

MEMORY OF THE WORLD REGISTER

TARIKH-E-KHANDAN-E-TIMURIYAH

(India)

Ref N° 2010-62

PART A – ESSENTIAL INFORMATION

1. SUMMARY

The *Tarikh-e-Khandan-e-Timuriyah* is a richly illustrated and the only extant copy of a manuscript which deals with the history of Timur and his descendants in Iran and India, including the Mughal rulers Babur, Humayun and Akbar. The manuscript was compiled in the 22nd regnal year of Akbar (1577-78 A.D).

This manuscript is one of the the most valued possessions of the Khuda Bakhsh Oriental Public Library, Patna, an autonomous institution under the Ministry of Culture, Government of India. The name of the author and the original title of the work are not given in the text; but an endorsement, by one of its former owners, mentions the title as “*Tarikh-e Khandan-e Timuriya*”. This is fairly correct because it contains the history of the family of Timur, the great Central Asian ruler and conqueror. It appears that the text was written primarily to provide basic reference-material to Abul Fazl who was then compiling the official history of Akbar’s reign – the *Akbar Namah*, which includes a history of Akbar’s ancestors. Commonly, this text is also referred to as *Timur Namah*. In the year 2006, it was identified as a Manuscript Treasure of India by Ministry of Culture, Government of India.

The *Tarikh-e-Khandan-e- Timuriyah* recounts the history of the Timurids i.e. of Timur and his successors in Iran and India. This richly illustrated manuscript was written and created twenty two years into the reign of the great Mughal emperor and a descendant of Timur, Jalaluddin Mohammad Akbar, in 1577-78 A.D. The authorship and calligraphy of the manuscript is ascribed to numerous court historians and scribes, since it is a collective work. Incidentally, this was the case with most of the Mughal illustrated manuscripts. Attesting to its authenticity and status as a royal copy, an brief note at the beginning of the manuscript, by Emperor Shah Jahan, in his own hand, states that this history was written during the time of “Shah Baba”, the name by which Emperor Shah Jahan affectionately called his grandfather, Akbar. There are also several notes and seals of Mughal nobles, testifying to its authenticity. Unfortunately, it is incomplete at both ends on account of which the Introduction has an abrupt beginning and the account ends with the events of the second campaign in Gujarat in 19th regnal year. Since the manuscript was completed in the 22nd regnal year, it therefore appears that the account of the intervening 3 years are missing.

Abul Fazl, Akbar’s official biographer, has listed the nine most important illustrated Persian manuscripts commissioned by Akbar in his account of the Emperor’s life and rule: *Akbar Namah* complemented by the *Ain-i-Akbari*. While the *Akbar Namah* is the authentic account of Akbar’s reign, the *Ain-e Akbari* is virtually a gazetteer on Mughal administration under Akbar. Eight of these manuscripts, mentioned by Abul Fazl, have been identified. But the ninth, the *Chingiz Namah* is still unknown. Some scholars suggest that this Timurid history, *Tarikh-e Khandan-e Timuriyah* could be the *Chingiz Namah* or the ninth, as yet unidentified, manuscript in Abul Fazl’s list of important manuscripts commissioned by Akbar.

The manuscript is remarkable for the number and splendour of its illuminations, all representing that delicate and highly refined style that was the trademark of the important artists of

the imperial atelier under Akbar's patronage. Some of the miniatures contain the names of the painters. A total of 51 artists including the leading masters of the time like Daswant, Miskin, Madho Mukund, Haidar Kashmiri, Miskeen, Manohar and Basawan have been mentioned. Most of them have been included by Abul Fazl in his list of eminent artists at Akbar's court. In most cases, more than one artist has worked on some of the 133 paintings contained in the manuscript. Sieges and battles comprise the principal themes of the paintings, as may be expected of a chronicle of generations of conquerors and rulers.

The manuscript is written in beautiful bold nastaleeq, within coloured and gold-ruled borders. The paper is of an excellent quality, of a sharp cream colour and with a slight ivory gloss.

