

Correspondence between H. H. Wilson and Hammer-Purgstall: Scholars of Two Empires

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I

In the history of mankind, several empires emerged, strongly established their hegemony, ruled over a vast areas of the world, profoundly influenced almost every aspect of life of the people but ultimately after a lapse of time collapsed and became a part of history. In our recent past, two such big empires existed: one was British Power which captured the vast regions of the world including South Asian subcontinent where it is commonly said, sunset never occurred, and the Austro-Hungarian Empire¹ which geographically had no comparison with the British Power as a few countries of eastern Europe like Hungary, Poland, Ukraine etc. were under her sway. Despite all such differences of subjugated areas and preponderating influences, there was one such domain where they were very close with each other and that was a vast range of scholarship in which the eminent scientists, orientalists and Indologists of these Powers maintained the close relationship and exchanged the information about their works including in-hand projects and other academic activities of the various institutions and societies, established by the respective governments. Many scholars were taking part in establishing such friendly relations but here only two prodigious scholars are going to be referred and those are Joseph von Hammer-Purgstall (Vienna), and H. H. Wilson (London) who corresponded with each other and contributed to promote the orientalism in the first half of the nineteenth century.

First of all their brief life sketches are as under:

* Former Director, Urdu Science Board, Lahore

Horace Hayman Wilson (16.9.1786-8.5.1860)

Educated in Soho Square, London and at St. Thomas's Hospital; arrived in Calcutta (now Kolkutta) in 1808, in the medical service of the East India Company: was at once attached to the Mint at Calcutta, for his knowledge of chemistry and assay; was Secretary to the Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1811-1833, with short intervals. He studied Sanskrit steadily and translated the *Meghaduta* of Kalidasa in 1813. In 1816 he was appointed Assay-master of the Calcutta mint, and held the appointment until he left India in 1832.

He published the *Theatre of the Hindus* and Sanskrit-English dictionary (two editions), besides contributing to *Asiatic Researches*, the Journals of the Asiatic, Medical and Physical Societies, and other Oriental Literature. He wrote an *Historical Account of the Burmese War*; catalogued Col. Colin Mackenzie's Mss.: was Secretary to the Committee of Public Instruction, introducing the study of European Science and English Literature into native-education; and was visitor to the Sanskrit College. He became Boden Professor of Sanskrit at Oxford in 1833, Hon. M.A. at Exeter College: Librarian of the India House in 1836, Examiner at Haileybury, and Director of the Royal Asiatic Society from 1837 till his death: F.R.S., 1834. He continued his labours on Indian subjects, publishing the *Vishnu Purana*; *Lectures on the Religious and Philosophical Systems of the Hindus*, 1840; a Sanskrit grammar; the *Ariana Antiqua*; (A Descriptive Account of the Antiquities and Coins of Afghanistan, with a memoir on the buildings called Topes, by C. Masson by H. H. Wilson, Repr. Lahore 2002; (London, 1841); a new edition of Mill's *History of British India*; a translation of the *Rig-Veda*; a *Glossary of Indian Terms*, and an edition of Macnaghton's *Hindu Law*: the greatest Sanskrit scholar of his time, combining a variety of attainments as general linguist, historian, chemist, accountant, numismatist, actor and musician.

Munshi Sayyid 'Abdullah (Teacher, University College, London) composed two chronograms in Persian on Wilson's death (8 May 1860) as under:

سید، تادمحس او روے یکا ہورس ہمن ولسن مغفور ہیں
سید برائے سال وفاتش بصدالم گفتار مرگ ولسن داغ

(Cf. *Tahqiqi Mazamin*) (Urdu) by Malik Ram, Dahli 1974, art. "Haftawar Koh-i-Nur, Lahore", pp. 198-242, p. 228)

Obituary by Garcin de Tassy, in: *Revue orientale à Americaine*, vol. 6 (1861), pp. 154-156 (See Surayya Husain: *Garcin de Tassy*, 'Ilmi Khidmat, 'Ilmi Karnamay (Urdu), Lucknow 1984, p. 337)

See for detail:

DNB, vol. Lxii, p. 99; Buckland, p. 455; *The Annual Register*, 1860; *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 1911; John F. Riddick: *Who was who in British India*, Westport, Conn. 1998; Shamboo Chander Dey: "W.W. Wilson" in: *Eminent Orientalists. Indian, European, American*. Repr. New Delhi/Madras 1991, pp. 62-80 (1st ed., 1922).

Hammer-Purgstall

Born on 9 June 1774 in Graz (Styria, Austria); son of Josef Hammer, a government servant; early education in a native school, showing much interest in geography; after the gymnasium came to Vienna (1787) and was admitted in the Oriental Academy that was founded by Maria Theresia in 1754 for educating the young noblemen trained in oriental languages and then appointed in the diplomatic service in Turkey; learnt here Islamic and classical languages alongwith other subjects like law, mathematics, logic, physics, geography and history (1789-1799); attained mastery over the three major languages of Islamic countries (Arabic, Persian and Turkish) which helped him to be appointed officially the interpreter; sent one special mission to Egypt (Feb. 1800); spent five months (Nov. 1801-April 1802) in England and worked in the oriental collections of London and Oxford; sent to Istanbul (1802) as the legation secretary; came back to Austria (1807) where he served many years (1811-1836) as interpreter of the court; founded the Austrian Academy of Sciences (Vienna) in 1847 and was elected its first president; died at the age of 83 on Nov. 1856 and buried in a graveyard of Weidling near

Vienna; inscriptions on his grave in ten occidental and oriental languages; honoured with nineteen medals, two honorary doctorates (Graz and Prague) as well as the membership of about fifty world-wide academies; wrote and translated more than seventy-five books (some contain upto ten volumes) and hundred of articles.

Hammer-Purgstall was also reputed as the first European Iranist who translated for the first time the complete *Diwan-i Hafiz* in German (2 vols., Tübingen 1812-13, published in 1814; Repr. Stuttgart 2007): a major source of inspiration of Goethe's *West-östlicher Divan* (Stuttgart, 1819) that was responded by Iqbal in the form of his Persian book entitled *Payam-i Mashriq* (Message of the East, 1923).

Austrian Academy of Sciences was his brainchild and he had been elected its first President in 1849. The idea had been conceived in 1811, but it did not materialize until 1847 due mainly to princess Pauline de Metternich's resistance.

