

Old Russia as a bilingual state with Russian and Turkic as two official languages

Letters considered Arabic nowadays were used for transcribing Russian words

1. ARABIC INSCRIPTIONS UPON RUSSIAN WEAPONS

1.1. Why would Nikita Davydov, a Russian craftsman, decorate the royal helmet with Arabic inscriptions?

The mediaeval weapons decorated by Arabic inscriptions are considered Oriental without a shadow of a doubt nowadays; this implies a Middle Eastern origin (Turkish or Persian, and definitely Islamic). Apparently, it is presumed that if a steel blade of a weapon had a phrase from the Koran inscribed upon it, it must have been made by a Muslim craftsman from the Islamic East, where the Arabic cultural tradition had existed for centuries on end. Russian craftsmen are presumed to have been ignorant and inferior in general, and the possibility that they may have known Arabic and written in this language is not even considered by the modern historians. The very spirit of Scaligerian and Millerian history implies that by the XVI century there had already been a long tradition of mutual animosity between the Orthodox Russia and the Muslim Turkey and Persia. Cultural and religious traditions are said to have been radically dif-

ferent and even hostile to one another from the very beginning.

However, according to our reconstruction, Russia, Turkey and Persia had been part of the same Great = “Mongolian” Empire until the very end of the XVI century. Therefore, the cultural traditions of these countries must have had a great many common elements – in particular, similar methods of forging and decorating weapons. Despite the religious schism between the Orthodox Christianity and Islam that started in the XV century, traditions of the state and the military had still remained similar in the XVI-XVII century.

There are many facts to prove the above, some of them very illustrative indeed, the Romanovian purge of the Russian history notwithstanding. It turns out that Russian craftsmen had still decorated weapons (even royal weapons) with Arabic inscriptions up until the middle of the XVII century, which had already been the Romanovian epoch. They must have received explicit forbidding instructions at some point in the second half of the XVII century. There have been no Arabic symbols anywhere on the Russian weapons since then – some of them may have been destroyed; however, the royal weapons that were covered in gold, diamonds and other gems, and also



Fig. 13.1. Ceremonial Russian helmet of damask, or the so-called “Jericho hat” that had belonged to the Russian Czar Alexei Mikhailovich. Kept in the Armaments Chamber of the Muscovite Kremlin. Made by Nikita Davydov, a Russian craftsman born in Murom ([187], page 163). Steel, gold, gemstones, pearls [...], engraving, enamel. Nikita Davydov put Arabic lettering around the top of the helmet. It turns out that Orthodox Russians were very prone to decorating their armaments with Arabic inscriptions. It is therefore incorrect to assume that Arabic lettering on mediaeval weapons testify to the Oriental origins of the latter – it is most likely that the weapons in question were forged in Russia. Taken from [187], page 162.

forged by the best court craftsmen, survived – apparently, due to its high material value. However, most of the “Russo-Arabic” weapons were removed from public sight (see Annex 2 to CHRON7). Nowadays some of the “dangerous” weapons are exhibited in museums, with photographs published et al; still, one has to have a very keen attention in order to notice Arabic inscriptions upon Russian weapons. Museum

plaques usually tell us nothing about these “oddities”, and the articles are often exhibited in such a way that the Arab inscriptions can’t be seen very well. Y. Yeliseyev pointed them out to us for the first time.

Let us turn to the fundamental publication entitled *The State Armoury* ([187]); it contains photographs and descriptions of the valuable objects stored in the State Armoury of the Muscovite Kremlin.

For instance, the so-called “Jericho Hat”, which is a ceremonial helmet worn by the Muscovite Czars and made of Damascus steel can be seen in fig. 13.1 ([187], page 162). In Chapter 5 of CHRON6 we give a detailed account of the helmet’s origins, as well as the reason it has got a Biblical name. Let us now consider the actual helmet more attentively.

“The steel surface of the helmet is well-polished and covered by a very fine golden inlaid pattern. Apart from that, the helmet is decorated with a variety of gemstones – diamonds, rubies and emeralds” ([662], page 173). It is known that the Jericho Hat was decorated with the gems and the inlaid pattern in 1621 – already in the Romanovian epoch, that is. It was made by Nikita Davydov from Murom – a Russian craftsman (the leading craftsman of the Armoury; see [187], page 163).



Fig. 13.2. A fragment of the “Jericho hat”. The same golden engraving is used for the royal crown with the Orthodox octagonal cross as well as the Arabic lettering that reads as “make the faithful rejoice”. See the top of the helmet on the photograph. Taken from [187], page 162.

