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BOOK AND SOFTWARE REVIEW

'Ajā'ib ad-Dunyā (*Chudesa mira*). **Kriticheskiĭ tekst, perevod s persidskogo, vvedenie, kommentarii i ukazateli L. P. Smirnovoĭ. Moskva: Nauka, 1993, 540 str. — Pamiatniki pis'mennosti Vostoka, LXXXIII.**

'Ajā'ib al-Dunyā (*Wonders of the World*). **Critical text, Russian translation from Persian, introduction, commentary and indices by L. P. Smirnova. Moscow: Nauka Publishing House, 1993, 540 pp. — Literary Monuments of the Orient, LXXXIII.**

The publication is a volume of the well-known series. The work under review comprises preface, critical text, Russian translation of the text, commentary to the translation and supplements including: 1. Abbreviations; 2. Bibliography; 3. Index of geographical and ethnic names; 4. Index of persons; 5. Index of subjects; 6. Abbreviations used in the Persian text; 7. Summary.

In the detailed preface L. Smirnova considers the history of the genre of *'ajā'ib* and of the monument itself, gives a study of the paleography and philological peculiarities of its manuscripts. She also considers the problems of the authorship and of the dating, as well as of the sources of the monument. Basing on the textological comparison of three manuscripts of *'ajā'ib* (the manuscript preserving in the Manuscript Collection of the St. Petersburg branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences, call No. A 253, ff. 87a—228b; the manuscript from the collection of B. G. Browne at the Cambridge University Oriental Library, call No. G 11 (12), ff. 44b—72b and the copy from the depository of the Library of the Majlis in Tehran (37503), which came from the private collection of Mālik al-Shu'arā Dr. M. T. Bahar), L. Smirnova comes to the conclusion that the Cambridge and Tehran copies are more close to the author's text than the manuscripts from St. Petersburg.

The monument belongs to the genre which was very popular in the Medieval Muslim World. It includes the real scientific information on geography, history, cosmography, mineralogy, ethnology, though mixed with legends and myths. The tradition of creating of such books goes back probably to the Zoroastrian Pahlavi literature like *Shahristaniha i Eran* (Towns of Iran), *Abdiha ud Sahigiha i Sagestan* (Miracles and Wonders of Sistan) and others.

The publication of the critical text of *'Ajā'ib al-Dunyā* and the translation, provided with the extensive bibliography, commentaries of utmost interest and indices, is an important and valuable contribution to the study of Persian culture and language, as well as of the Near and Middle Eastern history and culture in general. It is also helpful for the study of historical and cultural traditions of Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Turkestan.

F. Abdullaeva

Avesta. Izbrannye gimny iz Videvdata. **Perevod s avestiĭskogo Ivana Steblin-Kamenskogo. Moskva, 1993, 207 str.**

Avesta. Selected Hymns from Videvdat. **Russian translation from Avestan by I. Steblin-Kamensky. Moscow, 1993, 207 pp.**

It was almost two years ago when the fullest Russian translation of a part of Avestan text was published, which contains the hymns to eight gods and goddesses of Old Iranian pantheon (Ahura Mazda, Ardvisura, Khurshed, Tishtriya, Mitra, Veretragna, Ashi, Khwarno) and a prose passage from Videvdat (fragard 2). Thus the lacuna in the study and publishing of the Holy Books of the world-wide religions in Russia is filling up.

The publication consists of the rather short preface, the translation with commentaries and a general index of personal names, geographical names and terms, met in the text and in the commentaries.

In spite of the modest size of the preface by Prof. Steblin-Kamensky one can find here a funded survey, dedicated not only to the text of Avesta itself — the Holy Book of the Zoroastrians, but also a wealth of information about the Prophet Zaratushtra (who lived at the end of the second half and at the beginning of the first millennium B.C.), the history and the religion in general.

The most difficult task of the work was the adequate translation of the sayings by Zaratushtra which can be translated and interpreted in quite different ways. Old Iranians considered the art of writing as created by the Devil — Angra Mainyu. That is why the fixation of the Holy texts in a written form was not allowed. All of them were to be known by heart and transmitted from generation to generation of priests orally. From the days of the emergence of Zoroastrism, when it was the religion of cattle-breeders with an elementary organized cult structure during almost three millenniums of its history, Zoroastrism turned into a very elaborate official religion of great Empires, such as the Empires of Sassanids, of Parthian Ar-

shakids with its numerous priests, a great number of temples and specific way of liturgy, as well as with many every day life restrictions. It influenced greatly other religions. One can find the traces of it in Judaism, Christianity, Islam and Buddhism. At the same time Zoroastrism suffered the influence of other religions. One of the result of it — writing down the Avestan text in the Pahlavi script — should be taken into account.

