

PREFACE

MR. A. G. ELLIS'S "Catalogue of Arabic Books in the British Museum," completed in 1901, has earned the gratitude of more than a generation of scholars, although many have failed to make the fullest use of its accurate and copious information owing to its lack of indexes. It contains a detailed description of most of the huge collection of Arabic works acquired by the Trustees of the Museum from the earliest days up till the end of the nineteenth century, comprising not only books printed or lithographed in the Arabic language, but translations of Arabic books into European and other languages, bibliographies and other writings on Arabic literature.

In the search for any book, and especially one written in an Oriental language, for here peculiar difficulties arise, all the necessary bibliographical clues should be available to the student, who, if unable through inadequate information to use one line of approach, may thus without delay attain his object along another. The three indispensable clues being (a) Author's name, (b) Book-title, (c) Subject-matter, the Department of Oriental Printed Books and Manuscripts has always followed the practice of appending to author catalogues a full index of titles and a subject index. In the present instance a variety of causes, which it is needless to enumerate here, has long delayed the publication of these indexes. They are now offered to the student in the hope that the monumental work which they serve may thus acquire a fuller measure of usefulness than it has hitherto enjoyed.

For the General Index, Mr. Ellis had already written entries for those titles which are purely Arabic in form. These have been altered to suit the scheme here adopted and have been incorporated by the present compiler.

All the entries, irrespective of language, are embraced in a single alphabet. The definite article *al-*, or *'l-*, and the *Izāfat* *i* are ignored as index letters. Many of the works indexed have double titles, e.g.

Histoire des Beni Zeiyan, rois de Tlemçen [Naẓm al-durr wa'l-'ikyān].

MUH. b. 'ABD al-JALIL, *al-Tanasī*.

PREFACE

These appear *twice* (once under each title) in the General Index, but only *once* in the Subject Index. In every case the alternative title is given within brackets. The system of classification used in the Subject Index follows that of the "Supplementary Catalogue of Arabic Printed Books (1926)," but is slightly more detailed. The words *Muhammad* and *ibn*, which occur frequently on every page, are abridged in the usual way to *Muḥ.* and *b.*

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