

**HISTORY OF THE FUND OF MANUSCRIPTS AND UNIQUE AND  
ESPECIALLY VALUABLE PUBLICATIONS OF THE NATIONAL LIBRARY OF UZBEKISTAN****Umida Alimdjanovna Teshaboeva**

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**ABSTRACT:** This article provides a historical overview of the creation and formation of the Fund of Manuscripts and Unique and Especially Valuable Publications, which comprises an invaluable treasury of works of scientific, spiritual and cultural value that consists of literature and art, handwritten and graphic documents, albums, and printed periodicals, in the National Library of Uzbekistan. Named after Alisher Navoi, the Fund's composition is currently being enriched through acquisitions of handwritten books and rare printed publications from the general population. The restoration and conservation of the Fund's ancient collections with the use of modern equipment are also underway. Electronic copies of rare publications and manuscripts are being created, their certifications are being executed, their descriptions are being written, and the schedules for relevant restoration work are being planned. The pride of the Library is its collection of especially valuable collections—over 200 thousand copies of publications from the 15th to 19th centuries. Over 30 thousand of these are rare and ancient editions, manuscripts, and lithographs, including the first national magazines and newspapers. Thus, in this paper, the authors detail how the methods and directions of activity in the Fund of Manuscripts and Unique and Especially Valuable Publications enrich the Fund's composition by restoring and preserving its ancient collections using modern equipment.

**Keywords:** manuscript, rare books, national library, Uzbekistan, UNESCO, restoration.

**Introduction**

One of the main tasks of the National Library of Uzbekistan is the careful preservation of the nation's spiritual and historical inheritance, which is embodied in ancient manuscripts and publications that reflect the history of modern Uzbekistan's great ancestors. These valuable documentary sources, which concentrate thousands of years of the wisdom and experiences of mankind, have been made available in digital form for the study of history, science, architecture and art, which gives the Library a special role—the custodian of a priceless cultural heritage for future generations.

The Fund of Manuscripts and Unique and Especially Valuable Publications of the National Library of Uzbekistan is a part of the Library Fund that consists of handwritten books, printed publications, handwritten and graphic documents, and historical documents with significant scientific, artistic or other cultural value. These items are subject to a specific method of (strict) accounting, storage and use. The Fund has more than 200,000 storage units, over 30,000 of which are considered unique.

The following ranking is used to ensure a well-ordered placement of the materials in the Fund and the arrangement of information and library resources: Each century has its own codes, consisting of a capital letter “P”, the initial letter of the Greek word “palaios” (“ancient”); a lowercase vowel “a”, for books of the 15th and 16th centuries; “e” for 17th-century works; “i” for 18th-century works; “o” for books from the period of the French Revolution; “b” for East Asian manuscripts and lithographs; “c” for reference and bibliographic materials; “u” for 19th-century works; and “y” for the 20th century. The century code is followed by each item's serial number of publication. The Fund has been carrying out large-scale tasks since the first days of its existence. It has created a

special internal catalogue, conducted research, written scientific descriptions for individual collections, and acquired rare editions of the earliest printed Uzbek literature.

## **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

### **Historical review of the formation of the Fund of Manuscripts and Unique and Especially Valuable Publications**

The National Library of Uzbekistan, named after Alisher Navoi, was founded in 1870 as the Tashkent Public Library. The leading libraries and geographical societies of the Russian Empire assisted organizing the Fund and donated duplicate editions from their book depositories. By May 1870, more than 2,200 volumes (1,200 titles) had been collected, which formed the core of the future library.

The formation of the Fund of Manuscripts and Unique and Especially Valuable Publications started in 1918. E.K. Boetger (1887–1956), a prominent Central Asian orientalist and library scientist, made an enormous scientific and creative contribution to the newly established Fund. It was his initiative to create a subdepartment of rare and old editions in a special part of the Library's repository. Boetger was actively involved in the Fund's scientific processes and created a number of bibliographic indices containing detailed information on the history, ethnography, geography, natural resources, and economic development of the Turkestan territory and of individual areas in the Central Asian region. A number of annotated indices and reviews with unique contents are distinguished by their historiographic orientation, which Boetger worked fostered with his characteristic thoughtfulness and scientific approach including "A chronological review of Russian books of the 16th–18th centuries belonging to the A. Navoi State Opera and Ballet Theater" (1952), "Catalog of books of the scientific library of Tashkent State University"; and "Chronological review of old and rare books of the Fundamental library of the Central Asian State University" (1947) [1].

