E. A. Rezvan

ORIENTAL MANUSCRIPTS OF KARL FABERGÉ. II: *RĀGAMĀLĀ* MINIATURES OF THE ALBUM (*MURAQQA'*) (PART TWO)

The most important jewelers of the nineteenth century — Lui Cartier, Henri Vever and Karl Fabergé — all had collections of Eastern manuscripts and miniatures that inspired them to create the marvels of their art that today adorn the world's great museums and private collections. These outstanding artists and jewelers most likely did not fully understand the ancient traditions that inspired the examples of Eastern miniature and calligraphy in their collections. But it was undoubtedly the profundity and power of this tradition that contained the bewitching energy that springs to life anew in their marvelous works. Today we continue the study and publication of *rāgamālā* genre miniatures from the album (*muraqqa'*) of Karl Fabergé that we began in the preceding issue [1].

Albums of the type under discussion here represent a specific genre that contains the most varied materials. The researcher who studies them must be prepared for unexpected discoveries. In the course of writing this article, for example, reasons emerged to "shift" the dating of the earliest materials some 300 years, from the sixteenth to the thirteenth century. In the view of the Album's compilers, one of the calligraphy examples it contains (*qiṭ'a*) is an autograph by the outstanding Iraqi calligrapher Yāqūt al-Musta'ṣimī (1221—1298). This can only be confirmed or refuted by a comparative analysis of several samples created by the *qalam* of one of the greatest Muslim calligraphers.

In the preceding article we discussed in detail three folios from the Album that contain miniatures that stem from the *rāgamālā* tradition. We continue this description below [2].

1. *Kakubha Rāginī* (7.6 × 11.5 cm) (see front cover of the present issue).

This miniature (fol. 20b) depicts a lone young woman in a plush red dress who stands beneath a tree surrounded by three peacocks. The background consists of bright-yellow hills with a sprinkling of green treetops and yellow-white buildings (one notes a minaret and fragments of a mausoleum or palace complex) and a dark-red sky. The anxious mood evoked by the colours is underscored by the silhouettes of low-flying birds. The margins display a dark-blue background with large flowers in delicate gold. According to Mark Zebrovski, "after 1750 the bold eroticism of such paintings as *Kakubha Rāginī* changes. Figures become delicately sinuous; a taste for lighter, more thinly applied colour replaces the dark palette" [3]. The seductive female figure in our miniature confirms this observation, but the palette remains mostly dark. Deccan, second half of the 18th century [4].

The miniature rests in a complex yellow-green border adorned in gold (outer dimensions: 15.5 × 20.4 cm). The middle, and widest, part of the border contains an inscription the meaning of which is unclear at present. It apparently provides descriptions of several "genealogies" (ال) of people, for example: "eaters" (خوردن), "warriors" (سپاهی), "eunuchs (or merchants)" (خواجه), "muezzins" (موذن).

The *qiṭ'a* is written in *nasta'līq* on a yellow background, and the groups of words are separated by areas of gold and coloured pigment decorated with a floral motif. The technique was called *tarsī' wa taḥrīr* in Persia and *abrī* in Ottoman Turkey.

The *rāginī* usually plays on the *rudra vīṇā*, an ancient instrument used in Indian classical music. The instrument is depicted in temple art of the sixth century A.D. There are also references to a bottle-gourd *vīṇā* in texts dated as far back as 500 B.C. This instrument has dominated Indian music for nearly 2000 years [5].

The reverse of the folio (*fig. 1*) contains a calligraphy sample (*qiṭ'a*): five diagonal lines in large-scale *nasta'līq* written into a central rectangle (7.3 × 14.5 cm) in a complex border (outer dimensions: 17.8 × 26.0 cm). The central part of the latter also contains a Persian text in even larger *nasta'līq*. The groups of words, as on the reverse, are enclosed in a thin black line (*tarsī' wa taḥrīr*). The gold background bears a gold ornament of small blue, red and pink flowers identical to that on the reverse side. The margins display a yellow background with large flowers in delicate gold.

The Persian text in the central cartouche contains relatively standard moral-ethical maxims:

هو الرحیم
ای گشته بدولت وسعادت فروز
باید که دهی سیم بسایل هر روز
گر مرد کریم است زخاکش برگیر
ور مرد لئیم است دهانش بردوز

© E. A. Rezvan, 2001

Электронная библиотека Музея антропологии и этнографии им. Петра Великого (Кунсткамера) РАН
http://www.kunstkamera.ru/lib/rubrikator/08/08_02/978-5-88431-180-0/
© МАЭ РАН

"O, Merciful one!
O, you who has been blessed with luck and success!
You must give silver to the indigent each day.
If a man is generous, raise him from ashes,
If a man is greedy, sew up his mouth!"

