



Nematullo NASRULLAYEV^a

^a*International Islamic Academy of Uzbekistan*
Associate professor of the department of
Islamic History and Source Studies IRCICA, (DSc)
E-mail: nematullonasrullayev@gmail.com

THE PLACES WHERE ORIENTAL MANUSCRIPT SOURCES ARE PRESERVED IN UZBEKISTAN

Abstract. *The written heritage created by scholars, theologians, jurists, historians, mystics, linguists, and thinkers born and educated in the territory of present-day Uzbekistan constitutes an invaluable part of world civilization. These scholars produced fundamental works that shaped intellectual traditions in theology, law, philosophy, science, and literature across the Islamic world and beyond. Today, their manuscripts and lithographic works are dispersed across libraries, museums, archives, and private collections on all continents.*

This article provides an overview of the major manuscript repositories in Uzbekistan that preserve and study this rich heritage. Special attention is given to four principal institutions: the Fund of Oriental Manuscripts of the Abu Rayhan Beruni Institute of Oriental Studies, the Library of the Muslim Board of Uzbekistan, the Source Treasury of the International Islamic Academy of Uzbekistan, and the Alisher Navoi State Literary Museum. The article highlights the historical formation of these collections, their thematic scope, and their significance for contemporary scholarship. By introducing these major repositories, the study aims to encourage further academic engagement with Uzbekistan's manuscript heritage and to emphasize its importance for global intellectual history.

Keywords: *Institute of Oriental Studies named after Abu Rayhan Beruniy, books, newspapers, magazines, documents, Osman manuscripts.*

INTRODUCTION

The intellectual and cultural heritage produced by scholars originating from the territory of modern Uzbekistan represents one of the most significant contributions to

world civilization. Over many centuries, local commentators, hadith scholars, theologians, jurists, historians, mystics, linguists, and scientists developed comprehensive works that addressed virtually all branches of knowledge of their time. These works not only shaped regional scholarly traditions but also exerted a profound influence on the broader Islamic and global intellectual landscape.

Today, this written heritage is preserved in numerous scientific institutions, museums, archives, libraries, and private collections across the world, spanning more than fifty countries in Europe, Asia, Africa, the Americas, and Australia. Despite this wide dispersion, Uzbekistan remains one of the central custodians of this legacy, housing some of the richest and most diverse manuscript collections in the Orient. These collections include Qur'anic manuscripts, works on Islamic law, theology, philosophy, medicine, astronomy, linguistics, literature, and the natural sciences, dating from the early medieval period to the beginning of the twentieth century.

Given the vast scale and scholarly value of these materials, it is impossible to provide a comprehensive description of all existing repositories within a single article. Therefore, this study focuses on four major manuscript funds that play a leading role in the preservation, study, and promotion of Oriental written heritage in Uzbekistan. These include the Fund of Oriental Manuscripts of the Abu Rayhan Beruni Institute of Oriental Studies, the Library of the Muslim Board of Uzbekistan, the Source Treasury of the International Islamic Academy of Uzbekistan, and the Alisher Navoi State Literary Museum.

By offering a concise overview of these institutions, their historical development, and the unique manuscripts preserved within them, this article seeks to draw scholarly attention to these invaluable repositories. It is intended as an initial step toward more extensive research and international cooperation, encouraging researchers to further explore the rare texts that constitute an essential part of humanity's shared cultural and intellectual heritage.

MAIN PART

The invaluable cultural heritage created by local commentators, hadith scholars, scholars of theology, jurisprudents, historians, mystics, linguists, scholars and thinkers who were born and raised in Uzbekistan, who deeply studied all areas of their time

and made a great contribution to human civilization with their fundamental works, is attracting the attention of world scholars today. Currently, such written heritage has spread to various scientific institutions, museums, archives, libraries, treasuries, various funds and private collections in all continents of the world - America, Africa, Europe, Asia and even Australia, and about fifty countries. However, we will draw your attention to the four main funds that currently directly store manuscripts and lithographic works of the Orient. In particular, in this article The Institute of Oriental Studies named after Abu Rayhan Beruni of the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Treasury of Oriental Manuscripts, we will provide brief information about the Library of the Muslim Board of Uzbekistan, the Source Treasury of the International Islamic Academy of Uzbekistan, and the State Literature Museum named after Alisher Navoi of the Academy of Sciences of Uzbekistan. Of course, it is not possible to write in detail about such large, world-famous funds in one short article. However, a scientist who has become familiar with the article will certainly have a desire to get acquainted with these funds and the rare texts stored in them. Therefore, you can accept our initiative as the first step towards such major work.

