



۳ - تحقيق ما للهند من مقولة مقبولة

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-Biruni  
5289-

Birūnī, *Kitāb fī taḥqīq mā li'l-hind*, transl. into Russian by A.B. Khalidov and Y.N. Zavodovskii, *Izbrannyye proizvedeniya* (Selected works), II, Tashkent, 1963.

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Birūnī, *Al-Birūnī's India, an account of the religion, philosophy, literature, chronology, astronomy, customs, laws and astrology of India about A.-D. 1030*, ed. by E. Sachau, London, 1887; Leipzig, 1925.

-Biruni  
5286-

Birūnī, *Alberuni's India*, transl. with notes by C.E. Sachau, 2 vols., London, 1888; reprinted London, 1910, etc.

Well-known English translation of *Tahqīq mā li'l-hind* with an important preface on Birūnī and notes.

ترجمه معروف تحقيق ما للهند بيروني با مقدمه اي مفصل درباره بيروني

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Tahqiq mā li Hind

BĪRŪNĪ AND RASHĪD AL-DĪN\*

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Of all the monuments to Bīrūnī's greatness as a scientist and a scholar the most imposing is perhaps the *Tahqīq mā li'l-Hind*, a work which has been justly described as "unique in the domain of the study of one civilization by another until modern times."<sup>1</sup> Bīrūnī himself, writing from one of his bases in the Punjab, was fully conscious of the uniqueness of his undertaking. "I have found it very hard," he says, "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 either trouble or money in collecting Sanskrit books from places where I supposed they were likely to be found, and in procuring for myself, even from very remote places, Hindu scholars who understand them and are able to teach me. What scholar, however, has the same favourable opportunities of studying this subject as I have?"<sup>2</sup> It is difficult, as Sachau has remarked, to say what kind of readers Bīrūnī had in mind, not only for this work, but for all his publications on Indian topics. He suggests that he may have been addressing himself to "educated, and not bigoted or fanatical Muslims in Sindh, in parts of the Punjab, where they were living by the side of Hindus and in daily intercourse with them"; and perhaps also to similar persons in Kabul, where there was still a Hindu population at the end of the tenth century, and in other parts of Afghanistan. He suggests also that Bīrūnī had a certain public amongst the Hindus of Kashmir.<sup>3</sup> One suspects however that in his "great liking" for his subject, i.e. the religion,

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<sup>1</sup> Sayyed Hossein Nasr, *Abū Rayhān Bīrūnī: Scientist and Scholar Extraordinary* (Tehran, 1973).

<sup>2</sup> *Alberuni's India*, transl. Edward C. Sachau (London, 1888), I, 24.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, I, xxiii-xxiv.

philosophy, literature, geography, chronology, astronomy, customs, laws and astrology of India, Bīrūnī, in his own words, "stood quite alone in his time." In fact, as Aziz Ahmad says, "the Turco-Persian élite, for whom he had written the *Kitāb al-Hind*, did not derive much benefit from his researches in this field and continued to honour him as an astronomer rather than an Indologist, until Abu'l-Fazl resurrected him 500 years later."<sup>4</sup> Professor Ahmad forgets, however, that nearly three centuries before the appearance of the *Ā'in-Nāma* Bīrūnī's India had been drawn upon by the author of the *Jāmi' al-Tawārīkh* in that part of his encyclopaedic work in which he surveys the history of all the peoples of Europe and Asia with whom the Mongols' conquests had brought them in contact.

The *History of India* was the first part of this volume to be re-discovered, and W. H. Morley (1815-1860), the Librarian of the Royal Asiatic Society, was preparing an edition on the basis of two manuscripts at the time of his death.<sup>5</sup> The subsequent translation of some passages from the work in Vol. I of Elliot and Dowson<sup>6</sup> gave the impression that it was little more than an abridgement of Bīrūnī, and the appearance of Sachau's edition and translation of the *Tahqīq mā li'l-Hind* seemed to render the publication of Rashīd al-Dīn's text superfluous. It was the merit of Professor Karl Jahn, whose achievements as an editor and translator of the *Jāmi' al-Tawārīkh* are too well known to require mention before the present audience, to point out that it is only in the first chapters of Part I that Rashīd al-Dīn draws upon Bīrūnī and that the remainder of the work is based exclusively on material supplied by one of his informants, a Kashmiri Buddhist.<sup>7</sup> I propose to make a brief survey of those first chapters with the object of ascertaining the precise extent of Rashīd al-Dīn's indebtedness to the *Tahqīq mā li'l-Hind*.

In Chapter I, as Jahn has indicated, he deals "extensively, though without historical details, with the length and nature of the Yugas. His version differs considerably, however, from that of al-Bīrūnī."<sup>8</sup>

<sup>4</sup> *Studies in Islamic Culture in the Indian Environment* (Oxford, 1964), p. 114.

<sup>5</sup> See Karl Jahn, *Rashīd al-Dīn's History of India* (The Hague, 1965), p. xii.

<sup>6</sup> H. M. Elliot and John Dowson, *The History of India as told by its own Historians* (London, 1867-77), I, 42-73.

<sup>7</sup> *Rashīd al-Dīn's History of India*, p. xiii.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.* p. xx, note 2.