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### COLOUR PLATES

#### Front cover:

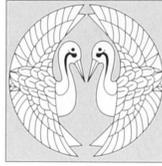
Winding up threads into balls, 17.7×26.5 cm, an illustration to the anonymous manuscript *Higashi Ezo iko*, Manuscript fund of the St. Petersburg Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies.

#### Back cover:

**Plate 1.** The Ainu loom, 38.2×26.5 cm, an illustration to the anonymous manuscript *Higashi Ezo iko*, Manuscript fund of the St. Petersburg Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies.

**Plate 2.** The weaving process (*attush-kar*), 38.2×26.5 cm, an illustration of the anonymous manuscript *Higashi Ezo iko*, Manuscript fund of the St. Petersburg Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies.

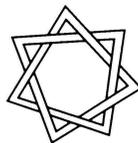
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# ORIENTAL MANUSCRIPTS AND NEW INFORMATION TECHNOLOGIES

*Val. Polosin, E. Rezvan*

## TO THE CD-ROM EDITION OF THE ST. PETERSBURG ARABIC BIBLE

A month ago Decadi Publishers Ltd Oy (Helsinki, Finland) started distribution of the first issue of the CD-ROM Series "Asiatic Museum. Treasures from St. Petersburg Academic Collection of Oriental Manuscripts" attached to the journal *Manuscripta Orientalia*. Within the frames of this series the publication of the "Secret Visionary Autobiography" of the Fifth Dalai Lama Ngag-dbang blo-bzang rgya-mtsho (1617—1682) was prepared by Dr Vladimir Uspensky. It provides a great deal of new information indispensable for students of Tibet and Tibetan Buddhism. The first judgments prove that the new publication of this outstanding specimen of Tibetan spirituality was met with interest by our colleagues.

The second CD-ROM publication is expected to contain a three-volume manuscript of the Arabic Bible, which is of great importance both from the textological and codicological points of view. The manuscript (D 226) is preserved in the collection of the St. Petersburg Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies, Russian Academy of Sciences. It pretends to be the earliest and, at the same time, the fullest collection of Biblical texts written in Arabic.

Usually, the Arabic manuscripts containing the texts of the Scriptures were not lying in the scope of interests of specialists in Arabic studies, being analyzed mostly within the aims of Oriental Christianity research. But it occurs sometimes that the interests of the scholars working in both of the fields meet owing to the special features of this or that manuscript. The St. Petersburg Arabic Bible appears to be such a manuscript. The circumstances surrounding the history of the text seem to be of much interest. To begin with, in 1925, Father Alberto Vaccari, Professor at the Istituto Pontificio Biblico, published his study of the Vatican manuscript containing the text of the Arabic Bible (call numbers ar. 467 and ar. 468) [1]. This manuscript was of prime importance, as it was used as a base for the famous Rome edition of 1671, which for the first time fully presented the printed text of the Arabic Bible. Father Vaccari succeeded in establishing the provenance of the Vatican manuscript. It was ordered by the Jesuit Giovanni Battista Eliano and executed in Țarābulus (the Lebanese Tripoli) in 1579. Giovanni Battista Eliano had a task to find the full text of the Arabic Bible in order to prepare the first printed edition intended for distribution among the Arabs. As Fa-

ther Vaccari has discovered, the Bible brought back to Vatican by Giovanni Battista Eliano was transcribed from a manuscript, **part of which** (the Second Book of Maccabees) was, in its turn, copied out in 1238 from the original executed in Antioch in 1022.

By the time of Vaccari several manuscript Arabic Bibles containing different parts of the Scriptures text were known. Furthermore, the investigations of Vaccari enabled him to come to the important conclusion. He regarded the Vatican manuscript of 1579 to represent the first codification of the text of the Arabic Bible. He also thought that different parts in the Vatican codex were copied from different originals.

It was in the same year of 1925 that the important article of Father Vaccari was read by I. Yu. Krachkovsky. Only one year earlier the Russian scholar published his description of a three-volume Arabic Bible which was transcribed in 1238 from the Antioch original of 1022 [2], so he immediately paid attention to the abundance of similarities in the Vatican manuscript and the St. Petersburg one.