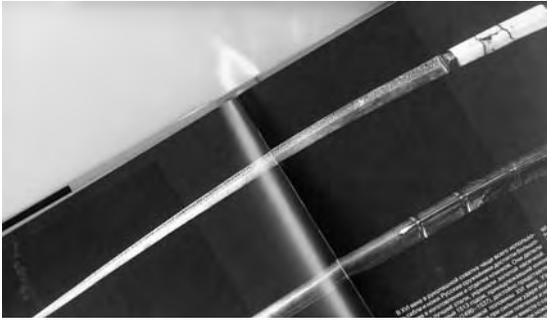


Fig. 13.3. Damask knife of Prince Andrei Staritskiy, son of Ivan III. Made by the Russian craftsmen in the early XVI century. Covered in Arabic lettering. It is also decorated by a Russian inscription reading as “Prince Ondrei Ivanovich, year of 7021” (or 1513 A.D.) Taken from [187], pages 150-151.



Fig. 13.4. Close-in of a fragment of the Arabic lettering on the knife of Andrei Staritskiy, a Russian prince. Taken from [187], pages 150-151.

The golden inlay pattern is distinctly shaped as the royal crown with the eight-pointed Orthodox cross. On the front part of the helmet we see an enamel depicting Archangel Michael; the top of the helmet is encircled in arabesques (see fig. 13.2), or framed Arabic inscriptions. The arabesque we can see on the photograph reads “*Va bashir al-mouminin*”, or “Make the believers rejoice” (translated from Arabic by T. G. Cherniyenko). It is a common phrase from the Koran. Thus, Nikita Davydov used the same kind of golden inlay for the Orthodox symbols and the Arabic quotations from the Koran! One must also note the utter absence of Slavic inscriptions on this helmet; Nikita Davydov, a Russian craftsman, had only left Arabic inscriptions on this masterpiece.

One must say that the photograph of the Jericho Hat as given in the luxurious album ([187]) was made in a very “politically correct” manner. Most of the arabesque is rendered all but invisible by a spot of reflected light; the next arabesque is in the shade, and therefore altogether illegible. The Arabic inscriptions

on the Russian helmet are therefore very hard to notice; the commentary doesn’t mention them anywhere at all. However, since they have already been noticed, it is easy enough to read them – the abovementioned arabesque was read and translated by T. G. Cherniyenko, a specialist in Arabic. The meaning of the other arabesques, which encircle the top part of the helmet, remains unknown.

Another such example from the very State Armoury is the knife of Prince Andrei Staritskiy, son of Ivan III (see fig. 13.3). It was made by Russian craftsmen in the early XVI century ([187], pages 150-151). The knife is signed in Russian; the legend says “Prince Ondrei Ivanovich, year of 7021” – the dating translates as 1513.

However, the blade of this knife is also decorated by an Arabic inscription, set in the same canonical Arab script as we find on virtually every “oriental” weapon (see fig. 13.4). T. G. Cherniyenko proved unable to read the inscription, since it doesn’t contain any diacritic signs; their absence makes every letter readable in a variety of ways, and a text transcribed in this manner can only be interpreted if its approximate content is already known; otherwise there are too many interpretation versions to go through.

Nevertheless, the disposition of letters and the use of their different forms (which depend on whether the letter is in the beginning, the middle or the end of the word in Arabic) implies that the inscription has an actual meaning and isn’t a mere “decorative pattern of Arabic letters emulating Oriental writing”, as the comments are telling us ([187], page 151). The authors of the commentary had clearly wanted to keep the readers from thinking that the Russian craftsmen of the XVI century had made a knife with an Arabic inscription as a present for the son of Ivan III. This method of declaring “embarrassing” inscriptions “illegible” is used by historians quite often, and known to us very well. It usually conceals utter reluctance to read inscriptions that contradict the Scaligerian and Romanovian version of history. We discuss this at length in CHRON5.

A propos, since the inscription on the knife of Andrei Staritskiy remains illegible, one cannot be certain about the fact that it is in Arabic. The kind of writing considered Arabic nowadays had also been used in other languages – Turkish and Persian, for ex-

ample. Could it have been common for the Russian language as well in the epoch of the XIV-XVI century?

