



Alberuni's India

Dr. Edward C. Sachau

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It was in 1017 AD, at the behest of Sultan Muhmud of Persia, Alberuni, aka Al-Biruni, travelled to India to learn about the Hindus, and to discuss with them questions of religion, science, and literature, and the very basis of their civilisation. He remained in India for 13 years, studying and exploring. Alberuni's scholarly work has not been given the due recognition it deserves. Not for nearly 800 years would any other writer match Alberuni's profound understanding of almost all aspects of Indian life. Brief Deatails of the amazing life of Alberuni. Birth: 5 September 973 Death: 13 December 1048 Ethnicity: Persian Main interests: Anthropology, astrology, astronomy, chemistry, comparative sociology, geodesy, geology, history, mathematics, medicine, philosophy, pharmacology, physics, psychology, science Notable ideas: Father of anthropology, geodesy and Indology. Founder of experimental mechanics and experimental astronomy. Pioneer of experimental psychology. Contributed to many other fields of knowledge. Works: Ta'rikh al-Hind, The Mas'udi Canon, Understanding Astrology, and many other books Influences: Aristotle, Ptolemy, Aryabhata, Muhammad, Brahmagupta, Rhazes, al-Sijzi, Abu Nasr Mansur, Avicenna Influenced: Al-Sijzi, Avicenna, Omar Khayyam, al-Khazini, Zakariya al-Qazwini, Maragha observatory, Islamic science, Islamic philosophy Biruni was a polymath with an interest in various practical and scholarly fields that relate to what nowadays is described as physics, anthropology, comparative sociology, astronomy, astrology, chemistry, history, geography, mathematics, medicine, psychology, philosophy, and theology. He was the first Muslim scholar to study India and the Brahminical tradition, and has been described as the founder of Indology, and "the first anthropologist". He was also one of the earliest leading exponents of the experimental scientific method, and was responsible for introducing the experimental method into mechanics and mineralogy, developed comparative sociology and experimentation in psychology, and the first to conduct elaborate experiments related to astronomical phenomena. Biruni has for example been described as "one of the very greatest scientists of Islam, and, all considered, one of the greatest of all times.", or as "one of the great scientific minds in all history." The crater Al-Biruni on the Moon is named after him. Tashkent Technical University (formerly Tashkent Polytechnic Institute) is also named after Abu Rayhan al-Biruni and a university founded by Ahmad Shah Massoud in Kapisa is named after him.

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