2. DETAILS OF THE NOMINATOR

2.1 Name (person or organization) :

- (i) Dr Imtiaz Ahmad, Director of the Khuda Bakhsh Oriental Public Library, Patna Bihar
- (ii) Ms Roopa Srinivasan, Director, Ministry of Culture, Government of India

2.2. Relationship to the documentary heritage nominated :

Dr. Imtiaz Ahmad is the Director of the Khuda Bakhsh Library, Patna, an autonomous institution under the Ministry of Culture, which has been declared as an Institution of National Importance by an Act of Parliament (1969). The Institution is fully funded by the Ministry of Culture, Government of India. The Director is the custodian of the said document and is therefore responsible for its maintenance, cataloguing and preservation. Ms Roopa Srinivasan is the Director, looking after matters related to the Memory of the World Register, in the Ministry of Culture, Government of India.

2.3 Contact person(s) : Both of the above are in charge of the nomination process.

2.4 Contact details (include address, phone, fax, email)

- (1) Dr. Imtiaz Ahmad, Director
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- (2) Ms Roopa Srinivasan
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India-110001
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3 IDENTITY AND DESCRIPTION OF THE DOCUMENTARY HERITAGE

3.1 Name and identification details of the item being nominated

- (i) Title : TARIKH-E KHANDAN-E TIMURIYAH
- (ii) Other title : Timur Namah
- (iii) Catalogue Number : H.L.(Hand List) No. 107 Cat No. 551
- (iv) Folios: 338,
- (v) Size: Folio Size: 15¾” x 10½” ; Text Size: 10½” x 6½”
- (vi) Illustrations : 133 (Mughal School of painting)
- (vii) Script : Nastaleeq
- (ix) Language : Persian
- (x) Date : Compiled during 16th century AD.
- (xii) Material : Handmade paper of sharp cream colour and with a slight ivory gloss

3.2 Description

3.3

Khuda Bakhsh Oriental Public Library, Patna has one of the largest collections in the world, of manuscripts that relate to Islamic heritage and is well-known internationally for its rare and unique collection of Arabic and Persian manuscripts. The documentary heritage, the *Tarikh-e Khandan-e Timuriyah*, on account of its uniqueness is the Library’s most prized possession.

The work presents an illustrated history of the Timurid family to which the Mughal rulers of India also belonged. This work spans the period from the year of Timur’s birth to the 22nd year of Akbar’s reign.

The history opens with Timur’s march in search of Amir Husayn, a Chief in Central Asia, (fol.7a), which corresponds with the account given in the printed edition of the *Zafar Namah*, vol.I, p.60, which is an authentic history of the reign of Timur.

4 JUSTIFICATION FOR INCLUSION / ASSESSMENT AGAINST CRITERIA

Uniqueness and Significance :

The interrelationship between art and the social, cultural and political institutions that sustain it, is an interesting one. Probing this relationship provides insights into the life and times of patrons and artists of any period in history. Mughal art is of particular significance in this respect.

The Mughal school evidences an assimilation of various traits of the art and the schools that flourished in India, Persia, Central Asia and Europe. Besides, the eclectic Mughal style that developed in the 16th-17th centuries shows the continuity of various traits of Indian classical arts, namely Ajanta art and the later Indian schools such as Pala (Buddhist- Eastern India) and Gujarat (Jain-Western India) forms. Further the patronage given by the Mughals to new forms such as portraiture, zoological themes, margin paintings, etc. not only added new chapters to Indian art but also opened new vistas for paintings for future generations.

The Mughals, hailing from Central Asia, were the descendants of the Turkish conqueror Timur. They established a mighty empire in the Indian subcontinent and ruled for more than four hundred years (1526-1858). It was one of the mightiest empires in the world, and contributed to the development of all branches of knowledge including the art of painting. “The initial step”, says Percy Brown in his ‘Indian Paintings under the Mughals’, (1981 p.18,) “in its development was taken by the Emperor Humayun, when he retained in his service two artists from Persia but the actual foundation of the school was laid by the constructive genius of his famous son Akbar the Great, in the course of his long reign which extended from A.D. 1556-1605. Under the aesthetic

Jahangir, with his intelligent patronage, it reached its meridian which was maintained in a slightly less degree during the magnificent reign of Shah Jahan, the builder of the Taj Mahal.”

Akbar was considered one of the most enthusiastic patrons of the arts. He was very fond of miniature paintings and for that purpose established a full fledged State-sponsored School of painting under his direct supervision. More than hundred painters were working in the School of which the two Persians, Abdus Samad and Mir Sayyid Ali, disciples of the celebrated Bihzad (head of the school of Herat and later that of Tabriz) were the master painters.