The Persian-Arabic text written around the perimeter is of a religious nature and presents four high-placed representatives of the Shi'ite spiritual hierarchy: the Prophet Muḥammad, the "Rightly-guided caliph" 'Alī, and the grandsons of the Prophet, Ḥasan and Ḥusayn, who died tragic deaths:

ناد علیا مظهر العجایب
حسن وحسین صاحبزاده اند
تجده عونالك فی النوایب
نبي [و] ولی هردو صاحب اند

"The prayer of 'Alī is the bringing of miracles.
Ḥasan and Ḥusayn are the grandson of the ruler
And aid you against the vicissitudes of fate
The Prophet [and] saint (i.e. Muḥammad and 'Alī — *E. R.*) are both lords."

2. *Gujarī Rāginī* (6.5 × 11.5 cm) (see *Plate 1*).

The miniature (fol. 21a) depicts a lone young woman in a plush red dress. The woman stands on a rocky island in the middle of a river. In each hand she holds garlands of white flowers with red spots. To her right is a thick, brown tree trunk with a branch in blossom hanging above the woman. A symbolically depicted pink rocky shore becomes a cliff adorned at the top with a mosque framed with green cupolas. A yellow valley extends to the horizon. At the top we find a strip of blue sky with grouped clouds. Small white birds dot the air and water. The grey-blue water of the river is enlivened by bright-red fish. The margins present a green background with large flowers in delicate gold. Deccan, second half of the 18th century. This and the preceding miniature were undoubtedly authored by the same artist, as is indicated by numerous compositional and depictive elements (for example, the telling depicting of the minaret tops) [6].

The miniature is located in a complex yellow-green border adorned in gold (outer dimensions: 15.5 × 20.4 cm). The middle, and widest, part of the border contains an inscription that is surely linked with the preceding inscription; it is just as difficult to read.

The *qiṭ'a* is written in *nasta'līq* on a yellow background, and the groups of words are separated by areas of gold pigment (*tarsī' wa taḥrīr*).

The reverse of the folio (*fig. 2*) contains a calligraphy sample (*qiṭ'a*): eight lines in large *nasta'līq* written into a central rectangle (16.5×25.0 cm) in a complex border adorned in gold. Seven of the eight lines are written on a yellow margin and separated by gold strips in *ta'shīr* style. The lower line is separated from the others by a strip identical to the outer border and written on a white background. The margins present a green background with drop-shaped leaves in delicate gold.

The text in the border is a calligraphic exercise (مشقه) by Sayyid 'Alī Bukhārī (the name breaks off where the edge was trimmed, see line 7); it contains wise sayings in Persian, and partially in Arabic (8 lines). The last line is separated from the others by a border:

ترتیب مال از بهر آسایش عمر است نه عمر از بهر گرد کردن مال است
عاقلی راپرسیدند که نیکبخت کیست و بدبخت چیست
گفت بدبخت آن که مرد و هشت و نیکبخت انکه خورد و گشت
مکن نماز بران کس که هیچ نکرد که عمر در سر تحصیل مال کرد و نخورد
مهتر موسی علیه السلام هارون را نصیحت کرد که احسن کما احسن الله إلیك نشنیده عاقبت شنیدی که چه دید
انکس که بدینار ودرم خیر نیندوخت سر عاقبت اندر سر دینار ودرم کرد
ولا تمنن لأن الفایده إلیك عایده
مشقه سید علی بخاري (روشز؟)
الهی ازهمه نیك آید ازجعفر بد الهی گفتی کریم امید بران است

"The acquisition of property is for the sake of peace in life, and not life for the sake of acquiring wealth.

They asked a wise man, who is lucky and who is unfortunate.

He answered: "Unfortunate is he who has died and is abandoned; lucky is he who eats and walks.

Do not perform the *namāz* over one who has done nothing, living only to acquire wealth, without eating through anything.

Lord Mūsā, may peace be upon him, counselled Hārūn: 'Be a patron to all, just as

Allah is a patron to you. It is better that you not hear that which you have heard about the end [of time], than that you see it.

He who has not acquired goods with the *dīnār* and the *dirham* will in the end receive his share only as a *dīnār* and a *dirham* ' [7].

Do not render favours hoping to profit for yourself".

Calligraphic exercise by Sayyid 'Alī Bukhārī [...]