He was also a member of the Academy of Amsterdam (1809), Göttinger Academy (1811), Institut de France and the Asiatic Society of Bengal (1817), Philosophical Society of Philadelphia (1818), Learned Society of Copenhagen and the Royal Asiatic Society, London (1825), Academy of Inscription, Paris (1825) and the Academy of Turin (1842).

See for detail: *Biographisches Lexikon des Kaiserthums Österreich*, vol. VI, pt. 7. Vienna 1861, art. By Constantin Wurzbach, pp. 269-289; *Österreichische Biographisches Lexikon, 1815-1950*, vol. II, Graz 1957, pp. 165-168; *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie*, vol. 10 (Leipzig, 1879), pp. 482-487; *Neue Deutsche Biographie*, vol. 7, pp. 593-594; M. Ikram Chagatai: *Hammer-Purgstall and the Muslim India*. Lahore 1998; Sibyle Wentker: "Joseph Freiherr von Hammer-Purgstall. Ein Leben zwischen Orient und Okzident", in: Hannes D. Galter and Siegfried Hass (eds.): *Wanderer zwischen Orient und Okzident*. Graz 2008; Ibid.: *Joseph von Hammer-Purgstall. Grenzgänger zwischen Orient und Okzident*. Graz 2008; Hannes D. Galter: "Joseph von Hammer-Purgstall und die Anfänge der Orientalistik", in: Karl Acham (ed.): *Kunst und Geisteswissenschaften aus Graz. Werk und Wirken überregional bedeutsamer Künstler und Gelehrter: von 15. Jahrhundert bis zur Jahrtausendwend* Vienna 2009, pp. 457-470.

Nima Mina: *Hammers Hafis-Übersetzung im Lichte der Iranistik*, Graz 2007; Ibid., Joseph von Hammer-Purgstall's Historiography Persian Literature and its Aftermath." (in: Rüdiger Görner and Nima Mina (eds.), *Wenn die Rosenhimmel tanzen. Orientalische Motive in der deutschen Literatur des 19. und 20. Jahrhunderts*.

London 2006, pp. 39-51; for Hammer's Publications and mss. see Walter Höflechner and Alexandra Wagner (eds.): *Joseph von Hammer Purgstall: Erinnerungen und Briefe von 1790 bis Ende 1819*. 3 vols., Graz 2011.

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With the scholarly support of some of my Austrian friends, I obtained a short-term official scholarship of the Government of Austria. I reached Vienna in 1982 and thus touched the European soil for the first. There, Hammer-Purgstall Society was responsible for my stay and research assignment relating to the life and works of Dr. Aloys Sprenger, a reputed Austrian Orientalist of the 19th century (1819-1893). In one of the issues of Society's journal entitled *Bustan* (1960-1971), I came to know, the autobiography of Hammer-Purgstall (1774-1852), the teacher of A. Sprenger in Vienna University, the original of his memoirs together with the memorabilia, mss. and letters are safely preserved in his family archives in Schloss Hainfeld, a fort-like huge building near the capital city of Graz in Styria. With my consent, the concerned Society facilitated my visit and I reached there where I spent a full day. An old woman, Cleo Freiin von Hammer-Purgstall, the wife of his grandson, Dr. Heinrich Freiherr von Hammer-Purgstall (1874-1954) was looking after all these rare material. In this short time, I marked the documents, mostly the letters, which were indispensable for my project. Before leaving, she promised to send me their photocopies which she did. Out of this collection of rare documents, I am here reproducing the eight letters, written by H. H. Wilson to Hammer-Purgstall, with brief explanatory notes. Some parts of the photocopies are not clear, therefore a few non-certain readings and illegible words are indicated by question marks and dots.

(1)

Calcutta, December 1st, 1813

Sir,

I am directed by the Asiatic Society to acknowledge your letter of the 13th June and 1st December 1812,¹ and to express their regret, that circumstances should have occurred to delay the delivery of those letters in Calcutta, and consequently to create so long an interval between their date and acknowledgement: I am also desired to thank you for the Books presented by you to the Society, viz., the Prospectus of the Mines of the East;² the Catalogue of the Imperial Oriental Library;³ the specimen of Firdausi translated into German verse;⁴ your translation from the Turkish of a geographical account of Bosnia and Romilia,⁵ and the Encyclopedia of Oriental Science⁶: the two volumes of your valuable Miscellany,⁷ the Mines of the East⁸, have not been duly forwarded to the Society, and they can only thank you therefore for the attention which dictated the purpose of their transmission. I am enjoined to request your acceptance of the three last volumes of the *Asiatic Researches*⁹, forwarded by the present opportunity, and to announce to you, that the Asiatic Society, as a mark of the esteem in which they hold your meritorious exertions, have elected you unanimously an Honorary Member.

Having thus discharged the pleasing duties which devolve upon me officially, allow me, Sir, to express my individual admiration of that zeal, which so indefatigably prosecutes a study little cheered by public commendation, and of those talents, which have been exerted so successfully, in a path thorny and intricate, and trod but by a few. Engaged in enquiries whose general purport is similar to your own, I feel a lively interest in the efforts you have made to diffuse a conviction of their merit and importance and anticipate with some hope, the most beneficial results, to Oriental literature, and to knowledge in general. In these sentiments I am not singular, and did not the remoteness of our respective situations, and the insecure medium of our mutual communication, forbid the maintenance of any regular intercourse, there are several Orientalists in Calcutta, much better able than myself, to appreciate your exertions, and equally well disposed to promote their success: they also as well as myself, are only prevented by the circumstances I have mentioned, from supplying you with to me of the objects of your work, and contributing every aid in their power to the Journal¹⁰ you have instituted; a work which links so many distinguished nations to the West, in a friendly confederacy

against the literary treasures of the East. In the meantime, we beg you to accept of the additions to the packet of the Society, specified below, and to receive our warmest assurances of individual esteem.

In reply to the questions, you have put to are relating to the publication of the *Shahnama*, in Calcutta,¹¹ I am happy to be able to give you the required information. It never was in contemplation to publish any translation of the Poem here, and the only object of Mr. Lumsden,¹² the learned Arabic and Persian Professor of the College of Fort William, was a correct edition of the original text, printed from a great number of the best manuscripts in this country.¹³ The first volume is completed, and is comprised in the packet. I have the honour to forward to you; the continuation of the work is at present suspended, and indeed may possibly be dispensed with altogether, as the heavy expense attached to the publication, has induced the Honorable the East India Company, to withdraw their patronage, without which, it is of course impossible to proceed.