Akbar used to check all the works done by the painters on weekly basis and confer awards or increase their monthly salaries according to the excellence of their workmanship. “Their talent”, so sharpened by Akbar, produced pictures, says Abul Fazl as quoted by Percy Brown (*op.cit*, p.64) “surpass our conceptions of things. Few indeed, in the whole world are found equal to them.” Percy Brown further remarks (p.108) “These works are scattered among various museums, art galleries, libraries and collections.

In India there are two large volumes profusely pictured, a *Razmnama*, the property of H.H. the Maharaja of Jaipur, mentioned in the *Ain-i-Akbari* list, and a *Timurnama (Tarikh-e Khandan-e-Timuriyah)*, or ‘History of the House of Timur’, in the Oriental Public Library at Bankipur. (Patna, India)”

The *Tarikh--e Khandan-e-Timuriyah* is thus one of the finest collections of original Mughal paintings prepared in a highly finished style by the foremost painters of the Akbar’s court at a time when the Mughal art of painting was at its zenith and all the prominent artists of the time were assembled in the Court of Akbar. A number of paintings are the collaborative result of the work of two painters: one did the drawings and the other coloured them while some paintings were done by three painters, the third doing the most delicate work of drawing the faces. E.B. Havell in his ‘Indian Sculpture and Painting’ (p.196) remarks that this division of labour was possibly introduced by Akbar. The *Tarikh-e-Khandan-e-Timuriyah* offers a good example of such division of work in its paintings. As many as 51 names of artists are legible, prominent among which are the names of universally renowned artists – Daswanth and Basawan.

Thus, the manuscript is part of the most precious documentary heritage of the world representing the most exquisite cultural history of the Timurids and their artistic genius which influenced not only India but the world as a whole. Since it is the only extant copy, its loss or any damage caused to it would amount to an irreplaceable loss of a unique heritage.

The manuscript has been carefully preserved in the Khuda Bakhsh Oriental Public Library, Patna for over a century and fully deserves the highest level of attention in the future as well. The inscription of this item in the Memory of the World Register will significantly facilitate this process as well as the conservation of this unique manuscript according to the best available expertise and accepted international standards.

1.1 Authenticity

- a) The manuscript begins with an autographic note by Emperor Shah Jahan, on the flyleaf, testifying to its originality and authenticity. The writing of Shah Jahan on the manuscript is identical to that found in several other manuscripts, including some preserved at the Khuda Bakhsh Oriental Public Library.
- b) A number of seals, signatures and Arz-didahs (observations of the readers as recorded on on the fly-leaf of the manuscript) are the living testimony of its authenticity.
- c) The flyleaf also bears a signature of Francis Gladwin, a well known Orientalist who died about 1813 (see C.E. Buckland, Dictionary of Indian Biography p. 167).
- d) The paper, ink, paintings, designs and style, further confirm its authenticity.

4.2 World significance, uniqueness and irreplaceability

Mughal rule in India (1526 to 1858) was founded by Babur, a descendant of the Turkish conqueror Timur. The Mughals influenced the social, cultural and economic life both of the Indian people and of the world. Their contributions to the development of astrology, astronomy, medicine, fine arts, architecture, paintings and literature are unparalleled. Mughals were renowned patrons of art. Emperor Babur collected illuminated manuscripts and his son Emperor Humayun brought with him Persian Painters while Emperor Akbar collected a great library and supported over 100 painters who prepared paintings on the Persian classics, Hindu epics and histories. These paintings were jewel-like scenes crowded with delicate and richly dressed figures and studded with flowers and architectural detail. Undoubtedly the art of painting reached its zenith during Akbar's period. His magnum opus, *Hamzanama*, which consists of 14 volumes, each with one hundred paintings, gained wide popularity all over the world. As per contemporary historical records, at least fifty painters were employed on the work and about one hundred men overall. By comparison, as many as 51 painters worked on the 133 paintings of the *Tarikh-e Khandan-e Timuriyah*. This indicates the value and importance of the paintings of the *Tarikh-e Khandan-e Timuriyah*.

