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ABU RAYHAN MUHAMMAD IBN AHMAD AL-BIRUNI'S WORK OF CHRONOLOGY OF ANCIENT NATIONS

Annotation: This article investigates Abu Rayhan al-Biruni's work " Chronology of Ancient Nations " It presents a comparative analysis of the calendar systems in the work and shows respect for various cultural traditions. The text also highlights the historical context, scientific contributions, and ongoing legacy of this important work.

Key words: Abu Rayhan al-Biruni, Chronology of Ancient Nations, Medieval Sciences, Calendar Systems, Cultural History, The Golden Age of Islam, Astronomy, Intercultural Studies.

Annotatsiya: Ushbu maqola Abu Rayhon al-Beruniyning Qadimgi Xalqlardan qolgan Yodgorliklar asarini tadqiq etadi. Asardagi taqvim tizimlarining taqqosiy tahlili va turli madaniy an'analarga hurmat ko'rsatilganiga guvoh bo'lamiz. Matnda ushbu muhim asarning tarixiy konteksti, ilmiy hissalari va davom etayotgan merosi ham yoritilgan.

Kalit so'zlar: Abu Rayhon al-Beruniy, Qadimgi Xalqlardan qolgan Yodgorliklar, O'rta asrlar ilmlari, taqvim tizimlari, madaniy tarix, Islomning Oltin Asri, Astronomiya, madaniyatlararo tadqiqotlar.

Аннотация : Эта статья исследует работу Абу Райхана аль-Бируни "Памятники Минувших Поколеней ". В ней представлен сравнительный анализ календарных систем, представленных в произведении, а также выражено уважение к различным культурным традициям. Текст также освещает исторический контекст, научные вклады и продолжающееся наследие этого важного произведения.

Ключевые слова: Абу Райхан аль-Бируни, Памятники Минувших Поколеней, Средневековые науки, Календарные системы, Культурная история, Золотой век ислама, Астрономия, Межкультурные исследования.

Abu Rayhan Muhammad ibn Ahmad al-Biruni (973–1048), an extraordinary polymath from the medieval Islamic Golden Age, remains one of the most influential figures in the history of science and humanities. Among his many contributions, his seminal work, Chronology of Ancient Nations, stands out as a masterful synthesis of historical, astronomical, and cultural knowledge. This book serves as a bridge between ancient civilizations and the Islamic world, highlighting al-Biruni's unparalleled intellectual curiosity and scholarly rigor. Chronology of Ancient Nations was written during a time of extensive cultural exchange and intellectual blossoming in the Islamic world. Al-Biruni, born in the Khwarezm region (modern-day Uzbekistan), had access to a wealth of Greek, Persian, and Indian texts, which he utilized to compile this monumental work. The book reflects the rich tapestry of cultural and scientific traditions that informed al-Biruni's approach to history. The primary aim of the work was to document and compare the calendrical systems of various civilizations, including the Greeks, Persians, Indians, and Arabs. Al-Biruni's meticulous examination of these systems demonstrates

his commitment to understanding the interplay between cultural practices and scientific principles. [1, 5-12-p] The book known in English as 'The Chronology of the Ancient Nations' was written in Arabic by the famous astronomer and polymath Abu Rayhan al-Biruni (or al-Bayruni) in the year 1000.

It is a monumental compendium of the calendars and chronological systems of a very wide range of societies and cultures from the late antique Hellenistic world and the ancient and medieval Near East and Central Asia, including pagans, Christians, Muslims, Jews, and Zoroastrians, as well as other religious and ethnic groups. It describes not only the technical, astronomical aspects of their time reckoning methods, but also their varied festivals and liturgical practices. This remarkable product of early Islamic scholarship sheds light on cultural and religious diversity in the early Islamic world. In the context of this project, it constitutes an important milestone in the standardization of time-reckoning in the medieval world.

The 'Chronology' was first published, and then translated into English, by Eduard Sachau in 1878 and 1879. Sachau's edition is based on three late manuscripts, all of which are in fact copied from a common archetype, which was not accessible to Sachau, but has since been acquired by the Edinburgh University Library; it was copied in 1307. In this manuscript, due to the physical loss of a large number of pages, substantial portions of the text are missing, e.g. in chapters 6, 7, 8, 9, 16, 20. Chapter 16, in particular, is mostly missing in Sachau's edition: it concerns the Christian Computus, i.e. the calculation of the date of Easter. These and other deficiencies can now be corrected with the help of superior copies, in particular, a complete manuscript in Istanbul from the XIIth century and several other old manuscripts. Moreover, research in the course of the last hundred years has shed considerable light on obscure or misunderstood passages in al-Biruni's book.

