

THE HISTORY OF THE 'ISHQIYYA BROTHERHOOD'S SACRED RELICS. II: THE KATTA LANGAR QU'RĀNS (NEW FRAGMENTS)*

In his marvelous book of recollections "Among Arabic Manuscripts", I. Iu. Krachkovsky included a section titled with the Russian proverb — *Na lovtsa i zver' bezhit* ("Game runs to meet the hunter"). The short chapters in this section describe the unique finds that seemingly present themselves to the scholar when the latter plunges headlong into his work. One of these chapters, entitled "The Kūfic Qur'ān and the Arab grandmother" [1], is often recalled today in reference to the activities of Uzbek, Russian, French and Dutch scholars who are studying Qur'ānic manuscripts held to this day in the *qīshlāq* of Katta Langar (Kashkadarya region of Uzbekistan, 80 km from the city of Shahrīsabz) in the mosque and *mazār*, the hereditary burial-vault of the 'Ishqiyya brotherhood [2]. The fact is that the manuscript that inspired I. Iu. Krachkovsky was held there for many years.

After a series of publications on the Katta Langar copies [3], the most varied material came to light, both on the history of the 'Ishqiyya brotherhood and on the Katta Langar relics. In the spirit of Krachkovsky's comparison to game and the hunter, the present short article deals with two such finds. Both English and Russian version of a detailed monograph by Prof. Efim Rezvan on the Katta Langar Hījāzī-script copy is slated to appear soon [4]. The book contains a facsimile reproduction of the manuscript and a video film in the production of which I assisted. The above-noted articles and this marvelously documented book liberate me from the necessity of belaboring the material on Katta Langar and the manuscripts that hark back to this religious centre.

Among the already famed Qur'ānic folios written in Hījāzī script are two pasted-together parchment folios copied in Kūfic script (*fig. 1*). They present a fragment of *sūra* 17:14—26 (15 lines per page with vowelling in red dots, each tenth *āyat* marked with a special round sign). These folios were described in detail, dated and published by Prof. Fr. Déroche [5]. I remember well the day when my kind colleague, Prof. J. Witkam of Holland, and I carefully

studied this folio *in situ* and agreed that it could be dated to the third century A.H.

I was fortunate recently to come across 4 folios of a Qur'ān from the same copy. They are pasted together out of the usual order for the Qur'ānic text and with additional paper pasted along the edges. The dimensions of the parchment pages are the same — 22.0×32.0 cm, with markers for each tenth *āyat* identical to those published by Fr. Déroche. One of the folios contains the *sūra* title, which may have been written in later. The fragments are *āyat* from *sūras* 17:101—110 and 18, 1—14; 57—71. One easily notes that the text of the Katta Langar fragment is a continuation of one of these folios. Fol. 1a (*fig. 2*) presents the text of *sūra* 17:101—107; fol. 1b (*fig. 3*) — 17:108—110; 18:1; fol. 2a (*fig. 4*) — 18:1—8; fol. 2b (*fig. 5*) — 18:9—14; fol. 3a (*fig. 6*) — 18:57—63; fol. 3b (*fig. 7*) — 18:63—70; fol. 4a (*fig. 8*) — 18:93—98; fol. 4b (*fig. 9*) — 18:98—105. According to the owner, who, as is often the case, gave us these folios through an intermediary, he has 40 folios from this copy. To buttress his assertion, he allowed us to see one more of them (unluckily, objective factors prevented us from studying it in detail).

At the beginning of 2002, a private collector in Tashkent acquired from a street vendor 35 manuscript folios of the Qur'ān (partly in very poor condition), which are directly related to the history of the copy to be published in facsimile by E. Rezvan. The folio dimensions are 53.5×32.5 cm, the text field is 44.2×16.0 cm, 11 lines in a coloured border enclosed in gold, calligraphic Central Asian *naskh*. The text is written on Samarkand paper in black ink, with *sūra* titles copied in red. The copy is dated 1309/1891—92. A number of the folios (*fig. 10*) bear the seal of the *waqf* of the Muḥammad Ṣādiq mosque in Katta Langar and the seal of 'Abd al-Ḥākīm b. 'Abd al-Sattār-bāy, the *ūrāq* [6] and ruler of Khuzar (now the regional centre of the Kashkadarya region of Uzbekistan). In the late

* This is the second contribution in a series of articles on the 'Ishqiyya brotherhood's sacred relics and historical sources devoted to them. The first article by E. Rezvan in this series was published in the previous issue of *Manuscripta Orientalia*, VIII/2, 2002, pp. 10—1 (see E. Rezvan, "On the history of 'Ishqiyya brotherhood sacred relics. I: the *khirqā* of the Prophet"). In one of upcoming issues of *Manuscripta Orientalia*, an article by Dr. B. Aminov (Tashkent) on the 'Ishqiyya *shajāra* recently found in Iski Langar will be published.