



UNIVERSITY OF
CAMBRIDGE

Libraries
and Archives

Provenance brings history to life: The manuscript collection of E.G. Browne at Cambridge University Library.

Yasmin Faghihi
Head of Near and Middle Eastern
Manuscripts and printed collections

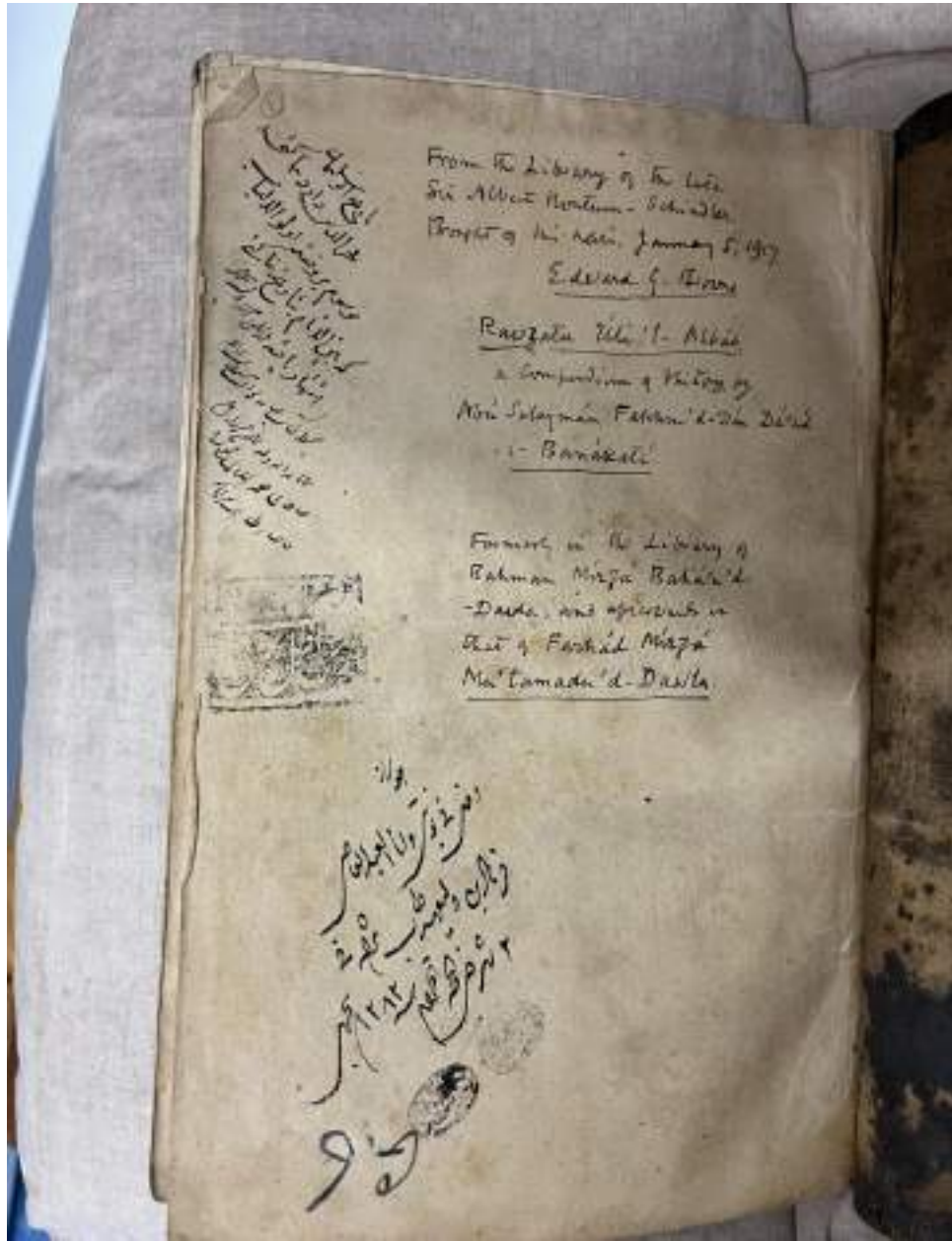
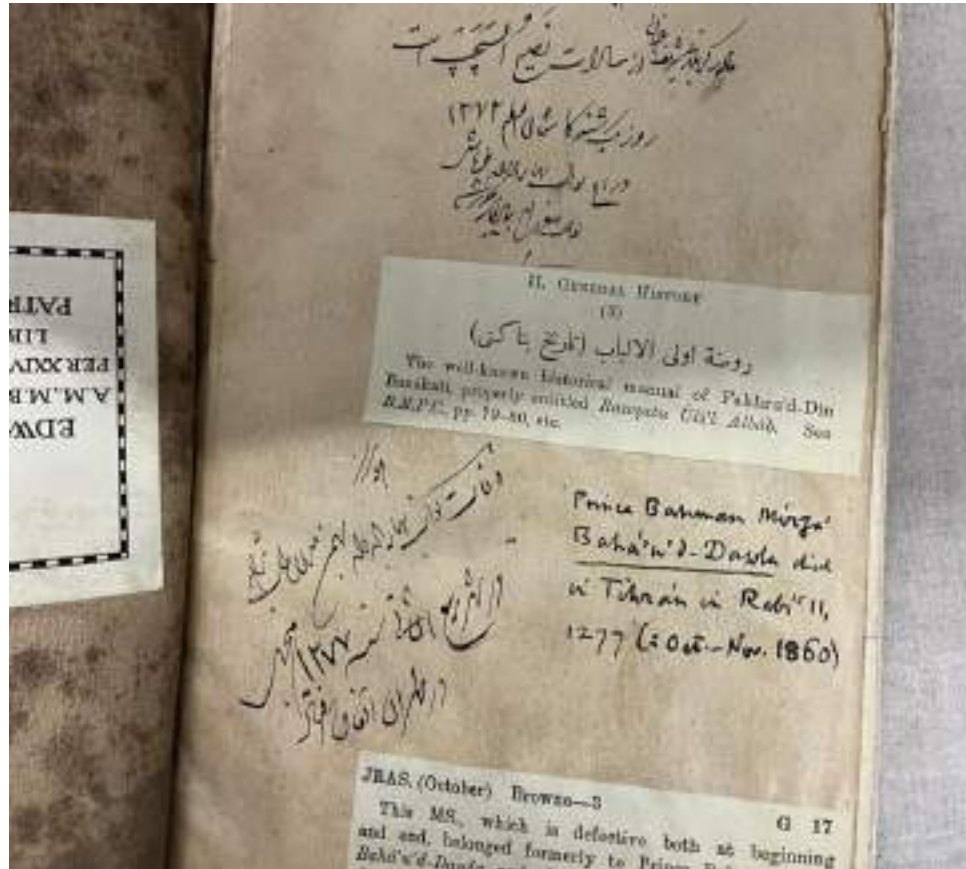




