

THE ARABOGRAPHIC SCRIPT OF THE INGUSH. A LETTER FROM THE FRONT

Written monuments of Ingushetia, composed in Ingush language with the help of the alphabet, developed on the basis of the Arabic script, contain important historical and cultural information. At the same time the Arabographic script of the Ingush is an absolutely unexplored theme. The usage of the Arabic script in communicating their native speech by the Ingush goes centuries back. The Ingush Arabographic alphabet was broadly used even by common ordinary people.

The letter joining in words traditional for the Arabic script was not observed strictly in the Ingush environment. Only a small portion of the literate, who acquired deeper education, had an opportunity to master the rules of the Arabic script. *Hujra* schools (“room” in Arabic, “school” in Ingush) oftentimes lacked even in regular writing materials. *Hujra-madrasas* alongside local mosques frequently used sharpened sticks by means of which they drew in the sand, pronouncing the sounds beforehand [1].

Table 1

Ъ	ا	د	ذ	دз	ض	к	ك
б	ب	з	ذ	тI	ط	л	ل
т	ت	р	ر	з	ظ	м	م
с	ث	з	ز	I	ع	н	ن
дж	ج	с	س	гI	غ	в	و
хь	ح	ш	ش	ф	ف	xI	ه
х	خ	с	ص	къ	ق	й	ي

There were only 37 Ingush sounds depicted in written language with the help of the Arabic script. Using this particular type of script led to certain difficulties, such as the lack of a special letter for the purpose of depicting an Ingush sound “zh”, which does not exist in Arabic speech. They, therefore, used the same letter “ج” in order to indicate both “zh” and “dzh”. The communication of “s” and “z” was imperfect, too. Common people could write “ث”, “ص”, “س” for the depiction of the Ingush “s” with no particular difference from depicting the Ingush “z” with “ذ”, “ز”, “ظ”. Educated people usually chose “س” and “ز” correspondingly for the Ingush “s” and “z”.

Ingush sounds as presented with the help of Arabic script and created by Ingush ‘*ulamā*’ in addition to the standard Arabic alphabet.

Table 2

чI	ч	ц	цI	пI	п	кx	кI	г
خ	چ	ز	ر	پ	ب	ق	ك	گ

In writing local ‘*ālim*’ scholars (*fig. 1*) strictly observed the rules of connection of Arabic letters in words. Their script sharply differed from the written language of the majority. The main part of the literate had only the skills of reading the fully diacritized text of the Qur’ān.

Two writing styles were distinguished in the Ingush environment: *shurī* (derived from the name of the city of Temir-Khān-Shurā) and *miṣrī* (derived from the name of Egypt — Miṣr). Local manuscripts of the Qur’ān were mostly copied in the *shurī* writing style. These types of copies were used for the purpose of education in *hujra*. The general body of the literate Ingush received elementary education with their help. The *miṣrī* style, without indicating diacritical marks, was used by those who received a deeper specialized education (*fig. 2*).

The *shurī* style was used in writing letters to the Caucasus by the Ingush *muhājirs*, who abandoned their motherland and left for Turkey. The letters of the exiled Ingush were written with the same writing style. It was also used in creating epitaphs on the tombstones and in communicating small Ingush texts, names and family names. Ingush language in Arabic script was used in writing letters home from a foreign land also because such a letter practically could not be read by the censorship [2].

Numerous religious *nazmash* texts were written with the help of this script, as well as translated works on morphology and syntax of Arabic language.

Hujra schools, of course, did not have classes and educational programs similar to the ones we have now. Knowledge transfer was implemented by means of studying of the certain set of books. It needs to be noted, however, that this system made a significant contribution to the spread of literacy among the Ingush (*fig. 3*).

