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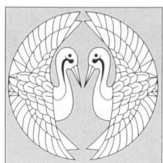
### Front cover:

"A Ship Among the Blocks of Ice", a colour drawing from the book 2 of the manuscript *Kankai Ibun* preserved in the collection of the St. Petersburg Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies (C 191), fol. 14a, 14.0 × 20.5 cm.

### Back cover:

"Theatre in the Capital of the Russian Empire", a colour drawing from the book 11 of the manuscript *Kankai Ibun* preserved in the collection of the St. Petersburg Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies (C 191), fols. 11b—12a, 32.5 × 26.5 cm.

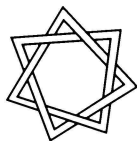
RUSSIAN ACADEMY OF SCIENCES  
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was terminated successfully only in 1994. Together with the Indonesian scholar Dr T. Iskandar, Voorhoeve has conducted a survey of all manuscripts in the Acehese language, kept in the collections outside Aceh, viewing to publish his work as a catalogue. In 1983, J. J. Witkam took the initiative of publishing this catalogue in English. After many modifications and additions had been made, the Dutch version of the book was translated into English by M. Durie, who not only translated and typed the work on a word-processor but also added much valuable information to it, which was a result of his own studies. The work was finally published in 1994, and the students in the field received the bibliographical complement to C. Snouck Hurgornje's history of Acehese literature they were so long awaiting for.

In the preface to the Catalogue (p. 17) its compiler mentions six main sources of the work:

- 1) C. Snouck Hurgornje's list of MSS sent from Aceh to the Museum of the Batavia Society;
- 2) H. T. Damsté's catalogue of Acehese MSS in the Museum for the Tropics in Amsterdam;
- 3) a typewritten catalogue of the Jakarta Museum collection and the Djajadiningrat collection;
- 4) Voorhoeve's typewritten catalogue of the collection in the Leiden University Library;
- 5) Voorhoeve's published and unpublished notes about several Acehese MSS from other collections;
- 6) T. Iskandar's description of MSS from the Damsté's collection.

The materials stored in the Leiden University Library, Amsterdam Municipal University Library, Amsterdam Royal Institute for the Tropics, Antwerpen Ethnographical Museum, Breda Ethnographical Museum "Justinus van Nassau", Djajadiningrat Collection of Jakarta, National Library (Jakarta), Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka (Kuala Lumpur), National Museum of Ethnography (Leiden), the British Library, School of Oriental and African Studies (London), Musée de l'homme (Paris), Ethnographic Museum (Rotterdam), Utrecht University Library, the Military Archives in The Hague and in the private collections of G. W. J. Drewes, M. Durie, T. Iskandar and Sikkema are described in accordance with the systematic Snouck

Hurgornje's survey of Acehese literature and divided as follows:

- 1) literature transmitted orally;
- 2) hikayat Ruhé;
- 3) epic hikayats;
- 4) original treatises;
- 5) fiction (romantic works);
- 6) fables relating to animals;
- 7) religious works (legends relating to the pre-Muhammedan period);
- 8) religious works (legends relating to the Muhammedan period);
- 9) religious works (books of instruction and edification);
- 10) miscellanea.

A major part of the items described consists of copies and transliterations of the originals made for C. Snouck Hurgornje, Hoesein Djajadiningrat and others, so there is often no need in codicological data to be present.

Section "Plates with notes" (pp. 319—62) contains 19 black-and-white reproductions of MSS' pages, sometimes provided partially with transliteration. The compiler even gives us a remarkable "portrait gallery" of the persons significant for the Acehese studies: of Dokarim (Abdulkarim), who was a composer of the heroic poem dedicated to the struggle of the Acehese against Dutch (see Catalogue, pp. 59—62), C. Snouck Hurgornje, Teungku Mohamed Noerdin, who was Hurgornje's assistant in collecting Acehese MSS, Dr Hoesein Djajadiningrat, and H. T. Damsté (pp. 358—62).

The detailed indices prepared by R. G. Tol and A. G. P. Janson (pp. 363—90) and a concordance named "Conspectus of Codex and Catalogue Numbers" (pp. 261—302) widen essentially the possibilities of using the Catalogue.

The work is a result of one hundred years of the efforts and activities of those engaged in studying Acehese MSS (see in particular a vast bibliography in the "References", pp. 301—18). Intended to be a bibliographical tool to make the manuscripts available for further study, the Catalogue may in effect be considered an important supplement to C. Snouck Hurgornje's writing on Acehese literature.

