

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	p	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	ك

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