Fund of Oriental Manuscripts of the Abu Rayhan Beruni Institute of Oriental Studies of the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Uzbekistan

Until the end of the 19th century, libraries were organized at madrasahs and mosques in Uzbekistan. Since 1870, state libraries have been founded. In particular, the Samarkand Public Library and the library at the Mirzo Ulugbek Madrasah were also opened at the same time. These libraries kept books, newspapers, and magazines in various languages. On the eve of the October Revolution, a total of 14 state libraries operated in Turkestan. The State Library, established in 1870, had a Department of Oriental Manuscripts, which contained 87 volumes in 1889 and more than 90 manuscripts in 1895. Especially after the revolution, the number of manuscripts in the department increased rapidly. These manuscripts were written in Uzbek, Arabic, Persian, Tajik, Urdu, Pashto, Azerbaijani, Turkish, Tatar, Turkmen, Uyghur, and other languages of the Oriental peoples. These works relate to various branches of science of the Middle Ages and later periods, including history, literature, philosophy, law, astronomy, chemistry, medicine, geography, medicine, language, music, mathematics, mineralogy and other fields.

The Abu Rayhan Beruni Institute of Oriental Studies of the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Uzbekistan was established in 1943 under the Oriental Department of the State Public Library of Uzbekistan (now the Alisher Navoi State Library) and until 1950 was called the “Institute for the Study of Oriental Manuscripts”. The library of the Khan of Khiva in its entirety, the library of the Emir of Bukhara, and the personal library of the emir of Bukhara, Sadr Ziya, were collected here. Thanks to the tireless efforts of the employees of the Institute of Manuscripts, expeditions were organized in a short time to various regions of our country and rare manuscripts were purchased from the population. As a result, the fund was constantly enriched with written and printed books. Since 1950, taking into account the expansion of the scope and areas of scientific activities carried out at the institute, this institute was renamed the “Institute of Oriental Studies”.

Initially, the institute had a single department dedicated to the study of Oriental manuscripts. Later, departments specializing in the classification of manuscripts, scientific study and description, research, preparation for publication, as well as the study of political-social, economic and cultural relations of the peoples of the Orient were also established.

This fund contains 25,977 volumes of manuscripts, which contain more than one hundred thousand texts. These written works cover almost all fields of science of the past. The fund also has 39,107 volumes of lithographic and printed works. In addition, the fund has more than 10,000 documents on various topics. The oldest of them date back to the 10th century, and the newest to the beginning of the 20th century. Archival documents belonging to the Bukhara, Khiva, and Kokand khanates make up the bulk of them. Local researchers are currently conducting fruitful scientific activities to study and publish these documents and classical texts.

Since 1952, work has been underway to publish an index of manuscripts stored in the institute’s treasury, and 11 volumes of the index entitled “Collection of Oriental Manuscripts of the Academy of Sciences of Uzbekistan” and catalogues on history, medicine, natural sciences, mysticism, and “Oriental Miniatures” have been published.

The oldest source in the treasury is a single page of the Quran written on leather, copied during the time of Caliph Ali. The oldest complete book dates back to the 9th century. It is a copy of the Quran copied in ancient Kufic script. The collection

includes Ibn Saloma's "Gharibul-hadith" (9th century), Abu Bakr Razi's "Kitab Sirrul-Asror" (912/1506), Abu Rayhan Beruni's "Al-Tahfim" (13th century), Burkhaniddin Marginani's "Hidoya" (13th century), Abu Hafs Umar Nasafi's "Matla'un-nujum va Majma'ul-Ulum" (14th century), Abdurahman Jami's "Diwan" (15th century), Alisher Navoi's "Navadirush-Shabab" (15th century), as well as rare works by such famous figures as Ibn Sina, Abu Nasr al-Farabi, Yusuf Khos Hajib, Muhammad al-Khwarizmi, Mahmud Zamakhshari, Ahmad Yasawi, Khoja Ahrar Wali, Abu al-Qasim Firdawsi, Bahauddin Rumi, Amir Khusraw Dehlavi, Sultan Ali Mashhadi, Zahiriddin Muhammad Babur, Muhammad Riza Ogahi and others. is being preserved.

In 2000, the Institute's treasury was included in the UNESCO World Heritage List as the richest collection of manuscripts in the world.

In accordance with the Resolution of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. 2995 dated May 24, 2017 "On measures to further improve the system of preservation, research and promotion of ancient written sources", the Institute was designated as the leading scientific research institution in the country for the preservation, study, scientific research and promotion of ancient manuscripts and modern written sources of historical and cultural significance.

