Mâmûn in the early third century A.H. (early half of the ninth century A.D.) and the latter that of Al-Birûnî in the early fifth century A.H. (early eleventh century A.D.).

Geodesy has certainly made great strides in the modern times, but as already indicated, its history goes back to remote times. The ancients also used the Earth's radius as a unit for their celestial measurements.

Amongst the Greeks Dicaerchos (320 B.C.), Eratosthenes (295 B.C.) and Hipparchus (160 B.C.) attempted the measurement of the Earth in different manners. We know on Aristotle's authority that the old astronomers had calculated the circuit of the meridian to consist of 400,000 stadia. Eratosthenes found 250,000 stadia, and Posedonius (57 B.C.) 240,000 stadia. Ptolemy (151 A.D.), the most famous Alexandrian astronomer, found a degree to consist of 500 stadia and the circumference 180,000 stadia.1

Among the Hindûs, who also occupied themselves with the subject, Aryyâbhâtta (B.C.), the best known of their astronomers, found the Earth's diameter 1,050 yojanas and the circumference as 3,364 yojanas. The writer of Siddhânta gives the diameter as 1,600 yojanas, Brahma Guptâ (fifth or sixth century, A.D.) gives the circumference as 5,000 yojanas and at another place as 4,800 yojanas and the diameter 1,581 yojanas. Bhashkar Āchârya, the last great astronomer of the Hindûs, apparently resting on Brahma Guptâ,

---

1 For the Greek researches in detail see Nallino's Lectures.
gives the diameter as $1,581\frac{3}{24}$ yojanas and the circumference as 4,967 yojanas.\(^1\)

The length of the Greek stadia and the Indian yojanas, varying from time to time and place to place, we have no certain and agreed data to test and verify their various results with any amount of absolute precision. We have, however, attempted in another place (Al-Birûnî, pp. 199–201) to make a comparative study of them, but we must confess that in the present state of our knowledge it is not possible to claim exactitude for those results. All that we can say at present is that they are of a mere tentative nature, some of them perhaps approximating the correct value more closely than the others.

So far as we could judge, most probably amongst the Hindûs the best result was obtained by Aryâbhâtta, and amongst the Greeks by Posedonius, though both of them seem yet very far from correct estimations.

Amongst the Muslims the real interest in astronomical studies began in the middle of the second century after the establishment of the Abbâsîd Caliphate and reached its zenith in the golden age of Al-Mâmûn the Great (A.H. 198–218/A.D. 813–833) who was a true patron of all the sciences of his times. The Muslims of that early period derived their entire knowledge of Astronomy first from the Hindûs and then from the Persian and Greek sources.

Having readily and whole-heartedly accepted the theory of the Earth’s rotundity, and noticing that the ancient accounts of the Earth’s measurements so widely differed, and were not verifiable on account of their ignorance of the true lengths of the various standards of measurements employed by those ancients, the Muslim astronomers set about in earnest to find out for themselves and in their own way the true dimensions of the Earth.

It was by Al-Mâmûn’s own order that his illustrious astronomers, for the first time in the world’s history, resorted to a strictly scientific and well directed measurement of an arc of the meridian, and by means of it to further ascertain its circumference as well as its diameter. They were truly the greatest astronomers of their age, and judged by their results, proved themselves also to be the perfect masters of their craft.

Most probably they had made a detailed record of their operations. But unfortunately those original records, and even

---

contemporary accounts relating to them, are nearly all lost\(^1\), probably beyond any hope of recovery. We have, therefore, almost wholly to depend for our information on the subsequent writers, some of whom apparently had access to them, and have left fairly reliable accounts. And we have a number of such accounts. Only a few of them can be treated as independent ones, as being of primary importance. Most of the others are more or less of a secondary nature, derived as they are from some other intermediary sources. At first sight there appears to be some conflict of details even in our best available authorities, and before we could satisfactorily account for these divergences, and attempt to actually reconcile them, or come to our final conclusions, we have to make a thorough study of all the available materials, and then ascertain their respective merits.

Almost the first in point of time\(^2\) is the account given in

---

\(^1\) The only exception is Habash, whose one work has survived, viz. *Opus Astronomicum* (ziJ.) in the Imperial Library of Berlin (p. LXVI of Part I of Nallino’s translation of Al-Battâni).

\(^2\) Strictly speaking the first in order would be the reference in the medical work *Firdaus-ul-Hikmat* (Berlin, 1928) by Abul-Hasan Ali bin Sahl Rabbân-ul-Tabari (آبي الحسن علي بن سهل ربان الطبري) (middle of ninth century A.D.) where at page 547 in the chapter dealing with the rotundity of the celestial sphere and the Earth’s globe he gives account of the Earth’s dimensions in the following manner:

قال جلاليوس وغيره من العلماء ان الأرض و الماء و سائر الطالب مستدرا كرية، و ان استدارة الأرض كلها و جبالها و بحارها اربعة و عشرين ألف ميل و ان قطرها و عمقها و عرضها سبعة الآف و ستة و ثلاثين ميلاً و ابه أنما استدركوا علم ذلك بالآية اخذوا ارتفاع القطب الشمالي في مدينة هما على خط واحد من خط الاستواء، مثل مدينة كرد و الزق، فوجدوا ارتفاع القطب في مدينة تمر و ثلاثين جزء، و في مدينة الزق خمسة و ثلاثين جزء، و اربعة جزء، و ثلاثين جزء، و عشرين جزء، و ثلاثين جزء و ستة جزء، و كل جزء من آجزاء الفلك الأعظم.

"Ptolemy and other philosophers say that the Earth, the sea and the natural elements are round and global in form, and the circumference of the whole Earth, including its seas and mountains, is 24,000 miles, and its diameter, or depth, or width 7,936 miles. They ascertained it by taking the altitude of the Polar Star in two places which happened to be on the same line from the Equator, e.g. Tadmur (Palmyra) and Al-Raqqa. They found the altitude of the former 34° and that of Al-Ruqqâ 35°, so the difference between these being 14°. Then they measured between Al-Raqqâ and Tadmur and found the same to be 67 miles. Thus they found out the length for 1° degree of the great sky line."

This passage of Tabari has been quoted nearly verbatim by Al-Masûdi in his 'Meadows of Gold' with very slight variants from the text as quoted in the above. (See volume 1, pp. 75, Bagdad edition.)
Al-Masûdi’s (†346 A.H. = 958/959 A.D.) ‘Meadows of Gold’ (Murûj-ud-dhahab) wherein he says as follows:—

ذکر جَبَّل المَنْجِم صاحب كتاب الزَّيْج في النجوم عن حَمَدَّ بن عبد الله المروزي

وغيره، وقد كانوا رَضَد و الشَّمس لأمير المومينون الامام في بِرَهْ سِنجار من بلاد

دِير ربيعه أن مقدار درجة واحدة من وجه الأرض ستة و خمسون ميلاً، قضروا مقدار درجة واحدة في ثلاثمائة و ستين، فوجدوا دور منطقة كُرة الأرض المحيطة بالبَر و البَحر عشرين ألف ميل و مائة و ستين ميل، ثم ضربوا دور الأرض في سبعة، فاجتمع مائة ألف ميل و أربعون ألف ميل، و مائة و عشرون ميلاً، قُسْسَموا ذلك على اثنتين و عشرين، و حَرْج القسم الذي هو مقدار قُطر الأرض ستة آلاف و أربعمائة و أربع عشر ميلاً و نصف عشر بالتقريب، و نصف قطر الأرض ثلاث آلاف ميل و مائتا ميل و سبعة ميل و ستة عشرة دقيقة و ثلثا ثانية، يكون ربع ميل وربع عشر ميل، و العميل أربع آلاف ذراع بالأسود، و هي الذراع التي وضعها أمير المومينون الامام للثواب و مساحة* 

“The astronomer Habash, the author of Kitâb-ul Zi‘ in Astronomy reports from Khâlîd-bin Abdullâh of Merv and others, who had made observations on the Sun for Amir-ul-Momenîn Al-Mâmûn in the desert of Sinjâr, one of the towns of Diyâr-e-Rabia, that the length of a single degree of the Earth’s surface is 56 miles. They multiplied this single degree of the Earth’s surface into 360, and found the circumference girdling the Earth including the seas, and the land to consist of 20,160 miles. By further multiplying the

The author though one of the great physicians of Islâm is apparently not much versed in the astronomical and mathematical sciences. The above account is not free from confusion and inaccuracy. Evidently it echoes some popular traditions of his times regarding the generally known measurements of Al-Mâmûn’s times carried out by the astronomers between Tadmur (Palmyra) and Raqqa. It certainly gives a manifestly inaccurate figure for the length of the arc, unless there be some errors of the copyists like سِنِين و سِنِين (77) سِيَمَة و سِيَمَة for the former would nearly, though considerably in excess, correspond with the length of the 1½ arc as found by a party of Al-Mâmûn’s astronomers.

We leave the matter as it is without further comment, as it will become clear as we proceed further in this study.
Earth's circumference into seven they found the result 141,120 miles. They divided it by 22, and got the quotient representing the Earth's diameter as about 6,414\frac{1}{4}, and the radius 3,207 miles, 16' and \(\frac{3}{4}\)" which would amount to \(\frac{1}{4} + \frac{1}{10}\) of a mile. The mile contains 4,000 cubits of Al-Aswad—a measuring stick invented by Amir-ul-Momenin Al-Mâmûn for measuring cloths and buildings and also for fixing stages on the routes, and the cubit consists of 120 fingers."^1

Al-Masûdî again reverts to the subject in his later work Al-Kitâb-ul-Tanbih wal Ishrâf where he says:

وفيما دَكَرْنَاهُ من مقدار حَصَة الْدَرجة من الاميلين تنازع، فمنهم من رأى ان ذلك
سبعه وثمانون ميلا، ومنهم من رأى ذلك ستة وخمسون ميلا وثلاثي ميل

* و المُعوَّل في ذلك على ما حكيناه عن بطليموس - (ص ٢٦٩ - ٢٧٠) *

"There is dispute (amongst the scholars) regarding what we have said about the length of a degree as expressed in miles. Some say it is 87 miles, others that it is 56\(\frac{3}{4}\) miles. People generally rely in this matter on what we have reported from Ptolemy", (who gives 66\(\frac{3}{4}\) miles).

Next comes the account given by the great Muslim astronomer of Egypt Ibn-i-Yûnus (A.H. 399/A.D. 1000) in his Kitâb-ul-Zij-ul-Kabîr, dedicated to the Fātimid Caliph Al-Hakam, and is quoted here from the unique manuscript (Or. 143, No. 1057 of the third volume of the printed catalogue of the Leyden Library), as extracted by Nallino (p. 218 of the Lectures). The French translation is found on pp. 95-96 of the Extracts from the manuscripts in the Bibliothèque Nationale of Paris, Volume VII, 180, 'Le Livre de la Grande Table Hakemite'.

الكلام في ما بين الأماكن من الذرع

دُكَر سَنَد بن علي فِي كَلام وَجَدته له أنَّ العامون أَمَّة هو وَخَالد بن عبد الملك

المرَوَّدَي أن يقيس مقدار درجة من أعمى دائرة من دوائر سطح كرة الأرض، قال فسرنا
لذك ذلك جمعا و آمَّة على بن عيسى الأَمْضِرُلابي وعلى بن البخترى بِمَثَل ذَلِك قِسَاراً إلى

* ناحية أخرى ^1 Volume I, pp. 118, 119 on the margin of Ibn-ul Athir's History (Cairo) and p. 72 of the Baghdad edition.
قال سعد بن علي، فسرت آنا و خالد بن عبد الملك إلى ما بين وامه (الرقه) و تَدَمِر،
و قسنا هنالك مقدار درجة من أعظم دائرة تم بسط الطرض، فكان سبعه و خمسين ميلاً
و قس السد على ين عيسى، وعلى بن البَخَتَري، ووجدنا مثل ذلك، و وردنا الكتابان من الناحيين
في ذلك في وقت واحد بقائتين متفقين

و ذكر أحمد بن عبد الله المعروف بِعَجُش في الكتاب الذي ذكر فيه آراؤه المذكورة
بدمشق أن المامون امتهن تقاس درجة من أعظم دائرة من دواير بسيط كره الارض،
قال فساروا لذلك في برية سنجراء، حتى اختلف ارتقاء النهار بين القياسين في يوم واحد
بدرجة، ثم تأسوا ما بين المكانين، فكان نو ميلة وربع ميل، و (كل ميل) منها أربعة آلاف
ذراع بالذراع السؤد التي اتخذها المامون.

و اقول انا، وبابته التوجيه، ان هذا القياس ليس بمطلق، بل يحتاج مع اختلاف
ارتقاء نصف النهار بدرجة الال ان يكون القائسون جميعا في سطح دائرة واحدة من
دوائر نصف النهار، والسيل إلى ذلك بعد ان تختار للقياس مكان معتدلًا ضاحيًا، ان
نستخرج خط نصف النهار في المكان الذي ينتهي منه القياس، ثم نتخذ حسبين دقيقين
جرديتين، طول كل واحد منها نحو خمسين درعاً، ثم نمرّ أحدهما موازيا بالخط نصف النهار
الذي استخرجنا الال ان ينتهي ثم نضع طرف الجبل الآخر في وسطه، و نمرّه راكبًا عليه، الى
حيث بلغ، ثم نرفع الجبل الأول، و نضع أيضاً طرفه في وسط الجبل الثاني و نمرّه راكبًا عليه
ثم نفعل دائما ليخطب السمك و ارتقاء نصف النهار ينتهي دائما بين المكان الأول الذي
استخرج فيه خط نصف النهار و المكان الثاني الذي انتهى إليه الذين يسيرون، حتى إذا
كان بين ارتقاء نصف النهار في يوم واحد درجه بالثنين صحيحين، فينطبق الدقيق في كل
واحدة منها قيس ما بين المكانين، فما كان من الاذرع فهو درجه واحد من أوساع دائره
تم ع بسيط كرة الارض.
An account of distances between places in cubits. Sind bin Ali has himself stated in a report that I have myself seen that Al-Mâmûn ordered him and Khâlid bin Abdul Malik-ul-Mâwarudi to calculate an arc of the meridian on the surface of the Earth's globe. He says, 'We both went together for this purpose.' He similarly ordered Ali bin 'Isâ—the designer of the astrolabes, and Ali bin Albukhtari. They went to another part of the country.

Sind bin Ali says, 'I and Khâlid bin Abdul Malik went to Wama (obviously misreading of the copyist for Raqqa) and Tadmur (Palmyra) and calculated a degree of the arc of the meridian round the surface of the Earth's face as 57 miles. Both Ali bin Isâ and Ali bin Al-Bukhtari also found similarly.'

The written accounts of both these expeditions reached at the same time with both the calculations agreeing. Ahmad-bin Abdullâh known as Habash says in his book in which he has described the astronomical observations which were made at Damascus by way of verification (of the previous observations) that Al-Mâmûn ordered the calculations of an arc of meridian, i.e., one of the circles on the Earth.

Habash says, 'They went for this purpose to the plains of Sinjâr till the meridian varied in the two calculations made on the same day to the extent of a single degree.'

They then measured the actual distance between the two places and found it to be 56½ miles. Every mile consisted of 4,000 cubits of Al-Saudâ, a scale which Al-Mâmûn had prescribed.

I (Ibn-i-Yûnus) say, relying on God's help, that the calculation is not always of an absolute nature. It further needs that along with the difference of the two altitudes of the meridian to the extent of one degree, the calculations be carried on the same surface touched by the same circles of the meridian. And they should resort to it after selecting for their operations a plot of land which is even as well as bright. They should then begin to find out the actual meridian of the place where they begin their calculations.

We should take two thin but strong ropes, each one of them of about 50 cubits. Then we should draw one of them on the line of the meridian which has already been found out, till we come to the end of the rope. Then we should lay down the end of the other rope in the middle of the first rope and carry it further to its full length, as if riding on it till we reach the other end. Then we raise the first rope and throw its one end in the middle of the second rope, and
continue riding on it. We continue repeating the process to keep the direction (straight).

The altitude of the meridian would always vary between the first place where we found it in the beginning and the place where arrive the people who have done the walking, till they reach the point, where there is between the two altitudes of the Meridian in the same day one degree's difference by reliable instruments. Then is disclosed the value of every one arc of that meridian calculated between the two places. Whatever is the number of the cubits that is the measure of the arc of the great circumference of the surface of the Earth's globe.¹

It is also possible to preserve the course by employing, instead of two ropes, three persons who keep on following one another on the track of the meridian line that has been ascertained and the nearest from sight walking at the head, then the other immediately next to him, and then the third. Thus continually.”²

The next account of these researches of Al-Māmūn’s times is found in Al-Birūnī’s works, of which we know at least four separate versions, which we shall take up in their chronological order.

First of these is found in his ‘Tahdīd Nihāyāt il-Amākin li Tashih Musāfat il-Amākin,’ تجديد نهایات الاماكن لتصحيح مسافات الاماكن (416 A.H., 1025-1026 A.D.), the unique autograph copy of which exists in Fāṭih’s mosque in Istambul (Nr. 3386) and from which some extracts have recently been published in ‘Beruni’s Picture of the world’ by Zaki Validi Tojan.³ It is as follows:—

و انما رصد الامامون، كان لما طالع من كتبت اليونانيين حصة الجزء الواحد خمس مائة إسطاذيا، وهو مقدار لهم، كانوا يقدرون بها المسافات، و لم يجد عند

¹ This process for keeping straight may be illustrated by means of a diagram like this:—

1st rope  1st rope  1st rope  1st rope

2nd rope  2nd rope  2nd rope

You have only to take care that both these ropes go on the same line.

² Let us illustrate this also in the form of a diagram:—

II

I

III

The second moves to the third, the first moves to the second, the third advances to the next position, which is again taken by the second, followed by the third and so on.

³ No. 53, Memoirs, Archaeological Survey of India.
المترجمين علماءً شافين بهمداية بما يتعرف عليه حينئذٍ، أم على ما حكي جيش عن خالد
المرودي جماعة من علماء الصناعة ووذاق الصناع من التجارين و الصفارين بعمل
الآلات، واختار موضع لهذه المساحات، فاختار موضع من برى سنجر من حدود الموصل،
يبعد عن قصبتها تسع عشر فرسخاً، و من سر من رأي ثلة بارعين فرسخاً، فأفرضاً
استواها، و حملوا آلات اليها، و عيّنوا منها موضعًا رصدوا بها ارتفاع الشمس نصف النهار،
ثم افترقوا منه فريقين، وتجه خالد مع طابة من المساح و الصناع إلى جهت القطب
الشمالي، و توجه على بن عيسى الاصطلاحي و أحمد بن البختري الذراع مع جماعة
نحو القطب الجنوبي، و رصد كل طائفة منها ارتفاع الشمس نصف النهار، حتّى
قد تغير جزءًا واحداً، سوى التغير الحادث من الميل، و كانوا يذرون الطريق في ذهابهم
و ينصبون السهام على طريقهم، فلما عادوا اعتبروا لسامحة ثانية، و اجتمعت الطائفة
حيث افترقتا، فوجدوا حصة الجزءا لواحد من الأرض سنة و خمسين ميلاً، و زعم أنّه
سمع خالداً يعلو ذلك على يحيى بن أكثر القاضي، فالتقى مه صاعاً، و هكذا حكى
ابو حامد الصغايني على ثابت بن قرة، و حكي عن الفرغاني ثلثا ميل تتبع الأميال المذكورة

و كذلك وجدت الحكايات كلها مطبقة على هذين القرنين، ولا يجوز ان احمل
ذلك على سقوطه من نسخة كتاب الآباد والأجرام، لأن جيش استخرج من ذلك
دور الأرض، و قطرها، و ساير الآباد، و إذا احتت روجت حاصلة ثم السنة و الخمسين
ميلاً للجزء الحاصل، بل اولى من ذلك ان يظل بالرواتين صدر عن الفرقين، و هو
موضوع تجربة بأخذ على تجديد الامكان و الرصد، وم منبه، و هو يحتاج إلى اقتسار
بسبب الاسباب في المكان و الاحتراس من غوايل المشترنين فيه - و كنت اختبرت له
البقاع التي بين دهستان المصاصب لجيحان، و بين ديار الاتراك الغزيه، فلم يساعد
المقدور، ثم الهمم المسترفة على ذلك - (ص ٩٥-٩٦) *
"As to Al-Māmūn’s observations (رصد المامون) it was due to the fact that when he read in the Greek authors that one arc in the meridian measured 500 stadia, which was the standard used by the Greeks for the measurement of distances, and the actual length of this scale was not known satisfactorily to the translators (in Arabic) so as to enable them to identify it with any standard of measurement known to them, Al-Māmūn, according to the account given by Habash from Khālid-al-Marvarudi ordered a party of the learned astronomers, and expert artisans amongst the carpenters and workers in brass to prepare instruments and select a spot for their survey. They chose a spot from the plain of Sinjār in the neighbourhood of Mausil (Mosul), 19 farsakhs (فراسخ) from the town itself, and 43 farsakhs from Surraman-ra’ā (Samarrā). They liked the spot on account of its levelness, and carried the instruments there. They specified a particular site for the observation of the Sun’s altitude at the meridian. Then departed from that point two groups—Khālid, with one party of the surveyors and artisans, heading towards the Northern Pole, and Ali bin Isā-ul-Usturlābī, (the maker of the astrolabes) and Ahmad bin Al-Bukhtari-ul-Zarra‘, the surveyor with the cubit, with another party, left to the South Pole. Both the parties observed the Sun at the Meridian till they found it declining to one degree without making any alterations in their straight course. While thus proceeding they marked their paths with the measuring sticks and fixing arrows at the points. When they returned they once more verified their survey for the second time, till, both the parties came together at the place whence both had started.

They found the single arc of the Earth as fifty-six (56) miles.

Habash believes that he heard Khālid dictating this to Qāzi Yahyā bin Aktham. So he got this information from Khālid.

Abu Hāmid Al-Sāghāni has also narrated similarly from Thābit bin Qurrah, but from Farghāni is reported § more in addition (to 56 miles). I have found all the other accounts agreeing about this §.

I cannot ascribe (this omission) to an over-sight in the manuscript of Kitāb-ul-Ab‘ad-wal-Ajrām by Habash (dealing with the magnitudes of the stars and their distances from the Earth), as Habash has also calculated on the basis of this figure the circumference and the diameter of the Earth as well as all the other distances.

When I examined those other calculations myself I also found this result based on 56 miles.

It would, therefore, be better to ascribe this divergence arising out of the two distinct results obtained by both the parties (working independently).

This, however, should be a matter for one’s amazement and necessitates fresh examination and observations.
Who is prepared to help me in this (great adventure) which needs command over a vast tract of land and proper control over the parties dispersed in it (in the course of such an expedition)?

I used to choose for this purpose localities situated between Dihistān in the vicinity of Jurjān and the land of the Ghuzz Turks. As the values (obtained by me in the course of such expeditions) would not agree, the courage of those who had financed the projects gave way” (pp. 65-66).

The second account is found in Al-Birūnī’s Kitāb-ul-Tashhim-Li-Sunā‘at-ul-Tanjeem (كتاب التنهم لصناعت التنجم) written by the author himself in Arabic and Persian languages separately. I quote the following from the Persian text recently published in Iran:

پس اندازه زمین چند است؟

اما دانستن اندازهای ستارگان را آن پس بود که زمین را یا قطعی را یک چشم همچنان که یک را اندر پیمودن بسنگ یا ارش یا کیل، با اصلامه بایکدیگر نهند و لیکن اگر کسی آنها بدان مسافتها خواهد که میزان مردمان مستعمل و معروف است باز دانستن که قطر زمین دو هزار و صد و شصت و سه فرسنگ است، و چهار دانگ فرسنگ و دورش گرد بر گرد شش هزار و هشت صد فرسنگ است و بر این شیاه مساحت روى آور از یک هزار چنانکه ارشی اندرو ارشی یک ارش مکسی باشد، چهارده بار هزار هزار و هفتصد و دوازده هزار و هفتصد و پانصد و هفت فرسنگ و چهار یک و مساحت تن او جمله چنانکه ارشی اندرو ارشی یک ارش مکسی باشد چون مکعب، صد و شصت و شش هزار و هفتصد و چهل و چار هزار و دویست و چهل و دو فرسنگ و دو پنج یک از فرسنگ

و چون چنین بوده آنها بعد کوکب گیری و بفرسنجهای نیمه قطر زمین زیاد و قطر کوکب بفرسنجهای قطر زمین، و تن کوکب بمساحت تن زمین

هیچ خلاقو هست اندر مقدار زمین؟

ازین جاره نیست، که ازان چیزهایست که مرجع یا بارونهون است از دور و سپس

آن چیزهای زمین

*
Q. What are the dimensions of the Earth?

A. For the purposes of ascertaining the magnitudes and distances of the stars it is sufficient to take the Earth or its diameter as a single unit, just as by measuring by means of a stone, or cubit or cup, we take a particular standard as an agreed unit.

If any one wants to know them by such distances as are well known and in vogue amongst the people, let him know that the Earth’s diameter is $2,163^{3/8}$ farsangs, and its circumference $6,800$ farsangs, and according to those calculations the total area of the Earth’s surface from outside in the manner in which you multiply one cubit into one cubit, i.e., square cubit, is $14,712,727^{1/4}$ farsangs and the total area of its whole body (as a globe) in the manner of multiplying one cubit into one cubit square, i.e., cubic cubit, is $166,744,242^{3/4}$.

And when it is so, take the distance of the stars and multiply it with $\frac{1}{2}$ of the Earth’s diameter (i.e., its radius) and their equators with the Earth’s equator and the star bodies with the (volume of) the Earth’s globe.

Q. Is there any difference of calculations in respect of these dimensions of the Earth (as given above)?

A. Yes, that is inevitable, as it is one of those matters which entirely depend on ascertaining first the circumference and then other earthly articles.
And every nation (of the World) have known it by means of such standards of length as were in use in their respective countries. For instance ‘Stadia’ amongst the Greeks and ‘Yojanas’ amongst the Hindus.

So when books (on Astronomy) were being translated into Arabic and those measurements were not exactly verifiable, the Caliph Mâmûn, son of Hârûn Al-Rashid, ordered that the Earth’s dimensions be ascertained de novo. He sent a number of the scientists of his time like Khâlid Marvârudi, Bu Bukhtari, the surveyor, Ali bin Isâ, the maker of astrolabes, and many others like them, to the plains of Sinjâr. They eventually carried out the project and found the length of a degree of the largest circle as 56\(^{\frac{3}{4}}\) miles.

They multiplied it by 360, so that the miles for the Earth’s circumference amounted to 20,400. Every farsang consisted of 3 miles and a mile 4,000 Sauda cubits, and Sauda is the well-known measuring stick of Mesopotamia, and with it people measure places in Baghdâd. It consists of 24 fingers. I also verified its accuracy in other ways in the land of India, and did not find it much different from the value mentioned by me in the above (pp. 156–164)."

Al-Birûnî reverts to the subject in detail in his opus magnum Al-Qânûn-ul-Masûdi (Canon Masudicus). From his own statement in an epistle written to a friend about the works of Al-Râzi (Rhazes), the physician, and in which he has also given a detailed account of his own works compiled up to the year 427 A.H. (1035–1036 A.D.\(^{1}\)) we find that Al-Qânûn was not yet completed by the author. The subject of the Earth’s dimensions had, however, attracted his special interest. He had already written a small book of some 180 pages on the subject, and the same is mentioned in his list

(مطالعه في استخراج قدر الأرض برصد انخطاط الأفق من قلال الجبال

We are not, however, in a position to judge, if at the time when he wrote ‘Al-Qânûn’ he had succeeded in obtaining better information on the subject than what he had given in ‘Tahdîd’. We do know that he had written a book by way of supplement and exposition on Habash’s Tables (Zij) entitled (تكميل زيج حبش بالعلل وتهذيب اعماله), in which he had supplied the proofs and had removed the defects of that famous work. It must have been quite a voluminous work of

---

1. رسالة الهيروني في نهرستان كتاب محمد بن زكريا الرازي، نسخة ب كرواس، بيرس، سنة 1386
2. Epître de Beruni publiée par Paul Kraus, Paris, 1936.
Al-Birûnî, as a third of it had as many as 500 pages. This Zij is the same as Zij-ul-Mumtahan, referred to by Ibn-i Yûnus.¹

In 'Al-Qânûn' we have two separate references to the Earth's dimensions, one, very brief, in connection with his argument against the idea of the Earth's rotations on its axis (Part 1, Chapter ii) where he refers to the reasons advanced by a contemporary Muslim astronomer—whose name he gives in another place²—who actually believed in this theory, and supported it by the fact that a weight falling on the Earth from heights does not fall in a perpendicular line, but always a little to the East. The whole passage is indeed of great importance and interesting in many respects, but I will confine myself for the present to its relevant portions only:

1 Al-Masûdi says that Habash had compiled three Zijs, but when one referred to his work by the name of 'Zij', one always meant Al-Mumtahan

2 The name of this illustrious astronomer is Abû Said Ahmad bin Mohammed bin Abdul Jalîl-ul-Sîjzî.
I have seen a certain astronomer, who is one of the perfect masters of the science, supporting the theory (of the Earth’s rotation) by suggesting that heavy weight does not fall on the Earth in a perpendicular line, but always diverting from it in different angles which have not been yet determined or recorded. This gentleman considered that the matter outside the Earth had two movements, one circular, on account of the part naturally being attracted to the whole, and the other straight on account of its being attracted to its own original source.

On account of a whole group of astronomers believing in this theory and questioning my arguments (based on the Earth’s measurements) I deem it necessary to refer to the subject of the Earth’s dimensions. And they are as follows:—

Evatosthenes had found one degree to consist of 700 stadia as is mentioned by Galen in his ‘Book on Reasoning’, and 500 stadia as stated by Ptolemy in his ‘Book on the Shape of the Earth’. The true value of the term ‘stadia’ is unknown (to us) in the terms of our own (familiar) standards (of measurement).

Therefore, the matter was re-examined in the days of Al-Mâmûn. They found that the arc formed by the angle (at the Earth’s centre) on the lines of meridian is 56°3 miles, the mile consisting of 4,000 Zirâ-i-saudâ, one Zira’ having the width of 24 fingers.

The Indians on the other hand had calculated double of this length.

Actual observations being always preferable to a mere report, I investigated the whole matter in their (i.e., the Hindûs’) own land (India).

I first obtained the extent of the dip of the horizon on the peak of the mountain of Nandânâ, the altitude of which I had already ascertained and then found the true value of the angle. At last I found out a degree as of about 57 miles. On this account we have been led to trust the result of (Al-Mamun’s) verification at Mausil.”

Before we proceed further we should note here that Al-Birûni’s version regarding the length of the arc as found by himself varies a

---

1 The reference is obviously to the expedition that surveyed an arc at Sinjâr, near Mosul.
little in his different accounts, which we shall discuss later on. But we have so far nowhere found support to Nallino's statement that Al-Birûnî had found it as 58 Arabian miles.¹

M. Carra de Vaux also apparently following Nallino's authority has fallen in the same error.

Nallino, however, while testing Al-Birûnî's result by means of logarithms found it as 56.94, i.e., just what Albîrûnî has said in the above quotation.

Al-Bîrûnî finally takes up the whole subject of Al-Mâmmûn's survey of the Earth's arc in a much more detailed manner in the ninth chapter of the Fifth Part (سماك) of Al-Qanûn.

في سَمَاك دور الأرض بالابزام الاستطلاعيه

My quotations of this and all other passages from Al-Qanûn are derived from the old manuscript written in the year 562 A.H. (1166-1167 A.D.) ² once on loan in the Lytton Library of M.A.O. College, Aligarh (Muslim University, Aligarh) and now in the State Library of Berlin, where it was transmitted by means of theft and sold for a handsome amount by some unknown student from India. I had compared the extracts from it with another copy of more recent date in the Library of the Muslim University, Aligarh, which had once belonged to Syed Mahmûd, the illustrious son of Sir Syed Ahmad Khân, and the father of the late Sir Syed Ross Masûd.

الباب السابع

١ معرفة دور الأرض بالابزام الاستطلاعيه

٢ كُرْتْ الأرض في وِستَ كُرْت السماك، فالزوايا الكنائية على مركز العالم يفصل

من كلتا قطاعا مشابهة، سأ كَانَت سَطْوًا مَجْهُزًا لِلنَزاوَياء المجمسه، أو كانت قِسما

مقابلة لِلزوايا المسلخ، و القسي المشابهه تنافض في العظم يحسب بعد عن المركز.

و يختلف ذُكر الأمم لمقدار القسي الأرضي بما اصطلحا عليه في تقدير المسافات،

فما من بُقعة إلا ولا أهلها في الدرج الذي يحملونها جميع فصلاً، أما بَعدها كفايل

¹ Says Nallino: p. 292.

"فاستنبط أن مقدار درجة من خط نصف البيار 55 ميلاً على التقرير.

² For a description of this Manuscript see my Al-Birûnî, pp. 136–138.
لمسر هاذا حَصْرَةٌ، بل يُعذِرُ عَلَى جَامِعَةَ تُحْصِيلَهَا، ثُمَّ لا يُثبت فِيهِم عَلَى الْأَحْقَابِ
وَالْقُرُونِ، أَنْما يَتَقَبَّلُ فِي قَلِيلٍ مِنَ الْزَّكَامِ;
وَلَمْ يَتَتَّسِلْ بِنَا فِي هَذَا الْبَابِ كَلَامٌ مَّسْنَدٌ إِلَى ذُوِّ التَّحْصِيلِ غَيْرَ مَا وَرَدَ مِن
َجهَةِ الْرَّوْمِ وَالْهَنْدِ، وَكُلَّ وَاحِدٍ فِيهَا مَخَالِفَ الآخَرِ يَقِدَّرُ لَا يُكَادُ تَجَدُّ لَهُ وَجَهَّ.
وقَدْ قَدَّرَ الْهَنْدُ دُورَ الْأَرْضِ بِمَسَافَةٍ يَشَتَّلُ عَلَى ثُلُّثِيْنِ إِمَامِ مِنْ إِمَايَلَ، وَأَخْلَفَ
رَأْيِهِمُ فِي كُلِّ الدُّوْرِ، فَذَكَّرُ فِي كُلِّ وَاحِدٍ مِنْ سَهَانِهِمُ الْخَمْسَةِ بِخَلَافِ مَا فِي الْأَخَرِ،
وَقَدْرَهُ الرُّوْمُ بِمَقَادِيْرِ سَمْوَهُ اسْتَطَادُ، وَزَمَّعَ جَالِينِّوْسُ أَنْ ارَاطَسَانَوْسُ قَدَّرَهُ مَا يَيْنُ بُلْدَٰ
مُوْسَانَ وَالْأَسْكَندَرِيَّ، فَأَنْفَهَا عَلَى خَطِّ وَاحِدٍ مِنْ حَدْوَةِ النَّصِفِ النَّهَارِ مِثْلِ بَلْدَٰٰ
وَالْرَّقَّةِ، وَمِتْنَى جُمِعَ مَا فِي كِتَابِ الْبَرْهَانِ لِجَالِينِّوْسِ الْيَنْى مَا فِي كُلِّ وَاحِدٍ مِنْ كِتَابِ
ِبَطْلِمِوْسِ فِي الْمُدْخِلِ فِي الصَّنَاعَةِ الْكَرَّى وَكِيتَابِ فِي الصَّوْرَةِ الْأَرْضِ، تُفَاوْتِ القَمَادِرَ
اِيِّاً، عَلَى أَنْ أَسْمَأْ تَقْدِيرَهُمْ أَذِا وَقَتَتِ الْيَنْى لَا يَكُنْ يَهْتَدِى بِهَا قُوَّمَ يَبْسُبُ اللَّغَةِ
وَأَخْلَافِ الطَّفْلِيَّاتِ فِيَّا;
وَهُذَا وَالْتَفَاوْتِ العَظِيمِ بِنِئَ زَائِدَ الْفَرَقِيْنِ فِيَّا هُوَ الَّذِي بَعْثَ فِيهَا الْعَمَّانُ
ِبِنِ الرَّشَدِ عَلَى تَجَدِيدِ الْاعْتِباَرِ فِي بَرْيَةِ سِنجَارِ فِي اَرْضِ الموْصَلِ عَلَى يَدِ جَمَاعَةِ مِنْ الْمُتَقَدِّيْنِ
في هَذِهِ الصَّنَاعَةِ، فَقَضَى مَعَهَا مَا يَخَصُّ قَوْسًا مِنْ دَارِهِ عَظِيمٍ مَّعُولِ النَّسْبَةِ إِلَى كُلِّ
الْدُّوْرِ مِنْ اَذِرَعِ اوْ إِمَالِ اوْ فِرْسَغِ;
وَكُلُّ منْ لَزَمَ فِي مِسْبِهِ طِرْقِيٌّ مَّسْتَقِيمًا عَلَى قَاعِّ أَمْتَ قَدْ سَكَنَ سُكْفُ مَحْيِيَةً عَظِيمَةٍ،
الَّا أَنْ لَزَمَهَا بِالْإِطَالَةِ يَصْبَعُ لَحْنََأْعِيْحَ، فَبَيْنِ بَعْدِ مِنْ الْبَعْدِ وَتَتَغَيِّرُ السَّمَتُ
في كُلِّ جَزِئِ مِنَ الدُّوْارِ العَظَامِ مَا خَلَأَ خَطَّ الْأَسْتَوَىَ وَخَطُوْطَ اِنْصَافِ النَّهَارِ;
وَلَذَلِكَ اْعْتَمَدُوا قَطِبَ الْكَلِّ فِي الْعِسَابِ وَالْإِسْتَبْدَابِ، وَرَاعَوا الشَّرَايِثِ الَّتِي بِهَا
تَصَحَّ استِقَامَةُ السِّيَرِ بالْنَّهَارِ وَالسَّرِّيِّ بالْبَلْيِّ، وَحِينَ اِحْتَاطَوا وَجَدَوا حَصَةً الْجِزْوِ مِن
الْثَّلْثَائِمَةِ وَالسَّتِينِ المَفْرَوْضَةِ لِكُلِّ الدُّوْرِ سَتَّةٍ وِ خَمْسَونَ مِلَّا، وَثَلَثِيْ مِلَّاٰ، كُلُّ مِيلٍ
مِنْهَا اْرْيَعُهَا الْيِنْ ذَرَاعٍ، تَعْرَفُ بِالْسَّوْدَا، وَتَقِدَّرُ بَارِعَهَا وَعَشَرَينَ اْسْتُعَا لِسَدَاةِ الْدُّيَارِ
The Chapter IX. On Ascertaining the Earth's Circumference by means of its Technical Divisions.

The Earth's globe stands in the centre of the Celestial Sphere, so that the angles formed at the centre of the world (the Earth) separate from both of them (i.e., the Heavens and the Earth) similar portions, irrespective of the fact that the surfaces opposite to these angles belong to a solid body or happen to be the arcs belonging to a plane surface. These similar arcs only increase in their dimensions according to their distances from the centre (i.e., more the distant the longer the arcs).

The accounts of the various nations regarding the dimensions of the arc of the Earth differ according to the different standards of measurements adopted by them for the computations of distances. There is no place where its inhabitants have not got a separate account of the cubit, which they carry about with them (for their measuring purposes). And then there are so many various versions that it would be tedious to recount them all here. Nay, it would be even impossible for anyone desirous of collecting full information about all of them to succeed in his attempt. Besides these (standards of measurements themselves) do not persist for generations or succeeding times. On the other hand, they change even in short times.

No accounts have reached us emanating from those who had made the researches, except, of course, from the Greeks and the Hindûs only. And every one of these two differs from the other regarding the dimensions of a single degree to such an extent that one is unable to find reasons for it.

The Hindûs have computed the circumference of the Earth in the distances which seem to consist of 8 of our (Arabian) miles. And their opinions have varied in every period. They have mentioned in every one of their five Siddhantas (Astronomical works) calculations contrary to what is given in the others.

The Greeks calculated the circumference of the Earth by means of their own standard, which they called 'Stadia'. Galen claims that Eratosthenes had measured in stadia the distance between the two cities of Asvan and Alexandria, as both of them are situated on the same meridian line like the cities of Tadmur (Palmyra) and Al-Raqqâ.
When the information on this subject as found in the Book of Galen on the Deductive Reasoning (الإرهاان) is compared with the information available either in ‘Ptolemy’s Introduction to the Science of Sphere’ or in his ‘Book on the Shape of the Earth’, the dimensions differ in the case of the Greeks similarly. Over and above it, when the terms used for their standard of measurements, reached our nations (the Muslims), they were unable to find their way to fix its true length, on account of their being strangers to the (Greek) language, and also owing to the differences amongst their commentators in this respect.

All this, and the great differences in the opinions of both the parties, (the Greeks and the Hindús) led Al-Māmūn, son of Al-Rashid, to review the actual observations on the plains of Sinjār, in the country of Mausal, at the hands of a group of the leading astronomers of his times.

Those astronomers (of Al-Māmūn) proposed to ascertain the length of an arc of (the Earth’s) great circumference whose (i.e., the arc’s) relations to the whole circumference is known—in the cubits, miles or farsakhs.

Now everyone who has walked on a straight path in a level part of the earth, has really walked on the path of a great circle (on account of the rotundity of the Earth’s surface). But to maintain such a straight course is really difficult owing to the inability to detect the divergence (from the straight path), the long distances (to be traversed) and the possibility of a variation in the direction of every part of the great circumferences, except, of course, on the equator or the meridian lines.

So Al-Māmūn’s astronomers relying on the Celestial Pole (الاستقبال) kept in view the conditions of guaranteeing the maintenance of a straight course in the day as well as in the night.

When they had taken every possible care in the matter, they found out one of the 360 supposed degrees (of the Earth’s circumference) to be 56½ miles. Everyone of these miles consisted of 4,000 cubits of Al-Sauda and every cubit had the breadth of 24 fingers. This cubit is in vogue in Baghdad for the measurement of habitations and houses. Three of such miles make a farsakh.

For this reason this single arc would consist of 226,666½ cubits, or 18 farsakhs and 53 minutes; and the whole circumference 81,600,000 cubits, or 204,000 miles, or 6,800 farsakhs.”

---

1 Although Al-Birûnî does not say that the calculations, mentioned above, in the terms of the Arabian cubit (نراجع) have been actually worked out in detail by him, we have no doubts that it is all his own work taking 56½ for his basis. Our later exposition will make it all clear to the reader.
These are the best accounts that we have of Al-Mâmûn's measurements of the arc of the meridian circle. But the subject had attracted interest beyond the circle of mere specialists, and its echoes are heard in the works of general historians, biographers, as well as mere litterateurs. We have, for instance, such an account in Ibn-i-Khallikân's Biographical Dictionary, *Kitâbul Wâfiyât* (كتاب الوفيات لاين خلكان), in the life of Mohammed bin Mûsâ bin Shâkir. We quote the Arabic text from the Egyptian Edition, and the translation from Volume III, pp. 322–324 of De Slane's English version (1845) (which though a little antiquated, is not very inaccurate):—

أبو عبد الله محمد بن موسى بن شاكر أحد الأخوة الثلاثة الذين ينسب اليهم

"خيل بن موسى، وهو مشهورون بها، و اسم اخوته أحمد، و الحسن، وكانت لهم

هوم عالية في تحصيل العلوم القديمة وكتب الأوائل، و اتبعوا أنفسهم في شانها

و اتفقوا إلى بلاد الروم، من اخرجها لهم، و احضرت النقل من الأصقاع الشاسعة

و الاماكن البعيدة بالبذل السنى، فاظهروا عجائب الحكمة، و كان الغالب عليهم

من العلوم الهندسه و الحيل و الحركات، و موسيقى و النجوم، و هو الأقل، و لهم

في الحيل كتاب عجيب نادر، يشتمل على كل غريبة، و لقد وقفت عليه، فوجدته

من احسن الكتب و اتعمها، هو مجلد واحد *

و مما اختصوا به في ملة الإسلام، و اخرجوا من القوّة إلى الفعل، و ان كان

ارباب الأرصاد المتقدمون علّ الإسلام قد فعلوه، لكنه لم يقل ان أحدًا من اهل

هذه الملة قصدته له و فعله الا هم، وهو ان الناس كان مغرى بعلوم الأوائل و تحقيقها

و رأى فيها ان دور كره الأرض اربعه و عشرون الف ميل، كُل ثلاثة أمثال فرسخ،

فيكون المجموع ثمانية آلاف فرسخ، بحيث لو وضع طرف حبل على اي نقطة كانت

من الأرض، و ادرنا الحبل على كره الأرض، حتي انتهينا بالطرف الآخر الى ذلك

الموضع من الأرض، و النتي طرف الحبل، فذا سمحنا ذلك الحبل كان طوله أربعه

و عشرين الف ميل *
فاراد الأموان ان يقف على حقيقة ذلك، فسأل بنى موسى المذكورين عنه، فقالوا نعم هذا قطع، وقال اريد منكم ان تعملوا الطريق الذي ذكره المتقدمون، حتى نصر هل يتحرر ذلك أم لا، فسألوا عن الأراضي المساوية فيه ببلاد هن، قبلهم صحة سناجيج في غاية الاستواء، وكذلك و طات الكوفة، فاخذوا معهم جماعة ممن يثقونهم إلى أقوالهم، ويركن إلى معرفتهم بهذا الصناعة، وخرجوا إلى سنجار، و جاوا إلى السرا الجذور، فقرونوا في موضوع منهما، فانطلقوا ارتفاع التقب السماوي بعض الآلات، و ضربوا في ذلك الموضوع، و تداوروا ببطوانه حبلاً طويلاً، ثم مشوا إلى جهة الشمالية على استوائ الأرض، من غير انحراف إلى الينين واليسار حسب الأسكان، فلمّا فرغ الحبل نصبوا في الأرض وتدام أخر، وربطوا فيه حبلاً طويلاً، ومشوا إلى جهة الشمال أيضاً، كنعلهم الأول، وليز ذلك دابهم، حتى انتهوا إلى موضوع اخذوا فيه ارتفاع القطب المذكور، فوجدوا قد زاد على الارتفاع الأول درجة، فمسحوا ذلك المقدر الذي قدروه من الأرض بالجبل، قيل ستة وستين ميلاً، و ثلاثي ميل، فلعلوا أن كل درجة من درج تلك تقابلها من سطح الأرض ستة وستون ميلاً وثلاثين، ثم عادوا الى الموضوع الذي ضربوا فيه الوتد الأول وشدو فيه حبلاً، و توجهوا الى جهة الجنوب، ومشوا على الامتدامة، وعملوا كما عملوا في جهة الشمال من نصب الاوتأد، وسج الجبال، حتى فيتجلب الجبال التي استعملوها في جهة الشمال، ثم اتخذوا الارتفاع، فوجدوا لقطب الشمال قد نقص عن الارتفاع الأول درجة، فصغ حسابهم، و حترموا ما قصدوه من ذلك، و هذا اذا وقت عليه من له يد في علم الهيئة ظهر له حقه ذلك، و من المعلوم ان عدد درج الفلك ثلاثمائة وتسعون درجة، لأن الفلك مقسم باثني عشر برجاً، وكل برج ثلاثون درجة فتكون الجملة أربعة وعشرين ألف ميل، وهي ثمانية آلاف فرسخ، و هذا محض، لا شك فيه، فلما عاد بنى موسى الى المامون، وأخبروه لما صنعوا، وكان مواقفه لما رآه في الكتاب القديم من استخراج الأوائل، طلب تحقيق ذلك في موضوع آخر، نسيهم الى ارض الكوفة، وفعلوا كما فعلوا في سنجار، و توافق الحسابان، فعلم المامون صحة ما حزوه قدما في ذلك.
Abū Abdullāh Mohammed Ibn Mūsā Ibn Shākir was one of the three brothers after whom the art of Engineering was called the contrivances of the sons of Mūsā. Mohammed, Ahmed and al-Hasan, these three brothers being celebrated for their talents in that line.

Animated with the noble ambition of learning the sciences of the ancients and acquiring their books they laboured to effect this object and sent persons to bring these books from the country of the Greeks. By the offer of ample rewards, they drew translators from distant countries, and they thus made known the marvels of science. Geometry, Engineering, the movements of the heavenly bodies, Music and Astrology were the principal subjects to which they turned their attention. But these were only a small number (of their acquirements). They composed on Engineering an original and curious book, filled with the most extraordinary (facts); I met with a copy of it, in one volume, and found it to be an excellent and highly instructive production.

A thing which they, the first in Islamic times, brought from theory into practice was the measurement (of the Earth); for although astronomical observers in ancient times, anterior to the promulgation of Islamism, had executed the operations, yet no statement exists to prove that it had been attempted by any person of this religion, except by themselves.

The (Caliph) Al-Mamūn had a strong predilection for the sciences of the ancients; and a great desire of putting their exactness to the test. Having read in their production that the circumference of the globe is twenty-four thousand miles, or eight thousand farsangs, (three miles make a farsang), and that, if one end of the cord were placed at any point of the surface of the Earth and the cord passed round the Earth till the two ends met, this cord would be twenty-four thousand miles long, he wished to prove the truth of this assertion, and asked the sons of Mūsā what was their opinion. They replied that the fact was certain, and he then asked, 'I wish you to employ the means indicated by the ancients so that one may see whether it be correct or not'. On this they inquired in what country a level plain could be found, and being informed that the desert of Sinjār was perfectly level as also the country about Kūfā, they

1 It would be more correct to say that the contrivances of Banū Mūsā have reference to them, and they are famous for the same.
took with them a number of persons on whose veracity and skill in this art Al-Mamun placed reliance, and set out for Sinjar. On arriving in the plain just mentioned, they stopped at a spot where they took the altitude of the North Pole by means of certain instruments and drove a picket into the place where observations were made. To this picket they fastened a long cord and walked directly towards the North, avoiding as much as possible, any deviation to the right or to the left. When the curve was run out they set up another picket and tied to it a cord, after which they walked towards the North as before. They continued the same operation till they came to a place where they observed the altitude of the Pole and found it to surpass by one degree the altitude observed at the first station. Having already obtained the length of the intermediate space by means of the cord, they found the distance to be sixty-six miles and two-thirds of a mile. From this they learned that every degree of the Zodiac \(^1\) corresponded to a space of sixty-six miles and two-thirds on the surface of the Earth. They then returned to the place where they had driven in the first picket, and, having fastened a cord to this picket, they went directly to the South, operating as they had previously done when going towards the North, that is, setting up pickets and fastening cords. When the cords employed in the operation directed towards the North were again run out, they took altitude of the North Pole and found it one degree less than the altitude first observed. Their calculations were thus verified and the result of their undertaking confirmed. Persons acquainted with Astronomy will understand this at the first glance. It is well known that the number of degrees in the Zodiac is three hundred and sixty; for the Zodiac is divided into twelve signs, and each sign into thirty degrees. These are, therefore, three hundred and sixty degrees in all, and if this sum be multiplied by sixty-six and two-thirds—the number of miles in a degree, we obtain twenty-four thousand miles, or eight thousand farsangs (for the circumference of the Earth). This is certain and undubitable.

When the sons of Mūsā returned to Al-Mamun and informed him of what they had done (he perceived that the result) corresponded with what he had read in the books of the ancients relating to the deduction of that people, and wishing to verify the fact elsewhere, he sent them to the land of Kūfa, where they operated as they had done at Sinjar. The two calculations agreeing Al-Mamun acknowledged the truth of what the ancients had written on the subject.\(^2\)

---

1 It would be more correct to say that every degree of the meridian of the great circle of the sphere. The word in the text is جُرَد and not جُرَد.

2 In another place (Volume III, pp. 72-73 of De Slane's English translation) Ibn-i-Khallikân has stated that the Earth's circumference is 8,000 farsangs, so that
Mohammed Ibn Mûsâ died in the month of first Rabi A.H. 259 (January, 873 A.D.)."

Ibn-i-Khallikân's account of the survey of the Earth's dimensions by the sons of Mûsâ as given above has rightly been subjected to a drastic criticism by Nallino on various grounds.¹

We do not know the original sources of Ibn-i-Khallikân's information on this subject. There is one most evident error in it, i.e., the length of the arc as measured by Al-Mâmûn's astronomers is shown as 66⁵⁄₈ miles. This is not a mere slip of pen for 56⁵⁄₈ miles, the value generally ascribed to those astronomers. This is on the other hand evidently due to the substitution of Ptolemy's measurements for those of Al-Mâmûn's times. Ptolemy had given 66⁵⁄₈ miles as the length of a degree as 24,000 miles as the length of the circumference.²

Similar misunderstanding is traceable in the accounts of Al-Masûdî and Ibn-i-Rabbân which have already been quoted by us in the above.

M. Carra de Vaux relying on the various accounts, and also benefiting from Nallino's discussions, has briefly described Al-Mâmûn's operations, in his interesting book 'Les Penseurs de l'Islam' (Volume III, pp. 27-29), from which I translate the whole passage in the following:—

'The Khalîfa Mâmûn wanted to take up afresh the question of the Earth's circumference. He gathered a group of savants to whom he gave orders to measure a degree of the meridian. The method followed by them was different from the ancient methods.

These savants gathered at a point in a vast plain, thence parting in 2 groups, one marching to the North—going straight to the Pole to the extent of a degree's altitude, the other marching to the opposite side to the extent of the lowering of the North Pole by a degree.

Then they measured the path they had thus traversed. They rejoined and compared their results. One party had found it as 56⁵⁄₈ miles, the other as 56. They took the mean by definitely adopting the bigger of the two operations,³ i.e., 56⁵⁄₈.

The mile had 4,000 metres of 27⁴ fingers amounting to 0M·58. The measurement of the circle came to 47,325 kilometres, being slightly in excess.⁵

if the end of a cord were laid on any part of the Earth and the cord passed completely round the Earth's body, the length of the cord would be equal to 24,000 miles or 8,000 farsakhs.

¹ 'The Lectures', p. 286.
² See Nallino's Lectures, pp. 278-279.
³ It is not correct as we shall see later on.
⁴ Apparently a misprint for 24.
⁵ Based on Nallino's calculations.
Once this operation was over, we are told, it was repeated several times.

Masûdi speaks of one survey in the plains of Sinjâr, of which the results are stated in the above, another between Kûfa and Madinan-us-Salâm (Baghdad), and a third between Palmyra and Raqqâ. Ibn-i-Yunus speaks of an operation in the sandy plains of the Euphrates between Palmyra and Wama.  

The last in time, but not the least in importance, is the account given by Abul-Fazl in his Âín-i-Akbarî based on Nâsîr-ud-din Tûsi ² and his pupil Qutb-ud-din Shirâzî’s ³ works. It throws some more light on the history of Al-Mâmûn’s measurement of the arc.

---

¹ Carra de Vaux refers to his French translation of Masûdi’s Kitâb-ul-Tanbih ‘Le Livre de l’aversissement’, p. 44.

² Wama is a copyist’s mistake for Raqqâ. The last reference, therefore, is redundant and mistaken.

³ Died 710 A.H. (1311 A.D.)
The ancient (astronomers) found the length of one degree to be 22 farsakhs and two-ninths of a farsakh, which come to 66 and two-thirds of a mile.

When by Mâmûn’s orders the plains of Sinjâr near Musal, were chosen for this work Khâlid bin Abdul Malik of Marv-Rod with a number of other savants started to the North, and Ali Ibn-i-Isâ, the maker of astrolabes, with another party of scholars went to the South. The former party found the degree to be a bit longer, while the other party found it a bit shorter (with the result that everyone of them, when they measured their own paths, found that their path was 19 farsakhs minus one-ninth of a farsakh, which came to 56 miles and \( \frac{3}{8} \) of a mile. The difference between the two measurements amounted to \( \frac{3}{8} \) of a mile only.

Mâmûn, in order to test these two parties, asked them to find out the distance from Mecca to Baghdad which was about 12 degrees and 44 minutes multiplied into 56\( \frac{3}{8} \) miles. It was found to be about 727 Kroh. On the order of the Caliph the most straight and level route between the two cities was measured with the cubit and was found having little difference.

It is extremely strange that Muhuqqiq-e-Tûsi in his Taḏhkirâ ascribes the researches of the ancient astronomers to the savants of Mâmûn’s times who calculated the length of a degree in the plains of Sinjâr, while Mulla Qutb uddin-i-Shirâzi in his Tuhfâ and other works gives the results of the later scholars in the manner in which I have given in the above. It appears that there is a slip of pen in Taḏhkirâ.¹

The Hindû scientists have found the value of a degree to be 14 yojanas and 66 dandas and 2 hands and 4 fingers, and this tallies with the previous calculations."

These are the various important accounts we have of the measurement of a degree of the Earth’s circumference in Al-Mâmûn’s times.

¹ It is unnecessary to remind here that like Ibn-i-Khallikân Tûsi had also confused the Greek researches with those of Al-Mâmûn’s times. Shirazi, on the other hand, is evidently much better informed, but from Abul-Fazl we are unable to ascertain the original sources of Shirazi’s information.
As we have already mentioned even our best accounts on the subject are not free from considerable differences both in respect of the details and the results ascribed to Al-Mâmûn’s astronomers.

This has naturally led to much confusion in the subsequent writers, who have preferred the one or the other of these versions, or tried to strike some sort of mean between them. For instance, Abul-Fidâ, following the majority, adopted 56½ miles in his Tables (Taqweem-ul-Buldân), and the learned Abdul Ali Birjandi ¹ 56½, obviously taking the mean between 56½ and 56. Only three of our earliest authorities, Al-Masûdi, Ibn-i-Yûnus, and Al-Birûni claim to base their accounts on the original contemporary sources.

Al-Masûdi and Al-Birûni derived their information about 56 miles as the value of the arc from Habash. It is clear from Al-Birûni’s statements in Kilâb-ul-Tahdid that Habash himself had got it from Khâlid, one of the leading members of the expeditions of Sinjâr. Al-Birûni had derived this information from Habash’s ‘Book on the Distances of the Stars’, while Al-Masûdi from his ‘Astronomical Tables’ (Al-Zij). It was also confirmed by the subsequent account as given by the famous astronomer Thâbit bin Qurrat-ul-Harrani \( \left( \frac{288}{901} \text{ A.H.} \right) \)

On the other hand the majority, like Al-Farghâni, Ahmad bin Mohammed bin Kathir \( \left( \frac{247}{861} \text{ A.H.} \right) \), however, do not claim to base their information on any written records prepared by any of Al-Mâmûn’s astronomers.

As to Ibn-i-Yûnus, he traces his information about 57 miles, as the value of the arc, directly from Sanad bin Ali (Abul Tayyib) who according to Ibnul-Nadim,² the author of Al-Fihrist, participated in all the astronomical observations of Al-Mâmûn’s times, and was one of the leading spirits in the operations between Palmyra and Raqqâ.

According to Habash, as quoted by Ibn-i-Yûnus, the length of the arc was found to be 56½ miles on the plains of Sinjâr. We have, therefore, two different versions of Habash, one in Al-Birûni and Al-Masûdi giving 56 miles and the other in Ibn-i-Yûnus giving 56½ miles, both relating to the same locality, i.e., Sinjâr in Mesopotamia.

We have thus the following different measurement of the arc ascribed to Al-Mâmûn’s times:—

(1) 57 miles according to Sanad bin Ali in Ibn-i-Yûnus, between Tadmur and Raqqâ.

¹ He was alive in A.H. 930 (1524 A.D.).
² Died 835 A.H. (995 A.D.)
(2) 57 miles at Sinjâr, according to one account of Al-Birûnî (in Al-Qânûn).

(3) 56\(\frac{1}{2}\) miles in Sinjâr according to Habash in Ibn-i-Yûnus.

(4) 56 miles in Sinjâr according to Habash in Al-Masûdi, and Al-Birûnî (in Tahdîd).

(5) 56\(\frac{1}{2}\) miles according to Al-Birûnî in Al-Qânûn, Al-Tafhîm and many other writers, all referring to the operations in Sinjâr.

In this connection it is further noteworthy that according to Al-Birûnî Sanad bin Ali’s party as well as the other party both carried out their measurements in the plains of Sinjâr only; while according to Ibn-i-Yûnus Sanad and his party carried out their measurement between Palmyra and Raqqa.

Al-Birûnî, while discussing the two divergent versions of 50 and 56\(\frac{1}{2}\) miles in his Tahdîd, was inclined to guess that the differences were due to two distinct findings by Al-Mâmûn’s astronomers working in the same plains and at the same time. He was right that although the difference may appear nominal to the layman, to the scientist it must be a matter for wonder, necessitating fresh and independent verification.

It is, however, amply evident that there were more than one measurement in Al-Mâmûn’s times. We are quite sure of the two mentioned by Ibn-i-Yûnus, one at Sinjâr and the other between Palmyra and Raqqa. In spite of some very cogent objections raised by Nallino, I am inclined to believe also the third one, between Kûsfa and Baghûdâd.

However, none of the original and contemporary authorities mention 56\(\frac{1}{2}\) as the result of any actual observation by Al-Mâmûn’s astronomers. I am, therefore, most strongly inclined to agree with Nallino that 56\(\frac{1}{2}\) miles was adopted as a compromise value between the two actual results of 57 and 56\(\frac{1}{2}\) miles, and passed subsequently as the real finding of Al-Mâmûn’s scientists.\(^1\)

This further leads us to think that Habash modified his information by referring to some better sources than he had at the time when he wrote his Zij-ul-Mumtahan. In my opinion Ibn-i-Yûnus’ account is on the whole the best and most reliable of all those we have on the subject.

We shall discuss later on the true worth of these measurements of Al-Mâmûn’s times, as we have yet to record another important

\(^1\) Says Nallino:—

و الصحيح أنه هو استخرج من زيج ابن ورنس وكتب غيره أن جماعة من الفلكيين قاسوا قوسًا من خطٍ نصف البار على صحراوين، أي البعيد من شمال تدمر و بيره سنجار، ثم حاصل السلمين اختلافًا بين 56\(\frac{1}{2}\) ميل و 56\(\frac{1}{2}\) ميل، فاتخذ متوسطهما، أي 56\(\frac{1}{2}\) تقريبًا (علم الفلك ص 260).
measurement of the Earth carried out personally by Al-Birûnî in India.

Having, owing to practical difficulties, failed in his attempts to verify Al-Mâmûn’s results by resorting to direct measurements of an arc, Al-Birûnî had recourse to a novel method of his own contrivance, which, before he actually carried it out into practice, had already been fully indicated by him in his earlier book on the astrolabe (الكتاب في الأسطرلاب)\(^1\)

وفي معرفة ذلك طريق قائم في الوجه صحيح بالبرهان، و الوصول الى عمه
صَعَب لصَعِر الأَسْتُرلَاب (او الأَلَائِث)\(^2\). و قَلْة مَقَادِر الشَّبَّى الّذِي يَبْنِي عَلَيْه نِهٍ، و هو ان
تَصَعَد جَبْلًا مَشْرَقًا عَلَى بَرَّة أَو بَريَة مَلَى، و تَرْصُد غَرْوب الشَّمس، فَتَجِد فيهما مَا ذَكَرُناه
من الانحِطاط، ثم تَعُرَف مَقَادِر عمود ذَلِك الجِبل و تَضْرِبْه في الجبَّي المُستَوِي لِتَتَم
الانحِطاط المُوجود، و تَقَسِم المَجِمُوع على الجيِب المَتَكوس لِذَلِك الانحِطاط نفسه، ثم
تَضْرِب ما خَرِّج من القُسَمِ في اثنيين و عشرين ابِدا و تقَسِم المَبْلَغ على سَبْعَة، فَيَخْرِج
مَقَادِر احِطاط الأرض بالمقدار الذي به قَدَرَت عمود الجِبل

و لم يقع لنا بهذا الانحِطاط و كُمِّيته في المواضع العالية تجربة - و جَرَّانًا على ذكر
هذِه الطريق ما حَكَّاه ابُو العَبَّاس التَّيْرِيْزَي عن اَرسطولوس ان اَتِوَل اَمْدَدَة الجِبَل خَمس
ايمِان و نصف بالمقدار الذي به نصف قَطر الأرض ثَلَاث اَلف و مائِتا مِيل بالتقريب،
فَأَن الحاسب يَقُضِي لِهذِه المقَدَسه ان يوجد الانحِطاط في الجِبل الذي عموده هذا القدر
ثلاث درجات بالتقريب  

\(^1\) This is quite a different book from Al-Biruni’s الكتاب الاستياب الوجه المكنه و في مهنة الاسترلاب and another book on the same subject, a unique copy of which exists in Leyden (B.d, 1908, p. 67). I have quoted the whole passage in the above from Nallino (Lectures, pp. 289-292):

وصر طريق الابناي المدق لذالك (النبوء) 0
و في الاهل (اللاب) 0
و الصواب (ضعف ما خرجه) ان خارج القسم هو نصف قطر الأرض، ولا النطاق فيه

(Nallino)
To know this method is quite conceivable in imagination, and it rests on sound deductions. It is difficult to carry it out in practice only owing to the smallness of the astrolabe (or other instruments) and the little size of the thing on which we have to base our solution. And that method is this: You climb a mountain situated close to the sea or a level plain, and then observe the setting of the sun and find out the dip of the horizon we have already mentioned, and then find the value of the perpendicular of this mountain. You multiply this height into the sine of the complementary angle of the dip, and divide the total by the versed sine of this dip itself. Then multiply (the double of) the quotient into 22 and divide the result of this multiplication by 7. You will get the length of the Earth's circumference (in the same terms or proportion) in which the height of the mountain has been fixed.

We have not so far been able to experiment with this dip, and its value in any high place. We were led to this method by Abul Abbas Al-Nairizi¹ who states, that Aristotenes (?) has mentioned that the heights of the peaks of the mountains would be $5\frac{1}{2}$ miles when the length of the radius of the Earth is 3,200 miles approximately.

For the solution of this problem it is necessary mathematically that the dip of the horizon in the mountain wherein the perpendicular is so high should be about $\frac{1}{3}$ degree.

Such matters, however, need actual experiments, and could be verified only by testing.

The Almighty and Wise God alone can help me (in obtaining success in such ventures).²

At the time of writing the 'Book on the Astrolabe' Al-Biruni had not yet made any actual attempt to put his theory into practice owing to, what he thought, the smallness of the instruments of observations, and lack of suitable site, and competent helpers. The method required the presence of a mountain either situated on a level plain or adjacent to the sea, and on the peak of it the observations of the sun setting in the horizon.

---

¹ Al-Nairizi died shortly after 300 A.H. (early tenth century A.D.).
² Nallino has demonstrated Al-Biruni's methods on pp. 291-292 of his Lectures. See Appendix I of this book.
He did not, however, despair of the idea. The opportunity actually came to him when he was, most probably, kept as a political detinue¹ in the fort of Nandnā² after the conquest by Sultān Mahmūd in 407 A.H. (1016-1017 A.D.) of Al-Bīrūnī’s native land of Khwārizm, where he had occupied a very prominent position under the royal patronage.

Al-Bīrūnī’s researches in India have so far received no adequate treatment. It is a pity that even the most learned Nallino, for whose comprehensive and deep learning I have the greatest respect, has not dealt with them in detail, and in his Lectures, has only contented himself with a very cursory³ reference. Others have been still more sketchy, and superficial.

Al-Bīrūnī must have elaborately dealt with this subject, which had so much fascinated him for long, in his book ‘An Essay on the ascertainment of the Earth’s Dimensions by the observation of the declining sun from the peaks of the mountains’⁴, mentioned in his Bibliography composed in 427 A.H. (1035-1036 A.D.). We have not so far been able to trace the existence of this small book in any of the libraries of the world.

However, references to the subject, more or less detailed, exist in other works of Al-Bīrūnī that have survived the ravages of about a thousand years.

He has barely referred to it in Al-Tasfhim, which is only an elementary book, but a more explicit reference exists in Tahdid-ul-Amākin (تحديد الاماكن), an incomplete extract from which has been reproduced from Al-Bīrūnī’s autograph copy by Zeki Validi in Al-Bīrūnī’s ‘Picture of the World’. It is, however, a pity that the learned Editor has omitted to quote the most important portion of the text that directly concerns us, and is of the greatest

¹ This must have been of a very short duration, as 2 years later we find Al-Bīrūnī occupied in his astronomical observations at Ghaznā.
³ This is all that he says on the subject:—

‘It is worth mentioning that al-Bīrūnī after the completion of his treatise on Astrolabe actually put this theory to practical test in his book known as Al-Qānūn-ul-Masūdī.

Wishing to verify Al-Mārinūn’s calculations he chose a mountain in the land of India near the Sea and a level plain. There he measured the altitude of the mountain and found it to be 652½ yards and the dip of the horizon as 34 degrees. He thereby calculated the degree of the meridian circle as 58 miles approximately.’ (p. 292)

As we shall see the value of the degree by Al-Bīrūnī is really much less.
scientific and historical value,† that is, the whole detailed account, which must be existing in the manuscript, of the actual calculations carried out by Al-Bīrūnī to satisfy himself of the true dimensions of the Earth as given by Al-Māmūn’s astronomers.

We quote the incomplete passage:

ص ۲۴۴ و لَم اتفق لي المقام بلقه نندمن من ارض الهند، و اشرفت من الجبل المطل عليها غربا، و عاينت البیدا الجنوبيه عنه، بدأ لي ان امتحن هذ الطريق (إي طريق سیرفة عمود الجبل) بها، فقسست على قمة الجبل ما يحس من النفا الأرض و الملون اللازوردي..............

* (ص ۲۴۵) فخرج امبال الجزو الواحد نه نح نه

'(Page 244)...... When I happened to be living in the fort of Nandnã in the land of India, and I found a high mountain standing to its West, and also saw a plain to its South, it occurred to my mind that I should examine this method there.

Then I calculated on the peak of the mountain the line touching the surface of the Earth and the blue sky..............'

(Page 245) The length of one single degree came out to be 55 miles 58' 55".

Fortunately we have a more detailed account of it in Al-Bīrūnī’s Al-Qânûn, where he says, after dealing with Al-Māmûn’s measurements:—

و على شدة حرصي ان اتوا الاعتبار، و اختباري له قاعا صافعا في شمال دهستان التي بارض جرجلان، ثم عجزي عن المفاوذ المتبوع و المعين الصادق عليه، عدلت فيه إلى طريق آخر

* لما وجدت بارض الهند جيلا مشرفا على صحرا مستوية الوجه، ناب استواها عن سلسة سطح البحر، فقسست على ذروته ملتقى السماء و الأرض في المنظر، اعني دابرة

† We wrote to the learned Editor to his address in Istanbul requesting him to furnish us with the copy of the missing portions of the passage, but most probably owing to the war conditions prevalent in those days, we failed to receive his reply.

‡ This note in the text in the brackets which we have left out in our English translation in the above is evidently by the Editor, and is, I imagine, due to the misunderstanding of the real meaning of Al-Bīrūnī, as the height of the mountain is a known quantity to start with and is to be one of the bases on which the solution of the problem rests, the other being the finding out of the angle of the dip of the horizon. All this would be clear to the reader as he proceeds further.
الأفق، نجدّته منحنئًا في الأفق عن خط الشرق و المغرب بالنقص قليلاً من ثلث و ربع جزءها، فأخذت هذه الربع و ثلثين دقيقة، و استخرجت عمود الجبل باخذ ارتفاع ذروته في موضعين هما مع أصل العمود في خط مستقيم، نجدّته سُمُّياء و اثنين و خمسين ذراعًا و نصف عشر ذراع.

و لكي عمود الجبل هج قائم على ابج كرة الأرض، و نخرجه على استناده على حلب، ولا بُد من مرونه على المركز لهبوط الأثقال عليه، فليكن ط، و الخط

المساف لالرض من الذروة هو المار على الأفق، فليكن ه، و نصل ط، فيحصل مثل

هذا، قائم زاوية، أ معلوم الزوايا، و ذلك أن زاوية الهض بacaktار تمام انحاطاط الأفق، و ذلك فضل وجيبي. نظر نظر ط ب، و زاوية هذا بقدار الانحاطاط نفسه، و هو. لذا، وجيبي. له لد، و هو إذن معلوم الإضلاع بالمقدار الذي به ط الجيب كله، و ذلك أن ط يكون فيه جيب تمام الانحاطاط، هج. يكون فضل الجيب كله على جيب تمام
My extreme anxiety to verify the matter for myself, and my choosing (for this purpose) a level plain in Northern Dihistán in the land of Jurján, and eventually my failure to exacting difficulties and want of earnest helper in the task, led me to adopt another method for it.

When in the country of India, I found a mountain adjacent to a leveled plain. I first ascertained its height at the sea-level. I then imagined the sight line passing on its peak and connecting the Earth with the sky, that is, the horizon ( دائرة اللاق ) . I found through my instrument that its horizon inclined from the Eastern and Western lines a little less than $\frac{1}{3}$ and $\frac{4}{3}$ degree. So I took the dip of the horizon as 34 minutes. I then ascertained the altitude of the mountain by taking the heights of its peak in two different places, both of which were in a line with the bottom of the mountain’s perpendicular. I found it $652\frac{1}{2}$ cubits.
Now the mountain's perpendicular \( \text{هـ} \) stands erect on \( \text{اً} \), the Earth's sphere, we carry it straight down to \( \text{حـذب} \), which would necessarily pass through the Earth's centre \( \text{ب} \) on account of the attraction of the heavy weights to it. Now the tangent touching the Earth from the peak of the mountain \( \text{ط} \) passing to the horizon is \( \text{ها} \). We join \( \text{ب} \), and \( \text{اً} \), and thus is formed the right-angled triangle \( \text{هـا} \), of which the angle at \( \text{اً} \) is known to be the right angle, and the values (of the other two angles) are also known, the angle \( \text{هـا} \), being equal to the complementary angle to the dip of the horizon having 89 degrees and 26 minutes, with a sine of \( \text{0}^\circ, 59', 59'', 49''\) \( 2''' \), and the angle \( \text{هـ} \) being equal to the dip of the horizon itself, that is, \( 34' \), with a sine of \( \text{0}^\circ, 0', 35'', 36''\). And thus this triangle will also be of known sides in the proportion in which \( \text{ب} \) will be sine \( \text{اً} \) (i.e., 90 degrees) and \( \text{ط} \) (half chord) will be sine for the complementary angle to the dip of the horizon. Therefore \( \text{هـ} \) would be the excess in the sine \( \text{اً} \) over the sine for the complementary angle to the dip of the horizon, and would come to \( \text{0}^\circ, 0', 0'', 10''\), \( 57'''\), \( 32'''' \), and its ratio to \( \text{ط} \), the sine for the complementary angle to the dip, would be the same as the ratio of the cubits of \( \text{هـ} \), the perpendicular of the mountain (i.e., \( 652\frac{1}{2} \) cubits) to the cubits of \( \text{ط} \), the radius of the Earth.

In this manner the radius of the Earth would be \( 12,851,369 \) cubits \( 50', 42'' \) and the circumference \( 80,780,039 \) cubits \( 17' 38''\), and a single one of the 360 degrees \( 224,388 \) cubits \( 59' 50'' \).

The miles for a single degree would amount to \( 56\degree 0' 50'' 6''' \).

This result (of mine) comes very close to the finding of those people (i.e., Al-Mâmûn's astronomers). Nay, it actually corresponds with it, and so my mind was (at last) set at rest (and satisfied) about their reports.

We have, however, used their measurement, as their instruments were more precise, and their labour to obtain it of an extremely exacting and fastidious nature.

As to the way for converting the miles of the distances into the degrees of the meridian circle, so that the previous process may be available in all cases, let us multiply it by 3 so as to make it three-fold, and divide it by 170 which represents thrice the miles of a single degree.
On the contrary, when it is intended to convert the degrees of a distance into miles let us multiply them into $170$ and divide the result by $3$.

But since the multiplication of the result into $20'$ is the substitute of the division of it by $3$, therefore it is necessary that we multiply the parts of the distances into $170$ and the result into $20'$ (i.e., into $\frac{30}{8}$ miles) so as to get the miles.'''

Having given a detailed and exhaustive account of Al-Mâmûn's and Al-Birûnî's measurements of the Earth we have now to see their true value in the light of our modern knowledge. For this purpose we have first to convert them into some well-known current system of measurements.

Thanks to the labours of the late Mahmûd Pâshâ and Nallino the correct length of the Arabian cubit (ذراع) of Al-Mâmûn's times has been precisely ascertained. Let us see what Nallino has got to say on this subject.

'The modern scholars continued to differ in their discussion about the real nature of this Arabian Zirâ', and the difference continued for many years, till I demonstrated by means of the reasons, the details of which would take us long, that the Zirâ al-Sauda (ذراع السودا) corresponds with the "Zira'" recognized by the Muslim law (الذراع الشرعي). Then I succeeded in positively determining the value and found it to be 4,933 millimetres, and the mile as 19,372 metres.

The calculation does not differ from that of the late Mahmûd Pâshâ, the well-known astronomer, by more than 40 centimetres only, i.e., so slightly as to be not even worth our while to mention it in this place 1 (Lectures, pp. 288-289).

Relying on Nallino's researches we further find that 4,000 Zira' amount to 6,473 feet (English Encyclopaedia of Islam, p. 498).

1 ان الحكم في قدر ضبط قياس العرب ينطلق بمعرفة طول الميل العربي المستعمل فيه المشتغل على اربعة آلاف ذراع سودا على قول أحمد بن محمد ابن كثير الفرغلي والمغربي، والبيروني وابن نصر الحسن التقي (من فلك القرن الرابع) وابن يونس، و اختلف آراء المحدثين الباحثين في مقدار ذلك الميل من الذراع، و لم يَّزَل الاختلاف سنة مدينة - لم أثبرت براهمي يطول شرحنا على معرفة الذراع السردا للذراع الشرعي، و توصلت إلى اثنين مقدارها - فوجدته 193,3 مليمتر، فالنيلبيات أن الميل العربي كان 193,3 متر - فهو قد لا يختلف عن عسا و جهد المرحوم محمود باشا الفلكي لأبارين سنتمرت، أي بحث لا لابذكاء.
Now according to learned Nallino the length of the degree $56\frac{3}{4}$ miles, as found by Al-Mâmûn’s astronomers would amount to $111,815$ metres and that of the whole circumference $41,248$ kilometres, which he adds, is so very near to the reality, as to deserve to be counted as a great scientific achievement of the Arabs.

 فلا بَدَّ لنا من عداد ذلك القياس في أعمال العرب العلمية المجيدة المثالوره،

These measurements having been taken between the latitudes 35 and 36 where the real length of the arc is $111,306$ metres, the difference is $877$ metres in excess of the true value which amounts to less than half of an English mile. The whole circumference according to Nallino would exceed $150$ miles.

We, however, owe to Al-Birûnî the measurements of these results in the Arabian Zira‘ and have calculated them in the English feet as in the following:

One degree $= 226,666\frac{2}{3}$ Zira‘ or $366,802\frac{1}{4}$ feet.
Circumference $= 81,600,000$ or $25,009\frac{3}{4}$ miles.
Diameter $= 12,979,500$ Zira‘ or $3,978,044$ feet.

The real circumference of the Earth being $24,858$ miles, the difference amounts to $151$ miles, or nearly the same as Nallino’s calculations.

But as we have already pointed out above it was a compromise value accepted by the astronomers as a mean taken between the two divergent measurements of Al-Mâmûn’s times.

According to our researches the best result was obtained by the actual measurements in the plains of Sinjâr, where, according to Habash (as narrated by Ibn-i-Ýûnus in his Zij) the astronomers had found the value of one degree as $56\frac{1}{4}$ miles.

According to this measurement the value of the degree would be as in the following:

$56\frac{1}{4}$ Aralîan miles,  
or $225,000$ Zira‘, 
or $364,106\frac{1}{4}$ English feet.

Circumference

$= 81,600,000$ Zira‘,  
or $24,825\frac{3}{4}$ miles.

1 Lectures, p. 289:—

"أما قَيَاس العرب (رَمَىَ الدَّامْرَىَ)، فهو أَول قَيَاس حَقيق، أَجري كَلِه بِصَبَر، مَعَ كُلِّ ما امْتَضَّهَ نَّكَل السَّاحِحِ، من النَّدِّةِ الطَّيِّبةِ وَ الصَّدِيقَةِ وَ المَشْهُورَةِ، وَ اسْتِرَاكِ جَمَاعَةٍ مِنَ الفَلَكيِّينَ الَّذِينَ مُسَاحِحِينَ في الْمَعَالِمَ!"
Now the latitude of Sinjár as given in Al-Birûni’s Al-Qânûn is 35° 50’ (‘or 30’), where the value of the arc is about 364,150 feet, and as compared with the Arabian measurement it exceeds it by about 44 feet only.

As to the circumference, it differs by about 33 ½ miles only, and if the Earth were a perfect globe and not a geoid, the difference would not exceed 3 miles in the whole of the Earth’s circumference!

These results are thus wonderfully close to the correct values, and deserve to rank as the best of those obtained before the modern times.

We do not propose to deal in detail with the other values, also ascribed to Al-Mâmmûn’s times, i.e., 56 miles and 57 miles for the degree, as obviously they are not so accurate as the previous ones; the former being much shorter and the latter much longer than the true lengths of the arc.

Now let us take up Al-Birûni’s own measurements as given in Al-Qânûn:—

1 degree = 224,389 Zira‘ or 56° 0’ 50” 6”’ or 363,115 English feet.
Circumference = 80,780,639 Zira‘ or 24,778½ English miles.
Radius = 12,851,370 Zira‘ or 3,939 miles.
Diameter = 7,878 miles.

Al-Birûni’s site of measurement being the fort of Nandnâ, which according to Al Qânûn had a latitude of 34° 10’, the length of the arc, therefore, would come to about 364,150 feet, a value which exceeds that of Al-Birûni’s by 1,035 feet or a little more than ½ of a mile only.

Al-Birûni’s circumference is some 80 miles less than the true circumference, but if we take the Earth a perfect globe then the difference is about 70½ miles only.

Modern Geodesy has measured the radius of the Earth at the equator as about 6,378 kilometres; one kilometre being equal to 0.621 English miles, the radius comes to about 3,951 English miles and differs from Al-Birûni’s calculations by about 12 English miles only.

As already rightly observed by Nallino (p. 290 of his Lectures), one of the impediments in ascertaining the precise value by means of this method would be the Refraction of the Ray of Light while passing through the air, and therefore, whatever little difference

1 Page 37 of Birûni’s Picture of the World —

سنجار في راويه رضد السامن دور الأرض له، م (أرل)
exists in Al-Birûni’s results must also be very much due to the same reason.¹

But before we take leave of Al-Birûni’s measurement we have still to account for the different values as assigned by Al-Biruni himself in his ‘Tahdid’ and ‘Al-Qânûn’ to his own measurement of the Earth’s diameter at Nandnâ. In ‘Tahdid’ the value of the degree is given as a little less than 56 Arabian miles, while in Al-Qânûn a little more than 56 miles.²

The only possible explanation to our mind seems to be that Al-Birûni had kept with himself the data of his observations at Nandnâ, and, as the subject continued to retain his interest to the end, he revised his previous calculations, and has embodied his better estimations. As his previous calculations are obviously less exact they need no further discussion.

No subsequent Muslim researches on the subject can be compared favourably with the researches of these greatest astronomers, who belonged to the Golden Age of the Islamic Culture and learning; when the scientific interest in all the various branches of knowledge had reached its climax and produced in all fields wonderful results indeed at the hands of those great Muslim scholars who were the best of their times in every line, and some of them like, Al-Birûni, worthy of standing in company with the best of all times and nations in the world’s history.

APPENDIX I

Nallino’s exposition of Al-Birûni’s trigonometrical method for ascertaining the radius of the Earth as described by him in his book on the Astrolabe, and later on tested at Nandanâ in India:—

\[ \text{ما و خطآ عموده اي ارتفاعه و هو خط ب ج عمودا على ا مساريا لاقف قله الحبل و نرسم اضما} \]

\[ \text{التي تنعت عن قباس زاوية الاخطاب بالصبر، (refraction) و من المعلوم أن الاشكال أكثر قدره في مستوى الأفق و أقله (بل عدده) في خط سمى الرأس، اي في 90° من الارتفاع عن الأفق (ص 390).} \]

¹ Tahdid: 55° 58' 55''.
² Al-Qânûn: 56° 0' 50'' 6''.
خط المماس لمحيط الدائرة على نقطة D - وحيث أن يبرهن في الهندسة (2) أن الخط
تتم المماس لدائرة ما عمود على نصف القطر الواعل إلى نقطة التماس يكون 

عمودا على D و مثلث A و D ع يكون قائما الزاوية على نقطته D - أما زاوية A D فهى
ما يسمى البيروي انحاط الاALCHEMY، ومن الواضح أنها تمام زاوية A D أن تعادل زاوية
أع د - فإذا أشارنا بحرف نق إلى نصف القطر المتساوي الخطوط المساحية إليه
و بحرف نق إلى نصف قطر الأرض و بحرف نق إلى ارتفاع الجبل و بحرف نق إلى الانحاط.

