
PRESENTING THE COLLECTIONS

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ANTONI MUCHLIŃSKI AND HIS COLLECTION OF ARABIC MANUSCRIPTS IN THE ST. PETERSBURG UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

The aim of the present article is to survey and analyse the Arabic manuscripts, which came to the Library of the St. Petersburg University from the collection of Antoni Muchliński (1808—1877). The study of collections assembled by scholars helps, as a rule, to reconstruct a more complete and detailed picture of their research-work and pedagogical activities. This aspect of A. Muchliński's activities is especially interesting, because, as it is marked in the works on the history of Oriental studies, "there are, unfortunately, no special works on certain professors and teachers of Oriental languages (M. G. Volkov, I. Gratsilevski, A. Muchliński, L. Z. Budagov) who deserve it" [1].

In the introduction to the description of Arabic manuscripts from the collection of A. Muchliński, it would be useful to present what is known about his life and scholarly activities [2].

The Muchliński family is mentioned in the Coat of Arms Book of Poland from the beginning of the sixteenth century. The Muchlińskis lived in the Poznań province of Poland and in Western Prussia. In the eighteenth century they moved to the Grodno district of Lithuania. The father of Antoni Muchliński, Józef (Rus. Osip), and his mother, Franciszka, were no longer rich or noble. Antoni was born in Sosnowo, in 1808. He was destined to open a new page in the history of the family which previously had nothing to do with scholarship. Since the family was poor, Józef's brother, who was a wealthier man, took care of the boy's breeding and education. Antoni was sent to the district secondary school (gymnasium) by the monastery in the town of Molodechno (Byelorussia). The school was supervised by the Wilno (Vilnius) University and was considered to be the best in the district. Antoni Muchliński spent six years there. The school gave him an excellent knowledge of classical languages, especially of Latin. He continued to study Latin in the Wilno University, where he was thought to be the best expert in this language. All candidates for Master or even Doctor degree, who were writing their theses in Latin, were applying to him for help and advice. Being kind-hearted, he never refused. His high religious and moral principles were formed during his school-years.

Muchliński entered the Wilno University when he was only 15 years old, in 1822 or 1823, becoming a student of the Faculty of law. He graduated in 1826 or 1827. Willing to pursue further his studies in classical languages and literature, he then entered the Faculty of literature and liberal arts (i.e. of philology). A year later he passed his candidate exams and got an award for scholarship. At that time Professor Münnich from Cracow lectured on the classical literature there. He was the man who stirred Muchliński's interest towards the Orient. Though he gave him only the basic knowledge of Arabic and Persian, these seeds fell on fertile soil. Thus by pure chance the young classicist turned into Orientalist.

After Muchliński had graduated from the University, his uncle refused to support him further. Once visiting Antoni, he discovered that the young man was spending all his money on books, that he was ill-fed and poorly dressed. Antoni was so distressed by this refusal that he even thought of entering the Theological Seminary. Fortunately, it has not gone so far. At that time, in 1828, the Wilno University decided to send six of its best students to the University of St. Petersburg to continue their education. They had to pass selective exams in the Academy of Sciences. It was planned that they would continue their education abroad at the state's expense. Only three students managed to pass the exams in the Academy, Muchliński being among them. He became a student of the Institute of Oriental Languages by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. His teachers of Arabic were Prof. O. I. Senkovski, J. F. Demange, F. B. Charmoy, Persian and Turkish were taught by Ja'far Topchibashev. Muchliński got there an excellent linguistic training, both in theory and in practical use of Oriental languages.

In 1832, he received a grant from the Ministry of Education and was sent to the Orient to master his knowledge of Oriental languages. At the beginning of 1832 he took a steamer from Odessa to Istanbul where he stayed at first by the Russian Embassy. He continued to study the Turkish language, Ottoman and Turkic literature under the guidance of Ottoman writer Hoja Ayni and one Nejib Efendi. His Arabic was improved by Father Filippus from Aleppo (Syria), the best Christian Arabic poet of that time. Muchli-