The early history of printing in Iran is divided into three distinct periods.\(^1\) Printing from movable type was introduced to Iran in or shortly before the year 1233/1817. During the initial period, for about the first fifteen years, printing from movable type was the only method of printing practised in Iran. Next, lithography made its way to Iran. The first item known to have been produced by this new technique is a Qur’an dated 1248–49/1832–33, printed most probably in the city of Tabriz. For almost three decades, both techniques of printing coexisted, though the number of books printed from movable type—probably some 60 items altogether\(^2\)—was far more modest than the steadily growing production of books printed by lithography. The last item printed from movable type in this period, according to present knowledge, was the 1275/1858 edition of Gawhari’s widely read martyrological compilation *Tufān al-bokâ*.\(^3\) During the third period, books in Iran were exclusively printed by way of lithography. Not a single item printed from movable type is known to have been published between 1275/1858 and 1291/1874. The modern mode of printing from movable type was introduced to Iran only with the publication of Nāṣir al-Dīn Shah’s travelogue to Europe (*Safar-nāme-ye Nāṣer al-Dīn Shāh be-farang*), in 1291/1874; significantly, this book was published in Istanbul. The new mode of printing distinguishes the modern history of printing in Iran from the three phases of the early period. While printing from movable type and lithography continued to compete for about half a century, the former soon gained the upper hand and ousted lithographic production around the middle of the twentieth century.

---


\(^3\) See ‘Ali Buďari, *Chehel tufān* (Tehran, 1390H.Sh.), 8m23.
The Persian books published by way of lithography during the Qajar period correspond more or less to printed manuscripts. The models they followed were either manuscripts or previous publications printed either from movable type or by way of lithography. Even though the majority of books published in Iran was in Persian, a certain number of books were also published in other languages, notably Turkish and Arabic. The Arabic texts almost exclusively relate to areas of traditional Muslim learning, predominantly Shi'ī theology. Given their content, none of these books would likely have profited from the unique option lithographic printing offered by allowing the printing of text and illumination or illustration in a single print-run. This option was, however, fruitfully put to use in a large number of works of Persian literature, notably the Persian classics and other items of a predominantly narrative nature.

Considering the historical development sketched above, the publication discussed in the present contribution shows a number of peculiar characteristics. First, the book under consideration here is the published lithographed edition of an Arabic text during the third period of the early history of printing in Iran, in which not a single book printed from movable type is known to have been produced. Second, the text does not belong to traditional Shi'ī learning, but comprises the zoological encyclopaedia Ḥayāt al-ḥayawān by al-Damīrī (d. 808/1405), a fourteenth-century Egyptian author. Third, even though the book is not primarily a narrative, it contains a large number of illustrations. In fact, in terms of the number of illustrations included, the 1285/1868 Tehran edition of Damīrī's Ḥayāt al-ḥayawān is the most profusely illustrated book ever published in nineteenth-century Iran: it contains a total of more than 1,400 single images. Fourth and foremost, the book's illustrations are not integrated into the printed text, as was the standard procedure in early Persian lithographed books printed in Iran or India. In this highly exceptional edition, the illustrations rather constitute a regularly added feature on the margin. In both Muslim and Western manuscript tradition, the margin provided the standard area for corrections as well as additions and commentaries to the book's main text. Likewise, the margins of manuscripts

---


from the medieval Western world often bear miniature illustrations, a feature that is similarly known from Muslim manuscripts. Yet, to date we do not know any other book from the Muslim world, whether manuscript or printed, in which marginal illustrations serve as a regular feature commenting on and illustrating the content of a book whose text is presented as a single written block. Whether or not the illustrations in the present case are marginal in the word's second, and dominant, meaning remains to be seen.

Damiri's zoological lexicon has been described as "a heroic attempt to impose a rational grouping to a vast store-house of animal lore." Essentially, the book offers an alphabetical treatment of the animal world, each entry containing a hypothetical maximum of seven sections. These sections range from philological considerations of the animal's name, via a description of its physical characteristics and habits, to its reflection in theological and juridical terms, in proverbs, medicine, and the interpretation of dreams. While some researchers have characterised the work as an "uncritical compilation, indiscriminately lumping together the important and the trivial, the real and the imaginary, the factual and the fictional," others have praised the book for the vast array of sources it exploits—adding up to about 800 different authors and works. Besides its value as a typical representative of the compilation literature of the Mamluk period, the book is also an extensive document of popular belief and tradition in the premodern Arabic world.