O, Lord! Good comes from all places, and from Ja'far, evil!

O, Lord! You said: 'I am merciful'. Only in this lies hope".

3. Gunkāli (Gunkāri) Rāginī (11.5 × 12 cm) (see Plate 2).

This small miniature (fol. 24b) presents a young woman adjusting garlands hung on decorative boughs in two large gilded vases. The scene takes place in a courtyard surrounded by a high red-brown wall behind which one sees the crowns of green trees. To the left is the corner of a house and part of a door. A tall, bright-green plate with fruits stands at the woman's feet. The margins present a dark-blue background with small, bright yellow-red flowers. A number of features indicate that this miniature is 150—200 years older than the other miniatures in this series. Mughāl, second half of the 16th century (?).

The miniature is located in a complex yellow-gold border adorned in gold (outer dimensions: 14.5 × 27.0 cm). Above and below are rectangular cartouches (4.3 × 12.7 cm; 3.53 × 11.5 cm), with two calligraphic samples (*qiṭ'a*) on a bright-green background with gold spots:

Электронная библиотека Музея антропологии и этнографии им. Петра Великого (Кунсткамера) РАН
http://www.kunstkamera.ru/lib/rubrikator/08/08_02/978-5-88431-180-0/
© МАЭ РАН

Persian text at the top:

معجز قلمی که دستگیر قلم است

"The marvel of the *qalam* is in that which aids the *qalam* (i.e. the hand — *E. R.*)".

Persian text at the bottom:

اگر تن برور است اندر فراخی

"If a man tends to his health, he will live in abundance".

The reverse side of the folio (*fig. 3*) contains calligraphic samples (*qiṭ'a*) in medium and large *nasta'līq* written into six cartouches in a common green border adorned in gold (14.0 × 26.0 cm). The background of the central cartouche is bright-green; that of the two vertical outer and upper cartouches, bright-red; of the two small upper cartouches in a blue border, yellow. The inscriptions are in gold, with gold spots scattered over the background. The margins present a yellow background with the small buds of white flowers painted in delicate red.

Persian texts (from top to bottom and left to right):

الهی جعفر را بنا هي دو جهان بده
یا سبحان یا سلطان
الهی من ضعیف وعاجز دردمندم
الهی بحرمت علئ مرتضئ ولي دو جهان به بخش
الهی من بنده عاصي وضعیفم

"O Most Gloroius! O Master!
O Lord! Grant Ja'far [8] refuge in the two worlds [9].
O Lord! I am a nullity, infirm and long-suffering!
O Lord! Revere 'Alī, the chosen one, master of two worlds.
O Lord! I am a disobedient and weak servant".

4. *Kakubha Rāginī* or *Soraṭh Rāginī* [10] (10.0 × 19.0 cm) (see *Plate 3*).

The miniature is located in a complex yellow-gold border adorned in gold. The margins form an even dirty-gold background.

A young woman (fol. 26b) dressed in a transparent tunic and pink jodhpurs strolls through a garden with a girl who holds a red *ṭanbūr* and *sāz* and feeds two peacocks. To the right of the girl are seven nearly square flowerbeds with rows of motley flowers. To the right is a salad-green meadow, the dominant colour in the miniature. At the top are gathering clouds of a violet colour. Somewhat lower we find a clarifying inscription: سازبك. We were unable to find a direct parallel for our miniature. Elements of its iconography can be found in other miniatures from the *rāgamālā* tradition: a woman feeding two peacocks (*Madhumādhavi Rāginī* or *Dipsadika Rāginī*); a woman strolling in a garden (*Gauri or Gauḍi Rāginī*) [11]. Deccan, second half of the 18th century.

The reverse of the folio (*fig. 4*) contains a calligraphy sample (*qiṭ'a*) in a yellow-gold border with gold (10.0 × 19.0 cm). It contains a two-line text (lovely calligraphic *naskh* on a brown background). The text lines are separated by a gold line and enclosed in a thin black line (*tarsī' wa taḥrīr*). An intermediary line in smaller *naskh* is written on the gold background. The Album's compilers felt that this particular fragment was an autograph by the famed Iraqi calligrapher Yāqūt al-Musta'ṣimī; the inscription in the upper part of the border — خط یاقوت [12] — indicates this. The cartouche is surrounded by yellow margins adorned with small gold flowers and laves. They are smaller than the folio's vertical dimensions and are enclosed in a thin gold border. 27 virtually illegible lines in Devanāgarī (in mirror image) are visible through the yellow paper in the upper part of the folio.