Edward Granville
Browne
(1862-1926)

Browne's manuscript collection

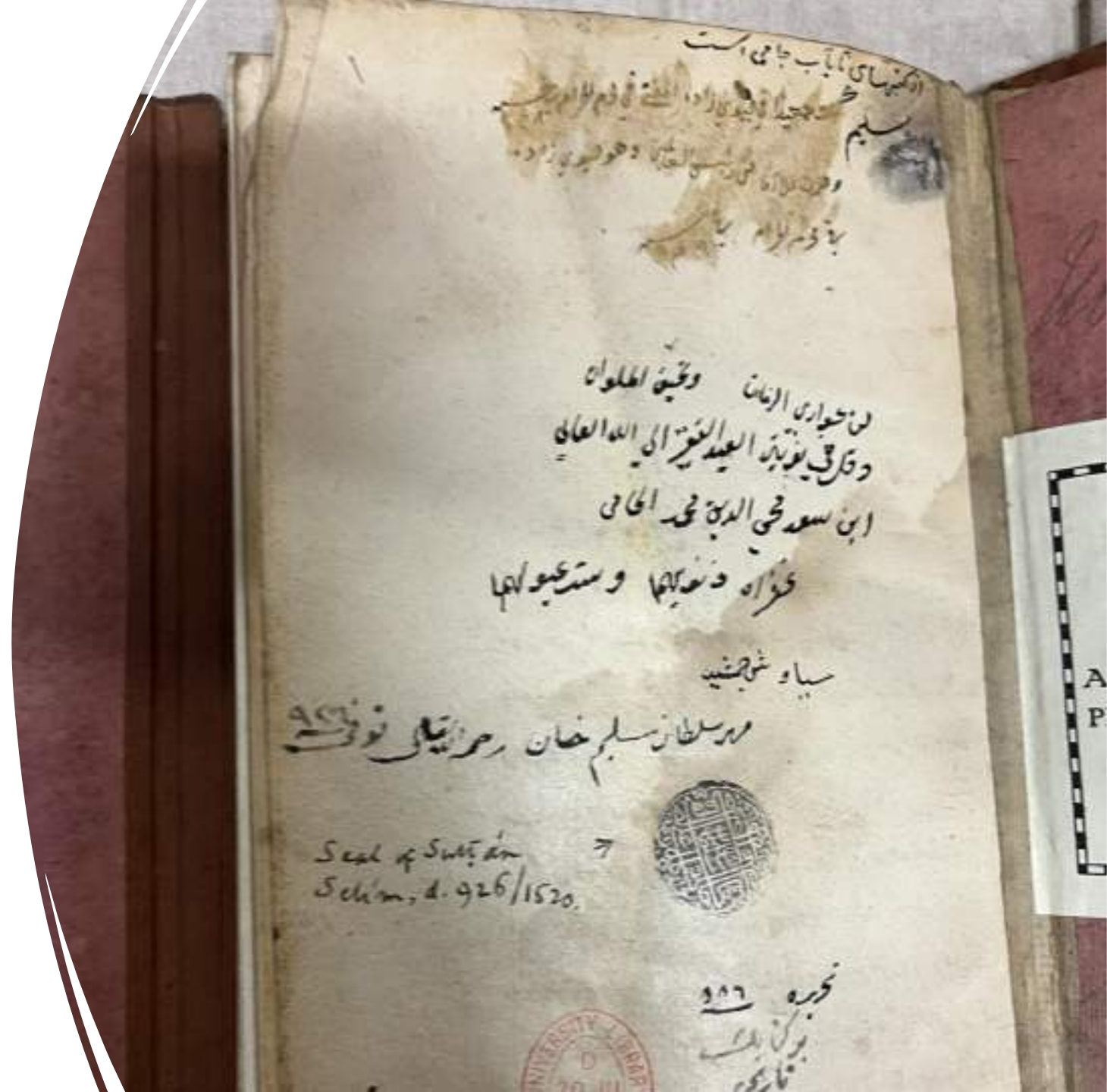




“In the formation of my Persian library I have always had regard to the requirements of my work rather than to mere beauty of illumination, illustration, or hand-writing , and I have been singularly fortunate in acquiring the very interesting collection of ... ”

Why is the provenance of Browne's collection interesting?

- Persian Studies
 - How did he approach this discipline?
 - Where did he get his sources from?
- Diversity of subjects = diversity of contacts?
- Unique texts
- Autographs
- Linking collections with other repositories.



Sources for investigating provenance

- Archival materials
- Published research
- Manuscript inscriptions
- His catalogue

The Documents in this book are very important,
and include:-

- (1) My list Catalogue (ff 35) of my own collection of Oriental MSS,
413 in number, arranged in series A - Z.
- (2) List of J. A. Moussier-Schneider MSS. to which I added a printed
book - but estimated value of each.
- (3) Facsimile the list of his MSS, arranged alphabetically, and the
price paid for each, followed by my list of 76 of his interpolated MSS.