I should have been happy to have furnished you with a favourable account of the state of Oriental Literature amongst us; it is however here as in Europe, but partially encouraged, and without wishing to rate its value too high, I think, it is in general estimated much below its real worth; the peculiar circumstances however of the British nation in these countries, must always tend to support the cultivation of their languages and literature, and they have accordingly been much indebted, to the liberality of the local administrations: I had hoped to have been able, through the kindness of Capt. Lockett,¹⁴ to have forwarded to you a proof of this, in a list of the publications, that have been effected, at the recommendation of the College Council, by the encouragement, and in great part, at the expense of this Government. It has not been found practicable however to prepare the list in time for the departure of the vessel about to sail for Bombay: I shall take the first opportunity to send you the Catalogue, and at the desire of the author, I shall also forward a work about to issue from the press, a translation, from the Arabic of the *Shereh Meuat Aamil* with commentary and original annotations¹⁵, by my friend Capt. Lockett; and in the meantime, I remain,

Calcutta
December, 1813

With the sincerest respect
Yours obediently
W. W. Wilson

List of Books sent to J. v. Hammer

9th and 10th vols. of the *Asiatic Researches* presented by the Society

The first volume of Arabic Grammar ¹⁶ A Persian Grammer in two vols. ¹⁷ The first volume of the <i>Shahnama</i> ¹⁸	Presented by the author and Editor M. Lumsden Esq. LL.D and Arabic and Persian Professor in the College of Fort William.
The text of the Hariri in two vols. ¹⁹	Presented by Capt. Lockett, Secretary and Examiner in the College of Fort William
The Megha Duta, a Sanscrit poem with English translation. ²⁰	Presented by H. H. Wilson, Secretary to the Asiatic Society

(2)

Calcutta, 1st January 1823

Dear Sir,

Our correspondence has been so unfortunate of late that I am willing to avail myself of every opportunity to you my assurances of esteem. I have therefore taken advantage of the return of a native of Germany a Mr. Bobsch²¹ to Europe overland to transmit to you my acknowledgement of two letters dated the 2nd January 1821 and the 30th October of the same year²² and a small packet of light communications made by myself to the conductors of the Calcutta Papers²³ on oriental subjects.

The first letter adverted to above forwarded to the Society the last numbers of the 'Mines de l'Orient'²⁴—2 and 4 nos. of the *Vienna Review*²⁵—these I am sorry to say have never been received—the second accompanied the topography of Constantinople²⁶ and the 13th and 14th nos. of the *Review* which have arrived safe it is a matter of great regret to us that we do not possess either of these works complete as they are both publications of the highest merit. I subjoin a note of the numbers missing and hope it will not be trespassing upon you to request their replacement.

I wrote several months ago by my friend and namesake Dr. Wilson²⁷ and then forwarded a large parcel of orientral publications—he encountered a

storm which drove him back to Calcutta and delayed his return to the Mediterranean which is his destination—he has again taken his departure and will probably send you my letter—he left Calcutta however so suddenly that I was unable to consign the books to his care and I must therefore avail a more favourable opportunity of forwarding them to your address. The Society's agent in London has been instructed to send you the 13th and 14th volumes of the Calcutta.²⁸

If you have received my letter by Dr. Wilson you will have learned why any delay in publishing your account of Mithraic monuments²⁹ should have occurred. It appeared to us that the account had previously been made known in Europe an inference drawn from a note by the Baron de Sacy upon a passage in the *Mystères des Paganisme*³⁰ of the Baron de St. Croia³¹ (I believe). Should this be the case a rule of the Society not to publish anything that has previously appeared in print could prevent our giving insertion to your very valuable paper but if it should appear as it probably will with that the description published on the continent is merely general and does not include the same extent of detail as the paper the latter will then be readily assigned a place in our *Researches*. The real delay is inconsiderable on this account for the paper can only appear in the 15th volume, which will not be published for some time to come and had my letter reached you when it should have arrived we might have been favoured with your reply before the volume was closed. It is not possible that this may yet be the case.

I have to request your indulgence for the inadequate manner in which I have given an English form to your analysis of the *Researches*. The translation is comprised in the accompanying packet. The vehicle of its publication compelled one to abridge as much as I will (?) could and my own imperfect acquaintance with German obtained in very early life and neglected for many years has possibly sometimes misrepresented your meaning—as it stood however it excited great interest and a general admiration of your industry and accuracy of the attention with which you must have perused the *Researches* and the entire possession you had acquired of their contents. The other papers are scarcely—worth your notice except the specimens of the Hindu play. This is a favourite subject with me and I hope ere long to offer some fuller translations to the public. I have completed three Dramas, the *ich ch'hakatika*³² of which I send your specimens, the *Uttara Rama Charitra*³³ and the *Mudra Racshasa*.³⁴ I have

also translated two others the Malati Madhava³⁵ and the Retnavali³⁶ but not yet revised the translations. I purpose preparing one or two others and then publishing them with some preliminary observations. It will not be possible I fear to give the text.

I have great regret in informing you of the death of Col. Wilford.³⁷ He died a few months ago at Benares and has left a blank in the scanty corps of oriental scholars which will not be easily filled up.

I am dear Sir

Your most obedient servant

H. H. Wilson

(3)

To,
Baron von Hammer-Purgstall

Oxford, 26 June, 1816

My dear Sir,

I avail myself of the opportunity afforded by the proposed visit of two gentlemen of the University of Vienna to acknowledge your two letters, one of the 9th December last and the other of last Easter. The letter forwarding to me the first volume of your 'History of Ottoman Poetry'³⁸ for which I beg you will accept my best thanks. You are determined that I shall never desist from wondering at the talent and industry with which you so unweariedly labour in Oriental literature. Your 'Turkish History'³⁹ alone is the (?) of a well employed life although it forms but a portion of your productions that by no means the largest although perhaps the most valuable and important.

