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### Colour plates:

#### Front cover:

The inside of the manuscript's front cover (on the left): Čudabandaka (Skt. Cūdāpanthaka; Tib. Lam-phran-bstan), “The Great Yum”, MS, vol. 5 (call number K 24), 15.0 × 16.0 cm.

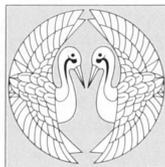
#### Back cover:

**Plate 1.** The inside of the back cover (from left to right): 1. Esru-a (Skt. Brahmā, Tib. Tshangs-pa); 2. Bigar (Skt. Śiva, Tib. ?); 3. Qormusta (Skt. Indra, Tib. brGya-byin), “The Great Yum”, MS, vol. 5 (call number K 24), 52.0 × 15.5 cm.

**Plate 2.** The inside of the front cover (on the left): Inggida (Skt. Aṅgaja, Tib. Yan-lag-'byung); (on the right) Bagula (Skt. Bakula, Tib. Ba-ku-la), “The Great Yum”, MS, vol. 4 (call number K 24), 53.0 × 15.5 cm.

**Plate 3.** The inside of the back cover (from left to right): 1. Qayanggiru-a (Skt. Lohakhaḍga Hayagrīva, Tib. Rta-mgrin lcags-ral-can); 2. Beiji Maq-a-kala (Skt. Aghora Mahākāla, Tib. Beg-tse); 3. Coytu Ökin tngri (Skt. Ekamātā Shrī Devī, Tib. Ma-cig dpal-ldan lha-mo), “The Great Yum”, MS, vol. 4 (call number K 24), 52.0 × 15.5 cm.

RUSSIAN ACADEMY OF SCIENCES  
THE INSTITUTE OF ORIENTAL STUDIES  
ST.PETERSBURG BRANCH



# **Manuscripta Orientalia**

*International Journal for Oriental Manuscript Research*

Vol. 2 No. 2 June 1996



**75ESA**  
**St. Petersburg-Helsinki**

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# PRESENTING THE COLLECTIONS

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## ORIENTAL MANUSCRIPTS IN THE NATIONAL LIBRARY OF RUSSIA

### 1

On May 27, 1995, the National Library of Russia (formerly the Imperial Public Library) has celebrated its 200th anniversary [1]. The idea of organising a state book storehouse for common people belonged to Catherine the Great. It was Catherine who approved the project after which architect E. Sokolov built the library in St. Petersburg at the junction of Nevsky Prospekt and Sadovaya Street. Even the formation of the library's stocks was connected with Catherine the Great. As early as 1795 she ordered Generalissimo A. V. Suvorov to bring from Warsaw the collection of Zaluski brothers. (Later, in 1923, all the books from this collection were returned to Poland. Most of them perished during the Second World War, among them 17 manuscripts in various Oriental languages).

The manuscript department ("Depot of manuscripts") of the Public Library was established on March 14, 1805. This event was connected with the acquisition of the collection made by P. P. Dubrovsky, a former official at Russian embassy in France. He brought from Europe about 900 Western, 103 Oriental, 50 Old Russian and 20 Greek codices, as well as numerous archive materials. The latter included documents and autographs of many famous people [2].

The Oriental part of the collection acquired by Dubrovsky (later he became the first curator of the "Depot of manuscripts") mainly came from the library of the Saint Germain Abbey. There are some rare and lavishly decorated manuscripts, the most interesting among them being the "Purple Qur'ān" copied in the 12th—13th centuries in North Africa. The text is written in silver ink on purple-dyed paper (the colour of the pigment is close to purple, though its spectral characteristics are different).

The official opening of the Imperial Public Library took place on January 14, 1814, in the reign of Alexander I. Thus, the grandson had realised the idea of his great grandmother. The first considerable acquisition of the new library was the collection of 40 Oriental manuscripts which belonged to P. K. Frolov, director of the factories in Barnaul (Altay). This collection (including, besides Oriental manuscripts, 160 Old Russian codices) was bought by the library in 1817. Among the most important manuscripts of this collection the anthology of Arabic verse made by the order of the Mamluk Sultan Sha'bān II (not later than 1376)

and the *Kulliyāt* by 'Alī-Shīr Nawā'ī with 25 miniatures are to be named.

None of the three manuscript-collectors whose books formed the foundation of the manuscript department of the library, namely, Zaluski (Poland), Dubrovsky (most of his books were acquired in France) and Frolov (Russia) had any special interest in Oriental manuscripts. Nevertheless, the rate of Oriental materials in their collections was comparatively high (Dubrovsky — 10%, Frolov — 20%). It means that at the end of the 18th—beginning of the 19th century numerous Oriental manuscripts — Chinese, Indian, but most of all in Arabic script — were already coming to Europe and in particular to Russia. Many of the subjects of the Russian Empire were familiar with different Oriental languages. At the same time Russia has common borders with a number of Eastern countries and there were constant trade and diplomatic relations between Russia and these countries.

In 1828 a collection of lavishly decorated Persian manuscripts was purchased in Ardabil for the Imperial Public Library by General-Lieutenant P. K. Suchtelen who brought it to St. Petersburg. These manuscripts originate from the *waqf* of Sheikh Ṣafī Mosque in Ardabil and include 166 literary and historical works which were selected with the assistance of the mosque's *mufī* [3]. It is interesting that the manuscripts acquired by Suchtelen belonged once to Shah 'Abbās I.

Soon after 1829 the library was enriched with 148 manuscripts from Ahaltsihe (Georgia), with 42 manuscripts from Erzerum and 66 manuscripts from Adrianople (Edirne). In 1829 18 illuminated manuscripts were presented to Nicholas I by Khusraw-Mirzā, the grandson of Faṭḥ 'Alī-shāh, who brought them to St. Petersburg as a reparation for the murder of A. S. Griboedov, Russian ambassador to Teheran.

In 1831 archimandrite Peter (P. Kamensky), the head of the tenth Russian Orthodox mission in China, presented to the library 48 block-prints in Chinese, Manchu and Mongolian languages.

In the mid-19th century it was decided to make a catalogue of the Oriental manuscripts. The project directed by Academician B. A. Dorn resulted in the publication of this catalogue in 1852 [4]. The descriptions of 900 manuscripts

written in 23 languages were made by Ch. D. Fraehn, F. F. Charmois, I. F. Gotwald (Arabic studies), M. I. Topchibashev (Iranian studies), I. I. Berezin (Turkish studies), M. I. Brosset (Caucasian studies), Z. F. Leontyevsky (Sino-logy), German scholar R. Rost (Indian studies), etc.

Collections which came after 1852 were usually kept as separate funds. Small collections or collections containing books in several particular languages were used to form "new series" classified by language. Manuscripts were either donated or bought. Since the library was Imperial, it was never short of money and donors. Along with Russian diplomats, officers, scholars and missionaries, scholars from other countries helped to form the collection as well. In 1858 the library acquired a large collection of manuscripts, Greek papyri and palimpsests, including also books in Arabic, Syriac, Georgian, Old Hebrew and Coptic. The owner of this collection was German byzantologist K. Tischendorf, who had assembled it during his two voyages to the Near East. This purchase was paid by Alexander II on the request of the director of the Public Library, baron M. A. Korf. Alexander II also sponsored Tischendorf's third trip to the East in search of Greek and Oriental manuscripts. Altogether Tischendorf's collection consists of 200 items.

In 1862, "by the highest order", the library has bought the so-called "First collection of Firkovitch". This collection includes 1500 Hebrew, Arabic and Karaite manuscripts on leather, parchment and paper. Among these manuscripts was the famous "Cairo Bible", the most ancient complete copy of the Old Testament, dated by 1010. A. S. Firkovitch, a scholar, traveller, archaeologist and passionate collector, assembled a new collection during his second voyage to the Near East. One of his principle sources was an old manuscript-depository in Cairo *kenasa*. For a thousand roubles he paid to the Karaite community Firkovitch selected from its manuscript-depository (*geniza*) numerous fragments of different manuscripts.

