

Qur'an  
Manuscript in Arabic, incomplete  
Egypt, 14th century CE  
2 folios of about 170 folios extant  
Smith MS Or 84, Gift of David Eugene Smith

These folios belong to a large Mamluk Qur'an that David E. Smith (1860–1944), a professor of mathematics at Teachers College (1901–1925), purchased in 1933 in Damascus, when he was traveling by car from Istanbul to Tehran.

The high standards of Mamluk calligraphy and illumination are still visible, even though the manuscript is disbound and severely damaged by wear and tear. Originally the textblock was surrounded by wide margins on all four sides.

#### COLLECTING ORIENTAL BOOKS FOR THE COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES, 1886–1936

The 150th anniversary of the birth of Columbians Richard Gottheil (1862–1936, CC 1881) and A. V. Williams Jackson (1862–1937, CC 1883) in 2012 offers the occasion to remember how their contribution to the teaching of Semitic and Indo-Iranian languages at Columbia University lead to the development of library resources in Oriental languages, ranging from Avestan, Akkadian, Sanskrit, Sumerian, and Syriac to modern Arabic, Armenian, Persian, and Turkish. The expansion of New York's cultural institutions after 1865 provided the background for the long and distinguished careers of Gottheil and Jackson at Columbia. Both were deeply engaged with developing the holdings of the Columbia University Libraries. They solicited gifts, and selected manuscripts and printed books for purchase.

The exhibition aims at highlighting the breadth of these first acquisitions in Oriental languages between 1886 and 1936, while drawing attention to the production of and the trade with manuscripts and printed books in Arabic script. The Columbia University Libraries began to actively collect books in Oriental languages during the last phase of the Islamic manuscript tradition, when in the Middle East and South Asia the early nineteenth-century adaptation of letterpress printing and lithography was slowly pushing out manuscript production. But at the beginning of the twentieth century, manuscripts continued to be widely traded, as many texts circulating in Muslim societies were not yet available in print. Columbia's early acquisitions are characterized by a pragmatic focus on texts as the indispensable resource for teaching and research in Oriental languages. In general, manuscripts and printed books were not acquired for their bibliophilic value, but primarily judged on the merits of their texts.

Dagmar Riedel  
Jane Siegel

*Al-Coranus, sive, Lex islamitica Muhammedis*

Ed. Abraham Hinckelmann, 1652–1695

Hamburg: ex officina Schulzio-Schilleriana, 1694

Interleaved with an incomplete Qur'an, manuscript in Arabic,

North Africa, no date

B893.7 K84 c.1, Gift of Alexander I. Cotheal, 1890

This copy of the Qur'an shows that Cotheal was a discerning collector, as it combines one of the seminal European printed editions with a North African manuscript. The numerals "491.85" in the top right corner of the opening shown here align the text of the manuscript with the printed text, since this page of the manuscript begins with verse 86 of sura 56, which corresponds to the printed text on page 491, line 85 (after the slash). As the same text is shown side by side in two different scripts, this Qur'an can also be used as a textbook of Arabic paleography.

The book itself carries no information as to who interleaved the Qur'an manuscript with the printed Qur'an. Nor is it known from whom Cotheal acquired the book.

Ḥāfiẓ, Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad Shīrāzī, ca. 715–ca. 792 AH / ca. 1315–ca. 1390 CE  
Dīvān

Manuscript in Persian

India, Muḥarram 1230 AH / December 1814–January 1815 CE

X892.8 H112, Gift of Alexander I. Cotheal

Atkins Hamerton (baptized 1804, d. 1857) inscribed this Indian manuscript of Persian poetry to Cotheal on March 26, 1851, in Zanzibar. Major Hamerton was a British army officer who in the 1830s had served in India as interpreter of Hindi and Persian. In 1841 Hamerton was appointed as the first British consul to Zanzibar, a post he held until his death.

This association copy documents that the American businessman Cotheal met the British official Hamerton in the Sultanate of Oman. But the manuscript is also a vivid reminder of the importance of Persian literary culture for an Anglo-Irish soldier who had left Dublin in his early teens to enlist in the Bombay infantry: Hamerton held on to his nice copy of the works of Ḥāfiẓ when he left the Indian Subcontinent for East Africa.

Ibn Ājurrūm, Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad, 672–723 AH / 1274–1323 CE  
*Al-Ajwibah al-jaliyyah fī al-uṣūl al-naḥwiyyah*  
Beirut, 1853  
PJ6101 .I16 1853g, Gift of Alexander I. Cotheal

Cotheal used this heavily marked textbook, written for boys in primary school, to study Arabic grammar. In the 1890s, this pamphlet was a valuable addition to the scarce holdings of Arabic textbooks in the Columbia University Libraries. Today there are very few extant copies of the cheap typeset books published in Lebanon and Egypt after the early nineteenth century adaptation of printing technology for large-scale commercial book production.

Cotheal Fund Bookplate  
Columbia University Libraries, late 20th century

In the 1850s, Alexander Isaac Cotheal (1804–1894), a New York merchant and gentleman scholar, was known as one of New York's important bibliophiles, and his collection was featured in James Wynne's *Private Libraries of New York* (1860). His interest in Arabic language and literature was a lifelong passion, and late in life he published his translation of a story from the *Arabian Nights* that was missing from Burton's translation of *The Thousand Nights and a Night*.

