

## Scholarly Correspondence: Mapping the DNA of Scholarship. An Introduction

As consumers of scholarship, we are as a rule limited to what has come down to us in published form. But if we want to understand the genetic makeup of the final product—what it was that prompted a scholar to approach a certain topic or problem, how he or she selected and analyzed the material at hand, and what guided him or her throughout the process—we need to get our hands on some of the material that reflects the genesis of the published work. And we have to consider these factors in light of the wider social, political, and intellectual context in which a scholar worked, as well as the relevant material and economic constraints.

Occasionally, some of these questions are addressed in the publications themselves, in the preface, the acknowledgements, the annotations, and other ancillary notes, but whatever is said there has passed through a careful process of filtering, polishing, selecting, and possibly self-censorship. The more authentic raw material is typically found in the discards that were never intended for publication, which may include any kind of working material and notes, such as a reader's margin notes in books, excerpts and study notebooks, reader registers, inventories of personal libraries, and drafts, as well as diaries. With the history of knowledge and knowledge transmission increasingly coming to the forefront of scholarship, some of this material has garnered attention in recent years and has been studied in a systematic manner, as in the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation-funded project "The Archaeology of Reading in Early Modern Europe," exploring historical reading practices through the lens of manuscript annotations preserved in early printed books.

Another genre that is particularly fruitful in the reconstruction of a scholar's intellectual trajectory is epistolary exchanges. Letters and letter-collections are ubiquitous—we encounter this genre from antiquity until today and in virtually all cultures and languages. Some disciplines, such as medieval and early modern European history, are very advanced in the study and handling of this important historical source, others less so.

Scholarship in the humanities, past and present, appears to be a solitary undertaking as the single-authored publication, be it a monograph or journal article, continues to be the predominant end product. And indeed, creativity and originality in research often flourishes best when the scholar has the

privilege of complete seclusion, at least temporarily, to focus on the material and reflect on its interpretation. During the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, before photography and microform technology became available and affordable, entertaining a close network of peers was indispensable for gaining access to and circulating knowledge. Scholars were typically limited to their local library, with access perhaps to some other libraries in their immediate vicinity. Travelling from one city or even country to another to visit different libraries and transcribe the manuscripts one needed for one's own research was time-consuming and costly. Especially in a field like Islamic studies, where manuscripts continue to be the bread and butter of virtually all historical research, the limited access a scholar might have had to only a few libraries posed a serious impediment to scholarship. Scholars were often generous and creative in finding ways to assist one another, providing colleagues with excerpts of manuscripts one had access to, checking references for other scholars, or collating one another's work with the manuscripts within one's reach, keeping one another informed about new publications and discoveries, discussing new findings, reading one another's drafts, purchasing books on behalf of others whenever opportunities arose, and, of course, exchanging offprints and publications. These were indispensable work habits for scholars during those days, and most of it took place through the medium of letters.

The scholars involved in "Oriental studies" during the late modern period—European scholars for the most part but also some who were based outside Europe—constituted a veritable Republic of Letters. The material that has come down to us is voluminous. The relevant holding institutions increasingly understand the value of the treasures they possess, and the preparation of detailed inventories and digitization of entire corpora of correspondence is on the rise.

When Ignaz Goldziher, the doyen of Arabic and Islamic, as well as Jewish, studies during his lifetime, passed away on 13 November 1921, he left behind a corpus of scientific correspondence consisting of more than 13,500 letters from about 1,650 persons, in eleven languages (German, Hungarian, French, English, Hebrew, Arabic, Italian, Spanish, Persian, Yiddish, and Russian). His *Nachlass*, including the letters as well as his hand-written notes and works, was bequeathed to the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. The corpus, which is freely accessible in its entirety in digital form, constitutes the single most important source on the history of Arabic, Jewish, and Islamic studies and cognate fields during Goldziher's time. Selected portions of the Goldziher correspondence are available in critical editions, while other portions have been consulted for studies on the history of the field, but the bulk of the material has as yet remained untapped. In November 2021, the editors of this volume convened an

international online conference, “Islamic and Jewish Studies around the Turn of the Twentieth Century: Ignaz Goldziher and his Correspondents,” focusing on the correspondence between Ignaz Goldziher and colleagues from different countries preserved in the Oriental Collection of the Library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences and elsewhere, addressing aspects of the history of the discipline as seen through the letters. Some of the papers that were delivered on this occasion are included in this volume, in addition to other pertinent studies that were invited after the conference.

