

Review of the History of the Persians in the Works of Abu Raykhan Beruni

Umida Kuranbayeva,

*Researcher, Institute of Oriental Studies of the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Uzbekistan,
Tashkent, Republic Uzbekistan. E-mail: kuranbayevaumida778@gmail.com, ORCID: 0000-0002-4915-
2166*

Abstract--- This article is devoted to the encirclement of the history of the Persians in the works of the scientist-encyclopedist Abu Rayhan Beruni. The author collects and analyzes the sources used by Beruni and the names of the rulers, the years of his rule, and compares them with the work of contemporary researchers in this area, citing relevant scientific articles. The article notes that Beruni's works are a significant source in the study of Persian history.

Keywords--- Central Asia, Behistun, "Al-Athar Al-Bakiyah Min Al-Qurun Al-khaliya", "Kitab As-siyar", "India", "Tafkhim", Shahinshah, Chronologist, S. Tolstov, Cyrus II, Darius I.

I. Introduction

The first local written sources on the country of Iran date back to the 6th-5th centuries BC, with the world-famous Behistun inscriptions occupying a special place. These records tell of the Achaemenid state, the first potent kingdom of Persia, and of the peoples of the Persian Gulf, as well as of the first rulers of the country. However, these inscriptions, written in Old Persian, do not provide complete information about the ancient rulers of Persia. M. Dandamaev, who wrote that there are few sources written about the ancient history of the Persians, and that only the inscriptions on the Behistun columns tell the history of this period, does not deny that the inscriptions on the Behistun rocks are not very convincing, and joins the opinion of many Greek historians, particularly since there is an assumption that Darius I may have written a story convenient for himself on the rocks of Behistun [9:102]. I. Pyankov writes that in the works of Charon, Hellanicus, Herodotus, Ctesias, Dinon, Diodorus, Pompey's Trog, Nicholas of Damascus, Xenophon there are many stories about the formation of the Achaemenid state [7:83].

II. Materials and Methods

There is also an opinion that in the Behistun inscriptions, along with the real ones, exaggerated and falsified information is given. An example of this is the results of archaeological excavations carried out by S. Tolstov, scientists proved that Cyrus II (Kurush) and Darius I did not conquer Khorezm [10:105].

Among the written sources on the history of the ancient Persians, the Greek sources are distinguished by a certain consistency and detail. The information given in the writings of Abu Rayhan Beruni is one of such sources. The history of Ancient Persia is described in more detail in the work of the scholar "Athar al-Bakiyah", on the basis of which it is possible to clarify the incomplete information written in Greek, Aramaic and Hebrew. It is in this work that 14 tables are given, in which the names of the ancient Persian kings are given and the order and period of their reign are indicated. Eleven of these tables are tables compiled before Beruni. These tables, referring to their sources and the names of their authors, Beruni studied, compared, checked and corrected. The work "Athar al-Bakiyah" provides more detailed information about the history of Persia compared to the history of other countries. Beruni divides the history of the Persians into three parts.

The first part includes legends about the life of the Persian kings and their famous deeds, in which Beruni summarized the years of the Persian kings in the table and noted that the titles of the Persian rulers naturally passed from one king to another and that the nicknames "Shahinshah", "Kisra" or titles were common to Persian rulers. If you look in detail at the information given by Beruni, it is clear that all the nicknames or titles given to the rulers are associated with their place of residence, on the basis of which a table of 38 nicknames or titles of rulers by region was compiled [1:128; 2:169; 6:258].

Beruni divided the dynasties of the legendary kings mentioned in the first part into three, and did this on the basis of the opinions of many Iranian authors [1:130; 2:170; 5:23]. He used the "Book of Biographies" / "Kitab as-siyar", made additions and corrections to it, brought them in the first table [1:130-132; 2:171-173]. These are the following names of the rulers and the periods of their reign:

1. Names and years of reign of 5 kings from the Peshdadid dynasty;
2. Names and years of reign of 7 kings from the dynasty of Aylan or Airan (Aryan, that is, "Aryans");
3. Names and years of reign of 9 kings from the Kayanid dynasty.

Beruni cites the same dynasties in the *second table*, which he compiled on the basis of information given in the book of Hamza ibn al-Hussein al-Isfahani “The Book of the eras of the great peoples that have passed and disappeared” using the Avesta, the table shows:

1. Names and years of reign of 12 kings from the Peshdadids and Ayrans dynasty;
2. Names and years of reign of 9 kings from the Kayanid dynasty and the period of their reign.