Cotheal never married, and in 1896, two years after his death, his sisters established a book buying fund in his name. There is, however, no evidence that the family had connections with Columbia prior to Cotheal's 1892 gift of books (see his letter to Gottheil in this case).

The Cotheal Fund provided the Columbia University Libraries with the financial means indispensable for actively collecting printed books and manuscripts related to the study of Oriental languages. The endowment is still active, and this bookplate is currently used to distinguish books purchased on the Cotheal Fund.

Alexander Isaac Cotheal, 1804–1894

Autograph letter, signed, to Richard Gottheil, New York, 20 January 1890  
University Archives, Historical Biographical Files

In the 1840s, Cotheal became one of the first members of the recently founded American Oriental Society. By the 1880s, when Gottheil and Jackson joined the Society as ambitious young scholars, Cotheal was one of its influential senior officers. While attendance records suggest that Cotheal might have listened to papers read by Gottheil and Jackson at the Society's meetings in the late 1880s, this letter is the only concrete evidence that in 1890 Cotheal himself arranged with Gottheil to donate some of his books to Columbia.

Richard James Horatio Gottheil, 1862–1936

Undated photograph  
University Archives, Historical Photograph Collection

Gottheil's father was the influential reform rabbi Gustav Gottheil (1827–1903), who in 1873 had accepted a position at Temple Emanu-El on Manhattan's East Side. Gottheil attended Columbia High School and Columbia College (CC 1881), but nothing is known about his time in college. After graduation in 1881, Gottheil studied in Berlin and Leipzig. He obtained a German doctorate in 1886, and Columbia hired him as lecturer in the Semitic languages. In 1887, Gottheil was appointed to the newly endowed professorship of Semitic languages and Rabbinical literature, a position he held until his death in 1936.

Abraham Valentine Williams Jackson, 1862–1937

Undated photograph, New York: Pach Brothers  
University Archives, Historical Photograph Collection

Jackson (CC 1883) was admitted to Columbia in 1879, and throughout his life he remained deeply involved with his college classmates. He conducted his graduate work in historical philology in the Department of English, and in 1886, the Department hired Jackson as lecturer of Indo-Iranian languages. He became instructor of Anglo-Saxon in 1889, and was made adjunct professor of English language and literature in 1891. During these years Jackson was repeatedly granted leaves of absence to study Indo-Iranian languages in Halle and Berlin. In 1895, Jackson succeeded his teacher Edward D. Perry (1854–1938), Columbia's first professor of Sanskrit (1891–1895), and he finally resigned from his adjunct professorship in the Department of English in 1906. Jackson's health began to decline in the late 1920s, and he retired in 1935.

Ibn ‘Asākir, ‘Alī ibn al-Ḥasan, 499–571 AH / 1105–1176 CE  
*Kitāb ta’rīkh madīnat Dimashq*  
 Manuscript in Arabic, incomplete  
 Syria, early 13th century CE  
 X893.7 I b66, Purchased on the Cotheal Fund, 1908

This manuscript is but a small fragment of Ibn ‘Asākir’s monumental biographical dictionary of Damascus, one of the most important sources of medieval Syrian history. The fragment lacks a colophon, but one of its study and reading notes is dated 27 Rabī I 619 AH (17 May 1222 CE), and the author’s son al-Qāsim (527–600 AH / 1132–1203 CE) is mentioned as a listener in these notes. A smaller fragment of the same copy was acquired by Leiden University Library (MS arab. Or. 12.644) in the 1970s.

Gottheil was particularly interested in medieval Islamic history. When he purchased this manuscript on the Cotheal Fund, Ibn ‘Asākir’s biographical dictionary was not yet available in a printed edition. The Columbia University Libraries arranged for preservation treatment, and all leaves were covered with silk gauze, a method rejected by conservators today.

The manuscript is opened to the title page of part (*juz*) 327, on the left. The framed notes on the right and left side are study and reading notes. In premodern Muslim societies, education and training was accompanied by a complex system of written documentation. Students added study and reading notes, called reader’s protocols, to their copies of the texts studied, recording thus the names of teachers and fellow students, as well as other details. These notes are a particularly valuable source for research on the history of knowledge, as they provide information about scholars, their teachers, and the curriculum.

Saint Shnorhali Nersēs, 1102–1173  
 Hymnal of the Armenian Church  
 Manuscript in Armenian, incomplete, written by Ghazar the monk  
 15th or 16th century CE  
 X892.9 N35, Purchased from Parsegh H. Vartoogian, 1890

Jackson arranged for the purchase of this Armenian hymnal. The study of Armenian poses fascinating classificatory challenges to the historian of Indo-Iranian languages, since Armenian, despite its many Iranian borrowings, is an independent branch of the Indo-European family of languages.

The manuscript retains a traditional Armenian binding, but it has lost its primary colophon together with quires at the beginning and end of the text. The secondary colophon provides the name of the scribe, but not the date of the writing of the manuscript.