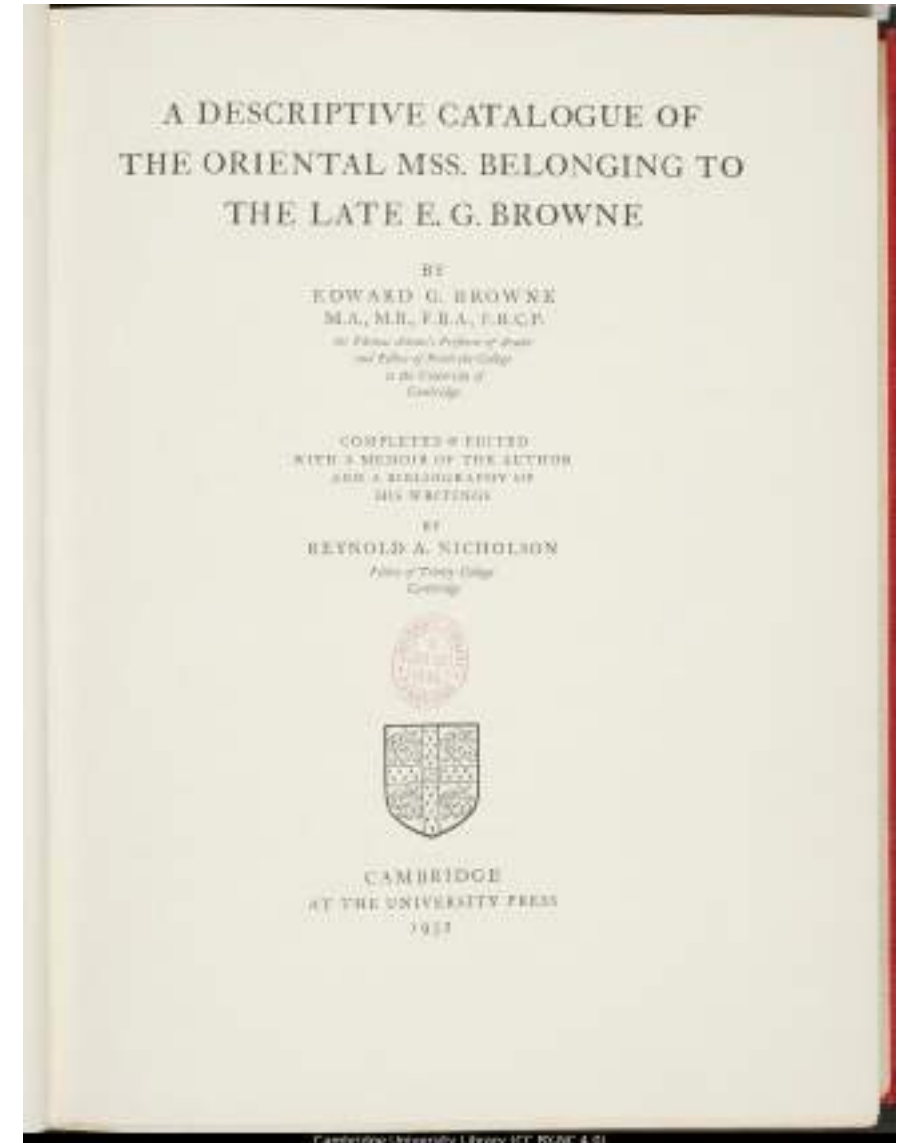
Edwin J. Hughes
January, 1916.

Browne's catalogue

A posthumous compilation

- Rich and detailed descriptions
- Transcribes passages of text
- Contains stories
- Mentions people of many trades

- Inconsistent in the information contained
- Outdated transcription
- Contains original script



Composition of subjects

- Baha’l and Babi faith
- History and biographies
- Persian literature (prose and poetry)
- Arabic texts (literature, history, religion)
- Turkish texts (literature, history, religion)
- Sciences, geography, arts
- Shia theology, mysticism
- Other sects
- Arts

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Catalogue entry

S. 2 (8).

معیار جمالی

An acephalous but otherwise complete copy of the *Mi'yār-i-Jamall*, by Shams-i-Fakhrī, of which the fourth and last part, edited by Salemann, was printed at Kazan in 1887. This good MS., apparently of the fifteenth century of the Christian era, was given to me by Dr Rīzā Tefvīk [Ridā Tawfīq] in August, 1909. It lacks at least one leaf at the beginning, the opening words (in the part dealing with the origins of Poetry and the nature of the Poet) being:

و در مجمعی که اکتبر القرب او و اعیان آن قبیله حاضر بودند بخواند ایشان گفتند ما هذا
التزیل الادی ما کتا شعرا یک قبل یومنا هذا آج

It comprises 176 ff. of 18.2 × 13 c. and 15 ll., and is written in a clear and excellent archaic *nasta'liq*, apparently of the fifteenth century. In the colophon the

History

Origin: 9th century AH; 15th century CE

Provenance and Acquisition

This good MS., apparently of the fifteenth century of the Christian era, was given to me by [Rīzā Tefvīk, 1869?-1949](#) in August, 1909.

