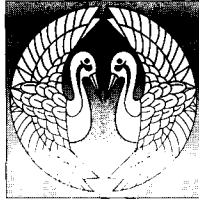


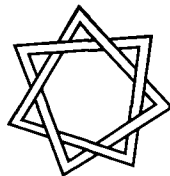
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PRESENTING THE COLLECTIONS

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THE COLLECTION OF ORIENTAL MANUSCRIPTS IN THE ST. PETERSBURG BRANCH OF THE INSTITUTE OF ORIENTAL STUDIES AND ITS INVESTIGATION

The foundation for the vast collection of Oriental manuscripts in the St. Petersburg Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences was established in 1818 with the foundation of the Asiatic Museum by the St. Petersburg Academy of Sciences. It became a priceless treasury of knowledge, a source of information on the history and cultural heritage of the East. Among its eighty thousand manuscripts written in 65 living and dead eastern languages there are many unique and rare literary works and historical treatises which help scholars to reconstruct the events of the past and the everyday life of the Oriental peoples in the Ancient and the Medieval times.

The Asiatic Museum of the Academy of Sciences [1], collecting, classifying and cataloguing of Oriental books and manuscripts becoming its main function, has made a remarkable contribution to the development of Oriental studies in Russia. Not only professional Museum curators and scholars took part in its collecting activities, but also state officials, diplomats, travelers and amateur collectors of antiquities [2]. Collectors' donations were not the only source nourishing the Museum. Beginning with the 1890s the Asiatic Museum turned to have been the leading scientific centre which provided the research support for numerous expeditions to Central Asia and the Caucasus organized and carried out by the Russian Geographical Society and later by the Russian Committee for the Study of Central and Eastern Asia. The discoveries made by Russian geographers and archaeologists in Central Asia revealed numerous unique texts. The manuscripts recovered by S. F. Oldenburg in Eastern Turkestan and Dunhuang (the expeditions of 1909–1910 and of 1914–1915) formed the Dunhuang fund of Chinese manuscripts. Manuscripts collected by S. E. Malov and N. N. Krotkov constituted the Uighur manuscript fund. The unique collection assembled by N. F. Petrovsky included rare Sanskrit Buddhist manuscripts and various texts in the Saka, old Tibetan, and Tocharian languages. P. K. Kozlov, a famous Russian traveler, discovered a whole Tangut (now a dead language) library (the expedition of 1907–1909).

At present the collection of the St. Petersburg Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies, which was founded in 1930 on the basis of the Asiatic Museum, presents the largest in Russia and one of the most prominent world collections of Oriental manuscripts. The study of these sources containing invaluable data on the political, social and spiritual history of the East allow us to estimate the contribution made by the Oriental peoples into the treasury of the World Civilisation. To be exact, the collection of the Institute comprises 85,639 items. These are manuscripts and fragments (50,201 items, including 35 papyri fragments), xylographs (32,877), and documents (1,393). All these texts and manuscripts are distributed over the following 31 funds: a) 25 manuscript funds, including not only manuscripts, but the block-prints as well; b) 1 fund of xylographs comprising Chinese block-prints; c) 1 fund of official documents; d) 1 fund of works of art (including albums); e) 1 fund of estampages; f) 1 cartographical fund; and g) 1 photo- and microfilm fund.

Among the manuscripts preserved in the collection there are Chinese manuscripts from Dunhuang — 19,092; Arabographic manuscripts (Arabic, Persian, Turkish, Afghan, Kurdish, etc.) — 9,774; Serindica (Uighur, Sanskrit, Saka, Sogdian, Tocharian, etc.) — 4,652; Tangut — 4,600; Mongolian — 4,067; Hebrew — 1,251 (including 24 scrolls); Indian (Sanskrit, Pali, new Indian languages) — 624; Georgian — 590; Chinese (fund “Nova”) — 379; Armenian — 410; Manchurian — 296; Chinese from Khara-Khoto — 139; Ethiopian — 119; Japanese — 113; Korean — 56; Judaica-Persica — 44; Syriac — 34; Samaritan — 40, Egyptian and Coptic papyri — 35; Malayan — 13 (a part of Arabographic manuscripts), etc.