In the modern period, Damiri's zoological encyclopaedia was first published in two editions printed from movable type in nineteenth-century Egypt, namely in 1274/1857 and 1284/1867. The lithographed Tehran
edition dated 1285/1868 thus constitutes the book’s third edition. While consciously referring to the two previous editions, in their concluding remarks the editors of the Tehran edition stereotypically propose to present a more reliable text. In this respect and, as will be shown, in several other respects, the book—even though presenting an Arabic text—is a typical product of Qajar Iran. The book’s first printed page (fol. 1a) is representative of the nascent state of the title page in Persian books of the period (plate 1). Headed by the basmala that the Muslim believer is obliged to pronounce before beginning any action, the first page is crowded in a somewhat baroque manner with information revealing the book’s title, the printing establishment, and the date of publication. The book’s printer, a certain ‘Ali-Qoli Ḥān, ran a printing house in Tehran during the latter half of the Qajar period. The text written inside a central ornament on the first page describes the circumstances of the book’s publication. It is framed by a Qur’ānic verse (sura 9, verse 111) that advertises constant strife as the sole means of attaining paradise, a notion proclaimed as common to the three Abrahamic religions.

The Tehran edition of Damiri’s Ḥayāt al-ḥayawan consists of two volumes comprising 283 unnumbered folios or 566 printed pages. The size of the paper is roughly 22 × 35 cm. The text of 35 lines per page is presented within a double frame that covers an area of about 15 × 28 cm. For the reader’s easy orientation, the frame is headed by a reference to the respective chapter, namely, the letter of the alphabet, and the catchwords of the specific single entries are repeated on the outer margin of the respective pages. As stated in the colophon of vol. 1 (fol. 134b), the book’s calligraphy has been executed by a certain Mohammad-Reżā b. ‘Ali-Akbar al-Ḥvānsāri (plate 2). The calligraphy of the book’s first volume

13 The 1285 Tehran edition is rarely present in public libraries in the West. Copies have been located in the Berlin Staatsbibliothek Preussischer Kulturbesitz (shelfmark 2 Lk 3529), the British Library, London (shelfmark 14533.g.1), the School of Oriental and African Studies, London (shelfmark ED86.18/18562) and in the Harvard Widener Library (shelfmark OL 22520.15 F). The copy used here originates from a private collection.


15 The only other book owing its calligraphy to this scribe that has been unambiguously identified so far is a copy of Bidel’s Mátamkade published in 1274/1857; see Marzolph, Narrative Illustration, 253.
was completed on the sixth day of the month Rabi‘ II, and the second volume is signed in the following month, ‘Umād I, without mentioning the exact day. It may thus be surmised that the book’s production might have taken some three to four months altogether. All of the book’s pages are framed by a somewhat less pronounced single line demarcating the actual margin against the paper size. The margin between this single line and the double lines framing the text measures about 3 to 3.5 cm on the top and outer side, and about 2 cm on the lower side. Besides headings, catchwords, and illustrations, the margin contains occasional corrections to the text in Arabic and occasional commentaries in Persian added by two different hands. The book’s text starts on the inner side of the first folio (fol. 1b; plate 3). Following the manuscript tradition, this page is headed by a large ornamental illumination surrounding the book’s centrally placed title. The book’s title is placed in a traditional wording—hādhā al-kitāb al-musammā bi-Hayāt al-Ḥayāwān—below an image of the Qajar coat of arms that shows a standing lion facing the viewer with a glaring sun behind his back; it is interesting to note that the lion is presented in a somewhat less martial manner than usual, since otherwise he would regularly hold a drawn sword in his raised right front paw.\textsuperscript{16} In the present case, the Qajar coat of arms is particularly suitable, since it links the Iranian context of the book’s production to the book’s text: after all, the text, disregarding strict alphabetical order, begins with the entry for Lion (al-asad). The first illustrations to the entries for lion (al-asad; fol. 1bB6a), camel (al-ibīl; fol. 6aB7b), and she-ass (al-ātān; fol. 7bB8a), introduce the respective animals, together with a vague outline of scenery, in a large size. In fact, the images are so large that even though the animals are represented vertically, the images still cross the line marking the page’s outer margin (plate 4). This is a rare feature, since the great majority of the following illustrations are contained within the margin, reducing the depicted animals to a true miniature size. Most animals are depicted in a manner more or less corresponding to their natural features (plate 5). In particular, horses (al-faras; fol. 207b–212b) and dogs (al-kalb; fol. 233a–246b)\textsuperscript{17} are represented in a variety of positions, and sometimes