As of December 1921, the Department of Oriental Studies and Oriental Linguistics (now the Fund of Manuscripts and Unique and Especially Valuable Publications) was headed by A.A. Garritsky, an orientalist who was also the deputy director of the Library. At that time, the Eastern section, according to the Inventory Book, contained 1,025 storage units. Many library staff members were graduates of the Institute of Oriental Studies, which was later renamed as the Oriental Faculty of State University (E.K. Boetger, O.V. Maslova, N.A. Burov and others). In 1931, a remarkable expert on oriental manuscripts and calligraphy, autodidact scientist Ibadulla Adylov, started working at the library.

By 1925, the Fund of Manuscripts and Unique and Especially Valuable Publications already contained 2,000 items [2]. In 1948, a separate sector headed by E.K. Boetger, the distinct Fund of Rare and Old Publications, was opened. Boetger started scientifically processing the Fund and organized a kind of cross-type card catalogue. He compiled the following catalogues: "A chronological review of Russian books of the 16th–18th centuries belonging to the State Theater of Opera and Ballet named after Alisher Navoi" and "Catalogue of books of the scientific library of Tashkent State University" [3].

From 1930 to 1970, a large amount of work was carried out not only to increase the rare publications in the Fund but also to create a separate structural unit in the Library, which remains a unique centre of the cultural and spiritual heritage of Uzbekistan and is of interest to worldwide researchers and scientists.

### **Private book collections and private libraries**

The history of the creation and existence of personal libraries and book collections in Central Asia, which originates in the distant past—the 8th–14th centuries, the era of the great states of the Samanids, Karakhanids and Timurids—merits further attention and is very interesting. The development of personal libraries in that time was influenced by

the economic and cultural conditions within states, the cult of books that were typical in a Muslim society, the institution of patronage at the ruling courts, and the growth of book production.

In the 19th–early 20th centuries, personal libraries were developed more intensively, especially in Bukhara, Fergana, Samarkand, Tashkent and other cities.

The sources for the acquisitions and expansions of personal libraries were mainly donations from private persons and purchases of books, both domestically and abroad. Sometimes, bibliophiles and collectors travelled to neighbouring countries, especially Iran, Afghanistan, and Saudi Arabia, to acquire rare, ancient works by famous scientists, writers and theologians.

The largest number of personal libraries was recorded in the territory of the Bukhara Emirate. Beks, kazis, mullahs, employees of the administrative and bureaucratic apparatuses, clergymen, writers, and scientists—all had collections of books. Many libraries were formed in this era and were then passed from generation to generation.

The famous Bukharan bibliophile, Sharifjan Makhdum, collected handwritten manuscripts with great care and sophistication for many years. “He had a passionate love for books,” wrote an orientalist, academician A.A. Semyonov, about him—“and, sparing neither effort nor money, he collected books and manuscripts in various subject areas: if he saw a rare list in someone's hands or heard where there was one, he tried to acquire it at all costs.” [4].

According to the famous writer, scientist and public figure Sadriddin Aini, the library of Sharifjan Makhdum was considered one of the best and richest private libraries in Bukhara. The Oriental Department of the State Public Library (now the National Library of Uzbekistan) acquired approximately 300 volumes of valuable manuscripts from the heirs of this Bukharan collector and bibliophile [5].

