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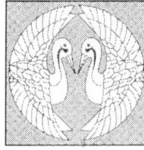
Front cover:

"The Sultan's repose in nature", miniature from 'Abd al-Raḥmān Jāmī's *Dīwān*, manuscript C 1697 in the collection of the St. Petersburg Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies, A. D. 1486/87, fol. 243 b, 7.7×7.7 cm.

Back cover:

"Portrait of some Moghol principal or influential grandee sitting in a chair (throne?) with a falcon on his right arm", miniature from the same manuscript, fol. 1b, 7.3×14.8 cm.

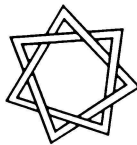
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(present-day the St. Petersburg Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies). The formation of the Badakhshan section of the St. Petersburg Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies collection was also aided by W. Ivanow, who brought manuscripts from Afghanistan Badakhshan (Chitral, Sarykol, Khanza, Kunjut).

The major part of the collection described here consists of manuscripts gathered during a five-year expedition conducted in 1959—1963 in mountainous regions of Tajikistan — Shugnan, Ishkashim, Dasht-i Qal'a, Rushan. This expedition led to the acquisition of more than 300 manuscripts (29 of which are described in the catalogue) and lithographs. The Badakhshan collection is of special interest not only to specialists on the history of the Ismā'īlism in Central Asia; among the original works in this collection are many folkloric texts, as well as poetic works by local authors such as the Badakhshan Sūfī poet, artist, astronomer, and musician Mubārak Wakhanī (d. 1905), Shāh Muḥabbat-Shāhzāda (d. 1959), Mūllā Timī, Shamsīr-beg, and others.

Among the catalogues published under the editorial guidance of M. Mujani is an original edition which first appeared thanks to support from the Mar'ashi Najafi Foundation. It is a description of a private collection of Muslim manuscripts carried out by Sh. Vakhidov and A. Erkinov

(Tashkent State University). The library belonged to the well-known Central Asian copyist and calligrapher, Faydallāh Khwāja b. 'Ināyatallāh Khwāja, also known as Rawnaqī (d. 1978). The Rawnaqī library is located in the city of Shahrīsabz (Uzbekistan). It contains manuscripts of 116 works in 79 volumes and more than 100 lithograph books in Persian (Tajik), Chaghatay (Uzbek), Arabic and Russian. The copies were executed primarily in the late nineteenth — early twenties century and present a broad range of subjects: books of poetry and prose, collections of treatises on theology, philosophy, history, ethics, Muslim exegesis, Sūfism, and fiction. This catalogue also displays some of the flaws noted above: it lacks both indices and a thematic division of material.

Despite serious shortcomings which the Persian versions of the catalogues reveal one must admit that the whole project is of exclusive importance to those working in the field of manuscript investigation in the Middle East. They are provided with helpful reference works which were unavailable to them until recently. Possibly a further publication of catalogues in Persian needs more careful attitude to reproducing necessary apparatus in general, which can contribute to the future editions value. In any case, I hope that this project, which aims to publish and republish catalogues of Persian manuscript collections on the territory of Russia and the CIS, will be successfully continued in the future.

F. Abdullaeva

N. A. Dobronravin. *Arabograficheskaia pis'mennaia traditsiia Zapadnoi Afriki*. Sankt-Peterburg: Sankt-Peterburgskii gosudarstvennyi universitet, Vostochnyi fakul'tet, 1999, 178 str., ill.

N. A. Dobronravin. *The Arabic-Script Written Tradition in West Africa*. St. Petersburg: St. Petersburg State University, Oriental Faculty, 1999, 178 pp., ill.

Arabic-language and Arabic-script culture in Africa has long been a marginal area within the study of Muslim culture. Recently, however, interest in the subject has been on the rise throughout the world. It is sufficient to mention the journal *Sudanic Africa*, or that the long-awaited "African" issues of *Verzeichnis der orientalistischen Handschriften in Deutschland* are finally appearing, the first volumes of "Arabic Literature of Africa" have been published, and the al-Furqan Islamic Heritage Foundation is publishing catalogues of manuscripts in African collections. Petersburg's Africanists have also joined in the study of this subject. Among works which have recently appeared are A. A. Zhukov's *Suakhili: lazyk i literatura* (Swahili: Language and Literature), St. Petersburg, 1997, and V. Vydrine's *Sur l'écriture mandingue et mandé en caractères arabes*, see *Mandenkan*, No. 33 (Paris, 1998).

The work by Dobronravin is in this row of publications, which appeared recently. As the title indicates, this work intends to pursue the topic on a more general level. The book opens with a brief foreword by O. Redkin. The author's introduction deals with the important concept of

"Muslim languages". It should be noted that the term "confessional languages" has long earned its rightful place, yet still requires clarification. While providing a detailed and multifaceted examination of the term and the phenomenon which stands behind it, the author relies on a vast range of material of the most varied geographic and cultural origins. He also presents an account of the history of his work's composition and the sources which were available to him.

The first chapter — "Arabic writing before and after Latinisation" — provides a thorough treatment of the phenomenon of written literature in general, variants of Latinised writing in particular, the capabilities of the Arabic script in conveying any language, and the extra-linguistic significance of such projects. A detailed history of the question is also given.

The second chapter — "Regional Arabic-script traditions" — is devoted to an even more thorough description of the phenomenon in all areas of the Muslim world. Illustrations accompany the material.

Only in the third chapter (beginning on page 72) does the author turn to "West-African literatures based on the Arabic script". The exposition here also moves from the general to the specific: from the history of the Arabic script's penetration into West Africa to concrete regional systems. The author identifies eight such systems. A surprise is the mention of a West African Arabic-script tradition in the New World.

The last chapter — "Manuscripts in the Hausa language: an overview of collections" — is of special interest to *Manuscripta Orientalia's* audience. True, there is

mention of manuscripts in African languages and variants of their publication in the preceding chapter. Unfortunately, narration here is too condensed. The chapter examines writing materials (wood, paper), ink, storage cases, the paleographic features of Hausa manuscripts and their classification on the basis of distinctive forms and purpose, dating (one of the most difficult questions in the study of African manuscripts), and the geography of distribution. The author here enumerates those places where manuscripts are stored, the extent of cataloguing, and the existence of published editions, beginning with Africa and ending with Europe. A minor sensation awaits us: the manuscript collection of the St. Petersburg Branch of the Institute of

Oriental Studies contains several Sudanic manuscripts. Previously, they were erroneously thought to be of Maghribine origin. The book is richly illustrated, which is an aid in acquainting oneself with material that has been little studied.

Here is a volume attesting to the increasing interest in Arabic-script written tradition in West Africa. In the breadth of its material and detail of its exposition, Dobronravin's work extends far beyond the bounds of African studies, and even Islamic studies. It will certainly be of interest to the broad scholarly audience and to those engaged in Muslim literature investigation.

I. Wojewódzki