**Camilla Adang’s** “*In vollkommener Verehrung*: Israel Friedlaender’s letters to Goldziher” examines, in a fascinatingly vivid manner, the academic exchange between Goldziher and his younger colleague and admirer, Israel Friedlaender (1876–1920). The study is based on thirty-three letters and postcards that Friedlaender sent Goldziher between 1901 and 1920. Friedlaender, a Semitic studies scholar (he had received much of his training in Strasbourg, under the supervision of Theodor Nöldeke), shared with Goldziher a passion for Jewish-Arabic studies. As is evident in the letters studied, he consulted him more than once on issues in classical Arabic-Islamic intellectual culture, including the early history of the Shī’a and Maimonides’ use of Arabic sources. Adang’s article also reveals the great joy Friedlaender seems to have felt when dealing with questions in Arabic studies and related fields of Judaica, whereas his ‘official discipline’ was Bible studies (from 1903, when he was appointed Professor of Biblical Literature and Exegesis, a position he held until he was killed in 1920, at the age of 44, in Ukraine, on a mission for the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, in an attempt to help starving Jews in Poland and Ukraine). Against the general background of events in Friedlaender’s active life, with its manifold scholarly and humanitarian commitments, Adang’s study particularly highlights the great respect that Friedlaender held for Goldziher as a mentor and colleague. However, it also shows Friedlaender’s frustration with the lack of an inspiring intellectual environment at his workplace, the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York, and his somewhat limited scholarly output.

In her paper, **Kinga Dévényi** analyzes the correspondence between Ignaz Goldziher and Duncan B. Macdonald (1863–1943), the founder of the first school in the U.S. devoted to Christian missionary work in the Middle East, who considered Goldziher his unrivalled master, whose influence he acknowledged without reservation. The paper traces the connection between the two scholars from their first exchange of publications, through critical remarks well-received on both sides, to intimate disclosures on difficult periods. Goldziher was very attentive to the needs of his diverse students. This predisposition for passing on knowledge met with Macdonald’s need of a mentor, as is clearly expressed in the letters, which provide a true imprint of their relationship. The

correspondence is unique not only because Macdonald is among the most frequent of Goldziher's correspondents but also because it contains Goldziher's letters as well.

**Livnat Holtzman** and **Miriam Ovadia's** "Ignaz Goldziher: The Founding Father of Gesture Studies in Arabic and Islamic Studies" focuses on "Ueber Geberden und Zeichensprache bei den Arabern" (Gestures and Sign Language among the Arabs), a short article published in 1886. With this publication, Goldziher was the first modern scholar to observe that the literature of Islamic prophetic traditions includes abundant information about the physical gestures transmitters of *ḥadīth* used to support their verbal teachings. Goldziher continued to pursue this subject in several more articles on the gestures and sign language used among Arabs. However, he stood virtually alone with this research in his own time and for several generations of scholars in Arabic and Islamic studies, as well as in Jewish studies. Through their close examination of Goldziher's pioneering insights on gestures in Arab culture and their reception in the scholarly circles of his time, Holtzman and Ovadia reveal the complexity of the topics Goldziher researched, his creative reading of the Arabic sources, and his lasting contribution to modern gesture studies.

**Amit Levy** writes on "Rediscovering the Goldziher Legacy in Jerusalem: Religion, Language, and History in the Making of a Hebrew University." As is well known, after Goldziher's death, his library was purchased and brought to Jerusalem, where it formed the basis for the Oriental Department of the National and University Library. But Goldziher also had a direct influence on the emerging university through a 1919 letter outlining his vision for a Hebrew university, which he wrote at the request of its organizing committee. In it, he recommends the establishment of five departments in addition to those usually found in European universities: Semitic Religions, Oriental Languages, Archaeology of the Holy Land, Jewish History, and Jewish Literature. Levy examines Goldziher's reasoning, the problematics of his proposals, and their impact, addressing core issues that were later debated again and again. He also describes how scholars of Arabic and Islamic studies associated with Goldziher and his legacy for decades by translating his works into Hebrew.