Cuneiform Tablet with Sumerian Text

Girsu, Sumer (Telloh, Dhī Qār, Iraq), Ur III (ca. 2100–2000 BCE)

Cuneiform 0002, Purchased for Columbia by Richard Gottheil

Between 1881 and 1886 Gottheil worked with, among others, the Jewish Studies scholar Moritz Steinschneider (1816–1907) and the Arabist Heinrich Fleischer (1801–1888) and eventually wrote a dissertation on Syriac literature. At Columbia, Gottheil was responsible for all Semitic languages, but in the 1880s the University had no resources for the teaching of languages such as Akkadian or Aramaic. The matter was further complicated by the fact that the printed reproduction of textual remains written in non-Latin scripts posed considerable technical difficulties.

Gottheil convinced the University to buy source texts so he could offer courses on one of the oldest documented Semitic languages. In 1895, Gottheil managed to acquire, in two separate purchases, about 450 tablets, which constitute about three quarters of the 629 cuneiform tablets Columbia holds today.

Richard James Horatio Gottheil, 1862–1936

Autograph letter, signed, to Seth Low, New York, 26 April 1895

Second signature by A. V. Williams Jackson, 1862–1937

University Archives, Central Files

Between 1890 and 1901, when Seth Low (1850–1916) served as the 11th president of Columbia, he grasped the opportunity to initiate the transformation of a moderate local college into an important research university. In this environment Gottheil and Jackson realized their ambition to establish a comprehensive Division of Oriental Languages, covering not only the ancient and classical languages of the Middle East and South Asia, but also “such important modern languages as Armenian, Turkish, Persian and Kurdish.”

While there is no evidence to suggest that Gottheil and Jackson were personal friends, the hire of Abraham Yohannan (1853–1925, Ph.D. Columbia 1900) as language lecturer shows how Gottheil and Jackson successfully cooperated as colleagues in order to further Oriental Studies at Columbia.

Ḥāfiẓ, Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad Shīrāzī, ca. 715–ca. 792 AH / ca. 1315–ca. 1390 CE  
Dīvān

Manuscript in Persian

Kashmir, 23 Rajab 982 AH / 8 November 1574 CE

X892.8 H11, Gift of J. Dyneley Prince, Jacob H. Schiff & James Speyer, 1904

This sixteenth-century Ḥāfiẓ manuscript belongs to a group of 22 Arabic and Persian manuscripts which Jacob H. Schiff (1847–1920), assisted by James Speyer (1861–1941) and Professor J. Dyneley Prince (1868–1945), purchased for Columbia from the widow of Carl Reinhardt (d. before 1904). Schiff and Speyer were prominent New York bankers and philanthropists, while Prince was a linguist who in 1902 had left a professorship at NYU to join Columbia as the second full professor of Semitic languages.

Very little is known about Reinhardt, who had served as translator in the German diplomatic service in Egypt and Iran, and there are no records as to how Reinhardt built this small but valuable collection of illuminated and illustrated Islamic manuscripts. Reinhardt's large collection of Arabic papyri, today known as the Schott-Reinhardt Collection, was acquired by the industrialist Friedrich Schott (1850–1931) and donated to Heidelberg University Library.

André du Ryer, ca. 1580–ca. 1660

*Rudimenta grammatices linguae turcicae*

Paris: A. Vitray, 1630

B893.54 W26, From the Temple Emanu-El Library of Hebrew and  
Rabbinical Literature

When Temple Emanu-El endowed a chair in Semitic languages and Rabbinical literature in 1887, Columbia had only very limited Jewish Studies resources, even though Hebrew had been occasionally taught by Christian Hebraists between the foundation of King's College in 1754 and the hiring of Gottheil in 1886. In 1892 this situation changed dramatically when Columbia received as a gift the library of Temple Emanu-El. The congregation had purchased about 2,500 printed books and 45 manuscripts from an Amsterdam rare book dealer in 1862.

One of the books particularly important Islamic is the first Latin grammar of the Turkish language, written by the French diplomat and Oriental Studies pioneer André du Ryer. Although printed in Europe, the orientation of this grammar reflects the fact that Ottoman Turkish, like Arabic and Persian, was written from right to left.

## Yasna

Avestan liturgical texts with Sanskrit translation by Neryosang Dhaval, fl. 1100 CE  
 Manuscript in Avestan and Sanskrit, incomplete  
 Surat, India, 18th century (?)  
 2 folios of 160 folios extant  
 X892.5Av3 N22 pt 1, Gift of M. Pavri, 1902

These folios belong to one of the most important preserved manuscripts of the Avesta. In the 1880s when Karl Friedrich Geldner (1852–1929) collated about 120 manuscripts for his critical edition of the Avesta (3 vols., 1886–1895, English tr., 1 vol., 1896), he recognized its importance and used it as Leithandschrift S1.

The disbound manuscript is severely damaged from wear and tear, but the displayed folios still give an impression of the book's generous layout with its wide margins. Each Avestan phrase is immediately followed by its Sanskrit translation. A digital surrogate of the complete manuscript was recently added to the Avestan Digital Archive, available at: <http://www.avesta-archive.com>.

