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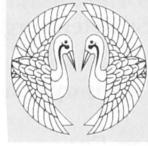
Front cover:

“Kakubha Rāginī”, watercolour, gouache, gold and ink on paper. Deccan, second half of the 18th century.
Album (*Muraqqa'*) X 3 in the Fabergé collection at the St. Petersburg Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies,
fol. 20b, 7.6 × 11.5 cm.

Back cover:

- Plate 1.** “Gujarī Rāginī”, watercolour, gouache, gold and ink on paper. Deccan, second half of the 18th century. Same
Album, fol. 21a, 6.5 × 11.5 cm.
- Plate 2.** “Gūnkālī (Gūnkāri) Rāginī”, watercolour, gouache, gold and ink on paper. Mughāl, second half of the 16th
century. Same Album, fol. 24b, 11.5 × 12 cm.
- Plate 3.** “Kakubha Rāginī or Sorath Rāginī”, watercolour, gouache and gold on paper. Deccan, second half of the
18th century. Same Album, fol. 26b, 10.0 × 19.0 cm.
- Plate 4.** “Rāginī” (unidentified), watercolour, gouache and gold on paper. Deccan, second half of the 18th century.
Same Album, fol. 27a, 11.5 × 17.0 cm.

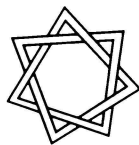
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EDITORIAL BOARD

Dear readers,

In the current issue of *Manuscripta Orientalia* we begin the publication of materials presented at two important international conferences.

The first, "Preservation of Dunhuang and Central Asian Collections. Third International Conference" was held in Berlin, (13—16 May, 1998) (see: <http://idp.bl.uk/>). The organizers invited colleagues from German scholarly centers, from Paris, Copenhagen, St. Petersburg, London, Kyoto, Ürümqi and Peking, as well as from Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. The papers presented were extremely important, and I am confident that topics such as recent advances in ¹⁴C dating techniques will be of interest to most of our readers.

The second conference, "Oriental books and manuscripts collections and new information technologies. MELCOM XXIII", was organized by the European Association of Middle East Librarians (see: www.uni-bamberg.de/unibib/melcom/home.html) and held in St. Petersburg, May 28—30, 2001 (for details, please, visit: <http://orient.thesa.ru/congress/>).

Colleagues from Russia, USA, France, Germany, Italy, Belgium, UK, Sharjah, Iran, Israel, Holland, Uzbekistan, Lebanon and Egypt took part in it. The 24 papers presented in St. Petersburg covered the following topics: automation for Middle-Eastern collections; Internet resources for Middle Eastern librarianship; Oriental manuscripts and new information technologies, manuscript studies; rare material collections; acquisition policies and co-ordination between libraries.

In introducing the above-mentioned publications, I would like to stress that the studies they contain represent the latest developments in international manuscript studies. These studies also reflect the general level, tendencies and perspectives which will determine the future development of research connected on the conservation and preservation of Oriental manuscripts and rare materials, acquisition policies of the world's leading libraries and research centres, the influence of the new information technologies and current approaches to automation on Oriental collections. The present issue of *Manuscripta Orientalia* starts publishing the papers delivered at the conferences; these are contributions by Catherina Koch (Germany), Elisabeth Zack (Holland — Egypt), Hala Kaileh (Palestine — France), and O. F. Akimushkin (Russia).

I would like to stress that these new publications do not represent a move away from our traditional policy of presenting to the world Orientalist community new research by Russian scholars. We will also continue publishing the article series that has brought our journal so many new readers.

Efim A. Rezvan
Editor-in-Chief