

**A Handlist of  
Nine Newly Discovered Middle Eastern and Islamic  
Materials**

Christ's College Library  
University of Cambridge  
United Kingdom



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**Cover illustration**

*Dd.7.1 An illuminated version of Dala'il al-Khayrat copied by Hasan al-Rushdi in 1180AH/1767CE*

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## **Preface**

It is widely known that Edward G. Browne (d. 1926), Cambridge University Professor and Iranologist, was the main cataloguer of oriental manuscripts at the University of Cambridge and its associated libraries, and those of its colleges from 1896. His catalogues and handlists cover Muslim materials in Arabic scripts, including Arabic, Persian, Ottoman Turkish, Turkic and Jawi (Malay). Later, more manuscripts were bought or donated by different groups of people and were catalogued and described by subsequent generations of scholars, such as Arthur John Arberry in 1952. Nonetheless, there have always been manuscripts and rare materials kept in the rich repositories of Cambridge University Libraries and their special collections, which have remained unknown and away from the eyes of experts. On this subject, the present document is a handlist of a collection of nine manuscripts and early printed volumes preserved at Christ's College Library. Most of them arrived at Christ's College during the first half of the twentieth century, and their provenances are described below, when available. The content, language and format of these works are especially rich. They are divided into Arabic, Persian, Ottoman Turkish, and English produced in Africa, the Middle East, South Asia and Europe. In terms of their themes, one may come across works on theology, exegesis, occultism, supplications, and more, from the 16<sup>th</sup> century CE onwards.

We welcome feedback on what is a draft handlist. It is never complete and almost never perfect.

## **Acknowledgements**

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1.

#### **Dd.4.16**

Language: Arabic-Persian

Place and Date: South Asia; 19<sup>th</sup> century

Measurements: 28.5x16.2 cm; unfoliated.

**Commentary:** A copy of the Qur'an in Arabic which is illuminated professionally. It includes interlinear Persian translation as well as marginal Persian commentaries. The commentaries are based on Islamic traditions (*hadith*) and former exegetical literature. References to mystical commentaries on the Qur'an, such among others as *Tafsir 'Ara'is al-Bayan* by Ruzbihan Baqli can be seen. Nonetheless, the main portion of glosses is taken from *Tafsir-e Husayni* or *Mawahib-e 'Aliyyah* by Va'iz Kashifi (d. c.1504 CE), a prolific Persianate thinker from Khorasan, whose works are found in different libraries across the world.

For instance, one may find Kashifi's commentaries under Q2:228 as follows:

معقل بن یسار رضی الله عنه خواهر خود را به عبدالله بن عاصم رضی الله عنه داده بود. عبدالله وی را طلاق داد

Some poetic verses regarding "theism" and "divine power", also cited in post-Safavid Persian-Shi'i materials (e.g., *Tafsir Manhaj al-Sadiqin*) are seen:

از خون سرخ شیر سفید آورد برون، وز خارهای خشک گلستان کند برون

This Qur'an copy as well as its commentaries are identical with a lithographed version produced in Hindustan in 1837. The latter is in Arabic (main text), Persian (commentary) and Urdu (translation).

All headings (chapter/titles) and their place of revelation are written in blue.

Every division of the Qur'an is shown in red.

It includes an additional short note by "S. Kennedy" about the title of the work as a Qur'an with "interlinear version and marginal notes in Persian."

#### **Provenance**

1. S. Kennedy
2. F. H. Cripps-Day (1935)
3. Christ's College Library, Cambridge

2.

### **Dd.5.18**

Language: Arabic

Place and Date: Unknown; 18<sup>th</sup>–19<sup>th</sup> century

Measurements: 30.5x19.5 cm; unfoliated.

**Commentary:** This is an illuminated copy of the Qur'an in the Arabic language. The handwriting seems uncommon, and the term used for "Chapter" is written as *سورت*.

The cover is an envelope flap form from the Muslim world.

Parts of the front spine shows the Qur'anic verse of *لَا يَمَسُّهُ إِلَّا الْمُطَهَّرُونَ*

### **Provenance:**

1. Unknown Muslim owner with their seal dated 1301AH/c.1883
2. Donated by Mrs. M. Newman Tremearne, widow of Arthur John Newman Tremearne (d. 1915), in 1932
3. Christ's College Library, Cambridge

3.

### **Dd.7.1**

Language: English, Arabic

Place and Date: England (and parts of the Middle East); 18<sup>th</sup> century

Measurements: 21.9x14.3 cm; 519pp.

**Commentary:** A collection of three works: two printed volumes and a manuscript, bound together in 1795.

- (a) "The Koran. Commonly called "the Alcoran of Mohammed, translated from the original Arabic with explanatory notes, taken from the most approved commentators, to which is prefixed, a preliminary discourse (vol.1)" (pp. 1–248). This is the new edition of George Sale's English translation of the Qur'an printed in Bath in 1795, including maps on geography of the Arab world, with pictures of the "Temple of Mecca." (p.114)
- (b) An illuminated manuscript copy of *Dala'il al-Khayrat* copied by Hasan al-Rushdi in 1180AH/1767CE. In line with other copies of this work, the paintings of Mecca and Medina are seen.
- (c) An incomplete translation of the Qur'an, printed until chapter 9 (Q9: *Surat al-Tawbah*), with notes and references to the works of Muslim authors including Ibn Ishaq, al-Zamakhshari, al-Baydawi, among others.

