renforté de bandes de cuir parfois d’une autre couleur, collées à chaque extrémité des deux côtés de l’ais, mais passant sous le cuir de la couverture. Quelques reliures souffrent d’altérations. Leur décor est proche de celui que l’on aurait obtenu, lui-même, si la surface du papier, en gaufrant le décor, avait été estampée avec une plaque gravée d’une texture.


Il est important de souligner que la reliure d’Asie centrale peut nous donner des renseignements sur l’évolution des rapports entre les hommes et la société. Nous assistons à un processus de transformation que l’on pourrait être tenté de qualifier de “modernisation”. Mais on ne peut reproduire la surface plus coûteuse, comme le cuir, par des matériaux moins onéreux, comme le papier, en simplifiant le décor à un médaillon central, deux personnages et éventuellement un motif intermédiaire, la reliure deviendrait plus accessible à un plus large public.

Les études sur l’histoire de la reliure en Asie centrale sont encore en devenir, nous avons observé quelques spécimens locaux qui nous ont permis d’attribuer avec certitude ce type de reliure à une zone géographique, mais nous savons encore trop peu de choses sur les techniques utilisées, les matériaux employés et les influences venant des pays voisins. Ainsi, à propos du bronzage du médaillon, nous n’avons pas pu déterminer à partir de quel moment il a fait son apparition, quel procédé permettait de l’obtenir et quelles influences (indianes?) expliquaient son apparition. La question de l’utilisation de la lanière mériterait également d’être reprise de manière plus globale.

Annexe
Liste des reliures

Muhammad Sarbi Shahdah
Suppl. pers. 1850

Maula Ali Shahdah
Arabe 6361

Abul al-‘Uzza al-Mutawwir Muhammad al-A‘lum Shahdah
Arabe 6346, pers. 1838

Maula Yildiz Shahdah
Suppl. pers. 1756

Maula ‘AbduRahman Shahdah
Arabe 6311

Muhammad Husein as-Mudir al-Rabi’ al-Shahdah
Arabe 6806

Muhammad HamidurRahman Shah Darb Shahdah
Arabe 6804

Muhammad Sadiq Shahdah
Suppl. pers. 2005

Muhammad Abdul al-Nasir Shahdah
Arabe 6579

Haji Muhammad Shahdah
Arabe 6372

Notes
1. Qu’il s’agit de remercier MM. F. Deroche, F. Richard et G. Troupé pour leur aide et leurs précieux conseils.


5. Isamaiko, op. cit., p. 47 parle de “tonguages” qui se trouvent en haut et en bas du dos qui servent à écrire le texte de l’égaré.


7. Voir le manuscrit Paris, BNF Arabe 6579.


10. Pour les reliures datées voir les manuscrits, BNF Suppl. pers. 1923, Arabe 6361, Suppl. pers. 1736, Suppl. pers. 2005, Arabe 6579, pour cette dernière la date est pratiquement illisible.


Illustrations
Fig. 1. Paris, BNF, ms. Supplément ture 1353, plat supérieur.

Fig. 2. Paris, BNF, Arabe 6361, plat supérieur.

Fig. 3. Paris, BNF, ms. Supplément ture 1357, plat supérieur.

Fig. 4. Paris, BNF, Arabe 6355, plat supérieur.

Book Reviews


Regular readers of our journal have asked me more than once that we should choose a book for your monthly feature, “The Oriental Manuscripts of Karl Fabergé”. The nearly year-long delay is primarily the result of the production of the film The Eastern Fabergé: love stories, which was shot last year in Paris and India (Delhi, Agra, Jaipur, Hyderabad). The film was conceived as a video supplement to my monograph on the oriental manuscript collection that once belonged to the famous jeweller.

I realized long ago that to understand a particular manuscript or miniature one often must travel to the place where it was created. This is how I found myself in Hyderabad. The album of miniatures and calligraphy that formed the pearl of the Fabergé oriental collection was created there in the mid- to late 19th century. Other manuscripts from this collection must also have begun their journey to Europe in Hyderabad. The romance that brought these oriental manuscripts to a St. Petersburg jeweller and which provided the subject for the first part of our film drew our attention to a tragic love story that began in Hyderabad virtually the same time as the album’s creation.

The story is that of the love between James Achilles Kirkpatrick, British East India Company Resident at the court of the Hyderabad Nizam, and a young Persian girl from the Indo-Persian aristocracy. The great niece of the Nizam’s Prime Minister and a Sīra of Saiyyid stock, she was said to be descended from the Prophet himself. The lovers belonged to a very different world. It seemed as though they faced insurmountable obstacles: religion and politics, traditions and prejudices.

