

## Scholarly Correspondence: A Window into the DNA of Scholarship<sup>1</sup>

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As consumers of scholarship, we are as a rule limited to what has come down to us in published form. If we want to understand the DNA 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 this in light of the wider social, political, and intellectual context a scholar is working in, as well as the material and economic constraints.

Occasionally, some of these questions are addressed in the publications themselves, in the preface, the acknowledgements, the annotations etc., 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 among what has never been intended for publication. It may include any kind of working material and notes, such as reader's margin notes in books, excerpts and study notebooks, reader registers, inventories of personal libraries, 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 come to the attention of scholars 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, my own current book project, an archaeological inquiry into texts and their transmission among Twelver Shī'ī thinkers over some six centuries, or the ERC funded "Project NOTA" studying medieval notebooks, written primarily in Latin.

Another genre that is particularly fruitful in the reconstruction of a scholar's intellectual trajectory are epistolary exchanges. Letters and letter-collections are ubiquitous—we encounter this genre from antiquity until today and in virtually all cultures and languages.

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<sup>1</sup> Talk presented in the „Virtual Events Series“, Institute for Advanced Study, March 26, 2021.

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 endproduct. 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. The Institute for Advanced Study is one of those places offering such favorable conditions. But this is only half the truth. Scholars in the humanities, and historians in particular, at all times benefit from the support of a network of peers, be it by sharing material, by reading, discussing, commenting, and criticizing each others' work, etc. During the nineteenth and early twentieth century, before photography and microform technology became available and affordable, entertaining a close network of peers was indispensable to gain access to and circulate 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 virtual all historical research, the limited access to only a few libraries poses a serious impediment to scholarship. Providing colleagues with excerpts of manuscripts one had access to, checking references, or collating each other's work with the manuscripts within one's reach, keeping each other informed about new publications and discoveries, discussing new findings, reading each others drafts, purchasing books on behalf of others whenever opportunities arose, and, of course, exchanging offprints and publications, were indispensable for scholars during those days. Most of this happened through the medium of letters.

In the field I am concerned with, „Oriental studies“ during the late modern period, the scholars involved—European scholars for the most part but also some who were based outside of 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. Prominent examples include the correspondence by and / or addressed to Ignaz Goldziher (b. 1850, d. 1921), the doyen of Arabic and Islamic as well as Jewish studies during his lifetime, consisting of 13,574 letters in ten languages (German, Hungarian, French, English, Hebrew, Arabic, Italian, Spanish, Yiddish, and Russian), held by the

Hungarian Academy of Sciences in Budapest; the archive of Paul Ernst Kahle (b. 1875, d. 1964) in Turin, which comprises the correspondence of this renowned Hebraist, Semitist and scholar of Islamic studies with more than 2,500 correspondents; the recently discovered Eugenio Griffini (b. 1878, d. 1925) archive in Milan, which sheds entirely new light on the history of Yemeni manuscript collections in Italy and Germany, complementing the archives of the Austrian explorer and scholar Eduard Glaser (b. 1855, d. 1908), the eponym of the Glaser collections of Yemeni manuscripts; or the correspondence of the German geographer and explorer Carl Rathjens (b. 1887, d. 1966), with some 1,080 correspondents around the world, including the ruling Imām of Yemen, Yaḥyā Ḥamīd al-Dīn (r. 1904–1948) during the 1920s and 1930s, in Hamburg. The picture that evolves from a mere quantitative analysis of the preserved materials is that of a closely-knit comprehensive network of scholars, beyond denominational, national, and disciplinary boundaries.

Mention should also be made of the rich and so far unexplored correspondence of former IAS faculty member Otto Neugebauer (b. 1899, d. 1990) and his collaborators revolving around their joint projects in Near Eastern mathematics and astronomy, which is kept in The Shelby White and Leon Levy Archives Center here at the Institute for Advanced Study.

Studying the historiography of our own discipline has many merits. It helps us to better understand our own doing as scholars, to reflect on our methods and objectives, and to evaluate our own achievements in view of those of our forebears, often realizing that progress in the humanities is an elusive concept. Our entrance into this fascinating world of our forebears—separated from us by only a few generations while at the same time representing a world that has long passed and is at times hard to grasp—is often prompted by chance finds—a letter, an image, an archival source, or just a small footnote. More often than not we are stumbling into lives that are nothing but tragic, and we encounter gems of scholarship that never made it through the press.

