

philosophers
below

FRIENDSHIP

"One's life has value so long as one attributes value to the life of others, by means of love, friendship, indignation and compassion" Simone de Beauvoir, *The Coming of Age*, 1970.

Friendship, a crucial element of human ethics, has fascinated philosophers, artists, and writers in many cultures for thousands of years. Countless poems, texts, and artworks praise the deep-rooted relationship between humans as a rare and precious gift. Thinkers as far back as the ancient philosopher Aristotle have tried to define what friendship means and why it is so important for human beings. Famous friendships abound throughout nearly all phases of world literature: David and Jonathan in the Bible, Achilles and Patroclus in Homer's *Iliad*, and Shakespeare's Hamlet and Horatio, to name but a few.

While philosophers opine on the theories of friendship and writers depict great relationships, archival materials provide us with an intimate glimpse into the real-life connections between friends. This is often witnessed in the exchange of letters written to bridge a physical distance and to keep one another informed and connected. Of course, friends do not necessarily agree on all aspects of life, and letters sometimes express differences and debates, ultimately proving how resilient friendships can be. The very preservation of letters as precious memorabilia attests to the esteem in which we hold our friendships. Hiding letters with delicate contents was also a sign of good friendship when the information included in them could do harm to the senders.

Keeping a friend's memory alive has often led authors to write about their life and work. The French philosopher Michel de Montaigne did so in the sixteenth century, and many others followed suit, writing biographies, interpretations of the deceased's scriptures or ideas, poems, and other kinds of literary expression that could introduce their deceased friend posthumously to new readers. However, these authors often idealized the legacy of their dead friends and thus were not always able to depict them objectively. Later authors thus sometimes tried to correct

ideal-
ized
above



Fragments of our Shaikh

Ahmad Ibn Taymiyyah,

Three Epistles, 14th century

RAQUEL UKELES

On May 1, 1328, the Mamluk Sultan al-Nasir confiscated Ahmad Ibn Taymiyyah's pen and paper. The exasperated sultan had already put the brilliant and contentious jurist behind bars; without his writing tools, the ruler hoped that Ibn Taymiyyah's inflammatory treatises would finally cease.

Ibn Taymiyyah (1263-1328) is known today as the intellectual forebear of a widespread, particularly conservative interpretation of Islam. However, during his lifetime, he was often on the political and religious margins. His unrelenting criticism of religious leaders who strayed from his understanding of Islamic norms alternately pleased and infuriated the Muslim rulers of late medieval Damascus and Cairo, and Ibn Taymiyyah thus spent a fair proportion of his adult life in jail.

The historical chronicles report that Ibn Taymiyyah was able to endure years in prison as long as he had writing instruments; once the authorities had taken these away, he died within a few months. When his disciples learned of his passing, they rushed to his cell, gathered up thousands of his scattered papers, and spent the ensuing years sorting them into treatises. The youngest of these disciples, Shams al-Din ibn Muhibb, the "Silent One," copied many of these treatises by hand, including the fourteenth-century manuscript shown here. A parenthetical remark by ibn Muhibb at the end of the first treatise gives us a glimpse into the desperate effort to preserve his teacher's writings, however incomplete: "and this is all that I found in the handwriting of our Shaikh, may God have mercy on him."

This manuscript includes a unique and previously unknown copy of a treatise by Ibn Taymiyyah on the eternality of the world, in which he outlines a surprisingly nuanced position, balancing God's eternality and the creation of the world.

#1

Ahmad Ibn Taymiyyah, **Three Epistles**, prior to 1387.

Right: Ownership notes on the opening page indicate that the manuscript was cherished by generations of scholars in Ibn Taymiyyah's Hanbali legal school

from the time it was first copied in the late ~~14th~~ century in Damascus until the ~~18th~~ century, folio 1r. Following page 4. Opening folio of the first epistle, "On the Matter of Whether the World is Created," folios 1v2r. The Abraham Shalom Yahuda Collection. Ms. Yah. Ar. 57.

#1 (?) **not a title but descriptive**

fourteenth / eighteenth

#2



How to Run a Muslim Empire

Abu'l-Fazl 'Allami, The Administration of Akbar, 18th century

SAMUEL THROPE

Abu'l-Fazl 'Allami (1551-1602) was the chief adviser, official historian, and articulate spokesperson of the greatest Mughal Indian emperor, Akbar I (1542-1605), as well as his closest friend.

The two were opposites in many ways. 'Allami devoted himself to study, particularly philosophy and Sufism, from an early age. Akbar, a descendant of the Mongol Emperor Chinggis Khan, ascended the throne at the age of thirteen. He spent the early years of his reign consolidating Mughal rule in India and expanding the empire, which left little time for formal education. Some contend that he never even learned to read.

However, mutual interests and shared animosities brought the two together. 'Allami's father, the Sufi Sheikh Mubarak, had been falsely accused of heresy by the official religious establishment, and 'Allami carried a lifelong grievance against its members. Akbar, for his part, sought to reduce the power of the orthodox legal authorities. In addition, his lack of schooling notwithstanding, Akbar was intellectually curious and collected a vast library from which he had volumes read to him each day.

During his thirty-year court service, 'Allami gave substance to Akbar's guiding vision, namely to create a just and peaceful society in which the Hindu population could participate on equal terms with the ruling Muslim minority. This is best seen in 'Allami's most important work, the *Book of Akbar* (*Akbar-nama*). Begun in 1590, the first two volumes are a critical record of Mughal history, providing Akbar's detailed horoscope and genealogy and a year-by-year chronicle of his reign. The third volume, known as the *Administration of Akbar* (*Ain-i Akbari*), stands alone as a detailed description of the empire and its inhabitants, covering its administration, coinage, military, crops, taxation, geography, ethnography, and religion (especially Hinduism).

