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Front cover:

“Laylā visiting Majnūn in the desert”, watercolour, gouache and gold on paper. Central Deccan, 1780—1800.
Miniature in Album (*Muraqqaʿ*) X 3 in the Fabergé collection at the St. Petersburg Branch
of the Institute of Oriental Studies, fol. 8b, 13.6×17.1 cm.

Back cover:

- Plate 1.** ‘*Unwān* from *Khamsa* (“Pentateuch”) by Abū Muḥammad Ilyās b. Yūsuf b. Muʿayyad Nizāmī Ganjawī. Manuscript C 1674 in the Fabergé collection at the St. Petersburg Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies, Heart, ca. 1480—1490, fol. 1b, 13.0×21.4 cm.
- Plate 2.** “The night journey of Muḥammad and his ascent to heaven”, miniature in the same manuscript (later work modelled after Herat samples), fol. 3b, 13.0×21.4 cm.
- Plate 3.** “Nūshāba, Queen of Amazons, showing Iskandar his portrait”, miniature in the same manuscript (later work modelled after Herat samples), fol. 41a, 13.0×21.4 cm.
- Plate 4.** “Iskandar supporting the head of the dying Dārā (Darius)”, miniature in the same manuscript (later work modelled after Herat samples), fol. 258b, 13.0×21.4 cm.

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QUR'ĀNIC MANUSCRIPTS AS BIRTH, DEATH, LAND AND LIBRARY REGISTER*

"After rummaging through the house, which was still surrounded by water, he discovered a Bible in English. The final page contained a history of the Gatry family..."

Jorges Luis Borges. "The Gospel of Mark" [1]

The attentive researcher cannot help but notice a special type of marginalia that occasionally appear on copies of the Qur'ān, both in the margins (usually at an angle to the main text), on additional folios at the beginning and end of the manuscript, and on the inside covers of the binding. Some of these notes on margins may be characterised as family records. For example, fol. 1b (*fig. 1*) from a Qur'ānic manuscript [2] — the main text is dated to the eleventh — twelfth century (*fig. 2*) — contains notes "of a family nature" in Persian and Turkic:

مولود فرزند طول لله محمد بن الحسين بن جو کی شب
ادینه دوازدهم ماهی محرم سنه احدی و ستین و خمسمایه
پادشاه سلطان از خلافه عباس شب دوشنبه دا یکی (؟) در
شب [...] خاتون تاریخ چهارم شهر رجب [...] برحمت المبرک
سنه ثلاث [...] و ستین خمسمایه [...] در شب ادینه یکشنبه
از شب [...] ربیع الاخر سنه سبع [...] خمسمایه

The text refers to three people's dates of birth, giving the exact dates of: the Friday evening in Muharram 561 A.H., the evening of the fourth day of Rajab 563 A.H., one of the Sunday evenings in Rabī' al-akhir 56(?)7 A.H. [3].

Another example, a Qumukh [4] manuscript of the Qur'ān from the collection of the Institute of History, Archeology and Ethnography at the Russian Academy of Sciences Daghestani Scientific Centre [5], records more than 100 registration acts: notary records of the most varied transactions. These include records of land rentals, purchases and sales of land and house-buildings, and property inheritance. We also find here lists of things from bridal dowries, registers of credit operations, etc.

The earliest of these notes is dated to 1138/1726—27. The notes are often found on broad margins (pp. 3, 6, 215, 216, 231, 244, 246, 312) at an angle to the main text along

with corrections to it (see *figs. 5—10*). The bulk of the registration notes are on the inner side of the binding cover and on folios before the beginning of the text of the Qur'ān and after its end. Apparently, the notes were at first made on blank sheets. After they were filled in, they were used to form the inner covers of the binding. Some of the notes are damaged, cropped or smeared with ink. The Daghestani researcher, Prof. Kh. A. Omarov, has succeeded in deciphering 81 notes. He analyzes them in a series of articles [6]. To cite only some examples:

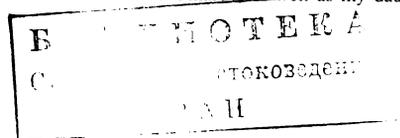
"Najm al-Dīn bīk granted a credit, approved by the *sharī'a*, without interest for profit (*bilā ribhīn*) to Shshazil-Muhammad from Kuli in the amount of fifteen 'abbāsī. This took place in the month of Šafar 1152 A.H. [7] and was witnessed by 'Abdallāh, who made these notes" [8].

