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### Front cover:

"Desvarāti (Varāri, Varādi) Rāginī", watercolour, gouache and gold on paper.  
Deccan, second half of the 18th century. Album (*Muraqqa'*) X 3 in the Karl Fabergé collection  
at the St. Petersburg Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies, fol. 25 a, 11.5×17.0 cm.

### Back cover:

"Lalita Rāginī", watercolour, gouache and gold on paper. Deccan, second half of the 18th century.  
Same Album, fol. 34 b, 13.5×23.0 cm.

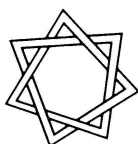
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## BOOK REVIEWS

*Srednevekovye arabskie i persidskie rukopisi fiziko-matematicheskogo soderzhanii v bibliotekakh byvshego Sovetskogo Soiuzu. Vypusk I: Nasir ad-Din at-Tusi i ego trudy po matematike i astronomii v bibliotekakh Sankt-Peterburga, Kazani, Tashkenta i Dushanbe*, sost. M. M. Rozhanskaia, G. P. Matvievskaia, I. O. Liuter. Moskva: Izdatel'stvo Vostochnaia Literatura, 1999, 142 str.

*Medieval Arab and Persian Manuscripts on Physics and Mathematics in Libraries of the Former Soviet Union. Fasc. I: Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī and His Works on Mathematics and Astronomy in the Libraries of St. Petersburg, Kazan, Tashkent, and Dushanbe. Compiled by M. M. Rozhanskaya, G. P. Matvievskaia, I. O. Luther. Moscow: The Publishing House "Vostochnaia Literatura", 1999, 142 pp.*

The study, description, and publication of extant Arabic-Persian manuscripts are of primary importance for the continuation of research on the history of the exact sciences both in the East and in the West, on the transfer of knowledge and inter-civilizational dialogue in the Middle Ages, as well as for research on the currently popular topic of the "Arab" Archimedes, Euclid, and Ptolemy in medieval Europe through the prism of Latin translations of Arabic-language authors. Soviet scholars' works over the last 30—40 years played a significant role in triggering a substantial re-evaluation of the achievements of Arab-Muslim science. If earlier Muslim science was treated by scholars only as a "bridge" or "link" between Hellenism and the Renaissance, the recent studies based on the investigation of extant manuscripts by Arab and Persian authors has convincingly shown their primacy in a number of scientific fields.

The publication under review is the first one in a series *Medieval Arab and Persian Manuscripts on Physics and Mathematics in Libraries of the Former Soviet Union*. It covers the main issues in the history of physics and the mathematical sciences in works by both known and little-known authors. Among them are works by such scholars as Abū-l-Wafā, Ibn al-Haytham, al-Bīrūnī, al-Khāzinī, al-Ṭūsī, al-Naysābūrī, al-Shīrāzī, al-Kāshī, and others, as well as some anonymous works of interest for the history of science. If you see a book with no Arabic letters in it, you can hardly guess that you have to do with a catalogue of Arabic and Persian manuscripts. The aim of a catalogue as

a reference book is to be available to as many readers as possible; the substitution of the original script by Russian transliteration considerably reduces the number of users who do not know Russian. But that is the very way the compilers of the book under review have chosen to present the material. Most of their names are well known to those interested in the history of Muslim science, and we do not know whether this form of publication was chosen because of technical possibilities of an academic Publishing House "Vostochnaia Literatura" or it was made intentionally by the compilers themselves. Whatever the case, such a form of publication has been chosen with their assent.

The first book in the series bears the title "Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī and His Works on Mathematics and Astronomy in the Libraries of St. Petersburg, Kazan, Tashkent, and Dushanbe", which is not quite exact, because its contents is much broader. First, apart from the works of Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī, the publication includes the works of his followers. Second, being the first in the series, it has introductions to the series as a whole. Among them one can find a brief preface where the main difficulty of such kind of publications is indicated: the author must possess not only the knowledge of Eastern languages but also be expert in the exact sciences, which is a rare thing to meet. It should be added that such a specialist should be a codicologist as well. The preface provides a very brief account of the history of investigations in the field; the aim of the series is also proclaimed here.