ينتج من قواعد حساب المثلثات المستوية:

\[ \frac{AD}{\tan \theta} = \frac{DQ}{\tan \phi} = \frac{DQ + r}{\tan \phi + r} \]

\[ \text{نق} - r - \text{نق} = \text{نق} - \text{نق} = \text{نق} - \text{نق} = \text{نق} \]

\[ r = \frac{\text{نق} - \text{نق}}{\tan \phi} \]

كتاب تحرير اصول ابوليدس من تأليف خوادم نصبه الطوري المطبوع في رومة سنة 1593 م.
(الشكل السابع عشر من المقالة الثالثة)
A short note on the Arabian unit of measurement ‘Al-Zira’-ul-Sauda’ used by Al-Mâmûn’s astronomers and also by Al-Birûnî in determining the Earth’s diameter.

Imâm Abul Hasan Ali b. Mohammed b. Habib-ul-Basari-ul-Baghdâdi, well known as Imâm Al-Mâwardi (†450 A.H.; 1058 A.D.), in his famous book Al-Akhâm-ul-Sullâniâh (الأحكام السلطانية) has given a very interesting account of the various zira’ (cubits) in vogue amongst the Muslims of his times. Of the seven kinds enumerated by him ‘Al-Sauda’ stands third in length being longer than two others and shorter than the remaining four. According to him this cubit was first invented by Hârûn-ul-Rashid, taking the length of his black slave’s arm for its measure. This cubit was used in measuring cloths, houses, etc. The name is obviously derived from Al-Sauda, the black, being the description of the Negro slave of the Caliph.¹

On the other hand, Al-Masûdî in his Kilâb-ul-Tanbih-wa’l-Ishrâf (كتاب التنبيه و الأشراف) (355 A.H.; 395 A.D.) says that this cubit was invented by Al-Mâmûn for measuring cloth, houses, and the division of the travelling stages. According to him the cubit consisted of 24 fingers. The finger was equal to 6 barley grains placed side by side of one another. Three miles made a farsakh.²

The latest discussion on this subject has been undertaken by the learned writer of Jâma-i-Bahâdur Khâni, an encyclopaedia of mathematical and astronomical sciences. According to him (p. 337) the followers of the Greek writers took the thickness of 6 ordinary hairs of the horse’s mane for determining the width of an ordinary

¹ الاحكام السلطانية ص 259 (مطبعة جامعه عمانه ﷺ 1331/1949)
² و الدين اربه آلاف ذراع بالسربا و هو الذراع الذي وضعه المامون لدجم الباب و مساحة البناء و قمة المنازل و الذراع ارج و عشرون إصبعا و الاعص مست شعيرات منفوم بعضها لبعض و الفرسخ هذا الميل
ثلث اميال (ص 32 - 24)
barley seed, and 6 barley seed for the width of a finger. Twenty-four fingers for a cubit or zira', while the European scientists have employed the width of 8 ordinary barley seeds for determining the length of an inch. According to this a cubit or zira' would be equal to 1½ feet.¹ which is only very roughly correct, as Nallino's more exacting researches have established that the length of Zirâ'-ul-Sauda was considerably more than 1½ feet, 4,000 zira' being equal to 6,473 feet. We do not propose to enter into the discussion about the other Arabian zira' (cubits) as they are not strictly pertinent to our present study. Those interested may refer to Al-Mâwardi for the comparative lengths, Ibn-i-Rustâh's كتاب الأخلاق النفسية, p. 29, Yâqût's Geographical Encyclopaedia, Vol. I, pp. 25-26, Egyptian edition, and Al-Masûdi's Kitâb ul-Tanbih, p. 38, for further details of other systems prevalent in those times.

APPENDIX III

To the best of our knowledge the solution of Al-Birûnî's trigonometrical problem, according to the data and method employed by him, and fully detailed in Al-Qâmnûn, has not so far been attempted and tested by means of actual calculations. We are much indebted to the collaboration of Mr. S. M. Abul Kâzîm, M.A., Lecturer of Mathematics, Muslim University, Aligarh, a prominent young scholar of real merits, in our fixing the pertinent part of the actual text and its translation as well as working out in detail all the steps involved in it.

For the text we had the advantage of having a copy from the most precious manuscript of the year 502 A.H. (1160-1167 A.D.), once in the custody of the Lytton Library, Muslim University, Aligarh, and now in Berlin. (It is fully described in my Al-Birûnî, 2nd edition, 1927, pp. 136-138.) For further comparison we had a more recent copy of a manuscript, once owned by the late Syed Mahmûd, son of Sir Syed Ahmad Khân, and now possessed by the Muslim University, Aligarh, and also a third copy of the Rânpur State Library, a true transcript of the chapter relating to the subject from it having been recently supplied to us by Mr. Arshi, the

¹ (ذكر مقياس مساحت مقرره)
librarian, who, for the sake of accuracy, took the trouble of copying it out in his own hand. We are much obliged for his prompt reply and kindness. The last manuscript is dated 1035 A.H. (1625 A.D.), and judging from the account given by the learned librarian, as well as from the faithful transcript supplied to us, it appears to be full of blunders, and is a very inaccurate copy of the book indeed. But even it has been of use in clarifying one or two dubious figures.

It would be of no good to go into the lengthy details relating to the various corrections that were necessary to be made in fixing Al-Biruni’s own text. After having gone through all the calculations we are now satisfied that the text as presented to the readers is finally established, and for all our purposes is thoroughly reliable.

Now to the problem itself:

\[
\sin 89^\circ 26' = 0^\circ 59', 59'', 49''', 2''\]

\[
= 0 + \frac{59}{60} + \frac{59}{3600} + \frac{49}{216000} + \frac{1296000}{12960000}
\]

\[
= 0.9838333333 + 0.0163888888 + 0.0002268518 + 0.0000001543
\]

\[
= 0.999949228 \text{ (correct to 9 decimal places only).}
\]

\[
\sin 90^\circ = 1
\]

\[
\cos 89^\circ 26' = 1 - \sin 89^\circ 26'
\]

\[
= 1 - 0^\circ 59', 59'', 49''', 2''''
\]

\[
= 0^\circ, 0', 0'', 10''', 57''', 32''''
\]

\[
= 1 - 0.57 + \frac{57}{21600} + \frac{1296000}{77760000}
\]

\[
= 0.0004629629 + 0.0000439815 + 0.000000411
\]

\[
= 0.00050735 \text{ (correct to 9 decimal places only).}
\]

\[
\frac{\text{cubits}}{\text{cubits}} = 652\frac{1}{4}\text{ cubits}
\]

\[
\frac{\text{cubits}}{\text{cubits}} = \frac{13041}{20}\text{ cubits}
\]

Now \[
\frac{\text{cubits}}{\text{cubits}} = \frac{\text{cubits}}{\text{half chord}} \times \frac{\text{cubits}}{\text{cubits}}
\]

\[
\text{i.e., the radius of the Earth in cubits} = \frac{13041 \times 0.999949228}{20 \times 0.00050735}
\]

\[
= 12851421 \text{ cubits.}
\]
As compared with Al-Bīrūnī’s calculation of the radius of the Earth, i.e. 12851369 cubits, our result is only 52 cubits in excess. But if we substitute in the above calculations 507352 instead of 507350 as the divisor, we get almost the same results as Al-Bīrūnī had reached in calculating the radius of the Earth. In any case on the given data his result stands most approximately tested, and verifies the various values assigned in the text.

We have not deemed it necessary to go beyond the sine values as given by Al-Bīrūnī himself. In our research for verification we have tried to ascertain these values from other sources as well. For instance, by consulting the well-known mathematical encyclopaedia Jāma-i-Bahādur Khānī (جامع بهادر خانی) we found the sine values for the angle of 89° 26' as 0°, 59', 59'', 49''', 26''''', 9'''''', 26''''''' (نطوط مط كوط كتو) which correspond with Al-Bīrūnī’s own value up to the thirds only. Similarly the sine value of 34' is 0', 35'', 36''', 14''''', 54'''''', (له لويدند) which again corresponds with Al-Bīrūnī’s values up to the thirds only.

The learned author of Jāma-i-Bahādur Khānī has claimed that he had derived his tables from the Muslim astronomers, naming Al-Bīrūnī, Khwājā Nasiruddin Tūsī and Ghyāsuddin Jamshēd (contemporary of Ulugh Beg), whom he especially mentions as the real pioneers in the field of this trigonometrical method.

It is apparent that he has depended for his values on subsequent writers. We have strictly confined ourselves to the values as given by Al-Bīrūnī himself. We leave it to others to see if in the light of better knowledge the result could be still improved upon.

The word ‘jaib’ (چيب) is derived from the Sanskrit word ‘jiva’. The Arab astronomers borrowed it from the Hindūs, at first

1 Page 383.

2 Page 350.

3 حسن س 268 ... أما متاخران بیرون، خواجه نمیر الدين طریسی و غیاث الدين جمشید و غيرهم برّ الد اف منجمم ینا زماننا هنادی بای ایمان اعمال راں جریب مدارند ...

Fortunately Al-Qānūn’s Third Miqālā (معال) has very ably been translated with copious notes into German language by Von Schoy at Hanover, 1927. On p. 37 of it are given the tables of values for the series of the various angles as given by Al-Bīrūnī himself. We have tallied these values and find them to correspond with Al-Bīrūnī’s values in this problem.

In the end of Von Schoy’s work is appended another table extracted from Ulugh Beg.

For those interested in further researches in the subject it would be extremely interesting to repeat Al-Bīrūnī’s labours on the very site in Pakistan where he himself for the first time carried them out so successfully.
writing it as 'jib'. Later on they imagined that it resembled their own word 'jaib', although there is no connection between the two.¹

In India chords were halved and became known as 'jivas' (sines) which are found mentioned in the writings of Aryabhâtta (c. A.D. 500) and Brahmagupta (c. A.D. 620). When the Arabs became acquainted with the astronomical works of the Hindus the use of the sines as known to the Hindus passed to their keeping. They developed the sine theorem, and employed it, wherever possible, by the middle of the fourth century A.H.² According to Nasiruddin Al-Tûsî³ (†672 A.H.; 1274 A.D.) the discovery of the sine theory as applied first to the right-angled triangles was simultaneously claimed by several Muslim astronomers. Al-Birûnî, in his book 'The Key to the Science of Astronomy' (مقاليد عام هیات) had collected the various methods employed by those astronomers. He asserted that his teacher Abû Nasr Mansûr b. Ali b. Irâq was the first scholar who described the sine theory in trigonometry. Suter has published in the German language the translation of his

الرسالة الابی نصر بن عراق فی هیان تناسب جیب الاضاع اجیب الزوایا المقابلة

from a manuscript in the Leyden Library (1910).

Other rivals to the claim were Abul Wafâ Mohammed b. Mohammed al-Bûzjâni (†388 A.H.; 998 A.D.) and Abu Mahmûd Hânîd b. Al Khizir-al-Khujandi (later half of the fourth century A.H.).⁴

¹ Nallino, pp. 168-169.
³ كتاب الشكل القواعس المبعض من الخطط المنهية، ص 1۳۰۹ - ص ۱۸۸.
⁴ See Nallino, pp. 244-245. On account of its significance I quote the whole passage here below:

و ما يستحق النظر ان العرب تُهْرَّوا في الصف latter من القرن الرابع الى الاياب تناسب جيب الاضاع

ليجيب الزوایا المعاينة لها في أي من تك كروي ينضروا بإذن الطريقة أن يَصْرُفون "الشكل المعنی" في حل المتتابعة الكرخرى قل تصير الدين الكرّي (1) المترقي سنة ١٣٧٧ هـ = "اصل دعاية" (2) ان تسب جيه

اضاعات المتتابعة المعاينة من تفاصيل القيم والمعلوم في سمحة الكرة كيب الزوایا المعرفة به، وقد جردت المادة ببيان هذا الدعوى أولا في المتتابتة المعاينة الزراعية، وقد ذهبا في إضاءة الهران عنها مازبة جمهوره الاستاذ أبو الريحان

البيروق (3) في كتاب له سماه بمقاليد علم هيات ما يحدث في سمحة الكرة وغيرها، و يوجد في بعض تلك الطرق تفاوتا، فأثيرت منها ما كان اندفاعًا، ليكون هذا الكتاب جامعا مع رعاية شرط الإجازة، و ابتدأت طريق الابره

ابي نصر علي بن عراق (4) فأن الاله ذي جن الرياح أنه السائح من النقار بأسلوب هذا القانون في جميع

المواقف، و إن كان كل واحد من التقاسيم أندباقي أبو علي محمد بن محمد البرز جانى (5) و أبي محمود حامد بن الحضر

المحندي (6) أدعي السبق أيضا في (7).
Al-Birûnî has made full use of the sine theory in *Al-Qânûn*, and other works. It is claimed that the determination of the sine of one degree theoretically is primarily the work of Al-Birûnî. In subsequent times Ulugh Beg and Ghayâsuddîn Jamshed claimed themselves to be the discoverers. But it has rightly been contended that they got it from Al-Birûnî’s *Al-Qânûn* which was so often in their use.  

1 For a full discussion of the topic, please see the interesting account in Deh Khudâ’s *Life of Al-Birûnî*, pp. 13–15, from which the following has been extracted:—

"..."
Later on the systemizer Nasiruddin Al-Tūsī collected and supplemented the labours of his predecessors, and organized the knowledge into a coherent whole. Lacking the co-sine theorem Al-Bīrūnī and Al-Tūsī resorted, when necessary, to auxiliary right angles to solve problems in oblique triangles.¹

Thus in determining the dimensions of the Earth Al-Bīrūnī not only employed his novel method, but also resorted to the use of sines, in the theoretical development and practical application of which he stands out as one of the foremost pioneers in history.

APPENDIX IV

(i) Details of our own calculations in English miles and feet of the measurements made by the astronomers of Al-Māmūn and Al-Bīrūnī:

According to Nallino 56$\frac{2}{3}$ Arabian miles measured 111,815 metres, while the real length of the arc of Meridian between 35° and 36° is 110,938 metres.

The difference of 877 metres is equal to 2,347 feet which is less than $\frac{6}{11}$ mile. The calculations are as follows:—

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metres</th>
<th>Feet</th>
<th>Feet</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1973</td>
<td>5280</td>
<td>$x$</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[
x = \frac{877 \times 5280}{1973} \text{ feet}
\]

or \[
x = \frac{4630560}{1973} \text{ feet}
\]

\[
= 2347\frac{292}{73} \text{ feet}
\]

\[
= 2347 \text{ mile}
\]

\[
= \text{less than } \frac{6}{11} \text{ mile.}
\]

(ii) According to Al-Bīrūnī Al-Māmūn's one degree of 56$\frac{2}{3}$ miles had 22666$\frac{3}{8}$ zira' (which are to be changed into English feet in the following way):—

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Zira'</th>
<th>Feet</th>
<th>Feet</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4000</td>
<td>6473</td>
<td>$x$</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[
x = \frac{22666\frac{3}{8} \times 6473}{4000}
\]

\[
= 366802 \text{ feet.}
\]

And the circumference of the Earth is 81,600,000 zirā' which is equal to \(81600000 \div 4000\) feet.

\[
\frac{528196800000}{4000} \text{ feet}
\]

\[
132049200 \text{ feet}
\]

\[
25009.31 \text{ miles.}
\]

The modern measurement of the Earth's circumference is 24,585 miles; therefore the difference between the modern and Al-Māmūn's measurements is equal to \(25009 - 24858 = 151\) miles.

(iii) According to Habash in *Ibn-i-Yūnus* one degree is equal to 56\(\frac{1}{4}\) Arabian miles which are equal to \(56\frac{1}{4} \times 4000\) zirā'

\[
225000 \text{ zirā'}
\]

\[
225000 \div 4000 \frac{4000}{6473} \text{ feet}
\]

\[
\frac{225000 \times 6473}{4000} \text{ feet}
\]

\[
\frac{1456425000}{4000} \text{ feet}
\]

\[
364106\frac{1}{4} \text{ feet.}
\]

The modern measurements for one degree is 364,150 feet; therefore the difference between the modern and Al-Māmūn's measurements (for one degree) is equal to \(364150 - 364106 = 44\) feet.

Therefore, according to Habash, the measurement of the whole circumference of the Earth will be

\[
36106\frac{1}{4} \times 360 \text{ feet}
\]

\[
131078250 \text{ feet}
\]

\[
\frac{131078250}{5280} \text{ miles}
\]

\[
24825.485 \frac{5}{8} \text{ miles.}
\]

Thus the difference between the modern measurements and Al-Māmūn's measurements of the circumference of the Earth will be \(24858 - 24825 = 33\) miles.

But if the Earth were a complete globe instead of being an oblate spheroid, the difference between the modern and Al-Māmūn's measurements would have been 3 miles only.\(^1\)

\(^1\) The calculations are simple:

\[
44\times 360 = 15840 \text{ ft.} = \frac{15840}{5280} \text{ miles = 3 miles.}
\]
(iv) According to Al-Birûni the Earth’s radius is more than 12,851,369 zira’, i.e.

\[ \frac{12851369 \times 6473}{4000} \text{ feet} \]

\[ = \frac{12851369 \times 6473}{4000 \times 5280} \text{ miles} \]

\[ = 3938.774 \text{ miles.} \]

The difference between the modern measurements and Al-Birûni’s measurements of the Earth’s radius is equal to

\[ 3959.738 - 3938.774 = 11.964 \text{ miles.} \]

Al-Birûni’s arc being about 224,389 zira’ or 363,115 feet, with a difference of 1,035 feet, the whole difference in the circumference, if the Earth were a complete globe, would be 70.568 miles only.\(^1\)

\(^1\) The calculation is as follows:—

\[ 1035 \text{ ft.} \times 360 = 372,600 \text{ ft.} = \frac{372,600}{5280} \text{ miles} = 70.568 \text{ miles.} \]
L'INDIA VISTA DA DUE GRANDI PERSONALITA' MUSULMANE: BĀBAR E BĪRŪNĪ

Per

ALESSANDRO BAUSANI

Letore di Lingua Persiana all'Università di Roma, Bibliotecario della Sezione Orientale dell’Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei.

Nella sua introduzione alla traduzione delle Āṭār al-Bāqiya di al-Bīrūnī, il Sachau osserva: 'Authors of the first centuries of the Hijra sometimes betray a great deal of commonsense... Then the author entirely disappears behind his book; all literary work sinks down to the level of imbecile compilation from good and bad sources'.¹ Anche se questo è in parte vero—specialmente per quanto riguarda gli scritti di filosofi, teologi, ecc.—nessuno potrà negare la personalità e la vividezza di alcune opere, anche relativamente tarde, di musulmani viaggiatori e guerrieri, quali ad es. Ibn Baṭṭūta e Bābar, fino a certe vivacissime relazioni di ambasciatori persiani del secolo passato. Nella loro forte personalità e nella mancanza di quel tardo e cieco senso di taqlīd di certi autori orientali (e perché no, anche occidentali...) Bīrūnī e Bābar hanno qualcosa di comune.

Ecco una prima giustificazione di questo paragone, forse un po' strano, fra due personalità divise da circa mezzo millennio di distanza, di razze diverse, legati solo dalla grande forza unificatrice dell'Islam e dal fatto di aver visitato una stessa terra straniera. Il carattere di queste righe vuol essere dunque non filologico, ma psicologico: può forse contribuire anche a dissipare quel pregiudizio, abbastanza diffuso in Occidente, che gli Orientali e nella fattispecie i musulmani 'siano tutti eguali', si somigliano tutti.²

Innanzitutto una osservazione preliminare: l'India che vide al-Bīrūnī e quella che vide Bābar non sono che in parte la stessa India, geograficamente, storicamente e dal punto di vista sotto il quale essi la studiano. Geograficamente Bābar viaggiò come è noto più di al-Bīrūnī nell'India. Le zone che Bīrūnī può aver conosciuto direttamente non sembra che oltrepasso il Panjāb,³ mentre Bābar giunse ad oriente fino al Bihār. Storicamente, come dicevamo, si tratta di ben 500 anni circa di differenza: l'India di Bābar è

¹ The Chronology of Ancient Nations translated and edited with notes and index by Edward Sachau. London, 1879, pag. X.
² Per l'interesse che può offrire la 'comparazione' nello studio delle culture orientali v. Ruben: Ueber philosophievergleichende Literatur, in OLZ, 1931, 96 segg.
molto più islamizzata di quella di al-Bīrūnī e cambiamenti radicali avvengono pur anche in quei paesi dove la storia è considerata un meccanico e uniforme gardīš-i ālaq. Infine mentre l’oggetto che più interessa Bīrūnī sono le teorie filosofico-scientifiche e religiose degli Indiani, Bābar apre i suoi vivaci occhi specialmente sulla natura e sulle cose esteriori del paese che visita.

A guisa di introduzione osserviamo un po’ come Bābar e Bīrūnī descrivono una identico oggetto, per esempio il rinoceronte ¹:

Bīrūnī I—203; 99.

Il ganda è molto numeroso in India, specialmente attorno al Gange. Ha la forma di un bufalo, ha una pelle nera a scaglie, e gioia sotto il collo: ha tre zoccoli in ogni zampa, gialli, uno grande davanti e gli altri due dai lati. La coda non l’ha lunga e gli occhi sono molto più bassi del solito sulle guance. Sul naso ha un unico corno curvato all’insù. I bramini hanno il privilegio di mangiare la carne del ganda. Io stesso ho visto coi miei occhi un giovane ganda che colpì un elefante che lo aveva assalito: lo colpì nella zampa anteriore col corno e lo abbatté.

Io pensavo che il ganda fosse il karkadann (rinoceronte), ma poi un tale venuto da Sofāla nel paese dei Zanğ mi comunicò che il kark il cui corno si usa per i manichi dei pugnali qui da noi è simile a questo ² e si chiama nella lingua dei zanğ ɪmpīlā. E’ di vari colori: e ha sul cranio un corno conico largo alla base ma non molto alto. Il fusto del corno è nero all’interno e per il resto bianco. Sulla fronte ha poi un altro corno più lungo simile al primo che si rizza al momento dell’azione quando l’animale vuol dare cornate. Il rinoceronte lo affila sulle rocce finché diviene tagliente e aguzzo. Ha degli zoccoli e una coda come quella dell’asino.

Bābar 489; 275b.

Un altro è il rinoceronte. Anche questo è un grosso animale, pari in grandezza a tre bufali (gāwmiš). Nei nostri paesi (ol wilāyatlār) è cosa risaputa che esso può sollevare un elefante sul suo corno, ma questo è probabilmente un errore.

¹ Per le citazioni uso per Bābar la traduzione inglese di A. S. Beveridge, tenendo presente il testo turki dei mss. di Hyderabad pubblicato dalla medesima nel Gibb Memorial (v. I, 1905); per Bīrūnī la classica edizione e traduzione del Sachau. Il primo dei numeri indica la pag. della traduzione, il secondo quella del testo.

² Il testo ha qariš min ḥaḍiḥ al-sifa, quindi meglio ‘simile a questo’, piuttosto che ‘comes nearer this description’ come traduce il Sachau. Il concetto è: ‘credevo che il rinoceronte unico e vero fosse il ganda ma poi uno mi disse che c’è un altro animale l’impīla, vicino a quello’. Non dice, né potrebbe dirlo date le notevoli differenze, (due corni invece di uno ecc) che è più simile l’impīla.
Ha sul naso un corno, lungo più di nove qārisṣ¹: con corni di
due qārisṣ non se ne vedono. Con un solo grosso corno ne fecero
un vaso da bere (āb-ḥawura kiṣṭi'), una scatola pel gioco del nard
e rimase ancora uno spessore di tre o quattro dita.² La cor-
azza del rinoceronte è molto spessa; una freccia che parte da
un arco teso, lanciata a tutta forza, se riesce a trarfare può
penetrare a quattro elik. Dai lati delle sue zampe anteriori e
posteriori pendono delle pieghe che a distanza sembrano una
gualdrappa che lo ricopra. Assomiglia al cavallo più che altri
animali. Ha pancia piccola come il cavallo, come nel cavallo
un solo osso cresce al posto di piccoli ossicini, come c'è nella
mano(eliq) del cavallo una tibia così anche nel rinoceronte. É'
più feroce che l'elefante e non può essere addomesticato.
Nelle foreste di Parašāwar e Hašnagar ce ne sono grandi quantità
ed anche fra il fiume Sind e le foreste del paese di Bhira. Gran
numero ce n'è anche sulle rive del fiume Saru nell'Hindustan.
Alcuni ne furono uccisi, nelle nostre spedizioni in India, appunto
nelle foreste di Parašāwar e Hašnagar. Colpisce violentemente
col suo corno; in quelle cacce parecchi uomini e cavalli furono
colpiti da cornate. In una di esse il cavallo di un soldato di
nome Maqšūd fu lanciato alla distanza di una lunghezza di
lancia, per la quale cosa quell'uomo ricevette il soprannome di
'oggetto del rinoceronte' (maqšūd-i karg).

Le osservazioni seguenti si possono facilmente dedurre da questa
prima comparazione: In primo luogo Bābār delimita con più esat-
tezza e precisione le località abitate da rinoceronti, quasi tutte
visitate personalmente. Birūnī afferma, su informazione d'altro,
che l'animale abbona nelle regioni del Gange, trascurando
in un più ampio volo d'uccello i fatti particolari. Anche la de-
scrizione esterna dell'animale è più generica in Birūnī, mentre Bābār
giunge fino all'anatomia; però mentre Birūnī dà una idea complessiva
molto chiara dell'animale Bābār si perde un po' più nei particolari.
Mentre Birūnī compara da scienziato più teorico che sperimenta
tore il gānda all'africano impilā, anche per stabilire una precisazione
lessicale e linguistica, Bābār entra nella curiosa, e non ben chiara,
comparazione anatomatica col cavallo. Infine la descrizione bābāriana
è pratico-dinamica: il corno del rinoceronte gli rammenta il vaso
da bere, lo spessore della pelle trova la sua espressione nella descrizione
di una frecciata. Quella di Birūnī è più scientifico-statica: anche
l'accegno ai manicoli dei pugnali fatti col corno del l'impilā è data come
notizia spersonalizzata, fornitali da un informatore.
Può essere interessante dopo queste due descrizioni del rino-
ceronte leggere quella che dello stesso animale (anche da lui

¹ Misura variabile simile al pollice (inch) inglese.
² elik, altra misura non uniforme. Il pers. traduce angušt, dito.
chiamato senza troppi scrupoli lessicali karkadann) fa Ibn Baṭṭūṭa\(^1\) (Mżik 28-29). La descrizione di Ibn Baṭṭūṭa è più giornalisticamente esagerata che immaginosa. E' colpito dalla grossezza della testa dell'animale e giunge ad affermare: 'esso è più piccolo dell'elefante ma la sua testa è parecchie volte(!) più grande che la testa dell'elefante'. Anche le misure sembrano alquanto esagerate. La grossa testa del rinoceronte ritorna poi insistente alcune righe dopo. Si potrebbe dire che se Birūnī è lo scienziato teorico e un po' libresco e Bābar il pratico e lo sperimentatore, Ibn Baṭṭūṭa è il reporter curioso, l'artista viaggiatore.

_Ancora sulla natura fisica dell'India_. Ambedue gli autori offrono qualche descrizione geofisica interessante e comparabile. Per esempio:

_Birūnī_ I—198; 97.

Ma se, osservandolo di persona, considerate il suolo dell'India e le pietre arrotondate che si trovano fin dove potete scavare sotto terra, pietre più grosse presso le montagne e dove è più forte la corrente dei fiumi, più piccole man mano che ci si allontana dalle montagne e si indebolisce la forza della corrente, pietre che appaiono polverizzate in forma di sabbia là dove le correnti stagnano vicino alle foci dei fiumi e al mare, non potete fare a meno di immaginare la terra dell'India come un antico mare man mano riempito dalle materie alluvionali portate dalle correnti.

_Bābar_ 485; 273.

Un' altra catena montuosa dell'India\(^2\) corre da nord a sud. Comincia nel paese di Delhi da una piccola collina rocciosa dove c'è la residenza di Firūz-Śāh . . . e proseguendo di li appare presso Delhi in forma di colline rocciose staccate molto basse sparse qua e là. Oltre Miwāt entra nel paese di Bīāna . . . Le colline di Gwālior, sebbene non connesse con questa catena, sono dei contrafforti di essa, come anche le colline di Rantanbōr, Čitōr, Čandēri e Mandāu. Distano in qualche punto dalla catena principale 7 od 8 kuroh. Queste colline sono molto basse, scabrose, rocciose e bosbose. Non vi cade neve ed esse danno origine a vari fiumi.

La descrizione di Bābar è degna di un viaggiatore moderno e tanto più acuta ci appare la sua interpretazione geofisica se pensiamo che non aveva come noi a disposizione carte o altri simili

---


\(^2\) I monti Aravalli, chiamati appunto Apocopi, 'gli spezzati' anche da Tolomeo.
mezzi di studio per riconoscere l’unità di un antico sistema orografico così frantumato. L’Enciclopedia Britannica usa pressappoco le stesse parole di Bābar nella descrizione esterna dei monti Aravalli che ‘send off rocky ridges in a north eastern direction through the states of Alwar and Jaipur, which from time to time reappear in the form of isolated hills and broken rocky elevations to near Delhi.’

Mentre Bābar descrive il suo oggetto senza mescolarvi una sua personale interpretazione, ma in modo così plastico e visivo che una spiegazione geologica sorge, se così posso esprimermi, dall’oggetto stesso, Bīrūnī subordina nel brano da noi or ora citato i dati da lui osservati alla sua interpretazione teorica. Nel brano bīrūniano quindi l’unità è da ricercarsi in Bīrūnī stesso che con la sua ‘teoria’ riunisce i frammenti di paesaggio vissuto, mentre nella descrizione bābariana l’unità si ritrova nel paesaggio stesso.

L’orografia indiana in generale è inquadrata da Bīrūnī in un ampio e geologicamente esatto cenno all’intera orografia euroasiatica.

Bīrūnī I—197-8; 96.

‘Immaginate nell’ecumene una catena di montagne eccele
unite fra loro, come delle vertebre, che si estendono lungo le
medie latitudini della terra e in longitudine da est a ovest,
passando attraverso la Cina, il Tibet, il paese dei Ėrūchi, Kābul,
il Badaẖšān, il Toẖāristān, Bāmiyān, Ghōr, il Ḥurāsān, la Media
(al-Ḡabal) l’Azerbaijan, l’Armenia, l’Asia Minore (al-Rūm)
il paese dei Franchi e quello dei Ḡalāliqa (i Galli). Lungo tutta
la sua lunghezza tale catena è anche estesa notevolmente e,
inoltre, ha delle sinuosità che racchiudono terre abitate, e
n’escono fiumi verso ambedue le direzioni (cioè verso nord e
verso sud). Una di queste pianure è l’India, limitata al sud dal
già nominato Oceano (Indiao) e da tutte le altre parti dalle
alte montagne le cui acque scorrono verso di essa.’

É’ una specie di ampia visione geografica dall’alto che poi si
frammenta nelle pagine seguenti in una libresca congerie di nomi
derivati da testi sanscriti e in parte non più corrispondenti alla realtà
toponimastica della sua epoca.

Passando all’orografia indiana come viene descritta da Bābar
si ha l’impressione di chi, dopo aver visto un paesaggio a volo di
uccello si abbauti per distinguervi i particolari. Si perde il quadro
di insieme ma si ha l’impressione di una accurata coscienziosità.

Bābar 485; 272b.

Gli indiani chiamano questo montagne\(^2\) Sawālak-Parbat . . .
La neve su queste montagne non diminuisce mai; si vede, bianca,

---

1 Encycl. Brit. s.v. Aravalli.
2 Le montagne settentrionali.
da parecchi distretti dell'India, come ad es. da Lahore, Sirhind e Sambal. La catena montana che a Kabul è nota col nome di Hindū-kuš prosegue da Kabul verso est nell'Indostan, con leggera inclinazione verso sud. I paesi dell'India sono a sud di essa, il Tibet a nord.\(^1\)

Più 'da vicino' è tuttavia anche quest'altra descrizione birūniana (I—258; 128-9).

Bisogna immaginare che le montagne formano i confini dell'India. Quelle che sono a nord sono il Himamant (Himalaya) nevoso. Al centro vi si estende il Kaśmīr, e son connesse con la terra dei Turchi. Questa regione montuosa diviene man mano sempre più fredda fino alla fine dell'ecume e al monte Meru . . . Le montagne fredde del nord e le montagne orientali sono in realtà la stessa catena, che si estende verso oriente e poi gira verso sud finché raggiunge il Grande Oceano dove partì di essa penetrano nel mare nel luogo noto col nome di 'diga di Rāma'.

Quest'ultimo particolare non è esatto\(^2\) non appartenendo le rocce che formano 'la diga di Rāma' allo stesso sistema orografico dell'Himalaya. Tutto sommato la visione ampia, e quindi non basata sulla sola esperienza, di al-Bīrūnī, talvolta cede alla acuta osservazione più prudente, sperimentale e alla buona di Bābar.

Per quanto riguarda l'idrografia, il fiume Indo, passaggio obbligato per tutti i viaggiatori provenienti dall'occidente occupa un posto centrale nell'idrografia indiana sia di Birūnī che di Bābar. Molto precisa è in Bābar la distinzione di tre bacini: quello dell'Indo, quello del Gange e quello degli affluenti del Gange nati dai monti Āravalli. Alla chiara descrizione birūniana del Pañcānada seguono, poi considerazioni oscuramente teoriche sul settemplice sistema fluviale che, a nord dell'Himalaya farebbe da pendant ai fiumi del Panjab.

Il preciso brano di Birūnī sulle piogge (I—211) non trova riscontro preciso in Bābar. O meglio alla documentata e chiara spiegazione teorica delle piogge in Birūnī ('quando, poi le nubi raggiungono le montagne, il fianco dei monti urta contro di esse e le nubi son compresse come olive o uva, cosicché ne fluisce la pioggia e le nubi non oltrepassano mai le montagne . . .') fanno riscontro in Bābar particolari pratici e personali: (519; 291) 'L'aria dell'India nel periodo delle piogge è molto buona. Talvolta piove dieci,

---

1 Un altro punto nel quale Birūnī è in parte anche verbatim simile a Bābar è il seguente (Bir. I—207; 102) 'Di qui si giunge al monte Kulağāk (v. Mži 168 nota) che è come una cupola, simile al monte Dūnbāwand; la neve vi è perenne e si vede dalla regione di Takešar e Lahore.' Si tratta di esperienze personali di Birūnī.

2 Il sadā Rām, come si vede a pag. I—209; 102 è fra Ceylon e il Continente e non può appartenere al sistema geologico su descritto.
quindici o venti volte al giorno; si riversano improvvisamente torrenti sulla terra e scorrono fiumi dove prima non c’era una goccia d’acqua. Mentre piove e negli intervalli fra le piogge l’aria è notevolmente buona, insuperabile per salubrità e freschezza; il difetto è che l’aria diviene troppo umida’. E, più avanti (678; 376b) leggiamo una descrizione di un temporale (ḫisān) di improvvisa violenza, quasi ad esemplificare ciò cui sopra aveva accennato in generale, che lo sorprende mentre scriveva le sue memorie sotto la tenda: ‘prima che potessi raccogliere le carte e i quaderni mi cadde addosso la tenda proprio sulla testa. La tempesta si calmò in circa due gari (48 minuti).’

In contrasto con questa violenza delle piogge, Bābar nota nell’India, ed è cosa che deve averlo particolarmente impressionato perché ci ritorna molto spesso, la mancanza di āqār sūlār, lett. acque correnti: è uno dei tanti aspetti della ‘stranezza’ dell’India cui più oltre accenneremo. Birūnī preferisce invece fornire (I 260 segg.) ampi elenchi di fiumi tratti dal Matsya-purāṇa.

**Fauna e Flora.**—Dei ventitré fogli del ms. di Hyderabad del Bābarnāma, che racchiudono una descrizione _ex professo_ dell’India, ben 13 fogli e una pagina sono dedicati alla flora e alla fauna dell’India: mammiferi, uccelli, pesci, fiori, frutti vi sono descritti con amore e con cura, e cenni ad animali, piante, giardini si trovano anche frequentemente qua e là nelle memorie babariane. Nessun accenno vi è a leggende zoologiche così facilmente reperibili nelle relazione di viaggiatori musulmani e non musulmani, ma osservazioni morfologiche, talvolta molto belle nella loro semplicità:

_Bābar 513; 287b._

Il fiore del ḡāsūn ha colore più pieno di quello del melograno ed è circa grande come una rosa rossa; però la rosa rossa, quando il bocciolo è cresciuto, s’apre semplicemente, mentre quando s’apre un bocciolo di ḡāsūn si vede uno stelo sul quale crescono altri petali, come un cuore. Sebbene ambedue siano parti di un sol fiore pure l’allungarsi e l’assottigliarsi prominente di quel cuore a forma di stelo formato dai petali aperti per primi lo fa apparire come due fiori. Non è cosa priva di stranezza (ḥāli az ḡarā‘īb īmās). I fiori, di magnifico colore, hanno un bell’aspetto sull’albero, ma non durano a lungo; basta un sol giorno per farli appassire . . .”

---

1 Talvolta da intendere più particolarmente come ‘canali d’irrigazione’.
Nulla di fantasioso e di complicato in questa che chiamerei commossa ammirazione di fronte all’oggetto, cui nulla aggiunge o toglie l’animo semplice e sincero di chi, come Bābar, sapeva scoppiare in lacrime spaccando un fragrante melone portatogli dalla sua terra natia (B. 645-6; 359).

Biruni tratta di alcuni animali dell’India specialmente nel capit. XVIII: la sua curiosità di scienziato teorico lo porta a dare il primo posto proprio a un animale mitico, lo šarava (šarabha), che . . .

*Biruni I—203; 99.*

. . . ha quattro piedi, ma anche sulla schiena ha qualcosa come altre quattro zampe dirette all’insù. Ha una piccola proboscide e due grandi corna colle quali attacca l’elefante e lo spacca in due; ha la forma di un bufalo, ma è più grande di un ganda (rinoceronte). Leggende affermano che esso talvolta colpisce con le sue corna qualche animale e se lo mette, tutto o in parte, sulla schiena cosicché esso si viene a trovare fra le sue quattro zampe superiori. Lì imputridisce, e i vermi rodono il dorso dell’animale . . .

Le stesse tendenze al leggendario si ritrovano nella descrizione dei ‘graха’ dei fiumi dell’India meridionale. Interessante è il modo come Bābar e Biruni parlano delle scimmie:

*Biruni I—209; 102.*

. . . Kihkind, che sono le montagne delle scimmie. Ogni giorno il loro re esce con la sua gente, ed hanno particolari luoghi da sedere a banchetto (mağālis) preparati per loro. La gente di quelle regioni prepara loro riso cotto che portano su delle foglie. Dopo mangiato le scimmie tornano nella boscaglia, ma se esse fossero trascurate, questo sarebbe la rovina del paese perché sono numerosissime ed anche selvagge e aggressive. Si crede che esse siano state una razza di uomini cambiati in scimmie per l’aiuto che diedero a Rāma quando combatteva contro i demoni . . .

*Bābar 492; 276b-277.*

Ci sono inoltre le scimmie (maymūn). Gli Indiani le chiamano bandar. Anche di queste ce ne sono varie specie, una sola delle quali è quella che viene portata anche nei nostri paesi. I saltimbanchi (lūlī) insegnano loro dei giochi (əyūn). Questa specie di scimmie si trova nei monti di Nūr-dara, nelle colline del Safid Kūh presso Khayber e di qui in giù per tutto l’Industan. Non se ne trovano più in su. Hanno il pelo giallo, il muso bianco e la coda non molto lunga. Un’altra specie, che non si trova a Bağaur, Savād e nei nostri paesi, é
molti più grandi di quelle che portano da noi: hanno la coda molto lunga, il pelo bianchissimo, il muso completamente nero. Si trovano sulle montagne e nelle giungle dell'Indostan. Se ne distingue anche un'altra specie, tutta nera, sia nel muso, che nel pelo e nelle membra.

Se si leggono, oltre questi, altri brani sullo stesso animale di Ibn Battūța e delle 'Ağâ’ib al-Hind si noterà che Birūnî è, come tono, più vicino forse ai due ultimi che a Bābar, il quale, nel suo rispetto per la realtà, riesce a superare la invincibile sensazione di 'curiosità' di questo animale così simile all'uomo, per dedicarsi invece a una coscienziosamente seppur non perfetta distinzione fra le varie sue specie. La sua descrizione è nettamente superiore, dal nostro punto di vista scientifico, a tutte le altre citate.

Questo maggiore senso realistico della natura fisica nelle sue forme più immediate, è sensibile anche in tanti piccoli episodi narrati nel Bābarnāma.1 Le osservazioni piuttosto pessimistiche sull'India che Bābar fa verso la fine della sua descrizione del paese sono in fondo smentite da tanti fatti che ci dicono che Bābar in India ci si trovava benissimo, almeno per quanto riguarda la natura fisica. Si pensi ai pesci volanti che vivacemente son colti dalla fotografica narrazione bābariana mentre saltano nelle barche (663; 367b), alla giovanile gioia dell'attraversare a nuoto il Gange (655; 365b), alla sua attenzione, mai sopita anche durante le lunghe spedizioni belligere, per i fiori, alla sua escursione verso Arrah al solo scopo 'di visitare le piante di loto (nilūfar-zār)' (666; 369b), le masse d'alberi trasportate dal fiume Son (666), le numerose descrizioni di giardini (610, 680 . . . ) di cascate (614) ecc. Questa natura indiana tuttavia, come è vista e descritta da Bābar, non fa affatto quell'impressione di oscuro e di misterioso che altri viaggiatori come ad es. Ibn Baṭṭūṭa o anche esploratori occidentali particolarmente accentuano. Bābar la descrive con lo stesso sguardo comprensivo e assimilatore col quale parallellamente, su un altro piano, Birūnî sa guardare—notandone con cura le affinità—le Weltanschauungen di una cultura diversa dalla sua. E' il potere di assimilazione, tipico dell'Islam, che si riflette in modi così diversi anche in questo campo.

La cultura.

La comprensione che Bābar ha per la natura fisica indiana, non è invece accompagnata da una eguale comprensione per la natura spirituale: l'atteggiamento che ha Bābar verso, i fiori, i meloni, gli uccelli dell'India, lo vediamo, mutatis mutandis, in Birūnī per la filosofia, l'astronomia, la religione indiana.

1 Sarebbe molto interessante confrontare il senso della natura in vari scrittori musulmani. Il Bābarnāma potrebbe fornire buon materiale per uno studio di tal genere: bellissima nella sua semplice fotograficità la descrizione dello stagno di Āb-i istāda presso Ghazna (Bāb. 239-40; 153).
Sull'argomento cultura Bābar—e questo è solo in parte giustificabile colla considerazione che egli venne come guerriero e conquistatore e per di più in un'epoca di maggiore islamizzazione dell'ambiente—ha solo qualche cenno.

E' interessante paragonare, per cominciare dal lato più esteriore, qualche osservazione dei due scrittori su argomenti linguisticici.

Bīrūnī ci comunica interessanti osservazioni sulla evoluzione linguistica:

**Bīrūnī I—299; 149.**

Tuttavia ciò che è più strano è che talvolta la stessa lingua cambia nella bocca della stessa gente che la parla, col che nascono strane forme di parole comprensibili solo a chi non tien conto delle regole grammaticali (al-ṣādiqah). . . . In tutto ciò gli indù sono spinti dal desiderio di avere quanti più nomi (asāmi) è possibile . . .

Altri concetti similmente alquanto esteriori si trovano all'inizio dell'opera birūniana (Bīrūnī era giustamente colpito—cfr. pag. I—18; 9-dalla enorme abbondanza del lessico sanscritico). Qua e là si trova qualche osservazione su fenomeni fonetici dei vernacoli indiani come la frequenza degli scambi fra ⟨kh⟩, ⟨h⟩, e ⟨ś⟩, sulla presenza di certi suoni 'impronunciabili' e indistinguibili per l'orecchio non indiano (le cerebrali).1

Bābar invece si limita appunto solo a citare qualche singola particolarità fonetica del vernacolo del suo tempo e dei luoghi da lui visitati (interessante l'osservazione che dimostra che già alla sua epoca era diffusa la tendenza a pronunciare molto breve la seconda ⟨a⟩ di parole tipo ⟨ḥābar⟩ pag. 380; 223b) e solo in un punto si lascia attrarre a teorizzare, d'altronde molto semplicemente, per fare una etimologia (491; 276b) e in termini molto prudenti:

‘In industani lo2 chiamano kalahara il che nell'origine può esser stato ⟨ikan-dur⟩ kālā haran cioè daino nero ⟨gara giyik⟩, poi alleggerito ⟨taḥṣīf⟩ in kalahara.’

Una qualità generica del mondo indiano che Bābar nota piuttosto nel campo pratico mentre Bīrūnī la scorge specialmente in quello dello spirito, ma che ha colpito ugualmente ambedue gli scrittori è l'asimmetria e il disordine dell'India. Vi accennano più di una volta ambedue: poiché si tratta a mio parere di punti di grande interesse cito i singoli passi:


2 L' 'Antelope Cervicapra'.
Bīrūnī I—89: 43.
... gli stessi indù non lo poliscono (la yuḥaṣḥaḥibū-nahu ...) gli indù raramente conservano l’ordine e son molto arbitrari nelle loro enumerazioni.

id. 361; 182 tutto ciò che è privo d’ordine (‘adīm al-nīzām) ... è ripulsivo per la nostra natura e sgradevole al nostro orecchio. Ma questa gente menziona un enorme numero di nomi ... inventando colossali numeri ... 

id. 25; 12 Gli indù non hanno uomini di questo stampo (cioè come Socrate); ... anche i teoremi scientifici degli indù sono in uno stato di estrema confusione (idṭīrāb) e in cattivo ordine (sau’ al-nīzām) e in fondo sempre mescolati con le fiabe del volgo, come enormi numeri, colossali spazi di tempo, ecc.

Bābar 487; 274: Le città e le regioni dell’Indostan sono molto poco graziose (bī-ṣāfā).

id. 518; 290b nel loro artigianato e nei loro lavori non c’è né forma né simmetria, né metodo né qualità (siyāq, andām, ecc. ... ).

id. 532; 300 Così (dopo le mie costruzioni) in quest’India sporca e asimmetrica (bī-ṣāfā wa bī-siyāq) si videro giardini ordinati e simmetrici, con gradevoli aiuole in ogni angolo e in ogni aiuola rose e narcisi perfettamente ordinati (mukammal, murattāb).

id. 608; 340b Essi (i palazzi del rāgā di Gwalior) sono magnifici edifici, ma tuttavia fatti di blocchi pesanti e asimmetrici (bī-siyāq).

id. 611; 341b portici che sono bassi (past) e informi (bī-andām) e, secondo l’uso indiano, di cattivo gusto (bī-maza).

Le testimonianze dei due scrittori su questo argomento si completano nel modo più perfetto: Bīrūnī ha sentito ed espresso il suo disagio di fronte alla smisuratezza dell’India spirituale, Bābar di fronte al disordine dell’India materiale. Ambedue, come vedremo e abbiamo in parte già visto, salvano però qualcosa dell’India, quel qualcosa che, è a loro parere comune sia a l’India che al loro mondo, e che per Bābar sarà la natura, per Bīrūnī quella teologia naturale comune a tutte le civiltà e che non è che la fiṭra islamica.

Bābar, oltre a far notare la dissimmetria, batte anche più di una volta sulla sporcizia (487: 274), nota il modo sporco di irrigazione usato dagli indiani e accentua, ripetendolo due volte, la sporcizia del sistema di illuminazione notturno mediante quelli che egli chiama dīwatī, i dawādāw di Ibn Baṭṭūta.\(^2\) Bīrūnī chiama

---

1 L’argomento del capitolo cioè ‘Agnās al-Ḥalāʾiʿ wa asmāʾuhum’ Le varie classi degli esseri creati e il loro nome.
2 Mālik, op. cit., 226. Ibn Baṭṭūta accenna appena a questo strano costume, forse troppo poco ‘curioso’ per lui, mentre Bābar, sempre attento a ciò che interessa la vita reale più che la fantasia, ne fa una precisa e visiva descrizione.
piuttosto strani che sporchi alcuni curiosi costumi indiani (I—179 segg.; 88).

Tali critiche a una essenziale ‘informità’ dell’India, che testi-
moniano della ellenica mesótēs penetrata nella cultura islamica,
si ampliano anche alla contemplazione più generica della radicale
diversità generale fra mondo indiano e mondo islamico.

Bīrūnī afferma addirittura (I—179; 89).

Si potrebbe quasi pensare che abbiano capovolto i nostri
usi a bella posta, perché i nostri costumi non solo non
somigliano ai loro ma sono esattamente l’opposto . . .

Segue un elenco delle stranezze degli indiani per lo più riguar-
danti usi e costumi, norme religiose o civili. Ecco invece come Bābār
parla della diversità dell’India:

Bābār 484; 272.

Paragonato ai nostri paesi è un mondo differente (ūzkā
‘ālami-dūr); le sue montagne, fiumi, giungle e deserti, le sue
città, i suoi campi coltivati, gli animali e le piante, la gente e
le loro lingue, le piogge e i venti, tutto è differente . . . Una
volta passato il fiume Sind ogni cosa è al modo indiano . . .

E Bābār accenna ancora a questo in una quartina da lui
improvvisata.1

E’ interessante notare come anche qui Bābār in ambedue i luoghi
pone l’accento non tanto sulle diversità culturali ma su quelle fisiche,
e senza poi esagerare troppo la cosa, mentre quel tipico intellettuale
che fu Bīrūnī si dedica a fare un lungo ‘elenco’ di stranezze, traendone
poi conseguenze teoriche più o meno giuste come quella sulla innata
perversione della natura indù (amţālu dhalika li-mā fi’l ‘azīza min
în’ikās al-ṭabī’ā).

Per quanto riguarda la religione e i costumi, la cultura nella
sua accezione più ampia, Bābār se la sbriga, come accennammo,
molto presto: tale aspetto dell’India lo ha colpito soltanto per
qualche estrinsecazione pratica, esteriore o curiosa. E’ solo da questo
lato quindi che può porsi una comparazione diretta con Bīrūnī.

La maggiore ampiezza è data, in questo campo, a quell’aspetto
così pratico, esteriore e normativo della cultura che è il sistema
di pesi e misure. Dato lo scopo di queste pagine, non è il luogo
di fare uno studio di metrologia comparata, bensì solo ci in-
teresseremo del come i due autori presentano l’argomento. Sia
Bīrūnī (I—334 segg.; 169 segg.; I—160 segg., 76; I—361; 182) che
Bābār (516; 289 segg.) dividono il nychtemeron di 24 ore in 60
ghaṛī (scritto كهري in Bīr., كرى in Bābār). Ma mentre Bīrūnī divide

1 Bab. 526; 296.
il gharī in 60 ḡašak (cašaka), Bābar chiama lo stesso periodo di tempo ḫal, e aggiunge: 'Dicono che la lunghezza di un ḫal è uguale al chiudere e aprire le palpebre per sessanta volte, il che in un nycthemeron farebbe 216.000 batter d'occhi. L'esperimento (tağruba) mostra che un ḫal è eguale a otto ripetizioni di 'Qul huwa 'llāhu aḥad' e 'Bismillāh' il che fa 28.000 ripetizioni della detta formula in un nycthemeron.'

Bīrūnī tuttavia nota: 'Al-Fazārī usa nel suo manuale astronomico (ziğ) la parola ḫal per minuti del giorno (duqā'īq al-ayyām). Non ho trovato mai quest'uso della parola nella letteratura indù, ma essi la usano a indicare una correzione (ta'dil').

Dopo aver accennato alla divisione nycthemeron-ghari-Ḫal, Bābar nota la divisione della notte e del giorno ripetitivamente in 4 pahar corrispondente al persiano pās, e si dilunga in una precisa descrizione del servizio orario dei ghariali (quelli che suonano il gharīl o gong) con l'aiuto di clessidre, e delle disposizioni da lui date per perfezionare il sistema.

Per Bīrūnī: 'Gli indù hanno oggi anche una divisione popolare (qisma ‘āmmiyya) del nycthemeron in otto pahar o turni di guardia. In alcuni paesi hanno clessidre regolate secondo il gharī colle quali si determinano i tempi degli otto turni di guardia. Quando un turno, che dura sette gharī e mezzo, è passato, battono il tamburo o suonano una conca che chiamano sānk (sānkhha) e in persiano sāpēd-muhra. Io ho visto questo nella città di Purshūr (prob. Peshavar). Questa osservazione personale è annegata in una grande congerie di citazioni libresche molto svariate discutere con grande accuratezza. Bābar accompagna le sue indicazioni con una ammirativa osservazione 'Gli abitanti dell'India hanno anche ben ordinate misure (wazn)'. Egli è anche stato colpito dall'eccellente modo di contare (ḫub ta'yi'n qilīb ... ) i famosi 'enormi numeri' dell'India, che hanno stupito orientali e occidentali e aggiunge 'La fissazione di numeri così alti è prova della grande quantità di ricchezza che c'è in Indostan'. Interessante è vedere invece quale ragione dà Bīrūnī del fenomeno dei grandi numeri:

'Quando essi arrivano a un capitolo come questo (sulle grandi misure di tempo) ripetono gli stessi nomi per molti esseri, misurano loro la vita e creano grandi numeri (tawwala 'l-a'dād). Questo è quello cui mirano: nessuno gli lo può impedire e i numeri se ne stanno dove si mettono ... ma devono nel

---

1 Invece il termine ḫal per vighatića, cioè nel senso di Bābar, è documentato in sanscrito v. Böthlingk s.v. ḫal. Daga'iq al-ayyām sono invece per Bīr. i gharī.
2 Sui numeri enormi v. ZDMG 15, pag. 132 segg.
3 Del resto nel Mahābhārata, II 2143-44, Yudhishtira si serve appunto di tali enormi ordini di numeri per contar le sue ricchezze, il che sembra confermare indirettamente la ragione portata da Bābar.
complesso esser considerati come un mezzo filosofico di introdurre un valore astratto di tempo, piuttosto che come veri e propri valori matematici . . .

La spiegazione è molto acuta e sostanzialmente giusta: qui anzi Birûni dimostra di aver capito quel simbolismo di certe manifestazioni del pensiero panteistico indiano che egli altrove da buon teista mostra di non comprendere affatto (sì veda proprio a questo stesso proposito ciò che dice alla fine del cap. XXXIX).

È inutile dire che sia gli ordini di numeri che le misure di capacità e di peso corrispondono solo parzialmente in Birûni e Bâbar.\footnote{1 Del resto tali misure sono variabili anche nei testi indiani stessi. Per quanto ignarda gli ordini di numeri l'\textit{arb} di Bâbar corrisponde al \textit{padma} di Birûni, il \textit{nil} al \textit{sanku} birûniano, il \textit{padam} invece al \textit{madhya} ecc.}

Ciò che più interessante si può ricavare da questo capitolo è l'accuratezza e l'interesse che ambedue gli autori mostrano per queste questioni metrologiche, che a noi possono sembrare quasi inutili. È un concreto particolare di quell'interesse per le questioni normative, per le divisioni e suddivisioni esteriori, così frequente nella cultura islamica, da questo lato più ordinata sì, e meno farraginosa della indù, ma forse meno 'profonda'.

Religione e Filosofia sono la base e il centro dell'opera sull'India di al-Birûnî, mentre non se ne hanno che scarsissimi cenni in Bâbar. Essi si possono ridurre ai seguenti:

\textit{Bâbar} 518; 290-290b.

La maggior parte degli abitanti dell'Industân sono pagani: un pagano (\textit{kâfir}) lo chiamano \textit{hindū}. La maggior parte degli indù credono alla trasmigrazione delle anime. Tutti gli artigiani, i salariati e i funzionari sono indù. Nei nostri paesi gli abitanti nomadi hanno dei nomi tribali (\textit{qabila āllāri}); qui invece sono i sedentari che abitano campi e villaggi che hanno nomi tribali (nomi di casta). Inoltre ogni artigiano segue la professione che gli è stata tramandata dai suoi antenati di generazione.

id. 520; 291b.

Un'altra buona cosa dell'India è che ci sono innumerevoli artigiani di ogni specie. C'è una casta fissa (\textit{ťam'i}) per ogni specie di lavoro e per ogni cosa . . . . casta che ha fatto quel lavoro o quella cosa di padre in figlio fino ad oggi.'

Metempsicosi e caste: ecco i due punti della religione indiana che hanno principalmente colpito Bâbar. Appare tuttavia chiaro che egli è ben lungi dal riconoscere il carattere religioso delle caste. Molto più empiricamente (e, chissà, anche più correttamente?) le basa unicamente su rapporti di lavoro.
E' tutta l'opera di al-Birūnī che può fare da *pendant* a questi pochi cenni di Bābar sulla religione indù; pressoché inutile è quindi trascegliere citazioni. Tuttavia è interessante notare che anche Birūnī scrive:

*Birūnī* I—50; 24.

Così come la professione di fede nell'unità di Dio è il segno distintivo della fede dei musulmani e la trinità quello dei cristiani e il sabato quello degli ebrei, così la trasmigrazione (*tanāsuḥ*) è la bandiera della religione indù.¹

La metempsicosi, che è come dire il panteismo in forma palpabile, è per queste due personalità musulmane dunque l'*essenza* della religione indiana: anche il superficiale Bābar ha saputo superare la elementare considerazione degli indiani come semplici politeisti e vedere anche lo strato più vivo (la metempsicosi panteistica) che è alla base di questo politeismo.

Birūnī approfondisce molto di più la questione e vede al disotto del concetto pagano del politeismo indù la credenza *in un solo Dio*. Questa sensazione di un contatto fra le due religioni è stata provata più di una volta nel mondo islamico; si pensi ad Akbar, a Dārā Šikūh, l'autore della 'Confluenza dei due mari' (*Mağma* *al-Bahrayn*). Comune a tutti questi tentativi di avvicinamento è a mio parere una interessante imprecisione da parte musulmana del punto di distinzione: cioè che il Dio unico indù, apparentemente munito di molti degli attributi del Dio islamico (v. Bir I—27 segg. 13 segg.) è in fondo un dio impersonale, di fronte al Dio islamico che è lo stesso Dio semitico di Abramo, di Isacco e di Giacobbe e che è soprattutto personale.²

A questa possibilità di avvicinamento delle due concezioni, cui mai certamente sarebbe giunto Maometto o un antico israelita, possono—seppur parzialmente—giungere al-Birūnī e i suoi successori

---

¹ Malgrado l'apparente eterogeneità di questi *shibboleth* delle varie religioni non si può non ammirare l'acutezza di al-Birūnī. Tradotte in termini moderni queste sue 'esenza' delle grandi religioni si chiamerebbero: concetto di Dio vivo e incarnabile nel Cristianesimo, 'legalismo' giudaico, panteismo indù.

specialmente e essenzialmente perché l’originario concetto semitico puramente extra-filosofico del Dio personale e volitivo si è man mano contaminato (come in tutte le grandi religioni monoteistiche rivelate: si pensi all’aristotelismo cristiano) con i concetti del Dio unico impersonale e filosofico della speculazione greca, più simile in fondo a quella indiana.¹

Non è pertanto un paradosso se diciamo che molto più sanamente e profondamente islamica (cioè semiticamente anti-panteistica) ci sembra la posizione di Bābar, certo non troppo nutrito delle speculazioni dei *falāṣīfa*, verso l’induismo, il quale su questa base e in questo senso è completamente incompilabile con l’islam e che perciò egli, uomo del suo tempo, trascura o anche tratta con disprezzo. Con quella semplicità islamica che è qualcosa di più e di meno dell’‘intolleranza’² Bābar dice ad es. a proposito del rāgā di Gwalior: ‘Nella sconfitta di Sultān Ḫirāḥīm il rāgā di Gwalior Bikramāght l’indū se n’andò all’inferno’ (477: 268, 268b).

Con questo non si vuol certo dire che Birūnī sia stato un simpaticante indū: tutt’altro. Anzi egli mostra più di una volta la sua irritazione di dottto per le ‘favole popolari’, le ḥurāfāt degli indū ‘quando essi abbandonano il sentiero della speculazione filosofica e si volgono a favole tradizionali’. Con analisi spesso acuta, mostra (I—32, 15) l’origine psicologica di tali ḥurāfāt come ad es. quella che Dio è lungo 12 dita e largo 10, ma mostra altrove una incomprensione che non so meglio se chiamare semitica o razionalisticamente greca per quel realistico e pesante simbolismo, anche per noi indubbiamente così farraginoso, dell’induismo. Si veda per esempio il capitolo sulle istituzioni, dove considera i Ṣi as ‘profeti’, e alla fine del quale inorridisce per la malvagità (qābāha) delle usanze indiane di fronte alla bellezza della verità (*husn al-ḥaqq*) dell’Islam. (I 110; 53).

Sulle origini dell’idolatria B. ha, come molti autori musulmani, dei concetti sempicasticamente everemistici (I—111, 53-4); anche qui gli riesce difficile comprendere il valore che non solo il popolino, come egli sostiene (I—112 segg.) ma anche in fondo, seppur un po’ diversamente, i dotti indū danno al simbolismo idolatrico.³ Altro esempio di intelletualismo, che crede di aver facilmente trionfato sull’avversario, il lettore lo può trovare a pag. I—117, 56

¹ Per far comprendere meglio ai suoi lettori i concetti indiani Birūnī ricorre spesso come è noto a paragoni col sūfismo. Quanto però le concezioni del mistico musulmano siano sostanzialmente dissimili, malgrado certe apparenze, dalla speculazione indiana, è stato brillantemente dimostrato dal MORENO nel suo recente studio ‘Mistica musulmana e mistica indiana’. Annali Lateranensi X, 1946.
² La nota della Beveridge a questo passo mi sembra completamente inutile. L’intolleranza è sempre in certo modo frutto di convinzione....!
³ Ai nostri tempi perfino il Mahātma Gandhi, nel suo credo pubblico del 6 ottobre del 1921, accettava dell’induismo anche il culto degli idoli. Cfr. R. ROLLAND, Mahātma Gandhi, Paris, 1924 pag.35.
ad es. (a proposito della possibile durata del legno). Talvolta Birūnī sa essere anche garbatamente ironico verso la mentalità indù! (I—291; 145).

Gli indù non possono mai parlare di nessuna cosa intelligenziale o immaginarla senza darle un corpo sensibile. Poi si affrettano a farla sposare, a portare la sposa dallo sposo, a far capire che la sposa poi concepisca e partorisca!

Con questo interrompo le citazioni su questo argomento; un attento lettore può trovare facilmente nell'opera birūniana da una parte tracce di intellettualismo razionalista greco, dall'altra tridimensionale anti-panteismo semitico: due posizioni mentali che, fuse più o meno bene insieme, velano talvolta la sua mente in diversi modi e per diverse vie, alla comprensione totale del vivace e policromo e turbinoso politeismo panteista indù.

Sulle caste, per passare al secondo argomento di cui tratta anche Bābar, Birūnī è, in fondo, d'accordo con Bābar nel riportarne l'origine, diversamente da quanto farebbe un ortodosso indù, a cause sociali ed economiche.

L'inizio del cap. IX di Birūnī, cui il Sachau ha voluto dare l'analisi critical ed equivoco sottotitolo di 'Throne and altar', è una dimostrazione degna di un Machiavelli della grande utilità pratica per i sovrani dello sfruttamento della religione a scopi politici. È' interessante che Birūnī da prima sembra quasi ammirato di fronte a quest'opera di ... 'classificazione' religiosa-politica degli antichi re che 'preoccupati dei doveri del loro ufficio (ma'niyūn bi-śīna' atihim) si davano la massima cura per dividere i loro sudditi in differenti classi (tabaqāt) e ordini che preservavano da miscele e disordine ...', mentre poco sotto dedica una riga o due a dire che 'però per l'Islam tutti gli uomini sono uguali, anzi che questa concezione è il più grande ostacolo a una comprensione fra indù e musulmani.'

Nel complesso la lunga introduzione al capitolo sulle caste non può non lasciare l'impressione di una certa nostalgia dell'iranico al-Birūnī per gli antichi sovrani 'classificatori'.

Parallela a questa, ma su un altro piano, è l'ammirazione di Bābar per le caste artigiane: la presenza di innumerevoli artigiani divisi in ordinate tabaqāt è per lui uno dei 'vantaggi dell'India'.

Un meno importante aspetto della vita etnico-culturale indiana di cui si trova cenno in ambedue gli autori è quello dei giocolieri, incantatori ecc. Bābar, come è suo solito, narra sue esperienze personali con i lūlī, elencandone le prodezze, di alcune delle quali sono

---

1 In questa divisione dei difetti da un lato e dei pregi da un altro è da notare che Bābar nella sezione destinata ai difetti parla piuttosto di caratteristiche degli abitanti e dei costumi, mentre la parte dei pregi è in buona parte occupata da pregi 'naturali', clima ecc. dell'India.
incapaci quelli del suo paese, prodezzé specialmente di tipo acrobatico (633; 353, 353b). Birüni è invece piuttosto colpito (I—194-5; 95-96) da incanti e talismani contro il veleno dei serpenti, da fenomeni di ipnotismo su uomini e su animali, cercando di darne almeno in parte spiegazione. Concludendo afferma sensatamente:

_Birüni_ I—193; 95.

Per quanto riguarda scongiuri e stregonerie (al-'azā'im wa 'l-ruqā) gli Indú ci credono sinceramente e la massa è molto incline a queste cose . . . Talvolta gli indú sono considerati dei maghi perché giocano con palle su dei legni piantati in terra o su corde, ma in queste cose tutte le nazioni sono uguali.

Questo prova ancora una volta l'interesse precipuo per la teoria in Birüni, per i fatti in Bâbar.¹

Per quanto riguarda l'arte indú essa è sia agli occhi di Bâbar che di Birüni iniziata da quella 'asimmetria' che già vedemmo. Ma ambedue, con gran senso di praticità, lodano le realizzazioni concrete dell'artigianato indú. La costruzione di speciali pozzi (wā'īn) e laghi artificiali sacri pare abbia colpito ambedue (Bîr. II. 144, 224; Bâbar 532-33; 300, 301) ed anche Ibn Baṭṭūta.² La descrizione di Bâbar è forse più esatta di quella di al-Birüni, il quale scivola immediatamente a parlare delle località sacre varie in cui i laghi artificiali più noti si trovano.

Quanto ai palazzi, ai templi e alle statue, Birüni si occupa della descrizione di alcuni idoli nel cap. XI per passare subito alle leggende che li riguardano. Molto interessante la spregiudicata praticità di Birüni a proposita degli idoli:

_Birüni_ I—116; 56.

Quando Muḥammad b al-Qāsim b al-Munabbîh conquistò Multan . . . pensò meglio lasciare l'idolo dove stava, ma gli appese per sfregio un pezzo di carne di vacca al collo . . . . . .

il tutto perché portava molto denaro in città l'afflusso dei pellegrini indú.

I Càrmati invece, deplora al Birüni, 'fecero a pezzi l'idolo e ne uccisero i sacerdoti'. E' evidente la sua preferenza per il primo modo di trattar l'idolo, preferenza che spicca ancor meglio in un altro passo (I—124; 60) dello stesso capitolo dove Birüni porta, a conferma della sua ipotesi che gli idoli non siano che monumenti eretti a _tadkhîr_ e _tasliya_ (ricordo e consolazione) dei morti, il contegno di Muʿawiya che vendeva gli 'idoli' (probabilmente immagini sacre)

¹ Curioso che per Birüni gli yogī sono dei filosofi, par Ibn Baṭṭūta dei maghi (Māzik, 268 segg.), per Bâbar probabilmente non sono che dei _lûlî_, dei prestigiditatori.

² Ibn Baṭṭūta descrive accuratamente un bâ'īn (Māzik 255–57) che egli ben conosceva per essersi rifugiato in un momento di grave pericolo.
presi come bottino nella conquista della Sicilia, ai principi pagani del Sind senza scrupolo alcuno, perché, afferma approvando Biruni, considerava la cosa dal punto di vista politico, non religioso (fi ḥukm al-ayāla lā al-diyāna)!

Si confronti quanto, invece, Bābar, anch’egli pratico, ma da un altro punto di vista, dice degli idoli di Urwāh: ‘Urwāh non è un brutto posto . . . ma ha il difetto che vi sono gli idoli. Io da parte mia ordinai di distruggerli’ (612; 342b) Ciò tuttavia non gli impedisce di descrivere edifici profani come i palazzi del rāgha di Gwalior (608, 340b segg.) templi indù (613, 343) e di affermare dei primi che sono ‘magnifici edifici’ (garīb ‘imārāllar).

Senso pratico dunque da ambe le parti, ma nel primo caso (Biruni) giustificato da ragionamenti e appoggiato da fatti non personalmente vissuti ma rivissuti semmai internamente, nel secondo appoggiato per così dire all’oggetto. Per parlare in termini di psicologia junghiana ci sarebbero, credo, sufficienti elementi per affermare essere Biruni un tipo introvertito, Bābar un estrovertito.

Riassumendo credo si possa e si debba rispondere a queste domande che possono interessare la storia della cultura: Hanno colto Biruni e Bābar qualcosa come essenziale nel ‘fenomeno India’? Hanno queste due personalità musulmane compreso esattamente la differenza fra i due mondi? È servita l’esperienza India ad arricchire la loro personalità culturale e per mezzo loro la cultura islamica? Hanno Biruni e Bābar detto qualcosa all’India, hanno significato qualcosa per l’India?

Alla prima domanda rispondiamo nettamente di sì. Sia Biruni che Bābar hanno, mi sembra, sentito come essenziale nell’India una indifferenziata e disarmonica unitarietà, vi hanno sentito, mi si perdoni la strana espressione, il senso del farraginoso. Ne abbiamo portato varie prove nelle pagine che precedono e il loro numero potrebbe forse aumentarsi. Chiunque, come i musulmani, sia imbevuto di una cultura religiosa profondamente teistica, una cultura che concepisce Iddio come persona onnipotente nettamente distinta dal mondo della natura che è sua schiava e creata da lui che su di essa opera per libero e arbitrario atto della sua volontà, per chi è nato in questa atmosfera culturale il fenomeno India non può non fare a prima vista una impressione sia pur vaga di confusione. Particolarmente interessanti sono a questo proposito le considerazioni di Biruni su tutto quanto è per lui il lato ‘popolare’, ‘āmmi, della cultura indù, che egli molto diligentemente contrappone a quello dei veri dotti, più vicino secondo lui al suo. Ora, come già sommariamente accennammo, questa netta distinzione che attraversa tutta la sua opera sull’India è basata su una incomprensione per il simbolismo quale può essere concepito consciamente o inconsciamente da dei panteisti. Se si pensa che certe, per Biruni, ‘superstizioni popolari’ come l’estrema veneratione per la vacca ad es., furono
nei nostri giorni apertamente professate da indiani di altissima cultura e d’animo nobilissimo quali il Mahâtmâ Gandhi\(^1\) si comprenderà che la distinzione birûniana fra fede popolare e teoria dotta in India è, almeno in parte, non esatta e troppo semplicistica e deriva, oltre che da quanto abbiamo già detto, da una più o meno confessata tendenza a ‘conciliare’ sul piano più elevato le teorie dei dotti indù col modo di vedere della filosofia birûniana.

In Bâbar la stessa ‘confusione’ è sentita, come è da aspettarsi da un estrovertito, sotto l’aspetto più esteriore di dissimmetria e sporczia. Anche di questo abbiamo portato sopra una sufficiente documentazione. Qui aggiungiamo che Bâbar, proprio perché riflette meno teoricamente e si lascia andare di più alle sue sensazioni di amante della natura, riesce forse a sentire la natura esteriore dell’India per lo meno tanto intensamente quanto Birûnî quella spirituale, se non di più. Gli yogi non sono qui che semplici lûlâ ma Bâbar con più fanciullesca semplicità e involontaria cordialità si diverte a vederne le bravure. ‘L’India è una ‘paese di poco fascino’... ma come è bello, ci dice implicitamente\(^2\) tutto il Bâbar-nâma, attraversare a nuoto il Gange, correre attraverso le fitte foreste, visitare spumeggianti cascate, laghi, giardini!

Un’altro aspetto di questo effetto fondamentale che l’India fa sulle nostre due personalità musulmane è quello dell’‘illogicità’ dell’India. Abbiamo già citato il passo in cui Birûnî sembra attribuire a una innata ‘perversità’ (nel senso etimologico della parola) della mente Indiana, certe strane usanze. ‘Gli indù, afferma altrove Birûnî (I=89, 43) sono gente che raramente mantengono lo stesso ordine nelle cose e nelle loro enumerazioni c’è molto di arbitrario’ e (I=263; 132) esalta la chiarezza e la logica semplicità del Corano a proposito della forma del cielo e della terra, di fronte alle fantasie indiane (monte Meru ecc.).

Più che di logicità si tratta piuttosto, nel pensatore musulmano, di un sano empirismo. La spiegazione che egli dà della miscela fra la dottrina dei dotti e le credenze superstiziose del volgo (I=265, 132) è un tipico esempio di tale lineare buon senso empirico che non sempre d’altronde coglie nel segno. Nella fattispecie si tratterebbe di una forma di do ut des: il popolo ha grande venerazione per i dotti astronomi e dichiara che tutti andranno in paradiso e nessuno all’inferno; in cambio di questa per loro molto utile venerazione i dotti non solo sopportano ma accettano anche nei loro libri le favole popolari, per non compromettersi. Questa spiegazione, che forse

\(^1\) Si vedano le sue entusiastiche e, per degli occidentali, quasi incomprensibili affermazioni sulla importanza del culto per la vacca in Young India articoli del 16 marzo, 8 giugno, 4 agosto 1920, 6 ottobre 1921.

\(^2\) Il senso pratico di Bâbar è implicitamente visibile ad es. nei suoi consigli ad Humâyûn nella lettera scrittagli il Rabî’ I 935 (Nov. 1528), come quello di scrivere senza elaborazione (bî-takalîf) e con grande semplicità.
può anche a prima vista colpire per la sua acutezza, è in realtà semplicistica e illuministica, e di uno che non ha compreso a fondo il valore positivo delle 'favole popolari'. Molti altri esempi si potrebbero portare di questa tipica logicità di tipo 'scolastico', di cui Birûnî come ogni musulmano colto dell'epoca è imbevuto; essa è un tratto che lo unisce in fondo a Bâbar, il cui profondo buon senso empirico traspare da tutta la sua opera. La differenza è evidentemente solo nel campo sul quale tale logica che mi piace chiamare esteriore, ed è in fondo la logica aristotelica semiticizzata, si esercita.

Alla seconda domanda risponderei un sì con riserva. E' chiaro che le differenze fra mondo indiano e mondo islamico sono state sentite fortemente da ambedue gli autori, ma non a mio parere nel punto essenziale. La differenza essenziale tra mondo spirituale islamico e mondo spirituale indiano sta, più ancora che nella abusata e troppo ripetuta distinzione fra immanenza della divinità in India e sua trascendenza nell'Islam, nella concezione, ripetiamolo, di un Dio personale nel mondo indiano e di un Dio impersonale in quello indù. Parallelamente si può aggiungere che la religiosità indiana è religione di conoscenza, gnosi, jñâna, la islamica d'azione, pratica. L'induismo purificato da ogni scoria di superstizioni, porta, in fondo, a una filosofia, mentre nell'islamismo anche purgato di ogni sovrastruuttura, resta sempre un residuo profondamente religioso-emozionale: il rapporto dinamico fra uomo e Allah da persona a persona. Ora Birûnî, sfruttando quella concezione filosofica del divino che l'influsso del pensiero ellenico ha fatto penetrare anche nell'islamismo (come del resto nel cristianesimo) cerca talvolta come ho detto di avvicinare i due concetti di divinità, musulmana e indù 'dotta'. E' anzi interessante, e ben noto, che egli, quando vuol fare tali paragoni e impostare tali somiglianze, usa specialmente detti e concezioni dei sūfî cioè di quella variopinta corrente di pensiero islamico che può essere stata influenzata da molte fonti ma come pare più probabilmente dal neoplatonismo, originario o cristianizzato, oppure vi paragona concezioni greche addirittura

1 Tutto il modernismo musulmano è imbevuto in fondo di tendenze razionaliste, mentre ad es. stà proprio nell'irrazionalismo (fideismo ecc.) una delle tentazioni più vive del modernismo cristiano. Anche il Sayyid Hasan Bârî nel suo studio su al-Birûnî, già citato, mette in evidenza a pag. 222 che maqâbâr-i ilâhî 'aqîl-kâ muhâlîf nahn ho-saktâ (la religione divina non può esser contraria alla ragione).

2 Uno studio accurato delle varie correnti del pensiero indiano mostra come panteismo e immanenza, talvolta troppo genericamente presi come shibboleth della mentalità indù sono da intendersi molto cum grano salis. V. anche Lacomba: L' absoluto selon le Vedanta, Paris, 1932, pag. 66 e passim.

3 Le acute 'Six Lectures on the Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam' di Sir Muhammad Iqbal (Lahore, 1930) cominciano proprio con la giusta osservazione: 'The Quran is a book which emphasizes "deed" rather than idea' (pag. 1).
To theion dei filosofi greci e il Dio della gnosi (ma'rifā) sufica sono indubbiamente più vicini al Dio indù di quanto non lo sia il Dio del Corano, onnipotente e misericordioso prima che infinito o sostanza assoluta.

In Bābar naturalmente non v'è sentore di tutto questo ma proprio perché più alieno da sottigliezze metafisiche egli capisce forse meglio la differenza fra i due mondi. L'elenco dei suoi difetti dell'India comincia con la interessante affermazione: l'India è kam-latāfat yer luogo poco grazioso e elī-dā husn yōq nei suoi abitanti non v'è bellezza. La mancanza di husn e laṭāfat è il centro di tutta la sua critica all'India. Il che implica per lui anche mancanza di gentilezza e buona educazione (muruwvet, adab) e anche di perspicacia (idrāk). Si pensi alla architettura islamica che è ordine e armonia di fronte a quella indù che pur nella grandiosità multiforme dei suoi templi evoca in noi quasi un senso di angoscia e direi di 'contorto'; e si comprenderà come tale atteggiamento di Bābar derivi anch'esso da una posizione di partenza che ha alle sue radici un tipo di mentalità religiosa non dissimile dalla nostra (Dio personale e distinto dal cosmo) piuttosto che da considerazioni puramente empiriche.

Rispondiamo ora alla terza domanda: è servita l'esperienza India alle due personalità musulmane? Che cosa l'India ha dato di comune ai due e che ne ha ricevuto? E' difficile qui dare una risposta decisa. E' mia opinione tuttavia che l'esperienza India non molto abbia dato di sostanzialmente nuovo e vitale né a Birūnī né a Bābar. Forse l'esperienza di Weltanschauungen così diverse da quella islamica può avere nel primo aumentato e approfondito il senso di tolleranza così singolare in lui, ma tolleranza non sempre significa comprensione. E', come vedemmo, la tolleranza birūniana è spesso basata su un non troppo comprensivo 'buon senso' semplicistico. Forse l'esperienza della immensità e della grandiosità della natura dell'India potrà avere arricchito il già robusto senso della natura di Bābar. In complesso, l'esperienza India può aver dato un certo stimolo all'ampliamento degli orizzonti mentali e materiali delle due personalità musulmane così come i viaggi dei coraggiosi navigatori musulmani nei mari dell'India hanno dato l'abbrivo a tutte quelle 'curiosità' 'āghā'ib, all'esotismo ecc. ma non si può, credo, affermare, che l'esperienza India rappresenti qualcosa di veramente vitale non solo nella personalità di Birūnī e di Bābar ma anche più in generale in tutta la civiltà.

1 Tuttavia, e nell'aver dimostrato questo sta il merito principale dello studio sopra citato del Moreno, anche i passi più apparentemente 'indù' dei testi sufici rivelano a una meditazione accurata radicali differenze.

2 Ad es. quando paragona gli idoli dell'Arabia preislamica a quelli indiani (Bir. I—123; 59) l'idolatria indù e l'idolatria semiunita hanno a mio parere radici diverse.
musulmana: in nessun modo l'ipotetico influsso indiano può esser paragonato a quello greco che, lungi dal limitarsi a penetrare nell'esperienza di studio di pochi 'curiosi', ha affondato le sue radici nel più profondo della mentalità islamica.

Più forte mi sembra semmai' indiretto influsso di Bābar e Bīrūnī sulla cultura e sulla storia indù: figlio di Bābar è l'impero Mogol con tutto il bene e il male che ha portato all'India, figli di Bīrūnī, in senso lato, possono ben dirsi i numerosi tentativi sincretistici indù-musulmani cui abbiamo accennato, e, ancor più alla lontana, il sikhismo, e il teismo indù (bhakti vishnuita ecc.) su tutti i quali già furono studiati influssi islamici.

Due è più complesso di uno; e l'opera del teismo dinamico islamico sull'elastico e notevolmente assimilatore monismo indù è stata più facile dell'inversa. Ma la dolorosa scissione attuale dell'India e il sangue che disgraziatamente ne è scorso ci convincono che l'islam non è riuscito a creare, malgrado quasi dieci secoli di permanenza, una unità viva nell'India. Ed è anche questo che, a distanza di secoli, ci conferma nell'opinione che davanti agli occhi di Bīrūnī e di Bābar l'India sia passata come un fantastico sogno, senza riuscire a conquistare e influenzare la zona più segreta delle loro anime; così come Bīrūnī è passato avanti agli occhi dell'Indiani come un curioso dotto mleccha che stupiva per la sua cultura (v. Bīr. I—23, 12) ma respingeva, forse per la sua sicurezza di sé i 'superbi' indiani, e Bābar è certo stato odiato da molti indù come un conquistatore e un asservitore.

Non si può negare che se questa scambievole comprensione dipende anche dal comprensivo esclusivismo indù (mi si perdoni il paradosso) si deve anche attribuirla a certe debolezze della cultura islamica stessa. Il Sarkar non ha fosse tutti i torti quando nel suo studio su Awrangzèb afferma che 'the Mughal Empire did much for India in many ways, but it failed to weld the people into a nation' ed aggiunge, a proposito delle differenze fra indù e musulmani 'the Hindú is solitary, passive, other worldly; his highest aim is self-realization, the attainment of personal salvation by individual effort, private devotions and lonely austerities . . . the Muslim on the other hand is taught to feel that he is nothing if not a soldier of the militant faith of Islam . . . he must pray in congregation . . . Islam boldly avows that it is good for us to be here, that God has given the world to the faithful as an inheritance for their enjoyment'.

1 Anche Sayyid Ḥasan Bārnī nel suo citato studio, mentre loda la ampiezza di vedute e tolleranza di Bīrūnī, riconosce (pag. 218) che Bīrūnī fu relativamente meno famoso nel mondo islamico di altre personalità musulmane, attribuendo questo, a mio parere a torto, a cause unicamente pratiche.

2 V. Bīr. I—22 segg.; 11-12.

Sia Bābar che Bīrūnī appartengono in pieno a questo islam; sì, anche Bīrūnī, così comprensivo e tollerante. Egli scrive (Bīr. II; 161-280).

Il loro stato è simile a quello dei cristiani: tutto è basato sul principio di far del bene e astenersi dal male, come l'astenersi assolutamente dall'uccidere, sul principio di dare anche la camicia a chi vi ha strappato il vestito, di porgerle l'altra guancia a chi vi ha schiaffeggiato su una, di augurare del bene al nemico, e di pregare per lui. Questa, in fede mia, è una nobile condotta di vita, ma gli abitanti del mondo non sono tutti filosofi, anzi la maggior parte sono ignoranti e perduti nell'errore, e non si possono tenere sulla retta via altro che con la spada o la frusta. . . .

Tale brano è un riassunto di tutta la mentalità birūniana: nella sua prima parte ce ne mostra la elevatezza e la comprensività, nella seconda quella praticità semplicistica che ne è il difetto.

