

**A DESCRIPTIVE CATALOGUE OF THE  
HISTORICAL MANUSCRIPTS IN THE  
ARABIC AND PERSIAN LANGUAGES,  
PRESERVED IN THE LIBRARY OF THE  
ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY OF GREAT  
BRITAIN AND IRELAND**

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A Descriptive Catalogue of the Historical Manuscripts in the Arabic and Persian Languages,  
Preserved in the Library of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland by William  
H. Morley

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**WILLIAM H. MORLEY**

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*Horace Hayman Wilson Esquire*  
*with the writer's kindest*  
*& respectful regards -*  
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OF

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AND IRELAND.

BY WILLIAM H. MORLEY, M.R.A.S.



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## ADVERTISEMENT.

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WITH the exception of Grammars and Dictionaries, there is, perhaps, no class of works more calculated to be practically useful to the student of Oriental literature than Descriptive Catalogues of MSS. Mere lists are of small value, even when accurately made, since the names generally given by Eastern authors to their compositions afford but little insight into the nature of their contents; and if, as is frequently the case, the titles of the books are taken merely from the fly-leaves, or the backs of the volumes, such lists are quite as likely to mislead as to furnish a correct guide.

The description of historical MSS. is of peculiar utility, for, in order that the student of the intricate history of Asia should know where to search for particular facts, or to find the best accounts of special epochs, it is obviously of the utmost consequence that he should have at his command concise but complete tables of the contents of the various works applicable to the period he may wish to investigate. In addition to this it is highly requisite that he should also be informed where copies of such works are to be found, as it is in most cases necessary, and always desirable, to consult more than one MS. of all the various authorities for the ascertainment of a fact. Different copies of the same history often vary materially both in extent and arrangement; the injuries caused by time or accident; the misplacing of leaves by the binders; the constant omission of detached sentences, and even of entire passages; the difficulty of decyphering words, especially proper

names; and all the errors arising from the ignorance or carelessness of the transcribers, concur to perplex the reader, and to render it extremely unsafe to trust to a single MS., where more than one can be procured.

If we were in possession of good catalogues of only half the public libraries in Europe, how much labour in research would be saved to the student, and how great would eventually be the gain to historic truth.

The historical MSS. preserved in the library of the Royal Asiatic Society are, from their number and character, well deserving the attention of Orientalists. Amongst them will be found a good collection of works relating to India and Persia, together with some others which are both rare and curious. At the desire of the Council of the Society, I have undertaken to give an account of them, confining myself, however, to those in the Arabic and Persian languages.

In the following pages I have, in the first instance, described each history shortly, and have added some notice of the author where procurable; I have then given the particular contents of each volume,<sup>1</sup> and have mentioned its size and extent, noticing the species of handwriting, and whether it is well written or transcribed in a more or less illegible hand. I have also enumerated the editions of the whole, or of the portions of each work, that have been printed either in text or translation.

The reader will perceive that I have given the size of the volumes in inches, instead of saying that they are in folio, 4to, &c. Eastern paper not being made in a regular series of sizes and folded as in Europe, those terms convey but a very indefinite idea of form when applied to Oriental MSS.; whilst the actual measurement of a volume, together with a statement of the number of leaves, and of the lines in a page, enable us

<sup>1</sup> I believe that the tables of contents which I have given are sufficiently equal, and that I have not dilated too much when describing the works of my favourite authors. When a whole dynasty is dismissed in a page, or less, as is often the case, I have merely mentioned the name of such dynasty; and the reader may conclude that the account of it in the work described is unimportant.



to form a tolerable estimate as to the extent of a work. I have also departed from the practice too often observed in catalogues in describing the external appearance and the exaration of MSS. The main points to be remarked are, the species and degree of legibility of the handwriting, the state of a MS. when damaged, the existence of lacunæ, and the misplacing of leaves by the binder. The elaborate notices of the illuminations, the gold and red and blue lines, the silk paper, &c., &c., with which works of the present nature are generally overloaded, seem to me to be so much space wasted, and should, I think, be abandoned to the tradesman who seeks to give a false value to his goods by bombastic description. If, therefore, I have at any time adverted to a volume as "beautifully written," or "finely illuminated," it must be understood as denoting that such volume presents a peculiarly good specimen of calligraphy or ornament. The names of the donors are added at the end of the description of each MS.

Notwithstanding every care, I fear that several errors of the press have escaped my observation.<sup>1</sup> The multitude of proper names and dates<sup>2</sup> occurring in the text render it very difficult, if not impracticable, to avoid oversights; and, had it not been for the kind revision of the last proofs, by my friend Mr. Charles Rieu, of the British Museum, and for which I tender him my best thanks, the typographical faults would have been still more numerous than at present.

January, 1854.

W. H. M.

<sup>1</sup> I trust that few will be found to be of importance. I have added a table of errata to call the reader's attention to the graver faults, but I have not thought it necessary to notice the occasional omission of accents and such like inadvertencies. Even these, however, I believe, are not of frequent occurrence.

<sup>2</sup> I may here mention that in converting the years of the Hijrah into those of our own æra, Prinsep's tables have been followed; the year of our Lord given being that in which the Hijrah year commenced.



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