The paintings of the *Tarikh-e Khandan-e Timuriyah* are unique examples of the height that was attained by the Mughals in the history of the art of painting. These are both unique and irreplaceable. There is no illustrated historical work preserved within India which matches the richness of this documentary heritage.

4.3 The criteria of (a) time (b) place (c) people (d) subject and theme (e) form and style

- (a) *Time* : The manuscript contains text and paintings prepared during 16th century, at a time when the Mughal Empire was rapidly expanding. This was a phase of brilliant and intense military activity, more or less in keeping with the Timurid tradition of wars and conquests. This could have been one of the possible reasons for the compilation of this text. As can be seen from the content, the text deals extensively with battles, sieges and other military activities. At the same time, this was also the period when the foundations were being laid of a remarkable cultural efflorescence in the Indian subcontinent. Mughal paintings, particularly, had entered a new phase of efflorescence characterised by the fusion of Persian influences with Indian traditions. This fact is also amply reflected in the features of the illustrations contained in the manuscript.
- (b) *Place* : The manuscript was written and illustrated around the beginning of the last quarter of the 16th century, the time when Akbar had made Fatehpur Sikri (near Agra) his capital. Although prepared possibly at Agra, the historical and artistic contents of the manuscript have a wider geographical range and relate to the entire geographical and cultural zone stretching across South Asia and Central Asia. It is an evident example of the merger of two distinct – yet complementary – cultural traditions, and of the liberal religio-cultural outlook of the rulers who actively patronised such a fusion.
- (c) *People* : The text and paintings of the manuscript are the creation of a number of scribes and painters mostly belonging to India, and some with a Persian origin. They reflect different dimensions of the life of the aristocracy as well as of the common people and provide an insight – in fact a visual testimony – to the life style, social customs,

rituals, court ceremonies, military tools and techniques and various other facets of life in Mughal India during one of the most important and formative phases of its history. Significantly, it was the cultural developments and economic prosperity of this period that made nobles and adventurers flock to India at this time, from different corners of the Islamic world, making the Mughal Empire a huge cauldron in which the fusion of Indian and Islamic cultural influences took shape and a syncretic Indo-Islamic pattern evolved. This was patronised by the rulers and adopted by the people. It left an enduring impact on the life of the people of all classes and creeds and continues to constitute the most positive legacy of Mughal rule in the Indian subcontinent

- (d) Subject & Theme : The manuscript is an illustrated history of Timur and his descendants down to 19th year of Akbar's reign. Thus about 2 centuries of one of the most tumultuous periods of the history of Central and South Asia find mention here. The information available in these pages complements other contemporary sources and enriches our understanding and perception of Mughal history and culture.

It contains 133 paintings which depict scenes of war and peace and different shades of life of that time including festivities, rituals, customs and events that shaped the history of those times.

- (e) Form & Style : The manuscript is in the form of a book. It is an illustrated history containing 338 folios of 15³/₄" x 10¹/₄" size. It contains 133 paintings in full size of the text portion of the book, some of which cover two opposite pages. Such large 'miniatures' are a rarity in Mughal painting, not to be found among the general illustrated texts of the period. The paintings represent the Mughal style of miniature paintings developed in 16th century in India, which was remarkably natural and realistic, and which is universally acknowledged as one of the most mature and rich stages in the history of Asian art. These decorated paintings represent a fusion of the bright, decorative Indian style with the elegant, fanciful, and symmetrically patterned style of Islamic paintings. It is thus a part of international heritage. The manuscript is written in beautiful bold nastaleeq, within coloured and gold-ruled borders. The paper is of an excellent quality, of a sharp cream colour and with a slight ivory gloss.

4.4.1 Rarity :

The content, especially the paintings, and its physical nature, the large size of the folios used for the text and illustrations definitely make it a rare surviving example of a distinct phase of the history of Mughal painting. In addition:-

- a) The manuscript is not only rare but unique, as it happens to be the only extant copy.
- b) It contains exquisite and richly decorated paintings representing a fusion of the bright, decorative style with the elegant, fanciful, and symmetrically patterned style of Islamic paintings.

- c) It has the magnificent calligraphy associated with the scribes at Akbar's court.
- d) It also contains an autographic note of the Mughal Emperor Shahjahan on the flyleaf at the beginning testifying to the authenticity of the manuscript. Besides it bears several Arz-didahs (observations of the readers as recorded on the flyleaf of the book) and official seals of the nobles of the Mughal Court of India.

