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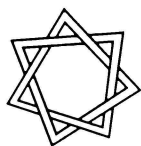**Plate 4.** "The Prophet Zakharyā", miniature from the same manuscript, fol. 112b.
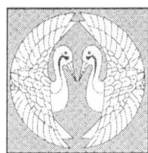
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BOOK REVIEWS

Mikael Persenius. *The Manuscripts of Parts 1 and 2 of Shams al-ʻulūm by Nashwān al-Ḥimyarī. A Study of Their Relationship.* **Uppsala: 1997, 278 pp. — Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis. Studia Semitica Upsaliensia, XIII.**

The work under review is Mikael Persenius's dissertation for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Semitic Languages at the Department of Asian and African Languages of Uppsala University in 1997. The main objective of the author consisted in establishing the relationship between the extant manuscripts of the Arabic lexicon *Shams al-ʻulūm wa-dawāʼ*[1] *kalām al-ʻArab min al-kulūm* ("The Sun of the Sciences and the Wounds' Remedy for the Words of the Arabs"), compiled by the famous scholar of medieval Yemen, Nashwān b. Saʻīd al-Ḥimyarī (d. 573/1178), to prepare a preliminary research for its critical edition.

It seems that a kind of fate hangs over the publication of this masterpiece of Yemenite tradition. Though a selection of texts from the *Shams al-ʻulūm*, dealing with South Arabia and compiled by ʻAẓīmuddīn Aḥmad on the basis of some reliable manuscripts, appeared as early as 1916[2], the edition of the whole body of the lexicon has not been accomplished yet. The first part of the work covering the letters *hamza* to *shīn* was published in 1951 under the supervision of ʻAbdallāh al-Jarāfī who used mostly manuscripts from the library of the Imām of Yemen[3]. But the decision to interrupt the publication was made by the Imām on his learning about the European edition of the same work undertaken by Karl Vilhelm Zettersteen (1866—1953). As for Professor Zettersteen, he succeeded in editing only two fascicles (down to the end of *jīm*)[4], as his death prevented

from finishing the project. In 1983, the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage of the Sultanate of Oman undertook the edition of five volumes of the *Shams al-ʻulūm*. The publication embraces the text of the lexicon from the beginning to the end of *shīn* and, in all probability, represents a faithful transcription of only one manuscript kept now at Muscat (pp. 29, 70)[5]. Thus the intention of Mikael Persenius to prepare a critical edition of Nashwān's work, following in the footsteps of K. V. Zettersteen, professor of Semitic languages at Uppsala University in 1904 to 1931, is praiseworthy, being an example of the scholarly continuity in classical Arabic studies, which occurs now rather seldom. M. Persenius's work is the first step in right direction.

The structure of the dissertation fits well the aims of the codicological research carried out by the author. It consists of six chapters, including the Introduction considered as Chapter I, and the critical edition of six texts selected from Parts 1 and 2 of the *Shams al-ʻulūm* (Chapter 6). Chapter 2 provides a survey of some important facts of Nashwān's biography, which are extracted mainly from several researches on the life of the lexicon's author (pp. 18—20). However, M. Persenius's list of primary sources dealing with Nashwān al-Ḥimyarī appears to be exhaustive (p. 17).

It should be noted that in the framework of a codicological research M. Persenius's attempt to reveal the real meaning of the proper name Nashwān (p. 19) seems a bit strange. Besides, the etymology he proposes — "he who inquires after the news as soon as it comes" — is not convincing. Possible is the derivation of this name from *nashwān* ("dizzy (with love)"), attested in the ʻAbsite poetry[6], or its affinity to the *nisba* form *nashwānī*, which in post-classical Yemeni Arabic means "diligent", "industrious"[7].

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[1] As M. Persenius correctly remarks (p. 23), the reading *diwāʼ* ("cure", "treatment") attested in some manuscripts fits well this context, and it is difficult to decide which of two variants was original.

[2] *Die auf Südarabien bezüglichen Angaben Našwān's im Šams al-ʻulūm.* Gesammelt, alphabetisch geordnet und hrsg. von ʻAẓīmuddīn Aḥmad (Leyden—London, 1916). — E. J. W. Gibb Memorial Series, vol. XXIV. The selection was reprinted in Yemen under the title *Muntakhabāt fī akhbār al-Yaman min Kitāb shams al-ʻulūm wa-dawāʼ kalām al-ʻArab min al-kulūm.* Ṭabʻa thāniya muṣawwara (Ṣanʻāʼ, 1981). — Mashrūʻ al-kitāb, 8/3. Unfortunately, in his detailed survey of all the previous publications of the *Shams al-ʻulūm*, M. Persenius took no notice of this publication, although he gives in his bibliography the names of reprint editions (pp. 26—30, 269).