The Arabic text is a fragment of a religious nature:

فاسئل ألهك وبالأنابة مخلصا دار الخلود
وتنال روح مسا كن لا تخرب وقال

"Ask paradise of your God sincerely, with repentance,
He grants peace of abodes, does not destroy, and He said" [13].

On the left side there is a note in a much smaller hand between the lines:

سؤال من يتقرب

"The question is, who is approaching... (?)".

Unfortunately, I lack at present the experience and comparative material to identify a number of miniatures in the Album. For this reason, I do not rule out the possibility that there are other *rāgamālā* miniatures. One of them may be a curious miniature on fol. 27a (see *Plate 4*). The signature reads as جو کی اسادری [وری]; it has not yet been deciphered. Another issue of *Manuscripta Orientalia* may yet feature an article on materials from this truly unique "late medieval oriental multi-media" tradition; in my view, it has been underestimated and is little known to the broader public.

I have now finished a book on Qur'ānic manuscript E 20 from our collection [14]. It is entitled "The Qur'ān of 'Uthmān (Katta Langar, St. Petersburg, Bukhara, Tashkent)" (St. Petersburg, Paris, 2001—2002, Russian-English and French editions) and will contain a research section, black and white facsimile publication, CD-ROM with the publication of the text in colour and a video CD with film "Searching for the Qur'ān of 'Uthmān", which I am preparing to shoot in Uzbekistan. The film will allow everybody interested in Islamic culture to visit Katta Langar, a place where life has changed little since the sixteenth century (people living close to the place continue to speak Arabic as their native language and assert that their distant ancestors were resettled here from Syria by order of Tīmūr).

I call this "three-dimensional publishing" (the printed text — 1st dimension (it could be stored on a floppy because of the comparatively small amount of information), 2nd is the CD-ROM, with many colour illustrations, maps, Internet links, etc, 3rd is the video CD, supplying the "reader" with another level of information. Moreover, the third level will provide a link between pure scholarship and material for general reader as well as for educational purposes. In our case, the story of the Muslim scripture based on unique manuscript and field materials could be very important for mutual understanding and inter-confessional dialogue both in Russia and Europe.

Электронная библиотека Музея антропологии и этнографии им. Петра Великого (Кунсткамера) РАН
http://www.kunstkamera.ru/lib/rubrikator/08/08_02/978-5-88431-180-0/
© МАЭ РАН

