rhetoric, music and the traditions. There are also some copies of the Qur’an. Among the most important items are a thousand-year-old copy of Al-Bukhārī’s Sahih, probably the oldest in existence, a late-fourteenth-century copy of Abū Masāḥ’s astronomical text Al-Lambī, and a seventeenth-century copy of the rare mystical text by Al-Muḥāsibī entitled Kāmil al-tawāhīth fi kashf al-abyād washarār al-adhāqāq.

Mingana himself began the cataloguing of the Arabic manuscripts in his collection, and following his death the task was taken up by Dr H. L. Gottschalk, who managed to catalogue many of the items before leaving in 1948 to take up the Chair of Arabic in Vienna. Gottschalk’s catalogue appeared in 1948–50, under the title Catalogue of the Mingana Collection of Manuscripts: Volume IV, Islamic Arabic Manuscripts. A later edition was the result of work by Professor Beeston, Dr Trimmingham and Dr Hopwood. It was published in 1963. The Selly Oak Colleges also have a good collection of Arabic printed books. This was originally established by Alphonse Mingana and strengthened by Mingana’s successor, Professor James Sweetman.

Manchester

Manchester, like Birmingham, is an important industrial city, often known as the capital of the north of England and famous in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries for being the centre of the English textile trade. Its university was founded in 1851 and it soon became one of the country’s leading higher education institutions. A Chair of Semitic Languages and Literatures was founded in 1903, and a separate Chair of Arabic Studies in 1949. However, Manchester’s interest in the Islamic world dates back to the late eighteenth century, and two important collections of Islamic manuscripts date from this period and from the nineteenth century. The collections are those held by Chetham’s Library and the John Rylands Library, now part of the university.

Chetham’s Library

Chetham’s Library claims to be the oldest free public library in Europe. It was founded in 1651 by Humphry Chetham (1580–1653), a Manchester merchant. The library was attached to a boys’ school, Chetham’s College, which he also endowed. The library’s Islamic manuscripts mostly date from the late eighteenth century, when John Haddon Hindley (1765–1827) was Librarian. Hindley was Oxford-educated, and became a Persian scholar while at Oxford. He returned to Manchester in 1792 to take up the posts of Librarian at Chetham’s and Chaplain of Manchester Collegiate Church. He was active in building up an important collection of Arabic and Persian printed books, many of which he used in his translation of Hāfiz, Farād ad-Dīn Attār and Jāmi. It was during his tenure that the eighteen Islamic manuscripts now held by the library were also acquired. The majority of these are in Arabic, but there are also a few Persian texts and one Turkish. The library also possesses an eighteenth century album of Mughal Indian paintings.

The John Rylands Library

Manchester’s other collection of Islamic manuscripts is housed in the John Rylands Library, now part of the University of Manchester. This collection is undoubtedly one of the great Islamic collections in Britain. The library was opened on 1 January 1900, and named in honour of the Lancashire industrialist, John Rylands. Two major collections were acquired between 1892 and 1901, and they contained a number of important Islamic manuscripts. The first of these was the library of the Earl Spencer, and the second the library of the Earls of Crawford and Balcarres, often referred to as the Bibliotheca Lin- desteina. It is this collection which has really established the reputation of the John Rylands Library as an important centre for Islamic manuscripts. Lord Lindsay, the twenty-fifth Earl of Crawford (1812–80), spent a couple of years (1836–7) travelling in Egypt and Syria. What took him there is not clear, but in the earlier part of the nineteenth century the Near East was becoming fashionable for the gentleman traveller. This was a trend reflected in the literature of the period, books such as Kinglake’s Eothen: or traces of travel brought home from the East, Disraeli’s Tancred (1847) and Robert Curzon’s Visit to the Monasteries of the Levant (1849). It seems that during his forays to the eastern Mediterranean the Earl acquired his first Arabic manuscripts, and this encouraged him to proceed further in this field when he returned to England. There is no evidence that he himself went back to a Muslim country, but in the tradition of later industrialist collectors he appointed agents to acquire materials for him. However, his greatest coup was to purchase two Islamic manuscript collections, the first in 1866 and the second in 1868. The first belonged to Nathaniel Bland (204 Arabic, 364 Persian and 63 Turkish works) and the second to Colonel G. W. Hamilton (303 Arabic volumes, 407 Persian and seven Turkish volumes). Colonel Hamilton had acquired most of his manuscripts while working in India for the East India Company, and his collection is rich in Persian manuscripts, several of them very finely illustrated. Between 1924 and 1929 another 22 volumes of manuscripts were acquired for the library by Alphonse Mingana. The John Rylands Library also contains a very interesting
collection of Arabic papyri dating from the third century AH (ninth century AD), also acquired by the Earl of Crawford. Among the valuable manuscripts is a Qur'an in Kufic script dating from the eighth century AD, and an Arabic Qur'an with Persian and Eastern Turkish translations.

