



T a n g i e r,

March 8:th 1900.

Dear Professor Goldziher,

Remembering your kind proposal to write to my University in behalf of my studies in Morocco, I now take the liberty of asking you for such a generous assistance. I should have done it already before, since the time is now running short, and I have already written the petition to the University. But I wished to be able to send to you an article on the Ginn, which contains a paper read by me before the Anthropological Institute in London some time ago and to be published in the next number of the Society's Journal. Only now I have received the proof and beg to send it to you at once. About the Arabic terms I wished to point out that I have given them so faithfully as possible as they are pronounced by the Moors. There is an apparent irregularity in the use of the terms ginn, genn and gñun. But I have consistently stuck to the rule, that ginn should be used as the general Arabic term, genn as the Moorish singular, and gñun as the Moorish plural. I have often given the terms also in Arabic characters in order to show the value



of the transliterated consonants. I by no means maintain that the system of transliteration which I have followed is the best one, and I should be extremely grateful for any suggestions as to the spelling of the Arabic words for the future. I am sorry to say that I have not yet received the article on the adoration of saints in Morocco which I left for publication to the Oriental Congress. I read only a short resumé of it at the Congress; I think it will fill about thirty pages in print. I wish however that you should understand that these articles are really only preliminary results, and that my intentions are to devote to the subject much more penetrating researches, — if circumstances will allow me to do so. The matter really lies in the hands of the Consistorial Body of my University.

Three years ago I applied to the University for a travelling studentship extending over three years. My plan was to continue a work, at which I had been engaged for several years, on the Origin and Growth of the Moral Ideas. When dealing with the connection between morality and religion, I found that the science of religion required a special study by itself, and after having carried on studies in the British Museum, I decided to make some branch of it the subject of original investigations. On a journey to Morocco I was struck by the many remains of Pre-Muhammedan religion still existing, and I made up my mind to go deeper into the subject. I



same time it is impossible to penetrate into the heart of the Berber districts, south of Fez, hence my Berber studies would be more or less incomplete. I think therefore it would be all the more necessary for me to visit the Berbers of Algier and Tunis, who are much more accessible. As to the Arab elements it would of course be extremely useful to extend my investigations to the Beduins of Arabia, but this could at all events not be done within such a limited period of time. I should particularly dwell in the country villages, which are of still more interest than the towns, and I think that there are in Morocco several Arab tribes who have been hardly at all influenced by the original inhabitants of the country.

The third point is one which particularly interests me, and which also require extensive knowledge of comparative religion. To explain the original meaning of a survival is of course in many cases impossible, unless we get the key to it from the customs of other peoples among whom the same idea has prevailed and is more plainly conspicuous. The burial customs, for instance, are per se hardly intelligible unless we study them from a comparative point of view. It may be that I also should try to explain the remains of ancient beliefs in Muhammedanism. I have been collecting facts bearing upon the Ramadan fast, and it seems to me plain that it is closely related to Sabaeen sacrifices in honour either of the Moon or the Sun, but I am still hesitating between two hypothesis as to the connection,



since something may be said in favour of both. This I have mentioned merely as an example of the nature of my studies.

I should be highly grateful for any suggestions as regards my investigations with which you would be disposed to favour me. It was your essay on the worship of saints which gave me the stimulus in that particular point, and I think that I in my article have given some new evidence as to the connection between the adoration of saints' tombs and ancient nature worship, and between saints and ginn, which you have advocated. The combination of a grove, a spring, and a stone where the offerings are placed, a combination which is exceedingly common at the so-called saints' tombs, seems interesting, and so also those mythical beings, of whom there are many, who are generally represented as ginn-saints, and whose sanctuaries consist of a rock in the sea, or some peculiarly shaped stone, and are worshipped in a similar manner as an ordinary sjid. This country is really full of interesting facts. The midsummer festivals and the harvest customs are curious, and I wonder if they are genuine Berber customs or imported from Europe. The burial ceremonies among some Arab tribes between Tangier and Fez are quite peculiar to them, which shows how careful one must be in ~~local~~ ^{local} distinguishing between local customs and such as are common to the whole country.



I have just given you a short sketch of the plan of my work, and of the method I pursue. Whether I shall be able to carry out my plan depends entirely upon my University, which now is able to grant me the studentship for three years more, or to refuse my petition. I hardly need say how grateful I should feel to you if you would be so good and speak a word in favour of my project, of the importance of such detailed investigations, and of the light they may throw on ancient beliefs. So far as I could understand, you were in sympathy with the object of my studies, and you can see that I am in earnest when considering that my stay in these parts of the world would last three years and a half. As you know, I am not an Arabic scholar. From the book which I took the liberty of sending you the other day, you find that my investigations have gone in other directions. But I have for a long time been studying comparative religion, and the practical knowledge of Arabic is after all not so very formidable to acquire. My native assistant, the Sherif who went with me to Rome, also facilitates my studies in a considerable measure, being remarkably accurate and intelligent. We have lately begun to collect proverbs, and I think it will be easy to bring together several hundreds. This shows that I am not going to neglect the philological point of view, although of course language is to me only a means, not an end.

I have no doubt that your esteemed opinion would carry a very weighty influence, and considering that the science of religion is



not very popular, especially among professors of Theology, whose words often are influential, I really think that I to a great extent should have to thank you for the studentship, if given to me. Since time is valuable, and the matter will be soon decided, I should ask you to be so kind as to send your lines directly to Helsingfors, directed "to the University of Finland," but addressed to my father, Assessor N. Chr. Westermarck, Annegatan 19, Helsingfors. He would then see that ~~it~~ the document would be placed together with my application.

I am so sorry to trouble you, but the matter is really of importance to me, since, if not provided with the means by my University, I shall have to leave unfinished the studies which I have begun, and which so deeply interest me. And from the kind words you spoke to me in Rome I could see that you would not mind giving me your valuable assistance. I especially remember that you said it would be an honour for my University to support studies of this kind. If you could allude to that "honour", I think it might prove effective, since our people are much impressed by what is "honourable."

My address is Tangier, poste restante. Hoping you will kindly excuse me for this lengthy letter and for the trouble I give you,

I remain, dear Professor Goldziher,

yours very faithfully

Edward Westermarck