A DESCRIPTIVE CATALOGUE OF
THE ORIENTAL MSS. BELONGING TO
THE LATE E. G. BROWNE

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COMPLETED & EDITED
WITH A MEMOIR OF THE AUTHOR
AND A BIBLIOGRAPHY OF
HIS WRITINGS

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ERRATA AND ADDENDA

P. 14, l. 13. For 'Ísá read 'Ísà.
P. 23, foot-note. Insert 1 before Read.
P. 28. For 82 (page-number) read 28.
P. 124, l. 20. For Lala-báští read Lárá-bástí.
P. 126, l. 3 from foot. For al-Yázájí read al-Yáziží.
P. 150, ll. 4-5. I have translated the passage referring to the sufra-sabští or “Feast for the Daughter of the Fairy King” in an article entitled “Some Notes on Arabian and Persian Folklore” (Folk-Lore, vol. xli, No. 4, pp. 355-358).
P. 164, l. 7. For 'Ísá read 'Ísà.
P. 169, l. 14 and p. 170, l. 11. For Kámilu'-Sántá'at read Kámilu'-Sínd'áat.
P. 200, l. 12. For Jaldáki read Jildáki.
P. 201, l. 6. For Sháhmírzádá read Sháhmírzádí.
P. 268, l. 19. Delete and probably he belongs to the 19th century.
Tarzí was an Afshá Turk, born near Urúmiyya in Ádharbáyján, who flourished in the reigns of Sháh Šafi and Sháh 'Abdás II (A.D. 1629–1667). His Díwán, with an excellent biographical notice, in which the editor praises his originality as a poet, was published by the “Tamaddun” Press in 1309/1891.
P. 276, l. 19. The Kamálu'-Balághá of al-Yázdádí was printed in Cairo in 1341/1922.
P. 278, l. 13 from foot. For Nagli'-Zírýf read Nuqli'-Zírýf.
P. 293, l. 2. Add The text has been edited and translated by C. D. Cobham in J.R.A.S., Vol. xxix, 1897, pp. 81-101, where further information is given concerning Umm Harám, her shrine, and the MSS. of this work.
INTRODUCTION

Born on February 7, 1862, Edward Granville Browne came of good English stock, a Gloucestershire family “producing soldiers and business men, with divines and doctors of medicine in former generations,” but leaving no record that might seem to anticipate their descendant’s genius for Orientalism. His schooldays were less happy than those of most boys, for even then he went his own ways, which could not be fitted into any orthodox system of work and play. Browne was destined for engineering, his father’s profession, and accordingly left Eton before he was sixteen. What first turned his thoughts to the East was the Russo-Turkish war of 1877–8; admiration for the bravery of the Turks and disgust with the attempts made in this country “to confound questions of abstract justice with party politics” started him upon the study of the Turkish language. From that day he never looked back. On coming up to Pembroke College, Cambridge, in 1879, though Medicine claimed most of his time, he began to read Arabic with Professor E. H. Palmer and later with Professor William Wright, while Persian (one of the subjects for the Indian Languages Tripos which he took in 1884) was rapidly mastered with the help of “a very learned but very eccentric old Persian,” Mírzá Muḥammad Bāqir of Bawánát, then living in Limehouse. A visit to Constantinople in 1882, after passing his second examination for the M.B., gave him a glimpse of the promised land; but now it was Persia on which his heart was set. When he went down from Cambridge to work for three years in London hospitals, he found consolation in the poetry of Persian mystics, in the society of Persian friends, and above all in the dream that some day he would make a pilgrimage to Shíráz and Isfahán. That dream came true sooner than he had dared to hope. In May, 1887, he was elected Fellow of his College and the way to the East lay open before him. 

