
PRESENTING THE MANUSCRIPT

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THE QUR'ĀN OF PĚTR STOLYPIN (?)

The Qur'ān is a unique monument in many respects. I have already written about the specific and multi-functional role that the Sacred Text have played in the Muslim world where the Qur'ān became the ubiquitous feature of life both for the individual and for the Islamic society. In particular the Qur'ānic manuscripts, handed down from generation to generation, served to register what we call today “items of public record” [1].

The manuscript of the Qur'ān as well as the text of the Sacred Book have been the most important ethno-cultural symbols for the Muslims. This has been, in particular, proved by recent research of St. Petersburg sociologists: in the system of modal images of Orthodox Church and Islam, the Qur'ān for the Muslims of St. Petersburg turned out to be much more important than the Bible for the Christians living in the city.

Quite naturally, the Qur'ān has been viewed as the most important symbol of the Islamic world as well as beyond the borders of this world — in Europe and America, in Black Africa and Russia. I have already written that the geopolitical location of the country and the course of Russian history laid the foundation for a special attitude toward the Sacred Book of Islam. Archival materials indicate that the Qur'ān was included in the personal libraries of such Russian Tsars as Ivan the Terrible (1530—1584), Peter the Great (1672—1725), and Catherine II (1729—1796). The fate of publications, translations, and rare manuscripts of the Qur'ān was also bound up with the personal decisions of the supreme rulers of Russia [3].

Quite recently I came across a manuscript of Qur'ān which can serve as a vivid illustration of what has been said above.

Not long ago Prof. A. A. Zhukov (Oriental Faculty, St. Petersburg State University) informed me that he owns a manuscript of the Qur'ān which could have belonged to PĚtr Stolypin, an outstanding reformer and an important figure in Russian 20th century politics. I, of course, became interested in the manuscript and soon received it for work.

The manuscript represents a small codex (16.7×10.4 cm) of vertical format which consists of 276 folios (the first one is missing). The manuscript is copied in a sure calligraphic *naskh* (fig. 1) on glazed European paper (water signs could be traced). The text is written in black ink, for the headings of the *sūras* placed in golden frames red ink was used. Red ink is also used to mark out

the *tajwīd* signs. Both red and black inks were used to indicate the *tajwīd* elements on the margins. Here, on the margins, the elements of liturgical division regularly appear: the *juz*'es are marked with floral rosettes of various forms (the colours — golden, light blue, pink, green). Pink ink was used to mark *hizbs*, dark red — to mark halves (*nisf*). Golden circles present the *āya* separators, in one place an '*ushr* — the tenth *āyāt* is marked in black on the margins.

The text is placed in a multi-colour frame (the order of lines from the outer edge of the pages to the text: a red, two black and a thick golden framed with a black line). There are 17 lines on a page. The size of the text is 12.7×7.1 cm.

The left part of a two-page '*unwān* (fig. 2) is preserved. It is designed with the same set of four colours as the whole manuscript (golden, light blue, pink and red).

The manuscript is kept in the original Oriental brown leather binding moulded and quilt on the front part of the cover (four rosettes at the corners and one at the centre) and gold painting inside it (fig. 3).

Folio 275b presents a standard colophon (in red ink) without the mention of a date or the name of the copyist (fig. 4). On the free lower half of this page in non-calligraphic handwriting and with omitted words the first *sūra* is copied, which is missing from the codex in connection with the loss of the right part of the '*unwān*. This, obviously, points to the fact that the first page of the manuscript had been lost before it was brought to Russia.

There are no *waqf* inscriptions. The manuscript, which is an example of serial production must have been copied in Tabrīz and dates to the end of the 17th century [4].

On the folio 276a in a column the following numbers are written (fig. 5):

٢٠٧	207	٠٧٥	075
١٠٨	108	١٨٠	180
١٧٥	175	١٠٧	107
١٦٥	165	١٢٣	123
١١٠	110	١١٢	112
٢٠٦	206	٠٤٣	043
٩٦٣	963	٥٩٣	593

This record could have had a practical, as well as a ritual (for example, magic) meaning (for example, accounting records important for the owner, or a code).