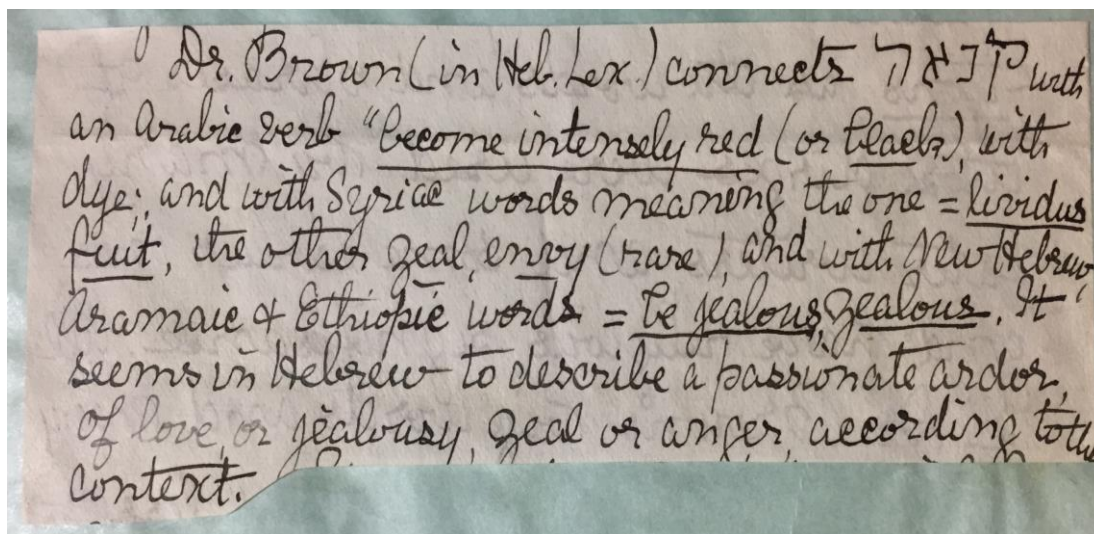


The Burke Library Archives, Columbia University Libraries,  
Union Theological Seminary, New York

Union Theological Seminary Archives 1

Finding Aid for

**Alanson Tuthill Briggs and Emilie Grace Briggs:  
Song of Songs Papers, [1913 – 1939?]**



Note on Jealousy. Credit to: UTS1: Emilie Grace Briggs and Alanson Tuthill Briggs: Song of Songs Papers, box 7, folder 4, The Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary, Columbia University in the City of New York.

Finding Aid prepared by: Brigette C. Kamsler, May 2015  
With financial support from the Henry Luce Foundation

**Summary Information**

Creator: Alanson Tuthill Briggs, 1871 – 1946  
Emilie Grace Briggs, 1867-1944

Title: Emilie Grace Briggs and Alanson Tuthill Briggs: Song of Songs Papers

Dates: [1913-1939?]

Abstract: Charles Augustus Briggs projected a commentary on the Song of Songs; after his sudden death, his children Alanson and Emilie Grace took over the project. Collection consists of introduction, extensive commentary on the Song of Songs, notes on a variety of topics; concordance; Hebrew words; location and archaeological notes; and sketches.

Size: 15 boxes, 7.25 linear feet

Storage: Onsite storage

Repository: The Burke Library  
Union Theological Seminary  
3041 Broadway  
New York, NY 10027  
Email: [burkearchives@library.columbia.edu](mailto:burkearchives@library.columbia.edu)

**Administrative Information**

- Provenance:** Emilie Grace Briggs, eldest daughter of Charles Augustus, donated the majority of her father's papers to the library at Union Theological Seminary, now The Burke library, on a series of occasions before her death in 1944. Emilie also donated her own papers in approximately 1941.
- Access:** Archival papers are available to registered readers for consultation by appointment only. Please contact archives staff by email to [burkearchives@library.columbia.edu](mailto:burkearchives@library.columbia.edu), or by postal mail to The Burke Library address on page 1, as far in advance as possible. Burke Library staff is available for inquiries or to request a consultation on archival or special collections research.
- Access Restrictions:** The collection is unrestricted to readers. Certain materials, however, are in a fragile condition, and this may necessitate restriction in handling and copying.
- Preferred Citation:** Item description, UTS1: Emilie Grace Briggs and Alanson Tuthill Briggs: Song of Songs Papers, box #, and folder #, The Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary, Columbia University in the City of New York.

**Biographies**

Emilie Grace Briggs and Alanson Tuthill Briggs were the daughter and son of Charles Augustus Briggs and Julia Valentine Briggs. Their father was a Presbyterian (later Episcopal) clergyman and noted Biblical scholar who served on the faculty at Union Theological Seminary (UTS) from 1876 to 1913.