In the third *table*, Beruni uses the table given in the manuscript of Mobed [1:134; 2:174] Hamza (priest of Zoroastrianism, Bahram ibn Mardanshah) [1:445]:

1. Names and years of reign of 11 kings from the Peshdadids and Ayrans dynasty;
2. Names and years of reign of 9 kings from the Kayanid dynasty.

III. Discussion

In the *fourth table*, Beruni presents the names of 24 kings and the years of their reign from Afridun to the last Darius, while he uses the works of Western authors, but does not indicate specifically which [1:135; 2:175-176]. Beruni notes that the tables given in the first part are based on myths and that is why it is inappropriate to compare them with each other [1:140; 2:181].

Comparative Table of Data Provided by R. Fry and E. Bickerman Regarding the First Part of the History of Persia, Mentioned in “Athar al-Bakiyah”.

№	The names of the Kayanids or the great kings of the Persians according to Beruni [2:175-176].	Reigned (years)	Names of Kayanids or great kings according to R. Fry [11:336].	Years of government	Names of Kayanids or great kings according to E. Bickerman [12:193].	
1	Kai Qubad	49				
2	Sanaherib II	31				
3	Majam	33				
4	Bukhtunassar, aka Kaykaus	57				
5	Ulad, son of Bukhtunassar	1				
6	Baltashassar, son of Evilad	2			Achaemen	ok. 700-675
7	Dari-al-Mahi i.e. Darius	9			Chishpish	675-640
8	Kurush, i.e. Kai Khusrau	8	Cyrus I		Cyrus I	640-600
9			Cambyses I		Cambyses I	600-559
10	Cyrus, i.e. Luhrasp	34	Cyrus II	559-530	Cyrus (in Iran) Cyrus (in Babylon)	559-530 539-530
11	Cambyses	80	Cambyses II	530-522	Cambyses II	530-522
12					Bardia (Semerdis, Gaumata)	522
13					Nebuchad Nosor III	522
14					Darius I	521-521
15					Nebuchad-nosor IV	521
16	Darius II	36	Darius I	522-486	Darius I	521-486
17	Xerxes son of Darius, i.e. Khusrau the first.	26	Xerxes I	486-465	Xerxes	486-464
18	Ardashir son of Xerxes, this is the one that is nicknamed “Macroheir”, that is, “Long-armed”	41	Artaxerxes I Longarm	465-424	Artaxerxes I	464-423
19	Khusrau II	30	Xerxes II	424-423	–	–
20	Sogdian Natos, son of Khusraw	9	Darius II Noth	423-404	Darius II	423-404

21	Ardashir, son of Darius II	41	Artaxerxes II Mnemon	404-359	Artaxerxes II	404-359
22	Ardashir the third	27	Artaxerxes III Ox	359-338	Artaxerxes III	359-338
23	Arces son of Ochus	12	Ars	338-336	Ars	338-336
24	Darius, last king of the Persians.	16	Darius III Codomann	336-330	Darius III	336-331

The first four kings (Khakhamen, Chishpish, Kurush I, Cambodia) played almost no role in the creation of the Achaemenid or Hachamenid kingdoms, mentioned in the first part of Persian history as the kings of Ailon, Kayanids or great kings, because they were dependent on Media, even on Babylon by kings. The real power of this dynasty is associated with the name of Cyrus II, especially with his victorious wars, which he waged in 553-547 BC [7:88-93].

Beruni includes in the second part of Persian history the period from the reign of Alexander the Rumian (Alexander the Great) to the reign of Ardavan, the son of Balash. In this part, he tried to identify and correct the confusing information that had come down to him and tabulated the names of the Ashkanid kings. The *first table* of the second part lists the names of 12 kings and the periods of their reign [3:135; 2:178].

In the *second table* of this part, Beruni also describes the table of Hamza ibn Hussein al-Isfahani, given in the “Book of the History of the Great People of Past and Destroyed Nations” and compiled using the Avesta. This table also lists the names of 12 Ashkanid kings who ruled from Alexander the Rumian to the reign of Ardavan, son of Balash, son of Feruzan, and their reign [3:135; 2:178-179].

There is also a *third table* dedicated to the second part of the history of the Iranians, in which Beruni gives a table taken entirely from a copy of Mubad Hamad ibn Hussein al-Isfahani. In the table, the author gave the names and periods of the reign of 19 Ashkanid kings [3:136]. In the comments of I. Abdullaev and O. Fayzullaev, it is noted that in the table of Beruni regarding the Ashkanid dynasty, the reign period is 496 years [1:445]. This dynasty, known in Europe as the Arsacids, ruled Iran from 248 BC to 227 AD [12:193, 196-197].