4.4.2 Integrity :

The available text of the manuscript is intact. While it appears that there are a few minor folios missing from the beginning and end of the text, as inferred from the abrupt start and end of the manuscript, the text is otherwise an integral whole. Thus, the substantial part of the historical narrative and the exquisite paintings remain safe and intact. Significantly, it is, at present, in the same condition as it was in the hands of Shah Jahan. In its present state, it is properly bound and safe, and appropriately preserved.

4.4.3 Threat :

There is no immediate threat, as such, to the manuscript because of its proper custody and careful preservation. However, all manuscripts, as a matter of fact, are likely to be worn out by human handling, besides other factors like aging, climatic changes, and are susceptible to attacks from vandals. It is to ensure that such long-term threats are adequately guarded against in the future as well, that it is necessary to record the manuscript in the Memory of World Register so that its value is duly appreciated, its contents properly introduced and publicised in the academic world and long-term plans set in place for its effective conservation. Such measures would help in ensuring its safety as well.

Although all care is taken by the library to preserve and conserve the manuscript, with the available resources – both financial and technical – it is further necessary to take some specific steps for special conservation. This need is being felt because in some paintings, the paint is flaking and if immediate curative measures are not taken the damage can spread further.

4.4.4 Management :

The manuscript is properly maintained by the Khuda Bakhsh Oriental Public Library with the available resources. This includes the following-

- a) The manuscript is periodically cleaned with soft brush.
- b) The binding is regularly checked to ensure that there is no damage caused to it, and that there is no threat from termites, book-worms, other insects and fungi.
- d) While due care is taken for its protection, scholars can access it for research and study with special permission and under controlled conditions.
- e) The manuscript is kept under maintained temperature as the Manuscript stacks are air-conditioned.
- f) The pages of the manuscript are properly bound and tissue-paper used to separate the painted pages so that the colours do not get affected.
- g) Napthalene balls and paradichlorobenzine are used for ensuring safety from insects and worms.
- h) Digitisation of the manuscripts has been done to ensure preservation.
- i) It is kept in a fire-proof iron-safe.
- j) Fire safety measures, including highly sensitive fire-alarms are in place, and fire-fighting drills are occasionally conducted and proper training imparted.
- k) There is a proposal to publish its digitised facsimile edition. It would then be possible to ensure wider access to the manuscript without causing wear and tear to the

manuscript due to manual handling.

l)The publication of the facsimile copy could also receive further support by this nomination.

5 Legal Information

5.1 Owner of Documentary Heritage (name & Contact details):

Khuda Bakhsh Oriental Public Library
Ashok Rajpath
Patna

5.2 Custodian of the Documentary Heritage :

Director
Khuda Bakhsh Oriental Public Library
Ashok Rajpath
Patna

5.3 Legal Status

(a) Category of ownership :

Public Trust : The manuscript is owned by Khuda Bakhsh Oriental Public Library, Patna. It is an autonomous organisation under the Ministry of Culture, Government of India, with a Governing Board headed, ex-officio, by the Governor of Bihar and consisting of the Accountant-General of Bihar, four nominees of the Central Government, four nominees of the State Govt, one representative of the Founder's family (vacant at present), the Accountant-General of Bihar and the Director of the Library, who is also the Member-Secretary.

(b) Accessibility :

The manuscript is accessible on request for consultation during the office hours of the library (Saturday to Thursday) from 9.30 a.m. to 5 p.m. except on holidays. Due formalities are to be completed for acquiring some folios of it in CD form. This facility, however, is restricted to scholars only.

(c) Copyright status :

The copyright of the catalogue, the images etc. is vested in Khuda Bakhsh Oriental Public Library, Patna.

(d) Responsible Administration :

Care is taken to keep the manuscript safe (under double lock & key system). The Director of the Khuda Bakhsh Oriental Public Library is legally responsible for safe keeping of the material. The responsibility is being exercised by keeping the manuscript under lock & key and making it available to scholars only under strict supervision of the Director or his nominee under stringent conditions.