[3] Nashwān b. Saʻīd al-Ḥimyarī, *Shams al-ʻulūm wa-dawāʼ kalām al-ʻArab min al-kulūm.* Taḥqīq ʻAbdallāh b. ʻAbd al-Karīm al-Jarāfī (Cairo, 1951), i—ii (reprint: Beirut, 1982).

[4] Nashwān b. Saʻīd al-Ḥimyarī, *Shams al-ʻulūm wa-dawāʼ kalām al-ʻArab min al-kulūm*, ed. K. V. Zettersteen (Leiden, 1951—1953), i, fasc. 1—2.

[5] Nashwān b. Saʻīd al-Ḥimyarī, *Shams al-ʻulūm wa-dawāʼ kalām al-ʻArab min al-kulūm* (Muscat, 1983), i—v.

[6] Vl. V. Polosin, *Slovarʼ poètov plemeni ʻabs (VI—VIII vv.)* (A Vocabulary of the ʻAbsite Poets of the Sixth—Eighth Centuries) (Moscow, 1995), p. 472.

[7] M. Piamenta, *Dictionary of Post-Classical Yemeni Arabic.* Pt. 2 (Leiden—New York—København —Köln, 1991), p. 486.

Unfortunately, the researcher did not notice that the name Nashwān, very rare in Arab genealogies, was rather widespread in the Ṣafaitic onomasticon in the pre-Islamic period and attested once in Sabaic [8].

In his work M. Persenius accurately enumerates the writings of Nashwān al-Ḥimyarī (pp. 20—2), even those which are not extant (e.g., an abridgment of the *Kitāb al-Iklīl* by al-Ḥasan al-Hamdānī) or whose authorship is disputed (*al-Farā'id wa-l-qalā'id*). However, among the great variety of subjects on which Nashwān wrote, Persenius did not distinguish the principal contribution of this scholar to the Arabic literature. The researcher did not remark that Nashwān al-Ḥimyarī had compiled the most complete version of the so-called "Qaḥṭānide Saga" (Yemenite medieval epic) [9]. It seems that the significance of Nashwān's works for South Arabian studies, unfortunately, escaped from the author's attention. After the detailed observation of the previous editions of the *Shams al-'ulūm*, M. Persenius makes reference to a number of out-of-date publications, issued by David Heinrich Müller in the second half of the nineteenth century, where the material from the lexicon of Nashwān was employed. Does not the researcher know about the extensive use of the *Shams al-'ulūm* in a large number of studies on ancient Yemen, which appeared after David Müller? Despite the semi-legendary character inherent in the "Qaḥṭānide Saga", some unique data cited by Nashwān al-Ḥimyarī in his lexicographical work have been successfully applied later for the reconstruction of the history of South Arabia. Among recent researches the monograph by Muḥammad 'Abd al-Qādir Bāfaqīh, who used the *Shams al-'ulūm* as a valuable source for the pre-Islamic history of the tribal confederation of Khawlān Quḍā'a [10] as well as for the origins of the Ḥimyarite dynasty [11], is worthy of note. M. Persenius has also left out a very interesting thesis about specific Yemenite words in the works by al-Hamdānī and Nashwān maintained and published by Ibrahim al-Selwi [12]. His ignorance of the latter is particularly regrettable, since it is closely connected with the subject of the dis-

sertation. The author's disregard of the "local colour" peculiar to this lexicon can have an adverse effect on its new critical edition.

Besides, the list of Nashwān's works enumerated by the author needs some corrections. There is, for instance, under No. 21 a certain treatise on *taṣrīf* (morphology), extant in the unique manuscript (p. 22) originating from the collection of Shaykh Muḥammad 'Ayyād al-Ṭanṭawī (1810—1861), professor of Arabic at St. Petersburg University from 1847 until his death. It is kept now under call number 785 in the collection of the Oriental Faculty of St. Petersburg University [13]. It was Baron Victor Rosen (1849—1908) who first described this fragmentary copy and attributed it to Nashwān al-Ḥimyarī [14]. Then he included the work in the list of manuscripts under the title *Risāla fī-l-taṣrīf* [15]. Rosen's attribution was universally recognised and the work has recently entered a new brief catalogue of Arabic manuscripts in the above-mentioned collection [16]. The thorough examination of this treatise *de visu*, however, clearly demonstrates that it cannot be a work by Nashwān himself or part of such a work, since its compiler says:

$$ إعلم أن نشوان رحمه الله تعالى رتب الحروف في أواخر $$
$$ الكلام كما رتبها عند ذكر أبواب حروف المعجم... $$

("Know that Nashwān, may Allah — highly exalted be He — have mercy on him, arranged the letters at the ends of the words in the same way as he arranged them mentioning the chapters on the letters of the alphabet ..." — fol. 20 a). But it is well-known that the formula رحمه الله is used only after the name of the deceased.

