

## ARABIC ASTRONOMICAL MANUSCRIPTS IN THE SCIENTIFIC LIBRARY OF ST. PETERSBURG STATE UNIVERSITY AND THE CENTRAL ASIAN INTELLECTUAL LEGACY

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**Abstract:** The Scientific Library of St. Petersburg State University holds approximately 900 volumes of Arabic manuscripts, although only a small proportion of these are devoted to the natural sciences. This paper discusses astronomical manuscripts from the University's collection, with particular attention paid to the physical characteristics of these texts. Through research, it has been possible to attribute several manuscripts that had been previously listed in descriptions and catalogues as anonymous. Additionally, new manuscripts on astronomy and related fields of knowledge have been identified.

During the study of the collection, several conclusions have been made. The limited number of astronomical texts largely reflects the priorities and interests of the individuals who compiled the collection, as they were primarily focused on teaching Arabic, literature, history, and Islam within the framework of traditional Oriental studies. The large number of commentaries on *Al-Mulakhḥaṣ fī al-hay'a* by al-Jaghminī once again highlights the significance of this work in the history of scholarship in the Middle East and Central Asia. Other works are treatises, astronomical tables, works on plain (al-hay'a) astronomy, descriptions of astronomical instruments, as well as a copy of the famous *A Book of the Fixed Stars* by 'Abdurrahmān al-Ṣūfī. It is worth noting that there are no works on astrology (*aḥkām an-nujūm*) available, apart from a few brief excerpts. Many of the works have dedications addressed to rulers who supported science, which sheds light on the history of the relationship between rulers and scientists (in particular, astronomers) in the region. This finding warrants further investigation and may provide insight into the intellectual history Islamic communities.

**Keywords:** Arabic manuscripts; Islamic science; Medieval Islamic astronomy; Central Asia; Middle East; al-hay'a; astronomical tables; astronomical instruments; astrology; St. Petersburg State University.

### 1 INTRODUCTION

St. Petersburg is renowned for its rich collections of valuable manuscripts in various languages, including Arabic. The scientific library of St. Petersburg State University (Figure 1) houses approximately 900 volumes of Arabic manuscripts, which is not the most extensive collection of Arabic manuscripts in the city (by comparison, the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts of the Russian Academy of Sciences holds 5,000 volumes and the collections at the Russian National Library comprise up to 3,000 items). Nevertheless, this collection is a highly valuable one, containing a number of rare manuscript copies and a few unique works.

A number of works related to astronomy and astrology are housed in the Asian and African Section of the Scientific Library at St. Petersburg State University. The most recent lists of astronomical and astrological manuscripts could be found in a brief synoptic article of Belyaev and Bulgakov (1958), dedicated to the Arabic manuscripts collection of the University, and in the catalogue of Arabic manuscripts (Frolova and Deryagina, 1996). Both of these works indicate that the collection contains thirteen manuscripts devoted to astronomy and astrology. In the collective monograph edited by V.L. Uspensky and dedicated to the description of all Asian and African manuscripts collection in the library the number of the Arabic manu-

scripts on astronomy and astrology is given as fourteen (Uspensky et al., 2014: 40–42).

However, the research conducted in the library's collection has revealed that the data available there requires clarification and correction. Some small works directly relevant to this topic were overlooked. Additionally, there is a lack of sufficiently detailed descriptions of astronomical and astrological manuscripts providing not only general information but also material characteristics of the manuscripts and a brief overview of the treatises they contain. The present article aims to fill this gap. For research purposes, the works on astronomy and astrology will be grouped into thematic blocks based on their content for ease of review.

A significant portion of the manuscripts in the library originated from Central Asia, a region known for the interest of its rulers in scientific endeavors and the extensive support they provided to scholars, including astronomers. The most prominent example of this is Ulugh Bek (1394–1449), who was not only a ruler and patron of the arts but also an accomplished astronomer. Some of the manuscripts contain dedications to rulers, which allows us to understand better the relationship between people of power and scientists in the context of the history of science in the region. Undoubtedly, a more thorough analysis of the manuscript collection



Figure 1: The main building and the library of the Department of Asian and African Studies, St. Petersburg State University (photographs: the author).

would allow us to gain insights on the history of Islamic scholarship, especially in the region of Central Asia.