"Shīkhamir, son of Tsumu, entrusted Bagircha, son of Ššunghur, with the sale of his hayfield, located in area of Marķīyārīr to Najm al-Dīn. He sold it for 16 *tūmāns*. The witnesses were: K'yachal 'Alī, 'Alī Kishī, Muḥammadshīh, and the best witness is Allah" [9].

"This is a notice to the present generation and information for the future. Najm al-Dīn returned the hayfield he bought from Shīhamir, son of Tsumu, to the latter, setting the condition that it not be sold to any third party. He also agreed with Shīhamir that he (Shīhamir) would report to the village and ensure calm, that Najm al-Dīn had returned his hill without complaints or quarrels. The witnesses were K'yachal 'Alī, Mamashī from al-Baḥkalī, and *qādi*, who made this record" [10].

"Najm al-Dīn bought a mill for an entire day from Bughdan, son of 'Abd, that he (Bughdan, son of 'Abd) had bought from Musalav, son of Mahad, for 60 'abbāsī. Najm al-Dīn accepted this deal and received the mill as witnessed by 'Abdallāh, who made this record, in 1146" [11].

* I am sincerely grateful to my Daghestani colleagues, Prof. A. R. Shikhsaidov and Prof. Kh. A. Omarov, as well as my daughter Maria Rezvan, for their help in my work on this article.



