

## Abu Syed Abd al-Hay bin Dahhak, the author of Zeen al-Akhbar

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### ABSTRACT

Abdul Hai Gardizi is the author of Zain al-Akhbar or Tarikh Gardizi, one of the most famous historians of Afghanistan. He is considered among the last historians of the first Ghaznavid period and his work, Zain al-Akhbar, is one of the important sources of the country's history. In this article, we have tried to briefly introduce Gardizi and the book Zain al-Akhbar and to evaluate Gardizi's historiographical method in writing Zain al-Akhbar as much as possible. The useful information it provides about the events of the first Ghaznavid period are very important and valuable in the history of Afghanistan. Gardizi has also dealt with social and ethnological topics and issues and has presented valuable and useful reports in this field, which distinguishes him from other historians. Gardizi was less religiously prejudiced than his contemporary historians and to some extent provided valuable information about the religions and rituals of Hindus, Jews, Christians and followers of other religions.

**Keywords-** Afghan historians, Gardizi, Islamic historiography, Khorasan history, Zain al-Akhbar.

### I. INTRODUCTION

Gardizi can be called one of the most important historians of the country, and his zina al-khabar in the train of Tabaqat Naseri and the history of Sistan are considered among the three most important sources of the country's history. Gardizi history is one of the first Dari histories written in the Ghaznavid period. Because the beginning and completion of the existing version of the book is lacking, and therefore it is not clear to us to access the goals and motivations of the historian in writing the book. But Gardizi's main desire is to write the history of Ghaznavids; Because he wrote this section with special interest. Zain al-Akhbar was published for the first time in its entirety thanks to the efforts of the famous historian of our country, Abdul Habi Habibi. Pohand Habibi took a lot of pains to correct, confront and revise this work and wrote useful notes on it. Also, several Indian and Iranian scientists have edited and published Zain Al-Akhbar Gardizi in different years, the latest of whom is Dr. Rahim Rezazadeh Malek. In his scholarly introduction, Dr. Malek discussed them and introduced their work on pages 16 to 20 of the preface,

and on page 22 of the same preface, he introduced the manuscript that they identified from Zain al-Akhbar.

### II. ABU SYED ABD AL-HAY BIN DAHHAK, THE AUTHOR OF ZEEN AL-AKHBAR

Abu Saeed Abd al-Hay bin Dahhak bin Mahmoud Gardizi is the author of Zeen al-Akhbar. According to the famous historian of Afghanistan, Abdul Hai Habibi, who prepared Zin al-Akhbar for the first time in its entirety, "Unfortunately, we do not know anything about Gardizi's biography and there is no mention of him in other books. If we had the introduction of Zin al-Akhbar, we would have known Gardizi better from that, while in some cases he writes his name as (the originator) of this book, Abu Syed Abd al-Hay bin Al-Dahhak Ibn Mahmud Gardizi, and it seems that in Ghazna, the capital At that time, he lived and wrote his book in this city, and at the end of his life, he met Ustad Aburihan Biruni (died 440 Hijri 1048 AD)» (Habibi, 1363, p. 22). Not much information is available about his personal and professional life, only

guesses have been made. Mojtabi Khalifa writes, quoting Maythami, that Gardizi was probably one of the secretaries of Sultan Mahmud's court, or perhaps he had a relationship with that Gardizi who brought the pledge of power to Masoud on behalf of Caliph Al-Qadir. Bosworth also pointed out that Gardizi was apparently connected with the court of the Ghaznavids (Khalifa and Ghafari, 2019, p. 3). Gardizi himself clearly states that he has seen many events with his own eyes, especially regarding the events of Sultan Mahmud's era, including the campaigns in India, the conquest of Nimroz, Khwarazm, etc. (Gardizi 1363, p. 379). This is a sign that he was probably one of the court agents of the Ghaznavid era. Habibi believes that Gardizi's year of birth is probably around 400 AH; Because he has witnessed some events of Sultan Mahmud Ghaznavi's period with his own eyes. As a result, it can be said that Gardizi was at least 20 years old at the time. Gardizi did not witness the Tughril sedition during the reign of Sultan Abd al-Rashid. Because he prays for Sultan Abdul Rashid's continued life and asks God to keep him alive. Therefore, Gardizi is believed to have died before 444 AH (Habibi, 1363, pp. 20-21).