\textsuperscript{16}See, e.g., the Qajar coat of arms on the front page of each and every single issue of the roughly contemporary lithographed Qajar newspaper \textit{Ruznāme-e vaqīye-e ettefaqīye} (facsimile reproduction in 4 vols., Tehran, 1373/1994), or on the front pages of each volume of the 1270–74/1853–57 Tehran edition of Mirvand’s \textit{Rawżat al-ṣafā}; see Marzolph, \textit{Narrative Illustration}, fig. 54.

\textsuperscript{17}The entry encompasses a lengthy digression on the legend of the Seven Sleepers, whose group according to Muslim tradition also included a dog.
the animals are even portrayed as acting in a manner typical of their natural behaviour—such as the falcon (al-bāзи; fol. 41a) and the chameleon (al-ḥirbā؛ fol. 84a), which are shown with their prey (plate 6). The rather strange depiction of some animals such as the rabbit (al-arnā؛ fol. 9b) or the crocodile (al-timsā؛) might indicate that the artist was less familiar with their actual appearance (plate 7; fol. 60a). Meanwhile, he takes great care to depict even the smallest creatures such as fleas (al-burğüt؛ fol. 45a) or mosquitos (al-ba‘ūذ؛ fol. 46b) by enlarging their size by way of a virtual magnifying glass (plate 8). Most of the book’s pages contain a single or only a few illustrations, but some pages in connection with the number or nature of the respective entries are fairly crowded (plate 9)—such as the passage in the entry al-ḥiḍ‘a (kite; fol. 83b) discussing the animals that according to the ḥadīth may be killed, or the beginning of the entry al-dā‘ba denoting any animal that walks or crawls or creeps (fol. 115a).

Corresponding with the book’s text, the illustrations also depict creatures that by modern critical science are regarded as fantastic or fabulous, but whose potential existence the author had no reason to doubt. Already the book’s very first illustration (fol. 2a) depicts the fabulous variety of lion known as al-ward that according to Aristotle has a human head and the tail of a scorpion, sometimes even the body of a cow (plate 10). The array of fabulous creatures depicted (plate 11) also includes various kinds of demons, such as the insān al-mā؛ (waterman; fol. 16b), the ḡūl (fol. 20b), and the hairy hobgoblin known as al-ilfā (fol. 39a). Fabulous creatures of a more friendly appearance (plate 12) comprise the burāq, the steed that carried the Prophet Muḥammad on his nocturnal journey to the heavens (fol. 43a), the bird with a human head resembling a harpy mentioned in the entry al-‘uqā‘ (eagle; fol. 191a), and the creature bint al-mā؛ (fol. 57b), a kind of mermaid or male sexual fantasy that—as the English translation by Jayakar bashfully veils it in Latin—“when they fall into the hands of seamen in vessels, hi cum illis ineunt, and then return them to the sea.”

In addition to the world of animals and other living creatures that constitutes his primary focus, Damiri’s work also presents a number of digressions. The longest of these digressions, inspired by an anecdote in the entry iwazz (goose), concerns the history of the caliphate from
its beginnings to the author’s day (fol. 18b–39a).20 The artist has taken this opportunity to supply, probably for the first time in history, portraits of potentially each and every caliph from the time of the first Umayyad caliph Mu’awiyah to the ‘Abbāsīd al-Mustakfi bi-llah, a total of sixty-one images altogether (plate 13). Since no historical portraits of the caliphs are available, the artist’s illustrations are both purely fictional and decidedly influenced by contemporary perception, particularly in the Qajar-style furniture and interiors in which the characters are depicted.