I take this occasion also to offer you my congratulations on your accession to Baronical honours:⁴⁰ although in my estimation the name of Purgstall however honourable from the prefix of Baron, can add no lustre to the name of Von Hammer. Rank and title are however amongst the objects of rational ambition and I am glad to inform that they have fallen to your lot particularly and I argue from the 'History of Turkish Poetry' in progress that they are not likely to divert you from literary translations or deprive oriental literature of one of its more hooted (?) cultivators and proudish ornaments.

I have an intelligence of recent interest to send you from this part of the world, the death of Sir Charles Wilkins⁴¹ has issued (?) Sanscrit letters of their patriarch and in that of Mr. Mill,⁴² of the best historian we have yet had of British India, is lost to modern history. They had both however I believe completed their literary career, if we have so (*sic*) or unfinished labours to regret. I have not yet received my Sanscrit types and have nothing therefore to offer you worthy of acceptance. I hope however to be able to go to work shortly and in the meantime send you two or three trifles as token of remembrance and (*sic*).

The gentlemen who take charge of this, Mr. Smith,⁴³ a fellow of Cambridge College and Mr. Vernon,⁴⁴ a student, propose in time was proceeding to Constantinople and will be much obliged to you for any information that was facilitated the progress. Should it also be quite convenient for you to put them in the way of seeing what is here worthy to be seen in Vienna you will do them a great service and a great favour.

To yours
Ever sincerely
W. W. Wilson

You must excuse me if I have committed an error in your address. I am not sufficiently versed in German titles to be quite (*sic*) that I am right in retaining 'Von'.

(4)

To,
Joseph von Hammer

Calcutta, January 24, 1818

Sir,
The opportunity offered me by the voyage of a friend Mr. Robert Wilcox⁴⁵ to Malta and his probable passage through Vienna and his return to England promises to be the most favourable and I could procure of continuing as Atei dei interval (?) the correspondence with Vienna which is the desire of every friend to oriental literature in Calcutta to maintain. You will, I hope, have received the parcels sent from here some three or four years to you and which I was sorry to find by your letter to my friend

Capt. Lockett had for no farther than Triest after having been so long despatched. You will probably have received by this time the twelfth volume of the *Asiatic Researches* which Mr. Colebrooke,⁴⁶ a friend acting as agent to the Society in London, has been directed to forward to your address. I hope soon to have the thirteenth volume to send to you by the same channel.

We have received your books and are obliged to you for such proofs of your regard. The 'Mines of the East'⁴⁷ seem to be the depositaries of much oriental wealth and must be highly desirable to the cultivation of Asiatic literature. I apprehend some error has been made in their apartment however as the numbers received form three volumes complete whilst we want two numbers of the fourth and same only the first volume of the first. I have not at present the means of ascertaining the numbers of the fourth which are deficient but shall take an early opportunity of writing to you again and will then be more I had in my account. Your own words on the topography Sea of the Levant⁴⁸ and states account... of the Ottoman Empire⁴⁹ have all in safe hand.

I have little news to give you. oriental study is rather languishing amongst us and the stand in need of some such spur as the emulation which your labours and those of Mour. Langles⁵⁰ or de Sacy⁵¹ has been calculated to excite. The Persian Dictionary, the *Burhan-Kata*⁵² will be shortly issued from the (?) by Capt. Roebuck⁵³ and I trust to get clear of my *Sanscrit Dictionary*⁵⁴ by the end of this year, as soon as completed I shall request your acceptance of a copy ----- when accept the assurances of my great esteem and believe me for faithful and obedient servant.

W. W. Wilson
Secy. Asiatic Society

(5)

Calcutta, June, 1823

Dear Sir,

The return of my friend Dr. Wilson to your part of the world gives me favourable opportunity of offering to you my thanks for the great attention and... I was fortunate enough to procure for him at your hands—he informs me he was not only indebted to you for... personal kindness but that you rendered his journey through Germany of singular interest by

introducing him to the acquaintance of various eminent men at the cities he travelled through on his way to England. I am afraid you must rest satisfied with his thanks and mine is requital of your... as it is not likely. I shall ever have an opportunity for making a more substantial return anything however that I can effect for you in the country you may command.

I have been some time absent from Calcutta on an official mission to Banaras—the metropolis of Hinduism in Upper India—this absence prevented me receiving your letter and paper on the monuments of the Mithraic worship⁵⁵ which arrived during the acting Secretaryship of Capt. Lockett. The paper is very justly considered of great interest but some doubt respecting to publication in the *Researches* pasanien(?); from a notion that its substance has already been given to the public. This idea was suggested by a note of the Baron de Sacy on a passage in the *Mystères des Paganisme* of Saint Croix⁵⁶ in which he adverts to your description of the monuments in a *literary gazette*⁵⁷ published at Vienna and translates the substance of that description much to the same purpose as the first part of the paper forwarded to the Society—I have no doubt that a comparison of the original notice and the paper would show that the former by no means succeeds the latter. I was gratified by seeing him at Banaras—he is advanced in years and very infirm in body but still of active intellect and animated zeal—he is less wildly addicted to etymology than formerly and his labors are likely to be the more valuable. Etymological speculation is however very attractive and those who condemn it in others are not able to shun it themselves. It appears to me that the *Jahrbücher* are not free from etymological aberrations. The missionaries have a particular object in their labours and are at present, I believe, engaged in no work purely literary—they have enough to engage their attention in combating Rammohun Roy's⁵⁸ ... the Dogmas of Christianity. I am occupied with some little diligence but have not otherwise to labour as assiduously as I would wish. I have several tasks for the Society in hand of which the Hindu society of Cashmir and an account of the existing sects are the principal—as an independent work I am busied in translating some of the Natas, the Indian Dramas, two of which the *Málaté Mádhava*⁵⁹ and a very curious comedy the *Mrichchacatica*⁶⁰ or Clay-Cart I have finished. I am now about to commence the *Mudra rácshana*⁶¹ in which Chandragupta on Sandsacotries⁶² plays a part—there will be some difficulty in printing them however as the oriental presses at Calcutta are extinct—the government

patronage having been almost wholly withdrawn—some of the natives have set up presses but these will do little good for some time through want of capital and skill. I send you one or two specimens of their latest productions. Dr. Lumsden has returned to us. The Mericean Euclid⁶³ you presented to him he understood was destined for the College library—however he purposes transferring it to the Society as it is your wish whilst at Banaras I procured a copy of the Sanscrit Euclid⁶⁴ translated by order of *Jayasinha*.⁶⁵ It is to be printed at the cost of the School Book Society⁶⁶ here whenever I can find time—superintend the press.