True, the comparison of the treatise's structure with that of the *muqaddima* in the *Shams al-'ulūm* [17] gives evidence of some resemblance between them. The title *Risāla fī-l-taṣrīf* does not conform to the fragmentary manuscript of St. Petersburg, since among seven sections extant in the treatise only the first one bears the name *Faṣl fī-l-taṣrīf*

[8] G. L. Harding, *An Index and Concordance of Pre-Islamic Arabian Names and Inscriptions* (Toronto—Buffalo, 1971), p. 590: *Nšwn*. — University of Toronto. Near and Middle East Series, 8. The Sabaic text Fa 3, where this proper noun has been attested (l. 9), dates from the second half of the third century A.D.

[9] This high estimation of Nashwān's heritage is generally accepted by the specialists (see, for instance, M. B. Piotrovskiĭ, *Predanie o khim'iaritskom tsare As'ade al-Kamile* (The Saga of the Ḥimyaritic King As'ad al-Kāmil) (Moscow, 1977), p. 34; *idem*, *Iuzhnaia Araviia v rannee srednevekov'e. Stanovlenie srednevekovogo obshchestva* (South Arabia in Early Middle Ages. The Formation of a Medieval Society) (Moscow, 1985), p. 67.

[10] M. Bāfaqīh, *L'Unification du Yémen antique. La lutte entre Saba', Ḥimyar et le Ḥaḍramawt du Iᵉʳ au IIIᵉᵐᵉ siècle de l'ère chrétienne* (Paris, 1990), p. 99 & n. 1, p. 102 & n. 10. — Bibliothèque de Raydān, vol. 1.

[11] *Ibid.*, p. 187 & n. 24, p. 188, tabl. 3 and p. 191 & n. 29.

[12] I. al-Selwi, *Jemenitische Wörter in den Werken von al-Hamdānī und Našwān und ihre Parallelen in den semitischen Sprachen* (Berlin, 1987). — Marburger Studien zur Afrika- und Asienkunde. Serie B: Asien, Bd. 10.

[13] C. Brockelmann, *Geschichte der arabischen Litteratur.* 1. Supplementband (Leiden, 1936), p. 528, No. 11.

[14] V. Rosen, *Les manuscrits arabes de l'Institut des langues orientales* (St. Pétersbourg, 1877), pp. 216—7. — Collections scientifiques de l'Institut des langues orientales du Ministère des affaires étrangères, I.

[15] K. G. Zaleman, V. R. Rozen, "Spisok persidskim, turetsko-tatarskim i arabskim rukopisiam Imperatorskogo Sankt-Peterburgskogo Universiteta (okonchanie)" ("The list of Persian, Turkish-Tatar and Arabic manuscripts of the Imperial St. Petersburg University (the ending)"), *Zapiski vostochnogo otdeleniia Imperatorskogo Russkogo arkheologicheskogo obshchestva*, vol. III, fasc. III (1889), p. 205.

[16] *Arabskie rukopisi vostochnogo otdela nauchnoĭ biblioteki Sankt-Peterburgskogo Gosudarstvennogo universiteta. Kratkiĭ katalog* (Arabic Manuscripts of Oriental Section of St. Petersburg University Scientific Library), compiled by O. B. Frolova and T. P. Deryagina, ed. O. B. Frolova (St. Petersburg, 1996), p. 90, No. 418. The list of bibliographical references enumerated in the catalogue in connection with this manuscript is, however, incomplete. Unfortunately, the catalogue's compilers did not mention a number of works by Carl Brockelmann and Victor Rosen cited above (see nn. 13 and 14 above). Moreover, their reference to the catalogue by Salemann and Rosen contains a mistake (p. 33 is to be corrected to p. 205; cf. n. 15 above).

[17] The contents of this *muqaddima* has been described in detail by M. Persenius (p. 25).