Fig. 1

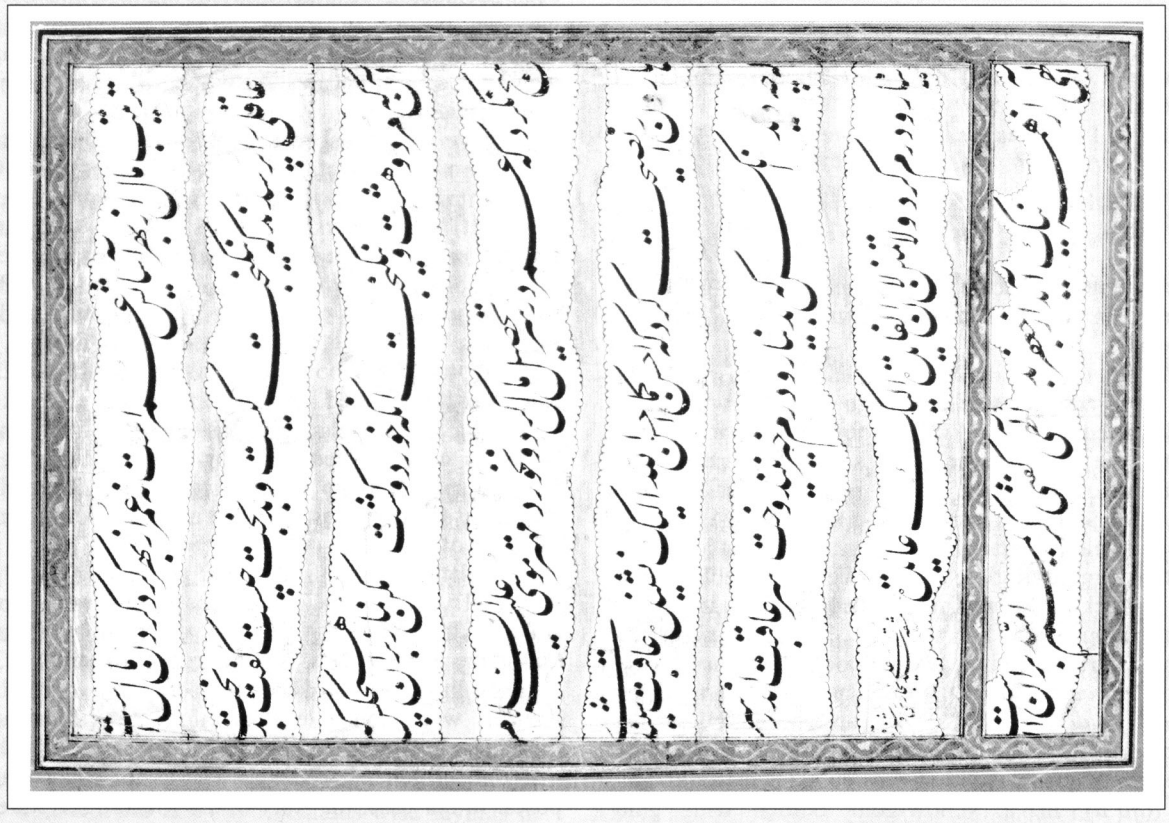

Fig. 2

Электронная библиотека Музея антропологии и этнографии им. Петра Великого (Кунсткамера) РАН
http://www.kunstkamera.ru/lib/rubrikator/08/08_02/978-5-88431-180-0/
© МАЭ РАН