Bequest of [E. G. Browne](#).

Data

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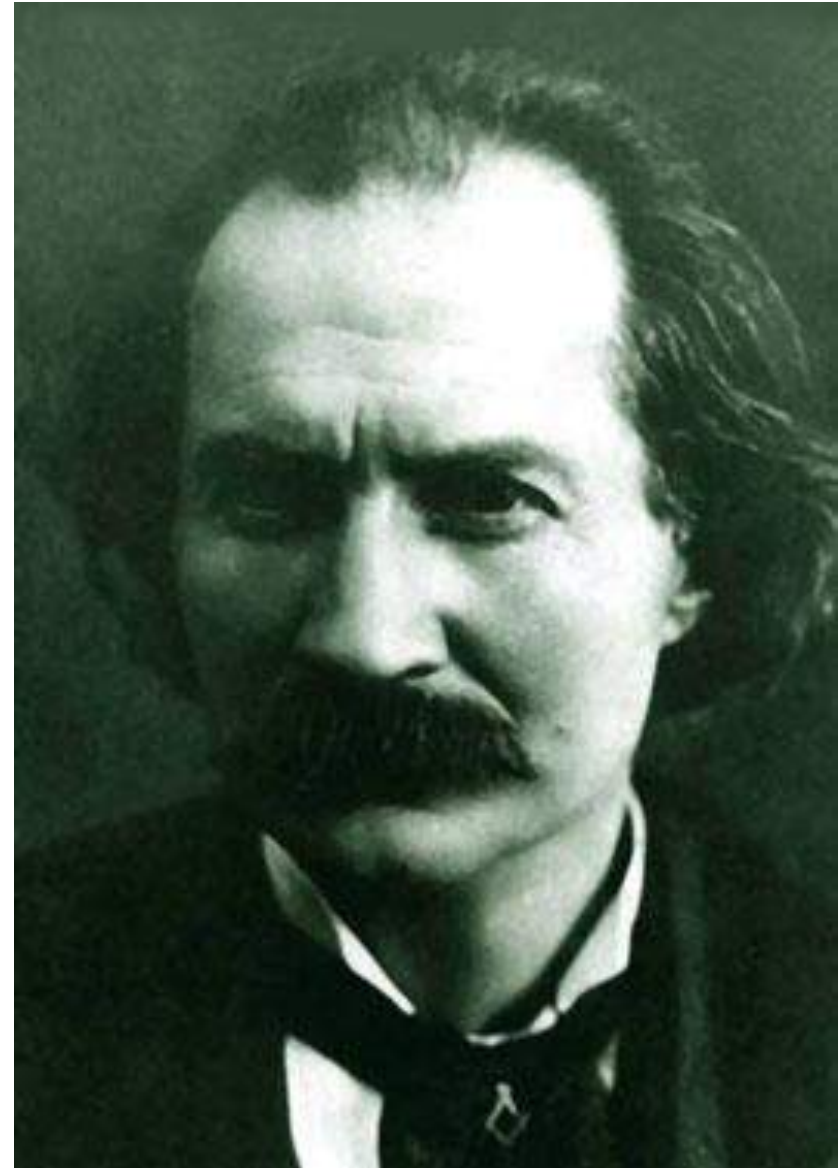
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Rıza Tevfik, 1869?-1949