A Year amongst the Persians, published in 1893, reflects his experiences and impressions with extraordinary vividness. Every one knows this fascinating book, in which the inmost spirit of Persia and the Persian people is revealed by a young Englishman who, incomparably beyond any other Western traveller, had absorbed it and made it part of his own feeling and thinking. Hence the book is a revelation of Browne himself; already we see his whole-hearted sympathy with the Oriental mind and, conversely, the fixed point of view from which his judgements on the West were formed and delivered. His falling in with the Bábís, though some readers may have regretted it, was a great piece of luck; for who else could have won their confidence, learned so much about them, and penetrated into the mysteries of their faith as he did? On returning to Cambridge with many precious manuscripts, he became University Lecturer in Persian, a post which he held till 1902, when he succeeded Charles Rieu as Sir Thomas Adams’s Professor of Arabic.
I first met him in 1891 and well remember how I was struck by his appearance and personality, so attractive and so unlike anything I had expected. At that time he had few pupils, mostly beginners, and some of us found his methods a little disconcerting. Impatient of grammar and syntax, he would read and translate with amazing speed, only pausing to take up a point that interested him, which he would illustrate by anecdotes and quotations and draw out into an eloquent digression lasting as often as not to the end of the hour. But he possessed in a singular degree the born teacher’s gift of communicating enthusiasm to his pupils; and when he saw that they desired knowledge for its own sake, he would spare no pains to remove their difficulties and help them in every possible way. As time went on, his teaching and organizing activities encroached more and more upon his leisure for literary work. He founded and directed a school, with Oriental instructors, where probationers for the Levant Consular Service and the Egyptian and Soudan Civil Services received special training in Arabic, Persian, and Turkish. During Term, lectures would keep him busy the whole morning; and to these, in his later years, there was added the supervision of Government of India Research Students, who produced admirable work under his guidance and inspiration. In 1904 the foundation of the E. J. W. Gibb Memorial Trust set on foot a great enterprise, in which Browne naturally took the leading part, for publishing editions and translations of Oriental texts. Besides contributing several important volumes and collaborating with Mîrzá Muḥammad Khān of Qazwín and others in many more, he was actively and often very intimately concerned in one way or another not only with most of the forty-five volumes which appeared before 1926 but also with some of those that have been published since. Indeed the whole series is as much a memorial to Browne as to Gibb himself.

In 1906 came the most fortunate event in his life, his marriage to Alice Blackburne-Daniell, and thenceforth he was always associated in the minds of those who knew him with his home, Firwood, and the delightful library where he and his wife entertained a host of friends from far and near. The same year witnessed the publication of the second volume of his Literary History of Persia; but then the work was broken off by his enthusiastic championship of Persia in her struggle for independence, followed after a brief interval by the world-war. What this catastrophe meant to him may be gathered from the words he wrote on the death of Charles Rieu, his predecessor in the Chair of Arabic at Cambridge—“in the realm of science at least we see some foreshadowing of that universal brotherhood of mankind which elsewhere is but dreamed of and hoped for, wherein the limitations of nationalities and tongues vanish away, and even East and West, so widely separated by thought, custom, feeling, and belief, are reconciled in the Light of that Knowledge which is the Creator’s Supreme Attribute and the student’s ultimate goal.” After the war, scholars of many nations joined in writing a volume of Oriental Studies, which was presented to him on February 7, 1922, his sixtieth birthday. At this
time he was busy with his manuscripts, and in a paper read on November 14 in the same year, he refers to "the Catalogue, with facsimiles and photographs, which I hope to publish before long." Though he wrote as easily as he talked, it must always remain a mystery how he contrived to get through the work he did, without ever denying himself to friends, pupils, or any one who sought his help. But he had felt the strain; there was a limit even to his output of energy. Two years later he collapsed and slowly sank till he passed away on January 5, 1926.

Of Browne's character and achievements as a scholar I will write briefly because they speak for themselves. He was the most human of men, and if he ranks among the greatest Orientalists it is because he was also, I suppose, the greatest humanist who has ever devoted himself to studying the life, thought, and literature of the East. He was no grammarian, and philology did not interest him except incidentally. He would have admitted the value of grammar as a necessary discipline for scholars to whom exact linguistic knowledge is either an end in itself or a means of promoting philological studies; but his own mastery of three Oriental languages was not gained by those methods against which as a schoolboy he had instinctively revolted. In his view, to know a language was to possess its literature, and through the literature a key to the minds and hearts of men; hence, though he admired profound scholarship, however "pure," he himself really cared for it in proportion as it was capable of being used to throw light upon Islamic, and especially Persian, culture and civilization. During the forty years which he spent in illuminating this immense subject, he was continually drawing information from the best sources available, including, besides books and manuscripts, a large number of Oriental correspondents and personal friends; for he spoke and wrote Arabic, Persian, and Turkish with equal facility, while they were charmed to find in him one who was familiar with their thoughts and sympathized with their ideals. As may be seen from the Bibliography (pp. xii–xv), the whole of Browne's literary work, not excepting his Lectures on Arabian Medicine, is concerned with Persia and falls into three main divisions:

I. Works on Religion.
II. Works on Literature and History.
III. Works on Politics and Journalism.

The religious works are the earliest, the political the fewest, while the most numerous and extensive belong to the domain of literary history. No attempt will be made to describe them in detail; there is only room for some general remarks under each head.