*E. Rezvan*

**Stefano Carboni. *Following the Stars: Images of the Zodiac in Islamic Art. The Metropolitan Museum of Art. New York: 1997, 48 pp.***

Though the Catalogue under review that was published in conjunction with the exhibition "Following the Stars: Images of the Zodiac in Islamic Art", held at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York from February 4 through August 31, 1997, is not voluminous, it is none the less of great interest for many specialists in the field of Islamic art and culture. Taking into account that the principle domain of interests of *Manuscripta Orientalia* covers a vast range of manuscript heritage investigation, including Oriental iconography as represented in Oriental manuscripts, the Catalogue, despite its special role to be a guide to the exhibi-

tion's items, could make service to the journal's readers, since it represents a valuable piece of scholarship. Needless to say, the compilation of a guide to the exhibition of Islamic art has always been the task that requires great knowledge in many fields of Oriental studies. In my view, the author has demonstrated his vast erudition in describing most precious items of Islamic art represented at the exhibition and in presenting a comprehensive survey of Oriental astrology in general.

The very idea of such kind of an exhibition, the aim of which is to show pieces of Islamic art dedicated to astrology, seems to be a fortunate one. Such a special approach, first, enables the public to make more profound acquaintance with priceless treasures of the Metropolitan Museum, and, secondly, makes a great service to Islamic scholarship,

because it draws specialists' attention to most ambivalent sphere of Islamic art as represented in astrology images.

The work by Dr Stefano Carboni comprises: i) a short but very valuable introductory article providing a scholarly survey of Oriental astrology, which shows the place it occupied in Islamic history, in particular, in the Arabic one; ii) the description of the specimens of Islamic art, which contain astrology images; iii) and a helpful bibliography. The Catalogue is supplied with the black-and-white photos of the exhibits described.

The author points out that in the medieval Islamic world the science of astrology was based on a knowledge of astronomy which was inherited by the Arabs from the Greek writings. Dr Carboni succeeded in clarifying the role of astrology in Islamic artistic production, its significance as both a decorative device and a powerful cosmological talisman. The author also gives an exhaustive description of astrology images in various specimens of Islamic art, coins, and manuscript miniatures. The last ones, to all appearances, play but a little part in the exhibition. That is all the more regrettable since there exist enormous material on the subject hidden on the pages of Islamic manuscripts which offer a lot of iconographical enigmas relating to astrology. One may only suggest that it was the lack of corresponding manuscripts under hand that miniatures were drawn on so poor a scale.

Nevertheless, it is a great success of Dr Carboni that he has employed so fruitfully medieval Muslim writings on astrology, without which much would be almost obscure when deciphering most complicated "language" of astrology images in numerous pieces of Islamic art. It is lucky that the author of the Catalogue combines in his work profound scholarship in medieval Muslim literature with his excellent knowledge of Islamic art in general.

It should be noted that the descriptions (20 in all) of the items are most informative and seem to be almost exhaustive providing many precious details which could be of much use to scholars working in the field. Apart from giving a detailed explanation of the astrological images, the author provides us with useful information on the relevant terms and traces the origins of some astrological images. It is no doubt that everyone dealing with Islamic iconography will borrow much after examining the exhibition and making acquaintance with the Catalogue compiled by Dr Carboni. One could only envy the visitors of this exhibition to have a chance to see the pieces of art presented at it and to get so abundant information on the role of astrology in Islamic society.

It is a fortunate device of Dr Carboni to provide some of the descriptions of the items with charming citations from the writing of the famous Muslim scholar and astrology Abū Ma'shar al-Balkhī, entitled *Kitāb al-mawālīd*, which would certainly excite curiosity of the exhibition's visitors. Given the great interest the people show in astrology nowadays, the device appears to be most appropriate. As for specialists, they will also read these passages with interest, not only because the most popular Muslim writing on astrology is being cited, but also because the citations reveal some special features of mentality of the Islamic society with concern to astrology and astrological beliefs.

Despite its special role, astrology can be viewed as one of the most creative and interesting branch of medieval Islamic thought and culture in general. I think that the theme of astrology in the Middle East deserves a special investigation, since it might contribute to our knowledge of medieval Islamic mentality. The Catalogue produced by Dr Stefano Carboni, with his deep penetration to the subject, could be a step in this direction.

*I. Petrosyan*