Emperor Akbar ensconced in a halo and seated on an elephant. Abu'l-Fazl 'Allami, *The Administration of Akbar* (*Ain-i Akbari*) India, 16th century. The Abraham Shalom Yehuda Collection. Ms. Yah. Ar. 1063v folio 43v

see p. 214 for position of folio

eighteenth / 18

sp. hygiene in text + caption

18

41/41

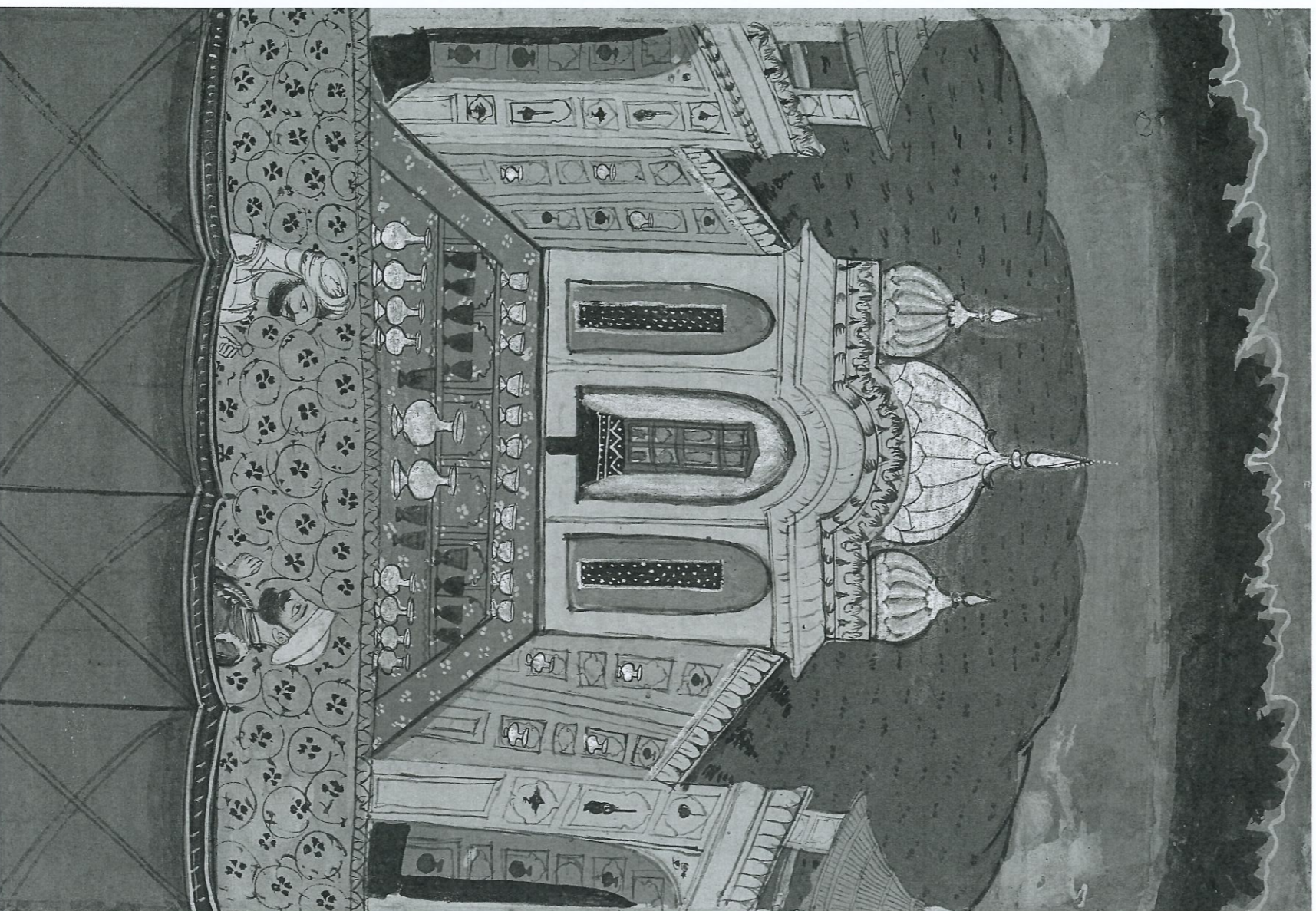


Below /

Left: The perfume makers' workshop, folio 62r.

Right: A display of royal jewelry, with descriptions in Persian and marginal notes in Persian and Sanskrit, folio 274r. Abu'l-Fazl 'Allami, *The Administration of Akbar* (A'in-i Akbari) India, 16th century. The Abraham Shalom Yahuda Collection. Ms. Yah. Ar. 1063.

eighteenth /



On the Road With Mozart

Mozart's Letter to ~~His~~ ~~Wife~~, ~~£/~~ Constanze, 1790

YEHUDA ROMEM

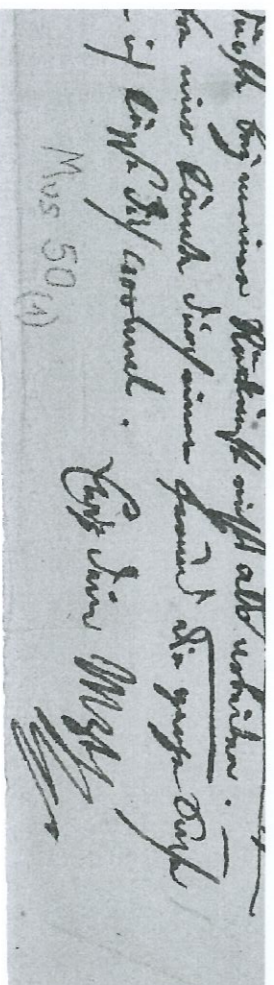
In the autumn of 1790, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756–1791) undertook a journey to Frankfurt am Main to participate in the coronation of Leopold II as Holy Roman Emperor. According to an early biographer, Mozart, who was accompanied by his brother-in-law, Franz de Paula Hofer, had to pawn some of his wife's valuables to finance the trip; he was not a part of the official group of court musicians, which included, among others, the composers Antonio Salieri and Ignaz Umlauf.