I. Browne's indifference (to use no stronger word) to Sunnî theology was not surprising, but it is characteristic of him that, without ignoring the orthodox Shi'a, he was far more attracted by its heretical sects: Ismā'īlīs, Ḥurūfīs, and Bābīs. These mysterious and fantastic doctrines excited his curiosity, and their appeal to him became irresistible when he saw them inspiring a faith for which its votaries
were ready to suffer torture and death. To me, at any rate, his enthusiasm for the Bábí has never seemed difficult to understand, nor its consequences to be a matter for regret. That he should eagerly grasp the opportunity given him to study on the spot, and in close touch with members of the sect, a typically Persian religion, which, though no longer in its infancy, was still young enough to feel growing pains; that he should realize its interest and historical importance to students of Comparative Religion; and that he should therefore exert himself to collect, examine, edit, and translate its earliest documents and records—all this is only what any one who knew Browne must have expected of him. His work on Bábism may be supplemented in the future; it can never be superseded. I am not sure whether, taking a long view, we ought not to regard it as the most original and valuable of all his contributions to our knowledge of Persia. The *Magála-i-Shákhší Sáyyád* (“A Traveller’s Narrative”), edited and translated in 1891, the *Táríkh-i-Jádíd* (“New History”), translated in 1893, which is a later and garbled recension of the same author’s *Nugátátul-Káf*, edited by Browne from the unique Paris MS. in 1910, bring out striking analogies between the history and historical records of Bábism and those of the early Christian Church. *Materials for the Study of the Bábí Religion* (1918), his last book on the subject which he had made his own, gives an account of many new and hitherto unpublished documents in his possession and includes a chapter on the Bahá’í propaganda in America. His magnificent collection of Bábí MSS. is described on pp. 53–87 of the present Catalogue.

II. About 1900 the *Literary History of Persia*, which Browne had contemplated since he was in his teens, took definite shape. The work, as he conceived it, was not to be a History of Persian Literature in the narrower sense; it should deal with “the manifestations of the national genius in the fields of Religion, Philosophy, and Science”; with ideas and movements rather than books; and, of course, not exclusively with books written in Persian. According to the arrangement made with his publisher, the complete work was to consist of a single volume of 500 pages; but few of Browne’s friends, and certainly none of his pupils, can have been astonished when in 1902 a volume of the stipulated size duly appeared, comprising the Prolegomena to a History of Persian Literature and carrying the work no further than A.D. 1000. The second volume (1906) covers the period of three hundred years from Firdawsí to Sa’dí; the third and fourth, entitled respectively *Persian Literature under Tartar Dominion* and *Persian Literature in Modern Times*, were published by the Cambridge University Press in 1920 and 1924. Browne had embarked on what he afterwards called “the labour of a life-time.” For the most part, he found it necessary to provide his own materials. The History is built on his multifarious researches before and during the twenty-two years which elapsed between the appearance of the first and last of its four volumes. These researches produced a great number of subsidiary publications, amounting to many thousands of pages and constituting, by themselves, a service of unparalleled
importance to Persian studies. I need only mention his three catalogues of the Muhammadan MSS. in the Cambridge University Library; his editions of the Lubab of ‘Awfi and the Tadkhira of Dawlatsháh; his translations of the Chahár Maqála and the Ta’rikh-i-Guzída; and his numerous articles in the Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society. In this way he traversed a vast extent of ground; and the deficiency of printed and lithographed texts he supplied, so far as was practicable, with original matter derived from the rare manuscripts which he was continually adding to his private Collection. Since it is always interesting to see how the personality and work of a famous scholar impress those who, though not of his own race, are specialists in the same branch of learning, I will give the gist of some critical remarks on the Literary History by a distinguished German savant, Professor Franz Babinger, who enjoyed Browne’s friendship and, on his death, contributed an appreciative notice to the Oriental journal Der Islam (vol. xvi, 1927, pp. 114–122). The writer regards Browne as “one of the greatest (bedeutendsten) Orientalists of all time,” and declares that the verdict passed on the History by the Anglo-Saxon world is entirely justified, though elsewhere, perhaps, the work would have received more censure than praise. “How fortunate for Browne that he thought and wrote as a true Englishman!” Too much, however, is left to chance; the book is unequal; “man kann es als eine Reihe von Essays bezeichnen, die der Verfasser über ihm lieb gewordene Gestalten geschrieben hat”; moreover, a certain capriciousness, excusable in the circumstances, is shown in the author’s choice of the sources which he has utilized. Without disputing the justice of these criticisms from an academic standpoint, I cannot admit that they are relevant here. Browne himself would have swept them aside. It was not his object to compile an exhaustive and systematic work either on the lines of Brockelmann’s History of Arabic Literature or on any other plan. He ranges freely along the paths to which his tastes and predilections beckon him, but there is a method in his wanderings, and those who accompany him to the end will feel that they have surveyed the historical evolution of the Persian people and have obtained such a wide and commanding view of Persian thought and literature as they could hardly have imagined to be possible in the limits of a single book.