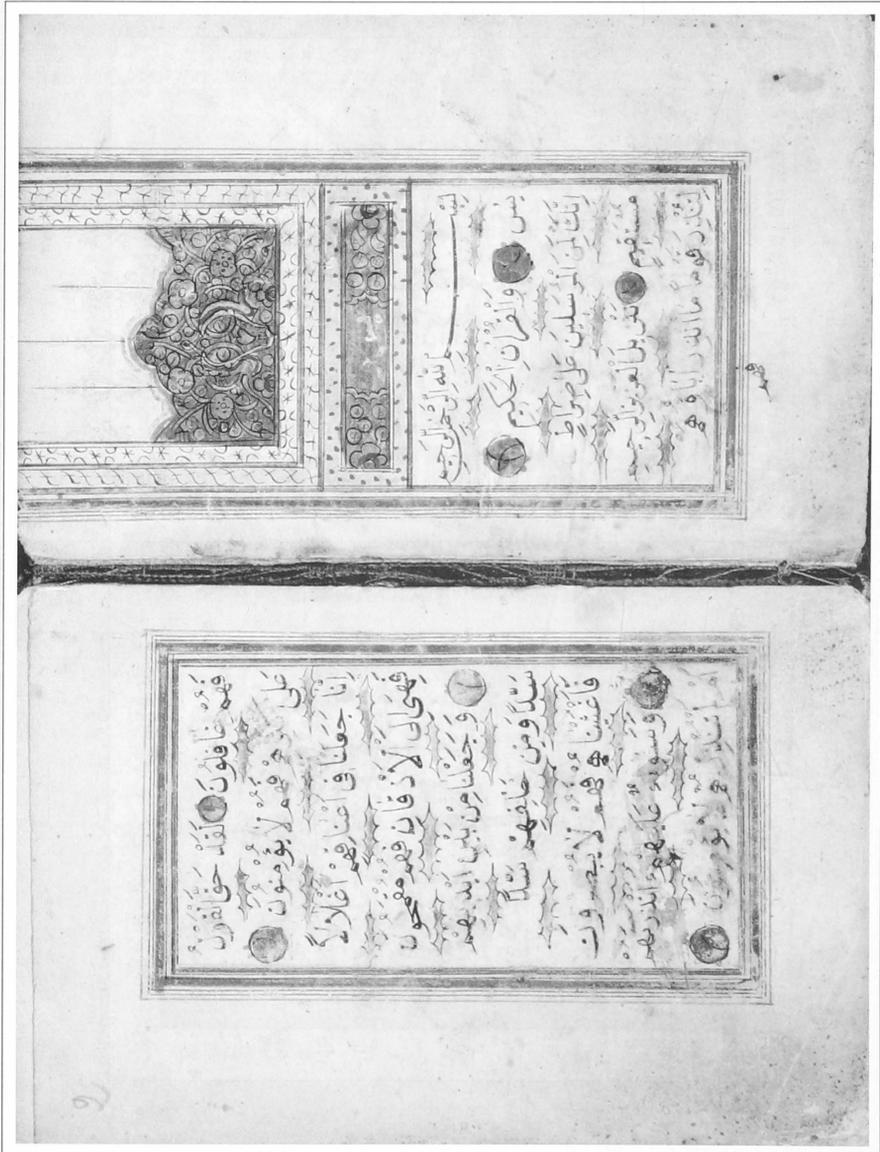


Fig. 3

y Sutyu sa motajizu u
 Spdacy 26 ceatempa 1885
 zadobume yetanu z Roma
 40 symalka melkonko cavasa
 peducetku dajjak u oby
 kumnyy. Apekca Cabut
 /lypo/ vorzduo dajjaktopa
 u jednoj ayy, ot kot je
 oby kumnyy izvanikom
 merdanom zadobuo.

Oba Sotka Sjeue ot naj
 k, babuzjux u najcnabuzje
 y porctky yetaska. Myza
 ka aoube u rodabuce
 y Spdacy apreko 80. Uotom
 je yopaduo recutur
 Sotka Kpctuf.

S. Chyja Kpctamuz

Fig. 4

As we see, the material is, in essence, a *qāḍī*'s register, documenting large property transactions and recorded in a Qur'ānic manuscript.

The respected Daghestani scholar, Prof. A. R. Shihsaidov, who each year organizes and personally participates in special expeditions to seek out and acquire manuscripts for the Institute of History, Archeology and Ethnography, has kindly informed me of two other manuscripts of the Qur'ān with marginalia of the sort that interest us. One of the families of the village Untsukatel (the Laq region of Daghestan) has a single-volume, large-format Qur'ān in an embossed light-brown leather binding with a flap. Palaeographic data date it to the late eighteenth — early nineteenth century. The flyleaf contains a note about the purchase of the manuscript by a Russian soldier. Below we find a long text of historical content that tells of the arrival in the village of a detachment headed by Shāmil and the havoc the latter wrought.

One of the maintenance buildings in the cemetery of Salta (Gunib region, Daghestan) holds a copy of the Qur'ān that contains a long list of books, a catalogue of a private library.

Also of this type, apparently, are the texts on the flyleaf of a small-format, compilative manuscript from the collection of the St. Petersburg Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies. The bulk of the texts constitutes a fragment of a Qur'ānic text (29 folios, see fig. 3) [12]. The text is dated September 1875; it was written in cursive, apparently in Serbo-Croatian (fig. 4). The text requires additional study.

The explanation of these phenomena is to be found on several levels. First, there are the specifics of how Qur'ānic manuscripts circulated and the status they had. They were widely used, and were found even in those homes where other books were unimaginable. They were passed from generation to generation, usually stored in a familiar place (to be accessible) and often referred to (actualizing the information, providing reminders). As sacral objects, they were handled differently than other manuscripts. Although the frequency of their use naturally aged the manuscripts, the special procedures that accompanied the retirement of a manuscript guaranteed the possibility of copying it and preserving the relevant information.