In a letter preserved in the National Library, Mozart describes his six-day journey to his wife, Constanze (née Weber). He mentions the cities visited en route to Frankfurt and then asks for reassuring news from his wife:

In Regensburg, we dined magnificently at midday, had divine table music, angelic service, and a magnificent Mosel wine. We had breakfast in Nuremberg—an ugly town. In Würzburg, we strengthened our precious stomachs with coffee, a beautiful, magnificent town.

I am waiting longingly for news from you, about your health, about our circumstances, etc. Now I am firmly resolved to carry out my business here as well as possible and then I look forward with all my heart to being with you again. What a wonderful life we are going to lead!

Yet, despite Mozart's great anticipation, the visit to Frankfurt proved barely profitable; after his concert, which took place on September 15, Mozart wrote to Constanze that it "turned out magnificently from the point of view of honor, but lean as far as money is concerned."



Right: Autograph letter by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart to Constanze Mozart, Frankfurt am Main, September 28, 1790.
Left: Closeup of Mozart's concluding words: "Adieu, kiss you 1000 times. Eternally yours, Mzt."
The Alex Cohen Collection, Mus. 50 (1).

3 dots elsewhere

21

style for displayed quotes? see previous query

M/21

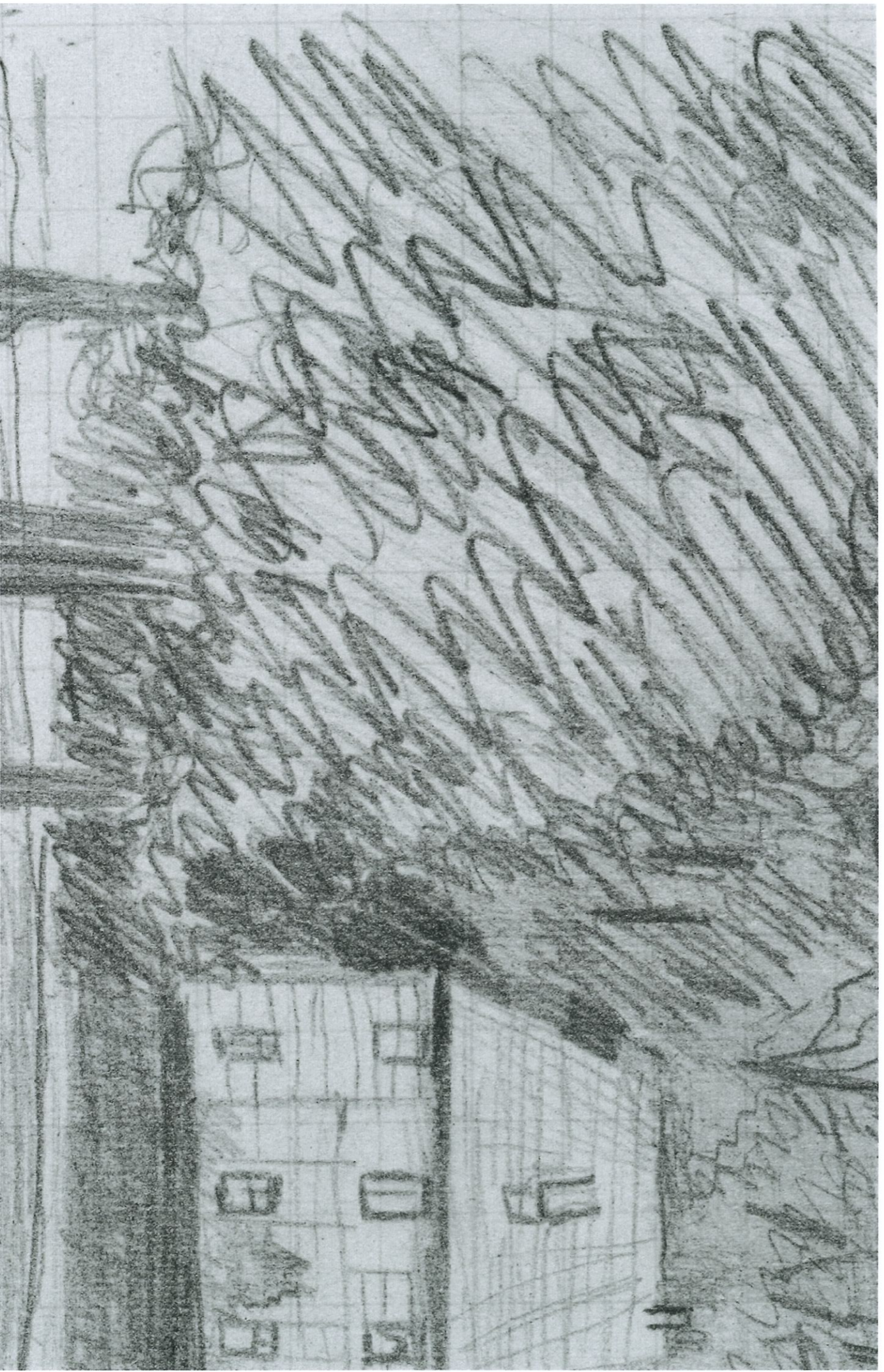
Franz Before Kafka

The Max Brod and Franz Kafka Archive, 20th century

STEFAN LITT

In July 2019, representatives of the National Library obtained permission to open a number of Swiss bank vaults and transfer their contents to Jerusalem. One of these included hundreds of letters and drawings and some manuscripts by Franz Kafka, one of the key figures of twentieth-century world literature. The story of these rare items began almost ~~100~~ ^{one hundred} years earlier, soon after the untimely death of the author.