A case in point is the Hungarian scholar Martin Schreiner (b. 1863, d. 1926), a representative of the Science of Judaism and Islamic studies at the turn of the twentieth century and the founder of modern study of the Muʿtazila, a rationalist current within Islamic theology, whose scholarly career came to an abrupt end in April 1902, at the age of thirty-nine, when he was diagnosed with mental illness and hospitalized in a private psychiatric clinic in Berlin. Schreiner's mental disorder put a painful and sudden end to the rich, albeit brief, career of a prolific and versatile scholar. He lingered on for another two decades until his demise on

October 9, 1926. The Hungarian Academy of Sciences in Budapest preserves 157 letters from Schreiner to his erstwhile teacher in Budapest, Goldziher, written between 1887 and 1901, in Hungarian, Hebrew, and Arabic. The two scholars regularly discussed their ongoing scholarly work and personal concerns, included offprints of their respective publications, shared material such as excerpts of manuscripts with each other, and discussed recent contributions to the field. Besides providing unique insights into Schreiner's biography, his personality and his interactions with his surroundings, as well as the world of scholars he interacted with in Hungary and Germany, his Hebrew and Arabic letters are particularly noteworthy as they beautifully emulate the Talmudic and the classical Arabic conventions respectively, as was typical for his time. The corpus of epistolary exchanges is complemented by the archive of his personal papers in the National Library of Israel, which show us the scholar at work—the archive comprises teaching notes, outlines of publications he had planned to write, excerpts from Arabic manuscripts and secondary sources, an inventory of his personal library, as well as numerous drafts, some close to final form, of books and articles that were never published. Moreover, we are also accurately informed about the manuscripts he consulted during his active years in Berlin on the faculty of the Hochschule für die Wissenschaft des Judentums, 1894 through 1902. Despite Schreiner's tragic fate, from a historian's point of view the sources available provide an ideal basis for a study of his intellectual trajectory, which I hope to complete very soon.

In what follows, I want to discuss two further scholars of Islamic studies who flourished in Germany during the late nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth century, namely Friedrich Kern and Rudolf Strothmann. Both Kern and Strothmann entered the discipline through unusual paths, and both chose to remain in the margins of mainstream scholarship during their time, though in entirely different ways. At the same time, the contributions they made to scholarship were cutting-edge although they are (for no good reason) mostly forgotten today. Moreover, neither Kern nor Strothmann left behind any personal papers, study notes, or correspondence, and it is only through the archival remains of others that their respective trajectories can be reconstructed.

Let me add here a brief personal note: I stumbled upon Kern when working on my monograph on Martin Schreiner, who mentions him once or twice in his letters. Besides a brief obituary by one of his friends, I found virtually nothing about Kern, but was intrigued by the sheer mass of the eight hundred or so manuscripts that he consulted at the Berlin State Library over the course of two decades. My interest in Rudolf Strothmann, on the other hand, arose from my

own work on Shīʿī Islam and the fact that, with one intermediary, I am a pupil of Strothmann. At the same time, and similar to the case of Kern, I was struck by the fact that virtually nothing is known about his life, with the exception of two brief obituaries that were published after his demise in 1960. My point of departure for both was their respective correspondence with the aforementioned Goldziher. In the case of Kern, the correspondence constituted the single richest source for the reconstruction of his scholarly trajectory and extremely difficult personality. Goldziher also exchanged letters with Kern's mother and brother-in-law, Kern's former doctoral adviser, and his close friends in Berlin.— Kern's difficulties in getting a grip on his life help the biographer of today; since his friends and close family members were continuously worrying about him, they mention him and his doings regularly in the correspondence between them. In the case of Strothmann, the discovery of his correspondence with Goldziher was only the first step to retrieving his epistolary exchanges with many other scholars and peers, each one of them covering different periods of his life. The correspondence also includes the official letters Strothmann sent to the authorities of Hamburg University and the ministries in charge between 1933 and 1945; these shed valuable light on the restrictions and possibilities for German scholars in the humanities during the years of National Socialism and World War II, and the ways to maneuver them.