It turns out that the weapons with Arabic inscriptions had also been made in other countries than Turkey – possible, in even greater amounts. We have just seen that the Orthodox Russians had kept the custom of decorating their weapons with Arabic writings up until the middle of the XVII century. We also find Arabic inscriptions on the sabre of Prince Mstislavskiy, the military commander of Ivan the Terrible ([187], page 207). One of the inscriptions translates as “Will serve in battle as strong defence”; we also find the name of the owner written in Russian ([187], page 207).

Another thing that we notice instantly is the photograph of the polished plate armour made in 1670 by Grigoriy Vyatkin, “one of the best craftsmen and the best manufacturer of weapons and armour in the second half of the century”, for Czar Alexei Mikhailovich ([187], page 173; see fig. 13.5). The armour is complemented by a helmet; the two had clearly constituted a single ensemble, although the commentary makes no separate reference to the helmet. The inscriptions on the helmet are amazing – they are all in Arabic, and distinctly recognizable as quotations from the Koran. The inscription on the nose guard says, “There is no God but Allah and Muhammad is his prophet”. The bottom of the helmet is decorated by a whole verse from the Koran – Sura 2, 256 (255). All of these inscriptions were translated by T. G. Cherniyenko. They are set in the canonical Arabic script, and their interpretation does not present any problems.

“Oriental” sabres were wielded by Minin and Pozharskiy, famed heroes of the Russian history (the sabres must have really been Russian, but decorated with Arabic inscriptions – see [187], page 151). As we have witnessed during our visit to the State Armoury in June 1998, the inscription on Minin’s sabre isn’t even Arabic – the script is completely unfamiliar. The explanatory plaque suggests the weapon to be of an “Egyptian origin”. In reality, both sabres are most likely to be Russian. A visit to the Armoury revealed a large number of exhibited “Russo-Arabic” weapons. It would be very interesting indeed to take a look at the storage rooms; one gets the idea that most Russian weapons were covered in “Arabic” or “illegible” inscriptions in the Middle Ages. This guess is confirmed by the materials cited in Annex 2 of CHRON7.



Fig. 13.5. Plate armour forged by the Russian craftsman Grigoriy Vyatkin for Czar Alexei Mikhailovich in 1670. Covered in Arabic lettering. Taken from [187], page 173.

Why are Russian weapons decorated with Arabic inscriptions presumed to be of a Turkish or Persian origin today? When the artwork is obviously Russian, it is presumed that the inexperienced and ignorant Russian craftsmen were faithfully copying the Oriental and Western European originals mechanically, as artwork, without delving into their real meaning, and used Arabic phrases for adorning the weapons and the armour of the Russian Czars and warlords, who would wear them proudly, unaware of the meaning and paying no attention to the reserved smiles of the enlightened Arabs and the even more enlightened Westerners.



Fig. 13.6. Precious damask sabre made in 1618 by Ilya Prosvit, a Russian craftsman. The entire blade is covered in lettering that employs Romanic characters. Left part of the photograph. Taken from [187], pages 156-157.

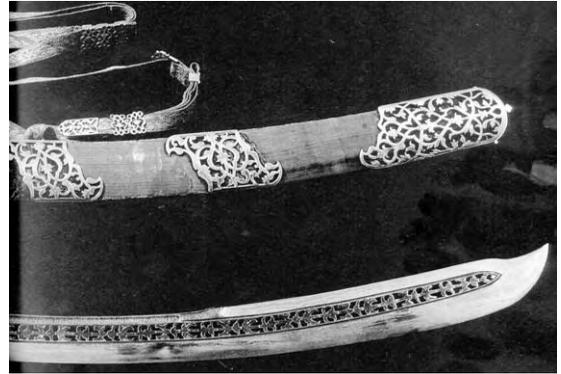


Fig. 13.7. Russian damask sabre of 1618. The Arabic lettering is visible perfectly well. Right part of the photograph. Taken from [187], pages 156-157.

The above is most likely to be incorrect. Most of these Russian weapons with Arabic inscriptions must have been made in the XVI and even the XVII century by Russian craftsmen in the Horde, which had also comprised Ottomania (Atamania). Most of these Russian weapons made in Moscow, Tula, Ural etc were declared “Damascene”, “Oriental”, “Western” and so on, which had led to the popular misconception that the Russians had preferred foreign weapons back in the day; domestic weapons had presumably been scarce and of “poor quality”, although it is quite obvious that every strong military power had used weapons of its own. Another forgotten fact is that the mediaeval Damascus is most likely to identify as T-Moscow (the city of Moscow written together with a definitive article).