Samaritan manuscripts (about 1000 items) from his second collection were sold to the library in 1870. The main part of Firkovitch's collection (15 thousand manuscripts and fragments) was kept in Chufut-Qala in the Crimea, where he spent the last ten years of his life studying and describing his treasures. This enormous collection was finally bought by the library from Firkovitch's heirs in 1876. It is one of the most valuable collections of Hebrew manuscripts in the world.

Many valuable acquisitions were made in the 1860s—1870s. In 1864 the heirs of French orientalist J. J. Marselles, the participant of Napoleon's expedition to Egypt, sold the most valuable part of his collection to the library — 132 manuscripts of the 8th—10th centuries written in Kufic script. Two years later N. V. Khanykov, a diplomat and orientalist, sold his collection of 160 Arabographic codices. Two splendid collections came to the library from the Russian ambassadors to Persia, namely, D. I. Dolgoruky, I. O. Simonich, and his son N. I. Simonich. Among the manuscripts acquired from Dolgoruky there were: 1) a Zoroastrian treatise in Pahlavi; 2) a translation of the "History" by Ṭabarī made in 1480 in the *kitāb-khāna* (library) of the Timurid ruler Shāhrūkh and of his son Bāysunqur; 3) a treatise by the Arab astronomer al-Ṣūfī with drawings of constellations, and many other fine illuminated manuscripts.

Two small collections were bought by the library in 1868 — 56 Kurdish manuscripts came from A. D. Zhaba, the Russian consul in Erzerum, and 99 drawings by Chinese and Russian artists were acquired from Z. F. Leontyevsky, member of the tenth Russian Orthodox mission in China.

The expanding of Russian borders in Central Asia brought to the Public Library numerous Central Asian manuscripts. Their official donator was K. P. Kaufman, general-governor of Turkestan, while the actual task of collecting manuscripts and other "scholarly materials for scientific societies" was entrusted to orientalist A. L. Kun, who served under Kaufman from 1868 to 1876. That was the time when the "Kaufman Collection" of the Public Library was formed (later it was divided among several funds). In 1870 the library acquired an old Qur'ān, which, according to the legend, formerly belonged to Caliph 'Uthmān. In 1917 by a special decree signed by V. I. Lenin it was returned to the Muslim community (now it is preserved in the Spiritual Centre for the Moslems of Central Asia and Kazakhstan in Tashkent). The archives of the *khāns* of Qoqand and Khiva, which had come to the library in 1875, were transferred to the Central Archives of Uzbekistan in 1962. Now in the library there are about 300 of the manuscripts donated by Kaufman. Most of them are later copies made in the 18th—19th centuries.

In 1875—1876 two collections of Arabographic manuscripts were acquired: 39 items, which formerly belonged to F. I. Erdman, Professor of the Kazan University, and 17 items — to General-Major A. K. Heinz.

The beginning of systematic scientific forming of the Oriental funds is connected with the name of V. D. Smirnov, Professor of the St. Petersburg University. During his three scientific trips to the Ottoman Turkey (1875, 1879, 1893) he was commissioned by the library to buy manuscripts from the book-bazaars of Istanbul and Bursa. Smirnov was an outstanding scholar — a historian, linguist, and palaeographer. That is why none of the 97 manuscripts he brought from Turkey were casual acquisitions. However, most of them represent copies for common people (not masterpieces of decorative art), though one of these manuscripts attracts attention with its 42 Turkish miniatures.

Members of the clergy contributed to the manuscript fund of the library as well. In the first half of the 19th century it was archimandrite Peter (Kamensky) who was already mentioned above, in the second half of the same century there were bishop Porphyry (Uspensky) and archimandrite Anthonin (Kapustin). Besides Slavonic and Greek books and fragments, their large and prominent collections included numerous manuscripts in a number of the Oriental languages. Porphyry spent 18 years in the Near East as a member of the Russian Orthodox mission. Among his manuscripts there are 23 in Arabic (the earliest one is the Gospel of 1036 written on parchment), 3 Syriac, 4 Georgian, 1 Coptic, and 1 Turkish.

Archimandrite Anthonin, who almost for thirty years remained the head of the Russian Orthodox mission in Jerusalem, combined his religious duties with Biblical archaeology and with collecting ancient manuscripts. The main part of the collection he bequeathed to the library consisted of Hebrew-Arabic, Hebrew and Samaritan manuscripts (13) and various fragments (1176). This part represents a separate fund, while other Arabic, Armenian, Syriac

and Ethiopian manuscripts he left to the library were added to the "new series".

The formation of the Armenian and Georgian funds should be considered separately. In 1880 "The Collection of Great Prince John" — 360 codices and 76 documents of the time when Georgia had been annexed by Russia — was bought from prince I. G. Gruzinsky, the grandson of great prince Jöhn Bagrationi (178 of these manuscripts were returned to Georgia in 1923). In 1892 1 Armenian and 17 Georgian manuscripts were bought from A. N. Gren, Privat-Docent of the Kiev University, and in 1896 — 25 Georgian manuscripts from historian M. P. Sabinin. 44 Armenian codices were transferred to the library from the Armenian-Catholic church in Kamenets-Podolsk.

Private collections represent another source of formation of the library's stocks. As a rule, private collectors were selling their books to the library. The price they were asking for often was lower than the real price of a manuscript. Sometimes the library received books as presents from the collectors. Usually these gifts were single manuscripts or small collections, like, for example, 6 manuscripts in Hindi and Sanskrit which belonged to the Hindus living in Russia. These were donated to the library in 1869 by historian P. I. Sawaitov. In the history of the Public Library the most prominent gift of Oriental materials from a private person was the collection of Indian manuscripts gathered by Prof. I. P. Minaev during his three voyages to India. According to his testament, the collection of 320 manuscripts, 75 of them being written on palm-leaves, was donated by his nieces V. P. and A. P. Schneider.

The first prominent acquisition of the 20th century was the collection of "*Qāḍī-askar* books" transferred to the library from the Simferopol (the Crimea) archives by the order of the Ministry of Internal affairs. It represents the surviving part of the archives of the *khāns* of the Crimea — 121 books containing copies of official documents coming from the office of the judges of the Muslim Supreme Court.

A comparatively small but valuable collection of Persian manuscripts came to the library from the Hermitage in 1913. It was a gift from the *amīr* of Bukhara to Nicholas II on the occasion of the 300th anniversary of the Romanov dynasty.

After the revolution of 1917 the funds were expanded mainly by occasional acquisitions and donations. A number of manuscripts were transferred to the library from other institutions by the decision of the government. Over a thousand manuscripts in 17 Oriental languages came to the library between 1917 and 1995. The first donation of the Soviet period was made by the eminent writer A. M. Gorky who in 1919 presented a copy of the Qur'ān and the Armenian translation of his "Falcon Song". In the same year a collection of 42 manuscripts in Turkish, Arabic and

Persian was donated by Yu. N. Danzas. Twenty years later, in 1939, the library bought 75 codices from A. I. Tamay, a native of Makhachkala. These manuscripts, most of them written in Arabic, reflect the spiritual life of Daghestan of the 17th—early 20th centuries.

Many Arabic, Persian and Hebrew manuscripts came to the library after the Second World War. A large collection of Arabographic manuscripts (103 items) were bought in 1964 from a collector in Kazan (who preferred to stay anonymous). The oldest manuscript of this collection is of 1312.

Professor V. A. Krachkovskaya (the widow of Academician I. Yu. Krachkovsky) gave to the library not only her husband's private library (25 thousand volumes) and furniture from his study, but also his manuscript collection consisting of 80 manuscripts, most of them in Arabic. The books were given to the library in 1971 and 1974. Krachkovsky's collection included many literary works, among them the autograph of "A Description of Russia" by Sheikh Ṭanṭāwī, the Professor of Arabic in the St. Petersburg University in 1847—1861.