Kafka (1883-1924) was born to an assimilated Jewish family in Prague, then one of the most important cities in the Austro-Hungarian Empire. He studied law at the German University in Prague, where he met the writer Max Brod (1884-1968), who would become his close friend. Kafka developed an intense interest in literature and philosophy and started writing his own works. Skeptical of their literary value, he hesitated to publish his



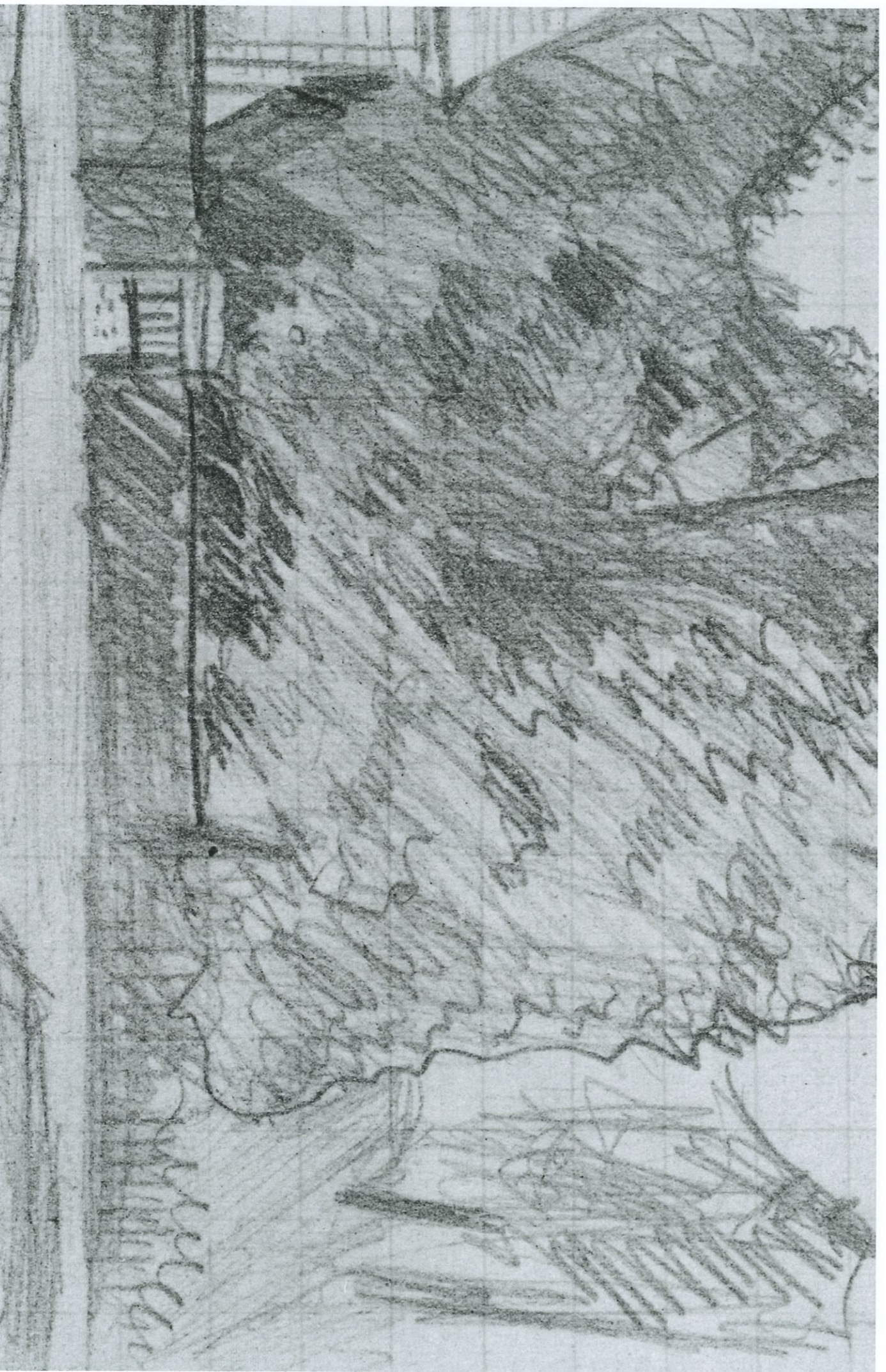
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across the image

writings and thus received little recognition as a literary figure during his lifetime. It is thanks to Max Brod, who encouraged his friend to complete and publish his works, that Kafka's writing entered the canon of world literature.

In 1921 and 1922, Kafka wrote two notes to Brod asking that all his manuscripts, paintings, and letters be destroyed after his death. In defiance of this clear directive, after Kafka's early death from tuberculosis, Brod collected all of Kafka's works from their various locations, examined them, and began to publish them. The three unfinished novels, *The Trial*, *America*, and *The Castle*, are among the most well-known of these works. Brod took all of Kafka's writings with him when he fled his native Czechoslovakia for Palestine in March 1939.