Russians had also made weapons adorned by Latin inscriptions (at the very least, they had used Romanic characters). Such is, for instance, the precious sabre of Damascus steel made by the Russian craftsman Ilya Prosvit in 1618 ([187], pages 156-157). There is an inscription that runs across the entire blade and uses Romanic characters. Unfortunately, we haven’t managed to read and interpret it, as the photograph in [187] isn’t large enough to make out all the letters (see figs. 13.6 and 13.7).

We are usually told that all of these “Oriental” and “Western” weapons were given to the Russian Czars by the Oriental and the Western rulers as presents. We

don’t see this to be the case – in the cases related above at least. Certain individual weapons may of course have been received as presents; however, it has to be said that the items a priori known to be presents or souvenirs from the Orient aren’t decorated by any inscriptions at all as a rule, according to the annotations provided by the Armoury (see Annex 2 of CHRON7). Alternatively, the inscriptions could be Slavic or Greek. Such is the nature of the precious bow-cover brought from Istanbul by the Russian merchants as a present for Czar Alexei Mikhailovich ([187], page 216; see fig. 13.8), or the royal neckpiece made for the same Czar by the craftsmen of Istanbul in the 1650’s ([187], pages 350-351; see fig. 13.9), or the precious mace (see fig. 13.10) given to Czar Mikhail Fyodorovich as a present by Sultan Murad in 1620 ([187], page 215). In all of the abovementioned cases we see either Greek inscriptions, or none whatsoever.

The historians of today are trying to convince us that the Arabic inscriptions upon old Russian weapons are explained by the fact that said weapons were received by the Russian Czars and warriors as presents from foreigners who wrote and spoke in Arabic. We are beginning to realise that this explanation is the furthest thing from the truth. Moreover, it turns out that the Russian Czars themselves would give weapons with Arabic inscriptions to foreigners as presents. A very illustrative example of the above



Fig. 13.8. Precious breastplate brought from Istanbul in 1656 by the Russian tradesmen as a present for Czar Alexei Mikhailovich. Taken from [187], page 216.

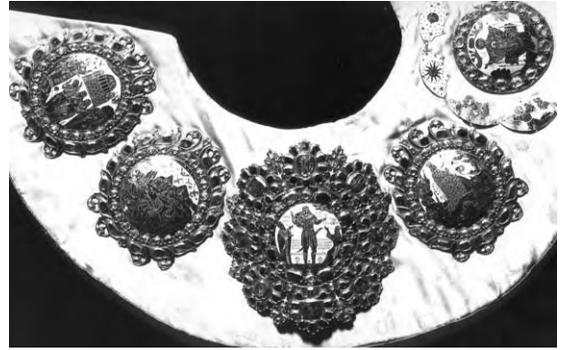


Fig. 13.9. Royal necklace made in Istanbul in the 1650's for Czar Alexei Mikhailovich. Taken from [187], pages 350-351.

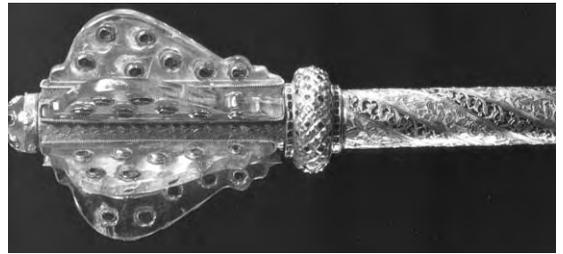


Fig. 13.10. Precious mace given to Czar Mikhail Fyodorovich by Sultan Murad as a present in 1630. Taken from [187], page 215.

is as follows. In 1853 Alexander Tereshchenko made a report of the excavations in Saray before the Imperial Academy of Sciences that concerned “the relics of the Desht-Kipchak Kingdom”. This is what he said in his report: “A special chamber known as the armoury contains a number of rare and noteworthy Asian weapons, including a number of sabres received as presents from our monarchs. There are weapons with Tartar, Persian, Arabic and Kufic inscriptions; among them – the blade of a sabre received by one of Djan-ger’s ancestors from Czar Mikhail Fyodorovich with the following Arabic inscription set in gold: ‘*Birakhmeti ilyahi taalya nakhnul melik el azym khan ve emyr kebir Mikhail Fyodorovich mamalike kul velyata Urus*’, which translates as ‘We, Mikhail Fyodorovich, Supreme Ruler, Czar and Governor by the Glory of God’ ” ([840], pages 99-100). Mark that the Arabic version of the title of Mikhail Fyodorovich Romanov contains the word “khan”.

