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Colour plates:

Front cover:

The inside of the manuscript's front cover (on the left): Čudabandaka (Skt. Cūdāpanthaka; Tib. Lam-phran-bstan), “The Great Yum”, MS, vol. 5 (call number K 24), 15.0 × 16.0 cm.

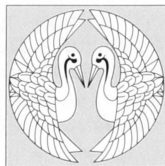
Back cover:

Plate 1. The inside of the back cover (from left to right): 1. Esru-a (Skt. Brahmā, Tib. Tshangs-pa); 2. Bigar (Skt. Śiva, Tib. ?); 3. Qormusta (Skt. Indra, Tib. brGya-byin), “The Great Yum”, MS, vol. 5 (call number K 24), 52.0 × 15.5 cm.

Plate 2. The inside of the front cover (on the left): Inggida (Skt. Aṅgaja, Tib. Yan-lag-'byung); (on the right) Bagula (Skt. Bakula, Tib. Ba-ku-la), “The Great Yum”, MS, vol. 4 (call number K 24), 53.0 × 15.5 cm.

Plate 3. The inside of the back cover (from left to right): 1. Qayanggiru-a (Skt. Lohakhaḍga Hayagrīva, Tib. Rta-mgrin lcags-ral-can); 2. Beiji Maq-a-kala (Skt. Aghora Mahākāla, Tib. Beg-tse); 3. Coytu Ökin tngri (Skt. Ekamātā Shrī Devī, Tib. Ma-cig dpal-ldan lha-mo), “The Great Yum”, MS, vol. 4 (call number K 24), 52.0 × 15.5 cm.

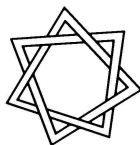
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Khrestomatiiā po Islamu. Perevody s arabskogo, vvedeniia i primechaniia. Sostavitel' i otvetstvennyi' redaktor S. M. Prozorov. Moscow: Nauka, 1994, 238 str.

Islam Reader. Translations from Arabic, introductions and commentaries. Compiled and edited by S. M. Prozorov. Moscow: Nauka Publishing House, 1994, 238 pp.

The first part of the *Islam Reader*¹ was published in 1994 in Moscow by the publishing house "Vostochnaya Literatura" (Oriental Literature). It contains translations (with detailed commentaries and introductory articles) of several original Arabic texts representing different genres of Muslim religious literature². The need for such a collection of texts has long been there, especially since textbooks on Arabic literature and language are scarce, and the demand for young specialists in the field of Islamic studies is growing. The appearance of this book should be viewed therefore as a prominent event in scholarly life. There is practically no experience with creating similar text selections, neither in Russia, nor in Western countries. It should be noted that the idea of publishing a similar selection of texts in English translation is much approved by our colleagues from other countries³.

Materials included in *Islam Reader* represent a wide range of problems connected with the study of Islam. All aspects of traditional Islamic studies are present: the origin of Islam (fragments from *Sira rasūl Allah* by Ibn Hishām, etc.), Qur'ānic texts and exegesis (98th *Sūra* and commentaries on it made by representatives of different schools and sects), the Sunna of the Prophet (passages from Ibn Baṭṭa al-'Uqbārī), dogmatic literature (chapter from '*Usūl al-dīn fī-l-qalām*', the book by the Shafiite *faqīh* and Ash'arite theologian al-Baghḏādī; the '*Aqīda* or "Creed" by Ahmad b. Ḥanbal, the eponymous founder of the Hanbalite school of law and theology), Ṣūfī literature (chapters from the classical *Kitāb al-luma'* by Abū Naṣr al-Sarrāj al-Ṭūsī), Muslim law (chapters from one of the earliest works on *fiqh* — *Kitāb al-Kharāj* by Abū Yūsuf Ya'qūb). These wide and successfully selected materials not only make it possible to teach students how to work with corresponding sources, but also give some idea of Islam in general and its forms developing in the Muslim world for over a thousand years. In this connection this publication may be interesting not only to students but also to specialists in such fields as history, Oriental studies, and philosophy.

It is noteworthy that not only Arabic printed texts and translations are included, but also fragments of manuscripts. These are pages representing different manuscript traditions and different genres of Islamic religious literature: the Qur'ān, *tafsīr*, collections of *ḥadīth*, works of Ṣūfīs, etc.). The manuscripts are written in different scripts — from comparatively easy to read Kufic Qur'āns and clear *naskh* to almost illegible cursive writing of marginal notes. The inclusion of these materials not only helps make the student familiar with the Arab manuscript tradi-

tion but also gives him some practice working with manuscript texts. In some sense this last task is quite new, usually textbooks and collections of selected texts were not required to confront it. However, the presence in Russia, first of all in St. Petersburg, of large collections of Arabic manuscripts demands the introduction of this kind of training — at least at the initial stage.