There follows an overview entitled "The largest repositories of Eastern manuscripts in the former Soviet Union" which contains information available to the authors on fifteen collections in Russia, Transcaucasia, and Central Asia. Only the largest five among them are described in detail which, in the authors' view, "are naturally the most important", an opinion not, strictly speaking, correct, since the size of the collection and its scholarly value are not necessary coincide. Here we read about manuscripts on physics and mathematics which are kept in these and some other libraries, the state of their investigation, as well as the possible location of similar manuscripts in other repositories of Russia and Central Asia.

An overview "Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī. The main writings on physics and mathematics" then follows; it is also very brief and has to do directly with the present issue in the series.

An introduction to the catalogue itself indicates that the compilers examined materials held in six libraries. In addi-

tion to the collections of manuscripts at the St. Petersburg Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies, the National Library of Russia, the St. Petersburg State University, the University of Kazan and the Biruni Institute of Oriental Studies in Tashkent, which were discussed in detail in the overview "The largest repositories of Eastern manuscripts in the former Soviet Union", the Firdawsī State Library's collection of manuscripts is also described; it is also said that, besides the works of al-Ṭūsī, the works of his followers — al-Naysābūrī, al-Ṣammānī, al-Khafīrī and al-Yazdī — are included in the catalogue.

The catalogue is divided into 18 sections. They either coincide with the description of a specific manuscript, if it is the only one of its kind, and consist of 14 points (discussed below), or provide a general description of the work (points 1—8) and then a description of actual copies (points 9—14). Textual variants are registered; it is strange that among them one finds *mukhtaṣars*, although we know that sometimes they belong to another "author". Whether we have here authorial abridgements remains unclear. The catalogue fails to answer this question, and it does not even ask it. Section 18 seems specially odd, providing a general description of the "Treatise in Twenty Chapters on Knowledge of the Astrolabe", while all of the 16 manuscripts it goes on to describe contain only a *mukhtaṣar*. Moreover, this word, even if it is not found in the manuscript, is sometimes bracketed and sometimes not.

The first section treats a unique manuscript by al-Naysābūrī, containing the list of 57 works by al-Ṭūsī; among them we discover works previously unknown. Sections 2 and 3 cover works by al-Ṭūsī. The fourth section treats a work by al-Ṣammānī, who was influenced by al-Ṭūsī's writings enumerated in the third section. The fifth through eighth sections deal with manuscripts containing four more works by al-Ṭūsī, while the ninth section gives us not one, but twelve of his works brought together as "reworkings of 'middle books'". The tenth section provides two works by al-Yazdī that are commentaries on two (of the twelve) works by al-Ṭūsī from the previous section. The eleventh section deals once again with al-Ṭūsī, the twelfth treats a commentary by al-Birjandī, and the thirteenth — again a work by al-Ṭūsī. The fourteenth section is dedicated to a commentary by al-Naysābūrī, the fifteenth — to an addition to a commentary by al-Khafīrī, while the sixteenth is again al-Ṭūsī. Finally, the seventeenth section presents his addition to a work from the previous section. We have already discussed the eighteenth section. This is the structure of the catalogue under review. One can admit only with difficulty that the structure is ideal.

The points of the descriptions are discussed in the catalogue's introduction. The first point provides the name and dates of the author. The name goes throughout the catalogue in one form only, while it would have been desirable to see the author's name in the form given in the actual manuscript. Besides, some manuscripts lack the author's name at all and sometimes al-Ṭūsī's authorship is presumed. Of course, in some cases the text is well known from other numerous copies and needs no special attribution. But at times the compilers suggest al-Ṭūsī's authorship, providing arguments that undoubtedly have their place but are not convincing to the extent as to consider the authorship established once and for all. Perhaps works that give rise to some doubt should have been put into a separate section.