In the early 1960s, Brod returned a large number of the writings to Kafka's surviving heirs. However, he retained hundreds of letters, several short manuscripts, some Hebrew exercises, and many drawings, which comprise a significant part of Kafka's literary legacy. After editing them, Brod deposited these precious items in a Swiss bank, regarding it as one of the safest places on earth. Following a long legal battle over rightful ownership that ended only in 2019, Brod's extensive personal archive, which included Kafka's works, was deposited in the National Library. These works represent the third largest collection of original materials by Franz Kafka in the world.

Max Brod, *Travel Diary*, Weimar, Germany, 1912. Max Brod's pencil drawing of Johann Wolfgang Goethe's garden cottage in Weimar. During their visit to the town, Brod and Kafka both drew the same cottage in their travel diaries (see next page). Max Brod Archive. ARC. 4° 2000 1 12, folio 127



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(10)

219

CM

DATE p. 218

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Winter meinen Mitschülern war ich
 dumm, doch nicht der dümmste.
 Und wenn trotzdem das bessere
 von mir gegen meiner Lehrer meinen
 Eltern und gegenüber nicht
 stehen behauptet werden ist es
 haben sie es nur in dem Maße
 wieder lernte optam, welche Gedanken,
 sie hätten die höchste Welt erreicht
 wenn sie in es öngestrichen Anteil
 weagen. *Wichtig* *wirklich*
 dass ich aber dumm sein
 konnte man allgemein und
 man hatte gute Gründe dafür,
 die ~~welt~~ leicht mitteilt werden
 konnten wenn vielleicht ein Fremder
 über mich zu belehren war, der
 anderen können nicht helfen ein-

#1/1

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91 #1 91

Top left: Franz Kafka, Blue Notebook,
 Prague, 1920. Kafka's Hebrew
 exercises during his studies with
 Puh Ben-Tovim. The Hebrew
 vocabulary and short texts show
 Kafka's advanced Hebrew level. The
 left page of the spread is a personal
 and humorous note to his teacher,
 signed "K." Max Brod Archive/ARC.
 4° 2000 5 34. Folios 14v-15r

Bottom left: Kafka's drawing of
 Goethe's garden cottage, Weimar,
 Germany, 1912. Kafka's pencil
 drawing made during his visit with
 Brod to the town. They both drew the
 same cottage in their travel diaries
 (see previous page). ARC. 4° 2000
 5 85.

Right: Kafka, Autobiographical
 sketch, Prague, 1909. First page of
 an untitled autograph starting with
 Kafka's typical self-deprecation:
 "Among my classmates I was
 stupid, but not the stupidest." The
 fragmentary text comprises six
 sheets. ARC. 4° 2000 5 10. Folios 1r



Friendship over Politics

Letter from David Ben-Gurion to Uri Zvi Greenberg, 1927

YARON SACHISH

Shut away in his hotel room during a trip to Europe in October 1927, David Ben-Gurion (1886–1973) described his mood in a letter to the poet Uri Zvi Greenberg (1896–1981):

Imprisoned in a room, listening all day to the incessant patter of the raindrops, melancholy and lonely, as if left all alone in a cold, silent, diaspora...I wanted to reach out to you from afar, with an expression of gratitude, because in reading your notes, I wondered hopefully: Perhaps this is the man who will sing to us man's song on earth. Yours, B.G.

Ben-Gurion, then leader of the Labor movement, would go on to become the first prime minister of the State of Israel. Greenberg, who would later be recognized as one of the greatest Jewish poets of the twentieth century, disengaged from the Labor movement, switching over to the political right and becoming one of its sharpest voices. Greenberg blamed the leadership of the Labor movement for losing sight of the vision of the pioneers. He also accused them, after the 1929

riots and the Hebron massacre, of treason, cowardice, and collaboration with the British rule.

However, dozens of letters between the two in the National Library's Uri Zvi Greenberg Archive attest to their ongoing closeness and affinity. The political rift did not lead to a rupture in the two men's lifelong friendship. While Prime Minister Ben-Gurion enjoyed maligning members of the right-wing Herut Party, he never attacked Greenberg, who was its representative in the first Knesset. Greenberg himself always respected the prime minister, even if he disagreed with him, and continued regarding him as the only individual fit to lead the nation.

In his diary, Ben-Gurion noted a meeting with Greenberg on August 24, 1965. Worried by the look on the poet's gaunt face, he gave him a check for 2000 lird (equivalent to \$6500 today) from his private account. Greenberg, wishing to preserve his independence, never cashed the check, which remains untouched in the archives.

style for displayed quotes?

1927? see letter

Left: Letter from David Ben-Gurion, then leader of the Labor Movement, to Uri Zvi Greenberg, France, October 23, 1929.
 Right: Check for 2,000 Israeli lird given by former Prime Minister Ben-Gurion to Greenberg, Israel, 1965. The Uri Zvi Greenberg Archive.
 ARC. 4* 1553 01 211.1.



The Last Poem

Rachel the Poet, "My Dead," 1931

HEZI AMIUR

The poet Rachel Bluwstein (1890–1931), so famous among Israelis that she is known simply as "Rachel," died before her forty-first birthday. Upon her death, she left behind a note with six lines of verse. This final poem, "My Dead," was about the loneliness she had experienced in her last years and her strength in the face of impending death.

Following Rachel's funeral on the banks of the Kinneret, her friend Zalman Shazar, who later became president of Israel, went to her apartment in Tel Aviv, where he discovered this poem on her desk. Struck by the poem's uniqueness, he published it and then sent it to the National Library along with several other manuscripts.