("Section on morphology") [18]. The identification of this work as a large fragment of the *muqaddima*, extracted from an abridgment of the *Shams al-'ulūm* compiled under the title *Ḍiyā' al-ḥulūm* by Muḥammad b. Nashwān al-Ḥimyarī (d. *ca.* 610/1212—13), can be regarded as well-founded [19]. In all probability, this introduction was copied separately as a kind of reference book on Arabic grammar. In any case, the *Risāla fī-l-taṣrīf* should be enumerated among the manuscripts of *Ḍiyā' al-ḥulūm* in Chapter 3 (pp. 31—8).

M. Persenius has, however, no claim to the completeness of the list of manuscripts which are the abridged versions of the *Shams al-'ulūm* (pp. 31, 37—8) [20]. His purpose consists in analysing these works from the viewpoint of preparing a critical edition of Nashwān's lexicon itself. As a result, the author established that "a number of the MSS catalogued as containing *Shams al-'ulūm* appeared instead on closer inspection to contain in whole or in part one or the other of the abridgments" (p. 121; cf. also p. 39) [21]. In this connection the author's intention to examine the manuscripts of the *Shams al-'ulūm* in Chapter 4, after a study of the manuscript tradition of this lexicon's abridgments in the previous chapter, seems quite logical.

In my opinion, Chapter 4 which contains a detailed description of 56 manuscripts held now in European, American, Yemenite, Egyptian, Turkish, Indian and other collections constitutes the most important part of the dissertation by M. Persenius (pp. 39—84). The special emphasis is put by the author on the contents of the manuscripts' title pages, colophons, notes related to collation and ownership, as well as on the use of vowel signs, diacritical marks, corrections, and catchwords. The list of those manuscripts appears to be exhaustive. The overwhelming majority of them (41, i.e. approximately 73%) have been available to the author in the form of microfilm copies or photocopies. As for the rest, information about them has been extracted from catalogues or other sources and therefore requires further verification. Nevertheless, the data put together by M. Persenius are quite sufficient for the choice of manuscripts which are to be used in the text edition. It is remarkable that although the subject of the dissertation is restricted to Parts 1 and 2 of the *Shams al-'ulūm*, the researcher has described in Chapter

4 all hitherto known manuscripts containing, wholly or partially, the second half of the lexicon, namely, Parts 3 and 4 (pp. 41—3, 46—8, 52—7, 62—74, 76—8, 81—4).

The most serious question that arises in connection with the work by Persenius concerns the possibility of studying the text of the first half of Nashwān's work independently of its second half. It is obvious that in contrast to voluminous anthologies of fiction or scholarly works on history and geography, the lexicon could normally be used only as a whole, and every owner of library usually tried to acquire all the sections of the book [22]. Owing to political and social disturbances of the late medieval period of Islamic history, many Muslim libraries were, however, destroyed or dispersed, and separate parts of the *Shams al-'ulūm* turned out to have been divided between various collections. Therefore, it seems that the author's attempt to establish the relationship between the manuscripts which contain only the first and second parts of the work can contribute only little to the real history of the text.

The stemmatic analysis of six sample texts selected by Persenius for his publication (Chapter 5, pp. 85—122) is based on the method of Lachmann and goes back to the theories of "common errors" and "common variants". The *credo* of the researcher is formulated as follows: "The fact that these errors are shared by all of the examined MSS may indicate that they are all descended from the same ancestor" (p. 92) [23]. However, convincing arguments against such an approach to text criticism were adduced by the famous Russian philologist D. S. Likhachev [24]. In his work dedicated to methodology of text criticism, the scholar remarks, for instance, that the same mistakes could be made independently in different copies and, therefore, "the establishment of a genealogy of copies on the basis of the theory of 'common errors' is impossible" [25]. If so, a detailed stemmatic analysis of every sample text seems useless. Besides, all the six stemmata differ from one another, sometimes considerably, and are rather far from demonstrating real genealogical relations between the manuscripts (pp. 96, 101, 105, 109, 114, 118). The only well-founded conclusion, which follows from Chapter 5, consists in dividing the copies selected for the preparation of the critical text into two fami-

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[18] In contrast to the treatise the *muqaddima* consists of four sections. The headings of the first three subdivisions, namely, *Faṣl fī-l-taṣrīf*, *Faṣl fī makhārij al-ḥurūf wa-taqsīmi-hā* and *Faṣl fī abniyat kalām al-'arab*, prove to be identical in both works (see fols. 1b, 12a, 13a). The fourth and last section of the *muqaddima*, entitled *Faṣl fī maṣādir al-afʿāl*, is the sixth in the treatise (fol. 16a). It is not excluded, however, that in spite of the difference in division into *fuṣūl* the texts of these works are very similar to one another.

