

**The Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary,  
Columbia University in the City of New York**

Union Theological Seminary Archives 1

Finding Aid for

**Edward Robinson Papers, 1836-1838**



Edward Robinson Faculty Photograph, UTS2: Union Theological Seminary Records, Series 18C, box 5, folder R-S, the Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary, Columbia University in the City of New York

Finding Aid prepared by: Rebecca Nieto, August 2016

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**Summary Information**

Creator: Edward Robinson, 1794 – 1863

Title: Edward Robinson Papers, 1836-1838

Inclusive dates: 1836-1838 with some undated material

Bulk dates: 1838

Abstract: Presbyterian minister, Biblical historian, translator, geographer, UTS professor and faculty librarian. Papers consist of divided bound manuscript materials recounting travels in Palestine and environs circa 1838; journals and itineraries; language workbooks; Heinrich Kiepert memoir and annotated galleys of Friedrich Wilhelm Gesenius' Hebrew lexicon [undated]. Materials include text in English, German, Arabic, Greek, Latin, and Hebrew.

Size: 7 boxes, 2.75 linear feet

Storage: Onsite storage

Repository: The Burke Library  
Union Theological Seminary  
3041 Broadway  
New York, NY 10027

Email: [burkespecial@library.columbia.edu](mailto:burkespecial@library.columbia.edu)

### Administrative Information

- Provenance:** The Edward Robinson Papers are part of the Union Theological Seminary Archives, which comprises institutional and administrative records of the Seminary, combined with the papers of many organizations, scholars, pastors, laypersons, and others connected with the school. These papers were partially processed in 2014, and completed as part of a large group of unprocessed material that was organized in 2016 during an archival processing grant funded by the Henry Luce Foundation and the E. Rhodes and Leona B. Carpenter Foundation.
- Access:** Archival papers are available to registered readers for consultation by appointment only. Please contact archives staff by email to [burkespecial@library.columbia.edu](mailto:burkespecial@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 fragile, and this may necessitate restriction in handling and copying. Care should be taken with the manuscripts as the paper is brittle and foxing and the binding weak on some sections. The original Kiepert manuscript is in poor condition and should not be handled; rather, the complete reference photocopy should be consulted. The Williams transcripts of the Robinson/Stuart correspondence are copyrighted outside of the Burke, and any reproduction of those materials must be taken up with the copyright holder.
- Preferred Citation:** Item description, Edward Robinson Papers, series #, box #, and folder #, The Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary, Columbia University in the City of New York.

### Biography

Edward Robinson was born in Southington, Connecticut on April 10, 1794, a town where his father preached as a Congregational minister for 40 years. Robinson was educated at Hamilton College between 1816 and 1818 where he studied law and worked as a tutor in mathematics and Greek. He pursued his religious education at Andover Theological Seminary between 1822 and 1825 and was ordained with the Third Presbytery of New York on November 15, 1841.

Robinson taught briefly as a Hebrew instructor at Andover from 1823-26 before pursuing further ancient language studies at the Universities of Berlin and Halle between 1826 and 1830. Upon his return to the States, he was Professor of Greek and Oriental Languages and Literature at the University of the City of New York (1832-1833) before moving to Union Theological Seminary, where he taught in the department of Sacred Literature from 1837-1863. Aside from teaching, Robinson was a career translator, beginning translations of religious and classical texts as early as 1821, and publishing a number of them, including a translation of Friedrich Gesenius' Hebrew Lexicon, a Greek New Testament, and edited a Greek translation of *The Iliad*.

Robinson would remain at Union in several capacities over the years, including as librarian from 1841 to 1850. Robinson's career was significantly marked by his international travels, in Europe during his studies and later conducting extensive research trips to describe landscapes and identified religious sites in the Holy Land and surrounding regions between 1837-1838, and again from 1851-1852. During these travels, Robinson fastidiously documented his experience of the topographic, sociocultural, linguistic and intellectual elements that distinguished the Middle East at that time. The landmark text that emerged from those travels is present in this collection as "Biblical Researches in Palestine and the Countries in the South". Robinson's extensive fieldwork in the then-Ottoman ruled Palestinian region has earned him the title "father of Biblical geography" in some circles. While the original manuscript of "Biblical Researches" is present in this collection, subsequent editions and copies are in existence, distributed by Boston-based publisher Crocker and Brewster.