The John Rylands Library is also rich in Batak, Buginese, Javanese, Madurese, Makassarese and Malay manuscripts. These were collected by the twenty-fifth Earl of Crawford, and mainly date from the nineteenth century. They were originally acquired by Charles Otto Blagden (1864–1949), who worked in the Straits Settlements Civil Service between 1888 and 1897 and later went on to become a lecturer in Malay at the School of Oriental and African Studies, and Henricus Christinaa Millies (1810–68), a Dutchman who was Professor of Oriental Languages at Utrecht (1856–68). He was an enthusiastic proponent of the value of studying Asian languages and built up a good collection of Indonesian manuscripts, most of which passed to Lord Lindsay.


Leeds

Leeds is the textile capital of Yorkshire, and is located about forty miles northeast of Manchester. It is a city which like many others in northern England boomed in the Victorian heyday of the nineteenth century. Its university was originally founded in 1874 and formed part of the Victoria University, a federation of northern university colleges. In 1904 it achieved independent university status.

The majority of the university’s Islamic manuscripts are located in the Department of Semitic Studies. They number about 550, mainly in Arabic and Persian, and were acquired in 1927. There are also some Turkish and Urdu manuscripts. Three hundred and seventy-one Arabic manuscripts are listed as being in the university’s collections. Some of these are by Christian authors or copyists. Islamic law is strongly represented in the collection, including a copy of Husain al-Din al-Ruhawi’s Hana’fia work Kitaab al-bihār, completed in AH 819 (AD 1416). There are also works on lexicography and grammar, such as a copy of Jawhari’s Sihaah dated AH 846 (AD 1442). There are several well-known medieval medical writers in the collection, some of them dating from the late fourteenth century AD. Philosophy, literature, poetry, magic, astronomy, history and geography are also to be found. The manuscripts originate from a variety of sources, among the most important traceable collections being that of the Maronite Yusuf Sayafi, who built up an important library in Lebanon in the early years of the nineteenth century. Nineteen of the medical and pharmacological texts originated from Sayafi’s collection.

Some of the manuscripts were once in the possession of scholars and librarians, such as Alexander George Ellis, author of the Catalogue of

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Arabic Books in the British Museum, and Johann Christian Clodius (1676–1745), Professor of Arabic at Leipzig and author of Theoria et praxis linguarum Arabice, first published in Leipzig in 1729. One of the literature manuscripts has on it a note in French, which links it to the French seizure of Algiers in 1830. It reads, quite lamely, ‘Livre arabe, prise à Alger, lors de l’occupation de cette ville, par les Français en 1830’. All the Arabic manuscripts in the Leeds University collections are catalogued in eight volumes entitled The University of Leeds Department of Semitic Languages and Literatures Catalogue of Oriental Manuscripts. The Persian manuscripts, numbering about one hundred and fifty, include texts on literature and astronomy. Several of them originate from the library of Yauaf Saya’i and the orientalist Pascal Vincent Carletti. Fifty of the manuscripts have been catalogued. There are seven Turkish manuscripts, containing about eleven works, which date mainly from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. These have been fully catalogued in Volume 8 of the Leeds Catalogue.

Hull

A small, but interesting, collection of Indonesian-language manuscripts is to be found at the University of Hull. The university was originally founded in 1927 and fully constituted in 1954. Perhaps appropriately for one of England’s leading port cities, the university has developed a strong interest in the maritime nations of South-East Asia, and has a Centre for South-East Asian Studies. The university has collections of Batak, Javanese and Malay manuscripts, all of them dating from the nineteenth century. The collections are well described in the Ricklefs and Voorhoeve catalogue.

Durham University: The Sudan Archive

To the north, the University of Durham is an important centre for Sudanese Islamic studies. Durham is an ancient city, famous for its cathedral, originally founded in the tenth century AD. The university is the second oldest in England, and was established in 1832. The majority of the manuscripts held by the university are connected with the Mahdist uprising in the Sudan (1883–98), and these are held in a special collection known as the Sudan Archive, begun in 1957 by Professor R. L. Hill, a leading British historian on the Sudan. Hill had close connections with the University of Khartoum, and himself worked in the Sudan for a number of years.