Dr. Wilson intends remaining some considerable... at Malta and will probably be able to concert with you some more secure means of communication between... the delay and uncertainty to which it is now subjected are matters of deep regret to

Yours very sincerely

H. H. Wilson

Numbers not received
'Mines of the East'
Vol. 5th—no. 2
Vol. 6th – nos. 1, 2 & 4
Jahrbücher
none since number 4

Contents of the packet delivered to—for Councillor von Hammer.

2 copies translation of the Review of the *Asiatic Researches* from the Calcutta Government gazette.⁶⁷

Tabsiret al Iman – a Sunni work compiled by Ali Khan of Banaras and printed at the native Persian Press.⁶⁸

An account of the Hindu castes and religious sects written by Mathura Nath, Librarian of the Hindu College at Banaras printed at the same... the account is brief but very accurate.⁶⁹ I have taken it as an index to my own account of the same sects.

17 Pamphlets published by Rammohun Roy⁷⁰—our modern reformer of both the Hindu and Christian faiths. You will consider them as a present from himself—they are curious specimens of native talent—as the

assistance he receives in his English is confined at the utmost to a few verbal connections, I believe, but as we have not the original at hand this comparison cannot be effected and it has been thought advisable to suspend the publication—it is possible you will be—to satisfy us in this respect—the 16th volume which is the first begun will not be completed in much less than the 18 months or two years so that your reply will reach in time enough to... the Society to include your... in the contents of the volume now in progress.

I have since my return been favoured with a letter from you forwarding to the Society the last number of the 6th volume of the 'Mines of the East' and four numbers of the *Jahrbücher der Literatur*—I am sorry to say however the books have not yet arrived seven numbers of the 'Mines' are missing as by the note a circumstance of great regret as it impairs the value and collection of very costly materials. Your review... me exceedingly. I prefer it to our Edinburgh⁷¹ and Oxford Reviews⁷²—as it far surpasses them in my opinion in... and information—the analysis of the *Asiatic Researches* in the 2nd and 3rd numbers which I attribute to your pen is a work of great labour and extraordinary accuracy. I have devoted a few hours to an abridged translation of it which for want of a better medium I have published with one of our weekly papers—a few detached copies have been struck off and I send you one by Dr. Wilson as far as it yet extends—my knowledge of German is very limited as you will perceive by several passages which perhaps do it exactly express your meaning and I have been obliged to express very much in order to bring the whole within the limits of newspaper publication. In its imperfect form however it has attracted much attention and conveyed much generation even to those amongst whom its original was generated—We have very few labourers in oriental literature at present on this side of India—I believe I am alone—excepting Capt. Wilford and the missionaries—the former is still at work—the ancient geography and Paliboths are now his objects.

(6)

17 Dorset Square, London
27 July, 1823

My dear Sir,

I am commissioned to the Asiatic Society of Bengal to return you their thanks for the 7th volume of your 'Ottoman History'⁷³ and 46-48 of the *Jahrbücher* of Vienna. These acknowledgements should have been made earlier but the Society had an idle Secretary, of whom they are happily rid, and any thing you may in future favour them with wish, I should not be more promptly, though not more sincerely, acknowledged.

I have the pleasure now of being a few thousand miles nearer to you than loosing many years, I have had the pleasure of correspondence with you. I hope proximity will not depend me of the satisfaction of hearing from you occasionally. As agent of the Society in place of Mr. Colebrooke, may still be the medium of any communication you may have to make to it.

You will receive either with this or very shortly a copy of the 17th volume of the *Asiatic Researches* and one of the second edition of my *Dictionary*⁷⁴ of which I request your acceptance it and have very unintentionally given offence to Augustus Schlegel.⁷⁵ I suppose it will be severely handled at Bonn, but I... philosophy of Mr. ... and must submit to... . It is some consolation too to think but of any thing can be said in my favour it will be said in Vienna.

I hope before many more years elapse to have the ... of being personally known to you, with Vienna to which must come ... or in England should come hither. I have enough to do to settle myself in this century which after so long an absence of 25 years is almost as foreign as any part of Europe.

Believe me

my dear Sir,

Very truly yours
W. W. Wilson

(7)

To,
Counsellor
Joseph von Hammer

Calcutta, 28th July 1824

Dear Sir,

I take advantage of an accidental opportunity furnished by the return of a person from Calcutta to Germany who has been kind enough to engage for the delivery of a small packet to your address to acknowledge your letter of the 10th May 1823 and to thank you for the different publications which accompanied it and which have been all received, viz. *Mammosis Dreyklang*,⁷⁶ the *Invelenschnurre*,⁷⁷ the 1, 2 and 4th nos. of the 6th volume of the 'Fundgruben' and your various notices in the Literary Gazettes of Halle, Vienna and Heidelberg.⁷⁸ I am sorry to learn the change that has taken place in the conduct of the *Jahrbücher*. The first numbers were full of rational and learned papers and the latter have no doubt sadly fallen off. The absence of oriental article of any merit has ceased to give the work any interest with me. I cannot imagine on what grounds any exception could have been taken to your article on the *Desatir*,⁷⁹ as except his implication. I know not that it offends Christian orthodoxy in any way. I do not agree with you respecting the authenticity of the *Desatir* but it contains much curious matter no doubt. It is very sensible that the relations between Persia and India should be investigated by competent talents. Your countryman... to judge from your account of his performance has gone to the task with very insufficient acquirements and the learned blunders thus laboriously made will only know us farther off the tract. I am sorry I cannot yet announce to you that your paper on Mithraic monuments⁸⁰ is yet in a fair way to be printed. Your aberrations however have left no doubt as to the propriety as far as it is affected by anything previously published. A circumstance on which I entertained no doubt, neither does any opinion prevail against the publication so that it will see the light unfortunately a new cause of delay has sprung up, attributable I fear to something like carelessness, in my friend Capt. Lockett, the drawing that illustrated the paper having been mislaid, if you can supply us with a duplicate by way of London through Mr. Colebrooke, or direct in any way there will then be no further procrastination. You may perhaps think it expedient to forward us the description of the Transylvanian caves by the same opportunity.