Friedrich Kern was born 28 July 1874 in Gleiwitz in Upper Silesia (nowadays Gliwice, in Poland) into a prosperous Jewish family. Though the family is said to have taken pride in the Jewish tradition, the Kern household was apparently not a religious one, nor does Friedrich seem to have received a thorough Jewish education. On 30 December 1894 Kern even converted to Protestantism.

Friedrich's father suffered from poor health, and after he retired, the family moved to Berlin, where Friedrich enrolled in the Joachimsthalsche Gymnasium. At the time of his father's demise in 1890, Friedrich was still a minor. He never married but apparently spent most of his short adult life in the company of his mother.

In the curriculum vitae which is appended to his doctoral dissertation, Kern summarizes his academic formation. He relates that he studied at the Universities of Lausanne, Jena, Berlin, and Leipzig. Between October 1895 and May 1896, even before completing his graduate studies in Europe, Kern spent some time in Cairo. He also provides here a list of his teachers at the various universities he attended, which gives some idea of the wide range of his interests during those years. The list of teachers and their respective disciplines corroborates the

impression of his doctoral advisor, Karl Vollers (b. 1857, d. 1909), that Kern's academic trajectory "was somewhat torn".

Kern submitted his doctoral dissertation to Jena University, which was approved on 8 June 1898. On several occasions, in 1898 and in 1890, Kern spent some time in Budapest, where he studied as a visiting scholar under the tutelage of Goldziher. Kern again spent extended periods of time in Cairo in 1898/99, 1900, 1901, and 1902, and he returned to the city in 1906 and 1907. During his sojourns in Cairo, he prepared an edition of a work on jurisprudence by the famous exegete and historian al-Ṭabarī; delved deeply in the local book market and the manuscript collection of the Khedival Library; and pursued his many other scholarly interests. Since 1902, Kern seems to have spent most of his time in Berlin, although he continued to travel frequently and for extended periods of time, mostly accompanying his mother.

Thanks to the bequest left by his father, Kern had the means to support himself throughout his adult life. There are few indications that he ever sought a paid position, and he apparently had no financial barrier to pursuing his scholarly interests. On the contrary, we learn from his letters that he spent considerable amounts of money on purchasing books and even ordered photographs of manuscript codices whenever he found them relevant for his work, something that was extremely costly and truly exceptional during this period.

Among the many interests Kern pursued was the study of the dogmatic history of Ḥanafism and Māturīdism, a largely neglected field at the time and a difficult one to embark on, in view of the problematic situation of the sources and the thorny question of the authenticity of writings attributed to Abū Ḥanīfa (d. 767), the putative founder of the earliest surviving school of Islamic law, and Abū Maṣṣūr al-Māturīdī (d. 944), the eponymous founder of the Māturīdī school of theology, which developed within Ḥanafism in Transoxania.

The data provided by the register of readers at the Berlin State Library and Kern's correspondence with Goldziher reveal his long and deep involvement in the study of Ḥanafism and Māturīdism and his close familiarity with most relevant sources and the extant manuscripts, in Berlin and beyond. An accomplished philologist with a rigorous historical-critical approach to the sources, Kern began his exploration of Ḥanafism and Māturīdism by focussing on the two eponyms and their writings, attempting to distinguish the authentic from the inauthentic, and advancing over the years towards a fairly nuanced picture of the different strands of thought among Transoxanian scholars both before and after al-Māturīdī.

Since most of his discoveries and observations remained unpublished and were eventually lost, his findings were never consulted by later scholars engaged with the topic. It was only decades later that those conclusions were again reached, but in some respects Kern's findings are still more refined than what is today considered to be the state of the art. The reasons why none of his publication plans came to fruition were manifold. Kern's widespread interest in a vast range of topics and literary traditions was without any doubt one of them. Friedrich Kern passed away on 21 August 1921, at the age of forty-seven.