After testing the text of the St. Petersburg manuscript against two photographs of the folios of the Vatican codex, I. Yu. Krachkovsky disputed Vaccari's conclusion. In an article entitled "The original of the Vatican manuscript of the Arabic Bible" the scholar noted: "Even if we put aside a rather serious written evidence for the translation of the whole text of the Bible into Arabic, which was made in the ninth century, the decisive argument would be the very existence of **original of the Vatican manuscript**, which was transcribed in 1238, **came to our days and is stored now in the Asiatic Museum (D 226)**" [3]. If the suggestion by I. Yu. Krachkovsky on the St. Petersburg Arabic Bible is right, which seems to be most probable, the St. Petersburg codex is 340 years older than the Vatican one, though it is not easy to challenge the priority of the Vatican codex widely accepted now [4]. It should be added also that the St. Petersburg manuscript is considered to be the oldest Arabic arrangement of the Biblical texts within one version.

Most part of the St. Petersburg manuscript (the whole corpus of the "Old Testament") was copied from the Antioch original of 1022 by one monk Pimen in Damascus in A.D. 1235—1238. The manuscript bears a lot of notes of its own and readers, which are helpful in restoring its his-

٢٥  
 قدس رب الكل بالجلا. وافصل لسان نيقنود المناق وامرهم ان يقطعونه ويخرجونه لطبوع السما  
 وبرى المبعوض ثالوا بين يدي الهيكل وسجدوا كلهم للرب صاحب السما الجبار وقالوا امازل هو  
 الذي حفظ مكانه لئلا يتجسّن. وانه سجد جسدا نيقنود من الضمّه وارب وعرفت لخر الشان  
 انحاس معونه الرب وانهم تعاهروا المشوع القلب انه الى قط لا ينسأد كثر هذا اليوم ٥  
 وريتم هذا اليوم في ثلثه عشر من اذار الذي هو الشهر الثاني عشر من اجل هذا يدعوا لسان انبيا من قبل  
 يوم واحد لنام مودحى كدلا هو لا تقيمت على هط نيقنود. ومن هذه الاثمه احدها اهل  
 المدنيه المتضعين وايضا اناس الان امسكت كلمتي وان محسن مقاتلي تركيات هو لا هذا هو  
 ارادنى انا ايضا. واركت ايضا انفتت شيئا وتقدمت قلته على نسيبه الشان ايضا الشرب الخمر  
 وحله والما وحله لكانا ردين فاما ان هو من جهما للشم والماجينيد يفرح القلب وتم النعمه هكذا  
 ايضا ركسات الاقاويل تعرج قلوب الذين سمعواهم ٥

ابوها هنا كان الزاع من السرا الثاني ولربنا دلالنا الحمد والمنه على ذلك  
 كثيرا دائما

ونقل من نسخة لسب بمدينة انطالياه الرسوله الشرقيه ٥  
 تبايع سبته الفوجسما به ولسن كراينا ادم  
 وكان الزاع من هذه النسجه العرا الاوسط من شباط سنه  
 سخاله وسع ما نسه واربعين لاينا ادم  
 والسبح لله دائما وعلينا رحمة امين

قوله

٩٨٣

ان يصيف هلاك شيحون وعروج واصحابها ثم يقطع كلامه عند انتهائه الى ذكر نزولهم في عمل باب  
وانبدا هذا السفر هـ

بجزء من السفر الرابع من التوراة بعون الله  
ونأيك

وعلى بنى يهودا اخشون بن عميناداب. وعلى  
بنى اسيلخر شنساك بن صوعر. وعلى بنى  
زبولون اليك بن طون. وبنى يوسف على بنى  
افرام اليشع بن ميهوده وعلى بنى منشا جميل  
بن فوصور. وعلى بنىامين ابيده بن جرعون  
وعلى بنى جاد الياساف بن عزرا. وعلى بنى  
نفتالى اجيدع بن عيان. هؤلاء وصناديد الجماعة  
وعطا اسباط ابايهم وروسا الوف بنى اسرائيل  
ثم انطلق موسى وهرون هؤلاء القوم المعدودون  
باسمايهم فجمعوا الجماعة كلها في اول يوم من الشهر  
الثاني فعدوا بيوت ابايهم وكل قبائلهم باسمهم  
من عشرين سنة فما فوق ذلك برؤسهم  
كما امر الله موسى فعدهم في تبة سيناء  
فكان بنى روبيل بجراسراسل موالدهم في  
قبائلهم لبيت ابايهم باسميهم وعددهم  
كل ذكر من عشرين سنة فما فوق ذلك  
كل حامل سلاح في بنى اسرائيل فكان عدد  
سبط روبيل ستة واربعين الف وستمائة  
وسبعمشعون فقسّمهم لبيت اسمهم وقبائلهم  
باسمايهم وعددهم وستمائة وعشرون سنة  
وما فوق ذلك كل حامل سلاح في بنى اسرائيل



