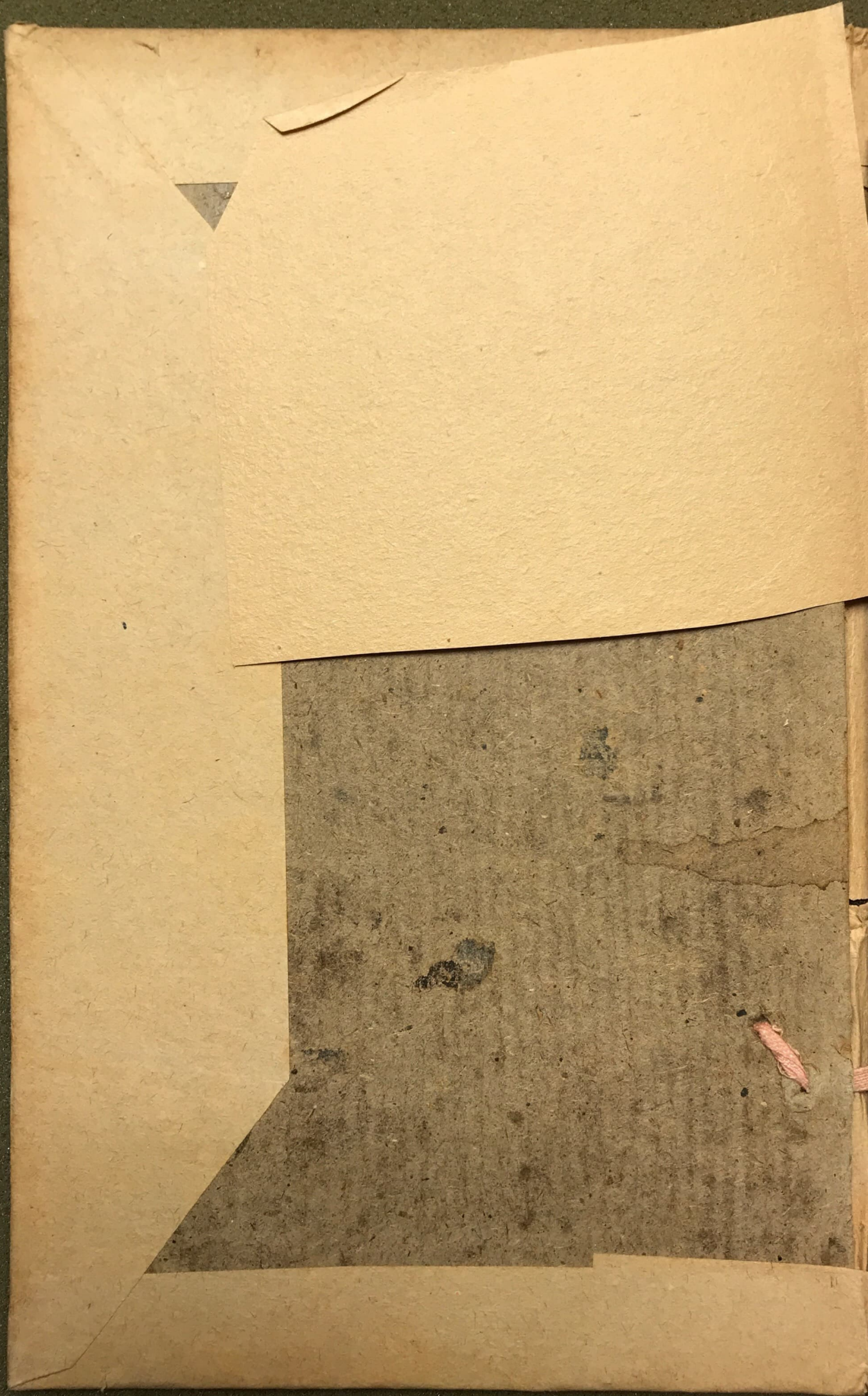


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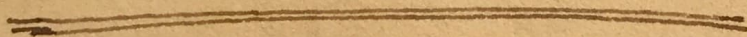
" LEVANT LIBRARIES "



LIBRARIES

of the

LEVANT



C

X
To Sir Thomas Phillips Bart.