The collection also comprises numerous xylographs: Tibetan — 21,789 (including 3,143 doublets); Mongolian — 3,442; Tangut — 3,765; Chinese — 4,581; Japanese — 683; Manchurian — 860; Chinese (from Khara-Khoto) — 206; Korean — 156. There are also 1,393 Arabographic (Persian, Turkish, Arabic) documents, 195 works of art and 973 estampages.

The distinctive feature of the Institute collection is the presence of several unique funds: monuments of Tangut literature (8,361), Sogdian documents from the mount Mug (77), Old Uighur texts (4,000), Chinese manuscripts from Dunhuang, ancient Buddhist Sanskrit and Saka texts and a collection of Tibetan manuscripts from Khara-Khoto.

All the collection's materials can be divided into two groups. The first one includes all manuscripts, documents and xylographs written in the languages living in our days: Iranian, Turkish, Arabic, Chinese, Tibetan, Mongolian, Manchurian, Indian and others. To the second group belong texts in dead languages: Egyptian and Coptic papyri, Syrian, Samaritan, Sogdian, Sanskrit, Saka, Tocharian, and Tangut manuscripts and documents, as well as Tangut xylographs.

The period of collecting materials continued till the end of the 1930s. The admirable collections formed in the course of 120 years remained to be little known beyond a close circle of specialists. Only few of these funds were available to scholars through concise catalogues, irregularly published lists of new acquisitions and several survey articles.

In 1951 the staff of the Institute started to work on the scientific catalogue of the whole collection basing upon the principles of describing manuscripts developed by that time. This labour-consuming program had been accomplished by the 1970s. Two types of scientific description of the funds have been produced: complete thematic and concise thematic or alphabet lists. The optimal way would be to have a published concise alphabet catalogue of each fund containing all basic data on its manuscripts along with special detailed descriptions arranged by subjects: history, biography, hagiography, etc. By now we have concise catalogues of the Arabic and Persian-Tadjik manuscript funds, of the Chinese xylographs, of approximately one fifth of the manuscripts from Dunhuang and the catalogues of the Mongolian and Tangut manuscripts (the last is in print) [3]. Other funds are represented by detailed catalogues [4], not counting numerous surveys, lists and articles. In this way approximately 95% of the funds have been catalogued.

Taking into account the experience acquired in the course of the work on the manuscripts and the contents of the funds, the project of producing a special work regarding the development of the Oriental manuscript-tradition in different historico-cultural regions could be realized. A joint monograph in two volumes "Manuscript in the Culture of the Peoples of the East" has been published recently by a group of scholars, members of the research-staff of the Institute [5]. There are also several monographs and articles investigating the manuscript-tradition of different Oriental peoples written by other scientists. Among them there are the work by A. B. Khalidov dedicated to Arabic manuscripts [6]. The work by V. V. Kushev on Afghan manuscripts has also appeared, where, on the materials of the collection of the 18th—19th centuries Pashto manuscripts, the author is demonstrating the development of the Afghan literary and manuscript tradition [7]. The study of the manuscripts of the collection underlined appearing a number of researches on the cultural history of the Arab countries and of Medieval Iran [8].

Much has been done during the last few years to reveal, study and publish the most valuable historical and literary

works of the collection. No investigation into the past can be fruitful without a detailed study of the literary sources describing social and cultural traditions of the peoples of the East, moreover that these traditions are still preserved in many Oriental countries. In this connection modern developments in the field of Islamic studies are of special importance. These works provided materials for the recently published collective monograph "Islam. A Reference Encyclopaedia", where many aspects of the history of Islam are elucidated.

More than a quarter of a century ago a special publication series devoted to the most important texts has been founded on the initiative of Academicians B. G. Gafurov and I. A. Orbeli, and of the chief editor of the Oriental Literature department of the "Nauka" publishing house O. K. Dreier. Since that time it has been recognised and welcomed by scholars from many countries. About 150 texts have been published in this series. Now this work is continued by the recently established publishing centre "Peterburgskoe Vostokovedenie" directed by its founder I. A. Alimov. From 1994 this centre is publishing manuscript texts in the series "Monuments of Oriental Culture (St. Petersburg Scientific Series)" [9].