Mi piace tuttavia terminare questo piccolo omaggio alla grande personalità del filosofo musulmano con una considerazione più ottimistica, l'augurio cioè che Islamismo e India, teismo e panteismo, il Dio in noi indù e il Dio al di sopra di noi musulmano, che già più d'una volta in passato tentarono vanamente di accostarsi, possano in futuro trovare non una statica fusione ma una dinamica unità, dopo tanto sangue e tante lotte, in una concezione che senza alcun senso confessionale potrebbe dirsi cristiana, che ha avuto nobilissimi rappresentanti nel sūfismo e nella bhakti e recentemente un grande precursore nella venerabile figura della 'Grande Anima', M. K. Gandhi.

---

1 Anche altrove Bīrūnī ravvicina Cristianesimo e Induismo, v. ad es. pag. II—151; 276.
ALBERUNI AND THE RĀMA-KATHĀ.

By

C. BULcke, S.J.

A superficial perusal of Alberuni's India sufficiently shows that he was first and foremost a scientist, whose chief interest was astronomy, astrology, cosmology, cosmography, geography, chronometry and alchemy (Rasāyana). Still, his interest was not limited to these scientific subjects, but extended also to religion, philosophy (he translated two books on Sāmkhya and Yoga), sociology and folklore. He was too human not to be interested in the whole of Indian civilization, and he can, without fear of contradiction, conclude his book: 'We think now that what we have related in this book will be sufficient for any one who wants to converse with the Hindus, and to discuss with them questions of religion, science or literature, on the very basis of their own civilisation.' (II, 246).¹

It must be admitted, however, that his scientific researches have not left him much leisure for the study of literature. In his twelfth chapter: 'On the Veda, the Purāṇas and other kinds of national literature', he mentions the four Vedas, gives a list of 18 Purāṇas and twenty Smṛiti books, and also refers to the Mahābhārata and the Harivamśa. His information about the Mahābhārata is accurate. He knows the reputed author (Vyāsa), the extent (100,000 ślokas) and the subject-matter (the war between the children of Paṇḍu and those of Kuru, at Kurukṣetra) and further enumerates the names of the eighteen parvans. He seems to have had a special predilection for the Bhagavadgītā, which he quotes some fifteen times in the course of his book. On the other hand, no mention is made of the Rāmāyaṇa in this chapter, and we look in vain for a reference to Kālidāsa or any other Mahākāvya-poet or dramatist, here or elsewhere in his work. The next two chapters treat of literature connected with grammar, prosody and various sciences such as astronomy, astrology and medicine. Alberuni himself is conscious of the inadequacy of this survey: 'The Hindus cultivate numerous other branches of science and literature, and have a nearly boundless literature. I, however, could not comprehend it with my knowledge' (I, 159).

This modest admission, characteristic of the true scholar, should not lead us to the conclusion that Alberuni was totally

¹ All quotations are taken from Alberuni's India, by E. C. Sachau, 2 vols., London, 1888.
ignorant of other literary works. Although he does not give any systematic account of the Rāmāyana, e.g., this does not mean that he did not know a good deal about the contents of the great Indian epic. It seems clear, however, that he never read, nor saw, a copy of the Rāmāyana. We are forced to conclude this from the way he refers to it: 'At that time (in the Tretā yuga) Vālmīki composed the story of Rāma and Rāmāyana and eternalised it in his books' (II, 3); '... as is described in the story of Rāma and Rāmāyana' (I, 307); '... my conjecture is strengthened by the fact that, according to the book of Rāma and Rāmāyana...' (I, 309). In spite of the fact that he was thus denied first-hand knowledge of the Rāmāyana, it is remarkable how much information concerning the story of Rāma can be gleaned from the pages of Alberuni's India.

From the passages, quoted above, we see that Alberuni knows that Vālmīki was the author of a famous poem dealing with the story of Rāma and that he agrees with the later parts of the epic itself (Bāla- and Uttarakāṇḍaś) in making Vālmīki a contemporary of Rāma. Besides, Alberuni was familiar with the tradition, which places Rāma in the Tretā yuga: 'The Hindus have several well-known traditions of events which are said to have occurred in the Tretā and Dwāpara yugas, e.g. the story of Rāma, who killed Rāvana...' (I, 380). He has, however, to admit that he does not know to what this exactly corresponds: 'No doubt, the date of Rāma and Rāmāyana is known among the Hindus, but I for my part have not been able to ascertain it' (II, 3).1

Regarding the contents of the Rāma-Kathā, we do not find any reference to the early events of Rāma's life: his birth, marriage and

1 In ch. 49, A summary description of the eras, he quotes the Viṣṇu-Dharma: 'Mārkaṇḍeya says, in answer to a question of Vajra,—I have already lived as long as six kalpas and six manvantaras of the seventh kalpa, 23 Tretāyugas of the 7th manvantara. In the 24th Tretāyuga Rāma killed Rāvana, and Lākṣmana, the brother of Rāma, killed Kumbhakarṇa. The two subdued the Rākṣasas (II, 3). Dr. G. Buehler, who has traced the quotations from the Viṣṇu-Dharma (cf. Notice on Alberuni's India, I.A., Vol. 19, pp. 381–410), says that the Sanskrit text is mutilated. Mārkaṇḍeya promises to show the differences between the kalpas, and should therefore give two stories about Rāma. He gives only one, and so does Alberuni. Dr. Buehler proposes: 'As in the past kalpa, when the 6th manvantara had gone, in the 24th Tretāyuga of the 7th, then, O King, when Rāma had killed Rāvana together with his host in battle, then that same Rāma slew Kumbhakarṇa. But that holy life of Rāma which happened in the present kalpa, O scion of Yadu's race, was composed in verse by Vālmīki. That which happened in the past kalpa, was narrated O King, by me to Yudhiṣṭhīra, the son of Dharma, in the Kāmyaka forest' (I, 81, 24–27). In the next chapter of the Viṣṇu-Dharma we find: 'Thus in the present kalpa, when the 6th manvantara had gone, in the 24th Tretāyuga of the 7th, O King, when Rāma had killed Rāvana together with his host in battle, then Lākṣmana slew Kumbhakarṇa, O King' (I, 82, 7b–9a). This latter passage is the source of Alberuni's affirmation that Lākṣmana killed Kumbhakarṇa and agrees with the Rāmopākhyāna of the Mahābhārata (III, 271, Poona ed.). In the Vālmīki Rāmāyana it is Rāma who kills Kumbhakarṇa (VI, 67).
banishment to the forest. *The cause of the conflict* between Rāma and Rāvana is given in the description of Lāṅkā: ‘There Rāvana, the demon, fortified himself when he had carried off the wife of Rāma, the son of Daśaratha’ (I, 306). The name of neither Hanumān nor Sugriva is given, but we find a reference to Rāma’s alliance with the monkeys of Kiṣkindha in Ch. 18: ‘Sixteen farsakh 1 from Setubandha towards the east is Kiṣkind, the mountains of the monkeys. Every day the king of the monkeys comes out of the thicket together with his hosts, and settles down in particular seats prepared for them. The inhabitants of that region prepare for them cooked rice, and bring it to them on leaves. After having eaten it they return into the thicket, but in case they are neglected, this would be the ruin of the country as they are not only numerous, but also savage and aggressive. According to popular belief, they are a race of men changed into monkeys on account of the help which they had afforded to Rāma when making war on the demons; he is believed to have bequeathed those villages to them as a legacy. When a man happens to fall in with them, and he recites to them the poetry of Rāma and pronounces the incantations of Rāma, they will quietly listen to him; they will even lead on the right path him who has gone astray and give him meat and drink. At all events, thus the matter stands according to popular belief. If there is any truth in this, the effect must be produced by the melody’ (I, 209). The episode of the Setubandha is mentioned several times: ‘Rāma attacked Rāvana after crossing the ocean on a dyke of the length of 100 yojanas, which he had constructed from a mountain in a place called Setubandha, i.e. bridge of the ocean, east of Ceylon. He fought with him and killed him, and Rāma’s brother killed the brother of Rāvana, as is described in the story of Rāma and Rāmāyaṇa. Thereupon he broke the dyke in ten different places by arrow-shots’ (I, 307; cf. also I, 209 and 258). The erection of the Śiva-liṅga at Rāmeśvaram (Ramshar in Alberuni, I, 209) is not mentioned in the Vālmiki-Rāmāyaṇa and is a later development of the Rāma-kathā. Alberuni refers to it in his chapter on the beginning of idol-worship: ‘The Hindus honour their idols on account of those who erected them, not on account of the material of which they are made....... e.g. the liṅga, which Rāma erected when he had finished the war with the demons, was of sand, which he had heaped up with his own hand. But then it became petrified all at once, since the astrologically correct moment for the erecting of the monument fell before the moment when the workmen had finished the cutting of the stone monument which Rāma originally had ordered’ (I, 121). Alberuni goes on to say that Rāma gave detailed instructions for the building of the temple and the appointment of the priests. When dealing with the occupations and customs of the various castes, the author relates the story of Śambūka (cf.

---

1 A farsakh is equal to 4 Arabian miles and about 3.7 English miles.
Valm. Ram. VII, 76) in order to show that nobody is allowed to take to an occupation alien to his caste: 'In the days of King Rāma human life was very long, always of a well-defined and well-known length. Thus a child never died before his father. Then, however, it happened that the son of a Brāhman died while the father was still alive. Now the Brāhman brought the child to the door of the king and spoke to him; “This innovation has sprung up in thy days for no other reason but this, that there is something rotten in the state of the country, and because a certain vazir commits in thy realm what he commits.” Then Rāma began to enquire into the cause of this, and finally they pointed out to him a Caṇḍāla who took the greatest pains in performing worship and in self-torment. The king rode to him and found him on the banks of the Ganges, hanging on something with his head downward. The king bent his bow, shot at him, and pierced his bowels. Then he spoke: “That it is! I kill thee on account of a good action which thou art not allowed to do.” When he returned home, he found the son of the Brāhman, who had been deposited before his door, alive’ (II, 137).

In Chapter 46, On Nārāyaṇa, his appearance at different times, and his names, mention is made of Rāma as an Avatāra of Viṣṇu: ‘...in Tretāyuga, in the shape of Rāma alone, for the purpose of spreading fortitude, to conquer the bad, and to preserve the three worlds by force and prevalence of virtuous action’ (I, 397). Finally we find a quotation from Varāhamihira, referring to the size of the image of Rāma: ‘If the figure is made to represent Rāma the son of Daśaratha, or Bālī the son of Virocana, give it the height of 120 digits’ (I, 117).

In the 30th Chapter, On Laṅka, or the Cupola of the earth,1 Alberuni says that the descriptions of Laṅka given by the Hindus do not agree and that no sailor who has traversed the ocean in that region has ever given an account which tallies with the traditions of the Hindus. He, then, advances his own theory and identifies Laṅka with the clove-country Langa (whence the word Lavang for clove), or the island of Langabalus of the Arabs, which, according to modern research, corresponds to the Nicobar Islands.2

We may still add that mention is made of the expression Rāvanaśiras to denote the number ten and thus we have gathered all the material referring to the Rāma-Kathā, which is to be found in Alberuni’s India. Although the picture is far from complete, it must be admitted that we cannot, with any degree of justification, apply to him the popular description of an ignoramus: ‘After all his studies he does not even know who Rāma is and who Rāvana is’.

---

1 Cupola of the world: '... the midst of the inhabitable world; ... a metaphorical term to denote a point from which the two ends of the inhabitable world in east and west are equidistant ...... and without latitude' (I, 306).
In any case he could have taught a lot of things about Rāma to the other Arab travellers to India,¹ and to many travellers of modern times too, beginning with William Finch (1608–11) who, in his description of Oude, writes ²: ‘Here are also the ruins of Ranichands castle and houses, which the Indians acknowledge for the great God, saying that he took flesh upon him to see the tamasha of the world’.

¹ Alberuni’s predecessors Sulaymān (851 A.D.), Abu Dulal Misar (940 A.D.) and Mas‘ūdi (943) have not a word about the Rāma-story, although the first made several journeys to India and mentions Sirandib (Ceylon) and the Ālāgabad Islands. Ibn Baṭūta (First half of 14th cent.) mentions the existence of numerous black monkeys with long tails in Ceylon, but does not make any reference to the Rāma story. Cf. G. Ferrand, Relation de Voyages, Paris, 1913 and Voyages d’Ibn Batoutah (IV, 175). Paris 1922.

AL-BĪRŪNĪ AND SANSKRIT

By

SUNITI KUMAR CHATTERJI,

Professor, Calcutta University

Abū-Rayḥān Muḥammad Ibn Ahmad Al-Bīrūnī, or Al-Bērōnī, who was born in 973 'in the territory of Khiva, then called Khwārizm, or Chorasmia in antiquity', and who died, probably at Ghazna, in 1048, is distinguished as one of the greatest scholars of medieval times, a polymath who was equally at home in mathematics and theology, astronomy and philosophy, chemistry and chronology, history and ethnography, and medicine and cosmography, and whose special pre-eminence was that he was the first of scientific Indologists and one of the greatest of all times. From his vast and exact scholarship on the one hand, and his broad liberalism and objectivism on the other, Al-Bīrūnī has to be reckoned among the outstanding thought-leaders of humanity. The unique character and importance of his scholarship and of his personality was fully understood and appreciated by the editor of two of his greatest works, the German scholar Edward Sachau, to whom the modern world has to be specially grateful for his edition of the Arabic text of his Indica (London, 1887) and for his English translation of that book (London, 1888). Sachau’s glowing tribute to the actual achievement of the scholar and the man, a tribute which is fully his due and which is all the more effective because of its quiet reticence, and, above all, the sterling worth of his work, have helped to establish Al-Bīrūnī’s position: he should, however, be better known, particularly in India, whose first scientific interpreter he became. It looks as if Al-Bīrūnī will finally come to his own: for now, 900 years after his death, his memory is being revived by the scholarly world in Europe and India: an Al-Bīrūnī Millenary has been held in Paris on the occasion of the 21st International Congress of Orientalists (July 1948), and Al-Bīrūnī celebrations are going to be held in Calcutta under the auspices of the Iran Society in December 1948.1

Although the scholarship of Al-Bīrūnī is both deep and wide, it is not his sole or main claim to our gratitude. He was something more than a scholar—he was a just man, whose own special religious convictions did not allow him to belittle or minimize the achievements of another people who had developed in a different milieu. His mind was singularly free from the narrow religious outlook of an

1 Because of special circumstances the Al-Bīrūnī celebrations had to be postponed to a later date.
orthodox scriptural religion, which sees the supreme truth only in
itself, and is not usually favourable to a sympathetic study and
understanding of other faiths as being equally paths in the same
quest. Although the full title of his work on India gives the point
of view of an orthodox Muslim man of science, viz. ‘An accurate
description of all categories of Hindu thought, as well those which
are admissible as those which must be rejected’ (Kitāb . . . fī
taḥqīq mā-l-Hind min maqīla muqabila fī-l-aql awi mirdhula), yet
it is not polemical or propagandistic with the intention of establishing
the superiority of one point of view over another. He takes it for
granted, tacitly and explicitly, as a good Muslim and a scholar from
outside who had an easily understandable sense of superiority over
the Hindus who were giving way to the Muslim Turks in the battle
of life, that his Islamic milieu was on a higher plane than the Hindu
one as being more cosmopolitan and more reasonable. Yet he
seeks to hold the balance even. Things and notions, practices and
ideas current in the Hindu world, which did not have his approval
as a man of science and as a man of common sense, he did not look
upon as being just ‘beastly devices of the heathen’. He manifests
a clear anxiety to show that in these matters the Hindus were just
human, and he quotes parallel situations from other parts of the
world—that of the ancient Greeks, or the early Arabs, for instance.
In this way he seeks to do away with any repugnance which the
Muslim readers of his Arabic work might feel specially for the people
of India. This detachment, or aloofness, or disinterestedness of
science, without any parti pris through theological or racial bias, is a
thing for which we Hindus of India should feel specially grateful to
Al-Birūnī, and for which the scientific world will also be thankful
to his memory. This attitude is certainly more precious than positive
scholarship, humanly speaking.

Al-Birūnī was a scholar of a unique breadth of vision in his day.
Probably, when he was in the prime of his intellectual life, say, about
1040 A.D., more than 900 years ago from now, he was the most
erudite and the most cosmopolitan or international scholar in the
whole world. In China and India, the greatest scholars had their
vision limited to the worlds of China and India only. There was no
one in these countries who had the least notion of the great cul-
tures of the West—of the Islamic world, of ancient Greece and
Rome. In Western Europe, including Italy, it was the dark age,
when a little Christian knowledge through Latin, with some of the
Latin classical writers who were a little studied by the more ardent
scholars, was all that was available to the scholarly world. The
Byzantine scholars of Eastern Europe similarly had no knowledge
of the literature or culture of the Saracens; and it was only where
Saracenic dominion was well established that internationalism in
scholarship was coming into being. But in Al-Birūnī we have a
man who probably spoke Persian as his mother-tongue, but belonging as he did to a Turki-speaking country, Khwārizm, and living in the entourage of a Turki aristocracy in Ghazna, he must have been familiar with Turki: and as a scholar of his inquisitiveness and interest, whatever was available as literature in these languages he can be expected to be cognizant of. Arabic was both the religious and culture-language of the Islamic world, and this he knew perfectly, at least as well as (if not much better than) the best Indian writer of English knowing the latter language. A good deal of the knowledge and science of the Greek and Byzantine as well as Syrian worlds, and a considerable amount of Indian science in mathematics and astronomy as well as medicine, he had access to through Arabic translations, for in early Islamic times Arabic in Baghdad became a sort of inheritor of the accumulated earlier knowledge of the more ancient neighbouring civilizations. Al-Bīrūnī quotes from Plato and Aristotle, with whom he was familiar through Arabic translations, made second-hand from intermediate Syrian versions: but he understood their value and implication, historical as well as philosophical and scientific. He quotes from Kapila and Vyāsa, from Varāha-mihira and the Purāṇas, with equal facility and understanding: and what is more, he knew the original language of these Indian writers—a unique thing among his own people. A man equally at home with so many distinct cultural domains—the Indian, the Islamic (including Arabic, Iranian and ‘Turanian’ or Turki), the Hellenic (although the latter was only second-hand)—and about the year 1040 A.D., so far as we know, there was only one such man in the civilized world, and that man was Al-Bīrūnī.

The monarch under whose umbrage Al-Bīrūnī lived from 1017 onwards, from his 44th year to his 58th, the great Sulṭān Maḥmūd of Ghazna, did not become, owing to the force of political circumstances, the enlightened patron for our scholar which otherwise he might have been. The circumstances have been fully indicated by Sachau. He was a hostage in the court of Maḥmūd from an erstwhile hostile state, respected, undoubtedly, for his scholarly attainments, but not properly helped or patronized. Sulṭān Maḥmūd of Ghazna was a powerful ruler, and he was actuated by both a sincere religious zeal combined with a strong desire for plunder in undertaking a series of raids into India, in the course of which he did the greatest harm to his Hindu neighbours, killing and enslaving thousands, destroying towns, temples and images and carrying off loot worth millions. These raids were not conducive to create a favourable opinion in the mind of the Hindu people for Maḥmūd and his Turks, and the name of the Turk naturally came to be both dreaded and hated among Hindus. In 921, Maḥmūd annexed the Indian province of the Panjab to his empire of Ghazna; and, under a Muslim sovereign, although inhabited by Hindus (among whom proselytization started
immediately), the Panjab became ‘a land of peace’, where a Muslim, a scholar as much as a soldier, could move about without danger or difficulty. This certainly gave to Al-Bīrūnī his great opportunity to study Hindu culture first-hand, by coming into India and sojourning there. Previously he was, as an astronomer and mathematician, interested in Hindu works on these sciences which were available to him in Arabic versions. His enforced stay at Ghazna as a hostage from Khwārizm from 1017 probably gave him his first chance to know first-hand something of Hindu learning. Ghazna, as the seat of the greatest Islamic state of the East and as the capital of a powerful and efficient ruler like Maḥmūd, had undoubtedly attracted people from all parts of the Near East and from Central Asia, and India was not unrepresented in its cosmopolitan population. Indian soldiers and artisans, princes and learned men were there as prisoners of war, most of whom were perhaps destined never to return to India or to be accepted in the fold of their own society even if they could return to India, as their captivity among the impure foreign barbarians, the Turks, had polluted them beyond redemption in the eyes of the generality of their intellectually and spiritually degraded kinsmen who by accident or through distance had escaped a similar fate to their own. Then there were the settled Hindu people of Afghanistan who were not yet wholly cut off from the bases of their national literature and culture. It would appear that both these sets of people had intelligent men who could appreciate the interest shown in their religion and ways of thinking by a member of the ruling race who was evidently generally esteemed for his learning. Al-Bīrūnī’s serious study of Indian things, including Sanskrit, and the West Panjab vernacular speech (which was also evidently current among the Hindus of Afghanistan), in all likelihood began in Ghazna. With the establishment of Turki rule in the Panjab, he would appear to have paid some visits to places in Western Panjab, where he met Brahman and other scholars to help him, and to have stayed for some time in Multan, which was still a very sacred place of Hindu pilgrimage with its temple of the Sun-god where Sanskrit learning might be expected to flourish during the first half of the tenth century.

Sachau has given his opinion about the nature of Al-Bīrūnī’s Sanskrit scholarship. It was wide enough and practical, but not very profound: and for a good deal of it, Al-Bīrūnī, like most European Sanskritists who worked in India from the days of Charles Wilkinson and William Jones, was indebted to ‘the Sastri or Pandit at his elbow’. There were perhaps several of these Brahman assistants or collaborators on whom at different times Al-Bīrūnī had to rely for his scientific work. These men served him by giving running translations of texts in which he was interested, in some language which both sides understood—either (as can normally be
expected) the West Panjab vernacular which Al-Birūnī must have picked up as one of the languages of Ghazna, or (what is equally likely) Persian. This was the basis of his Sanskrit scholarship. He probably read a lot of Sanskrit by himself after acquiring an elementary knowledge of it with the help of these translations or paraphrases which he took down for his own use after rendering them into Persian or Arabic. He was instrumental in translating and composing some works into Sanskrit, and here too the Sanskrit Pandit was in evidence, in rendering into Sanskrit verse the subject-matter explained to them by him. Sachau has made a most brilliant study of Al-Birūnī's attainments in Sanskrit—his actual achievements and his limitations—by comparing his translations into Arabic with the original Sanskrit texts—and it has been no small feat for this great German scholar who combined in himself in a unique way the Arabicist and the Sanskritist.

A certain amount of Sanskrit literature appears to have been translated into Pahlavi (and from Pahlavi into the languages of the West—Syriac and Arabic and Greek) from Sasanian times, and the Arabic translations of Sanskrit works on mathematics, astronomy and medicine, as well as on philosophy, made in Baghdad during the rule of the early Abbasids, were in the line of the tradition of these Sasanian translations. As a matter of fact, this tradition goes back earlier, to Greek times. From the fifth century B.C. at least, Indian scholars and religious men, with the spirit of Wander-lust and adventure in them (their tribe has continued to our day), were in the habit of going to the West, at least as far as Greece, coming in contact with appreciative spirits abroad and bringing to them their own point of view in matters metaphysical. We have record of at least one such Indian philosopher reaching Athens and meeting Socrates, before 400 B.C. Alexander took Calanos with him from India as far as Babylon, where the latter committed suicide by burning himself on the pyre. Asoka in the third century B.C. sent Buddhist philosophers to the lands of the Near East—Asia Minor, Syria, Egypt, Greece. Doubtless there were others who were not formally Buddhists. These men might have given oral lectures on Indian philosophy which formed the basis of what meagre information the Greek and Syrian world received about the Indian world of ideas. It is not known whether they translated any Sanskrit or other Indian work in a Western speech, Old Persian, or Syriac, or Greek: no such work has survived, nor is there any clear reference to any such work. From the sixth century A.D. when the strong Sasanian empire in Iran had cultural rapprochements with the contemporary Indian empires of the Guptas in North India and of the Chalukyas in the Deccan, a systematic effort at translation of Indian works into Iranian was inaugurated. A great and a puissant empire like that of the Sasanians could not be without a literary renaissance
in Iran, and about the same time Greek and Syriac works on science (medicine and astronomy) and philosophy began to be rendered into Persian, and similarly works from the Sanskrit. Greek sophists, philosophers or scholars (*pat hrom filisôkhfäy, as the Pahlavi Denkart has it*), carrying with them both the lore of classical Hellas and of Byzantine or Romaic Greece (*Yonäyik and HRomäyik* respectively, as the Sasanian Iranians distinguished them), came to Iran and enriched both the Iranian mind and Iranian literature by their teaching and their translations. Indian wise men (*pat hindükän dänäk*) similarly found the court of the Sasanian monarchs appreciative of their talents and their science and thought, and we are told that a number of books were rendered into Iranian (Pahlavi), including *trk*, i.e. *tarka* or Logic. (See H. W. Bailey, 'Zoroastrian Problems in Ninth-century Books—Ratanbai Katrak Lectures', Oxford, 1943, pp. 80–86.) The Indian scholars who were in the habit of coming to Iran did not find themselves in an uncongenial atmosphere: Iranian Zoroastrianism with its fire ritual was something they could understand. In the Sasanian period, Hindu notions about ceremonial purity, about *Ärya* and *Mleccha*, about caste and pollution, were not yet so rigid as in later post-Mohammedan times, and it is just likely that scholars would go to Iran and come back to their own society in Hindu India without any loss of caste. Undoubtedly it was like that in pre-Christian, Greek times. But with an intransigent creed like Islam, the followers of which lacked that spirit of compromise towards the faith and usages of Kāfirs which the Greeks and Iranians would show to creeds different from theirs, the situation became different. The thin stream of Sanskrit-knowing scholars who went to Baghdad seemed to have settled there for good, and we hear of conversions of some of them to Islam, which suggests that after a sojourn in an Islamic country they found it impossible to be accommodated in their own society at a time when Hindu India was in the throes of a life-and-death struggle with Islam in the north-west frontier of India. It was consequently the proximity of Ghazna to India, and the fact that at Ghazna an enquiring spirit like Al-Bīrūnī’s could find suitable persons to initiate him into Hindu lore through the vernacular of Western Panjab, and even, it may be, through Sanskrit, that brought about the happy circumstance of the great Iranian scholar being enabled, Muslim though he was and as such the object of natural suspicion among Hindus, to enter into the doubly closed precincts of Hindu science and philosophy.

Al-Bīrūnī nowhere mentions Sanskrit by name, nor has he ever employed the words Prakrit or Apabhramśa. But he was quite in line with the view-point (which was that of early medieval India and which was current among the orthodox or old-fashioned Sanskrit scholars to our day) that Sanskrit and the spoken vernacular (or vernaculars) were not so much as distinct languages as two different
styles of a single speech. It was mainly a matter of phonetic equi-
valences, with a slight modicum of inflexional and glossic changes,
and Sanskrit became the spoken vernacular and vice versa. Such
was for instance the opinion of Dāmodara, the author of the Ukti-
vyaakti-prakarana, a work composed probably at Benares within a
hundred years of the death of Al-Bīrūnī with a view to teaching
Sanskrit through the vernacular: 'like a debased Brahman woman
who has performed the expiation ceremony and is restored to
her original status of a Brahman lady', by restoring the fuller forms
the current Apabhramśa speech is turned into good Sanskrit.
As in contemporary Indian usage, the line of demarcation
between the correct Sanskrit of books and the vernacular forms
is not strictly maintained by Al-Bīrūnī. At times he gives Prakritic
or vernacular forms in place of, or side by side with, Sanskrit forms.
And in the matter of pronunciation, he is not consistent—he
pronounced a Sanskrit letter sometimes in one way, sometimes in
another. This want of consistency is perhaps due to his not finding
a single or uniform pronunciation among his Sanskrit-knowing
collaborators or teachers. They might have been, as Sachau has
already suggested, men from different parts of India.

And from what parts of India were they mostly? Sachau
has given a list of all the Sanskrit and other Indian words as employed
by Al-Bīrūnī in his book, in their original Perso-Arabic transcriptions
and their Sanskrit equivalents or source-forms. A study of this
list, taking due note of the imperfections of the Kufic Arabic script
employed by Al-Bīrūnī for his Arabic, is very valuable for finding
out the nature of both the pronunciation of Sanskrit (in some of its
local forms) and the phonology of Early New Indo-Aryan (parti-
cularly of Western Panjab) in the eleventh century.

Al-Bīrūnī's transcriptions\(^1\) indicate a diversity of pronunciation.
The bulk of his forms would show that these are not based on what
we would expect to be a Western Panjab pronunciation, or a Ganges
Valley pronunciation, of about 1000 A.D., but would rather appear
to be what may be called a spelling pronunciation, with some
noteworthy Ganges Valley characteristics, which a person familiar
with the Sanskrit script and the accepted values of the letters as
given in the grammars, and not at home in the oral traditions or
forms, would follow in his transliteration. In all, not more than
2,500 Sanskrit words have been given by Al-Bīrūnī in transcription
in his work. These transcriptions suffer in two ways. They were

\(^1\) In the transcriptions made into the Roman script of the Sanskrit words as
written with the Arabic letters by Al-Bīrūnī for comparative study with the origi-
nal Sanskrit forms, the following equivalents have been used:

\[
\begin{align*}
\lambda &= \varepsilon; \quad \theta = \mathfrak{c}; \quad j = \mathfrak{c}; \quad c = \mathfrak{c}; \quad h = \mathfrak{c}; \quad x = \mathfrak{c}; \quad \delta = \delta; \quad \varepsilon = \varepsilon; \quad s = \mathfrak{c}; \quad \zeta = \zeta; \quad \mathfrak{d} = \mathfrak{d}; \quad \mathfrak{z} = \mathfrak{z}; \quad \mathfrak{l} = \mathfrak{l}; \quad \mathfrak{f} = \mathfrak{f}; \quad \mathfrak{y} = \mathfrak{y}.
\end{align*}
\]
written in the Kufi style of Arabic which was then in vogue; and then, the MS. Schefer, which is a transcript of Al-Birûni’s autograph MS. made in 1059 (Al-Birûni having completed his work early in 1031), made mistakes in copying the unfamiliar Sanskrit words which could be put into the Kufic Arabic script only most imperfectly. The muqāras or points marking the difference between a b, a t, and a p, or between a c, a j, a kh and an h, between a d and a dh (spirant), between s and sh, were not yet the rule but rather exception in Arabic writing of the time of Al-Birûni: and although he takes care to indicate them, as the evidence of the Schefer MS. copied from his original autograph would testify, and he sometimes uses the Persian three-dotted letter for c and for p, and a kāf (k) with two dots above for g (the later Persian form of the letter gāf was as yet not in existence), Al-Birûni appears to have been rather careless in his transliteration for p, c, t, g, and does not trouble much about the Indian aspirates kh, gh, th, dh, ph, bh, etc. He, however, uses frequently enough the Perso-Arabic letter dhāl (for a spirant sound in these two speeches, like that of English th as in then, bathe) for the Sanskrit and Indian aspirated stop dh (= d-h). The cerebral or retroflex sounds of Indian languages of course Al-Birûni did not know how to represent with the help of Arabic letters, and he was content to use the ordinary Arabic dentals t, d for them, and r for interior d when it was pronounced as r (e.g. krbd = kudavā, byrd = Vyādi, dnr = Dravida, drmr = Dramida, nry = nādi, byrwrj = vaidurya, etc.). But he was conscious of the special character of the Indian cerebral n, which is a living sound not only in Panjabi (both Western and Eastern) and in Sindhi but also in Pashto; and he occasionally attempted to denote it by the combination nr or rn (as in pnrn = Pānini, written p’nr, and brnj = banj or vanj; and a Prakritic or vernacular pronunciation has been followed in the case of the word bhānu, when it has been written once as bh’nr and again as bh’r = bhānu, besides bh’n, bh’nw = bhānu). The vocalism of these Sanskrit words was sought to be rendered only in a half-hearted way, and the copyist has degraded the transcription further by making confusions, e.g. using a sukūn for a damma (e.g. writing bār for bāru).

A few observations may be made about the pronunciation of Sanskrit which Al-Birûni has generally followed in his transcriptions. He has almost always used b- -b- for v of Sanskrit; never w = v initially, and rarely w when it is pre- or post-consonantal or inter-vocal. Post-consonantal v is omitted frequently enough, indicated a vernacularized pronunciation with post-consonantal v serving only to double or lengthen the preceding consonant (e.g. blnb = vilambini, ’bykt = avyakta, blbh = Valabhi, prd for brd = vrdāhi, prk for brk = yka, brn = varṇa and Varuna, bdś = Vidiśā, b’myk = Vālmiki, b’mn = Vāmana, b’ndw = Pāṇḍava, plb = plava, bvn =
byd-by'as = Veda-vyāsa, t'mbrn = tāmravarṇa; but śwyt = śvēla and 
bywsyt = Vaivavatā, while drśbd = Drśadvātī, rb = ravi, k'b =
hāvyā, etc.). In an attempt to represent the post-consonantal v, 
we have transcriptions like srśft = sarasvatī, beside srst = *sarassatī, 
byśf'nr = vaiśvānara, and nndkšyfr for nndkstryfr = Nandikesvara, 
with f = Skt. v. It is interesting to note that v after a sibilant in 
all likelihood became unvoiced to f, evidently in the West Panjāb 
pronunciation of Sanskrit in the 11th century—*Sarasfatī, *Vaiś-
jarāra, *Nandikesjāra. The West Panjab and Sindh pronunciations, 
whether of the local Prakritic vernaculars or of Sanskrit, has 
preserved initial v (and interior v where it was not frankly assimilated 
with the preceding consonant in the Prakritic words) as w. Use of h 
for initial and interior v characterized the pronunciation of the 
Gangetic Valley. Did Al-Bīrūnī consciously adopt the pronunciation 
of the Pandits of interior India, as it might appear to him as 
having preserved a purer tradition, in the case of the Sanskrit v? 
For v, a form मिफ, now revived in Egypt for the European v, is found 
in a few cases: e.g. मिफ = mewār.

In medieval India, when exactly we do not know, but it was 
probably when Apabhramśa as a literary language was fully estab-
lished (say, after 800 A.D.) over the greater part of Northern India, 
from the Panjab to Bengal, the Sanskrit s developed the value of kh, 
both in isolation and combination: so much so that the letter for s, 
š, in Early Hindi orthography, was commonly used for š = kh, 
and in the Gurumukhi script, ṣ became the regular sign for 
kh in place of š. That is why in the seventeenth century 
Dara Shikoh transcribed Upaniṣad as 'pnkht = Upanikhat in 
his Persian translation of the Upaniṣads. But Al-Bīrūnī, except 
in a very few cases where he used ḥ (x) and ṭ (k) for š = kh 
for s (e.g. in the case of the word škht = šisyahita, pron. 
*ṣikhyahita; and nxbh = nkhadhā = niśādhā, beside nšd; 'ṣryxyn = 
Śrīṣena; ghwēk = ghosā; ḅxw = viśvā; cf. also ḫxklw'at = Puṣkalāvati, 
ḫxkr = Puṣkara (?)), always writes š for s. This would indicate a 
conscious attempt to give the letter ṣ its proper or original value of 
a sibilant. So, too, in the case of the palatal š. This in the medieval 
tradition of Sanskrit pronunciation became a dental s. But Al-
Bīrūnī is equally careful to represent it almost always by ś, being 
thus at pains to show its difference from the dental s. This kh 
pronunciation of š, and s pronunciation of ś, is of course in tātsama 
and semi-latsama, i.e. borrowed Sanskrit words unmodified or modified 
and not in tadbhava, i.e. derived, Prakritic words. (These latter 
turned original š s s to s in the Ganges Valley, but to h in the Panjab 
and Sindh: e.g. Skt. vimśati, vimśa = Hindi bīs, but Panjabi vih; 
Skt. desā = Hindi des, Sindhī dehu; Skt. snuśā = Panjabi muh; Skt. 
āsādha = Hindi asār, Panjabi hār; Skt. trāsā = Panjabi trāh; etc.)
Examples of ʂ for both ʂ and ʃ of Sanskrit in Al-Bīrūnī: k’ʃy = Kāšī; k’yəb for k’syəb = Kāsyaṇa; tš = Tiṣya; bbš, bhbb = bhaviṣya; bh’rəṛs = Bhārata- (pron. bhāratha-) varṣa; kʃy = kṣīra; kʃknə = Kiśkindhyā; kš = kuṣa; k’št = kāṣṭhā; šṅk = śaṅkha; šṅtn = Śāntanu; šy = šeṣa; šy1-st’pt = Śailasutāpati; škt = śakti; ššlkš = šaśi-lakṣa; šš = šiṣya; šstr = šastra; šq = Saka; škrbr’r = Sukravāra; šs = isu, āśā; šr’bn = Śrāvana; šrw = śarabha; šj = suci; etc. In thrśl = Takṣasīlā, ptywn = Paśyoṣṇī, ’rl = ṛṣṭa, m’nstrg = māṃśāśṭaka, pwr’rık = pūrāṇṭaka, we have curiously enough r for ʂ: is this r due to a voiced pronunciation of the s in combination, as z, which could be confused with r? There are cases, however, where ṣ = s has been used for ʂ and ʃ: the reason for this has been noted by Sachau in the Introduction to his edition of Al-Bīrūnī’s Arabic text.

(In a word like nixrb = nikharva, x has been used for the Sanskrit kh.)

Parallel to the b-pronunciation of Sanskrit v is the j-pronunciation of Sanskrit y, single or in a nexus. This vernacular habit, which is fairly ancient, is followed by Al-Bīrūnī in his transliterations. Thus jbn, j’wən = Yavana, j’nbłk = Yājñavalkya, j’m = yāmya, j’dw = Yādava, ’rj’prt, ’rj’vt (ارجات) = Āryāvarla, jōstr = Yudhiṣṭhira, jm = Yama, ’jwδh = Ayodhya, jnjw’, jnjwy = *jaŋjoĩ = yajñopavīṭa, ’rjbr = Āryabhata pron. Ārajbhaja, ’rjk = Āryaka, ’rjm = Aryaman, jwzn = yojana, ’jr’ = āyurdā, jwg = yuga, ’jr’ = ācārya, njwt = niyula (also nywīn), p’r’z’t = Pāriyātra, srjw = Sarayū, beside srw = *Ｓaravī, srj’t = Saryāli. Cf. sj = Sahya, with Prakritic assimilation as Sajjha.

Al-Bīrūnī evidently knew, but ignored as colloquial or vulgar, the gy pronunciation of Sanskrit jn which is current all over Northern India and spread even into the South. He wrote yajña as jgm”, Yājñavalkya as both jnbłk and as j’gbnlk, and generally he employed nj for jn, and in one case şn for jn—şnh = jnə. The use of d for t is also common enough: e.g. mds beside mts = matsya, besides a vernacularized mj for mc = maccha; ’dv = Atri, adri, beside ’tr = Atri; ’dby = āṭavya, bds = vatsa, etc.

The above are some of the salient characteristics of Al-Bīrūnī’s method of writing Sanskrit words in the Perso-Arabic (Kufic) writing of his day. There are a number of other points, which can be easily explained by taking note of both Indian speech habits and the Perso-Arabic graphic system. For a study of Indo-Aryan phonology round about 1000 A.D., when the New Indo-Aryan vernaculars were coming into being and when a medieval tradition in Sanskrit pronunciation was already established (the ancient Sanskrit pronunciation as in Old Indo-Aryan, i.e. Vedic times, being transformed in the course of the development of Middle Indo-Aryan and so lost to
the people), Al-Bīrūnī’s transcriptions, in spite of the limitations of
the Perso-Arabic script and the carelessness or want of system of
Al-Bīrūnī himself and the defects or mistakes of the copyist, still
have a great value. (Cf. in this connexion, Suniti Kumar Chatterji,
‘Sanskrit in Perso-Arabic Script: A side-light on the Medieval
Pronunciation of Sanskrit in Kashmir and Northern India’, in Indian
Linguistics (Quarterly Bulletin of the Linguistic Society of India),

Al-Bīrūnī noted that the speech of the Hindus in their daily
life differed from that of the written literature—that is, Prakrit and
Apabhramśa or Bhāṣā (which to him were identical) on the one hand
and Sanskrit on the other presented two different strata. Of the
former he knew only one—the speech of Western Panjab and of
Afghanistan Hindus, which were probably identical in his time, and
was very similar to the speech of Sindh. Evidently he had no notion
of other Prakritic speeches of interior India, and Hindu sojourners
or prisoners in Ghazna from interior India (i.e. the Western and
Eastern Hindi areas) would, as things would tend to show, familiarly
employ the Western Panjab speech, which was not much different
from spoken Western Apabhramśa with which Midlanders and
Easterners were familiar as a great inter-provincial literary vernacular,
the precursor of Braj-bhākhā and Hindi or Hindustani (Hindusthani).
Al-Bīrūnī consciously or unconsciously has given a good number of
these North-Western Indian vernacular words in his book, in place of
the expected Sanskrit; and from these, we can form some idea of
at least the phonology and phonetic habits of this vernacular.
It was a dialect which changed interior (and frequently initial) s
of Prakrit (< Skt. š š s) to h: e.g. ḵr̥w = kroha = Skt. kroṣa;
by’h = Bīyāha = Biāha for Wīwāha = Vīpāsā; āh’ry = āhārī <
āśādha-; bhnd = bahanda for *Wahanda = Vasanta; ḵw’hwr = Sālātura
dhyn = daḥi = daśamtikā; y’hy = yāhī = eāhī < *eaaḥī = ekādaśikā;
dw’h = dwuḥi < dvādaśikā; so ḹrewh, cwehy, pnc’h > trayodaśikā,
caturdaśikā, paṇcadaśikā. In this dialect, also the Old Indo-Aryan
nasal+surd stop or aspirate became nasal+sonant stop or aspirate,
and nasal+sonant stop or aspirate became double nasal: e.g. s’n’g =
*sāṅg(h)a for sāṅkhyā; bhnd = Vasanta, changed in pronunciation to
Wahanda, in all likelihood; s’mnd = Sāmanta; trnj’y = tripaṇcāśikā
(*triyanjāhī); and dwn = *domma = Skt. domba; ’dnpr = *Uddanna-
puri = Uddanḍapuri. Cf. with the above the Modern Panjabi forms
dand = Skt. danta, cambā = Skt. campa, cannā = candana, Sindi
kāndo = kanṭaka, etc., and in the Arabic version of the Mahābhārata
story made before 1000 A.D., which was rendered into Persian and
abridged, and published in this abridged Persian version by Reinaud
from Paris in 1845, we have similarly qnd = Kuntī, *Kundi, and fn =
fn < Paṇṇu = Pāndu. Cf. also Panjabi Canāb = Cannahā <
Candrabhāgā, Candahāā+Persian āb. This dialect also preserved
unassimilated initial groups like **kr, tr** (e.g. **krh = kroha = krosa**, **tryh = tiya = triyā** (> **triya**).

A study of the vernacular words or forms, apart from the professedly Sanskrit ones, in Al-Birūnī’s *Indica* consequently has some useful sideline to throw on the history of the sounds in Panjabi and Sindhi: and this matter, in conjunction with similar contemporary transcriptions of North-Western names and words in Persian and Arabic writers, should be taken in hand for detailed study.

Al-Birūnī made translations from Sanskrit into Arabic; the works he is known to have translated, and the method employed by him in this work, have been indicated by Sachau. He on his own showing made (or got made with the help of his Pandit assistants) translations of some Arabic works into Sanskrit. Sachau has discussed this (§5, Introduction to the Arabic text of the *Indica*). His works on Indological subjects including translations from Sanskrit are mentioned by Sachau, apart from his great work, the *Indica* (pp. xx, xxi, Introduction). He made Sanskrit versions of at least three works—Euclid’s Elements, Ptolemy’s Almagest, and a work of his own on the astrolabe: as Sachau says, ‘Probably he dictated the meanings to his Pandits and they moulded the words into Slokas.’ He appears to have been in touch with Hindu scholars in Kashmir and interior India through these Sanskrit versions of Arabic and Islamic science. But unfortunately all trace of his Sanskrit translations is lost.

In outwardly a very small but very highly significant matter, it seems we can see Al-Birūnī in the *rôle* of a translator into Sanskrit, and as a lover of India and Indian culture, and at the same time a practical supporter of the principle of self-determination among peoples.

After the conquest of Khiva in 1017 by Sulṭān Mahmūd of Ghazna, Al-Birūnī was compelled to remain in Ghazna as a hostage; and he appears to have been treated with respect for his learning, if not actually patronized with royal favour and largesse and facilities for study and research. In any case, Al-Birūnī had no reason to feel specially grateful to his illustrious contemporary; and on the other hand, he complained about the difficulties by way of leisure and funds in carrying on his work. Mahmūd of Ghazna had another great man in his court, the poet Firdausi, who wrote his *magnum opus*, the national epic of Persia, the *Shāh-nāmā*, with hopes of adequate recompense, but who was bitterly disappointed at the end of his labours. The want of sympathy and the opposition of the chief adviser of Mahmūd was largely responsible for Mahmūd’s neglect of these two of the greatest men of his times who were actually in his entourage, viz. Al-Birūnī and Firdausi.

Mahmūd was an efficient ruler, generous and chivalrous, and a great patron of the arts and sciences. He lived in what may be
called the second epoch in the heroic age of both Islam and of Turkdom, and his advocacy of and propagation of Islam in India was actuated by both high motives of religion, such as he understood religion to be, and lust for easy plunder. Like the Frankish Crusaders of a century later, he had not the slightest doubt that he and his Turki warriors were among the elect of God, the chosen knights of Allah, who in fighting and killing, plundering and converting the Hindus and in destroying the abominations of their temples and idols were but working the will of God; and for this service to Allah and Islam they were rewarded with the accumulated treasures of India and slaves from India in this world, and had the assurance of the joys of paradise as their reward in the next. With those motives, he with his strongly organized Turks and their associates, burning with the zeal of Islamic faith, and eager for Lebensraum as a ruling power, was enabled among the disunited, isolated and decadent Hindus with their antiquated methods of fighting to perform, in the words of Al-Biruni himself, ‘wonderful exploits, by which the Hindus became like atoms of dust scattered in all directions, and like a tale of old in the mouth of the people’, and in the course of his marches into India during a period of thirty years and more, ‘utterly ruined the prosperity of the country’. The plundering raids into India by Maḥmūd of Ghazna was the first and most serious calamity that befell the Hindu people ever since their formation; and for the terrible but-shikan or ‘image-breaker’ Maḥmūd, as for one who did the greatest amount of harm to them, the Hindus could not have any affection. A dispassionate Muslim scholar of India like Professor Habib of Aligarh has shown how Maḥmūd’s ‘Turki method’ of trying to spread Islam by force utterly defeated its purpose. This method of ‘blitz’ attack and destruction inaugurated by the Turks in the tenth century against the Hindus and continued by them with vigour in the eleventh and twelfth evoked the following observation from the great Ṣūfī mystic poet of Iran, Jalāluddin Rūmī (died 1274):

Hindūyak-i-hastā-rā tu Turkānā naghmā kun.

‘In the manner of the Turk, do thou plunder life like the wretched Hindu.’

It was gradually realized that this ‘Turki way’ of Maḥmūd, this Turkānā tariqā, was not of any use in winning the people of India, both the upper classes and the masses, to Islam. The other method, that of peaceful persuasion, on the other hand, met with phenomenal success in India—the method or way of the Ṣūfī saint or preacher, Ṣūfiyānā tariqā: of the Ṣūfī miracle-working saint who lived among the Hindu masses and by gentleness and the example of his life of prayer and contemplation and indirect persuasion managed to effect mass conversions of Hindus, in places far away from centres of Islamic political power in India. So long as Maḥmūd found it
necessary to consolidate the Indian province of the Panjab which he added to his empire in 1014, he did not cease from attacking and fighting the Hindus.

Some time after annexing the Panjab to his empire, this great enemy of the Hindus and of their religion and culture, this bukhān, issued a special type of coins for his Indian province; and on these coins in the matter of the legend something was done which was never done before and after in the annals of Islamic numismatics. In the Muslim coins of the specific Islamic type established from the time of the Omayyads, we have these things as almost indispensable: (i) the kalima or the Islamic creed, lā-ʾilāha ʾillā-llāh, Muḥammad rasūl-lāh ‘there is no god except Allāh, and Muhammad is His prophet’ in Arabic; (ii) the name of the king who issues the coin, with or without his titles; (iii) mention of the place (or mint) where the coin was struck, also in Arabic: ʿduriba (or ẓuriba) hadha al-dirham (or al-dīnār) ʿti . . . . . .
′this dirham (silver coin) or dīnār (gold coin) has been struck in . . . . . . ′(iv) mention of the date, in the Hijra era. The Indian coins of Mahmūd, we find to be bilingual, in the first instance. On one side we have everything in Arabic, as is usual in coins of Muslim rulers; and on the other side, we have, and this is specially to be noted, the translation of the Arabic legend in Sanskrit. For the first (and perhaps for the last) time in the history of Islam a Muslim sovereign has allowed a translation of his religious creed into a language which is the vehicle of a religion and culture which he has been taught to be antagonistic to Islam. The translation of the kalima runs thus: avyaktam ekam, Muhammada avatāra. This is not, however, a literal translation of the Arabic; Muslims would at first sight object particularly to the second part, for Muḥammad is not regarded as an avatāra or incarnation of God, he was as human as any of his followers, contemporaneous or future. But it should be borne in mind that in the tenth-eleventh centuries, Islam in Persia and Afghanistan was not the simple creed of the Qur'ān—it was already suffused and coloured with the mysticism of Sufism. Muslims in India are even today taught from thousands of pulpits by Wāʾiz-ēs or preachers on the occasion of a religious ceremony like the Miʿlād Sharīf or Maulud Sharif or the celebration of the birthday of the prophet that a special spirit of light, known as the Nūr-i-Muḥammadi or ‘the Light of Muhammad’, was created by God even before the creation of the world, and it was resting in Heaven for æons, and then with the help of portions of this spirit of light the angels and other creatures were created; and it was finally this Light of Muḥammad which descended upon earth and incarnated itself as the future prophet in the womb of Amina. All this miraculous legend was a part of the Muhammad story or the ‘Golden Legend’ of Muḥammad as it came to India. So that to describe
Muḥammad as an *avatāra* or incarnation of God was not wrong from this point of view, and such a description would fit in well with the legendary account which popular Ṣūfi and other preachers must have started giving to all and sundry and particularly to the actual and possible converts from among the Hindus in the Panjab.

We shall revert to the translation of the first part of the *kalima* later.

The other Arabic inscriptions giving the names of the king and of the mint and the date have been very carefully and literally translated: *ayam tānkah Muhamadapure ghatte āhatah* 'this silver coin has been struck in the *ghatta* or mint at Muhammadapur, i.e. Lahore'; *Nṛpatī Mahamūd* 'King Mahmūd'; *Jināyana-samvati* . . . . . . . 'in the year of the passing (*ayana*) of the *Jīna (= Prophet)* . . . . . . . The translation of the name *Ḥiğrah*, or 'Flight, or Passage', properly *Ḥiğratu-n-Nabī* 'the flight of the Prophet' shows a remarkable care or anxiety to bring the meaning of even the era of Islam which was new to the Hindus and so to make them curious about it. A number of examples of this bilingual coin have been found, and they show different dates (e.g. 412 A.H., 419 A.H. = 1021 A.D., 1028 A.D.) and slightly different readings; in one of them the expression *bi-smi-llāh duriba* occurs, and *bi-smi-llāh* here has been correctly rendered by *avvakṭiya-nāme*. (References: Edward Thomas, 'On the Coins of the Kings of Ghazni (961–1171 A.D.)', London, 1848, p. 57; Chas. J. Rodgers, 'Catalogue of Coins collected by Chas. J. Rodgers and purchased by the Government of the Panjab', Part II, Miscellaneous Muhammadan Coins, Panjab Government Publication, Calcutta, 1894, p. 28, Coins No. 38ff.; Stanley Lane Poole, 'Catalogue of Coins in the British Museum', referred to by K. N. Dikshit; K. N. Dikshit, 'A Note on the Bilingual Coins of Sultan Mahmud of Ghazni', JRASB., Letters, Vol. II, 1936, No. 3, issued 1938, Numismatic Supplement, p. 29; Stanley Lane Poole, 'Mediaeval India' ('Story of the Nations' series), London, 1906, p. 27 for picture of an example of this coin struck in 418 A.H. = 1027 A.D.; Jayachandra Vidyālankār, *Itihās-Praweś* (in Hindi), Vol. I, Allahabad, 1939, pp. 213, 216.)

The promulgation of coins with legends in Sanskrit, with even a Sanskrit translation of the holy creed of Islam, was certainly, from orthodox Muslim point of view coloured as it used to be (and still largely is) by anti-Shuʿubiya (i.e. pro-Arab) tendencies even among non-Arabs, a very great concession to the tax-paying infidel subjects conquered by the arms of Islam. One wonders how Mahmūd of Ghazna, who spent thirty years of his life in fighting the Hindus, made this great allowance for his newly conquered Hindu subjects by bringing to them the message of Islam through their own language; and, in giving their language a place on the coins of the realm, further he seemed to stabilize them in their nationalism. Probably it
was the expression of an astute political sagacity—he did not want to antagonize the large Hindu population who after the annexation of the Panjab formed such a large percentage of his subjects. It might have been a spontaneous gesture of magnanimity or liberality in ideas.

But with the background of Al-Bīrūnī’s *Indica*, and the presence of his cultured and sympathetic personality in the entourage of Mahmūd at Ghazna, one would like to think that Al-Bīrūnī deserves the credit for this friendly and cosmopolitan spirit towards the Hindus, this expression of respect for the learning and culture of Hindu India by recognizing their language. No Brahman or Sanskrit scholar from India could be expected to be in any way connected with it. Mahmūd of Ghazna, it is said, was on one occasion presented with some Hindi, i.e. Apabhramśa verses from a Rajput prince in which the bravery of a number of Turki soldiers in tackling some elephants which were let loose was celebrated, and it is further narrated that having got these verses translated by learned men (i.e. Hindi or Apabhramśa-knowing scholars) who were about him, he was delighted with them. But it would be too much to expect that a Brahman from India, or some other Hindu, would be responsible ultimately for the Sanskrit legends on Mahmūd’s Indian coins.

If Sulṭān Mahmūd could be persuaded by anybody in this matter, it could be only by Al-Bīrūnī. And the way in which the translations of the Arabic legends were made into Sanskrit certainly indicates the hand of Al-Bīrūnī. *Jina* has been employed as the equivalent of the Arabic *Nābī* or *Rasūl* = ‘Prophet’. Al-Bīrūnī in his work (MS. p. 57, l. 14, and p. 121, l. 17) uses the word *jina* twice, and this he uses as an equivalent of Buddha (*Jīna, wahuwa al-Buddha*). He knew that Buddha was just the founder of the sect of red-robed Shamansians or *Sramaṇas*, and possibly he thought the less common word *jina* might be a suitable word (in the absence of any current one) for ‘Prophet’. Then, from the translation of the first part of the *kalima*, we can see Al-Bīrūnī’s hand. ‘There is no god but Allāh’ has been rendered as *avyaktam ekam*, ‘the Unmanifest is One’. This is not at all a literal translation; it is at best a roundabout and explanatory one. But it has its justification from Al-Bīrūnī’s point of view. An *ilāh* in Arabic was more often a tangible, visible object of veneration, a god represented by an idol, rather than the abstract idea of divinity; and *Allāh* was the reverse of this kind of *ilāh* or visible god—the Divinity without any corporeal form. Such a Divinity, without form, alone existed: there was no *ilāh* or god to be considered. So ‘the Formless (Divinity) is One’ was a translation of the spirit of the first part of the *kalima*, with Islam’s uncompromising aniconism; and such a translation was very near to the language of Hindu spiritualism or philosophy, which revealed
in passages like ekaṁ sat (‘that which is, is One’), and ekaṁ evādvitiyaṁ (‘the One without a second’).

Moreover, the word Avyakta was understood by Al-Bīrūnī to mean specially ‘the one without form or shape’ (‘bykt ‘y šy’ bl’ šwrtt = avyakta, ayyu šayyun bilā šūrat’a). This of course is only one of the senses of the word, and not the most prominent. The proper meaning is ‘unmanifested’: and this manifestation is not merely through form, but it embraces all other kinds of manifestation or expression tangible by one or more senses. Avyakta as a translation of Allāh is not very happy; but if we think that formlessness or absence of shape (śūrat) is the fundamental characteristic of Allāh, and if we select among the very wide range of meanings of the Sanskrit word avyakta only this one, namely, ‘without form’, then this rendering is allowable.

One is reminded of the controversy which took place among scholars in China, Buddhists headed by Hiuen Ts’ang and Taoists, over the proper Sanskrit translation of one of the fundamental terms in Chinese philosophy, namely, the word Tao, which is usually translated into English (taking the fundamental pictographic and ideographic sense of the character in the Chinese script representing it) as ‘Way’. The Taoists wanted to render it by Sanskrit Bodhi = ‘Superior Wisdom, Perception’; while Hiuen Ts’ang, who did not have much sympathy for the Taoist doctrine, insisted that the Sanskrit Mārga = ‘Path (leading to what one seeks as destination)’ was the only proper equivalent. They did not come to any decision: although it would appear the Vedic word Ṛta, meaning ‘Cosmic Order, Cosmic Law, Cosmic Path’ from an original sense of ‘Way’, from root r ‘to go,’ would be the best Sanskrit equivalent.

The translation of Allāh by Avyakta on the coin of Maḥmūd in this sense, which we find registered in his Indica, would suggest that Al-Bīrūnī was responsible, at least for the Sanskrit legend. And it is not even unlikely that Al-Bīrūnī was personally responsible for the suggestion. It will be conceded from what has been said above that this is not too much to assume. And this would place Al-Bīrūnī in a new light: as a lover of Sanskrit, and as a practical applier of the principle of self-determination in matters of language and culture for peoples, particularly those with a high civilization of their own. Buddha, when he declared that people everywhere were to benefit by his teachings through their own languages, gave a great charter of freedom to all and sundry even when becoming his votaries. The insistence on a particular sacred language for prayer and preaching denied this great freedom to many peoples. It was remarkable that this great freedom should be made accessible to the Hindus of the Panjāb under foreign rule in the eleventh century A.D.; and it is very likely that a cosmopolitan scholar and liberal spirit like Al-Bīrūnī, as we have tried to show above, should at least
be partly responsible for it. And after the expiry of nearly ten
centuries, we can only offer our tribute of respect to the memory of
a great man, who was not only a great scholar but also a most liberal
internationalist for his age, one of the beacon-lights in the path of
man's intellectual progress.

NOTE.—After the above article was in print, my esteemed friend
Dr. Vāsudeva Śaraṇa Agravāla of the Archaeological Survey of
India drew my attention to his reading of the Sanskrit legend in the
coins of Maḥmūd of Ghazna, which was first published in the ‘Journal
of the Numismatic Society of India’, Vol. V, Part II and then in
‘Journal of the United Provinces Historical Society,’ Vol. XVII,
Part II, December 1944, Lucknow, pp. 45–54. Dr. Agravāla has
reviewed previous readings, which he generally accepts; only for
Jināyana-saṃvatī as a translation of Hijra year, Dr. Agravāla reads
Tājikiyera-saṃvatī = ‘the Tājika, i.e. Arab year’, Tājiku for ‘Arab’
being from the Persian Tāzī, Tāzīk. This reading appears to be
correct, only the affix -yera, in spite of Dr. Agravāla’s explanation,
still presents some difficulties. About the Sanskrit rendering, he
also thinks it possible that it was done by the great Al-Bīrūnī him-
self.
AL-BĪRŪṆĪ ET L’ALCHIMIE INDIENNE

Par

JEAN FILLIOZAT,

Directeur d’études à l’Ecole des Hautes Études
Secrétaire de la Société Asiatique, Paris.

L’oeuvre du grand Al-Bīrūnī est une des sources essentielles de
notre connaissance de l’Inde du haut Moyen-Âge. L’analyse appro-
profondie qu’en a donnée, le premier, Reinaud, dans son Mémoire géogra-
phique, historique et scientifique sur l’Inde antérieurement au milieu
du XIe siècle de l’ère chrétienne, d’après les écrivains arabes, persans et
chinois (Mémoires de l’Institut National de France, Académie des
565–566) a marqué une date dans l’histoire de l’indologie et, à
quelques mois près, le centenaire de cette œuvre, publiée à Paris
en 1849, se trouve coïncider avec le millénaire du grand indieniste
arabe dont elle a fait connaître toute la valeur.

Les précieuses édition et traduction de l’Inde d’Al-Bīrūnī par
Edward C. Sachau (1886 et 1888) ont livré tout le détail de ses
informations et sont depuis soixante ans des instruments de travail
fondamentaux. Mais elles n’ont pas rendu inutile le Mémoire de
Reinaud, parce que celui-ci confrontait les données d’Al-Bīrūnī
avec les témoignages arabes, persans et chinois et avec les données
indiennes elles-mêmes, et sa méthode demeurera toujours indispen-
sable pour bien interpréter le texte d’Al-Bīrūnī.

Pour l’avoir méconnue, on a tiré de ce texte une notion grave-
ment erronée sur l’histoire de l’alchimie indienne.

Plusieurs des textes les plus célèbres de cette alchimie sont at-
tribués par la tradition à Nāgārjuna, qualifié à cette occasion de
siddha, ‘Parfait’, et placé ainsi dans la catégorie des savants sur-
humains dont des listes variées sont données et qui comprennent
des personnages qu’il est impossible de considérer comme très
anciens. Par ailleurs, divers textes tendent à identifier l’alchimiste
Nāgārjuna avec le patriarche bouddhiste du même nom, contem-
porain de Kanishka ou, en tout cas, appartenant à un des premiers
siècles de l’ère chrétienne. Or, une indication d’Al-Bīrūnī a paru
infirmer cette identification et ramener l’alchimiste Nāgārjuna au
Xe siècle. Al-Bīrūnī donne, en effet, comme un fameux alchimiste
indien, auteur d’un traité important, un Nāgārjuna natif du fort
de Daihak près de Somnāth, et ayant vécu environ une centaine
d’années avant son temps, donc au Xe siècle.

Cette indication a été acceptée telle quelle, notamment par
Winternitz (Geschichte der indischen Litteratur, t. III, Leipzig, 1920,
Il en résulterait que le Nāgārjuna considéré par la tradition indienne comme un des fondateurs de l'alchimie dans l'Inde, serait non pas le personnage bouddhiste célèbre, mais un homonyme tardif, que la tradition le confondant avec ce personnage bouddhiste serait postérieure au Xᵉ siècle et que l'alchimie indienne ne se serait formée qu'à cette époque, en dépit de ses prétentions à l'antiquité. Cette alchimie serait donc plus récente que les débuts de l'alchimie arabe et pourrait avoir été constituée à l'imitation de celle-ci.


Il ne s'ensuit pas qu'Al-Bīrūnī se soit trompé en donnant un Nāgārjuna relativement récent comme un auteur important d'al-chimie indienne, ni que le patriarche bouddhiste Nāgārjuna ait réellement été un grand alchimiste. Mais il en résulte qu'on ne peut tirer argument de l'époque où vivait le Nāgārjuna d'Al-Bīrūnī pour révoquer en doute la tradition indienne d'après laquelle le patriarche Nāgārjuna aurait déjà pratiqué l'alchimie, et pour faire descendre jusqu'à une époque tardive les débuts de l'alchimie indienne. Le Nāgārjuna d'Al-Bīrūnī ne peut être qu'un homonyme du personnage illustre dont la réputation d'alchimiste était faite depuis des siècles.

Al-Bīrūnī, d'ailleurs ne doutait pas que l'origine de l'alchimie indienne ne remontât beaucoup plus haut que l'époque du Nāgārjuna qu'il mentionnait. Il a parlé, en effet, d'un autre alchimiste, Vyāḍī, en le faisant vivre à Újain au temps du roi Vikramāditya (trad. Sachau, I, 189). Il distinguait deux rois de ce nom, le fondateur de l'ère "vikrama" et le vainqueur du Saka fondateur lui-même de l'ère de 137 ans plus récente (II, 6), mais il a précisé, à propos de Vyāḍī, que le Vikramāditya dont il était contemporain était le fondateur de l'ère portant son nom. Comme il connaissait l'antiquité de cette ère (57 avant J. C.), il admettait donc l'ancienneté de Vyāḍī. De plus, il ne faisait pas de Vyāḍī un fondateur de la science qu'il avait cultivée. Il racontait, en effet, une légende d'après laquelle Vyāḍī s'était d'abord ruiné en vaines tentatives pour réaliser les prescriptions d'un livre déjà existant d'alchimie qu'il avait mal compris. Vyāḍī aurait interprété le composé raktāmala comme signifiant "myrobolan (amala) rouge (rakta)", alors qu'il aurait fallu comprendre "sang humain et huile", ce qu'il aurait par la suite reconnu fortuitement, des gouttes de son sang étant tombées de sa
tête dans son creuset alors qu’il s’était blessé à la tête après s’y être brûlé et avoir huilé la brûlure (Sachau, I, 190).1

Bien entendu, Al-Bīrūnī n’a pas garanti l’authenticité de la légende, mais il nous suffit ici de constater qu’il n’y a dénoncé aucun anachronisme.

En ce qui concerne l’existence d’un auteur alchimique du nom de Vyāḍī, nous pouvons confirmer l’information d’Al-Bīrūnī. Sachau ne connaissait sous ce nom qu’un lexicographe (II, 315), mais le Tanjur tibétain contient la traduction d’un Rasasiddhīsāstra, qui ne semble pas nous être conservé en sanskrit, qui est attribué à Vyāḍī et dont un extrait a fait, lui aussi, l’objet d’une traduction tibétaine (Mdo 'grel, CXXIII, 1 et 3, cf. P. Cordier, Catalogue du fonds tibétain de la Bibliothèque Nationale, t. III, Paris, 1915, p. 473). On a signalé de plus que Vyāḍī est cité comme autorité dans le Rasaratnasamuccaya et le Rasaratnapradīpa (cf. G. N. Mukhopadhyaya, History of Indian Medicine, t. III, Calcutta, 1929, p. 758). M. G. N. Mukhopadhyaya le suppose postérieur à Pāṇini (en l’identifiant au grammairien du même nom) et antérieur à Nāgārjuna, et il le place au Vᵉ siècle avant J. C. Nous n’avons pas, toutefois, de preuve qu’il faille identifier l’alchimiste au grammairien. Une indication d’après laquelle celui-ci habitait les Vindhya, semble même le distinguer de l’alchimiste d’Ujain, quoiqu’un même personnage ait pu vivre successivement en des lieux différents. On pourrait plutôt, mais encore sans preuve décisive, chercher à identifier l’alchimiste Vyāḍī avec l’auteur de même nom d’ouvrages tantriques traduits dans le Tanjur (Rgyud 'grel, LXXIV, 34, 37 et LXXVI 29 et 30). Nous ne pouvons pas non plus le faire remonter au Vᵉ siècle avant notre ère sans nous heurter au témoignage de la tradition notée par Al-Bīrūnī qui le place au Iᵉʳ. Il se pourrait seulement qu’il eût été antérieur à Nāgārjuna si cette tradition était certaine, mais l’attribution d’un auteur à l’époque de Vikramāditya est un usage fréquent et arbitraire (plusieurs auteurs réputés de ce temps, sont en réalité des premiers siècles de l’ère chrétienne et non contemporains les uns des autres). Vyāḍī se trouve nommé juste avant Nāgārjuna dans la liste d’alchimistes qui est donnée au début du Rasaratnasamuccaya de Vāgbhaṭa (I, 3) et c’est encore lui qui apparaît sans doute sous le nom de Vyālacārya en tête d’une autre liste similaire du même ouvrage (VI, 57), où Nāgārjuna occupe le cinquième rang. Mais on ne peut considérer l’ordre adopté dans ces listes comme chronologique car, pour un bon nombre de noms,

1 Sachau (II, 315) n’a pas vu comment rakāmala pouvait signifier ‘sang et huile’, mais rakā signifie normalement en sanskrit ‘sang’ en même temps que ‘rouge’. Seul amala fait difficulté, ne signifiant pas ‘huile’ mais ‘pur.’ Il faut admettre que le texte faisait l’ellipse du mot tāila, ‘de la pure’ étant mis pour ‘de l’huile pure’. Ce style équivoque est bien dans la manière des traités indiens d’alchimie.
il diffère complètement d’une liste à l’autre (les noms mêmes ne concordent pas tous).

L'étude approfondie de la littérature alchimique indienne, telle que l’a inaugurée Praphulla Chandra Ray, pourra seule élucider des questions de ce genre. En attendant, les données d’Al-Bīrūnī nous sont précieuses, à condition de les confronter avec celles d’autres sources. Cependant le caractère ésotérique de la tradition alchimique indienne les a rendues plus difficiles à acquérir pour Al-Bīrūnī et moins sûres que dans d’autres domaines. C’est ainsi qu’Al-Bīrūnī a conçu pour les enseignements de cette tradition un mépris qui s’explique parce qu’il n’y voyait que vaine recherche de richesses et de pouvoir magique et parce qu’il n’a pas pu s’informer avec précision des méthodes employées. La partie chimique de cette tradition, qui n’est nullement sans valeur, ne lui a pas été présentée et il n’en a pu connaître que la partie alchimique.

Ceci résulte du fait qu’il dit lui-même n’avoir pu déterminer avec certitude si les Indiens opéraient surtout sur une matière minérale, animale ou végétale, quoiqu’il lui ait paru que c’était plutôt sur une matière minérale. Ceci résulte aussi de fausses indications qui lui ont été données. C’est ainsi qu’il traduit rasa par “or” (Sachau I, 188), tandis qu’il s’agit soit du “mercure”, soit du cinabre, soit de toute une série de “corps essentiels”, c’est à dire trouvés à l’état natif tels que le cinabre (rasa, daraka, hingula), le mica (abhra), les pyrites (mākhika) etc. . Il donne aussi tālaka (I, 188) comme le nom indien du talc (arabe tālq) alors que tālaka désigne en sanskrit l’orpiment qui se présente, il est vrai, en lamelles comme le talc, mais qui est jaune (cf. Rasaratnasamuccaya III, 66 et suivants).

De ce fait, ce sont surtout ses témoignages sur les légendes indiennes relatives aux alchimistes qui nous sont utiles. Outre celles que nous avons rappelées sur un Nāgarjuna et sur Vyādi, il nous en a préservé une autre dont un pendant exact est connu au Cambodge dans l’histoire du Roi Lépreux d’Angkor Thom.

La tradition populaire cambodgienne raconte en effet que ce roi, invité par un brahmane alchimiste à se plonger pour se guérir dans un bain médicinal bouillant, aurait voulu que le brahmane s’y plongeât le premier. Celui-ci aurait accepté à la condition que le roi jetât sur lui, à un moment voulu, une certaine poudre. Le roi, après avoir promis, s’abstint de jeter la poudre et le brahmane mourut (Cf. G. Porée et E. Maspero, Moeurs et coutumes des Khmères, Paris, 1938, p. 73).

Al-Bīrūnī raconte de son côté (I, 191) le même événement mais à la différence que le roi n’est pas lépreux. Il est invité par un alchimiste à plonger dans une huile bouillante préparée pour le rendre immortel, victorieux et invincible. Il n’ose pas et accepte que l’alchimiste s’y plonge lui-même tandis qu’il jetterait divers paquets
de drogues successivement dans le bain. Mais, craignant que l’homme ne ressorte immortel, victorieux et invincible, il s’abstient de jeter le dernier paquet. L’homme meurt et se trouve changé en un bloc d’argent. La scène est localisée à Dhāra, capitale du Mālava.

L’histoire indienne d’Al-Bīrūnī est plus claire que son pendant cambodgien où le mobile qui empêche le roi de tenir sa promesse reste obscur, mais il s’agit manifestement d’une même légende, apparemment transportée de l’Inde au Cambodge. Ainsi, une fois de plus, le précieux texte d’Al-Bīrūnī reçoit de la comparaison avec des données qui lui sont étrangères un surcroît d’intérêt et de portée.
LE CITAZIONI DELLE LEGGI PLATONICHE IN AL-BİRŪNĪ

Per

FRANCESCO GABRIELI,

Professore di lingua e letteratura araba nell’ Università di Roma.

È noto che l’India di al-Bīrūnī racchiude numerose citazioni di opere classiche greche,1 le più antiche delle quali sono il Fedone, il Timeo e le Leggi di Platone. Ignaro a quanto pare del greco, e con solo qualche superficiale conoscenza di siriaco, al-Bīrūnī doveva attingere queste citazioni a traduzioni arabe di quei classici, condotte direttamente o per trafila siriaca, la cui familiarità attesta nel grande scienziato musulmano la sua sete di sapere anche in quei campi a cui per ragioni linguistiche gli era precluso un diretto accesso. Queste versioni arabe di scritti greci, più che il puro testo degli originali, ne riproducono di solito delle parafrasi o commenti, o redazioni in cui testo e commento sono mescolati insieme, talora con più o meno profondi svisamenti del testo primitivo. Ciò, per limitarci qui alle citazioni platoniche, è stato dimostrato dal Sachau per il Fedone e il Timeo, di cui al-Bīrūnī sembra aver avuto dinanzi tali edizioni parafrastiche.2 Questa nostra nota si propone di esaminare le citazioni in India delle Leggi, per chiarire se anche per esse sia da presupporre in al-Bīrūnī l’uso di una parafrasi del genere, o d’una vera e propria versione relativamente fedele.

Osserviamo anzitutto che a differenza degli altri due scritti platonici, per tutte e tre le citazioni delle Leggi in al-Bīrūnī (sette, se si consideri la prima più lunga e multipla scomposta nei suoi singoli elementi), è stato possibile indicare con esattezza il corrispondente luogo dell’originale. V’è anche una quarta citazione, (190, 9–12), sulla genealogia di Ippocrate, che manca nel testo greco, ma al-Bīrūnī stesso ci avverte che era inclusa fuor del libro (khāriĝa l-kiṭābi) a mo’ d’appendice, e ignoriamo con qual nesso, nell’esemplare di cui disponeva. Questo si iniziava, con l’esatta divisione in libri, conservando non solo la forma dialogica ma la cara terizzazione degli interlocutori (India 51, 9–12 = Leges 624):

(1a) Dice lo straniero Ateniese:—Chi ritieni sia stato causa per voi della istituzione delle Leggi, un essere supremo

---

1 Vedine l’elenco nella versione del Sachau, Alberuni’s India, I, XLI.
2 Alberuni’s India, II, 271-72, 277-78. Cfr Rosenthal, On the Knowledge of Plato’s Philosophy in the Islamic World, in Islamic Culture, XIV (1940), 395: ‘he (Biruni) too had not a pure, untampered text of Plato’s works before him, but, may be, a commented paraphrase.’
(ba'd al-malā'ikah) o un uomo? Risponde lo Cnosio:—
Un essere superno; e in verità per noi Zeus, mentre i
Lacedemoni sostengono sia stato per loro Apollo;
Segue il passo, alquanto franteso, sulla totalità della virtù
(πρὸς πᾶσαν ἀρετήν), che il legislatore deve aver di mira (51, 12-13 =
Leges 630 c):

(1b) 'Il divino legislatore deve porre a suo scopo, nell'istituire
le leggi, l'acquisto delle maggiori virtù e l'estremo
della giustizia'.

e, assai aderente al testo greco, la lode della legislazione cretese, con
la distinzione in beni umani e divini (51, 13-15 = Leges 631b):

(1c) 'tali appunto (per giustizia e virtù) l'autore descrive le
leggi dei Cretesi, che rendon perfetta la felicità di chi
rettamente le usa, poiché egli con esse viene a possedere
tutti i beni umani connessi con quelli divini'.

Molto interessanti i due passi del secondo libro, che completano
questo primo gruppo di citazioni, e investono nel complesso felicemen-
te, salvo l'ultimo punto, materia prettamente greca (51, 15-20 =
Leges 653 cd+653e—654a):

(1d) 'Dice l'Atheniese nel secondo libro:—Gli Dei, avendo
avuto pietà del genere umano, nato ai travagli della
vita, stabilirono per gli uomini delle festività in onor
degli Dei, delle Muse (Sakīnā),1 di Apollo loro duce,
e di Dioniso che donò agli uomini il vino come rimedio
all'amarezza della vecchiaia, perché tornassero giovani
dimenticando la tristezza, e si mutasse l'animo loro
da angustia in salute'.

(1e) 'T: dice anche che essi ispiraron loro le norme della danza
e del ritmo, per compensarli dei travagli, e perché
si abituassero con loro nelle festività e nelle gioie; e
perciò un genere di musica, in allusione alle preghiere
agli Dei, fu chiamato "inni di lode"'.

Dal terzo libro è la citazione, o meglio riassunto della pagina
platonica, sugli antichi cataclismi e spopolamenti della terra, e sullo


2 Qui è del tutto irriconoscibile l'etimologia platonica in 654a: χοροῦν τε ᾧνομακοῦν τὸ παρὰ τῆς χαρᾶς ἐμφυτον ὄνομα. Ci si potrebbe poi domandare se quel fit r-ramz del testo Sachau non sarebbe forse da leggere fit-s-zamr: 'musica auletica' per la preghiere agli Dei.
stato innocente e felice dell'umanità all'alba della sua storia (193, 11–15 = Leges 677a-b, 678e–679b). Della forma dialogica si serba ancora traccia, benché inesattamente, chè nell'originale tutte le affermazioni sotto riportate sono in bocca all'Ateniese:

(2) ‘Dice l’Ateniese nel terzo libro che ci furono nella terra diluvi e morbi e cataclismi, in cui non si salvarono del genere umano se non pastori e montanari; furono, questi superstiti della specie, inesperti di frode e desiderio di sopraffare. E, dice lo Chnosio che essi da principio si amavano schiettamente fra loro, per la solitudine del mondo deserto, e perchè non era loro angusto lo spazio,1 nè li obbligava a darsi da fare (per sostenersi); non esisteva presso di loro indigenza, ed essi non avevano possedimenti nè beni,2 nè avarizia nè argento nè oro. Non v’eran tra loro nè ricchi nè poveri. E se trovassimo loro scritti, ne abbonderebbero le testimonianze’

Assai meno felice di questo passo, ove l’originale è inteso e riassunto ottimamente, è l’ultima citazione dal libro quarto, sulla gerarchia degli onori dovuti agli Dei patrii, ai demoni, eroi e genitori (59, 17–19 = Leges 717 b-c):

(3) ‘È doveroso per chi rende i pieni onori (alla divinità) di prendersi a cuore il culto degli Dei e degli eroi (o dèmoni, Sahināt), e di non porre idoli particolari a capo degli Dei patrii; quindi gli onori dovuti ai genitori da vivi sono tra i massimi doveri, nella misura del possibile’

Per giudicare della relativa aderenza all’originale di queste citazioni in al-Bīrūnī, può essere interessante confrontarle con i relativi passi del Sommario delle Leggi di al-Fārābī (ms 1429 della Biblioteca di Leida), di cui è in preparazione l’edizione nel Plato Arabus di Oxford. Diamo qui tradotti di seguito i vari luoghi:


(1b) fol. 3: ‘Spiega come il proposito del legislatore in ciò che escogita e tocca sia il desiderio del favore divino e il

1 Il τροφή e νουμή del greco farebbe inclinare a leggere qhidhā'uhum in luogo di 'arā'uhum, se non vi fosse l'immagine del āqqa bihim, che esige appunto un nome di luogo.

2 Da leggere certo ‘aqār (olcheiēs και οἰκεία) anziché 'iqād (Sachau traduce ‘contract’, ma il plurale di 'aqād è 'iqād, e non è certo da pensare a un infinito).
conseguimento del premio celeste e dell’altra vita, e il procacciamento della somma virtù."

(1c) fol. 3: (manca la menzione delle leggi di Creta) ‘Divide poi le virtù, e spiega che ve ne sono di umane e divine’

(1d-e) fol. 6: ‘Il legislatore stabilì giorni e tempi festivi con cui gli uomini si dilettassero, e che fossero loro divini piaceri, e così i generi musicali cui dettero corso per la naturale inclinazione in ciò nota, e per un divino piacere. È adduce esempi noti presso di loro, come la danza e il suono dei flauti.’

(2) fol. 9: ‘(la legge si oblitera) per accidenti sulla terra, come diluvi e malattie mortali, che estinguono gli uomini. Cita poi in esempio il diluvio, con cui furono sommerse le altre città, e cominciò poi a raccogliersi e crescere una nuova. È in principio quegli uomini ebbero costumi lodevoli, che poi, col crescere della moltitudine, mutarono; in quel tempo, cioè dopo il diluvio, si guardavano tra loro con volto lieto e benigno, ed animo amico, ma poi, crescendo di numero, cominciò a poco a poco a crescere fra loro l’invidia.’

(3) fol. 13: ‘Si volge poi a parlare dei figli e dei padri, dei loro doveri ed uffici, e come li adempiano ecc.’

Un confronto fra questi estratti di al-Fārābī e le relative citazioni di al-Bīrūnī è tutto a vantaggio di queste ultime. Ciò è certo in parte dovuto al carattere compendio di dell’operetta farabiana, ma anche a un assai maggior contatto con l’originale che la fonte di al-Bīrūnī rivela: si vedano in particolare 1a, 1c, 2. Gli interlocutori sono meglio specificati, la forma dialogica, subito perduta in al-Fārābī, lascia ancor qualche traccia in Bīrūnī. Se possedessimo intera la fonte di questo, come intero abbiamo il compendio di al-Fārābī (che conosce però solo i primi nove libri delle Leggi), tale divario qualitativo apparirebbe probabilmente ancor maggiore.

Concludendo, la redazione araba delle Leggi di cui si servì al-Bīrūnī (e che potrebbe esser quella di Hunain ibn Ishāq o di Yaḥyā ibn ‘Adī, ricordate dal Fihrist)1 ci sembra da questi saggi una vera e propria versione (s’intende, come al solito, piuttosto libera e qua e là parafrastica), anziché una sistematica parafrasi o un commento, quale fan presumere alcune delle citazioni del Fedone e soprattutto quelle del Timo, nell’opera biruniana. Almeno per quanto riguarda le Leggi, l’autore dell’India ebbe forse dinanzi un Platone più genuino che non il ‘Maestro secondo’ al-Fārābī, il caposcuola del (neo) platonismo nel mondo musulmano.

---

1 Fihrist 246. Per quella di Hunain, vedi anche Bergstraesser, in Abhand lungen für die Kunde des Morgenlandes, XVII (1925) 50 (fi s-sunan).
REMARKS ON AL-BIRUNI’S QUOTATIONS FROM
SANSKRIT TEXTS

By

PROF. DR. J. GONDA,

Utrecht

As is well known, Al-Biruni gives a list of names of the eighteen Purânas, which is of interest to students of Sanskrit literature, because it shows that these texts existed in the first half of the eleventh century. Of this huge mass of literature the Arabic author has only consulted parts of the Matsya, Āditya, Vāyu and Viṣṇu Purâṇas, and, also, the Viṣṇudharmottara. Now, his quotations from these works do not always tally with the Sanskrit texts which we possess in our editions.

This fact has, of course, been stated by Sachau in the copious annotations added to his translation of Al-Biruni’s admirable ‘History of India’. It would, however, appear to me that the learned translator has put too many question-marks in his commentary. Now that we have more texts at our disposal and have gained a deeper insight into the Puranic traditions and the history of this kind of literature, it is possible to give some additions and to propose some corrections on his notes. In most cases these corrections remove any doubt as to Al-Biruni’s accuracy and familiarity with the texts which he consulted.

Whereas, for instance, Sachau must confess that he did not know the Sanskrit original of the Viṣṇu-Dharma quoted by the Iranian scholar, and stated that it is totally different from the Viṣṇu-Smṛti or Vaiṣṇava-Dharmaśāstra, translated by Jolly, other scholars have seen that this work is in fact identical with the Viṣṇudharmottara-Purâṇa, as has been surmised by Sachau himself at the end of his note.

‘When, at the end of the yuga, the evil will have reached its highest pitch’, Al-Biruni says in accordance with this Purâṇa, ‘there will come forward Garga, the son of JŚV, the Brahman, i.e. Kali, after whom this yuga is called....’ And further on he

2 Sachau, o.c., II, pp. 275f.
3 I refer to M. Winternitz, Geschichte der indischen Litteratur, p. 446.
4 Tarikh’al-Hind, XLIII, p. 192; Sachau, I, p. 382.
5 XLVI, p. 199; I, p. 397.
quotes from the Viṣṇu-Purāṇa: ‘. . . in the Kaliyuga, (Viṣṇu) in the shape of Kali, the son of J-Ś-V, the Brahman (will appear) to kill all, and to make the cycle of the yugas begin anew.’

