

SOME NOTES ON THE ARABIC MANUSCRIPTS AND COLLECTIONS IN THE LIBRARY OF THE ORIENTAL FACULTY OF THE ST. PETERSBURG UNIVERSITY

From the very foundation of the St. Petersburg University in 1819, before the establishment of the Oriental faculty here, the Arabic language was among disciplines taught at the University. It is from that time that Arabic manuscripts began to come into the University Library. Initially, they were not numerous. In 1845 they numbered only four copies (Nos. 28, 30, 31, 32)*, including some works which were important for educational purposes:

1. a work on Arabic grammar — a commentary on the famous *Unmūdḥaj* (call number 31e);
2. a work on logic, *Ādāb al-Munāẓara*, by the Turkish encyclopedist Tashkuprī-zāda (call number 32a);
3. a theological work, *Al-Ḥizb al-A'ẓam wa al-Wird al-Afkhām*, by 'Alī al-Qāri', a native of Herat (call number 28a);
4. *Ḥayāt al-Ḥayawān* by al-Dimīrī (call number 31c);
5. a work on rhetoric dealing, in particular, with metaphor (call number 31f).

Another two Arabic MSS came into the library in 1846, but the main part of the manuscript fund of the Oriental faculty began to form only after the establishment of the faculty when the University of Kazan and the Odessa Richelieu Lycée transmitted to St. Petersburg a large collection of Oriental MSS with many Arabic ones in it. The collection which came from Kazan was the largest one. It is not surprising, as at that time the Kazan University was the centre of teaching Oriental languages, primarily the languages of Muslim peoples. The transmission of the manuscripts took place thanks to helpful support by M. N. Musin-Pushkin, a representative of the glorious Russian family. As to the establishment of the Oriental languages faculty (now the Oriental faculty) at the St. Petersburg University, it was connected with the closing of the related faculties in Kazan and Odessa.

Among the collections of Oriental manuscripts which came into the Oriental faculty library was a collection of A. K. Kazem-Bek (1802—1870). He was born in Derbent

(Dagestan). After his father's moving to Astrakhan in 1821 he had made acquaintance of some Christian missionaries from Scotland and under their influence adopted Christianity. Afterwards A. K. Kazem-Bek taught Arabic, Persian and Turkish at the Kazan and St. Petersburg Universities. He was the first Dean of the Oriental languages faculty of the St. Petersburg University. It is interesting that the great Russian writer, Lev Tolstoy, studied Turkish and Arabic under his guidance when at the Kazan University. After Kazem-Bek's death, in 1871, the St. Petersburg University bought many manuscripts from his collection.

A major part of these MSS was dedicated to Islam. As to their owner, Professor I. N. Berezin wrote about him: "in Western Europe there was no such a connoisseur of Islam and Muslim law as Professor Kazem-Bek". He also called him the patriarch of Russian Orientalistics [1]. I. N. Berezin noted: "The name of Kazem-Bek will be pronounced respectfully till Oriental studies be continued, and these studies will never end" [2].

Most of the manuscripts from Kazem-Bek's collection are works on Muslim theology and law. The principal study by Kazem-Bek, entitled *Mukhtaṣar al-Wiqāya*, was dedicated to the Muslim law as well. Among the Arabic MSS from Kazem-Bek's collection there are some works of literature and folklore, e. g. a folk tale about the legendary hero of the Arab-Byzantine wars, Sayyid al-Baṭṭāl (call number 599) [3]. This tale, being a part of the Arabic folk novel about Fāṭima Dhāt al-Himma, is most popular among the Turkic speaking Muslim peoples. It draws special attention because it gives a peculiar Muslim woman's image. This image seems to be a kind of social-psychological paradox, as the woman appears here as a hero, a warrior-defender of her people, but not a modest resident of the *ḥaram*.

The Kazem-Bek's collection also comprises some works dedicated to the actual political and historical problems of his lifetime. These works lay at the basis of his studies on Shī'ī dogmatics and the Babi movement in Persia.

* Numbers in brackets correspond to the call numbers indicated in the Catalogue which was published in *Sankt-Peterburgskoe vos-tokovedenie* in 1995.