More than sixty years ago N. A. Nevsky began to explore the unique fund of Tangut manuscripts. By now many Tangut texts have been deciphered, which made it possible to reconstruct the history of the Tangut state in the 10th—13th centuries. The Tangut fund (8,365 items), manuscripts and xylographs from the above mentioned collection discovered by P. K. Kozlov, still continue to provide evidence on the history and culture of the Tanguts. Recently a fundamental study of the Tangut law has been accomplished by E. I. Kychanov [10].

The publication of the Tangut translation of the famous Chinese military treatise *Sun-tzû* was prepared by K. B. Kepping. The publication is even more important, taking into account that this version of the original writing has been lost. Another publication by the same author is worth noting. It is the Tangut translation of the Chinese anthology *Lei lin* ("The Forest of Categories"), its original also lost. It provides rich materials for reconstructing the grammar of the dead Tangut language [11].

The study of the Tangut materials resulted in the appearance of several works on the Tangut culture, among them the book by A. P. Terentyev-Katansky dedicated to the Tangut xylograph and manuscript tradition [12]. It should be mentioned that all works by the St. Petersburg Tangutologists receive wide response from scholars both in Russia and abroad. One of the most prominent publications of the past years, the great Tangut explanatory dictionary "The Sea of Letters" [13], was reprinted in China in 1983 with many additions and vast commentaries.

The Dunhuang fund, the collection of Chinese and of a small number of Old Uighur, Tibetan and Saka manuscripts, constantly attracts scholars' attention. In the course of the last two decades many of these texts has been published by the Institute team of sinologists directed by L. N. Menshikov. The first results of this project were highly estimated by scholars. The project received the award of the French Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres in 1964.

Two of these publications deserve special mentioning. The first one is the publication of four scrolls of a previously unknown 9th century Chinese literary work of the

pien-wen genre — Chinese folk novels — prepared by L. N. Menshikov [14]. It is an important contribution to the studies of Chinese medieval literature and ideology. The other one, made by L. I. Chuguyevsky, is the result of many years of his work on the Chinese economic documents of the Dunhuang fund [15]. These documents provide evidence on the development of social and economic life not only in the Dunhuang region but also in China and in Central Asia in general. They reveal to us many sides of human life, as it was more than a thousand years ago: how plots of land were rented or sold, how movable and immovable property was exchanged or bought, what regulations were there in Buddhist monasteries and in lay communities settled around. In 1991 the Institute undertook, jointly with the Shanghai publishing house “Ancient Book”, the publication of the whole corpus of Dunhuang manuscripts from the collection. The first five volumes of this fundamental edition have already appeared.

The fund of Tibetan manuscripts and xylographs has been waiting for a long time to be explored. Only recently a small group of specialists has accomplished the inventory of the fund. From 1994, on the initiative of Dr Michael Roach (U.S.A.) the making of the digital electronic catalogue of the fund has been started. A group of Tibetan monks is taking part in this work under the direction of L. S. Savitsky and V. L. Uspensky. Now the making of the catalogue is on the way. Meanwhile the plans for its study are being drawn and the most valuable works are prepared for publication. Recently a facsimile edition of one unique xylograph and of a manuscript has appeared containing a collection of lyric poems by Tsanyan Jamtso, the Sixth Dalai Lama, Tibetan poet of the late 17th—early 18th century [16]. This collection of poems seems to be the only known book of Tibetan lay poetry. It should be added that this year V. Uspensky has published an article dealing with another Tibetan manuscript — the illustrated text of the Fifth Dalai Lama's “Secret Visionary Autobiography” [17].

The collection of ancient Buddhist texts from Chinese Turkestan is really unique. It contains records of Buddhist literature in several ancient languages — Sanskrit, Saka and Tocharian — made in the 5th—9th centuries A.D. Its scientific value is all the more significant, because even in India, whence from Buddhism had originated, none of these records have survived. Indologists from St. Petersburg continue the work on this collection started by Academician S. F. Oldenburg. Publications of some of the texts appeared already in several Russian and European scientific journals. Recently G. M. Bongard-Levin and M. I. Vorobyeva-De-syatovskaya have published a number of Indian texts from Central Asia [18].

The study of the manuscripts from Chinese Turkestan revealed many new facts about the peoples inhabiting Central Asia in the Ancient and Early Medieval period and about their migrations. Several texts in Khotanese-Saka and Tocharian have been published, developing the study of these dead languages, as well as several canonical books of the two major branches of Buddhism — the Hināyāna and the Mahāyāna — previously known only in Chinese and Tibetan translations. These texts prove that in the 5th—9th centuries East Turkestan was the main centre of the Buddhist teaching, whence from it was introduced to other regions of Asia. It also played an important part in the propagation of Indian literary and cultural traditions.