Currently, this fund includes the main, doublet, Hamid Sulayman, historical documents, lithographic works and tape copy collections. This unique collection is a rich and inexhaustible resource for researchers. Preserving this treasure and passing it on to future generations is one of the important tasks facing the employees of the institute and the general public.

Library of the Muslims Board of Uzbekistan

The fund was founded in 1943 by the first head of the Religious Administration, Mufti Eshon Bobokhan ibn Abdulmajidkhan (1860-1957), with more than a thousand rare manuscripts. The famous Navoi scholar and Bedil scholar Alauddinov Nodirkhan Domla (1899-1975) from 1943 to 1970 replenished the library with manuscripts and lithographs purchased and donated from the public, as well as books and periodicals brought from foreign countries. contributed to the enrichment of the fund.

Currently, the library stores about 20 thousand copies of books. More than three thousand of them are rare manuscripts. The rarest monument of the fund is the Usman Mushafi, one of six copies of the Holy Quran written on deerskin in the 7th century.

This copy is kept in the exhibition of the “Muyi Mubarak” madrasah located in the “Hazrat Imam” complex. The Usman Mushafi was written based on the pages of the Holy Quran collected by Abu Bakr Siddiq with the participation of Zayd ibn Thabit, Abdullah ibn Zubair Sa’d ibn as and other companions. It was first kept in Samarkand by Sheikh Khoja Ubaydullah Ahrar, and then by his descendants.

Among the rare manuscript sources in the library of the Muslim Board of Uzbekistan is a copy of the Quran known as the “Great Anchor” from the 8th century. Along with this, there are also copies of the Holy Quran copied in the 9th - 19th centuries. Also kept in this fund are Masud ibn Umar Taftazani’s “Sharhul-Mutawwal” (14th century), Huseyn Voiz Kashifi’s “Rawzatush-shuhado” (15th century), Burkhaniddin Marginani’s “al-Hidoya”, Ubaydullah ibn Masud’s “Mukhtasarul Wiqaya”, “Tanqih”, “Tawzih” (14th century), and Jurjani’s medical works “Zahiratul-Khorezmshah” (17th century).

The main fund of the library is located in the new administrative building of the Muslim Board of Uzbekistan. The books there are stored at the latest modern standards. All conditions have been created for readers to use the manuscripts. In particular, a catalog of general books stored in the fund has been developed, and an electronic list of books has been developed for the convenience of users. This program is open not only to library employees, but also to those who are interested in rare manuscripts and intend to study them.

The requirements and rules that exist in the world’s largest funds are also present in this treasury. According to them, the rarest written texts are not given to the subscriber, but, on the contrary, their electronic facsimile is used.

The number of visitors to the collection and the Mushafi of Uthman, which is kept in its fund, is increasing year by year. Most of the visitors to the fund from the Muslim Orient and European countries bring copies of the Holy Quran published in their own languages as gifts. Perhaps due to this, the number of translations of the Holy Quran and explanatory commentaries printed in various languages has also reached nearly fifty. In particular, among them are books in Finnish from Finland, Czech from the Czech Republic, Hebrew from Israel, Swedish from Sweden, Bengali from Bangladesh, Polish from Poland, and Kazakh from Kazakhstan. The library also has a separate collection of books of the Holy Quran translated into the official languages of English, French, German, Spanish, Italian, Japanese, Hindi, Persian, Azeri, and Urdu.

International Islamic Academy of Uzbekistan

By the decree of the First President of the Republic of Uzbekistan dated April 7, 1999, the “Treasury of Resources” department began its activities at the Tashkent Islamic University under the Cabinet of Ministers.

The purpose of the department is to collect, preserve, conduct scientific research on, and pass on to future generations the scientific, spiritual, and religious heritage created by our ancestors and passed down to the present day.

developing electronic versions of manuscripts and printed (lithographic) books; studying manuscripts in the public’s possession; purchasing them from the public; organizing scientific expeditions to enrich the treasury; repairing them; conducting conservation work, etc.

About the department - currently, the department has more than 450 manuscripts, about 2,000 lithographs and about 6,000 modern publications. During the inventory of manuscript books, cataloguing, and carrying out their expanded scientific descriptions, the fund’s employees found that more than 1,000 independent works and treatises are included in the more than four hundred and fifty manuscripts. The previously compiled brief catalogue of these manuscripts has been revised and supplemented with additional information. Currently, all of these manuscripts have been given an extensive scientific description and published in two volumes under the title “Manuscript Catalogue” in four languages (Uzbek, Russian, Arabic and English).