6 Management Plan

While there is no separate management Plan currently in existence specifically for this manuscript, it is part of the important manuscript collection of the Khuda Bakhsh Oriental Public Library and is properly maintained by the Library with its available resources. Keeping in mind its great importance and value, certain measures have been put in place to ensure its conservation. The manuscript is periodically cleaned with soft brush. The binding is regularly checked to ensure that there is no damage caused to it and that there is no threat from termites, book-worms, other insects and fungi. While due care is taken for its protection, scholars can access it for research and study with special permission and under controlled conditions. The manuscript is kept under maintained temperature as the Manuscript stacks are air-conditioned. The pages of the manuscript are properly bound and tissue-paper used to separate the painted pages so that the colours do not get affected. Napthalene balls and paradichlorobenzine are used for ensuring safety from insects and worms. Digitisation of the manuscript has been done. The Manuscript has since the start been kept in a fire-proof iron-safe, which resides in a secluded area of the Manuscript Stacks, categorised as the 'Rare Collection Room'. This room is normally locked and can be entered only with special permission of the Director of the Library. Fire safety measures, including highly sensitive fire-alarms, are in place, and fire-fighting drills are occasionally conducted and proper training in this area has been imparted to the staff. There is a proposal to publish its digitised facsimile edition. It would then be possible to ensure wider access to the manuscript without causing wear and tear to the Manuscript due to manual handling.

The manuscript is in full custody of Khuda Bakhsh Oriental Public Library, Patna. It is kept in an iron safe under double lock and key system. One key of the safe is with the Director of Khuda Bakhsh Oriental Public Library, Patna while the other is with the Commissioner, Patna Division, Patna. The iron safe can only be opened in presence of both the keys. The safe is periodically opened for the preventive conservation of the manuscript.

The Library has a Chief Conservator assisted by an Assistant Conservator and four binders among the Library staff are responsible for the preservation and conservation of the valuable manuscripts in the Collection.

The Library has a preservation laboratory, with qualified staff for treatment of books and manuscripts for deacidification of rare books and manuscripts. It has a full-fledged preservation Lab with a bindry where manuscripts are treated, laminated (if necessary) and bound for better preservation. The staff are given regular in-service training from time to time, often in collaboration with the Manuscript Conservation Centres set up by the National Mission for Manuscripts.

The manuscript and others are well preserved and are included in the regular preservation procedures of the Library.

The Annual Preservation/Conservation budget of the Library is:

(i)	Preservation Liability :	Rs. 350,000
(ii)	Development of book preservation and reprography facilities :	Rs. 350,000
		Rs. 700,000

7. CONSULTATION:

The owner of this document is Khuda Bakhsh Oriental Public Library, Patna, an Institution of national importance, duly recognised by an Act of the Parliament of India. The

custodian is the Director of the Library who is also the Member Secretary of the Library's Governing Body. The Nomination of this Manuscript is being done in association and consultation with the Director of the Khuda Bakhsh Oriental Public Library, Patna.

PART B – SUBSIDIARY INFORMATION

8. Assessment of Risk :

The principal threat to the collection is that of decay through neglect and decay through handling. Also power failures (affecting the airconditioning) and extreme climate changes may also adversely affect the manuscripts. Presently there is no risk to the collection.

The manuscript collection of Khuda Bakhsh Oriental Public Library, Patna is well-maintained. Besides giving preventive conservation to the collection on regular basis, the collection is provided curative conservation as well. Deacidification, fumigation and periodic spraying of chemicals are the routine works in the Library. Recently the whole building of the library has been given anti-termite treatment. However, these measures are largely based on traditional methods with minor improvisations made on the basis of the information obtained through periodic training of the conservators. An adequate conservation plan for the Library, keeping the latest techniques and perceptions in mind, is essential so that the manuscript remains safe from any future risk as well. This nomination shall facilitate this process.

9. Assessment of Preservation :

The Library has a preservation laboratory, with qualified staff for treatment of books and manuscripts for deacidification of rare books and manuscripts. It has a full-fledged preservation Lab with a bindry where manuscripts are treated, laminated (if necessary) and bound for better preservation. The staff are given regular in-service training from time to time, often in collaboration with the Manuscript Conservation Centres set up by the National Mission for Manuscripts, a Mission set up by the Ministry of Culture, Government of India..

There is a Chief Conservator assisted by an Assistant Conservator and four binders among the Library staff are responsible for preservation.

The manuscript and others are well preserved and are included in the regular preservation scheme of the management.