Probably the most fascinating features in the Tehran edition of Damīrī’s Hayāt al-hayawān are the illustrations relating to the numerous tales and anecdotes the author quotes at intervals. Because of the book’s subject matter, many of these are animal tales or fables (plate 14). Two of the better known fables, as a matter of fact narratives that enjoy a worldwide distribution, are the “Lion’s Share,” in which the lion requests that the wolf and fox, one after the other, divide their prey (fol. 64b),21 and the “Sick Lion,” in which the cunning fox advises the lion to take the wolf’s brain as a remedy for his illness (fol. 65b).22 Many other entries refer to traditional tales known in Muslim (and international) tradition (plate 15). The entry kalb (dog) contains a lengthy digression on the legend of the “Seven Sleepers” (āshāb al-kahf) together with a portrait of the seven men and their dog (fol. 242b);23 and the small series of folk tales on the wiles of women, inspired by an anecdote of Jesus meeting the devil, includes a version of the tale known in international tradition as the “Equivocal Oath,” in which a woman conceals her extramarital sexual activity by hiring her lover as her guide when about to visit the holy mountain where she is to swear an oath (fol. 90a).24 Here again, the artist’s illustration depicts contemporary Qajar costume, as it does even more convincingly in one of the tales from Arab tradition (plate 16) in which three men visit three wise women who are famed for knowing the cure to each and every ailment (fol. 101a). Another tale from ancient Arab tradition tells of the man

---

who escaped from a lion by climbing a tree, only to find a bear on top of the tree (fol. 119a). A third category of illustrated tales refers to religious tradition, much of which is common to the Abrahamic religions (plate 17). Examples of this category shown here include the story of Moses, whose staff turns into a snake or a dragon when thrown to the ground before Pharaoh (fol. 67a), and the angel Gabriel leading Pharaoh’s army to drown in the sea (fol. 85b). The only one of the more complex illustrations shown twice is that of King Solomon’s court (fols. 80b, 177b), underlining the ruler’s supreme position in learned as well as popular perception of the Muslim world (plate 18). Even though these illustrations are only permitted to cover the limited space of the margin, they contain the standard set of creatures usually surrounding Solomon in Iranian art, and particularly in the simplified range of lithographic illustration—including the Simorgh and the hoopoe close to the ruler’s head, demons and angels holding his throne, a peaceful array of carnivorous and herbivorous animals, and even insects such as the ant.

Considered together, the numerous images that have been added to Damiri’s text are not just simple illustrations of given facts, but specific interpretations. On the one hand, they result from the artist’s perception of his contemporary context, and on the other they transmit this particular perception of the Qajar period to the work’s intended readers in the Arab world—after all, the Tehran edition of Damiri’s Hayat al-hayawan was the only accessible visual interpretation of the popular work’s text. In other words, even though the illustrations are placed in the margin, they are not at all marginal to the work’s visual perception.

The fact that the Tehran edition of Damiri’s work was produced not only in an Iranian, but moreover in a decidedly Shi’i context, becomes obvious from the invocations that the proofreader has added to the title pages of both volumes (plate 19). On the title page of the first volume he has framed the basmala by the invocation ya ‘Ali madad (“O ‘Ali, support me!”) and a set of invocations mentioning God and the panj tan, the five members of the Muslim “holy family,” consisting of the Prophet Muhammadd, his son-in-law ‘Ali, his daughter Fatiha, and their sons Hasan and Husayn. To a similar invocation at the top of the second page the proofreader has moreover added an invocation to the sahib al-zaman,

25 For other depictions of Solomon in Persian lithographed illustration see, e.g., Marzolph, Narrative Illustration, figs. 114–115.
the twelfth Shi‘i Imam who lives in concealment and will only return on the Day of Judgement.

To conclude the short survey of this fascinating publication, I should like to mention a last illustration that, although so small as to be almost indistinguishable, expresses the essence of the work’s specifically Iranian presentation (plate 20). The illustration to the entry nightingale (al-‘andalūb; fol. 189b) is one of the rare instances in which an animal is depicted in its natural habitat. According to the Iranian notion, as vividly expressed in numerous poems and related illustrations, the nightingale’s quintessential partner is the rose bush.26 Consequently, this entry is accompanied by a miniature illustration depicting two birds inside a bush with blossoming roses. Even though this image is as “marginal” as the hundreds of other images in the 1285/1868 Tehran edition of al-Damiri’s Ḥayāt al-ḥayawān illustrating, supporting, and commenting on the author’s text, the rootedness of this particular illustration in a decidedly Iranian context is beyond doubt. Moreover, the charming details visible in the illustration’s diligent execution contradict the obvious decline in both the quantity and quality of illustrations in the work’s second volume. In this manner, it once more adds to the appeal of a highly exceptional visual interpretation of a classic of Arabic Islamic learning, prepared by an Iranian artist.