Now, this name of J-Ś-V, which puzzled Sachau, is, in fact, not in the passage of the Viṣṇu-Purāṇa quoted by the German translator, viz. 3, 2, 57f., which runs as follows: kaler ante punar hariḥ/ kalkisvarūpi durṣṭiṁ mārgaṁ śhāpayati prabhuh. It cannot represent Yaśodā,¹ and is, in my opinion, identical with Viṣṇuyāsas, who, according to the same Purāṇa and other texts, was the father of Kalkin—for Viṣṇu’s tenth avatāra, which is yet to come, is, of course, meant by Kali in Al-Biruni’s text—: Vi. Pur. 4, 24, 26 ‘when the close of the Kali age shall be near, a part (aṁśa) of bhagavat Vāsudeva. . . . will be born in the house of the eminent brahman Viṣṇuyāsas. . . . appearing as Kalkin. . . .’²

That the author or his source mistook Kali, the personified spirit of the evil age and the king of the godless, for his antagonist ³ can easily be explained. The name Garga is unknown to me in this connection. That it should be identical with Gārgya, the name of one of Kalkin’s faithful relatives according to the Kalkin-Purāṇa,⁴ seems less probable than the supposition that it is the name of the famous rṣi and astronomer Garga, whose ‘so-called Samhitā’ is quoted by the Iranian scholar.

Among the longer quotations from the Viṣṇu-Purāṇa, found in the Tarikh al-Hind, some are of special interest. After having said ⁶ that, according to this Purāṇa (where?), the number of hells is 88,000,⁶ Al-Biruni translates a part of this work, which in the main corresponds with 2, 6, 7ff. in the printed edition (Calcutta, 1882). As Sachau remarks, the order in which the hells are enumerated and their names differ to some extent. Moreover, our Vi. Pur. has 23 names—and in the catalogue, vs. 2–5 even 28—, whereas Al-Biruni mentions only 16 hells by name. Now as to the order, this tallies with that found in the Brahmāṇḍa (U. Bhā. Upa. Pā. 4, 2, 146ff.) and Vāyu (101, 146ff. or 2, 39, 146ff.) Purāṇas.⁷ These texts, which agree on many essential points—according to Kirfel they originally formed one Purāṇa⁸—contain, however, 29 names, of

¹ As suggested by Sachau, o.c., II, p. 349.
² See also E. Abegg, Der Messiasglaube in Indien und Iran (1928), p. 58. In other texts (e.g. Mbh. 3, 190, 93; Hariv. 42, 2367 and Vāyu-Pur. II, 36, 104) Kalkin himself is named Viṣṇuyāsas.
³ See also Abegg, o.c., pp. 20ff., 76 and 115.
⁴ See Abegg, o.c., p. 84.
⁵ VI, p. 29; I, p. 60.
⁶ Some texts give 28, some 21, some 28 koṭis, etc.
⁷ The Viṣṇu-Purāṇa, on the other hand, agrees, in the main, with Brahma-, Garuda-, Śiva-Purāṇas. See W. Kirfel, Die Kosmographie der Inder nach den Quellen dargestellt (1920), pp. 148ff.
⁸ W. Kirfel, Das Purāṇa Pañcalakṣaṇa (1927), pp. xff.
which the numbers 3, 4, 8, 9, 14, 16, 17, 23—29 are missing in Al-Biruni's text, which has, on the other hand, a hell Rudhira after no. 15 Rudhirándha. Curiously enough, the name Rudhira is found in the Gar. Pur., where Brahma and Vi. Pur. have Rudhirândha. As to the names of the other hells, Kṛmīśa is the form given by Vi. Pur. c.s., whereas Brṇḍ. and Vā. have Kṛmibhakṣa (no. 10) and Kṛmī (no. 9).

Similarly, Viśasana exactly tallies with Vi. Pur. Viśasana, against Viśāmsana in Brṇḍ.-Vā.; and Vahnjjvāla (Al-Biruni, Vi. c.s.) against Agnijvāla (Brṇḍ.-Vā.). Al-Biruni's last name, Sandanśaka, corresponds to Sandanśa in all other texts. The impression we have from these facts, viz. that Al-Biruni's source was either an intermediate between our Vi. and Brṇḍ.-Vā. texts or an amalgam—if he did not amalgamate it himself in some way or other—is corroborated by a close inspection of the detailed description of punishments added to the names of the hells. Some categories of sinners, mentioned by the Arabic author, are neither in the Viṣṇu-group, nor in Brṇḍ.-Vā., e.g. 'the person who helps the man who makes a false claim etc.', who is condemned to the Raurava hell and 'the princes who do not look after their subjects', who go to the Taṭṭakumbha. In other cases various categories of sinners who, according to the Sanskrit texts, go to two or three different hells, are condemned by Al-Biruni to the same place of damnation. In places some particulars, whilst absent in Brṇḍ.-Vā., tally with the Viṣṇu text, e.g. in the combined description of the sinners who will come to the Vimo-ha(-na) and Kṛmibhakṣa hells of the Sanskrit works: the man who hates his father and the man 'who does not honour the gems which God has made glorious' are mentioned by the Vi. Pur. ('he who hates his father...and who spoils precious gems', v. 14).

Other categories, mentioned by both groups of Sanskrit texts, e.g. in the same paragraph the maryādādūṣaka, are missing in the Arabic text. The distribution of the subject-matter over the verses or paragraphs dealing with the same hell repeatedly differs in all traditions: whereas, for instance, Vi. Pur. agrees with Brṇḍ.-Vā. in condemning the wretch who eats his meal before offering food to the gods, manes and guests to the Lālābhakṣa, and (disagreeing with these texts which send the following categories of sinners to the same hell, viz. Viśāmsana: the maker of arrows, the potter, the robber of a golden ornament, the physician and the man who sets fire to a pleasure-garden) sentences the maker of arrows to 'an abode, called Vedhaka ('the piercing one'), and the maker of swords and other weapons to the Viśasana, Al-Biruni's text sends him 'who does not honour the rights of parents and grandparents, who does not do his duty towards the angels, the maker of arrows and spear-points' to Lālābhakṣa, and, in harmony with Vi. Pur., the maker of swords and knives to Viśasana.
Finally, the sinners in the intoxication of youth, mentioned by the Iranian author, only recur in the Śiva-Pur., which, in general, agrees with Vi. Pur. All things considered, it is clear that inaccuracy on the part of Al-Biruni is not the only factor to be reckoned with, when trying to explain the discrepancies displayed in his text.

In commenting upon the lists of peoples who inhabit the five regions of Bhārata, given in the 29th chapter of the Tarikh'al-Hind, Sachau confines himself to the remark that the Arabic text mentions the directions in the following order: east, south, west, north, whilst the Sanskrit Vāyu Pur. has: north, east, south, west. As, however, with regard to Al-Biruni's extract from Varāhamihira's Samhitā dealing with the same subject, he remarks that, given the very considerable number of discrepancies between the Arabic and the Sanskrit texts, 'Al-Biruni and his Pandit may not have read their manuscript with sufficient accuracy', it is worth while to ask ourselves carefully, whether he is right in putting so many question-marks in his translation.

Patheśvara in Al-Biruni's Vāyu-list: cf. Satapateśvara in the printed Vāyu-Pur. (I, 45, 110) which may be explained as originating in sahapateśvara- (cf. Brṇḍ. Pur. Pū. Bhā. 16, 41: sahapaṭāccharāḥ). Kisaḍya: Kisaṇa, Kisaṭa, Kisajya Vā. Pur. As to the Arthayāśasavas and Puhīngas, instead of these names the Vāyu text has aha pārśve tīlaṅgāś ca, which is doubtful, because the Tīlaṅgas are mentioned as a Southern people in the Mārk. Pur. 58, 28, with good reason doubtless, because the name will be the same as Tālāṅga, that is Teliṅga, the Telugu country. As especially with regard to the first name, the other texts have different forms, part of which seems to be mistaken, it is possible that Al-Biruni read in his source what we find in the Arabic text.

A similar remark may be made with regard to Mashaka and Mudrakaraka. Prātragīra, however, seems incorrect; we expect Antargir or Antargirya, given by many texts. Prathaṅga: corrupt? Instead of Malada (Brṇḍ.-Vā.) the famous Māladas seem to have crept in. The form Mālavartika is also found in the Brahman Pur. (Mālavartika Brṇḍ., Mālavartin Vā.).

Instead of Ābika all parallel texts have Videha, which is correct. Govinda Vā.: Gonarda Brṇḍ., Matsya-Pur. The first six names of peoples in the South exactly correspond with those found in Vā. (Cola Brṇḍ., Mats.). Al-Biruni may have read Ruman, because there are many variants: Kumāra Vā., Kumāra Brahman etc. Mahiṣa: Mahiṣika Brṇḍ., Mahiṣaka or -ika the other texts. Ishīka: cf.

1 XXIX, p. 150 ; I, pp. 299f.  
2 Sachau, o.c., II, p. 335.  
3 See also Kirfel, Kosmographie, pp. 71ff.  
Haisika Brṇḍ., Caiṣika Vā. etc. (sandhi!). Šavara, like Mārk.: ca Varāś ca Vā., Sarava Brṇḍ. The parallel texts give Pulinda; the Jaina canon, however, knows these mlecchas also as Pulindras, which is (erroneously?) read by Vā. Vindhyamūli: -ika Vā., -maulīya Brṇḍ. Mūlika: Maulika Brṇḍ. and other texts, Maunika Vā.; Gar. Pur. (55, 10ff.) has Mālaka. Naitika: Naiṣika Mārk. and Nairṇika Vā. after Bhogavardhana. Udbhira: Udbhida Vā., Mārk., Ujīda Vām. Pur. It seems that Al-Biruni has erroneously split up Nala-kalika (Vā.) into two names: the Javanese Brṇḍ. Pur., however, has Nalaka (142, 18). The two following words (not marked in Sachau’s translation !) are clearly mistaken: Vā. (128) has dākṣinātyās ca vai desā . . . . . ‘(these are) the countries of the Southern region’. Here, the Iranian scholar adds the peoples of the West to the Southerners. It must be remarked that the Javanese Purāṇa mentions the following peoples in the Western borderlands of the Dekhan (Dakṣināpatha), which tallies with the fact that some of them are expressly said to dwell in these regions. The country of the Śūrpākāras e.g., was, according to the Mahābhārata (2, 31, 65; 3, 88, 12; 12, 49, 66f.) in the South, and near the Southern sea in the Western region of India. Again the name Tillīta, which I have not met with elsewhere, corresponds with a variety of forms in the Sanskrit texts (Kālītaka Vā., Kuntala Brṇḍ. etc.), so that Al-Biruni may have read it. Similarly, Krāla Al-Bir.: Surāla Vā., Kirāta Brṇḍ., Sirāla Mats. Rūpaka is found in Brṇḍ., Vā. has Rūpasa, Tāmasesa in the Vāmana-Pur.: Tāpasa Vā., Tāpaka Brṇḍ. Tarūpana: Turasita Vā., Kariti Brṇḍ. and other forms. Karaskara is, as Kāraskara, found in Mats.: Parakṣara Vā. and other forms in the other texts. Uttaranarmada also Mārk. 51: Antaranarmada Brṇḍ.-Vā. The erroneous form Bhānukaschra is read in the printed Vāyu text: Bhārukaschha Mats. Sārasvata Brṇḍ., Mats. etc.: Śāśvata Vā. Hudvuda, which I have not found elsewhere, is probably mistaken, the Sanskrit texts have Arbuda, which is correct. In the following paragraph, which mentions the peoples in the West, Al-Biruni has united part of the inhabitants of the Vindhya Mountains and part of the Mountaineers (parvalāśrayinas)—two categories distinguished by the Sanskrit texts—into one group.

The form Malada is also given by Brṇḍ.: Mālava (Vā., Mats.) is no doubt correct, but it was, I think, not read by Al-Biruni. Baśārṇa may have arisen from a confusion of characters in the

1 See also Pargiter, o.c., p. 334.
2 I refer to Kirfel, Kosmographie, p. 227.
3 Old-Javanese Brahmāṇḍa-Purāṇa, ed. by J. Gouda (Dutch title and introduction, Batavia, 1932).
4 See also Pargiter, o.c., pp. 338f.
5 Called the countries on the flank of the Himālaya, according to the Javanese text (143, 1).
Arabic manuscript-tradition: all Sanskrit texts have the well-known name Daśārṇa. Instead of Tosala and Kosala, given by the Sanskrit texts, Al-Biruni, like the Javanese Purāṇa, gives (or found?) only the last name. Instead of Tharpura Tumbura Vā. and Mats. have Tumura Tumbura, Brṇḍ. Tuhunḍa Barbara, Brahma-Pur. Tumbura (Tu)Cara etc. As Tumura and Tumbura are in all probability two names for the same tribe or group of tribes or, rather, two variants of the same name,¹ a text which, like Vā., gives Tumura and Tumbura, does not seem to have preserved the correct tradition. Instead of eleven peoples in the parallel Sanskrit texts, Al-Biruni mentions only two, Shattumāna and Padha, which do not tally with any of the variants found there. The next name, however, is as good as identical with Karṇaprāvarana (Brahma-Pur.): in Brṇḍ., Vā. etc. The first part of the word differs. Hūṇa: as Hūṇa only in Vā. Sahūhuka (Brṇḍ.) and Sahūdaka (Vā.) might indeed be interpreted 'and the Hūhukas', but I have found no such name elsewhere. Tāmara Brṇḍ., Jav.: Tāmase Vā. As to the peoples in the North: Al-Biruni has split up the name of the Vāṭadhānas (Vāṭhadhāna Vā. 115), who are also mentioned in the Mahābhārata, into two names. Aparānta Brṇḍ. etc.: Aparīta Vā. The correct form Pahlava has only been preserved by Al-Biruni and Vā. Pur. (var.: the text has Pahnava). Madhra: read Madra, this is the name of a well-known people,² which is given as Madraka by Mārk. and other Purāṇas, whereas Vā. erroneously reads Bhadraka and Brṇḍ. Maṇḍala.

Śaka, Drihāla may have been in Al-Biruni's source, since the other texts give a variety of forms: the Śakas are no doubt meant together with another people. Litta: cf. Lalitha Vām. Pur. After 10–16 other items Vā. has Pahlava and Bāḥyatodara (pahlavā vāhyatodarāḥ), probably erroneously, to which correspond other expressions in Brṇḍ.; as the Iranian scholar gives only five syllables, he has, in all probability, misunderstood his source. Bharadvā (not marked by Sachau!) must be Bharadvāja. Jāṅgala appears in Matsya-Pur. (114, 43, after Sainika which corresponds to Sūlika in the Arabic text), Brahma-Pur. and other sources. Daśerakas or Dāśerakas are mentioned in other texts³; Kaseruka (Vā.) is erroneous. Tālakūna: Tālaśāla Brṇḍ., Talagāna Mats., Stanapa Vā. Sūlika: Culika Mārk., Bhūsika Brṇḍ. and many other variants elsewhere, but further on Mārk. (41) has Sūlika which is probably

² See also Pargiter, o.c., pp. 315f.
³ I refer to Pargiter, o.c., p. 321.
correct.¹ Jâgara, which I have not found in the Sanskrit texts, may correspond to Jâguđa (Mârk. 40), Juhuđa (Vâ. 113). So, many names in Al-Biruni’s texts, which puzzled Sachau, can be explained.

Let us now consider the list of names which Al-Biruni took from the Saṃhitā of Varāhamihira.² In a number of places the Iranian scholar has, indeed, erred in wrongly dissolving compounds: Sâlvani Pojjihāna instead of Sâlva, Nîpa, Ujjihāna; Meru (a well-known name, often found in his work), Kanaṣṭharâjya instead of Meruka, Naṣṭarâjya (‘the Kingdom of the Dead’) etc. But could it be expected that Al-Biruni should know or interpret all these names correctly, which have often been inaccurately understood by native authors? Then, there are minor discrepancies: Phalgulu Al-Bir.: Phalgulukâ Var. etc. Twice the order of the names is different: §5 after Kapila six names have been moved from their place and put at the end of the paragraph; and, §3 Purika Dâśârâna Var. Five times a country, mentioned by Varāhamihira, is missing in the Arabic text: §1 before Manu: Saṃkhyaṭa, which is, however, also missing in the Parâśara text quoted in Bhaṭṭotpala’s commentary, and Pargiter, in his commentary upon the parallel Mârkanḍeya text,³ says that Ghoṣasamkhya (Mârk. has a different order of names here) may mean ‘those who are reckoned among Ghoshas or herdsmen’, and be an adjective to Khaṣas. So the absence of this word in the Arabic text may be due to deliberation. Mâdhyaamika, after Matsya, is also missing in Mârk., like Gavya (before Vâudheya, §8). Pahlava, at the beginning of §5, and the mount Kṣurârâpaṇa (after Vanaugha, §6) are, on the other hand, present in Mârk. After Śaka (§6), where Mârk. adds twelve names which are unknown to Varāhamihira’s text, and Parâśara mentions a number of other names, Al-Biruni gives: ‘Mleccha, i.e. the Arabs.’ We now come to those names which at first sight may seem faulty: Gaja (§1) may be the result of a literal interpretation of Var.’s Gajâhvaya (14, 4) ‘the town called after the elephant’, i.e. Hastinâpura as ‘the town called Gaja’. Tulya (§2) (or Padmatulya?): Mâlyavat Var., Mânava Mârk., ? Krîrasamudra, which is, of course, corrupt: Kṣîroda-samudra Var., Sâmudra Mârk.; Colika: Cedika Var., Cedi Mârk., ? Ģûdhakarṇa agrees with Mârk.: -kanṭha Var. Sairikîrṇa (§4): the commentary, quoted by Kern, reads Sairikîrṇa (sairi is in part of the manuscripts) and takes this for one word: Sairikîrṇa Kirfel, Sauris Kîrṇas Kern, Śailika Mârk. Taṅkaṇa: Kaṅkaṇa Kirfel, p. 84

¹ See Pargiter, o.c., pp. 323f.
³ Pargiter, o.c., p. 351.
(which is read by one MS.): Taṅkaṇa Var. text. Kauverya: the river Kāveri in the Sanskrit texts. Jarmapaṭṭana is mistaken, but Mārk. has Carmapaṭṭanivāsinaḥ: Dharmapaṭṭana Var. Instead of Kṛṣṇavellūra (Var.) the Arabic text reads Kṛṣṇavaidūrya which is a 'sanskritized' form of the same name; Var. MS. G has Vaidūra. Śibika is also read by MS. D, the other Var. MSS. have Piṣika or Pisika, as Mārk. has. Śūryādri agrees with Mārk.'s reading and most Var. MSS., as far as Kern saw. Divārṣa: the Var. MSS. give a variety of readings: devarṣi A, varṣāryaka S, carhakarasaka C etc., Par. seems to have read Ṇ(?)-vērvārka, Kern interprets Cerya, Āryaka. Kravya: all Var. MSS., except A (kravyādān) read kravyākhya-. Dramida like one Var. MS.¹: Dravida Var. Māraka: Mākara some Var. MSS., Mārgara other MSS. Kāṇaprabārana is read by some Var. MSS.² Maṭhara: this is no doubt the Western people mentioned as Ramaṭas, Ramaṭhas, Rāmathas in Mats. (113, 42), Mbh. (3, 51, 25 etc.) and, as Māṭhasas, in Mārk. 57, 37. Tārakruti: Tārakṣuti two Var. MSS.³ In §8 Giri is due to a misinterpretation of Var. 24 . . . himavān vasumān girir dvīnasmāṁ ca 'In the North lie the mountains . . . Himālaya, V., Dh.' Agnitya is read by the Var. MSS. except two. Śatāka like Mārk. and many Var. MSS. Instead of abhisāradarada- (Var. 29) the Arabic text reads Abhi, Sāradā (haplography). Rāṣṭra must be Vanarāṣṭra 'The Kingdom of the Woods'. Palola: see Kern,⁴ Nandaviṣṭha (instead of Diviṣṭha): dittography. Puṇjādri, like four Var. MSS.: Muṇjādri, a well-known mountain.

So, on the strength of a critical examination of these lists we refrain from imputing to Al-Biruni such a lack of accuracy in this matter as might be suggested by Sachau's remark. Some of his readings are even of value to those scholars who apply themselves to the study of Puranic traditions. Although the results of a thoroughgoing comparison of all texts used by the Iranian author are not always abundant,⁵ Sanskrit philologists as well as Al-Biruni students may be interested in them.

² See also Kern, o.c., I, p. 235, n. 11.
³ See also Pargiter, o.c., p. 372.
⁴ Kern, o.c., p. 237, n. 1.
⁵ I refer to my remarks on Al-Biruni's quotations from the Bhagavadgītā, to be found in my paper: 'The Javanese version of the Bhagavadgītā' in: Tijdschrift voor Indische Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde, 75 (Batavia, 1935), pp. 36–82, esp. pp. 48–51.
THE ADVAITA DOCTRINE IN ALBERUNI

By

THE REV. H. HERAS, S.J.,

Director, Indian Historical Research Institute, Bombay

Alberuni was one of the most learned Muhammadans who entered India during the Afghan period, if not the most learned of all. He was an astronomer and a philosopher, and, as befits a man of learning, he was wise enough to study and appreciate the opinions and beliefs of other people. His travels through India gave him a good opportunity to study things Indian, and the account he has left to us of his Indian studies is not the hurried narrative of superficial impressions of the average modern traveller through the East. It is a conscientious, deep, well-reasoned and scholarly treatise concerning all important subjects prominent in India in those days. He mentions a number of Indian authors and books, like the Mahābhārata, the Rāmāyana, the Bhagavad Gītā, the Brhadāranyaka Upanishad of Varāhamihira, the Māthsya Purāṇa, the Viṣṇu Purāṇa, the Vāyu Purāṇa, the Manuśmṛti, Patañjali, the Brahmasiddhānta of Brahmagupta, the Sāmkhya Sūtras and others, from which he quotes freely, with sympathy and understanding, in a very scholarly way, as behoves a learned man who takes pleasure in acquiring new knowledge staying above all petty feelings and religious scruples.

None of the Vedāntic authors is ever mentioned by Alberuni; yet while delving into the nature of God he clearly explains the foundation of the Advaita School.¹

On this point he writes as follows: ‘They consider the unity of God as absolute, but that everything beside God which may appear as a unity is really a plurality of things. The existence of God they consider as a real existence, because everything that exists exists through him. It is not impossible to think that the existing beings are not and that He is; but it is impossible to think that He is not and that they are’.²

Alberuni’s first statement may appear somewhat confusing to those who know the mind of the ancient Indian sages. The latter clearly say that this plurality of things by which we are surrounded is but an illusion for one who does not see anything else beyond; but

¹ In ch. II.
² Sachau’s transl., i, p. 37.
all these diverse things lead the wise to see the ultimate Reality which is behind them all:

'There is on earth no diversity.
He gets death after death,
Who perceives here seeming diversity.
As a unity only is it to be looked upon—
This indemonstrable, enduring Being,
Spotless, beyond space,
The unborn Self, great, enduring.
By knowing Him, only a wise
Brahman should get for himself intelligence'.

Though contradictory in appearance, Alberuni says absolutely the same. The world is really 'a plurality of things'; there is no doubt about it; yet all this plurality 'may appear as a unity'. How? To him whose mind is trained. That is the reason of that Upaniṣadic prayer:

*Tamaso mā jyotirgamaya.*

To look at the things of the world and not to rise from them to the Supreme Being, is not human; animals also see them all. For our intellect tells us that all these things are transient, passing, fleeting, appearing and disappearing in a continuous flux, the saṁsāra of Vedic literature, and all of us with them. And they, being so, cannot exist without a foundation. Because being transient they do not in reality exist. "How can that be a real thing," asks Socrates in one of the platonic dialogues, "which is never in the same state?" For existence means steadfastness, steadiness, immobility, unchangeability. Such is the existence of God, through whom everything else exist. Hence Alberuni adds: 'The existence of God they consider as a real existence, because everything that exists exists through him'. He is therefore Satyasya Satyam, the motionless rock upon which the whole universe is founded, according to those words of David: 'He is my rock and my salvation'.

Alberuni says that 'this is what educated people believe about God', for whosoever does not see this One Reality beyond the diversity of things, is not properly educated, and lacks something which is essentially human. His life is totally wasted:

As water rained upon rough ground
Runs to waste among the hills,
So he who sees qualities separately
Runs to waste after them.

---

1 Brhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad, IV, 4, 19–21 (Hume's, p. 143).
2 Ibid., I, 3, 28.
3 Plato, Cratylus, 439 E.
4 Ps., LXI, 7.
As pure water poured forth into pure
Becomes the very same,
So becomes the very soul, O Gautama,
Of the seer who has understanding.  

For 'the perfect man is not aware of anything than God, his own higher self'. One who has acquired this mystical knowledge, one who sees One only in the midst of the diversity of the universe, owing to his intellectual training, sees God in all and all in God, which is a very high attainment in the life of man. Once more the Brhadaranyaka Upanisad says: 'It is as, when a drum is being beaten, one would not be able to grasp the external sounds, but by grasping the drum or the beater of the drum, the sound is grasped. It is as, when a conch-shell is being blown, one would not be able to grasp the external sounds, but by grasping the conch-shell or the blower of the conch-shell, the sound is grasped. It is as when a lute is being played, one would not be able to grasp the external sounds, but by grasping the lute or the player of the lute, the sound is grasped'. St. Paul in his epistle to the Romans had also repeated the same, idea: 'The invisible things of Him, from the creation of the World are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made'.

Alberuni proceeds to give the reason why God is the Real Existence, while creatures exist only through Him: 'It is not impossible' he says, 'to think that the existing beings are not and that He is, but it is impossible to think that He is not and that they are'. Alberuni’s statement is very bold but it is philosophically true. While he explains the theological ideas of ancient Indians, he is able to think of the existing creatures as not existing, for they actually began to exist one day; consequently they did not exist before; just as it is possible to think that God exists; but it is not possible and is totally absurd to think that He is not for he is the Necessary Being, Self-subsistent, Svayambhū. The Bhāva Vṛti of the Rgveda after describing the nothingness that existed before the Creation describes Him as existing by his own power:

Ānīt avātam swadhayā tat evam.

Such a Being is the Existing one, One, indeed, like whom no other being exists. And that is the reason why God Himself gave to Moses the description of His existence as his most proper name. Some may call him the Infinite, the Omnipotent, the Omniscient,

---

1 Katha Upanisad, IV, 14–15.
3 Brhadaranyaka Upanisad, II, 4, 7–9.
4 Rom., I, 20.
5 Rg., X, 129, 2.
the Merciful, the Changeless One; but He called Himself, 'He who exists'.

Very wisely therefore the early Proto-Indians styled Him Irwvan, 'the One who is'.

The human intellect cannot easily grasp the real import of the divine existence, for it has no other standard of existence to compare it with than the existence of the creation; and yet if He is the One who exists, the Universe does not exist as He is.

'Not by sight can one obtain Him,
Nor yet by speech or by the mind;
Except by one who says: 'He is',
How can He be experienced?
He should be apprehended as 'He is',
And by his real nature in both ways:
When He is apprehended as 'He is',
His real nature is made manifest'.

The ancient sages nevertheless fully acknowledge this difficulty—nay this impossibility without his prasāda—of understanding the nature of God. 'He is incomprehensible, for He cannot be comprehended'. On this account says Kṛṣṇa in the Gitā: 'I know all beings past, present and future, and no one knows me'. And in the same strain Vāc says in the Rgveda, referring precisely to the unilateral relation of the creatures to the Creator: 'Whosoever eats food he eats it through Me; those who see, breathe or hear the spoken word, through Me see, breathe and hear. They do not know it, but they live through me'.

God therefore, though man cannot fully understand it, cannot but exist; and since the world may one day not exist, the existence of the world is entirely different from the existence of God. Hence we may boldly say that the world does not exist, which is the contention of Śaṅkara and his advaitic school, enclosed as if by magic in that brief formula, pregnant with the most salutary thoughts, which nevertheless has so very often been misunderstood: Ekameva advitiya. 'He is one without a second', i.e. having no other like Him. He is not the first in a numerical series, for the world belongs to a much inferior category. He constitutes a category by himself, transcending all, yet immanent in all, for He is anguṣṭha mātra puruṣa, the person of the size of a thumb, indwelling in the lotus mahāl of man's heart, the silent, all-knowing antaryāmin.

---

1 Exod., III, 14.
2 Cf. Heras, 'The Religion of the Mohenjo Darians according to the Inscriptions', Journal of the University of Bombay, V, p. 3.
3 Kaṭha Upaniṣad, VI, 12-13; Cf. Keṇa Upaniṣad 3; Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad, III, I, 8.
4 Brhadāranyaka Upaniṣad, IV, 4, 22.
5 Bhagavad Gitā, VII, 26.
6 Rg., X, 125, 4.
The person who has trained his or her mind to see God behind all the creatures of the world, who sees God in all and all in God may really be called *Brahma drṣṭi*, who 'sees everything under the form of eternity',¹ where there is no change at all. Such a person is already enjoying the beginning of eternal bliss, as far as it may be enjoyed in this world, for he has found the peace and tranquillity of God in the solitude of his mind. ‘He to whom all things are one, he who reduceth all things to one and sees all things in one; may enjoy a quiet mind and remain peaceable in God’.²

Alberuni visited India and studied her ancient wisdom with that open mind and with that desire to acquire knowledge, which adorned that intelligent envoy of old, spoken of by Jalālu’d-dīn Rūmī, who was sent to India by an ancient Iranian King to find the Tree of the Water of Life.³ And he was as successful as his prototype.

AL-BİRŪNĪ’S CONTRIBUTION TO COMPARATIVE RELIGION

By

PROF. DR. A. JEFFERY

The importance of al-Bīrūnī’s contributions to the more strictly scientific disciplines has tended to obscure the fact that he stands unique in his age, and perhaps unique in the history of his own faith, for his contributions to the study of Comparative Religion. It is true that he had a good tradition in which to stand. If Comparative Religion means the study of Religion by the same scientific method as is used in Comparative Anatomy or Comparative Philology, viz. the assembling of facts about the beliefs and practices of various religious groups, arranging them, classifying them, comparing them with one another and with the beliefs and practices of one’s own religion, in order to arrive at a better understanding of the significance of religion, then this branch of study had already had a long history in the area of al-Bīrūnī’s life work.

As early as the cuneiform tablets of Mesopotamia we find documents showing a lively interest in the facts of religious belief and religious cult ceremonies connected with the religious life of the various centres of that ancient world, and giving an abundance of materials accompanied by elements of critical appraisal and comparison. With the Greeks there was even more interest in describing the religions of other peoples and comparing them with the relevant phenomena in Greek religion, an interest which they in turn passed on to the Romans. In the Classical writers there is even some theorizing on the origins and the development of religion. The ecclesiastical writers of the succeeding centuries, both those living at the eastern end of the Mediterranean, and those in the Provinces further East, show an even more lively interest in Oriental religions, and the fact that their attitude is now very largely polemic ought not to obscure recognition of the value of the great amount of information they give us about these various religions against which their polemic is directed. Indeed their copious quotations from the writings of their adversaries are often the only direct information we have about some religions which were living then but have since passed away.

Islam in its turn took up this tradition. Just as the Christian writers who deal with these other religions were at first interested mostly in heretical movements within their own community, so Muslim writers in this field are at first interested more particularly in what we may call the Muslim heresies. Yet even al-Ashʿarī (d. 953) in his Maqālāt al-Islāmiyyīn is interested in the views of non-Muslim dualists and in those of the Christian communities,
and was known to have composed a work in which he refuted the teachings not only of Jews and Christians, but also of the Hindus and Zoroastrians. The interest of Jāhiz of Baṣra (d. 869), of Ibn Hazm of Cordova (d. 1064), and of the Shiʿa writers an-Nawbakhtī (d. 912) and Ibn Babūya (d. 1001), in other religions and sects, is almost wholly polemical, but in the historians, such as al-Yaʿqūbī (d. 890) and al-Masʿūdī (d. 956), there is evident interest in recording the facts about the religions of surrounding peoples without any special polemic intent, while in the works of the encyclopaedists such as the Fihrist of an-Nadim (c. 990), or the Bāyān al-Adyān of Abūʿl-Maʿālī (d. 1092), the interest is so frankly in the religions themselves that the authors tended to come under suspicion of not being very good Muslims.

It is in this tradition that al-Bīrūnī stands. He also is aware that he risks the censure of the orthodox Muslims for his interest in these other faiths, and is at pains to defend himself. He was well aware that there was a considerable literature on the subject in Arabic, much of which he himself had read. Occasionally he refers to the work of some of his predecessors in this field, to Abū Maʿṣhar al-Balkhī (d. 885), the great astronomer known to Europe in the Middle Ages as Albumasar, who, he says, wrote an important work on ‘Houses of Worship’, to Abū Yaʿqūb as-Sijistānī, the Ismaʿīlī writer who was executed at Bukhāra in 942, and whose Kashf al-Mahjūb contained an account of the various doctrines of metempsychosis, to one Zarqān, unknown to us, who had written about Buddhism. His chief reference, however, is to a work by Abūʿl-ʿAbbās al-İranshahrī, who not only set forth the facts about the religions with which he was dealing without prejudice, but took care to go to the Scriptures of these various religions to document his statements, and who always supplemented the information he gained from writings by personal questioning of the common folk who were adherents of these various faiths.

**Methodology**

When al-Bīrūnī is discussing the religion of the Jews or the Christians of his day, the Greeks or the Zoroastrians, the Hindus or the Buddhists, or even the religion of the Manichaeans, he is dealing with matters on which we have today source material much superior to that which was available to him. For this reason, while what he has to say about these religions has considerable interest for us, our main interest today is in his methodology.

He tells us that he was led to write down his observations on the religious customs and beliefs of the Hindus, at the insistence of Abū Sahl of Tiflis, on the ground that he discovered that most of the available literature on the subject of the non-Muslim religions sadly misrepresented those religions, both because of inadequate
ACQUAINTANCE WITH SOURCE MATERIAL, AND BECAUSE OF A HIGHLY PREJUDICED ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE RELIGIONS THEY WERE DESCRIBING. AL-IRANSHAHRI WAS AN EXCEPTION, PERHAPS BECAUSE HE WAS A SORT OF RELIGIOUS SYNCRETIST WHO HAD A FANCY RELIGION OF HIS OWN INVENTION, BUT AT ANY RATE IN HIS BOOK HE WAS NOT SATISFIED WITH THE POPULAR METHOD OF UNCITRICALLY COPYING OUT INFORMATION FROM SECOND-HAND SOURCES, BUT WENT TO THE SCRIPTURES OF THE VARIOUS RELIGIONS, AND CONSULTED WHERE POSSIBLE LIVING ADHERENTS THEREOF, SO THAT HE WAS ABLE TO GIVE A GOOD ACCOUNT OF THE ANCIENT RELIGIONS, OF JUDAISM AND CHRISTIANITY, AND IN PARTICULAR OF MANICHAEISM, AND EVEN OF CONTEMPORARY HINDUISM AND BUDDHISM, THOUGH HERE HE WAS LED ASTRAY BY PLACING TOO GREAT TRUST IN THE WRITINGS OF ZARQAN. ON THE WHOLE HE HAS A POOR OPINION OF MOST OF HIS PREDECESSORS, BUT HE THINKS THAT IT IS POSSIBLE TO GIVE AN ADEQUATE ACCOUNT OF OTHER RELIGIONS, AND A FAIR AND UNBIASED DESCRIPTION OF THEIR BELIEFS AND PRACTICES, IF ONE FOLLOWS THE RIGHT METHOD. FORTUNATELY, BOTH IN HIS INDIA AND IN HIS CHRONOLOGY, HE HAS A GOOD DEAL TO SAY ABOUT MATTERS OF METHOD IN SUCH INVESTIGATION.

HIS METHOD IS THE COMPARATIVE METHOD. HE MENTIONS THIS EXPRESSLY IN OPENING HIS DISCUSSION OF THE VARIOUS SYSTEMS OF TIME-RECKONING (CHRON., 4), AND AGAIN IN CONNECTION WITH MARRIAGE CUSTOMS (INDIA, 53). NO AMOUNT OF SKILL IN PHILOSOPHICAL DEDUCTION, OR INDUCTION FROM THE EVIDENCE OF OUR SENSES, CAN EVER LEAD TO CORRECT NOTIONS ON THE RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS OF PEOPLES. IT IS ONLY BY COLLECTING THEIR WRITTEN TRADITIONS ON THESE MATTERS, AND ENQUIRING FROM THE PEOPLE THEMSELVES, THAT WE CAN FORM A BASIS FOR UNDERSTANDING. THEN, BY COMPARISON OF THE TRADITIONS AND OPINIONS OF ONE GROUP REGARDING A CERTAIN INSTITUTION WITH THE TRADITIONS AND OPINIONS OF OTHER GROUPS, WE SHALL BRING OUT SIMILARITIES AND CONTRASTS, AND GAIN JUST IDEAS AS TO RELATIVE VALUES AND THE RELATIVE SUPERIORITY OF ONE SYSTEM TO ANOTHER. THIS HE ILLUSTRATES IN INDIA, 12, BY A COMPARISON OF GREEK THOUGHT AND THINKERS WITH HINDU THOUGHT AND THINKERS, NOT, HE REMINDS US, IN ORDER TO CORRECT EITHER ONE OF THEM, BUT TO CONFRONT THEM WITH ONE ANOTHER SO AS TO MAKE IT POSSIBLE TO DRAW SOME CONCLUSIONS FROM THE COMPARISON. IT IS THUS THAT WE MUST PROCEED, FROM THE NEAR AT HAND TO THAT WHICH IS MORE DISTANT, FROM THE KNOWN TO THE UNKNOWN, BEGINNING ALWAYS WITH THE COLLECTING OF TRADITIONS AND REPORTS FROM THE PEOPLE THEMSELVES, SO THAT IF WE DO NOT ATTAIN TO ALL THAT WE DESIRE IN OUR STUDY WE AT LEAST LEAVE ACCURATE, ASSURED INFORMATION FOR THOSE LOVERS OF TRUTH AND WISDOM WHO MAY COME AFTER US, AND WHO PERHAPS, BUILDING ON OUR FOUNDATIONS, MAY ATTAIN WHAT HAS BEEN DENIED US.

THE COMPARATIVE METHOD, HOWEVER, IF IT IS TO HAVE RELIABLE RESULTS, MUST CONFORM TO CERTAIN FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES OF INVESTIGATIONS, THE CAREFUL OBSERVANCE OF WHICH IS OUR SOLE MEANS OF MINIMIZING ERROR.
(a) Completeness.

Comparisons made on the basis of an inadequate assemblage of material may lead to quite erroneous conclusions. Therefore we must make every effort to gather as complete an array of facts on each matter under consideration as possible, and refrain from comparisons where our material on hand is inadequate. Thus he himself, in the matter of the months observed by the Tibetans, Chinese, Negroes, Ethiopians and others, though he has found out something about them, judges that it is best to postpone discussion of them till his information is more complete, for otherwise, he says, he would be going contrary to his method of refusing to connect the doubtful and unknown with the certain and known (Chron., 68). It is true that in his work the actual statements he makes as to the length his investigations have gone, and his confessions of the inadequacy of his knowledge, are generally in connection with more strictly scientific matters, but we may assume that the same care for completeness would characterize his investigation of matters of religious interest.

(b) Accuracy.

Comparisons can be of little use unless the material on both sides of the comparison is set forth not only completely but accurately. In the case of religion this is a peculiarly difficult problem. If we take any religious practice, say Prayer, it is obvious that a comparison of methods of prayer used among Hindus, Greeks, Buddhists, Jews, Christians, Manichees and other groups, would yield valuable insights into the nature of prayer as a cult act and as a practice of individual piety. Yet actually we find that the problem of securing accurate descriptions of the practice of prayer in the different groups is a serious one. Al-Biruni tells us that in his investigation of such points he found too often that the material in the authors he consulted was hearsay and not precise information. Hearsay has its advantages, since in the form of Tradition it can continue to tell us of times that have passed away (India, 2), but it has its evident drawbacks, and in his discussion of festivals (Chron., 330) he takes occasion to give point to his scepticism of statements based only on the authority of popular story-tellers. No pains must be spared, therefore, in the attempt to attain accuracy. So in dealing with Hinduism, he tells us (India, 4) that he will place before the reader the theories of the Hindus exactly as they are, and where there are similar theories among the Greeks, or in the teachings of the Christian sects, or the Sûfis, as for example in the matter of the transmigration of souls, or pantheistic doctrines of the unity of God with His creatures, he will accurately report their theories also for comparison.
There is always the problem, of course, of which authorities one is to use for one's report on any particular matter, for not infrequently there is one set of religious ideas current among the educated, but quite another among the uneducated (India, 15), so that those of one group may stoutly maintain that the views of the other group do not really represent their religion (India, 54). For this reason he is careful to note in his reports whether he is reporting the popular or the educated-class belief or practice, where it is possible to make this distinction.

It is not always possible to consult living authorities, for some religions belong to the past and have no modern adherents, and some are professed in distant areas with which one has no means of direct contact. In these cases it is necessary to depend on traditions which have been handed down in writing. Written records are also a useful check on what one hears from living sources of information. Often enough these living sources of information are just foolish people who tell the enquirer tales which they think will interest him, but which do not really represent the teaching of their religion, and this can be checked by written records. Often the enquirer finds that the religious leaders of a group are unwilling to give information to one not of their faith. He mentions in particular the unwillingness of Hindu savants to impart to any foreigner information about their teachings (India, 11). Books, however, are generally more available, and if the investigator can procure them and takes care to quote from them copiously and accurately he may avoid the charge of having used material that is inaccurate because picked up from hearsay (India, 13, 247).

The use of documentary evidence, however, presents problems of its own to the scholar who is interested in accuracy.

(i) There is the preliminary difficulty of understanding correctly and reporting accurately teachings of sects whose whole system of thought is foreign to one's own, and whose practices in many details present elements completely strange to the observer. This difficulty is there even when reporting from the living informant whom one can question about things one does not understand, but the situation is doubly difficult when documents are the sole source of information. He illustrates this from his own difficulties with Hindu thought (India, 9), where not only is it true in general that the Hindu mind seems to differ from the Muslim mind in every respect (India, 10), but in particular, in problems such as that of the classes of created beings (India, 43), it seems impossible for a non-Hindu really to penetrate their
thought and look at these matters from their point of view, seeing them from within.

(ii) Then there is the difficulty that the sources themselves are often lacking in scientific precision in their descriptions of their own religious beliefs and customs (India, 43). Sometimes this is because these matters are so familiar to them that they do not see that their descriptions are inadequate for others not born into their tradition, and where means of clarification are not available this may be a serious defect. Even his predecessor, al-Iranshahri, for whom he had high praise, went widely astray in his account of Buddhism through having to depend on the inadequate information given in the written source he was using, (India, 4). For this reason he insists that the writer of a comparative study must himself take great care about the wording of every sentence he writes, lest from some misunderstanding of his words wrong conclusions be drawn from his comparisons. His illustrations here (India, 15) are interesting. He refers to the Hindu philosophical statement that God is a point, by which they mean that the qualities of bodies do not apply to Him, yet some uninstructed person reading or hearing this jumps to the conclusion that it means that the Hindu teachers claim that God is as small as a point, to offset which absurdity they immediately indulge in greater absurdities. Or maybe someone coming upon the statement that God so comprehends the universe that nothing therein is concealed from Him, jumps to the conclusion that God must have eyes, and as one eye or two eyes obviously would not suffice to embrace all in our universe, they will describe God as having a thousand eyes. Care must therefore be taken in examining the statements to be found in the documents at one's disposal.

(iii) To these problems must be added that arising from the difficulties of language. The books of the Jews and Christians, of the Greeks and Hindus, are in foreign languages, in translation from which lurks many a possibility of error. There may be error in the understanding of words in these books, and there may be error in the rendering of them. He goes into some detail (India, 9) in describing his difficulties with Sanskrit. Its enormous vocabulary, of which the Hindus are abnormally proud but which is really a
defect, is a primary difficulty. Hardly less important, however, is the fact that the Indian phonology is so different from that of Arabic that it in itself can be a constant source of error. In *India*, 214, he points out how some of his Muslim predecessors had fallen into sad error through their misspelling of Indian words which they thought they had got right but had not. Then he discovered that in India there were always two languages, a classical and a vernacular, so that to learn to speak with the people and gather their ideas about their religion was one thing, but to understand the highly ornate language of the texts, with its niceties of grammar and of rhetoric, was quite another thing. Added to this was the fact that in order to facilitate the memorizing of texts there had grown up a custom of composing them in verse, a proceeding which resulted in the language of such texts becoming strangely artificial and strained, and increasing the difficulties of the foreigner desirous of understanding the texts (*India*, 10; *Chron.*, 337).

(iv) Finally there was the ever present difficulty of textual corruption. Not all scribes are careful, and some are almost unbelievably careless. Yet in dealing with documents we are always dependent on the transmissions of scribes. If the scribes are careless in transcribing and do not prepare properly collated copies, even a good author becomes practically lost by reason of their negligence. Indian scribes in particular he found to be guilty of gross carelessness (*India*, 9), and a like carelessness on the part of some Muslim scribes has caused further corruptions in the transmission of the Arabic translations of many works. It is curious to note how often in dealing with individual points of his exposition we find him complaining of textual corruption (*India*, 76, 77, 112, 235, 240, 313; *Chron.*, 84). Where we are dealing with translations there is the further source of textual corruption in the unwarrantable liberties some translators take with their texts, omitting, altering, misplacing, transposing, glossing, in such a way as often to deform sadly the original text (*India*, 76).

(c) *Unbiassed treatment.*

Even where care has been taken to state the beliefs and describe the customs of other religions accurately and fully, the account may nevertheless be distorted by the biassed and prejudiced manner
in which it is set forth. Al-Bīrūnī therefore insists that part of methodology is—

(i) The examination of witnesses to ascertain what value their evidence has.

Some writers are satisfied with superficial information, *(India, 3)* which, though it may be correct enough so far as it goes and is set forth without obvious bias, nevertheless gives a distorted picture which is satisfactory neither to the adherents of the religion nor to the scientific investigator.

Other reporters are full of animosities and antipathies, based it may be on national pride or personal predilections *(India, 2; Chron., 4)*, and so report what certainly are facts, but facts distorted because they are directed to the laudation of this or the disparagement of that, and thus unreliable because so biassed. Some indeed allow their antipathies to go so far as the wilful falsification of evidence to make it enhance this or detract from that.

There are still others who falsify evidence, not out of any feeling of animosity, but because of an innate delight in altering and embellishing all that comes into their hands *(India, 2)*. Such writers would deny that this is distortion, but since they cannot resist their intellectual delight in improving on everything that comes to them, their evidence must always be suspect.

Some, of course, falsify simply through ignorance *(India, 78)*, mingling together things that do not belong together, confusing speculation with fact, misunderstanding the significance of things they have observed or have been told, and so while intending to report accurately and without bias, yet produce accounts that are unreliable.

(ii) Criticism of evidence.

Examination of the witnesses will remove some sources of distortion, but a further check may be imposed by the confrontation of reports. This will often reveal that certain accounts, otherwise not under suspicion, are not free from confusions and mistakes *(Chron., 322)*. One of al-Bīrūnī’s complaints against his predecessors is that in their works he so frequently came upon masses of material unsifted by scientific examination *(India, 4)*. Yaʿqūb b. Ṭāriq and al-Fazārī he found constantly misspelling Indian words, *(India, 214)* and so disfiguring them that their evidence could
never be accepted without critical examination. Many authors, again, on even a slight examination, can be shown to have no independent value, since they are merely copying from others (India, 4), while sometimes by comparing the statements of writers it can be shown that on important points they have all gone astray through misunderstanding a source from which they have all drawn (India, 242). Though his particular objection to Ya‘qūb b. Ṭāriq in India, 219, that he failed to examine and check his sources, is in reference to a point of a scientific nature, his point of methodology here holds true for religious matters as well. Criticism is necessary, but it must be fair, so he states that he himself will always endeavour to give a clear exposition of all theories, basing his statements on the foremost authorities of their religious law, so as to expose the matter to fair criticism (India, 112).

(iii) Unprejudiced presentation.

Al-Bīrūnī is conscious of the fact that Muslim authors are far too prone to misrepresent the teachings of other religions, or even those of other sects of their own religion, when they come to write of them. He had found this true in their accounts of the rationalistic Mu‘tazilites (India, 3), and in the Introduction to his Chronology he also has to complain of the numerous lies he found mixed up with all the historical records (Chron., 5). Again in speaking of the work of Abū Ma‘shar (Chron., 26), he takes occasion to refer to the foolish people who abuse all religions. This unfortunate habit of allowing partisanship to enter into scholarly discussion he deplores because it makes even clear seeing eyes blind and clear hearing ears deaf, and pushes men into following paths that their intellects would bid them never follow (Chron., 66). This reproach of prejudice is levelled not only against the uneducated, for even among the learned he has found that there are those so enamoured of their own theories, and so fully persuaded that they are much superior to others, that instead of examining evidence in an impartial spirit they wrinkle up their noses in a grimace of disdain, or laugh in mockery (Chron., 84). This defect is not confined, of course, to Muslims. He is able to quote a warning example of Brahmagupta’s blind hatred and abuse of Āryabhata (India, 189), and the lies Synkellos tells about the Šābians (Chron., 205).
His method, on the contrary, will be to make no unfounded imputations against other religions even though its adherents are antagonistic to his religion (India, 7). The correct scientific method is to deduce the facts about another religion from the statements of its adherents, even if you yourself do not believe in them (India, 3). Such an investigator will set forth the ideas of these religions, not in order to refute them, but merely as an historical record of the facts (India, 3, 13; Chron., 332). Such, he says, his work on India will be. He will place before the reader the various theories of the Hindus exactly as he finds them to be, and for illustrative purposes, to make them clearer and more intelligible, he will bring into connection with them such theories of the Greeks as he finds to be similar to them.

One particular difficulty of presentation, he recognizes, lies in the fact that certain terms which are quite admissible in the thought world of one religion, e.g. the term apotheosis, are extremely offensive to people of another faith (India, 17), so that it is difficult to choose terms with which to present such a theory which will not cause undue prejudice in the mind of the reader of another faith, and yet will really do justice to the theory concerned.

He is also aware that there will be objection on the part of some pious Muslims to the setting forth in detail many theories and practices which they regard as heathenish and objectionable. Yet he claims that, since his purpose is to elucidate the subject, it is not inconsistent conduct for a Muslim to set forth the beliefs and describe the religious customs of others (India, 4). His account is to be descriptive, not polemical (India, 4, 112), for only so can his account win approval from all. In his discussion of the Jewish and Christian methods for the computation of the Passover, he writes—

'Now, since it has been our object in all that has preceded thus far, to point out scientific truth, to mediate between the two parties, and to clear up the differences between them, we have here set down the methods of each of the two sects according to their own opinion, as well as that of others, so as to show to each of them what is for and what against the same. Then from our side we have shown that we frankly adopt their statement, and lean upon their opinion, in order to make the truth clear to them. In this we are guided by a desire that both parties should dismiss from their minds any suspicion that we are partial to either side or are dissembling, that their minds should not shrink from our differing opinion, when we pass in review the Canons which they themselves adduce. For if these are left such as they are they are not free from confusions and mistakes, most of which we have already pointed out.'
(Chron., 322.)
With obstinate people, of course, it is useless to argue (Chron., 68), for they will refuse to see the truth, but by carefully collecting the histories and traditions of former peoples that have come down to us from them, even though this at best gives us but remains of their customs and institutes; by comparing traditions and opinions with one another; by consulting the present adherents of the various religions and sects as to their current use of the various institutes of their faith; by correcting as far as possible all reports that come to us; and by removing from oneself any element of partisan spirit, it is possible to make a fair and unbiased study of other religions (Chron., 4, 5).

He is not blind to the inherent difficulties, and indeed confesses that this is not an easy method to follow (Chron. 5). He is aware of the difficulty raised by the problem of terminology (India, 17), and of the necessity of supporting his statements by good attestation (Chron., 14)—

'It is therefore preferable not to accept any account of a similar subject unless it is attested by a writing, the correctness of which may be relied upon, or by a tradition, the conditions for whose authenticity, according to the prevalent opinion, are well grounded.'

Sometimes, of course, it is not possible to procure documentary attestation. He mentions the case of the Khwarizmians, whose priests and learned men were all killed off by the conqueror Qutaiba b. Muslim al-Bañili, and their books burned, so that presently they became quite illiterate, and being dependent on what could be handed down by memory they forgot all matters on which there was divergence, and remembered only those on which there had been general agreement.

He is conscious also of the difficulties involved in dealing with documents even when they are preserved in some completeness. He recounts his own diligence in procuring MSS from such places as he heard they were likely to be found, sparing neither trouble nor expense in collecting them. With equal diligence he sought out learned native scholars who could teach him the language and explain to him their beliefs (India, 12). But then there was the trouble of translation, so he is at some pains to explain his own method of translating into Arabic (India, 13) taking every precaution to be accurate and clear, and to give adequate explanation of all the terms he uses. He tells us how he had made complete translations of two important works, the Samkhya, a treatise on origins and a description of all created beings, and the Patañjali, a treatise on the emancipation of the soul from the bodily fetters, since these two contained between them most of the elements important for the study of Hindu thought (India, 4).
Sachau, in the Introduction to his translation of the *Chronology* (pp. ix–xiii), has paid homage to the careful method of al-Bīrūnī, his hatred of all shams and his love of truth, his critical acumen, and the large measure of success he attained in setting forth the views of those whose systems he had studied. That he did not quite succeed in his aim at impartiality, however, appears in many a passage of his books where he allows his regard for Muslim orthodoxy to sharpen his tongue, and especially in those passages where he lets us see all too clearly his deep seated aversion for the Arabs and strong predilection for all things Iranian.

**Theoretical Discussions**

Apart from his account of the beliefs and practices of the various religions with which he deals, al-Bīrūnī has also some theoretical discussion of certain general problems of religion.

(a) *Idolatry*.

No student of Indian religion could fail to be impressed by the ever present images of the deities and the daily worship offered to idols. It is a problem of religion far wider than the area of Hindu religion. Al-Bīrūnī thinks he can discover the origin of the practice of idolatry in the conditions of human nature. Abstract thought is something beyond the attainment of the average man. In any time or place there will be but a few select minds which can grapple with abstract thought. The common man has a profound aversion to it and prefers to deal with the world of sensible things. Thus religious leaders, not only among the Hindus, but also among the Manichees, Jews and Christians, have given pictorial representations of religious things so as to satisfy the mentality of the common people. He thinks that even among the uneducated Muslims, if a picture of the Prophet, or of the Ka'ba, the sacred shrine at Mecca, were presented to them, their delight in seeing the picture would make them want to kiss it, fondle it, roll in the dust before it, as though in the presence of the real thing, imagining that they are seeing the original, not just a representation. It was precisely this that led to the manufacture of idols. The people must be taught to venerate certain persons or monuments connected with their religion. But how can common people venerate them unless they can see some sensuous representation of them? Once this representation is supplied its origin is soon forgotten, and men come to reverence the representation as though it were the original (*India*, 53).

He knows that there are some theorists who claim that all mankind was involved in idolatry before God sent Prophets to reveal His truth to men (*India*, 54). Others thought that mankind began with the true religion but later fell into the error of
idolatry, and have their theories as to when idolatry was introduced. The Jews, he says, claim that it was first introduced in the days of Serugh, the great-grandfather of Abraham. Here he would seem to be reproducing a tradition told him by some Jewish informant, for though the usual Jewish theory is that it was Enoch, who made the first idol by kneading together dust and clay into an image into which as he blew on it Satan entered and made it walk (Cf. Targum Yerushalmi to Gen. iv, 26 and the Rabbinic Commentators on the passage), yet the Jews agreed that Serugh was an idolator who taught his son the arts of the soothsayer and the magician (Jubilees, xi, 1–10). The Romans, he says, think it was introduced by Romulus, who made an image of the brother he had killed, while the Hindus have stories about idolatry being introduced by king Ambarisha in consequence of certain appearances to him of the god Indra (India, 54, 55), or by a Brahman named Nārada, who saw a divine image in the fire (India, 55). Idols, however, are only for the use of the uneducated, and he quotes the Gītā to show that educated Hindus knew that no real representation could be made of God (India, 59).

The pagan Arabs, he tells us, worshipped idols because they thought that they would be intercessors with God (India, 59), and the Greeks considered idols as mediators between them and the First Cause, since this latter could not be addressed in worship. The Greeks also knew the theory that an idol was only a remembrancer, a memorial erected in the first instance to commemorate the dead and be a consolation to the living, but later, when this origin was forgotten, idolatry became an abuse (India, 59, 60). The Caliph Muḥāfiya, he says, had this idea about the idols he found during the conquest of Sicily.

(b) Sunna.

As a Muslim al-Bīrūnī was well enough acquainted with the binding force of religious custom (sunna), and its importance as normative for the lives of believers, but in India, 275, he quotes with approval a passage from the Hindu Samhitā describing the reason why various matters are placed under religious sanctions. In the case of ordinary usages men are likely to enquire into origins and analyse basal concepts, and perhaps be led to abandon them, whereas religious commands are accepted on trust and not closely enquired into or argued about. It is somewhat like the case, he says, of people who were born in a land that was harsh and sterile, and since they have never known anything else, and that is their mother country, they love it, reverence it, and find it difficult to leave it. So where things are placed under the sanctions of religion or religious law, attachment to them becomes Sunna and can never be rooted out.
(c) Scripture.

Since the orthodox Muslim theory is that the Qur’ān is the final revelation, and the sole book that can claim to be in the absolute sense the word of God, it was inevitable that the Scriptures in the hands of the adherents of other religions should pose a problem for the Muslim theologians. Did these represent genuine transcripts of the revelations which had been sent down prior to the revelation of the Qur’ān to Muḥammad, or were they but man-made collections pretending to be transcripts of these earlier Scriptures? Gradually an orthodox ‘doctrine of Scripture’ took shape among them. In his section in the Chronology on Ramadān (Chron., 332, 333) al-Bīrūnī quotes one part of this orthodox theory of the Muslim divines, viz. that part of it which declared that all Scripture was revealed during the month of Ramadān—the Suhuf to Abraham on the first of the month, the Torah to Moses on the 6th, the Zabūr to David on the 12th, the Injīl to Jesus on the 18th, and the Furgān to Muḥammad on the 24th. That the Qur’ān was sent down in the month of Ramadān seems to be the teaching of that book itself (II, 185/181) though no mention is made of any particular day. If the Furgān mentioned in VIII, 41/42 means the Qur’ān, it was sent down on the day that the two parties met, i.e., presumably on the day of the Battle of Badr, so that the reference may be to the 17th Ramadān. As to the other books there is no statement in the Qur’ān about the time of their being sent down. The Jews, he says, claim that the Torah was revealed on the 6th of Siwan (see Targum Shenî to Esther, iii, 8), but there is no means of deciding whether at that time Siwan corresponded to Ramadān. As to the Gospel, he comments laconically that the statement that it was revealed on a certain set day can only be the statement of a man who has never read the book and knows nothing of its composition and arrangement. What the truth may be as to the Psalms of David and the Suhuf of Abraham no one knows nor can anyone find out, so that God alone knows the truth of the matter.

It is quite clear from this that al-Bīrūnī does not subscribe to the popular view that the copies of the Old and New Testaments in the hands of the Jews and the Christians are not copies of the books originally revealed to those communities. He knows these books from personal contact. He knows that the Torah and the Prophets were written in Hebrew (India, 18), and that the language of the New Testament is Syriac. It seems likely that he himself knew the Old Testament in Syriac also. He has read these books, and quotes from them. He knows also that the Hindus, Manichaeans, Samaritans, Šābians and Zoroastrians have sacred Scriptures, and even that some of the Christian sects have Gospels of their own (Chron., 18).

He does not expressly state his own view, but his practical
attitude is to regard these Scriptures as the genuine Scriptures of the various faiths, which may be used as authentic documentary evidence for their beliefs and religious practices.

(d) Cosmologies.

The various groups which had Scriptures that in their eyes contained divine revelation, were all, he found, much interested in the beginnings of things, and had their own stories of the creation of the world and of man, and their own calculations as to when the world as we know it would come to an end. That is, they had their cosmologies and their eschatology. He himself is sceptical about all these creation stories (Chron., 13, 14, 112). Creation was a long time ago, and in the case of even the earliest of these stories it is an account of a very remote age regarding which they can have no attestation, but only tales and traditions which have been handed down by memory and mixed with all sorts of falsifications in the process of transmission. For this reason they cannot be regarded as historical accounts, but belong to the realm of myth. As to the duration of the world they have various ideas. The Zoroastrians taught that the world would last for 12,000 years (Chron. 14), the Buddhists that it will last a million years (Chron., 206), while other groups believe in a cyclic series, a new world coming into being as soon as one cycle ends with the perishing of all beings, and then there is a new creation for the beginning of the new cycle (Chron., 112). Each new cycle will then have its Adam and Eve, or indeed a number of Adams and Eves if we wish to account for the different races and languages. In this connection he tells, on the authority of the book of Sa‘id b. Muhammad adh-Dhuhi, the story of the Iranian first human pair and their earthly Paradise.

(e) Demons.

A description of the perfume and incense rites used among the Khwarizmians at certain specified times, to keep off malign influences and injuries from demons and evil spirits, leads him to notice theories as to the origin of such demonic spirits (Chron., 237). The Qur‘an leaves no doubt as to the existence of the Jinn and their contacts with human kind. The most famous philosophers also, he asserts, believed in them. Aristotle calls them 'human beings' and describes them as beings of air and fire. Johannes Grammaticus, the Egyptian Jacobite whose learning was appreciated by the Muslim conqueror of Egypt, ‘Amr b. al-‘Āṣ (Barhebraeus, Mukhtasār, 175, 176), he says, described them as the impure parts of erring souls, which, owing to their error and failure to find the truth, were unable, when they separated from the body, to find their way back to their primal origin, and so wander in confusion. He knows of similar
views of Mani detailed in the Manichaean books, though the statements he found there are so obscure that he does not venture to set them forth. It is not impossible, he thinks, that some such precautions as those taken by the Khwarizmians may be effective against these spirits. There are, he knows, some who sneer, deride and make mock of such precautionary measures, but sneering is not argument. On the other hand some most distinguished savants, Galen, for example, having witnessed the effects of charms, incantations and prayers used as prophylactic measures against malignant influences from evil spirits have acknowledged their efficacy. He himself favours their use, especially if used in connection with astronomical influences.

(f) Qibla.

Every Muslim in performing his ritual prayers takes his stand facing the Ka‘ba at Mecca. This raises an interesting point in Comparative Religion, that of orientation for prayer. To the Muslim the Ka‘ba is the qibla, or prayer direction. In the earliest years of Islam the qibla was Jerusalem. In mentioning the date in mid Sha‘bān on which Muhammad suddenly changed the prayer direction from Jerusalem to Mecca, and caused so much discussion in his community, and so much controversy with his adversaries, he takes occasion to discuss this question of prayer direction. The Harranians, he says, always turn to the South in prayer, for the south pole is their qibla. The Šābians, on the contrary, face North, their qibla being the north pole. The Manichaeans also, he has heard, face the north pole, since that in their belief is the highest point in the universe, the mid-point of the dome of heaven (Chron., 331). The Christians, however, always turn towards the East, the rising place of the sun, and orient their Churches thus (Chron., 249). He quotes with approval, however, from a book by one of the Manichaean missionaries, which reproaches people of the various religions for thinking that it is important to turn in one direction rather than another, seeming to indicate by this the very proper notion that a man who genuinely prays to God does not need any qibla at all.

(g) Burial Customs.

All over the area with which al-Bīrūnī was in contact funerary ceremonies were regarded as of the utmost importance, and indeed, if we may generalize from the results of some of the most recent excavations, had always been regarded in those areas as of the utmost importance. It is thus not strange to find him in Chap. LXXIII of his India dealing with this whole question of death and the disposal of the dead. In his view the most primitive custom
was exposure, the bodies of the dead being simply thrown out to be disposed of by the elements. The first improvement on this was introduced by a legislator who bade the people limit the exposure by making it an exposure to wind alone. This they did by constructing roofed-in buildings in which the dead were laid, the walls of these buildings being so constructed that the winds could pass freely through and attend to the disposal of the bodies. The Zoroastrian dakhamas, he thinks, are a modification of this custom. The next improvement was to expose them to fire, which in a more sanitary fashion would dispose of all. This method was introduced into India by Nārāyana, but was a method practised also by the ancient Slavs and the ancient Greeks. In classical Greek times the bodies were buried, so as to be disposed of by earth. Among the Buddhists the bodies were thrown into rivers to be disposed of by water, and the Hindus after the burning will scatter the ashes over running water.

(h) Hall-marks.

A small but important point of general theory of religion is that he has seen clearly how there is usually some characteristic feature that will serve as a Hall-mark of a religion (*India*, 24). For the Muslims, he says, this is their kalima, 'there is no god but Allah, and Muḥammad is his Apostle', which they repeat in season and out of season. For the Christians it is the Trinity, and for the Jews the Sabbath. Both of these are rather surprising to us, for we should have thought that he would have recognized that the great point of distinction between the Melkites, Jacobites and Nestorians, with all of whom he had considerable acquaintance, was their interpretation of the doctrine of the Person of Christ, while we should have expected him to note as the Jewish Hall-mark their reverence for the Law. It is possible that his word Trinity is meant to suggest this exaltation of the person of Christ, and his word Sabbath may be meant to stand for reverence for the Law. It is more likely, however, that he is here being influenced by the Qur'ānic references to these religions. The Hall-mark of Hinduism, he says, is its doctrine of transmigration. We should probably have used the word karma.

The Religions

A detailed exposition and criticism of all al-Bīrūnī has to say on each of the religions he mentions in his works would take up far more space than we have at our disposal. On most of these religions we now have in our hands much better sources than were available to him in his day, so that we can supplement and correct his information on many matters. Nevertheless we can in brief
indicate the contribution he was making to the study of these religions in his own day.

HINDUISM

Sachau, in the Introduction to his translation of the *India* has given an account of the sources which al-Bīrūnī quotes in his account of the Hindu doctrines and practices. That we cannot today identify all of these quotations in the printed texts may be due to two reasons. Firstly, we cannot always be sure that the recension of a Sanskrit work which we now use in printed texts, e.g. the text of the *Gītā*, is the same recension which was available to him in his day. Secondly, we are never sure how much the text of al-Bīrūnī’s work has suffered in the process of transmission. The same holds true to some extent in connection with his quotations from Greek writers. There is also the possibility that in some cases he himself did not see the actual text of the work he quotes, but is depending on what was told him, or what he found in some work of one or other of his predecessors in this field. A summary of his account of the religion of the Hindus was published in Vol. IX of A. V. W. Jackson’s *History of India* in 1907 (pp. 154–199), to which reference may be made.

Al-Bīrūnī is always conscious of the fact that there is a great difference between the religion of the masses and that of the educated Brahmans, and that this difference extends into even fundamental religious conceptions (*India*, p. 13). Educated Hindus, e.g. abhor all anthropomorphism of the Father and Son variety, whereas the popular religion is full of such (*India*, p. 19), and even indulges in rather crude descriptions of the family relationships of the deities. The religion of the educated, he found, had a strong tendency towards monism, whereas the popular religion is frankly pluralistic and polytheistic (p. 19). The masses pay great reverence to the images of the gods, which images are to them idols receiving idolatrous worship, whereas the educated follow *sāra*, which is an imageless worship of God (p. 54). The ignorant people are of the opinion that the joys of Paradise and the pains of Hell are for the body, whereas the learned know that they affect only the soul (p. 31). So great is the gap between the two that in the interests of harmony their learned men have had to make concessions to the popular theology against what they know to be the truth (*India*, 225, 226).

In his opinion the teachings of the Brahmans represent the real religion of India, so that he bases his exposition on what he could discover about what they believed and thought (p. 19). He found them, however, not much inclined to theological discussion (p. 10), quite unlike the Muslims. Moreover, they were not co-operative with an enquirer however earnest and sincere he might be. He found them so convinced of their own superiority over all other
peoples that not only will they not intermarry with them, or sit to eat and drink with them, but call them impure, and think that they themselves are defiled if they come into contact with them (p. 10). So great is their pride, indeed, that they will never confess their ignorance, being unwilling under any circumstances to say ‘I do not know’ (p. 84). Yet by some inner perversity of their nature, they seemed to a Muslim to be always insisting on putting things the wrong way around (p. 90). However, he had been able to procure some of their books, and though he knows that there are differences of opinion among their learned men, he thinks he may venture to put forth what he has learned of their system.

(a) God.

To them God is the absolute, and as such is a unity. He is the only real existence, and so the source of all other existences, everything that exists coming into existence through him. He is self-sufficing and beneficent, the One who gives without receiving. He is without beginning and without end, the ultimate cause, sublime beyond likeness or unlikeness, and so is unattainable by thought (pp. 13–15, 38). The Hindus are monists in the sense that they hold that all is of God, e.g. it says in the Gita that Vishnu made himself earth, made himself water, made himself wind and fire. With this he compares a passage in the De Causis Rerum of Apollonius, which finds a unity in creation because there is the divine in it all, and he suggests that the Persian use of the word Khudā for ‘Lord’ may be meant to shadow forth the same idea. With the notion of God as universal cause (p. 14) he compares the teachings of the Greeks and of the Sufi mystics on the First Cause (pp. 15, 16).

It is somewhat curious that his knowledge is mostly of Vaishnavism. Vishnu (= Nārāyaṇa) is without beginning and without end (p. 105), and yet he is said to have appeared in this world at different times and under different names (pp. 198, 199). To represent such appearances they have images of the god, and though the Gita explains clearly that God is not to be confounded with these idols (p. 59), the idols are dear to the populace, and the priests, who find it to their interest to keep the masses in thralldom, not only encourage reverence of idols, but resort to all sorts of tricks and frauds in connection therewith (p. 59). From the Samhitā of Varāhamihira he quotes the rules laid down for the making of idols (pp. 56–58), and tells of the servants and priests dedicated to minister to these idols (pp. 58, 59). Some of the more famous idols known to him he mentions expressly (pp. 56, 252).

(b) Angels and Spirits.

Lower than the gods but higher than men are the angels and spirits, who live in a very tenuous and subtle kind of matter. They
eat and drink, cohabit, live and die, but by reason of their nature can do a great many things that are impossible to human kind. They are of various kinds. The Daevas or angels belong to the north, to the heavenly places and Mount Meru (pp. 44, 118, 121). They are ever inclined to worship and never disobey a divine command (p. 147). Then there are the Pitaras and Rishis, who are human ancestors. There are the Yaksha or guardian spirits, the Râkhshasa and other kinds of demons who live in the south, the Nâga or serpent spirits, demon sorcerers and other lesser types of demon spirits (p. 44). The angels were involved in the process of creation of the universe (p. 164), with which he compares Plato's teaching about the ÏŒOL, who under command of their father carried out the work of creation. Man may have some sort of intercourse with these beings by making them the object of his meditation (p. 37).

(c) Cosmology.

The universe was not created out of nothing. There was a primordial stuff, which some call 'darkness', others 'time', and others 'nature' (p. 104), which was put into motion. Then water, rolling and foaming, filled all space, till out of it came the primal egg, which, when it split, gave one half to form the seven heavens and the other to form the seven earths (p. 109). This primal water he compares with the Qur'ânic statement (XI, 7/9) that in the beginning Allah's throne was on the waters, and the egg theory he compares with Greek parallels. The earth is held in place by the water, the water by the fire, the fire by the wind, the wind by the heaven, and the heaven by its Lord (pp. 112–114). Underneath the lowest earth is the great coiled serpent with the thousand heads (p. 118), and in the very midst of the earth, directly under the north pole star is the World Mountain, Mount Meru (p. 121ff.), the mountain knot of the mountain systems of the world. This Mt. Meru, he is aware, is also known to the Buddhists, and with the legends concerning it he compares the Muslim legends about Mt. Qaf, and the Zoroastrian legends about Ârdiyâ (pp. 124, 125). The rivers flow down from the mountain knots, the holiest of them being the Ganges (p. 133), which used formerly to flow in Paradise with the Milky Way as its bed, but was brought down to earth.

Over the earth the seven heavens are spread out like seven canopies. In them are set the sun, moon, planets, and stars, the wonder of whose workings has made the study of astronomy and astrology of great repute among the Hindus (pp. 73, 74). Among the stars are luminous bodies which are not really stars, but are righteous men who have been given their eternal reward and been set on thrones of crystal in the heavens (p. 232). Various ceremonial sacrifices are offered at the heliacal rising of certain stars (p. 247),
and there are ceremonies connected with eclipses (p. 255). The components of the universe are five—(1) purusha or soul; (2) avyakta or amorphous matter, which has potentiality but not actuality; (3) vyakta or formed matter, the union of avyakta and vyakta giving prakriti; (4) ahankara or nature; and (5) mahabhiita, the five elements—heaven, wind, fire, water, earth (pp. 19, 20). The created universe will end, of course, in the great conflagration (p. 165).

(d) Man.

It is difficult to give his account of the Hindu doctrine of man without quoting in extenso whole pages of his treatment. In brief man is purusha, or soul, and so belongs to God, but he is involved in matter. What binds him to matter is ignorance, so his redemption from matter will be by knowledge (pp. 19-22, 33, 34), a doctrine which invites comparison with the teaching of Socrates on the liberation of the soul by knowledge (p. 35). In one human lifetime, however, man learns relatively little, so obviously he must be given rebirth into the world so that he may learn a little more. This is the famous Hindu doctrine of metempsychosis (pp. 22-29). The goal of liberation is the union of the soul with God (pp. 39, 40), but this liberation (moksha, p. 34) can only come after a whole series of reincarnations. Of course a man in any one incarnation may not attain to any knowledge, but become only the more deeply entangled in ignorance. Thus there is a moral purpose governing reincarnation, each new incarnation depending on the merit and attainment of the previous life, retribution being calculated according to intention rather than to deed (p. 31). Four worlds are involved in this process of metempsychosis, our normal world, which is called madhyaloka, an upper world or Paradise, called svarloka, a lower world or Hell, called nagaloka, in which two worlds the soul receives reward for its good deeds and punishment for its bad deeds for some time before it is ready for its reincarnation, and also tiryagloka, or the irrational world of animals and plants, to which go souls which have not deserved the height of heaven nor the depth of hell. A great number of different hells are pictured as fitted for the expiation of various kinds of evil (pp. 29, 30). These hells may be avoided by works of repentance and expiation (p. 32), and since abstinence from evil is a sure way of increasing knowledge, the way of virtuous behaviour is thus a high-way to liberation (pp. 35-37).

This discussion naturally calls to his mind similar views on metempsychosis among the Greeks and the Sufis, whose parallel doctrines he sets forth (pp. 28, 29, 32, 37, 40-43). It also suggests the views on this matter he has found in earlier Muslim writers. It is interesting to note here that he quotes Vyasa’s idea that if men could only learn properly the elements it would not matter very
much what religion they followed, for the final end of salvation
would in every case be the same (p. 22).

(e) Scripture.

God has not left man to grope alone in order to find his way to
moksha, but has revealed truth to man through Scripture. The
Veda he regards as having been ‘sent down’ as the Qur’ân is said
to be (p. 1.4). It is the supreme book of Scripture to the Hindu.
It is in metric form, and was formerly never written down but was
cantillated and so handed down orally, in which process of trans-
mission certain parts have been lost (pp. 60–62). At present there
are four Vedas, which, being divine, are inimitable. The Brahmans
recite the Vedas, but often, he found, they did not understand much,
though these books contain the rules for daily life, what they must
do and must not do, and the rules for the conduct of their worship.
It may be recited to Kshatriyas, they told him, though they are
not allowed to teach it, while Vaiśyas and Śūdras may not even
hear it (p. 60). Those who hold the cyclic theory speak of the Veda
being renewed at the beginning of each cycle (pp. 73, 190, 197).
The Purāṇas are of human origin having been composed by the
Rishis (p. 67). The twenty Sūrīti books are derived from the Vedas.
Besides these they have other books on rules for ascetic practice,
theosophy, jurisprudence, astronomy, divination, etc. (p. 63–75)
which are connected with religion. Peculiar among these is the
Mahābhārata which they highly revere and consider as containing
a summary of everything found in the other religious books (pp. 64,
65). Al-Bīrūnî knows the mystic doctrine of the great word OM,
which he compares with the mysticism of the Tetragrammaton
(p. 82).

(f) Society.

In his world man is necessarily organized in society. Hindu
society is rigorously stratified. State and Church are inseparably
united for the higher development of human society. To keep
society orderly it has been arranged, as in other countries, into
groups according to the various necessary functions that have to
be performed for the welfare of society. Yet whereas the Muslim
considers all as equal before Allah in all things save piety, the
Hindus have organized their groups into castes of descending scale
of value--Brahmans, Kshatriyas, Vaiśyas, Śūdras and outcastes,
considering these as divinely ordained, and making it a sin for any
man to wish to break from his caste (pp. 48–50).

Like the Greeks they consider the laws that govern their life
in society as having come down to them from the Rishis, and so to
have more than merely human sanction (pp. 51, 52). The Brahman’s
life is the one most hedged about by law, for he is the most important member of society. All his life is plotted out for him from his seventh year to his death (pp. 267–270), though there are assigned duties for other castes (pp. 270, 271). The Brahman is the man of religion in the system, and every act of his life has religious significance for the well-being of the group.

(g) Cult.

The Brahmans are the priests in both the public and the domestic cult services (p. 268). Their prayer consists of praise, glorification and adoration, the sun being their qibla (p. 269). Sacrifices have been practised since Vedic times and are both public and private, e.g. at weddings (p. 271 ff.). Dietary regulations are strict (pp. 270, 276, 277), and there are periodic fasts (pp. 281, 285). The religious festivals and festive days he found were mostly celebrated by women and children (p. 287 ff.), but pilgrimages, though not obligatory, were much in favour (p. 273), especially those to holy waters, to Benares, and to certain shrines (pp. 274, 275). There was also a worship of fire with flower offerings (p. 268). Almsgiving he found to be obligatory as a religious duty (p. 276). He mentions their view of the sanctity and inviolability of the marriage bond, and the custom of widow-burning (p. 278), and also their peculiar funerary rites (pp. 282 ff.). It is rather curious that he makes a comparison between Hindu and Christian ethics (p. 280).

Buddhism

It is curious how little al-Bīrūnī has to say about Buddhism. He knows the name Buddha, but he usually calls the Buddhists Shamaniyya (India, 10), which reminds one of the Greek names Σαρμαναί, Σαρμάνες, Σαρμανιοί and the Latin Samneci, which represent the Sanskrit śramana or the Pali samana. Before the days of Zoroaster, he says, all Khurāsān, Persia and 'Irāq as far as Mosul was Buddhist (India, 10), but now-a-days it is to be found as the religion of the people in certain parts of India, China, and among the Turki tribes (Chron., 206). It may be conjectured that Buddhism had for the most part died out in those regions with which al-Bīrūnī was personally acquainted, so that his knowledge of this religion was mostly at second hand. He knows the hatred of the Buddhists for the Brahmans (India, 10). They were idolators, many of whose idols and monuments were still to be seen (Chron., 206). Like the Hindus they believe in the migration of souls, (Chron., 206), and that our present world will end up in a great conflagration (India, 166), though as to the actual duration of the world they differ, some saying that it will endure a million years, others that it goes on to eternity (Chron., 206). He knows that the
Buddha was sent as a prophet to India (Chron., 207), and of the teaching about the buddha, dharma and saṅgha, (India, 20), of which, however, he has no proper understanding, and he thinks that it was the Buddha who ordered them to dispose of dead bodies by casting them into the water (India, 284). That he twice calls the Buddha by the name Buddhodana may be due to a textual corruption. He seems to know that there were Buddhist Scriptures, for he mentions a work on 'knowledge of the Unknown' composed by the Buddha (India, 75), but apparently he had no contact with the Scriptures known to us. Nor were there any Buddhist texts among the Indian works to which he refers, save one grammatical and one astronomical text (India, 65, 75). Of their sects he mentions only the red-robed, but would seem to think that this was a word that could be used to cover all Buddhists (India, 65, 75).

ZOROASTRIANISM

Sachau is probably right in thinking that in the country districts of Persia the majority of the people in al-Biruni's day were still Zoroastrians. There may also have been considerable communities of them in the bigger towns, for we now know that the progress of Islam among the people was but slow even though the land was under Muslim domination. It would thus have been no problem for him to have come into contact with living and practising Zoroastrians from whom he could have learned necessary details about their faith and practice. He may even have used documentary sources, for much more of their literature seems to have been available in his time than has survived to us.

We have already noticed his curious idea that Zoroastrianism succeeded Buddhism in Iranian lands (India, 10). He knows, however, that there was a Magian religion before Zoroaster, though no pure form of this was any longer in existence (Chron., 318). The early Iranian religion, he says, was in pre-Zoroastrian times a worship of sun, moon, planets, and the primal elements (Chron., 204). He gives the well-known story of how Zoroaster came forth as a Prophet in Azarbaijan, preached in Bactria, and after the conversion of King Gushtasp was able to spread his religion and set up his fire-temples from the frontiers of China to those of the Greek Empire (India, 10). He knows how later it became the State religion in Persia (India, 11), was introduced into Soghdiana (Chron., 234), and later into India where there were communities of Zoroastrians in al-Biruni's own day (India, 11).

That they shared with other peoples the idea of a World Mountain (India, 125), and exposed their dead on towers of silence (India, 283), we have already noticed. They had also their teaching about origins, and he reproduces two versions he had heard of the
story of the struggle between Ahriman and that curious creature Gayōmarth, who was born from the sweat of God, from which struggle came the creation of the first human pair (Chron., 99, 100). He tells also the story of Frēdūn’s subduing and binding the great demon Dahhāk (Chron., 223). Their priests, who have great authority among them, are the Mobadhs and the Hērbadhs (Chron., 100). He says little, however, about their religious customs save that they do not fast (Chron., 230), and that they have a marriage custom somewhat like the Jewish Levirate (India, 53). Their Scripture is the Avesta, which they recite in a curious whispering fashion (Chron., 219). A great part of their religious code, however, and most of their monuments, were destroyed by Alexander the Great (Chron., 129). He gives a long account of their calendar of festivals, in which he collects a good deal of miscellaneous information as to their religion (Chron., 215–233). Of more interest to us is the fact that he gives us some account of the curious heretics who arose on Zoroastrian soil. He says that there were no schisms among them till the time of the coming of Jesus (Chron., 207). What the early schisms were which arose then, he does not tell us, but he gives quite a number of details as to the teachings of Mazdak, Bahāfirid and Ibn Abī Zakariyyā (Chron., 209–214).

MANICHAIMISM

The interest of al-Bīrūnī’s account of Manichaimism is that the Manichaean Scriptures and books by Mani’s disciples were still extant in his day, and he could quote from them. Many scattered communities of Manichees were still in existence then, with whom he could have had personal contact (Chron., 209). He also knew the works of others who had written about this religion. He praises highly the account that al-Iranshahrī had given of Manichaimism (India, 4), and quotes two Christian writers from whom he had drawn information about them (Chron., 208). It is interesting to see that he places Mani in the Christian succession, in the line of Marcion and Bardaisan (Chron., 207), for this is the tradition found almost everywhere in the Syriac writers. In India, 19 he emphasizes the close relationship in which they stand to the Christians. He calls Mani a pupil of Fādarūn (Chron., 207), a name which is most probably a corruption of Kēgōw, the well-known name of the teacher of Marcion. Mani, however, was not a Christian, he was an eclectic who, having studied the doctrines of the Magians, the dualists and the Christians, set up as a Prophet himself, claiming that as Buddha had been sent to India, Zoroaster to Persia, Jesus to the West, so he in this age had been in similar fashion sent to his generation (Chron., 207). His doctrine of metempsychosis he got from the Hindus (India, 27), from whom also he derived his explanation of
the ebb and flow of the tides (India, 253). From the Christians he got the idea that he must have a Gospel (Chron., 23). Either Buddhist or Hindu is his teaching about the cyclic series (India, 191), and doubtless of the same origin is his prohibition of killing for food (India, 276), while from the Judaeo-Christian tradition came his notion that in heaven there is neither male nor female in our earthly sense (India, 19). His conception of himself as the Paraclete is obviously of Christian origin (Chron., 208).