There are 429 Arabic manuscripts in the Sudan Archive. These include over 300 documents drawn up by the Mahdist government. Other items comprise a unique manuscript biography of Muhammad Ahmad al-Mahdi by Ismail Abd al-Qadir (AH 1306, AD 1888–9), and a historical study of the war between the Khalifa’s armies and those of the King of Ethiopia (dated 10 Muharam 1308, that is 26 August 1890). Some of the manuscripts were once in the possession of Sir Rudolf Baron Slatin (1857–1932). Slatin was a remarkable figure, an Austrian who was knighted by King Edward VII for his extraordinary role in
the Sudan before, during and after the Mahdist uprising. Slatin was a close friend of General Charles Gordon, and was appointed Governor of the Sudanese province of South Darfur in 1879. He was captured by the Mahdi soon after the defeat of Hicks Pasha’s army at El Obeid. He was kept a prisoner in the Mahdist capital of Omdurman, often in chains, until March 1895, when he managed a daring escape to Egypt. In 1896 he published his account of these colourful years entitled Fire and Sword in the Sudan. Between 1900 and 1914 he was Inspector-General of the Sudan, and in 1907 he was made an honorary Major-General in the British army. The outbreak of war between Britain and Austria-Hungary in 1914 meant he had to leave the British Colonial Service, but he refused to take up arms against the British and instead presided over the Austrian Red Cross for the duration of the war. His collection of Mahdist manuscripts reflects the relative sophistication and competence of the Mahdi regime in its administration of the Sudan in the period 1881–98.

Other Arabic manuscripts from the Mahdist period were once in the possession of General Sir Reginald Wingate (1861–1953). Wingate was Governor-General of the Sudan between 1899 and 1917 and High Commissioner for Egypt in 1917–19. The personal papers of Abbas Hilmi II (1874–1944), who was Khedive of Egypt between 1892 and 1914, are also to be found in Durham. These consist of official and diplomatic correspondence, papers on estate and financial management, and a large number of personal letters sent by Abbas Hilmi II to his family and friends. These papers were deposited on loan to the University of Durham by the Mohammed Ali Foundation in 1980.

A catalogue of the 429 Arabic items in the Sudan Archive was issued in 1973, entitled ‘Handlist of Arabic manuscripts and lithographs’. It was compiled by Professor R. L. Hill. Apart from the manuscripts in the Sudan and Abbas Hilmi collections, there is also a miscellaneous collection of fourteen Arabic, fifteen Persian and six Ottoman Turkish manuscripts. No printed catalogue exists of these.

**Scotland**

Islamic studies and the collecting of Islamic manuscripts began later in Scotland than in England. Scotland had no equivalent of an East India Company or Levant Company to stimulate interest in the Near East and India. Scottish merchants and traders therefore did not have any sustained or prolonged contact with the Islamic world until well after the union of England and Scotland in 1707. Although there was an interest in oriental studies at Glasgow University in the seventeenth century, this was mainly confined to biblical subjects, and there is no evidence that Arabic or Persian was ever seriously studied. It was not until the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries that a real, lasting interest in Islamic studies began in Scotland. By this time Scottish administrators and merchants were going out to all corners of the British Empire, and there was a real need felt for Persian and Arabic studies. It was about this time as well as the first collections of Islamic manuscripts began to be developed in Scottish universities.

**Edinburgh University**

Edinburgh University, founded in 1583, first demonstrated interest in Islamic studies in the latter half of the eighteenth century. James Robertson was appointed Professor of Languages between 1751 and 1792 and taught Arabic and Persian mainly in relation to theological studies, but also for the benefit of those going out to trade and direct empire in India.

However, it was not until 1880 that Arabic was formally incorporated into the curriculum. Among the famous names associated with Arabic and Islamic studies at Edinburgh were scholars such as Sir William Muir, Principal of the university between 1885 and 1903, and William Montgomery Watt, Professor of Arabic between 1947 and 1979. Today the University of Edinburgh is the only institution in the whole of Scotland which teaches the three main languages of the Islamic world (Arabic, Persian and Turkish).