We are better informed about Rudolf Strothmann, who was born on 4 September 1877 in Lengerich, in North Rhine-Westphalia, into a Lutheran family. Strothmann received his early education in his hometown of Lengerich Wechte, and in July 1897 he received his high school certificate from the Arnoldinum in nearby Steinfurt.

Strothmann embarked on a career as a theologian. In October 1897 he enrolled at Halle University, where he spent four terms. His study programme was that of a typical student of Protestant theology. While in Halle, Strothmann also began to study Hebrew. He spent the academic year 1899/1900 in Bonn, where he continued his formation as a theologian. In addition, he began to delve into Oriental studies, attending some courses in Syriac studies. Strothmann's engagement with both Syriac and Hebrew must have been continuous and intensive, as he became an accomplished Hebraist and Syriacist.

In the autumn of 1902 Strothmann moved to Münster, not far from Lengerich, his birthplace, where he served as a high school teacher until 1907. During his years in Münster, Strothmann continued to attend courses at the local university. Although Semitic languages were not taught there at the time, it is likely that he attended the reading classes in Hebrew and Aramaic.

From October 1907 until 1923, he filled the double post of a senior teacher and a deacon at the prestigious boarding school of Schulpforta in Saxony-Anhalt, which was famed for its classical education.

Strothmann relates on various occasions that it was Carl Brockelmann (b. 1868, d. 1956), author of the renowned *Geschichte der arabischen Litteratur*, who enticed him towards Arabic and Islamic matters. The two had met by pure chance in Warnemünde, a seaside resort on the Baltic Sea near Rostock, possibly in 1903 or 1904. At some point, Brockelmann steered Strothmann's attention towards Zaydī Shī'ism and the impressive collections of Zaydī/Yemeni manuscripts that had recently arrived in Europe. This corpus included the manuscript

collections that had been brought together by Glaser and sold to libraries in Berlin, London, and Vienna, as well as those collected by Caprotti, which were purchased by the Bavarian State Library in Munich (1902) and by the Biblioteca Ambrosiana in Milan (1909 and 1914).

Strothmann primarily worked with the codices held in Berlin, and his first visit to the State Library took place in October 1908. Over the following years, he spent every vacation in Berlin. Detailed information about Strothmann's manuscript work in the State Library can be gleaned from the register of readers of Oriental manuscripts in the Library. Strothmann also had access during those years to some manuscripts held in Leiden, London, Milan, Munich, and Vienna.

The first fruit of Strothmann's endeavor was an extensive historio-bibliographical overview article on Zaydī Shī'ism, which was published in two instalments in the journal *Der Islam*, in 1910 and 1911. His overall aim was to study three main aspects of Zaydism, namely political doctrines, religious practices, and civil law, in order to situate the Zaydiyya between (mainstream) Sunnism on the one hand and Twelver Shī'ism on the other.

On 1 March 1911 Strothmann submitted to Halle University his doctoral dissertation, "Das Staatsrecht der Zaiditen, Kap. 1-3, 3 1", which he had prepared under the supervision of Carl Brockelmann. In 1912, he published *Das Staatsrecht der Zaiditen*, containing his 1911 doctoral dissertation (pp. 1-47) and a completion of the study (pp. 47-109). In the same year, he published a second monograph, on the history of religious practices.

His planned third volume, on civil law, was never published. On 14 March 1911, Strothmann wrote to his Italian colleague Griffini that he had essentially completed the study and that it had been accepted for publication. Strothmann hesitated, however, to go ahead with the finalization and publication of the study, as he had not yet seen the allegedly earliest legal codex, attributed to Zayd b. 'Alī, the eponymous founder of the Zaydiyya, that Griffini intended to publish. Eager to avoid any conflict with him, Strothmann even offered to let go of the project.

Griffini's reply has not come down to us, but there is *no* indication that he encouraged Strothmann to pursue his plans to publish the third volume. Moreover, Strothmann's inquiry a few months later, in a letter dated 19 June 1911, as to whether he might spend his summer vacation of 1911 in Milan to consult the Zayd b. 'Alī codex in the Ambrosiana Library was evidently turned down by Griffini. Apparently the latter planned to spend the summer period outside of Milan, and he seems to have been unwilling to let Strothmann consult any manuscripts without being around himself.