Jackson had studied with Geldner, and in the first half of the twentieth century, Jackson was internationally recognized as one of the leading scholars of Zoroastrianism and Indo-Iranian Studies. Through Jackson and his students, the Columbia acquired at least 15 manuscripts in Avestan, often as gifts from the Parsi (Indian Zoroastrian) community. In the case of this manuscript, *the New York Times* published on August 16, 1902 an article by Jackson's student Louis H. Gray (1875–1955, Ph.D. Columbia 1900), giving public recognition to this important gift to the University.

Richard James Horatio Gottheil, 1862–1936  
 Autograph letter, 4 pages, signed, to Nicholas Murray Butler,  
 Cairo, Egypt, 28 December 1904  
 University Archives, Central Files

Gottheil's wife Emma Léon Gottheil née Yehuda (1862–1947) had lived with her family in Beirut from 1862 until 1874, and the couple traveled widely in the Middle East. Gottheil repeatedly visited Cairo to conduct research, but he also used these trips to add to Columbia's collections. In the academic year of 1909–1910, Gottheil served as the director of the American School of Oriental Research in Jerusalem. One of his last contributions to the *Journal of the American Oriental Society* was a short essay about a recent trip to Morocco, published in 1934.

In the letter, Gottheil describes with much enthusiasm how he is working on his Arabic with a sub-librarian of al-Azhar University, though his teacher's name is unfortunately not given. The remainder of the letter is devoted to Gottheil's observations about al-Azhar University, one of the oldest and most important Islamic universities, and about intellectual life in early twentieth-century Egypt.

Abraham Valentine Williams Jackson, 1862–1937  
Cable to Nicholas Murray Butler, Shiraz, Iran, 5 May 1903

AND

Autograph letter, 2 pages, signed, to Nicholas Murray Butler,  
Enzeli, Persia (Bandar-i Anzali, Iran), 29 May 1903  
University Archives, Central Files

In 1903 Jackson undertook his first of several trips to Iran, and his experiences are captured in the bestselling travelogue *Persia: Past and Present*, which appeared in 1906. Like many before him, Jackson relished the exploration of the remote areas of the Iranian Plateau, but the telegram to Butler, who in 1902 had succeeded Low as President of Columbia, illustrates that Iran was fully integrated into international communication networks. The first Iranian electric telegraph lines had been laid down in the late 1850s, and since 1865 the major Iranian cities were connected to the Indo-European telegraph line.

Early on Jackson had gained scholarly recognition with his philological work on the Avestan language, and in 1898 he published the biography *Zoroaster: A Prophet of Ancient Iran*. Jackson used his 1903 trip to Iran to visit regions and places associated with Zoroaster, and this letter to Butler conveys his excitement about being able to do so.

Richard James Horatio Gottheil, 1862–1936  
Typed letter, signed, to Nicholas Murray Butler, New York, 29 March 1902  
With autograph note, signed, 31 March 1902 by A. V. Williams Jackson.  
University Archives, Central Files

Gottheil and Jackson attended Columbia College at the same time as Nicholas M. Butler (1862–1947, CC 1882), and so they both enjoyed a good working relationship with Butler, the powerful 12th president of Columbia (1902–1945).

The anthropologist Franz Boas (1858–1942) had joined the Columbia faculty in the 1890s. His goal of fostering the study of contemporary living languages within the context of anthropological research related to the work of Gottheil and Jackson, as they were responsible for teaching the languages of the Middle East and South Asia. The report mentioned in the cover letter contains the response of Gottheil and Jackson to the most recent proposal by Boas about the integration of Chinese into the curriculum.

Sa'dī, Muḥarrif al-Dīn Muṣṭafī ibn 'Abd Allāh Shīrāzī,  
ca. 610–690/1 AH / 1213–1291/2 CE

*Gulistān*

Manuscript in Persian, incomplete, written by 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn 'Abd al-Karīm  
ibn Ibrāhīm

Samarqand, Ramaḍān 945 AH /January–February 1539 CE  
X892.8 Sa13, Purchase, June 1902

This sixteenth-century Central Asian manuscript is a beautiful copy of Sa'dī's *Gulistān*. Sa'dī is one of the great authors of classical Persian literature, and the *Gulistān* is one of the most influential works of Persian prose. In the seventeenth century the *Gulistān* was the first work of Persian literature to be translated into a contemporary European language. Still, it may not only be due to Sa'dī's fame with European audiences that in 1810 Henry Gally Knight, a British traveler to the Ottoman Empire, bought this pretty book and wrote his name in it. While there are no extant records about the 1902 seller of this manuscript, it was a sensible decision to add this classic work in a bibliophilic copy to Columbia's growing collection of Persian literature.

Jāmī, 'Abd al-Raḥmān Nūr al-Dīn, 817–898 AH / 1414–1492 CE

*Bahāristān*

Ed. and translated from Persian into German by Ottocar Maria  
von Schlechta-Wssehrd, 1825–1894

Vienna: Kaiserlich-Königliche Hof- und Staatsdruckerei, 1846  
PK6490.B3 1846, Purchased on the Cotheal Fund, 1900

In Europe printers had experimented with typefaces for Arabic script since the sixteenth century, as there was a European market for books about Europe's Muslim neighbors. After 1800, when Muslim presses started using letterpress printing and lithography for large-scale commercial book production in the Middle East and South Asia, European presses nonetheless continued to produce books in Arabic script. But little is known about the decision of the imperial press in Vienna to issue between the 1840s and the 1860s a series of classical works of Arabic and Persian literature in expensively produced critical editions. These books are odd hybrids since they present a scholarly edited text with the chromolithographed illumination of an Islamic manuscript from the sixteenth or seventeenth century.