[19] During my visit to *Dār al-Makhṭūṭāt* in Ṣanʿā' in November 1998, I had a chance to compare the treatise's text with a microfilm of the manuscript of the *Ḍiyā' al-ḥulūm* from a private Yemenite collection (microfilm No. 166 made in 1983). The observation of the text showed that in spite of a number of different readings, rather limited though, the so-called *Risāla fī-l-taṣrīf* held at the Library of St. Petersburg University is to be identified with the introduction to the abridgment of the *Shams al-'ulūm* written by the author's son, Muḥammad b. Nashwān al-Ḥimyarī. The St. Petersburg manuscript includes almost the whole text of this *muqaddima*, with only the last page lacking.

[20] In his list there is, for example, no mention of the manuscript kept in the Eastern Library of al-Jāmi' al-Kabīr under call number 12/2129-*lugha*, which contains part 4 of the *Ḍiyā' al-ḥulūm* (354 fols; 26 lines per page; 18.0 × 23.0 cm). Cf. *Fihrist makhṭūṭāt al-Maktaba al-Gharbiyya bi-l-Jāmi' al-Kabir bi-Ṣanʿā'*, comp. by Iʿdād Aḥmad Muḥammad ʿĪsawī, Muḥammad Saʿīd al-Malīḥ (Alexandria, [1976]), p. 442.

[21] In this respect a parallel with the above-mentioned "treatise on *taṣrīf*" inevitably come to mind.

[22] Because of their great size they could often be written by different copyists.

[23] A certain hesitation expressed by M. Persenius in this conclusion ("... *may* indicate ...") is accounted for the insufficient number of common errors and not for his doubt about the applicability of this method. As he puts it, "because of the small number of detected common errors in the examined texts the existence of a common ancestor cannot be concluded with any certainty" (pp. 92—3).

[24] D. S. Likhachev, *Tekstologiia. Na materiale russkoĭ literatury X—XVII vekov* (Text Criticism. According to the Material of Russian Literature of the Ninth—Seventeenth Centuries), second edition, revised and enlarged (Leningrad, 1983), pp. 8—24.

[25] *Ibid.*, p. 16. Acad. Likhachev also observes that some mistakes in manuscripts are connected with the "psychology of errors", common to all copyists, which is still insufficiently investigated (*ibid.*, p. 15 & n. 13).

lies denoted by A and B (p. 121). But such a rough classification could be obtained without drawing stemmata which make the reconstruction of the history of the *Shams al-'ulūm*'s text even more obscure.

The main contribution of the author of the dissertation are six fragments, namely, the preface and five chapters from the Books of *al-tā'*, *al-ḥā'*, *al-dāl*, *al-rā'* and *al-shīn*, edited critically (pp. 123—233). Their text is published in a very accurate manner and proves to be a good basis for a future edition of the whole lexicon. From the point of view of a specialist in South Arabian tradition, the comparison of those sample fragments with the extracts from the *Shams al-'ulūm* made by 'Aẓīmuddīn Aḥmad seems very interesting. In the artciles *al-Tubbat* (Tibet), *al-Tubba'*, *Tabūk*, *al-Rass*, *Shadad* and *al-Shammām*, which are shared by both works [26], only one significant different reading has been discovered: from the text of *al-Tubbat*, established by Per-

senuis, the expression قصيدته الدامغة في used before a poetical quotation was excluded (p. 144) [27]. It is rather surprising that both versions of such a large article as *al-Tubba'* (*wāḥid al-tabābi'a*) coincide completely [28]. Probably it would be better for the researcher to study more attentively the works of his predecessors than to spare his efforts for the labour-consuming but inefficient stemmatic analysis.

In spite of several shortcomings and imperfections connected mostly with the methodology of text criticism, the monograph under review is of great value for every scholar who is interested in the life and works by Nashwān b. Sa'īd al-Ḥimyarī, and in Arabic lexicography in general. The audacious intention of Mikael Persenius to prepare the first critical edition of the whole text of the *Shams al-'ulūm* must be only welcomed.

S. Frantsouzoff

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[26] Cf. pp. 143—7, 194, 213, 215 in the work under review. See also *Die auf Südarabien bezüglichen Angaben Našwān's im Šams al-'ulūm*, pp. 11—3, 41, 53, 57. From the article *al-Rass* only the fragment dealing with the well *al-Rass* was selected by 'Aẓīmuddīn Aḥmad (*ibid.*, p. 41).

[27] This variant is, however, cited by M. Persenius in the notes (p. 144, n. 4).

[28] Cf. pp. 144—6. See also *Die auf Südarabien bezüglichen Angaben Našwān's im Šams al-'ulūm*, pp. 12—3.