
PRESENTING THE MANUSCRIPT

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AN ARABIC COMPOSITE MANUSCRIPT OF TALES FROM THE COLLECTION OF THE ST. PETERSBURG BRANCH OF THE INSTITUTE OF ORIENTAL STUDIES

Among the few illustrated Arabic manuscripts in the collection of the St. Petersburg Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies is one which contains the anonymous "Tale of King Kal'ād and his Vizier Shīmās" and a collection of fables entitled "Fables Told by Scholars" (call number A 448). The first tale (fols. 1b—56a) is part of the "Thousand and One Night". The second collection (fols. 56b—74b) brings together fables of the legendary sage Luqmān. The works in the copy under discussion here can be described as half-folkloric or half-literary prose, the style of which is entirely in harmony with the numerous miniatures which adorn the manuscript. The old traditions of the Arab school of miniatures are only partially visible here. Nonetheless, the manuscript is of a certain interest, as it reflects a late period of the Arabic manuscripts miniature painting. The illustrations reveal the significant influence of the Turkish school of miniatures. This is not at all surprising, as the manuscript can be dated to the first half of the seventeenth century. Support for this is found in the owner's inscription on fol. 1a with the name Būluş (Paul) and the date 1055/1645—46. Furthermore, this note appears to have been made shortly after the production of the copy.

Fol. 04a contains an annotation in French marked with the date 1843. The margins hold many pencilled-in notes in Russian, Latin and French. Fols. 1a and 001b display the seal of the library of the Teaching division of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. For a certain time, the copy was in the collection of General P. P. Sukhtelen (1788—1833), who took part in the Russian-Turkish war of 1811 and afterwards headed the Caucasus corps Staff during the Russian-Persian war of 1828—1830. The manuscript was acquired by the Asiatic Museum (today the St. Petersburg Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies) in 1919.

In all the manuscript contains 04 + 74 + 004 fols. (17.5 × 12.0 cm). The paper is European and has yellowed substantially over time. The text was copied in black Indian ink. Headings, individual words, and dividers are in red ink. The writing is small calligraphic *naskh*.

The text is enclosed in a double border of thin red lines. The beginning of the manuscript is adorned with an *'unwān* in gold and paint. The binding is made from nearly black leather and is pasted onto pasteboard. Both the manuscript

and binding are heavily worn, which points to intensive use, most likely by numerous readers. The manuscript has apparently already undergone old restoration; in any case, some of the folios are out of order, which could be the result of rebinding. One folio is missing entirely after fol. 47. The end of the "Tale of King Kal'ād and His Vizier Shīmās" is on fol. 50b. The beginning of the "Fables Told by Scholars" is on fol. 56b.

Although the "Tale of King Kal'ād" forms part of the well-known "Thousand and One Night", the "Tale" also circulated independently. In the manuscript it is represented in full, with all inserted stories as they are cited by V. Chauvin, with the exception of the tale of King Solomon and his wives (Chauvin, No. 24). The text of the tale is presented in the copy as a single work without division into nights. The "Tale" closes with a short additional story not mentioned by Chauvin. The story runs that during a hunt, the hunter's favourite falcon attacks a dove and kills it. Feeling pity for the dove, the hunter kills his falcon and is left with neither falcon nor dove. At the end of this story, not cited by Chauvin, we also learn of the punishment to which the main wife of the king was subjected — by his order, she was boiled alive in a copper.

The "Tale" is illustrated with many miniatures. They are uniform in style and usually occupy a third of the folio, frequently being framed by the text. Some of them deviate from the accepted canons of Muslim miniatures and display a faintly distinguishable tendency toward realism. We note here only one of them, representing the depiction of a hunt (see *Plate 1* on the back cover of the current issue). The hunter stands with his right hand on the butt of a musket which hangs behind his back; gripped by its paw, a black bird he has shot hangs head down from his left hand; and a very realistically depicted hunting dog with collar grasps in its teeth a cat it has dragged out of a burrow. All elements of the miniature are depicted in a very realistic manner, as though the scene were painted from life. The employing of colours is skilful as well — the hunter's bright-red belt and equally bright-red pants fix the viewer's attention on the figure of the hunter, as though underscoring the central importance of this figure in the scene. The landscape background is also worthy of notice. Although no plants are