Shazar was largely responsible for publishing Rachel's poetry during her lifetime. He encouraged her to submit poems for him to publish in the *Davar* newspaper, and when she refused to write anything new, he chose poems from her notebooks.

Rachel rarely titled her poems, but at the top of "My Dead" she wrote, "Only the dead will not die," a quote from the Hebrew writer Yodkov Shalom Katznelbogen. Shazar was well acquainted with this quote as Katznelbogen had been his beloved private tutor as a child. Katznelbogen drowned in Switzerland at a relatively young age, and his literary output had sunk into oblivion. A year before her death, Shazar had sat with Rachel looking out at the sea in Tel Aviv and quoted Katznelbogen's writings to her. These words seem to have become imprinted on Rachel's mind, helping her come to terms with the meaning of life and death—the subject of her last poem.

Katznelbogen was the teacher who had introduced Shazar to the world of Hebrew literature; Shazar was the editor who introduced Rachel into the canon of Hebrew literature; and Rachel was the poet who ensured a legacy for that otherwise forgotten Hebrew writer.



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= M = /

Rachel Bluwstein, "My Dead" (Metraj),
Tel Aviv, 1931. The last poem written
by the poet known as "Rachel," as it
was found by Zalman Shazar on her
desk the day she died. Schwad 01
02 146.

היא ?

The Correspondence of a Cosmopolitan

The Stefan Zweig Collection,

1900-~~19~~42

STEFAN LITT

The renowned Austrian Jewish author Stefan Zweig (1881-1942) was famous for his rich literary oeuvre, his pacifism, and his skepticism toward all forms of nationalism, including the Zionist movement. Despite his close relationship with leading Zionist figures, such as Theodor Herzl and Martin Buber, Zweig openly expressed a different view on the historical task of Judaism; namely, to live among all peoples and serve as a unifying element. For him, the Diaspora was the ideal form of Jewish life, with Jews dispersed over many countries, being at home everywhere and nowhere at the same time, and connected to each other solely by tradition and spiritual ties.

Zweig lived in Salzburg for many years, where he accumulated a rich private library, a one-of-a-kind autograph collection, and an extensive correspondence with his famous contemporaries. After the Nazis rose to power in Germany in 1933, he anticipated that Austria would soon fall into their hands and, with plans to flee from continental Europe, gave away large parts of his collections. Despite his opinions on Zionism, he never visited the Land of Israel. Zweig offered hundreds of letters from his personal archive to the National Library, the last place anyone would expect to find any of his papers. It seems that he was eager to hide some of them away in order to protect the authors, including figures such as Albert Einstein, Sigmund Freud, Thomas Mann, Romain Rolland, and many others.

This remains the only important donation Stefan Zweig ever made to a public institution. It significantly boosted the international status of the National Library's archival collections and has been in intensive use by scholars ever since.



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בית הספרים הלאומי והאוניברסיטאי, ירושלים
JEWISH NATIONAL AND UNIVERSITY LIBRARY, JERUSALEM

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57/91

Wooden lid of a box containing letters sent to Stefan Zweig, 1933-1934. The red remnants of wax seals prove that the former library director Hugo Bergmann complied with Zweig's demand to embargo the materials until ten years after the author's passing. The Hebrew remarks in Bergmann's handwriting also refer to the author's demand. ARC. 4° 793 05 293.

410?

HÔTEL EDLACHERHOF

* * * * * IN EDLACH, N.Ö. * * * * *

Sidbahnstation Payerbach-Reichenau.

Telegramm-Adresse:
EDLACHERHOF, EDLACH.

INTERURBAN, TELEPHON
Edlach Nr. 1.

K. k. Post- und Telegraphen-Amt Edlach.

Edlachhof, 2 Nov 1903

Mein lieber Freund,
wie ping sind Sie! Du schreibst
oben Ihren Brief präzis, damit
Sie ihn in 20 Jahren empfangt
wiederlesen. Vamentliche das
Bergmannes der schönen Frau wird
oben dann viel Freude machen.
Gegen solche Frauen ist man
nicht stoll.
Für solche Arbeit: ich bin schon
rest einigset Zeit aus Krankheiten
Familienangelegenheiten -
etc. - nun nicht, wenn ich
mein Werk nicht, warum
miederzukommen. Reklamieren
Sie direkt bei der Redaktion,
meine Sympathien haben Sie
nicht verloren, brauche solche,
im Gegenteil.
Mit den besten Grüßen
Ihr
Herzl

ARC. Ms. Var. 305/40

40

07

data okay?
see p 221
caption -
should be
1952?

Left: A letter from Zweig to National Library director/Hugo Bergmann, Salzburg, 1933. In the letter, Zweig offers Bergmann a significant part of his correspondence, including many letters of famous international contemporaries. In 1934 and 1935, the donation arrived in Jerusalem and was sealed until its opening in 1958. Stefan Zweig Collection. ARC. Ms. Var. 305 1131.