My dear Sir

I send you an account, as short as I can make it, of some of the out of the way libraries, that I have seen or heard of, in my Travels. From the difficulty of making out the contents of an Ancient Greek Manuscript, I fear this may be found an imperfect sketch of many of these dusty treasures, particularly as the monks seldom allowed me to remain there as long as I wished, however

even this would be useful to
any one who was going into
the east in search of manuscripts
So I hope you will excuse
the poverty of the list. &
believe me my dear Sir
Yours very truly

R Curzon

Tam

Hasley. Jan 5th 1837.

Notes. of some of the
original libraries in the Levant
where manuscripts still exist
which have been mostly written
there, & are not generally known

Europe.

Venice. in the greek convent are many
books. of Divinity. one of parts of Homer
not very old, & some plays of Gregory
Narianren.

The armenian convent has a good
library, the only one however in this list
which has been collected of late years, it
has a copy of the gospels in large 4^{to}, in
uncial letters; 2 or 3 fine greek MSS of the
Fathers, and about 1000 volumes mostly
divinity, in the armenian language, few
of them are on vellum, & none illumina-
:nated.

Meteora, in Albania, here there are
7 monasteries built on the summits
of perpendicular rocks, the monastery of
1. Meteora. has about 1500 MSS of
which 500 are on vellum, all divinity
or lives of the saints except 12 copies of
the gospels of the 11th 12th & 13th centuries
one of them has 100 miniatures in it
the only greek manuscript of the sort I
ever saw. a chronicle, which I brought

to England. there was a Hesiod there some years ago but I could not find it.

2. Monastery of Barlaam. several fine mss of the gospels, 2 of the Psalms, 1 of the prophets, the library contains 1000 vols 300 on vellum all liturgies, anthologies & lives of the Saints, there are also 2 fine looking books in the Wallachian language which I could not read.

3. Monastery of Agia Stephanos. the library is kept in a secret room where there are 150 mss in very bad condition all good for nothing.

4. Agia Triada. 100 worn eaten volumes are concealed in a room behind the altar of the chapel some of them are wrecks of most gorgeous old tomes all of divinity.

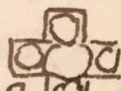
5. <u>Agia Rosaria</u> .	} these monasteries are now deserted & I found no manuscripts there.
6. <u>Agia Nicholas</u>	
7. <u>Agia Mone</u>	

The monastery of Megaspelon on the gulph of Corinth has been supposed to contain surprising treasures but there were none there in 1833. however they have a fair library of printed books.

Patmos the magnificent monastery
of St John built over the cave
where the Apocalypse was written
possesses a famous library of ancient
manuscripts, among which are 1, of
Josephus. Diadoms Siculus with scholia
Lascaris Anthologia in uncial letters, &
it had the dialogues of Plato, which
has been happily brought to England.

Isle of Scio, the collegiate library
did contain several MSS but
they were all destroyed in the days
of the massacre the other day
many glorious old books lay half
burned among the ruins of the town
but the rain & the blood of the scholars
spoiled them, & none are now to
be seen.

Princes Islands. in one of the small
monasteries there is a Sophocles on paper
the other books are rituals. NB. these
islands are in the sea of Marmora
Constantinople. the famous library
of the Seraglio which has excited the
curiosity of the learned for so many

generations, does not contain one Greek manuscript of any kind, it is a separate building in the form of a cross with a dome over the centre of each transept & another in the middle  each side has 6 windows, 3 above, & 3 below, the centre dome is supported by 4 marble pillars & on each side of the cross are 4 book cases full of manuscripts. but all in the Arabic, Persian, & Turkish languages, making altogether 1294 volumes — viz

Koran	17
commentaries on the Koran	143
Traditions relative to Mohammed	182
Treatises on Mahomedan jurisprudence	324
on Logic	95
on Mystical subjects	47
on Philosophy	86
on Grammar	192
on Physic	31
Poetry & polite literature	79
History	42
Dictionaries & vocabularies	56

however there is said to be another library in the khassne / treasury / of the palace & this has never been examined but the officers of the Sultan declare

that there is nothing in it excepting
some fine copies of the Koran,
& that all the books belonging to
the Greek Emperors of Byzantium
have been sold by former
Sultans, or turned out of the
palace as the unclean pro-
ductions of Christian unbelievers.

The Greek Patriarch. has a
large library of old printed books
& a few Manuscripts on sacred
subjects.