Paulus Orosius, fl. 400 CE

*Kitāb Hurūshiyūsh*

Anonymous Arabic translation of the *Historiarum adversus paganos libri VII*

Manuscript in Arabic, incomplete

North Africa, 13th or 14th century CE

2 folios of 124 folios extant

X893.712 H, cataloged in 1926

These two leaves belong to the only known copy of an Arabic translation of the first universal Christian history. The manuscript entered the Columbia University Libraries as a North African manuscript with unknown contents before 1926, and it was the Russian Arabist Ignaty Kratchkovsky (1883–1951) who identified the text in the late 1920s. While the reception of Latin sources in Muslim Spain and North Africa is well attested, the dating of this translation and the identification of its translators remains a matter of considerable controversy. Two very different transcriptions of this manuscript were published in 1982 (ed. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Bayḍāwī, Beirut 1982) and 2001 (ed. Mayte Penelas, Madrid 2001).

The disbound manuscript is severely damaged, and several leaves are missing at the beginning and the end. The displayed leaves are two pages from the table of contents. The disbound pages are out of order; the leaves shown are not in the proper sequence.

In this table of contents, a large reddish script sets off the title of a part (*juz*), while a larger brown-black script is used for highlighting the chapter (*bāb*) sequence. A later reader added in black ink folio numbers to the chapter headings, but this foliation is no longer extant since the folios have lost most of their margins.

Richard James Horatio Gottheil, 1862–1936

Undated photograph, Marceau

University Archives, Historical Photograph Collection

Gottheil is today primarily remembered as a Jewish Studies scholar who, as a friend of Theodor Herzl (1860–1904), was actively engaged with establishing the Zionist movement in North America. Yet his continued interest in early Islamic history should not be forgotten. Among Gottheil’s many students were William Popper (1874–1963, Ph.D. Columbia 1899) and Philip K. Hitti (1886–1978, Ph.D. Columbia 1915). Popper, professor at UC Berkeley from 1905 until 1945, began his career with a dissertation on the censorship of Jewish books in early modern Europe, and later became a highly regarded historian of Mamluk Egypt. The Lebanese-American Hitti, professor at Princeton from 1927 until 1954, was probably the most influential Arab Studies professor of his generation. Hitti had come to Columbia in 1913 to pursue graduate studies, while being on leave from his teaching position at the American University in Beirut (AUB). Before joining the Princeton faculty in 1927, he held appointments at Columbia and AUB.

Richard James Horatio Gottheil, 1862–1936, and Ida A. Pratt  
*List of Works in the New York Public Library Relating to Persia*  
 New York: The New York Public Library, 1915

After the foundation of the New York Public Library in 1895, the banker and philanthropist Jacob H. Schiff (1847–1920) initiated the establishment of its Oriental Division, which until the formation of an independent Jewish Division in 1901 also collected Judaica. From 1897 until his death in 1936, Gottheil served as the first Chief of the Oriental Division, and used Schiff's generous financial support to transform the outstanding Astor collection of books on Africa and Asia into an internationally renowned Middle Eastern and Asian Studies research library.

In 1901 Gottheil hired the librarian Ida A. Pratt, and Pratt would remain with the Oriental Division until her retirement in 1942. From 1907 onwards, the New York Public Library published systematic finding aids for the Oriental Division, compiled by Pratt under the supervision of Gottheil. These bibliographies, ranging from Assyria and Ancient Egypt to Buddhism, Armenia, and contemporary Egypt, document Gottheil's catholic conception of Oriental Studies.

At Columbia Gottheil supervised the work of librarian Mary L. McClure (1870–1956, Vassar 1896). In 1906, McClure joined the Catalog Department where she started out with the cataloging of mathematical and Latin books. After she had learned Arabic and Sanskrit on her own, the Libraries finally could have proper catalog cards for its Oriental materials. Gottheil received duplicate cards, so he could edit McClure's cataloging of more than 2,500 Arabic titles.

Firdawsī, Abū al-Qāsim al-Ṭūsī, 329–411 or 416 AH / 940–1020 or 1025 CE  
*Yūsuf va Zulaykhā*  
 Lithograph in Persian, Cawnpore: Naval Kishore Press, 1898  
 PK6460 .F57 1898g, Purchased on the Cotheal Fund, 1907

In the second half of the nineteenth century, the Naval Kishore Press was the largest Indian-owned printing establishment on the Subcontinent. The acquisition of this book reflects the efforts of the Columbia University Libraries at the beginning of the twentieth century to obtain modern editions of classical Persian literature, while illustrating the international reach of this very successful publisher in North India.

When the Naval Kishore Press issued this book, it was widely believed that this long poem in rhyming couplets (*mathnawī*) was a work of Firdawsī, who as the author of the *Shāh-nāmah* is a central figure of Persian literary history. But this ascription is now rejected as unlikely. The epic poem tells one of the Persian versions of the Old Testament and Quranic story of Joseph and Potiphar's wife, who in the Islamic tradition is known as Zulaykhā.