Although the current version has a new binding, the old one is pasted to the inside of the cover (i.e., as a pastedown). The volume includes the embossed seal of the Christ's College.

**Provenance:**

1. John Hutton of Marske Esq. (d. 1841) whose bookplate is present
2. T. H. Armiger
3. Christ's College Library, Cambridge

4.

**Dd.7.2**

Language: English

Place and Date: England; 18<sup>th</sup> century

Measurements: 21.9x14.3 cm; 395pp.

**Commentary:** The second volume of Sale's English translation without Arabic texts. It also includes the index. Although the current version has a new binding, the old one is pasted to the inside of the cover (i.e., as a pastedown).

**Provenance:**

1. John Hutton of Marske Esq. (d. 1841) whose bookplate is present
2. T. H. Armiger
3. Christ's College Library, Cambridge

5.

**Dd.7.3**

Language: Arabic

Place and Date: Africa; 19<sup>th</sup> century

Measurements: 23.4x17.3 cm; unfoliated.

**Commentary:** A 19<sup>th</sup>-century copy of the Qur'an produced in Africa with some illuminations. Similar copies are found in other libraries including Cambridge University Library.

**Provenance:**

1. Donated by Mrs. M. Newman Tremearne, widow of Arthur John Newman Tremearne (d. 1915), in 1932
2. Christ's College Library, Cambridge

6.

**Dd.7.4**

Language: Arabic

Place and Date: Africa; 19<sup>th</sup> century

Measurements: 20.8x14.5 cm; 472ff.

**Commentary:** An incomplete copy of the Qur'an in the Arabic language. It begins with Q2:11. It includes several grammatical and diacritical errors. It has an envelope flap cover of dark red leather.

**Provenance:**

1. “W.H.D. Rouse, Litt.D. fellow 1888 to 1894 honorary fellow 1933 to 1950”
2. Christ’s College Library, Cambridge, since 1949(?)

7.

**Dd.7.6**

Language: Ottoman Turkish

Place and Date: Ottoman Turkey; late 16<sup>th</sup> century

Measurement: 16.2x11.5 cm; 86ff.

**Commentary:** Including three treatises, this is an Ottoman Turkish manuscript including minor Persian phrases. The first treatise is on *‘ilm al-Firasat* (‘physiognomy’, also related to countenance) based on the statements of “Fakhr al-Din al-Razi” (d. c. 1210 CE), “Ibn Arabi” (d. c. 1240 CE) and also “Imam al-Ghazali” (d. 1111). It has been selected and copied by Mustafa ben Bali. An English note considered this author as the commentator of *Fusus al-Hikam* of Ibn ‘Arabi, too. This treatise was offered to Sultan Murad III (1546–1595) (the son of Selim II).

The second treatise covers geography and geographical locations and climate, a common genre of literature widely used by Muslims.

The third treatise is رسالة قائمى افندى رحمة الله on *Qasidat al-Amali*. It comes with an envelope flap leather cover.

**Provenance:**

1. Christ’s College Library, Cambridge, 20<sup>th</sup> century

8.

**Dd.7.8**

Language: Arabic mixed with Ottoman Turkish

Place and Date: Ottoman Turkey; unknown

Measurement: 15.4x10.5 cm; 89ff.

**Commentary:** This is a comprehensive book of supplications. It includes the following treatises:

1. Qur’anic chapters and relevant supplicatory notes
2. The supplication of *Asma’ al-Husna* including the beautiful names and attributes of God outlined in tables.
3. Illuminations similar to Muhammad’s Mosque dome and his minbar (pulpit)
4. The supplication of حلية النبي also الحلية الشريفة describing the physical features (or: image) of Muhammad. It is followed by some descriptions about the features of the Prophet’s successors (viz., Four Rightly Guided Caliphs: Abu Bakr, ‘Umar, ‘Uthman and ‘Ali).



5. مهر سعادت، مهر رسول، مهر خضر الیاس، مهر سلیمان، مهر شریف and مهر دولت all including occultic formula and numbers to bring felicity, power and salvation, and also ward off disasters and enemies.
6. Supplication of jinn
7. مهر رسول (supplications)
8. دایره رجال الغیب *rijal* or *rajal al-ghayb*, common occultic formula from the Middle East to Southeast Asia
9. طلسم ام الصبیان the talisman and supplication of “Umm al-Sibyan”, commonly recited from Africa to South-East Asia
10. Further supplications in Arabic and Ottoman Turkish. There are for example دعا طاعون or *the Plague Supplication*.
11. دعا كنز العرش a common supplication known as *the Treasure of the Throne*.
12. Some religious accounts from the Qur’an and Arabic traditional sources.

**Provenance:**

1. Christ’s College Library, Cambridge, 20<sup>th</sup> century

**9.**

**Dd.7.9**

Language: Arabic

Place and Date: Africa; 19<sup>th</sup> century

Measurements: 18x12.5 cm; unfoliated.

**Commentary:** An Arabic source including the names and attributes of the Prophet Muhammad totalling two hundred and one. The names are mainly taken from *Dala’il al-Khayrat*. It also covers other themes of *Dala’il al-Khayrat*, apparently mixed with other mystical sources.

**Provenance:**

1. Donated by Mrs. M. Newman Tremearne, widow of Arthur John Newman Tremearne (d. 1915), in 1932
2. Christ’s College Library, Cambridge