## 2 BRIEF HISTORY OF THE COLLECTION OF ARABIC MANUSCRIPTS

At St. Petersburg University, the Oriental manuscripts fund began to form even before the foundation of the Oriental faculty, starting in 1819, mainly due to random admissions. Initially, their number was only 35 volumes, of which only four contained works in Arabic. However, the main fact of the further expansion of the collection was the transfer of a large collection of manuscripts to the newly formed Department of Oriental Languages in 1855. This collection in different languages belonging to Kazan University consisted of 380 volumes. In addition, a much smaller (61 volumes) collection of the Odessa Richelieu Lyceum was also moved to the University (Belyaev and Bulgakov, 1958: 21).

Further replenishment occurred due to later acquisitions. The largest of these were the collection of manuscripts from A.K. Kazim-Bek's (1802–1870) (179 volumes were received in 1871), Sheikh Muḥammad 'Ayyād al-Ṭanṭāwī (1810–1861) collection (156 volumes were received in 1871), as well as the collections of A.O. Mukhlinsky's (1808–1877) manuscripts (36 volumes were received in 1868 and 1879) (Mokrushina, 2015: 129). Other manuscripts were mostly received as personal gifts from the collections of individuals, including the University staff members. Among them, in the context of this research, it is particularly worth highlighting the Persian and Arabic manuscripts on nat-

ural sciences that A.A. Romaskevich (1885–1942) brought from his journey in Iran in 1912–1914.

For more information about the history of the acquisition of Arabic manuscript collections, see the collective monograph edited by Uspensky (2014) (in Russian) and the article by Kudryavtseva (2023) (in English). Now let us proceed to the description of astrological and astronomical manuscripts.

## 3 DESCRIPTION OF THE MANUSCRIPTS

### 3.1 Corpus Jaghminicum

The first and largest group of works that will be described can be generally referred to as '*Corpus Jaghminicum*'. These are works subsequent to the extremely popular treatise by *Al-Mulakhkhaṣ fī al-hay'a* (*Epitome of Plain Theoretical Astronomy*) by Maḥmūd b. Muḥammad 'Umar al-Jaghminī and his work itself. *Al-Mulakhkhaṣ* provoked a significant number of commentaries and supra-commentaries. Al-Jaghminī was born in Jaghmīn, a small town near Khwārizm, where he flourished. There has been some ambiguity regarding the dates of Jaghmīn's life; he has been erroneously assigned the dates of 1344–1345 on several occasions, in part due to the confusion with another al-Jaghminī who was a physician and lived at that time. In any way, most probably he lived in the early thirteenth century, since the date of composition of the *Mulakhkhaṣ* is given as circa 618 AH/1221–1222 by several authors (namely, C. Storey, D. King, and E. İhsanoğlu) (Rageb, 2007: 584–585).

His *al-Mulakhkhaṣ fī al-hay'a* (*Epitome of Plain Theoretical Astronomy*) was widely read,

a simple treatise on astronomy devoid of mathematical proofs and complicated calculations. The work itself is a concise overview of the structure of the celestial and terrestrial realms, including the celestial bodies and the sublunar regions within them. It was the subject of a vast number of surviving commentaries and supra-commentaries, intended to be studied alongside the text of the *Mulakhkhaṣ* as supplementary materials for more advanced learning. The work is dedicated to a famous physician and scholar Imām Badr al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Bahrām al-Qalānīsī, the author of a well-known pharmaceutical *Aqrābādhīn* (ca. 590/1194) (Rageb, 2016: 16–17).

### 3.1.1 Ms.O. 90a

In the Library there is only one example of al-Jaghmīnī's *Mulakhkhaṣ*, namely Ms.O. 90a (ff. 1–11v). It is a part of the volume consisting of 212 folios of thick paper (24 × 14.5 cm). The text is written in distinct and bold, but rather small *naskh* script, with 29 lines on a page. The ink is black, with some words and phrases written (beginnings of the sections and chapters, numbers) or overlined in red. Some of the pages have blank areas intended for illustrations that were never completed. The margins contain comments and corrections written by the same hand. The manuscript is dated back to 830 AH/1427. The manuscript is from Kazim-Bek's collection.

