

Oleg G. Bolshakov

MINIATURES OF THE ST. PETERSBURG
MANUSCRIPT OF THE
'MAQAMAT' OF

al-Hariri

INSTITUTE OF ORIENTAL MANUSCRIPTS, RUSSIAN ACADEMY OF SCIENCES

SPIRITUAL BOARD OF MUSLIMS OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

MOSCOW ISLAMIC INSTITUTE



On the 200th anniversary of the Asiatic Museum of the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts,
Russian Academy of Sciences

On the 200th anniversary of the birth of Shihabutdin Marjani

Oleg G. Bolshakov

**MINIATURES OF THE ST. PETERSBURG
MANUSCRIPT OF THE
'MAQAMAT' OF**

al-Hariri



St. Petersburg
2018

Published with permission of the Scientific Council of the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts,
Russian Academy of Sciences.

With the support of the Alisher Usmanov “Art, science and sport” charitable foundation.

Edited by Andrey O. Bolshakov

We express our deepest gratitude to the first deputy chairman of the Spiritual Board of Muslims of the Russian Federation and rector of the Moscow Islamic Institute, Damir Mukhetdinov, for his help and support in carrying out this project. Our thanks also go to all those specialists who took part in preparing this work ready for publication.

Bolshakov, Oleg Georgievich

Miniatures of the St. Petersburg Manuscript of the ‘Maqamat’ of al-Hariri. St. Petersburg:
‘Slavia’, 2018. 256 pp., 177 illustrations.

This unique medieval Arabic manuscript, which contains 96 miniatures, has often attracted the attention of researchers but has never before been subjected to such a thorough analysis. The author has investigated the features of the pictures and the composition of the miniatures, thereby disclosing yet another aspect of Arab artistic culture.

Edited by Olga Fedoseenko (‘Slavia’)

Designed by Tatiana Ivanova (‘Slavia’)

Translated from Russian into English by D. Rubin (“Medina’ publishing house Ltd.”)

Commissioning editor: Damir Mukhetdinov (“Medina’ publishing house Ltd.”)

Executive editor: Ildar Nurimanov (“Medina’ publishing house Ltd.”)

© Institute of Oriental Manuscripts, Russian Academy of Sciences, St. Petersburg, 2018

© Bolshakov O.G., 2018

© ‘Slavia’, St. Petersburg, 2018

ISBN 978-5-9501-0274-5

Contents

Introduction by Mufti sheikh Ravil Gaynutdin	6
Introduction by Irina Popova, Director of the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts of the Russian Academy of Sciences	7
Arab Painting and the St. Petersburg Manuscript of the 'Maqamat' of al-Hariri	9
The State of the Manuscript	19
Features of the Artistic Style	27
Miniatures and Commentaries	58



In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful!

It is with great joy that I introduce readers to the publication of the manuscript of the 'Maqamat' of the well-known Arab author Abu Muhammad al-Qasim ibn 'Ali al-Hariri al-Basri. Maqamat are one of the pearls of the medieval Arab literary heritage, and all the more precious as the published list is kept in Russia, in the collection of the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts of the Russian Academy of Sciences, which was acquired in the 19th century.

Maqamat are famous stories about meetings that take place during the hero's wanderings throughout the length and breadth of the Muslim East. This book was read by Muslims many centuries ago in their leisure time, in the same way that many of our contemporaries today watch films or read literary works to nourish their minds and satisfy their ethical urges. An important part of the manuscript consists of illustrations drawn by an unknown artist.

Thus, these simple witty stories reflect the daily life of Muslims under the Arab caliphate, and the numerous illustrations also allow the modern viewer to imagine the appearance of the inhabitants of the state founded by the descendants of the uncle of the Prophet (peace be upon him), Abbas ibn 'Abd al-Muttalib. We can visualize the environment in which their daily duties and tasks were conducted, and what their houses and public buildings looked like. Many details which escaped the author's attention were observed and recorded by the artist.

At first glance, the content of the Maqamat bears no direct relationship to the theme of Islam, other than their setting in the Arab caliphate, and their heroes, who by default are Muslim. The paradoxical and surprising deeds of the heroes and their departure from the commonly accepted logic or norms of behavior revives an ancient discussion about the form and content of their actions, the question of what sort of behavior is superior, and why they do not correspond to each other.

One of the offshoots of this discussion is the dispute over the permissibility of representing living beings. We often hear the assertion that in Muslim culture the depiction of living beings has never been permitted and has never existed. We can see that this and many other manuscripts reveal that such depictions did indeed exist even under the Islamic caliphate. How can we understand this in light of the well-known hadiths? The actions of the Prophet (peace be upon him) were not directed at all images as such, but principally against the worship of idols. By idols was meant images that were venerated as living, and to which people turned in prayer expecting an answer. In Islam, condemnation undoubtedly awaits the creators of such idols. With regard to other images the Prophet (peace be upon him) did not express himself so unambiguously. In any case, commentators on the hadiths who lived at different times had different opinions about whether the Prophet (peace be upon him) considered images of everyday objects to be permitted or undesirable. Scholarly study of the practice of Muslim art allows us to better understand the evolution of Muslim theological thought when trying to understand the main sources of religious knowledge.

Russia has amassed an enormous wealth of Islamic heirlooms that are preserved in its libraries and museums. In terms of the richness of these collections and the quantity of unique artefacts we do not lag behind either the East or the West. Isn't it astonishing that, by the will of Allah, it is in our country that the oldest illustrated collections of Maqamat have been preserved, in the northern capital of Russia, thousands of kilometers from their place of origin in medieval Mesopotamia? Our country also boasts other jewels of Muslim culture that possess worldwide significance. But, unfortunately, at present we are familiar only with a small fraction of the objects in these collections of ours. The reason for this is both the lack of funds to carry out research and publication, as well as the extremely low numbers of specialists who are capable of working in this area.

