Guide to the Samuel David Luzzatto and Isaia Luzzatto papers, 1812-1894

Finding aid prepared by The Magnes Collection of Jewish Art and Life Staff.
The Magnes Collection of Jewish Art and Life
The Bancroft Library
University of California
2121 Allston Way
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Email: magnesresearch@library.berkeley.edu
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2011
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Title: Samuel David Luzzatto and Isaia Luzzatto papers
Date: 1812-1894
Collection number: LIB 91.018
Creator: Luzzatto, Samuel David, 1800-1865.
Creator: Luzzatto, Isaia, 1836-1898.
Extent: 2 boxes (.4 linear feet)
Repository: The Magnes Collection of Jewish Art and Life
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Abstract: Manuscript poems and correspondence of Samuel David Luzzatto and Isaia Luzzatto, dating from circa 1812 through 1898.
Language of Material: The papers are in Italian, Hebrew, French.
Access
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Preferred Citation
[Identification of item], Samuel David Luzzatto and Isaia Luzzatto papers, LIB 91.18, The Magnes Collection of Jewish Art and Life, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.
Alternate Forms Available
The entire collection was digitized in 2008, resulting in 650 digital image files. Contact Magnes Collection Staff for information regarding these digital files.
Acquisition Information
Gift of Gideon Sorokin.
Biography
Samuel David Luzzatto (also known under the acronym of SHaDaL), an Italian Rabbi, poet, grammarian and scholar of Hebrew letters, was born in Trieste on August 22, 1800, and died in Padua on September 30, 1865. Luzzatto wrote his first Hebrew poem at the age of nine, and by 1815 he had composed thirty-seven poems (later included in the two volumes of Kinor na'im, Vienna 1825 and Padua 1879). His translation of the Ashkenazi prayer book into Italian appeared in 1821-22, and that of the Italian rite in 1829, the year in which he joined the faculty of the Collegio Rabbinico of Padua, where he remained until his death, teaching Bible, philology, philosophy, and Jewish history. Among his many works are a study of Targum Onkelos (Ohev ger, 1830), commentaries (in Hebrew and Italian) on the Pentateuch and haftarot (1871-76) and several other biblical books, as well as pioneering studies on the Hebrew language and on Hebrew liturgical poetry (piyyut), the groundbreaking introduction (Mavo) to the Italian Machzor (1856), and philosophical works (Mozne tzedeq: Vikuach 'al chokhamat ha-qabalah, 1852; Teologia morale israelitica, 1862; and Yesodei ha-torah, 1880). Luzzatto corresponded with
virtually all the leading Jewish scholars of his day, including Isaac Samuel Reggio (1784-1855), Abraham Geiger (1810-1874), Leopold Zunz (1794-1886), Solomon Rapoport (1790-1867) and Moritz Steinschneider (1816-1907). Circa four hundred of S. D. Luzzatto's letters were edited by his son Isaia, and published at the end of the 19th-century (Igrot shada"l, 1882-1894, and Pnine shada"l, 1883).

Isaia Luzzatto (Padua, September 27, 1836-November 7, 1898) was Samuel David Luzzatto's younger son. A lawyer active in his hometown, I. Luzzatto collected his father's works, to which he devoted several introductory publications, most notably Reshimat maamare shada"l... Catalogo ragionato degli scritti sparsi di Samuele Davide Luzzatto (Padua 1881). In a letter to the Italian Jewish periodical, L'Educatore Israelita (vol. XIX/1871: 22), I. Luzzatto announced his intention to gather his father's massive correspondence, including all personal letters, and asked the readers to send him all available copies in their possession. A selection of these letters were published a decade later.

Scope and Content
The collection includes early manuscript poems (two are dated 1812-1813) and personal and professional letters by and to Samuel David Luzzatto, dating from the 1817 until his death in 1865. Among the correspondents are some of the major rabbinical figures of 19th-century Italy, including Marco Mortara and Moses Ehrenreich, and European Jewish scholars like Gabriel Jacob Polak of Amsterdam (1803-1869), A. G. Samiler of Brody (1780-1854). It also includes a letter (dated Oct. 31, 1792) signed by Mazaltov and Raffael Benedetto Segré who were to become S. D. Luzzatto's in-laws (R. B. Segré was one of Luzzatto's teachers in Trieste). Several of the letters include annotations and added titles, either by S. D. Luzzatto himself or by another hand (possibly his son Isaia's), which appear to be editorial comments in view of their publication in a volume. The collection also includes what appears to be a draft of the manuscript title page, with a dedication, of Luzzatto's anti-Kabbalistic treatise, "Mozne tzedeq: wiquach 'al chokhmat ha-qabalah," published in 1844 (no. 58).

The collection also includes the personal and professional correspondence of Isaia Luzzatto, dating from 1853 until the time of his death. Some of the letters addressed to Isaia Luzzatto are from family, friends, and colleagues, while others are from Jewish scholars and publishers interested in his father's published and unpublished works, and the payment of rights related to their publication.

Indexing Terms
The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection:

Luzzatto, Samuel David, 1800-1865.
Luzzatto, Isaia, 1836-1898.
Jews--Italy--Correspondence.