السفر الرابع من التوراة  
سفر العدد  
وهو سنة وعشرون اصحفا  
الاصحاح الاول

وكلم الله موسى وقبته الزمان في تبة سيناء  
في اول يوم من الشهر الثاني في السنة الثانية  
من خروج بنى اسرائيل من ارض مصر وقال احص  
عدد روس جماعة بنى اسرائيل كلهم لعشائرهم  
وقبائلهم وبيوت ابايهم بعدد الاسماء من عشرين  
سنة واعلى من ذلك كل حامل سلاح في بنى اسرائيل  
وعلمت وانت والحاك هرون نفوسهم وليخر معل  
من كل سبط رجل هو راس بيت ابيه وهو اسما  
الرجال الذين نفوسهم معكم على بنى روبيل البصر  
بن شارور وعلى سبعمائة وثلثمائة

Fig. 2







٤١٢  
 وقال لهم لا تخافوا من الكلدانيين المقعدوا في الارض  
 واحطوا بملك بابل فيخس البحر. وفي الشهر السابع  
 حاسم عيل من شينبار من عيل من درع المملكة  
 وعشرون رجلا معه. فقتلوا اجدنيا وماتوا  
 ايضا اليهود والكلدانيين الذين كانوا معه بصيفيا  
 وقام جميع سعب الارض من الصغرى حتى الكبرى  
 وجميع رؤوس الجيوش فارتضوا مصر لانهم فرغوا  
 من الكلدانيين. وفي سنة اثني عشر في شعبه

وعشرين من الشهر من درع ملك بابل في السنة الاولى  
 التي ملك رفع راسه من ارجس ملك هوذا واخرجه  
 من السجن وسلك معه حزقيا ورفع كونه فوق  
 كرسي الملوك الذين معه في بابل. وبدا لبوس  
 اساره واكل خبزا قدامه دايما جميع الايام  
 في حياته وعلى ما يدته دايما يعطاه من قدام  
 ملك بابل في كل يوم كالايام  
 حيا

في تدعي اسرائيل  
 من تحب الطاعة و...

تم كتاب سفر

ملوك بني اسرائيل ويهوذا

تسعيه رعوثة المايه

وليتم عند العبرانيين كتابا واحدا

رحم الله النسخ والناقل لان نقل هذا الكتاب مضبوط  
 نوعا بالنسخة الى غيره من النسخ وهو اصح من جميع الكتب  
 المنقول الى العربية اذ بها العبد الجديد فانه اصح من الاصل  
 المطبوع في حلب قديما وفي ما يرضنا الشور حديثا ومن  
 كانه النسخ الموجوده خطأ فزعمه انه على نسخة علي بن  
 حور وهو من ملوك المسلمين  
 اللهم انك تعلم  
 مطر ال...  
 سب  
 ذلك

Fig. 6

tory. In particular, for some time the manuscript was held by a certain 'Isā b. Mūsa and his descendants. In 1618 Sulaymān b. Jirjī *al-kātib*, the founder of the famous literary family of al-Yazījī, donated it as a *waqf* to the Belemend monastery (in the vicinity of Tripoli), where it was stored till the end of the nineteenth century. In 1913 this manuscript, along with a collection of Arabic Christian manuscripts, was gifted to the Russian Tsar Nicholas II by Gregory IV, the patriarch of Antioch, in commemoration of the 300th anniversary of the Romanov dynasty. In 1919 it was transferred from the Tsar's library in Winter Palace to the Asiatic Museum of the Academy of Sciences (now the St. Petersburg Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies, Russian Academy of Sciences).

Unfortunately, despite the St. Petersburg manuscript was thoroughly described, it was not studied in full. It should be mentioned that not all of the scholars agreed with I. Yu. Krachkovsky that not only the Book of Maccabees in the manuscript but the whole "Old Testament" was copied from the Antioch original of 1022. Even the fact that the Vatican Arabic Bible was copied from the manuscript preserved in St. Petersburg was questioned by G. Graf. The latter held Vaccari's opinion that the Antioch original was the photograph of the Book of Maccabees solely [5].