Every publication devoted to the art of Islam is an event and a victory on the path of enlightenment. A significant role in executing the present project was played by the financial support of the "Art, science and sport" charity. I would like to express my gratitude to the founder of this charity, Alisher Burhanovich Usmanov, and through him to all those who work at the organization.

On the 200th anniversary of the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts of the Russian Academy of Sciences, I would like to congratulate the Institute and all those who participated in the making of this book: I hope that this book will finally find a path to its readers, and that they will find it beautiful and interesting. I would like to express special gratitude to the author of this book, the famous Russian orientalist and Arabist, professor Oleg Georgievich Bolshakov for the immense work he carried out in bringing this book to publication. It is appropriate that the publication of this book has coincided with the 200th anniversary of the birth of the famous Muslim theologian, preacher and scholar, Shihabuddin Marjani; we timed the publication of this book to coincide with this event. I believe that this will be the first of many projects in which the Spiritual Board of Muslims of the Russian Federation collaborates with the academic institutes of the Russian Academy of Sciences. I am sure that Russian orientalism will evolve and in time disclose to people the full diversity of the heirlooms stored in our collections. To this end, we are applying all our efforts and prayers.

Mufti sheikh Ravil Gaynutdin,
Head of the Spiritual Board of Muslims of the Russian Federation,
Head of the Council of Muftis of Russia





The publication of the 'Maqamat' of Abu Muhammad al-Qasim ibn Ali al-Hariri al-Basri (1054–1122) is a great and long-awaited event for all connoisseurs and lovers of the Orient. This manuscript is one of the pearls in the collection of the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts of the Russian Academy of Sciences (IOM RAS), which was founded 200 years ago on the 23 (11) November, 1818, as the Asiatic Museum of the Russian Academy of Sciences, in order to collect and study the manuscript heritage of the Orient. Today the collection of the IOP RAS is one of the largest and most valuable in the world, consisting of more than 100, 000 storage units in 65 dead and living Oriental languages. In total, the Arabographic component of the IOM RAS consists of more than 10,000 manuscripts. The IOM RAS Arabic manuscript collection has long enjoyed widespread international renown, as it was the basis for Russian Arab studies and classical Islamic studies.

The St. Petersburg manuscript of the 'Maqamat' entered the Asiatic Museum as part of the collection of the French diplomat, Jean-Batiste Louis Jacques Rousseau (1780–1831), who was based in many different locations during his service in the Orient: he worked in Basra, Tehran, Aleppo, Baghdad, and Tripoli, and always successfully combined his diplomatic career with the study of the history and cultures of the countries where he was performing his professional duties. Rousseau's collection of nearly 500 manuscripts in Arabic, Persian and Ottoman Turkish was acquired by the Russian government in two installments - in 1819 and 1825 - and comprised the basis of the Muslim foundation of the AM - IOM RAS. Huge efforts to acquire this collection were made by the president of the St. Petersburg Imperial Academy of Sciences, count Sergei Semenovich Uvarov (1786–1855); it was he who negotiated with the French and attained funding from the Russian government.

These two purchases of Rousseau's manuscripts not only laid the ground for a long period of growth in the Asiatic Museum's manuscript collection, but immediately placed it in the ranks of the most important European repositories of Oriental manuscripts. Rousseau's collection was assembled by a sophisticated connoisseur of Oriental manuscripts in the most important scholarly centers of the Arab Orient and made the Asiatic Museum the owner of a number of invaluable Arabic and Persian literary heirlooms, some of which were unique. Due to the excellent range of rare manuscripts, the materials in Rousseau's collection were always the pride of the Asiatic Museum, and throughout the 19th and 20th centuries it constantly updated them with ever newer collections, including significant materials in the languages of the Near and Middle East. Work on Rousseau's collection immediately gave an impetus to the development of Arabic studies in St. Petersburg and Russia. A large part in this was played by the first director of the Asiatic Museum, Christian Danilovich Frähn (1782–1851).

The rare manuscript of the 'Maqamat' of al-Hariri al-Basri, the poetic tales concerning the peregrinations of a talented scoundrel with an ability to compose stories and verses, has often attracted the attention of researchers. Remarkable translations of works in the Maqama genre were published by A.A. Dolinina in the 1970s.

This manuscript has been prepared for publication by the prominent Arabist, Oleg Georgievich Bolshakov (born 1929), who is a specialist in the history of the Arab caliphate and the medieval city in the Middle East, and a laureate of the State Prize of the Russian Federation (2002). In 1954, Oleg G. Bolshakov defended his doctoral dissertation on "Glazed ceramics of Mawarannahr from the 8-12th centuries as a historical-cultural monument", in which he carried out a stylistic and chronological systematization of archaeological and epigraphic material which was also connected with the problem of the relationship between religion and visual culture. The question of the relationship between Islam and depictions of people and animals would later attract Oleg G. Bolshakov's sustained attention; in later works he would meticulously research the phenomenon of Arab Muslim painting, revealing its special relationship to Islam. In the 1960s, one of his teachers, Vladimir Ivanovich Belyaev, showed him a manuscript from the 12th century, C 23, which contained remarkable miniatures that reproduced quite precisely the earlier illustrations of an unknown talented artist that had formed the basis for all the illustrations of the 'Maqamat' of al-Hariri. Thus, the present publication is the result of more than 50 years work by Oleg G. Bolshakov on the 'Maqamat' manuscript from the IOM RAS. It presents important conclusions on the problem of the relationship between religion and art in the Muslim Orient.