The translation of such kind of the text could be done by a specialist not only in the field of the history of Zoroastrian religion, but by a historian, ethnologist and philologist with the really encyclopedic knowledge of Indo-European dead and living languages. That is I. M. Steblin-Kamensky who is, fortunately, such kind of a specialist. His Iranian studies are widely known all over the world and we could not miss a chance to congratulate Prof. I. M. Steblin-Kamensky, who has recently been appointed the Dean of the Oriental Faculty of the St. Petersburg University (after Academician M. V. Bogolyubov having retired), on the occasion of his 50th anniversary.

The earliest manuscript of Avesta dates back to 1288. The text of Avesta is still considered to be one of the most difficult ever created in Indo-European languages.

The translation by I. M. Steblin-Kamensky follows not only the sense and exact meaning of the original text, it also reproduces the very structure of the Hymns. Most of the Yashts (Hymns) were created in the form of 7—9 syllable verses (sometimes 4—13 syllable), which was carefully preserved by Prof. Steblin-Kamensky. The poetic style of the translation is very clear and natural. It is absolutely relevant to the ancient Holy Hymns.

The work under review represents an important contribution to the Avestan and Iranian studies in general. Both the common readers and the students of the East will certainly enjoy Prof. Steblin-Kamensky's compact and integrating presentation of the ancient text. The next part of the Avestan translation by Steblin-Kamensky — the Gathas (the Songs of Zaratushtra) — is expected in the near future.

F. Abdullaeva

ADOBE ACROBAT 2.0 AS A MEDIUM FOR ELECTRONIC PUBLISHING IN ARABIC STUDIES (WINDOWS VERSION)

P r o d u c e r: *Adobe Systems Incorporated*

System requirements:

❑ 386- or 486-based personal computer (or Pentium)

❑ Microsoft Windows 3.1 or greater

❑ 4 Mb of RAM for Acrobat Exchange and Acrobat Reader

❑ 8 Mb of RAM for Acrobat Distiller

Method of testing:

❑ computer used
   Compaq DeskPro XL 590, CPU Pentium 90, 16 Mb RAM
❑ platform
   Microsoft Windows 3.1
   Microsoft Windows 3.1 with Arabic support ("bi-l-i'timad")
❑ texts and PostScript files produced with
   Microsoft Word for Windows 6.0a
   Microsoft Arabic Word for Windows 6.0a
   NISUS 3.4 (Macintosh)

The Adobe Acrobat Pro 2.0 package comes with Adobe Reader 2.0, Adobe Exchange 2.0 (PDFWriter), and Adobe Distiller 2.0, together with a limited purpose version of Adobe Type Manager 3.01. An upgrade of the Reader (version 2.1) is available from Adobe Systems (ftp://ftp. adobe.com or http://www.adobe.com).

The Windows version of the Adobe Acrobat family of programs performs essentially the same as the Macintosh version described in an earlier review (*Manuscripta Orientalia* 1/2, http://www.hf-fak.uib.no/i/midtspraak/acrobat. htm). In general PDF (portable document format) files retain all the formatting and detail of hard copy and can handle both Latin diacritics and Arabic script, although there are occasional problems with screen fonts, and image quality must be reduced if files are to be kept to a manageable size. PDF files can be produced directly from word

processing programs by PDFWriter, which is part of Acrobat Exchange. They may also be generated from PostScript files by Acrobat Distiller, including files containing Arabic fonts. PostScript files can be created from most word processor or page layout programs or by using the printer option offered by Acrobat Distiller Assistant. Acrobat Reader, which allows viewing on screen, simple searching, and printing out, is available free. Acrobat Exchange permits the inclusion in a PDF file of hypertext links to other files, including sound and video clips. Exchange also provides sophisticated searching techniques (see below on Adobe Catalog). Compared to word processor files, PDF files tend to be rather large, but they can be considerably reduced, often to little more than the size of the word processor original, by the exclusion of Type 1 (PostScript) fonts.