### 3.1.2 Ms.O. 90b

Commentaries on the *Mulakhkhaṣ* constitute a substantial part of the astronomical and astrolological manuscripts collection of the Library. One of them is *Sharḥ al-Mulakhkhaṣ fī al-hay'a* (*Commentary on Epitome of Plain Theoretical Astronomy*) by al-Sayyid al-Sharīf 'Alī b. Muḥammad al-Jurjānī (740 AH/1339–ca. 816 AH/1413). He was a scholar of immense knowledge, a scientist, and a theologian who adhered to traditional beliefs. In sources, he is referred to as 'al-Sayyid al-Sharīf' which suggests his lineage traced back to 'Alī b. Abī Tālib. He was born in the village of Tāḡu, near Astarabad in Gorgan, and later became a professor in Shiraz. When the city was ravaged by Timur in 1387, he relocated to Samarkand, but returned to Shiraz in 1405, where he remained until his passing.

The manuscript of *Sharḥ al-Mulakhkhaṣ fī al-hay'a* Ms.O. 90b (ff. 13v–51v) is a part of the same volume, as previously described work, written with the same hand and the same inks. The margins contain even more comments and corrections written by the same hand as well. A significant distinction from previous work is the

inclusion of well-organized and neat schematic pictures, performed in black and red inks.

It is worth mentioning that all other works contained in this volume are devoted mainly to mathematics, and in particular, geometry.

### 3.1.3 Ms.O. 397

The next manuscript of our concern contains another commentary on the *Mulakhkhaṣ* named *Sharḥ al-Mulakhkhaṣ fī al-hay'a*. It was written by Qāḍī Zāda al-Rūmī (765 AH/1364–840 AH/1436), famous astronomer and mathematician, who worked in the observatory of Ulugh Beg in Samarkand. The manuscript Ms.O. 397 consists of 76 folios (18.5 × 12 cm, with 14 lines on each page). The copy is defective: it has no end. Lost fragments of the original text, written on yellow paper, have been restored on fresher, greenish-colored paper, and added to defective folios. The text of restored fragments is completed in the same *ta'liq* handwriting. The text is written in black ink, and some words and phrases are overlined in red. There are drawings made in red and black ink, as well as comments on the margins (made by the same hand). Folio 60 is an insert sheet of smaller format with a schematic picture of the lunar eclipse. The manuscript is from the collection of Kazim-Bek.

### 3.1.4 Ms.O. 668a

Manuscript Ms.O. 668a (ff. 1v–101, 21.5 × 17 cm, thick and rough paper) contains the same work. It is written in black ink in *naskh* script, which is slightly changing towards the end of the text. Many words have vowel marks (*ḥarakāt*). Some words and numbers are performed in red ink. The average number of lines on a page is 16. There are numerous comments in the margins and in between the lines, all in the same handwriting, as well as drawings and illustrations in black ink.

The copy of *Sharḥ al-Mulakhkhaṣ fī al-hay'a* constitutes the lion's share of the volume. Notably, the remaining pages of the volume dedicated to the commentary on Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī's work on *al-hay'a* (see below). The manuscript is from the collection of Kazim-Bek.

### 3.1.5 Ms.O.191

The next work we are considering is a commentary on the previous treatise, compiled by 'Abd al-'Alī b. Muḥammad al-Birjandī (d. ca. 1525/1526), known for his numerous astronomical commentaries and supra-commentaries. The manuscript Ms.O.191 has 222 folios (17 × 9.5 cm, 15 lines on page). The copy is defective: it has no end. It is also devoid of any drawings or diagrams. The text is written in black ink with a very neat and clean *naskh* script. Cited



text of Qāḍī Zāda al-Rūmī is marked by introductory words *qawluhu* (*his speech*), written in red ink. There are a few comments in the margins, some are made in the same ink and the same handwriting, some are made in *ta'liq* script and different inks. The paper of the copy is thin and of a rather good quality. The manuscript was attributed as Ottoman and was brought to the University by W.F. Dittell (1816–1848) and I.N. Berezin (1818–1896) from their journeys in Central Asia and Caucasus (Frolova and Deryagina, 1996: 252).