Edinburgh University’s Islamic manuscript collections mainly date from the nineteenth century, although some items reached the university as early as 1690. The total number of manuscripts now numbers about 463 Arabic and Persian texts and three Turkish. The single most important collection is that bequeathed in 1876. This is still known today by the name of its original collector, Lieutenant-Colonel John Baillie of Leys (1772–1833). One hundred and sixty-five Arabic and Turkish manuscripts were obtained by him and bequeathed to the university by his grandson. John Baillie is a good example of how Scotsmen were by the eighteenth century successfully participating in the creation of the British Empire overseas. He joined the East India Company in 1790, and by 1794 had risen to the rank of lieutenant in the Company’s army. His real and abiding interest, however, lay in oriental languages, and he began to study these during his leisure time. He was so successful that in 1801 he was appointed Professor of Arabic and Turkish languages at the new College of Fort William. Obviously academic life was not entirely to his taste, however, because two years later we find him joining in the siege of Agra, and then shortly afterwards appearing as Political Agent in Bundelkhand, where he busied himself keeping the various chiefs and tribes apart. In 1807 he was appointed Resident of Lucknow, a post which he held for eight years. He returned to Britain in 1818, and until his death was a member of Parliament for Heden, and later Inverness. He was also appointed a Director of the East India Company.44 Throughout his time in India, whether in the role of soldier, professor, political agent or Resident, he maintained a keen interest in Islamic manuscripts and Islamic studies. He also published books on Arabic grammar and Muslim law.

Baillie’s Arabic and Persian manuscripts cover a wide range of subjects, including Qur’anic commentaries, histories, texts on mathematics, medicine and the sciences, literature, music and philosophy. However, the most
outstanding manuscript in his collection is undoubtedly the Jami al-Tawarikh (World History) of the Mongol Vizier, Rashid al-Din (1247–1318), copied in Rashid’s own scriptorium in Tabriz, probably around AH 706 (AD 1306/7). This is the finest manuscript treasure possessed by the university. It was displayed in London on at least four occasions between 1931 and 1967. Rashid al-Din, who was eventually put to death, is not only accounted one of the greatest ever Muslim historians, but also through his scriptorium influenced an entire generation of Persian artists, and is responsible for what is known as the Rashidi school of miniature painting. The Edinburgh text is one of only two surviving copies of the ‘World History’ which were produced at Tabriz during the life of Rashid al-Din. Both eventually found their way to Britain. The other manuscript copy ended up in the Royal Asiatic Society in London.

Other important manuscripts bequeathed to the university include a collection of around 167 texts made by two brothers, David and James Anderson, who worked in India at the end of the eighteenth century. The Islamic manuscripts which once belonged to New College, the university’s theological college, have now been absorbed into the main library. Among these is an interesting collection of about 25 Turkish manuscripts, which were acquired in Astrakhan between 1819 and 1825 by the Revd John Dickson, who was a missionary maintained by the Scottish Missionary Society. The Revd Dickson worked hard to convert the Persian and Tartar inhabitants of Astrakhan, but with very limited success, and in the end the Russian government put an end to his activities. He appears to have been a Turkish scholar, and his translation into Turkish of the New Testament was published in 1825. Among the manuscripts which he acquired were several early Ottoman texts. The New College collections also included about seventeen Arabic, seventy-two Persian and four Hindustani manuscripts. The majority of these were acquired and catalogued by Mr R. M. B. Binning, who was an official in the British Indian Civil Service (ICS). Binning appears to have travelled extensively through India and Persia acquiring his manuscripts. The results of his travels were recorded in his two-volume work Journal of Two Years’ Travel in Persia and Ceylon (London, 1857), in which he discourses upon some of the manuscripts which he had in his possession: ‘the paper has turned dingy and dark’, he wrote, ‘but the writing is as clear and brilliant as if it had been executed yesterday.’ One of Binnie’s greatest treasures is a rare copy of Al-Biruni’s Al-Atlhir al-Bakiyya en al-Kurîn al-Khalîyya (The Book of Vestiges Which Survive of Past Times). It is a richly illustrated Persian text of the early fourteenth century, possibly produced in the famous scriptorium of Rashid al-Din at Tabriz. Other valuable manuscripts include early-eighteenth-century Shiraz copies of Sadi’s poems Bastin and Gulistan.

The university also has a small collection of Malay manuscripts. These include an early-eighteenth-century Malay translation of Al-Ghazali’s Moral Lessons for Kings made by Haji Ismail. This manuscript was presented to the library by a Mr William Carstairs on 16 August 1706 and was obtained from a Scot called James Walker, who described himself as ‘a sergeant in the

Dutch forces in the Indies’. Other Malay manuscripts originate from Aceh in northern Sumatra and include a history of Aceh from the dawn of the Islamic era up to the early nineteenth century, as well as a list of Aceh’s sultans.