Mount Athos. This is the
great treasury of Greek MSS
there being no less than 13000
volumes in the different
monasteries on the Peninsula.

1. Monastery of Baitoponidi. besides
numerous copies of the Gospels &
the Fathers of the 12th and 13th
centuries there are two tragedies

of Aeschylus. the Iliad of Homer, the
Batrachomyomachia, Demosthenes, Atteneus,
Lysias, Galen. parts of Aristotle, Hippocrates
& Plato. two copies of the Apocalipse. &
1 of the history of the Jews, of Josephus,
I am inclined to think that this was bought
by Lord Guifford & is now at Middle
Hill.

2. Couttounoussi: 4 copies of the Gospels
one in uncial letters but with accents
probably of the 1Xth century. some of
these are illuminated. 2 copies of the
acts of the Apostles.

3. Pantocratoras. One copy of the Gospels
in the autograph of the Emperor
Alexius Comnenus, & a very ancient
Octateuch.

4. Stavroniketa. here all the manuscripts
in this monastery are ecclesiastical
& none of them of any extraordinary
value.

5. Iveron. there is an immense library
here mostly of printed books, among
which are some glorious Aldines.
of the manuscripts, several hundred
are Ecclesiastical. also parts of

aschilus, & Euripides. a m s of
Aristophanes, the Electra & Ajax of
Sophocles, Pindar. Hesiod. Demas-
= thenes, parts of Galen & Aristotle,
some imperfect lexicons, the works
of Libanius the Sophist, and Philo-
Judæus.

6. Philotheo. a fine manuscript of
the Gospels & one of the Acts
Epistles & Apocalypse.
7. Caracalla. a treatise in common
letters with a commentary in uncial
this is very curious. I saw a book
of the same kind in the monastery
of Barlaam, at Meteora / where
I was pulled up 250 feet by a
rope hanging over a precipice
the only approach to its library
for any adventurous bibliomaniac.
a volume containing parts of
Demosthenes, Justin in Greek, the Hecuba
of Euripides, the first book of Euclid
& some verses from Hesiod and
the Batrachomyomachia

8. Agia Laura. the book of Job
with commentaries & illuminations
Proverbs, the book of the wisdom
of Jesus the son of Sirach, 61
copies of the Gospels, the history of
Susannah, 2 copies of Galen,
Demosthenes, 2 first books of the Iliad,
part of Pindar, Apthomius the sophist
& some lexicons
9. Agia Anna. the works of Saint
Gregory Nazianzen, & many other
ecclesiastical writers.
10. Agias Paolos. 500 manuscripts
in the Servian & Illyrian
languages, & one greek manuscript
of the Psalms.
11. Dionysio. several of the New
Testament (a very rare manuscript)
one of them in uncial letters.
part of the Iliad with commentaries
part of Demosthenes, Libanius,
Dionysius the Areopagite, one of
St Gregory's tragedies, and the

aphorisms of Hippocrates.

12. Apios Gregorios. the library has been burned down.
13. Simo petra. 19 copies of the Gospels some of them very antient. 3 of the acts & epistles, & a number of the Ecclesiastical authors.
14. Xepopotamo. Genesis in Hebrew. several copies of the Gospels, one of great antiquity. some modern selections from several classics & many Theological manuscripts.
15. Xenophon, 4 copies of the Gospels & a great many ecclesiastical books.
16. Docheiron. plenty of Theology, & 18 manuscripts of the Gospels.
17. Constantamoueta. a tragedy of Aeschylus, the 7 chiefs at Thebes, & part of Hesiod.
18. Zografou. all Servian and Ilirian manuscripts.
19. Chilianteri. a few greek liturgies the rest Bulgarian.

20. Spigmenou. 20 copies of the
Gospels. & a good quantity of
Theological writers.

21. Agias Basilica. this monastery
is now in ruins

Asia

Sinope. There are some monasteries
there which are said to contain
ancient libraries, but I do not know
that they have ever been explored.

Tatrisond. Also contains some
Greek monasteries as well as
Mount Ararat all unknown.

Ectmiasin. the residence of the
great Patriarch of Armenia,
he has a magnificent library,
where any one understanding
the language would probably
find some of the lost classics
translated into Armenian, but
nobody has been there who knows
anything about the matter, the
Armenians are a literary people
& receive you hospitably & have
good cooks; I have some un-
known writings of St Paul.