In the fund of Sogdian texts an important place belongs to the collection of documents found in 1932—1933 among the ruins of a fortress on the Mount Mug, 120 km east of Samarkand. These documents deciphered and published in the 1930s—1960s constitute a very important source on the history of Central Asia in the Pre-Islamic period (the second half of the 7th—early 8th century) and on the economics, social relations, religion and culture of Sogd in the Early Medieval time [19]. These documents are still attracting the attention of linguists, historians and archaeologists. They help to interpret the data collected from archaeological excavations and to understand the contents of some newly discovered Sogdian texts. Recent investigations into the grammar of the Sogdian language, which present an important contribution to Oriental philology, are also basing upon the texts from the Mug fortress [20].

Another part of the Sogdian fund, the collection of Sogdian manuscript fragments from East Turkestan, owes its origin to the activities of Russian diplomats in the late 19th—early 20th century and to the discoveries made by the Russian expeditions directed by S. F. Oldenburg. Most of these fragments belong to Sogdian translations of Buddhist and Manichaean texts. The publication of the Sogdian materials from Central Asia preserved in the collection was accomplished in 1980. At present the investigation of these materials and their publication are being carried out by the specialists of the Institute [21].

Among the works of the last years the reading and publication of the ancient Khwārazmian documents on leather and wood coming from the excavations of the palace of Toprak-kala (3d century A.D.) should be mentioned. This work, started in the 1950s by S. P. Tolstov, was accomplished by V. A. Livshits [22]. The documents are now preserved in the St. Petersburg Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies. They provide new evidence on the character of social relations in Central Asia in the Early Medieval Period.

The study of Arabic, Persian and Turkish manuscripts expands our knowledge of the history, economic development and culture of the states and peoples of the Near and the Middle East, and of Central Asia. The translation of the “Book on Creeds and Sects” by al-Shahrastānī, a 12th century Muslim theologian, has appeared in the series “Literary Monuments of the East” [23]. This work is a concise encyclopaedia of religions and religious teachings widespread among the peoples of the Near East and the Mediterranean in the Early Medieval Period. Al-Shahrastānī's work is most important for understanding the cultural development of the Muslim society of that time. The translation is basing upon the Cairo edition of the treatise; one of the earliest copies of this work belonging to the collection of the Institute enabled the translator to verify the text and to improve the translation of several passages.

New possibilities for the study of the medieval history of Khazakhstan and East Turkestan were opened by the publication of the “Chronicle” by Maḥmūd Churās (17th century) [24]. The publication is basing mainly upon the Persian manuscript from the Russian State library in Moscow. Over 60 Persian manuscripts from the collection of the Institute allowed to provide it with a vast commentary on the text by Maḥmūd Churās, making it an important contribution not only to textology but also to philology and to the history of Central Asia.

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Fig. 1

經傳告長者子善德汝行請維摩詰
 以 為疾
 尊世留余之特乃告善德長者才呼友
 宗難解而俯道華基仰望如來入平而
 專聽度氣吾為維摩外病我見居士
 煙病思向評而如渴待漿常傳言而如
 索扣吾便從頭勅命從舍利弗等介推
 詞我逐次弟親空自殊勸位中人謙退
 皆言少辯盡道勸才彼向者各說本因
 在對者咸彰過比善誚彼惣道不任
 佛使宜可暫停衡命汝差俊差今善

