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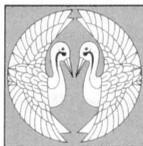
Front cover:

“The Holy Family with Attendants”, *Muraqqa’* (E 14) in the collection of the St. Petersburg Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies, Lucknow school, mid-18th century, fragment of folio 91 a, 10.0×13.3 cm. Watercolour, gouache.

Back cover:

“The Madonna Praying before the Crucifix” (top left), “The Madonna of St. Luke” (top right) and “Ibrāhīm ibn Adham and Angels” (bottom), *Muraqqa’* (E 14) in the collection of the St. Petersburg Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies, attributed to Manohar Dās, Mughāl school, ca. 1590—1595, folio 53 a. Sizes: 6.0×7.2 cm, 2.8×5.8 cm, 14.8×19.5 cm. Watercolour, ink and gold on paper.

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EDITORIAL BOARD

Dear readers,

Scholars in the area of Oriental studies understand, perhaps better than others, that all calendars are rather arbitrary. Our work brings us into contact with texts that belong to the most varied cultures, dated in the most varied fashions. We constantly convert dates from one system of chronology to another ... We are well familiar with the arbitrariness of the dates chosen by humankind as starting points to order events of the greatest historical and cultural importance. This in no way reduces the significance of these events in human history, or the role of the calendar as a vital instrument that allows human civilization to link its past and present.

One of the world's great civilizations — Christian civilization — is entering its third millennium. The millennial nature of events in our time has led many to reflect on the past and make projections about the future. Despite the diversity of their forecasts, futurologists stand united on one point: the "clock of civilization" is ticking faster, and future decades will usher in vast changes for all humankind and each one of us. These radical changes may cause growing contradictions and lead to conflict. One hopes that the lessons of history — the lessons of the not too much merciful 20th century — will not go unheeded and that the message of peace, justice, and love contained in all the great religions of the world will be heard in all hearts.

*The beginning of the third millennium marks a convergence of three holidays — Christmas according to the Gregorian calendar, which brings the Christian fast to an end, the Muslim holiday of 'īd al-fīṭr, which closes the fast month of Ramaḍān, and Jewish Hanukah. The editorial board of the journal **Manuscripta Orientalia** sends greetings to all its readers, who today live in more than thirty countries, and wishes them peace, inner peace, peace in their families, and peace in the common abode inhabited by the people of our Earth. May the lovely Persian miniatures on the cover of our journal, which bring together the spiritual legacies of the Abrahamic religions that stem from a common spiritual legacy, remind us all of the arbitrariness of difference and the indubitable unity of all shared values. We wish you a happy new year, new century, new millennium.*

E. Rezvan, Editor-in-Chief