### III. THE STRUCTURE OF THE BOOK

Although according to Afaf al-Sayed Zain al-Akhbar, it is public history and Maithami considers it to be local and general history; Khalifa and Ghafari (2019) considers this book to be a combination of three types of historiography, namely general history, dynastic history and local history (p. 6). According to Barthold, the text of Gardizi's book is sometimes very close to the text of Ibn Athir, and in some cases it is almost a word-for-word translation, although the reason for this similarity is that both authors used a single source. And that source is undoubtedly the authorship of Salami (Barthold, 1363, p. 73).

In his book, Gardizi discussed various topics, but his main focus was on the history of Khorasan. First, he briefly discusses the history of ancient Iran in five sections:

**The first part of the book:** The first part of the history book is dedicated to the general issues of Iranian history, and in the style and manner of general chronicles, it has started the history of the world from the first fictional kings of Iran.

**The second part of the book:** The second part of Gardizi's book takes on a local aspect. And the history of Khorasan land is discussed from the beginning. Of course, the same aspect of summarizing, which is the style and manner of Gardizi, can be seen in this part as well. While referring to the conquest of Khorasan by Muslims, he drew a table of governors who were sent to this country by the caliphs and explained it. In this section, there is information about the uprising of Abu Muslim in Khorasan, as well as the rule of Mamun and after that the Taherian dynasty in Khorasan. Gardizi has

spoken about the history of the Safavids because their history is somehow related to the events of Khorasan. He mentioned his material about this historical chain under the title of Fitna Yaqub bin Al Laith. And while referring to the other rulers of this land, he has discussed more extensively about the origin of the Samanid dynasty and their history in that land compared to the previous chapters. He has dedicated another part of his book to the causes of the creation of Roman, Arabic, Persian and Indian chronicles and their differences with each other. In the continuation of that, Gardizi has drawn tables of important and religious holidays and days of Muslims, Jews, Christians, Maghans (Zoroastrians) and Hindus and has described them, which provides relatively good information to the history researcher ((Gardizi 1363).

**The third part of the book:** Qamest III is related to the Ghaznavid dynasty. With the beginning of the history of the Ghaznavid dynasty, Gardizi again emphasizes the brevity of his words. He writes: "We started telling the news of Yamin al-Dawlah, may his mercy and blessings be upon him, according to brevity and brevity." The last part of the book is about the knowledge and lineage of different tribes. A chapter of this section is dedicated to the origin and ratio of Turks and different clans and the culture and customs of each of these clans as well as their residential areas in East Asia. In other separate chapters of this section, the education and genealogy of Hindus and Romans have been discussed (Khalifa and Ghafari, 2019, pp. 2-3).

### IV. THE IMPORTANCE OF THE BOOK

Zain al-Akhbar is one of the most reliable historical books. Richard Nelson Frye considers this work as one of the most important sources in the history of the Samanids (Fray, 1384, p. 268). The section related to the kings of pre-Islamic Iran should be considered "the oldest independent Persian history in prose". The contents of this section are taken from reliable sources, the original of some of which has been lost. The description of nearly 55 years of the history of Khorasan, which is related to the Ghaznavid period, is the result of his own sightings or what he heard from people who witnessed those events (Gardizi, 63, 13 p. 379). Apart from the historical aspect, this work is very valuable and valuable in terms of ancient Persian prose; Its prose is very mature and fluent and the author has tried to make it very simple and fluent. One of the characteristics of Gardizi's speech is to observe the side of brevity and mention the main points of events. But apart from these, what makes Zain al-Akhbar important is the content related to the culture of the people of that time, i.e., the topics about the customs, ceremonies and celebrations of Iranians, Turks and some other nations are narrated in it (Qanvati, 2019).