III. The principles which impelled Browne to follow the fortunes of the Persian national movement of 1905–1909 with intense sympathy, take an active part in organizing and influencing British opinion, and devote two considerable volumes to writing the history of the “Risorgimento” and illustrating its character, are expressed in the following sentences. “Whether it be a question of individuals or nations, the destruction of a distinctive type is a loss to the universe and therefore an evil.” “There can be no doubt that politically both Greece and Italy profited much from a sympathy largely based on a recognition of what human civilization owed them for their contributions to art and literature. It is my contention that Persia stands in the same category and that her disappearance from the society of
independent states would be a misfortune not only to herself but to the whole human race." The fact that his Persian Revolution is deeply coloured by the fervour with which he held these convictions, as well as by the origin of some of the papers and letters whence he drew the materials for his narrative, does not impair its authority as a faithful and masterly presentation of the events described. During the years 1909–1912, when the crisis was at its height, he published several pamphlets, of which the titles are given below. In his Press and Poetry of Modern Persia the literary side of the movement is attractively exhibited in text and translation.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY**

The following Bibliography is based on the list of Browne's writings at the end of his Materials for the Study of the Bábí Religion (1918), but differs from it in some respects. It comprises all his own books, editions, and translations; the articles which he contributed to the J.R.A.S. (Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society); his political pamphlets and his papers read to and published by the Persia Society. These, together with a few more, have been classified and arranged chronologically under three heads, viz.: I. Persian Religion; II. Persian Literature, History, Science, and Travel; III. Persian Politics and Journalism. The titles of books, of which the Introductions alone were written by Browne, are not included; and I have also omitted E. J. W. Gibb's History of Ottoman Poetry, of which Vols. II–VI were edited by Browne after the author's death. Although the present Bibliography is not complete, it contains, I hope, nearly everything of importance except reviews of books, letters published in newspapers, and a few scattered articles. Of these last, two, though not included in the Bibliography, deserve mention here. The first is a paper entitled, "On the Turkish Language and Turkish Philology" (Transactions of the Philological Society, 1882–1884, pp. 544–572); the second, "A Chapter from the History of Cannabis Indica," published in the St Bartholomew's Hospital Journal for March, 1897.

**I. Persian Religion**


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1 The most important of these Introductions were written for the Persian texts edited by Mirzá Muḥammad of Qazwín in the E. J. W. Gibb Memorial Series: Vol. viii, the Marsubáán-náma (1909); Vol. x, al-Muʿjam fi Maʿḍūrī Ash’ārī l-ʿAjam (1909); Vol. xi, the Chahár Maqála (1910); and Vol. xvi, 1 and 2, the Taʾrīkh-i-Jahán-gushá (1912 and 1916). Browne also contributed Introductions to the reprint of Morier's Hajji Baba (1895) in the Series of English Classics edited by W. E. Henley; to The Life and Teaching of Abbas Effendi by Myron H. Phelps (New York, 1903); and to Dar-ul-Islam (1904), a record of a journey through ten of the Asiatic provinces of Turkey, by his friend Sir Mark Sykes.
INTRODUCTION


II. PERSIAN LITERATURE, HISTORY, SCIENCE, AND TRAVEL


   The whole work is now issued by the Cambridge University Press in four volumes, uniform in style and appearance.


24. The Ta'ríkh-i-Guzída ("Select History") of Ḥamdulláh Mustawfí, reproduced in facsimile from a MS. written in A.D. 1453, with an abridged translation by E. G. Browne and


32. Persian Literature in Modern Times, 1924. See No. 14 supra.


III. PERSIAN POLITICS AND JOURNALISM


All Orientalists will regret that Browne did not live to finish and see in type the Catalogue of his Oriental Manuscripts, upon which he had been engaged for several years before his last illness, and which is now published in accordance with injunctions given by him to his literary executors, Dr Ellis Hovell Minns of Pembroke College and myself. We have done our best to carry out his wishes, and since I am writing on behalf of us both, it is an obvious duty to say a few words here regarding my colleague's share in the work. On him fell the main burden of making the preliminary arrangements for its publication, and though he has taken no part in preparing it for the press, he has helped to settle many points of difficulty which arose in connection with it, and at every stage his collaboration has proved invaluable. Without entering into the reasons which determined our choice of the Cambridge University Press as publishers, perhaps I may say that we took into account the probability that the Browne Collection will ultimately find a permanent home in the University Library, as well as the fact that Browne's three catalogues of the Muhammadan MSS. in the Library were published by the University Press. The Trustees of the E. J. W. Gibb Memorial Fund agreed to contribute the sum of £150 towards the cost of publication in return for an equivalent number of copies, which will be presented to Oriental scholars and institutions in different parts of the world; and a further sum of £50 was promised by the Managers of the E. G. Browne Memorial Fund. The materials handed over to us comprised (1) the entire Collection of Oriental Manuscripts; (2) a slip-catalogue, dated July, 1922, containing the titles and brief descriptions of most of these MSS.; (3) a catalogue, written on 311 pages of foolscap, containing 386 articles in their final form. It is this, supplemented by 82 articles for which I am responsible, that is published in the present volume.