- Role(s):
- Donor
- External links:
- [VIAF: Virtual International Authority File \(authority record\)](#)
- Manuscripts:
- [B.10 \(University Library, Cambridge University\)](#)
 - [B.11 \(University Library, Cambridge University\)](#)
 - [D.14 \(University Library, Cambridge University\)](#)
 - [E.7 \(University Library, Cambridge University\)](#)
 - [E.7b \(University Library, Cambridge University\)](#)
 - [I.10 \(University Library, Cambridge University\)](#)
 - [O.5 \(University Library, Cambridge University\)](#)
 - [O.6 \(University Library, Cambridge University\)](#)
 - [P.25 \(University Library, Cambridge University\)](#)
 - [S.2 \(University Library, Cambridge University\)](#)
 - [U.6 \(University Library, Cambridge University\)](#)
 - [V.2 \(University Library, Cambridge University\)](#)
 - [V.19 \(University Library, Cambridge University\)](#)
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 - [V.49 \(University Library, Cambridge University\)](#)
 - [V.55 \(University Library, Cambridge University\)](#)
 - [V.63 \(University Library, Cambridge University\)](#)
 - [V.67 \(University Library, Cambridge University\)](#)
 - [Y.12 \(University Library, Cambridge University\)](#)

The above references reflect only the current coverage of the online catalogue and may not be comprehensive.

<https://sl.bing.net/bmFsvJKd42e>



Catalogue entry

C. SHĪ'A THEOLOGY, ETC.

C. I (10).

روضۃ الأبرار (ترجمة نهج البلاغة)

The *Nahju'l-Balāgha* ("Way of Eloquence") is believed by nearly all Muḥammadan men of letters to contain the actual homilies and sayings of 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib, compiled by his descendant ash-Sharīfu'l-Murtaḍā (b. 355/966: d. 436/1044), to whom European scholars generally assign the authorship of the work (Brockelmann, vol. 1, pp. 404-5). The book therefore enjoys a high reputation, especially

History

Origin: 9th century AH; 15th century CE

Provenance and Acquisition

This fine MS. was bought by me from the heirs of the late Albert Houtum-Schindler at the beginning of 1917. Schindler bought it in December, 1906.

In 1270/1854 it was in the possession of Kayūmarth Mīrzā

in 1787 of Charles Boddam of Calcutta

in 1198/1784 of Shamsu'd-Dawla Munīru'l-Mulk

In 1019/1610-11 of Sultan Muhammad of Kashmir

amongst the Shī'a, and the present is not the only Persian paraphrase and commentary on it which exists: see Rieu's Persian Catalogue, pp. 18-19.

This Persian translation was made by a certain 'Alī ibn Ḥasan az-Zuwārī apparently in the year 647/1249-50. His short Introduction runs as follows (after the doxology):

و بعدا مخفی نیست که بعد از کلام حضرت رب العالمین و سید المرسلین کلام معجز نظام امیر المؤمنین است صلوات الله علیهما وآلہما الطیبین کہ بصنوف فصاحت و قنون بلاغت مشحولست سبها کتاب نهج البلاغة کہ مشتمل بر معانی لطیفه شریفه و نکات غریبه عجبہ کہ مورخ فکر هیچ فصیح در قضای آن نمی تواند برسد و اندیشه هیچ بلیغ بحرر سرای آن نمی تواند رسید و لیکن غوصان بحور معانی بقدر وسع و توانائی درری و غوری چند از آن دریای بی پایان ساحل بیان آورده اند کہ هر کس بحسب قابلیت و استعداد ازو محفوظ گشتند و بحکم ما لا یُدْرَکُ کُلُّهُ لَا یَتَوَدَّ کُلُّهُ بِنَدْوِ حَقِیرِ بِي مَقْدَارِ عَلِي بْنِ حَسَنِ الزُّوَارِيِّ عَفَرَ اللهُ تَعَالَى ذُنُوبَهُ وَشَرَّ عَيْبِهِ بِجَهْتِ عَمِيرِ قَائِدِهِ مَرْتَلِبِ تَرْجِمَهُ أَنْ شَدَّ كَهْ مَوْسُوهُ اسْتَبْرَضَهُ الْأَبْرَارُ بِرُوحِهِ اخْتِصَارِ كَهْ السَّبِّ اسْتَبْرَأَ مِنْهُ اللهُ التَّوْفِيقَ وَهُوَ خَيْرُ رَفِيقٍ وَجَامِعِ أَيْنَ كِتَابِ شَرِيفِ حَضْرَتِ مَنْ خَصَّهُ اللهُ تَعَالَى بِالْبَيَاضِ الْعَالِيَةِ وَالرَّاقِبِ الْحَائِثَةِ ذِي الْحَمِيمِ أَرَى الْحَسَنَ السَّيِّدَ رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ مِنْ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ الْحُسَيْنِ بْنِ مُوسَى بْنِ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ مُوسَى بْنِ أَبِي هَبَيْرِ بْنِ مُوسَى الْكَاطِمِ اسْتَبْرَأَ عَلَيْهِ السَّلَامُ سَيِّدِ رَحِمَهُ اللهُ مِيفَرَمَائِدِ أَلْحَقْ