Gardizi, who introduces himself as the compiler of Zain al-Akhbar, in addition to the observations and

narrations of his friends, has used various sources to compile his book. As he himself has stated, he understood the great scholar Abu Rihan Biruni's noble report and heard things from him. The author of *Zain al-Akhbar*, two famous books of Biruni; That is, he used "Tahqiq Mal-e-Hind" and "Athar al-Baqiyah". Also, he may have used the lost book of Abu Ali Salami, "Akhbar Velayat Khorasan" in the chapter of Khorasan province (Habibi, 1363, pp. 20-21). According to the content of *Zain al-Akhbar* book, he has taken parts from *Ruba al-Duniya/Tawzi al-Duniya* by Ibn Muqafgh (around 140 AH 757 AD) and has also adapted from Abu Abdullah Jihani's *Masalak and Mamalik*. It can be seen that Gardizi used works that are not in our hands today and can only be seen in *Zain al-Akhbar*. It can be seen that Gardizi used works that are not in our hands today and can only be seen in *Zain al-Akhbar*. On this principle, Gardizi's work is more valuable. Gardizi dedicated his work to Sultan Abdul Rashid (441-444 AH, 1053-1053 AD). Gardizi's work is not the only book written with an Arabic name and a Dari text, but earlier there was another book under the title *Hudud al-Alam Man Al-Mashreq wal Maghreb* (unknown author) with an Arabic name and a Dari text. *Tarikh Gardizi (Zain al-AKhabar)* was the only work (without external influence) until that time, in which the social content of different ethnicities and nations was researched. Despite the fact that, in the history of *Beyhaqi*, an attempt has been made to investigate the social situation. In this work, Gardizi exemplified the external method, and a part of his book is based on the external work (Gardizi, 1363).

## V. ETHNOLOGICAL AND SOCIAL INFORMATION

Ethnography is one of the important features of Gardizi historiography. He has devoted a considerable amount of his history to the history and culture of different nations. Although some topics raised by him, including topics related to Hindu education, are mostly taken from the works of Abu Rihan, but he provides unique information in the topics related to the Oghuz and other Turk tribes. As an example, he has provided valuable information about the ancient religion of the Oghuz, namely, shamanism, relying on writers such as Ibn Muqafa. In this case, the story of the belief of the Oghozs in the rain stone has been explained in detail. Gardizi, in his work about the different Turkic tribes, *Kharkhizians (Qirghizians)*, *Tibetans*, *Barskhans*, *Ghazans*, *Bejanakians*, *Khazrans*, *Berdas*, *Belkar (Bulgarians)*, *Alans*, *Chagal* and *Tarkshi* are among the tribes that Gardizi mentioned. *Zain al-Akhbar* is one of the first sources in which *Tatars* are mentioned. The mention of the Chinese and the tribes beyond China is also mentioned in *Zain al-Akhbar*. Gardizi has occasionally made reports about people's livelihood and life (Khalifa and Ghafari, 2019, p. 10).

Although Bosworth introduces him as an emotionless and cold-blooded historian against various traditions (Bosworth, 2007, p. 48); But Khalifa and Ghaffari consider this probably because the simple Persian prose of Gardizi cannot convey the historian's inner feelings like Atabi's prose. But Gardizi sees people both in the past and in his contemporary time and describes their lives to the extent that he does not damage the topic of his general history (Khalifa and Ghaffari, 2019, p. 11).

The main point about Gardizi's historiography is the two-part nature of his feelings. In the sense that he describes the narrations after Sultan Mahmud sat on the throne more emotionally and with more passion; Gardizi has shown more interest in this part of the book. In cases such as people's complaints to Sultan Mahmud from Ali Tegin or the happy beginning of Amir Muhammad's rule, he deals with the situation of the people in the Ghaznavid era.

"When the year of Khums Ashar and Arba Ma'e arrived, Amir Mahmud, may God have mercy on him, intended to Balkh to be there in the winter season. When Mahmud reached Balkh, those who were oppressed by Ali Tegin, came to him from across the river and complained about Ali Tegin, that he was doing many injustices and the people were suffering under his oppression. Because the oppression became too much, Amir Mahmud decided to save those Muslims from suffering and calamities" (Gardizi, 1363, p. 404) When Amir Muhammad ascended to the throne after his father, "he brought the country under his control and life became good for the people." The prices decreased and the merchants and soldiers were happy and when the news of Ghaznin's prosperity reached other cities, merchants from far and near brought their best goods to the capital. In this narration, apart from the social issue, there is another interesting point, and that is the historian's adherence to Amir Muhammad against Masoud. in the continuation of this narration, Gardizi adds: "And with all the goodness he [Amir Muhammad] did to his subjects and soldiers, the courtiers and subjects wanted Amir Shahab al-Dawlah Abu Saeed Masoud bin Yamin al-Dawlah and they wanted him (Gardizi, 1363, p. 420). It seems that Gardizi was initially in the faction of supporters of Amir Muhammad (Padriyan), whose head was Hassanak Wazir (Khalifa and Ghafari, 2019, p. 12).