Beruni compiles a table based on the work “The Book of the Chronicle” by Abu al-Faraj Ibrahim ibn Ahmad Khalaf al-Zanjani, in this table he gives the names and periods of the reign of the Ashkanid kings who ruled in Iraq and Jibal after the death of Alexander in the year 246, but not numbers this table. The table lists the names and period of reign of 13 kings from Iskandar Rumian to the younger Ardavan [3:137].

Beruni also gives a table from the work “The Book of Kings”, made for Abu-l-Mansur ibn Abd-ar-Razzak [1:436], this table is also not numbered. It lists the names and periods of reign of 11 Ashkanid rulers, starting with Ashka son of Darius and ending with Ardavan [1:139]. Beruni in the second part calculates the year, comparing the given tables, as a starting point, the year when Yazdegerd becomes king of the era of Alexander [6:140]. Beruni notes that these tables are not without flaws [1:142].

In the *first table* of the third part, Beruni gives the names and period of the reign of 30 kings, from Ardashir son of Babak to Yazdegerd (III) son of Shahriyar; the difference between this table and the previous tables is that it indicates the day, month and years of the reign. Beruni, in addition to this table, includes the tables of Hamza, corrected and supplemented by him from the book of the Avesta and from the “Book of Lives”. The *second table* lists the names of the 27 rulers and their terms of office [1:144]. The *third table* was compiled by Beruni from a copy of the mobed manuscript copied by Hamza, which also contains the names and dates of the reign of 27 kings, from Ardashir son of Babak to Yazdegerd (III) son of Shahriyar [2:187]. The names of 31 Sasanian kings are given, from Ardashir son of Babak to Yazdegerd son of Shahriyar, taken from the table in the book of az-Zanjani Abu-l-Faraj [1:146]. After these tables, Beruni writes that al-Kisravi shortened the period from Alexander to Yazdegerd by 260 years, notes that it is not clear why he attributed these years to the period of the Sassanid kings, and not the Ashkanids, cites his table. According to Hamza, the names of 33 Sassanid kings and the years of their reign, specified by al-Kisrawi, are indicated, which is the last table dedicated to Persian history in the work “Athar al-Bakiyah” [1:147].

IV. Results

Comparing the names of Persian kings given on silver dirhams and wall frescoes found in the 60s and 70s of the last century, we can say that they exactly match the names of Persian kings mentioned by Beruni [8:9-24].

Comparative Table with the Data of the Sassanid Kings, Presented by E. Bikerma [12:197-198] and V. Lukonin [8: 9-24) and Relating to the 3rd Part of the History of Pars

No	The names of the Sasanian kings in the writings of Beruni	Reigned (years)	Names of the Sasanian kings according to E. Bikerma	Years of government	Names of the Sasanian kings according to V. Lukonin	Years of government
1	Ardashir, son of Babak	14	Ardashir I	224-240	–	–
2	Shapur, son of Ardashir	30	Shapur	240- 272	–	–
3	Hurmuz, son of Shapur	1	Hurmuz Ardashir	272-273	Hurmuz	274
4	Bahram, son of Hurmuz	3	Varahran I	273-276	Varahran I	274-276
5	Bahram son of Bahram	17	Varahran II	276-293	Varahran II	276-293
6	Bahram son of Bahram son of Bahram	–	Varahran III	293	Varahran III	293
7	Narsi son of Bahram son of Bahram	9	Narse	299-302	Narse	293-302
8	Hurmuz, son of Narsi	7	Hormizd II	302-309	Hormizd II	302-309
9	Shapur, son of Hurmuz	72	Shapur II	309-379	–	–
10	Ardashir, son of Hurmuz	4	Ardashir II	379-383	–	–
11	Shapur, son of Shapur	5	Shapur III	383-388	–	–
12	Bahram son of Shapur	11	Varahran IV	388-399	–	–
13	Yazdegerd, son of Shapur	21	Yazdegerd I	399-421	–	–
14	Bahram, son of Yazdegerd	18	Varahran V	421-439	–	–
15	Yazdegerd son of Bahram	18	Yazdegerd II	439-457	–	–
16	Afridun son of Yazdegerd	27	Hormizd III	457-459	–	–
17	Balash son of Firuz	4	–	–	–	–

In chapter IX “The estates (populations), which the Hindus call different colors, and the lower estates” of Beruni’s work “India”, before giving a list and description of the Indian castes, Beruni describes the order according to which the Persian kings were divided into estates, while:

- 1st estate - children of military leaders and kings;
- 2nd estate - priests, religious figures serving in fire worship;
- 3rd estate - healers, astronomers and representatives of various sciences;
- 4th estate - dekhkans and artisans [4: 88-89].