From this point of view most impressive chapter of the book is "The Qur'ān and Its Exegesis" by E. Rezvan. It includes the 98th *Sūra* of the Qur'ān and a representative selection of 12 *tafsīrs* by different authors. The chapter is provided with the following reproductions of manuscript fragments:

1. 2 folios of an early Kufic Qur'ān manuscript dated from the 8th—9th centuries (parts of *Sūras* 96—98);
2. 2 folios from a Qur'ān written in Maghribī script (*Sūra* 98);
3. 2 folios from the *tafsīr* by al-Zamakhsharī (commentary on *Sūra* 98) written in easily legible *naskh*;
4. 2 folios written in middle-size *naskh* from the *tafsīr* by al-Bayḏāwī (explanation of *Sūra* 98) containing numerous marginal additions. The copy was made in 698/1299;
5. 2 folios of the same type from the *tafsīr* by al-Jalālayn (explanation of *Sūra* 98), manuscript of 925/1519.

The inclusion of similar materials into textbooks of this kind, preferably in high quality reproductions, should be encouraged.

During a discussion of the book under review in Bergen in the May of 1995 (in which Efim Rezvan, Joseph Bell of the University of Bergen, and Dr. Michael G. Carter of New York University took part) the idea of making a series of similar textbooks devoted to different genres of medieval Arabic literature was considered. However, the suggested series would be different from *Islam Reader* in being not just a collection of texts borrowed from different works, but a series of publications, each of them dedicated to one specific genre or to one author. The whole idea was to some extent inspired by the chapter on the Qur'ān and its exegesis. A separate issue of this chapter (with a slightly expanded foreword) could serve as a pattern for the suggested series. The necessity of producing such a series of textbooks is evident. Textbooks of this kind are few not only in Russia but also in Western countries. We invite all specialists working in the field of the Arabic language and literature to take part in this project or in its discussion⁴. We are ready to undertake all preliminary and editorial work. Only the question of funding remains open. The issues could be printed either in St. Petersburg or elsewhere, original forms would be prepared in St. Petersburg. Our project offers a very flexible forum for making the results of research-work available to students (as well as for a wide range of specialists in other disciplines). Practically every Arabist can compile a textbook of this kind on the basis of

¹ The book had been submitted to printers several years ago, however, its publication was detained by technical and financial problems connected with the reconstruction of the publishing business in Russia.

² The second part of the book containing texts in Arabic is forthcoming.

³ Of the textbooks on Islam most closely resembling the *Islam Reader* there is *Textual Sources for the Study of Islam*, ed. and trans. by A. Rippin and J. Knappert (Manchester, 1986), which gives translations of the corresponding texts into English.

⁴ We shall be happy to get any suggestions connected with this project, which is now in its preliminary stage. Our e-mail address is: "orient@icos.spb.su".

the sources he is studying. The number of issues is unlimited, if we take into account the many genres existing in Arabic literature and the multitude of works written in the Arabic language.

Let us consider now the conditions which textbooks of this kind should meet. Needless to say, a thorough selection of materials is required, as well as a high level of editing and printing.

I. THE TEXTBOOKS SHOULD INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING OBLIGATORY ELEMENTS

1. Parallel texts

a) Arabic original typed in clear easily legible font, preferably with diacritic marks in all difficult cases which could be interpreted in several different ways (passives which are not evident and the like).

b) Translation into Russian (or/and into English). Translations should be clear, philologically precise and close to the original (almost literal, though the grammatical rules of the language into which the text is translated must be respected). Paraphrases are inappropriate for the purpose of the series. When a translation of a poetic or *adab* work is done, it can be presented in a more "artistic" form, but only after the parallel word-by-word translation of the same text and preferably at the end of the book.

2. Manuscript text

It is preferable or, from our point of view, even necessary, to include facsimile reproductions of the Arabic manuscript text. There is no need to reproduce the whole text selected, but at least several pages should be present in the book. This will give the reader some idea of the Arab manuscript tradition and will make him see how the text in question was embodied in material form. It would be useful in this connection to reproduce folios from different manuscripts and to give the first and the last page of one of the manuscripts. Such reproductions will make the book more interesting and will introduce more variety into the process of education. They can help the student feel the pulse of real life.