[The story of Sayf al-Mulūk]

Lithograph in Turkish, written by Muḥammad Bāqir

Iran (Tabriz?), Jumādā I 1286 AH / August 1869 CE

PL314 .M74 S76 1870g, Gift of Abraham Yohannan, November 1913

Lithographed books with illustrated prose narratives were very popular in nineteenth-century Iran. While they must have circulated in considerable numbers, few are extant today. This pamphlet contains a Turkish version of the story of prince Sayf al-Mulūk. This story circulated independently in Eastern Central Asia and South Asia, and is preserved in different versions in many languages. English-speaking English-reading audiences usually know this story in Burton's translation of *The Thousand Nights and a Night*.

The donor, Abraham Yohannan (1847–1924), belonged to the first generation of Assyrian Christians who emigrated from Iran to the U.S. He was born in Urmia, received an American-style education at Urmia College, and moved in 1886 to New York City. He was eventually ordained as an Episcopalian minister and obtained a Ph.D. from Columbia. From 1895 until his death he was associated with the Division of Oriental Languages, where he taught the modern languages – Armenian, Turkish, Persian, and Kurdish – as needed. He was particularly close to Jackson, with whom he collaborated on several publications. Yohannan's donation of about 60 manuscripts and printed books in Arabic script was a particularly valuable addition to Columbia's Islamic holdings, since these books rarely circulated outside Iran.

al-Mu'azzam ibn al-Ādil, ʿĪsā ibn Abī Bakr ibn Ayyūb, d. 624 AH / 1227 CE

*Sahm al-musīb fī kabd al-khatīb*

Manuscript in Arabic, written by ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib

Syria, 623 AH / 1226 CE

X893.7 Is1, Purchased on the Cotheal Fund, 1908

This formal manuscript copy contains a polemical treatise against al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī (392–463 AH / 1002–1071 CE), a famous Shafiī scholar and preacher. The work was composed by al-Mu'azzam ibn al-Ādil, one of the Ayyubid rulers of Damascus.

This manuscript is an important textual witness because it was copied during the author's lifetime. Although the manuscript was severely trimmed and part of the scribal note on the left margin is missing, the date 623 (1226 CE) has remained legible and is supported by codicological evidence. The red note written around the colophon is a reader's note dated 1239 (1824 CE)

Gottheil purchased this manuscript from Paul Geuthner, a French dealer and publisher specializing in Orientalia, in 1908, when the treatise was not yet documented in western bio-bibliographical reference works.

al-Bayḍāwī, ‘Abd Allāh ibn ‘Umar, d. 716 AH / 1316 CE (?)

*Anwār al-tanzīl wa-asrār al-ta’wīl*

Manuscript in Arabic, written by Ibrāhīm

Turkey, 2 Jumādā I 1063 AH / 31 March 1653 CE

Loose table of contents

X893.7 K842, Gift of Alexander I. Cotheal

This leaf is the separate table of contents that belongs to Cotheal’s copy of the al-Bayḍāwī *tafsīr*. This Qur’an commentary has been a fixture in Qur’an education for centuries, and is preserved in countless manuscripts. At least since the seventeenth century, European collectors purchased copies of this commentary when traveling in Muslim societies. Cotheal did not leave any note about his acquisition in this manuscript, but the book was mentioned in James Wynne’s description of the Cotheal library from the late 1850s.

From the seventeenth century onwards, Ottoman manuscripts often had separate tables of contents, which usually preceded the introduction. In this case, a reader first added foliation to the manuscript and then wrote out his own table of contents on a separate sheet of paper. The grid layout is typical for Ottoman table of contents, and begins in the top right corner with the first sura. Cotheal’s name stamp shows that he was aware of this finding aid.

Roger Howson, 1882–1962

Carbon copy of typed letter, signed, to The Honorary Secretary, The K.R. Cama Oriental Institute (Sir Jivanji J. Modi), New York, 17 October 1929  
With autograph note, signed, 18 October 1929 by A. V. Williams Jackson, Columbia University Library Office Files

Jackson was a close friend of the industrialist and philanthropist Alexander S. Cochran (1874–1929), and in 1907 they traveled together to India. Cochran was a graduate of Yale College, and is today remembered as an important benefactor of his Alma Mater. For many years, however, Cochran provided Jackson with funds for the acquisition of valuable books for the Columbia University Libraries. While the University of course gratefully acknowledged Cochran's donations, the full extent of Cochran's active interest in Jackson's research is only documented by archival documents.

Jackson's note on this letter illustrates how Cochran helped Jackson while staying out of the limelight himself. Cochran had provided Jackson with the funds for buying a manuscript of the *Burzū-nāmāh* (MS pers. X892.8 B28 F, 2 vols.), an epic poem about the legendary hero Burzū, from the Parsi (Indian Zoroastrian) priest and scholar Sir Jivanji J. Modi (1854–1933). The Columbia University Libraries, however, registered the manuscript as a gift of Dr. Modi.

