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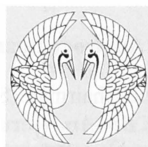
### Front cover:

Embroidery design of a dragon. The Qing imperial credentials of the Emperor Xuantong to the Russian Tsar Nicolas II, accordion binding cover. The collection of the St. Petersburg Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies, 34,5×22,0 cm.

### Back cover:

Embroidery design on a *tao*. Same credentials, 34,5×22,0 cm.

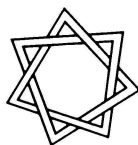
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# **Manuscripta Orientalia**

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## **EDITORIAL BOARD**

*Dear readers,*

*Our journal is entering the ninth year of its existence. Thanks to your interest and support, it has become in that time a truly independent scholarly publication, read in at least 50 countries the world over, if the mail our editors receive is any indication. The journal has become a forum for the discussion both of the basic scholarly tasks and difficulties of the moment that confront scholars and specialists in the main centres for the preservation and study of the East's cultural treasures. Over the past nine years, we have gladly made the pages of the journal available for the publication of conference proceedings in our field. This issue, for example, begins familiarizing readers with the proceedings of a Round Table that took place at the 24th Paris congress of Melcom International (The European Association of Middle East Librarians).*

*When we came up with the idea for an "international journal", we conceived it primarily as an opportunity to tell our non-Russian-speaking colleagues about the scholarly activities of St. Petersburg's scholars of the East, as well as the riches of our manuscript and museum collections. But we soon established strong ties with scholarly centres in Moscow, Tashkent, Makhachkala, and other cities of the former USSR. The scholars and caretakers of museum and library collections from many countries became frequent contributors. Our cooperation with St. Petersburg's institutes, libraries, and museums has grown more and more multifaceted.*

*We are proud to present to readers a memorable issue of our journal. Its title page displays an official announcement that the journal is now published in conjunction with the State Hermitage and Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography, St. Petersburg's famed Kunstkamera. The very building that has housed the Kunstkamera since the early 18th century has become a symbol of St. Petersburg's Academy of Sciences.*

*St. Petersburg's Kunstkamera was founded in 1714 by a decree from Peter the Great. Its purpose was to collect and study rarities of nature and human creation. At present, the collection of the Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography holds more than one million exhibits that reflect the diverse cultures of the Old and New Worlds. The State Hermitage, one of the world's great museums, has gathered over more than two and a half centuries a vast collection that today includes some three million works of art and treasures of world culture. A significant part of these marvellous collections is linked to the cultures of Eastern peoples.*

*The journal's editors are confident that these new ties will soon allow us to introduce to readers the fascinating work our colleagues are now carrying out in the collections of these outstanding museums. We will continue to publish articles by scholars from Moscow and Central Asia, the Near and Far East, Europe and America. It is our conviction that this will make our journal even more engaging and necessary.*

**Efim A. Rezan**  
*Editor-in-Chief*