## VI. RELIGIOUS TENDENCY

Gardizi's belief and religious approach can be found in the news he gave about Zoroastrianism, Hinduism, Ismailia and the first caliphs. Gardizi's worldview is based on following the "Theology of Matridiyeh". Because Gardizi lived in a land where this type of thinking was dominant, therefore Gardizi was not an absolute determinist. In his work, Gardizi showed his negative view towards Zoroastrianism and did not try to

avoid prejudice or neutrality (Khalifa and Ghaffari, 2019, pp. 14-15). He calls the Zoroastrian religion fire-worship and writes: "Ki Gehstasb, when he became king, during his time Zoroast bin Porshasb bin Firasp appeared from the people of the city of Moqan, Azerbaijan. And he presented the religion of Maghi and fire worship as a new religion. He calls the Zoroastrian religion fire-worship and writes: "Ki Ghstasb, when he became king, during his reign Zarasht bin Porshasb bin Firasp came out from the people of Azerbaijan, from the city of Moqan, and brought the Mughli religion and fire worship." (Gardizi, 1363, p. 51). Gardizi like Otabi describes Sultan Mahmud's war in India with an ideological perspective. "... So they drew lines and went to war. Almighty God gave victory to the Muslims and Amir Mahmud, may God have mercy on him, found turquoise and Jaipal was defeated. The infidels were destroyed and the Muslims had killed five thousand infidels in that battle..." (Gardizi, 1363, p. 386). And Gardizi writes about the construction of mosques in India: "And within this year [Sultan Mahmud] said that wherever there was space from the land of disbelief, they built comprehensive mosques and he ordered the teachers to be sent everywhere to teach the Hindus the conditions of Islam (Gardizi), 1363, p. 395).

Gardizi paid less attention to Ismailia than his contemporary historians, although he has the same general view of Ghaznavids as hostile to Ismailis. Unlike Otabi, who discussed the subject of "Tahrti" in detail, he ends the story of "Tahrti" in a few sentences (Khalifa and Ghafari, 2019, p. 15). Regarding the religious belief of Gardizi, Mojtaba Khalifa agrees with Elton Daniel that Gardizi was not a Shia, but the expression of devotion and friendship towards Hazrat Ali was a common and natural feeling in the eastern regions of the Islamic world. Using the prayer phrase "May God be pleased with him" for Imam Hussain, which is a common habit of Sunnis, is a sign of his being a Sunni (Khalifa and Ghafari, 2019, pp. 15-16).

## VII. HISTORIOGRAPHY METHOD

According to Khalifa and Ghafari, Abdul Hai Gardizi's emphasis on brevity has taken away from him the circle of any institutional criticism, especially the criticism of sources, and for this reason, he quoted the sources without criticism. Gardizi is not looking for the truth of the news and explaining it to the readers, and he does not make much effort in this regard. Gardizi avoids accepting the responsibilities of a professional historian by calling himself "Collector" or "Farazavarandeh". Although Gardizi's book was clearly influenced by Abu Rihan's works, this did not affect his historiography (Khalifa and Ghaffari, 2019, p. 17).

It is from the beginning of the history of Ghaznavid that Gardizi deals with historiography and criticism of sources; As if his history has just started from this episode. Gardizi begins the reign of Mahmud

Ghaznavi with these sentences: "We started telling the news of Yamin al-Dawlah, may God have mercy on him, according to the summary of all the news that we read, nothing was as good as his news." We heard those other things by listening and we read from books, and maybe the authors and narrators of the ballads and news have spoken and said more and more out of surprise and to make the book dearer.