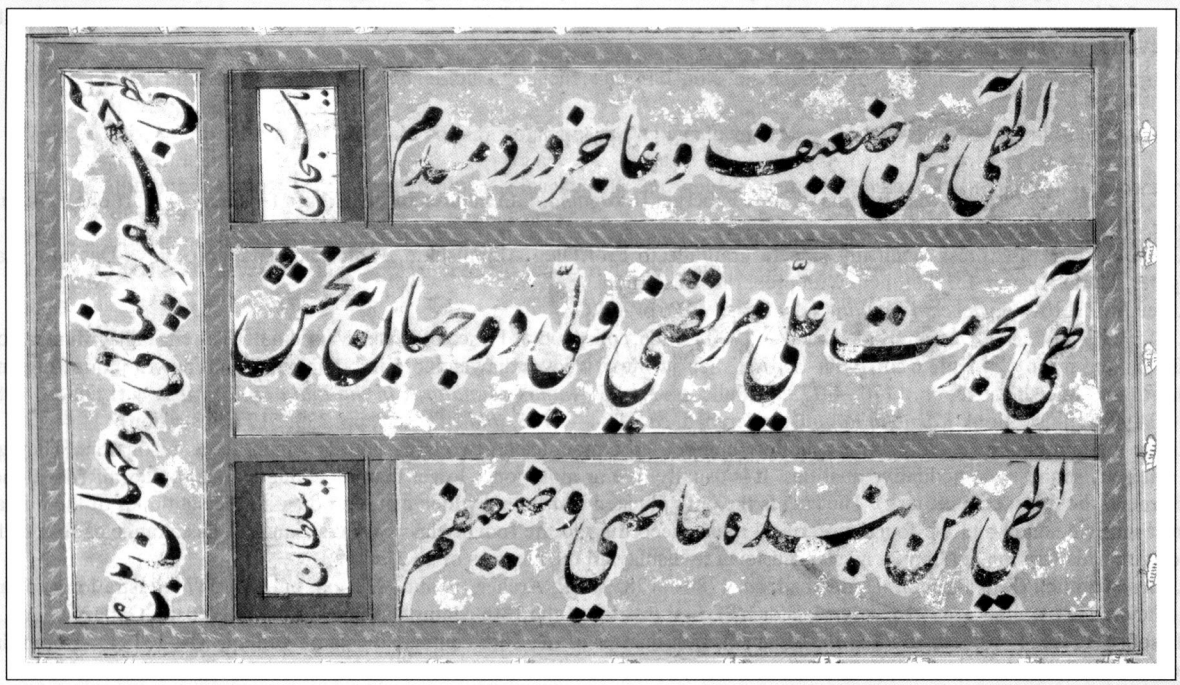

Fig. 3

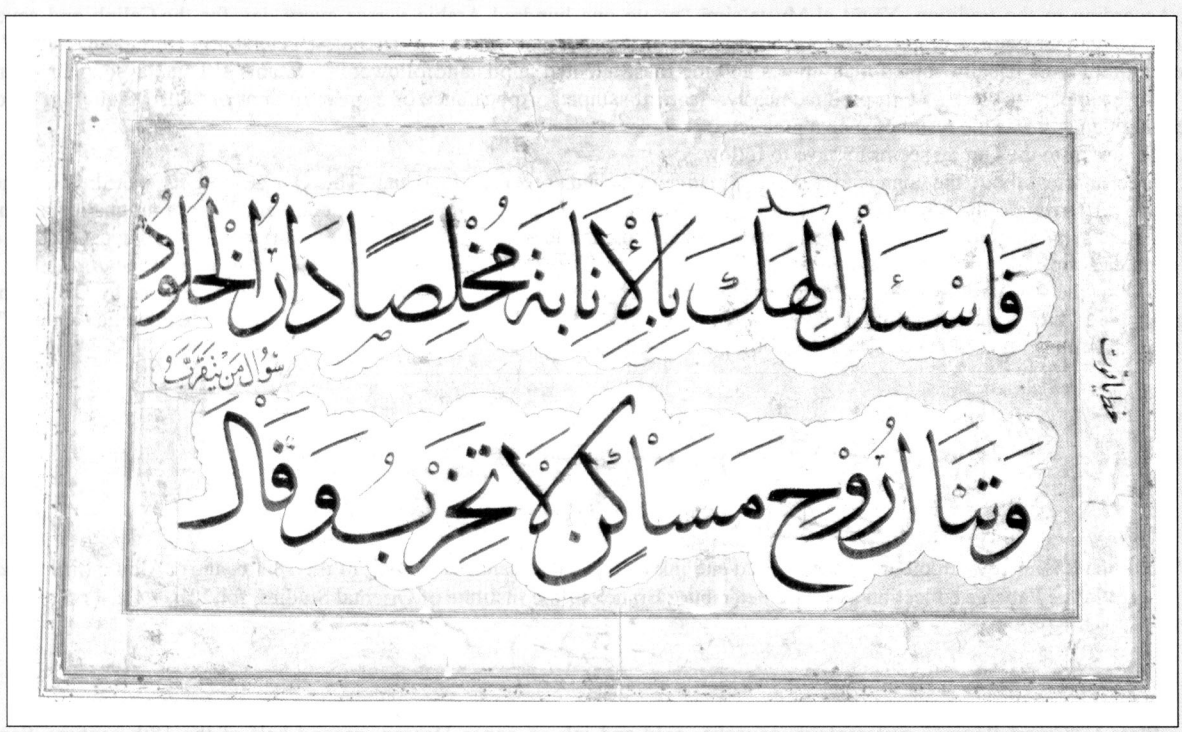

Fig. 4

Электронная библиотека Музея антропологии и этнографии им. Петра Великого (Кунсткамера) РАН
http://www.kunstkamera.ru/lib/rubrikator/08/08_02/978-5-88431-180-0/
© МАЭ РАН

God willing, I pan to prepare a similar edition of Fabergé's collection. I firmly believe that the publication of miniatures from this *rāgamālā* series with sound (and, if possible, video) supplements will allow us to gain a different view of this material, about which much has been written, and even more remains to be learned.

In any case, I am grateful that fate brought me into contact with this striking cultural phenomenon. Writing the articles on miniatures in the cycle, I found myself growing younger, regaining a student's sense of wonder at the world's inexhaustible beauty and its power to enchant us.

Notes

1. E. A. Rezvan, "Oriental manuscripts of Karl Fabergé. II: *rāgamālā* miniatures of the Album (*muraqqa'*) (part one)", *Manuscripta Orientalia*, VII/2 (2001), pp. 36—45.

2. I would like to express again my sincere gratitude to Prof. Oleg Akimushkin, Prof. Margarita Vorobyova-Desyatovskaya, and my daughter, Maria Rezvan, for their help with preparing this article.

3. See M. Zebrovski, *Deccani Painting* (London, 1983), p. 254.

4. Cf. *Kakubha Rāginī*, Deccan, Hyderabad, *ca.* 1700—1725, collection of Prince of Wales Museum of Western India, Mumbai, call number 22.3316, dimensions 24.1×43.6 cm (with border). See at http://www.indiawatch.org.in/bombaymuseum/powm/jubilee/ragamala.htm; *Kakubha Rāginī*, Murshidabad, *ca.* 1770—1775, T. Falk, M. Archer, *Indian Miniatures in the India Office Library* (London, 1981), 383 xvi, pp. 204, 490 (illustration); *Kakubha Rāginī*, Hyderabad, *ca.* 1784—1785, *ibid.*, 431 xxi, pp. 233, 517 (illustration).