### 3.1.6 Ms.O. 1207

The manuscript Ms.O. 1207 contains commentary on al-Jaghmiṇī's *Mulakhkhaṣ*. The treatise is entitled *Hāshiyat Jaghmīnī* (*Commentary on Jaghmīnī*) with notion *Sharḥ 'alā al-Mulakhkhaṣ fī al-hay'a li al-Jaghmiṇī* (*Commentary on Epitome of Plain Theoretical Astronomy of al-Jaghmiṇī*). The volume consists of 52 folios (18 × 10 cm) of thin and delicate paper with 23 lines on a page, written in a very small and sometimes scrawled *ta'liq* handwriting. The words *qāla* (he said) and *aqūlu* (I am saying) dividing al-Jaghmiṇī's own words and the commentary are written in red ink. There are numerous comments on the margins, written by the same hand. The name of the first (?) scribe, Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr b. Aḥmad, is given on the last folio, in the colophon, as well as the date of finishing the text—884AH/1479. The author of the work is not given in the catalogue (Belyaev and Bulgakov, 1958: 185). However, there is a dedication to "... the sultan, son of the sultan Maḥmūd Jānī Beg Khān." (f. 2). This may allow us to attribute this treatise as *Sharḥ al-Mulakhkhaṣ* by Yūsuf b. Mubārak al-Alānī. The work was composed Sunday, 19 Ramaḍān 735/13–14 May 1335 and dedicated to Jānī Beg Khān (r. 1341–57) of the Golden Horde of the Mongol Empire (Rageb, 2016: 284). The beginning of the text is decorated with *'unwān* made in gold, blue, red and green colors. On the f.1 there is a very neat drawing of a sitting sufi with a cup in his hand. The manuscript contains the signature of A. Romaskevich and a presumable date of its purchase (1914).

## 3.2 Other Works on Al-Hay'a

### 3.2.1 Ms.O. 670

Other works devoted to the summary of astronomical information and cosmography (*al-hay'a*) are represented by two works. The first one is *Al-Tuḥfa al-shāhiya fī al-hay'a* (*Royal Present in Plain Theoretical Astronomy*) by Qutb al-Dīn Maḥmūd b. Mas'ūd al-Shīrāzī (634 AH/1236–710 AH/1311), one of the most prominent astronomers of the thirteenth century, who work-

ed with famous Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī and also had vast knowledge in medicine. The work was dedicated to Vizier Amīr Shāh ibn Tāj al-Dīn Mu'tazz ibn Ṭāhir. The manuscript in the library Ms.O. 670 contains 303 folios (18 × 9.5 cm). It is defective (without beginning and the end of the text). The manuscript is written in a harsh paper with a rather tiny *ta'liq* script (19 lines on a page) written in black ink (some words are in red). The text is surrounded with a frame made with blue and golden ink. The text is illustrated with diagrams and schemes painted in red and black ink. Comments on margins are scarce and made by the same hand. The manuscript is from the collection of Kazim-Bek.

### 3.2.2 Ms.O. 1079

Another work on *al-hay'a* is a treatise entitled *Tadhkira fī 'ilm al-hay'a* (*Note on the Science of Plain Theoretical Astronomy*). The copy (or rather, the initial copy from which the copy in the possession of the library was made) was completed in Sabzewar in 724 AH/1324 as mentioned in the conclusive part of the text. The manuscript does not contain the author's name and it has been attributed as anonymous (Frolova and Deryagina, 1996: 48), however with the notion that the treatise is named exactly as the famous work of al-Ṭūsī (Belyaev and Bulgakov, 1958: 29). Comparison of the text with other manuscripts of the same name available worldwide has shown without doubt that it is a well-known work by Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī (597 AH/1201–672 AH/1274). The manuscript contains 38 folios (20 × 12 cm) of rough paper with traces of water. The text is written in *naskh* script in black ink with 25 lines on a page. The manuscript contains numerous schemes painted in red and black ink and multitudinous comments on margins. The manuscript is from the collection of A.A. Romaskevich.

### 3.2.3 Ms.O. 668b

The manuscript Ms.O. 668b is a part of the volume Ms.O. 668 (ff. 102v–110). However, it is not attributed in the catalogue. It is written on smoother and thinner paper than the rest of the volume. It is an unidentified commentary on the tenth paragraph (*faṣl*) of the third chapter (*bāb*) *Tadhkira fī 'ilm al-hay'a* (*Note on the Science of Plain Theoretical Astronomy*) by Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī, titled *Al-faṣl al-'āshir fī ma'rifat ajzā' al-ayyām wa ma'rifat mā yatarakkabu bihi* (*The tenth paragraph about knowledge of parts of the days and knowledge of what is composed by it*). The text is written in *ta'liq* script in black ink by the different handwriting compared to Ms.O. 668a. Quality of the ink differs as well. The title is written in red ink, and the text of al-

Ṭūsī is overlined with red ink.