2 found by Lattu Pasquale Ancher
of Venice, in an uncial armenian
2 manuscript. & I think it would
repay any scholar to go to
Ectmiazin.

Antioch. the Greek Patriarch, has
a library but I do not know that
it has been looked over. I
did not think of it when I
passed by.

Mount Lebanon. the great
Maronite convent has a large
collection of Arabic manuscripts
among which are several of the
gospels. & one of Josephus
if this was translated from the
Hebrew it would be very curious.

Jobah. a small villiage near
Damascus, at this place is a
synagogue of a peculiar sect of
Jews, who believe in Jesus Christ

but still adhere to their ancient
ceremonies, they have 36 copies of
the law, which perhaps may
contain differences from the above
copies.

Nablous, in the Holy Land, in
the Samaritan synagogue is a
most curious pentateuch in the
Samaritan character, & language
which is said to have been
written by Abishah, the grand
son of Aaron, there are also
10 or 12 ancient copies of the
original roll.

Jerusalem. the library of the Greek
convent adjoining the Church of the
Holy Sepulchre, contains 7 copies of the
Gospels one of which has the first
leaves of the book, & of each gospel
in gold letters on purple vellum.
several copies of the Psalms, 1 of
the whole Bible, 2 or 3 of the
Prophets. the Book of Job, a large

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folio full of miniatures & illuminations
this is a very fine book. 800 vols
of Divinity on paper; and a
good collection of printed books in
various languages.

Monasteries of St John in the wilderness
& the Holy Cross. near Jerusalem
both of these have libraries, which
are said to contain some Ethiopic
manuscripts, but they would not
let me see them.

S^r. Sabba, near the Dead Sea
there is a splendid library here
containing 1500 manuscripts
mostly on vellum. of these
several gospels in Greek, 1 in
Bulgarian. a copy of all the
works of St. Crystostom in many
volumes large folio. 2 or 3 of the
Psalms. 1 octateuch, which I
brought away of the Xth century.
some of the epistles, some parts

of Homer on paper, & some
imperfect books in a tower, of
which several seemed to me not
to be theological but as they
had no beginning or end it
was impossible to make them
out in a short time. The rest
are divinity.

The Armenian convent at Jerusalem

has some fine books in that language
but I do not know what they
are about.

Mount Sinai. the library in the
monastery of St Catherine contains
2000 volumes. 500 of which
are arabic an account of these
may be seen in Burckhardt's
travels in Arabia. one of them which
I looked at was a history of Egypt.
500 more are Greek manuscripts
on vellum of these there are 12 of
the Gospels, several of the Psalms
a fine Cyprian & most of the

2
2
Jathus. but in the Patriarch's room
are kept 3 famous manuscripts
worth all the rest together. the first
contains the whole book of Psalms
written on 6 leaves duodecimo of fine
vellum, very ancient & legible. the
next is the Gospels in uncial or
rather round letters of gold, on
white vellum the letters resemble
the acts at the Bodleian, but it
is full of Contractions, this book
is in its original binding of pure
gold & jewels it has 16 illuminations
the size of the page, a large quarto
& remains exactly in the state in
which it was presented to St Catherine
by the Emperor Justinian. the 3^d
is a Firman of privileges granted
to the monks by Mohammed who
has set his mark to it, as he could
not write by covering the palm
of his hand with ink and laying

it on the roll. the names of Ali Abubekir, Ottoman, Omar, and several more are written at the bottom, as witnesses.

Africa

Cairo. the Greek Patriarch has a library of 6 or 700 volumes, but all of Divinity.

Watron Lakes. a monastery near here contains several coptic MSS among which is a dictionary of coptic & Arabic an invaluable book as it is the only one in existence.

Old Cairo. in the synagogue is a pentateuch said to have been written by Ezra, excepting the name of God which was filled up by an angel.

The following monasteries contain coptic manuscripts and are utterly unexplored.

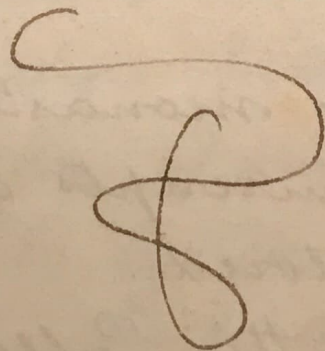
Monastery of the Pulley, on the Nile
St Anthony } on the shores of
St Paul } the Red Sea.