**Dóra Pataricza** and **Máté Hidvégi**, in their contribution entitled "On *The Kiss*: An Early Piece of Correspondence between Ignaz Goldziher and Immanuel Löw," analyze a postcard written by Goldziher to Immanuel Löw, shedding new light on the circumstances under which the first version of this important folkloristic study by Löw was written. A close friend of Goldziher, Immanuel Löw (1854–1944), the Chief Rabbi of Szeged, Hungary, was one of his time's most significant Neolog (progressive) rabbis and scholars. He was not only outstanding as a rabbi but also as an academic in various fields. The article also

establishes the milieu in which Goldziher was working on one of his most important studies (*Die Zâhiriten*) during the summer of 1882, when he received a copy of *The Kiss*.

**Christoph Rauch's** paper deals with a difficult topic, as is apparent already from its title: "A Complicated Relationship: Carlo Landberg's Friendship with Ignaz Goldziher—Between Ambition and Anti-Semitism." The article presents some aspects of the Swedish Arabist and independent scholar Carlo Landberg's (1848–1924) multifaceted life and activities, based on hitherto unstudied sources. The author traces the friendship between Landberg and Goldziher, from their first meeting in Damascus in 1872, through many important shared events, until Landberg's last postcard in 1921, announcing the publication of the first volume of his *Glossaire datinois*, which Goldziher had encouraged as a capstone to Landberg's scholarly work. The resulting portrait is especially interesting for the history of scholarship, since Landberg stood outside academic institutions.

**Valentina Sagaria Rossi's** paper, entitled "*Arabicae Investigationes* in the Correspondence between Carlo Alfonso Nallino and Ignaz Goldziher, 1893 through 1920," sheds light on a hitherto understudied aspect of Goldziher's correspondence, i.e., the letters exchanged with his Italian colleagues. Carlo A. Nallino (1872–1938) was an emblematic figure of Arabic studies in Italy and long-time chair of Muslim History and Institutions at Rome's La Sapienza University, and his diverse interests and engagements make their correspondence highly important for the history of the field. This is especially so because none of Nallino's correspondence has been edited so far and because Goldziher's letters to him were also preserved. After a detailed presentation of Nallino's life and scholarly achievements, the paper contains an edition of the correspondence, with an in-depth study of its contents and the differences and similarities between the two scholars.

**Sabine Schmidtke** discusses in her paper "Ignaz Goldziher, Walter Gottschalk, and the *Kitāb al-Aymān* by Ibrāhīm b. 'Abd Allāh al-Najīramī" Goldziher's and Walter Gottschalk's (1891–1974) correspondence both before and after World War I, revolving around Abū Ishāq Ibrāhīm b. 'Abd Allāh al-Najīramī's (fl. fourth/tenth-century) *Kitāb al-Aymān* and Goldziher's editorial work on the text, which was never published. The study concludes with a sketch of Gottschalk's scholarly career after World War I, when he served as librarian at Berlin State Library and from 1935, when he was ousted from his position and eventually had to flee Germany.

**Jan Thiele's** "Publishing Ibn Tūmart's 'Book' in Colonial Algeria" studies the correspondence Ignaz Goldziher received between 1901 and 1903 while he was writing an introduction of some 100 pages to *Le livre de Mohammed Ibn Tou-*

*mert, Mahdi des Almohades* (published 1903 in Algiers). This first critical edition of the political-religious writings attributed to Ibn Tūmart (d. 1130), the founder and messianic figure of the Almohad empire, was prepared by Jean-Dominique Luciani (1851–1932), a French Orientalist and member of the French colonial administration in Algeria. Luciani's letters to Goldziher, as well as those from two other French Orientalists, Edmond Doutté (1857–1926) and Maurice Gaudefroy-Demombynes (1862–1957), who had been commissioned to translate Goldziher's introduction to this edition from German into French, reveal two important aspects: first, the prestige Goldziher enjoyed in his time as an authority on Almohad history, and second, the constructive dynamics and eventual success of this international academic joint venture early in the 20th century.