Arabic script was also used in the letters of the Ingush, who were going home from the battlefronts of the



Fig. 1



Fig. 2



Fig. 3

*Fig. 4*

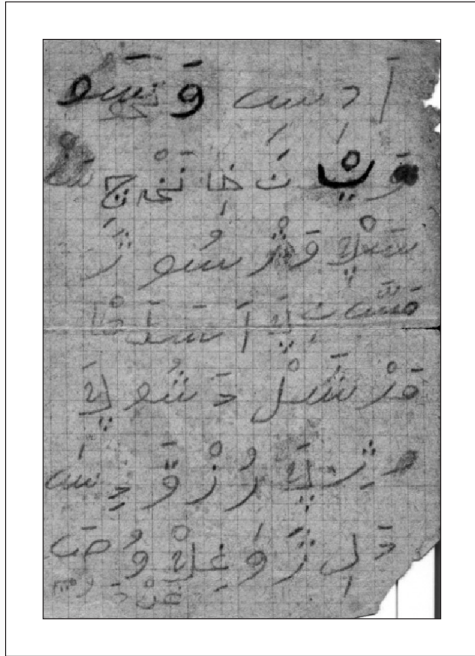


Fig. 5

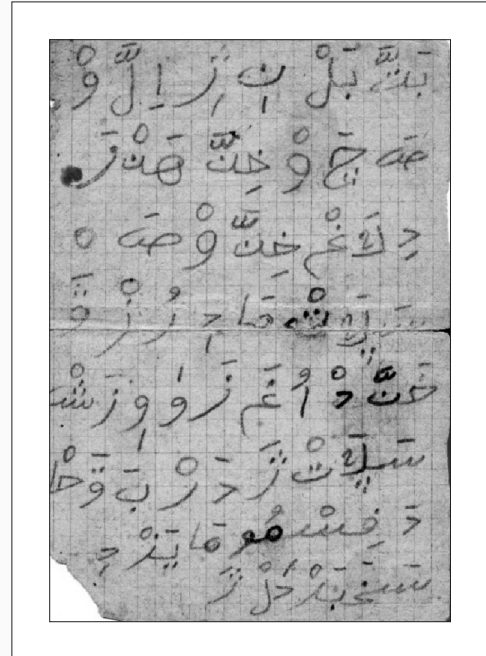


Fig. 6

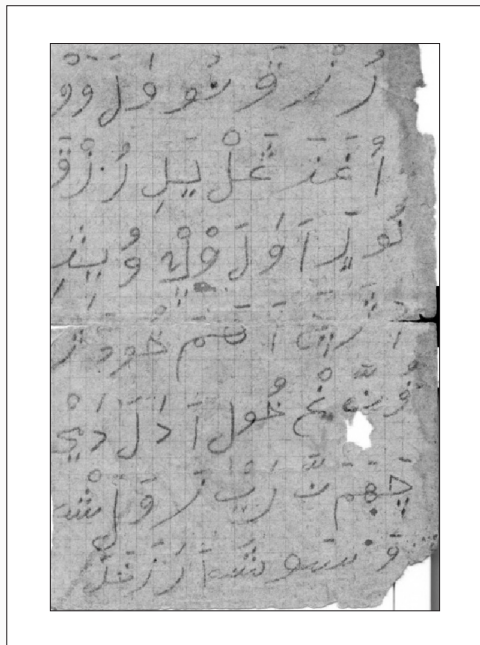


Fig. 7

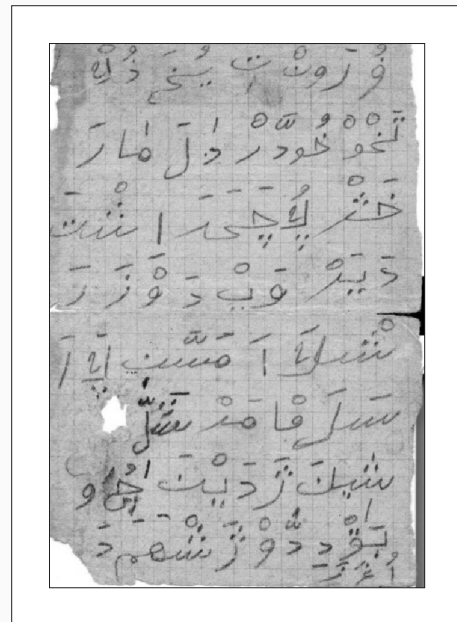


Fig. 8

Great Patriotic War. The author of this text has one of such letters, written in 1941 in Odessa by Ingush Iusup Ibragimovich Kodzoev (fig. 4). It is given below in Ingush and

English languages with transliteration into modern Ingush scrip, which was done by the nephew of the war veteran, a famous Ingush historian N. D. Kodzoev (figs. 5–8).