### 3.3 Astronomy

#### 3.3.1 Ms.O. 669

Astronomy as such is represented by only one work, a copy of a well-known *Kitāb ṣuwar al-kawākib al-thābita* (*A Book of the Fixed Stars*) by ‘Abdurrahmān b. ‘Umar al-Šūfī (291 AH/903–376/986), Persian astronomer and mathematician. He lived at the court of his friend Emir ‘Aḍud al-Dawla in Isfahan, engaged in translating astronomical works from Greek. However, *A Book of the Fixed Stars* with the illustrated description of 48 constellations became his most famous treatise. The manuscript Ms.O. 669 contains 119 folios of thin and delicate paper (25 × 19 cm). The text is written in a good and neat *naskh* script with 17 lines on a page, with illustrations made by black, green, red and golden ink). The text is written in black ink and the titles of the pictures are in red. The copy is incomplete and individual blocks of the manuscript sheets are intertwined in a chaotic manner. In the colophon (f. 26) there is a date of copying the manuscript (Muḥarram 16, 1050 AH/7 May 1640), and the scribe’s name is given (‘Abd al-Rashīd b. Jānī). The manuscript is from the collection of Kazim-Bek.

### 3.4 Astronomical Instruments

The library also contains three treatises on astronomical and navigational instruments, which are collected in one volume (Ms.O. 830), from the collection of Sheikh Muḥammad ‘Ayyād d al-Ṭanṭāwī. These treatises were copied by his own hand 11 Ramaḍān 1241 AH/18 April 1826 in Cairo on a good paper of European production (24.5 × 17 cm), with *naskh* script in black ink (in Ms.O.830c some headings are written in red ink) with 22 lines on each page.

#### 3.4.1 Ms.O. 830d

The treatise Ms.O. 830d (ff. 30v–34v) is *Risāla fī ‘amal bi-rub’ al-muqantarāt* (*A Treatise in Usage of Astrolabe Quadrant*) by Jamāl al-Dīn ‘Abdullāh b. Khalīl b. Yūsuf al-Māridīnī (d. 809 AH/1406). He may have served as a *muwaqqit* (official astronomer and timekeeper) at the Umayyad mosque in Damascus, and later became a *muwaqqit* in Cairo. He also was the teacher of Shihāb al-Dīn Abū al-‘Abbās Aḥmad b. Rajab al-Majdī (767AH/1366–850AH/1447), one of the most prominent Egyptian astronomers and mathematicians of the first half of the fifteenth century under the Mamluk rule, who also was famous for his vast expertise in astronomical instruments.

#### 3.4.2 Ms.O. 830e

The next work, Ms.O. 830e (ff. 35–39) is written by Ibn al-Majdī, mentioned above. It is his treatise entitled *Risāla fī ‘amal bi al-rub’* (*Treatise in Usage of Quadrant*). The last work dedicated to the astronomical instruments in this volume is under mark Ms.O. 830e as well (ff. 40v–43). It is *Waraqāt fī ma’rifat waḍ’ bayt al-ibra ‘alā al-jihāt al-arba’* (*Pages on knowledge of compass needle position on four directions*) by ‘Abdurrahmān al-Tājūrī (d. 999AH/1590).

### 3.5 Astronomical Tables

#### 3.5.1 Ms.O. 761

Astronomical tables (*zīj*) are represented by only one work, Ms.O. 761, anonymous tables of the positions of the planets, titled *Aqrab ishāra ilā ḥulūl al-kawākib al-sayyāra* (*The Nearest Indication of the Positions of Planets*). The beginning of the text says that these tables contain compendious information ‘from the long books’. The manuscript dates to the eighteenth century (Frolova and Deryagina, 1996: 30) and contains 42 folios (22 × 16 cm) of tables filled in *naskh* script, performed in black and red inks. The manuscript is from the collection of Sheikh al-Ṭanṭāwī.

### 3.6 Timekeeping and Calendars

Timekeeping and calendars are represented by three short treatises, each of them is a part of an anthology of various works.

#### 3.6.1 Ms.O. 757d

The short anonymous treatise titled *Sabak al-‘ibāra bi alfāz al-miyāra* (*Moulding of the Expression in Words of the Motion*), Ms.O. 757d (ff. 21v–29v) is a part of the volume dated back to 1094 AH/1683, consisting of 264 folios (22 × 16 cm). The paper is European, white, thin, and glossy. The text is written in small *maghribī* handwriting with 23–25 lines on a page. The ink is black, individual words and headings are written in red ink. The colophon says that it was finished in 999 AH/1590–91. The manuscript is from the collection of Sheikh al-Ṭanṭāwī.

