

BOOK REVIEWS

Paul Suter, *Alfurkan Tatarski. Der litauisch-tatarische Koran-Tefsir*. Köln, etc. Böhlau: 2004. XXI, 555 S. (Bausteine zur slavischen Philologie und Kulturgeschichte. N. F. R. A: Slavistische Forschungen. Bd. 43).

The study of the manuscript heritage of the Polish-Lithuanian Tatars (the so-called "kitābistics") has a lot in common with the study of Muslim-Spanish manuscripts *aljamiado*: both are unlikely to be published in their original form. In both cases the preserved texts are evidence of the language of their epoch of which few other sources have preserved since Latin served as the main written language, and the "local" languages were used mostly by the minorities of other faiths. This causes the domination of the interest in the linguistic aspect of these monuments over the interest in their contents, and the aspiration to convey them in transcription to make them readable for those who do not master Arabic graphics.

The appearance in 1986 of the book by Cz. Łapicz *Kitab Tatarów litewsko-polskich* in the publishing house of Toruń University defined a new period in kitābistics. Years ago the Harrassowitz publishing house announced the book by Sh. Akiner *The Religious Language of the Byelorussian Tatars* which has not yet been published, and meanwhile several important monographs have appeared apart from numerous articles. In Poland the following books were published: A. Drozd, *Arabskie teksty liturgiczne w przekładzie na język polski XVII wieku* (Warszawa, 1999); as the third volume of the *Katalog zabytków tatarskich*, an annotated and well illustrated catalogue of A. Drozd was published together with M. M. Dziekan and T. Majda *Piśmiennictwo i muhiry Tatarów polsko-litewskich* (Warszawa, 2000), and Cz. Łapicz together with H. Jankowski published a translation of *Klucz do raju. Księga Tatarów litewsko-polskich z XVIII wieku* (Warszawa, 2000). This translation is notable as Spanish researchers prefer not to translate texts written in *aljamiado* into the modern Spanish language, but to provide them with glossaries. In Lithuania G. Miškinienė's book was published called *Seniausis Lietuvos Totorių rankraščių* (despite the Lithuanian title, most of the book is written in the Russian language) (Vilnius 2001), which was presented as an "educational-methodological text-book".

Paul P. Suter's book was published in the famous series of monographs called *Bausteine zur Slavischen Philologie*

und Kulturgeschichte. In fact it is a dissertation written in Zürich University and bears all features of one including its lay-out. The text is divided into 19 sections with smaller sub-sections inside most of them.

In the first section, the "Introduction", such notions as "Lithuanian Tatars" and "kitābistics" are explained and the history of its studies is told beginning from A. Muchliński, the absence of a full world inventory of manuscripts is noted and most famous places of their storage are listed (however, the abovementioned catalogue by A. Drozd and others is unknown to the author). When dividing the manuscripts into different types, the author points to incorrect orthography of oriental words ascribed to the copyists who did not always understand what they were copying. The Slavic texts of the manuscripts are mostly translations, just Polish or just Byelorussian is rarely found in them, and we usually come across a mix of the two languages. The text of the *tafsirs* is Polish, but the Qur'ānic texts in the *kitābs* are in the Byelorussian language. Basing on this the author makes an assumption about the once existing but later lost Byelorussian *tafsir*. The names of the translators have not preserved. In the same section other European analogues are mentioned: the Spanish and Bosnian *aljamiado*. All this information can be found in all research works on kitābistics, but their repetition in the dissertation is inevitable.

In the following sections different types of comments and translations are considered (replication and insets of comments) as well as Slavonic conformities to the Arabic grammatical structures, adoptions from the Arabic, Turkish and Persian languages, the already mentioned alternative versions in the *tafsirs* and the Qur'ānic quotations of the *kitābs*. Everyone who has dealt with the translation of the canonic texts into the "local" confessional languages will find here many typologically familiar phenomena.