3. Commentaries

Commentaries should be thorough and detailed, giving the student a complete idea of the material he is dealing with. All notions, terms, names and place-names occurring in the text should be commented. Even well-known terms and names which could be left without comment in an ordinary critical edition of a text must be taken into account. On the other hand, the commentaries should be more detailed than usual — to provide the student with positive information on the history, language and cultural environment of the genre he is working on. At the same time commentaries of this kind could be interesting to specialists in related fields, like the history of Medieval Europe, who are not so well acquainted with the realities of the Oriental world. Finally, from the point of view of pure scholarship,

since the number of medieval Arabic treatises translated into European languages is not huge, one cannot overestimate the importance of any new publications introducing new materials

4. Introduction

The introduction is expected to contain information on the following aspects:

a) Genre, its characteristics in detail and a short history. Specific genre features of the work in question, etc.

b) The author: his life and work; in what historical and literary environment his works were created (especially the work considered in the textbook).

c) Time: information on the historical period considered in the text in question (this concerns first of all works on history, works of the *adab* genre relating to historical events, and the like). It would be reasonable to give a detailed historical survey of the period considered in works on history.

5. Vocabulary

It is preferable, though not obligatory (because the Arabic text is supplemented with a parallel translation), to include a vocabulary. The creation of a complete vocabulary of the text would of course be a complicated and time-consuming work. It is quite possible, however, to make a concise vocabulary in the process of translating and editing the text, including the most important and difficult to understand groups of words:

a) Special terms — philological, historical, philosophical, etc. — with a detailed explanation of their meaning and use.

b) Rare words which the potential reader (not only a student) could not be expected to know. The range of selection is wide enough: one can either include only words missing in standard Arabic dictionaries (for the Russian reader the dictionary by Baranov) and present only in Arabic explanatory dictionaries or in large European dictionaries (Lane), or just all words which do not occur very frequently (or words most probably unknown to students).

c) Well-known words which occur in the text in a specific meaning (if a dozen of meanings for some word are known, but in the text it is present only in one rarely used meaning), words which in this particular context require a very careful selection of European equivalents, and other unusual cases.

II. SELECTING TEXTS

The principle quality required of the text is its representativeness:

1. The text selected must be a characteristic representative of the genre in question to make the reader (student) familiar with the principal features of the genre as a whole.

2. The author of the text selected should be one of the principal representatives of the genre in question. The same concerns the work itself: it should be an outstanding work within the genre as a whole as well as among the works of the chosen author.

3. When dealing with a work the length of which makes it impossible to give the full text — a chronicle, a work on geography, a collection of *adab* — the section selected for translation should be logically complete. It must be a finished narrative, geographical description, philosophical essay or description of some historical event or period. Even if a series of fragments is given, they must be logically connected, presenting some aesthetically consistent whole, not just a book of quotations.

4. The text itself should contain information of some value, so that the student could not only learn how to read texts of this kind, but also get useful data on the subject matter (historical events, description of lands, cities and peoples, religious dogma, philosophy, linguistic phenomena, etc.). As for literary texts — *adab* and poetry — the texts selected should, on one hand, give some idea of the different sides of the author's creative activities, on the other — of the genre in question.

All the above notwithstanding, a given issue should not necessarily include only texts written by the same author. A different principle may be applied, for example, a collection of texts by different authors presenting a consistent description of a certain phenomenon. Ten *mu'allaqas* by different authors also present a consistent whole (actually, even a smaller number would be enough to illustrate this particular genre).

The chapter by Efim Rezvan in *Islam Reader* meets practically all the requirements listed here. It gives a clear idea of the Qur'ān and its place in the Muslim tradition during more than a thousand years — from its interpretation in the 8th century (*tafsir* by Muqātil b. Sulaymān) to the most recent concepts of the Muslim Brothers (*Fī Zilāl al-Qur'ān* by Sayyid Qutb). The 98th *Sūra*, which Rezvan uses as an example, is one of the most important and complicated parts of the Qur'ān (a fact which was noticed by practically all authors of *tafsirs*). It is important not only theologically but also on practical, political level: the way of interpreting the words of the Qur'ān relating to non-Moslems (first of all — “the people of the Book”), has never been just pure theory. Much in the practice of relations with non-Muslim states and with heterodox communities within *dār al-Islām* depended upon the way Qur'ānic sentences (especially of the 98th *Sūra*) were interpreted. On the other hand, established practice to some extent influenced the way the *Sūra* was interpreted. This complicated double-sided process was developing at different levels: social practice influenced ideology and ideological innovations modified social practice.