Robinson's knowledge of several languages and complementary interests in the religious and cultural landscape of Palestine are well-documented through "Biblical Researches", as well as supplementary notebooks/journals Robinson kept throughout his travels, and religious works written by others but that Robinson translated or otherwise engaged with in his scholarship. These supplementary publications include a manuscript of *Memoir of Palestine* by Heinrich Kiepert and an annotated copy of a translation of Friedrich Wilhelm Gesenius' Hebrew/English lexicon.

The Gesenius lexicon translation, originally written by one of the period's "fathers of modern Hebrew lexicography", is printed with paste-down text elements, and annotated by Robinson and possibly his travel partner, Reverend Eli Smith.

Edward Robinson eventually also received a Doctorate of Divinity from Dartmouth College, and would be involved with Union Theological Seminary until his death in New York City on January 27, 1863.

### **Collection Scope and Content Note**

This collection documents Robinson's travels in Palestine, Greece, Syria, and surrounding environs on an expedition there, accompanied by Reverend Eli Smith, during 1837-1838. The materials, all text-based, are organized in 2 series, "Writings" and "Gesenius Galley Proofs". All material was previously bound in library boards and inscribed as being a gift to Union Theological Seminary on behalf of Edward Robinson. A third series, "Correspondence", comprises the addition of transcribed correspondence between Edward Robinson and Moses Stuart (1780-1852), a contemporary of Robinson's and professor of Sacred Literature and Languages at Andover Seminary. Materials were kept in sequence in their original paginated order, with notebooks and additional publications following the Palestine manuscript itself. Series arrangement is as follows:

- **Series 1: Writings, [1836-1838] (4 boxes, 1.75 lin. ft.)**

This series contains the manuscript originally entitled "Biblical Researches in Palestine and the Countries in the South", as well as appendices of English-Arabic lists and language exercises, travel itineraries, a guide to Arabic pronunciation and supplementary

materials relating to travel. The series is thus subdivided between the Palestine manuscript itself and related notebooks and clippings.

The Writings consist of all bound sections of *Biblical Researches in Palestine and the Countries in the South*. Most of the text is in English, while annotations, notes, and the Arabic index and related notebooks include text in English, German, Hebrew, and Arabic. Pagination is contiguous with sections titled by place-name or subject. Folder titles delineate sections and breaks, which correspond to the following themes:

- Section I – Introduction. Greece and Egypt, pp.1-78
- Section II – Cairo to Suez, pp.79-123
- Section III – Suez to Mount Sinai pp.124-271
- Section IV – Mount Sinai to 'Akabah pp.279-320
- Section V – 'Akabah to Jerusalem, pp.321-406
- Section VI – Jerusalem – Incidents and first impressions, pp.407-460
- Section VII.I – Jerusalem topography and antiquities, pp.461-550
- VII.II – Tower of Hippicus [sic] & other towers, pp.551-649
- Section VIII – Jerusalem – History, statistics, etc., pp.650-764
- Section IX – Excursion from Jerusalem to Bethel, etc., pp.765-820
- Section X.I – Excursion to 'Ain Jidy, the Dead Sea, Jordan, etc., pp.821-924
- X.II – [Untitled], pp.925-1021
- Section XI – From Jerusalem to Gaza and Hebron, pp.1022-1190
- Section XII.I – From Hebron to Wady Mûsa and back, pp.1191-1329
- XII.II – [Untitled], pp.1330-1396
- Section XIII – From Hebron to Ramleh and Jerusalem, pp.1397-1470
- Section XIV – From Jerusalem to Nazareth and Mount Tabor, pp.1471-1650
- Section XV – From Mount Tabor by the Lake of Tiberias to Safed, pp.1651-1790
- Section XVI – From Safed by Tyre and Sidon to Beirut, pp.1791-1884
- Section XVII – Religious Sects in Syria and Palestine, pp.1885-1904

The notebooks accompanying the manuscript include bound notebooks divided into a Lists section, a travel itinerary with paste-down and folded-in notes and correspondence, notes on Arabic pronunciation and place-names, and an index of notes that likely correspond to the Palestine manuscript. Dates of these manuscript materials were supplied from original publication date of the text as well as the dates Robinson is known to have travelled in these regions.