A decade after selling the manuscript to Columbia, Modi went through Jackson to borrow the manuscript back in order to have it copied. The manuscript was sent to Bombay in 1927, and finally returned in 1930. In another letter from 1930, Modi expresses his regret for having sold the manuscript at all: "It was under some misapprehension that I parted with the Volumes about 15 years ago."

Abraham Valentine Williams Jackson, 1862–1937

Autograph letter, 3 pages, signed, to David E. Smith, New York, 2 August 1906  
David Eugene Smith Professional Papers

David E. Smith (1860–1844) joined the faculty of Teachers College in 1901, and it is not known when he first made the acquaintance of Jackson and his student Louis H. Gray. Both Jackson and Gray, who in 1926 was appointed professor of Oriental languages, were among those whom Smith contacted with questions about his Islamic manuscripts. The letter documents that Smith and Jackson knew each other as early as 1906. In contrast, Smith and Gottheil only crossed paths at Columbia in 1934, and thereafter they became good friends.

Abraham Valentine Williams Jackson, 1862–1937  
Photograph, December 1926  
University Archives, Historical Photograph Collection

In the 1920s, Jackson's health began to decline, and in 1936 President Butler finally granted Jackson's wish to retire. In 1954, when Columbia celebrated its 200th anniversary, Jackson was still fondly remembered by the English Department faculty as an impeccably dressed man of vast learning with great personal charm. But this 1926 photograph also bears witness to the recollection of Jackson's classmates who had considered the young Will a natty dresser.

Abraham Valentine Williams Jackson, 1862–1937  
*Early Persian Poetry, from the Beginnings down to the Time of Firdausi*  
New York: The Macmillan Company, 1920  
Burke Library, BQ66 J12

Jackson is now primarily remembered as an historical philologist, but this small anthology of Persian poetry was one his most popular and enduring books. Jackson considered Persian poetry a reflection of Iranian history, and as a scholar of Zoroastrianism he limited himself to early Iranian history, beginning with the ancient Zoroastrian hymns of the Avesta and concluding with Firdawsī's *Shāh-nāmah*, the tenth-century epic poem of Iranian history.

The book is dedicated to Jackson's second wife Kate Brigham, whom Jackson had married in 1911 and who had accompanied him in 1918 when he traveled to Iran as a member of the American-Persian Relief Commission. The Persian miniature (MMA acc. 13.228.7.4) used as frontispiece belongs to one of the exquisitely illustrated manuscripts that Cochran had bought during his 1907 India trip with Jackson and subsequently donated to the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Kāshifī, Ḥusayn Vā'iz, d. 910 AH / 1504 CE  
*Anvār-i Suhaylī*  
 Manuscript in Persian  
 Iran, 1231 AH / 1816 CE  
 X892.8 B472, Gift of Alexander J. Cochran, 1908

During their 1907 trip to India, Jackson advised Cochran on his purchases for his own art collection. Upon their return to New York, Cochran gave some of his Indian acquisitions to New York institutions, in particular the Metropolitan Museum of Art and Columbia University. While the Metropolitan Museum received 22 illustrated manuscripts of artistic value, Columbia was given those manuscripts that were perceived as books to be read and studied.

This illustrated Persian manuscript of Kāshifī's *Anvār-i Suhaylī* is a nineteenth-century copy of average quality. *Anvār-i Suhaylī* is an early sixteenth-century Persian imitation of *Kalīla wa Dimna*, a collection of didactic animal fables. The story cycle originated between 500 and 100 BCE in India and is known as *Pañcatantra* in Sanskrit literature. Circulating widely in the Near East, *Kalīla wa Dimna* has survived in very different versions, for example, in Hebrew, Syriac, Arabic, Persian, and Ottoman Turkish. Kāshifī's imitation was particularly popular with Persian reading audiences between the early sixteenth and the nineteenth century. The work is preserved in many illustrated copies, as it was a staple of commercial manuscript production.

Sa'dī, Musharrif al-Dīn Muṣliḥ ibn 'Abd Allāh Shīrāzī,  
 ca. 610–690/1 AH 1213–1291/2 CE  
*Gulistān*  
 Manuscript in Persian  
 India, 19th century  
 X892.8 Sa17, Gift of Mrs. A. V. W. Jackson, December 1937

Jackson received this manuscript as a gift from his Iranian student A. Beijan in October 1921, when he was enrolled in Jackson's survey course on the history of India and Persia.

Jackson's 1898 biography of Zoroaster had gained him the support of the Zoroastrian community. Later he received an honorary degree from the Dār al-Funūn, the polytechnic college in Tehran, and after World War I the Iranian government honored him for his work on the American Persian Relief Commission. Jackson was held in such high regard in Iran and India that Iranian and Indian students came to Columbia in order to study with Jackson.

Firdawsī, Abū al-Qāsim al-Ṭūsī, 329–411 or 416 AH / 940–1020 or 1025 CE  
*Shāh-nāmah*  
 Manuscript in Persian  
 Iran, 1239 AH / 1823 CE  
 Smith MS Or 155, Gift of David Eugene Smith

Smith, who was deeply interested in Iranian culture, was the driving force behind Columbia's contribution to the Firdawsī millenary celebrations in 1935. In 1933, during his visit to Tehran, the Pahlavi government had honored Smith for his research on the history of mathematics, and Smith had acquaintances in the American Iranian community. Avery Library and the Metropolitan Museum of Art organized Firdawsī exhibitions, while Smith arranged an official banquet and coordinated the 1936 publication of a memorial volume, titled *Firdausī Celebration, 935–1935*. Both Gottheil and Jackson served on Smith's organizing committee. Jackson wrote a short essay for the volume, and Gottheil helped Smith with the compilation of a Firdawsī bibliography.