During the very short time, I managed to spend in Hyderabad I attempted to collect what materials I could find about this story. At the very last minute, on my way to the airport, I dropped into a small bookshop. The first thing I saw when I entered the shop was a book with a white cover that bore the image of a young black-eyed woman and the title White Mughals. This is how I discovered the book that not only elucidated for me the details of this story but also helped me answer a number of questions about the Fabergé collection.

The book’s author was William Dalrymple, a fellow of the Royal Society of Literature and the Royal Asiatic Societies. His book In Asia: A Quest (1989) won the 1990 Yorkshire Post Best First Work Award and a Scottish Arts Council Spring Book Award; it was also short-listed for the Orange Prize and was the winner of the James Jelleywun Rhyd Memorial Prize. Another book, City of Djinns: A Year in Delhi (1993) won the Thomas Cook Travel Book Award in 1994 and the Sunday Times Young British Writer of the Year Award 1995.

His television series Stories of the Raj and Indian Journeys received the Grierson Award for Best Documentary Series from the British Academy of Film and Television Arts in 2002. In the same year, the Royal Scottish Geographical Society awarded William Dalrymple the Mungo Park Medal for his “outstanding contribution to travel literature.”

The book under review here has been beautifully published. The author’s wife, the painter Olivia Fraser, has further enriched it with 30 colour and 20 black-and-white illustrations, maps, and elegant miniatures. It also contains thorough footnotes for scholars, genealogical charts, a list of dramatis personae, a glossary, and a useful bibliography. The book’s reader-friendly organization helps non-specialist readers to orient themselves among a mass of unfamiliar names, terms and concepts.

The incredible plot turns of the true-life love story, the narrator’s skill, and the book’s readable style all but a work intended for a broad readership. At the same time, the book also fits in with the concept of “total history” — it fills in the gaps between the “partitions of the historical object” and borrows from historical anthropology the idea of studying a culture as a sphere that makes uses and comprehends the essence of being. One notes that cultural source-study is part of the study of human intentions. It puts into practice the ideas of “new historical science” in the form of a deliberate attempt to return to history the “common meanings” that so easily slip away. This is a basic tool in the creative quest of the individual historian, who apprehends the world and shares his knowledge with the world.

The book is the result of five years of research among a variety of unpublished primary sources in many languages that the author has collected in various libraries and archives both in Europe and India (the British Library and National Army Museum Library in London, Bodleian Library in Oxford, Devon Records Office and West Country Studies Library in Exeter, the National Library of Scotland, Scottish
I believe, however, that this material is new not only for Russia. In Britain itself, as well as in India, the bitter experience of confrontation made people forget these pages of their history, which may be of no less importance than the events that were to follow.

I would like to congratulate the author on a brilliant book. It combines experience, scholarly courage, and luck, which always seems to alight on those who selflessly devote themselves to their mission. This beautifully written book will surely find grateful readers not only in Western Europe and the East, but also in Russia, where I will do my best to promote its publication. This is not only important; it is urgent. I cite the author's own words:

"Even today, despite all the progress that has been made, we still have rhetoric about 'clashing civilizations', and almost daily generalizations in the press about East and West, Islam and Christianity, and the vast differences and fundamental gaffs that are said to separate the two. The white Mughals — with their unexpected minglings and fusions, their hybridity and above all their efforts at promoting tolerance and understanding — attempted to bridge these two worlds, and to some extent, they succeeded in doing so again" (pp. 501—1).

It is especially important to recall this today as we confront fleeting attempts to spark conflict between two great civilizations. Those who know the details of this story cannot remain indifferent to the present condition of the British Residency complex that James Achilles Kirkpatrick built in Hyderabad, now the Osmania Women's College. "The building, recognized as one of the most important colonial edifices in India, urgently needs restoration. Its walls and the garden around it bear witness to the people who once hoped to spend happy years here. I close this review with a quote from the author's acknowledgments:

"A non-profit-making trust has now been set up to fund conservation efforts. Anyone who would like more information, or to make a donation, should contact Friends of Osmania Women's College, Osmania, Birmingham, UK. A tax-exempt 501(c) 3 non-profit organisation aimed at restoring the Osmania Women's College buildings and site."

Eifim Rezvan
Editor-in-Chief
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