

## Editorial Note

Gunilla Gren-Eklund, Lars Johanson, Bo Utas

The first issue of the journal *Orientalia Suecana* appeared after a period of preparation and fund-raising in 1952. Its founder was Erik Gren (1904–1959), Reader in Classical History and Archaeology at Uppsala University as well as librarian at the University Library. The journal came to be a successor to the journal *Le Monde Oriental*, published by scholars in Oriental Studies at Uppsala 1906–1946.<sup>1</sup>

From the very beginning the acting editor had at his disposal an editorial board consisting of about ten well-established Swedish oriental scholars who acted as reviewers of incoming contributions in their respective fields of research.

The purpose of OS was described as follows in the introduction to its first issue:

During recent years Oriental studies in Sweden have grown so much in intensity and scope that the need for a special periodical covering certain branches of these studies has become more and more urgent. This is so in the investigation of the ancient culture of the Near East, which has largely attracted increasing attention, and hardly less so in the case of certain aspects of Islamic studies, Iranology, Egyptology and African ethnology.

The present journal is in the first place intended to satisfy this need, but the possibility of later extending the programme will be kept in view.

This outline for the journal has been followed ever since. The fields covered were soon extended beyond those mentioned. Indology was included as early as vol. 2, Turkology from vol. 3, and articles on Byzantine studies were subsequently also published. The need for the journal expressed at the start has certainly been confirmed by its unfailing survival during half a century.

The editor of the journal, Erik Gren, had just finished vol. 8 when he suddenly passed away in 1959. The task of editing was taken over by the Byzantinist Gustav Karlsson and the Indologist Nils Simonsson who designed vol. 9 (1960) as a memorial volume for the founder of the journal, including an obituary. The same two scholars, with the support of the original editorial board, edited the journal up to vol. 13 (1964) when Frithiof Rundgren took over as sole editor. He stayed on as the editor for 25 years, doing most of the editorial work himself, with the help of the printing house Almqvist & Wiksell. During his period as editor there was a certain interruption when vols. 33–35 (1984–1986) were combined into a Festschrift for Frithiof Rundgren, edited by Tryggve Kronholm and Eva Riad (in collaboration with Lennart Carlsson, Stig Eliasson, and Lennart Grönberg). Frithiof Rundgren retired from his chair in Semitic languages in 1987 and handed over the editorial work to his successor, Tryggve Kronholm, with the double issue 38–39 (1989–1990, a congratula-

<sup>1</sup> A special article about *Le Monde Oriental* has been published by Sigrid Kahle in *Orientalia Suecana* 51–52 (2002–2003), pp. 275–295.

tory volume for Gösta Vitestam, professor of Semitic Languages at the University of Lund 1968–1987). Frithiof Rundgren lived until 2006; his obituary was printed in vol. 55 (2006).

Tryggve Kronholm was the sole editor of vols. 39–42. At the prospect of editing vol. 43 (1994) he summoned support from his colleagues at the then Department of Asian and African Languages: Gunilla Gren-Eklund, Indology; and Bo Utas, Iranian studies. For Turkic studies Lars Johanson, also originally from Uppsala, joined the editorial committee. Tryggve Kronholm passed away suddenly in 1999; his obituary can be found in vol. 49 (2000). His successor, professor Bo Isaksson, took over Kronholm's responsibilities on the acting editorial committee from vol. 53 (2004) as a representative of Semitic Languages. For vols. 54–57 there was a slight change in the editorial committee when Gunilla Gren-Eklund was appointed as the main editor, with Bo Isaksson, Lars Johanson, and Bo Utas acting as collaborating members.

The editorial committee as constituted until now has thus been responsible for the journal for sixteen years. During this period, vols. 51–52 (2002–2003) were edited as a combined volume by Éva Á. Csató, Carina Jahani, Anju Saxena, and Christiane Schaefer, intended as a congratulatory volume on the occasion of the retirement of the two editors Gunilla Gren-Eklund and Bo Utas from their respective professorships at Uppsala University: Indology, especially Sanskrit; and Iranistics.

With the present volume the editorial quadriga has handed over the responsibility for the journal to a new committee which has the intention – in clear accordance with the vision of the founder – to broaden the journal's content anew by including more fields of Oriental Studies.

Such is the story of the editorial work behind *Orientalia Suecana*. The technical aspects of the editing were originally handled by Almqvist & Wiksell, the printing house traditionally engaged by the University of Uppsala. After a restructuring of the printing house and its distribution department, the collaboration was ended, and from the double vol. 43–44 (1994–1995) the working committee took over more of the technical duties: both the financial accounts and the entire distribution process. Since that time the typesetting has been competently performed by Textgruppen AB, Uppsala, and its resourceful director John Wilkinson.

In spite of varying conditions the journal has remained financially stable. For at least three decades the editing has been supported by grants of greater or lesser amounts from the Swedish Research Council, thus securing both funding and quality.

It is not, however, only the demands of the Research Council that have made the editors aware of the necessity to ensure high quality in the contributions. Since the journal is, in fact, multidisciplinary, expert knowledge, internal and external, has always been called upon, and many experts have, without personal compensation, been of great help in passing judgement on the incoming contributions.

A closer look at the contents of the journal during its long history reveals certain changes in the scholarly world of Oriental Studies during the last decades.

First, the number of contributions from abroad is greater today than in the time before the 1990s, which might also be an indicator that the journal has obtained wider acceptance among the international scholarly society.

Second, it is also evident that most of the early contributions could be classified as primarily philological, with a wider view towards historical, and especially religious-historical issues. The articles dealing with antiquity are now joined by more studies of present-day topics and phenomena. At the same time, contributions addressing philological and linguistic problems are more clearly distinguished today, due to the fact that different modern theories are applied to these fields. The diversity of topics, times, and viewpoints might be exemplified by mentioning two articles typical of their times: “Mithra en vieux-perse” from the first issue in 1952; and from vol. 56 (2007), a paper treating the view on East and West in the novels of Orhan Pamuk.

This is the story of *Orientalia Suecana* so far, and we three, now retiring editors wish the new editorial committee the best of luck – both in upholding the fine traditions of the journal and in meeting the demands of the present time for necessary renewal in all respects.