Emilie Grace was born in Berlin in 1867. The first woman to receive a Bachelor of Divinity degree from UTS, Emilie graduated in 1897. She enrolled in the doctoral program and worked toward completion on a dissertation entitled *The Deaconess in the Ancient and Medieval Church*, although her dissertation was never published and she never received the PhD.

From 1896 to 1915 she taught Greek and New Testament at the New York Training School for Deaconesses located at St. John the Divine Cathedral, wrote her dissertation, and assisted her father on the Hebrew Lexicon and a commentary on Psalms for the International Critical Commentary (ICC) series. She acted as Charles Briggs' amanuensis for much of her adult life before 1913. After her father's death in 1913, Emilie worked to prepare his uncompleted projects for publication. Much of her time and energy was directed towards the joint father-daughter venture of a Commentary on Lamentations. Charles Briggs began the project, and Emilie completed it, contributing additional research, revisions and considerable additions. This, together with a biography of her father planned as late as 1941 but never written, seems to have been what she considered her life's work.

The last years of her life continued to reflect both commitment to academic scholarship and devotion to her father. Emilie died in 1944

Alanson Tuthill Briggs was born in New Jersey in 1871. In 1892 Alanson graduated from Columbia College and after graduating from Columbia Law School in 1895, he joined the firm of

Olin, Rives and Montgomery. Alanson became Clerk of The Library's Board of Trustees for the New York Public Library, and was appointed Agent for Carnegie Sites for the City. He worked as the Agent until 1910. After leaving NYPL Briggs served as Secretary of the Court House Board and practiced law independently. According to census records, Alanson was married, but he often was living with lodgers or boarders and not a wife. In the 1910 census, Alanson is living with a woman named Josephine, who is listed as 'wife.' No other evidence could be traced at this time to indicate further personal information. Around 1931 he moved to California, where he died, in Hollywood, on January 31, 1946.

### Collection Scope and Content Note

The collection consists of an introduction, followed by extensive commentary on the Song of Songs. Following that are notes on a variety of topics; concordance; Hebrew words; location and archaeological notes; and sketches.

The Song of Songs, also known as the Song of Solomon or Canticles, is one of the books of the Old Testament. Song of Songs is the fourth book in the third section of the Hebrew Bible. Song of Songs is also part of the Megillot "Scrolls," five books that were associated in postbiblical times with a particular Jewish feast. The Song was read on the eighth day of Passover. Exegesis, or the interpretation of the text, has been exhaustive over the centuries for this piece. The piece is a love poem; some believe it is about erotic love and sexual desire, as well as spoken from the perspective of a woman. The Song of Songs is full of happiness at the merging of the relationship between God, "Christ," and human.

A note in the front of the first commentary binder indicated that Charles Augustus Briggs projected a commentary on the Song of Songs. However, Charles Briggs died suddenly and never carried out his plan. The Song of Songs was picked up by Emilie with the assistance of her brother, Alanson; however neither of them finished the project. William Walker Rockwell, librarian and assistant professor at Union Theological Seminary, is noted to have shared this story.

There are letters in Emilie's papers from her brother, who was living in California, and date from 1928 to 1939. Many have been heavily edited and deal almost exclusively with their shared interest in the Song of Songs. Together they worked on the project, despite Emilie being located in New York and Alanson in California. Emilie was concerned with preserving their father's research, the results of which were never published.

### Sources:

Duguid, Iain M. *The Song of Songs*. Downers Grove: Inter-Varsity Press, 2015.

Exum, J. Cheryl. *Song of Songs: A Commentary*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005.

Longman III, Tremper. *Song of Songs*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2001.

Taussig, Hal. *A New New Testament*. New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2013.

### Processing

The collection was originally housed in green three-ring binders. These papers were removed from the binders and placed in new acid-free folders and boxes. Acidic items were separated from one another by interleaving with acid-free paper as needed. Any items in an advanced state of deterioration were placed in Mylar envelopes.

The materials were originally part of the UTS Collection for Charles Augustus Briggs. However, this was a later addition as Charles died before being able to carry out the project, and it was continued by his son Alanson and his daughter Emilie Grace. The materials were separated into their own collection, and in 2015 were fully processed as part of the Henry Luce Foundation grant.

### Further Sources

Emilie Grace Briggs Papers at the Burke Library contain family and publishers correspondence, her doctoral dissertation, drafts of books and articles, research notes, bibliography notebooks, collections of devotional quotations, clippings, material relating to her father, memorabilia, and educational certificates. Specifically the correspondence in series 1, box 1 pertain to the Song of Songs. This collection is currently unprocessed, but will be made available as part of the Henry Luce Foundation grant. For more information, please [see the Burke Library Archives website](#) or contact Burke Archives staff: [burkearchives@library.columbia.edu](mailto:burkearchives@library.columbia.edu).