Of Mani’s books he knows the Shāhpūrgān, which the teacher had composed in Persian for Shāpūr I, and from which he quotes twice (Chron., 118, 207), his Gospel, which differs from that of the Christians, and is arranged under the twenty-two letters of the alphabet (Chron., 207, 208), his Thesaurus (Chron., 208), from which he also gives a quotation (India, 19), his Book of Giants, Book of Books, and many treatises (Chron., 208), and his Book of Mysteries, from which he also quotes (India, 27). This shows a quite remarkable acquaintance with the Manichaean Canon. It was from the Shāhpūrgān that he extracted Mani’s account of his call to preach (Chron., 118, 207), and because of the superior reliability of this book he uses it as the source for one of his calendar calculations (Chron., 121). It was this book, he says, that they used as a Code for the guidance of their daily life (Chron., 118). Like Augustine he was impressed by the Manichaean use of pictures in their books and in their places of worship (India, 53), and perhaps there is a reference to their books where he speaks of how the Manichee propagandists present Mani’s biography to the people in a beautiful and attractive garb (India, 132). One work of a Manichaean missionary he knows and quotes, viz. the Book of Marriage, which repudiated the need for a qibla (Chron., 331).

His account of Mani’s life and death follows the usual tradition we know from Christian and Muslim books (Chron., 208), so that he is doubtless reproducing the commonly accepted account of his day. He knows how the Manichaean community is divided into Electi and Auditores (Chron., 207, 208), and indeed describes the peculiarly ascetic life prescribed for the Electi as the religious leaders responsible for the propagation of the faith, whereas the Auditores have as their main duty the support of the Electi (ibid). As to Mani’s teaching, he mentions in particular his dualism (Chron., 207; India, 59, 132), his doctrine of the Primal Man (Chron., 207), of ahiṁsā (Chron., 207), of the presence of soul in all matter (India, 23). He quotes Mani’s denial that they worshipped sun and moon (India, 284), and his view, which al-Birūnī found obscurely expressed, as to the state of souls which had failed to come to a knowledge of the truth (Chron., 237). In his day there were some of the Manichaens who were ascribing all sorts of miracles and wonders to Mani, while others denied that he was a miracle worker (Chron., 209).
The Manichaean communities in the Muslim areas, save at Samarquand, seem to have been but scattered communities, but he says that most of the eastern Turks in his day were Manichees, and that there were considerable communities of them in China and Tibet, and not a few in India (Chron., 299). He is fully aware that the Muslim community had suffered from their religious propaganda, mentioning especially the work of Ibn Maqaffa (India, 76), Ma‘n b. Zā‘ida and his uncle ‘Abd al-Karīm b. Abī’l-‘Awjā (Chron., 67, 68; India, 132) and their fellow zindīqs, who were preaching the doctrines of Mani pretending that this was the true Islam. This is quite of a piece with what we read in the Chinese writers of the Manicheans in China pretending that their doctrine was the real Buddhism, and Augustine’s complaint that in the West they tried to make out that they were really Christians but with a special message.

Greek Religion

His knowledge of Greek religion is quite obviously derived from books and often at second-hand. He knows of the Seven Sages (India, 15), of Plato and Socrates (India, 12, 21, 28, 32, 51, 59, 282), Homer (India, 21; Chron., 86), Aristotle (Chron., 182, 223, 237; India, 60), Aratos (India, 47), Ptolemy (Chron., 29), Proclus (India, 28), Galen (India, 59; Chron., 237, 243, 297), Hippocrates (Chron., 266, etc.), Iudoxus and Dositheus (Chron., 244), and others, for the most part those authors more usually known in the Muslim world. He consults them as a rule for information on matters concerned with his scientific interests, so that his references to Greek religion are merely incidental, and for the most part simply in comparison with Hindu ideas, since he holds that the pre-Christian Greeks held much the same views as the Hindus (India, 12). Thus he brings in their views for comparison with the doctrine of the First Cause, on the pre-existence of souls, on the deification of humans in consideration of their superhuman powers, on plants having a kind of animal sense, on metempsychosis, and on the cyclic series (India, 15–17, 21, 28, 192). Early Greek religion, he says, was idolatrous and anthropomorphic (India, 18, 46, 59, 60). He thinks that the language they use of Zeus is very similar to that which the Brahmins use of Brahma (India, 47), and he quotes the Stoic view that Zeus really means spirit diffused in matter (ibid). As Hindu law was said to come from the Rishis, so, he says, Greek religious and civil law was derived from such sages as Solon, Draco, Pythagoras, Minos, who received divine assistance in drawing up their codes, and he quotes Plato as saying that the Athenians claimed that their laws were from Zeus, while the Lacedaemonians held that theirs came from Apollo (India, 51, 52). On the problem of the origins of all things, he quotes Ibn Zakariyā ar-Rāzī as stating that the Greeks
taught that five things had lasted from all eternity, viz. the Creator, the universal Soul, primal matter, space and time (India, 163). There were rationalists, however, among the Greeks, who did not follow the popular leaders where these claimed to base their knowledge on a supposed divine inspiration (Chron., 51).

JUDAISM

Though al-Birūnī mentions his contact with Jewish teachers (Chron., 187, 276), it is a little difficult to estimate how much of his knowledge of Judaism is at first hand. He seems to have had access to the text of the Old Testament, and has quotations from Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Deuteronomy, Job, Psalms, Daniel, Chronicles, Isaiah and Zachariah, though at times it looks as though he is quoting from the Peshitta rather than from the Hebrew text. Yet he knows that the Torah was in Hebrew (India, 18), and that there was a Greek translation of it in use among the Christians, whose correctness the Jews disputed and the Christians defended (Chron., 20, 21, 279). He seems also to have been acquainted with the Book Seder Olam (Chron., 74). He knows that the MSS. of the Torah were generally written on the skins of gazelles (India, 81), but in India 53 he says that they were accustomed to use pictures in their books and places of worship. This, however, may be merely a slip, for the Christians and Manichees whom he mentions in the same sentence were noted for their use of picture illustrations. His statement that the Torah itself refutes Jewish tales that God drowned Pharaoh (Chron., 330) would seem to point to first-hand knowledge of the text, as perhaps would also what he says about the Tetragrammaton (India, 82), and his reference to what it says about there having been giants in olden time (Chron., 83, 84).

The nations round about Palestine were idol worshippers, and he knows the story of how the Israelites who rebelled always went after Baal and Ashtoreth (India, 18), and how the people fell into idolatry after the split in the nation at the death of Solomon (Chron., 74). He is aware of the importance of Jerusalem as their central seat (Chron., 146), and the importance to them of the Sabbath institution (India, 24; Chron., 275), and the Passover (Chron., 56). In discussing the marriage customs of the various nations he includes a reference to the Levirate marriage (India, 53). Of more than usual interest to us is his mention of their expectation of a Messiah, and the use made of this expectation by numerous false prophets who at various times arose among them (Chron., 15, 16). It is somewhat curious to find him referring to Muslim use of the wisdom of Daniel, a wisdom which they said was derived from the book Cave of Treasures, in which Adam had set down the wisdom he had learned (Chron., 302). His main interest is naturally in the Jewish
calendar, so we find him discussing the various cycles they knew, such as the Jubilee and the Shabu’ (Chron., 176, 177) and the Tequfoth (Chron., 182), and giving details as to their festivals—New Year, Yom Kippur, Tabernacles, Hanukka, Purim, Passover, etc. (Chron., 275–281). Occasionally he mentions the Jewish sects known in his day, the Rabbanites, Miladites, Qaraite, Maghribis, Alfaniiya (Chron., 57, 58, 284).

**Samaritans**

It is perhaps a little surprising that he should have known anything about the Samaritans, even though they were a much more numerous community in his day than they are in ours. His information about them, however, seems to have come from secondary sources. He knows that they originated from a mixture of the indigenous people of that area, who had aided Nebuchadrezzar against the Jews, with those people whom he sent from Babylon to replace the Jews he took away into captivity (Chron., 21, 318). He knows their 'churches' at Nablus, and is aware of the enmity between them and the Jews, which led them deliberately to deceive the Jews (Chron., 57). They have never entered Jerusalem, he says, since David transferred the temple from their Gerizim site to Jerusalem (Chron., 21). He quotes Abū ‘Isā al-Warrāq as authority that the Samaritans do not celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles (Chron., 277). His suggestion that their religion consists of a mixture of Magian and Jewish elements (Chron., 21, 318), is apparently a wrong inference, though he is right on the question of their recognizing no Prophet since Moses (Chron., 21). The most interesting thing is that he knows that they have a Tor'ah whose year reckonings differ both from those of the Jewish copy and those in the Christian Greek translation (Chron., 21). His statement that they call their Torah by the name al-Lāmasāsiyya (i.e. the touch not), is apparently based on nothing more than the Qur'aniic verse XX, 97, which has been the source of so many curious Muslim notions about the Samaritans. Both this and his statement that they do not allow other people to touch them just as they themselves do not touch others, is merely an exaggeration of the well-known Samaritan insistence on ritual purifications.

**Christianity**

There were Christian communities, often very considerable communities, in all the areas with which we know al-Biruni to have been in personal contact. He seems to have known all three of the Christian groups of the Orient, the Melkites, the Jacobites and the Nestorians (Chron., 288, 315), though his information about the Jacobites is much less copious than about the others, and indeed, he in one place remarks that he has never met a Jacobite nor one
who knew their dogmas (Chron., 315). Not infrequently he mentions Christian authors and books, and even Christian scholars with whom he was in friendly intercourse. Christianity, he says, had been very generally adopted in the empire after the death of Diocletian. In his days the Melkites were mainly in the areas nearest to Greece proper, though there were scattered communities of them elsewhere, even in Khwarizm (Chron., 288), and have their Catholicos for the Arab countries at Baghdad (Chron., 289). The Nestorians, he says, made up the majority of the inhabitants of Syria, 'Irāq and Khōrāsān, whereas the Jacobites were mainly in Egypt and the countries adjacent thereto (Chron., 288). The four great Patriarchates in his day were those of Constantinople, Rome, Alexandria and Antioch, the Catholicos at Baghdad being under the throne of Antioch (Chron., 289). He notes that the Nestorians at that time nominated their Catholicos, but his actual appointment was at the hands of the Caliph, since their lands were entirely under the domination of Islam (ibid). He knows that the chief dogmatic difference between these groups was their interpretation of the union of the two natures in Christ, and that it was over this point that there had arisen the Arians, whose views in this matter were nearer those of the Muslims (Chron., 288). Their Churches were familiar to him. He comments on their orientation (Chron., 249), and on their use of pictures (India, 53). There were Arab Christians in his day, who had their own peculiar fast days connected with their own local history (Chron., 314), a very interesting piece of evidence of how quickly Christianity became indigenous in these Oriental lands. Though there was enmity between the Christians and the Jews, which caused the Jews to delight to deceive them by lies (Chron., 304), he finds that for their fasts and their festivals they agreed on the whole with the Jewish computations, the cardinal point being the date of the Passover (Chron., 11).

We have already noticed his acquaintance with the Septuagint as the Christian version of the Torah (Chron., 20, 21). He knows the Gospels in Syriac (India, 18). He quotes a conflate text of Matthew and Luke in India, 3, and quotes both John and Matthew in India, 18. That he was acquainted with the four Gospels from personal observation appears also from a number of references, such as to Joseph of Arimathea (Chron., 292), to the Gospel statement of the number of days Jonah remained in the belly of the fish (Chron., 333), to the transfiguration story (Chron., 300), to Herod's killing the infants at Bethlehem (Chron., 292), to the descent of the dove at the Baptism (Chron., 293), to the annunciation to the prophet Zechariah of the birth of John (Chron., 291), and his statement that he found nothing in the Gospels about the tales told of the death of John (Chron., 301). He also knows of the differences among the Gospels in their accounts of the Messiah, and how the Christians think to
reconcile these differences (Chron., 22). He knows of the seventy-two disciples (Chron., 300), and of the Apostleship of Paul, whose eyes the Lord had blinded before He chose him for Apostleship (Chron., 288, 299, 314). His statements about Paul's blindness (Chron., 314), about the disciples being bidden remain in the Upper Room till the Paraclete come (Chron., 308), about the disciples speaking with tongues at Pentecost, and Peter's healing the lame man in Jerusalem (ibid), may show a knowledge of the Acts of the Apostles, but may have come to him from other sources. He knows that the Christians use the Old Testament to find prophecies there of the coming of Christ (Chron., 297). It is interesting to note that he is not only aware that the Gospel is not a revelation sent down all at a sitting, as some Muslims held (Chron., 333), but he knows also that it is not a Law code, for the Christian Codes are based on the works of the 'Fathers', who developed them from the sayings of the Messiah and His Apostles (Chron., 291).

We have already noticed how he selects the doctrine of the Trinity as the Hall-mark of Christianity (India, 24). In another passage he uses this doctrine to provide a comparison with the Hindu teaching as to Brahma being the First Cause, Nārāyaṇa the second force, and Rudra the third force, though in a sense they are a unity as Vishnu, just as the Christian Father, Son and Holy Spirit are three persons but one substance (India, 46). On the Father-Son designation he has quite a discussion, knowing quite well that in the older religions this did not have the crude sense usually attributed to it in Muslim writings (India, 18, 19). Jesus was the 'Son' in a very special sense, that special sense in its relation to the Trinity being the point on which the Arians differed from the others (Chron., 295, 288), yet in spite of His miraculous birth and constant aid from the Holy Spirit, the Messiah during His earthly life was subject to the ordinary laws of nature (Chron., 294, 309, 310). His teachings are the ethic of the Christians. Al-Bīrūnī knows the Sermon on the Mount, but though he admires the ethic of giving another your cloak and your shirt, of turning the other cheek, and blessing and praying for your enemies, he thinks that this is quite unpractical, for mankind are not philosophers, but for the most part ignorant and erring folks who must be kept in the straight path by sword and whips (India, 280).

He has a long account of the Calendars of both the Melkites and the Nestorians. That of the Melkites has been reproduced with annotations by Louis Cheikho in al-Machriq for 1902 and by Robert Griveau in Patrologia Orientalis X, 291–312 (1914). In these he gives some details of the way in which they kept the festivals of the Annunciation, Transfiguration, Ascension, Lent, etc., and that of St. Helena's Invention of the Cross. He knows the differences between a 'commemoration' and a 'feast' (Chron., 300), the general
ceremonial for the keeping of a Saint’s day (Chron., 288), and that for a ‘christening’ (Chron., 293). He knows the general scheme of the Christian hierarchy from Patriarch to singers and altar-servants (Chron., 289), and tells how the Patriarchs are elected (ibid). To our surprise he can quote from the Canones Apostolorum (Chron., 303), and give quite an account of the first six great Synods of the Church (Chron., 295, 296). On the whole his account is sympathetic, though he blames the Christians of his day for giving too much credence to idle tales without making proper historical investigation (Chron., 292).

There were heretical sects of Christianity in his world. In the Introduction to his India he promises to quote the views of these when he finds they have something in common with Hindu teachings (India, 4), but apparently he did not find much that he could use. What is of some interest is that the sects of the Marcionites and Bardesanians were apparently still flourishing, each with its own version of the Gospel (Chron., 23, 201), a fact which makes it easier to understand why Syriac writers were so preoccupied with these two sects. Their doctrine, he says, though it was in the Christian succession, was a mixture of Christian and Zoroastrian elements and fundamentally dualistic. Bardaisan even claimed that he had the ‘Light’ of God dwelling in his own heart (Chron., 207).

SĀBIANS

Thrice in the Qur’ān we find mention of the Sābi ans—II, 62-59; V, 69-73; XXII, 17, as those who, along with the Jews, Christians and Zoroastrians, are in a special way to be counted as Believers in Allah. No reference to any such group appears in pre-Islamic Arabia, and our best guess at present is that the Prophet meant by this word to designate some of the Gnostic groups which at that time were fairly active in North Arabia. Under the Caliphate various groups claimed the right to be included under this name. Al-Bīrūnī is apparently aware that it is a kind of blanket word. He knows that it is most commonly used in connection with the Harrānians, though they themselves took this name only under the ‘Abbāsids, being really a heathen, idolatrous group deriving from a remnant of the old Greek religion which continued to carry on the old forms of worship when the Greeks in general accepted Christianity. Their prophets were Agathodaimon, Hermes, Pythagoras, Wālis, Māba, and finally Sawār who was the maternal grandfather of Plato (Chron., 205, 318). From the list of their feasts and fasts that he gives we gather that they were for the most part worshippers of heavenly bodies, having images of Venus, whom they called Belit, Mars, Saturn, Mercury-Hermes, Sun and Moon, along with Tammuz and Atargatis (Chron., 318–322). Their qibla for prayer was the south pole (Chron., 331), and they had books of Hermes,
which he had apparently consulted (*Chron.*, 341). This Hermes who played so important a part in their system was identified by some with Idrīs, a prophet mentioned in the Qur’ān, who is said to be the Old Testament Enoch, though others said Hermes was that Būdhasāf who was reputed to have come forward as a prophet in India in the first year of Tahmūrath and was the inventor of Persian writing (*Chron.*, 204, 206, 216). In *India*, 59, he includes them among those who made much of the idea of a mystery.

Some said they got their name from their place of abode at Harrān; others, however, said that they were so named from Hārān the brother of Abraham, and al-Bīrūnī quotes from Syncellus the tale about Abraham's connection with them. Al-Kindī in his *Apology*, he says, accuses them of being given to human sacrifices. He himself thinks that they are monotheists who employ only negative terms in their description of God, and though they have temples and images named after the celestial bodies, offering sacrifices both to the stars and to the images, this did not seem to him inconsistent with their fundamental monotheism (*Chron.*, 204-206). They observed certain dietary laws and made much of prayer, having fixed liturgical prayer thrice daily, preceded by purification and accompanied by inclination and prostration, and also voluntary prayers at certain hours (*Chron.*, 206). Tradition said that many of the ancient houses of worship whose ruins were still to be seen, such as those at Damascus, Baalbek, Harrān and Selemsin used formerly to belong to them, and some said even the Ka'ba at Mecca was in former times one of their shrines (*Chron.*, 205).

There were those, however, who claimed that the Harrānians were not the true, original Šābians, for these were those remnants of the Jews who stayed behind in Babylon when Cyrus permitted the return. There, since they were now isolated, they mingled their original doctrine with some elements of Magianism, and some from the old Babylonian religion, and claimed to be the descendants of Ėnos son of Seth. Others said that Methusaleh had a son named Šābi' from whom they got their name. These people deny that they are Harrānians, with whose doctrines they do not agree save in some small matters, while in prayer they turn to the North, which is quite the opposite to the *qibla* of the Harrānians (*Chron.*, 206, 318, 331). Since he places the chief seat of those people in Southern Mesopotamia it would seem that he has in mind the Mandaeans.

**Khwarizmians**

The interest that has been excited in our days in the language and culture of Khwarizm has naturally turned attention to the curious words that al-Bīrūnī inserted so long ago in his account of the festivals of the Khwarizmians. We have noticed how he
mourns the fact that at the conquest Qutaiba b. Muslim had killed off their priests and learned men and burned their books (Chron., 48). In his day, however, they were still maintaining many of their ancient customs. Zoroastrianism had not made any great headway amongst them (Chron., 235), and apparently Islam spread but slowly in their area. They were still following their ancient practice of using perfume and incense rites to keep off the malignant influences of demonic spirits (Chron., 237), and on certain days they were accustomed to lay out food in their temples as a banquet for the spirits of the dead (Chron., 238). He is able to record six religious festivals which they kept, though he seems to know nothing of them save their names and the dates on which they fell (Chron., 237, 238).

**Arabian Paganism**

Though al-Bīrūnī, as we have mentioned above, has a strong antipathy to things Arabian, the meagerness of his information about the early Arabian religion cannot be attributed solely to this. Muslim orthodoxy had done its best to blot out as far as possible all memory of the old pre-Islamic paganism, and al-Bīrūnī complains of the utter neglect of study of the old ways of life of the pagan past (Chron., 141). Partly, he thinks, this was their own fault, for these ancient Arabs had been content to remain in illiteracy, depending for the preservation of their traditions on the poems which were memorized, so that when a new religion came in, and no one any longer practised the old rites, the poems connected with them were soon forgotten (ibid). Even in his own day the Arabs were an illiterate people who did not read nor write nor reckon (India, 242), so that it was useless to turn to them for accurate information.

From what has been recorded of them it is clear that they were idolatrous. The story was that the idols they worshipped were an importation into Arabia from Syria, and that they paid reverence to them in the belief that they would be intercessors for them (India, 59). They were not noted, however, for their respect to their idols, for there was a story, mentioned in certain of the early poets, of how the Banū Hanifa had an idol named Hais, which was made of edible material, and once when the tribe was pressed with hunger they ate their idol (Chron., 210). These were the people among whom arose Muhammad’s rival in prophethood Maslama, he whom the Muslims always mockingly call the false prophet Musai-lama, and who, they charge, used to delude the people with cheap tricks (Chron., 209, 210). In some forms of their worship the ancient Arabs used hand clapping and whistling with the fingers (India, 91), which would seem to point to a Shamanistic form of worship. In discussing marriage customs he describes the various types of marriage in vogue among them (India, 53), and he knows that they
had no dietary regulations, eating indifferently clean and unclean animals (India, 91). The system of intercalation which was characteristic of their calendar they took, he says, from the Jews (Chron., 12, 62). He is able to enumerate their main festivals (Chron., 325-328), though if these had any religious connections he does not mention the fact.

Islam

His own religion of Islam he often draws on to provide comparisons and contrasts with things he finds in the other religions he is describing. In general he writes as a pious Muslim who accepts the normal orthodox system of Islam. At times we find him profoundly contemptuous of some of the arguments much in favour with the orthodox theologians, as for example their deducing mystical wisdom from the fact that the form of the human figure may be considered as resembling the form of the name Muhammad (Chron., 207), or their endeavouring to find words of religious significance in the natural markings on rocks or stones (Chron., 298). Naturally he is strongly opposed to the attempts of some of the orthodox to prohibit free discussion of religious topics (India, 15). On the other hand he at times seems over anxious to assert his orthodoxy, as in his claims for the excellence of the Qur'an (India, 132), or his strange overemphasis on the cogency of the supposed prophecies to be found in the Bible concerning the coming of Muhammad and his position as the final prophet (Chron., 18-20).

In discussing the question of apotheosis he compares the Muslim use of the name Allah with the use in the Jewish and Christian Scriptures of such words as Eloah and Rabb, and how this is related to Hindu, Greek and Manichaean usage of words in connection with deity (India, 12-19), which leads him to the very interesting discussion of how these religions use the Father-Son terminology in relation to the divine. In discussing the Sunday observance of the Christians he compares the Jewish Sabbath and the Muslim Friday, and the special reasons adduced by each group for observing their particular day (Chron., 308). He defends the union of Church and State, so characteristic of Islam, as offering the best possibility for the fullest development of human society (India, 48). The Muslim Antichrist legend he compares with those of the Jews and Christians, quoting a curious notice to the effect that the Jews of Damascus told the Caliph 'Umar that the Antichrist would arise from the tribe of Benjamin (Chron., 212).

Of particular interest is what he has to say about the various sects that had arisen within Islam. With some asperity he rejects the anthropomorphism of the Jabarites (India, 15), and what he calls the foolish rationalism of the Hashwiyya and Dahariyya who would not believe in anything that went beyond their own
experience (Chron., 78). The two disastrous influences in early Islam, he says, were the Judaising sect who led away the unlearned by false copies of the Qur’an they had in their possession, and the Zindiqs, who were really Manichees masquerading as the representatives of the true Islam (India, 132). He knows also of sects which arose among the Shi’a and corrupted their Code (Chron., 67), tells of a rascally missionary of the Šarūriyya sect (Chron., 201), of al-Muqannā‘ who claimed to be God (Chron., 211), and of those curious people the Qarmaṭians (Chron., 211–214). In discussing the Muslim festivals he takes occasion to recount how the festival of the first day of Muharram came to be associated with the family of ‘Ali (Chron., 239).

The Şūfis are those whom he introduces most often, because of the many points of contact he found between their teachings and Hindu thought (India, 4). He can compare their view of the soul with the Hindu puruṣa (India, 177, 178); their two soul theory with something similar in both Hinduisim and Christianity (34); their notion of the liberation of the soul with the Hindu moksha (40, 41); their doctrine of metempsychosis with that commonly taught in India (29). He compares their doctrine of the First Cause with that of the Greeks (16), and explains how, like the author of the Śāṅkhyā, they do not regard the attainment of Paradise as any special gain, since absorption in its delights tends to divert the soul from the Absolute (31). He knows their doctrine of the veils of light and darkness that drop between man and God (43), and how they taught that love meant being engrossed by the creature instead of by the Creator (37). He quotes ash-Shībīlī and Bāyazīd al-Bīstāmī on their pantheism (India, 43), and has quite an account of the extravagant doctrine of al-Hallāj, whose followers still at that time were carrying on his teaching (Chron., 211, 212).

This account of al-Bīrūnī’s contribution to the study of Comparative Religion has had to be based on his India and his Chronology, the sole texts which were available, but it will suffice to show how important a place he has in the history of that study in general and within the fold of Islam in particular. It is rare until modern times to find so fair and unprejudiced a statement of the views of other religions, so earnest an attempt to study them in the best sources, and such care to find a method which for this branch of study would be both rigorous and just. Might it be after all that his greatest contribution to learning was not in the field of the more exact sciences but in this field of the sciences of the spirit?
AL-BIRUNI AND TRIGONOMETRY

By

M. A. KAZIM,

Lecturer in Mathematics, Muslim University, Aligarh

The purpose of this article is to give a critical estimate of the merit of the THIRD BOOK of QANÜN-I-MAS’UDI as the first Compendium on Trigonometry written by the ‘Most profound Thinker in Islam’ Muhammad Ibn Ahmad Abn’l Raihan Al-Biruni (4th Sept., 973 A.D.—11th Dec., 1048 A.D.) who was not only the most original and brilliant scholar at the court of Ghazna, but also was the greatest astronomer-mathematician, the greatest historian-geographer of his age. He was a tremendous writer who ‘did never leave his pen except on two days, Nauroz and Mehrjân’, and produced works in practically every field of science and literature, which exceeded ‘a camel’s load’.

He was the author of numerous books and articles on diverse subjects such as philosophy, metaphysics, and religion; history, chronology, and civilization; art, fiction, and poetry; geology, geodesy, and geography; physiology, mineralogy, and medicine; optics, physics and chemistry; mapping and survey; and various branches of mathematics, astronomy and astrology. Adept in Arabic and Sanskrit, in Greek, Hebrew and Syriac, and in many Indian and Iranian dialects, he translated numerous works from these languages, and thereby linked the East and West at Ghazna.

But it was in mathematics and astronomy where his creative genius mostly lay, and, to which he claims to be associated. In the Preface to Qanûn-i-Mas’udi, his master-work on astronomy, astrology and mathematical geography, dedicated to Mas’ud, the son of Mahmud, he asserts, ‘As I am connected with one of the branches of mathematics, and I am associated with it and deep in it since my birth, I prefer to serve his (Mas’ud) Treasury named ‘Hikmat’ by writing a treatise on the art astronomy (قانون صنعت تنجیم)

\[\ldots\text{. I have adorned it with the best ornament.}\]

Apart from his invention of a new type of astrolabe called ‘Ustuwâni’, which he used not only in observations of heavenly bodies, etc., but also in calculating the heights and distances of distant

---

1 Nallino Enc.
2 Shahrzori.
objects, he wrote immensely on astronomical and mathematical
topics such as Indian arithmetic, extraction of cube-root, ratio and
proportion, calculation of heights and distances, direction of the
qibla, balance and its correction, calculation of chords and tangents,
construction of astrolabe and its use, time and its conception,
days and nights, the moon and its phases, twilight, eclipses, comets
and meteorites, horoscopes, Indian astrology, measurement of the
earth by observing the dip of the horizon, methods of projection
of bodies and spheres on planes, which he claims to have put for
the first time before the world. His 'Tafhim', an introduction to
astrology, meant for a lady named Raihana Bintul Hasan, is still
extant.

In short, he was an ocean of knowledge—a 'Sagar' as Indian
Pandits used to regard him, rather a 'magician' who could spell
any one by his intellectual attainments.

The book under consideration is mostly devoted to the plane
trigonometry and trigonometrical tables except the last two chapters
on spherical trigonometry. It is Al-Biruni and not Nasiruddin
Tusi (1201–1274 A.D.) as mentioned by Brammühl who for the
first time approached trigonometry as an independent subject.
Nasiruddin himself seems to have based his trigonometry on that
of Al-Biruni's. He already talked highly of Al-Biruni's spherical
trigonometry which has not yet come to light.

Al-Biruni's predecessor Al-Battani (877–929 A.D.) was pre-
viously believed to be the real discoverer of trigonometry with his
invention of the word 'Jaib', (of which sinus is a literal translation)
for sine of an angle as half-chord of double the arc in a circle whose
radius is 60 parts, but the researches of Burgess and Monk and
the statement of Al-Biruni himself left no doubt as to its Indian
origin. Even tangent and cotangent which he defined as shadows
of a rod 12 parts in length placed on horizontal and vertical planes
respectively called ظل مستوي ظل معكس, have their origin not
from him but from India. Al-Battani has no doubt the credit
of using them for the first time in simplifying astronomical calcula-
tions in his Zich-el-Sabe.

1 Incorporated in the seventh chapter of the fifth Book of the Qanûn.
3 Al-Biruni in Indica.
4 Gesch. der Trig., p. 66.
5 See Nasiruddin Tusi, edited by Cartheory.
6 Brammühl: Gesch. der Trig.
7 Qanûn-i-Masudi: Book III (Introduction, also Chapter VI).
8 Al-Biruni: Book III of Qanûn, Chapter VIII.
9 Edited by Nallino, 1899.
Abul Wafa (940–998) added more to trigonometry and gave the formula that \( \frac{sine}{cosine} \), and also, for the first time, defined all the trigonometrical functions and gave their mutual relations. He also pointed out that the tangent tables can be deduced from the sine tables by dividing the sine of the angle by the sine of its complement. He too based his calculations on the radius equal to 90, as all other Arab astronomers did except Al-Biruni who took the radius as unity.\(^1\)

Al-Biruni developed the subject in a systematic way and has the credit of, for the first time, keeping it independent of astronomical calculations. His book on trigonometry has ten chapters, the first of which deals with the methods of calculating the sides of an equilateral triangle, a square, pentagon, hexagon, octagon and decagon for a given radius of the circle, and gives his own proof of determining the side of a decagon. He adds that the side of a heptagon cannot be found in terms of known numbers.\(^2\) It is irrational. The method of determination of the side of a nonagon, he gives in a later chapter. As by definition, chord \( \theta^\circ = 2 \sin \frac{\theta^\circ}{2} \); the values of \( \sin 60^\circ, \sin 45^\circ, \sin 30^\circ, \sin 22\frac{1}{2}^\circ \) and \( \sin 18^\circ \) were thus obtained.

Al-Biruni did not use, for his enunciations, numbers in abstract, but adopted the language of the Greek geometers, e.g. instead of using the formula \( S_8 = \sqrt{\gamma^2 - \gamma} \cdot (\gamma \sqrt{2} - \gamma) \) or \( S_8 = \gamma \sqrt{2 - \sqrt{2}} \), he will say: 'If we wish to find the chord of an octagon, we should multiply the radius by the difference of the radius and the chord of a square, and subtract the result from the square of the radius, and then extract the square root.'

The second chapter is devoted to finding the chord of complementary arc, the chords of double and half the arc, the chords of the sum and difference of two given arcs of known chords. Thus the formulae for \( \sin \frac{\theta}{2}, \sin 2\theta, \sin (\theta + \varphi) \) and \( \sin (\theta - \varphi) \) were established. The above theorems, he applied in determining the sines of multiples and sub-multiples of angles. The rule of finding the chord of double the arc is verified by the general theorem of

\(^1\) Nasiruddin Tusi, also see Introduction to Chapter VI of the Third Book of Qanûn.

\(^2\) In Chapter IV, Book III, Al-Biruni remarks: 'As his contemporaries Abu Sahl al-Kohi (988 A.D.) and Abuljud (1000 A.D.) have worked on it uselessly, he should not take pains to do it.' Cajori: History of Mathematics:—Al-Kohi wrote mémoires on the determination of the side of a heptagon inscribed in a circle. Abuljud solved the cubic \( x^3 - x^2 - 2x + 1 = 0 \) in constructing the side of a regular heptagon.
finding the chord of the sum of the arcs by supposing the two chords equal.

The third chapter deals with the determination of the side of a nonagon from the side of an equilateral triangle. This reduces to the problem of determining the chord of one-third of the given arc, or to find \( \sin \frac{\theta}{3} \) if \( \sin \theta \) is given. Al-Biruni exhibits here a remarkable power of interpolation. He was both an excellent geometer and a great calculator. Where need arises, he takes recourse to algebra. He introduces, to get his result, in this case, a cubic equation \( x^3 = 3x - 1 \), and also changes the sexagesimal scale to the decimal scale only to extract the root. The solution, which he gives of the above cubic, is correct to eight decimal places \(^1\) if we verify the result by Horner’s method of approximation to the root.

The fourth chapter is very important, as in this he discusses the value of chord \( 1^\circ \) or \( \sin \frac{1}{2}^\circ \), on which depends the accuracy of the tables. It is here that he displays his great geometrical curiosity in deriving twelve geometrical relations after assuming that the trisection of an angle is possible. One of these relations, he utilizes in interpolating the value of chord \( 1^\circ \) from chord \( 3^\circ \). He first criticizes the value of chord \( 1^\circ \) calculated by Ptolemy by considering the ratios of the arcs for \( 1\frac{1}{2}^\circ \) and \( 3^\circ \), the chords of which Ptolemy had obtained by bisecting the difference of the chords of decagon and duodecagon \( 6^\circ \). Al-Biruni shows that his method is correct only up to the second order. He also badly criticizes one Yâkub-al-Sehri who obtained chord \( 1^\circ \) by first getting chord \( 3\frac{2}{3}^\circ \) by addition theorem, and then getting chord \( \frac{15^\circ}{16} \) by bisection, and then committing the mathematical blunder of adding to it \( \frac{1}{15} \) of the value of chord \( \frac{15}{16} \). Al-Biruni ironically remarks ‘Both the methods give results correct to the second order, but Ptolemy understood what he did, whilst Yâkub did not know what he was doing.’

Al-Biruni gives the following methods:—

1. \( S_9 \) and \( S_{10} \) lead to chord \( (40^\circ - 36^\circ) = \) chord \( 4^\circ \), which gives chord \( 2^\circ \) and chord \( 1^\circ \) by bisection.

2. \( S_9 \) and \( S_{10} \) also lead to chord \( 10^\circ \) and chord \( 12^\circ \), hence chord \( 2^\circ \) which by bisection gives chord \( 1^\circ \).

3. Interpolating the value of chord \( 1^\circ \) by trisection of chord \( 3^\circ \). This value, he finds out correct to the fifth order as \( 0^\circ 1' 2'' 49''' 51^{iv} 48^v \).

\(^1\) Carl Schøy, p. 19.
The fifth chapter is on the calculation of the value of \( \pi \). He first determines the ratios of the diameters to the perimeters of regular polygons of 180 sides, inscribed and circumscribed in the unit circle; which corresponds to \( \frac{2}{360 \sin 1^\circ} \) and \( \frac{2}{360 \tan 1^\circ} \). He then deduces that the value of \( \pi \) is intermediate between the two values \( 3^\circ 8' 29'' 35''' 24^{IV} \) and \( 3^\circ 8' 30'' 59''' 10^{IV} \), and applies Ptolemy's method of taking the arithmetic mean between the two values, and thus getting the result correct to the sixth order as \( 3^\circ 8' 30'' 17''' 46^{IV} 46^v 30^{VI} \). He further transforms the whole thing to the vulgar fraction as \( \frac{1628681471}{518400000} \) which comes out as \( 3.1417482 \).

It was for the first time perhaps that Al-Biruni gave the result so correctly. Al-Biruni also knew how to transfer the sexagesimal scale into vulgar fraction and vice versa.

The chapters VI and VII are devoted to the Sine Tables. He calculated the tables to the third order correct to six places of decimals. The only remarkable advancement was that in calculation the radius of the circle was taken as unity instead of sixty as usual, and the period of the tables being at an interval of \( 15' \) i.e. \( \frac{1}{4}^\circ \). Al-Biruni, himself remarks that 'starting with radius equal to one' has saved him the labour of multiplication, division and reduction to degrees, etc.

An extract of his Sine Tables is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Satr add-</th>
<th>al-Juyûb</th>
<th>at-Ta‘âdîl*</th>
<th>Al-Fuḍül.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>al-Qusi</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24 0</td>
<td>24 24 15 7</td>
<td>0 57 20 32</td>
<td>14 20 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>24 38 35 15</td>
<td>0 57 13 16</td>
<td>14 18 29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>24 52 53 44</td>
<td>0 57 7 4</td>
<td>14 16 40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45</td>
<td>25 7 10 30</td>
<td>0 57 0 8</td>
<td>14 15 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 0</td>
<td>25 21 25 32</td>
<td>0 56 53 16</td>
<td>14 13 19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The first column gives the arcs, the second their sines, the third 'equalisations', and the fourth their 'differences'. The column of 'equalisations' or تعديل is calculated to avoid the trouble of

* \( Tā‘ādîl \) = equalizations, \( Fuḍul \) = differences.
multiplying each time by four. If $U_{-1}$, $T_{-1}$, $\Delta_{-1}$ be the values of sines, $Ta'\dil$ and difference for the angle $\alpha-\frac{1}{4}$, and $U_{0}$, $T_{0}$, $\Delta_{0}$; $U_{1}$, $T_{1}$, $\Delta_{1}$, the corresponding values for the angle $\alpha$ and $\alpha+\frac{1}{4}$ respectively; $T$ being equal to $4\Delta$. Al-Biruni gives the following two methods for approximating the sine of an intermediary angle:

1. $\sin(\alpha + x) = U_{0} + xT_{0} = U_{0} + 4x\Delta_{0}$ [for $x<\frac{1}{4}$, $T_{0} = 4\Delta_{0}$]

2. $\sin(\alpha + x) = U_{0} + 4x\Delta_{-1} - (4x)^2(\Delta_{-1} - \Delta_{0})$

This shows that Al-Biruni knew that the sine of an angle can be expanded in terms of a polynomial. He uses finite differences for the purpose of interpolation. His second formula which was given by him for the first time corresponds very approximately to Newton’s interpolation formula:

$$f(X) = f(a) + \frac{X-a}{\Delta} \cdot \frac{f(a)}{h} + \frac{(X-a)(X-a-h)}{\Delta^2} \cdot \frac{\Delta f(a)}{h^2} + \ldots$$

where $\Delta$, $\Delta^2$ etc. are the first and second differences, $h$, the common difference for which the tables are calculated.

Comparing this to Al-Biruni’s formula, we observe that he has neglected the third and the fourth terms etc., perhaps, because he wanted his results only correct to six decimal places. Let $h = \frac{1}{4}$, $f = \sin$, $X = x + \alpha$ where $x<\frac{1}{4}$, $a = \alpha-\frac{1}{4}$, then Newton’s formula gives:

$$\sin(x + \alpha) = U_{-1} + \frac{x+\frac{1}{4}}{\frac{1}{4}}(U_{0} - U_{-1}) + \frac{(x+\frac{1}{4})(x)}{\frac{2}{4}} \cdot \frac{[U_{1} - 2U_{0} + U_{-1}]}{(\frac{1}{4})^2} +$$

$$= U_{-1} + (U_{0} - U_{-1}) + 4x(U_{0} - U_{-1}) + \frac{16x(x+\frac{1}{4})}{\gamma}[(U_{1} - U_{0})$$

$$\cdot(U_{0} - U_{-1})] +$$

$$U_{0} + 4x\Delta_{-1} + \frac{16x(x+\frac{1}{4})}{\gamma}[\Delta_{0} - \Delta_{-1}]$$

$$= U_{0} + 4x\Delta_{-1} + (4x)^2[\Delta - \Delta_{-1}]$$

if in the third term we regard $\frac{1}{4}$ as $x$, because no appreciable error will occur in the second approximation.

Al-Biruni also gives two inverse interpolation formulae for determining the approximate angle corresponding to an intermediate value of sine. These formulae are derivable from (1) and (2) above. For, if $x$ is an increment on $\alpha$, and other notations have their own meaning, then:

(a) $x = \frac{U_{0} + x - U_{0}}{T_{0}}$ from (1)

(b) $x = \frac{15'(U_{0} + x - U_{0})\Delta_{0}}{\Delta_{-1}\Delta_{0} - [U_{0} + x - U_{0}](\Delta_{-1} - \Delta_{0})}$
For \[ U_{0+x} = U_0 + 4x\Delta_{-1} - (4x)^2(\Delta_{-1} - \Delta_0) \]
from (2)

or \[ 4x = \frac{U_{0+x} - U_0}{\Delta_{-1} - 4x(\Delta_{-1} - \Delta_0)} \]

or \[ 4x = \frac{U_{0+x} - U_0}{\Delta_{-1} - \frac{U_0}{\Delta_0}[\Delta_{-1} - \Delta_0]} \]
from (1)

or \[ x = \frac{\frac{1}{4}\Delta_0(U_{0+x} - U_0)}{\Delta_{-1} \Delta_0 - (U_{0+x} - U_0)(\Delta_{-1} - \Delta_0)} \]

This is the first example of calculus of finite differences appearing in classical mathematics. The formulae derived by Al-Biruni seemed to have gone into background till they appear again in the 17th century of the Christian Era in the modified form. The credit of invention of calculus of finite differences should, therefore, go to our hero Al-Biruni.

The eighth chapter deals with ‘Shadows’, their forms as Umbra Versa and Umbra Recta (ظل مستوي and ظل مبكر), and their tables. In our own terminology, he treats, in details, the tangents and cotangents and further establishes expressions for secant, cosecant, sine and cosine, versine and coversine in terms of tangents and cotangents; and vice versa. He calculates the tangents tables from those of sines, using the formula: \( \tan \theta = \frac{\sin \theta}{\cos \theta} \).

It was here he remarks: ‘The length of the measuring rod (miqvās) for the shadows was generally taken as twelve parts (fingers) for Umbra Recta. This was what Indian astronomers always used to do.’ It shows how high was the sense of integrity in him as always to acknowledge the work done by others. Now it is clear that Al-Battani, in this respect, also, is indebted to India.

Al-Biruni in this chapter also gives with proof the interpolation formula for intermediary values of tangents similar to those for sines; and, in the end, generalizes his interpolation formula for intermediary values in the language of the theory of function, though the word ‘function’ does not occur. The following is the translation of the text: ‘The METHOD OF FINDING MORE APPROXIMATELY FROM ANY TABLE WHATSOEVER’.²

‘Whatever part you have got from the sine, arc, or tangent, find out in the given table nearest to that part and keep it; also find out corresponding to the part a unit part less than the found-

1 See Freeman, Part II.
2 Last article, Chapter VIII, Book III of Qanun.
3 The common difference for which the Table is calculated.
out-part and take their difference, call it the 'first difference'; find also the part a unit part more than the found-out-part, and take their difference call it the 'second difference'. Now multiply the fraction of the unit part which is left out by the difference of the first and second differences. If the first difference be less than the second difference, then add the result to the first difference; and if the first difference be greater than the second, then subtract the result from the first difference. Then multiply this result again by the fraction of the Unit part left out, and add this to the found-out-part, provided the part a unit part more than the found-out-part be greater than the found-out-part (function increasing); and subtract thus provided the part a unit part more be less (function decreasing).

In the functional notation, if \( x \) is the part left out, \( h \) the Unit part, \( F(a) \), the found-out-part, then \( F(a) - F(a-h) \) is the first difference: \( F(a+h) \) is the second difference, then

\[
F(a+x) = F(a) + \frac{x}{h} [F(a) - F(a-h)] + \frac{x^2}{h^2} \left\{ F(a+h) - F(a) \right\} - [F(a) - F(a-h)]
\]

\( x < h, \) and function is increasing

\[
F(a+x) = F(a) - \frac{x}{h} [F(a-h) - F(a)] + \frac{x^2}{h^2} \left\{ F(a-h) - F(a) \right\} - [F(a) - F(a+h)]
\]

\( x < h, \) and function is decreasing.

The above theorem again corresponds to the interpolation formula given as below:

\[
F(a+x) = F(a) + \frac{x}{h} [F(a) - F(a-h)] + \frac{x}{h} \left( \frac{x}{h} + 1 \right) \left[ F(a+h) - 2 F(a) + F(a-h) \right] + \]

where \( \frac{x}{h} < 1 \)

Al-Biruni only considers three terms, and in the last term, to approximate the result, supposes 1 to 6 \( x/h \), which reduces the Formula to his form. The genius of Al-Biruni needs no comment. I think, probably, it is the only instance, either in the Middle Ages or in the classical period, that a general theorem is formulated in the language of the theory of function.

The ninth and the tenth chapters deal with relations between sines and tangents of great circular arcs in the figures formed by pairs of intersecting quadrants.
If $R$ is the pole of $AC$, and $A$ the pole of $RC$, and if any other quadrants $AD$ and $RB$ intersect at $T$, then Al-Biruni proves very important properties such as:

\[(i) \quad \frac{\sin RT}{\sin DT} = \frac{\sin RB}{\sin BC} \quad (ii) \quad \frac{\sin RD}{\sin RC} - \frac{\tan DT}{\tan BC} \]

These properties, he has applied throughout the chapters of the QANUN, for instance, in the fourth book in chapters XII, XIV, XVII and XVIII: On determination of eastern and western amplitudes of a heavenly body; On determination of altitude from azimuth; On computation of the equation of day and latitude thereof; On determination of ascensions of signs of ecliptic. The proof of sine formula of spherical trigonometry, i.e.

\[
\sin A \quad \sin B \quad \sin C \\
\sin a \quad \sin b \quad \sin c
\]

is given in a very elegant way as follows:

Let $ABC$ be a spherical triangle. Produce $AC$, $AB$, $CA$, $CB$

such that $AT$, $AG$, $CD$, $CR$ each is equal to a quadrant. Join $GT$ and $RD$ which will be equal to the spherical angles $A$ and $C$ respectively, because $A$ is the pole of $GT$, and $C$ the pole of $RD$. Draw $BH$ perpendicular to $CA$. Then, from Property (i) above, $\sin AB/\sin BH = \sin AG/\sin GT = 1/\sin A$; also, $\sin BC/\sin BH = \sin CR/\sin RD = 1/\sin C$. This gives, by division, $\sin A/\sin a = \sin C/\sin c$. Similarly, for the other ratios.

In chapter VIII, he has also given a very beautiful proof of the sine formula of plane triangles, i.e.

\[
\frac{\sin A}{a} = \frac{\sin B}{b} = \frac{\sin C}{c}.
\]

None of his predecessors, from Ptolemy to Battani proved the sine formula. Ghabir bin Aflah, \(^1\) who lived in 1085 A.D. at Seville in

Cajory: History of Mathematics.
Spain forty years after Al-Biruni’s death, knew the formula. But it is quite probable that he might have possessed the works of Al-Biruni; as it seems that he has tried to imitate the style of Qanun-i-Mas’udi by writing an Astronomy in nine books, the first being on trigonometry just like the eleven books of the Qanun, the third being on trigonometry. Full justice to Al-Biruni’s contributions to trigonometry is only possible when the spherical trigonometry of Al-Biruni will be somewhere available. I am sure, he must have perfected the subject.

How astounding it looks to modern mathematicians that a person existing thousand years back happens to produce so much original work in spite of very little resources of those times, at the same time plays a considerable part in diverse fields with astonishing accuracy and mathematical care. The world still knows very little of Al-Biruni as a great mathematician, and many of his original contributions to mathematics still lie hidden in the pages of his master-work the Qanun-i-Mas’udi, and in many of his other books which perhaps may never come to light.

It is really sad that no oriental mathematician-scholar has so far taken up the task of translating the Qanun-i-Mas’udi to its entirety. The translations of some of the books from the manuscript of this work in the Lytton Library, M. U. Aligarh, have no doubt been attempted in Urdu by late Maulana Râghib Badâñi at the instance of late Sir Shah Sulaiman, but due to his ignorance of mathematics, he could not succeed.

Let us hope that the day is not far off when this great astronomer, who was the first to observe and solemnly assert that the assumption ‘that the Earth moves round the Sun’ could not be disproved, and the explanation of which was later given by Copernicus (1473–1543) in his helio-centric theory, will shine like the most brilliant star of all times in the firmament of fame and glory.

1 Nasiruddin Tusi.
2 Molvi Enayatullah Beg: Hâlât-i-Al-Biruni.
ON THE MINOR TRACTS OF ABU-RAÏHAN MUHAMMAD BIN AḤMAD AL-BERUNI.

By

MOHD. ABDUR RAHMAN KHAN,

Principal, Osmania University,

(Retired).*

Al-Beruni was born on 3rd Dhu-l-Hijja A.H. 362 (4th December, 973) and died as is generally believed, on 2nd Rajab 440 (11th December, 1048) but according to Max Meycherof in 1050. He was a native of Khwarizm and lived under the patronage of the House of Māmūn, formerly vassals of the Sāmānian Kings of Central Asia. For some years he lived also in Jurjan, perhaps at the Court of Qa’bus ben Washmīr Shams-al-Ma‘ālī, and dedicated to him about A.H. 390-391 (A.D. 1000) his famous Arabic work آثار الباقين عن الترويّن (translated into English and edited with Notes by Edward Sachau of the University of Berlin). It is a monumental work containing technical and historical details for the compilation of time invented and used by the Persians, Sogdians, Khwarizmians, Jews, Syrians, Harranians and others, together with Greek traditions.

He returned to Khwarizm and lived there during A.H. 400-407. At the conquest of the country by Sultan Mahmūd of Ghazneh (A.H. 407), he was carried off along with other scholars to Afghanistan in A.H. 408. From now on he occupied himself with research over a wide field of subjects: mathematics, astronomy, natural sciences, etc. While in India he made a deep study of its geography, history, language and literature (Sanskrit) and carefully observed the manners and customs of its people——, all recorded in his Kitab-al-Hind, composed in Ghazneh in 1030——(edited by Sachau in 1887; English translation with elaborate introduction and notes in 2 vols. in 1889 and reprinted in 1910).

George Sarton tells us that al-Beruni was an admirer of Hindu philosophy especially of the Bhagavagita and translated several works from Sanskrit into Arabic (e.g., two of Varahamiura’s works

* Fellow of the Royal Astronomical Society, Research Associate of the Institute of Meteoritics, the University of New Mexico, U.S.A., President, the Hyderabad Academy, etc.
of the first half of the sixth century A.D.). He also transmitted Muslim knowledge to the Hindus. He gave the best Mediaeval account of the Hindu numerals and solved interesting problems of the game of chess.

He wrote both in Arabic and Persian; knew perhaps a little Hebrew and Syriac, but seems to have been ignorant of Greek. Nevertheless he thoroughly knew the Greek masterpieces in mathematics and astronomy through Arabic and Syriac versions. His كتاب التفهيم لواءات صناعة التنجيم written in Ghaznah in Arabic (original text with English translation by R. Ramsay Wright, London, 1934) is a masterpiece of scientific observations and well repays careful study by modern scientists as well. His astronomical encyclopaedia القانون السعودي في الهندية و النجوم dedicated in 1030 to Sultan Mas'ūd, son of Sultan Maḥmūd, is a great work still awaiting careful translation and edition.

Among his other activities he discussed geometrical methods of trisecting plane angles and other problems which cannot be solved with ruler and compass alone, (that came to be known later as Alberunic problems); simplified stereographic projection (similar to that published by G. B. Niccolosi di Paterno in 1600; Isis V, 498), described accurate methods of determining latitudes and longitudes and wrote on geodetic measurements. He discussed the question of the Earth's rotation on its axis, but failed to reach a definite conclusion, possibly for want of adequate scientific data.

He deduced values experimentally for the specific gravities of 18 precious stones and metals, that are remarkably accurate. He knew that the speed of light was immensely greater than that of sound; explained on hydrostatic principles the ascent of water in natural springs and artesian wells. As a keen observer of natural phenomena he marked carefully the succession of changes in the light of the sky at dawn and dusk; and was thus the first accurate observer and describer of the Zodiacal Light (vide Hyderabad Academy Studies, No. 2, 1940). He was interested in botany, zoology and geology also, as is evident from his remark that flowers have 3, 4, 5, 6 or 18 petals, never 7 or 9, and from his book of Drug-Knowledge (Kitab-us-Ṣaydana); from his description of monstrosities including the so-called Siamese Twins; and from his suggestion that the Indus Valley was at one time a sea-basin, now filled up with alluvious matter.

(Max Meyerhof's article in Isis, vol. 37, May 1947, pp. 32-36, the Earliest Mention of a 'Manniparous Insect' describes al-Beruni's account of Bishr al-Fazari's views on exudation of 'honey-dew' طل العسل by the action of an insect living between the leaves of a plant called الحاج by Arab writers).
Al-Beruni's influence on scientific research long survived his death. His pupils and pupils' pupils carried on the work he had started with commendable diligence, as is borne out by the appearance of a number of scientific Rasa'il or pamphlets dedicated to his memory; amongst which the following tracts have been published by the Dā'irat-ul-Ma'ārif lately: ¹

1. المقالة لأبراهيم بن سنان في طريق التحليل و التركيب و سائر الأعمال فى المسائل الهندسية *

2. المقالة لأبراهيم بن سنان بن ثابت بن قره في رسم القطع الثلالث *

3. المقالة لأبراهيم بن سنان في الاسترلاط *

4. المقالة في الأبعاد و الأجرام *

5. الرسالة في إقامة البرهان على الدائر من الفائدة من قوس النهار و ارتفاع نصف النهار و ارتفاع الوقت *

6. الرسالة في براهين اعمال جدول التقويم في زيححبش الحلسب *

7. الرسالة المسماة جدول الدقائق *

8. الرسالة في البرهان على عمل محمد بن الصباح في استخان الشمس *

9. الرسالة في الدوائر التي تعد الساعات الزمانية *

10. الرسالة في البرهان على عمل حبش في مطالب المست في زيجه *

11. الرسالة في معرفه الفسي الفلكيه *

12. رسالة ابن نصر في كشف عوارى الباطنية بما موهبه على روبيه الاهله *

13. الرسالة في حل شبه في المقالة الثالثة عشر من كتاب الأصول *

14. فصل من كتاب ابن نصر في كريه السماو *

15. المقالة في استخراج ساعات ما بين طلوع الفجر و الشمس كل يوم من أيام السنة مدنهه قائد *

16. المقالة في استخراج تاريخ اليهود و اعيادهم للغوارني *

17. المقالة في استخراج تاريخ اليهود ابن بنشاد القايين *

¹ See the Cat. of Arabic MSS. Oriental Public Library, Bankipore, vol. xxii, page 60.
The following are under publication and are expected to be ready soon:

1 - رساله ابراهيم بن سنان بن ثابت في وصف المعاني التي استخرجها في الهندسه و التجوم *

2 - الرسالة في تصحيح ما وقع لابي جعفر الخازن في السهو في زيح الصفائح *

3 - الرسالة في إصلاح شكل من كتاب الأناوس في الكريات *

4 - المقاله في البرهان على حقيقة الدستله التي وقعت بين ابي حامد الصفان و ابن منجي الري فيها منازعه *

5 - الرسالة في مجازات دوائر السموت في الاسترلاب *

6 - الرسالة في صناعة الاسترلاب بالطرق الصناعي *

7 - رساله ابي نصر في جواب مسائل الهندسه *

8 - قول ابن الهيثم في خواص المثل من جه العمود *

9 - الرسالة في مسالة المجسم المكاني *

10 - أفراد المقال في ام الفلال *

11 - المقاله في راشيات الهند *

12 - تميهج المستقر في معاني العمر *

13 - الكتاب في كيفيه تسطيح الكره على سطح الاسترلاب *
Mention must also be made of 'Abdur Rahmān, al-Khāzini's 'Mizān-ul-Ḥikmat completed in 1121 or 1122, in which full tribute is paid to al-Beruni's genius as an experimental and analytical scientist. There is no doubt whatsoever that al-Beruni was one of the greatest scientists of all times and as Sachau remarks, 'the work of generations will be required to do full justice to al-Beruni'.

It is a source of great satisfaction to observe that the referred to above has been printed by the Dāirat-ul-Maʿārif, Osmania University, Hyderabad. It will go a long way to rouse the interest of the modern scientific world in the grand achievements of the great Muslim philosopher of the 11th century, the greatest of his time, and one of the greatest of all times.
AL-BIRUNI'S DETERMINATION OF GEOGRAPHICAL LONGITUDE BY MEASURING THE DISTANCES

By

PROF. J. H. KRAMERS,
Leiden University

In the second chapter of the sixth treatise of al-Qānūn al-Masʿūdī al-Biruni explains a method of determining the difference in geographical longitude between two places by measuring the distance between them in common measures and then using these data in a rather intricate mathematical calculation. This chapter has been rendered into German by C. Schoy in an article entitled Aus der astronomischen Geographic der Araber, which has appeared in Isis, Vol. V (1923), pp. 51–74.¹ As the translation given by Schoy contains not a few errors on the linguistic side, I am giving here an English translation which I consider more correct. After that I propose to present some observations on various points raised by the text, which are of a nature to give some more insight into the way of working of the celebrated Islamic astronomer and mathematician.

My remarks do not bear on the theoretical side of al-Biruni's reasoning, which has been set forth with great lucidity and exactitude by the eminent German scholar in his aforesaid article.

The theory itself is not difficult to grasp. Al-Biruni considers the distance between two places \( A \) and \( B \), the latitudes of which are known, as one of the diagonals of a spherical quadrangle, which is formed by sections of the meridians passing over \( A \) and \( B \) as one pair of opposite sides, and sections of the parallel circles passing over \( A \) and \( B \) as the other pair of opposite sides.² In this quadrangle \( AHBZ \), the sides \( AZ \) and \( HB \) are equal and they represent the difference in latitude of \( A \) and \( B \). The length of all these sides can be expressed in degrees of the earth circumference and their parts. Now al-Biruni converts the spherical quadrangle into a planimetrical quadrangle by substituting for the spherical lines or arcs the corresponding chords, the length of which is expressed in radials and their sexagesimal parts (one radial being half of the earth's diameter).

¹ Some sections of the chapter have also been published in Arabic and French translation in Monumenta Geographica Africae et Aegypti, by Prince Youssouf Kamal, Tom. III, Fasc. III (Leiden 1933) fol. 713.
² In the letters of the figure, which is a copy of that found in the manuscripts, the Arabic phonetic value is followed as much as possible. The same transcription is used by Schoy.
Then \(AHBZ\) becomes a trapezium and, as its angles lie on the circumference of a circle, the quadrangle is governed by the so-called theorem of Ptolemy, which states that the product of the diagonals (in this case the square of one diagonal) is equal to the sum of the products of each pair of opposite sides. In this case: \(AB \times ZH = AZ \times HB + AH \times BZ\) or \(AB^2 = AZ^2 + AH \times BZ\). This enables him to find \(AH \times BZ\) by subtracting the square of \(AZ\) (the distance between the two latitudes) from the square of \(AB\) (the distance between the two places). In order to determine \(AH\) and \(BZ\) the author considers these lines as chords of concentric circles (the parallels running through \(A\) and \(B\)); their ratio is equal to the ratio between the radii of these circles and these radii can be known, as they are the cosinus lines of the angles belonging to the known latitudes of \(A\) and \(B\). So after having ascertained these cosines (expressed in radials) he is able to calculate the length of \(AH\) in radials. Finally he has to find out how much this is in equatorial degrees. Therefore he has to determine the distance between the intersections of the meridians of \(A\) and \(B\) and the equator, namely, the line \(GD\). By a similar reasoning as the foregoing he points out that the ratio between \(AH\) and \(GD\) is equal to the ratio between the radius of the parallel of \(A\) (the cosinus of its latitude) and the radius of the equator, which is 1 radial. After having computed in this way the straight line \(GD\), he converts this again into an arc of the equator and so obtains the longitudinal degrees and their parts which express the difference in geographical length between \(G\) and \(D\) as well as between \(A\) and \(B\). This last result was the aim of the calculation.

In his article Schoy has also treated of another method of al-Biruni's to find longitudinal differences, which is expounded in the second chapter of the fifth treatise of the \(Qānūn\). This method is purely trigonometrical and will not be dealt with in this place.

For the Arabic text Schoy has used the MS. Orient. Oct. 275 of the Preussische Staatsbibliothek in Berlin and photographs of the incomplete MS. Or. 1997 of the British Museum and of the MS. Or. 516 of the Bodleiana at Oxford. I have been able to consult the same London MS. as Schoy and the MS. Acc. Or. 1927 No. 213 of the Pr. St.-Bibl. at Berlin.\(^1\) The latter manuscript,

\(^1\) Cf. Brockelmann, \(G.A.L.,\) Suppl. I, 873.
which was acquired only after Schoy had written his paper, was finished the 29th Rab. I, 562 (22 Febr. 1167) and gives the impression of having been very carefully copied. The London MS. was written in 570 (1174), while the Oxford MS. dates from 475 (1082). There is a fairly good agreement between the second Berlin MS. and the London MS. The differences are to be found mainly in the figures used in the computation. These figures are rendered as usual in Arabic letters and, as is well known, these are especially apt to confound the figures for 10 and 50 by a wrong (or lacking) punctuation ( for ١ and vice versa) and those for 3 and 8 (8 being written as ٨ and ٣ by the same letter, but with an incomplete downstroke ٨). Very often dubious cases can be settled by the probability of the calculation described in the text. Where there is a notable difference between the manuscripts or with regard to Schoy’s text it has been indicated in the notes.

Translation

Second chapter (of the sixth treatise) on the verification of the longitudes of Ghazna and al-Iskandariya.

(1) As we wish to establish the movements of the stars in relation to the meridian of the town of Ghazna, it is necessary that we first determine (the position of) that place in the ‘inhabited part of the earth’, so that the transfer of the time moments (اوقات awqat) in the various towns to that place may be in accordance with the longitudinal difference existing between those places.

(2) As to Ghazna, this place is situated on the parallel which runs at a distance of thirty-three parts (degrees) plus one-third plus one-fourth north of the equator, while its meridian advances the meridian of Baghdad by twenty-four time units (امام azmān, viz. degrees) plus one-third to the east.

(3) The method by which we have ascertained this is that we have proceeded to the observation of its latitude by means of the ‘yamini ring’, which is subdivided into minutes in such a way that the division comprises each time eight of them (المسوسة بالدقائق المقسمة بالدقائق ١ al-magsūma bi‘l-daqā‘iq qismatān wasi‘at tathmīna kull wāhidatin minhā). This observation was executed in each of the years 409 and 410 of the Hijra (20 May 1018 to 8 May 1019 and 9 May 1019 to 26 April 1020).¹

¹ Schoy erroneously gives as the corresponding years of the Christian era 1011/12 and 1012/13.
(4) So we take, in order to learn how it is with its longitude, the town of Shiraz as an intermediary between it (Ghazna) and Baghdad. Now let $A$ be Baghdad on the meridian $TAG$ and $B$ Shiraz on the meridian $TBD$ and let $GD$ be the difference between both places, expressed in time units of the celestial equator (ازمان معدل النهار) $azmān mu'addili 'l-nahār$, i.e. equatorial degrees), and $AB$ the distance between the two towns. This distance is hundred and seventy farsakhs, for the greater part flat country, in which it is approved (مستحسن) $mustaḥsan$ to drop the tenth part, in order to relieve it from the curvature of the roads and to bring it near to a straight stretch. Hereby the number of farsakhs becomes hundred and fifty-three, which, expressed in parts, is $8° 6' 0''$.

(5) We draw now round the pole $T$ and with the distance of each of the two towns, the two circular lines $AH$ and $BZ$. It is clear that the quadrangle formed by the chords $AZ$, $ZB$, $BH$ and $AH$ is comprised in a circle, because its angles are on the spherical surface, while its surface cuts the sphere, describing in this way a circle. Also that the quadrangle has two equal sides, $AZ$ and $HB$, and two unequal sides, $AH$ and $ZB$, which are parallels. It follows that the square of the chord $AB$ is equal to the square of the chord $AZ$, added to the product of the chord $AH$ and the chord $ZB$. The chord $AB$ is $0 8 28 32$.²

(6) The latitude of Baghdad is $33° 25'$ and the latitude of Shiraz, according to the observation of Abū'l-Ḥusain ibn al-Ṣūfī together with a number of scholars by means of the 'adudā ring', $29° 36'$. The chord of the difference between these two latitudes is $0 3 59 46$. Now when we subtract the square of this from the square of the chord $AB$, we obtain the product of the chords $AH$ and $BZ$. The ratio of this product to the square of the chord $AH$ is equal to the ratio of the chord $ZB$ to the chord $AH$. Now the ratio of the chords of concentric arcs (القسي المتشابهة $al-qisī al-mulašībiha$, المتشابهة النقطة $al-mulašībihat al-nuqtā) is the same as the ratio between the diameters of their circles. So this is the ratio between the sinus of $TB$ and the sinus of $TA$, namely between the half diameter of the circular line $BZ$ and the half diameter of the circular line $AH$. The cosinus of the latitude of Baghdad is $0 50 4 12$ and

---

1 MS. London erroneously $Z$ only.
2 This should strictly be rendered $8' 28'' 32'''$ but for convenience sake I omit in the figures given in radials the indication of minutes, etc. The text does the same and is not less clear for it.
3 MS. L.: Abū'l-Ḥasan.
4 MS. L.: $0 50 3 12$; B.: $0 55 4 12$; Schøy: $0 50 3 2$. 
the cosinus of the latitude of Shiraz is $0 \, 52 \, 10 \, 16$. So the chord $AH$ becomes $0 \, 7 \, 28 \, 27$. The ratio between this and the sinus of $AT$ is equal to the ratio between the chord of $GD$ and the sinus of $GT$, which is a quarter (an angle of $90^\circ$). It follows that the chord of $GD$ is $0 \, 8 \, 57 \, 16$, the arc of which is $8^\circ \, 33' \, 32''$. This is the difference between the two longitudes.

(7) We have already said that the latitude of Baghdad from the shore of the encircling ocean is seventy time units. Then the longitude of Shiraz is $78^\circ \, 33' \, 32''$. In the books this is given as $79^\circ \, 0'$. So the two results are near to each other and the two methods cover each other.

(8) As to the distance between the towns of Shiraz and Ghazna, the distance from Shiraz to al-Sirajân in the country of Kirmân is seventy-eight $^3$ farsakhs, then to the beginning of the desert forty-seven, then to Zaranj, the capital of Sijistân, seventy, then to the town of Bust sixty, then to Ghazna eighty. When we correct this partially by subtracting a seventh part and partially by subtracting a sixth part, according to a conjecture made while traversing these distances, the number of corrected farsakhs which remains is two hundred and eighty-four. The parts of this distance are $15^\circ \, 2' \, 7''$ and the corresponding chord is $0 \, 15 \, 41 \, 59$.

(9) We make Ghazna $A$ in the preceding figure and Shiraz $B$. The chord of the difference between these two towns is $0 \, 4 \, 10 \, 14$. Now when we follow the same method with regard to this as before, the chord $AH$ proves to be $0 \, 14 \, 50 \, 6$. The cosinus of the latitude of Ghazna is $0 \, 49 \, 59 \, 5$, so that the chord $GD$ becomes $0 \, 17 \, 3 \, 43$ and the corresponding arc $16^\circ \, 20' \, 54''$. When we add this to the longitude of Shiraz, the addition gives as the longitude of Ghazna $94^\circ \, 54' \, 26''$.

(10) Let us now turn from Baghdad to the other side and let in the foregoing figure $A$ be al-Rayy and $B$ Baghdad. The distance between these two places expressed in farsakhs, after correction by means of subtracting one-sixth, is hundred and thirty-two. In parts this is $7^\circ \, 5' \, 21''$, the corresponding arc being $0 \, 7 \, 19 \, 54 $. The latitude of al-Rayy, according to the observation of Abu’l-Faql al-Harawi and Abu Mahmūd al-Khujandi, is $34^\circ \, 35'$, the cosinus of which is $0 \, 48 \, 47 \, 59$. The chord of the difference between the two latitudes is $0 \, 2 \, 15 \, 45$. The chord $AH$ becomes $0 \, 6 \, 53 \, 2^9$ and

---

1 So MS. B. L. has $0 \, 52 \, 10 \, 46$ and Schoy $0 \, 52 \, 10 \, 17$.

2 The passage ending here and beginning with 'and the sinuos of GT...' is lacking in L.

3 Schoy has $98$, which must be an error.

4 L.: $15^\circ \, 4' \, 7''$.

5 B.: $0 \, 14 \, 55 \, 6$.

6 L.: $0 \, 7 \, 19 \, 54 (or 59) \, 54$; Schoy: $0 \, 7 \, 19 \, 14$.

7 L.: $35^\circ \, 35'$. Schoy: $0 \, 6 \, 13 \, 2$. 

8 So $L.$ and $B.$; Schoy: $0 \, 6 \, 13 \, 2$. 

9 L.: $15^\circ \, 4' \, 7''$. 

10 L.: sinuos.
the chord $GD = 8 \, 27 \, 50$. The corresponding arc of this is $8^\circ \, 5' \, 20''$, the difference between both latitudes.

(11) We have already said that we have found the latitude of al-Jurjâniya in Khwârizm by means of the ‘shâhî ring’ to be $42^\circ \, 17'$, the cosinus of which is $0 \, 44 \, 23 \, 22$. The distance between al-Rayy and this town, expressed in farsakhs after correction by means of subtracting one-sixth, is hundred and fifty-four. The parts of this distance are $8^\circ \, 10' \, 14''$, of which the chord is $0 \, 8 \, 33 \, 16$. The chord of the distance between both latitudes is $0 \, 7 \, 1 \, 5$. The chord $AH$ becomes $0 \, 4 \, 39 \, 54$ and the chord $GD = 0 \, 6 \, 18 \, 20$. The corresponding arc of this is $6^\circ \, 1' \, 26''$, the difference between the two longitudes.

(12) The distance between al-Jurjâniya and Ghazna is two hundred and thirty farsakhs at the utmost (في غاية الطول $fi$-$ghâyat al-ţâl$). When this is taken as authoritative ($rasmîyatan$) it has no need of correction to make it straight. The parts of this distance are $12^\circ \, 10' \, 37''$, of which the corresponding chord is $0 \, 12 \, 43 \, 40$. Now let al-Jurjâniya be $A$ and Ghazna $B$. The chord of the difference between the two latitudes is $0 \, 9 \, 0 \, 7$. The chord $AH$ becomes $0 \, 8 \, 23 \, 2$ and the chord $GD = 0 \, 10 \, 3 \, 50$. The corresponding arc of this is $9^\circ \, 37' \, 16''$, the difference between both longitudes.

(13) Now if we make an addition of the time units which have been found between these towns, we obtain $23^\circ \, 44' \, 2''$. So the longitude of Ghazna, according to this computation, is $93^\circ \, 44' \, 2''$. The result of the computation from the side of Shiraz was $94^\circ \, 54' \, 26''$. Half the sum of both these figures, according to the rule ($rasm$) of the arithmeticians, is $94^\circ \, 19' \, 14''$. Thus it has been established that Ghazna is situated at twenty-four time units and one-third east of Baghdad.

(14) After this it is necessary for us to know how great is the difference in latitude between her (Ghazna) and al-Iskandariya. The Almagest states that this latter place lies one-half and a third hour to the west of Bâbil and that its latitude is $36^\circ \, 58'$. The position of Bâbil is near to Baghdad. So we have to consider what he tells, for no doubt he has found it thus in the books, just as we find similar statements in them to deviate from the truth.

(15) Al-Raqqa is intermediate between both towns and Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-'Azîz al-Hâshimi says that which is found between al-Raqqa and Baghdad by observation of a lunar eclipse, of which he mentions the date, is seven time units. Now let in the preceding figure $B$ be Baghdad and $A$ al-Raqqa. The latitude of

---

1 B.: $0 \, 8 \, 27 \, 55.$
2 B.: $0 \, 10 \, 3 \, 55.$
this town, according to the observation of Muḥammad ibn Jābir al-Battānī, is 36° 1'. The cosinus of this is 0.48 31 51 and the chord of the difference between both latitudes is 0 2 43 21. The distance between Baghdad and al-Raqqa is hundred and thirty farsakhs. So, if we take this as approximately hundred and ten by means of a correction of one-sixth, the number of parts is 5° 49' 34'',¹ the chord of which is 0 6 5 54.² The chord AH becomes 0 5 32 36 and GD 0 6 38 28. The corresponding arc is 6° 20' 43'', the difference between both longitudes.

(16) As to the difference between al-Raqqa and al-Iskandariya, the distance, corrected by one-sixth, becomes six hundred and twenty-eight miles, which is 11° 4' 56'',³ the chord of which is 0 11 35 14.⁴ The chord of the difference between both latitudes is 0 5 17 12.⁵ The chord AH becomes 0 10 32 9 and the chord GD 0 12 17 14. The corresponding arc of this is 11° 45' 15'', the difference between the two latitudes.

(17) The sum of the time units between these towns is 18° 5' 58'', which is the difference between Baghdad and al-Iskandariya. The number of hours corresponding to this result is one hour and a fifth approximately.

(18) It follows that Ghazna has a difference with regard to al-Iskandariya of 42° 26' time units, which corresponds to 2 49 44 hours. In day minutes this is 7 4 20. And in this way has become known the position of the place for which our computation was executed.

(19) Question. What is this sixth part that is subtracted from the distances?

Answer. The people of the profession approve of this without constraint. It is known, indeed, that when the distance between two places is traversing even flats we do not need to subtract anything from it, because the leaving of the straight direction is caused by obstacles which make it necessary to deviate, such as mountains, where the ascent and descent increase the distance. Likewise precipices and water-courses whose passages lie aside from the road, so that one has to take a deviating direction to reach them. Further, sand plains or salt-marshes and mud-swamps, which have to be rounded by circuitous roads, and mountain passes of which the windings have to be followed. Further conditions connected with the commodity of the journey, such as precautions against calamities or lack of sufficient supply of water and forage on the straight road, so that it is advisable to take a roundabout way in

¹ Schoy: 6° 49' 34''. ² L.: 0 6 40 54; Schoy: 0 6 5 43.
³ Schoy: 11° 20' 56''. ⁴ Schoy: 0 11 34 14.
⁵ B.: 0 5 57 12; L. uncertain; Schoy: 0 6 16 12.
order to obtain it. These things are of different importance as they present themselves separate or combined, so that the measure of the decrease is different and has to rely on the impressions and estimates of eye-witnesses. So there are stretches which make necessary the decrease of one-half or more than that and others which make necessary the decrease of one-sixth or less. All in all, one-sixth has been accepted by common consent for the road stretches which approach a straight line.

(20) Question. Can the longitudes be ascertained more correctly by the distances or by the eclipses?

Answer. When one determines the distances so exactly that they approach straightness, the operation with them is superior to the operation with eclipses, because the first appearance and the end of the visibility of the eclipse, which are its most critical moments (اظهر اوقاته azhar awqātihi), can only be observed approximately. For the contact of the circles of the shadow and the moon is generally preceded by a certain faintness, which gives the impression of smoke at the first appearance (of the eclipse), and likewise the same thing occurs after their separation at the end of the eclipse. Then the roundness of the shadow becomes visible only after it has already taken a good deal from the moon, and in between these various moments a certain number of the time units of the celestial equator are turning round, which spoils the distance between the two latitudes, either by increasing it or by decreasing it. And it may cause inexactitude in the observation when the two observers are not exactly in agreement on the identity of the situation which they both have in view; so one of them should not pursue one line and the other another.¹

(21) Question. Why is it that Ghazna and al-Iskandariya have been specially chosen in this chapter as objects for the verification of the longitude?

Answer. As regards Ghazna, here has taken place my last observation of the sun. As to al-Iskandariya, the reason is that I am necessarily relying in the operation on the observation of Ptolemy, for he was himself in that place. And it so happened that Ghazna was the eastern end of the places where, according to the reports that have reached me, the sun has been observed, while al-Iskandariya was the western end. Therefore I have indicated in a table the distances of the various places with regard to those two towns, in day minutes as well as in time units of the celestial equator, in order that it may be fit for use.

¹ In Arabic the word wādin is used here idiomatically: فلا ينفع احدما ال راد falā yadhb abhadhumā ilā wādin wa'l-ākhar ilā ākhar.
## Table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Distance between Ghazna in the east and:</th>
<th>Time units</th>
<th>Day minutes</th>
<th>Towns</th>
<th>Time units</th>
<th>Day minutes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>d.</td>
<td>m.</td>
<td>s.</td>
<td>tr.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balkh</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nisabur</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>al-Jurjānīya</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jurjan</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shiraz</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>al-Rayy</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baghdad</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surra man ra'a</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>al-Raqqa</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dimashq</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>al-Iskandariya</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Distance between al-Iskandariya in the west and:</th>
<th>Towns</th>
<th>Time units</th>
<th>Day minutes</th>
<th>Towns</th>
<th>Time units</th>
<th>Day minutes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>d.</td>
<td>m.</td>
<td>s.</td>
<td>tr.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>17</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>18</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>26</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>26</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>28</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>32</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>33</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>30</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>42</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Remarks on the text**

(1) With the 'transfer of the time moments' al-Biruni seems to have in view the calculation of astronomic tables especially for Ghazna in order to give this town and the reigning Ghaznevids a scientific standing corresponding to its political importance, just as many princes had a geographical description of the world made to accentuate their political power. The same was done, for instance, by the astronomers of al-Ma'mūn, who composed the Ma'mūnīc tables, by Ibn Yūnus for the caliph al-Ḥākim and by the astronomers of Alphonso the Wise in Toledo. Schoy has already pointed to this motive in his article quoted hereafter.

(2) In saying that the difference in longitude between Ghazna and Baghdad is $24^\circ 20'$ the author gives in advance the result of the following computation.

(3) The *yamīnī* ring must be a special variation of an observation instrument, where an index is running along the border of a ring or ring sector—as is also found in the astrolabe—and which was called in this case after Mahmūd of Ghazna, whose honorific name was Yamīn al-Dawlā. The description given of this instrument by al-Biruni in no way justifies the qualification by Schoy as an octant (Achtelring). The description does not imply, however, that there was only one mark for each set of eight minutes; it rather points to a decorative device in which each time eight minutes were singled out and which gave to the ring its special character, on which a
special surname was applicable. This must also have been the case for the other rings which are named in the text hereafter.

Al-Biruni's determination of the latitude of Ghazna is described at length in the eighth chapter of the fourth treatise of the ٔقٔنٔن. This chapter was translated and commented upon by Schoy in his article Die bestimmung der geographischen Breite der Stadt Ghazna in Annalen der Hydrographie und Maritimen Meteorologie, 53rd year, 1925, pp. 41-47. The exact result given here is 90°-56°25’42” = 33°34’18”. It is curious to observe that in this chapter the year of the observation is not mentioned; we only learn that it was done on Monday the 5th of the Persian month Ādhar māḥ in the year that is registered in the year indication for Ghazna'. Schoy supposes that the special observation referred to took place on the 19th of November 1019, which is not in disagreement with the statement of our text. Neither is the ٔئمٔئٔن ring mentioned in the description of this observation.

(4) It is not easy to control al-Biruni's statement that the distance between Baghdad and Shiraz is 170 farsakhs. The earlier geographers often describe this road or parts of it, giving the distance in day's journeys (ٔمٔرٔحٔلا marhala), post stages (ٔسٔكٔكٔ كٔرٔد sikka, barīd) or farsakhs, but as none of these road measures is well defined, it is difficult to make a comparison with the figure given by the author. The shortest road between the two towns passes through Wāṣīṭ, Ahwāz and Arrajān, but it is not probable that al-Biruni has been himself in these parts, which can also be induced from his remark that this distance covers for the greater part flat country. This may be true as far as Ahwāz, but farther to the east there are formidable mountain passages, among them the gorge of Bawwān, celebrated as one of the most beautiful spots on the earth. The most comprehensive description of the road is found in Ibn Khurradāhbeh, who counts 94 stages from Baghdad to Shiraz. From Ahwāz to Shiraz there are 49 stages; Ibn Kh. gives this last distance also in farsakhs, the sum of which amounts to 88 farsakhs. At this rate, the entire road, expressed in farsakhs, would be 169 f., which is remarkably near to the figure given in the text. The dates given by other geographers more or less agree with Ibn Kh. We do not intend to subject the other distances given by al-Biruni to a detailed examination, but what has been said may be sufficient to show that

1 Ibn Khurr., p. 43; Maqdisi, pp. 420, 434; Ibn Hawqal, p. 199 (2nd ed., 282), etc.
3 p. 43.
he must have used his own method in arranging the distances reported to him. With al-Biruni the farsakh has indeed a fixed value, the circumference of the Earth being given by him as amounting to 6,800 farsakhs or 20,400 miles.¹

The correction or straightening of the distances by dropping a certain fraction is more amply treated in para. 19.

In converting the distance expressed in farsakhs into degrees of the Earth circumference the author does not seem to be consistent. If the circumference is 6,800 f., there falls on one farsakh 190.58 seconds or 6° 3′ 10.58″. The 15; f. of the rectilinear distance between Baghdad and Shiraz would be 8° 5′ 58″; in giving 8° 6′ 0″ he may have been rounding off, but in some other cases to come he is much less correct.

(5) In this paragraph the theorem of Ptolemy is applied.

The method followed by al-Biruni in converting an arc into a chord is explained in the seventh chapter of the third treatise of the Qānūn. Schøy has translated this treatise and commented on it in his posthumous book Die trigonometrischen Lehren des persischen Astronomen Abūl-Rayhān Muh. ibn Ahmad al-Biruni (Hanover, 1927). After having given in Ch. 6 a table of the sines of the arcs from 0° 15′ till 90°—augmenting each time with 15′—the author explains in Ch. 7 how he finds the sines of arcs lying between those given in the table by interpolation. According to the table the sine of 4° is 0 4 11 7 24 and, of 4° 15′, 0 4 26 27 20, so that the chord of 8° 6′ must be between 0 8 22 14 48 and 0 8 52 54 52. We shall not try here to control the author’s statements in detail, but we must point to the fact that in the sinus tables of Ulugh Beg, reproduced by Schøy at the end of his publication just mentioned, the sinus of 4° 3′ is 0 4 14 15 25 44; this would give for the chord of 8° 6′ the value of 0 8 28 30 51 28, which is not exactly the value given by al-Biruni. The same small divergence can be observed in the other ‘conversions’ that appear in the text.

(6) In this paragraph the computation of the difference in latitude between Baghdad and Shiraz is brought to an end.

Al-Biruni does not say who is his authority for taking 33° 25′ as the latitude of Baghdad, but he is on this point in agreement with Ibn Yunus, who died in 958 (MS. Leiden 1057). The older authorities, such as al-Battānī and al-Khuwārizmī, have 33° 20′ and this seems to go back on the observations executed under the caliph al-Ma’mūn at al-Shammāsiya in Baghdad.² At any rate the figure is not Ptolemaic.

² Cf. Honigmann, Die sieben Klimata, Heidelberg, 1929, p. 127
Abū l-Ḥusain al-Ṣūfī (died 986) lived under the Buyid dynasty and so it is not surprising that he gave to the ‘ring’ with which he operated the epithet of ‘aḍudī after the great Buyid ruler ‘Aḍud al-Dawla (died 983). Al-Khuwārizmī gives Shiraz the latitude of 32; likewise Ibn Yūnus.

In stating that the ratio between the chords $ZB$ and $AH$ is equal to that between the sines of $TB$ and $TA$ the author should have added that this is also the ratio between the cosines of $BD$ and $AG$, because in the following he only speaks of these cosines. In any case the cosine of the latitude of Baghdad ($AG$) is found by looking up in the sinus table the sinus of $90^\circ - 33^\circ 25'$.

The text does not give the entire calculation which leads to the result that the difference in longitude between Baghdad and Shiraz is $8^\circ 33' 32''$. Altogether there are 15 arithmetical operations involved, mostly executed in the laborious sexagesimal system. I have tried to make the calculations as indicated by Al-Bīrūnī, but I have not come to the same result, although the difference is not considerable. In the following list of the operations I have put my own results between brackets.