So, how does Beruni evaluate the Achaemenid and Sassanid periods? Although the scientist did not write directly about the reign of the Achaemenid and Sassanid dynasties, based on the works of Beruni, we can draw conclusions about the greatness of the kings of the Achaemenid and Sassanid dynasties, about their useful and necessary activities for their country, their division of peoples into estates and management, about their attitude to annals and religion.

V. Conclusion

In short, Abu Rayhan Beruni, as an author who knew the Persians closely, clarifies a number of unknown aspects of their history. In particular, the population of this country, adjacent to Khorasan in the east, Iraq and other Arab countries in the west, the Indian Ocean in the south and the southern shores of the Caspian Sea in the north - Persians or Western Iranians - founded a number of large kingdoms in Asia, served as a kind of bridge between Asia - Africa - Europe. The Persians, who had their own special place both in socio-political life and in economic and cultural relations, like the ancient Egyptians, Mesopotamians, Greeks, Armenians, Indians and other peoples living on these continents, actively participated in historical processes. This is also confirmed by the information about the ancient Persian kings given by Beruni.

References

- [1] Abu Rayhan Beruni. Selected works. I tom. – Tashkent: Fan, 1968. [Абу Райҳон Беруний. Танланган асарлар. I жилд. –Тошкент: Фан, 1968.].
- [2] Abu Rayhan Beruni. Chronology. Selected works. T.I. - Tashkent: Fan, 2015. [Абу Райхан Беруни. Хронология. Избранные произведения. T.I. – Ташкент: Фан, 2015.].
- [3] Abu Rayhan Beruni. Selected works. I tom. – Tashkent: O’zbekiston, 2020. [Абу Райҳон Беруний. Танланган асарлар. I жилд. –Тошкент: O’zbekiston, 2020.].

- [4] Abu Rayhan Beruni. Selected works. India. II tom. – Tashkent: Fan, 1965. [Абу Райхон Беруний. Танланган асарлар. Ҳиндистон. II жилд. –Тошкент: Фан, 1965.].
- [5] Dmitrov V.A. Biruni about the Sassanids. TRANSCAUCASIC. Issue. 2. 2014. [Дмитров В.А. Бируни о Сасанидах. TRANSCAUCASICA. Вып. 2. 2014.].
- [6] Gritsyuk E.Yu. The Image of the “Other” in “Monuments of Past Generations”. Historical translation. – Moscow. 2014. [Грицюк. Е.Ю. Образ «другого» в «Памятниках минувших поколений». Исторический перевод. – Москва. 2014.].
- [7] Ryankov I.V. The formation of the Achaemenid state according to ancient sources / History of the Iranian state and culture for the 2500th anniversary of the Iranian state / ed. ed. acad. B.G. Gafurov. – Moscow: Eastern Literature, 1971. [Пьянков И.В. Образование державы Ахеменидов по данным античных источников/История Иранского государства и культуры (к 2500-летию Иранского государства)/ отв. ред. акад. Б.Г.Гафуров. – Москва: Восточная литература, 1971.].
- [8] Lukonin V.G. Iran in the III century / New materials and experience of historical reconstruction. State Hermitage. – Moscow: Nauka, 1979. [Луконин В.Г. Иран в III веке/ Новые материалы и опыт исторической реконструкции. – Москва: Наука, 1979.].
- [9] Dandamaev M.A. Political history of the Achaemenid state. – Moscow: Nauka, 1985. [Дандамаев. М.А. Политическая история Ахеменидской державы. – Москва: Наука, 1985.].
- [10] Tolstov S.P. In the footsteps of the ancient Khorezm civilization. – Moscow-Leningrad: Nauka, 1948. [Толстов С.П. По следам древнехорезмской цивилизации. – Москва-Ленинград: Наука, 1948.].
- [11] Fry R. Heritage of Iran. Culture of the peoples of the East / Translation from English by V.A. Livshits and E.V. Zeimal, edited and with a preface by M.A. Dandamaev – Moscow: Nauka, 1972. [Фрай Р. Наследия Ирана. Культура народов Востока / Перевод с английского В.А. Лившица и Е.В. Зеймаля под редакцией и с предисловием М. А. Дандамаева – Москва: Наука, 1972.].
- [12] Bikerman E. Chronology of the ancient world. The Middle East and Antiquity / Translation from English by I.M. Steblin-Kamensky, responsible ed. M.A. Dandamaev - Moscow: Nauka, 1976. [Э. Бикерман. Хронология древнего мира. Ближний восток и античность / Перевод с английского И.М. Стеблин-Каменского, отв. ред. М.А. Дандамаев. – Москва: Наука, 1976.].