The [Charles Augustus Briggs Papers](#) at the Burke Library is an extensive collection covering his remarkable life, from pastor to professor to heretic. Materials include correspondence, writings, personal documents, heresy trials coverage. This collection is fully processed and is open to researchers.

The Burke Library offers a number of other collections related to the Briggs controversy and subsequent fallout from the heresy trails. For more information, please see [the Burke Library website](#).

The New York Public Library offers a collection of Alanson Briggs Papers. This collection consists of 24 boxes (7.50 linear feet) span the years 1901 to 1913, with the bulk falling in the period 1901 to 1910. The collection consists of letter books and correspondence; typescript, handwritten and printed reports and memoranda; statistical tables and graphs; appraisals; blue prints; deeds; insurance policies; photographs; sketches; clippings; petitions; and invitations to the opening of most of the branch libraries. For more information, please see: <http://archives.nypl.org/nypla/4934>.

**Contents list**

<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>	<b>Contents</b>
		<b>Introduction</b>
1	1	Oral and Written Communications
1	2-3	Interpretations and Appreciations, Date, Sources
1	4-5	Versions, Poetical Form, Linguistic Peculiarities, Characters
		<b>Commentary</b>
2	1-2	1:1-1:3
2	3-4	1:4-1:6
2	5-6	1:7-1:9
2	7	1:10-1:13
2	8-9	1:14-1:17
2	10-11	2:1-2:5
3	1-2	2:6-2:9
3	3-4	2:10-2:13
3	5-7	2:14-2:17
3	8-9	3:1-3:5
3	10-11	3:6-3:8
4	1-2	3:9-3:11
4	3-4	4:1-4:3
4	5-6	4:4-4:7
4	7-8	4:8-4:9
4	9-10	4:10-4:13
4	11-12	4:14-4:16
4	13	4: Loose Materials
5	1-2	5:1-5:3
5	3-4	5:4-5:7
5	5-6	5:8-5:12
5	7-8	5:13-5:16
5	9-10	6:1-6:7
6	1-2	6:8-6:10
6	3-4	6:11-6:13
6	5-6	7:1-7:3
6	7-8	7:4-7:8
6	9-10	7:9-7:14
7	1-2	8:1-8:5
7	3-4	8:6
7	5-6	8:7-8:10
7	7-8	8:11-8:14

Box	Folder	Contents
8	1	Assignment of Parts and Pause Divisions
8	2	Language, Syntax, and Poetical Forms, 1933
8	3-9	Notes on Life of Solomon, Volumes 1-4
9	1-2	Notes on Manners and Customs
9	3-4	Notes on Nature in Palestine
9	5-6	Notes on Drama and Feasts
9	7-8	Notes on Dancing
9	9-10	Notes on Music and Instruments
10	1	Ancient Egyptian Compositions: Songs, Hymns, Paeans and Psalms
10	2	Hebrew Lexicon
<b>Concordance of Words in A.R. Version</b>		
10	3-4	A-B
10	5-6	C-E
10	7-8	F-G
10	9-10	H-K
11	1-2	L-M
11	3-4	N-Q
11	5-6	Return
11	7-8	R-S
11	9	T-Z
<b>Word Notes, 1929</b>		
12	1	Palace, House, Furniture
12	2-3	Military, Civil, Officials
12	4-5	Conveyances, Chariots
12	6-7	Beverages, Drink, Wine
<b>Hebrew Words Relating to:</b>		
12	8-9	Song and Music
12	10-11	Nature and Seasons
13	1-2	Speech, the Mouth
13	3	Songs of the Bodies
13	4-5	Love and Affection
13	6-7	Death, Sheol, and Future State
13	8	Perfume and Spices
13	9-10	Titular Expressions in the Old Testament
13	11	Birth, Blossom, Growth

Box	Folder	Contents
		<b>Hebrew Words Relating to (cont'd):</b>
14	1	Mountains, Valleys, Streams
14	2	Body and its Parts
14	3	Dark, Darkness
		<b>Location Notes</b>
14	4-5	Palestine
14	6-7	Jerusalem
14	8-9	The Temple
15	1	The Palace
		<b>Archaeological Notes</b>
15	2-3	Ancient Sources
15	4-5	Egypt and Babylon
15	6-7	Hebrews and Palestine
15	8-9	Solomon, Greece, Rome
15	10	Newspaper Clippings
		<b>Sketches by Alanson Briggs, 1923-1925</b>
15	11	Twin Stars or Marked for Life Hidden Heart Iowa Crops Life's Sands Philanderings of Cupid