The next section contains a review of the sources where apart from *tafsir* manuscripts, the texts of many of which are unknown as they are kept in private collections and their owners are reluctant to make contacts with the researchers, the "outside" sources about the Polish-Lithuanian Tatars are reviewed: *Tarih-i Peçevî* where they are mentioned casually and *Risāle-i Tātār-ı Leh*. Some researchers assume that the later is A. Muchliński's invention, but the manuscript is indeed kept in the Oriental Library of the St. Petersburg State University.

Further the cultural context is considered beginning from the 16th century, the context in which the Tatars lived among the national and religious majority and due to which latinisms are found in the text, the communication of *kitāb* via "metrics" (according to the author from the "Lithuanian metrics"), and some Islamic realities through Christian terms (*imām* = "kapłan", *mihṛāb* = "kaplica", *āya* and *sūra* = "rozdział", etc.)

Then follows a list of the translations of the Qur'ān into European languages from the Latin one by Robertus Cetensis, 1143, to the English one by George Sale, 1734 (the first printed one is the Latin Bibliander, 1543). The next section is dedicated to the Arabic graphics of the Polish-Tatar texts; according to the author this is "considered by Antonovič in detail". The abovementioned book by G. Miškinienė listed by the author in the bibliography contains interesting observations on this issue, but, judging by the absence of references, the author did not use them.

Part of the information contained here is well-known to the orientologists and must have been addressed to the Slavonic scholars.

Sections 10 to 16 are completely dedicated to the linguistic aspects of *tafsir*. The last section is the publication of transcriptions of five manuscripts. It is not clear why the section which tells about the manuscripts upon which the whole research work is based is placed at the end of the book. P. Suter based on the *tafsir* manuscript of 1725 No. 33264 from the Francis Skaryna Byelorussian Library in London. When citing the record of the copyist "*ben bo[hdan] ibn ša'bān...*" the author, though he writes that the text is in the Arabic and Turkish languages, for some reason gives the translation "Ibn Bohdan ibn Ša'bān..." instead of "I, Bohdan ibn Ša'ban". The author published

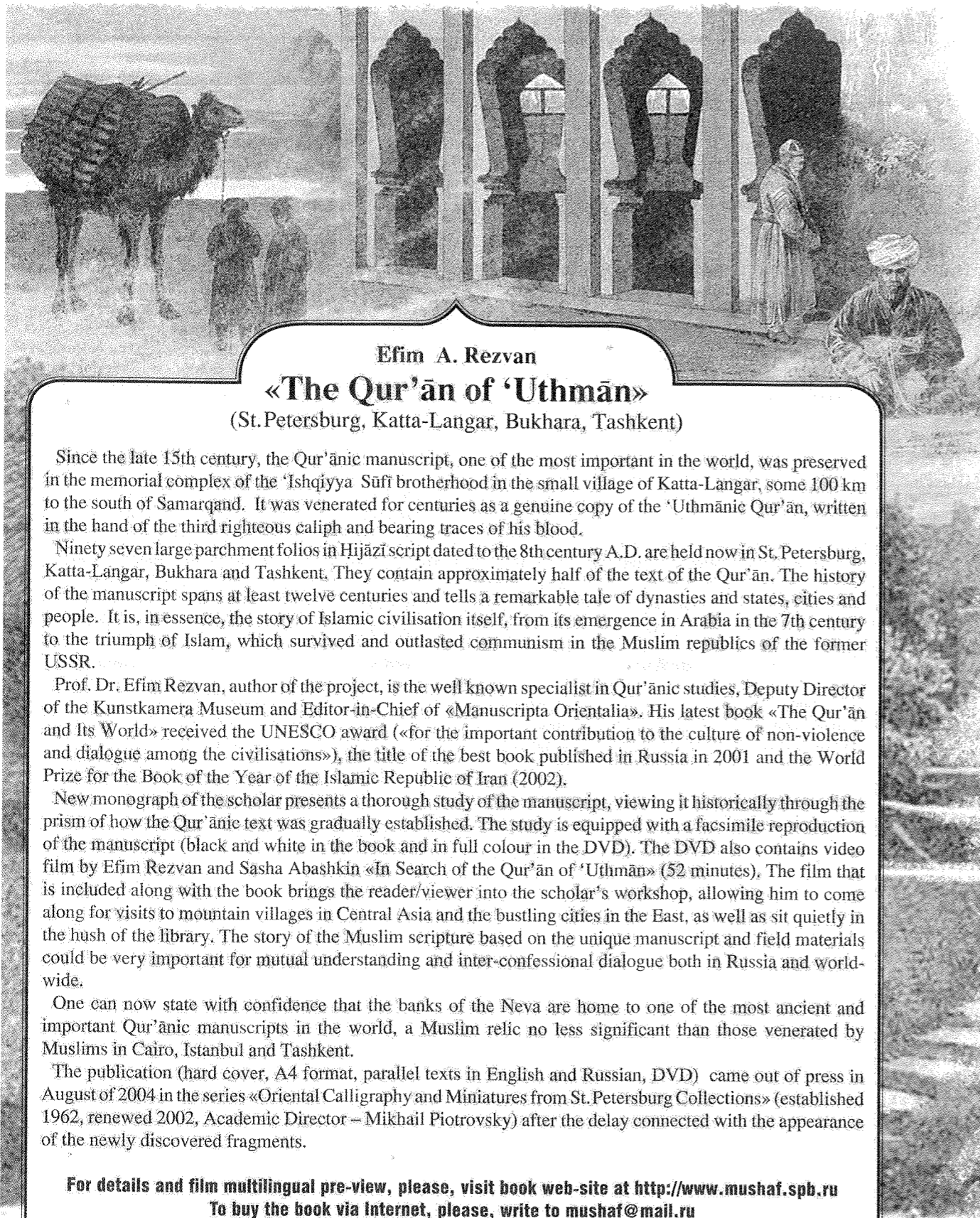
39 (out of 497) folios: the transcription of the Arabic text and the transcription of the Polish translation.