It will be seen from the conclusion of the above extract that the compilation of the *Nahju'l-Balāgha* is here ascribed not to ash-Sharīfu'l-Murtaḍā but to his brother ash-Sharīfu'r-Rāḍī.

This fine MS. was bought by me from the heirs of the late Sir A. Houtum-Schindler at the beginning of 1917. He bought it in December, 1906. In 1270/1854 it was in the possession of Kayūmarth Mīrzā in 1787 of Charles Boddam of Calcutta; in 1198/1784 of Shamsu'd-Dawla Munīru'l-Mulk, and in 1019/1610-11 of Sulṭān Muḥammad of Kashmir. It comprises 497 ff. of 24.2 x 16.9 c. and 23 ll. The Arabic text is written in clear *naskh* and pointed; the Persian translation is good *nasta'liq*, with rubrications and some marginal notes and glosses. There is no colophon or date, but the writing appears to be of the fifteenth century of our era.

Data

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فهرست

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Houtum-Schindler, Albert, 1846-1916

Role(s): Author, Former owner

- Also known as:
- Houtum-Schindler, Albert 1846-1916
 - Albert Houtum-Schindler
 - Schindler
 - Sir A. Houtum-Schindler
 - Sir Albert (then Dr) Houtum-Schindler
 - Sir Albert Houtum-Schindler
 - late Sir Albert Houtum-Schindler

- External links:
- [ISNI: International Standard Name Identifier \(authority record\)](#)
 - [VIAF: Virtual International Authority File \(authority record\)](#)

- Author of:
- [Telegrams sent to Sir A. Houtum-Schindler together with his answers](#)

- Manuscripts:
- [C. 112 \(University Library, Cambridge University\)](#) - Former owner
 - [D. 8 \(University Library, Cambridge University\)](#) - Former owner
 - [G. 6 \(University Library, Cambridge University\)](#) - Former owner
 - [G. 10 \(University Library, Cambridge University\)](#) - Former owner
 - [H. 2 \(University Library, Cambridge University\)](#) - Former owner
 - [H. 4 \(University Library, Cambridge University\)](#) - Former owner
 - [H. 6 \(University Library, Cambridge University\)](#) - Former owner
 - [H. 16 \(University Library, Cambridge University\)](#) - Former owner
 - [H. 17 \(University Library, Cambridge University\)](#) - Former owner
 - [H. 19 \(University Library, Cambridge University\)](#) - Former owner
 - [H. 21 \(University Library, Cambridge University\)](#) - Former owner
 - [L. 1 \(University Library, Cambridge University\)](#) - Former owner
 - [L. 2 \(University Library, Cambridge University\)](#) - Former owner
 - [L. 3 \(University Library, Cambridge University\)](#) - Former owner





Conclusions (collecting)

- Over forty years of collecting (1882-2024) and scholarship
- Purchases on travels
- Manuscripts presented by friends (Riza Tevfik)
- Commissioning copies
- Purchase of major legacy collections (Schindler, BM)
- Purchases from selected dealers in London (Belshah, Naaman)

Conclusions (data and DH research)

- Nodes vs frameworks
- Data sets vs platforms
- Identity and disambiguation
- AI in workflows
- Scale and perspective

Provenance and Life



A 3D rendering of a field of dark grey question marks. In the center, one question mark is highlighted in a bright yellow color. The word "Questions?" is written in white text across the yellow question mark.

Questions?