Bibliography


——. Каталог литографированных книг на персидском языке в собрании Ленинградского отделения Института востоковедения АН СССР. Moscow, 1975.


Plate 1 (fol. 1a). Title-page of vol. 1
Plate 2 (fol. 134b). Final page of vol. 1
Plate 3 (fol. 1b). First text page of vol. 1
Plate 4 (fols. 2b, 6b, 7b). The lion, the camel, the (female) donkey
Plate 5 (fols. 208b, 243b). The horse, the dog
Plate 6 (fols. 41a, 84a). The chameleon, the falcon
Plate 7 (fols. 9b, 60a). The crocodile, the rabbit
Plate 8 (fols. 45a, 46b). Fleas, mosquitoes
Plate 9 (83b, 115a). Specific larger groups of animals
Plate 10 (fol. 2a). A fabulous lion (al-ward)
Plate 11 (fol. 16b, 201b, 39a). The waterman, the ġūl, al-ilfa
Plate 12 (fols. 57b, 191a, 43a). Harpy, al-Bārāq, Bint al-māʿ.
Plate 13 (fols. 37a, 22a). 'Abbāsid caliphs, Mu‘āwiya
Plate 14 (fols. 64b, 65b). The Lion's Share, The Sick Lion
Plate 15 (fol. 242b, 9oa). The Seven Sleepers, The Equivocal Oath
Plate 16 (fols. 101a, 119a). Tales from the Arabic tradition
Plate 17 (fols. 67a, 85b). The staff of Moses turns into a snake; the Pharaoh's army.
Plate 18 (fols. 80b, 177b). King Solomon's court
Plate 19 (fols. 1a, 135a). Title-pages of vol. 1 and 2
Plate 20 (fol. 189b). The rose and the nightingale
Historical Aspects of Printing and Publishing in Languages of the Middle East

Papers from the Third Symposium on the History of Printing and Publishing in the Languages and Countries of the Middle East, University of Leipzig, September 2008

Edited by
Geoffrey Roper
Cover illustration: Case layout for Arabic ligature sorts, used at the Imprimerie Nationale, Paris, in the 19th century. Reproduced by courtesy of the Houghton Library, Harvard University, USA

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Symposium on the History of Printing and Publishing in the Languages and Countries of the Middle East (3rd : 2008 : Universität Leipzig)

Historical aspects of printing and publishing in languages of the Middle East : papers from the Third Symposium on the History of Printing and Publishing in the Languages and Countries of the Middle East, University of Leipzig, September 2008 / edited by Geoffrey Roper.

pages cm. — (Islamic manuscripts and books ; volume 4)

"This volume contains revised and edited versions of papers presented at the Third International Symposium on the History of Printing and Publishing in the Languages and Countries of the Middle East, held at the University of Leipzig, 24-27 September 2008, in conjunction with the 24th Congress of the Union Europeenne des Arabisants et Islamisants (UEAI) and in cooperation with the Oriental Institute, University of Leipzig"—Preface.

Papers chiefly in English; one paper each in French and German.

Includes bibliographical references and index.


Z186.M628596 2013
686.20956—dc23
2013029648

This publication has been typeset in the multilingual "Brill" typeface. With over 5,100 characters covering Latin, IPA, Greek, and Cyrillic, this typeface is especially suitable for use in the humanities. For more information, please see www.brill.com/brill-typeface.

ISSN 1877-9964
ISBN 978-90-04-25505-0 (hardback)

Copyright 2014 by Koninklijke Brill NV, Leiden, The Netherlands.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, translated, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without prior written permission from the publisher.

Authorization to photocopy items for internal or personal use is granted by Koninklijke Brill NV provided that the appropriate fees are paid directly to The Copyright Clearance Center, 222 Rosewood Drive, Suite 910, Danvers, MA 01923, USA.
Fees are subject to change.

This book is printed on acid-free paper.

Printed by Printforce, the Netherlands