Now, in the first place, something should be said concerning the formation, contents, and character of the Browne Collection. It began modestly enough with two volumes of Persian Poetry, namely, the Laylā ʿu Majnūn of Maktabi (V. 44), which Browne acquired on his first visit to Constantinople in 1882—this, by the way, is almost the only one of his MSS. that contains miniatures—and a copy of the Bāstān with Súdúl's Turkish translation and commentary, purchased soon afterwards from Quaritch. The real nucleus, however, was formed in 1888, his "year amongst the Persians," and the period immediately following, when his keen interest in the Bábí movement led to the acquisition of about 30 MSS. bearing on the history and doctrines of the sect, a number which subsequently was more than doubled, as on his return from Persia he kept up an active correspondence with both Azalís and Bahá'ís; and even after this had slackened, he continued to receive copies of their latest books and tracts at frequent intervals till within a year or two of his death. From 1890 onwards the Collection expanded steadily, but although 39 MSS. of which nearly half belong to Classes V and W (Persian and Turkish Poetry), were purchased, for the most part between 1901 and 1911, from J. J. Naaman of
Baghdád, it received its most important accessions during and after the European War. In January, 1917, Browne acquired *en bloc* the small but valuable collection of Schindler MSS., 64 in all, which he has described in the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (October, 1917, p. 657 foll.). Sir Albert Houtum-Schindler possessed a singularly deep and extensive knowledge of Persia, where he spent over forty years of his life in the service of the Persian Government. His tastes were objective; hence in this group of MSS., as Browne remarks, “historical, biographical, and geographical works enormously preponderate; the remaining volumes represent lexicography, anecdotes, and various scientific subjects, *viz.*, medicine, astronomy, music, and notably mineralogy and the natural history of precious stones.” As the provenance of the Schindler MSS. is not always stated in the Catalogue, I append a complete list of the class-marks under which they are described: C 1; D 8; G 6, G 8, G 10–12, G 14, G 15, G 17; H 2–4, H 6, H 8, H 10–12, H 14–17, H 19, H 21, H 22; I 1–4, I 6, I 7; J 5, J 6, J 8, J 18; K 2, K 3, K 5–9; L 1–3, L 6; N 1; O 3; P 12, P 13, P 29–32; R 1; S 3, S 5; V 59, V 69; X 4, X 6; Y 3; Sup. 3, Sup. 4.

A collector of very different type was Hájjí ‘Abdu'l-Majíd Belshah (ob. 1923), whose name appears oftener than any other in the pages of this Catalogue. Though, like many professional dealers in Oriental manuscripts, he may sometimes have been inclined to overestimate their worth, “his flair for good books was only equalled by his energy in seeking them out,” and the present Collection (not to speak of those in the British Museum and the India Office Library) is indebted to him for many of its choicest treasures. From Belshah, directly or indirectly, Browne obtained at least 100 MSS., the great majority of which were purchased in 1920. About half of them are works on Medicine (26), Shi'a Theology (12), and Mysticism (9), while Arabic and Persian Poetry are represented by 15 volumes and Mathematics and Astronomy by 5. Further large acquisitions, the last of their kind, were made in December, 1923, and January, 1924, when 57 MSS. were bought from the Trustees of the British Museum.

