

**CATALOGUE OF TWO  
COLLECTIONS OF PERSIAN AND  
ARABIC  
MANUSCRIPTS PRESERVED IN  
THE INDIA OFFICE LIBRARY**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649000333

Catalogue of two collections of Persian and Arabic manuscripts preserved in the India office library by E. Denison Ross & Edward G. Browne

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CATALOGUE  
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TWO COLLECTIONS OF  
PERSIAN AND ARABIC MANUSCRIPTS

PRESERVED IN THE  
*INDIA OFFICE LIBRARY*

BY

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LONDON  
PRINTED BY EYRE AND SPOTTISWOODE  
PRINTERS TO THE KING'S MOST EXCELLENT MAJESTY

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1902

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## P R E F A C E.

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WHEN, in the year 1900, I completed and published my *Hand-list of the Muhammadan Manuscripts in the Library of the University of Cambridge* (which was itself the sequel and complement to the *Catalogue of the Persian Manuscripts* of the same Library published four years earlier), I resolved that never again, if I could help it, would I undertake the drudgery of cataloguing any but the smallest and most choice collections of Oriental books. Unfortunately, as the Persian proverb says :—

تدبیر تشدیرو را بر نمی گرداند

“*Human foresight cannot avert predestined fate.*” My talented and valued friend Dr. E. Denison Ross (till lately Professor of Persian at University College, London), to whom the cataloguing of the two collections described in the following pages was entrusted by the India Office, accepted the post of Principal of the Muhammadan Madrasa College at Calcutta ere his work was completed, and sailed for India on October 17, 1901. In undertaking to complete his work, and in so doing to run counter to the decision above mentioned, I was actuated by two strong motives, friendship for one of the most gifted and amiable of my fellow-workers, and gratitude to the most liberal and enlightened of English Libraries. In nearly all civilised countries except England, manuscripts are freely lent (subject to reasonable precautions) by public Libraries to native and foreign scholars, whereby research is not merely aided but rendered possible. The general practice of English Libraries in refusing to



lend their manuscripts not only impedes study and fetters innumerable useful enterprises, but would, but for the generosity and liberality of a few, at the head of which stands the India Office Library, inevitably result in the complete exclusion of British Orientalists from the privileges shared by their Continental colleagues. For this reason no Orientalist who has any adequate conception of his obligations and responsibilities would hesitate for a moment in rendering any service within his power to an institution to which he is so deeply indebted.

For the general plan of this Catalogue, and for the system of measurement adopted (which consists in giving in inches the area of that portion only of the page which is covered by writing), Dr. Ross is responsible; and as far as p. 123, as stated in the note there printed, the work is entirely his. In the concluding portion, therefore, it only remained for me to follow, as closely as possible, what appeared to me to be his intentions. The Indices are entirely my work. For the full and scholarly description of one of the Pahlavi MSS. (No. CCXXVIII), on pp. 171-172, I am indebted to Dr. E. W. West, whose unrivalled attainments in this field of knowledge are only equalled by his amiable readiness to place them at the disposal of all who seek his help.

Of the two collections hereinafter described I am not in a position to say much. The first was originally presented by Sir William and Lady Jones to the Royal Society, at the end of January, 1792, and a summary description of it by Mr. C. (afterwards Sir Charles) Wilkins, F.R.S., will be found at the end of the last volume of Sir William Jones's *Works* (pp. 399 *et seqq.* of vol. xiii of the edition published in 1807). The second, that of Mr. Burjorjee Sorabjee Ashburner, likewise belonged to the same Society, which, however, having neither the occasion to use nor the means properly to house these collections, wisely decided to transfer them to the custody of the India Office, which was done in July, 1876. In consequence of this they are kept apart from the other manuscripts, and are not included in the catalogues which have been published, or are now in course of publication. Their comparatively small extent renders it unnecessary to enlarge further upon

their contents, and I will therefore confine myself to directing the attention of the reader to three of the most interesting Persian MSS. which they include, viz., Nos. XXVIII, XLVI and LIX. The first (pp. 21-23) is a copy of the rather rare *Yúsnf u Zúlaykhá* of Firdawsí, which appears to be important as representing a recension differing considerably from that made known by the indefatigable Dr. Ethé. The second (pp. 33-41) is a singularly fine and complete copy of the *Kulliyát*, or collected Works, of the poet and polymath Mullá Núru 'd-Dín 'Abdu 'r-Raḥmán Jámí. The last (pp. 53-54) is an exceedingly ancient, fine and quite complete copy of the valuable and interesting *Jawámí'u 'l-Hikáyát* of Muḥammad 'Awfí, the author of the very rare Biography of Poets (entitled *Lubábu 'l-Albáb*), of which the text is now being printed for me by Messrs. E. J. Brill of Leyden. The Zoroastrian MSS. contained in the Ashburner Collection are also in many cases of considerable interest, and derive an additional importance from the fact that many of them are of Persian, not Indian, origin.

It only remains for me to hope that I have succeeded in carrying out the work begun and chiefly accomplished by my friend Dr. Ross according to his wishes, and to express my gratitude to Mr. Tawney and Mr. Thomas, the Librarian and Assistant Librarian of the India Office, for the kindness, courtesy and friendly help which has so greatly served to smooth and lighten my labours.

EDWARD G. BROWNE.

September 13, 1902.