1. Determining the distance between $A$ and $B$
   (Baghdad and Shiraz) .. .. 153 f.
   Finding the equatorial degrees of $1$ .. $8^\circ 6' 0''$
   Converting 2 into a chord .. .. 0 8 28 32
   Determining the difference in latitude between $A$ and $B$ .. .. $33^\circ 25' - 29^\circ 26' = (3^\circ 59'')$

5. Converting 4 into a chord .. .. 0 3 59 46
6. Squaring 3 .. .. (0 1 11 50 6 9 4)
7. Squaring 5 .. .. (0 0 11 58 8 3 16)
8. Subtracting 7 from 6 .. .. (0 0 59 51 58 5 48)
9. Finding the cosine of lat. $A$ .. .. 0 50 3 12
10. Finding the cosine of lat. $B$ .. .. 0 52 10 16
11. Multiplying 8 with 9 .. .. (0 0 49 56 30 19 7 54 33 36)
12. Dividing 11 by 10 .. .. (0 0 57 26 9 58 15)
13. Extracting the root of 12 .. .. 0 7 28 27 (0 7 34 43)
14. Dividing 13 by 9 $^3$ .. .. 0 8 57 16 (0 8 57 33)
15. Converting 14 into an arc of the equator .. .. $8^\circ 33' 32''$

(7) The longitude of Baghdad ($70^\circ$) agrees again with that given by Ibn Yūnus. It may have also been the longitude given by al-Khuwārizmī according to Yāqūt who quotes the ‘author of the Ţīj’ (I 678). The $K. Šūrat al-Ārd$ by al-Khuwārizmī (ed. von Mūzik), however, has 73, which must be an error. Al-Battāmī’s $80^\circ$ is counted from a beginning point lying $10^\circ$ farther to the west.

---

2 Schøy translates: ‘mit dem grossten Ringe’.
3 My starting point is here the result given by Al-Bīrūnī (0 7 28 27) and not my own.
4 Cf. Honigmann, op. cit., p. 127 note.
The real difference of longitude between Baghdad and Shiraz, according to modern observations, is $52^\circ 40' - 44^\circ 24' = 8^\circ 16'$.

(8) Al-Birûnî's correction of the sum of the given distances, which is 335 f., by subtracting 51 f. seems rather arbitrary. The 51 f. are, however, between $\frac{1}{4}$ and $\frac{1}{8}$ of 335. It is possible that here he judges after his own experiences.

(10) Here begins the computation of the longitudinal difference between Baghdad and Ghazna by following the northern road.


(11) Al-Jurjâniya was Al-Birûnî's birthplace, where he was able to make himself his astronomical observations. The 'šāhī ring' must have been named after the title of Khwârizm-Shâh, which the rulers of that country continued to bear.\(^1\)

(12) The text implies that al-Birûnî had already made up his mind about the rectilinear distance between the two towns. He must have been well acquainted with the regions traversed\(^2\) and has no doubt taken into account the mountain ranges in northern Afghanistan. Schoy is not very clear in the rendering of this passage.

(13) The real difference in longitude between Baghdad and Ghazna is $23^\circ 54'$. The corrections applied by the author seem to have been too small.

(14) I have not found Al-Birûnî's quotation in the Greek Almagest. According to Ptolemy's Geography (ed. Nobbe, I, 251 and II, 72) the difference in longitude between Babylonia and Alexandria is $79^\circ - 60^\circ 30' = 18^\circ 30'$, while $\frac{1}{2} + \frac{1}{3}$ hour would mean $12^\circ 30'$. As for the latitude Ptolemy's Geography gives $32^\circ$. Al-Khwârizmî has $31^\circ 5'$ and Ibn Yunus $31^\circ$. H. von Mžik, who has commented upon al-Khwârizmî, considers these latitudes as not Ptolemaic.\(^3\) So al-Birûnî's authority remains obscure. In para. 21 he expresses his full confidence in Ptolemy’s latitude.

(15) For al-Hâshimi, who died in 187, cf. Suter, page 79 and Brockelmann, *G.A.L.*, Suppl. I, 386. The year of al-Hâshimi's observation seems to have been left out on purpose. The same reticence about a date is shown in Al-Birûnî's report on his observation of the latitude of Ghazna (see my remarks on para. 3).

---

1 Schoy's translation: 'mit dem scharfsichtigen? Ring' is far beside the mark.

2 That an intelligent traveller may be able to compute distances to a certain degree of exactitude is confirmed by Doughty, *Travels in Arabia Deserta*, London and Toronto, 1930, p. 15: 'Afterward when even my watch failed, I have computed distances in Arabia by camel journeys; nor is this manner so rude that the situation of any place in so vast a country may not be found by diligent cross reckoning, with the largest error, I suppose, of thirty miles.'

It is not surprising that the author shows full confidence in the famous al-Battānī, who made his observations in al-Raqqa and died in 929.

(16) For this paragraph I am able to produce a parallel text from al-Biruni, which is found in his work تحديد نهایات الاماكن لتصحيح مسافات المساكن (Tahdīd niḥāyāt al-’amākīn li-tasḥīh masāfāt al-masākīn). Only one MS. is known, which is in the Fatih Library at Istanbul (No. 3386). It was finished in Ghazna on the 23rd Rajab 416 (19 Sept. 1025), and so, if not an autograph, written under the author’s personal supervision. The text deals just with such geographical-mathematical subjects as are treated in the chapter discussed in this article and contains, besides, some important geographical items.

In his article Der Islam und die geographische Wissenschaft in Geographische Zeitschrift, XLth year, 1934 (pp. 361–372), Ahmet Zeki Validi gives the German translation of a passage in the middle of the MS. (foll. 123b–124b), where Al-Bīrūnī speaks of his desire to determine especially the position of Ghazna on the surface of the earth. He expresses his doubt as to the reliability of Ptolemy, not on account of lack of accuracy of this author, but because Ptolemy had to rely for a good deal on uncertain reports from far-away countries. Now that the dominion of Islam has facilitated communications over a considerable part of the globe, the exact determination of geographical positions is possible on a much wider scale. Al-Bīrūnī has here in view a combination of descriptive and mathematical geography. In an earlier part of the same work (fol. 8a) he says: ‘In the foregoing time I have been intended on combining the methods in the book Jughrājiyya and al-Ja‘hani and other authors of road books.’ Unfortunately this combination has never been harmonically realized in Islamic geographical lore.

The latter half of the book is entirely given to the computation of longitudinal distances. It gives the calculations much more in detail and deals with towns such as Balkh and Nisapur, which are not mentioned in the Qānūn text, though they are found in the table of longitudes at the end of para. 21. Apparently the Tahdīd was written before the Qānūn and so the chapter discussed in the present article is only a compendium. This is not contradicted by the fact that the oldest extant copy of the Qānūn was finished in exactly the same year as the MS. of the Tahdīd, namely, in the year 416/1025. It would only seem that al-Bīrūnī had some carefully written copies of these treatises executed in the said year.

I happen to possess photographs of the last pages of the *Tahdīd* MS. of Istanbul. As it is very beautifully and clearly written, we may presume that it is as good a text as we can desire. On foll. 166b–167a we find the following account of the computation of the longitudinal difference between al-Raqqa and al-Iskandariya.

'As regards the difference in longitude between al-Raqqa and al-Iskandariya, we remark that the difference in latitude between both places is 5° 3', of which the chord is 5 17 12,1 the square of which is 27 56 55 50 24. The distance between them by way of Ḥimṣ, Dimashq, Ṭabariya, al-Ramla and Mīsr (Cairo), though this is not a straight stretch, is 750* miles2 approximately. From al-Raqqa to Ḥimṣ this is 15 4, then to Dimashq 50, then to Ṭabariya 60, then to al-Ramla 87, then to Fustāt Mīsr 207, then to al-Iskandariya 80. Now if we discount one-sixth from the number of these miles the result is 628*, which is in parts 11° 15’ 50’’, the chord of which is 11 35 14. The square of this is 132* 39 33 8 16, and the difference between the two squares 104* 42 37 17 52. This we multiply with the cosine of the latitude of al-Iskandariya, which is 51 26 58; the product is 5387* 8 39 59 53 18 50. We divide it by the cosine of the latitude of al-Raqqa, the result of which is 111* 0 17 27 49. The root of this is 10 32 9. This we multiply with the entire sinus (sin. 90° or 1 radial) and obtain 632* 9 0. Then we divide this by the cosine of the latitude of al-Iskandariya, of which the result is 12 17 14. And this is the chord of the arc 11° 45’ 15’’, the longitudinal distance between al-Iskandariya and al-Raqqa.'

The author goes on by stating that this result is very near to that of al-Battānī and this increases his confidence in the *Zīj* of that author.

The passage of the *Tahdīd* contains the entire computation, while the *Qānūn* passage only gives an extract. The only item missing is the indication of the cosine of the latitude of al-Raqqa. We find all the 15 arithmetical operations mentioned above; he only adds after operation 13 the multiplication of the value found for *AH* with the 'entire sinus', namely, with 1. This only implies another way of writing: 632* 9 0 instead of 10 32 9.

It is disconcerting to state, however, that even here the results of some calculations do not hold good if we try to execute them ourselves. The sum of the distances given is not 750 but 749 miles 3

---

1 In this text the figure for the radials—which is always 0—is omitted everywhere, so that the first figure of the value renders the radial minutes, the second the seconds, etc.

2 The figures marked in this translation with an asterisk are written with 'Indian ciphers' in the text; the others with Arabic letters.

3 The mile is the Western measure as against the Eastern farsakh. For Al-Bīrūnī 1 mile is always 4 of a farsakh.
and $\frac{3}{8}$ of this amount is not 628 miles, the same figure that is given in the Qānūn. Further the squaring of 11 35 14 (operation 6) does not give 132 39 33 8 16 but 134 15 49 23 16. Still he uses this wrong result in the subtraction from the other square, which happens to be right. Operations 11, 12 and 14 again do not hold good, though the difference is never considerable.

How do we account for this? Probably al-Biruni did not do all the ciphering himself and had to rely on a staff of calculators which worked for him. Even the great authenticity of the Tāhdīd MS. would then not be a guarantee for a faultless rendering of the application of the great mathematician's theory. Still the results of the computation do not seem to be worthless, as the deviations from the true situation are only slight.

(17) In the table at the end of para. 21 the longitudinal difference between al-Iskandariya and Baghdad is rounded off to 18° 6'. In the great table of longitudes and latitudes found elsewhere in the Qānūn the longitude of al-Iskandariya is given as 52°, implying a more extensive rounding off.

(18) A day minute is the 60th part of a day and corresponds to 6°.

(19) In this paragraph is shown the essential practical weakness of al-Birûni's admirable construction. The author refers to the 'people of the profession', but it would seem that this is only an excuse for his own way of dealing with the distances. We have seen already that his corrections are very subjective. Still, because they are Al-Birûni's, we cannot consider them as worthless.

(20) This paragraph has been misunderstood by Sehoy. He thought that the text spoke about two shadow circles, which has brought about confusion in his translation. The reasoning of al-Biruni is remarkably clear. He only seems too optimistic about the possibility of determining the rectilinear distance between two places.

(21) Though Baghdad is no more mentioned in this paragraph, we have seen that this city remained for Al-Birûni's age the pivot on which all things in mathematical geography were turning. It is not a mere coincidence that Baghdad was given a convenient longitude, marked by a round figure (70°) in the time of al-Ma'mūn.

Al-Birûni himself made Ghazna a starting point for his computation of the longitudes of Indian towns and the far-away eastern and north-eastern countries that are recorded in his great table of longitudes and latitudes in the Qānūn. The material with which he worked were the road distances that were brought to his knowledge by traders and envoys from distant countries. Professor Minorsky has rightly considered the geographical indications of the Qānūn important enough to use them in his book on Marvazi for a calcula-
tion of the distances by a method which is exactly the reverse of the intricate calculations of Al-Birûni.¹

The small table of longitudes at the end of the chapter contains, as we have said, also the towns which were more extensively dealt with in the K. al-Taḥdīd. The figures given are not faultless, especially in the column of the day minutes, which gives not always exactly the sixth part of the degrees of the first column. I have reproduced the table after the manuscripts, as Schoy has done also, without making the corrections that would be possible.

The foregoing remarks may have given a glimpse of the very laborious kitchen-work that was done by Al-Birûni, or rather for him, in the elaboration of the remarkable results attained by him. The inconsistency in the calculations must perhaps not be attributed to the great scholar himself, but should be seen as springing from the necessity in which he found himself to exploit his huge mass of material.

BERŪNĪ AND THE MS. SULTAN FĀTIḤ No. 3386.

By

F. KRENKOW

Honorary Member of the Scottish Oriental Society,
Member of the Arabic Academy of Damascus,
Dr. Phil. honoris causa of the University of Leipzig

BERŪNĪ

Abu-r-Raiḥān Muḥammad b. Ahmad in the introduction of what is probably his last work, the Kitāb aṣ-Ṣaʿīdana, speaks about the inadequacy of the Arabic script to render exactly the phonetical values of sounds, particularly of vowels in foreign languages. He was speaking of the difficulty in identifying the names of drugs and plants that were known by their Greek or Syrian names transcribed in Arabic letters. The late Dr. Max Meyerhof edited this introduction with a German translation in 1932, but the small volume, published at a ridiculously high price (M. 7.80 for 18 pages of Arabic text and 52 pages of translation) may not be accessible to most readers and I give here an English translation of it, after having again compared the photos of the original manuscript. He says:

‘In accordance with my natural disposition I was from my youth possessed with a real greed to acquire knowledge, considering my age and the existing circumstances. As an example may suffice that a Roman (Greek) lived in our country and I used to go to him with grains, seeds, fruits, plants and other articles and ask him about their names in his language and put them down in (Arabic) writing. However the Arabic script has an immense defect, namely the similarity of the shapes of the letters and that you are compelled to use dots and vowel-points to distinguish them. For if they are omitted the meaning becomes doubtful. Added to this comes the neglect to check and compare the text copied to see that it is correct. As this (the neglect) is habitual with our people it does hardly matter whether the book (so written) exists or not, or whether its contents are known or not known.

‘If it were not for this defect it would be sufficient to have what is in the books of Dioscurides, Galenos, Paulos and Oraibasios in which the Greek names are transcribed in Arabic letters, but we cannot trust them, nor are we certain that they have not been altered in copying...

‘Current among the public is in use a book called Dah-nāmah in incorrect copies of no real value and it has a misleading title, for the equivalents in ten languages are not given for every word mentioned in it. The Christians have a book called Pushshaq Shamahe
(i.e. Commentary of Names of Syriac) which is also known by the title *Chahār Nāmah* because each word is given in Greek, Syriac, Arabic and Persian. I acquired a copy of it in the Syrian script and in it are none of the defects which lead to misunderstanding and for this reason I have copied most of its contents (into Arabic script). They also have books called *Lexicons* which give uncommon words with an explanation of their meaning as they were difficult to understand. Sometimes these books are composed for certain works. I possess a lexicon for the Zīj of Ptolemy, the text of which is in Syriac, then exactly in Arabic, then the explanation; to this book I refer in my researches. I also acquired the following two books: *The Book of Herbs*, very useful with pictures, and the *Kunāsh* of Oraibasios in which against all medicaments the names are written in Greek letters and I copied them because I had confidence in them.

So far this introduction to support to a measure my claim that the *Nisba* of Abu-r-Raiḥān should be pronounced BĒRŪNĪ with a long ĕ; and not Bīrūnī as indicated in some sources like the *Ansāb Samʿānī* (who certainly knew better but could not express it in Arabic letters). In the autograph manuscript (Istanbul, Fāṭih 3386) of which I published a facsimile in ‘Islamic Culture’ the author himself, who should know his own name, has clearly vocalized the *Bāʾ* with a fath, which would mean a pronunciation Bairūnī, but in the fifth century of the Hijra no special mark was used to indicate consonants peculiar to Persian or other languages and not found in the Arabic script. If the *Nisba* referred to a suburb of Gurgānj, where Abu-r-Raiḥān was born and lived, and it was indicated by the word, there it certainly was pronounced in the language of that time. We are taught in Persian dictionaries of much later times that the word meaning ‘outside’ was pronounced with *Yaʿi Majhūl* ‘BĒRŪN’, a pronunciation which has survived to this day in India.

**THE MS. SULTAN FĀTIḤ No. 3386.**

The manuscript, besides being an autograph written by Bērūnī in Ghazna, is important from another point of view. It shows us the author as an enquirer into the geography of the lands which came under his notice. I had for a short time at my disposal photographs, which Professor Ritter had taken for the State Library in Berlin, but unfortunately could copy only the first 54 pages. However, as the original may not be available for a long time and the Berlin photographs may have been lost, some extracts and translation may be of some service. The title reads

كتاب ..... في تحديد نهایات الاِسْماَکَن و تصحيح مساقَتِه مَسَاکِن
and the purpose of the work is to enable scientists to ascertain the correct longitudes and latitudes so essential for fixing the correct direction of the Qibla, because Bērūnī had found that much nonsense had been said such as the sun being at its zenith everywhere at the same time.

As my sole aim is to draw attention to this work which should be published I give some extracts from a rather long introduction in which Bērūnī insists upon the importance of geographical knowledge.

(1) (p. 11) 'One day in an assembly there happened to be a man learned in lexicography when the book "The Routes and Kingdoms" (al-Masālik wal Maimalik) was mentioned and he went beyond bounds in depreciating it, almost placing it outside the pale of sciences, and in his talk he insisted that it was of minor importance and that there was no great advantage in knowing the distances between various kingdoms. I was amazed about him, but why wonder? The likes of people vary greatly and the intentions differ considerably, so that really, as it is often said, there is no scope for arguing though some put in a nicer manner than others in giving expression. There is no difference between him and many people of our times who give preference to the Persian language before the Arabic, who will say: What is the advantage of the inflection of the nominative for the subject and the accusative for the object and other specialities of the language... .

(2) 'But does not the Holy Writ speak of the travels of saints, satisfied with them, like Dhu’l-Qarnain reaching the rising and setting of the sun, Moses coming to the Meeting of the Seas and the Night Journey of the Prophet, whom God bless, from the Sacred Mosque to the Distant Mosque and his emigration from Mecca to al-Medina, besides his travels on warlike expeditions while those who stayed behind were reproached....'

As an example of persons who know the roads of reaching a country differing from those who are ignorant he quotes the following tale:

(3) 'At a time not far distant from ours there was among the pilots of Sirāf learned in the routes across the sea one named Māfannā. One of the captains hired him for a big fee to pilot him to China. When they came to the gates (which are rivers flowing down to the sea between high mountains, the wind prevented him from slipping through the gates which lead to Khānfū (the modern Canton), which is the first harbour of China to be reached and which the captain was aiming for. So Māfannā made for a gate which led to another harbour, but the owner of the ship asked to steer again for the high sea and try to aim for the gate of Khānfū. Māfannā warned him of the dangers of the sea after he had escaped from them, but the captain refused (to listen). So the ship was steared again
into the Ocean and a storm arose and wrecked the ship. Māfannā threw himself on a plank of wood which floated with him and he remained on the waters for three days and nights when a sailing ship (Junk) came into sight which was sailing from Java to China and had missed its course. He wove to them and they took him on board on account of his reputation and they thought themselves lucky. They asked him for advice upon which he demanded his fee. At this the master of the ship became angry saying: "Are you not satisfied at being rescued but must ask from us a fee when you only share with us in having your life saved?" He replied: "I shall never guide you unless you give me money; dying or reaching China are the same to me in my condition (without money)". The master of the ship said: "If you will not guide us I will put you back into the sea as you were." He replied: "Please yourself." So they cast him back into the sea on the same plank and they sailed on and strayed till they perished. Māfannā remained in the sea two more days when another sailing-ship passed which had lost its course. They asked him what had happened to him and what his aim was if they took him on board. He replied that he required a fee; otherwise they could put him back into the sea. So they gave him 200 mithqal of gold and he took the rudder of the vessel, cast out the plumb-line (which is a heavy piece of lead with which the depth of the sea and the eminences at the bottom of it are sounded). He brought up the clay from the bottom, smelled it till he made sure of the place where he was, steered the right course with them and reached safety.'

(4) (p. 19) 'In the days gone by I had the intention to collect the information by Ptolomaios in the book GEOGRAPHHAIA and by al-Jahānī and others in books on travelling-routes which were scattered in these books and to make easier what was obscure so as to perfect this science. I therefore first corrected the distances given as well as the names of places and countries from what I had heard from the mouth of these who had travelled those roads and gathered from those who had been there, after making sure and using caution in accepting the witness of one against the other. I was not niggardly with my money and reputation to gain what I required to know. I made for this purpose half a globe, the diametre of which was ten yards, traced upon it the longitudes and latitudes from the route-indications when time was lacking to work out the mathematical account on them because of their multitude and length. I used to rely for what I ascertained upon my putting it down in writing instead of trusting to my memory as I was not sure of (my) safety and as a guard against any accidents. Then when trials came upon me unexpectedly, I remembered my strivings upon it in the past as if they had never been and if God make it
easy for me to have it back (and He has the power) I am not weighed down that I may complete it.'

Then follow some philosophical discussions upon the age of the Earth which he estimates at millions of years. The Qur’an (he says) does not enter upon this question at all, but the books of the Christians, Jews and Sabians speak of the first human beings; on this, however, they differ widely. He translates the first verses of Genesis quite correctly and then he discusses the geological composition of the Earth and has observed that on some mountains the strata appear to have been dislodged by internal upheavals and that the surface of the Earth has undergone great changes.

(5) (p. 24) ‘Abu’l-Abbās al-Erānsahāri mentions that at a castle called al-Ba‘īda’, a parasang from as-Sirajān, a town in Kirmān, he saw the stems of date-palms which used to grow there, but the climate grew colder and the palms died and whithered and at his time there were no palms within the circumference of twenty parasangs. A further proof is found in the fact that when the level of the ground rose, the brooks and rivers which had been flowing in earlier times dried up.

In a similar way, sea has turned into land and land into sea; which changes, if they happened before the existence of man, are not known and if they took place later they are not remembered because with the length of time the record of events breaks off especially if this happens gradually. This only a few can realize.

This steppe of Arabia was at one time sea, then was upturned so that the traces are still visible when wells or ponds are dug; for they begin with layers of dust, sand and pebbles, then there are found in the soil shells, glass and bones which cannot possibly be said to have been buried there on purpose. Nay, even stones are brought up in which are embedded shells, cowries and what is called ‘fish-ears’, sometimes well-preserved or the hollows are there of their shape while the animal has decayed. The same are found at the Bāb al-Abwāb on the shores of the Caspian Sea. But there is no memory of a known time nor any history about it for the Arabs have inhabited the land since their ancestor Yoqṭān. Of course, they may have lived in the mountains of Yaman while the low-land was sea. These were the ‘Arab al-‘Āriba of antiquity. They cultivated the land from a spring between two mountains, the waters rising to the top, and two gardens flourished right and left till the dam break of al-‘Arim ruined them because the water sank and cultivation ceased and in place of the two gardens there were two waste lands with bitter herbs, tamarisks and a few willows.

We find similar stones in the centre of which are enclosed ‘fish-ears’ in the sandy desert between Jurjān and Khwārazm which must have been a lake in the past, because the river Jaiḥūn (Oxus), I mean the river of Balkh, ran through them to the Caspian Sea past
a district known as Balkhān. Thus Ptolomaicos mentions in the book GEOGRAPHAIA that the river flows into the sea of Hyrcania, i.e. Jurjān. Now between to-day and the time of Ptolomaicos are nearly eight hundred years. The Oxus used to flow in those days through those plains which to-day are desert from a place between Zam and Āmūya and irrigate the lands and villages which were there round Balkhān and shed into the sea between Jurjān and al-Khazar. Then happened some silting which diverted the waters to the land of the Ghuzz Turks, where its course was interrupted by a mountain known to-day by the name of fam'al-Asad (the lion’s mouth) and among the people of Khwārazm as Sikr ash-Shaiqān (Devil’s Dam). There the water accumulated and rose so that the traces of the dashing of the waves are on the heights thereof. Then when the weight (of the water) and the pressure on those porous stones became excessive, it broke through and burrowed about one day’s journey, then turned to the right towards Fārāb on a course known to-day as al-Faḥmī. The people cultivated the land on both sides of its banks in about three hundred towns and villages, the ruins of which are remaining to this day. Then happened to this water-course after a lapse of time what happened to the first and the water turned to the left to the land of the Pajnākis and took the water-course known as Wādī Mazdubast in the desert between Khwārazm and Jurjān and irrigated numerous localities for a long time till they too fell into decay. So the inhabitants moved to the coast of the Caspian Sea. They are folk of the kind of the Allān and al-Uss and their language to-day is a mixture of Khwārazmī and Pajnākī. After this all the water flowed towards Khwārazm after seeings had flown there before and it purified itself at a place barred by rocks, which to-day is at the beginning of the plain of Khwārazm, and burst through it overflowing the district and making a small lake and on account of its abundance of water and the strong current it became muddy from the clay the water carried. This used to sink as the water spread with the mud it carried and harden gradually where it broke through and became dry and the lake moved further till it surrounded all Khwārazm and the lake reached the sand-dune which lay across its course and as it was not able to press it further it turned towards the north to the land inhabited by the Turkumān to-day. Between this lake and that which was in the Wādī Mazdubast is no great distance. It has become a muddy salt-swamp which cannot be forded and is known in Turkish as Khīz-Tangūzī, i.e. the Maiden’s Sea.

(6) 'Ibn al-‘Amid in the BOOK ON THE BUILDING OF TOWNS states that an earthquake occurred in ar-Rūyān at a time not long ago and upset two mountains so that they banged together and hindered the course of the rivers which used to flow between them by blocking the passage. So the water was kept back and formed a
lake. In the same way, as it found no outlet, is the lake of the Dead Sea which has its origin from the accumulated waters of the Jordan.

From the history of the Syrians I have copied that in the year 838 of Alexander, which was the second year of the reign of Justinianus Caesar, there was an earthquake and upheaval at Antioch (Antākiya) and that a mountain above Clodia split in two and fell into the river Euphrates and blocked it. Then the water rose till it drowned and ruined (various places) and the water accumulated till it opened itself a place and flowed again.

This country, Egypt, had the Nile spread over it, as Aristotle mentions in his book al-Āthār al-‘Ulwīya, and covered it like a sea. Then the water continued to sink in and the land which was above dried gradually and was inhabited till it became filled with towns and people, but to-day the commencement of its cultivation is not known. Egypt used to be called Thēba after the name of one of its towns in Upper Egypt which was the part first settled and this town is different from its large town called Memphis, which is the same as Mauf, and Homer the poet, who is modern in comparison with the ancient Egyptians, calls her in his poem Thēba. At the time when Egypt was (partially) sea a certain king in one of his occupations of the country was anxious that they should dig to it from Quzum (the Red Sea) and raise the Isthmus above the two seas so that it would be possible for a ship to sail from the Ocean in the West to the one in the East. The first to do this was Sesostrates, then Darius and they dug a considerable distance, which (channel) is existing to this day, the water of the Red Sea entering with the flow and receding with the ebb. Then when they measured the level of the water of the Red Sea they gave up what they intended fearing that (the water of) the Red Sea might deteriorate the water of the river of Egypt, being of a higher level. Later Ptolomaïos the Third completed it by the efforts of Archimedes as he attained his purpose without causing any harm. Later the kings of the Romans filled it up to hinder the Persians from coming to Egypt.

(7) 'The desert known by the name Karkas Kūh between Fārs and Sijistān and Khorāsān is full of ruins of decayed settlements which Ptolomy calls Qarmania the Deserted, i.e. Kirmān the Deserted. The Persians say that it used to be the most cultivated province being watered by a thousand large springs, the water of which used to flow from the neighbourhood of Sijistān and that Afrāsīāb, the Turk, caused the waters to disappear and with the water being cut off those districts became deserted and what remained of those waters flowed to the lake Zarath which did not exist before.

One can witness in the districts of Syria and other places which lack water, plants and animals, ancient traces which necessarily speak of their having been inhabited at one time and this was possible only because there was water which failed later. So are
the traces of cultivation in the swamps of al-Basra, for the Tigris
used to flow through another course, then burst its banks to those
places and overflowed them.’

(8) ‘Abul-‘Abbās al-‘Erānshahri relates that at al-Buṣīṭt in the
district of Nīshāpūr a pipe-line was dug out and at the depth of some
fifty yards were found the stems of three acacia-trees, which had
been sawed with a saw. Now it is well known that between the
time when they were cut on the surface of the earth and were buried
according to the measure mentioned the time cannot be fixed how
long they must have been buried. Also you cannot wonder at the
preservation of the wood as neither heat nor cold could touch them
with the change of the seasons and this made them last longer
(in their original condition).’

(9) ‘Also that piece of wood in Jurjān which rises each year
from a spring, its roots growing in it and turning on the edge of
the spring about which the people of Jurjān tell many silly tales
and make much about it. Yet it is only a willow affected by an
earthquake; the ground splitting, the tree slipped into it. Then the
earth closed round it and the gap became the place of a spring which
was not able to lift the tree (completely); the branches whithered
and fell off, but when in spring the waters in the interior increase,
they lift the trunk so that it appears above the surface, but roots
remaining hinder it from being ejected completely from the spring.
Those who dived into the spring and touched it found it to be like
the top of an oven. It remains above ground the days of the flowing
(of the spring) but when the water returns to its usual level the wood
returns to its resting-place. The people of that district have no
knowledge about the time when it first commenced, but it is well
known that cultivation moves with the moving of (the supply) of
water as it depends upon it.’

Then follows an investigation concerning the creation of land
and sea based on Aristotle with quotations from the Genesis and the
Qur’ān the translation of which would take too much space and would
require a long commentary for against 1.5 own intellect Berūnī
cannot get away from the erroneous statements of his Greek au-
thority. While it is for him comparatively easy to ascertain the
latitudes the difficulty (only solved in modern times with instruments
not invented in his time) of ascertaining the longitudes was almost
unsurmountable. He will establish them with observations of the
position of the sun, the fixed stars and the planets and this is the
main part of the work which begins on p. 45 of the manuscript. I
was able only to copy a few pages and to follow his arguments would
require the knowledge of a first-class mathematician, which I am
not, and my aim in this short article is to draw attention of com-
petent scholars to the importance of this work, which shows us
Berūnī as one of the foremost geographers of Islam.
اللغة: عربي
النص:

قد كان جمعي وكأنه اديب اللغة مجلس جرى فيه ذكر كتاب المسالك والممالك.
فاضطر الاديب المذكور من الوضع عنه حتى كان يخرج من جملة المعرف والاعتماد في كلماته.
المنفعة وان للفائدة للاهابه بكمية المسافات بين الممالك فتعجبت منه واعجب فالنهايات المختلفة و الارادات متباعدة و ليس فيها على ما قيل خصومة.
لا أن تقيدها بشخص دون آخر احسن من اطلاقها فلا نفرق بينه وبين من يقابله من اهل زماننا الذين اثروا الفارسية على العربية فيقول له ما منفعة ارتفاع الفاعل وانتصاب.
المفعول به وسأير ما عندك من علم وغرائب اللغة.

ثم ما يحكي بحاجته من استباق أولئك راضيًا بها منهم كابورج في القرنين مطلع.
السما وغربيا وبلوغ موسى عليه السلام مجمع البحرين و اسراء النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم من المسجد الحرام إلى المسجد الأقصى و هجرته من مكة إلى المدينة.
و استفوه في غزواته وما اقتنى بها من ذم القاعدين عنه.

ولقد كان بالقرب من زماننا في ربانية سيراف دليل عالم بطرق البحر يسمى ما فنا.
استخرج بعض النواجذة بمال كبير آل الصين فلما قرب من أبوبها و هي الودية التي.
تنصب إلى البحر بين شواهذها حالت الريح بينه وبين ولوج الباب الفضفاض إلى خانفو.
و هو أول بلاد الصين وكان مقصده تتعلق ما فنا باب آخر مود إلى غير بلدة خانفو.
و صالح صاحب المركب ان يرده إلى البحر و يقصد به باب خانفو فحذره ما فنا حواتث.
البحر بعد أن سلم منها فأي الناذا و اعيد المركب إلى اللجة فعصفت عليه ريح.
اهلكته وطرح ما فنا نفسه على خشبة طفت به وبيه في البحر ثلاثة أيام بيااليها الى ان.
اجتاز به من الراوي إلى الصين سباقه قد ضل طريقه فلوج لهم مانفو واحموله لشهرته.
و استبشرنا بمكانه و سألوه الارشاد فطلب عليه أجرة و غضب صاحب السباق وقال له:
اما يقتلك تخلصنا روكح حتى تطالبنا بالمرة وانت شريكنا في السلامة - قال:
ما كنت لاشركم او تعطوني فلولا قاموت عندي ودخول الصين بهذه الحالة سواء.
قال صاحب السباق: لن ترشدني لأعذيك إلى حالك - قال: شائك - فقدفوه على.
تلك الخشبة و ساروا و استمر بهم التحير حتى هلكوا - و بقي ما فاينا في البحر بوبين حتى اجتاز به سبوق آخر دخل فاستخرحوه خبره و عزمهم فيهم حين أخبر بأمره فقال: طلب الإجرة و الا فردو النجاة - فاعطوه مائين مثال ذهب و اخذ سكان المركب بيده و طرح البرد و هو اصابه ثقيفة يسره بها مقدار العمق و نتو الجبال في القرع و استخرج طبق القرار و شمع حتى تحقق الموضوع و عدل بهم الى الطريق فسلم *  

ولقد كنت عارضا فيها مصى على الجمع بين طريقي بطليموس في كتاب جاوجرافيا و الجهان و غيره في كتاب المساكل جميع للترقق و تسهيلا للمنلغة كمالاً للذين قد استندوا تصحح المسافات و أساليب المواضع و البلدان سماعاً من سلكها و التناقل منه في من شاهدها بعد الاستثمار و الاحتياط باستهداف بعض على بعض و لم أضن على مطرح فيه من مال وجاء يجب حصول هذا المقصود و عملته لها نصف كررة قطرها عشرة اذرع لاستخرج الأطول و العروض من المسافات بها إذ الزمان يضيق عن استعمال الحساب فيها على كثرة وتلوه لكنى كنت اعتمد فيها كنت أحمل فيها كنت أحمل على الضبط بالكتابة دون الحفظ اعترا لباسلا و اتى من الحوادث - فحين غافصتى الكتبية اتت على ذكرت في جملة ما اتت عليه من اجتهادات و مرت كان لم تغن بالأمس و ان سهل الله الاعادة و هو عليها قديز فلست بمنتقل عن اتمام ذلك *  

و قد ذكر أبو العباس الأیرانشهرى ان شاهد بقلعة تعرف بالبيضاء على فرسخ من السير جان من مدن كرمان اصول نخيل قد كانت بها قصرد الموضوع و ذهب نخيله و جفت و لم يكن في ذلك الوقت حوله بعشرين فرسخ نخيل و زاد الامر بيناه لما علا الموضوع غار حوله كتاب و انهار كانت تجري من قبل - على مثله ينقل البحر الي البر و البير الى البحر في ازمنة ان كانت قبل كون الناس في العلم فغير معلومة و ان كانت بعده فغير محفوظة لأن الأخبار تنقطع إذا طال عليها الامد و خاصة في الأشياء الكائنة جزئًا بعد جزء و يبحث لا تفتتن لها الا الخواص - فهذه بادية العرب و قد كانت بحرا  

فانكس حتى ان آثار ذلك ظاهرة عند حفر الآبار و الحياض بها فانها تدلى ابطاقا من
تراب و رمال و رضاع ثم يوجد فيها من الخزف والزجاج والعظام ما يمنع ان يحمل
على ذفن قاقد اياه هناك بل يخرج منها احجار اذا كسرت كانت مشتملة على أصداف
و ودع وما يسمى آذان السمك إما باقيا فيها على حالها و إما بالية قد تلاشت و بقيت
مكانها خالية متشكلة بشكلها - كما يوجد مثله بباب الإبواب على ساحل بحر الخزر ثم
لاأيذكر لذلك وقت معلوم ولا تاريخ البهجة فإن العرب قاطنوه منذ اولهم يقطان على
انه يمكن ان يكون سكانهم جبال الزمن وقت كون البادية بحرا فيها العرب العارية
الاقدوس و لهم كانت العمارة بها من شاذروان بين جبلين يرتفع الماء الى قلتهما
و يعمر جنتين عن يمين و شمال اله ان غال به سبل العمر فسفل الماء و بطلت العمارة
و ابدلت بالجنتين أخرى بين ذوات اكل خط و اثل و شئ من سدر قليل - و نحن نجد مثل
هذه الحجارة التي يتوزعها آذان السمك في المنازل الرملية التي بين جرجان و خوارزم
فقد كانت كالبيرة فيها مضي لأن مجرى جيحون اعني نهر بلغ كان عليها الى بحر الخزر
على بلد يعرف بلخان و هكذا يذكر بطليموس مصبه في كتاب جاومغرافيا انه الى بحر
ارتقانه اي جرجان و بينا الاذن و بين بطليموس قريب من ثمان مائة سنة - و كان جيحون
حينئذ يخترق هذه المواضع (الأصل هذا الموضع) التي هي الآن منازة من موضع هو بين
زم و بين اسوئه في عمر البلاد و القرى التي فيها الى لدن بلخان و ينصب الى البحر بين
جرجان و الخزر فاتفق له من الانساد ما مال له ماؤه الى نواحي ارض الغزية و اعترض
له جيل يعرف الآن بفم الاحد و عند اهل خوارزم يشكر الشيطان فاجتمع وطما بحيث
آثار تلاطم الامواج باقيا على علوته فيم جاوز حد النقل و الاعتماد على تلك الاحجار
المتخلقة خرقة و اخترقها قربا من مرحلة ث م مال بيئة نحو فاراب على مجرى يعرف الآن
بالنحمي فعمر الناس على شطبه أكثر من ثمان مائة سنة و عطلة باقيا اطلالة حتى الآن
و عرض لذلك المجرى بعد برد ما مازنها عرض للنظر بالفطنت و مال الماء ذات البسارية ارض
البجانية في مجرى يعرف بواي مزدجت في المنازل التي بين خوارزم و جرجان فعمر
باقا كثيرة زمنا مديدًا و خرب أيضا فانقلّت سكانها الى ساحل بحر الخزر و هم جنس اللات
و الآس و غنتهم الآن مترحكة من الخوارزمية و البجانية - ثم جرى الماء كله نحو
خوارزم بعد أن كانت صياماته تسيل إليها وتتصني من خلال موقع منسوب بالصغير هو الآن في أوائل سهل خوارزم وقرقها وغرق البيعة وصيرها بحرية من لدن هناك ولكلمة المياه وشدة جريها تذكر بما يحمل من الطين فكان يرغب عند الانتساط ما معه من التراب ويفغظ الأرض عند المصب أولا فاولا ويفجر يسا ويتعد البحرية إلا أن ظهرت خوارزم بأسرها وبلغت البحرية في التباعد الى حبل معرض إمامها لم يمكنها أن تزاحمه فانفرحت نحو الشمال الى الأرض التي ينزلها التركمانية الآن وبين هذه البحرية التي كانت لوازى مضبست مسافة غير بعيدة وقد صارت تلك سبخة وحالة لا تخفاض وتعرف بالتركية بحرية تترودها ايه البحر العذراء [في الطرحة بخط غير خط اليروي: بحر و قد حرف الى دنكر وت قد حرف الى قيز] 

ذكر ابن العميد في كتابه في تراوي المدن أن زلزلة كانت بالرويان منذ زمن ليس بالكثير و هذب جبلين حتى تصاد ما ونعما الودية التي كانت تسيل بينهما بالانسداد قتراع الماء وصوت بحرية وهذعى الماء إذا لم يكون منفذا كبيرة زغب ال biên المجمع من ماء الأردن - و تقل أيضا من توازي السربانيين إن في سنة ثمان مائة وثمانين وثلاثين للاسكندر و هي الثانية من ملك بوطانيان قبض كانت زلزلة بأناطكية وخفف وأ ان جبل فوقع قلوضية انشق ووقع في الفرات فانسد و ارتفع ماؤه حتى غرق وحرب ثم ترايع الماء ورائه حتى فتح لنفسه طريقه وعاد الى جريبه

و هذه ارض مصر قد كان النيل ينضب عليها كما ذكر ارسلوطاين في كتاب الأثار العلوية وطبعها كانوا يرح قلما ينزل ينضب عنها وييبس ما علما منها اولا فاولا ويسكن إليها ان امتلاك بالمدن والناس وان جهلوا الآن ببدا العمارة - وقد كانت ارض مصر تسمى في القدم ثبيا باسم مدينة من مدائنها العليا التي سكنت اولا وهي غير مدينتها العظمى السماة سمياس (كذا) وهي منف و أيمرون الشاعر وهو محدث بالقياس الى أوائل مصر يسميها في شعره ثبيا - حين كانت ارض حرا حرص ملوك في بعض استيلاتهم على مصر ان ينظروا من القلزم إليها ويرفعوا البرزخ عما بين البحران حتى يمكن المركب ان يسير من البحر النحيف في المغرب واليه بالشرق
كل ذلك ارتقافا و تطبيق المصلحة وكان أولهم ساستراءطيس الملك ثم داريوس
و حفروا مسافة مديدة هي بقية الآن يدخلها ماء القلزم بالمد و يخرج بالجزر فلمما قاسوا
مقدار ارتفاع ماء القلزم اسبكا عما راموه خوفا أن يفسد القلزم نهر مصر لأشرافه عليه
ثم تمه بطليميوس الثالث على يد ارشميس بحيث حصل الفرض بلا ضرر ثم طمه احد
ملوك الروم منعا للفسر عن ورود مصر منه *

و هذه المنازة المعروفة بكركر كوة بين فارس و سجستان و خراسان ملي مئ من
اطلال العمارات المندسة يسميها بطليميوس قربانيا الغزية اي كربان الخسره و تذكر
الفرس انا كانت اعمار البلاد باما يجمع إليها من قريب الف عين عظام نابغة من حوالي
سجستان و ان افراسياق التركية غورها فقتطع الماء عن تلك البلاد و جربت و سالت بقية
تلك المياه الى بحيرة زره و لم تكن قبل ذلك - و عاين بتعش الشام و غير ذلك من
البراري العديدة الماء و النبات و الحيوان آثار عادية تنطوى ضرورة بها كانت آهله
و ان ذلك غير ممكن الا باماك ان لها ثم انقطع منها كما يرى آثار العمارات في بطائح
البصرة و قد كانت الدحلة (كذا) تجري على غير البطائح ثم ابتقت الى هذه المواضع
فغرقتها *

و ذكر ابو العباس الآرشيشرى انه حفر برستاق بست من حدود نيسابور قناية
فوجد على نيف و خمسين ذراعا اصول ثلاثة اشجاري سرو قد نشرت بالمشار و معلوم
ان الزبان بين مقطعها على وجه الأرض و بين انكسار ما فقته بالCSR المذكور
غير مضبوط لطوله على النقل ثم لايتعجب من بقاء الخشب فيه فانه اذا بعد عن
الموضع الذي أكثر قبوله للشر و البرد الدائمين في السنة كان اطول بقاء

و هذه خشية جربان و هي تخرج كل سنة من منبع ماء خزوجا ينبت به اصلها
و يدور على حافة العين رأسها و لأهل جربان فيها خرافات و تعظم لأمها و ليست
الشجرة سرو قد زلزلت ارضها فانشقت و وقتت الشجرة في الشق ثم انضمت الأرض
عليها و مسار الشق منبع ماء لايستقل برف الشجرة في انة قد عفتت اغصانها و سقطت
فاذدا أزدادت المواد في الربع استقل الماء حينئذ يرفعها فبرى و قد بلد من عروقها

بِرُنْيُّ وَ الْمُسْلَمُ السُّلَتَانُ فَطِيْحُ. 3386. 207
ما يتحول بينها و بين البروز من اصل المنبع كلها - وهو على ما ذكر من غاص فيه و لمسه كرأس تنور فيبقى أيام الماء و إذا عاد الماء إلى مقداره رجعت الخشبة إلى قراره و ليس في اهل تلك البقاع من يحصل لحديثها على اول فقد علم ان العمارة منتقلة بسبب انتقال الماء لأنها تابعة اياه *

NOTES

(1) I have not been able to find any reference to Abul 'Abbās al-Īrānshahri elsewhere.

(2) The Pajnāki Turks became in the 12th century potential enemies of the Russians in the Southern Steppes. We find them here at the end of the 10th century still to the east of the Caspian.

(3) In the name of the Karkas Kūh the Sin is clearly marked with 3 dots under the letter in the MS. against Yāqūt who has a Shīm.

(4) Though Bērūnī could read Greek letters well he frequently did not transcribe the spiritus asper and he writes Irqania for Hyrcania and Omeros for Homeros and this is confirmed also in his other works. He is a little at sea in his account of ancient Egypt but it is noteworthy that he knew of the hundred-gated Thebes which is mentioned in the Iliad of Homer.

(5) A later hand has corrected Bērūnī in the ancient Turkish Khiz Tanqizi and on the margin of the MS. we find Qyz Dengezi.

(6) The earthquake of Antioch mentioned occurred on the 29th of November 528 A.C. which was the second year of Justinian, as stated by Bērūnī.

(7) Ibn al-'Amid must be the celebrated Wazīr of the Büyide sultān Rukn ad-Daula, but none of his works have survived.
L'ARTE DELL'ESPORRE IN AL-BİRÜNĪ

Per

PROF. MARTINO MARIO MORENO,
dell' Università di Roma.

La sapiente architettura del volume di al-Bīrūnī sull'-India è già stata segnalata da altri, a partire dal SACHAU nella sua prefazione; ioni propongo di esaminarla dal punto di vista didattico-estetico, mostrando in lui più ancora del dotto il maestro, più ancora dello scienziato l'artista. Al-Bīrūnī non è un semplice erudito che fa sfoggio delle sue molte cognizioni, magari compiacendosi di avvolgerle, come molti dei suoi contemporanei, in una terminologia astrusa, o restando incapace di uscire dall'aridità del tecnicismo; egli è un cuore pulsante oltre che un cervello ragionante; il nuovo mondo che i suoi studi gli hanno rivelato ha fatto vibrare in lui le corde dell'umana simpatia, lo ha animato d'una passione che brama di comunicarsi ad altri, e sa quindi trovare le vie più adatte per vincere la diffidenza e l'indifferenza ed accattivarsi l'interesse. Perciò egli possiede in sommo grado l'arte del divulgatore. Le sue doti di comunicativa risplendono soprattutto nella parte dedicata al pensiero filosofico-religioso dell'India.

Nell'iniziare i suoi corregessionari a un soggetto così astruso e insieme così delicato, al-Bīrūnī si comporta con il savoir faire di un aristocratico che voglia introdurre nel suo circolo un forestiero. Prima di tutto egli mette in luce le affinità della sua educazione con quella di coloro che debbono riceverlo, mostrando che appartiene anche lui alla buona società (خِرَاصٍ) e ha una mentalità simile alla loro (مِقاوِة مَعَقاَوَة); dopo aver così rotto il ghiaccio e stabilito una corrente di simpatia, ottiene dagli anfitrioni che si adattino alle originalità dell'ospite e magari alle sue stesse gaffes (مَعْوَة مَرْدُوْة).

Il salotto più adatto a un incontro fra l'Induismo e l'Islam era, senza dubbio, il Misticismo. Al-Bīrūnī fa la sua presentazione precisamente in questo ambiente, e chiama in suo aiuto una comune conoscenza che farà il suo affiatamento: la filosofia ellenica. Poi si passerà in biblioteca, e si discorrerà di astronomia e di altri argomenti scientifici. Il metodo comparativo ha qui un'eccellenza non soltanto didattica, ma anche psicologica.

Però anche il terreno scelto per l'incontro-il Misticismo-è sdruccevole dal punto di vista dell'ortodossia islamica. Ebbene, al-Bīrūnī ha il tatto di non cominciare con il Paramātman ed al-Ḥaqq,
ma con Ḫavrā ed Allāh, l'Allāh della teologia comune; salvo, poi, a passare a un Dio che, una volta affermata la, sua personalità, può rivelarsi impunemente come il Tutto.

La credenza degli Indiani in Dio il laudatissimo− comincia al-Birūnī - è che Egli è l'unico, l'eterno, che non ha fine nè principio, il libero (muḫtār) nel suo agire, l'onnipotente, il sapiente, il vivente, il vivificante, il regolatore (muḏabbīr), il conservatore, l'esente nella sua sovranità (maʿlakât) dai rivali (addâd) e dai pari (andâd), Colui che a nulla è simile e a cui nulla assomiglia' (Pag. 13 ed. Sachau).

Sembra l'inizio d'un catechismo musulmano. Ora in tutto ciò non v'è nulla che sia men che esatto dal punto di vista del teismo indiano; solo che nelle fonti la disposizione degli epiteti non sarebbe precisamente quella adottata da al-Birūnī, e verrebbero in luce dei particolari che rivelerebbero Ḫavrā come un Purusa diverso, sì, dagli altri, ma sempre eguale ad essi in essenza, e quindi, benchè privo di superiori e di pari, non tale nel senso assoluto della teologia musulmana ortodossa, che non ammette che Dio possa essere chiamato Spirito; oppure come l'Āmun non più preso nella purità della sua essenza, ma già compromesso dal suo rapporto con la Māyā, o Prakṛti, fonte essa, e non Lui, dell'agire. Queste peculiarità non sono ignote ad al-Birūnī, tanto è vero che verranno in seguito, insieme con il parallelismo sussuo della distinzione fra l'Essere dello 'ahl al-haqīqāh e l'Allāh dei mutakallimīn; ma intanto egli le tace, perchè dal punto di vista oratorio conviene conciliarsi gli uditori, e dal punto di vista didattico procedere per gradi.

Ancora. Quale dei due metodi è più opportuno seguire nello esporre un sistema straniero: scorporarlo, per introdurre a pezzi il contenuto nelle caselle del sistema nostro corrispondente, ovvero presentarlo in blocco così com'è? L'uno e l'altro metodo hanno i loro inconvenienti. Meglio di tutto è abbinarli; e così fa appunto al-Birūnī, prima mostrando quale risposta abbiano dato gli Indiani a taluno dei quesiti più appassionanti della teologia musulmana, e poi facendoci della loro dottrina un'esposizione unitaria. Non ci stupirà quindi che, a completare la serie delle proprietà di Ḫavrā, egli si fermi sull'attributo del kalām, che effettivamente anche la teologia indiana ha trattato, ma in un'altra luce, in un altro contesto,— al punto che le scuole atee sostengono un kalām (≡Veda, Ḫabda) a sé stante, del tutte inconcepibile per i Musulmani—e faccia rilevare che anche per gli Indiani teisti Iddio è mutakallim, in quanto fonte della Rivelazione (pag. 13, l. 20 sgg.).

Al-Birūnī dice ciò citando un estratto del Kitāb Bātanjal: nello esercizio, cioè della sua arte di traduttore. Con il Kitāb Bātanjal non lo possiamo seguire su questo terreno in modo completo e sicuro,
perché l'originale ci è ignoto; siamo, invece, in grado di controllare i suoi procedimenti con la Bhagavadgītā.

La prima citazione (pag. 14, l. 10-13) del poema sacro suona così:

'Io sono il Tutto, senza principio per via di nascita nè fine per via di morte. Non cerco col mio agire ricompensa. Non sto piuttosto con una casta che con l'altra per amicizia o inimicizia. Ho dato a ognuna delle mie creature ciò che le occorre per il suo operare. Di chi mi conosce in questo carattere, e si fa simile a me nel rimuovere il desiderio dall'azione, si scioglie il legame, e divien facile la liberazione e l'emancipazione.'

Com'è noto, inutilmente si cercherebbe, tutto di seguito, questo passaggio nella Bhagavadgītā. Il Sachau segnala, come tradotto a senso, lo cloka 3° del canto X:

Yo māṁ ajam anādīṁ ca vetti, loka-maheçvaram, asammūḍhaḥ sa martyeṣu sarva-pāpaḥ pramucyate.

'Chi mi conosce ingenerato e senza principio, supremo signore del mondo, si libera, scevro da errore fra i mortali, da tutti i peccati.'

Secondo me, invece, l'autore ha presente il canto IV e il canto IX insieme.

Per il concetto di 'senza principio e senza fine'

IV, 6 Ajo 'pi sann, avyayātmā, bhūtānāṁ icvaro 'pi san, prakṛtīṁ svām adhiṣṭhāya, saṁbhavāmy, ātma-māyayā.

Per i concetti di disinteresse, conoscenza della natura divina, assimilazione al Dio, emancipazione:

IV, 9 Janma karma ca me divyam evam yo vetti tattvataḥ, tyaktvā deham, punarjanma naiti, māṁ eti so, 'rjuna.

10 Vita-rāga-bhaya-krodhāḥ man-mayā, māṁ upāçritāḥ, bahavo, jnāna-tapasā pūtā, mad-bhāvam āgatāḥ.

Per il concetto che ognuno ha avuto da Dio secondo il suo bisogno, e, ancora, che Dio è disinteressato, e che conoscendolo in tale natura si raggiunge la salvezza:

IV, 13 Cātūrvarṇaṁ mayā sṛṣṭaṁ guna-karma-vibhāgaçaḥ:
tasya kartāram api māṁ viddhy, akartāram, avyayam.

14 Na māṁ karmāṇi limpanti, na me karma-phale sṛṣṭaṁ Iti māṁ yo 'bhijānātī karmabhir na sa badhyate.
'Pure essendo ingenerato, imperituro, e signore degli esseri, presidendo alla mia Prakṛti, io vengo al mondo in virtù della mia Māyā.... Chi conosce a fondo in questa guisa il mio divino nascere ed agire, quando abbandona il corpo non incorre nella rinascita, ma viene a me, o Arjuna! Liberati dalla passione, dal timore, dall'ira, identificati a me, rifugiati in me, molti, purificati dall'ascesi della gnosi, sono entrati nella mia essenza. Ho create le quattro caste, ripartendone le qualità e i compiti: sappi che di esse l'autore sono io, pur inattivo e imperituro. Me non macchiano le opere, né me ne attira il frutto: chi tale mi conosce, non è incatenato dalle azioni.'

Per il concetto d'imparzialità, con applicazione alle caste:

IX, 29 Samo 'ham sarva-bhūteṣu: na me dvesyo 'sti, na priyah.  
32 Mām, hi, Pārtha, vyapāçritya ye 'pi syuh pāpa-yonayah, striyo, vaiçyās, tathā ċūdrās, te 'pi yānti parāṃ gatim.'

'Io sono equanime verso tutti gli esseri: nessuno m'è in odio, nè alcuno m'è diletto.... Poichè, o Prthide, coloro che si rifugiano in me, anche se sono di infame origine, donne, agricoltori, servi, raggiungono il fine supremo.'

Come si è, dunque, comportato al-Birūnī traduttore? Ha fatto una scelta di versi entro due differenti canti, e ne ha stralcio tutto ciò che per il momento non era ancora intelligibile ai suoi lettori, integrandoli, per converso, con qualche particolare tratto da altri punti del poema. 'Io sono il Tutto' è l'idea direttrice del IV canto e del poema intero. L'adhiṣṭhāna e la māyā (che del resto al-Birūnī, attaccato alla terminologia sāmkhya, non menziona mai nel suo libro), sono stati omessi, per non ingenerare difficoltà. Del desiderio, del timore e dell'ira egli parlerà in seguito: non ritiene quindi il caso di farne per il momento l'enumerazione, e così si regola pure per le caste, di cui dirà poi a lungo. Insomma: il suo metodo è di non mettere troppa carne al fuoco. In luogo d'une traduzione abbiamo una parafrasi, ispirata a un sano criterio pedagogico. In pari tempo egli vuole che il suo testo sia nitido non solo per chiarezza, ma anche per venustà. Notate, infatti, la prosa rimata: il mukāfāt che fa eco a wafāt e l'‘itāq che si contrappone anche nel suono al w ithāq. Dietro allo scienziato spunta il letterato.

Le citazioni biruniane della Bhagavadgītā sono disperanti, perchè nessuna trova corrispondenza esatta nell’originale. Si può, col Sachau (Trad, vol. II, pag. 265) ricorrere all’ipotesi che egli avesse dinanzi un testo molto diverso da quello odierno - i potesi soprattutto valevole per quelle citazioni che mancano completamente di riscontro; si può pensare che qualche volta egli abbia fuso il testo col commentario; si può anche supporre che qualche citazione provenga non direttamente dal poema, ma da trattati riportanti di seguito versi tratti da canti diversi della Gitā; ma molte cose possono
essere spiegate semplicemente con questi criteri didattici ed artistici
dell’autore.

Ecco varie riprove di quello che ho detto.
Negli čloka 7-8 del citato canto IV della Bhagavadgitā, il Beato
dice di sé:

Yadā yadā hi dharmasya glānir bhavati, Bhārata,
abhyyutthānam adharmasya, tadātmānaṃ sṛjāmy aham.
Paritrāṅ̄ya sādhūnām vinācāya ca duṣkṛtāṁ,
dharma-samsthāpanārthāya, sambhavāmi yuge yuge.

‘Tutte le volte che declina la virtù ed insorge il vizio, allora, o
Bharatide io ricreo Me stesso. A difesa dei buoni, a sterminio dei
malfattori, io rinasco di evo in evo, per restaurare la legge.’

Al-Bīrūnī traduce: ‘E tutte le volte che ho desiderato venire a
scopo di riforma (الإصلاح). ho rivestito un corpo, perché non
è possibile stare fra gli uomini senza farsi uomo’. Egli riassume
un concetto che nell’originale si distende fra due čloka nella pre-
gnante parola araba įcīāh, e aggiunge per comodo dei lettori una
chiosa (pag. 26, l. 5–8). E la sua traduzione riesce elegante e chiara,
senza essere infedele.

Un altro bell’esempio di traduzione essenzializzata si incontra
a pag. 26, l. 13–16, dove in un arabo scorrevolissimo al-Bīrūnī ri-
roduce non solo la sostanza, ma anche i particolari più significativi,
dell’involuto passaggio della Bhagavadgitā (VI, 40–45) relativo al
ciclo delle incarnazioni.

Egualmente son conservate e rese con perfetta grazia di stile
arabo, sobriamente ornato di rime, le espressioni più vivide del
lungo brano della Gitā (canto II) in cui Kṛṣṇa prova ad Arjuna che
egli può sterminare senza rimorso i suoi avversari. Nulla davvero
perde l’originale ad essere sfrondato del superfluo (vedi pag. 13,
l. 25 sgg.). Al-Bīrūnī non cerca nella Gitā soltanto la teoria: ne
sentе e ne rende anche la poesia.

La rima è adoperata dal nostro anche ad effetto didattico: allo
scopo, cioè, di imprimere anche foneticamente nello spirito gli acco-
stamenti e le opposizioni dei concetti. Così dei tre ḡuna, chiamati
‘le tre forze’, egli dice:

فَالْأَوْلِى رَاحَتُ طَبْيَةُ مِنْهَا الْكُونُ وَ الْنَّمَاهُ وَ الْثَّانِيَةُ تَعْبُ وَ مِشْتَةُ، مِنْهَا الْثَّبَتُ وَ الْبَقَاءُ وَ الْثَّالِثَةُ فُتْوَرُ وَ عَمْهُ، مِنْهَا الْفَسَادُ وَ الْفَنْعَاءٌ

Ben detto ed esattissimo insieme! Così i tre mondi sono: lī-l-
iktisāb, lī-l-thawāb e lī-l‘iqāb: azione, punizione, premiazione (pag.
29, l. 10).

Ecco un’ elegante traduzione dal Kitāb Bātanjal (p. 27, l. 16
sgg. e pag. 28, l. 1).
Basta questo brano a darcì un'idea dell'arte di al-Birûnî come traduttore. Nell'ultima frase c'è anche una reminiscenza coranica (il gioco di parole), come ci sono rispettivamente a pag. 14, 17, pag. 26, 18, e pag. 26, 15 un précédent et un précédent e un precedent che non rappresentano nulla intrusi ideologici in quei contesti.

Passiamo così ad esaminare un altro degli aspetti dell'espositiva di al-Birûnî. Non possiamo rendere un pensiero straniero senza convertirlo in una certa misura nei termini d'un pensiero che ci sia familiare. Nel tradurre il Sāmkhya e il Pātañjala al-Birûnî si vale di vocaboli tecnici della filosofia e della teologia araba con altrettanta legittimità con quanta il Woods, per esempio, ricorre per lo Yoga alla nomenclatura, non sempre perspicua, della psicologia anglosassone. Ma egli usa press'a poco le stesse cautele di un coscienzioso indianista moderno, e come questi indulge alla pura e semplice trascrizione di vocaboli sanscriti. È interessante seguirlo in questo sforzo.

Ottima solo per esemplificare le traduzioni مادة مادة مصورة per avyakta, vyakta e prâkrti; la presentazione dei tre guna come di tre potenze (قوي) prime agevola la comprensione della loro natura; notevole il vocabolo di ضروريات coniato per rendere karmendriyâni; passabile gâlib per manas, sebbene al-Birûnî abbia il torto di ridurre la funzione di quest'organo a pura volontà; poco felice la conversione di ahamkâra in ṭabi'ah (natura), con una falsa spiegazione del concetto di abhimâna. Che sarà l'ellenico ḫayr mahâ (خير محض) applicato al Dio indiano (pag. 13, 1. 19)? Il sad del Brahman che è saccidânanda o il ciòddhasattva di Içvara? I devâs imbarazzano al-Birûnî; un po' ne fa dei rûhâniyyun e un po', addirittura, dei maîâ'ikah (Angeli), ma dopo avere bene spiegato come la lingua araba non tolleri che sian chiamati
ālihah (dei), e quale distanza li separi effettivamente nel sistema indiano dall'Ente Supremo.

Ma anche le sue identificazioni o approssimazioni non sono del tutto felici, egli non tradisce mai il pensiero che va esponendo, perchè la preoccupazione di renderlo chiaro ed accessibile non lo trascina mai a manipolazioni arbitrarie. Al-Bīrūnī è ben lontano dal cedere alla tentazione di fare del sincretismo, alla quale si abbandonerà invece in pieno, trattando in parte la stessa materia, un Dārā Šikūh. Conosciamo in Europa un Vedānta travestito alla hegeliana, un’anima indiana presentata secondo il gusto romantico, certi pasticci teosofici portati in giro per gli alberghi di lusso: al-Bīrūnī, invece, se è lieto quando le idee indiane coincidono con quelle dell’Islam o della filosofia greca, non tenta mai di ficcarle per forza in recipienti che non le contengono; anzi, quanto più sono peregrine ed ostiche, tante più si affatica a romperne la dura scorza; e ci riesce egregiamente.

Si ammiri con quanta maestria, nonostante le piccole inesattezze di dettaglio, egli disegni le linee del sistema Sāṁkhya-Yoga, difficili a ricavarsi (ben lo sanno i Sanscritisti), dagli arruffati Sūtra e dai loro non meglio ordinati commenti.

L’onestà scientifica dà alla sua esposizione la esattezza; la lucidità del pensiero la dà l’ordine, che è bellezza; e a questa bellezza altra ne aggiunge la passione per il soggetto, che infonde nel suo stile colorito e calore.

Per queste ragioni leggiamo ancora oggi, dopo mill’anni, con profitto e diletto il suo capolavoro, frutto d’intelletto e d’amore.
AL-BERUNI ET LA VALEUR INTERNATIONALE DE LA SCIENCE ARABE

Par

LOUIS MASSIGNON

On donnait il y a deux mois à Paris une série de conférences fort remarquées sur l'histoire des religions, discipline essentielle pour les scientifiques, car elle donne à la fois la courbe, construite par points du progrès experimental des découvertes, et une perspective psychologique sur la structure de l'imagination des découvreurs et des inventeurs. C'était George Sarton, l'auteur d'une monumentale 'Introduction to the History of Science' (1er volume, Baltimore 1927 ; le Vème volume vient de paraître : il mène jusqu'à la fin du XIVe siècle), où il a marqué que la première moitié du XIe siècle doit être représentée du point de vue international par Beruni bien plus que par Avicenne (Ibn Sina). Esprit critique, tolérance, amour de la vérité, courage intellectuel, telles sont les qualités maîtresses de ce mathématicien, explorateur des routes d'échange économique et intellectuel, comparatiste des philosophies et même des mystiques entre l'Inde et la Grèce, et des calendriers liturgiques, des fêtes mazdéennes aux fêtes juives, chrétiennes, et musulmanes.

En mathématiques, Wiedemann et Suter ont souligné l'originalité de Beruni : pour les chiffres dits hindous (principe de position), les progressions géométriques (à propos du jeu d'échecs), la trisection de l'angle et les problèmes non solubles au moyen de la règle et du compas seuls. En géographie, la projection stéréographique, la cartographie, la géodésie, la détermination des densités spécifiques de dix-huit minéraux et métaux précieux, l'incommensurable supériorité de la vitesse de la lumière par rapport à celle du son, l'explication des puits artésiens, de certains cas tératologiques, du nombre toujours pair des pétales des fleurs (phyllotaxie), la construction de l'astrolabe sphérique.

Né Kharezmien, c'est-à-dire parlant un dialecte iranien du Nord, à empreinte turque (ce qui pose le problème des Qarluq étudié par Minorsky) ; né musulman sunnite, à tendances ismaéliennes, par universalisme philosophique (ce qui le différencie du sh'iisme raciste des imamites qui est surtout dévotion sentimentale) il admirait le grand médecin Razi malgré son irréligion : il tient de lui l'idée de progrès. Alors que Razi s'est montré assez sévère pour la grammaire arabe, Beruni admire la puissance d'abstraction de la langue arabe : pour lui, la science internationale doit s'exprimer en arabe.
Comme beaucoup d’écrivains arabes, il a passé sa vie en dehors des pays arabes; mais de l’année 1017 à 1048, année de sa mort, il a été principalement en Afghanistan: résidant à Ghazni, capitale de la dynastie Ghaznawide. C’est là qu’il a écrit, en dehors de sa chronologie (écrite en Jurjan en l’an 1000) ses principaux ouvrages sur l’Inde, sur l’astronomie (Qanun Mas’udi et Tafsirim), le catalogue des oeuvres de Razi (cent trois titres), le catalogue de ses propres oeuvres (cent treize titres), le livre des drogues, le livre sur les mines et les pierres précieuses, enfin la traduction du livre de Patanjali (en sanscrit) sur le Yoga: dont nous avons retrouvé le manuscrit à Istambul (étudié par Hauer). J’ai visité Ghazni in 1945.

Beruni a parfaitement compris le rôle international de l’arabe comme principale langue sémitique de civilisation: sa puissance de condensation et d’abstraction, sa syntaxe interne par infixes significatifs, non par affixes accolés; sa valeur d’unification, sa morphologie dominatrice (structuralisation de la parataxe).

Mathématicien, il a pris le virage des sciences mathématiques vers leur orientation moderne: atomisme occasionaliste et quantique; projection des nombres dans la durée discontinue (semis stellaires d’instants) étude des nombres ordinaux singuliers, ayant spécificité experimentale, algébrisation de l’imagination mathématique.

En une célèbre préface du livre des drogues, il dit: ‘c’est dans la langue arabe que les sciences ont été transmises par traductions venant de toutes les parties du monde; elles s’y sont embelliës, ce qui leur a permis de s’insinuer dans les coeurs; et les beautés de cette langue ont circulé avec ces sciences dans nos artères et dans nos veines. Et s’il est vrai qu’en toute nation on aime à se parer de la langue à laquelle on est resté attaché pour s’être accoutumé à l’employer avec ses amis et compagnons selon ses besoins, j’en dois juger par moi-même et par ma langue natale, Kharezmienne: où une science serait aussi étonnée de se voir éternisée qu’un chameau de se voir dans la rigole de la Ka’ba, ou une girafe de se voir parmi des purs sang. Et si je compare l’arabe au persan, deux langues dont je me sens intimement le familier, j’avoue préférer l’invective en arabe à la louange en persan. Et l’on reconnaîtra le bien-fondé de ma remarque si l’on scrute ce que devient un texte scientifique une fois traduit en persan; il perd toute clarté, son horizon s’estompe, ses linéaments se brouillent, sa portée pratique disparaît. La vocation de la langue persane c’est de perpétuer des épopées historiques sur les rois de jadis et de fournir des contes pour les veilles nocturnes.’ (On reconnaît ici le contemporain de Ferdossi et des premières Mille et une Nuits.)

Je pressens ici une objection: toute langue internationale scientifique dénationalise; vous nous montrez un Beruni qui par une sorte de parti-pris abstrait pour la supériorité technique de l’arabe, renie la race iranienne dont sa famille kharezmienne, était
issue. En ce temps de renaissance des nations orientales Beruni prend figure de traître ou d’otage ?

Non pas; il a entrevu l’idéal supra-national d’une langue universelle dont la beauté pure l’a séduit pour son esthétique transcendante. En travaillant d’ailleurs comme tant d’autres grands iraniens médiévaux au perfectionnement du lexique technique de l’arabe, considéré comme langue privilégiée pour les échanges intellectuels entre savants, Beruni a réalisé un progrès que seule son origine aryenne pouvait réaliser dans ce domaine. La langue arabe, comme toutes les langues sémitiques contient beaucoup de racines ambivalentes (elle n’est pas seulement la langue du īḏād, mais la langue des aḏḏād) et il fallait des écrivains de souche aryenne pour faire prendre ainsi à l’arabe conscience de tout son destin ; pour poser un choix volontaire entre les deux sens contrastants de mots arabes devenant ainsi inducteurs, générateurs d’une structure philosophique positive et orientée. Beruni apparaît ici comme le chaînon le plus illustre d’une longue chaîne d’écrivains comparatistes depuis la plus antique caste des scribes iraniens Sogdians qui ont organisé l’administration des Achéménides et des Sassanides avant de fournir le lexique technique des parlers turcs d’Asie centrale, jusqu’à la fameuse caste hindoue des Kayasthas, qui chargée par le Sultan de Delhi de la tenue des registres de l’impôt foncier a traduit en persan entre autres chef-d’œuvres classiques de l’Inde sanscrite les Upanichads rapportées en Occident par Anquetil Duperron. Car la langue arabe, la science arabe, des savants musulmans, ont réuni comme l’empire islamique l’héritage grec avec l’héritage hindou dans une synthèse qui n’est pas une simple accumulation mais une ascension dans le progrès mondial. Dans le sens, précisément, de ce véritable orientalisme, qui n’est ni une manie d’exotisme, ni un reniement de l’Europe, mais une mise à niveau entre nos méthodes de recherches et les traditions vécues d’antiques civilisations dont l’expansion économique, colonisatrice de l’Europe et de l’Amérique a cru pouvoir disposer à bon marché; alors qu’elle recèle en profondeur une expérience sociale de la vie, un sens de paix sereine, dans la justice, qu’a personnalisés admirablement un fils de cette Inde qui avait passionné Beruni, une grande âme orientale, Gandhi, dont cette étude faite l’année de sa mort (mort pour qu’il soit rendu justice à l’Islam indien), ne pouvait ne pas rappeler l’incomparable destin.
AL-BIRUNI SUGLI INIZI DEL CRISTIANESIMO A MERV

Per

GIUSEPPE MESSINA, S.J.

Professore al Pontificio Istituto Biblico, Città del Vaticano.

La città di Merv dal secolo VI dopo C. appare come uno dei principali avamposti del territorio iranico, da cui si diffuse il cristianesimo nelle regioni dell'Asia Centrale. Centro di studi e di formazione, i giovani missionari vi trovavano tutto l'occorrente per la loro istruzione e preparazione; nodo importante di commercio, si poteva considerare come la porta più diretta alla capitale della Battriana e alle vie, che da questa si dipartivano verso l'estremo Oriente.

La prima volta che spunti un vescovo di Merv in atti ufficiali è l'anno 424; dagli Atti Conciliari risulta che in quell'anno Barshabba, vescovo della città, prese parte al Concilio, indetto dal patriarca Dadhisio.¹ L'esistenza di un seggio vescovile, divenuto poi arcivescovile, si può seguire negli stessi Atti dal 424 fino al 585. Non si pensò però che dopo quest'ultima data la sede sia scomparsa; perchè da altri documenti risultano i nomi di arcivescovi fino al secolo XI, alla vigilia, cioè, delle invasioni dei mongoli, i quali distruggendo e radendo al suolo molti centri abitati dell'Iran e poi passando all'Islam, diedero un colpo mortale alla gerarchia cristiana. Tra questi vescovi uno dei più conosciuti è Elia di Merv, vissuto al tempo dell'invasione dell'Iran da parte degli arabi. Quando Isdegerde III nel 651-652 venne ucciso in tale località, fu proprio Elia, secondo quello che ci viene narrato da Tabari, a dare all'infelice re onorata sepoltura. Con i suoi cristiani andò a ripescarne il cadavere nel fiume, in cui era stato gettato, e lo pose in un mau-soleo, ch'egli aveva eretto nel giardino dell'arcivescovado. ‘Conviene, diceva il prelato ai suoi cristiani, che facciamo lutto per l'uccisione di questo nobile re, a causa dei benefici ricevuti dai suoi antenati e dell'appartenenza di sua madre Shirin al Cristianesimo.'²

Sugli inizi però del Cristianesimo in Merv non abbiamo se non una sola notizia, che ci viene data da Albruni. Nella sua opera

\[
\text{‘È nel giorno 21 (del mese Hazirān = giugno) commemorazione del} \]

sacerdote Barshabba, il quale portò il Cristianesimo in Merv circa 200 anni dopo Cristo.  

Precedentemente Albiruni aveva affermato di voler dare il calendario religioso dei cristiani melchiti, stabiliti nella sua patria Khwarizm (oggi Chiwa). La notizia quindi su Merv gli viene dai cristiani.

Per controllarne il valore, ci viene a proposito ciò che Mari, e con maggior ricchezza di particolari la Cronaca di Seert ci tramandano su un tale Barshabba e sulla sua opera a Merv. Seguiamo quest’ultima.

Secondo la Cronaca, Barshabba ‘era uno dei prigionieri, che Sapore figlio di Ardasher, aveva deportati dall’Occidente.’ Apprese la lingua siriana a Seleucia-Ctesifonte ed anche il persiano. Insigne nella pietà, esemplare nei costumi, istruito anche in medicina, la sua fama pervenne a Sapore, il quale lo chiamò alla corte per curare la malattia della moglie. Egli riuscì a guarirla e in seguito a ciò Sapore gli concedette il suo favore. Segue poi il racconto della sua andata a Merv e del suo apostolato; ma prima di trarlarne, fermiamoci a queste notizie.

Il re Sapore qui menzionato, essendo figlio di Ardasher, potrebbe essere o Sapore I, figlio di Ardasher I, o Sapore III, figlio di Ardasher II. Ma la notizia della deportazione di cristiani dall’Occidente non lascia alcun dubbio che si tratti di Sapore I, che regnò dal 241 al 272. Questi difatti, in lotta contro i romani, invase le terre della Siria, ad essi sottoposte, una prima volta nel 256 e una seconda volta, probabilmente nel 260, quando sconfisse l’imperatore Valeriano e lo fece prigioniero. In entrambe le spedizioni egli portò ecclesiastici e laici cristiani dalle città della Siria e li stabilì nella Susiana, nella Perside e in Babilonia e in altri luoghi. Tra questi prigionieri, secondo la Cronaca, si trovava anche Barshabba.


2 Sachau, testo, p. 288, vers. 283.


5 Patr. Or., V, 253.

6 Così la Cronaca di Seert, Patr. Or., IV, 220–223; i suoi dati si accordano con quello che riferiscono altre fonti, e vengono ora lumeaggiati da un’iscrizione di Sapore.
Se prestiamo fede a ciò che ci narra la Cronaca che Barshhabba visse al tempo di Sapore I, le notizie ch’essa ci dà in seguito sul suo apostolato a Merv devono riferirsi ad un’epoca di qualche anno posteriore alla prima deportazione del 256 o alla seconda del 260. Avremmo così una certa corrispondenza con ciò che afferma Albiruni, quando riferisce che a Merv il cristianesimo fu introdotto da Barshhabba circa 200 anni dopo Cristo. Se il computo si fa dalla morte di Cristo, i ‘circa 200 anni’ di Albiruni vanno intesi come approssimativamente 230 anni dopo C.

È attendibile questa notizia?

Una grave difficoltà viene subito dal seguente del racconto della Cronaca su Barshhabba. Eccolo in riassunto:¹

Sapore aveva sposato una sorella a nome Shiraran.² Questa fu colpita da una malattia, ribelle a tutte le cure di medici, magi ed astrologi.³ In un sogno sentì parole di conforto ed ebbe l’annunzio ch’essa sarebbe divenuta serva di Dio. In seguito a ciò fece chiamare Barshhabba dalla chiesa di Seleucia, il quale la istruì nella religione cristiana, la battezzò e la guarì. Sapore adirato la volle far morire; però trovandosi di passaggio alla corte un principe sassanide, il marzaban (marchese) di Merv di ritorno da Nisibi dopo la pace conclusa con Gioviano, gli comandò di condurre seco Shiraran, per allontanarla così dai cristiani, e gli diede anche la facoltà di sposarla, ciò ch’egli fece. Shiraran prima di partire, pregò i prelati cristiani di consacrare Barshhabba vescovo; perché dopo l’uccisione del patriarca Barbeshmin la sede patriarcale era vacante, avendo Sapore impedita la nomina di un suo successore.

A Merv Shiraran si diede a far proseliti per la religione cristiana ed ebbe felice successo tra i greci stabiliti nella città, discendenti da quelli che vi erano venuti con Alessandro; fece costruire una chiesa, secondo il modello del palazzo regio, e la chiamò Ctesifonte. Ebbe un figlio dal marzaban e l’annunziò a Sapore, pregandolo d’inviare Barshhabba, di cui aveva bisogno per curare la sua salute. Il re, lieto dell’evento, accodisce; e Barshhabba partì con altri preti, forniti di tutto l’occorrente per il culto. Fu ricevuto a Merv con grandi onori; guarì ammalati, battezzò molti magi, costruì chiese e le dotò con compere di campi e vigne. I suoi discepoli si diffusero


³ Mari, Gismondi, l.c. afferma essersi trattato di epilessia.
nelle città del Chorasan, costruirono chiese e battezzarono gli abitanti.

Si racconta in seguito che Barshabba venne a morte, ma per le preghiere dei cristiani risuscitò; e si fa notare che alcuni prestarono a ciò fede, altri no. Alla sua morte egli venne considerato come il primo arcivescovo di Merv. I figli di Shiraran non divennero cristiani, ma restarono nella religione dei magi, come il loro padre; ebbero però verso i cristiani grande benevolenza.

Fin qui il racconto della Cronaca, da cui possiamo estrarre alcuni dati cronologici.

Barbeshmin morì martire nei primi anni della persecuzione di Sapore II nel 346. Inoltre la notizia che si dà sulla vacanza della sede patriarcale dopo la sua morte corrisponde a verità; difatti solo nel 383, quando cessò la persecuzione con la morte di Sapore II e del suo successore Ardashir II, appare un nuovo patriarca nella persona di Tomarsa. La conclusione della pace con Gioviano avvenne nel 363. Ora tutte queste date concordano tra di se, ma sono in disarmonia con quello che la Cronaca aveva detto prima. La prospettiva cronologica non è più quella dell’inizio del racconto, l’epoca cioè di Sapore I, ma quella di Sapore II, che ebbe un lungo regno dal 309 al 379. Abbiamo così nella Cronaca su uno stesso personaggio due datazioni differenti, che differiscono di circa un secolo.

Una via, per mettere d’accordo ciò che si narra nella prima parte con quello che si dice nella seconda parte della Cronaca, sarebbe quella seguita dal Sachau, il quale interpreta il passo iniziale di essa nel senso che Barshabba era non un deportato di Sapore I, ma piuttosto un discendente di una delle famiglie cristiane deportate da questo re.1 Ma l’ovvio tenore del testo non sembra favorire tale interpretazione: esso parla di un deportato di Sapore I e non di un discendente di deportati.

كان هذا الرجل من السبي الذي ساء سابور بن أردشير: من المغرب

Inoltre la spiegazione del Sachau ci toglierebbe la possibilità di intendere la notizia di Albiruni, il quale non arriva con un computo suo personale alla datazione dell’introduzione del Cristianesimo a Merv da parte di Barshabba a circa 200 anni dopo Cristo, come pensa l’illustre maestro,2 ma questa data piuttosto gli sarà stata fornita dal calendario religioso dei melchiti o dai cristiani stessi. E la Cronaca di Seert, composta non molto dopo il 1036, quindi pochi decenni dopo l’opera di Albiruni, parlando di un Barshabba del tempo di Sapore I, mostra che tale era l’opinione dei cristiani sugli inizi del Cristianesimo in Merv circa l’epoca, in cui scriveva Albiruni.

1 Die Christianisierungs-Legende, l.c., p. 406.
2 Ib., p. 409.
Da parte nostra incliniamo piuttosto a pensare che l’autore della Cronaca mischia e confonde insieme due personaggi dello stesso nome, che si occuparono di diffondere il Cristianesimo in Merv a circa un secolo di distanza. E le ragioni che ci inducono a questa soluzione sono soprattutto due.

Anzitutto già nella narrazione della Cronaca salta agli occhi una certa discontinuità, la quale induce a pensare alla fusione di due racconti originariamente indipendenti. Dopo aver narrato della guarigione della moglie di Sapore I da parte di Barshhabba, passa senza alcun legamento a parlare di una sorella del re, che questi ‘aveva sposato secondo il costume dei magi’, guarita anch’essa da Barshhabba. La prima frutta il favore del re, la seconda la sua ira. Tale confusione non sembra esistere nella narrazione parallela e succinta di Mari, nella quale tutto viene riferito al Barshhabba del tempo di Sapore II. Differisce peraltro dalla Cronaca in un punto: mentre questa parla di Shiraran sorella-sposa del re, la quale con- vertita viene mandata a Merv, Mari sdoppia questo personaggio, e parla della moglie e della sorella del re, le quali entrambe seguono Barshhabba a Merv.\footnote{1} Si noti ancora che Mari non parla in alcun modo della prima penetrazione del Cristianesimo a Merv.

Inoltre il testo stesso di Alibiruni esige che si distingua un Barshhabba del secolo III da un omonimo del secolo IV. In esso l’apostolo, che introdusse il Cristianesimo a Merv, viene detto ‘sacerdote’, non ‘vescovo’. Se egli avesse inteso parlare del Barshhabba del tempo di Sapore II, non avrebbe mancato di chiamarlo ‘vescovo.’ Il contrario sarebbe stato contro l’uso constante di Alibiruni, come si rileva da ogni pagina del suo calendario, il quale non tralascia mai di aggiungere il titolo di dignità ai santi commemorati nei vari mesi dell’anno. Si veda come egli ci tenga a distinguere i titoli della gerarchia cristiana in ciò che dice sul mese Tishrin I.\footnote{2}

Dobbiamo quindi distinguere un Barshhabba ‘sacerdote’ che dette inizio all’evangelizzazione di Merv nel secolo III, da un suo omonimo, che operò un secolo dopo e fu il primo vescovo della città. Si può domandare se quest’ultimo sia identico con quel vescovo Barshhabba, che fu presente al Concilio convocato da Dadhisho nel 424, di cui abbiamo parlato all’inizio. Sachau ne dubita, perché egli allora avrebbe avuto 81 anno di età.\footnote{3} Ma se si tien presente che la Cronaca gli dà lunga vita e lungo episcopato,\footnote{4} il dubbio di Sachau non dovrebbe impedire dall’ammettere che il vescovo presente al Concilio era quello di cui parla la Cronaca. Riassumendo possiamo dire che nella Cronaca i due personaggi sono confusi per ragione dell’omonimia; ma ciò non sarebbe bastato,
se l’uno e l’altro non avessero svolto il loro apostolato nella medesima città di Merv. Oltre l’omonimia c’era dunque analogia di opere. Pur non riuscendo ora possibile di distinguere nella relazione della Cronaca gli elementi che riguardano il primo apostolato da quelli che si riferiscono al secondo; ciò peraltro che essa narra sugli inizi del cristianesimo in Merv non può essere attribuito se non al primo, al Barshabba ‘sacerdote’. L’autore della Cronaca, o la sua fonte, l’attribuisce invece al vescovo dello stesso nome, forse perché era più noto, essendo di epoca più recente, o di maggiore dignità.

Essendoci serviti della Cronaca di Seert per controllare e illuminare la notizia di Albiruni sugli inizi del Cristianesimo a Merv, occorre domandarcì quale valore si può attribuire a ciò che essa racconta sull’apostolo Barshabba.