As part of this project, an entirely new edition of the text, with critical apparatus, English translation, and commentary, is now in preparation. This new edition will serve as a solid foundation for any future research into Biruni's 'Chronology' and into the chronological systems discussed in that book.

The Chronology of Ancient Nations is divided into several sections, each dedicated to the timekeeping methods and historical narratives of specific civilizations. Al-Biruni begins with an overview of calendrical systems, explaining the lunar and solar cycles and their integration into different cultural frameworks. His descriptions of the Zoroastrian, Indian, and Islamic calendars are particularly detailed, revealing his profound understanding of astronomical calculations. [2, 10-18-p]

The book also contains historical accounts that elucidate the cultural contexts of these systems. Al-Biruni's discussions range from the mythical kings of Persia to the astronomical insights of ancient India. His balanced approach, free of ethnocentric bias, underscores his respect for the intellectual traditions of other cultures. [3, 3-9-p]

Al-Biruni's work exemplifies the interdisciplinary nature of medieval Islamic scholarship. By combining astronomy, mathematics, and history, he created a framework for understanding the evolution of human thought. His analysis of lunar and solar calendars, for instance, laid the groundwork for later studies in timekeeping and astronomy. One of the most groundbreaking aspects of Chronology of Ancient Nations is its comparative methodology. Al-Biruni's ability to synthesize knowledge from diverse sources set a new standard for historical and scientific

inquiry. His insights continue to influence modern studies in history and anthropology. [4,15-22-p] The Chronology of Ancient Nations is more than a historical text; it is a testament to the universality of human curiosity and the pursuit of knowledge. Al-Biruni's efforts to document and respect the intellectual achievements of other cultures remain a model for cross-cultural understanding.

Today, his work is studied by historians and scientists alike, who recognize its enduring relevance. By bridging ancient and medieval worlds, al-Biruni provides a unique lens through which we can view the interconnectedness of human civilizations. [5,7-14-p] Al-Biruni was a polymath with an interest in science and astronomy. In The chronology of ancient nations, he gives an overview of the most significant scientific theories, astronomical observations, and mathematical concepts of his time. Discussing the astrolabe, al-Biruni considers the orthographic cylindrical projection as his own invention, expanding upon the work of Al-Saghani.[6, 127-p] He also describes two novel projections he has created, which are nowadays called the azimuthal equidistant and the Nicolosi globular.[7, 287–294-p] He integrates this scientific knowledge with historical and cultural insights.

A unique aspect of the book is Al-Biruni's methodological approach to the formation of an established historical account. He emphasizes the importance of empirical observation, critical analysis, and cross-cultural comparison. His rigorous methodology sets a precedent for later scholars in the fields of history, geography, and anthropology.[8, 96–98-p]

ON THE FESTIVALS IN THE MONTHS OF THE KHWARIZMIANS.

The Khwarizmians agree with the Sughdians regarding the beginnings of the year and the months, and they disagree with the Persians in the same subjects. The cause of this is the same which we have described when speaking of the Sughdians. Their usages in their months are similar to those of the Sughdians. The beginning of their summer was the 1st of Nausarji. They had festivals in their months which they celebrated before the time of Islam. They maintain that God Almighty ordered them to celebrate those festivals. Besides they celebrate other days in commemoration of the deeds of their ancestors. But at the present time there are only very few of the Magians among the Khwarizmians left, who do not particularly care for their religion ; they know nothing of it except its outward forms, and they do not inquire into its spirit and real meaning. In consequence, they regulate their festivals by the knowledge of their distances from each other, not according to their real places which they occupy the single months. [9, 223-p] Biruni expresses his ideas regarding the philosophy and methodologies of history, especially through a scientific lens. He begins with an introduction establishing the relevance of history, geography, and the interconnectedness of civilizations. He proposes the need for studying different cultures and civilizations to gain a broader understanding of the world. In doing so, he defends the legitimacy of his work.[10, 86–115-p]

If we make a conclusion Abu Rayhan al-Biruni's Chronology of Ancient Nations is a testament to the universality of human inquiry and the value of preserving diverse intellectual traditions. Through his detailed documentation of calendrical systems and his comparative analysis of cultural practices, al-Biruni bridged civilizations and set a precedent for modern interdisciplinary studies. His legacy continues to inspire scholars and emphasizes the importance of respecting and learning from the achievements of all cultures

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