Fig. 2

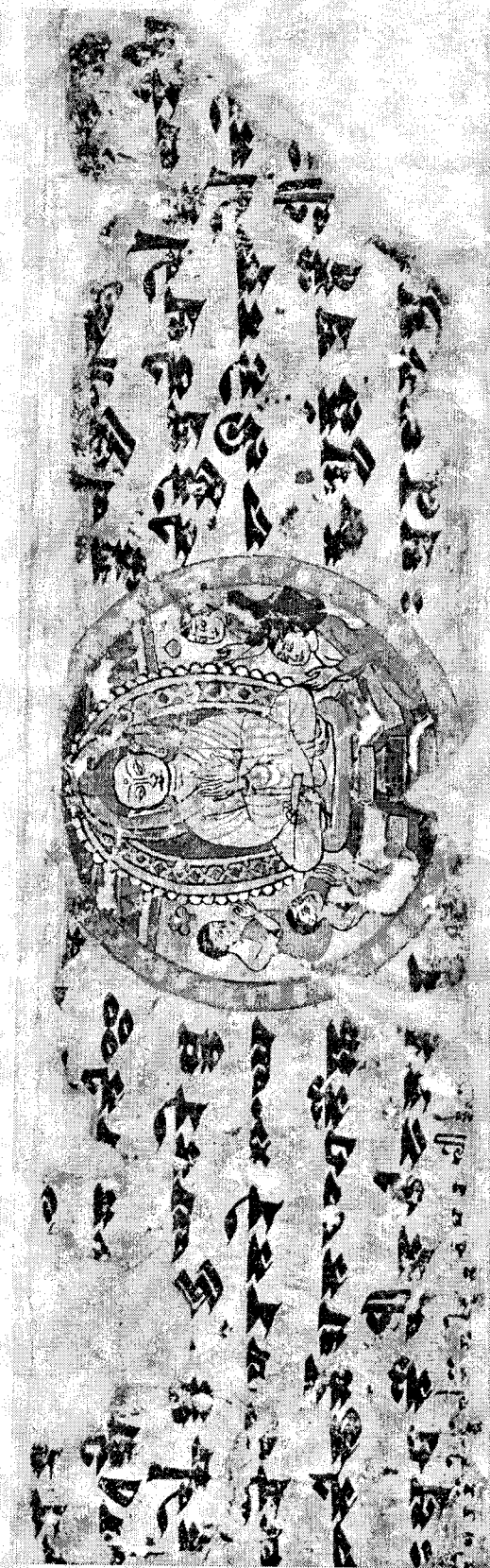


Fig. 3

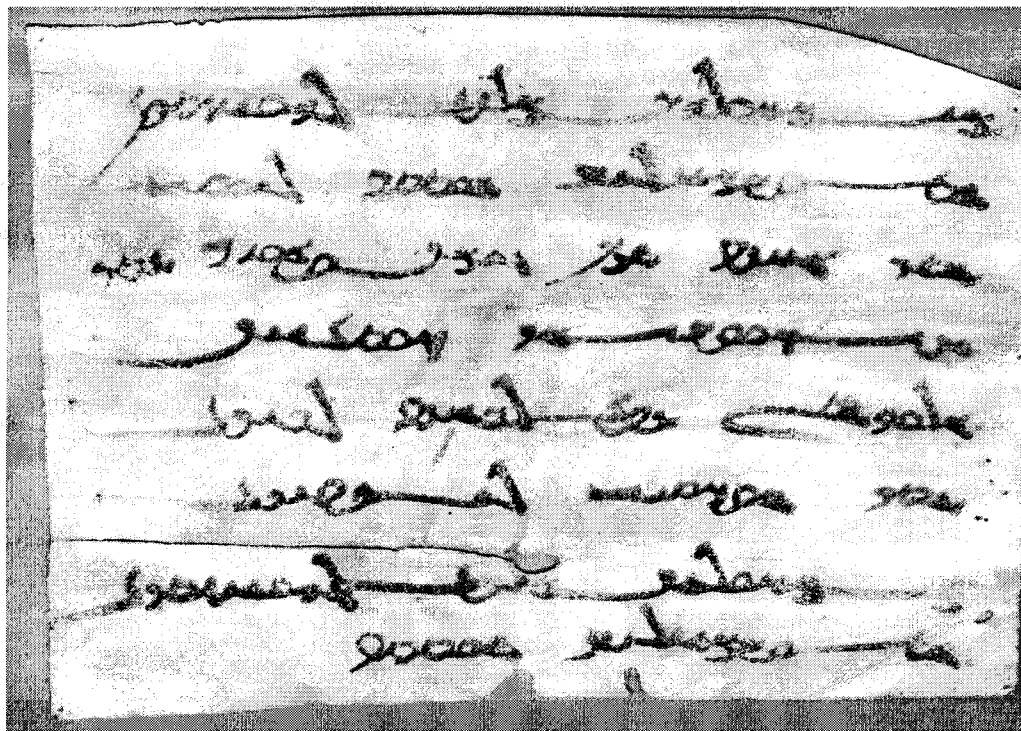


Fig. 4

A rare Turkish treatise on the history of the Janissary corps — the text of the original with a Russian translation and commentaries — has recently been published by I. Ye. Petrosyan. It expands our knowledge of the military, political and economic system of the Ottoman Empire in the late Medieval Period [25].