Three more manuscripts served as material for comparison: the manuscript of the end of the 18th century D 723 from the SPIOS MS Department (and not the Library, as the author states), also 39 folios out of 480, only the transcription of the translation is given, manuscript of 1825 LU 867 from the Library of the Oriental Faculty of the St. Petersburg State University — the transcription of the translation of 39 out of 535 folios and the manuscript of the end of the 19th century from the private collection of Ibrāhim Kanapacki in Minsk which is for the first time being introduced into scientific circulation. The author gives little information about its condition, even its volume is unknown from which the author publishes the transcription of the translation on folios 5—10. Finally, transcriptions of 12 fragments with Qur'ānic quotations from the *kitāb* manuscript of the 19th century OR 13.020 from the British Museum in London are given as a text for comparison.

In the supplement examples of Turkish *tafsirs* are given. The book finishes with a bibliography which is not very voluminous (because of the absence of many articles in periodicals) compared with the bibliographies in the abovementioned Polish and Lithuanian books. However, it is possible that many of them lay outside the author's range of interest or were inaccessible for him.

We can say that P. Suter's book is first of all of interest for the German Slavonic scholars who for the first time get familiarized with kitābistics. For orientologists and codicologists the last section could be interesting if the manuscripts given in it in transcription were given in original in bigger volume than the only illustration on page 25.

I. Wojewódzki



Efim A. Rezvan
«The Qur'ān of 'Uthmān»
(St. Petersburg, Katta-Langar, Bukhara, Tashkent)

Since the late 15th century, the Qur'ānic manuscript, one of the most important in the world, was preserved in the memorial complex of the 'Ishqiyya Sūfī brotherhood in the small village of Katta-Langar, some 100 km to the south of Samarqand. It was venerated for centuries as a genuine copy of the 'Uthmānic Qur'ān, written in the hand of the third righteous caliph and bearing traces of his blood.

Ninety seven large parchment folios in Hijāzī script dated to the 8th century A.D. are held now in St. Petersburg, Katta-Langar, Bukhara and Tashkent. They contain approximately half of the text of the Qur'ān. The history of the manuscript spans at least twelve centuries and tells a remarkable tale of dynasties and states, cities and people. It is, in essence, the story of Islamic civilisation itself, from its emergence in Arabia in the 7th century to the triumph of Islam, which survived and outlasted communism in the Muslim republics of the former USSR.

