

## SUMMARY

*The Qur'ān and its exegesis* by E. A. Rezvan is a textbook for the Qur'ānic studies component of the *Introduction to Islamic studies* lecture course created by a group of St. Petersburg scholars and published in the Russian Orientalists' professional journal *Narody Azii i Afriki* ("Peoples of Asia and Africa", 1989, N 3, p. 106—116; N 4, p. 107—116; N 5, p. 112—122). This is the first book in the series *Culture and Ideology of the Medieval Muslim Orient* founded and edited by E. A. Rezvan and sponsored by the Federal Program "Integration" intended as a collaborative environment for scholars in the Russian Academy of Sciences and universities.

The books in the series are united by a common methodological approach designed to facilitate students' introduction to the vocabulary and terminological apparatus of a group of very complicated texts created in Arabic and Persian between the 8th and 20th centuries. Tests of this proposed approach show that it is possible to start studying these texts at least a year and a half earlier than in the case of traditional teaching methods.

Each book includes a scholarly introduction, publication of a text in the original, and its parallel full or partial translation with detailed commentary. Most of the texts are illustrated with fragments from manuscript in order to introduce students to the manuscript tradition.

In the *Foreword*, the author elucidates the aims of the book. The main purpose of the book is to help a Russian-speaking audience to gain an impartial and concrete view of the Qur'ān and its exegesis as an important part of Islam, itself an elaborate and flexible ideological system.

The first four chapters contain basic information on the Muslim attitude toward the Revelation and its exegesis. For a concrete example, the translator provides a wide range of exegetic approaches and methods employed in the interpretation of *sūra* 98 by twelve Muslim exegetes of various theological and dogmatic affiliations who lived from the 8th century until recently and came from different parts of the Muslim world. The diversity of their understanding of the same Qur'ānic text reflects the variety of their aims, world outlooks and methods of interpretation, and in the final analysis, of ideological trends within what we call "classical Islam". Considering the exegetic texts in a historical perspective, we can evaluate the degree of continuity and novelty in the work of an exegete and observe the development of the Muslim exegetic tradition.

The book's intended audience is undergraduate students: Islamists, specialists in the humanities (students of religion, philosophers, historians, cultural studies, etc.), as well as all those interested in the history of Islam and its ideology.

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