
EDITOR'S NOTE

Dear readers,

our journal has taken the first steps on the road of carrying out the programme which was declared by the editors in the first issue of 1995, by no means an easy task, as you may guess. You are in your own right to make assessments of what has been a success or not, but what you can notice for certain is that the journal's principal subject of scholarly investigations has been strictly kept throughout the first issues.

You can also notice that most of the first articles of the journal were written by scholars working at the St. Petersburg Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies. This was no deliberate preference of ours, but the inevitable result of an initial stage of the process of making the journal which has been basically projected and created by the St. Petersburg specialists in Oriental studies. We are now hoping that our appeal to Orientalists from abroad to contribute to the *Manuscripta Orientalia* which, from the very beginning, was expected to be an international issue, will be heard by them. The St. Petersburg scholars would be glad to see these contributions on the pages of the quarterly.

Estimating the first publication actions in 1995, however modest it could seem at first sight, we can point out with satisfaction that a number of scholars from Japan, Germany, the USA, Czechia, and Norway have already contributed to the *Manuscripta Orientalia*, delivering their articles and information of much interest.

To those who lack the first issue of the quarterly where the editorial programme has been published, we would like to present it once more, revealing the principal scholarly aims of the journal. The emphasis will be laid on the articles dedicated to Oriental manuscripts, be they Arabic, Persian, and Hebrew, or Japanese, Indian, Chinese, etc. Studies on Oriental textology, palaeography, codicology, as well as on philosophy, history, and culture will be published here, provided that these studies are based upon some Oriental manuscript or a group of manuscripts from the collections all over the world.

It should be mentioned that the *Manuscripta Orientalia* is also a journal dealing with Orientalistics heritage. The studies on Oriental manuscripts, which were not published for some reason in the past, could be published here. We intend also to reproduce in English, the language of the quarterly, the most important works on manuscripts previously published in Russian or in other languages if necessary. It is hardly necessary to say that all those who deal with the problems of conservation and restoration of Ori-

ental manuscripts, the priceless literary heritage of the Oriental peoples, are welcome to contribute to the journal as well. When it concerns the safety and the future destiny of this heritage, the editors regard it as one of their most important tasks to provide a necessary information on their keeping and restoration.

One more important point must be mentioned when speaking about the general programme of the journal. The rapid progress of the new information technologies and their introduction into all spheres of modern life and scholarship is, naturally, influencing the development of Orientalistics. Being applied to the study of Oriental manuscripts, they open new perspectives in this traditional branch of scholarship. A special section of our journal is dedicated to the new information technologies in their connection with manuscripts research.

It is also important to note that every issue of the journal is expected to include a publication concerning some manuscript of special artistic or scientific value belonging to the collection of the St. Petersburg Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies or to some other collection, with a number of its pages or miniatures reproduced in colour.

We have already had, and are still continuing, to receive the first appraisals of our work through 1995. They seem to be quite encouraging. In any event our colleagues from abroad appear to support the idea of publishing such a kind of quarterly and its scholarly programme. Highly appreciating this support, which is in effect important for us, the editors are glad to inform you, our readers, that a new section — "Cultural Traditions of the Orient as Reflected in Its Written Monuments" — is being introduced in the journal starting from the first issue of 1996. Information which concerns the most interesting or possibly less known literary monuments of the Orient will be published, including that on family life and its traditions, everyday life foundations and specific features of Oriental habitations, as well as on military organisation, various kinds of weapons, warriors' equipment, etc.

Another point of the journal editors' programme deserves special attention — a project of producing CD-ROM issues, which we are planning to carry out as the journal's supplement, starting from 1996. The CD-ROM issues are expected to contain a facsimile either of the whole texts or excerpts from various texts (in accordance with the topic chosen) of the manuscripts, dedicated to history, literature, religion, and philosophy, from the collection of the St. Pe-