Vari punti della narrazione sono tali da ispirare fiducia nelle informazioni, ch’essa ci dà. Quanto si dice sulla sede patriarciale vacante dopo il martirio di Barshabba e sulla pace con Gioviano corrisponde con quello che sappiamo da altre fonti. La notizia sulla chiesa costruita a Merv e chiamata Ctesifonte può essere messa in rapporto con quella di uno scrittore arabo,1 il qual afferma che un quartiere della città era chiamato con lo stesso nome e sarà potuto essere il quartiere dei cristiani. Nel riferimento alla dotazione delle chiese con campi e vigne, l’autore mostra buone conoscenze delle condizioni locali. L’affermazione che i figli di Shiraran non divennero cristiani, ma seguirono la religione dei magi, come il loro padre, dà prova di serena oggettività in un autore, a cui doveva premere l’esaltazione del Cristianesimo. Tutti questi punti sono stati messi in giusto rilievo dal Sachau.2 Aggiungiamo che l’autore della Cronaca, narrando la risurrezione di Barshabba, non manca di far notare onestamente i dubbi di alcuni su tale fatto. Tutti questi elementi danno testimonianza della serietà e probità dello autore e ispirano fiducia anche su quello ch’egli dice sulla introduzione del Cristianesimo a Merv.

Però per arrivare alla piena certezza, dovremmo disporre di fonti più vicine agli avvenimenti, e questo purtroppo non è il caso nostro. L’istoriografia ecclesiastica della chiesa sira prende i suoi inizi al secolo VII e si serve di fonti, che non ci sono pervenute. Il Sachau pensa che la fonte, da cui piglia il nostro autore potrebbe essere quel tale Elia, il quale fu arcivescovo a Merv nel secolo VII, identico forse a quell’Elia, che diede sepoltura all’ultimo re sassanide.3 Come capo della chiesa di Merv, il prelato, noto anche per il suo apostolato presso i turchi, doveva aver interesse a conoscere e tramandare i fasti della sua chiesa fin dagli inizi. Ma siamo a quattro secoli di distanza dal fatto di cui trattiamo, e non ci riesce di conoscere dove egli abbia attinto le sue notizie.

1 Jaqt III, 570. 2 L.c., p. 406s. 3 L.c., p. 405, 408.
Nell'assenza di fonti più antiche, possiamo porci il quesito, se la notizia trasmissaci da Albiruni e dalla Cronaca sugli inizi del Cristianesimo a Merv trovi appoggio nelle condizioni, in cui vivevano i cristiani in Persia durante il regno di Sapore I; inoltre se essa è in armonia con ciò che dello sviluppo del Cristianesimo in Oriente possiamo conoscere da altre fonti.

I deportati di Sapore I, stabiliti, come abbiamo visto, in alcuni centri principali dell'impero persiano, furono adibiti a lavori agricoli e ad opere tecniche, come la canalizzazione delle acque e la costruzione di ponti e dighe. Di questo loro lavoro resta ancor oggi un ricordo nella diga costruita nella Susiana, detta anche ai nostri giorni 'diga di Cesare.'\(^1\) Sotto il rispetto religioso Sapore I diede prova di larga tolleranza e si mantenne lunghi dal restringere il suo favore esclusivamente alla religione dei magi. Egli si mostrò benevole verso Mani, il quale afferma: 'mi presentai al re Sapore, mi ricevette con grande onore e mi permise ch'io pellegrinassi e predicassi la parola della vita.'\(^2\)

Uguale atteggiamento ebbe Sapore verso i cristiani, ch'egli aveva stabiliti nelle sue terre. L'autore della Cronaca di Seert, a cui non può certo attribuirsi il partito preso di difendere gli atti del re, afferma che i cristiani ebbero terre da coltivare senza alcun pagamento; ed aggiunge che essi nella nuova terra pervennero ad un benessere maggiore di quello, di cui avevano goduto nella loro patria. Essi erano liberi di seguire la loro religione e di vivere conforme alle sue norme; a Rev Ardashir, città la quale divenne in seguito il centro più importante ed influente della gerarchia cristiana, come sede arcivescovile della Perside, essi avevano due chiese, l'una quella dei romani, l'altra quella dei siri nelle quali il culto si svolgeva rispettivamente in greco e in siriaco. Ed aggiunge: 'Dio pose (i cristiani) in favore presso i persiani . . . e per mezzo loro il cristianesimo si diffuse nell'Oriente.'\(^3\) Come i manichei anche i cristiani avevano la libertà di muoversi e far propaganda, e l'hanno fatto con felice risultato. La notizia quindi dell'introduzione del Cristianesimo a Merv al tempo di Sapore I non ha nulla d'inversibile, anzi si accorda bene con le condizioni, in cui vivevano i cristiani nel territorio iranico.

Anche ciò che sappiamo sullo sviluppo del Cristianesimo, in tempi vicini a quelli di Sapore I, s'inquadrà bene con la notizia


\(^2\) Kephalaia, Stuttgart, 1940, p. 15, 31-16, 2. Notizie analoghe danno il Fihrist, Flügel, Mani, p. 85; Jaubi, l.c., p. 180, 1; Masudi, Prairies d'or, II, 164; Albiruni, testo 208, vers. 191.

\(^3\) Patrologia Orient., IV, 223.
dell’introduzione del Cristianesimo a Merv nel secolo III. I dati sono poco numerosi, nè così particolareggiati come li desidereremmo; ma bastano a mostrare che l’Evangelo aveva fatto la sua comparsa in territori vicini a Merv e con essa in rapporto. Ci fermeremo brevemente sulla regione ad Oriente di Merv e sull’India, l’una e l’altra unita a Merv con una delle principali arterie di commercio.

Nel ‘Libro delle leggi delle nazioni’ composto in siriaco, si ha un accenno alla diffusione del Cristianesimo in varie regioni; e nel trattare dei costumi dei cristiani, in contrasto con quelli delle genti in mezzo a cui vivevano, si afferma tra l’altro: ‘le nostre sorelle tra i ghilani e i cushani non fanno adulterio con estranei’. Tale libro viene da alcuni attribuito a Bardesane, da altri al suo discepolo Filippo; se fu composto da Bardesane, l’opera è anteriore al 222, anno della morte di questo; se l’autore ne è il discepolo, essa va posta alcuni decenni dopo. Secondo tale notizia, tra i ghilani, cioè gli abitanti della sponda sud-occidentale del Caspio, e tra i cushani, almeno nella prima metà del secolo III, c’erano cristiani. Con il termine di cushani si indicano gli abitanti del regno fondato da Cadises I nella prima metà del secolo I, secondo alcuni nel 25, secondo altri nel 40 dopo Cristo. Essi sono gli abitanti della Battriana, il cui centro era a Battria, che con Merv era unita da una arteria principale di commercio. Tale regione, situata ad est di Merv in tempi anteriori costituiva un regno greco, staccatosi dallo impero dei Seleucidi, che durò fino al 128 avanti Cristo, quando venne abbattuto dalle orde degli Yueh-ci, da cui sorsero i cushani. Anche dopo la perdita dell’indipendenza, gli abitanti greci della regione, che prima faceva parte del loro regno, compreso il territorio di Merv, vi rimasero; e la notizia della Cronaca che il primo nucleo di cristiani a Merv fu reclutato tra i greci ritiene tutta la sua vero-simiglianza.

Quindi in una regione ad oriente di Merv nel secolo III, al tempo di Sapore I, si trovavano cristiani. Per avere un’altra notizia sul Cristianesimo in quella regione, bisogna aspettare due buoni secoli, e ricorrere ad un autore armeno del secolo V, Elise, il quale riferisce dell’arrivo di cristiani in essa durante la persecuzione di Sapore II.1

Se ci rivolgiamo alle regioni confinanti dell’India, non ci fermeremo sulla questione, tanto dibattuta fino ai nostri giorni, del viaggio di san Tommaso apostolo. L’argomento è lontano dal


2 Che si tratti degli abitanti della Battriana si rileva da altro passo della stessa opera, Cureton, p. 21.

nostro soggetto, il quale si limita all’epoca del primo Sapore ed ai tempi ad essa vicini. Inoltre ciò che Eusebio riferisce sul viaggio di Panteno in India circa l’anno 180, è inteso oggi quasi comunemente come riferentesi piuttosto all’Arabia. Gli scrittori ecclesiastici dei primi secoli avevano vaghe notizie geografiche e sotto il nome di India intendevano spesso regioni molto diverse tra di loro: sia l’India stessa, come l’Arabia meridionale e le coste dell’Etiopia. Per uguale ragione, quando leggiamo che Davide, vescovo di Basra, circa il 290-300 lasciò la sua sede e si recò nell’India per evangelizzarla, restiamo nel dubbio di quale India si tratti.

Una notizia sull’esistenza di cristiani nell’India più vicina ai tempi di Sapore I, la quale non sembra essere stata oggetto di studio, ci viene da un’opera araba, di cui dà un largo riassunto Edw. G. Browne. Si afferma in essa che il re Bahram II, che regnò quattro anni dopo Sapore I dal 276 al 293 ebbe disgusto verso la religione di Zardusht a causa del matrimonio fra stretti parenti, in essa consentito. Per questo egli avrebbe fatto venire dalla India maestri cristiani. Gli vennero inviati sette missionari, e il re si sarebbe convertito, ma tenne nascosta la sua fede, essendo stato minacciato di deposizione. Lo scritto arabo abonda d’inverosimiglianze e anche nel nostro caso ne dà la prova; non è però escluso che contenga qualche nocciolo di verità. Del resto siamo in grado di controllare la notizia con una narrazione che dà prova di maggior equilibrio e ci viene dalla Cronaca di Seert. Questa non parla affatto di conversione del re, ma afferma solamente ch’egli conosceseva qualche cosa del Cristianoismo, essendo stato educato a Karkha de Joddan, e sapeva anche un pò di siriaco. Era ostile non ai seguaci di Zar-dusht, ma piuttosto ai manichei, a causa della loro dottrina, contraria al matrimonio, e li perseguì. Ma siccome questi si camuffavano da cristiani, e d’altra parte i metropoliti e vescovi cristiani si astenevano ugualmente dal matrimonio, il re pensò che le due religioni fossero identiche, e quindi anche i cristiani vennero coinvolti nella persecuzione. Questi se ne lamentarono, e allora il re li interrogò e conosciuta la differenza che esisteva tra la loro religione e

1 Stor. eccl., V. 10, 3.
3 Patrologia Orient, IV, 236 (دارو), 292 (دروي).
5 Patrologia Orient, IV, 237 ss.
6 Assemani, Bibliotheca Orient. III, 1, 51.
7 ‘Se esso (il matrimonio), dice il re, è cattivo e proibito presso di loro, merita la morte, perché vogliono annientare il mondo’. Parole analoghe sono attribuite da Albiruni testo p. 208, vers. p. 191, a Bahram I, il quale fece morire Mani: ‘Costui (Mani) è sorto per incitare il popolo a distruggere il mondo; sarà necessario cominciare dal distruggere lui, prima che alcuno dei suoi piani possa venire attuato.’
il manicheismo rispetto al matrimonio, non li molestò più. Si vedono subito le discrepanze tra la narrazione dell’autore cristiano e quella dell’arabo. La Cronaca non dice donde provenivano i cristiani, che furono interrogati dal re; ma la notizia dell’arabo, che il re li abbia fatto venire dall’India, ci guadagna in verosimiglianza. Data la confusione, favorita dai manichi, fra le due religioni nello impero persiano, il re avrà preferito di conoscere la dottrina del Cristianesimo riguardo al matrimonio da cristiani abitanti fuori di esso. In questo caso bisognerà convenire che cristiani in India esistevano già al tempo di Sapore I.

Accenneremo infine ad un noto missionario, Teofilo l’Indiano, di cui l’unico a parlare è Filostorgio. La sua missione in India si svolse durante il regno di Costanzo nel 356, quindi parecchio tempo dopo il tempo che ci interessa; si noti però che di lui non si riferisce aver fondato comunità cristiane, ma di averle visitate; esse quindi esistevano prima del suo arrivo e la sua opera si restrinse a riformare alcune esterne pratiche di culto, non conformi ai canoni della chiesa siriaca.

Secondo Filostorgio, egli ebbe affidata dall’imperatore Costanzo una missione presso gli Omeriti, gli abitanti dell’Arabia meridionale (Yemen); si trattava di annodare relazioni con il principe di quella gente, di guadagnarne la benevolenza, di ottenere libertà di propaganda religiosa e la facoltà di costruire chiese per quelli che abbracciassero il Cristianesimo. Nonostante gli intrighi dei giudei, che si sforzarono d’intralciarne la missione, Teofilo riuscì a convertire al Cristianesimo il principe, il quale a proprie spese fece erigere tre chiese in quella regione. Si aggiunge ora che Teofilo, espletata la sua missione, navigò all’isola Dibou, di cui era originario e di là si recò ‘nell’altra regione dell’India’. Ivi ‘riformò molte cose che presso di loro (i cristiani) non erano compiute rettamente.’ In particolare si fa notare, che ‘ascoltavano la lettura del Vangelo stando seduti, e compivano altre cose non conformi alla legge divina’.

Si tratta dell’India propriamente detta? Ciò sembra risultare chiaramente dal testo stesso, ma taluno ne ha dubitato ed ha affermato che le parole ‘altra regione dell’India’ si debba intendere l’Etiopia sul Mar Rosso. Ma l’itinerario accennato da Filostorgio esclude tale interpretazione.

Dibou corrisponde al sascrito dvīpa, pali dīpa ‘isola’; tale nome per indicare un’isola ricorre nell’Oceano Indiano e in altri mari della grande Asia, ma non costa che sia stato usato per qualche isolotto nel Mar Rosso. Così si ha ancor oggi l’isola di Diu nell’estremo lembo meridionale della penisola Kathiawar, nella regione del Guzarat; nei tempi antichi il termine ricorre anche come secondo membro di un composto: per es. Jabadiu, Sabadiu, Nagadiba, Trikadiba,

---
Serendib i.e. l'antica Taphobane, odierna Ceylon.\(^1\) Quanto alla ubicazione dell'isola Dibou, i cui abitanti vengono chiamati 'divi' da un scrittore latino, come quelli di Serendib vengono dallo stesso denominati 'serendivi'.\(^2\) Le opinioni divergono. Alcuni pensano ad un'isola del gruppo delle Maldive, altri all'odierna Diu, altri all'isola di Socotra, detta anticamente Dwipa Sukhâdâra. Pensiamo che si tratti di quest'ultima. Filostorgio narra che durante il regno di Costantino, Teofilo in età ancora giovanile era stato mandato come ostaggio ai romani. Ora si può capire che si mandi un ostaggio da un territorio, in cui i romani avevano influenza, e quindi vicino alla Arabia, meno facilmente s'intende se si tratta delle Maldive, e di Diu. Il termine Dibou quindi è l'ipocoristico di Dwipa Sukhâdâra, divenuta in greco Dioscoride. Il viaggio di Teofilo a quest'isola era una prima tappa. Di là egli si recò 'nell'altra regione della India'. Se con questa espressione si volesse indicare l'Etiopia, dovremmo ammettere che Teofilo invece di pigliare la via più breve e comoda attraverso Aden, prima si sarebbe allontanato, recandosi a Socotra, e poi sarebbe ritornato al punto di partenza per raggiungere le coste etiopiche. Per un viaggio dall'Arabia meridionale all'India propriamente detta, Socotra invece era la tappa indicata. Non ci viene riferito in quale parte di quest'India egli si recò, ma quello che si afferma sul culto ci mostra l'esistenza di comunità cristiane ordinate e dirette da sacerdoti, ciò che suppone una loro esistenza anteriore almeno di qualche decennio alla venuta di Teofilo.\(^4\)

Ritornando al testo di Albiruni, possiamo riassumere ciò che siam venuti dicendo. Il raffronto di esso con la Cronaca di Seert ha mostrato che i 'circa 200 anni dopo C.' debbono intendersi come una data riferentesi all'epoca di Sapore I. Non riesce possibile confermare tale notizia con argomenti diretti, non disponendo noi di fonti antiche; peraltro le notizie che abbiamo delle condizioni in cui vivevano i Cristiani a quel tempo nell'impero persiano e dello sviluppo dell'apostolato cristiano non solo non contrastano con l'affermazione di Albiruni, ma depongono in suo favore.

Roma, 8 dicembre 1947

---


\(^2\) Anmiano Marcellino, XXII, c. 7.

\(^3\) L.c.

ON SOME OF BĪRŪNĪ'S INFORMANTS

By

PROF. V. MINORSKY,
Cambridge

In his praiseworthy edition and translation of Bīrūnī's India Prof. E. Sachau has analyzed the whole range of Indian and Greek sources which went into the preparation of this monumental work. Similar methods have to be applied to all the works of the 'Iranian Eratosthenes'. Only then shall we be able to explore the foundations of his judgments and appreciate the flashes of his genius in drawing his own conclusions from the facts.

To this end I wish to offer my suggestions regarding some items in Bīrūnī's al-Qānūn al-Masʿūdī and Tahādī al-amākin.

I. In al-Qānūn al-Masʿūdī Bīrūnī quotes a number of points relating to the Far East which are found in the same arrangement only in one other known source, namely in Marvazi's Ṭabā'ī al-ḥayāwān:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1st Clime</th>
<th>No. 57</th>
<th>سرخور</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2nd , ,</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>قتا</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>, ,</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>اوتکین</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd , ,</td>
<td>293</td>
<td>تکسین</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>, ,</td>
<td>294</td>
<td>خاتون سین</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5th , ,</td>
<td>571</td>
<td>توسمت</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>, ,</td>
<td>573</td>
<td>سولمن</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Marvazi these places are arranged in itineraries, with distances between them indicated in days of travelling. In Bīrūnī they are quoted separately according to their longitudes and latitudes.

Immediately after the itineraries connecting the lands of Islam with Mongolia, China and Manchuria, Marvazi gives an exceptionally

---

2 As Bīrūnī is called by J. Marquart, Das Reich Žābul, p. 248.
3 The texts are found reproduced in A. Z. Validi Togan's Biruni's Picture of the World, Memoirs of the Arch. Survey of India, No. 53, pp. 10–53 and 54–68.
4 Minorsky, Sharaf al-zamān Ṭāhir Marvazi on China, the Turks and India, 1942.
valuable account of an embassy of the rulers of Qitây and Yughur which visited the court of Sultan Mahmud circa 418/1027. It followed as a natural corollary that the description of the unusual roads depended on the reports of the said envoys. The ambassador of Qitây came undoubtedly on behalf of the Emperor Shêng Tsung (983–1031) of the Liao dynasty 1 which had conquered Manchuria and Northern China and formed a powerful State in A.D. 937–1125. The other envoy represented some Uyghur ruler, probably the king of the Sarî-Uyghurs of Kan-su. 2

Sharaf al-zamân Marvazi was only a compiler and the last date found in his work is 514/1120. Birûnî died in 440/1048 and it would have been quite possible for Marvazi to use his works, but the fact is that no detailed report on the two embasies has been found in any of the known writings of Birûnî. Thus we have to postulate that Marvazi used some official record of the reception and interrogation of the ambassadors in Ghazna. 3

As the embassy came to Ghazna in A.D. 1027 and the Qânûn al-Mas‘ûdî was compiled shortly after 421/1030, it was also safe to assume that Birûnî’s additional place-names in the Far East were in some way connected with the passage of the rare guests. Great was my pleasure when, in another of Birûnî’s works, 4 I found a direct indication that he ‘interrogated the ambassadors from the Qitây-khan’. He asked them about the value they attached to khutû, 5 but he could not have missed the opportunity of completing his knowledge of the more important problems of Far Eastern geography. Only with his usual leaning to mathematical accuracy he tried to express the ambassadors’ itineraries (as still available in Marvazi) in terms of astronomical co-ordinates. 6

II. Another name which percolated into Islamic geography through Birûnî is Waranj/Warank, by which name Norsemen were known in ancient Russia and Byzantium. 7 In his Taḥdîd

1 Qitây, in Chinese Kitân, was the name of the people led by this dynasty.
2 In A.D. 840 the Uyghurs were driven from the territory they occupied in the present-day Mongolia and retreated to the West, where by the beginning of the tenth century they formed two kingdoms: in the Chinese province Kan-su and in Eastern Tian-shan (Turfan).
3 It has always been a habit in the East to interrogate ambassadors on the countries they represented.
5 A still mysterious product described as the horn of some animal. Birûnî himself explains it as ‘the frontal bone of a bull in the country of Khirkhiz’. See Saydana, in Birûnî’s Picture, p. 118; cf. Der Islam, 11, 1911, 345–58.
6 The complete title of the book Taḥdîd nihâyât al-amâkin fi taṣâhîh masâ‘îl al-masâ‘în clearly indicates Birûnî’s intention to connect astronomical co-ordinates with the finding out of distances. In the Qânûn he used this method the other way round.
7 Slavonic vareng/varag; Greek: Barang-ös.
ON SOME OF BİRÜNİ’S INFORMANTS

al-amākin\footnote{BİRÜNİ’s Picture, p. 63.} he speaks of the sea which turns away (mun’atif) from the Circumambient Ocean ‘to the north of the Saqāliba (Slavs)’ and states that ‘it is called the Sea of the Varang (Bahır Varanı) because this nation lives on its coast.’ Opposite it lies a region where snow and ice abound, though cold is not excessive (Scandinavia?).

‘There are even some of those (Varangs) who on their fishing and predatory expeditions during the summer stubbornly (navigate) that sea and sail on in the direction of the North Pole up to the place where at the summer solstice the sun rotates above the earth. (The sailor) sees it and boasts among his people of having reached a place where there is no night’. In BİRÜNİ’s biography found in Yaqūt’s Irshād al-arīb (VI, 310) an anecdote is quoted about ‘an ambassador from the extreme limits of the Turks’ who told Sultan Mahmūd exactly the same story, namely that ‘beyond the sea, in the direction of the Southern Pole’ he saw the sun rotate above the earth, so that there was no night. When Sultan Mahmūd got angry and accused him of heresy, Abū Naṣr ibn Mishkān\footnote{Probably the Baltic still confused with the White Sea, etc. The text is rather involved. See A. Z. Validi’s translation in ZDMG, 1936, 90/1, 39, and my commentary in Marvazi, pp. 115-6.} calmed his master by pointing to the artlessness of the Turks. Then the Sultan questioned Abū Rayḥān BİRÜNİ and the latter began to explain the matter briefly and convincingly, and finally the question was settled. This story, which is possibly derived from the Magāmāt of Abū Naṣr ibn Mishkān (now lost), is important in that it indicates the presence of BİRÜNİ at the audience.

Who could this ambassador have been? By a most happy coincidence the author of the History of Bayhaq\footnote{All the parallels and the general sense leave no doubt whatever that we must read Northern instead of Southern.} reports that in 415/1024 the padishah of the (Volga) Bulghars dreamt that he should make an offering to the mosque of Sabzavār and Khosraugird. To this offering he joined wonderful presents for the ‘padishah of Khorasan’, i.e., certainly for Sultan Mahmūd.\footnote{Head of the Correspondence Department.} Yaqūt’s story makes it certain that, just as in the case of the Qitāy embassy, BİRÜNİ fully utilized this chance of completing his information on the Polar regions with which the Volga Bulghars entertained active trade. It may be added that the Taḥdīd al-amākin was composed in 1025, i.e., within one year of the coming of his Bulghar ambassador.

\footnotetext[1]{BİRÜNİ’s Picture, p. 63.} \footnotetext[2]{ Probably the Baltic still confused with the White Sea, etc. The text is rather involved. See A. Z. Validi’s translation in ZDMG, 1936, 90/1, 39, and my commentary in Marvazi, pp. 115-6.} \footnotetext[3]{All the parallels and the general sense leave no doubt whatever that we must read Northern instead of Southern.} \footnotetext[4]{Head of the Correspondence Department.} \footnotetext[5]{Abul-Ḥasan ‘Ali Bayhaqi, known as Ibn Funduq, wrote his history in 563/1164; see p. 63 of the Tehran edition (1317/1938).} \footnotetext[6]{According to M. Nazim, Sultān Mahmūd, p. 53, in September 1024 Mahmūd was in Balkh.}
III. As a further illustration of Būrūnī’s eagerness to acquire knowledge by interrogating travellers one might quote his own statement in the Ṣaydāna as to how he obtained Greek names of plants from a Greek who happened to visit Khwārazm.\(^1\)

One knows Būrūnī’s emphatic utterance on his attachment to the Arabic language and culture.\(^2\) This does not alter the fact that the characteristic and unbounded curiosity of Būrūnī\(^3\) must have been stimulated not by any exclusiveness of his sympathies but rather by the variety of his experience and environment. He was born on the borderland of the old world of Iranian culture and the steppes teeming with Turkish nomads. At the court of Qābūs ibn Vushmagīr he could still observe numerous remains of old pre-Islamic times which survived in the Caspian region; in Ghazna and India he witnessed the astonishing contrasts of the world of Indian culture. Būrūnī may have spoken disparagingly of his native provincial tongue,\(^4\) but it was a sister of Soghdian whose cultural legacy is coming to light only now. We may yet hear of a literature which existed in the Khwārazmian language which has been deciphered by professors W. Henning (London) and A. Freiman (Leningrad). Khwārazm was an old cultural land. Būrūnī himself compiled a History of Khwārazm and has drawn up a long list of the ancient Khwārazmian kings\(^5\) some of whose names have been retrieved from the local coins.

When thirty-seven years ago I visited Būrūnī’s native country, I could not help admiring its ancient system of irrigation canals. The imposing ruins which Professor S. P. Tolstov has discovered amid the sands now stretching around the Khwārazm oasis are other vestiges of its former glories.\(^6\)

These multifarious impressions and influences must have presided over the growth of Būrūnī’s genius.

\(^1\) See Meyerhoff, Das Vorwort zur Drogenkunde des Būrūnī, 1932, p. 42.
\(^2\) L.c., p. 40.
\(^3\) L.c., p. 42, Arabic text, 14: qād hažaytu fī gharīzati mundhu ḥadāthati bi-farī al-kīrṣ ‘alā iqṭinā al-ma‘ārif.
\(^4\) L.c., 39-40, Arabic text 12-13: ‘And I judge by myself: my native language is such that, were Science treasured in it, one would feel as astonished as (at finding) a camel in a roof-gutter or a giraffe in a drove of noble steeds. Then I switched to Arabic and Persian but in both of them I (feel like) an embarrassed outsider (dakhīl wa mulahallīf).’
\(^5\) Now lost and known only through quotations, see Barthold, Turkestan, 20. See also E. Sachau, Zur Geschichte von Khwārazm, Sitz. W.A.W. 1873, LXXIII, 471-506.
\(^6\) See now a detailed description in S. P. Tolstov, In the footsteps of the Khwārazmian civilization, 1948 (in Russian). During his latest expedition to Khwarazm (1948) Prof. Tolstov discovered 81 written documents in old-Khwarazmian.
(Dr. Mohammad MOÎN)

بعض فوائد لغوي

کتاب

الجماهر بیرونی

از دکتر محمد معین

استاد ادبیات فارسی در دانشگاه تهران

کتاب الجماهر فی معرفة الجواهر (1) ابریحان محمد بن احمد بیرونی جانشکه
از عنوان آن پیداست، در موضوع انواع جواهر ومعادن تألیف شده است ولی ضمنا
مشتمل بر فواید لغوي و تاریخی بسیار است. در این مقاله منظور ذکر برخی از فواید
لغوی این کتاب ارجمعئد است(2)

* - آذرشست - در جماهر آمده(3): "قد ذكر اخبار البازه زاهد الاجوف المشتمل
على مخاط الشيطان يؤخذ من جوفيه ما فيه و يعمل من غزله ششتك(4) و هي التي
کانت الاكتراء تسميتها آذرشست و يقت اسم شست على المعلم من غيره فان النار
تحرقها،*

آذرشست مركب است از دو كلمة: آذر، که با آتش از یکریش و در اواستا
در atash و atar، atur و آتش و آت، و آتش و در atar، atar و

(1) نویسندگی مقاله رساله‌ای بحث‌ها در شاهان‌کیان و همکاران در آثار نزدیک، بیرونی تألیف کرد است
که در مجله آموزش و پرورش (نشریه و دفترک نفرته ایران) سال 89، شماره 8 و 9 و 10 حاصل شده است.
(2) تألیف کتاب با عهد شیبان سلطان ابر الفتح مورد بن سنود بن محمود (۳۴۳-۳۴۷) مقرر بوده است
(صفحه ۳۱ الجماهر)
(3) این کتاب در همدان، در مطبعة جمعیت دانشگاه علوم شناسی حیدرآباد کنی بیل مهندس، جهانگیر شده
(4) رک: عنوان حشمتک، در همان مقاله
پارسی آذر - آذر - آتش - آتش - آدیش و تنش و در لهجه عامیانه تبریزی و لهجه شیرازی
آتش و در لهجه دزنولی تنش آباده است (۱) *

جبّر دوم مرحم (شسته) است از مصادرشستن از مصدر الوصاف
که در پارسی snā

بصورت شنا - آشنا - شست و میلّت آنها در آباده (۲) *

لغت مربّک آذر شست بمعنى شست در آتش و (مغسل بالنار) عربي است (۳)

این لغت را فرهنگ‌نوايان بخطا (آذر شب) و (آذر شب) یاد کرده (۴) Bمعنى نام
فرشتة مولک آتش که پیوسته در آتش است و نیز آنرا بمعنى سمندر آورده اند ...

منوّه‌هری گوید:

در شود بی‌بخش و زجر و در شود به ترس و بیم
همچو آذر شب بانش (۵) همچو مرگابی بجوى
و در محل التواریخ و القصص آباده (۶) : 
ج: [و خسرو پرویز را بود] دستاریه آذر شب
و آن از موه سمندر بافته بود، *

آقای دهخدا احتیال داده اند که مراد از موه سمندر حجر الفتیله بمعنى بینه کوهی
باشد و بعید تیبداند که آذر شب (آذر شست) نیز بمعنى حجر الفتیله باشد (۷) - نظر
بعبارت پیرونی شکتی مانند که صحیح این کلمه همان آذر شست است که در کتابت
بخط عربي تحریف شده است *

۲. بهرج - در جماهر آباده (۸) : 
"و در حديث الحجاج انتگان کتابی که بعضاً عالماً،

ان ابعث ایننا بالجشیر (۹) الأولونى الجراح نبراج به و البهرج عند من عرى من

__________________________________________________________________________

(۱) رجوع شود : موتیکا و تأثیر آن در ادبیات پارسی، تألیف نگارگر، صفحه ۱۴۸

Bartholomae, Altitranisches Wörterbuch (۲)

(۳) جامع صفحة ۳۰۱ ماسبه ۲

(۴) کل : برجان قاطع

(۵) چند ایست در اصل و آقای دهخدا چنین صحیح کرد اند : همچو آذر شست بانش

(۶) مصهر آقا پهلوی صفحه ۸۸

(۷) لغت نامه دمغیان، ماده (آذر شب) - آذر شست در برجان قاطع، اختیار آذر شب (با پای تامس) آباده

(۸) صفحه ۱۵۸ - ۱۵۹

(۹) ترکش - تبریز
الفارسية هو الردى و اللفتحة في الأصل منتولة من الهندية فان الجيد بهله بالباء و الردى نبهله(1) و كذلك بالفارسية بهله بالباء التي تعب باللفاء حتى أن أفضل لغتهم هى الفهلوية نسبة إلى الجودة - و يقولون أن الردى من الدراهم نبهر(2) و للطريق العادل عن المججة كذلك - و لكن هذا الخبر لما كان بين العرب و كان البهرج عندهم هو الردى و كيف يحمل إلى الحجاج ما يرد و يسترذل و كذلك قال أبو محمد الفثبي: احسبه جراباً بهرج به عن الطريق المسلوك اب عدل و اخذ به الطريق البهرج خوفاً أن يحدث به من العائلين حادثة قطع أو من العشارين تعرض بعثة التعمير و قد رسم الحجاج لحامله اخفاءه و الاحتياط فيه فعل ذلك،

مؤلف لسان العرب بنقل از ابنته وردوف: "احسبه جراب أوأو بهرج، أي عدل به عن الطريق المسلوك خوفاً من العشار و اللفتحة معرية و قبل هي كلمة هندية اصلها نبهلة و هو الردى فنقلت إلى الفارسية قبل بهرج ثم عرب بهرج(3)"

(4) در مقدمة الأدب زغشري آمده: "بهرج: الدراهم الذي فضته غالبًا،" (5) در كتاب العرب جوليجي آمده: "الإيرون: الدراهم المبطل السكة و البهرج: التعريج من الاستواى إلى غير الاستواى و البهرج: الشيء المباح - يقال: البهرج دمته إذا أهدره، ازهى خلفته: "بهرج: عربى مضح نيست و اصل آن "بهرج": است و آن درهم هاي ليست و قوي در اصل نوارا بود كفته ان بهرج و بهرج و جميع آن: دراهم بهرجة و نبهرجة و بحرمات و بحروج - طيان وود(6) و كفته ان: درهم بحرجة و نبهرجة و بحروج و شاعر خلفته:

(1) نخبة بدل: بهرج - نبهر و هو در خطوات
(2) الجبهاء صفحة 183 - سال 1883 - صفحة 516 - سطر 33
(3) ماهر مقدمة الأدب في قهرط لجكت بهرج را بين مهن كرده:

drachma argento et pondere praestantior.

(4) جاب مصر صفحة 99
قالت سليم قوله تحرجا يا شيخ لا بدين لنا أن تحرجا
قد جمع هذا العام من تحرجا فابنغ لنا جمال صدق فالتقرأ
لا تغا له زيفا ولا تنهرجا

و ابن الأعرابي قلت:
أن هوي قل ما تحرجا أعطاني الناقص و النهرجا
و الزينف حتى لم يدع لي محرجا إذا رأى باب حرام هملجا
و أبو عمرو قلت: درهم بهرج و دراهم بهرج - كويد: و بهرج، المعدل
به عن جهته، بس كويد: بهرج البريبد، اذا عدل عن الطريق و نيز كويد:
البهرج، الدرجة المضروب في غير دار السلطان.1) دزى Dozy
ذيل قواميس عربي آرد:

بهرج: falsifier, altérer, être de mauvais aloi, être altéré.

بهرج: un métal altéré, de mauvais aloi.

بهرج: concetti, pensées brillantes, mais fausses.

كلمة (بهره) در زبان بارسي استعمال شده است: استدى در لغت فرس، ذيل بشير.

آرد(1): "چيزی باشد كه بجای درم رود - روکی كويد:
چه فضل ای ابو الفضل بر همه ملکان چه فضل گوهر و یاقوت بر بهره پشير؛
و نظامی كويد:

شناسنده گر نیست شوریده مغر بهره مشاسب ز دینار نغر(2)
وی استی خود لغت "بهره"، يا "بهره"، را در لغت نامه خویش ضبط نکرده است.

(1) مصحت آقای اقبال صفحه 189
(2) پهی ره و سیم و کلب و ناصر. رجوع شورده: کتابه گنجی وحید صفحه 183
در برخان قاطع آمده: "نبهه - بپنح اول و ثانی و سکون های هوژ و رای قرشت مفتون، بعمنی قلب و ناسره باشد عموما و سیم قلب را گویند خصوصا و بعمنی دون و فرمانیه هم آمده است و بعمنی اول نابهار باشد که بزرگ و عظیم است و بعمنی پوشیده و پهن حکم گفته اند، لابی که که نشانه طاق و بیرون) که در زبان بارسی فقط بعمنی حسس و نصب و حلت و قسمت (1 آمده - مینه ابت که (بیرون) در اینجا مبدل (پاره) باشد چه تبدیل ب و پ و الف و ه معتاد است، بنات، در باد افرا و باد افرا و پهلوی و پارک و رسم الخط آن در پهلیه پر دو و جه پارک و پهلوی خوانند بیشود (پارک و پارک) در پهلیه بعمنی پل و (پارکستان) بعمنی رشوه گیر است و در پارسی هم پاره بعمنی زشوت و اتاوه و رشوهای که قاضی را دهدن (3 آمده: عنصری کوید: هر آنها که پاره شده از درون شد استواری ز روزن برون

سوزنی راه:

قاضی دعوی مرا نشوندا تا نپرم پیش زنشن پاره...

و نیز بعمنی مزد و جعل (9 و همچنین بعمنی مسکورک و پول و نقد و بها و قیمت استعمال شده - فرجی گوره: بر پاره زر گردد جای که خروی می برچشم خون گردد جایی که کشی کین امروز نیز چرخش یکی بپیچروی شد و نیست بدید که پهلیه و پاره پارسی وتوجه راجح و سیم مسکورک متداول بوده که بعده بمناسبت ذکر لازم و ارادة ملزوم برخوانن اطلاع شده و پارک و نیامه (نا پارک - نا پاره) بعمنی وجه غیر راجح و پول قلب بوده و همین کننده، پاره و پنیه نیز تلفظ میشده و وعده نهدیرک

(1) برخان قاطع
(2) پاره و دماح الفرس و زمانی و منتهی از
(3) منتهی الارب - پاره بمناسبت باره دادن آمده
(4) نقل از لطف نامه کرید آقای علی اکرم دخاشدا
نَجَصَ هَدی کرده و گاه نیز باقاعدگی تعرب حرف اول را حذف کرده به چند نتیجه که ژرمنیم خوانده بی‌ماند. ورد را زمبارود و پیمارستان (یا کهن می‌خورند) و پارک خوانند. و بعدها از اسم برنج فعل ساخته بَرْجَگ کفتند.

۳- خود خروه [در جمهوری‌شهر، ۱۹۱۳-۱۹۲۱ آمده: "و چن (۵) یمسی خروه‌ک و عرب بالاخانه و هو تشیه لاصلح ال‌پَد بقلنسوا ال‌دیک که شبه به نوع من بستان آورده عربی متشنج و یمسی (۶) خود خروه (۶) و اظهه انا ذاک الصلال الموسوم و بالمرجان فان مرجان قرب من اسم الطیور الفارسیه، (۷) اما خروه‌که که بیرون آن خراشه آمد مرکب است از (خروه) که لتقی است در خروس – عنصری گوید:

شب از حمله روز گردید ستوه شود پر زاغش چو پر خروه

و نظامی گوید:

خردوغنوه فروکوت بال دهل زن برد بر تبیره دوال

و ابوزع سابوچی گوید:

ای خواجه [ما] چرا شدستی زگره خویان که زدند طرها خود خروه و تبدیل سین به ها در زبان‌های ایرانی بسیار رایج است چنانه که در آماس و پلاس پارسی، آمده و پیام هم آمده و رواب و آکاس و پاترنس و راس پهلوی در پارسی روبه و آگاه و بادا فراه و راه شده و در زبان‌های سانسکرت و اونس و پارسی باستان نیز همین تبدیل

(۱) المعرب جوامع صفحه ۱۴۲
(۲) حمان کتاب صفحه ۳۲۳ و تفسیر الافلاطون الخلیف ظرفیة الفارسیة (۳) من البند
(۴) در اصل: 
(۵) این صورت مصحح استاد علامه آقای دهخدا است و در اصل (خول خروه) آمده و علی جاحی در ذلی نوشته ای است: داری الکی‌هایی پیش مردان بینم الطیور، و خول در پارسی بردیه است کیچک از گنجیک (برنک)
(۶) پیش مردان و مردان در لفظ و کتاب‌های زندیک چند
سورت گرفته است چنانکه اسوره Asura (نام خدا) و سپه (هفته) و سندو (هنده) Hindu، هپتا گرفته است Ahura سانسکریت در اوستا و پارسی باستان به اهوره تبدیل شده و خروه (نتایج خروس) هم آمد آستا اما خروس و مبادله آن خروس و خروه و خروه و خروه و خروه و خروه (در خورناری) و کروس و ارزوس از اوستای است یعنی خروسیدن و خود کلمه خروس و خروشیدن با این ریشه اوستای از یک بنیاد است کا. آن خروسیدن تحویل آن به آن خروسیدن که یورونک فرشته نویسان آنرا با (بوستان افرورز) تطبیق کرده اند هنست که اوره خروس خواندن و آن درست لغة و مبتا برایا "خود خروس"، است و در فرشته اما آدا xaoda "خود خروس"، نیز ضیف کرده اند. "کلمه (خود) در اوستا خنواهید" یعنی سهیوش، آنچه که سر را بخشانند و در حقیقت همان خود پارسی - این کلمه در پارسی باستان ضمن کلمه مرکب تیکره خوده آَمَش (Sakas) آمده یعنی دارنده خود تیز است و شد. و بسیاری از بهبادی دیگر بتوانست رنگ و شکل تاج خروس اطلاق amaranthus cruenti است. اما کل بوستان افرورز یا تاج خروس همان گوید و آن لغة یعنی تاج Crète-de-coq می‌تواند، یا آن را بفرانسه خروس است.

م - روزنامه ـ در صفحه ۳۰۱ الجماهیر، از قول ناخذای کشتی گوید:

و کتیبه (۴) در الروزنامه باسمه، و روزنامه معرف (روز نامه) پهلوی و آن

(۱) رمان تقلع فرخگ ایران باستان ـ پور دارو صفحه ۳۶۴ - ۱۹۱
(۲) خود خروس بر ورد و مون خود خروس است که تاج و منفر خروس و کل بوستان افرورز باشد (برهان تقلع)
Bartholomea, Air. W. (۳) رمان تقلع
(۴) رمان تقلع
(۵) دارونامه، آقای دکتر احمد پارسا صفحه ۸، کازیمیروکس فرانسه را به بوستان افرور amaranthe ترجیه کرد و صحیح است (فرخگ فرانسه پارسی آقای دهخدا)
(۶) فرخگ فرانسه پارسی آقای دهخدا (۸) مصله سرب
(۷) بارش شینک که بطل حاجی زند ارب آسم حدود
مرکز است از روز و نامهٔ بعینی نامه و کتاب و دفتر - کلمهٔ روزنامه در سده‌های تاریخی اسلامی مستعمل بوده است - ثعابی در زبان‌های دری اورده است: "با آن جویی از کتاب‌های بعینی نامه، کتاب روزنامه حساب‌یاب، این از کتاب‌های بعینی نامه در این دوره بوده است." نیز در جای دیگر شرحی از کتاب روزنامه بعینی نامه، می‌گوید: "فصل از کتاب‌های بعینی نامه، از کتاب‌های این دوره بوده است." و از همه‌ای این صورتا معلوم می‌شود که روزنامه در آن اوقات به‌معنی کتاب شرح گزارش journal می‌گویند بوده و همچنین بعینی نامه در سده‌های اورده است: "با آن جویی از کتاب روزنامه حساب‌یاب، این از کتاب‌های بعینی نامه در این دوره بوده است." نیز از کتاب‌های این دوره برای وضع مطلب، به‌طور کلی می‌گویند که آن‌ها روی اندام و این اوقات به‌معنی کتاب روزنامه است. به‌طور کلی، این اوقات به‌معنی کتاب روزنامه است.

(۱) چاب دقیق جلد در صفحه ۱۱-۱۰
(۲) صاحب ی بعید
(۳) همان کتاب جلد ۶ صفحه ۳۲۲
(۴) چاب مارگلیور جلد ۶ صفحه ۳۲۲
(۵) نقل از مقاله (روزنامه‌های ایران) جامعه ۷ از مجله کاوی درده درم بین آن‌ها تا زاده

—**calendrier فرانسه گرفته است**

— شستن یک از عنوان یک زبانی در عنوان (آذر شست) کل حجم shostak کلمه (شستن) آمده و آن جمع شسته مربوط شستکه نیشابوری و شسته پارسی snā و بعینی مفسل عربی است از مصدر شستک که آنها از رشته‌سنای مصدر اوسطی.
بیانیش: در صفحه ۱۱۱، جاماعت آمده: "و انا خص العذارى لفراغیه"، در باره کلمه اخیر نوشته: "هیسه لفظة فارسیه تذكر

فی الیتیلین و احکام النجوم" (۱)

این کلمه پارسی (بمعنی اخصر) نیست و پهلیوی است و تلفظ صحیح آن کدخذابیه است مارکب از کد، که katak-xvatayih kad-xodqahih

از ریشه کنه kata اوسانی آمده است و این وازه نیز از مصدر کن kant می‌گیرد kan

و (کنک پهلیوی = کنده)

پارسی = حنادق معرب) و کانکه (شهر معروف هند) (۵)

در اوستا کنه بمعنی دیل آمده: اطاق، دخان، سرداب، محل هفظ لاشه‌های یکمین کلمه در پهلیو به کنک تبدیل شده (۱) و کنه در پارسی از ادای مکان است katak xvatay و در فرهنگ‌ها آنرا بمعنی خانه دانسته اند (۶) جزو دوم نیز مارکب است از خوتوای پهلیو و ایه ih خوتوای از کلمه (ختا د) مرتق شده است بعنی از خود آفریده، از خود برجسته (۸) جزو اخیر (ایه) در پهلیو علامت نسبت است و آن در پارسی به (ای) تبدیل شده است کدخذابیه لغت بمعنی صاحب و سهی و دو رگ مردانه و خانه خدا است - حافظ:

جلوه مفروش بین ای ملك الحاج که تو خانه می‌پین و من خانه خدا می‌پینم

و آن باب کدوانوست که بزائن سهی خانه اطاق شود و امروز کدخذابیه بمعنی سهی و ریش سفید ده (مراد دهدا) استعمال می‌شود - اما کدخذابیه که در پارسی

۱) Air. Wb. 
۲) مکار، صفحه ۲۰۱ ح
۳) Grundriss der Neupersische Etymologie، von P. Horn. Stras. ۱۸۹۳.
۴) مرکب از Kalik نام رب النوی و Kata بمعنی سرای و خانه
۵) پرمان قابل
۶) Air. Wb. s. ۴۳۲.
۷) Air. Wb. و Grund. der Neupers. و Etudes Iranienness، par Darmesteter,
۸) و یک‌ها، پر داود ج ۱ صفحه ۳۲
كدخاني ميشود لغة بمعنى (قين) مجهر خانه و بعبارت ديكر فن تدير منزل و ادارة خانه استا

١- مشت افتخار - در صفحه ٣٦٣ جماهر آمده: "و اغلب الظن في الذهب المشتشات (٢) أنه لينه و أنه كان في أيام الفرس محتوراً على العامة من جهة السياسة و كان الملوك خاصة، ١ُو ن siz يوريسي بس اازيدن سطر (صفحة ٣٦٣) آرد: "و قال حمزة ان سيئة (٣) كانت من كرة من ذهب محلول تقلب الملوك و لعابها كما تقلب الآن آكر الخالخ (٤) وكان إذا قضى عليها انسال الذهب من بين اصابعه كانه عصرة فانصرع و المشتشات (٥) هو الشراب المصور [بالبديلا(٦)] بالارجل - و الشراب المصور بالارجل (٧) للعروهم، ٩٠

١ (١) رجوع شرد: نفياس الفلن تأليف محمد بن محمد أمير قم دنم مقالة أوله فن دنم (دو علم، تدبير مونرز)

٢ (٢) من مشا المشتشات

٣ (٣) مصحح الجماهر (صفحة ٣٣٢ ح) نخه يلباقا ابن كله را (بيته) و (به) (بدون نطقه) و (بيه) أورده و توشته اسم: "مصحح ابن كله را تافتم، ١ و (بيه) بدين صورت مكتب لغة مضبوط ليست و فقط در ذيل قواميس عري تأليف ذي آمر: "اسبية، قصى ار كاهال (يدي) داريا سه، و خوض درن مره كن كد و يلم ين حر و هي كد مرحكت مشتة (بيه) مصحح اسم و آن مرحل أست از سيب كارس (رك) تشيح الاقتطاع الدخيل في القا النحية، سيب) و ده، ود، يدافاهان ساسا معد داشتن مروه مصون معانه ترج و يبي ذر و سم ساشه در مست قرن (٢)

٤ (٤) جمع لخذا و آن خطي أست از مسك و عنبر و كافور و ماندن آن (٢) في درول نستيش (٢) مصحح جاهز در اناشتاص: "كلمة قدسية مملولة من سب و نفار اع مة مكة، و از يفة عرار متي يدات كا ين تبرير درت نسب مي (ديرونكة) مي نفت (٨) مره يباني مهات كا تمره أشتر قاير تيبمش (با نيش مصم) (٨) مسر ومي تبيه ومي (مشت آب) و سكنية مرو (٨) مفتره أند: "كل مشن سب بنش (ذيل قوامسة عري دزي)

٥ (٥) مصحح طلاط على اكتر مهندئة موقف لنف ثمانية كبي (١٠) يني أبو ريحان بن يابو امكن سيلان طلا و ذكر أن ذر سفر او تورية و هدية حرام يدافاد (١٠) سيربليا سس ينانه اسنت، الجماهر صفحه ٣٦٣
در جمل التواریخ و القصص آنده(۱)؛ "و [خسرو پرویز را بود] زر مشت افشار
که بر آن سهر نداشی و برسان موم بود،" - کریستنسن در تاریخ ایران در زمان ساسانیان
جو که چون سوم نرم بود و میتوانستند آنا باشکل مختلف در آوردند(۲) - (مشت افشار) بود که چون سوم نرم بود و میتوانستند آنا باشکل مختلف در آوردند(۳)
(مشت افشار) بود که چون سوم نرم بود و میتوانستند آنا باشکل مختلف در آوردند(۴)
(مشت افشار) بود که چون سوم نرم بود و میتوانستند آنا باشکل مختلف در آوردند(۵)
(مشت افشار) بود که چون سوم نرم بود و میتوانستند آنا باشکل مختلف در آوردند(۶)
آمده: "مز مشت افشار گویند که قدری زر بوده در خزانه
حسین پرویز مانند موم نرم که هر صوری از آن خواستنی (کردنی) یک آتش
حکم سوزنی گفت:"

(۷) مز مشت افشار بودی بیونه ای یا را بها

پس آورد و سرا پر زر مشت افشار شده(۸)

در بهران قاطع آنده: "مشت افشار پشم اول(۹)" طلا در دست افشار باشد و آن در خزینه
خسرو پرویز بود - گویند مانند موم نرم شد و هر صوری که از آن خواستنی
سالمشده(۱) شرایی(۱) را نیز گویند که از انگور پیش رسانیده باشد و آنا باصطلاب
شرابخوازان شراب جهودی گویند و بلغت اهل شام سطحان خوانند و بجذف همه(۲)

آمده است(۱)، بیت دیل ازخافانی، از قصیده ایوان مدرن نیز مویید این اقوال است:
کسی و ترنیج زر پرویز و به زمین برای شده یکسر، با خاک شده یکسان
و (دست افشار) را نیز بهمین معانی آورده انده - در فرهنگ آندره آمده: "طلای
دست افشار مشهور است که خسرو پرویز داشت و مانند موم نرم میشد و هر صوری
که از آن میخواست میساخت
* گویند اهل عمل(۳) آنا با این مرتبه رسانیده بودند - و بجا آن سیم دست افشار
نیز آمده: - ظهوری گوید:

ترنیج سیم دست افشار خسرو اثر سینه شیرین وشان کرد

(۠) ترجمه پارسی صفحه ۳۸۸
(۲) صفحه ۸۸
(۳) بیت نز فر کوغلک الفرس نمایی
(۴) از نسخه خاط
(۵) در نسخه خاطی دیگر: سرای زَر زرت مشت افزار شد
(۶) چانگ کهوری گفته است (۷) محتوای
(۸) کیبایران
غالب که سیم دریچه‌ی به‌عنای طلا باشد(1) پس استعجاب در این شعر جامی:

زدست افتخارزدی به خمش شو یا این سیم دست افتخار بشنو
بااعتبار معنی حقیقی سیم باشد که فضه است،(2) کلمه مشت پارسی در اوستا موشی

آدمه(3) * mushti

۸ نسک شاهه - در صفحه ۹۵ جحاور آدمه: "وكان للاکارسه ايضاً سبحة من
امثال ذلك(4) الدار الشاهوار عدهها في السمت احدي وعشرون حبة تسمى على ما
ذكر حمره نسك شماره(5) لانها علي [عدد][6] نسك(7) كتابهم المسمى است(8)
و هي قطاعة المنسق(9) بالتوالي و كان يقلها(10) بالاصبع برسوبها من التسابيح
ورداً لهم غذوة كل يوم، *

محشي كتاب درباره "لَسْك شماره!"(11) نوشته: "الفاظن فارسیان، معناها:
تعداد قطع(12) - اما نسک در اوستا نسکه
بعنی کتاب و سفینه آدمه naska و هر جا که این لغت بکار رفته از آن کتاب مقدس ارادة شده است(13) - اما در پیان
های ۹، بند ۲۷ نسکه بعنی خود اوستا و دوره کامل آن آدمه است(14) - دیگرت،
در فصل‌های هشتم و نهم نویسد که اوستا دارای ۲ نسک میباشد و نام هر یک
ازین بیست و یک بشق را جدآگاه یاد میکند و خلاصه مندرجات آنها را شرح می‌دهد -
در فهرشگاه پارسی آدمه(15) نسک بضم اول قسمتی باشد از بیست و یک قسم

(۱) نام کتاب مورق سروش بن کیوان بن کامکار، از پیروان آدر کیوان در مشت افتخار، یا دوز

دست افتخار، است

Air. Style: mushti masah

(۱) رجوع شرد: جاه ۱۵۰ - ۱۵۱
(۲) در متن جاه: لَسْک شماره، در حاشیه لَسْک شماره - لَسْک شماره
(۳) در متن لَسْک - در حاشیه: لَسْک
(۴) در اصل این کلمه بیست و صبح نیای است
(۵) نسخه بلک، اختیار
(۶) نسخه بلک: است، ابها و هر دور خطاست
(۷) بالام و سین
(۸) خرده اوستا، پروتودور صفحه ۲۷
(۹) پرها، حجم آرا
۱۰۱ جحاور صفحه ۱۵۶ ح
۱۲۷ پروتودور، ج ۱ صفحه ۱۱۲
کتاب زند (۱) که زردشت آنرا متقسم کرده است و هر نسک برخی معمولاً را به‌معنی mar نامی نهاده‌است (۲) اما شار و شماره و آمار و آماره همه از مصدر اوستای مزرعه به‌معنی شمردن و آمارت‌های پلولی نیز به‌معنی شمردن و پیشمار (پیش + مار) و پسار (پس + مار) بی‌معنی مدعی و مدعی عليه در پلولی، همه ازین ریشه اند.

از این مطالب آشکار شد که نسک شاره در عهد ساسانیان سبجای بوده است که بمناسبت بیست و یک بخش اوستای ساسانیان شامل بیست و یک دانه در شاهوار بوده و شاهنشاهان آنرا در دست مطابق رسوم میگردانیدند.

(۱) باید دانست که در فرهنگ‌ها نسک (بخش اول و سکن ثانی) را به‌معنی عدس (لغه مشور) و نیز به‌معنی عار و خشک گرفته اند، و کمی شود: مزدیسا و تأثیر آن در ادبیات پارسی، تأیید نگارند. صفحه ۱۳۶.
البيروني

azo

مولانا عبد السلام ندوی، دار المصنفين، أعظم الغه
قد تذكرنا تاریخون میں بیرونی کے حالات معجم الادباء جلد ششم، اخبار الحکام شہر زوری، طبقات الاطباء این ای اصیبط، تنہا صوان الحکمہ اور مختصر الدول میں ذکور هیں،(1) لیکن یہ حالات اس قدر گیر مرتبل ہے چیم اور بہم هیں کہ اس بیرونی کی زندگی کا کوئی پتہ چلتہ نہیں، یہ اس کینتا بھی پررن سخاوت یعنی آثار الاباقیے کے مقدمہ میں اس کے حالات کے تمام مذکور کے ذریعہ وی اس کے جو حالات لکھے ہیں، اون یہ اس کی زندگی کا اجمالی خاکے بیش نظر ہوگئیا ہے، ایسی حالات کا خلاصہ مرزا محمد بن عبد الوہاب قروانی نے حواسکی چھہار مقالہ میں درج کیا ہے، جس کو هم سب سے پہلے درج کر چکے ہیں، وہ لکھے ہیں، کہ:

ابو ریحان بیرونی کے حالات جو اب تک لکھے گئے ہیں، اون میں بہتین حالات وہ ہیں، جن کو مستشرق ایجاد سخاوت یعنی آثار الاباقیے کے مقدمہ میں لکھا ہے، اس نے اون تمام مذکور اور مصادر کا کہنے سے ابو ریحان کی معمول حالت وہ معلوم ہوئی ہے، مطالعے کیا ہے، چونکہ مشرق میں ایران کے سب سے پہلے فلسفی اور رياضی دان کے حالات صحیح طور پر معلوم نہیں ہیں، اس لئے بیرونی سخاوت کی تحریر کا خلاصہ اس موقع پر دِج کرنا مناسب معلوم ہوتا ہے،

وہ 3 ڈیجھا سے 703 میں خوارزم میں پیدا ہوا اور 3 ہجری سے 863 میں گزرے میں سے 85 سال کی عمر میں وفات پائی بیرون خوارزم کی طرف منسوب ہے((1)

اور ماستر عبد الله علی کتاب مهار علم حنا اول میں تحقیق بیرونی کے حالات میں لکھے ہیں، اون سے کہ بعد میں ایک اور مستقل رسالہ بیرونی کے حالات میں لکھا ہے،
کیونکہ وہ حوالی شهر خوارزم یا صوبہ خوارزم کا رہنے والا تھا، پہر حال خود شہر خوارزم کا باشندہ نہ تھا، اس لئے اوس کو پیرون کہا گیا، سمعانی کتاب الامناب میں جو ابو ریحان بیرونی کی وفات کے تقریباً ایک سو سال بعد بھی لکھے گئے کہتے ہیں:

"بیرونی کی یہ نسبت، بیرون خوارزم کی طرف ہے، کیونکہ جو لوگ خود خوارزم کے باشندے نہیں، وہ لوگ بہت بہترہے اور خوارزمیون کی زبان میں لوگون کو اپرزک کہتے ہیں. ابوبیرون نے جمجم پیرونی اسی نسبت سے مشہور ہے."

بیاظہر ابو ریحان نے اپنی عمر کے ابتدائی حسہ کو خوارزم میں مامونیون کے نظر عائضت میں جو خوارزم شاهی کے نام سے مشہور بہت بسا، برس کیا، مامونیون کا خاندان ابتدائ میں شاہان سامانیہ کا بچہ گذار تھا، پہر سامانیوں کی سلطنت کے خاتمے اور غزویوں کے استقلال حکومت کے ماہین یعنی سنه ۳۸۹ هـ سے سنت ۳۹۰ هـ و ۳۹۱ هـ کے دوران میں یہ خاندان مستقل فرمانروا ہوگیا، لیکن اس استقلال کے بعد اس سلطنت میں مہم غزنوی نے خوارزم کو فتح کرکے اپنی وسیع سلطنت میں شامل کرلیا.

ابوبیرون چند سال جرجلان میں شمس الممالک قابوس بن وشمگیر کے دربار میں بھی جس ے دو مختلف زمانہ بنے سنت ۳۸۹ هـ تا سنت ۳۹۳ هـ اور سنت ۳۹۴ هـ تا سنت ۳۹۶ هـ میں جرجلان اور مضائج جرجلان میں حکومت کی، بسر کے، اور حدود سنت ۳۹۱ هـ میں اس کے نام پر کتاب آثار باقیہ تصنیف کی، پہر سنت ۳۹۲ هـ ہے سنت ۳۹۴ هـ میں سے ۔ اور اس کے دوران میں ابو ریحان عربی دیوان آپ، اور اس کے بعد اس کے سے سلطان محمود کی لشکرکشی اور فتح خوارزم کی سے تام واقعات۔ ابوبیرون نے خود اپنی آنگیوں سے دیکھے ہیں، اور ان تمام واقعات میں خود موجود رہا ہے.
ابو ریحان کی کتابوں کی فہرست میں ایک کتاب کا نام "تاریخ خوارزمی"، ہے، اور
ابو ریحان نے اس کتاب میں حساب عادت اپنے وطن کے ہم اخبار، آثار اور
قصص و حکایات بالخصوص اپنے زمانہ کے تاریخی واقعات جن کے اکثر
ہمیشہ چاہتا تھا، درج کیے ہیں، یہ کتاب بنیاد تھی، لیکن اس کی چند فصول ان کو الفصل بہتی نہیں تاریخ سعودی کے آخر میں
شامل کرلیا ہے۔

* بہر حال سلطان محمود جب خوارزمی نے غزنوی کو واپس ہوا تو پھر سے 882 ہم ہیں
ابو ریحان اور ابو ریحان کے ساتھی دربار خوارزمی شاہی کے تمام فضلاء کو اپنے ساتھہ
غزنوی لگی، غزنوی سے قیام کرکے بعد ابوبیکر نے کئی بار اپنے وطن خوارزم کا
سفر کیا، اور محمود غزنوی نے هندوستان پر جو حملے کے اون میں اکثر محامد کے
ساتھی رہا اور هندوستان کے علاوہ و حکایہ سے میل جول پیدا کرکے زبان سنکرتن
سیکھی، اور تاریخ، حیثیت، ریاضی، جغرافیہ، اور علوم طبیعیہ میں اون کے میل
جول سے اپنی معلومات کو وسیع کیا، انہیں سفروں میں ابوبیکر نے اپنے مشہور
کتاب، کتاب الهند کا مواد، هندوستان کی علوم، مذہب اور اخلاق و عادات کے متعلق
جمع کیا، یہ کتاب سنه 882 نو ہزار اہتمام پر یہ پرفسور شاہی حکومت هندوستان کے
صرفہ ہے لندن میں چھپ گیا ہے۔

* ابو ریحان کی کتابوں دو زبانوں یعنی عربی اور فارسی میں ہیں، لیکن اوس کی
کتابوں کے مطالعہ سے معلوم ہوتا ہے، کہ وہ سنکرتز زبان اور کسی قدر عربانی
اور سریاسی زبان سے بھی اہمیت رکھتی تھی، ابہمہ یونانی زبان سے بالکل واقف نہ تھی،
اور اوس سے بطور موسیقی اور جالنیوں وغیرہ سے جو کچھہ آپنے کتابوں میں نقل کیا ہے
ہو اون یونانی ترجھوں سے ماخذ ہے، جو عربی با سریاسی زبان میں کئی گہرے تھے
* ابو ریحان نے اپنی معلومات اون عمده کتابوں کے علاوہ جو اپنے ناپید اثر
زیادہ تر لگنے کی زبان پاتی نے حاصل کی ہیں، اور همیشہ مخصوص مذہب کے
پیشواوں اور دوسری قوموں کے علاوہ و حکایہ سے میل جول پیدا کرکے کوشش بلکل ہے۔
ساتهه اون ين معلومات حاصل كرنا رها هم، بالخصوم ايران كي زرتشتين اور
اهل خوارزم، اهل صفدر، اور اهل سمرقن ود كي تاريخ اور تقويم كي متعلق اوس هن
جو نادر معلومات نراهم كي هين اون كا زياده تر حصه زبانى رواينون كي متعلق ركنتها هن،
كتابون كي منقول هين هن، اور اگر ايو ريجان قدماء كي آثار كي قائم ركنتها كا
اس قدر ناير قى نه هوتا، تو اون كا نام و نشان بهي باقى نه رهتا *

ابو ريجان كي زمانى مين، اوس كى هيمونى زيادت اور اموا كي پرتشت
کرکت تى، اور اکثر شهرى اور قصور مين آتشکده كى قائم تى، اور زرتشتين
مذهب كى علماء كى اثر كلايه زائل نينه هوا تى، بهى وجه هن كه ايو ريجان كى اپني
معلومات بالخصوم زرتشتين كي اخبار و آثار و تقاليد و تعليم كى متعلق اطلاعات
حاصل كرکت كى عمله ذرائع ميسر هوه *

ابو ريجان كى تصنيفات كى سرسرى مطالعه سى بهي اوس كى عقيدة اور مشرب كا
پته جلايا جاسكنا هي، ايو ريجان صرف حقیقت پرست تى، اور كسي چيز كى دنيا كيين
اوس پر ترجيح نهين دينا تى، اور اوس كي حقیقت كى كسي دوسرى غرض سين نهين
چهپاي، اور توهات اور خرافات كى ابطال مين مطلق دريگه نهين كيبا، مى سملان تى،
اور شيعت كى طرف مائل تى، ليكن متعصب، مشدد اور خشك سملان نه تى،
اول غرب سين بهجين كى ساسانيون كى جيدو شرف كى خانه كيبا سخت نفرت رکنتها تى،
اور ايراني قوم كى ساتنه جو چيزين تعلق رکنتها تى، اون كى ار اخباره شيدانى تى،
اوس زمانه يین اسلام اس قدر طاقتور نهين هوا تى، كه كوني شخص علانيه دوسره
مذاهب كى حاصل نه كرسي، يا اون مين سين كسي اين كى برائى يا بهله تى نه بيان
كرسي، دقیق جو ساسانى خاندان كا شاعر تى، اور ايو ريجان كى زمانه سين بهت زياده
بپه نه تى، كيال آزادى كى ساتنه اس قسم كى شعر كيهتى *

دقیق چار خصلت برگزیده است
بخی دیگر خوبی و زشتی
لب یاقوت رنگ و نائل چندگ
مع گارنج و کیش زر ترشتی
بیرون سندہ کا ایک شہر ہے، اور بیرون اس شہر کے طرف منسوب ہے (2)

"بیرون جوہرکا کے جن منہ اور وطن ہے، ایک عمدہ شہر ہے، اور اس کے عجائب و غرائب پانے چاہئے ہیں، اور یہ کوئی عجائب بات نہیں، کیونکہ مواد سبہ ہی میں رہتا ہے، لیکن فرد کا سبہ یہ ہے، کہ سندہ میں نیرون ایک شہر ہے، اور اب حدیث بحرانی کے کتاب السالک کے ایک قدر

نسخہ میں سندہ کا ایک تفضیل موجود ہے جس میں نیرون کا موقع و محل بتندا گا ہے، خود بیرون سندہ میں کوئی شہر نہیں، غالبًا لگتھا ہے گلی میں اسی نیرون کو بیرون پہرا اور ابو ريحان کو اس کے طرف منسوب کردیا، بیرون کی سنگرتنادی اور کتاب الهند بہی اس غلطی کا سبہ هوکری ہے، کیونکہ هندوتستان کی ایک قدیم زبان اور هندی مذهب، هندی تنہی، اور هندی علوم ہے اس قدر دلچسپ صرف اوسی شخص کو هوکری ہے، جو خود هندوتستان ہو، نہ حال حстал نہ بیرون سندہ کا کوئی شہر ہے، نہ بیرون وہان پیدا ہوا اس کا اصل مولد خوازم کا کوئی گاہون ہے، اس کے متعلق کتاب الانساب سمنانی کا حوالہ خود بیرون سخاوت ہے دیا ہے، اور

(1) حراشی چھار مثال از صفحہ 193 تا صفحہ 196 (2) طبقات الاطباء، جلد 3 صفحہ 20
ياقوت كي معجم الأدباء في بهي اس كي تأثيد هوغه، جناحيه اوس نه يبروني كا تذكره ان الفاظ كي شروع كيا هه:

محمد بن احمد ابو الريحان البيروني الخوارزمي اور اس نسبت كي معنى باهر واهالي كي هين، كيونكه فارسي مين يبرون كي معنى باهر كي هين

ميم كي بعض ضفلاء يه اس كي متعلق دريفت كيا كي اوس نه خوارزم احنية كيو

يبروني كيو حي، گوية حب ووه اوس نه بخت دنون تك الغ رهاء

تووه احنية هوگيا ليكن ميره خيان مين اس كي وجه يه هه، كيه ووه

ديمات كا باشنده تهاء، يهيه ووه شهر كي باهر كا رهاله والا تهاء(1)

ولادت اور وفات بهاره تذكورنوسون نه يبروني كا سال ولادت نهيم لكيه،

البغة ياقوت ّ اوس كي سال وفات كي متعلق لكيها هه، كيه ميره خيان مين اوس نه

غزمه مين سنه 326 ماي كي حدود مين ي최 عمر مين وفات(2) دايب، ليكن يه بالكل غلط كي

اور به غلطه خود ياقوت كي معجم الأدباء هيه نه ظاهر هوجاب هه، كيونكه ووه

لكهنا هه كيه "سلطان محمود نه سنه 333 مين انتقال كيا، اور ابو ريجان غزمه مين

زنه تهاء(3)، اس كي الصف ثابت هه كيه كيو ريجان نه سنه 332 مين وفات

نيلين پانى تقى، غالبا يه كاتب كي غطشي هه، جين نه سنه 333 مين بجايه سنه 334 م

لكهديا نه، يبروني كي سال ولادت كي متعلق تو هاره تذكورنوسون نه غالط كي

صحيح طور بركجه نهيم لكهنا، البغه خود يبروني نه اس كي ايك دوست نه اس كي

تصنيفته كي فهرست طلب كي نه اس كي جواب مين يبروني نه لكيه هه كيه:

تم مجيه نه اون كتبون كي نام دريفت كيره هو جو سنه 327 مین تك

لكهي جاچي كي، اس وقت ميे عشر قمي مييه بهيه نه 30 سال اور

شمسى مهین نه 32 سال كي هه *

(1) معم الأدباء، جلد 4، صفحة 280
(2) معم الأدباء، جلد 4، صفحة 432
(3) ايايًا، جلد 4، صفحة 280
اس پر ایک طرف تو یاقوت کے لکھے ہوئے سمن وقت کی غلظی ثابت ہوئے ہے،
دوسری طرف یہ معلوم ہوگا تھا کہ وہ سال 1200 میں ہوگا، اوہ اس وقت سے چیا پڑھ ہوئے ہے، اور اس وقت سے ایک ویلے کے مطابق ہے، لیکن ایک اور اس وقت سے ایک ویلے کے مطابق ہے، محمد الفضیل البترازی نے بیرونی کے استعمال کے ذریعے سے اس خط کی تشریح میں ایک سوال لکھا ہے، جس کی نقل بوری میں موجود ہے، اور اس وقت سے ایک سوال لکھا ہے، تصریح کا سوال کی ہے،
کہ وہ 3 دیہات کو پنچشیپ کے دن بیج خواروز کو بھیہدا ہوا، اوہ ابو ریحان کے ایک شاگرد امام فاضل سرخی کے خط میں ابو ریحان کی کتابیں نے کسی کتاب کے حاملے پر بھی تصریح تھی، کہ ابو ریحان نے 2 رجب سال 366 میں جمعہ کے دن عشاء کے بعد انتقال کیا، اوہ دوسرا موقع پر کسی دوسرے کے ذریعے سے لکھا ہوا ہے، کہ ابو ریحان کے عمر اس وقت 2 سال میں ملا کی تھی(1)

خاندان اور تعلیم و تربیت: ہاریو نے تذکرہ کیے ہوئے ریحان کے خاندان،
طرفیات اور تعلیم و تربیت کا حال بالکل معلوم نہیں ہوچا، البته خود ابو ریحان کے آثار الباپی کے متن اور ایک دو اس تاریخ کا نام لیا گیا، ایک اور نصر منصور بن علی بن عراق مولی امر المومنین(1) کا اور ان کی نسبت تصریح کی ساتھیہ "استاذی"، کا لفظ لکھا ہے، دوسرا نام بنداد سرخی کا ہے، جس کو مفتہ سید حسن بروز نے اس کے استادیّت میں شار کیا ہے، لیکن ابو ریحان کے آثار الباپی کے متن ان کا نام اس طرح لیا گیا ہے، محمد بن اسحاق بن استاد بنداد سرخی(2) جس نے بھی وضاحت بھی ثابت نہیں ہوئی، کہ بنداد سرخی نے اس کے استاد تھیں، ممکن ہے کہ استاد اول کا لقب ہو، یاقوت کی مصیم الاداب سے ابو ریحان کے ایک اور استاد کے نام کا پتہ چلتا ہے، وہ لکھتا ہے کہ "محمد نے 3 چرب خوارزم پر قہبہ کیا تو ابو ریحان اور اس کے استاد عبدالسّلّم اول بن عبد الصمد کو گفتار کیا، اور اس پر بازیغیت اور کفر کا الزام لکھیا 3 کرتی ہر کردار(3)،" پھر حال موجودہ تذکرہ سے اس سے زیادہ اوس کی تعلیم و تربیت پر کوئی روشنی نہیں پٹی

(1) پرورش حاصل 3 آثار الباپی 3 مقدمہ پر اس کے اصل الفاظ نقل کی حیث (2) آثار الباپی صفحہ 38 (3) یہ ابتدائی صفحہ 20 (2) مصیم الاداب 16 صفحہ 6 صفحہ 311

17
درباری تعلقات ؛ ابو ریحان ے طويل عمر پائی اور اس وسیع مدت میں اوس کے تعلقات مختلف شاہی دربارون سے قائم ہوئے، معجم الادباء کی عبارت سے معلوم ہوتا ہے کہ ابو ریحان کو سب سے پہلے شمس المالکی قابوس بن شمگیر ے ایپنے دربار مین طلب کیا، لیکن ابو ریحان نے اس سے انکار کیا، جنکیہ وہ لکہنا نہیں، کہ "قابوس نے اوس کو اپنی صحبت کے لئے خاصو کرنا اور اپنی گھر مین رکھنا چاہتا اور اس شرط کس ساتھ چاہتا" کہ اوس کی سلطنت کے تمام مقامات و مملوکات پر اس کا حکم نافذ ہوگا، لیکن ابو ریحان نے انکار کیا، یکی قابوس بن شمگیر سے 1362 میں تختنشین ہوا ہے، اور وہ 1283 میں دیلمین نے اس کی حکومت بر قبضہ کرلیا ہے، ابو ریحان سے 1272 میں پیدا ہوا ہے، اس لئے سے 1283 میں اس کی عمر صرف نوسال کی تھی، اور اس عمر مین اوس کے دربار مین طلب کیے جانے کے قابل نہ تھے ابتدہ قابوس نے سنہ 1388 میں دوبارہ حکومت حاصل کی، اور سنہ م.1283 کے بعد ہنگامہ مین قتل ہوا، اس لئے اس کا تعلق قابوس کے دربار مین اسی زمانہ مین ہوا، اور اسی زمانہ مین اوس کے قابوس کے نام پر آثار الباشی لکھے، معجم الادباء کی عبارت سے معلوم ہوتا ہے، کہ بیرنکی نے اس سے انکار کیا، اور بیرنکی کے سوائے زندگی مین اس قسم کے استغناء کی بعض مثالیں بھی موجود ہیں، لیکن غالباً افلاس و تنگدستی ے اوس کے اس تعلق پر جمبور کیا، کبھی تاہم وہ خود آثار الباشی مین لکہنا نہیں، وہ "یہ فصل مجبور ایک ایسی حالت یاد دلائے ہے، جس یہ احمد بن فارس کا یہ قول صادق آتا ہے :

قدقال فيما مضى حکیم
ما المرء الا باصغره
گنستہ زمانہ کے ایک حکیم کا قول ہے، کہ آدمی اپنی دو چھوئے عضو یعنی
dل اور زبان نے آدمی ہوتا ہے:

قلت قول امر لیب
ما المرء الا بدرهمیه

(1) مجمع الادباء، جلد 6، صفحہ 289 و شہر زوری صفحہ 58
لكن میں نے ایک عقلی میں آدمی کا یہ قول بیان کیا کہ آدمی اپنی دو درہم سے آدمی ہوتا ہے?

تم نے میں نے درہم نے درہم نے اوس کی چیز بنی اس کی طرف متوسط نہیں ہوئے.

وہ یہ کہ جس زمانہ میں، میں بندگان عالی کے دربار سے اگت تھا، میں نے رئے میں تجویز کے ایک عالم کو دیکھا، کہ اوس سے تجویز کے احکام کے استخراج کا ایک طريقة استعمال کیا لیکن میں نے اوس کو بنا نا کریں کہ صبح ہزیرت اس کے خلاف ہے، لیکن اوس نے مغرونانے طور پر میکسیکو حقیق سمجھا حالانکہ علمی حیثیت اسی اوس کا درجه مبھی ہے بیہت کم تھا، اوس سے مبھی قول کو جھلادیا، اور مبھی بر زبان درازی کی، کیونکہ مبھی میں اور اس میں دوبل اور افلاس کا فرق تھا اور افلاس ایک اسی کچھ ہے، کہ اوس کہ مبھی سے مناسب و معاشرہ، معین و مثال بین جانے ہیں، اور میں اوس وقت حیثیت سے مبہم مصیبت اور پرہیز وسعت تھی، پھر جب مصیبتی کسی قدر کم ہوئے تو اوس سے مبھی سے دوستنہ تعقیلات قائم کرائے (1) *

اس تصمیم کے معلوم ہوتا ہے کہ نے قابوس کے دربار کے تعلق سے بلنہا نہایت تنگی اور شکستہ حال تھا، اور اسی تنگی اور شکستہ حال اس کو قابوس کے دربار کے تعلق پر مجبور کیا ہوگا.