The selection of *tafsirs* is also quite representative. It makes it possible to trace the development both of the notions and concepts commented, as well as of the genre itself, reflecting changes not only in Muslim theology but also in the society and in social consciousness in general. A number of works representing the principal stages of the making of Islamic exegesis and theology are cited (the *tafsir* by Muqātil b. Sulaymān standing at the beginning of this genre; the work by al-Ṭabarī, the most prominent work of this kind, which sums up both the development of Islamic exegesis in general and that of “commentary based on tradition” in particular; the most popular *tafsir* of the later Middle Ages and of modern times, the *Tafsir al-Jalālayn*, which is the peak of the development of the genre, the so-called “Arabic translation of the Qur'ān”; and the works of one of the most prominent Arab reformers Muḥammad 'Abduh and the ideologist of the Muslim Brothers Sayyid Qutb). The whole spectrum of trends within Islam is represented: purely Sunnite *Ṣaḥīḥ* by al-Bukhārī and the *tafsir* by the Shafiite *fakih* and commentator al-Bayḍāwī; Shiite *tafsir* by al-Ṭabarsī and the Mu'tazilite commentary by al-Zamakhsharī; the *tafsir* of the prominent Ash'arite al-Rāzī, the Sūfī commentary by al-Tustarī (the earliest composition of this kind containing allegoric explanation of the Qur'ānic text) and by Ibn 'Arabī. The technical aspect of the chapter is also perfect: the translation is precise, with detailed commentaries and an introduction containing a survey of the history of the genre and an analysis of the principal problems and notions present in the 98th *Sūra* of the Qur'ān. There are also introductory articles dedicated to each of the *tafsirs*. Very important are the reproductions of pages from several manuscripts which give some idea of how the Arab manuscript tradition developed (and at the same time a good introduction for students who wish to learn to read different scripts). All this provides a linguistic and theological basis for future work with the sources of this kind.

A collection of texts from medieval Arab geographers along the same lines is being planned by the present reviewer. It will include passages by different authors describing some part of the caravan route from Khorasan to Baghdad. A series of texts describing the same part of the route can, on one hand, demonstrate the characteristic features of medieval Arab geography and, on the other, show how the principles of selecting and rendering materials were developing from the early works on geography by Ibn Khurdādhbih, Qudāma, Ibn Rusta, and al-Ya'qūbī to the “classical school of Arab geography” represented by such writers as al-Iṣṭakhri, Ibn Hawqal, and al-Muqaddasī. Readers will be provided with the necessary materials for them to attempt their own reconstruction of the trade route (which makes the learning process more entertaining). Taking into account the specific character of the contemplated edition, it must include, besides the texts, translations, commentaries, and facsimile reproductions of pages from different manuscripts, as well as several maps from medieval works and a reliable modern map of the area described⁵.

⁵ It would be best, perhaps, not to use the most recent maps showing the landscape considerably changed, but maps from the beginning of the century with no modern features present. Many of the roads in the Middle-East, for instance, were still following the course of medieval caravan tracks at the beginning of this century.

Another example, this time of a text belonging to one author, is a collection I am preparing of passages from *Al-Kāmil fī-l-tārikh* by Ibn al-Athīr dedicated to the history of Syria, Palestine, al-Jazira and Iraq in the second half of the 11th—beginning of the 12th centuries. The materials selected so as to meet all the requirements listed above. Ibn al-Athīr is a first-rate historian, one of the prominent representatives of Arab historiography (he can be compared only with al-Ṭabarī, if we take into account the range of materials he records and the way he uses them). *Al-Kāmil fī-l-tārikh*, moreover, is a characteristic and a very good example of an Arab chronicle. It is written in clear language characteristic of this genre. Passages selected for the text-book refer to a limited period — from the acme of the Seljuk Empire (the arrival of Ṭuğhril Beg in Baghdad in 1055) to its decline and fall and the appearance of the Crusader states. This era, for which the work by Ibn al-Athīr is the

principle source, was one of the crucial periods in the history of the Middle East. The rise of the Seljuk Empire brought many changes in the social, political and economic life of the whole region. It is impossible to underestimate the significance of these changes, no matter how different the views of scholars on their nature (from “gradual evolution” to “revolutionary rupture”) may be. At the same time it was the beginning of the Crusades, a new stage in the history of the Mediterranean region. The appearance of *Islam Reader* is a contribution to the development of Arabic studies in general and to the educational infrastructure required to train new specialists in one of the traditional fields of Oriental studies — Arabic manuscripts — in particular. Moreover, as I have tried to point out, it sets an example for a number of useful projects.

A. Matveev