A series of publications by M. A. Salahetdinova on *Sharaf-nāma-i shāhī* (“The Book of Shah’s Glory”) is introducing a new source on the history of Central Asia of the second half of the 16th century. The book was written by Ḥāfiẓ-i Tanīsh from Bukhārā. The publication with a Russian translation and translator’s commentaries is basing upon the manuscript of the Institute collection [26]. This work presents many new facts on the political history of Central Asia, it may help to understand its ethnic history, especially the history Uzbek and the Khazakh peoples. A Persian manuscript containing the memoirs of Barnābādī, a Herat landlord, written at the beginning of the 19th century, has been published. This work is a valuable source for the history and culture of Afghanistan in the 17th—18th centuries [27].

The examples brought forward here do not cover the whole range of works connected with the description and study of the manuscript collection of the Institute of Oriental Studies. Oriental textology, as we know by the experience of many years of work over manuscripts, makes the foundation of almost all important studies of the history and the cultural heritage of the East. It is evident that the publication of any new text, especially if it is rare or unique, be

it a chronicle, a treatise on philosophy, a canonical religious text or a poem, is significant far beyond the frames of purely textological work. As a rule, publications of this kind stimulate historico-cultural studies and often open new directions in the field of oriental studies. The results of the Tangut, Dunhuang and Sogdian studies mentioned above confirm the importance of textology within the multiform system of oriental studies.

The scholars of St. Petersburg working in the field of oriental textology realise the scientific and public significance of their work. Numerous reviews on their works, especially if these are publications of new texts, which appear in Eastern countries testify to the wide public interest towards the results of their investigations. There are many cases when publications of Oriental texts made in Russia were reprinted in other countries.

Our foreign colleagues and representatives of public circles, who often visit the Institute in St. Petersburg, recognise the significance of the efforts of its staff to preserve the collection, as well as the importance of their scholarly activities. Every new article, every publication of a literary or historical text is accepted by the peoples of the East as a sign of attention and respect towards their culture and their traditions. Now old manuscripts serve the case of improving relations between different peoples, help them to better understand each other. The realisation of this public significance of their work was always and is still inspiring all those who dedicated their life to the study of Oriental manuscripts.

ناظران در بلاغت و افاق است و ارقان غرض صاحب را اتفاق که علم
 که قصص آیات و نصوص و آیات موضوع آن فن تواند بود و قرائد نواید آن و مولد علوم
 آن زیاد و از اینست که بشیرین زبانی قلم و سکر فاشی رقم سخن حسن تهر و حدیث
 لطیف سخن بر آن آید تواند نمود انکه و هم نویست هم که است سخن است درین سخن نخست
 و ازین است که کلام معجز نظام ملک علام تم اکره و عم انعام شریف است بر عیادت و کثرت
 درین باب سکه گان فی ستم زانین با سبایا
 انوشا علم تاریخ و اخبار ان
 جهانیت روشن با نواران | تاریخ دانست اخبار و سیر | که چون در پیش اطوار و سیر
 تاریخ از انبیا و رسل | خبر ما بداندیش از جزو کل | تاریخ دوران از یاد بر و
 که تخت سلیمان چنان با و برود | از تاریخ در ملک برود پدلی | که چشمید کی بود کا و پس کی
 و در مطالعات تواریخ مجل فایده که روی میدهند اینست که چون در قرون و ادوار و سپنون
 اطوار خوقین ریش مقدار و پلاطین با اقدار تاملی واقعی و نقلی ثانی نمایند و بکن ادراک
 و بمن فهم در آنک دریا بند که تصاریف آیام و لغات مشهور و اعوام بران فرقه و خجسته فرجام
 اتفاق کرد و جز آنرا نیک و بد و اخبار خیر و شر فایده بر صیایف روزگار و صفایح این دنیا
 نقش پذیرند اگر از انبای ملوک و شرفند در این جهان داری و طریقت کامکار می
 بر سوم و عادات ایشان نمایند و در بزم و زرم بقواعد و مراسیم آن فیه رفیع امکان اقتدا نماید
 و اگر از سبب ایراصد و بکن آن شمایل خوب و خصایل مرغوب که سپرد فقر مجموع کرم و فدک
 مجامع ششم است متحلی و متخلق کردند و عجایب تقلبات را سپر مایه سپاری و سوشیاری
 شمارند و شیشه مرضیه را است کاری را بهب رست کاری شناخته سپر مفاخرت بر
 اهرازند | اندر باد رستنی بجرگاه تمام | سپر بر سلیمان علیه السلام
 با خورشیدی که بر باد رست | انگل آنکه با دانش داور | نموده میشود که منزه می بود
 خاکیماری بی اعتباری شمس بن میر محمد البخاری ابن اللالی فی المساکک البخاری
 با وجود تعب طلب وجه علم کتب و ادب در شان تحصیل علوم و معیت و تکمیل معارف
 یقینیه در میان جوانی و عقوان زندگانی همواره صورت این معنی بر لوح اندیش چهره