The publication of this book is dedicated to two major anniversaries: the 200th anniversary of the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts of the Russian Academy of Sciences, and the 200th anniversary of the birth of the Muslim scholar, Shihabuddin Marjani.



Irina Fedorovna Popova,
Director of the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts of the RAS,
Doctor of Historical Sciences

وَفُصِيلَةُ الدِّينَارِ يَظْهَرُ سُرُّهَا مِنْ حِكْمَةِ لَا مِنْ مَلَا حَةِ نَقْشِهَا
 وَمِنْ الْغِيَاوَةِ أَنْ تُعْجَمَ جَاهِلًا لِصِقَالِ مَلْبَسِهِ وَرَوْنَقِ رَقِشِهِ
 أَوْ أَنْ تُهَيَّبَ مُهْتَدِيًا فِي نَفْسِهِ لِدُرُوسِ بَرْتِهِ وَرِثَةِ فَرَسِهِ
 وَلَكِنْ أَحْيَى طَمْرِنِ هَيْبِ لِقْضَاهِ وَمُنَوِّفِ الْبُرْدِيِّ عَيْبِ لَفْخِشِهِ
 وَإِذَا الْفَتَى لَمْ يَعْشُرْ عَارًا لَمْ تَكُنْ أَسْمَالُهُ الْأَسْرَاقِي عَمْرِي
 مَا أَنْ يَصْرُ الْعَضْبُ كُونَ قَرَابِهِ خَلْقًا وَلَا الْبَارِي حَقَارَةَ عُشِّهِ
 عَمْرِي أَنْ اسْتَوْقَفَ الْمَلَاخَ وَصَعِدَ مِنَ السَّفِينَةِ وَسَاحَ قَدِيمَ كَلِّ سَائِكَ عَلَى مَا فَرَطَ فِي ذَاتِ



ARAB PAINTING AND
THE ST. PETERSBURG MANUSCRIPT OF THE
'MAQAMAT' OF

al-Ḥariri

Medieval Arab painting is less known than its Iranian counterpart, and has always been relatively neglected by orientalists and art historians. This may be because it never achieved the same sophistication and elegance as the miniatures of the Herat school of the XVth century, and because it flourished for less time than the latter. Medieval Arab painting consists almost entirely of book miniatures, whose earliest specimens come from the last quarter of the XIIth century.

The actual term "Arab painting" is somewhat provisional, as with any explanation of a cultural phenomenon on the basis of national origin: in any literature or figurative art there are always a certain number of practitioners from different nationalities. One need only recall such undoubtedly Russian artists as Ivan Aivazovsky and Isaak Levitan. In the case of Arab painting, the situation is more complex, as only certain works are signed while others are anonymous. When considering the problem of defining the medieval painting of the East as being a part of Arab culture, Oleg Grabar also found no precise criterion for such a designation¹.

The only marker for defining this group of pictorial works, which might be called "Arab painting", is the language of the compositions being illustrated, which does not rule out the non-Arab or non-Muslim identities of the artists. One can call illustrations to Arabic-language compositions Arab without reservation, only if one contrasts them with Iranian painting.

¹ Grabar O. *What does 'Arab Painting' Mean? // Arab Painting: Text and Image in Illustrated Arabic Manuscripts.* Leiden; Boston, 2007. Pp. 17-22.

It would be more reliable to define them by territorial markers, as scholars do when they refer to them as “Baghdadi” or “Mesopotamian”; however, this excludes works produced in Syria, Egypt and other Arab countries. One might use the term “Near Eastern miniatures”, but this would include Christian art as well, which represents a different group of concepts and a different artistic tradition. In this case, though, for a number of reasons, it is important for us to understand the spirit, perceptions and tastes of precisely Muslim Arabs. Consequently, after these lengthy qualifications, we will nonetheless carry on using the term “Arab miniatures”.

It is almost impossible to date its emergence. The famous murals in Omayyad palaces of the first half of the VIIIth century in Syria and Jordan belong to the contemporary Byzantine and Mesopotomian schools and might be the distant forebears of Arab miniatures if their existence extended beyond the IXth century, which is the date of the surviving fragments of the murals in the caliphal palace in Samarra. We know of the existence of murals in the palaces of other Muslim rulers only through their mention in written sources. Nor do we know how painting on paper developed. The few ink sketches in various manuscripts are not enough to tell us the nature of Arab book illustrations in the IX-XI centuries. On purely speculative grounds, we can merely say that it must have emerged gradually from within the general array of artistic productions of Byzantine and Irano-Mesopotamian origin. I think that even if we had a significant number of records from the X-XI centuries, it would be impossible to identify Arab painting unambiguously. We are talking not of when Muslim artists first appeared, but of when and in what form a specific artistic school emerged which can be referred to as Arab Muslim. Its first feature would have to be the complete absence of any religious subject-matter, which is the main component of Christian art, as Islam condemns any worship of images.

Discussions as to how deeply Muslim fine art was influenced by this ban first arose at the beginning of the first third of the XIX century. It was started in 1869 by F. Pharaon, who proved that in Islam there is no absolute prohibition on depicting living beings, a point also made by A. Lavois and Y. Karabachek. All of them relied on the depiction of living beings mentioned in medieval written sources, but none of them mentioned the real illustrated manuscripts to be found in the collections of Paris, London, Oxford, Vienna and St. Petersburg. It would take European orientalists almost another half century before people shifted their attention to these easily accessible specimens of fine art.