The first published catalogue of the Edinburgh University collections did not appear until 1925, although the original idea had been mooted as far back as 1904. It appeared under the title Descriptive Catalogue of the Arabic and Persian Manuscripts in Edinburgh University Library. The compilers were Muhammad Ashraf ul Hukh of Hyderabad, a student at the University, Professor Hermann Ethis of the university college at Aberystwyth and Dr Edward Robertson, Lecturer in Arabic at Edinburgh University. This catalogue covers all the manuscripts bequeathed by Baille and the two Anderson brothers, as well as other miscellaneous collections. It remains to this day the definitive catalogue. The New College collections are described in R. B. Serjeant’s Handlist of the Arabic, Persian and Hindustani MSS. in New College, Edinburgh (London, 1942) and J. R. Walsh’s ‘The Turkish MSS. in New College, Edinburgh’ (1959).

The National Library of Scotland (Department of Manuscripts) has a small collection of Islamic texts. These include eight Arabic, eighteen Persian and eight Turkish manuscripts. The Arabic manuscripts include copies of the Qur’an, and an interesting firman granted by the Mughal Emperor Shah Alam II (1788–1806), conferring the dignity of Khan upon Dr Robert Wilson (1762–1822), a surgeon in the service of the East India Company. This firman appears to have been issued in 1802. Among the Persian manuscripts is an eighteenth-century copy of Hafiz’s collected poems, and a copy of the Kirab al-Ishar, a collection of short anecdotes illustrating ancient Indian Justice. The Turkish manuscripts include the Bâbur Nâmah of the Emperor Zahir al-Din Muhammad Bâbar, copied in the sixteenth century, and a 1584 copy of Jami al-Kamil, a short treatise intended for the guidance of kings. Several of the Turkish manuscripts appear once to have been in the possession of Montstuart Elphinstone. The older manuscripts are listed on a typewritten catalogue, the more recent ones in the Catalogue of Manuscripts Acquired since 1925.

Glasgow University

Glasgow University was founded in 1451. Interest in oriental languages began early in the seventeenth century but was mainly confined to theological and biblical studies. This was particularly the case under such men as Andrew Melville (Principal of the University 1574–80), Patrick Sharpe (Principal, 1586–1615) and Robert Boyd (Principal, 1615–21). During their time the University established a pre-eminent position in Scotland in the teaching of oriental languages such as Hebrew, Aramaic and Syriac. Arabic also entered the teaching curriculum in the mid-seventeenth century. In 1708, during the reign of Queen Anne (1701–15), the first Chair of Oriental Languages was established at the university, and Charles Morthland, who had studied under
Professor Adrian Reland of Utrecht University, was appointed to the post. However, as in the seventeenth century, scant attention appears to have been paid to Arabic, Persian or Turkish, and most of the emphasis was on biblical languages and subjects.

By the nineteenth century, however, Scottish contact with India and the Middle East was beginning to transform the picture. Arabic was firmly part of the curriculum by 1850. In 1880 the Glasgow University Oriental Society was founded, which not only became a forum for the university's own growing interest in Islamic studies, but soon included many members in other Scottish universities and others living outside Scotland. In 1902 a full-time lecturer in Arabic was appointed for the first time, the appointee being Thomas Hunter Weir. Weir was to become one of the university's greatest Arabists, author of The Shi'ahs of Morocco in the Twelfth Century and Omar Khayyam, the Poet. It was during this period that Professor Robertson held the Chair of Oriental Studies and did so much to raise Glasgow's profile in the field of oriental and Islamic studies.

Glasgow University's collections of Islamic manuscripts can be traced back to the early nineteenth century, and reached the university from rather an unusual source. They were the gift of Dr William Hunter (1718-83), a famous Scottish physician and book collector. Hunter was Physician Extraordinary to Queen Charlotte and a Fellow of the Royal Society. He was also passionately interested in books and manuscripts. When he died in 1783, he left a library of over 10,000 books and 650 manuscripts. Although only a small proportion of these were Islamic, there included among them some very interesting Arabic, Persian and Turkish texts on medicine and the natural sciences. Among them were Hunter's bequest (which reached the University Library in 1807) included 64 Arabic, 32 Persian and 34 Turkish manuscripts. Among the Arabic manuscripts is a late-seventeenth-century copy of Ibn Jazlah al-Baghdadi's medical treatise Taqwīm al-abdan fi 'tabārī al-insān, which has a section on smallpox and measles, a subject of great interest in Britain in the eighteenth century owing to the experiments of Lady Montague Worsley. Another early-eighteenth-century manuscript is a copy of Rāzī's Maqālah fi al-jadari wa al-barbash, which again deals with smallpox. The medical implications of this disease were understood in the Muslim world seven hundred years before it was properly interpreted in the West. Hunter does not appear to have obtained his Islamic manuscripts directly from Muslim countries, but usually purchased them from an intermediary collector. Most of Hunter's manuscripts can be dated to between the fourteenth and seventeenth centuries.