**Samuel Thrope** describes in his "The Goldziher Collection at the National Library of Israel" this collection, with its wide variety of printed books, journals, and manuscripts, many of them annotated by Goldziher's own hand. He traces how this collection ended up in possession of the Zionist Organization and became one of the building blocks of the nascent Hebrew University, despite efforts of many other interested parties worldwide. The archives show that, contrary to what one might assume, it was not the mediation work of Jerusalem-born Abraham Shalom Yahuda, Goldziher's protégé and friend of his family, that tipped the scales, but the persevering efforts of Israel Cohen, the then-general secretary of the Zionist Organization in London. The nearly 6,000 volumes represented a massive addition to the Jerusalem library's holdings and had a decisive influence on the further development of its Islamic collection.

**Tamás Turán** in his essay "Goldziher and Jewish Scholarship in Light of His Correspondence with Immanuel Löw and Michael Guttman," documents and exemplifies how Goldziher, through questions, encouragement, and feedback, stimulated the work and research of his meritorious and renowned Hungarian friends Immanuel Löw (1854–1944) and (former disciple) Michael Guttman (1872–1942), in the field of Judaic studies. Services were reciprocal: In the extensive correspondence with Löw, many questions of comparative Semitic philology are discussed, while Guttman's letters contain detailed scholarly information on Jewish religious and folkloristic parallels to Islam. Goldziher's strong comparative interest and curiosity about Jewish scholars are evident here, even though he increasingly instrumentalized Jewish scholarship and put it at the service of his Islamic studies. At the same time, his policy of using comparatist findings remained complex and elusive.

**Maxim Yosefi's** paper, "Friend, Teacher, 'Shaykh': Goldziher and the Founders of Islamic Studies in St. Petersburg," explores the scholarly and personal connections that linked Ignaz Goldziher to three generations of pioneers in

Islamic studies in St. Petersburg. It examines the unique aspects of Goldziher's correspondence with Baron Viktor von Rosen (1849–1908), Alexander von Schmidt (1871–1939), and Ignaty Kratchkovsky (1883–1951). This is complemented with recollections of these scholars as recounted by their contemporaries and disciples. Through this approach, the paper achieves two main objectives: First, it sheds light on the significant contributions of the renowned Hungarian scholar to the establishment of Islamic studies in Russia, as well as the support provided by scholars in St. Petersburg to Goldziher's work and what became his intellectual legacy. Second, it situates the development of Arabic and Islamic studies in St. Petersburg within the broader context of the Western European tradition in these fields.

**Dora Zsom's** "Goldziher as a Master: The Correspondence of Ignaz Goldziher and Martin Schreiner" deals with Goldziher's amazing patience with and forgiveness of his disciple, while Schreiner (1863–1926) in his 150 letters repeatedly attacked him or wrote in a confrontational manner. Apparently, Goldziher did not take offense. This seems to contradict the passionate, resentful, and often contemptuous outbursts recorded in Goldziher's diary, which gives the impression of a quick-tempered person, swift to take offense and slow to forgive. But his diary shows marked similarity to Schreiner's letters, in that they frequently voice scorn for his colleagues. Schreiner's admiration for Goldziher was beyond question, and he expressed his affection and loyalty again and again, sometimes in exaggerated terms, while Goldziher, who, with his own lack of self-confidence, was himself in need of recognition and approval, nevertheless tolerated Schreiner's occasional confrontations, no matter how ill-tempered they were.

The volume concludes with a bibliographical guide to Goldziher's published correspondence, prepared by **Kinga Dévényi** and **Sabine Schmidtke**. The publication and analysis of Goldziher's correspondence is an ongoing project to which the bibliographical guide provides just a "snapshot" to assist researchers in finding the gaps yet to be filled. Another version of this bibliographical guide, which is continuously being updated, is accessible via <https://doi.org/10.48706/XSDD-CQ10>.



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We hope that the present volume will serve as an impetus and encouragement for further studies into the rich holdings of the Oriental Collection in Budapest.

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