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there are some also at Thebes, and
at Nagadi on the Nile. there are
also said to be libraries at Gondar,
& Massoah, in Abyssinia. and at
Timbuctoo in the centre of Africa.

The Syriac manuscripts have
mostly retreated beyond the
Euphrates, very few are to be found
in the Holy Land, but there
are a few small libraries in the
monasteries of Kurdistan.

~~~~~  
Laus Deo.

Finis.





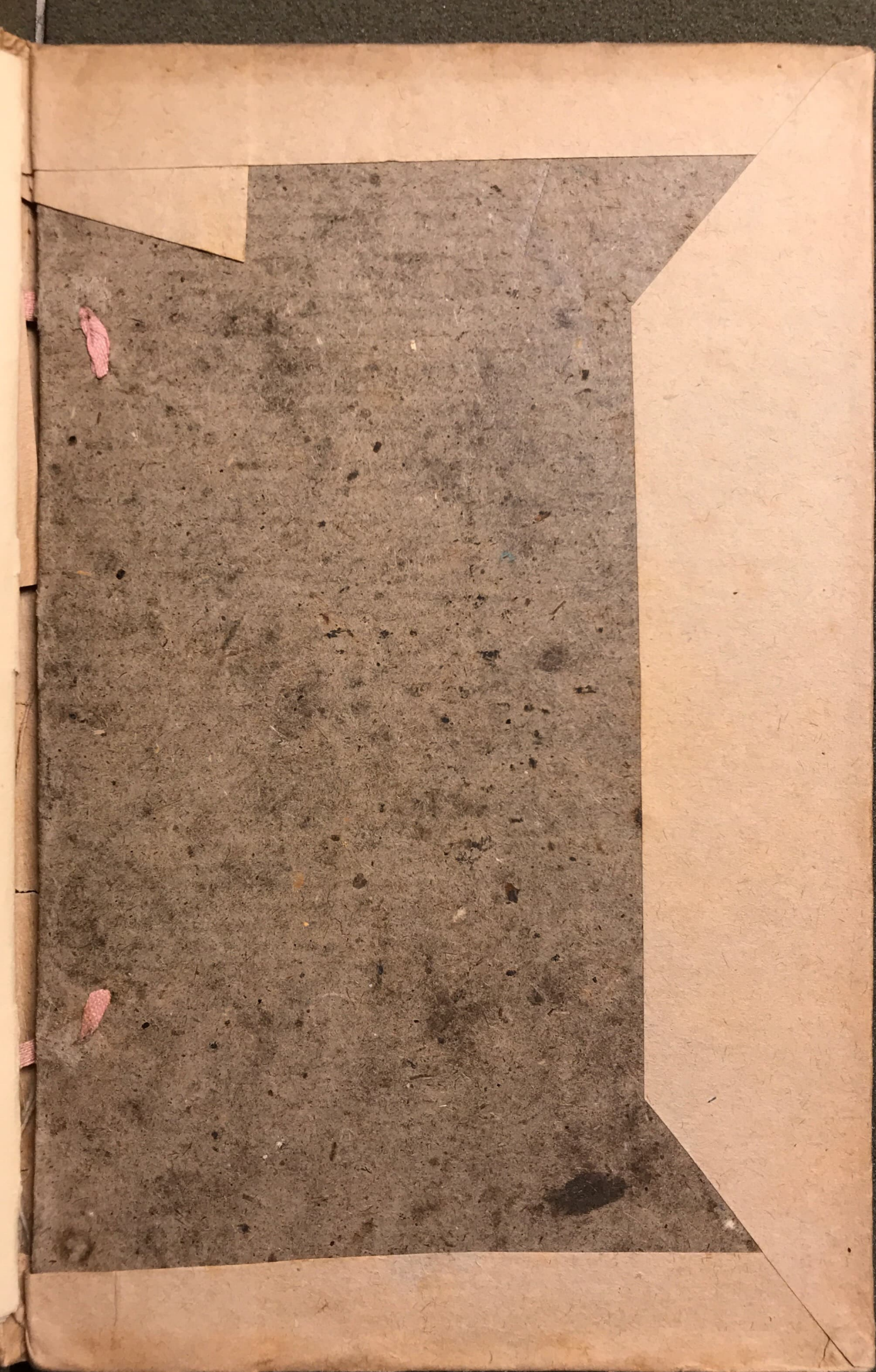
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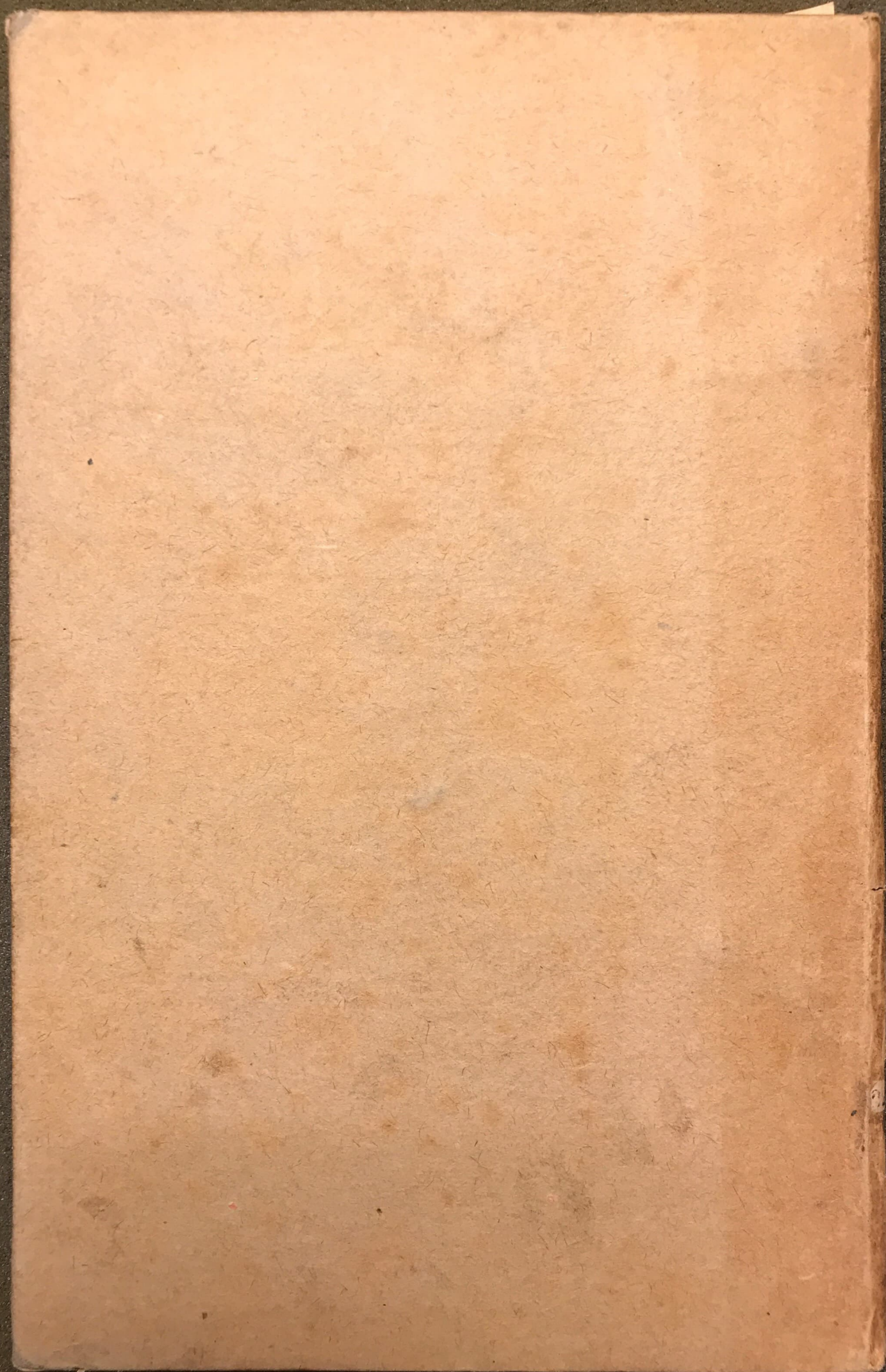
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