We refer here to "genizas" in mosques, which, in keeping with Near Eastern tradition, held indefinitely old copies of the Qur'ān. The rules for "burying" such copies were carefully developed. They were buried in much the same fashion as people, with ritual ablutions, wrapped in a "shroud" of pure fabric and buried or laid to rest in such a fashion that dust or dirt would not touch their pages, so people would not trample the "grave" [13] with their feet (this ritual is identical to the "burial" of old icons

in Orthodox monasteries in the Balkans) [14]. Finally, the sacral nature of the text that provided the context for notes of various transactions and agreements in a sense guaranteed the observance of their conditions, much like the idea that stood behind the ritual of swearing an oath on the Qur'ān.

Second, the phenomenon we discuss here is linked to the distinguishing characteristics of the "religious class" in various Islamic states. Daghestani documents from the late sixteenth — first-half of the eighteenth century show that the *imām* was not merely the leader of prayers, but carried out the functions of a *qāḍī*, verifying and registering various types of transactions, acting as a witness and, in a sense, a guarantor that the conditions of the deal had been recorded and would be observed [15]. This naturally led to the use of the Qur'ān, the primary "workbook" of the *imām*, to record the most varied transactions.

Finally, this phenomenon arose in the fifteenth — eighteenth century, when the Qur'ān was gradually becoming ubiquitous feature of life for the individual and for Islamic society. A person dressed in a Qur'ān-shirt could enter a mosque or mausoleum where the walls bore the entire text of the Sacred Book. To store the Qur'ān, special trunks were commissioned that frequently recalled a mosque or mausoleum in their form. People were born to the sounds of the Qur'ān (3:35—37; 10:31; 18:14, 25; 35:41), were given a name during the reading of the *sūra al-Aḥzāb*, a sick or crying child was calmed with the Qur'ān (3:35—37), the texts of the Qur'ān taught reading and writing, the *sūra al-Fātiḥa* was read to seal a marriage, justice was practiced on the basis of the Qur'ān, the Qur'ān aided medical treatment, Qur'ānic texts were widely used to practice the magic that accompanied daily life at that time. Qur'ānic texts constantly surrounded people in their everyday lives. They were depicted on the most varied objects (vases, dishes, tiles, fabrics, jewelry, etc.), provided the material for the calligraphy that adorned the walls of private and public buildings. The *sūra Yā 'Sīn* accompanied people on their final journey. Texts from the Sacred Book were carved on tombstones together with the name of the departed. The Qur'ān was a talisman and a weapon, while weapons were "strengthened" and "refined" with the Qur'ān [16]. It is because of this that manuscripts of the Qur'ān, handed down from generation to generation, served to record what we today call "items of public record".

Returning to the epigraph that opens our article, one must note that the practices we have discussed are undoubtedly common to manuscripts and editions of other sacred texts. The specific features of Islamic practice were conditioned by the special character of the Qur'ān's circulation in various parts of the Islamic world over the centuries.

Notes

1. Khorkhe Luis Borkhes (Jorges Luis Borges), *Kolleksiia: rasskazy, esse, stikhotvoreniia* (Collection: Stories, Essays, Poems) (St. Petersburg, 1992), p. 411. Translation of the excerpt from the Russian edition by D. Kimmage.

2. Manuscript A 976, 13.5 × 20.5 cm.

3. The reference is to the events of A. D. 1165—1171.

4. The political and cultural centre of the Laq territory in today Daghestan.

5. Call number 666. A 375-page manuscript written in black ink, in *nashk*, on white paper with watermarks; *sūra* titles are written in smaller *nashk* and in red ink. Manuscript dimensions are 30.0 × 16.0 cm with a text field of 22.0 × 11.0 cm. The leather binding, ringed with a wound border, has a flap. There is an embossed inscription in the middle of the fold on the latter: *yā Allah, yā Muḥammad, yā 'Alī*, which indicates that it was created in a Shi'a milieu.