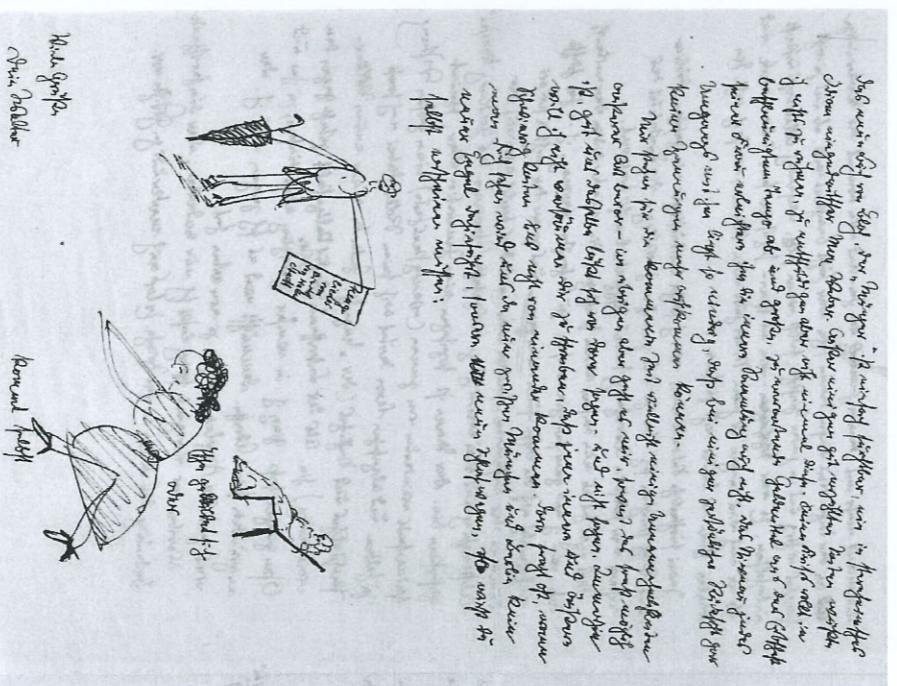
Right: Letter by Theodor Herzl to Zweig. As an influential playwright and literary critic, Herzl identified Zweig's literary talent and supported him from an early stage. The Stefan Zweig Collection. ARC. Ms. Var. 305 140.

not above

Some geniuses experience the bitter fate of not earning adequate attention during their lifetime. The now internationally renowned philosopher and essayist Walter Benjamin (1892–1940) was one such genius, with most of his contemporaries unable to understand his innovative interpretations of human society. Benjamin depended heavily on his friends, who included the philosophers Hannah Arendt and Theodor W. Adorno, the poet and playwright Bertolt Brecht, and the scholar of Jewish mysticism, Gershom Scholem. Forced to leave Germany even before the Nazis came to power and then driven out of France, where he had spent several years in exile, Benjamin committed suicide on the French-Spanish border in 1940 during an attempt to leave for the United States.

Despite his lack of recognition by contemporary philosophers, Benjamin had faith in his own ideas and carefully preserved his writings. Thanks to his friends, most of Benjamin's writings survived in Europe after his death. In Palestine, even during Benjamin's lifetime, his close friend Gershom Scholem collected manuscripts, letters, photographs, and other materials related to Benjamin's life and thought in his private "Benjaminiana" collection. After Benjamin's death, Scholem continued to amass more documents, creating a diverse collection covering many aspects of Benjamin's intellectual and private life. This collection enabled Scholem, together with Adorno, to make the first steps in publishing Benjamin's letters and writings since the 1950s, thus finally giving Benjamin's ideas fitting worldwide attention.

Benjamin's papers arrived at the National Library in 1984 with the transfer of Scholem's private collection. The hundreds of letters and rare manuscripts are a testament to the remarkable friendship between two of the most important thinkers of the twentieth century.



Left: Walter Benjamin (Notes, 1928). This opening of Benjamin's parchment notebook presents notes made about, among other things, the role of movies in European society of the late 1920s; the notes also offer insight into the philosopher's personal network of friends. The scheme on the right page visualizes several groups of friends with whom Benjamin had contact. Among the names: Gerhard (Gershom) Scholem and his wife Escha. The Walter Benjamin Collection. ARC. 4° 1598 04 75.

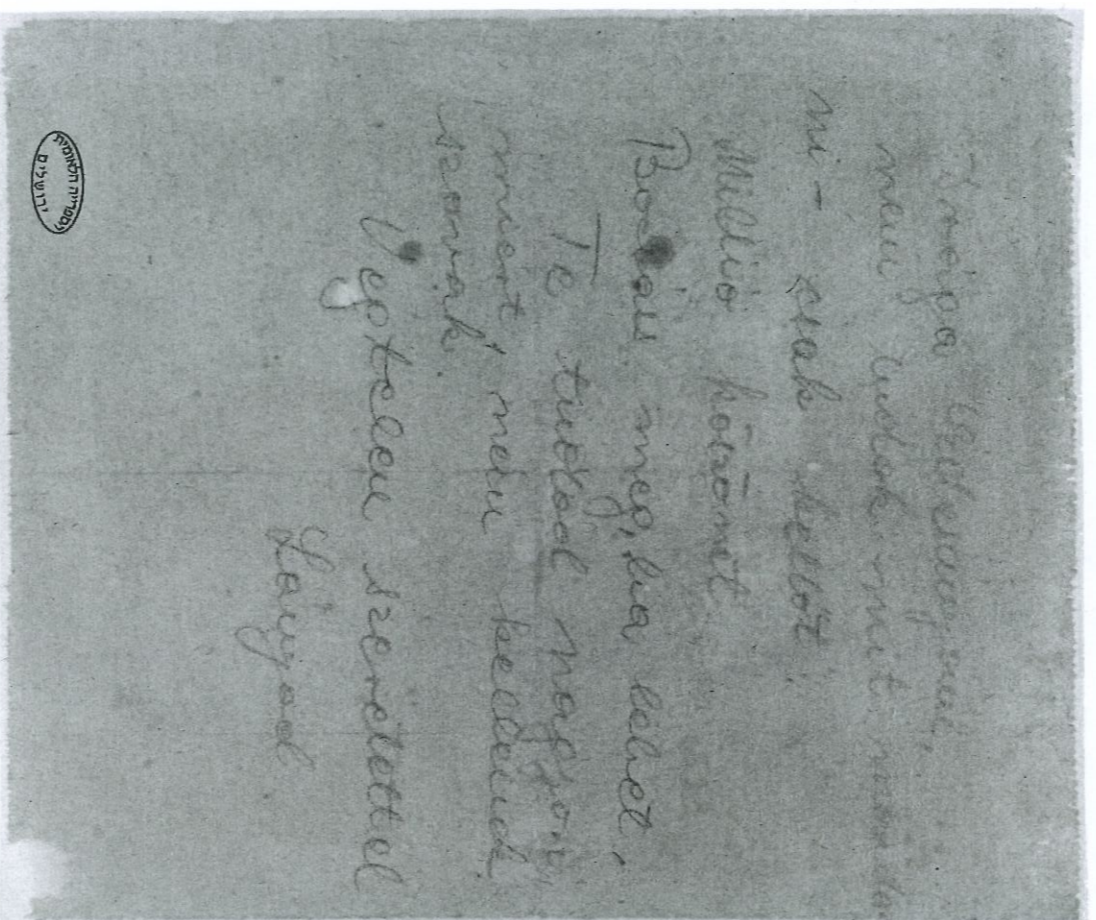
Right: Letter from Walter and Dora Benjamin to Scholem, Berlin, 1921. A drawing by Benjamin related to artist Paul Klee's work *Angelus Novus*, which had been acquired by Benjamin shortly beforehand. The lower figure shows Scholem's girlfriend Escha Burchardt as the angel. In Klee's drawing. ARC. 4° 1598 03 64.

