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- 1 Under the auspices of a new Franco-Uzbekistan initiative aimed at determining the state and condition of Oriental manuscript collections in post-Soviet Central Asia – entitled “Patrimoine manuscrit de l'Asie centrale musulmane” – Maria Szuppe and Ashirbek Muminov have provided the summation of a 1998-exploration of the archives of the Museum of Qarshi (located in south western Uzbekistan, some 200 km from Bukhara). This slight volume, consisting of a detailed introduction, a complete catalogue of fifty-two manuscripts, as well as a number of indices (geographic, nominal, technical, authorial), will supplement ongoing efforts to provide transparency to the murky conditions of archival research resources in Uzbekistan, and Central Asia in general. In many ways, the history of the Qarshi manuscript collection is an excellent example of how such small and mid-sized centers fared during the Soviet era. The museum, formerly a *madrasa* built in 1909, was closed for two lengthy periods (1927-43, 1960-68) on account of reformulations of provincial boundaries in the SSR Uzbekistan. It would not be until the late 1990s, when a research team (M. Szuppe, A. Muminov, A. Erkinov) discovered this cache of manuscripts which, it was soon discovered, had never been properly surveyed and catalogued on account of the fact that no one associated with the museum could read the Arabic alphabet. The authors discuss the various features of these manuscripts, and on the basis of colophon copyist signatures

and *nisbas* provide sufficient evidence to interpret this region in and around Bukhara as an area of significant manuscript production and transmission. Given that the collection had ultimately been a working library for a *madrasa*, these manuscripts – mostly in Arabic but also including some in Persian and Turkish – shed some light on typical 19th-century Central Asian *madrasa* curricula.

- 2 The catalogue is divided into routine headings (Qur'an, Qur'anic sciences, law, theology, logic, grammar, etc.), and many entries include a facsimile of the beginning text. Given their *madrasa* provenance, it is not entirely surprising that many of the texts deal with *fiqh* (law), *kalâm* (theology), and *mantiq* (logic). It is also clear that Sa'd al-Din al-Taftâzânî (d. 791/1389) and Jalâl al-Din al-Davâni (d. 908/1503) were particularly popular as we find copies of their work as well as a number of commentaries and supracommentaries. Some other notable manuscripts include a copy of a collection of Arabic *fatwas* originating from the Mughal court of Aurangzib (no. 16 – *Fatâwâ-i Hindiya*) which appears in a 19th century *waqf* compiled for the Emir of Bukhara; a rare copy of an Alexandrian romance (no. 45 – *Iskandar nama*) composed in 1725 by one Bâqi Muhammad ibn Maulânâ Yusuf, a descendent of Ahmad Yasawi, and a genealogical text (no. 52 – *Nasab nâma*) for Karim-birdi Khvâjah Shaykh, a notable Sufi personality associated with the Yasawiyya Order.

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Thèmes : 1.1. Bibliographie

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