اس کے بعد اوس کا تعلق خوارزم شاهی کے دربار سے ہوئے خوارزم شاهی کا خاندان جیسے کہ اپنی عہدہ سنہ 838 سے سنہ 936 کے درسیانہ زمانہ میں مستقل فرمان روا ہوئے، اور سنہ 965 میں سلطان محمود غزنوی سے اون کی حکومت کا خاتمہ گردیا، اس لئے اس دربار سے اپو ریحان کا تعلق سنہ 965 کے بعد ہوا ہوگا، پھر حال اپو ریحان سے اس دربار سے بہی نہایت عزت اور احترام حاصل کیا پہلے ایک ہی

(1) آثار الابنی مسہ 328
خوارزم شاه سواری بر ابوبی رقیان کے مقام سے گذرا، اور حکم دیا کہ ابوبی رقیان کو حجرہ سے بلا لیا جائے، ابوبی رقیان نے کچھہ دیدر کی تو خوارزم شاه نے سواری کی باگ مسؤل اور خود اترا چاہا، لیکن ابوبی رقیان اوس نے پہلے حجرہ سے نکل آیا، اور قسم دلاکر کہا کہ آپ سواری سے نا اوتربین اس بر خوارزم شاه سے نیا شعر بھرها۔

العلم من اشرف الولایات یاتیہ کل الوری وولایاق

علم سب سے زیادہ معزز ملک ہی، کہ تمام لوگ اوس کے پاس آتے ہیں،

اور وہ خود نہیں آتا ہے

پہر کہا "اگر دنیا کا دستور نہ هوتا تو مین آپ کو نہ بلواتا، کبینکہ علم بلند هوتا ہے، اور اس کے اوپر بلندی نہیں حاصل کی جاتی، غالباً اوس نے معتضد کے حال میں اس قرہ کو سنا ہوگا، کبینکہ معتضد ایک دن ثابت بن قره الحرا قا هاتھہ پکرے ہوئے باغ مین گھووم رہا تھا، کہ دفعہ اپنے هاتھہ کو کھینچ لیا، اس ثابت ہے کہا کہ "آمیر الموسین کیا واقعہ پیش آیا؟" اوس نے کہا کہ "میرا هاتھہ آپ کی حالتہ کے اؤیر تھا، حالانکہ علم بلند هوتا ہے، اور اس کے اوپر بلندی نہیں حاصل کی جاتی"،(1)

خوارزم شاهیون کی تبہار چک بعد اوس کا تعلقسلطان محمد غزنوی کے دربار سے

ہوا، لیکن یہ مسئلہ حقیقی طلب ہے، کہ اس دربار سے اوس کا تعلق کبینکہ پیدا ہوا؟ اس کے متعلق نظامی عروضی سرمقنندی نے چار مقالہ مین یہ روایت نقل کی ہے کہ سلطان محمد غزنوی ز ابوبی عباس مامون خوارزم شاه کو ایک خط لکھ کہا کہ تجارہکے دربار مین چند پر نظیر فضلاً کا مجمع ہے، اون کو هارے دربار مین بہہندو تاکہ اس نے کی علم وفضل یہ بھی اندوز ہوکر تجارہکے ممنون احسان ہوئے، خوارزم شاه نے اپنے دربار کے حکمران کو جمع کرکے یہ خط سنانا تو یشیب ابوبی علی سینا اور ابوبی سہیل چڑھے تو جاں نے ایک اکثر کردنیا، لیکن ابوبی نصر، ابوبی الخیر اور ابوبی رقیان مال ترگیبات کی بنا پر راضی ہوگیے،(2) اس کے بعد یشیب ابوبی علی سینا اور

(1) مجموع الادیبیہ جلد ۶ صفحہ ۶۰۹-۶۱۰ (۲) جہاز مقالہ صفحہ ۳۱۸
ابو سهل يحيى کے فرار و گرفتاری کا طویل قصہ مذکور ہے، لیکن یہ روایت مشتبہ ہے، اوّرس روایت کی غلطی اس کی بھی ثابت ہوئے ہیں، کہ یاقوت نے معجم الادباء میں ابو ریحان کا مفصل تذکرہ لکھا ہے، لیکن کہیں بھی اس واقعہ کا تذکرہ نہیں کیا ہے، بلکہ اس کے بجائے یہ لکھا ہے کہ غزنة میں ابو ریحان کا جانے کا سبب یہ هوا کہ سلطان محمود نے چب خوارزم کو فتح کیا تو ابو ریحان اور سے اوسطاد عبد الصمد اول بن عبد الصمد حکیم کو گرفتار کیا، اور اس بر باطنیت اور کفر کا الزام لگا گا، اس نما پر عبد الصمد کو تو قتل کردیا اور ابو ریحان کو بھی قتل کرنا چاہتا، لیکن ایک دوسرے ہے وہ پچ گیا، محمود نے کہیا گیا کہ وہ علم نجوم میں اپنے وقت کا امام ہے، اور باشنا لگتی اوس جبڑی شخص ہے یہ نیا نہیں رہے سکتے، اب سلطان محمود نے اوس کو اپنے ساتھہ لے لیا اور وہ ہنگام وہ بلاد حال آیا، اور ایک وقت کی۔ ہدیہ ایک سے میں، منند میں رہا، اون کی زبان سیکھی اور اون کے علوم اخذ کیے، اس کے بعد غزنة میں قیام کیا، اور وہنہ وقت باتی، (1) بہر حال ابو ریحان کو سلطان محمود نے اپنے صحیح کے لئے مخصوص کرلیا، اور جب مغول اور آسان کے متعلق اوس کے ذهن میں جو باتیں آئی تھیں، اون بر ابو ریحان یہ گفتگو: کیا کرنا تھا، چنانچہ ایک بار اوس کے پاس افظاً بلاد نرک سے ایک قاصد آیا، اور اپنا معاشرہ یہ بیان کیا کہ قطب جنوبی میں سمدر کے پار آفتا کی ایک ایسی گرددہ وہ ہے، کہ رات باقلِ نیاں ہوئی، چونکہ سلطان محمود کو مذہب میں سخت تشدد تھی، اس لئے اوس نے اس پر الحاد و باطینی کا الزام لگا گا، لیکن ابو نصر بن مشکان نے کہا کہ وہ ہے اسی رہے سے نہیں بیان کرنا، بلکہ اپنا مشاهدہ بیان کرنا ہے، اس پر اوس نے یہ آیت پڑھی: "وجوہا تقلع علی قوم لم نجعل لهم من دونا ستراء، اوس نے سریج کو ایک ایسی قوم پر طلوع هوتی ہوئی ہوایا کہ هم نے اوس کے سامنے اس کے لئے پرھے نہیں بنایا * اب سلطان نے اس کے متعلق ابو ریحان سے دریافت کیا تو اوس نے احترام کے ساتھ اس کو ثابت کیا، سلطان محمود بعض اوقات بات کو اچھی طرح ستنتی تھیا، (1) معم الادباء، جلد 2 صفحہ 311 و 322
اور انصاف کرتا تیہا، اس لئے اوس نے ابو رجحان کے بیان کو تسلیم کرلیا، اور دونوں نے اور بینچ کان گفتگو کا خاتمہ کیا ہوگیا۔

مستر سید حسن بروکی کہے کہ:

خوازم کی فتح کے بعد جب محمود اپنے دار السلطنت کی طرف لوتا تو تمام مشاہیر ملک اور اراکین حکومت کو مفیق کرلیا، ان پولیشکل قیدیوں میں
ہارا غمزدہ ہیروئی بھی تھا، غزی آCKER اوس کا کیا حضرت ہوا؟ تمام موجودہ
تاریخیں اس کا جواب دینے سے عاجز ہیں، اور ناوتیکے مستند تاریخی
شہادتیں دستیاب نہ ہوگئیں، کوئی قول فیصل صادق نہیں ہوگئتا،
موجودہ روایات کی کمیوزی اور صحیح واقعات کی گم گشتی کی وجہ سے
ہم جھوٹی ہیں، کچھ ہیروئی کی تصنیف اور واقعات بر غور کر کہر ہوئےہوئے،
کوئی قیاسی تنبیہ اخذ کریں، ظہور الدین الباقی اور شمس الدین
شهر زوری ہے ہیروئی کے تذکرے میں کہہنی ہے اشکار نہیں کیا،
کہ ہیروئی کا محمود کے دربار سے کوئی تعلقات تھا۔

لیکن خود شهر زوری نے معجم الادبے کا اس روایت کو لیا ہے، اور اس واقعہ کا
ذکر کیا ہے، اس سے یہ بہتر سلطان محمود کے تعلقات اور ملازمت کی اور کیا شہادات
ہوسکتی ہیں؟ البتہ ہیروئی نے خود سلطان محمود سے نام بر کوئی کتاب نہیں لکھی
لیکن محمود کے بعد جب ہیروئی کا تعلقات اور واقعات بر غور کر کہر ہوئے
تو اوس نے ہیروئی کے قدردان سلطان محمود سے بھی زیدے کہ اور ہیروئی نے اوس کے
نام پر متعدد کتبیں لکھیں، اور اس کا وہ چیز کہ سلطان محمود خود نہایت
علم پہور تھا، اور علم مجبور کے طرف خاص طور پر مائل تھا، جانئے یاک دن اوس نے
ہیروئی نے اس مستشرق پر اور رات اور دن کی مقدار کی اختلاف پر گفتگو کی اور یہ چاہتا
کہ اوس کو اپنے اپنے معلم تھا، جب کہ صحت مشاہدة نیں ابتکار
ثبت نہیں ہوئی ہیں، اس پر اپو رجحان نے کہا کہ ”ہا وقت آپ مشرق و مغرب کے

(1) معجم الادب، جلد 6 صفحہ 310
موفق اوزين كم بادشاها كم كتب كم حقائق مستحقة هين، اس لاس مسئله يع
وافق هون كم سب كم زياده حق آپ كم حاقل كم، جناته بيرون كم كم
اس موضوع بير ايك كتب كله ي، جو منجين كم موضوع اوز اصطلاب كم
اك تهي،
اور جو شخص اون كم عاديه نيدي هو، وجهي اس كم سمجهي سكنه تيا، سلطان مسعود
چويكه غريت كم ماهر تيا، اس لاس اون كم آسان كم ستهيه اس كم سمجيه لياء
اور بيرون كم صله و اغييه ديا، اس طرح اوس كم حكم كم ايك كتب لوازم الحركتين
تصنيف كي جو قرآن مجيد كي آيتون كم اقتباسات كم لبريز تيه، سلطان مسعود ك فام بر
اوس كم سب كم ايك كتب كم لكي هوي قانون مسعودي تيه؛(1) سلطان مسعود كم
بههي اس كي ييه قدراني كي، كه اوس كم صله مين ايك با فيل جاندي انيام مين دي,
ليكن بيرون كم اوس كي ييه نيازي كم ستهيه و ايس كرديا.(2)*
سلطان مسعود كي شهادت كي بعد اوس كا بيتا شهاب الدولة ابو الفتح مودود
فرمانا روا هوا، تو بيرون كا تعطي اوس كم دربار كي بههي قائم هوا، اور اس كم فام بر
كتاب الدستور كلهي.(3)*

اختلاك و عادات: بيرون كم اختلاك و عادات كي متعلق هاريه
تذكروييسون كي كجهه نيدي لكه، صرف ياقوت كي معجم الادبائيين كم اس قدر
لكه ايه، كي او باكيزه مواقيس ركبتا تيا، اوس كي الناظر امرك كي ينهاك أنه تيه،
ليكن اس كي افعال باكبازانه تيه،(4) شهر زوري كي كم اوس كي بعض اختلاك مقول يبهي
تقل كيه، اور اس كا حليه يه لكه كي، كي او كندي كون اور بست قامت تيا,
اس كي دارههي بلني اور سفيد تيه، اور اس كا بيض بئا تها

بيرون كي تصنيفات اور اس كا عالي كا باوي: بيرون كي عام شهير علم هيين
اور علم نجوم وغيره مين كي، اور اس مين شبه نيدي كه اوس كي زياده تر كتابين
ائي علم كي متعلق كهيه هين، ليكن اس كي ستهيه و او رعلم كي بههي نا آنشنا نه تها

(1) مجموع الابداء، جلد 6، صفحه 311 - 310
(2) شهر زوري، قلم صفحه 93
(3) مجموع الابداء، جلد 6، صفحه 312
(4) اياضا، صفحه 98
علیاً ابن ابی اصبعہ نے لکہا ہے کہ وہ فن طلب سے عہدہ نظر رکھتی تھی، ریاضی و نجوم کے علاوہ دوسرا علوم حکیمیہ ہے بہت واقف تھا، چنانچہ ان علوم کے متعلق شیخ ابن سینا نے اوس کے مباحثات و مراحلہ بہو وچکے ہیں، لیکن وہ ریاضی اور نجوم کے علاوہ دوسرا علوم حکیمیہ مین شیخ کا مهمہ نہ تھا، چنانچہ شهر زمری نے اوس کے حالات مین لکہا ہے کہ شیخ ابن سینا کے ساتھ وہ اوس کے مناظرات ہیں، لیکن معقولات کے ساتھ مین گھسننا اوس کا کام نہ تھا، اور هر شخص

وہی کام کرسکتا ہے، جس کے لئے وہ بیدا کیا گیا ہے

ان علوم کے ساتھ وہ ادبی علوم کا ذوق بھی رکھتی تھا، اور یاقتون ہے معلوم الادیب مین اسی حیثیت سے اوس کا تذکرہ کیا ہے، اور لکہا ہے کہ وہ ایک

پر ادبی اور لغوتی تھا، اور ان علوم مین اس کی متعدد تصنیفات ہیں، وہ کو مین نے دیکھا ہے، ایک تو ابو تمام کے اشعار کی شرح ہے، جس کا نسخہ مین نے

خود اوست کے ساتھ ہے لکہا ہے وہ اس کو اوست نے مکمل نہیں کیا، دوسرا کتاب کا نام "تعلیم باحالة الہسمی" میں نظم اولی الفضل" ہے، ایک

کتاب مین اوست نے سلطان محمود کے زمانہ کی تاریخ اور اس کے باب کے حالات

لکھی ہے، خوارزم کے حالات مین ایک کتاب لکھی ہے، جس کا نام

کتاب المسامره ہے، ایک کتاب کا نام مختارت اشعار و الآثار

ان تاریخی اور ادبی کتابوں کے علاوہ اوس نے جو کتابوں نے نہ کشمیر، ہیئت، منطق،

اور حکمت مین لکھی ہیں، ان کا شمار نہیں کرسکتا ہے بایوٹ نے لکہا ہے، کہ مین نے

وقت جامع مین اس کی کتابوں کی فہرست گنجان خات مین سائٹ مین ورق مین

دیکھیں ہے، اور تمام تذکرہ ہے بھی اس کی کثیر تصنیف، علی ایمان کا اور

عیسی ذوق کے مداد ہیں، شهر زمری نے لکہا ہے کہ وہ همیشہ تصنیف و تالیف مین

مصرف رہتی تھی، اور اس کا ساتھ قلم کو اوسکی آنکھی مطابعہ کو، اور اس کا دل

غور و فکر کو، صرف کہاں نے کے اوقات مین مشورت تھی، اس کی تصنیفات ایک

(1) معم الادب، جلد 6 صفحہ 211.
ان تمام تصورات سے اوس کے علمی ذوق، علمی انبہاک اور گھر تحقیق کا حال معلومات ہوسکتا ہے، یہ ہیں خود ابتدائی اوس بحیثیت ہیں یوں ان کو ایک ہو وہ اس کی مقامہ میں شامل ہے، اور بعد ایک جدید ہو جاتے ہیں۔ اس کے علاوہ اس وقت اور کتاباں اس کی زیر تحقیق تھیں، اور ان سے اس کے ہوںگی، اس کے اس کی تحقیق کے نام اس کی دوسری کتاباں مین ملتے ہیں، اور بہت سی تحقیقات کے نام اس کے کتاباں مین ملتے ہیں، اور ایک جدید ہو جاتے ہیں، اور ان سے اس کی فہرست مسیر سید حسن برونی ایک رساں مین دیدی ہے۔


(1) شرح دوزی قلمی صفحہ 93
(2) مسمو انبیاء جلد 6 صفحہ 267، 2008
یعنی آثار الباقیہ اور کتاب البند شائع هوچکی ہیں، اور هم اون کے چند اقتباسات
اس موقع پر درج کر کے ہیں:
بیرونم اگرچہ آثار الباقیہ ریاضی کے ایک خاص موضوع پر لکھی ہوئیت آویں اور مبنی ویسے ہے،
تاہم امسے اس میں اور بہت سے دلچسپ علمی، تاریخی، مذہبی اور فلسفیانہ
بادات لکھی ہوئی، اور ان پر آزادانہ تحقیق کی چھ اور سے کی چند باتیں ہیں کہ
بعض موقع پر اگرچہ ہم دوسے فنون پر بیج کر کے لگی ہوئی، اور
ایسی چیزیں میں جگہ پھر تھیہ ہیں، جن کا تعلق عبارت ہے بہت دور کا
ہوتا ہے، لیکن اس کا مقصود طوال پسنیہ نہیں ہوتا، بلکہ مخصوص ہے
ہوتا ہے کہ ناظرین کا ذهن نہیں پایا، کیونکہ ایک ہی
فن پر همیشہ نظر رکھنے سے ذهن کند ہوجاتا ہے، اور اسی کے چند
برداشت نہیں کرسکتا، لیکن جب ایک فن کو چھوڑ کر وہ دوسرے فن
اختیار کرتا ہے، تو گو ہاا وہ چند باگون کي سیر کرنا ہے، کہ ایک
باغ کے بعد دوسرے باگ آتا ہے، تو وہ نہایت رغبت کے ساتھ سہ اور کو
دیکھنے لگتا ہے، چنانچہ یہ مشہور مقولہ ہے کہ ہر نئی چیز میں
لڑت ہوئی ہے(1)*

اس حیثیت سے اوس کی یہ کتاب دور گننے کے ایم تاریخی، مذہبی اور علمی
مسئلے کی ایک تحقیقی تاریخ ہے، اور اس سے معلوم ہوسکتا ہے، کہ اگر ہارے
فلسفی تاریخی کتابیں لکھیں تو یہ فن موجودہ دور کی تحقیقی موشکائی کسے پی نیا
ہوجاتا، لیکن ہارے فلسفی فنن میں صرف این مسکویں نے مستقلًا اور بروین نے ضمنتًا
اس قسم کے مسائل پر تحقیق کی ہے، اور ہم ان میں سے چند مسائل کو بیان کرنا
ہیں، بیرونم ایک تحقیق بادشاہوں کے نام، اقاب اور حالات نہایت تفصیل کے
ساتھ لکھی ہیں، تاہم یہ تصمیم کر کے ہیں، کہ ان میں یہ بہت سے باتیں نامکن
دور از کار اور ناقابل قبول ہیں، چنانچہ لکھتا ہے:

(1) آثار الباقیہ صفحہ 26
ايرانيون کے ہیں حساب کی تاریخ، واداشاہون کی عملون، اور ان کو مشہور کا نام کے متعلق اون کے ہیں ایسی روایتی موجود ہیں، جن کے سے دل بیزیار ظاهر ہو ہیں، کان اون کو تھوک دیتے ہیں، اور عقیل اون کو قبول نہیں کرتے، لیکن ہم نے جو روش اختیار کیے اوس کا مقصد صرف تاریخی واقعات کا یہاں ہونا ہے، روایت کی تنقید کرنا نہیں ہے(1)。

اس ضمن میں اوس نے تاریخی حیثیت سے بعض ادبی نکات بھی بین کے ہیں مثلاً شعر کے ایران جو هزار سالہ زندگی کی دعائیں دیتے ہیں، اوس کو سبیلے سمجھتے ہوئے، لیکن بیرونی کے یہاں سے معلوم ہوئے ہے، کہ یہ دعا ایک تاریخی روایت ہے، چنانچہ لکھتا ہے:

"تمام ایرانیوں کا اتفاق ہے کہ بیورافس (شقاک) نے هزار سال کی عمر پائی، یہاں جاتا ہے، کہ ایرانی ایک دوسرے کو جو هزار سال تک زندہ رہنے کی دعا دیتے ہیں، اور کہتے ہیں، کہ "ہزار سال بزی"، اوس کی ابتدا اسی زمانے سے ہوئی، کیونکہ اپنے نے اس کو دیکھی تھا، اس کے لئے اس کو نزدیک مکین تھا، و اللہ اعظم(2)!

مبار ضحاک کی نسبت لکھتا ہے:

"بیورافس (شقاک) کے دونوں سانیوں کے متعلق یہاں جاتا ہے کہ وہ اس کے شاندن کے دریمان ابھرے ہوئے تھے، اور انسانو کا دماغ کھل چکا تھا، اور کہا گیا ہے کہ یہ دو غدود تھے، جن میں درد پیدا ہوئی تھا اور اون بڑا لباس کے ساتھ کی جاک تھی، جس نے اون کو سکون ہوئی تھی، لیکن دو سانیوں کا پیدا ہوئی ایک عجیب چیز اور ہوتی ہے۔ مستبعد ہے، کیونکہ گوشت سے صرف کیچھ پیدا ہوئے ہیں(3)۔"
ان تمام واقعات كم لكهكر كم وكهنا كم: 

اس دن ان تمام اتفاقات كا جمع هوجان اگرچه ممكن كه، ليكن وغ عام محدثين
اور اهل كتب كي طرف منسوب كه جهن كي علم كا اچی ترخ نبين

حاصل كييا كه(1) *

غرض وغ تمدن تاريخي واقعات بر غفلي حديثت كي نظر ذالكنا كه، اور اسی حديثت سی
اور پر تنقید كرتن که، تاهم وغ بالکل عقل بردست بهي نبين كه، بلکه تاريخي واقعات بر
اور حديثت كي بهي نظر ذالكنا كه، مثلًا سلطانين فارس كي طويل العمر كي متعلق
ايراني تاريخون مين جو دور از كار باتين مذكور كه، اون كي اگرچه وغ تسلیم نبين
كرتن، تاهم انسان زندگي كا اوس كي کوئي خاص عددت معيار بهي قاتم نبين کييا كه،

(1) آثار الاباى صفحه 229 - 330
لکھتا ہے:

بعض مینذل روایت پرستون اور احمق دهورنے گنی شتہ قوویں کے طويل العمر بالخصوص حضرت ابراهیم عليه السلام کے زمانے سے بہت کی عورون کا اناک کیا ہے، اور ان کے اجسام کی جو بہتی بیان کی گئی تھی، اوس کو نانمک اور عمال سمجھتے ہیں، اور ایسے زمانے میں جو اجسام دیکھتے ہیں، اونیہ بیان کو بہت قیام کرنا ہے، اور احکام جوہر کے مین کے نزدیک انسان کی انتہائی عمر دو سو بندرو نہ ہوسکتی ہے، اور اس کی طبع عمر صرف ایک سو سویس برس کی ہے، لیکن اگر حق اون کی خواہشون کا پانبد هو جا ی، تو آسانی و زینی تیہ هوجائیں، صرف مشاهدة اور اس پر قیاس کریں سی طول عمر اور اشخاص کے جسم کی ضخامت کا اندازہ نہیں کیا جاسکتا، کیونکہ یہ پچیزہ زمانہ سے مختلف طور پر پیدا ہوئے ہیں، اس لئے جب کوئی مشاهده کرنا والا اون کی پیداہی کا اوقات کی مشاهدة نہیں کرتا، تو اون کو مستبعد سمجھتا ہے، تمام کائنات یعنی جانور، درخت، نمک اور پھل سب کے سب اس میں داخل ہیں، اگر کسی انسان کو ان کی حالات معلوم نہ ہوئے، پھر اوس کو ایک خزان سے ہورما دیکھتے ہیں، اور اوس سے بیان کیا جائے گا، کہ وہ سرسبز هوجائیگا، اور اوس میں پھیل آئینگی نو وہ اوس کو مستبعد سمجھتا گا، بیان نک کہ ان چیزون کو دیکھتے ہیں، بیان وہ ہے، کہ شاہ ملکون کے لوگ جاہیزے کے زمانہ سے کھجور اور زینی کے درختنے کے سرسبز رہنے پر تتعجب کرنا ہے، کیونکہ انسوں نے اونہ ملکون میں ایسے درخت نہیں دیکھے ہیں。

* بعض چیزوں خیر منظم جوہر میں صرف اتفاق سے بیدا سمجھتے ہیں، اس لئے جب اس اتفاق کا دور گذر جاتا ہے، تو صرف اون کی روایتین باقی رجحانہ ہیں اس لئے اگر روایت میں صحت کے شرائط موجود ہیں،
اور اس سے پہلے وہ چیزین ممکن تھیں، تو اوس کے قبول کرنے سے چارہ نہیں، گو اوس کی کیفیت اور علت نہ معلوم هو ۔

اسے طرح بعض چیزین نظرت کی غلطی سے پیدا ہو جاگئی ہیں، کیونکہ اونکے نوع کا جو نظم کہ اوس سے نکل جاتی ہیں، جیسا کہ بہت سے حیوانات میں زائد اعضا پانے والا جانے ہیں ۔

اس کے بعد اس قسم کی بہت سی مثالیں دیکھ کر لکھتا ہے یہ

اس قسم کی تمام چیزون کے متعلق مین یے خصوصی کتابیں لکھی ہیں، جو اون لوگون کے نزدیک مقبول نہیں ہیں، جنھوں نے ان کو نہیں دیکھا ہے، کیونکہ اون نہیں روایت کی صحت کے شرائط نہیں پانے ہوئے ۔

فرغانہ اور یہانے مین اس قدر طویل عمر میں هو عہق ہیں، جو ان کے علاوہ دوسرے شهر میں نہیں ہوئے یہ، اسے طرح عرب اور هند کی عمر میں بھی اون سے زیادہ هوے ہیں ۔

نباتات مین بھی یے بات نما یاں طرور بر نظر آتی ہے، بعض نباتات کی نوعین دیر تک قائم رہتی ہیں، اور بعض جلد فتا ہو جاتی ہیں، اس لیے ان لوگون نے اقوال نہیں سے جو استدلال کیا ہے، وہ باطل ہے ۔

ابو عبد الله الحسن بن ابراهیم الطبری الکائی کا ایک رسالہ مین یے عمر طبیعی کی مقدار پر دیکھا جس مین اوس نے یہ بیان کیا ہے، کہ اوس کی انتہا ایک سو جالیس شمیس ہے، اس بر زیادت نامیکن ہے، لیکن کہیا نامیکن کمہدین ے پر ابیسی دلیل کی ضرورت ہے، جس ے دل کو اطمینان ہو ۔

رھی اجسام کی ضخامت تو گو ہو ضروری نہیں، کیونکہ اس وقت اوس کا مشاهده نہیں کیا جاتا، اور جس زمانہ کی نسبت یہ بیان کیا جاتا ہے، وہ بہت دور نکل چکا ہے، تاہم وہ حال نہیں ہے ۔
لا يوجد نص يمكن قراءته بشكل طبيعي من الصورة المقدمة.
اور اس ہے آثار الباقيہ مین قدم قوسون کے تمورن وبھی کہ نہاہت تفصیل سے ذکر کیا ھے، اور ان کے مذہبی پیشواوں کا حال لکھنا ھے، ایک خاص فصل مین متنیسین یعنی جملہ پیغمبر کا حال لکھنا ھے، اور اس سلسلا مین مقنع کی نسبت لکھتا ھے:

ماوراء الہ مین اوس کے پیرو ہیں جو اختینے طور پر اوس گے دین پر ھیں؛

لیکن اپنے وکس کو مسلمان ظاہر کرے ہیں، اوس کے حالات کا خیال ہے میں

فارسی سے عربی مین ترجمہ کیا، اور میری کتاب اخبار الھیشہ و القرائے میں یہ حالات تفصیل سے مذکور ھیں(1) *

اصل یہ ہے کہ قدم قوسون اور مختلف فرقون کے مذہبی خیالات اور عقائد و رسول مین ماتے کے علم کلام کا ایک ضروری جزو تھی، اور اون سے یہ معلوم ہوسکتا تھا کہ ایک قوم یا ایک فرقہ دوسری قوم یا فرقہ یا کس قدر مہاتر ھوا ہے، اور ان خیالات اور عقائد و رسول مین بعد کے زمانہ مین کیا کیا تعدد پیدا ہوئے ہے، میل و نخل کی کتابوں مین مختلف قوسون اور مختلف فرقون کے جو خیالات اور عقائد و رسول ہیں، اون کا بھی مقصد ھے، یہروں کے دور سے پہلے اگرچہ عیسائیون، یہودیون اور پارسیون کے عقائد و رسول برہت کچھ کہ لکھا جاجکا تھا، اور خود ہیریوں ں آثار الباقيہ اور اپنے دوسرے کتابوں مین ان برہت کچھہ لکھا ھے، تاہم هندوستان کے باشنوں بر کسی ں اس حیثت سے گھے نہیں ذال نئی، عباسي دور مین اگرچہ پہت سی سنگرکت کی کتابوں کے ترجمہ مہینے تھی، اور برہت سے هندو پذہت، اور وید اور هندو فلاسفر دربار خلافت مین پہچ چکے تھے، تاہم جن کتابوں کے ترجمہ مہینے تھی، وہ زیادہ تر طب، رضی، نجوم اور فلسفة سے تعقیل رکھتی تھیں، جن سے هندوؤں کے مذہبی خیالات عقائد و رسول اور طرز معاشرت کا پہہ نہیں، چت سکتا تھا، اور مسلمان بھی اگرچہ شوق علم مین مین هندوستان آگرچہ تھی، لیکن اپنے سے بھی اس حیثت سے هندوستان کا مطالعہ نہیں کیا تھا، یہروں پہلا شخص ھے، جس سے اس غرض سے هندوستان کا سفر کیا اور میرے تذکرہ نویسون کا

(1) آثار الباقيہ صفحہ 211
بیان ہے کہ اوس نے جالیس سال تک هندوستان کی سیاحت کی، یہ مدت اگرچہ
غیر قطعی اور مبادله عالمی ہے، تاہم اس میں شہبہ نہیں، کہ وہ سنتے ہیں میں
محمود غزنوی کے ساتھیوں آیا، اور غزنوی نے اس سنتے ہیں میں وفات پائے،
اس لیے اوس نے اپنی عمر کا کافی حصہ هندوستان میں بس رکا اور پنجاب اور سندھ کے
سیرت کرکے هندوستان کا بچھم خود مشاہدہ کیا، سننکرت زبان سیکھی، اور
ہندوؤں کے علوم و فنون، عقائد و رسوم اور معافیت و اخلاق پر کتابہت کے
نام ینہی ایک ایسی کتاب لکھی جس کی تفسیر اب تک موجود نہ تھی
اوس کو اس راه میں جو مشکلات پیش آئیں، اون کو سب سے پہلے اوس نے

لکھا ہے:

(1) ایک تو زبان سننکرت کی مشکلات تھیں، جنہوں نے اوس کو
فارسی اور عربی سے بیگانہ کردیا تھا، اور اس کا سیکھنا دوسرون کے لئے
سخت مشکل تھا *

(2) دوسرے اون کی عمیق کتابی زبانوں مرحوم تھی اور نظم کے تکلفات سے
اون کے معانی و مطالب کا معلوم کرنا آسان نام کام نہ تھا *

(3) تیسرے مذہبی اور قومی بیگانگی کہ اینے سوا دوسرے قوہون کو ملچہ ہے
یعنی جنس سمجھتے تھے، کہ اون کے ساتھی ائہ ائہا بیہا، کہا نا بالکل نامنکن تھا *

(4) چوتھے یہ کہ وہ رسوم و عادات میں مسلاون سے بالکل مختلف تھے،
یہانے کہ مسلاون کی وضع و قطع سے اینے بہتر کو ذرائع تھی، اور ان کو شیطان
سمجھتے تھے *

(5) پانچویں محمد بن قاسم کے زمانہ میں محمود غزنوی کے زمانہ نک چکی
فتوحات نے جن کی وجہ سے اون کا تمام علمی اور قومی شیرازہ پر اگندہ ہوگیا تھا؛
ان کو مسلاون کا اور بھی زیادہ دشمن بنادیا تھا *

ییکانی کے ان اسباب کے علاوہ هندوؤں کا خیال تھا، کہ دنیا میں هندوستان کے
سوا نے کونی اور ملک نے نہ هندوؤں کے سوا اور کوئی قوم نہیں، نہ هندوؤں کے سوا
اور کوئی بادشاہ ہے، اور نہ هندوؤں کے سوا کسی اور قوم کے پاس علم ہے،
یہانتک کہ خراسان اور فارس کے علم یا کسی عالم کا ذکر، اون ہے کیا جانتا تھا،
تو وہ اس کی تصمیق نہیں کریں تھے، بلکہ اوس کو جھلاؤ تھے، بیرون اگرچہ اون کو پہلے نہیں کہا اس وقت، اور ان کے سامنے دلائل بیان کریں شروع کیئے، تو وہ اوس ہے تعجب کے ساتھہ استفادة کریں لگے، اور پوجھے لگے، کہ هندوستان کے کس عالم ہے ے تم نے یہ باتن سیکھے ہیں،
پیرونی اون کو حقارت ہے دیکھنے تھا، تو وہ اوس کو جادوگر سمجھے تھے، اور اب ائیر اکابر کے پاس اوس کو اپنی زبان میں جبر زخائر کہتے تھے *

گریمہ ورون مو طبقہ ہیں، خاص و عام، اور دونوں کے عقائد و خیالات اور
اعالی مختلف تھے، جسакے عیسائیت کے ظهور ہے پبلی یونانیوں کا بھی یہ حال تھا،
لیکن بعد کو چو یونانی حکاک بیدا ہوئی انہوں نے یونانی عقائد، یونانی رسوم اور
یونانی علوم کو عوام کے خیالات سے پاک کردیا، لیکن هندوؤں میں اس قسم کے
حکاک نہیں بیدا ہوئی، اس لئے هندوؤں کے عقائد و خیالات میں اہم و خرافات کی
بہت زیادہ آمیزش ہوگئی، اور بیرونی نے ایمانداری کے ساتھہ ان کا بہت تنگی کے
نقل کردیا، تاہم اوس نے چو کچھ ہی لکھا ہے، اوس نے خواص کا نقصان نہیں بھی

معلوم ہوتجاتا ہی

مثلاً خداوند تعالی کی ذات کے متعلق ہیں تو اوس نے خواص کے عقائد
لکھی ہیں، اس ے بعد لکھتا ہے:*

اگر ہم هندوؤں کے خواص کے طبیعت کو چھوڑکر ہے، اون کے عوام پر نظر دالیں
تو اون کے اقوال مختلف اور بدنا ہوتجاتینگ، جسکے تمام مذہب بلکہ
خود اسلام میں بہی تشبیه وگیرہ پانی جاکر ہے، هندوؤں کے بعض خواص
خدا کو نقصان کیئے ہیں، تاہم اسجاس کے اوصاف ے اوس ے بروی کریں،
اس کے بعد عوام کو یہ معلوم ہوا نے انبہون ے خیال کیا کہ چھوٹا ہوئنا
خدا ي ك عظمة بى دلالت كرتا مم، اس لى انبى مم يه عقيدة قائم كرلدا

كه و 2، انگل لبا اور دس انگل جوزا مه *

يا يه كه جيساكه مم نز بيانكاي مه، كه خدا مه جي بمحيط مه،
اويس يه كوى جيچ مه ننشين سكتي، اس يه عوام نز يه عقيدة قائم كرلدا،
كه احاله، ديکهنزي يه هوتا مه، اور ديکهنای آيکه مه، اور دونون
آنگيکن انده بن نش افضل هين اسلامي انبى مم نم خدا كي له ايک هزار
آنگيکن تسليم كرليين، جسن نه كمال علم مداد مه، اس قسم كي خرافات
اون كي بيان موجود هين، بالخصوص اون طبقات مين جو علم نه حاصل

كريسكي (1) *

بيورني صرف هندوؤن هي ك عقائد و خيالات كي نقل كرنه بر اكعنا نهين
كرتانا، بلكه دوسره مذاهب كي عقائد و خيالات بهي نقل كرنا مه، جسن نه نيابت
مفيد باتين معلوم هوقي هين، مثلا ايک موقع بر لکهنا مه:

ابوعا اور نبوا كي لفظ كي اسلام اجازت نهن ديتا، كيونها ولد اور ابن
عبري زبان مين ايک هي معني مين بوله جاژ هي، اور والد اور ولاد كا
لفظ روابيت كي معني سه منفي مه، ليكن عبري زبان كي علاوه اور زبانون
مين اس كي گنجابش هي، بيان تك كه اون مين باب كي ساته خطاب
كرننا، آفا كي ساته خطاب كرنا كي معني مين آنا مه، اسي لئي عيسائيون
مين جو شخص اب اور ابن نهين بولنا وه اون كي ملت سه نكل جاتا مه،
ابن كا لفظ حضرت عيسى عليه السلام كي متعلق خصوصيت كي معني مين
مستعمل مه، اور وه صرف انها تك محدود نهين بلكه اون كي علاوه
اور لگون بر بئي شامل مه، وه خود ائي تلامذه كي دعاوئن مين
يي سكهان هي، كه كيه "اين ميی باب جو آسان مين" (1) *
برویون ہے اگرچہ كتاب الہند میں صرف هندوؤں کے عقائد و خیالات لکھے
ہیں، تاہم جا بجا ضمنا ایسی باتیں بھی لکھے جاتا ہے، جس سے معلوم ہوتا ہے،
کہ هندو مذہب کا دنیا کا اور مذاہب پر کیا اثر پڑا ہے، جنابہ قدا تنااسک کے متعلق
لکھتا ہے کہ:

مانی ایران شہر ہے جلا وطن کیا گیا، تو هندوستان میں آنا اور هندوؤں سے
تناسک کے مسائل کے انی مذہب میں منتقل کرلیا。(1)

اسی بحث میں دوسرا موقع پر لکھتا ہے:

برویون کہتا ہے کہ ہم کا اور همہ اور بلہا نااٹقھا کا خاصہ ہے اور ہے بات
ظاہر هوچکی ہے کہ ہمیشہ موجود رہی ہے اس لئے ہمیشہ جانے والی
اور بلہا واقع ہوگی، جب ہم بند ہیں اگر ہوگی، تو جانے والی ہوگی
اور جب ہم بند ہیں اگر ہوگی، کیونکہ ہم بند ہیں چاہے ہوئے کی
حالت میں ہو جب عقل میں ہوگی، اس لئے جانے والی ہوگی، اور بند ہے
ملتے میں ہو اور نئے اور اوتھا آئی، اس لئے اس کو نسب ہے کہ دنیا سو منہوی
ہوگاجاگا، بعض صورتیہ کا جو ہے ہے کہ دنیا سو منہوی نفس اور
آخت جاگے واقع نفس ہے اور میں ہے بھی مراد ہے، صورتیہ چند مقامات
مثلاً آسان، عرش، اور کرسی میں خدیا ہے حلول کو جائز سمجھئے میں
اور بعض صورتیہ تمام عالم، حیوان، دیسی اور جماد میں حلول کو جائز
خیال کرئے میں اور اس کے تعبیر ظهور کی سے کرئے ہیں، اور جب
ہو اس کو جائز سمجھئے میں تو تناسک کے ذریعہ سے حلول ارواہ میں
اون کے نزدیک کوئی مانعت نہیں(2)

هندوؤں کے اصل عقائد و خیالات میں چیساکه ایک گذرا ہے اور اهوم
و خرافات سپر ہیں، لیکن بہی ہیں ہندوؤں کی اصل کتابوں کو پیش نظر
رکھہ گر اک اوم و خرافات کا پردہ چاک کردیا ہے، چنانچہ دنیا کے نجات حاصل

(1) کتاب الہند منہج (2) ایہا منہج 72
کریکا کے طریقے برہندوؤں کی اصل عقائد و خیالات بر اوس سے نہایت تفصیل سے بھیت کی ہے اور اس کے بعد لکھا ہے:

نظر و تحصیل کے بعد یہ باتین اون کے کلام سے ظاهر هو ہے، لیکن خبر و روایت کے طریقے سے موافق ہے میں کشتی سے خلاف شاہم نواجاتیں ہیں اون کا ذکر دریان کلام میں آگاہیا(1)

آج ہندوؤں کی جو عام مذہبی حالت ہی اوس کو دیکھکر دھرس شخص یہ فیصلہ کریکا کہ ہندوؤں کا اصل مذہب بت پرستی ہے، لیکن بیروئی نے جہان ہندوؤں کے بتون پر بھیت کی ہے، وہان یاف صرف تصرب کر یدیہ ہے کہ یہ ہندوؤں کے عوام کا مذہب ہے خواص اور حقائق صرف توہید کے قائل ہیں چنانچہ لکھتی ہے:

جہانگیار کہ مرفوع وہ باتی بیان کر دیہ، جس کے ہندو معتقل ہیں، اس لیے اس سامانہ میں اون کے خلاف بیان کر دیہ، لیکن ہم یہ بھی بنا ہے سےکہ یہ ہندوؤں کے عوام کا اعتقادات ہے، لیکن جو شخص نیا کے طریقے کے فیصلہ ہے، یہ بھی وہ کلام کے طریقہ کا مطالعہ کرنا ہے اور اوس تحقیق کا طالب ہے جس کا نام اون لوگن نے سارے ہے گا اور بنگا اور کسی کی پرستش سے برے ہے چنانچہ اوس کی مصنوعہ صورت کی پرستش(2)

بیروئی نے ہندوؤں کی سیاحت کے زمانہ میں اسلامی علوم و فنون کی جو اشاعت کی اوس کا پہ اس کتابالہند سے جا پھرچالیا ہے اوس نے اس سلسے میں سب سے پہلی کوچش تو یہ چیز ہے کہ ہندوؤں مسلمانوں کے علوم و فنون سے واقفہ ہوئے اور اس راه میں اوس کو پہلی مشکلات پہنچ آئیں جنانچہ لکھتی ہے:

زیداتر ہندوؤں کے لوغ نظم پر فریفته ہوئے اور تحقیق کے طرف گا اس کا جاننا آسان ہے راغب نہیں اون کی زیداتر کتابوں اشکل کی میں ہیں، چنانچہ میں اشاعت علم کا حیثیت ہوئے اور چھاہا نہوں، کہ یہ جو علوم

(1) کتاب الہند صفحہ 32
(2) ابغاً صفحہ 36
اون کے پہلے نہیں ہوئے، تو اوہ ہمیں خیال کرنا چاہئے کہ
کتاب اور پہلی کتاب تجربہ اور ظالمیت کا املا کرنا چاہئے
تو اس کی وجوہ کی مسیحت میں مبنا ہوگئیا(1)

بہر حال باوجود ان دشواریوں کے، اسی طرح اسی ہندوؤں کو بھی ہندوؤں کے علوم وفنون کی
بیرقیہ نہیں رکھی، بلکہ ہندوؤں کی کتابوں کے بھی عربی میں ترجمے کے
چنانچہ لکھتے ہیں:

اس فن میں بروہمر کی دو چھوٹی بزرگی کتابوں نہیں جس کی تفسیر بہت بہتر ہے
کہ یہ اور ان میں کتاب کا تجربہ میں نہیں عربی میں کیا(2)

اس پر میں بھی روشن کو تمام علوم وفنون میں ہندوؤں کی کتابوں کے
سکون ورنہ اگر اوہ کو اس ان کتابوں کی پہلی اور تجربہ کرنے کا موقع ملتا،
تو اوہ کے دوسرے پہلے ہندوؤں کی جن کتابوں کے تجربہ ہوچکے تھے، اوہ کی
بہت سی غلطیاں ظاہر ہو جاتیں، چنانچہ ایک موقع بر لکھتے ہیں:

ہندوؤں کے اور بھی بہت سے علم ہیں اور پھر کتابوں نہیں، لیکن میں
اون سے واقع ہو ہوسکتا، اور میری خواہش یہ ہے، کہ میں کتاب
پڑھنے کا جو ہچرہ یہاں کليلہ و دمنہ کے نام سے مشہور ہے، تجربہ
کرسکتا اور سب سے پہلے ہندی سے فارسی میں، پھر فارسی سے
عربی میں تجربہ ہوا، اور اسے لوگوں نے تجربہ کیا جن کی تغییر
و تحریف کا خوف ہے، مثالاً عبد اللہ بن متقع نے اس میں برزوزہ کے باب کا
اضافہ کر دیا، تا کہ دوسرے عقیدے میں شک پیدا کر دیدے اور مذہب ہمینہ کی
دعا شدی، کیونکہ اوہ نے جو اضافہ کیا اوس میں وہ تمہر تھا(3)

پیرانون ہر زمانے میں ہندوستان میں آیا ہے، تو تمدنی اور معاشرتی حیثیت کا
ہندوؤں کا دور وحضت و جبهات تھیا، لیکن اوہ نے اس دور کے تمدنی و معاشرتی حالت
(1) 9کتاب اندہ صفحہ 27 (2) ابتدائی صفحہ 59 (3) کتاب اندہ صفحہ 62
جو لکھنی ہے، اوس سے هندوؤں کی تنقیض اور سلاسلون کا تفوق ظاہر کرنا مقصود
ہے تھا، بلکہ هندوستان کی تمدنی و معاشرتی زندگی کا صحیح نقصان کیہنچتا مقصود تھا،
جنانیہ هندوؤں کی تمدنی و معاشرتی زندگی کا حال لکھا کہ ایک اخر مین لکھتا ہے:
میں صرف هندوؤں ہی کے دور جاہلیت پر سڑکنے نہیں کرتا، عرب مین بہت
اس قسم کی براہیان موجود تھیں، لیکن اسلام نہ اون کو مثاثا،
جسیکہ هندوستان کی أكثر باتون کو اون لوگوں نے مثاثا جنہوں نے
یہاں اسلام قبول کیتا بن* یہ حال اگرچہ اس کتاب میں اوس نے زیادہ تر ریاضی اور هیات کے مسائل پر
بحث کی ہے، تاہم پہلے سی فصلوں مین هندوؤں کے مذہبی عقائد و اعمال میں نہایت
tفصیل سے لکھی ہیں، اور اس سے هندو مذہب کی تاریخ پر کاف روشنی پوری ہے

(1) ابتدأ صفحہ 10.
ALBERUNI AS A THINKER*

By

ARTHUR UPHAM POPE

Alberuni must rank high in any list of the world’s great scholars. No history of mathematics, astronomy, geography, anthropology, or history of religion is complete without acknowledgment of his immense contribution. One of the outstanding minds of all time, distinguished to a remarkable degree by the essential qualities which have made possible both science and social studies, Alberuni is a demonstration of the universality and timelessness of a great mind. One could compile a long series of quotations from Alberuni written a thousand years ago that anticipate supposedly modern intellectual attitudes and methods.

A satisfactory appraisal of his work as an historian of Indian myth, religion, the natural sciences, and social forms of the period can only be done by specialists; but the man’s character, and the quality of his mind all can appreciate and profit by.

The range of his learning was prodigious, particularly for an age when there was no mass publication of books, no scientific journals, no rapid distribution of the knowledge that was available. A persistent and omnivorous curiosity, thoroughness, industry, systematic planning, and the open mind garnered for his intellectual treasury about all that could be learned in his day. He was familiar with Greek science and philosophy (he quotes Plato twenty-three times); was deeply grounded in Arabic history and science; knew and could use, with both piety and effectiveness the Koran and its commentaries.

As historian Alberuni was pre-eminent. Any good historian needs to be soundly grounded in geography. Alberuni understood this, and his geographical reports are first class. Whether discussing location, direction, distances, coastal configuration, river courses, or rainfall, he was comprehensive, systematic and precise, his terms clearly defined, and as usual the facts made contributions to fuller understanding of the human factors. His description of how a vapor-charged cloud is condensed by contact with a steep mountain slope is perfectly correct and represents an extension beyond factual description to understanding.

While Alberuni faithfully holds to facts and is specific and careful in his descriptions, he always understands that both history

* The page references are to Edward Sachau’s Alberuni’s India.
and science have to go beyond fact and that understanding does not emerge from an inventory but from interpretation that is only possible by general principles. Moreover, he must use other techniques than the mere recital of fact. He shows a real interest in the meaning and derivation of words where they can throw light on any problem. He understood that history was far more than a series of events and that any true history had to be history of ideas and institutions. Accordingly, he must give detailed and penetrating accounts of religion in India, and any account of Indian religions without an understanding of the philosophies involved would have been hopelessly superficial. Alberuni had to understand what he was writing about. He had to be a philosopher in order to write the history of philosophy; and his definition of problems, his comments on their solutions show that in this field alone he was one of the great minds of the time.

Politically and economically a large area of the world had been becoming one under the expansion of Islam, a unity which with immense effort, observation, judgment was being systematically recorded by the great Arab geographers. But Alberuni's report on India is more comprehensive, systematic, and specialized than any preceding report on a foreign land, not except the great records of the early Chinese Buddhist pilgrims Huan Tsang and Fa Hsien.

There was more than mere curiosity in this work. Alberuni is consciously building up the possibility of understanding, communication, and co-operation with a sharply contrasting civilization. He claims to have provided sufficient information 'for anyone who wants to converse with the Hindus and to discuss with them questions of religion, science or literature,' then he adds significantly—'on the basis of their own civilization' (II, 246). In short, he saw clearly that cultural interchange was something far more than mere information or external description.

Alberuni exemplified all the essential qualities of a great scientist in the broadest sense; notably a burning curiosity which was disciplined and sustained; a love of truth that was sovereign in all his thinking: 'We ask God to pardon us for every statement of ours which is not true' (II, 246); and unusual specificity—his reports like his thinking are pointed and definite; but there are other scientific requirements which we are apt to think more modern than they are: a healthy scepticism ready always to test all assertions, a resolute effort at objectivity, a refusal to be beguiled by plausibility or romantic charm unless supported by proof. Concerning some rather tall stories about charms for snake bites he says, 'I for my part do not know what to say about these things, as I do not believe them' (I, 194). Nonetheless he felt it necessary to set down accurately and faithfully even the most fantastic tales and the
most peculiar customs. Yet, so strong is his faith in reason and his repugnance to the incoherent, capricious, or merely peculiar, that he resolutely looks for some natural explanation that will relate the isolated phenomena to a more inclusive set of facts and principles. Like a true scientist, Alberuni insists on the necessity of observation and experiment and is scornful of those who uncritically merely repeat tradition.

He is as free as any ancient writer could be from the taint of propaganda or proselytizing, exemplifying that faith in fact and reason which are the presumptions of all good scholarship. Many of the things that he had to report seemed to him absurd, and not a few he found socially and religiously offensive, but he includes them in his account with obvious efforts to be fair and accurate.

He does not wholly escape, as does no one, intolerance, and sometimes his scorn is unjustifiable and occasionally his religious convictions and resultant partisanship get the better of him. Referring to Mani and Manichaeism, he asserts that 'all their beautiful books were intended for deliberate deception' (I, 264), and this is more than a little extravagant; but here, as in other comparable passages, Alberuni is protesting against sectarianism. He believed that the Koran was, in all essentials, 'in perfect harmony with other religious codes' (a view to which he was committed by his conviction of the universal validity of reason), and he was convinced that the purity of Islamic doctrine had been corrupted, both within and without, by ignorant, selfish and ambitious men.

This is one of the earliest statements of belief in the essential unity of all religions, in their major precepts. If religious partisanship is persisted in, he believes that 'we may easily decline from the straight path of honor and duty' (Vol. I, p. 264).

This confidence that knowledge is one, and that with patience and care agreement can be reached, a point of view that is frequently affirmed and also implied throughout Alberuni's work, is a postulate that is fundamental to modern science. In Alberuni's scholarship it is both the ground and a consequence of his skilful use of the comparative method. He constantly expounds Greek views, and adds: 'It is precisely the same with the Hindus'. And to such comparisons he often adds views of Persians, Jews and Arabs. Or again, he finds the doctrine of Patanjali comparable to Sufi doctrines, with which it proves to be in complete accord. He checks one account against another, stating them both fairly. In all his social studies particularly Alberuni uses the comparative method with great effect, thus overcoming the bewilderment that the more curious customs seen by themselves engender. In comparing the marriage customs of the Hindus, he compares not merely various Hindu communities, but the customs of the Arabs, Persians and Tibetans (I, 109).
In all his reports of Hindu doctrine, Alberuni is conscientious about his sources and honest in his appraisal of their, or his own, deficiencies. He has occasion to state Buddhist views on subjects like Mount Meru, but he frankly says, ‘I have never found a Buddhist book and never known a Buddhist from whom I might have learned their theories on this subject. All I relate of them I can only relate on the authority of Aleranshari though according to my mind his report has no claim to scientific exactness nor is it the report of a man who has scientific knowledge on the subject’ (I, 249).

He is equally frank about difficulties due to translation, or to confusion in the views that he is discussing. Thus he says of a remark of Brahma Gupta on Mount Meru: ‘I for my part have no means of arranging this erroneous sentence in a reasonable shape’ (II, 83). And again referring to Brahma Gupta’s work he says: ‘There seems to be some confusion in this chapter perhaps by the fault of the translator’ (I, 277). Similarly in his effort to be clearly understood, he states: ‘In case, however, one word or other in our translation should be used in a meaning different from that which it generally has in our sciences, we ask the reader to consider only the original meaning of the word (not the technical one), for this one is meant’ (I, 260).

Alberuni, in accord with modern philosophical and mathematical procedure tests the truth of assertions by first developing their implications, then testing these implications for consistency and reasonableness.

Concerning the revolution of the earth round the sun he says: ‘This one is more difficult to solve’, and with a confidence which a scientist often shows when he is sure that he has hold of something solid, he adds that the question has been deeply studied by both modern and ancient astronomers and remarks: ‘We, too, have composed a book on the subject, called “Key of Astronomy,” in which we think we have surpassed our predecessors, if not in the words, at all events in the matter’ (I, 277).

Like any good modern scientist, he is scornful of pseudo-science, and particularly contemptuous of any who, like some of the Hindu princes of his day, were, in their greed for gold, spending a lot of effort on a kind of alchemy from which they hoped to acquire limitless riches. Alberuni adds: ‘If this precious science of Rasayana were banished to the utmost limits of the world, where it is unattainable to anybody, it would be the best’ (I, 193). ‘Alchemy is a make-believe science’ (I, 188), motivated simply by ‘excessive eagerness for acquiring fortune and for avoiding misfortune.’ But he also says: ‘No nation is entirely free from it’ and ‘many intelligent people are entirely given to alchemy’ (I, 188). It was seven hundred years after these shrewd remarks before Europe gave up its pursuit of alchemy.
The conception of science underlying all his work is sound and again astonishingly modern. He assumes the reign of law and uniformity, and that all judgment of magnitude, position and movement are subject to the authority of mathematical analysis.

He is aware of the compromises that result from the contrast and conflict between scientific knowledge and popular opinion and the danger of pressure from popular opinion, particularly of religion on science. '... the astronomers require them by accepting their popular notions as truth, by conforming themselves to them, however far from truth most of them may be, and by presenting them with such spiritual stuff as they stand in need of. This is the reason why the two theories, the vulgar and the scientific, have become intermingled in the course of time, why the doctrines of the astronomers have become disturbed and confused. ...' (I, 265).

If we knew less about the Islamic world at this period, we would be inclined to see in Alberuni's character and achievement a conspicuous confirmation of the 'great man theory': that it is the exceptional man endowed with uncommon intelligence and powerful and persistent will who impresses himself on his time and deflects the course of affairs. But every genuinely great scholar has struck deep and nourishing roots into the past; and his greatness often consists in the selectivity and comprehensiveness with which he has focused and integrated in his own personality the achievements and creative tendencies of his own age. In the ninth and tenth centuries (A.D.) in Islam, a great page was written in the history of civilization. The Persian contribution was particularly brilliant. Al Razi, Rudagi, Firdausi, Kabus ibn Washimgir, Avicenna, and a host of productive and provocative minds, of which we know too little, all came out of the same background as Alberuni. They all had important traits in common.

According to the Traditions, the Prophet said: 'Seek ye knowledge even to China'; and the intellectual zest of Iran was a parent of much fervent and true thought. It was this cultural ambience that nourished and sustained Alberuni; and the crucial character of the time gave him fortunate opportunities for his great talents to operate effectively.

He was of his time; yet nonetheless a supremely great individual. His humor, his courage, his enterprise, his objectivity, his honesty, his prodigious industry, and his technical intellectual skills were nothing that happened automatically. They were Alberuni himself.
AL-BİRŬṆĪ AND ORIENTALISTICS

By

PROF. DR. J. C. TAVADIA, B.A. (Hons.), Ph.D. (Hamburg),
Santiniketan

Al-āthār’l-bāqiya and Ta’rikh’-l-Hind show al-Biruni as a worker in the field of orientalistics in the modern sense. In preparing them he was not actuated by any personal motives, but solely by the desire for knowledge about peoples of various countries and religions different from his own, and that out of pure intellectual curiosity of finding out the truth, be it pleasant or not.

Al-āthār’l-bāqiya contains a mass of useful and even unique information about Iranian antiquities, for instance, about religious customs amongst Zoroastrian communities in different provinces like Sughd and Khwarizm. The local names of months, festivals, etc., give us also some insight into the characteristic traits of their dialects, thus helping us to identify the middle Sogdian texts in the manuscripts discovered from Turfan and Khwarizmi noticed elsewhere. When Sachau prepared the text and translation of Al-āthār, the MSS. at his disposal were defective, but now the complete ones have been brought to light. This new material requires to be worked out and also the old one is not quite exhausted. But as the work is not accessible to me I cannot give any examples to the point.

Ta’rikh’l-Hind has got another type of interest for us. A detailed commentary on the facts about Indian antiquities recorded in this work would not be superfluous. By way of illustration I may dwell upon a few details.

While speaking of the Ṛgveda al-Biruni remarks:

P. 128: . . . ‘It treats of the sacrifices to the fire, and is recited in three different ways. First, in a uniform manner of reading, just as every other book is read. Secondly, in such a way that a pause is made after every single word. Thirdly, in a method which is the most meritorious and for which plenty of reward in heaven is promised. First you read a short passage, each word of which is distinctly pronounced; then you repeat it together with a part of that which has not yet been recited. Next you recite the added portion alone, and then you repeat it together with the next part of that which has not yet been recited, etc. Continuing to do so till the end, you will have read the whole text twice.’
The first statement, now, can be said to refer to the fact that all the so-called Family Books (2-7) as well as the first one open with the hymns to Agni or fire. Of course, we cannot say whether the above conclusion was drawn by al-Birûnî from the reports given to him by some native scholar or the same was presented to him by the latter. The same doubt remains as regards the account about the recitation. Al-Birûnî may have actually heard and observed the recital, or may have read about it in some works, or may have received oral information. In any case, the first two modes of recital are clear. They refer to the Samhitâ-pâtha and Pada-pâtha respectively. The third is not quite properly represented, but it certainly refers to the Krama-pâtha in which the words are recited ab, bc, cd, and so forth. Instead of individual words, al-Birûnî speaks of ‘short passages’. This is of course a slight oversight or misunderstanding. But why and where this mode of recital is said to be meritorious, I do not know—as to why, perhaps because it is so difficult and complicated. In a recent article on the subject there is nothing about this meritoriousness, as a matter of fact nothing new about the whole subject of recitation itself, with the exception of the interesting notice about the feats of a modern Pandit, who has all the three modes of recitation by heart and also various other details about the Rgveda. (Annals, Bhandarkar Or. Res. Institute. 28, 140.)

The story given by al-Birûnî about the reason why the Rgveda cannot be recited as a text connected by the rules of Samdhî, refers, I believe, to the Pada-pâtha, but its source is unknown to me. The legend in Visnu Purâna 3.5 varies in various respects; it is about learning the Yajur-Veda, for instance. Other details are not so remarkable, and even the above ones may be considered puerile and not worth attention; yet I think they have some value as to how Indian antiquarian details were presented to al-Birûnî or how he grasped them. They may also point to a different tradition of a matter or a different version of a story. Hence by way of example I may refer to the ambiguous answer given by Yudhiṣṭhira, his only departure from truth, which has even resulted in proverbial sayings. In al-Birûnî’s version of the story, the answer is said to be ‘Aśvatthâman, the elephant, has died’; but it is added, Yudhiṣṭhira ‘had made a pause between Aśvatthâman and the elephant, by which he had led Droṇa to believe that he meant his son’. In the Mahâbhârata (Drona-Parva 191-57), however, we are told that the word elephant (kuṇjara) was added indistinctly (avyaktam). Is it possible that the difference has arisen from the fact that some languages have one and the same word for ‘low’ (soft, not loud) in tone and ‘slow’ in time? I remember how an oriental mixed up ‘leise’ and ‘langsam’ in German quite promiscuously or rather preferring the latter. Of course, one must consult the original Arabic for such minute details and points
of niceties. The event or anecdote is referred to in various other places; hence varying versions are not out of the question either. In Gujarat, for instance, even the phrase naro vā kuñjaro vā ‘either the man or the elephant’ is attributed (mark that nar is declined thematically).

Then there occur also notices on beliefs and customs of other peoples. These are referred to by al-Bīrūnī for the sake of comparison and elucidation just as a modern scholar does. Sachau has prepared a separate Index to them, and so one can study any or a particular group of them. For the present a few remarks will suffice.

Page 21: The statement ‘There are some Magians up to the present time in India, where they are called Maga’ seems to me out of place. Before and after it al-Bīrūnī speaks of Buddhists and Hindus, and I think the statement ought to refer to the Buddhists. Moreover, Magas were, strictly speaking, not Magians or orthodox Zoroastrians, but a sun-worshipping tribe of Iranian extraction with some Iranian customs. If, however, al-Bīrūnī does mean Magians or Zoroastrians, then he must be referring to some Parsi colonies in Sindh and the Punjab like that at Uch, about which see my article ‘Zur Pflege des iranischen Schrifttums im Mittelalter’, ZDMG 98, pp. 294 ff., especially pp. 309 ff.—Parsen-Kolonie in Uc, Sind-Punjab.

Page 54 f.: The remarks about body and soul from Mani’s Book of Mysteries are very interesting. I hope to return to them in my study on the Manichean fragment S 9.

Page 100: The four classes of Iranian Society are based upon the actual state under the Sasanids; hence they resemble the accounts in other historical works and not that in the religious literature of the Parsis which mechanically repeats the more ancient state of affairs.

Page 109: Details about ‘a man’s being married as the substitute for another man’ will clear up some of our false notions about marriages among ancient Iranians.

Page 158: While giving the title Sārāvalī, of a Hindu work on astrology, al-Bīrūnī adds ‘similar to Vazadaj’ which Sachau equates with ‘Persian guzīda?’, thus with a mark of interrogation or doubt. But the term is really Persian—vizīdag representing the later Middle Persian pronunciation vizīdag, the earlier one would be vičīlak ‘selected, selection’. This should be the meaning of the Arabic explanation which Sachau has rendered with ‘chosen one’. The Sanskrit title, which is very common, is made up of sāra’ essence, substance’, and āvalī ‘row, series, etc.’ The comparison by al-Bīrūnī is really remarkable. It suggests that he must have met with a considerable number of older Persian books bearing that Middle Persian title. Here is another proof of the existence of a
vast secular and even scientific literature in pre-Islamic Persia. Very probably it was more or less extant up to the days of al-Bīrūnī and even a little later. The adoption of Arabic as the language of science and literature caused its gradual decay, which decay was crowned very probably by the coup d'état delivered by the Mongol invasion. Barthold may well try to remove the charge of ruthless destruction against the Mongols, so vehemently and eloquently laid by Browne, as far as the Islamic science and letters are concerned; but I believe there is still enough truth in that charge. Zoroastrians too failed to preserve their entire religious literature only after this epoch. For we know for certain that even up to the tenth century a considerable part of it was extant, and selections and summaries were prepared from it. To return to the point of our departure I may add that one such work bears the same title as referred to by al-Bīrūnī. It is the well-known Vieštakihä i Zātspram.

Page 260: The remarks about confusing two countries under the name of the land of five or seven rivers deserves further investigation.

Lastly I may refer to one point from the second volume, p. 167: The bodies of the dead are said to be exposed to the wind. Is there any connection with the wind God, Vayu, who once played the rôle of the chief God and is still known as the God of death?

It goes without saying that this varied and various mass of details referred to by al-Bīrūnī cannot be satisfactorily dealt with by a single individual, however learned and well read he may be. Sachau no doubt has achieved a masterpiece, yet not only the obscurity and difficulty of Arabic may well necessitate a new attempt, but also the commentary should be revised and enlarged. This task should be undertaken with all due care and co-operation at least of a Sanskritist or rather Sanskritists, for al-Bīrūnī traverses a vast field of some 80 subjects.

There is another task which equally deserves to be undertaken. A critical edition of the author's Tashīm in Persian will provide us a good specimen of early prose in this language.

A few words on the name of this remarkable and almost unique scholar and I have done with these ramble notes and stray thoughts upon him. The full name is Abū Raiḥān al-Bīrūnī. Bīrūnī is a Persian word meaning 'of or belonging to the outside (bīrūn), in this case the outside or outskirts of the city Khiva. Sachau writes Berūnī in accordance with the older pronunciation of be 'out'; but then one must be consequent and adopt also rōn 'side', as some have actually done (cf. also Master Aliboron used in the West). It is under this name or so to say surname that this renowned scholar of ancient times is known to us moderns. Formerly among his compatriots he was generally referred to as Abū Raiḥān. If I am right in my conjecture the great romantic poet Nizāmī refers to our
scholar as well as to the literal meaning of the term *raiḥān* in his Haft Paikar, in the story of the Russian Princess. I cannot cite the exact verse, as neither this work nor my article on it in Or. Lit. Zeitung is accessible here. My conjecture was based upon the variants given in the edition by Ritter and Rypka.
INDEX

The following Index is not exhaustive but suggestive only of the subject matter found in the volume. The text of the numerous quotations has not been surveyed. The titles of books, when given, are in italics. The spelling or transliteration used by the authors of the articles have generally been retained. The capital letter M. stands for Muhammad, and the letter b. for ibn. The Persian and Urdu papers (pp. 237-270) are covered by a separate Index in Persian script.

A
'Abd al-Karīm b. Abīl-'Awjā, 151
'Abdul Ali Bīrjandi, 30
'Abdur-Rahmān, 175
Abūl-'Abbās al-Transhalīrī, 126 ff., 130, 140, 199, 202
Abūl-Fażl, 28
Abūl-Fīādī, 30
Abūl-Husain al-Ṣāḥī, 188
Abū Ḥāṣa al-Warrāq, 153
Abūl-Maʿālī, 120
Abūl-Wafā M. b. M. al Būzjānī, 48, 163
Abū Muhmūd Ḥanūb b. al-Khīzir al-Kūhāndī, 48
Abū Maʿṣhar (Al-Bumaser), 126, 133
Abū Naṣr Mansūr b. 'All b. 'Irāq, 48
Abū Naṣr b. Miṣḥān, 235
Abū Sāḥl of Tīfīs, 126
Abū Yūʿūb as-Sijistānī, 126
Achemenides, 219
Ach, 220
Ādītiya, 111
'Adul al-Dawla, 188
Advaita School, Foundation of, 199; Nature of God, 120
Agathodaimon, 156
 Ağn (Fīre), 288
Ahānkāra, 145
Ahīl al-Haqiqah, 210
Ahmad b. M. b. Kathir, 30
Ahmet Zeki Valide, 190
Ahriman, 149
Ahwāz, 186
'Ain-i-Akbari (Abūl-Fażl), 28
Akbar, 67
Al-Arifī, 190
Al-Ash'ārī, 125
Al-Baṭṭanī, 2, 162, 188, 190 f.
Al-Bīrūnī, Beruni:
Attitude towards Hinduism, 68
Appraisement of, 71
Biographical Notes: 171 f., 251 f.
Character, 84
Christian Scriptures, 148
Indian Culture, 94
Knowledge of Buddhism, 147
Languages, 85
Millenary, 83
Nisba, 196
Sanskrit scholarship, 86
Scholar, 84
Source of his Puranas text, 113
Study of literature, 77
Al-Bumaser (Abu Ma‘ṣhar), 126, 133
Alchimie indienne, 101, 102
Alexander the Great (Alesandro), 87, 149, 223
Al-Farābī, 109 f.
Al-Farghānī, 30
Al-Farabi, 132
Al-Jurjānī, 180
Al-Hallāj, 160
Al-Hāshimi, 189
Al-Haqq, 209
Al-Iskandariya, Longitude, 179; longitudinal difference from Raqqā, 191
Al-Kindī, 157
Al-Khazinī, 175
Al-Khwārizmī, (Khwārizmi), 187 ff., 287
Al-Lāmāsaiyūs (Samaritan way of calling the Torah), 153
Almugest (Ptolemy), 94, 189
Al-Muqannār, 160
Al-Nadīm, 126
Al-Nawbakhtū, 126
Allāh, in Sanskrit (Avyakta), 98 f., use of the name, 159
Al-Qānūn al-Masʿudī (Al-Biruni), 8, 16, 17, 19, 27, 30, 177, 233 ...
Al-Raqqā, longitudinal difference from al-Iskandariya, 101
Al-Rāzī (Rhazes), 16, 285
Al-Shammasīyā, 187
Al-Shihābī, 160
Al-Taḥīm (Al-Biruni), 34
Al-Yaʾqūbī, 126
Ambarisha, 137
'Amr b. al-ʿĀs, 139
Anjuman-e-Taraqqi-e-Urdu, 3
Antichrist legend, 159
Apabhramsa, 88 f., 91, 93
Apollo, 151
Apollonius, 143
Aratos, 151
Arabs: rôle international, 218
Paganism of, 158
Value of a mile for, 50
Arc of a meridian:
Checking of Al-Biruni’s calculations, 45 f.
Conversion into chord, 182
Length of, 18 f., 50
Measurement by Al-Mamum’s scholars, 23, 28; by Al-Biruni, 41 f.; by others 30 f.
Modern notation, 39 f.
Source of information on measurement, 30 f.
Ardahār, 222
Ārdyāya, 144
Arians, 155
Aristotle, 85, 139, 151
Aryabāhṭa, Āryabhata, 48, 133
Ascertainment of the Earth’s Dimensions by the observation of the Declining Sun from the Peaks of Mountains, An Essay on (Al-Biruni)  
Ashtoreth, 152  
Asoka, 87  
Astronomy, Key to the science of (Al-Biruni), 48  
Astronomic Tables, 185  
Astrolabe, 94, 161, 185  
Atargatis, 156  
Aṭhar al-Bīqṭayā (Al-Biruni), 53, 287  
Ātman, 210  
Āttī conciliāri, 221  
Avesta, 149  
Avicenna (Ibn Sīnā), 185, 217  
Avyakta (unmanifested-Allah), 99, 145  
Avyakta (unmanifested-Allah) Ekham, 98  
Awrengzib, 75  
Azerbaijan, 148  

B  
Baal, 152  
Baalbek, 157  
Bab-al-Abwāb, 199  
Babār, 53, 72; attitude towards Hinduism, 67  
Babylonia, 257  
Bailiounia, 222  
Bactria, 148  
Badauni, Maultana Raghib, 170  
Baghdad, 31, 101  
Difference of longitude with Ghazna, 189  
Distance from Shiraz, 186  
Latitude, 187  
Longitude, 188  
Bāhārī, 140  
Baltram II, 229  
Bailey, II. W., 88  
Balḵ, 190  
Banū Hānīfa, 158  
Kapism, 154  
Barbālism, 223, 224, 226  
Bardišan, 149, 150  
Bardesane, 228  
Bardesanesians, 156  
Barshabāla, 222, 223, 225, Vesovo, 221  
Battra, 228  
Battariana, 221, 228  
Bayaḏīl al-Bīstāmī, 160  
Bayhāq, History of, 235  
Belit, 156  
Benares, 147  
Benjamin, 159  
Bēthlēhēm, 154  
Rdhagavādṛtā, 77, 171, 211 ff.  
Bhūrata, peoples of, 114  
Bhūrā, 93  
Pshishkar āChāryā, 4  
Biographical Dictionary (Ibn Khallikhān), 23  
Bismillah, in Sanskrit (Avyakti name), 97  
Book on the Astrolabe (Al-Biruni), 32 f.  
Brahma, 151, 155  
Brahman, 146, 147  
Brahma Gupta, 4, 48, 133, 284  
Brahmanda, 112  
Braj-ābhākhā, 93  
Bramnūhul, 162  

C  
Caddīsīs I, 228  
Calculus of finite differences, invention, 167  
Calendar, Melkite, Nestorian, 155  
Caliph: 'Umar, 150, Al-Māmūm, 3 f., 11, 40, 126, 185, 187, 192; Al-Mu'āwiya, 137; Al-Hakam, 8; Al-Rākib, 182  
Carra de Vaux, 17, 27  
Casteles (tabaqāt), 60  
Cause, First, 160  
Cave of Treasures, 152  
Chalukya, 87  
Cheikh, Louis, 155  
Chess, 172  
China, 147, 151  
Chorasan, Khorāsān, 147, 234  
Chords (India), 48  
Chorasmia, 83  
Christ, 155  
Christians, 149  
Christianity, Cristianesimo, 153, 222, 225  
Diffusion, 228  
Indo India, 229  
In Yemen, 230  
A Merv, 226  
Christians, Cristiani, 149  
Medelhit, 222  
Chronicles, 152  
Coins, Indian Bilingual, 96, 97  
Comparative Religion and Al-Biruni:  
Among Muslims, 126  
Angels and Spirits, 143  
Cosmology Hindī, 144; others, 139  
Difficulties, 120 ff.  
Force of Sunnah, 137  
Hall Marks, 141  
Idolatry, 136  
Study of, 125, 141  
Theoretical discussions, 136 ff.  
Copernicus, 120  
Cronaca di Sevet, 22, 225, 226  
Ctesifont, 223, 226  
Cubit, see Zīra  
Cult, Hinduism, 147  
Cultura, 61  
Cyrus, 157  

D  
Dadhisho, 221, 225  
Dacca, 144  
Dahm-namah, 105  
Daharihyya, 159  
Dahhak, 149  
Dārāt-ul-Ma'ārif, 173  
Damascus, 157  
Dānomoda, 80  
Dārā Śīkūh, 67  
David, 138
INDEX

Davidice, vescovo di Basra, 229
\textit{De Causis Rerum} (Apollonius), 43
Degree, Length of (Al-Ma'mum), 40
\textit{Desmetony}, 152
Dhāra, 105
Dibon (dīpa, isula), 230
Dicaearchos, 4
Differences fra Mondo indiano e mondo islamico, 73
Dioecletian, 154
Dioscorides, 105
Disordine dell'India, 62
Diu, 230
Dosithheus, 151
Draco, 151
Duperron, Anquetil, 219
Dvipa Sukhādara (Dioscoride), 231

F
Earth: Arc, 19
\textit{Circumference, modern measurements}, 51
Dimensions, 17; according to Sous of Musa, 27
Measurements by the Hindus, 4; the Greeks, 4; the Muslims, 4; Al-Mas'udi, 7; Ibn Yunus, 8; Al-Biruni, 11 f.; 32, 35; expressed in miles and feet, 50
Radius 41; according to Al-Biruni, 52
Rotation, 17; Rotundity, 3
Ecllone, 107
Eclipta, 150
\textit{Elements of Euclid}, 94
Elia, arcivescovo a Merv, 221, 226
Eloah, 150
Enoch, 157
Eriphus, 157
Enos, son of Seth, 157
Eratosthenes, 4
Rtiopia, 230
Eudoxus, 151
Ruscio, 229
\textit{Evolution linguistica}, 61
\textit{Exodus}, 152

G
Pa Hsien, 282
Family Books, 288
\textit{Pārādūn}, 149
\textit{Farsakh, value of}, 187
Pauna, 59
Feast of the Tabernacles, 153
\textit{Fedone}, 110
Filippo, discepolo di Bardesane, 228
Filestorgo, 230, 231
Finch, William, 81
Firdausi, 94, 285
Flora, 59
Frēdūn, 149
Freiman, A, 236
Function, theory of, 168
Furqān, 138

Galen, 140, 151
Galenos, 195
Ganges, 144
Garga, 112
Gavōmarth, 149
\textit{Genesis}, 152
Geodesy, 2, 3, 4
\textit{Georaphia} (Piöreny), 198, 200
\textit{Ghābir} b. Aflāḥ, 169
\textit{Ghayūsuddān} Jamšīd, 40
Ghazna, 83, 86, 185, 196, 197
\textit{Difference of longitude with Baghdad}, 189
Giocolieri, 69
Gioviano, 226
Gnosis sūfica, 74
God, Nature according to Advaita School, 119, 120
\textit{Real existence, 121}; in Hinduism, 143
Graha, 60
Greeks, 145, 146; their religion, 151
Grīvēn, Robert, 155
Guna, 213
Gupta, 87
Gurganj, 196
Gushtasp, 148

H
\textit{Hābāsh}, 30, 31, 40, 51
\textit{Tables}, 16
Hais, 158
Hanukka, 153
Hanumān, 79
\textit{Harivamśa}, 77
Harrān, 157
Harrānians, 156, 157
Harūfiyya, 160
Hashwīyya, 159
\textit{Hells in Viṣṇu Purāṇa}, 112, 145
\textit{Visamsana}, 113; Raurava, 113
\textit{Taptakumbha}, 113
Henning, W., 236
Herbadh, 149
\textit{Hermes, the Book of (Al-Biruni)}, 196
Hermes, 156, 157
Herod, 154
Hijrah, 97
Hindus, 84
Hinduism, 142 f.
\textit{Man, 145}; Society, 146; Scriptures, 146
Hipparchus, 4
Hippocrates, 151
Homer, 151
Huan Tsang, 102, 282
Humain b. Ishāq, 110
\textit{Hurāfāṭ}, 68

I
\textit{Ibn Abī Zakariyya}, 149, 151
\textit{Ibn al-'Amūd}, 200
\textit{Ibn Rabīyā}, 126
\textit{Ibn Ṣaḥḥa}, 53, 56, 61, 70
\textit{Ibn Hazm of Cordova}, 126
\textit{Ibn Khallīkān}, 23, 27
\textit{Ibn Khurradābīh}, 186
\textit{Ibn‘ul-Nādir}, 30
\textit{Ibn-i-Yūnus}, 8, 17, 30, 31, 185, 187, 189
\textit{Ibn-i-Rabbān}, 27
\textit{Ibn Maqaffa}, 151
Išvara, 210
Idolatry, Idolatria, 68
Origin of, 137
Idol, 70
Idris, 157
Idrografia, 58
Ilah, 98
Incantatori, 60
India, 147, et passim
Influence on Babar and Al-Biruni, 74
Indologists, First, 83
Indra, 137
‘Injil, 138
‘Irāq, 147
Irshād al-‘Arab (Yaqub), 234
Irwān, 122
Isaiah, 152
Isdegerde III, 221
Islam, 159
Spread of (Turki Method), 95

J
Jabarites, 159
Jackson, A. V. W., 142
Jacobites, 153, 154
Jahliz of Basra, 126
Jaib (sine), 162
Origin of, 47
Jalā‘ud-Dīn al-Rūmi, 95, 123
Jerusalem, 152
Jesus, 138, 149
Sonship of, 155
Jina (Nabi), 98
Ju‘ayyana Samwati (Hijrat’al-Nabi), 97
Jā‘ana (Gnosis), 73
Job, 152
Jonah, 154
Jones, William, 96
Johannes Grammaticus, 129
John, 154
Joseph of Arimathea, 154
J-S-V., 112
Judaism, 152
Jurjānā, 191, 199

K
Ka‘ba, 140
Kabul b. Washimgir, 285
Kalām, 210
Kali, 112
Kalidas, 77
Kalima, 141; 98; in Sanskrit, 96
Kalkin, 112
Kauishka, 101
Kapila, 85
Karma, 141
Kashti’al-Mahjūb (Al-Sijistāni), 126
Kathwārar, 230
Kayansthas, 219
Khālid, 30
Khanin (Canton), 197
Khiva, 82
Khosrangird, 235
Khurāsān, 147
Khutab, 234
Khwārizmi, Khuwarismians, 157, 189, 287
Khwārizm, Khwārazm, 83, 86, 153, 157, 171, 199
History of Khuwarism (Al-Biruni), 236
Kīrǰel, 112
Kitab as-Sa‘īdana (Al-Biruni), 195
Kitab Batanjal, 210, 213
Kitab’ul-Taḥkim li Sunna’al-Tanjeem (Al-Biruni), 14
Kitab’ul-Zīj al-Kabīr (Ibn Yūnus), 8
Krama-Patha, 288
Krizsa, 113
Kshatriyyas, 146
Kunash (Oraibasios), 196
Kufa, 31
Kufic Arabic script, 90

L
Lacedaemonians, 151
Lalābhaṇa, 113
Langabalus, 80
Lanka, 70; Description of, 80
Latitude of Ghazna, 186; Baghdad, 187
Iskandariya, 170; Shiraz, 188
Determination of, 197
Leggi (Platonic), 107, 110, passim
Leviticus, 152
Light of Muhammad, 96
Longitude of Iskandariya, 170; Ghazna, 179;
Baghdad, 188; Shiraz, 188, 189
Determination of, 177, 192
Luke, 154
Lulū, 69

M
Mābā, 156
Madhyaloka, 145
Māfānū, 107
Magian, 148
Ma‘kma al-Bahrūn (Dārū Šikūh)
Maghrības, 153
Mahābbhūta, 145
Mahābhārata, 77, 146, 288
Mahākavaya Poet, 77
Mahmūd of Ghazna, 34, 39, 85, 94, 171, 185,
234, 235
Māmūn, 171
Manumic tables, 185
Manudecan, 157
Ma‘n b. Zādīa, 151
Mani, 140, 149, 150, 283
Manichel, Manichees, Manichacan, 150, 151,
229
Manichaim, 140, 283
Magūmāt (Abu Naṣr), 235
Magūlā‘al-Islāmīyīn, 125
Marcionites, 156
Marcion, 149
Marga, 99
Marī, 222
Mars, 156
Marvāzi, 192, 233
Mas‘ūd, Sultan, 172
Matsya, 117
Matthew, 154
Meyerhof, Max, 171, 195
Māyā, 210
Mazdak, 149
Meadows of Gold (Al-Mas‘ūdi), 7
Measurement of the Arc: see Arc; of the
Earth: see Earth
Raurava Hell, 113
Raqqia, 31
Ray, Prophulla Chandra, 104
Rasayana (gold making), 284
Razi, 217, 278
Reinaud, 101
Rgveda, 287, 288
Rimoerouge, 54
Ring: aduli, 188; Yamini, 185; Shāhī, 189
Risālah ‘Abi Nasr, 48
Rishis, 144, 146
Romulus, 137
Rudra, 155
Rudhira, 113
Rufagl, 285
Russia, Iljsantium, 234

§
Sabians, 133, 150, 157
Sa’d b. M. Adh-Dhuhil, 139
Sakāhāt, 168 f.
Samaritans, 153
Samarquand, 151
Sambukia, 70
Samuddi, 288
Samhitā, 137, 143
Samhitā-Patha, 288
Samykhya, 135, 160, 214
Sa’ad b. Ali, 30
Saṅkara, 122
Sanskrit, 88
Pronunciation, 80, 96
Quotation by Al-Biruni, textual discrepancies, 113 f.
Scholars in Baghulad, 80
Study of, 86, 87
Transcription by Al-Biruni, 89 f., 93
Translation into Arabic, 87 f., 94
San Tommaso Apostoli, 228
Saporc, 222, 225, 227
Saqabha, 235
Sara, 142
Sarava, Sarabha, 60
Sarkar, 75
Sarton, Dr. George, 1, 121, 217
Sassanide, 219
Saturn, 150
Satyasya Satyam, 120
Sawar, 156
Schefter Ms., 90
Scimmie (monkey), 60
Schoy, C., 177, 178, 185 f., 189
Scriptures, Holy, 138
Seder Olam, 152
Selemis, 157
Seleucia, 212, 223
Septuagint, 154
Sermon on the Mount, 155
Serugh, 137
Setubaulha, 79
Sabhū, 153
Shāhī ring, 189
Shāh Pūrān, 150
Shamaniyya Buddhism, 147, 158
Shapur I, 150

Sharaf’ al-Zamān (Marvazi), 234
Sheng Tsung, Emperor, 234
Shī‘a, 160
Shirin, 22
Shirāz, Latitude, 188
Longitude, 188, 189
Shiraran, 223, 225 f.
Siddhānta, 4
Sine Tables, 165; theory in Al-Qanūn, 49
Sinjar, 30, 40
Smrīti, Books, 77, 146
Socrates, 87, 145, 151
Socrates, 231
Sogdians, 219
Soghdiana, 148
Sogdian texts, 287
Solomon, 152
Solon, 151
Spherical Trigonometry, 162
Stadia (Greek), length of, 5
Study of Literature and Al-Biruni, 77
Sudras, 140
Suﬁs, 145, 160, 283
Sufiyana tariqa, 95
Sughd, 287
Surgīva, 79
Suhf, 138
Susiana, 222
Suter, 217
Svādāka, 145
Synecclus, 133, 157
Symonds of the Church, 156

T
Tahari, 221
Tabernacles, feast of, 153
Tahai’ al-Hayawan (Marvazi), 233
Tahdīd’al-Amākin (Al-Biruni), 34, 190 f., 233 f.
Talimīrah, 157
Tadilīr, 70
Tasliya, 70
Tājikyeta Šamvatī (Jināyana Šamvati), 100
Tājur, 103
Taö, 99
Takwīm al-Buldān (Abu’l-Reda), 30
Tariqa: Sufiyana, 95; Turkana, 85
Tārikh al-Hind (Al-Biruni) passim
Tatakumha Hell, 113
Tetragrammaton, 140, 152
Theoﬁlo I’ Indiano, 230 f.
Thābit’b. Qurra’t-ul-Harrāmi, 30
Tefquoth, 153
Tibet, 151
Timeo, 110, 167
Tirugloka, 145
Tishrin I, sacerdote, primo vescovo di Merv, 225
Toledo, 185
Tolstov, S. P., 156
Tomarso, Patriarcha di Merv, 224
Torah, 138, 152
Translations from Greek and Roman works into Persian, 88
Transfiguration, 156
Trigonometry; Spherical, 162, 170
Plane, 162
Functions, 113
INDEX

Trinity, 154 f.
Transmigration, 141
Turfan, 287
Turkāna, Tariqa, 85
Turki Tribes, 85, 147
Turks, 191, 225

U

‘Ustuwānī, 161
Ulugh Beg, 49

V

Vaiśṇava-Dharmaśāstra, 111
Vaiśṇavism, 143
Vaiṣṭya, 146
Valeriano, 222
Vamiki, 78
Varāhamihira, 80, 85, 143, 171
Vāsudeva Saranā Agrawala, Dr., 100
Vāyu, 111
Veda, 77, 146
Vedhaka, 113
Venus, 156
Vikramaditya, 103
Vijasa, 77
Visasana, 113
Vishnu, Viṣṇu, 111, 155
Viṣṇuvāsa, 112
Viṣṇu-Dharma, 111
Visamasana Hell, 113
Viven-smṛti, 111
Viṣṇu Purāṇa, 111, 112, 288
Vṛddhi, 102 ff.
Vṛddhacārya, 103
Vyaṭka, 145
Vṛṣada, 85, 145

W

Walis, 150
Warang, Waranak (Norsemen) sea of, 234 f.
Wiedeman, 217
Wilkinson, Charles, 86
Winteritz, 101
Wisdom of Daniel, 152
World Mountain, 148

Y

Yahya b. ʿĀdi, 110
Yajur Veda, 288
Yaksha, 144
Yakūb’al-Schri, 164
Yamini Ring, 185
Yamū al-Dawla, 185
Ya’qūb b. Tariq, 132
Yaqtī, 188
Yaṣaṭā, 112
Yoga, 218
Yojana (Indian) length of, 5
Yon Kippur, 153
Yudhisthira, 288
Yunghur, 234

Z

Zubār, 138
Zachariah, 152, 154
Zardušht, 229
Zarqān, 126 f.
Zeus, 151
Zick’el-Sabe, 162
Zi’j’al-Mumtahan (Habash), 17, 31
Zindoqs, 151, 160
Zira (Cubit): Al-Zira’al-Sauda, 44
Arabian, Al Mamun’s time, 39
Zodiacal light, 172
Zoroaster, 147 ff.
Zoroastrians, 148
| 262, 261, 260, 259, 256 | تأريخ خوارزم |
| 263, 262 | تأريخ مسعودي |
| 254 | تبران |
| 255, 252 | نبات بن قرة الحيان |
| 273, 255 | ثعالبي |
| 264, 263, 262 | جالينوس |
| 259, 258, 252 | جامع |
| 264, 263, 262, 255, 252 | جراح |
| 263 | جماعر (ديكيرجوماعر) |
| 254 | 348, 246, 242, 238 |
| 251 | 248 |
| 267 | 260, 251 |
| 251 | حاجي خليفة |
| 239 | حافظ |
| 262 | خاناتي |
| 261, 257, 254, 253, 252, 251 | خواززم |
| 261 | خواززم شلا |
| 251 | دار المصنفين |
| 244 | 251 |
| 278 | 245, 240 |
| 261, 257 | 254 |
| 242, 241 | 238 |
| 261, 253, 251 | 258 |
| 257 | 248 |
| 241 | 248 |
| 270 | 271 |
| 247 | 240 |
| 247 | 259 |
| 259, 258, 252 | 249 |
| 263 | 239 |
| 251 | 255, 253, 251 |
| 255, 252 | سماره - بروفرس ایتودرا |
| 263 | 257 |
| 255, 252 | سرخسی - بنادا |
| 263 | سرخسی - امام فاضل |
| 251 | سفر الامرسار |

- سلطان مصecure
- سلطان محمود
- سرقلد
- صبعانی
- سنده
- شمس الدين شیرزوری
- شمس المعالي قایوس بن وشمگر
- شیرزوری
- شهاب الدولة ابو الفتح موردود
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INDEX</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>251</td>
<td>مختصر الدول</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>251</td>
<td>كتاب المسالك</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>251</td>
<td>كتاب السامراء</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>264</td>
<td>مروز محمود بن عبد الوهاب قزويني</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>264</td>
<td>كتاب البند</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>260</td>
<td>معاوض</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>247</td>
<td>كريستو</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>262, 258, 257, 256, 251, 244</td>
<td>معجم الأدباء</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>264, 263, 237</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>237</td>
<td>معين - دكتور محمد</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>239</td>
<td>مقدمة الأدب</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>272</td>
<td>محل و نعل</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>272</td>
<td>لسان العرب</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>239</td>
<td>لغت فرس</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>240</td>
<td>لأوزم الحركين</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>263</td>
<td>إسماعيل</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>251</td>
<td>ندرن - مرلانا عبد السلام</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>242</td>
<td>نظامي</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>260</td>
<td>نظامي عروضي سوريودي</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>255</td>
<td>لينور</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>272, 272</td>
<td>هندرستان</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>264, 263, 261, 257, 256, 244</td>
<td>باترك حجووي</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>265</td>
<td>معين بن أحمد مفيع</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>244</td>
<td>محمد بن إسحاق بن استاذ بلداد</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>257</td>
<td>معين بن زكريا زرفي</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>271</td>
<td>معين بن قاسم</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>273</td>
<td>محمد غزنوي - سلطان</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>273, 253, 252, 255, 225</td>
<td>مختار الأشعار و الأنثى</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>264</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Printed by Norman A. Ellis, Baptist Mission Press, 41A Lower Circular Road, Calcutta, and Published by V. Courtois, S.J., Secretary, Al-Biruni Celebration Committee. The Oriental Institute, 30 Park Street, Calcutta.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Borrower's No.</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Borrower's No.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Accession No.

1. Books are issued for 15 days only but may have to be recalled earlier if urgently required.

2. An over-due charge of 25 Paise per day per volume will be charged.

3. Books may be renewed on request, at the discretion of the Librarian.

4. Periodicals, Rare and Reference books may not be issued and may be consulted only in the Library.

5. Books lost, defaced or injured in any way shall have to be replaced or its double price shall be paid by the