Fig. 5

Notes

1. On the history of the Asiatic Museum see B. Dorn, *Das Asiatische Museum der Kaiserlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu St. Petersburg* (St. Petersburg, 1946); *Aziatskii Muzei Rossiiskoi Akademii nauk. 1818—1918* (The Asiatic Museum of the Russian Academy of Sciences. 1818—1918) (Petrograd, 1920); *Aziatskii Muzei — Leningradskoe otdelenie Instituta vostokovedeniia AN SSSR* (The Asiatic Museum — the Leningrad Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences) (Moscow, 1972).

2. On the history and the study of the collections see D. I. Tikhonov, “Vostochnye rukopisi Instituta vostokovedeniia AN SSSR” (“Oriental manuscripts of the Institute of Oriental Studies of the USSR Academy of Sciences”), *Uchenye zapiski Instituta vostokovedeniia AN SSSR*, VI (1953), pp. 3—33; *idem*, “Sokrovishcha Aziatskogo Muzeia i ikh sobirатели. Istoricheskii ocherk” (“Treasures of the Asiatic Museum and their collectors. Historical survey”), *Kultura narodov zarubezhnoi Azii* (Moscow, 1973), pp. 4—33; Yu. A. Petrosian, E. N. Tëmkin, “Izuchenie sobraniia vostochnykh rukopisei Instituta vostokovedeniia AN SSSR. Opisaniie fondov, izdanie i issledovanie tekstov” (“The study of the collection of Oriental manuscripts of the Institute of Oriental Studies of the USSR Academy of Sciences, description of the funds, publications and study of the texts”), *Arkheograficheskii ezhegodnik. 1983* (Moscow, 1985), pp. 27—36; Yu. A. Petrosian, “Kolleksiia vostochnykh rukopisei Instituta vostokovedeniia AN SSSR i eë izuchenie” (“The collection of Oriental manuscripts of the Institute of Oriental Studies of the USSR Academy of Sciences and its study”), *Vestnik Akademii Nauk SSSR*, No. 7 (1985), pp. 49—59. For a brief survey of the collection see also *Vostokovednye fondy krupneishikh bibliotek Sovetskogo Soiuz*a (Oriental Funds in the Principal Libraries of the USSR) (Moscow, 1963), pp. 30—50.

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Illustrations

- Fig. 1.** “The Sea of Letters”, a xylograph (call number Tang. 14, No. 212), 12th century, fol. 57b, 17.5 × 28.5 cm.
- Fig. 2.** “Pien-wen about Wei Mo-chie”, a scroll (call number F 252), 10th century, the beginning of the text, 24.0 × 20.5 cm.
- Fig. 3.** *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka-sūtra*, a manuscript (call number SI P/12 + 13), 7th century, the end of the sixth and the beginning of the seventh chapters, fol. 146b, 20.0 × 9.0 cm.
- Fig. 4.** A Sogdian document (leather), call number A 3, 8th century, the letter of Sogdian King Dēwāštīč, 10.5 × 13.5 cm.
- Fig. 5.** Ḥāfiẓ-i Tanīsh, *Sharaf-nāma-i shāhī*, a manuscript (call number D-88), 16th century, fol. 3a, 19.5 × 33.5 cm.