Text

1-ра оагIув

- (1) Одессе ва со,
- (2) вайнаъхеи нохчии
- (3) саг вац соца.
- (4) Массанега салам-
- (5) моаршал да шуга.
- (6) Вайцига рузкъа диса
- (7) дале цIаваоагIаргва со.

2-гIа оагIув

- (8) Бетта больнице иллав
- (9) со, чов хинна. ХIанз
- (10) дикагI хиннав со.
- (11) Сагот ма де. Рузкъа
- (12) хиннад укхаза ва везаш.
- (13) Сагот ца дар бакъахъа
- (14) да. Письмо ма язде,
- (15) са хабар далцца.

3-гIа оагIув

- (16) Рузкъано воалаваъв
- (17) укхаза. Кхел яле рузкъа-
- (18) но цIа а воалавергва, вуссе.
- (19) Дийцача а хIама хургдац.
- (20) ФуннагIа хуле а, Дала даъ-
- (21) ча хIаман раъза волаш
- (22) ва со. Шо а раъза хила.

4-гIа оагIув

- (23) Фронте юхадуг
- (24) тхо. Хургдар Далла маара
- (25) хац. Гучахъара иштта
- (26) да ер. Вай дезара-
- (27) рашка а массанега а
- (28) салам-моаршал ле.
- (29) Шийна ца дайначо
- (30) бакъдергдоацаш хIама да
- (31) укхаза.

Translation

1st page

- (1) I am in Odessa.
- (2) Neither a Nakh nor a Chechen
- (3) are beside me.
- (4) To all *salām-*
- (5) *moarshal* [3] I send.
- (6) If fate decrees so
- (7) I will come back home.

2nd page

- (8) For a month I was in hospital,
- (9) wounded. Now
- (10) I am feeling better.
- (11) Don't worry. Fate
- (12) decreed that I should find myself here.
- (13) It is better not to worry.
- (14) Write me no letters,
- (15) until you receive a message from me.

3rd page

- (16) By fate I was brought
- (17) here. Fate will also bring
- (18) me back home, if I am come out with my life.
- (19) We should not be talking about such matters.
- (20) Whatever happens, I am pleased
- (21) with the decree of Allāh.
- (22) And you will also be pleased.

4th page

- (23) We are being sent back
- (24) to the front. What will happen Allāh alone
- (25) knows. This is all I
- (26) know. To our relatives,
- (27) all of our acquaintances
- (28) send my *salām-moarshal*.
- (29) Who has not seen it,
- (30) will not be able to believe what is happening
- (31) here.

The Red Army private Iu. D. Kodzoev did not return from the Great Patriotic War.

Notes

1. Informants: Kodzoev Daud Gabisovich, born in 1925. Lives in the village of Kantyshevo, the Republic of Ingushetia; Dudarov Murat-Hajji Magometovich, born in 1926. Lives in the same village.

2. Informant: Dudarov Salman Sulievich, born in 1894; the same village.

3. Traditional Ingush Muslim greeting, consisting of Arabic word for “peace”: *salām*, and Ingush word for “peace”: *moarshal*.

4. N. D. Kodzoev, “Iusup Kodzoev — uchastnik oborony Odessy” (“Yusup Kodzoev — the Veteran of the Defense of Odessa”), *Uchēnye zapiski gimnazii № 1 g. Nazran' III* (Nazran, 2006), pp. 14–15.

Illustrations

- Fig. 1.** Umar-mol Ganiev-Archakov. Ingush scholar from the Galashki village. From the personal archives of the author.
- Fig. 2.** Young scholars, graduated from *hujra*. Left to right: Ismail Cechoyev, Husayn Chumakov-Yevloyev, Ahmad Ozdoyev. Photo from personal archive of the author.
- Fig. 3.** In the center sits Ishak-mol Chapanov, one of the most respected scholars and Naqshbandiyya *ustādh* of Ingushetia. He died in deportation and was buried in Kazakhstan, not far from Celinograd. From the personal archives of the author.
- Fig. 4.** Yusuf Ibrahimovich Kodzoev. 1939. From the personal archives of the author.
- Figs. 5—8.** The text of the letter.
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