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## PRESENTING THE MANUSCRIPT

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### ORIENTAL MANUSCRIPTS OF KARL FABERGÉ. III: BIOGRAPHICAL WORKS AND PORTRAITS (PART 2)

Before moving to the subject of this article, I would like to return to my “Oriental manuscripts of Karl Fabergé. II: *rāgamālā* miniatures of the Album (*muraqqa* ‘) (part two)”, published in *Manuscripta Orientalia*, VII/3, September 2001, pp. 39–45. I noted there (p. 41) that one of the miniatures in the Album (*Plate 4*) is evidently also part of a *rāgamālā* series. I was, however, unable to identify it. I am sincerely grateful to Prof. R. W. Skelton for commenting on my conclusion. I quote here from a letter I received from him after the publication of my article:

“You are right that this appears to refer to a Ragini, namely Jogi Asavari, which is presumably a mixed Raga found in the Deccan. In his index, Ebeling (p. 302) has ‘Joga, Asavari’ which he cites as being in Ragamalas 70 and 71 described on pp. 194–5, though in his descriptions for those two sets he mentions ‘Asavari’ only and does not illustrate their iconography or say whether they are really inscribed as ‘Jog (or Jogi) Asavari’. It would require a thorough search of the literature on Ragas to determine the truth of this — so far I have only consulted books by Waldschmidt and Kauffman without finding Jogi (or Yogi) Asavari. Certainly your plates 1, 3 & 4 are all in 18th century Deccani (probably Hyderabad) style as are Ebeling’s Ragamalas 70 & 71. I have a theory about these 18th century Hyderabad sets that the iconography was almost certainly introduced from the North (eg. sets from Delhi or Awadh) but that the Hyderabad painters may not have had a full set of examples to follow. They obviously knew the names of the Ragas and Raginis followed in the North Indian plains and presumably made guesses about the subject matter of drawings (cartoons) found in their portfolios, which were copied and substituted for the missing compositions. In at least one of the sets published by O. C. Gangoly, Persian inscriptions describing the paintings were added and then translated for him in the belief that they were genuine Raga dhyanas”.

We now turn to the subject at hand. Karl Fabergé’s collection of Eastern manuscripts includes a copy of yet another biographical work held in the St. Petersburg Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies collection of Eastern manuscripts (call number C 1684) [1]. This work, entitled *Manāqib-i Murtaẓawī*, treats the life and virtues (*al-*

*manāqib*) of ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib. It was written by Amīr Muḥammad Ṣāliḥ al-Ḥusaynī al-Tirmidhī who bore literary pseudonyms (*takhallus*) Kashfī, Subḥānī, and Sujān (d. 1650 or 1651). A poet, literary figure and calligrapher, he occupied high posts in the court of the Mughal emperor Shāh Jahān (1592–1666; r. 1628–1657). In 1646, he was appointed keeper (*dāragāh*) of the court library. Amīr Muḥammad hailed from the lineage that gave the Muslim world Shaykh Ni‘matallāh Walī, the famed poet renowned for his piety. As the son of a noted calligrapher and poet, Mīr ‘Abdallāh Tirmidhī, who bore the *takhallus* Waṣfī and was also known as Mushkīn Qalam (d. 1616), Amīr Muḥammad was distinguished by his fine hand, and especially his beautiful *nasta‘līq*.

Both of the main works by Kashfī that have come down to us deal with the early history of Islam and the biographies of noted figures from that period. *Manāqib-i Murtaẓawī* [2] is a Shī‘ī and Ṣūfī interpretation of the life of ‘Alī. His another unfinished work, written in prose and poetry, *I‘jāz-i Muṣṭafawī*, details the biographies of the Prophet, the “Rightly-guided” caliphs, and the early *imāms*. The parallel titles, common sources, and similar approach to the material reveals a single conception behind both works.

*Manāqib-i Murtaẓawī* consists of 12 chapters and testifies to the author’s outstanding knowledge of the sources on the early history of Islam that were most widespread in India during his time. It also displays his close familiarity with the works of such renowned poets as ‘Aṭṭār, Jalāl ad-Dīn Rūmī, Khwāja Muḥammad Gīsū Darāz, Khwāja Mu‘in al-Dīn Chishtī, Sana‘ī, Niẓāmī, and, of course, his glorious ancestor, Ni‘matallāh Walī, as well as many other Ṣūfī poets [3].

Manuscript C 1684 in the St. Petersburg Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies was copied in Indian ink in a lovely *shikasta-nasta‘līq* and *naskh* on glossy crème-coloured paper of Eastern origin. It contains 127 folios. The folio dimensions are 17.2×27.6 cm; 15 lines. The text is enclosed in a blue-black-gold border; text dimensions are 11.5×21.8 cm. Red ink was used for chapter (*bāb*) divisions and smaller divisions. A number of proper names and quotes are highlighted with red dotted overlines. Quotes in Arabic are copied in *naskh*. The *ḥāfiẓ* — pagination “holders” — consist of the first word on the next page and are placed in the lower left corner of each even page.