



# DEFRÉMERY, CHARLES-FRANÇOIS

---

**DEFRÉMERY**, Charles-François (b. Cambrai, France, 18 December 1822, d. St.-Valéry-en Caux, France, 18 August 1883), French orientalist and scholar. His father was a notary. After finishing at the Lycée Louis-le-Grand he studied Arabic with J. T. Reinaud and Caussin de Perceval at the Collège de France and the École des Langues Orientales; at the latter he also studied Persian with the historian Étienne de Quatremère, whose disciple he became. In 1848 it had been intended to entrust him with the first courses in the history of the Islamic world at the École des Langues Orientales, but other matters took priority, and the courses were not introduced. After Quatremère's death in 1857 he hoped to succeed to the chair at the École des Langues Orientales, but Charles Schefer received the appointment instead. Nevertheless, Defrémery taught Arabic beginning in 1859 and was named to Caussin's chair at the Collège de France after the death of the latter in 1871. From 1869 Defrémery was a member of the Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres, where he and MacGuckin de Slane were entrusted with overseeing the publication of *Historiens arabes des Croisades*.

Defrémery was a scrupulous and careful historian, the author of numerous scholarly notes and reviews in *Journal Asiatique* and the *Mémoires* of the Institut de France. Aside from his publications on the history of Arabic-speaking lands and early French literature, he left a number of works on Persian history and literature.



His editions of Persian texts included two sections from Mīrḳvānd's *Rawzat al-ṣafā' fī sīrat al-anbā' wa'l-molūk wa'l-ḳolafā'* (*L'histoire des sultans du Kharezem*, Paris, 1842; *Histoire des Samanides*, Paris, 1845, with translation); Ḳvāndamīr's *Habīb al-sīār* (with translation, "L'histoire des Khans mongols du Turkistan et de la Transoxiane," *JA*, 4e sér. 19, 1852, pp. 58-94, 216-88; 20, 1852, pp. 370-406); and Ebn Baṭṭūṭa's *Rehla* (with B. R. Sanguinetti; 4 vols., Paris, 1853-59, with translation). In 1858 he published in Paris a translation of Sa'dī's *Golestān* (*Gulistan ou parterre des roses*) and, in *Journal Asiatique*, "Coup d'oeil sur la vie et les écrits de Hafiz"; the next year his translation of several extracts from Sa'dī's *Būstān* appeared in the same journal. In 1873 his translation from Chaghatay Turkish of the memoirs of the Mughal emperor Bābor appeared in *Journal des Savants*; two years earlier he had published a notice about the dictionary of eastern Turkish by Pavet de Courteille.

In 1844 Defrémery's notice on 'Abd-al-Razzāq Samarqandī's *Maṭla'-e sa'daynwa majma'-e baḥrayn* appeared in *Journal Asiatique*. In 1854 the firm of Firmin-Didot in Paris brought out his *Mélanges d'histoire orientale*, followed by *Mélanges de critique, de philologie et de géographie*, both containing considerable important material on history as well. A long study devoted to the "Ismaéliens ou Batiniens" of Persia and Syria appeared in *Journal Asiatique* in 1854 and 1856.

Defrémery was first and foremost a historian, particularly concerned with establishing solid factual foundations for and applying the most scrupulous rigor to Islamic history. Much of his work remains useful to this day.

He died at the age of sixty years, after a long illness.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

---

Barbier de Meynard, *Catalogue de la bibliothèque de M. Defrémery*, Paris, 1884.

J. Darmesteter, "Rapport sur les travaux . . .," *JA*, 8e sér., 4, 1884, pp. 27-29.

J. Richardot, "Defrémery," in *Dictionnaire de biographie française X*, Paris,



1963, cols. 536-37.