- **Series 2: Friedrich Wilhelm Gesenius Lexicon, Undated (2 boxes, 0.75 lin. ft.)**  
 Within this series are galley proofs of Gesenius' lexicon with handwritten annotations by Robinson and possibly others. The Latin proofs are bound in eleven parts and paginated contiguously.
- **Series 3: Correspondence, 1826-1830 (1 box, 0.25 lin. ft.)**  
 Two plastic-bound transcripts, indexed, of letters exchanged between Edward Robinson and Moses Stuart between 1826 and 1830. The letters were transcribed and edited in 2003 by Hermine Wiegel Williams, a lecturer in Religion and the Arts at Hamilton College.

**Processing**

Metal clips and staples were removed from materials and folded items were flattened. Materials were placed in new acid-free folders and boxes. Acidic items were separated from one another by interleaving with acid-free paper as needed. The Kiepel manuscript was enclosed in an acid-free folder and a preservation photocopy made for reference.

**Further Sources**

The Internet Archive holds a freely accessible digital copy (original held at the University of Michigan) of the second edition of Robinson and Smith's publication, published in 1856 in two volumes and re-titled *Biblical Researches in Palestine, and in the Adjacent Regions: Journal of Travels in the Year 1838*: <https://archive.org/details/biblicalresearch02smitgoog>

Biographical information was gathered in part from the Union Theological Seminary Alumni Catalogue, 1836-1947. New York: [s.n.], 1948. Readable online here: [http://www.columbia.edu/cu/lweb/digital/collections/cul/texts/ldpd\\_5949068\\_000/pages/ldpd\\_5949068\\_000\\_00000001.html](http://www.columbia.edu/cu/lweb/digital/collections/cul/texts/ldpd_5949068_000/pages/ldpd_5949068_000_00000001.html)

Pritchard, James B. *Archeology and the Old Testament*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1958.

## Contents list

### Series 1: Writings, [1836-1838]

#### Series Box Folder Contents

#### **Manuscripts – Biblical Researches in Palestine and the Countries in the South**

1	1	1	Preface and Mss. Sections I-II, 1836-1838
1	1	2	Sec. III
1	1	3	Sections IV-V
1	1	4	Sections VI-VII.I
1	1	5	Section VII.II
1	2	1	Sections VIII-IX
1	2	2	Section X.I
1	2	3	Section X.II
1	2	4	Section XI
1	2	5	Section XII:I
1	3	1	Sections XII.II-XIII
1	3	2	Section XIV
1	3	3	Section XV
1	3	4	Section XVI-XVII
1	3	5	Notes/Illustrations and Appendices [by section]
1	4	1	Biblical Researches in Palestine and the Countries in the South – Arabic Index
			<b>Mss. – Notebooks</b>
1	4	2	Lebanon – Index of Arabic Names and Terms [Notebook], 1838
1	4	3	Travel Itinerary and Notes, [1838]
1	4	4	Notes on Christian Sects in Syria, 1838
1	4	5	Memoir of Palestine by Heinrich Kiepert [Original - <b>FRAGILE</b> ], Undated
1	4	6	Memoir of Palestine by Heinrich Kiepert [Reference photocopy], Undated
1	4	7	Edward Robinson Signature Card, Undated

### Series 2: Gesenius Galley Proofs, Undated

2	1	1	Annotated Wilhelm Friedrich Gesenius Lexicon I, pp. 1-96
2	1	2	Gesenius II, pp.97-192
2	1	3	Gesenius III, pp.193-288
2	1	4	Gesenius IV, pp. 289-384
2	1	5	Gesenius V, pp.385-480
2	1	6	Gesenius VI, pp.481-576
2	1	7	Gesenius VII, pp.577-672
2	1	8	Gesenius VIII, pp.673- 768
2	2	1	Gesenius IX-IXb, pp.769-864
2	2	2	Gesenius X, pp.865-960

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2      2    3      Gesenius XI, pp.961-1072

**Series 2: Correspondence, 1826-1830**

3      1    1      Letters from Edward Robinson to Moses Stuart (Transcript)