In 1976 by the decision of the Ministry of Culture of the Ukraine 122 Arabic, Turkish, Karaim and Hebrew manuscripts were transferred to the library from the Bakhchisarai Historico-Archaeological Museum. Islamic manuscripts of this collection formerly belonged to the libraries of the *khāns* of the Crimea and to the *Zinjīrlī madrasa*, while Hebrew and Karaite books came from a manuscript-depository in Chufut-Qala.

In the 1960s—1970s V. V. Lebedev, member of the library staff, undertook several archaeological expeditions to Makhachkala, Astrakhan, Eupatoria and Tashkent, bringing back 16 manuscripts.

Last years' acquisitions deserve special attention [5]. Here we would like to name only the most important items, like the collection of S. N. Khanukaev from St. Petersburg consisting of 26 items, and some Persian manuscripts of the 14th—16th centuries. The most valuable acquisition is an illuminated copy of al-Būṣīrī's poem *Qaṣīdat al-Burda* made in the 14th century. In 1490 this poem was donated by the Mamluk Sultan Ashrāf Abi Naṣr al-Dīn Qā'itbay to the *waqf* of the *madrasa* he founded himself.

Recent acquisitions demonstrate the tendency which is characteristic of the last two centuries as well — we mean the predominance of Near Eastern and Middle Eastern materials.

Today the total number of Oriental manuscripts in the National Library of Russia exceeds 26 thousand, 19 thousand of them are Hebrew manuscripts, about 4 thousand — Islamic, while the rest are written in the languages of India, Far East, Caucasus, etc.

## 2

Oriental manuscripts (codices), fragments, drawings, block-prints and documents are divided among 47 funds created at different times and for different reasons [6]. Chronologically the manuscripts extend from the 10th century B.C. (Ancient Egyptian papyri) up to the 20th century A.D., while geographically they cover a vast territory from Spain to Japan, from St. Petersburg to Ethiopia. The collection serves as a good illustration of the development of

script and manuscript traditions in the East, the cradle of the first civilisations. One of the permanent exhibitions of the manuscript department demonstrates not only the variability of scripts but also the materials used for writing and artistic designs decorating Oriental manuscripts. Texts written on papyrus, leather, parchment, birch-bark, palm-leaves, plaques of wood and metal, paper, silk and canvas, decorated with patterns and illuminated, show the cultural

*Fig. 1**Fig. 2*

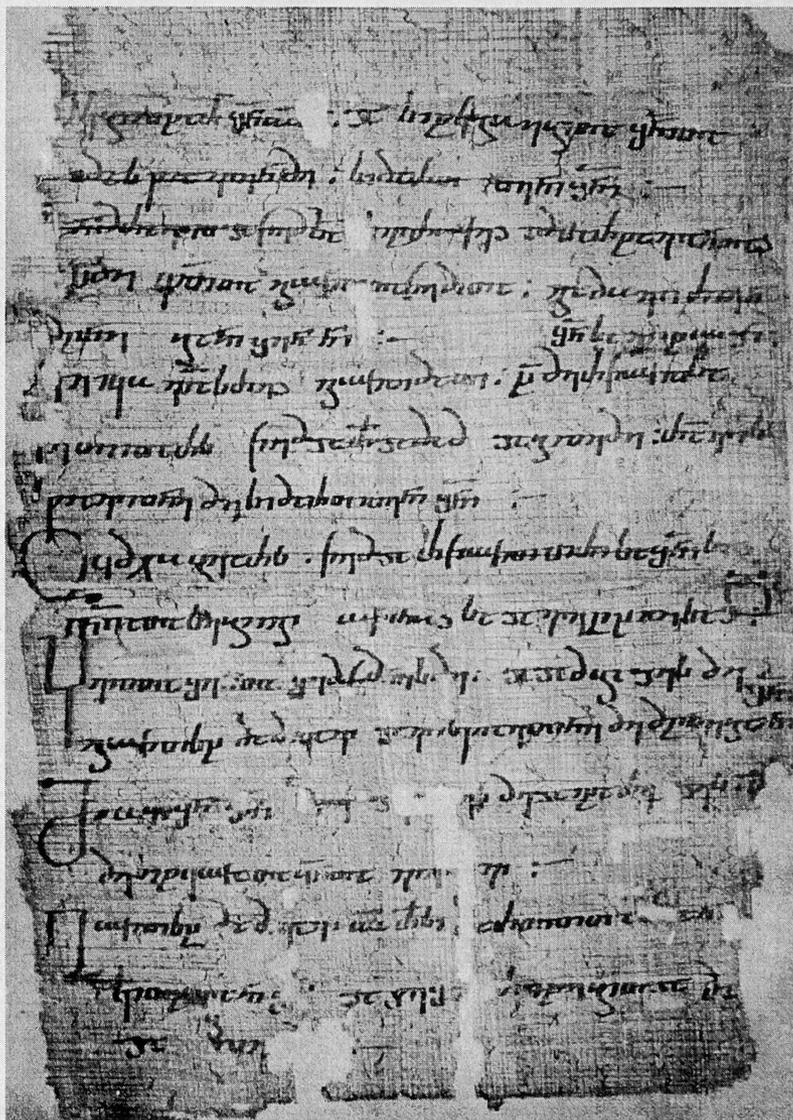


Fig. 3



Fig. 4

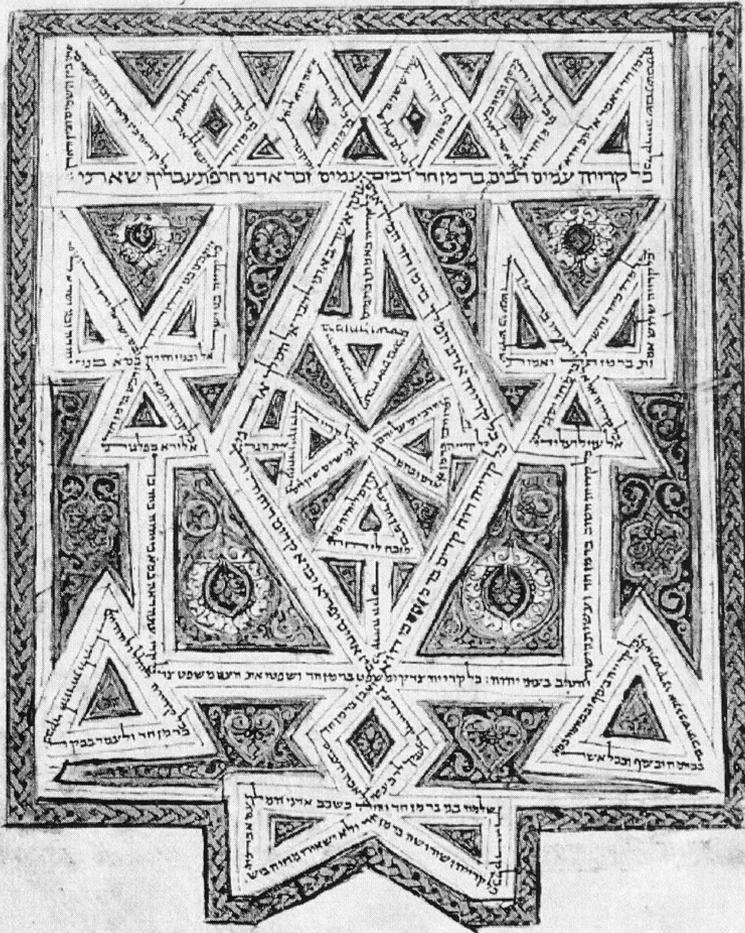


Fig. 5

and historical significance of the literary monuments of the East.

The East is not only the cradle of ancient civilisations but often it is regarded as the motherland of the world religions as well. The collections of Jewish, Christian, Muslim and Buddhist manuscripts in the Public Library give a perfect possibility to survey the Oriental funds from the confessional point of view. Such an approach to the history of book-making seems to be quite justified. Thus it is quite obvious that the design of Arab Christian manuscripts has much more in common with that of Greek-Byzantine, Syriac, and Coptic books than with the decorative patterns of Arab Islamic manuscripts.