The scope of the manuscripts stored in the fund is wide and refers to about 100 independent fields. In particular, they belong to such fields as the Qur’an, Qur’anic sciences, tajvid, tafsir, hadith, fiqh, kalam, syra, mysticism, story, interpretation, cosmography, calligraphy, philosophy, logic, durud, history, literature, morphology and syntax, arithmetic, sports.

In addition, in order to create electronic forms of existing manuscripts and lithographs, each text is regularly recorded in facsimile mode. The purpose of this is to create a convenient opportunity for the user.

Also, repair and binding of damaged and used books, as well as chemical and biological processing, are regularly carried out by employees.

Rare manuscripts in the fund - the book stored in the fund of the treasury of sources under the number inv. No. 50 is one of the rarest manuscripts. It discusses about 60

ancient inscriptions. Unfortunately, this manuscript has not been involved in scientific research so far. The study of this work, called “Majmu’atul-khutut”, would be one of the important tools for historians and archaeologists.

Thus, the Treasury of Sources regularly works in order to study, research and pass on manuscripts handed down from ancestors to future generations, as well as to create comfortable conditions for users of the department. In general, this fund is known to the Republic and many foreign countries.

Alisher Navoi State Literary Museum of the Academy of Sciences of Uzbekistan

The library is an important scientific research and educational centre in the Republic. Its treasury contains a rich spiritual, scientific and literary written heritage. The museum’s activities are aimed at collecting, preserving, researching and promoting the centuries-old heritage of Uzbekistan.

The museum was founded in 1939 in connection with the large-scale celebration of the 500th anniversary of the birth of Alisher Navoi with the task of creating a special scientific and cultural centre under the Academy of Sciences of Uzbekistan. Since 1967, the museum has had the status of the State Literary Museum named after Alisher Navoi of the Academy of Sciences of Uzbekistan. Its first director was Doctor of Philology, Professor H.S. Sulaymonov. The museum building was built in 1933-1936 in the style of a unique architectural monument. Even now, it attracts the attention of visitors.

By 1978, the museum’s collection had acquired about ten thousand manuscripts and lithographs from the public. Later, this vast cultural and educational heritage became the basis for the establishment of the “Institute of Manuscripts” within the museum’s fund. For many years, the Literature Museum also operated as an exhibition department of this institute.

Over the past historical period, the museum has created a rich exposition showcasing the classical literature and history of the Orient of the 15th-20th centuries. Visitors to the treasury will not only get acquainted with the unique masterpieces of centuries-old rich literary history, but also enjoy works of art that are considered examples of Central Asian culture and art - books, fine arts, calligraphy, painting, music and architecture.

The manuscripts kept in the museum’s collection include works by representatives of classical Oriental literature, including Alisher Navoi’s “Badayi’ul-bidoya” (15th century), “Gharayibus-saghir” (1528), Saadi Shirazi’s “Kulliyot” copied in 1636, a

rare manuscript of Abdurahman Jami's "Tuhfatul-ahror" dating back to 1578, Nizami Ganjavi's "Makhzanul-asror" (16th century), Khusraw Dehlavi's "Khamsa" (1575), Husain Voiz al-Kashifi's "Rashahot aynul-hayot" and "Tafsiri Husaini" (16th century), Fuzuli's "Divan" (18th century), as well as rare manuscripts by Fighani, Nazim Hirawi, Abdullo Hatifi, Temurshah Afghani and other poets and writers.

Similarly, the fund preserves the epic poem "The Language of Birds" by the 18th-century Khorezm poet Rizai Paivandi, the four-language "Muqaddamatul-adab" by Mahmud Zamakhshari, "Mubayin" by Zahiriddin Muhammad Babur, "Tutinama" by Khirami, "Layli and Majnun" by Nasir Khoja, and "Hadiqatul-Auliya" by Khoja Muhammad Balkhi. The museum contains not only manuscripts of poets and writers, but also interesting lithographed books on history, philosophy, Islamic law, medicine, geography, astronomy, linguistics, and other fields.

In 1991, the museum was separated from the institute and began its activities as a separate scientific and educational institution. In this short time, the Literature Museum began to organize its manuscript collection, which has now become a treasury with about 2,000 thousand manuscripts and lithographed books.