The facts which have been noticed indicate the provenance of some 330 MSS., *i.e.* over two-thirds of the whole Collection. Many others, including five acquired (May, 1901) at the sale of a Bektáshí dervish's effects, were picked up at auctions in London, Constantinople and elsewhere, or purchased from booksellers and private individuals. An extraordinarily high proportion—not less, I think, than 75 or 80—were personal gifts to Browne from his friends. Dr Rıza Tevfiq, the well-known Turkish patriot, philosopher, and man of letters, presented him with 31 volumes; a great many gifts of this kind came from Persia; and the same generosity, which he never failed to appreciate, was shown by many of his English and European friends, such as (to mention only a few names), Mr Guy le Strange, E. J. W. Gibb, Sir Albert Houtum-Schindler, Professor A. von Le Coq of Berlin, Mr H. L. Rabino, Sir Mark Sykes, Professor E. H. Minns, C. D. Cobham, and Rev. W. St Clair Tisdall.
The motives and considerations by which Browne was guided in forming his Collection are apparent from numerous passages in his works. He points out that “those whose studies are concerned with Western literature, whether ancient or modern, often hardly realize how dependent the Orientalist is on manuscript materials. Of most important ancient and mediaeval Western writings some tolerable printed edition exists, even though it be rare and not equal to the highest standard of textual accuracy. But in the case of Oriental, especially Persian, books of reference it is far otherwise; many indispensable works exist only in manuscript and can only be consulted in large libraries like the British Museum.” When he described Sir Albert Houtum-Schindler’s MSS. as “a working library, containing many very rare books carefully selected during a long period of time...for a definite purpose of study, and clearly reflecting the outlook of him who formed it,” he was no doubt conscious that these words might be applied with the same propriety to his own Collection. In his view a manuscript was primarily a scientific instrument, and unless it had some intrinsic value as such, its merits as an object of art would seldom kindle his enthusiasm, though he was not insensible to the charms of calligraphy when they met his eye, for example, in a fine old Persian codex of the 13th century. It was his thirst for knowledge, and the depth and breadth of his interest in Islam, that created the Collection and gave it so much of the personal character and individuality that we find everywhere in his writings, just as it was his study of the materials which he gradually accumulated in the course of his lifetime that enabled him to strike off from the familiar highways of Orientalism and penetrate into regions hitherto little known or altogether unexplored.

The total number of MSS. designated by class-marks is 468. Some are in two or more volumes, and the number of separate works is, of course, very much greater, as many MSS. contain several by one or more than one author. Taking a general survey of their subject-matter, we observe that Religion, including Theology and Mysticism, claims 149; Poetry 115; History and Biography 76; Medicine and Natural Science 43; while the remnant are distributed in comparatively small numbers under such heads as Geography and Travels, Philosophy, Lexicography, and Belles-Lettres. No one need be told that the most prominent features of the Collection coincide with those aspects of Islam by which Browne was mainly attracted. The Shaykhi and Babi MSS. alone would suffice to make it memorable; probably they constitute the fullest and richest assemblage of original documents relating to these sects that exists in any public or private library in the world. Among them are the *Magâla-i-Shâkhâ* Sayyâh (F 56), of which the text, accompanied by an English translation, was published by Browne in 1891; the *Tarîkh-i-Jadîd* (F 55), which he translated two years afterwards; the *Sâhifa bayna’l-Haramayn* (F 7), one of the earliest writings of the Báb, with a note by Subh-i-Azal on the disposal of the Báb’s remains; and a collection of letters written by the Báb to various persons (F 21). Hurûfi literature, the subject of two articles
by Browne in the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, is also strongly represented. Measured in terms of MSS, his preference for Shi‘a as opposed to Sunní religious literature is something like nine to one, and 22 volumes on Şûfîsm do not go far towards restoring the balance. These comprise a Persian translation of the *Fusûs-al-Hikam* (D I) made in 744/1343-4; an excellent old copy (768/1367) of the *Mirzâdul-‘Ibâd* of Najmu’d-Din Dâya (D 3); and two autographs, viz., a polemic against the Şûfîs, entitled *Matâ’ini’s-Şûfiyya* (D 16), which was composed in 1221/1806 by Muḥammad Rafi‘ of Tabriz, and a treatise (D 17) written in 1887 by ‘Abdu’llâh Muḥammad Zamán in answer to nine questions on Şûfî terminology and doctrine which Browne had submitted to his eccentric friend, Mírzá Muḥammad Bâqir of Bawánât. Several other religious works in the Collection are remarkable for their antiquity or rarity, and an old anonymous Persian Commentary on the Qur‘án (A 1) seems to be unique.

Among the *Historical and Biographical MSS.*, attention may be drawn to the *Tajâribu’s-Salaf* (G 3), a Persian version of the *Kitâbu’l-Fakhrit*, described by Browne in the Centenary Volume of the Royal Asiatic Society (1924); a complete copy, apparently the only one extant, of an enormous general history in Persian entitled *Khuld-i-Barîn* (G 14); a fine and ancient copy, dated 542/1148, of Shahristânî’s *Kitâbni’s-Milal wa’n-Nihal* (H 1); the very rare *Silsilatu’n-Nasab-i-Šafawiyya* (H 12) on the Şafawî kings and their ancestors; the original Arabic treatise, entitled *Risâla fi Maḥâsini Isfahân*, by al-Mâfarrâkhî, together with the Persian translation of the same (I 1 and I 2); and the *Qisaṣu’t-Anbiyâ* (J 21), translated into Persian from the Arabic of Abûl-Ḥasan al-Bûshânji, in which there occurs an account of St Paul that forms the subject of the last article written by Browne before his death (see *Islamica*, April, 1926, pp. 129–134). A most instructive and probably unique collection of letters by the famous statesman and historian, Rashidu’d-Dîn Faḍlu’l-láh, is preserved in the *Munshâ’ât-i-Rashîdî* (L 1).