The discovery in 1898 in Transjordan of the bath-house of Qusayr Amra with its extensive multi-themed interior mural decoration provided rich fodder for judgments on the problem of Muslim painting. It triggered several new investigations into the problem of the status of fine art in the Muslim world. It was E. Blochet in 1907 who first drew attention to Arab book miniatures².

Interestingly, right up until the First World War two groups of specialists, who might have done otherwise, ignored the study of Arab book miniatures, particularly the illustrations of the Maqamat: these were the specialists in Arabic, both philologists and historians, who studied Arabic manuscripts intensely and published texts based on them, and the Islam specialists, who discussed Islam’s relationship to fine art.

To date, Arabic manuscripts from the XII-XV centuries are well-known and have been studied to different degrees. Their content is varied: literary, botanical and pharmacological, medical, cosmographic, military and hippological. In most cases, except for illustrations in literary works, the drawings are more in the nature of explanations and figures, material high in cognitive value but without thematic content. Medieval Arab literature did not boast the great poetical works that existed in Iran and were enthusiastically illustrated by artists. In essence, there was only one work of literature, which was represented in thirteen illustrated manuscripts. These are the ‘Maqamat’ of Abu Muhammad al-Qasym ibn Ali al-Hariri.

Maqamat are a special genre of the picaresque short stories, whose main feature is not so much the adventures of the artful, smooth-tongued scoundrel as the refined style of presentation, which is a rhymed prose that uses rare words and verses that can be read from beginning to end as well as backwards from end to beginning. It is reading for an erudite elite which finds pleasure precisely in the style. Translations into other languages cannot capture this feature of the Maqamat. When rendered into Russian, Maqamat end up sounding like fairground folk poetry, whose style for us more closely resembles farce than high literature.

The term 'Maqamat' cannot be translated into European languages in any half-decent way. The Arabic verb 'qama' is highly polyvalent. The meaning (rather than the etymology) of the word in this context is best translated as "appearance", that is, the appearance of the same hero in different situations. Clearly, the idea of 'Maqamat' is best taken as designating a specific literary genre and should be left untranslated.

The genre appeared in the second half of the Xth century, emerging in the atmosphere of literary mejlises where poetic competitions were held between virtuoso impromptu performers. The first Maqamat cycle to come down to us was composed by al-Hamadani (969–1007), a Khorasan literary figure and an author with a refined poetic technique. The hero of his Maqamat, Abu al-Fath al-Iskandari, is a vagabond who earns a living with his witty impromptu verses and is not averse to a bit of dishonest trickery. The raconteur who gives us the narrative meets this character in different places and situations, which he then describes. For the readers of the Maqamat, it is not just the shenanigans of Abu al-Fath that are interesting but also the way they are presented in rhymed prose and with recourse to the poetic tricks for which the author himself was famous³.

The genre reached its perfection in the Maqamat cycle of Abu Muhammad al-Qasym ibn Ali al-Hariri al-Basri (1054–1122), who came from a wealthy family of silk traders and received an excellent literary and linguistic education. In pursuit of linguistic perfection he lived for some time among the Beduins, who were considered speakers of the purest Arabic, a fact that is reflected in the 'Maqamat'. At the beginning of the XIIth century, a certain noble, who was probably a vizier to one of the Abbasid caliphs, suggested that al-Hariri write a composition for him in the spirit of al-Hamadani. Al-Hariri started a competition with al-Hamadani, imitating him in all respects. The hero of his fifty Maqamat, a certain Abu Zayd al-Saruji, is also a talented rogue who astonishes his listeners with the elegance of his off-the-cuff poetic inventions and the eloquence of his sermons. In exactly the same way the story is recited in the name of a certain narrator called al-Harith ibn Hamam (the 'h' in this case is not same as in 'hamam', it is more like a German 'h' in 'haben') al-Basri. This was a literary duel on an equal footing where the winning element was poetic ingenuity. Al-Hariri was the victor in this encounter: his Maqamat were recognized by his peers and his successors to be the height of perfection, and a masterpiece which it was impossible to surpass.

'Maqamat' were written in rhymed prose with special verses inserted into the mouth of Abu Zayd; the latter formed the icing on the cake that delighted the sensibilities of educated people. He amazes his listeners with verses that start by heaping glory on some object, such as

² Blochet E. *Peintures des manuscrits arabes à types byzantins* // Revue Archéologique, t. 9, 4 ser. Paris, 1907. Pp. 193–223.

³ Translated into Russian: *Бади' аз-Заман ал-Хамадани. Макамы* // Перевод А.А. Долининой и З.М. Ауэзовой. Пред. и прим. А.А. Долининой. СПб., 1999. The retelling of the contents of the Maqamat in the description of the miniatures is based on this translation.

a gold coin; then in the very next poem, the same thing is excoriated; there are verses that can be read from start to finish and vice versa, or verses in which certain letters either have to be present or absent, and so on. All this is combined with the use of rare and unusual words which had even medieval Arabs running to the commentaries.

It is impossible to convey to the reader the full complexity of the language of the Maqamat. One can translate the whole text into rhyming prose and even write verses that can be read from start to finish and vice versa, but one cannot at the same time, as has already been said, convey the artistic impression which the Maqamat of al-Hariri made on their medieval Arab reader.