One should bear in mind that the discussion on the both Bible manuscripts took place not in the very favourable political conditions. I. Yu. Krachkovsky could use the St. Petersburg manuscript and was able to collate the text of the St. Petersburg codex with the Vatican one only against the two above-mentioned photographs. Meanwhile, his op-

ponents were familiar with the Vatican codex, but knew practically nothing of the St. Petersburg manuscript of the Arabic Bible which was not available to them. In their investigations they could employ only the photographs from the third volume of the St. Petersburg manuscript. As they pointed out, "in spite of the repeatedly efforts it was impossible to receive from Leningrad the photographs of the first two volumes" [6].

Now, for the first time, the CD-ROM facsimile edition makes the St. Petersburg manuscript accessible in all its entirety, thus giving the fascinating possibilities to resolve the old scholarly dispute and to re-assess the whole volume of existing material in order to solve a variety of textological and cultural problems.

The new IBM / MAC hybrid CD-ROM contains the full contents of all three volumes (around 1,600 pages presented in colour). The material is organised along the usual patterns of the arranging of a book and has its hierarchical structure. The software includes the capabilities for quick and careful search, presentation and study of the material. Friendly interface allows to organize the screen and adds to the standard Windows functions some original (Zoom picture, etc.). It is supplied with the sound track — fragments from the Orthodox liturgy in Arabic. We do hope that the new edition will provide not only new scholarly possibilities to conduct textological, codicological, and linguistic research but will also enable all those interested in manuscript heritage of the Orient to get in touch with the real masterpiece of manuscript tradition of the Arab Christians.

## Notes

1. A. Vaccari, "Una Biblia araba per il primo gesuita venuto al Libano", *Mélanges de l'Université Saint-Joseph*, X/4 (Beirouth, 1925), pp. 79—104.

2. I. Iu. Krachkovskii, "Arabskie rukopisi iz sobraniia Grigoriia IV, patriarkha antiokhiiskogo (kratkaia opis')" ("Arabic manuscripts from the collection of Gregory IV, patriarch of Antioch: a concise description"), *Selected Works* (Moscow—Leningrad, 1960), vi, p. 428, Nos. 1—3 (first published in 1924).

3. I. Iu. Krachkovskii, "Original vaticanskoĭ rukopisi arabskogo perevoda Biblii" ("The original of the Vatican manuscript of the Arabic Bible"), *ibid.*, p. 473. In the passage cited I. Yu. Krachkovsky is referring to his article "O perevode Biblii na arabskiiĭ iazyk pri khalife al-Ma'mune" ("On the Arabic translation of the Bible at the age of caliph al-Ma'mun"), *Khristianskiiĭ Vostok*, VI (1918), pp. 189—96.

4. G. Graf, *Geschichte der christlichen arabischen Literatur* (Città del Vaticano, 1944), i, pp. 89—92.

5. *Ibid.*

6. *Ibid.*, p. 92.

## Illustrations

**Fig. 1.** Manuscript D 226, vol. 3, fol. 13b, 30.5 × 23.0 cm, the colophon of the scribe Pimen.

**Fig. 2.** Manuscript D 226, vol. 1, fol. 74b, 30.5 × 23.0 cm, one of the miniatures (9.0 × 7.5 cm) illustrating the book of Numbers. Evidently the scribe planned to execute at least 26 miniatures, but only ten (in black and white) were actually made. Moreover, five of them had been cut later.

**Fig. 3.** Manuscript D 226, vol. 1, fol. 56b, 30.5 × 23.0 cm, two reader's notes dated by 1538 and 1561 and containing details of the manuscript history.

**Fig. 4.** Manuscript D 226, vol. 1, fol. 96b, 30.5 × 23.0 cm, the beginning of the book of Deuteronomy with the note of Iġānāniyā, grandson of the Antioch patriarch Makariyūs, dated by 1672.

**Fig. 5.** Manuscript D 226, vol. 1, fol. 116a, 30.5 × 23.0 cm, folio with colophon containing the date 1236 and several other details of the manuscript history.

**Fig. 6.** Manuscript D 226, vol. 1, fol. 210b, 30.5 × 23.0 cm, folio with the note of Athanāsīyūs, metropolitan of Beiruth, dated by 1806 and evaluating the importance of the manuscript.