But I consider the written material about Sultan Mahmud to be reliable because we saw the events with our own eyes and I personally witnessed the performance of Amir Mahmud in India... (Gardizi, 1363, p. 379). In these lines, Gardizi describes his historiography method, which is based on narrations based on written, oral and objective news. He criticizes the sources he used in writing the events of Pisaghaznavi; Now the basic question is why Gardizi doesn't criticize the sources or traditions from the beginning? Or does he not share his concerns about sources with the audience? Now he admits that he did not trust the previous sources, as he said that "maybe they did it for the sake of more charm and beauty in their writing."; So what has been the criterion for verifying the news?

Gardizi continues to write: "...so I collected the best and most amazing news from the government of this [Ghaznavi] family and brought it here and summarized it as much as I could. If I were to explain more, the discussion would be long, so I shortened the topics according to my choice (Gardizi, 1363, p. 380). In order to magnify his government as much as possible, Gardizi tries to remove any doubts from his readers. Therefore, he validates the accuracy of the subsequent narrations, including the events of Sultan Mahmud's rule, and emphasizes the objectivity of these news for reassurance. Gardizi shows that the legitimization of Ghaznavis has in practice influenced him so much that he makes the history of pre-Ghaznavis look unimportant and has no obligation to criticize news and sources.

Gardizi's criticism is mostly based on the criticism of individuals. These people do not constitute different people and usually include kings or emirs and caliphs. In the comparison between Amin and Mamun, Gardizi puts Mamun's righteousness in front of Amin (Khalifa and Ghafari, 2019, p. 18). Regarding Gardizi's explanatory method, it can be said that he has a dual approach under the influence of Matridi's thought. Sometimes he looks at the roots and causes of historical events, and sometimes he calls fate the cause of the event. Gardizi writes about the final story of Abu Muslim's life: "Because the time had come, Abu Muslim was killed" (Gardizi, 1363, p. 270). It is also about the fate of Sultan Masoud of Ghaznavi, which Gardizi mentions with a sad tone: "... and when Amir Shahid saw it like this and there was no place to use politics and war, he went to Rabat, Marigleh, and he was in Rabat at night, and when The other day, he came out and tried a lot. "The time of his death had come and he could not do

anything" (Gardizi, 1363, p. 440). In a general view, Gardizi has tried to avoid doubtful and repetitive sentences like "And God knows best...".

In a general view, Gardizi has tried to avoid doubtful and repetitive sentences like "And God knows best...". In some incidents, he sought to find the cause, a factor that made these narrations strong. Gardizi's writing style is such that he first mentions the essence of the event in one sentence and then mentions its causes in the next sentences, and in other words, he used narrative explanation. He pays attention to various causes, small and large causes and long-term factors. The reasons for Ustad Sis' uprising, the progress of Yaqub bin Leith, the execution of Hassanak Wazir, Sultan Masoud's attacks on the Trans-Nahr and even the reason for the strength of Kalanjar Castle are examples of Gardizi's explanations (Khalifa and Ghafari, 2019, pp. 19-20).

### VIII. CONCLUSION

Like most historians of that time, Gardizi also wanted to start his history from the mythological history of Iran, and the major part of it is the history of Islam. But Gardizi has quoted these parts from other books, including the history of Salami. Since Gardizi's main decision was to write the history of the Ghaznavids, Gardizi feels more responsible from the beginning of Sultan Mahmud's reign. In terms of typology, Gardizi's Zain al-Akhbar is a combination of three types of general, dynastic and local history. Before Gardizi, most of the historians wrote their works following the Arab historians in a documentary and hadith-oriented way. Accordingly, Gardizi can be considered as one of the

modern historians who tried to write history in a new way. Despite this, there is still a lot of narration in Zain al-Akhbar. But Gardizi has made a scientific analysis to some extent (especially the narrations related to the events of the Ghaznavid period). Gardizi's weakness is excessive adherence to summaries, a factor that has caused the historian's neglect of criticizing the sources and his lack of communication with the readers. In the final parts of the book, Gardizi introduces various tribes, customs and beliefs of other nations, which is considered one of the strengths of this work.

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