While paying great attention to the artistic aspect of his exposition, al-Hariri takes little account of the realities surrounding the development of his narrative. The area that Abu Zayd transverses and his meetings with al-Harith – from Tiflis to Sana, and from Samarkand to Maghrib (without precise location) – give us a picture of a territory which, in the imagination of a XIIth century person, would be accessible to any Muslim with free movement. On the other hand, we are not given any concrete markers that would identify the cities we encounter: they are simply arbitrary symbols to designate the place of action. Nor are there any signs that the territory was home to several conflicting states that were often at war with each other. The crusaders also receive no mention, even though their invasion of the Near East took place during the writing of al-Hariri's 'Maqamat'. But then again, al-Harith never meets up with Abu Zayd in a city that has been captured by the crusaders. The only chronological link can be found in Abu Zayd's words that he was compelled to flee his native Saruj after it had been seized by the Franks. The crusaders captured the city in 494 AH (1099/1100 AD) and meted out harsh treatment to the local population.

Al-Hariri's indifference to describing locations, and his minimal interest in the actual plot, is the best proof that what was most important for him were the flights of eloquence and poetical virtuosity placed in the mouth of Abu Zayd; this, too, rather than the story was what most aroused the admiration of his readers. Of course, this does not rule out the possibility of the added pleasure given by the illustrations, but they were merely an exquisite luxury. Maqamat are an eloquent testimony to the character of the literary tastes of the educated elite of medieval Arab society, where worship of the word prevails, and form is ranked higher than content. The same humanistic enjoyment of the word is characteristic of Iranian society as well, although in somewhat different forms.

Along with the tales of 'One Thousand and One Nights', the 'Maqamat' of al-Hariri attracted interest in Western Europe from early on. The first translations into European languages, despite the complex task of translation and the linguistic incompatibility, had already appeared by the beginning of the XIXth century. However, the first Russian translation only appeared in 1978. It contained 40 Maqamat, and the full translation of all 50 Maqamat came out in 1987.

The renewed interest in the medieval painting of Arab countries was accompanied by greater attention among researchers to the book miniature, and primarily to the illustrations of the al-Hariri's 'Maqamat' manuscript of the National library in Paris (arabe 5847), which was distinguished by the fact that all 99 of its miniatures were especially well-preserved, and could be dated exactly, as well as by the fact that the name of the illustrator was known: Yahya ibn Mahmud ibn Yahya al-Wasiti.

As mentioned, the first person to give a precise characterization of the features of these miniatures and their link with Byzantine art was E. Blochet in 1907. After E. Blochet's work came out, Eastern Art historians gradually acquired more and more materials to deepen their perspective on Arab painting. After some years, art historians turned their attention

to the St. Petersburg manuscript of al-Hariri's 'Maqamat', which had been acquired by the Asiatic Museum in 1824 as part of a large collection of Arab and Persian manuscripts from the French diplomat J. Rousseau (no. 92, now – C 23)⁴, who recognized its artistic value along with that of the miniatures of the manuscripts already possessed by the National library in Paris, which it closely resembled in style. In 1914, W. Schulz published several miniatures of the St. Petersburg manuscript⁵, and in 1915 E. Dietz⁶ published another miniature, noting the outstanding realism of the St. Petersburg and Paris miniatures of the al-Hariri's 'Maqamat' manuscripts.

In 1922 E. Kühnel reproduced photographs of another five miniatures from our manuscript kept in the State Museums of Berlin⁷. There was no analysis of the artistic techniques involved, and the reproduction was accompanied only by a summary of the contents of two of them (pp. 51, 52). It was B.P. Denike⁸ who gave the first serious analysis of the St. Petersburg manuscript miniatures in his overview of Muslim art, which came out at the same time as E. Kühnel's book. Unlike Kühnel, he was familiar with the actual manuscript and was able to judge the miniatures not from black-and-white photographs but to give a comprehensive account of their artistic worth. He agreed with Kühnel in seeing a link with Byzantine painting, but unlike him he also posited not just a possible Mesopotamian origin, but also a Syrian and even Egyptian provenance for the miniatures. He noted a stylistic similarity with the miniatures of the 1222 translation of Dioscorides's "Pharmacology", and suggested that the St. Petersburg manuscript was somewhat older and might date to the cusp of the XII-XIII centuries. The size of the book and technical limitations only allowed him to reproduce two miniatures (pp. 27 and 345 of the manuscript⁹ = nos. 8 and 95).

After publishing the miniatures from the manuscript of al-Hariri's 'Maqamat' in the Asiatic museum collection, B.P. Denike never again returned to this topic, devoting himself instead to the art of Central Asia. It was only 15 years later that the miniatures of this manuscript once again attracted interest. Unfortunately, A.Y. Borisov's article, which was written for an anthology devoted to the art and culture of the Shota Rustaveli era¹⁰ added nothing new to B.P. Denike's work. A cursory summary of the possible sources of the development of the Arab miniature was followed by a list of the subjects of the St. Petersburg (Leningrad) manuscript miniatures and their importance for imagining the everyday life of an Eastern city in the Rustaveli era. One can deduce from the text that the author believed that the manuscript dates

⁴ The manuscript was first categorized as no. 92; with the renumbering at the beginning of the 1930s it received the pressmark C 23 (O. Grabar read Latin "c" as the Russian letter "с" and transmitted the pressmark as S 23, cf. Grabar O. *The Illustrations of the Maqamat*. Chicago; London, 1984). For more detail on the acquisition of the collection, cf: Бертельс Д.Е. Из истории создания коллекции арабских рукописей ЛО ИВ АН СССР (по архивным документам) // Письменные памятники и проблемы истории культуры народов Востока. XV годичная научная сессия ЛО ИВ АН СССР. Ч. II. М., 1981. С. 116-122.

⁵ Schulz W. *Die persische-islamische Miniaturmalerei*. Leipzig, 1914.