Other collections which make up the University's present holdings include the Arabic music manuscripts of Henry George Farmer (1882-1965). These were presented to the University following Farmer's death. Farmer had begun studying music at the age of 7, became Musical Director of the Broadway Theatre in London at the age of 28 in 1910 and in 1918 began studying Arabic at Glasgow University at the same time as he founded the Glasgow Symphony Orchestra. His twin interests in Arabic and music fused when in 1925, follow-

ing his graduation, he published two articles, 'Clues for the Arabian influence on European musical theory' and 'Arabic musical manuscripts in the Bodleian Library'. In 1926 he was awarded the doctorate for his study on Arabic music, and in 1929 published A History of Arabian Music to the Thirteenth Century. For the next twenty years a steady stream of publications appeared on studies relating to Arabic music, and in 1951 he started working in Glasgow University Library. Farmer's collection of Arab manuscripts dealing with music forms one of the most original and interesting subject collections available in Britain. Altogether Farmer bequeathed 1,600 volumes (both manuscript and printed) of oriental works on music. Finally, one unusual manuscript which the university possesses is a nineteenth-century copy from Nigeria or Senegal in Sudani Arabic script of litanies and prayers in praise of the Prophet Muhammad by the fifteenth-century writer Al-Jazā'ī.

The Islamic manuscripts held by Glasgow University are mainly described in two catalogues. The first was published in 1908 and was compiled by John Young and P. Henderson Aitken. It is entitled A Catalogue of the Manuscripts in the Library of the Hunterian Museum in the University of Glasgow. This lists all the items bequeathed by William Hunter. In 1945 James Robson published a catalogue of the oriental manuscripts in the library of the University of Glasgow, which covered texts received since 1908.

Other Collections

Outside Glasgow and Edinburgh, collections of Islamic manuscripts are small. St Andrews University Library has a collection of twenty-two Arabic and fifteen Persian manuscripts. A draft handwritten catalogue, never published, exists; it was compiled in 1950 by D. M. Dunlop. Aberdeen University Library has five Arabic and twenty-four Persian manuscripts, but their provenance is not clearly known.

Wales

Unlike Scotland, Wales has no tradition of Islamic studies, either at the present time or in the past, and the only important collection of Islamic manuscripts is to be found in the National Library of Wales, which is located at Aberystwyth on the central western coast of Wales. The National Library was founded in 1907 and became a copyright library two years later. The library has a small collection of Persian, Arabic and Indian manuscripts (mainly Hindustani). Among the items held in the collections are a sixteenth-century Persian copy of Husain bin Ali al-Wazî al-kâtîfî's commentary on the Qur'â'ân, entitled Ma'wâbih-i-aliyyah, various eighteenth-century copies of the Qur'â'ân, mainly obtained in India, and a manuscript volume in Arabic and Persian, dated Ah 1213 (AD 1835), invoking the names of Allah. According to an accompanying note, the manuscript was picked up on the battlefield of Inkerman in the Crimea in 1854.
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Only one published catalogue of the library’s Islamic collections exists. This was compiled by Hermann Ethis, a professor at the University of Wales, in Aberystwyth in 1916 and is entitled A Catalogue of Oriental Manuscripts, Persian, Arabic and Hindustani, Held by the National Library of Wales. In 1972, a typewritten Handlist of Manuscripts in the National Library of Wales in, or Relating to, the Semitic Languages was produced.

Ireland

Irish interest in Islamic studies is limited and of recent date. Historically, Ireland has had little contact with the Islamic world, and Irishmen who did work in India or the Middle East did so entirely under the auspices of the British Empire. Independent contact between Ireland and the Muslim East only really started after the Second World War. However, Ireland is home to one of the greatest collections of Islamic manuscripts ever assembled in the West by a single individual. The collector’s name was Alfred Chester Beatty, and there is a fascinating story behind his collection.7