Among the book collections mentioned above, a distinctive collection was that of the library of Muhammad Ali Sabirov, known as Dukchi-Ishan, Mingtyubinsk ishan, who lived in Andijan. After the suppression of the national liberation rebellion in Andijan by tsarist troops (the Andijan rebellion in 1898) [6], the ishan's library was confiscated and part of it, at the request of the Turkestan orientalist N.P. Ostroumov (1846–1930) [7], was transferred to Turkestan's cadre of archaeologists, who extensively researched the history of the region. Subsequently, it entered the Turkestan Public Library (now the National Library of Uzbekistan) as 194 manuscripts, thereby replenishing the Fund of Oriental Manuscripts.

In 1943, all the handwritten publications acquired by the Library or given to its Funds from personal collections by order of the government were transferred to the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Uzbekistan for more complete and detailed study.

The Library has documents showing how contributions of Russian orientalist scholars, famous statesmen and local intellectuals to replenished the Fund. They valued written monuments and other cultural properties of the peoples of Central Asia. Therefore, in different years, famous scientists and civil servants of Turkestan, such as N.F. Petrovsky, P.I. Khomutov, P.P. Pukalov, Major General A.K. Geins, Orientalist P.I. Pashino and many others, contributed books from their personal libraries to the Library. Later, some publications were acquired from the personal library of the first director of the Turkestan Public Library, N.V. Dmitrovsky.

Historically, personal libraries and private book collections have played a well-known role in the cultural and educational life of the local intelligentsia, and educated people have been an important means for self-education and the dissemination of knowledge amidst absences of secular educational and educational institutions in Turkestan.

#### **Collection of rare books and manuscripts of the medieval period**

Among the private book collections kept in the Library, the remarkable collection of books that belonged to famous military historian Ivan Petrovich Liprandi (1790–1880) [8] stand out. These books have his personal bookplate, deLiprandi, on their title pages.

The Fund of Manuscripts and Unique and Highly Valuable Publications contains a collection of rare books from the 12th–20th centuries. These are manuscripts, lithographs, periodicals, and a huge number of copies of printed medieval European books.

Here, the books printed by the famous Dutch company Elzevir should be mentioned. In addition, unique handwritten juzes [9] (parts) of the Quran are kept in the Fund under the codes Pv-9, Pv-10, Pv-12, Pv-15 and Pv-21. For example, the manuscript of the fifth part of Al-Juz' al-khamis li-l-Kur'ani-l-Karim covers the 24–147 verses of Sura al-Nisa (women). Written text with gold inserts and patterns was created by the calligraphers and artists who worked in kitabkhana of Baysungur, the grandson of Amir Timur (802/1399–837/1433). The book was copied in the 15th century.

In the design of all parts of the handwritten Quran, the most sophisticated muhaqqak script, which is a variation of the Quranic script naskh [10-12], is used. This text is located in the middle of the pages (32 cm x 23 cm), and in some juzes, it is set out in golden frames and coloured borders. The number of lines (5 lines on each page, except for the introductory page of the manuscript and pages at the beginning of Surah) in each volume is the same.

The Fund also contains a facsimile edition of the Osman Quran. S.I. Pisarev made 50 photocopies of the Quran, 25 of which were intended for sale, and the remaining 25 were intended to be donated to Muslim countries. Each of the copies intended for sale was valued at 500 rubles (1904, 352 pages, 42 cm x 33 cm). In addition, the Fund has editions of the Quran in different languages that were written at different times, including handwritten translations [13].

One of the rare works kept in the Fund is the manuscript of Al akhkomus sultaniya val viloyatud diniya (The Laws of State Administration) by Abul Hasan Ali bin Muhammad al Movardi [14]. It belongs to the Abbasid period [15]. An ancient multilingual dictionary, Muqaddimat-ul-adab (Introduction to Literature), by Makhmud al-Zamakhshariy (1075–1144) [16], is also among the rarities, which dates from 701/1302. Another manuscript, Sharh mulahhas fil hayya, is a commentary by Musa bin Mahmud Kadizade Rumi on the book Mulahhas fil hayya by Mahmud Chagminiy, a famous medieval astronomer [17]. The book was one of the important textbooks on astronomy in higher educational institutions in the medieval East. It was studied by founders of the medieval Samarkand astronomical school and influenced the creations of other major treatises on astronomy.