⁶ Dietz E. *Die Kunst der islamische Völker*. Berlin, 1915.

⁷ Kühnel E. *Miniaturmalerei im Islamischen Orient*. Berlin, 1922 (2nd edition with small corrections and additions: Berlin, 1923), Taf. 7-11 (S. 135, 174, 349, 328 and 250 manuscripts = Nr. 45, 56, 97, 92, 75; here and below the numbers of the illustrations are cited according to this edition).

⁸ Денике Б.П. Искусство Востока. Очерк истории мусульманского искусства (с 11 фотографиями). Казань, 1923.

⁹ *Ibid.* С. 43-49, табл. I, III.

¹⁰ Борисов А.Я. Миниатюры «Книги Макам» ал-Харири // Памятники эпохи Руставели. Л., 1938. С. 171-178.

to the beginning of the XIIIth century along with a number of other illustrated manuscripts of the so-called Baghdad school of painting. In his account of the artistic aspect of the miniatures, A.Y. Borisov highlights the awkward execution of some of the miniatures and the somewhat faded palette of the artist. The article contains two reproductions, but no comparisons of the artistic style with other illustrated 'Maqamat' manuscripts. The article is somewhat eccentric when compared to Borisov's usual Semitics studies research. In any case he was not destined to continue with this subject as he died three and a half years after its publication.

The outbreak of war and the death of many Orientalists delayed any further research into our manuscript for a long time. In general, for many reasons the nineteen fifties and sixties were not an auspicious time for carrying out research into Arab medieval culture and miniatures in particular. The few lines on medieval Arab literature in the "General History of Art"¹¹ do not count. The next stage in the study of our miniatures is linked to the name of V.A. Krachkovskaya. It was probably due to her involvement that the IVth volume of the "Collected essays" of I.Y. Krachkovsky¹² was illustrated with six reproductions of miniatures from our manuscript. However, they were not accompanied by any commentary and had no direct link to the text of the book.

In 1959, the English Arabist D.S. Rice¹³ visited Leningrad and examined the manuscript C 23. He published an article in which he carried out an interesting comparison between depictions of a single theme in ten illustrated manuscripts of the 'Maqamat' of al-Hariri (the 11th Maqama - Abu Zayd's sermon in the graveyard in Saveh). He concluded that the Leningrad manuscript was the oldest of them, thus confirming B.P. Denike's belief in its early origins.

1962 saw the publication of two articles by V.A. Krachkovskaya analyzing the miniatures of the Leningrad manuscript¹⁴. One of them was devoted to a narrow topic: the Iranian origin of certain ornaments that are depicted in the miniatures (the choice of topic was to some extent determined by the nature of the publication where the article appeared, a commemorative anthology for B.N. Zakhoder). The other article was a more comprehensive account of the subjects, artistic techniques and color scheme of the miniatures, in which she made comparisons with actual objects depicted in the miniatures on the basis of archeological finds and artistic parallels. In particular, the article pointed out the greater primitiveness of the Paris manuscript miniatures (arabe 5847) and expressed agreement with D.S. Rice's conclusion that the Leningrad manuscript was the oldest illustrated manuscript of al-Hariri's 'Maqamat'¹⁵. The article contained reproductions of the miniature depicting the sermon in Saveh with the scene in the Beduin sheikh's arbitration court (p. 288, no. 86) and the scene in the bazaar (p. 91, no. 31). Unfortunately, for technical reasons no more miniatures could be reproduced. This article was an excellent first step towards a detailed study of our manuscript. But there was no chance to complete the work and publish it at that time. The 160-page typescript of V.A. Krachkovskaya's work was stored in the archives of the Leningrad Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies of the USSR Academy of Sciences (draw 67, storage unit 163); however, so far it has been impossible to locate it.

The first work to give an account for a broad readership of the artistic merits of the al-Hariri's 'Maqamat' Leningrad manuscript miniatures was R. Ettinghausen's magnum opus, "Arab painting"¹⁶. It was published in Geneva in 1962 and contained eighty one colored reproductions. In fact, only one of the six miniatures from our manuscript was being published for the first time; the others were more or less well-known (nos. 5, 63, 75, 79, 86). The difference lay in the incomparably superior quality of the color reproductions, which gave one the chance to judge the originals for the first time.

One of the topics first broached by V.A. Krachkovskaya was developed further on the basis of more evidence in the work of M.V. Gorelik. In 1972, this scholar published an article

on male clothing as depicted in Arab miniatures from the second half of the XIIth century to the first half of the XIIIth century. Unfortunately, although he established the presence of three local types of clothing and illustrated the article with 116 sketches, he did not indicate the exact sources from which he had made the sketches of specific models, and thus did not distinguish material taken from the C 23 manuscript. In his doctoral dissertation (as far as one can tell from the abstract) on the stylistic features of Arab miniatures, M.V. Gorelik gives a similarly general characterization of the three territorial groups (Northern and Southern Mesopotamia and Western Iran) without considering differences between manuscripts within a single region¹⁷.

It was only with the work of B.V. Weymarn in 1974 that an author gave a separate, detailed analysis of our manuscript and published three color miniatures for the first time (drawings 26, 27, 28; nos. 70, 26, 59). This was part of his long book on art in Arab countries and Iran¹⁸. Weymarn groups the manuscript with the works of the Baghdad school and dates it to between 1225 and 1235, locating it between manuscripts of the "Pharmacology" (1222) and the 'Maqamat' of al-Hariri in the Paris National library (arabe 5847), on the grounds of a great degree of similarity in artistic techniques and composition, especially the depiction of interiors. B.V. Weymarn mentions the inability to convey spacial depths, typical for miniatures of the time, but also points out the great liveliness and realism of the artist's human figures and the great talent for color displayed by the illustrator of our manuscript.