It is interesting to observe that Strothmann, who usually wrote to Griffini in German, addressed him in Italian whenever he sensed that Griffini felt offended, evidently trying to appease him, as was the case with this letter written at the end of June 1911.

After the end of World War I, when Strothmann was able to resume his scholarly work, his plans had apparently shifted in more ways than one. What ultimately prevented him from publishing the third book on Zaydism is unclear. Griffini's edition of the Zayd b. 'Alī legal codex had been published by this time, so that it is unlikely that he opposed Strothmann's plans in any way. It is possible that his project was thwarted by the overall poor economic situation during the 1920s—publishing academic books in Germany during the chaotic period of hyperinflation was largely impossible.

Strothmann now focussed primarily on Twelver Shī'ism, but the lack of sources, and especially the difficulty of accessing lithograph prints of many of the Imāmī classics which had been published since the second half of the nineteenth century in Iran and India, constituted a far greater challenge than that which he had faced with the relevant Zaydī materials. In addition, Strothmann became increasingly interested in another branch of Shī'ism: Ismā'īlism, another topic for which he could initially access only very limited materials.

The difficulties in gaining access to the relevant primary sources seems to have been the principal reason that prompted Strothmann to leave Schulpforta to pursue an academic career, and in 1923 he secured an appointment to the chair for Semitic studies in Gießen.

Strothmann brought together a systematic collection for the study of Twelver Shī'ism, first in Gießen and then in Hamburg, where he taught from 1927 on until his retirement in 1947. His efforts to build up a collection of Shī'ī literature in Hamburg were largely nullified when in July 1943 the entire holdings of the Institute Library of the Department for the History and Culture of the Near East at Hamburg University were destroyed during an Royal Air Force air attack on the city. The manuscript holdings of the Berlin State Library, some of which Strothmann was still able to consult during a brief visit to Berlin in January 1936, were likewise no longer accessible as they were removed from Berlin to protect them during the war.

Strothmann's very first trip to the Middle East had taken place during the spring of 1913, which he spent at the German Protestant Institute of Archeology in Jerusalem. On his way to Jerusalem, Strothmann passed through Milan, where he met Griffini on 24 December 1912 and where he consulted some manuscripts at the Ambrosiana.

Later in his life, Strothmann had further opportunities to spend extended periods of time in the Middle East. In 1929/30 he sojourned for several months in Ṣan‘ā’, Yemen, as a guest of Imām Yaḥyā. Strothmann’s main goal during his visit to Yemen was to establish contact with Ismā‘īlīs in the country and, perhaps more importantly, to gain access to the corpus of some four hundred Ismā‘īlī manuscripts that had been confiscated by Imām Yaḥyā in 1905 and he had learned of through Griffini’s 1915 publication “Die jüngste ambrosianische Sammlung arabischer Handschriften”. The overall outcome of the trip was disappointing. Strothmann was granted access to only one work held in the Imām’s library, namely the *Kitāb Qawā‘id ‘aḳā‘id āl Muḥammad* by the Zaydī author Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Daylamī (d. 1311–12). He presented a first report on the book’s anti-Ismā‘īlī section at the seventh Deutscher Orientalistentag in Bonn (1934) and then published a critical edition of this part of the book in 1939.

In March 1939 Strothmann submitted a request for permission and financial support for yet another extended trip to the Middle East during the winter term 1939/40. Although his request was initially granted, the trip did not materialize in view of the outbreak of World War II on 1 September 1939. Strothmann had planned to visit Iraq, Syria, Palestine, and Istanbul; the objectives he had hoped to pursue during the trip provide insights into his scholarly interests during the time.

Strothmann’s last recorded trip to the Middle East took place in 1952. His destination was Lebanon and Syria, where he sought to converse with Nuṣayrīs, an offshoot of Ismā‘īlism, Strothmann’s principal focus during this time.