The second point deals with the language of the work, which is extremely important; unfortunately, recently published catalogues often do not indicate the language and one can only guess at which of the possible languages was employed in the work. The third point provides the Arabic or Persian title of the work in Russian transcription. The fourth is a Russian translation of the title. Already the acquaintance with the first description shows that the book contains inaccuracies in diacritics, inconsistencies in transcription, and oddities of translation, to say at least. For example, *khwāja* is for some reason given in Russian translation as *khadzhi* (*hājī*).

The fifth point gives the time of the work's composition; the sixth — the work's brief contents. This point seems to render the presence of the fourth one unnecessary, but the fourth point is most likely intended to provide a henceforth obligatory, standardized Russian form, which is occasioned by special nature of Arabic titles.

The seventh point contains information about the location and call numbers of all known manuscripts; the eighth provides a general bibliography; the ninth gives the location and call number of a specific copy; the tenth discusses the completeness of the text; the eleventh gives the incipit in Russian transcription; the twelfth — the copyist, year, and place of copying (unfortunately, one too often finds here the two words "not indicated"). The thirteenth point is dedicated to a description of the manuscript: folio size, number of folios, text dimensions, sketches and drawings, handwriting, ink, paper, binding, special characteristics are indicated here. It should be mentioned that not all sub-points of the point are represented in each description.

Finally, the fourteenth point provides information on mentions of the given manuscript in the scholarly literature. Together with the information containing in the eighth point, it enables us to bring together a great deal of data scattered throughout various publications, correcting and augmenting it when necessary.

The book closes with a bibliography (62 titles) and index of names. Regrettably, the index gives names of Eastern authors with no diacritics; the names of European scholars are sometimes conveyed inaccurately in Russian. Moreover, the index was poorly proof-read, and if it claims that a name is listed on a certain page, I recommend perusing nearby pages if one fails to find it where indicated.

Despite its obvious shortcomings, the publication is a serious and important work which required years of systematisation and research. This book can serve as a reference work for all those engaged in manuscripts research and related studies, both in the East and West. And this is the reason why we felt it was necessary to call attention to the deficiencies of the catalogue; they must be kept in mind by each user. Unfortunately, the absence of diacritical marks in the index of names hinders significantly from using this important work.

The compilers inform us that a second issue in the series will treat a group of manuscripts of particular interest for the history of science. These are al-Khāzīnī's "Book of the Scales of Wisdom", Abū-l-Wafā's "Treatise on Theoretical Arithmetic", works by Ibn al-Haytham, al-Bīrūnī and al-Kāshī, and works by Samarqand scholars of the fifteenth century that belonged to the school of Ulughbēg and are now held in libraries in St. Petersburg, Kazan, Tashkent, and Dushanbe.

One can consider the first issue in the series a trial edition. We repeat that, despite all of the flaws mentioned, this is a serious scholarly work that will undoubtedly draw the attention of the scholars both in Russia and abroad. One hopes that future issues will be prepared more carefully (many deficiencies could have been avoided if the editors of the Moscow Publishing House "Vostochnaia literatura",

primarily V. V. Volgina, who was responsible for the first issue in the series, had made their work more professionally). I am convinced that the Arabic alphabet should be used in the series, as its absence is the main shortcoming that considerably hinders using the catalogue.

*I. Wojewódzki*

**Elisabetta Chiodo. *The Mongolian Manuscripts on Birch Bark from Xarboxyn Balgas in the Collection of the Mongolian Academy of Sciences. Part 1. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2000, X, 305 pp., plus facsimiles. — Asiatische Forschungen, Bd. 137.***

When perusing the catalogues and descriptions of Mongolian manuscript and xylograph collections, one constantly encounters the names of well-known Mongolian studies specialists who brought numerous collections of Mongolian written materials to dozens of currently existing repositories of Eastern manuscript and print books. From the very beginning of Mongolian studies as an academic discipline, seeking out and collecting Mongolian books was a key part of the process that allowed us to appreciate properly the diversity and breadth of the Mongolian peoples' written legacy, which took shape on the vast expanses of Mongolia over nearly eight centuries.