Beatty was born in 1875 to an American-Irish banking family. He began life as a mining engineer, with a keen interest in minerals, notting with great enthusiasm their wide range of colours. By the age of 38 he had worked himself up to the position of Assistant General Manager of the Guggenheim Exploration Company. At this stage in his career, he left the United States and settled abroad, buying property in London and Cairo. It was in 1913 while wandering in the markets of old Cairo that he first came across the richly illuminated Islamic manuscripts that were to obsess him for the rest of his life. He became fascinated by the great range of colours used in Islamic manuscript illustration and this led him to make the first purchases in what was eventually to become one of the world’s greatest Islamic manuscript collections. Although he never claimed to be an expert, or a scholar, Beatty showed considerable skill in purchasing manuscripts which were not only of a high artistic standard, but were also of scholarly interest. After the First World War, his scale of collecting grew as his personal fortune increased, as a result of his involvement in the development of lead and zinc mines in Siberia, diamond mines in Sierra Leone and copper mines in Zambia. He built up a collection of about 3,000 Arabic, Persian and Turkish manuscripts covering all the main subject areas. It is estimated that about 2,500 of the manuscripts are in Arabic, 383 in Persian and 92 in Turkish. There are in addition 230 copies of the Qur’an, ranging from Chinese scripts through to West African scripts. Among these is what may be the most famous Qur’an in existence. It is one of the only known manuscripts copied by Iban al-Bawwab, one of the three classic masters of Arabic calligraphy. It was produced in Baghdad in the year AD 1001 and is written in an early Naskhi script. This was the style later to become predominant in transcribing the Qur’an.

The Arabic manuscripts which Chester Beatty acquired are notable for their high calligraphic standards. They include the oldest known copy of Al Jumāli’s History of Arabic Poetry, the oldest manuscript copy of Al-Husayn’s work on falconry and Al-Ma‘alqi’s biographies of famous Arab women. The Persian manuscripts are richly illustrated, and date from as early as the fifteenth century AD. Among the finest items is a late-sixteenth-century copy of the Shah-nama, or Book of Kings, written for the Persian ruler Shah Abbas (1582–1629). The high quality of the surviving illustrations attests to the fact that the manuscript must have been one of the greatest Persian books ever produced.

The Turkish manuscripts in the collection number ninety-two, and include an illustrated history of Suleiman the Magnificent which dates from 1579. It is thought that some of the large, gloriously coloured illustrations in this manuscript may be by the Ottoman artist Osman. The Indian manuscripts number eighteen altogether. The high point of Indian manuscript painting was reached during the Mughal era, under the emperors Akbar (1556–1605), Jahangir (1605–28) and Shah Jahan (1627–58). Under their patronage there was a great flowering of Indo-Persian art, and they were able to attract some of the greatest artists to the imperial Mughal court. The manuscripts acquired by Chester Beatty all date from this period, and are among the very finest examples of Mughal art in existence.

Chester Beatty originally intended that his unique collection should be bequeathed to a British institution: he had spent a great deal of his life in Britain, had become a naturalized British citizen in 1933, and was knighted after the Second World War for his valuable assistance to the British war effort. However, events were to turn out otherwise. First, he had a disagreement with the British Museum about the terms of his bequest. It would appear that Chester Beatty wanted his collection to be housed in a separate area, apart from the Islamic manuscripts, and to be given his name as a memorial. But the British Museum refused to accept these terms. Negotiations were broken off. Beatty then became increasingly irritated by Britain’s post-war Labour (Socialist) government, and resented not being able to transfer his funds abroad to buy manuscripts. At this time currency transfer regulations in Britain were very tight. Frustrated therefore by the attitudes both of the British Museum and the British government, he decided to emigrate, and in 1950 he settled in Ireland. His valuable collection went with him. The Irish received him with open arms. He was granted Irish citizenship, and promised that his manuscripts would be housed in a special building, to be known as the Chester Beatty Library. When he died in 1968 he was given a state funeral, and true to his word he bequeathed his entire collection to the Irish people. The Chester Beatty Library is located today in a quiet suburb of Dublin, maintained with an annual special grant from the Prime Minister’s office. This is the extraordinary story of how Ireland—a country with virtually no connections with the Muslim world, and strongly Roman Catholic—has ended up with one of the finest collections of Islamic manuscripts anywhere in the Western world.

The collection has been extensively catalogued. There is an eight-volume handlist of Arabic manuscripts, published between 1955 and 1966, with basic
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bibliographic details. This covers the 2,500 Arabic manuscripts in the collection. There is also a three-volume catalogue of the Persian manuscripts and miniatures, published between 1959 and 1962. These were compiled by A. J. Arberry, M. Minovoi, B. W. Robinson and E. Blochet, all great names in Islamic studies. There is a 1958 catalogue of the Turkish manuscripts and miniatures, compiled by V. Minorsky. The Mughal Indian manuscripts were catalogued in 1936 by Sir Thomas Arnold, and issued in three volumes by Oxford University Press. These volumes are 'elephant folio' size, and two of the volumes consist solely of illustrations taken from the eighteen manuscripts. Finally, there is a handlist of the Qur'ans held by the Chester Beatty Library, which was compiled by A. J. Arberry and published in 1967 under the title *The Koran Illuminated*.