#### David Eugene Smith

Smith, a professor of mathematics at Teachers College from 1901 to 1925, originally collected books and manuscripts from the Middle East and South Asia for his comprehensive collection exploring the history of mathematics. Over time he started buying illuminated and illustrated Islamic manuscripts because of their beauty. In the early 1930s, before donating his books and artifacts to Columbia Libraries, Smith became one of the driving forces behind the foundation of the Rare Book and Manuscript Library. His collection included about 350 codices in Arabic script, and constitutes about half of Columbia's current Islamic manuscript holdings.

Smith began the transfer of his collections to Columbia some time after his return from his long car trip from Istanbul to Tehran in 1933. The University recognized this generous donation with an exhibition of Smith's treasures in 1934. At an official dinner held on the occasion of the first exhibition of Islamic manuscripts at Columbia University, Smith is reported to have explained his interest in buying Islamic books in two ways:

"I have been interested in gathering books and other beautiful things for many years. Twenty-five or thirty years ago I saw that Columbia lacked Oriental manuscripts.... So I set myself the task of adding such manuscripts to the Columbia collection. But you may ask, 'Why buy books you can't read?' Why not? Librarians never read the books they buy! ... I feel it my duty to buy them for Columbia for future use. While they may not be used just now [,] I feel that in fifty years they will be used."

David Eugene Smith, 1860–1944  
Photograph, Ypsilanti, Michigan, ca. 1895  
University Archives, Historical Photograph Collection

Smith was admitted to the bar of New York State in 1884, and then obtained a Ph.D. in Art History from Syracuse University in 1887. He later became a prominent teacher and historian of mathematics, joining the faculty of Teachers College in 1901. This staged photograph shows Smith “in action” in the classroom between 1891 and 1898, when he taught mathematics at Michigan State Normal School in Ypsilanti, Michigan.

Qur'an  
Manuscript in Arabic, written by Muḥammad Muḥsin al-Iṣfahānī  
Iran, 1129 AH /1716 CE  
Lacquer binding, dated 1272 AH (1855 CE), by Luṭf 'Alī Khān, fl. 1840–1870 CE  
Smith MS Or 347, Gift of David Eugene Smith

In the early 1930s, when Smith traveled by car from Istanbul to Tehran, he bought books all along the way. Beautiful Qur'ans were a vital sector of the commercial book trade in all Muslim societies. In the second half of the nineteenth century, this nice eighteenth-century manuscript was kept in circulation with a new binding by Luṭf 'Alī Khān, a well-known painter and book artist of the Qajar period.

Qur'an  
Manuscript in Arabic on parchment  
No place, no date  
Smith MS Or 4A, Gift of David Eugene Smith

Since the Qur'an is the revealed word of God, damaged and disbound Qur'an manuscripts are usually transformed into apotropaic artifacts, such as talismans or wall hangings. This parchment fragment was set into a decorative frame, probably to be included into an album. The dating of these small Qur'an fragments is notoriously difficult, because the production of Qur'an copies tends to be conservative. In the bottom left corner there is an Iranian export stamp, but unfortunately the date is not legible.

Astronomical almanac  
Manuscript in Turkish  
Turkey, 1064 AH /1653 CE  
Smith MS Or 24, Gift of David Eugene Smith

Smith systematically collected books and artifacts about the history of mathematics, and about 200 of his manuscripts in Arabic script are related to the mathematical sciences, understood in the widest sense possible.

Within Islamic civilization, astronomical almanacs are an important literary genre of applied mathematics, as they allow their owner to determine, for example, the time for prayer and for the breaking of the fast during Ramadan. According to a note kept with the manuscript, Smith purchased this Ottoman almanac 1908 in Nuremberg, Germany.

Qurʾan  
Manuscript in Arabic  
India, 19th century  
Smith MS Or 220, Gift of David Eugene Smith

In the nineteenth century, when printing technology was adapted to large-scale commercial book production in Muslim societies, one survival strategy for manuscript workshops was to focus on high-end manuscripts for conspicuous consumption. That this beautiful Qurʾan was indeed a regular trade manuscript is suggested by the impersonal and short colophon.

Ḥāfiẓ, Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad Shīrāzī, ca. 715–ca. 792 AH / ca. 1315–ca. 1390 CE  
Dīvān  
Manuscript in Persian  
Iran, Muḥarram 1229 AH /December 1813–January 1814 CE  
Smith MS Or 154, Gift of David Eugene Smith

Ḥāfiẓ is the only author to be represented with three beautiful books in this small exhibition, since to this day he is the most popular of all Persian poets. His celebrated work has affected all aspects of Persian culture, from bibliomancy to literary criticism. Copies of his work have always been in great demand, and were therefore one of the staples of commercial manuscript production.