The first study after Krachkovskaya's article to investigate the C 23 manuscript was a dissertation by a doctoral student from Iraq Mahmud Ahmed Muhammed. The work was carried out at the Moscow Surikov Art Institute, and the defense took place at the Institute of Art Theory and History of the Academy of Arts of the USSR; the main theses are laid out

¹¹ Алпатов М.В. Всеобщая история искусств. Т. 1. М., 1948. С. 240.

¹² Академик Игнатий Юлианович Крачковский. Избранные сочинения. Т. IV. М.; Л., 1957. Рис. 3, 25, 26, 29 (цветная), 43, 45 (цветная) (№№ 38, 5, 62, 79, 60).

¹³ Rice D.S. *The Oldest Illustrated Arabic Manuscript*. – Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies. Vol. XXII, Pt. 2. London, 1959. Pp. 207–220. One can add to this the then unknown miniature in the Istanbul manuscript: Grabar O. *A Newly Discovered Manuscript of the Maqamaat of Hariri* // *Ars Orientalis*. Vol. 5. Ann Arbor, 1963. Fig. 4), which logically fits in after the Paris manuscript arabe 5847.

¹⁴ Крачковская В.А. Иранские заимствования в ленинградских миниатюрах «Макам» ал-Харири // Ближний и Средний Восток. Сборник статей. М., 1962. С. 63–67; Ее же. Миниатюры «Макам» ал-Харири рукописи С 23 Института народов Азии // Ученые записки ЛГУ, № 306. Серия востоковедческих наук № 16. Филология стран Востока. Л., 1962. С. 171–185.

¹⁵ Крачковская В.А. Миниатюры «Макам»... С. 181. In the essays on the history of the arts of the Arab countries (Веймарн В., Каптерева Т., Подольский А. Искусство арабских стран. Средневековый период. М., 1960) two miniatures were reproduced: drawing 23 (p. 250 of the manuscript, published by E. Kühnel) and drawing 27 (p. 205 of the manuscript, "The paupers' wedding feast"). In the text the characteristics of the artistic features of the miniatures in the Leningrad manuscript and other manuscripts of the Arab-Mesopotamian school are described very generally.

¹⁶ Ettinghausen R. *Arab Painting*. Geneva, 1962. In 1973 an Arabic translation was published in Baghdad with exact reproductions of the original illustrations and design. The English title is: *Arab Painting* by Richard Ettinghausen. Translated by Dr. Issa Salman and Saleem Taha Al-Tekriti. Baghdad, 1973.

¹⁷ Горелик М.В. Ближневосточная миниатюра XII–XIII вв. как этнографический источник (опыт изучения мужского костюма) // Советская этнография. 1972, № 2. С. 37–50; *Idem*. Месопотамские школы миниатюры 2-й половины XII – 1-й половины XIII в. Некоторые вопросы генезиса и развития стилей. Автореферат дисс... канд. искусствоведения. М., 1972.

¹⁸ Веймарн Б.В. Искусство арабских стран и Ирана в VII–XVII веках. М., 1974. С. 52.

quite succinctly in some detail in the abstract¹⁹. Mahmud Ahmed was familiar with the actual manuscript and was able to judge the miniatures not on the basis of separate samples but through accessing all 98 illustrations and comparing them with miniatures in manuscript arabe 5847. The author concluded that the latter was created later than ours and that its illustrator, al-Wasati, was influenced by an earlier version.

By comparing the content of the 'Maqamat' with the corresponding miniatures, Mahmud Ahmed noted the effort of the illustrator of C 23 manuscript to depict the events described in visual images. On the basis of this and several other details, he concluded that the artist was also the copyist of the text of this manuscript. Unfortunately, this serious (if not entirely original) work²⁰ was not published and had no influence on further research into the C 23 manuscript miniatures. In any case, after this dissertation not a single serious study on Arab miniatures appeared in Russia, even though studies on Iranian and Central Asian miniatures came out²¹.

Meanwhile, even though most research on 'Maqamat' illustrations outside the USSR was conducted on the basis of the Paris manuscript arabe 5847, there was also a constant demand for the miniatures of our manuscript, and the Leningrad Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies of the USSR Academy of Sciences often gave permission for the reproduction of several of them. Work on the preparation for full publication of the C 23 miniatures began only in the 1980s. O.G. Bolshakov wrote an artistic analysis of the miniatures and A.B. Khalidov described al-Hariri's 'Maqamat' as a literary work. The comparative analysis of the miniatures received an impetus from the publication in 1984 of O. Grabar's book, which summarized information on all the existing illustrated manuscripts of the Maqamat and contained an appendix with nine microfiche cards of the 733 miniatures²². This sumptuous publication gave readers the chance to compare our manuscript's miniatures with the whole corpus of known miniatures. In 1990 the work of O.G. Bolshakov and A.B. Khalidov was submitted to the publishers, but then the troubled 1990s began and the project was not completed.

In 1994–1995 an exhibition of the miniatures was organized by the St. Petersburg Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences (now the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts of the Russian Academy of Sciences) and the Art Restoration for Cultural Heritage foundation. It was exhibited in France (at Petit Palais, Paris, 14 October 1994 – 8 January 1995), Italy (at the villa Favorita, Lugano, 2 June – 12 August 1995) and the USA (in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 15 September – 10 December 1995)²³. There were sixteen miniatures in the exhibition, which were reproduced in all the catalogues under the single number 18 and a reference to the pages. S. Carboni wrote the article on the Arab part of the exhibition for the catalogues; there was a special division devoted to the place of the 'Maqamat' of al-Hariri in illuminated Arab manuscripts. In the English version of the catalogue, for example, this appears on pages 80–82²⁵.