Prof. Dr. Efim Rezvan, author of the project, is the well known specialist in Qur'ānic studies, Deputy Director of the Kunstkamera Museum and Editor-in-Chief of «Manuscripta Orientalia». His latest book «The Qur'ān and Its World» received the UNESCO award («for the important contribution to the culture of non-violence and dialogue among the civilisations»), the title of the best book published in Russia in 2001 and the World Prize for the Book of the Year of the Islamic Republic of Iran (2002).

New monograph of the scholar presents a thorough study of the manuscript, viewing it historically through the prism of how the Qur'ānic text was gradually established. The study is equipped with a facsimile reproduction of the manuscript (black and white in the book and in full colour in the DVD). The DVD also contains video film by Efim Rezvan and Sasha Abashkin «In Search of the Qur'ān of 'Uthmān» (52 minutes). The film that is included along with the book brings the reader/viewer into the scholar's workshop, allowing him to come along for visits to mountain villages in Central Asia and the bustling cities in the East, as well as sit quietly in the hush of the library. The story of the Muslim scripture based on the unique manuscript and field materials could be very important for mutual understanding and inter-confessional dialogue both in Russia and worldwide.

One can now state with confidence that the banks of the Neva are home to one of the most ancient and important Qur'ānic manuscripts in the world, a Muslim relic no less significant than those venerated by Muslims in Cairo, Istanbul and Tashkent.

The publication (hard cover, A4 format, parallel texts in English and Russian, DVD) came out of press in August of 2004 in the series «Oriental Calligraphy and Miniatures from St. Petersburg Collections» (established 1962, renewed 2002, Academic Director – Mikhail Piotrovsky) after the delay connected with the appearance of the newly discovered fragments.

**For details and film multilingual pre-view, please, visit book web-site at <http://www.mushaf.spb.ru>
To buy the book via Internet, please, write to mushaf@mail.ru**

Efim Rezvan's book not only brings us close to an understanding of how the Sacred Text was established, it also gives us all, Muslims and non-Muslims, a chance to brush up against the History that is recorded in this remarkable copy of the Qur'ān. I welcome the publication of this book and congratulate its author on the scholarly coup that it is his right to claim.

*Mikhail Piotrovskiy,
Director,
State Hermitage Museum*

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Notes to Contributors

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Manuscripts must be clearly typewritten with numbered pages, double linespacing and wide margins throughout. Italic and bold typeface should be avoided. Use underlining where text is to be italicised. The title should be as brief and informative as possible. The institute at which the work has been done should be indicated at the head of each paper. Authors are requested to include their e-mail address if one is available.

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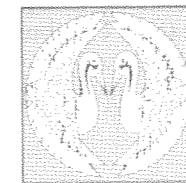
Manuscripts should be sent in duplicate to the Editor-in-Chief: Dr. Efim A. Rezvan, Peter the Great Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography (Kunstkamera), Russian Academy of Sciences, 3 Universitetskaya nab., 199034, St. Petersburg, Russia, e-mail: rezvan@kunstkamera.ru.

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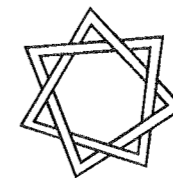
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Plate 1. *State Emblem of the Russian Empire.* Paper, silk, embroidery, wood (64.5 × 107 cm), Japan, 1891. Peter the Great Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography, Russian Academy of Sciences (MAE RAS). Collection of Nicholas II. Shelf-mark 312-63. Courtesy of the Museum.

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Plate 2. *Birds.* Chinese watercolour on pith (37 × 25 cm), second half of the 19th century. MAE RAS, Collection of Nicholas II. Shelf-mark 311-1/12 (4). Courtesy of the Museum.

Plate 3. *Ships.* Chinese watercolour on pith (37 × 25 cm), second half of the 19th century, MAE RAS, Collection of Nicholas II. Shelf-mark 311-1/12 (12). Courtesy of the Museum.



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