The gems of the collection are the works of Alisher Navoi. They were repeatedly copied by different calligraphers during the poet's life and afterwards, up to the 19th century. Here, one can mention Mahbub al-kulub (Beloved of hearts) [18], which consists of three parts and is the last brilliant creation of Navoi. The manuscript was copied by the calligrapher Haliknazar Khalifa ibn usta Kurban in 1239/1824. The collection of lyric poems, Garai bassigar (Miracles of Childhood) [19] copied in 1284/1867, is also worth mentioning.

Today, the collection is being replenished by books received from other departments and institutions, as well as by publications donated by individuals. Over the past year, the library collection has accessioned thirty manuscripts. Among them is a rare ethical and legal work, U'jubatulfatava, or Fatawa al-Akhsikati (The most interesting legal opinions of al-Dinari al-Akhsikati), by Alauddin al-Akhsikati [20]. It is dated 591/1195, and this manuscript is currently considered the oldest copy of this work. Additionally, the Kitabu majmua mukhtarati navozil (Collection of Selected Epistles), a fundamental ethical and legal manuscript of the 13th century by Burkhaniddin al-Marginani [21] is noteworthy. The date of this copy is 651/1253.

**Collection of Western European and Russian literature of the 16th–18th centuries**

This collection contains publications from the famous printing house Aldus Manutius, books published by the Dutch company Elsevier (16th–18th centuries), and more than 4,000 Western European books, which are valuable sources for studying the history, literature and art of Western European countries [2]. The Library also has numerous maps of the countries in Europe, Asia, Africa, the Americas, etc. Among them, there are many maps of the countries in the East and West. These maps contain historical and geographical descriptions of countries and information about their environments and minerals.

There are many Western European books about Central Asia, which reflect the great interest of Europeans in Uzbekistan's region and its history. They have been published in Paris, London, Berlin and other Western European cities in English, French and German.

The *bibliothèque orientale* (Oriental Library or Eastern Encyclopaedia) is one of the oldest books in the collection. It was compiled by the famous French orientalist Barthelemy d'Herbelot de Molainville [23]. It was published in French in Paris in 1697. The publication contains approximately 100 articles about the great scientists, poets and statesmen who had lived and worked in Central Asia up to that time. The 661 pages of the book contain, inter alia, limited information about the great Uzbek poet Alisher Navoi. Pages 877–888 are dedicated to Amir Timur and the Timurids [24].

The work of the famous medieval author Sharafiddin Ali Yazdi *Zafarnama* (Book of Victories), published in French and entitled *Histoire de Timur-Bec* (History of Timurbek) [25], is also devoted to Timurid history. The translator of the book was Petit de la Cour. The book was published in Paris in 1723 in a four-volume format.

Another book that was translated into French is the publication *Institutes political and military* (Political and military codes) by the great ruler Amir Timur. The book was published in Persian and English by Major Davy and Arabic scholar Professor White and is 408 pages long. The original publication is the famous work *Timur Tuzuklari* (Codes of Timur) [26], originally written in the Turkic language. In 1610, Abutalib Al-Hussein, court translator of the king of Yemen, wrote that the book had been kept in the royal Jafar library and that he had translated the codes into Persian in 1610–1612. Later, the codes were translated into English.

The collection of antique Russian books numbers over 700 titles and belongs to the epochs of Tsar Alexei Mikhailovich Romanov, Emperor Peter I, Catherine II, Paul I and Alexander I. The oldest and most valuable books are *Uchenie i hitrost' ratnogo stroeniya pehotnyh lyudey* (The doctrine and stratagem of the military structure of infantry people) printed in Cyrillic in 1647; *Arifmetika* (Arithmetic) by Leontiy Magnitsky (1703); *Khlynovskaya rukopis'* (Khlynov manuscript) (18th century); *Opyt istoricheskogo slovarya o rossiyskih pisatelyah* (Experience of the Historical Dictionary of Russian Writers) by N.I. Novikov, St. Petersburg, 1772; and others.