In 1997 an article by O.G. Bolshakov appeared²⁶, which aimed not to publish hitherto unpublished miniatures from the C 23 manuscript but rather to propose a new approach to establishing the relative date of the miniatures' composition. The idea was to define its age not by reference to absolute time but as a stage in the "copying-chain" of the hypothetical pictorial original. Any illustrations, mostly in sketches, were included only as a means to demonstrate the deteriorating composition of the miniatures in other manuscripts compared to C 23.

Six colored reproductions of C 23 miniatures, which had till then either not been published or only presented in black-and-white format, appeared in 2002 in a catalogue from the Paris exhibition "Arab horses and riders"²⁷ (nos. 38, 55–58, 67); the scale was three fifths of the original. The illustrations were accompanied by a short description of the subject-matter.

Also in 2003 there finally appeared a full publication of the miniatures of the Paris manuscript arabe 5847, undertaken by O. Grabar²⁸. The question now arose with renewed urgency of publishing all the miniatures in keeping with the best modern technical standards. This was how the present publication came to be. As we have seen, our manuscript has been published in several versions but it is only now that the reader has the chance to examine the full range of its miniatures in color and in the same size as the originals.

¹⁹ Махмуд Ахмед Мухаммед. Миниатюра списка «Макамат» ал-Харири, хранящегося в Ленинградском отделении Института востоковедения АН СССР. Автореферат дисс... канд. искусствоведения. М., 1978.

²⁰ The only point which is impossible to accept is the attempt to show that these miniatures reflect the protest of the Arab population of Baghdad against the oppressive Seljuk conquerors. This idea might well have been encouraged by M.V. Alpatov, his supervisor, or by the general spirit of that time. The supervisor's contribution to this dissertation is undoubtedly very great.

²¹ Акимушкин О.Ф., Грек Т.В., Гюзальян Л.Т., Иванов А.А. Альбом индийской и персидской миниатюры и каллиграфии XVI–XVIII вв. М., 1962; Акимушкин О.Ф., Иванов А.А. Персидская миниатюра 14–17 вв. в ленинградских собраниях. М., 1968; Додхудоева Л.Н. Поэмы Низами в средневековой миниатюрной живописи. М., 1985.

²² Grabar O. *The Illustrations...*

²³ De Bagdad à Ispahan: manuscrits islamiques de la filiale de Saint-Petersbourg de l'Institut d'Études Orientales // Académie des Sciences de Russie. Lugano: Fondation ARCH, Paris-Musées. Electa, 1994; De Bagdad a Isfahan. Pittura e calligrafia islamica dall'Accademia Russa delle Scienze, San Pietroburgo // Accura di Jurij A. Petrosjan, Oleg F. Akimuškin, Anas B. Chalidov, Efim A. Rezvan con contributi di Marie Lukens Swietochowski e Stefano Carboni. Lugano, 1995; Pages of Perfection. Islamic Paintings and Calligraphy from the Russian Academy of Sciences, St. Petersburg, written by Yuri A. Petrosyan, Oleg F. Akimushkin, Anas B. Khalidov, Efim A. Rezvan with essays by Marie Lukens Swietochowski and Stefano Carboni. Milan, 1995; Von Bagdad bis Isfahan. Buchmalerei und Schriftkunst des vorderen Orients (8.-18.Jh.) aus dem Institut für Orientalistik, St. Petersburg // Herausgegeben von Juri A. Petrosjan, Oleg F. Akimuschkina, Anas B. Chalidow, Efim A. Rezvan und Essays von Stefano Carboni und Marie Lukens Swietochowski. Lugano: ARCH Foundation, 1995.

²⁴ P. 22 (sheet 12a), p. 31 (sheet 16b), p. 63 (sheet 32b), p. 72 (sheet 37a), p. 85 (sheet 43b), p. 105 (sheet 53b), p. 135 (sheet 68b), p. 174 (sheet 88a), p. 196 (sheet 99a), p. 201 (sheet 101b), p. 205 (sheet 103b), p. 231 (sheet 116b), p. 256 (sheet 128a), p. 260 (sheet 132a), p. 288 (sheet 145a), p. 328 (sheet 165a).

²⁵ Carboni S. *The Arabic Manuscripts* // Pages of Perfection... Pp. 77-91.

²⁶ Bolshakov O.G. *The Petersburg Manuscript of the Maqamat of al-Hariri and its Place in the History of the Arab Painting* // Manuscripta Orientalia. Vol. 4. Moscow, 1997. Pp. 59-66.

²⁷ Chevaux et cavaliers arabes dans les arts d'Orient et Occident. Exposition présentée à l'Institut du monde arabe. Paris du 26 novembre 2002 au 30 mars 2003. Paris, 2002. Pp. 219-221.

²⁸ Maqamat Al-Hariri. *Illustrated Arabic Manuscript from the 13th Century* // Intr. by Oleg Grabar. Vol. 1-2. London, 2003.

Oleg G. Bolshakov

**MINIATURES OF THE ST. PETERSBURG
MANUSCRIPT OF THE
'MAQAMAT' OF**

al-Hariri

Print run: 1 000

'Slavia', 191186 St. Petersburg, Millionnaya Street 25, of. 58

"Medina' publishing house Ltd.", 109382 Moscow, Kirova proezd 12

Printed by 'NP-Print', St. Petersburg, Chkalovsky Prospect 15