6. For more detail, see Kh. A. Omarov, "Kumukhskie chastnye akty nachala XVIII v." ("Kumukh private documents from the early 18th century"), in *Pis'mennye pamiatniki Dagestana XVIII—XIX vv.* (Makhachkala, 1989), pp. 33—43; *idem*, "Razvitie tovarno-denezhnykh otnoshenii v Nagornom Dagestane" ("The development of commercial and financial relations in mountainous Daghistan"), in *Tovarno-denezhnye otnosheniia v dorevoliutsionnom Dagestane* (Makhachkala, 1991), pp. 81—97; *idem*, "Spiski Korana, khраниashchiesia v Fonde vostochnykh rukopisei IIAE: obzor i opisanie" ("Copies of the Qur'ān held in the collection of Eastern manuscripts at the Institute of History, Archaeology and Ethnography: review and description"), in *Islam i islamskaia kul'tura v Dagestane* (Moscow, 2001), pp. 108—15. *Manuscripta Orientalia* plans to publish an article by Kh. A. Omarov in an upcoming issue on this collection.

7. That is, from 10 May to 8 July 1739.

8. Cited in Omarov, "Kumukhskie chastnye akty", p. 34.

9. Cited in Omarov, "Razvitie", p. 88.

10. *Ibid.*, p. 89.

11. That is, 1734/35. The mill was rented for a day's work. See also *ibid.*, p. 87.

12. Fol. 108b. See also the marginalia on fol. 1a of the Qur'ān, manuscript A 1011 in the collection of the St. Petersburg Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies. The manuscript is written in *naskh*, 9 lines per page, 12.0 × 18.0 cm.

13. J. Sadan, "Genizah and genizah-like practices in Islamic and Jewish traditions", *Bibliotheca Orientalis*, XLIII/1—2 (1986), pp. 36—58.

14. Milan Pavich, *Vnutrenniaia storona vetra* (The Inside of the Wind) (St. Petersburg, 2001), p. 26 (the Russian edition of the novel).

15. T. M. Aitberov, "Institut glavnogo kadi (pervonachal'no imama) v politicheskoi sisteme Andalala kontsa XVI — pervoi poloviny XVIII v." ("The institution of the main *qādī* (originally *imām*) in the political system of Andalal in the late-16th — first half of the 18th century"), in *Dukhovenstvo i politicheskaia zhizn' na Blizhnem i Srednem Vostoke v period feodalizma* (Moscow, 1985).

16. For more detail, see the chapter "Tahajjaba bi-l-muṣḥaf: talisman, shield and sword" in my monograph *Koran i ego mir* (The Qur'ān and Its World) (St. Petersburg, 2001), pp. 321—50.

Illustrations

Fig. 1. The Qur'ān, manuscript A 976 in the collection of the St. Petersburg Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies, 11th—12th century, fols. 1b—2a, 13.5 × 20.5 cm.

Fig. 2. Same manuscript, fols. 2b—3a.

Fig. 3. The Qur'ān, manuscript A 1011 in the collection of the St. Petersburg Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies, late 18th century, Turkey, Balkans, fols. 1b—2a, 12.0 × 18.0 cm.

Fig. 4. Same manuscript, fol. 108b.

Fig. 5. The Qur'ān, a Qumukh eighteenth-century manuscript (call number 666) in the collection of the Institute of History, Archaeology and Ethnography at the Russian Academy of Sciences Dagestani Scientific Centre, fol. 327, 30.0 × 16.0 cm. Courtesy of the Institute of History, Archaeology and Ethnography at the Russian Academy of Sciences Dagestani Scientific Centre.

Fig. 6. Same manuscript, fol. 231.

Fig. 7. Same manuscript, fol. 210.

Fig. 8. Same manuscript, fol. 227.

Fig. 9. Same manuscript, fol. 244.

Fig. 10. Same manuscript, fol. 216.