Next to the Bábî MSS., I think the most characteristic group is that composed of 28 works on *Medicine and Medical Science*, a domain in which Browne renewed the studies of his youth and felt himself to be inspired by the traditions of what he always regarded as “a great and noble profession.” The rare books belonging to this class include the *Kitâbni’s-Fakhir* of Râzî (P 2); eleventh century copies of ‘Alî ibn ‘İsâ’s *Tadhkira pull-Kalhâlîn* (P 3) and the *Maqâla fi Khalqi’l-Insân* (P 4) of Sa’îd ibn Hibati’lláh; part of Book III of the *Qânûn* of Avicenna (P 5), transcribed by the eminent physician Hibatulláh ibn Ṣâ‘îd (ob. 560/1164); and the encyclopaedic *Dhakhtra-i-Khwárazmshâhî* (P 16), complete in one volume, as well as portions of the same work dating from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries (P 17–19). Among the remaining *Scientific MSS.*, the *Zîjul-Mufrad* (O 1), a unique work on astronomy and chronology, deserves particular notice; there are also some *tansâq-nâma’s* or Persian lapidaries (P 29–33). *Persian Poetry*, the largest single class in the Collection, though less rich in quality than many others,
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contains the Gházán-námá (V 28), an extremely rare account of the reign of Gházán Khán the Mongol, composed in 758/1357; the complete works of ‘Aṭṭár (V 7) and Jamáli or Pír Jamál (V 38); ancient copies of the Díwán of Qásimu’l-Anwár (V 39) and the Tuhfatul-Ahrár of Jámi (V 41); some uncommon Díwáns, e.g., those of Jahán (V 32), Muḥyí (V 46), Shaykh Şáfi (V 56), Maẓhar (V 57), Mír Naṣr Nawá (V 84), Ṭarží (V 86); three valuable Anthologies (V 65, V 68, V 88); and a Kurdish mathnawí entitled Kitáb-i-Mullá Paríshán (V 62).

Inadequate as it is, the foregoing review will have served to show the importance of the Collection for students of Islamic literature and literary history. I can now proceed to explain the arrangement of the Catalogue, or rather let Browne himself explain it by quoting a passage in which, with his usual mastery of details, he sets forth the principles and practice that he has followed.

"Now even a few hundred manuscripts, if they are to be readily available for reference, must be catalogued, and for this purpose each one must bear a class-mark for identification and a size-mark to indicate location. It would, of course, be more convenient if the books could be arranged simply according to subject; but owing to the difference of size this would involve a great waste of space on the shelves, and those volumes must stand together which are approximately of the same height. The system which I have adopted for the size-marks…is that used in the Cambridge University Library, according to which a book is marked 8 when it is over 7 and under 8 inches in height, and so on. Since a book marked 8 should go into a shelf 8 inches in height, directly it exceeds this height, no matter by how little, it becomes 9. Under each size the books are arranged in order of class-marks, so that the double indication of size-mark and class-mark enables a book to be located immediately. The question of class-marks is rather less simple, and the system must be adapted to the extent and character of the collection…. I therefore decided to group the subjects under the 26 letters of the Roman alphabet; in each subject to arrange the books in chronological order; and when one book was represented by more than one MS., to put the older before the later copy. In arranging the classes, I followed on the whole the order adopted in Dr Rieu's excellent Catalogues of the Persian, Arabic, and Turkish MSS. in the British Museum, except that I placed non-Muhammadan religious books at the end, under Z, instead of at the beginning, under A.…Also I made no differentiation according to language, for Muhammadan learning and culture is so essentially one that its vehicle is, comparatively speaking, a matter of indifference."