5. The modern *vīṇā* or *been* features a hollow bamboo tube mounted on two large gourds which act as resonators. They generate a deep, sonorous sound with meditative qualities. It is usually five or more tones lower than its younger cousin, the *sitār* (developed from the *vīṇā* around the fourteenth century). The *vīṇā* is the only plucked instrument which can reproduce all the subtleties of the human voice (the purest musical sound and the foundation of all music according to the Indian classical musicians). It has a range of four to four and a half octaves. This vast range allows a master musician to display all the nuances of a *rāga*.

6. Close parallel: *Gujarī Rāginī*, Hyderabad, *ca.* 1784—1785, Falk, Archer, *op. cit.*, 431 xxi, pp. 233, 517 (illustration); for architectural and landscape parallels see *Paraj Rāginī*, Bidar (?), first quarter of the 18th century, William Rockhill Nelson Gallery of Art, Kanzas City, Missouri, 31—131/10; *Asavari Rāginī*, Bihar (?), first quarter of the 18th century, the same gallery, 31—131/11. Both miniatures could be found at Zebrovski, *op. cit.*, pp. 226—7.

7. Cf. Luke, 16:9: "I tell you, use worldly wealth to gain friends for yourselves, so that when it is gone, you will be welcomed into eternal dwellings".

8. Ja'far al-Ṣādiq, sixth Shi'a *imām* (d. 148/765).

9. *Id est* in the earth-bound and upper worlds.

10. Cf. *Soraṭh Rāginī*, Hyderabad, *ca.* 1760, Falk, Archer, *op. cit.*, 426 xxiv, pp. 230 and 511 (illustration).

11. K. Ebeling, *Ragamala Painting* (Bâle, 1973), p. 60.

12. According to the tradition, Yāqūt al-Musta'ṣimī "wrote one hundred Arabic verses every day for the Caliph and seventy for the viziers" (Būdāq Qazwīnī, *Jawāhir al-akhbār*, manuscript of the National Library of Russia, St. Petersburg, Dorn, 288, fol. 107v). The *qiṭ'as* left by him were usually copied many times and the most talented pupils and followers — Shams al-Dīn Baysonghūrī (early 15th century), for example, — were able to produce nearly identical samples. Appearance of a great amount of "false Yāqūt" *qiṭ'as* of comparatively high quality was the result of such a practice.

13. The text from the Qur'ān seems to have to follow.

14. Three articles about the manuscript were already published, see E. A. Rezvan, "The Qur'ān and its world: VI. Emergence of the canon: the struggle for uniformity", *Manuscripta Orientalia*, IV/2 (1998), pp. 13-54. You can find a continuation of the study as well as several photographs at http://orient.thesa.ru/supplement/mo_issues/v6n1.htm ("Yet another "'Uthmānic Qur'ān" (on the history of manuscript E 20 from the St. Petersburg Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies", *Manuscripta Orientalia*, VI/1 (2000), pp. 49—68). For the third article including radio-carbon dating of the manuscript using AMS technology (conducted by Dr. J. van Plicht, Groningen), see http://orient/thesa.ru/supplement/mo_issues/v6n3.htm ("On the dating of the "'Uthmanic Qur'ān" from St. Petersburg", *Manuscripta Orientalia*, VI/2 (2000), pp. 19—22).

Illustrations

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. "Gunkāli (Gunkāri) 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 Soraṭh Rāginī", watercolour, gouache and gold on paper. Deccan, second half of the 18th century. Same Album, fol. 26b, 10.0 × 19.0 cm.

Электронная библиотека Музея антропологии и этнографии им. Петра Великого (Кунсткамера) РАН
http://www.kunstkamera.ru/lib/rubrikator/08/08_02/978-5-88431-180-0/
© МАЭ РАН

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.

Inside the text:

Fig. 1. Calligraphic sample (*qiṭ'a*), watercolour, gouache, ink and gold on paper. Mounted in India, mid-18th century. Same Album, fol. 20a.

Fig. 2. Calligraphic sample (*qiṭ'a*), watercolour, gouache, ink and gold on paper. Mounted in India, mid-18th century. Same Album, fol. 21b.

Fig. 3. Calligraphic sample (*qiṭ'a*), watercolour, gouache, ink and gold on paper. Mounted in India, mid-18th century. Same Album, fol. 24a.

Fig. 4. Calligraphic sample (*qiṭ'a*). Probably, calligraphic exercise by Yāqūt al-Musta'ṣimī (1221—1298). Watercolour, gouache, ink and gold on paper. Mounted in India, mid-18th century. Same Album, fol. 26a.