The only other library in Ireland to have a collection of Islamic manuscripts is that of Trinity College, Dublin. There are currently 34 Arabic, 66 Persian, three Hindustani and five Turkish manuscripts in the collection. The five first Islamic manuscripts reached the library in 1682, presented by Dr Huntingdon of Merton College, Oxford. A further bequest was given in 1786, and in the nineteenth century Sir W. Gore's oriental manuscripts entered the library. All the manuscripts are described in T. K. Abbott's 'Catalogue of the Manuscripts in the Library of Trinity College, Dublin.'

Today, Britain's contacts with the Islamic world remain strong. Despite the loss of empire, and the consequent drawing in of British global power, the country's contacts with the Muslim East continue to prosper. In part this is due to the Arab oil boom of the 1970s and early 1980s, which stimulated British economic interest in the Middle East, an area with which Britain has always had strong ties and in which it has always maintained a keen interest. In part also it is due to the growing influence of Islam within Britain itself, as a result of Arab oil money and Muslim immigrants from the Indian subcontinent. There are now estimated to be over two million practising Muslims resident in Britain, one of the largest Muslim populations in the Western world. Islamic studies are well represented in British universities and other learned institutes. There are departments of Arabic and Islamic Studies at many British universities, including Oxford, Cambridge, London, Edinburgh, Glasgow, St Andrews, Exeter and Lancaster. Exeter and Lancaster are both new arrivals on the scene. The University of Exeter is creating a reputation for itself through its Centre for Arab Gulf Studies, which is now one of the major centres in Britain for research on the Arabian Gulf.

At Oxford, there is also the recently established Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies, attached to St Cross College. Its aim is to encourage a better and wider understanding of Islam, its culture and civilization, and a deeper appreciation of Muslim values and traditions. The Centre maintains a research library, has a visiting fellows programme, is sponsoring (in conjunction with Oxford University Press) the publication of a new international English-lang

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guage journal called the *Journal of Islamic Studies* and is preparing a number of research projects, in such subjects as Islam in Britain and the translation of Islamic manuscripts into English.

Turkish and Persian are taught at fewer places than Arabic, but there are none the less courses offered at places such as the School of Oriental and African Studies, the University of Edinburgh and the Oriental Institutes in Oxford and Cambridge. There are various learned societies which flourish — the Royal Asiatic Society and the Royal Society for Asian Affairs, to name but two. In 1973 the British Society for Middle Eastern Studies was founded to 'encourage and promote the study in the United Kingdom of the Middle Eastern cultural region'.

Libraries involved in collecting Middle Eastern materials have formed what is known as MELCOM (the Middle Eastern Libraries Committee). This committee has designated subject areas for collecting by particular institutions, so as to ensure that limited resources can stretch further. So, for example, the University of Durham concentrates on Libya and the Sudan, Manchester on Afghanistan and Iran, Cambridge on Iraq and the Arabian peninsula, Oxford on Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and Turkey, and London on North Africa and Iran. MELCOM has also sponsored various publishing projects such as Safadi and Auchterlonie's *Union Catalogue of Arabic Serials and Newspapers in British Libraries*.

One of Britain's greatest contributions to Islamic bibliography is undoubtedly the *Index Islamicus*, edited by J. D. Pearson. *Index Islamicus* is currently published by Mansell, having first appeared in 1958. Britain's immigrant Muslim community is also beginning to make its impact. The Islamic Foundation in Leicester, the Islamic Cultural Centre in North London and the Muslim Educational Trust are all involved in publishing and disseminating information about Islam. The Islamic Council of Europe is also based in London, and the Regent's Park mosque is one of the largest mosques in the Western world. There is no doubt that Britain's long association with the Islamic world shows no sign of weakening. Those first Islamic manuscripts which reached British shores on board ships of the Levant Company in 1634 have proved to be a remarkable foundation for the development of some of the closest ties forged by any Western European country with the Muslim world, ties built up on the basis not only of trade and empire, but also on a sense of scholarship and genuine intellectual interest in what Islam had to offer the West. With Islam now the fastest-growing religion in Britain, it would seem that the stage is set for a fresh chapter in Anglo-Muslim relations, one that will ensure a new lease of life for the important collections of Islamic manuscripts now housed in Britain's many libraries and archives.
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