In the second half of the 19th century, the first printing houses appeared in Turkestan. A small printing house opened in 1868 and was intended to serve the government and military departments. It was here, in 1868, that *Zametki o gornoy strane na verшинah Chu i Naryna i dorogah cherez (byvshyi) Kitayskiy Turkestan* (Notes on a mountainous country on the peaks of Chu and Naryn and roads across the (former) Chinese Turkestan) by N.A. Severtsev was printed, which is justifiably considered to be the first “Tashkent incunabulum”.

In 1870, a larger printing house equipped with Russian and Arabic scripts was founded and marked the beginning of the Russian-language newspaper *Turkestanskie vedomosti* and the Uzbek-language newspaper *Turkiston viloyatining gazety*. This printing house created the first sample of the Uzbek printing industry, *Kalendar' 1871 goda* (Calendar of 1871), which was compiled by Sh. Ibragimov. The first print run amounted to 500 copies and was sold very quickly. In the same year, *Turkestanskie vedomosti* announced the second edition of the calendar [27].



The collection of authors' lifetime editions and books with the autographs of authors and donators attracts a well-deserved interest. Among them are the works of the great Russian poet A.S. Pushkin such as *Istoriya pugachevskogo vosstaniya* (History of the Pugachev Uprising) (1834), *Poltava* (Poltava) (1829), *Bakhchisarayskiy fontan* (Bakhchisarai Fountain) (1899), and others, and the lifetime and subsequent editions of the great Russian writer L.N. Tolstoy including *Polnoye sobranie sochineniy* (Complete Works) (1907), *Vosstanovlenie ada* (Restoration of Hell) (1906), and a two-volume edition of *Anna Karenina* [2].

Abdulla Qadiri, Abdurauf Fitrat, Mashrab, Chulpan, Abdulla Kahhar. Abdullah Qadiri (1894–1938) was not only the author of fictional and satirical works but also an excellent compiler of dictionaries. The part of the *Polniy russko-uzbekskiy slovar'* (Complete Russian-Uzbek Dictionary) with words beginning with the letter P was compiled by him and is a good example of his excellent work in this direction, consisting of 21,500 entries. The collection of the department also includes a famous novel by Qadiri *Minuvshie dni* (The Days Gone), which was published in three parts in 1926.

The work of one of the famous Uzbek poets, Abdulhamid Chulpan (1897–1938), *Soz*, was published in 1935 in Latin script. There are also translations of his works including *Devona*, *Immat*, and *Kukhi malak*, completed by E. Zart.

The collection of Chulpan's verse *Uygonish*, consisting of 40 pages, was published in Tashkent in 1922. The collection contains 23 poems written in Bukhara, Samarkand and Tashkent. The works of Abdurauf Fitrat (1886–1938), Arslon (1926), Nahv (1927), *Uzbek classic musikasi* (1927), *Eng eski turk adabiyot namunalari* (1927), *Qiyomat* (1936) and drama *Chin sevish* are also kept in the collections of the department.

#### **Collection of Turkestan periodicals**

The collection of Turkestan periodicals dates back to 1870. The first newspaper in the Uzbek language (Arabic graphics) was *Turkiston viloyatining gazetasi* (Turkestan native newspaper), published in Tashkent from 1870 to 1916. The purpose of the newspaper was to introduce the peoples of Turkestan to the orders of the local administration and to inform them about the history and geography of the region [28].

On April 28 (May 10), 1870, the first issue of the official Russian newspaper, *Turkestanskije vedomosti* (Tashkent, 1870–1917), was published. The newspaper published articles on the literature, ethnography, history, and agriculture of Turkestan. The alphabetical and subject card catalogue (handwritten), compiled on the basis of detailed descriptions from the newspaper *Turkestanskije vedomosti* from 1893 to 1917, is a great help in studying the history of the Uzbek homeland.

The first private newspapers written in Russian were *Okraina*, which was published in 1890–1898 and was originally a daily newspaper; beginning in 1891, it was published 2–3 times a week. The editor and publisher of this political, social and literary newspaper was N.V. Poltoranov. The newspaper consisted of reports from scenes, various kinds of information, and sections with theatrical reviews.