So much for the method of classification. The reader will see at once that, for instance, the MS. designated as Q 4 (9) occupies the fourth place in Class Q and is over eight, but not more than nine, inches in height. As finally arranged the Classes, with the number of MSS. in each, are as follows:

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1 From an unpublished paper, entitled A Persian Library, which Browne read before the Royal Asiatic Society on November 14, 1922.
A. Qur'áns and Commentaries. 3 MSS.  P. Medicine, Natural Science, Mineralogy, etc. 35 MSS.
B. Sunní Theology, etc. 13 MSS.  Q. Occult Sciences. 6 MSS.
C. Shí'a Theology, etc. 23 MSS.  R. Art, Calligraphy, Music, etc. 5 MSS.
D. Mysticism. 22 MSS.  S. Dictionaries. 10 MSS.
E. The Older Heretical Sects. 21 MSS.  T. Acrostics, Rhyme, Rhetoric, etc. 5 MSS.
F. Shaykhí and Bábí MSS. 67 MSS.  U. Arabic Poetry. 11 MSS.
G. General History. 19 MSS.  V. Persian Poetry. 94 MSS.
H. History of Special Periods, Dynasties, etc. 23 MSS.  W. Turkish Poetry. 10 MSS.
I. Local Histories. 11 MSS.  X. Stories and Epistolary Models. 14 MSS.
J. Biographical Works. 23 MSS.  Y. Collectanea, Miscellanea, and Unclassified. 12 MSS.
K. Geography and Travels. 9 MSS.  Z. Non-Islamic Books. 1 MS.
L. Official Papers, Letters, etc. 6 MSS.  Sup. (Supernumerary)^1 9 MSS.
M. Encyclopaedias. 2 MSS.  N. Philosophy. 6 MSS.
O. Mathematics and Astronomy. 8 MSS.

When the written Catalogue, containing Browne's description of 386 of these 468 MSS., came into my hands, I found that it was in perfect order so far as it went, and that all I had to do was to re-write some words here and there which might have puzzled the compositors, make a few trivial corrections, insert a few foot-notes^2, and verify the references. If the claims of other work have sometimes prevented me from discharging the last-mentioned duty as thoroughly as I could have wished, it must be added that numerous tests of the author's accuracy have almost invariably confirmed my respect for it. But unfortunately the Catalogue, as he left it, was incomplete. I had to ascertain the extent of the deficiency, and in the summer of 1926, after the MSS. had been deposited in the University Library, my friend Mr Guy le Strange, who was also one of Browne's oldest and most valued friends, undertook the arduous task of arranging the volumes on the shelves. By grouping together those of the same size seriatim and drawing up a table to show the location of each group, he made it easy for me to find any particular MS. that might be wanted; moreover, he noted cases where the same class-mark had been assigned to two MSS. or where MSS. which had been entered in the Catalogue were no longer traceable. I am glad to have an opportunity of recording my gratitude to Mr le Strange for the time and trouble which he devoted to this labour of love in circumstances that rendered it peculiarly toilsome.

The 84 MSS.^3 of which the written Catalogue gave no account bear the following class-marks: D 21, D 22; F 65, F 66, F 66*; H 23; L 6; N 6; S 9, S 10; U 10,

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^1 See the Appendix. The nine MSS. of this Class were discovered among Browne's lithographed editions of Oriental texts by Mr Reuben Levy, University Lecturer in Persian, whilst he was engaged in preparing a Hand-list of the latter.

^2 These are enclosed in square brackets, to distinguish them from foot-notes written by the author himself.

^3 Two MSS., designated by the class-marks V 74 and Y 2, are not included in the Collection.
INTRODUCTION

Over a dozen were obtained by gift or purchase at various dates between 1898 and 1917, but most were recent acquisitions. As a rule, I have described them briefly, since on the whole they are uninteresting and, though they contribute to the catholicity of the Collection, have scarcely repaid me for many tedious hours spent in their company. The two Indices will, I hope, be found useful. The first contains only the titles of MSS. described in the Catalogue; the second, the names of authors, copyists, and other persons, titles of books, and some general references. In the Catalogue the following abbreviations have occasionally been employed:

B.M.T.C. = Catalogue of Turkish MSS. in the British Museum, by C. Rieu.

As has been explained above, I am particularly indebted to Professor E. H. Minns and Mr Guy le Strange for the help they have given me in the preparation of this work; but there are also other friends and colleagues to whom I wish to express my thanks—to Mr R. Levy for discovering and calling my attention to several MSS. which had been mislaid; to Mr E. Edwards of the British Museum for his notices (Browne Presentation Volume, pp. 137–149) of certain MSS. in the Collection; and to the University Librarian, Mr A. F. Scholfield, for facilities in making use of the Library, for his interest in the work, and for his promptness and courtesy in disposing of many questions with which I troubled him. A final word of gratitude is due to the Staff of the Cambridge University Press for the care and skill that made the correction of the proofs, if not a light task, at least an exceptionally pleasant one of its kind.

1 A list at the end of the slip-catalogue (on which Browne's later manuscript catalogue was based) gives the titles of 23, and is preceded by a note stating that they were bought as a residue from the Trustees of the British Museum on January 17, 1924.

REYNOLD A. NICHOLSON

February 7, 1932