I am very sorry to say your ‘History of Persian Poetry’⁸¹ I never received one copy addressed to Dr. Lumsden reached him some years ago. He is desirous I should inform you that the copy of Euclid presented by you to the Asiatic Society has been duly handed to us. It is a very splendid specimen of Arabic typography, a merit you will scarcely recognize in the copy of Euclid lately printed in Calcutta and which I forward for your acceptance.⁸² It is something however to have directed Mohammedan attention to mathematical exactitude and the Euclid now published has been printed chiefly for the benefit of our Madressa,⁸³ a college founded by Warren Hastings⁸⁴ and of late years the object of much attention to our Government, we have lately also founded a Hindu College⁸⁵ in Calcutta and various managements have been set on foot for the dissemination of improved education in India, of which you will see sketch in the public discourse of Lord Amherst⁸⁶ at the last visitation of the College of Fort William.⁸⁷ Your work on Constantinople and the Bosphorus⁸⁸ was received safe and the Memoir Isemams⁸⁹ of Count Purgstall have also arrived. They have been officially acknowledged but I apprehend my letters have miscarried. As Mr. Scheichebauer⁹⁰ travels via Egypt he has issued in his power to take a very large parcel. I have therefore only put up. The Euclid mentioned above a work lately completed by myself translation of Persia and Hindoostanee proverbs,⁹¹ and the first volume of a periodical publication started this year in Calcutta which I beg you to accept as trifling marks of the esteem with which I am

Your sincere and obedient servant
H. H. Wilson

(8)

East India House
London
March 15, 1841

My dear Sir,

You will think me I fear very idle and very ungrateful in not having replied earlier to your letter of the 2nd February 1840—more than a year ago. I am however less capable than you may imagine as it is only within the last few weeks that your letter came to hand, where it has loitered for a twelve months I do not know but it has taken that time to come to England—it has not travelled by steam. I have received your two volumes

of Turkish Poetry,⁹² the book on Falconry⁹³ and the *Gemäldeaal*,⁹⁴ for which I return you my best thanks. The Asiatic Society has taken charge of these for India. Mr. Prinsep⁹⁵ to whom you also sent the work on Falcons, you will be sorry to learn, is dead. He brought on an affection of the brain by excessive application which after a lingering illness proved fatal. He is a great loss to the literature of India. I have also to thank you for your very kind invitation to Vienna which I should be delighted to take advantage of but time runs on, and I have much to do, much more probably than I shall have life to accomplish, and I have little leisure for personal indulgence. Should I ever be able to travel there is a part of the continent I should more wish to visit than Vienna, no individual I should have greater pleasure in seeing than yourself. It may perhaps happen in the fitness (?) of time but at present I am finishing a work on the Bactro-Indian coins⁹⁶ and am printing a Sanscrit grammar,⁹⁷ as an introduction to the study. I have not long since completed a translation of the Vishnu Purana⁹⁸ of which I propose sending you a copy when I can meet with a favourable opportunity. My speculations on the age of the Puranas have offended the advocates for the remote antiquity of everything Hindu, but this does not surprise nor vex me. Truth is truth. I have great faith in its powers of self-defence, and think it waste of time to battle for what, if he is true, truth is not in ... and what if it be not sound and good, no championing can save from defeat. Now I have a favour to ask of you if you can without trouble grant it, if it puts you to inconvenience to comply. Think no more about it. An Oxford friend of mine, Mr. Twiss,⁹⁹ who is editing Liny,¹⁰⁰ is anxious to give in lithography a facsimile mss. you have in the Imperial Library,¹⁰¹ to the extent of a page or two. He would like to have a copy made (a facsimile copy) of the 42nd or 43rd book and also of the remnant of an old inscription on the last leaf 'sutbeits' Epi de dorostat, on which the history of the mss. turns. It is described No CV in Catalogue Cod Philol. 4 to 626. Codex membraneous sqculi ut veritur VI. leteris uncialibus sine verborum dislencleone, filiorum 193 in formen octav. magore simillema—Titi Livii Vatao. Histor. nomen. Decade. V. Libri I-V. Can you get this done and send to me direct, Library East India House, and point out how any cost attending it can best be deprayed.

With my best wishes for the continuance of your health and reputation between me.

Ever sincerest, your admirer and friend
H. H. Wilson

Notes:

- 1) These two letters are not available in the Archiv Hainfeld (Styria, Graz).
- 2) *Fundgruben des Orients* (=FdO), bearbeitet durch eine Gesellschaft von Liebhabern. Aus Veranstaltung des Herrn Grafen Wenceshaus Rzewusky, (1765-1832). For the reference of the selective articles published in the six volumes of this journal, 1809-1818, see Fück, pp. 159-164.
- 3) Alfons Huber: *Geschichte der Gründung und Wirksamkeit der Kaiserlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften in Wien 1847-1957*. Vienna 1957
- 4) Joseph Görres (Jr.): *Das Heldenbuch von Iran. Aus dem Schahname des Firdussi*. Berlin, 1820.
- 5) *Rumeli und Bosna, geographisch beschrieben von Mustapha Ben Abdallah Hadschi Chalfa*. Aus dem Türkischen übersetzt. Vienna, 1812.
- 6) *Encyklopädische Übersicht der Wissenschaften des Orients, aus sieben arabischen, persischen und türkischen Werken*. Übersetzt. 2 vols., Leipzig 1804.
- 7) *Schirin, ein morgenländische Gedicht nach persischen und türkischen Quellen*, 2 pts., Leipzig 1809.
- 8) *FdO*, op. cit., f. n. 2.
- 9) *Asiatic Researches*; or, transactions of the society instituted in Bengal for inquiring into the history and antiquities, the arts, the sciences, and literature of Ssia. Calcutta, vols. 1-24 (1788-1831), vol. 24 = index 1/18.
- 10) *FdO*, op. cit.
- 11) Firdausi (b. ca. 320-4/932-6): *Shahnama* (ca. 50000 verses), cf. Rypka (1968), pp. 154-162.
For the German translation of *Shahnama*, see Brauterwerk's letter to Hammer, dated 15.11.1813 in Archiv Hainfeld.
See op. cit., f.n. 4
F. Rückert: *Firdosis Königsbuch* (Tr. of *Shahname*). From the Nachlass, ed. by E. A. Bayer. Berlin 1890/94; see also H. H. Schneder. "Firdosi und die Deutschen", in: *ZDMG*, 88 (1934)
- 12) Matthew Lumsden (1777-1835), Assistant Professor and from 1808 Professor of Arabic and Persian in the College of Fort William, Calcutta.
- 13) *The Shah Nameh...* Calcutta 1811, see Zenker: *Bibliotheca Orientalis*, I, 1846, Nr. 526;
- 14) Captain A. Lockett, see Roebuck, referred below, no. 20.
- 15) هذه مجموعة الكتب المتداولة لدرس النحو و قداعتهد تصحيحا و صوتها عن الغلط والسهو
An entire and correct edition of the Five Books upon Arabic Grammar, which together with the principles of inflexion in the Arabic language, form the first part of a classical education throughout all the seminaries of Asia. Carefully collated with the most ancient and accurate mss. which could be found in India and now for the first time offered to the European world from the Press. By Lieut. J. Baillie, Prof. of Arabic in the College of Fort William., 3 vols., Calcutta 1802-1805.
The *Mi'at 'Amil* was edited with English translation and notes by A. Lockett Calcutta 1814.
- 16) *A Grammar of the Arabic language, according to the principles taught and maintained in the Schools of Arabic etc.*, vol. 1, Calcutta 1813.