The geographic provenance of a manuscript is of no less importance than its language or confessional character. For example, Hebrew manuscripts from European countries can well be considered within the European manuscript tradition; manuscripts in Arabic copied and circulated in Turkey have much more to do with the Turkish than with the Arab tradition.

**Jewish manuscripts in Old Hebrew** are concentrated in the funds of Firkovitch and Anthonin, besides that the collection of Firkovitch includes about 7 thousand manuscripts in **Arabic** written in Hebrew script and about 700 Arabographic Hebrew books. The main part of his collection is Karaite manuscripts — *i. e.* books written or copied by the followers of the Karaite sect in Judaism. Among the most valuable Hebrew books with the exception of the already mentioned Bible of 1010 written on parchment (Codex Petropolitanus or the Cairo Bible), we have at our disposal an illuminated Bible of 929, a complete copy of the Bible made on paper in the 10th century, and an ancient scroll of the Torah on dark brown leather. The materials of the Public Library were used by V. V. Stasov and D. H. Ginzburg who had jointly published an album of Jewish ornaments [7]. Unfortunately, patterns from manuscripts created in Europe were almost completely ignored in this world-famous publication. Meanwhile the Public Library has a copy of the Bible with two illuminated head-pieces close in colours and gilding to the 15th century Italian miniatures. A prayer-book of the 15th century (it came in 1861 from the library of the Hermitage) is decorated with floral and animal head-pieces. Drawings of plants and animals decorate the Bible copied in Germany. In general, manuscripts of European origin (Ashkenazic) are much less numerous in our collection than those originating from the Near East or from Spain (Sephardic). Unfortunately, a few number of Eastern Jewish bindings hinders the study of this side of book-art. As for the sorts of parchment, paper, ink and handwriting (not to mention rare works), the funds of the library provide a good foundation for investigators. Last few years French and Israeli scholars have been working on the catalogue of the most ancient dated (not later than the 14th century) Hebrew manuscripts of the National Library of Russia. This publication will introduce new data on Hebrew palaeography. Undoubtedly the Hebrew manuscripts deserve a special survey (it will be dealt in [8]).

**Manuscripts of the Christian Orient** (translations of the Old and New Testament, liturgy, books on theology, hagiographic literature, historical and literary works) are represented both in old and new copies [9]. Of the 40 Syriac manuscripts 13 date to the first millennium. The oldest

one, a translation of the "History of the Church" by Eusebius, is dated to 462.

Coptic manuscripts include 64 items dating between the 10th and the 18th centuries. Some of these items represent small fragments of parchment leaves. There are also 32 Ethiopian manuscripts in Gehez and Amher dating between the 16th and 19th centuries. Some of them have decorated head-pieces, many have wooden bindings covered with stamped leather. One 15th century Gospel is illuminated.

Many Georgian and Armenian prayer books and Gospels are decorated with miniatures and ornaments. The library has 105 Armenian manuscripts of the 11th—20th centuries and 237 Georgian manuscripts. The oldest of them are two papyrus folios with the Psalms dating to the 8th—9th centuries and an illuminated manuscript with the Four Gospels of 995.

Oriental Christian manuscripts were much influenced by the Byzantine book art. This influence reveals itself in miniatures, decorative patterns and bindings. The famous "Byzantine twist", a characteristic woven pattern is to be seen in the decoration of different Christian books, while the "Calvary" (cross) stamping can be found on Coptic and Armenian bindings. Although Greek-Byzantine manuscripts are not to be classified as Oriental manuscripts, their significance for the development of the book-culture of many nations gives us all grounds to mention them in our paper. The National Library of Russia has the world-famous collection of 904 Greek manuscripts of the 4th—19th centuries. Among them are fragments of the 4th—5th century papyri, the "Purple Gospel" of Mark of the 5th century, fragments of the 4th century Codex Sinaiticus (the Codex was sold in the 1930s to the British Museum), the "Trapezund Gospel" of the 10th century, fragment of the Gospel of Luke of 1043 with a parallel Arabic translation (another part of the same codex belongs to the Bibliothèque Nationale de Paris).

Among the 100 Arab Christian manuscripts the most noteworthy are four illuminated New Testaments (the oldest is of 892), the apocrypha "Dispute between Christ and Satan" of 895—896, Greek-Arab palimpsest of the 9th century.

Two of the four Persian Christian manuscripts were written by European missionaries, two are Persian translations of the Four Gospels, one of which is copied at the end of the 17th—early 18th century by an Armenian (Sargis Luch ibn Amir Malik). The binding of the last one is Persian, but its damaged part shows that the leaves of the book were fastened by raised bands, what was not characteristic of the Islamic manuscript tradition but was quite common for Christian binders.

The Tatar Christian manuscripts are represented by the two volumes of "The Conversion of the Saracens to Christianity" by Anthony Stahovsky, the metropolitan of Tobolsk and Siberia (1726), and by two copies of a treatise on the recognition of the Christian Church by Islam.

European missionaries were very active in China. There is a large list of Catholic block-prints, composed in 1831 (most probably by archimandrite Peter Kamensky). The members of the Russian Orthodox mission in China also translated into Chinese and published several Christian works. These block-prints have the same appearance as ordinary Chinese xylographs. The National Library of Russia has 84 Christian Chinese manuscripts and block-prints

which are kept in two places — in the manuscript department and in the department of Asian and African literature.

The lands of Islam developed their own tradition of shaping manuscripts influenced, first of all, by their reverent attitude to the written word as the third manifestation of God. The dominating role of calligraphy and high demands of the styles of writing have elevated the calligraphy art to an extraordinary height. Excellent samples of geometrically verified and harmonious handwritings can be found in different regions and at different periods, e. g. in the Mamluk Egypt, in Iran under the Timurids and the Safavids, in India under the Moghul dynasty, in Central Asia and the Ottoman Turkey, etc. Special styles were created in such Islamic centres as Daghestan and the Volga region. Such a variety was consolidated into a single entity by the Arabic script, which naturally came into use with the adoption of Islam and recognition of the Qur'ān as its principle book. Despite all these specific regional features it is often not easy to define to what particular region or period some of these features belong. The traditional "imitativeness", deliberate, even though creative, reproduction of samples established earlier either in one's own country or in other cultural centres, constant appeal to the achievements of one's own state or of the neighbouring countries — all these factors have shaped Islamic book even more tightly into a single cultural phenomenon. Even the language does not always indicate the origin of the manuscript, since many Muslim peoples, from Africa to India, were writing in Arabic, Persian was used in Central Asia, Turkey and India, while Uzbek and Turkish works were copied in Iran.

Constant migrations of books and of the artists, who made them, also contributed to the development of patterns and methods of book-decoration, to the creation of a single "Islamic book concept". It could be defined as the harmony of all the components of the book: paper (usually sandpaper); composition — both in space (a certain correlation between the text and the margins) and in colour; decorative patterns (frontispieces, *'unwāns*, head-pieces), miniatures and binding. Of major importance was the palette: the combination of coloured and glittering ink, margins, gold, multicolour patterns and miniatures, stamping (often gilded) of leather, or colours of lacquered bindings affected the reader on the level of subconsciousness. The aesthetic function of Islamic book was no less significant than its informative function. It proves to be that, as a rule, the higher was the social level of the reader to whom the manuscript was addressed, the lower was the significance of the information provided by the text. The aesthetic demands of "educated commoners" were completely satisfied by mass production of good quality copies.