Thus, the Russian Czars, including the first Romanovs, had customarily made presents of precious weapons to their own subjects or to foreigners, whereupon they had ordered the craftsmen to make Arabic inscriptions in gold.

The above passages about Arabic inscriptions present upon the Russian weapons don’t only apply to the Armoury of the Kremlin – another example is the museum of Alexandrovskaya Village (the town of Alexandrov nowadays), namely, the weapons and armour of a Russian warrior exhibited in the Raspyatskaya Church (see fig. 13.11). We visited this museum in July 1998. The exhibited objects include a chain mail, a helmet and a shield (see figs. 13.12-13.20).

The explanatory plaque reports the items in question to be of a Russian origin. Indeed, we see the entire helmet to be covered by artwork depicting fantasy animals, birds and horsemen, very Russian in style and resembling the famous cathedral wall carv-



Fig. 13.11. The Raspyatskaya church and belfry in Alexandrovskaya Sloboda (presently the town of Alexandrov) dating from the XVI century. The building functions as a museum nowadays.

ings from the Vladimir and Suzdal Russia. The nose-guard of the helmet has got a four-point cross at the end, resembling the dome of a church topped with a cross. All of the above allows us to identify the helmet as a Russian piece of armour without any doubts left about its origins. At the same time, the helm has got an Arabic inscription upon it – a wide stripe that covers the entire perimeter. The explanatory plaque doesn't say a word about it, and quite naturally doesn't provide anything in the way of a translation, either. Next to the helmet we see a shield. Once again, there is Arabic writing all over the perimeter. The rest of the surface is covered in artwork that is purely Russian in style. We have taken several photographs of the shield in order to represent as many fragments of the Arabic inscription upon it as possible.

We cannot call the armaments in question Muslim in the modern meaning of the word, seeing as how the Muslim art has apparently had a strict taboo concerning the graphical representations of people and

animals ever since the XVIII century. Yet the artwork of this “Russo-Arabic” helmet contains figures of animals and people (also mounted) – if we study fig. 13.12 attentively, we shall see a very clear image of an Amazon – a mounted woman waving a scimitar (above the nose-guard on the right).

Why don't the museum workers exhibit mediaeval Russian helms with Slavic inscriptions and nothing but? Could it be that there are very few such pieces to be found amidst the “Russo-Arabic” majority? What if the armaments in question had been typical for mediaeval Russia? The items we see must have been very common indeed, yet we find them covered in “Arabic” script (or another one considered “illegible”). This makes the plot thicken even more.

We see the same to be the case in the Moscow museum complex of Kolomenskoye. We have visited the halls of the Front Gate on 23 June 2001 and seen the two Old Russian helmets exhibited there (figs. 13.20a, 13.20b and 13.20c). The inscriptions we find on both of them are exclusively in Arabic; there isn't a single piece of armour with Slavic lettering in sight. Both museum plaques tell us tersely that Russian craftsmen had copied these helmets from “Oriental originals”. Russians must have been truly wild about all things Oriental, seeing as how they kept on copying them all the time.

Thus, most of the inscriptions found upon the Russian mediaeval weapons are rendered in a script presumed to be exclusively Arabic nowadays. If you pay attention to this fact once, you shall find an abundance of similar examples over a very short period of time. This amazing fact does not fit into the consensual Scaligerian and Romanovian version of history; it alone suffices to make it perfectly clear that the history of the pre-Romanovian epoch must have drastically differed from how it is presented to us nowadays.

1.2. The reason why Alexander Nevskiy and Ivan the Terrible wore helmets with Arabic writing. The famous “Arabic conquest of the world” as it happened in reality

We have thus witnessed that the ancient Russian armaments exhibited in modern museums are covered with Arabic writings for the most part. Let us cite



Fig. 13.12. Russian armaments: chain mail, helmet and shield. The helmet and the shield are all covered in Arabic lettering. The museum of the XVI century Raspyatskaya church in Alexandrovskaya Sloboda.



Fig. 13.13. Russian helmet. In the top right part we see an Amazon (a horsewoman with a sabre). Museum of the Raspyatskaya church in Alexandrovskaya Sloboda. Apparently, the Amazons were the Cossack women from Russia (Horde).



Fig. 13.14. Russian helmet. Fragment of the Arabic lettering upon it. Museum of the Raspyatskaya church in Alexandrovskaya Sloboda.



Fig. 13.15. Russian helmet covered in artwork and Arabic lettering. Museum of the Raspyatskaya church in Alexandrovskaya Sloboda.