Beyond Heroism

Hannah Szenes' Last Note, 1944

HAGIT ZIMRONI

2/SL
hastily
opposite



“My dear, beloved mother,” wrote Hannah Szenes on November 7, 1944, from her jail cell in Budapest. “I have no words. All I can say to you is a million thanks. Forgive me if you can. You alone will understand why there is no need for words. With endless love, your daughter.” These words were scribbled hastily, shortly before Hannah was executed by a firing squad.

A few days later, Katherina Szenes received her daughter's belongings from the Hungarian police and found the note that Hannah had tucked into the pocket of her dress alongside a scrap of paper containing the last poem she wrote. Katherina brought her last letters from Hannah and the rest of her daughter's belongings with her when she immigrated to Israel a year later. This archive, along with Hannah Szenes' personal items that had been left in Kibbutz Sdot Yam after she departed on her mission to Europe, were transferred to the National Library on the centenary of her birth.

The archive reveals her close relationship with her mother, especially after Hannah immigrated to the Land of Israel in 1939. In a letter from this period, Hannah describes her experiences, first at the agricultural school in Nahalal and later at Sdot Yam. In her diaries, she expresses her feelings of guilt and anxiety over the fate of her mother, left all alone in Budapest. Her concern for her mother's welfare was one of the motivations behind her decision to embark on a parachuting mission in occupied Europe. Hannah's last note, written after their final meeting in a Budapest jail, offers a moving testament to the love and care between mother and daughter as well as to their indomitable strength of spirit.

Above

Left: Note written by Szenes to her mother on the day Szenes was executed in a Budapest jail, November 17, 1944. The Szenes Family Archive. Courtesy: Ori and Mirit Eisen. The Szenes Family Archive. Donated by Ori and Mirit Eisen. ARC. 4° 2091 04 03 01.

Opposite

Bottom right: Szenes' diary, November 1942–February 1943, pages 54–55. The diary includes drafts of two poems, including “A Walk to Caesarea” (*Halikhah le-Kesariyah*). One of her best-known works. ARC. 4° 2091 04 02 04.

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SL

Elegy for the Thirty-Five

Haim Gouri, "Here Lie Our Bodies," 1948

NATI GABBAY

On the evening of January 15, 1948, a group of thirty-five fighters from the Palmach and the Hagannah set out to deliver supplies and ammunition to the blockaded Gush Etzion. The commander of this Mountain Platoon was Danny Mass. The platoon was discovered before dawn and besieged by masses of local Arabs. All its members were killed.

At that time, the poet Haim Gouri (1923-2018) had been sent to Europe to help promote illegal immigration to pre-State Palestine, train immigrants to join the Jewish defense forces, and procure weapons and military equipment. One morning, while helping Hungarian Holocaust survivors in Vienna, he came across an American military newspaper and read about the fate of the Mountain Platoon.

Two weeks later, in his rented room in Budapest, Gouri read through letters and newspapers that had arrived from Tel Aviv in his absence. Confronted by the list of the thirty-five casualties, his friend Danny Mass among them, the poet sat down at his typewriter and composed an elegy written in the voice of "The Thirty-Five," as they came to be known. In a moment of sadness and frustration, he threw the page into the charcoal stove across the room.

The following day, his landlady handed him the crumpled sheet of paper that she had retrieved from the bottom of the stove. She explained that her late husband had been a writer and she was familiar with poets and their tendency to regret destroying their work in a fit of frenzy. Gouri looked over the words he had written, made a few revisions, and sent the poem to Tel Aviv, where it was published two months after the death of the Thirty-Five. The poem "Here Lie Our Bodies" has, ever since, been a cornerstone of Israeli cultural memory.



~~thirty-five~~

Haim Gouri's draft of "Here Lie Our Bodies" (*Hineh mutatot gufotenu*). His poem in memory of the ~~35~~ soldiers who fell on their way to Gush Etzion during Israel's War of Independence, January 1948. The Haim Gouri Archive. ARC. 4* 1813 07 91.

45?