



DESMAISONS, JEAN-JACQUES- PIERRE

DESMAISONS, JEAN-JACQUES-PIERRE (Petr Ivanovich Demezou; b. Chambéry, in the kingdom of Sardinia, 1807, d. Paris, ** 1873), diplomat and compiler of an important Persian-French dictionary. Desmaisons was the son of a physician; he attended the Collège Royal in Chambéry, then went to St. Petersburg to study oriental languages with Henry Wlangali (Vesselovskiï, pp. 23-26; *Zapiski*, p. 8). In 1829 he entered the university at Kazan, where he received a doctorate in oriental literature the next year. In February 1831 he was appointed senior master of oriental languages (Persian and Arabic) at the Neplyuev institute in Orenburg and in September translator for the frontier commission of that city (Desmaisons, I, p. 2). In 1834 he was sent to Bukhara disguised as a Muslim merchant; he submitted several reports on the political and economic situation in the khanate, which the Russians were planning to annex. For his success he was awarded the order of St. Anne, 3rd degree, and 3,000 rubles (Savel'ev, p. 26; Chabrov, pp. 109-15; *Zapiski*, pp. 130-31; cf. pp. 17-81, for copies of Desmaisons's reports, drawn from the state archives of Orenburg and the archives of the Russian Ministry of foreign affairs).

In 1836 Desmaisons was named professor in the Asiatic department of the Russian Ministry of foreign affairs. He was a member of the Russian diplomatic mission to Tehran in 1840-41 (Vesselovskiï, p. 25). Two years later he was named director of training in oriental languages in the Asiatic department, responsible to the imperial chancellery for translation of Tatar



documents and works on Muslim jurisprudence (Desmaisons, I, p. 2). He became a Russian national and traveled to Persia and the Ottoman empire. In 1846 he received from King Charles Albert of Sardinia (1831-49) the title of baron and authorization to continue in the service of Russia (Desmaisons, I, p. 2). In 1850 he reached the highest diplomatic rank in the Asiatic department, dragoman, 5th class.

In 1857 Desmaisons retired to Paris, where he undertook his edition and translation of the *Ketāb-e šajara-ye torkī* by Abu'l-Gāzī Bahādūr Khan, based on a manuscript discovered by V. I. Dahl in Orenburg (Kononov, pp. 68-69, 241); it was published by the Imperial academy of sciences of St. Petersburg in two volumes under the title *Histoire des Mogols et des Tartares* (1871-74). Desmaisons' *Dictionnaire persan-français*, compiled during repeated visits to Persia in the years 1858-69, was published posthumously, in Rome in 1908. For each entry he customarily mentioned his sources, which included the Persian works *Bahār-e 'Ajam* and *Borhān-e qaṭe'* (see [DICTIONARIES i](#)), as well as the Turkish-Arabic dictionary *al-Oqānūs al-basīṭ fī tarjoma al-Qāmūs al-moḥīṭ* and the Persian-Turkish lexicon *Lesān-e 'Ajamyā Farhang-e šo'ūrī*. In addition, he relied on earlier European dictionaries like Jacobus Golius' *Lexicon Arabico-Latinum . . .* (Leiden, 1653); Franciszek Meniński's *Thesaurus Linguarum Orientalium Turcicae, Arabicae, Persicae . . .* (3 vols., Vienna, 1680); G. W. Freytag's *Lexicon Arabico-Latinum* (4 vols., Halle, 1830-37), J. A. Vullers' *Lexicon Persico-Latinum Etymologicum* (2 vols., Bonn, 1855-64), and Albert de Biberstein-Kazimirski, *Dictionnaire arabe-français* (2 vols., Paris, 1860).

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