In 1898–1907, one more private newspaper, *Russkiy Turkestan*, was published. The newspaper was originally published 3 times a week under the editorship of I.I. Geyer; later, it was published on a daily basis. In 1906, 14 new private Russian language newspapers were published in the region.

Periodicals in Russian are represented by editions from the first quarter of the 20th century, which now have become bibliographic rarities: *Nasha Jizn'* (Our Life) (1919); *Zakaspiyskoye obozrenie* (Transcaspian Review) (1899–1912), a commercial and industrial political, social and literary newspaper that was published 5 times a week; *Turkestan* (1906), a socioeconomic and literary newspaper; *Nasha Jizn'* (Our Life) (1920); *Golos Sredney Azii* (Voice of Central Asia) (1919); *Golos Samarkanda* (Voice of Samarkand) (1918–1919); *Golos Semirechya* (Voice

of Semirechye) (1919); Narodniy Universitet (People's University) (1918); Turkestanskoye slovo (Turkestan Word) (1917); and others.

Periodicals in the Uzbek language are represented by editions from the first quarter of the 20th century, which now have become bibliographic rarities: Taraqqiy (1906), Kambagallar tovushi (1918–1922), Samarqand (1913), Sadoi Fargona (1914–1915), Qizil bayroq (1920–1922), Ulug Turkiston (1917–1918), and Ishirakiy un (1919–1920).

The Fund contains magazines in the Uzbek, Kazakh, and Tatar languages (in Latin and Arabic graphics) published in 1905–1940. Among them are Al-Izokh (1917–1918) in Uzbek (Arabic script), Yer yuzi (1925–1930) in Uzbek (Latin and Arabic scripts), Al-Islok (1907–1908; 1915–1917) in Uzbek (Arabic script), Maorif va ukituvchi (1925–1933) in Uzbek (Latin and Arabic scripts), Oyina (1913–1915) in Uzbek (Arabic script), Chulpon (1922–1923) in Kazakh (Arabic script), Shuro (1911–1916) in Tatar (Arabic script), Inqilob va madaniyat (1928–1936) in Azerbaijani (Latin and Arabic scripts) and many others.

### **Collections of reference and bibliographic publications**

The Fund of the Department of Manuscripts and Unique and Especially Valuable Publications includes reference and bibliographic manuals, publications containing bibliographic data and indices created by the famous founder of Central Asian bibliography, scholar, orientalist and organizer of the Fund of Rare Editions, E.K. Boetger. Among them are the two-volume bibliographic reference book Turkestanskaya Oblast' (Turkestan region) (1944); the Katalog starinnyh russkikh izdaniy 17–18 vekov, hranyashchihysya v GPB (Gosudarstvennoy publichnoy biblioteke) (Catalogue of old Russian editions of the 17th-18th centuries, stored in State Public Library); an unofficial reference book for the newspaper Turkestanskije vedomosti; Annotatsii na statyi i razdely po istorii i arheologii Tsentralnoy Azii (1870–1917) (Annotations on articles and sections on the history and archeology of Central Asia (1870–1917)); and many others.

In the early 19th century, V.I. Mezhov published a two-volume Bibliografiya Turkestana (Bibliography of Turkestan) and a three-volume Sibirskaya Bibliografiya (Siberian Bibliography). Both editions were released separately, but they are complementary publications. They include the first catalogues of the Library compiled by N.V. Dmitrovsky, as well as reference publications such as Sbornik statey o Tsentralnoy Azii (Collection of Articles on Central Asia) in two volumes (Tashkent.1869); Gosudarstvennaya biblioteka UzSSR imeni A. Navoi v Tashkente. 1870–1945 (State Library of the Uzbek SSR named after A. Navoi in Tashkent. 1870–1945) (Tallinn.1945) with photographs by Yu.B. Gens; Katalog otdela inostrannoy literatury Turkestanskoy publichnoy biblioteki (Catalogue of the Department of Foreign Literature of Turkestan Public Library) (Tashkent.1891); and others.