- On Lumsden's recommendation 'Abdur Rahim b. 'Abdul Karim (d. 1851) translated in Persian entitled *Ghayat ul-bayan fi 'Ilm il-lisan*. Calcutta 1828, see Zenker: *Bibliotheca Orientalis* I, 1846, Nr. 141.
- 17) *A Grammar of the Persian Language* etc. Calcutta 1800, 2 vols., fol.; *Selections for the Use of the Persian Class, College of Fort William*. I-VI. Calcutta 1809.
 - 18) *The Shahnameh...* Calcutta 1811, op. cit., *The Shah nameh...* Calcutta 1829, 4 vols., see Zenker, op. cit., Nr. 527.
 - 19) المقامات الحريريّة *The Muqamat ool Hureeree... collated with eight Arabian Ms. Copies and corrected for the Press* by Muolvees Ulluh Daud and Jaun Ulee, Arabic and Persian Department of the College of Fort William, Calcutta, 1809, 1812, 2 vols., de Sacy: *Les séances de Hariri*, publiées en arabe avec un commentaire arabe choise. Paris 1822.
 - 20) Cf. List of College's publications (1800-1818) in: *Annals of the College of Fort William, from the Period of its Foundation...to the present time*, compiled from Office Records, arranged and published by Thomas Roebuck. Calcutta, 1819.
 - 21) Mr. Bobsch (?)
 - 22) These two letters are not available in Archiv Hainfeld, Styria, Austria.
 - 23) *Calcutta Papers*.
 - 24) *FdO*.
 - 25) *Wiener Jahrbücher der Literatur*. (Vienna), 1818 H. Johann Ludwig Dinhardstein (1794-1959), edited of this journal (1829-1848).
 - 26) *Topographische Ansichten gesammelt auf einer Reise in die Levant*. Vienna 1811.
 - 27) Dr. Wilson. (?)
 - 28) *Asiatic Researches* (Calcutta)
 - 29) *Mithriaca ou les Mithriaques. Mémoire sur le culte [solaire] de Mithra*. Paris/Caen 1833.
 - 30) de Sacy's 'Mystères du Paganisme'.
 - 31) Baron de St. Croia. (?)
 - 32-36) In 1827, Wilson published *Select Specimens of the Theatre of the Hindus*, which contained a very full survey of the Indian drama, translation of six complete plays and short accounts of twenty-three others 1827, rev. 2nd ed. 1835.
The Vishnu Purana (1840), *Megha Duta* by Kalidasa (2nd rev. ed., 1843) and *Rig-Veda Sanhitra*. 6 vols., 1850-1888.
See Benjamin Walker; *Hindu World, An Encyclopedia Survey of Hinduism*. New Delhi 1983; *Brill's Encyclopedic of Hinduism*. Ed. Knut A. Jacobson. 5 vols., Leiden 2009-2013.
 - 37) M. Col. Wilford(?)
 - 38) *Geschichte der Osmanischen Dichtkunst bis auf unsere Zeit; Mit einer Blüthenlese aus zweytausend zweyhundert Dichtern*. 4 vols., Pesth 1836-1838.
 - 39) *Geschichte des Osmanischen Reiches, grossentheils aus bisher unbenützten Handschriften und Archiven*. 10 vols., Pesth, 1827-1835, 2nd rev. ed., 4 vols., 1834-1836; repr.: Graz 1963, ed. by Herbert W. Duda.
 - 40) After 1835, he was called as Freiherr von Hammer-Purgstall, see Bachofen von Echt, 1940, p. 13.
 - 41) Sir Charles Wilkins translated *Bhagavagita* in 1765 and *Hitapadesha* in 1787.

