



GARDĪZĪ, ABŪ SA'ĪD 'ABD-AL-ḤAYY

GARDĪZĪ, ABŪ SA'ĪD 'ABD-al-ḤAYY b. Żaḥḥāk b. Maḥmūd, Persian historian of the early 5th/11th century whose exact dates of birth and death are unknown.

His life is almost wholly obscure, although his *nesba* implies a connection with Gardīz (q.v.) in eastern Afghanistan, and the name Zahāk/Żaḥḥāk seems to have been a popular one in the surrounding region of Zābolestān. He was clearly connected with the Ghaznavid court and administration and close to the sultans, although it is rather strange that Abu'l-Faẓl Bayhaqī (q.v.) does not mention him in his history (or, at least, not in the extant part). Gardīzī dedicated his history, *Zayn al-aḵbar*, to Sultan 'Abd-al-Rašīd b. Maḥmūd (q.v.; 440-43/1049-52), probably when he was an old man.

The *Zayn al-aḵbār* is written in a concise, in parts even skeletal, form but is only partially extant in two fairly late manuscripts, those of King's College, Cambridge, and of Oxford, the latter seemingly copied from the former. What we possess of it comprises firstly, a purely historical section dealing with the ancient kings of Persia until the end of the Sasanians; the Prophet Moḥammad (very sketchy); the caliphs up to the 'Abbasid al-Qā'em (422-67/1031-75, also very summary); and the various governors and dynasties controlling Khorasan, i.e., eastern Persia, Transoxania, and Afghanistan. The narrative becomes much more detailed once the author reaches the Samanids, and is



especially detailed on the disintegration of the Samanid amirate. The origins of Ghaznavid rule, from Alptigin to Sebüktigin (qq.v.), are treated only sketchily, and the connected account of the dynasty only begins with Maḥmūd's investiture as governor of Khorasan by the caliph al-Qāder in 391/999. From then onwards, however, the narrative is quite detailed, up to the triumph of the Saljuqs and the end of Mas'ūd's reign (421-32/1030-41), and with a fair number of dates, although the treatment is dry and lacks the liveliness, the analyses of motive, and the critical comments which characterize Bayhaqī's approach. The story breaks off with the events in the Ghaznavid sultanate of 432/1041, when Mawdūd b. Mas'ūd avenged his father's murder at the hands of an army coup which had temporarily placed Moḥammad b. Maḥmūd on the throne. Since the break is an abrupt one, the history very probably continued up to 'Abd-al-Rašīd's own time some ten years later. There then follows what might be called a cultural-historical section: on the eras and festivals of various peoples, including the Muslims, Jews, Christians, Zoroastrians, and Hindus; on the Turkish tribes and other peoples, including the Rūs and Alans, of the Eurasian steppes; and on the ancient Greeks from Alexander to the Ptolemys.

Despite its conciseness, Gardīzī's work is of the highest value for the Islamic history of eastern Persia. He supplies valuable details on the rise of the Saffarids in Sīstān and on the history in Khorasan and Transoxania of the Samanids. His source here was almost certainly the lost *Ta'riḳ wolāt Korāsān* of the shadowy Samanid author Abū 'Alī Ḥosayn b. Aḥmad Sallāmī Bayhaqī, a protégé of the Chaghanids, whose material seems to go up to 344/955; after this point, Gardīzī's source for later Samanid history was probably the continuation of Sallāmī's work (also lost), the *Mazīd al-tāriḳ fī aḳbār Korāsān* of Abū Ḥasan Moḥammad b. Solaymān. For early Ghaznavid history, he must have used contemporary material plus his own direct experience of events; for his account of the Ghaznavid Sultan Maḥmūd's sultanate, he avers that he witnessed the greater part of events personally, at the amir's side (ed. Nazim, pp. 61-62, ed. Ḥabībī, pp. 173-74).

The cultural-historical section contains equally valuable information. That on the Turkish and other peoples of Inner Asia and eastern Europe was used by Barthold (who first published extracts, with translations, on the Turks and on the history of Central Asia from the *Zayn al-aḳbār* in *Zapiski Imp. Akad. Nauk po Ist. Phil. Otd.*, ser. 8, 1/4, 1897, pp. 78-128, and then in the volume of texts accompanying his *Turkestan*, I, St. Petersburg, 1900, pp. 1-18) in his *Turkestan*,



etc., and by Marquart (pp. 89-93, 97 ff.). Gardīzī's source here was probably the Samanid vizier Abū 'Abd-Allāh Moḥammad b. Aḥmad Jayhānī, to whose (lost) work he refers in his narrative of Samanid history as Jayhānī's *Ketāb-e tawārīk*; Gardīzī further refers in glowing terms to the vizier's skill and learning, stating that he allegedly sent for information on administrative practices in all parts of the world, from China to Byzantium and the land of the Zanj, and then adopted the best of them for use in the Samanid chancery at Bokhara (ed. Nazim, pp. 25-26, ed. Ḥabībī, p. 150). Minorsky pointed out (pp. 626-27) that Gardīzī also probably used Jayhānī for his section on the beliefs, sects, and castes of the Indians; furthermore, the historian knew Abū Rayḥān Bīrūnī (q.v.) personally, and his section on the festivals of the Indians is demonstrably based on Bīrūnī's *India* (loc. cit.).

Gardīzī's approach to contemporary history is dispassionate for his time; thus he is neither adulatory of Sultan Maḥmūd nor savagely condemnatory of the incoming Saljuqs. His Persian style is usually simple, what Bahār called a "mature and flowing" one, and he connects it with the oldest period of Persian prose-writing, with stylistic affinities to the Samanid vizier Bal'amī's translation of Ṭabarī's history (*Sabk-šenāsī* II, pp. 50-52; cf. Lazard, pp. 71-74).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Editions. Barthold was the first to publish extracts from the *Zayn al-aḳbār*. An edition of the historical section covering the Taherids to the Ghaznavids was made by Muhammad Nazim, *Kitab Zainu'l-Akhbar*, E. G. Browne Memorial Series 1. Berlin-Stieglitz, 1928; this was used as the basis for subsequent Tehran prints, e.g., 1315 Š./1936. The whole surviving text was not published until the critical edition of 'Abd al-Ḥayy Ḥabībī, Tehran, 1347 Š./1968.

Studies. W. Barthold, "Gardīzī," in *EI*2 II, pp. 978.

C. E. Bosworth, "Early Sources for the History of the First Four Ghaznavid Sultans (977-1041)," *IQ* 9, 1965, pp. 8-10; repr. in *The Medieval History of Iran, Afghanistan and Central Asia*, London, 1977.



'A.-Ḥ. Ḥabībī, “Mowarreḡ-e waṭan 'Abd-al-Ḥayy Gardīzī,” *Erfān* 30, 1347 Š./1968, pp. 67 ff. G.Lazard, *La langue des plus anciens monuments de la prose persane*, Paris, 1963.

Marquart, “Über das Volkstum der Komanen” in W. Bang and J. Marquart, *Osttürkische Dialektstudien*, Berlin, 1914.

V. Minorsky, “Gardīzī on India,” *BSOAS* 12, 1948, pp. 625-40; repr. in *Bīst maqāla/Iranica: Twenty Articles*, Tehran, 1964, pp. 200–215.

M. Qazvīnī, “Moqaddama-ye *Ketāb-e zayn al-aḡbār*,” in M. Qazvīnī, *Bīst maqāla-ye Qazvīnī*, 2 vols., Tehran, 1332 Š./1953, II, pp. 257-63.

Storey, I, pp. 65-66, 1229. Storey-Bregel, I, pp. 288-91.