#### 3.6.2 Ms.O. 663

The manuscript Ms.O. 663 is an extensive anonymous medical anthology of 265 folios (21.5 × 15 cm), titled *Kitāb al-Mughnī ‘an jamī’ kutub al-ṭibb* (*The Book Eliminating the Need for All Medical Books*). It is listed in the catalog as a single work with a note: “ff. 1–244—the main part; ff. 244v–245 v—about the months of the year, Zodiac signs in connection with diseases and their cure; 246–260v—excerpts from an-

cient books about human treatment; ff. 261–265v—various recipes and spells.” (Frolova and Deryagina, 1996: 178). The text on folios seems to be a rather separate text, for it starts with the *basmala* blessing and begins as such: *alā ism Allāh nabda’ naktub ḥisāb al-sana wa tafṣīlahā ... (In the name of God, we begin to write about the calculation of the year and its division ...)*. The text ends with the colophon, also containing blessings to the God. The treatise briefly describes division of the year into months and days and the dates of the Sun’s stay in each of the Zodiac signs. It is written (as all the volume) in large *naskh* script with 15 lines on the page. The inks are black, the dots between sentences and around the colophon are performed with red ink. The manuscript is from the collection of Kazim-Bek.

### 3.6.3 Ms.O. 831 (f. 15)

Manuscript Ms.O. 831 is a pamphlet volume (convolute) containing 32 folios of various size made from different sorts of paper. They are filled with various handwriting. Of interest is f. 15 (20 × 13.5 cm), containing verses related to days of the week, related to the planets and suitable for certain activities. The paper also contains several prayers (*du‘ā’*). The texts are written in *naskh* script, with black ink. On the reverse side of the folio there is a beginning of the treatise titled *Risāla fī mas‘alat al-jabr wa al-qadar (Epistle on the Question of Destiny and Predestination)* by Shams al-Dīn Aḥmad b. Sulaymān Ibn Kamāl (ca. 873 AH/1468–1469–940AH/1534). The manuscript is from the collection of Sheikh al-Ṭanṭāwī.

## 4 CONCLUDING REMARKS

Works on astronomy hold a relatively small place in the collection of manuscripts at St. Petersburg State University: this paper provides a list of 17 items with 15 different original works (There are two copies of *Sharḥ al-Mulakhkhaṣ fī al-hay’a* by Qāḍī Zāda al-Rūmī as well as a full copy and a chapter from *Tadhkira fī ‘ilm al-hay’a* by Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī). All these works are placed in 13 volumes. The small number of the astronomical manuscripts could be explained by the fact that the collection was primarily expanded by University members and served educational purposes in the field of

Oriental Studies, particularly as a resource for studying Arabic, Islam and the history of Muslim countries. As a result, scientific works were not generally in the focus of attention of those who contributed to the collection. An exception is A.A. Romaskevich, who had a particular interest in manuscripts related to natural and occult sciences. Therefore, despite the presence of publications in this field within the library, their number is limited and the selection is often arbitrary.

The manuscripts originate from different parts of the Islamic world and date from the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries, focusing primarily on the fundamentals of astronomy such as *hay’a*, timekeeping and astronomical instruments. Interestingly, these works do not include any references to astrological predictions (*aḥ-kām al-nujūm*). This fact cannot be explained by the interests of manuscript collectors, as some of these volumes include works on alchemy, mystical prayers, talismans, divination, and other esoteric topics. This study may provide insight into the trends in the dissemination of natural science and occult knowledge in the Volga-Ural region, the Caucasus, and Central Asia during the given period. It is also noteworthy that the most numerous types of manuscripts are commentaries on *Al-Mulakhkhaṣ fī al-hay’a* by al-Jaghminī. This fact clearly indicates his influence over Muslim astronomers of Central Asia and the Middle East for a long period of time. It is important to note the presence of dedicatory formulas in the works under study. These formulas are important for the study of social and political aspects of the history of sciences in the region. Moreover, the presence of dedication contributed attribution of Ms.O. 1207.

The collection of astronomical manuscripts in St. Petersburg State University undoubtedly holds significant interest for the study of the history of science and the intellectual history of Arab-Muslim communities. It should be noted that the list given in this paper may be incomplete, since fragments of astronomical and astrological writings may be found in volumes devoted to other fields of knowledge. Therefore, the Scientific Library of St. Petersburg State University is definitely waiting for researchers to make new discoveries.

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