Электронная библиотека Музея антропологии и этнографии им. Петра Великого (Кунсткамера) РАН
http://www.kunstkamera.ru/lib/rubrikator/08/08_02/978-5-88431-180-0/
© МАЭ РАН

библиотека Музея антропологии и этнографии им. Петра Великого (Кунст
http://www.kunstkamera.ru/lib/rubrikator/08/08_02/978-5-88431-180-0/
© МАЭ РАН

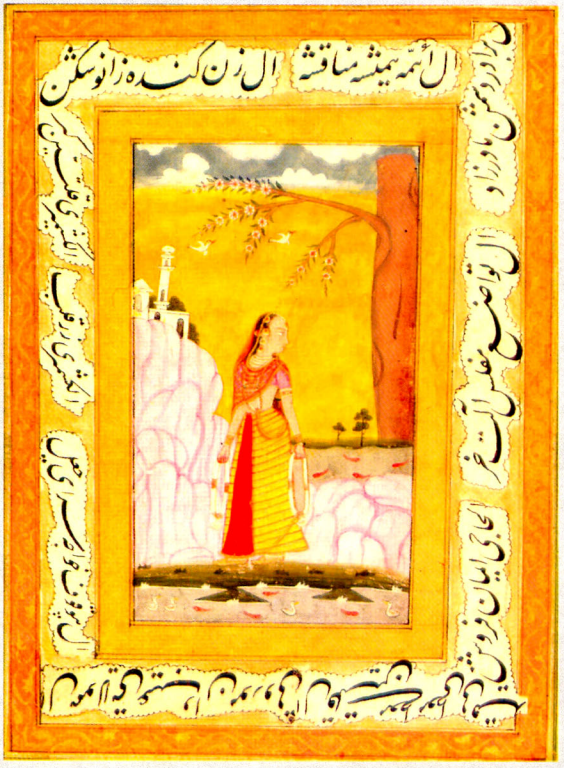

Plate 1

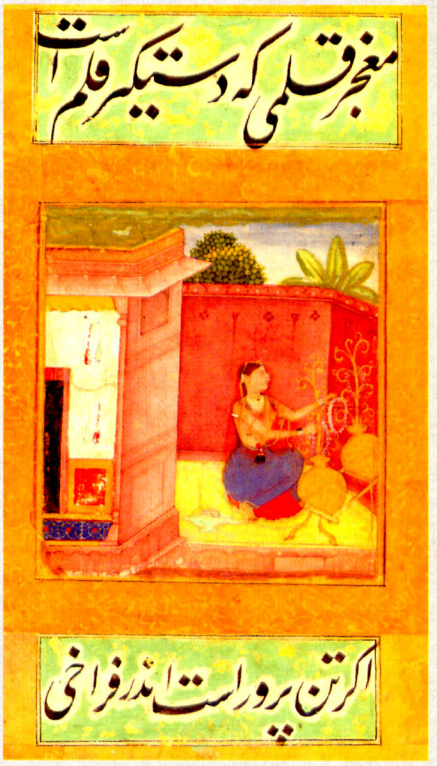

Plate 2

Plate 3

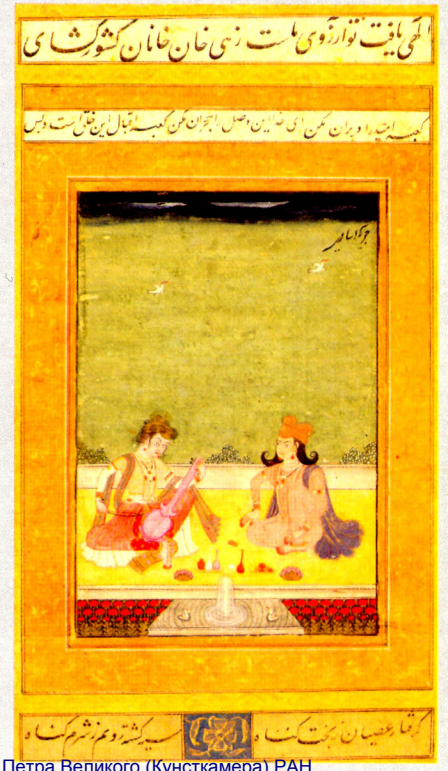

Plate 4

Электронная библиотека Музея антропологии и этнографии им. Петра Великого (Кунсткамера) РАН
http://www.kunstkamera.ru/lib/rubrikator/08/08_02/978-5-88431-180-0/
© МАЭ РАН