In view of his pioneering work on the Ismā‘īliyya, Strothmann’s scholarship came to attention of the scholarly circle of Wladimir Ivanow (b. 1886, d. 1970), arguably the most important scholar of Ismā‘īlism since the early 1920s, and Asaf A. A. Fyzee (b. 1899, d. 1981), who were based in Bombay and closely collaborated to further the historical text-critical study of Ismā‘īlism under the patronage of the Āghā Khān III, Sir Sulṭān Muḥammad Shāh (b. 1877, d. 1957), the 47th Imām of the Nizārī Ismā‘īlīs. In 1933 they founded the Islamic Research Association, and in April 1935 they honored Strothmann with an appointment as corresponding member of the association.

Strothmann felt obliged to publish a book with the association. In summer 1939, he completed his edition of the *K. al-Kashf*, attributed to al-Dā‘ī Ja‘far b. Manṣūr al-Yaman, which he dispatched to Bombay. The publication turned into a nightmare: With the outbreak of World

War II, postal service between Germany and India came to a halt, and this situation continued throughout World War II. For years Strothmann was left in the dark as to the publication progress. When the book was eventually published in 1952, Strothmann's introduction was completely outdated, and he had never received any proofs before publication.

Rudolf Strothmann's academic career was marked by several turns and ruptures. The most important was no doubt his appointment to a faculty position at Gießen University in 1923, which allowed him to abandon his earlier career as a high school teacher and deacon at Pforta and to focus henceforth exclusively on Oriental studies. Strothmann's 1927 appointment at Hamburg University was another important career step, as it also made him editor of *Der Islam*, arguably one of the most important journals for German Arabists and Islamicists during the two decades of Strothmann's editorship. Strothmann's scholarly trajectory over the course of its five decades reflects his shifting interests, beginning with his early interest in Zaydism, which subsequently led him to delve into Twelver Shī'ism, and then his evolving preoccupation with Ismā'īlism. In parallel, Strothmann was also deeply involved in the history of Eastern Christianity and the Church of the East, and whenever he had the chance he was an avid observer of the contemporary Middle East and of Islam as a living religion and culture. This diversity of interests coexisted with continuity in his scholarship, which moved organically in new directions whenever new material came to his attention. Moreover, Strothmann's focus on the "fringes" of Islamic civilization was a conscious decision, as he wrote in his programmatic article of 1938, "On the History of Islamic Heresiography".

The continuity of Strothmann's scholarly trajectory is all the more remarkable as his research was conducted under difficult circumstances. During the first decade and a half, at Schulpforta, Strothmann worked under extreme time constraints, and he also had restricted access to scholarly literature and primary sources. The closest comprehensive library for printed materials was that of the Deutsche Morgenländische Gesellschaft in Halle, and the closest manuscript depository was the Berlin State Library. World War I caused another interruption to Strothmann's research. During the first years of the war, he continued to work in his position at Pforta. From February 1917 onwards, he served as military chaplain on the Western front, and he was released from military service to return to Pforta on 13 December 1918. Although Strothmann was able to spend about a month in Berlin to pursue his studies at the beginning of 1917, he notes in one of his letters that his scholarly work came to a halt during World War I. This is corroborated by his publication history: after his "Analecta haeretica", published in 1913, nothing appeared in print until 1921, when Strothmann's review of van

Arendonk's *De opkomst van het Zaidietische Imamaat in Yemen* was published. Most of what he wrote during the early years of the war was never published and is probably lost. World War II proved even more devastating, as it led to the complete destruction of both Strothmann's personal papers and books and the library of Hamburg University.

If I were to summarize:

Strothmann's trajectory and his single-handed opening up the world of Shī'ism and its three main strands to Western scholarship, and this under extremely difficult circumstances, is admirable. That his work is largely forgotten and for the most part ignored by contemporary scholars is entirely unjustified. Moreover, in view of the vicissitudes of his life, one cannot imagine how much more he would have been able to achieve otherwise.

The case of Friedrich Kern is tragic, as next to none of his findings were ever published. Most of what he saw at the time was „discovered“ only decades later, and in no case was anyone aware of his earlier finds, which can be reconstructed only through his letters. Moreover, some of the later discoveries seem questionable in view of Kern's earlier findings and should be reconsidered. The case of Kern is a telling example that much of what is perceived as „progress“ in scholarship is no progress at all, but often just a rediscovery what earlier, long forgotten scholars had already found out.