

АКАДЕМИЯ НАУК СССР  
ОТДЕЛЕНИЕ ИСТОРИИ

# КУЛЬТУРА НАРОДОВ ВОСТОКА

*Материалы и исследования*



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ОРДЕНА ТРУДОВОГО КРАСНОГО ЗНАМЕНИ  
ИНСТИТУТ ВОСТОКОВЕДЕНИЯ

**РУКОПИСНАЯ  
КНИГА  
В КУЛЬТУРЕ  
НАРОДОВ  
ВОСТОКА**

*ОЧЕРКИ*

*Книга первая*

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The present edition is the first volume of the book entitled *A Manuscript in the Oriental Culture*. It has been written by the scholars from the Leningrad branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies of the USSR Academy of Sciences and their colleagues from other USSR centres of oriental studies. This publication is, in a sense, a logical outcome of multi-year research work into oriental manuscripts conducted by a team of specialists from the Leningrad branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies. The Soviet and foreign orientalists know quite well the collection of oriental manuscripts belonging to the Institute of Oriental studies of the USSR Academy of Sciences which is kept in Leningrad. It is one of the richest oriental collections in the world and the largest in the USSR by the number of manuscript traditions represented in it. For a quarter of a century many scholars of the Leningrad branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies have been studying and describing manuscripts and compiling catalogues of this collection and introducing into scholarly use accurate data on the important original sources of the history and culture of the Ancient and Middle Age East. Dozens of catalogues have been published since then and the contents of almost all funds of this collection disclosed. The Institute of Oriental Studies and particularly its branch in Leningrad are carrying out an immense and ever-growing scope of work studying and publishing the written monuments which are extremely important for the study of the historic and cultural processes in the East. A special series well-known throughout the world — *Written monuments of the Orient*, — has been started in the Academy of Sciences of the USSR.

In the course of scholarly description and interpretation of oriental manuscripts and when preparing them for publication the collective of scholars in the Leningrad Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies has collected plenty of facts and important data on the history of manuscripts in the ancient time and Middle Ages in the Orient. The results of the previous research work and the accumulated knowledge had to be made public. All the wealth of the ancient and medieval oriental civilizations was fixed in manuscripts and reached us through them. The art of manuscripts existed till the middle of the XIX century, when printed 557

books started replacing them. It was a manuscript book which passed cultural heritage from generation to generation in the Orient for hundreds of years longer than in the West. Not only culture but also a whole branch of material production was closely associated with a manuscript, too. Manufacture of writing materials, paper and the stationery, manuscript texts, copying, their ornamentation, book-binding, manuscript sale and the organization of book-stores and libraries were business of and provided means of subsistence for thousands of people in the Oriental countries. A manuscript book has always been greatly honoured in the Orient — in the ancient and medieval times, and nowadays. We, the orientalists, specially esteem the manuscript because it is a primary source of information about a great contribution made by the Oriental nations into the world culture. The contemporary Orient is well known to have close, at times rather strong, links with its remote and not too distant past. These traditions continue playing an important role in life of Eastern countries, which bears certain imprint even today. We shall not be able to understand problems of today's Orient if we do not study its strong traditions. Oriental manuscripts tell us how these traditions appeared and developed. They are a magnificent and eloquent monument to these traditions — cultural and social.

Therefore, the authors' collective had every reason to give on the pages of the two volumes a panorama of history of the manuscript and its art in the Orient. They have proceeded from their firm conviction that the historical and cultural processes in the Orient cannot be studied without finding out how word of science and art of the ancient and medieval oriental peoples was fixed, accumulated and spread.

The present volume includes descriptions of the manuscript traditions of the Middle, Near East and Central Asian peoples. It has also a glossary of special terms and indexes.

The second volume describes the manuscript writing art of the peoples of India and the Far East.