The art of Islamic manuscript is well represented in the Public Library. Among 2000 Arabic codices and fragments there is a whole collection of Kufic Qur'āns formerly belonging to J. J. Marseilles. Most of these manuscripts, coming from the oldest mosque of Cairo built in 643 by 'Amr ibn al-Ās, date to the 8th—11th centuries. Among the old Qur'āns there is a 10th century illuminated copy made on paper. Eight so-called Mamluk manuscripts of the 14th—15th centuries represent the most valuable items of the Arabic fund. Two of them formerly belonged to the *madrasa* of Sultan Naṣr al-Dīn Qā'itbay. One Christian service book of the 13th—14th centuries (The Sanctification of the City of Alexandria by the Patriarch) in Coptic with Arabic translation, is also decorated in the Mamluk

tradition. The combination of "Islamic" illumination with "Christian" contents reveals the fact that the confessional factor is not always the dominating one. Sometimes regional features characteristic of the neighbouring community prevail over the original indigenous traditions of manuscript-decoration. Of the original Arabic manuscripts noteworthy is one volume of "Geography" by al-Idrīsī (14th century, 37 maps). Among the Arabic manuscripts copied in Iran there are: 1) a treatise on constellations by al-Šūfī (1616, 76 miniatures and drawings); 2) "The Hundred Names of Allah"; 3) separate samples of calligraphy (*qit'a*) collected into albums (*muraqqa*). A considerable number of Arabic manuscripts in the Public Library were copied in Turkey, Central Asia, and Daghestan. All these manuscripts are well-done "everyday" copies.

The number of fine illuminated Persian manuscripts is so huge that any attempt to enumerate even the most valuable of them is doomed to failure from the beginning. Of a thousand manuscripts 135 are decorated with miniatures — beginning with the *Shāh-nāma* of 1333 [10] up to the poetry of the first half of the 19th century. Different schools are represented here, namely, of Herat, Shiraz, Qazvin and Mashhad, Maverannahr and, especially, of Tabriz. Miniatures in two copies of the Khusraw Dihlawī's poem "Leila and Majnun" executed in the Tabriz style are ascribed to Bihzād. Several miniatures in *Gūy wa Chawgān* by 'Arīfī copied by Shah Tahmāsp in the days of his youth are attributed to Sulṭān Muḥammad, while two tinted drawings from *Dīwān* by Shāhī can be ascribed to Muḥammadī, a miniaturist from Tabriz. One album-*muraqqa* contains several signed miniatures by the famous artist from Isfahan Riḍā'ī 'Abbāsī. Moghul miniatures are also well represented in the same album. Several manuscripts from the collection of the *amir* of Bukhara are illustrated with Kashmir miniatures. The fund includes samples of many famous masters of the *qalam*: Sulṭān 'Alī Mashhadī (the autograph of his treatise on calligraphy) [11], Shāh Maḥmūd Nishāpūrī, Mir 'Imād.

Persian manuscripts impress not only with their miniatures, calligraphy and decorations but with their bindings as well. In keeping with the rules of harmony, the book-cover, its initial purpose being to protect the manuscript, developed into a piece of fine art. Persian cardboard-paper bindings were covered with leather, which was either decorated with stamped medallions, often gilded, or bore some composition — a kind of stamped miniature. Iran produced also such a phenomenon as lacquered binding: decorative pattern or miniature painted on the binding were covered with lacquer. There are combined covers: gold stamped medallions on black lacquered background with tiny gold ornamentation.

Some of the Turkish manuscripts in the Public Library are decorated after the Iranian tradition. These are mainly works either of the Uzbek poet 'Alī-Shīr Nawā'ī or of the Turkish poet Aḥmadī (Ahmedi). Most of the 400 Turkish codices of the 15th—20th centuries were copied in Turkey and in Central Asia for common readers. Kurdish manuscripts (56 items, 18th—19th centuries), are similar in appearance to Turkish manuscripts.

Islamic manuscripts are represented in the Public Library not only by codices but also by different documents: *firmāns* of the Shahs of Iran and of the Ottoman Sultans, *waqf* documents, contracts, letters, court registers, etc. Among the finest samples of decorated official documents

is the charter granted by the Turkish Sultan Osman II to the family of a Jewish woman named Cyra [12]. It is written in exquisite *divāni* script and decorated with a multicolour *tughrā*-monogram.

It is difficult to consider books from the Far East and from South-East Asia from the point of view of their religious attribution. Only Buddhist literature can be treated as a single phenomenon. One of the characteristic features of Buddhist manuscripts from India to Kalmykia are long horizontal folios deriving their shape from the leaves of the palm-tree. Palm-leaves were not bound but tied together with a cord through holes made on both sides, they were kept between two wooden panels. Manuscripts written on paper and block-prints basically retained the same shape (but without cord), though other forms also may appear.

Indian manuscripts are most fully represented in the library: there are about 400 of them, written in different languages (Sanskrit, Pali, Hindi, etc.), on paper (Indian and European) and on palm-leaves (90 items), on canvas and even on metal plaques. There are manuscripts with miniatures — representations of deities. Of special interest is an album containing 76 drawings of the Bengal school (water-colour and Indian ink covered with lacquer). The same can be said about an album of miniatures of the Deccan school representing the rulers and officials of Golconda. The oldest Indian manuscript is of 1430.

Tibetan manuscripts (161 items) date between the 18th and the 19th centuries. Among the most interesting is a fragment of a small poem on birch-bark. There is also the *Mahāyāna-sūtra* written in gold on black leaves concealed between gilded panels. Four *thanka* are included in this

fund as well. Mongol (39 items) and Kalmyk (14 items) manuscripts and xylographs also date between the 18th and the 19th centuries.

Far Eastern materials are not abundant in the funds of the library. The only exception is the Chinese fund formed mainly by Russian missionaries. There are about 300 Chinese, 70 Manchu and 60 Japanese manuscripts, block-prints, drawings, maps and other documents of the 18th—20th centuries, which are kept not only in the Oriental fund, but in the Russian funds as well. Of great interest are albums with ethnographic drawings.

Our survey of the funds would be incomplete if we do not mention some “exotic” manuscripts, like Indonesian (3 items, 2 of them written on bark), Siamese (4 items, written on folded black paper) and Chaldean. The main item of the last fund is a convolute of 6 papyrus and 7 paper leaves. The papyrus contains text in an unknown language written in special characters. Paper leaves (paper of the end of the 15th—early 16th centuries) contain what is supposed to be a Latin translation of the “Chaldean” text — a letter from rabbi Ismael to lawyer Moses dated A.D. 33. However, already in the 19th century the scholars doubted the authenticity of this document.

It should be added that private archives of several prominent orientalist and translators from Oriental languages, namely, M. M. Bernstein, A. F. Margolin, A. L. Troitskaya, A. N. Samoilovich, N. N. Martinovich, L. H. Vilsker, A. G. Shprintsin, are also preserved in the manuscript department.

### 3

The library means not only funds, but also librarians, specialists in conservation and readers. All these people in different ways do their best to prolong the life of the old manuscripts. Many famous orientalist of the past worked in the Public Library [13]. One of the first Russian orientalist, Iakynth (Bichurin), was its honorary librarian. In 1829 he composed “The Register of Chinese and Manchu Books of the Imperial Public Library”, which includes a description of the block-prints of the manuscript department [14].

Honorary librarians, Academicians F. F. Charmois and Ch. D. Fraehn worked on the description of the Ardabil and Akhaltsihe collections, Profs. O. I. Senkovsky, F. Demonge and M. D. Topchibashev were also invited to work on the collection. This project was accomplished in 1832. The catalogue of the Oriental manuscripts was presented to Nicholas I, who ordered to print it in Russian and in French. This publication never came into being. However, later its data were used by B. A. Dorn in his catalogue of 1852 (see above). Dorn's catalogue included also the description of Armenian and Georgian manuscripts made by Acad. M. I. Brosset (worked in the library in 1841—1843) and the description of Arabographic manuscripts made by the corresponding member of the Academy I. F. Gotwald (worked in the Public Library from 1841 to 1849). Dorn worked in the library from 1844 to 1869. Being the head of two sections — the Oriental section (printed books) and the section of theology, he also was taking part in the everyday routine work.