- 42) William Hodge Mill (1792-1853), Orientalist and Professor of Hebrew, *DNB*, *Buckland*.
- 43) R. P. Smith (1819-1895) (?)
- 44) Mr. Vernon (?)
- 45) Robert Wilcox (?)
- 46) Henry Thomas Colebrooke (1765-1837): English orientalist and the first Boden Professor of Sanskrit at Oxford University; went out to India in 1808 as assistant-surgeon on the Bengal establishment of the British East India Company; superintended the studies of the Sanskrit College in Calcutta. In 1832 Oxford University selected Wilson to be the first occupant of the newly-founded Boden Chair of Sanskrit. On the recommendation of Colebrooke, Wilson was in 1811 appointed secretary to Asiatic Society of Bengal, Calcutta; he was member of the Royal Asiatic Society, London, of which he was director from 1837 up to the time of his death.
- 47) *FdO*. See for detail: *The Royal Asiatic Society. Its History and Treasures*. Eds. Stuart Simmonds and Simon Digby. London 1979 and *The Asiatic Society of Bengal and the Discovery of India's Past, 1784-1838*. By O.P. Kejariwal. Delhi 1988.
- 48) *Topographische Ansichten gesammelt auf einer Reise in die Levante*. Vienna 1811.
- 49) *Die Staatsrerfassung und Verwaltung des Osmanischen Reiches*. 2 vols., Vienna 1815-16.
- 50) Louis Mathieu Langlès (1763-1824), Professor in the "Ecole spéciale des langues orientales vivantes" (1795) see A. Carrière: "Notice historiques sur l'Ecole des langues orientales", in: *Mélanges Orientaux* 1883, p. 1 ff.
- 51) Silvestre de Sacy (1758-1836), see Henri Dehérain: *Silvestre de Sacy, ses contemporains et ses disciples*. Paris 1938; Füek, pp. 140-157.
- 52) *Burhān-i Kāfi'a* by Muhamamd Husain Burhān; year of compilation 1062/1652; arranged, corrected and revised by Thomas Roebuck, assisted by Karam Husain Bilgrami, etc. 1st ed. Calcutta 1818; 2nd ed., 2 vols., Calcutta 1822; 3rd ed., Calcutta 1834; see Storey, vol. III, pt. 1, Leiden 1984, pp. 31-35.
- 53) Capt. Thomas Roebuck (1781-1819), English orientalist, see *DNB*, s.v.
- 54) *Sanskrit-English Dictionary*, 1819 (rev. 2nd ed., 1832).
- 55) *Mithraica ou les Mithriaques. Mémoire sur le culte [solaire] de Mithra...* Paris/Caen, 1833.
- 56) de Sacy: *Mystères des Paganisme* of Saint Croix.
- 57) *Wiener Literatur Zeitung*.
- 58) Rammohan Roy (1774-1833), Hindu writer and reformer.
- 59) Máláté Mádhava.
- 60) Mrichchecatic.
- 61) Mudra rácshava.
- 62) Sandsacotries.
- 63) Euclid (اقليدس) see *EI*², vol. x. Leiden 2000, pp. 702-704, art. Sonja Brentjes.
- 64) Euclid (Sanskrit)
- 65) Jayasinha.
- 66) School Book Society, Calcutta.
- 67) *Calcutta Government Gazette*.
- 68) Tabisāl al-Imān by Ali Khan of Benares.
- 69) Mathura Das account on Hindu castes & religious sects.

- 70) Rammohan Roy's pamphlets on different subjects of Hinduism and Christianity.
 71) *Edinburgh Review*.
 72) *Oxford Review*.
 73) See op. cit.
 74) *Sanskrit-English Dictionary*, 1819.
 75) August Wilhelm von Schlegel (1767-1845), German man of letters and poet, see *Buckland*. See Marianne Thalmann et al., *August Wilhelm Schlegel*. Bad Godesberg, 1967.
 76) (?)
 77) (?)
 78) *Allgemeine Literaturzeitung* (Halle), *Heidelberger Jahrbücher* (Heidelberg) and *Wiener Literaturzeitung* (Vienna)
 79) Hammer-Purgstall's article on *Desatir*. (?)
 80) *Mithriaca ou les Mithriagues*, op. cit.
 81) *Geschichte der schönen Redekünste Persiens, mit einer Blüthenlese aus zweyhundert persischen Dichtern*. Vienna 1818.
 82) Euclid, op. cit.
 83) Calcutta Madressah. (cf. *Tārīkh-i Madressah-i 'Āliya*, in Hindu)
 84) Warren Hastings (1732-1818), Governor of India and statesman. *DNB*, *Buckland*.
 85) Hindu College (Calcutta).
 86) William Pitt Amherst (1773-1857), Governor-General of India. *DNB*.
 87) Gesta Hertz: *Das britische Erziehungswesen in Indien*. Berlin 1932, p. 83 ff.; Fück, pp. 135-140; Thomas Roebuck: *Annals of the College of Fort William, from the period of its Formation...to the present time compiled from Office Records*. Calcutta 1819; *Gilchrist and the Fort William College* by M. Atique Siddiqui (in Urdu); *Vas'iq-i Fort William College*. By Rajindra Nath Shaida. New Delhi 2003, pp. 128-129 (in Urdu).
 88) *Constantinopolis und der Bosphorus*, örtlich und geschichtlich beschrieben. 2 vols., Pesth 1822. Repr.: Osnabrück 1967.
 89) *Denkmal auf das Grab der beiden letzten Grafen von Purgstall. Gedruckt als Handschrift für Freunde*. Vienna 1821.
 90) Bernhard Kuer-Scheichelbauer: *200 Jahre Freimaurerei in Österreich*, Vienna 1959.
 91) Translation of Persian and Hindustani Proverbs by Wilson.
 92) *Geschichte des Osmanischen Dichtkunst...* op. cit., 4 vols., Pesth, 1836-1838.
 93) *Falknerklee, bestehend aus drey ungedruckten Werken über die Falknerrey...* Aus dem Türkischen und Griechischen verdeutscht, und in Text und Übers. Hg. Wien/Pesth, 1840.
 94) *Gemäldeaal der Lebensbeschreibungen grosser moslimischer Herrscher der ersten sieben Jahrhunderts der Hidschret*. 6 vols., Leipzig/Darmstadt, 1837-1839
 95) Jas. Prinsep (1799-1840). *DNA*, *Buckland* & *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 1911.
 96) Book on Bactro-Indian coins by Wilson.
 97) Wilson: *Sanskrit-English Grammar*, op. cit.
 98) Eng. tr. of Vishnu Purana by Wilson.
 99) Hor. Twiss (1787-1849), *DNB*, s.v.
 100) Liny.(?)
 101) k. k. Bibliothek. The previous name of the Austrian National Library, Vienna.

Abstract

The article aims at providing letters shared between two scholars representing their own British and Austro-Hungarian empires. They contributed to promote the orientalism in the first half of the nineteenth century. Horace Hayman Wilson was the greatest Sanskrit scholar of his time, combining a variety of attainments as general linguist, historian, chemist, accountant, numismatist, actor and musician. Hammer-Purgstall was also reputed as the first European Iranist who translated for the first time the complete Diwan-i Hafiz in German. The translation was a major source of inspiration of Goethe's West-ostlicher that was responded by Allama Iqbal in the form his Persian collection of poetry Payam-i Mashriq. Despite the differences, there was one such domain where the empires were very close with each other and that was a vast range of scholarship in which eminent scientists, orientalist and Indologists maintained the close relationship and exchanged the information about their works.

Keyword: British empire, Austro-Hungarian empire, exchange of scholarship