Apart from the archaographic expeditions that brought to light not insignificant number of unique Mongolian literary texts, archaeological expeditions also turned up extremely valuable ancient Mongolian manuscripts and xylographs. Among the finds best known and most valuable to scholars are the fragments of fourteenth-century manuscript and print books from Turfan and Khara Khoto. More than 200 manuscript fragments from the sixteenth — seventeenth centuries were found in the wrecked *suburgan* in Olon Süme in Southern Mongolia.

The last discovery was made in 1970 by a Russian-Mongolian archaeological expedition that found a large number of manuscript texts in Mongolian and Tibetan stored in a partially destroyed *suburgan* in the village of Xarboxyn on the site of the ancient city of Xarboxyn Balgas, not far from the centre of the Dašinčilen *sum* of the Bulgan *ajmag*, 240 km north-west of Ulan-Bator. Most of the manuscripts and manuscript fragments (approximately 1,000 items) are in Mongolian: 240 of them are published by Elisabetta Chiodo in the monograph under review here.

One of the notable aspects of this collection is that all of the manuscript texts were executed on birch bark. Some other instances of the Mongols' using birch bark in place of paper are also known. The oldest such example, the so-called "Golden Horde manuscript", was discovered on the Volga in 1930; it dates to the fourteenth century. Numerous other birch-bark manuscripts dated to the first half of the seventeenth century, the period when all of the manuscripts included in the collection under review were written. Such a large number of manuscripts on birch bark appeared, of course, because of a shortage of paper, always an extremely expensive and rare commodity in the steppes. Imported Chinese paper was usually used, but often turbulent mo-

ments in Mongolian history, for example, the events of the late sixteenth — early seventeenth centuries, led to the dropping of the availability of Chinese goods, including paper. The solution to the paper shortage was to write on birch bark (the areas surrounding Xarboxyn, Elisabetta Chiodo remarks, to this day abound in birches).

The manuscripts extracted from the *suburgan* were a rather sad spectacle, consisting of birch-bark folios and fragments covered in lime, stuck together thanks to animal droppings and dirt, and partly damaged by fire. It demanded a great deal of painstaking restoration to clean and preserve the material; only then could the manuscripts be studied.

The task of enormous difficulty stood before Elisabetta Chiodo: to identify and analyse the numerous scattered folios and fragments, which required a great deal of attention and patience, not to mention a solid knowledge of Mongolian palaeography and texts. No less difficult was the attribution of the identified texts, as the published volume includes only 14 complete or "almost complete" manuscripts. All of the remaining manuscript texts were preserved in the form of fragments, sometimes minuscule.

Naturally, a significant part of the collection consists of Buddhist works, but there are, however, several manuscripts of non-Buddhist content. Among them the records of the so-called "Eighteen Steppe Laws", published in 1974 by the Mongolian historian Kh. Perlee, a participant in the expedition that discovered the treasure-trove of birch-bark books, deserve special attention. The publication of these laws is an event of great importance in Mongolian studies, since the laws were adopted at the gatherings of the Khalkha princes in the late sixteenth — early seventeenth centuries, making them the earliest known Mongol code to appear after the fall of the Yüan dynasty. The manuscript of the "Eighteen Steppe Laws" discovered was abraded and frayed from extended use and unreadable in places; some of the folios had been lost. Luckily, a few folios missing in Perlee's publication were discovered during the preparation of the monograph under review here (fols. 14b—17a). They contain the text of the so-called "Great Distribution" linked with worship of Genghis Khan.

Among manuscripts Elisabetta Chiodo discusses there are several copies of astrological and fortune-telling reference works. These include, for example, guides to the location of the soul for each day of the month (XBM 93—96) and predictions of fortuitous days for weddings (XBM 97—99). We find also collections of dream interpretations and indications of means to dispel bad dreams (XBM 100—103). Such literature was widespread among the nomad Mongols who did undertake nothing without first appealing to oracles. To meet this demand, collections were drawn up