Prof. V. D. Smirnov worked in the library in 1874—1908 as a volunteer and from 1909 as a librarian and the

head of the Oriental department. Noticeable traces of his activities were left in the department of manuscripts as well. The descriptions of manuscripts he made are published in the Library Reports. They could have formed a whole volume of the catalogue of Arabic, Persian and Turkish manuscripts which the library was receiving during the 48 years Smirnov spent in it. Smirnov was well acquainted with the Muslim manuscript tradition, he was an expert in Islamic literature, history and culture. His descriptions reflect his profound knowledge, intuition and excellent understanding of palaeography.

At the same time, between 1872 and 1919, in the library worked semitologist A. Ya. Harkavi, the first orientalist to be enlisted to the library staff. His services were required in connection with the acquisition of the Firkovitch collection of Hebrew manuscripts. During his stay in the library Harkavi had not only sorted and described the collection of Anthonin and over 11 thousand books and fragments from the Firkovitch collection, but also he had published two catalogues [15], several manuscripts from the collection of the library and a great number (several hundred) articles and papers in Russian and European periodicals. The sphere of his interests included the history of the Jews, Hebrew literature, ethnography, the history of Jewish sects, of the Karaites and the Khazars, the history of the Jews in Russia. Harkavi, being “of Jewish creed and coming from the lower middle-class of Novogrudok” (Byelorussia), achieved the rank of State Councillor, was awarded the order of St. Stanislaus, St. Anna and St. Vladimir and the Spanish order of Isabella the Catholic.

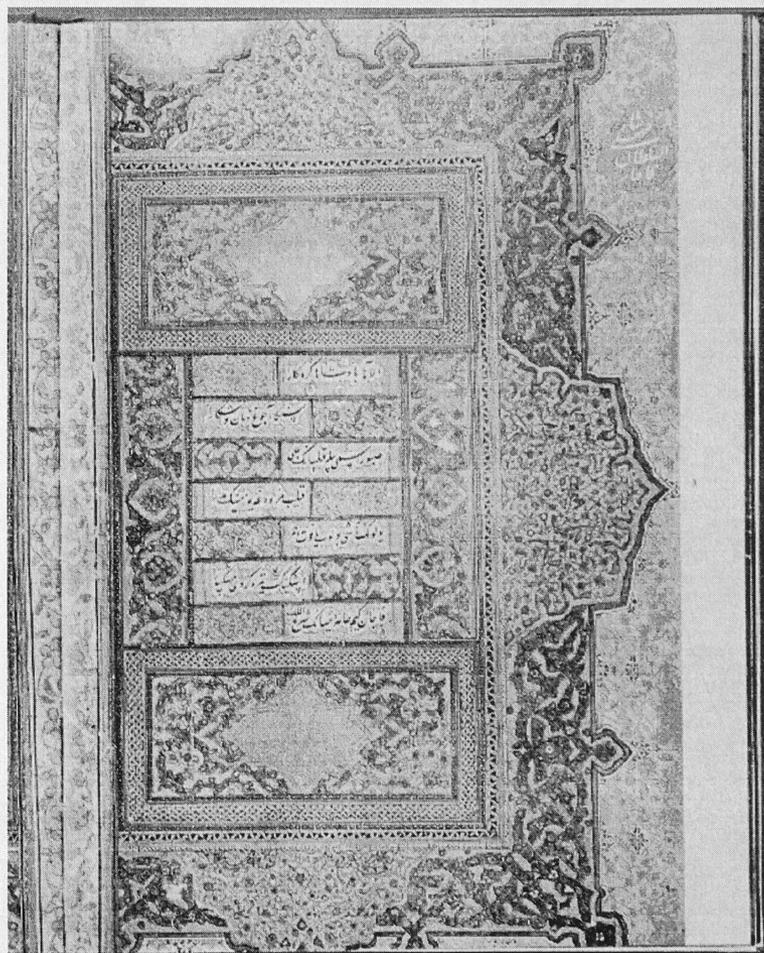
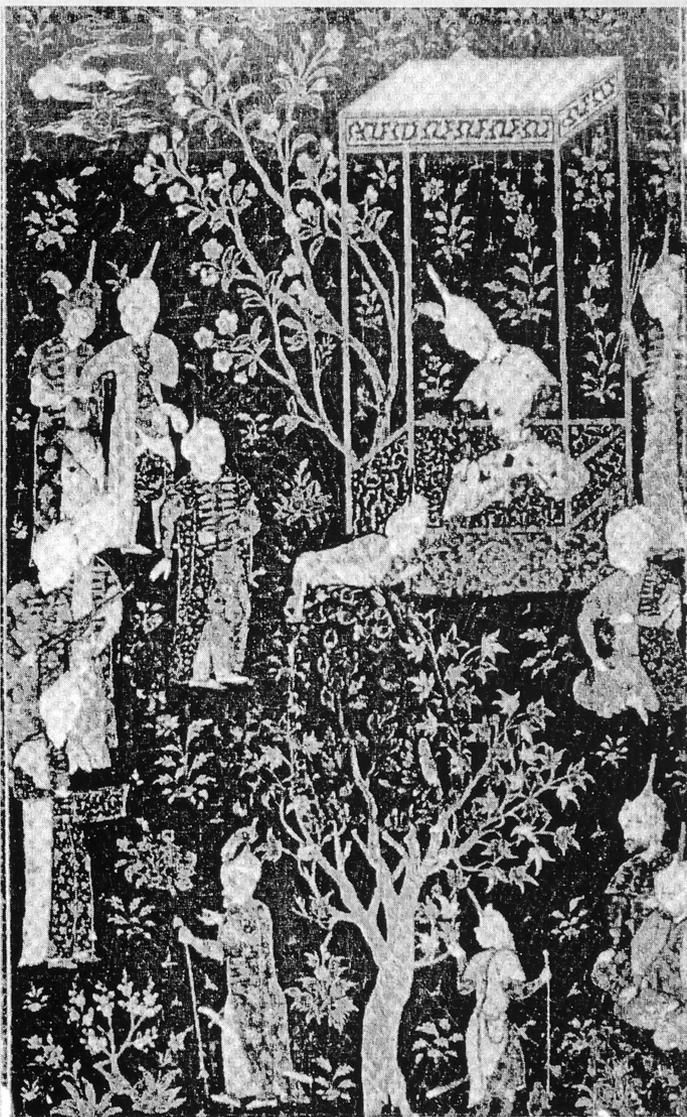