### **DISCUSSION**

#### **The current state and prospects for the development and formation of the Fund of Manuscripts and Unique and Especially Valuable Publications**

In 2011, the National Library of Uzbekistan moved to a new building, entering a new era in the history of the Fund of Manuscripts and Unique and Especially Valuable Publications. The Nodir Reading Room, the book depository, and the Museum of the Book were transferred to the Fund. The organization and functions of the Museum of the Book of the National Library of Uzbekistan are of great importance in terms of the preservation, study and transfer of information; the museum is a source of historical facts. It creates a unique opportunity for its visitors to familiarize themselves with the monuments of literary culture that are stored in the Fund of the Manuscripts and Unique and Especially Valuable Publications.

Today, one of the priorities of the museum of rare books is to introduce users, especially young people, to the rich cultural heritage of Uzbekistan and to increase love and respect for books—the most valuable monuments of the spiritual cultures of all times and peoples.

The reading room, museum, book depository, and work rooms for library specialists meet international standards in terms of their lighting, temperature and hygroscopic conditions.

The National Library of Uzbekistan has developed software for a rather detailed reflection of its collection of rare and handwritten publications. This software gives users the opportunity to become acquainted with its catalogue of unique books, as well as with its full-text databases. This computer program, along with the catalogue, provides a space for the “passport” of a book, which contains information about its state, degree of preservation, and materials. Although these passports share a variety of information about each document, primarily its state (damage or lack thereof), the state of a document, its preservation at the time of the description and the potential adjustments to be made to these are the most important characteristics. They facilitate examining the Fund and updating document states, which make it possible to identify any damage in a timely manner, adjust storage and use conditions, and then send a document to a restorer if needed.

The National Library of Uzbekistan plays a key role in the preservation, study and transmission of information. It is a source of historical and scientific facts and creates a unique opportunity to familiarize its visitors with the monuments of literary culture that are stored in the Fund [29].

The task of the National Library is to carefully preserve the cultural and historical wealth that is embodied in manuscripts, historical documents and publications, which are considered both rare and especially valuable, as they have stood the test of time. Many have survived only in a single copy.

Handwritten and rare editions are stored in the library with a stable temperature and humidity. Conditions are monitored and controlled automatically. For this, the repositories are equipped with special equipment. Collections of printed publications are placed on racks depending on their type and size in accordance with GOST 7.50–2002 Preservation of documents, General requirements. Newspaper filings are placed with no more than 4–5 in each cell of a rack; sheet editions are horizontally stored in boxes or folders on racks. Rare publications that require a special storage regime and restrictions on the use of originals have electronic copies and duplicates.

Specialists from the storage funds, as well as employees of the conservation and restoration service, have had the opportunity to participate in qualification courses in leading libraries and restoration centres in the United States, Russia, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey. Highly qualified specialists from Italy, Chad and other nations were invited to Uzbekistan.

The training included presentations and educational films about the techniques of manual and machine papermaking, theoretical foundations and training materials on conservation and restoration, detailed information on the types and qualities of paper, and the history of publishing bookbinding and of types of binding.

In addition, the National Library of Uzbekistan, in cooperation with the National Commission of Uzbekistan for UNESCO, administer a training seminar on the topic of the preservation and availability of documentary heritage in Uzbekistan within the framework of the UNESCO Information for All [30] project, involving the participation of specialists from information and library institutions and employees of museums and archives across Uzbekistan.

According to Presidential Decree PU-5349, on measures for further improvement of the sphere of information technologies and communications, dated February 19, 2018, the Republican Information and Library Centre, information and library centres of the Republic of Karakalpakstan, its regions and Tashkent city, were



transferred to the jurisdiction of the National Library of Uzbekistan, named after Alisher Navoi, under Uzbek Agency for Press and Information.