CONCLUSION

The manuscript heritage preserved in the leading scholarly institutions of Uzbekistan represents an invaluable component of world intellectual and cultural history. As demonstrated in this study, the collections housed in the Fund of Oriental Manuscripts of the Abu Rayhan Beruni Institute of Oriental Studies, the Library of the Muslim Board of Uzbekistan, the Source Treasury of the International Islamic Academy of Uzbekistan, and the Alisher Navoi State Literary Museum collectively encompass a vast chronological, linguistic, and disciplinary spectrum. These repositories safeguard unique Qur'anic manuscripts, works of Islamic law, theology, philosophy, literature, medicine, astronomy, linguistics, and other sciences, reflecting the remarkable scholarly achievements of Central Asian thinkers over many centuries.

The analysis shows that these manuscript funds are not merely storage facilities but dynamic research centers actively engaged in cataloguing, conservation, digitization, and scholarly dissemination. Their systematic efforts to preserve fragile manuscripts, prepare scientific descriptions, and create electronic facsimiles significantly enhance

accessibility for both national and international researchers. The inclusion of the Beruni Institute's manuscript collection in the UNESCO World Heritage List further underscores the global significance of Uzbekistan's written heritage.

At the same time, the study highlights the necessity of continued scholarly attention, institutional support, and international cooperation to ensure the sustainable preservation and effective utilization of these collections. Many rare texts remain insufficiently studied, and their academic potential has yet to be fully realized. Expanding interdisciplinary research, promoting digital humanities initiatives, and strengthening global partnerships can contribute to a deeper understanding of the intellectual traditions embodied in these manuscripts.

In conclusion, the manuscript repositories of Uzbekistan serve as a vital bridge between the past and the present, preserving the intellectual legacy of generations of scholars and offering invaluable resources for future research. Their protection and systematic study are not only a national responsibility but also a shared task of the global scholarly community, aimed at safeguarding a common cultural heritage for future generations.

REFERENCES

1. "Catalog of museum manuscripts (Vol. II). (2017). Kayumov, A., Hasanova, S., Juraev, J., Ozodbek, A., Hasanova, S., & Mansurov, S. Tashkent: MERIYUS.
2. Encyclopaedia of Islam (Vols. V–VII). (1986). Bosworth, G. E., van Donzel, E., Lewis, B., & Pellat, Ch. (Eds.). Paris: G.-P. Maisonneuve & Larose.
3. Encyclopaedia of Islam (Vol. X). (1998). Bianquis, Th., Bosworth, G. E., van Donzel, E., & Heinrichs, W. P. (Eds.). Leiden: Brill.
4. Erkinov, A., Polvonov, N., & Aminov, H. (2010). Muhammad Rahimkhan II – Feruz library list. Tashkent: New Age Avlodi Publishing House.
5. In the background of the catalog is the manuscript of the institute (Vol. I). (1988). Kayumov, A. P. (Ed.). Tashkent: Fan.
6. In the background of the catalog is the manuscript of the institute (Vol. II). (1989). Kayumov, A. P. (Ed.). Tashkent: Fan.
7. Katalog rukopisey gosudarstvennogo muzeya literatury imeni Alishera Navoi (Vol. I). (2006). Khasanov, S. (Ed.). Tashkent: Science and Technologies of the Center Printing House.
8. Mukhamedov, N. (2015). Issues of the scientific heritage of Mahmoud Zamakhshari. *Eastern Torch*, 1(1), 3–5. <https://inlibrary.uz/index.php/eastern-torch/article/view/9585>
9. Register of written works of our ancestors preserved in the funds of our country and the world. (2022). Authors' collective. Tashkent: Uzbekistan International Islamic Academy Publishing and Printing Association.

10. Scientific and descriptive catalog of manuscripts stored in the Source Treasury of Tashkent Islamic University (Vol. I). (2017). Samarkand: Imam Bukhari International Centre.
11. Scientific and descriptive catalog of manuscripts stored in the Source Treasury of Tashkent Islamic University (Vol. II). (2017). Samarkand: Imam Bukhari International Centre.
12. Sobranie vostochnykh rukopisey Akademii nauk Respubliki Uzbekistan: History. (1998). Yusupova, D. Yu., & Djalilova, R. P. (Comps.). Tashkent: Fan.
13. Sobranie vostochnykh rukopisey Akademii nauk Uzbekistana (Vols. I–XI). (1952–1987). Tashkent.
14. Sources Treasury: Manuscripts catalog. (2009). Tashkent: Tashkent Islamic University Publishing and Printing Association.
15. Treasury of Oriental Manuscripts. (2012). Institute of Oriental Studies named after Abu Rayhan Beruni, Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Uzbekistan. Tashkent: Mega Basim.