Fig. 6





*Fig. 9*

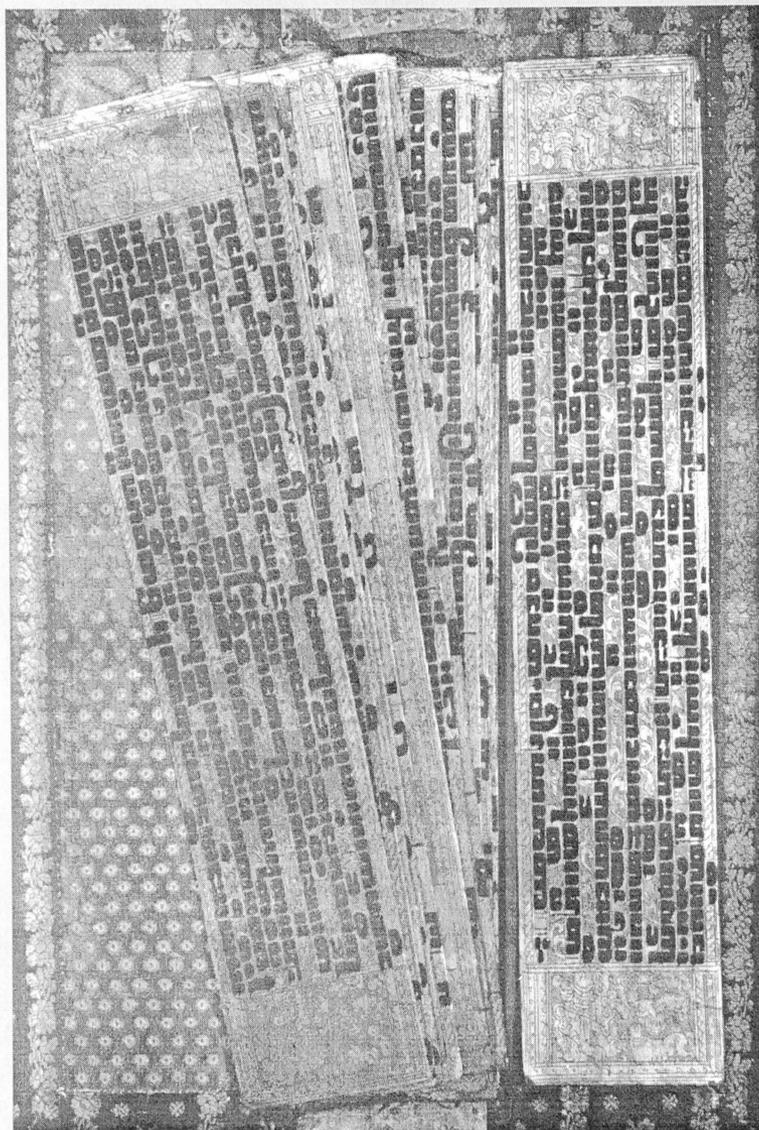


Fig. 10

Though Harkavi spent all his life describing Hebrew and Arabic-Hebrew manuscripts, he never became their official keeper. Usually only one librarian was responsible for giving manuscripts to the readers. From 1844 it was A. F. Bychkov, who later (1868) became the director of the Public Library. He was succeeded by his son, I. A. Bychkov, who stayed in this office till 1944. Both the father and the son were slavists, but they were also well acquainted with all the funds of the manuscript department. Bychkov served as a consultant to many orientologists, such as P. K. Kokovtsev, A. Ya. Borisov, B. A. Turaev [16], N. D. Mironov [17], V. V. Barthold, N. Ya. Marr. Marr became the first (and so far the only) orientalist to be the director of the library (he stayed in this office between 1924 and 1930). Such prominent scholars as N. V. Pigulevskaya (between 1922 and 1928) and I. I. Ravrebe (from 1931 to 1937) worked in the department before the war. Pigulevskaya made the catalogue of Syriac manuscripts preserved in the libraries of Leningrad [18], Ravrebe continued Harkavi's work on Hebrew manuscripts.

During the war (1941—1945) the funds of the manuscript department were evacuated from Leningrad to Melekes (Ulyanovsk district). Despite all the efforts made by the librarians the conditions of the books' keeping were not always good because of constant changes of temperature and humidity. After the war the collection of Firkovitch was re-arranged by K. B. Starkova. In 1950—1958 A. L. Troitskaya, who worked in the manuscript department, described the archives of the *khāns* of Qoqand [19]. Her successor was G. I. Kostygova, who resumed the publication of the *Vostochnyi Sbornik* ("Oriental Collection", its first issue came out in 1926) and prepared the catalogue of Persian manuscripts [20].

In the 1950s—1960s turkologist L. V. Dmitrieva, egyptologist V. I. Evgenova, coptologist A. I. Elanskaya [21], arabist A. I. Mihaylova, indologist V. S. Vorobyev-Desyatovskiy, kurdologist M. B. Rudenko [22], mongolist E. N. Sankrityayana, specialist in Georgian

studies R. R. Orbeli and armenologist K. N. Yuzbashyan were invited to catalogue the funds. At that time a number of survey articles on the funds and several new catalogues were published by them. Much has been done on the catalogues of Arabic and Hebrew materials by V. V. Lebedev. He published the catalogue of Arabic documents and Arabic literary works written in Hebrew script [23].

In the 1990s K. S. Yahontov published two catalogues, one of Manchu and the other of Chinese manuscripts and xylographs in the Public Library [24]. Scholar from Shri Lanka Handurukande helped to make the list of Indian manuscripts on palm-leaves. The catalogue of Samaritan documents was prepared by L. H. Vilsker who worked in the department of Asian and African literature [25], while the catalogue of Ethiopian manuscripts was compiled by V. M. Platonov [26].

During the two hundred years of the existence of the Public Library not only several catalogues of manuscripts were prepared, but a number of facsimile-editions, a lot of monographs and articles were published as well [27]. A few publications on Persian art do not include reproductions of miniatures from the manuscript department. Hebrew manuscripts often attract the attention of scholars, starting from the famous Bible of 1010, which became the base of the Bible's edition made by Kittel and Kahle [28]. Up to now five issues of the "Oriental Collection" have appeared [29]. The "Codicological Collection" dedicated to the study of Oriental bindings is expected soon. Oriental codicology is a new trend which began to develop after the institution of a specialised division within the manuscript department — a codicological laboratory provided with modern equipment [30]. The department, which includes Russian, Slavonic, Greek, Western and Oriental funds, provides a unique opportunity for comparative codicological studies. Collected and preserved by several generations of scholars, librarians, missionaries and officials, manuscript treasures of the National Library of Russia have become a part of the Russian culture and history.

## Notes

1. During 200 years of its existence the library changed its name several times. From 1795 up to 1810 it was called the Imperial Library, up to 1917 — Imperial Public, up to 1925 — Russian Public, up to 1932 — State Public Library in Leningrad, up to 1992 — Saltykov-Shchedrin State Public, since 1992 — National Library of Russia. On the history of the library see *The National Library of Russia, 1795—1995* (St. Petersburg, 1995).

2. On the formation of the funds see V. V. Lebedev, O. V. Vasil'eva, "Iz istorii formirovaniia vostochnykh rukopisnykh fondov GPB" ("On the history of formation of the State Public Library funds of Oriental manuscripts"), *Vostochnyi Sbornik*. Gosudarstvennaia Publichnaia biblioteka im. M. E. Saltykova-Shchedrina, fasc. 4 (Leningrad, 1990), pp. 10—31.

3. For more detailed information see Yu. E. Borshchevskii, "Istoriia priobreteniia Ardebil'skogo sobraniia rukopisei Rossiei" ("The history of acquisition of the Ardabil collection by Russia"), *Formirovanie gumanisticheskikh traditsii otechestvennogo vostokovedeniia* (Moscow, 1984), pp. 204—17.

4. *Catalogues des manuscrits et xylographes orientaux de la Bibliothèque Imp. publique de St. Petersbourg*, ed. B. Dorn (St. Petersburg, 1852); reprinted in Leipzig in 1978.

5. O. V. Vasil'eva, "New acquisitions of Oriental manuscripts into the National Library of Russia" (forthcoming).

6. V. V. Lebedev, O. V. Vasil'eva, "Vostochnye rukopisnye fondy Publichnoi biblioteki im. M. E. Saltykova-Shchedrina", ("The Oriental manuscript funds of the Saltykov-Shchedrin Public Library"), *Archaeographia orientalis: Materialy Vsesoiuznogo rabocheho soveshchaniia po problemam vostochnoi arheografii*. Leningrad, 1—4 marta 1988 (Moscow, 1990), pp. 93—119.

7. D. Ginzburg et V. Stassof, *L'ornement hebraique* (St. Petersburg, 1886); reprint: *Illuminations from Hebrew Bibles of Leningrad* (Jerusalem, 1989).

8. O. V. Vasil'eva, B. I. Zaikovskii, "Hebrew manuscripts in the National Library of Russia" (forthcoming).

9. O. V. Vasil'eva, "Khristianskie rukopisi Vostoka v Rossiiskoi natsional'noi biblioteki" ("Christian Oriental manuscripts in the National Library of Russia") (forthcoming).