As per the administrative order of the Director of the National Library of Uzbekistan, dated May 14, 2019, on ensuring the safety of manuscripts and printed publications in the funds of regional information and library centres under the National Library of Uzbekistan, a great deal of work has been conducted to study storage conditions and to transfer rare and handwritten books located in regional information and library centres, including the following:

- The development of a template with a questionnaire in the form of a table for each book;
- The compilation of rules and recommendations for the safe transfer of collections of handwritten books;
- The transfer of the collections in compliance with all safety standards, based on the rules and recommendations of UNESCO, which were developed by the world's leading restorers.

Within the framework of this event, the following items were transferred to the repository of the National Library of Uzbekistan for temporary storage:

- A total of 47 manuscripts and lithographs from the Samarkand Regional Information and Library Centre;
- A total of 9 volumes from the Jizzakh Regional Information and Library Centre;
- A total of 12 books from the Andijan Information and Library Centre, and 12 from the Khorezm Information and Library Centre.

All books were packed horizontally in cardboard boxes made of neutral material, and the sides were sealed with PU foam. They were additionally wrapped in a special bubble wrap to prevent deformation.

After the expiration of the quarantine period, these books were placed in the repository of the Fund of Manuscripts and Unique and Especially Valuable Publications. At present, 13 manuscripts have been stabilized, restored, and digitized, and library specialists have entered their data into the relevant database.

On May 22–23, a group of specialists visited the Bukhara Regional Information and Library Centre and became acquainted with the state of storage conditions for rare books. During the inspection, some violations and shortcomings in storage were revealed.

A list of the identified shortcomings and specific measures to eliminate them was developed. A fragment (2 sheets) of the parchment of the Katta-Langar Quran from the 8th century was removed from display due to a lack of safe conditions for storing and exhibiting a historical monument of this kind. It was packed in special neutral material and transferred to a safe storage location.

Due to the difficulty of creating necessary conditions for manuscripts and unique publications in a short time, it was decided to temporarily transfer the Fund of Rare and Manuscript Books (including Kattalangar Quran) from Bukhara Regional Information and Library Centre to Bukhara Culture Preserve ARC. To improve the qualifications of the employees responsible for unique funds, a seminar was held during the 8th National Information and Library Week INFOLIB-2019 on October 29, 2021. The topic of the seminar was the conservation and restoration of the ILR: Problems and solutions. Various events are now regularly held to introduce ILC specialists to the basics of the conservation and restoration of unique books.

## **CONCLUSION**

The task of the National Library is to carefully maintain cultural and historical heritage that has survived in the form of manuscripts, historical documents and publications that are considered rare and highly valuable today

because they have withstood the ravages of time and often have survived only in a single copy, which must be preserved through monitoring activities.

In accordance with the self-standing of unique and highly valuable information and library resources, organizing monitoring activities is an important process among the range of activities of information and library institutions. The unique and highly valuable information of library resources, the state of preservation of information and library funds, the preservation of funds regarding their use in information and library institutions, the dynamics of the qualification levels of specialists in this area and the identifications of the needs of the relevant skilled workers in this area must be constantly and systematically monitored.

In addition, the National Library of Uzbekistan oversees how all the information and library institutions of the republic, many of which have rare and handwritten editions in their repositories, implement software to create a unified search system for users that contains information about the place of storage of a publication and provides full-text materials for viewing.

A central record of unique and highly valuable information and library resources is maintained by the National Consolidated Electronic Register of Unique and Highly Valuable Information and Library Resources.

This includes the following:

- The register of information and library funds containing unique and highly valuable information and library resources (information on the compositions and volumes of funds);
- The register of unique and highly valuable information and library resources in the form of collections (information about the creators and owners of collections, their contents and volumes, and their sources of acquisition);
- The register of single, unique and highly valuable information and library resources (archaeographic descriptions of handwritten books, bibliographical descriptions of publications indicating the locations and numbers of preserved and special copies).

One of the priority tasks is to introduce specialists, users, and especially young professionals to printed publications, works of literature and art, handwritten and graphic documents, manuscripts, albums and periodicals, as well as to rare books of scientific, artistic and cultural value. On behalf of all authors, the corresponding author states that there is no conflict of interest.

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