10. A. T. Adamova, L. T. Gyuzalyan, *Miniatiury rukopisi poëmy "Shahname" 1333 goda* (The Miniatures in the *Shāh-nāma* Manuscript of 1333) (Leningrad, 1985).
11. G. I. Kostygova, "Traktat po kalligrafii Sultan-Ali Meshhedī" ("A treatise on calligraphy by Sulṭān-'Alī Mashhadī"), *Vostochnyi Sbornik*. Gosudarstvennaia Publichnaia biblioteka im. M. E. Saltykova-Shchedrina, fasc. 2 (Leningrad, 1957), pp. 111—63.
12. Published by V. D. Smirnov in *Vostochnye Zapiski* of the faculty of Oriental Languages of the St. Petersburg University (St. Petersburg, 1895), pp. 35—78.
13. On the orientalist working in the library see *Sotrudniki Rossiiskoi natsional'noi biblioteki — deiateli nauki i kul'tury: Biograficheskii slovar'* (The Staff of the Russian National Library — Specialists in Science and Culture: the Biography Dictionary), vol. I: *Imperatorskaia Publichnaia biblioteka: 1795—1917* (The Imperial Public Library: 1795—1917) (St. Petersburg, 1995).
14. In 1929 private archives of Iakinth — his translations of Chinese works with comments on them — came to the library as a part of the collection of Alexandro-Nevskaya Lavra.
15. *Catalog der hebräischen und samaritanischen Handschriften der Kais. Öffentlichen Bibliothek in St. Petersburg*, Bd. I: A. Harkayi und H. L. Strak, *Catalog der hebräischen Bibelhandschriften der Kais. Öffentlichen Bibliothek in St. Petersburg*, Bd. 2: A. Ya. Garkavi, *Opisanie samaritianskikh rukopisei, khroniashchikhsia v Imperatorskoi Publichnoi biblioteki. Opisanie pergamentnykh rukopisei samaritianskogo Piatiknizhīa i perevodov k nemu: Varianty k samaritianskomu Targumu* (A Description of Samaritan Manuscripts Preserved in the Imperial Public Library. A Description of the Samaritan Pentateuch Written on Parchment and of its Translations: the Samaritan Targum's Versions) (St. Petersburg, 1875).
16. B. A. Turaev, *Ėfiopskie rukopisi v S.-Peterburge* (Ethiopian Manuscripts in St. Petersburg) (St. Petersburg, 1906).
17. N. D. Mironov, *Katalog indiiskikh rukopisei Rossiiskoi Publichnoi biblioteki: Sobranie I. P. Minaeva i nekotorye drugie* (A Catalogue of Indian Manuscripts in Russian Public Library: I. P. Minayev's Collection and Other Ones), fasc. 1 (Petrograd, 1918).
18. N. V. Pigulevskaia, "Katalog siriiskikh rukopisei Leningrada" ("A catalogue of Syriac manuscripts in Leningrad"), *Palestinskiĭ Sbornik*, fasc. 6 (69) (Leningrad, 1960).
19. A. L. Troitskaia, *Katalog arkhiva kokandskikh khanov XIX veka* (The Catalogue of the Qoqand Khans Archives) (Moscow, 1968).
20. G. I. Kostygova, *Persidskie i tadzhikskie rukopisi Gosudarstvennoi Publichnoi biblioteki im. M. E. Saltykova-Shchedrina: Alfavitnyi katalog* (Persian and Tajik Manuscripts in the Saltykov-Shchedrin State Public Library: the Alphabetical Catalogue), fasc. 1—2 (Leningrad, 1988).
21. A. I. Elanskaia, "Koptskie rukopisi Gosudarstvennoi Publichnoi biblioteki im. M. E. Saltykova-Shchedrina", ("Coptic manuscripts in the Saltykov-Shchedrin State Public Library"), *Palestinskiĭ sbornik*, fasc. 20 (83) (Leningrad, 1969).
22. M. B. Rudenko, *Opisanie kurdsikh rukopisei leningradskikh sobraniĭ* (A Description of Kurdish Manuscripts from the Leningrad Collections) (Moscow, 1961).
23. V. V. Lebedev, *Arabskie dokumenty IX—XX vv.: Katalog* (Arabic Documents of the 9th—20th Centuries: A Catalogue) (Leningrad, 1978); idem., *Arabskie sochineniia v evreiskoi grafike: Katalog rukopisei* (Arabic Works Written in Hebrew Script: A Catalogue of Manuscripts) (Leningrad, 1987).
24. K. S. Iakhontov, *Man'chzhurskie rukopisi i ksilografy Gosudarstvennoi Publichnoi biblioteki imeni M. E. Saltykova-Shchedrina: Sistemacheskii katalog* (Manchu Manuscripts and Block-Prints of the Saltykov-Shchedrin State Public Library: a Systematic Catalogue) (Leningrad, 1991); K. S. Iakhontov, *Kitaiskie rukopisi i ksilografy Publichnoi biblioteki: Sistemacheskii katalog* (Chinese Manuscripts and Block-Prints of the Public Library: Systematic Catalogue) (Leningrad, 1993).
25. L. H. Vil'sker, *Samaritianskie dokumenty Gosudarstvennoi Publichnoi biblioteki imeni M. E. Saltykova-Shchedrina: Katalog* (Samaritan Documents of the Saltykov-Shchedrin State Public Library: a Catalogue) (St. Petersburg, 1992).
26. V. M. Platonov, *Ėfiopskie rukopisi v sobraniakh Sanki-Peterburga: Katalog* (Ethiopian Manuscripts in the Collections of St. Petersburg: a Catalogue) (St. Petersburg, 1996).
27. For example, V. V. Vel'iaminov-Zernov, *Slovar' dzhagataisko-turetskii* (Chaghatay-Turkish Dictionary) (St. Petersburg, 1868); *Me'or 'aiin* ("Svetoch glaza"): *Karaimskaia grammatika drevneevreiskogo iazyka po rukopisi 1208 g.* Faksimile. Izdanie teksta, perevod s drevneevreiskogo iazyka, issledovanie i kommentarii M. N. Zislina (*Me'or 'ayin* ("The Light of Eye"). Karaite Hebrew Grammar. The Manuscript of 1208. Facsimile, edition of the text, Russian translation from Hebrew, research and commentary by M. N. Zislin) (Moscow, 1990); Abdurrahman Dzhami, *Salman i Absal'*, ed. K. S. Ayni, with introductory articles by K. S. Ayni and M. M. Ashrafi (Dushanbe, 1977).
28. *Biblia Hebraica*, eds. R. Kittel, P. Kahle (Stuttgartiae, 1937).
29. In 1926, 1957, 1972, 1990, 1993.
30. D. O. Tsyppin, O. V. Vasil'eva, "Codicological analysis of manuscripts by means of modern optico-electronic methods and some issues of restoration", *Proceedings of the Second International Seminar on the Care and Conservation of Manuscripts. Kopenhagen, Oct. 14—15, 1995* (forthcoming).

### Illustrations

**Fig. 1.** The National Library of Russia.

**Fig. 2.** The Manuscript Department.

**Fig. 3.** "Psalter", Georgian papyrus, 8th—9th centuries (call number G.N.S. 10), 20.0 × 15.0 cm.

**Fig. 4.** Apostle Luke, miniature from the Gospel in Arabic, 1036 (call number Dorn 1), 17.0 × 12.0 cm.

**Fig. 5.** "Cairo Bible", 1010, Masorah (commentary) as an ornament (call number B. 19A), 34.0 × 30.0 cm.

- Fig. 6.** 'Alī-shīr Nawā'ī, an early *Diwān*, 1465—1466, Herat. Calligrapher Sulṭān-'Alī Mashhadī (call number Dorn 564), 33.5 × 23.0 cm.
- Fig. 7.** “Purple Qur'ān”, 12th—13th centuries, North Africa (call number Dorn 41), 24.0 × 16.0 cm.
- Fig. 8.** al-Ṣūfī, “Treatise on Constellations”, 1606, Nain (Iran) (call number A.N.S. 191), 24.0 × 14.0 cm.
- Fig. 9.** Persian lacquered book cover, 16th century, Tabriz (call number P.N.S. 267), 33.0 × 21.5 cm.
- Fig. 10.** *Kammavāca*, a treatise on duties of Buddhist monks and nuns (in Pali language), 18th—19th centuries. Metal gilded plates (call number I.N.S. 26), 10.0 × 50.5 cm.
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